

# Mission Of St. Simon And St. Jude & Early Settlement Days At Tignish

In the autumn of the year 1799, eight families of French Acadians living in the parish of Malpec, on the shore of Richmond Bay, tempted by the prospect of more fruitful harvest fields and richer fishing grounds than was afforded by the thickly populated district in which they lived, decided upon removing to the wild lands of an Indian settlement, called in the Micmac language Mitagunehk, signifying "a paddle." This place was called Tagumiche by the French, and later on the English called it Tignish.

It is situated on the North-Eastern shore of Prince Edward Island. These families accordingly shipped their few possessions in canoes and started westward. After a tedious and perilous voyage, they landed at Tignish, close to what is now called the "old Burying Ground." One of the first to leap ashore was a boy of thirteen years of age named Pierre Chaisson, who died in 1879 at the ripe old age of ninety-three years. Mr. Chaisson is famous in local history as being the first person to fell a tree in Tignish, just as Joseph Bernard is noted as the first person christened in the new mission.

The voyagers made some temporary provision to shield themselves against the rigor of the coming winter, and in the spring, put up strong log houses, the cellars of which are still plainly discernible.

The new settlement was formed at the cost of much toil; forests had to be felled, dykes built, and drains cut through the marshes before the golden dreams of a rich harvest could be realized. Then if a horse needed a shoe, or an axe edge, a journey of over fifty miles to John Baker's forge at Bedouque, or to George Warren's at Darnley was necessary to supply the deficiency.

Grain had to be carried in sledges, or in canoes to John Taylor's mill at Bedouque or Wallace's at Malpec, or even as far as Indian River to be ground. Weddings often necessitated a journey to Rustico, where there was in those days a resident priest.

In 1803 when Bishop Denant visited Prince Edward Island, and in 1812 when Bishop Plessis made the tour of his Maritime missions, the faithful of Tignish came down to Malpec to partake of the privileges afforded them by the presence of the Bishop. They flocked to the sacraments and many children of tender years were confirmed in accordance with the custom of the time.

The good people of this mission put up their first church in the year 1801. It was a log building, thirty feet long by twenty five wide. It was furnished with a gallery, and the roof was shingled.

In addition to the church they erected a small parochial house. Those were built about the year 1801, probably under the direction of the Abbe de Calonne, who was then living at Malpec. They stood near Tignish Pond, on land formerly in the occupation of Thomas Chaisson. The second church of the mission was built in the year 1826. It was sixty feet long by forty-five wide and was framed by a man called Dixon. William Harper was the carpenter employed to finish the interior. The site of this church was about half a mile to the westward of the first one.

Roads from each point of the compass were eventually opened to it, so that it became, as it were, the centre of a square.

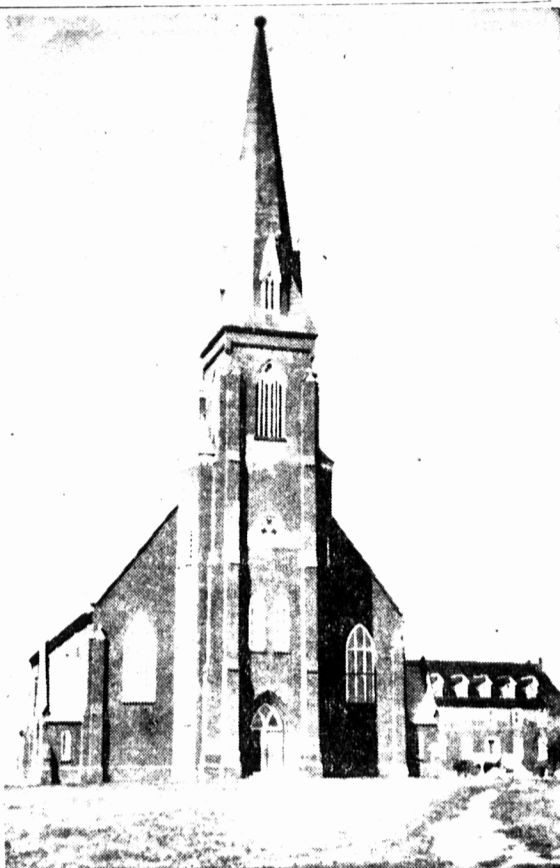
Upon the opening of the new church in 1860 the old one was hauled to Tignish village, where it served long as a school. It is now the parish hall.

The first priest to offer the holy sacrifice of the Mass in Tignish was the Abbe de Calonne, who from 1799 to 1803, paid at least a yearly visit to this Ultima Thule. Upon his departure for England, the care of all the Prince Edward Island missions, as well as those of a stern Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, fell upon Father McEachern, who was alone in his charge until 1812, when Father Beaubien came to assist him in serving the French Missions. In 1818 Father Beaubien was replaced by Father Cecile. In 1822 Father Cecile returned to Quebec to assume the duties of Berthier de Bellechasse, and in 1823 the Rev. Bernard Donald McDonald, a native of Ailsbury, Prince Edward Island, who had been ordained in Quebec in June of that year, was given charge of the churches in the western half of Prince Edward Island.

In 1828 the second native of Prince Edward Island, destined for the Priesthood, received Holy Orders. He was Rev. Sylvain Epherim Poirier, commonly called Perry, a native of Tignish. He, soon after his ordination, assumed the care of the French parishes of the newly created diocese. In 1844 the Rev. Peter McIntyre, went to Tignish as parish priest, and it was during his incumbency, that the beautiful church which is justly the pride of the mission was built.

In 1860 Father McIntyre was named Bishop of the diocese and took up residence in Charlottetown, naming Rev. Dugald M. McDonald to the charge of Tignish. After a year spent in the mission, Father Dugald was appointed to the mission of St. Columba in Kings County, and was succeeded in Tignish, by Rev. Dugald McIsaac, which he served for more than 55 years. Here in November 1886, he celebrated his silver Jubilee, the twenty-fifth anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood.

The beautiful sanctuary dedicated to St. Simon and St. Jude which will perpetuate the memory of Bishop McIntyre in Tignish, was



Present Church at Tignish, built 1859-60

commenced in the year 1859; the foundation stone was laid by the Right Rev. Colin McKinnon, then Bishop of Archaat, N. S. The church is of brick, in the Gothic style of architecture. It was built from plans furnished by P. C. Kelly of New York, and is as might be expected from the illustrious name of the architect, a perfect in design and proportion. The body of the church is one hundred feet in length, by six-two in breadth, with a chancel twenty eight feet by thirty two. The height of the walls is thirty two feet, that of the spire, one hundred and fifty feet. The bricks used in building the church were made by the parishioners, who also provided and prepared the timber required.

The cost of this beautiful church was spontaneously defrayed by the parishioners and only fourteen months elapsed from the laying of the corner stone to its completion.

It was solemnly consecrated by the most Rev. Archbishop Connolly of Halifax. The ceremony took place on the 19th of August 1860 in the presence of a large number of Bishops and priests who had assembled to witness the ceremony of the Episcopal dignity upon the zealous priest of Tignish, whose labours were thus so fittingly crowned.

The interior of this church presents a striking contrast to that of all others in the diocese. They are, as a rule, painted in bright colours, and are as light and modern looking as possible. The church of St. S. Simon and Jude on the contrary,

is dark, and the style aimed at, is that of those venerable piles, where, "Storied windows richly light, Cast a dim religious light." The colours chosen in decoration resemble those of old illuminations. The altar is of dark marble and a composition called "macalora." The frontal shows three medallions in bas relief. The central one portrays the descent from the cross; that on the gospel side, the interior of the stable at Bethlehem, and that on the epistle side, the Resurrection. Over the tabernary on the gospel side, leads to a small vestry. Passing under the rose window, at the epistle side, one enters by a small door, into the beautiful side chapel, a truly exquisite little sanctuary, fifty-two feet in length, by eighteen in breadth. The ceiling is of oak and is open timbered between the oaken arches. It is painted blue and dotted with stars. There is here, a very beautiful little altar, exquisitely carved and illuminated; above it, under a high canopy, stands a statue of the Immaculate Conception, painted in dark colours.



Dalton School, built 1930-32, gift of Sir Charles Dalton to parish of Tignish.

On July 20, 1899, the descendants of the pioneers celebrated the hundredth anniversary of the arrival of the founders of their parish. On this occasion a Memorial Number of the local weekly newspaper, "L'Impartial" was dedicated to the event. This volume contained many details of the complete genealogical account of the early families, both French Acadian and Irish.



Tignish Convent, opened in 1868

to match the altar. The communion railing and confessionals are of oak; above the latter in Gothic letters is illuminated "Father, forgive me, for I have sinned." The church and side chapel are heated by steam.

Near the church stands the convent of Notre Dame. It is seventy-five feet in length by thirty-two in breadth, and three stories and a half in height. It was opened in 1868. Rev. Mother St. Mary Antoinette, afterwards superior general of the congregation of Notre Dame, being the first Superior. There was a teaching staff of four nuns and a roll of seventy pupils. The first parochial residence of the mission was built by Rev. Sylvain Poirier. The present three-story brick Rectory, was built in 1872.

The mission of Tignish is one of the largest in the diocese, comprising over four hundred families. Here is the western terminus of the Prince Edward Island Railway, the station is quite near the church, and around these two centres a busy village has grown up. Commercial enterprise has erected some stores and many fishing establishments; farming is busily prosecuted, and all promises well for the future of Tignish.

It has been remarked that the Catholic population has been more prosperous since the parishioners so generously combined to erect their beautiful church, so that they have since been able to build for themselves better houses and buildings, and to enlarge and improve their properties. The parish extends to the extreme end of the North Cape Lighthouse, in the vicinity of which is very wild and beautiful scenery.

**First Acadian Settlers of the Parish of St. Simon and St. Jude, Tignish:** 1799: Pierre Poirier, Jacques Chaisson, Germain Poirier, Etienne Gaudet, Joseph DesRoches, Joseph Richard, Basile Poirier, Gregoire Bernard.

In 1800: Joseph Doucet, Charles Doucet, Pierre Arsenault, Joseph Gaudet.

In 1817: Michel Buote, Joseph Arsenault.

In 1819: Simon Martin, Joseph Martin.

In 1831: Sylvain Gallant.

In 1835: Francois Buote, School teacher.

About 1840: LeClair, and Pitre.

**First Irish settlers of Tignish parish:** The first Irish settlers to arrive at Tignish were Edward and Michael Rielly who came from county Kerry in 1811. They were followed by:

From Kerry: John Mansel (1817), John Reedy (1817), John McCarthy (1822), Patrick Dalton (1829), Patrick Nelligan (1832), Maurice Nelligan (1829), Michael Reedy (1844), Thomas Mansel (School teacher 1832), John Dougan (1839), John Kennedy (1830).

From Waterford: James McGrath (1819), William Handrahan (1819), Thomas Noonan, Martin Doyle (1839), John Gavin (1817), Richard Aylward (1818), James Christopher (1829).

From Louth: James Phee and Edward O'Brien.

From Kilkenny: James Fitzgerald (1829), Patrick Clohossey (1849), Thomas Hackett (1850).

From Wexford: Thomas Conroy (Charlottetown in 1835, later in Tignish with his son Nicholas), John, Peter and James A'Hearn (1830), Charlottetown (1813) at Tignish in 1820), James Christopher (1849).

From Tipperary: John Carroll (1816), William Dillon (1835), Patrick Carrigan (?).

From Monaghan: Patrick McCue (1818).

From Newfoundland: Michael Brennan (1818), John Broderick (1839).

From Northern Ireland: Francis Hughes first came to Tracadie and moved to Tignish in 1857. John McCarthy came from Ireland to Miscouche in 1820 and to Tignish in 1851. Timothy Casey had first come to Cape Traverse, P. E. I., and removed to Tignish in 1844.

Rev. A. E. Burke gathered this data in 1899, and has this to say about its accuracy: "I believe that most of this information is substantially correct. In a few cases there may be an error in the dates, as it has been difficult to verify them in every case."

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The weekly paper "L'Impartial" began publication at Tignish, June 1893. It was a four page newspaper very well edited by a

scholarly man and it continued to appear regularly until 1915. The files of this newspaper are kept at St. Joseph University in their new building in Moncton, N. B.

**Pastors of Tignish since 1886:** Rev. D. M. MacDonald (1867-1923); Rev. G. J. MacLellan (1923-1931); Rev. John A. MacDonald 1931. Present pastor.

The following priests have been assistants at the Church of St. Simon and St. Jude: Revs. Cajetan Myrie, Fortunatus Aubrey, D. Stanislaus MacDonald, Andre Roy, Joseph Quevillon, P. O. Allaire, J. Legere, E. C. Gilbert, Pius MacPhee, N. C. A. Boudrauld, Angus MacDonald, Francois Guay, G. A. Picotte, A. E. Burke, J. L. Cass, L. J. Avers, P. P. Wood, William Simpson, Eric Rubin, J. W. Pineau, Emmett McLinnis, Louis B. Dooley, J. Denis Gallant, (present curate).

The following are the priests born in the parish: Rev. Sylvain E. Poirier (Perry) ordained 1828. Arsenault, Rev. P. J. Hogan, Rev. Earl Dalton, Rev. John Crawford, Rev. J. W. Arsenault, Rev. Claude Sica, Rev. J. P. McGrath, Rev. John Buote, Rev. Jean A. Gaudet, Rev. Leo Nelligan (retired Bishop of Pembroke, Ontario), Rev. Joseph A. LeClair, Rev. Alphonse Gaudet, (O.M.I.), Rev. Howard Shea.

Albert Bernard of Tignish joined the Brothers of the Oblate in 1952.

The following young ladies of Tignish parish have joined various Religious Orders: Mary Conroy, Gwendolyn McCarthy, Susan Gavin, Nellie McGrath, Margaret McGrath, Mary McGrath, Ellen M. McCarthy, Mary Olive McCarthy, George McCarthy, Hannah Hogan, Mary O'Connor, Mary O'Brien, Marguerite Gaudet, Mimi Cahill, Edith McKenna, Christina Nelligan, Mary Olive McLinnis, Annie MacIntyre, Mildred Bernard, Bernetta Dalton, Regina McCarthy, Carmel Doyle, Carrie Richard, Irma Handrahan, Clara McLinnis, Mary Nelligan, Jeanne Arsenault, Agnes Gaudet, Marguerite Gaudet, Agnes Arsenault, Edith Gaudet, Irma Reedy, Angela Sica. (All Congregation of Notre-Dame, Montreal)

Sisters of Mercy: Annie Jeanette Kinch, Margaret Reedy, Sisters of the Precious Blood (Charlottetown): Lillian Kennedy, Sisters of St. Joseph (Boston): Jamie Cahill.

Sisters of Charity (Manchester, N. H.): Annie MacDonald, Angelina Phee.

In addition to the above named young ladies from Tignish, parish, the following have studied at Tignish Convent and joined Religious Orders:

Congregation of Notre Dame (Montreal) From Alberton: Sarah Gillis, Winifred Gillis, Margaret Gillis, Bertha Gillis, Ethel Foley, Ethel O'Brien From Lot 10, (Bloomfield): Mimi MacDonald; From Charlottetown: Josie Smith; From Palmer Road: Bertha Knox

Sisters of St. Martha (Charlottetown) From Palmer Road: DeVala Cahill.

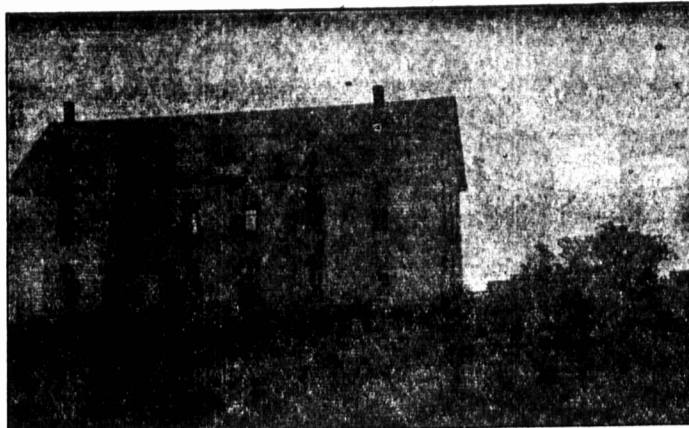
Sisters of St. Joseph (St. Paul, Minn.): From Alberton, Mary Monica O'Brien, From Palmer Road: Miss Doucette.

Sisters of Service (Toronto): From Palmer Road, Irene Profit.

Sisters of Precious Blood (Charlottetown): From Summerside, Marguerite Blanchard.

Sisters of St. Joseph: From Alberton, Melvina Melvina Christina Melvina; From Wellington, Theresa O'Brien.

Sisters of Mercy: From Palmer Road, Jean O'Brien and Myrtle O'Brien.



Second Church, built 1826-28, now Parish Hall

## South Rustico And Vicinity

Mr. Edward Doucette of South Rustico, spent several days in Charlottetown on business.

Miss Stella Dorian of South Rustico, has returned to Charlottetown after being home for two weeks sick with the "flu."

News has been received that Reverend Cornelius Pineau, S. J., would not be returning to the far-east missions until after Easter. After spending delightful holidays with his brothers in Ottawa, he has returned to Montreal where he plans to remain the rest of the month. While enjoying the peace and quiet of his beloved country, Father Pineau S. J. is not idle. Having had to leave all his personal belongings, including his collection of sermons and instructions which he gathered during a period of 18 years behind the Iron Curtain, he finds himself obliged to begin anew to prepare a series of sermons and instructions in view of preaching several retreats in the early days of March. Plans are being made to have him preach a retreat to the boys and girls of St. Augustines Convent when he returns to his native parish. —CA

## WORLD'S TALLEST

The Central Railway, Peru, climbs to almost 16,000 feet—the highest standard-gauge railroad in the world.

Appearance. The parish of Tignish is now composed of 440 families. The parish registers begin in 1831; the first entry being a record of the baptism of Joseph Arsenault, born on August 28, 1831.

## CAMEO THEATRE

(KENSINGTON)

Friday-Saturday 7:15-9:15. Tony Curtis, Jan Sterling, Mona Freeman, in

## "FLESH AND FURY"

A story of a young prize fighter and the two women who loved him.

## EVENING OFFICE HOURS

Patients please note change in Evening Office Hours.

Dr. W. E. Callaghan will be in office Monday, Thursday, Saturday evenings.

Dr. H. B. MacNeill will be in office Tuesday, Friday, Saturday evenings.

Emergencies will be attended to at all times.

## CAPITOL Summerside

Tonight 7:15-9:15; Saturday 2:30-7:15-9:15

**America's Devils Island!**

The West's underground citadel of terror...

BLAZING with the fury of forgotten men who could not forget women!

**HELLGATE**

A kiss opened the doorway of the damned! A heart of hate, soul of Satan!

Infame of torment the shame of a nation!

Rebellion was a one-way ticket!

Starring **STERLING HAYDEN · JOAN LESLIE · WARD BOND**

JAMES ANNES · PETER COE · JOHN RICLAND · ROBERT WILKIE · EYLE JAMES · RICHARD EMORY

Written and Directed by CHARLES BRANNON BARBER. Produced by JIM E. CAMPBELL. A LIPPERT PICTURES PRESENTATION

## REGENT Today 3:30-7-9:20 Saturday 2:30-7-9:20

## DOUBLE BILL

"WIDE BOY" Sydney Tafler Susan Shaw

**STAND AT APACHE RIVER**

Color by Technicolor

Starring **STEPHEN MCNALLY · JULIA ADAMS**

HUGH MARLOWE · HUGH O'BRIEN