

Chapter 10 Building the Parsonage

Within about a month of his arrival, Mr. Bayne presided over a vestry meeting at which plans to acquire land and build a parsonage were laid. To build a place for the minister to live was considered the most important aim of the parish at this time, and just over two years after that first meeting, the Baynes moved into the completed parsonage.

The minutes of November 14, 1893 stated that a piece of land 76 yd. x 25 yd. more or less, was to be bought from Mr. George Ascah for \$25, one half to be paid that autumn and the remainder two years from the date of the first payment. The minutes continued:

Seeing the above piece of ground is on the side of the public road opposite to the Church property, it be exchanged with Mr. Wm. Ascah for a piece of equal size adjoining the Church lot, the piece bought from Mr. Geo. Ascah to be brought into a state of cultivation for Mr. Wm. Ascah.

It was to be a two-storey parsonage, 34 ft. by 24 ft. subject to alteration at the discretion of the building committee. Mr. Wyndham Miller and Mr. Louis Annett were to lay these plans before the vestry of St. Peter's Church with a view to obtaining its co-operation. This support was evidently obtained as the Little Gaspé congregation helped with the building and contributed for the next seventy-eight years to the maintenance of the parsonage.

On January 8, 1894, it was decided at a vestry meeting that Wyndham Miller be appointed to apportion the timber for the parsonage frame as well as 100 ft. of boards to each male member of the Church. My mother well remembers her father making out little slips of paper for each man and worrying about whether or not he had apportioned the lumber fairly.

With the parsonage to work for, every man and woman in the place had something extra to think about. The Guild minutes for January 4, 1894, seem to have expressed the eager interest of the people:

We are busy preparing a bazaar table in aid of a new parsonage

so we have decided to have an extra sewing meeting at Mr. Robert Ascah's to finish off our work.

Mr. John Neil Ascah's diary for January 25, 1894 reads:

"Had concert. Realized \$120 about 250 people. 25¢ entrance - tea 10¢ reserved seats 10¢ extra. Had bazaar table."

My mother remembers one of the concerts of that winter as she was then nine years old and very much impressed. It was held in Mr. George Annett's new house which was still without partitions and therefore ideal for a concert hall. One item on the programme which my mother never forgot was a song in which two of the lines were:

*"Up, up, with the standard of England
And raise the proud banner of France..."*

For the song, the stage was decorated with two large flags, a Union Jack and a Tricolour. After the song, Mrs. Louis Annett and George Miller who was then just a boy, stepped out and danced.

I am fortunate in having letters from the two daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Bayne. Both live in Lennoxville, and, while they cannot remember Peninsula when their parents were here, they remember visits in later years and also remember much from what their mother and grandmother told them. Mrs. Waterman (Frances), wife of Bishop R.H. Waterman, wrote:

"Mother's piano - a wedding gift from my father - was the first one in (Peninsula). My parents were musical - Mother played the piano with a beautiful touch & both sang. The piano went from house to house where concerts were given to raise money - at 25¢ a head - to pay for the new parsonage. One duet they used to sing was 'Oh, For the Wings of a Dove'."

With Mrs. Bayne's piano, several violins, and all the vocal talent there was, the musical numbers alone were worth attending the concert to hear. In addition, many of the men and women then and in later years did splendid acting. Mr. Bert Miller, Mr. Roland Miller, Mrs. Louis Annett, and Mr. Jim Ascah are a few who were long remembered for the parts they took in plays in these concerts.

The ladies must have worked hard making cakes for the tea. Their practice was to collect all the ingredients at one house and

gather there to make the cakes. For the concert in January, 1894, they made enough to serve the 250 people and, as Mr. Ascah records, had some left over:

"Sat. January 27: 5¢ tea in concert hall to eat rest of cakes. Realized \$10."

When spring came that year (1894), the men went to work on the parsonage. Mr. John Neil says:

"March 29: Crowd in Griffon Road cutting sills for parsonage.

April 16: Commenced work on Parsonage - is to be framed gratis.

May 1: Tenders opened last night for making frames and sashes for Parsonage. Rich Miller was lowest tender \$44 but creek crowd want George Ascah to have it his tender was \$50.

May 8: They put up frame for Parsonage today.

July 21: Tenders opened last night by committee to board in & shingle parsonage Louis Ascah has the job for \$40, lowest tender.

Nov. 24: Tenders have been opened for ceiling, flooring and running partitions in Parsonage. Henry Annett has the job for \$35, boards and mill dressed."

Early in the year 1895, the Guild held a sale in the new parsonage. One can imagine the preparations needed to heat the building and provide all the necessities for the sale. At the same time they were preparing for another concert which, Mr. John Neil says, took place on January 29 and was a "Big success. Made \$136."

All through the years 1895 and 1896, the Guild raised money at their meetings and by holding entertainments and sales to contribute to the parsonage fund. The secretary wrote in the minutes of May 16, 1896:

Our Guild has done a good work this year. The sum of one hundred and eleven dollars has been given to the Parsonage fund and a good start to begin the new year of Seven dollars and ten cents.

The Baynes must have been very happy when they were finally able to move in as they did on Friday, November 29, 1895. Mr. John Neil noted on November 30: "They moved up in our new Parsonage yesterday. House is finished, but back kitchen is not done yet."

Mr. Bayne kept a notebook in which he marked down all receipts

and expenditures on the parsonage from 1894 to 1897. He notes donations from Sam Robert, Elias Lucas, Senator Price, Mr. Smith and Mr. Hamilton of Quebec, various people in the Basin such as Dr. Peabody, J.F. Davis, Rev. J. Kemp, and Dr. Wakeham, Mr. Jas. Ascah, Fame Point, the Lord Bishop, Archdeacon Roe, and many other individuals. He also records donations from proceeds of lantern views shown by the Rev. A.C. Ascah, bazaars and socials in Little Gaspé and Grande Grève, some of which went on for two nights, collections in Fox River and many other projects. The expenditures are interesting for their variety and the prices of the time. A few examples are:

Birch planks for Doorstep	\$1.00
5000 ft. dressed boards	8.00 40.00
2 paint brushes	18 .36
Birch bark and lime	2.25
One thousand shingles	1.75
Ed Annett for digging cellar and laying stone foundation	14.00
Hy Annett for digging cellar and posting same	3.50
Nicholas Simon for b'g two chimneys	3.50
Luther Coffin for work	25.00
A.E. Hookes for clapboards	47.58
Blinds fr. T. Eaton Co., Toronto	10.85
Mrs. Schilling 1 day's painting	.30
Walter Miller for making screen for door and windows	1.75

In the summer of 1897, building began on a large back kitchen on the parsonage and a barn. A well was drilled at that time. During the first year in the parsonage, the Baynes must have carried water from one of the neighbours. Their first baby, Frances, had been born in the old Ascah house in the spring of 1895 and their second, Edythe, was born in the parsonage in January, 1897. Thus, with Mrs. Bayne Sr., there was quite a household in the parsonage, and Mr. Bayne wrote in his report for 1898 "Through their (the Guild members) labours a large kitchen attached to the Parsonage is now nearing completion, being provided with a pump and abundant supply of good water". Mr. Bayne's "Kitchen and Barn Account" shows that these new additions, kitchen, woodshed, and barn, cost about \$155. Of the barn, Mr. Bayne wrote:

"The congregation of Peninsula prepared the frame and boards last winter, and put the whole together in the spring, the Little Gaspé congregation having furnished the shingles. In this way very little cash has been required, and the building is practically free of debt."

While all the work was being done on the parsonage, the Church was not being neglected. Mr. John Neil wrote on September 6, 1896: "James, Windham, John Mullin, and Ed Annett have been shingling the church roof this week". The Guild minutes of March 11, 1898, show us how things were going on:

We did not hold any meeting in February owing to our having a concert with a sale of our goods the last of January. (This concert was held in Mr. Lewis Ascah's new house.) We realized the handsome of \$102 good encouragement for the hard labour of the members. I must also say a word of thanks to our young men, without their able assistance we could not have such successful sales. May they always be ready and willing to help in any good work even after our own mission is built up. This money is devoted to the renovating of our Church which it sadly needs.

In his report of the year before this, 1897, Mr. Bayne said that he had been to Quebec in October seeking assistance. He had received much sympathy and kindness: the Hon. E.G. Price subscribed \$100, Mr. Robert Hamilton \$50, the Church Helpers' Association \$48, and Bishop Dunn \$20. In his 1898 report, Mr. Bayne stated that \$50 of the money given by the Guild had been set apart for the labour of ceiling, staining, etc. and that money to buy the material for this work had been given by "faithful churchmen in Quebec", no doubt the ones referred to in 1897. The ceiling and staining were done the following year. The lumber came from the timber limit leased at the time by John and Charles Phillips and was sawed in their mill; the ceiling was done by them after Rich Miller dressed the lumber. As Mr. Miller suffered from a severe physical handicap, it is a great tribute to his manual skill that he was able to do such work. The varied arrangement of lines of the beaded boards and the dull beauty of their varnished surface have been one of the most admired features of the church ever since.

Next came the altering and staining of the pews. This was done, I believe, by Mr. Luther Coffin who stained them to bring out the grain of the wood. They were arranged in two rows as they still are.

I have found no record of the work, but I think the vestry was built at the back of the church at this time and the pulpit moved to its present position.

A new bell was also acquired in the summer of 1898. It was made of an alloy by the C.S. Bell Co., Hillsboro, Ohio, was delivered for less than \$50, and weighed with mountings 600 lb. Mr. Bayne commented: "Its tone is not quite as good as that of an equally large bell of the ordinary material but it is far-reaching and excellent for the price."

Mr. William Annett tells me that he believes there was a small steeple on the west end of the church; the old bell hung in this and the rope to ring it came down through a hole in the wall of the church into the porch which had been built over the door. Mr. Murray Roberts tells me that this hole, worn at the bottom from the rope rubbing on it, can be seen in the wall when one is in the loft of the present porch. My father told me that the bell was not very good. I think it was cracked.

The new bell was set up at first on a stand on the ground until a spire could be built. It has been ringing for church services, pealing for weddings, and tolling for funerals now for eighty years.

Chapter 11

The Reverend Norman Melrose Bayne

Mr. Bayne's influence was felt in much more than the physical improvements in the parish. Those who came into contact with him, whether intimately as his parishioners or only casually in business or social affairs, seem to have been very deeply impressed by him. This was partly because he took an interest in all aspects of the lives of the people. For example, he paid at least one visit a year to the Peninsula School. The following are two excerpts from the Visitor's Book of that school.

Nov. 7 1893

This afternoon I visited the school here in Peninsula taught by Miss Ramier who kindly gave me permission to question the scholars in the various subjects taken up. The manner in which all answers have been made is very satisfying, showing plainly that good work has been done by both teacher and pupils. I hope to call quite frequently, if I may, to give any help and encouragement that I can as well as for the pleasure it affords me.

N.M. Bayne Clk.

Visited the school on the last day of the year and think that satisfactory progress has been made. Practical and unusual questions were all answered, showing that the scholars are being taught to use what they learn.

July 7th 1899

N.M. Bayne

My father used to tell a story about how Mr. Bayne had occasion to be in a stable owned by a man who was not his parishioner. He noticed that the stable was very dark and advised the man to put in a window for the good of his animals. The man took his advice. The minister had much common sense and he also had a tactful manner which enabled him to offer advice inoffensively.

In Mr. Bayne's day it was a courtesy of the "single lane" snow roads of winter that a light sleigh always turned out when meeting a loaded one. The French people so respected Mr. Bayne that they insisted on turning out, loaded or not, when they saw his horse approaching.

Mr. Bayne was a deacon when he came to Peninsula but went away

in August, 1894, to be ordained to the priesthood in the Cathedral at Quebec. During his absence, services were carried on. He wrote:

"Mr. Wm. Miller and Mr. Chas. Bartlett, our Sunday School Superintendents, kindly acted as Lay Readers, a service for which I was very grateful."

He was unflinching in his expressions of gratitude for such help and mentioned all special efforts made by the people. Here are a few quotations from his reports:

"1894a thing which gives me great happiness, as an evidence of the value which the people place upon the Church's ministrations is the fact that I have found the Lord's Table sought very freely, and I believe earnestly by many, including a goodly proportion of the younger members of the congregation.

Christmas was a joyful season, and fittingly observed, both Churches being most tastefully decorated.

1897many kindnesses and much real help which I have received from the mission, chiefest of which are an abundant and regular supply of wood; the hauling of my hay from a considerable distance; besides almost all the labour of shoeing my horse given gratis by one man during the four years of my incumbency.

1898Singers and players in both choirs continue faithful to their highly privileged duty."

It was a great sorrow to all the people in his parishes, as well as to Mr. Bayne and his wife, when they realized that the heart trouble which had bothered him most of the time he was here was going to cause him to have to leave the area. Mr. John Neil Ascah wrote on April 24, 1898:

"Mr. Bayne is very sick with heart trouble so no service today."

Mr. Bayne wrote in his report for that year:

"In the month of July I left the Mission, seeking strength in rest and change. The holiday did me much good."

However, his condition had not improved the following year and Bishop Dunn arranged that he exchange appointments with ^{the Rev. Arthur Dutton,} the minister at Way's Mills, a parish in the Eastern Townships; ~~the Rev. Arthur Dutton.~~

As the care of the lightship had been given over by this time to another man, Mr. John Neil Ascah was preoccupied with fishing and other work. He did not write often in his diary and we miss his comments

on the departure of this minister and his family who for six years had been so much a part of Peninsula and Little Gaspé. A letter written by Mr. Bayne's mother to my grandmother Phillips some time after the family's departure gives us a little glimpse of her feelings at leaving her "home" here. She wrote:

"I often think of your aged mother and wish I could walk along the road to see her and all of them, it takes me quite while to like new people, so I do not forget the old ones...."

I often think of Peninsula and all those whom I used to meet with there, and sometimes I forget how far it is from our present home. I can see in my mind the mill stream and rocks that I enjoyed looking at so much when walking to the people on the hill or coming back on a fine summer evening."

Soon after the Baynes arrived in Way's Mills their third daughter, Lillian, was born. When she grew up she became the wife of Colonel Lee Watson and lived in Lennoxville. In her home there today may be seen both her mother's piano which was here in Peninsula so long ago and Mrs. Louis Annett's melodeon. She wrote me: "We put it (the melodeon) in the same key as mother's piano & Frances & I played the two instruments many times together".

Mrs. Louis Annett remained friends with the Baynes as long as she lived and left her melodeon to them.

Mr. Bayne carried on his work in Way's Mills for only a short time. He died in 1900. He was not yet 34 years old. A fellow clergyman¹ wrote after his death:

"It was my privilege to minister to him in his last days and to be with him in his final hours. His firm faith, his patient submission to the will of God when he realized that he could not recover, were remarkable in one so young."

He was buried in Lennoxville and his wife and family moved there to live. His mother sent the beautiful Good Shepherd stained glass window in 1901 to be erected in his memory in the chancel of St. Matthew's Church.

Unfortunately, the second daughter, Edythe, died, too, in 1907. The family came back to Peninsula in 1907 and 1909 to spend the summers

1. The Rev. Albert Stevens, Secretary of the St. Francis District.

with Mrs. Louis Annett, and when the girls were grown up and married they brought their mother back for a visit in 1933. The link between this little parish and the family of the Rev. Norman Bayne seems to have been unbreakable by time.