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Partici-Paper

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The Brook Village Churches: An historical glimpse

by Mary Anne Ducharme

Parishioners of the St. John the Baptist Church of Brook Village are gearing up for a late July celebration of the 50th anniversary of the official opening of the church on June 19, 1940. In six years there will be another celebration: the 100th year of the Parish.

The first St. John the Baptist church building of Brook Village was not at the present site, but was located near the Catholic Cemetery on the Village end of the Hays River Road. Previous to this those who lived in Brook Village attended Sunday services in Mabou, a considerable trek of twelve miles in inclement weather when people travelled by horse or on foot. This first church, the exact date of construction uncertain at this time, was to serve the Mission of Mabou, and was very small as compared to the present structure. The need became apparent for a larger central church.

In 1896, a new church, "a beautiful Gothic style church," was planned at the present site, on land donated by Sandy Tulloch, and with substantial support from Judge Nicholas Meagher, as well as generous contributions of labour and materials from other parishioners. This was to become a parent parish, with missions in West Lake Ainslie and Glencoe. The old church was moved to the Village. It was enlarged and served

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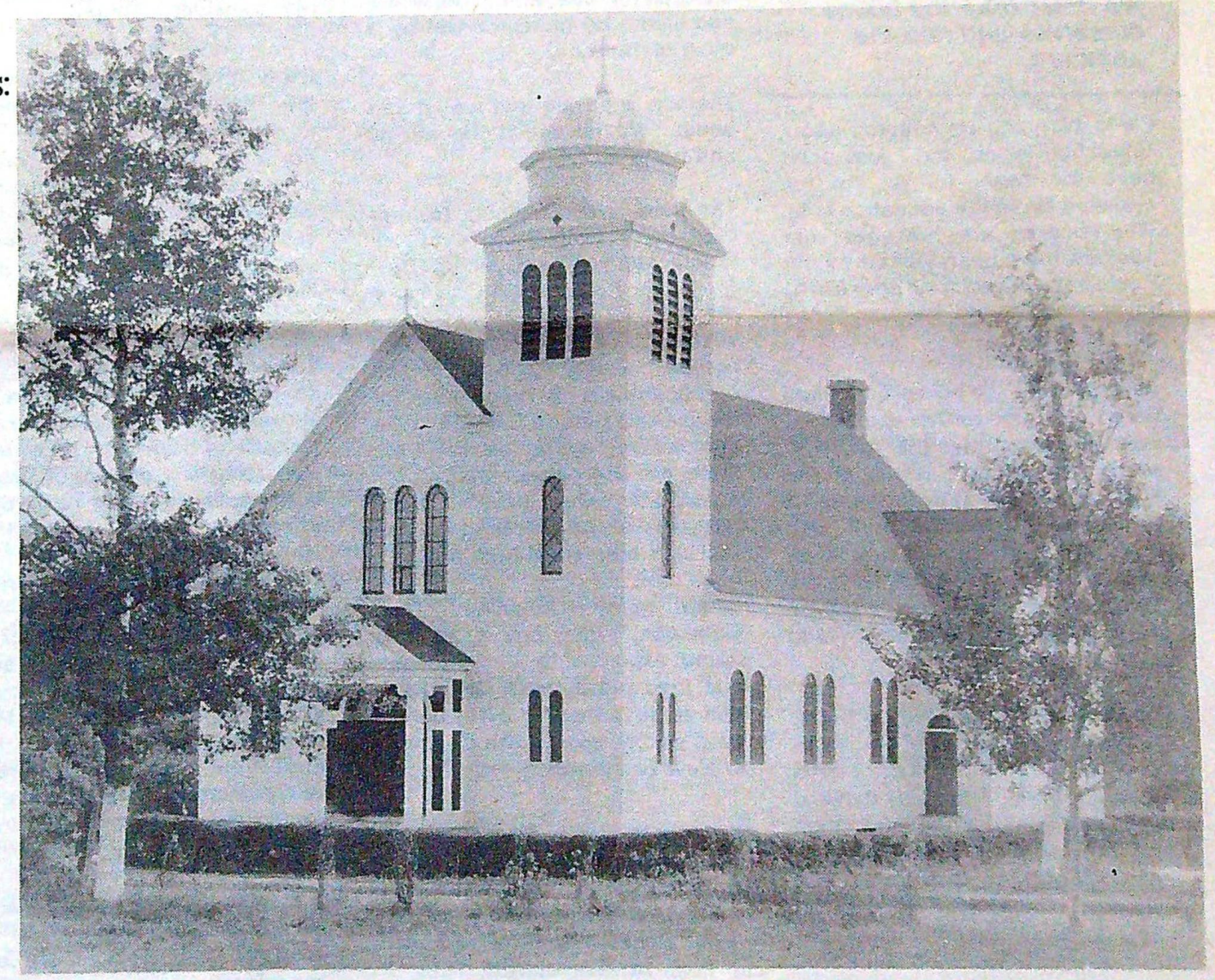

St. John the Baptist Church Celebrating 50 years

Parishioners of the St. John the Baptist Church of Brook Village are gearing up for a late July celebration of the 50th anniversary of the official opening of the church in 1940. Pictured above is the church as it was before the removal of the bell tower. This structure was built through the extraordinary support of a small parish, not only with manual labour, but with materials, and financial contributions made with great personal sacrifice. The old "Devotional Church," on the same site burned in 1938. More on the July celebrations in the next issue of Partici-Paper.

"We have met the enemy and he is us."

From the Editor

Maritimers are paying the price for misplaced trust in politicians and turning a blind eye to long standing problems. Central Canadians are spending their growth capital in the U.S. instead of investing it in the future of Canada. If economic survival and national unity are at stake, we must take the blame ourselves and find the answers.

I was planning an editorial about Education Week, but I just don't have the heart for it. I'm too appalled about the education cuts. The children are hostages; our pockets have been picked by the Federal and Provincial governments; and we can't pay the ransom.

As even the bare bones education here is due for further starvation, we will be lucky in the future to reach Third World status in the Maritimes. Keep in mind that most Third World countries don't use that term any more. Now they refer to themselves as "Developing Countries." Maybe we can aspire to Fourth World status.

Gnawing behind this rage is fright. Quebec separate? The Maritimes set adrift? Nova Scotia cannibalizing its future by denying decent education? The elimination of the poor on welfare by enforced birth control? Racial and minority intolerance? Soaring bankruptcies? Surely this is not the brave new world of Canada's future! Surely it is mostly windy theatrics, over-reaction, temporary insanity -- and Canadians will soon regain their native common sense.

Recently I visited my parents in Upstate New York, a mere day's journey, 15 hours if you make only gas station stops. I am one of the great many people in the Maritimes who have historic and present roots in "The Boston States." We see things a little differently than some do.

Whenever times get tough in Canada, some Canadians have a proclivity towards blaming our troubles on the evil machinations of Americans.

This largely unexamined paranoia is evident in casual conversations, in editorials, in classrooms, among some newsreporters, and especially in political bluster. It could be a psychotic fear that the mythical beast to the South, The Magic Dragon, will come to swallow us up while we aren't looking. Or, it could be a calculated ploy used by some parents to unite squabbling children by making them afraid of the "bogey man." While psychologists would readily understand this stuff, Canada's ego would be better served by a dose of reality.

There is a saying that we all can heed: "We have met the enemy and he is us."

The point is that my hometown of Plattsburgh is booming-- thanks to Canadians from Quebec. They line up for hours at the Champlain Border Crossing to take advantage of cheaper prices and better quality goods. The Americans are not responsible for the footdragging of Canada in the competitive world market, but there are a growing number of Americans who have enough business sense to recognize the fact and take advantage of it.

When many Canadians "buy Canadian," they buy it as it is found exported to the States-- and they get it there CHEAPER! The same is true for every border town or city from British Columbia to New Brunswick.

Plattsburgh is becoming a shopping-and-vacation-mecca for Montreal. In fact, Plattsburgh is currently listed as one of the nicest places in the United States to live. At the current rate, it won't be for long--it is becoming a suburb of Montreal.

Plattsburgh is mushrooming with condos, more shopping malls, more businesses, more jobs, more people, more everything. There are beautiful schools and hospitals with ALL the essentials AND all of the "frills."

My parents now live in the quiet, historic village of Chazy --a few miles from the border. It is in the throes of a painful awakening.

The nearby Lake Champlain shore property is being bought up by a new wave of Canadians, not ones who come there to settle, but who come there for profit, speculation, or for vacation.

Absentee ownership of valuable property is on the rise, tax assessments are sky-rocketing, the local people can't afford to live there any more. One farmer said it: "This year I'm growing corn, hay, and building lots. Next year, building lots."

A growing number of local people are scared. Their traditions, their way of life, their identity is being overwhelmed by the Canadians. Chazy is becoming one of those commuter "bedroom" communities with transient tenants.

Every mile (pardon, kilometre) of the Trans-Canada from Toronto to the Quebec-New Brunswick border bespeaks booming, bursting prosperity. But there is also a sense that what you are seeing is not quite as it seems. Upstate rumours are buzzing about the soaring rates of business bankruptcies in Ontario and Quebec. It makes some New Yorkers nervous--because they have learned to recognize the symptoms of yet another wave of Canadian buying-- how much ownership and control of Upstate businesses can New Yorkers afford to give up?

Canadian investment is changing the face of Upstate New York, and even the central part of the State. Scared residents of some resort communities have put a moratorium on further development. But let's not stop there. Let's admit it: there is vastly increasing investment by Canadians all over the United States.

If Maritimers are paranoid about being forced to be part of the good ole U. S. of A., there is an answering paranoia in the Northeast that it will be swallowed whole by the "Canucks."

Any traveller can see the contrast of the Maritimes to Central Canada. After the New Brunswick border, it's a different world. A few prosperous farms are visible from the Trans-Canada, but as you go east, most homes are smaller, less prosperous; there are more and more derelict houses, run-down farms, shabby business sections in small cities, and, those awful cracker-box-flat-roofed schools that leak. There is more than a bleak hint of economic depression, stagnation.

Why? It's not so far, after all, not with modern travel. One day by car, one hour by plane.

Somewhere in this experience are lessons not quite grasped yet.

If Canadians had the foresight and patriotism to invest growth capital in the Maritimes, perhaps we could be sharing an economic boom instead of a crash. Perhaps we would be worrying about maintaining our rural identity rather than survival from pogey to pogey.

In *Cry the Beloved Country*, Alan Paton cried out for South Africa. Many here are crying out now, for our young Canada is either going to be forced to grow up as a nation, or dissolve in regional disunity and economic failure. We need the kind of patriotism it takes for Canadians to invest in the future of Canada. Otherwise, we may become victims of our own particular brand of self-imposed apartheid.

"A house divided against itself cannot stand." said Lincoln in 1858. He echoed the Gospel of Mark, very old words, but ones freshly relevant to Canada.

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