

St. Pierre Aux Bouleaux – French Settlement 1858-1861 by Rev. Auguste Wassereau



A log cabin belonging to Jean-Baptiste Ducharme, (perhaps similar to this one built in 1861 by Pierre Cantin) was initially used as the church and school house.

1858 – 1861, 1874 Parish Update

This history of St. Peter's Parish, French Settlement was handwritten in the back of a small black journal, stored in a box of other journals, in an upstairs room at St. Peter's, Goderich rectory. The front half of the journal was empty and the history was recorded at the back.

The document was signed by Rev. Auguste Wassereau. The last part of the document was written in 1874 and possibly added by Rev. Murphy.

As of 2017 the original journal is not at the Diocesan Archives in London but may still be at St. Peter's Rectory in Goderich. While doing research, this information was copied by hand, by Elaine (Jeffrey) Coxon, then transcribed and translated in 2017.

St. Peter of the Birch Trees - French Settlement

1858- 1861 by Rev. A. Wassereau

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1858

Upon my arrival in the congregation of French Settlement, as commonly known, under the name of St. Peter of the Birch Trees, the congregation administered by me during the first 3 months every fortnight by the orders of his greatness the Bishop of London was in the most discouraging conditions. Three years before my arrival in this congregation, this congregation was administered by the Rev. M. Moncoq, a French priest, of regrettable memory, lost his life on his way to see someone who was sick. Forced to travel during the winter on an imperfectly frozen river to see the patient in question, the ice (it must be presumed) regrettably gave way under his feet.

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Mr. Moncoq was drowned. His body was found (only a few days later) one side of his body (this is not true is written on original) was caught in the ice and formed a compact form with the latter..... Nequiesat in pace / Rest in Peace

The so-called St. Pierre aux Bouleaux congregation had previously been administered by (Rev.) Mr. Pierre Schneider, missionary priest of the Goderich mission. Following the arrival of Rev. Mr. Moncoq in this part of Canada, this part of Goderich's mission was ceded by the Bishop of Toronto, to Mr. Moncoq, who for two years administered the congregation of French settlement with the greatest of zeal and utmost devotion.

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The congregation of French settlement upon Rev. Mr. Moncoq's arrival had no church. Mass was said in the school house. However, this place was too small to contain the population of the French Settlement and surrounding area, and a plan was designed to build a church in the said congregation. It was the year 1853 that Rev. Mr. Moncoq began to gather the materials to build the said church. His death, hindered the work and the responsibility of the construction was left to the trustees Baptiste Ducharme, J. B. Lémissier and Donat. Given the more or less favorable circumstances, the trustees were obliged to contribute their own money to pay for the work that had been done, and this led to "_____ in bad faith"

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of the inhabitants who refused to pay the full amount of their subscription under the pretext [of the desired conditions ?] The church as I found it when I arrived in the mission was a building of 55' in length and 36 feet in width. The gallery that was to be built according to a plan was cancelled. Its windows were not yet finished and were closed with planks that did not allow wind, snow and rain to enter the church. The church had no altar and possessed none of the objects necessary for worship. The church would have remained in this state of stagnation for many years if this mission had not been regularly administered. Its inhabitants didn't see the priest except on only very

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rare intervals (added by someone ... He forgot that this church was built by the good Father P. Schneider) and did not make any attempt to finish their church.

For the reader's information it is worth saying that when the Rev. Mr. Moncoq arrived in this congregation, which formed one of the congregations of his mission of 60 miles in length, the Rev. Mr. Moncoq, said to have arrived in 1853 in this congregation to which he was appointed administrator, visited it in 1853 every month, then in the year 1854 due to circumstances had visited it only 3 or 4 times during the year when his death occurred.

Finally after the death of Rev. Mr. Moncoq happened as we said above in circumstances that were unfortunate, the congregation of Pointe aux Bouleaux was again under the direction of

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Rev. Pierre Schneider, who, in view of the excessive size of his Goderich mission, could not visit it as often as he wished. Also the need for an assistant was necessary. The Rev. Pierre Schneider, convinced of this necessity, asked the Bishop for an assistant who promised him one as soon as he had one at his disposal. His Greatness did this by sending to Goderich, Rev. Mr. Jehan followed by the Rev. Aug. Wassereau. Finally towards the end of the year 1857 the Bishop of London sent (as vicar) to the mission of Goderich the Rev. Mr. Jehan as Assistant to Rev. Pierre Schneider pending the arrival in the mission of Goderich, the Rev. Auguste Wassereau, a French priest of the diocese.

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of Nancy (Meurthe) [France]

The Rev. Mr. Jehan during his one-month stay in Goderich's mission could only visit the congregation of the Point once and during the middle of his stay there he made a subscription amounting to about 20 dollars to finish the church. The 20 dollars he received from the inhabitants on account of their subscription, was used to lay the floor of the nave, the choir and to build the foot of the altar. Mr. Jehan left Goderich's mission and was replaced by Rev. Auguste Wassereau ordained a priest on the 8th of October 1853. The Rev. Auguste Wassereau did not arrive in Goderich's mission until the 29th of November 1857. Two days later on New Year's day he went to the congregation of Pointe aux Bouleaux, which was described as above by the pastor, Father P. Schneider.

The Rev. Auguste Wassereau managed Pointe aux Bouleaux during all of the year 1858. He visited the Pointe every 15 days, his first three months and then after, by the order of his greatness the Bishop of London, he visited it only once a month, the exercise of his ministry being required in other congregations of Goderich's mission [where he was vicar, P. Schneider PP]

During the year 1858, the Rev. Auguste Wassereau made every effort to finish the church but in vain because the poverty of the inhabitants did not allow him to find the necessary funds.

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During that same year, he tried to build a presbytery; several blocks had already been brought to the church grounds, but due to untimely circumstances, he again found his project stopped.

Auguste Wassereau ptr. (his signature)

Year 1859

In the month of 7^{bre} 1859 the Rev. Auguste Wassereau had the altar built as it is now. In the month of 8^{bre} Mr. Blattner, a German of the Pointe offered to finish the choir.

All materials were already repaired, the choir and four windows were already lathed and finished. But the choir arcade ?loft? made by

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Mr. Blattner had to be removed because it was rotten and disfigured the choir and then a month later, after the trustees heard, the following provisions were made.

Note: Before going over and in order to provide more order, the Rev. Auguste Wassereau would like to let you know that when he arrived at the Mission of the Point, the church had no ornaments, no ciborium, chalice, missal, monstrance, etc. and that all the objects mentioned above are the property of Rev. Auguste Wassereau who received them from France from his parents and friends.

Baptiste X Ducharme Charles X Donat
Henry X Mayoux

That said, we move on to the contract which was passed on the 1st of 8^{bre}
1859 by the

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Rev. Auguste Wassereau of which here is an excerpt.

The 1st 8^{bre} of 1859, between the Misters (Sieurs) Henry Mayoux, Charles Donat and Baptiste Ducharmes (sic) on the one hand and the Misters (Sieurs) Jean Nicolas Heric and Victor Heric on the other hand adopted the following conventions:

Know that:

1. Windows: there will be 3 windows placed on each side of the church. [The front of the church at the height of the rostrum to the church workers has to use windows capable of service and judged such by the workers in question??.] The rest of the windows to be built on the same model as the windows built in the choir.

2. Door: The church will contain only one door that will be placed in the middle of the

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front of the church. This door will be placed in the middle. This door must be 8 feet tall without a window above the door.

3. Gallery: the old plan of the gallery has been repealed and the following provisions have been adopted

Know that:

The gallery that was to be above the altar and on each side of the church will not survive. The one and only gallery required will have to be built over the main door and furnished with benches.

The stairs to the gallery will be built in the right corner of the church facade. The steps of the staircase should be spiral?

4. Benches: the **nave?** must contain three rows, containing four rows of benches.

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These benches will be without doors (?). The number of benches to be built should be proportionate to the length and width of the church.

5. Choir: The choir arcade will be removed and will not be replaced.

In the interior of the choir will be a bench arranged so as to provide sufficient space for the cantors. This bench for the cantors must be placed to the left of the altar. To the right of the altar another bench sufficient for the priest and his servants must be built in front of the bench of the cantors.

6. Balustrades/Railings: the balustrades/railings must be made on the same model as those of Goderich, with the exception that in the middle of the balustrade/railing must be a double door with small

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hooks to attach the communion tablecloth.

7. The church cornice must be finished and repaired as well as the cover. The vault of the interior of the church will be made of planks and painted. All except the outside of the church must be painted and the interior except the ceiling of the nave must be plaster.

The conditions set out above must be executed from point to point and the work executed in good and due form.

On these conditions we subscribe to the above appointed gentlemen with the following provisions.

Know that:

Misters? Henry Mayoux, Charles Donat, Baptiste Ducharmes undertake to pay the Misters Jean Nicolas Heric and Victor Heric the sum of 450 dollars which will have to

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be paid in the following way:

Know that:

150 dollars must be paid before the 1st of January, 1860, the rest of the sum due to be paid with the money from the proceeds of the sale of the benches.

We have faith that we have signed this note to serve the testimony?.

Done in duplicate at Hay on the 1st 8^{bre} of 1859

Signed

Baptiste Ducharmes, Charles Donat

Henry Mayoux, Victor Heric, Jean N. Heric

Money received for the church

Regis Aiotte	20c
Xavier Aubin	25c
Louis Desnomé	3.00
Henry Campbell	1.00
Pierre Mafs	2.00
Thomas Long	2.00
Patrick Cryan	2.00
Norbert Desnome	1.50
Mrs. Long	1.00
Urgele Desnomé	2.50
Charles Donat	1.50
Henry Mayoux	2.00
Christophe Ducharmes ...	2.00
Basil Durand	1.00

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Joseph Belair 50c
Joseph Bouché 1.00
Joseph Chopin 4.00
Francois Papillon 2.00
Joseph Bouché 2.80
Xavier Mayoux 1.25
Stopped the account on 5 Xbre 1859 33?

Paid to the carpenter: 33

On the 14th of November 1859, the money of the subscription was collected and the amount of this collection amounted to the sum of 7 dollars and 81 cents, namely

Charles Donat 50c
Basil Durand 2.00
Antoine Lence? 4.00
J.B. Papillon 1.31
7.81

Pay the carpenter 33? + 7.81 = 20.81 7.81

On the 15th of November, 1859, a terrible misfortune came to throw the inhabitants of The Pointe in the greatest consternation. On the day of the 15th at noon while the workers were busy taking their meals, the church became engulfed in flames.

Before anyone could bring some

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relief, the church was no more than an immense blaze.

The loss was huge because nothing could be saved. The workers lost all their tools and the Rev. Auguste Wassereau regretted the loss of 3 ornaments, a missel: aubes?, 3 surplices, a crucifix, altar cloths ... etc.

On January 1, 1860, a meeting was held to provide for the construction of a new brick church. The result of the deliberations was satisfactory. The clay can be found on the church ground; the stones for the foundation may be within a short distance of the church grounds. The inhabitants generally agreed to subscribe the sum of 2 to 15 dollars. Then they agreed to each give a few days of work and to be divided

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In groups of 10 men and a supervisor.

This is how the meeting ended on January 1, 1860.

During the month of January the trustees arranged to have the stones for the foundation of the new church brought to the church grounds. The inhabitants willingly volunteered their time. All stones (about 12 cords worth) were transported to the church grounds.

The number of days of work given by the inhabitants of the Point for the construction of the church will be exactly and accurately counted in this book.

The inhabitants mentioned below each gave a day's work. If there were some who spent more than one day, the number of days will be indicated.

[scan 0053] pg. 19

- 1 Charles Donat
 2. Olivier Hétu
 3. Prosper Tessier
 4. Paul Généreux
 5. Pierre Piette
 6. Kind Desrosier
 7. Narcissus Mousseau
 8. François Papillon
 9. Baptiste Bouché
 10. Baptiste Ducharme
 11. Joseph Ducharme
 12. Louis Desnomé
 13. Antoine Cantin
 14. Daniel Ducharme (1/2 day)
 15. Grégoire Graton (1 day 1/2)
 16. Elie Ducharme
 17. Pierre Matz (1/2 day)
 18. Pascal Charrette
- End of the year 1859

1860

During the year 1860, several proposals were made in relation to the building of the church:

The notes amounted no higher than the sum of 200 dollars, it was necessary to give up building the brick church in bricks, due to lack of resources.

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The affairs of the church are very much in the status quo until the arrival of his greatness Monseigneur Pinsonneault, bishop of Sandwich, who, seeing the poverty of people living in the congregation promised an effective relief. Father Schneider also offered to help us and help by giving some of his own money.

In the month of December part of the stones needed for the construction of the church were carried to the church grounds. The sand and lime will have to be transported at a more favorable time.

Nothing memorable happened in the congregation throughout the rest of the year. The inhabitants encouraged by the promises of Monsignor and Father Schneider showed goodwill and hope

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that the church will be constructed in the course of the year 1861.

God willing to help us !!!!

Amen.....

Amen.....

End of the year 1860

1861

Property of the church

Altar Tablecloths 2

Candlesticks 4

Altar stone 1

Flat Burettes -

Purifications -

Table 1

Checkout 1

Bells 1

The establishment and the Benediction

St. Joseph's Chapel Road stations caucus en credit infracriptus I do not have to call me strength commupionis al Illrño the Reverend. Dño. John Walsh. Epo in London on November 26 to 1874, became a way of the cross in the chapel Soi 5 or S Joseph, with all the privileges and rules established by the indulgentus juxtra

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S.C. Indulgentianum outlaws as the first day of December ejudem years he practiced Genedixisse and saved.

In faith testimony his own hand, signed on 3 December, 1874

J. Bruyere e.g.

(The Latin didn't translate well in Google or what I copied wasn't accurate)