

EARLY HISTORY of HOULTON

CHAPTER SIX

Reprinted verbatim in the exact form in which it appeared in the Aroostook Pioneer, June 22, 1858, from the pen of Joshua Kendall.—Ed.

The inhabitants of Houlton retaining the puritan character, duly estimating the advantages of early mental culture, procured a room or a school in the house of Joseph Foulton, Esq., and employed Samuel Kendall, Jr., as their first teacher.

Sept. 7, 1814, Dea. Samuel Kendall and family left New Salem for Houlton, accompanied by Edwin Townsend. It being in time of war we came by land, with wagons, to Bangor. On our passage, in many places, we met families removing from Maine, in wagons, drawn by four and six oxen, plodding their way patiently along, where their heavy-loaded teams had beaten the roads, in many sections, to one common mortar; all bound for Ohio. Many of them disposed of their property at great sacrifice, leaving their now fertile lands and comfortable homes, venturing their lives upon a hazardous enterprise, without even previously making a provision. So great was the rush to Ohio, that the taverns were crowded with emigrants, who on inquiry learning that we were bound for the eastward, their attention was at once arrested, and the interrogatories to which we were subjected, were marshalled with the scrutiny of an inquisition.

They exclaimed to us, "You are wrong — what! going into the wilds of the interior of Me.? the very jumping off place of all Creations!" After listening to their unqualified salutations, we must confess we felt some twitching qualms of conscience that our father did not accept the offer of his nephew, James Prentiss of Boston, who said he would give him all the land himself and sons could improve in the State of Kentucky if he would come there; but, in the Province of God, our destiny was in Aroostook. However, not long after these families whom we met, reached their destination in Ohio, we were credibly informed that many of them were attacked with the fever, and sighed for the salutary air of New England; yea, could have been glad had they never left Maine.

But, to pursue our journey, we sold our horses and wagons at Bangor, and proceeded on foot, with the beauty of the surrounding scenery, in the stillness of a clear October moonlight; the elm, here and there, with its bending top, though recently shorn of its foliage, still appeared as if planned by the hand of art; and the banks elevated to secure the table-lands from freshet tides, with shrubbery enough to give it the appearance of a tastefully cultivated garden; where the autumnal leaf, in its golden hue, carpeted the spongy surface, and fringed the alluvial shore. From the Mattawamkeag, we came to the Baskahegan, where, at the falls we caught a supply of the largest, fattest trout we ever saw. Whence we followed the stream to the portage at Schoodic lake, where we tarried for the night. It being late, old Matannis went astray, and it was quite dark before he found the company.

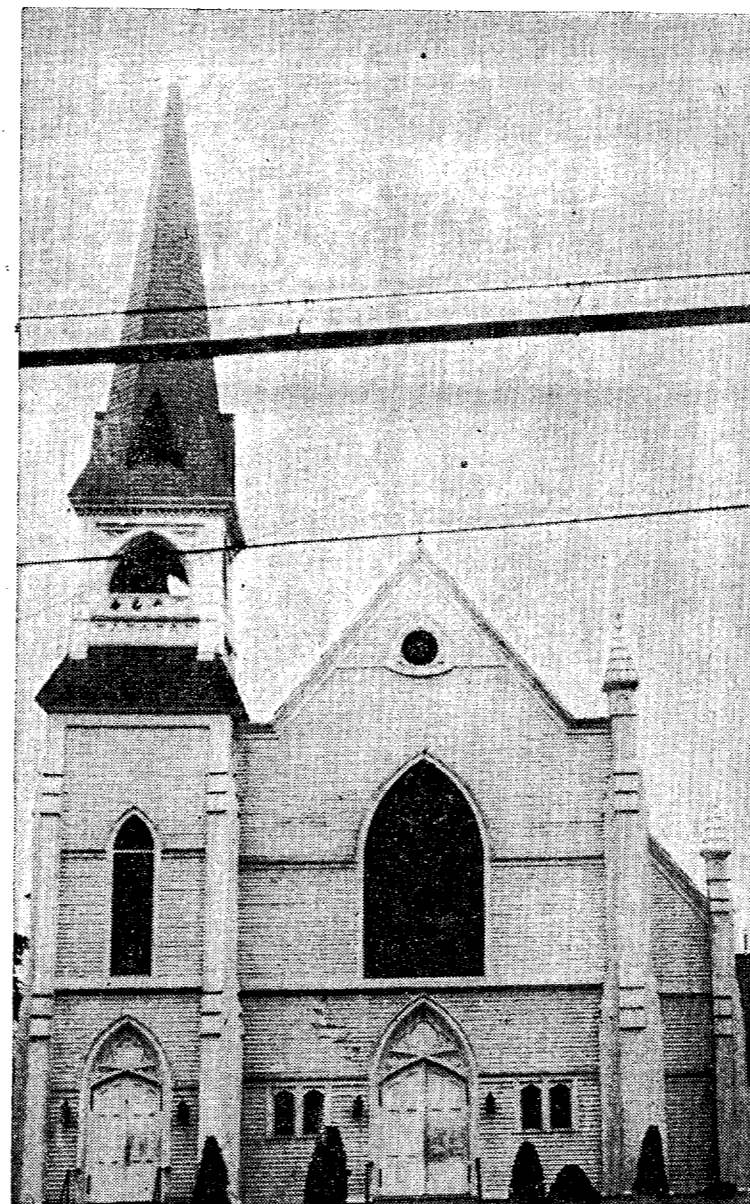
years of age, gave us a specimen of the Indian dance, shaking his shot-horn and singing in a varied, guttural tone, el-ba-took-took-take-take-moah, repeating these (to us unmeaning) monosyllables, hopping up and down, alternating on each foot, his body inclining forward, with projecting elbows which gave him a most ludicrous appearance, until from this monotonous gamboling he became exhausted, then he would close his fandango, with hue-cha! on a high key note. Old Matannis was a brawny, clear-blooded aboriginal, who, though not so much of a comedian, yet sustained his part to admiration, while the other Indians appeared equally to enjoy the comic repast. Pecopold was distinguished for vivacity, intrepidity, symmetry of form and manly beauty. He came in the same bark with the writer, and we believe the history of the same Pacopold has recently been published, whose life, if carried out as commenced, must prove a fit subject for a romance.

On the first night after leaving Old Town, we stopped at the home of Silas Wheeler, who received us kindly. Our lodging consisted of a field bed which covered the floor and somewhat crowded at that. In the morning we pushed our heavy laden barks up the smooth waters of the Penobscot, taking our lunch at 12 o'clock, before a fire which the Indians made for boiling the tea; we were soon underway with our pilot ahead, with sturdy hands our paddles measured with equal pace, until the sun cast the long shadow from the superb elm from the island to shore which warned us to prepare for the night; when we arrived at a Mr. Haynes', whose sequestered cabin stood a few rods from the river, as we ascended its western bank, we were cordially received. After an early breakfast we left our hospitable friends, who were the uppermost settlers on the river, and worked our way a day's journey onward, where, on the eastern bank, we landed our frail craft, and made our bed of boughs before a crackling fire, by which we, with keen appetite, partook of our simple fare, and lay down, particularly bidding adieu to

ed with the beauty of the surrounding scenery, in the stillness of a clear October moonlight; the elm, here and there, with its bending top, though recently shorn of its foliage, still appeared as if planned by the hand of art; and the banks elevated to secure the table-lands from freshet tides, with shrubbery enough to give it the appearance of a tastefully cultivated garden; where the autumnal leaf, in its golden hue, carpeted the spongy surface, and fringed the alluvial shore. From the Mattawamkeag, we came to the Baskahegan, where, at the falls we caught a supply of the largest, fattest trout we ever saw. Whence we followed the stream to the portage at Schoodic lake, where we tarried for the night. It being late, old Matannis went astray, and it was quite dark before he found the company.

Pelop asked what he would have done if he had not found the camp, he said, "Oh, spoze me starve three days, then eatum sable," as if by that time nothing would come amiss. In the morning, having carried our canoes and baggage to the western shore, we launched our flotilla in the waters of the limpid lake, which then, to us outlanders, appeared rather oceanic. In the afternoon we encountered a squall, that beat against our frail bark, occasionally dashing over the gunwale upon us; at times we feared the boats would fill and sink with their valuable freight, but we ventured to follow our pilot, one after another in true Indian file. It is astonishing to see with what dexterity the Indians control their canoes, propelling them so steadily and safely against the surging waves and the whirling, foaming current. From the lake we passed down Eel river to the carrying place, as it is called, to the St. John, where we were obliged to lug our baggage four or five miles dodging along the windings of a bridle path. After six weeks journeying through the country, up rivers and over lakes we arrived at Houlton, happy to see our friends and neighbors, who met us with affectionate salutations. Truly thankful were we to HIM who guided our footsteps and led us gently through this laborious and perilous journey, and safely landed us at our long sought, anticipated home.

Mr. J. H. Clough informs us that it is 56 years ago this summer since he came to Houlton. He was 21 years of age and at that time there were only two stores in



Although the parish of St. Mary's of the Visitation was organized in Houlton in 1828, it was not until 60 years later, in 1888 that the edifice from which this church was developed, was completed and dedicated.

Priest Came From Eastport To Celebrate First Mass In St. Mary's Church In Houlton

The first historic beginnings of the Catholic Parish in Houlton, called St. Mary's of the Visitation, had their origin in the year 1828.

In June of that year there were but five Catholic families in the young village of Houlton, far too few to support a priest and a church of their own.

Yet the need for the ministrations of the Holy Church made itself so keenly felt on that small group as well as on some of the same faith quest

We are deeply indebted to Rev. Michael F. Tierney from whose small but complete volume entitled "A Brief History

Rev. Luke Bartley who stayed here until his death in 1879.

He was described as a man who was held in the highest esteem by his parishioners and respected throughout the community. His remains lie at the westerly side of the front entrance to the church and a marble monument erected in his memory stands just off the westerly driveway.

Then came Father Denis Ryan, to remain until 1882 and Father Cornelius Sullivan to stay until his transfer to Machias late in 1885.

A CRITICAL TIME

It was at this point in the life of St. Mary's Church of the Visitation that Father William Lonergan moved into the Pastorate. Before he left it 15 years later, he left his stamp indelibly upon it as well as on the entire community.

A native of Ireland, he received his collegiate education in England, later, after completing his classical studies, going to the Franciscan College in Ghent, Belgium, where he was ordained to the priesthood. There followed ten years of labor in the missions of England and Scotland before he came to the United States and to Houlton, Maine.

It was a critical time for St. Mary's parish. The congregation had outgrown the old church. A larger Edifice was sorely needed. Father Lonergan proved himself equal to this challenge.

On Wednesday, July 11, 1888, a beautiful new Catholic Church of St. Marys of the Visitation Parish in Houlton was dedicated, the ceremony being performed by Rev. Bishop Healy, assisted by Rev. P. H. Healy, S. J. Fathers Canning, Gorman, Bradley, Murry, Doyle and Chapman.

The solemn and impressive ceremony began by the singing of Psalms, while a procession, headed by the Bishop and clergy, marched around the exterior of the church performing the exterior dedicatory service. Entering the church the Bishop and the clergy proceeded to the sanctuary, where the ceremony was continued.

ELOQUENT DISCOURSE

At the solemn High Mass, Rev. E. Doyle of Milltown, N. B., was Celebrant; Rev. Fr. Gorman of Brunswick, Deacon; Rev. Father Chapman, Sub-Deacon. After the gospel, the Rev. Fr. Canning of Exeter, N. H., delivered an eloquent discourse, which was listened to by a large and appreciative

such a costly edifice in such a short time.

And so, the church in which the parish now worships, the lovely Haig and Hastings pipe organ that stands at the rear, are monuments to the memory of Father Lonergan and to his untiring energy. He also had a hand in other changes. He moved the building that was to become St. Mary's Rectory, to its present site and caused considerable remodeling to make of it a new parochial residence.

As his early training might indicate, he was a linguist of considerable ability, speaking five languages fluently. He also was described as a fine theologian and a lover of good music. He found time to organize a choir of the best voices in the community, irrespective of creed.

LEAVES INDELIBLE MARK

Father Lonergan was transferred from Houlton in 1901, having left an indelible mark in the entire town during his stay here. He was succeeded by Father Jeremiah McCarthy who remained seven years. A lovable character and a great priest, he so endeared himself to his parishioners that, when he arose one Sunday morning to announce his promotion to the pastorate of St. Mary's Church in Bangor, it was reported that the entire congregation was in tears.

The Aroostook Pioneer in its issue of January 30, 1907, reported that, "Rev. Father McCarthy surprised his congregation at St. Mary's Catholic Church last Sunday when he announced that that would be his last Sunday with them. The work here has been very hard for him and his health

has broken down under the strain. During his stay in Houlton Father McCarthy has endeared himself to all of his parishioners and has proven himself to be one of the best of his calling. Outside of his parish he has made a host of friends by this thoughtful and considerate manner and his removal from Houlton will be a distinct loss to the town. He goes from Houlton to Bangor where he has accepted a permanent charge".

In 1908 Father John Manning came to Houlton from Fort Fairfield's St. Denis Church over which he had presided for 30 years. His was a brief and ill-fated tenure. He was taken ill soon after he arrived here and required the assistance of several curates before his death in 1910.

The Aroostook Pioneer carried this item in its issue of February 27, 1908: "The Rev. Father Manning of St. Mary's Catholic Church is considerably improved this week. By advice of his attending physician Fr. Manning will leave for Florida next week where he will take a much needed rest. Rev. Fr. Hogan of Orono will have charge of the parish."

FATHER P. M. SILKE

In that same year, June 15th, there began the longest occupancy of any priest of St. Mary's Parish when Rev. Patrick M. Silke arrived here to spend the next 23 years of his priestly life in this community and what a contribution he made in that time!

He was responsible for many improvements within the parish. The first of his accomplishments was the establishment of St. Mary's Academy on Water street which opened its doors in August,

IVEY'S RADIO CABS



EXTENDS ITS BEST WISHES TO THE RESIDENTS OF HOULTON

But, to pursue our journey, we sold our horses and wagons at Bangor, where we arrived ten days after it was besieged by the British. The vessels then being built were burned on the stocks, the buildings here and there were perforated with grape shot and shattered, the academy windows broken, and the place though but a village, presented the habiliments of mourning. The children, as if unconscious of their devastated homes, were at play in the streets with the cannon balls.

At Old Town, twelve miles above Bangor, we hired seven men, five of whom were Indians, with birch bark canoes, to convey the family and goods, accompanied by Messrs Marshall and Butterfield, making five loaded canoes, all bound for the river St. John. We had what might be called a social time. Lamping out at nights was a novel thing to us, and an Indian, we had never seen before; and they were rather frolicsome though we gave them no stimulant to excite them. They were joking and singing with the playfulness and innocence of children. Young Pecopold, about 18

our simple fare, and lay down, particularly bidding adieu to surrounding objects. Somnus presiding over our motley group until the day star rose, when, with eager haste we prepared our frugal meal of which we all ate with thankful hearts and, loading our canoes, we resumed our onward course. After a fatiguing day, forcing our way against a strong current, we arrived at what was called Gordan's falls, on the Mattawamkeag, where we stopped for the night, under an old roof, the rafters of which stood on the ground, expecting to find more ample accommodations than where we had no shelter, save the forest and the broad blue canopy of Heaven, but to our utter disappointment, we were annoyed all night by myriads of insects, which, for the time being, were as bad, or worse, than the ten Plagues of Egypt. The next morning, after a sleepless night, and I might say restless night, we poked our way along, following the meanderings of the Mattawamkeag, every now and then losing our whereabouts, from the perpetual windings of the dead waters, but were delight-

time there were only two stores in town (or plantation as it then was); they were located on the hill, and were carried on by Shepard Cary and James Houlton. There were none at the creek village, where the principal business is now done. Mr. Clough states that William Cook is the only unmarried man living, who was here when he first came to Houlton, and of the married men there is not one remaining.—Aroostook Times, June 14, 1888.

Mr. W. S. Perks' new dwelling house at the corner of Main and Winter streets has been recently completed and is now occupied by the family. It is of Queen Ann order of architecture, two stories in height and with slate roof. The carpenter work was done by John Chadwick, the brick and stone work by Carpenter & Cogan, the painting and papering by John Young and the beautiful frescoing by Frank H. Anderson, the plumbing and steam fitting by John Watson.—Aroostook Times, March 14, 1889.

some of the same faith quartered at Hancock Barracks, that Brigadier General Brady, USA, stationed there, sent out a request that a priest be sent to the then isolated community of Houlton for the purpose of celebrating Mass for the tiny parish.

PRIEST FROM EASTPORT

Responding in June of that year was Father MacMahon of Eastport who made the long journey to celebrate the first Mass in the town of Houlton, a service he was destined to perform on several occasions after that time.

But it was 11 years later, in 1839, oddly enough, the same year as the founding of Aroostook County, that the small flock here, then grown to some 30 families, had its own priest and had laid the foundation and boarded in the first St. Mary's Church of the Visitation in Houlton.

Prior to that time the members of the parish had been obliged to congregate at the home of Jeremiah Mullen whenever a traveling priest happened to make his way to Houlton. As their numbers grew, the Mullen home soon became too small to accommodate the growing flock. The next move was to a hall above the Mullen store until such time as they could have their own priest and erect their own church.

FIRST RESIDENT PRIEST

In response to a request from the congregation, sent to the then Bishop of Boston, for a resident priest to minister to its spiritual needs, Father Manasses Dougherty was sent to Houlton and became the first priest of this parish.

A man of energy and determination, Father Dougherty immediately set himself to the task of building a church. Cooperation from his congregation was prompt and wholehearted. A lady named Mrs. Collins Whitaker volunteered to collect needed funds; a Mrs. John Hodgdon gave largely of her time and money to the project; the soldiers at the Garrison also contributed by giving generously. The work progressed rapidly.

Offers to haul rocks required for the foundation came from Anthony Mullen, Francis Bird and James McKenna, while John McGrorty and Michael Tobin volunteered to hew the frame.

The outcome of this energetic response to a call was that, at the end of the year 1839, the founda-

tion was laid and the frame of the new church was boarded in.

FIRST MASS IN NEW CHURCH

Father Manasses Dougherty presided over the congregation a little more than a year, when he was recalled to a parish in old Cambridge, Mass., where he remained until his death. He was succeeded by Father William Moran who came to Houlton in 1840. It fell to the lot of Father Moran to complete the task his predecessor had started and he began at once on the interior and had the honor of offering the first Mass in the new church.

When Father Moran was later recalled elsewhere, the Houlton parish was served for a time from neighboring Woodstock. Father Thomas Donnelly served the church for a few months in 1855. He was succeeded by Father Patrick McIver who came here from Ellicottville, N. Y. and remained here for six years.

Then came an interval, prior to the arrival of Father Daniel Murphy, to serve from 1859 to 1861, when St. Mary's parish here was again served by priests from the Woodstock Church.

A COLORFUL FIGURE

Father Murphy turned out to be the most colorful figure yet to be a part of St. Mary's parish. He was the oldest of four priest brothers, the youngest being Father John Murphy who erected St. Dominic's Church in Portland.

Father John Murphy was a man of great physical prowess, it being said of him that he filled with equal distinction the roles of a clergyman and a guardian of the law. It is also related of him that, on one Christmas Day, he drove a double team from Benedicta to Houlton, a distance of about 50 miles, and offered a Holy Mass in each place.

When one realizes the primitive state of the roads of those days and the fact that it was in winter, the real extent of this feat becomes awesome indeed.

Father Murphy was followed here by Father John Brady who remained in charge of the parish until March 30, 1870. Then came

ed to by a large and appreciative audience.

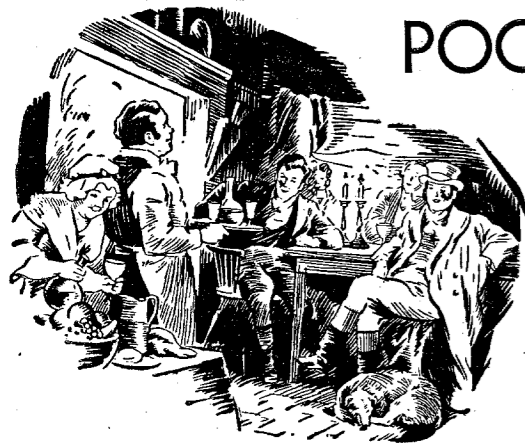
Appropriate and effective music was rendered by the church choir, conducted by Miss Hattie Madigan.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, Bishop Healy addressed the congregation congratulating them on the possession of the church which he declared to be the finest in his diocese and complimenting Rev. Fr. Lonergan on his zeal and success in erecting

GOOD LUCK
TO THE
HOULTON
PIONEER
TIMES
ON 100 YEARS
OF SERVICE

HOULTON
ON THIS THEIR
150th
BIRTHDAY

OFFICIAL "NORTHEAST AIRLINES" TAXI



POOR GRANDFATHER!

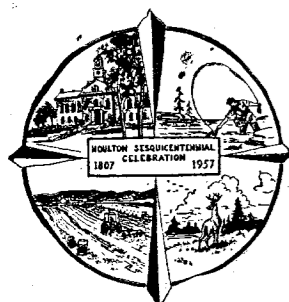
He lived too
Early ...
To Get a Chance
To Eat at the

HEYWOOD CAFE

Formerly Al's Food Shop

COURT ST.

HOULTON



CONGRATULATIONS HOULTON

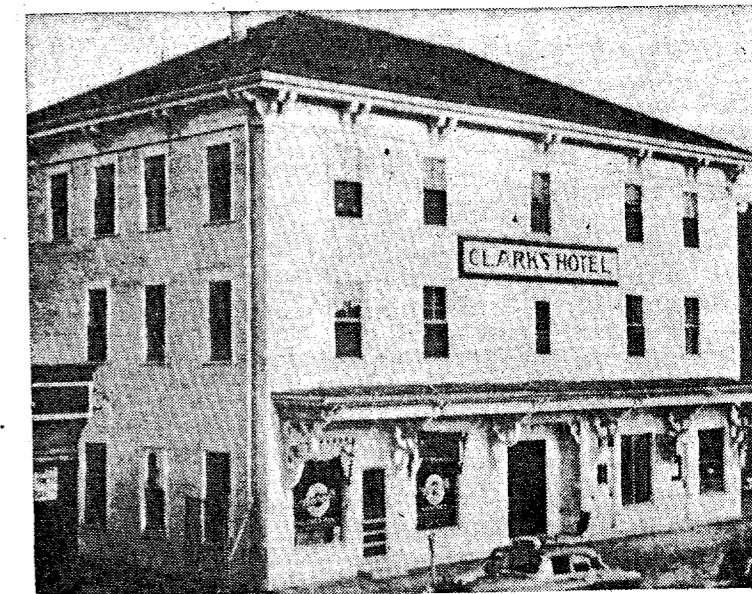
on your
150th BIRTHDAY

AND TO THE HOULTON
PIONEER TIMES ... GOOD

WISHES ON YOUR 100 YEARS OF SERVICE

... IF IT'S A SANDWICH OR A MEAL, EAT HERE

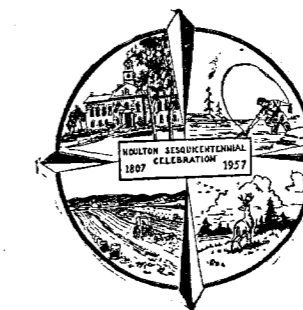
HOULTON, MAINE



CLARK'S HOTEL

... Long a landmark in the Houlton scene ... has been Clark's Hotel ... many a wayfarer taking advantage of an overnight stay on his way to the North ... or over to the Province. The patronage of these people has made the stay of Clark's Hotel on the Houlton scene ... a happy one for both Mrs. Grimm and myself ... and it's only fitting that we pause at this time to pay tribute to the town on its 150th Birthday.

OZZIE GRIMM



... and to the Houlton Pioneer Times for 100 years of service to Aroostook County ... a job well done.