



# Mission on Grape Island

By Rev. Richard Boehme

Illustrations  
by Steve Campbell

## INTRODUCTION

In 1966, two beautiful little islands rest peacefully and quietly in the waters of the Bay of Quinte near the mouth of Marsh Creek. Sawgun is now a farmer's field, connected to Huff Island by a causeway. Grape Island lies silent and alone all winter, but is awakened in the spring as one family comes to spend the summer months in their cottage there.

This is a striking contrast to 140 years ago when some 200 Indian men, women and children lived on Grape Island and cultivated Sawgun. These were Christian Indians who had moved to the islands under the auspices of the Methodist Church. The life of this Mission lasted only 10 years, but it was a decade of fascinating history.

## 1824

Although the establishment and settlement of the Grape Island Mission did not take place until 1826-27, its beginnings can be traced to the year 1824. In that year the first session of the Canada Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church was held in Hallowell (Picton), beginning August 25. William

Case was transferred from Upper Canada District to Bay Quinte as Presiding Elder, succeeding the rebellious Henry Ryan. Elder Case soon became personally involved with Indian mission work in this area. This was an involvement that lasted all his life.

## 1825

A second individual who had a lasting association with the Grape Island Mission was Peter Jones, the son of Augustus Jones, a Weishman, and Thubenannequay, daughter of an Ojibway chief. Converted at a Methodist camp meeting at Ancaster in June, 1823, he was befriended by William Case and became a missionary to his own people. The second session

of the Canada Conference was held in Saltfleet Township, Niagara District in 1825. The Canada Auxiliary Missionary Society presented its first annual report to Conference. Thomas Davis, a Monawk Chief, and Peter Jones addressed the assembly and "there was much joy among the brethren because a great and effectual door unto the heathen had been opened."

Impressed by the work at Grand River and concerned about the spiritual well-being of the Ojibways or Mississaugas in the Belleville and Kingston area, William Case enlisted Peter Jones' help. In a letter dated York, 4th December, 1825 he wrote to Peter Jones. "We are very desirous that you should make us a visit some time this winter or spring. There are a number of Ojibways at Belleville and the Bay Quinte, who would probably be profited as well as Mohawks."<sup>2</sup> Before the month was over, Peter Jones replied to this invitation.

Mission House, Grand River,  
Dec. 28th 1825.

Dear Brother, -- Yesterday I re-

ceived your letter of the 14th inst., and in answer, inform you that it gave me much satisfaction to hear from you, and of the opening prospects of doing the Indian tribes good in your District. I intend to visit you (if it be the will of Providence,) some time in February, that I may meet your wishes. I will endeavour to be down at one of your quarterly meetings...

I am your unworthy friend and brother  
Peter Jones.  
To the Rev. W. Case.<sup>3</sup>

Thus the stage was set for a fascinating decade of Methodist mission work in the Belleville area.

## 1826

True to his promise, Peter Jones, accompanied by Chief John Crane, left the Grand River January 31 or February 1, 1826 and headed toward the Bay of Quinte. They arrived in the village of Belleville on February 9 and had the good fortune to meet a young Indian, Peter Jacobs, who was being educated by some benevolent people. Quite likely it was Jacobs who let the other Indians of the area know about the arrival of the two Christian Indian Chiefs. Planning to return to Belleville later for an extensive period of work, Jones and Crane continued on the same day to the Tyendinaga settlement of Mohawks. Not confining themselves to work among the pagan Indians, the two travellers desired to preach their message to these Anglican Indians as well. Apparently Peter Jones did not have too high an opinion of the influence of the Church of England, for he remarked in his diary that "they (the Mohawks) appear ignorant of experimental religion, for they still drink and dance."<sup>4</sup>

Jones and Crane went on to Ernestown

where they met Elder Case and attended the quarterly meeting in Switzer's Chapel on Saturday and Sunday. Peter Jones spoke to the white people at these meetings and also addressed a congregation in Kingston Sunday evening. The next two days were spent contacting some of the Indians back of Kingston. Then Jones and Crane retraced their steps, holding meetings in Ernestown and in the Mohawk Woods, arriving back in Belleville on Friday, February 17.

That same day they met about twelve young Indian men and boys who had come thirty miles to see them. These Ojibways were ready to hear about Jesus Christ. The following three days were spent instructing the Indians and attending the Quarterly Meeting in Belleville. The message they tried to impress on these inquiring Indians was interesting. Elder Case asked Peter to tell them:

That we are all brothers by creation, that God was our Father, that he made one man at the first, and that all nations sprung from him; that the difference in our colour arose from circumstances, such as the climate and our mode of living; that the Great Spirit who made our first parents, was no respecter of persons, and that whatever he promised to one person he said to all nations; that all had a right to share in his love, and the blessings of His Gospel.<sup>5</sup> Messages such as this certainly pre-

1. A. Sutherland, *The Methodist Church & Missions*. Toronto, Dept. of Missionary Literature of the Methodist Church, Canada, 1906, p240.

2. Peter Jones, *Life and Journals of Kah-ke-wa-quo-na-by*, Toronto, Wesleyan Printing Establishment, 1860, p48.

3. *Ibid.*, p49.

4. Jones, *Journal*, p50.

5. Jones, *Journal*, p58.

pared the ground for later harvests. Two more Indians arrived on Sunday, having travelled some distance. One of these was John Sunday who was destined to become an important Christian leader of his people.

On February 21, 1826 the two Christian Chiefs left for their home on the Grand River. They took with them two Indian boys to attend school. Their stay had been short -- less than two weeks -- but apparently they decided "to leave the seed sown to vegetate, consigning it to Him who watches over the crop in the ground while the frosts of winter bind it, and the snows of winter cover it."<sup>6</sup>



After assisting the Indians of the Grand River to move to the new settlement at the Credit, Peter Jones visited Belleville again. Arriving on May 26, he began holding meetings with the Mississaugas of the area. It was soon ev-

ident that his earlier efforts and the interim work of local people made the Indians ready to hear more of the Gospel message. The day after his arrival he, the Rev. J. Reynolds, and some 50 Indians travelled by canoes across the Bay to the Hallowell Circuit for a Quarterly meeting. Several of the young Indians made their decision to become Christian at that meeting. Included in this group was John Sunday. Back in Belleville again, May 29 and 31 were a strange jumble for Peter Jones of instructing the Indians and searching for his lost horse! His "poor animal" was finally found several miles up the Moira River.

Wednesday, May 31, 1826 was a most significant day. At 2:00 p.m. the Mississaugas assembled in Belleville Methodist Church for the baptism of those who had been converted. Elder Case and Peter Jones both preached, explaining the meaning of baptism. Twenty-two adults received this sacrament. This solemn service was followed by a class meeting where 50 to 60 more Indians indicated their interest in becoming Christians.

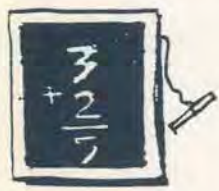
The message of the Gospel was indeed making rapid progress among the Bay of Quinte natives!

On June 1 they were gathered for prayer and after breakfast 11 children of the Christian Indians were baptised by Elder Case. Peter started for the Credit that morning, but before going he left this little flock some sound advice --- "not to neglect praying to the Good Spirit, to live in peace one with another, be industrious, and never more taste the fire waters." William Beaver and John Sunday were left in charge as class leaders.

Camp meetings were an important part of early Methodist life. George F. Playter gives an interesting description of the site for the Adolphustown Meeting in mid-June, 1826.<sup>8</sup> It was situated on Carnahan's Bay, west of Adolphustown, with a sweeping view of the Bay of Quinte. There was a good landing place for boats. A high fence enclosed the grounds to keep out unwelcome intruders. Nearby was "an overflowing spring of water, which running from a sandy soil was sweet and good." The whole area could be illuminated at night by burning pine on six foot high platforms. Those attending would pitch their tents in circles around the worshipping area. Such idyllic surroundings must surely have been conducive to truly meaningful religious experiences.

Filled with enthusiasm like all new converts, the Belleville Indians wanted to attend the Adolphustown Camp Meeting and they were encouraged to go by the ministers of the area. Most of the white people were already settled in when the Indian canoes approached the encampment, with the Mississauga Christians bringing their friends and relatives with them.

What a stirring sight it must have been as two ministers led a single file procession of 58 Indian men, women and children into the camp ground. As soon as they had laid down their provisions



6. John Carroll. Case and his Contemporaries. Toronto. Wesleyan Conference Office, 1871, vol. 3. p72.

7. Jones, Journal. pp68-69.

8. G.F. Playter. The History of Methodism in Canada. Toronto. W.P.E., 1862. p279.

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and camping equipment. "they all kneeled down and silently prayed for the blessing of the Great Spirit, to the surprise and increased delight of the pious whites".<sup>9</sup>

The Camp Meeting had a profound effect on the Mississaugas. Indians and whites met separately except for the preaching. William Beaver translated for the Indians. On the weekend, the meeting grew until there were three to four thousand people attending! On the Monday when the Sacraments were celebrated, another 21 Indian adults were baptized plus 10 children. In four short months this tribe had heard the Gospel for the first time, were stirred by its invitation and 43 adults and 21 children were baptized into the Christian faith.

The permanent settlement for the Grand River Indians at the Credit was proving such a success that Elder Case and other concerned Methodist leaders wished to provide similar advantages for the Belleville area Indians. They selected beautiful little Grape Island "on which to collect the Indians in order to bring the adults under religious influences and to instruct the children in the rudiments of an English education, hoping to induce them to abandon their nomadic habits and take to agricultural and mechanical pursuits".<sup>10</sup>

The Methodists leased Grape Island and the adjacent Sawgun Island from the Indians for the Indians. Apparently they felt that if the land was held on a long-term basis that they could expect more generous support from benevolent people

9. Playter, op.cit., p279.

10. T. Webster, History of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada, Hamilton, Canada Christian Advocate, 1870, p199.

and groups who would be more ready to give if they knew their help would have lasting value.

G.F. Playter in his book, History of Methodism in Canada, has recorded the legal transaction in full. The introductory paragraph and one or two other pertinent parts are worth quoting here.



THIS INDENTURE, made at Belleville, in the Midland District, of the Province of Upper Canada, the 16th day of October, in the year of our Lord (1826) between the chiefs, warriors

and Indians of the Mississauga tribe, of the one part, -- and John Reynolds, Benjamin Ketcheson, Pannel G. Seidon, James Bickford, and William Ross, all of the town of Belleville...<sup>11</sup>

In the Indenture, the nomadic life of the Indians is described with its resultant difficulties for education and religion. Because they desire a permanent settlement with church and school and on receipt of five shillings, the Indians agree to lease:

-- all that certain tract of land, situate in the township of Ameliasburgh, in the said district, being composed of a certain island in the Bay of Quinte, near the mouth of Marsh Creek, heretofore generally called and known by the name of Logrim's Island, containing by estimation 50 acres of land... a certain other island within described, and which is commonly called and known by the name of Grape Island, containing about 11 acres.<sup>12</sup>

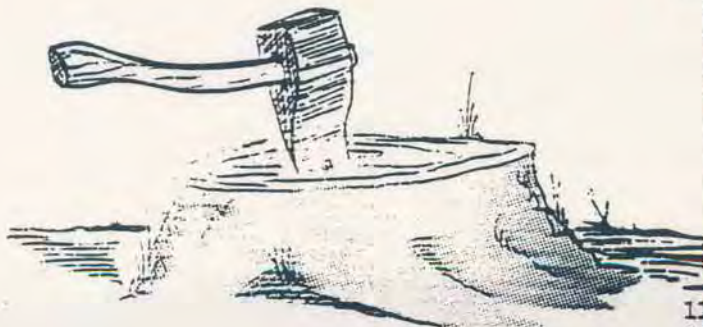
Included in the agreement was the right of the Indians to live on these islands without paying rent and an interesting conservation regulation that showed much foresight:

that they themselves shall not, neither shall they suffer or permit any other person or persons to cut down or destroy the trees or underwood of the said island, except so much as may be required to be cleared away for the purposes of cultivating the soil, or which may reasonably be required for building for ourselves, or for fencing our clearings.<sup>13</sup>

11. Playter, Methodism in Canada, p292.

12 Ibid. p293.

13. Playter, Methodism in Canada, p293.



On behalf of the Indians, the following signed the agreement: John Sunday, Wm. Beaver, Nelson Snake, John Simpson, Mitchell Snake, Jacob Musquashcum, Joseph Skunk, Paul Yawaseeng, Jacob Nawquashcum, John Sait, Isaac Skunk, Wm. Ross, Potto Skunk, Jacob Sheepegang, and James Snake. The whole was signed, sealed and delivered in the presence of Tobias Bleaker and Peter Jones.

The name Logrim's Island was probably given by an English surveyor. All modern maps label the island Sawgun, suggesting that it quickly reverted to its original Indian name of Sangeen. It will

be noted that a Wm. Ross signed the agreement for the whites and a Wm. Ross for the Indians! Apparently Wm. Ross of Belleville was a man highly respected by the Indians and so one of these was baptized in his name. The agreement also indicates that Peter Jones had visited Belleville for the third time that year.

Although the islands were not leased until October 16, 1826, some of the Mississaugas moved onto Grape Island that fall and spent the winter there in their bark wigwams. The main settlement of the island took place in 1827 however.

# 1827

The quiet months of winter on the island were spent in hunting and in learning about the new faith. Methodist Episcopal ministers from the area visited them when they could but the main work was left to Indian exhorters such as William Beaver. Scripture passages were taught by rote with the meaning simplified in order to be understood.

In January they all attended a several day meeting in the Belleville Methodist Church where they were given further basic Christian instruction. Before the year was over, Solomon Waldron was appointed as first missionary on Grape Island, and the little flock then had a trained leader to nurture and guide them.



In May, after the quiet of the winter, the island suddenly burst forth into a beehive of activity -- some land was broken and planted, buildings begun, Peter Jones arrived from Credit and the Indians of the Kingston area came to hear the Gospel preached.

Peter Jones arrived May 13 for his only visit to the Grape Island Mission in 1827. He stayed for 12 days and participated fully in the various on-going activities. He led in several services of worship and showed concern for the Indians from back of Kingston who were then on the island. The Mission House was under construction and Peter assisted Mr. Ross (possibly Wm. Ross of Belleville who had participated in the leasing of the two islands). The Belleville minister, Rev. W. Atwood, was over to the island and he and Peter Jones found time to go fishing, catching about 50 catfish.

On Sunday, May 20, in addition to the regular services, Peter conducted worship on Big Island at 5 p.m. for the whites. In his descriptive way, he wrote in his diary that "the congregation listened with attention, and a few tears were shed, but most of them appeared gospel-hardened!"<sup>14</sup>

According to G.F. Playter, the tribe numbered 130 and all the 90 adults were members of the Methodist Society. Indeed, on Wednesday, May 23, Elder Case conducted Holy Communion for about 90.

14. Jones, Journal, p84.

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In addition, he baptized 20 newly converted Indians. Probably these were from the Kingston group. Peter Jones worked all the next day and then left with Elder Case for a Quarterly Meeting at Cobourg. He wrote that he was "thankful to witness the progress these poor people have made, both in christianity and civilization".<sup>15</sup>

In July the first death occurred on the island. John Moses had been an exhorter who had worked among his people very effectively. Nearby Grave Island was an Indian burying ground, but it was probably used in the pre-Christian era. It is likely that Christians were buried right on the island, as skeletal remains have been found there.<sup>16</sup>

By July a building to be used as a school and meeting place had been erected. In a letter that Elder Case wrote to Zachariah Paddock of Rochester, N.Y. on October 15, 1827, he described it as "a house there for schools and meetings 25 x 30, with a room finished in the chamber for a bed and a study for the teacher."<sup>17</sup> Besides this building, there was a small parsonage completed and a number of homes for the Indians were under construction. "The Indians have ten houses 15 x 20 on the foundation, 7 of which are about to be completed."<sup>18</sup> These were loghouses, and before winter eight of them were shingled and enclosed.

Richard Pheips was living on the island now and he instructed the Indians in farming and other useful skills. Indians who a few short months earlier had been destitute now owned a team of oxen, three cows and farming tools besides lumber, nails, etc. for their homes. The amazing thing is that all this improvement was accomplished without drawing on the general funds of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The entire cost was met by private gifts from interested individuals in the United States and Upper Canada.

15 Ibid. p85.  
16. Interview with Frank Beinap, RR7 Belleville, by Richard Boenme.  
17. Carroll, Case & Contemporaries, p155.  
18. Ibid. p155

NEXT ISSUE: Part 2 of the Grape Island Mission, beginning with the first of the year, 1828

# Knits AND Knots

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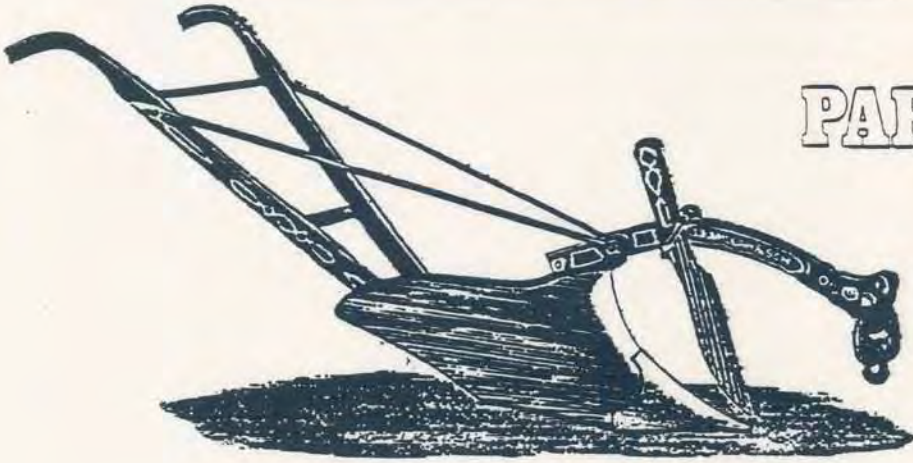
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# Mission on Grape Island



## PART 2

### 1828

Grape Island Mission grew and prospered in 1828. Very early in January Peter Jones arrived at the island. He must have been a particularly welcome guest at that time of the year. He reported that conditions were much improved since his last visit. "They now have 8 log houses, 18 x 20 which have been built principally by their own labour. Some benevolent white people kindly subscribed to purchase brick for chimneys, glass, nails, etc." <sup>19</sup>

Elder Case joined his good friend, Peter Jones, at Grape Island. One evening after a day of chopping firewood on Sawquin Island, they examined the workmanship of the Indians. In a two-week period they had manufactured 172 axe handles, 6 shovels, 57 ladles, 4 trays, 44 broom handles, and 415 brooms. Mr. and Mrs. Waldron, Elder Case and Peter Jones were very pleased with this display and a few days later William Case gave rewards to those who had shown the greatest industry. This was to encourage them to continue their efforts.

Although the Mission was flourishing, hints of its doom began to appear as

early as 1828. There was not enough acreage on the two islands to support the growing community. The Indians held a council to discuss the situation and they decided to request the Governor for additional land as a source of firewood and pasture. Those appointed to approach the Governor were John Sunday, John Simpson, William Beaver, Jacob Shippegaw and John Pigeon. Peter Jones accompanied them and acted as interpreter. In addition, deputations from Rice Lake and the Credit went with them to York to place their petitions before Colonel Givens, the Indian agent. John Sunday spoke on behalf of the Grape Island Missions. He pointed out that his people after conversion to Christianity settled on the Bay of Quinte but now realized their lands were not sufficient to support them in the future. <sup>20</sup> He asked that they might be granted additional land nearby. He also wished to have the Mississaugas' claims to Big Island clarified, for the white settlers were giving them only a token rent -- two bushels of potatoes for 200 acres of land. According to Jones, "This chief spoke with much freedom and

19. Jones, Journal, p100

20. Jones, Journal, p104-5

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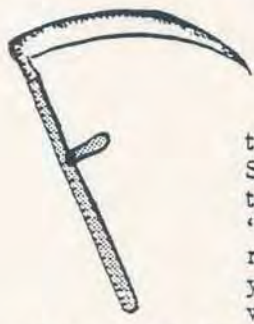
energy." 21

The initial response to the Grape Island Indians' request was friendly and hopeful. However when Peter and his brother, John Jones, were called in the next day to receive the government's decision, Dr. Strachan, the Attorney General, informed them that the Indians must renounce their Methodist leadership and come under the influence of the Church of England if they were to receive government help. A Government Committee that was later investigating the state of the different denominations in Upper Canada asked Peter Jones about this incident. He replied:

Dr. Strachan spoke to us first, and said His Excellency did not feel disposed to assist the Indians under their present situation with the Methodists, because their present Christian teachers were not responsible for their proceedings and instruction to the Government; but that, if they could come under the care of the Church of England, they would assist them; because His Excellency could not countenance any persuasion only the Established Church. 22

Peter Jones chose not to influence the Indians in any way; but to let them

make their own decision. While the Chiefs were disappointed by the Governor's action,



the words of John Sunday gave them determination. He said, "We have heretofore made out to live from year to year even when we were sinners, and

shall not the Great Spirit whom we now serve take care of us and preserve us from all harm?" 23

The children attending school on Grape Island were making progress. Peter Jones reported in May that "seven read the Testament; nine easy lessons; six spell in three syllables; six in two syllables; seven are in the alphabet and abs. Some of the Testament class are learning to write." 24 Such were the subjects of an 1828 report card! In ad-

dition, girls learned practical skills such as knitting.

The Methodist Society on Grape Island had now grown to 172, for the tribe had been increased by Indians from Kingston and Ganonoque who settled on the island. They were now divided into six classes, each with its own leader. The class leaders were Indians and it was their duty "to instruct, warn and encourage the little flock." 25

William Case spent some time in the United States in the spring of 1828 in order "to enlist sympathy and to obtain subscriptions in behalf of the Indian missions in Canada." 26



While there he attended the ninth anniversary of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in New York. This society and interested New York individuals had made contributions to the Grape Island Mission. William Case and his two Indian companions, John Sunday and Peter Jacobs, spoke to the congregation about the progress of the Gospel among the Indians. John Sunday, unable to use English, spoke in Chippewa. "It is related that, though the congregation understood not a word, yet his gestures, expression of countenance, energy and appeals to heaven -- parts of the natural language of man -- so indicated his lively affections, the sincerity of his religion, and the power of the Indian eloquence, that sighs were heard and tears seen in every part of the crowded church." 27 Elder Case was given much material for use at the Mission. G.F. Playter tells us that there was enough ticking for straw beds to provide twenty families with their first beds!

When the travellers returned to Grape Island in mid-May, two women accompanied them. The women came to devote their lives to the Indian work and their leadership was a source of much good for the natives. Miss Eliza Barnes was a gifted preacher and she became a teacher at Rice Lake. (Later she became William Case's second wife.) Miss Hester Ann Hubbard settled on Grape Island, married

21. Jones, Journal, p105.

22. Playter, Methodism, p338.

23. Jones, Journal, p107.

24. Jones, Journal, p138.

25. Playter, Methodism, p342.

26. Carroll, Case & Contemporaries, 168.

27. Playter, Methodism in Canada, p341.



William Case and died an early death there.

Peter Jones was at the Mission when his friend Elder Case returned from the states with the women workers. The Indian women of the Island now had an opportunity to display their handiwork, mainly maple sugar and baskets of various sizes and colours. Miss Hubbard and Miss Barnes gave the Indian women sewing supplies, -- needles and thimbles.



June 26-30 Indians from Grape Island attended a Camp Meeting near Haldimand. In addition to the usual program of preaching, the children from Grape Island put on a display in order to show their educational improvement. They recited parts of the Ten Commandments and sang. Peter Jones, who was at the Meeting also, reported that "the congregation appeared greatly interested, and it must have been a great satisfaction to those who contributed to aid this good cause."<sup>28</sup>

The Indians new-found joy in their religion was not something they wanted to confine to themselves. Early they showed a concern for others, especially their brothers of other tribes. In September, the much-travelled John Sunday attended an Indian Camp Meeting on Snake Island in Lake Simcoe. He spoke to the assembly and brought greetings from the Grape Island Indians. He said that "previous to his leaving Grape Island, his brethern spent one day in praying for a blessing to rest on his labors amongst the Indians whom he was about to visit. Thus you see my brethern at Grape Island made up my pack and sent me off in the name of the Lord to this place."<sup>29</sup>

September was the month for receiving goods from the government, -- their treaty "gifts". The presentation was made in Belleville by Mr. Clench, the Indian Agent. Peter Jones interpreted for him and showed much pleasure at their progress in Christianity. Peter Jones went up the Trent River with Clench to give the Rice Lake Indians their presents. Peter Jones has recorded the gifts that were made to the Indians from Rice Lake, and these were probably similar

28. Jones, Journal, p157.

29. Jones, Journal, p173.

to the ones received by the Grape Island Indians. "Each man received two blankets, cloth for one coat, and one pair of trowsers, two shirts, several small articles, and also several guns, ammunition, kettles, etc."<sup>30</sup>

The Canada Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church met in Switzer's Chapel, Ernestown on October 2 to 8, 1828, with Bishop Hedding from the United States presiding. Statistics from the year show that there were now 118 members in the Society on Grape Island.<sup>31</sup> William Smith, a preacher taken into the work on trial, who had been assisting at Grape Island, was appointed as missionary succeeding Samuel Waldron and Richard Pheips. During the Missionary Society presentation at the Conferency, Indian school children from Grape Island and Rice Lake demonstrated their abilities. A most significant decision was made at this Conference. It now seemed in the best interest of the Church in Canada to become independent of the parent body in the United States. This separation was achieved with complete harmony on both sides of the border, and so in 1828 the separate and independent Methodist Episcopal Church of Canada came into being.

In the future, no bishops from the United States would be coming to preside at Conferences. Therefore it was necessary to choose "some one to be bishop or superintendent of the church".<sup>32</sup> The choice of the Conference was its oldest member, Rev. William Case. Thus after a total of 18 years as a Presiding Elder, he was elected General Superintendent, "which comprised all the duties of a bishop, except conferring Orders."<sup>33</sup> This appointment was meant to be temporary until a bishop could be chosen, but in fact William Case held this position for five years. At the same time he was Superintendent of Indian Missions. Thus it was that the head of the M.E. Church actually lived on beautiful little Grape Island in the Bay of Quinte!

Immediately after the Conference Rev. William Case returned to the island

30. Jones, Journal, p177.

31. G. Cornish, Cyclopaedia of Methodism in Canada, Toronto, Methodist Book & Publishing House, 1881, vol.1, p339.

32. Playter, Methodism in Canada, p324.

33 Carroll, Case & Contemporaries, 217

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and to the very practical tasks of operating a Mission. He and Peter Jones who accompanied him there set the Indians to work, "some in digging potatoes and others at ploughing, and the whole island assumed the appearance of a hive of bees busy at work."<sup>34</sup> There was a good crop that year, for Peter Jones records in his Journal that he helped the Indians divide up about 300 bushels of potatoes.

On October 16, the mission family, school children and Peter Jones attended a Missionary Meeting in Belleville. Rev. William Case preached and Miss Hubbard led the school children in singing and demonstrating their educational progress. Three boys spoke briefly about their lives. Here is what one of them had to say:

My name is Allan Salt. I am 8 years old. I was born in the wigwam, and lived in the woods till two years ago, when my father and mother began to pray. My

mother is dead. She prayed when she was dying. My father lives and sends me to school at Grape Island, where 60 children are learning to read the Good Book. My Christian friends, in the wigwam was cold and hungry. Now we have plenty to eat, and live in good houses like our white friends. The good people in Belleville they help to build them. We thank them very much for all they do for poor Indians, and we pray Kezhamunedoo to reward them an hundred fold in this life, and in the world to come -- life everlasting.<sup>35</sup>

Although the words of an eight-year-old may have been slightly colored by Peter Jones when he recorded them later, nevertheless this is the type of witness and testimony being made by the Indians of all ages. What a profound effect this kind of statement must have had on the white people who heard it!

## 1829

In late February of 1829, Miss Barnes and Peter Jones came to Grape Island to join a party that would make a tour in the United States. On Sunday, February 22, special services were held. A number of Mohawks were there and the Indians filled the chapel. The whites worshipped in the Mission House and were addressed by Miss Barnes. There may have been a number of whites from the nearby mainland who regularly attended Church on the Island.<sup>36</sup> The sacraments were administered and both Mohawk and Mississauga children were baptized.

Miss Barnes, Miss Hubbard, Peter Jones, Rev. William Case and a number of Indian children crossed into the United States on February 26. The purpose of their tour was to raise funds for the Indian Missions. This was an ecumenical venture, for the little touring group spoke to Presbyterians and Baptists, as well as Methodists. They presented their work in an interesting way through story, song and personal witness, and were well received wherever they went, although Peter Jones seemed to feel the welcome of the Mohawk Dutch of Schenectady was

not too generous! "A collection was taken up for our Missions amounting to \$7.50. I suppose this might be called a large collection from the Dutch. I hope they will have their reward."<sup>37</sup> Besides money, other gifts such as books and clothing were received. During the tour, Hester (Betty) Hubbard and William Case were married in New York City on May 4. By mid-May the group was back at Grape Island in time for the spring planting.

The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church met at Ancaster in August with Rev. William Case presiding. Peter Jones was a candidate for Deacon's orders that year. Statistics for the year showed that Grape Island had 120 members and 56 scholars attending the two schools. In addition, there were three white members.<sup>38</sup> Conference



37. Jones, Journal, p203.

38. The Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada, Toronto, Conference Office, 1846, p25.

34. Jones, Journal, p182.

35. Jones, Journal, p.184.

36. Boenme, Beinap interview.

was not able to settle a missionary on the Island. However, Peter Jones mentions a Brother Benham as part of the Mission family when he visited there at the end of September.

Peter Jones spent two weeks at the Grape Island Mission in October. He noted progress in the construction of buildings in the village, the most important of which was a work-house 40 x 28 feet. This was designed as a "vocational school" where the Indians could be taught various trades. While he was there, Peter visited all the houses and was impressed by the improvement of the Indian house wives. He observed that "many of the houses were neat and clean, and the dishes washed and placed in order, like as the house and cupboard of a white squaw." 39 As always, he showed a keen interest in the progress of education. The publishing of some Scriptures in the Indian language proved a good incentive to encourage people to learn to read. Often Peter Jones commented on the singing of the Grape Island people. Mr. and Mrs. Case were able

39. Jones, Journal, p261.



instructors in music, and Jones was able to write that in singing, "the children at this place excel those of the other stations." 40

Peter Jones gathered some interesting statistics during his short visits: The Population of Grape Island

BELLEVILLE Indians	25	116
KINGSTON Indians	20	92
TOTAL	45	208

In addition, there were certain Indians visiting at the Island who were not included in this early census. The Kingston and Belleville Indians received \$2320 in goods annually as payment for the surrender of their lands to the Crown. 41 This did not include the yearly gift of "King's presents".

## 1830

A detailed account of events at Grape Island Mission is not available for 1830, although the life of the Mission itself is described in great detail by two visitors. Peter Jones once again visited his good friends on the Island, staying from August 6 until September 7. He was warmly welcomed to the Island by Mr. and Mrs. Case and the Indians. He immediately noticed the continuing improvement in the lot of the people. "The neatness of their houses, the luxuriant growth of their crops, and everything else showed that our Grape Island brethren had made great proficiency in the arts of the civilized life." 42 There were now five white workers on the Island, -- Rev. and Mrs. Case, Mr. Robinson, the blacksmith, Mr. Thomas Hale, teacher of the boys' school, and Miss Nancy Brink, teacher of the girls' school.

A distinguished visitor from the United States, Bishop Hedding, spent three days on Grape Island prior to the opening of the Annual Conference. The Bishop visited the schools. He preached on Sunday, with Peter Jones translating his sermon. The Indians of the Island felt highly honoured to have him visit them. The purpose of Bishop Hedding's visit to Canada was to conduct the Ordination Service at the Conference which met in

40. Loc cit.

41. Jones, Journal, p262.

42. Jones, Journal, p279.

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Kingston August 18-23. On Sunday, August 22, the Bishop ordained twenty-one Deacons, including Peter Jones.

The adjourned Conference reassembled on August 25 in Belleville. During the Missionary Society Meeting, the Grape Island school children again showed their improvements, this time demonstrating their knowledge of Geography and English grammar. Conference closed on August 30. No appointment had been made to Grape Island, but it was to be supplied from Belleville. Statistics for the year showed that there were now 125 members of the Methodist Episcopal Church on Grape Island.

On September 3, Rev. Peter Jones went on an inspection tour of all the homes on the Island! He recorded a report of the condition of each home. He "took the Indian Sisters all by surprise" and claimed that his reason for going around and making remarks was "to stir the Indian sisters in cleanliness and in industry." 43 He does not say whether any of the Indian women objected to his intrusion into their private matters! His report is interesting and helps to paint a picture of what life on the island was really like. e.g.

JACOB SNOWSTORM's -- Floor and cupboard poor -- bed tolerably good -- one table no chairs -- hearth poor -- one woman making baskets -- one sewing -- one idle.

POTTO SNAKE's -- Table and floor dusty -- beds pretty good -- three old fashioned chairs -- cupboard poor -- no one at home.

JOHN PIGEON's -- floors good -- good tables, but dusty -- chairs good -- 1 good painted cupboard -- 1 good curtain bed -- 3 painted chests -- a Bible, Hymn Book, etc., on a shelf -- everything looked like industry, and improvement in the house. The floor was occupied by an old woman, who sat in the middle of the floor making brooms.

MISSION HOUSE -- Abounds with the good things of this world, and plenty of help to keep the things of the house in order. The Mission family now consists of William and Hetty Case, Daughter, Mary Cooley, Eunice Huff, Thomas Hale, the blacksmith, Mary Crawford, Sarah M. Ahznawonce, Allen Salt, and Benjamin Jonns. 44

43. Jones, Journal, p287.  
44. Ibid. pp285-6.

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*Knots*

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CONTINUES  
AFTER  
CHRISTMAS

Not even the two school houses escaped Peter Jones' careful scrutiny!

The other visitor to the Island in 1830 who left a detailed account of life there was Rev. Philander Smith. Elder Smith had been seriously ill and was now doing some travelling for the improvement of his health. He was so impressed by the work at Grape Island that he wrote a lengthy letter describing its general appearance, the farming, carpentry, schools, Sabbath observances, homes and hospital. This letter was published in The Christian Guardian on November 27, 1830. <sup>45</sup> The letter is too long to reproduce here in its entirety, but one or two quotes from it seem in order.

On approaching the Island, the houses have an appearance of neatness, being whitewashed. This with the order of the buildings on each side of the street adds much to the beauty of the village. It consists of 23 dwellings, -- chapel, a schoolhouse, a hospital, a general storehouse, a blacksmith shop and an excellent frame building 24 x 40 designed for different branches of mechanism; in all 29 buildings. <sup>46</sup>

Regarding agriculture, Philander Smith wrote:

Their farming business appears to have been pretty well performed. We walked about the fields where their crops had been gathered. Their corn and potatoes were excellent and abundant. From 50 acres they had taken nearly sufficient of bread stuff for supporting their families for the year. Some of the men were securing fodder for their oxen and cows, others again were chopping wood for winter's use, and some were gone to the Salmon River for a raft of lumber. <sup>47</sup>

Mr. Smith used a large part of his letter to describe the religious observances of the Christian Indians. Modern church attenders might well be amazed at the rigorous discipline these Grape Island Indians underwent joyously on the Sabbath. The timetable for the day was as follows:

- 6 a.m. Community Prayers
- 9 a.m. Sabbath School
- 11 a.m. Church Service

<sup>45</sup> Christian Guardian, Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

- 8 a.m. Meeting of youth
- 9 a.m. Class Meetings
- 10 p.m. Prayer Meeting

In addition, each family had three times of prayer daily, usually led by the father.

# 1831

Because Peter Jones spent most of the year in England, Grape Island did not see its most frequent and most interested visitor. Consequently, records for 1831 are scarce. From the "Report of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada" for 1831, published in the Christian Guardian in February 1832, it is obvious that life continued much the same as in the past. The days of great progress were over and they had now entered the days of consolidation. The report noted that "there is no abatement in the fervency and piety of those that remain, but with very few exceptions they still continue steadfast, unmoveable and show by their lives they are honest in a sacred cause." <sup>48</sup> The numbers were slightly decreased due to some moving away from the Island and some dying.

One of the Indians who died was Brother Paul who had been an exhorter. He had travelled as a missionary among other Indians. In 1830 he and John Sunday had laboured at Penetanguishene and Mackinaw. In a letter <sup>49</sup> to Peter Jones in England, dated Grape Island, December 19, 1831, William Case mentioned that John Simpson had arrived on the Island from the Mission on Sah-geeng, Lake Huron. These Indian exhorters returned to Grape Island at intervals for "refresher courses". After studying for three months, John Simpson would return to the work in one of the other Missions. These are indications of how the influence of Grape Island was felt far beyond the local Bay of Quinte area.

Education continued to be stressed. The curriculum of the Mission School was quite ambitious, including Spelling, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, English Grammar, Geography, Astronomy and

<sup>48</sup> 'Report of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada,' Christian Guardian, York, 1832.

<sup>49</sup> Carroll, Case & Contemporaries, 321

Natural Philosophy. The teachers played a very significant role in the life of Grape Island. If, as again in 1831, no missionary was appointed by Conference, the task of the spiritual shepherding of the flock fell to them. While Rev. William Case continued as General Superintendent pro tem with special charge of Grape Island Mission, the nature of his responsibilities called him away from the Island frequently.

In a letter from York, February 8, 1832, William Case wrote to another missionary about the Island. He had left Grape Island near the end of December. Uppermost in his mind were the deaths that had been occurring, many of them children. One of the Mission family, Sarah Axhwance, had died, but the heaviest bereavement of all was his own wife. "It is overwhelming. The loss is felt by all of the Indians. The Missions have lost a sincere and faithful friend."<sup>50</sup>

## 1832

By February 26, William Case was back on the Island, continuing his supervision of the Indian work. He wrote on that date to his good friend, Peter Jones, who was still in England. He gave Peter the place and date for the Annual Conference and then went on to tell about life on the Island. He was still preoccupied with the deaths that had taken place. "We have lost a number of children, among whom is Sarah Axhwance. The measles and whooping cough have been sad work with the children, and much of the work of death has been by the women taking their children sick into camp."<sup>51</sup>

The Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church was held in Hallowell, beginning August 8. One of the Grape Island men, John Sunday, was "received on trial as a Missionary, in the travelling connexion."<sup>52</sup> Apparently this was a promotion from his former office as an exhorter. The most important topic discussed at Conference was the proposed union between the Methodist Episcopal Church of Canada and the British Conference. Wesleyan Methodist Church.

50. Carroll, Case & Contemporaries, 325

51. Ibid, p324.

52. Jones. Journal, p353.

The following year this union was consummated, and thus 1832-33 was the last year of William Case's "temporary" appointment as General Superintendent! At the Conference of 1832 he was designated as the Grape Island Missionary. The work there had passed its high point. The number of members was beginning to decline. In 1832 there were 108 members in Society, of whom three were whites.<sup>53</sup>

Following the Conference, Peter Jones went with Mr. Case to Grape Island. While there Peter became very seriously ill, and the Indians of the Island prayed for his recovery. Peter was very upset when he heard that some Indians from the Kingston area, in whom he had shown such interest, had fallen and given up their new faith. "I was very sorry to learn that a number of the Kingston Indians had left the Mission and gone to their old enchanted ground at Kingston and Gananoque, where some white savages at Kingston, had succeeded in their hellish designs in getting them to take and indulge in their greatest enemy, the fire-waters!"<sup>54</sup>

S. Hurlburt was the teacher in the boys' school. On October 17 he wrote a letter to William Case who was probably on a missionary tour. Parts of the letter were published in the Christian Guardian.<sup>55</sup> He described how the Indians were seeking to provide enough food in spite of their limited acreage. James Crawford rented 20 acres on shares from a white farmer. In addition to cultivating Grape and Sawgun Islands, the Indians also used Goose Island, a field on Huff Island, 20 acres on Everett Island plus another island near the head of the Bay. Having their farms scattered like this must have been an inconvenience, and indicates the seriousness of their position.

## 1833

In 1833 the number of members of the Methodist Society on Grape Island declined to 81. However, William Case was able to rejoice in the material

53. Methodist Minutes, p47.

54. Jones, Journal, p353.

55. Christian Guardian, Oct. 24, 1832.

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improvements of the inhabitants and their continuing religious fervour. Of particular cause for rejoicing was the return of two of the Kingston families. In a letter to the Secretary of the Missionary Society, Mr. Case gave a delightful comparison of the condition of the Grape Island Indians in contrast to their former ways:

Their fields and gardens on this land and neighbouring lands, are commendable, and show a happy contrast between their former degraded condition, and their present happy state. In company with a friend I lately stepped into the dwelling of Pigeon, one among the most drunken and worthless of the Kingston body. The house was cleanly and well set off with most useful furniture. The cupboard and table and bed were of neat workmanship. A neat spread, the work of native female hands covered a good bed of feathers and blankets. The Britannia cups and spoons as bright as silver. The kitchen furniture in order, the axe and hoes and saw in their places, and the happy family comfortably clothed. We sat down to make some inquiries. Pigeon seemed delighted and happy in his condition, and said, "God very good to us now we serve Him, -- when I first come here from Kingston, I had but one small kettle, my blanket coat all torn, -- no shirt, -- no shoes, -- now I got all this, I owe no man, and I got little money too." 56

At Conference that year, the union with the British Conference came into effect. Mr. Case resigned his position as General Superintendent, and Rev. George Marsden was appointed President of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in British North America. The work of Missions was placed under Rev. Joseph Stinson who was known as the General Superintendent of Missions. Rev. William Case was appointed to the Credit, "but he was also designated a General Missionary to the Indian tribes, who will also pay attention to the translation of the Sacred Scriptures into the Indian Languages." 57 Thus Mr. Case left his home on Grape Island, and the Indians there lost a true Father-in-God.

No missionary was appointed to the island for the 1833-34 year. The minister

from Belleville was expected to visit regularly however, Mr. S. Huriburt, teacher of the boys' school, was an experienced and able leader and became in fact "the missionary in everything but name". 58

## 1834

The number of people living on Grape Island continued to decline. Apparently there was a similar decrease in other Missions as well, and Rev. Joseph Stinson attributed it to the lack of resident Missionaries. "It is a painful fact that owing to the connection of mission stations with ordinary circuits, an arrangement which was necessary to make through want of funds, serious injury has been done to some of the Indian societies." 59 This may have been partly true of Grape Island, but likely the unsolved problem of inadequate land was the more basic cause of the declining population. Jonathan Scott was appointed as Missionary on the Island for the next year.

In his report to Conference, Mr. Stinson gave the following statistics for Grape Island: 65 members, 5 native leaders, 6 native exhorters, and 48 boys and girls attending school. He still saw the Mission as worthwhile because of its influence on the mission work at large. Rev. J. Stinson wrote, "The Island has from the first been the chief nursery of our Indian exhorters. From this place several pious and useful natives have gone forth to preach the Gospel to their brethren in the wilderness and we feel great pleasure in stating that although there are but few persons left on the island now, nearly the whole of the people are members of our Society and are ornaments to our holy religion." 60

## 1835

While their numbers were diminishing, the zeal of the Grape Island Indians continued unabated. Mr. Stinson attended a Quarterly Meeting on the Island and he reported in a letter written in August to the Editor of the Christian Guardian

58. Carroll, Case & Contemporaries, 417  
59. Ibid, p451.

60. 'Report to Conference on Indian Missions', Christian Guardian, Toronto (late York), 1834, p134.

56. 'Letter of William Case', Christian Guardian, York, Oct. 2, 1833, p186.

57. Carroll, Case & Contemporaries, 417

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that four red brethren have contributed and subscribed upwards of \$40 to our Missionary Society".<sup>61</sup> Such a donation surely represented sacrifice on their part and illustrates the out-going concern for others that was always a mark of the Grape Island Christians.

A native son was appointed as Missionary on the Island for the 1835-36 term! This was John Sunday's first pastoral charge, and it must have been difficult for him to minister to his own tribe. He continued, however, to do much travelling as an evangelist to other Indian tribes. According to George Cornish there were 113 members in the Grape Island Society<sup>62</sup> which would seem to indicate a renewal of the work on the Island. The figures are deceiving however. The Methodist Minutes indicate that the Mohawk Methodists were included in the Grape Island statistics that year, as were a number of white members. There were 26 whites and 87 Indians for a total of 113 members.

61. 'A Letter of J. Stinson', Christian Guardian, Toronto, 1835, p162.

62. Cornish. Cyclopaedia, vol.1, p339.

Next Issue: Conclusion of the Mission.

## Mill

Continued from Page 33

later to his nephew, Ezekiel Clarke. Mrs. Bongard paid a penny a year if demanded for the privilege of crossing the bridge to the Power field. The present road to the lower mill is not the same as when the Allens held the property. The road then led down from the Town Hall to the shore and along the shore to the mill. Later the Township Council closed the road and paid for opening the present road. At the mill they made choice flour of all kinds such as wheat and buckwheat-flour. They got 42 pounds to the bushel of wheat flour".

Tracing the ownership of the mill to the present -- after Ezekiel Clarke, nephew of the original Clarke, it was run by his son Thomas who lived in the mill house (Ray Ostrander's). He converted it to a gasoline engine for power. Thomas died during the flu epidemic of 1918. Captain Harry Clarke, who had recently returned from Overseas, ran it for a short time until it was sold to Eugene Wright who operated it until 1932. It was

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What a great feeling to look at our barn! Never will it be a mere building, because it represents the reaching out to us from those we live and work near.

Alphabetical order Volunteers:

- |                                  |                |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| Two anonymous Bayfield Home boys |                |
| Barry Blaind                     | Beecher Mikel  |
| Keith Burris                     | Ken Mikel      |
| Clarence Carley                  | Doug Palmer    |
| Arnold Cruikshank                | Howard Sanford |
| Walter Haight                    | Don Tapp       |
| Alan Istead                      | Tom Wilson     |
| Ken Istead                       |                |

We're getting there with the barn, and the horses, plus two calves, are comfortable.

Edith and Clarence Carley have moved into a new home on the other side of Lake Consecon.

Paul and Diana Andrews are farming and milking cows; and their herefords have wintered well back in our sheds. The first heifer born is named, what else, Bernice!!

## Mission

Continued from Page 46

cern for the material as well as spiritual well-being of his charges, he established a Manual Labour School to train the Indians in useful trades.

It seems fitting to end this brief history of the Grape Island Mission with a visit from an old and true friend. On the morning of September 3, 1837, Peter Jones arrived at Aldersville in time to have breakfast with the Case family. This was Peter's assessment for the New Mission:

"The settlement at Alwicks bids fair to be a prosperous one. The Indians in general are very industrious and ambitious to get along in their civilization. The arrangement of this Mission is the best I have seen in all the Indian settlements." 66

## Conclusion

Should the Grape Island Mission be judged a failure? A large amount of money and effort was expended on it and yet it lasted barely a decade. Those who chose the Island site showed little fore-

66. Jones, Journal, p391.

sight. Today the existence of the once flourishing Mission on the peaceful little island in the Bay of Quinte is largely unknown, even to the local residents. These are indications of failure.

However, it is my opinion that in many ways the Grape Island Mission proved to be a very great success! Mistakes were made in choice of site, it is true, but this must have led to a better understanding of the "mechanics" of operating such a Mission which would prove valuable in the establishing of others. The existence of the Grape Island Mission may be largely forgotten now, but that does not in any way limit its influence, even today. Grape Island was more than just a Mission station. It was a spiritual storehouse; a colony of missionaries; a dynamic source of concern for others. Its influence spread in every direction for hundreds and thousands of miles. Many Indians are Christians today because their ancestors were reached by the influence of Grape Island!

The Indians of Grape Island have not been forgotten. Their descendents are still ministered to today by the United Church of Canada.



## Lesson

Continued from Page 47

continued her rosary fidgeting, frowning slightly when she realized she was doing it, and gently touched Eddy's shoulder, whereupon the startled boy quickly lifted his head causing his curly blond hair to bounce.

For a dazed moment he blinked his reddened and watery eyes wildly and glanced around as if he did not know where he was. After realizing his whereabouts he relaxed, and then coughed rather harshly several times.

He had stayed up late the previous night and had risen early that morning to complete his dictionary assignment. His writing hand ached so much that it was positively numb when he finished the last word of the fifteen thousand he was assigned to copy. Eddy should have refused to do the assignment. He should have told principal Jackson about it. Old man Harris wasn't even sure it was him who broke the window. He gave it to him