

# BE RESOLVED

## St. Michael's Parish Began To Form In 1837

St. Michael's parish in Cobourg, began in 1837; before that time priests did come through here from Kingston and Toronto; mass was said, people baptized in homes in the area.

(Mrs. Phil Calnan told the story of St. Michael's parish to a meeting of the Cobourg Catholic Women's League.)

One such house used frequently, in the memory of my mother-in-law's mother, stood at the highway edge near Colborne, the Grosjean farm.

At that time Kingston was the seat of the diocese.

Rev. Fr. Kernan, a native of Galway, Ireland, was sent to Cobourg and called together the few Catholics of the area to discuss building a church.

The first church was built on the former Rutlan property now the General Foods property on the location of the present laboratory building, facing William Street.

The frame church was 75 by 45 feet with tower and spire. It was completed and dedicated to St. Polycarp in 1839. The congregation numbered 50 souls.

In 1845 Fr. Kernan was killed near Toronto. Driving the Bishop of Kingston to Toronto, the horse ran away and Fr. Kernan was thrown on a rock. His body was buried in Toronto but the parishioners in this area wished to have the body here. Accordingly, Fr. Kernan's remains were brought by boat to Cobourg and interred under the church he had built. He was 38 years old.

Rev. Wm. Dolan followed in 1842 as pastor. He immediately began to build a rectory near the church.

This large old home was later sold to William Fox and remained in the Fox family for many decades. It was recently removed to make way for the General Foods expansion.

In 1844 the parish records show the visit of Rev. Patrick Phelan, assistant to the bishop of Kingston. He administered confirmation to 38 persons and erected the stations of the cross.

His mandate, inserted in the parish register, calls on the faithful to contribute more generously to the support of the pastor, and in payment of the church debt.

He gives orders to set aside a potter's field in the

new cemetery and make necessary repairs to the foundation of the church. Also to arrange certain fixed rates for burial permits and family plots; and to build a sacristy at the east end of church. In the summer of that year Fr. Dolan resigned, going away to improve his health. Perhaps he was tired. It seems a big order from the bishop and only 50 people!

Here also, I will mention my mother's grandparents who arrived in Cobourg in the Spring of 1844. They came from Fermanagh, Ireland, where living was a horror and religious practices of Catholics had been suppressed.

They did not even have a team of horses and walked each Sunday from Centreton to Cobourg for mass at St. Polycarp's, a distance of 14 miles. They felt so privileged to be able to attend mass after years of having about twice-yearly mass in the hills at home. They also usually stopped at the old Leonard residence on Cottesmore Avenue (then a farm well out in the country) for tea before walking home.

I mention my ancestors here as being fairly typical of many of the parishioners in those days. Cobourg parish covered all of the area then known as West Northumberland.

Fr. Michael Timlin followed Fr. Dolan and stayed 33 years until his death in 1877.

I have heard my grandmother speak of this man so often I felt I must have known the man, he was dearly loved.

In 1850 the church was found to be too small, the foundation needed attention, so a brick addition 65 by 45 feet was added to the frame structure. The congregation was rapidly increasing—my great grandparents produced 12 new members.

Fr. Timlin now decided on the first Catholic school. It was a frame structure built on Dan Rooney's property on Ball Street.

The first teachers were four men, Messrs. Redmond, O'Flynn, Cunningham and Lynch.

Four years later the frame structure of the church was destroyed by fire. People said at the time, it was arson.

Fr. Timlin immediately built a new brick structure

to join the back of the church already standing, this was completed in one year.

On the feast of St. Michael, 1856, the new church was dedicated to St. Michael.

1873 saw a new brick school on Ball Street, built on the same site. This school is used as an apartment at present. Teachers then were a Mr. O'Reilly, Mr. O'Connor.

Fr. Timlin was in failing health and Fr. Michael Larkin was sent here as curate.

During the next two years the church in Grafton was begun. The men of Grafton and Colborne joined in hauling the stone from Grafton harbor to the site on the hill in Grafton.

In 1877 Fr. Timlin died and his remains were buried in the crypt of the church on William Street.

About this time a new cemetery was needed and our present cemetery was purchased. Father Collins has records of burials there going back about 90 years. Rev. Larkin remained pastor for two years, then took over the new parish of Grafton. In 1879 Rev. Ed. Murray was appointed here and four years later he sold the school on Ball Street, opened the school and convent on Have-

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ST. MICHAEL'S PARISH

## Changing The Guard

At the crowd-pleasing Changing of the Guard Ceremonies in front of Victoria Hall last Saturday the CFB Cobourg Bugle Band was under direction of Capt. F. S. Dowe. Drum Major R. G. Walters led the Quarter Guard: one sergeant, one corporal, and 12 men in 1967 military uniforms to replace their 1867 counterparts.

Regimental Sgt. Major of CFB Cobourg, WO1 F. Dempsey, began the ceremony by calling forward the new Guard Commander S/Sgt. L. J. Deschamp, and Battalion Orderly Sergeant, Sgt. G. S. Hastings, for inspection.

Unit Adjutant Capt. W. J. Cromlish, accompanied by the RSM, inspected the remainder of the New Guard.

Capt. F. S. Dowe was commentator.

# St. Michael's Parish

(Continued from page 1)

lock Street. This had been Judge Boswell's residence, later Miss Adams' girls' academy. Classes were started that year, 1883, by the Sisters of St. Joseph, Toronto; 1882 was the year the Diocese of Peterboro came into existence and the first bishop, Most Rev. John Jamot, made his official visit to Cobourg.

Now the town had moved much farther east and a new location and larger church was needed in a more central part of town.

Fr. Murray and the congregation decided the site of the present church was ideal, as a rectory was already built there, with convent and school in operation.

The cornerstone of our church was laid by Bishop O'Connor in June, 1895.

St. Michael's was opened

and dedicated in February, 1896.

The building committee included Messrs. McNichol, M.D., J. B. McColl, James Bulger, Ed Gordon, M. Quinn, D. Rooney, James Butter. These men organized groups to haul stone from the local farms for the foundation.

Cost of St. Michael's was \$2,500 including the new pipe organ; the size was 130 ft. x 50 x 24.

On the occasion of the dedication the Sentinel-Star ran a full page account of speeches, choir members, altar boys, etc., this page was preserved on silk and a copy hangs in the Barnum House at Grafton.

It was not until 1913 that P. C. Brown, a noted artist from Toronto, decorated the interior with a series of Biblical paintings. The beautiful stations of the cross were donated by Michael Gerin of Sioux Falls, Dakota.

Meanwhile, the old brick from the original church was used for Leonard's warehouse which stood so long on Spring Street near University, now W. I. Thomas' car lot.

In 1895 the priests' bodies were moved to the new cemetery. Old tombstones still remained on William Street until quite recent times. I haven't the date of the move, it was probably when the church property was sold to General Foods.

Fr. Murray died in 1926, having been pastor 47 years.

Mons. Kelly then was pastor until 1940. Many of this audience remember Mons. Kelly. Dr. Kelly followed Mons. Kelly until his death in 1948.

I am passing quickly over these years as they are within the memory for many of us. Many assistant priests came and went during these years as the parish became larger. Harwood had been a mission from Cobourg since Fr. Murray's time, also.

Our huge parish has mushroomed from tiny beginnings, our own pastor and assistants have a heavy load.

It is fitting that we pause

Gay festivities, solemn ceremony, spectacular sports, costumes, uniforms, contests, pyrotechnics marked 1967 in Cobourg. Starting with the January televised Council in costumes and proceeding to the giant bingo on Monday night, many special events have taken place in Cobourg to mark Canada's One Hundredth Birthday.

Culmination of a year's planning, of trying to create

here and think of these pioneers now in our cemetery, and remember the sacrifices they made.

In preparing this little talk I became more aware of the diligence and perseverance of these people, long gone, who never appeared satisfied with second best for our parish, and who always kept up with the times. Many illustrious names could be recalled. I'm sure God loved many we never heard of. Three priests from here have gone to their reward—Fr. Duffy, Fr. Ryan and Fr. McIlhenney, also a brother of Mrs. Hazel and Miss Norah McGwan. The latter, Thomas James McGwan, had nearly completed his training before dying as a young man. Many religious nuns and brothers served their early life in Cobourg.

A small quotation from the Bible was used in the dedication of a booklet I found; the booklet was prepared on the occasion of the church's 75 anniversary in 1914. This quotation seems appropriate as a conclusion.

"These were men of mercy, whose goodly deeds have not failed. Their bodies are buried in peace and their name liveth unto generation and generation. Let people show forth their wisdom and the church declare their praise."

## W. I. R

Coldsprings W. I.

Roll call was: An interesting fact about Expo; answered by 21 members and 1 visitor. Mrs. V. Thompson spoke of her 2-day trip to Expo. Bell Telephone Co. Building is like a large re-



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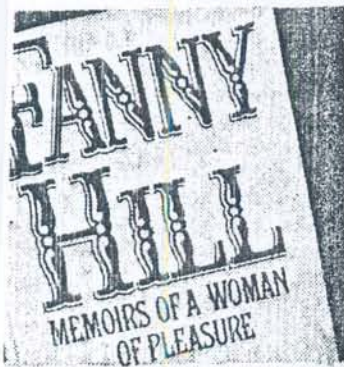
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