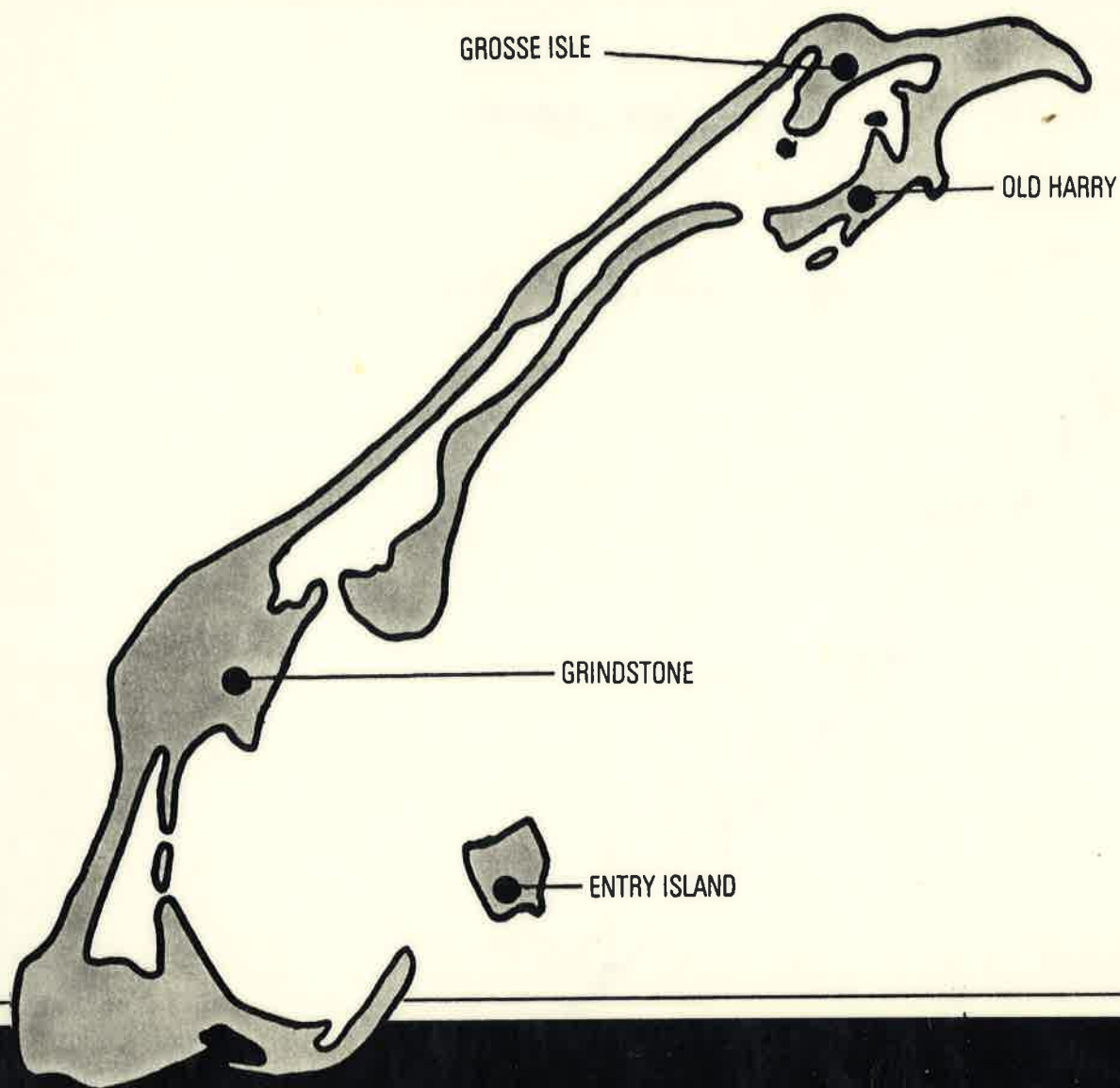


C.A.M.I.
FOR CONSULTATION



Unknown, New Venture

by Effie Rebecca Powell Vallis

UNKNOWN, NEW VENTURE

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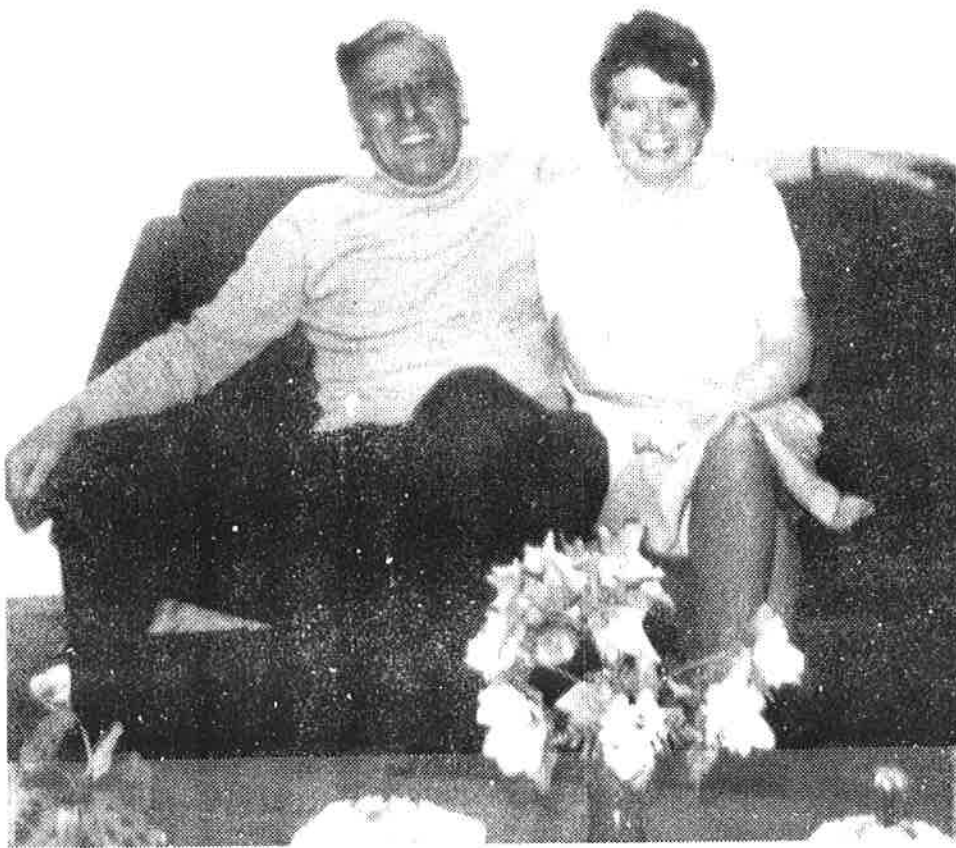
Dedicated to Elizabeth, Pamela,

Kim and Jackie

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to thank those who helped me with this book, most particularly Vera and Byron Clark .

I also obtained information from Hugh A. Halliday's historical and geographical report and the Archives of Quebec.



Effie Rebecca Powell Vallis and her husband, Rev. H.A. Vallis,
in the living room at the rectory, 1977



Centre, Pamela Keating, 1977

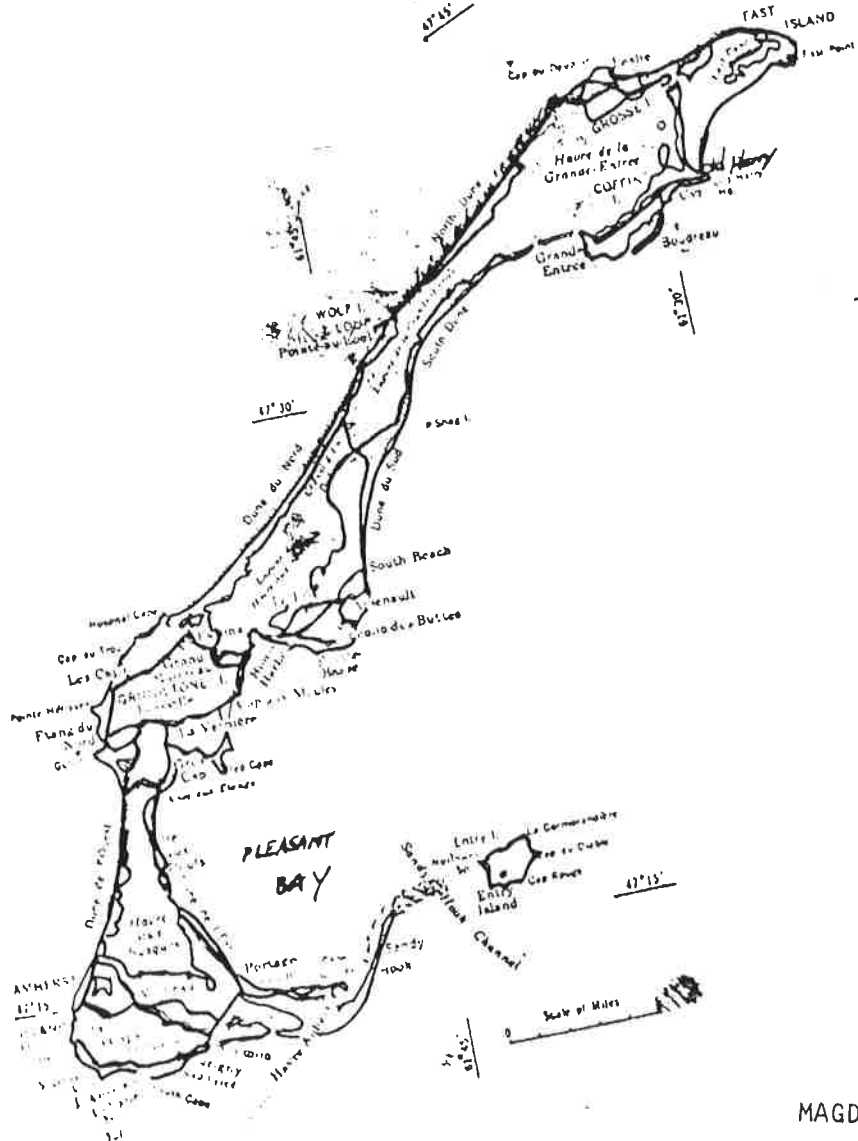


Centre, Elizabeth McKay, 1977

I LES-DE-LA-MADELEINE



Bird Rock.



MAGDALEN ISLANDS



The Author, 1977

The lamp sitting on the table is a gift, given by one of my choir girls. The view through the kitchen window is the sea.

CHAPTER 1

NEW VENTURE

Working in my kitchen one morning at Thunder Bay, Ontario, October 1973--I dashed to the telephone which kept ringing and ringing--the call was for my husband--I overheard the conversation.

This was a clergyman phoning--from the Gaspé coast--he was phoning to ask us if we would consider coming to the Magdalen Islands. After living in the city for 15 years and a background of experience--it seemed almost impossible to leave. Hubert, (my husband) did not actually commit himself, in fact, he did not relish the idea of leaving the city and our many acquaintances. However, after asking God's guidance in making this decision, and being nonchalant in phoning the Bishop, then the Rt. Rev. Timothy Matthews of Quebec. Well, going to the Magdalen Islands seemed to be the chief topic of conversation. Within a period of two weeks the phone rang again, this was the Bishop himself--so without hesitation my husband said, "Yes, with God's help I shall do my best."

I am a native of Newfoundland and since leaving there, at times I have been very homesick although I loved the busy city life still I was a little hesitant of the life style and isolation of the islands.

Something deep within me was acting as if I were going Home-- and this gave me a feeling of joy--leaving the busy rush of the city was given a lot of thought, it really was a challenge--sometimes frightening--but as the reader will discover I enjoyed the isolation--although the vicissitudes at times were many. There were many times I ran away but was always glad to return home.

Our last Sunday in Thunder Bay, St. Luke's Anglican Church (our parish) was filled--standing room only--the sidewalk was lined--people standing and waiting to hear my husband's farewell sermon and to wish us well. Many gifts of remembrance were given to us, and we still keep in touch, especially at Christmas time.

On November 23, 1973, at approximately 12 noon after having breakfast with Agnes and Cameron McGregor, we left on our long journey.

It was a long journey, but we made a little holiday as well by staying at nice motels and enjoying good food.

It was winter already in North Western Ontario, the children were skating on the lake close by Geraldton (a small town), Cochrane where we spent the night it was below zero and about two inches of snow, but coming into North Bay the weather was sunny and much warmer--we met with nice weather from there on.

Deep River, Ontario, was our next overnight stop--then on to Montreal to visit with my husband's sister and to spend the night. She just couldn't think why we would leave the city of Thunder Bay,

with all its new modern devices--an up and coming city of the future --especially when everything was going so well for us, and go to live on the Magdalen Islands; it was a bit upsetting to her; however, it was our decision--she wished us well. Soon after we arrived on the islands she learnt that we were adjusting very well --this changed her trend of thought and she soon became agreeable which ended her frustration.

Quebec City was our next stop--we were to visit the Bishop and Mrs. Matthews--we introduced ourselves and were given a warm welcome to the Diocese of Quebec. After spending the night there we proceeded on to Prince Edward Island.

November 27th, we arrived in Prince Edward Island--the lady at the desk in the hotel also was curious to know why we were leaving Thunder Bay and going to the Magdalen Islands--we had an Ontario license plate on our car and also we had to make inquiries about the boat leaving for the Islands, etc.

Winter was already setting in, it was quite cold at Prince Edward Island. However, we spent almost two days at Charlottetown, shopping and preparing ourselves for the Unknown, hoping the sea would be calm; I am not a good sailor, and was sort of dreading the trip.

When we arrived in Souris (this is the town which the ship leaves from, to go to the Magdalens) I do not remember the mileage from Charlottetown, but it was quite a distance to me and I was getting hungry--not knowing when we would eat again. I was de-

lighted to see the sea quite calm--we boarded the S.S. Manic on Nov. 28th, 1973, at 1:30 p.m. I was amazed at the atmosphere on board and was very impressed--everything was so new to me, especially the French language. However, my husband and I went into the dining saloon--sat at the table--the waitress brought the menu--everything was written in French, we asked for an interpreter--she came and read the menu--and we ordered from there.

I was tired after a journey of two thousand miles, besides all our pre-leaving festivities and good-byes. The lounge was very comfortably equipped with easy chairs and sofas--I stretched out on a sofa and fell fast asleep--maybe it was the fresh sea breeze. My husband decided he needed a rest also, so he stretched out on another sofa and was about to go asleep when an elbow hit him, he immediately responded to the touch and sat up to hear the reason--a man was bending over him saying, "Father, you look as if you are recuperating from an operation--but my wife doesn't feel very well, do you mind if she lies down also?" To make a long story short, my husband reclined in an easy chair and Madame took his place.

When we arrived at Grindstone it was raining and oh, so dark. When the Captain announced we were in port--my husband and I went on deck to view our future surroundings--the ship was all lit up--the wharf and the town looked so bright as if they were saying "Welcome!"

My husband had bought a new Dart Dodge before leaving Thunder

Bay but I was driving my 1961 Dodge, Susie was her name, quite a large car really, white in colour--the time had come for us to go to our cars, we drove off the wharf, as there were many cars coming behind I parked by the side of the street, not too far from the pier--sitting and thinking and wondering what the future had in store for us--then a man put his head in the window and asked if I were Mrs. Vallis. I replied, "yes." I told him my husband was somewhere on the other side in a yellow '74 Dodge. Off, he went. This man was the warden of the church in Grosse Ile and had come to the pier to meet us, his name is Mr. Richards--he then went to his truck which was stopped by the side of the road and I pulled in behind him. Oh, someone has hit my Susie in the back! Just then Mrs. Richards put her head in the window to introduce herself, I'm quite sure I didn't respond. I immediately asked her how my car was, as someone had hit me in the back--she never came back to tell me so I presumed everything was alright.

As I was leaving the ship the boys were whistling as if to say, "a new female in town". I soon learned that "Je m'en fiche" would be one of my bilingual answers.

We then started off--I followed Mr. Richards. The pavements made me very happy and I drove along at a good speed. Oh, suddenly we are on gravel roads and I hate gravel roads especially when it is raining.

The gravel roads reduced my speed somewhat, just then my hus-

band flew by and blew his horn as if to say, come on, get going-- I didn't feel like going another yard. The Unknown then struck me very forcibly, and after driving five miles, (I had 25 more miles to go), and there wasn't a light to be seen, just a glimmer from the houses here and there--I felt like getting out and sitting in the middle of the road or staying by the side in the dark--to wait for daylight. However, instead of doing that I prayed--"God, You have always been my friend, closer to me than my breathing, and if ever I needed You it is now". He was right with me. Mr. Richards and my husband signaled they were turning off the road. I put my signal on also--wondering what it was all about--I said, "thank God, Susie, we are home".

Yes, we were home. Mr. and Mrs. Richards helped with unloading the cars, their kindness was very much appreciated. We then said, good-night, and we were on our own. Soon the rectory was aglow, the warmth from the furnace and the kettle boiling for tea --meanwhile, we explored the rooms--I liked the atmosphere immediately--the rooms were all very bright, clean, and nicely furnished, with a bit of changing furniture here and there we were going to be very happy, as well as comfortable.

Next morning we were up bright and early to view our new surroundings. It was a beautiful day, temperature 50 degrees F.--we were really entranced by the many large windows with a view of the sea on either side--the space between the houses and the hills.

The following week there was an evening of real changeover-- five ladies and five men came to the rectory and every piece of furniture was either coming or going from one room to another. (The rectory is permanently furnished.) The people of Grosse Ile came to welcome us by bringing vegetables of all kinds, jams, fish, meat and cranberries--all a product of Grosse Ile.

Note: The man who ran into the back of my car damaged his brand new truck costing him \$150.00 for repairs, Susie wasn't damaged at all. The lady who needed the sofa was his wife--it was a year before we were secretly told this--as they were our parishioners and friends.

CHAPTER 2

LIFE ON THE MAGDALENS

The most pleasant time of the day on the Islands is the early morning (from the month of May right through until the end of September). At 6 a.m. unless the sky is overcast, the sun shines so brightly--reflecting its rays on the ocean, it is really spectacular, the quietness and serenity are almost unbelievable--the sound of the motor boats coming from fishing or going to their fishing grounds--really this is the only sound to be heard, other than cars on the highway and this is mostly towards mid-day.

The Island is 55 miles long with the exception of a spot here and there is paved all the way.

Sand dunes are everywhere--the beaches are all white sand which can be seen for miles, there is very little rock. The sun going down over the sea, what a sight! breathtaking and indescribable, leaving one with the feeling there is something beyond.

In summer there are some perfect days, with a mere breeze to keep the temperature comfortable, and in winter there is a ration of still, clear, sparkling cold days as befits a part of Quebec.

Because of the weather, communications and travel are never certain; I must try to explain, the wind from November until April blows round the clock--I am of small stature 5 feet 2 inches weigh-

ing 112 lbs--one morning a friend phoned to tell me not to go outdoors, it was blowing so hard I might blow away--I often had to hold the fence in winter so that I wouldn't take off. The wind also carries with it salt spray, sand, rain or snow.

I remember going to the shopping centre with my husband--leaving Grosse Ile 9 a.m. seemingly a perfect day ahead--leaving Grindstone to return home at noon (30 miles)--alas, the wind and snow came on so suddenly (month of January), we had to take refuge with a French family, they could speak little English and we could speak little French--but we communicated. However, the storm continued for two days. It was a very enjoyable two days --the snow was piled so high that when we did leave for home we were stuck on the road--some people saw us--five men came immediately, lifted the car and shovelled a place to put the car until the snow plough came along. Another neighbour came out and with a bienvenue, followed her to her house where we spent the day. It was in January as I have already reiterated--so the festive season not being too far away, we really enjoyed a pleasant day--there were French wines and foods of all descriptions. What a wonderful lot of people--we shall never forget the hospitality of the French people on the Islands--we are hoping that nothing will ever come to mar their way of life.

This kind of refuge was given to us a couple of times on the Islands--we reciprocated with a little gift which our hostess was

hesitant in taking.

Mr. Edward Clarke, then 80 years of age, told us to leave for shopping early in the morning--and to arrive back home in Grosse Ile not later than noon--this is only from the months of January to the end of March--following his rule we never set out unless the sky was clear and then we arrived back early.

The Islanders have found the answer which folk from other parts might find hard to understand--they cut their activities to fit the weather and don't expect anything too definite until it actually happens--for instance, there may be an important meeting planned in the parish hall for 8 o'clock--7 p.m. the phone rings, no meeting until further notice--a storm is on its way.

More affected by the geography of the Islands than any others are the Entry Island folk, who have to cross four miles of open water to get to or from the main Island group--seven miles to the nearest port from Entry which is Amherst.

Entry Island is isolated; my husband built a church cottage there; he didn't actually build the cottage--the parishioners built it while he made the plans; it is really a dream come true, beautifully designed and furnished. It has all modern conveniences--it is really a chalet in the wilderness. Electrically heated--I just loved to go there and did so, sometimes staying at least two weeks. In winter the Island looked as if it were a frosted cake--the snow so white and evenly spread.

I spent many days there alone as I love the people--I was always welcome at any home for dinner or supper or an in between snack, with a few exceptions (and they are very few) the homes are equal to any city home--I never saw a place mat used--it was always a clean white table cloth for the meal, even when not expecting visitors. I travelled by boat in the summer and autumn--by plane during the winter. Craig Quinn is the owner of a three seater plane, (the pilot is not included) of course like all planes weight is the big consideration. Craig is a very reliable pilot, just a young married man who takes his work very conscientiously.

In the winter my husband travelled by ski-doo over the ice mostly, especially if the plane didn't agree with his schedule. The ice bridge as it is called is a formation of ice floes which are driven in from the Arctic by winds--this to me is very unpleasant and hazardous. Once he fell off--the driver fell off also, and suffered from facial abrasions. All that happened to my husband was, he was holding groceries for the driver--the box broke open and eggs (broken) came pouring over him. On arriving to Entry, the people jokingly asked, "if the minister had beaten his warden".

The only fatal accident recorded is that of a man on a horse and sleigh driving across to Entry on the ice bridge--he drove into an open space in the water, the driver was picked up later,

but the horse and sleigh disappeared in the water.

Another incident I would like to tell you about, is that of a horse. A horse belonging to Entry was sold to a man in Grosse Ile. When the purchaser went to his barn in the morning, his horse was gone--words came from Entry that the horse swam over the ocean a distance of ten miles to its home. The horse therefore remained on Entry, and its purchaser settled with the owner. Reading this--one can see how caring the people of Entry Island are. This is a true story.

Grosse Ile, where we lived is situated near the end of the Island, as you will see by the map. This land is rather high and one can see far out to sea. In the sealing season I always left the lights on all over the house, especially the outside lights, thinking it would help some sealer find his way home. There is a hill, maybe one hundred feet in height--just across from the house--this hill I climbed nearly every day, weather permitting--I usually carried a book, sometimes an apple and a blanket--there I would meditate, look out at sea, read and sometimes fall asleep. One afternoon, I was awakened by a person standing over me. I asked him what he was doing here in this lonely spot--he replied, "I'm measuring the water for the wharf where the ships will be coming in." He asked, "what are you doing here?" "This is my home," I very proudly said. He then said, "I love to live here, but my home is in Quebec City, I am going to go and bring my wife.

here and we will settle on the Islands." The wharf never was constructed as the salt mining industry has not as yet been commercialized, I imagine this young man is still living at Grindstone.

Most of the homes at Grosse Ile are modern and comfortable--almost every family has one or two cars--a skidoo and of course trucks sometimes instead of a car, as this is necessary for their livelihood as much as boats. They are a very hospitable people--I received a welcome in every home I visited and they were always ready to lend a helping hand. Our freezer was never empty--there were fish and vegetables of all kinds--it was delightful having fresh squash in the middle of winter--they kept very well in a cool spot in the basement. Mr. Edward Clarke tried his best to make a gardener out of me--I did grow potatoes a couple of years with his help.

When I visited there in 1978-79, it was as if I were going home--what a beautiful feeling.

Old Harry, of approximately 22 families has a beautiful view of the sea, especially the Anglican Church, "St. Peter's by the sea", it is a landmark for fishermen up and down the coast, well furnished interior and beautifully kept on the outside. Mr. and Mrs. Frank Clark, the oldest citizens and the kindest of people--their home was always a welcome for me--I can still picture Mrs. Clark always washing her hands in the pure white sink before ever touching food, this sink was small and situated in the dining area--

this being part of the kitchen--off the kitchen was a room where the meals were prepared, there were cupboards and also sinks for washing the dishes--in spite of her years, she still crochets--last year while visiting her, she showed me a carpet she had crocheted for the stairs. Mr. Clarke a real gentleman. Right now they have relatives living with them and taking care of the house. The sandy beach at Old Harry is extensive--there is no beach like it--very clean white sand extends for miles--a haven for tourists. I found the sea water very cold for swimming, but the sand very relaxing.

East Cape, has eight families, such hospitable people, a folk we just admired, ready and willing to help--it was a pleasure to be with them. East Cape seemed to me to be surrounded on both sides by hills.

Grindstone: at one time there were many English families--now there is just one English person--and it is very fitting to mention her name, Mrs. Oscar Gaudet, (Sally)--Sally is a perfectionist--her church told the story. Alas, the church is closed and now being used for other purposes.

Grindstone, was once an island--now joined at House Harbour by a covered bridge in 1928. Prior to this a scow on a cable was used to cross the channel. Grindstone is the best shopping area, a new modern shopping plaza was built some years ago--there are also many exclusive shops scattered about the place, when Grind-

stone is lit up at night it has the appearance of a rich holiday resort. There is also a fairly large hospital--with a competent staff of doctors and nurses--the French Roman Catholic churches are quite modern and elaborate--I am speaking for the village churches as well.

I cannot leave without paying tribute to my dear friends--the Rev. Fr. Boudreau and Rev. Fr. Cyr--these priests were born on the Islands and have served the French people for many, many years, God bless them.

Amherst has two English families--Mrs. Savage--Mr. and Mrs. Patton and daughter--they like the rest of the Islanders are very hospitable with very beautiful homes--this is a super place for a holiday--a little up to date town with a perfect beach for swimming. According to reports, there are families moving there from Entry Island--not far from there is the French Regional school--you read more in detail later on in the book.

In some of the older homes can be seen wreckage well preserved--this came from ships which were once wrecked and driven ashore. At one time the Magdalens were called "the graveyard of the Atlantic". These days are gone--thank goodness--one seldom hears of a shipwreck in that area now.

There are many young people on the Islands, sometimes a problem arose in trying to keep them busy and out of mischief--regardless of how busy children are, somehow they manage to have prob-

lems, the Magdalen Island children are no different from children living in the city or country. I believe it was a task for them to do their homework from school--and this they realized when they were older and went away to school. Some of the girls whose mothers were quite strict were very close to their parents, well, no matter what they undertook they did well--in fact, all the children on the Islands have a potential, if only they would realize their talent and nurture it.

Pamela, Elizabeth, Kim, Letitia, Lorraine and Jackie were among my choir group, the piano at the rectory was a great attraction--the girls would come often to learn songs of praise and having learnt them, would sing during the church service, their voices were equal to any singing voices I have ever heard, and the girls are to be complimented.

The ages of the girls who were really true to me were from 10-14 years--they taught Sunday School, helped in the Pageants, of course all children of the parish took part in this performance, each year they excelled, even though at times they were wanting to give up. Letitia and Lorraine moved to Nova Scotia with their parents, I was sorry to see them go.

I would sometimes say to the girls, "What profession would you like when you finish school?"--they would laugh and say, "When I finish grade 10 I am going to get married and have children,"--so far neither has done this. They seem to be finishing their

education and quite happy. I took them (five altogether) in the car one Saturday morning after the mothers filled boxes with food and sleeping bags--off we went to Grindstone--from there we took the mail boat to Entry Island--I have already told my readers about the cottage on the Island--the girls were exhilarated--we returned on Monday (it was a school holiday), my husband came on Sunday for the church service so we returned with him.

The school concerts were highlights of the year. My husband tells a story of a boy of eight years--being restless during the programme--who would jump up and would pass him without saying, "I'm sorry", so my husband asked the boy to say, he was sorry--the boy kindly responded--his friend sitting close by, shouted, "He has been passing me all evening and never once has he said, he was sorry."

The farewell services at the Islands were a note of sadness, the girls sang, "I know who holds the future"--the receptions and the gifts were a token of their appreciation--my living room is strewn with these gifts--reminding me of my loyal friends.

I knew I would return and visit with them again--I have done so a couple of times and the Islanders are always the same.

The English speaking Islanders are a quiet and sometimes withdrawn people, in stature, they are well built, most of them have fair skin, the children especially have blond curly hair; as a rule they marry young, 17-18 years of age.

The women are good housekeepers, they are very talented with their hands, their sofas (some of them) are covered with crochet afghans of all colours--bed spreads, cushions, centrepieces, and every description of doily imaginable--their hands are seldom idle.

The beautiful aroma of home made bread--it was on the Islands that I learned to make bread. Once, when the Bishop and his chaplain were coming for confirmation services--my husband had gone to the airport to meet them, arriving back to the rectory 3:30 p.m.--in the process of making tea I answered a knock at the door, here was a lady presenting me with one dozen hot delightful cinnamon rolls right from her oven, needless to say, dinner was later that evening. The suppers in the parish hall were very tasty, equal to any home made food anywhere in Canada. Their display of hand made goods at the bazaars are most striking, the ladies of Grosse Isle have a small craft shop where one can buy gifts.

Man Power (Quebec Government) supplies a teacher for twelve weeks each winter for the Adult English speaking population, the teacher is a resident. There are different teachers--one for French and one for handicrafts.

Teachers come from all parts of Canada to teach in the schools there. Many teachers graduate from university and return home to teach.

Grosse Isle has a pre-kindergarten, and kindergarten with grades to grade eleven. Principal plus eleven teachers--113 pu-

pils, nine class rooms. For slow learners there is a qualified teacher.

Entry Island school has three teachers, 23 pupils, Grade 1 to Grade 7.

At LaVaniere there is a Regional French school. This school is open to any grade if the student desires to learn French--many of the students from Grosse Isle go there for a couple of years or until they are completely bilingual. The student finishes at Grade 12, then if ambitious goes on to university.

I went to Adult French classes and excelled with my theory--but my practical speaking was not too good, probably because my daily contacts were English speaking, and one has to practise to become fluent--I was very anxious that I learn the language--probably also I was a bit nervous for fear of making mistakes.

The children referred to me as teacher, it was rather strange, when they met me or came to visit they greeted me as teacher. I taught Sunday School, this is no doubt why--I liked being called teacher and they sensed it.

I often would drive Susie (my car) to Prince Edward Island. What a thrill! getting up at 5:30 a.m. putting my necessary belongings in the car. The air was so fresh, and the stillness undisturbed by even a breath of wind, the clear blue sky and the sparkling blue of the sea on either side as I drove along for 30 miles. Leaving home--6:30 a.m. and arriving at the pier 7:30 a.m.

(Grindstone). I had the feeling as I drove along that there were just two people in this world, God and myself, I was so very happy.

All the cars boarded at 7:45 a.m. The ship left 8 a.m.--arrived Souris, Prince Edward Island 1:30 p.m. The steamer schedule is from April 15th until the end of December. The winter of 1975 I left my car with a friend at Souris.

One year when the month of May was here I felt I needed a few days to relax in different surroundings. My husband took me to the ship, and of course I had to hitchhike (this being my only means of getting to P.E.I. that is when I went alone) as the car was 3-4 miles from the boat. There were many transports that morning and just a couple of passenger cars. I noticed a passenger car with a P.E.I. license plate--"I thought how lucky can one be", my husband went to this car, the driver looked very uncouth and my husband didn't get any response. He returned to me and said, "I wouldn't advise you to travel with that man". I didn't listen--I walked over to the driver who smiled and said, "Certainly you may come with me, where is your luggage"?

In fear and trembling I gave him my luggage. He then said, "I will meet you when the boat docks at Souris."

I kissed my husband good-bye and went on board the boat which sailed 8 a.m.

Before the boat docked at Souris I went to find my driver. Alas, I couldn't see him any place--suddenly a voice boomed, "We

have to go to the cars soon." I really did not recognize this man as he had transformed himself into a well-groomed masculine and was wearing a beige straw hat decorated with a red and yellow feather.

I confess I was a little uneasy. We passed my car, he was alert though and turned back. The car just wouldn't start, so he put his booster on the batteries, the car started immediately. I thanked him. He replied, "Now drive like hell." Very light-heartedly I drove 75 miles to our cottage.

Leaving Prince Edward Island where winter was fast approaching--I was somewhat anxious to know what the climate would be like on the Magdalens, to my surprise, it was very mild, in fact, there was a fine drizzle with not a sign of winter. I remember going to church on Christmas day without a coat--sweater taking its place.

This was a new climate to me and a new world, February and March are really winter months, the wind blows nearly all the year --sort of spasmodically, but the above months that I have already mentioned are the worse.

The men were given a winter project by the Quebec Government, this project is offered almost every year. The Parish hall needed a new face--so this was the planned winter project--everything was going along very well, the walls nearing completion--when 6 a.m. one Sunday, the wind suddenly came up--taking with it the walls of the Parish hall.

My husband and I were in bed at the time, we were awakened by the sudden banging of boards. Two by four boards were flying past the window. It was indeed scary, one dare not go outdoors as the wind was so very strong. However, Monday was a beautiful calm day so the men began to work, as quickly as was possible the walls were back in place and the roof completed.

A little craft shop once was blown over, inside was a woman and her husband, the husband wasn't hurt but his wife suffered a broken collar bone.

The homes are so well built, the wind seldom blows a shingle off--my husband and I have often said, the Magdalen Island men are surely competent house builders.

A little pre-school boy by the name of Charles Taker, son of Mary and Huntley Taker seldom missed church or Sunday school; I said to him, "Charles you are a clever little boy,--I hope some day to hear of your graduating from university in Theology and returning home to care for your people."

I have the most happy remembrance of these beautiful Islands and the kindness and hospitality that my husband and I enjoyed there, we shall always cherish.

CHAPTER 3

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY OF THE ISLANDS

Stretching across 60 miles in the Gulf of St. Lawrence are the Magdalen Islands--les iles de la Madeleine, to most of their inhabitants--hauntingly beautiful, defiantly isolated, and in tragic danger of becoming an ecological disaster. They are fascinating islands from both a geographical and a historical viewpoint; they also provide a vivid study of what man and nature can do to each other.

The Magdalens include seven major islands joined by sand dunes, plus a scattering of off-shore islands. The inhabitants are both French and English. Over the years some place names have been altered--ile Cap aux Meules now Grindstone, Havre Aubert (Amherst), Havre aux Maisons (Alright), ile au Loup (Wolf), Grande Entrée (Coffin), ile de l'Est (East Island), and Grosse Isle. Close in-shore are numerous islets, some of them in the lagoons of the Magdalens.

Further out lie the islands of ile du Mort (Deadman), ile d'Entrée (Entry Island, the only detached island to be inhabited). Ile Brion (Bryon Island) and les Rochers aux Oiseaux (The Bird Rocks).

The Islands began to form some 250 million years ago as sedimentary layers of limestone and gypsum were laid down in ancient seas. This process was interrupted sporadically by volcanic outbursts, but it nevertheless continued with deposits of gray and red sandstone being added. Once these materials were in place and the original seas had retreated, shifting land masses tilted the future Island group upwards into steep hills. Some 800,000 years ago, the floor of the Gulf of St. Lawrence was depressed from the weight of continental glaciers. When the ice retreated, the Magdalens remained separated from the mainland, with the seas pounding the sandstone cliffs.

The assault of wind and waves has continued to this day, eroding the sandstone into countless sculptures, and pitting it with hundreds of caverns. Rocks have crumbled into sand, and the sand has been heaped into the dunes which stretch for miles between the major islands. There are, in fact, only two types of shorelines, sand and sandstone.

Although men have sown grass and built woven fences to hold the sand in place, the character of these dunes changes constantly.

A map of the Islands drawn to-day, differs markedly from one of 40 years ago.

The Sandy Hook, which loops like a tentacle from ile Havre Aubert towards ile d'Entrée, has been known to grow over 1,200 feet in a single year, erode backwards, then extend out to sea

again.

The topography of the Islands is varied. In places like ile Grande Entrée, ile de l'Est, and the northern sections of Havre aux Maisons--it is relatively flat, with low sand hills or marshes. By contrast, ile d'Entrée thrusts up out of the sea and soars abruptly into a 559 foot summit, the highest point on the Islands. On ile Cap aux Meules a hill known as la Butte du Vent rises to a height of 532 feet, while a height of land on Ile Havre Aubert rolls up 477 feet, and la Butte Ronde on Havre aux Maisons rises steeply to a height of 362 feet. Even Grosse Ile boasts of a summit exceeding 300 feet, while on Ile Brion a hill located in almost the exact centre of the Island is over 200 feet high.

Geological surveys of the islands in 1881 uncovered deposits of manganese and gypsum in the main islands. These, however, proved to be too limited to be of commercial value. Private companies attempted to exploit the manganese ore in 1920 and again between 1939 and 1948 with unsatisfactory results. Small pockets of natural gas were discovered in 1959, but exploration has not since been extensive. Published in 1967 was a plan of economic expansion. This gave scant attention to the meagre resources, concentrating instead on suggestions to improve agriculture, fishing, and the potential of tourism.

The seas around the Islands are shallow with numerous shoals and submerged rocks. Consequently the Magdalens have acquired a

reputation rivalling that of Sable Island as a marine disaster area. How many ships have been wrecked there is uncertain. Some estimates put the number at 600, but this appears to be exaggerated. A more likely figure would be about 200 in as many years.

Most of these incidents have involved small craft--fishing boats from Gaspé, Nova Scotia and New England ports whose crews were unfamiliar with the tricky shoals and currents in the area. There have, however, been several larger vessels that came to grief in the area, and some wrecks have been major tragedies.

The worst of these involved the *Miracle*, a 626-ton barque with over 400 Irish immigrants aboard, which foundered in a storm off Ile de L'Est on the night of May 19, 1847. Dysentery had weakened almost everyone on the ship, and some 150 died, at least half of them by exposure rather than drowning. Another barque, the *Calcutta*, loaded with timber, was wrecked off Grosse Isle on November 22, 1875, with a loss of 23 lives. Twelve persons died when the S. S. *Liverpool* was wrecked on Ile Cap aux Meules on December 4, 1905.

A dramatic tale with a happy ending concerns the *Lochmaben Castle*, another barque loaded with Irish and German immigrants; on June 4, 1855, she was coasting through dense fog when she struck a rock edge near the Bird Rocks and stuck fast.

The Captain, a man named Turner, ordered all cargo thrown overboard, but the ship remained trapped. As the fog lifted a

breeze sprang up and the waves threatened to crush the Castle to pieces. Turner then ordered every inch of sail run up, and succeeded in jamming his ship more firmly unto the ledge, where the wave action was less severe. Having thus bought time, he proceeded to transfer his passengers to passing vessels and to the Magdalen Islands themselves. The process required three days, but in the end not a single life was lost.

Between 1870 and 1874 the Canadian Government built a series of lighthouses on the Islands in an effort to reduce the shipping losses there. The first of these on the Bird Rocks became the site of numerous casualties. It was 39 feet high, and when heavy fog shrouded its light the keepers fired a signal cannon at 30-minute intervals. Until the development of radio telephones, the Bird Rock station was a veritable hermitage.

The first two keepers resigned their posts. From 1873 to 1880 Patrick Whalen manned the light. On April 8, 1880 he decided to go seal hunting on the ice, accompanied by his son and an assistant. A violent storm caught them by surprise. The assistant, his feet frozen, regained the station, Whalen and his son died on the ice.

Charles Chiasson took over the Bird Rock light. On August 23, 1881, he was showing some friends around his 7-acres empire when someone asked him to fire the cannon. He complied. The gun exploded, killing Chiasson, his son, and one of the visitors.

Jean Turbide followed. In 1891 the gun again exploded and he lost one hand. He suffered for two days before a passing boat recognized his distress signals. Turbide later returned to his post and manned the Bird Rock light until 1896, when he was injured in a fall and resigned.

He was followed by Arsène Turbide, who spent the winter of 1896-1897 on the rocks. On March 7, 1897, he decided to try his hand at seal hunting on the ice, with him went an assistant, Damien Cormier. As had happened 17 years before, the wind changed and the three men (his son went along with him also, Turbide's son) were set adrift on an ice floe. Cormier and the younger Turbide died the first night, Arsène Turbide spent three days and nights on the ice with no food and only seal blood to drink. His ice floe was finally washed ashore on Cape Breton Island, 60 miles from his starting point, fifteen days later he, too succumbed.

Pierre Bourque followed and manned the Bird Rock lighthouse until 1905. No harm came to him, but in June, 1897, his assistant was injured by another explosion of the cannon (it was replaced by a fog siren in 1907). Bourque had to take the man by sailboat to Havre Aubert. The next keeper, Wilfred Bourque, died under mysterious circumstances in March 1911. Thereafter the curse of the Bird Rocks--if curse it was--seemed to vanish for a decade. In November 1922, however, the fresh water supply for the Lighthouse became poisoned, one man died immediately, another was so affected that he

died 18 months later.

I have already mentioned Bird Rock and some of its tragedies --I am quite sure that many of my readers would like to know more about this great rock. The size of Bird Rock is seven acres--it is 16.5 miles from East Point, and 64 kilometers north east of the Magdalen Islands, authentically speaking--the rock is a chunk of sandstone--it has cliffs that rise 30 metres straight out of the sea. When it was discovered by Jacques Cartier there were two smaller rocks as well, but over the years they have eroded away, becoming part of the reef that surrounds the great rock.

Bird Rock was named for the sea birds that nested there. In the 17th and 18th centuries, sailors frequently raided the nests for eggs to give them a change from the fish diet: on occasions, passing ships would fire their guns, so that passengers could watch clouds of birds taking flight. The Island is 100 feet above the water, at one time the only access to the Island was by a crane overhanging the water from the precipice. A chair was lowered and visitors were hoisted from their boat up onto the land. While this hoist method was still in use there was a ladder consisting of 146 steps. The precipitous cliffs are the nesting place of thousands of migratory sea birds, the majority of which are gannets--they are big white birds, more akin to the wild goose than the gull, and have black tipped wings. Besides the gannets, there are murrees, sea pigeons, puffins, and a half dozen other varieties. I am told *it is like a field of colour.*

In July, 1955 a major fire caused by lightning destroyed the house and a couple of small buildings, (refer to picture). A crew of nine off the C.G.S. Saurel were on the Rock at the time carrying out repairs to the wharf, they helped fight the fire. All food and clothing were lost but no one was injured.

The 146 steps forming the ladder are now unfit for use. Around 1966 the department began landing supplies by helicopter. During one of my visits to Entry Island in 1975, the helicopter was transporting the exchange lighthouse keeper to the rock--I went to the pilot requesting his taking me with them on the trip--the pilot was very sorry to inform me because of government restrictions I could not go, needless to say I was very disappointed.

In 1919, Bird Rock was established as a bird sanctuary under the Migratory Birds Convention Act, and the birds, their nests and their eggs are protected under this Act.

The Bird Rock Lighthouse was built in 1870, and was said to be the loneliest lighthouse in Canada. The first lightkeeper could not stand the isolation and asked to be relieved--the second one remained only 18 months--this cannon that I have already spoken of was replaced in 1907 by a fog siren.

For several years back there are two men stationed on the Rock. They remain for four weeks--then two other men relieve them for the same period of time (that is if the relief plane doesn't forget).

The two English men I know are Mr. Philip Quinn and Mr. James McLean, the relief men are French.

Mr. Leon Patton, a native of Entry Island, was stationed on the Rock for eleven years, previous to his leaving in the middle seventies, he and his co-worker enjoyed the luxury of C.B. Radio and a telephone was installed. One can imagine how elated these men were--especially having contact with their families. Mr. Patton is now in charge of the Wood Islands Lighthouse at Prince Edward Island.

Readers may shudder when reading of these tragedies--it is a way of life for these Islanders, they face destiny with great courage and determination.

N.B.-John James Audubon visited Bird Rock early in the 19th century and Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1939.

Marine tragedies are deeply imbedded in the history and folklore of the Islands. If few Madelinots have been shipwrecked in their home Islands, many have come to grief on fishing expeditions in the Gulf and along the North shore of the St. Lawrence. The worst of these incidents occurred in the Spring of 1863 when two sealing ships, the Emma and the Breeze, were crushed by ice floes with the loss of twenty lives including six brothers. Left behind were a total of 13 widows and 45 children.

Another incident worth noting was the loss of the schooner Flash, a Madelinot vessel which left Havre Aubert in November, 1883,

with a cargo for Quebec. With her sailed the Canayen headed for Baie-St.-Paul. The weather was fine, but the Flash never reached her destination. No bodies were ever found and only a few traces of wreckage were washed up on the northern dunes of the Magdalens. The disappearance of the Flash was a marine mystery.

Fifteen years later the truth came out in a death-bed confession by the cook of the Canayen. The evening of their departure with the Magdalens barely over the horizon, the crew of the north shore vessel had boarded the Flash and in a bloody struggle had massacred the crew. The murderous sailors then plundered the Flash and scuttled her in what was probably the last case of piracy in Canadian history.

This is to certify that the ship Merical under my command was wrecked on the Magdalen Islands on the 19th. of May, 1847, with 446 souls on board.

James Clark and his sons succeeded in saving nearly the whole of them, and they deserve great praise for their exertions in supplying them with provisions and shelter.

I firmly believe a light on the East end of the Island would save many a shipwreck as the Bryon or Bird Rocks can be seen.

(sig) H. H. Elliot,
MASTER
19th, May 1847.

The above report tells a tragic tale--200 died of typhus fever and exhaustion and are buried at East Point. They were Irish immi-

grants coming to Canada during the years of the great potato famine in Ireland. No stone marks their graves.

The Micmac Indians knew of these islands and called them Mewquit, but did not settle there. It is possible that Norse sailors saw them, but the first European to record their existence was Jacques Cartier. June 25, 1534, his fleet of two ships paused near the Bird Rocks while the sailors went ashore to kill more than a thousand murre and great auks. It was the beginning of a slaughter which would eventually render the latter extinct.

Over the next few decades the islands were visited by Basque, Breton and Norman fisherman who took walrus in fair numbers. 1500 walrus were probably killed on Ile d'Entrée.

Jacques next landed on Brion Island, which he named after the Grand Admiral of France, Philippe Chabot, Sieur de Brion. On Brion, he described in glowing terms its trees, berries, flowers, wild oaks, and herbs. He also noted wolves, and bears on the islands but he was most taken with BEASTS, like great oxen, which have two teeth in their chops like teeth of an elephant, that go in the sea, this was his first sight of walrus.

On his second voyage, Jacques Cartier went from Brion Island to the sandy shores of Grosse-Ile, Cap de l'Est, Entrée Island and Plaisance Bay. He named all of these "The Araynes". Until 1663, the archipelago was known as the Araynes, the Brion Islands or the Ramée-Brion. In that year, however, the company of One Hundred

Associates granted the Islands to François Doublet de Honfleur who named them after his wife, Madeleine Fontaine. Since then, they have been known as either the Madeleine Islands or, as in some English reports and maps, the Magdalen Islands.

Between 1591 -1597 English ships also intruded into the area; a two day battle between the French and the English ended in victory for the French.

Towards the end of September 1663, Doublet's ships returned to France. Previous to his leaving huts were built to house 25 of his men--Philippe Gaignard, a surgeon, was left in charge. When Doublet returned in the spring of 1664 to his surprise the men had all vanished; he learned that they had taken their small boats and gone to Quebec before freeze-up. The failure of this enterprise ruined Doublet and ended all efforts at colonization for nearly a century.

The fishing rights passed from one adventurer to another. Colonel Richard Gridley appeared upon the scene in December 1762-- he applied to the British Government for a monopoly of the hunting rights in the Islands. This was granted, and he then brought in Canadian and Acadian families to winter and eventually settle there. As of 1765, 23 people were under his employ, by 1773 eight families had settled, also a few English families from Cape Breton had purchased lands at Cap de l'Est.

The numbers were small but they were strong enough to capture

walrus, so ferocious was the hunt that on some of the beaches there was not enough space to lay out the carcasses, and Gridleay realized substantial profits from walrus oil from which his employees benefited very little.

In 1799 the walrus had joined the great auk in extinction.

The French revolution of 1789 spread to all the overseas possessions of France. When the doctrines of the revolution turned anti-clerical the people divided--St. Pierre and Miquelon (Islands situated 200 miles off Magdalen Islands) sided with the French Revolution of 1789. It was St. Pierre which tended to side with the revolution, while Miquelon opposed--30 under the leadership of their priest, Jean Baptiste Allain, some 250 Miquelonis embarked secretly in their fishing boats one night late in 1792 and fled to the Magdalens.

It is from these 250 refugees that most of the present day Madelinots are descended. By 1824 they numbered 840, and 20 years later the population doubled. At the turn of the century they had grown to 6000. Population of Islands when added municipality by municipality as of sometime early 1979 is 14,004 (French) approximately 610 (English), who live in Grosse Ile, Old Harry, Ile d'Entrée, Grindstone and Amherst.

The newly arrived Madelinots presumed that the lands on which they settled were their own. However, in April 1798, the British government granted title to the Islands to Captain (later Admiral)

Sir Isaac Coffin. The Madelinots quarreled with Coffin because he wanted them to pay rent for their land--he died in 1839 and the dispute was not resolved until 1895, when a Quebec statute enabled the inhabitants to purchase their lands from the Coffin estate.

The dispute with Sir Isaac and his heirs so stunted agriculture that fishing soon became virtually the only local industry. The census of 1871 listed--598 fisherman--41 mariners--one miller--and one notary. Today, 1980, there has been for the past several years a well equipped modern hospital at Grindstone with a competent staff of doctors, nurses, lab. technicians and domestic workers-- this hospital provides service to the whole island. There is also a shopping centre with many exclusive shops, taxi service, a few motels, and in 1978 the paved highway across the island was almost completed.

The S.S. Manic passenger and auto service steamer is no longer there--it was replaced by the S.S. Lucy Maud Montgomery in 1975. There is daily service--regular sailing 8 a.m. from Grindstone, arriving Souris, Prince Edward Island, at 1.30 p.m., leaving Souris 2.30 p.m. for Grindstone.

There are three nursing stations--Grosse Isle, Entry Island and Grand Entrée, Public Health nurses with Midwifery training are in charge of these centers.

At Havre aux Maisons there is quite a good landing strip. The Eastern Provincial Airways provide daily services to and from

Prince Edward Island, Moncton and Halifax. The Quebec Airways provide daily services to Gaspé and other points in Quebec.

Commercial Air Services to the Magdalens represent one of Canada's oldest aviation operations. The Islands, isolated each year from December until April by ice movements in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, have depended on winter Air Services since 1926. The actual first flight to the Islands is unknown. It has been recorded that irregular flights were flown to the Islands prior to 1927.

Early in the 1900's there were periods of isolation during the winter season and steamers had to push their way through heavy ice to get food to the Islanders as sometimes food had run out. It was a winter such as this that the cable (telegraph) was broken, it happened in 1910--these ingenious people of Havre Aubert resorted to a novel device to publicize their plight. They got a wooden barrel and filled it with letters, some to relatives, and some to government officials--fitted with a rudder and sail, ballasted, then cast adrift in the gulf. A month later it was washed ashore on Cape Breton Island. The Federal Government reacted promptly, on March 1 an ice breaker was despatched from Sydney and a year later wireless communication was established between the Islands and the mainland--models of this barrel are sold in the shops throughout the Islands today.



The following are names of English families who have lived on the Islands within the past 135 years one time and another but whose names have disappeared leaving no trace of having ever lived there.

Ballantyne, Bouchy, Bushy, Bowden, Hall, Bloome, Chapman, Carr, DeLisle, Driscoll, Fox, Gallichan, Gaudin, Heddon, Hynes, Hayden, Harris, Jack, Jean, Kirk, McCallum, McIsaac, Pinkham, Rose, Rix,

Roach, Romley, Sigsworth, Smiley, Salisbury, Sawyers, Tuzo, Van Barnsweld, Worth, Wardwell, Waxwell.

In 1927 a contract was awarded to Canadian Trans-Continental Airways of Quebec to operate between New Brunswick and the Magdalen Islands during the winter months with cargo and mail. Due to the ice masses that surrounded the Islands at that time, the contract called for an amphibian aircraft. To meet these special requirements, the Fairchild Corporation produced two F.C.-2W's which featured powerful wasp engines on special float skis, however, these float skis did not prove successful. By the way, it is believed the Maritime Provinces was the first area where such an innovation was introduced.

Radio facilities and weather data being almost non-existent in those early years, the pilots had to rely mostly on roundabout delayed information to prepare their flight for the hundred miles of hazardous open water separating the Islands from the Main Land.

Trans-Continental Airways also operated during the winter of 1928-1929. During the second winter of the operation, a Loening amphibian on special skis replaced the earlier Fairchild's. The skis on the Loening were manufactured in Quebec and were very peculiar in design. They were constructed of corrugated metal with a pedestal that extended almost from the nose to the tail with very light tubing throughout. This whole pedestal was covered with a laced, canvasboot. Canadian Airways was awarded the contract for

air services to the Magdalen Islands in the winter of 1929-1930, and had no radios or other navigational assistance to facilitate their operations or guide their planes. Storms, fog, wind, and bad circulation would sometimes meet them as they flew across the 100 miles of open waters of the Gulf, many times they would have to turn back.

During the middle 1930's the flights were set up on a twice weekly schedule, the plane carried the mail and a few passengers.

In 1934, ten trips were made to the Islands by three Charlottetown base pilots.

By 1937, Canadian Airways had matters under more rigid control and maintained their Maritime and Magdalen Islands services until T.C.A. came into the picture in the spring of 1940. Landings were made on the beach at Fatima and on the harbor ice off Grindstone Village.

The DC-3 Equipment took over in 1945, carrying heavier loads, made year round landings on Fatima Beach and on the beaches of Amherst Island. Radio and navigation aids were by this time part of the aircraft and ground equipment, so that the company gradually maintained continuous service on this route.

Fatima Beach was a busy place on flight days, as many people from the villages would drive their cars and horse drawn carts onto the sandy stretches for the arrival of the "Big Bird," from Charlottetown. One could see the happy faces of the residents as they

anxiously were awaiting the arrival of their mail, parcel post and returning relatives.

First Air mail to Magdalen Islands

January 11 - 1928

Pilot Cooper landed seaplane with mails at Grindstone about one hundred yards East of wharf at 1.45 P.M. he flew again at 2. P.M.

Time from Moncton to Grindstone 1 hour and 35 minutes (135 miles)

Mails were landed in a dory by Robert McPhail and Willie Chalson

*4 bags { 1 bag Havre Aubert
1 bag Solomon
1 bag Grindstone
1 bag House Harbor } 195 pounds*

This Seaplane had 3 pontoons and 1 engine that started from the outside by hand with a crank

Facsimile of First Airmail Log Entry to Magdalen Islands

Taken from Postmaster's Records at Grand Entry

While the Magdalens are historically a part of Quebec, the continuous air service from Prince Edward Island through the years

has built up a community of commercial interest between that area and Charlottetown that has flourished from the beginning. Magdalen Islands buy most of their products from P.E.I., they shop in the Charlottetown stores, migrate and intermarry and send their sons and daughters to school there, especially to the universities.

The new Terminal was officially opened on June 9th, 1960 at House Harbor--the two paved runways and a modern passenger terminal has provided First Class Air service on a year round basis.

Note: The above information was gained from the brochure published at the official opening of the Magdalen Island airport, June 9, 1960.

DEADMAN'S ISLE

See you beneath yon cloud so dark,
Fast gliding along, a gloomy bark?
Her sails are full, though the wind is still,
And there blows not a breath her sails to fill!

Oh! what doth that vessel of darkness bear?
The silent calm of the grave is there,
Save now and again a death-knell rung,
And the flap of the sails with night fog hung.

There lieth a wreck on the dismal shore
Of cold and pitiless Labrador;
Where, under the moon, upon mounts of frost,
Full many a mariner's bones are tossed!

Yon shadowy bark hath been to that wreck,
And the dim blue fire, that lights her deck,
Doth play on as pale and livid a crew
As ever yet drank the church-yard dew!

To Deadman's Isle, in the eye of the blast,
To Deadman's Isle, she speeds her fast,
By skeleton shapes her sails are furled,
And the hand that steers is not of this world!

Oh! hurry thee on-- oh! hurry thee on,
Thou terrible bark! ere the night be gone;
Nor let morning look on so foul a sight
As would blanch for ever her rosy light!

Written by the Irish poet Thomas Moore, while
passing Deadman's Island, late in the evening
in September 1804, on his way home to England

CHAPTER 4

INDUSTRIES

The lobster fishing is the principal industry. Usually on May 10th--weather permitting--the season for lobster fishing begins. During the winter the men are busy repairing the boats and either repairing their lobster pots or building new ones. A couple of times I got up at 5 a.m., called for a friend and we drove to the wharf at Old Harry--where many families were gathered for the launching of the boats.

It was usually bright, and at one time there were special prayers or a service as the boats took off for their fishing grounds--I'm sure there were many quiet prayers offered to God for the safety of the men during this season.

The blue sky, and calm waters were very impressive--there was joy in the air--the long winter was over and the freezers which were nearly empty, would again be filled.

The men usually arrived back from their fishing grounds 2 o'clock in the afternoon--and what a treat was in store for everybody--our lobster boiler was on the stove kept very busy with lobster cooking--my husband likes lobster in preference to any other fish, needless to say we were never without the delicacy--the men would throw them cooked in the back porch; he would also go to

the wharf and buy them.

Sometimes, my husband would go to the wharf when the boats were coming in and the men would throw up lobsters, "A treat for yourself and your wife," they would say--little did they know his wife wasn't that fond of lobster, it was a joke really--as the parson had an extra meal; July 10th season ends.

At the Thanksgiving service in the month of September, when the vegetables were brought to the church, giving thanks to God for the harvest, the lobster pot was there giving thanks also.

There is some fishing of cod, trawlers supply the commercial market; Grand Entry and Grindstone each have large fish plants, there fish is packaged and ready for the market, many women are employed in these plants.

The individual family catches its own supply of cod, mackerel and herring also--but not in such great quantities. Smelts, scallops and glazed fish tails are also sold commercially, but the catch is not too great.

Spin-off industry is packing fish and the making of fish meal. Sealing is good in certain years when ice conditions are right.

Few people raise animals which supply their meat, milk, etc. This is quite a contrast to the times when everyone kept their own cows to provide milk, butter and cream.

Although cod, mackerel, scallop and herring were the chief catches, sometimes halibut would stray into the fishing nets--this

would provide us with a delicacy, as at that time halibut was my favourite fish.

I remember hearing a knock at the door one afternoon during our first month of May on the Islands. I opened the door and was quite startled at the size of the fish two men were holding, it was huge. I asked them what it was. One man replied, "It is a halibut," I was so thrilled--I immediately asked, "Where did you get it"? The other man replied, "Your husband bought it at the wharf, what shall we do with it"? I replied, "the basement floor is the only place large enough." So I put papers on the floor and the poor thing jumped although its innards had been removed at the wharf--it weighed 50 pounds.

Not knowing what to do with it, I phoned a friend, Mrs. Sam. Matthews, and told her the story. She said, "bring it down and put it in my deep freezer," so when my husband came home we put it in the trunk of the car and proceeded to Mrs. Matthews. It remained there one week--I asked her how we could reciprocate--she replied, "I would like the head,"--this being a delicacy, she was very grateful.

During the week of the halibut's freezing, I asked Mr. Arthur McKay if he would cut it up for me. After telling him the story and the week was over--my husband again took the halibut in the car and proceeded to Mr. McKay's cutting shed as he was the meat cutter for several people in the town. As he cut the steaks--my

husband and I packaged them, the ends and bits were also packaged, I used these for chowder. What a delightful dinner we were going to have that evening--yes, it was delightful, and our freezer looked really luxurious--winter treats, halibut 70 cents a pound in May 1977.

I have often thought it would be feasible to have a cranberry industry. The season is from the middle of October to the end--sometimes later. Not exaggerating, there are millions--people from the mainland come home for the picking. The berries are much larger than imported berries and much more tasty. I have picked gallons--made jellies and jams, not forgetting the deep freezer. What is more delectable than biting into a hot juicy cranberry pie when the weather outside is freezing?

The Government of Quebec has been excavating for the past five years with the hope of a salt mining industry. Just outside Grosse Ile a mine is operating, few men are employed, but as yet the salt has not been commercialized.

There has been some controversy over the building of a harbour to ship the salt. It is hoped some solution will be found to the satisfaction of the people of Grosse Ile and also to the Provincial Government.

The Tourist Industry seems to increase each year--because of the excellent auto service many of the tourists bring their own trailers or cars--there is a trailer park in Grand Entree--with all

modern devices. I remember going in the park wanting to do some laundry as my washing machined seemed to be out of order--but was told by the management that it was strictly for people who were staying in the park--this park is equal to any park across Canada. Many come in by E.P.A. or Quebec Air, these are mostly one time residents or people coming home on vacation to visit relatives. The tourists vary--if weather conditions are favourable there is a good business. The season is so short and uncertain that hotels and motels are limited but a more relaxing place for city folk is difficult to find.

NOTE: 30,000 tourists visited the Islands in 1980.

WINDMILLS

(News item--"The windmill now being designed for the Magdalen Islands will be the largest vertical-axis wind turbine in the world and will save 40,000 gallons of diesel fuel a year".)

I saw, so many years ago
A windmill on the Norfolk shore
The windmill turned and creaked and groaned
It ground the grain - and furthermore
It had been there a hundred years
Facing the wind - a need to fill
I have not been there as of late
For all I know it is there still.

The one that we are building now
Is absolutely up to-date
Instead of sails this modern one
Will use a kind of half moon plate
The finds of coal and oil and gas
Made sale of windmills somewhat slack
But we are running out of things
And now the windmill's coming back.

(Stuart Richardson)

The above appeared in a recent issue of a Montreal newspaper.

(I regret to say that this experiment was not successful. Maybe in some future date Hydro will try again.)

CHAPTER 5

SPORTS

Winter sports on the Islands are a bit different from other parts of Canada. There is little or no skiing--this is because of the snow blowing away with the wind storms; also the crust that forms on the snow is very slippery; in spite of this condition skidoos are very plentiful--the majority of fathers of households are proud owners; the children (it seems to me it is a must for the children) really appreciate the skidoo--it gives them a lot of pleasure.

Skidoos are very plentiful as I have before mentioned--sometimes when walking down the road, I would hear a voice call, "Teacher, would you like a ride?"--I immediately would jump on, and off we would go, the children especially would like for me to get into the wagon attached to the skidoo and ride with them. Sometimes there was not much room, but there was always room for the teacher, (meaning me).

Skating is quite popular--hockey teams from Fatima and Grand Entrée compete with Grosse Isle--the rink in Grosse Isle is an outdoor rink--a little hut close by is heated for the removal of skates and boots, as well as for the intermissions. The Church Youth group served coffee and sometimes made a little extra money by

serving hot dogs. The small children used the rink for skating; they were always happy with their new skates.

Broomball was played two evenings a week. I was invited to join, it was a rather rough game, so in fear of my anatomy being disrupted I declined; one winter I remember there were several injuries.

Ice fishing sometimes--when the weather permits. I remember once getting on a skidoo and driving over a hill to the sea, frozen of course, and there was a man lying on his tummy with a hook and line dropped through the ice, he was catching frost fish. I too lay on my tummy and as the fish swam by naturally they were attracted by the bait. One could see them as they bit into the bait. The frost fish is pinkish in colour with a sweetish flavour--in size they resembled a medium size lake trout.

One would imagine it would be very cold on the ice--but actually it was very warm because here in this little nook I am quite sure the temperature would reach 60 degrees F. Instead of a sun tan one would call it an ice tan or maybe a wind burn, it was a nice tan anyway. I said, "What a nice place for a picnic." When lying on the ice to catch the fish, a bag of hay was used for protection.

With the great outdoors and the attitude of the people indoors, being isolated seldom entered my mind.

CHAPTER 6

THE FOUNDING OF THE MISSION

In 1850 when our Mission was founded, Capt. John Townsend Coffin was proprietor of the Magdalen Islands which had been bequeathed to him by his late uncle, Sir Isaac Coffin, the grantee of the crown.

Although the Mission was established under the S.P.C.K. (Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge), the help that Capt. Coffin gave the church on the islands during its infancy was invaluable. One hundred acres of land was provided by him at Grindstone for the use of the clergy and also the lands for the cemeteries at Amherst and Grindstone.

The church at Amherst and the first parsonage and church at Grindstone were built and furnished through his generous gifts and donations. His agents, Mr. Munsey, John Fontana, John D. Tuzo and A.S.D. Van Barnweld who resided on the Islands were always ready and willing to help the church and clergy in any way.

The Mission is indebted to these men who gave of themselves in aiding the establishment of the Anglican church on the Islands. During those early years without their generosity and help it would no doubt have been a slow and arduous task.

The Rev. Felix Boyle was the first Anglican Missionary to visit

the Islands and hold services, and the first Anglican Bishop the Rt. Rev. George Jehoshapat Mountain, the third Bishop of Quebec, who arrived here in the summer of 1850. He was 61 years of age when he felt it was his duty to go to the Magdalen Islands and look after the Protestant Community on Grosse Ile and Entry Island. He left England in a small Brigantine bound for Halifax, whose Captain undertook to put him off on the Islands.

It was not until 1847 that the Bishop was made aware of any claim existing in these Islands, (in which there are computed to be about two thousand French Acadian Roman Catholics) under the care of the Church of England. The inhabitants are in the habit of regarding themselves connected rather with Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island or Newfoundland, (of which last colony they formerly constituted a dependence) than with Canada; and the still very small body of Protestants among them, having grown out of yet smaller beginnings, appear to have become habituated to the idea of being too insignificant and inconsiderable to apply at a distance for the provisions of the Christian Ministry. The late Mr. E. Bowen, however, having been obliged in his capacity of District Judge in the County of Gaspé, to pass over to the Islands, in the year above mentioned, in order to hold annual Circuit Court, had occasion to learn that a good number of Protestant families were settled upon the Islands, and having been always alive to the spiritual interests of his fellow creatures, he made the Bishop acquainted with the

particulars. It was accordingly arranged that upon the next visit of the Judge in 1848, he should be accompanied by the Rev. R. Short, one of the Missionaries in the county of Gaspé, who volunteered for the service. In the execution, however, of this arrangement, the labours of Mr. Short were interrupted, and left incomplete in consequence of the unfortunate illness of the Judge, (terminating some time afterwards in his death), which broke out at the Islands; and when they returned to Gaspé, the only portion of the Protestant inhabitants who had been visited were the settlers upon Entry Island.

When the Bishop arrived on the 25th of June he brought with him a supply of Bibles, prayer-books, and tracts, voted for the purpose by the Diocesan Committee at Quebec, of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. The Bishop travelled alone, on arriving on the Islands there was no inhabitation in sight but on the beach there were signs of human labor, in some roughly prepared means of curing cod, upon a diminutive scale--the men who had landed him on the beach walked to a French settlement and returned with a cart which just sufficed for the baggage. The Bishop then proceeded on foot for about ten miles when he came to a small kind of village, inhabited by French Canadians, l'Etang du Nord, and containing a wooden Roman Catholic Church, served by the same Priest who serves another at House Harbour. Here the Bishop dried himself, procured a breakfast and a cart and proceeded to the house of Mr. Munsey, (his name has been mentioned previously). Mr. Munsey

was a merchant and a justice of the peace for the Islands. It was impossible for him to stay at this residence as it was overcrowded with visitors (summer), so lodgings were procured for him close by in a particularly clean but humble surroundings belonging to a French family; at 9 a.m. he held services in the Munsey household, and had a congregation of 17 or 18 persons.

The Bishop really would have gone to Grosse Ile on the following day, but it was unfit to travel--the next day being good weather, he procured a fishing boat and proceeded to Grosse Ile (about 25 miles from House Harbour) which was inhabited exclusively by Protestants. The Grosse Ile settlers consisted principally of a little band of Colonists of 22 years standing, from Nova Scotia, with their children and grandchildren. More than 50 persons met him in a house at seven o'clock, this was on July 9th--some of the men were away fishing on the coast of Labrador. Most cordially was he welcomed by the poor people--the Minister of God who came among them--the first to be seen upon the spot. Some of the families here were taking their children to the Roman Catholic Priest at House Harbour, the people from Amherst Harbour were also taking their children to the Priest. Services were held here, tracts and Bibles were distributed.

The weather was not good--so the Bishop did not get to Entry Island until July 11th--there were eleven Protestant families--no Roman Catholics on the Island.

Mr. Munsey accompanied him, this time he travelled by a boat belonging to the Collector, Mr. Belleau, resident at Amherst Harbour. The service was held in the largest house on the island which stands upon an excellent farm. There were between forty and fifty people present--the house where he was to spend the night; the family attended the service and through the wooden partition he could hear a child saying his prayers. What an example; domestic religion was carefully cultivated in this family, in spite of all the disadvantages under which they had labored.

On leaving Entry Island the women showered him with loaves and homemade cheese--although it was Sunday a lamb was killed to add extra to the meal.

The Bishop took care not to entangle them in any hasty arrangements nor to take advantage of the impressions made by him while they were freshly warmed by the peculiar circumstances of his visit. They all, however, gave in their deliberate and thankfully expressed adhesion to the Church, and received gladly her prayer book (the church of England), together with tracts which were explanatory of her systems, usages and worship. The number of Protestant souls on the Islands, including children was 173.

Grain was raised for their own consumption--hand mills were sometimes used or it was sent to mills in Prince Edward Island or Pictou in Nova Scotia.

The people of the Islands were completely to themselves--no

post office or means of stated communication.

The Proprietor of the whole group of Islands, was Captain Coffin, R.N., resident in Europe, to whom they were bequeathed by his uncle, the late Admiral Sir Isaac Coffin, the grantee of the Crown. Mr. Munsey, the agent, seems to be much interested for the religious as well as the temporal welfare of its inhabitants, and has instructions of a liberal character from his Principal, who, it appears, does not desire to look to the property as a source of revenue and wishes to expend upon public improvements within the Islands, whatever he may receive from them. Unfortunately, however, an opposition to the claims of the proprietor has arisen among the French, who constitute the great body of the population.

In the twelve years following his first journey in 1850, Bishop Mountain paid many visits to the Islands. Many times he had shivered with the cold in wet clothing (caused by leaky decks) on board fishing vessels between Gaspé and the Magdalen Islands for as many as four days at a time. The many other strenuous journeys by canoe, vessel, horse and on foot were taking their toll as well.

In the summer of 1862, he visited the Islands for the last time--he passed to his rest on the Feast of the Epiphany (January 6th) 1863. He might very well have echoed the words of the Apostle Paul--"I have fought a good fight--I have finished my course--I have kept the faith."

The Rev. Felix Boyle was among the first students to graduate

from Bishop's University, Lennoxville, he graduated with an M.A. He took charge of the Islands June 14, 1851, as Deacon. In 1852 he returned to Quebec for his ordination as Priest, which took place at Trinity Cathedral on June 5, 1852 by the Rt. Rev. G. J. Mountain. He returned to the Islands where he served devoutly and faithfully for 15 long hard years. His wife and a couple of his children died and are buried at Grosse Ile.

George C. Phinney (lay reader) who came to the Islands on June 1st, 1875, in his report gives an excellent account of the Islands.

Three months in the Magdalens will restore health to the sick, vigor and elasticity to the most impaired constitution, and, in fact, benefit in a thousand ways any whose good fortune it is to be stationed there.

Unmindful of obstacles (for the most part anticipated, I am happy to say), the change from the busy streets, the dusty city and impure air to that of the purest, wafted for miles over the Gulf of St. Lawrence, infused new life in me, and I launched my little bark in the cause of Christ, to ferry souls to his fold.

I remember the days which I spent in the Magdalens as the happiest of my life, and I regret that duty's call elsewhere deprives me of the privilege of ministering longer to these simple Christian people.

The Parsonage and Churches are well cared for by the wardens, the former has been furnished throughout by Admiral Coffin. I took

an inventory of the furniture and found it the same as when Rev. Riopel left it.

A word in behalf of the people--a more quiet, inoffensive, harmless and Christian people I never met. They received me kindly, gave me the best their homes could afford, gladly assisted me in everything I required to be done, and forwarded me wherever I wished to go, thus endearing themselves to me, and I take my leave of them with a feeling of sadness, fearing that ere they receive a pastor their little flock will be lessened by the cold hand of death, and they will be compelled to perform that saddest of services without the assistance of a kind and loving minister.

The Rev. R. C. Tambs, a native of Norway and professor of Mathematics at Bishop's University, Lennoxville, was in charge of the Islands during the summer months of 1874. He reports, "Everywhere I was received and forwarded in my way with the utmost kindness, and when I took my final leave of these our poor people in the wilderness, it was not without a feeling of sadness and deepest sympathy for them, knowing, as I did, how deeply troubled their hearts were at the thought of having, perhaps, to pass another long and dreary winter without the services of the Church and the cheering visits of a kindly pastor."

The author after having looked up the record is quite pleased to quote--that a pastor succeeded the Rev. George Phinney in 1875--and for the years that followed the Islands have been conscientious-

ly cared for.

The whole population of the Islands in 1875: French speaking - 3000; English speaking - 335.

MAGDALEN ISLANDS

Rev. James Chambers reports:

1881

We have passed a winter of unusual length, not marked by any great degree of frost, but by heavy and repeated falls of snow, which is a point to be noticed in Mission work here, because it has made travelling difficult and tedious.

As usual all the Islands have been visited as regularly as possible, with the exception of Bryon Island, this is in consequence of its isolated position, and the current running rapidly between it and Grosse Isle, prevents anything like an ice bridge forming. The distance from Island to Island being ten miles.

Grosse Isle is twenty miles from Grindstone Island, and the journey takes the whole of the day to accomplish, if there is much snow. However, this Island has been visited frequently and regularly and the work carried on as usual.

Grindstone Island has had the advantage of a good schoolmaster, Mr. Harvey Clarke, jr., who has done his work well and to the satisfaction of all. During my absence he has conducted Sunday School, thus supplying a great need.

Our deepest thanks are due to H.S. Scott, Esq., Quebec, who

has kindly obtained twenty dollars (20) for school purposes, with a promise of twenty more at the termination of the scholastic year.

Amherst Island has been visited as usual. Here there are but five Protestant families all of which have been visited. One of these has but recently settled here from Prince Edward Island, the husband being a Methodist and the wife a Presbyterian. They have always received me with marked attention, and on my last visit requested me to baptize their three children as they had not previously received the rite.

A good opportunity offered for visiting Entry Island, as the ice-bridge formed early.

The Temperance Society still continues to hold its ground. Lately it has not added many to its ranks; this is owing to its having already embraced all the elder inhabitants of the Islands with the exception of the veteran drinkers who still prefer the way of death.

Travelling is much more difficult here for a Missionary than for any other person, on account of having to meet engagements, i.e., to be at an Island at a given time, and thus have to force through all kinds of weather. And although the exposure on these bleak frozen bays is great, yet, it seems to me far less troublesome than that of the fall of the year when boating in bad weather. I will give an example: I was returning from Grosse Isle late last Fall, a strong fair wind was blowing, and with reefed sails the

boat went along at a splendid rate until I arrived at what is called "The Narrows". Unfortunately, I started and arrived at this place just before sunset, and as I could not see the channel distinctly, I had the misfortune of running the boat aground. Nothing remained now but to get overboard and try to heave the boat off, for one dare not lighten the boat by throwing away ballast, as fully six miles of deep water had to be accomplished after getting clear of these shoals.

At this season of the year the water is very cold, and as it took fully an hour to get the boat into deep water again, I was much chilled.

Darkness had now set in and with it rain and an increase of wind, which hauled right ahead and compelled me to anchor for the night. And such a night of misery is not easily explained here, suffice it to say that this and similar experiences of frequent occurrence are fruitful sources of sharp attacks of rheumatism.

In the early days, the churches on the Islands were built from wood, etc., obtained from shipwrecks.

The first church to be built was at Grosse Isle in the year 1853.

The first church at Grindstone, 1869.

The first church at Entry Island, 1900.

The first church at Old Harry 1916.

There was also a church at Amherst, it was built sometime in the 1800s, sad to say, it was torn down about 65 years ago--the Protestants had moved away. There is a beautiful French Roman Catholic church there - today, (1980).

The Protestant churches are well furnished--they may not be as elaborate as the Roman Catholic, this of course is understandable as the French population is very much greater.

The people of the Islands are quite proud of their Acadian ancestry. When, in 1763, New France came under the English rule, the Magdalen Islands were annexed to Newfoundland. Soon after, however, the passing of the Quebec Act transferred them to the Jurisdiction of the Province of Quebec, where they were for administrative purposes, attached to the Gaspé county.

In 1798, King George III, as a reward for service during the American War of Independence, granted the Islands to Admiral Isaac Coffin. They were under the control of Coffin's agents, and those of his successors, for more than a century. It was only in 1895 that the Quebec Parliament passed a law allowing the Acadians to become landowners. In that year, as well, the Islands formed a part of the diocese of Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. They remained a part of this diocese until 1946, when they were again joined with the Gaspé diocese and are under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Quebec. As far as Federal Jurisdiction was concerned,

the Islands had to wait until 1948 before being considered an autonomous county.

Ille Brion was granted to Captain Coffin by the British Crown as a Freehold; this is the only Freehold granted by the British Crown in North America.

In 1850 when the Mission was founded, Captain John Townsend Coffin was proprietor of the Magdalen Islands, which had come to him from his late uncle, Sir Isaac Coffin, the grantee of the Crown. The latter was Captain of one of the ships in Lord Nelson's fleet at Trafalgar--and was given the Freehold in recognition of his services.

One morning when we were living on the Islands, it was during the summer months--my husband and I received guests for the morning tea--it happened to be a man and his wife by the name of Mr. and Mrs. Ernest McCallum, whose grandfather had once lived on Brion Island--they came to try and get a glimpse of the Island. Alas there was fog. The Island being 8 miles from the rectory at Grosse Isle, on fine days with visibility Brion can be seen quite clearly--we tried to hold on to these kind people, hoping the fog would eventually clear--I commiserated with them as they had come a long way from Quebec to try and get a bird's eye view--the Island was covered with fog all day and very disappointed they returned to Quebec.

Mr. McCallum's grandfather, Singleton McCallum along with three of his brothers namely George, John, and James were hired in St.

Peter's, Prince Edward Island to go to Brion Island and work for a William Dingwell who then owned or leased Brion Island as a fishing station. He was known as the King of Brion Island and with his wife Peg, ruled it with an iron hand. The lighthouse keeper at that time was Townsend Dingwell--married to his grandfather's sister Jane, this would be Toosie Dingwell's father and mother. Mr. McCallum's grandfather and grandmother died on the Island when their children were quite young.

There were four children who were then cared for by their Aunt Jane and Uncle Townsend Dingwell who had four of their own, Dick, Florence, Todd and Caroline, Caroline was commonly known as Toosie. Dingwell's father had an uncle George McCallum who was the blacksmith at Grindstone throughout his entire life.

In 1921 Ernest's father made the one and only trip back to the Island--this of course was a very sad event for him, he also visited his two sisters Sadie and Bertha who had married and settled on Entry Island.

The Island has been uninhabited since 1947--it is used now only by fishermen who have their fishing nets close by--there is no sign of wild life as in the early days--the Island looks desolate from a distance.

Note: Toosie is now 88 years of age and the only survivor,
lives at Grindstone.

CHAPTER 7

THE MAGDALEN ISLAND CLERGY RESERVES

Captain Isaac Coffin had fought well in his Majesty's navy during the American War 1775-83. His frigate Sybil had plied these northern waters aiding the Loyalist and British cause.

One evening while passing the Magdalen Islands, on one of his many trips to Quebec, with his friend and superiors, Lord Dorchester, who was serving his second term as Governor of Lower Canada, Coffin, jokingly suggested that he would like to be made proprietor of these Islands. Dorchester assented, and Isaac Coffin's petition requesting that he be granted the Magdalen Islands for his services to the Crown, was read in Council on July 31, 1787.

The request was granted, but it was not until April 24, 1798, that the Governor of Lower Canada acting on behalf of King George III, stated that the extreme Eastern Island (now known as Coffin Island) would not be part of the grant, that this Eastern Island would be set aside as a Clergy Reserve for the support and maintenance of a Protestant Clergy. This clause was to fulfil Article 36 of the Constitutional Act of 1791.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL ACT OF 1791

A few years after the smoke had cleared away from the muskets of the French and British armies in the battle for Quebec, and

General James Wolfe emerged as the dauntless hero that Alexander Muir saw it so fitting to write about in his famous song (The Maple Leaf Forever) some 100 years later. Several Acts and Royal Proclamations were issued in order to establish both peace and prosperity in the new land. One of these acts was the Constitutional Act of 1791, which brought about the establishment of the Clergy Reserves.

The Act stipulated among many things, that Canada would be divided into two Provinces, Upper Canada now Ontario, Lower Canada now Quebec.

Article 36 of this Act stated that in all future land grants for whatever purpose, one-seventh would be set aside for the support and maintenance of a Protestant clergy. The word "Protestant" was undoubtedly the fly in the ointment, which caused all the trouble.

Two years after the Act was introduced, Bishop Jacob Mountain, the first Bishop of Quebec, arrived in the new land to look after his flock, which was scattered hither and yon in the vast wilds of Lower Canada (Quebec). He, along with Archdeacon Strachan, who later became the first Anglican Bishop of Toronto, held very firm opinions on the Clergy Reserves. They were of the opinion that these reserves were meant for the exclusive use of the Church of England. However, several other rivals--Presbyterians--Methodists and the Church of Scotland were attempting to lay their claims

also. These groups had moved into Canada during and after the British-American war 1775-83.

One can imagine that the Roman Catholic Bishops who had held sway here for 175 years were outraged in finding that they would not derive any support from these public reserves. Many argued the revenue (from rent) of the clergy reserves should go to the support of schools, which were sadly lacking at the time. Public agitation mounted as politics encountered religion, and the issue of the distribution of the reserves cropped up as perennially as dandelions on a lawn.

The matter was finally settled under the Cartier-Macdonald Government, who passed legislation in 1854, to abolish the clergy reserves. By 1856 the Crown had taken back all the lands of these reserves and they were later sold to the public. Their accumulated interests (from the rent of these lands) were paid into the Upper and Lower Canada Municipalities Fund.

The General Synod of the Anglican Church was paid the reserves. The National Church then divided the money to the various parishes according to the amount of property held by them under the old clergy reserves system.

The Clergy Reserves have long since disappeared, but the pages they made in Canadian History during their sixty years of existence will probably remain forever. It was an issue that clogged Canadian politics for over half a century, and they too played a

role in our Mission.

In 1856 when the Clergy Reserves were finally closed out, this part of the islands was taken back by the Crown and sold to the public at 20 cents per acre. The Magdalen Island Mission received approximately \$1,300,00 for the sale of land (Coffin Island) and this was the basis for our parochial endowment.

CHAPTER 8

THE 125th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF
THE MAGDALEN ISLAND MISSION
1975

This year 1975 was a very special year for the English speaking people of the Magdalen Islands, looking forward to the 125th Anniversary. There were many preparations to be made, many people to be contacted especially those who had been away from the Island temporarily and those who had made their homes elsewhere, the thanksgiving dinner or supper (and naturally we were going to have lobster), the decorations, etc., everything was very efficiently cared for by the people.

It was Sunday morning July 6, 1975, 10 a.m. at Entry Island the Thanksgiving service began--conducted by the Rt. Rev. Timothy Matthews and my husband.

A large congregation attended the service, it was held in All Saints Church, following the service a reception was held in the parish hall--the ladies prepared a delightful meal, Mrs. Edna Welsh made a special cake which was decorated by Mrs. Rhoda Josey. The cake was cut by the oldest parishioners, Mrs. Grace Welsh and Mrs. Dorothy Quinn.

It was a very calm and fine day, making the boat trip back to

Grosse Isle in good time for my husband and the Bishop who were looking forward to a full day of celebrations--it was a seven mile boat trip to Grindstone, then 30 miles by car to Grosse Isle. There wasn't much time for resting, no doubt the boat trip was invigorating as the day was so very suitable for the occasion. The Bishop and my husband arrived at the cemetery in Grosse Isle at 4 p.m. where were 400 people gathered for the dedication of a Plaque, given to the glory of God and in memory of Reverend Felix Boyle. I have already told you of his coming to the Islands from 1851-1866, the Plaque is made of brass and is mounted on a cement slab about 2 feet in height, Mr. Byron Clarke and Mr. Robert McLean unveiled the Plaque, it was dedicated by the Rt. Rev. Timothy Matthews, Bishop of Quebec. Taking part in the ceremony were the Rev. H.A. Vallis (Priest-in-charge) and the Rev. Frs. Boudreau and Cyr.

There were no cars, so in 1850 the horse was the main source of travel. We tried to keep as close to the original as was possible--one can imagine the difficulty in grooming the horses, we were all wondering how they would perform. Two horses with their owners and drivers led the Pilgrimage, perhaps it was a good idea with this arrangement as the horses were quite at ease. The owners and drivers were Mr. Kenneth Keating and Mr. Robert Turnbull. The buggies were very fitting--in the buggy leading the procession were the Bishop and Rev. Fr. Boudreau, following in the second

buggy were Rev. H. A. Vallis and Rev. Fr. Cyr. A very spectacular and impressive parade followed in line--cars, trucks, and walking parishioners.

The children of the Islands are very artistic--so with the help of their mothers and friends, they made many beautiful flags and banners, "God is love" was inscribed on each flag and banner, the children sang and waved the banners as they marched slowly with the older people to the rectory grounds where a Thanksgiving service was held, conducted by the Bishop and clergy.

Under blue skies and temperature 75 degrees F. people who could stand, stood, while others filled the chairs; there were so many people in attendance the church could only hold one eighth. Knowing this was going to happen, we had planned outside.

Two organs were placed on the rectory grounds (one an electric organ kindly lent by Mrs. Mildred Clarke) this one I played, the other was from the parish hall, it was played by Mr. Byron Clark ; the singing sounded almost like Celestial voices as the melodies floated through the air, "How Great Thou Art," and "Amazing Grace."

The sound of the waves all around us and the sparkling blue of the sea and sky seemed to say "Thank you" to God for the accomplishments of so many, many efforts over the years.

A native of Grosse Isle now living on the Mainland and 92 years of age was home for the celebration--also with us, was Mr. Reginald Gibb of the Church Army of Hanover, Ontario, who served

the Islands from 1931-1932.

There were so many people from out of town, I cannot remember their names, so I shall just say, "Welcome Home."

Everybody seemed to be dressed in their best attire, there was every colour imaginable, the grounds resembled a field of flowers. Now with the service over, we all walked to the parish hall, as it was close by; the hall was gaily decorated for the occasion--and after the singing of the Blessing, everybody but the servitors sat at the tables where the festive lobster was served; 300 lobsters and a variety of salads with home made rolls, breads and cakes. A very special cake was donated, compliments of the French bakery in Etang du Nord.

Greetings were brought from Mr. Gordon Matthews, out of town teacher, he spoke of his affiliation with the church of Grosse Isle. Greetings were also brought by the French Priests from their people, wishing us well in accomplishing our duties over the years, indeed a struggle during the early years of the Mission.

So ended the day, a great day in our history.

ILES DES MAGDALENES

The Gulf of St. Lawrence,
 Off the coast of P.E.I.
 There are treasures this world has seldom seen,
 When I dream, I dream of them,
 Shining there like little gems
 Those beautiful Iles des Magdalenes.

Where the high cliffs of red,
 And the blue skies overhead,
 Land the ocean its deep romantic sheen,
 While the long warm lagoons
 Clasp the shining crystal dunes
 Heaven shines on the Iles des Magdalenes.

Where the boats will come and go
 Gently rocking to and fro
 On the breeze of the sea so fresh and clean,
 And the hardy fishermen are away from home again.
 Fishing lobsters off the Iles des Magdalenes.

From Grosse Ile to Sandy Hook,
 You may drive and take a look,
 At the little town of Grindstone in between.
 Where the children love to play
 Around the barracks on the hay,
 When the sun shines on the Iles des Magdalenes.

To this haven of the Gulf,
 Many feathers from the South,
 Build their nests among the hills of grassy green
 They sing Je vous aime beaucoup
 Like the friendly people do.
 For they love those Iles des Magdalenes.

While the blue of the skies
 Bring the tears to my eyes,
 I go back to the islands of my dreams,
 Where the little fishing towns
 Dot the coast line all around,
 I return to the Iles des Magdalenes.