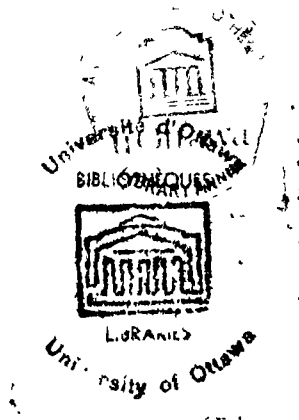


A HISTORY OF ASHFIELD PARISH
HURON COUNTY, ONTARIO

by Sister Mary Dolorosa Sullivan, C.S.J.

Thesis presented to the Faculty of
Arts of the University of Ottawa,
through the Department of History,
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INTRODUCTION

"What is the matter with the folks out there?" expostulated the summer-visitor as he entered the sacristy where the parish priest was unvesting after having celebrated Holy Mass that warm Sunday morning, August, 1934.

"Is there something wrong?" returned the pastor calmly.

"Definitely yes, Father. Why, they are still in the church. Don't they know that Mass is over?"

"And so that's it, is it? Young man, the whole trouble is that my parishioners are Christians. They have just shared in the most sublime Act of Religion, and many of them have received their Lord in Holy Communion. They feel that they have time to remain to thank their God and to say a prayer for their dear departed, lying out there in God's Acre."

"Oh--sorry--thanks, Father", and Mr. Summer-Visitor hurried to his Packard, casting a last curious glance at the strange people who were now congregating in friendly groups before the stately edifice to discuss the latest in the world of politics, fashion, crops or weather. Ever since, on the Irish section of the Lake Shore, the first frame structure was erected with its sanctuary towards the blue Lake Huron and its door opening

on the fertile fields, little groups have gathered here after the Sunday Mass to talk, joke, and argue, sharing one another's joys and sorrows, and oiling, for another week's wear, the wheels of life, with clean and wholesome wit and humour.

For nearly one hundred years, the Sunday Mass has been the pivotal point around which the lives of the people of Ashfield Parish revolve. So true is this that the absence of anyone from "church" on Sunday means, almost without exception, serious illness. The spire of St. Joseph's can be seen miles away, its bell can be heard much farther, but the intangible influence of that for which it stands reaches beyond the realm of either sight or sound. The parish church, primarily the centre of religious life, is the centre of social, economic, and political life as well, for if there is a spot in Canada where men of the soil live the Faith they love, that spot is Ashfield Parish, in Huron County, Ontario.

Katherine Hale, motoring through Ontario in the summer of 1936, passed by this same church, and in her charming book, This is Ontario, dismissed the entire district with these few lines:

Between Goderich and Kincardine we noticed many farm houses with front doors boarded up, though they were by no means deserted. We wondered if their owners had forgotten that summer had come. But the country was lovely,

seen in the half-light of the long warm evening-- a rolling land of opulent farms, in which at that moment potato fields in flower were a dominant note ¹.

The owners had not forgotten that summer had come-- the owners lived some distance away on one of their other farms or perhaps in a far-off city, having left the care of their fields to those who rented them. Today the same conditions obtain. The fields are not deserted, signs of vibrant life abound, but no one lives in the lovely houses. It was different yesterday, and, please God, it will be different tomorrow, but today Ashfield Parish is but a shadow of what it once was. "The opulent farms" are there, but the children of the old families are in the cities. "If you wish to meet Ashfield, you must go to Detroit", is a statement more than half true.

Nevertheless, hopeful portents already appear. Plans are afoot to popularize agriculture in Ontario and to re-direct to rural life men of strong character, keen intelligence, and sound judgment, men who are willing to work, but who will be agents also in fostering community spirit by promoting recreational, social, and cultural activities. The government no longer treats a delegation on farmers' grievances with the impatience and irritation

too often shown to country relatives, but rather with the courtesy and deference due to respectable neighbours. The Hierarchy of Ontario are evincing a keen interest in the situation, realizing what a safeguard to freedom resides in the ownership of property, and what a priceless heritage of spiritual and cultural values the land holds. A Catholic Rural Life Movement has been in existence for some time which, it is hoped, will become more effective in the Archdiocese of Toronto through the medium of a Rural Life Program established, 1946, in St. Augustine's Seminary, Toronto, and in St. Peter's Seminary, London. Father Lord's Summer School of Catholic Action included in its 1946 program a "Rural Life in Principle" elective, under the direction of Father Anthony J. Adams, S.J. The aim is the same in all--to face the problems of rural life by educating leaders to the gravity of the situation that through them the difficulties may be solved and more young Catholics may be persuaded to remain on the farm. The Catholic Press also is weekly drawing attention to the national need for a Christian rural population. Rev. J. V. Urbain, warning against the incorporated commercial type of farm where creative activity is at a minimum, and the soil is made a machine of production, says:

If democracy, freedom, religion and life itself are to be kept safe and secure, it means that our major battle is to be fought on the home-front by saving the family-owned farms. It is foolish simply to cry about false urban standards and industrial outrages. We must direct our best efforts towards cultivating a type of Christian family that will produce virtuous men and women . . . to restore a new vitality to Christian home life and home culture ².

But what is more important than a changed attitude in government officials, a new interest on the part of the Hierarchy or an awakened public press is the fact that the farmers themselves are uniting to improve the conditions of the independent landowner. Their organization, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, under the presidency of H. H. Hannan, with headquarters in Ottawa, is sworn to a policy non-political but highly co-operative, based on the principles laid down by the Rochdale Pioneers. If farming holds the key to progress, all skeleton keys, hitherto held and used indiscriminately, must be destroyed. The day is just behind the dawn.

That the prosperity of Canada is largely dependent on the rural districts of our vast dominion is a fact beyond the realm of discussion. That the rural

² The Family-Type Farm Since the War, Rural Life Column in The Canadian Register of Kingston, Fifth Year, No. 27, p. 7, col. 5.

districts have had a large share in shaping Canada's destiny thus far is also a truth fully recognized. Consequently, until the local history of these smaller units has been minutely studied, and the humble folk, whose works and words are an index to the culture of the period, have been disinterred from the obscurity of the past, we cannot hope to understand the history of our country, to appreciate fully our great heritage or to feel that kinship with our ancestors on which true national love is based. May these pages, then, be a saga of unsung Canadians, a story of lives unknown in the printed pages of history but indelibly written into the narrative of Canada's life and progress.

Reliable sources of information regarding the township of Ashfield are not altogether lacking, as a perusal of the bibliography will attest, but many of these writings, ancient or modern, have little definite material on the Parish itself. However, Kingsbridge people lived through scenes and hours similar to those described, and from these authors we learn a great deal which otherwise, as a result of the reticence of the people concerned, would remain hidden. Unfortunately, no official historian accompanied the early settlers whose lives first affected Ashfield, and since an interest in local history did not become evident until, one by one,

the pioneers began to disappear from the stage of life, the inevitable result is that the local records now available are neither complete nor fully in accord.

Occasionally throughout this work family histories will be inserted, not because the persons concerned are more important than their neighbours, but simply because their story, being available, serves as a pattern of the general community life. In an effort to keep even traditional history impartial, residents of Ashfield who do not belong to St. Joseph's, as well as those who do, have been consulted ³.

An attempt to secure details of information from the present older residents has proved only partially satisfactory as discrepancies are bound to occur. Moreover, the kindly old people are loath to say anything that might cast the least shadow on any of their friends now "dead and gone". This delicacy of sentiment is truly admirable, and, after all, it is obvious that there is little to be kept secret in the history of Ashfield Parish. However, a balance has been well maintained, because while charity and courtesy, on the one hand, are inclined to

³ Mrs. A.A.J. Simpson, Kintail, and Mrs. Richard McWhinney, Crewe, both made valuable contributions. The latter was the first child born on the land used for the Port Albert Airport, which became, October 15-18, 1946, the scene of the International Victory Ploughing Match, which featured, among other items of agricultural progress, demonstrations of how pioneers a hundred years ago broke land.

suppression, on the other, a desire for a good story often leads to harmless exaggeration. Especially is this tendency to enlargement true of stories which were current while their principals were still alive--stories which have come down to us as legends of those early days. Such tales are to be read and enjoyed rather than investigated, but they should not be omitted, because they supply the spirit and the atmosphere without which statistics would become meaningless figures.

Fortified by these sources of information, inspired by esteem for these early pioneers, and fired by a desire to preserve for posterity their memory and their spirit, a chronicler of Ashfield Parish reverently begins a work of love.

CHAPTER I

FROM ERIN TO ASHFIELD

Do tum glóire Dé agus onóra na h-Eireann¹

Catholic Emancipation, 1829, had freed Irish Catholics from many of the disabilities under which they had lived for nearly three hundred years. But it would take more than one or two generations to wipe out the effect of these centuries of virtual slavery. No longer was it necessary to leave Erin in order to escape persecution, but equally true was it that only with great difficulty could a livelihood be wrested from her soil. When the young generation heard that there was gold to be found on the streets of New York, true to the idealism of their race, they began to dream of a day when they would shower on their loved parents comforts so richly deserved but heretofore lacking. They visualized their children as recipients of advantages which they themselves had never known. They read alluring stories of the boundless opportunities offered by beautiful and beneficent America. True once again to racial character, in a spirit of generous self-sacrifice, they determined to sever the ties of love

¹ For the Glory of God and the honour of Ireland.

and family in the interests of a greater good.

The 1830's and 1840's saw many young emigrants smile through their tears as they bade farewell to relatives and friends to find a new world which might be kinder to them than their materially² unfortunate Erin had been. They did not cry, as did the departing Scotch piper, "Ha til mi tulidh" --We return, we return, no more, no more--but rather was their "Slan Leat" --Health be with you--a promise to return, to bring back gifts or to take their loved ones to their Utopia. They departed³ with the blessing of God--a blessing which has been manifest in their lives and in those of their descendants for the past hundred years. May God never cease to guide their destinies until they all meet again in the eternal mansions!

Although these Irish exiles were paying their own passages and were prepared to make their own way in the New World, yet the ocean voyage was not without great suffering and peril. Letters written by ocean travellers of this period may be found in clippings from old newspapers in "Ye Olde Curiosity Shoppe" room of the Goderich

² Erin was not wholly unfortunate because at all times she has had homes which are shrines of domestic simplicity, of parental authority and of filial love, where Faith is the energizing force, Hope the dominant note, and Charity the prevailing virtue.

³ Appendix 1, p. 169.

Public Library, and in the excellent collection of early Canadian history owned by Fred G. Ketcheson of Toronto, whose private library is among the finest in North America. But there were, in addition to the general inconveniences and trials, particularly painful circumstances in individual cases which aggravated the unpleasantness of the long voyage.

Perhaps the most pathetic instance recorded is the one related by John Sullivan--later, father of eight children, including Nellie, Mrs. Michael O'Connor of Ashfield, and the late John, Patrick, and Mary (Mrs. Morgan Dalton) Sullivan, all of whom brought up their families in this district, giving to St. Joseph's Parish thirty-five children, of whom two have been ordained priests--Father M. N. Sullivan and Major M. J. Dalton, M.B.E.--while seven have become Sisters of St. Joseph, London. This Sullivan family, at the time of crossing, consisted of nine members, including John and his parents. Youngest of these was a small girl of less than a year, who, unable to withstand the hardships of the journey, while the boat was still a few days' distance from the shore of their new homeland, winged her way back to God. The mother could not bear to bury her little one in a watery grave, yet disclosure of the death would inevitably mean that the little body would be consigned to the waves,

which had already proved so cruel. Accordingly, the tiny form was wrapped in her ordinary shawl, and the older members of the family took turns in carrying the precious burden about the deck that suspicions might be allayed. This ruse succeeded well, for Christian burial was accorded the "Holy Innocent" when the shores of Canada at last received the ocean-weary immigrants.

Mrs. Thomas Hussey, mother of Mrs. Cornelius O'Keefe of Ashfield, used to tell how the ship in which she travelled was driven back to shore by adverse winds, whereby a dreary journey was made still longer and more wearisome. Her son became a priest, Father Thomas Hussey of Seaforth, two of her daughters are Sisters of St. Joseph, London, and two of her grandsons, Father Thomas O'Keefe and Cyril O'Keefe, belong to the great Ignatian Order of Jesuits.

Maurice Dalton, grandfather of John, Raymond, and Denis Dalton of Ashfield, had a stirring story of a three months' voyage with three "shipwrecks". An atheist on board approached the young Maurice during one of these ordeals, taunting him with the powerlessness of his God. When the storm had subsided and the boat had been righted, the young Irishman did not fail to remind the scoffer that his God had saved all on board, including the atheist himself. This is the Maurice Dalton who claimed a personal

acquaintance with Daniel O'Connell, but since the former must have been a much younger man than the great Daniel his descendants attribute his boast to that love of the Irish to be associated with the great. Incidentally, this trait is not peculiar to the Irish, as evidenced by the fact that the Mayflower would have been a five-deck vessel, two thousand feet in length and eight hundred feet in width to accommodate the ancestors of all those who claim to be descendants of people who crossed the Atlantic in that famous ship. However, even if Maurice Dalton's boast might have been closer to reality had he said, "I shook the hand that shook the hand of Daniel O'Connell", yet he and his descendants are the type of people whom Daniel O'Connell would have been proud to claim not only as acquaintances but as intimate friends.

Storms sometimes separated ships which were carrying friends who had hoped to begin their new life as neighbours, even as they had lived so happily in close proximity at home. Today, families meet who bear the same Christian as well as surname, and investigation often discloses the fact that the pioneers from whom they descended were relatives who had planned to live together in America, but whom circumstances had ruthlessly separated. The casualty list of gruesome World War II, always featuring many Irish names, not infrequently has occasioned

the sending of notes of sympathy to parents who, fortunately, could disclaim them, the confusion having been caused by a duplication of names for more than one generation.

Separation was also effected by a divergence of vocations--or perhaps the divergence of vocations resulted rather from the separation. An interesting case in point is that of the Desmond family. One branch married into a military society and located in the United States; the other followed agricultural pursuits and eventually reached Ashfield. Both branches have been favoured by God in the matter of religious vocations. The well-known Lieutenant-General Drum of the United States First Army, who served in World War I under General Pershing as Chief of Staff, and to whom the Notre Dame Laetare Medal was awarded in 1940, is descended from the former branch. His brother, the late Father Walter Drum, S.J., belonged to the chosen band of more perfect souls who make the vow of absolute fidelity to the duties of their state, a vow made by the great St. Theresa, by St. Margaret Mary and by Blessed Claude de la Colombière⁴. The agricultural branch

⁴ R.B. Eiten, S.J., Living the Apostolate of the Cross, in Sponsa Regis, vol.16, no.3, p.56.

has descendants still living in Ashfield, Mrs. Thomas Garvey and Mrs. Michael O'Connor, both grandchildren of John Desmond, brother of Lieutenant-General Drum's grandmother. Thomas Garvey and his wife, Margaret Donnelly, sister of Senator James Donnelly of Bruce County and of the late Monsignor J. J. Donnelly of Denver--a mathematician noted for his uncanny results with children in that science--celebrated their diamond jubilee, September, 1944. Of their family of eleven, two became priests in the Basilian Congregation, the late Father Wilfrid Garvey, S.T.D., and Father Edwin Garvey, Ph.D., of Assumption College, Windsor; one, Margaret, became a Sister of St. Joseph, London; one became a lawyer, Joseph Garvey, K.C., Toronto; one, a dentist, the late Doctor Leo, of Guelph; James, Thomas, and John work farms in Ashfield on such a large scale that the family possesses about twice as much land as any other family in the parish; Gerald in Toronto, and the late Mary, R.N., and Nellie (Mrs. W. Dalton) complete the circle. This branch, if not as widely known as the military, has contributed no less to the growth of America, and bears witness to the fact that the obscurity of a country parish is no detriment to the developing of talents and the achieving of success, but may rather furnish an environment of religious and cultural refinement.

The ocean voyage over, the cholera pest-houses left behind, the Irish immigrants of the early nineteenth century advanced along the St. Lawrence from Quebec City to Lake Ontario. One group, composed of Roman Catholics and Orangemen, settled the five townships of Peel County; Toronto, the Gore of Toronto, Chinguacousy, Albion, and Caledon, where they lived harmoniously--except on special occasions. By 1829, St. Patrick's Church, Wildfield, was completed, and became for Father Gordon the centre of an area of great religious activity. In 1839, Father Eugene O'Reilly, living in the Gore of Toronto, was parish priest for the entire county, which had a Catholic population of seven thousand, for whom he laboured until 1856, preaching, marrying, baptizing, and burying.

The baptismal records from the Parish Archives of The Gore, while disclosing names similar to those of the early Ashfield settlers, in no way indicate that these people first located in the Toronto district. Rather does it seem that the call of adventure, the challenge of unchartered land, the pioneering urge so well portrayed by Louis Hénon in the father of Maria Chapdelaine⁵, led the immigrants of the late thirties and

the early forties to push farther inland. There is, however, one family of the Albion district whose descendants have lived in Ashfield until very recently. Daniel O'Callaghan, who emigrated from Cork in 1826, leaving a wife and three children behind, settled in Albion. In five years he sent back for his family, and the following year, 1832, Patrick was born. In 1844 the father died at the age of fifty-four, and his is the first recorded burial in the Albion graveyard--St. John the Evangelist Churchyard. Patrick remained with his mother, formerly Margaret Troy, until he was twenty-seven, helping to care for four younger members of the family. When he left Albion, 1859, for Wawanosh, which had been separated from Ashfield in 1843, he had but an axe to call his own. He borrowed twelve hundred dollars to buy one hundred acres from the Canada Company, mortgaging his farm in security. After clearing a little land and building a small shanty, he went to Pickering to get his bride, Mary O'Leary, whom he had met while visiting his sister Bridget⁶.

The young couple made their home in the bush, on concession 12, Lot 27, tapping trees for maple sugar--

⁶ Bridget O'Callaghan had married Denis O'Connor, Mary O'Leary's uncle, father of the Right Reverend Denis O'Connor, C.S.B., D.D., Bishop of London from 1890 to 1899, and Archbishop of Toronto from 1899 to 1908.

which could be traded for almost everything available except tea and tobacco. They were blessed with four sons and two daughters, and before Patrick died in 1893 at the age of sixty-one, he was one of the most prosperous farmers in the district, owning three hundred and fifty acres of land and the best brick house in the vicinity. The homestead remained in the hands of the eldest son, Daniel, until 1930. The youngest daughter, Margaret, now resident in Detroit, married Patrick M. Sullivan of Ashfield in 1889. Although the family no longer live in that light brick house on the seventh concession, one half mile east of the Lake Shore Road--there nine children were taught, by example, the beauties of their Irish faith, and there the Sacred Heart, our Blessed Mother, and good St. Joseph always held the places of honour--yet the farm still belongs to a son, Joseph of Detroit. The eldest son now lives in the district to which his great-grandfather first came from Ireland. John P. Sullivan, his wife, formerly Elizabeth O'Neil, and their ten children overflow three complete pews in St. Patrick's Church, Wildfield, every Sunday morning, despite rain or cold, drifts or storms. Obviously, the faith is still burning brightly in the young hearts of this fifth generation in Canada.

Apart from this instance, it is safe to conclude that the very early settlers obtained their first land

grants in Ashfield, although some worked along the Lake Front in the Toronto district for a time, as shown by early correspondence, and carried with them letters of recommendation⁷ for similar work in their new location. When in 1840, John Dean, John Finn, Jeremiah Flynn, John O'Connor, Morgan King, Cornelius O'Keefe, Thomas Sullivan, and John Sullivan, cut across country in the wake of William O'Neil, and "blazed a trail" to the shore of Lake Huron, there was laid the foundation of a civilization, distinct in itself, though somewhat similar to that already established in The Gore and its environs.

Since Ashfield was not included in the acres purchased by the Canada Company, it was not opened to settlement until some years after the district to the south⁸; but in 1837, the government of Canada, apparently in competition with the Canada Company, which in 1827 had established the harbour and founded the town of Goderich on the Minnesetung River, sent William Hawkins to survey land north of the Canada Company boundary, and to mark out a town plot where the Nine Mile River empties into Lake Huron, that the river might furnish water-power for mills

7 Appendix 2a, p. 170.

8 Appendix 3a, p. 172.

and provide a harbour. By 1840 some progress had been made in this regard ⁹. The town plot, one mile square, was called Port Albert but, although a wharf was built by the government at the mouth of the river, where small schooners used to load tanbark, wood, hides, and other commodities for Detroit and Sarnia ports, the project never reached the proportions intended. By 1879 it had attained considerable importance but later declined from this relative activity, and until 1941 it was merely a most beautiful spot between two of the most dangerous hills in Huron, a perfect setting for picnickers, and a thrill for adventurous motorists--though, strange to say, seldom have serious accidents occurred on its steep and winding curves. The British Commonwealth Air Training Plan brought the port into temporary prominence when the school for Celestial Navigation, 31 A.N.S., was opened there. This training centre has been closed, and since April, 1945, is occupied by a small holding unit, while Ashfield, tuned to the whirl of wings for the past war years again settles down to comparative peace and quiet. ¹⁰

9 Appendix 2, pp. 170, 171.

10 One elderly parishioner, on moving to Detroit from Kingsbridge during the war when the airport was at its best, found the American metropolis very quiet!

Stephen Martin, Andrew McConnell, and Jerome Sharp were the first settlers in Port Albert, all of whom arrived in 1837, five years before the township of Ashfield was formed. Andrew McConnell was drowned in 1842 as he travelled by boat from Goderich to Port Albert. Jerome Sharp, who built the first tavern there, left in 1843. Stephen Martin's grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren still live in Ashfield, Stephen Jr.--now a grandfather himself--operating a general store and a service station at Kingsbridge proper; Andrew, farming and fishing; their children, working various farms in the township. This is the only family of French descent in the entire parish, but neither they nor their neighbours ever pause to reflect on nationality as they work together for the glory of God, and the good of their country, their families, and themselves.

To William O'Neil belongs the distinction of being the first Irishman to select a homestead in Ashfield. In 1839, when he reached Toronto from the County of Cork, he inquired of the Crown authorities as to a suitable location and was referred to the Catholic surveyor, William Hawkins, who was going to the Lake Huron district. The two men travelled north to Owen Sound, and then south along the lake shore to the place where St. Joseph's Church now stands. William O'Neil chose Lot 14, Lake Shore Range,

as his future home¹¹ but continued surveying with Hawkins until the end of the year. In January he took up residence on his homestead, around which some men from his native land soon settled¹².

A perusal of the accompanying pages from the assessment roll gives some interesting information. The first list available gives the data for 1842 by which year fifteen families appear. Seven more names are given for 1844, seven additional entries for 1845, and ten others for 1847. It is evident that most of the first settlers brought wives and young families with them and each year shows Canadian born additions to these Irish families, and the church records show new members admitted to the Mystical Body of Christ through the reception of the Sacrament of Baptism. In some cases it will be noted that brothers took up land together for the first year or two--two adults, both male--but later worked individually. A very few remained for only a time. The early assessors were Tom Johnson and Maurice Dalton; the auditor, Dan Lizars, Clerk of the Peace.

¹¹ This must have been later than August 12, 1839, because an old document in Toronto Archives shows lot 14, L.S.R., still vacant at that date. Appendix 3a, p. 172.

¹² Appendix 2a, p. 170.

Members of the Church of Rome in Ashfield¹³

(Column A indicates the number of persons over 16 years of age; column B, those under 16.)

	1842		1844		1845		1847	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
Maurice Dalton	2,0		2,1		2,2		2,2	
John Dean	2,3		2,3		2,6		2,7	
Dan Donovan	2,4							
Jerry Flynn	2,1		2,2		2,2		2,4	
John Finn	2,2		2,2		2,3		2,4	
Mike Healey	2,4		2,4		2,4		2,5	
Pat Henry	2,1							
Cornelius Keefe	2,0		2,0		2,1		2,2	
John Kenny	3,3							
Steve Martin	2,5		2,6		2,5		2,5	
Dan McKinnon	4,6		3,6		3,6		3,6	
John O'Connor	2,4		2,5		2,5		2,6	
William O'Neil	6,3		6,3		6,2		2,2	
John Sullivan	2,2		1,2					
Tom Sullivan	2,2		3,1		3,2		3,4	
Henry Brown			2,6		2,7		3,6	
Con Desmond			2,2		2,2		2,3	
John Hennessy			2,2		2,0		2,0	
Pat Hussey			2,1		2,2		2,3	
Morgan King			3,2		3,1		5,1	
Joseph Long			2,2		2,3		2,3	
Michael Mcglead			2,1		3,0		4,0	
Owen Duffy					1			
Pat Griffin					2,2		2,4	
Pat Hennessey					1		1	
John Knightley					2,2		2,3	
Denis O'Neil					1		4,1	
Pat O'Neil					1			
Charles Whitfield					3,0		3,0	

¹³ Assessment Roll for the Township of Ashfield in the Huron District, Regional History, University of Western Ontario.

	1842	1844	1845	1847
	A B	A B	A B	A B
Philip Austin				2,2
Tim Griffin				2,3
David McCarron				1
Michael McCarron				1
Denis O'Connell				2
John O'Shea				7
Pat O'Shea				2
John Reilly				1
Mike Reilly				6,1
Simon Stilles				2,1

INDIVIDUAL ECONOMIC PROGRESS

Cornelius Keefe, Lot 5, L.S.R.	1842	1844	1845	1847	1848
Acres uncultivated	94	88	80	80	64½
Acres cultivated	6	12	20	20	30
Oxen	2	2	2	2	2
Cows	1	2	2	3	3
Value in £	35	43	50	53	59

GENERAL ECONOMIC PROGRESS IN ASHFIELD

Acres uncultivated	11357½	3494	4604	5893	7438
Acres cultivated	161½	228	374	759	951
Horses	3	1	1	2	4
Oxen	26	33	48	72	95
Cows	30	50	62	108	140
Horned Cattle	4	8	25	32	84
Value in £	2755	1325	1975	2977	3755

If Morgan King arrived in the fall of 1840 with the other seven men previously referred to, he must have delayed his procuring of land; or perhaps his name was inadvertently omitted from the first record. At any rate it was he who built the bridge north of the present church site, and, no doubt recalling Kingsbridge Station in Ireland, his fellow settlers determined to call their new location Kingsbridge--a name now known from coast to coast, though found seldom even on a road map. Some of the older families look on Philip Austin as one of the first group to take up land in Ashfield, but it will be noted that his name appears in the lists for the first time in 1847. However, progress was not so rapid in those early days that a year or two made a great difference, and even the people who came in the fifties and the sixties well deserve the name of pioneers.

Tradition¹⁴ places the following names with those who arrived before 1844, although they do not appear in the list even in 1847. Since considerable variety has been used in the spelling of names, it is quite possible that Christian names became confused at times, and a Denis O'Neil might easily be John; or a Joseph Long, Patrick.

¹⁴ Mae O'Loughlin, History of St. Joseph's Parish, Kingsbridge, Ontario, p. 7; Wm. Dean, The History of Kingsbridge Parish, pp. 2,3.

The names are: Donald Brick, John Desmond, John Dolan, John Hennessey, John Hurley, James Jones, Patrick Long, Charles McCarthy, two brothers of John O'Connor, Tom Reilly, Jerry Shea.

By 1860 the parish register reads like a page from the Irish martyrology, and makes sweet music to the ears of anyone in whose veins flows Irish blood. With the above we find: Brady, Bowler, Buckley, Cashin, Clare, Coleman, Courtney, Cronk, Curran, Dalton, Davis, Dineen, Doyle, Fay, Ford, Garvey, Gilmore, Griffin, Hayes, Higgins, Hogan, Howard, Kelly, Kennedy, Lannon, Lucy, McCarron, McGinty, McGlynn, McGrory, McGuinness, McPhee, MacNamara, Maher, Martin, Moran, Murchison, Mulroy, Murphy, O'Fay, O'Neil, O'Reilly, O'Rourke, Quinn, Reardon, Roach, Sennett, Smith, Sullivan, Wall, Wallace, Welsh, Whitty.

Most of these people came from Cork or Kerry, but a few were from Tipperary. Some who had left Ireland in 1834 and had located in New York State now moved to Ashfield to be near their former friends and relatives. Others, the Daltons for instance, landing in Quebec, travelled in wagons directly from Quebec City to Ashfield. All quickly accommodated themselves to their new surroundings, and while ever looking back to Ireland with love and devotion, they gave themselves whole-heartedly to their adopted country, Canada, the Land of the Maple.

CHAPTER II

LAND OF THE MAPLE LEAF

CANADA IN 1840

The Canada to which these early pioneers came consisted of the present provinces of Ontario and Quebec. Two abortive rebellions had just darkened her history, but the silver lining behind those gloomy clouds was already beginning to shine with the advent, in 1838, of Lord Durham, the British High Commissioner, sent out to investigate the cause of bloodshed in the banner colony of the Empire, to whose throne the young Queen Victoria had just ascended. Canada was most fortunate in the appointment, for although Lord Durham's term of office was cut short by the machinations of political enemies at home, against whom the Melbourne government failed to undertake his defence, yet he was too noble--or too proud--to leave his work unfinished, and in 1839 he disclosed the findings of his five months' sojourn in Canada in his famous Report on the Affairs of British North America, an exhaustive survey of the situation in Canada, and a classic in the category of official documents. Lord Durham's suggestion regarding the granting of Responsible Government, expanded and interpreted in the light of new situations and new problems, has resulted, not only in the status of nationhood

for Canada, but in the unique organization, the British Commonwealth of Nations, which gives to a war-weary world hope of a larger unit, a world organization, wherein all nations may live in the harmony engendered by the recognition of a common end and of the necessity for mutual sacrifice and forbearance.

The major recommendation in the Report related to the union of Upper and Lower Canada, as a prelude to the epic of the greater union of all the North American provinces. There is not a doubt but that Durham sadly underestimated the worth, the culture and the tenacity of the French Canadians of the Lower Province, but his vision of a larger Canada saw fulfilment when in 1867 the British North America Act divided the old province of his union into two sections, Ontario and Quebec, and united them with Nova Scotia and New Brunswick in a federal dominion, making provision that the other sections might join should they desire. The British government accepted Lord Durham's report, and in 1839 appointed Charles Poulett Thomson, afterwards Lord Sydenham, as governor-general of Canada, whose first task it was to unite Upper and Lower Canada. The Act of Union of 1840 was passed by the British parliament and came into operation in 1841.

The first parliament of the United Canada passed an act in accord with a third recommendation of Durham,

regarding the introduction of municipal institutions as a training school for provincial and federal politicians. This Act was "to provide for the better internal government of that part of this province which formerly constituted the province of Upper Canada by the establishment of local or municipal authorities therein"¹. In the present municipal government are recognizable many of the main features laid down by the Municipal Act of 1849².

The general conditions prevailing in Canada in the 1840's is a matter of well-known history. Between 1791 and 1850 many settlers had come, chiefly actuated by economic complications. Those from the United States were attracted by the offer of free lands; those from Scotland were moved by the desire to escape from the appalling conditions resulting from the economic revolution in the north; those from England were influenced by the consequences of the Industrial Revolution and Napoleonic wars; those from Ireland were driven by the living conditions forced upon them by their powerful neighbour--which conditions became particularly bad when the failure of the potato crops (practically the only food which was not

¹ Minutes of the Proceedings of the District Municipal Council for the District of Huron, Feb. 9, 1842-June 25, 1859, Regional History, University of Western Ontario.

² Appendix 2d, p. 171.

forcibly exported to England) brought famine to their isle. The majority of these British immigrants were voluntary and unassisted exiles, paying and making their own way³. By 1833 there was little, if any, absolute poverty or distress in Canada, but certainly there was no superfluity of conveniences. The population of Canada West (Ontario) had increased from about 6,000 in 1791 to nearly 500,000 in 1841, and to 800,000 in 1850. In 1847 alone nearly 100,000 immigrants came into Canada, and as the great majority settled in the western section, by 1850 the population of Canada West actually exceeded that of Canada East (Quebec)⁴.

The first official record of white settlers within Huron County is in the census returns of Upper Canada for 1833, at which time there appears to have been a total population of 685 souls (404 male, 281 female)⁵. But a historical sketch of the County takes us back to 1615 when Champlain, defeated by the Southern Iroquois at Oswego, New York, wished to make an alliance with the Neutral Nation who lived in Northern Ohio and Southern Michigan. He returned to Georgian Bay, coasted it to Lake

3 Appendix 4a, p. 177.

4 Wm. Stewart Wallace, A History of the Canadian People, p. 169.

5 Loose Sheets, Regional History, U. of W. O.

Huron, followed the eastern shore to the River and Lake St. Clair, and then continued on to Detroit. Tradition says that he camped at Goderich both going and coming, which means that he passed along the entire western shore of Ashfield Township. To him Lake Huron was La Douce Mer. In 1615 he brought to the district Father Joseph Le Caron, the Récollet priest who first offered Holy Mass in Ontario. Father Jean de Brébeuf was the first Jesuit to enter Huron County. He formed a beautiful concept of a Christianized Indian nation, set apart from the white men, and governed by the Church. In 1649 the Huron nation was practically wiped out by the Iroquois, but the Martyrs' Shrine at Midland bears testimony to the ideals and heroic sanctity of that great "Athlete of Christ".

In 1656, Sanson d'Abbeville, geographer-in-ordinary to King Louis XIV of France, made in Paris a map of the district around the Great Lakes, basing it upon information received from the French authorities at Quebec.

In 1670, two Sulpicians, Dollier de Casson and René de Bréhant de Galinée, travelled to the Sault by the east side of Lake Huron (Joliet had used the Michigan, or west side, the previous year). No memorial marks their passage on Lake Huron, but at Port Dover, where these men landed from Lake Erie, was erected, in 1922, a cross to remind us of the one erected March 23, 1670, by the

missionaries themselves. The cross shows: 1669, Clement IX, Louis XIV, Dollier, De Galinée.

Father Louis Hennepin, a Franciscan, tells of La Salle's Griffin sailing Huron's waters in 1679. The voyagers sang the Te Deum as their little boat entered the Lake after passing the rapids of the St. Clair. La Salle tried to travel north-northeast, but a storm sent him north-northwest, to Mackinac. He missed Goderich and Ashfield as a result.

The next notable passage seems to have been in 1814 when a fleet of American ships went from Detroit to Mackinac. Storms caused detours again, but if these warriors saw the Huron forest along the eastern shore of the lake they seem to have taken little notice of it, as the Niagara, Lawrence, Caledonia, Tigress and Scorpion sailed on under Captain Arthur Sinclair's command.

Canada at this time was considered a vast solitude but not a hopeless wilderness. Emigrants might still be found among those with small capital, but these men did not always have the judgment and industry required for pioneer life. As one old man in Goderich expressed it, "Sure they all had money; but few of them had any sense and none of them knew how to work." After the Napoleonic wars, a world of exploration was open to military and naval officers in whose blood burned a fever for something

different. A desire to reward those who had loyally served the mother country led to the formation of the Canada Company in 1826, at which time a new type of settlers became available. John Galt, the Scottish novelist, was made superintendent. He put the last touches on his Last of the Lairds and embarked for Canada with a grant of 1,100,000 acres of land--the Huron Tract--in his pocket, enthusiasm in his heart and varied emigration ideas in his brain.

It was indeed a critical age.

The times were Napoleonic; and as many who were destined to lead in this march to Western Canada were military and naval men, it is not wonderful that their aims were high and their schemes gigantic. Dunlop, Von Egmond, Vansittart, Talbot, and others whose record of labour, mistake and success is written upon the face of our peninsula, dreamt dreams and saw visions. But they were tired of the Moloch of War set up in every European land, and their minds were busy with the themes of Adam Smith. Attention had been directed from wealth as wealth, to labour as a means towards it But what was to make the increased wealth of the land, what was to contribute the revenue? The work of the men who came to it; the work of their hands, be the hands gentle, mechanic, soldier or horny ⁶.

Galt seems to have been actuated by true zeal, but many of the other officials of the Company, particularly those who did not cross the ocean to taste hardship,

⁶ Robina and Kathleen M. Lizars, In the Days of the Canada Company, pp. 22, 23.

misinterpreted his actions and believed accusations of extravagance levelled at him by his Scottish reviewers. The great commissioner suffered acutely from this lack of appreciation, but he considered the fact that the Canada Company was one of the most flourishing concerns in London a vindication of his work.

In 1826, W. F. Gooding, a fur-trader, accompanied by Frank Deschamps, had sailed from the mouth of the Grand River to the mouth of the Minnesetung, and there had established a trading post. The following year, Galt, boarding the gunboat Bee at Georgian Bay, reached, by the eastern waters of Lake Huron, the new post. Dr. W. Dunlop left the town of Galt about the same time, but coming overland, reached Goderich first. Both men were acting under instructions from the Canada Company when they planned the spoke-wheel town of Goderich, called after the Chancellor of the Exchequer who at that time was the acting prime minister of England. The Minnesetung River was renamed Maitland in 1830 in honour of Sir Peregrine Maitland, Lieutenant-governor of Upper Canada. The streets of the town tell of Napoleonic and other war years: Trafalgar, Nelson, Wellington, Waterloo, Arthur, Wellesley, Hamilton, Brock, Napier, Montcalm, Wolfe, Anglesey. The four main streets, however, radiating from the circular "Square", are North, South, East, and West, to help the

dizzy sightseer keep his direction. By 1828 the town consisted of Dunlop's "Castle", and about one-half dozen log cabins, with French Canadians, Half-breeds, Indians, and a few Europeans constituting the inhabitants. An article in The Goderich Signal-Star, June 21, 1945, gives a brief but interesting sketch of Goderich history:

In his travels up the lakes to Detroit, Samuel de Champlain anchored one night in the mouth of the Menesetung River. The natural harbour and the general prospect is said to have been pleasing in his sight, but as he was not on a sight-seeing tour he continued his journey next day, and more than two hundred years elapsed ere another white man set foot in the locality. That river, which once bore the Indian name of "Menesetung", signifying "Red" river, on account of the tint the water had, absorbed from the soil, is today the Maitland River, and the site of the prospect which commended itself to Champlain is now the town of Goderich.

Except for the building development the topography is the same today as it was then. The Maitland runs between two banks one hundred and thirty feet high, receding from the mouth of the river which spreads itself over a wide basin, above which the stream divides itself into several channels, forming small islands. It was down there on the 'flats' that the first stores and taverns were built. Gradually, the town clambered up the hill and firmly established itself on the high ground in the hinterland, a geographical process which might also symbolize the early uphill struggle of Goderich against the usury of the Canada Company, and its triumphant attainment of municipal independence about twenty-five years after the advent of its founders, John Galt and Dr. Dunlop⁷.

7 Early History of Goderich, in The Goderich Signal-Star, 97th Year, no.25, p. 2, col. 4, 5.

The settlement of the Tract was slow. Many of the men connected with the company had little or no knowledge of woodcraft or, indeed, of mancraft to direct those under them. Bridges, roads, mills, promised to the settlers, were incomplete or inadequate. Great opposition developed, and Galt, who seems to have been too big a man for the company, retired. The two opposite views regarding the Canada Company may be found in the writings of the one man, Doctor Dunlop. While in the service of this land company he prepared, in 1836, a document in vindication of it, but before his writing was published he made a vigorous attack against the company in a speech in the Assembly, 1845. This led to the disinterring of the earlier written statement which had lain in obscurity. Commissioner Widder sent it with a memorandum for the information of the Legislative Council of Canada, in reference to the Canada Company's position with the Municipal District Council of the Huron District. In this document, the writer tells of the early prestige of the Company, and then deals at length with the four major charges brought against it:

1. That the Company purchased their land at too cheap a rate.
2. That the colony had received no advantage adequate to the advantages accruing to the Company.
3. That individuals had received no adequate advantage.
4. That the Company was a monopoly.

Summing up, he says:

To conclude, we think that we have made out our case by proving that the Canada Company has, to say the best of it, only made a fair bargain for their lands; that their operations have been highly beneficial to the province, as well as to almost every individual in it; and lastly, that under no construction of the English language can it be with propriety designated a monopoly⁸.

It was soon after writing this that Dunlop broke with the Company, resigning his position as "Warden of Forests", and heading, in opposition to the Company, the "Colborne Clique", a group of Scotch settlers who had succumbed to the extravagant propaganda of the advertising agency of the Company and had come to the Huron Tract in 1833, 1834, and 1835.

The grievances against the company are most agreeably learned by the perusal of an open letter, obviously written by Dunlop, but signed by a Roddy Slattery, a character of these early days. The occasion was the expected visit of Poulett Thomson, the new governor-general, to Goderich. The writer wishes to know how the town should receive the notable, and recalls how "Sir George Arthur" had been deceived on his visit. It seems that at that time the Goderich pier had been completed, and a very crude and

⁸ Lizars, op. cit., p. 141.

unsatisfactory bridge had been constructed over the Maitland. Sir George Arthur was fêted by the Canada Company Commissioner, Mr. Jones, and the staff of the company, resplendent on their gay mounts, accompanied him through the town. Since the governor-general was there to see if the money granted by the government was being judiciously spent, no doubt he was gratified to witness the industry evident at the pier and at the bridge. Mr. Jones and Mr. Longworth were the key men of the company in Goderich at the time, and obviously they made the most of any work accomplished by their company. The men employed by them later laughingly acknowledged that they had made a deceptive show of industry on the occasion. But one must read the letter to "Misther Editer", headed "Goodruch, 13th Augt. (I think I'm not sure)" (sic.) to get a graphic picture of the situation. The wit makes the gall palatable, and even Jones and Longworth must surely have laughed at the Benny-Note-Book epistle in which the company's officials are pictured as urging the men to keep busy with tools, the use of which was quite unknown to them, at the pier when the vice-regal party inspected it, and then to rush madly to be similarly engaged at the bridge when the party reached that point. ". . . the order is given: 'You blackguards, though I know you'll handle your tools as nately as a bear would a tayspoon, no matter--work away for dare life

whenever he comes, and so as you look busy he'll never find you out'." After the inspection, all relaxed to their ordinary inactivity of the previous twelve months, and ". . . sorrow's the hand's turn did we do when once we got his back turned"⁹.

Wit did not always smooth away differences, and many a duel was arranged, but always something intervened to prevent its being fought. Perhaps one of the parties had all the available weapons and therefore could not fight an unarmed adversary, or it might be that a constable would appear, by pre-arrangement, in time to anticipate the bloody proceedings. In any case, great outbursts of anger over the loss of so coveted an opportunity furnished the required outlet for the feigned violence, and at the same time protected the honour of the duelists.

If undue space seems to have been accorded to the Canada Company and its opponents, it is because its influence on Goderich and environs was passing through the various phases at the very time that the early settlers of Ashfield were sinking their roots in that northern township. To Goderich, through Colborne, they had to go to have their marriages solemnized, their children baptized, and their

⁹ Ibid., pp. 147, 148.

wheat ground to flour. Doubtless they often stood before the two huge posts which were in front of the company's office near the Harbour Road, on which were nailed all notices regarding marriages, lost children, strayed cattle, and calamities in general. We may hear them laughing in their log cabins at home over the queer signs they had read, or seriously discussing the events predicted by Goderich sages. One notice, Miss Lizars records, gave the bride's name as "Matilda Selina Salome Royal Bangs S. P. Cuyler". The young lady, herself, had forgotten what the S. P. stood for. An old man, when questioned about these posts long after they had disappeared, and asked if they had been used for all public notices, replied in a manner truly enlightening: "Why, dammit, there was no public; there was no public; you were Canada Company or you were nothing"¹⁰.

The company passed through various stages of popularity. It had a tinge of the Family Compact, yet Galt could be friendly to Mackenzie. Goderich, too, had divided loyalties, and consequently the year 1837 was a trying one in that seaport town, for though many went to fight for British supremacy, yet Von Egmond was a name

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 115

dearly loved. The advent of the railway meant the doom of the company, which by 1853 had moved its offices to Toronto¹¹. An excerpt from an appraisal of the Canada Company, written in 1896, reads:

. . . those who made this oasis of imported culture in a wilderness, left of their cloud-capped fancies, ambitions and hopes, not one wrack behind. Like the dapple in a summer sky, their very memory has dissolved, while the marrow, the bone, the sinew of Huron stands up to certify in the third generation to the work of that company which made growth and prosperity a possibility¹².

11 Appendix 5b, p. 178.

12 Lizars, op. cit., p. 374.

CHAPTER III

THE BLUE AND GOLD OF HURON

The withdrawal of The Canada Company from Goderich and Huron left the district free to develop along its own distinctive lines, resulting in a progress well symbolized by the seal of Huron County. This seal, dated 1841, is particularly appropriate to Ashfield, because it was in that year that the axe in this Township was making ready for the plough that the sheaf of wheat might be produced in all its golden glory.

The seal displays an armorial achievement featuring a golden sheaf and technically described¹ as follows: azure, a garb or, on the chief of the first sheaf or, of the last a plough proper; crest, a dexter arm embowed, couped at the shoulder, vested above the elbow, wielding an axe, all proper; accosted by a wreath of laurel and another of oak leaves; the whole surrounded by the legend "The County of Huron 1841". This simply means that the lower two-thirds of the shield is blue and carries a sheaf of golden grain, while the upper part is gold, bearing a plough, with a wreath of laurel on one side and oak leaves

¹ Robina and Kathleen M. Lizars, In the Days of the Canada Company, p. 376.

on the other. The plough does not stand on ground because this is unheraldic. The presence of the crest is explained by the fact that the age in which the seal was adopted was of a distinctly military character.

The strong right arm, bared and wielding an axe, represents those hardy men who cleared a virgin forest that the rich land which had produced those giants might yield a livelihood to the builders of a nation. The plough on its golden background represents the next generation who tilled the soil, persevering against terrible odds and heart-breaking discouragement, but always sustained by the realization that duty done and life well-lived bring man to his eternal home--the fulfilment of his sublime destiny. The golden sheaf on its azure background does honour to the third and succeeding generations when the fruits of the labours of the first decades were revealing themselves to those who continued to care for the fertile acres of Huron County. It is true that the sheaf was more appropriate in 1905 than in 1945, but perhaps a hungry Europe will bring back to Huron a wheat revival. At any rate, the blue background breathes hope and serves to intensify the glory of achievement. The oak leaves remind us of the enormous possibilities, arising from small beginnings, while the laurel proclaims a final victory.

Huron has not developed at any unusual rate, and perhaps least of all has Ashfield. But do we not err in this twentieth century when we use size and astronomical figures as the criteria of success? Skyscrapers and traffic-congested thoroughfares do not necessarily spell national greatness. Ashfield has contributed her small share to Huron's material prosperity, just as Huron has to Ontario's. But Ashfield has contributed more than her share to the intellectual and the religious life in these last hundred years, in a county noted for moral rectitude² from early times. Nor has the spectacular been wanting. In addition to those who have won renown in business, literary or religious fields, there have been military honours worthy of mention awarded to the Ashfield boys of Huron. Major the Reverend M. J. Dalton was decorated by His Majesty, George VI, at Buckingham Palace, with Membership in the British Empire; Pilot Officer Thomas Joseph Howard was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

The oak and the laurel on Huron's emblem should remain a challenge to Huron's sons to make their oak the sturdiest in Canada that Huron may become a symbol of strength and protection to those of other lands less

² Appendix 5c, pp. 179, 180.

favoured by nature and by grace. Only when men have done their best for God and for country may they accept the laurel leaf to place at the feet of Him Who gave to them the privilege of first seeing light in so glorious a homeland.

The seal of Huron County seems to carry one more message. Today, the descendants of those early settlers have just emerged from the maelstrom of a most cruel war-- so different is our world from the ideal of our forefathers. As proud parents from Huron, now resident in the United States of America, received from overseas the "Oak Leaf Cluster", awarded to a brave son, they perhaps remembered the oak leaves chosen one hundred years ago by men who also would have fought for the principles now at stake; and if soon after, the heart-breaking message came, "Missing in Action", did they recall that the laurel is given only to the victor in a hard-won struggle? Undoubtedly, pride in a son's achievement can never fill the void which his manly sacrifice has created in a father's or a mother's life, yet America may well rejoice that this generation of heroic souls includes the sons of the sons of Huron³.

³ Appendix 6, p. 182.

Huron County originally comprised Perth, Huron and Bruce, as well as the Townships of Biddulph and McGillivray which were later annexed to Middlesex. A board of Magistrates, meeting at London, carried on the local government of this section before the District of Huron was organized. An old document⁴ shows Daniel Lizars to be the Clerk of the Peace, and gives a list of the Magistrates of the District of London, resident in the County of Huron. It indicates that of the nineteen names given only six remained at the time, one having resigned, one having left Canada, and the rest having died. The minutes record the calling of a meeting at Mr. Hick's Tavern, Township of Goderich, to arrange for measures to put into operation a provincial act which authorized the erection of the County of Huron and certain other territory adjacent to it into a separate district. This meeting was held April 26, 1838, with Robert Graham Dunlop, M.P.P., as chairman. Notice was sent to the London Gazette regarding the coming meeting, July 2, at eleven a.m., at Reed's Hotel, of the Justices of the Peace of the County of Huron. The report of this meeting speaks of the magistrates of Huron County, not of the magistrates of the London District resident in the County of Huron. The minutes for September 8, 1838, name

⁴ Minutes of the Proceedings of the Magistrates in Petit Sessions, 1838-1840, Regional History, University of Western Ontario.

thirteen Townships, but Ashfield does not yet appear. These minutes are quite detailed and give in full some interesting correspondence carried on by the county with the officials of the Canada Company. Apparently, the proposed district was discussed at each meeting of the year. By August 9, 1839, two and one-quarter acres had been accepted from the Canada Company as sites for a gaol and Court House. By December, 1840, the gaol was ready. Consequently, the settlers of Ashfield had this luxury available for their first arrival, although they really have made little use of it in their century of progress. The Court House⁵ was eventually completed on the centre of the Market Square of Goderich in 1855, and the land on which it stands was ceded to the County.

Some interesting weather data seem to be disclosed by the report of January 16, 1841, at which meeting only H. Hyndman was present, even Chairman W. B. Rich having failed to appear. Obviously, January storms were no respecters of municipal sessions. The old brown book carrying the minutes of the County of Huron for 1838, 1839 and 1840 now gives place to a larger volume⁶ which records the

⁵ At the November session of the Huron County Council, 1945, it was decided on a vote of twenty-seven to one to erect a new Court House on the site of this century-old building.

⁶ Note Book of Transactions of Special Sessions of the Peace, and of Court of General Quarter Sessions of the Peace.

minutes for the District of Huron from October 25, 1841, to June 14, 1842. Lizars was made Clerk of the Peace in and for the District, by a letter from Secretary Harrison. The Canadian Gazette, October 23, announced that the County had been erected into a separate and independent district, and that the organization was to begin at once at the instigation of the Clerk of the Peace. A meeting was called for November 4, 1841, to receive the Proclamation by His Excellency, the administrator of the government, and to adopt steps for organization.

In the minutes of December 14, 1841, the name "Ashfield" appears for the first time. William Hawkins was made Justice of the Peace in this Township, and the first township meeting was held January, 1842. Information of various kinds may be gathered from the minutes of the successive months: when representatives of the different townships met at Goderich, the seat of local government, February 8, 1842, Mr. Hawkins, representing Ashfield, was chairman for the session; the first County Clerk was David Don (May 6, 1842); Dr. William Dunlop, M.P.P., had been commissioned by the government as first Warden of the District, but in 1847 a law was passed authorizing the election of the Warden by the county council, and Dr. Chalk was the first choice; in 1849 an Act was passed by Parliament by which the District of Huron was dissolved, and the

United County of Huron, Perth, and Bruce was erected in its stead; the first council of the triple county met in 1850; in 1853 Perth became separate, but Goderich remained the seat of government for the United Counties of Huron and Bruce; the number of councillors increased until in 1865 there were fifty-three; in that year Bruce became separate, and the number went down to thirty-seven, then up to forty-five by 1879. In 1946, the membership was twenty-eight⁷. Only four townships have had sufficient population to warrant their having a deputy-reeve: Ashfield, Stephen, Grey, Howick. Of these, Ashfield has been the first to lose the privilege. Sad to relate, the Township Clerk in 1944 could not file with the County Clerk a certificate stating the presence in the township of a thousand property holders. Consequently, Gilbert Frayne, as reeve, was the sole representative of Ashfield in the Huron County Council of that year, though two men had sat in that capacity ever since 1861.

Huron County derives its name from the Lake which the French called after the Wyandotte Indians whom they named "Huron" because of the way in which they arranged

⁷ In 1896 the Provincial Legislature, deeming it unseemly that county councils should have as large a membership as their legislative house, passed a measure dividing counties and districts on a population basis.

their hair. The townships of this county have received their name from various sources. Wawanosh, East and West, are called after the Indian Wawanosh who wrote of the white settlers of this district:

I have already seen much of this people, but have not yet been able to perceive that they are happier than the simple sons of the forest. But I entreat thee, wait with patience, and I will endeavour to unfold to thy imagination many sources of their miseries, their follies and their multiplied vices⁸.

Osborne, Tuckersmith, McKillop and Hullett are all called after directors of the Canada Company. Stephen recalls the under-secretary of state for the colonies, the unpopular "Mr. Mother Country"⁹ of those days. Hay and Stanley are also in honour of secretaries for the colonies. Goderich is for Viscount Goderich; Colborne honours the governor, Sir John; Grey and Howick are named after the second and the third Earl of Grey, respectively--the third Earl was Viscount Howick. Morris and Turnberry are of Scottish origin, the former in honour of Honourable William Morris, Perth, Ontario, who was born in Scotland, the latter after a castle of that name in Carrick, Scotland, where Bruce is thought to have spent many years of his youth. Ashfield

⁸ Eddie Simons, Follies, Customs of White Men Puzzled Huron Indian Observer, in the Saturday Supplement, The Free Press, London, Dec. 9, 1944, p.39, col. 1, 2, 3, 4.

⁹ C. H. Currey, British Colonial Policy, p. 21.

alone is called after an English village, in Suffolk, which claims to be the birthplace of Lord Chancellor Thurlow and his brother Thomas, Bishop of Durham.

In perusing the origin of these names, one is reminded of the naming of the Chapdelaine horse, "Charles Eugene". A family feud with a neighbour of that name had inspired a Chapdelaine to call his old lame horse by this appellation, that he might have the satisfaction of loudly berating the animal under this title as he passed the little house of his enemy each day. The name became traditional though the feud had long been buried¹⁰. Ashfield, whose first permanent settlers were Irish, called after an English village! Wawanosh commemorating the Indian who had exposed the white man's idiosyncrasies! Stephen doing honour to one who was blamed for the misrule of the country! Four townships named for the much maligned Canada Company directors! That these are all cases of returning good for evil is scarcely credible. That any malice was the motivating force is unthinkable. Did, then, these early Huronites, in good-natured humour, accept the names of their townships¹¹ that they might exult, in the midst of their labours, in

10 Louis Hémon, Marie Chapdelaine, p. 28.

11 Appendix 4b, p. 177.

the realization that while subduing the stubborn forest and the hard soil, they were conquering, symbolically, those who, from high places, had neglected their interests?

Ashfield Township is situated in the north-west portion of Huron, and is bounded on the north by the Township of Huron, Bruce County; on the east, by the Township of West Wawanosh; on the south, by the Township of Colborne, and on the west by Lake Huron. Comprising 66,184 acres of land, it is the second largest township in the county, Howick alone being larger. In the census of 1871, Huron County is credited with 66,165 inhabitants, 3,893 of whom came from Ashfield ¹².

The earliest invasion of Ashfield by white men seems to have been some time shortly after 1828, when one sunny June day Gooding and eight friends set out in the former's big canoe, De Witt Clinton, for the "Nine Mile Creek," taking rations and accommodations for only one day and one night. Leaving Goderich, and heading north on their exploring expedition, they were carried forward by a breeze which filled their two "blanket" sprit-sails. When the breeze failed, eight strong arms plied the paddles, and although intense heat and gathering double-headed thunder

¹² Census returns, Regional History, University of Western Ontario.

clouds gave warning of a storm, a merry party reached Port Albert's natural harbour:

A narrow channel, some ten feet wide, let them into the creek through the mass of sand and gravel which choked their entrance. Across the bar they found a snug basin, and landing on the little peninsula began to prepare camp. They dined and explored; found a beautiful waterfall, and then, warned by the thunder, made preparations for the night ¹³.

Major Strickland, "Professor" Brewster, and Mr. Fullarton were members of the party. Protected by a tent and the up-turned boat, with beds of hemlock-brush and fern for couches, the explorers began to while away the hours with drink and stories. The lightning flashes illuminated their tiny harbour and disclosed to them a scene of wild beauty. All went merrily until a sudden gust of wind whirled the tent beyond their reach, and, arrange as they would, three at least had to sleep without protection in a pelting rain and thunderous storm. Dawn showed a roaring lake, whose white-capped breakers defied approach. The provisions were practically gone, and worst of all, the whiskey jar was empty. Gooding and three companions began a trek south through the woods with Goderich as the goal out of view. Strickland and the other four men remained to take the canoe back when navigation opened again. One-half

¹³ Lizars, op. cit., p. 98.

of a loaf of bread, a few lumps of sugar, no line, no hook, no gun, left these first Fort Albert picnickers in a sorry plight. However, they speared a few suckers, boiled them, made hemlock tea, and dined as best they could. A repetition of this menu for supper--with the exception of the bread and sugar--was compensated for only by the super-camp which they had spent the day in preparing. Next morning brought no better prospects for a lake voyage, so the party, having hidden the canoe in the shrubs beyond the harbour, began their weary journey through the bush.

They travelled for the most part along the natural terraces overhanging the water, sometimes one hundred feet above its level, sometimes so low that they had to climb to avoid the breakers. Along the banks were patches of strawberries, large and delicious, a most seasonable change from the day before. The prospect before and around them was magnificent; they rested now and then upon the slopes, enjoying their fruit and gazing their fill across the blue expanse. About four in the afternoon the white cabins dotted about the Goderich cliff were welcome to the sight, and the travel-stained, half-starved explorers found hearty welcomes therein ¹⁴.

Thus ended the first exploring expedition into Ashfield. No doubt, when in 1837 the government sent William Hawkins to found a town and harbour at the mouth of this Nine Mile River, the principals of this first adventure rejoiced that they were safely settled on the

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 99.

Maitland. Yet they had sensed the romance of the place and if they did not wax poetic as did John Galt as he sailed by "the houseless shores and shipless seas of Huron"¹⁵, the beauty of the spot must have appealed at least to Strickland who, after his first journey through the "bridle path" which was Galt's "road", some years before, had exclaimed as the waters of Huron broke upon his view shortly after the rapids of the Minnesetung had been heard through the woods: "Never shall I forget the moment when that inland ocean met my sight . . . I thought Canada then--and I have never changed my opinion--the most beautiful country in the world"¹⁶.

When William O'Neil reached Ashfield by means of Lake Huron's eastern shore as he travelled south from Georgian Bay with the government surveyor, he must have felt some of the emotions recorded by Mrs. Anna Jameson, who had made the same journey two years before, by canoe. Her party had interrupted for the night their voyage down the lake, and were resting and refreshing themselves on shore:

I wish I could give you the least idea of the beauty of this evening; but while I try to put in words what was before me, the sense of its ineffable loveliness overpowers me now, even as it did then.

15 Ibid., p. 31.

16 Ibid., p. 81.

The sun had set in that cloudless splendour, and that peculiar blending of rose and amber light that belongs only to these climes and Italy; the lake lay weltering under the western sky like a bath of molten gold; the rocky islands which studded its surface were of a dense purple, except where their edges seemed fringed with fire . . . Then, as the purple shadows came darkening from the east, the young crescent moon showed herself, flinging a paly splendour over the water. I remember standing on the shore, "my spirits as in a dream were all bound up"--overcome by such an intense feeling of the beautiful--such a deep adoration of the Power that had created it--I must have suffocated ¹⁷.

Again she pictures the lake in its angry moments--swelling, roaring, the lightning gambolling over the rocks and waves, the rain falling in torrents; or yet again as night closed in, in sultry darkness:

The dark weltering waters, the blaze, the sparks, the faces and figures catching the brilliant light as it flashed on them in fitful glare ¹⁸.

The next group of pioneers came through the forest--a journey made by the same intrepid writer a few years previously but she had means of transportation, money, and influential friends. Our travellers had to rely on faith, health, good-will and perseverance. Mrs. Jameson tells of the well cultivated farms about Toronto, and then, leaving the Gore district, the capital of which was Hamilton,

¹⁷
in Canada, pp. 362, 363.

Winter Studies and Summer Rambles

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 226.

describes her journey in a heavy, lumbering stage coach, built to survive on impassable roads. At Brantford she hired a gig at five dollars for twenty-five miles, and passed through a country, rich, beautiful, and fertile, through Paris to Woodstock and London, over abominable corduroy contrivances with mud-holes to the axle-tree, by the homes of settlers who complained endlessly of the government for the condition of the roads but who did nothing to ameliorate the hardship. Woodstock and London are described as prosperous communities, where the London Gazette and the Freeman's Journal might be obtained ¹⁹. She did not go to Goderich, but we know that at this time there were roads where oxen could reach a speed of fifteen miles a day and four horses could do twenty miles, between Goderich and London--but our eight pioneers had no oxen, much less horses, and apparently followed no definite road, but rather an Indian trail. Even the Galt road from Lake Ontario to Lake Huron could have afforded them little comfort, although it was the one thing of which the Scottish writer claimed to be proud, and was considered by Professor Grant as the most fitting memorial to the great man. Yet

¹⁹ Katherine Hale covers much the same district one hundred years later, in her book This is Ontario.

it was only a single track of variable width on which a succession of hay crops and strawberries grew in abundance, and on which it was no uncommon thing for progress to be delayed while trees fallen across it were cut away ²⁰.

Rather than place our eight men on this road, let us picture them as they travelled through the Canadian forest, the beauty of which is nowhere excelled:

No one who has a single atom of imagination can travel through these forest roads of Canada without being strongly impressed and excited. The seemingly interminable line of trees before you, the boundless wilderness around, the mysterious depths amidst the multitudinous foliage, where foot of man hath never penetrated--and which partial gleams of the noontide sun, now seen, now lost, lit up with a changeful, magical beauty--the wondrous splendour and novelty of the flowers--the silence unbroken but by the low cry of a bird or hum of insect, or the splash and croak of some huge bull-frog--the solitude in which we proceeded mile after mile, no human being, no human dwelling within sight,-- are all either exciting to the fancy or oppressive to the spirits according to the mood one may be in ²¹.

To emerge from the tangled depths of the autumnal forest, where gold played on green and scarlet! To see the blue waters of the great Lake Huron sparkling in the noon-day splendour or rainbow-tinted by the setting sun! To hear the breakers as they rolled their white-caps towards

20 Lizars, op. cit., p. 67.

21 Jameson, op. cit., p. 79.

the shell sand shore! To be at home at last in so glorious a setting, suggestive of the beauties of the Lakes of Killarney! Well might these emigrants from Erin kneel in reverence and gratitude for the mighty works of God as they witnessed for the first time:

Sunset on Lake Huron

Mists of pearl and rose and amber,
Golden-crested cloudlets dim,
Regal, far-flung banners flashing
From the crimson sunset's rim.

Wisps of mauve across sapphire,
Hung there by a Master's hand,
Fleecy scrolls of woolly whiteness,
Woven by a magic wand.

The god of day is slowly sinking,
Night demands the royal seat,
Gorgeous in his dying splendor,
Where the sky and waters meet.

Golden path across the ripples,
Waves are murmuring soft and low,
Shimmering, undulating mirror
Of the radiant afterglow.

Daylight fades as twilight deepens,
Birds' hushed cries along the shore;
Darkness falls, but memories linger--
Such beauty lives forevermore.

Grandeur such as you have witnessed,
For the sordid things atone--
Peace of soul and understanding
Borrowed from the Great White Throne 22 .

22 Rosalia O'Connor, Sunset on Lake Huron, in History of St. Joseph's Parish, Kingsbridge, Ontario, p. 34.

CHAPTER IV

JUST A LITTLE BIT OF IRELAND SET IN HURON FAR AWAY

The men of Canada who rank as pioneers were not the kind to dwell on their hardships or hand down stories of them to their successors. We know, however, that they must have experienced the trials inseparable from life in Ontario in the middle of the nineteenth century: loneliness, fear, cold--loneliness for those back in Ireland, loneliness from isolation, from the stillness of the forest and the vastness of the lake; fear of wild animals, of falling trees, of sickness when no doctor could be summoned, of death far from a priest; cold from the severe climate as compared to Ireland's, from long and slow journeys to get supplies or sell some produce--but why should we recall these horrors when they, in a true, Christian philosophical spirit, dismissed them with a "May God's Holy Will be done"?

After the first settlement at Port Albert, the newcomers, the pioneers of Ashfield Parish, built their homes along the Lake Shore, penetrating farther and farther north until the Bruce boundary was reached. They naturally believed that the road, when constructed, would follow the shore-line, and thus they would be close to

both land and water means of transportation. However, since the first road-builders were not acquainted with drainage measures, they found it more expedient to build the highway farther east where the land was higher. This accounts for the extremely long lanes from the present Provincial Highway 21, the Blue Water, back to the lake shore. One advantage accrues, however, in that there are now several "roads to the lake," branching from the main thoroughfare.

Others besides Roman Catholic Irish began to take up land in Ashfield, and soon there were about equal numbers of Scotch and Irish, with a sprinkling of English. The south section received pioneers from the three British Isles, many belonging to the Church of England. The north-east division was settled by Presbyterian Scotch, and English from Northern Ireland who adhered to Methodism and later to the United Church. The eastern section of the township was opened when William McMallough came from Hamilton in 1843 and located on Lot 12, Concession 4, where the village of Dungannon is now situated. Robert Davidson chose Lot 12, Concession 5, in 1844. During 1848 and 1849 Richard Treleaven, Tom Anderson, David, Joseph and Valentine Alton, Joseph Hackett, and others "broke land" near the Wawanosh line.

The people who settled north of Kingsbridge were chiefly Presbyterians from Scotland, and today they are still staunch supporters of the religion of their forefathers. Ninety per cent of them were Highlanders, and it would be hard to find two settlements whose people have mingled in more friendly and helpful co-operation than the Scotch of Kintail and the Irish of Kingsbridge. In 1838 Kenneth MacGregor and Donald MacRae reached the mouth of the Kerry Creek which empties into Lake Huron, west of the present village of Kintail, and in 1839 they took adjoining lots on the Lake Shore. Alexander Johnson arrived in 1839 and Donald MacGregor in 1840. In the next decade there settled on the Lake Range and to the east men of the clans of MacDonald, MacGregor, MacKenzie, MacKay, MacLean, MacLennan, MacLeod, MacRay, Black, Douglas, Finlayson, Matheson and Stewart. By 1850 the forest was disappearing before the strong arms of Scotland's sons.

The first settlers came over the ocean from Kintail in Scotland, reached Montreal, travelled by boat to Toronto and Hamilton, by wagon to Goderich, and from Goderich along the surveyor's blazed trail to Kintail, carrying their treasures in a chest. They tell in Kintail that when these men were chopping trees for a clearing, one day they heard a similar sound farther south. After a few days their social instinct urged them to investigate, and travelling

south along the Lake Shore about a mile, they came face to face with Sullivan, Dean, King, etc. The friendship born that day has never died, and about the only thing the Irish of Kingsbridge and the Scotch of Kintail will not do for each other is embrace the other's religion. In all the years there have been but two converts to Catholicism. Each section respects the other, enjoys the other, and helps the other--but the Scotch Presbyterians are as truly convinced as are the Irish Catholics that they are serving God best in the Faith of their fathers. When young women from the Parish returned as Sisters to the local convent for a few days that their parents might visit them, Mary MacLeod, their former dress-maker, and her sister, Flora, Mrs. Simpson, wife of the kindly doctor, were among the old friends whom they were most pleased to see--and after these Scotch visitors left, the chapel was fragrant with fresh flowers that had not been gathered in Kingsbridge. Nor was any one surprised to see kneeling at the railing in St. Joseph's Church to receive the young Father O'Keefe's blessing, July, 1944, boys from Kintail's staunch Presbyterian settlement.

By 1850, the population of Ashfield was 682, and 1094 acres were under cultivation. The crop of 1849 had produced 2700 bushels of wheat, and 7000 lbs. of maple sugar ¹.

¹ W.H. Smith, Canada: Past, Present and Future, vol.2, p. 179.

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The following summary from Return of the Inhabitants of Ashfield and other Statistical Information, Book VI, gives the economic status of the township by April, 1850.

Houses occupied	133	:	Births: M, 66, F	61
Houses vacant	9	:	Deaths	38
Members of family	672	:	Attending school	14
Not members	10	:	Acres occupied	11037
Away.	28	:	Acres under crop	876 $\frac{1}{2}$
Property holders	83	:	Pasturage.	218
Non-property holders	59	:	Wood or Wild	9942 $\frac{1}{2}$
In Trade and Commerce	1	:	Acres unfit	0
In Agriculture	135	:	Wheat: acres 335 $\frac{1}{4}$	2719 bu.
In Handicraft	4	:	Barley " 15 $\frac{1}{4}$	122 bu.
In Lumber	2	:	Oats " 144 $\frac{1}{4}$	1955 bu.
From Ireland	459	:	Peas " 45	330 $\frac{1}{2}$ bu.
From Scotland	163	:	Corn " 1 $\frac{1}{2}$	33 bu.
From England	39	:	Potatoes " 107 $\frac{1}{4}$	9160 bu.
French Canadian	8	:	Turnips " 1162	
Br. Canadian	3	:	Tons of Hay	192 $\frac{1}{4}$
Roman Catholic	258	:	Lbs. Maple Sugar	7276
Church of Scotland	65	:	Lbs. Wool	923
Church of England	137	:	Yds. fulled cloth	146 $\frac{1}{2}$
Presbyterians, free	118	:	Yds. Linen or Cotton,	110
United Presbyterians	40	:	Yds. Flannel or other	
Br. Wesleyans	45	:	unfulled cloth.	780
Bible Attachment	9	:	Lbs. Butter for market	358
No denomination	0	:	Meat Cattle	515
Deaf and dumb	1	:	Horses.	11
Twins (2 g.; 1 g. 1 b.)	2	:	Sheep	341
Lunatics, Blind, Servants 0		:	Hogs	170
Grist Mill		:	1 Thomas Hawkins, Lot 36, T.P. $\frac{1}{2}$	
No. of run of stones		:	2 " " " "	
Oats & Barley Mills		:	1 " " " "	
Saw Mills		:	2 John Hawkins, Lot 38, T.P.	
			Michael McCarron, Lot 8, Con.4.	

2 Census returns of Ashfield Township, Regional History, University of Western Ontario.

About a mile and a half north of Kintail settled a Garvey family who later moved to Chicago. In this same neighbourhood lived Flynns, Dolans, Matt O'Connor and Thomas Stiles. A goodly procession of wagons and democrats passed through Kintail each Sunday morning as these people went to Kingsbridge for Mass. On the 10th Concession located Bowlers, Welsh, Howards, Hogans, Tim Griffin, John Griffin (Lucknow Jack, because he had livery stables at Lucknow for a time). To the south of this district, on the 9th, came the families: Clare, Coleman, Lannon, Long, McGrory, McNiff, Kelly, Kennedy, Whitty, Mulroy.

The cash system for buying land, in vogue at first, retarded settlement, but when replaced in 1852 by a ten-year arrangement, new settlers came more rapidly³.

The Clares and Colemans between 1855 and 1861 took up 400 acres. On one 100-acre farm were Mr. and Mrs. Coleman, Sr., their widowed daughter-in-law, who later became Mrs. William Moran, and a son-in-law, Anthony Lavell. They planted their first ten acres in potatoes, wheat and oats, with a hoe as their only agricultural implement. Men, women and children all worked in the fields until the

³ Appendix 3b, 3c, pp. 172, 173.

seed was covered. The first harvest was good, and never did they know want. On the next farm was Patrick Coleman who was known as a Father Matthew Temperance man--having taken the pledge before leaving Ireland, and having kept it! In 1868 he sold his farm to William Knickley and moved to Sault Ste. Marie. The Clare brothers, Michael and Patrick, each cleared 100 acres of land. The latter was a member of the Ashfield Township Council for nearly 25 years, serving as councillor and deputy-reeve to the county council. Thomas Lannon and family came in 1861 after having settled first in Caledonia. William, a son, died in Goderich in 1938 at the age of 86, and his sons, William and T. J., still farm in Ashfield on his two hundred acre homestead. A grandson Lyle, 4th generation, is doing some scientific farming in Ashfield. Another resident in the district was William Moran, father of Father William Moran, late parish priest of Ridgetown, and father of John Moran, a teacher in Whalen in the 90's, but later a resident in Detroit, who said of these people who settled on the 9th, "I have yet to hear of any of them having fallen from decency"⁴. This may be said of all the parishioners.

⁴ W.H. Johnston, Houses Snug when Stoves were Scarce, The Free Press, London, Jan. 15, 1938, in Fred Landon's Huron County Scrap Book.

The Atlas of Huron County⁵ has a fund of information on Ashfield Township, which assessment rolls, Books of Minutes, and loose sheets of miscellaneous data, in the Archives of the County at the University of Western Ontario, verify. By 1879 Ashfield grew wheat, barley, oats, rye, peas, beans, buckwheat, clover, flax, corn, potatoes, turnips and other roots. It also produced butter, cheese, home-dressed flax, linen, cloth, maple sugar, tobacco, hops, apples, grapes and small fruits. The skins of beaver, bear, otter, mink, fox, deer, and muskrat were available, as also the wood from white and red pine, oak, tamarack, birch, maple, elm, black walnut and hickory, providing pine logs, spars, staves, cords, laths, tanbark and fuel; the water supplied herring, whitefish, trout and fish oil.

By this time Ashfield boasted of other villages besides Port Albert, whose commercial and industrial institutions in 1879 comprised two stores, one saw, grist, and shingle mill, one hotel, one telegraph office, two blacksmith shops, one post-office supplied with daily mail north and south by the Goderich-Kincardine stage. Dungannon, in the south-east section of the township, had

⁵ H. Beldon, Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Huron, Ontario, pp. xiii, xiv.

been named by William McMallough in honour of his home town in Tyrone County, Ireland. Robert Clendenning started the first store there in 1854. A post-office, at first called Wawanosh and situated south of the present village, was opened in 1852 and later moved to the village proper. A "stage", carrying mail and passengers, made daily trips between Goderich and Lucknow. The village had three general stores, a shoe shop, a tin shop, a large carriage shop, two hotels, a steam grist and saw mill, a telegraph office, and three churches--Canadian Methodist, Presbyterian and Episcopal. The village was the seat of the sixth division court of the county, with John Cook as Clerk, and Robert Hogan as Bailiff.

Amberley, on the town line between Huron and Bruce County at the intersection of the Kincardine Road, contained a telegraph office, a store and a post-office. Kintail, on the Goderich-Kincardine Road north of the ninth concession, consisted of a post-office, a telegraph office, two stores, a saw and a grist mill. Lanes, Lot 3, Concession 11, had a store and post-office. Belfast, three and a half miles south of Lucknow, had two stores, a hotel and a post-office. Lochalsh, on the Bruce side of the town-line, three miles east of Amberley, had a post-office. Kingsbridge, on the Goderich-Kincardine Road, where it intersects the seventh concession, also had its store and

post-office. One-half mile farther north on the same road was the Church of St. Joseph, a building modest in itself but housing Him Whose presence has meant everything to the faithful flock of Ashfield Parish. Of all these centres, not one is large enough to be represented on the County Council in 1946.

When Ashfield was first made a township in 1842, it had annexed to it East and West Wawanosh, which, however, became separate in 1843. Later, when Bruce was surveyed, it also was annexed. According to the Minutes of Proceedings, the first municipal meeting was held at Sharpe's Hotel, January 3, 1842, with the householders of the district present to vote in their new officers, viva voce. Maurice Dalton was made chairman, and the business began. It was moved by William E. Higgins and seconded by John King that John Hawkins, Sr., be first councillor. This being carried unanimously, the other officers were elected with the following results: William E. Higgins, Clerk; Tom Johnson, Assessor; Mike Healey, Collector; Jerome Sharpe and John Jackman, Pound-keepers; William Carey, Tom Connor, Morgan King, and Dick Ryan, Overseers of Highways; John Donnelley, Donald McCrea, and John Dean, Township Wardens; W. E. Higgins, Morgan King, Tom Hawkins, and John Finn, Common School Commissioners.

In January, 1850, the first popular election of an entire council of five members took place at the home of Dan McKinnon, Lake Road, with vote receipts as shown: William Graham, 92; Colin McKenzie, 68; Jerry Flynn, 73; John Hawkins, 63; Tom Johnson, 62. These five were the successful candidates. The unsuccessful were: Charles Girvin, 61; Robert Davidson, 40; Charles Wilson, 32; Bernard McCabe, 23; Dave Girvin, 21; Kenneth MacGregor, 2.

In 1861 Ashfield could qualify for a deputy-reeve, which position was first held by John King. Previous reeves had been: 1851, Charles Girvin; 1852-1853, Robert Davidson; 1853-1857, John Hawkins; 1857-1858, Robert Davidson; 1859-1861, John Hawkins. In 1862, William Mallough was reeve, with Maurice Dalton as deputy. These men continued to represent Ashfield in the County Council until 1867, after which year, following the abolition of township wards, election was by the people. Of the succeeding reeves, the following belonged to Ashfield Parish: Joseph Griffin, 1884-1893; Morgan Dalton, 1900-1904; Joseph Dalton, 1918-1919; and Gilbert Frayne, 1944-1945.

The list of Ashfield Township Patrons, 1879, includes the following names familiar to St. Joseph's Parish: Rev. R. Beausang, George Currell, James Dalton, Joseph Dalton, Joseph Griffin, M. D. Long, Patrick O'Connor, Patrick Sullivan, Patrick Clare (Lanes), David Courtney (Port Albert) and

Maurice Dalton (Kintail). The Atlas displays a map of Ashfield on a scale of sixty chains per inch, on which may be located exactly each man's farm in 1879 ⁶.

The first flour mill was built by the government at Port Albert in 1843, and the next on the Nine Mile River, Lot 7, Concession 4, by William Harris in 1854. Previous, then, to 1843 and doubtless often after when the mill at "the Port" was not functioning, the Ashfield men had to take their grain as far as twenty miles to Piper's Dam on the Maitland, a few miles east of Goderich. Sometimes it was possible to row in Lake Huron, but often the journey was made by land, on foot, with the heavy bag on the back. The return journey, after a seemingly interminable wait at the mill, was no easier, for in addition to the precious flour, the weary yeoman and his wife carried provisions and implements to be procured only in Goderich, the metropolis of Huron. Another mill in Goderich vicinity is of interest to us chiefly because it was built and operated by Elias Disney, the great-grandfather of Walt Disney of movie production fame, whose new picture, Make Mine Music, has captured, in the perfection of its technicolour, something of the beauty of a Huron sunset.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 81, 82, 12,13.

In addition to the facilities offered by the Goderich and Port Albert mills and docks, Kintail, just three miles north of Kingsbridge, soon proved of great service to the farmers in the vicinity. The old dock at Kintail, though the top is gone, has still the oak piles as sound as when they were laid in 1876. Blake & Co., storekeepers at Kintail, built the dock to handle cord wood and tanbark for Detroit; schooners from Sarnia, Goderich and Kincardine called there. All winter the wood was collected and piled along the road winding to the dock. A Mr. Lee later operated the dock works, but no grain was shipped from Kintail--probably for lack of warehouses. Kintail's saw-mill was operated by Grant and Youll to make barn timber from hemlock logs, and later by Robert MacKay when hardwood, white ash, black ash, and elm were teamed to Goderich to become wagon tongues and planks. The Riggins Tile and Brick Works furnished material for many of the Ashfield brick houses. Carrick operated a tannery, where local hides were processed with local tanbark, and a grist mill and a flour mill did a flourishing business.

The sawmills, the tannery, the brick and tile works and the schooners have passed into history. No steamer ever called at the dock; it was purely a schooner port. The trim brick houses, the sturdy oak-framed barns and the old dock remain as mute evidence of the days when to the old

schooner men it was Kintail Port ⁷.

In 1845 Henry Philips and Sons built a dam on the Sam Philip's Creek which crossed their farms, Concession 9. A sawmill with an upright saw was erected. When the hemlock trees had been cut into saw logs with an axe, they were drawn to the mill where they were sawn on shares, the farmer getting one half, the miller the other half. The fifth generation are now on that farm acquired 100 years ago from the Crown. In 1852 Alex McDonough erected a tannery on the Nine Mile River, Lot 10. Concession 11. In 1859 William Shackleton built a saw mill, but in his absence his dam and much machinery were carried away by the force of the ice. In 1867 David Runciman bought land from W. Shackleton on Concession 9 and from George Twamley, Concession 8. Here he installed the first circular saw of the district and cut lumber at \$2.50 per M or on shares, fifty fifty. (It is to be noted that dollars and cents were used for the first time in court proceedings, February 8, 1858.) In 1946 there are, in Ashfield, no saw mills or flour mills, but grist mills are operated as follows: Wilfrid Bradley at Amberley, Allan Grant on

⁷ Phillips, W.E., Old Piles of Long-abandoned Kintail Wharf Survive Storms, in The Free Press, London, 1943, in Flora Simpson's Scrap Book.

Concession 12, Herman Philips on Concession 9, and George Hodges at Dungannon.

The central part of Ashfield contains some poor land but that chosen by the members of St. Joseph's Parish is, on the whole, quite good. The pioneers chose their lots from the size of the trees they found--not that they relished the additional labour and time involved in eliminating the giants of the forest but they intelligently reasoned that the soil which nurtured such monstrous growth would surely be productive of bountiful crops. At once they prepared for the Canadian winter of which they had been warned. Their clearing meant life, and it had to be sufficiently large that a tree, when struck by lightning or uprooted by the wind, would not fall across the roof. These trees were chiefly maple, elm and hemlock, though pine--white and red--tamarack, birch, walnut, and hickory were also found. The hardwood resisted the axe, and made the carving of a home a problem much more complicated than that awaiting solution in the prairies.

The first log cabin was usually but one room, with a loft above for sleeping and for storage. When the chinks were filled with wet clay or moss, and the logs were piled in the open fireplace, a cheery little home sent its wreaths of smoke out into the wilderness. Wooden pegs could serve for nails, and a rug from the big box would do

service as a door until one could be made. W. H. Johnson's interview⁸ with the descendants of the Clare-Coleman settlement gives the following information about their particular homes. They had no stoves, but had, instead, substantial fireplaces with stonework protruding out beyond the walls and a large smooth hearth built inside. In the sides were cranes of different lengths on which the pots were hung over the fire. Frequently there were no partitions in the cabin, at one end of which were the beds; in the centre, tables, chairs or benches; and at the other end, the fireplace.

The ordinary development from the log cabin to the modern home will be best understood by following the procedure in a particular case. To the original log cabin, East $\frac{1}{2}$ Lot 19, L.S.R., of John Sullivan, were built a big frame "front" room, a bed-room, a stairway, and three rooms on the second floor. The log house now became a back kitchen. Later were built a parlour, another bed-room, a wardrobe, with corresponding rooms above, until the house was a large, cheery, roomy structure. But its life was short. It was moved back from the road to give place to the beautiful brick house now occupied by a grandson, John Sullivan Dalton, on the Blue Water Highway.

8 W.H. Johnson, op. cit.

When the brick house was ready for occupancy, and the family moved in, the old frame house was demolished, 1887. The owner of the house had been a boy pioneer, and as he took Mr. Griffin, a neighbour, through his new home, he remarked that he did not wish to furnish the large front room to the south until he could do it properly. The first furnishing in it was his own coffin, which the neighbours clothed in black and white, hanging the windows with similar drapes, when, at the age of fifty-eight, Mr. Sullivan died after a very short illness. He was the owner of four hundred acres at the time of his death, and left a widow with six sons and two daughters.

The barns saw even more rapid improvement, and these large, modernly-equipped structures are more striking in appearance than the houses. They rest on concrete or stone foundations, and have huge concrete silos attached. Running water and electrical fixtures should soon be common, and today are by no means unusual. Early in the 1900's, houses were equipped with running water, but except for occasional "Delco" lighting, oil lamps did universal service till very recently, and will probably be used for several years more.

During the season when the grain was growing, the men cleared more land, and considered from two to five acres a year good progress. Yet even this speed gradually caused the forest to recede, and the township, in the span

of one man's life, saw progress from the sickle to the tractor-drawn combine. Morgan Dalton, born May 2, 1857, the son of Maurice Dalton and Margaret King, when interviewed a few months before his death, December 26, 1939, in Detroit, recalled his father cutting grain with the sickle--an earlier implement than the cradle--and threshing it by pounding it over boards set on edge, before the introduction of the flail. He saw the harrow replace the roll of brush, and the plough replace the drag--two sticks of wood fastened with wooden pegs. He saw the disc, the mower, the binder, and finally looked from his window as the tractor roared along, drawing the latest improvement, the combine, which eliminates the back-breaking stooking, and cuts, threshes, and bags the grain in the one process. In answer to the question as to whether or not the pioneers were as happy as we are today, the reply was that they were happier, because they had seen their homes growing before their eyes, and happiness follows definite achievement. On the other hand, he spoke in favour of machinery as a means to progress and happiness if only, on our higher plane of living, we maintain the lofty standards of life which we have set for ourselves .

⁹ R.J. Deachman, M.P., These Eighty Years, news clipping in Flora Simpson's Scrap Book.

The first trails, also, gradually gave place to good roads. As early as 1840 Hawkins was interested in roads through Ashfield¹⁰. Besides the main thoroughfare through Port Albert he suggested one east of the Lake at the 7th concession as indispensable. Among the road maps in the Archives of the Province, in Toronto, is a copy of one made by Hawkins, April 30, 1860, showing the Maitland River, the Lake shore north to Ashfield, Port Albert Town Plot, the Nine Mile River, and the two proposed roads to Ashfield--the westerly one two miles shorter, the other using part of a road already constructed through Colborne. Another road was proposed from the south boundary of Port Albert, directly east to Wawanosh, as well as one between Ashfield and Wawanosh. The Lake Shore Road does not keep parallel to the lake shore, but never goes far afield. In 1870 Holland and Lomis built a gravel road about a mile east of the Lake.

Toll gates were abolished in 1873, and roads were kept up by the ratepayers according to Statute Labour. If the labour was not done it was charged on the taxes. The path master had a beat from one concession to the next, and his duty was to notify the farmers of their portion. A team and a man, ploughing, scraping, or drawing gravel

¹⁰ Appendix 2, pp. 170, 171.

counted five days. Since some served as many as four days under these conditions, the requirement for 200 acres seemed to be 20 days work. Neglect of this duty was charged at the rate of 75 cents a day. Today, trucks are used for this labour, and the taxes defray the expense.

The Goderich-Kincardine Road, which belonged to the County in 1879, then to the townships, and finally became the Blue Water Provincial Highway 21, was paved and crowned with a hot tar surface by the Storms' Construction Company of Toronto, 1946. Although for many years it was an excellent gravel road, it is now one of the best highways in the Province.

Tallow candles were made at the pioneer home to supplement the glow from the open fireplace when the darkness of the Canadian winter closed in on the little family. Potash they made from ashes recovered from the burning of stumps--or of trees which were sometimes sacrificed to facilitate the clearing process, so plentiful was wood with forests all around. Lime and lye were then available, and the addition of grease resulted in soap. For clothing, they spun their own yarn and they wove their own cloth, dyeing the wool or thread to taste.

The various woods were utilized according to their composition and properties: hemlock bark was piled along the shore to be carried away in barges and exchanged for

commodities not available in Ashfield. Cedar and basswood slits made shingles; hard oak and other hardwoods made wheels, furniture and pegs for nails; walnut was used for snake fences, while the maple, as well as doing service for building purposes, supplied sugar and syrup in abundance.

The first oxen were brought into the country by the Flynn Brothers. These animals were slow but powerful, and with a yoke across their necks and a goad or lash to encourage them, they notably eased the labour of their owners. To feed them was the problem--in winter they had to "browse" on low green trees. James Dalton brought the first team of Indian ponies and a wagon from Kettle Point, Ontario. In 1856, John King purchased the first team of draft horses, and in 1857, Thomas O'Reilly became the owner of the first Kingsbridge colt. Michael O'Reilly, on Kerry Creek, the inventor of the district, was the first to have a loom, and John Sullivan possessed the first binder. The excitement created when a new implement appeared is evident in the story of the threshing machine. Charles and Michael Dalton were the first to use a horse-power threshing outfit. The Dalton brothers supplied one team and the neighbours nine more to power the turntable when the threshing machine toured the country. The machine itself was a McTaggart outfit made in Clinton, and the memory of it brings back the picture of the bountiful meal served by

the women, after which a bit of cider always, regardless of the date, brought forth the complimentary remark: "Mighty fine cider--for this time of year." The little boys had a perfect race track after the ten teams had travelled all day in the circular path. The winner of the race was called "Dan Patch"--the epitome of equine speed. In 1882 Kingsbridge and Kintail saw the steam threshing machine, owned by Richard Wall and Patrick J. O'Reilly. A picnic was held at Kintail to see its wonders, though many farmers feared to use it lest it set their barns on fire ¹¹.

Robert Howard later owned the first traction engine, and James Sennett the first tractor. Although improvements have come quickly, the old spirit of the "bee" still exists, and though the women folks do not have to plan on having the "threshers" two or three days as formerly, yet at least one banquet is set at each farm of any size, and the men forget their labour in the gustatory pleasure of the noon hour; also, at least one-half day may be stolen from school on the plea: "We have the threshers." Norman O'Connor and Lyle Lannon operate combines today. Ploughing matches are still popular, and the "Victory Match", recently held at Port Albert Airport, October, 1946, featured, with

11 W.E. Phillips, op. cit.

the competition, educational exhibits of agricultural progress in the buildings and on the grounds. That farmers are more interested in new machinery and new methods than in vaudeville shows and fanfare, is evident from the enormous crowds which attend these matches.

When Kingsbridge was first named, the post-office was housed in John McCarron's hotel at the corner of the 6th Concession and the main road. About 1870 Francis Egan became postmaster and was succeeded by Philip Austin, Charles Moss, Rupert Bell, Michael Beninger, and lastly, Stephen Martin. Mr. Martin still operates the general store, but a service station has taken the place of the post-office which is no longer necessary since rural delivery came into operation in 1917. When the Blue Water Highway became a thoroughfare for tourist motor traffic, Edward Gunn opened another service station opposite the church, which in 1946 is in the hands of James Wallace. A post-office was established at Kintail within the parish limits in the late 60's where Mr. Grant had a small store and blacksmith shop. In 1877 the general store was operated by Martin Whitty who served as postmaster for about forty years. In this building, later Dr. Simpson's home, the C.M.B.A. members (No. 83) of Ashfield Parish held their meetings. The present general store at Kintail was first operated in a barn by a Mr. Fellow, and then

successively by Blake, MacGregor, Buchanan, MacMurchy, Neil MacDonald, Robert MacDonald, and David MacKenzie, (1946). Then Robert MacDonald again assumed control.

Hotels were necessary in those days of slow travel, and the one at Kingsbridge had as proprietors John McCarron, Roger Mulroy and Robert McGrory. The first hotel in Kintail was operated by Farquhar MacRae, who had a boat and often went to Goderich for supplies. But a storm upturned his little boat, one day, and he was drowned--the first internment in Kintail cemetery, 1858. A parishioner, Alexander Young, who retired in 1917, kept, in Kintail, one of the best hotels of the earlier days in Western Ontario, with a livery stable to accommodate travellers between Goderich and Kincardine who needed to change horses. In the adjoining hall all Ashfield met for concerts, wedding receptions, public meetings, elections, and especially for the New Year's Ball.

Kingsbridge had a black-smith shop until recently. Mr. Patrick Hogan kept one on the Lake Shore, north of the church, until he died, when William Quigley became the smith. "Bill" moved the shop to Kingsbridge proper--the corner of Concession 6, and operated on horses' hoofs from there for many years. About 1930 he moved again, and continued the service from his farm on the 7th, but today Bill and the shop are both gone. In Kintail, Michael Kenny had a

shop, and another, located on Mr. Young's property, was pulled down only in the summer of 1945. In 1946 the only blacksmith shop in Ashfield is in the hands of Mr. Scholtz, Dungannon.

A shoe-maker shop was kept by Mr. Noble on the grounds which later were used for the convent. Michael O'Connor had a cheese factory in the Kintail district, and the butcher business was carried on successively by David Stewart, Patrick M. Sullivan and George O'Callaghan, the first and third operating from Kintail, Mr. Sullivan from his home on the 7th, where he killed on Mondays and distributed by wagon the rest of the week. The dress-makers lived in Kintail: Annie and Lena Ford--who had also a millinery shop in a little cottage; Hannah Styles and Kate Bowler in MacMurchy's store, and finally Mary MacLeod in her own home.

The doctors also resided in Kintail. First there was the young Dr. McKidd who had his office in Kintail Hall, but who did not remain long. Dr. MacDonald followed, but the Yukon gold-rush lured him away; Dr. Cassidy, Dr. O'Carrol and Dr. MacLennan each served for a time, but in 1904 Ashfield's own doctor came when Dr. A. A. J. Simpson took up his quarters in that village. Until 1941, when the doctor quietly slipped away to receive his reward from the Master he had served so well, Ashfield had in him a surgeon, a

medical adviser, a kind and sympathetic friend. As Medical Officer of Health he visited Kingsbridge School yearly. He was loved from one end of the township to the other, visited every home from Port Albert to Amberley, could be called at any hour in any weather, performed operations on kitchen tables by oil light--without a nurse. Ever comforting the sorrowing and keeping his patients' interests close at heart, he calmly did his duty in a manner which brought honour to his noble profession.

There is one sad story in the economic history of Ashfield--the Ontario West Shore Railroad. Ashfield needed a railroad, and when Mr. J. W. Moyes of unhappy memory promised to build one from Goderich, through Colborne and Ashfield, to Kincardine, the offer was enthusiastically received. When they came to vote on the project, John Neil MacKenzie warned against it, citing the instance of the bogus railway at the Sault. Morgan Dalton, of Kingsbridge, the wise man of Ashfield, urged its acceptance because his district was in great need of it. The vote went with the railroad, and Goderich, Huron, Ashfield and Kincardine were to pay the \$400,000. The workmen were paid as they proceeded, and in twenty years the increased taxes were to have retired the debt. Construction began. By 1908 Point Farm was reached; by 1911 Kintail--at which time Moyes disappeared and construction ceased, leaving

Goderich burdened with a debt of \$150,000; Kincardine, \$125,000; Ashfield, \$75,000, and Huron, \$50,000. Goderich paid her debt before 1918 by the sale of rails and other movable articles. The bonds were due 1934, but the burden remained much longer, and the taxes in Ashfield continued to be high as a result of that major "swindle". They hope to have the debt cleared by 1947, a debt for the privilege of having once a load of coal brought out from Goderich and a load of grain taken back. The High School students in residence in Goderich actually travelled home on the train once, and hopes ran high as to the conveniences that would result when the students could live at home, and the parents could get Goderich supplies brought to their very doors. But again, "God's Will be done" was the voice of the people, and life went serenely on.

According to the latest record¹² from Ashfield, the number of property holders in 1946 is 685, with property assessed to the value of \$22,778,375, only \$299,500 of which belongs to parishioners--a decrease in the last five years. At least 95% of the Ashfield farmers are insured with the West Wawanosh Fire Insurance Company. All the grain is now sold in Lucknow, and all livestock is trucked

¹² Special Communication from a Township Official, September 8, 1946.

to market.

The County Clerk, 1946, is Norman Miller; County Treasurer, Henry Erskin; Township Clerk, Charles McDonagh; Township Reeve, Cecil Johnston; Township Councillors: Raymond Dalton, Melvin Dickson, Robert Grant and Elmer Graham; Treasurer, A. H. McNoy; Assessor, William Tigert; Tax Collector, Wilfred McCarthy; Road Superintendent, Herbert Curran; Weed Inspector, Herman Philips; School Attendance Officer, Roy Alton; Relief Officer, Ernest Blake; Separate School Trustees: Father Donnellan, Chairman, James Keane, John Kelly, Wilfred McCarthy, Secretary-Treasurer; Separate School Inspector, H. J. Payette, B.A.; Separate School Teacher, Miss Margaret Kirby; Attendance, twenty-eight.

This completes to date the story of the economic and municipal life of the members of St. Joseph's Church, Ashfield. The parish boundaries coincide with those of the township, except that no part of Lucknow is included. The outward lives of the people run parallel to those of their non-Catholic neighbours. But these people live another and more active life as members of the largest and most highly organized institution in the world--the Catholic Church. The Parish is a cell in this great body, and each parishioner is a member of the Mystical Body of Christ.

CHAPTER V

ASHFIELD IN THE CHURCH IN CANADA

The nucleus for the Parish of Ashfield arrived in Canada at the beginning of a period which has been termed, "La Renaissance religieuse du Canada français de 1840 à 1855." If French Canada needed a religious awakening, what of Western Canada, where the dearth of clergy was even greater? The Church had suffered from its first establishment in Canada, having come with the early explorers and having endured their hardships and privations. The first Mass had been offered in Ontario by Father Joseph Le Caron, a Franciscan, August 12, 1615, at Carhagwa (Carhagoutha), in the presence of Champlain, Brulé and twelve other Frenchmen. A cross was erected near Father Le Caron's cabin which became the first church in Ontario. In 1924 the Knights of Columbus erected a monument at Carhagwa to commemorate the first August Sacrifice, and the State Council of the Order, meeting at Windsor, 1946, decided to proceed with work on the site of the Le Caron Memorial to preserve this religiously historic spot.

In 1626 the Jesuits came to the province, but by 1650 their missions among the Hurons had been demolished. In 1657 Quebec was made a vicariate-apostolic, but the Gallicism of the French overlords militated against the

Church's success in the work for souls, and threatened to submerge it. In 1763, paradoxically enough, a change to British rule brought a freedom which the Church in Canada had not previously experienced. The conquerors intended merely toleration for a church which would be administered as a department of state, severed from the Holy See and deriving its authority from the Crown. Fortunately, however, the anglicizing, proselytizing process was deemed inopportune by those in control of Canada, and although no ecclesiastical appointment was made without the consent of the governor, great discretion and tact were used on both sides, and no serious disagreement resulted. The civil authorities allowed the Church full control of its internal economy, and intercourse with Rome continued. However, European priests were not well received by the government at Quebec. Those from France were not wanted; those from England, Ireland, and Scotland were not allowed to preach without special permission of the governor. The authority of the Catholic Bishop of Quebec was uncertain, penal laws still remained on the statute books, and anti-catholic prejudice was strong. Even the privileges enjoyed were guaranteed by a statement which ended with the words, "as far as the laws of Great Britain permit"¹--a very doubtful

¹ H.A. Scott, The Roman Catholic Church East of the Great Lakes, 1760-1912 in Canada and Its Provinces, vol.II, p.13.

security. The Bishop of Quebec had died in 1760, three months before the capitulation of Montreal, and the concessions made to the church did not seem to include permission for the election of a bishop. By 1766 however, Bishop Briand had been consecrated, and although strange conditions were theoretically imposed, he fearlessly declared himself Bishop of Quebec by the Mercy of God and the Grace of the Holy See, and refused to take the oath of allegiance until a formula acceptable to a Roman Catholic was provided. Rome approved the formula later, and Bishop Briand, while resisting any encroachment on the Church's powers, by his loyalty to Great Britain during the American Revolution won for himself, his flock, and his Church the gratitude of the British authorities, and a pension of two hundred pounds yearly--which was paid also to his successors, and was discontinued only in 1850².

The French Revolution meant the emigration of many French priests, and fortunately Britain welcomed them to Canada. Their presence did much to break down English religious prejudice against everything Catholic, and their work for souls did an enormous amount in strengthening the Church in Canada. Lord Dorchester, who was governor three times between 1766 and 1796, by his benevolence permitted

² Ibid., pp. 11-47.

this growth to continue and to flourish. Efforts by Monk, Sewell, Bishop Mountain, Craig and Ryland to destroy her freedom had no lasting results.

Bishop Flessis (1763-1825) achieved the organization of the Canadian Hierarchy, and although he never relinquished a right, he never offended English sensibilities. On the other hand, by his pastoral letters in 1812, 1813, and 1814, he won the admiration of the government authorities to the extent that the pension was increased to one thousand pounds a year as a reward for his loyalty and the good conduct of his clergy and flock. He was given a seat in the Legislative Council in 1817, and exercised more powerfully his good influence from that vantage point. Bishop Flessis realized the need for a division of his huge diocese. Bishop Hubert's report to the Holy See in 1794 showed the diocese in four divisions: Montreal, Quebec, Upper Canada, and the Maritimes. Each division had its own vicar-general, and priests were prepared at the Seminary in Quebec--though the first priests' retreat after the conquest was not until 1839. Difficulties continued to prevent the creation of separate dioceses, but after 1815 Nova Scotia became a vicariate-apostolic with Edmund Burke³,

³ Fr. Burke was the first English speaking priest to work in Upper Canada west of Glengarry. In 1794 Bishop Hubert sent him to Upper Canada as vicar-general.

Bishop of Sion, to rule it. In 1819 and 1820 the necessary Bulls arrived for the consecration of four more bishops. Macdonell was consecrated Bishop of Rhaesina for Upper Canada, 1820; Lartrigue, Bishop for Montreal in 1821; MacEacharn, Bishop for New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Magdalen Islands, 1821; and Provencher, Bishop for the North West in 1822. This marked a milestone in the establishment of a perfect hierarchy in Canada, and never after did England place any obstacle in the way of its completion. By 1826 Upper Canada was a separate diocese, and by 1845 a statute had been enacted by the House of Assembly by which civil incorporation was granted to the dioceses of Kingston and Toronto, and to all dioceses that might in future be erected. By 1946, when His Holiness Pope Pius XII created Archbishop McGuigan of Toronto a Cardinal, thereby giving Canada two princes of the church, the nation hailed the gesture as an honour bestowed, not only on the recipient of the Red Hat, but on all Canadians, Protestant and Catholic. The civic reception accorded him on his return from Rome vied in splendour with the religious honours paid him.

Bishop Macdonell was not a stranger in Upper Canada. He had been sent to that district as early as 1803 and had been Vicar-General in 1807. In a letter to Sir Francis Bond Head regarding conditions on his arrival, he says:

There were but two Catholic clergymen in the whole of Upper Canada . . . During that period I had to travel over the country, from Lake Superior to the Province line of Lower Canada, in the discharge of my pastoral functions, carrying the sacred vestments sometimes on horseback, sometimes on my back, and sometimes in Indian birch canoes, living with savages, without any other shelter and comfort, but what their fires and their fare and the branches of the trees afforded, crossing the great lakes and rivers . . . Nor were the hardships and privations I endured among the new settlers and immigrants, less than what I had to encounter among the savages themselves, in their miserable shanties, exposed on all sides to the weather and destitute of every comfort ⁴.

February 14, 1826, Leo XII erected Upper Canada into a diocese with Bishop Macdonell as first bishop under title of Regiopolis--or Kingston. This was the first diocese created in a British domain after the Reformation, and its bishop had earlier received his episcopal ring from George IV. In 1827 Bishop Macdonell visited his diocese, including Sandwich, where he found many Roman Catholics administered to by Abbé Crevier, who had replaced Abbé Marchand, a Sulpician. Jesuit Fathers from this district visited the Huron District at more or less regular intervals. Gooding, after 1826, often took a priest with him as he travelled from Detroit to Georgian Bay, but three Jesuits seem to have been chiefly responsible for

⁴ Scott, op. cit., pp. 50, 51.

taking the consolations of religion to the people of Goderich and its environs. They tell in Goderich of the visit of a bishop, supposedly Bishop Macdonell, who held an audience of Catholics and Protestants spell-bound as he spoke in the little school-house church (used by all missionaries, regardless of creed) to a congregation which overflowed even to "The Square." The Bishop died in 1840, therefore few, if any, of the people of Ashfield would have been in that congregation. At the time of Bishop Macdonell's death, there were thirty-four priests in Ontario, forty-eight parishes or missions with churches or chapels, and about 60,000 Catholics. The Bishop was careful to secure land for church purposes, by government grants or by purchase, wherever he foresaw that a mission could be opened. He received from the government a pension of five hundred pounds for himself and one thousand pounds for his clergy, which, though an award for personal services, was continued to his successors, until 1850 probably, when all pensions to Roman Catholic clergy were discontinued. Since then, Catholic clergy of every province of Canada have received nothing from the government, but are supported by their congregations.

While Huron still belonged to Kingston diocese, the good Irishman, Father Lawrence Dempsey, pastor of St. Thomas and London, visited Goderich in 1831, arriving on horseback.

In 1834, Father Joseph Louis Wiriath (or Worrath) walked from the Wilmot Line to give a three days' mission at the Little Thames, carrying on his back the vestments, sacred vessels and other necessaries. Then he proceeded on to Irishtown and to Goderich, wearing low shoes, thin clothing, and practising severe mortification even in regard to food. He seems to have been attached to the German settlement at Waterloo, at the time, yet it was he who procured the present site on North Street, overlooking the Maitland, and it was he who erected a frame church there, 1834.

In 1836 another Irishman, Reverend Father Thomas Gibney, was placed in charge of the Counties of Huron and Perth, with Goderich and Stratford the chief centres, but he was not a resident pastor. He probably came from Toronto to fulfil his mission. In February, 1842, he said the first Mass in Ashfield, in McGlade's cabin, south of Port Albert.

Under the star-fretted dome where Orion,
Arcturus, the Pleiades, and Sirius kept lit the
eternal altar lights of God, did he raise the
Host on high, while the warning bell which
bowed low those bent in adoration, sounded down
aisles not formed of stone, but of over-arching
boughs. Like the Sistine, the choir of these
first services was unseen; no Michelangelo, but
the Architect Almighty had laid the corner-stone;
the moving tabernacle rested there to

 "Bring back the sheep that wander,
 To raise up the souls that fall;"
and until such time as when the temple and

Sacrament shall nevermore be known, the Huron Tract was consecrated by God-with-us⁵.

After Holy Mass, that February morning, Father Gibney baptized the children, some infants of a few days, others much older--so seldom had the missionaries penetrated the northern forest depths. Thomas Finn, son of John Finn, born December, 1839, and Mary Flynn, daughter of Jeremiah Flynn, born June, 1840, were among the little ones received into the fold of Holy Mother Church that day. These were the first boy and the first girl born in Ashfield Township, and accordingly they each received a grant of land from the government. According to the records in the Patent Offices, Lands and Forests Department, Parliament Buildings, Toronto, Sept. 27, 1847, Thomas Finn received $78\frac{1}{2}$ acres, S. $\frac{1}{2}$; and Mary Flynn, $78\frac{1}{2}$ acres, N. $\frac{1}{2}$. These grants appear in the Land Files and in the Huron Atlas under the fathers' names, and seem to be Lot 6, L.S.R.

In 1841 the Diocese of Toronto was formed, and Huron District was included in its territory. Bishop Power was its first shepherd, and when he called a Synod in 1842, sixteen of his nineteen priests were present. He consecrated his diocese to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the most pure Heart of Mary.

⁵ Robina and Kathleen M. Lizars, In the Days of the Canada Company, p. 447.

In 1843 Father Peter Schneider was appointed resident priest of Goderich, with Stratford also under his care ⁶. He has been called the "Apostle of Huron County", a title he richly deserved because from 1843 to 1868, with the exception of two years, he spent himself for the people of this district. It was during this time that the Diocese of London and the Parish of Ashfield came into being. Father Schneider must have been a colourful figure, for so often we find little word pictures of him, both in private correspondence and in public writings. They say he looked like Pius IX, and pictures treasured in Goderich bear out the impression.

Father Schneider was born in Schoenbourg, Alsace, October 23, 1806, and was ordained priest, June, 1836. After working in his home diocese for a time he left for America to serve in the Missions of New York, Montreal, Kingston, Toronto and London. He was a curate for eighteen months at Sandwich, some few years in Wilmot, Waterloo, and eventually was assigned to Goderich. At first he lived in a little house on the corner of Kingston and St. David Streets, but later moved to a frame cottage on the site of the present separate school. His district was large, his flock scattered, and Miss Lizars describes him

⁶ Appendix 5d, p. 181.

as making his "dress-encumbered way over the impediments of blaze and bush road" ⁷. But Ashfield remembers him as a majestic figure on a white horse--a novelty in those days--and others say that after the completion of the Buffalo and Lake Huron Railway, opened formally by Lord Elgin in 1857, he often rode the engine to reach more distant parts.

Miss Lizars again describes this huge man as a peacemaker who seemed to bear a charmed life among those who were inimical to things Catholic. One day as he travelled between Goderich and Irishtown he met an Orange parade. The ranks opened, and as the "tremendous" man passed through, nodding to all in a friendly manner, the Orangemen respectfully saluted. He numbered among his friends men like John Longworth--who had fought under Wellington. Miss Lizars credits Father Schneider with having been a physician before becoming a priest, and having been a soldier in Napoleon Bonaparte's army, a Peninsular and a Waterloo man. But if the diocesan record regarding the date of his birth is correct, even at Waterloo he would have been but eight or nine years old. However, he

⁷ Lizars, *op. cit.*, p. 445. It was not until 1875 that the Provincial Council of Toronto dispensed the clergy from wearing priestly garments in public when not engaged in the service of the church.

did stride in his soutanne as if a sabre hung at his side.

His Latin was good, his English bad, and both German and French were native to him. The result was that he spoke no known tongue, yet he apparently made himself understood, as when he turned the vote of his people in 1851 from Mr. Cayley who had promised him land for a church in Ashfield and had failed to keep his word⁸. Perhaps this story is as imaginative as his Napoleonic connections.

Father Schneider began official parish records in Goderich, 1844, and included data of the previous year. For some reason he found it necessary to go to Rome, and he entered, under date of June, 1852:

Here I left Goderich, and may God keep my successor to his duty faithful as I have been these nine years.

By 1854 he seems to have returned, and in 1856 he entered the following:

Dear Reader My mission this 13 years was Stratford, Irishtown, Goderich. This last year it has pleased the Rt. Rev. Dr. Charbonal (sic), Bp. of Toronto to take off Stratford. There now remain Goderich, Irishtown, Ashfield, Bayfield.

His visits to Ashfield before his trip to Rome were very rare, if at all, because no mention is made of him in Kingsbridge until after the beginning of the year

⁸ Appendix 5e, p. 181.

1852, and he is considered the successor to Fathers Ryan and Keleher who looked after Goderich during his absence. Even after 1852 Ashfield people often travelled to Goderich to assist at Mass, a distance of from 15 to 17 miles. In 1858 Father Schneider has another entry:

Until now I was alone having Goderich containing the missions of Ashfield, Wawanosh, Hay, St. Joseph and Irishtown. But just now I got a "vicaire" named Wassereau, born in Phalbourg, Lorraine, France.

This "vicaire", Louis Auguste Wassereau, according to official London diocesan records, was ordained at Sandwich, December 8, 1857, by Bishop Pinsonneault. He was soon given charge of Ashfield, with Wawanosh and Morris as missions, and from 1860 the parish began to live its independent life as an integral party of the Catholic Church in Canada.

In the meantime, in 1850, Armand François Marie de Charbonnel, son of a French Count, was consecrated the second Bishop of Toronto. He caused to be erected the Diocese of London in 1855, and that of Hamilton in 1856. Huron District now belonged to the Diocese of London which comprised: Middlesex, Elgin, Norfolk, Oxford, Perth, Huron, Lambton, Kent and Essex, with Peter Adolphe Pinsonneault as the first bishop, consecrated in Montreal by Bishop Charbonnel, May 18, 1856. He made his solemn entry into London, June 29, transferred the See to Sandwich,

February 2, 1859, resigned 1866, and died 1883. His successor, Bishop John Walsh, transferred the See back to London, October 3, (ratified November 15) 1869, was himself transferred to Toronto with Archepiscopal dignity in 1889, and died in 1898. Denis O'Connor, C.S.B., was Bishop of London from 1890 to 1899, became Archbishop of Toronto 1899, resigned 1908, and died in 1911. F. P. McEvay followed Bishop O'Connor in London and in Toronto, and also died in 1911. Michael Francis Fallon, O.M.I., was Bishop of London from 1910 to 1931, and the present saintly incumbent of that weighty office is the Most Rev. John Thomas Kidd, D.D., LL.D. In April, 1946, the Most Reverend Ildebrando Antoniutti, Apostolic Delegate to Canada and Newfoundland, announced the appointment of the Most Rev. John C. Cody, Bishop of Victoria, as Titular Bishop of Eletea, and Coadjutor with the right of succession to the Most Rev. John T. Kidd. The diocese is rapidly increasing and in 1945 had 170 diocesan priests, 82 priests of Religious Order, 1 Ukranian priest, 93 parishes with resident pastors, and 30 missions; 3 theological seminaries, 4 colleges, 4 academies, 25 secondary schools, 97 primary schools, 4 hospitals, 1 orphan asylum, 1 House of Providence, 6 orders of men, 10 orders of women, and a

Catholic population of 115,000⁹.

When Father Schneider left Goderich in 1852, Father Ryan served the district for a short time, and although his visits to Ashfield were few, he is remembered as the first missionary after Father Gibney. He has left no personal notes in the Register in Goderich, but he made his official entries under the heading, "Goderich, Ashfield, etc, etc." In 1845 William O'Neil had donated ten acres for church purposes, and although the church was not built for several years, the people settled around the spot one day to be consecrated to their Lord by a Temple. The Land Acquisition files show the ten acres to be the N.E. of Lot 14, L.S.R., which had been given to William O'Neil as recorded by Sept. 30, 1847, under the Sales Number 4063, and was now guaranteed by an Order-in-Council for a Roman Catholic Church¹⁰. Mass was now said at the home of Morgan King, and later at John McKinnon's, both of which were near the new site.

Father Keleher followed Father Ryan. In the parish register in Goderich he has left this interesting note, in Latin:

⁹
Directory, pp. 75-81.

The Ontario Catholic Year Book and

¹⁰ Archives and Public Records, Parliament Buildings, Toronto, Ontario.

Goderich C.W. The 28th day of September in the year of our Lord, 1853, A.M.D.G. Being in the 39th year of my age and the 14th since my ordination at Maynooth, Ireland, by Cornelius Egan, Bishop of Kerry, A.D. 1840. In this vineyard of the church I laboured from the year 1840 until April of the year 1845. Then I sailed for North America and having been accepted by Rt. Rev. John Hughes, I first served under him. Then in the Diocese of Albany under Rt. Rev. John McCloskey. In the year 1852 he permitted me to leave so that according to the will of God I placed myself under the jurisdiction of Bishop De Charbonelle (sic) of the Diocese of Toronto in the part of America known as Canada West. May God have mercy on him. 11.
Robert Keleher 11.

Father Keleher's last entry is May 31, 1854.

There is mention made of a Father Mungault visiting Ashfield in the 1850's. He must be the Father M. Montcoq that Sarnia Archives records as a young missionary direct from France who worked in that district from 1854 to 1856, since the fate of the priest is remembered in both places in the same tragic setting. Father was returning over the frozen river St. Clair to Sarnia from a sick call in Port Huron, when the ice gave way, and his body was recovered only in the spring on the banks of Walpole Island.

When Father Schneider returned from Rome, and more especially when he received an assistant, Ashfield's needs were attended to more often, and though trips to Goderich continued, no doubt, the number of settlers in the

11 Parish Register, St. Peter's Church, Goderich.

northern district warranted the presence of a priest Sunday morning. The records were kept in the Goderich Register, St. Peter's Church, until 1861, but after 1858 bear Father Wassereau's signature. Father Schneider copied all the records from the first book into a second larger one, and added his signature, therefore, to that of Father Wassereau. The first Confirmation recorded is that of a class of forty-five male and thirty-one female in the Church of St. Ignatius, in the Township of Ashfield, 1858, the minister of the Sacrament being the Rt. Rev. J. Farrell, Bishop of Hamilton and Administrator of the London Diocese in the absence of Bishop Pinsonneault. The new church in Ashfield was opened and blessed the same day, and in that Confirmation class were, not only children of ten, but also married men and women.

CHAPTER VI

ASHFIELD AS A PARISH UNIT

Since a Parish is a world epitomized, history was made when the little church was opened in 1858, and another group of militants became Soldiers of Christ. It was a frame building, 60 feet by 40 feet, without flooring. The timber had been hewn and the frame work erected as is done in the raising of a barn. Lumber was then drawn from Goderich by means of oxen, and the church was sided in. The roof was later raised to a peak to eliminate the barn effect. Seats were made of 8 by 10 inch timbers placed lengthwise, three to each side of the building, and filled in underneath to raise to sufficient height, with rough boards placed across, leaving space for aisles in the centre and on each side. By 1865 there were about 75 families in the parish, so the church was enlarged. Again in 1872 there had been so great an increase that another addition was made which doubled the size of the building and included a vestry. This work was done by Thomas Hussey, Morgan Austin, and Hugh O'Fay. At first the altar was of rough timber, but soon a better one was procured, and the whole interior was made more comfortable. The exterior was unchanged until 1887, and a picture, taken by Thomas Finn and preserved by his brother Pat's family,

shows it to be artistic in its simple architecture, with a clocher pointing heavenward to remind all to raise their hearts and minds to God, and the cross surmounting it, as always, speaking of Redemption through Sacrifice. The older residents, recalling the opening day in 1858, loved to mention the singing of "Hail Queen of Heaven" by John Babon, who later lived with Father Wassereau in the parochial residence. Until this small one-story building was completed, Father Wassereau lived with his people, chiefly at Morgan King's or John Sullivan's. Since he had charge also of St. Augustine and Morris he had considerable travelling to do. Tall in stature, mounted on a powerful grey horse, he was a striking figure, but when he appeared in the first buggy he created a still greater sensation.

Records at St. Peter's Rectory, Goderich, for the early days of Ashfield, are contained in two books, the older and smaller one from January 5, 1843, to July 30, 1865, and ending with the ejaculation Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam; the larger one containing the same material with additional records of later years. Father Schneider was chiefly responsible for these early entries, some of which are very interesting, and many of which are in Latin. The first for the year 1843 shows Maria Keal, born November 5, 1842, and baptized January 5, 1843, daughter of John Keal and Johanna Moor. Sponsors: Patrick Sullivan, Johanna McGrath. By December these sponsors had their own child baptized,

according to the following:

Hac 7^a decembris 1843 Baptizato Johanna
Sullivan, filia Patritii Sullivan et Johannae
McGrath, nata 27 Novembris 1843, susceptores
erant Matheius Coffey et Maria Douny
Schneider PP.

Since Father Wassereau and Father Schneider both sign items it is difficult to tell which man performed each ceremony. Tradition makes Father Schneider the officiant at the marriage in Goderich of six Ashfield couples the same day, but as the small book has only Father Wassereau's signature and the large book has both, it would seem that Father Wassereau really married these couples, and Father Schneider, on re-copying the information from the small book to the larger one, signed all entries as a matter of course. In any case, February 8, 1858, the following people were united in matrimony in Goderich, having travelled from fifteen to twenty miles to perform the sacrament:

Patrick Desmond and Martha Wall;
James Donnelly and Ellen Desmond;
Patrick Sullivan and Catherine Dean;
Thomas O'Neil and Catherine Whitty;
Lawrence Kelly and Mary Whitty;
Patrick Connor and Mary Sullivan

It is little wonder that Ashfield became an independent parish soon after. The first baptism shown in the Ashfield parish archives is that of Mary Welch, born December 6, 1860, and baptized February 17, 1861, by Father Wassereau. Her parents were Maurice Welch and Mary Bowler,

May 1, 1863, at Sandwich, William Bernard Hennet, whose parents lived near Dungannon, was ordained priest, thus beginning that glorious line which has been the crowning gift of Ashfield to the Diocese, for she has given more sons to the Church than any other parish of the See, despite the fact that she is almost the smallest. James Brick, son of Donald Brick of the 4th Concession, was the second Ashfield young man to receive Holy Orders. About the same time, Johanna Brick (1876) and Catherine Brick (1878) became Black Franciscan Sisters, Sister Mary and Sister Ladislaus respectively. In 1877 Mary Dineen, daughter of Daniel Dineen and Ann Mahoney, became Sister Mary Louise of St. Joseph's Community, Hamilton. In the meantime, in 1875, Mary O'Reilly, daughter of Michael O'Reilly and Julia Desmond, entered the Congregation of Notre Dame of Peoria, Illinois, and was thenceforth known as Sister Mary Clement. Ten years later her two younger sisters, Agnes and Lucy, entered the same order, taking the names, Sister St. Alban and Sister Winifred. This family was gifted in invention, music and poetry, but their devotion to religion eclipsed all other characteristics.

Music has played an important part in the life of the people of Ashfield from the earliest days. Indians sang hymns in their own language in that first little church, and tenors who might have been world famous raised

their voices to honour Christ and His Blessed Mother and good St. Joseph who was patron of the church from the time of its independence in 1860. Miss Lennon (Mrs. Joseph Griffin) organized the first choir, and became the first organist when a melodion was purchased. (Father Wassereau wept tears of joy as he sat before the musical instrument and for the first time since leaving France played hymns-- of thanksgiving). In 1894 the same group, with the exception of John Dalton who had died in 1888, sang the Requiem at the funeral of their esteemed choir leader.

Father Wassereau attended the parish of St. Augustine once a month and often took his choir with him. His first acolytes in Kingsbridge were James and Timothy McCarron, but Thomas O'Reilly always lit the candles, and Patrick O'Connor took up the collection in the oblong box made by Mr. Slanigan and still preserved as a souvenir.

Ireland, the land of Saints and Scholars, must have been pleased with these sons and daughters of hers, for scarcely were they housed when the Lord came among them in the Holy Sacrifice, and scarcely were they organized into even a loose unit when they began to plan for a school. Nor did they delay their education until a building was furnished. They sent their children to any home where a teacher could be found. Mrs. Joseph O'Connor of Port Albert taught near Brown's Creek--near John Buckley's

property--and also in private homes until a log building was erected in 1859, on land ceded by John Dean. The teacher lived in the school and "boarded around" with the parents of his pupils. William Mulroy, Miss Ward, Mr. Cantelon, John Desmond and Richard Wall taught in this school, and Thomas Mulroy taught here and continued in the new school, a frame building of one room erected in 1861. Thomas Mulroy completed four years; Daniel O'Brien of Whitby, two years; Patrick Murphy, seven years; and Miss Bridget Mary Lennon of Pickering, four years.

Negotiations regarding land for a school had been initiated as early as 1848, and some very interesting correspondence was carried on in this regard. In 1842 the township of Ashfield had been formed into one school division², but Father Schneider was anxious to procure better facilities for the little ones of his flock and represented to the authorities the great necessity of supplying them with a school of their own. The parishioners joined with him in asking for one acre on the South East corner of Lot 15, N.T.P., which John Dean was willing to give. John Clarke wrote to the Crown Lands Department, which in turn applied to the government, and the transfer

² Appendix 5a, p. 178.

was eventually effected³, though it was not until 1859 that the building was erected. The site was the same as the present, but the interior, as well as the exterior, was very crude. A row of boards around three walls served for seats, and the pupils faced the walls. The rough desk for the teacher occupied one front corner, and the very necessary stove, the centre. Early in the 1860's the frame school was built, and though it had but one room also, it accommodated one hundred and fifty pupils, thirty-three of whom, at one period, answered to the name Dalton. The entire course was taught from primary to entrance, and although it is said that the salary varied as the flogging powers of the teacher that school produced some outstanding graduates. The smaller children attended in spring and fall, the older ones, young men about the age of the teacher, attended during the winter.

In 1873 an addition was built to the school by William Moran. Margaret Dalton (Mrs. J.J. Sullivan, mother of Father M. N. Sullivan of London Diocese), a graduate of the school, became the assistant teacher and later, the organist. An elder sister, Mrs. Christopher Lambertus, had charge of the choir in holiday time.

³ Appendix 3d, pp. 174, 175, 176.

One winter, some Indians encamped on the hill near Michael O'Connor's. The children attended school, and at recess war games were introduced. The Indian "braves", when losing, used to seek shelter in the empty house (which later became the convent) and from there called their war-cry of "Cuthe, Cuthe, cawee, cuthe, cuthe, cawee, caweeneeshin." One day two Indian boys went to Dalton's with a bright red sled which they traded for an old sled and a bushel of peas for soup. Then followed sleigh-riding, during which the young Indians persuaded the young Irishmen, Maurice and Morgan, to take a last ride in their old sled. When comfortably seated, the guileless Dalton boys were pushed down the hill, while the Redskins dashed off with the new sled. But when Maurice and Morgan realized what was happening, so great an uproar did they create that the hearts of even Canadian Indian braves quailed, and in the flight which followed both sleds were left for the victorious Irish.

When Father Wassereau was transferred from Ashfield to Maidstone in 1875, he left behind him a devoted people who had learned to love their good pastor in the years he had served them. A church, a school, a progressive community bore testimony to his years of labour, and many boys, baptized by him, proudly answered to the name Augustine. Father John Ansboro, ordained in the church of

St. Columbia at Irishtown by Bishop Walsh, September 24, 1871, followed Father Wassereau in Ashfield, but was succeeded after a few months by Fathers Francis Xavier Darragh and James Scanlon, the latter to look after the missions of St. Augustine and Morris. Father Scanlon had been ordained at Sandwich, August 16, 1863, by Bishop Pinsonneault, and Father Darragh at St. Peter's, London, February 24, 1871, by Bishop Walsh. Father Darragh was an accomplished violinist, young and delicate, but very active, and is remembered as one who won the love of the boys and young men by playing foot-ball with them. In fact, it is said that he was the first priest of whom the young people were not afraid. While pastor he enlarged the parish house and put a stone foundation under it, but his time in Ashfield was quite short, for, August 19, 1876, Father Richard Beausang was appointed pastor by Bishop Walsh. Father Beausang was a native of Ross, County Cork, Ireland, and had served there as a priest for several years. He came to London diocese, was appointed pastor of Sarnia, 1869, and was transferred to Ashfield in 1876. He was a huge man, over fifty years of age, of delicate health, and poorly fitted for the arduous work before him. But he was holy and had a heart responsive to those in need. Before his time, Catechism classes had been organized under lay instructors--notably John Long--but Father Beausang looked

after the children himself and proved an excellent catechist. He was particularly interested in the young people, many of whom he persuaded to take the pledge in answer to the temptations of the day when between Kingsbridge and Goderich, a distance of fifteen miles, there were almost as many hotels. His parishioners co-operated with him, and total abstinence had many supporters. He also organized a sodality for the young women of the parish, and legislated that dances, hitherto lasting until dawn, must stop at midnight.

Since Father Beausang could not drive a horse himself, the parishioners took him to St. Augustine Mission, and he is remembered as a large figure crouched in furs at the bottom of the sleigh. In December, 1879, Bishop Walsh cut off Wawanosh from the mission of Ashfield and made Rev. John A. O'Connor pastor of St. Augustine, with Blyth and Wingham as missions ⁴.

Allergy to cold created strange situations for Father Beausang at times. The weather was particularly stormy when Mr. John Desmond died, and for several days the body had to be kept at home because of the impassability of the roads. When finally a clearing was effected through the drifts, the pastor could not accompany the body to the

⁴ Appendix 7a, p. 183.

graveyard. As the kind neighbours stood around the frozen but open grave, someone remarked that it didn't seem right to lower the corpse without any prayers. "Down wid him, down wid him", called old Mr. Dolan, "down wid him--he's been up long enough". Yet Father Beausang did not remain in doors in all wintry weather. He is remembered as standing on top of a huge snow drift north of the school, sending the children over to the church to make the Stations in Lent. His interest in the exterior is shown by his having a high board fence built around the church grounds, and maple trees planted, some of which are still standing.

The teachers during this time were Miss Neagle, Miss Hannah Dineen (Mrs. Thomas Joy, who in 1946 is still keenly interested in local affairs, and whose daughter Irene, Mrs. Wallace, lives in Kingsbridge), Michael Long, Miss Mary O'Keefe, and Hugh McPhee. All except Miss Neagle belonged to the parish.

It was during Father Beausang's pastorate that the Sisters of St. Joseph of London diocese began to tour the parishes for assistance in the interests of the orphans and old people for whom they devotedly cared. Money was scarce--Father Beausang had discovered that, without quite understanding the inevitability of those "penny collections" on Sunday--but donations of yarn, meat, wheat, flour, apples,

potatoes, vegetables of various kinds, were collected in sleighs and shipped to London. The Sisters bravely faced the hardships of these winter tours--when the farmers had time to convoy them--and sat on top of loads of food, or rolled off into the drifts according to the state of the roads and their own dexterity in maintaining equilibrium. The higher the load, the colder the ride, but what did that matter if God's poor were the better provided for? It may be remarked here that Ashfield more often took orphans to house them than sent them to London to be sheltered, and it was rare for an old man or woman to be placed at Mount Hope before the time of pensions. Now they are glad to go to end their days in a house with the Master Himself, and their native pride is not too severely hurt when they can present a monthly pension to the kind Sisters who have devoted their lives to that work--Sisters among whom are many who were baptized in that same church and taught in the Kingsbridge school.

In October, 1884, Father Beausang was obliged to resign on account of ill health and retired to Sarnia, where he lived with his niece until he died, January 14, 1886, at the age of sixty-one, fortified by the Last Sacraments ⁵.

⁵ Appendix 7b, p. 183.

Father Bartholomew Boubat succeeded Father Beausang, July 21, 1884. Father Boubat, formerly Deacon in the Diocese of Clermont, France, was ordained by Bishop Pinsonneault at Assumption Church, Sandwich, December 6, 1857. His position in Kingsbridge at first was slightly like that of Father O'Malley with Father Fitzgerald in the popular movie, Going My Way. Father Beausang did not realize that a new pastor was relieving him and that his ill health made his continuance there impossible. But Father Boubat was not Father O'Malley, nor was Father Beausang Father Fitzgerald. Moreover, the new pastor was not a complete stranger. He had been stationed in Goderich from 1868 to 1874, and had earned the title "The Builder". The parish rectory which he built there is gone, and the old frame church is gone, but the Separate School and the St. Joseph's Convent still remain. In Sarnia, from 1874 to 1877, he had been particularly interested in securing a proper Christian education for the children. In other parishes, Father Boubat was remembered as the "Angel of the Sick Room", but in Kingsbridge his memory will never die. Perhaps his experiences with the Irishmen in the "flats" at Goderich--the district which later became the property of the Maitland Golf Club--whose inclinations towards merry-making were not to be thwarted by any attempts of the clergy to restore order, gave him the impression that he must rule

with an iron hand. But whatever their faults, the Irish are ever respectful to their priests, and the Kingsbridge people reacted like good novices to his strict training, young and old alike accepting his unreasonable corrections, and repaying him by co-operation and sacrifices as the most natural procedure. He, on his part, worked untiringly for the parish and in five years made marvellous improvements.

His first act, according to his own notes, was to put locks on the church to make it safe at night. How strange that must have seemed to the people whose descendants in Kingsbridge, even now, never lock their doors! He then renovated the church and rectory, completing the work before the first winter set in. The sanctuary was enlarged by a thirty-foot addition, new carpet was put in, a \$2300 altar--still in use--was erected, new statues of the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph were enthroned, new pews were procured, a belfry was built, and one of the finest bells of the diocese bought, the clear tones of which have been heard in Goderich, fifteen miles away. This enormous two-thousand-pound bell was procured from the McShane Bell Co., Troy, New York. Before being installed in the belfry (of which Michael Comiskey of Ingersoll was the architect) it was set up, 1887, temporarily and tolled for John Sullivan, aged fifty-nine, who died

suddenly--perhaps of appendicitis--before Dr. Cassidy, who resided in Goderich, could receive the telegram sent from Kintail, come out the fifteen miles and go back for what was needed on discovering the condition of the man who a few hours before had been milking his cows. Mr. Sullivan left a widow and seven children, the youngest of whom, Nellie, Mrs. M. O'Connor, still lives in Kingsbridge.

At the re-opening of the church in 1887 the bell was christened Leo, for whom Maria O'Connor, Christina Murchison, John Quinn and Daniel Sullivan were sponsors. These names, with those of Bishop Walsh, Father Boubat, Judge Doyle, Joseph Griffin--reeve--were inscribed on it.

It was at this time that Rt. Rev. J. Walsh confirmed a class of nearly eighty children, and a choir, trained by Father Boubat with infinite impatience but with astounding results, accompanied at the organ by the youthful Minnie Keating of Ingersoll, rendered in their isolated country parish Lambillotte's "Tantum Ergo," and "Lauda Sion," and Mozart's "Twelfth Mass". The talent developed by Father Boubat has never since been buried, and the Kingsbridge people have a feeling for music which is beyond the ordinary. "Little Maurice" Dalton rivalled the great John McCormack as an Irish tenor, and Major, the Rev. M. J. Dalton considered it an untold privilege to visit with the late Count at his home in England during

the recent Great War (for being a great singer made one an enviable personage). Walter Dalton's son Jack, before he was two years old, could reproduce perfectly an air heard over the radio, though the little fellow could not talk. Walter and the Major are nephews of "Little Maurice", and they, with their brothers Ray and Denis in Kingsbridge, can produce as marvellous a quartet extemporaneously as one might hear from a New York stage. Any of their sisters will accompany them with piano or violin.

Father Boubat re-furnished and enlarged the rectory by adding a kitchen, a basement, and a glass-enclosed verandah around three sides of the house. The renovation of church and house had cost about fourteen thousand dollars, but the parishioners were proud of their parish and subscribed generously to the building fund. Each year Father Boubat held picnics in "Dean's Grove", and netted something like two thousand dollars annually from this source alone. Although the parish had but nine hundred souls, local talent was outstanding, and expenses were, therefore, not great.

Beautiful, appropriate, and lasting gifts were made to the church. The large full-size figure of Christ on His cross which hangs in the sanctuary was the gift of John Garvey and his wife, Mary McLean, who at that time lived in Chicago. The wall piece, "The Instruments of the Passion",

was donated by John Sullivan and his wife, Johanna Desmond.

Father Boubat gave his people the benefit of witnessing the liturgy of the church in her seasonal ceremonies, Vespers, rogation day processions, etc. The mention of these coupled with Father Boubat's name calls forth the involuntary exclamation from those whose memory goes back that far, "And the meek altar boys!" Cuffs in the vestry, followed by cookies in the rectory, was the recipe, apparently.

In 1889 Father Boubat was transferred to Ridgetown. Here he spent a short time before retiring to Walkerville, where he lived with former Ashfield parishioners, Mrs. Maria Ford and her family, Lena (Mrs. John M. Dalton), Anna, and Thomas ⁶. This French priest had grown to love his Irish parish and to be proud of it, and his parish loved him and was likewise proud of the stately man who drove such a fine horse and rode in so fine a buggy. When he celebrated his golden jubilee quietly in Windsor, about one hundred of these former parishioners, then resident in Detroit, attended the celebration, and presented him with a "bountiful purse".

⁶ This is the family who donated the carillon chimes to St. Peter's Seminary, London, making the bequest through their cousin, Father Thomas J. Ford, now of St. Michael's, London.

The school teachers of these years were: P. J. Neven, organist, Cecile Julien of Owen Sound, Katherine Landy of Toronto, Anne O'Keefe (Mrs. Aspenleiter) of Preston, Katherine Lennon (Sister M. St. Ann) of Pickering, Louise Tyrell of Lindsay, Agnes Stiles, Michael Gilmore, Margaret Egan of St. Mary's, Margaret O'Keefe (Mrs. Peter Martin) and the writer, Kathleen Sullivan of Stratford. J. R. Miller of Goderich was succeeded as public school inspector in 1888 by J. Elgin Tom, who visited the school until 1891, at which time Kingsbridge school became the responsibility of the Separate School Section no. 2, Ashfield.

During Father Boubat's pastorate, Agnes and Lucy O'Reilly entered the convent, 1885, followed in 1886 by Mary Dalton, daughter of Maurice Dalton and Jane McKenna, who, after a few brief years in the Order of the Sacred Heart in St. Louis, died. Elizabeth and Mary Hussey, daughters of Thomas Hussey and Mary Dalton, entered St. Joseph's Community, London, 1887 and 1888 respectively, as Sister Euphemia and Sister Philomena.

In 1890 Father Nicholas Dixon, who had been ordained priest by Bishop Walsh at the chapel of the Sacred Heart Convent, London, November 18, 1883, was appointed Pastor of Ashfield. He was tall and healthy looking, but had a bad heart and lived in dread of a sudden death.

Apparently though, he did not fear the dead, for he had the 8-foot tight board fence around the cemetery removed, and new, less formidable fences erected, where needed, on the church property. The main event of his pastorate was the organization of a Separate School Section in 1891, and the building of the present two-room, light brick structure. Misses Mabel Megan, organist, and Anna C. Dalton were the first teachers of this Separate School, from which so many girls were graduated to Goderich Collegiate and then to Clinton Model School or London or Stratford Normal Schools, after which they spread over the province as educators of youth. The boys often went to Assumption College, Sandwich, after completing their course in Kingsbridge, and then on to the Grand Seminary, Montreal, returning later as priests of God to do His work in the diocese of London. In May, 1890, John Donnelly, son of James Donnelly and Ellen Desmond, then of Greenoch, was ordained for Hamilton Diocese; and on December 19, 1896, John Hogan, son of William Hogan and Mary Dean, was ordained at St. Peter's Cathedral by Rt. Rev. Denis O'Connor, Bishop of London. In 1946, fifty years later, as Chaplain at the House of Providence, London, Father Hogan is still working for the salvation of souls. In 1890 Margaret O'Connor, daughter of Patrick O'Connor and Catherine Sullivan, became Sister Thaddeus of the Sisters

of St. Joseph Mercy, Cincinnati, Ohio. In 1900 Sara O'Neil, daughter of Thomas O'Neil and Catherine Whitty, entered St. Joseph's Community, London, as Sister St. Felix. She died in 1935, having spent most of her years caring for the poor and aged.

One Sunday morning, January, 1900, Father Dixon, still a young man, had his hand on the knob of the verandah door preparatory to leaving to say his Mass in the church, when he collapsed, and died within an hour without ever regaining consciousness. He was buried in the Parish cemetery, where a beautiful granite tombstone marks his resting place. His flock still visit his grave, and after the family Rosary in many homes they daily say that beautiful prayer:

"O Gentlest Heart of Jesus, . . .
Have Mercy on Thy servant Nicholas".

CHAPTER VII

ST. JOSEPH'S IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The Parish, bereaved of its beloved Father Dixon, was served for a few weeks by Father P. L'Heureux, but in February, 1900, Father Michael McCormack came as resident pastor. He had come to this country from Killarney, Ireland, had studied at St. Jerome's College, Kitchener, and had completed his theological course at the Grand Seminary, Montreal. Ordained at St. Peter's Cathedral by Rt. Rev. D. O'Connor, Bishop of London, December 27, 1891, he had worked in St. Mary's, London, and in Woodstock, before coming to Ashfield. If compatibility ever reached a state of perfection, it did in the case of Father Mac and Kingsbridge. The Soggarth Aroon had come over the sea to find a little bit of Ireland along Lake Huron's shore. It was not only respect the parishioners felt for him, not even ordinary love; it was a case of one heart and one mind. He would not start the Sunday Mass until he knew that the would-be late-comers had arrived. He knew the step of each young man's horse as it passed his door in the wee hours of the morning--and each young man knew that Father knew, and there was nothing that could be done about it. These same young men, in teens and twenties, slipped away from their New Year's Eve party each year,

just before twelve. On the hour, the big church bell pealed out over the snow, reminding Ashfield--yes, and Lucknow and Goderich too--that a New Year was beginning. Then these boys stepped quietly into the church where, with their beloved Father Mac, they said the beads in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, opening the New Year with this act of homage to their Eucharistic Lord, and this act of love to their Immaculate Mother.

Yearly, Father McCormack drove around to the homes, in his cutter, to bless the throats of all the little ones whom stormy weather had prevented from going to church, February 3. He became the idol of the young people as they formed their K.D.C. -- Kingsbridge Dramatic Club--which produced plays, worthy of any amateur company, under the direction of Edward Sinnott, Horace Hearn, Joseph Sullivan and Andrew Martin. He had his hounds and his broncho, his hens and his garden. He was the first in the parish to have a motor car--his parishioners saw to that in 1914--and the first in 1911 to install the Bell Telephone. But all this was after his urgent work was done.

When he arrived, the church was so badly in need of repair that the bell could not be rung lest the structure collapse. At once he began to plan a new church, visiting his flock and getting subscriptions to the amount

of \$12,000. The work began in the spring of 1903, and the corner-stone was laid by Bishop McEvay, September 6 of the same year. On that memorable day Michael O'Neil, son of Thomas O'Neil and Catherine Whitty, was ordained by Bishop McEvay in his own parish church, Ashfield, whereby the little country parish had the glory of being the scene of such a tremendous ceremony. Bishop McEvay's picture then became as familiar in Kingsbridge homes as that of Daniel O'Connell or Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and in fact he had a warmer spot in the hearts of these people who truly appreciated the gift of Faith which could turn a collapsing building into the most sacred place in the world. All denominations were present from the flourishing neighbourhood, swelling the congregation to more than 400. The sermon was preached by Father Aylward, from the top of the wall of the bell tower. The collection amounted to \$700! (What would Father Beausang think?) The following morning Bishop McEvay gave Holy Communion to twenty-six little girls and twenty-three little boys, whom he confirmed later in the day.

Samuel Cooper was given the contract of building the new church, and to say that it was officially opened by the Most Rev. F. P. McEvay, October, 1906, does not tell half the story. During the years of building, Father McCormack's personal labour and his anxiety lest the

severe weather injure the open walls, lest the workmen stop entirely, lest accidents occur, lest funds give out, cannot be recorded. But today that beautiful church stands as a fitting memorial to the patient priest who saw it through to completion. It is 156 feet by 60 feet with a spire 175 feet high. The basement is 12 feet deep; the foundation is of field stone, the body of the church is of pressed red brick. The architecture on the whole is Gothic, and though the doors and the windows are somewhat rounded, the buttresses and the spire are true to form. The interior corresponds to the exterior, with altars well in keeping. The central arch, again, is rounded, but the side panels are closer to Gothic style.

Many of the beautiful stained glass windows were donated by the parishioners; the sanctuary lamp was the gift of Mrs. Patrick Austin; the altar chimes, that of Simon Stiles, and the carpet that of Agnes and John Stiles. Morgan Dalton donated the altar of St. Joseph in memory of his parents, Maurice Dalton and Margaret King. Mrs. Hussey gave the Blessed Virgin's altar in memory of her husband Thomas, while her son, Rev. Thomas Hussey, gave the "Pieta", a composition modelled from Michelangelo's, which was executed in 1499 for the French Chapel in St. Peter's. At last Ashfield had a church of which she could be justly proud, and the Lord had the

best residence in the township.

A decade later an auditorium was furnished in the large basement, with stage, wings, kitchen and lobbies. The Dramatic Club, and the musical section under the direction of Mrs. James Garvey (Ila Foley) entertained capacity crowds, before whom local talent was given an opportunity to display itself. The Hogan Orchestra, long famous, was in demand, while John Dalton's art of "fiddling", handed down through the years, was ably demonstrated by Jack Charlie Dalton and Jerry O'Connor.

It was during Father McCormack's pastorate that St. Joseph's, Ashfield, became the "banner parish" of London diocese, giving to the service of the church the greatest number of sons. Thomas P. Hussey was ordained December 17, 1904, at St. Peter's Cathedral, London, by Bishop McEvay. He was the son of Thomas Hussey and Mary Dalton; Thomas J. Ford, son of Thomas Ford and Julia Griffin, and James Hogan, son of William Hogan and Mary Dean, were ordained by the same Bishop, December 21, 1907. William A. Dean, son of Michael Dean and Abigail O'Neil, was ordained December 17, 1910, by Bishop Fallon, as was also William Moran, son of William Moran and Mary Clare, June, 1916. In 1911 John O'Reilly, son of Michael O'Reilly and Julia Desmond, was ordained in the diocese of South Dakota.

During this time many young ladies chose the better part and entered religious life. Gertrude Sullivan, daughter of Denis Sullivan and Catherine Garvey, became Sister Theodora, Sister Servant of the Immaculate Heart, Monroe, Michigan. The following entered the Congregation of St. Joseph, London: 1911, Mayme Sullivan (Sister St. Basil, who died May 26, 1939), daughter of John J. Sullivan and Margaret Dalton; 1912, Gladys Moss (Sister St. Charles), daughter of Charles Moss and Ellen Walsh; 1915, Dora Dalton (Sister Ursula), daughter of Charles Dalton and Bridget Flynn; 1916, Eileen Sullivan (Sister Dionysia), daughter of Patrick Sullivan and Margaret O'Callaghan. Frances McIntosh, daughter of John McIntosh and Agnes Shannon, former members of the parish, entered the Dominican Order, Adrian, Michigan, as Sister St. Matthew, and Hannah Stiles, daughter of Thomas Stiles and Ann O'Keefe, became a Franciscan, Sister Euphrasia.

Bridget J. Dalton (Mrs. Wendell) had been succeeded as organist by Henrietta Noble, who, in turn, was replaced by Elizabeth Martin in 1911. At the death of Miss Noble, Father McCormack, who with Morgan Dalton was executor of the will, suggested that her property be acquired by the Separate School Board for a convent. The trustees at the time were Michael Dean, Edward Foley, and Morgan Dalton, all of whom acquiesced to the wish of their pastor. The site was just a few yards north of the school

and across the road; the house, a two-story light brick building, facing the Blue Water Highway, with an orchard sloping on the north to a creek which babbled merrily in spring, and a verandah from which there was an excellent view of the famous Huron sunsets. Father McCormack invited the Sisters of St. Joseph, London, to establish a convent there. The secular teachers of these later years had been Miss Agnes O'Keefe (Mrs. Marentette), Miss Ann O'Keefe, Miss Noonan, Miss M. Benn (Mrs. Bender), Miss O'Donnell (Mrs. J. O'Henley), Miss Elizabeth Dean (Mrs. M. J. Dalton), Miss M. O'Leary, Miss Coleman, Miss J. O'Connor (Mrs. Sweeney--sister of the late Bishop D. O'Connor of Peterborough), Miss Alice Dalton (Mrs. Pope), Miss Nellie Sullivan (Sister St. Maurice), Miss Daly, Miss Pope, and Miss Alice O'Leary (Mrs. J. Dalton). These teachers had done excellent work and had kept the school at a high standard, as witnessed by the inspectors, Mr. Power, Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Sullivan, and as evidenced by the students who graduated to take higher training elsewhere. To cite but one example: Marie Sullivan, daughter of Patrick Sullivan and Margaret O'Callaghan, now Mrs. J. A. Morrison of Dublin, had, by the age of fifteen, completed her schooling as far as "leaving," and had taken the additional one year at Goderich Collegiate necessary before entering Normal School. She had to wait three

years before she was old enough to attend London Normal, which year she completed successfully to join the ranks of the teaching profession, already strong with Kingsbridge graduates.

But the presence of the Sisters would surely bring a blessing on the parish. Reverend Mother Celestine, Superior-General, consented to open the school in January, 1912. Accordingly, December 26, 1911, Mother Aloysia, Sisters Vincent, Sebastian and Imelda came to Kingsbridge where Sisters Vincent and Sebastian were to take charge of the school. Hardships always accompany new foundations, and a Kingsbridge winter was not too kind to the unsuspecting Sisters who, on one occasion, blew past the church before they realized where they were in the snow flurry. But the parishioners loved their new neighbours, and during the thirty years of their residence among them shared everything they had: fruit, flowers, fowl, vegetables, cream. Especially will Father McCormack's kindness never be forgotten. The pupils of those days recall his sending his cutter during a particularly bad storm to take the Sisters home from school, though the distance was but a few yards. He and the Sisters vied with each other in trying to lessen the other's burden.

Improvements in the school followed: the old stove gave place to a furnace; lunch rooms and lavatories were set up in the basement; a chemical and physical

laboratory was installed, and an already good library was expanded. Negotiations were initiated for establishing a complete high school, but it was not until 1923 that the Sisters graduated their first class from fourth year.

But by that time, Father Mac was gone. His slim figure, snow-white hair, rosy cheeks, and smiling Irish eyes would no longer be seen by those who loved him so. Faithful to duty, always ready in time of need, throughout his eighteen years of calm activity he had always been a kind friend, but most of all, a priest of God. It is said that, as he stood by Father Dixon's open grave in 1900, before he had received his new appointment, he remarked that he would one day rest there too. October 3, 1918, after two weeks' illness, our Lord claimed His faithful servant, and not only Kingsbridge but all Ashfield Township mourned for the little man whose parting took from their lives something which nothing could replace. Some had not realized that he was even ill, when the tolling of the big bell brought the sad news. Again, in 1918, the same boys who with their pastor used to ring out the old year and ring in the new, with aching hearts, throughout the long night vigil by the coffin of their friend, prayed the Rosary in the Divine Presence, and tried to accept the fact that never again would he lead them in this act so precious to all Catholic hearts. Kingsbridge without

Father Mac just was not Kingsbridge! Today he lies opposite Father Dixon among the people whom he baptized, instructed, married and buried, fondly and prayerfully remembered by those whom he had comforted and encouraged, inspired and directed. Requiescat in pace!

Father McCormack left a parish of some 800 souls, a beautiful church, a promising school and a respectable rectory, while \$2000 which he willed to the parish cleared the debt. Father Francis A. McArdle, recently ordained priest, served Kingsbridge from October to December, when one of the "boys" of the parish, Rev. Father William Dean, was appointed to his home parish, December, 1918. Father Dean's kindness, mildness, zeal and generosity reversed the old truism that a prophet is never acclaimed in his own town. With the kindly Dr. Simpson he fought the influenza which 1918 and 1919 saw ravage home after home, forgetting himself completely in the interest of his flock. His own father and mother died while he was their pastor, but to their Irish hearts he was as truly a pastor as a son. From his former schoolmates, Father Dean received the same co-operation as any stranger, enhanced with the romance of the unknown, could have expected.

Parish societies were organized: the Holy Name Society enrolled practically every man in the parish, and,

whether the horses noticed the difference or not, these men were in earnest, and were a credit to Ashfield when they marched in the district rallies or played host to fellow members from the neighboring parishes; the Altar Society received new life, and its social activities helped to replenish furnishings for the performance of the ceremonies of the church; the Catholic Women's League was created early in Father's pastorate, and Ashfield Parish contributed in the nation-wide project.

John Long, who had taken up the collection in Father McCormack's time, now gave place to Stephen Martin, assisted by Michael Foley and Michael O'Neil--with Jim Garvey and J. B. Martin on hand for special occasions, replacing Jack Stiles and Joe and Morgan Dalton in this capacity. Nor were the dead forgotten. In his kind and quiet way, Father Dean over-rode objections to ploughing up the old graveyard, and made the resting place of the parish dead a more sightly spot. He effected notable improvements and entrusted the care of God's Acre to the "Martin boys", sons of Andrew Martin, son of the first settler in Ashfield Parish.

May 28, 1920, Maurice N. Sullivan, son of John J. Sullivan and Margaret Dalton, was ordained in London by Bishop Fallon. His sister, Nellie (Sister St. Maurice), entered the community of St. Joseph, London, the following

November, having been preceded there in July by her cousins, Patricia and Madeline Sullivan (Sisters Denise and Dolorosa), daughters of Patrick M. Sullivan and Margaret O'Callaghan; July, 1926, Margaret Joy (Sister M. Clara), daughter of Thomas Joy and Hannah Dineen, and Margaret Garvey (Sister Marie Therese), daughter of Thomas Garvey and Margaret Donnelly, entered the same congregation. The previous year, a brother, Wilfrid Garvey, a member of the Basilian order, had been ordained in Toronto by Archbishop McNeil. Father Garvey was present in St. Peter's at the Canonization of the Little Flower, and always seemed lonesome for Rome after he returned as Dr. Garvey. He soon went to the real Eternal City, however, for a heart condition cut short, in 1930, what had promised to be a brilliant career.

The complete four-year high school course was taught from September, 1922, so that no longer was it necessary for students to board in Goderich while obtaining their secondary school education. Sister Isabel was the first high school teacher, and also the last, though Sister St. Omer, Sisters Wenefreda and Dionysia replaced her at different times. The first High School graduates, 1923, were: Margaret Foley, Monica O'Connor (Mrs. J. Kasper), Margaret Joy (Sister M. Clara), Rufina Sullivan (Sister M. Marguerite), and Margaret Long (Sister M. Augustine). Teachers in the primary school, following Sisters Vincent

and Sebastian, were: Sisters Eugenia, Edith, Gonzaga, Dominica, Mary Joseph, Mary of the Divine Heart, Regina, Winifred, Maura, Ethelreda and Brendan. Various other Sisters worked in the parish but we shall mention only Sisters Gabriel and Dolours, who cared for the altars, Sister Claude, who introduced plain chant to the senior choir, and Mother Angela, who taught music.

Charley "Mike" Dalton, who had long ago gone from the Parish, donated, in the 1920's, a large Christmas Crib group. May the custom of taking all the children to visit their Little King sometime in the Christmas Season ever obtain!

In April, 1926, Father Dean was transferred to Port Lambton, where he remained as pastor until his death, June, 1946. He was followed in Kingsbridge by Father McArdle, whose unflagging energy during the next nine years effected many improvements in the parish. The old rectory was replaced by a red brick building, which is a credit to Kingsbridge and quite in keeping with the beautiful church. He improved the grounds and the cemetery, and replaced the oil lamps by Delco electric fixtures. A magnificent bronze crucifix was erected in the cemetery in 1928, the gift of John Courtney; and a shrine of the Little Flower was opened in the church about the same time.

January, 1927, Helen Dalton (Sister Maureen), daughter of Morgan Dalton and Mary Sullivan, entered St. Joseph's Community, London, followed in July by Rufina Sullivan (Sister Marguerite), the fourth daughter of Patrick Sullivan and Margaret O'Callaghan to become a member of that community. In 1929 Margaret Long (Sister Augustine), daughter of William Long and Anna Burns, became a Sister of St. Joseph, as also in 1930 did Kathleen Foley (Sister Apollonia), daughter of Edward Foley and Mary Sullivan. In 1929 Father James Hogan died in his parish of St. Patrick's, Lucan, where he had served 15 years. In April, 1930, Rev. Wilfrid Garvey, C.S.B., S.T.D., died in Rochester, N. Y. In 1931 Thomas O'Keefe, son of Cornelius O'Keefe and Anne Hussey, entered the Jesuit Novitiate, Guelph. May 28, 1932, Michael Joseph Dalton, son of Morgan Dalton and Mary Sullivan, was ordained in London by Bishop Denis O'Connor, of Peterboro. Father "Mike" first administered the Sacrament of Extreme Unction to his mother, who died, December 8, 1932, and after becoming a Chaplain to the Essex Scottish, Windsor, answered as his first sick call one from his father, Morgan Dalton, who died in Detroit, December 26, 1939. Father Dalton, who served five years overseas, is now a civilian, pastor of Most Precious Blood Parish, Windsor, since September, 1946, and may compare notes with Father T. Hussey, pastor of St. James Church,

Seaforth, the Ashfield "boy" who served as chaplain overseas in World War I. In 1933 Marie Beninger, daughter of Michael Beninger and Catherine McPhee, entered St. Joseph's Community, London, to become Sister Marie Brébeuf. Her brother, Donald, miraculously cured of paralysis at the Canadian Martyrs' Shrine, Midland, Ontario, entered the Basilian Novitiate in Toronto in 1933, the same year in which Simon Raphael O'Loughlin, son of Joseph O'Loughlin and Mary Griffin, entered the same Order. On December 16, 1934, Edwin Garvey, C.S.B., was ordained priest at the Church of the Assumption, in Sandwich, by the Most Rev. J. T. Kidd, D.D.

Thomas Garvey presented to the church a "Safe Tabernacle" in 1934, in memory of his brother, Dr. Wilfrid Garvey, C.S.B. In 1935 Mrs. Mary Gunn donated a set of vestments.

March 17, 1938, is a St. Patrick's Day not soon to be forgotten in Ashfield. Its dawn revealed the "Safe Tabernacle" gone with its Precious Contents. In a ditch, some miles north, it was later found battered beyond repair, but the Sacred Hosts were safe. Donations poured in--Mrs. Louis Dalton herself gave \$100--and a new safe was soon enshrined.

In 1927 the Silver Jubilee of the laying of the corner-stone of the new church was anticipated slightly, and Old Boys and Old Girls from far and near returned or

sent greetings. A Detroit cast--all former parishioners--presented the play, "A House of Ghosts", under the direction of William Long, an "Old Boy." Father McArdle was transferred to Parkhill on May 10, 1935, where he remained until August, 1946, when he succeeded Father Dean in Port Lambton. His reunion in Ashfield had been so successful that Father Quigley, the new pastor, began to plan another as soon as he arrived. August 1, 2, 3, 1936, again assembled the "Prodigals" who literally streamed back to the home parish. Mrs. Joe O'Loughlin (Mae Griffin) compiled a History of Kingsbridge for this occasion--a history which has proved most useful in the present work. The following September 15, 1936, she was largely instrumental in the formation of a Detroit "Kingsbridge Old Boys" organization which began with a membership of 182, and which still meets, especially on the annual occasion of the Mass for Deceased Members, after which breakfast is served. Father M. J. Dalton is chaplain.

The parish population, in the meantime, as a result of a movement toward the cities and the years of depression, had been sadly depleted. Whereas the records of 1903 show a First Communion Class of forty-nine, 1930 shows a class of only two. But hopeful signs are still quite evident, although the other side of the picture sometimes dims the view. Illustrative of the bright side

was the ordination to the priesthood of two young Basilians, former members of the Parish, by Archbishop McGuigan of Toronto--Father Ralph O'Loughlin, August 15, 1942, and Father Donald Beninger, December 19, 1942. In the same year the Resurrectionist Fathers procured fifty acres of land from Stephen Martin, close to Lake Huron, Lot 14, West. It happened this way: Father Freiburger, looking for a summer home for his young students, April, 1938, accompanied by a lay brother, Pat, found this little house (vacant for twenty years), a barn, and--what another would have entirely missed--possibilities. In late May ten Philosophers came from St. Thomas Scholasticate, London, and miracles began to "happen". Young men in good health, working for the glory of God, under inspiring leadership, can accomplish almost anything. These men did. Though engineers were required to move the house thirty feet closer to the Lake to put it on a new foundation of cedar logs, and though the neighbours had a "bee" to remove accumulations of years--12 teams and wagons gave service--the Resurrectionists effected most of the changes themselves.

The old house was jacked up, the old roof ripped off, a new roof added, a new well dug, and this summer cottage became a residence for the Priests. Engineers swung the beams of the barn to make them correspond to

those of a house, the "boys" poured cement on the floor to level it, added a second floor, divided it into a dormitory and a chapel, and behold, a residence for the students with the dining room, the living room, and the kitchen on the first floor! At first Mass was said in a room in the little house, but by August the chapel was ready for the Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament. In July, about twenty Theologians had arrived, and gardens, both flower and vegetable, appeared as by magic. Another 100 square feet at the Lake and the right of way on the lane were procured by 1942, and the summer residence was complete. A tent on the shore, a boat, swimming facilities, fields for ball and other sports--all help to make good religious. Voluntary service among the farmers in the harvest time, singing of High Mass in the parish church, participation in the activities of the young people--all have meant the uplift of the parish. Naturally, the winter months send the young religious students back to London or Kitchener, but the following spring and summer, Kingsbridge welcomes them again.

The summer of 1940 ushered in what might have been a new era for Ashfield. In July, the government purchased land at Port Albert from Wilfred Stevenson, M. Dickson, Albert McGee and Donald McKenzie for an Air Navigation School, which was opened January, 1941. Here thousands of

young airmen ascended the expensively equipped towers to a sky that was a tiny replica of the magnificent dome thrown over our terrestrial home by the Creator of all that is beautiful. Since April 1, 1945, a small holding unit occupies it, and already some of the equipment has been shipped elsewhere. But for a time 31 Air Navigation School made Ashfield skies a busy thoroughfare, and many of the parishioners worked at the site. The instructing personnel were English; the students were Canadian, Australian, and American. For three years it was served from the parish church. At first, the hundred and twenty-five Catholics went to St. Joseph's Church in lorries, but Father Quigley arranged to have Mass said in the theatre of the station as soon as possible, using a portable altar and Mass Kit. Later, the convent altar was transferred to the Port, where a separate room was set aside as a chapel in which the Blessed Sacrament was reserved. A full-time chaplain came in February, 1944, in the person of Father Roland, born in Cape Breton Isle. and educated in Scotland. He had worked in the diocese of Westminster, had been in charge of a farm training-school for boys (some 400) until the institution was blasted by the Nazi in 1942, after which he joined the R.A.F. as chaplain, was sent to Canada in 1943 and assigned to Port Albert, where he gave those on the station the privilege of daily Mass. One of the first

men at this Ashfield air port was John Gerard Dunne, who had gone with planes over Germany when the first pamphlet raid, suggesting capitulation, was made on that unfortunate country. The station was the astronomical unit of the British Commonwealth Air Training project, and there the boys were trained as pilots and as navigators. Today, all is quiet in that region.

However, scarcely had the Resurrectionists brought Emmanuel to another centre in Ashfield, and the air port necessitated the offering of the sublime Sacrifice at the township's southern extremity, when the Sisters of St. Joseph found it necessary to close their convent, 1942, because the small number of children made it seem unreasonable to keep four sisters on the Mission--the smallest number ordinarily located in any house--when the call for them from other parts of the diocese was so urgent. In 1927 the Convent Historian had written:

Since the opening of this mission in 1912, the members of the Community have made good use of it as a summer resort where there is always room and hospitality. Every holiday it has been filled to capacity, and even during the year sisters in ill health are sent out to recuperate.

The clear exhilarating air, the cool breezes off the lake, revive the tired and weary labourers in the various duties of their vocation. A walk to the lake to spend the day has always been one of the pastimes, and the fresh vegetables and fruits in season are generously supplied by the good neighbours. Jars of cream, baskets of fruit are daily gifts for which the sisters are duly grateful. We pray that God may bless with special

favours all those who are thus good to us ¹.

In the later years the Sisters had not made such recreational use of the Convent, closing it often from July until late August, but the parishioners watched eagerly for the four quiet figures who would slip in through the vestry door some Sunday morning. The rumour that the Convent might be closed entirely had brought from the people offers to adopt orphans, to import children, to do anything to avert the disaster. For a time Margaret Foley, then Margaret Moylan, Elizabeth Quarry, and finally Mae Redmond, taught in the junior room with a Sister in the senior, but by 1942 the step was taken, and in August no Sisters came to open the convent. Father Quigley had had the convent equipped with electricity, materially adding to the comfort of the little most northern mission, and fuel had been provided for the coming winter. However, the Sisters really left, promising to return when the school enrolment increased sufficiently. At the time, only twenty-four children were in attendance, and some of these were not Catholics. For a long time the parishioners refrained from using the front pew in the church, keeping it sacred to the memory of the Sisters. But someone had to take

¹
Kingsbridge, pp. 16, 17. Chronicles of St. Joseph's Convent,

their place in school, and unfortunately, each year has seen a new teacher: Miss Mae Redmond, Miss Grace Whaling, Miss Adeline Murphy and Miss Mary Ellen Murray. In September, 1946, still another new face greeted the children there, as Miss Margaret Kirby, of Toronto, assumed her duties.

Father Quigley, in his eleven years' pastorate, brought back many features of Father McCormack's day. There was mutual affection between pastor and people as this kind and pleasant priest persuaded his parishioners that they wanted to do what he saw was for their good. Mrs. William Lannon continued to preside at the church organ. As Catherine Martin she had succeeded her aunt, Elizabeth Martin, but had been replaced by Mrs. J. P. Sullivan (Elizabeth O'Neil), Margaret Long (Sister M. Augustine), Helen Dalton (Sister Maureen), and finally Sister Claude, whom she succeeded. Pat Sullivan, the indispensable "handy man" since Father McCormack's time, continued to look after the church and school furnaces and grounds, while assisting his pastor as sacristan, acolyte, choir, messenger, and janitor. A new cross was erected on the church, and braces adjusted, by the Piggott Company, to support the spreading walls. The steeple was repaired, and once again the bell's clear tones rang over the countryside. Study clubs, garden parties, fowl suppers

and other parish activities were well patronized.

Yet the empty pews in Kingsbridge Church are vocal. Even funerals, well attended by parishioners, ex-parishioners, and Protestant neighbours, cannot fill the church. The school is operating but one room, the convent is closed, and the church Directory for 1946 states merely:

Ashfield, Est. 1841. Huron Co. St. Joseph's
(at Kingsbridge), Rev. J.R. Quigley, P.P.
(P.O. Goderich, R. R. 3). Phone: Dungannon 12-22.
Mass: Winter, 9, 11; Summer, 8.30, 10.30.
School--1 Lay T.; Pupils, 29³.

On the other hand, April 22, 1946, Father Quigley, in a personal letter, could write:

Easter Sunday was glorious. We had High Mass at 8:30 at which all the parish received Holy Communion. Then a second Mass at 10:30. Many Exiles were home for the holiday.

July 2, 1944, Rev. Thomas O'Keefe, S.J., was ordained priest, and once again all Ashfield assembled in St. Joseph's Church to assist in a Mass celebrated by a local boy, and to receive the young priest's blessing. His brother Cyril is a member of the same order, and their only sister, Mary Philomena, was received as a postulant, September 8, 1946, at the Sacred Heart Convent, London, where Eileen Foran, whose mother, Mary Ellen Keane,

is a native of Kingsbridge, had just received the Holy Habit and the name Sister Vincentia.

The fact that boys and girls from the old Kingsbridge School still answer the call to religious life makes one hopeful that a condition which, unknown to the principals, existed in Father Dean's time, in the 1920's, still obtains. A convert, whom circumstances sent to live in Kingsbridge in a capacity in which she was exceptionally well able to sense the spirit of the place, was astounded at what she experienced. To her it was a revelation that an entire secular community could live the Faith so naturally--could and did move in an atmosphere which she thought only religious congregations breathed. She became perturbed and almost desperate when she realized that her loved ones, through no fault of their own, knew nothing of this union with Christ, possible even in this world. No doubt the Kingsbridge people would be more surprised than anyone else to hear that they had created such an impression. Was this the reward for faithful pastors, saintly pioneers or heroically self-sacrificing parents who gave their children to God's service? We cannot answer, but may God continue to bless a parish which at any time in its history could radiate God's spirit to this extent.

In June, 1946, Father Quigley,⁴ stricken with paralysis, was taken to St. Joseph's Hospital, London. The Resurrectionist Fathers attended to the spiritual needs of the parish until September, when Father T. C. P. Donnellan, of Most Precious Blood Parish, Windsor, was transferred as Pastor to Kingsbridge. Here opens another page in the history of St. Joseph's, Ashfield.

⁴ Rev. Father John R. Quigley, ordained in London, 1912, by Bishop Fallon, died in St. Joseph's Hospital, Sarnia, October 18, 1946.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SPIRIT OF ASHFIELD

A History of St. Joseph's Parish would be incomplete without a picture of the more intimate lives of the people. Ashfield has many stories of the early days, some of which belong to all pioneers, some to the realm of humorous imagination, and some to the grim reality. Of the first, an outstanding example is that of the father, who, going to the woods in the morning, leaving his family well, returned to find his son dead--and buried--so horrible was the cholera scourge. He insisted on seeing his child, and found the little fellow's heart still beating. To the second class belongs the story of the wife getting out at Port Albert on the long trip home from Goderich, and hurrying ahead of the ox-cart to have supper ready for her husband when he arrived. Also, we hear of the old couple trudging home from Goderich, himself carrying the jug with the "creature"; herself, a huge iron pot. Himself drops behind from time to time, and his load gradually becomes lighter. Finally he sinks down, unable to proceed. She, witness of his plight, puts him and the empty jug into her kettle, shoulders it, and reaches home on schedule time. Just what happened to himself after they arrived home was not for the neighbours to know.

But there are authentic tales of courage in the face of terror, and resignation in the face of woe. Thomas Sullivan and his wife were walking home from Goderich one evening. She became exhausted when the journey was nearly over. As his arm was broken he could not carry her, so he hurried off to get help. When he returned, the poor little woman was already dead, having met the Grim Reaper alone on the forest path.

Another Sullivan family--not related--had a horrible experience. Michael, hearing a great commotion in the hen-house, rushed out to find a wolf in possession. In self-protection he thrust his arm down the brute's throat and called for a butcher knife. His wife and mother came and killed the animal. Michael's arm was scratched by a tooth, but he would take no precaution against hydrophobia. One day in the spring, seeing his shadow in the water, he went violently mad and never recovered.

Denis Sullivan, his brother, born December 18, 1846, who lived to be over ninety, remembered the scare of the Fenian Raids when his uncle assembled all the volunteers to drill for a fight against the Fenians! He was armed with an old musket that wouldn't shoot, while the majority had only pitch-forks. The arrival of a friendly American boat in the Goderich harbour was as close as the danger ever came.

Michael O'Reilly, who died recently in Goderich at the age of ninety, related that his parents, on first coming to Ontario, settled in the vicinity of Bayfield, where they chopped, logged, cleared some land, and planted seed. They were busy clearing some additional acres when they discovered that they were on another man's property. However, the law allowed them their hard-earned crop, and with seed potatoes on their back they walked north on the Lake Huron shore to the 9th Concession, Ashfield, where they cleared two acres and planted their potatoes.

When the pioneers went to Goderich, they carried their shoes until they were near the town--to save them. Similarly, the people coming to Kingsbridge from a distance donned their shoes just before reaching the church. Pilot Officer Thomas Joseph Howard's grandparents will serve as an example of the love of these people for the Holy Mass. "Tommy" is the son of Robert Howard and Annie Sennett. Great-grandmother Sennett, when living with "Daddy" Sennett--Tom's grandfather--used to walk seven miles from their home in Bruce County to John Cowan's on the Kintail sideroad, each Saturday night. From there she continued, Sunday morning, another six miles to reach the Kingsbridge Church in time for Mass. Tom received the Distinguished Flying Cross in the fall of 1943, with the citation, "This airman has completed many successful operations against the enemy

in which he has displayed high skill, fortitude, and devotion to duty." May the D.F.C. of this Ashfield boy remind him of the Cross of Calvary to the perpetuation of which sacrifice his ancestors were so nobly devoted!

Sometimes religious demands called for unusual journeys, as when Patrick Long walked to Detroit, and when Maurice Dalton with his groomsmen, Philip Austin, walked to London to meet Margaret King, his bride-to-be. That this love for the Mass was not confined to the pioneers is gratifyingly evident. James Foley (2nd generation), now an octogenarian, has walked six miles through a winter storm in very recent years to assist at the Sunday Mass. Examples also may be cited regarding children of the third or fourth generation. But would we not be surprised to find it otherwise? These Ashfield homes have been faithful to two great devotions, the Holy Mass and the family Rosary. When the evening meal is over, all drop to their knees, and the stranger must join in the family Rosary and stay for the "trimmin's" too. They brought the custom from Ireland, and, thank God, it is still practised. "Himself" may grumble, the young folks may think they have no time, the tiny children may fall asleep, but the Rosary is said, the members in turn leading the decades. And what courage do those who have left the parental roof feel in the thought that at home a special trimmin' is added for them

and their needs! No wonder vocations have been found so plentiful, in Ashfield Parish! No wonder the Faith still burns brightly in the hearts of her children!

Port Albert, which came into being the same year as Chicago, experienced darkness (and soot) when that city was burned, October 8, 1871. But it was not Chicago's fire that caused the phenomenon, evident to all western Ashfield, but rather the fire that swept across the State of Michigan that same night and the following day and night, wiping out one city, part of another, and cutting out a district east from Lake Michigan over to Lake Huron, where its fury was halted. This was only one of a series of forest fires in the wake of lumber men's operations in the exploitation of pine forests on the American side. The loss on this occasion was over a million dollars. An area of 40 miles square was so devastated that few buildings were left, whole villages were gone, and thousands were homeless.

Again in 1881 a similar tragedy resulted in the loss of 125 lives and \$2,000,000 damage. The smoke was so dense that it was as dark as night, and boats in Lake Huron were held as in a fog. As flames could be seen across the lake, leaping from forest to forest, some

thought it was Judgment Day ¹.

But neither of these fires caused what has been termed the "Dark Day" which occurred in the fall of 1877. The sky became very dark. People rushed to their doors to ascertain the cause, and could see nothing but a mass of pigeons flying south. It took one hour for that host to pass, the number estimated at a million. The humming noise made by their wings became like thunder, they flew so low that they could be hit by a stick, and were so compact that the sky could not be seen. Every seven or eight years there had been what was called a "Pigeon Year", but their final exit was the most spectacular. After this "Dark Day" only a few stragglers were found, and the last one of the great race died in Cincinnati Zoological Gardens in 1914. They had had a hatching rookery in the cedar grove on Concession 12 of Ashfield, to which the people of Goderich, Colborne and Ashfield used to go to slaughter the birds by hundreds--there were no game laws to protect them. Another rookery was in Greenoch swamp to the north. When the wheat ripened these birds could be bagged selectively, without aid of pole or gun. The young and tender birds made good eating, giving a pleasant variety from salt pork. They were also salted down, and when fried,

¹ Fred Landon, Lake Huron, pp. 107-110.

roasted, boiled or made into soup they were quite palatable². Gavin Green, Olde Curiosity Shoppe, Goderich, becomes quite enthusiastic on this subject.

Two other Dark Days deserve mention. "Sunday, November 9, 1913, is the blackest day in the history of navigation on the Great Lakes"³. Scores of bulk freighters stayed on the lakes, hoping to complete one more trip before navigation closed, and were caught in a storm which sank eight seaworthy ships on Lake Huron and two on Lake Superior, drove several others ashore, and took two hundred and thirty-five lives. For sixteen hours there was a continuous gale with a wind velocity of over sixty miles per hour, and waves thirty feet high. For a week after, bodies, chiefly from the James Carruthers, came floating in all along the lake shore, until over sixty had been taken in a wagon procession to the various morgues. Many of the bodies were never identified, and today, in the Maitland Cemetery, Goderich, a dark red polished obelisk, with an anchor carved on top, stands as "A Memorial to the Unidentified seamen whose lives were lost in the Great Lakes Disaster of November 9, 1913."

² J.J. Talman: Tale of Vast Pigeon Flights of Early Days Amazed Writer, The Free Press, London, July 8, 1944, in Fred Landon's Huron County Scrap Book.

Robina and Kathleen M. Lizars, In the Days of the Canada Company, p. 96.

³ Landon, op. cit., p. 325.

The reverse side simply reads "Sailors", five of whom lie beneath. Although no Kingsbridge boys lost their lives in that disaster, the sudden cruelty of the great blue lake made a vivid impression on the parishioners, and Joseph Sullivan, aged 17, wrote his impressions in verse, some lines of which follow:

To those who were on terra firma
'Twas well to be sheltered at home,
But what of the poor stricken sailors,
Way out on the merciless foam?

There, ships were as playthings of Nature
To weather such terrible gales;
They rose on the mountains of water,
Then sank in its valleys and dales.

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They are gone, but their memory still liveth,
In conclusion, we only can say
Of the Sailors who died on the waters:
"Requiescant in pace".

A still darker day for Kingsbridge was yet to come. The Merida sank October 20, 1916, in Lake Erie, with a crew among whom were three boys from the parish and a former parishioner closely related to several families there: John Quigley, Joe Connor, Wilfrid Austin and John O'Callaghan. It was more than a week before the boys' bodies were recovered, and the triple funeral, held in Kingsbridge over which a great pall lay, could be solemnized.

In later years, some tragedies have occurred in connection with the air-training school at Port Albert.

Two young Englishmen, out on an ice-floe taking pictures to send "back home", were drowned when the ice parted. About a week later the bodies were found, and the victims were buried with military honours at Port Albert.

Once before, Ashfield and England had been brought into close contact. Norman Chamberlain, a first cousin of Neville, belonging to a philanthropist club in Birmingham, sponsored a scheme whereby English boys were placed on Canadian farms. When he came to Canada personally to visit these youths and to receive a report on them, he included Ashfield in his tour. The first World War ended the project.

There are two newspapers which enter practically every home in Kingsbridge. The Catholic Record, London, Ontario, which is now in its sixty-seventh year, has been a weekly visitant since Mr. Neven introduced it to the parish. Definitely, it was there in 1885, and probably as early as 1879. The other is The Signal, Goderich, which is now in its ninety-ninth year. It also has been a weekly visitor in most homes. Today it is officially called "The Goderich Signal-Star", having amalgamated with a rival publication, the Goderich Star. It is edited by William Robertson, a staunch Liberal, who keeps

his paper⁴ clean and elevating, and as free from politics as human nature permits.

Elections in these early days were interesting and dangerous, but Kingsbridge has been Grit or Liberal ever since Father Schneider turned the vote from Mr. Cayley⁵. No doubt Sir Wilfrid Laurier consolidated Irish Ashfield political opinion in that direction, but there are always exceptions to prove the rule. Old Denny Sullivan, for instance, was a staunch Conservative, claiming that the only crime he ever committed was the Grit vote he once cast. The first parliamentary elections had been held in 1835, in Huron, with Captain Dunlop the successful candidate against Von Egmond. By the second, Ashfield settlers were interested. In 1841 Dr. William Dunlop ran against Mr. Strachan in an historically wild election, during which the militia from London intervened. Mr. Strachan was successful, but after sitting only fourteen days had to give place to Dunlop. Fights, bon-fires, bagpipes--all played an important part, and no doubt the good Irishmen of Ashfield added zest to the North Huron contest. In the election of 1867 there was quite a different feeling

4 The original publication was a 4-page blanket sheet, edited by McQueen in 1848. After changing to Cox, Nickols and Cox, Keyes, and again to McQueen, in 1880 McGillicuddy Brothers brought out an edition in a format similar to the one used at present.

5 Appendix 5e, p. 181.

prevailing, a feeling of friendliness, and in Ashfield, where there was but one polling booth, Finlay's schoolhouse, the open voting continued for two days. In 1873, Huron had three members for the Commons: North, Central and South, and three for the province: East, West, and South, whereas formerly the ridings had coincided. By this time, however, bitterness had returned. The voting in North Huron was delayed a few days after that in the other districts. A house to house canvas was then made by the Reformers, but Farrow, a Conservative, won.

In 1882 there was an exciting time at Dungannon. The candidates were M.C. Cameron and Robert Porter. Hon. Edward Blake spoke in the drill shed, where Dr. E. Cameron, a private banker, had trained a choral club to sing songs of James David Edgar, taunting the Conservatives, to the wrath of the latter and the delight of all Reformers: "The Traitor's at Thy Throat, Ontario," they chanted. At Finlay's schoolhouse, Robert McGrory of Kingsbridge was returning officer, and many a man was sworn in that day to satisfy the contending groups. M.C. Cameron was the victor.

But 1887 election saw a real contest. M.C. Cameron, Grit, and Robert Porter, Tory, were again the contestants. Both travelled miles and miles to political meetings and tore each other asunder in abusive personalities. Dungannon and Port Albert were Tory; Leeburn, Kintail, Kingsbridge,

and Benmiller, Grit; Goderich township, strongly Tory; Goderich town, both, but Tory in the majority; Saltford could find only four Grit votes. Porter won by twelve votes, but by 1891 Cameron was again in, and was appointed lieutenant-governor of the N. W. Territories, which position he held until his death. The 1898 election for provincial member for West Huron was most indecisive. Joseph Beck, Conservative, and James T. Garrow, Liberal, were contestants. Ashfield was with Garrow. First it was thought that Beck was in, then Garrow. A recount gave Beck a majority of two; the result of an appeal to Osgoode for a recount was a majority of one for Garrow. The Tories protested, a new election gave Garrow a majority of forty-five; Tories again protested, the election was declared void, and the seat declared empty. Garrow then dropped out of politics. In 1902, M. G. Cameron, Liberal, secured 2,458 votes, against James Mitchell, Conservative, with 2,437. In 1905 Cameron defeated Dudley Holmes by three votes. The small majority is an index to the keenness of the contest.

But Ashfield Parish has remained Liberal (except for a time during World War I when many voted "Union"). The last Dominion election, June 11, 1945, resulted in a Progressive Conservative victory in North Huron, as follows: L.E. Cardiff, Brussels, P.C., 6,864; M.F. Mills,

C.C.F., 453; Major D.R. Nairn, L., 5,038. The Provincial returns, June 4, 1945, gave John Hanna, Wingham, P.C., a majority of 608; but the Kingsbridge polling booth received few votes that were not Liberal in either election.

There were other diversions in Ashfield and its environs besides elections. Lucknow, the Scotch settlement on the border of Huron, became noted internationally as the home of the Caledonian games. As many as 12,000 assembled for these contests for which a sum of approximately \$1200 was given in prizes. The tug-of-war between Huron and Bruce, the tossing of the caber, the music of the bagpipes--all attracted the Irish of Ashfield, so that as many sons of St. Patrick were there to celebrate as those of St. Andrew. Then there was Burns' Ball--a yearly affair for Scotch and Irish alike, January 25. When Donnybrook, at its best in the 60's, became of less account, Dungannon Fair attracted old and young. St. Patrick's Day saw the men with C.M.B.A. badges march to Mass, and the concert at night brought all nationalities to Kingsbridge. School concerts, Kingsbridge Dramatic Club performances, Irish picnics at the lake, parish dances, barn dances, Hallowe'en pranks which left buildings painted grotesquely and farm machinery balancing on the top of barns--all these failed to exhaust the energy of Kingsbridgites, whose capacity for fun and frolic seems boundless. The

picnics at Dean's Grove, which were at their best in Father Boubat's time and the early part of Father McCormack's pastorate, deserve special mention:

People came from far and near and were royally welcomed. The finest of music was furnished by bands, by Pipers McDonald and McKay, and by numberless violinists of local talent; step-dancing by John Dalton, Sr.; Highland Fling by Tillie and Jack Austin (children of Morgan Austin and Lucy Stiles), and other attractions too numerous to mention, made these gatherings enjoyable to all. Good fellowship reigned supreme ⁶.

The type of entertainment has remained much the same, as this excerpt, regarding the Reunion, from the local paper, 1936, indicates:

The weatherman, after threatening to undermine the concluding festivities on Monday evening, experienced a change of heart, and the program was allowed to go on outside on the school grounds as originally planned. During the evening Rev. Father Sullivan, who acted as chairman, presented the participants in a delightfully varied and well received program. Harvey McGee of Auburn appeared in Scottish character songs and comedy. Walter Dalton and Raymond Dalton each contributed songs. Little Miss Dorothy Bogie danced to the Scottish piping of her father, Tommie Bogie, who also delighted with several numbers on the grounds earlier in the evening. Mary Perry sang some modern popular numbers, and Bill Long showed the old folks that he still knows how to put over a ballad. Mabel Young was well received in old-time numbers on the violin; and two speakers, Mr. Thomas Bresnahan of River Rouge, Mich., and Mr. R.L. Deachman, M.P. for North Huron, added charm and dignity to the occasion by appropriate addresses.

⁶ Mae O'Loughlin, History of St. Joseph's Parish, Kingsbridge, Ontario, p. 15.

An original recitation by Jos. I. Sullivan of Detroit, in which the mannerisms and sayings of some of the better known members of the parish, both past and present, were good-naturedly exposed, was perhaps the high spot in the comedy of the evening. Miss Martina Hussey of Goderich acted as accompanist for most of the vocal numbers, but Miss Louie Harrington of Blyth supplied the musical background for the songs and patter of Harvey McGee⁷.

Kingsbridge has always had a unique way of indicating the geneology of her parishioners, while differentiating them. When The Goderich Signal-Star speaks of:

Jim Maurice, Jim Scuff and Jim John, Red Billy Bill and Ned Jim, John L., John Paddy and John S., Bill John, Jerr Charlie and Johnny Mike, Maggie Mack, Maggie Matt and Ann Charlie⁸, no one in Ashfield is the least confused by the absence of surnames. To the uninitiated, Mot Maurice and Jack Johnnie may sound strange, but they mean simply: Mot, the son of Maurice, and Jack, the son of Johnnie.

Auction sales were interesting in the days of John Purvis and Thomas Gundry. Everybody attended and later discussed how much too much old Jack paid for that plough, or Minnie for the parlour lamp. Barn raisings also, like threshings, now perpetuate the community

⁷ Ibid., p. 37.

⁸ Echoes of the Kingsbridge Reunion, in The Goderich Signal-Star, 89th Year, no. 32, in Margaret Sullivan's Scrap Book.

spirit of the "bees" of earlier days. When the foundation has been completed, all the neighbouring men and boys come to the farm, choose sides and race putting up the framework. Pictures are taken, Romeo tries to reach the highest peak that Juliet may admire his prowess. "Heave-ho", and they work frantically, daringly, happily, because the side that wins eats first at the long tables set out on the lawn surrounding the house, tables which groan with the weight of the banquet to be served by the neighbouring women and girls. In the good old days there was sometimes a keg of beer for the winning side--no coupons required. Then there is the barn dance at night, with local fiddlers--Hogans or Daltons--and "callers-off"--Frank or Paddy Murphy or Duncan McIntyre--and pretty girls, and gay young men as fresh as if they hadn't worked at the risk of their lives in the sweat of their brows all day. Long after the novelty of the new barn has worn off, that picture in the drawer of the parlour table recalls the thrills of the day of "our barn raising".

Wakes have always been occasions for reunions. The Beads are recited several times during the night, lunch is served, and crowds remain till dawn, pleasantly conversing just as they would if "Johnnie" were with them, instead of lying in there with the candles. The professional wailers are no longer heard, the mischievous pranks are less

common, but the same Christian spirit obtains. When a Requiem Mass is announced on Sunday for some deceased member of the parish, each family reasonably close to the church tries to be represented. When the Forty Hours' Devotions are held, or a Mission or Retreat^{is}/given, the entire parish attends, and it would be a scandal if anyone put anything before these opportunities of grace.

Kingsbridge people, even to the present generation, look back to the Ireland which they have never seen, with a feeling of intense loyalty and love. When Denis Sullivan, who had been financially successful, gave his old uncle Jerry Desmond a trip back to Ireland, material for a good book was lived. Denis told the bell-hops and stewards in hotels and on the ship that his companion was an eccentric millionaire who was as likely to give a \$100 tip as a smile. The attention Jerry received was most disconcerting to the old man who never wore a crease in his trousers--just as Denny never appeared without perfect grooming.

Father Wilfrid Garvey, visiting some relatives in Kingsbridge after his return from Europe, asked one of them if she thought the Holy Land would be a good topic for the sermon he had been asked to preach the next day in the local church. "Oh yes, Father," was the reply, "we are all so anxious to hear about Ireland."

Father Dalton finds the same enthusiasm in a 1946 audience when, recounting his experiences across the Atlantic, he launches into some Irish references. His presence in St. Peter's for the Public Consistory when the new Cardinals were created and his audience with the Holy Father come first, but to receive his M.B.E. at Buckingham Palace is not to be compared with kissing the Blarney Stone or hearing the Bells of Shandon.

Many elements have been combined to produce the Spirit of Ashfield--a Spirit most distinctive on the "Seventeenth of Ireland", a Spirit well expressed by Clara McFerran in her little poem, St. Patrick's Day⁹, some lines of which follow:

And they told in song and story,
Of the glories that had been,
Tho' there was not one among them
Who had seen that Isle of Green.
Then the violin's sweet music
Twanged the heartstrings of us there
And it set our feet to dancing
To a lilting Irish air.

May the light of faith keep burning,
Spreading far to left and right,
Like a million million candles,
Shining in the darkest night.
And the faith he brought we'll cherish,
Cost the heart though what it may,
Is the pledge of faithful children,
To St. Patrick on his Day.

9 Clipping in Margaret Sullivan's Scrap Book.

RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

One hundred years ago Ireland's sons left their beloved land to find economic security in Canada. The Land of the Maple Leaf welcomed them to choice sections of her vast dominion. Kingsbridge took root in the Township of Ashfield, Huron County, where from a wilderness sturdy arms carved a fruitful agricultural area. Here, close to the soil, true Christian families have lived and loved, firmly convinced that they are children of a good and provident Creator, Who has a definite purpose in all He does. The pioneers did not know that they had a philosophy of life, but, in their optimism looking to God and to the hereafter, they lived according to the true medieval concept, while the light of God within them guided them on their way.

They built their church, they built their school, they owned the land they worked, and living from its products each family became a vital and fruitful cell of society. Their sons became priests to serve at God's altar, their daughters consecrated themselves to His service. They saw more in life than dollars and cents, which at the best can merely be a means for a fuller life.

But the very wisdom of these pioneers has proved Ashfield's undoing. Of late years sons and daughters have

left the land to find more remunerative employment in the urban centres. They have exchanged the security and freedom of rural life for the uncertainty and slavery of assembly lines. While failing to seize the treasures which progress offered in scientific farming, they grasped at industrial opportunities less secure but more apparent, and Kingsbridge, though avoiding the Scylla of materialism, almost crashed on the Charbydis of indifference.

Almost crashed--but not quite. Today, some of Ashfield's college men are turning to their home parish where they will use their broader knowledge in the nation's foremost industry. Also, some who have never been prodigals are at last embracing the opportunities offered through the facilities of the Guelph Agricultural College and the Department of Agriculture of Ontario. Moreover, new families have moved in recently, and are most decidedly welcome, but the Caed Mille Failtha¹ is for the descendants of those same pioneers who laid the foundation of a Christian Culture in this land blessed by God. In 1935 there were but forty-nine families, with one hundred and thirty men and boys listed as "The Home Guard" in the hand-bills advertising the Old Boys' Reunion. But the names had the same sterling ring, and

1 A thousand welcomes.

only five unfamiliar words occurred: Austin, Bowler, Buckley, Clare, Courtney, Dalton, Dean, Devereaux, Dineen, Drennan, Foley, Frayne, Garvey, Gilmore, Griffin, Gunn, Hackett, Hogan, Howard, Keane, Kelly, Lannan, McCarthy, McIntyre, Martin, Meyer, Moerbeck, Moran, Morrison, Moss, Murchison, Murphy, O'Connor, O'Keefe, O'Loughlin, O'Neil, Quigley, Sennett, Sullivan, Vasella, Wallace, Ward.

Some families are missing, such as O'Reilly, Joy, O'Shea, King and Long, but by 1959, one hundred years after the last group of early settlers arrived, may we hope for a rejuvenated Parish? Kingsbridge, which has given seventeen sons to the priesthood and twenty-eight daughters to the religious life, has yet a great work to do. There is a rural life apostolate--an apostolate to save the Christian family, to make its continued existence possible, and to re-educate people to the true values of life, the dignity and the sacredness of the human person. Where better than in Kingsbridge could such an apostolate flourish?

Anno Domini Nineteen Hundred and Ninety

As dawn gives place to day, the helicopter spirals upward, bearing its precious occupants to St. Joseph's Church, Ashfield, where daily an entire parish worships by the Holy Mass. The mysticism of the machine

has solved the problem of time for these rural people, who, having safely steered back into the road of progress, are careful not to lose their way in the detours of mass-production corporation farms. Their agrarian economy has introduced cooperatives and credit unions, but each family owns its own fields and each member is conscious of the dignity of his profession in the stewardship of the land. The large owners of the 1940's--Garvey Brothers and Norman O'Connor--have sold many acres of their estates to other families whose children fill the homes with laughter, and the spacious lawns with cheer. The processing factories situated at strategic and convenient points have eliminated the middle man. Kingsbridge is self-sufficient, and does her share to feed, clothe and shelter the busy cities of London and Stratford, and the thriving sea-port of Goderich.

Home life is pleasant for the family with the leisure and the capacity for cultural enjoyment. The mother is not weary because electrical equipment and labour-saving devices have eliminated drudgery completely. The light aluminium farm machinery has worked the same marvel for the men. The days are profitably spent, occasionally at the communal processing factory, but usually in the fields. The daily paper and the news by radio and television keep all in touch with the world

abroad, while the daily family Rosary, recited at twilight, keeps all in touch with their Home above. Besides the attractive domestic life, there are discussion groups, debating clubs, dramatic and music classes, and athletic meets in the huge gymnasium opposite Jack O'Neil's old home, Lot 14, L.S.R.--the first land claimed in Ashfield Parish. In addition, a friendly relationship is maintained with other rural life associations, with the result that the various communities of Ashfield, Catholic and non-Catholic, are closely knit in the "Brotherhood of man under the Fatherhood of God". The fathers--many of whom are college graduates--and the teen-age boys who are still attending the local high school, which has expanded with the increased population, keep the clubs in active operation during the year, but in the summer months the sons from various colleges take the leadership and bring to their home town new ideas and new life. The girls, graduated from high school, and now in attendance at some Catholic College, bring to their homes culture and charm. Realizing that next to a religious vocation ranks that of mothering a Christian family, they need little inducement to keep them on the land to grace some intelligent young farmer's home. The parents eagerly look forward to the occasional short refresher courses in Music Appreciation, Interior Decorating or Home Progress which give them a new

outlook on life. Monthly Cana Conferences and yearly Closed Retreats are part of the regular program in this Parish where the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin claims a live membership of eligible youth.

The world is smaller now, and from Port Albert Airport to Detroit is but a matter of minutes. However, fewer and fewer leave home permanently, because Kingsbridge people have solved their own problems after the manner of Pope Leo XIII and Pius XI. They live the principles of the social encyclicals, and while making use of scientific inventions--yes, and making some contributions thereto--they have not forgotten the standards of the simple life, they have not let materialism choke out the appreciation of aesthetic values, they have not forgotten that, while God gave us this world to use for our personal development--and the more we develop our personalities according to His model the nearer we come to doing His will--He created us for higher things, and we cannot rest until we find Him. At last the fondest dreams of our forefathers are realized. Kingsbridge is not "The Deserted Village"; Kingsbridge is "The Village that Lives Christ", and living Christ, it radiates powerful

discharges with spiritual strength to warm a cold and indifferent world, and draw it to the feet of its Master.

KINGSBRIDGE!

Bridge - for the journey to our Heavenly Home,

King - for our Leader, our Lord.

Kingsbridge, ad multos annos!

Ever live Christ our King!

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An account in easy conversational style, expressive of Kingsbridge atmosphere.

Eiten, R. B., Living the Apostolate of the Cross or The Victim-Life in Practice, in Sponsa Regis, vol. 16, no. 3, November 15, 1944, pages 53 - 60.

An inspiring article. Consoling to find one so close to Ashfield so true to the Sacred Heart.

Green, Gavin Hamilton, The Old Log School and Huron Old Boys in Pioneer Days, Goderich, Signal-Star Press, 1939, 217 pages.

A book whose author has a unique way of expressing himself. Useful in recreating the atmosphere of early days.

Hale, Katherine, This is Ontario, Toronto, Ryerson Press, 1937, X-241 pages.

Easy reading. Ontario seen through the eyes of a traveller who gives Ashfield little prominence.

Hénon, Louis, Maria Chapdelaine, translated by W. H. Blake, St. Martin's Classics, Toronto, Macmillan Co., 1942, XX-267 pages.

Home-life charmingly depicted. Much like Ashfield life.

Jameson, Anna Brownell, Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada, edited by James J. Talman and Elsie McLeod Murray, from the New York edition of 1839, Toronto, Thos. Nelson & Sons, Ltd., 1943, XII-276 pages.

A classic of the early days in which the author has brought to life the past that we may see the district as our forefathers did.

Johnston, W. H., Houses Snug when Stoves were Scarce, in The Free Press, London, Jan. 15, 1938, in Fred Landon's Huron County Scrap Book.

An account of an interview with descendants of early settlers. Interesting details given.

Landon, Fred, Lake Huron, the American Lake Series, edited by Milo M. Quaife, New York, Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1944, 398 pages.

Huron's own historian who writes so well because he knows and loves. Particularly useful for early history, and for Lake Huron storms.

Lauriston, Victor, A Century of Goderich, in Canadian Geographical Journal, vol. 5, no. 2, August, 1932, pages 83 - 96.

A lively survey of Goderich history, in which, however, Ashfield is only indirectly concerned.

Lizars, Robina and Kathleen Macfarlane, In the Days of the Canada Company, 1825 - 1850, Toronto, Wm. Briggs, 1896, XIV-494 pages.

The classic of the early period, particularly useful in regard to the Canada Company.

O'Laughlin, Mae, History of St. Joseph's Parish, Kingsbridge, Ontario, Goderich, Signal-Star Press, 1937, 40 pages.

A concise story of the Parish in a readable style, written by a parishioner. Very useful for reference in this work.

The Ontario Catholic Year Book and Directory, Toronto, Newman Club, 1946, 132 pages.

A brief statistical picture of the Church in Ontario, of which Ashfield is a part.

Phillips, W. E., Old Files of Long-Abandoned Kintail Wharf Survive Storms, in The Free Press, London, 1943, in Flora Simpson's Scrap Book.

A brief survey of early days in Kintail as remembered by one of the oldest residents. New details of the early life disclosed.

Scott, H. A., The Roman Catholic Church East of the Great Lakes, 1760 - 1912, in Canada and Its Provinces, Archives Edition, vol. 11, Toronto, Glasgow, Brook and Co., 1914, pages 11 - 112.

A reliable account of the religious situation. Useful as a background for Ashfield Parish.

Simons, Eddie, Follies, Customs of White Men Puzzled Huron Indian Observer, in The Free Press, London, Ont., Dec. 9, 1944, p. 39, columns 1, 2, 3, 4.

Reasonable explanation of the names of Huron's townships.

Smith, W. H., Canada, Past, Present and Future, vol. 2, Toronto, Thomas Maclear, 1851, XXIV-544 pages. Historical, geographical and statistical account of Canada West up to 1851. Reliable source of reference for early Ashfield data.

Talman, J. J., Tale of Vast Pigeon Flights of Early Days Amazed Writer, in The Free Press, London, July 8, 1944, in Fred Landon's Huron County Scrap Book.

An article which shows that research proves the truth of the seemingly exaggerated stories of these pigeon flights.

Three Generations of Standard Bearers - Historical Sketch of The Presbyterian Church, Ashfield, Ontario, from 1848 to 1918 (no publisher, no place), 1918, 45 pages.

A clear picture of the people and the spirit of Kintail in the early days. Kingsbridge and Kintail complete each other.

Urbain, J. V., The Family-Type Farm Since the War, Rural Life Column in The Canadian Register of Kingston, London Edition, Fifth Year, no. 27, August 24, 1946, p. 7, col. 4, 5.

An index to the current interest in Christian rural life.

Wallace, Wm. Stewart, A History of the Canadian People, Toronto, The Copp Clark Co., Ltd., 1938, XIII-404 pages.

A general work, free from extraneous details. Useful for a view of the early immigration situation, and political and economic development in the nineteenth century.

Weaver, Emily P., The Story of the Counties of Ontario, Toronto, Bell & Cockburn, 1913, X-318 pages.

One of the very few books written on this subject, but only four pages refer to our study.

The most fertile sources of information were not the books listed, but rather the following:

Four tons of records and documents from the Archives of Huron County, still in the process of being sorted and organized as Regional History at the University of Western Ontario, including the following:

Canada Company Papers;

Assessment Rolls for the Township of Ashfield in the Huron District for the years 1842 - 1848;

Minutes of the Proceedings for the District of Huron;
Minutes, Resolutions, By-Laws and Reports of Huron County Council;
Note Book of Transactions of Special Sessions of the Peace, beginning 1841;
 Loose sheets of Summaries compiled from census returns or Assessment Rolls.

The Archives and Public Records of the Province of Ontario, Legislative Library, Parliament Buildings, Toronto, Canada:

The Ashfield Letter Book;
Book of Crown Land Papers of Ashfield Town Plots;
Early maps of roads;
 Records of Patents for Land, from the Lands and Forests Department.

Scrap Books of material relating to Huron collected over a period of years:

Fred Landon's, University of Western Ontario;
 Flora Simpson's, Kintail;
 Margaret Sullivan's, Detroit;

"Ye Olde Curiosity Shoppe" section of the Goderich Museum, Public Library, Goderich:
 Photos, clippings, letters, autographs, early implements.

The Official Records of the Diocese of London, Diocesan Archives, St. Peter's Seminary, London, Ontario, including:
Excerpts from Status Animarum of Diocese of Sandwich,
 and from notes in Bishop Walsh's handwriting.

The Parish Archives at St. Peter's Church, Goderich, and St. Joseph's Church, Kingsbridge.

The files of The Goderich Signal-Star, particularly the 24-page folio, The Board of Trade Edition, March 25, 1889.

Private letters from and interviews with residents of Kingsbridge, Kintail, and Crewe.

APPENDIX 1

IRISH EMIGRANTS¹

At first Cove appeared like a vast fair. More than four thousand persons had crowded from the country into it. Half the number were bound for a distant land which lay beyond the vast and dangerous ocean. The other half had come to look their last on daughters and sons and brothers. . . The black ships are lying in that harbour which is among the most beautiful of the works of God. Monkstown shines white against the hill and on the heights opposite, which overlook the road leading from Queenstown to Cork, the furze were already yellow with blossom. The terraced curves of the harbour circle on either side of the harbour's mouth, beyond which the Atlantic beats into foam against the rocky bases of the green hills. No wonder men find it hard to leave such a country. It is like a lover tearing himself away from the woman he has loved and loves. In that hour of grief and madness and tears, her eye seems brighter, her smile sweeter than ever, and her sobs accentuate with fatal charm every beauteous outline. The hour comes. The bells sound. The boats put off to the ships. Anchor is weighed. Those left behind press over the low wall which fringes the long straggling hill commanding the view sea-ward. The emigrants press to the side of the ship. They wave their handkerchiefs and as the ships move away, a wail from the shore rises like--but that is indescribable and beggars comparison. Some faint, others rush madly down to the water's edge. None turn homewards. Seaward they strain their eyes until the ships have become specks and disappeared.

On board the vessels, grief and sickness prostrate most. But one emigrant sits in the bow. He watches the waves rise between him and his beloved country. When the last shadowy outline is gone, to an old harp, an heirloom of his family, which may have sounded in the halls of Tara, and with his forefathers' prowess of song not wholly degraded, he pours forth . . . a farewell to his country, in which he mourns over her history and dilates on her tender beauty.

¹ Nicholas Flood Davin, The Irishman in Canada, pp. 355, 356.

APPENDIX 2

LETTERS FROM THE ASHFIELD LETTER-BOOK¹

a) Letter to William Hawkins, District Agent in Goderich

Crown Lands Office,
Toronto, 2nd July 1840

Sir

The bearers Morgan King--O'Connor, Keefe, have been in the province three or four years. They understand wood-work, I mean chopping and clearing they have made up their minds to proceed to your settlement and I have to request of you to give them encouragement. They have some means of their own but would like to be employed in the road so as to pay in that manner for their land.

I think you need not hesitate in carrying on roads in this manner to any extent, paying money in part if required and as much as possible in land to attract Settlers. I am therefore desirous to send you all that are willing to undertake the Settlement.

I have the honour to be Sir etc etc
(Sgd.) R. B. Sullivan

b) Letter of Hawkins to Sullivan regarding Roads, Mills, etc.

Toronto, 10th Feb. 1840

Sir

.....
The soil not only of Ashfield but of a large Tract of unsurveyed lands north of it is of the best quality and in order to make this land available it would first be requisite to open roads of communication with Goderich, erect Bridges and perhaps a Grist and Saw Mill . . . Although the entire coast of this part of Lake Huron is much exposed to the westerly winds it is free from Rocks and other obstructions which abound on the north easterly shore of the same Lake.

Wm Hawkins

¹ Archives and Public Records of the Province of Ontario, Toronto, Canada.

c) Letter of Sullivan to Government Authorities

R. B. Sullivan, Crown Land Agent, writing from the Crown Lands Office, April 29, 1840, requests five hundred pounds to open roads and build a sawmill on the Town Plot of Ashfield. He explains that the land cannot be sold until a road is built, and shows how illogical is the government plan whereby the road is to be built from the thousand pounds acquired by land sales. The letter bears at the bottom: "Adopted in Council 21 May 1840--O.C. b21"

Attached to this letter he sends:

1. Hawkins' Report
2. A plan of the Town Plot as surveyed
3. Mr. Jones' Letter to Mr. Hawkins
4. Mr. Jones' Letter to Mr. Sullivan
5. A Map showing the road lines
6. A copy of his reply to Commissioner Jones

d) Letter regarding the election of John Hawkins as Town Reeve²

Office of the Township Clerk
January 16 1854

In accordance with the 33rd section as amended, of the 81st chapter, 12 Victoria, I hereby certify that John Hawkins Jr. Esqre. of the Township of Ashfield, has been duly elected Town reeve for the said Township for the present year, by the Municipality thereof, and that he has taken the oath of Qualification and of office, as such Town Reeve, in accordance with the above cited Statute.

John Cook, Township Clerk

² John Hawkins Sr. had been unanimously made the first councillor of the first council of Ashfield, 1842.

APPENDIX 3

CROWN LAND PAPERS OF ASHFIELD TOWN PLOTS¹

a) An old document in Toronto Archives shows, under the date of August 12, 1839, Lot 14, Lake Shore Range, still vacant. However, an Application (on aged paper in good brown ink) for land in Ashfield, from Woodstock, over the signature of Thomas Lapenatiere, as early as March, 1837, requests Lot No. 1 South of the government reserve, but written under the official, "Received, 23rd and 25th", is evident, "Ashfield not open for location".

b) List of Detached Lots²

Crown Lands Department
Kingston, 22nd December, 1843

Township of Ashfield, C. W.
For sale at the prices specified
Conditions

No payment of purchase money will be received by Instalments but the whole Purchase Money either in Money or Land Script, must be paid at the time of Sale.

On the payment of the Purchase Money, the purchaser will receive a Receipt which will entitle him to enter on the Land which he has purchased, and arrangements will be made for issuing to him the Patent without delay.

¹ Book of Crown Land Papers of Ashfield Town Plots, Archives and Public Records of the Province of Ontario.

² Pages from the Supplement to the Canadian Gazette pasted in the Book of Crown Land Papers.

Patented, and any wood cut in violation of this condition shall be deemed to have been cut by the said John O'Neil and be dealt with as by law provided in respect to timber cut upon Public Lands without authority.

Fourth:- That should the said John O'Neil violate or neglect to fulfil any of the foregoing conditions, this instrument shall become null and void and the commissioner of Crown Lands may revoke the same, and he or his agent may enter upon and take back the said parcel of land without any formality whatever, and without any other proof than such as may be satisfactory to the Governor-General-in-Council.

Fifth:- That the said John O'Neil shall not transfer or assign this Instrument unless with the written consent of the commissioner of Crown Lands so to do.

Sixth:- That upon compliance with the foregoing conditions the said John O'Neil shall be entitled to receive a Deed in Fee for the said Lot, but the timber, though owned thereafter by the Patentee shall be held subject to any general duty the Legislature may hereafter impose upon timber.

In witness whereof we have hereunto set our hands and seals this twelfth day of October in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-two.

In presence of

John Clarke

his

John x O'Neil

mark

I hereby certify that this document was read and explained to John O'Neil, and that he consented to the conditions thereof before delivery of the copy signed by the Commissioners.

John Clarke

d) Letters regarding Land for a School

Goderich, 21st Aug. 1848

Sir

I have the honour to inform you that I have been requested by a number of Roman Catholic Settlers in Ashfield and by the Revd. Mr. Sneider their clergyman to apply to the Department for a grant of one acre of land for the purpose of erecting a school-house thereon. There is at present only one common school in Ashfield and it is situated from five to eight miles distant from where these people reside. So that if they were willing to send their children to the Protestant School they cannot do so owing to the distance. Mr. Sneider represents their children as

being in a deplorable state of ignorance and speaking only the Irish language and he is most anxious to better their condition by having them educated that they may become good Christians and useful members of society.

These people are poor but they have engaged to erect a suitable school-house, and some of them have offered land for the purpose, but these parties happen to reside at the extremities of the Catholic settlement.

They have agreed that the South East Corner of Lot 15 N.T.P. is the most central (sic) spot. This spot is occupied by John Deen who is entitled to a part of it for a Road Contract and expects soon to be able to pay for the remainder, but he consents to give up all claim to one acre on the South East corner for the use of a school.

Under these circumstances I beg that the Department may represent the case to His Excellency the Governor in Council as early as convenient.

I have the honor to be

Sir

Your Obed't humble serv't

John Clark

To the Honourable

J. H. Price,

Commissioner of Crown Lands

I beg to submit this application for the favourable consideration of the Government that one acre at the S. E. Corner of Lot N. 15 N.T.P. in the Township of Ashfield be granted for School purposes.

Crown Land Office
Montreal 19th Oct. 1848

In Committee 28th Oct. 1848

The Committee recommend that the acre of land in question be granted for school purposes as suggested by the Commissioner of Crown Lands in his report of 19th October 1848.

Approved in Council same day.
Com'd to C.C.L. 30th Oct. 1848
R.C.I. of A.

Goderich December 29th, 1862

Sir

On 3d May 1862 you wrote Mr. Widder your agent here to the effect that one acre at the south east angle of Lot 15 N.T.P. Ashfield Township in the County of Huron had by order in council on the 28th Oct. 1848 been set aside for school purposes and that by an oversight whole Lot 15 had been granted to Deen and pointing out that it would be proper for Mr. Deen to convey this acre to the school Trustees.

Mr. Deen is ready at any moment to convey an acre to the School Trustees but he and they cannot agree to the metes and bounds. The Trustees want a square acre and Deen wishes to give an acre with a frontage proportioned to the whole lot. The whole lot is about five times as deep as it is broad--hence the acre would be in his opinion of this like proportion. Rather than raise a difficulty Deen is willing to give 104 ft. ($\frac{1}{2}$ acre) in front and a depth sufficient to make an acre. This you will I doubt not consider a reasonable offer on the part of Deen and if you will take the trouble to recommend the trustees to accept the acre in the form suggested I believe they will at once submit to your view of the case and if they do much correspondence and trouble will be avoided.

I Remain Sir

Your Obedient Servant

J. B. Gordon

To the Honourable
Commissioner of Common Laws
Quebec.

APPENDIX 5

MISCELLANEOUS EXTRACTS RELATING TO HURON OR ASHFIELD

a) Goderich, Thurs. Feb. 10/42

Moved by W. Hawkins, seconded by W. Chalk that the Township of Ashfield be formed into one School Division and that the memorial of the School Commissioners for said township be received.

Carried -- nem: dis. 1
District Clerk -- Daniel Lizars

b) To the Settlers of the Huron Tract²

The undersigned begs leave to give notice to all those who may have any business to transact with the Canada Company that since the removal of their office from this town he has determined to open an agency office here for the benefit of those who may not wish to travel to Toronto to transact their business in person. From his thorough knowledge of the company's mode of transacting business (having been so long employed in their office) he feels confident that he can aid and give satisfaction to all those who may require his services. Conveyancing Land and General Agency Office, also a list of lands for sale kept, and a registry of those wishing to purchase without charge except where a sale is effected when a moderate percentage will be required.

Alex Robertson
Land Agent, etc.

Goderich
January 25, 1853

¹ Minutes of the Proceedings of the District Municipal Council for the District of Huron Holders at Goderich, 1842, Archives of Huron County, University of Western Ontario, London.

² Notice on age-yellowed paper in "Ye Olde Curiosity Shoppe" room of Goderich Public Library, from the Huron Signal, of Goderich, vol.6, no. 32, Sept. 15, 1853.

c) Report on State of Crime³

By the Clerk of the Peace of the United Counties of Huron, Perth and Bruce, upon the state of crime within the said United Counties during the year 1850.

To the Hon. Board of Registration, Toronto.

Dan Lizars, in a 5-page manuscript letter, following the above heading, rejoices over the small number of crimes and the prosperity of the people. He refers to the absence of political and sectarian animosity, mentions the various nationalities and religions--twenty sub-divisions of the Christian Faith--and gives the following data:

Total convicted in 1848 . . .	180
" " " 1850 . . .	120

and of these most crimes were mere peccadilloes. He notes that the City of Toronto for 1850 had 1608 apprehensions, while its population was the same as that of the United Counties for whom he spoke. "Such," he philosophizes, "is the melancholy difference between a city and an agricultural population." On pages three and four of the letter he continues:

In this favoured portion of the Province of Upper Canada--blest with a salubrious climate and fertile soil, watered with crystal springs

³ Unclassified letter, Archives of Huron County, University of Western Ontario.

and brooks in every direction, reposing upon a table land whose natural drainage flows uninterruptedly onwards to the streams and great rivers which intersect it in every quarter, towards the noble Huron or Lake St. Clair, the energies of the people have been steadily devoted to practical progress and improvement having in the short period above alluded to brought upwards of 80,000 acres of the wilderness under cultivation--erected 5000 dwelling houses, 56 schools--14 churches--12 grist mills with 19 run of stones, 5 oat and barley mills, 36 saw mills, 2 fulling and carding mills, 5 distilleries, 2 breweries, 8 tanneries, and 24 Pot and Pearl ash factories.

He gives the population as follows:

1841	5,000
1847	16,641
1848	20,450
1850	26,933

but due to the infancy of Bruce and consequent inaccuracy of numbers, he concludes that the true increase from 1841 is 24,400.

After enumerating the bushels of grain produced, he concludes:

The above gratifying examples speak loudly for the industry of the Settlers, and where hired labour can with difficulty be obtained at a high remuneration notwithstanding the yearly increasing ratio of newcomers, and moreover, where all are diligently employed in the onward march to happiness and independence, we may truly be thankful to a superintending Providence that, prosperity is in the ascendant and that crime is on the decline.

All of which is respectfully submitted by
 Dan Lizars
 Clerk of the Peace

Office of C. of P.
 Goderich, May, 1851.

- d) Letter sent to D. Lizars, Clerk of the Peace⁴

McKillop, June 7th, 1848

Sir

This day I received your letter of the 29th of May requesting of me to let you know who were the Resident Clergymen of this Township or was there any, I have to inform you that at present there is no Resident Clergyman, but there are two churches built in this Township, the one a roman Catholic (sic) Church and the other a Prospeterian (sic) one, and the Clergymen who officiates regularly in them is the Revd. Mr. Snyder, Roman Catholic priest and the Rev. Wm. McIkenzy, Prospeterian Minister. Mr. McIkenzy lives within a few rods of this Township near the post office and I am told attends all the Spiritual duty of all denominations of the Protestants in it, the Rev'd Mr. Snyder mostly stops in Goderich but punctually attends all the Spiritual duty of his own Church here, this is all the information I can send you which I hope Sir will be sufficient for the present, from Sir your most obedient Humble Servant

Patrick O'Sullivan
Township Clerk, McKillop

- e) Scene as related by an eye-witness⁵

There was a committee meeting at the British Hotel, when there entered the Father,--very excited, and trying to explain himself in terms where English, French and German strove for mastery. He said that Mr. Cayley, one of the candidates, had promised him land in Ashfield, and he asked loudly, "Where is that land you promised me?" Mr. Cayley denied having so promised; but Father Schneider contended he had, and for Church purposes. He then threatened, "If you don't give me my land, my people shall not vote for you; they shall vote against you".

Mr. Cayley was not a man to be brow-beaten, so he rang the bell, saying to the waiter, "Show this gentleman the door". And they did so vote; all but our two friends, Roddy Slattery and Michael Kelly. At all polling places appeared a small hand bill or placard--"It is a mistake for my people to imagine that I wish them to vote for the Honourable William Cayley. I desire them to vote for the Honourable Malcolm Cameron". P. Schneider, P.P.

⁴ Ibid. ⁵ Robina and Kathleen M. Lizars, In the Days of the Canada Company, p. 275

APPENDIX 6

OAK LEAVES IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Staff Sergeant Maurice J. Sullivan of the American Airforce, great grandson of John Sullivan, a pioneer of the 1840's in Ashfield, received from the American Government the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, and later the Purple Heart and Victory Medal. In December, 1944, he was listed as Missing and by September 28, 1945, was officially pronounced dead, having been killed when his bomber, a B 17, was shot down on his 30th combat mission.

His father, on the occasion of his son's twenty-second birthday, in the interval between the two messages, "Missing" and "Dead", in a pensive mood penned the lines from which the following are taken:

You left us, son, the memory of joys
On all your birthdays, up to twenty-one.
Then God-less, war-mad times had claimed our boys.
Your toys were gone: your plaything was a gun.

We cannot understand God's ways, and yet
We feel He willed you "perish by the sword"
To teach frail mortals never to forget
The simple first commandment of our Lord.

You left us, son, a portion of your strength
To bear our heavy cross and pray for grace
To be resigned throughout life's fleeting length--
Tho' resignation cannot fill your place.

You left us, son, this hope: the destiny
To be with you again when life is done;
And as we wait we oft repeat this plea:
Dear Lord, please make us worthy of our son.
August 3, 1945 J.I.S.

APPENDIX 7

NOTES IN BISHOP WALSH'S OWN HANDWRITING¹

a) December 31, 1879

I have this day by a decree cut off Wawanosh from the mission of Ashfield, and Blyth and Wingham from the Mission of Irishtown, and have erected them into a distinct Mission with Rev'd John A. O'Connor as its pastor.

+ John Walsh

Bishop of London

b) Rev'd Richard Beausang died in his Residence at Sarnia on the 14th of January 1886 aged 61 years. He had the happiness of receiving the last Sacraments. Father Beausang was a native of the Diocese of Ross Co. Cork Ireland and was a priest therein for several years. He was appointed by me pastor of Sarnia in 1869. He was removed therefrom and was appointed pastor of Ashfield in August 1876. There he exercised the ministry until October 1884 when he was obliged to resign in consequence of ill health. He was succeeded in Ashfield by Rev'd B. Boubat

+ John Walsh

Bishop of London

¹ The Official Records of the Diocese of London, St. Peter's Seminary, London, Ontario.