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“My Dear Mrs. Millar”
Soul Tending from the Townships
to the Lower North Shore

by Yolande Allard

Translation: Julie Miller

Quebec Heritage News

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Charles Howard Millar, *Millar family at "Lord's Farm," Drummondville, Quebec, 1889.* McCord Museum, MP-1974.133.114. Note that Eliza Ann Millar is seated at right.

“MY DEAR MRS. MILLAR”

Soul Tending from the Townships to the Lower North Shore

by Yolande Allard
Translation: Julie Miller

INTRODUCTION

Back in the spring of 2023, I was contacted by Julie Miller, the then culture and heritage coordinator at the Centre for Access to Services in English, Mauricie-Centre-du-Québec (CASE-MCQ) in Drummondville. Julie told me about historian Yolande Allard, who was writing a story in connection to a 150-year-old letter that had been discovered inside the wall of her old house during renovation work. The letter was written by a Reverend Francis Allnatt. Yolande’s story was almost finished, and Julie was translating it from French into English.

Having previously heard of Allard’s work (in relation to the Drummondville area and the St. Francis River), I asked Julie if she thought Yolande might be interested in publishing her story in *Quebec Heritage News*. Julie set up a meeting and before long the three of us were sipping coffee in the QAHN board room. Yolande told me all about Reverend Allnatt, his connection to Bishop’s University, Drummondville and other parts of Quebec, and his missionary work on the Lower North Shore. I was intrigued.

There was one little hitch though. It was obvious that Yolande’s article would be much too long to be featured in a regular edition (or even two) of the magazine. So I suggested we publish a special edition focusing on this one story. Yolande and Julie really liked the idea, and I wish to thank them both for bringing this story to life.

Of course, publishing an extra (fifth) edition of what is normally a quarterly magazine comes with significant cost. The publication of this special edition would not have been possible without the generous financial support of the Townshippers’ Research and Cultural Foundation, our partners at CASE-MCQ, and our advertisers. QAHN thanks all of these supporters for their support.

Matthew Farfan
Executive Director, QAHN

We all love a good mystery, and I can think of no better one (for an amateur sleuth, at any rate) than to find a fragment of an old letter sealed up in the walls of an old house and have to work out who it was written by, whom it was written to, and why. This is the mystery that Yolande Allard set out to solve when she discovered such a letter in the course of a home renovation project.

The mystery began in Yolande’s home town of Drummondville, where the letter’s recipient (“Mrs. Millar”) had lived well over a century earlier. Here, local sources could answer some immediate questions. But Yolande’s investigative journey took her much further afield – to Lennoxville, where Bishop’s University proved a mine of information, but also to more remote sections of the St.

Lawrence River valley: the spectacular Charlevoix region, and finally the all-but-inaccessible Lower North Shore, which the letter’s author refers to by its nineteenth-century name, “Labrador.” Seal hunts, dog sled rides, and a battle against typhus in the bleak northern wilderness feature in the account that Yolande provides. It is a long way from the genteel world of Mrs. Millar’s drawing room.

The story you are about to read is fascinating in its own right, but it also serves as an example of the most rewarding sort of historical investigation: a humble point of departure leads to the reconstruction of a remarkable life, one of duty and dedication but also of adventure, exploration, and even survival. It is a story that would have gone untold had it not been for a chance encounter and a dollop of painstaking research.

It has been my pleasure to edit Yolande’s engaging prose for this special edition of *Quebec Heritage News*, facilitated greatly by Julie Miller’s sparkling translation. I would like to thank them both for introducing me to the hitherto enigmatic Reverend Allnatt.

Read on! The game is afoot! The sleuthing may have been laborious but the result is pure pleasure – indeed, one might say that the pleasure is Elementary, My Dear Mrs. Millar...

Rod MacLeod
Editor, *Quebec Heritage News*



Wall where the 1873 letter to Mrs. Millar was discovered under the plaster. Photo courtesy of Yolande Allard.





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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

It was just over twenty years ago now that I discovered a letter hidden beneath the plaster of one of the walls in my house. My husband and I had lived in the house for many years, but only made this exciting discovery when we decided to add a guest room on the house's west-facing side, and renovations were underway. The house itself is well over a hundred years old, and was once inhabited by the Millar family.

This treasure of a letter was enigmatically addressed to "My dear Mrs. Millar." It had been sent from "Labrador" and was dated January 29, 1873. There was no signature. The contents of this letter were so moving that I was quickly caught up in a quest to identify the author and to discover what his or her relationship with "Mrs. Millar" had been. The ensuing search brought me into contact with many exciting archival documents that overflowed with anecdotes. I also received invaluable help

from historians, ethnologists, anthropologists, and also friends, many of whom were called upon to translate a series of letters or to decode handwriting that was at times barely legible.

The journey was filled with many surprises, and eventually brought me to learn the details of the eventful life of a remarkable and unusually determined and energetic man. Let me now tell you his story – the story of his journey to "Labrador" (today's Lower North Shore) and back, and of his early days, his many talents, and his dedication to the Anglican Church as both missionary and clergyman.

I would like to express my very special thanks to: Louise Abbott, Louise Audet, Michelle Bachand, Patricia Bergeron, Éleine Bérubé, Dwight Bilodeau, Francis Butler, Paul Charest, Hannah Deskin, Jesse Dymond, Alain Frank, Denis Goulet, Anna Grant, Barry Husk, Shannon Keats, Fleurette T. Lafrance, Lise Larose, Jack Little, Jean-Jacques Mailhot, France Monty, Françoise Monville-Sauvage, Suzanne Muldoon, Mia Morisset, Garland Nadeau, Monique Nadeau-Saumier, Caroline Paquin, Julie Paquin, Michèle Paquin, Laurel Parson, Bill Phifer, Mary Ellen Reisner, France Rivest, Jody Robinson, Jim Sweeny, Vince Teetaert, Anne Thériault, Roger D. Thomas, France Vachon.

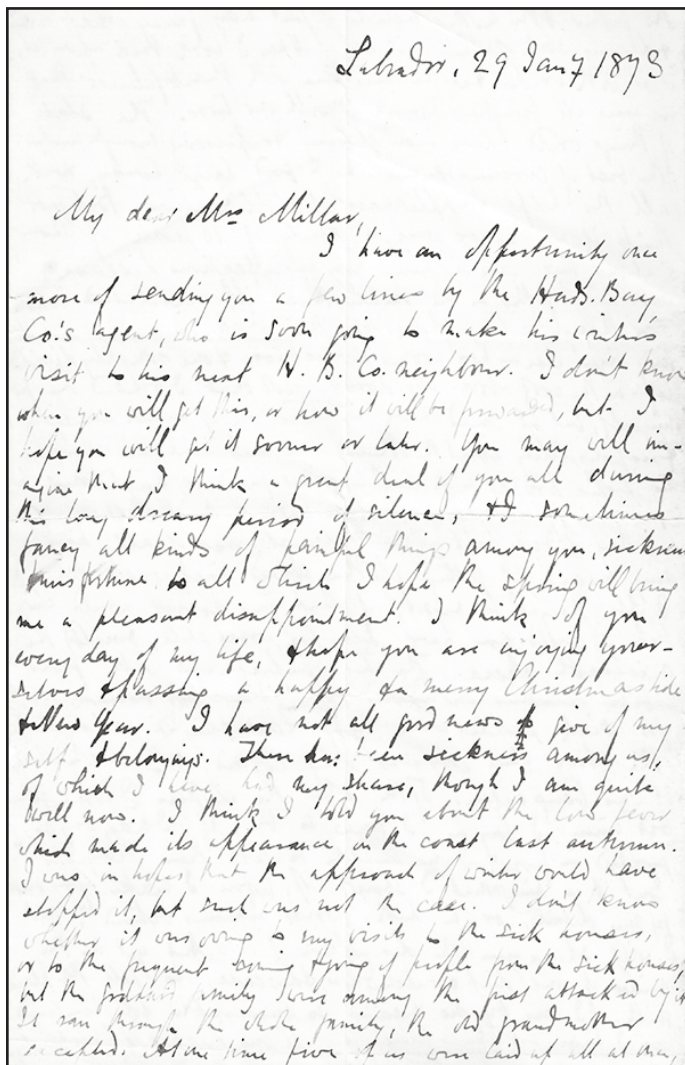
Yolande Allard, July 6, 2023



Yolande Allard is a historian hailing from Drummondville, Quebec. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Sherbrooke and a Master's degree from Bishop's University. She has participated in numerous projects exploring the history of the Eastern Townships – for example, a study of the Atlantic salmon population in the St. Francis River during the nineteenth century. In 2021, she received the

insignia of an officer of the Order of Drummondville in recognition of her exemplary work promoting and protecting the city's history and heritage.

Julie Miller is a translator who has been active in the culture and heritage sector. She lives in the Eastern Townships and is also a musician and community worker.



Part of the first page of the letter found by the author in 2003. Photo courtesy of Yolande Allard.



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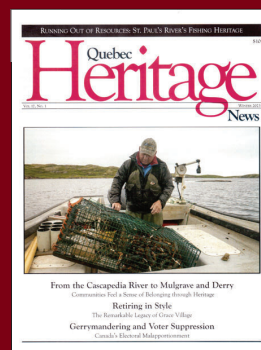


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THE LETTER

The Writer

From the outset, it was clear that the treasure hidden in the walls of my living room was incomplete. What I had was the first four-pages of a letter, filled with fine and confident handwriting, but only a fragment. Obviously it had no signature. How many pages could be missing, I wondered. We will probably never know. And who wrote the letter? Luckily, some passages gave me some hints as to the writer's profession:

And yet in the midst of our dirt and wretchedness and disease to tell the plain truth I was by no means so miserable and disheartened as I have sometimes been when all was comfort and prosperity around me. This was partly owing (under the blessing of God) to the fact of my position as parson - everyone looking to me as referee in everything.

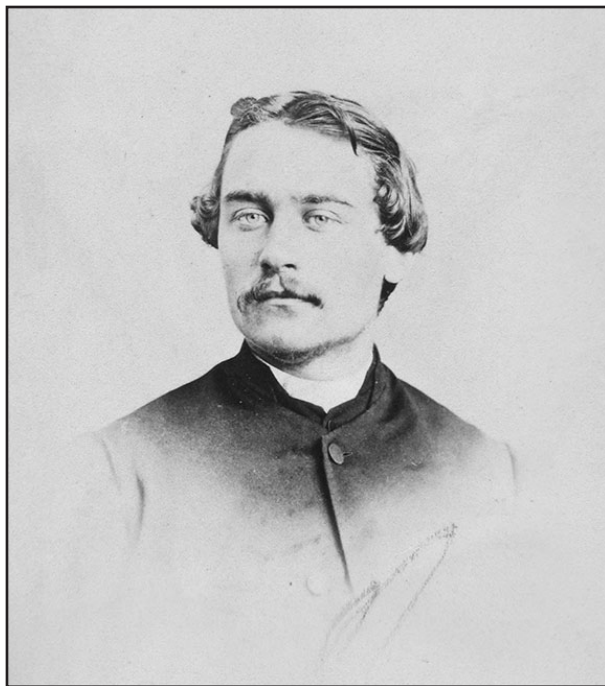
A bit further on, the writer gives another clue:

The parson is looked upon here as being necessarily a man of iron and leather. He is looked to for everything, except actual physical labour; the idea of his "giving out" is never entertained for a moment.

I finally discovered that the writer was Francis John Benwell Allnatt (1841-1920), whose experiences can be reconstructed from the archives of St. George's Anglican Church, Drummondville. He was rector of St. George's from 1864 to 1885, save for an interval of two years, which he spent as a missionary on the Lower North Shore. Correspondence from Archdeacon Francis Buckle of Newfoundland confirmed Reverend Allnatt's presence in this area from 1872 to 1874, as well as the name of the parish where he served: St. Clement's of Mutton Bay.

The Recipient

"Mrs. Millar" was born Elisa Ann Robins (1818-1891), the daughter of William George Robins, a re-



Francis John Benwell Allnatt in 1864, shortly after his arrival in Montreal. Photo: William Notman, McCord Museum, I-11048.1.

tired officer of the Swiss De Meuron Regiment who participated in the founding of Drummondville. In 1841, Elisa Ann married Robert James Millar (1815-1877), the registrar of Drummond Township. Millar was the son of James Grant, a retired officer of the 1st Battalion of the Royal Scots Regiment. The couple lived on the north shore of the St. Francis River, across from what was then the commercial and industrial heart of Drummondville (Vallée, *La colonie*, 62, 176-177).

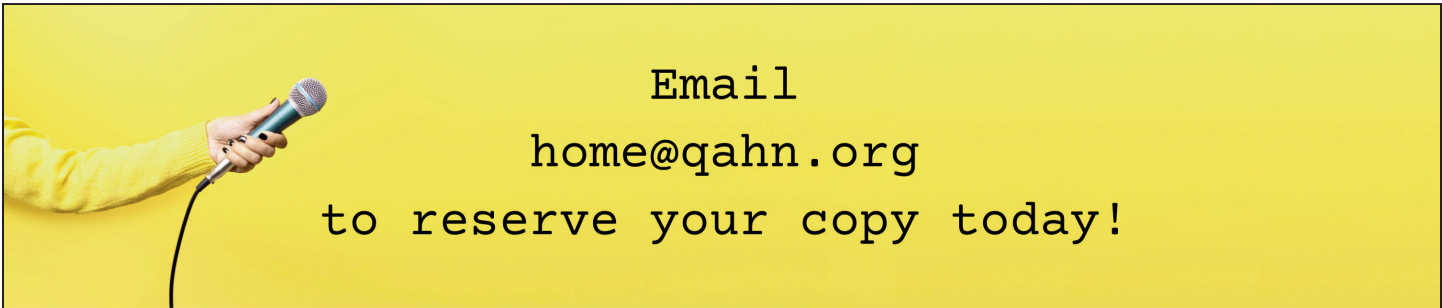
In 1873, Elisa Ann acted as a sort of intermediary between her younger sister, Jane Henrietta, and Francis John Allnatt. The two would marry at the end of Allnatt's two-year mission on the Lower North Shore.

Some passages in the letter reflect the tender feelings of a suitor for his betrothed and her family:

I think a great deal of you all during this long dreary period of silence, and I sometimes fancy all kinds of painful things among you, sickness, misfortune... I think of you every day of my life... And yet then some two (I think) days during which I thought I was going to die... I was much troubled by the thought... that I had not been able to give any account of my circumstances and feelings to my friends at home, and to you in Drummondville.



The Millar family residence in Drummondville, c.1900. Photo: Charles Howard Millar. McCord Museum, MP-1974.133.36.



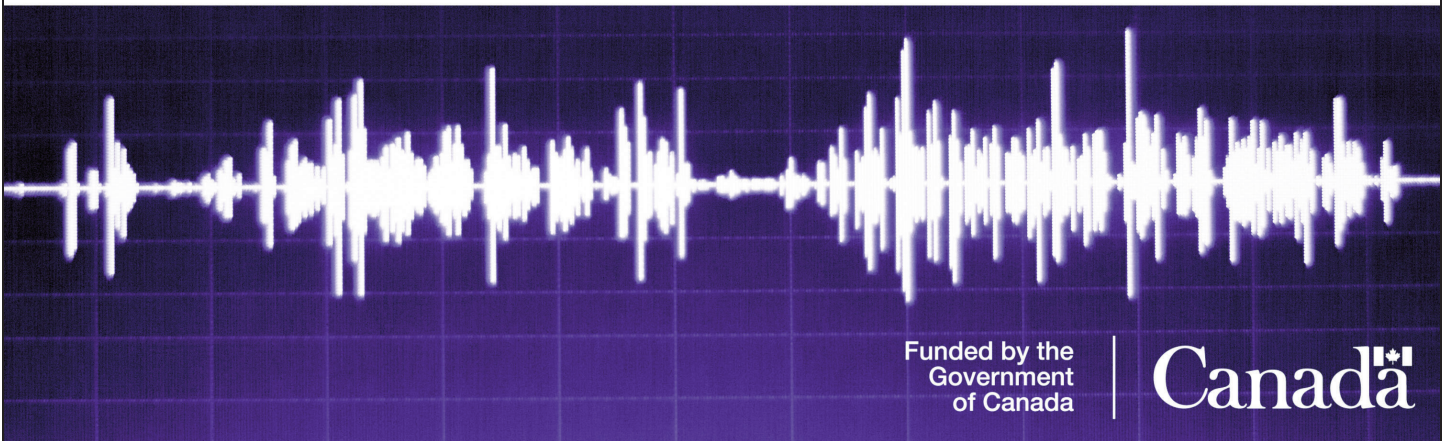
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A MISSIONARY'S CALLING

The Training of Francis J. B. Allnatt, 1841-1872



Principal Gateway of St. Augustine's College, Canterbury.
Illustrated London News, July 8, 1848.

Heading for Canada

Francis John Benwell Allnatt was born on January 15, 1841, in the working-class suburb of Clapham in southwest London, England. When he was still very young, his family moved to Cumberland, a county near the border with Scotland. His father, Francis John Allnatt, was a priest of the Church of England and a respected linguist; while still small enough to be seated on his father's knee, the future missionary first learned the rudiments of Latin and Greek (Wood, 634; Abbott-Smith, 51; *Mission Field*, 1878, 70).

When he was 18, Allnatt Jr. enrolled in a three-year course at the Anglican missionary college of St. Augustine, Canterbury, in connection with the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. As part of the curriculum, students were taught the basics of medicine: besides attending formal lectures, they went twice a week to a local hospital where they received clinical training (Pascoe, 868; *The Week*, April 19, 1862).

In 1864, the young Allnatt boarded the *Bohemian*, a steamship of the Allan line, which took passengers from Liverpool to Portland, Maine, during the winter months. The ship hit a rocky shoal at Cape Elizabeth, not too far from their destination, tearing the engine room in two. The ship began to take on water at great speed, and in under an hour and half it had sunk completely, at a distance of only 200 metres from the shore. Almost all the passengers survived, except for 20 unfortunate Irish emigrants, who were drowned when their lifeboat capsized (*New York Times*, February 23, 1864).

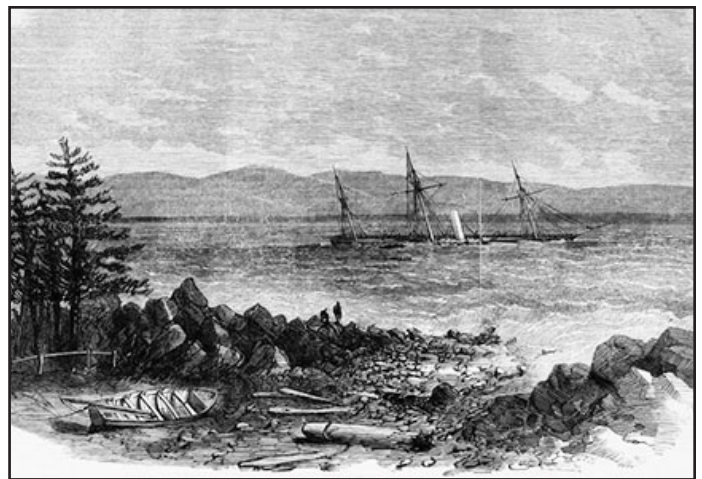
Allnatt's traumatic arrival on American soil, on February 22, 1864, was all the more troubling because it came only seven months after another family tragedy: his brother, Herman

Augustine Goode Allnatt, had died at sea on June 22, 1863.

Francis John Allnatt had very little time to feel sorry for himself, however. He immediately boarded a train in Portland bound for Montreal on the Grand Trunk Railway.

Missionary in Canada

Allnatt was given a hearty welcome in Canada by the Canadian episcopate, who were recruiting candidates for the priesthood and needed people who were both competent and courageous. But Allnatt first had to be ordained a deacon. Although he had passed all his exams at St. Augustine's, he had left the college to travel overseas before being ordained. This presented no problem, however. Indeed, the Church had placed the responsibility for the ordination of overseas missionaries in the hands of the colonial bishops, who would ensure the candidates were properly qualified. Since this ordination was only valid in the colonies, the practice served to



The Wreck of the *Bohemian*, Montreal Ocean Company's Steam-Packet, off the coast of Maine. *Illustrated London News*, March 19, 1864.

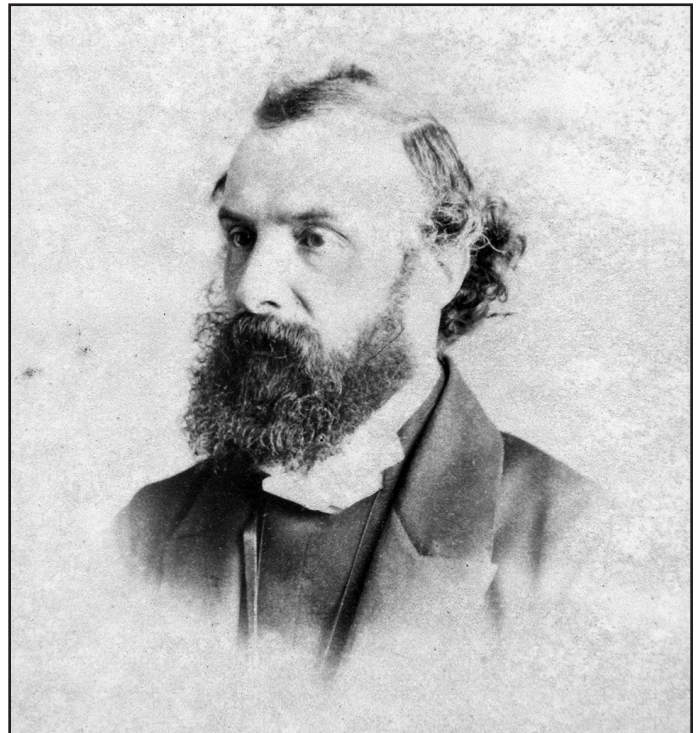
prevent young missionary students from returning to England to serve as priests (Reisner, 235). Allnatt was ordained deacon only a few weeks after his arrival in Canada.

Allnatt's first posting was in the Lower St. Francis Valley, in the Eastern Townships. Here, he served about a hundred families of mostly subsistence farmers in the missions of Drummondville and L'Avenir. The people living in Drummondville, the larger of the two missions, had lost their church to a devastating fire two years before. They had only been able to save the outer stone walls and just two of the stained-glass windows. The



In 1864, George Henry Parker was ordained a priest of the Anglican Church and posed for a portrait with his colleagues Francis John B. Allnatt (left) and C. A. Daniel (seated), both of whom were ordained deacons (a lesser rank within the church hierarchy).

These men wear the typical garb of the diaconate: the white collar and the stole draped around the neck. All three men were graduates of St. Augustine's missionary college, Canterbury. Photo: William Notman. McCord Museum, I-11941.1.

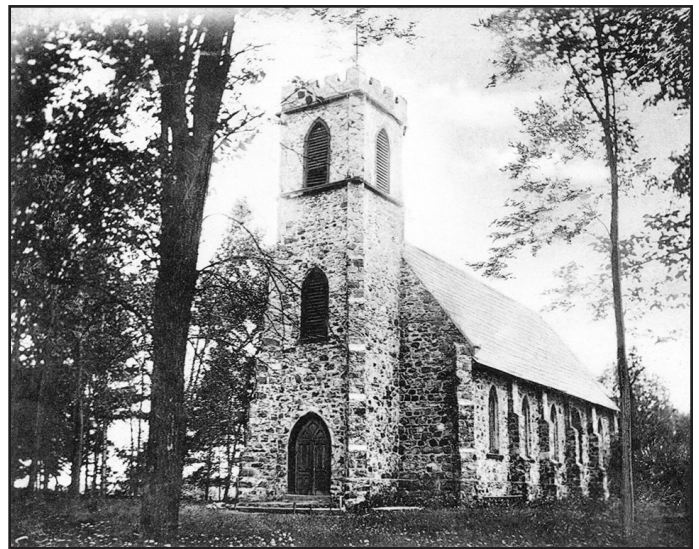


James William Williams was an Anglican priest who immigrated to Canada in 1857 to serve as rector of the grammar school connected to Bishop's University in Lennoxville. This photo was taken in 1863, the year Williams was appointed Anglican Bishop of Quebec, a position he held until his death in 1892. The Diocese of Quebec encompassed the Eastern Townships, Quebec City, and the remaining eastern part of the province, including the Lower North Shore. Photo: William Notman. McCord Museum, I-6366.1.

church elders had been hard at work ever since rebuilding the roof and walls, but progress was slow. The new church was dedicated on February 6, 1867, by James William Williams, Bishop of the Diocese of Quebec. As Williams noted in his journal, St. George's Anglican Church, Drummondville, was "far superior to the one that was burnt," being "well built, good windows, no debt, funds raised ¾ by congregation" (Diocese of Quebec).

Ordination to the Priesthood

The next step for Allnatt was to be ordained a priest. Before leaving for a trip to England, Bishop Williams had authorized all candidates for the priesthood in his diocese to be ordained by Francis Fulford, Bishop of the Montreal Diocese. Williams then travelled to London in order to secure more funding for the diocese from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, answering their complaints that they had not been receiving the quarterly reports from

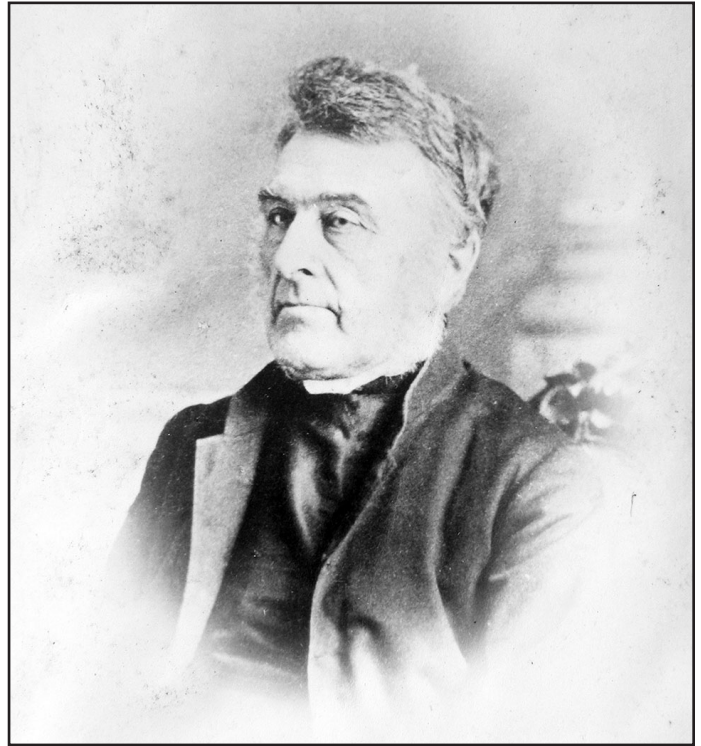


St. George's Anglican Church, Drummondville, c.1910. This church was completed by the beginning of 1867 while Allnatt was the rector. It replaced the original church, which had burned five years earlier. McCord Museum, MP-0000.1123.10.

Canada, containing statistical information about the success of the Anglican Church there (Diocese of Quebec). It is from these reports that we have derived much of our knowledge about Anglican missionary work in Canada.

For the ordination of priests in the Eastern Townships, Bishop Fulford planned for a ceremony to take place at St. Paul's Anglican Church, Potton (Mansonville today). He chose the location on the suggestion of its rector, Reverend John Godden, who had said "that it would be attended with excellent effect on the people's minds, now beginning to understand and appreciate the services" (*Mission Field*, 1865, 109). It had been Williams' hope that such a service could perhaps influence or at least leave a positive impression on the large number of respectable Anglicans in the Eastern Townships who, while un-faillingly polite and courteous to local missionaries, seemed quite indifferent to religion itself, claiming no religious feeling in much the same way they might express lack of interest in politics (*Mission Field*, 1878, 70).

Fulford left Montreal with his entourage on March 9, 1865, taking a train on the Stanstead, Shefford and Chambly Railroad and disembarking at the end of the afternoon at the station in Waterloo. The group then travelled by sleigh for the second half of their journey, bundled up in blankets and mittens. Visibility was terrible and neither earth nor sky could be seen due to blustery winds and the thick snow that fell without cease. Discouraged by the stormy weather, the sleigh driver told his passengers that it had been the worst winter he had ever seen; there had been many heavy snowfalls since Christmas, without a single period of rain (*Mission Field*, 1865, 111). It took the



Francis Fulford was Anglican Bishop of Montreal from 1850 to his death in 1868. Photo: William Notman Studio. McCord Museum, I-34141.0.1.

party two days to get to Mansonville, where four candidates for the priesthood awaited them – including Francis John B. Allnatt, who had travelled the 140 kilometres from Drummondville to Mansonville partly on snowshoes and partly by sleigh.

On Sunday, March 12, the high winds of the previous night had blocked the roads and made them impassable, so the huge crowd of the faithful hoped for by Reverend Godden did not turn up, and there was almost no one present at all. The ordination service went ahead anyway, with much pomp and ceremony: hymns were sung, accompanied by an eleven-year-old girl on the harmonium (*Mission Field*, 1865, 112).

Convalescence in England

Allnatt cared for his parishioners' material welfare as well as their spiritual needs, and he was concerned about the miserable condition of their lives. Some of the subsistence farmers could not meet their family's basic requirements, while the workers at the Drummondville Bark Extract Company, the region's main employer, faced losing their jobs if the company went bankrupt. St. George's congregation had shrunk by 25 per cent over the previous decade. Despite all this, the young priest remained dedicated and carried out his regular duties of preaching, visiting schools, and performing marriages, burials and baptisms.

The amount of work led him to overexert himself, and it soon took a toll on his health. A few of his friends launched a collection for him, raising a total of \$164 – enough to pay for his return passage to England for a period of convalescence.



The Baptist church in Mansonville, built in 1847-1848, was sold to the Church of England in 1856. This photo shows the church as Allnatt would have known it. In 1902, this building was demolished and replaced by the current St. Paul's Anglican Church. La Vie dans Potton: patrimoinepotton.org.



From Portland, Maine, he crossed the Atlantic on the *North American*, docking at Liverpool on December 24, 1869. From there, he went directly to join his family at Grinsdale, where his father had recently been named rector of the parish of St. Kentigern (Church Society, 1869, 42).

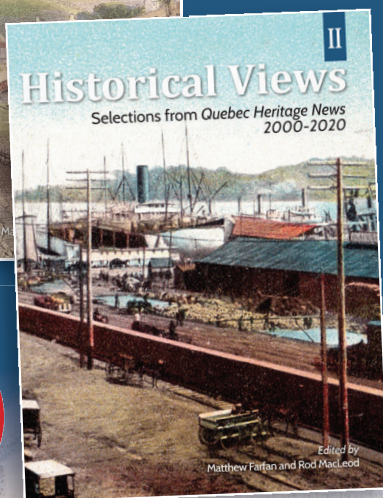
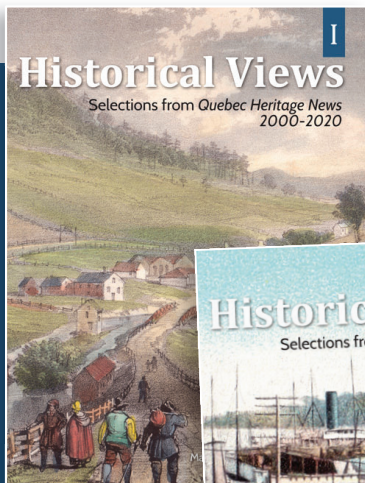
Upon his return to Canada, Allnatt was now ready for his mission to serve the Anglican fishing families on the Lower North Shore.



The missionary's key tool: a little box containing a compact chalice with its cover. This one is inscribed: "M.H. Rev. F.J.B. Allnatt on his leaving for LABRADOR from his Churchwarden, Drummondville, 1872. Collection of St. Mark's Chapel, Bishop's University.

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A MISSIONARY ON THE LOWER NORTH SHORE, 1872-1874

Map of the Lower North Shore

Note that, in the nineteenth century, this coastal area was referred to as “Canadian Labrador” or simply “Labrador.” The term applied to the northern shore of the St. Lawrence River stretching from Kegaska (about 60 kilometres east of Natashquan) to Blanc-Sablon. After Newfoundland became part of Canada in 1949, “Labrador” came to refer only to the territory to the north of this 400-kilometre-long stretch of coastline. The coast known to Reverend Allnatt and his contemporaries as “Labrador” was sparsely populated by people living exclusively in fishing communities (Belvin, 3-5).

Map prepared by Yolande Allard and drawn by Michel Bouchard.

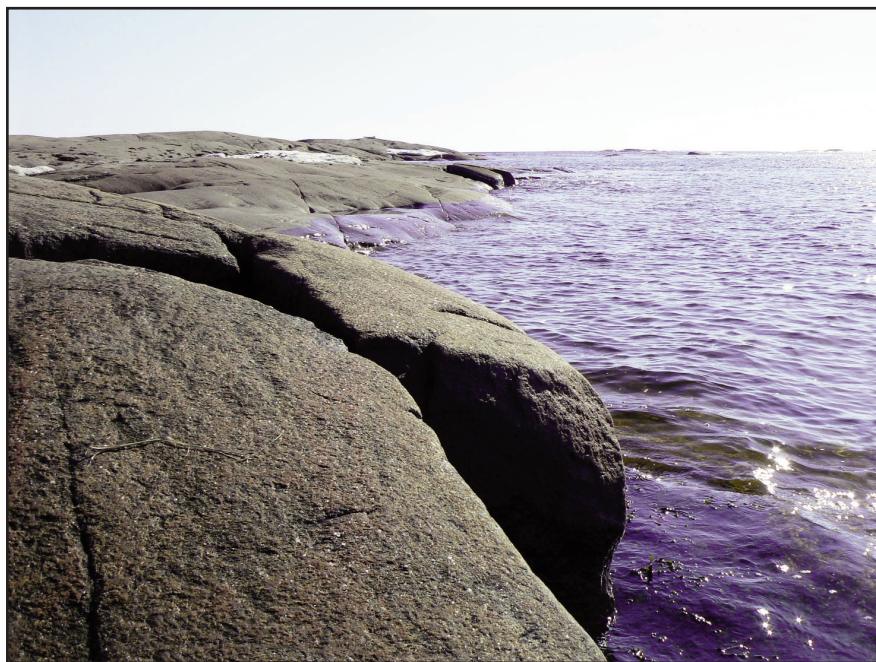
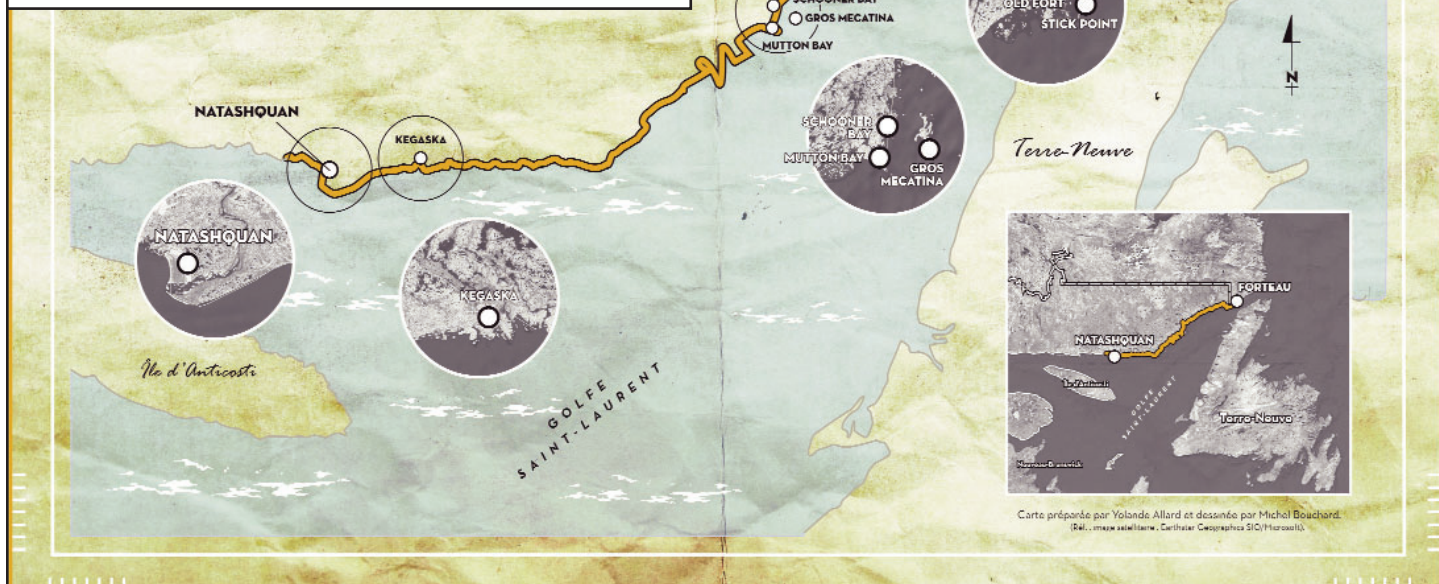


Photo courtesy of Yolande Allard.

A Challenging Frontier

In August 1872, a schooner carried Allnatt to his mission on the Lower North Shore (or, as he referred to it, “Labrador”). As he gazed out he was struck by its unusual landscape:

The coast of Labrador presents an aspect of the most utter desolation which the mind can conceive. Bare rugged hills, for the most part devoid of all vegetation with the exception of a scanty clothing of moss, there and there a tangle of dwarf bushes in the hollows and glens – no trees except in some instances, and at wide intervals – bold craggy cliffs and steep precipices – this is the unvarying character of the landscape (SPG, 1873).

Missionaries of various denominations had been present in this inhospitable territory for over a century. The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate had claimed exclusive rights to evangelize the Innu since 1844. The Moravian Church



school close by the Hudson's Bay Company trading post that had recently been established at the mouth of the St. Augustine River (Belvin, 95; Mackenzie, 1868, 115).

The next Anglican missionary to the area was James Hepburn, who began his first term of service on the Lower North Shore at the beginning of the summer of 1870, only a few weeks after being ordained to the diaconate. Despite his limited experience working under hostile conditions, he revealed himself to be of a prudent nature: "I never failed to reach a house of shelter for the night," he wrote. He was also frank about how comforted he felt by a visit from the bishop and his driver, Roe: "After being among strangers for more than nine months, and hearing little news from abroad, the sight of two familiar faces did me much good, and the impression made upon me lasted through the rest of the year" (Church Society, 1872, 64-65).

At the southern extremity of Stick Point lies the tomb of Martha Goddard, who died on the island at the age of 15. Photo: Louise Abbott.

had set up missions for the Inuit at Nain, Okkak, Hopedale, Hebron, Zohar, and Ramah. American Congregationalist Charles Carroll Carpenter had established a mission at Esquimaux River (also known as St. Paul's River). The Presbyterian College in Halifax would send its theological students on missions along the coast during the summer months; some would repeat their visit the following summer (Grenfell, 32-35; Arnaud, 6-8; Belvin, 75; Charest, *Des Tentés*, 488; Carpenter, 7-13).

Anglican clergy had been serving on the Lower North Shore since 1862. From Old Fort, Deacon Frederick John Cookesley travelled to serve local fishermen as well as a floating population of sailors who had been hired by ship owners in Newfoundland and the Channel Islands. The daunting challenges of Cookesley's work, along with the lack of available medical care, took an ultimate toll on his health. "His constitution succumbed to the severity of the climate," Bishop Williams wrote. "After having vainly endeavored to recover strength in a Mission near Quebec he went home to England to die" (*Mission Field*, 1891, 456).

Richard Wainwright was 34 years old and accompanied by his wife and two daughters when he arrived to replace Cookesley. After five years of continuous travel along the coast, he became determined to create a base for his immense parish at St. Augustine, where he would move with his family. Wainwright obtained permission to build a chapel and a



Tombstone of Martha Goddard, 2022. Martha, the second child of Lucy Ann Dukes and John Goddard, was buried at Stick Point in November 1879. Her epitaph reads:

*Weep not for me my parents dear
But praise the God who brought me here.
Live Good Lives while you are living
And we shall meet again in Heaven.*

Photo: Louise Abbott.

Allnatt and Hepburn must have crossed paths somewhere along the St. Lawrence in the summer of 1872, with the former sailing out towards the forbidding landscape of the Lower North Shore, and the latter sailing up the great river to be welcomed by the parishioners of St. George's in Drummondville.

The Goddard Family of Stick Point

Like his predecessors, and indeed like Anglican bishops on official visits over the years, Allnatt lived with the Goddard family (*Mission Field*, 1891, 459). The family traced their ancestry back to John Goddard, who had emigrated from Salisbury, England, with the intention of purchasing and exploiting a post for salmon fishing and seal hunting. His nephew, John Jr., married Lucy Ann Dukes, who was of Inuit

ancestry. The couple had ten children in under 20 years – five boys and five girls.

Besides her regular household chores and duties, Lucy Ann could hunt seals without using a net, a skill she had learned from her maternal grandmother, Jenny Menouque. Establishing herself with a rifle in a prone position on a cliff above an inlet of



Seal hunting on the ice, Little Whale River, Quebec, 1872.
Photo: James Laurence Cotter. McCord Museum,
MP-0000.291.6.

moderate depth, she would call harbour seals into the inlet by imitating their growl. Because seals sink when shot, she would cajole them into comparatively shallow waters before shooting them. The first seal killed (weighing 150 to 250 pounds) she would prop up on the top of the cliff to serve as a decoy for others and to shield herself from view. Lucy Ann was also an expert in skinning seals (Charest, “Les Inuit,” 5-35).

Jenny Menouque left a strong impression on all those she met: “The grandmother is a very copper colored Indian,” wrote one visitor, “who thinks nothing, even now at her advanced age [75], of taking the boat and gun and spending a few hours shooting birds when the larder is getting low” (Taylor). Or, as Bishop Williams noted in a journal entry in August 1871: “She is a fine woman, full of intelligence and in the possession of all her faculties, able to thread a fine needle without spectacles as we witnessed – or to go off for a holiday or a fishing expedition by herself in a canoe” (Mackenzie, 1872, 22).

The Annual Summer Migration

A few months before Allnatt’s arrival, the Goddard family had relocated to their “offshore” summer house on the island of Stick Point. They transported their stove and foodstuffs before the spring ice breakup on sleds pulled by their dogs. They stored wood for the stove, as well as salt, gear, and fish barrels, in a shed sturdy enough to withstand the frequent southwesterly gales.

During the summer months, John Goddard Jr. and his hired hands fished salmon from the shore, as the salmon returned to the river to spawn. They also hunted seals, using nets that went down 40 to 80 fathoms. Seals were vital to their survival: their oil was used to light lamps, their pelts were used for clothing, and their

flesh fed both the family and the dogs. Oil fetched 50 cents per gallon, while cleaned pelts could be sold for \$1.25 each (Kennedy, 177).

Cod was the most lucrative of the fisheries. The season was short and the effort was grueling. “The people have to work not only from morning to night, daylight till dark, but literally from dark till dark,” Allnatt wrote. “During the busy season, three hours’ sleep at night is considered a fair allowance” (Mackenzie, 1874, 63). Goddard and five other fishermen would be out before sunrise, hoping for an abundant catch, but they would not turn up their noses if mackerel and herring also got caught in their nets. Back on the island, four hired men worked to extract the cod liver oil, and to salt and lay the fish to dry on the rocky beaches (Charest, email).

Meanwhile, Lucy Ann and the children worked in the garden, growing turnips, cabbages and potatoes in depressions between rocks. To add variety to their diet, they gathered seagull eggs and picked bakeapple and blackberries from the mossy ground by the basketful (Bélanger, 73; Belvin, 71).

Steady as She Goes

Allnatt spent the last few weeks of the summer of 1872 on his first official visits around the parish. He stopped at about twenty different permanent fishing posts and he visited the bays of Brador and Blanc-Sablou, where quite a number of ships had cast anchor in the

spring. He had his own sailing vessel, like other Anglican missionaries before him. This was a great luxury and it gave him an advantage over missionaries of other denominations, who had to time their visits to the schedule of the commercial schooners. Because of this, it was not uncommon for missionaries to have to prolong a visit, or to cut one short, or to miss a visit altogether (Charest, *Des Tentés*, 499).

The first “church yacht” Allnatt had to contend with, the *Etna*, was a two-masted American fishing barge that could be rowed by two men if necessary. The boat had been designed for work – it was sturdy and seaworthy, but also old and very worn down. After making the rounds that first summer,

before even finding another boat to replace it, Allnatt sold the *Etna* to the highest bidder (Franck, emails; Mackenzie, 1873).

Before the pack ice had completely disappeared in the late spring of 1873, Allnatt bought the *Aurora*, which was a type of sailing boat often used by lighthouse keepers and pilots for making short crossings. The limited draught of this new church yacht made traveling between islands and into small coves and bays much easier. Although it was only six or seven metres long, the *Aurora* had a tiny cabin – a space that Allnatt greatly appreciated for the moments of privacy it afforded him:



Cod fishing on a small scale was practiced on the Lower North Shore in the late nineteenth century. Archives and Special Collections (Coll. 137 24.02.001), Queen Elizabeth II Library, Memorial University, St. John’s, Newfoundland and Labrador.



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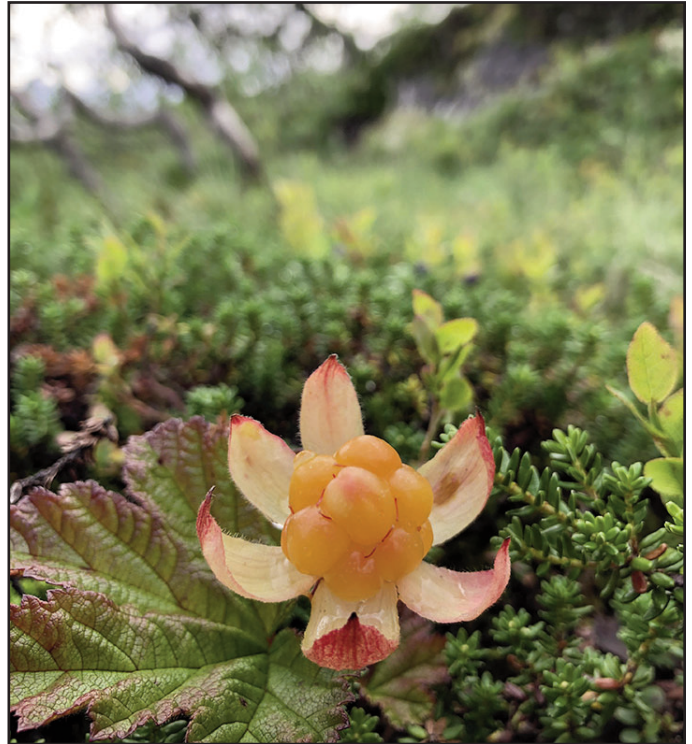


The Goddard family established their fishing post at Stick Point, building a house and a shed at the northern end of the island. Here, they stored their equipment, as well as barrels of salt, fish, seal oil, and furs. They would trade their surplus with the various merchants who would sail to the coast to exchange goods – flour, clothing, molasses, salt, gunpowder, matches, and tools. A century and a half later, Stick Point is still a favourite destination for members of the Goddard family. Photo: Niels Jensen.

There is just room in the cabin for two small berths, and between them a span where I can sit on the floor (my head not quite touching the deck above). I read by the light of my hanging lamp. An evening of this sort is a little holiday to me, for when in the houses of my flock it is almost impossible for me to have any time to myself... In the stormy weather we have encountered this summer, which has often forced us to take refuge in uninhabited harbours, we should often have passed comfortless nights had it not been for this... Then thus weatherbound, we go ashore and make a fire to warm ourselves and to cook our meals; and retire for the night to the boat (Mackenzie, 1874, 63-64).



Iris, a yacht sailing on the St. Lawrence River, c.1900. It was similar to *Aurora*, the sailboat used by Allnatt on the Lower North Shore in the summer of 1873. Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, Fonds Hethrington, 03Q, E6, S8, SS6, P69.



“Bakeapple,” the name for the fruit of *Rubus chamaemorus*, is also known as “cloudberry” and “la chicoutai” in French. It is a shrub that grows in boggy or peat moss soils. The fruit turns from red to yellowish-orange when ripe. *Rubus chamaemorus*, Norway, 2020. Photo: Moravice.

The *Aurora* was more comfortable and spacious than the *Etna*, but it was difficult to manoeuvre whenever there were strong winds, so an experienced captain had to be at the helm at all times. Allnatt thought that the boat’s sails were lopsided, which he said made the vessel somewhat unpredictable. Yet he kept putting off the work of shortening the masts and narrowing the sails, because

she sails so beautifully when the winds are not too heavy, that I have not had the heart to do it yet. We are so much accustomed now to outsail everything else, that we should not like to eat humble pie and drop astern of other vessels. At present we beat even large schooners, overtaking, passing, and leaving them behind with the greatest ease (Mackenzie, 1874, 63-65).

At the end of the 1873 season, Allnatt entrusted his boat to two experienced sailors, who planned to take it to Gros Mecantina (Grosse-Ile) so it could be repaired by Sam Gomecan, known to be the most skillful shipwright in the area.

The crew left Schooner Bay on November 27, and made a three-day detour to Red Bay. The weather was fair on November 30 when they set sail again, but the *Aurora* did not arrive at its destination.

The following spring a few identifiable scraps were washed up on the shore of the island. Why the *Aurora* sank remains a mystery. (Mackenzie, 1974, 138; Mission Field, 1874, 241.)

The Winter House

Bitter conditions made life unbearable during the winters on the islands along the coast. Once the fishery was over for the season, the reverse migration began, and families moved back for the long winter to the little hamlets on the mainland, where their homes were protected from the prevailing winds and located close to the rare sources of wood. Year in, year out, each family would cut about thirty cords of spruce, fir and birch, which they loaded onto sleds to be pulled back home by their dogs. As they travelled home with the firewood, they would snare rabbits, shoot partridge, and check trap lines for mink, beaver, fox, and wolf.

On a morning in October, before the water turned to ice, the members of the Goddard family left their summer fishing camp at Stick Point to move into their winter house at St. Augustine. They made the 90-kilometre journey on a barge wide open to the wind. The barge groaned with all the household effects they had brought over to the island the previous spring, as well as their summer's catch, various provisions, and the sled dogs, who had spent the summer, bored and inactive, fighting amongst themselves.

The Goddard's winter house had two storeys; a ladder gave access to the attic through a hole cut through the attic floor. The main floor was furnished with a table, some deep-backed chairs, a cupboard and a sideboard for a basin and soap. In the middle of the large room stood a big two-tiered cast iron stove. At the back, a small room for the parents had been sectioned off. The house had neither basement nor foundation, and was surrounded by a collection of rudimentary buildings, namely a latrine and an all-purpose shed (Buissières, 168; Frenette, 248). No less than ten people lived together in this house: John Goddard (30 years old), Lucy Ann (29), her grandmother Jenny (in her seventies), a servant, five children all under 10 years of age, and Allnatt.

Living in such close quarters increased the risk of spreading infectious diseases and made even the most basic hygiene measures difficult to apply. The Goddard Family faced a terrible ordeal shortly after their return to St. Augustine.

Typhoid Fever

In his letter of January 1873, Allnatt shared the anxiety he felt about the pandemic of typhoid fever that had been running rampant along the coast since the previous autumn. Indeed, the surviving four pages of his letter are overwhelmingly devoted to the pandemic.

The entire household became ill, one after the other – everyone except the grandmother. “At one time five of us were laid up all at once, the father and the mother included,” Allnatt wrote to Mrs. Millar. There was no escaping the contagion, as the sickest members of the family lay day and night beside the large cook stove, which also served to heat the small and cramped house (Mackenzie, 1873, 81; Goulet, 22).

I think I told you about the low fever which made its appearance on the coast last autumn. I was in hopes that the approach of winter would have stopped it, but such was not the case. I don't know whether it was owing to my visits in

the sick houses or the frequent coming and going of people from the sick houses, but the Goddard family was among the first attacked by it.

The young clergyman made himself useful by playing a variety of roles, including chaplain, nurse, and housekeeper. He felt confident in his abilities at first, despite the suffering and disorder that surrounded him.

I had to see about having meals at proper times, having food, such as it were, prepared for the sick, bearing the case of each one separately, in my mind, so as to see to their being provided with food at proper intervals. I had to see about the treatment of each case with such remedies as happened to be in the house. I had to urge forward as much as possible the operations of washing and changing the scanty supply of clothes and bed linen. [We had] no doctor... no medicine, no nurse, no proper food for sick people – no friend or neighbour to come in and give assistance (we know a neighbour or two but they didn't help us) – and almost worst of all, hardly any means of getting clothes and bed linen washed and changed... And with all this I had to keep up a cheerful countenance and try to restore the drooping spirits of the other sufferers, none of whom had the least idea of attempting any such thing they themselves.

On numerous occasions, he found himself having to improvise, not realizing until then the wide range of tasks involved in basic housekeeping.

The state of things would have been gloomy and depressing enough under the best of circumstances – in a good large house, and with all the helps and appliances of civilization... For though a large house [the Goddards'] for this coast, it would be small anywhere else.

When he too eventually fell ill, Allnatt believed he was facing his final hours:

And yet then some two (I think) days during which I thought I was going to die – I was sinking so fast. On the first of these I was much troubled by the thought that all my papers and concerns were in a compound state, and that I had not been able to give any account of my circumstances and feelings to my friends at home, and to you in Drummondville. And I determined by the next day to write a few letters. But next day my hand was too weak, and I could not set about it. I was growing weak very fast, not eating nor inclined to eat. I never kept any food... As I kept growing weaker, I began to think that I must make an effort for myself or otherwise sink or die.

Almost worse, he felt alone, and abandoned by his hosts, who had recovered:

The bed linen I lay on I knew to be, if I may say so, soaked in fever; I was unable to get them changed... I can just remember, before I got to this point, creeping to the stove and sitting down beside it, doing something with some oatmeal and a frying pan, with the vague idea I believe of making gruel, as I

could not get anyone else to do it, at any rate my attempt was an utter failure... But at this point a sense of desolation – of being utterly uncared for – came over me.

Allnatt finally asked for someone to prepare a bowl of gruel for him to eat, which John Goddard hastened to do. “It had evidently never struck him before,” Allnatt wrote. “It seemed altogether a new idea to him that I might possibly need assistance as well as render it.”

Advance or Die

Barely recovered from his sickness, Allnatt decided to undertake a first winter tour to visit his parishioners. He set out first on snowshoes, which made travelling over the hills covered in thick blankets of snow possible. His backpack was stuffed with prayer books, medicines, and a change of clothes. The distances he covered were relatively short compared to the effort required to cover them during the limited number of daylight hours. Despite these challenges, he could always look forward to a warm welcome wherever he went.

To survive in the harsh climate, travelers wore clothing made of sealskin: overalls, a coat, mittens, a hat with visor, and boots. A person could survive dressed like this no matter how cold the temperature dropped, as long as they could see their sled dogs running ahead of them. From time to time, however, and in particular circumstances, dogs could abandon their masters, or humans and dogs could become separated.

This happened to Allnatt in the archipelago of St. Paul’s River, when he set out one day with a guide, Joseph Wellman. Wellman was of English ancestry. His first marriage was to Rosanna Chalker of Salmon Bay; the couple had four children. His second marriage was to Naomi Penny of Forteau, with whom he had a son called Benjamin. In July 1877, both Joseph and his children were confirmed into the Anglican Church by Bishop Williams. It was on that occasion that Williams heard the story of Allnatt’s winter adventure, directly from Wellman.

Allnatt and Wellman were convinced that they could cover a distance of 30 kilometres in a day. However, in the midst of a thick blizzard, the dogs could barely advance, so the two men had to get off the sleds and walk. Increasingly blinded by the snow, they lost sight of their dogs, who disappeared into the storm. Allnatt and Wellman decided to turn back and retrace their steps, hoping to find a place to take refuge from the storm. The experienced guide noticed that the clergyman was running dangerously low on energy, even though Allnatt pleaded with Wellman to be patient with him. “I am sorry for you,” Wellman said (as recounted by Bishop Williams). “I am used to this; I can tramp and keep life in me till the storm is over but your time is come.” Allnatt said: “No, no... I can walk yet.” With huge effort,

the clergyman continued to put one foot in front of the other. Then, in a stroke of luck, the guide spotted a landmark he recognized.

“Thank God,” he said, “I now know where I am. I can bring you to a house.” Then the strength, born not of the body but the spirit, which in the time of danger had kept Mr. Allnatt up, gave way; and he could scarcely move one foot after the other. The help Mr. Wellman could give was not sufficient; and he said, “Mr. Allnatt, if you will promise me not to sit down, I will go on and get help.” Reluctantly Mr. Allnatt did promise; and scarcely able to move, he continued to drag himself on. This painful effort, by God’s blessing, saved his life. Had he stopped, he would soon have been asleep – and once asleep he would have been frozen as solid as a log (Mission Field, 1878, 65-66).

Bishop Williams was deeply impressed by the tale. “In Mr. Allnatt, who volunteered to relieve,” he wrote, “we had a man whose devotedness to his work was unsurpassed. His bodily strength was not equal to that of Mr. Hepburn, but he, too, had a spirit that never quailed.” Williams continued by noting a reminder of the perils faced by missionaries on the Lower North Shore, and how Reverend Allnatt seemed to take them in stride:

He has the usual perils of the sea to encounter in open boat along 250 miles of rocky coast in the summer and the chance of being lost in a snowstorm in the winter... Mr. Allnatt was brought in and restored. He is not the man to talk of this thing. And I should have known little about them had I not visited the scene and learned the story of the adventure where it happened (Mission Field, 1878, 65-66).



Dog sled on ice, c.1910.

High winds between the islands and the coast clear much of the surface snow, creating open roads for dog sleds, which can travel up to 100 kilometres a day. Photo: William Oliver Kennedy Ross. McCord Museum, MP-1986.9.5.27.

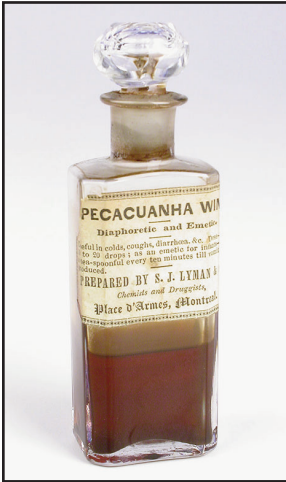
As soon as he had caught his breath again, Allnatt resumed his journey towards Forteau, a fishing station that belonged to the Diocese of Newfoundland but was served by the missionary from the Quebec Diocese. From Forteau, Allnatt doubled back to meet his Anglican parishioners, travelling all the way to Natashquan. All in all, he travelled 1,000 kilometres on his tour of the parish in the winter of 1873

(Church Society, 1873).

The Bush Doctor

The clinical training Allnatt had received in England allowed him to serve as the closest thing his parishioners had to a doctor. His practice was open to anyone who asked for help, regardless of their faith. He saved more than one life thanks to the medicines in his kit.

Last Sunday an Indian came who had walked out about thirty miles from the interior that morning to get some medicine for



Ipecacuanha was extracted from a flowering plant of the family Rubiaceae. This bottle of “Ipecacuanha wine” was prepared by nineteenth-century chemist and druggist S. J. Lyman of Place d’Armes, Montreal. The drug was a “diaphoretic and emetic” and was “useful in colds, coughs, diarrhea, etc.” McCord Museum, M21681.25.

his mother then laid up with rheumatism in their wigwam. I should not have been able to make out what he said, as he spoke nei-

ther English nor French, only fortunately a young man was there who could speak Indian. So we gave the poor fellow his dinner and a plentiful supply of medicine and lineament and away he started for the wigwam again. We had some difficulty in making him understand the directions. Even when we thought that they had been impressed upon him in the clearest manner, we luckily discovered in time that he was under the impression that the paper was to be taken with the powder it enclosed (Mission Field, 1874, 242-243).

Two Parishes for the Lower North Shore?

Newfoundlanders had been arriving on the Lower North Shore in large numbers since the early 1870s to get away from commercial merchants or to get closer to areas considered more promising. They worked as coastal fishermen (sedentary) as opposed to offshore fishermen who needed lots of gear and larger sailboats (Duhaime, 31; Charest, “Le peuplement,” 59).

With the significant rise of the number of Anglican families, Reverend Allnatt proposed to divide the mission of St. Augustine into two separate parishes: one in the east with St. Paul’s River as its base, and the other in the west at Schooner Bay. A chapel, a presbytery, and a school would be built in each parish. The teacher would live at the school, helped by the girls with housekeeping, and by the boys with splitting wood and fetching water. The project, as Allnatt saw it, would “be conducted on such an economical plan as to entail, very little more expense upon the parents than that of their children’s maintenance at home. Each family will thus have the opportunity of sending one or more of its members to school for at any rate a few months in the year.” The teacher would bring school books, an iron bedstead, a mattress, linen, and a chair or two. Part of his salary would be paid by the government, and the other part would come from external donations (Church Society, 1873, 19; Mackenzie, 1873, 82).

The eastern parish of St. Paul’s River (the area from Dog Island to Blanc-Sablon) included more than a third of the 70 families who had been counted along the entire Lower North Shore. At the outset, the creation of this parish seemed to be the more straightforward of the two, since the Congregationalists were planning to leave and would sell their various buildings to the Anglicans at a bargain. However, this deal caused a general outcry



Medicine chest manufactured in the late nineteenth century by British medical supplies dealer Henry Gilbertson, along with a bottle of “Dwight’s Remedy for Cholera, Diarrhea, etc.” McCord Museum, M21681.21.

and the Congregationalists had to backtrack at the last minute (Mackenzie, 1873, 82). At once disappointed and puzzled by this development, Allnatt turned his immediate efforts instead to creating the parish at Schooner Bay in the west, where many of Mutton Bay’s fishing families took refuge for the winter.

At the end of the 1873 fishing season, the chapel of St. Augustine was taken apart and brought to Schooner Bay in pieces. However, the workers who were supposed to rebuild it abandoned the project for the year, because they believed that Reverend Allnatt and the teacher, Samuel Russel Butler, would never arrive this late in the autumn. When the two men did indeed arrive, on November 17, they had to hide their embarrassment upon seeing that work on the chapel had not begun. For temporary shelter, they had to settle for a miserable little hut lent to them by the Hudson’s Bay Company’s agent while they worked hard to put up the chapel with the help of a few local people. The small chapel, measuring only about five by seven metres, also served in the short term as school, sleeping quarters, refectory, and kitchen. Even though all the work had not yet been completed, the whole community gathered on Sunday, November 23, 1873, for “our first regular service.” Allnatt proposed “to choose as our patron St. Clement, to whom the day is dedicated” (Church Society, 1874, 71).

“Open House to All Comers”

Only two months after the arrival of the reverend and the schoolteacher, St. Clement’s mission was already buzzing with activity. Allnatt’s letter to the bishop brimmed with enthusiasm. The chapel regularly received about ten families, he wrote, such as the Robertsons, the Browns, and the Gallichans, who traveled up to 10 kilometres by snowshoe or komatik (sled) to attend one of the three Sunday services and the special holy days. During the week, local parishioners attended the evening services, which on

Wednesdays and Fridays were followed by sermons (Mackenzie, 1874, 138). Forty children were registered at the school, although only about half that number attended regularly. The attendance of the younger children depended on the weather, while that of the older children on whether they were required to help out at home. In the evenings, Butler, the teacher, met with about ten adults who were determined to learn to read, write, and do arithmetic.

Allnatt was slightly less enthusiastic in his letter to Bishop Williams when he described the building used for chapel and school:

The little Mission-cell of St. Clement's is a poor shed – walls, roof and floor full of cracks and chinks – very cold: my own room not larger than a stateroom on board ship, my bed a bag of shavings... my little room serving the additional purpose of surgery and consulting room.

When he took over as reverend in the fall of 1874, James Hepburn confirmed just how rustic the little mission was:

It is a mystery to me how he [Allnatt] and Mr. Butler, the schoolmaster, succeeded in passing the winter. I am not delicate in the least but sleeping in it for a fortnight from the middle of October, gave me such a cold that it required all my resolution to fight against it (Church Society, 1875, 60-61; Mission Field, 1874, 240-241).

Despite all this, Allnatt ended his letter to Bishop Williams on a positive note:

It is a great comfort to have a home to return to, although it is a homely one... Our daily services, schools, classes, visitors for advice, medical and otherwise, take up our time pleasantly, and I hope, usefully... According to the univer-

sal custom of the coast, we keep open house to all comers, every wayfarer is made welcome to a seat by the stove, a place at the table, and a part of the boys' bed (Mission Field, 1874, 240-241).

A Life of Ups and Downs

A missionary heading to the Lower North Shore for the first time could not imagine the full weight of the isolation that awaited him, nor could he truly understand what it was like to live for eight months at a stretch on a rugged coast without any communication from the outside world. Communication only opened up during the cool and brief summer with the arrival of commercial sailboats. Furthermore, whenever he ventured out anywhere at all, he was utterly dependent on a competent guide or an experienced pilot to help him cover over 3,000 kilometres of terrain per year (one 1,300 kilometre tour in the winter, and two summer tours of about 900 kilometres each), whether through blizzards and storms or gales of wind and rain. This was without mentioning the summers of being hounded by hordes of black flies and armies of mosquitoes. Reverend Hepburn later bore witness to this situation in his own reports to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Hoping to fall asleep after a difficult day of work, he would “be kept awake and annoyed by the humming and stinging of mosquitoes” (Church Society, 1871, 64).

The reward for pushing body and soul to the limit was the respect and appreciation of the faithful of this remote part of the world: “Night after night, where the Missionary is, all will assemble, at least all who can, to listen and to learn, and to pray,” Allnatt wrote. He also stated that his “missionary work on the Labrador coast” where he ministered “to the simple fisherfolk,” were “two of the happiest years of his life” (Wood, 634; Abbott-Smith, 51; Mission Field, 1878, 70).

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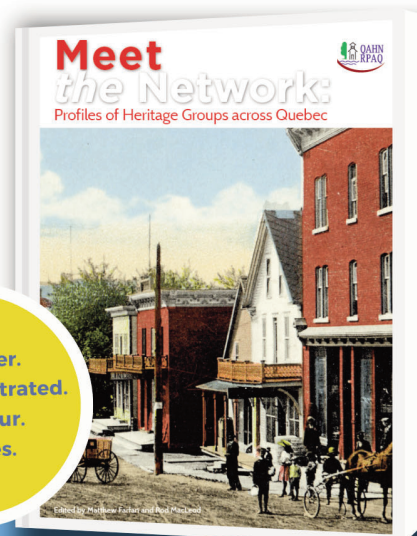
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A DEDICATED PRIEST AND ACADEMIC, 1874–1920

Marriage

On Tuesday, November 17, 1874, not long after his return to Drummondville, Allnatt got married. He was 33 years of age and his bride, Jane Henrietta Robins, was 46. Jane was the widow of Ignace Gill, who had died a decade earlier. Gill was a merchant in Saint-Thomas-de-Pierreville, a justice of the peace, president of the Agricultural Society, mayor and elected representative of Yamaska; he was also a profoundly religious and charitable man (Charland). Jane's father, William George Robins, was a retired officer of the Swiss de Meuron regiment; he had participated in the founding of Drummondville and later served as registrar for Drummondville Township (Vallée, *Les Volontaires*, 68, and *La colonie*, 176-77).

A contemporary said that Jane Henrietta Robins was known for her hospitality and her cheerfulness; the sound of her laughter was a tonic for all who knew her. She was at her best when surrounded by family, friends, and the colleagues of her husband. She was also much appreciated for her charitable work: "She was a great favorite throughout the parish, for she never wearied of tending to the sick and poor... She was leader in all parish work" (*Sherbrooke Daily Record*, March 2, 1917).

Jane Henrietta Robins was "blessed with a splendid physique," and she "reveled in nature. She was at home and delighted in wandering through the fields and woods. She was an expert with her canoe on the river." Despite this, her health was fragile and she was bedridden on many occasions before her death in February 1917, when she was 89 years old.

Jane's only child was a daughter, from her former marriage. Catherine Gill, known as "Minnie," invested her energy into caring lovingly for her mother and her stepfather. Art historian Monique Nadeau-Saumier researched the life and work of Minnie Gill, and found that

she was a woman of many talents – a painter, musician, teacher, and actress – and with her generosity and sense of whimsy, she transformed a milieu that could be conservative and strict, and at times even somewhat rigid... She played all these roles fully and without compromise, breathing her love of life into all she did" (Nadeau-Saumier, 6).



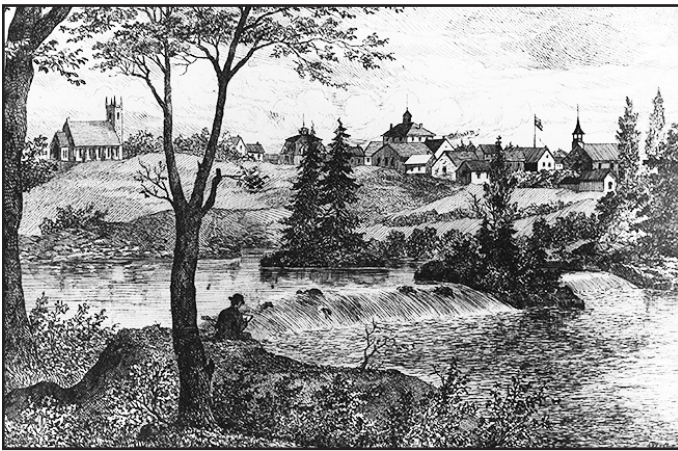
Jane Henrietta Robins, wearing the traditional Victorian widow's cap or coif, an item made with great skill using expensive materials. Jane Henrietta would have worn the cap even after her marriage to Francis John Allnatt. Photo courtesy of the Millward-Cruikshank family collection, Album D-5.

Mary Catherine ("Minnie") Gill, the only child of Jane Henrietta Robins, and step-daughter of Francis John Allnatt. Minnie had been baptized in the Roman Catholic faith of her father, Ignace Gill, but at some point converted to the Church of England. She is shown here at 21, in 1881, wearing a cross. Photo: Notman & Sandham. McCord Museum, II-65525.1.



A Decade of Service in Drummondville

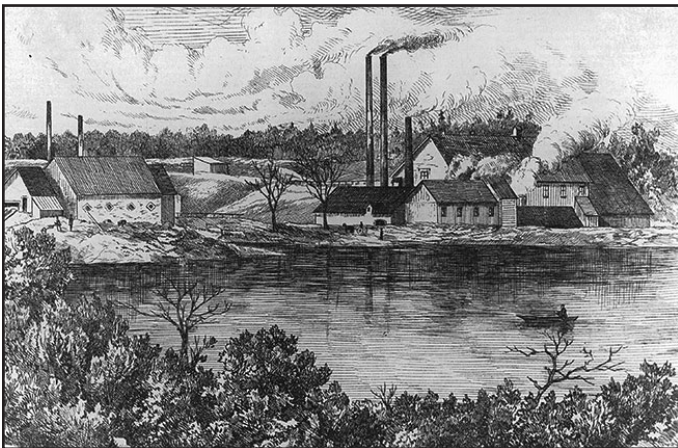
The economy of Drummondville was on the decline when Allnatt returned to St. George's Church in August 1874 after his time on the Lower North Shore. There were only three industries in town: Cooke's Saw Mill, the tannery of the Shaw Brothers, and the McLeish &



Drummondville, c.1875, by "W.S." McCord Museum, MP-0000.1123.8.

Wright Spool Factory. To make matters worse, an epidemic of measles, followed by another of scarlet fever, had taken the lives of one tenth of the town's population, and the outbreak was not over yet. One hundred people died out of the total population of just over 1,000 (Church Society, 1874, 52). It was only in the late 1870s that the foundations for Drummondville's industrial future were laid, with the arrival of the John McDougall & Company ironworks. In the heart of the nascent town, McDougall built two blast furnaces to produce pig iron, which was made from wood and limonite drawn from the neighboring township of Simpson.

St. George's Anglican Church began to welcome new members, including converts from other denominations – Presbyterians, especially. More regular attendance at weekly services meant a healthier cash flow for the parish, and this allowed the congregation to pay what was due the bishopric. It also meant they could begin major repairs to the church, including sealing the stone walls that had been infiltrated by climbing vines. An even more urgent need was to build a decent rectory to replace the drafty old one, which was in such poor condition that the Allnatt family had to spend the winter in a little rented house some distance from the church. Reverend Allnatt was very moved by the generosity of his parishioners, who contributed



The Simpson Tannery and sawmill, Drummondville, c.1875. McCord Museum, MP-0000.1123.9.



The St. George's congregation presented Allnatt with a cane on the occasion of his departure for St. Matthew's parish in Quebec City.

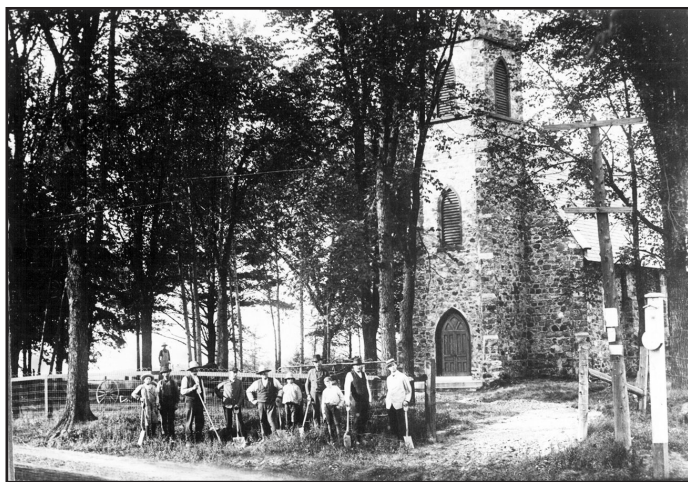
Inscribed on the knob was the following:

PRESENTED
to the
Rev. F.J.B. Allnatt
by the Members of
St George's Church
Drummondville PQ
April 27th 1885

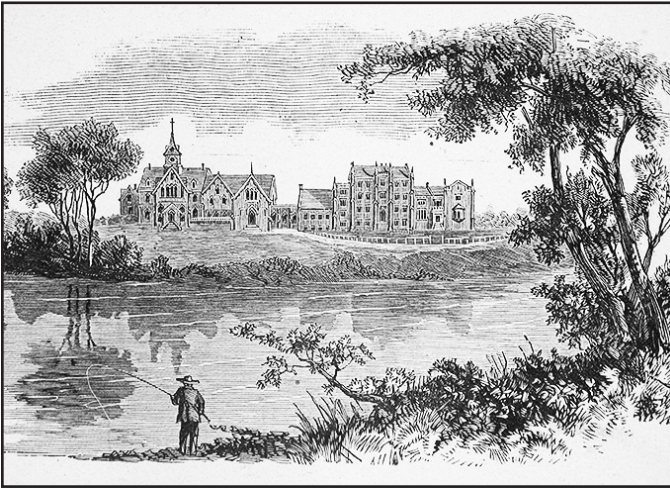
Photo courtesy of Monique Nadeau-Saumier.

however they could, in countless ways and according to their means:

It was a touching sight, when the time came for digging the foundation and cellar, to see the band of volunteers, already tired with their day's work at their different avocations, coming together with spade and shovel for their labour of love and toiling with might and main, by the fading light of the summer evening. The parson was in the



A group of volunteer workers helping to maintain St. George's Church, Drummondville, c.1915, recalling the community effort that had impressed Allnatt in 1880. Photo courtesy of the Société d'histoire de Drummond: collection régionale, IC2.3e195.



Bishop's College was founded in Lennoxville in 1843 as a primarily Anglican institution of higher learning. It gained the status of university in 1853. Image: John Henry Walker. McCord Museum, M930.50.2.38.

midst of them, digging and shoveling with the best (Mission Field, 1880, 110-111).

Even as he began his new family life and carried out his work in Drummondville, Allnatt studied theology at Bishop's College in Lennoxville. He received a Bachelor's of Arts in 1878 and a doctorate a few years later. He was also the author of an exegetical analysis of the New Testament entitled *The Witness of St. Matthew*, a work which received good reviews in both Britain and the United States (*Morning Chronicle*, Sept. 13, 1884; *Daily Evening Mercury*, December 8, 1885; *The Mitre*, 1920).

Dr. Allnatt, Professor and Dean

In May 1885, Reverend Allnatt was named Rector of St. Matthew's Church in Quebec City. His time at the helm of this vibrant parish did not last long, however. In November 1886, Allnatt was asked to stand in at Bishop's College for Professor Henry Roe, who had to take a leave for health reasons. He accepted, stating that he was responding to "a clear call of duty," despite a considerable cut in salary. Allnatt would spend the rest of his life at this venerable institution in Lennoxville.

In those days, Bishop's was a very small establishment, having never had more than 40 students enrolled at a time since its founding in 1843. It was a liberal arts college that included a school to educate theological students who would eventually be ordained to the Church of England in Canada. Soon after Allnatt was hired, a Chair of Pastoral Theology was created; the students enrolled in this program would receive a Bachelor of Arts degree. The most pressing challenge was to enroll new students, because there was much competition from the many different denominations present in the Eastern Townships at the time, each with missionaries who actively criss-crossed the area looking for new recruits and ministers. A further obstacle, noted by Bishop Williams, was that wealthy families rarely encouraged their sons to become men of the cloth (Masters, Millman, Burns, Rose).

Finances at Bishop's College were in a bad state. The poor quality of the food and the neglect of communal spaces led to the circulation of a petition in October 1890 that was signed by almost the entire student body. This outraged the directors of the college, who began to hand out reprimands and to fine the students, even going so far as to expel the two (Waterman and Dibbs) who had been behind the petition. Allnatt, however, felt that the young men should not be disqualified from the priesthood for their part in the student rebellion. He interceded on their behalf with the bishops of their respective dioceses, and both were eventually ordained within a few months of each other in 1892 (Nicholl, 106-9; Dutton, February 1979).

A new building was erected at Bishop's with the financial support of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (sister society to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel). This building was Divinity House, where students and professors (and professors' families) lived together under one roof, in order to build close relationships and to have more opportunities for communal worship. The census of 1891 bears witness to this arrangement: in that year, the residents of Divinity House included Allnatt and his family, eleven students, and eight domestic servants working as either housekeepers or cooks.

In less than five years after his arrival at Bishop's College, Allnatt was named chair of the Harrold Professorship of Divinity. He also became Dean of Divinity and Vice-Principal, a post second only in rank to the principal. Despite these new responsibilities and administrative tasks, Allnatt continued to teach. Every morning, he lectured students on topics ranging from the Hebrew of the Old Testament, to New Testament Greek, to elements of Christian doctrine. He was a distinguished scholar, who could read classics of poetry and prose in their original Greek or Latin versions. He was also very well versed in English literature, and could recite long passages drawn from different works with ease from memory. He would speak at a steady pace, but whenever he wanted to emphasize some point, he would pause for a few seconds, bend his head, look over his glasses, and add "If I may say" before continuing (Grant).



St. Mark's Chapel, Bishop's University, Lennoxville, c.1999. Photo: Harold Haig Sims. McCord Museum, MP-1978.82.102.

Chaplain of Cap-à-l'Aigle

As a reward for his many responsibilities at Bishop's College, Bishop Williams awarded Allnatt the summer chaplaincy in Cap-à-l'Aigle, which was a pastoral charge for vacationing Anglicans who visited in the summer months to take the air. The village is located a few kilometres downstream from Pointe-au-Pic and is built on a rocky cape overlooking the St. Lawrence River. Vacationers would stay in boarding houses, or rent the homes of permanent residents of the area, who would move themselves into an unheated summer extension for the duration of the tourist season (DuBerger). Of the 64 residences in Cap-à-l'Aigle, 31 of them were for rent and another 11 were boarding houses. During the summer of 1897, Reverend George Abbott-Smith and his wife each paid \$5.00 per week for their room and board at Henri Tremblay's house in Cap-à-l'Aigle.

Religious services were held in a large shed-like structure with a very plain interior, with pine paneling on the walls, simple grey benches, and a portable harmonium. The altar was tucked into a little alcove that was graced by bunches of wildflowers throughout the summer months. Sunlight streamed through six plain glass windows, with two additional stained-glass windows adding a touch of warmth to the ambience. The church was called St. Peter-on-the-Rock, named for the tips of giant boulders that broke through the surface of the ground around it. It was a picturesque spot; the grass was crowded with white daisies and yellow buttercups (Reisner, 346-7; Simms, 78; Pope, 1-2).



Bishop's University Football Team, 1905. Reverend F. J. B. Allnatt, the team's Honorary President, can be seen at centre-left, wearing his black cape and Astrakhan hat. Bishop's University Archives.

A stable behind the little church served as the rectory. Allnatt eventually bought land near the church and built a comfortable home with a wonderful view of the St. Lawrence River

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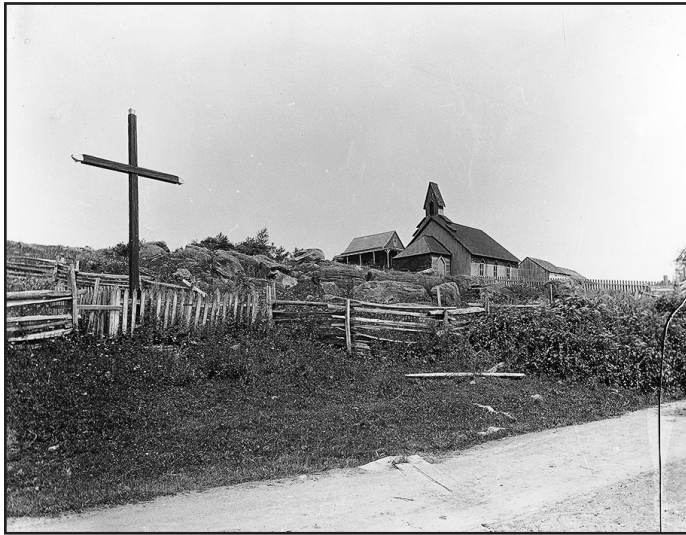


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around Murray Bay (La Malbaie today). The lot of land, measuring 100 feet by 127 feet, was purchased on July 31, 1894, from Joseph Tremblay, for \$50.00 cash (*L'Éclaireur*, September 4, 1894). Here, the family often received visitors, just as they



The church of St. Peter-on-the-Rock in Cap-à-l'Aigle, c.1895. Photo: William Notman & Son. McCord Museum, VIEW-2946.

did at the rectory in Lennoxville. In 1943, Minnie Gill, who had inherited the rectory from her parents, left the house and its contents in her will to the parish of St. Peter-on-the-Rock.

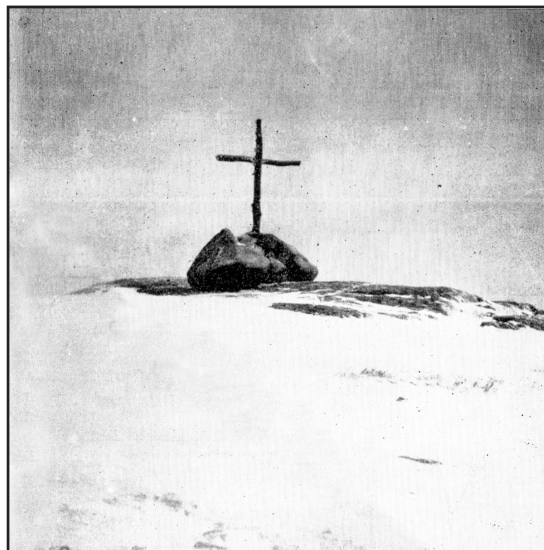
When he was not conducting Sunday and weekday services, Allnatt hiked happily through the surrounding fields and forests. In *Studies in Soul Tending*, a book written for young men entering the priesthood, Allnatt praised the virtues of these wild areas as sources of inspiration and places of meditation. He referred to an occasion when, during a hike of several days, he realized that he did not have enough food to last the whole trip, and therefore decided to skip his lunchtime meals. He felt hungry at lunch for the first two days, but after that, he felt fine and did not miss the food. This experience served to demonstrate to young men that it was possible to get used to fasting at Lent.

Most vacationers to the region stayed close to the coast, but Allnatt enjoyed wilderness camping in the backcountry of Charlevoix, usually in the company of friends. Crowded into a rough cart, they traveled cross-country for about 40 kilometres through the valleys of the Murray and the Du Gouffre Rivers before rejoining the old postal road (no. 381) that linked Baie-Saint-Paul and Chicoutimi.



Cap-à-l'Aigle seen from the Quebec City road, Murray Bay, c.1895. Photo: William Notman & Son. McCord Museum, VIEW-3280.

From there they made a sharp turn to the north to travel about a dozen kilometres to their base camp, a log cabin. They stayed there for a week, enjoying their favourite outdoor activities. No adventure was more memorable than scaling a tall hill that rose 300 metres above the cabin. The hikers “spent the night on the summit... covered with bracken and scattered spruce and cedar trees, with here and there a tor of igneous rock.” In the middle of a mound of rocks, the friends planted a cross of rough-hewn wood (Abbott-Smith, 41).



A cross made of spruce wood was erected on some high ground in Charlevoix overlooking the Gouffre River to mark Allnatt's expedition there in 1905. From George Abbott-Smith, *I Call to Mind*, p.41.

The following winter, Allnatt and one of his new friends, George Abbott-Smith, also an Anglican priest, went on a camping trip to the cabin in Charlevoix. “P’tit Louis” Murray, the reliable local cart driver, picked them up at St. Anne-de-Beaupré to take them the 100 kilometres to St. Urbain, where they passed the night. Early the next morning, the two friends made their way to the log cabin, which had been equipped with a wood stove since the summer and was now somewhat better insulated. After the sun set behind the mountains, the men spent the evening reading aloud to each other from two books: *The Cruise of the Cachalot* (a memoir written by Frank Bullen of his experiences on a whaling ship from New Bedford, Massachusetts, in 1875) and *Cur Deus Homo* (Why God Became Man, a religious tract written by St. Anselm of Canterbury in the eleventh century). The next day, the

two men snowshoed up the hill behind the cabin to take photographs of the cross they had erected the previous summer (Abbott-Smith, 42).



The Charlevoix coast, from Malbaie to Saint-Siméon. Map prepared by Yolande Allard and drawn by Michel Bouchard.

Allnatt also had good memories of sailing trips on the St. Lawrence River. One time, he was out on the river in a boat with about twenty guests. All were enjoying themselves and admiring the glorious view of the capes stretching out along the river and into the distance, when suddenly the wind fell still. Without any wind, they were unable to return to Cap-à-l'Aigle before nightfall. They spent the night on the schooner, dozing as best they could under the bright moonlight. Fortunately, the boat's captain was able to find a favourable current at dawn, upon which they drifted until they reached St. Fidèle-de-Mont-Murray. The passengers disembarked and, courage in hand, were able to scale the steep cliff upon which the village was perched. They then traveled the re-

maining 12 kilometres to Cap-à-l'Aigle in a wagon (Abbott-Smith, 151).

Bake oven at Cap-à-l'Aigle, Murray Bay, 1898. The woman in the centre is Jane Henrietta Allnatt; the woman in the hat removing bread from the oven is her niece Ida Millar (née McDougall), and the child at her feet is her great nephew Leslie Millar. Photo courtesy of Yolande Allard.



Although over a century has passed since Allnatt left the Charlevoix region, his memory survives today in a bronze plaque displayed prominently at the entrance to the chapel in Cap-à-l'Aigle.

An accomplished artist, Minnie Gill took full advantage of regular summer visits to the Charlevoix region to paint the stunning scenery, using oils, watercolour, and especially the difficult medium of pastels. Many of her works recall the rolling fields at the moment of transformation by the passing seasons.

Dusk at Cap-à-l'Aigle was painted around 1909. Bishop's University art collection, #CA BU BUArtColl-2021_009.



1872 - ST. PETER'S-ON-THE-ROCK - 1922
 TO THE GLORY OF GOD
 AND GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE OF
 FRANCIS JOHN BENWELL ALLNATT DD
 DEAN OF THE FACULTY OF DIVINITY BISHOPS
 UNIVERSITY
 THIS CHURCH IS ERECTED
 BY HIS CONGREGATION AND FRIENDS
 TO WHOM HE MINISTERED WITH LOVING CARE
 1887 - FOR THIRTY-THREE YEARS - 1920

Trips Back to England

Allnatt crossed the Atlantic on several occasions. The first trip was his dramatic voyage in 1864 from Liverpool to America aboard the *Bohemian*, when the ship struck a rocky shoal and sank only 200 metres from the shore. In December 1869, he returned to England on the *North American*, sailing out of Portland, Maine; he arrived on Christmas Eve and spent six months in Cumberland with his family in order to restore his strength. In October 1881, he took the *Montreal* from Quebec City to Liverpool to visit his family again, spending three months with his ailing mother, Jane. She died only ten days after her son departed on his journey back to Canada. He traveled to England once again in 1894 to be with his father, Francis John Allnatt Sr., and was at his side when he died on Christmas Eve. He sailed home the following February on the *SS Aurania*, which connected Liverpool with New York.

Allnatt made one final trip to England in the summer of 1911, accompanied by his stepdaughter Minnie, for a long dreamed-of walking holiday in the Lake District. Towards the end of the trip, when they were returning to their inn at Lodore, Minnie thought she might throw away her old walking shoes. Allnatt stopped her, suggesting that she bury her shoes instead, so as not to tarnish such a beautiful scene. Minnie agreed, on the condition that her stepfather compose an epitaph for her shoes. It was done right there and then, and Minnie copied Allnatt's words onto an old board she found nearby.

*Traveler, pause and lend a tear
 Two toil-worn soles lie buried here,
 Earth's stony paths long time they trod
 And now they rest beneath the sod.
 They well deserved a happier fate,
 Of other's loads they love the weight
 Nor fee, nor gratitude they gained
 But never lost patience, never com-
 plained.*

A Clergyman until the End

In 1919, Allnatt accepted the post of interim rector at Bishop's College, despite his advancing age and failing health. It was in this capacity, clad in his red academic gown, that he joined other dignitaries to greet the Prince of Wales, who was travelling on the Canadian Pacific Railway, with a stop in Lennoxville. Far from being an anonymous member of the crowd, Allnatt was one of those who shook the hand of the future King Edward VIII (Nicholl; *La Presse*, October 27, 1919; Dutton, 19-20).

Allnatt's death came quickly, after only a few days of illness. On Easter Monday, 1920, while going about his usual activities, he suffered a heart attack and passed away the following Saturday, April 10. His funeral took place at St. Mark's, the College chapel where he had spent so many hours over many decades.

Condolences and tributes immediately flowed in from all directions; he was praised by both colleagues and his numerous lay friends and acquaintances. His peers in the Anglican clergy sent kind remembrances and accolades, including Bishop Lennox Williams of Quebec City (the son of Bishop James Williams, Allnatt's mentor), who wrote: "We have good reason to thank God that He gave to the Church in Canada, and to the Diocese in particular, for so many years, the life and labours of a man so gifted, loving, unselfish and spiritually minded as Dr. Allnatt" (*Quebec Diocesan Gazette and Church Society News*, Vol. LII, No. 1, February 1945).

Francis John B. Allnatt was buried at Malvern Cemetery in Lennoxville, joining his wife, Jane Henrietta (née Robins), who had been laid to rest three years earlier. His stepdaughter, Catherine "Minnie" Gill, was buried alongside them in 1946.

*What seek ye, 'mid the ebbing and the flowing
 Of life's wide sea, where nothing is secure?
 Ye seek, amid the coming and the going
 A love most sure.*

-Reverend Francis John Allnatt, from one of his last sermons in Cap-à-l'Aigle, collected by Reverend George Abbott-Smith



The Allnatt grave site, Malvern Cemetery, Lennoxville.

*At left, the tomb of Francis Allnatt,
 with the epitaph:
 His Servants Shall Serve Him and
 They Shall See His Face
 At right, the tomb of his wife, Jane
 Henrietta, and his step-daughter,
 Catherine Gill, with the epitaph:
 Waiting for the Coming*

Photo courtesy of Yolande Allard

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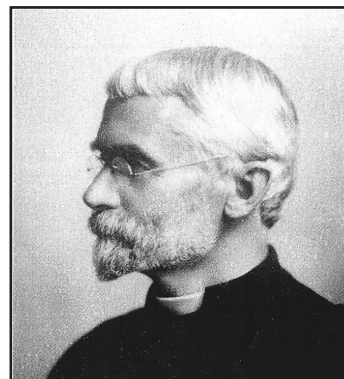
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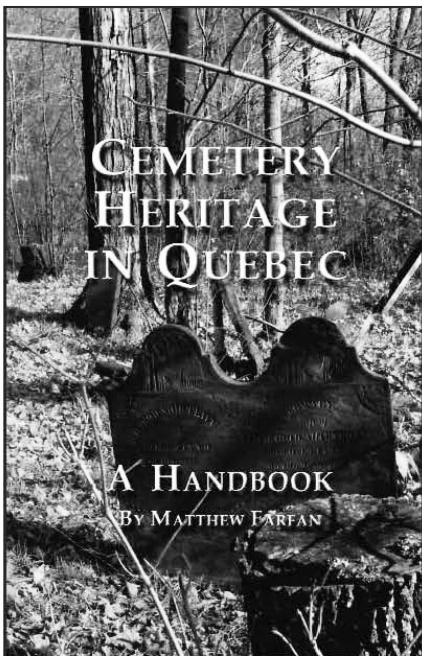
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