

# Notes on Methodist Churches, Bauline, Conception Bay.



ich@heritagenl.ca -- Heritage NL -- PO Box 5171, St. John's, NL, Canada, A1C 5V5

## **Bauline Methodist Timeline**

- 1821 – First Methodist preacher visits Bauline in 1821
- 1834 – Chapel constructed
- 1867 – School constructed
- 1869 – Church constructed (either adjacent to, or attached to, the school)
- 1872 – Pouch Cove and Bauline get their first resident minister
- 1881 – Oldest gravestone inscription
- 1887 – Church constructed
- 1898 – Revival meeting in at Bauline Methodist Church
- 1919 – Cornerstone of present church laid by A. Soper.
- 1920-1921 – present church completed during the pastorate of A. A. Holmes (1918-21).

***By Dale Gilbert Jarvis, ICH Development Officer, Heritage NL***

The town of Bauline is located about 15 km north of St. John's, NL. As described in a 1956 article in Newfoundland Quarterly, "Near the S.E. point of Conception Bay lies the little fishing village of Bauline, there can be no doubt that the original name was Baleine, after a place in the I. of Sark which it very much resembles" (LeMessurier 7). Today, it is home to approximately 400 people.

Since it's early days, the community has been almost exclusively Methodist. An article in the final 1982 edition of Deck's Awash notes that the settlement was established as a part of the Gower Street Methodist Church circuit, based out of St. John's:

Although the area was visited in 1821 by a Methodist preacher, it was 1834 before the first Methodist Chapel was erected at the community. The actual settlement did not appear on a government census until 1857 when it was reported that the

---

community of Balline had a population of 35. The totally Methodist Wesleyan community had built 9 houses and fishing rooms and some 17 residents were engaged in the fishery (Bauline 11).

The establishment of a chapel in the early 1830s was most likely influenced by a Methodist revival in the Conception Bay region from 1829-1832, seeing many converts in the Carbonear area, while the St. John's community saw a more modest increase of between 35 and 50 people per year during the same period (Hollett 126). By 1836, the largest concentration of Methodists in Newfoundland was in Conception Bay - 6,333 of the approximate 9,000 in the island (Winsor 143). In 1857 there were 16 Methodist Churches in Conception Bay; by 1884 that number grew to 24 (Winsor 204).

Encyclopedia NL states that by 1864 the community of Bauline (appearing in the Census as "Baline") had a population of forty-two in five families occupying five houses. ENL notes:

Many of the early settlers, such as the Kings (a name recorded in Broad Cove, Conception Bay as early as 1776), Whelans, Butlers and LeGrows (recorded in Torbay before 1794 and in Portugal Cove by 1830) came originally from such places as Blackhead and Broad Cove across Conception Bay; this continued to be the early trading pattern. All were native Newfoundlanders engaged in the inshore fishery. The community, exclusively Methodist, had a church by 1869 and a school building by 1884, though school was held in the settlement as early as 1867; it had thirty-two pupils that year (ENL 147).

The date of 1869 for the first proper church in the community is repeated by the Decks Awash article:

Robert Pitt in 1981 wrote that the settlement grew rapidly in its development of a school and church in 1867 and 1869 respectively and by 1884 some 127 persons lived at the community. In that year some 19 vessels occupied the exposed cleft that passed for a harbour and 90 residents were active in the herring, salmon, caplin and cod fisheries. The settlement kept 32 head of cattle and produced some 214 barrels of potatoes and 20 barrels of turnip on 12 acres of family gardens. (Bauline 12)

The town website notes that the communities of Pouch Cove and Bauline had their first resident minister by 1872. An article in the Evening Telegram, September 4, 1964 noted that "prior to the conference year 1879-80 Methodists in St. John's and the adjacent settlements of Pouch Cove, Bauline, Portugal Cove and Topsail, constituted but one circuit, with one Official Board, a senior minister, with two junior assistants" (qtd in Batstone 156).

---

Records are slightly confusing about which was the first church built in the town. A circa 1925 book on the history of Methodism in “Eastern British America” makes note of a “first church” being erected in 1887. Oral tradition maintains that the the first was the church/school combination, followed by a stand-alone church on the site of the present church. The 1925 document states,

Bauline is seven miles from Pouch Cove over a high divide. It has a small but beautiful Church. Messrs. John King and Benjamin LeGrow were the first layreaders, and for forty years Isaac King has rendered excellent service as lay-reader and of late years Bernard King has done good service. The first church in Bauline was built in 1887 and the new one during the pastorate of A. A. Holmes (1918-21). At the opening of the first church John Reay pastor, and Revs. T. Atkinson, L. Curtis and J. Pincock the preachers, a revival broke out and numbers were converted. (Johnson 261-262)

Whether it was the first or second church (or third if you count the chapel), there was clearly a church in Bauline by 1898 when a revival meeting was held there, according to the Evening Telegram:

On Wednesday afternoon last, Nov. 23rd, the annual missionary meeting was held at Bauline Methodist Church, when almost every man and woman in the place who could get out was present. The pastor, the Rev. T. W. Atkinson, gave out hymn 707, and the Rev. J. T. Newman offered prayer. The chair was occupied by Mr. Win. Campbell, of St. John's, and earnest and practical addresses were delivered by the Revs. James Pincock, J. T. Newman, and the Hon. James Angel. The collection amounted to over \$30 (Largely 3)

A new Methodist church was built in Pouch Cove circa 1903, which was referred to in the Evening Telegram in December of that year as a “bright new church” with an energetic pastor; the Bauline church in the same article was said to have a congregation of 100 people (Missionary 3).

According to local oral tradition, the c1887 church burned (whether completely or partially is uncertain) and the church records were lost in the fire. The cornerstone for a new church was laid November 12th, 1919 by A. Soper, Esq, and the inscription on the stone reads “Thy house shall be a house of prayer.”

The current church was constructed between 1920 and 1921. A banner inside the church gives a date of 1920, while other records indicate 1921, so it is possible construction began one year and finished the next. The building was expanded, a basement was hand-dug with pick and shovel, and a new concrete block foundation was put in place in 1985.

---

Immediately adjacent to the church is the Methodist/United churchyard. The Town of Bauline website notes that, “The oldest gravestone identified in the church yard is dated 1881, however, purportedly the original graveyard, located in the centre of the village, is much older, (no headstones remain today).” The stone referenced here is that of Lenora King, daughter of James and Selina King, who died April 1881, aged 14 years.

Southwest of the church yard along Main Road is the grass-covered, sloping ground said to be the original Methodist burying ground. It is bound by a hill to one side and the remains of an old cart path/possible stone retaining wall to the side closest to the ocean. Local oral tradition holds that the entranceway to this burial ground was marked by two rocks. Further research is needed to determine the extent of this earlier burial ground, and to identify possible stone grave markers. Land adjacent to the space is believed by local residents to be the location of the 1867-1879 school and church.

### Works Cited

Batstone, H.A. Methodism in Newfoundland: A Study of its Social Impact. A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research of McGill University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Sacred Theology. Montreal, 1967.

“Bauline.” Decks Awash, vol. 11, no. 01 (February 1982): 11-12.

“Bauline.” Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador, volume 1. Smallwood, Joseph Roberts and Pitt, Robert D. W., eds. St. John's: Newfoundland Book Publishers (1967) Ltd., 1981. p147.

Bauline History. Town of Bauline Website.

<http://townofbauline.ca/visitors/bauline-history/>

Hollett, Calvin. Shouting, Embracing, and Dancing: The Growth of Methodism in Newfoundland, 1774-1874. McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010.

Johnson, David W. History of Methodism in Eastern British America, including Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Bermuda : From the beginning till the consummation of union with the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches in 1925. Sackville, N.B, c1925.

<http://collections.mun.ca/cdm/compoundobject/collection/cns2/id/7667/rec/8>

---

“Largely Attended.” Evening Telegram (St. John's, N.L.), 1898-11-29: 3.

LeMessurier, H. W. Newfoundland Name Lore: The Early Relations between Newfoundland and the Channel Islands. *The Newfoundland Quarterly*. Volume 55, No. 1 (March 1956): 7.

Missionary Enthusiasm. Evening Telegram (St. John's, N.L.), 1903-12-11: 3.

Winsor, Naboth. A History of Methodism in Newfoundland 1765-1925. A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, Memorial University of Newfoundland, September, 1970.

See also:

Bauline United Church Cemetery, St. John's East District  
(Complete as of 2007)

<http://ngb.chebucto.org/Cemetery/cem-bauline-old-uc-sje.shtml>

---

*The Heritage NL Fieldnotes Series was created to openly share information concerning the ongoing research projects of Heritage NL in the fields of built heritage and intangible cultural heritage. This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/). Last update 6 December 2018.*