CHAPTER THREE
THE JESUIT HERITAGE IN VERMONT

Long before New England Congregationalists arrived in Vermont the Jesuits were active in the Green Mountain State. It is a story that antedates the establishment of the Diocese of Burlington on 29 July 1853, and it is a relationship that continues to the present even though the Jesuits do not have a foundation in Vermont today. This chapter will survey the early period of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when a number of missions sprang up among the Abnakis, the modern period of the nineteenth century when members of the Society of Jesus were not foreign to the growth of Catholicism, and the contemporary period of the twentieth century when the Jesuit relationship to Vermont continues to endure.

The story begins with the discovery of Vermont by Samuel de Champlain. In the first part of July of 1609, this explorer entered the lake that separates upper Vermont from New York. Viewing the beauty of the mountains on the New England side, including Mount Mansfield, Vermont’s highest peak, Champlain exclaimed: “Voilà les monts verts!” As he gave Lake Champlain its name so too did the Green Mountain State derive its name from this man who founded Quebec the year after the settlement of Jamestown. To that Canadian city in 1625 came the Jesuits, friends of Champlain who had asked the Jesuits as early as 1608 to help in spreading Christianity in Canada.

Although the Jesuits became the loyal friends and co-workers of Champlain in New France, it was not until August of 1642 that Vermont witnessed the arrival of the Jesuits. Early that month, on August 2nd, Father Isaac Jogues, S.J., and two Jesuit donnés (laymen who helped the Jesuits by performing a wide variety of services as carpenters, cooks, doctors, etc.),
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Guillaume Couture and René Goupil, were captured by the Mohawks, members of the Five Nations (Cayugas, Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas and Senecas) who made up the Iroquois League. Before Champlain had defeated them, they dominated the Vermont shore and Lake Champlain as well as the area of Lake George and the Mohawk River. They hated the French and their Huron allies and captured Jogues' party as it set out from Three Rivers on the St. Lawrence River for the Huron mission.

Led down the rivers of the St. Lawrence and the Richelieu to Lake Champlain, the Mohawks and their prisoners apparently stopped at Isle La Motte. This was a natural break in the journey from Canada to New York and one that Iroquois, who were struggling for supremacy with the French for control of the Lake Champlain Valley, were accustomed to use in meeting the Algonquins. Since, as Father Jogues narrated in his letter to the Jesuit superior at Quebec in May of 1646, the prisoners were suffering from the torments of their captors, Isle La Motte became part of the "bloody trail" of the Jesuit martyrs.

On arriving in the Mohawk village at Ossernenon (near Auriesville, New York), the sufferings of the prisoners were intensified. Goupil, who had displayed courage when captured and had pronounced his Jesuits vows on this journey as a prisoner of the Indians, was martyred at Ossernenon on 29 September 1642. Even after an embassy of the Sokoki Indians from the Saco River in Maine came in April of 1643 with gifts to obtain the Jesuit's release, Father Jogues was not freed from his sufferings (his finger nails were extracted, the forefinger of each hand was mutilated, and the thumb of the right hand was cut off) until the Dutch rescued him on 18 August of that year and he returned to France. And Couture, who had urged Jogues to flee, escaped the Mohawks and made his way back to Quebec.

Father Jogues, however, returned to Canada from France in June of the following year and visited the Green Mountain State three more times before his death. As an ambassador to the Mohawks in the latter part of May of 1646, he went down the natural route for trade, commerce and war that wound through the Lake Champlain Valley to the Mohawk village in
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New York and returned to Quebec by that route in the latter part of June. Since the negotiations with the Mohawks demanded his further attention, Father Jogues set out in September and hoped to serve the Iroquois as a missionary as well as to deal with them as an ambassador. Unfortunately, on his departure from Three Rivers on September 24th of the same year, he and Jean de la Lande, a donné, were captured in violation of the understanding with the Mohawks and taken as prisoners over the trail that led through the waters and forests of Vermont to Ossernenon. The Indians tomahawked Father Jogues to death on October 18th and his companion, la Lande, suffered the same fate the following day.

The Jesuit martyrs Goupil, Jogues, and la Lande were not the only Jesuits to pass through Vermont in the seventeenth century. Father Joseph Bressani, a Roman by birth, was seized by the Iroquois as he was on his way from Quebec to the Huron mission. The Indians led him over the route through Lake Champlain and the forests of Vermont in the spring of 1644. Father Bressani suffered the mutilation of his hands and feet before he reached Ossernenon. Rescued by the Dutch later that year, he went back to Europe before returning to Quebec where he witnessed the destruction of the Huron mission in 1648. Father Bressani remained in New France long enough to conduct scientific observations on the ebb and flow of the tides for his colleagues in Europe before he departed for Italy two years later. He died at Florence on 9 September 1672.

Since it was not unusual for the Jesuits to offer Mass on improvised altars during their missionary travels (for example, both Father Gabriel Druillettes and Father Sébastien Râle did so when they traveled with the Indians of Maine), it appears that the Jesuits who went back and forth through the Lake Champlain Valley were the first priests to celebrate Mass in Vermont. While this is doubtful in the case of the captives, it seems to be quite true with respect to other Jesuits. Father Simon LeMoyne passed through Vermont on a diplomatic mission between Quebec and New York as early as September of 1654. Father Pierre Raffeix and Brother Charles Boquet accompanied the expedition of Sieur de Courcelles against the Mohawks in 1666 when it stopped at Chimney Point as well as
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Isle La Motte. And later that year Father Charles Albanel joined the same expedition which set out again from Canada to destroy the Indian villages of upper New York.

The Jesuit Relations, moreover, indicates that the Jesuits were very informed about the activities of the French in preparing a defensive perimeter against the Iroquois. Captain Pierre de St. Paul, Sieur de la Motte, constructed Fort St. Anne on the island named in Lake Champlain for him (it was the fourth in a line of defense that reached from the mouth of the Richelieu River into Lake Champlain). Since the French appreciated the strategic value of the island before they built the fort, the likelihood that a Jesuit offered Mass on Isle La Motte before the formal dedication (tradition dates it as the feast of St. Anne, 26 July 1666) is not at all remote. Father Raffeix, for instance, who heard confessions and celebrated Mass there in September of 1666 with Father Albanel, had stopped at this island in May of that year with the returning military expedition. Fort St. Anne was known to New Englanders before the end of the seventeenth century.

Further circumstantial evidence as to whether the Jesuits were the first to offer Mass and set up the first chapel in Vermont on Isle La Motte arises from their actions during the summer of the following year. At that time three Jesuit missionaries stopped at the strategic fort when they learned of a Mahican plan to capture them and their Iroquois ambassador. Assigned to the missions of New York, Fathers Jacques Bruyas, Jacques Frémin, and Jean Pierron administered to the needs of about 300 soldiers during this delay. Not only were they present to celebrate the feast of St. Anne, but they conducted religious exercises that entitle these priests to be recognized as the precursors of those many Jesuits who would give missions and retreats throughout Vermont in its subsequent history.

While the efforts of the missionaries among the Mohawks were succeeding, Jesuits like Julien Garnier, who traveled to the Oneida mission in 1668, and François Vaillard de Gueslis, who was sent in 1687 by the Governor of New France on a diplomatic mission to Governor Thomas Dongan of New York (he had English Jesuits as chaplains and opposed the work of French Jesuits), continued to cross through Vermont. In 1673 Kryn,
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the Mohawk leader who had driven the hostile Mahicans (they attacked the Jesuit mission in August of 1669 at Gandaouague in New York where Father Pierron was in charge) from the upper Hudson river valley to the Connecticut River in 1669 (Mahicans roamed in the southern and western areas of Vermont), became a Catholic. The Great Mohawk, as he was known, and the warriors who followed his example later moved to Sault-Saint-Louis (now Caughnawaga) near Montreal. This site of the Jesuit mission was not only Kryn’s home (until his death at Salmon River in 1690), but it became the home of another Mohawk, Kateri Tékakwitha, a girl who had been converted in 1676 by Father Jacques de Lamberville, S.J., a traveler through Vermont. She moved to Caughnawaga the following year from her home in New York and died there in 1680. Today visitors to the Jesuit mission may view the tomb of this “Lily of the Mohawks” at the Jesuit church of St. François-Xavier in Caughnawaga where she is especially venerated.

Of the various tribes that had access to the Lake Champlain Valley, a letter from Father Jean Pierron in Jesuit Relations for 10 October 1682 indicates that the Abnakis were in the area before the end of the seventeenth century. Less than a hundred years later, on 8 September 1766, the Missisquoi Indians told the Governor of Quebec that they were in that section from time immemorial. And one tradition among the Abnakis of the area, known as the St. Francis Indians, recalls the visit of a priest among them as early as 1613. Certainly, the presence of the Abnakis at Otter Creek, the Winooski River, and Missisquoi Bay dates at least from the 1680s when a number of Abnakis, perhaps at the urging of Father Vincent Bigot, S.J., or his brother, the Jesuit Father Jacques Bigot, left Maine for the more secure havens near Lake Champlain.

At the time of the attack on Deerfield, Massachusetts, in February of 1704, the Indians who formed part of the expedition returned by paths that indicated their connection not only with a mission on the Missisquoi but also with one on the Connecticut River. One group went up the Connecticut River as far as the White River where it crossed over to Lake Champlain by a number of rivers (White, First Branch, Stevens Branch, and Winooski) and stopped at the Abnaki village
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(Swanton) on the Missisquoi River. The other party continued up the Connecticut River until it stopped at Coös or Koés (Newbury) on the upper waters of that river, a place noted for its pines, before continuing their journey to the Jesuit mission at Caughnawaga.

Late in the spring of that same year, however, an expedition set out from Northampton, Massachusetts, to retaliate against the Indians for their attacks on the New England settlements. On 14 June 1704, they slaughtered the inhabitants and destroyed the mission where the Indians were accustomed to plant corn. Father Joseph Aubery, S.J., who served as a missionary among the Abnakis for forty-six years and must have exercised his ministry at Koés, recorded the old Christian mission on his map of 1715 and associated it with the Loups or the Indians of the Connecticut River, perhaps even the Mahicans. Situated at a major crossover point for the Abnakis traveling not only the upper and lower Connecticut but also for those who could reach these meadows through the White Mountains from such rivers as the Merrimac, Saco, and Androscoggin, it was, most likely, a Jesuit mission. Since this area of the Great Ox-Bow was a strategic spot, the Indians resettled amidst the fertile area of the pines in 1754 from which they could terrorize New Englanders during the last stages of the struggle between France and England for North America.

Yet, the more interesting development of a Jesuit mission took place on the Lake Champlain side of Vermont at Swanton (the old Indian name for this area was Tequahunga). Here there was a little church that dated, according to tradition, at least from the opening of the eighteenth century, and it seems that the Jesuits were caring for the Indians of that area no later than 1710. Not far from the settlement Chief Gray Lock who terrorized the English towns as far as the Connecticut River during Father Râle’s War, had a fort. He was chief of the Waranokes who were refugees from Massachusetts and Connecticut at the Missisquoi. In 1723, Gray Lock killed Joseph Willard, the minister at Rutland. When a plague wiped out the village of some 250 dwellings in 1730, the mission bell remained quiet for more than a decade.

By 1741 the St. Francis Indians had returned to the Missis-
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quoi mission and two years later the French government was constructing a residence for a Jesuit priest there. Father Étienne Lauverjat, S.J., labored among the Abnakis from 1743 to 1749 when the mission was a flourishing settlement with a sawmill and a church whence the bell for the “Angelus” sounded along the banks of the Missisquoi River. Father Pierre-Antoine Roubaud, who went on the expedition of the Marquis de Montcalm across Lake Champlain and against Fort William Henry in July of 1757, was the Jesuit missionary responsible for these Abnakis from 1754 to 1762 (Jesuits like Claude-François Virot and Pierre Audran helped him). Although a legend exists that tells how the Indians dismantled the little church and took the stones up to St. Hyacinthe in Canada, the chapel at the Missisquoi was still in existence when the first English settlers arrived in 1775. John Hilliker, Sr., one of these settlers, testified to the presence of the chapel and the Indian village as late as 1779.

But the Jesuits are also associated with places in Vermont other than just Swanton, Newbury, and Isle La Motte. West of Rutland, there is a lake and a town named in honor of Chief Bombazine, the Indian who was the friend and protector of Father Râle until both were killed by the English in the 1724 raid against the Jesuit mission at Norridgewock, Maine. Between Poultney and Wells is Lake St. Catherine which supposedly derived its name from the Jesuit mission once located on its shores. And, although it is open to question, some writers have claimed that “Paulette” was the origin of the name for the town of Pawlet, a name that goes back to Jesuits who were active in that area during the eighteenth century after Father Aubery had completed his map of the missions in New England.

Moreover, Peter Kalm, the Swiss naturalist who traveled up and down the Lake Champlain Valley in 1749, observed that he found Jesuits in the larger villages. At Alburg, where the Indians had a settlement at Point aux Algonquins, the French had constructed a church by 1734 at which any missionary could easily stop on his journeys. And near the present town of Ferrisburg, where an Abnaki village was located at the mouth of the Otter River, the Jesuits reportedly had a stone church with a bell at least a year before Kalm’s visit.

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If Kalm's testimony can be proved by the remains found in various villages, perhaps the best example is the French fort at Chimney Point. Although Father Raffeix visited Chimney Point in 1666, it did not become an important settlement until Captain Jacobus de Warm of Albany in New York built an outpost there in 1690. The fort was rebuilt by the French so that Fort de Pieux became a vital fortification of strategic value by 1731. During his travels in 1749, Kalm saw a chapel there that both the Recollects, who resided at Fort St. Frederic across the way at Crown Point, and the Jesuits, who labored among the Indians, could have used for conducting religious services. Lest the fort fall into the hands of the conquering English in 1759, the French destroyed Fort de Pieux. Thus, it was the ruined chimney stacks which gave the town its name.

The Abnakis who had terrorized New England suffered because of their alliance with the French in the struggle for North America. They had taken English captives to Canada from Brattleboro (five), Putney (one), Rutland (four) and elsewhere in Vermont as well as prisoners from nearby New Hampshire and Massachusetts. Consequently, the Abnakis were deprived of their lands in Vermont, including those around the Missisquoi Bay, and they failed to recover them even after the defeat of England in the American Revolutionary War.

Following the suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773, most of the former Jesuits in Canada were sympathetic to the Americans. This was clear in the example of Father Charles Germain, a Jesuit missionary to St. François-du-Lac since 1767. He was implicated, before his death in 1779, in the cause of the Abnakis who were partisan to the American cause (his old servant André was involved). And, on 20 June 1783, British Governor General Frederick Haldimand reported to Lord North: "The Jesuits have sided with the rebels."

One who did associate with the rebels was the former Jesuit John Carroll who, like most of the suppressed Jesuits in America, was sympathetic to the American cause. Not only was his cousin, Charles Carroll, involved in the events leading to the Declaration of Independence, but Father Carroll himself, after being appointed by the Continental Congress in February of 1776, accompanied such a rebel as Benjamin Franklin to Canada.
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on a diplomatic mission. During the spring of that year, Father Carroll journeyed from Philadelphia to Montreal and back by way of the valleys of the Hudson River and Lake Champlain. One can only speculate about the places where the former Jesuit might have stopped during this mission for the American Congress, but Isle La Motte was not an unlikely place.

Lastly, there is a link between Vergennes, the Vermont town incorporated in 1788, and the Jesuits. For it was named after the Comte de Vergennes, Charles Gravier, who was the French minister of foreign affairs during the Revolutionary War. A student of the Jesuits at Dijon, he came into office in 1774 and helped the United States to achieve its independence from England.

II

The modern period in the history of the Jesuit relationship to Vermont began with the appointment of Father John Carroll as the first bishop of American Catholics in the new nation in 1789. Vermont was the only state in New England visited by him before he became bishop. When, on 8 April 1801, Bishop Carroll agreed to let the Bishop of Quebec care for the French Catholics in Vermont, any urgency about a pastoral visit to the state by the Bishop of Baltimore vanished. Consequently, even though Bishop Carroll enjoyed episcopal jurisdiction over Vermont until 1808, the Green Mountain State became the only one of the states in New England that he did not visit during his episcopacy.

When Bishop Carroll was thinking of dividing his vast diocese, he consulted Father François-Antoine Matignon. Although this priest suggested that Massachusetts and Vermont should be part of New York, it was Bishop Carroll who wanted Vermont to be included in a new diocese centered at Boston. Bishop Carroll had such a high opinion of Father Matignon that this priest was his first choice as Bishop of Boston. Respecting the objections of Father Matignon to the appointment, Bishop Carroll settled for Father Jean Lefebvre de Cheverus.

Following the organization of the Diocese of Boston in 1808, Bishop Cheverus succeeded to Bishop Carroll’s jurisdiction over Vermont. While the First Bishop of Boston did not
visit Vermont until he sailed to Montreal in 1821, Joseph-Octave Plessis, First Archbishop of Quebec, stopped at Burlington in mid-September of 1815. He was the great-grandson of Thomas French, deacon of the church in Deerfield, Massachusetts, from which the latter and his daughter Martha, the grandmother of the Archbishop, were taken as captives by the Indians from the Jesuit missions during the raid on that town in 1704. Archbishop Plessis arrived in Burlington on the Boxer which sailed up Lake Champlain after he had journeyed from Halifax to Boston and New York. He found nearly 100 Catholics in Burlington and persuaded Father Matignon to found a mission there in 1815.

Of interest about this time were the traces of the Jesuit past uncovered by Vermonters. During the retreat of Rogers Rangers following the desecration of the Jesuit mission at St. François-du-Lac in 1759, the rangers had descended by the region of Lake Memphremagog and headed for the shelter of Fort No. 4 down on the Connecticut River. Tragically for them, the Indians wiped out a squad of rangers on the southern banks of the lake at what is now Newport. In flight, the rangers had buried their booty at various places along the way before death overtook them. A farmer in West Charleston discovered the gold candelabra of the mission in 1816, and Robert Orne, another Vermonter, found a large brass holy image gilded in bronze or gold near the mouth of Lake Magag before 1838.

The story of the Jesuits in Vermont also relates to the Barber family. For Daniel Barber, who not only became a Jesuit but was the father of a Jesuit and a grandfather of a Jesuit, moved to Manchester, Vermont, as an Episcopal clergyman in 1790. Having fought in the Revolutionary War, he was ordained a priest in the Episcopal Church by the same bishop who officiated at the wedding of St. Elizabeth Seton in 1794. His years at Manchester were saddened by the death of his three-year-old son who was buried in the town cemetery.

Even though Reverend Daniel Barber accepted the call to Union Episcopal Church in Claremont, New Hampshire, in 1794, his interest in church affairs, especially the establishment of a diocese for the Episcopalians, continued. Since most of the church lands were in the eastern part of Vermont and the
western part of New Hampshire, he wanted this region as the new diocese. But, his ambition to lead the new diocese evaporated when the controversy involving church lands ended in the formation of the Eastern Diocese. This included Massachusetts and Rhode Island as well as New Hampshire and Vermont in the new jurisdiction of the Episcopal Church.

Barber’s work as an Episcopal rector in the Connecticut River Valley brought him into contact with a number of interesting Vermonters. He baptized Ethan Allen’s daughter Fanny in the Episcopal faith at the Swanton home of her stepfather, Dr. Jabez Penniman, in 1807. Later, on 18 March 1811, Daniel Barber was present when she made her religious profession in Montreal as a Catholic missionary nun. His own son Virgil, who had studied surveying in Springfield, Vermont, before entering Dartmouth College in 1801, married Jerusha Booth. Born at Newtown, Connecticut, she lived in Vergennes by 1807. The Reverend Barber’s sister, Abigail Barber, had married Noah Tyler, son of Colonel Benjamin Tyler who reportedly gave all the lumber for the construction of Union Church in Claremont, New Hampshire and they became the parents of William Tyler, the First Catholic Bishop of Hartford, who was born in Derby on 5 June 1806.

On 18 November 1818, Reverend Daniel Barber, who had been moving towards Roman Catholicism since he made his initial inquiry about it from Bishop Cheverus in 1812, took his leave of Union Church. His son Virgil, who had taken his own reservations to Father Benedict Joseph Fenwick, S.J., in New York City in 1816 and had been received into the Catholic church, was already studying to become a Jesuit. And Daniel himself was received into the Catholic Church by Bishop Cheverus a few months after his departure from Claremont.

Vermonters saw little of the Barbers until Virgil returned to Claremont after his ordination as a Catholic priest on 3 December 1822. There he was joined by his father who helped him in the establishment of the first Catholic church and school in the Granite State. This parish covered not only the Catholics of New Hampshire but also those in the eastern part of Vermont.

When his friend, Father Fenwick, succeeded Cheverus as
Bishop of Boston in 1825, Father Barber persuaded the new prelate to visit the Green Mountain State. Bishop Fenwick arrived by stage and explored the feasibility of establishing a college on Mount Ascutney, especially since the town of Windsor, as well as Father Barber, expressed an interest in the enterprise. But, when Bishop Fenwick climbed Mount Ascutney on 5 June 1826, he became convinced, after perspiring copiously, that the proposal of Father Barber and the citizens of Windsor was impractical and turned it down.

One of Father Barber's famous converts at Claremont was Lucy Warner Alden, the wife of Joseph Alden, who was a *Mayflower* descendant of John Alden. Mrs. Alden was the daughter of Colonel Seth Warner (1743-84) who became Captain of the Bennington company of the Green Mountain Boys in 1770. He led the successful resistance to the British at the Battle of Hubbardston on 7 July 1777, and his statue stands in the shadow of the Bennington Monument today.

With the departure of Father Barber in 1828 from Claremont, the English-speaking Catholics of Vermont did not have a priest. Although the ubiquitous Father James Fitton went to care for the mission at Burlington in the summer of 1829, it was not until Bishop Fenwick sent Father Jeremiah O'Callaghan, a priest from Ireland, in the following year that Burlington had its first resident priest. A city of 1000 Catholics at that time, it was destined to become the center of Catholicism in the Green Mountain State.

On 12 December 1831, Bishop Fenwick made the first official visit of a Roman Catholic bishop to Burlington and preached in English and French in a large room of Howard's Tavern where he celebrated Mass. Colonel Archibald Hyde, a non-Catholic (he was converted to Catholicism later) and the Assistant United States Collector of Customs, befriended the Catholics and gave them five acres of land for a church. During his pastoral visit, the bishop called upon Colonel Hyde and approved the site for the new church on the outskirts of the city where St. Joseph's cemetery is located. It was here that Bishop Fenwick returned on 9 September 1832 to dedicate St. Mary's, the first Catholic church in Burlington. He did not neglect the French who were being served in that part of his
diocese by Abbé Pierre-Marie Mignault of Chambly from 1818 to 1853. This priest, whose monument stands in St. Johnsbury, was appointed vicar general by Bishop Fenwick to care for the French-speaking Catholics of Vermont.

Writing in *The Jesuit* for 4 September 1832, Father O'Callaghan mentioned his plans for churches at St. Albans, Swanton, and Vergennes. At Vergennes, "the oldest and smallest city of New England," lived Mrs. Danial Nichols (her maiden name was Mary Ann Booth) who as early as Bishop Fenwick's visit in 1830, tried to convince the Bishop of Boston to send a resident priest there and to establish a church so that this area could become the center of Catholicism in Vermont. To this end, Mrs. Nichols hoped to donate an estate that she had inherited in Newtown, Connecticut, but this did not materialize. Her house served as Father O'Callaghan's headquarters during his visits to the Catholics of the Vergennes area and Bishop Fenwick offered Mass there when he visited the town (the first church in what is St. Peter's Parish, was not constructed there until 1854). Mrs. Nichols' own son, who joined the Jesuits, died at an early age in the Society of Jesus.

Bigotry was alive in Burlington just as it was elsewhere in New England in the nineteenth century. When anti-Catholics learned that Father O'Callaghan was away, they burned St. Mary's on 2 May 1838 and destroyed it. Undaunted by the loss, the Catholics built a new church on the corner of Cherry and St. Paul streets which Bishop Fenwick dedicated under the patronage of St. Peter on 31 October 1841. Within a couple of more years, the Catholics of Vermont grew to about 5000, so that they ranked after Massachusetts and Rhode Island as the third largest group of Catholics in New England.

There were about 2000 Catholics in the area of Fairfield, St. Albans, and Swanton in 1841 when Bishop Fenwick went there to administer confirmation. His brother, Father George Fenwick, S.J., accompanied the Bishop of Boston and on October 5th offered Mass at St. Albans. Although there was no church in that town until after Bishop Fenwick died, a small brick church was being constructed at Swanton in 1842 and was completed by 1847 on land donated by James McNally.

Bishop Fenwick met Orestes Augustus Brownson, the
future Catholic intellectual, for the first time in the spring of 1843. Brownson was born in Stockbridge, Vermont, on 16 September 1803, and grew up at Royalton. He studied at Norwich Academy (now Norwich University) in 1824 before he was ordained a minister at Jaffrey, New Hampshire, the next year. He preached at Windsor, Windham, and Rutland in his career as a Universalist minister. Having moved from one set of beliefs to another, he approached Bishop Fenwick for a second time in 1844. The latter told Brownson to join the Catholic church, if he wished to be saved. After being instructed by Bishop Fenwick's coadjutor, Bishop John B. Fitzpatrick, Brownson entered the Catholic church on 20 October 1844. In Brownson's Quarterly Review for October 1846, the illustrious convert eulogized Bishop Fenwick, who had died the previous August, for his distinguished intellect.

Bishop Fenwick, who had provided a resident priest for the Green Mountain State in Father O'Callaghan, supplied a second one in the Franciscan John B. Daly. With headquarters at Rutland and Middlebury, he lightened the pastoral responsibilities of Father O'Callaghan by taking care of the lower half of Vermont while the former continued to care for the upper half of the state. At Castleton, where Catholics had given Bishop Fenwick the deed for the property on 7 September 1835 and finished remodeling a carpenter's shop for a church that opened in 1836 (the first one in the parish of St. John the Baptist), Father Daly became very popular as the president of the Vermont Catholic Total Abstinence Society in the early 1840s. At Middlebury, he bought land on 24 April 1838 and began the construction of a church that opened in 1840 (the first one in the parish of the Assumption). He also cared for western New Hampshire, and North Adams and Pittsfield in Massachusetts.

On 25 July 1848, Father Joseph Coolidge Shaw, who entered the Jesuits two years later, visited Brattleboro for about eight weeks; he was there to take the water cure of the hot medicinal baths for his troubled leg. Since a number of Irish Catholics were there working on the railroad, Father Shaw offered Mass for them on Sundays and on the feast of the Assumption (August 15th), thereby becoming the first priest to offer Mass in Brattleboro. The location of the historic event
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was in an area known as “the Wood farm” where a special shed was later constructed for Sunday Mass.

A similar arrangement took place two years later when Bishop John B. Fitzpatrick, who had succeeded Bishop Fenwick in 1846 as Bishop of Boston, went to Bellows Falls for confirmations. Arriving with two Jesuits, Father George Fenwick and Father Samuel A. Mulledy, the bishop had to conduct his services in a pine grove on the west side of town because Catholics had been refused the use of the Methodist church. On September 4th, the Jesuits helped Bishop Fitzpatrick by hearing confessions and offering Mass. About a thousand people turned out, including some Protestants, to witness the religious services.

With the appointment of Louis J. de Goesbriand as the First Bishop of Burlington in 1853, Catholicism in Vermont had reached a stage of maturity. This was due in no small part to the work of the Society of Jesus whose reputation was castigated that very year in Bennington’s Vermont State Banner. Commenting on the book, Helen Mulgrave: or Jesuit Executorship, in the fall of 1853, it spoke of the Jesuits as “a power destructive to the moral and intellectual energies of any nation.” Fortunately, Abby Maria Hemenway, who was a convert to Catholicism, gave a better view of the Jesuits when she published her Vermont Historical Gazetteer starting in 1867 and continuing until 1891.

One cannot overlook the number of churches that were dedicated to Jesuit saints during Bishop de Goesbriand’s years. A mission under the patronage of St. Ignatius Loyola was organized at Lowell in 1853 and the church was completed in 1875. A church honoring St. Francis Xavier was opened on 18 September 1867. And, at St. Johnsbury, St. Aloysius Church was dedicated on 26 October 1897.

On 8 October 1887, Father Dennis Lynch, a priest active in the Diocese of Burlington, entered the Jesuits. He had served at St. Anthony’s in White River Junction and taught at St. Joseph’s College in Burlington. After becoming a Jesuit, he taught French at Holy Cross College in the early 1890s. Later he taught as a missionary in India and the Philippines. He died in Manila 13 November 1934.
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The Catholic population of Vermont in 1890 was mainly French-Canadians who numbered 33,204 out of a population of 45,000 Catholics. The first French-Canadian church seems to have been built at Burlington in 1842 near the site of St. Mary's, but it was abandoned before Bishop Fenwick's death for lack of priests. Within the next fifty years, the French-Canadians were more successful because about ten national parishes were opened for these people throughout Vermont.

Bishop de Goesbriand was a staunch protector of the French-Canadians in the United States. Father Edouard Hamon, a Jesuit who gave missions in the French-speaking parishes of the state after 1879, dedicated his work on the history of the French-Canadians to the Bishop of Burlington. "These emigrants, we believe," declared Bishop de Goesbriand in a letter of 11 May 1869 concerning the work of the French-Canadians in the United States, "are called by God to cooperate in the conversion of America as their ancestors were called to plant the faith on the shores of the St. Lawrence."

As the nineteenth century came to an end the Jesuits were still visible in Vermont. During the 1890s, Jesuits preached at the dedication of St. Anthony's at White River Junction, at the transfer of the release of St. Peter's Chains to St. Mary's Cathedral in Burlington, and at a mission for St. Raphael's in Poultney. Father John M. Kerdilou, a priest of the diocese, had carried on excavations on the old Isle La Motte and opened a shrine to St. Anne there in 1893 that recalled the Jesuit heritage.

III

The story of the Jesuit relationship with the contemporary period of the twentieth century must begin with the elevation of John S. Michaud, a native of that city, as Bishop of Burlington in 1899. A graduate of the College of the Holy Cross in 1870, he was ordained an auxiliary bishop in 1892 with the assistance of Bishop Dennis M. Bradley, who was a student with him at Holy Cross, and with another classmate, Father Thomas D. Beaven, future Bishop of Springfield, as the preacher. Bishop Michaud was the first Catholic bishop to receive an honorary degree from the University of Vermont.

The presence of the Jesuits was manifested in various ways
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during Bishop Michaud’s years. One was the discovery of the last recorded evidence of the remains of the Indian mission at Coös in 1903. Another was the continuation until 1904 of Father Hamon’s work among the French-speaking Catholics of the state. A third was the founding of a parish in West Rutland honoring another Jesuit, St. Stanislaus Kostka.

Between the death of Bishop Michaud on 22 December 1908 and the appointment of his successor, perhaps the most notable tribute to the work of the Jesuits in Vermont took place during his episcopate. In celebrating the tercentenary of the discovery of Lake Champlain, the people of Swanton dedicated a 7½-foot granite shaft on the site of the church built by the Jesuits on Missisquoi Bay. Not only did Governor George H. Prouty of Vermont take part in the celebration on 3 July 1909, but the Jesuit Provincial from Montreal was present to witness a colorful river parade of Caughnawaga Indians arriving at the historic site, and a road parade that included a float of the old St. Francis mission. William Janes, who had owned the historic site, had given the land for the monument. The Jesuits were also represented a few days later at the special celebration at Isle La Motte on July 9th in connection with the Champlain anniversary.

Joseph J. Rice, who graduated from Holy Cross College in 1891, was ordained Third Bishop of Burlington on 14 April 1910. As he indicated in his visit to his alma mater in May of 1912, he was grateful for the education that he received there. He was Bishop of Burlington when the New England Province of the Society of Jesus was established in 1926, and he remained in office until his death in 1938.

The Jesuit relationship with Vermont was evident during the Rice years. The Jesuits continued to give retreats to religious of the Diocese as they did, for example, in 1913 to seventy-four Sisters of Mercy at Burlington and seventy-two Sisters of St. Joseph at Rutland. St. John Berchmans in West Dummerston, which opened as a mission of Our Lady of Mercy in Putney on 8 September 1929, indicated that the Jesuits were still a conscious element in the minds of Vermont Catholics (it remains the only church in New England dedicated to that Jesuit saint). And when, on 29 June 1930, Pope Pius XI canonized René
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Goupil, Isaac Jogues, and Jean de la Lande, the Catholics of the Green Mountain State could look to the establishment of a church dedicated to the North American Martyrs in Marshfield (originally a mission of St. Augustine’s in Montpelier).

It was during the Rice years that two natives of Vermont were ordained Jesuit priests. One was John W. Moran (1889-1956) of East Granville and the other was Philip J. Branon (1898-1970) of Fairfield. Father Moran went on to teach dogmatic theology at Weston College and write at least three books in this field. Father Branon pursued the career of a missionary in Jamaica.

One of the famous historical sites in Vermont is the Plymouth Historic District which includes the birthplace, homestead and grave of former President Calvin Coolidge. As Governor of Massachusetts, he continued the tradition inaugurated by Governor John A. Andrew in the 1860s of giving the commencement address at the College of the Holy Cross in 1919 and 1920. Not only did he have this relationship to the Jesuits, but Foster W. Stearns, the son of the man who discovered Coolidge, served as Librarian at Holy Cross. He was the only one of the long line of Massachusetts Governors to become an American President of those who came to Holy Cross.

Moreover, President Coolidge had Catholic relatives who were not only his cousins but those of Father Joseph Coolidge Shaw, S.J., better known as “Coolidge” to his family and friends. Whether Father Shaw was directly related to the President because of the latter’s ancestor, John Coolidge of Watertown, Massachusetts, is not clear. But there is no doubt about the relationship to the same cousins because of Father Shaw’s mother, Elizabeth Parkman, whose brother, Dr. Francis Parkman, Sr., was the father of the historian, Francis Parkman, Jr. The latter was not only the first cousin of Father Shaw, but he was the grandfather of Louise Coolidge Sargent and Elizabeth Coolidge Nielson. These women were related to President Coolidge because of their father, John Templeton Coolidge, who had graduated from Harvard in 1879.

Also, there was a good relationship between President Coolidge and Father Charles W. Lyons, S.J., a native of Boston. Not only was Father Lyons the President of Boston College
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(1914-19) at a time when Coolidge was the Governor of Massachusetts, but he was the President of Georgetown University (1924-28) when Coolidge was the President of the United States. President Coolidge, who had endorsed the 1921 building drive at Boston College when he was Vice President, visited Georgetown University on 9 June 1924 and later appointed Father Lyons to the Bunker Hill Sesquicentennial Commission. The White House sent Easter flowers to Georgetown at least once when Father Lyons was there. And on 20 January 1927, the Jesuit president had the honor of dining at the White House.

Another Vermonter of interest to the Jesuits was Henrietta Howland Robinson, who married Edward H. Green of Bellows Falls in 1867. Known as the "Witch of Wall Street," she sent her son, "Colonel Ned Green" of Arthur H. Lewis' book, The Day They Shook the Plum Tree, to St. John's College at Fordham in 1885 where the Jesuits taught. Next to the Immanuel Episcopal Church on Church Street in Bellows Falls, one may find the graves of Hetty and her husband as well as their children, Colonel Ned and daughter Sylvia. The latter was the last survivor of the family that owned the mansion at Round Hills in South Dartmouth, Massachusetts. After her brother died in 1936, Sylvia lived until 1951 and bequeathed to the Jesuit institution where her brother had studied for a year, now Fordham University, $2,4000,000.

From 1938 to 1944, Matthew F. Brady was Bishop of Burlington. Unlike many of the bishops of New England, he had no relationship with the Jesuits by education. Yet, Jesuits did work in his diocese by continuing to give retreats as they did, for instance, to the Sisters of Mercy and the Daughters of the Heart of Mary at Burlington in 1942. Also, Father John J. Dugan, S.J., a chaplain for the Civilian Conservation Corps, served on active duty at Fort Ethan Allen from November 1937 to June of 1940, and Father John L. Clancy, S.J., another Army chaplain, cared for the spiritual needs of the men stationed in the Civilian Conservation Corps at Bellows Falls from 1938 to 1939.

Edward F. Ryan, a priest of the Archdiocese of Boston,
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succeeded Bishop Brady in 1944 when the latter went to Manchester. A member of the Class of 1901 at Boston College where he was a good student and athlete, he established a number of religious communities in his diocese, including a Benedictine foundation at Weston. Although the Jesuits had a relationship with the state much older than any one of the new foundations, they still were not established in Vermont.

Of significance during Bishop Ryan’s episcopate, which lasted until 1956, was the honorary doctoral degree that the Jesuits of Holy Cross College conferred on Walter H. Cleary of Newport in October of 1943. A graduate of Middlebury College in 1911 and a member of Phi Beta Kappa, he was the first Catholic elected to public office in the Green Mountain State. His stature as a judge was such that he was elevated to Chief Justice of the Vermont Supreme Court in 1958.

Robert F. Joyce was Bishop Ryan’s successor as Bishop of Burlington from 1957 to 1971. Along with the Jesuits who continued to give retreats to the religious of the diocese, there was an academic relationship because of the Jesuits who studied at Middlebury College. As far back as the early 1950s, Jesuits from Latin America went there to study English, and starting in the early 1960s Jesuits from the New England Province enrolled in degree programs at the Bread Loaf School of English at Ripton. The New England Jesuits, who lived in a cottage on the edge of the field, used to offer Mass on the campus.

Moreover, items of cultural interest relating to the Jesuits and Vermont belong to these years. The poet Robert Frost, who was associated with the founding of the Bread Loaf School of English, was a frequent guest lecturer at both Boston College and Holy Cross College before his death in 1963. Margaret Carroll Cassidy, a sculptress, unveiled a bronze bust of the poet at Holy Cross College in 1962 where Frost viewed it on one of his visits there. And in 1968 the State of Vermont gave to the Shrine of St. Anne at Isle La Motte, a place associated with the early Jesuits, the statue of Champlain which was on display at Expo '67 in Montreal.

John A. Marshall succeeded Bishop Joyce as Bishop of Burlington in 1972. Like other members of the prominent Marshall family of Worcester, Massachusetts, he graduated from
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Holy Cross College (1949). In his short time as Bishop of Burlington, Jesuit activity in Vermont took a slightly new turn when a Jesuit scholastic enrolled in the School for International Training at Brattleboro in 1972 and a Jesuit priest taught theology at St. Michael’s College in Winooski during the 1974-75 academic year. And, when the St. Francis Indians sought to take over the site of the old mission site in Swanton during the spring of 1975, Vermonters were reminded of their state’s ties to the Jesuit missionaries before the American Revolution.

Today Catholics in Vermont number about one third of the state’s population and the Jesuit heritage is reflected in the more than 500 graduates of Jesuit institutions of higher learning involved in the life of the Green Mountain State. Thomas P. Salmon, a graduate of Boston College (1954) and Boston College Law School (1957), became the first Catholic elected Governor of Vermont in 1972. Patrick Leahy, a graduate of Georgetown University Law Center (1964), became the first Catholic elected United States Senator in 1974. Although a few native sons have joined the Society of Jesus over the years, the richness of the Jesuit relationship to the Green Mountain State is illustrated by those graduates of Georgetown, Holy Cross, Boston College, Fairfield, Fordham and elsewhere who hold prominent positions in the various areas of Vermont life today.