

A Storyline for

**THE HUMAN AND NATURAL HISTORY
OF TIGNISH, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND
INTERPRETATIVE CENTRE**

**prepared for the
Tignish Historic Preservation Foundation**

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Reginald Porter
162, Dorchester Street #1, Charlottetown, PEI, Canada, C1A 1E3
TEL 902-566-1395 & EMAIL jrporter@auracom.com

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

As part of the celebrations planned for the Bicentenary of Tignish in 1999 and to further the long-term goals of the Tignish Historic Preservation Foundation, the Board intends to set up an interpretative display that will present to both local and visiting audiences of all ages, significant aspects of the human and natural history of Tignish.

In order to conform more easily to the practical problems of running a museum, and to meet with less difficulty, the strict requirements of display, storage, conservation and environmental criteria stipulated by the nationally-accepted standards of the Canadian Museums Association, the Foundation will concentrate its efforts on setting up an interpretative centre rather than a fully articulated museum.

This means that the following significant observations can be made:

1. The Foundation will only collect those artefacts necessary to interpret specifically pre-planned aspects of local human history;
2. As a result of this, there will be no need for collections storage and all that is implied by that as all the artefacts required will be on display;
3. This also means that micro environments (the interior of a case has heat, light and relative humidity controls) can be employed where necessary, thereby diminishing the need for building-wide controls designed to meet national standards.

This means that the new museum building need not have impossibly expensive heating, lighting and humidity controls.

Many of the display elements, such as maps, charts, photographs, interpretative text etc. can be copies, not originals, so that if any light or material degradation occurs, single elements can always be replaced cheaply.

THE FORMAT OF THE DISPLAY

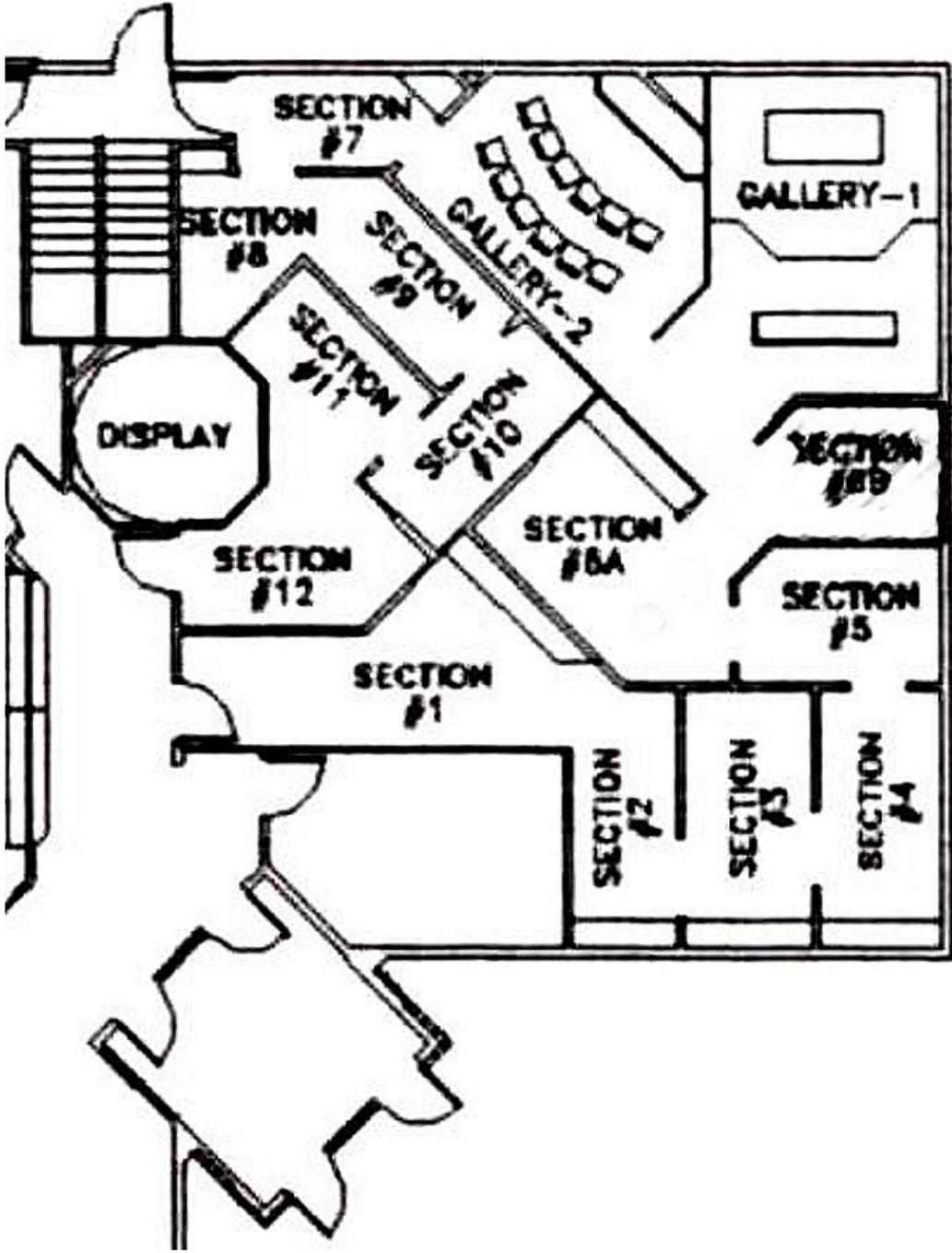
The display area will consist of a maze through which visitors will be guided by physical arrangement of space and display elements so that a chronological approach to history, or a thematic approach to material, can be achieved. In other words this means that visitors will see exactly what the Museum Board wants them to see and in the order (or lack of it) that is deemed appropriate.

The planning and execution of the space will be achieved using a three-column system such as the one illustrated below. This makes planning simple, and the design and construction of the various elements tidy and economical.

THE THREE COLUMN SYSTEM OF PLANNING

SECTION ONE (name each section here and on the museum wall)		
TEXT	GRAPHICS	ARTEFACTS
In this column you write EXACTLY what visitors will read on wall text panels. These panels will put visitors “in the picture” by presenting, in large print, a minimum of text to give the necessary background.	In order to illustrate the material described in the text, certain illustrations – photos, maps, charts – may be used to make the meaning clear. They can be originals or copies of originals scaled to meet display requirements.	Only those artefacts which are truly necessary to give a sense of nostalgic intimacy will be employed in the interpretative centre. Non-essential artefacts, or artefacts in private collections, can be illustrated with photographs.

PROPOSED PLAN OF THE INTERPRETATIVE CENTRE



(A clearer and larger plan has not survived.)

SECTION ONE – THE NATURAL WORLD

The natural history of the Tignish area is varied and interesting. Lot One's natural environment ranges from fresh, brackish and saltwater ecosystems to evidence in the tall cliffs that clearly indicates early volcanic activity and the passage of glaciers.

The red cliffs and sandy beaches that encircle Lot One are full of stories that tell about the human and natural history.

In some places in the sandstone cliffs are clear evidence of hot volcanic mud that was injected violently thousands of years ago.

The cliffs themselves and the rocks on the shore clearly tell the story of the retreat of glaciers thousands of years ago.

The land itself, shows an astonishing array of geological features that include 300 million year-old bedrock near Nail Pond and North Cape, and extensive salt marsh near Tignish Shore. Most of the land from Christopher's Cross to North Cape consists of the gravelly beds of glacial rivers and peat bogs which were formed in ponds scooped out by the retreating ice.

The remainder of the land is mostly ground moraine: soil made of greater or lesser amounts of sand and clay.

Photographs Needed:

1. satellite aerial
2. map of surficial geology
3. cliff photo showing volcanic mud
4. cliff photo – conglomerate
5. cliff photo – redbed sandstone
6. cliff photo showing charcoal occupation layer/shell midden
7. salt marsh
8. peat bog
9. note to see North Cape museum
10. photo of field showing sandy soil
11. tamarack
12. pine
13. cedar
14. cedar fence
15. spruce
16. glacial scars
17. bog vegetation
pitcher plant
sundew

Artefacts Needed:

1. rock: volcanic mud
2. rock: conglomerate
3. rock: 300 million year old redbed
5. fossils
6. specimens of soil
7. peat

SECTION TWO – THE FIRST PEOPLES

The time of the earliest human occupation of the Tignish area is not well known. There has been little archaeological exploration to date. However stone tools and weapons found along the seashore and in ploughed fields suggest that there was a certain degree of occupation from perhaps as early as 10,000 years ago and certainly during the period of the Mi'kmaq who arrived in the region about the time that Christ lived.

Various stone artefacts found in the area indicate that in what archaeologists call the Late Pre-Ceramic (or pre-pottery) era (5000?-2500 BP) aboriginals visited the area and may have camped here.

Certainly by the time the first European settlers arrived the Mi'kmaq had been in the area for a long time. Evidence of this can be found in the fields and beaches that surround the lagoon at Miminegash.

New research in ancient sea levels, following the retreat of the glaciers around 12,000 years ago, now suggests that land travel between Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and the Magdalen Islands was feasible for several thousand years up to about three thousand years ago.

-Map showing traces of prehistoric settlement

-map showing sea levels 9,000 years ago

-Picture of early Mi'kmaq from NMC

-Photos of Mi'kmaq

-Miminegash lagoon

Collection of prehistoric stone artefacts? (Clifford Wedge or PEI Museum)

SECTION THREE – THE COMING OF THE ACADIAN SETTLERS

The first settlers of Tignish were a group of Acadian families. Settlers from France and Acadia had been living on Prince Edward Island since 1720. Some had managed to remain there after the Deportation of 1758. Others returned to the Island a few years later.

Some Acadians were probably familiar with the Tignish area before there was any settlement there. They travelled extensively fishing and hunting seals and walrus. Others had schooners and traded with Newfoundland.

In October 1799, after the harvest was in, 8 Acadian families left Malpeque and travelled to the future site of Tignish with their livestock and belongings.

The families who moved to Tignish did so because of serious harassment by the agents of the British landlords who were settling in Malpeque and coveted the Acadian farms. At Tignish, they settled along the shore to hunt, fish, and farm in peace. They built their first log church in 1801.

1. Map showing distribution of Acadians in the Maritime region
2. Map showing Acadian and French settlement on the Island
3. Early French map of the Island
4. Reproduction of painting showing the Deportation in 1758
5. Map showing route followed by first settlers to Tignish Run lagoon
6. Aerial photo of first settlement
7. Map of first settlement
8. first log church
9. **SPECIAL PANEL LIST OF FIRST ACADIAN FAMILIES TO 1850**

1. Conch shell used to call people to prayer
2. Early crucifix?

SECTION FOUR – THE COMING OF THE IRISH SETTLERS

Shortly after the coming of the Acadians from Malpeque a significant number of Irish settlers began to arrive, some from the North Shore of New Brunswick.

These settlers appear to have come to this end of the Island by chance rather than by plan. There is evidence that many were bound for Boston and New York and, having endured a difficult voyage to the North Shore of New Brunswick, which was a fast-developing timber colony, they decided to remain in the region.

It was a short voyage across the Northumberland Strait to Nail Pond and Skinner’s Pond, both natural harbours that were well-protected. Here the Irish came in contact with the Acadians who had preceded them a few years earlier. This contact was marked by some violent episodes as two peoples learned to live together. Before two generations had passed, however, they had begun to intermarry and live in productive harmony.

Of great significance in the story of the Irish settlers is the fact that the majority of them arrived well before the Great Famine of the 1840s. Less weakened by hunger and disease, they were better able to learn the new skills of clearing land and making it productive.

1. Map of Ireland showing counties from which first settlers came
 2. Map of Atlantic region showing places and dates of Irish settlement
 3. Map showing locations of first Irish settlers in Tignish – use Meacham Lot 1 map
 4. Map showing Irish on Island (from Irish year)
- photos of surviving Irish tombstones in old cemetery

SPECIAL PANEL: LIST OF THE FIRST IRISH SETTLERS

- photos of houses of early Irish families
- Celtic Cross paired with misery of the Irish
- photos of earliest faces; the Conroys
- picture of land clearing shown with cleared land of Ireland
- immigrant ship
- ms map of Nail Pond (PEI Archives)
- ms map of Skinner’s Pond (PEI Archives)

Early Irish settler artefacts from museum collection or from donors...

SECTION 5 – THE PERIOD OF EARLY GROWTH OF THE COMMUNITY

Tignish grew rapidly. More settlers arrived and most had large families. A second, much larger church was built in 1826. Two years later, a son of one of the original Acadian families, Sylvain-Ephrem Perrey, was ordained to the priesthood. He was made responsible for all Catholic parishes from Miscouche to Tignish. Based in Tignish, this meant that he could spend more time with the local Acadians and Irish than the previous missionaries, who could only come once a year for two weeks.

Tignish was still remote from the rest of the Island, but was becoming less so. There were a few roads, though most transportation was by water. Starting in 1832, a number of Protestant entrepreneurs began to settle in the area. Rent collectors for the absentee landlords began to arrive in 1820, but were told there was no money. They left Tignish alone again for nearly 20 years. Father Perrey notes that rent was not demanded until about 1835. The early settlers were bitter at having to recognize absentee landlords about whom they knew nothing, and were angry at having to pay rent on land cleared and farmed by them for over a generation.

When the rent collectors tried again in 1843-44, they were met with violence. Although the little rebellion failed, there is no further evidence of harassment either.

- 1. Reconstruction drawing of Second Church
- 2. Map showing emergence of the first roads in the area
- 3. rent receipts
- 4. maps showing development of roads
- 5. photo of Cunard
- 6. photo of Palmer
- 7 map showing Cunard holdings on PEI – 200, 000 acres

**SPECIAL PANEL:
FR S. E. PERREY**

**SPECIAL PANEL:
STORY OF ENCOUNTERS
WITH SHERIFF IN 1840'S**

- 1. Rent receipts (museum collection or donations?)
- 2. All the objects associated with S. E. Perrey that can be found. Maybe his Special Panel can be in a show case if there are enough artefacts.
- 3. land deeds?

SECTION SIX – GROWTH OF THE FISHERIES

Tignish's main industry, fishing, began in 1845, when Frank Arsenault and Thomas J. Caie set up stores in the district and began to trade with the local inhabitants.

In 1850, W. B. Dean, an American, and Captain Hubbard founded a big fishing enterprise and general store.

In 1856 John Myrick of Boston and Isaac Hall followed their example. Myrick's fishing enterprise, general store and other businesses were to endure for over 100 years. For many decades, they controlled the local economy.

The early fishing pioneers did not travel far offshore. At first their boats were driven by sails. A dory was towed out behind and was used to fish and maintain the lines.

Most of the processing was done on shore. This consisted chiefly of gutting the fish and either drying it on racks or flakes in the sun or pickling it in barrels.

With the invention of the canning process, fish factories were set up in a number of places.

As the century progressed the fishing industry came to dominate the economy of the region to a very large extent.

SPECIAL PANEL: THE MYRICK STORY (taken from Myrick history)

As many photographs as possible of the early fishing pioneers...

Map showing reserves set aside for fishing concessions (Large manuscript map in PARO)

Collection of representative ledgers from Myrick store from Museum's collection

Joe Gaudet's picture enlarged and mounted.

Joe Gaudet's ship model of Myrick schooner

SECTION SEVEN – ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PARISH

In 1844, Peter McIntyre became Tignish's first resident priest. A native of Cable Head in King's County, he was trained in Quebec and ordained in 1843. Upon his return to the Island he was sent to Tignish to assist Father S.-E. Perrey, whose health was declining. He was to remain there until his consecration as the third Bishop of Charlottetown in 1860.

Peter McIntyre was a most able priest, deeply committed to the cause of religion and an organizer of extraordinary ability. A man of vision and great energy, he refurbished the church built in 1826. He also purchased a large amount of property where the present village is located.

When the village migrated inland, probably after the opening up of the Western Road, Father McIntyre had obtained land for the new church and, next to it, his own estate.

He also had the vision to plan and construct a huge new church, the largest brick building on the Island at that time, and to employ the services of the most famous and productive Catholic architect in Eastern North America, Patrick Keely (1816-96) of New York.

Earliest photo of Peter McIntyre

THE BUILDING OF THE PRESENT CHURCH

- Plan of church
- Cundall photo #1
- Cundall photo #1
- Meloche Interior of nave
- Meloche interior of chapel
- Meloche 12 Apostles
- Meloche Tranfiguration
- Meloche Assumption
- Pugin engraving
- organ loft
- altar
- tabernacle detail
- altar table detail

No artefacts

LARGE DISPLAY AREA: SIMULATION OF CHURCH INTERIOR

This gallery, one of two special areas, is meant to show the place of the Catholic Church in the community. It is to be evocative of a chapel interior, complete with altar rail, representative Stations of the Cross, an altar table and various articles associated with a sanctuary.

On light boxes there will be details of the stained glass windows in the church.

The back wall of the room will consist of a huge mural showing the altar of the church before it was demolished in 1965.

Stations of the Cross (old engravings)

Mass altar cards

Host-making irons

Thurible

Holy Water bucket

Altar candlesticks

Church bench

Prie dieu

Chairs (from museum collection)

LARGE DISPLAY AND SEATING AREA: DOMESTIC ACTIVITIES AND VIDEO SCREEN

This section is meant to contrast strongly with the previous gallery, the chapel interior.

Here domestic activities and work on the farm and around the home will be illustrated by a series of artefacts in a large wall case area.

Among these artefacts will be placed a video screen which will be used to play tapes (to be planned for the future) concerning various aspects of local history.

There will be a seating area where visitors can rest on their way through the maze.

On the walls not occupied by the large case there will be reproductions of photos showing local people involved in many aspects of everyday life in and around the home and in the village.

As many photos as possible of domestic and village life.

Parlour pictures

Hooked rug?

Domestic utensils

Footwear (from collection)

Furniture

**AS MANY ARTEFACTS
FROM THE OLD MUSEUM
COLLECTION AS CAN BE
ARRANGED IN THE
AVAILABLE SPACE**

SECTION EIGHT – TIGNISH AT ONE HUNDRED YEARS

From 1860 to 1899, Tignish continued to develop and grow. It was linked to the rest of the world by telegraph, starting in 1870, and by the railway, which arrived in 1875. Two local men, Edward Hackett and Stanislaus Perry, were elected to the federal parliament. This gave the area some representation on the national scale.

Map showing advance of telegraph and railway and telegraph.

-lighthouse pictures

-photo of Edward Hackett

Photo of Stanislaus Perry

Meacham Map of Lot One

Meacham Map of Tignish

merchants' ads

SECTION NINE – TIGNISH AT ONE HUNDRED YEARS (CONVENT)

Tignish became a centre for girls' education when the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre-Dame opened a day/boarding school in 1868. The government school for boys became a First-Class school in 1879. This meant it could provide the equivalent of two years of high school education. Many religious and educational associations for adults were organized in the last quarter of the century too. They often sponsored lectures and other cultural events. Community members organized plays and concerts.

Earliest picture of convent.

Earliest photos of CND nuns.

List of CND sisters.

Cut-out of CND nun?

Textbooks?

Registers?

Furniture?

SECTION TEN – TIGNISH AT ONE HUNDRED YEARS (BUOTES)

<p>In 1893, Gilbert and François-Joseph Buote started the Island's first French language weekly newspaper, <i>L'Impartial</i>, which continued until 1915. All this educational, social and cultural development made Tignish one of the main Acadian centres of the period. This period culminated in 1899 with the centennial celebrations organized by the Buotes to commemorate the settlement of the area.</p>	<p>special Panel The story of the Buotes and the <i>Impartial</i>.</p> <p>Significance of <i>L'Impartial Illustré</i>.</p> <p>Huge reproduction of Centennial photo.</p>	<p>Framed portrait of Gilbert Buote</p> <p>Framed portrait of François Buote</p> <p>As many <i>Impartial</i> artefacts as possible.</p> <p><i>L'Impartial Illustré</i> pages?</p> <p>Programme of Special Celebration</p>
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SECTION ELEVEN – STARTING A NEW CENTURY (1900-1921)

More specialized forms of agriculture came to the fore with the new century. In 1898, a co-operative cheese factory was opened. Two years later, one of the first Farmers' Institute was organized by the new provincial Department of Agriculture. It combined lectures and practical work, such as upgrading livestock, and became very popular. Orchards too were now producing fruit that was shipped as far away as Britain. Tignish was also noted for its lambs. As many as 3,000 a year were shipped by rail.

A brand-new industry was started by Charles Dalton of North Cape and Robert Oulton of Alberton. They managed to get wild foxes to breed in captivity, and developed a strain of silver foxes which became very popular. Pelts and breeding stock sold for enormous sums. Soon many Islanders were starting fox ranches all over the Island. Dalton became a millionaire, and many other breeders made fortunes from this industry, which flourished for about 40 years, until fox fur went out of fashion.

From the 1880s onward this was also a period of extensive out-migration when many individuals, having no way to earn their living locally, moved to the United States and other areas to work in mills and factories

Photo(s) of cheese factory?

Cheese Factory share?

Picture of Lamb Day

SIR CHARLES DALTON

-original photo of Dalton

SECTION TWELVE – HARD TIMES AND REMEDIES (1923-1945)

The twenties and thirties were hard times for most Maritime fishermen. In 1923, however, a group of Tignish fishermen who owned their own boats and gear, and were thus relatively independent of the fish merchants, organized the Tignish Fishermen's Union, the first of its kind in Canada. It functioned as a clearing-house for information, a discussion group, and a collective buying club. Two years later, this group bought a lobster factory and started Tignish Fisheries. Chester McCarthy, a Tignish lawyer who had helped organize both groups, became its first manager. It was this organization that Moses Coady, founder of the Antigonish Movement, used as a model for Nova Scotia fishermen who wanted to become “masters of their own destiny.” The Tignish Credit Union was organized so that poor people could get small loans the banks would not consider, and help one another.

It was followed that same year by a co-operative buying club, which brought in coal, feed, and groceries at reasonable prices. A few years later, it became the Tignish Co-operative Association.

World War Two brought money to the area as men in the Forces sent home pay, while others worked in munitions factories in major Canadian centres. Hard times were over - for a while.

Transcripts of Minutes of the Tignish Fishermen's Union

Song of fishermen's union

CHESTER MCCARTHY

Early photos of co-op Building

Early photo of Credit Union office

Photos of the village social life in these times – a sort of visual social history...

Panorama views of village in 1926?

SECTION THIRTEEN – A QUIET PERIOD (1945-1969)

World War Two changed Tignish in several ways. Because many younger people were experiencing new places, new ways of life, and new cultures, Tignish became more aware of the rest of the world. More and more Acadian girls married English speakers, which contributed to the decline of French and speeded up assimilation.

Joseph A. Bernard, a Tignish merchant and politician, became Lieutenant-Governor of the Province. Even though there had been some French elementary classes taught in some rural schools, in Tignish French instruction at the elementary level began again after a break of over 60 years. A regional high school was opened in 1959. With the decline in the popularity of lamb and the burning of the cheese factory, farmers turned to raising pigs and growing wild blueberries. Another co-op was formed to market the latter. The Tignish Credit Union became the biggest on the Island by 1951. From 1964 on, the Church was the venue of many concerts featuring its Mitchell organ and attracting organists and other visitors from all over the world. Students from as far away as Sri Lanka were coming regularly to study how a co-operative community worked in practice. In spite of this life in Tignish remained largely unchanged from what it had been earlier in the century.

Photos of military activity in Tignish

Photo of Wireless installation in St. Felix

Photo of street with Morris & Bernard store

Various streetscapes from this period: the large blow-ups in the Dalton School.

Photo of Joe Bernard

Photos of the old high school.

Any photos of Credit Union key people?

Photos of foreign students

**GERALD
HANDRAHAN**

SECTION FOURTEEN – CHANGE SPEEDS UP (1969-1981)

The Prince Edward Island Development Plan, an attempt by government to bring the Island into the modern world, gradually closed all rural schools and brought all elementary school children to the Dalton School, which Charles Dalton had built for boys in 1930.

A second wave of co-operatives were organized in the seventies. They provide social and cultural services to the area, thus making it unique on the Island. The first, a Health Centre, has been followed by one that provides training and useful work for handicapped adults, another that provides some of them with a group home, and a social and cultural centre for Acadians.

A series of renovation projects, starting with the organ, began in the Church at the beginning of this period.

As a result of the Official Languages of 1969, grants to help Francophone minorities became available. Tignish Acadians took advantage of them by organizing a wide variety of projects from step dancing classes to a weekly community bulletin. Many of these have strengthened the community as a whole.

Photos of many rural school groups

Dalton School photos

Convent photos

Picture of health Centre – inside and out

Photos of normalisation process (see Cletus Shea)

Photo of group home

Picture of Club Ti-Pa

Photos of church renovations?

Outside and in? (organ, glass and painting)

SECTION FIFTEEN – A PROGRESSING COMMUNITY (1981 - PRESENT)

Change in Tignish has continued steadily, though at a slower rate than in the seventies. A good many new businesses catering to new needs or wants have been set up and are doing well. They include daycare centres, a gym, a fast food outlet, and an auto parts shop. Industry too - a second fish plant and a rafter factory - is diversifying the area's economic base. Tignish Fisheries itself has expanded and continues to modernize.

After high school students were transferred to the new Westisle Composite High School, elementary students were moved to the old high school building until it, in turn was replaced by a modern building that has one of the largest enrollments in the Province. By then, the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre-Dame had ceased to teach in Tignish. Most recently, a branch of Holland College, the Island's community college, has been opened in the village.

The Trans-Canada Trail, here called the Confederation Trail, begins in the centre of Tignish.

The Church remains the symbol of Tignish. Most of the area inhabitants are practising Catholics, making Tignish the biggest rural parish on the Island.

This section is to be very picture and modern-day artefact intensive. I suggest that **Aggie Gaudet** be invited to provide a large number of photo enlargements that will illustrate the life and growth of Tignish in the past number of years.

These photos could be mounted in a display area that would incorporate examples or specimens of local industries (e.g. wooden trusses) so that you get the impression as you leave of intense activity and productivity.