

## **Sandwich, Detroit and Gabriel Richard 1798 -1832**

by  
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When the American occupation of Detroit was taking place, that summer of 1796, young Gabriel Richard of the Society of Saint-Sulpice was hard at work almost seven hundred miles away in the Illinois country, endeavoring to carry on alone as missionary to five parishes along the banks of the Mississippi River. As far away from Detroit in another direction was Jean-Baptiste Marchand, principal of the Sulpician College at Montreal. Neither of these men had any expectation of ever transferring his efforts to the settlements lying along the banks of the Detroit River, yet before that year was over, Father Marchand was to come to Sandwich to succeed Father Dufaux, deceased, and two years later, Father Richard was to reach Detroit, sent by Bishop Carroll to rejoin Father Michel Levadoux, his former superior and co-worker in the Illinois missions. Both Father Marchand and Father Richard were destined to spend the rest of their lives in this area, experiencing all the vicissitudes of frontier life, to say nothing of the emotional stresses and strains peculiar to the disturbance of the political status quo.

Ste. Anne's parish on the north bank of the strait extended from the site of present-day Port Huron to Rivière aux Raisins, now Monroe, but the missionary's responsibilities included the care of the entire area from the Falls of the Miami, below Toledo to Green Bay Wisconsin. Father Levadoux had made a visitation of the Mackinac missions on his way from Illinois to Detroit in 1796, but he could do no more than try to care for the needs of the parishioners of Ste. Anne's. There was work enough here for two priests. To say nothing of great distances to cover – often on foot – in any kind of weather, there were hundreds of confessions to be heard, baptisms and burials, both in considerable numbers, and marriages to be performed, even more, marriages to be validated, for many marriages between Catholics had been performed by a commandant or other officer serving as magistrate. In all his letters to Bishop Carroll Father Levadoux pleaded for assistance – if only the Bishop would find it possible to send him his dear Gabriel Richard.

The Bishop made it possible. On the morning of June 3, 1798, Gabriel Richard came walking up from the wharf after his long journey begun at the end of March. No thought so fantastic came to him as that he would live out a pastorate of thirty-four years here to be remembered by posterity as a

devoted priest, an inspired educator, a tireless humanitarian. His humility would have permitted of no such thinking.

Toward the end of that month, Father Jean Dilhet, recently arrived from France, came on from Baltimore. Father Levadoux was happy to assign him to the parish at Raisin River and the missions to be served from that center.

Meanwhile Monseigneur Pierre Denaut, successor to Bishop Hubert, in Quebec, was writing Bishop Carroll of his intention to go to Sandwich in the near future to administer the sacrament of Confirmation. Would Bishop Carroll wish to have him go to Detroit for the same reason? The Bishop would, indeed, and gladly invited him to do so. Word to Detroit was electric. Father Richard, who had just returned from his first visitation of the missions in the Michillimackinac area late in 1799, yearned to put the badly run-down church in good condition, but he realized that it would not be possible to get it finished in time. There would be large Confirmation classes to be prepared for this extraordinary event. Fathers Marchand and Dilhet would be busy, too, for nothing like this had ever happened here before. Bishop Denaut would be the first bishop ever to visit these shores in the century-long history of the settlements.<sup>1</sup>

The Bishop reached Amherstburg June 13, 1801, and made his “solemn entry” into Sandwich three days later. The exercises began with a mission to prepare the parish for the reception of the sacrament. At the close of the mission, the Bishop confirmed 529 members of Assumption parish.<sup>2</sup>

The morning of June 25, the Bishop crossed to Detroit to be the guest of all Ste. Anne’s. The priests were too happy to put into words the joy they were experiencing, but the warmth of their welcome spoke for them. Everyone was eager to receive this sacrament which only those who had lived for a time in Montreal or Quebec would have had the privilege of receiving. So many were ready, in fact, that it was necessary to hold Confirmation services on four different days, June 25, 26, 28, and July 2, for 563 people.<sup>3</sup> The little old log church must have bulged at all corners in the effort to accommodate the crowd of candidates, their sponsors, and their relatives, not to mention the rest of the congregation drawn each time to the services. Not the least interesting feature of this dramatic event is the age range of those confirmed. Jacques St. Aubin, for example, was ninety-plus, and Jean-Baptiste Chapoton and Marie-Charlotte Cecire were both eighty. The youngest was thirteen; more than half the number were over twenty-one.

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<sup>1</sup> Edward J. Hickey, “Sainte-Anne’s Parish: One Hundred Years of Detroit History” (Detroit, 1951), pp. 21-22.

<sup>2</sup> John C. Plomer, “A History of Assumption Parish,” a bound manuscript in Burton Historical Library, Detroit. Father Plomei had under way an edition in translation of Jean-Baptiste Marchand’s letters but died, 1925, before completing more than this (introductory) essay.

<sup>3</sup> Hickey, *loc. cit.*

At River Raisin Father Dilhet reported Confirmation administered on three successive days “to those who presented themselves at the Communion railing.”<sup>4</sup> The number recorded by Bishop Denaut is 295. Father Marchand assisted at the River Raisin services, as he presumably did at all the services in Detroit.

Bishop Denaut’s visitation over, he left Sandwich July 15 to return to Quebec, having brought the sacrament of Confirmation to almost 1400 people in the three parishes bordering on the strait and the lake it enters. There is material for a meditation in the contemplation of the tremendous spiritual energy created in the soul of one who receives the Gifts of the Holy Ghost. Multiply that one soul by the 1400 souls of devout and grateful simple folk, most of them unlettered, remote from the populous cities, and one comes close to re-living for the moment similar experiences in the first centuries of the Church.

One by-product of the Bishop’s visitation was the upsurge of interest among St. Anne’s parishioners to do something about the old church. Among the 140 pledges given toward the needed improvements was a generous gift from Colonel Hamtramck. Few could give money, but they gave the work of their hands or hauled materials for the project. Colonel Hamtramck did not live to see the work completed, for he died in 1803. Father Marchand came over from Sandwich to assist Father Richard at the Requiem Mass.

Father Levadoux had left for Baltimore during the preceding year.<sup>5</sup> Father Richard was now left alone to see the restoration of the church and rectory through to completion. The arousal of the parishioners from their spiritual inertia gave him hope that the schools he would establish would break down the existing indifference to education among his people and thereby encourage their more active participation in civic affairs.

In his first move toward that objective he enlisted the co-operation of Father Dilhet, whom he asked the Bishop to transfer from St. Anthony’s at River Raisin. The fire of 1805,<sup>6</sup> put an end to their first efforts to conduct a

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<sup>4</sup> Plomer, *loc. cit.*

<sup>5</sup> F. Clever Bald, *Detroit’s First American Decade* (Ann Arbor, 1948), p. 208.

<sup>6</sup> So much has already been written about that fire and the paralyzing losses suffered by the townspeople that there is little need to retell the story here except for mention of Gabriel Richard’s heroic services to the sufferers at that time. Stifling all thoughts of his own shocking losses, he summoned men and youths to take their canoes moored along the shoreline and go to the homes beyond reach of the fire up and down the River for food, clothing, and blankets. By nightfall, something like order was restored. Many homes were hospitably opened to the destitute. all were fed, and many made the best of things under shelter of boughs and boxes. Then Father Richard could turn his thoughts to his own terrible losses – the debt standing on the church property, now in ashes – and his own personal effects, procured with so much effort, gone with

school for boys who might find their vocation in the priesthood. Father Dilhet left Detroit the year after the fire, but Father Richard continued the work he had begun in 1804, in his Academy for Young Ladies. Here he prepared four young women to become the first teachers of the schools he envisioned for the white and Indian children in and near Detroit. These young ladies were from prominent families and already possessed of excellent educations.

In Canada, as early as 1797 Governor Simcoe was urging that schools be encouraged, but his objective was ‘the establishment of grammar schools to which the sons of officials and of better-class inhabitants might be sent.’<sup>7</sup> Gabriel Richard’s philosophy of education maintained the right of every child to the kind of education best suited to his capacity and his needs. He was to have that education gratis if his parents were unable to provide his tuition. In the Richard plan, children of different races and nationalities would study together, play together, and eat together, for through such contacts prejudices are done away with and the anti-social, anti-racial emotions that so readily breed strife would less readily be aroused.<sup>8</sup> His theory, based on the democratic ideal, called for government aid to education, but he wanted no government control over schools. Governor Simcoe’s plan, on the other hand, was set up largely for “the professional and administrative classes of the province,” and would depend in part at least on a government endowment derived from lands set aside for that purpose.<sup>9</sup> For some years, too, these schools were under clerical control, that of the Church of England.<sup>10</sup> Gabriel Richard’s schools, in particular the University, were to be free of sectarian control, though that did not mean they were to be non-religious.<sup>11</sup>

From his opening remarks in his “Address to the Honourable Legislature of Michigan,” in 1808, shortly before he left for Washington to present to the Congress of the United States his “Plan for the Education of the Indians,” it may safely be assumed that Gabriel Richard was keeping his sights trained on the educational experiment being conducted on the Canadian side of the River.

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everything else.

<sup>7</sup> Fred Landon, *Western Ontario and the American Frontier* (Toronto, 1941), p. 63.

<sup>8</sup> Gabriel Richard, “Memorial to Congress (1809),” in *Territorial Papers of the United States*, C. E. Carter (editor and compiler); (Washington, 1942), X, 262.266.

<sup>9</sup> Landon, *loc. cit.*

<sup>10</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>11</sup> Lucy Salmon, “Education in Michigan during the Territorial Period,” *Michigan Pioneer Historical Collections*, 7:38.

Our neighbours on the British side [he wrote] are now erecting a large Stone building for an Academy. The undersigned being sensible that it would be shameful for the American Citizens of Detroit, if nothing should be done in their territory for a similar and so valuable Establishment, begs leave to call the attention of the Legislature of Michigan to an object the most important to the welfare of the rising Generation ...<sup>12</sup>

The Honourable Legislature could give Gabriel Richard little but high approval of his excellent plan and plenty of encouragement for him to go to Washington in quest of funds to promote his plans for the vocational training of the Indians. He was deeply concerned, too, for their spiritual welfare, for attempts were being made by proselyters to draw them from the faith of their forefathers. But what of his parishioners during his long absence? He would ask Father Marchand to come to his aid.

Father Marchand agreed to look after Father Richard's flock, but he made known his distress in his letter to Bishop Plessis within a week after Father Richard's departure for the East. The prospect of three month's absence during which the Sandwich pastor would be offering his Masses each Sunday in two different churches separated by a stretch of water that he would have to cross in any kind of weather, besides all the other parish duties incumbent upon him ... Devastating prospect!<sup>13</sup> What he was later to discover was even worse: Father Richard would be away for six whole months, not three.

It was midsummer when Gabriel Richard returned bringing with him an organ, a printing press and printer, and many tools and materials for his schools, and with assurances from President Jefferson and others of financial help which, ironically, were never to be kept.

Father Marchand had, indeed, stood by during that long absence in 1809. Older than Gabriel Richard by seven years, and given to caution, he occasionally became disturbed by the younger priest's out-of-the-ordinary enterprises. There was the time, for example, when Father Richard acceded to the request of the Governor and other prominent protestants to preach to them every Sunday at noon in the Council House after his High Mass. There was no minister in Detroit at the time nor was there likely to be in the near future. After Father Richard had for some time conducted a service of simple prayers and a sermon based on "the Principles used in the discovery of truth, the several causes of our errors, the existance (sic) of God and the

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<sup>12</sup> Gabriel Richard, "To the Honourable Legislature of the Territory of Michigan" (October 18, 1808), in Gabriel Richard *Papers*, Burton Historical Library.

<sup>13</sup> Letter to Bishop Plessis, December 5, 1808, via George Paré, *The Catholic Church in Detroit* (Detroit, 1951), pp. 306-307.

spirituality, immortality of our soul ....”<sup>14</sup> Father Marchand’s scruples compelled him to advise the younger priest to ask Bishop Carroll’s approval of what he was doing. Father Richard promptly wrote the Bishop a full account of this activity. Whether the Bishop approved or disapproved evidence seems to be lacking, but Father Marchand could at least feel that he had done his duty.

One of the numerous anecdotes clustering about the good Curé’s memory grows out of those Sunday services held in the Council House. An appreciative auditor, thanking Father Richard for his generosity, commented rather tactfully on the absence of sectarianism in the sermons, whereupon the kindly priest replied in his quaint English, “Well, you know our dear Lord said, ‘I am the Good Shepherd, and you are my mutttons.’”

The Catholic missionary on the frontier has been characterized by Calvin Goodrich as “the one wholly faithful friend of the Indian.”<sup>15</sup> Gabriel Richard surely qualifies for such a tribute in the long story of his relations with and devotion to the Indians of the Michigan Territory. It was ever his concern to promote their welfare and to protect them against exploitation. The Indians knew Father Richard and they gave him their confidence. Thus he learned instance after instance of the white man’s cheating the red man and of the dangers inherent in any incident that would draw the United States into a dispute involving an Indian-British coalition.

In July, 1807, he wrote Bishop Carroll in anger and anxiety, citing the circumstances of speculators buying land of the Indians in “the new Connecticut” for one-half cent an acre, only to sell it almost at once for fifteen dollars an acre. The Indians, Father Richard wrote, learning of being cheated, “are everyday complaining of the Americans in general... and they shew some disposition to go to war.”<sup>16</sup> The Bishop forwarded the letter to Washington at once, where it set up a chain-reaction of plans for defense in the event of a crisis. President Jefferson acted immediately to order cessation of negotiations for the purchase of lands of the Indians, because “the immediate acquisition of the land is of less consequence to us than their friendship & thorough confidence in our justice – we had better let the purchase lie till they are in better temper.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Letter to Bishop Carroll, October 8, 1807. Photostatic copy, Detroit Archdiocesan Archives, Father Paré’s Collection.

<sup>15</sup> *The First Michigan Frontier* (Ann Arbor, 1940), p. 60.

<sup>16</sup> Portion of Gabriel Richard’s letter to Bishop Carroll, forwarded by Daniel Brent (August 30, 1807) to James Madison, Secretary of State, in Carter, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-131.

<sup>17</sup> See “The President to the Secretary of War.” pp. 131-132. The following 35 pages in this volume carry an interesting exchange of letters occasioned by the anxiety aroused by a letter “from a French priest in Detroit,” forwarded to Washington by the Bishop.

Both in that letter and in one four days later, the President directed Secretary Dearborn to take the necessary measures against the possibility of an uprising in the vicinity of Detroit. Thus “a priest at Detroit” sounded one of the first warnings of the unrest and growing animosity of the Indians that was to eventuate into savage war within five years.

Unrest among the Indians and political disturbances mounting into “incidents” were bringing the threat of war ever closer to reality. Days of prayer and fasting were being observed in the East and in Bishop Plessis’ diocese, but scarcely any real awareness on the part of Detroit was noticeable beyond the prevailing nervousness.

The causes of the war and its details are far too complex to be treated here and it would not serve our purpose to try to do so. The most that can be attempted is to direct attention to some of the incidents growing out of the local conditions.

When General Hull’s expedition entered Sandwich at the beginning of the war to make of the village a base for attack upon Amherstburg, Father Marchand, “though suspected of being in communication with Amherstburg,”<sup>18</sup> was treated “with respect” by the American troops and was permitted to remain in his presbytery. It is further recorded that he stayed at home “and minded his business.”

The tide of fortune changed with Hull’s surrender and Proctor’s taking command at Detroit. Father Marchand was seriously worried on Father Richard’s behalf, and well he might be, for the Detroit priest was “neither slow nor gentle in expressing his opinion”;<sup>19</sup> in fact, “he talked too much.” In February, 1813, Proctor sent thirty of Detroit’s citizens into exile at Quebec, and it might be Gabriel Richard’s turn any day. His press, devoted to the arts of peace, had been taken over by the British forces, and from it were issued the orders and demands incident to war-time conditions. When Gabriel Richard’s turn did come, he was ordered to Sandwich temporarily, May 21, 1813, in the custody of Father Marchand.

This situation made it difficult for Father Marchand, and it is safe to assume that his guest kept on his best behavior, if only out of consideration for his host. For some reason Proctor changed his mind about sending Gabriel Richard to Quebec. He crossed over to Sandwich unexpectedly on the night of June 6 and entered the rectory without advance warning to give the priest his choice of going into exile or signing his parole to refrain from any further remarks. It was not easy to give in, but to do so would mean he could return to his people. In the presence of Father Marchand and M. Jacques Baby of Assumption parish, Gabriel Richard signed the parole. He was back

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<sup>18</sup> Plomer, *op. cit.*

<sup>19</sup> Letter from J: B. Marchand to Bishop Plessis, August 18, 1813, via Paré, *op. cit.* 316.

in Detroit the next morning for the feast of Corpus Christi.<sup>20</sup>

The later fortunes of war made Jacques Baby a prisoner of General Henry Harrison after the battle of the Thames. And it so happened that the Baby home at Sandwich became the General's headquarters. A Baby descendant writing of this house some sixty years ago said of it:

This house had echoed to the voices of Brock, Hull, Tecumseh, Proctor, and Harrison ... After the Battle of the Thames, when Tecumseh was killed, Colonel James [Jacques] Baby was taken prisoner and returned to Sandwich with General Harrison. [The General] occupied the [Baby] house as his headquarters and his humane and honourable treatment of the Canadians during the campaign was ever held by them in grateful remembrance. The house has sheltered the mitred and the ermined, and the doors were ever opened alike to the Huron and the habitant.<sup>21</sup>

That war ended with nobody really a winner and all too many on both sides of the Detroit River suffering from deprivations inflicted by the combatants.

Gabriel Richard's return to Detroit was followed by his appointment as agent for the administration of relief<sup>22</sup> to the indigent and stricken people from Monroe (River Raisin) to Port Huron. Poverty and illness confronted the great-hearted priest on all sides.

The war ended, too, with deepened animosities displacing the old friendships and with a heightened anti-Americanism frequently expressed by those who had not experienced the old-time closely knit relationships based on family ties. It was not like that in the wake of the departure of the British post in 1796. Then the ties held rather firmly and pleasantly, as witness the exodus of Detroit officials and citizens to Sandwich, in June of 1800, to celebrate the birthday of His Majesty, George III. And that was only four years after the United States took possession of Detroit. Families established in Sandwich and others resident in Detroit in 1815 sensible of the prevailing feeling believed our two communities were too close to each other not only geographically but also by ties of family relationships to permit these recent sentiments to become permanent. "Pacification Balls" would be one means of bringing people together, for dancing to music would be hard to resist.

The Detroit *Free Press* in reminiscent mood fifty years ago, carried a story about the first of these "Pacification Balls." The story proper is discovered in what we might today think of as a gossip column. It goes like

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<sup>20</sup> Paré, *op. cit.*, 317.

<sup>21</sup> W. L. Baby Manuscript, Detroit *News-Tribune* (May 6, 1894), Part 3, p. 17, in *Burton Scrap Books*, 7, Burton Historical Library.

<sup>22</sup> Lewis Cass to W. H. Crawford, Secretary of War, enclosure dated September 23, 1815, in Carter, *op. cit.*, X, 644-646.

this:

... Though a far inland town, Detroit had even the manners of a seaport, and its fashions were those of London and Paris – only they were about five months behind the times, as it required a ninety days’ sail from Europe and a two months’ travel across New York and over Lake Erie. So much disaffection existed between the people and the British residents who had been conspicuous as leaders during the War of 1812, that many prominent families found it prudent to seek protection under the British flag on the opposite side of the river. In a short time society resumed its usual conditions, and such a state of feeling was considered most unfortunate. One device employed to heal the breach was a series, of “pacification balls.” The invitation to the first of these reads:

“The company of — is respectfully solicited to the first Pacification Ball, at Woodworth’s Hotel, on Thursday next at 7 p.m.”

At the bottom of the invitation is the list of the “Managers” sponsoring the ball, all prominent men in the life of the city, among them, William Woodbridge, A. B. Woodward, Charles Latmed, H. I. Hunt and others. The date was March 24, 1815, an indication that no time was being lost in bringing Sandwich and Detroit together.<sup>23</sup>

Another of those “pacification balls” occurred on the Fourth of July, the exact year not stated. Not every one remained pacified that time, however, for “it required a score or more of citizens to protect British guests from insults. Plenty of wine was drunk and these balls were voted a great success.”<sup>24</sup>

It is interesting to note that the invitations were printed on the Richard press, thereby suggesting that the press was once more serving the arts of peace.

No “pacification balls” succeeded better in their efforts to restore the old relations than did the visit of Bishop Joseph-Octave Plessis of Quebec, who came over from Sandwich to be Father Richard’s guest in June, 1816. The Bishop’s own journal meticulously recording each day’s events gives us the delightfully frank account of the visit of the prelate and his suite, including Father Marchand, of course, from their arrival at noon to their departure late that night.

They called at once on Governor Cass, who, “to receive this ceremonious visit, which he had expected,... had put on a calico dressing gown.” The sentry, too, had not got the signal in time to present arms, but at

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<sup>23</sup> Detroit *Free Press* (Sunday, December 22, 1901), in *Burton Scrap Books*, 7:79, Burton Historical Library, Detroit.

<sup>24</sup> *Loc. cit.*

Major-General Macomb's everything went off very differently.

There they were received with full military honors – “not expected by ecclesiastics [writes the Bishop] but received graciously whenever accorded.” The half-hour-long visit during which musicians in the background continued to play was marked by “mutual ceremony and civilities.” Upon leaving to go to Father Richard's house “a mile lower down on the same bank,” they accepted the invitation of the General to make the trip in his own boat “prepared expressly and manned with an elegant crew... The guard was still under arms, and the musicians lined the steep to play a flourish as [the guests] walked down.”<sup>25</sup>

The dinner at Father Richard's made up in quantity what it may have lacked in epicurean variety and the company gathered there provided an evening of “lively conversation.” The good Bishop was impressed to discover that here at Father Richard's board was gathered in “happy reunion [a group] whose members, French, Canadians, Americans, English, Civil, Military, ecclesiastics, laymen, Catholics and Protestants were strangers to each other.”<sup>26</sup>

At the end came the toasts. “The first was in the Bishop's honour. He proposed one to the President of the United States, expecting that it would be returned by another to the King of England. Not at all. Governor Casa proposed his to the Holy Father, the Pope, and the General's [was] to the prosperity of the Catholic clergy.”<sup>27</sup>

Before they left, the guests promised to dine with the General the following Thursday and with the Governor the Monday following that engagement.

Only these few details of the Bishop's visit can be given here, but they suffice to indicate how cordial were the relations among the various groups of people on both sides of the River. Much of this happy circumstance was due to Gabriel Richard himself, though some of his own parishioners took exception to his mingling so congenially with other than the French Catholics.

Some of his people gave him trouble of more serious nature in their long-standing feud over the location of the church to replace the one destroyed by fire in 1805. It finally required an interdict by Bishop Flaget, happily removed during his visitation at Detroit in 1818, when he laid the cornerstone of the new Ste. Anne's.

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<sup>25</sup> *Journal of Bishop Joseph-Octave Plessis* (1816), as translated by Abbé Lionel St. G. Lindsay, of Quebec. The material selected here is from that part of the *Journal* entitled “Visitation of Monseigneur Joseph-Octave Plessis, 1816.” Typed copy, Burton Historical Library.

<sup>26</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>27</sup> *Loc. cit.*

Father Marchand was also experiencing bitter difficulties over the ownership of lands claimed by François Pratte, the same François Pratte who had set out in 1796 to escort his new pastor from Montreal to Sandwich. The court action begun in 1801 was settled five years later when Pratte was awarded all the land given by the Indiana to Father Potier in 1780 and the buildings on those lands. Nothing remained to Father Marchand but his church and rectory. François Pratte did promise in 1816 in the presence of Father Richard and Father Marchand to re-open the case for arbitration, but died without doing so, and his son was relentless in his demand that the old cemetery be speedily made ready for his use. It was not until 1824, however, the year before Father Marchand's death, that the Bishop directed removal of the dead to the new cemetery.<sup>28</sup>

The long and highly involved story of Gabriel Richard's difficulties even to imprisonment in consequence of his carrying out a directive of Bishop Flaget to excommunicate François Labadie, who married again following his divorce from his wife in Montreal, is probably too well known to need recounting here. That the Labadie suit should ever have come into a civil court is difficult to understand except that he claimed defamation and loss of business as a result of the act of excommunication. Most of his former patrons would have no business dealings with him.

The story of the progress of that case through the courts and its relation to and effect upon Gabriel Richard's political career in Congress as Delegate from Michigan Territory has been admirably presented by the Reverend George Paré in his outstanding history recently published.<sup>29</sup> Briefly, the outcome of the first trial and the move to appeal while Father Richard was on bail placed him in jeopardy when he left Detroit for Washington to take his seat, in the House of Representatives in December, 1823.

He hoped to advance the spiritual welfare of the Indians by his efforts in Congress and he advocated the building of roads into the interior of the state to further the immigration of home-seekers. He worked hard not only in Congress but through private contacts to bring restitution to those settlers who had lost so heavily in cattle and farm implements during the War of 1812 without reimbursement. His stipend of eight dollars a day would be thriftily saved for payment on the debt of the new Ste. Anne's.<sup>30</sup>

Trusting to immunity granted a duly elected member of Congress,

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<sup>28</sup> Plomer, *op. cit.*

<sup>29</sup> Father Paré's *The Catholic Church in Detroit*, referred to frequently and most gratefully throughout this paper, has traced expertly the very complex interplay of hostile forces that did their utmost to destroy Gabriel Richard's every effort to be of service in the last years of his life. See especially pages 339-351.

<sup>30</sup> Marchand to Bishop Plessis, December 11, 1823: "My neighbor is getting eight dollars a day. That will make him a good sum, and you know he needs it." *Via Paré, op. cit.*, p. 341.

Gabriel Richard had risked leaving Detroit while still on bail. His enemies did not respect immunity and promptly had him arrested upon his return in 1824. Bailed out again, on condition he not leave the county, he went again in the fall to Washington for the second session of the Eighteenth Congress, relying on the opinion of Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, and other men of note that it was safe for him to do so.<sup>31</sup>

The case was finally taken to the United States Supreme Court in 1831. Gabriel Richard died before action was taken, but from 1825 on, he was confined to Wayne County, prohibited from the missionary work he had looked forward to carrying on for the Indians in the l'Arbre Croche and Mackinac areas now that additional priests would be able to help him care for the vast parish he had so long served alone. He had not been able to attend the funeral of his good friend Father Marchand, who died April 14, 1825.

Though confined to one area, he was not idle. He opened infant schools on the methods of Pestalozzi, he sent to Paris for Abbe Sicard's course in the teaching of the deaf and deaf-mutes, and he opened classes for the teaching of such handicapped children and for the blind as well. He helped to found the Michigan Historical Society and he had plans well under way for a small Sulpician seminary at the time of his death, September 13, 1832.

In his death he became, indeed, the symbol of the devoted priest and the passionate humanitarian, for he gave his life in the cholera scourge of that year in ministering to the souls and bodies of the stricken in his beloved Ste. Anne's and in the entire town.

His passing marked the end of an era. The frontier village to which he had come June 3, 1798 was now a flourishing little city to which newcomers were daily being transported from the East on the steamers plying the Great Lakes. In his work for the people of Ste. Anne's as their pastor; in the schools he had founded or planned for as the first educator in the Territory; in the University, the Public Library, and the Historical Society, institutions which he had helped to found; in his services in Congress; in his devotion to all the underprivileged wherever he met them, he made posterity his debtors – in Detroit and Michigan, at least – but in his abounding charity, he would never remind us of our obligations to his memory.

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<sup>31</sup> Paré, *op. cit.*, p. 348.

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