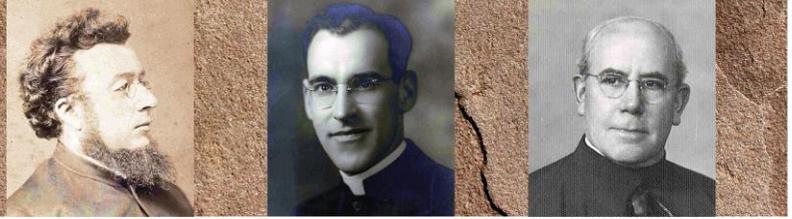


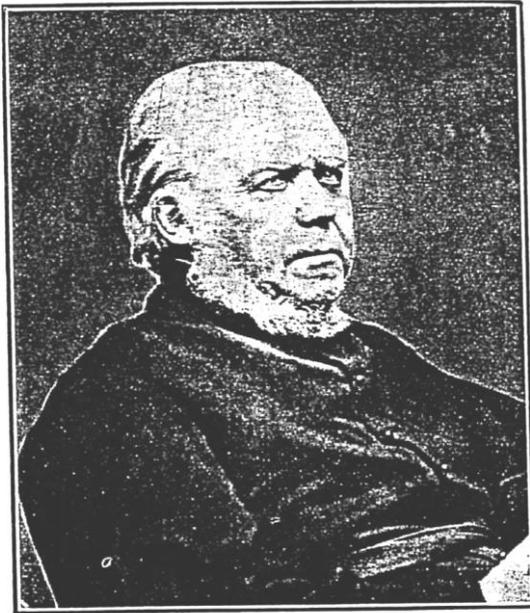
THESE
are our brothers



Reverend Peter Schneider

Peter Schneider was born on October 8, 1806 in Schoenborn, Alsace. He was the son of Joseph Schneider and Eva Steckle. His education was at the Lycee at Zabern, before he entered the Novitiate of the Redemptorists in Vienna, Austria. For reasons unknown, he

did not stay with the Redemptorists for long. At some point after leaving, but before arriving in Canada, he served in the Diocese of Strasbourg. It was during that time that he evidently decided to become a missionary in the Americas, and left for the Diocese of New York. Around 1830, Bishop Alexander MacDonnell invited him to come to Canada, which was in need of priests at the time, and sent him to the seminary in Montreal to finish his priestly studies. He was ordained on June 19, 1836 in Montreal.



Father Schneider was a formidable man even in his youth, possessing a commanding bearing and the ability to speak three languages (French, German and English). One can only imagine the impact he would have had on the rural

communities he served. His first such assignment was in Amherstburg and Sandwich, where baptismal registers suggest he was in the area from 1836 to 1837, focusing more on Sandwich in the latter half of that period.

By 1838, he had taken up residence in Goderich, ministering to the Catholics there and in the surrounding areas of Guelph, Wilmot and Waterloo. While doubtless Father Schneider was held in great esteem from the start, due to his presence and his demeanor, an event recalled during this time speaks to the respect and esteem he enjoyed among Catholics and Protestants alike, which was not common in those days: the tale has it that he was walking alone to Goderich when he came across a group from the Protestant-affiliated Orange Order. He bowed to them; in return, the group saluted him and moved so he could pass. There were also reports that he was welcome in the houses of Catholics and Protestants.

During this period, he also built a frame church in St. Agatha.

In 1843, Bishop Michael Power of Toronto reassigned Waterloo to another priest, and attached Stratford to Goderich, changing and expanding Father Schneider's territory. From that time he became the resident pastor of Goderich and nine other missions, and still ministered in the Waterloo area from time to time. During this period of time he erected some of the first altars at Wilmot, Waterloo, Stratford and Irishtown. By 1849, he began to minister to the French-Canadians near St. Joseph, which had apparently been lacking in a religious presence for some time. Father Schneider's zeal and his friendly character won them over.

Around 1852, he began to minister to Logan and Mitchell, coming every third Sunday to celebrate Mass in the local log schoolhouse (S.S. No.5 Logan). After spending some time in Rome in June 1852, he returned in 1853. He returned to Goderich and remained there until 1869, when poor health forced him to retire. He retired to France, where he passed away near Lyons in 1880. When word reached Canada, Masses were said for the repose of his soul — such was the esteem he held among the Catholic community, even years later.

*Tiffany Champagne, M.L.I.S.
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