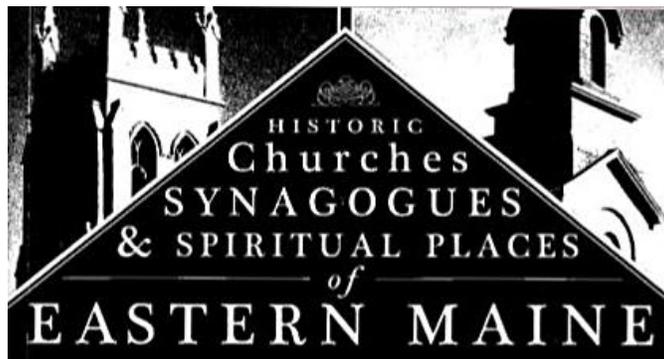


## **Holy Name of Jesus Church - Historical Information**

Excerpts of text are from the following book, used with the permission of the authors.



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Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church in Machias has a rich historical tradition that is deeply woven into the fabric of both the New England Catholic Church history and that of the state of Maine.

Just eight years after Maine was admitted to the Union and twenty years after Boston was established as a separate diocese (of which Maine became a part) Holy Name of Jesus Parish was formed in Machias in 1828. It preceded the establishment of the Catholic Diocese of Portland by 26 years. Prior to the building of the Church in Machias in 1845, services were held in parishioners' homes by priests that covered the scattered Catholic missions of the Diocese.

Bishop Jean-Louis Cheverus, Boston's first bishop, made yearly visits to Maine and ministered on these trips to both the small enclaves of Catholics and to the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy people. In 1804 Bishop Cheverus appointed Father Romagne as pastor to the two Indian Nations and the scattered Catholic settlements in Maine. Father Romagne served in this role until 1824. In 1825, when Bishop Fenwick was consecrated as Boston's second bishop, he found only two priests in his diocese, Father Byrne in Boston, and Father Ryan at St. Patrick's in Newcastle, Maine. In 1826, a Dominican priest Father French, was stationed in Eastport, Maine. It is most likely that during Holy Name of Jesus's fledgling years as a parish that Father Ryan and Father French were the priests that provide for the sacramental needs of the community.

Holy Name Church's historical roots here in Washington County can be traced back over 400 years to the founding of the ill-fated French colony on De Monts Island on the St. Croix River near the present-day city of Calais, Maine. In July 1604, Mass was celebrated for the first time in New England by Father Nicholas Aubrey of Paris.

The present Holy Name of Jesus Church was built during the years 1875 and 1876 to replace the first church, which was destroyed by fire in 1875. The present church steeple was added later.

As the Catholic population of southern Washington County grew, St. Michael the Archangel Church was built in Cherryfield in 1864 as a seasonal mission church to the Holy Name of Jesus Parish. Over the years, the Catholic population in the southern section of Washington county has continued to grow and in 1990 the church building in Cherryfield was moved to its new foundation and commenced operating year-round.

In 1936, the Cornelius Sullivan family of Whitneyville endowed the building of our Lady of Mercies Church as a second mission church to Holy Name Parish. This church served the Catholic community of Whitneyville for 36 years until it was the decommission by the Catholic Diocese of Portland in 1969. In 1996 the church building was destroyed by fire.