Rev. Alex Macdonell immigrated to “Canada” from Scotland in 1786 from Knoydart Scotland in 1786 with 560 parishioners

Before the Church was built the congregation worshiped in a building known as the Blue Chapel (because of its blue ceiling) located where the east graveyard is.

The stone church was built from 1815 to 1821. The church seated 1000 parishioners. The church was built using wooden pegs instead of nails. Upon completion of construction in 1821 in a letter to Rome the Third pastor, another Rev Alexander Macdonell and first Bishop of Upper Canada declared that “This Church was second to none is all of North America”.

It did not have pillars like most large churches have. Stones used to build the church were excavated from a local quarry. It had stained glass windows.

The mission parish’s of St. Raphael's Parish and St. Andrews were both named parishes on the same day in April 1802 from which all other parishes in the area were formed. (See front page in binder)

St. Raphael’s church burnt on August 10th, 1970. Cause of the fire was deemed electrical.

There were three bells. The two smaller bells were badly melted, one was stollen in the mid 1980’s Only part of the largest bell remains on display at the entrance of the Ruins. The two smaller bells were badly melted, one was stolen in the mid 1980’s

In 1994 a committee of 14 individuals known as the Friends of the Ruins St. Raphael’s was formed. They were committed to the stabilization of the Ruins walls.

The Friends of the Ruins raised 1.4 million dollars from Matching Heritage grants, fundraising and generous donations from loyal supporters.

Stabilization was completed in 2005.

There will never be a roof placed on the structure.

The Ruins of St. Raphael’s Roman Catholic Church was officially designated a National Historic site of Canada in 1996. The official plaque unveiling was in 1999.

Plaques on the interior north west wall lists the names of patrons. They are generous individuals who have donated $1,000 to the stabilization project.

The plaques on the north east wall are in memoriam. They honour the deceased loved ones who are remembered by family or friends. All of the plaques are part of our fundraising efforts.

The Ruins as it stands now is supported by donations and a golf tournament to support the upkeep of the structure, and to pay ongoing expenses such as hydro, grass cutting, insurance, and repairs.