

Bedeque United Church

The History of a Methodist Circuit in Prince Edward Island

Tracing its Roots in the Cultural, Educational and Commercial Fields of the Community.

By E. S. D.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Methodist Church of Canada was formed in 1874 by the Union of the Wesleyan Methodist Eastern British American Conference composed of churches in the Maritimes, Newfoundland and Bermuda, with the Wesleyan Methodist conference of Canada (all west of New Brunswick) and the new Connexion Methodist church of Canada whose work centred in Ontario. This marked the severance of all connection to, and aid from, the Old Country.

The last meeting of the Eastern British American Conference was held in Charlottetown in June, 1874. The new Methodist Church of Canada established at that time divided the church into smaller conferences with the provinces of New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island forming one. Previously, in voting on union of the Methodist churches, the Bedeque official board agreed to the scheme with the stipulation that there should be lay delegates to Conference which did not come to pass till 1884. Mr. Strong continued however to represent Bedeque interests in an unofficial capacity.

It was a time of Union. The previous year Prince Edward Island had joined the Dominion of Canada. The next year, 1876, the Presbyterian Church in Canada was formed—as a natural sequence of brethren forgetting their petty differences in the oneness of Christ,



REV. JOHN PHINNEY
Superintendent of the Bedeque Circuit
1872-1875

which had resulted in nine previous unions in that church since 1817. Methodist Union did not reach its high tide till 1884 when a further splicing joined the Primitive Methodists, Methodist Episcopal, and Bible Christian churches with the Methodist Church of Canada in the national wide Methodist Church, which with the Presbyterian Church in Canada then sat back to gain new strength and confidence for the greatest of all acts of faith in the Church Union field—the consummation of the United Church of Canada.

Circuit Divided

Bedeque Circuit was finally divided in 1873, with Tryon, Cape Traverse, Crapaud, Victoria, DeSable, North Tryon and Westmoreland forming the new Tryon circuit. Preaching places remaining on the Bedeque end included Centreville, Searletown, Freetown and Wilmot. Rev. John S. Phinney who had come as superintendent minister in 1872 continued at Bedeque as pastor. In the second winter of his ministry "a most pleasing and powerful revival took place at Searletown and Centreville." Over fifty, mostly young people, were converted in Searletown alone. A custom among loyal children of the Church at Bedeque, of leaving small endowments to perpetuate the Cause when they were gone, had its inception in 1873, when Solomon Wright of Centreville, who died at the early age of thirty-two, made specific bequests of \$182.00 to the building fund of the parsonage; \$81.00 to foreign missions and \$81.00 to assist in repairing the Wesleyan Church at Centreville.

While a new custom started, another, that of preaching funeral sermons the first Sunday after the burial of a prominent leader, was dying out. One of the last in Centreville Church was for Philip Callbeck of South Shore who died at forty-eight years of age in 1874. Scion of a prominent Tryon family whose ancestor of the same name was the Island's most distinguished politician in the 18th century, Philip Callbeck never basked in the reflected glories of his ancestor's achievements but with the aid of a devoted wife, Priscilla Pope Wright, who moved to Central Bedeque shortly before his death, gave to a small family of three children a heritage of devotion to the finer things of life which has had a tremendous impact on the community's life right down to the present.

Mr. Beer's Removal

The removal next year (1875) of John Beer, Esq. left a big store vacant on Centreville Corner (where William T. Bowness later built) and a gap in the offices of the church equalled only by Hon. Wm. B. Strong's departure from Central Bedeque the next year. John Beer, well-known as merchant, farmer, magistrate and local preacher, gave probably his best services to Centreville in the work of the Sunday School to which he was intensely devoted and in which he served as Superintendent and teacher during most of his eighteen years in Bedeque. As a farmer, who necessarily had to hire men to do most of the work, he was deeply concerned with preserving and improving soil fertility. A story is told of John Beer sitting as a magistrate in Tryon, on a case involving the piling of mussel mud on the side of the road to the inconvenience of the public. In his judgment he found for the defendant and said he'd like to see mussel mud, destined for the fields, piled not only on one side of the road but on both, all the way from Tryon to Bedeque. John Beer's schooner frequently tied up at Hurd's wharf to load much of the Bedeque produce shipped at this time. It was a period when store accounts, running for ten months, were settled once a year with potatoes and oats. Many accounts were never settled. This fact, together with a growing awareness that, since the Railway went through by-passing Bedeque, the community would never be a big commercial centre, probably accounted for Mr. Beer's moving. The quarterly meeting appointed Nelson Inman to take up the collection at Bedeque in place of Mr. Beer and Collin Wright to prepare for the Sacraments.

William G. Strong who removed to Summerside in 1876 to continue a general merchandising business in a larger field of action, was still the Bedeque representative in the Legislative Council and still continued as a local preacher for the Bedeque church. Amos M. Wright

SPONSOR FOLK SCHOOL

WINDSOR, N.S. — (CP) — Encouraged by the success of other community projects here, the Hants County Farmers' Association has sponsored a folk school which offers courses in personal development and community living.

QUALITY COUNTS

One can actually stuff up with food and still starve the body, according to nutrition experts. It's quality, not quantity, which counts. This is particularly worth remembering if one is doing heavy work, such as logging or fanning, which burn up a lot of energy. Some foods are just so much stuffing, authorities say. Therefore, more than tantalizing taste should be the guide to good health. Also, Canadians are reminded that food should be prepared properly and served cleanly, to ensure maximum health.

took his place as circuit steward; and brother Albert Craig's name was added to the list of prayer leaders at this time. At Strong's Corner Collin Wright who married a daughter of Wm. G. Strong took over the business which some years later became Wright and Craig. At Centreville John Beer's departure left Major Wright as sole merchant in the settlement, doing business at the same stand where he and Charles Gardiner had commenced many years previously. Major Wright commenced the good Bedeque custom of combining store and postoffice, having been postmaster as early as 1868.

Rev. John S. Phinney came to Bedeque in 1872, direct from a successful ministry of fourteen years in Newfoundland where he had served some time with the fishing fleet. His frequent prayers in the Bedeque church for those at sea and in perilous places, were models of fervency and great earnestness. The Phinneys were the last minister's family to live in the Searletown Mission House. Though the new one was started the year they came, it was slow in being finished, and the prospect of an extra move nothing to be desired by a family which Methodist rule moved at least once every three years. Accordingly, the first occupants of the new parsonage at Centreville were Rev. Joseph Sellar, M.A., wife and family. Their son, George Douglas, was the first of a large number of minister's children born in Bedeque parsonage. The ministerial salary had been raised the previous year to \$750, plus horse-hire and \$40.00 yearly for each child. When Tryon divided from the circuit in 1873 the Bedeque stewards recommended monthly or weekly contributions to more effectively take care of increased expenditures. Regular giving was made for education, and though weekly envelopes, first tried in 1876 during Mr. Sellar's pastorate, were the answer, they met with only moderate success.

The old parsonage at Searletown was offered rent free to any supernumerary minister who might wish to retire on the Bedeque circuit and give of his time, as strength would allow, to assisting the minister. No one, however, was found at that time who wished to retire in Searletown so the Mission House was eventually rented to George MacLean for forty dollars a year, later reduced to thirty. The rent never more than paid the upkeep on the property so that in 1897 the old parsonage was sold by auction and moved, first to the Percy Allen farm in Searletown then finally to Albany, where, still standing opposite the station and not looking its age, it is occupied by Wendell Howatt.

Proceeds from the sale were used for various purposes; twenty dollars went towards the debt on Centreville parsonage and other sums were used for painting the inside of Searletown church and removing the gallery which had been built for the choir in 1886. The Searletown organ, purchased in 1884, had first occupied the Lewis Leard pew; but, accompanying the choir to the gallery two years later, it came back to the front of the church in 1899 when a redesigned chancel, eliminating the side pews and the front pew of the middle aisle, placed the pulpit more forward with choir and organ behind. Alice Black, the first organist, was still playing at this time, though under a different name, being now Mrs. Arthur Wright. During the eighties, hundred and nineties a yearly assessment of twenty-five cents for each pew holder was collected for warming and lighting the church.

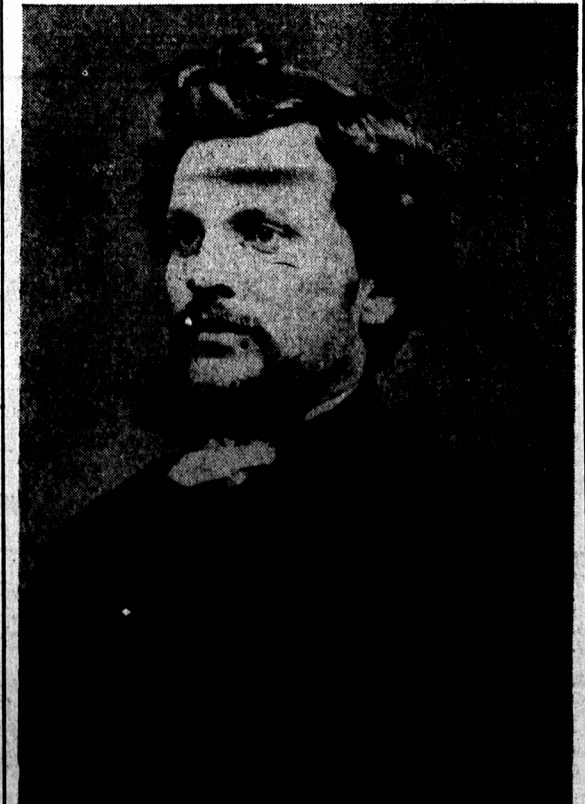
Vacancies on the trustee Board of Searletown church, following in the wake of deaths and removals, were filled by the minister's nominations, voted on by the remaining members. In 1884, David T. Lowther succeeded Gabriel Strang, deceased. Two years later Albert Wright and David Lowther took the places of William Allan and Thomas Sobey who had passed on; while John Huestis filled the vacancy caused by Nelson Wright's removal from the community. In 1895 Marshall Wright and Lewis Trueman were appointed in the places of the late S. R. Black and S. H. Trueman, men whose loss to the community was measurable only partly by their work and worth in Searletown church.

North Carleton Services

At North Carleton, or Seven Mile Bay, the first Methodist service were held sometime in early eighteen hundred and seventies in Deborah Lowther's big kitchen where the friends and neighbors sat on plank seats on Sunday afternoons to hear the Gospel preached, generally by a local preacher. Mrs. Lewis Trueman of Centreville can call up vivid childhood memories of Richard Hudson, Tryon's best local preacher speaking in this kitchen which was her mother's. Deborah, the wife of David Lowther, was the first member of the Methodist society in North Carleton. She and her sister Hannah (Mrs. Matthew Lowther) belonged to the Christopher Smith family of Crapaud, of whom Rev. Matthew Smith mentioned previously was one. They were married to sons of William Lowther and his wife, Hannah Fox, original Yorkshire settlers at Crapaud.

The first class at North Carleton, formed in 1876, had Stephen R. Black as leader with a membership including, Mrs. S. R. Black, Isaac Wright and wife, David T. Lowther and wife, Mrs. David Lowther, Mrs. James Penwarren, Wallace Thomas, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Crossman and Sarah M. Penwarren. The next year Quarterly meeting appointed Stephen Black "to take up collections in Carleton and to make necessary preparation for worship." With the opening, around this time, of a school situated on the David Lowther farm, preaching was transferred to the school house where once a month the folks gathered to sit on long desks with their feet in the seats and listen, perhaps more attentively than those who in more favoured places lounged in padded pews. In the North Carleton hall built in 1891 preaching was once a month with prayer meetings led by an exhorter on the other Sundays and a mid-week service every Wednesday evening. Special revival services conducted by Thomas Moyses of Central Bedeque, newly licensed local preacher, in this hall in 1896 led many to a lifelong dedication to Christ. The hall was used for both church services and Sabbath School, the latter under the devoted superintendency of the late Hermas Myers, till 1922 when services were consolidated at Searletown.

(To Be Continued)



REV. JOSEPH SELLER
Superintendent of the Bedeque Circuit
1882-1883

HOLMAN'S YOUTH CENTRE

"The Store For Young Islanders"

Mothers!

SEE THESE DRESS BARGAINS FOR YOUR GIRLS

ON SALE SATURDAY at 10 a.m.

Buy now and get a real Bargain! We know you'll like these Dresses and your girls will be excited about them. To make space on our racks for the new Spring styles, we must clear our entire stock of Winter Dresses at—

1/3 off

Feather Flannel, Corduroy, Wool, Alpine and Rayon—regularly priced at 2.19 to 7.50. The colors range from the dark serviceable shades to dainty pastels—sizes 3 to 6x. The Special Clearing prices are—

1.45 to 5.00

All the latest styles in sizes 7 to 14x, in this selection are plaids and plain colors ranging from dark shades to pastels. These Dresses are regularly priced at 2.98 to 11.95—The Special Clearing prices are—

1.99 to 7.97



"WHERE OLD FRIENDS MEET"

Darnley And Vicinity

—Miss Joan Bearisto, Malpeque, and Miss Joyce MacKay, Sea View were week-end visitors in Darnley, the guests of Misses Mary and Edith Cousins.

The Y.P.U. of Malpeque held a Valentine Social Friday evening, Feb. 13th at the "Manse", which was enjoyed by fifteen members. The evening was spent in playing games and contests, Miss Mary Cousins and Mr. Donnie Bearisto

winning the prizes. A delicious lunch consisting of home-made ice cream and cake was served by Mrs. Cross, assisted by the members, followed by a social hour. A hearty vote of thanks was extended to Rev. James and Mrs. Cross for a very pleasant evening.

A meeting of the Junior Red Cross was held Friday afternoon by senior pupils of Darnley school. Meeting opened by reading minutes, and roll call answered by "naming a favorite song." Reports of committees. Collection 25 cts.

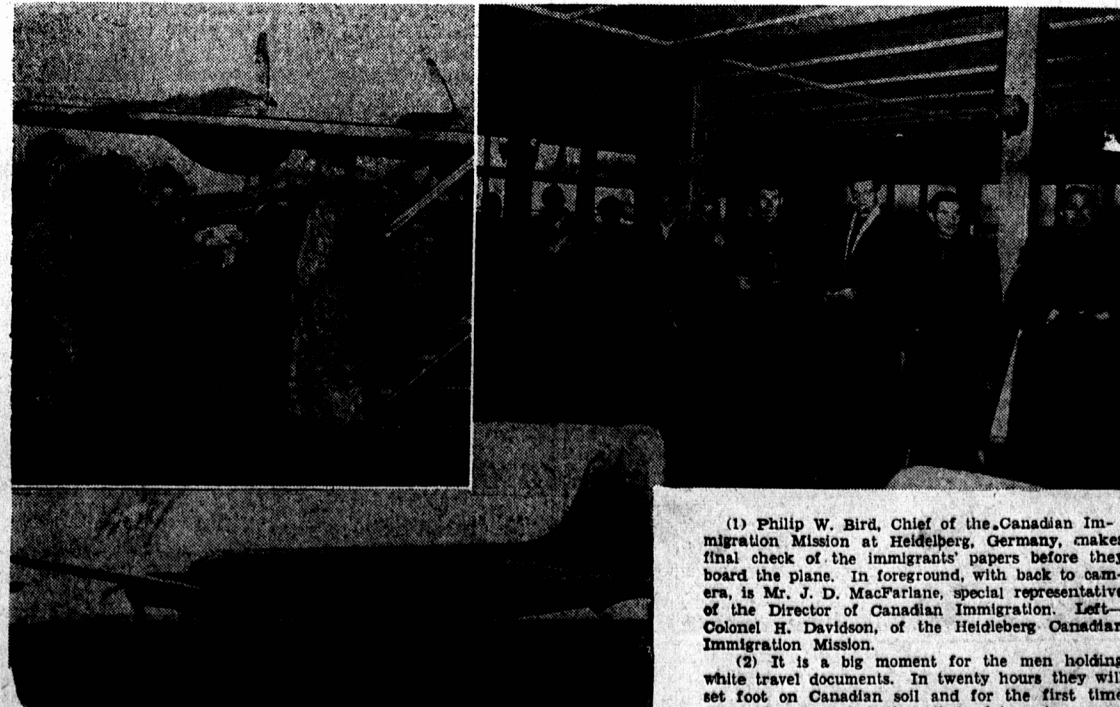
A pleasant feature of the meeting was the exchange of Valentines, also a treat of candy to the pupils by their teacher, Miss Merle Crozier. The pupils of the junior room also had an exchange of Valentines at their meeting.

A very enjoyable party was held by sixteen girls on Saturday afternoon, Feb. 14th at the home of Miss Edith Cousins in observance of her 14th birthday. The afternoon was spent in games and much merriment among the guests. A delicious supper, including ice-

cream and birthday cake, was served to all by Mrs. Cousins, after which all returned to their homes wishing Edith many happy returns of the day.

INSTALL TRANSFORMER

MONCTON, N. B.—(CP)—Alleviation of an electric power shortage in Moncton has been effected through installation of a new 5,000-kilowatt supply transformer by the New Brunswick Power Commission.



(1) Philip W. Bird, Chief of the Canadian Immigration Mission at Heidelberg, Germany, makes final check of the immigrants' papers before they board the plane. In foreground, with back to camera, is Mr. J. D. MacFarlane, special representative of the Director of Canadian Immigration. Left—Colonel H. Davidson, of the Heidelberg Canadian Immigration Mission.

(2) It is a big moment for the men holding white travel documents. In twenty hours they will set foot on Canadian soil and for the first time since liberation, feel that their future is secure. Each man was allowed to take 66 lbs. of baggage with the rest to be shipped later. None had more than the amount specified and few had as much. Only two out of the 34 D.P.'s had ever flown before.

(3) Canada in Europe. This TCA plane at the Rhine Main airport, Frankfurt, Germany, is all ready to take off for Canada with thirty-four displaced persons aboard.

POWER RATIONING RESUMES

WOODSTOCK, N. B., Feb. 18—(CP)—Electric power was again rationed in this United States border town today as the Maine and New Brunswick Power Commission took steps to conserve power.

last night and again tonight but officials here did not know how long the cutoff would continue. Heavy power consumption in the area was given as the reason for the ration step and officials said they were handicapped by drought conditions.