

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 FIVE

Though a school had been established in Bedeque previous to 1800, its history is difficult to trace. Schurman's store at Central Bedeque and later at Wilson's Grove generally sold "1 Bible and 1 schooling" together which may indicate the course of studies. Teachers however, were often a problem; the majority of them being driven to their poorly paid tasks by an inability to perform heavy manual labour, and for this reason too, given to the consolation of drink. An advertisement in the Royal Gazette of Tuesday, August 4, 1835, would point to this:

WANTED for Bedeque district school a teacher of second or third (highest) class. None need offer who cannot produce testimonials of sobriety and good moral conduct. Apply to Joseph Pope, Esq., Bedeque.

The first Bedeque school was possibly somewhere on the Leonard Schurman property to which came scholars from as far as Lower Bedeque, Freeborn, Centreville, and North Bedeque. The teacher secured at this time taught in this oldest of Bedeque schools. He was William Nells, one time master at Princetown, whose daughter Emily, Rev. William Wilson baptized in 1837. At this time Mr. Wilson commenced signing his official title as "Wesleyan Minister"; a significant trend in Bedeque's history when the Methodist pastors started dropping the title of Missionary. The Bedeque school at this period so the first report of John McNeil, district visitor of schools, informs us was among the best on the Island, the pupils having "an extensive knowledge of the signification of words." Mr. Nells left Bedeque in 1839 to take the No. 1 teaching position on the Island—master of the National School at Charlottetown—yet such was the pay of school teachers of that period (and the next hundred years was to see no very marked improvement) that in 1839 when age had overtaken him, the Legislature found it necessary to grant him eight pounds to carry him to his friends in the United States.

Other Early Schoolmasters

Schoolmasters in Bedeque in the eighteen hundred and thirties included Charles Fowls, John Slattery, Joseph P. Sherlock and Archibald C. Beckford, all of whom taught the twelve month year for their board and twelve dollars a month. The teacher's contract at this time generally called for half the salary to be paid in potatoes at one shilling a bushel, with the remainder in oats, wheat and butter at market prices, and pork, beef and mutton at three pence a pound; all to be delivered at some convenient wharf.

School kept from nine to twelve in the mornings and one to four in the afternoon with generally a two hour dinner period in the summer when the afternoon session was from two to five. Heat was provided by each scholar bringing a cord of wood. The master's room in the community was not a trailer, yet moved from time to time, and from house to house, and if the contract was carried out, was "comfortable with firewood furnished."

1840 was Bedeque's big year for erection of schools. Upper Bedeque (probably present North Bedeque) had twenty-four pupils in a new school building which was "neat and comfortable." At Bedeque a school which opened early in this year and was situated near the marsh south of the road and west of the bridge at Centreville had twenty-three pupils with J. B. Newcomb as master. Lower Bedeque's school where the enrolment was thirty, was three months younger again with Allan MacPhee as the first teacher. "Bedeque Road Lot 27" folks (undoubtedly Seartowners of a later day) dated the school history from 1840 with a neat house, newly erected, and a teacher whose name, Charles R. Stuart, echoed royalty.

Another newspaper advertisement of this period told of Jesse Wright wanting a "miller who understood milling oats and wheat." Liberal wages were promised in return "for sobriety and industry." The appointment of sub-collectors of Customs and Excise at various points on the Island was provided for in a bill passed in 1837, and it is thought that the Customs House, which was on Hurd's wharf up till 1856 or later, was built around this time.

Circuit Divided

The Colonial governing body of the Methodist Church was called District Meeting and Bedeque was a circuit of the Nova Scotia and P. E. I. District, which at this time had, for all practical purposes, the only steady hand of Conference in England. When District Meeting met in 1837 the fathers and brethren divided Bedeque, sending Rev. Thomas H. Davies to the older part of the circuit and requesting a preacher for the new charge of "Rustico and New London." However, the preacher for the new circuit was not available and Mr. Davies carried on as best he could. New London Presbyterians at this time shared jointly with Cavendish in the labours of Rev. John Geddie, who was ordained in March, was married in September and burnt out in November, all in the year 1838. Driving behind his horse, Sampson, he was not an unfamiliar figure at North Bedeque, where, at different times, availing himself of the Presbyterian pulpit, he preached the Word for Christ and challenged the infant church with the wider vision.

The first District meeting on the Island was held at Charlottetown, "a village with a single wharf", from the 4th to 14th June, 1836. Mr. Wilson thought it one of the most delightful he had ever attended.

Mr. Davies, during his three year stay at Bedeque, buried two of his congregation who were considered worthy of obituaries in the Wesleyan which, then in its very infancy as a church paper, was destined to grow up into the United Churchman. A Wesleyan obituary at this time was reserved for "the brother or sister" whose life and death made edifying reading. Such a one was Mary Lea, (wife to James Howat, merchant, of Crapaud) who died in 1838, a Methodist of the third generation, which was a rarity on the Island at this time. Her grandparents were members in England while she, with her parents, had joined the church in Tryon in 1824. Her husband was fruit of the Great Revival of 1831. She believed in that "most debatable point of Methodist doctrine, Christian Perfection" obtained one Sabbath morning in 1833, while on her knees praying for it. This was something very few professed to attain, and was represented as the gift of the Holy Spirit—perfect love to man and God so flooding the mind and heart that voluntary sin was excluded.

This doctrine was never meant as some critics of Methodism interpreted it as excluding involuntary transgressions due to ignorance or mistakes inseparable from mortality, so was never called sinless perfection. The perfect man, according to Epictetus, was the man who had set his feet on the true path and was still advancing, "going on to perfection", which is perhaps what the Master meant, "Be ye therefore perfect."

Mrs. Wright's Demise

Funeral sermons for the departed faithful were preached in crowded churches on the Sunday following the burial, and were generally of an eulogistic nature combined with the evangelistic. The text for Mrs. Howat's funeral sermon on April 1st, was from the 20th Chapter of St. Luke, and the 36th verse. Nearly a year later in Bedeque on a Sunday late in March, Mr. Davies preached the sermon of one whom he called the "Mother of the Methodist Cause in Bedeque." Ann Lord, the widow of Nathaniel Wright, had died at the age of 69. Worn out from winter-long nursing of her son Thomas's wife, who predeceased her by only three weeks, she became a ready victim to a severe cold. Her religious experiences, which began the time of Rev. Wm. Grandin's visit to Tryon in 1792, paralleled her husband's very closely; her great advantage being that she had lived to see the church, which they had so carefully nurtured, grow large and strong. Mr. Davies in his tribute to Mrs. Wright (Wesleyan, June 17, 1860), tells how she had shown her love to the cause of God by opening her house for prayer and class meetings, and in the spreading of numerous tables with food for those who flocked at different times to Bedeque for revival services, etc.

Her liberality to the circuit finances was commended with the observation that "were all to give proportionately, Bedeque would no longer be a mission station." Mrs. Wright's strong attachment to Methodism showed in her wish that her children should marry only Methodists. "For which," Mr. Davies indignantly comments, "she was called a bigot." Drowsy most of her illness she was taken. "Why are His chariot wheels so long in coming?" she asked. She died on Thursday, 25th March, 1859. Her son Stephen, the mill owner of Centre-

OTTAWA LETTER

By J. Watson MacNaught, M.P.

The weather in Ottawa has been very cold for the last two weeks. Temperature of twenty below are not unusual. The air is dry, however, and with a fair amount of sunshine it is not unduly uncomfortable; but rather bracing and exhilarating.

Over the weekend Ottawa was visited by a large number of snowshoe enthusiasts. Their colourful costumes added much to the Ottawa scene. Many of the clubs brought along bands with them and the corridors and lobbies of the hotels resounded far into the night with music and laughter. A delegation from Charlottetown arrived to attend the annual meeting of the Horticultural Council of Canada. Many problems affecting the potato industry will be discussed at these meetings. Not a few delegates expressed regret that illness prevented Mr. Boulter from attending. He has been chairman of one of the important committees for many years, and his complete knowledge of all phases of the potato industry and his tact and good judgment make his position as chairman a difficult one indeed to fill.

The first vote of the resumed session came on Friday evening on the motion of the Minister of Finance for second reading of his bill to restrict imports from the United States and so conserve and augment the supply of American dollars in Canada. It was one of the rare occasions on which all the Opposition parties united against the Government. Only one independent member, J. L. Gibson from Comox-Alberni, a constituency on Vancouver Island, voted with the Government. The vote was 84 to 59 which is an unusually small vote.

The vote came at six o'clock in the evening. Many of the Ontario and Quebec members had left for their homes. Some newspapers have pointed out, both editorially and in their news columns, that if the Conservative members had not gone home the Government would have been defeated; but such would not have happened. Many Conservative and Liberal members have standing engagements that along about Thursday they will meet and arrange that both be away until Monday evening or Tuesday morning. They both have confidence in each other and there is no need to record their "pair" with their respective Party Whips. If either decided not to go home, the other would have to stay in Ottawa. So, if more Conservatives had remained to vote, the result would have been that of a corresponding number of Liberals would have remained in Ottawa.

This going home by the Ontario and Quebec members for weekends has long been a source of annoyance to the members from the Maritimes and the West; but apparently there is nothing that can be done about it and no amount of riles by party leaders will put an end to these gentlemen's agreements.

The C. C. F. party were able to vote 26 out of their total number of 28. This is quite understandable. All of them, except one, come from the West and, since they cannot get home for weekends themselves, they can see no good reason to enter into pairs to let their opponents get away.

The most urgent matter before Parliament at the moment is the rising cost of living. The Prime Minister some time ago announced that, as soon as Parliament opened, a committee would be set up to investigate the causes. This committee will have wide powers and will thoroughly investigate all the underlying reasons for the recent sharp advance in the cost of living. At the moment there are many rumours and suggestions as to the cause of the advance, such as such-and-such a firm holding back essential commodities or that a combine exists in such and such an industry. It will be the duty of the committee to summon witnesses and cross examine them, to examine financial statements and reports, and generally to make a thorough and searching and complete investigation as to the circumstances warrant. I am sure that the committee will do everything possible to reveal the true facts and thus allay the rumours so prevalent at the present time.

MAKE TRAVEL EASY LONDON—OF visas for holders of British passports travelling to Italy and for Italian citizens travelling to the United Kingdom have been abolished. This step, announced by the foreign office, is a further development of a policy to facilitate travel between Britain and friendly countries.

ville, married six months later into one of the most prominent Anglican families of the colony, when Millicent, 2nd daughter of the late James B. Palmer, became his bride, with the St. Paul's rector officiating. The first two children of the marriage were taken to Charlottetown to receive baptism at the hand of the rector, and it looked as though the wishes of the Mother of Bedeque Methodism were being flouted. However, Stephen Wright, occupied one of the prominent pews in the old church, which in time they all grew to love and serve.

Rev. A. V. Wiggins, rector of St. John's church at St. Eleanor's, conducted services around this time, which might suggest that there were more Anglicans in Bedeque than Mrs. Stephen Wright. However the Anglican cause in Bedeque, like that of the Methodist and Bible Christian efforts in St. Eleanor's, where the latter even built a church, never flourished and have long since been forgotten.

Methodism always showed a commendable zeal for statistical reports which took a new form in 1839, when, although to point an objective, the number of souls on the Bedeque circuit of nine chapels or preaching places was listed as two thousand eight hundred and twenty-three in comparison with six hundred attending Methodist meetings. Of the six hundred it was believed, rather optimistically, that nearly all could read.

To Be Continued

Church Activities In Summerside

Trinity Evening Auxiliary met in Epworth Hall, Summerside, on Tuesday, February 3, with an attendance of 39. The president, Mrs. Clifford Rankin was in the chair.

The devotional period was led by Mrs. R. S. Hinton and a chapter from the Study Book was presented by Mrs. Allison MacLean. The business meeting followed. Mrs. William Roach was appointed corresponding secretary for the Society. This Society is putting on a banquet for the C.G.I.T. Taxis boys, and Trail Rangers, on February 10, this being the week set for them by the United Church. It was decided that a hostess should be appointed from the lunch committee to act at each meeting. It was also decided to hold a Hand Times social.

A report of the P.E.I. Presbyterial was presented by Mrs. James MacArthur and Miss Mary Geldart. Routine business followed and one new member was added to the roll. A box of clothing for overseas is to be packed within a few days.

A social hour and lunch brought the meeting to a close. The regular meeting of the "Guiding Light" C.G.I.T. of Trinity United Church, Summerside, was held in Epworth Hall on Tuesday evening with the president, Esther MacKay, in the chair. The devotional period was conducted by June Geddis, assisted by Mrs. William H. Hootert and Mrs. R. B. Dewar. Esther MacKay was in charge of the study "Out of the Tepee" which was the third chapter in the book regarding the life of the Canadian Indian. During the business session a discussion took place regarding C. G. I. T. week, February 9 to 15, and plans were made for a banquet for the C. G. I. T. Taxis Boys and Trail Rangers to be held on Tuesday evening, also for the following Sunday evening when the boys and girls will assist in the church service. The project, the making of the Christian Flag and the Affiliation Poster, was continued and the meeting closed with Taps.

The Summerside A.Y.F.A. met on Tuesday evening in St. Mary's Hall with Mrs. Evelyn MacAlpine presiding. The final arrangements were made for the Valentine Dance, after which an interesting talk was given on interior decorating by Mr. Gail Woolf, in which he plans to specialize in the future. The members are invited to attend the basket social, sponsored by the Ladies' Guild, next Tuesday evening. The project of leathercraft, under the direction of Miss Marie Bonness, was worked on and a number of book-marks made.

The regular meeting of the Ladies' Club of Summerside Presbyterian Church was held on Tuesday evening at the home of Miss Jean MacFadyen, Green Street, with the president, Mrs. G. Franklin Cameron, in the chair. As the first meeting of each month is devoted to Red Cross, Mrs. Ernest L. Walker, convener, distributed the work which kept the members busy, knitting and sewing. During the social hour, refreshments were served by the lunch committee, Mrs. J. W. MacKenzie and Mrs. Charles Mountain, after which a quiz contest caused much merriment. The next meeting will be held at the home of Mrs. Maurice Mill.

The Bromans Group of Summerside Presbyterian Church held its meeting on Tuesday afternoon at the Manse. The president, Jean Matthews, was in the chair. During the devotional period, which was in charge of Joan Baker, the following prayers were offered: Confession, Thanksgiving and intercession, with corresponding hymns sung between each. Taking part were Mary Rae Tanton, Sylvia Bishop and Rhoda Baker. The story "Coming Home" was given by Mrs. Charles Carnegie. Others taking part in the meeting were Georgina MacKenzie and Anne Dystant. The singing of the Dismissal Hymn and the Lord's Prayer brought the afternoon to a close.

The meeting of the Y. P. U. of Trinity United Church, Summerside, on Tuesday evening was in charge of the recreational committee when a sleigh ride was enjoyed. Returning to Epworth Hall, games under the direction of Windsor Corney were enjoyed. Refreshments were served by the lunch hostesses, the Misses Leitha Crue and Marie Bonness.

The Y. P. S. of the Church of Christ held its weekly meeting on Tuesday evening in the church hall with Fay Edman in charge of the devotional period and Leigh Linkletter, the business session. The Bible Study, conducted by the minister, took the form of a blackboard quiz, concerning the little things of the Bible, Biblical occupations, towns, rivers, cities, mountains, hills and people. A social period followed when games were enjoyed.

The devotional period of the Baptist Senior Y.P.U., Summerside, which met in the Church Hall on Tuesday evening, was in charge of Mrs. Ellsworth MacNeill, with Miss Barbara Currie at the piano. A special feature of the evening was a debate, "Resolved that the horse is of more use to humanity than the cow". The leaders for the affirmative were Mr. Frank Jenkins, Mrs. E. J. Barras and Mr. John Waugh; for the negative, Mr. Ted Poole, Miss Betty Magee and Mr. Elmer Jordan. The negative side won by one point, the judges being Rev. E. J. Barras, Mr. and Mrs. C. B. Jelly. Refreshments were served at the close by Mrs. Mildred Poole, Mrs. Marion Johnston and Mrs. Marion MacNeill, lunch hostesses. The Junior Group held its meeting earlier.

The February meeting of the Trinity W.M.S. Auxiliary was held on Tuesday afternoon in Epworth Hall with an excellent attendance. The new president, Mrs. W. A. Allen, was in the chair. The opening devotions were conducted by the president with Mrs. E. E.

At HOLMAN'S---



GOOD NEWS

FOR FOOD SHOPPERS

Pre-Lenten SPECIALS On Sale

Saturday - Monday - Tuesday - Wednesday Morning

SUNKIST
ORANGES 2 for .59
288's—Regular 39c doz.

GRAPEFRUIT 4 for .25
96's—Regular 3 for 25c

VISKING
PORK BUTTS lb. .50
Boneless—Regular 67c lb.

MOLASSES Gal. 1.07
Regular 1.30 Gal.

SALADA
COFFEE 1 lb. Tin .63
Limited Quantity—Regular 67c lb.

SPICY
DILL PICKLES .27
24 oz.—Regular 32c

HAMILTON
Milk Lunch BISCUITS .24
1 Lb. Pkg. — Regular 27c

CLOVER LEAF — FANCY
PINK SALMON .22
1/2 Lb. Tin — Regular 25c

X. L.
Orange MARMALADE .39
24 Oz. — Regular 45c

AYLMER
PRUNE PLUMS .18
Choice Quality — 20 Oz. — Regular 21c

MAGIC
BAKING SODA 8c
1 Lb. Pkg. Reg. 10c

AYLMER
DICED BEETS 11c
20 Oz. Reg. 15c

SERVE MORE fish DURING LENT

ON DISPLAY DAILY

Fresh Fish—Haddock Fillets, Haddock, Chilled Fish—Salmon Fillets, Halibut, Scallops, Salmon.

Smoked Fish—Salmon, Shad, Kippers, Fillets, Finnan Haddie.

Canned Fish—Lobster, Lobster Paste, Herring, Mackerel, Salmon, Fish Cakes, Finnan Haddie, Tuna, Malpeque Oysters.

Salt Fish — Boneless Cod, Herring, Digby Chicks.

Prepare For
Shrove (Pancake) Tuesday

See Demonstration of
Aunt Jemima PANCAKE FLOUR

Friday and Saturday, Feb. 13 - 14

SPECIAL!

Groves **MAPLE SYRUP**

32 oz. Reg. 1.15 16 oz. Reg. 59c

1.05 51c

CAMPBELL TOMATO SOUP 3 Tins 29c Regular 11c

LYNN VALLEY PEAS 2 Tins 27c Reg. 16c

Size 4-5

FOR LENT—**CANNED SPAGHETTI MACARONI PORK and BEANS**

Crystal Rink Summerside

Friday, Doubleheader Hockey
CHARLOTTETOWN JUVENILES vs. KINSMEN JUVENILES

—And—
CHARLOTTETOWN MIDGETS vs. KINSMEN MIDGETS

Saturday, Skating 3 to 5; Hockey 9.30
INTERMEDIATE ABBIES vs. SUMMERSIDE ALL STARS

Also drawing for Washing Machine Lottery.

Sharp at the piano. Mrs. John Stirling, on behalf of the different church organizations, thanked the members for their part in the raising of \$528.00 which was sent to the bereaved family of Mr. and Mrs. Stirling Barlow in their recent severe loss by fire of their child and their home. A box of clothing forwarded recently to the needy people in Europe was reported. Mrs. Roland Phillipson led in prayer. The following missionaries were adopted for prayer for the year: Dr. Florence Murray, Korea; Dr. Sydney Gilchrist, Africa; Dr. Robert MacLure, China; and Miss Elma Inman, Trinidad. Mrs. Hammond Johnson expressed thanks to those who donated food and helped serve, also to the choir and to Mr. George Williams, who donated flowers. Mrs. Harry Cannon reported that the sum of one hundred dollars was bequeathed to the Auxiliary by the late Mrs. Irene M. Hogg, a life member. The following were appointed to the Finance Committee: Mrs. G.L. Sheen, Mrs. George Bonness, Mrs. W. E. Llewellyn, Mrs. Hammond Johnson and Mrs. H. R. Crockett; and to the Nominating Committee, Mrs. T. H. E. Inman and Miss Millicent Strong. Mrs. G.L. Sheen, a delegate to the recent Presbyterial, gave interesting impressions of the meetings and Mrs. John Stirling read the evening address of Mrs. Neil M. Rastie. This was followed by the reading of the Scripture on tithing.

The regular meeting of the Y. P. S. of the Church of Christ held its weekly meeting on Tuesday evening in the church hall with Fay Edman in charge of the devotional period and Leigh Linkletter, the business session. The Bible Study, conducted by the minister, took the form of a blackboard quiz, concerning the little things of the Bible, Biblical occupations, towns, rivers, cities, mountains, hills and people. A social period followed when games were enjoyed.

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