Interesting History Attaches To St. Stephen's Church At Irishtown

By L. E. T.

(Continued from Friday's Issue)

Though not born into the church, Rev. Mr. Reagh was attracted to it as a young man and was ordained as deacon in 1878 and priest in 1880. In his first report he tells of a large attendence in Irishtown Church, and for the first time in all the reports the graveyard is mentioned. Unsightly stumps, stones and weeds were removed, the ground levelled, and the fence put in repair. But with all these improvements it would still be a far cry from the beautifully kept cemetery of today which we will tell about later.

This was a poor year—no sale for produce and money scarce. The church built in 1855 was falling into decay and must be repaired or a new one built. In fact for 1879 and 1880 the reports were very gloomy. The people had all they could do to maintain a clergyman, but Mr. Reagh wrote: "We can only pray that God who has blessed us in the past will open the way for us in the future." The Bible Class in Irishtown was increasing in attendance, a fact which made a cheerful note. By 1882 things were picking up. He wrote: "Trishtown is by far the best part of the parish as far as support is concerned. Some money has been collected and a large sum subscribed either to repair or to build . . . . We hope another year will bring unity. If the people unite they will find a way to do the work . . . . Good work is being done in the Sunday School. Bible truths are being carefully taught. It is a great satisfaction to know that our young people are being taught the way to Heaven, and this satisfaction is increased when we know they are becoming intelligent members of our branch of Christ's Church, and therefore more capable of meeting the attacks of those hostile to our faith. Without this doctrinal teaching it is impossible to lead the young to Christ, but if we want them to be Christian churchmen they must be taught the distinctive doctrines of the Church."

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Mr. Reagh moved to Port Hill in 1881 for a short period, and Mr Henry Harper (later the Reverend Henry Harper) took duty in the summer months. However Mr. Reagh reported for that year: "It might be expected that being in a manner without a resident clergyman the people would carry on with a heavy heart, but on the contrary they seem to be quite actively engaged in repairing the church in Irishtown. The old roof has been removed and a new one put on, greatly improving the appearance of the building, which received a thorough coat of paint all over at a large expenditure of money and labour.

At the present time they are actively engaged in procuring lumber and other materials for a tower to be built this coming summer, and they expect to have all repairs completed by the 1st of July. St. Stephen's Church will then compare favorably with the church in New London and will be a credit to the mission."

When Mr. Reagh returned from Port Hill he reported good results in St. Stephen's Church. Eighty-six were confirmed, and the average attendance was 140. In 1886 the church was thoroughly repaired at a cost of $800.00. Probably the tower (8½ x 8½ feet) was built and the bell installed in that year. So, after thirty-one years of ups and downs we now have the church thoroughly established, the building equipped as a church should be, a large and loyal congregation, the Gospel preached and the Sacraments administered.

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Mr. Reagh was a man of exceptional gifts. He was loved by the people,—by all the people including those belonging to other denominations. Even to this day, over seventy years later, his name is spoken with respect by those who remember him. He continued in the parish preaching and teaching till he returned to the parish of Milton and Rustico in 1891.

St. Mark's Church at Kensington was built in 1885 and the rectory the following year. One can well imagine the diplomacy the Rector would have to exercise in these undertakings. If we know human nature there would be opposing plans and ideas, but Mr. Reagh seemed to be able to cope with them and all the work was successfully carried through. This, and the regular parish work, must have added up to a heavy burden for a man who was not of strong physique. When he died in 1914 it was said of him that God and humanity were first with him, and the Church was blessed with his ministry.

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The Reverend Thomas Lloyd, a Welshman, followed Mr. Reagh, remaining until 1894. Nothing special needed doing in these years as St. Stephen's Church was in excellent condition. The Lloyd family were helpful in the musical part of the service, and what a fine choir there was in those days! With capable organists and bass, tenor, alto and soprano singers, there was full, rich harmony, a real lifting of the heart to God in praise.

In later years Mrs. James A. Campbell of Andover, Massachusetts, came to live in Burlington and associated herself with St. Stephen's Church. She was a thoroughly trained musician, holding musical degrees, her specialty being the pipe organ. She trained the choir collectively and individually. At least two organists who later gave years of faithful service, (Mrs.) Bessie Profitt Sheritt, and (Mrs.) Bertha Millman MacLeod, were her pupils. Mrs. Campbell, her little daughter, and her husband, have their final resting place in the church cemetery. Mrs Lorne Campbell, Mrs. W. J. Profitt and Mrs. W. J. Harrington now take turns in providing music for the Sunday services.

The Reverend H. C. Aylwin followed Mr. Lloyd. He was an Old Country man whose health had been impaired while doing work in the Canadian north before coming to the Diocese of Nova Scotia. Mrs. Aylwin is remembered as a sweet, gentle mistress of the rectory. They had one son, Horace, who gave his life in the first World War. In 1896 the Reverend George C. Wallis, also an Englishman, was appointed Rector of New London Parish. He was a Christian gentleman in every sense of the word. He and Mrs. Wallis were instrumental in organizing the Gleaner's Union, the first missionary organization in the parish. Strange as it may seem to us now there was some opposition to that among the older members of St. Stephen's Church.

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The people were used to getting financial help from the English Societies that the idea of giving money to help missions in India and China was not popular. But the younger members took it up with enthusiam and a splendid branch of the Gleaner's Union was formed in St. Stephen's Church. They met monthly in the homes and had a program of Bible and missionary study. This was carried on for years after Mr. Wallis left.

During the year of Mr. Wallis's rectorship the Reverend R. H. A. Haslam, then a student at Wycliffe College, assisted in the mission at St. Stephen's Church. Writing of old times to a friend in 1952 Dr. Haslam said: "Mr. Wallis took the service, and I gave the addresses. It was a blessed time, and several confessed their faith in Christ their Saviour." The Reverend R. H. A. Haslam, M.A., D.D., died in February, 1953, aged eighty-three years. He gave a lifetime of devoted service to Christ and his Church at home and in India. Mr. Wallis was called from New London Parish to St. James Cathedral, Toronto, but returned in later years to the Diocese of Nova Scotia.

From 1898 to 1900 there was no settled rector in the parish and therefore no official reports were written. There was a student supply for one summer at least. The Reverend I. E. Fraser, born in St. Eleanor's, took duty during his holidays. Canon Fraser was later rector of New Glasgow, N. S., for many years. In December, 1900 the Reverend J. A. Winfield came to the parish from England, and with Mrs. Winfield settled in the rectory. Mr. Winfield was trained for evangelistic work in the Church Army. He was then in all the vigour of middle life and gave unstintingly of his powers for the upbuilding of the Church. There was a response to his leadership and all three churches took on a new lease of life.

(To be Continued)

Protestant Orphanage Collections

Crapaud District L. O. L.
Church Service ..... $29.75.
Kings County L. O. L.
Church Service ..... 18.25.
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York Lane ..... 5.00.
Mrs. Kenneth Richards,
Euston St. ..... 5.00.
Mrs. J. M. Murley,
Euston Street 3.00
Mrs. J. A. Clark,
Euston Street 2.00
Mrs. W. Watts,
Kent Street 1.00
Anonymous", Grafton Street ... 10.00
A friend, Richmond Street 5.00.
Wm. Warren, Elme Ave .... 2.00.
P. E. I. Hospital
Mrs. Lois MacDonald ..... 5.00.
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$1.00 each: Mildred Thompson, Hattie MacLaine, Florence MacLean, Bethla Tweedy, Margaret Scott, Mrs. Freda MacKinnon, Shirlie Stearns, Ardith Dixon, Mrs. George Vessey, Alice Dixon, Margaret Goodwin, Edna Reid, Marjorie MacDougall, Doris MacKay, Anne Jenkins, Margaret Haroy.
50c; Mrs. W. P. Bruce.
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Mrs. J. A. Lawson ..... 5.00.
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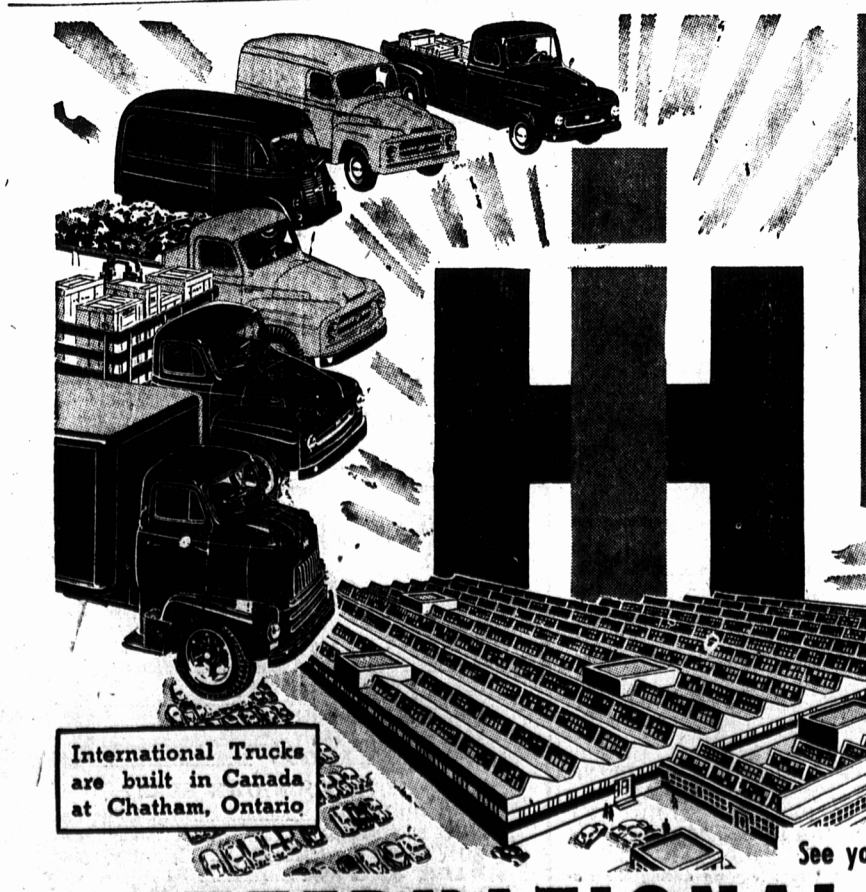

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