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Woodstock, N. B.**

## THE FIRST ENGLISH MISSIONARY ON THE UPPER ST. JOHN.

(CONTINUED)

[No 71]

It was not until the lapse of several years after the ordination of Rev. Frederick Dibblee that steps were taken to build a church at Woodstock. The delay was owing to the want of means on the part of the settlers, who were not at first assisted by a grant from the provincial government which largely contributed to the early erection of churches at Fredericton, Gagetown, Mauderville and Kingston. However the matter began to be agitated about the beginning of the present century, and soon after a grant of land was obtained from the government for a glebe and school lot, and a site chosen for the church, the frame of which was at first erected on a knoll below the old rectory, near the Hodgdon road. Here too some of the old settlers were buried whose remains were afterwards removed to the present churchyard. About the year 1804 it was decided to move the church frame to a site a few rods north of the present parish church and the work of construction was then taken up in earnest. Many of the settlers personally assisted in the work of framing, raising and enclosing the building. Others contributed a variety of building materials. The following item appears amongst other donations mentioned in the church accounts,

"Oct 23, 1805—Thos. Phillips and Richard Ketchum, 1000 feet each of siding."

It may be necessary to explain that in olden days the better class of houses and other buildings were covered externally with strips of the best quality of pine, similar to clapboards but thicker and wider and very much longer; this was called "siding." On the walls of the old Chipman house in St. John, the old Raymond house at Kingston (built in 1788) and other old houses in the province, the siding is still sound and good having stood the ravages of the elements more than one hundred years. Such pine lumber is scarce enough today.

It was some years after the frame was put up before the church approached completion. It was temporarily fitted up for services during the summer season, but there being no stove the winter services were held chiefly in Parsons Dibblee's house as formerly.

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel at length made a grant to aid in finishing the church, and the people decided to sell the pews to provide such other funds as were needed. This was quite in accord with the spirit and usage of the day as is evident from a letter Bishop Inglis wrote the good people of Kingston, N. B. in the year 1809 in which he says:—

"It gave me no small concern to learn that the pews in the church of Kingston were all held in common, and that none were appropriated to individuals. I never knew an instance before this in Europe or America, where the pews were thus held in common, and where men—perhaps of the worst character—might come and set themselves down by the most religious and respectable characters in the parish. This must ultimately tend to produce disorder and confusion in the church and to check the spirit of true devotion and piety. When a man has a pew of his own he can leave his bible and prayer book in that pew when public worship is ended on Sunday, and he will be sure to find them in his pew on the next Sabbath. The infirmities of age and bad health require attention to the comfort of warmth, especially in the winter. A man may procure that comfort by lining his pew with some kind of cloth and covering the floor."

The good bishop goes on to quote other arguments for the removal of what he calls "this strange arrangement." (It need scarcely be mentioned in this connection that Bishop Inglis' successors have been strong opponents of the pew system and zealous advocates of free seats and anxious to secure the attendance even of "men of the worst character.")

Rev. Frederick Dibblee about the close of the year 1813 wrote to the S. P. G., "The carpenters are now employed in erecting the pews in the church, upon the completion of which the remaining purchase money will become due. It is supposed that after all expenses are paid the funds will be sufficient to put up a handsome painted fence around the churchyard. The inhabitants are deeply sensible of the liberality of the society which has enabled them to build a church capable of containing 300 persons in a spot which not many years since was an absolute wilderness."

In a letter dated March 12, 1814, Mr. Dibblee mentions that the House of Assembly had appropriated £1500 currency for the completion of the Woodstock parish church, and the sum has been placed in the hands of the church wardens. These dignitaries "came to a resolution to erect a steeple 10 feet square and to order a bell from England of sufficient size and tone; the church also to be raised two feet higher." Mr. Dibblee adds "it is hoped that there will remain sufficient to procure a handsome service of plate for the altar." The intention of the wardens so far as steeple and bell were concerned were never carried out. Probably the funds were needed for things considered more essential. As completed the church was a fair specimen of the church architecture of the day and probably the less said about that the better. It had a reading desk for the minister beneath which sat the clerk who did most of the responding and (if blessed with voice) led the singing; above the reading desk was the pulpit. This was sometimes rather irreverent, styled the "three decker arrangement." The communion table stood at the other end of the church and there are many of the older Woodstock people who well remember how at the morning service the officiating minister used to gravely proceed from one end of the church to the other, and the people as gravely turned to the right about,

until such time as the parson returned to his place, donned the black gown and mounted the pulpit stairs. This was always the signal for an old gentleman a prominent member of the congregation to produce his snuff box and after applying a generous pinch to either nostril to bring forth his ample red pocket handkerchief, which being applied to his nasal organ was invariably followed by a blast as from a ram's horn. The boys always looked for this performance as one of the features of the service, and it was even hinted that the parson after giving out his text would hardly have felt justified in proceeding with his discourse until the squire's nose had been heard from.

On one occasion the first rector of Woodstock was obliged to depart from his accustomed usage. It was the memorable "dark day," Sunday the 7th November 1819, of which all the old newspapers make mention. In his diary Parson Dibblee thus describes it:—"Cloudy and a very thick fog; never knew so dark a day; had to go to the altar window to perform divine service." We conclude that at this time there were no facilities for lighting the church, not even tallow candles being in use. This is not to be wondered at; evening services in the church at that time were unheard of, and would have been opposed as an unwarrantable innovation.

The fruit of Mr. Dibblee's labors soon manifested itself. His communicant roll increased from 40 in the year 1800 to 83 in the year 1810. Writing to the S. P. G. in 1817 he says, "The congregation at Woodstock continues to increase and is very respectable."

Meanwhile steps had been taken about the year 1815 for the erection of a church in the parish of Queensbury and the following year Mr. Dibblee wrote the S. P. G., "the church at Queensborough is far advanced in its structure though the subscriptions fall much below the estimate." The construction of the church he deemed of the utmost consequence, the situation near Burgoyne's ferry being convenient for the settlers in the parishes of Prince William and Kingsclear as well as those of Queensbury. The S. P. G. made a liberal grant for the completion of the church but the people were so impoverished by the total failure of the crops in the years 1816 and 1817, that they could do little or nothing to supplement the society's bounty. Arrangements were made by which the Rev. Dr. Somerville of the college at Fredericton was enabled to officiate at Queensbury every third Sunday where he had a very large congregation of all denominations. The church was finished about the year 1820, services were held there in summer but not in the winter. People went long distances to attend, some on foot, others on horse back and many in canoes. A father, mother and sometimes a child might be seen going to church on the back of a family horse. The old Queensbury church was consecrated by the name of "Trinity." It was so battered and damaged by a storm in 1825 as to be unfit for service, and stood for many years after a mournful ruin. It was pulled down in 1847 and such materials as were serviceable used in the erection of the present church at lower Queensbury. Some interments were made in the old church yard by the river side which was consecrated at the same time as the church. When the Rev. H. W. Tippet went to Queensbury in 1847 the place was so overgrown with shrubs that not a single grave was visible.

The intention of Judge Saunders to build a church in Prince William was apparently not carried into effect, but services were held by Mr. Dibblee during the summer months at "the Barony," and at Col. Ellegood's, Capt. Davidson's or Thomas Jones'. He went and returned in a canoe usually hiring an Indian to accompany him. Among the occasional references in Mr. Dibblee's papers relative to his ministerial duties in Prince William occur the following items:—

"July 29, 1798: Baptised 2 black children the property of Col. Ellegood; their names Sally and Adam Wise."

"March 28, 1810: Went to Prince William to visit Capt. Davidson; came home Sunday after preaching at Mr. Jones'."

May 10, 1810: George Morehouse came to take me to Capt. Davidson's."

May 18th: Returned yesterday from Prince William; Capt. Davidson died Sunday 13 inst and was buried Tuesday."

May 27: Preached Capt. Davidson's funeral sermon—a large congregation."

Until the division of the old county of York the parishes of Canterbury and Southampton were included respectively in those of Woodstock and Northampton and up to the close of the war of 1812 much of Mr. Dibblee's time was spent with the settlers on the river in these parishes. We shall speak of the formation of the military settlements and of the work done above Woodstock by Mr. Dibblee in our next article.

W. O. RAYMOND.

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There will be sold at Public Auction in front of the post office, in the town of Woodstock, County of Carleton, in the Province of New Brunswick, on THURSDAY, the FIFTH DAY OF MARCH next, at the hour of Twelve o'clock noon, pursuant to the directions of a Decretal Order of the Supreme Court in Equity, in a certain cause there pending between Mary McCafferty, Plaintiff, and Matthew McCafferty and Elizabeth McCafferty, Defendants, with the approbation of the undersigned Referee in Equity, the lands and premises directed to be sold by the said Decretal Order, and therein described as follows:

All that lot, piece or parcel of land and premises situate lying and being in the Parish of Simonds and County of Carleton and described as follows; commencing at the west side of the road running through the McCafferty Settlement at the angle formed by the northern line of lot number sixteen running south along said road thirty-six rods, thence westerly in a parallel line with said north side line of lot number sixteen until it strikes the rear line of said lot sixteen, thence northerly along said rear line until it strikes the north line of said lot, thence easterly along said north line to the place of beginning making fifty acres more or less. Together with the buildings and improvements thereon and the appurtenances to the same belonging or appertaining.

Dated the 28th day of December A. D. 1895.  
STEPHEN B. APPELEY,  
Referee in Equity.

FISHER & A. B. CONNELL,  
Plaintiff's Solicitor.

The above sale is postponed to SATURDAY, the 14th day of March, instant, at 12 o'clock noon. Dated the 5th day of March, A. D. 1896.  
STEPHEN B. APPELEY,  
Referee in Equity.

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advertisement

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## RAILWAY TIME TABLE.

### DEPARTURES.

**6.30** A. M.—MIXED—Week days: For Mc-

Adam Junction, St. Stephen, St. Andrews

Fredricton, St. John.

**8.00** A. M.—MIXED—Week days: For Hou-

ton.

**10.50** A. M.—MIXED—Week days: For Mc-

Adam Junction, Fredericton and St.

John.

**11.05** A. M.—MIXED—Week days: For Aro-

ook Junction, etc.

**12.25** P. M.—MIXED—Week days: For Freder-

icton, etc., via Gibson Branch.

**1.04** P. M.—EXPRESS—Week days: For

Presque Isle, and points North.

**4.23** P. M.—EXPRESS—Week days: For St.

John, St. Stephen, Vancorbo, Sher-

brooke, Montreal, and all points West, North-

land, Boston, etc.

### ARRIVALS.

**A. M.—MIXED—Week days, from Aro-**

ook Junction, etc.

**10.35** A. M.—MIXED—Week days: From Fred-

ricton, etc., via Gibson Branch.

**10.45** A. M.—MIXED—from McAdam Junction.

**1.00** P. M.—EXPRESS—Week days, from St.

John, St. Stephen, St. Andrews, Bangor,

Montreal, etc.

**4.19** P. M.—EXPRESS—Week days, from

Presque Isle, Caribou, Edmundston, etc.

**6.00** P. M.—MIXED—Week days, from Hou-

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**10.45** P. M.—MIXED—Week days, from St.

John, St. Stephen, etc.

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