

CHRONICLE

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The Parish Church of Saint John.

THE Parish of Saint John was legally constituted in 1789, and comprehended all the lands lying and being in the City of Saint John. Missionary work was commenced in the Province as early as the year 1769, when the Rev T. Wood, a Missionary of the Society for the propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts, visited, at the request of the Governor of Nova Scotia, the settlement along the River St. John; but at that time there were only a few English in the Province, the population consisting chiefly of French and Indians. It was not till New Brunswick became a home and asylum for the loyal refugees from the United States, upon the declaration of American Independence, that resident missionaries were stationed in it, and that regular church work was begun to be carried on; and the spot where they first landed, was the mouth of the River St. John, on May 18th, 1783. Previous to that date various notices are found of St. John. Its harbor was surveyed in 1761, and a few English people had settled on the land adjoining, but the peninsula on which the city now stands, was almost entirely in all nature's wildness, when the first fleet with Loyalists from New York, entered the harbour on the above date. Few, if any, vestiges of civilized life met the eye. Everywhere they must have seen what was at that time a very inhospitable coast. No wharves lined the shores, no hotels were open to receive them, scarcely a friend was ready to welcome them, and no communication by post, or telegraph, could be had with the outside world. But the courage, zeal, and loyal patriotism, which had moved the Loyalists to leave comfortable homes, and sacrifice valuable



properties, rewarded them for the task which lay before them, of founding a city. And writing now on May 18, 1886, we cannot but reflect on the fruit of their labors, and be ready to acknowledge that we stand indebted to the Loyalists for a city whose picturesque site is surpassed by only one city in the Dominion, whose harbor can be made to afford every facility to be, what we hope it will yet be, the Maritime Port of Canada on the Atlantic, and adjoining to which, is the splendid river of the same name, with its many tributaries, flowing like a great artery through the Province, and so fit to be a highway of commerce into the interior.

With characteristic energy the Loyalists at once commenced the work of building, and being "faithful alike to God and King" they provided, on first laying out the ground, for a site for a church, wherein they might worship Him, who had preserved, and brought them safely to the land of their adoption. The site first chosen was on the south-west corner of what has been known for the last fifty years as the "Old Burial Ground." The timber for the frame was cut off the ground on which the Court House now stands, but owing to a fire which broke out in that part of the city, the church was never built, and that site was abandoned. A house was then purchased on Germain street, between Duke and Queen streets, and fitted up as a temporary place of worship. This building was never consecrated, nor ever had any name. But plain and unpretentious as it was, and only measuring 30x28, it was the first place of worship in the city, and constituted the beginning of the Parish of Saint John, and of all regular church work in the Diocese.