

THE JARVIS RECORD

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WOODHOUSE METHODIST CHURCH HAS HAD AN INTERESTING HISTORY

(By Mr. Henry Johnson)

I fully appreciate the honor that has been conferred upon me in being asked to tell a little of the early history of this Old Woodhouse Church. At the same time I realize the difficulties and the responsibility attached to the task. For there are difficulties. So much of your early history has never been recorded. Other bits of it have possibly been written but likely now lost. Perhaps some here today know something of it that should not be forgotten, but it will be if some steps are not taken to preserve it. Anyway I feel that I know so little about the many interesting events of the past 120 years. And here is where the responsible part of what I tell you today shall be accurate. Because a copy of what I am now reading will be filed away among the papers of the Norfolk Historical Society. Even if this were not the case, I do not want to be wrong or to misinform you.

About the earliest documentary evidence that I have been able to obtain begins with the year 1801. But surely the history of the Old Long Point Circuit, of which this place was the centre of importance, if not geographically, goes further back than that time. Major Neal landed in Upper Canada on the 7th of October, 1796, and soon afterwards commenced to preach. In the year 1794, the Circuit of Newark or Niagara, was formed, and included practically the whole of the western part of what we know as Old Ontario that had then been settled, with Rev. Elijah Woolsey as the first preacher. This was a mission from the Western New York Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Now, whatever else we forget, we should never forget that the Methodist Church in Canada is a result of Missionary effort on the part of those who were endeavoring to carry out that injunction of the Living Man, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel." The early settlers were in no position to organize churches and man them with the necessary workers as well as to furnish the money and pay the expenses. But it was to people from another country, who, looking across the border, saw that the brother Canadians were in need of the Gospel and that they were in no position to provide for it themselves and realizing that they could supply that need, did supply it. In 1795 Mr. Woolsey was succeeded by Rev. Darius Dinham. In or about the year 1792, the celebrated Doctor Michael Trosier, who was the first permanent settler in Norfolk, came to Walsingham. The next year, of the Circuit Riders began to arrive, and by year new families joined them. Thus when the Niagara Circuit was formed in 1794, the Long Point country had a gradually increasing population which naturally grew at a more rapid rate as the years passed by.

So I want to ask a question—Is it reasonable to expect from what we know of missionaries in general and Methodists in particular that it would take years for the Circuit Riders to reach this part of the country which is less than 75 miles in a direct line from his home and a portion of his circuit? Two years before this time, in 1792, there was a Methodist class at Smithville, less than 50 miles as the crow flies, from this very spot. I will answer my question myself, with a most emphatic "No." When we remember that the Long Point Settlement was the most important one between Niagara and Western frontiers, I am as confident as I am that I am standing here that it was but a few months, perhaps but a few weeks or days before Rev. Elijah Woolsey found his way to this very locality, with the possibility (shall I say probably) that Major Neal had already been here. Now, if my idea is correct, it is fully 130 years since the first Methodist preacher came to this neighborhood and preached the Gospel in the Long Point country. Of course there was no church edifice of any kind. A letter from Rev. Peter Russell to Bishop Mountain, the head of the Anglican church in Canada, dated the 22nd day of June, 1793, says that there was no church east of Kingston. Of course he was thinking of Anglican churches. But if the Anglican church with its prestige, given by the fact that the members of the Provincial authorities very largely were connected with it, had no church building in the western part of Upper Canada, we can safely say that neither had the other denominations. While saying this, you will remember that the Indians had the Mohawk Church, near Brant.

(Continued on Page 5)

Story of the Coming of Methodism to Norfolk

By courtesy of the Maple Leaf, Pt. Dover, we reprint the following interesting article on "Early Days of Methodism in Norfolk County," by Rev. W. L. Davidson, B.A., pastor of Grace Church. The 125th anniversary of Woodhouse Church was held on Sunday, June 14th. This article will be, no doubt, appreciated by the majority of our readers.

The story of the coming of Methodism to Norfolk County is, indeed, a most interesting and fascinating one, and it is worthy of more than passing note that men who labored here have done much to bring Methodism to the forefront in our great Dominion and thanks to the ideals inspired in them, they have proved themselves a bulwark in the life of the nation.

It might be interesting, by way of introduction to this important story, to relate just briefly the story of the coming of the first white men back a long way to 1669, yet in that year two French priests, Dollier and Galinee, accompanied by a few other Frenchmen were the first to push their way through the wilderness and unknown ways of the lake and land upon the shores of, to them, a great unknown land. However, in that year they landed on Dover and there they erected a cross and proclaimed possession of the lands on the lake, in the name of the King of France.

The Historical Sites Commission of Ottawa have erected a splendid stone cross to mark the place of the landing of these men and also beautifully protected the position about two miles up the river where the first winter was spent and where the first white man's cabin existed, a splendid stone cairn was unveiled on this spot last summer.

One hundred and forty-six years after the coming of the French priests, the first white settlers arrived—in 1785—and it is rather interesting to note that at this time Toronto had not a single house (the first being built here in 1794); Hamilton did not exist; nor had the counties east and west of Norfolk a single settler—and, at this particular time, the only place of importance west of the St. Lawrence was the village of Newark, now called Niagara. Norfolk had natural resources and advantages that attracted the settler and to-day it has an interest for us in that it was the first settled county in all Western Ontario.

Very soon after a settlement was made, Methodism also made its presence felt. It was only seventy-one years after the name "Methodists" was first given to the followers of John Wesley, and only sixty-one years after the first Methodist society was founded in old London that the first Methodist society in Western Ontario and in Norfolk County began to take form. This takes us back to a time only about nine years after the death of John Wesley.

Elder Freeman
Before the dawn of the 19th century there came to the wilds of what was then known as "The Longue Point Settlement," a young man with his wife and two children. The name of Elder Daniel Freeman will long stand out as one of the leading men in the Longue Point Settlement. He was born in New Jersey in 1769. He married Phoebe Swazie and when they came to Long Point this was in the year 1800. He was thirty-one years old when he came and he drew from the government, lot 24 of the 4th concession of Charlotteville, where he erected one of the finest Christian homes that Norfolk has ever had. He was a zealous Methodist and to him is ascribed the honor of gathering the nucleus of Norfolk's first Methodist Society.

He was one of the leaders in building the first Methodist Church in the settlement, which was located in the present Woodhouse Cemetery ground. This was accomplished before he had been in the settlement for two years. Previous to the building of this first church, the services had been held in the homes of the settlers and in log school houses.

Elder Freeman spent a good part of his time in the settlements from Niagara to the Detroit River. It was necessary that one who could travel the country in that early day should have a strong constitution, and Elder Freeman had a fairly strong body, but the constant forcing of stream and exposure broke his health while yet in his prime and he died in 1835, in his 67th year.

The first burial in that old Woodhouse yard was Elder Freeman's little daughter, Mary Swazie, and Elder Freeman's body and that of his wife lie there.

It is said that the first Protestant evangelical sermon ever preached in the city of Detroit was preached by this old pioneer. As far as the writer is able to ascertain, the work of Daniel Freeman carried on for some time was as a local preacher. He must, however, have been later fully ordained, for in some of the early minutes he is stationed, and he also applied for a license to marry in 1801, but this request was refused from dissenting ministers.

by the court for the reason that the privilege was at that time withheld just to show the type of laymen this little early church had. It is only necessary to mention the name of Daniel Hazen, whose home was in Walsingham and who walked 17 miles as the crow flies to attend worship.

Elder Prindle.

It is said that the longest series of meetings ever held in this section was conducted in 1828 under the leadership of Elder Prindle, and they

continued for 14 weeks (protracted meetings). Elder Prindle was a veritable mountain of flesh. He required two chairs when sitting and in order to get in his rig he carried along a little ladder. He happened to be a Mason, and these protracted meetings and in the congregation there were some who had an anti-masonic feeling and while rumors went about that Elder Prindle had swallowed Morgan.

Major Neal Next in Line.

The next character mentioned is Major Neal. He was born in South Carolina and was a Major in the British army at the time of the Revolutionary war. After the war he went back to his native state and was employed as a school teacher. However, one night in his sleep he imagined he was giving orders to his loyal British forces at the front. He was overheard by the people with whom he was staying and soon he had to seek a more comfortable climate, so we find him like many another U.E.L. working his way toward the Canadian frontier. In 1786 he crossed the frontier at Niagara and took up land. He was a Methodist and zealous local preacher. He visited the scattered inhabitants, preaching in their homes and he denounced the prevailing vices and it was through his preaching that many were converted. He was to the Niagara frontier what Daniel Freeman was to the early Norfolk settlement.

Rev. W. H. Garnham, while minister at Port Rowan, discovered that Major Neal spent a portion of his life and was buried with his wife at the cemetery in Walsingham. The stones marking these graves were all covered with rubbish. However, they were discovered and after much effort the present beautiful Memorial Church was erected at Port Rowan, and what remained of the bodies and the stones were placed therein.

Nathan Bangs Ministry.

While Daniel Freeman and Major Neal began the laying of the foundations of Methodism while still local preachers we have to record the coming of Nathan Bangs as the first ordained Methodist preacher in the year 1801 or 2.

Bangs came to Canada as a surveyor and teacher, but came under the influence of two Methodist preachers Coleman and Sawyer. Presiding Elder Jewell asked Bangs to assist him which he did and after some training he was commissioned by Elder Jewell to go to the Longue Point, to develop a circuit. He became so discouraged that he was determined to leave the work but by the flooding of the Grand River he was prevented. His way brightened and he stuck out and took a general revival broke out and the next year three hundred people on the first circuit were converted. His next church was in the Bay of Quinte circuit and we lose sight of him from Norfolk County. But we remember him as the first stationed ordained minister.

A Wide District.

In 1805 the Canada District comprised the following circuits: Long Point (with Bishop Luther as pastor); a membership of 125; Niagara, Smith's Creek, Yonge street, Bay of Quinte, Oswegotie, Ottawa and Montreal, with a total membership of 1787.

In 1806 the Long Point circuit was comprised of settlements of Burford, Windham, Charlotteville, Walsingham, Houghton, Malahide, Dorchester, Southwold, Needham, Yarmouth, and Oxford. Some circuit?

However, in 1818, the circuit was somewhat enlarged and at that time it extended from Long Point, through Norwich, Oxford, Blenheim, Burford and Hamilton, the villages of Dundas and Little York, and up Yonge street to Lake Simcoe.

The Ryerson Family.

No history of Woodhouse Church, or Norfolk County, however brief, would be complete without a word or two of a family who have played a large part in the life of the Methodist Church and who were nurtured and produced by the early work and influence of the saddle bag preachers of Norfolk County—the Ryersons.

They lived at Long Point, Colonel Joseph Ryerson, who was one of the earliest U.E.L. settlers, to come to Long Point. Mrs. Ryerson, a niece of Egerton Ryerson, writing re those days, says, "It would be much easier for a family to go from Canada to New York than it was to come from New York to Canada then. She tells about the difficulties and hardships endured. When Jos. Ryerson came, only four settlers in twenty miles of lakefront. The nearest mill for flour was seventy miles away. Wolves howled about. All had to depend on fox and deer skins for clothing. Colonel Ryerson came here in 1799.

He had a family of six sons and three daughters. The sons were George, Samuel, William, John, Egerton and Edward. With the exception of Samuel, who followed farming, all the others were preachers. The old Colonel used to say that Sam was the only one that was any good and that when he sent the others out to do any work he found them later in a fence corner under a shade tree reading some book.

George, William and John were converts. John joined the Methodist church, and in 1828 John was called to do work by Elder Case. Concerning the younger brother, Egerton writes:

"When I was 12 years of age my three brothers became deeply religious, and I imbibed the same spirit."

Again he says: "To the Methodist way of religion my father was much

NORFOLK COUNTY MOURNS DEATH OF SENATOR McCALL

Senator Alexander McCall passed away early Wednesday morning, June 10th, at his residence, "Homewood," after a lingering illness, in his 94th year. His death removes from our midst one of the early pioneers of Norfolk County, a gentleman who both in private and public life had always commanded the deepest respect and admiration of his many friends in this county and elsewhere. He led an extremely busy life from his earliest boyhood until the closing years of his life, and only the possession of a splendid physique enabled him to carry to a successful completion the many undertakings in which he engaged.

He leaves to mourn his demise, his widow, who was formerly Sara MacInnes, daughter of Andrew MacInnes, of Victoria; one son, Harold; and two daughters, Miss Carrie McCall and Mrs. Jessie Laing of Simcoe. A third daughter, Mrs. Peterson, predeceased him some years ago. One brother, W. C. McCall, of Simcoe, and two sisters, Mrs. Mabee of Simcoe, and Mrs. Henrietta Kyle, of Los Angeles, also remain, and there is a large family connection in town and county.

Native of Charlotteville

Senator McCall was born on December 20th, 1841, at the old family homestead, Charlotteville Centre, the son of David McCall and Harriet Mann, and the great-grandson of Donald McCall, a Scotch soldier who was engaged at the capture of Quebec under General Wolfe, and who later fought through the Revolutionary War, and came to Norfolk County with the United Empire Loyalists.

At an early age, Alexander McCall entered into the lumbering business, which at that time was the outstanding industry in South Norfolk. It is recorded that in the year 1865, Messrs. Alexander and Thomas McCall entered into a partnership in the lumbering business which enjoyed a high degree of prosperity for many years. They owned two steam sawmills, producing about four million feet of lumber per annum, and giving employment to about 35 men. They opened a lumber yard at the Canada Air Line Railway station at Simcoe, where the greater portion of their cut was assorted and piled away to season. This branch of the business was under the direct management of Alexander McCall, the senior partner.

The firm owned and operated a total of six schooners, carrying lumber from Pt. Ryerse to distant markets. They were, at one time, the most extensive holders of standing pine in the county or any of the adjoining counties, the quantity owned by them being over 25,000,000 feet. In later years he went farther afield and carried on a large business in the export of Quebec timber. The territory in which he operated included not only Ontario, but half a score of states. With Alexander McCall, the lumber trade was a life-time vocation, and until recently he was actively engaged in the business.

For Norfolk First

In the public life of Norfolk County and in every matter relating to the advancement of Norfolk's interests, Senator McCall was always prominent. He was responsible for the present C.N.R. branch from Simcoe to Port Rowan, and of recent years he had been an ardent advocate of the proposal to electrify the line. He was likewise one of the foremost proponents of harbor improvements for Port Dover. It was largely through his influence that the Dominion Monuments and Sites Commission erected the memorial cross on Brant Hill, Pt. Dover, and the cairn to mark the wintering place of the French priests, and on

opposed and when at 18 I gave in my name for membership he said "Egerton, I understand you have joined the Methodists. You must leave them or leave my home." He left, and became an assistant in the London dist. Grammar School.

Later the father was reconciled and asked the lad to some home, which he did for a time. But the call to the ministry was strong and the story of that would fill full volumes.

His father and mother both lie beside the Woodhouse Church.

the occasion of the unveiling of each he was one of the chief speakers. Even since the time of his inception, Senator McCall had been one of the moving spirits of the Norfolk Historical Society.

He was deeply interested in, and was a liberal contributor to both the Norfolk Soldiers' Memorial Tower and the Norfolk General Hospital. It was his hand that laid the cornerstone of the new hospital in September last. So in practically every public project carried out in Norfolk in recent decades, Senator McCall was a leading figure. He will be sadly missed in the many departments of public life to which he had been such an invaluable contributor.

While a resident of Charlotteville he served on the township council for several years. He became a resident of Simcoe about 1880, and was mayor of the town in 1893 and 1894.

In politics he was a staunch Conservative, and in the year 1906, he was elected to the House of Commons. In May 1913, he was called to the Senate, of which he had been a valued member, and a regular attendance even during its most recent session.

He was an adherent of the Anglican Church and a member of the executive of the Synod of London. He was a member of the local Masonic Lodge.

MATTHIAS SCHILZ WAS A NORFOLK FARMER 50 YEARS

A real Norfolk pioneer, a man esteemed and revered by hundreds of friends throughout the county, departed his earthly home on Friday, June 5th, in the person of Matthias Schilz. Deceased, who was in his 87th year, had resided for the past five years with his daughter, Mrs. Geo. Griffin, Colborne street north, having moved here from his farm in the township of Woodhouse. During this time his kindly disposition and hospitable manner had won for him many friends in Simcoe and vicinity, all of whom will deeply regret to learn of his passing.

Matthias Schilz was born of Prussian parents in the valley of the River Rhine. At 18 years of age, he ran away from home to escape the iron heel of militarism. On foot, he journeyed through Belgium, to the seacoast city of Antwerp, whence he embarked for America aboard a three-masted sailing vessel. Arriving at New York in June, 1857, he decided to come to Norfolk County. To see his brother, Nicholas Schilz, who lived at Port Ryerse. When he finally reached Pt. Ryerse, he had the meagre sum of 25 cents left in his pocket. But the day he set foot on Norfolk soil marked the end of his travels and the start of his long, upward climb to success and prosperity.

For a number of years he hired out to Woodhouse farmers and at one time he was employed at the half-way house. At last he purchased a farm of his own on Con. 6, Lot 14, Woodhouse Township. There, for the next 50 years of his life, he laboured industriously and successfully. He cleared the land, built a home, and by dint of incessant work, became owner of one of the richest farms in the township.

Matthias Schilz always took a keen interest in the public life of the township of his choice, and he served on the Woodhouse Council for seven years. He was always a strenuous advocate of the employment of cooperative methods in the marketing of farm products. He was one of the organizers of the Norfolk branch of the Grange Society, called No. 147 Norfolk Grange, and he was master of the Grange at one time. Some years ago, in partnership with Charles Burch, he started a co-operative store at Renton, which was later abandoned. He was a shareholder and a partner of the Norfolk Co-operative Company, and last February celebrated his 86th birthday by attending the annual meeting of that organization.

He leaves to mourn two sons, James of Port Dover, and Charles of Detroit, and one daughter, Mrs. George Griffin of Simcoe. He was predeceased by his brother, Nicholas, of Port Ryerse, by about three years.

The funeral service at the home on Sunday afternoon was attended by a large concourse of friends, desirous of paying their last respect to one who both in private and public affairs had ever led an exemplary life. Interment was made at Oakwood Cemetery.

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No. 120—lv for Canfield Jc. 5:10 p.m.
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No. 225—lv for St. Thomas 11:35 a.m.
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No. 227—lv for St. Thomas 8:30 p.m.
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No. 124—lv for Pt. Dover 8:20 p.m.
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No. 227—lv for Hamilton 8:10 a.m.
No. 225—arr Jarvis 5:05 p.m.
No. 226—lv for Hamilton 5:10 p.m.
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NOTICE TO CREDITORS

IN THE MATTER of the Estate of Thomas McBurney Murphree of the Township of Toronto in the County of Norfolk deceased.

NOTICE is hereby given to the creditors of the said Thomas McBurney Murphree, deceased, who about the 21st day of March, 1925, died, to send in their claims or demands against the said deceased, to the undersigned, for the Administration of the said deceased, and such claims and demands, if not so received by them at the time of distribution.

DATED at the Town of the County of Norfolk, this 10th day of June, 1925.
John Murphy, Esq., R.R. Silverhill, Ont.
Robert Murphy, Esq., R.R. Silverhill, Ont.
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Innes & Mackay, Simcoe, Ontario,
Solicitors for the said Administrators.

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