

FROM THE SCRAPBOOK
A New School and Church: Harvey Station, September 1886
by Dr. William Randall
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Let's go back to September 1886 and in our imaginations try to share with the mothers and ladies of the Village some of their concerns.

They felt they and their families were isolated from the educational and spiritual centers of Harvey... and they were living right in Harvey Station! This was because the railroad had only built the first station in 1869. Prior to that there had been no real center to the geographically large community.

In the upstairs room of Taylor's store, the women formed a Ladies Sewing Circle. There were many needs to discuss. There was no school in the Village; their children walked to the Superior School built opposite the Patterson Road, now a building on the property of Beryl Johnston. There was no church handier than the Presbyterian Church at Manners Sutton, now the site of St. Andrews United Church of Canada. They did have a Society known as The Sons of Temperance though. There was also a Christian Endeavor Society, which met in the same room, commonly called Taylor Hall. These ladies were concerned for their families - mostly relatives of the Robisons. The matriarch of the ladies was probably Mary, the wife of Marshall Robison. At that time she would have been 52 with a son William aged 27, Margaret 18, Andrew 16, Alexander 15, Allen 12, Frederic 10, and Kenneth 8. Jane Glendenning, the wife of David, storekeeper and postmaster, was 47. She had a daughter Maud 17, Minnie 15, John 14 and Ida 12. There would be Elizabeth Atcheson. She was the Sister of Marshall Robison and the wife of William. They lived on the property now owned by Mrs. Edwin Henry. Elizabeth was 38 and her children were Ada 12, Andrew 11, Berkley 10, Frederick 8, Dora 6, Edwin 4 and Annie 2. Fannie Elkington Robison, wife of Thomas Robison, the son of Marshall and Mary Robison would have been there. She was 27 and had Camilla, aged 9, James 8, Lizzie 6, Benjamin 4, Mabel 2 and infant Ada. Her mother Susanna Elkington aged 67, lived with Fannie as a widow. As a member of The Church of England it would be uncertain to speculate on her involvement. Mary Grieve, aged 55, widow of Patrick would have been there. Isabel Grieve, daughter of Marshall and Mary Herbert and wife of Robert Grieve would have been there. She was 25 and had two children Allen 3 and Oscar 1. Isobel Grieve 28, would have been there, she was the wife of John Grieve and the daughter of Andrew Cockburn and Elizabeth Messer. Isobel in 1886 had three children Frederick 6, Mary 4, and Bertha 2. Jane Smith would have been there, age 35 and already the widow of W.W.E. Smith. She had Lewis 15, Maggie 14, Alice 12; Emma 9, David 8, Nellie 6, Annie 4 and Norman 3. Mary McGee age 31 wife of William McGee, her children Melvin 8, Ada 6 and Myrtle 2. Elizabeth Coburn 58 wife of Andrew and perhaps her daughter-in-law Hepzibah, wife of William. Jane Beck may have attended their meetings. She was a colored lady aged 60 who had married Lewis Beck and she had a daughter aged 33, Clara. Rounding out the CIRCLE and a strong influence on them all was Jane Robison age 43, wife of Stephen Robison. Her children were Charles 14, Florence 12, Arthur 10, Grace 8 and Emma 6.

With so many children to care for it was planned to build a church. At that time a Sunday evening service was held in Taylor's Hall once every two weeks.

Marshall and Mary Robison gave the land for a church. The church still stands, known originally as St. James Presbyterian church, then as St. James United Church of Canada, and now as the Harvey United Baptist Church. The community cooperated in its building. The Sons of Temperance held a picnic and raised \$125.00 for the purchase of a bell. Michael Donahue, a Roman Catholic blacksmith, made an iron ornament, which topped the steeple.

Three men involved in the actual building of the church were Thomas Robison, William Embleton and James Patterson. They wrote their names on a small triangular piece of wood Oct. 4, 1893, and left it in the steeple of the church where it remained until the steeple was recently dismantled.

The church was first lighted with oil lamps, which was followed by an acetylene plant, and later still by electricity. William McGee (who lived next door to the church in what is now Austin Pollock's home) was the first janitor, serving for many years. He did an excellent job and was so punctual that many residents of the village set their clocks when he rang the bell knowing that the time, by Mr. McGee's big railroad watch, would be absolutely correct. Mr. McGee's immediate successors were Wesley Cleghorn, Gardiner Essensa and William Hunter, all good janitors. Since then there have been others whose names I do not have but are doubtless known to this audience. Mr. McGee worked for years without a salary until he was given the magnificent amount of \$25.00 yearly. Many organists have throughout the years given of their time and talents and until the late Prof. John Peterson was hired to teach music in Harvey and act as organist, no organist received any pay, and probably not even a thank you. Years ago people did not expect any reward, consequently none was offered. I am told that the salary of Rev. J.A. MacLean was \$700.00 per year with preaching stations at Acton, South Tweedside, Tweedside, and sometime York Mills and Coburn as well as the two churches in Harvey. I have not a complete list of the various organists but I believe that Maude Glendenning, Later the wife of Dr. Gilbert Chamberlain, may have been the first. Others were Margaret Smith, Annie Smith, Regina Keith (a sister of the Local doctor), Elizabeth Robison, Ada Robison, Annie Robison, Maude Robison, Alice Robison, Ellen Robison, Mary Robison, Jeanette Robison, Ella Hunter and Alice Little, prior to Church Union, followed by Dora Hunter, Mrs. Lorne Coffey, Mrs. Ross Robbins, Mrs. Douglas Delaney, Mrs. Wallace Coburn, Mrs. Linda Little, Mrs. Ford Messer, Helen Ritchie Christie, Mrs. Roy Coburn, Prof. John Peterson and Mrs. W.L. Randall. These names are not in order and I have probably overlooked some, though not intentionally. Mrs. Karl Byers, Miss Blanche Cleghorn, Mrs. Lloyd Wood and Mrs. Hazen Burrell have all played at various times but I do not know if they were officially hired or just helping out.

The first choir was composed of many fine voices, and as all could read music well it was four part singing. Visiting clergymen often commented on the quality of the music, so unusual in a small country church. This choir was composed of Glendennings, Smiths and Robisons and the anthems 1& 2 (two volumes) Excells 1 & 2 and Leslies. No member of that choir is living today. Ministers of St. James Church were Rev. James A MacLean, for whom the church was named, Rev. Malcolm J. Macpherson, Rev. Jamieson F. MacKay, Rev. J. Hugh Mclean (son of he first minister), Rev. Alexander MacKay, Rev. Ross Robbins, Rev. Edward Aitken, Re. John L. Rose and Rev. W.L. Randall. These Ministers were all natives of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, of which it was said years ago that, "the main exports of these two provinces were horses, and ministers", putting the horses in first place for some unknown reason.

The church was finally finished and dedicated on Sunday, June 7th. 1896. The following account is taken from a newspaper clipping in an old scrapbook.

"Harvey Station, N.B. June 9, 1896. Formal Opening of the new Presbyterian Church for worship. "On Sunday June 6th, the new Presbyterian Church at Harvey Station was formally opened for worship. The inception of this church was in the minds of the ladies of the Harvey Station Sewing Circle about six years ago. Since then they have strived towards this object and now they have an enduring monument of their untiring energy."

"The Church has been erected at a cost of nearly \$2000 and there remains on it only about \$200 of debt."

"The main building is about 20 feet by 48 feet with an addend for the choir of 8 feet. To it communicating with it by folding doors is attached a vestry 12 feet by 24 feet. The entrance is at the corner of the Church through the basement of the spires. The building is finished in wood, cherry with walnut trimming. The seats are of ash. The seating capacity of the main building is nearly 300 and of the vestry (figures deleted and worn). In every way the building is a credit to the place and people and compares favorably with any country church in this province and also with many city churches."

"Thomas Robison was the architect and builder."

"The services on Sabbath were conducted by Rev. James Ross of Saint John. Rev. William

Ross of Prince William and the pastor Rev. J. A. McLean. The sermon in the morning was preached by Rev. James Ross, his text being from Genesis 25 and 17th verse.

"In the evening Rev. Mr. Ross preached from Matthew Chap.21, verse 12 The choir, in addition to the regular singing furnished the following anthems: Let Us Bow Before Him; The Lords Prayer; and The Beautiful Golden Gate, and in the evening, Sweet Sabbath Eve, and Be Telling of His Salvation. Very large congregations were present at all service. At the close of the ordinary morning service a communion service was held, conducted by the pastor Rev. J.A. McLean assisted by the visiting clergymen."

Note: Material for this month's Scrapbook came from notes taken from Mary Coburn's scrapbooks and Census information provided by Joceleane Hall.