

FROM THE SCRAPBOOK
"The Disruption" and Presbyterians in Harvey, 1840s

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I have been watching with interest the stages in the relocation of the Knox Presbyterian Young Peoples Hall. Ed Christie will be providing Cable 10 T.V. viewers with a documentary, and I do not wish to duplicate the historic material, which will be provided therein. However, the early history of the Presbyterian Church in Harvey provides background for me when I take a further interest in the history of the Presbyterian Church in Fredericton. It is also interesting to me that the names of the early supporters of the church in Fredericton are very much similar to the names of the early Harvey settlers. For example, among the names attached to the call for a minister (Rev. Ebenezer Johnston of Kirkcaldy, Scotland) were William Taylor, James Pollock, James Nisbet, John F. Taylor, John Little, Andrew Davidson, James Taylor and William Grieves.

Early in the history of the Presbyterian Church there was a conflict in Church politics known historically as "The Disruption". It was a break from the established United Presbyterian Churches of Scotland to form the Free Church of Scotland. The chief element of contention concerned the system of placing ministers. As an example of this contention, when the Rev. Ebenezer Johnston of Kirkcaldy (mentioned above) came to Fredericton in July 1831, he returned to Scotland only four months later, the reason being that he was not an appropriately ordained minister under the rules prescribed by the Church of Scotland and his settlement did not conform to the act of incorporation of the Fredericton Church.

"The Disruption" also affected the churches in the Maritime Provinces. In fact, it's effect created a division among the Harvey settlers who came here in 1837. It was because of this division that a second Presbyterian Church was built on the site of the present St. Andrews United Church in addition to the original Presbyterian Church that was across the road from the present Knox Presbyterian Church. The old church, though maintained as a church for a few years became a sort of Community Hall following North American reunification of the Free and United Presbyterian churches in 1861. The original Presbyterian Church eventually became the property of the United Church of Canada following the next split of Harvey Presbyterians in 1925. The structure next was passed to the Harvey Community Cemetery, and the building was sold and dismantled. It was originally thought that the lumber from the Church would be used to build the Knox Young Peoples Hall, but when the hall was built it was decided to use new lumber.

To go back now to the relationship between the Fredericton Presbyterian Church and the Harvey Presbyterian Church many Harvey families sought the ministry of the Fredericton Church, first, of all because the early settlers had no Church, and even after they did, the dissenting families chose to remain loyal to the Church of Scotland, as did the St Paul's Church of Fredericton. St. Paul's of Fredericton was built in 1830 and the 'day of raising' is described as a "great occasion. Men came from miles around to assist." (excerpted from a Century of Service, the history of St. Paul's Church in Fredericton, compiled by Mr. L.S. Morrison, Mrs. Burton C. Foster and Mr. S.H. McFarlane). The foreword of this history includes this sentence "A special word of thanks is due to Mr. Samuel H. McFarlane the indefatigable secretary of the committee who gathered most of the material for this book."

Wednesday afternoon, December 4 I visited Mr. McFarlane's daughter, Helen Tozer. She was born the 29th day of February 1896, and has an excellent memory.

In a book which soon will be published by Mrs. Avens Craig (Helen), "The Craig Family", there will be a story from the early life of Thomas Craig, where he describes walking 25 miles to a place of worship - this would be from Harvey to Fredericton.

Many baptisms and marriages for families of Harvey people were performed at St. Paul's United Church in Fredericton both before and after Church union. It is interesting for me now to be a part of the Ministry of that Church, and to trace back these Churches' relationships through the years.