

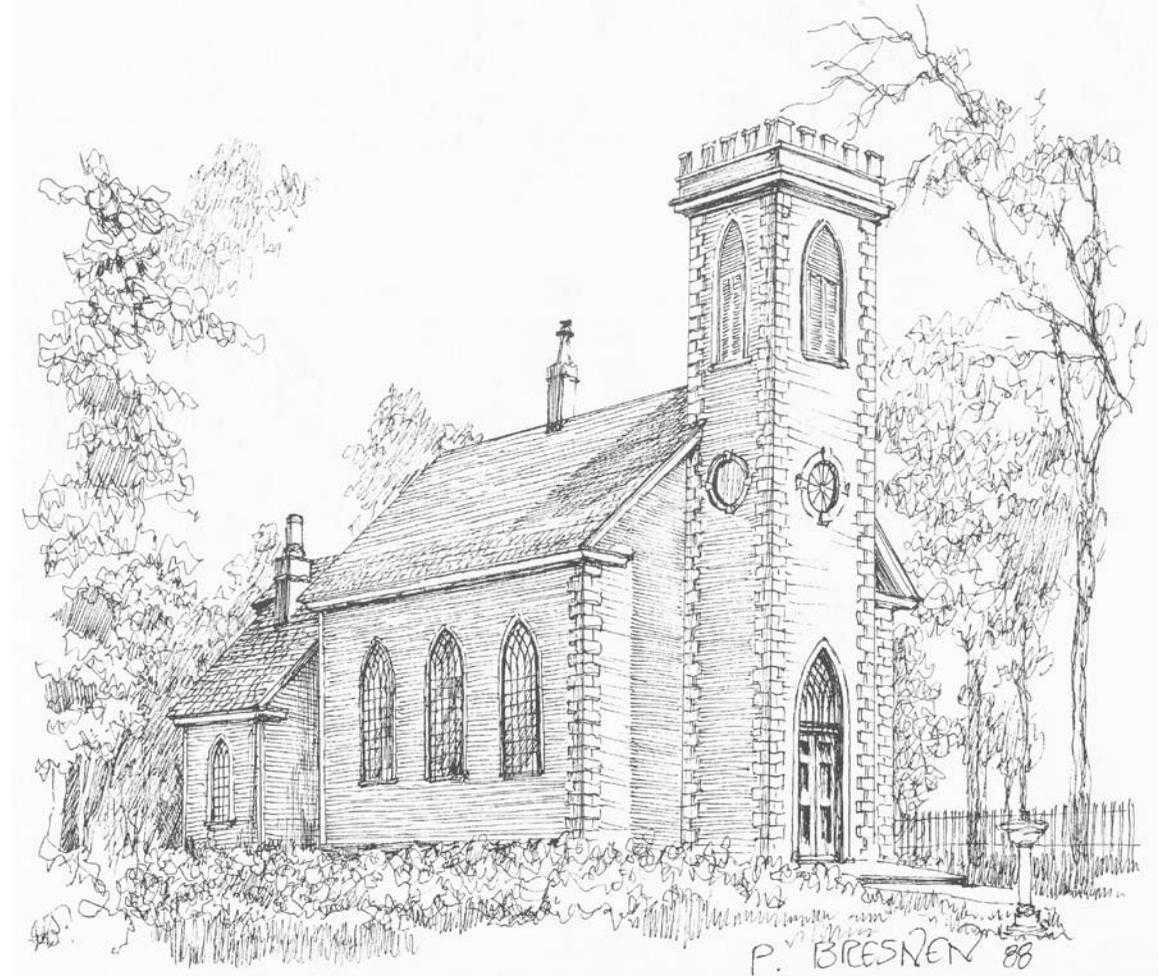
St Peter's Anglican Church

Architecture & Historical Notes



Robert Lawrence Henry

1917-1944



A Presentation Given to the Heritage Rug-Hooking Guild, May 29, 2013

Celebrating 175 Years of Continuous Worship and Witness

Architectural Phases

The St Peter's Church you see has undergone three distinct architectural phases. The original church, built in 1837-38 was a typical Georgian structure - a basic rectangle with attached bell tower. There was no separate sanctuary space and the windows were curve-topped, Palladian style. As for interior layout, at the head of the center aisle would have stood a so-called triple-decker pulpit. The nearest and sole extant Anglican example of this interior layout is to be found in St James Anglican Church, Long Reach, N.B.

St Peter's second architectural phase occurred in the 1870s. Due to the influence of the Diocese of Fredericton's first resident bishop, John Medley, the original structure was modified in a neo-Gothic direction. The most telling aspect of this modification was the addition of a separate choir and sanctuary area at the west end. This addition entails all that lies beyond the large central pointed arch. The present space retains the dimensions of the addition but its internal arrangement was vastly different from what you now see. Two steps of elevation led to the choir space with two short choir pews on each side facing one another. One additional step of elevation led through the opening in the altar rail and into the actual sanctuary area. The small wooden altar, (now functioning as a credence table in the alcove to the right of the sanctuary) was placed against the west wall. The alcove to the right housed a small organ. The west end was adorned with the three stained-glass windows, imported from England, depicting our Saviour as Good Shepherd, flanked by St Paul on the left and the building's patron saint, Peter, on the right. The windows are in memory of the Rev John Black, Rector, 1849-71 and the Rev Charles Lee, a son of the parish and, at the time of his early death, rector of Christ Church Parish in Fredericton.

The third architectural phase, the one which ushered in the building layout you now see occurred in 1978. In this phase, the balcony was added and a unique and historic organ installed. The choir was moved from the front of the church to the balcony. The sanctuary space was thus both significantly enlarged and lowered by the removal of two steps. The old wooden altar became a credence table in the former organ alcove and a large free-standing altar was installed. The old altar rail was removed and a new one installed which extended from one side of the 1870s archway to the other. Other changes effected in 1978 include the placing of tile on the entire floor as well as the removal of the 19th century stencilling of Scriptural passages both over the large central arch (*Here have we no continuing city - But we hope for one to come*) as well as between the side windows. These changes were

crowned by the addition of five new, (locally produced, by Cuppens of Saint John, N.B.) stained-glass windows in the nave of the church. The right front window depicts the construction of St Peter's by the local black population.

Historical Notes

The local black community, former slaves and their descendants, provided the work force which built St Peter's church. The oral tradition of the community confirms that it was George Leek (52) aided by his son William (21) who formed the skilled nucleus of the construction force. The Church's regional authority, Archdeacon Coster, also praised local magnate Charles Lee for his "indefatigable industry and perseverance". Coster wrote the English missionary Society, the SPG, (Society for the Propagation of the Gospel) in April 1839. He informed them,

the new Parish church at Kingsclear, situated about five miles from Fredericton, was opened for divine service by myself, before the commencement of the winter. The Society has given £50 towards this building. The rest of the expense was provided for by the voluntary contributions of the parishioners and their fellow Churchmen in the vicinity. At the time I officiated in it, it was in a very comfortable state, although without the pulpit or pews. The circumstances of the congregation being thought to require a free church, it is not intended to fit it up with pews and all that remains to be done to it, the inhabitants will be able to accomplish with such help as the Church Society will afford them. Divine service has been regularly performed in it all this winter, every alternate Sunday, by JM Stirling. It will be ready for consecration whenever the bishop shall again visit us, and is a valuable addition to our Establishment.

Further testament as to the engagement and integration of the local black community is provided by a letter to the bishop by the Rev Stirling himself in January 1843. He wrote

My Lord,

Your Lordship will be pleased to hear that St Peter's Church in Kingsclear, which was consecrated during your last Visitation to New Brunswick and which has now everything requisite for the decent celebration of Divine worship, including a handsome service of Communion plate presented to it by the ladies of the Church in this Parish, has been regularly opened every alternate Sunday since its consecration, and that the most

cheering results have attended these partial ministrations. The congregation has been steadily increasing and a growing attachment to the Church is daily manifested, more especially among the humbler classes of the people. The average attendance is about one hundred. During the last year nine adults (eight of them persons of colour) after undergoing a long trial and professing a strict and satisfactory examination were publicly admitted into the Church by Baptism and I rejoice to be able to add that eight of these are living conformably to the profession which they then made whilst the ninth, after a severe illness borne with Christian patience and cheered by the Christian's hope of a blessed immortality through the merits of her Redeemer, passed, I trust, from the Church Militant on Earth to the Church triumphant in heaven... I have the honour to be Your Lordship's Faithful Chaplain,

JM Stirling

From its inception, the degree of integration of black and white at St Peter's was unique. Not only did white and black worship together, blacks also served as sextons, vestry members and constituted a significant proportion of St Peter's well-known choir. Most tellingly however, black and white are buried together, without distinction, in St Peter's cemetery. This is in stark contrast to other nearby church and community cemeteries where segregation and separation were the norm. Indeed, St Peter's cemetery is the only known instance of integrated burial dating from the nineteenth century in the greater Fredericton area and perhaps, it has been suggested, in all of New Brunswick.

While Rev Stirling was baptizing the above mentioned adults another family were attending worship and raising their children at St Peter's. The family were the Rainsfords, a name which will immediately bring to mind Captain Charles Rainsford, hero of the War of 1812-1814, and member of the 104 Regiment of Foot. In the winter of 1813, circumstances necessitated that the Regiment march from Fredericton all the way to Kingston in order to participate in the defense of the nation the following spring. When two hundred men became storm-stayed by a blizzard at Lake Temiscouata, Rainsford and two other men tramped 185 kms in just two days to secure a rescue party bearing supplies. This action saved the stranded men from exposure and starvation and enabled them to complete the initial leg of their journey to Quebec City. Captain Rainsford and his wife Deborah lie buried in St Peter's cemetery.

In addition to the Rainsfords, St Peter's cemetery's earlier graves reflect our province's colonial past. To cite only one example, Major General James Kilner, who served in the Bombay Engineers in the mid-nineteenth century and died in 1894, is buried here. Moving forward in time, Captain Francis deLancey Clements, veteran of the First World War, who was awarded the Military Cross for heroism is also buried here. Any list of non-military notables must include Francis Partridge, who, born and educated in England, was the first Dean of Christ Church Cathedral, Fredericton; he died at sixty in 1906. Although not a member of the parish, he is reputed to have been very fond of our choir and was undoubtedly attached to our church for he asked to be laid to rest here. The Rev. Henry Montgomery (rector 1883-1909) commented in the Burial Register: "A good man, ripe scholar, and eloquent and able preacher. Great loss to the Diocese." Dean Partridge was a larger-than-life figure who impressed many people. After a lying in state and a massive funeral at the cathedral, his body was conveyed out of Fredericton, to be interred beside our modest little church in the countryside. Legend has it that he requested to be buried where the shadow of St Peter's would daily cross his gravesite.

St Peter's and the Wars of the Twentieth Century

Given that 2014 will mark the one-hundred year anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War, perhaps it is best to conclude this historic overview with a word on seven men who, although connected to St Peter's, do not lie buried in our cemetery. In 1918-19 our Sunday School erected its War Memorial. Embossed on brass maple leafs and attached to a wooden shield were the names of six men who had been associated with St Peter's. They ranged the gamut from English immigrant workers who had attended St Peter's to local boys baptized and confirmed in our church. The list includes an early naval fatality killed on November 1, 1914, (John Victor Hatheway at the battle of Coronel) as well as an artilleryman killed on the eve of the Canadian victory of Amiens on August 8, 1918, (Walter Horace Morell). The list also includes the serving minister, the Rev Wm. J. Wilkinson's son, Lawrence Tremaine Wilkinson who was a graduate of the University of King's College, Halifax and a candidate for Holy Orders. Being too young for ordination at the time of his graduation, (23) he joined the CFA (Canadian Field Artillery) in May of 1916. He died of wounds at a CCS (Casualty Clearing Station) on October 30, 1917. He lies buried at Nine Elms British cemetery just outside Ypres, Belgium.



W. Horace Morrell

1892-1918

In September of 1914 Walter Horace Morrell, 22 of Newcastle married a local girl Hazel Alice Gallop, 19, of Springhill. In April 1916 Horace joined the 65th Overseas Artillery Battery at Woodstock. In September 1916, Hazel rented a cottage in Woodstock to be near her husband but by October his unit had sailed overseas. In January 1917, Horace wrote his mother saying, "I hope Hazel spent Christmas with you, poor kid, I guess she's pretty near got her head worried off by the tone of her letters." Again in September 1917, Horace advises his mother, "you have no need to worry as everything is OK. I don't think Hazel would take things as seriously as she did, but I suppose you can't blame her." Sadly, Hazel's worrying proved prophetic. In August 1918, Horace's brother Herb had to write his mother; " I have never before felt less like writing a letter than I do at present, .. I do not feel so badly as regards myself, but I worry continually about you and Hazel and the rest at home. . . . Poor Hazel, I feel sorrier for her than I can say, and I hope she does not take it too hard." Horace had been killed by random German artillery fire on the eve of the Canadian victory at the battle of Amiens on August 8, 1918. He was 26 years old. Hazel never remarried.

Sadly, the Great War was not the last conflict to claim a son of St Peter's. Robert Lawrence Henry, born Dec 4, 1917 was the son of Cecil E Henry and Charlotte E (Taylor) Henry. Robert's parents' each represented black families with longstanding ties to St Peter's. Young Robert was killed in action in Italy on May 10, 1944 while serving in the Carleton and York Regiment. Tragically, his mother and sister learned of the existence of a telegram for the family from a callous stranger. They had been innocently down to Fredericton on a shopping trip on a Saturday afternoon when approached by this stranger bearing news. Robert too (pictured on back cover) rests in foreign soil and is buried in Caserta War Cemetery, Italy.

Finally, one historic note to close on which is especially appropriate for St Peter's. The annual Easter meeting of the parish in April 1922 records that the issue discussed was *whether or not women were to be given the vote*. It was moved by Fred Leek, seconded by Chas Murray that , *Lady members of the congregation have equal voice with the men at all parochial meetings*. The motion carried. There was only one woman present, Miss Wilkinson, the sister of Lawrence Tremaine Wilkinson who had been killed in France fighting for his country five years previously. So the one woman present now had equal voice at parish meetings based upon a motion made by a black man and seconded by the wealthiest white man of the Parish. True to its past, St Peter's continued to evolve along with Canadian society and in Faith and with hope, to press forward into an unknown and unpredictable future.