

History of the Congregation - Old Sharon

Previous to 1863, though Stellarton or the Albion Mines as it was then called was over a quarter of a century old, there was no place of worship in town which the Presbyterians could call their own.

The English Church had been built previous to that time. The Presbyterian families were therefore compelled to attend worship in one or the other of the Presbyterian Churches in New Glasgow.

In the wintertime a few travelled there on foot but the majority went by horse and sleigh.

In summer some preferred to walk - some could afford to drive but a majority went by flat car drawn by a horse on the railway which was placed at their disposal all through the courtesy of the manager of the mines (James Scott). It cannot be said the people of Stellarton sat in heathen darkness, yet they were placed at a disadvantage in having no place of worship of their own.

In 1863 steps were taken to build a church (or churches) and it came about in this way. The Presbyterians at this time were divided into three sects - the Kirk, the Free and the Anti-burghers.

The minister of the Kirk in New Glasgow was Mr. Pollok of the Kirk - the Free, John Stewart and of the Anti-burghers, Mr. Roy. Mr. MacPherson, who is still among us, was an Anti-Burgher, and Mr. MacKenzie (deceased) was a staunch believer in the establishment. The two were returning from church in New Glasgow on a Sabbath in the year 1862 when the former asked if Presbyterians

were not numerous enough in Stellarton to build a church for themselves.

It was agreed that the matter be talked up among their friends. Mr. MacKenzie and his friends met and after consultation it was decided to build a church. The Kirkman led the van; snatched a victory as the others thought. This had the effect of rousing the slumbering energies of the Free Churchmen and the Anti-Burghers. They met and they resolved to build a church. So the outcome of the sabbath talk, as the sequel proved, was not one but two churches. The project was first mooted in 1862 and though at that time there were only about 30 Presbyterian families they resolutely set to work and had the church occupation in September of the year following.

The building of such a large church as Sharon was considered a formidable undertaking at that time. Many had misgivings that they were attempting too much.

It was built by days work and not by contract. The builders of the superstructure were Messrs. Anthony Culton and James Chisholm and of the foundation by Mr. Daniel Falconer. At the very outset the little band met with obstacles which might have discouraged a people less resolute.

When the frame had been erected a gale levelled it to the ground. But that made no matter. Up it went again and without further mishaps. The building was finished in the year 1864.

Among the moving spirits were Dan Donnelly, D. A. Dickson, Dun. MacKay, Captain MacKay, John Matheson, William MacPherson, Daniel Falconer, William Carr and William Flemming - none of whom



remain to witness the fruit of which they sowed.

The church was formally opened in October, 1864, the preacher being Rev. Wm. Stewart of New Glasgow - who took as his text Isaiah 43:12. The collection was \$ 54.00 - in those days considered good.

It is a coincidence worthy of note the text from which Mr. Stewart preached the opening sermon and that from which Mr. Mowatt preached the closing afternoon sermon were both the 43rd chapter of Isaiah.

From October 1864 until the congregation had a stated pastor, the pulpit was supplied by the Pictou Presbytery.

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Stellarton - Sept. 15, 1863

Old Sharon Church was raised by Anthony Culton. The foundation was built by Daniel Falconer, joiner work by James Chisholm.

The church opened for divine service October 2, 1864. Rev. John Stewart of New Glasgow preached the morning service (Isaiah 43, verse 12) Collection \$ 52.00<sup>54</sup>. Rev. John MacKinnon preached in the evening (St. John 5: 39).

Commencement of Sabbath School in Sharon Church was Nov. 20, 1864 - 60 scholars. The first prayer meeting - Nov. 21, 1864.

The Presbytery met in James Church, New Glasgow on March 6, 1866 and organized the members of Sharon Church as a congregation. Rev. A. I. Mowatt was inducted June 5, 1866.

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References for these notes on the old Sharon came from a

diary by a Mr. MacPherson donated to the Public Archives  
by Rev. Mr. Johnson, Bridgewater.

Refer in the archives to:

P 27, 127, 149, 21

PANS Community records: Stellarton Sharon  
Church and other records. (Manuscript)  
MG4 Vol 145

The following notes on the New Glasgow Church came also  
from the above source.

History of New Sharon Church (August 1890)

At an annual meeting of the congregation held in Sharon  
Church Jan. 14, 1887, it was reported that the church building  
wanted repairs. The question was asked - was it worth repairing?

A committee was appointed to examine who reported adversely.  
The idea of a new church was touted and took root. At a  
subsequent meeting it was decided to ask for plans and tenders for  
a new church, the cost not to exceed \$ 8000.00 (they could go to  
\$10,000.00 but no more). A plan was agreed on, tenders called and  
the contract awarded to Mr. John MacIntosh.

A beautiful structure - pure Gothic. The plan was prepared  
by Daniel Grant of Nova Scotia - two handsome spires, the main one  
over 100 ft. high and the smaller one 70 ft. Two front entrances  
situated in the towers. In the front gable there is a large stained  
glass gothic window and a similar window in the rear gable.

The main spire is extremely graceful looking and competent  
judges assert there is not as fine looking and proportional a  
spire in Nova Scotia.



The entrances to the building are spacious and the easy means of egress will enable the building to be emptied in a short time.

800 seating capacity but 850 can be accommodated. 152 pews - all cushioned - a quarter circle.

The pulpit is a handsome piece of work of American design and the gift of John MacIntosh.

The magnificent organ was the gift of a few benevolent gentlemen and is considered in some respects better than many a large reed organ.

The bell was the gift of Mrs. D. A. Dickson and Charles W. Dickson.

Mr. J. H. Turnbull preached the first time in the new church on August ~~24~~<sup>17</sup>, 189~~9~~<sup>90</sup>. He took as his text Joshua 3: 9. "And Joshua said unto the children of Israel come hither, and hear the words of the Lord, your God".