

EARLY HISTORY

Philip Harding was born in England on August 20th 1819, and landed in Canada in 1859. He settled in Haliburton County where he homesteaded, worked at logging, clearing and cultivating the land struggling against the privations and hardships of the early pioneering days. His first visit to Apsley was in 1871 when he learned that a Charles Vizard who had settled in the hamlet four years before gave land for an English Church, churchyard and cemetery.

The only place of worship at that time was a non-conformist chapel two miles away near Scott's turn on Chandos Road (north), when Ben Hales, the first reeve of Chandos, held service and preached. In Apsley itself, before 1871 there was an unfinished Anglican Church on the present site and also a Presbyterian place of worship was served by itinerant students at times.

With regard to the Anglican Church, Mr. Harding writes in his diary that the original church was built by funds sent from England by Captain Hall of the Royal Navy to his son at Apsley, but due to unforeseen circumstances only a part of the amount sent was expended for the purpose, with the result that the church got no farther than being a mere shell and was not in use. In October 1874 it came to the ears of Mr. Harding that a certain man was trying to sell the church to the Presbyterians. He wrote to a Mr. Golborne who operated a sawmill in Apsley, a good churchman, on the matter. He in turn took up the matter with the Rev. Dr. Smithett of Lindsay and the Rev. F. Burt of Minden, both of whom evidently conferred with the Bishop on the situation.