

St. Alban's Church History Preserved in Minister's Booklet

Reverend Richard Ruggie, minister of St. Alban's Anglican Church in Glen Williams has put together a historical sketch of the parish on the 70th anniversary of the laying of the church's cornerstone. It is reprinted below. The history in pamphlet form with historical pictures is available at The Book Shop.

THE BEGINNINGS OF ST. ALBAN'S CHURCH

Like many riverside communities, the Glen took its name from the mill owners, on whom the pioneers depended for the grinding of flour and the sawing of lumber. Originally called Williamsburg, a new post office brought the name Glen Williams. Jacob Williams had set up a carding and fulling mill to supplement the other trades. As the 19th century passed the half-way mark, people began to depend less on the local sources of flour and wood, and small industries became more important to the villages of Canada West. In Glen Williams, wool was becoming the major industry.

Fire was a constant hazard to the wooden structures of the village. In May of 1866 a large fire in Mr. Williams' woods consumed the rake factory and damaged the saw mill, and the Milton paper reported:

The Glen Williams engine fell a victim to the impetuosity of its keepers, and was itself

extinguished by the element it was intended to overcome.

The following year the woolen mill was destroyed by fire. Bad fortune continued when, in 1868, the building was being replaced:

while raising the heavy timbers in top of the woolen mill . . . no less than 32 men went to the bottom, 3 storeys, with all the ladders, boards, pickpoles, etc. with them.

Three men died, and the mill had to be restored again after another fire in 1875. From 1894 to 1907 it was owned by an Old Yorkshirer, John Sykes, and his son-in-law, Alfred Ainley. Though he was an Anglican, Mr. Sykes, was not an active churchman, and he had the reputation of being overly concerned with the profits of his business. The owners brought to the village another Englishman, Harry Holdroyd, to be their general manager.

A second woolen mill was set up, in the northern end of the village, by Samuel Beaumont in 1878. When his son Joseph took over, it was said (perhaps apocryphally) that only Anglicans need apply to work there. He did, however, encourage his workers to attend church.

In the 19th century people were more anxious to attend church than they seem to be today. They would drive long distances in their buggies or

leighs, as people from the Glen probably did after St. George's Church was established in Georgetown in 1852. Or they would attend whatever church was near at hand: from the 1830's on there was a Methodist Episcopal chapel in the village of Glen Williams, and a Presbyterian Free Church close by. Often services in a village were arranged so that the "twicers" could join with one congregation in the morning and another in the evening.

From time to time Anglican services were held in the Glen. In 1877 Halton County Atlas, for example, tells of the Church of England minister from Georgetown holding services every Sunday in the Town Hall. This seems to have been the practice as well around the turn of the century. But one can only guess as to whether the services carried on during the years in between.

A public school scribber containing an account of the founding of the church seems to have been lost, but fortunately some of the information was used for a story in The Niagara Anglican that tells us:

Earlier attempts to establish a Church in the Village ended in failure but in 1899 the Rev. E. A. Vesey, rector of St. George's, Georgetown, succeeded in founding a Mission. Mr. Vesey, who was in Georgetown about three years,

did much during his time to encourage an appreciation of music, both in the church and in the town.

When Mrs. Rose Ann McMaster died in October 1901, she left her home and lot, on the bank of the mill pond leading to the Sykes and Ainley mill, to the Church of England. The home was renovated, and the following month services began to be held there. When St. Alban's was built, two stained glass windows in her memory were placed in the sanctuary.

At that time the Rev. T. G. Wallace — a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, who was remembered here for his fine sermons — was Rector of Georgetown and Norval. He headed a building committee appointed by the vestry (in April 1903), that included a number of people mentioned above: Joseph Beaumont, Harry Holdroyd, John Sykes and William Armstrong. A Toronto architect, F. S. Baker, designed a church which is charming from the outside and which gives an immediate atmosphere of worship inside.

Bishop DuMoulin was not pleased by the prospect of a church being built in the Glen. He felt that the villagers should continue to use St. George's. The villagers disagreed — Mr. Beaumont and Mr. Holdroyd feeling the need particularly since they had young families. Glen Williams is far from the city of Hamilton, and the plans carried on.

Mr. Holdroyd was at the time a prominent member of Credit Lodge (as was Mr. Beaumont), and the Masons' aid was enlisted for the project. The foundations were dug, and the walls of native limestone from the Logan quarries began to rise. One stone tells a story:

This Corner Stone was laid by Grand Lodge of Canada A.F. & A.M. Sept. 8, 1902. M. W. His Hon. Judge J. E. Harding, Grand Master. It is situated on the north-east corner of the church — the traditional place for masonic

corner stones. The weather on the afternoon of the ceremony was good, and the village had been decorated with flags, evergreens and bunting. The Glen Williams band led the Grand Lodge from the town hall to the building, where John Sykes presented a silver trowel, engraved for the occasion, to Judge Harding to lay the stone. Mr. Wallace and the Rural Dean were among the clergy who took part in the service. Afterwards the ladies gave tea on the lawn of S. Beaumont.

Perhaps it was felt that Bishop DuMoulin would not have been interested in taking part in this ceremony, but he was furious that the Masons had been invited in place of himself to officiate.

For some reason, he was not present when, on June 24th of the following year, the new church was opened. A rough line of red crayon drawn across the page of the service register marks the beginning of services there. 200 people heard Archdeacon Davidson of Guelph preach that evening. The following Sunday, it is recorded that 400 attended evensong, at a church which is crowded with 150. The register suggests that, though attendances were high, givings were low (even by modern standards).

Along with the yearly remembrance of Christmas and Easter and the Harvest Thanksgiving, the register notes when there were no services, as one March Sunday in 1905 "Owing to Flood of the Credit River", and all through October 1918 "owing to influenza epidemic." One clerical visitor confessed his sins, after signing the book, by writing in "Preached too long."

In Alban's day, after whom the parish is named, there were no church buildings. He lived at the start of the 4th century, and when the Roman empire persecuted Christians, he sheltered one, and came to share his faith. For this he was beheaded, the first English Christian to die for his faith. His church in the Glen has given

shelter to many weighed down by life's pressures. Hopefully too, it has helped to build concern for others and a trust in God such as Alban showed.

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Except the Lord build the house, their labour is but lost that built it.

Psalm 127:1.
IN THE BEGINNING . . .
The first baptism recorded in the parish register is that of Lily Beatrice Norton, who was baptized on June 28th, 1903 —

the Sunday after the opening of the church.
Bishop DuMoulin did come to the village on June 26th, 1904 to confirm a group of seven — ranging in age from 13 to 24. A pretty church often attracts enquiries about weddings from outside its membership. This is the case with St. Alban's, and

the first marriage here took place between a Methodist bride and a Presbyterian groom. On the next page is recorded how John Sykes, after a year of being a widower, remarried — at the age of 72. The first funeral was for Nathaniel Brown, in his 67th year, a native of County Armagh in Ireland and a former sergeant in the British Army.



Laying St. Alban's cornerstone, September 8, 1902.

Georgetown's Sage Named Top Group at Folk One

Folk 1, a province wide folk festival held in Georgetown on October 20 and 21 was a popular event with performers and spectators alike. More than 120 secondary school folk musicians took part in the event sending folk music all through the corridors of G.D.H.S. Some 500 Georgetown spectators cheered them on.

On Friday, Oct. 20 the out of town performers arrived and took part in a get-together hootenany. The performers then went to the homes of many Georgetown residents who had volunteered to billet them for the weekend.

Preliminary competition took place during Saturday morning and afternoon, and six solo, five duet and four group finalists were chosen out of forty-three solo, twenty duet and eight groups entered.

Judges for the competition were Allan Weeks and Andy Rush of Kingston, Glen Ingram of Oakville, Heather Bridges of Brantford, Roger Frost of Georgetown and Gay and Norm Stimers of Toronto. They had a most difficult job in choosing the finalists out of all the acts entered and an even more difficult task in picking the winners from the finalists. The finals, took place on Saturday evening in a formal folk concert format with Gord Fendley and Ron Fiddler, two local entertainers, keeping the audience in stitches with their emcee work.

First place in the solo division went to Bruce Reynolds of Huntsville who sang an original composition "An Old Man's Song" and played an original instrumental piece entitled "Carol's Pocket Book". Second place honours went to Bud Brown of Thunder Bay who played original numbers on the banjo and guitar. Third place laurels went to Ken Hartuiksen, another Thunder Bay musician, who sang Cat Stevens' "Father and Son".

First place in the duet category went to a Japanese duo from Toronto, Paul and Larry Sue-Ping, who wowed the audience with their guitar work on two original compositions. Second place went to Mike Domenico and Patrick Doyle of Toronto with Pat's song "Sleazy Woman". Mike Friedman and Jodi Sufirin of Toronto carried off third position with their rendition of an old Feter, Paul and Mary

number, "If I Had My Way". First place in the group category went to Georgetown's own "Sage". This group composed of Bryan Day, Colleen and Donna Burns, Pete McCormick and George Lasso, combined quality guitar work with multi part harmony to win the day with numbers such as "Love Is Not A Game", "Happy Together", "The Boxer", and "Tell It All". A hair-like group from Preston High came in second with large group renditions of "California Dreamin'" and "Bambou".

The festival was the un-

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dertaking on the part of the G.D.H.S. Folk Club and the final result showed the fruits of lengthy preparation. All out of towners were happily billeted, all competitions ran on time and the final show on Saturday night was of Mariposa quality. All performers before they left for their varied destinations in Ontario, were anxious to get back here for Folk Two.

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