

St. Philip's Roots 'n Wings

From the archives of St. Philip's Church, Milford:

ST. PHILIP'S CHURCH COMPLETELY DESTROYED BY FIRE ON MONDAY SEPTEMBER 6th, 1920

An article in the Picton Gazette, Sept. 11th, 1920 reported the following "The good people of Milford were shocked to see the English church in the village catch fire and burn to the ground. This old frame church was built in 1830 and served as a place of worship for Anglicans in the south part of Marysburgh". St. John's Waupoos and St. Philip's Milford made up the Parish of Marysburgh in the Diocese of Ontario, headquartered in Kingston.

The late Cecil Lobb of South Bay was an eye witness to the event and told the following story:

As a boy of fifteen he had been working on the farm of Morris Clapp and had stopped at Ostrander's store in Milford (now the Milford Bistro) because of a severe thunderstorm in progress. When Ostrander closed the store Lobb went the rest of the way home by the creek and had scarcely arrived there when he heard the Anglican Church bell ringing. As this bell was also the town fire alarm, Lobb jumped back on his bicycle and raced to the village, finding on his arrival that the belfry of the Anglican Church was ablaze after being struck by lightning. Led by Ernie

Brown, a force of men had tied ladders together to get at the fire, but, while they had formed a bucket brigade, it proved impossible to throw water up onto the old structure. Thus it eventually spread to the ceiling of the church and efforts switched from firefighting to the rescue of portable property. Lobb recalls church pews were wrenched from the floor and thrown out through the stained glass windows. The storm that produced the lightning produced virtually no rain, and this gave the firefighters no assistance in their efforts and the church was demolished.

George Ostrander made a loan of \$2,500.00 @ 5.5% to help rebuild the new church and it was completed in 1921 and consecrated on October 29th, 1925 after the loan was repaid. W. A. Jones and Welsh & Shaw brothers of Picton were the contractors. Services were held at St. John's while construction was underway and the good people of St. John's gave generously to help with the costs of rebuilding St. Philip's.

The same newspaper article in the Picton Gazette, stated that the memorial tablets, altar and ornaments were saved, but all other items, including bibles, prayer



Present Church



Old St. Philips

books and vessels in the Vestry were destroyed.

It is comforting to think if this happened today there would probably be a far different outcome. I am sure that Ernie Brown and his volunteers would not possess the firefighting skills that Fire Chief Glendon Walker and his well trained volunteers possess. And the 1920 crew would not have had the equipment now available a mere few hundred feet from the church.

- Bill Cowan