

**A HISTORY OF GREENOCK
CHURCH, ST. ANDREWS,
NEW BRUNSWICK FROM
1821 TO 1906.**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9781760575052

A history of Greenock Church, St. Andrews, New Brunswick from 1821 to 1906. by Melville N. Cockburn

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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MELVILLE N. COCKBURN

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OF
Greenock Church

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BY

MELVILLE N. COCKBURN, K. C.





BARRISTER-AT-LAW AND JUDGE OF PROBATE.

JUNE 1906.



GREENOCK CHURCH.

FINISHED JUNE 1824.



Greenock Church

ST. ANDREWS.

With the passing away of that generation of good old people who lived in St. Andrews, and were actively identified with the affairs of the town during the early part of the nineteenth century, much very important and valuable information connected with the settlement and development of that quaint old town has been lost, and a history replete with events of the utmost importance has been obliterated forever. The unwritten history of Saint Andrews that was told, in broken paragraphic form, by the generations now long since passed away, would have made a very large, interesting and valuable volume, and because of the failure to properly chronicle some of what were really the most important events in connection with our local history, by those personally conversant therewith, the same can now only be told with the usual uncertainty of tradition.

That fact obtains in a very marked degree in connection with the affairs of the Presbyterian Church in St. Andrews prior to the year 1825. In that year, on the 17th of April, what appears to be the first record connected with Greenock Presbyterian Church was made; but all the struggles and trials through which the Church passed before that date, and which would, of necessity, form a very interesting chapter in the history of the congregation, is known to the present generation only by tradition.

When Saint Andrews was first settled by the United Empire Loyalists, there was but one Protestant Church in the place, and all denominations were content to worship God according to the Episcopal faith, and under the teaching of the Rev. Mr. Andrews, the rector then in charge, who was greatly beloved by

all classes because of his kindly disposition, and his broad and liberal spirit. But when the Rev. Mr. Andrews passed over to the Great Beyond in 1817, and the Episcopal Church secured a pastor less popular among his own and other denominations, the Presbyterian section of his former congregation and a large portion of the Scotch element grew restless and showed much discontent under the teachings of Dr. Alley, and were seized with a desire to have a Church of their own where they could worship God after the manner of their fathers.

I.

THE FIRST RESIDENT PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER.

In 1811 the Rev. John Cassilis, a Presbyterian clergyman, was sent out from Scotland to teach in the Academy, or King's College, at Windsor, N. S., and became the first settled pastor of the Presbyterian Church there. He came to Saint Andrews in 1818, and took charge of the grammar school which was established there that year, which position he filled until 1838. Between the time of Mr. Cassilis' coming from Windsor, in 1818, and the opening of Greenock Church, with a settled pastor, in 1824, he conducted divine services and preached with more or less regularity, sometimes in Ordway's Hall (known now as Paul's Hall), sometimes in the Masonic Hall, and occasionally in the unfinished structure which, when completed, became the magnificent House of God, known as "Greenock Church." The records give no information on the subject, but it is generally believed that Mr. Cassilis was the first Presbyterian minister to preach in Saint Andrews and also the first to conduct divine service in Greenock Church.

Mr. Cassilis was a man of strong personality, of learning and culture, and eminently filled with the Divine Spirit. His influence in the community, and his acceptable exposition of Divine truths had, no doubt, much to do with inspiring in his people a determination to have a church of their own where they could worship God as their fathers did, and as many of themselves had done, in the land of "brown heath and shaggy wood."

THE CHURCH ERECTED.

Very soon after Mr. Cassilis began his work among the people of Saint Andrews so strong a stimulus was given to Presbyterianism, that the work of erecting a place of worship of their own was earnestly and energetically undertaken. Mr. Robert Pagan, a very prosperous and public spirited merchant of that time, and whose name one of the streets of St. Andrews now bears, was the first to make a practical move in that direction, and contributed one hundred pounds sterling (£100) from his own funds towards the cost of same. Many others followed Mr. Pagan's worthy example; and when a substantial fund had been raised a contract was given to Donald D. Morrison, who had Byron Stephenson as his framer and foreman. The foundations of what was destined to become one of the most beautiful sacred edifices of its day were laid, the frame work erected and boarded in, and the roof partially shingled, when the funds became exhausted, and in that unfinished condition, the building stood until November, 1822, a monument of temporary disappointment and hopes unfulfilled, an emblem of Scottish ambition, and which afterwards became a lasting exemplification of what Scotch pluck and determination can accomplish.

There lived in those days, in the Town of Saint Andrews, one Christopher Scott, a man of Scottish birth, possessed of an iron will, of irresistible determination, and extensive wealth. At a public dinner held during the autumn of 1822, where Mr. Scott was present, a friend and follower of the Episcopal denomination made an uncomplimentary reference to the unsuccessful attempt of the "Presbyterian Saints" to build a church of their own. Mr. Scott was filled with resentment; the pride of one of Scotland's most loyal sons was touched; the indignation of a stubborn and determined Scotchman was stirred to the utmost, and in language more forcible than elegant, which he accentuated with a heavy blow from his fist on the table, he informed his Episcopal friend and all present that he would let it be seen that the Presbyterians of Saint Andrews could have a church of their own, and a fine one too.

Captain Christopher Scott proved himself to be a man of deeds as well as words, for immediately following the declaration con-

tained in his after dinner speech, he took full charge of the work of finishing the church in the month of November, 1822, and according to his own tastes, at his sole and individual cost, and apparently without regard to expense, he pushed on to completion what was then one of the most beautiful and costly of the Church buildings in the Province, and what is still an object of keen admiration because of its perfect proportions and superior architectural design.

The building is of the Colonial style of architecture, two storeys high, and has been constantly kept painted in snow white colour. The interior finish is rich and costly. A gallery occupies two sides and the southwest end, supported by ten pillars of solid bird's-eye maple, grown in Charlotte County; the facing of the gallery is of solid mahogany and bird's-eye maple, and finished in panel work of artistic design. In each of the four corners of the ceiling is a large Scotch thistle, emblems of the land so dearly loved by the one who finished the building. The most striking and beautiful part of the interior of this interesting and historic old church is found in its pulpit. This sacred structure, for perfection in its proportions and design and richness of finish, is a marvel of beauty and excellence. It rises to a height on a level with the gallery and makes perfect the acoustic properties of the building. It is composed entirely of mahogany and bird's-eye maple, the mahogany having been brought from Honduras by a West Indian trader sent there by Mr. Scott specially for that purpose. Mr. Gordon Gilchrist was in charge of the work, in the construction of the pulpit, and afterwards became a member of the first Session of Greenock Church and a member of the first Board of Trustees.

This wonderful structure was completed almost entirely without the use of nails or metal of any kind, the hinges of the doors and the screws that fasten them on being the only hardware employed in its building. The cost of the pulpit was Five Hundred Pounds Sterling (£500), and two of the most skilled workmen spent the greater part of two years in its completion. The design was obtained by Mr. Scott from Greenock, Scotland, the place of his birth, and after which town the church took its name.

On the outside of the large tower facing the harbor, at a high elevation, was placed a carved representation of an oak tree in full leaf, which, by the use of the painter's brush, has ever been kept