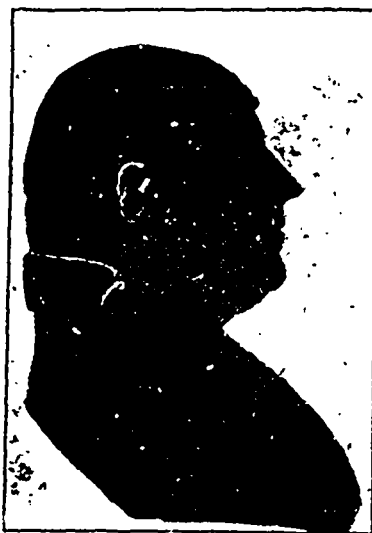


## Centennial of the Organization of Pictou Presbytery.

The Presbytery assembled in New Glasgow on July 10th, to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of its organization. On July



Rev. DUNCAN ROSS.  
The only portrait of any of the members of the first Presbytery in Pictou County.

7th, 1795, the Presbytery of Pictou was organized in a barn near McCulloch's Brook with four members, Rev. James McGregor, Rev. John Brown, Rev. Duncan Ross, ministers, and Robert Marshall elder. Pictou may well claim to be the cradle of Presbyterianism in Canada. From this county have gone forth many of the brightest minds in the Canadian Church, and many of the heroic missionaries to foreign fields own Pictou as their birth-place. From its humble beginning, when this country was almost an unbroken forest, the Church in Pictou has grown into a prosperous and influential body. Presbyterian has almost become synonymous with Pictonian.

During the century the Presbytery of Pictou has sent forth 120 ministers, and to-day it numbers 6,000 members on its communion roll. The Presbytery of Pictou may justly be proud of its ministry and their work during the century of its existence. The spirit which animated and inspired the pioneers of 1795 still dwells among the loyal Presbyterians of Pictou, and inspired by the history of the past they will achieve still greater works in the future.

The celebration of the centenary marks an important epoch in the history of Pictou county. The opening services were held this afternoon in James church which itself is bound by many ties to the early history of the Church in Pictou. Behind the platform are placed two tablets in memory of Revs. Drs. McGregor and Roy, pioneers of the Church in Canada. The Moderator of Presbytery, Rev. A. Robertson, presided, and beside him were seated Revs. Drs. Pollock, Paterson and Morrison, A. McLean, J. Carruthers and E. D. Miller. There were fifty clergymen present at this meeting, most of whom were natives of Pictou.

The meeting was opened by singing the Hundredth Psalm followed by reading of Scriptures by Rev. James Carruthers and prayer by Rev. Dr. Pollock.

The Moderator welcomed the visitors and clergymen and said that this celebration was held in honor of the memory of the men who had organized the Presbytery. He then read graceful letters of congratulation from Sir Wm. Dawson and Rev. A. J. Mowat, of Montreal, and telegrams from Rev. Dr. McCulloch, of Truro, and the Presbytery of Montreal.

### DR. PATTERSON'S ADDRESS.

Rev. Dr. Patterson, of New Glasgow, who has been closely associated with the Presbytery of Pictou, for nearly half a century, was the first speaker. The following is a brief summary of his address:

The first settlers in Pictou were six families from the borders of Pennsylvania and Maryland in the year 1667, of whom however only four remained. These were joined in subsequent years by others from the same quarter or by persons from other settlements. Then in the year 1773 came the ship Hector with 30 families and about 200 souls, mostly highlanders, who were thrown upon our shores in a state of destitution. They generally removed to other settlements to obtain the means of a subsistence, but the most of them returned in subsequent years. Then in 1776 came about 15 families originally from Dumfriesshire, who had come to P. E. Island but who were driven off by famine occasioned by a plague of mice.

The Philadelphia Company, which had sent most of the settlers made provision for and sent a minister, the Rev. James Lyon, who has given his name to Lyon's Brook, who ministered to them for about two years from 1768 to 1770. A little later their religious interests were partly attended to by a pious schoolmaster, named James Davidson, who taught school during the week and gathered the children on the Sabbath for religious instruction, before Raikes began the modern Sabbath school movement. But he left about the year 1776. From this time till the year 1784 the settlers enjoyed almost every summer a missionary visit from the Rev. Daniel Cook, of Truro, or the Rev. David Smith, of Londonderry, but particularly the former.

Between the fall of 1783 and the spring of 1784 the settlement received a large accession of population, principally of men who had served in the American Revolutionary war. About 150 men of the 82nd regiment settled the eastern part of the country. Of these about a third were Roman Catholics. A number of 84th regiment settled on the upper part of East River, and about the

same time came about twelve families from the Highlands of Scotland.

Such an increase of population led to measures for obtaining a minister of their own. Meetings were accordingly held in the summer of 1784 at which it was resolved to make an effort for that purpose. A committee was appointed and authorized to take necessary steps for that end. They accordingly forwarded a petition to Scotland, the original of which I have in my hand. This came before the general assembly or Antislavery Synod, as it was commonly called, at its meeting on the 4th May, 1786, when the Rev. James McGregor was appointed to proceed to Pictou. He was ordained by the Presbytery of Glasgow on the 30th May, arrived in Pictou on the 21st July, and immediately entered upon his labors.

Dr. McGregor not only labored in Pictou county, but also visited Cumberland, Colchester, East Hants and P. E. Island. Able to give them only occasional visits, and finding many in other places perishing for lack of knowledge, even entreating a visit, whom he could not reach, he besought the Synod of Scotland in terms of the most earnest entreaty to send men to help him to occupy the fields that were already white unto the harvest. For nine years his appeals were in vain, but at last two young men then students, John Brown and Duncan Ross, offered their services. They were licensed and ordained and sailed for New York. Thence they reached Nova Scotia the beginning of July, 1795, just at the time of the observance of the Lord's Supper. They assisted Dr. McGregor at the services connected with that ordinance and on the Tuesday following, by authority of the Synod from which they came, the three brethren, with an elder from the congregation of Pictou, constituted themselves a Presbytery under the name of the Associate Presbytery of Nova Scotia, but commonly known as the Presbytery of Pictou. The place of meeting was Robert Marshall's barn, which stood a few yards west of the road leading from Middle River to New Glasgow, on the descent of the hill towards McCulloch's Brook. The place was chosen as central for the whole congregation, which then embraced all Pictou. A barn was chosen doubtless as affording the largest room, and, being summer, as many as chose could gather round. We have not full particulars of their proceedings, and the minutes for the first few years are not in existence. The most known is that Dr. McGregor preached from Neh. ii : 20—"The God of heaven, He will prosper us, therefore we, His servants, will arise and build."



The spot where the barn stood in which Pictou Presbytery held its first meeting. The cross indicates where the barn was.

The young missionaries received appointments to the mission fields. At the next meeting two calls were presented to each of them and that season they were settled, Mr. Ross as colleague to Dr. McGregor in Pictou, and Mr. Brown as successor to Rev. David Smith, of Londonderry, who had died a little before.

After reference to the fields in which these ministers labored, Dr. Patterson referred to the arrival of Rev. Alexander Dick in 1802. He was ordained at what is now the village of Maitland, June 21st, 1803. Mr. Dick was a man of fine talents of an ardent temperament, and as a preacher perhaps had no superior among the early ministers of our church. Dr. McGregor was the only one that people placed on a level with him. He was the McChoyne of the infant body. But the zeal of the Lord's house rapidly consumed him and his career proved short. He



James Church, New Glasgow.