

THE PROPOSED MEMORIAL  
TO THE  
REV. GEORGE NEAL

Better known as Major Neal, the Pioneer Methodist  
Preacher in Upper Canada

A LITTLE more than ten years after the first Methodist society was organized in London, England, a child was born, either in Pennsylvania or, as some of his descendants claim, in South Carolina, who, in his mature years, exerted an important influence on the founding of Methodism in Upper Canada. George Neal was of Irish descent, the family name being originally O'Neal. In his youth Whitefield was itinerating in America, but it was not until later in life that Neal was brought under Methodist influences. During the stirring times of the American Revolution Neal served with the British forces in South Carolina and in Georgia, and attained to the rank of major. On several occasions he displayed conspicuous bravery, and more than once narrowly escaped with his life. Towards the close of the war, when his services were no longer required, he retired to the interior of the State of Georgia, where he engaged in teaching school. It was during this time that he heard the Rev. Hope Hull, an earnest Methodist preacher, and became concerned about his spiritual welfare, and a year later found peace through faith in Christ.

He soon began to exercise his gifts in the service of the Lord. His call to preach was in the form of a dream, in which a glittering sword was given him, having two edges, with the name of Wesley emblazoned thereon. He was sent by the Presiding Elder to preach on the Pee Dee River, where he was instrumental in leading a number of souls to the Saviour. Whilst strongly attached to the people amongst whom he labored, his British proclivities were strong, and he resolved to go to Canada. He missed the boat by which he intended to go to Nova Scotia, and