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History of The Campbellton Baptist Church

In seeking to trace the history of the Campbellton Baptist Church—the first one to be founded in any North Shore town, we are taken back to the years before Confederation. Thus, in the year 1846 there was organized on the river at Flatlands, the Baptist church in Restigouche. The leaders in this organization were, Elder James Bleakney, ordained Baptist minister, and his assistant, Alexander March, licensed Baptist minister.

In the town of Campbellton itself, what few Baptist there were, attended the Methodist church and worked with their brethren of that denomination. Among those may be mentioned, the late Mr. J. E. Price, former superintendent of the I. C. R. Railway.

In the fall of 1885, however, a visit, important in its results, was made to Restigouche Co. by the Rev. Isiah Wallace. Visiting first some parts of Northumberland Co., where he had previously ministered, he came on further north to Campbellton and vicinity where he found an abundant opportunity for service.

In an account which he made of his visit, he mentions Mr. J. E. Price and among others up the river, the name of Mr. Stevens, formerly of Hillsbro, now a member of the present Campbellton church.

Accordingly, having made their decision, Mr. Wallace, Mr. J. E. Price, and the few others associated with them met in what was then known as Patterson's Hall for organization. This little group gathered there in the November of 1885 formed the nucleus of the present Campbellton church.

In Mr. Wallace's reminiscences of his ministry we read an account of that meeting. After an effective sermon there were read the Baptist Articles of Faith and Practice and the Church Covenant. Prayers were offered. Then followed the organization of the church and the election of officers. Twenty members were enrolled.

On the following Sunday three were added by baptism. After this work was carried on up the river with very good results. Mr. Wallace, staying in Campbellton until the church membership had doubled, and arrangements had been made for the erection of a house of worship and the calling of a pastor. This call was answered by Mr. W. C. Vincent, now of Winnipeg. Mr. Vincent's labors were fruitful, resulting in a large addition to the membership.

The ten years or more following his term of service are more or less enshrouded in the mantle which the past

First Baptist Church



REV. W. CAMP, B. D., Pastor CAMPBELLTON, N. B.

Special services were held at Moore Settlement, and Desidero on the Quebec side and at Flatlands and Upsalpuitch on the New Brunswick side. In all of these places the efforts put forth were blessed of God and much good was accomplished.

After working about three weeks with excellent results, it was resolved after much careful thought to organize a church in the town, to be known as the Campbellton Baptist church.

Situated as they were, from any large Baptist organization, the little band of workers had to look to God alone for wisdom and strength in their undertaking. But they had his promise to rely on. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him."

weavers for itself in the minds, and the fire further obliterated all records.

The names of some of those who ministered to the early church, we have been able to glean from those whose memory can take them back to those pioneer days. Thus, we learn of a Mr. Munroe who was here for a time, Mr. Sables, Mr. C. P. Wilson and Mr. Brown.

As the town grew in population, more Baptists came to the place and the church was strengthened in numbers.

In the year 1902, the late Rev. J. W. Kierstead was the pastor. The membership at that time was 235 persons. Three years later it had increased to 246 an addition of eleven members. The office of church clerk in Mr. Kierstead's time was filled, first by Mr. Ronald Currie and after his death by Mr. Starratt.

During this period the growth of the church was steady. From time to time members were added, both by letter and baptism, while occasionally some removed from the place.

Just when the Sunday School was started cannot be stated, but that it was in a flourishing condition at this time, there seems little reason to doubt. One of the early superintendents was Mr. H. H. Bray. In Mr. Kierstead's time, Mr. Stephen Moores held this office.

Besides doing the work at home, we find the church also wide awake to the needs of the foreign mission field.

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Christ has given his Great Commission which must be carried out. "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel," and statistics have proved that a church without missionary interest soon loses its life and power to do service at home. The Campbellton church was not of the latter class.

In Mr. Kierstead's time we find the Ladies' Aid seeking to interest the children in missions through the agency of the Teague Mission Band. Miss Barnes, so well known to Campbellton people was President.

In 1906 when she left the place where she had spent so many years of useful service, she was succeeded in the band by Miss Colpitts, now Mrs. Eveleigh of Sussex. Under her leadership a most successful years work was accomplished, and a considerable sum of money was raised for missions. Mrs. Nobles and Mrs. M. P. Moores took charge the following year and in their turn were followed by Mrs. D. E. Richards and Mrs. Archie Henderson.

In the year of 1906, Mr. Kierstead removed to Oxford Jet, and was succeeded by Rev. B. H. Nobles, now of Victoria Street, St. John.

Mr. Nobles' term here was brief, lasting but a year. During that time however, the church prospered and the membership increased from two hundred and forty-six to two hundred and seventy-five.

Mr. Nobles' successor was Rev. P. J. Stackhouse, now of Utica, N. Y. He remained here three years, giving service which proved very fruitful in its results. A large Bible class among the men was one noteworthy feature of his ministry.

During his stay the church suffered the loss of two of its most prominent workers. To Mr. E. W. Lewis, Superintendent of the Sunday School and teacher of the Ladies Bible Class the call came very suddenly to leave the place he so nobly and usefully filled. His death was followed by that of Deacon Miller not long after.

In 1910 Mr. Schurman succeeded Mr. Stackhouse, who went to Amherst to enter a larger field of labor in the First Baptist Church of that town.

Coming to Campbellton in May, Mr. Schurman had just had time to get settled in his new pastorate and lose all in the fire which swept the town on July 11.

By this nothing was spared. A few hours sufficed to destroy the visible results of years of labor and Mr. Schurman found himself pastor of a church whose members and congregation were with few exceptions homeless, and forced to begin again at the place in their fortunes where they started years before.

The church organization was not dissolved, but that was all that remained, and so it fell to his lot to share in the difficulties attending the rebuilding of a house of worship.

The fire occurred on Monday and the last of that week saw all who remained in town, settled in the tents, forwarded from Ottawa and Sussex for the shelter of the unfortunate inhabitants. The place was appropriately termed the "City of Tents." These, the charred and smoking ruins, rendering old sites almost impossible of recognition and a few stray houses which

(Continued on page 6)

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PAGE TWO

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News Notes

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Tuesday was a beautiful day with warm sunshine.

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The report of the Com-
stant Teachers in Ne-
appear in the next issue.

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ceived their first carlow
cars and they are on each
garage, Water street.

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Mrs. Wm. Wayne Wr
sincerely thank her ma-
kindness and syn-
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ering the construction c
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Wounded
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G. E. McFarlane, New
F. S. Flaherty, Chatha

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opened a law office here
has removed to Bathurst
practise in future. Dur-
ence here Mr. Ryan ma-
ends who wish him succe-
field.

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Works has just had ere
water tower of 30,000-
city. This is an auxilia-
sprinkler system which
about a year ago. Now it
pays the town supply ti
on hand to draw from.
is elevated well above th
the plant.

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or 75c. for 6 months, or \$
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I became so weak
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