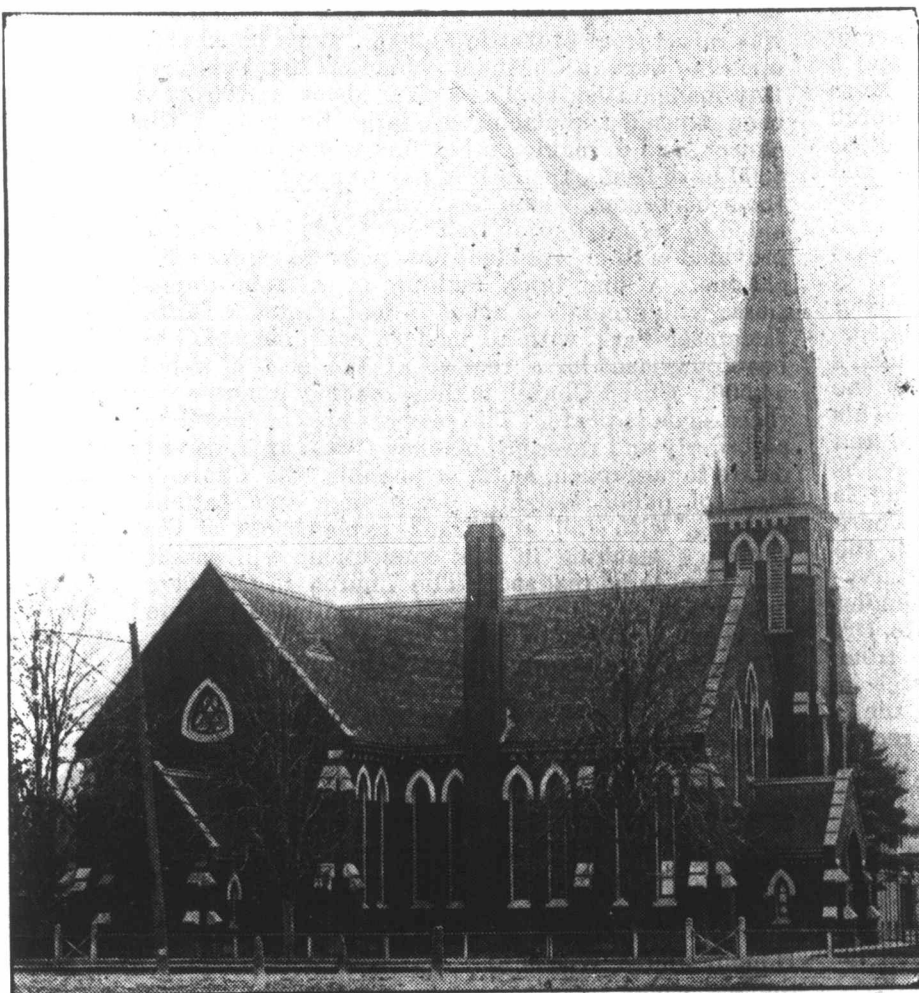


CHRIST CHURCH, CHATHAM, ONT.

There are few more difficult things than to write an accurate history, when the materials cannot be found in systematically kept records, but have to be gathered from many different sources, in scraps which do not always exactly fit each other, owing to diverse impressions and uncertain memories. Although the history of this church goes back as far as the year 1820, there are no parish records extant extending further back than the time of the late Ven. Archdeacon Sandys. Whether the books were lost, burned, or ever even existed, cannot now, with certainty, be ascertained; but it is supposed that they were burnt at the burning of the original church of the parish. It is not thought that the long period of twenty-five years could have elapsed without proper records having been kept, at least by some of the four incumbents who preceded the Rev. Dr. Sandys. The original church, called St. Paul's, was a plain, brick structure, probably built under Government auspices, the people and missionary societies co-operating upon the original glebe, consisting of 3½ acres of land, which comprises town lots 1, 2, 3 and 4 on Gaol street, granted to the Rev. Thomas Morley, first resident missionary of Chatham; John Dolsen, of Dover, and Duncan McGregor of Harwich, on the 29th April, 1833, by King William IV. It will be observed that if the church was built as long ago as 1820 on this site, the issuing of the patent granting it was kept in abeyance for some 12 or 13 years. In 1834, a parcel of land, containing 1½ acres, was allotted by the Crown as a convenient place for the building of a church and parsonage house for the successive ministers and congregations of the Established Church of England. This property is on King street, at the place upon which Dr. Duncan's present residence now stands. Afterwards, in the year 1837, the Rev. Thomas Brock Fuller, the second incumbent of the mission of Chatham, petitioned the Governor in Council to exchange this site for another, which petition was granted by order of the Executive Council of Upper Canada, on the 23rd day of March, 1837, and in lieu thereof was given 5½ acres of land lying between Gaol street and Murray street. This last property is now all built upon, and produces an annual rental of about \$800. Christ Church, which succeeded old St. Paul's, which was burnt down in March, 1869, stands upon a portion of the school land granted by the Government to the town of Chatham for school purposes, and purchased by the congregation at the cost of about \$2,300. It is stated above that the Rev. Thomas Morley was the first resident missionary of the Church of England in Chatham. There is, however, a tradition of previous missionaries travelling through this part of the peninsula, but their names cannot at this time be ascertained. He came from England in the year 1822, and was sent as a missionary to the Indians on the Grand River, where he remained three years. In 1827 (two years being unaccounted for) he was appointed missionary at Chatham. Mr. Morley's field of labour was large, embracing enough of what now constitutes the three counties of Kent, Elgin and Essex, to form a large county. He was a man of large physique and very active, and pushed forward his missionary labours in every direction. Of his family but little is known. His wife and invalid child never resided in the mission, but in a place called Hallowell, in the State of Maine, where he was in the habit of spending a few weeks during the summer months. In some of his letters, written to parishioners while on his travels, he mentions having preached for the Rev. Mr. Addison, then rector of Niagara-on-the-Lake, at the old historic St. Mark's Church of that parish, and also at St. George's Church, Kingston. His letters abound in expressions of pious solicitude

for his people, and breathe the spirit of the kind pastor. He fell asleep suddenly at the house of a friend whom he was visiting in Amherstburg, falling upon his bed stricken by apoplexy or heart-failure in 1836. He was succeeded about the close of the same year by the Rev. Thomas Brock Fuller, a man of marked individuality and force of character, who subsequently took a prominent part in promoting the interests of the Church in this province, always bending the activities of his mind and using his rare judgment toward that end. He was born in the Garrison at Kingston, his father being Major of the 41st Regiment. His mother was a descendant of Archbishop Loftus, of Dublin, and one of the founders of Trinity College in that city. On his father's side he descended from Fuller, the Church historian. General Brock, after whom he was named, was his godfather. He attended school at Little York with Young McMurray, who afterwards became rector of Niagara-on-the-Lake and Archdeacon of Niagara, at Dr. Strachan's Academy. He then went to Chambly Divinity School, under the supervision of Bishop Stewart. On the 8th September, 1838, he was made deacon, and received an appointment as curate in the city of Montreal, at the time the



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cholera was decimating the city, in the following year. Early in 1836 he came to Chatham, where he laboured four years and established in the counties of Kent and Lambton a number of missions, which have since grown into distinct missions and self-sustaining parishes. In 1840, he was appointed rector of Thorold, and established several missions along the Welland Canal. He left Thorold in 1861, having presented the parish with the gift of \$11,000, which he had expended in building the beautiful stone church which adorns the town. He was then appointed rector of St. George's Church, Toronto, and soon placed that church in a prosperous condition, causing St. George's rectory to be built among other of his achievements. In 1849 he was appointed Archdeacon of Niagara by Bishop Strachan, having jurisdiction over not only the Niagara district, but that part of the Diocese of Toronto east of the city. In 1875, he was chosen the first Bishop of the new Diocese of Niagara by more than two-thirds of the clerical, and nineteen-twentieths of the lay vote. The election took place on St. Patrick's Day. He was consecrated at St. Thomas' Church, Hamilton, on the first day of May following, by the Bishops of Toronto, Huron and Michigan. On his elevation to the Episcopate he received the degree of D.D., *Honoris causa*, at the hands of Trinity University,

Toronto. He fulfilled the office of bishop for ten years, departing this life full of labours and honour in the year 1885. It has thus seemed appropriate on this occasion to give some details of a career beyond the immediate scope of this paper, of one whose memory deserves to be held in honor by Chatham, as one of the heroes of its early history, who did not fear to endure hardships for his Master's sake; for during the four years he was at Chatham, his labours were abundant and painstaking, while he travelled over a large extent of country on horse-back, unpretentiously sharing the humble fare of the log cabin of those days. Among some of the oldest inhabitants his memory is kept green even to the present day, old times and incidents being recalled with pleasure. He was succeeded by the Rev. Oliver J. Wiggins about the year 1841. Those who remember him can only say that he was an accomplished scholar and a man of ability, who had come up from the Lower Provinces, but who only held the incumbency of Chatham for about two years. He was succeeded by the Rev. Thomas Hobson, of whose history little can be ascertained. Those who remember him were impressed with his small, but elegant, physique, his scholarship and polished man-

ners, with an unvarying neatness of dress. This gentleman's mind, through a sad weakness, became unhinged, and he was found dead on the 12th October, 1848, on the plains near Windsor, whither he had wandered and perished through an aberration of the mind. The next appointment to the incumbency of Chatham was that of the Rev. Francis William Sandys, who for the previous four years had occupied the position of travelling missionary between the townships of Dunwich and Mersea, with headquarters at Tyroconnel. His energy and abilities were well-known in Chatham, where he had from time to time officiated, and he was therefore called to this charge at the unanimous desire and request of the congregation. He was appointed rector of Chatham in July, 1849. Although now rector of Chatham his field of labour was little less circumscribed than his former missions, having a number of outposts to attend to, as well as the increasing population of a growing town, destined ere long to become an important city. His oratorical powers and genial temperament gained him a wide influence and renown in this section of the country. In 1860, he visited England and received the degree of D.D. at the hands of the Archbishop of Canterbury. On his return he set himself the task of finishing

the structure and completing the church, whose foundation stone had been laid some years previously, but the building of which had to remain in abeyance owing to the financial stringency of those times. But now the country being in a more prosperous state, a strong and earnest appeal was made to the congregation, which met with a hearty response, so that within a year the fine ecclesiastical structure which now adorns the city as Christ Church, Chatham, was completed and ready for use, without any extraneous aid, with the exception of the steeple, and within a fortnight afterwards, what was then called an organ-melodeon was purchased, through the efforts of the ladies, who had in this short time collected about \$800 for the purpose. The church was formally opened by a solemn public service toward the close of the year 1861, in which the late Bishop Cronyn took part, preaching the special sermon, the Rev. David Armstrong, of Moore, having read the prayers. There were said to have been 700 or 800 people present. After the services the Rev. Dr. Sandys presented to the bishop three candidates for ordination, Messrs. Jonas Stainers Baker, Hans Caulfeild and Joel T. Wright, who were admitted to the order of deacons. Then followed a celebration of the Holy Communion, at which there were about fifty communicants. There was