

INTRODUCTION

Trinity Church, Chippawa, 1818-1828

THOUGH the first minister of the Protestant Episcopal Church, as they used to say in the eighteenth century, who ministered in the Niagara district was the Rev. John Ogilvie, chaplain to the British force which reduced Niagara in 1759, the chances are that no services of the Church of England were held in Chippawa before the time of the Revd. John Stuart, D.D., or even that of the Revd. Robert Addison, of Niagara. Dr. Stuart, who settled in Kingston in the year 1785, paid more than one visit to Niagara and the Indian reserve on the Grand River between that date and 1792, the year of Mr. Addison's arrival in Niagara to become the missionary to the Loyalists and traders in the peninsula.

Like Dr. Stuart from Kingston, Mr. Addison itinerated in all directions from Niagara (or Newark) as far as the Head of the Lake, (Hamilton) and at Lake Erie. He tells, in a letter of July 10, 1810, to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, of two small convenient chapels ten or twelve miles distant from Niagara, in which he performs service alternately on the first Sunday of every month." One of these has been identified as having been at Queenston, but the other can hardly have been so far up the river as Chippawa.

After the War of 1812 was over, Ancaster became the centre of a new mission, which included Chippawa as well as Grimsby and ultimately, apparently, the Grand River Reserve. Over this mission was placed in 1820 the Revd. William Leeming, who is counted the first rector of Chippawa, he having retained that parish on the subdivision of his field of labour, seemingly in 1825 or 1826.

While Ancaster was still Leeming's headquarters, he reported that there were in the district 200 Episcopalians, 200 Presbyterians, and 600 Methodists. He adds, according to the Society's Report for the year 1818, that he preaches as often as he can in places other than Ancaster and "preserves the attachment of the people to the service of the Church." "Many members of the Church," he continues, "have been seduced to join dissenting congregations, from the want of a regular resident missionary."

The Hon. and Revd. Dr. Charles James Stewart, Travelling Missionary for the Diocese of Quebec and "The Father of the Church in Upper Canada," set himself resolutely to work to counteract this flow of the tide from the Church. In the Report for 1819 he is stated to have collected money in England for the purpose of Church building in the two Provinces. In that for 1821 he urged the settlement of ministers along Lakes Erie and Ontario.