

From the beginning of his ministry in Pictou County they had some of them been finding their way to his summer time communion services. Four of the new communicants at East River in 1790 were from this side of the Shubenacadie. They now petition the East River Kirk Session to allow their minister to give a Sabbath each to Shubenacadie, Noel and Kennetcook. It is agreed to, and in 1793, Dr. McGregor filled his first appointment. From this on they received a yearly visit from Mr. McGregor, or one other of the Anti-burgher Brethren until they had a minister of their own. Dr. McGregor in 1796 gave them a double extra in the way of supply, which was greatly appreciated and never forgotten by the people. On his way to his marriage in Halifax he gave a Sunday's service at Fort Ellis and on his way back, preached at Baptismal Services held at Gay's River, and at least two other up river places on week days, and "on the Sabbath following he preached at the mouth of the Shubenacadie on the western side to a large congregation."

Rev. Dr. McGregor's report of his first visit to the Shubenacadie country had very directly to do with our celebration to-day. His report of that 1793 visit read in the Associate Synod of Scotland, reporting as it did the spiritual destitution of the land, and appealing for ministers had such an effect upon the Synod that it was ordered printed to be read in every pulpit. Thus, Alexander Dick, a young carpenter in the village of Pathstrine, Perthshire, heard it. It stirred his soul and awakened in him a desire to be a preacher of the word to such people as those described.

He immediately, under the direction of his minister, Rev. John McCara, began his studies with a view to the ministry. Of a family in better than comfortable circumstances, owners of the estate of "Aughtenny," and himself of more than ordinary mental ability, there was nothing to interfere with his going right along in his preparation for the ministry. In addition to the ordinary course of study he attended classes in medicine, thus obtaining knowledge that he certainly used to good account during his ministry here, but which also, very probably led to his early death. His studies were completed in the Divinity Hall of the General Associate Synod, then presided over by Prof. Bruce of Whithorn. His studies completed he was licensed by the Presbytery of Perth, on St. Patrick's day, 1802, and missioned to Nova Scotia.