

The parish lines have undergone very extensive changes since their establishment, which can however be followed very readily through the Acts of the Assembly aided by the early maps, supplemented in certain complicated cases by the original grant plans in the Crown Land Office. For the purposes of this monograph, and in order to keep its proportions, I have thought it best not to attempt to give all these changes in minute detail, though their general character is traced in the synopsis below. In local county histories, however, this minute discussion will be in place, and every such history published in New Brunswick in the future should give such facts, which may be readily traced through the sources above mentioned.

In addition to the civil parishes here treated, there are several in the cities and towns established for ecclesiastical purposes only, but these are not mentioned in the following synopsis.

It is of interest to note what accurate indices the parishes form to the progress of settlement in New Brunswick. The first parishes, as Map No. 35 will show, were entirely along the waterways, mostly on the lower courses of the larger rivers, for it was there the earlier settlements lay. Later they have extended up the rivers and inland (compare Maps No. 39, 1), always following settlement. At first, in 1786, the parishes were in most of the counties simply erected of a certain size to enclose a settlement, leaving a great part, often (as in York and Northumberland), the greater part, unassigned to any parish, and it was not until 1826 that all of the land of all of the counties was finally assigned to parishes. Moreover, the sizes of the parishes at the present day reflect very clearly the density of settlement. Where they are small and numerous, as in Kings County, there is the population dense, while the great parishes of Stanley, Gordon, Northesk, Southesk, Lorne, Eldon, indicate the great wilderness area of the province, and the smaller wilderness areas are similarly indicated. There is much more of local interest in this correlation of parish evolution with the progress of settlement than I have tried to bring out, but we are concerned here rather with broader principles, and the details, being of strictly local interest, are more in place in local county histories.

The very interesting origin of the nomenclature of the parishes has been traced in the Monograph on Place-Nomenclature, but some of the results there given need modification and extension (later to be offered) in consequence of later studies. Some needless duplications occur in the names. Thus, three parishes, St. John, Westmorland and Madawaska have the same names as their counties; one name, Simonds, is exactly duplicated (in St. John and Carleton); while Carleton County has a Kent parish and Kent County has a Carleton parish.