

appointed Christian Warner leader. This class was composed of a number of members who afterwards were distinguished as pillars in the Church of God. About this year, 1790, Major Neal married a widow named Cronk, who already had some family, but who proved a helpmeet in the best sense of the term. Whatever the facts may have been, the members of this class believed it to be the first class in Canada West, for upon the tombstone of Mary Neal, wife of Major Neal, it is explicitly stated that she was a member of the first Methodist class in Canada West.

The work continued to spread, the leavening influence of the Gospel manifesting itself in many places along the Chippewa, and up Lyon's Creek. Major Neal's proceedings were approved of by his brethren in the United States, as well as in Canada, and on July 23rd, 1810, he was ordained deacon by Bishop Asbury at the first session of the Genesee Conference, which assembled at Lyons, N.Y. About 1813 Major Neal removed to the township of Charlotteville, to what was formerly known as Cope's Landing, where he purchased two hundred acres of land, on a portion of which part of the village of St. Williams now stands. There he continued his labors, and aided greatly in building up the Methodist Society.

The Woodhouse Methodist Church, which was the first in the County of Norfolk, was only ten or twelve miles from Major Neal's new home. Services were commenced in that neighborhood about the year 1800. The home of the Ryersons was near the Woodhouse church, and in all probability Dr. Egerton Ryerson and his three brothers, who were converted in 1815, or thereabouts, heard occasionally from the lips of Major Neal, as well as from other earnest preachers of those days, the message that at length led to their conversion. The Rev. George Ferguson in his manuscript journal, as quoted by Father Carroll in "Case and His Contemporaries," says that "while he (Ferguson) was yet a preaching soldier, during the War of 1812, he found many of Neal's converts in various places on the frontier, and still more of them when he came to travel on the Niagara Circuit in 1817."