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HISTORY  
OF  
S. John's Church  
MOOSE JAW  
SASK.



Diocese of Qu'Appelle  
1883 to 1918

from  
H. Wells Johnson  
S. John's Rectory  
M. Jaw

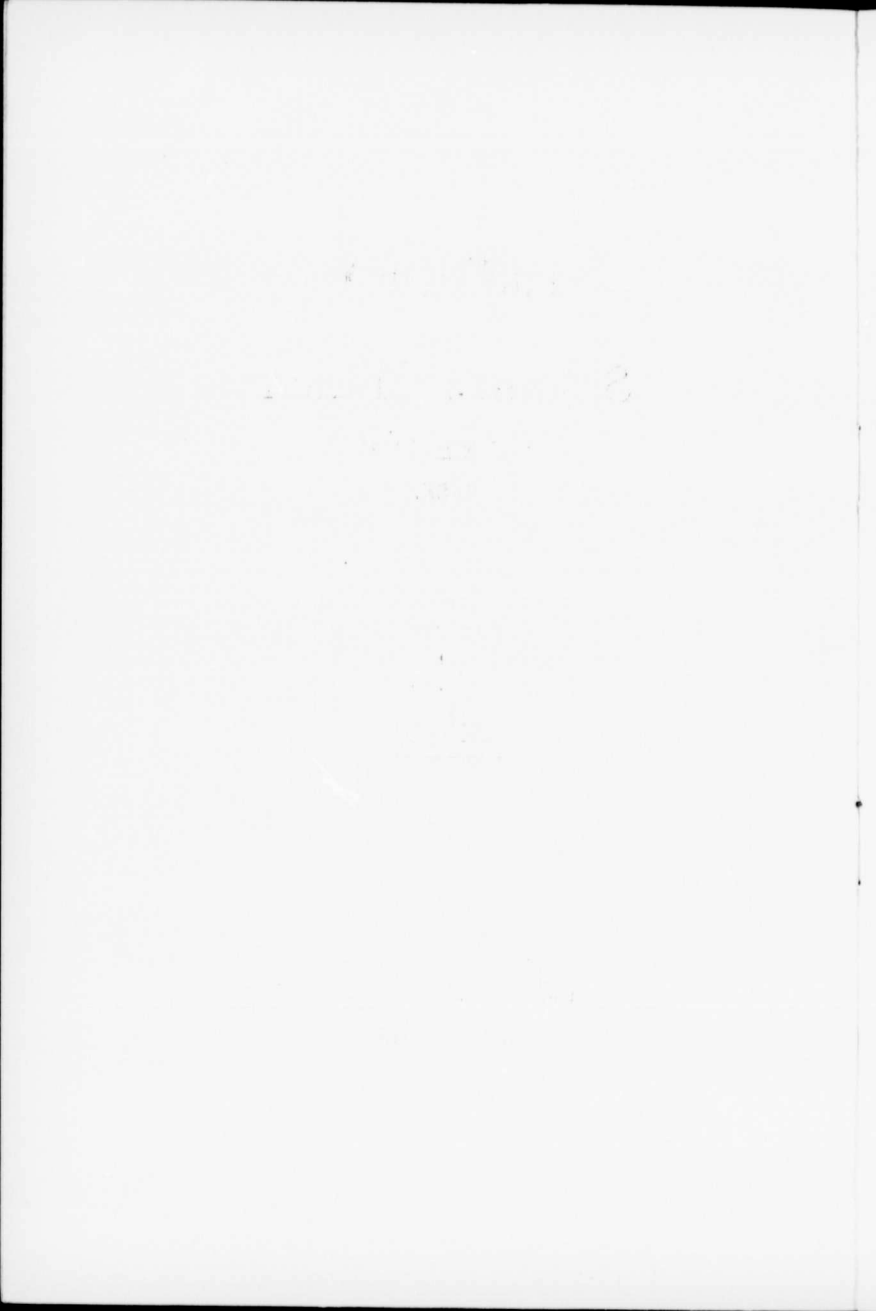
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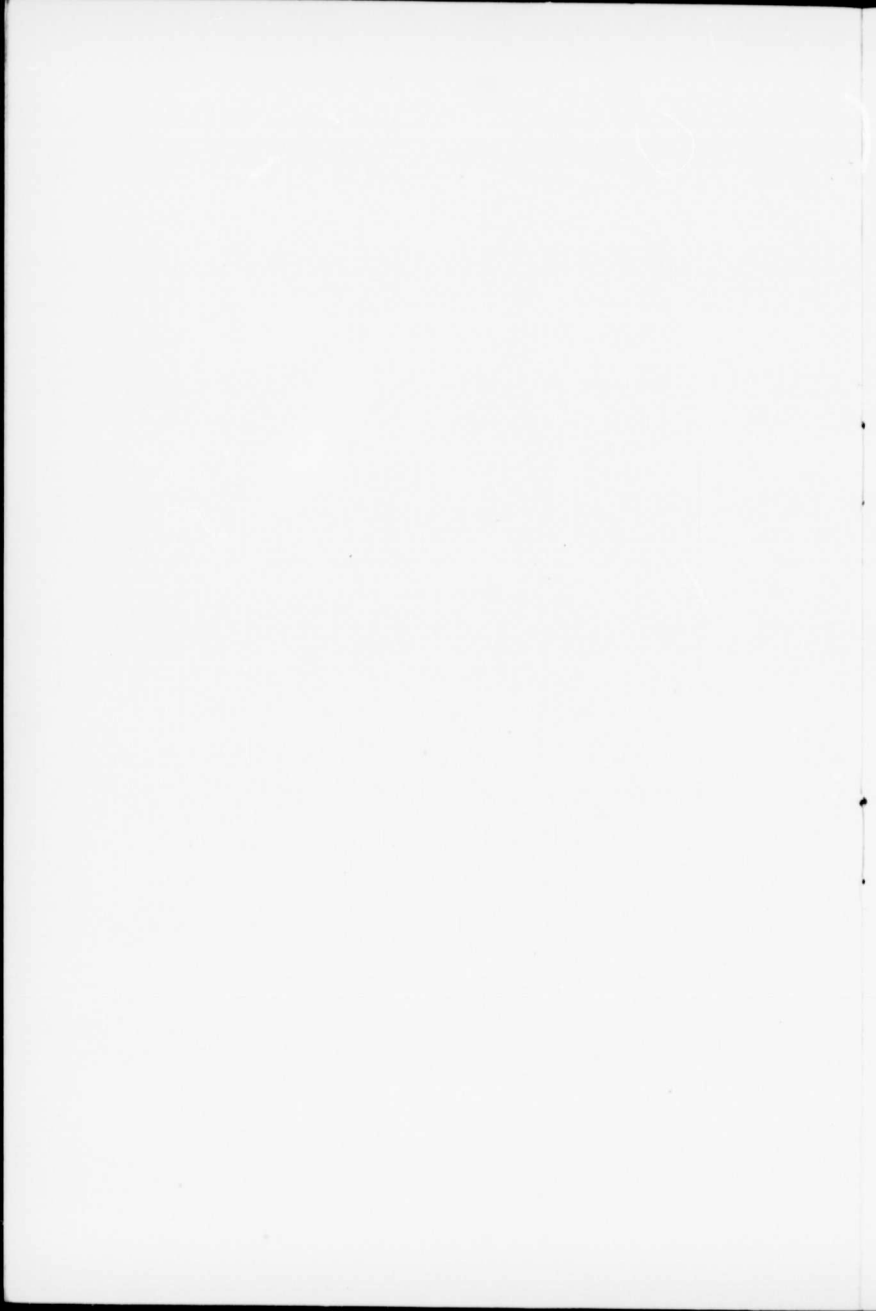


Diocese of Qu'Appelle  
1883 TO 1918





THE PRESENT S. JOHN'S CHURCH



## History of S. John's Church

The City of Moose Jaw, now (1918) containing some 19,000 inhabitants, is situated in a dip in the prairie at the junction of the Moose Jaw and Thunder Creeks; these creeks would naturally be almost dry for the greater part of the year, but a large dam retains the water, and supplies the Canadian Pacific Railway, which reached here in 1883, with a sufficient amount for its large shops.

The origin of the name of the city is obscure; some say that an early traveller, Lord Dunmore, met with an accident to his cart while crossing the creek and used the jawbone of a moose for repairs; others say that the creek in its perambulations south of the city has shaped in its banks the form of a moose jaw; the traveller's story is difficult to verify, and the moose jaw formation is difficult to see; nevertheless the city, if lacking in natural beauty, has a very beautiful name.

Moose Jaw is a railway centre, and owes its life and growth to the C. P. R., but the Canadian Northern and Grand Trunk Pacific both have stations, of sorts, here; the Canadian Northern enters from the south, and is completing a very conspicuous wooden bridge to carry it over the C.P.R. tracks into the centre of affairs; and the Grand Trunk Pacific, apparently endeavoring to pass by unnoticed, barely touches the city on the north, its very diminutive station being hidden in a valley, apparently fearful of discovery.

When, in 1883, the C.P.R. reached Moose Jaw, the Church had her ambassador in the person of that

pioneer prairie priest, the Rev'd. J. P. Sargent, now Dean of Qu'Appelle, who ministered to the many hands employed in the railway construction camps, and to the few settlers already scattered here and there near the line. In 1884 Dean Sargent made Moose Jaw his headquarters; the services were held in a tent until the fall when the first church was built. This was a wooden structure, placed about



THE FIRST CHURCH.

four blocks north and one block west of the station. Experience, however, proved that the church was too far out and the building was moved to a more central location, the vestry wisely determining that if the people would not go to the church, the church should go to the people. During Dean Sargent's incumbency a vicarage was built. In November,



INTERIOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH.

1887, the Dean left for Moosomin, and was succeeded by the Rev'd. W. Nicolls, now in the Maritime Provinces.

On the third day of May, 1888, at a parish meeting it was decided to build a new church, "cost not to exceed 1200 dollars," tenders to be called for, and plans exhibited, in Moose Jaw, Regina, and Winnipeg. How hard up we all were in those days, what a sum 1200 dollars was, and how proud a vestry that could talk of such figures and even decorate Winnipeg with the plans of its future church! The minutes of succeeding meetings are not very complete, but the church was evidently built, for on 13 Dec., 1888, it was decided to deduct 16 dollars from the contract price for delay in completing the church whereby the congregation was put to the ex-





SECOND S. JOHN CHURCH, NOW A PRIVATE RESIDENCE.

pense of 24 dollars for rent of a hall. During this period the church of S. John the Evangelist was erected at English village, some 25 miles northeast.

In July, 1889, the Rev'd. W. E. Brown succeeded Mr. Nicolls. In December, 1891, the church building was destroyed by fire; at this unfortunate time, Mr. Brown was in England, and the Rev'd. J. Manning was acting as *locum tenens*. In May, 1892, a meeting of parishioners was called to decide whether to restore the old church or to build a new one; after much discussion and several meetings it was decided to build a new church. Lots were obtained where the present church now stands, and a brick building was erected, the contract price for which was 2825 dollars.



THE THIRD CHURCH.

It is interesting to note that after the loss of the church by fire permission was given to the town to use the church bell for fire calls, provided that the town erected a scaffold for the bell on the church property. The walls of the building, which were still intact, and the two lots on which it stood were disposed of for 40,000 bricks at the brick yard—*sic transit*—the church was reconstructed as a dwelling house.

In September, 1894, Mr. Brown was appointed to St. Paul's, Regina, and the parish was left in charge of the Rev'd. T. W. Cunliffe and William Watson until Easter, 1895, when the latter was instituted as incumbent and remained in charge until 1898. During this time the mission of Buffalo Lake was organized, and the church of St. Columba



INTERIOR OF THE THIRD CHURCH.

was built. Up to the year 1895 the mission, or parish of Moose Jaw, included the territory between Pense and Medicine Hat, as well as the railway south to Estevan, which it retained until 1898. With the help of the lay reader, Mr. J. O. de la Hey, services were held at English Village, Buffalo Lake, Chester, Westview, and other points to the north; Parkbeg, Swift Current, Maple Creek and other points to the west; Pasqua, Milestone, Yellow Grass, Weyburn, with occasional ministrations at Estevan, Roche Perce and Portal along the Soo Line, as well as at one or two small missions in the south country. Those were strenuous days indeed, and to them some of us look back with a certain regret, for if ever a parish priest felt that he was fulfilling a purpose it was when he ministered to the seat-

tered settlers of the early days, who were glad indeed to see upon the prairie the pony and buckboard of him who was the bringer of good tidings.

In October, 1898, the Rev'd. J. S. Chivers succeeded Mr. Watson. The parish of Moose Jaw, shorn of its many outstations, became self-supporting; and in this period the present rectory was built.

In December, 1903, Mr. Chivers was appointed rector of S. Augustine's, Lethbridge, and was succeeded by the Rev'd. F. Wells Johnson, now Archdeacon. Moose Jaw was now a city with a population of 5,000, and in March, 1905, the work of adding a chancel to the church was commenced, and



THIRD CHURCH WITH CHANCEL.

in the same month it was decided to build a mission room in a new section of the city which was growing up on the south side of the C. P. R. main line. On the 14th of May the mission was opened, much of the work of building having been done in

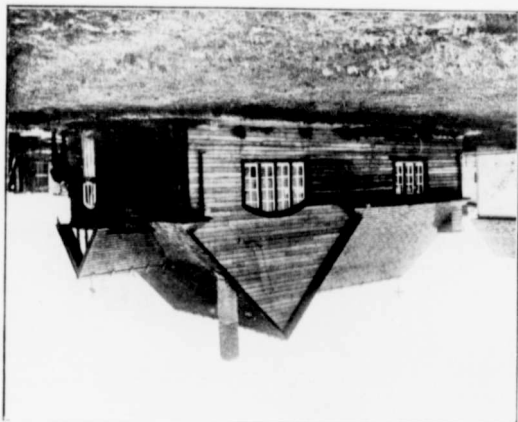


S. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS.

the evenings by volunteer workers. Now the building, several times added to, is the centre of the self-supporting parish of S. Michael and All Angels, of which the present rector is the Rev'd. C. Bucklee. In November the chancel which had been added to S. John's was consecrated by the Bishop of the diocese. During this year a pipe organ was placed in the church, the choir vested and electric light installed.

In 1906 the Rev'd. A. G. McMortine helped in the work of the parish, but his work was mainly in the country to the south and west, services being held at Caron, Mortlach, Keeley, and Newberry. In 1908, the Rev. A. B. Payne took Mr. McMortine's place, the work in the west country was provided for by the Colonial and Continental Church Society, and Mr. Payne worked chiefly on the South Hill and eventually became, in 1912, first rector of St. Michael and All Angels.

At the Easter meeting of 1908, the question of building a larger church in St. John's parish was discussed, and in June, 1909, the work of pulling down the then existing building was commenced; the corner stone of the new church was laid by the Bishop of the diocese 18 Sept. 1909. Services were



S. GEORGE'S MISSION.

held in the Savoy moving picture theatre, kindly lent by the manager, until Feb. 1910, when the basement of the new building was ready for use. On Easter Day, 27 March, 1910, the present church was used for the first time and dedicated a month later. The following year a peal of 8 bells was given and installed by a small band of lady workers.

In 1911 S. George's mission was built in the Northwest of the city, the work was undertaken by the members of the brotherhood of S. Andrew, who had also helped in the building of S. Michael's; Canon Rathbone Hartley of Heywood, Lanes., assisted generously in financing the undertaking; the mission soon proved too small and was enlarged in two years' time. Mr. C. F. Kempton gave much help to the work in this district as lay reader.

In 1912, the Rev'd. J. F. Southam was appointed assistant to the rector. In the following year S. Barnabas mission was built in the Northeast quarter



S. BARNABAS MISSION.

of the city; for this work we were again deeply indebted to Canon Hartley, also to the Rev'd. A. E. Burgett, now Archdeacon, and a friend of his. Mr. H. J. Gabb was greatly interested in this work and, as lay reader, conducted the services until he left on active service in the spring of 1916. Since its erection this mission has also been enlarged. Mr. Southam returned to England in 1914 and was followed by Mr. Wren, then a lay reader, but much assistance was given, almost voluntarily, by the Rev'd. E. N. Webber, who lived in Moose Jaw for a while, and Mr. Wren was only with us for a brief period. In 1915, Mr. Webber returned to his old home in Ontario and the Rev'd. C. S. J. Stuart, subwarden of S. Chad's, helped in the work on Sundays, until he was accepted as army chaplain and



INTERIOR OF PRESENT CHURCH.



left for France. The Rev. J. R. Jones was then given charge of the two missions, but in the fall of 1916 he married and left for the diocese of Fredericton, and the Rev. E. H. Lee has assisted in the work since that time.

The present church seats about 500 people; there is a large parish room under the nave and a chapel under the chancel; it is well equipped throughout. The altar is in memory of the Rev'd. W. E. Brown, who died in Regina; the reredos was the joint gift



THE CHAPEL OF PRESENT CHURCH.

of two parishioners, the painting by Mrs. C. A. W. Stunt, in memory of her mother, and the oak work by Mr. E. Loney, also in memory of his mother. The font is the gift of the Sunday School children.



THE FONT OF PRESENT CHURCH.

and the cover was made and given by an old friend of Archdeacon Johnson, Mr. G. Spring Rice, since killed in action in France. The cross on the chancel beam is in memory of Mr. H. R. Verini, given by his father. The lectern is the gift of Mr. J. Chivers, who for some years served as lay reader in this parish and was the father of the first rector. The windows tell their own story. An article of great interest possessed by the church is a Bible of the reign of Charles II.; the date is 1682; it was given by Lady Louisa Longley to the Rev'd. and Hon. E. R. Lindsay, recently head of the railway mission and then to this church; the case which contains the Bible has on it the words, "From Britons in the Old Land to Britons Overseas," so the Bible is not only a bibliographical curiosity, but a link between the Anglican Church in England and that in Canada.

To mark progress since Moose Jaw became a city, the following figures are illuminating:

*Total Amount Raised in Parish*

S. John's, 1904 .....	\$ 1,172.86
S. John's, 1918 .....	\$10,503.43
S. Michael's .....	3,262.20
S. George's .....	663.13
S. Barnabas' .....	2,476.40
	<hr/>
	\$16,905.16

*Sunday School Scholars*

S. John's, 1904 .....	53
S. John's, 1918 .....	275
S. Michael's .....	282
S. George's .....	80
S. Barnabas' .....	180
	<hr/> 817 <hr/>

The following story aptly illustrates the wonderful change in this country in the last half century: A native woman told the writer last year that when she was two years old and her sister five, the tribe to which she belonged was attacked by another Indian tribe and her mother with one child under each arm slid down a steep bank and hid in the bushes at a creek side. The hill down which these Indians slid 45 years ago, is now just on the outskirts of a small but up-to-date city, with its electric light, phones, street cars, innumerable motors, and all modern conveniences, and that city is Moose Jaw. In the life of the church the change is no less remarkable: compare the tent of 1883 in which the first services were held with the very beautiful church in which we now worship.

*LAUS DEO*

