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HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF



Fairville Baptist Church,

ST. JOHN COUNTY, N. B.

JANUARY, 1910.

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HISTORICAL SKETCH OF FAIRVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH

COMPILED BY MISS MILDRED BLACK AND MISS EDDA STEVENS,
AND READ ON THE OCCASION OF THE BURNING OF THE
MORTGAGE, ON THE EVENING OF JAN. 18th, 1910.

Few perhaps, if any, of the younger people in this audience can go back in their memories to the Fairville of the old days, before the first great fire which so wofully dismantled our little village. Fewer still, yes, very few, can call up a picture of the Fairville of a decade before that. Some old landmarks of so many years ago still survive, but more generally newer buildings occupy the old sites.

At this time, say 1880, only thirty years ago, Fairville possessed the public buildings common to all villages, and not least among them, churches. The first Protestant church built in Fairville was the Methodist. Here, for many years, the church-going people of Fairville and out-lying districts worshipped. Services were sometimes held in halls or school houses by the few Baptists in the place, at that time; but it was not until the summer of 1881 that the old brick church with its tall spire was erected on the site of this present building. Here in the vestry of the new church, on Tuesday, September 6, 1881, there met together a few people for the purpose of organizing the First Baptist Church of Fairville. These charter members were twenty-six in number, and their names were: Rev. J. F. Bartlett, C. P.

Baker, John J. Waring, Albert Ferris, Foster MacFarlane, M. D., David Philips, Nathan Canning, J. H. Cooper, Charles W. Anderson, H. C. Stackhouse, Mrs. Sadie Bartlett, Mrs. Amanda Baker, Mrs. Maria Canning, Mrs. Hannah Thomas, Mrs. Mary E. Taylor, Mrs. Mary A. Irvine, Mrs. Margaret Philips, Mrs. Isabella Chute, Mrs. Mary P. Baker, Mrs. Mary Buchanan, Mrs. Rebecca McLean, Mrs. Eleanor Anderson, Mrs. Melissa P. Ferris, Mrs. Margaret J. Stackhouse, George Fowler.

Six of these are still members of this church: Mr. and Mrs. C. P. Baker, George Fowler, Mr. and Mrs. David Philips, and Albert Ferris.

On motion moderator and secretary were chosen pro tem, and the first set of church officers was duly elected as follows:

C. P. Baker, J. J. Waring, A. Ferris, Foster MacFarlane, M. D., deacon.

Dr. Foster MacFarlane, clerk.

Ebenezer Sutton, treasurer.

On Thursday evening, September 15, a delegation, composed of the pastor and delegates from all the neighboring churches, met, and before a large audience publicly and prayerfully recognized the new organization as a regular Baptist church.

Behold us, then, all ready launched out for work, few in numbers, but full of energy for the efforts before us.

The first business meeting was held September 22, with an attendance of thirteen, among whom the men present were: Rev. Mr. Bartlett, Albert Ferris, H. C. Stackhouse, J. J. Waring, C. P. Baker, George Fowler.

The following order of service was later decided upon:—Preaching at 11 a. m. and 6.30 p. m., and Sabbath school at 9.30 a. m. As this latter hour did not prove convenient, it was changed to 12.15, which was immediately after the morning service. A few months later the evening service was changed to 7 p. m., instead of 6.30.

Not wishing to weary our hearers with too many particulars, still we think it might be interesting just here to notice the first candidates for baptism. One of these, the first man baptised in this church, Dr. James McIntyre, is present with us tonight. The others were: Mrs. Foster MacFarlane, Mrs. T. L. Earle, Miss Annie Vanburen, Miss Nellie Vanburen, Miss M. L. Stackhouse, Mrs. Rebecca Fowler, Miss Bessie MacFarlane, Miss Susie Vanburen, Miss Maggie Donovan, Miss Maggie Buchanan.

On looking over the records, many interesting items were read, recording principles that have always held in this church. For instance, pews were allotted to those who needed them, but without rent, and always free to strangers. Our familiar mottoes "Strangers welcome. All seats free," were placed in the vestibules in August, 1883.

Again the church, like all organizations, needs financial support; and in our case this has always been approached by voluntary subscriptions. During the years we have not, as a church, contributed to denominational purposes as liberally as we should, owing probably to the great pressure of home needs. We shall hope to do better in the future.



REV. F. E. BISHOP

The Declaration of Faith, the Church Covenant, and Rules of Order, used by the New Brunswick Southern Baptist Association, were adopted. In 1883, the church was admitted as a member of this association, and showed its willingness to help by entertaining the delegates to the annual meeting held in 1884. Since that time we have assisted in the entertainment of the delegates to various conventions and associations which have met across the river, or in Carleton. In June, 1908, the annual gathering of the Seventh District was held with the brethren and sisters in Fairville.

Several pastors, eight in all, have worked with us faithfully and well. Although much time and energy have been wisely spent on the material side of our work, we can

truly say in looking back over the past, that much faithful work has been accomplished for the furthering of Christ's kingdom. The good seed has been constantly sown, and a plentiful harvest has been yielded. And the whole harvest is not yet; our one desire, deeper now than ever before, is to do all that the loving, gracious Master of men requires of us.

The first pastor, Rev. J. F. Bartlett, was present at the organization, and baptized the first candidates on November 13, 1881. Rev. Mr. Bartlett did not remain long with us, just a little over a year. He was followed by Rev. Wellington Camp, at that time a student, but soon afterwards ordained. Rev. Mr. Camp stayed as our leader until May, 1885. In October, 1885, Rev. W. J. Swaffield was given a call to the church and accepted.

The good work of the church went on steadily. Progress was made in every department. Records show substantial amounts given for current expenses and denominational funds, giving missions, home and foreign, their proper share in the increase.

The membership at the end of Rev. Mr. Swaffield's labors was about one hundred and seventy. A number of these had been received from sister churches. Thirty-four had been baptised by Rev. Mr. Bartlett, thirty-nine by Rev. Mr. Camp, and thirty by Rev. Mr. Swaffield. In spite of all the difficulties and weaknesses of a youthful church, prosperity, spiritual and material, was plainly evident.

In 1888 Rev. Mr. Martell entered on his six years' work in Fairville. Before his arrival the late Rev. Isaiah Wallace, the well-known home missionary of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, spent some time here. He baptized eleven candidates. Twenty-seven were baptised by Rev. Mr. Martell. It was during his pastoral work that the present parsonage was built.

In October 1894, after a summer without a pastor, Rev. I. W. Corey took charge

of the work. He was with us one year and seven months. During that time, sixty-four, mostly young people were baptised and given the right hand of fellowship. The new church, no longer the old brick-cased building dates from this time.

Next came Rev. G. R. White, then Rev. A. T. Dykeman, and following him our present pastor, Rev. F. E. Bishop.

Many were added to the church during Rev. G. R. White's short stay with us. In 1898 Rev. Mr. White accepted a call to Hantsport, and in October Rev. A. T. Dykeman began his seven year's pastorate, the longest thus far in the history of the church. In these seven years, much outside work was accomplished. The mission church at Pleasant Point was built and extensive repairs made on the building at Grand Bay. Also a greater spiritual interest was awakened in that part of the field, as well as in the home church.

Our present pastor has labored faithfully and earnestly during the last four years. Although, hampered as were his two predecessors, by the heavy burden of a church debt, a steady advance has been shown in all departments of the work. In 1905 the membership of the church, as shown by the church register, numbered four hundred and forty-six. A large number of these, however, have made homes elsewhere, and perhaps a still larger number have passed away to the eternal home that awaits us all.

Among the several departments of church work, the Sabbath School is probably the most important. The growth of our Sabbath school has been coincident with that of the church. Organized at the same time as the church, the work has been carried on by faithful, energetic workers through all the years. We suffered a great loss in the death of our beloved superintendent, the late Chas. F. Baker, who for many years so earnestly labored for the advancement of the Sunday school, and the well-being of the

church. After Mr. Baker's death, James S. Lord took charge of the work, then Mrs. L. A. Long, and following her, Deacon J. W. Stevens.

Our present superintendent is the pastor, Rev. F. E. Bishop. He is aided by the clerk of the church, Deacon J. W. Stevens as assistant superintendent, and Deacon Walter Ross, as treasurer. The Pleasant Point school was founded during Rev. A. T. Dykeman's work here. It shares in all the privileges of the home school. Brother Carey Black has always been its superintendent.

The First Baptist Church of Fairville was the church-home of three ministers of our denomination, Rev. B. Havelock Thomas; Rev. H. F. Waring, son of the late J. J. Waring, one of the charter members; and Rev. George R. Baker, brother of the late Chas. F. Baker, and only surviving child of Mr. and Mrs. C. P. Baker.

Another of the members present at the organization was Deacon George Fowler, the first chorister. This office he has held ever since. At his request during the last two years H. P. Allingham has ably and faithfully instructed the choir, and his work has been highly appreciated.

It is also of interest to note that for a continuous period of twenty-five years the church building has been cared for by one of the members, John Gray. Mr. Gray has given a faithful service, prompted not by the financial remuneration received, which has been far less than the service rendered, but by the deep interest which he has taken in the welfare of the church.

The present officers of the church are:

Trustees—George Brown, James Cripps, David Philips, C. P. Baker, LeB. Flewelling, George Doherty, J. F. Black.

Deacons—Walter Ross, J. F. Black, J. W. Stevens, Albert Ferris, LeB. Flewelling, Isaac Kierstead, George Fowler.

Clerk—J. W. Stevens.

Treasurer—Walter Ross.

Our church property now stands clear of debt. We are here tonight to witness the burning of the mortgage, and with the completion of that ceremony will disappear the last vestige of a burden, which at one time seemed to be an insurmountable barrier to all progress. Many, probably, are not familiar with the beginning of this debt, even of those who have labored faithfully in recent years towards its payment. In 1895 it was decided that the old building was too small for the needs of the congregation. It was also in need of extensive repairs, and after much deliberation, the trustees were empowered to begin and carry on all needed repairs and enlargements. Pledges of assistance in money and materials were called for, and the response was very encouraging, so much so that operations were begun at once and carried to a successful issue.

Much credit is due to John Fowler and the late William Campbell, who so energetically carried the work of building through to completion, and thereby materially lessened the debt that was bound to remain.

Many men of influence outside the membership of the church ably assisted the trustees in their undertaking. Among these was the late Hon. A. F. Randolph, who had always been interested in the cause in Fairville, and had many times made the way easier by his generous contributions; also, the late Dr. J. T. Steeves, at that time superintendent of the Provincial Hospital, Lancaster Heights, contributed largely towards building and current expenses.

On Sunday, October 13, 1895, at 3 p. m. the dedication services were held in the auditorium of the completed building. Once before, dedication services had been held, on January 29, 1882. At that time those who took part in the services were: Rev. Mr. Hickson, Rev. W. A. Corey, Rev. Mr. Weeks, Rev. J. W. Manning and Rev. J. F. Bartlett. On the latter

occasion Rev. Dr. Gates, then pastor of the Germain street church, preached the dedication sermon to a large audience. Special music was rendered by the choir, assisted by outside talent. On the platform were pastors from all the neighboring churches. Rev. Dr. Manning preached at the morning service, and the pastor, Rev. I. W. Corey, preached at the evening service.

Much earnest effort has been put into the work of paying off the debt. Progress was slow at first, but as the end came in sight people grew more encouraged. In May 1907, nearly three years ago, an organized effort towards removing the debt was begun. By the faithful and efficient work of our pastor Rev. F. E. Bishop, this campaign has been brought to a successful issue. Besides money received by personal pledges, much credit is due to the women of the church and congrega-

tion, who have nobly contributed their share. The consummation of our hopes was made possible however, by the generosity of C. P. Baker. Much gratitude on the part of the church and congregation is due to Mr. Baker.

Gratitude is due also to the many who have sacrificed time and means towards the removal of this burden, and by generous gifts made according to their means, have so materially helped in the arduous work that has been accomplished.

In the future the church will be hampered by no financial burdens. It will be free to devote all its energies to the purpose for which it was organized, the upbuilding of the Master's kingdom in this community. May our Father's blessing dwell richly upon all our efforts in this direction, and may our spiritual interest grow deeper and more lasting.