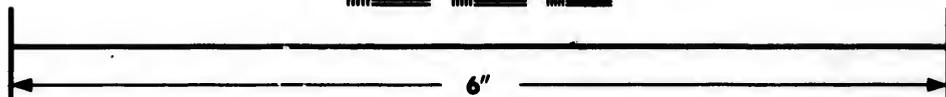
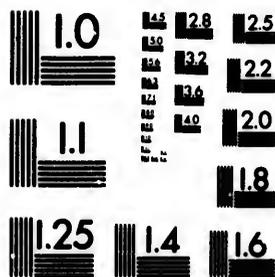


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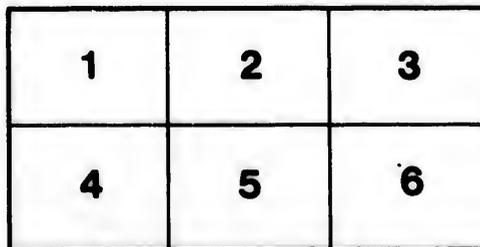
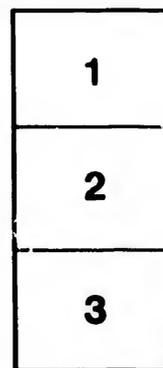
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NARRATIVE
OF THE
ORIGIN OF THE CHURCHES.

AND OF
THE STATE OF RELIGION,

WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF THE
"NIAGARA PRESBYTERY"

OF
UPPER CANADA.

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE PRESBYTERY.

ST. CATHARINES, U. C.
PRINTED BY HIRAM LEAVENWORTH.

1834.

NARRATIVE, &c.

The Presbytery feel much pleasure in being able to present to the Churches and Congregations under their care, the following NARRATIVE. In doing it, they are forcibly reminded of the faithfulness of God's promise: "The desert shall rejoice and blossom like the rose."

In view of the comparatively little advancement of Zion, within our bounds, we cannot but feel assured, that the great Head of the Church is moving onward to the accomplishment of that most interesting prediction—"There shall be a handful of corn in the earth," "the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon."

We are sorry that the state of religion is not as flourishing, at present, as it has been. But even now, while we must lament that there is a partial slumbering—a want of warm-hearted active piety, too generally; still we have much to cheer and gladden our hearts. On the whole, we think our history will have a happy influence upon the churches. It affords much that is suited to awaken our gratitude; much to humble us; and very much to induce us to greater pains-taking and sacrifice in the service of our Master. He hath blessed the labour of our hands. We have seen that He "*can* spread a table in the wilderness." Therefore, we will "declare his doings among the people, and make mention that his name is exalted."

The church in GAINSBOROUGH, on the 20 mile creek, was organized by the Rev. D. W. EASTMAN, in 1809, consisting of a very small number. It was blessed with nothing like a special revival until 1821, when there was a small ingathering. In 1826, a goodly number was added to the church. For about four years after this period, there were only occasional accessions.

In September, 1831, a protracted meeting was called—the first that was held in this part of the pro-

vince of Upper Canada; and truly it was a "time of the right hand of the most High." The Spirit of the Lord was poured out in rich affusions, humbling and quickening his people, filling their hearts with comfort, and converting sinners to Christ. Between 70 and 80, we believe, were born into the Kingdom of God—about 50 of whom, at once, united with the church. In the winter following, another protracted meeting was held—not, indeed, so interesting as the first, but with precious results. The number of hopeful converts at this time, is not stated, except that 17 were added to our communion, while some attached themselves to other Christian denominations. This church now numbers about 120 members. From its organization, it was under the care of Mr. Eastman for something like 12 years. He left about two years since, during which time it has been supplied by the Rev. Mr. Goodell.

Within its bounds are two Sabbath schools—one of which has been continued, *summer and winter*, without intermission, for about six years; and in which between 20 and 30 scholars have been hopefully converted to Christ. The temperance reformation is begun in this place. A society exists of about 125 members. To this society most of the church have united—we are sorry to say, not *every one*. The present state of religion is not so cheering as it has been in seasons past. But while this calls for mourning, we are happy to state, that prayer meetings are yet sustained, with some good degree of interest; and that a respectful and serious attention is given to the word preached on the Lord's day.

This church and society have a good and convenient meeting-house, which was rebuilt and completed, in 1831. They have divine service, that is, preaching, but once on the Sabbath. Mr. Goodell divides his labours between this congregation and another, six miles distant, in the same town.

The Church in LOUTH, on the 15 mile creek, was organized by the Rev. D. W. Eastman, in 1809, comprising about 20 members. From its commencement

down to the late war, religion being very low in the country during this time, there were but very few accessions. At the beginning of the war Mr. Eastman left, and the church was without supply for a period of between seven and nine years.

In 1821—2, when Mr. Eastman returned, there was a little revival, and a small number added to the church. In 1824—5, a meeting-house was built. For five or six years after this, there was only a gradual increase—no special revival until October, 1831. At this time a protracted meeting was held, which was crowned with the signal blessing of God. About 30 made a publick profession of their faith in Christ. Since then, there have been some seasons of more than ordinary interest, and a gradual accession to the church. The present number of communicants is about 80. A Sabbath school is maintained here, which is furnished with a good library. A temperance Society has of late been organized, which bids fair to succeed, and do good. Weekly prayer meetings are generally well attended. This congregation, like most, if not all our congregations, has preaching but once on the Sabbath.

The church in PELHAM, was organized in 1828, with 12 or 14 members, by Mr. Eastman. The next year there was a little accession. Since then, to the present time, the church has had interesting seasons of revival, and ingatherings almost every year. The number of communicants is now about 120. An interesting female prayer meeting is maintained, with other weekly meetings. A Sabbath school, of between three and four years standing, and numbering about 60 scholars, is flourishing, and exerting a precious influence. Several hopeful conversions, under God, have grown out of this school; and at this time it exhibits much seriousness. The monthly concert is observed. The temperance society, in this place, embraces between 150 and 200 members. Since 1830, this church and society have built a good meeting-house, now completed, and paid for. The present state of religion, though not like a special revival, is, nevertheless, encouraging.

The church in HAMILTON, was organized in December, 1831, by the Rev. EDWARDS MARSH, consisting of 20 members. Nothing of very special interest occurred until January following, when the church had a protracted meeting. The commencement of this meeting was in Barton, three miles out of the village, on what is called "the mountain." Of the fruits of a most blessed work in this place, about 50, at once, made a profession of their faith in Christ, on the spot, and in the house where the meeting was held. And truly, as many of us remember, it was most delightful and heavenly to see such a company crowding around God's altar!—The hoary headed, and the sprightly youth; parents and their children; and whole families together, all seemed in haste to avouch Jehovah to be their triune God, in their solemn and joyful attendance upon the ordinances of Christ's house—baptism and the Lord's supper. It was a season never to be forgotten; and the place *was the house of God—it was the gate of heaven*. The meeting, being thus closed on the mountain, was removed into the village. Here it continued not many days, and with considerable abatement of interest. About 20 united with the church, of the fruits of the meeting after its removal. From that time this portion of our Zion has had *seasons* of more than usual interest; and at every communion, more or less have been added to its number. The meetings, Sabbath schools, and benevolent operations, on the mountain, and in the village, are maintained separately. In both places there are four Sabbath schools, comprising about 260 scholars.

This church was formed on the temperance plan—that is, none are received or retained as members, who make, vend or use, as a drink, ardent spirits. Eight have been suspended from the privileges of Christ's house—four of these for intemperance. We are happy, however, in being able to say, that, comparatively, there are but few apostacies, and that converts "*hold on their way*." The monthly concert is observed. In 1832, this church and society built a meeting house, which

cost \$1,200. At this time, the members on the mountain are making proposals to build a parsonage. The number in communion, is 160. This church, in its two parts, and with its two congregations, has the labours of but one minister. The state of religion is good, on the mountain; but not so good, it is feared, in the village. On the whole we may say, that Zion here, most evidently, has the smiles of her King, with the prospect that her borders will be more and more enlarged.

The church in ST. CATHARINES, was organized January 7, 1831, by the Rev. A. K. BUELL, comprising only 11 members—10 by letter, and one on profession. Soon after this, and within the space of a few months, the presence of God's spirit was manifested in some few instances of turning unto the Lord. Here and there was found a sinner inquiring the way to Zion. Of the fruits of this gracious visitation, about 12 were added to the church. Nothing, however, very special occurred, until Nov. 1831, during a protracted meeting. This was a season of peculiar interest. It was supposed that between 40 and 50 were made the subjects of grace, 30 of whom immediately united with the church. In Nov. 1832, another meeting was held, which, though evidently blessed in some good degree, was not as successful as the first. Of those hopefully born into the Kingdom, at this time, 12 made a publick profession of their faith in Christ. Since then the church has enjoyed other seasons of refreshing, and has had her number increased, at almost every communion.

Nearly half of the members of this church, live between two and three miles from the village, in a neighbourhood which, only* about three years ago, was a moral desert. When our meetings were first set up in this place, only here and there one made any *pretensions* to piety. To the best of our knowledge, this people had never enjoyed stated preaching, and, for a long time they had been wholly destitute. But to their praise, they *gladly received the word*, almost without any delay. Having the Gospel preached to them, they soon began to turn unto the Lord. From that time to

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the present moment, God's spirit has been with this people, by his *special* and *saving* operations. That is, Christians have *kept their first love*, and persevered, and sinners, more or less, have been coming to Christ continually. Thus, within a very short time, the whole moral aspect of this neighbourhood has been changed. The wilderness, under God, has become a fruitful field. This people now maintain weekly prayer meetings, observe the monthly concert, conduct a Sabbath school, and give liberally for the support of the gospel. Besides, they have obtained subscriptions, and already made a contract for building a meeting house, which it is expected will be finished before the coming winter.

In the village, it is believed that the state of religion is not as good as usual. The Sabbath school, which has a good library, and *was* large and flourishing, languishes, at present, and is ready to come to nothing—chiefly, it is supposed, for the want of teachers. But while these things are lamented, we are glad to say, that prayer meetings are sustained, the monthly concert observed, and a serious attention given to the preached word. For about three years, small contributions have been made for missionary operations, for tracts, and to the Bible cause—amounting in the whole, to nearly *one hundred dollars*.

A brick meeting-house in the village, is nearly finished, 55 by 40 feet, and costing about \$4,000. The whole number of communicants is 108. Thirteen have been dismissed, and one has died. All, with an exception or two, are members of the temperance society—which numbers about 300. There has been no case of discipline. The members, for the most part, give good evidence of piety. While some, no doubt, are greatly deficient in true devotedness, and Christian labours, it is evident that others are crying in secret, for the deliverance of the Lord's people, and every day making advancement in holy living. On the whole, looking at the church in both places, with the two congregations, it is believed, that what God has already done, and what He is still doing, may be viewed as a pledge,

that He will yet more and more enlarge this portion of his Zion.

CHIPPAWA.—The church in this place, was organized in December, 1831, after a protracted meeting, consisting of 12 members. In July, 1832, a second meeting was held; of the fruits of which, 29 made a publick profession of their faith. In 1833, this church enjoyed an interesting season of revival, which commenced in June, and continued through the summer. Of the number hopefully converted at this time, 30 were added to the church. The present number of communicants is 71. This people have laboured under much disadvantage, on account of not having a convenient place of publick worship. They are now, however, about to build a meeting house, which they hope to occupy by next winter.

Not much has yet been done for Sabbath schools, chiefly for the want of suitable teachers. The temperance cause has begun to command attention; although yet in its infancy, in this place. The state of religion is not now as good as it has been, in some seasons. There have been a few cases of discipline, and two suspended. Generally, however, the members walk orderly, and maintain, in a good degree, the Christian character. On the whole, this little Zion, considering her embarrassments, has succeeded beyond the expectations of her best friends, and we think that it promises yet to increase and flourish.

The church at **DRUMMONDVILLE**, was organized by Mr. Buell, in October, 1831, consisting of eight members. For about six months, they enjoyed only occasional preaching. In the spring of 1832, the Rev. Mr. SESSIONS commenced labouring with them—preaching, however, only once on the Sabbath. At this time, a very mortal sickness prevailed in the village and its vicinity. This, it is believed, together with the faithful exhibition of truth, was the means, under God, of bringing some to Christ. In the following autumn, this little church was most deeply bereaved. Few and weak as they were, God was pleased to take away from them,

by the cholera, one of their most efficient members. In May, 1833, a protracted meeting was held. Of the fruits of this interesting season of revival, 25 were received into the church. The whole number added in a year, and during Mr. Sessions' labours, was 32. At present, the church is destitute of stated preaching. They are, however, anxious to obtain a minister, and they expect one soon. Although it is supposed that the present state of religion is not so cheering as usual, still, prayer meetings during the week, and the worship of God on the Sabbath, are maintained. They have a Sabbath school of about 60 scholars. In this place and its vicinity, is a very large and flourishing temperance society. While we record, with gratitude, what God has already done for this little church, we are encouraged to believe that He will yet con- enlarge her borders.

The church in BEECH WOODS, was organized after a protracted meeting, in May, 1832, comprising 16 members. In 1833, there was an accession of eight. The present number of communicants is 22. A Sabbath school, and weekly prayer meetings are maintained. Recently very successful efforts have been made in the cause of temperance. This church and people have had but little preaching. For a single year, they had the small supply of one sermon in two weeks: this is all they have had. They are now destitute.

The church at the 40 M. CREEK, was organized in July, 1832, consisting of about 15 members. We cannot make perfectly accurate statements, in regard to this little portion of our Zion, as it sent no delegate to the last meeting of the Presbytery. We know, however, that it is supplied with preaching part of the time; and we believe that a Sabbath school, and the weekly prayer meetings are maintained. This church and society are building a very good brick meeting house, which is almost completed. Considering how recently this church was organized, and how few their number, we think their prospects are encouraging.

The church in BRANTFORD was organized in Aug. 1833, consisting of 45 members, the fruits of a most interesting protracted meeting held at that time. Since then, 17 have been added. The monthly concert is well attended; and a Sabbath school, of between 40 and 50 scholars, is in a flourishing condition. This church and people have been supplied chiefly by Rev. Wm. F. Currey, until within a few months past. They have commenced the building of a meeting house; and, though destitute of preaching for the time being, yet they expect soon to enjoy the stated ministrations of the gospel.

The church at DUNNVILLE was organized in Jan. 1834, consisting of 8 members, 2 males and 6 females. One has since been added: all are members of the temperance society. They have no stated preaching, and only here and there a sermon. But even while thus destitute, a Sabbath school is in operation; and prayer meetings during the week, and reading meetings are well sustained.

The church at OAKVILLE was organized in April, 1833, consisting of 11 members. They had but very little preaching until December, when Mr. Sessions came to the place. Since then, five have united with the church, and more are expecting to unite soon. The congregation attending worship in the village, is large; and for some time, more than ordinary seriousness prevails generally. Weekly prayer meetings, with an interesting female prayer meeting, and the monthly concert, are well attended. A Bible class has lately been organized, which promises much. There is also, a temperance society in this place. It is in contemplation to build a meeting house, to cost \$2,000, and to be completed at the close of next autumn. The Sabbath school, which is connected with the Methodists', consists of about 80 scholars, and is in a flourishing condition. With God's professing people, the state of religion is interesting at the present time. The friends of the Redeemer are much engaged in his service, and are willing to labour and make sacrifices for their Master; and many seem ready to press into the Kingdom.

The church in ERAMOSSA was organized in February, 1834. The origin of this church is as follows:— Two men, converted at a protracted meeting in Hamilton, went home and began, at once, to labour with their families, and their friends in the neighbourhood.— Though they sought for ministerial help, they obtained none until about 20 were the hopeful subjects of grace, by means of their efforts. In Dec. 1833, Mr. Sessions preached twice to this people, and in Feb. following, organized a church of 18 members. Previous to this, many, not expecting any Presbyterian preaching, had united with the Methodists. Prayer meetings were crowded and solemn. In this place, though new, a temperance society is operating successfully, and a Sabbath school is sustained, of about 30 scholars. This church is not supplied with preaching *at all*, on the Sabbath, and only occasionally in the week.

Besides preaching weekly, in a great number of places, Mr. Sessions divides his labours, on the Sabbath, between five congregations—including but *two churches*. Two of the congregations mentioned, are in *Erin*. These, being in neighbourhoods contiguous, propose to have a church organized between them, and to worship in one place, that will accommodate both.

In *Esquesing*, also, Mr. Sessions labours occasionally in two neighbourhoods, six miles apart. In all these places of his labours, he meets large and waiting congregations. On the whole, it is believed that a field is here opened of very great promise. Some females walk *seven miles* to hear the gospel preached. The people are calling for protracted meetings. They seem hungry for the bread of life.

There are two or three small churches, belonging to us and other congregations, of which we cannot speak any thing definite, except, that they have no stated supply of the means of grace. Besides these, there are many other places, which scarcely any religious denomination pretends to possess, and that enjoy but few of the privileges of the gospel.

APPENDIX.

It will be seen by the foregoing history, that there were but three or four churches of our denomination until about 1831. These were organized by the Rev. D. W. Eastman, who came into the province nearly thirty years ago. For about twenty-five years he was *alone*, in a wild and comparatively uncultivated field. As will be seen, he laboured under many disadvantages. The country being new—deriving next to no support for preaching—having no ecclesiastical connexion—and meeting with opposition of various kinds; it could hardly have been expected that he would gain a foot hold and make a beginning. Yet he has laboured with these churches, more or less, and brought them along, under God, from the early period when they were gathered, almost to the present day. To two of them he now ministers. Besides this, in a great many other places, where he formed no churches, his labours have been useful to a certain extent—they have kept the field, and helped greatly to prepare the way for what has been done within the three or four years past.

A little before the commencement of 1831, two or three Presbyterian ministers came into this field, and engaged with Mr. Eastman. From that time to the present, God has greatly enlarged our Zion. This He has done, so far as means are concerned, chiefly by protracted meetings. These commenced in the churches under Mr. Eastman's care; and they have been held, in many places, within our bounds, with most blessed results. And here we are reminded to render, as we do most cheerfully, our grateful acknowledgements to our ministerial friends from abroad, who laboured with us in these seasons of protracted effort—brothers Currey, Murray, Coleman, Myers, Martyn, and others.

Our churches are scattered over a territory which, commencing at the Niagara river, extends on westerly nearly one hundred miles: its width is from ten to forty miles. Almost the whole, within these limits, is settled. Besides a full country population, there are many villages and important towns—among which are Drummondville, St. Catharines, Hamilton and Brantford. These places, as well as others, are all flourishing. But while the country is rising and improving almost every day, still there is a great demand for the services of devoted ministers of Christ. After the untiring efforts of the ministers of the Methodist denomination, and after all that is done by the Church of England, the Kirk, the United Synod, and the Baptists, still the field is not yet taken up.

That the desolate places may be visited, and that the almost destitute may have the gospel, our few little churches have engaged to support an evangelist within our bounds, for at least a year; and for this purpose the necessary funds are secured. Our churches *can do more than this—they will do more*. The former habit, with some, of doing little or nothing for religious purposes, is breaking up; and of late many of our members are coming forward in the support of benevolent operations, with a largeness, in their bestowments, that is truly praiseworthy.

Our Presbytery was organized in May, 1833, consisting of three ministers, and having under its care six churches. At present, it numbers five ministers, and has under its care fifteen churches, comprising about 900 communicants. As yet, the Presbytery is not connected with any Synod.

