



*Holy Trinity Church.
1871 Kirkdale. 1971*

Kirkdale Through The Ages

a thumbnail history of

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

Compiled by ALLEDA NIXON

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P r e f a c e

As the present Rector of Drummondville, I have taken the liberty of writing this preface to this sketch of Holy Trinity, Kirkdale.

One of the first things I was given upon my arrival in 1968 was the first draft copy of this sketch. From time to time, as spare minutes presented themselves, I started reading and then re-reading the script. I must admit here that I did not overly hurry with this job because 1971 was a long way off!

However, the days and weeks and months just flew by, and we soon found ourselves together at a January meeting of the A. C. W. when plans were being finalized for the celebration, and I realized that my plan to have the script finalized for that meeting could not be met. As matters later turned out this was fortunate for me, because other information came to hand which clarified some points and some of the historical dates.

Mrs. Nixon has spent many long hours on this sketch of Kirkdale and it has been a pleasure for me to be of some little help in preparing the final manuscript, which, when you read it, we hope it will bring you some pleasure also.

As this goes to press, we bid farewell to the eighth Bishop of our Diocese, The Right Reverend Russel F. Brown, and we wish him well in his new ventures. We also wish to bid a warm welcome to his successor, Archdeacon T. J. Matthews, who is to be consecrated as the ninth Bishop of our Diocese later this year.

G. S. P.

St. George's Rectory
Drummondville, Quebec
May 24th, 1971

KIRKDALE

Sometime in 1805 the first settler found his way from Drummondville up the St. Francis River to a certain spot on its banks which so appealed to him that he remained to establish a settlement. This man was Simon Stevens. He must have been a real crusader for he was soon joined by Armitages, Burrills, Gees, Lysters, Martins, Mountains, Pattersons, and Ramseys. After wresting creature comforts from this land of their choice, the first thoughts of these pioneers were for schools and churches.

The first death in the settlement was that of Philip Lyster in 1822, only two years after his arrival.

Ministers of many faiths had already held services in the homes of the settlers in 1829 when Archdeacon Mountain visited the area, coming over the road which had been cleared from Drummondville the previous year. He mentioned the visit in the Diocesan records, referring to the area as Upper Durham. This is the first official notice of the parish.

Following his visit a Board of Education was formed. In January the following year Simon Stevens and William Mountain, acting for the Board of Education, purchased a piece of land 2 roods by 8 perches (about a $\frac{1}{2}$ acre) from Thomas Ramsey. Here they were to build a school, which would also serve as a church. Part of the land became a cemetery. This land was purchased for the princely sum of 2 pounds 10 shillings, about \$10.00. Burial in this cemetery was non-denominational. This ground is included in our present cemetery.

The first mail was delivered in the area in 1832, Robert Moore being the postmaster. Deliveries were made once a week.

On September 9th, 1834, Simon Stevens gave the Lord Bishop of Quebec, "in trust for the first rector and his successors", a piece of land beside the school to be used for a church site, with the condition that a church be built within five years.

This church was built in 1835 near the lower gate, presumably on that spot where a number of newer tombstones are surrounded by marble slabs. This building serves as the Church Hall today.

The first marriage in this church was that of William Burrill to Rachel Stevens in 1837.

During these adventurous days, your closest neighbour was often across the river. At first the Reverend Mr. Fleming and the Reverend Mr. Butler came over from Kingsey to minister to this new parish of Upper Durham. During the turbulent period of 1837-38, with the rebellion of Lower Canada sparked by Louis Joseph Papineau from the Lachute district, it was feared that this area would be plundered, and the local families were trained to defend themselves. Lord Durham was sent from England to investigate, and he, by conceding certain rights to the French, was able to quell the rebellion. The church was used as a barracks for the volunteers and only after this crisis was it consecrated in 1840 to the worship of God by Bishop Mountain. At that time Upper Durham was attached to the Kingsey Mission, whose clergyman was the Reverend R. Lonsdell, followed in 1843 by the Reverend J. Butler.

For several years there was no regular clergyman, and the Reverend Andrew Balfour of Kingsey took services here occasionally. In January 1852 he presented Bishop Mountain with the first confirmation candidates here.

Another who gave his time to minister to this young parish was the Reverend Samuel Simpson Wood, who bought the Ramsey property here from Mrs. Brady on March 27th, 1857. In 1861 he came to Upper Durham and gave 12 acres of this land for a parsonage and grounds. Mr. Wood took no salary while here, but rather he gave unstintingly of his wealth and wisdom to help the parish in the construction of a brick church and parsonage. The actual construction of the church, and possibly that of the parsonage, was done by William Hood. The church was built in 1871. The date of the construction of the parsonage is undetermined, but it is thought that it was built first. Mr. Wood died in 1867 and was buried in the family lot

near the church he planned and worked for but never saw.

Following the death of Mr. Wood, the Reverend John F. Carr became the clergyman, and on Christmas Eve he officiated at the marriage of Eliza Lawrence to W. James Waterhouse.

Also in 1871 a church was built down river in L'Avenir, then called Lower Durham. This church was called St. Paul's and was consecrated in December, 1871. The present Holy Trinity Church was consecrated May 24th, 1872 and at that time these two churches were joined with the first St. James' Church at South Durham to form the mission of Durham. (St. James' had been under construction since 1869 and opened for service Thanksgiving, 1872, although not consecrated until January 22nd, 1875.)

The Reverend Ernest Willoughby King was the first clergyman in charge of the new mission in 1872. The last marriage in the old church building at Kirkdale was that of Hugh Mitchell of South Durham to Elizabeth Cross, also of South Durham, on the 20th of March, 1872. The first marriage in the new church building was that of William Burrill and Miss Lydia Stimpson on May 1, 1872. There is no record of the official opening of the new church. It is of interest to note that Mr. Burrill's father's marriage was the first marriage in the old church. During the three years Mr. King remained in the parish the old church was used as a school and a parish hall.

In 1875, the Reverend George Harding took over the work here. About this time William Stevens, son of the pioneer Simon, gave another strip of land on the south side of the church to enlarge the cemetery, stipulating that the burial lots here be sold and the revenue used for the installation of stained glass windows to replace the plain glass that had served until that time. Despite this suggestion the stained glass windows have been placed in the church by relatives in memory of their parents and pioneer forefathers.

One of the earliest school masters in the area was Edmund T. Patterson, M.A., born in Ireland in 1814, and possibly the earliest doctor was Dr. Joseph Breadon, medical surgeon of England, born 1788, died 1874.

Mr. Harding stayed here until late 1887, and in 1888 the Reverend A. H. Robertson was appointed to the mission. He remained until late 1890, when he was succeeded by the Reverend David Horner who came early in 1891. It was during Mr. Horner's time that the deeds to the cemetery were finally straightened out. During the last year of Mr. Horner's stay, the parish hall was moved across the road. The land on which it had stood was included in the cemetery. Also, at this time, the name Upper Durham was gradually being superseded by "Kirkdale".

At Mr. Horner's departure in 1898, the Reverend William John Curran came here from Gallup Hill. Mr. Curran was unmarried. During his stay he joined in all community activities and it was thus that he died. He attended a Harvest Supper in September of 1901. Joining in the feats of strength and skill following the meal, he suffered a fatal heart attack at the age of 34, as a result of over-exertion. The east window in St. James' Church, South Durham, is dedicated to his memory as well as one by the Font in Holy Trinity.

During the vacancy caused by the untimely death of Mr. Curran, several students from Bishop's University, Lennoxville, helped with the services until the coming of the Reverend Henry Wright.

Henry Wright was the first Canadian-born clergyman in Kirkdale. He was the son of Gideon Wright of Kingsey, and his wife was Miss Dora Evans. During Mr. Wright's occupancy, Mr. James Lyster, grandson of Philip, who had left Kirkdale but still had an interest in the old home church, established a cemetery endowment of \$1,010.00 in co-operation with the clergyman and wardens. \$460 of this money was used to build a fence around the cemetery. The balance was later augmented by bequests from Mrs. C. N. Lyster and Mr. Charles Ewing. The interest on this fund is used to cover the cost of upkeep of the cemetery. Mr. James Lyster's endowment was the first ever to be set up here.

In 1907 Mr. Wright was succeeded by the Reverend W. A. Adcock, who with his wife and children joined the parishioners at worship and work. During his stay with us the cemetery was surveyed and a plan of the grounds

made by a Mr. Cleveland of Richmond.

The Reverend J. Stanley B. Dickson and his wife Anna, granddaughter of Simon Stevens, arrived here in 1914. He it was who helped Mrs. Alvah Cross amass many of the facts contained in this history. Mr. Dickson was a great worker who ably inspired his parish. He is still remembered in connection with many of the improvements he made while here. With the help of Mr. Frank McCaw, heating and plumbing systems were installed and improved in the parsonage; the cemetery was ploughed, levelled and partially prepared for the lawnmower, and the fence painted. The lighting systems in the hall and the church were up-dated. The ceiling, floor, and windows were renewed in the parish hall, and our present kitchen built at the rear of it. In 1925 when St. Paul's Church, L'Avenir, was de-consecrated by Bishop Williams, and the building sold, the organ, bell, seats and rood screen were placed in Holy Trinity; the font and the stained glass windows were put in St. James. The only cost to the parish was the price of the material for the belfry. The belfry construction was done by the parishioners under the leadership of Mr. Dickson. Also of note, the present Chalice and Paten in use in Holy Trinity came from St. Paul's as the originals at Holy Trinity were stolen some years ago. In 1927 Mr. Dickson moved to Cape Cove, Gaspé, but at his death in 1937 he was brought back to Kirkdale for interment.

The Reverend Arthur J. Oakley of Cape Cove, came here in 1927, having exchanged with the Dicksons, and remained five years. During his residence the interior of Holy Trinity was redecorated and varnished. In 1923, John S. Lyster gave a strip of land at the back of the church, the full width of the cemetery, for its further enlargement, and on May 23rd of that year it was consecrated by Bishop Lennox Williams.

The Reverend John Comfort of Sherbrooke was appointed to this mission in 1932, and as he was not priested, the Reverend H. O. N. Belford of Richmond celebrated the Eucharist once a month. Mr. Comfort, being unmarried, boarded at South Durham and served the parish from there. He was ordained priest in St. Ann's, Richmond, and he was married to Lillian Smith about the time of his moving to Mal Bay, Gaspé, at the end of a year with us.

Due to a shortage of clergy, Bishop Williams could not send anyone to Kirkdale, so again the parish had no resident clergyman. The parish was served by the Reverend H. O. N. Belford of Richmond, the Reverend John Prout of Gallup Hill, and Mr. H. Coles, layreader of Richmond.

The condition of the mission was brought to the attention of the newly elected Bishop of the Diocese, Philip Carrington, in 1935, and he immediately called a meeting in the parish hall. Present were representatives from Kirkdale, South Durham and Gallup Hill. Bishop Carrington promised that if the three parishes would join together and if the parsonage at Kirkdale -- being the more central of the two -- would be renovated and made really habitable, he would supply us with a clergyman. This trust was completed to the best ability of the three parishes, and in 1935 the Reverend A. V. McLaren arrived here and remained for two years.

In May 1938 the McLarens moved to Marbleton, and the Reverend R. C. Warder and Mrs. Warder came from Ontario and moved into the parsonage. Mr. Warder was an energetic young man, who, before he had been with us two months, asked to be placed in a larger parish as there was not sufficient work for him here. The Warders left for Bela, Ontario.

On October 2nd, 1938, the Reverend Henry C. Denton, Mrs. Denton and David came from Leeds, Quebec, and took up their residence in the parsonage. Unfortunately, the parsonage was still a long way from warm. Mr. Denton ingeniously closed up the cold back kitchen and the bathroom which was over it, moving these into the main part of the house. New storm windows and doors were purchased, and some improvements were made in the heating system, thus realizing a saving in fuel costs. There was also a heating problem in the church, and the Dentons opened their home to the parish for Sunday services. Mrs. Denton was especially interested in Young People and the Women's Auxiliary, and soon had a J. A. in operation and the Guild affiliated with the W. A. The Dentons had a special understanding of the needs of a small country parish, and their friendly leadership is still remembered.

For a time after the Dentons left Kirkdale in 1945

there was no permanent resident clergyman, and we were again supplied from Richmond. The Reverend George Harrington, Rector of St. Ann's, took charge of the special services, the regular services being in charge of students and layreaders. One such student, Sidney Irwin, his wife and children came to live in the parsonage for the summer months. Although they only stayed a short time, the Irwin family are remembered as people who added a zest to the community. Mr. Irwin was later priested and is presently in Smiths Falls, Ontario. Another of our summer students who is remembered, Ben Midlige, is now the Rector of St. Paul's, Lachine, Quebec.

In 1950 the Gallup Hill Church was de-consecrated, members of that parish going to Richmond. The church and parsonage were sold in 1951 at a public auction. The church was moved to Lennoxville where it serves as the Pentecostal Church. The parsonage and barns were sold to William Fleming and are now owned by Kenneth Stevens.

In 1950, prior to the arrival of the Reverend T. L. Beattie, his wife and sons from England, another attempt was made to make the parsonage comfortable. As electricity passed through the community at about that time, the parsonage was wired; the building was insulated, repairs made to the furnace, and a complete renovation job done. The church and hall were also wired. During his time a parsonage committee consisting of members from both South Durham and Kirkdale was set up. After Mr. Beattie left in 1952 the up-keep of the parsonage seemed too much to cope with, and this, with a shortage of clergy, resulted in the parsonage being rented for a time before it was sold to Percy Mace in 1957. It now belongs to Mr. Bruce Taylor, principal of the new Richmond Regional High School.

Bishop Carrington attached the mission of South Durham and Kirkdale to the parish of Drummondville. St. George's had had, since 1949, the Reverend Canon Harold Church as their rector. From 1952 to '54, Mervyn Awcock, a student at Bishop's University, assisted Canon Church in his duties, and in 1953 Mr. Awcock persuaded a number of his classmates to come down and help at a bee at which the inside of Kirkdale church and hall were painted. When Canon Church left Drummondville in 1955 there was no

immediate replacement. Mr. Stanley Norris, layreader from Drummondville, came to take the services for a time. Then the duties of the mission were taken over by the Reverend Vaughan Wilford of Windsor Mills who had taken services here occasionally while Canon Church was here. Mr. Wilford came to us until the arrival of the Reverend James R. Brown from England in 1956.

During Mr. Brown's stay, repairs were made to the foundation of the hall, the belfry and roof of the church were repaired and painted, some repairs were made to the brick work on the north and east sides of the church, and the cemetery fencing was painted. As the wood stoves were not keeping the church warm enough, an oil stove was installed. Mr. Brown introduced the new revised Prayer Books. Also at this time, Chester C. Lyster donated 50 acres of wood land to the cemetery endowment fund. This endowment fund was again augmented in 1971 by a handsome bequest under the terms of the will of the late Arthur and Eliza Lyster.

In 1961 Canon Church returned to Drummondville, and of course to South Durham and Kirkdale. Canon Church has a great interest in old churches and instigated the restoration of Holy Trinity, preparatory to the centennial of the present building in 1971. He had the south side of the church and the abutments repaired. Many of the headstones which had been broken and in some instances laid aside were repaired and replaced, if possible, both at Kirkdale and L'Avenir. The basement of Holy Trinity was excavated sufficiently for the installation of an oil furnace. The church was redecorated, new matting was laid in the main aisle, lights were lowered, the brickwork on the church was pointed, steps were re-cemented, the fence was again painted (this has to be done quite often due to salt damage), and a number of small trees were planted in the cemetery. New cement steps were installed at the back door of the hall, dishes were purchased for the hall, and, just prior to his leaving in 1968, Canon Church set up a committee to collect and administer a fund for the repair and maintenance of the stained glass windows which at that time were in poor condition.

The Reverend T. H. Bishop, on leave from his parish

in the Diocese of Johannesburg, South Africa, came to us for the summer months. It was an experience to have him with us as he made Africa seem a more familiar place.

In late September 1968, the Reverend Gordon Peabody was appointed Rector of Drummondville, with charge of Kirkdale and South Durham. He has supervised the complete restoration of the stained glass windows and the outside painting of the window frames. The foundation of the hall has again been repaired, the roof painted, and the yard gravelled. Also at the hall, running water has been brought in and new washroom facilities have been installed. At this writing, work is underway on the construction of an outside chimney for the church.

Much of the information contained in these pages has been taken from the personal records of Mrs. Alvah Cross and was made available by her daughter, Mrs. M. Davidson. It is only fitting that I close with a few words directly from the writings of Mrs. Cross.

"I know I have not done justice to all those early pioneer men and women who built this church, simply based on their trust in God and faith in the future and I thank God that I have been one of those to carry their torch for a short way."

Kirkdale, Quebec

May 15th, 1971