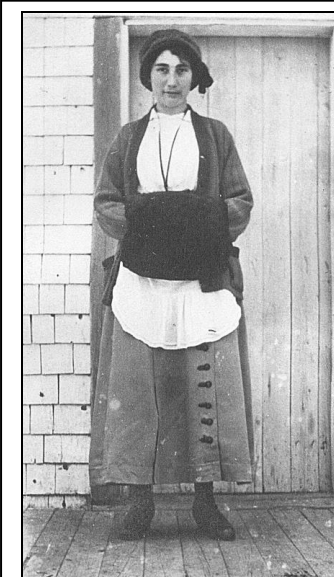


The History of the United Baptist Church in Penobsquis, Kings Co., N.B.



Women's Missionary Society Members, Penobsquis, Kings Co., N.B ~1938

In 1864 a Foreign Missionary Society was organized at Penobsquis Baptist Church. In 1875, a **Women's Missionary Society** was organized. From the very inception of these societies, the local church showed its interest and bore its share of the costs. This picture features the members of the **WMS in 1938**. The WMS supported missionaries to foreign lands through their fundraising efforts. Women were the backbone of fundraising for the church. Other organizations in connection with the Church were the B.Y.P.U., Sewing Circle, the Busy Bees, the Stitch and Chatter Club, and the Women's Institute. They quilted, cooked for social affairs and sales, held suppers and pie socials. Bernetta Catherine (Flemming) McLeod wrote the history of the Penobsquis Church from information written in 1913 that she found in the McLeod family history. "Bea" is in the back row first on the left.



Bernetta Catherine Flemming, born 5 Dec 1894, Port Elgin, N.B. married on 11 June 1919 Kenneth Raymond McLeod, born 21 April 1894, Penobsquis, Cardwell Parish, Kings Co., N.B. Bernetta graduated from Acadia U. and Teacher's College, Fredericton, N.B. Kenneth and Bernetta had a family of six; four girls and two boys. Bernetta was a leader in the life of the Baptist Church in Penobsquis.

History of the United Baptist Church of Penobsquis~From Original Notes of 1913 ~By Bea McLeod~

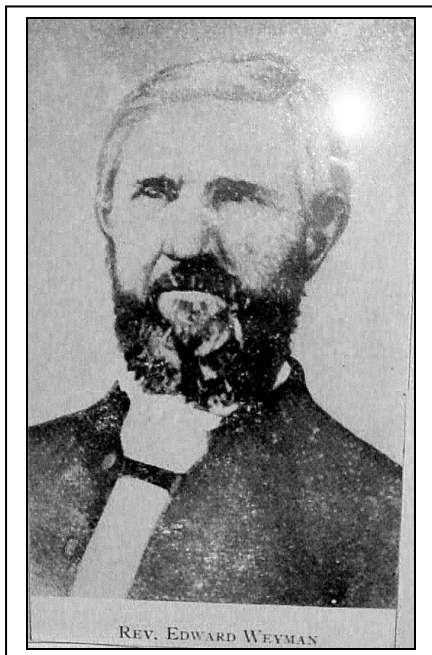
The early church history of the free Christian Baptist body is not confined to the church itself, but is intimately associated with the early history of the denomination. To chronicle in detail the date of its organization, and a short account of the different events transpiring throughout its existence, the names of its members, of the ministers, who during all the years laboured with its members, of the officers who in successive periods performed their several duties, and to give an account of the money spent on various occasions for building, or other purposes, is to bring to us an inadequate idea of the true history of the church.

Its struggles in the beginning of its existence are closely interwoven with the early struggles of the Denomination, and it is necessary to become acquainted with the personalities denominating the movement, with the predominant motives by which it is impelled, with the forces by which it is controlled and further more, essential to acquire a full, and clear knowledge of the conditions of the community and of the lives of the people at the time when the church was born, to fully appreciate the story of the trials experienced.

1831~ The Church Comes Into Being

This church came into being in 1831 and was not founded by any denominational body already settled in the province. Only two churches of like faith existed here at the time. Those at Upper and Lower Brighton established in 1830. No organized body holding their particular set of doctrines had as yet been established in New Brunswick. Nor were they off shoots of any other religious body then existing in the province. Elder Ezekiel McLeod in his report to the General Conference of 1856 says; “ The elements of which our body was composed, had been brought to our shores by pious emigrants from other lands, and had been nourished and fanned by the devoted Henry Alline who visited N.B. many years ago.”

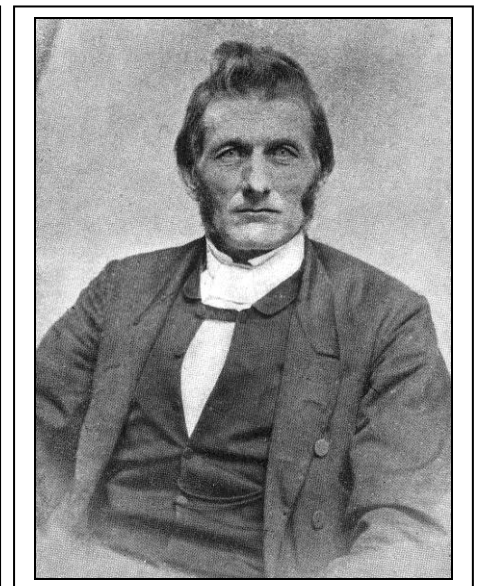
Early Christian Ministers of the Penobsquis Baptist Church



**Rev. Edward Weyman
(1800-1882)**



**Rev. David Oram
(1809-1900)**



**Rev. Ezekiel McLeod
(1812-1867)**

Elders Churchill, Nutt, Hartt

It is well then to notice that these early churches occupied the position as pioneers of a new movement. At what time any minister holding these particular beliefs first visited the place, it is not recorded, but it is known that they were labouring as early as 1830. In November of this year, Elder Nathaniel Churchill administered the ordinance of Baptism to one convert. In the following February Elder Samuel Nutt baptized one convert and in March several were baptized by Elder Samuel Hartt. Again in September 5, 1831, at the funeral of the service of a little child, two more confessed conversion. Immediately after the child was laid in the grave the gathering repaired to the water's edge and these received baptism together with two others who came forward and offered themselves at the same time.

Fourteen Band Together To Found The Early Baptist Church of Penobscis

On the very next day, Tuesday Sept. 6th, 1831, at eight o'clock in the morning, a number met under the leadership of Elder Samuel Hartt, with whom was associated Elder Edward Weyman, for the purpose of uniting themselves into a band to watch over each other for good. And there, William Wallace, Robert McLeod, Samuel Gosline, Isaac Teakles, Charles McCready, George A. Morton, Thomas Stapleford, Alexander Teakles, Eleanore Gosline, Jerusha McCready, Mary Morton, Elizabeth Teakles, Mary Pugsley, Charlotte Harmer; fourteen in all, eight brothers and six sisters laid the foundation of the future United Baptist Church of Penobscis. The Place was at that time called Upper Settlement and later, Upper Sussex. The Church was at first known as the Christian Church, afterwards as the Free Baptist, then the Free Christian Baptist and in 1905, after the union of the two bodies, it received its present name, Penobscis United Baptist Church. For many years the services of no regular minister could be employed. The church depended upon the assistance it received from the visiting elders, who journeyed from place to place, receiving no definite salary for their labours. Nor was there any particular house set aside for public worship, meetings being held in the school-house, private houses and barns. No account of the election of any officers is recorded, but it is known that Bro. George A. Morton acted as clerk, and that Bro. William Wallace and Robert McLeod were deacons.

The Early Church Struggles

For the first few months after organization much interest seemed to have been taken in the work, but after this, little strength is shown, so much so, that at times, they almost concluded it was useless to meet together. Such appears to have been the condition of the Church until the autumn of the following year when Elder Hart again appeared among them, remaining several days, visiting from house to house. Elder Cronkite and Edward Weyman also visited them. But although they were encouraged while these were in their midst, the meetings being held in the school-house, at Bros. Charles McCready and other places, no lasting interest seems to have resulted.

In the autumn of 1832, this Church together with the few others then existing, organized themselves into a body called the New Brunswick Christian Conference. The life of the church, however, was at very low ebb. Mid-week meetings were altogether abandoned and even Sunday services were not encouraging.

Thus passed two years when, again, after a visit from Elder Cronkite, weekly meetings were again begun, and monthly conferences attended. Sunday services were held in the upper school-house and in the lower part of the settlement and week about. Two were added to the Church, thus making sixteen members in all.

1840~ A Regular Meeting House~ the "Free Baptist Meeting House"

Three more uneventful years passed, the Church receiving assistance from the frequent visits of the Elders, until, in 1838 the General Conference held its annual meeting here-the first to be held in Upper Settlement. A number of Elders were present and meetings continued for four days. In the Spring of 1839, Sunday services were held jointly with the Colonist Baptists; meetings

being held in the lower part of the settlement in the forenoon and at South Branch in the afternoon. In the autumn of 1840, a regular meeting house was nearly completed and the General Conference of the year met in Upper Settlement for the second time in the new building. The house was called the "Free Baptist Meeting House", and was situated in what is now called the Lower Burying Ground. (This is now Pioneer Cemetery). (This piece of land in 1816 was given to the trustees of the Union School House by Mr. John McCully for the purpose of building, burying, or whatever they might deem useful for the public good.) It was to be free to the ministers of all denominations for funerals and any other purpose if unoccupied and if approved by the committee of management. At this conference 47 names appear in the subscription list and most of these promising to do some work to finish the building.

During this year, 6 new names were added to the church register. Two more years roll by with frequent visits from Elder Hartt, Weyman, and David Oram. The spiritual life of the church was at low ebb and at length April 20, 1842 was appointed as a day for fasting and prayer from the rising to the going down of the sun. However, when the General Conference was held at Millstream in the fall of the following year 1843, much religious feeling was aroused, and its influence extended even to this place. At the close of the Conference Elder Samuel Hartt laboured with the people and in three months twenty-seven were added to the church.

1860~ The Greatest Revival In The History Of The Church

Many more years went by, the church experiencing the same visitudes of fortune as it had in the past. Different Elders throughout this period ministered to the spiritual needs, and the names of Hartt, King, Wormwood, Wallace, Noble, and Dobson appear upon the records. At length in 1860 with Elder Rattray as pastor, assisted by, during the winter, Elders Parsons, Hartley and Weyman, the greatest revival in history of the church is recorded. With the addition of 47 new names to its roll of membership and the deepest religious interest prevailing in all its branches. The Church was at the height of its prosperity. Eight more were added during the ministry of Elder Downey in 1864. The names of Elder Dobson, French, and Noble appear during the next few years and with the latter was associated Rev. C.T. Phillips, then a young licentiate who for fourteen years from 1871 to 1884 had the care of the Church. This was the largest pastorate in its history and a most successful one. During those years the membership was increased to 47 and the spiritual life was good.

In 1884 Rev. C. T. Phillips exchanged churches with Rev. G.W.McDonald of Woodstock, who was followed by Licentiate F. G. Frances in 1888, by Lic. F. T. Hartley, in 1889, by Rev. A. McNinch in 1890, by Rev. Nobles in 1892, and by Rev. A. J. Prosser in 1898. During this period the membership was increased. Especially might be mentioned the revival services under the ministry of Mr. McNinch when 18 new members were received.

For 7 years until 1907 no regular minister was employed when Rev. C.J. Steeves became pastor. In 1911 he was succeeded by Rev. A.W. Currie and in 1913 by Pastor Mr. Schrader. Evangelistic meetings had been held in 1904 by Rev. Mr. Beatty and in 1910 by Rev. Mr. Phillips.

Early Church Officers

In 1867 Bro. Banford Colpitts was appointed deacon in succession to Bro. George A. Morton, which position he held until his entry into the ministry in 1872. Brother Robert McLeod continued to fill such office until his death, thirty-two years ago, since which time no deacons have been chosen. Brother Colpitts is the only member this church has contributed to the ranks of the ministry.

In 1866 Brother George A. Morton was succeeded as clerk by Brother Samuel McCready, in 1867 by Brother Gideon McLeod, in 1908 by Brother Edgar Wallace and in 1910 by Brother Harry Wallace and in 1940 by Brother Duncan McLeod.

Brother G. L. Slipp, Gideon McLeod, Edgar Wallace, A. D. Freeze and Frank Morton have successfully held the position of treasurer. On the death of Mr. Morton, Mrs. Heber McQuinn was appointed treasurer 1943.

Church Conferences

On four different occasions the Conference has met with the church and during six different years, the District Meeting assembled here: The Conferences in 1838-40-46-77, and the District meeting in 1852, 63, 66, 86, 97, and in 1905.

In 1875 a new place of worship being needed, the present church was built near the village on land donated by Winslow McLeod and Robert Pugsley. Dedication services were held in August of that year. The Church was remodelled in 1910 during the pastorate of Rev. Mr. Steeves. Re-opening services were held Sunday, July 11th of that year. Rev. Mr. Philips preaching in the morning, Rev. Mr. Saunders in the afternoon and Rev. Mr. Higgins in the evening. Only one other roll call had ever been taken during the ministry of Rev. Mr. Prosser. In Feb. 5 1881, a communion set was presented to the church by the members of the Girls Sewing Circle, an address being read at the time signed by the Misses Lillie McLeod, Lizzie Murray, and Augusta Pugsley.

During the history of the church 193 had been admitted as members when this was written in 1913, 113 being the largest number reported at any one time. 89 at least, have already passed away. Of the remaining 30 some are members of other churches, the others are unaccounted for.

In 1850 the Sabbath School had been organized by Brother Isaiah Wallace who was teaching here at the time. When he left a few years afterwards, he was succeeded as Superintendent by Brother Charles Freeze.

In 1872 he was succeeded by Bro. Gideon McLeod, in 1908 by Bro. Havelock Freeze, and in 1909 by Albert McLeod. In 1919 or 1920 Bruce McLeod followed by Duncan McLeod, Henry McLeod, Gordon DeLong, Duncan McLeod.

In the early years of the Sabbath School it opened May 1 and closed Oct. 1. for more than 30 years. Since then it has been open the year round.

The Penobsquis Church Burns~1957

In 1957 the Penobsquis Church burned. The Cardwell Church and the Penobsquis Church dissolved and formed a new United Baptist Church at Penobsquis. Joint superintendents were Mr. A. G. Mills and Duncan McLeod. (This information and that of 1919 added by Bea McLeod)

Such is the brief history of the United Baptist Church of Penobsquis. More complete records would tell of many more interesting incidents. However, much could never be told. It has been written in the characters of those, who during all these years have passed under the influence of its ministry. Since the time of Bro. George Morton, the first to move the baptismal waters, to the present day, many have listened to its teachings and oftentimes in some troubled hour the strength developed by the instruction here received has helped to bear the weight and pierce above the clouds. Many have wandered in foreign lands bearing with them the seed of good in their lives, and in the lives they have touched. The good that has been done no one knows.

During the years of its history, the Church has experienced periods of enthusiasm and periods of depression. From the heights of that religious ecstasy which at first baptisms (as the record says), moved many and moved many to praise the Lord aloud and melted others to tears to the depths of that desponding which bred the feeling that it was almost useless to meet together. We pass from the highest flood to the lowest ebb of spiritual life and it is necessary to comprehend the complete structure of the human nature, to penetrate to its deepest depths, to know the history of the personality in which it is set and to understand the strivings of the soul of man in order to appreciate their trials, to sympathize with their failures, and to rejoice in their successes.

In the seasons of discouragement the efforts of a faithful few alone, kept alive the spark of Life; but such has been the story of the chosen people ever since the call of Abraham, and such is the story of every good work. Yet each has his individual responsibilities to bear. Each must be willing to make a thorough analysis of his own life, and recognizing our own imperfections, and Spiritual needs, determine to overcome these imperfections, and supply those spiritual wants so that he will be the more able to guard his own life and thus to accomplish that work his responsibility brings. Good will be done and the life of the Church assured.

Sources:

From original notes of 1913 in the McLeod family history later transcribed by Bea (Bernetta) Catherine McLeod.

Edited with the addition of information and pictures of those who were involved with the Church in its beginnings up to 1913 and submitted by Barb Pearson.

Additional information on the early Baptist ministers involved with United Baptist Church of Penobsquis can be found in:

1. Faith, freedom and Democracy, "The Baptists in Atlantic Canada" by Roland K. McCormick, now retired and living in Barrington, Nova Scotia.
2. Biographical Directory of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Free Baptist Ministers and Preachers, by Frederick C. Burnett, now retired and living in Carleton Co., N.B.
3. Lights and Shadows of Eighty Years, An Autobiography, by Rev. Joshua N. Barnes, 1911.

Barb Pearson