The Canadian Society of Presbyterian History

Papers 1999

Editor:
David R. Elliott
Box 704, Parkhill, Ontario N0M 2K0

The Canadian Society of Presbyterian History
1975-1999

Celebrating twenty-five years as a Canadian Learned Society dedicated to the study of Presbyterian and Reformed history

President's Letter

The following papers were read by invitation during the morning and afternoon sederunts of the Society at its twenty-fourth Annual Meeting, September 25th, 1999. Each year the lectures traditionally have been presented on the last Saturday of September, usually at Knox College, Toronto. Copyright remains vested in the several authors. Inclusion in the proceedings of the Society does not preclude publication in another form at any time or place.

Membership in the Society is open to individuals and institutions interested in its objectives — the promotion of public interest in this field of history through the holding of meetings and the publication of papers. Persons considering the presentation of a paper in the future or seeking further information are asked to consult the president, John A. Johnston, 183 Chedoke Avenue, Hamilton, ON, L8P 4P2.

Annual dues of $15.00 include membership in the organization and one printed bound copy of papers for the current year. Payment may be sent to the secretary-treasurer, Michael Miller, 293 Shanty Bay Road, Barrie, ON, L4M 1E6, or presented at the annual meeting.

Microfilm copies of all papers, 1975-86 have been placed in the Presbyterian Archives, c/o Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives and Records Office, 50 Wynford Drive, Don Mills, Ontario M3C 1J7, and are available for research upon request. Bound back copies for the years 1997-99 can be ordered ($10 each) from the secretary.

Appreciation is extended to David Elliott for editing and publishing the 1999 papers.

CSPH will begin its twenty-sixth year, entering its second quarter-century of annual meetings on Saturday, September 30th, 10 AM at Knox College, 59 St. George St., Toronto, ON. Reserve the date now, and plan to bring a friend to this twenty-sixth Annual Meeting of the Society.

John Alexander Johnston, Ph.D., D.D.
President, CSPH

Contents

Biographical Notes on Contributors

John S Moir is professor emeritus of the University of Toronto. He has published widely in Canadian church history.

Hugh E. McKeller is a retired high school teacher and hymnologist.

J. Ernest Nix is a retired minister who served the United Church of Canada.

Jack C. Whytock works as pastor of the Associate Reformed Church in Moncton, N.B. and is an adjunct professor of Religious Studies at Atlantic Baptist University.

John Strachan and Presbyterianism

by John S. Moir

The story of a conversation in Toronto between John Strachan and his former classmate, William Jenkins, Presbyterian preacher and farmer from Markham Township, is probably only a legend invented by the agitated mind of William Lyon Mackenzie, but by many Canadians it is popularly accepted as historical fact. When Strachan remarked "Your coat is looking pretty shabby Willum," Jenkins supposedly replied, "Ah weel, Jock, I have na turned it yet."[1]

This joke must have delighted all those contemporaries who opposed the political influence of Strachan and many of his former students and their friends and relatives whom Mackenzie immortalized as Upper Canada's "Family Compact." It was commonly accepted, then and now, that Strachan had exchanged his Presbyterian gown for an Anglican surplice and a consequent £200 mess of church-and-state pottage. Unfortunately for Canadian folk history, the facts concerning John Strachan's religious and professional growth do not support the tradition.

John Strachan was born in 1778, youngest surviving son of six children in the respectable lower-middle-class family of an Aberdonian quarryman who died when John was fifteen.[2] His father

---

1. The anecdote is told in C.B. Sissons, *Egerton Ryerson: His Life and Letters* (Toronto: Clarke Irwin, 1937), I, p. 85; it is retold in Mariel Jenkins, "Grace Seasoned with Salt: a profile of Reverend William Jenkins, 1779-1843," *Ontario History*, LI:2 (1959), pp.95-104; see also *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (hereafter *DCB)*, VII, pp.433-34.

2. The only "full" biography of Strachan, *Memoir of the Right Reverend John Strachan, D.D., D.C.L.* dates from 1870 and is the product of his admiring student, protégé and episcopal successor, A.N. Bethune. Two more recent volumes by the late John L.H. Henderson are a short biography, *John Strachan 1778-1867* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969) and selections from Strachan's voluminous writings, *John Strachan: Documents and Opinions.* (Toronto/Montreal: McClelland and Stewart, Carleton Library No. 44, 1969), (hereafter *D and O*). See also the most recent and authoritative biography, published in 1976 by the late Gerald Craig, *DCB*, IX, pp.751-66.

was a non-juror or Episcopalian who frequently took John to hear the sermons of John Skinner, bishop of Aberdeen, and John declared later that from his early years he had a strong inclination towards episcopacy.[3]

John's mother belonged to the Relief Presbytery — seceders from the Church of Scotland in 1761 — that was open to communion with all who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. A deeply religious person, she taught her children to make the sign of the cross at bedtime and convinced the family that John should be educated for the ministry because, among other "signs," he was born at high noon on a Sunday when communion was being distributed.

John's religious education seems to have come largely from home influences, and his autobiography, written at the age of twenty-two, contains no personal reference to religious practice or any religious commitment.[4] He did, however, enjoy the society of clergymen, especially of his friend the Reverend Professor James Brown and his classmates, philosopher Dugald Stewart and evangelical leader Thomas Chalmers, because they were academic scholars.

After graduating from the University of Aberdeen Strachan enrolled for part-time divinity studies at St. Andrew's University, paid for by teaching. The Church of Scotland, however, was oversupplied with "stickit" clergy looking for employment, so Strachan agreed in 1799 to tutor the children of Richard Cartwright, an Anglican Loyalist merchant in Kingston, Upper Canada for three years.

The Anglican clergyman in Kingston was Aberdeen-educated John Stuart, Loyalist, missionary to the Iroquois, rector of Kingston, bishop's commissary for Upper Canada, and himself a convert to Anglicanism. Cartwright and Stuart did much to shape the intellectual and spiritual life of the young Scot, impressing him with their first hand accounts of the American democratic Revolution and convincing him of the almost divine superiority of British political, social and religious institutions. Stuart, whom Strachan always called his "spiritual father," also loaned John theological books. "At Dr. Stuart's suggestion, I devoted all my leisure time during the three years of my engagement with Mr. Cartwright, to the study of Divinity, with a view to entering the Church . . . ."[5]

As the end of Strachan's contract approached he began to look for other employment early in 1802. He asked Dr. Brown's advice about taking holy orders and soon after wrote that a church

---

3. John Strachan, *A Speech of the Venerable John Strachan, D.D., Archdeacon of York, in the Legislative Council, Thursday, sixth March, 1828: on the Subject of the Clergy Reserves* (York, U.C., 1828), p.25; John Strachan,*Church Fellowship: a sermon preached on Wednesday, September 5, 1832, at the visitation of the Honorable [sic] and Right Rev. Charles James, Lord Bishop of Quebec* (York, U.C.: 1832), p.24.

4. Strachan Papers, Provincial Archives of Ontario, Toronto. The "Relic," written during Strachan's Kingston years, is the first reference to religion in the family life but lacks any comment expressive of his own religious inclinations. See *D and O*, pp.1-13.

5. John Strachan, *A charge delivered to the clergy of the Diocese of Toronto, at the visitation, on Tuesday, June 12, 1860* (Toronto, U.C.: Rowsell, 1860), p.15.

was likely to be vacant, but at no time was any denomination mentioned in his letters.[6] It was Cartwright who learned that the pulpit of St. Gabriel's Street Scotch Church in Montreal was empty and urged John (who admired Montreal's cultural society and had numerous friends there) to make enquiries.

John did write to his friend Thomas Blackwood, a prominent Montreal merchant, staunch promoter of the causes of the Church of Scotland, and co-founder of the oldest curling club in North America.[7] John Young, minister at St. Gabriel's, was in Kingston — "Has he left you altogether or does he go to the Falls? If he leaves you, give me a good salary and I'll become your minister."[8] A month later he explained that, although not licensed to preach, he was prepared to spend four months travelling to Scotland to obtain a licence if he received a call from Montreal.[9] Blackwood replied that an ordained minister had already preached and been called, so Strachan thanked his friend for this news and said that he would pursue "some other prospects from which I have been for some time diverted."[10]

Later in 1802, at Stuart's strong invitation, Strachan applied for the Anglican parish of Cornwall and was appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in March 1803. Although Strachan had apparently never been baptized or confirmed by any denomination,[11] he had already stood godfather to one child at St. George's church in Kingston. He received communion for the first time from Stuart and shortly thereafter was ordained deacon in Quebec. When Strachan announced his ordination to the family in Aberdeen his mother blessed him.[12] Unlike Stuart, whose "conversion"

---

6. *D and O*, p.23.

7. *DCB* , VII, pp.79-80; Robert Campbell, *A History of the Scotch Presbyterian Church , St. Gabriel's Street, Montreal.* (Montreal, QC: Drysdale, 1887), pp. 244-249.

8. *D and O*, p.22. Young, an alcoholic and legally only "stated supply" for the congregation during eight years, was dismissed by the congregation and stayed only two years at Niagara-on-the-Lake before moving to Lake Champlain and then to Lunenburg and to Sheet Harbour in Nova Scotia. See Campbell, pp. 55-58; *DCB*, VI, pp.822-23.

9. Campbell, pp. 183-84.

10. *D and O*, p.22.

11. No documentary evidence has ever been found to contradict this statement made by the late biographers of John Strachan, professors A.H. Young and J.L.H. Henderson . Campbell's lengthy account of Strachan's application to St. Gabriel Street congregation challenges Strachan's veracity regarding his ecclesiastical status, ascribes his "conversion" to religious maturation, and ends with a biographical appreciation of his achievements. (*St. Gabriel's Street*, pp.182-200).

12. John Strachan, *A Speech of the Venerable John Strachan, D.D., Archdeacon of York, in the Legislative Council, Thursday, sixth March, 1828: on the Subject of the Clergy Reserves* (York, U.C.: 1828), p.26.

from Presbyterianism to Anglicanism had involved a prolonged spiritual struggle, Strachan's so-called "conversion" appears as simply a matter of convenience and pecuniary advantage, not as a crisis of faith.

Doctrinally there was no problem for Strachan in this career change. The Thirty-Nine Articles are sufficiently Calvinistic for any age that sees no essential differences between Protestant churches beyond ecclesiological distinctions, as in the individual *versus* corporate episcopacy of the two established churches national of England and Scotland. It was this perceived factor of similarity of the two national churches that subsequently caused Thomas Chalmers to suggest that Canadian Presbyterians should join the Church of England. Strachan's total acceptance of Anglicanism completed his entry into Christianity. His was the "high and dry" theology of the Scottish Episcopalian Church ("neither Arminian nor Calvinistic but Scriptural"),[13] a faith that eschewed both the extremes of emotion-based religion and of excessively ritualization. Four years later his alma mater, King's College, Aberdeen, gave him an honorary D.D. with the assurance that, "We confer academical honours alike on both churches."[14] It remained for the next generation to be informed that, by his Anglican ordination, John Strachan had become a turn-coat.

During Strachan's decade of ministry and teaching at Cornwall, a parish with "plenty of Presbyterians,"[15] his only Presbyterian neighbour was the Reverend John Bethune, founder of St. Gabriel's Street Scotch Church in Montreal and now minister at Williamstown. Bethune performed Strachan's marriage and sent two sons, who both became Anglican priests, to Strachan's school.[16]

In Upper Canada's earliest years neither of Britain's established churches did much to supply the colonies with clergymen. In 1803 there was only one Kirk minister and five Church of England priests in Upper Canada. A generation later, when the population of the colony had reached 150,000, those numbers stood at six and twenty-nine respectively.[17] The few clergy who did come to the frontier colony inevitably had to abandon the European parish model and become missionaries who covered hundreds of miles to reach the faithful and the unchurched. Stuart of Kingston served his Mohawk flock as far distant as the Grand River, and Presbyterian pioneer William McDowall reputedly travelled from the Bay of Quinte as far west as Sandwich.

As for John Strachan's career, his marriage to a young and wealthy Canadian-born widow became a Rubicon separating him from Scotland and initiating the process of his Canadianization. Next, in 1812, just as he was moving his small family to become rector of York, war with the United States began. War completed the process by making him aware of his own abilities and of the need

---

13. Strachan Papers, John Strachan to the Rev. G.O. Stewart, 17 September 1805.

14. Strachan Papers, Roderick MacLeod to John Strachan, 7 October 1809.

15. *D and O*, p.25.

16. *DCB*, X, pp.53-58.

17. John Strachan, *A letter from the Hon. and Venerable Dr. Strachan, Archdeacon of York, U.C., to Dr. Lee, D.D., convenor of a committee of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland* (Kingston, U.C.: 1829), p.8.

for leadership in the colony when, to protect York's citizens and their property, he alone faced the invading American admiral. By the end of the hostilities Strachan was a self-assured British-Canadian, loyally defending the high ideals and institutions of the mother country in contrast to the democratic excesses and lawlessness of Bonaparte and his American allies. To counteract the "revolutionary spirit" of the Assembly, Strachan offered himself for Legislative Councillor[18] (later he also joined the Executive Council). More than this, the young men he had moulded in his excellent Cornwall school were now achieving positions of public stature and power, ready to join in his destined mission to keep Upper Canada British.[19]

The war also caused Strachan's first confrontation with Presbyterians. The Americans had burned St. Andrew's Church, Niagara-on-the-Lake, in 1813, and in 1819 the congregation petitioned the Lieutenant-Governor for an annual grant of £100 from the income of Upper Canada's Clergy Reserves. Those Reserves consisted of two and a half million acres of prime agricultural land set aside by the 1791 Constitutional Act for the support of a "Protestant clergy." St. Andrew's congregation wanted some of the Reserves income to rebuild their church and to import a minister of "the Established Church of Scotland."[20] Strachan warned his diocesan that an attempt would be made in 1821 to get financial assistance, this time for both the Presbyterians and the Roman Catholics.[21] In Britain the Law Officers of the Crown held that the phrase "Protestant clergy" included both of the national churches, but this was not made public in Canada for nearly two decades.

Meanwhile the Church of Scotland's claim to co-establishment was taken up and supported by Upper Canada's House of Assembly in 1823 when a series of resolutions were sent up to the Legislative Council. Those resolutions stated that the 1707 union of England and Scotland recognized the Church of Scotland as a co-established "National Protestant " church, that the conquest of Canada by the United Kingdom gave both churches equal claims to the advantages of that victory, that because the Clergy Reserves were intended for a "Protestant Clergy" both churches should share in the income, and finally that an address to this effect should be presented to the King. Six days later, with Strachan and several of his supporting members present, the Council rejected the Assembly's resolutions.[22]

---

18. Strachan Papers, Letter Book 1812-34, Strachan to Bishop Mountain, 12 May 1817, p. 163; Strachan to the Lieutenant-Governor, 22 May 1817, p. 173.

19. See George W. Spragge, "Dr. Strachan's Motives for becoming a Legislative Councillor," *Canadian Historical Review*, December, 1938, pp.397-402.

20. J.S. Moir, ed. *Church and State in Canada 1627-1867* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, Carleton Library No.33, 1967), p.161 (hereafter *C and S*).

21. Strachan Papers, Letter Book 1812-34, Strachan to Bishop Mountain, 13 November 1820, p. 241.

22. *Report of the Ontario Bureau of Archives, 1915*, 215, 220. See also J.S. Moir, "'Loyalty and Respectability': the Campaign for Co-establishment of the Church of Scotland in Canada," *Scottish Tradition*, IX/X (1979), pp.64-82.

Strachan's first reaction was legalistic — the Constitution Act gave those funds to the "Protestant clergy" which meant exclusively the Church of England, and the law must be obeyed to the letter. Privately he was convinced that all the income from the Clergy Reserves would be barely sufficient to help his church. The Anglican clergy corporation that managed the lands echoed Strachan's argument, and the Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada informed the Colonial Office that Upper Canada was an English, not a British colony. Against "the unexpected and extraordinary claim" of the Kirk to co-establishment and a share of the Reserves funds the Angl;ican clergy corporation protested that no assistance should go to the Kirk as such, and that any help to a Kirk congregation should be minimal and never at the expense of the Church of England.[23]

Curtis Fahey, the most recent historian to devote considerable attention to John Strachan, makes the point that as late as 1819 Strachan was lavish in his praise of Canadian Presbyterians, but that in the next decade he came to see them, especially the Kirkmen and their claims to co-establishment, as a serious threat to his ideal of a loyal, hierarchic, British and therefore Anglican Upper Canada.[24] The lines of denominational conflict were now clearly set, and reams of repetitious documentation flowed in the years that followed.

Within the next decade, however, John Strachan went to Britain twice, in 1824 and 1826, on Clergy Reserves and educational business, and sparked a number of violent reactions on both subjects. In 1824 he wrote a lengthy defence of his Church's position and appended from memory an Ecclesiastical Chart describing the denominational situation in Upper Canada. In 1826, while negotiating a charter for an Anglican-controlled King's College, Strachan revived and slightly revised his chart, but when the chart and the College charter were publicized in colonial newspapers the popular and critical reaction was instantaneous and vociferous. A further impetus to the Church of Scotland's demands was added when the evangelically-oriented Glasgow Colonial Society was created in 1825 to promote the interests of the colonial Kirk, with Lord Dalhousie, Governor of Canada and active Kirkman, as the Society's patron. The Colonial Office again expressed sympathy for the Kirk's requests but insisted no funds were available.[25]

In the Upper Canadian Legislature and in much of the colonial press Strachan came under attack from various groups on the issue of the university charter and the disposition of the Reserves, but in March 1828 he defended himself and his actions in a major speech to the Legislative Council, and for the first time publicly recounted his family's religious connections, his own predilections and his religious commitment.[26] The indisputable fact of religious pluralism in Upper Canada was introducing a new element — voluntaryism — into the arguments over establishment, co-establishment and separation of church and state. The Kirk, however, single-mindedly pursued its

---

23. *C and S*, p.167.

24. Curtis Fahey, *In His Name: the Anglican Experience in Upper Canada, 1791-1854.* Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1991, p.25 *et passim.*

25. *C and S*, pp.168-69.

26. *A Speech . . . in the Legislative Council, Thursday, sixth March, 1828: on the Subject of the Clergy Reserves*, pp. 25-26.

own goal of co-establishment. In January that year representatives of the Kirk had gathered in Cornwall and formulated again their requests. The support of the mother church was enlisted, evidence was presented to the General Assembly and the imperial parliament was bombarded with rival petitions.

Strachan felt justified when his fellow Legislative Councillors resolved that his explanations regarding the Ecclesiastical Chart and the university charter were quite satisfactory, but suddenly his 1802 private letter to Blackwood regarding the vacant pulpit at St. Gabriel Street Church appeared in the *Montreal Herald.* Strachan's reaction to this development was bitter. In a pamphlet letter to Dr. John Lee, convener of the General Assembly's Canada Committee, Strachan averred that he had always wanted "reasonable support" for the Church of Scotland even though as late as 1818 there had been only one Kirk minister in the whole province and the Kirk had done next to nothing for Upper Canada in comparison to the efforts of the Church of England. Strachan charged that Lee's abuse of him before the famous Parliamentary Committee on the Canadas brought discredit on the General Assembly.

As for his letter to Blackwood, Strachan blamed the Reverend Henry Esson, another Aberdonian, assistant minister at St. Gabriel Street Church and vocal proponent of the Kirk's claim to co-establishment, for using "the mental infirmity of an old and worthy friend of mine" to get confidential information. Esson, he said, had then passed the letter to "a hired slanderer" who published it.[27] Esson had already denounced Strachan in the June issue of the *Canadian Miscellany* as "our evil genius [who] stood prepared to oppose us,."[28] and another letter by Esson appeared in the *Glasgow Chronicle* accusing Strachan of saying about Kirk church services that, "I never go to hear Sectaries or Dissenters."[29] Elsewhere he asserted that the Church of Scotland, like his own church, promoted "all that is great and good," including church establishment which had made Britain mighty.[30]

Thanks to the publication of the letter to Blackwood a legend was born and Strachan found it necessary to refute the story of his so-called conversion on several occasions by repeating his account of his childhood and his family's religious connections as described during his speech to the Legislative Council in 1828. In 1850 he again denied being an ex-Presbyterian in response to an accusation in a newspaper, and a decade later, at the age of eighty-two, he repeated the story at length for his diocesan clergy.[31] In the wake of the publication of the Blackwood letter, however, Strachan told James Stewart, the new Bishop of Quebec, of his concern at the challenge to the

---

27. Letter to Dr. Lee, pp. 3, 5, 8, 13, 17.

28. *DCB*, I, pp.272-73.

29. *Letter to Dr. Lee*, p.18.

30. John Strachan, *Claims of the Churchmen & Dissenters of Upper Canada brought to the Test in a controversy between several members of the Church of England and a Methodist Preacher* (Kingston [?]: 1828), p.10.

31. Strachan Papers, Strachan to the editor of *The Record*, 25 July 1850.

Anglican privileged position in Upper Canada posed by Dr. Lee and the Kirk's demand for co-establishment. Perhaps Strachan was working at the same time towards some form of mutually advantageous compromise by co-operation between the two denominations. In a tantalizingly cryptic private letter to the minister of Lochiel, Strachan sought the Synod's support for King's College and added, "There in truth ought to be no dispute in the Colonies between the national churches."[32] If these two men hoped to make such a deal nothing ever came of it, but to Bishop Stewart Strachan wrote of "the vast advantages which accrue to the Church of Scotland in power and stability from [having] the General Assembly" instead of individual bishops.[33]

No basic change in the positions of the two churches occurred until 1831 when in response to hints from the Colonial Office, a Kirk Synod of Canada was formed to consolidate and strengthen its position. The home government was prepared to aid the established Church of Scotland, but the colony's Executive Council managed to hide this decision from the public for another decade. Increasing popular opposition to the Family Compact's exclusive rule and to the Anglican (the Family Compact at prayer) monopoly on the acres of Clergy Reserves and to the predominant Anglican influence in politics and education made the Reserves a major *cause célebre* by the early 1830s. Upper Canada's new Church of Scotland synod argued for a share of the Reserves money on the grounds that it was co-established in the Empire, that Wolfe's victory at Quebec in 1759 was a British victory, thanks as much to Scottish as to English bravery. Petitions, addresses and letters, enough to fill more than one volume, document the oft-rehashed story of the Reserves.

The next episode in the long and repetitious story of the Clergy Reserves was an abortive attempt in 1832 by the weak Whig government in Britain to dump the whole issue back on the colony, a scheme which prompted Strachan to say, "A more Jesuitical attempt to pillage the Church was never made."[34] For a few years the Kirk's campaign for co-establishment seemed trapped in the doldrums of colonial-imperial relations until reawakened by the action of Lieutenant-Governor Sir John Colborne. Just as Colborne left office at the opening of 1836 he patented forty-four Anglican rectories, each endowed with four hundred acre glebes from the Clergy Reserves. This added a new dimension of intensity to the Kirk's campaign. The first reaction of the Kirk synod was to question the powers, if any, of these rectors, and then, in 1837, to address the Crown again for co-establishment and cite the creation of the rectories as "a further Infringement" on the rights of the Kirk.[35] In reply to this address, Strachan informed his clergy that the Kirk ministers were "expert agitators" who did not serve their people as well as did the provincial United Synod. Anglicans would never be jealous of any government help to these Presbyterians who deserved "the confidence of the community and the warm affection of their own people."[36] A.N. Bethune, former student, now

---

32. *D and O*, pp.123-27.

33. *D and O*, p.101.

34. Strachan Letter Book, 1827-42, Strachan to Robert Cartwright, 2 February 1832, p.181 ½.

35. *C and S*, 202-03.

36. John Strachan, *Address to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of York, by the Honorable and*

rector of Cobourg and Strachan's protégé and editor of *The Church*, suggested in vain that Strachan might "soften or modify" those remarks that bore "with considerable asperity upon the Scotch Presbyterians."[37]

The third step taken by the Kirk in Canada at the same time was to send their influential lay spokesman, William Morris, a Kingston business man and politician, to Britain to promote the cause at Westminster and in Scotland.[38] Morris received a friendly but ultimately unproductive welcome at the Colonial Office, and Scotland was disheartening because the Kirk's leaders gave no support — and this was the moment when Thomas Chalmers suggested that the Canadian synod should join the Church of England.[39] Morris's only achievement was a survey by the General Assembly of the condition and position of its neglected Canadian offspring. Returning to Upper Canada shortly before the abortive Rebellion, Morris received a series of letters in pamphlet form addressed to him by John Strachan, commenting on Morris's presentation to the Colonial Office. In harsh words Strachan charged that Morris had stirred up angry feelings in the colony, and the Church of Scotland's campaign against the Church of England's Clergy Reserves and rectories was "blind but selfish violence." This "aggressive attack" on the Church of England was "as senseless as it is wicked," and made "without the shadow of an excuse." Anglicans, however, always displayed "patient meekness and forbearance," as proven by their gift of almost twenty per cent of the cost of building the Kirk church in Toronto.[40]

The war of words continued as Morris rose to this challenge with his own pamphlet in defence of co-establishment.[41] Robert McGill accused Strachan of adopting the disloyal style of the rebel William Lyon Mackenzie, and from Williamstown, Canada's largest Kirk congregation, Dr. John Rae, another Aberdonian, economist and proponent of the Kirk, reminded Strachan again of his application to St. Gabriel Street Church.[42] A supposedly final end to this interdenominational

---

Venerable the Archdeacon of York; delivered in Toronto on Wednesday, the 13th September, 1837, p. 7; *Church Fellowship*, p. 24.

37. Strachan Papers, A.N. Bethune to John Strachan, 16 October 1837.

38. See Morris' account of his journey and its limited success, "Journal of the Honorable William Morris's Mission to England in the Year 1837," E.C. Kyte, ed., Ontario Historical Society, *Papers and Records*, XXX (1934), pp.212-42; *DCB*, VIII, pp.638-42.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 239.

40. John Strachan, *Letters to the Honorable William Morris: being strictures on the correspondence of that gentleman with the Colonial Office, as a delegate from the Presbyterian body in Canada* (Cobourg, U.C.: 1838), pp.6, 8, 13, 19.

41. William Morris, *Reply of William Morris, member of the Legislative Council of Upper Canada to six letters addressed to him by John Strachan, D.D., Archdeacon of York* (Toronto: Scotsman, 1838).

42. J.S. Moir, *Enduring Witness: A History of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.* 2nd ed.

rivalry was, however, approaching, thanks ironically to Mackenzie's rebellion which had forced the Colonial Office to take drastic action on the so-called Canada Question. That action involved sending Lord Durham to British North America in 1838 on a mission of enquiry, to be followed the next year by C.E.P. Thomson, later Lord Sydenham, as the facilitator who would set the colonies "running in grooves" towards their eventual confederation.

But before a supposedly final solution to the Clergy Reserves problem was imposed, a new issue arose over the long-incubated King's College. The Church of Scotland claimed, in the name of co-establishment, that it too should have a professorship of Divinity in the University to match the Anglican presence. Ultimately the Church of Scotland created the University of Queen's College at Kingston with a charter more exclusive than anything Strachan would have suggested because it imposed the Westminster Confession as a test on all professors. A provincial act incorporating Queen's was traded for a royal charter and for the promise of an endowed chair of theology which Queen's was never able to collect.

A compromise solution to the Clergy Reserves question was not reached until 1841, two years after Strachan had become Toronto's first Anglican bishop and after Lord Sydenham's made-for-Canada plan to divide the Reserves among the denominations was replaced by a similar Act of the imperial parliament after the provincial legislation was declared *ultra vires*. At each stage of the process Strachan protested loudly against this "spoliation," but privately he was prepared to accept any reasonable and final solution to end a generation of agitation. This Act divided the income from previous sales of the Reserves between the churches of England and Scotland in the proportions of two to one. Strachan would now defend this settlement because it was the law and because it was to be final, but the Church of Scotland complained of "systematic humbugging" because the Kirk's share of the "loaves and fishes" was based on an inaccurate census. Lord Sydenham assured the Colonial Office that "The Scotch I have in hand," which explains the Kirk's regretful acceptance for virtually the same reasons as Strachan's.[43]

During the last quarter-century in Strachan's long life he was no longer involved directly in provincial politics, and the duties of a conscientious bishop were so onerous that at the age of eighty-one he travelled 1119 miles (more than 800 by stage coach), confirming 1670 persons of forty-four congregations in thirty days. Most of the 1840s passed quietly if busily, and Strachan's only contact with the Church of Scotland was his reception in 1842 of two of Kirk ministers, Leach and Ritchie, into the Anglican fold, and their immediate transfer to A.N. Bethune's diocesan seminary at Cobourg for remedial theological studies. When the Disruption occurred in Scotland in 1843 and in Canada in 1844, Strachan recorded no comment thereon, but his own churchmanship was as anti-Erastian as that of his classmate Thomas Chalmers. Their shared conviction that the Church was the divine bride of Christ and not a creature of any worldly state ensured Strachan's support for the Anglican Tractarians or Oxford Movement, at least until John Henry Newman and others defected to Rome by leaving the road to Canterbury for the Appian Way.[44] That the days of bitter interdenominational

---

Toronto:1987), pp. 90-91; *DCB*, X, pp.605-8.

43. *Church and State in Canada West*, pp. 31-39.

44. The parallelism between the Oxford Movement and the Disruption was first discussed

rivalry were over was shown when St. James Cathedral was burned in 1849 and Knox Church offered sympathy and the use of its facilities from two until six p.m. each Sunday.[45]

Suddenly, however, in January 1848, provincial politics had made those former rivals, the churches of England and Scotland into allies. The general election a month early had returned a government composed of the Reform duo, Louis-Hippolyte Lafontaine and Robert Baldwin, and thereby ushered in what became Canada's most dynamic decade of change. Although the legislative revolution that created the form of modern Canada did not begin for another year, the announcement was made on 29 January 1848 — only five days after the new government took office — that a surplus of Clergy Reserves funds from the post-1841 sales was now available to any denomination that applied. This virtually ensured that the "final" solution of 1841 would be challenged by the ever-growing forces of voluntaryism. By the summer of 1849 several religious bodies had asked for money and others had stated their belief that the Reserves, and the forty-four Anglican rectory glebes, should be secularized for the benefit of the nation. The two main beneficiaries of the 1841 compromise, the churches of England and Scotland, were equally quick to respond separately to this latest proposal to strip them of their patrimony.[46] In a warning that sounds like a case of divide and conquer Strachan asserted that such legislation on the Reserves would be tantamount to a "precedent for the pillage" of the much larger endowments of the Roman Catholic church in Lower Canada.[47] When the imperial parliament moved to give the colonial legislature the power to settle finally (again) the Clergy Reserves question Strachan still hoped to be saved by the House of Lords. That arm of flesh also failed as he remarked sadly, "What could we expect when nine Bishops out of nineteen voted for the total confiscation of the Church Property in Canada . . . ."[48]

---

by Harold Laski in *Essays in the Problem of Sovereignty* (New York: Yale University Press, 1917). On the anti-Erastianism of Strachan and the Disruption see O.R. Osmond, "The Churchmanship of John Strachan", *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society*, XVI:3 (September 1974), pp.46-59; William C. MacVean, The "Erastianism" of John Strachan," *Canadian Journal of Theology*, XIII:3 (July 1967), pp.189-204; J.S. Moir, "The Correspondence of Bishop Strachan and John Henry Newman," *Canadian Journal of Theology*, III:4 (1957), pp.219-25; J.S. Moir, "'The Quay of Greenock,' – Jurisdiction and Nationality in the Canadian Disruption of 1844," *Scottish Tradition*, V (1975), pp.38-53; and J.S. Moir, "'Who Pays the Piper . . . : Canadian Presbyterianism and Church-State Relations," in William Klempa, ed., *The Burning Bush and a Few Acres of Snow* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1994), pp.67-81.

45. Strachan Papers, John Shaw to the Bishop of Toronto, 7 April 1849.

46. Strachan Papers, Letter Book to the Societies, Secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel to John Strachan, 21 February 1851.

47.John Strachan, *The Clergy Reserves: a Letter from the Bishop of Toronto, to the Honorable A.N. Morin, Commissioner of Crown Lands* (Toronto: 1854), p.25.

48. Strachan Papers, Letter Book 1854-62, John Strachan to Bishop Skinner, 5 July 1856, p.141.

The story of that source of denominational controversy for three decades, the Clergy Reserves, was almost finished, but John Strachan convinced his clergy to commute their compensation and the funds still gain interest today. The Church of Scotland's beneficiaries, however, lost their capital through bad investments and in less than half a century their Clergy Reserves income had vanished. Perhaps the most astute businessmen were the Methodists who, prohibited from investing in real property, put all their share of the Reserves funds into second mortgages.

As for the broader picture of John Strachan and Presbyterianism, that relationship was almost totally motivated by personal and denominational ambitions, played out on a stage circumscribed in both time and space rather than theological differences. When John Strachan died on All Saints Day, 1867 in his ninetieth year, the Presbyterian ministers of Toronto were among the large body of clergy of every denomination that followed his cortege through the streets of Toronto as the city bade farewell to one of the most controversial and influential men in the history of Upper Canada.

The *Books of Praise* of 1897 and 1997:

Kith, Kin, or Kissing Cousins?

By Hugh E. McKeller

You know and I know that a standard procedure exists for comparing two hymnbooks having some factor in common. First, I ought to tell you how many of the hymns in the 1897 *Book of Praise* reappear in its great-grandchild a century later. Then I should sort out the lyrics of each book by century, country and denomination of origin, and repeat the procedure with the tunes. But, having experienced the application of this procedure in various conferences and publications of the Hymn Society, I realize that before I would be half way through it, only politeness would be keeping you awake, and I daresay that each of you has a bed at home more comfortable than the chair where you are now sitting. Accordingly I propose to take a less scholarly and a more impressionistic approach to comparing these two books, although I haven't established with either of them the kind of intimate familiarity which comes only from steady use.

However, both my parents grew up on the 1897 book, and continued to use it as the measuring stick for all other hymnals they encountered. Thus I learned to regard it as something like my grandfathers, who both died well before my birth; it was not a daily presence, but a hovering one. But with the 1997 book, I knew my way around the store of materials on which the editors could draw, so that awaiting its publication was rather like awaiting the birth of a baby all of whose relatives you know, and then deducing from its features whose genes won out.

I will make two related assumptions, both easier to defend than to prove; first, that the editors of both books did the best they could to meet the needs of Canada's Presbyterians; and secondly, that their perception of those needs was fairly accurate, seeing that neither book attracted anything like the firestorm of criticism which the 1971 Anglican/United *Hymn Book* drew down on itself and never quite managed to shake. We could, if we liked, compare the prefaces of the two books, and then estimate how successfully each editorial committee carried out its stated intentions. However, intentions which get expressed are frequently less interesting than those which certainly

operate, but are never spelled out in so many words. Thus I prose to take the reverse tack; to look at what the books actually do, and work back from that it infer the editorial agenda which produced such a result. If we can safely regard each book as an accurate reflection of the church it was assembled to serve, we may be able, up to a point, to measure the degree of change which the Presbyterian Church in Canada has experienced during this century - not so much in doctrine or structure as in ambience and ethos.

Let us begin, then, with an aspect of the two books which would be noticeable even to person unable to read either words or music. The 1897 book nearly always places a tune at the top of the page with the words underneath, printed in stanzas just like a poem. But the 1997 book nearly always interlines the words, placing them between two staves of music. Since both arrangements work, in that they enable you to sing each syllable to the correct note, you might wonder what difference it makes–and the answer is, probably more than you think.

The 1897 book was the second step in a process of consolidation growing out of the 1875 Union which brought together four groups of Presbyterians with slightly different repertoires. They all used the *Scottish Psalter* of 1650 and the Scottish *Paraphrases* of 1781, but when they got into what they called "hymns of human composure," there was considerable variation among the four, and a danger that, if each went on using the book it had, they might behave like Corinthians, saying, "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephus." But there was an even more worrisome divergence among the four, involving the pensions payable to what they called "aged and infirm ministers." They were up against the same problem as Toronto faces with its municipal employees: how do you harmonize formerly separate arrangements when you haven't much money? So when the General Assembly of 1878 set up a hymnal committee to produce a book which might serve as a unifying force, it stipulated that profits from the book should go towards stabilizing the pension fund. We are still dealing with a time when churches didn't buy hymn books and place them in the pew-racks; people bought their own. Thus sales would increase if one book were brought out in several different guises, and there was no need to wait until copies started falling apart before issuing a new improved version. How profitable this could be was dramatically demonstrated when in England when *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, after bringing out its standard edition in 1875, announced that in 1889 it would have a supplement ready; by the day of publication, the publishers had orders from all over the British empire for one million copies. Before long, we shall see who was paying close attention to these sales figures.

So the1880 *Hymnal* came out in this music edition, to which I shall return shortly, and this words-only edition, had its uses even for people who could read music: you could slip it into your pocket or purse to take to a meeting in a private home, or if you had to go into hospital. But the *Children's Hymnal* which came out in 1884 made no such concession to the musically illiterate; you could get the full music edition, a melody edition, or, for a while, an edition with the melody in tonic sol-fa. If the rising generation of Canadians could not read music, it was not going to be the Hymnal Committee's fault.

Now let us look at the format of the music edition. For each hymn, it prints the words in stanza form underneath the tune; no surprise there. But for the psalms and the paraphrases, each page is divided horizontally in half, giving congregations much greater latitude than most of them probably used in deciding which tune to use with the words they wished to sing. This idea of using a great variety of tunes with one set of words is specifically British. On the continent of Europe a

lyric, even if it were based on a psalm, tended to become associated with one particular tune, and the linkage remained; other words might later be written to fit the tune, but never the other way round. And curiously enough, this practice of linking words indissolubly with a particular tune resurfaced where we might not think to look for it - - in American gospel songs.

Three points about these songs are worth making. They never had the backing of any recognized denomination, but were a strictly commercial enterprise; people bought them simply because they wanted them. Secondly, they were created overwhelmingly by lay-people, most of them with much more talent than formal training, whereas contributors to standard hymnals were often in the opposite situation. Thirdly, these people wrote for committed Christians only incidentally; they aimed deliberately at catching the attention of people who had yet to start on the Christian journey, not at providing strength for the way. They wanted their work to meet such people where they were, but instead of leaving them there, to draw them into churches where more solid spiritual nourishment would be available.

Ironically, the gospel-song writers perhaps achieved their stated aims best in Scotland, where their work was first heard through the 1872 mission of Dwight Moody and Ira Sankey. After that several eminent Scots, who themselves sang only metrical psalms in public worship, were heard to declare that gospel songs might be very beneficial - - for the servants. But from this beginning the idea began to percolate through Scottish consciousness that hymns, as distinct from metrical psalms, might indeed have their uses - - to the point where, in 1892, after *Hymns Ancient and Modern*'s sales triumph, the Church of Scotland proposed the compilation of a hymnal for the use of all Presbyterians in the British empire, including Canada.

Fortunately a person ideally qualified to represent Canada in this endeavor was available. Alexander MacMillan had emigrated in 1887, just after graduating from Edinburgh University, so that he was acquainted with several of the people behind the Scottish project. For five years he had ministered at Auburn before moving to Mimico, so that he had some idea what both a rural congregation and a town one could cope with musically. He had some muscial training, though less than his sister Margaret, who was living with their mother in Edinburgh, so that he had a ready-made base of operations for any negotiations required. No wonder that Hymnal Committee co-opted him in 1893, just before his son Ernest was born. After some visits to Scotland, and much correspondence, he saw fit to tell General Assembly that in two significant respects the Scots' plans would not quite meet Canadian needs.

First, the Scots wanted to issue the *Psalter* and paraphrases in a volume separate from the hymns, instead of having everything under one cover. Secondly, they felt that gospel songs, however edifying they might be in homes or gatherings, were unworthy of use in public worship - - a view which Canadians did not share, since they had been buying collections of gospel songs voluntarily for a whole generation. General Assembly accordingly decided to withdraw from the joint hymnal project and proceed with a book of its own, in which some the ideas emerging from the consultations bore fruit, notably the inclusion of 90 children's hymns in the main volume instead of in a separate one. MacMillan also found Oxford University Press willing to give General Assembly a better deal than any Canadian firm for publishing the book and ended by spending several months in his mother's home, where Margaret helped him with the editing and proofreading. Because the new book was to draw together the formerly distinct *Psalter*, *Paraphrases*, *Hymnal*, and *Children's Hymnal*, General Assembly deemed the title *Book of Praise* appropriate, but Oxford University Press

pointed out that this title had been used some thirty years earlier for a collection edited by Lord Roundell Palmer, who held the copyright on it; hence the need for the adjective "Presbyterian." By 1918, however, Palmer's copyright had expired, and the conciliatory adjective could safely be dropped.

To some extent the book preserved the primacy of the *Psalter* by using one sequence of numbers for the hymns and another for "psalm selections," i.e. sequences of verses rather than complete psalms, mostly from the *Scottish Psalter* but some from later metrical versions. Notably absent are psalms like 41, 79, and 109, which unabashedly confront emotions which nice people are not supposed to feel, much less talk about. Similarly, many of the paraphrases were omitted, and the survivors interspersed among the hymns. The gospel songs which are included have been rescued from the servants' hall by printing their words below their tunes, just as though they had all along been respectable subjects of Queen Victoria.

We need devote much less attention to the historical background of the 1997 book, partly because we have lived through it, and partly because neither the 1918 nor the 1972 book deviated greatly from the pattern laid down in 1897. We have also lived through enough changes, technological and otherwise, to realize that unqualified improvement is very rare: your new improved gadget may enable you to do several things that you couldn't do easily before and cannot do now, though it may not show up right away. Thus I do not condemn or disparage the new book by pointing out that, as well as setting some new doors ajar, it closes several which formerly stood open.

First, let us examine the look of the pages. The format of the gospel song books has won out completely, with every syllable placed directly under, or above, the note to which it is to be sung; the only stanzas printed without music are in languages other than English. Of course, if you don't read music anyway, that won't bother you - - but its consequences might. First, the difficulty of signing a hymn to any tune except what the editors have chosen is increased exponentially, because you can't disentangle words from notes fast enough. The 1897 book gave congregations at least some latitude in their choice of tunes, although less than its predecessor; this one does its best to give them none at all. Secondly, once you have learned how to fit words to notes when the tune is printed separately, you have no trouble reading from an interlined page; but it does not work the other way. Americans, whose standard hymnals adopted the gospel-song format two generations ago, take one look at a page laid out in the older way and fall silent, whereas Canadians have so far been able to cope with both systems - - it is rather like being able to read two languages fluently instead of just one. The 1972 book got the best of both worlds, by interlining three or four stanzas of each hymn and printing the rest below the music, allowing singers to keep both skills in working order, which leads us to another difficulty.

You can print only so many stanzas of a hymn between the staves before people get mixed up. This posed no problem for gospel songs, because most of them make only one specific point which they can usually do in three or four stanzas. But a hymn with something profound or complex to say may well need more space, and if stanzas are cut to make the hymn fit the format, its sense takes a beating. More seriously still, the 1997 book is available only in the music edition and a words-only edition in large print, both of them too hefty to fit into a pocket or purse. Is the expectation, then, that the book will be used only during public worship, and not for devotions at home, in which case nobody will come to know it really well?

The same question warrants asking about the treatment of the Psalms. It presents 108 metrical treatments of passages from selected Psalms, relatively few from the *Scottish Psalter*, which could at least echo the claim of Shredded Wheat: "nothing added, nothing taken away." I realize that a separate book has been published which contains the entire *Psalter* in responsorial form; but if there is a treatment more ingeniously devised to ensure that nobody memorizes anything, I have yet to encounter it. Of course, the 1897 editors had two advantages which their successors lack: they could count on the King James Version and the *Scottish Psalter* being around as long as they were; and in their day all levels of education involved a good deal of memorizing, so that bringing this necessary skill to bear on the Psalms and other parts of Scripture made good sense. Granted, you and I memorized the multiplication table because we neither had nor envisaged calculators; but have you ever been sorry you know it? In theory, you can now look up any information you want when you need it, but do you?

Whether deliberately or not, the 1897 book toook full advantage of another belief then current: that stretching one's mind was a Good Thing. If you were presented with a concept which you could not immediately understand, the onus was on you to raise your sights till you could grasp it, not on the presenter to water it down. The book could thus afford to sustain a level of literacy and musical integrity which allowed it to serve as not just a compendium of edification, but an instrument of acculturation, not always in ways the editors could have foreseen.

A century ago, Canada was full of people whose formal education had ended with Grade 8, if that, more often for lack of opportunity than for lack of inclination. To meet the need of young adults with more mental energy than their daily work required, individual congregations set up all kinds of groups and projects; similarly, hymns were recognized as providing about the only exposure to literature that these people were likely to get. Similarly, with sound recording in its infancy and radio barely on the horizon, many people's experience with music was limited to what they and their neighbours could make; and hymn tunes could bring at least a glimpse into the realm of classical music to people with no hope of ever hearing a symphony. The book thus had an opportunity, indeed almost a duty, to shape its users' ideas of what poetry and music could be; it might not take them far, but if they got a chance to go farther, they would at least have to unlearn nothing that it had taught them. It could be a civilizing medium as well as a spiritual guide.

This is a kind of responsibility which the 1997 book does not have to shoulder, now that recordings and other electronic media give Canadians convenient access to all the music they want, and all kinds of avenues for furthering one's general education exist. We can either deplore, or welcome, the fact that governments and other agencies have taken on so many functions which churches once fulfilled, primarily because they needed doing and nobody else would tackle them. And yet the book leaves me with the uneasy and probably unwarranted suspicion that it is content to occupy a peripheral position in the lives who use it, as the 1897 book assuredly was not.

Thus far I have done my best to spare you figures, but must now call a few to my aid. Excluding metrical psalms in both cases, the 1997 book contains about 700 hymns against the 1897 book's 600. Of its 700, the new book devotes 175, that is one-quarter, to working from Advent to Pentecost through the church year - - a concept which the 1897 book does not even mention. Now, occasions of the liturgical year are rarely noted or marked outside church walls except for Christmas and Easter - - so what happens with them? Against the 1997 book's 40 hymns for Christmas and 35 for Easter, the older book supplies half a dozen apiece, as though users expected to bow in the

direction of a major feast but then go straight on with business as usual. Possibly they wanted their religious life to be steady and constant, rather than a matter of peaks and valleys.

Again the 1997 book devotes 90 hymns to sacraments and ordinances of the church; the 1897 book barely 20. This may reflect the view that baptisms, weddings, and funerals were primarily family affairs, better held at home than in church – though not always; in 1898 my mother was baptized at home and my father in church. But then and now, profession of faith, ordination, and communion would normally be held within a church. Incidently, the older book provided only 8 communion hymns against the new book's 40, and they differ completely in emotional tone; in 1897 the Lord's Supper was thoroughly serious, stressing the link between the believer and God, while most of the 1997 hymns celebrate the joy of the feast and the ties among believers. Thus the new book devotes about a third, and the old book a tenth, of its space to hymns barely usable outside of public worship. May we safely infer that a century ago people were expected to take much more responsibility for their spiritual development, and that much of this work, with the help of hymns which could be read as easily as sung, was to be done alone?

I will mention only three more differences between the books, one merely apparent, one revealing, and one disturbing. We have seen how the 1884 *Children's Hymnal* became a section in the 1897 book, which was continued in 1918. The new book follows the 1972 practice of sprinkling children's hymns throughout, according to theme, but lists them in a separate topical index, letting you find them if you are willing to take two steps. Secondly, each book devotes some 30 hymns to what it calls "Mission," but the meaning of the word has suffered a sea-change. All but three of the 1897 hymns share the mind-set of the Joseph Conrad character who spoke of "weaning those ignorant millions from their horrid ways" - - at a time when that was, in many regions, exactly what needed doing. The remaining three hymns point out that anyone can find certified card-carrying heathen without leaving home or looking very hard; and these are the people on whose needs the new book focuses completely.

The most striking difference between the two books baffles my understanding, so I can but leave it with you. The 1897 book has 65 hymns - - one one-tenth of its total content – which deal with death and heaven, while the new book has barely 10, most of them tentative. Since people continue to die at the rate of one-a-piece, I should think they could use some help in dealing with the prospect of their own death, to say nothing of bereavement; and they will not get it from this book. Yet, mere weeks before it came off the press, millions of people had shown that they had no idea how to respond to the unexpected death of Princess Diana except by buying "Candle in the Wind," whereas the royal family, aware of needing all the strength they could get, went where they knew they could get it; they attended church as usual. Does a church show its people any kindness by tiptoeing around death, instead of proclaiming that Christ has overcome it once and for all? Possibly the 1897 book went too far, like Queen Victoria wearing black throughout forty years of widowhood; but having access to more guidance than you need is surely better than having too little.

George Burdon McKean, V.C., M.C., M.M.

by J. Ernest Nix

A quite modest article, "Robertson College in the War," by James Fairweather told an amazing tale. After reminding the reader that Robertson College had been established as a theological college in Edmonton in 1910, and sent out its first graduate in August 1914, he then calls the roll on Robertson men who have since "made a big breach" in attendance at classes, in making up a current honor roll of 50 men enlisted in the Great War. Several have been wounded, and several killed.[1]

Fairweather then continues: "One of the greatest honours that a British soldier can gain has lately been conferred upon a Robertson College student, Lieut. [G.] B. McKean, who enlisted with the 51st Regiment, at Edmonton, as a private. He won the Military Medal in 1915 and was wounded in 1916, and received his commission in 1917, and on June 29th, 1918 was awarded the Victoria Cross."

It was Fairweather's conclusion about McKean that made me sit up: "Before he enlisted Lieut. McKean was assistant pastor at Robertson Presbyterian Church, Edmonton, and also Scoutmaster of the Boy Scouts connected with that congregation. He is married; and it is needless to say that Mrs. McKean on receiving the news that her husband had been decorated with the Victoria Cross was delighted, as also is his alma mater and his many friends."[2] This brief account was a wake-up call to me. I had grown up in the Robertson Church neighbourhood and thought I knew it well. But I had never heard of George Burdon McKean! Upon investigation I soon found that McKean's name was indeed on the Robertson Church World War One Honor Roll, but with no indication of his decorations.

The following is a brief profile of what we know about McKean. He was born July 4th, 1888 in Willington, County Durham, England. His parent's names are unknown, but both parents were deceased when George, at age 15, emigrated to Canada. He went to join an elder brother, J.W.

---

[1] *The Presbyterian and Westminster*, July 19, 1918, p.60.

[2] *Ibid.*

McKean, who was farming near Lethbridge, Alberta.

Little is known about McKean's earliest years in Canada. It is believed that he worked on a ranch and then on a farm. He may have needed some matriculation subjects for university entry as a student at the newly-formed Robertson College in Edmonton.[3]

While a student at Robertson College he was occasionally the college's correspondent for *The Gateway*, the University of Alberta's student newspaper. During two summers he was a student missionary at Hardieville and at Athabasca Landing, where it was reported he became "extremely popular." In his third year he became assistant to the minister at Robertson Church, Edmonton.[4] He participated in the happy opening of its new building on 123rd Street and wrote a graceful and capable account of the event for *The Presbyterian*.[5]

McKean organized the first Boy Scout troop of twenty-six boys at Robertson Church, among the first of this new youth activity in the city. In describing the troop, he somewhat naively said, "We are not a military organization. We are first and always for the Church and for the development of a type of character which shall make for good citizenship and Christian service."[6]

In the summer McKean took fourteen of the boys on a two week camping trip to a nearby lake. The annual report of the Robertson Session for 1914 complimented McKean's work: "Mr. George McKean, who was assistant to Mr. Stewart [the minister] at that time, rendered the church a service that will not soon be forgotten."[7]

That annual report also revealed deep foreboding about the War. On 23 January 1915 we find George McKean enlisting as a private soldier in the 51st Battalion in Edmonton. Though he was keen on all outdoor sports, and played on the university soccer team, he was small – five-foot-six, 120 pounds with a 32 inch chest. He was trained with the 51st Battalion in Canada and England, but in France he was transferred to the 14th Battalion, Royal Montreal Regiment.

Here we encounter a historical problem. Although McKean's enlistment papers gave his denomination as "Presbyterian," he made no mention of his work as the assistant pastor at Robertson Presbyterian Church. He listed himself as a "school teacher." We have no information to confirm that he had ever been a school teacher. Was trying to avoid being placed in the chaplain corps? Or was he hankering after military action instead?

When McKean won the Military Medal at Bully-Grenay, near Lens, France in 1915, he was

---

[3]I am indebted to Michael Miller for two references to McKean which appear in Reports of the Senate of Robertson College in *Acts and Proceedings*, 1913 and 1914, pp.187 and 193 respectively.

[4]*Lethbridge Herald*, 1 December 1926.

[5]*The Presbyterian*, March 5, 1914.

[6]Robertson Presbyterian Church Annual Report, 1913, p.27. I acknowledge with thanks substantial assistance with this study by my brother, Major Nelson Nix [Ret.] who is a trustee at Robertson-Wesley United Church.

[7]Robertson Presbyterian Church Annual Report, 1914, p.6.

then a corporal and recommended for a commission, which he obtained in April 1917. Perhaps because of his small size, he was appointed to scouting duties. This entailed frequently visiting no-man's-land and reporting back the disposition of the enemy.

On the night of 27/28 April 1918 in the Gravelle sector on Hussar trench along the Lys River the Canadians encountered stiff r esistence. McKean's action there earned him the Victoria Cross. His citation read:

> George Burdon McKean Lieut., 14th Canadian Infantry Bttn. (Quebec Regt.) was awarded the Victoria Cross for most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty during a raid on the enemy's trenches. Lieut. McKean's party, which was operating on the right flank was held up at a block in the communications trench by most intense fire from hand grenades and machine guns. This block, which was too close to our trenches to have been engaged by the preliminary bombardment, was well protected by wire and covered by a well-protected machine gun thirty yards behind it. Realizing that if this block were not destroyed the success of the operation might be marred, he ran into the open to the right flank of the block and with utter disregard of danger, leaped over the block head first on top of the enemy. Whilst lying on the ground on top of one of the enemy, another rushed at him with fixed bayonet. Lieut, McKean shot him through the body and then shot the enemy underneath him, who was struggling violently. This very gallant action enabled this position to be captured. Lieut. McKean's supply of bombs ran out at this time and he sent back to our front line for a fresh supply. Whilst waiting for them, he engaged the enemy single-handed. When the bombs arrived, he fearlessly rushed the second block, killing two of the enemy, capturing four others, and drove the remaining garrison, including a hostile machine gun section, into a dug out. The dug-out, with its occupants and machine gun. Was destroyed. This officer's splendid bravery and dash undoubtedly saved many lives, for had not this position been captured the whole of the raiding party would have been exposed to dangerous enfilading fire during the withdrawl. His leadership has been at all times beyond praise.[8]

On 25 May 1918 McKean was appointed Scout Officer and took a officer's training in it. During heavy fighting on 1/ 2 Sept.1918, McKean was severely wounded and awarded the Military Cross.[9] Because of his serious wounds he was detached from his regiment and invalided back to England. He never rejoined his regiment in battle again.

By March 1919, McKean had become part of the Khaki University, under the command of Henry Marshall Tory. McKean was placed in charge of the Bureau of Information, in Bedford Square, London. With an instructional staff approaching 800, over 50,000 servicemen received class

---

[8]Nora Buzzel, ed. *The Register of the Victoria Cross* (Cheltenham: This England Books, 1988), p.206.

[9]David Riddle and Donald Mitchell, *The Military Cross Awarded to the Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1915-1921* (Winnipeg: Kirkby-Marlton Press, 1991), pp.223-224.

instruction in preparation for their return to civilian life, while waiting repatriation after the armistice.

Another pastime during McKean's recuperation was writing. In 1919 his war memoirs, entitled *Scouting Thrills*,[10] were published. The book is a little hard to classify; the introduction is at least partly addressed to juveniles, but its bloody content certainly was not suitable for juveniles and had an adult reader in mind. In it he stated, "It was pure love of adventure that attracted me to scouting, a love which, if not exactly born in me, was at least developed in me through my association with the Boy Scout movement...."[11] Baden-Powell would have been pleased! A military reviewer commenting on his book said, "It is not a text book in any sense. It is a picture of courage, enthusiasm, and skilled execution of work conducted in small patrols in No-Man's-Land."[12]

In 1921 he produced another book, *Making Good: A Story of North-West Canada*, a possible autobiographical tale which dealt with the adventures of two English lads ranching in Western Canada.[13]

George McKean never returned to Canada; he settled in England where he operated a saw mill. He was accidently killed on 28 November 1926, when the saw blade broke and a piece fractured his skull. He was buried in the Brighton Extra-Mural Cemetery.

McKean's life raises many questions for which we do not have ready answers. Although he had been active in the Presbyterian ministry before the war, that aspect of his life seemed to come to an end with the war. One is forced to wonder if Mckean's experience was similar to many other theological students and clergy who became spiritually disillusioned during World War One.[14]

A clue to his spiritual state may come from his portrait, painted in oils by the Canadian war artist Frederick H. Varley. On this striking work Peter Varley, the artist's son has said, "In his characterization of KcKean, Varley caught the numbed horror of his shatttered soul; rigid, staring, one eye showing a wild defiance, almost rage; the other guarded, cynical, hiding a storm of hatred."[15] The thrill he seemed to get out of killing the enemy appeared psychotic and his experience needs to be viewed against recent studies on the impact of war on combatants.[16]

---

[10]G.B. McKean, *Scouting Thrills* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1919).

[11]McKean, *Scouting Thrills*, p.3.

[12]Review of *Scouting Thrills* in *Armor*, Vol. 37, 1928, p.465.

[13]G.B. McKean, *Making Good: A Story of North-West Canada* (London: Humphrey Milford, 1921).

[14]See David Marshall, "Methodism Embattled: A Reconsideration of the Methodist Church and World War I," *Canadian Historical Review* 66:1 (1985), pp.48-64.

[15]Peter Varley, *Frederick H. Varley* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1983), pp.86-87. The painting is now in the permanent collection of the Canadian War Museum, Ottawa.

[16]See Joanna Bourke, *An Intimate History of Killing Face-to-Face: Killing in Twentieth-Century Warfare* (London: Granta Books, 1999).

McKean's memory occasionally crops up in the news. In February 1951, the Canadian Board on Geographical names announced that a mountain peak approximately 17 km. north-west of Jasper, Alberta, had been named after George B. McKean. More recently, McKean's widow caused a national scandal when she put his war medals up for auction in England in order to support herself. They were purchased and given to the Canadian War Museum, rather than letting them fall into foreign hands.

Thomas McCulloch's Quest to Educate:

Societies, Collections and Degrees

by Jack C. Whytock

There are a plethora of studies on various aspects of Thomas McCulloch (1776-1843), the founder of Pictou Academy, and his relationship to education, most of which in recent years have come from the pen of Anne Wood.[1] Rather than recovering the subjects of these worthwhile studies

---

1. I express my thanks to Anne Wood for sending one of these articles and directing me to certain others:
B. Anne Wood, "The Significance of Calvinism in The Educational Vision of Thomas McCulloch," *Vitae Scholasticae*, 4 (Spring/Fall 1985), pp.15-30; B. Anne Wood, "Thomas McCulloch's Use of Science in Promoting a Liberal Education," *Acadiensis* 17 (Autumn 1987), pp. 56-73; B. Anne Wood, "Schooling for Presbyterian Leaders: The College Years of Pictou Academy, 1816-1832," in *The Burning Bush and A Few Acres of Snow: The Presbyterian Contribution to Canadian Life and Culture*, edited by William Klempa, No. 180 in "Carleton Library Series" (Ottawa: Carleton University, Press, 1994), pp. 19-37; B. Anne Wood, "Schooling/Credentials for Professional Advancement: A Case Study of Pictou Presbyterians," in *The Contribution of Presbyterianism to The Maritime Provinces of Canada*, editors, Charles H. H. Scobie and G. A. Rawlyk, "McGill-Queens Studies in the History of Religion" Series Two (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press. 1997), pp. 54-69; B. Anne Wood, *God, Science and Schooling: John William Dawson's Pictou Years, 1820-1855* (Truro, N. S.: Nova Scotia Teachers College, 1991); B. Anne Wood, "The Significance of Evangelical Presbyterian Politics in the Construction of State Schooling: A Case Study of the Pictou District, 1817-1866," *Acadiensis*, 20:2 (1991), pp. 62-85.

Others include: Stanley E. McMullin, "In Search of the Liberal Mind: Thomas McCulloch and the Impulse to Action," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 23 (1988-89), pp. 68-85; Bruce

that discuss curricula, educational theory, history and struggle, I want to narrow the focus to Thomas McCulloch's membership in British learned societies, his various collections, and, upon occasion, his seeking after honorary degrees. These themes relate to McCulloch's quest to educate and to establish a centre for higher education in British North America. Though they are three distinct ideas, they will greatly overlap as the paper unfolds. We will discover McCulloch's British contacts concerning academic societies, collections and degrees. It will become evident that McCulloch was repeating in Nova Scotia what was already common in Britain. Several works have stressed the curricula parallels between Pictou Academy and the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh.[2] Here, our interest will also introduce us to the history of those societies, their functions, the rise of collections in the early nineteenth century, and the purposes served by honorary degrees in this period for education in Nova Scotia.

1. Societies and Collections: Introductory

We are at a society function today and, in part, fulfilling the purpose of a society as an "association of persons united by a common aim or interest or principle".[3] Often societies have educators in their rank but not exclusively. McCulloch, as an educator, held membership in several societies and we will focus chiefly upon three of these, namely the three societies listed under Thomas McCulloch's name on his 1826 *A Memorial from the Committee of Missions of the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia to the Glasgow Society*[4]....:

1) The Wernerian Natural History Society of the University of Edinburgh
2) The Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle
3) The Antiquarian Society of Newcastle.

James MacGregor alluded to these in a highly complementary speech delivered before the students of Pictou Academy in January, 1826:

MacDonald, "Thomas McCulloch: Pioneer Educationalist of Nova Scotia," in *Called to Witness*, ed. W. Stanford Reid (n.p.: Presbyterian Publications, 1975), pp. 111-127.

2. This is evident in many of the studies listed in the preceding footnote.

3. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, first edited by H. W. Fowler and F. H. Fowler, Seventh Edition, edited by J. B. Sykes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), p. 1006.

4. Thomas McCulloch, *A Memorial from the Committee of Missions of the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia, to the Glasgow Society for Promoting the Religious Interests of the Scottish Settlers in British North America with Observations on the Constitution of that Society, and upon the Proceedings and First Annual Report of the Committee of Directors* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1826). This paper purposely does not focus on McCulloch's membership in the Philosophical Society of Pictou and The National Institute for the Promotion of Science, Washington, D.C.

> With much fatigue he [Thomas McCulloch] taught the Grammar School in this town seven years, and prepared a number of scholars for entering upon philosophical studies....By his unwearied perseverance in scientific pursuits, he turned his five talents into ten, and raised himself to a high degree of celebrity in the learned world. This is evinced by the many diplomas he has obtained in the United States, in the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow, and from various literary societies in England...[5]

McCulloch's membership in the Newcastle Societies likely dates to around 1822 and to the Wernerian Society in 1823.[6]

2. The Newcastle Societies

The Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle was founded in 1793 "with the aim of teaching and educating the population of Newcastle upon Tyne and the surrounding areas" and possessed some of the finest scientific apparatus of the early nineteenth century; it was a pioneer of scientific invention and discovery.[7] Two societies arose out of the Lit and Phil, the Antiquarian Society (f. 1818) and the Natural History Society of Northumberland, Durham and Newcastle (f. 1829). In part these separations reflected the growing move toward specialization in the nineteenth century which was parallelled also in curricula with the rise of specialized fields of study.[8]

---

5. James MacGregor, "Address to the Students of the Pictou Academy, January 2nd, 1826," in *A Few Remains of the Rev. James MacGregor*, ed. George Patterson (Edinburgh: Wm. Oliphants, 1859), p. 243.

6. *Memoirs of the Wernerian Society*, V (1823-1824), p. 583 states that Rev. Thomas MacCulloch of Pictou was admitted into the Wernerian Society; Wood, *Pictou Academy in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 103 where Wood states that McCulloch held such membership since 1823 in the Wernerian Society and Lit and Phil Society. The date for membership in the Newcastle Societies may actually be 1822, if the exchange of letters between Pictou and Newcastle, which we turn to now, may infer such a conclusion.

7. Visitors brochure to the 'Lit and Phil Library' obtained in Newcastle upon Tyne in 1998. (no date for publication) This paper will use the common short-form title of the 'Lit and Phil'.

8. Robert Spence Watson, *The History of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne (1793-1896)* (London: 1897), p.310. The Natural History Society of Northumberland, Durham and Newcastle upon Tyne is now known as the Natural History Society of Northumbria. This society continues to operate the Hancock Museum in Newcastle upon Tyne and produces an annual *Bulletin* plus *Transactions of the Natural History Society of Northumbria*. The Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle upon Tyne remains in existence today and operates a 'first class' library in the centre of Newcastle housing 140,000 volumes, plus lecture halls,

Thomas McCulloch's primary correspondent in the Newcastle societies was Rev. John Hodgson, also a member of the Lit and Phil and of the Antiquarian Society. Hodgson was the vicar of Kirk Whelpington, Northumberland, and today is chiefly remembered for his valuable work, *The History of Northumberland.* He was a very close friend of Sir Walter Trevelyan, a leading Northumberland naturalist, collector and member of the Wernerian Society.[9] (I will now provide a detailed overview of the McCulloch/Newcastle correspondence because it has not been properly considered or brought to light.)

James Raine produced a two volume *Memoir of the Rev. John Hodgson* which supplements the Thomas McCulloch letters we find in the manuscript archives of the Library of the Literary and Philosophical Society in Newcastle. It appears that Raine had access to the private papers of John Hodgson and freely quotes from McCulloch's 1822 and 1823 letters to Hodgson.[10] The manuscript letters of McCulloch in the Lit and Phil Library are from 1824. It would appear that McCulloch's primary period of correspondence with John Hodgson was 1822 to 1826 (a period when McCulloch was lecturing and conducting experiments in various Maritime centres).

Raine introduces Hodgson and McCulloch in this way:

> In the summer of 1822 there commences a series of letters addressed to Mr. Hodgson by Dr. Thomas McCulloch, an eminent American experimental philosopher and naturalist, chiefly on the subject of insects and other objects of Natural History; and affording at the same time, some curious information of the state of Experimental Philosophy in that country.[11]

Raine goes on to summarize some of McCulloch's 1822 correspondence to Hodgson. These letters tell us a great deal which ultimately has to do with McCulloch's quest to educate. Hodgson had sent McCulloch "certain publications" and McCulloch in turn promised to send back some North American insects for Hodgson's distribution. In all likelihood the publications Hodgson sent out would have been printed lectures and reports generated from the meetings of the Lit and Phil Society of Newcastle.

Both Raine and the letters of McCulloch in Newcastle make no mention of any form of theological exchange between Hodgson and McCulloch. Rather these letters all centred around the exchange of collections and the stating of needs for scientific equipment. McCulloch's second July 1822 letter made a request to the Lit and Phil Society, through Hodgson, to send him insect-pins and cork, with the pins being those specifically made by Durnford of London "and can with difficulty

---

art exhibits and concerts.

9. "Hodgson, John" *Dictionary of National Biography*, XXVII (London: Smith, Elder, 1895-1900), pp. 68-70.

10. James Raine, *A Memoir of The Rev. John Hodgson*, I (London: 1857), pp. 383-385.

11. Raine, *Memoir of John Hodgson*, I, p.383

be got in America."[12] McCulloch continued in the letter to set forth his own work in education and to extend further requests:

> In our Institution it is a part of my duty to deliver lectures upon Natural Philosophy, and I am, at times, very much at a loss for receivers, tubes, etc... At present I am preparing a small electrical battery of twelve jars, but want the wires for connecting them. In Nova Scotia things of this kind are not to be got.[13]

Hodgson sent out these supplies and McCulloch acknowledged receipt and set forth more requests in his November 1822 letter to Hodgson. Raine summarizes McCulloch's "wants list" as a total of twenty-four different articles for which his scientific apparatus was deficient and that Hodgson would have to "lay out" six or seven pounds. McCulloch also directed Hodgson as to how to disburse the 4,000 insects:

> Of these, four boxes [of insects] go to the University of Glasgow and the remainder to that of Edinburgh.—For you I have reserved a few.—I hope to furnish you with as many as may introduce you to some Philosophical Society of which you may wish to be a member... Along with the box of insects, I have sent for your little children a few Indian playthings. I hope to send you a collection of the birds of these provinces - Would you wish a few of the reptiles of this country? Some of the toads and frogs are very curious.[14]

McCulloch's letter then goes on for a paragraph in which he described his attempts to teach experimental science. He told Hodgson of his many frustrations to perform classroom experiments with such defective apparatus and also of how he was employing some of the equipment that Hodgson had sent. This letter also contains an interesting word of instruction that these insects were to go to Professor Cowper of Glasgow and Professor Jameson of Edinburgh. Raine tells us that Hodgson followed through on these requests and that both professors acknowledged arrival of the boxes.[15] It is virtually certain that this letter tells us that McCulloch continued sending specimens to Glasgow even after receiving his honorary D.D. early in 1822.

McCulloch, in correspondence with Rev. John Mitchell in 1821, stated that the following summer's shipment of insects could also be distributed to the principal of Glasgow University and any other professor there who might want such.[16] Reading these letters carefully leads to the

---

12. Raine, *Memoir of John Hodgson*, I, pp. 383-384.

13. Raine, *Memoir of John Hodgson*, I, p. 384.

14. Raine, *Memoir of John Hodgson*, I, p. 384.

15. Raine, *Memoir of John Hodgson*, I, p. 384.

16. Public Archives of Nova Scotia (PANS), Thomas McCulloch Papers, MGI, Vol.553, No. 13, Thomas McCulloch, Pictou to Rev. John Mitchell, Anderston, Glasgow, November 24, 1821.

conclusion that McCulloch's collecting was for British museums and also private British collectors and Hodgson was a distributor for McCulloch as well as a supplier of scientific equipment.

McCulloch expressed his "overwhelming gratitude" to Hodgson for all of the scientific equipment he had dutifully sent. (McCulloch promised to send Hodgson a collection of shells from the shores of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the Atlantic Coast, and the Bay of Fundy.)[17] However McCulloch's 1823 summer collecting was a disappointment and he wrote to Hodgson that fall:

> The collection which I am about to send is not what I expected it to be. I never spent a more active summer, but fighting against nature is a profitless toil. We have had so little summer that many beautiful species have not been hatched. You will scarcely believe me when I tell you that I and some of our students expended several hundred miles' riding [after] the largest species of our butterfly, without catching one. My whole collection contains only three, of which you will receive two. You will receive four boxes containing, I conjecture, about two thousand specimens. In moths you will find a very beautiful collection.[18]

There is no reference to the promised collection of shells. This does not necessarily mean they were not sent since Raine only quotes a portion of the October letter and the original is not extant. In all likelihood a collection of shells were forthcoming and we know that such were highly prized by collectors in the United Kingdom. We know that between 1820 to1840 George Gibson of Tyneside, England was a prolific collector of mollusc shells. Gibson was a founding member in 1829 of the Natural History Society of Northumbria which had emerged out of the Lit and Phil Society. Not only were shells collected but it was the period to produce watercolour paintings of them. Gibson painted 4,408 and these are of a superb nature. It is difficult to make any further conclusions other than to acknowledge the complex ring of trading which was occurring in the early nineteenth century.[19]

Another letter which confirms this theory that McCulloch continued to send specimens to Glasgow University and her professors is: PANS, Thomas McCulloch Papers, MGI, Vol. 554, No. 32 [Professor Cowper] Glasgow College, to Rev. Thomas McCulloch, temporarily residing with Rev. John Mitchell, Anderston, Glasgow, December 13, 1825.

17. Raine, *Memoir of John Hodgson*, I, pp. 384-385. Here Raine is referring to Thomas McCulloch's, 24, 1823 letter to John Hodgson.

18. Raine, *Memoir of John Hodgson*, I, p. 385. Raine is quoting from McCulloch's October letter to Hodgson which from context would be dated October, 1823.

19. L. Jessop, "George Gibsone and His Conches" *Transactions of the Natural History Society of Northumbria*, 57: Part I (October, 1996), pp. 5-12.

Mention needs to be made of the official records concerning McCulloch's gifts to the Lit and Phil Society. Turning to the official history of the Literary and Philosophical Society we read:

> Amongst other important gifts which the Society received about this time was a valuable collection of some two thousand insects, collected and beautifully preserved by the Rev. Dr. Macculloch (sic), Principal of Picton (sic) College, Nova Scotia. These were the more welcome as most of the other insects in the Society's possession had been collected in hot climates.[20]

Also, the record book for what is now the Hancock Museum, Newcastle (which was in part collections from the Lit and Phil Society having to do with Natural History subjects), reads:

> From Dr. M'Cullock (sic), of Pictou College, New Brunswick [No.] 124. Eight double Cases of Insects. The production of New Brunswick, collected and preserved by his pupils. I regret that the want of time has prevented me assorting and presenting a named list of this valuable present, which, however, will, I hope, be done shortly, when a general arrangement of the Insects in the Museum is completed, which is already begun.[21]

We know that the treasurer of the Lit and Phil Society was given a directive sometime in *1823* to pay the duty of a shipment of insects from "Dr Macculloch" and that these insects were sent to member Rev. John Hodgson on the ship *Barbara*. The insects were to be included in the Society's museum.[22] Thus it is virtually certain that the Newcastle Society received 2,000 insects from McCulloch in the early fall of 1823 even though the official history is vague as to the date and the

---

20. Watson, *History of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne*, p. 303.

21. I am grateful for the kindness afforded to me by Les Jessop, Keeper of Biology and Eric Cross, Assistant Keeper of Biology, Hancock Museum, Newcastle upon Tyne for freely taking me through the museum's records. See George Townshend Fox, *Synopsis of the Newcastle Museum, Late the Allan, formerly the Tunstall, or Wycliffe Museum: to which are prefixed Memoirs of Mr. Tunstall, the Founder, and of Mr. Allan, the late Proprietor, of the Collection; with occasional remarks on the species, by those gentlemen and the editor* (Newcastle: T. and J. Hodgson, 1827), p. 252. Les Jessop directing me where to continue research with the Lit and Phil Library.

22. Literary and Philosophical Library of Newcastle upon Tyne (LPLN), *Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne Letters (1823-1824)*. MS volume. These letters are not numbered, however they do appear to be arranged by order of date. See the 1823 'Directive' for the Treasurer to pay the duty on a shipment of Insects form Dr. Macculloch on the ship, Barbara. These MS Letters were not referred to by Raine but only letters dates 1822, 1823, and 1826. The *Record* book does not list two shipments but this means little as the record keeping was not always very detailed or consistent.

Record book fails to give a date. The *Record* book does not list two shipments but this means little as the record keeping was not always very detailed or consistent.

McCulloch's October 1824 letter to Hodgson expresses gratitude for the sending of trees. Evidently some of these trees blossomed during the passage, so they were possibly apple or cherry trees. These trees were sent out from Hodgson's friend, presumably, Sir Walter Trevelyan. McCulloch apologetically stated that he himself was "no botanist" but was most willing to send him plants or flowers if the friend so desired. Further mention of collecting is made in this letter along with regrets that the collection McCulloch sent was somewhat sparse due to the cold summer, "so that my collection particularly in moths and butterflies is more defective than usual . Still your friend I trust will find it worth his acceptance and you may say to him that I shall endeavour when hotter summers arrive to render his collection more perfect."[23] McCulloch hoped to soon to have birds for Hodgson's friend's museum.

Another letter by McCulloch to Hodgson spoke of excellent fly catching and expressed appreciation for all the honours bestowed upon McCulloch by the Newcastle Societies. McCulloch asked Hodgson to commence a correspondence with the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester to see if they would like a collection of insects for their museum.[24] No further mention is made of the Manchester Society in the McCulloch and Hodgson correspondence. Then follows an extensive instructive on scientific apparatus needs:

> In the little box which you will receive by Capt. Lowrie you will find the model of a pump of which the glass is broken. I will thank you to hand it to Mr. Walton to be repaired. I wish him likewise to send me 3 small bails for electricity, 2 two inch brass balls gilt and very exactly rounded, 4 ditto 1 ½ inch perforated, 1 glass tube two inches diameter and about 2 ½ feet long hermetically sealed at the one end and at the other furnished with a cap and stop cock below which there must be sufficient length to form a screw for fixing it up on my air pump. The screw I will make myself. Capt. Lowrie will pay his bill and also any other expenses which you may be subjected. In my

---

23. LPLN. *Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle-upon-Tyne Letters (1823-1824,* MS volume, Thomas McCulloch, Pictou, to John Hodgson, Kirk Whelpington, October, 1824; "Jardine, Sir William" *DNB*, XXIX, pp. 251-252. Since known of the letters specifically mention Sir William Jardine I have adopted Sir Walter Trevelyan as the donor of the trees to McCulloch and also a recipient of McCulloch specimens as we will see in later letters. However in saying this I do not want to rule out the possibility that Jardine may also have received bird skins from McCulloch. Jardine's collection numbered six-thousand species.

24. LPLN, *Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle-upon-Tyne Letters (1823-1824)*, MS, Thomas McCulloch, Pictou, to John Hodgson, Upper Heworth, [June 27, 1824]. There is no full date recorded on this letter but by internal evidence and placement in the MS volume, June 27, 1824 must be the date.

> last I wrote to you for two circular pieces of glass about 16 or 17 inches in diameter. I wanted merely common window glass without twists. Instead of this I have received from the glass work two 14 inch diameter electrical plates for a machine. If glass such as I want could be easily got I would like to have it. I should also like to know from Mr. Walton the price of the brass work requisite for an electrical machine containing both plates and also the price of a good camera obscura for a classroom and one for a window shutter with the images not inverted. Also, the price of convex and concave mirrors and of Galvanic plates eight inches square. At present our institution is as poor as Job but by and by I may be able to give him some more extensive commission. The bails, balls, etc. I am anxious to receive as I have some thoughts of giving during the course of the winter a series of electrical lectures in Halifax and at present my apparatus needs many additions. Have the goodness further to ask of Mr. Walton the price of Henly's Universal Discharger. I hope you will find leisure to write me by Captain Lowrie. Though I have not the honour of knowing Mrs. Hodgson I must beg of you to present her my best respects and say that for all the trouble to which I am subjecting her husband I shall endeavour to send her a few cranberries in the fall and by and by perhaps I may pop in and taste her tarts and Newcastle Ale.[25]

Hodgson very much served as a middle-man. He distributed the collections which McCulloch sent, whether it was to the Wernerian Society of the University of Edinburgh, Glasgow University, Sir Trevelyan, the Lit and Phil collection, or others.[26] Also, Hodgson was McCulloch's apparatus agent in the United Kingdom. Hodgson, on two separate occasions, sent insects from Newcastle to Professor Jameson, Edinburgh on McCulloch's behalf (1822 and 1824).[27]

In one letter, McCulloch corresponded directly with Mr. John Adamson, the Secretary of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle. McCulloch expressed his regrets that a collection of shells had not yet been sent but he wrote that the collecting of birds was going well:

> Of late I have begun a collection of the birds of these provinces.

---

25. LPLN, *Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle-upon-Tyne Letters (1823-1824).* MS, Thomas McCulloch, Pictou, to John Hodgson, Upper Heworth, [June 27, 1824].

26. LPLN, *Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle-upon-Tyne Letters (1823-1824).* MS, Thomas McCulloch, Pictou, to John Hodgson, [Whelpington or Heworth] October 27, 1824.

27. Raine, *Memoir of John Hodgson*, I, p. 384; LPLN, *Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle-upon-Tyne Letters (1823-1824),* MS, Thomas McCulloch, Pictou to John Hodgson, [Whelpington or Heworth] November 13, 1824; Robert Jameson, Edinburgh to John Hodgson, Whelpington, December 24, 1824.

> Many of them are very beautiful. As every man and child here is a marksman I shall be abundantly furnished with specimens. By and by it shall be in my power to aid your Museum with something more showy than insects.[28]

From further correspondence we learn that Sir Walter Trevelyan received insects from McCulloch via Rev. Hodgson.[29] When Raine wrote Hodgson's biography he had knowledge of McCulloch's insects forming part of Trevelyan's collection as Raine wrote: "Some of the insects given by this gentleman [McCulloch] to Hodgson are now in the museum at Wallington." Raine wrote that in 1857.[30] The Trevelyan collection today is not completely intact so there is no concrete evidence of what once may have been the McCulloch insects.[31]

Newcastle was a vital link to McCulloch in the 1820s for the acquisition of scientific apparatus. This scientific apparatus was used for teaching and for public lectures. It was a barter system. McCulloch had insects, birds and perhaps shells to offer the Newcastle Society and other collectors. This transatlantic barter system aided McCulloch's academic reputation and his Academy.

3. The Wernerian Society

The very name, Wernerian Natural History Society, is somewhat intriguing and begs the question, "why such a German name for a society in Edinburgh, Scotland?" The University of Edinburgh in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries contained two schools of thought concerning the earth's structure. These two schools have had various names but in general they can be referred to as the Neptunists (which were the Catastrophists) and the other, the Plutonists (Vulcanists), which were the Uniformitarians.[32] Professors James Hutton and John Playfair were the Plutonists, whereas Professor Robert Jameson was of the Neptunist school or a Wernerian.

---

28. LPLN, *Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle-upon-Tyne Letters (1823-1824)*, MS, Thomas McCulloch, Pictou to John Adamson, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, November 14, 1824.

29. LPLN, *Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle-upon-Tyne Letters (1823-1824)*, MS, John Hodgson, Whelpington to John Adamson, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, December 25, 1824. Walter Trevelyan, Wallington to John Adamson, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, [December 26, 1824].

30. Raine, *Memoir of John Hodgson*, I, p. 385. "Trevelyan, Sir Walter" *DNB*, LVII, p. 210.

31. "Wallington," *Where to Go in Britain*, eds., E. Johnson and S. Gordon (Basingstoke, Hampshire: The Automobile Association, 1992), p. 186.

32. "Abraham Gottlob Werner," *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th Edition, 1998, pp. 582-583; "Continental Landforms," *New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, pp. *704-759*; Herbert Butterfield, *The Origins of Modern Science: Revised Edition* (New York: The Free Press, 1957), p. 241.

Professor Jameson, whom we met in correspondence concerning McCulloch's insects via Newcastle, was the founder of the Wernerian Natural History Society and Professor of Natural History, University of Edinburgh. Jameson was the first in Britain to be an exponent of Abraham Gottlob Werner's geological tenets.[33] Jameson had studied under Werner at the Freiburg School of Mining . The Wernerian or Neptunist school taught that the earth was once covered by water and with time the minerals were precipitated out of the waters into distinct layers. Thus the Wernerian approach incorporates catastrophism theory as a key element. For many within this school the Noachian flood was the catastrophe. Thus the Wernerian school found a popularity "in large part to its theological appeal".[34]

In 1808 Jameson proposed that a society be formed in Edinburgh for the study of Natural History in honour of "the illustrious Werner".[35] From 1808 to the society's demise in 1858, and amalgamations into the Royal Physical and Botanical Societies of Edinburgh, there was a movement away from the Wernerian theory of rock formation as the Uniformitarian school was replacing the Catastrophist school and one of the chief exponents was Charles Lyell who was arguing that geologic change was incremental and gradual, thus needing a longer time scale.[36] Jameson in his later life may have even changed his views.[37]

The Wernerian Society had a vast array of prestigious members including the principal of the University of Edinburgh and several of its professors, the president of the Linnean Society, members from Freiburg, Berlin, Vienna, Paris, Geneva and the United States. The Arctic explorers Sir William Edward Parry and Sir John Richardson were members along with John James Audubon, Prince Albert, and others.

At the gatherings of the society papers were read on all branches of Natural History; geology, mineralogy, meteorology, chemistry, physics, botany, zoology, comparative anatomy, entomology, etc....[38] For a society called the Natural History Society its range of study was vast, including examination of a mummy from Thebes. Sometimes experiments were conducted such as when the

---

33. "Jameson, Robert" *DNB*, XXXIX, pp. 234-235.

34. "Geochronology," *New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, pp. 749-750.

35. "Robert Jameson," *DNB*, XXIX pp. 234-235; J. B. Sweet, " The Wernerian Natural History Society of Edinburgh," *Freiberger Forschungsheft* (1967), pp. 205-206.

36. "Geochronology," *New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, pp. 750. For a fuller discussion see also, T. G. Bonney, *Charles Lyell and Modern Geology* (London: Cassell, 1895), pp. 88-97. And Henri Blocher, *In the Beginning: The Opening Chapters of Genesis*, "Appendix: Scientific hypotheses and the beginning of Genesis" (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1984), pp. 213-231.

37. "Robert Jameson," *DNB*, XXIX, pp. 234-235; Sweet, "Wernerian Natural History Society of Edinburgh," pp. 214-217.

38. Sweet, "Wernerian Natural History Society of Edinburgh," pp. 207, 210-214.

society adjourned to Professor Hope's laboratory "to witness various experiments such as the solidification of carbonic acid, sulphurous acid and the liquefaction of chlorine...."[39] The papers were then published in the Society's *Memoirs* and latterly *The Edinburgh New Philosophical Journal* and included illustrations, sketches, maps and on occasion, hand-coloured plates. The *Memoirs* were printed by Patrick Neill, secretary of the society, a leading Edinburgh naturalist, publisher and correspondent of Thomas McCulloch.[40]

The Wernerian Society also collected specimens which were to be housed in the University of Edinburgh Museum. The central purpose of this collection was to serve the university for teaching. Jameson was in charge of the museum from 1804 through to his death (1854) at which time the University Museum was transferred into government ownership to form a publicly funded museum. Today this museum is known as the Royal Museum on Chamber Street, Edinburgh and is one body within the National Museums of Scotland system.[41]

The correspondence between McCulloch and Hodgson reveals that at least two collections were sent to the Wernerian Society. Examination of the *National Museums of Scotland Zoology Accessions Register* (which were in part records transferred in from the Wernerian Natural History Society Donations Record) reveals two McCulloch donations. The first is entry No. 45, June 1822 - June 1823:

Fine collection of insects - North America. Mr. McCulloch.
Through Governor Sir James Kempt, Nova Scotia.[42]

The second is entry No. 58, 1824-1825:

Fine collection of North American Insects
presented by Dr Maculloch of Halifax[43]

---

39. Sweet, "Wernerian Natural History Society of Edinburgh," pp. 215-126.

40. Sweet, "Wernerian Natural History Society of Edinburgh," pp. 210-211; PANS, Thomas McCulloch Papers, MGI, Vol. 554 #88 Patrick Neill, Canonmills (Edinburgh) to Thomas McCulloch, Pictou 1 May, 1829; PANS, Thomas McCulloch Papers, MGI, Vol. 554 #126 Patrick Neill, Canonmills (Edinburgh) to Thomas McCulloch, Pictou, 3 February, 1841.

41. I am grateful for the assistance of Geoffrey N. Swinney of the Department of Geology and Zoology, National Museums of Scotland, Chambers Street, Edinburgh for providing help concerning the collection and records. See Geoffrey N. Swinney and Mark R. Shaw, "History of the Zoological Collections of the National Museums of Scotland" *Bush Telegraph* No. 27 (June, 1998), pp. 23-25, 30-31; *Royal Museum of Scotland, Chambers Street, Edinburgh, Souvenir Booklet*, ed. Jenni Calder (Edinburgh: Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland, 1990), pp. 2, 7.

42. Royal Museum of Scotland, Chamber Street (RMSC), *National Museum of Scotland Zoology Accessions Register*, MS, Entry No. 45 for June, 1822-June 1823.

In raising questions about Thomas McCulloch's membership in the Wernerian Society and claiming that he "had been a supporter of the Wernerian school of geology", as Anne Wood claims in her *Pictou Academy in the Nineteenth Century*, we find an endless sea of questions.[44] First of all did those who were early supporters of the Wernerian school generally hold to Archbishop Ussher's chronology of the creation of the earth?[45] Benedict Picktet's *Systematics* adopts such a view or at least a literal understanding of the creation days as does John Dick's *Systematics* and John Brown's. Picktet was used by McCulloch and Dick was used in the Divinity Hall of the Secession Church in Nova Scotia.[46]

Secondly, if McCulloch's greatest scientific student was William Dawson, when did Dawson reject the Wernerian school (if he ever held to it), and what influenced Dawson to adopt the long day viewpoint? After all it was F. C. McIntosh in the early1930s who wrote:

> Dawson readily admitted the antiquity of the world, but he could never be persuaded that species-distinctions are not unvarying and absolute. Thus his views, considered very heterodox by the theologians of his youth, give him in his later days the name of conservative and reactionary.[47]

---

43. RMSC, *National Museums of Scotland Zoology Accessions Register*, MS. Entry No. 58 for 1824-1825.

44. Wood, *Pictou Academy in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 103. Wood writes, "McCulloch had been a supporter of the Wernerian school of geology...." The question I pose in the text must be answered to fully understand the implications of what Wood raises.

45. On Ussher see, Bernard Ramm, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954), pp. 38, 121.

46. Thomas McCulloch lists Benedict Picktet's *Theologie Chretienne* as one of the works quoted from in his *Calvinism, the Doctrine of the Scriptures* (Glasgow: Collins [1844]) p. 7. See Benedict Picktet, *Christian Theology: Translated from the Latin*, trans. F. Reyroux (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Public, n. d.), pp.121-122, and his literal understanding of the Genesis account of creation. This parallels John Dick's, *Lectures on Theology* which went through various editions and are listed as reading material in Professor Keir's classes and constituted part of his library. See, John Dick, *Lectures on Theology*, I (New York: Dodd, 1850), pp. 381-385. Also, John Brown, *A Compendius View of Natural and Revealed Religion* (London: Wm. Baynes, 1817), p. 170.

47. F. C. MacIntosh, "Some Nova Scotian Scientists," *Dalhousie Review*, 10 (1930/31), pp. 201-207. See also references to Dawson and the Princeton theologians, Hodge and Warfield in the following: Richard Vaudry, "Canadian Presbyterians and Princeton Seminary, 1850-1900," in *The Burning Bush and a Few Acres of Snow*, pp. 230-233, 236. A proper theological study of creation from McCulloch's theological Professor Archibald Bruce through to Dawson needs to be

Dawson delivered a paper to the Wernerian Society in Edinburgh in 1840 and subsequently met Sir Charles Lyell and became a uniformitarian.[48] Prior to this, Dawson gave a paper at the Philosophical Society of Pictou on the structure of the earth.[49] This immediately raises the question of Dawson's viewpoint around 1836 on the Wernerian school of geology versus the Uniformitarian and also the issue of geochronology. More importantly, it asks about Dawson's mentor, Thomas McCulloch, and how he was guiding his student.

The mid-nineteenth century was a time of much intellectual discussion and it centred on creation, science and Scripture. It is said of the famous Free Church leader, Thomas Chalmers, that he "stated categorically that Genesis did not fix the age of the earth and declared that geology could have all the time it wanted."[50]

There is simply a barouche of questions of intellectual history which need to be properly explored: "What was McCulloch's position on geology and the 'days'?"; "What was Dawson's early position?"; "How do these men fit with the emerging theologians like Thomas Chalmers, William Green and Charles Hodge?";[51] "Did the Wernerian school have strong supporters amongst certain

---

undertaken.

48. Wood, *Pictou Academy in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 103. *Fifty Years of Work in Canada: Scientific and Educational Being Autobiographical Notes by Sir William Dawson*, ed. Rankine Dawson, (London and Edinburgh: Ballantyne, Hanson, 1901), pp. 48-50. Dawson mentions several of the men he sat under while in Edinburgh, both within and outside the university. One of these names was Thomas Chalmers who also had particular views on geology and creation.

49. MacIntosh, "Some Nova Scotian Scientists", pp. 202-203; R. W. Vaudry, "Dawson, John William" in *Dictionary of the Presbyterian and Reformed Tradition in America*, Gen. ed. D. G. Hart (Downers Grove: IVP, 1999), pp. 77-78.

50. Donald MacLeod, "The Threat to the Church," Free Church of Scotland Web-site: www.freechurch.org/foot/profmac9.htm) 08/29/1999. Also, Donald MacLeod, *A Faith to Live By* (Fearn, Ross-Shire: Mentor, 1998), pp. 57-62.

51. Richard Vaudry sums up Dawson and his link to Princeton University and Seminary well: "Perhaps no other Canadian of his era was as highly regarded by the Princeton theologians as was the Principal of McGill [Dawson]. Certainly no other Canadian was quoted as often nor were any others offered positions at the seminary." Vaudry, "Canadian Presbyterians and Princeton, 1850-1900," p. 233. Once a study has been done on McCulloch's mentors on creation then another needs to go from McCulloch to Dawson and the Princetonians. Recent studies on how Presbyterians have treated creation appear to have missed these links. See Morton H. Smith, "The History of the Creation Doctrine in the American Presbyterian Churches," in *Did God Create in Six Days?* Edited by Joseph A. Pipa and David W. Hall (Taylors and Oak Ridge: Southern Presbyterian Press and Covenant Foundation, 1999), pp. 1-39.

theologians?" Many of these questions are beyond this paper but McCulloch's membership in the Wernerian Society and his work as an educator in Nova Scotia must be more fully explored. This would take explorations of Thomas McCulloch and science beyond discussions that centre around either a Baconian or a Newtonian approach. McCulloch's membership into the Wernerian Society is somewhat like being at the door to a grand mansion - much is contained inside to be explored.

4. Degrees

There has been much discussion centred around the University of Glasgow and the conferring of M. A. degrees upon three students of Pictou Academy. This is not our focus here. Rather we will examine the quest to obtain honorary degrees as it relates to McCulloch's quest to educate.

As we have seen, both the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh received some of McCulloch's collections, the latter via the Wernerian Society and the former by direct donation. The Senate Minutes of the University of Glasgow state that their conferring of the Doctor of Divinity degree to McCulloch was:

> As a mark of esteem for the character of the Rev. Dr. Thomas McCulloch, Head of the College of Pictou in Nova Scotia and in consideration of the valuable donation of insects lately presented by him to the University.This collection of insects was added on 7 March, 1822 to the Hunterian Museum, University of Glasgow. [52]

Due to moves, loss of records, etc., it is uncertain today which collection of insects were Rev. McCulloch's.

McCulloch was not the only Nova Scotian to receive an honorary doctorate from Glasgow in 1822. Three other men closely connected with Pictou Academy also received doctorates: Rev. James MacGregor, a strong supporter of the Academy and a fund-raiser; Samuel George William Archibald, a Trustee of Pictou Academy, member of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, its eventual speaker and Chief Justice of P.E.I.; and Simon Broadstreet Robie, a lawyer, member of the N. S. House of Assembly, and later Solicitor General of N. S. and president of the Legislative Council, and also a trustee of Pictou Academy.[53] Both Archibald and Robie were awarded the L.

---

52. University of Glasgow Archives (UGA), *University of Glasgow Senate Minutes*, MS. 1/1/4, p. 101. Special Collection, University of Glasgow Library (SC, UG). *Hunterian Museum Records, List of Donations 7 March 1822 to 23 Jan. 1823*, (MS) MR 50/10. Special thanks to the Curator of the Hunterian Museum, Zoology, Maggie Rielly and Assistant Geoffrey Hancock for help on this point. The Glasgow D. D. was dated March, 1822 and can be seen in the Maritimes Conference Archives, Sackville, N. B.

53. UGA, *University of Glasgow Senate Minutes*. MS. 1/1/4, pp. 100, 104. Senate Meetings on 18 and 26 March and 2 April, 1822. J. Murray Beck, "Archibald, Samuel George William," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, VII, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988),

L.D. degree, whereas McCulloch and MacGregor received the D.D.

McCulloch's advocacy for Archibald and Robie to receive the honorary Glasgow degrees was because of their strident efforts to support Pictou College and to break the Anglican monopoly on higher education in Nova Scotia. Evidently Glasgow University was highly sympathetic to such a position, for as a Scottish University it had a strong tradition of supporting Irish students and English dissenters. The Senate Minutes are very terse and officially state no reasons for the conferment of the two L.L.D.s other than saying these men were "Trustees" of Pictou Seminary and this alone appears to be the only written reason for the awarding of the degrees.

Thomas McCulloch next contacted the Senate of the University of Edinburgh by way of a 16 page letter (plus attachments) to secure honorary doctorates for three more Nova Scotians. From internal evidence within the document, it can be dated as late 1822 or early 1823. The document is written in McCulloch's hand although unsigned and begins as follows:

> Gentlemen:As an offering to science I have transmitted to Professor Jameson for the Museum of the University a specimen of North American insects. I regret that my engagements with the University of Glasgow have rendered my present contribution less worthy of your acceptance than otherwise it would have been...[54]

(This accords with the Hodgson correspondence and with the accessions records of the University Museum for 1822.) The letter proceeds with a request for the honorary degrees:

> It has frequently occurred to the friends of the Presbyterian Church here that were its seminary to receive the countenance of the Scotch Universities both its respectability and influence would be greatly enlarged. With a view to these ends accordingly it was judged expedient that I should open a correspondence with the University of Glasgow for the purpose of soliciting that patronage which our seminary needed and as the document No. 2 will show the sympathy and friendship of that learned body was readily granted by the conferring of an honorary degree upon the Speaker of our House of Assembly, upon the gentleman who is King's Counsel in this province and upon a respectable clergyman of the Presbyterian Church who are all Trustees of the Pictou seminary.
>
> Encouraged by the success of this application to Scotchmen and anxious for the respectability of the presbyterian church of these

---

pp. 21-25. Israel Longworth, "Honourable Judge Robie," *Acadiensis*, I (1901), pp. 74-81; 143-150. Page 80 makes mention of his Glasgow degree, "James MacGregor," *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, ed. N. Cameron (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993), p. 515.

54. Maritime Conference Archives (MCA), Thomas McCulloch Box, AO172 (New System) File 82(f) #6 "Letter to the Senate of the University of Edinburgh," (no date, unsigned, but in Thomas McCulloch's hand).

> provinces its friends have excited me to lay our situation before the Senate of the University of Edinburgh and on behalf of expatriated countrymen and their principles to solicit its patronage by conferring a degree upon the Honourable Sampson Salter Blowers, the Chief Justice of this province and upon two of his colleagues, the Honourable Brenton Halyburton [*sic*] and the Honourable James Stewart of whom the first is President and the last two, members of His Majesty's Council for this province...they are all members of the Established Church [C.of E.] they have uniformly pursued the liberal policy which refuses to degrade any part of the community for the sake of aggrandising even the church to which they belong.... The leading presbyterians here are anxious that they should receive from Scotchmen some gratifying acknowledgement....Were the Senate of the University of Edinburgh to gratify their wish I feel satisfied that an essential service would be done to literature and also to the presbyterian church of these provinces....[55]

McCulloch's appeal to the Senate for honorary degrees to be conferred upon these three Nova Scotia Anglicans was obviously due to their support of liberal education at Pictou Academy. It is not entirely conclusive as to what happened to McCulloch's Edinburgh request.[56] Perhaps the sending of collections of insects was a first step to the request. It is difficult to access the motives. Taken as a whole, McCulloch's efforts with the University of Glasgow and the University of Edinburgh for honorary degrees for Nova Scotians connected in several ways with his quest to educate: to work to displace the Anglican monopoly, to promote Pictou Academy, to give it respectability, and to receive the blessing of the Scottish educational elite, namely, their PATRONAGE!

5. What of McCulloch's Collections Today in the U. K.?

We can verify that McCulloch's collections made their way into at least four recognized museums: the Hunterian Museum, Zoological Collections, University of Glasgow; the Natural History Museum, University of Edinburgh; the natural history collections of the Literary and

---

55. MCA, McCulloch Box,AO172, File 82(f) #6, Letter to the Senate of the University of Edinburgh.

56. The three names of Blowers, Halyburton, and Stewart are not to be found in: *A Catalogue of the Graduates in the Faculties of Arts, Divinity, and Law, of the University of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1858). I express thanks to Dr. Ian Hazlett for searching through this volume. Also the entries which are there in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* are silent on this point. The matter remains somewhat of a mystery but it would be premature to conclude that McCulloch never carried out his intentions. It is possible that the request was rejected or ignored.

Philosophical Society, Newcastle (now the Hancock Museum); and Wallington House of Sir Trevelyan. Each of these four museums still exist today in some form although to be able to point and say "this was a McCulloch insect, etc." is virtually impossible. These four were 'recognized' museums associated with great collectors and mainly, with the exception of Wallington House, for teaching purposes, similar to what McCulloch himself was doing at Pictou Academy. In essence it exemplified what Richard Sher wrote about Scotland around 1800 describing it as a nation with "an epidemic of science fever".[57] Collections, popular lectures and societies were closely related in Scotland and McCulloch transported all of this to the Maritime provinces.

Beyond the formal U. K. collections listed above, McCulloch sent to individuals, as we saw with Rev. John Hodgson. Where these may have gone is rather difficult to state. Therefore, we must not ignore the sale of the Pictou Collection in London in 1835. McCulloch's collecting was scientific but it also exhibited the pragmatic. Insects in exchange for scientific apparatus, society membership and yes, prestige, not necessarily for McCulloch as an ego-maniac, but for the cause of education -- the Academy. Cash for McCulloch and the Academy in the 1830s was at a critical point so the Academy collection was auctioned off in London.

John Audubon described the London auction, 20 April 1835:

> This afternoon I attended a public auction of sundries. My friend Thomas McCulloch of Pictou, Nova Scotia had there for sale about 400 well mounted birds, all of which were disposed of - for how much so you think? - Why not exceeding 50 Dollars. - Havell bought the great number of them-...
> Now I purchased about 15 pounds worth - and a few others bought to nearly double that sum - he refused 20 Dollars six weeks ago, for a Snowy owl, that this afternoon produced just 25 cents!! and all this because the World is all agog - for what? for bugs the size of Water Melons....[58]

Audubon had previously met Thomas McCulloch, Sr and Jr in 1833 in Pictou and continued a correspondence and the trading of birds throughout the late 1830s.[59] Evidently the largest purchases at the London Auction went to the 13th Earl of Derby, Edward Stanley, of Knowsley Hall, Liverpool,[60] one of the most prominent natural historians of his day. Since 1806 he had been

---

57. Richard B. Sher, *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 309.

58. *Letters of John James Audubon 1826-1840*, ed. Howard Corning, I (Boston, 1930), pp. 68-69. John James Audubon, London, to Rev. John Bachman, Charleston, S. C., April 20th, 1835.

59. *Letters of John James Audubon*, pp. 134, 142, 186.

60. William McCulloch, *Life of Thomas McCulloch*, ed. Isabella and Jean McCulloch (n. p., n. pub., 1920), p. 149. The British Museum had been a possible buyer but this did not work out.

systematically collecting birds and mammals in what would become one of the most important collections in the world. Upon his death the 13th Earl of Derby bequeathed his zoological collections to the people of Liverpool, thus creating the Derby Museum, now the Liverpool Museum.[61]

The computerized catalogue of the Liverpool Museum lists fourteen bird skins which were obtained by the 13th Earl of Derby from Thomas McCulloch, in 1835.[62] In all likelihood there were originally more but the war, culling, etc. has reduced the McCulloch specimens to fourteen. "These McCulloch birds exhibit a quality of work, comparable to that of the famed Gilbert, the assistant of John Gould the outstanding naturalist."[63] These birds would have been trapped and killed, carefully gutted, stuffed and resewn. One specimen, the Eskimo Curlew was last recorded sighted in Labrador in 1932. It was once a very popular bird in the Maritime provinces, but numbers greatly

---

61. I am indebted to Dr. Clem Fisher, Curator of Birds and Mammals, National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside for her kind help concerning McCulloch and the Liverpool Museum (the oldest institution within the National Museums and Galleries of Merseyside) and the draft article I refer to here. Liverpool Museum (LM), Clem Fisher, "13th Earl of Derby Exhibition 2001" (National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, Liverpool, 1998), p. 1-2.

62. *Liverpool Museum* [Visitor's Handbook] (Liverpool: National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, 1993), pp. 2-3, 13-14. Computerized printout of Lord Derby's Collection for entry name Thomas McCulloch, obtained by Clem Fisher, 06/17/98 listing the Accession Number, Family Name, Subspecies, donor and date and collection. Printed below are the subspecies' Latin names and common names:

1. Circus (Cyaneus) Hudsonicus (Linnaeus)	1. Northern Harrier
2. Aegolius Acadius (Gmelin)	2. Northern Saw-whet Owl
3. Contopus Virens (Linnaeus)	3. Eastern Wood-Pewee
4. Parus Hudsonicus Forster	4. Boreal Chickadee
5. Ammodramus Sandwichensis (Gmelin) [male]	5. Savannah Sparrow
6. Ammodramus Sandwichensis (Gmelin) [female]	6. Savannah Sparrow
7. Dendroica Fusca (Muller) [male]	7. Blackburnian Warbler
8. Dendroica Fusca (Muller) [female]	8. Blackburnian Warbler
9. Dendroica Magnolia (Wilson) [male]	9. Magnolia Warbler
10. Dendroica Magnolia (Wilson) [female]	10. Magnolia Warbler
11. Wilsonia Canadensis (Linnaeus) [male]	11. Canada Warbler
12. Wilsonia Canadensis (Linnaeus) [female]	12. Canada Warbler
13. Carpodacus Purpureus (Gmelin)	13. Purple Finch
14. Numenius Borealis (J. R. Forster)	14. Eskimo Curlew

63. Personal conversation by the author with Dr. Clem Fisher at the National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, Liverpool on 30 June, 1998.

declined after 1888 and it is now viewed as extinct.[64]

Among the Earl of Derby's closest associates were such naturalists as John James Audubon, John Gould and Sir William Jardine.[65] Two names draw our attention, Audubon and Jardine. Audubon often signed many of his drawings M.W.S. (member Wernerian Society), and was an acquaintance of McCulloch's. Jardine was a member of the Newcastle societies and one of the letters of McCulloch mentioned "Sir William," then Rev. Hodgson inserted the name Mr. Trevelyan beside it. Were some of McCulloch's collections first for Sir William Jardine rather than Sir Walter Trevelyan, "the friend"? It matters very little. The point is that, McCulloch's name came up in the company of the names of the early nineteenth-century naturalists and there remains evidence today in the United Kingdom of these associations.

Overall Conclusion

The building up of a large natural history museum was critical for Pictou Academy. The two Scottish universities, Glasgow and Edinburgh, not to mention Anderson's,[66] were all busily creating their natural history collections. McCulloch's collecting pursuits enhanced scholarship amongst his students and no doubt generated respect. McCulloch's collections enabled him to barter for honours, publications, respectability, scientific equipment, and upon occasion, honorary degrees. In essence insects, shells, birds, etc. were free (outside of the work) and could be used as a means to an end - the curriculum McCulloch could secure in return for Pictou Academy.

It is highly important to discover the names of the individuals McCulloch was dealing with in the 1820s. Rev. John Hodgson, an Anglican vicar was obviously a key figure. This is somewhat amusing given the Anglican monopoly at King's College, Nova Scotia. The trail of other names is also fascinating: Professor Jameson, Sir Walter Trevelyan, Patrick Neil, John James Audubon and perhaps others. These names read as a list of some of the finest naturalists of the time. Intimately associated with these names is membership in several societies and a quick read in the *Dictionary of National Biography* establishes the fact that these societies were vital to the dissemination of information and scientific discovery. Thus McCulloch's society memberships must receive greater acknowledgement.

Admittedly this raises several theological and scientific questions about McCulloch which to date have not been adequately addressed: "What was the relationship between McCulloch's

---

64. W. Earl Godfrey, *The Birds of Canada, Revised edition*, (Ottawa: National Museums of Natural Sciences, 1986), p. 207.

65. LM, Fisher, "13th Earl of Derby Exhibition 2001," p. 2.

66. John Butt, *John Anderson's Legacy: The University of Strathclyde and Its Antecedents 1796-1996* (East Linton, Scotland: Tuckwell Press and The University of Strathclyde, c. 1996), pp. 49, 62-64. I acknowledge my appreciation to R. Mackenzie, Archivist for the University of Strathclyde and discussions about collections and museums.

training in Glasgow University and under Professor Archibald Bruce, Whitburn, and the new theologians emerging in the mid-nineteenth century?"; "What was the exact nature of McCulloch's attachment to the Wernerian school of geology?"; and "How did this impact his student, William Dawson?" Further study also needs to be done concerning the inventory of McCulloch's collection at Pictou and then at Dalhousie with comparisons to British collections of the same time period. Separate articles on these need to be written.[67]

McCulloch's desire was to conduct a scientific and liberal arts curriculum which was clearly in the Scottish tradition of his time. His energies and membership in certain British learned societies, his collections and his efforts to obtain honorary degrees for Nova Scotians were put forth to help to achieve, promote, and enhance his educational goal. They were a means to an end.

As James MacGregor stated eloquently in his 1824 report to the United Secession Synod, the teaching of theology "lies nearest our heart", but the Pictou Academy was more:

> it is not merely a Divinity Hall of Theological Seminary such as you need, that we are forming; it is rather a college where our young men may learn what you learn at the universities, before they attend the Divinity Hall, for we have no other place where they can learn any branch of education above a grammar school.[68]

---

67. McCulloch's collecting for British institutions and individuals throughout the 1820s and the 1835 London sale, all form the backdrop to his natural history museum he established with his son at Dalhousie from 1838 until his death. This existing collection today at Dalhousie is our link to his efforts to educate and imitate his British counterparts. See the visitors' brochure for the Thomas McCulloch Museum, Biology Department, Dalhousie University (no date of publication), edited by Steve Fry, Chief Curator and Carey Isenor, Curator; Marjory Whitelaw, *Thomas McCulloch His Life and Times* (Halifax: Nova Scotia Museum, 1985), pp. 31, 36.

68. James MacGregor, "Address to the United Secession Synod in Behalf of the Literary Institution at Pictou," [1824] in *A Few Remains of the Rev. James MacGregor*, ed. George Patterson (Edinburgh: Wm. Oliphants, 1859), pp. 209, 213.