



**The
Canadian
Society of
Presbyterian History**

Papers 2007



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Edited by Elizabeth J. Millar

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Biographical Notes on Contributors

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The Communion Token: An Aid in Discipline, An Enticement for Growth

Angus J. Sutherland

The purpose of this paper is to introduce the Communion Token, and then to trace the use and development of the Communion Token from its inception after the Reformation until the present.

What is a Communion Token?

A Communion Token is a token of admission to the Lord's Supper, found in its early days in the form of a piece of metal variously inscribed (and occasionally blank), and in its later days in the form of a card. The metal token, referred to in this paper as the Communion Token, came into use within Protestant communions in approximately 1560 and continued in use in most places until the late 1800s. The card token, hereafter called the Communion Card, has been in use from the early 1800s until today.

How did the Communion Token come into being?

The origins of the token can be traced back well before the Reformation. Greek and Roman civilizations used signs or tokens called *tesserae* or *meralli* for entry into celebrations, or as evidence of membership in secret societies. The Christian fish symbol may be seen to have a similar use. Tokens of various styles and taking various forms were in use over the centuries as souvenirs, passwords, introductions, and passes into special events.

The beginning of the Communion Token, known generally in the French-speaking world as the *marreau* or *méreau*, is placed at the feet of John Calvin himself. In a letter to the Council of Geneva, dated 1560, Calvin wrote:

[Il] serait bon que pour éviter le danger de ceux qui profanent la cène, lesquels on ne peut tout connaître, il serait bon de faire des marreaux et que, advenant le jour de la cène, chacun allât prendre des marreaux pour ceux de sa maison qui seraient instruits et les étrangers qui viennent ayant rendu témoignage de leur foi en pourront aussi prendre et ce qui n'en auront point n'y seront pas admis."¹ It would be good to avoid the danger of those who profane the Lord's Supper, of which one cannot know everyone, it would be good to make tokens and when the day of the Lord's Supper comes, each [member] would go and get tokens for those in their

¹ Charles Delormeau, *Les méreaux de communion des églises protestantes de France et du Refuge* (Mialet en Cévennes: Musée du Désert, 1999) 5.

households that have received instruction, and the strangers who come, having given witness to their faith, would receive them as well, and that those who have no token should not be admitted to the Supper.²

The Geneva Council itself did not adopt Calvin's idea immediately, noting "some great and unimpeachable difficulties, and decided that they would restrain themselves by warning the people from the pulpit that no one might approach the Lord's Supper who was not fit."³ However, in France the idea caught on quickly; the earliest recorded use of the *méreau* was in the church at Nîmes in 1562, and "by the end of the 16th century most of the churches of the [French Protestant] communion had adopted it."⁴

John Knox, a student of Calvin's and the Father of the Scottish Reformation, was almost certainly the one who introduced the Communion Token to Scotland. The earliest dated Scottish Communion Token on record is one from Glasgow dated 1588, but all examples of this token seem to have been lost. While the token was used extensively in France, the Scots were far more enthusiastic; my research indicates that today over 80% of the known Communion Tokens are of Scottish origin.

What do Communion Tokens look like?

Communion Tokens are of two basic types: the European and the Scottish. Among the European tokens, the major motif appears to be the Communion chalice. Scandinavian, German, and French tokens have this as a primary symbol. The Dutch tokens from the eighteenth century feature a goose, believed to represent Jan Hus, the early reformer. There is a secondary motif among the French tokens, that of a shepherd and sheep. Dutch, German, and Scandinavian examples normally feature a Latin text, while the tokens of the Calvinist Protestant Churches of France feature primarily the French language. The texts in Latin are often ones that would be acceptable in both Roman and Protestant worship, such as "Signo calicis et crucis" ("a sign [or token] of the chalice and the cross"), presumably to prevent problems in an era of suspicion and persecution. The tokens of France identified their congregation of origin with initials. For example AP or EP often appear for *Assemblée Protestante* or *Église Protestante*, followed by the initials of the church itself. Initials were also used for messages to the token user. One example is the letters RGAD&LSF, which stands for "*Rendez Grâce À Dieu Et Le Servez Fidèlement*" ("Return thanks to God and serve Him faithfully") which appears on a token of Vançais, in Poitou. European tokens are mostly round, though a very small number of other shapes are known. Most are made of lead, but a very few in white metal or silver are known.

Early inscriptions on the Scottish type often involved the initials of the minister or of the parish stamped onto the piece of lead, either incuse or in relief. In many cases the token was understood to be the property of the minister and went with him when he

² There is some debate among scholars as to whether Calvin was proposing a new idea or encouraging a practice that had already begun. There is in existence what appears in every way to be a Communion Token of France dated 1553, which contributes some uncertainty to the question.

³ Henri Gélin, *Communion Tokens in the Reformed Churches of France and More Particularly in Those of Poitou*, trans. M. B. Orr ([Pittsburgh: Carnegie Museum of Natural History, 1977]) 7.

⁴ Gélin 7.

moved from one congregation to another. As time went on, the tokens were manufactured with more artistic appeal and with refinements. Scripture was the focus of messages to the bearer. Most often the Scripture passages were either "This do in remembrance of me" accompanied by either the reference to I Corinthians 11:24 or Luke 22:19, or "But let a man examine himself" (I Corinthians 11:28). Many other passages appear, though less often, either written out in full or simply by the Scripture reference. The languages known on the Scottish type include Gaelic, Dutch, Afrikaans, and the languages of the islands of Aneiteum and Efate in Vanuatu (formerly the New Hebrides). Later tokens sometimes included devices referring to the Communion services, chalice, bread, and table. Occasionally there were representations of the burning bush or the church building.

Communion Tokens vary greatly in size, measuring from a tiny ten to a large fifty millimetres, and in thickness, ranging from less than a millimetre to over four millimetres. The tokens of the Scottish type have a whole myriad of shapes. Most are rectangular with clipped corners, oval, round, or square, though there are some with triangular, hexagonal, octagonal, trefoil, and heart shapes. The early metal token was generally of the cheapest metal available, primarily lead. Later tokens are of lead with alloys, such as white metal and pewter, and also brass, copper, bronze, nickel, and, when it became useable, aluminium. A few examples are known in silver and wood, and even leather and ivory.

Who used the Communion Token?

European Communion tokens were used primarily by Calvinist churches in Western Europe, particularly France and the Netherlands, but also by Lutherans in Germany and Scandinavia.

The Scottish type, which is the primary subject of this paper, is almost exclusively a Presbyterian phenomenon, though a few examples of Scottish Episcopalian and Methodist tokens exist. One Scottish Baptist congregation is known to have used a metal token. Two Dutch Reformed congregations are known to have used the Scottish type. One such congregation, St. Stephen's Dutch Reformed Church in Cape Town, South Africa, had originally been founded as a Presbyterian congregation, and the "Reformed Dutch" congregation on the island of St. Thomas in the U. S. Virgin Islands used a token during the time when the congregation was served by Presbyterian ministers by the names of John Knox, an American, and William Allan, a Scot, between 1846 and 1878.

Some experts have speculated that perhaps there have been examples of a Roman Catholic Communion Token. Some tokens of Roman Catholic churches are known, but rather than being tokens for admission to the Sacrament, they are rather known as "pew tokens," and were taken by members who moved from one parish as introduction into a new parish church. Father Bernard O'Connor, a member of the Pope's Curia living at the Vatican, and also a collector of Nova Scotia Communion Tokens, writes:

I have never heard of Communion Tokens in the RC tradition. Given the style of distributing the Mass elements which we have followed from time immemorial, there would have never been the need to prepare a specific number of the elements for any given Mass celebration. Again, this would refer to the fact that Communion under one species (unleavened bread or

host) was the norm until recent times for us. As for pew tokens, these were used in many parishes I am told, especially during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This related to the fact that most families had a reserved pew in the local parish church. By showing the token to a new pastor or to an usher, this verified their family's membership in that parish. Also, families actually paid each year for the rental of their pew in church, and at which time it is likely that they were given the token as a kind of receipt and as proof of good standing to new pastors, church wardens (think Parish Council or equivalent, e.g. Session) and other concerned parties. The pew token therefore had diverse functions.”⁵

The Scottish type of the Communion Token is, in fact, international. During the years of European expansion, the Highland Clearances, and the resulting emigrations, the tradition of the token was taken by Scots as they left their native soil and settled in other countries. Thus the Scottish type is known to have been used throughout the British Isles, and also in Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, the Caribbean, and Argentina. In Canada the token arrived with immigrants on the east coast and then travelled with the people as settlements expanded westwards. The farthest west congregation known to have used the Communion Token is Kildonan Church in Winnipeg.

Missionaries from the various colonies also took the tradition of the token to their fields of work. In some places the use of the metal token was impractical, but Canadian missionaries did use Communion Tokens in British Guiana (now Guyana) and the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu).

Scottish military regiments, mindful of their faith, were responsible for the use of tokens in places like Gibraltar, Malta, Madeira, Greece, India, and South Africa. There is one purely regimental token, that of the 72nd regiment, Seaforth Highlanders; the others were used by churches that stemmed from Scottish regimental presence.

How was the Communion Token used?

In Scotland and in early Canadian churches, the sacrament was generally observed once a year, and often in July or August. Typical of the practice is this description of the seventeenth-century kirk in Brechin, Scotland:

Before the Communion season there was quite a lengthy period of preliminary preparation, for everybody in the congregation, both young and old, had to be tested in their scriptural knowledge. Sometimes the Ministers intimated that they would visit and examine the families resident in a given quarter on certain days of the coming week. More usually a time-table of the examination was announced from the pulpit, by which certain days were set aside weekly for the various elders' districts, and the people were expected to come and be examined in the church. For the town members of the congregation this form of examination lasted three

⁵ Bernard O'Connor, letter to the author, 20 May 2007.

or four weeks, but for the landward area of the parish it might easily be spread over two or three months. [. . .] When the Ministers and elders were satisfied with the fitness of the congregation to communicate, there came the distribution of the Communion tokens, small coin-shaped pieces of lead, known in Brechin at this time as “tickets.” [. . .] Communion was spread over two or three successive Sundays. During the Covenanting period there were usually two Sundays for the landward and one for the townspeople. [. . .] For the actual service, two long tables were set up on trestles in the length of the nave.⁶

The minister celebrated the Supper from a small table at the front, and the elements would be carried by the elders to the communicants who had surrendered their tokens as they came to the table.

In Canada, the practice was very similar. For example, in St. Andrew’s Guelph, “the practice of the Communion season, still common in some of the Presbyterian Churches in Scotland, was followed, consisting of preparatory services on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, at which services the Communion Tokens would be distributed permitting those in attendance to come to the Lord’s table.”⁷ Concerning the Communions held at Kenyon Presbyterian Church in Dunvegan, Glengarry County, we read about

the English services in the church and the Gaelic in the grove near the location of the present manse because the log church would not hold the crowd; the preparatory services; the giving out of the tokens; then the services of the Sabbath; the ministers standing in the tent; the people sitting on logs and benches among the trees; the sweet yet strong singing as the voices blended with nature’s music of the rustle of the leaves; the powerful evangelistic sermons; the stillness as the tables were fenced and the elements dispensed; and the deep feeling that Christ himself was present among the communicants.⁸

It might also be noted that the sermons were preached for two hours in Gaelic, and only one hour in English since it was believed that language did not lend itself to good preaching. However, the Rev. William Proudfoot of London, Ontario had no problem with English preaching. He wrote that after the Communion tokens were collected and the people gathered for Communion, “I fenced the tables, also out of doors. After the fencings we went into the meeting house. There were four table services. I gave

⁶ David Boath Thoms, *The Kirk of Brechin in the Seventeenth Century* ([Brechin]: The Society of Friends of Brechin Cathedral, 1972) 75, 77, 78.

⁷ W. Stanford Reid, *A Century and a Half of Witness 1828-1978: The Story of St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, Guelph, Ontario* (Mississauga: Moyers and Smart, 1980) 7.

⁸ Donald N. MacMillan, *Historical Sketch of Kenyon Presbyterian Church Dunvegan* (Cornwall: O’Neill, 1993) 5.

an address after the service was over. I did not give an evening sermon lest I weary the people. I had already spoken for six hours.”⁹

The Communion Token was essential to the worship of the Scottish Church from the Reformation until the early 1800s. The creation of the Free Church of Scotland in 1843 saw a revival of the use of the Communion Token as hundreds of new tokens were made for church use. Over the years, the Communion Token has served a variety of purposes. The four primary uses, which overlap through history, are education, discipline, evangelism, and membership.

Education

As noted above, Calvin promoted the use of the token among believers and stated that those without one would not be received at the Lord’s table—amounting to excommunication. But there was a concern in the church as people misunderstood being barred from participation in the Lord’s Supper as a permanent condition. In a letter of 1561, addressed to the faithful in France, Calvin clarifies this “excommunication,” writing, “When someone is forbidden Communion, he is not excluded forever nor is it to make him desperate, but to humble him and to instruct others.”¹⁰ Thus the primary use of the token in early Calvinist teaching was instruction.

The practice continued in Scotland where the use of the token was long associated with the encouragement to learn what was considered the basics of the faith. In 1657, for example, the Kirk Session at Brechin

ordered that “ilk family within this congregation, where there is any who can read, shall have a Shorter Catechism for instructing the children and servants on the Lord’s Day after sermon.” But above all it was necessary at the examination to be able to repeat the Lord’s Prayer, the Apostles’ Creed, and the Ten Commandments. This seems to have been regarded as an essential minimum of knowledge.¹¹

The standards applied to members seeking admission to Communion, couples seeking to be married, and parents of children to be baptised.

The result of this instruction is the deep faith and conviction of the Scots that appears in many circumstances. Even where there was no preacher, the desire to express their love for God was evident. Although Communion Tokens are not specifically mentioned, the effect of the education associated with the tokens may be seen in a story from Cape Town, South Africa. In 1806 the 1st battalion of the 93rd Sutherland Fencibles formed The Calvinist Society for “worship and mutual edification”:

The Sutherland men were so well grounded in moral duties and religious principles, that when stationed at the Cape of Good Hope [. . .] the men of

⁹ Leslie Robb Grey, *Proudfoot to Pepperbox to Posterity 1833-1983: The 150 Year History of New St. James Presbyterian Church* (London: New St. James Presbyterian Church, 1983) 8.

¹⁰ Gélin 7.

¹¹ Thoms 76.

the 93rd regiment formed themselves into a congregation, appointed elders of their own number, engaged and paid a stipend, collected from the soldiers, to a clergyman of the Church of Scotland, [. . .] and had divine services performed comfortably to the ritual of the established Church.”¹²

Out of this expression of faith came the congregation of St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, Cape Town, and their Communion Token.

Discipline

Discipline is perhaps the best known use of the Communion Token. Those who are aware of the token and its uses tend to believe that they were the tools of heavy-handed Sessions dealing with the excesses and errors of their congregants. While this was certainly the case in most congregations at one time or another, it is just one of the purposes of the Communion Token. However,

it was the elders’ duty, as Communion drew near, to seek to mend quarrels and remove the causes of dispute and strife among members in their districts, and if their efforts at reconciliation proved unavailing, to bring such cases before the Session. Indeed to withhold Communion from various types of offenders was not unknown, and sometimes it was quite an effective threat to those who refused to comply with the requirements of Church discipline.¹³

John Moir, in his article on John Waldie’s essay on the influence of the Kirk Session in Victorian Canada, mentions “the three most important purposes of church discipline—to vindicate God’s glory, to keep the church pure, and to reclaim the sinner.”¹⁴ He further notes: “Discipline, whatever its form, should however be followed by reconciliation and since, in the Reformed tradition, only God can forgive, Church censures are not punishments, but a means of grace to be used to recover the erring souls from sin and error.”¹⁵

Sessions were called upon to make judgements, primarily in connection with the service of Communion, in many kinds of complaints and disputes, including, “church attendance, neglect of ordinances, Sabbath breaking, intemperance, dishonesty, profanity, forgery and an imaginative variety of sexual sins, [. . .] ‘gambling or gaming for money, card playing, attending theatres, public balls, horse racing, circus, bowling alleys,’ [. . .] gossiping, dishonesty, nonpayment of debts [. . .].”¹⁶ For any one of these reasons the

¹² James Browne, *History of the Highlands and of the Highland Clans*, vol. 4 (Glasgow: Fullerton, 1888) 366-67.

¹³ Thoms 77.

¹⁴ John S. Moir, *Early Presbyterianism in Canada*, ed. Paul Laverdure (Gravelbourg, SK: Gravelbooks, 2003) 73.

¹⁵ Moir 74.

¹⁶ Moir 77.

Session could choose to withhold the token, and therefore keep the “sinner” from Communion, until the penitence of the offender was offered and believed.

In the context of modern ways of looking at discipline, it seems ironic that some Sessions would often take stringent actions of examination and then hand out a token that had the inscription “Let a man examine himself.” Perhaps this explains the “great and unimpeachable difficulties” quoted earlier and expressed in response to Calvin’s suggestion of the token by the Council at Geneva, and their decision only to have the tables fenced by warnings from the pulpit.

The practice was not universally strict, however. Forgiveness and encouragement to reform was also part of the discipline of Session. Moir recounts this example: “One member who had been under the influence of liquor at the Hamilton Exhibition in 1868 expressed his penitence to a committee of two elders, but when he did not come forward to get a Communion token, the Session directed the Moderator to ‘encourage him and offer him one.’”¹⁷

Evangelism

With roots in the growing Presbyterian and Episcopalian struggles of post-Reformation Scotland, sacramental occasions burgeoned in the 1620s into great evangelistic events. In a climate of marked religious and political unrest, communions among the most fervent Presbyterians were transformed from parochial events into massive evangelistic gatherings.¹⁸

Early Scottish evangelism found its roots in, and was built around, the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.

Such things as preparatory services, sitting to receive the elements, self-examination, careful fencing of the tables, and communion tokens were all evident in one form or another from the early years of the Reformation in Scotland. What separated the festal communions from earlier sacraments were such characteristics as outdoor preaching, great concourses of people from an extensive region, long vigils of prayer, powerful experiences of conversion and confirmation, a number of popular ministers co-operating for extended services over three days or more, a seasonal focus on summer, and unusually large numbers of communicants at successive tables.¹⁹

The same practices of examination and handing out Communion Tokens were prevalent in these evangelistic events. The people who received tokens sat at tables, and those who did not gathered on the hillsides around about to hear the messages. They were encouraged and prodded through the preaching to come to know the Saviour so that when

¹⁷ Moir 79.

¹⁸ Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Holy Fairs: Scotland and the Making of American Revivalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001) 22.

¹⁹ Schmidt 24.

the next Communion season came, they too might receive the token, sit at table, and come closer to the Lord.

The practice of the Communion season continued in Scotland, finding a new upsurge in the time of the Covenanters. The call to faith was as strong as ever in a time of persecution. An account of a Covenanter Communion service recalls the communions of a century before: "The Communion tables were spread on the green by the water, and around them the people had arranged themselves in decent order. But the far greater multitude sat on the brae face, which was crowded from top to bottom."²⁰

The practice of the Communion season, or the Holy Fair, continued for many years. As anything else, the yearly communion gathering had its good points and its problems. The event in the late 1700s is described and ridiculed by Robert Burns in his poem, "The Holy Fair." However, the place of the Communion token as a means of evangelism was clear. Those who responded to the preaching and yearned to sit at the table and receive the means of grace learned the basics of faith in order to receive the token.

One lovely story tells how the true meaning was understood. The story is of a young lad in Scotland, not blessed with full mental faculties, who was on his way to Communion. He met another on the same journey and was asked if he had the token. He responded that he didn't have the lead thing; but the token was in his heart.²¹

Membership

The most familiar use of the Communion token in the past century and a half, is simply as a means of identifying those who are members in good standing of a congregation. As times changed, the days of the examination were eventually left behind. Tokens were given to congregational members before the Communion service was celebrated. In some places, the tokens were handed out at the preparatory service, and in others the tokens were delivered to the congregants by the elders. By the late 1800s metal tokens were being replaced by Communion cards for two major reasons: for one, paper was less expensive than metal, and for another, it was an advantage to be able to write the name of the member on the card so that the person's attendance could be noted.

The transition was abrupt in many congregations as the token was dropped without ceremony and the card was adopted. A few, however, made the transition more interesting. St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Kingston, for example, placed their tokens in small envelopes on which were written the names of the members. Others used the cards and tokens in conjunction. St. John's Presbyterian Church in Cornwall is the only congregation of The Presbyterian Church in Canada still using metal Communion tokens. The elders deliver cards to their districts, and when the people enter the church on Communion Sunday, they exchange the cards at the door for metal tokens. At the table, the tokens are turned in and the sacrament received.

The Communion card has given way in many congregations to a simple invitation that the elder delivers to all people, whether members or adherents. Some congregations,

²⁰ Alexander Smellie, *Men of the Covenant: The Story of the Scottish Church in the Years of the Persecution* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1975) 216.

²¹ A. A. Milne, *Communion Tokens of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland* (Glasgow: Fraser, Asher & Co, 1920) 7.

such as Knox Presbyterian Church in Woodstock, give out a fridge magnet with the dates of yearly communion services. Though there have been many changes in use, the idea of the Communion token continues in other forms.

Conclusion

Whether the student of the history surrounding the Communion token considers the idea to be well-advised or not, it is abundantly clear that those who made use of the token had one goal in mind, the drawing of the heart of the worshipper into the presence of Jesus Christ at the celebration of the Lord's Supper. For Presbyterians over almost five centuries, the Communion Token and its kin have been aids to the means of grace.

Graham and MacGregor: What Formed These Heralds of the Early Church?

John M. Gammell

Most of you are aware of Hugh Graham and James MacGregor, and at one point I thought that an appropriate title for this paper might have been “Were They for Real?” This is not a religious or philosophical rhetorical question. To explain my perhaps presumptuous attempt to answer it, it might be helpful if I told you how I got here. It is just a little about my family and Presbyterian heritage.

Upon retirement, as many of us do, I began to research my family roots. My paternal grandmother was of early Pictou County settlers, including Kenneth Fraser of the *Hector*. Kenneth, having gone on to Colchester County, came back to Pictou when he learned that the newly arrived Reverend James MacGregor was preaching in Gaelic. MacGregor’s memoirist, his grandson Rev. George Patterson, provides MacGregor’s observation that “among the Highlanders some are decidedly pious, of whom Colin Douglass and Kenneth Fraser are especially worthy of notice [. . .].”¹ MacGregor said of Kenneth:

It was not till the next time I visited the Middle River that I became acquainted with Kenneth Fraser, an amiable Christian, whom I never met without a smile on his countenance. At home he had been under the ministry of the Rev. Thomas MacKay, in Lairg, Sutherlandshire. He remembered so many savoury notes of Mr. MacKay’s sermons, that I could not but have a high opinion of the character of both.²

Kenneth, an elder at Lairg, Scotland, along with Donald MacKay, Peter Grant, Robert Marshall, John MacLean, Hugh Fraser, and John Patterson became the first chosen elders of the Pictou church in September 1786. According to MacGregor, “I name them because they were my companions, my support and comfort, when Pictou was destitute and poor, and I was without the assistance of a co-presbyter.”³

In 1792 MacGregor performed the marriage of Alexander Fraser, son of Kenneth, and Ann Blaikie, my great-great-great-grandparents. Alexander spoke only Gaelic and Ann a “Dumfries Settler,” spoke only Scot’s English. In his memoir, MacGregor mentioned a couple in a similar situation:

¹ George Patterson, *Memoir of the Rev. James MacGregor, D.D.* (Philadelphia: Joseph M. Wilson, 1859) 83.

² Patterson 106.

³ Patterson 119.

At examinations and marriages I made it a rule to speak to those who knew both languages in that which they preferred. In one instance only of marriage had I to speak in both languages, telling the man his duties and engagements in English and the woman hers in Gaelic. How they managed to court or to converse afterwards I know not, but they declared to me, and the neighbours confirmed it, that they could hardly speak a single word of one another's language.⁴

Was MacGregor making sure that each knew what was their due from the other?

Deacon Thomas Fraser of Kirkhill and Margaret Fraser of Beauly, Scotland, also great-great-great-grandparents came to Pictou in 1784. Thomas, an elder at Kirkhill, had been one of the settlers actively involved in the petition for a missionary, which resulted in MacGregor coming to Pictou. Thomas was the surviving elder of MacGregor's first efforts to form a session, often accompanying him on his preaching journeys, and in the words of Patterson: "[. . .] Thomas Fraser was one of his closest companions and firmest supports almost till his death."⁵ In MacGregor's words: "I had been afraid of the want of proper precentors, especially for the Gaelic, as I knew in Scotland that readers were scarce in the North Highlands; but I was happily disappointed, for William Smith did very well in English, and Thomas Fraser in Gaelic."⁶

Patterson relates of the difficulty and danger MacGregor experienced travelling over ice in winter, when sudden snowstorms would blind him and his companions and they would lose their course: "We have heard of his being in danger [. . .], especially on one occasion while on Merigomish Harbour in company with Thomas Fraser, the Elder. It came on a snow-storm, in which they lost their way, and when they reached the shore they were nearly exhausted."⁷

After the deaths of their parents, my paternal grandmother Marna Avondale MacKenzie Gammell and her sister came to live in Pictou with their aunt and uncle Martha and Robert Gordon Maclellan. He became the Principal of Pictou Academy.

My paternal grandfather, Isaac Gammell, born in Upper Stewiacke, Colchester County was a student at the Pictou Academy and after graduation from Dalhousie became a master at the Academy. He married my grandmother and they moved to Montreal where he eventually became the Rector of the Montreal High School. He was an elder at Knox Crescent and a longtime friend of Dr. David Scott, its minister and joint minister of the successor church, Knox Crescent and Kensington. Dr. Gammell was a member of the Corporation of McGill University and of the Senate of the Presbyterian College of Montreal.

Isaac's eldest brother was named Hugh Graham Gammell. My father is Hugh Graham Gammell. My brother is Hugh Graham Gammell. My daughter is Elizabeth Graham Gammell and my great-nephew is Graham Gammell. I had always assumed that the name had been given to honour the Rev. Hugh Graham, the first settled minister of

⁴ Patterson 136.

⁵ Patterson 104.

⁶ Patterson 99.

⁷ Patterson 128.

Upper Stewiacke and Upper Musquodoboit. We discovered that Isaac's mother, Rachel Tupper Gammell was the daughter of Isobel Graham Tupper who was the eldest surviving daughter of Hugh Graham. However further research and investigation has led us to the belief that John Whidden Graham, the second son of Hugh Graham was the putative father of Isaac's father, Isaac Gammell, Sr.; the mother being a Jane Gammell. Perhaps it is not surprising that Rachel Tupper Gammell, a granddaughter of Hugh Graham and Isaac Gammell, Sr., a grandson of Hugh Graham named their firstborn after their grandfather.

Jane Gammell was the daughter of Robert Gammell, an Antiburgher, who with other early settlers of that party had invited James MacGregor, soon after he was settled at Pictou, to give them what service he could. He did, preaching on two occasions, once in 1794 and again in 1795. Rev. Duncan Ross, an Antiburgher, joined MacGregor in 1795 and settled at West River. He was prevailed upon to provide a supply of preaching to the Antiburgher section of the Stewiacke congregation. During Mr. Ross's five-year involvement, Robert Gammell was one of three elders ordained. Though none of the Antiburgher section of the congregation signed the 1799 call to Rev. Hugh Graham, the congregation had come together enough that in 1802 the members of the Burgher section signed a Quit Claim Deed to him of each of their share in one hundred and eighty-one and one-quarter acres of a five-hundred acre Glebe Lot. In 1804 the members of the Antiburgher section signed a Quit Claim Deed to Mr. Graham of each of their share in sixty-eight acres and one hundred and twenty square rods of a one-hundred acre Glebe Lot. These deeds were registered on the 23 June and 4 July respectively, in 1807. By this time Robert Gammell and another Antiburgher elder had become members of Graham's session, apparently having the effect of uniting the warring factions in Upper Stewiacke and presaging the 1817 uniting of Burghers and Antiburghers in Nova Scotia. John Gammell, a nephew of Robert, was the Precentor of the church for over fifty years. Israel Longworth in his *History of Colchester (circa) 1886* relates the following incident:

One of their number quaintly explained these differences, as amounting to no more than, that one party peeled his potatoes before eating, and the other party ate theirs with the coats on. After Mr. Graham's arrival, a church meeting was held for the purpose of doing away with all disputes in matters of religion. Some time after the meeting, Robert Gammel had occasion to go to Musquodoboit, whither Mathew Johnson, the first settler had removed on account of his habitation at Stewiacke having been repeatedly floated about and broken up with freshets. While there, Johnson, who had heard of the meeting, and the observation made about the disputants by one of their number, asked Gammel the result. The latter replied, "Why, they came to the conclusion that we should all peel our potatoes before eating them."⁸

The family roots search had become a collective project involving my cousin Ian Darragh, the former editor of *Canadian Geographic* and his wife Maria. Maria is the prime writer and researcher. She has authored over seven volumes of the family history,

⁸ Sandra Creighton, ed., *Israel Longworth's History of Colchester County, Nova Scotia (circa 1886)* (Truro, NS: Bob and Ada Mingo, 1989) 76.

"The Story of a Canadian Family." Ian was the successor editor of the *Geographic* to our cousin David Maclellan. David was the great-nephew of Dr. Robert Gordon Maclellan of Pictou Academy. Because our forbears were early grantees in Annapolis, King, Colchester, Pictou, Shelburne, and Guysborough counties we became aware of the part that the church played in their lives. There was family lore that Hugh Graham was involved in the leadership of the church, but we had no idea that it was anything other than his being the first settled minister in Upper Stewiacke. My own family had drifted away from the church. As a youngster I had failed Sunday school. I had broken a leg and missed most of the year at a Sunday school held in the basement church on Clanranald Road in the Côte Ste. Luc district of Montreal in the early 1930s and was held back. I refused to attend. Later in elementary school, not being able to indicate to which religion I belonged, I pestered my parents. They decided that they had better do something about the religious upbringing of their children and became involved with the establishment of a Presbyterian congregation in west-end Ottawa, St. Stephen's, becoming charter members. The Rev. Ian Burnett of Ottawa's St. Andrews was our Interim Moderator and was our favourite with his wonderful burr, but we could not steal him away from Mackenzie King's church. I always felt that I was responsible for Rev. George H. Sparks receiving the Call to become our first minister. At the church meeting to make that decision my father related my unsolicited endorsement as to how every time Mr. Sparks came to preach, he had a story for the children. My father was one of the first three trustees, the third chairman of the Board of Managers and an early elder. My mother was the fifth president of the Ladies Guild. May 6, 1947 saw the laying of the cornerstone by Prime Minister Mackenzie King, an event which he noted in his diary: "It was an impressive ceremony out of doors, like an old covenanters meeting."⁹

I subsequently attended Carleton University, where the Rev. M. M. MacOdrum was the President. In 1945 Dr. MacOdrum preached at the first anniversary of St. Stephen's. At Carleton I was a classmate of Eldon Hay. Pursuing our search, I began to gather written material about early Nova Scotia, which in turn led to the church and the world of secessionists, covenanters, burghers, antiburghers, auld lights, and new lights. I had read in a Carleton alumni magazine that Eldon had written *The Chignecto Covenanters*. I finally acquired a copy, a signed copy at that, and read it wondering if Hugh Graham might be mentioned. He was. I wrote to Eldon describing how I was involved in a family history project, which involved a comparison of the lives of Hugh Graham and James MacGregor. Eldon wrote to Michael Millar, who, it turns out, knows me from my judicial life. And that is how I got here.

My marriage to Ruth MacIntyre, an Islay descendent, was performed by Rev. W. L. Young at First Presbyterian Church, Collingwood. Previously, he had served at my forbears' church in Pictou. We came to Midland, where the Rev. Len Self was our minister. As a young minister he had the Musquodoboit charge, which included Sharon Presbyterian Church, Dean, Nova Scotia. This was the church, just over the height of land, to which my great-uncle Hugh Graham Gammell, an elder at Stewiacke's Riverside Church, had gone angrily after church union and where he also served as an elder. The vote, by the way, was 75-yes, 32-no. My uncle Robert Gordon MacLellan Gammell, who

⁹ Quoted in *Ottawa West Witness: Nearing a Half Century at St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church Ottawa* (Ottawa: History Sub-Committee of the Policy and Planning Committee, St. Stephens's Kirk Session, 1989) 118.

later became a major with the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, the regiment of two of his older brothers, and a Judge of the Quebec Provincial Court, was a bit of a young cut up. He went to visit his uncle Hugh Graham Gammell. Uncle Graham, when he answered the door, did not recognize his nephew, not having seen him for some time. My uncle said he had come to collect for the United Church. The door was slammed in his face and he was not allowed in until he was finally able to persuade his uncle that he really was a nephew.

My younger brother, an actor, had appeared in a CBC television production as an early Nova Scotia circuit minister. It was based on diaries and letters. I always wondered whose diaries and letters. Was that minister a composite? According to Hay, the Rev. Alexander Clarke was sent to the Maritimes by the Reformed Presbyterian Synod of Ireland in June 1827.¹⁰ Disappointed in his reception in Saint John, New Brunswick, he was ready to entertain a call from a congregation outside the city. In November 1827 he traveled to Amherst Point to meet Hugh Logan. Logan when he found out why Clarke had come, stated: "Sir, you need not stop here; there is no room for *you* here. They want none of your sort here, and I may say to you as was said to Mr. [Hugh] Graham, when he came—unless you can live on potatoes and marsh hay, you could not subsist three months."¹¹

A 1791 letter from Hugh Graham to Rev. Andrew Brown of Halifax indicates that Graham had made a Cumberland tour. E. M. Deyarmond, in his 1974 edition of *Leaves From the Whip-Handle Tree*, quotes from a tribute to the Rev. Hugh Graham by Rev. A. B. Dickie in the *Hantsport Journal*, 1923:

He became Clerk of the Truro Presbytery on the death of Rev. David Smith of Londonderry. Attendance at the meetings of Presbytery at this time involved considerable difficulty in the way of travel and incurred some physical toil. Sometimes when living in Stewiacke, Mr. Graham would be seen forcing his way on horseback to Truro, through snowdrifts with his tartan plaid flaunting in the breeze as he wended his way in zero weather. These meetings were enjoyed by the widely separated brethren, affording an opportunity for wise counsel and social enjoyment.¹²

Patterson describes additional traveling conditions met by MacGregor:

All these circumstances rendered walking disagreeable. But the chief of the travelling was along shore or along the banks of rivers, which were often encumbered with trees and stones, and at other places presented bogs, in which the pedestrian was in danger of being mired, or creeks which required a long circuit round, or brooks which it was necessary to ascend for some distance to a convenient place of crossing.¹³

¹⁰ Eldon Hay, *The Chignecto Covenanters: A Regional History of Reformed Presbyterianism in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, 1827-1905* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1996) 7, 12.

¹¹ Hay 14-15.

¹² E. M. Deyarmond, *Leaves From the Whip-Handle Tree* ([Nova Scotia]: n.p., 1974) 94.

¹³ Patterson 186.

The search for more material on Hugh Graham led to the discovery of the Hugh Graham fonds at the Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management. It includes *inter alia*, letters that Graham wrote to colleagues, and to family in Scotland. They were donated by Frank H. Patterson of Truro, Nova Scotia in 1959. There are some fifty-one letters, in fragile condition, some torn. They have been microfilmed, resulting in two hundred and thirty printed pages. We commissioned their transcription with Maria Darragh completing the painstaking work.

How did this material from Scotland end up in Nova Scotia? On the balance of probabilities, the letters came into the possession of Mr. Justice Frank H. Patterson as the executor of the estate of his cousin George Geddie Patterson, a Dalhousie Law School Professor, M.L.A., historian, author, Stipendiary Magistrate, Town Recorder, and Town Councillor for the Town of New Glasgow. George Geddie Patterson, an avid history buff, inherited the collection of historical material of his father, Rev. George Patterson, which must have included the Graham letters.

In the preface to his *History of the Mission of the Secession Church to Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, From its Commencement in 1765*, published in 1847, Rev. James Robertson notes that he received through Rev. William Millar of Whitburn, West Lothian, Scotland, the Hugh Graham letters from Hugh's sister, Margaret Hamilton, and brother, Peter Graham. Robertson also indicates that he borrowed from the family of the late Dr. MacGregor of Pictou, MacGregor's own account of his "labours" as well as being supplied with George Patterson's notes to his grandfather's memoirs.¹⁴ The memoir could have been obtained when Robertson was in Nova Scotia in 1846, and the notes and various items of information from Patterson during 1847 when Patterson was studying in his second year at the University of Edinburgh. Again it is probable that Robertson returned the material to Patterson along with the Graham letters, which were brought to Nova Scotia when Patterson returned in 1849.

Given the difficulties surrounding the lack of correspondence and original material that Patterson encountered while gathering information on his grandfather; and accepting the premise that Patterson had the Graham letters in his possession, I began to wonder whether or not MacGregor's and Graham's contributions to the development of the early church had become co-mingled in the telling, with Graham being somewhat overshadowed by MacGregor. Perhaps similar to the lowly codfish who lays 10,000 eggs and of whom you never hear unless the species disappears, while the hen lays but one and clucks to tell you what she has done. It is clear in his preface that Patterson was contemplating another work, having already accumulated material: "[. . .] any additional facts that [the memoirist] may be able to collect, will be embodied in a companion volume to the present, to be entitled 'Memorials of our Fathers,' in which he designs to exhibit the life and labours of those brethren in the ministry, who were associated with Dr. MacGregor in his labours."¹⁵ So I set out to examine the records of their lives that we had. What went into the making of these men? Where did they get their energy? What kind of education did they have to enable them to preach, write, talk in the way they did, and dedicate their lives to the betterment of their fellow human beings? What were the

¹⁴ James Robertson, *History of the Mission of the Secession Church to Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, From its Commencement in 1765* (Edinburgh: John Johnstone, 1847) 7.

¹⁵ Patterson viii.

dynamics between the two? There appears to have been little reference by each to the other.

Let me say at the outset that my examination has led me to the clear conclusion that there was no appropriation of the material in the Graham letters to flesh out the MacGregor legend. The men were similar in some ways, but this should not be surprising given their similar backgrounds and the similar vicissitudes they faced.

After the Secession, James MacGregor's father, who had come to the Stirling area, was attracted to the preaching of the original four of the Associate Presbytery, but in particular to the Rev. Ebenezer Erskine. He was made a communicant by Erskine and returned to his Comrie highland home in Perthshire, where he became active in the emergence of a Secession congregation with a church being built in 1752. He was a pious and dedicated supporter of the church. James MacGregor was born in December 1759, the only surviving son. Hugh Graham was born October 1758. James' father, in "parental piety," and according to family tradition solemnly dedicated him to the work of the Lord at the baptism. It was common in the Scottish peasantry to train one or more of their children for the ministry. Hugh Graham's younger brother trained for the ministry but did not succeed to ordination. Hugh Graham Sr. was a successful tenant farmer in the West Calder area, at Slateheugh, West Lothian.

Our initial research disclosed that Hugh Graham Sr. served as an elder with some noted Secession ministers; firstly Rev. Archibald Hall at Torpichen, secondly Rev. William Hall at Bathgate, thirdly Rev. John Brown at Whitburn, and of course was a Burgher. I had thought that Hugh Graham Sr. had moved from place to place as he became an elder at different churches but discovered on my visit to West Lothian in September 2005 that all of these places are relatively close. Given the reports of throngs of followers walking distances in the early hours of the day to hear their ministerial giants, he did not change his residence, but likely traveled to the location of each successive secession preaching station and when it became a congregation, became an elder.

James MacGregor grew up amid the beauty of the Vale of Strathearne, which remained in his recollections and fed his appreciation for the wilds of America. Hugh Graham grew up in the valley of the Almond River and its tributaries, north of the Pentland Hills. In a letter, dated 30 September 1823, to the Rev. John Brown of Whitburn, his family's minister and the son of the Rev. John Brown of the Burgher Divinity School at Haddington, Graham notes: "I have thought upon it that when I was trudging thro the Moors on foot as a Hearer of yours I was then training up to be a Preacher of the same word somewhat in the same circumstances." If you will indulge me, I am going to read the whole of that letter because of its general interest.

Stewiack Sept^r 30th 1823

My worthy Friend & Father

I have just had notice of the safe arrival of the Printing Press. It is now at D^r M^cCulloch's. A Commission of Synod is soon to meet in order to give a final Decision in the Musquidobit Business. Most probably some steps will then be taken in order to have it set up and put in Operation. But

as I have notice of a Vessel, loading at Pictou for Port Glasgow, I would not delay writing, less I should miss the opp^y of Conveyance, perhaps for the Season. I embrace therefore the 1st opp^y of returning Thanks not in my own name only but on behalf of our whole Church to you and especially to M^r & M^{rs} Weir for their Invaluable Donation. And I hope & pray that it may be a Benefit not only to this but to Generations yet to come. It is the more acceptable to us being what we call a Cash Article [letter torn] an Article not to be had without Cash. It is [letter torn] for us that we can obtain many things [letter torn] even yet still there are some which we [letter torn]

What I wrote to you in July last will [letter torn] some Idea of our situation in this [letter torn]. But I am still in hopes that as our internal Resources & foreign Trade increase, with the Aid of a Bank, our present Inconveniencies arising from the want of a circulatory Medium may be obviated in some good degree. I have Notice also of a Box of Books sent by you. I expect that it is now in Truro. By this, myself & friends are laid under still deeper obligations to your Bounty. I expect to be in Truro next week, attending a Meeting of Pby and so to handle your Gift & find a Letter. D^r M^cCulloch has favoured me w^h y^l Perusal of one from you to him & two from you to D^r Hall respecting the P. Press.

Next Sabbath I have to assist my Brother M^r Blackwood, in dispensing the Sacr^t of the Lord's Supper. On Friday I go from this to his House 23 Miles. On Saturday forenoon to Nine Mile River the Place of Meeting 18 Miles - a bad road. On Monday after preaching to return to his house And on Tuesday I must be in Truro at an early hour 23 Miles. But I never feel better than when my horse's Back. These are ordinary Journeys with us. Many Miles [letter torn]ve I both rode & walk'd upon the strength of that [letter torn]omise "as thy days are so shall thy strength be [letter torn] you a Specimen. In 1793 Oct^r in company with [letter torn]od old friend M^r Munro, now gone to rest, we [letter torn] on a Friday about Noon a wet day and started [letter torn] a Port where we expected take a Passage for Corn [letter torn] were disappointed. Under a heavy rain we took into the woods on foot and after walking 5 Miles we halted for the Night in a mere hut wet as we were. Next Morning, we were on the way again, soon after the breaking of the day. We had with us 2 young men who carried our Saddle Bags for us. We travelled all day, not halting more than 5 Minutes at a time in a path obstructed by stumps roots & dubb's and came to a friendly house some time after it was dark. There M^r Munro stopped on purpose to preach next day in the Settlement viz Newport. Having travelled that day on foot about 40 Miles I got a horse from my friend and proceeded 4 or 5 Miles [letter torn] to an^r friend's house. The [letter torn] were now in hed but I soon [letter torn] met with a very friendly Reception [letter torn]. Next Morning I got a horse & was on my way before Sunrise and after changing horses once & again in the course of 25 Miles I was at my own Church by 12 oClock and preached a Sermon. It was the Sabbath before the Sacr^t Sabb w^h made it the more

necessary for me to be at home. And after all I felt none the worse for it. Many a time Summer & Winter since I came to this place have I walked 8 or 10 Miles on a Sab Morning & gone thro all the Exercises of the day. I have thought upon it that when I was trudging thro the Moors on foot as a Hearer of yours I was then training up to be a Preacher of the same word somewhat in similar circumstances. The roads were then so bad that I preferred walking to riding. But now when my walking days are over & gone, the roads are good. And I am never without a horse or choice of horses to ride and still I enjoy it. This story may seem singular to you, but I would not have you to publish it.

If I am spared, I shall write to you further & from [time] to time, respecting the P. Press. Let me ask you for an Explanation of the Name or Title of the Durham Press w¹ you merely suggest. We shall be asked the reason for the name! As yet we shall be at a loss for an answer. Is there any allusion to the Venerable Ja^s Durham? From y^r sincere friend & affⁿ Brother Hugh Graham.¹⁶

This same printing press is referred to in Patterson's *Memoir*. In the early 1820s James MacGregor wrote to Rev. Robert Douglass, new minister at Onslow to, in effect, exhort him and his congregation to assist in the project at hand in the Synod: obtaining a printing press. In a footnote, Patterson indicates that a small press was presented by a lady in Britain and the scheme to raise money for the press, headed by MacGregor, was abandoned by the Synod. The small printing press was eventually sent out to the New Hebrides with Rev. Mr. Geddie and used there.¹⁷

James MacGregor was "a lively and active, yet gentle boy, of very inquisitive disposition, and occasionally giving evidence of a quick temper." In later life he tended to be placid and not easily provoked but could at times burst into "holy fire."¹⁸ In "Reminiscences of a Long Life" John MacKay, Esq., July 1873, describes MacGregor along with Mr. Ross as "usually the peacemakers." He also describes the

ebullition of passion indulged in by some members of Synod, especially by Clericals. There was the late Rev. Mr. Waddell of Truro—a corpulent pompous, and extremely important gentleman; and there was the Rev. Mr. Crow of Londonderry—a thin, lean, sharp-nosed person, and as snappish as a mink. These two had a regular field-day of it. During one of their encounters, Mr. Crow took up a pocket Bible that lay on the table, and threw it with might and will in Mr. Waddell's face. The quarrel was about some Presbyterial Appeal which was brought up to Synod by either of the

¹⁶ Hugh Graham, letter to Rev. John Brown, 30 Sept. 1823, Hugh Graham fonds, MG 1 332B, Nova Scotia Archives & Records Management (NSARM), Halifax. All Graham letters included in this paper are from this fonds unless otherwise referenced.

¹⁷ Patterson 472-74.

¹⁸ Patterson 23.

combatants. [. . .] Mr. [Thomas] McCulloch was cold, stiff, sarcastic, and seemed to enjoy the scene.¹⁹

Handley Chipman the well-connected Cornwallis merchant prince, diarist, and Congregational Episcopalian turned Presbyterian, on the day he joined Rev. Hugh Graham's congregation in 1795, described his reaction to Graham's preaching: "some glows tho' not Equal to what I have at Sometimes Enjoyed."²⁰ Rev. John Sprott of Musquodoboit in his diary entry of 19 June 1825 wrote: "Dispensed the sacrament. The weather was excellent; the congregation was the largest seen in Musquodoboit: 158 sat down at the table, and received the pledges of the Saviour's love. Mr. Graham assisted me. He is like the setting sun,—he has lost his brilliancy—he dazzles less but pleases more."²¹

James Drummond, father of James MacGregor, having returned to Portmore at the foot of Loch Earne, Comrie Parish in Perthshire, now trained as a weaver, had a small farm and with the extra income from a still was able to send his son to the Kinkell Grammar School and to one in Dunblane. The clan MacGregor was proscribed in 1603, resulting in its members taking other surnames including Drummond. The ban was lifted in 1774 and young James adopted his patronymic name MacGregor. While pursuing classical studies at Edinburgh University, MacGregor also taught school at Glenlednock. He was described as being an active, sprightly lad, full of life and activity, very sociable in the family and so full of fun, as sometimes to elicit a reproof from the grave but pious old man with whom he lodged. He gave himself to the study of Gaelic, the language of his ancestors. It was here that he was employed in preparing a corrected version of the Gaelic Scriptures, translating the Book of Proverbs. MacGregor became an accomplished Gaelic scholar; he spoke it with ease and fluency and wrote it with precision and elegance. He also acted as a chain bearer for surveyors working in Perthshire, preparing maps of Scotland. He then studied theology for five years under Rev. William Moncrieff at Alloa. Moncrieff was the son of Rev. Alexander Moncrieff of Abernathy and his successor as Professor of Theology to the General Associate Synod. This included the study of Hebrew and ministerial apprenticeships. MacGregor also taught at Morebattle in the south of Scotland, and to improve his Gaelic, taught in the Highlands of Argyleshire.

The Divinity Hall met at Alloa for two months in autumn, and the five-year term of study consisted of five annual sessions of eight weeks each. All subjects were taught by a single professor, and the enrolment at that period was between twenty and thirty students. Once the period of study ended, the student submitted to the usual examination and trials for license before the Presbytery, and became a probationer with the rights to preach under the supervision of the Synod. According to Robert Richardson:

¹⁹ John MacKay Esq., "Reminiscences of a Long Life," ms., 1873, Grey Box Genealogy & Local History Collection, New Glasgow Library, New Glasgow, NS, para. 37, 30 Aug. 2009 <<http://www.parl.ns.ca/rooms/localhistoryroom/greyboxes/reminiscences.html>>.

²⁰ "Memoir," Handley Chipman fonds, 1931.005-CHI/4/2, Esther Clark Wright Archives, Acadia University, Wolfville, NS, 57, 30 Oct. 2009 <<http://openarchive.acadiau.ca/cdm4/document.php?CISOROOT=/HChipman&CISOPTR=15&REC=3>>.

²¹ George W. Sprott, ed., *Memorials of the Rev. John Sprott* (Edinburgh: George A. Morton, 1906) 17.

The course of business in Divinity Hall was, with occasional variations, One meeting a day at twelve o'clock. On Monday, a miscellaneous lecture by the Professor. On Tuesday, discourses by the students. On Wednesday, a lecture by the Professor, in Latin, on the system of Theology, using Markii Medulla (a treatise on Systematic Theology by the celebrated Mark of Leyden) as a textbook. On Thursday, examination of the students on the Theology taught. On Friday, discourses by the students. On Saturday, a lecture on the Confession of Faith, with conference on some practical subject stated by the Professor. In addition, the students had debating and other societies among themselves, in which theological questions were discussed.²²

During the vacation, the studies of candidates for the ministry were prosecuted under the care of Presbyteries, and sometimes young men were taken for a time to reside in the families of aged ministers for the purpose of receiving their aid in the work.

Upon the completion of his theological studies and the Performance of usual exercises, prescribed as trials, MacGregor was Licensed to Preach in 1784 as a Probationer, expecting to be called to preach in the Highlands. He preached at many places in Scotland until 13 May 1786, when he was ordained by the General Associate Synod on a Mission to Pictou. He sailed from Greenock on 3 June 1786, arriving in Halifax on July 11th.

Hugh Graham attended Mr. R. Brown's Grammar School in East Whitburn from 1758 until he was eighteen years of age. He then completed his degree in classical and philosophical studies after three years at the University of Edinburgh, which the Presbyterian churches of Scotland required of their students prior to their formal entrance to the study of Theology. He entered the Theological Hall, Haddington, East Lothian under Rev. John Brown who was the father of Rev. John Brown the Burgher Minister at Longridge, Parish of Whitburn, West Lothian. This church had become the Graham family's church and was known as the farmers' church.

Reverend John Brown, 1722-1787, was appointed Professor of Theology to the Burgher Synod of the Secession Church in May 1768. He was a prolific author of religious works. Prospective students who wished to study for the Burgher Ministry came to Haddington Divinity School for two months every summer for five annual sessions. Rev. Dr. Brown exercised a minute and household superintendence over the young men under his direction. In the morning it was his custom to go his rounds among his students' lodgings, to assure himself that they were employing "the golden hours of prime" usefully. They were directed to such course of reading and study as most proper to qualify them for the profitable discharge of their pastoral duties. He wished to transmit the pure Gospel Strain of Teaching for which the Seceding fathers stood. He used his own "System of Theology" along with his "Dictionary of the Bible" and his "Self Interpreting Bible." Each student, in order to gain admission into the Divinity Hall was required by the Synod to be "first examined, as to their proficiency in Latin and Greek, by the Presbytery within whose bounds they resided. They were examined, likewise, on

²² Robert Richardson, *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell: Embracing a View of the Origin, Progress and Principles of the Religious Reformation Which He Advocated*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1868) 26.

the various branches of philosophy they had studied at the University; and also on personal religion."²³ They then submitted to the usual examination and trials for license before the Presbytery to become a Probationer, whose office was to preach the Gospel under the supervision of the Synod in such congregations as were destitute of a fixed ministry. Many of the students taught school in between sessions in order to earn their tuition and board fees. Hugh Graham appears not to have, probably working on his father's farm.

A letter, written from Cornwallis in September 1791 to his youngest brother Peter, is illustrative of Hugh Graham's thoughts as to entering Theological Study as well as to other matters. Keep in mind that Hugh had lost his first wife, Elizabeth (Betty) Brown on 14 April 1786, within a year of their arrival in Cornwallis, having married just prior to their departure from Scotland.

Cornwallis Septr 9, 1791

My Dear Brother

Yours bearing date May 12 has been duly received. It produced in me at once the Glow of Gratitude and blush of Shame. I am grateful for your attention to a distant Brother a brother separated from his Brethren. I confess I ought to have been more attentive to a younger Brother asking advice in matters of importance. You have had however your own share in my frequent thoughts & daily prayers and by the good hand of God upon you I hope you have taken the same course I should have recommended if you have entered the divinity Hall before this reaches you as I suppose you have done. Then you have taken a very important step in life. I hope you have duly pondered the path of life your feet. You have then an eye towards the work & office of the holy ministry. See to it that your eye be single and your heart sincere. The summer before I entered the divinity hall was perhaps as serious an one as ever I spent in Scotland. And yet after all I was very much unprepared for the great undertaking I have known it better & been more sensible of it since. Many many times I have regretted as I now do the misimprovent of the golden season & opportunity of Improvement alas! alas! the charms of Sloth the Tricks of folly and blots of vice with which early life is so often stained and deformed. May the God of your Fathers be Guide of your Youth. Now is the time for you to lay in a stock of knowledge & of Grace even that Grace which has its fruit unto holiness & the end everlasting life. Now the foundation is to be laid and the character to be formed and future life will derive a certain Colouring from the present period. A period in life this how momentous and eventful Let the serious consideration of this & abiding impression of what is in dependence add continual energy to the powers of action as weights affect the movements of a Clock If you would be an accomplished & respectable & useful minister of Jesus Christ you must not seek your own things you must be self denied meek & lowly Give yourself wholly to these things. Viz Meditation Reading & prayer.

²³ Robertson 26.

Make sure of a Cordial possession of the religious principle See to it that it be sealed in the heart & so extend itself over the whole man. This is essentially necessary in order to your being a true professor of religion & no less so in order to your being a true minister of Religion upon this Sacred Stem let as much useful learning & accomplishments as possible be grafted. Carry your researches into every field of knowledge from whence you can collect any thing conducive to the Glory of God and of Christ as the Good of your own soul or the Souls of others But let these be your favourite walks which lead most directly to Jehovah Jesus. In the Expectation and thoughts of your being a faithful minister of Religion and good Soldier of Jesus Christ (and better not at all than not be [illegible]) you must not seek your own honour ease or pleasure. No, you must lay down all these at the foot of the Cross & you must resign yourself wholly to the management of Him who once hung upon the Cross as a propitiary sacrifice for the sins of many & who now sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high attached to him as your Saviour & Sovereign you must be on the road of duty hold to his interest in spite of a tempting Devil an ensnaring world and an evil heart. At all events and whatever be the cost you must abide faithful to him who is appointed both as your Saviour and Sovereign arduous & difficult as the work of the ministry is every where it is easy in old Scotland when compared with what it is in New Scotland. Here we are single & solitary far apart from each other & cannot as a religious body support each other as the Clergy may and do with you. As to ministerial respect it is scarcely allowed in this land of liberty. We are glad to get a fair hearing & must be content with that respect and influence which arises from the reception of Youth. But is unnecessary to come to particulars if I should you would still form but broken & imperfect ideas of our situation. But I am more reconciled to my lot here within this year past than ever I was formerly. If we want some means of Improvement you have we may have on the other hand some you want. My congregation has increased considerably. The promising appearance of things has encouraged me to move into my own house after having boarded upwards of 5 years and let out my own place. I took my own place into my own hand the 1st of May and began Housekeeping the 23 of Aug^r. An Elderly widow Lady officiates as housekeeper & seems to be very well qualified for the Charge. It would have been in favour of my worldly interest to have sooner moved into my own house. This last Sabbath I intimated the Sacrament of our Lord's Supper to be dispensed on the 2^d Sabbath of June. It is to be dispensed again the 1st of Oct^r. At Last occasion I had for assistants Mrs Smith & Munro at next I expect Messrs Cock & Munro.

It is only about a year Since M^r Munro came into this province. He had a settlement in Pennsylvania but had not his health there and so moved to this province. He is originally from Elgin of Murray. This comes by a D^r And^w Brown who returns to pay a visit to Scotland. He is a minister in Halifax. I have corresponded with him tho the distance

between Halifax & Cornwallis is 70 miles. I shall expect a long letter from you by his return early in the next spring. Be as particular as possible in regard to church & country affairs personal and family concerns. I should wish to hear from M^r Black Dundee. And now tho removed at a vast distance from all my Kinfolks I hope this will reach them. I bear you all on my Spirits praying for your temporal & spiritual welfare.

I am Dear Brother, Yours truly and affectionately, Hugh

Reverend James Robertson had the reading of that letter and said of Hugh Graham's counsel to his brother: "The correspondence from which the preceding quotations are made, uniformly breathes the finest Christian spirit, and evinces a cultivated mind, a solid judgement and a profound piety. How judicious and impressive the advice he gives to his brother on his commencing the study of theology!"²⁴ It was a hard self-denying life for which the Secession Church was training and preparing its disciples. Hugh Graham was licensed in 1784 by the Edinburgh Presbytery to preach as a Probationer and went to South Shields, a Burgher congregation, on the south side of the Tyne River, across from Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

My Whidden, Longfellow, Newcomb, and Tupper forbears were part of the religious turmoil of Cornwallis and Horton Townships, Kings County, Nova Scotia, alluded to by Dr. A. W. H. Eaton in his *The History of Kings County, Nova Scotia, Heart of the Acadian Land* published in 1910. "The complete withdrawal from the regular Congregationalist Church in Cornwallis of the people who composed the New Light Church left the old church in a depressed and enfeebled State."²⁵ And further:

A crisis had now come in the Cornwallis church's affairs. The Revolutionary War was at its height and there was little friendly intercourse between Nova Scotia and the revolting colonies. Moreover, the members of the church had not forgotten the Hartford Association's refusal to oblige Mr. Phelps to return to them the proceeds of the land he had sold before he left the town. In the meantime, a few families of Scotch or Scotch-Irish Presbyterians had settled among the New England Puritans on both sides of the Cornwallis river, [. . .], and in Lower Horton there was a well established Presbyterian Church. These combined facts led the Cornwallis Congregationalists to appeal to the Glasgow Associate Synod of the Secession Church of Scotland for a minister to supply their religious needs. The result of their appeal was that in 1785 the Rev. Hugh Graham was sent by the Presbytery of Edinburgh to serve the Cornwallis Church. [. . .] he sailed from Greenock on the 22nd of June, 1785. Two months later he arrived at Halifax, and from there at once went to Cornwallis. On

²⁴ Robertson 40.

²⁵ Eaton, Arthur Wentworth Hamilton, *The History of Kings County, Nova Scotia, Heart of the Acadian Land: Giving a Sketch of the French and Their Expulsion; And a History of the New England Planters Who Came in Their Stead, With Many Genealogies 1604-1910* (Salem, MA: Salem Press, 1910) 289.

Sunday, August 29th, he preached his first sermon in the Cornwallis church.²⁶

After the Presbytery had made its decision, Graham wrote to his parents in this undated letter:

Dear Parents

I feel no doubt at the thought of parting with you. But I may as well now as afterwards inform you that my mind is perfectly reconciled to go to Cornwallis. I feel that the People of South Shiel[d]s should think themselves disappointed: tho I think it will be no Disappointment in the Issue. I am grateful for the Attachment they have shown to me. And they shall ever have my most fervent Prayers The Affair will be determined at the Synod. I have now finished all my public Trials. I have procured a deal of Information about Nova Scotia. All is very encouraging. I talked last Wednesday with a Gentleman who has been twice in Nova Scotia & over most of the Provinces in America And he is a honest upright steady man. He gave me just simple narrative of fact without any Exxageration. He says that if he had his Choice of all the Provinces of America he would choose to settle in N Scotia: first because of the Healthiness of the Climate which somewhat like our own yea more healthy never a fever nor a Consumption nor an Ague, second cause the Soil is generally very rich & all European Grains so great on & because they are a civil friendly just able & religious sett of People. I think I have a plain & loud Call evidence to go there and I have [letter torn] Prospect of being extensively useful. And I have a [letter torn]tional Prospect living much more comfortable way than I can do here. The Stipend is better than 200£ per Annum. If you could think of [letter torn] a few Shirts or a pair of Sheets like you would send the Cloth[letter torn] Blackfield to have it cleaned have it soon done. I will see on Mon[letter torn] for the Synod.

I am &c Hugh Graham

And then from his letter of 2 September 1785 from Cornwallis to his Parents, after describing his and his wife's passage:

Halifax is a very considerable Town and has a deal of Trade. I did not expect to find it so elegant a Town nor so many rich shops or half so many inhabitants. We staid 9 Days in Halifax & found several very agreeable & some pious Friends The Cornwallis People having been informed by a letter from John Phillis Esqr. of our Arrival sent down Horses & a guide to attend us up to Cornwallis. Mr. Phillis also accompanied us to this place. Cornwallis is 70 miles above Halifax.

²⁶ Eaton 290.

We left Halifax about 9 o'clock on Thursday Morning & arrived here about Sunset on Friday Night. We had a pleasant journey & I did not think the Road tedious.

I preached last Sabbath in Cornwallis to a large Audience. I have found a Number of very intelligent & serious Christians among them. All forms of civility & Religion are better observed than I expected and there is more Enquiring about Points in religion than I expected. All that I can say as yet (I wish I could say more[]), I have not repented & I see no reason to repent my obedience to the Synod in going to this distant & destitute Corner of the Vineyard. Let not my dear Parents feel nor fret that the Lord should employ One out of ten in a Place where my Services are greatly needed.

I cannot as yet say a great deal as to the particul[letter torn] sign & particular Services which Providence may [letter torn] by my hire. Time I hope will declare them. Neither [letter torn] as yet say a great deal about the Place. The Country is very pleasant to the Eyes & we are told the Soil is rich & suits European Grains exceedingly well. The Harvest is nearly over & we are blessed with a very plentiful Crop. There is a great Show of fruit around every House. We enjoy our Health very well. The People seem to live comfortably here & they dress very genteely. When you write be very particular as to News whither on the Country or the Church. Direct your letters in the care of John Phillis Esqr. Remember me to my Uncles & their families on whom I think of times with Gratitude & Pleasure. Offer my respectful compliments & best wishes to Mr Brown & to all the Ministers you may see. My wife joins me in kind Regards to you all. I am yours & a Hugh Graham

In his *Memoir*, James MacGregor described his reaction to the decision of the General Associate Synod (Antiburgher) to appoint him to Pictou:

I was thunderstruck by this decision of Synod, I by no means expected it, though I was not without fears of it. It put me into such a confusion, that I did not know what to say or think. I had considered it a case clear, not to myself only, but to the majority of the Synod, that I was called to preach to the Highlanders of Scotland, and of course that I could not be sent abroad. I had never met with an event to deprive me wholly of a night's sleep till then. That night I slept none, but tossed upon my bed, till it was time to rise next morning. Through the day several friends helped much to reconcile me to the Synod's appointment. Upon reflection I observed that there was at present no opening of great consequence for my preaching the gospel to the Highlanders at home,—that souls were equally precious wherever they were, and that I might be as successful abroad as at home. I resolved to go, but still overwhelming difficulties were before me. The mission was vastly important, and I was alone and weakness itself. I had to go among strangers, probably prejudiced against the religious denomination to which I belonged. Though the Synod told me, and I felt it

comfort too, that I was not sent to make Seceders, but Christians; yet, as there was no minister before me, except two or three Burgher ministers, nor any likely to come after me with whom I could hold communion, I felt as an exile from the church. Besides Nova Scotia was accounted so barren, cold, and dreary, that there was no living in it with comfort. Isa xli. 14, was my comfort, "Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy one of Israel."²⁷

On Halifax MacGregor observed: "I landed at Halifax, July 11th, and stayed two or three days there getting my baggage ashore, and looking out for a vessel to carry it round to Pictou. The immorality of Halifax shocked me not a little, and I hastened out of it hoping better things of the country."²⁸

MacGregor and Graham were not immune to early discouragement experienced by most ministers of that time over accommodation, stipends, and discord in the congregation. One might say even now: *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*. According to MacGregor:

There were so few houses in Pictou with any accommodations, that I could get no convenient place for lodging. [. . .] After two years I got a house where I had a room to myself. During the whole of the harvest and the fall I saw no preparation for building any of the meeting-houses. This discouragement, with the rest, affected me so, that, if I could have left Pictou, I would have done it, even late in the fall.²⁹

In November 1788, he "received the first money for preaching in Pictou—a part of the year's first stipend. I lived a year and a quarter here without receiving a shilling [. . .]." The payment was twenty-seven of the forty pounds to which he was entitled, and he received only thirty pounds of produce of the forty of which he was owed.³⁰ However, matters improved: "I resolved not to confine my visitations to Presbyterians, but to include all, of every denomination, who would make me welcome; for I viewed them as sheep without a shepherd."³¹ These visitations were "of great advantage to many of the settlers" as well as to MacGregor. "I began to see that my labours were not altogether in vain. [. . .] These things cheered my heart; and even with respect to such as were not at all affected by my instructions, I began to be less discouraged, because time might bring a blessing to them also."³²

Graham, after two years at Cornwallis, had decided to return to Scotland because conflicts in the Congregation were insurmountable. He had not received the promised annual stipend, and had actually secured permission from the Synod to return. However,

²⁷ Patterson 47-48.

²⁸ Patterson 60.

²⁹ Patterson 118-19.

³⁰ Patterson 140-41.

³¹ Patterson 122.

³² Patterson 123.

he changed his mind. He was becoming acclimatized to America. The "Authors & unwearied Fomenters of Contests & Trouble"³³ who had plagued his congregation had left. The congregation was growing and he was obtaining land of his own. It would appear that he had become more accepted into Cornwallis society, which was predominantly made up of Planters from the American Colonies with varying religious backgrounds. He eventually married Elizabeth Whidden, the daughter of John Whidden, a wealthy merchant, on 15 December 1792. Her sister had married the Honourable Charles Ramage Prescott, a wealthy merchant of Prescott Lawson & Company, Halifax. Elizabeth's mother was a Longfellow and she was related to other Planter families including the Chipmans, Tuppers, Newcombs, and Allisons. Cornwallis is on the north side of the Cornwallis River where it enters Minas Basin in the land of Evangeline and Grand Pre of Acadian history.

I do not know if George Patterson reflects the views of his grandfather as to the Acadians in Chapter IV of the *Memoirs*, which relates to the history of Nova Scotia, the struggle between the French and English for control of North America, the expulsion of Acadians, the introduction of protestant settlers and a description of the state of religion in the Province at the time of the coming of our early heralds. After the cession of Nova Scotia in 1713 to Britain, the French still retained Cape Breton, Prince Edward Island, and claimed a large portion of New Brunswick. In Patterson's words:

The French inhabitants, who remained in the province, had taken an oath of neutrality; but under the continual instigation of their countrymen in Canada and Cape Breton, and especially of their priests, they were excited to acts of hostility, which led the government in the year 1755, to remove them from the province and disperse them over the other colonies.³⁴

Given that our family's Planter forebears had had the benefit of the Acadian lands we had an interest in Longfellow's "Evangeline." There was family lore that we were related to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and the ditty "He is a poet, but he doesn't know it, his feet are longfellows" was claimed as our own. It turns out, as we discovered, that quite often family lore is based on fact. Longfellow, 1807-1882, born in Portland, Maine, a Harvard Professor of French, Spanish, and "belle letters" from 1837-1854, published his epic poem "Evangeline" in 1847. His grandfather's cousin, Jonathon Longfellow had gone to Cornwallis after the Expulsion, accompanied by at least three of his children. A daughter, Elizabeth, married John Whidden and their daughter, Elizabeth, married Hugh Graham. There were related Longfellows in Maine and Cornwallis. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in a handwritten note, given to the Legislative Library in Nova Scotia in 1884 by his brother Samuel, gave his own account of the origin of "Evangeline":

Hawthorne dined one day with I and brought with him a friend from Salem. After dinner the friend said; "I have been trying to persuade Hawthorne to write a story based upon a legend of Acadie, and still current there; the legend of a girl, who in the dispersion of the Acadians,

³³ Hugh Graham, letter to his parents, 19 Nov. 1788.

³⁴ Patterson 65.

was separated from her lover and passed her life in waiting and seeking for him and only finding (found) him dying in a hospital when both were old." I wondered that this legend did not strike the fancy of Hawthorne, and said to him; "If you have really made up your mind not to use it for a story, will you give it to me for a poem?" To this Hawthorne assented and moreover promised not to treat the subject in prose till I had seen what I could do with it in verse.³⁵

The dinner took place 5 April 1840 and the friend was Reverend Horace Lorenzo Conolly. There are varying accounts as to how Conolly heard the story. One, that it was from a French-Canadian woman; another, that it was from a relative of Thomas Chandler Haliburton. Longfellow researched the basic history of the expulsion at the Harvard Library and the Massachusetts Historical Society, and used the factual background to fashion his work of fiction. I have some difficulty in accepting that Longfellow did not already have some knowledge of the Acadians given that there must have been contact with the Longfellow Nova Scotian relatives who had gone to Cornwallis to take the land made vacant by the Expulsion.

There had been numerous attempts to write a history of Nova Scotia prior to the publication of Thomas Chandler Haliburton's. Haliburton included an emotional account of the Acadian Expulsion in his 1829 history of Nova Scotia,³⁶ and also called Hugh Graham one of the founders of Presbyterianism in Nova Scotia. Reverend Andrew Brown, DD, made one attempt but though in an advanced state of preparation it was never published. He was the Minister of St. Matthew's Church in Halifax from 1787-1795 before returning to Scotland and eventually becoming a professor of rhetoric and belle-letters. His efforts cover a period from 1790-1815 and "in most instances," the papers he assembled "were prepared by eye-witnesses and actors of the events they describe."³⁷ One of these corresponding eyewitnesses was Hugh Graham, and another was the Honourable Brook Watson. Brown had written to Watson in London from Halifax in November 1790 asking for Watson's assistance in collecting materials for the compilation of a history of Nova Scotia. Watson wrote a long letter on the first of July 1791, then a short letter on 12 August 1791. Brown had also written to Graham asking for information as to the reliability of Watson. Graham responded by a long letter in March 1791, firstly describing Watson's career then providing a "Points of Interest" guide for Brown's proposed tour of Cumberland later that summer. This was followed by a comment on the religious opinions and professions of the inhabitants and then a report on the size of the fisheries in the Cornwallis area.³⁸

As described by Graham, Watson's life was the stuff of which a movie starring Errol Flynn, could have been made:

³⁵ Henry W. Longfellow, letter, Nova Scotia Legislative Library, 11 Sept. 2009
<<http://www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/library/digitalcollection/letter2.stm>>.

³⁶ Thomas Chandler Haliburton, *An Historical and Statistical Account of Nova Scotia: In Two Volumes* (Halifax: Joseph Howe, 1829).

³⁷ "The Acadian French," *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society* 2 (1881): 129.

³⁸ Hugh Graham, letter to Andrew Brown, March 1791, "The Acadian French," *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society* 2 (1881): 135-45.

Few, perhaps, have seen greater changes or more sudden transitions in life than Brook Watson; who among men could have predicted that he who, at one time was almost entomb'd in the bowels of a shark and buried in the depths of the sea, and escaped but with the loss of a hinder quarter should, in a future day, be an alderman of the city of London, that he who was admitted as an object of charity, or forlorn child of wretchedness, into the Havana hospital, and when cured was set adrift to seek his fortune in the wide world, guided only by a faint ray of hope to Boston and that also soon extinguished, should at length step from the cloud and take his seat in the British Parliament as the Representative of that little world, the metropolis of Great Britain, and should at pleasure command the attention and applause of that august senate. In this instance, I presume, we may apply the words of the prophet without exposing ourselves to the imputation or enthusiasm, or the dangers of misapplication, viz:—This who cometh from the Son, who is excellent in Council, and wonderful in working. “For as the Heavens are high above the Earth so are God's thoughts high above our thoughts, and His ways high above our ways[.]”³⁹

Graham then begins the description of what Brown may expect to see on his Cumberland visit, based on Graham's own “transient view of that part of the Province.”⁴⁰ He describes the geography of the route and the approach to the Napana River, a branch of the Herbert Bear River. Here, “was the scene of one of those barbarous outrages which created a distant likeness between ‘Scotia junior and Scotia senior.’” Rangers of a British regiment came upon four Frenchmen, “and as there was a bounty on Indian scalps [. . .] the officer's [sic] turned their backs, and the French were instantly shot and scalped.” Graham describes Rangers taking twenty-five French scalps to Col. Wilmot (later Governor Wilmot) one day, claiming the Indian Bounty. Despite protests, Wilmot authorized the payments, stating the “necessity of winking at such things.”⁴¹ Graham continues on describing people, habitations to be seen, and the crossing of the Bear River into Amherst Township, suggesting Brown visit

[. . .] one emphatically called Forrest, the rich man. It will not be amiss to give him a call. He is a curiosity. He is the unpolished rustic; has, however, a large share of natural sense blended with a very gross vein of drollery. He is one of a small congregation of Irish Pbens. who will gladly and gratefully attend on your salutary instructions on the sacred day when the call is “Let us go up to the House of the Lord.” There is among them a Mr. McGowan, an elder, a worthy and agreeable man. They have built a decent little meeting-house, have made several attempts to get a minister, and after repeated disappointments, it is said one will be sent them from Scotland this summer—one of Mr. McGregor's [sic] class. But if he does

³⁹ Graham to Andrew Brown, March 1791, 140.

⁴⁰ Graham to Andrew Brown, March 1791, 140.

⁴¹ Graham to Andrew Brown, March 1791, 141.

come I fear it will be too late to do much good, or to live with any manner of comfort in that place. There are not now above a dozen of professed Pbn. families in the whole settlement.⁴²

And then:

In your tour thro' this part of the country, the relative situation of the 3 Provinces will engage your particular attention. Take the following hints:—Between the heads of Cumberland Bay and Bay de Verte, the distance is near 8 miles, the course direct and the surface level. But it is only 2 miles and a half between a branch of Vert Bay and the River Missiquash, and the intervening space one continual swamp. This neck is about 5 or 6 miles to the north-east of Fort Cumberland, and is particularly to be noted that there is 4 hours of difference between the time of the tide in Cumberland Bay and Vert Bay. The tide has begun to flow and rise 4 hours in the former before it turns in the latter. Query—Might not a canal be opened thro' that neck of land? In Cumberland Bay, it is true, tide rises to an amazing height, as much as 60 feet, and in Vert Bay not more than 6 feet. But perhaps the difference in the time of tides may serve to balance this disproportion, and it is possible that the height of tide on this side might thus be reduced without occasioning any material inconvenience on ye other.

As to the religious opinions and professions of the inhabitants I shall only observe, in general, that a few, and but a very few, belong to the Established Church, a few, but I believe more than the former, are Pbn. Dissenters. The Methodists hear the sway—most all of them Yorkshire—in general, they are an ignorant, vulgar race, and then the means and opportunities of information are very unfavorable. Those of the original settlers from N. England, who remain, have chiefly become New Lights. Without prejudice it may be said of both sectaries that, being unenlightened by knowledge and misled by delusion, animated by party spirit, and carried away by a religious-like zeal, they seem to vie with each other in the wildness and absurdity of their opinions and practices, and they seem to breathe fire and vengeance against each other and against everybody else. “Let us turn our eyes” from these wandering stars and quit these fire brands of contention to look after the harmless and useful inhabitants of the great deep, which do mankind much good and no evil. In this heterogeneous piece I shall tack a short account of the average amount of the shad taken in Cornwallis yearly:

⁴² Graham to Andrew Brown, March 1791, 142-43.

Amount of Shad caught in Habitants River:

Year.	Amount
1789	120,000
1790	70,000

N. B. — I have fished on them.

2 years with a seine in Hab. River, yearly average, 95,000. Began to fish Canard River in the year 1787, caught in

1787	upwards of	100,000
1788	"	100,000
1789	about	70,000
1790	"	70,000

Canard River yearly average,

85,000

Yearly average of ye Creeks taken by wires

25,000

Was planted in Cornwallis River 90 a seine, but did not succeed well. Caught about

15,000

This one is not likely to succeed, as the force of the current is too great for the seine. But on a moderate calculation there is upwards of

200,000

150 ordinary shad fill a barrel, not salted, 15 shillings; salted, £1 5 shillings.

The codfishery might also be much more productive could it be more attended to. For tho' the settlers all alongshore, from the mouth to the head of the Bay, go out to fish by times, yet few make a business of it. They have got their farms to attend to. I could not possibly give a guess at the amount of the codfishery in the Bay; and I don't know that any individual here can. The cod suit exceedingly for export, but the shad don't; most of the shad, therefore, are consumed at home, and a great benefit they are; new settlers and the poor, especially which class are numerous. By my next or by the time you are here we shall have a calculation of the average amount of gaspereaux; tho' that is more difficult

to find out, as they are fished, not by company's, but everyone for his own hand.⁴³

Brook Watson in his first letter indicates that his knowledge of Nova Scotia commenced at an early period of his life, in 1750, and his connection with it had continued up to the date of the letter, 1 July 1791. He gives a complete and concise history leading up to the Expulsion and the aftermath. Lieutenant-Colonel Monkton, having received orders from Colonel Lawrence, the Governor of the Province to embark the Acadians for the purpose of sending them out of the country, issued the proclamation commanding the Acadians to appear at Beausejour. The men were shut up and the women and children allowed to go home.

In September I was directed to proceed with a party of Provincials to the Baie Verte, then a considerable and flourishing settlement, there to wait further orders, which I received on the following day, to collect and send to Beausejour, for embarkation, all the women and children to be found in that district, and, on leaving the town, to fire it; this painful task performed, I was afterwards employed in victualling the transports for their reception; the season was now far advanced before the embarkation took place, which caused much hurry, and I fear some families were divided and sent to different parts of the globe, notwithstanding all possible care was taken to prevent it. These wretched people, given up by France without their consent, were for adhering to those principles which the liberal mind must deem praiseworthy, plucked from their native soil, cast out by the nation who claimed their obedience, and rejected by that from whence they sprang, and to whose religion, customs and laws they had evinced the strongest attachment.⁴⁴

Watson goes on to describe the privations the Acadians experienced: thirteen hundred perished by shipwreck on the way to France; refused there, the survivors landed at Southampton and other English ports, where large numbers contracted small-pox. Those who were transported to the French West Indies either died from starvation or were turned away because they were deemed not to be French subjects. The West Indies survivors joined the New England expellees in Georgia where they were more fortunate. Although there was generally a rancour against Roman Catholics, the Acadians' orderly conduct, integrity, sobriety, and frugality secured the good will of the people. The exiles attempted to find their way back, some coasting up the Atlantic coast in their own self-built boats, while others came up the Mississippi and down the St. Lawrence system.

But alas! what did they find? all was desolated for the more effectually to drive them out of the country, all their houses had been burnt, all their cattle killed by order of Government, hence they found no shelter, still

⁴³ Graham to Andrew Brown, March 1791, 143-45.

⁴⁴ Brook Watson, letter to Andrew Brown, 1 July 1791, "The Acadian French," *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society* 2 (1881): 131-32.

they persevered with never-failing fortitude, with unremitting industry, and established themselves in different remote parts of the Province, where they had been suffered to remain, but without any legal property, at least I have not heard of any land having been granted to them; their numbers, I am told, have increased about two thousand, and am informed they still continue, what I know them to be in their prosperous state, an honest, sober, industrious, and virtuous people; seldom did any quarrels happen amongst them.⁴⁵

He describes a well ordered, industrious, productive and co-operative, happy way of life. "The winters long and cold were spent in cheerful hospitality, having fuel in abundance their houses was [sic] always comfortable, the rustic song and dance made their principal amusement. Thus did they live, so have they been visited. In 1755 I was a very humble instrument in sending eighteen hundred of those suffering mortals out of the Province."⁴⁶

But in 1783, as Commissary General to the army serving in North America under the command of Sir Guy Carleton, now Lord Dorchester, Watson was responsible for the embarkation of thirty-five thousand Loyalists from New York, their transportation and settlement in the undivided Province, and generous compensation and annuities. It almost appears as if his description of the treatment of the Loyalists, in such stark contrast to that of the Acadians, was intentional, perhaps a mea culpa or an indication that things were different under Dorchester. Watson included the following clause in a long sentence praising the "considerate mind and feeling heart of Lord Dorchester": "I trust all in my power was done to soften the affliction of the Acadians and alleviate the sufferings of the loyalists [. . .]."⁴⁷ There is no indication of what was done to soften those afflictions. It may not have been politically expedient to have disclosed such steps, but perhaps Watson was attempting to set the record straight about the treatment of the Acadians.

Watson's second letter to Rev. Andrew Brown, dated 12 August 1791, indicates that he had discussed his first letter with a knowledgeable person, Dr. Breynon, who

[. . .] agreed to all the facts which I had written, but thought the Acadians, in the year 1755, had their option to take the oaths of allegiance and remain, or to be sent out of the country. This point is of moment and ought to be ascertained. I much fear that was not the case, for although I entertain a very high opinion of their firmness, yet I doubt whether a people ever existed who possessed, to a man, spirit enough to leave everything dear and plunge themselves and families into a state of inexpressible wretchedness, rather than swear allegiance to a Prince, who held them and their country most completely in his power.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Watson to Brown, 1 July 1791, 132.

⁴⁶ Watson to Brown, 1 July 1791, 133.

⁴⁷ Watson to Brown, 1 July 1791, 133.

⁴⁸ Brook Watson, letter to Andrew Brown, 12 August 1791, "The Acadian French," *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society* 2 (1881): 135.

Hugh Graham's next letter to Andrew Brown was 9 September 1791. Graham had received a letter from Brown and had been disappointed that Brown had not been able to visit Graham or make his Cumberland tour because of illness. Graham had wanted to introduce Brown to Graham's "fountain head of my intelligence respecting Acadian affairs, I still owe you something on this score."

In general, I may say, as you already know, that the French Acadians lived in the dft. settlements like so many great families, "happily united in their views and interests." If a young couple married—conarried off, a New England man would say—scarcely any separation took place between the parent stock and the branches. Now this voluntary marriage union of the branches was not supposed to interfere with nor to break off the original and natural connexion between the parent stock and both branches. In this mode of life the two branches of connexion naturally braced and strengthened each other. Accordingly upon the occasion of a marriage settlement of a young couple not only the immediate parents, but the whole community, contributed in various proportion as the ability of the donors could, and as the exigencies of the case required. By this means the young people were in this very first outset in life placed in a state of independence, with all the satisfaction and ease which arise from a competency already possessed; they must have labored afterwards and taken proper methods to increase their fortunes, more with the generous views of being able to help others in their turn, than with the covetous wish of amassing riches—the charms of riches had not the same effect upon them as upon others. With an abundance of the necessaries, they were strangers to the luxuries of life. Their wants and other wishes were few, and their deficiencies and disputes were still fewer. They had no courts of law—because they had no need of them. If any difference arose it was soon allayed and settled by the interference and counsel of two or three of the most judicious and best respected in the neighborhood. But whosoever mediated the peace the priests superadded their influence to confirm it. This was sound policy and good conduct, without exposing themselves to the suspicions and jealousies which are ever incurred less or more by arbitrators, they enjoyed this unalloyed satisfaction of peacemakers. In all their public works everyone did as much as he could—as in building abattiaux, and dykes, in erecting chapels, and in enclosing burying grounds, and the like. The interest of the community had ever its due preponderancy over the interest of the individual. This obtained not only among acquaintances in the same neighborhood, and in the same settlement, but extended to the slightest acquaintance and the remotest situation. It was not affected nor lessened by the slightness of acquaintance or remoteness of situation. If, for instance, an abbitaux had given way, or a dyke had been broken at Cumberland, upon such an emergency as many hands were sent from Cornwallis as could be spared

with any degree of conveniency. Simplicity and friendliness, were very prominent features in their character.⁴⁹

Was this empathetic view of the Acadian some thirty-six years after the Expulsion due to his own short six-year exposure to what had been Acadia, or due to the influence of his "fountainhead of my intelligence respecting Acadian affairs"? Why did he not disclose this person's identity, though he was prepared to have Brown meet that person? I suspect that Handley Chipman was that "fountainhead."

Hugh Graham's large accumulation of books, including Protestant religious writings, along with sermons, correspondence and papers were lost in a fire that destroyed his first house in Stewiacke. In *Handley Chipman, King's County Planter, 1717-1799*, by James Doyle Davidson, Handley Chipman's records show that Hugh Graham purchased 108 volumes from Chipman during 1796 and 1797, including *Evidence of C. Religion*, *Arnot's Sermons*, and *Winter Evenings, or Lurnstration [sic] on Life and Letters* in three volumes.⁵⁰ The papers lost included a work in which considerable progress had been made: "Notitae; or Notices concerning the State of the Church and Religion in Nova Scotia in Former and Later Times," brought down to 1800, if not later, as well as another like manuscript, co-authored with Rev. Munro of Antigonish. James Robertson refers to "Two sermons, The Relation and Relative Duties of the Pastor and People." This was delivered at the admission of the Reverend John Waddell to the charge of the United Congregations of Truro and Onslow in 1799. Hugh Graham presided at the induction. His sermon, addresses and discourse preached next day were later printed in pamphlet form in Halifax, and a copy was sent to his brother Peter in Scotland. Robertson writes; "The publication which now lies before us, and which was printed in Halifax in 1799, proves him to have been 'a scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, and like unto a man who is a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.'"⁵¹

Graham built a larger, roomier house in 1804, but other than two sermons, no information has come to our attention as to the whereabouts of what must have accumulated thereafter. The first, "Thoughts on Prayer: A Fragment," was published in *The Christian Instructor and Missionary Register of the Presbyterian Church of Nova-Scotia* in 1859 after being forwarded by his family; the second, "A Warning to Youth, or an Address to the Rising Generation," appeared in that same journal two months later.⁵² Patterson, in his Preface, indicates that a large portion of MacGregor's recordings of his reminiscences along with many of his other papers had been lost.⁵³

⁴⁹ Hugh Graham, letter to Andrew Brown, 9 September 1791, "The Acadian French," *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society* 2 (1881): 146-47.

⁵⁰ Davison, James Doyle, *Handley Chipman, King's County Planter, 1717-1799: First of That Name at Chipman Corner, Cornwallis Township, Nova Scotia* (Wolfville, NS: J.D. Davison, 1988) 126.

⁵¹ Robertson 37-38.

⁵² Hugh Graham, "Thoughts on Prayer: A Fragment" *The Christian Instructor and Missionary Register of the Presbyterian Church of Nova-Scotia* 4.11 (Nov. 1859): 327-329; Hugh Graham, "A Warning to Youth, or an Address to the Rising Generation," *The Christian Instructor and Missionary Register of the Presbyterian Church of Nova-Scotia* 5.1 (Jan. 1860): 5-13.

⁵³ Patterson vi.

Letters home from both MacGregor and Graham were treated in the same way. They were received with great interest, shared with others and sometimes saved. The recipients were interested in what was going on in Nova Scotia. The letters show not only an interest and extensive knowledge in matters temporal but how they are interconnected with matters religious. The language used, which seems to us contrived, verbose, flowery, and pompous, really shows how people of education wrote in those times, and, I suppose at times, talked. Their people appeared to hunger for, and hang on every word of their messages.

Their importuning for books, bibles and tracts was common to both. MacGregor, in correspondence to William Young of Philadelphia, a former classmate at Alloa, requested material that he had no hope of obtaining in Nova Scotia. From a letter of 11 August 1803: "We lie under great difficulties in getting books here, as our commerce with the States is restrained, and the people in general have but little taste for books."⁵⁴ Graham, in a letter to his brother-in-law, William Hamilton, of Whitburn, dated 25 August 1806, after thanking him for the books sent by Hamilton and another friend, probably Rev. John Brown of Longridge, and contributing to his happiness, writes: "The obligation is the greater, as Books are so scarce & dear in this remote Corner of the Earth. [. . .] I hope that when the Warr [sic] is over the communication between the two Countries may be more frequent & easy." His brother-in-law, William Hamilton had sent out fifty Bibles and two-hundred Testaments from the British Foreign Bible Society, which finally arrived in July 1808. These are likely the Bibles referred to in the *History of The Canadian Bible Society*.⁵⁵ In his letter to Peter of 9 August 1808, Graham indicates that he had been worried because he had heard that the spring lumber vessels carrying the shipment had been plundered by French Privateers, but they arrived:

The Box of Bibles & Testaments only came [sic] to hand on the 29th ulto [i.e. 29 July]. They are to be sold at moderate Prices & the Proceeds to be remitted. It is a great Favor [illegible] in this way as they come much lower than the Shop prices. Tho no Family among us is without a Bible & most have more than one or two yet they were rather scarce than plenty. And there are very few but what are able to purchase. We have it in view to form a Society in the Province in order to co-operate with the Parent Society in London in order to promote a more extensive and continued circulation of the Sacred Scriptures.

In a later letter to Peter, dated 26 May 1809, Graham indicates also:

We have it in view about the middle of next Month to form a Bible Society in this Part of the Province in Connexion with the British foreign Bible Society. We have already [illegible] in M^r Waddel's Congⁿ & mine a considerable little sum of Money in and of the friends of the B.F.B.S. and expect several other Cong^{ns} to collect.

⁵⁴ Patterson 336.

⁵⁵ Gerald E. Benson and Kenneth G. McMillan, *To the Ends of the Earth: A History of the Canadian Bible Society* (Toronto: Canadian Bible Society, 1998).

This would be the first Auxiliary Bible Society in the Province. He wrote again to Peter, 7 July 1809:

We have had a collection in this Congⁿ for the British & Foreign Bible Society upwards of £30:0-0. This, with the Proceeds of a Box of Bibles and Testaments sent us last Season and upwards of £20: Collⁿ by Truro Congⁿ I expect to remitt from Pictou to Glasgow or London. The Reports of the Bible Society together with collateral Information as to the Progress already made in translating & circulating the Sacred Scriptures in [illegible] & distant Regions of the Earth have awakened the Zeal of many among us. In this Congⁿ People in general have exceeded my Expectations & have contributed liberally according to their Numbers & Means.

In a letter from Stewiacke, dated 1 August 1816, to the Rev. and very dear Brother John Brown, Graham reports his wife's death on 12 June 1816. He also indicates that the Truro Bible Society had held its seventh anniversary on 17 July 1816, and that the second meeting of this branch [Stewiacke] was held on July 24th. "Our Remittance this year will be but small But the day of small things is not to be despised."

MacGregor had written to the Bible Society on 4 December 1807 asking for at least fifty Gaelic Bibles, gratis, and fifty more, for sale, which he would pay for as soon as he could. In 1808 the Society sent out large supplies of Scriptures both in Gaelic and English to Nova Scotia and Canada with the mandate that he should sell his share at either a small price or gratis at his discretion, though being reminded that a sale at low price might tend to cause the purchaser to read it more often than if it had been received gratis.⁵⁶ He was later asked by the Society, because of his Gaelic linguistic skills, to note any errata in the Gaelic Bible. He sent back a significant list.⁵⁷ It would appear that the 1808 consignment was part of the same shipment that included those sent to Graham. MacGregor had collected random donations for the Society, but decided to initiate the establishment at Pictou of the second Auxiliary Bible Society in Nova Scotia, though it became a virtual one-man show. MacGregor had received in 1793, before the formation of Bible or Tract Societies, through the beneficence of David Dale, "Peasemeal David" of Glasgow, sixty Bibles, sixty spelling books, and sixty primers to be given to the poor Highlanders.⁵⁸

Both MacGregor and Graham maintained an active interest in Agriculture. In Cornwallis, Graham had a share of the "Glebe" and owned a "wood track" which as it was cleared would provide income from the timber. In Upper Stewiacke he received a grant of two-hundred acres, fifteen acres cleared, and a house. He was one of the founders of the Agricultural Society in Upper Stewiacke and its Secretary. In a letter from Stewiacke, 25 August 1806 to his brother-in-law William Hamilton, Hugh highlights a fact of life facing ministers in New Scotland:

⁵⁶ Patterson 380-81.

⁵⁷ Patterson 382.

⁵⁸ Patterson 267.

It is now our Haying time & a busy Season as we have to provide for a long Winter. I have to lend a hand as help is scarce & dear & my Boys are but weak & young hands. In this Country a Min^r cannot do well without a farm. For the smallest Part of the Salary is paid in cash and we have to barter & turn things as well as we can.

James MacGregor farmed his lot of land, obtained shortly after his first marriage. According to Patterson, "he exercised an active superintendence over the operations of the farm, and took an interest in having them conducted in a superior manner." He also "endeavoured to lead [his people] to improved modes of cultivation." To this end, MacGregor imported improved implements and had the first roller and double harrow in the area. He even won a first prize for his turnips at an early Provincial Agricultural Society Show.⁵⁹ The land contained a deposit of coal as well as gas. He actually succeeded in tapping the source and bringing it to his house in hollow wooden, then metal, pipes though it was never more than a curiosity. His farm became necessary for the operations of the General Mining Association and was sold for £1,150 (\$4,600), 1827 figures, which provided a substantial nest egg for the care of his widow and education of his children.⁶⁰ He suffered a severe stroke on 13 February 1828, and, after experiencing another, died 3 March 1830. Hugh Graham's house and home farm, some 110½ acres, was sold after his death, 5 April 1829, in order to enable the distribution of his estate, for £300. The other land holdings went to his sons.

Graham and MacGregor each conducted a crusade to remedy the shortage of ministers. Almost every letter home, to family, friends, ministers, synod hierarchy and opinion moulders contained exhortations, pleas and reasoned cases for relief. They carried on a tenacious correspondence with their respective Synods, and they supported Reverend Thomas McCulloch's efforts wholeheartedly. By 1805 McCulloch had begun the organization of a society to raise money to found an institution of higher learning offering a college education, with a view of preparing young men for the Presbyterian ministry. The Pictou Presbytery, earlier, had set up a fund for the Propagation of the Gospel by various means which included the provision of ministers by the Synod. McGregor, involved in fund raising for that purpose, became a lead campaigner for the proposed academy. Propagation of the Gospel included reaching the younger generation. In his *History*, Robertson quotes from a letter written by Hugh Graham in 1811:

Besides my ordinary course of visitation and catechizing, I have generally called the young people together at my own house in the winter evenings, reading to them interesting pieces, giving advices, and asking questions. This I have done these six years past; *i.e.*, since I lived in this house, which is considerably large and roomy. This winter I meet with them every Wednesday evening, in a new schoolhouse built the larger for the purpose. I read first one of Dr. Lawson's lectures on Joseph, and then examine them on the subject. This evening, the third discourse on the blessing of Joseph comes under consideration. I have them arranged into

⁵⁹ Patterson 322.

⁶⁰ Patterson 487-89.

classes, and so they know when their turn comes. In new as well as in old countries, youth is the most eligible and promising plot in the gospel field for cultivation; and in the worst times, still the young are like our sheet-anchor. Let us hold on by this, while we have such a promise as that recorded in the 110th Psalm, 3d verse, to hold by. Ever since I have been in America, I have considered it as a main part of my duty frequently to visit such schools as I have had any kind of connection with.⁶¹

This passage of Graham's letter led Robertson to say of him, "Mr. Graham's life at Stewiacke was that of 'a good minister of Jesus Christ.'"⁶²

With the schisms in the church having such an impact on the propagation of the gospel and provision of ministers, the differences were always in mind. Hugh Graham had written to his brother Peter for material on the New Lights-Old Lights and upon receipt thereof notes in a letter to him of 26 July 1805:

I have now had the Perusal of the Publications on both sides of the controversy and it is my decided opinion that the New old or old New Pby is as absurd a Constitution as its name is. As its name is so itself is. It is the offspring of Mere Suspicion & countless musings of shallow & contracted thinking & speculation on an Abstruse & [illegible] Subject. If ever Moderation & forbearance were required & if ever there was Room & Reason for the Exercise of their Christian Graces it was on that occasion & in that case. Who is this Geo. Paton?

In a letter to Reverend John Brown, dated 22 October 1813, he asks:

Is there no Prospect of a Coalition of Parties? I suppose the jarring Interests & Prejudices of Ministers & People to be the main Obstruction. The Effects of Division upon the Temper of Christians and on the Interests of the Church are often worse than the Cause. The Causes of some Divisions in the Church seem to be inconsiderable & [illegible] & yet the Effects on Brotherly Love & Peace order & Purity are as pernicious as when the Causes are apparently greater. Satan serves himself by these Things.

I had had the impression that MacGregor and Graham had operated in their own spheres of influence without much contact or reference to each other. This might have been fed by my reading of "The Report of the Stewiacke Centennial Celebration, 6 October 1880." Among other exercises for the afternoon and evening, the programme showed an address by Rev. Robert Sedgewick, DD, in the afternoon and addresses in the evening by Rev. George Patterson, DD, and others, commencing at 6:00 o'clock after tea. As chairman, Eliakim Tupper, Jr., Warden of the County of Colchester and a relative, introduced Dr. Sedgewick, referring to him as "one of the fathers of Presbyterianism in

⁶¹ Robertson 38-39.

⁶² Robertson 38.

this County.” Sedgewick’s theme was “The planting and growth of Presbyterianism in the Stewiacke Valley.” He described Hugh Graham’s fourteen years at Cornwallis and his twenty-nine years in Stewiacke in laudatory terms, making reference to having read portions of his correspondence. Dr. Sedgewick quoted from the Minutes of Presbytery: “The long, laborious and successful life of our deceased brother, furnishes matter of pleasing reflection to us all, and it is our unanimous wish and prayer that we may be enabled to follow his exemplary conduct to the end. Mark the perfect, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.”⁶³

Dr. Patterson’s address was entitled “Early Religious History of Eastern Nova Scotia.” After describing the work of Rev. Cock and Rev. Smith, he stated they must be “regarded as the founders of the Presbyterian Church in Eastern Nova Scotia,” and went on to say: “Several other ministers having arrived, a Presbytery was formed on Aug. 2nd, 1786, by the name of the Associate Presbytery of Truro, being the first in the Dominion. Rev. James McGregor [sic] arrived just at that time, but did not join the Presbytery. Time would fail me to tell of his labors.” And further: “And first, let us be thankful to God for such an ancestry. ‘The glory of children is their fathers,’ and the people of these regions have reason to bless God, for the class of men, who, in His Providence, were sent to people these Western wilds.”⁶⁴

I am somewhat taken aback by there not being one mention of Hugh Graham in his whole address, given that he was in the Stewiacke Valley, given that he must have heard Dr. Sedgewick’s address, given that he had possession of Hugh Graham’s correspondence. Surely more than “several other ministers having arrived” would have been appropriate. It is clear that they did not labour in a vacuum, each insulated from the other. Hugh Graham wrote to his brother Peter on 29 September 1795 setting out the ten Proposals to be presented to the Antiburgher Brethern in the hope of forming a coalition, there having been meetings to this end. He stated that the “Proposal of Accommodation & Agreement came from our Side of the House. [. . .] I wish you to consult with any of the Senior Clergymen concerning them and to let me know their opinions. I have written the Committee of Correspondence in regard to these matters. But they have all alongst neglected us so much that I don’t promise much from them.” MacGregor would have had to have been cognizant of these attempts at merger with the Pictou Presbytery and Graham’s involvement.

In the 13 July postscript to Graham’s letter of 7 July 1809 to his brother-in-law William Hamilton, he refers in the last paragraph to the death in Prince Edward Island of Rev. Peter Gordon who had married Rev. Bruce’s niece Janet Auld and had come to Nova Scotia about two years previously. Graham knew the Auld family, of which she was a branch. Janet became the second wife of James MacGregor. In Scotland she had been a friend of Hugh Graham’s sister, Margaret Hamilton.

From Stewiacke, on 1 August 1816, Graham wrote to Rev. John Brown of Longridge. The last letter he had received from Rev. Brown indicated that Rev. James MacGregor had traveled into New Brunswick and written to Brown:

⁶³ *Stewiacke, 1780-1900* (Belleville, ON: Mika, 1973) 138.

⁶⁴ *Stewiacke, 1780-1900* 157, 162-63.

Altho I wrote to you in May last the necessities of the Church require that I should write at this time. In your last, you mentioned that you had Information from M^r M^cGregor as to the destitute condition of New Brunswick in regard to the Gospel & Means of Salvation.

I have now to inform you that at our last meeting of Pby held at this place on the 24th ult^o an application was made from the Congⁿ of Majorville New Brunswick for supply and aids in order to obtain a Minister from Scotland to settle among them as their Pastor.

The Presbytery of Truro appointed Mr. Waddel to go as soon as possible to do whatever he could do for them, and gave support to James Taylor of Majorville on his trip to Scotland to bring out a Minister. It may be that Presbytery's action was due to an Antiburgher's foray into unclaimed territory or that this was a rustling of the breezes of co-operation beginning to appear. In any event they each knew the other was there.

With the Union on 3 July 1817 of the three Nova Scotian Presbyteries, the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia had come into being with Rev. James MacGregor as its first Moderator; the ravine was crossed. By 1822 MacGregor and Graham were close enough that in conjunction they published "An Address to the Congregation under the Inspection of the Presbyterian Synod of Nova Scotia, exciting them to a public spirit in the cause of Christ."

What may have been the last reference to MacGregor by Graham is found in his last letter to Reverend John Brown of Whitburn, West Lothian of 27 September 1828 wherein he notes the deaths and infirmities of various colleagues including his own tottering under a burden of years: "D^r M^cGregor has had a severe shock of the palsy from which he has not altogether recovered and it is feared never will, while in the body."

Although James MacGregor upon his arrival in Nova Scotia refused to unite with the Burgher side, Patterson writes that in later years "he entered heart and soul into the measures for accomplishing the union, and the late Doctor Keir informed us, that its success was chiefly owing to the zeal as well as Christian meekness of him, and the Rev. Hugh Graham, of the other Presbytery, a man of kindred spirit."⁶⁵

Graham and MacGregor were for real. They were human beings, sons, brothers, students, husbands, fathers, teachers, friends and farmers who happened to be ministers, and they experienced tragedy. We tend to think of those on the battlefields, sports-fields, and those who react quickly in moments of crisis as our heroes. But James MacGregor and Hugh Graham, along with the people they served, were heroes of the early days of this country.

⁶⁵ Patterson 409.

Appendix

AS A TRIBUTE OF AFFECTIONATE REGARD FOR THE MEMORY OF THE LATE JAMES MACGREGOR, D.D.,

The first Presbyterian Minister of this district, who departed this life, March 3, 1830, in the 71st year of his age, and the 46th of his ministry, this tombstone was erected by a number of those who cherish a grateful remembrance of his apostolic zeal and labours of love.

When the early settlers of Pictou could afford to a minister of the gospel little else than a participation of their hardships, he cast in his lot with the destitute, became to them a pattern of patient endurance, and cheered them with the tidings of salvation. Like Him whom he served, he went about doing good. Neither toil nor privation deterred him from his Master's work, and the pleasure of the Lord prospered in his hand. He lived to witness the success of his labours in the erection of numerous churches, and in the establishment of a Seminary, from which these churches could be provided with religious instructors. Though so highly honoured of the Lord, few have exceeded him in Christian humility; save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ he gloried in nothing; and as public teacher, combining instruction with example, he approved himself to be a follower of them who through faith and patience now inherit the promises.⁶⁶

This is the inscription, composed by Doctor MacCulloch on a monument erected to Dr. MacGregor's memory, though subsequently replaced by another monument.

.....

SACRED TO THE MEMORY of the Rev. Hugh Graham, first pastor of this congregation; missioned by the Secession Church. He was first settled in Cornwallis, and thence translated to Stewiacke, where he laboured with fidelity and zeal for thirty years, and greatly endeared himself to his people. He was a man of peace, and an eminent example of meekness and piety. As a pastor, he was sound in his doctrine, earnest in his teaching, and truly devoted to the spiritual welfare of his flock. He died April, 1829, in the seventy-fifth year of his age.⁶⁷

This is the inscription on the Reverend Hugh Graham's large tabletop tombstone in Riverside Cemetery, Upper Stewiacke. He actually died in the seventy-first year of his age, having been born on 16 October 1758.

⁶⁶ Patterson 497-98.

⁶⁷ Robertson 46.

“All Power to the Presbyteries”: The Case of the Rev. Ian Burnett Reconsidered

John S. Moir

This is not a research paper in progress. In this instance the relevant documents were placed in the Church's archives and sealed *in retentis* for fifty years, until 2008. Recent consideration of the principle of transparency suggests that these papers may remain closed indefinitely, which would be the equivalent to their destruction. In addition, the Rev. Louis Fowler, Clerk of the General Assembly, a leading figure in the Burnett trial who had requested that the *in retentis* be imposed in this case, reportedly indicated his personal respect for the history of the Church by ordering the destruction of all his own files.

Even at its foundation in 1828 the congregation of St. Andrew's in Ottawa was not in any way typical of Presbyterianism in the colonial period. By the time of Confederation many of its members were associated with the rich lumber industry in the Valley, or civil servants of the highest rank, who worshiped within a few feet of the country's central seat of political power. In the decade following World War One, St. Andrew's eight-hundred members were well-established both financially and socially. Its morning-coated gentlemen ushers gave an impression, justifiably, of a congregation that represented wealth and power. The congregation's possession of the real estate known as the Glebe lands reminded any observers of the financial benefits of state-church establishment in an earlier colonial period. St. Andrew's clinched its location in the hearts of establishmentarians by calling its clergy exclusively from Scotland.

The Rev. Ian Burnett came from Glasgow in 1943 when St. Andrew's minister died of a heart attack while holidaying in Prince Edward Island. Burnett was already popular in Scotland, especially with the younger generation. No leet was held by St. Andrew's, but a congregational meeting in May 1943 confirmed Burnett's call. Thanks to connections (Prime Minister Mackenzie King filled a prominent pew presence each Sunday) the transfer of Burnett and his wife and two children was expedited in the midst of the general confusion of Ottawa and its government thanks to wartime conditions. St. Andrew's was already heavily involved in Canada's war effort, offering its facilities to the government and the armed forces. In war and in peace St. Andrew's worked harmoniously and effectively. Only one issue proved divisive within the congregation, and that was the form of a memorial to the 171 men and women of St. Andrew's killed in the two world wars.

Burnett wanted the memorial to be a chapel for small and intimate services. A majority of the congregation, however, favoured a tablet of names and opposed the small chapel as too large and too expensive an undertaking that would reduce the mission offerings. The leader and winner in this contest was Clarence Pitts, scion of a financially successful New Brunswick Congregationalist family. Pitts had served as representative

elder in Presbytery for several years, and in the Sunday School for twenty-three years. This confrontation between Burnett and Pitts may have been an additive to the popularity that Burnett had cultivated since his arrival in Ottawa. A popular speaker he had moved from radio-broadcast sermons (printed and distributed regularly) and had broadened his audience even further when television was added to the available media.

The immediate postwar years saw great interest in religion in Canada, thanks to the blunt writing of Pierre Burton's *The Comfortable Pew: A Critical Look at Christianity and the Religious Establishment in the New Age*. His criticisms of the Anglican Church were often applicable to other denominations and, as rebels with a cause, a group of young Presbyterian ministers openly expressed their dissatisfaction with the present condition and future prospects of their own church. In 1965 Professor Joseph McLelland condemned the overly simplistic "heroic view" of the 1925 church union as a half-true version of history, and the Presbyterian Church's self-image as a caricature, challenging the Church to prove its principle of "always self-renewing." Was the Church committed to the past or the future?

St. Andrew's had marked the coming of peace in Europe by holding a special thanksgiving service, and the congregation discussed for the first time what kind of permanent memorial should be erected to the memory of those who fell in the two world wars. By 1951 opinion had settled on either a plaque in the sanctuary or, as the Rev. Mr. Burnett recommended, a chapel in the church basement for such services as funerals and small weddings. In a vote of twelve to three the Session endorsed the chapel plan at a cost \$15,000. The annual congregational meeting in 1952, however, led by Clarence Pitts, one of the three dissenting elders, rejected that proposal on the grounds that the money was needed for church extension. The Rev. Burnett also enquired about the possibility of having an assistant because, in addition to his congregational duties, he was Moderator of Presbytery and an officer in six other religious organizations. Session approved the plan for an assistant.

Burnett's popularity continued. A volume of his sermons was published and an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree was bestowed by Queen's University. St. Andrew's celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of Burnett's ordination with a reception and a gift. The communicants' roll now stood at 928, but 110 of these names were non-residents. Both the Temporal Committee and the Session were pleased with the numerical growth of the congregation, but concerned that the church collection had not kept pace proportionately. At the annual congregational meeting of 1955 a budget was adopted that would require the raising of \$98,000 from members and adherents, and that autumn the Wells organization of professional fund-raisers was hired in hopes of doubling the congregation's individual contributions to all of the church's projects. Within the year this canvass almost doubled the givings, and the improved financial state of the church enabled the Session to offer aid to ministerial candidates even at the level of their arts studies.

In April 1957 the congregation welcomed the Rev. Cyril Cook, a young minister of the Church of Scotland who had just been appointed as Burnett's new assistant. At almost that very moment certain pent-up tensions appeared within both the Session and the congregation. Session minutes give no warning of the storm that was about to break over St. Andrew's. At the end of May Dr. Burnett informed the Session that he intended to resign the ministry of St. Andrew's "on personal grounds." Burnett had worked hard at

every aspect of his ministry and, in the opinion of one congregational officer, he enjoyed being in the limelight that his efforts produced. Both the minister and his wife, however, were strong-minded individuals and differences had existed between them at least since their arrival in Ottawa in 1943. The minister now seemed to feel that his wife was exerting an undue influence in the congregation that challenged his role as minister. When Mrs. Burnett moved out of the manse to stay with Mr. and Mrs. Pitts, the local press began to report in detail this domestic drama. Soon rumours began linking Dr. Burnett to an unnamed woman on the faculty of Carleton University. As a professor at Carleton I recall that I never heard of any such scandal, but the charge certainly was known to our students.

When St. Andrew's Session met on 3 September Burnett confirmed his intention to resign, but the Session divided evenly twelve to twelve on a motion supporting his action. On 8 September a congregational meeting of about 275 members, by a vote of 184 to twenty-nine, petitioned the Presbytery of Ottawa to investigate the situation, and sixteen elders also petitioned Presbytery regarding the "unsatisfactory conditions" in the congregation. Burnett objected to one phrase in this second petition because it included the vague reference to "other matters relating to the conduct of the minister." Ottawa Presbytery responded by appointing a Visitation Committee that met with all groups from St. Andrew's for eighty hours, and spent another thirty-two writing its report. On 8 December the Committee told Presbytery that it had full confidence in the minister, and called on the members and elders to restore peace in the congregation.

The petitioners from St. Andrew's wanted time to digest this report, and one week later Clarence Pitts, leader of those supporting Mrs. Burnett, charged the Presbytery with prejudice against the petitioners. Nevertheless, the report was adopted by the Presbytery with only two dissenting votes, whereupon Pitts announced that he reserved the right to appeal against this Presbytery action. Within the congregation the Presbytery's decision seemed to polarize supporters of the minister and supporters of his wife. The report had stated frankly that "ministers are not perfect," that "the minister in any congregation is a sinful man amongst sinful men and women," and it called on the warring parties to forgive and reunite. Session accepted the report by a vote of thirteen to seven and Burnett withdrew his resignation. Pitts and the minority would not, however, accept defeat and so Session formed a committee to study the statutory position of St. Andrew's.

On 12 January 1960 Pitts again appeared at Presbytery, with a new petition signed by twenty-seven members denouncing the action of Presbytery because the assistant to the minister had been invited to attend the previous meeting, even though he was neither a member of Presbytery nor a member of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. The petition claimed that the Visitation Committee had been biased and did not perform its duty, that the majority of the congregation were "uninformed" about the minister's "ungovernable temper," and that he had shown no evidence of "repentance." The fatal sting, however, was in the final proposal, namely that justice would prevail when the whole matter was sent to the next General Assembly for judgment. When Presbytery next met in March, an elder of Knox Church expressed his dissent from Presbytery's action in allowing the grievances of Pitt and his twenty-seven supporters from a congregation of nearly 800 to be forwarded to General Assembly. Three special congregational meetings at St. Andrew's had been held in February, March and December; both sides seemed "over-informed," economic blackmail had been attempted when givings to St. Andrew's

were reduced throughout 1958, and the whole case against Burnett was simply "vexatious" action.

When the General Assembly met at Guelph in June 1960, it undertook to investigate St. Andrew's problem by appointing a Special Commission chaired by the Rev. Dr. Louis Fowler, Assembly's long-time principal clerk, known for his bluntness and rigidity but an expert on church law. The Book of Forms (1955) Section 289 provided for Assembly's appointment of a commission for the transaction of judicial and administrative business, but without any "legislative" function. Section 290 provided for a "special commission" whose "decision and sentence" shall be "final" and subject only to the will of the whole Assembly. In the Burnett case a special commission (Section 290) rather than a general commission (Section 289) was chosen, presumably on the advice of the Rev. Dr. Fowler, although no documentary evidence is available.

The Special Commission reported that Burnett should be removed from St. Andrew's pulpit, citing Paul's first letter to Timothy (3:4), concerning the necessity of bishops ruling their families as they did their flocks. The contents of this report were regrettably leaked to the *Presbyterian Record*. Action against Burnett was postponed because the judgement was not in final form, but in mid-September Ottawa Presbytery was ordered to remove him by the end of October. The severance was actually made on the first of October under protest from the Presbytery which gave him a strong letter of appreciation for his ministry of seventeen years.

In August the Rev. Cyril Cook, the assistant minister, supporter and "friend" of Burnett, had announced from St. Andrew's pulpit his own resignation, urging the congregation not to follow his example but to work for reconciliation. Widespread opposition was voiced to the apparent injustice of this "improper procedure," namely the Assembly's interference in a matter entirely within the jurisdiction of Presbytery and the procedures and reasons for this action. In its annual message to the congregation for 1960, Session spoke of the whole episode as "a fact regrettable in the life and proud record of St. Andrew's," while General Assembly's Special Commission called on the members "to heal their differences and to carry on the great record of St. Andrew's in the years to come."

Both evening services at St. Andrew's and the congregational *Church Magazine*, now in its eighteenth year, ended with Burnett's departure. As for Burnett himself, the Session debated a motion to continue his stipend until May 1961, and to provide compensation for his loss of clerical status. By a vote of nineteen to eleven, it was agreed to pay him \$100 each month to age sixty-five, and a pension thereafter of \$200 per month. The cost of the total package, in two annuities estimated to be \$38,000, was approved by a congregational vote of 152 to 101 at a special meeting on 26 September. Sixty-nine members had formally left the congregation by the end of 1960, several leaders of the Cubs and Scouts had resigned, and contributions to specific funds had fallen. By March 1961, however, a search committee recommended that St. Andrew's issue a call to the Rev. Arthur William Currie, minister of a West Toronto church for the past decade. Currie, a native of Hawkesbury, accepted the call and became the second Canadian-born minister of St. Andrew's. He was well aware of the recent events in the congregation and of its crying need for reconciliation, rebuilding, and a firm but sensitive hand at the helm. His only requests were that he be allowed to buy a house to serve as the manse, and that evening services be reinstated. The Burnett case, however, was not yet

closed. After the General Assembly, St. Andrew's Session received two reports claiming that the Special Commission chaired by Dr. Fowler had exceeded its power. The Assembly's Judicial Committee had heard the complaints of St. Andrew's congregation and Session, and the protest of the Presbytery of Ottawa against the Commission's action, but the Judicial Committee upheld the Commission's decision, saying that the Commission's powers were in fact unlimited, which seemed to deny the Presbyterian principle of checks and balances. The full story of the Burnett issue, however, cannot yet be recorded for history because the Assembly accepted Fowler's request that the Commission's records be sealed for the next fifty years.

Currie brought fresh skills and new techniques to the task of strengthening his divided congregation. The congregational roll was purged of almost ninety names, bringing the number of members down to 559, but thereafter the trend was reversed as new members joined St. Andrew's regularly and in significant numbers with as many as two dozen at a service. By the end of 1962 the church's financial position was so strengthened that money problems were now under control, and evening services had been reinstated. Whereas Burnett had spent much time on pastoral visitations, Currie worked through committees to whom certain administrative duties were assigned. The increasing strength and stability of St. Andrew's congregation continued throughout 1965, and the minister's important role in this peaceful progress and reconciliation was noted publicly when Queen's University conferred the Doctor of Divinity degree on the Rev. Mr. Currie. Nineteen sixty-six was a year of new beginnings and broadening experiences starting in January with the moderator's participation, along with other Christian denominations, in a service for Christian unity held in Ottawa's Roman Catholic Basilica.

“The Dominion”: Herbert S. Mekeel, His Clergy Conscripts, and Their Impact on The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1935-1979

A. Donald MacLeod

By any reckoning Herbert Surface Mekeel was one of the most remarkable Presbyterian ministers of the twentieth century. For forty-one years he served as senior pastor of First Church, Schenectady, New York. In that time he founded nine satellite congregations, received three honorary degrees, and sent (by actual count) two hundred and thirty-five men into the Christian ministry.¹ He was a significant figure in the post-Second World War evangelical renaissance, helping briefly in the establishment of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California as dean of the school and being a founding member of the National Association of Evangelicals which he served as President in 1958-60.

Almost single-handedly Herbert Mekeel provided a vision of renewed parish life. Coming in 1937 to a congregation with a long and proud history, he helped to establish two churches: those who came to faith under his challenging ministry and the others who left in disgust at his theology and helped strengthen the liberal but failing First Reformed Church two blocks away. Upper New York state, as Mekeel would often note, was part of the “burnt-over district” where a surfeit of nineteenth-century Finney evangelistic techniques had left a sour taste for any evidences of evangelical religion. What is more, it was commonly felt that Albany Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church (USA) was the launch pad for the latest fad from denominational headquarters. Overlooking the Hudson River, 475 Riverside Drive in Manhattan was the launch for so-called innovative programs that were (to quote one long time First Church member) “floated down river to Albany.” It was one of the most liberal judicatories in the denomination.

This vision of renewed mainline churches impacted Canada through the fifteen men that Mekeel sent to study, and in most cases to be ordained, in The Presbyterian Church in Canada, mostly during the 1950s. The influx of students from Schenectady to Presbyterian College, Montreal in that mid-decade significantly boosted enrolment there and kept the school viable. But Mekeel’s links with Canada went back much earlier. He had served two of the largest churches in the denomination on an interim or associate basis in the 1930s. In spite of the difficulties of these short but tempestuous links, he encouraged young men to go north to Canada because he saw in The Presbyterian Church in Canada a more conservative church that would provide openings for his recruits that the Presbytery of Albany increasingly spurned.

As an adult Herbert Mekeel was never called by even his closest associates “Herbert” or “Herb.” From the earliest days of his ministry it would appear, he chose to

¹ Confirmed by Rev. Michael Alford, Schenectady, his assistant, colleague and then successor, in an interview 11 Sept. 2007. I would like to express thanks to Ms. Peg Meo, administrative assistant at First Church, Schenectady, NY, for her gracious help in this project.

be designated as “The Dominie”—a Dutch term of respect for the clergy. He was a challenging, probing, some said dictatorial, individual who kept his private life distinctly separate from his public persona. Mekeel was full of paradoxes. A lonely man, he was surrounded by adoring congregants. A prude when it came to anything sexual, and a lifelong bachelor, women found him irresistible. He was 6’3" tall, had steel grey hair from his youth, and was the kind of person who stood out in the crowd. Even into his sixties he was still on the wave-length of the young.

You said “No” to the Dominie at your peril. He always had a plan for your life. He worked on the premise that if God had not specifically told you not to be a minister then the Almighty had called you to become a pastor. No one could doubt the intensity of his religious convictions. His prayers in the conduct of worship were indescribable, lifting one to the heights of heaven.² His preaching was passionate, authoritative (some said authoritarian), and convicting. It was Mekeel who placed behind his pulpit the inscription, visible only to the preacher, “Sirs we would see Jesus” which has since been copied in churches all over North America. You never walked away from his services without a challenge. He was a man of robust individuality, deep conviction, and penetrating gaze.

Though regarded as an intellectual (even by his critics), he had only one academic degree, a Bachelor of Arts he received in classics from the University of Michigan in 1927. His theological training was spotty at best. He attended Biblical Seminary in New York City for two years, and then proceeded to Andover Newton Theological School in 1932, a year after the union between Andover (Congregational) and Newton (Baptist) and at the height of the Depression. Biblical Seminary emphasized the English Bible, while Andover Newton was in a state of disarray after the amalgamation. After two years of incomplete study there he left that institution without a degree. He received leave from his congregation in 1955 to complete doctoral work at the University of Edinburgh, joining a plethora of Americans who overwhelmed Hugh Watt with requests for thesis subjects. He never completed his dissertation. His three doctoral degrees were all *honoris causa*. But he read widely, studied the New Testament in the original language, and had eight thousand books in his library which overflowed from his study in the church to stacks in the basement below.

Theologically the Dominie was hard to categorize. He was by no means Reformed, and he appears to have had little stomach for theological argument. His visceral reaction to the liberalism of the 1920s and 1930s expressed itself more in a personal piety which owed much to several of his favourite writers, particularly mystics like Madame Guyon and the contemporary A. W. Tozer. His preaching was solidly Biblical but lacked the in-depth textual analysis of an exegete, in spite of his familiarity with Greek. His vast library reflected his tastes: a few commentaries but heavy on the historical and biographical.³

² Compare his personal profile for the denominational placement office (he stated he was open to the possibility of a move at the time) dated 29 Sept. 1959: “Personal devotional habits: Prayer, morning and evening, frequently at noon, and definite intercession for specific objects such as missions, evangelism, the sick, the troubled cases” (Herbert S. Mekeel Archives (HSMA), First Presbyterian Church, Schenectady, NY. Used with permission).

³ From Mekeel’s personal profile dated 29 Sept. 1959: “Reading habits (catholic!): especially Church History, Bible Study, Biography” (HSMA).

Canada formed a kind of *leit-motif* throughout the Dominie's life. He was born in the border city of Detroit on Valentine's Day 1904. His parents were, by the standards of the time, elderly when they married, and Mekeel as their only child was born to a mother then aged forty-four. It was an intense relationship: he was described recently as a "mommy's boy," tied to his mother's "apron strings."⁴ The Mekeel family appear to have worshipped in the old Christian and Missionary Alliance "church" at the corner of Forest Avenue and Second Boulevard.⁵ There, while barely out of his teens, Herbert Mekeel published several sensational booklets focussing on Bible prophecy and demon possession which he later suppressed.⁶

Though details are sketchy Mekeel once stated that he had started his postsecondary education at the University of Toronto and at McMaster University, then close neighbours. A friend was later to describe those difficult days: "This young man lost his father at a time when he needed him most, and he has had quite a struggle to put himself through university, and in spite of the many obstacles he has had to face has been a credit to himself."⁷ In spite of the fact that his father was a lawyer they seem to have lived in considerable financial distress. He returned home to complete studies at the University of Michigan. After serving for two years as an instructor in Ann Arbor, Mekeel went on to Manhattan to the Biblical Seminary. There he met one of the faculty, Andrew Rule Osborn, who would make him a Presbyterian and bring him to Canada.⁸

Andrew Osborn was an Australian Presbyterian minister who immigrated to North America in the late 1920s, and in 1932 secured an earned Doctor of Divinity degree from Presbyterian College, Montreal.⁹ That was the year he was invited to fill the

⁴ Ken Munro, *First Presbyterian Church, Edmonton: A History* (Victoria, BC: Trafford, 2004) 168.

⁵ It was only in the 1950s that the Christian and Missionary Alliance, founded by former Presbyterian Church in Canada minister A. B. Simpson, accepted reluctantly the self-evident fact that they were now a denomination, not simply a sending agency for overseas missionaries.

⁶ The booklets were entitled: *The Battle of Armageddon*; *Demoniac Possession*; and *The Jewish Day and The Christian Sabbath*. All sold for a few cents (HSMA).

⁷ Judge J. F. McKinley, Ottawa, letter to Robert E. Rugen, Pattersonville, NY, 13 Aug. 1937, HSMA. Rugen, Chair of the First Church Schenectady Pulpit Nominating Committee, was seeking a reference.

⁸ Andrew Rule Osborn (1875-1949) was born in Beechworth, Victoria, Australia. He graduated from Queen's, University of Melbourne and theological studies at Ormond College (class of 1901), the Australian Presbyterian divinity school there. Osborn served congregations in Tasmania and Victoria, and from 1914-17 edited Sunday School and youth materials. He came to Canada in the post-Union call for ministers, served in Cornwall and Montreal, and then went to Biblical Seminary in 1929 but unexpectedly that summer was offered a year-long interim position in apologetics at Princeton Theological Seminary (PTS) as the school was reorganized. His residence (with a daughter) was at 4 Urban St., Mount Vernon, NY, which he maintained when he went to Edmonton. He authored three books, all published by Oxford University Press: *Schleiermacher and Religious Education* (1934); *Christian Ethics* (1940); and *Christianity in Peril: The New World and the Churches* (1942). His time at Biblical seems to have been stormy: "The Seminary I fear is in chaos," he wrote to Mekeel on 22 Sept. 1932. "Dr. White is a psychopath if not a paranoiac. Any student who goes there must face the possibility of the institution becoming bankrupt at any moment" (HSMA).

⁹ There is an anomaly here. In the Preface to his *Schleiermacher and Religious Education* Osborn

pulpit of First Presbyterian Church, Edmonton, made vacant by the death two years earlier of D. G. McQueen.¹⁰ McQueen had established the church on the banks of the Saskatchewan River back in 1887 and served in the pulpit there for forty-three years until his death at seventy-six. Describing First as “an important church” in a letter to Mekeel,¹¹ Osborn reported that a congregational meeting that was to consider a call was to be held later that day. A further meeting

was summoned for the lecture hall, but so many turned up that they had to go into [the] auditorium of the church. They were unanimous and enthusiastic and I felt it was my best course to settle here. So instead of professor I am minister of the First Presbyterian Church, Edmonton. It is a good church. The building cost \$250,000. I have large congregations on Sunday both morning and evening and there is every prospect of building up a very strong and influential church.¹²

Mekeel left Biblical Seminary in 1932, transferring to Andover Newton Theological School in suburban Boston. Osborn was increasingly aware that First Church Edmonton was badly run down: the ravages of church union, the loss of young people, and a pastor, who though an icon had stayed on too long, all having taken their toll. He wrote asking Mekeel to be his assistant and help to attract young people. Things started to improve in the church. By February 1933 he was reporting that the sanctuary “is always well filled, and it holds over 1500.” But he quickly added “I can do little until I have additional assistance.” He continued “There is a difficulty in regard to yourself by reason of the fact that you are not a Presbyterian. I do not know that you would even desire to come to Canada, nor that you would care to become a Presbyterian. I do not feel I could advise

claims that “in its original form this book was written as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Theology [sic] in the Presbyterian Theological College, Montreal.” But, as Rev. Dr. Dan Shute, the College Librarian points out, the degree was granted after a rigorous four-day examination on the basis of a previously published book and that book is listed as his 1914 *Method in Teaching: A Text-Book for Sunday School Teachers* (Dan Shute, “The Rise and Fall of the Earned D.D. in the Presbyterian Church in Canada,” online article, Feb. 2006, Montreal: The Presbyterian College at McGill University, 13, fn 37, 23 Oct. 2009 <http://www.presbyteriancollege.ca/rise_and_fall_of_the_earned_dd.pdf>). With Osborn nothing was straightforward.

¹⁰ In one obituary, D. G. McQueen (1854-1930), was described as “an evangelical preacher of the sanest type, the true spirit of Presbyterian doctrine, breathing through his every pulpit utterance.” He was moderator of the 1912 General Assembly when it met in his newly consecrated church, and was moderator a second time at Knox Church Toronto in 1925, this time of the non-concurrents. “He had a part” the obituary continued “in every activity that contributed to the growth of his home city” (*Acts and Proceedings of the Fifty-Seventh General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada* (1931): 291).

¹¹ A. R. Osborn, letter to H. S. Mekeel, 22 Sept. 1932, HSMA.

¹² In that letter of 22 Sept. 1932 Osborn writes Mekeel that he had entertained “serious thoughts of going [to Montreal], taking a church or a lectureship until a chair was available” but the call of a thousand member congregation was not to be scorned, even if it were out on the Prairies. The Osborns were cultured individuals and their eight children, scattered on three continents, were making a name for themselves. She was a woman’s page editor for eleven years in Australia and had edited the women’s section of the weekly *Australian Presbyterian Messenger*. Her husband was the author, it was later claimed, of some twenty educational and religious books (*Edmonton Journal*, 3 Feb. 1937, HSMA).

you on the matter. I am inclined to think that the Presbyterian Church is the one that would offer you most opportunity.”¹³ It was advice Mekeel was often to give his young men in later years.

By the spring of 1935 Mekeel had succumbed to Osborn’s entreaties. “I really believe there is the possibility of an awakening here,” Osborn wrote him encouragingly.¹⁴ On May first he informed him that “the immigration agent here called me to know if some suspicious character known as Mekeel was seeking to enter the British Empire. Ottawa had wanted a full check up.”¹⁵

Not only was Mekeel, on Osborn’s urging, entering Canada, he was becoming a Presbyterian minister. As a student minister (connected with the Salem Baptist Association) he had been serving the First United Church (Baptist and Disciples) in Swampscott, MA but now he needed speedy ordination. He approached the clerk of the Presbytery of Boston (Presbyterian USA), Earl van Zandt, who later recalled (relying on his memory as he had destroyed the correspondence) that “He asked us to receive him as a member of this Presbytery and then dismiss him to The Presbyterian Church in Canada. After lengthy discussion, the Presbytery agreed to this by a very close vote, and received and dismissed him the very same meeting.”¹⁶ “I had expected to be treated,” Mekeel wrote his mentor,¹⁷ “like a heathen and a publican and to be displayed as an ignoramus, especially with my dislike for speculative thinking. Instead they ordained me without dissent—and that considering that some of our views were poles apart.”¹⁸

Ordained on Sunday, 10 May 1935, in what he described as a “brief but dull service by ministers of the two denominations”¹⁹ he left two days later to spend the summer in Edmonton. On arrival he was interviewed by Session, who were assured by Osborn that his inquiries in Montreal (where he was a commissioner to General Assembly that year) provided no available Canadian alternative. The elders passed a resolution in Osborn’s absence (by now he was in New York recuperating from a busy year²⁰): “That we engage The Rev. Herbert S. Mekeel as assistant minister until he is accepted by the General Assembly of the church next June.”²¹ At the end of the summer Mekeel returned to Boston. Delays ensued, and by November an anxious Osborn was

¹³ A. R. Osborn, self-typed letter “these benighted Canadians can see no need for a secretary in the church” to H. S. Mekeel, 17 Feb. 1932, HSMA.

¹⁴ A. R. Osborn, letter to H. S. Mekeel, 9 Apr. 1935, HSMA.

¹⁵ A. R. Osborn, letter to H. S. Mekeel, 1 May 1935, HSMA.

¹⁶ Rev. Earl B. Van Zandt, letter to Rev. E. W. Miller, Gloversville, NY, 20 Nov. 1937, HSMA.

¹⁷ H. S. Mekeel, letter to A. R. Osborn, 10 May 1938, HSMA.

¹⁸ According to a letter in the alumni file of Andover Newton Theological School (ANTS), there is a letter signed by Mekeel, dated 25 June 1960, providing the date of his ordination as 12 May 1935 (Andover Newton Theological School Archives, Newton Centre, MA, courtesy of Ms Diana Yount, Reference Librarian).

¹⁹ Mekeel to ANTS, 25 June 1960.

²⁰ “I was tired when I left Edmonton, and church assemblies are far from a vacation,” Osborn wrote Mekeel, 27 June 1935, HSMA.

²¹ Excerpt from the minutes of the First Church Edmonton Session, 13 July 1935, signed by Rob Buchanan acting Session Clerk, sent to Mekeel, HSMA.

complaining that

I have had to limit my activities. I find that I cannot manage as much as I did. The Sunday School is under the direction of Dr. Gillespie and Prof. Adam. Generally the whole of the young people's work is chaotic. So I am hoping that you will be here by the middle of January at the latest [. . .]. I am wondering whether it would be a good idea to have a series of sermons for young people during February.²²

Ten days later he wrote: "As you know my intention is that you shall become the real minister of the Church as soon as the way is open."²³

This assurance proved later to be a recipe for disaster. Mekeel duly arrived in February and by May Osborn, again away in New York for his health, was writing Mekeel reclaiming his pulpit. Osborn's position as senior minister was increasingly being challenged. An undated petition from about that time, addressed to the Presbytery of Edmonton and quoted in the newspaper, assailed him for "using the pulpit as a political forum or arena for the discussion of politics instead of a gospel message."²⁴ "The above preaching has brought to many of the congregation distress of mind, resulting in cancellation of subscriptions and absence from Church attendance." He was accused of "modernism" for a series titled "Man the Unknown" and undiplomatically saying that "the congregation of First Presbyterian Church is asleep" and "That the Presbyterian Church in Canada has no program." Mrs. McQueen also seems to have been a powerful—and according to Osborn a divisive—influence. Osborn was also feeling decidedly uncomfortable in the presence of a younger, more popular, minister who was able to draw crowds to the church and whose preaching was so compelling and evangelical.

Mekeel was duly received as a minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada at the 1936 General Assembly and on 24 June 1936 was inducted as Associate Minister of First Church Edmonton. Trouble was brewing, however. By 26 August Mekeel chaired an emergency Session meeting because "a number of our young people desire to go out from our Church in Christian service." Osborn was not keen on their going out "without sufficient training."²⁵ As the fissure between the two ministers grew larger, Mekeel received an invitation to speak at a young people's meeting in St. Andrew's Ottawa and left on 17 September. In an apparently friendly farewell letter Osborn said "All I can do therefore is to hope you will have a good time" and then added ominously "It will be all right, if you wish to stay a little longer to complete your B. D. work."²⁶

²² A. R. Osborn, letter to H. S. Mekeel, 9 Nov. 1935, HSMA.

²³ Sentence copied out and typed separately, quotation dated 19 Nov. 1935, HSMA.

²⁴ On 8 Oct. 1936 the *Edmonton Journal* headline read "Rev. A. Osborn In Reply To Bible Temple." In his weekly "Voice of the Church" broadcast, Osborn had replied to an unnamed person ("a speaker at the Prophetic Bible Conference") for his inconsistencies. The newspaper immediately identified the individual as William Aberhardt. Osborn was apparently correcting the premier's eschatology "to which [he] frequently refers in [Aberhardt's] broadcast" (HSMA).

²⁵ Munro 169.

²⁶ H. S. Mekeel, letter to A. R. Osborn, 16 Sept. 1936, HSMA.

Three weeks later the Session of St. Andrew's Ottawa was requesting the appointment of Mekeel for three months: "such service to commence as early in November as you could conveniently make the necessary arrangements, and provided of course that your own Kirk Session would grant you the necessary leave of absence."²⁷ Permission was duly granted for a three-month leave of absence. It was a good time for Mekeel to absent himself from First Church. Osborn, through a group of supporters known as the Open Forum Club, had drafted a memorial against Mekeel that was submitted to the Session for transmission to Presbytery on 11 December²⁸: "We, your petitioners, are loyal to the standards and government of our Presbyterian Church and we ask you to help us to restore that government to our congregation."²⁹ Attitudes were hardening. The church secretary, a young woman who was one of Mekeel's supporters wrote, "he said a lot of nasty things about you [. . .]. He also does not approve of Stacy [sic] Woods." She continued "Even the Governor-general [John Buchan, Lord Tweedsmuir] spoke of you when he was here, telling some one that they, meaning Ottawa people, were going to have both you and your bride."³⁰ Gossip says also that you are to stay in Ottawa for good. So do not be downhearted see what good fortune has in store for you."³¹

The Clerk of the Presbytery of Edmonton, F. D. Roxburgh, a friend of Mekeel's, refused to allow the court to hear the memorial without his being present. Sam Niven, Session Clerk, received a letter from Mekeel early in the new year: "I love the church and its people, even those who dislike me, although they would not believe that. The hard and bitter struggle through which you and Alice and the others who love the Gospel is more than I realize, and I only wish it had not been my misfortune to be the focus of the trouble. However, such an antagonist might have aroused a storm sooner or later and the trouble cannot wholly be mine."³² At the annual congregational meeting an expression of the thanks of the congregation to Mekeel was sent on to St. Andrew's Ottawa. The petition was withdrawn³³ and Mekeel's resignation, left in the hands of the Session Clerk (which gave such offence) on departure for Ottawa, was accepted at the February meeting of Presbytery. A beautiful "From Friends in First Presbyterian Church Edmonton Alta," containing 240 signatures, was mailed to him. A First Church elder quoting "faithful are

²⁷ F. F. Burpee, Clerk of Session, letter to H. S. Mekeel, 6 Oct. 1936, HSMA.

²⁸ "The Doctor (i.e., Osborn) did explain to the Session that he put the memorial in proper form after those members had expressed their desire to know the facts as set out in that document" (Sam D. Niven, letter to H. S. Mekeel, 14 Dec. 1936, HSMA).

²⁹ "Memorial by Members of the Congregation of First Presbyterian Church, Edmonton, to the Presbytery of Edmonton, with Reference to the Present Condition of Our Church" (undated copy, HSMA).

³⁰ While in Edmonton Mekeel met Muriel Elizabeth McRae who accepted his proposal of marriage. In a letter to a friend in Detroit, he indicated that he was stopping off in the Motor City and continues "I shall have pleasant news. You will rejoice with me in the good quality of it" (H. S. Mekeel, letter to "Cecil", 3 Nov. 1936, HSMA). The engagement was subsequently broken, only to be renewed almost thirty years later. Mekeel prepared a home in Pattersonville, NY for her. Miss McRae was diagnosed with cancer and died 31 January 1965 before the wedding took place.

³¹ Grace, church secretary, letter to H. S. Mekeel, 17 Dec. 1936, HSMA.

³² H. S. Mekeel, letter to Sam Niven, 7 Jan. 1937, HSMA.

³³ F. D. Roxburgh, Presbytery Clerk, letter to H. S. Mekeel, 29 Jan. 1937, HSMA.

the wounds of a friend,” advised Mekeel to “Be tolerant with both fellow ministers and people your impulsiveness sometimes makes you forget. I do not like modernists any better than you do. I have learned by experience some parts of their teaching is clear and helpful to mystified minds.”³⁴

An outflanked Andrew Osborn resigned in March and left Edmonton three months later, his wife preceding him. Seven years later he wrote a former congregant:

I was glad to have Mr. Mekeel’s help, but unfortunately his ambition was to rule the church. While I was absent on my vacation, his mother and he visited members of the congregation telling them that I had persecuted him. I am incapable of persecuting anybody, but Mr. Mekeel has Hitler’s gift of attributing to others the things he does himself. What disappointed me was that people who must have known that Mr. Mekeel was not telling the truth turned against me [. . .]. I can understand the tactics of Hitler and Goebbels, for they were practised in Edmonton.³⁵

The Dominie had the letter, sent on to him, notarized and kept in his files. But there is no indication that he ever took legal action for libel. That was not his approach though he carefully mustered all the facts.

His year and a half in Edmonton was to be a formative experience for Herbert Mekeel, defining the rest of his ministry and influencing directly his subsequent mentoring of the young men (and a few women) he brought into ministry. Patterns were discernible there that he developed later: three young women sent to Vancouver Bible Training School, one at least of whom went out under the China Inland Mission in 1940—his earliest missionary recruit.³⁶ They were supported by a Training School Account that he had Session set up at First Church.³⁷ And the fierce loyalties he inspired were to continue throughout the rest of his life, as well as strident opposition to his strongly held convictions. But in his response he was always the gentleman.

Meanwhile the Dominie had arrived in Ottawa. It appears that St. Andrew’s heard

³⁴ William Simons, letter to H. S. Mekeel, 29 Jan. 1937, HSMA.

³⁵ E. R. Osborn, letter to Mrs. Douglas, 1 Feb. 1944, HSMA.

³⁶ Helen McRae wrote to Mekeel’s colleague and successor Michael Alford (who around 2002 was seeking reminiscences of the Dominie for a book he has yet to write) in an undated letter: “The second Sunday upon being home [in Edmonton] and hearing Herbert preach, I was strongly aware of God’s call that I should give up my teaching and go to Bible school for Christian training. For three nights I didn’t sleep a wink, trying to convince God that that should never be. God was so patient and insistent I finally gave in. Next day, I saw Dr. Mekeel in his study, told him what had happened and said I doubted if I should go for I didn’t know if I had any faith at all. He gave the wise response, ‘If that is so, don’t you think that Bible School is the very place you should go?’ I therefore went to Vancouver Bible School for two years, and following that I taught another two years and then went to China in 1940” (HSMA). The other two from First Church who accompanied her were Margaret Killen and Norma Cuthbertson who was for many years Home Secretary of the Mission to Lepers in Toronto.

³⁷ Compare with Sam D. Niven, letter to H. S. Mekeel, 14 Dec. 1936: “The Young People’s Society is going strong under the leadership of Allen Killen, and I heard the other day from the Vancouver girls. On the authority of the Training School Committee, I sent each of the three girls a cheque for \$5.00 to meet their Christmas expenditures,—the fund still grows and the Young People decided to put seventy-five per cent of all their funds to the Training School Account” (HSMA).

of him through Francis F. Burpee, Clerk of Session, who visited Edmonton frequently on court business and had relatives in the city. Mekeel's first services at St. Andrew's were 27 September and communion on 4 October 1936.³⁸ As well, he had been telegraphed by Ottawa Presbytery Presbyterian Young Peoples Society (PYPS) to conduct a week of "young peoples evangelical memberships drive services" during the intervening week." "Our aim," the telegram went on, "is to bring the young people to a saving knowledge of Christ and interest them in their church."³⁹ The meetings were an unqualified success: four young women, including significantly Moira Leathem, wrote to Mekeel's mother: "It is impossible to put into words the encouragement and inspiration he has brought us, and the high goal he has set before us."⁴⁰

"So impressed were we with his sincerity and the love of the Gospel he was preaching, that we asked him to remain for a period of some months," Judge J. F. McKinley recalled later.⁴¹ "In all my experience I have never seen a man who worked as hard as pastor, who visited the sick as much, or brought as much comfort into the homes of those in need, as this young man did." Mekeel built the evening service up from fifty when he came to two hundred by the time he left, organized a softball league which brought the young people out, and continued to recruit "several young people for the mission fields." On 3 February 1937 the St. Andrew's Session extended his contract until 31 May.⁴² The highlight of his time at St. Andrew's was his conducting a special service commemorating King George VI's coronation on 9 May 1937, as "acting minister."⁴³

But there was soon to be trouble. W. H. Leathem,⁴⁴ who had come from Scotland to serve St. Andrew's after the congregation lost its minister through church union, succumbed to cancer at Royal Victoria Hospital, Montreal, on 23 February after a long illness.⁴⁵ Mekeel was asked to preach at Knox Church so that the minister, Robert

³⁸ Gordon Faraday, telegram to H. S. Mekeel, 12 Aug. 1936, HSMA. There is also a formal letter of invitation from F. F. Burpee, Clerk of Session, 24 Aug. 1936, explaining that Scott MacKenzie had waived his invitation on 27 September in favour of Mekeel to comply with the request of the young people (HSMA).

³⁹ Canadian National Telegram, 12 Aug. 1936, HSMA.

⁴⁰ Alison Cochrane, Moira Leathem [daughter of the minister, then dying], Marjorie McKinnon, Genevieve Bronson, letter to Mrs. O. Mekeel, 7 Oct. 1937, HSMA.

⁴¹ McKinley to Rugen, 13 Aug. 1937.

⁴² F. F. Burpee, letter to H. S. Mekeel, 4 Feb. 1937, HSMA.

⁴³ Characteristically Mekeel preached on I Peter 2:17, "Fear God. Honour the King." Bulletin preserved by Mekeel (HSMA) as a highlight of his time in Ottawa. He would later refer to waiting in the vestry for the buzzer alerting him that the Governor General was in his pew before he could enter the sanctuary (H. S. Mekeel, personal interview, 1950s).

⁴⁴ William Harvey Leathem (1875-1937), of Belfast, completed his undergraduate degree at Queen's and theology degree at New College, Edinburgh with Assembly's Belfast. He served in Londonderry; as Assistant Minister at Coates' Parish church, Edinburgh; at St. Andrew's Fife; as chaplain of the 1st Gordon Highlanders in WWI; was called to St. Andrew's Ottawa in 1926; and authored three books. "Dr Leathem's pulpit utterances were ever characterized by a keen awareness of the vital and underlying principles of true Christianity" as John Buchan and Mackenzie King eulogized him at the funeral (*Acts and Proceedings of the Sixty-Third General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada* (1937): 301-2).

⁴⁵ "Rev. W. H. Leathem, M.A., D.D." *Presbyterian Record* (Apr. 1937): 103.

Johnston, could bring comfort to his neighbouring congregation in their grief. He also spoke at the funeral. Johnston, moderator of the 1932 General Assembly, later reflected: "My duties as Interim Moderator brought me in close touch with Mr. Mekeel and enables me to form a judgment about him. Lest I would be considered unfair I shall omit to express that judgment. This I do know that both in Edmonton and Ottawa he was the storm centre of divisions."⁴⁶ A minister in Belleville sniffed: "Mekeel is very strongly entrenched" and went on to indicate why he was unfit to receive the call: "he must be not only minister of St. Andrew's but also the minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada whom we can send to represent us in the Old Country where scholarship counts, and to the United States where we can show that the Canadian Church holds second candle to none."⁴⁷

Johnston's disapproval of Mekeel soon became an issue in the congregation. At a Session meeting on 21 September 1937 he was attacked by Judge McKinley. He wrote Mekeel: "I said I was surprised that a Moderator of our Session, and a past Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, doing such a thing, and ended up with the words, 'shame on you, shame on you.'"⁴⁸ On 7 October members of Presbytery had a long meeting with Johnston and asked him to resign. There was a brief flurry at the same time as "the ministers of Ottawa Presbytery informed our PYPS Provincial Executive that because of certain feeling in Ottawa they do not think it advisable for us to have you on our Convention program."⁴⁹ Their refusal to cooperate meant that 700 young people would not have billets for the Thanksgiving weekend. A compromise was finally worked out and Mekeel spoke as he had the previous year to a wildly enthusiastic group. A motion was almost passed asking the presbytery to remove Johnston as Interim Moderator.

The previous day the Ottawa papers announced that Herbert S. Mekeel had been called to First Presbyterian Church, Schenectady, New York, a church founded when the United States were still thirteen colonies. During the summer Mekeel had moved back to the Boston area, his contract with St. Andrew's Ottawa having expired at the end of May. Inquiries from Schenectady were initiated in August, Referee Judge McKinley wrote the chair of the pulpit committee, Robert E. Rugen, that "you will make no mistake in appointing Rev. Herbert S. Mekeel to your pulpit, and if you so decide and you get behind him, I venture to say you won't recognize your own congregation in twelve months, when his true worth becomes known, not only to the members of your church, but the citizens of Schenectady."⁵⁰ Bob Rugen, an engineer at General Electric, was one of the first to embrace Mekeel's warm evangelical faith.

⁴⁶ Robert Johnston, letter to E. W. Miller, Clerk of the Presbytery of Albany, 24 Nov. 1937, HSMA. The correspondence was initiated by a letter of 26 October 1937 in which Johnston challenged the legitimacy of the call to Mekeel from Schenectady. There were follow-up letters on 11 November and then the final one 24 November. They can only be described as "waspyish."

⁴⁷ William J. Walker, minister of St. Andrew's Belleville, Ontario, letter to Mr. Fiske, 2 Apr. 1937, HSMA. It would appear that Walker was actually applying for the vacancy by diminishing Mekeel though he protests that "I am not the man."

⁴⁸ J. F. McKinley, letter to H. S. Mekeel, 21 Sept. 1937, HSMA.

⁴⁹ John M. Stephens, President, Ontario PYPS, letter to H. S. Mekeel, 19 Sept. 1937, HSMA.

⁵⁰ McKinley to Rugen, 13 Aug. 1937.

On 6 October 1937 the *Ottawa Journal* announced that "Rev. H. Mekeel Accepts Call." It continued: "Mr. Mekeel left Ottawa in May after having been suply [sic] minister for six months, during which time he made many friends here who will be pleased to learn of the call extended him."⁵¹ Russell Dick, a prominent Ottawa lawyer journeyed south the next month. "Our trip to Schenectady," he reported to Mekeel on his return, "was full of hazards, and we were all glad to arrive home safely as the roads were in a very bad condition." "It gave us an opportunity of seeing not only the church buildings, but your people, and to see that you were in good hands. I do hope that you will not have any trouble such as you experienced in Ottawa, as that is enough for one lifetime."⁵² The *Dominion* was to remain in Schenectady for forty-one years, finally retiring at the age of seventy-five.

There was one final bizarre twist in the Ottawa saga. Even after the call to Schenectady went through, his Ottawa friends would not accept his loss and actively campaigned to bring him back to St. Andrew's. Session moved that Mekeel be considered "a suitable and desirable Minister of St. Andrew's Ottawa." A dissent noted that

His preaching is not acceptable to certain members of St. Andrew's. We believe him to be an alien under our laws and none but British Subjects have ever been ministers in St. Andrew's which has received and still derives assistance from Crown Grants. He has evidently found it very difficult to co-operate with the Ministers in either of the Canadian Presbyteries in which he has been located.⁵³

Clarence Pitts's name was at the top of the signatures of eight elders including, surprisingly, Mekeel's erstwhile advocate Francis Burpee.

It is interesting to speculate as to what went on both in Edmonton and Ottawa with Mekeel. Both pulpits were trophies of the anti-Unionist cause. Both were regarded as "plums" in The Presbyterian Church in Canada. A gifted but young, outspoken, and some would say abrasive, American upstart, sparked both resentment and jealousy. Though in his early days D. G. McQueen, a protégé of James Robertson, was evangelical in theology and possessed missionary zeal, time mired him increasingly and almost inevitably in that institutional Christianity that was typified by the quarter of a million dollar cathedral his congregation built in 1912. Gifted William Leathem, in spite of his daughter Moira's conversion experience under Mekeel, was conservative and very establishment. He had come from the Church of Scotland and it was only after 1929 that the union between it and the United Free Church brought in a more evangelical constituency. Though Irish he played the Scottish and British card to the hilt. Mekeel was a striking contrast to both men which goes a long way to explain his enthusiastic acceptance by the young, and the cool reaction to his boyish charm by an older constituency who guarded the traditions of the Kirk, particularly after 1925. It was a predictable clash, emblematic of the psychology of the post-Union church. It is

⁵¹ Clipping in HSMA.

⁵² Russell M. Dick, letter to H. S. Mekeel, 12 Dec. 1937, HSMA.

⁵³ Session minutes, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Ottawa, n.d., HSMA.

interesting to speculate on what would have been Mekeel's impact on either congregation and on the denomination had he received a call.

Mekeel was inducted by the Presbytery of Albany on 16 December 1937 as minister of First Presbyterian Church, Schenectady, New York, established 1760. The congregation was one of the most prestigious and historic congregations within its bounds. First Church numbered among its constituency the social elite of upper New York state, many of whom were members of the Mohawk Club down the street. When asked why the church would call such a maverick minister, one of them later said that Mekeel had two things going for him: he preached well, providing a polished, intellectually challenging, discourse, but—even more importantly—he had good manners.⁵⁴ He behaved, in spite of growing up in reduced circumstances (and thanks to his mother), impeccably and had mastered the fine art of Emily Post etiquette. He was courtly, a true gentleman, who always deferred to the ladies.

Historic Union College was less than a mile away from the church and, as he had elsewhere, Mekeel made an immediate approach to students on the campus. He had connected with Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship while in Edmonton, knew Stacey Woods (whom Osborn did not approve of), and encouraged the movement as it entered the United States. American Charles Troutman, on IVCF staff in Canada, became the advance party, and on 9 and 10 November 1938 had lengthy conversations with Mekeel about the future of the movement should it come south.⁵⁵ Mekeel, as the minister of a prestigious mainline church, with a growing student constituency in his congregation, provided IVCF with needed credibility, particularly among the clergy, as it pushed south. Schenectady became, and remained for many years, an IVCF beachhead.

As students flocked to First Church, it did not take long for Mekeel to establish the same kind of administrative structure that he had in Edmonton for the encouragement of persons into “full-time Christian service.” An Education Committee of Session was set up in 1939. The following year four students, each of them twenty or twenty-one years of age, met with the committee in Mekeel's study. They were the first fruits of Mekeel's aggressive recruitment of men to go into the ministry. Collister,⁵⁶ McKeefery,⁵⁷ McMillen,⁵⁸ and Wallace⁵⁹ all went to Princeton Seminary. They were the start of a

⁵⁴ Quoted by Michael Alford, personal interview, 11 Sept. 2007.

⁵⁵ On 9 November 1938 Troutman wrote: “Had an hour chat with Mr. Mekeel about the US situation showing him what we have done and have planned. He agrees with me on many lines as opposed to Stacey.” The following day he made this entry in his diary: “Had lunch at Mekeel's and a long talk with Mr. Mekeel on the future and development of student work” (Centre for the History of Christian Thought and Experience, Macquarrie University, held at the Bible Society of NSW, Sydney, Australia). Stacey visited Mekeel in February 1938 (see my *C. Stacey Woods and the Evangelical Rediscovery of the University* (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007) 73-74).

⁵⁶ Allan Vannin Collister, born in 1919 in Colorado Springs, CO, attended PTS, 1944-47; was ordained by the Presbytery of Albany on 29 January, 1947; served as Assistant Minister at First Schenectady, 1947-49; at First Church, New Haven, CT, 1949-52; and as Assistant Minister at Lake Avenue Congregational Church, Pasadena, CA, 1953- .

⁵⁷ William James McKeefery, born in 1918, spent his life after ordination in post-secondary educational administration.

⁵⁸ Ernest Lomax McMillen, born in 1919 in Roanoke, VA, attended PTS 1942-45; was missionary to Iran, 1945-50; Assistant Minister at First Schenectady, 1951-52; and also served at Ballston Center Church, 1952-56; Abadan Iran, International Church, 1956-59, and St. John's Devon, 1960-.

swelling tide. Engineers at General Electric (at its peak during the war there were 30,000 of them) were warned that “that minister at First Church” was out to get them into the ministry. Legend had it that by 1945, when Princeton Seminary students gathered in Miller Chapel were asked how many came from First Church, Schenectady, two rows responded.⁶⁰

On 6 June 1945 the Presbytery of Albany ordained three of those students, two going immediately to serve under the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions in Persia, as Iran was then known. Among others in that famous class was Christy Wilson, about to join IVCF staff as missionary secretary and establish the first Urbana in Toronto the following Christmas. Wilson went to Afghanistan in 1951 where he served for twenty-two years, all the time remaining *Minister extra muros* in Schenectady. He returned home when the Kabul International Church, just built, was razed on orders of his friend the shah, rightly concerned for his future as monarch.

It was inevitable that educational institutions would want Mekeel. He served on the boards of Albany Bible Institute, Gordon College and Divinity School, and was asked in the summer of 1947 by his friend Harold Ockenga to join the fledgling Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California.⁶¹ He joined the faculty two years later as Dean and acting Professor of Practical Theology. With only an undergraduate degree, it was a tribute to his reputation as a compelling pastor and preacher. Mekeel, however, only lasted a year. Afraid of losing his ecclesiastical connection—Los Angeles Presbytery was an implacable enemy of the new school—he returned to Schenectady after a year. It was basically an out for him: he was not particularly popular with some students,⁶² and longed to get back into a responsive and caring parish.⁶³

The scene was now set for Mekeel’s extraordinary engagement with Canadian Presbyterian theological institutions. Mekeel cast his eye northward, partly out of frustration with continual hassles with American Presbyterian judicatories, and ongoing conflicts over the satellite churches he was founding in the presbytery, but also for the opportunities for paying student ministerial positions (which didn’t exist in the United States), which would help fund some of the older married candidates. He also found the Canadian church more “conservative” and thus (in spite of his conflicts in Edmonton and Ottawa) assumed that they would be more hospitable and welcoming.

In the autumn of 1952 three students from Schenectady arrived at Knox College to take their final year of theology. Two of them were from Fuller Theological Seminary, stymied by the refusal of the Presbytery of Los Angeles to allow them to be ordained in the Presbyterian Church (USA). The third came from Princeton Seminary where he was encountering difficulties with Albany Presbytery. Stuart Merriam had grown up in First

⁵⁹ Donald Eking Wallace, born in 1918 in St. Luis Obispo, CA, attended PTS 1942-45; served in Iran 1946-51; and was called as Co-Pastor, then Senior Pastor to historic South Church, Syracuse, NY.

⁶⁰ Relayed to me by Professor Chuck Cardston, Fairfax, CA, 7 May 2007.

⁶¹ George Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987) 27-28.

⁶² According to Professor Chuck Carlston, member of the first graduating class at Fuller, Mekeel seemed unable to pace his course requirements and made unrealistic demands of his students (personal interview, Fairfax, CA, 7 May 2007).

⁶³ “He often found his administrative tasks thankless and so eventually decided to return to his New York pastorate when the year was completed” (Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism* 107).

Church, graduated from Union College (where he was an active IVCF member) in 1950 and had taken two years at Princeton. At the time of Mekeel's death he described him as "my spiritual father having influenced my life far more than anyone could possibly realize."⁶⁴ Merriam left Canada on graduation, his only experience in the Canadian church being service on a student mission field in Prince Edward Island.

The two who came from the West Coast would both be ordained, on graduation from Knox College, in The Presbyterian Church in Canada and accept ordained missionary appointments with the General Board of Missions. John Mickelsen, a General Electric engineer, had completed three years at Fuller but lacked credits in Hebrew and church history. Mekeel sent him to Knox to make up his deficiencies. He was appointed to Melfort, Saskatchewan, where he remained for four years before transferring back to the American church.⁶⁵

The other, Ray Rollins, an ex-GI from Buffalo, encountered Mekeel while a student at Rensselaer Institute of Technology in nearby Troy. He attended Mekeel's class for college students held each Sunday prior to the morning service, and through Mekeel's influence was brought back to faith after abandoning his childhood fundamentalism while in the military. He noted that Mekeel "devoted his whole life to his students."⁶⁶ Rollins joined First Church, was married by the Dominie⁶⁷ and having graduated from Rensselaer mid-year was encouraged to get his Greek during a semester at Faith Seminary, a Carl McIntire school in suburban Philadelphia. He then went on to Fuller for two years. He had wanted to go to Afghanistan as an instructor in an engineering school set up by Christians in that limited-access country. When the founder, Dick Gordon, met with him and explained the health risks to his wife who had had a difficult pregnancy, they decided against going. Mekeel encouraged him to take his final year of theology and sent him to Knox. Rollins accepted an appointment to Barney's River, Pictou Presbytery, remaining there three years. He left the ministry, demitted his ordination, taught engineering in Buffalo, and then worked with the US Navy in the Washington DC area.

Sending the three to Knox College was an experiment by the Dominie to discover alternatives to the impasse he was experiencing in the United States with seminaries and judicatories. Rollins was not positive about the experience. He found that while Faith

⁶⁴ Stuart Merriam, letter to Michael Alford, 28 Aug. 1986, HSMA. Merriam was ordained on graduation from Knox and then went on to a doctorate at New College, Edinburgh (1956). For a year he was associate at Faith Church, Baltimore; then at First Portsmouth, VA; and in 1961 was called to succeed John Hess McComb at Broadway Church in Manhattan, a congregation with a substantial endowment left them by McComb's predecessor who had married into the Dun (of Dun and Bradstreet) fortune. The following year Merriam became a media celebrity when the Presbytery of New York severed the pastoral tie. *Time* magazine noted that "presbytery spokesmen say that his fellow ministers did not quarrel so much with Merriam's theology as with his 'anti-intellectual' evangelism, inappropriate to a call that included ministering to students from nearby Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary" (*Time* 15 June 1962). Merriam went off to Goroka, EHP, Papua New Guinea (PNG), to found the Highland Christian Mission. The Mission was decertified by the Evangelical Council for Fiscal Accountability in March 1993 at the same time as Merriam got into serious legal difficulties in PNG. He was subsequently defrocked by the Tennessee Valley Presbytery of the PCA.

⁶⁵ John Mickelson, telephone interview, 25 Sept. 2007.

⁶⁶ Ray Rollins, Solomons, MD, telephone interview, 25 Sept. 2007.

⁶⁷ At the end of his ministry it was noted that Mekeel performed 265 marriages, 593 baptisms, 27 child dedications, and 532 funerals (Fortieth Anniversary bulletin, Reformation Sunday, 1977, HSMA).

Seminary had a right-wing party line, he discovered that Knox similarly had a left-wing party line and was "unwilling to raise uncomfortable questions that challenged assumptions by the faculty."⁶⁸ This he contrasted unfavourably with the openness of Fuller Seminary.

As a result, Mekeel looked increasingly to Presbyterian College, Montreal. He had already sent in 1951 Fred Woodberry,⁶⁹ son of First Church missionaries Ada and Earle Sr., to Montreal to study at Presbyterian College, along with Don Wilson⁷⁰ and Jim Raney.⁷¹ Woodberry's future brother-in-law Alvin Desterhaft had also been encouraged to go there but withdrew after a few days.⁷² Raney, Wilson, and Woodberry graduated from Presbyterian College, Montreal on 28 April 1953 and, along with a fourth candidate, were ordained by the Presbytery of Albany the following day in First Church Schenectady. Principal Robert Lennox preached the sermon. These three were the vanguard of at least a dozen students from the congregation who registered at Presbyterian College during the 1950s. One year (1956-57) they formed the majority of the graduating class. "The Dominie thought that he could cooperate with Principal Lennox and turn Presbyterian College into the Fuller of the east," Ed Hart (one of the twelve) explained recently, with a wry tone in his voice.⁷³

In the academic year 1953-54 David Hostetter and Earle Roberts were listed as "special students." Hostetter grew up in India where his parents were missionaries with the Christian and Missionary Alliance. He went to their training college at Nyack on the Hudson River. Mekeel had the Alliance in his blood, was welcome at the school, and a link formed. Hostetter worked with Albany Child Evangelism and went up to Montreal and, on graduation in 1954, was appointed as ordained missionary to Valleyfield,

⁶⁸ Rollins, 25 Sept. 2007.

⁶⁹ Fred Woodberry was never ordained but was involved in Christian ministry as a staff member of IVCF in both Montreal and Hudson House, New York. He went out briefly under Overseas Missionary Fellowship in Singapore. He now lives in Manchester, New Hampshire.

⁷⁰ On graduation, Donald J. Wilson taught at an institute Mekeel set up on the campus of Albany Bible Institute for professional workers, spending a year going through the Bible, and being involved in evangelistic church planting. He went on to get a PhD in Edinburgh and was received from the Presbytery of Albany in 1958 to serve an ordained missionary appointment in the Presbytery of Quebec in Legatt's Point. The following year he was assigned to work under the General Board of Missions in Taiwan with his wife Marie. He first went to the Tainan Theological Seminary and later worked with Church World Service of the World Council and became Associate General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. On 31 December 1966 he was transferred to the United Presbyterian Church (USA), subsequently working in the denominational headquarters. He is now married to Mary Jane Lundy, Associate Director of the Reimagining Conference of 1993. He and Mekeel parted over theological and political issues.

⁷¹ James Wilbur Raney grew up in Rolla, Missouri and served in the US Navy during WWII. He came to Schenectady in 1947 to work for GE. In 1950 took a year at Fuller. "Although I visited many churches during my navy days, it was not until I began attending the First Presbyterian Church in Schenectady that I yielded my heart to the Lord and entered into the joy of my salvation. It was in Schenectady that I was asked whether I had ever considered devoting my life to full-service for the Lord. After a year of prayerful consideration, the Lord gave me peace in the decision to go into His service." "Spiritual Experience-James Raney" (HSMA). Now deceased.

⁷² Alvin Desterhaft, letter to Robert Lennox, 9 Oct. 1951 (The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives and Records Office, 1984-6001-13-1).

⁷³ Ed Hart, Seymour, TX, telephone interview, 26 Sept. 2007.

Quebec, and soon was starting up a new church extension charge on the Lakeshore in Montreal, called St. Columba by the Lake.⁷⁴

Meanwhile Jim Raney, who had been an electrical engineer at GE, returned to Canada and was appointed to St. Edward's Church, Beauharnois, Quebec. He was recognized as an ordained missionary by the Presbytery of Montreal on 23 June 1954. The following year he returned to Schenectady to be Mekeel's assistant, went back to GE, and then on 13 May 1958 was again recognized by The Presbyterian Church in Canada, this time as territorial missionary in Lanark and Renfrew Presbytery, covering Petawawa and Chalk River. He returned permanently to the United States three years later, becoming for over a decade a chaplain in the US Army during Vietnam. Mekeel was always vociferous in defending the American action there and included Raney each week on his bulletin as one who was "pro patria."

Earle Roberts actually finished in January of 1955 and took up an appointment to Virden, Manitoba. Mekeel travelled by train in a bitter prairie winter to attend the ordination, as he did with all his men.⁷⁵ At the time of Mekeel's death Roberts, then senior Clerk of the General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, wrote: "Dr. Mekeel had a great influence on my life, and time and time again I have expressed thanks to God for the privilege of having grown up under his ministry."⁷⁶ Roberts was appointed to Nigeria and went to study in Toronto in May of 1956. After fourteen years in Nigeria, and the bloody Biafra secession, and a tragic accident that deeply moved the entire church, he went on to give distinguished service to the denomination, first with the Board of World Mission, then the Administrative Council, and finally as senior clerk of Assembly. He was moderator of the 1993 General Assembly. "Dr. Roberts," the minute of appreciation on his retirement read, "brought to his office many gifts. He has used those gifts in the service of the whole Church. Above all, he brought a deep commitment to the Church and to its King and Head."⁷⁷

In the academic year 1955-56 there were five Schenectady men at Presbyterian College: John Brush,⁷⁸ William Delaney, Ed Hart,⁷⁹ Jim Morton,⁸⁰ and Eugene Williams.

⁷⁴ B. David Hostetter was ordained 6 May 1954 by the Presbytery of Montreal; translated to St. John and St. Stephen, Saint John on 9 September 1958; became assistant to Walter Welch at St. Andrew's Humber Heights; and subsequently transferred to the United Presbyterian church (USA) as an ecumenical Christian educational consultant for Schuyler Co. He describes Mekeel as "super orthodox" and a "dominating character" (telephone interview, Batavia, New York, 7 Sept. 2007).

⁷⁵ Dorothy Roberts said that the air in the tires of the cars parked outside the church froze during the service and the ride home was clunk clunk clunk (personal interview, 26 Sept. 2007).

⁷⁶ Earle Roberts, letter to Michael Alford, 30 Sept. 1986, HSMA.

⁷⁷ *Acts and Proceedings of the One-Hundred and Eighteenth General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada (1992)*: 8900.

⁷⁸ John Brush, from Scranton, was another Nyack graduate. Mekeel became a father figure to him as his own father had died when he was three. He got his BA at Sir George Williams College (one of the reasons he gave for going to Montreal), and served as a student at Mountain and South Mountain, Brockville Presbytery. Ordained as ordained missionary at Ingleside, Glengarry Presbytery, he gave a lifetime of faithful service to The Presbyterian Church in Canada, first in Molesworth and Gorrie, and then in Dundalk and Swinton Park. He has retired to Shelburne.

⁷⁹ Ed Hart served the church in Ballston Spa, New York during his first two years at Presbyterian College, only serving locally (Stanley Church as youth director) his final year. He was ordained in 1957 by

Clyde Reed was also in residence, doing an arts degree in history as the Dominie had suggested. It didn't take long for him to discover that he was still an engineer at heart and he transferred a year later to the McGill engineering faculty. A decade further on he enrolled at Knox College, graduating in 1972. He was ordained after "a hassle" by Albany Presbytery into the church in Amsterdam, New York, which subsequently split, one group forming an Orthodox Presbyterian church. Reed is presently in Arizona with the Associate Reformed Presbyterian denomination, church planting when past seventy years of age. Writing to Principal Lennox on behalf of the Student Committee of First Church Donald Brown stated: "Mr. Mekeel and all of us connected with student work are grateful for the fine teaching grounding in faith being given by you and your staff."⁸¹

In 1956-57 the number of Schenectady men at Presbyterian College crested. John Brush graduated in 1958. The numbers were beginning to tail off. Mekeel was from 1958 to 1960 the President of the National Association of Evangelicals which took a lot of time away from the church. He started to look for another congregation. The final Schenectady recruit was Paul Mills, who graduated from the college in 1961. The two first met while Mills was studying at Nyack. At Mekeel's urging Mills completed undergraduate work at St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Nova Scotia, at the same time serving at Merigomish congregation, Pictou Presbytery. He then went on to Montreal, being appointed to Vernon, Ottawa Presbytery, as a student.

Mills had lost his own father at the age of twelve under tragic circumstances and Mekeel provided, over twenty years, continual paternal advice and encouragement. In 1960 Mekeel wrote Mills: "I do not blame you for whatever transpired between you and Lennox, and I am only too glad to know that we shall be seeing each other one of these days."⁸² On 15 May 1961 Mekeel preached, as was his custom, at Mills' ordination in Vernon, Ottawa Presbytery. He recruited him the following year to be director at Camp Pinnacle, Mekeel's summer centre in the Adirondacks. He then went on to Pittsfield, Massachusetts, a Mekeel church plant. Finally in June of 1969 Mills returned to Canada (his name had never been taken off the roll of Presbytery) to another church plant, this time in Barrie, Ontario, that was called Westminster. It was not an easy assignment but Mekeel was always there for Mills. In 1974 Mills wrote to his mentor: "I do appreciate the prayers of you and fellow-Christians at First Pres. I have profited by your prayer and concern."⁸³ During the summer of 1981 he was called to St. Andrew's Wingham, Presbytery of Grey-Bruce, and seemed to bask in the warmth of a strong and supportive congregation. News from Schenectady was not good, however: his daughter Liz was caring for Mekeel who was increasingly incapacitated and mentally challenged. Mills'

the Presbytery of Abilene Texas (PCUS), and did graduate study at Texas Tech. For over a decade he was in Beirut at the Armenian Community College. From 1976-96 he was pastor in Seymour, Texas. When he came from Texas to work at GE, he looked for a church his first Sunday, found First Presbyterian, and "it changed my life" (telephone interview, 26 Sept. 2007).

⁸⁰ James Edward Morton was another Nyack graduate. Ordained by Albany Presbytery in 1957, he served congregations in upstate New York until 1972, taught at Rochester Institute of Technology, and finally worked in PCA congregations near his home in Lake George.

⁸¹ Donald Brown, letter to Robert Lennox, 9 Apr. 1956, HSMA.

⁸² H. S. Mekeel, letter to Paul Mills, 6 Feb. 1960, HSMA.

⁸³ Paul Mills, letter to H. S. Mekeel, 16 Apr. 1974, HSMA.

many friends were shocked to hear on Christmas Eve 1985 that he had died of a self-inflicted gun shot wound the night before. "It was never the same without Mekeel being there for him," his widow reflected years later.

Mekeel's own final years were not easy. Adoption of the new Confession of 1967, which he actively campaigned against, put him in a difficult situation in spite of having been made moderator of the Presbytery of Albany the year before. There were difficulties with some of his church plants, several of which went independent or split. One, Loudonville Community, is today one of the largest congregations in the tri-city area. He was vexed over the societal turmoil of the late sixties. Well past retirement, he worried about the future for First Presbyterian Church, particularly after the Kenyon trial in 1974 proscribed (as was to happen in The Presbyterian Church in Canada with the MacDougall case in 1979) anyone not wholeheartedly accepting the ordination of women.⁸⁴ On the first of February 1977 he submitted his resignation from the United Presbyterian Church (USA) to the clerk of Albany Presbytery.⁸⁵ His congregation also voted to secede. The court case about the ownership of the property went all the way to the United States Supreme Court. "Our incorporation," James R. Stewart, who was on the Session committee that made the case explained,

predates a revision of the New York State Religious Corporation Law and so was grandfathered with existing privileges, which we maintained included changing denominational affiliation without consequences to our property. After a period of years the courts upheld that interpretation and the U. S. Supreme Court agreed [in 1986] that it was a valid neutral principles of law case.⁸⁶

The church is now part of the New York Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA).

On 20 July 1977 Mekeel made his last trip to Canada, concluding sixteen years as speaker at the Knox Church Toronto Summer Fellowship.⁸⁷ Mekeel retired on 31 December 1979. His colleague and successor Michael Alford graciously allowed him to keep his office in the church with all of his eight thousand books. He was going to set about writing the history of the church but his faculties were failing. One terrible wintry night in February 1981, while he was visiting Christy Wilson in Boston, someone broke into his study. Finding nothing of value there except some old books and furniture (the burglar thought), he used kerosene the Dominie kept for his Coleman stove while

⁸⁴ The official statement from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) stated explicitly: "Neither a synod nor the General Assembly has any power to allow a presbytery to grant an exception to an explicit constitutional provision. A candidate who chooses not to subscribe to the polity of this church may be a more useful servant of our Lord in some other fellowship whose polity is in harmony with the candidate's conscience."

⁸⁵ H. S. Mekeel, letter to Donald W. Stake, Clerk of Albany Presbytery, 1 Feb. 1977, HSMA.

⁸⁶ James R. Stewart, e-mail to the author, 28 Jan. 2008.

⁸⁷ Mekeel counted Knox senior ministers Christy Innes, Robert Barr and particularly William Fitch his friends. He was at Knox Church, Toronto for the five weeks in the summer of 1960 and again for a week of outreach to both church and university 22-23 January 1966. Many of Mekeel's ideas (such as Summer Fellowship) were borrowed by William Fitch and used in the ministry of Knox Church.

camping and poured it out in front of the four walls with bookcases from floor to ceiling and then set it alight. The antiques were destroyed, the colonial portrait ruined, but worst of all the priceless library was reduced to powder. The result on Mekeel, when he returned and discovered the devastation that awaited him, was catastrophic. He never recovered and his once keen mind slipped further and further away from its moorings.

Four years later, on 24 August 1986, he died. Tributes came from all over the world but probably the most touching was from the high Episcopal priest whose church abutted First. For almost forty years Father Darwin Kirby proved that the Dominie was open and tolerant of others, loving and gracious, even if he disagreed. Jim Raney came from Missouri, Christy Wilson from Boston, a native son from a church in Chicago, another from Ypsilanti. The church was full.

But the real testament to the influence of Herbert Surface Mekeel was in the lives he had touched and the ministries that reflected his influence. As Ed Smith,⁸⁸ a faithful minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada for fifty years, remarked: "I can still hear Dr. Mekeel saying as we laboured to the top of some mountain in the Catskills or the Adirondacks, 'Come on! Put some energy in it! It's good missionary training.'"⁸⁹ Many of us, who owe so much to his life and influence, often still think we can hear the Dominie say on occasion: "Come on! Put some energy in it" as we go about our daily vocation.

⁸⁸ Edward G. Smith, who became a Christian at First Church, did not follow the usual path, attending first Gordon College and then graduating from Westminster Theological Seminary. After his second year there (in 1956) he went to Cranberry Portage, Manitoba, and from that moment on he committed himself to ministry in Canada. His final congregation before retirement was Centreville and Millbrook in Peterborough Presbytery.

⁸⁹ Ed Smith, letter to First Church Re-Union, 21 Aug. 1991, HSMA.

THE CANADIAN SOCIETY OF PRESBYTERIAN HISTORY:

Minutes of the Annual Meeting 29 September 2007, held at the Knox College, University of Toronto, 59 St. George Street, Toronto:

The meeting was Called to Order by the President, Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Johnston at 1:10pm. The Secretary-Treasurer, Mr. Michael Millar, acted as Secretary for the meeting. Nineteen members were in attendance.

The President opened the meeting by welcoming all who were present.

The President recognised the passing in late 2006 of a long-time supporter of the Society, Rev. Dr. John Webster Grant. Several members shared thoughts and memories of this fine Christian gentleman. The Secretary informed the meeting that he obtained a two-page memorial from Dr. John Moir on his long-time friend and colleague and this will appear in the 2006 Society Papers. Following these comments the President read a tribute to Dr. Grant, while the members stood. It was agreed that the President's words would be spread in the Minutes

“John Webster Grant was one of the major figures in Canadian Church History. A native of Pictou County, Nova Scotia he was for many years professor of church history at Emmanuel College, a guide to many a novice church historian, and author of many seminal articles and books on Canadian church history, including the pioneer study of work among Canadian First Nations, *The Moon in Wintertime*. Those who knew John Grant as a teacher and a colleague remember with gratitude his wisdom and gentle humour.

Dr. Grant was an active member of the Society, and two of his contributions to our discussions have been posted on the website. The Society notes his passing in 2006 with sorrow, but with thanksgiving that so many of us had the privilege of knowing him.”

The President called for regrets. Ms. Olive Anstice, Rev. Dr. James Armour, Ms. Kim Arnold, Mr. Mark Boundy, Mr. Gerry Boyce, Rev. Peter Bush, Hon. Lorne Clarke, Rev. Major Lloyd Clifton, Rev. Dr. Zander Dunn, Rev. Dr. Eldon Hay, Father Edward Jackman, Rev. Dr. Sheldon MacKenzie, Dr. John Moir, Rev. Ritchie Robinson, Rev. Dr. Donald Smith, Rev. Angus Sutherland, Dr. Marilyn Whiteley, and Rev. Dr. Jack Whytock, were noted as being received by the Secretary-Treasurer.

The Secretary was instructed to send a letter to Dr. Moir expressing regret that he is not able to be with us because of the current state of his health and tendering to him the good wishes of the Society.

The agenda was presented. No additions were called for. On motion of the Secretary-Treasurer, duly seconded, the agenda as presented, was the agenda for the meeting.

On motion of the Secretary-Treasurer, seconded by Mr. John Gammell, the Minutes of the 2006 Annual Meeting, as circulated prior to the meeting, were approved, no errors or omissions having been noted.

Business Arising from the Minutes:

(1) The Secretary-Treasurer gave a report on the current state of the Society website at www.csph.ca. He informed the meeting that we now have eighteen (18) Papers up. Our web requirements have been very modest up to now and have been done for us at minimal cost by Mr. Ian MacCready, former Webmaster for The Presbyterian Church in Canada. The Secretary-Treasurer has had discussions with Mr. Bob Anger to enquire if he would be willing to take on the role of Society Webmaster. Mr. Anger looks after the Archives & Records Office component of The P. C. C. website and is agreeable to looking after ours. Moved by the Secretary-Treasurer, seconded by Rev. Dr. John Johnston that "Bob Anger be appointed Webmaster to the Canadian Society of Presbyterian History." Carried. Mr. Anger will liaise with Mr. MacCready to find out exactly what he needs to do to access our website. Mr. Clarkson informed the meeting that The Presbyterian Church in Canada website is presently undergoing a major upgrade and many of the links – such as ours through the Committee on History portal – are not working at the present time. This was confirmed from several places on the floor.

(2) The Secretary-Treasurer informed the meeting that the final payment from the Bailey Estate amounting to five hundred and sixty-three dollars and ninety-three cents (\$563.93), had been received. In response to a question from the President as to exactly how much money we had received as a result of the late Dr. Bailey's generosity, the Secretary-Treasurer reported four thousand two hundred and sixty-three dollars and ninety-three cents (\$4263.93). The Terms of Reference, as approved at the 2006 Annual Meeting, were given out for the benefit of the members present. It was also noted that they are given on the Society website.

(3) Calvin – Bryden for 2009, the President reported. Dr. MacLeod informed the meeting that he had two Papers lined up already. Professor Macdonald, in response to a question, indicated that a number of events are planned for 2009 at various venues in and around the University to recognise the 500th anniversary of the birth of John Calvin.

President's Report.

The President then gave his report. He indicated that he had now served for five years as President, the same length of time as his predecessor, Rev. Dr. John Johnston, and was stepping down.

Editor's Report.

The Secretary-Treasurer read the Editor's Report. Miss Millar is still working on the 2006 Papers and hopes to have them completed very shortly. She has made some revisions to the guidelines for presenters, and all of the presenters at the meeting today have been furnished with a copy prior to the meeting. She asked the meeting for approval to continue to refine the guidelines from time-to-time as circumstances warrant. This was agreed to. The Secretary-Treasurer informed the meeting that because of the size of the 2005 publication – twelve Papers and a complete author index from 1975 to 2005 – the mailing charges have been very heavy. A single copy weighed over 500 grams, which meant that they had to go out parcel post instead of first class mail. Miss Millar had noted in her report that the Secretary-Treasurer had taken the copies addressed to members in the Maritimes down East with him in July and had personally hand delivered them, thereby saving the Society over three hundred dollars (\$300.00) in postal charges. Following the presentation it was Moved by Rev. Dr. John Johnston, seconded by Rev. Dr. Victor Shepherd "That the appreciation of the Society be given to our Editor for the excellent job she did in editing the 2005 Papers of the Society." Carried.

Secretary-Treasurer's Report.

(1) The financial statement was circulated and discussed. Following amplification of certain items in the statement, the financial statement was approved on motion of the Secretary-Treasurer, seconded by Professor Macdonald. The matter of re-investment of the G. I. C's. when they mature was discussed – one in October and the other at the end of May 2008. The Secretary-Treasurer Moved, seconded by Margaret Stephenson "That the Secretary-Treasurer be granted permission to re-invest these two G. I. C's. when they mature." Carried.

(2) Rev. Dr. Anderson questioned the expense of the advertisement in the August 2007 issue of the *Presbyterian Record*. He stated that it seemed to be a tremendous expense for so little return, amounting to roughly twenty-four (24) memberships. However several members expressed the view that the advertisement at least brought the Society to the notice of the Church. Two ladies present stated that they were at the meeting as a result of seeing the advertisement. Margaret Stephenson felt that the meeting notice should go out earlier so that it could be posted on church bulletin boards. These comments were noted.

New Business:

(1) The matter of an honorarium for the Editor was brought up for discussion by Mr. Bob Anger. The Secretary-Treasurer immediately declared a conflict of interest – the Editor being his daughter. Mr. Anger noted that it was his understanding that the Editor had not received any remuneration for all of the work involved with the 2005 Papers – her first effort. He Moved, seconded by Rev. Dr. A. D. MacLeod “That the Editor’s Honorarium for the 2005 Papers be two hundred and fifty dollars (\$250.00), with an additional sum of one hundred dollars (\$100.00) for 2006 and subsequent years.” Carried.

(2) The Secretary-Treasurer reported that with the Canadian and United States dollars being almost equal, a change to our U.S. and Foreign rate structure is necessary. At the moment the U.S. Rate is twenty dollars in U.S. funds (US\$20.00) or twenty-five in Canadian funds (CDN\$25.00). The Foreign rate is twenty-five dollars in U.S. funds (US\$25.00) or thirty dollars in Canadian funds (CDN\$30.00). While we have no U.S. or Foreign subscribers at the moment, if someone sent us a subscription in U.S. dollars we would lose money on the postage charges. He Moved, seconded by Rev. Dr. John Johnston “That the rate for United States subscriptions be set at five dollars (\$5.00) above the Canadian membership rate, payable in Canadian funds; and that the rate for Foreign subscriptions be set at ten dollars (\$10.00) above the Canadian membership rate, payable in Canadian funds, and that the Executive review this in one year.” Carried.

(3) The matter of a venue for the 2008 meeting was discussed. Professor Macdonald informed the meeting that the Scottish History Society also meets on the last Saturday in September at the University of Guelph. In response to a question, Dr. John Johnston – one of the Founding Members’ of the Canadian Society of Presbyterian History – replied that ever since the Society had been formed its meetings had been held on the last Saturday of September. There was some discussion about either moving the day back or forward one week, but one member expressed some horror at moving the meeting into October – that month is just too busy as it is. It was generally agreed that there are going to be conflicts with other events no matter what date is chosen. It was also noted that an event at the University campus today had got the parking lots closed off, which made getting to the College extremely difficult. At the end of the discussion the Secretary-Treasurer Moved, seconded by Mr. John Gammell “That Knox College be the venue for the 2008 meeting and that Saturday the 27th of September be the day.” Carried. The President and Secretary-Treasurer were given Power to Issue in the event that the day or venue has to be changed.

Election of Officers:

The President is retiring from the position. On behalf of the Nominating Committee, struck at the 2006 meeting, Rev. Dr. John Johnston Moved, seconded by Professor Macdonald “That Rev. Dr. A. Donald MacLeod be nominated to serve as President of the Society.” There being no nominations from the floor, Dr. MacLeod was elected President for 2007 – 2008.

It was Moved by Mr. John Gammell, seconded by Mr. Bob Anger “That Michael Millar continue as Secretary-Treasurer for 2007 – 2008.” Carried.

It was Moved by the Secretary-Treasurer, seconded by Mr. Ross Lamb “That Elizabeth Millar continue as Editor for 2007 – 2008.” Carried.

Dr. MacLeod Moved a Vote of Thanks to Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Johnston for his five years as President of the Society. Carried unanimously.

Adjournment:

The 2007 Annual General Meeting was adjourned at 2:00pm on Motion of Mr. Clarkson, duly seconded and Carried and the regular business of the Society resumed.

Geoffrey Johnston, BA, BD, M.Th, Th.D.
President.

Michael Millar, FRPSC.
Secretary-Treasurer.

THE CANADIAN SOCIETY OF PRESBYTERIAN HISTORY:

FINANCIAL REPORT - 29 September 2007:

<u>Item:</u>	<u>Income:</u>	<u>Expenses:</u>	<u>Balance:</u>
Balance forward 30 September 2006:			2379.88
Memberships 2005	140.00		
Memberships 2006	560.00		
Memberships 2007	200.00		
Memberships paid in advance 2009 - 2013	200.00		
Corporate memberships 2005	120.00		
Sale of papers	19.00		
Donations	50.00		
Bank Interest	1.53		
G. I. C. 9078920 BR (24 October 2006)	2,000.00		
G. I. C. Interest	34.90		
G. I. C. 9078867 BR (31 May 2007)	2,000.00		
G. I. C. Interest	59.85		
Bequest, Estate of the late T. M. Bailey. (1)	563.93		
Total Income.	5,949.21		5,949.21
Sub-total.			8,329.09
Refreshments - 2005 meeting		30.00	
Donation - St. John's Presbyterian Church, Toronto		100.00	
Editor expense		22.08	
Postage		384.38	
Photocopying - Secretary-Treasurer		3.60	
Office Supplies - Secretary-Treasurer		19.37	
New style cheques		28.94	
Conestoga Press for 2005 Papers		1,330.83	
Website honorarium - Ian MacCready		250.00	
Advertising - Presbyterian Record		487.60	
G. I. C. maturing 18 October 2007		2,000.00	
G. I. C. 0317-9605280 - maturing 1 June 2008		2,000.00	
Total Expenses.		6,656.80	6,656.80
Balance Forward 29 September 2007:			1,672.29
Assets - two G. I. C's. @ 2000.00 each			4,000.00
Total - Balance Forward plus the two G. I. C's.			\$5,672.29
Notes:			
1. Dr. Bailey very generously included the Canadian Society of Presbyterian History in his Will. The amount shown is the final payment.			
Michael Millar, FRPSC. Secretary-Treasurer.			