

A History of Breadalbane Christian Church

by

Mrs. Pomroy Murray

One hundred years ago, Breadalbane was a very different place from what it is today. Scottish settlers, chiefly from the Isle of Skye, first came to this area in the summer of 1831. About twenty families settled in lot 67, at that time an uninhabited and unbroken wilderness. By 1870 the Scottish settlers had founded the village of Breadalbane, which at first they named Bradalbyn. The present name which most probably was derived from Breadalbane, Scotland, was given to it sometime before 1876. In that year a railroad was constructed on Prince Edward Island which ran through the village of Breadalbane. An old letter dated April 1, 1876 contains an "acknowledgment of a communication" of Charles Murray who on behalf of himself and others requested that a station be erected in Breadalbane. This request which was granted some time later was largely responsible for the rapid growth and progress of Breadalbane during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Before the day of motor vehicles, farm products such as potatoes, turnips and oats were shipped in large quantities from Breadalbane Station. The supplies for the stores were also brought in by train. The first store, which was probably a small one, was owned by Charles Murray. According to an old Record Book, dated 1876, prices were exceedingly low; for instance: one-half gallon of molasses was 5¢; 2 yards of bleached cotton was 45¢.

The first post office was located in one of the rooms of Breadalbane Station.

Sometime between 1871 and 1877 a sawmill was constructed on the main branch of the Dunk River by James Holmes (later owned by Charles Murray). Another mill further up the river was owned by Joseph Mallet; later a third one was built and owned by a Mr. Doyle.

As early as 1854 the first blacksmith shop was opened by Donald Stewart. It is believed that this shop was in the same building, adjoining the garage, which is now owned by Allan Hickox.

Breadalbane had a hotel in 1841; the hotel keeper was named Hector MacDonald.

A tailor shop was built on the land where the gas pumps of the Hickox garage now operate. It was owned by William Todd.

Yes! Breadalbane was thriving and prosperous one hundred years ago. But what about its spiritual development?

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform"

A young man, Donald Crawford, born on the Island of Arran, Scotland on the 31st of October 1820, came with his parents to P.E.I. in 1827. Through a series of events and the influence of godly men and earnest prayer, he reached the spiritual plane where as he expressed it,

"I came to see that the apostles understood the Great Commission just as it is recorded in Acts, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, I believed Jesus with all my heart and believe Him still, although unworthy of such grace. From that day I never felt a lingering doubt of being saved: the Cross, the empty tomb, and the Great Commission, these three shall stand."

Donald Crawford believed the desire to preach the gospel was kindled by the Spirit of God. He began to preach at the age of 21. He received no academic training but was one of the class of men who because of natural gifts and industry became educated.

It would fill a book if one were to write of all his travels over Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Maine and Prince Edward Island where he founded and helped churches. In 1855 after his marriage to Miss Harriet M. Wallace of Milton, N.S. he settled down in New Glasgow, P.E.I. where he lived for thirty-five years. It was probably during this period that the evangelization of Breadalbane began, as the first recorded baptism is of a Mrs. Samuel Cann in 1857. Seven years later, in 1864 another baptism was performed. By 1877 there were enough baptized believers to make feasible the building of a meeting house. Some of these baptisms were in the Dunk River, Breadalbane.

According to the copy of an old will, Mr. Crawford purchased a parcel of land from Stephen Van Buskirk. He personally helped build the meeting house which now has the distinction of being one hundred years old. An old letter in Mr. Crawford's own handwriting reads as follows.

Breadalbane
October 30, 1878

This is to certify that two years ago there was manifest anxiety to have preaching in the village, and no suitable place even a school house for people to meet in, which led a number of persons to the resolution of building a meeting house. It was begun in June 1877 and finished, except the seating, October following. Since then it has been used for preaching and Sunday School.

Friends in different places contributed to its erection. There is still a debt of over 200 dollars nearly due which I have assumed and by the blessing of God and the assistance of friends, I hope to pay at the proper time.

Any donations will be thankfully received which can be recorded on next page.

Donald Crawford
(minister of the gospel)

An old receipt dated more than ten months earlier reads thus:

Breadalbane Station, P.E.I.
January 3, 1878

\$142.90

Received from the building committee the sum of one hundred and forty-two dollars and ninety cents. Being amount of contract of lumber for

church at Breadalbane Station.

John Gillis

At first the meeting house was quite different from the present interior. It had a patterned metallic ceiling, plain white plastered walls, small nine above nine-paned windows and (it is thought) a wide board floor. It was heated with a coal or wood stove and lighted with oil lamps. I've been told, "on good authority", that Franklin Hickox, after becoming a member in the early twentieth century, used to drive all the way from Springfield, by horse and sleigh, even on cold and wintery days, in order to light the fire for services.

According to an entry in an old yellow-paged record book, "The Breadalbane Christian Church was extensively repaired and reopened Sept. 1925. A donation of \$514 was secured by Pomroy Murray from John S. Holmes, a business man from Chicago, for this purpose. Committee appointed for the purpose of superintending the repairs was: Rufus Stevenson, Benjamin Weeks, James Brown, Nelson S.J. Murray and Pomroy Murray."

At that time more ornate windows, new flooring and probably the electric lights were installed. The Charles Murray Electric Light plant had begun operations in 1917 and electricity was supplied free of charge to the church for some time. In the year 1946-47 the annual charge was only \$8.80.

Although the meeting house was built in 1877, it was not until December 31, 1904, under the ministry of John Simpson, that the congregation of 20 was organized. The first trustees were Joseph Biggar, Charles Murray, Franklin Hickox, C. Ham Warren and James Brown. The first elders were Charles Murray and Joseph Biggar. During those early years George Heartz, Franklin Hickox, C.H. Warren, James Brown, Robert I.C. Hill and Edward Sellick served the congregation as deacons. Others who served as deacons through the years were Eldon Hickox, Lionel Robinson, James Craig, George Anderson, George Hickox, Howard Parkman, Earl Chappell and Wellington Murray. Presently Allan Hickox Sr., Cuyler Matheson and Archie Hutchinson are deacons. The trustees are George Hickox, Allan Hickox Sr., Cuyler Matheson and Archie Hutchinson.

We know little about the first Sunday School except that it was encouraged by Franklin Hickox, who served as a teacher. Other teachers during that early period were Percy Brown, Mrs. Samuel Kennedy, Etta Cann (who was also a school teacher), Eliza Biggar (later Mrs. George Hickox), and John Murray who now lives in the United States.

Prayer Meetings

In the olden times cottage prayer meetings were held in the homes. During the ministries of Merle Zimmerman and Neil Burt mid-week Bible study and prayer meetings were held in the church building on alternate weeks with Fredericton and New Glasgow.

Young People's Society

In 1954 when Alvin and Eleanor Rowledge came from western Canada they helped organize a Young People's Society which met regularly at the homes. Lunch was served always, and in summer corn "boils" and weiner roasts were enjoyed. Those who attended from Breadalbane were Joyce Chappell (MacKenzie), William Chappell, Robert, Franklin, Donald and Kirk Hickox, also Louise Hickox (Rooney), Mary Hickox (Johnston), Dorothy Matheson (Nicholson), Jurette Murray (Yunker), Eleanor Murray and Wellington Murray. John Van Ewyk with his horse and sleigh would "transport" the crowd even in blustery, blizzard-like weather.

Through the years the various activities of the youth group have provided opportunities for Christian growth and fellowship for many other young people such as: Carol Matheson (Weeks), Kathy Matheson (McNutt), Terry Hutchinson, Allan Hickox Jr., Faye Hickox (Champion), Heather Morrison (Rafferty), Marlene Morrison, Connie MacSwain, Ricky MacSwain, and Roger Dignan.

Women's Groups and Activities

Little is known about the first Ladies Aid except that it was probably missionary oriented and met in the homes of its members. Mrs. James Brown, Mrs. Joseph Biggar and Mrs. Ham Warren were prominent leaders in this society. A lady informed me that the ladies used to make felt mats when the Ladies Aid met. Probably these were sold to make money for missions or the local church.

Well kept records bring us up to date with the Women's Missionary Society which was organized October 9, 1948. Six charter members were present: Mrs. Susan Newson, Mrs. Cuyler Matheson, Mrs. Pomroy Murray, Mrs. George Anderson, Mrs. Kenneth Graham and Jurette Murray (Yunker). Mrs. Susan Newson was appointed president; Mrs. Cuyler Matheson, vice-president; and Mrs. George Anderson, secretary. At first money was raised, in part, by having an afternoon tea and bazaar at the home of one of the members. In the beginning the society considered Mr. and Mrs. Frank Rempel as its missionaries, but although the W.M.S. still helps the Kulpahar Mission in India, by supporting an orphan boy - the vision has widened.

For thirty years the missionary society with very few, if any exceptions has met regularly once a month. Besides giving financial help to missionaries this society has contributed many quilts to the needy. The present executive is Mrs. Allan Hickox, President; Mrs. Pomroy Murray, Vice-President; and Mrs. John Hickox, secretary. Mrs. Allan Hickox served as secretary for years, Mrs. Earl Chappell and Mrs. Cuyler Matheson also were secretaries. Mrs. James Craig served in several offices, other members included Mrs. George Hickox (deceased), Mrs. Howard Parkman (deceased), Mrs. Will Anderson (deceased), Mrs. George Anderson (deceased), Mrs. Lionel Robinson (deceased), Mrs. William Nicholson (Charlottetown), Mrs. Eldon Hickox (Charlottetown), Miss Eleanor Murray (Kingston, Ont.), Mrs. Lloyd Frizzell, Mrs. Cecil Mallet, Mrs. Chester Yunker (Brackley Beach), Mrs. Archie Hutchinson (Bedeque), and Mrs. Kenneth Graham (Charlottetown). Also our ministers' wives - Mrs. Merle Zimmerman, Mrs. Neil Burt and presently Mrs. John Herring, have assisted and encouraged the W.M.S. through the years.

Church Camp

For years Breadalbane was well represented by our young people at camp, first at Brudenell and later at Canoe Cove. It is impossible to evaluate the long lasting spiritual influence of these camps and today we wish to pay a tribute to the many who have so generously given of their time and talents in order to instill in the minds of our young people the true values of life.

Preaching Ministers

In some cases the records of the early years do not distinguish between regular ministers and evangelists but the following is as complete a list as was available.

- 1864 Mr. Archibald baptized a convert
- 1869 Benjamin Franklin, who was one of the leaders of the American churches, began his visits to Canada and preached in Charlottetown. He also baptized a believer.
- 1879 W. H. Harding and A. N. Simpson are mentioned
- 1880 J. A. Flagetter who was the minister in Charlottetown
- 1894 Donald Crawford
- 1896 H. C. Higgins, a Baptist minister
- 1897-1898 W. H. Harding, (Donald Crawford, evangelist)
- 1901-1904 A. N. Simpson (A. J. MacLeod, evangelist)
- 1906 Donald Crawford (J. A. Flagetter, evangelist)
- 1907 John Simpson (Rufus Stevenson, evangelist)
- 1908-1912 H. R. Bell
- 1913 C. A. Hatfield
(Lowell MacPherson, evangelist in 1914)
- 1916 H. O. Crowe
- 1917-1921 J. W. Hayter, an Islander, (J. L. Wheeler, evangelist)
- 1921-1925 A. P. Hodges
- 1926-1929 C. E. Armstrong
- 1930-1938 W. G. Quigley
- 1939-1940 Isaac Cavender
- 1940-1944 Robert Shaw (an Islander)

1944-1945 Stephen Ackland

1945-1947 J. W. Hayter (This was Mr. Hayter's second
ministry at Breadalbane.)

1948-1951 Paul Richardson

1951-1954 Maitland Watterworth

May-September 1954 Bryer Jones (an Islander)

1955-October 1956 Byard Thurber

Mr. Dunbar and Mr. Weale supplied until December 1957

December 1957-June 1967 Merle Zimmerman

August 1967-July 1973 Neil Burt

John Macdonald, a teacher at Maritime Christian College in
Charlottetown, supplied until John Herring came in September 1974.

This list of organists may not be complete, but the following are some: Mrs. Edward Sellick, Euphemia Hill (later Mrs. Robert MacLeod), Melvina Yeo (Mrs. Will Taylor), Christie Biggar (Mrs. Howard Parkman), Addie Biggar (Mrs. Dan Matheson), Stella Weeks (Mrs. Frank Nicholson), Irene Weeks (Mrs. Harold Sharpe), Mrs. Pomroy Murray, Jurretta Murray (Mrs. Chester Younker), Carol Matheson (Mrs. Robert Weeks), Mr. Aart Van Ewyk, Kathy Matheson (Mrs. Paul McNutt), and presently Allan Hiclox Jr.

The first church secretary was Ham Warren. Others who served were Franklin Hickox, Mrs. Pomroy Murray and for many years Mrs. John Hickox. The Sunday School secretaries were Mrs. Pomroy Murray and Mrs. Cuyler Matheson.

The present Sunday School was organized June 2, 1946 after the regular church service. The following officers were appointed: George Anderson (Superintendent), Stephen Ackland (adult class teacher), Mrs. George Anderson (Junior class), Mrs. Pomroy Murray (Secretary-Treasurer).

The Sunday School, though with diminishing numbers, still meets regularly (31 years later, 1977). Eldon Hickox served as superintendent for many years. Others who assisted were James Craig, and Allan Hickox. Mrs. Cuyler Matheson is presently superintendent. Mrs. Susan Newson, who died at the age of 102 sometimes assisted by teaching the adult class. Mrs. Pomroy Murray taught this class for many years and is still teaching on alternate Sundays with the preaching minister, John Herring. Others who have served as teachers include: Mrs. Cuyler Matheson, Mrs. James Craig, Mrs. George Hickox and Kathy Matheson (McNutt). Mrs. John Hickox has taught the Junior class for several years. Faye Hickox (Champion) taught the Primary class for 9 years. Heather Morrison succeeded her. When Heather became Mrs. Barry Rafferty, her sister Marlene Morrison began to teach the Primary class.

Mrs. Kenneth Graham faithfully taught the Junior class for many

years until she moved to a Senior Citizens Home in Charlottetown. James Craig assisted by making some equipment, such as, a flannelgraph board. Mr. and Mrs. George Anderson made a screen to provide more privacy for classes. Mr. Anderson also made the first hymn board. Mrs. John Hickox has been largely responsible for Sunday School programs at Christmas, Easter, Mother's Day etc. Playing the organ in Sunday School has been the introduction and preparation for many of the girls who now sometimes play for church services. Mrs. Allan Hickox is presently the Sunday School organist. Other organists have been Carol Matheson (Weeks), Kathy Matheson (McNutt), Jurretta Murray (Yunker), and Joyce Chappell (MacKenzie).

Service of Rededication

On October 4 and 5, 1936 a special service of rededication was held in Bredalbane Church at which the speakers were W. G. Quigley (then pastor), H. R. Bell (a former minister), C. Watterworth and S. C. Cooper. Paul LaVoie (a member of the church) unveiled two enlarged photos, one of Mr. Crawford (the founder) and one of John S. Holmes who endowed the church in honor of his parents, Mr. James Holmes and Mrs. Mary (Sellick) Holmes. At this service the building was named "Crawford Memorial" in honor of its founder and staunchest supporter.

Through the years a number of other donations have been made including:

Five hundred dollars - Mr. and Mrs. Howard Parkman

Framed photo of Donald Crawford and choir seats - Pomroy Murray

Upholstered chair - Mrs. Caroline Bragdon in memory of her mother

Communion table - the Franklin Hickox family in memory of their parents

Guest book and pen - Mrs. Cecil Mallett in memory of Mrs. Howard Parkman

Flower stand - designed and donated by Arthur H. Perkins

Arrangement of dried flowers - in memory of Eldon Hickox by the congregation

Bibles - the congregation in memory of Pomroy Murray

Bibles - in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Franklin Hickox by the family

Bibles - in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Biggar, by two of their daughters, Mrs. Howard Parkman and Mrs. George Hickox

Pulpit cloth - in memory of Mrs. Franklin Hickox by the Women's Missionary Society

Choir Hymn board - Archie Hutchinson

Communion plate - in memory of Cecil Mallett by his wife

Communion plate - in memory of Lois Perkins by Mr. and Mrs.
John Hickox

Members of the church have also contributed generously of their time, energy and money in order to improve the appearance of the building by cleaning, painting, remodelling and redecorating. To everyone who has helped in this way over the years we express our sincere appreciation.

In 1969 pavement was laid around the church building. A parking lot was rented from Barton Murray; it was graded and prepared for use in 1975.

In 1970 extensive repairs were made to the building. A new, lower ceiling was installed and the walls were panelled. Assisting with this work were Harold Toombs, Archie Hutchinson, Cuyler Matheson, Eldon Hickox and John Hickox. In 1974 Fenton MacSwain laid a new carpet on the platform.

There have been a number of evangelistic meetings. During the last twenty-five or so years the speakers have been Paul Richardson, Mr. Fry from the United States, Byard Thurber and William Weale (working together), and Edward Benoit now ministering with the Sherwood Church of Christ. During brother Benoit's meetings the church building was filled to capacity and a number were added to the church.

Two men from this church, Wellington P. Murray and Alfred Murray entered the ministry; the latter served also as a chaplain in the United States navy. The former held ministries in Ontario and in the United States. Two Sunday School pupils attended Alberta Bible College, namely Jurretta Murray (Yunker), who completed two years of study and Eleanor Murray who graduated with a Bachelor of Sacred Literature degree.

This very old historic church building has been the setting for many earnest Bible messages in which Christ has been glorified, sinners have been converted and Christians have been strengthened in the faith.

Today, October 9, 1977, as we celebrate with thankful hearts its 100th anniversary, we pray that the services held here will continue to be a blessing, inspiration and encouragement to all who enter its doors.

Additional Information Regarding Breadalbane Christian Church

H.R. Bell held evangelistic services in the Breadalbane church building in 1910 which resulted in many, both young and old, confessing Christ.

Samuel Kennedy, at that time called Samuel Junior, (who was later mayor of Charlottetown), was the leader of home prayer meetings about the turn of the twentieth century.

Margaret Murray (Mrs. Dawson Stevenson) was church organist for several years in the early 1900's.

Other members during the early years of the Young People's Society were James Craig, Grace Craig and Raymond Chappell.

Some more donations which were omitted:

1. A crocheted flower basket and artificial flowers - Mrs. Andrew Stevenson
2. A sign board for the church building - Pomroy Murray
3. Free upholstering of several chairs - James Hickox Jr.
4. Bible - Mrs. Charles Murray

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2. Some memories of the past recalled by Mrs. Cecil Mallett of Granville, Mrs. Harold Sharpe of Pleasant Valley and John Murray of Arlington, Massachusetts, U.S.A.

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