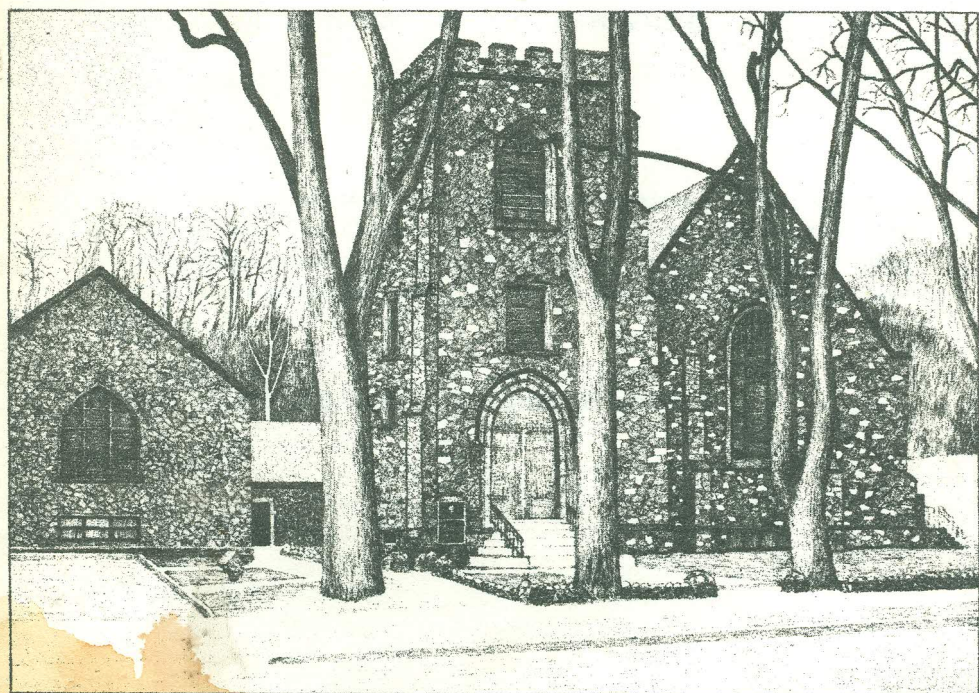


History
of
The United Church
of
St. Paul and St. Stephen



United Church St. Paul and St. Stephen, Kentville N.S.

Walter Kellerman

Kentville, N. S.

1975
MARITIME
CONFERENCE
ARCHIVES

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CHURCH UNION IN KENTVILLE

In 1923 the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches in Kentville united, thereby forming The United Church of St. Paul and St. Stephen. The purpose of this paper is to give a historical sketch of each of these Congregations and to tell something of the first fifty-two years of their union.

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ST. STEPHEN'S METHODIST CHURCH

In Eaton's History of Kings County, he says that the first place of worship of any denomination in Kentville was a Methodist Chapel built in 1821 on the hill, and on a site later owned by Alfred DeWolfe. Inquiry shows that it would have been on the east side of Prospect Avenue. The Trustees were James and Samuel Dennison and Colonel William Charles Moore. For some time the only services were conducted by itinerant Ministers, and as a rule were held only fortnightly. At times the periods between services would be longer. In 1839, soon after the founding of Acadia University, one of the early Professors, Rev. Edmond Crawley, came regularly every second Sunday forenoon and preached in the Chapel. On occasions, a student for the Baptist Ministry would come in his place. Later some use was made of the Chapel by other denominations. Baptists and Congregationalists met in it.

About 1849 a new building was erected under the auspices of the Methodists "near the entrance to the road which leads up the Academy Hill". There was hope that it would be a Union Church, available to other denominations, but it became and remained a Methodist Church. It was burned in 1860. From the research made, it is not clear how the Congregation was housed for some years following the fire.

In "History of Methodism" found in the Conference Archives at Halifax is the following passage:

"Kentville--In Smith's History we find a reference to William Burt who was stationed at Lower Horton from 1819 to 22 which says: 'At Horton Corner, as Kentville was called until 1820, he found the frame of a church, which, before his removal, was formally opened for worship.' Kentville and neighbouring appointments continued to be connected with Horton for many years. Sometimes, besides the superintendent who resided at Lower Horton, a young colleague would reside at Greenwich or Kentville. Among these latter were F. H. W. Pickles, W. W. Colpitts, Albert S. DesBrisay, R. B. Mack, and H. P. Cowperthwaite. Kentville first appears as a separate circuit with A. D. Morton as pastor, to exchange once a month with Horton. The circuit sometimes included Greenwich, Kentville, Canaan Mountain, Sheffield's Mills, Woodville and Cambridge. Greenwich was afterwards connected with Horton and later with the Wolfville circuit.

A new church was dedicated at Kentville on March 7th, 1897, during the pastorate of R. S. Stevens, the preachers being Revs. Wm. Dobson (11 and 7) and G. O. Huestis at 3 p.m. The church

cost \$2300.00; a dollar would go a great deal farther than it will today and the building was very neat and attractive. The fine new parsonage was considerably damaged by fire on January 3rd, 1898."

In Smith's History, contained in the Conference Archives, is the following paragraph:

"The following is the ministerial record since Kentville became a separate circuit in 1870: A. D. Morton; 1871, R. W. Weddall; 1873, W. J. Johnson; 1875, A. H. Clayton; 1876, I. E. Thurlow; 1879, Paul Prestwood; 1881, R. Wasson; 1883, W. H. Langille; 1885, Wm. Ryan; 1886, J. A. Mosher; 1887, C. M. Tyler; 1889, T. A. Wilson; 1890, W. F. Cann; 1892, F. W. W. Desbarres; 1893, S. R. Ackman; 1896, R. S. Stevens; 1898, W. F. Gaetz; 1901, R. Williams; 1904, J. W. Turner; 1906, W. R. Turner; 1909, W. A. Outerbridge; 1912, R. C. Tait; 1913, Supply; 1914, C. B. Sinden; 1915, J. G. Stones; 1916, P. Pollitt; 1917, A. C. Borden; 1920, B. J. Porter; 1924, United St. Andrew's and St. Stephen's, Presbyterian and Methodist (To be supplied); 1925, (United Presbyterian and Methodist), A. A. MacLeod, Presbyterian. Rev. J. W. Turner died at Kentville while stationed there. H. W. Outerbridge, Japan, is connected with Kentville." The 1914 supply mentioned was Rev. George Beck who later enlisted. After service in France with the Canadian Artillery, he served with the Y.M.C.A. in England and Scotland.

An 1870 copy of "The Wesleyan" mentioned that the Kentville Church then had a well-organized Sunday School and a library of one hundred and twenty volumes.

On February 22, 1906, a special meeting of the Official Board was held to deal with the vacancy caused by the death of Rev. J. W. Turner, and at a further meeting reference was made to a service to be held in his memory at which Rev. J. D. Spidell of the Baptist Church and Rev. George MacMillan should be invited. Mr. Reginald Turner of Kentville is a son of Rev. J. W. Turner.

In November of 1911, at an Official Board Meeting it was decided upon motion that Rev. W. A. Outerbridge be invited to remain for a further year. Great appreciation was expressed as to his services. Mr. Outerbridge said that while his associations in Kentville had been pleasant, he felt that it would be wise for him to retire at the end of the year. This was followed by a special meeting at which the Board was unanimous that a further invitation should be extended to Mr. Outerbridge and that he be asked to reconsider his earlier decision. At a further meeting a few days later, Mr. Outerbridge said that in consideration of the unanimous

request, he would remain with the Congregation for a further year. Mrs. E. B. Newcombe, an active member of St. Paul and St. Stephen, is a daughter of Mr. Outerbridge.

The Presbyterian Church and lot at the corner of Aberdeen and Webster Streets having been sold to the Royal Bank, arrangements were made for the Presbyterians to have the use of the Methodist Church. On February 11, 1912, a meeting was held in the Methodist vestry attended by the Rev. Mr. Outerbridge and the Rev. George MacMillan, along with six delegates from the Methodist Congregation and seven from the Presbyterian. The purpose was to arrange details as to the use of the Methodist Church by both Congregations until such time as the Presbyterians would have another building. It was decided that the morning services be conducted by the Presbyterian minister, and the evening by the Methodist Pastor. Each body was to continue to celebrate communion in their customary manner. Both choirs should unite as one, and the ushers of both Congregations act in unison at all services.

At an Official Board Meeting on May 27, 1912, the following resolution was passed,

"That the Quarterly Official Board of the Kentville Mission hereby expresses the firm belief that should the conference appoint a young man to their circuit who is lacking in experience and ministerial ability that it would mean the eventual extinction of Methodism in this Shire town.

That we further request the Windsor District at its annual session to seek to bring the needs of this Mission before the standing committee that they may send us a supply a strong man who will be capable of upholding the cause of God in connection with our Church."

At the quarterly meeting of the Official Board on December 10, 1912, a long resolution favouring union with St. Paul's Presbyterian Church was submitted to the meeting. There were numerous recitals and the body of the resolution had many clauses setting out details as to how the united body should be constituted. The vote on the resolution resulted as follows: in favour - 6, against - 1. It would seem that one of those present did not vote.

At a meeting held on January 4, 1915, when the Presbyterians were about to begin the use of their own Church, there was a discussion concerning the Methodist services. It was evident that without them the attendance at the morning services would be greatly reduced. A suggestion was made that the morning preaching service be discontinued and that adult Bible study be substituted. It was decided that the regular meeting services should be continued.

At the Quarterly meeting on March 16, 1915, a wristwatch was

presented "to our esteemed and valued steward Major Thomas A. Lydiard", who was then Commander of "C" Squadron of the 6th Canadian Mounted Rifles.

The minutes of a meeting held on June 1, 1915 contain the following: "Regret was expressed by the Board that anything had arisen to cause our Pastor, Rev. C. B. Synden to consider leaving the work in this corner of the Master's Vineyard where such encouraging results followed his ministrations and where officials and congregation generally had learned to recognize his ability and faithfulness as well as his earnestness in the cause of the better welfare of the Church and the upbuilding of Christ's Kingdom in a larger way". From the minutes, it appeared that the Board expressed itself freely and felt that Mr. Synden should continue his pastorate and regretted any unintentional injury.

At the next meeting, the recording steward was asked to write Mr. Synden regarding an unpaid horse hire bill and the \$10.00 horse hire appropriation.

Before the meeting of March 2, 1916, Rev. George Stones had arrived and assumed his duties as pastor. Soon after his arrival, he joined the army and at the meeting mentioned, was presented with a military cane.

At a special meeting of the Official Board held on November 2, 1919, the illness of Dr. Borden, who was then pastor, was considered. The question arose as to what course should be followed. The following resolution was introduced - "that we believe this an opportune time to consider a permanent union with St. Paul's Presbyterian Church". This was followed by the following amendment, "That the Church continue its work as heretofore, and that the matter of supply be left in the hands of the Chairman of the District". The amendment was carried by a vote of 8 to 4.

At a meeting on September 5, 1921, a motion was passed that Mr. Harold S. Bishop be granted a local preaching license by the Board.

On July 10, 1923, the Official Board met to discuss the proposed union with St. Paul's Presbyterian Church. The course decided upon was to appoint an equal number from each Church to a joint committee to go into various matters concerning the proposed union and report back to their Congregations. Those appointed to the joint committee were A. A. Palmetter, E. H. Munroe, and E. B. Newcombe.

On July 30, 1923, a meeting of the Congregation was held when it was decided that a committee of seven be appointed to co-operate with a like committee from St. Paul's Congregation to do all in their power to bring into effect the proposed union.

On August 7, 1923, there was a joint committee of the officials of the uniting churches. The Presbyterians attending were Rev. R. B. Layton, Messrs. Leonard Cogswell, Robert Newcombe, George E. Calkin, A. E. H. Chesley, James Brydon, James Gallaher, Charles Newcombe and

Thomas Weaver. The Methodist were represented by Rev. B. J. Porter, Mrs. B. H. Dodge, A. A. Palmetter, Robert Gillingham, G. W. Chisholm, E. Williams, M. P. Pyke and E. B. Newcombe.

The meeting decided upon recommendations to be submitted to the Congregations concerned for their confirmation. The recommendations were unanimously adopted by the Methodist congregation on September 10, 1923. It was subsequently agreed that the formal union take place on Sunday, October 7, 1923 and that special services be held on that day.

ST. PAUL'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The origin of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church can be traced back to the Congregational Church at Chipman Corner. About 1762 there was a migration of many families from New England to Cornwallis and Horton. They were largely Congregationalists and for a time had neither church nor minister. They formed the "Church of Horton and Cornwallis". On occasions, Anglican clergymen from Halifax would conduct services.

Their church, the first Protestant one in Western Nova Scotia, was erected in 1767 and 1768. At about the same time the Rev. Beriah Phelps, their first minister, came from New England. At first he had a short period of popularity. After a bit he was in trouble with the Government of Nova Scotia and with his Congregation. A grant of land was made for congregational purposes, but it was in the name of Mr. Phelps personally. He sold the land and retained the proceeds. This ended his popularity. He further lost standing by his anti-British views concerning the American Revolution. His son later wrote, "My father got into trouble with the Government of Nova Scotia and had to leave unceremoniously in 1778". During the stay of Mr. Phelps, Alline, a fiery preacher of the New Light group was in the vicinity, and occasionally preached in the church. Harmony between him and Mr. Phelps was wanting. After Mr. Phelps' departure it was impossible to get a Congregational minister from New England, and Presbytery sent to Truro for two Presbyterian ministers. As a result, Rev. Daniel Cock and Rev. David Smith came. Their arrival did not curb the activities of Alline, who in answer to a petition, formed a New Light Church. This weakened the Congregation. Later Alline and many of his followers became Baptists and Alline made a substantial contribution towards the development of the Baptist Church.

Eaton, in his History of Kings County says "With the coming of the Rev. Hugh Graham in 1785 the History of the Cornwallis

Congregationalist Church as a Presbyterian Church may be said virtually to begin." Mr. Graham came from Scotland and stayed till 1799 when he was called to Upper Stewiacke and Musquodoboit. Mr. Graham was followed by Rev. William Forsythe, also from Scotland. In addition to his ministerial duties Mr. Forsythe conducted a grammar school for boys. Among his students were William Webster, Frederick Webster, Henry B. Webster, H. N. Chipman, Edward Beckwith and George E. Morton.

Previous to Mr. Forsythe's death in 1840, Rev. George Struthers had acted as his assistant, and following Mr. Forsythe's death became minister and acted as such till his death in 1857. He was succeeded by Rev. William Murray, a native of Colchester County. He was the last of the Chipman Corner ministers. Concerning their period, Dr. J. B. Calkin wrote:

"The Sunday Service was an all-day affair. It included a morning sermon and an afternoon sermon, with an intermission of fifteen minutes, so that the worshippers could eat the lunch they had brought with them in their pockets. In church people were accustomed to stand in prayer, with their faces turned from the minister. This peculiar custom, the turning of the back to the minister in prayer, was probably originally intended as a protest against reverence for the minister as a priest. The hymns were lined out before singing, two lines at a time, sometimes by a sort of rapid chanting of the words. The minister's stipend, like the priest's portion under the Mosaic dispensation, was paid in farm produce, a quarter of lamb or veal, a roast of beef, a cheese, or whatever happened to be most plentiful and in season among the parishoner's products".

In 1858 a meeting was held to discuss the question of dividing the charge and in 1859 the Presbytery of Halifax agreed to a division and the creation of three new charges. One charge included Kentville and Wolfville on the south side of the Cornwallis River, and on the north Church Street and Belcher Streets. The other newly created charges were North Cornwallis, which became known as Canard, and West Cornwallis which included Woodville and Waterville.

For a while, Kentville and Wolfville were in the same charge. At a meeting in 1874, it was agreed that Communion be celebrated in Wolfville on the last Sabbath in June, and in Kentville on the second Sabbath in August. In 1883, Wolfville and Lower Horton were separated from Kentville.

The minutes book of the early session meetings show great care and discipline in the keeping of records.

The following instructions were found in one of the minute books:-

- "1. The number of each page shall be written in words as well as given in figures.
2. Every page shall be signed by the clerk and the record of each sederunt by the moderator and the clerk.
3. The time and place of each meeting shall be fully stated in words.
4. Every page shall have a suitable margin and each item of business recorded shall be indexed.
5. The place and time of each meeting shall be shortly indicated on the margin at the top of each page.
6. All numbers shall be given in words as well as in figures.
7. No unnecessary space shall be left between meetings of sederunts of the Court."

The minutes were signed by the Clerk of the Session and by the minister as Moderator. The readers of this paper will probably look with surprise at the word "sederunt". Webster's Dictionary gives the following definition: - "sederunt—A term employed chiefly in minutes of the courts to indicate that such and such members were present and composed the meeting; thus **sederunt** signifies that these individuals were present and composed the meeting. The same term is also used as a noun to signify, specifically, a sitting or meeting of a court, but has been extended to signify a more or less formal meeting or sitting of any association, society, company or body of men."

In the minutes of the session meetings, the word "sederunt" has been placed in the margin opposite the names of the elders in attendance.

In May of 1859, Rev. William Furlong became Minister at Kentville and in the same month, St. Paul's Church, which had been erected at the corner of Webster and Aberdeen Streets in Kentville was dedicated. In 1868, the Rev. John B. Logan became Minister. In 1874 and 1875 a Manse was built. The records do not show where, but it would be reasonable to assume that it was the house at the corner of Main and School Streets, owned by the Congregation at the time of union. Rev. W. E. Archibald followed Mr. Logan in 1886. He resigned in 1887 and Rev. W. P. Begg became Minister. Rev. George MacMillan was inducted in 1897 and continued until the time of his death in 1913.

The Provincial Statutes of 1908 contain an Act relating to St. Paul's. A recital in it reads,

"Whereas the Congregation of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church at Kentville is possessed of real estate and personal property held in trust for the Congregation under various conveyances, each with a separate set of trustees.....

And whereas...it is by the Congregation deemed advisable that the said property, real and personal, be vested in one set of trustees with a corporate capacity and with the powers and duties hereafter specified."

The Statute creates Archibald A. Thomson, William S. Woodworth, Clayton C. Cogswell, William McKittrick and Robert G. Campbell a body corporate under the name of "The Trustees of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church of Kentville, Nova Scotia".

It was enacted that all votes for trustees be by ballot, and that the annual meeting of the Congregation be the third Wednesday in January and that notice of such be given at the morning service on two consecutive Sundays preceding the meeting. Persons entitled to vote were those of either sex who were members in good standing or adherents not less than eighteen years of age and have been regular worshippers in the Church for the past six months and were regular contributors to its support.

Towards the close of Mr. MacMillan's ministry there was a proposal of union with St. Stephen's Methodist Church, but at that time, the desire for union on the part of St. Paul's was not sufficient. St. Paul's Church and lot were sold to the Royal Bank of Canada, and in February of 1912, for the last time a religious service was held in that building with Rev. Clarence MacKinnon, Principal of Pine Hill, being the preacher.

In 1913, Rev. R. B. Layton was inducted as minister of St. Paul's. He remained until 1924 when he went to take up new ministerial duties in Alberta. The corner stone of the present United Church was laid and most of the construction completed in 1914. In the winter of 1915, the building was dedicated. The preacher was Rev. H. A. Kent of Pine Hill. Dr. Layton had a busy ministry. He gave vigorous leadership in the erection of the new church which again gave the congregation a place of their own for worship. During the first war he displayed an active interest in the men at Aldershot, and was diligent in writing members of the Congregation who were abroad on active service.

On Friday, August 17, 1923 a meeting was held in St. Paul's Schoolroom of the Methodist Official Board, and the elders and managers of the Presbyterian Church, along with others. The purpose was to prepare a basis of union for the two Congregations. It was agreed that members of the uniting bodies retain membership in their parent church, and that new members be placed on whichever communion roll they prefer. The officials of the uniting churches were to be officials of the United Church and all properties owned by the uniting churches were to be held by the holding trustees or their successors.

It was also agreed that any Minister in good standing of either of the Methodist or Presbyterian churches would be eligible for call as Minister to the United Church.

YEARS OF UNION

The uniting bodies began their joint life with the ministers that each had prior to union--Rev. B. J. Porter for the Methodists and Rev. R. B. Layton for the Presbyterians. Both resigned in 1924. In 1925, Rev. A. A. MacLeod became Minister of the new church. Under his guidance the two bodies became more closely united in a spirit of unity and fellowship.

On January 11, 1940 there was a fire in the Church. The auditorium was extensively damaged as a result of heat and smoke. On the following Sunday, service was held in the Cornwallis Inn. The Capitol Theatre, the Empire Theatre, the Cornwallis Inn, the Baptists and the Anglicans all offered their facilities. Use was made of the Capitol Theatre. In some months the Church was substantially altered and again ready for use. Originally there was no chancel. There was a platform and reading desk, with the minister's chair behind it. Next was the choir loft, where the members were seated, facing the Congregation. The organ was behind the choir, with the console so placed that the organist's back was towards the body of the Church. Following the fire the organ was removed and the necessary changes made to effect the result seen today. The original church was not lacking in beauty, but the change made it more fitting as a place of worship. Mr. Charles Killingbeck, an architect and member of the Congregation, designed and supervised the transition.

Dr. MacLeod's duties were increased by the number of men stationed at Aldershot following the outbreak of the Second World War. He, his family and Congregation were saddened by the illness and death of his son, and later by the loss of Mrs. MacLeod.

In 1943, Dr. MacLeod tendered his resignation and moved to Halifax to take the pastorate at St. John's, vacated by his brother, Dr. J. D. MacLeod, who had joined the Chaplain's Service.

Very shortly after Dr. MacLeod's departure his successor Dr. Fraser Munro was inducted. His stay in Kentville was from 1943 till 1948 when he left to edit the United Churchman at Sackville. His ministerial duties were heavy. The Congregation was growing and he did not have the help of an assistant or director of religious education.

Upon entering the union, the Methodist Church had as real property the Church and the parsonage, 25 Leverett Avenue. Following the union, the Church was used as a Church Hall, and later sold. Its site is now a part of Irving Oil property at the corner of Main Street and Masters Avenue. The parsonage, being in much better condition than the Presbyterian manse, remained in use as a parsonage until sold in 1961 when the Main Street manse was obtained. The Presbyterians came into

the union owning the present Church and the manse at the corner of School Street and Main Streets. The Church lot was made up by three different purchases. In 1911 the western part of the property was procured. In 1923, the land between it and what is now the Wade property was obtained. At the time of purchase this lot had a house on the North East corner. It was later removed and the parking lot prepared and paved. In 1955 the entire lot was deepened by a further purchase of land at the rear. The manse was old and substantial expense would have been necessary to make it suitable as a Minister's residence. The parsonage was preferable, and the manse was sold.

In 1948, Dr. Munro was succeeded by Rev. Emmerson Curry, who had served in the 85th Battalion in the First World War, and as a Chaplain in the Second. During his stay, there was a rapid growth in the Church membership. One of his first undertakings was to explain to the Congregation the need of a hall. When this was done, a fund-raising campaign was conducted with results that showed the willingness of the Congregation to proceed with its construction. In 1951, for family reasons, Dr. Curry felt that he should leave. His resignation was regretfully accepted.

The interval between Dr. Curry's departure and the arrival of his successor, Rev. Kenneth G. Sullivan, was very brief. Dr. Sullivan came to Kentville from Summerside where he had served his second Congregation, the first being at Canning. His work at Summerside was interrupted by his service as a Chaplain in the Royal Canadian Air Force. During his first year in Kentville the first floor of the Church Hall was finished and the building completed in 1954. A few years later an extension made at the back provided seven additional classrooms. During his pastorate, Dr. Sullivan was honoured in having a Doctorate conferred upon him by Pine Hill Divinity Hall and again when he was made a Life Governor of the British and Foreign Bible Society. He strongly supported the development of the Windsor Elms. He was never wanting in energy or in devotion to duty. On July 27th, 1975, Dr. Sullivan conducted his last service as Minister of The United Church of St. Paul and St. Stephen.

At the time of writing this, there is no successor to Dr. Sullivan. A call has been extended to Rev. Ian K. MacDonald of Arnprior, Ontario. He is accepting the call and his arrival in Kentville is expected shortly.

For the United Church of St. Paul and St. Stephen, 1975 means not only fifty years in The United Church of Canada, but fifty-two years of a voluntary union, agreed upon by the uniting bodies and in which harmony has prevailed. The Psalmist has said "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

In preparing the above, information has been obtained from the following sources:

1. An unpublished history of St. Paul's by Dr. R. B. Layton
2. Eaton's "History of Kings County"
3. The Registry of Deeds at Kentville
4. Minutes of Meetings of the Methodist Official Board
5. Minutes of Meetings of the Presbyterian Session
6. Minutes of Meetings of Official Board from 1923 to date
7. Minutes of Meetings of Session from 1923 to date
8. The Conference Archives, at Halifax. Appreciation is expressed to Mr. Betts, the Archivist, for his assistance.