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Churches of Dunn and Sherbrooke Townships continued Part IV

As early as 1841 the Baptist of Sherbrooke Township gathered in a small log schoolhouse on what has become known as Niece's Hill. With Deacon Thomas Stillwell in the pulpit the little congregation met regularly awaiting the day when they would receive recognition as a Regular Baptist Church. This would come when eighteen delegates from other local *Regular Baptist Churches* formed a council on January 8, 1842, and deliberated the fate of thirty-two local souls. With joy and praise the new congregation of Sherbrooke Baptist was formed and began a one hundred and sixty one year mission, serving the spiritual needs of the people of Sherbrooke.

This day would not only serve as a formal beginning of this little church but the same council would go back into session to determine the worthiness of Deacon Stillwell to receive ordination. Pastor Stillwell was ordained and served his congregation for only another year. However, in his time Rev. Stillwell added to the numbers in his charge, baptising or accepting into the new church about one hundred and fifty souls.

Within ten years the congregation had outgrown the log school and began plans to build a permanent church. First it was necessary to purchase property and there arose the question! *Where should the new church be erected?* Before I answer that, let me take you back a few years and help you understand how many churches raised funds in the 1850s. There was generally not a collection plate passed from worshipper to worshipper; rather *Subscriptions* were taken. Each member would be asked to subscribe to the amount they would offer.

On a visit to McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton I talked with Rev. Mark Steinacher, Th.D. Dr. Mark was very helpful, providing me with a number of documents relating to the *Sherbrooke Forest Baptist Church*. One document was a Subscription List dated March 2, 1852. To paraphrase the opening page, there is a paragraph with promises from those later mentioned, to pay either Samuel Niece or William Furry one hundred and fifty *dolars*, for purchase of land on which to build the new church. It turned out to be Samuel Niece who received the payment.

Some of those listed in the Subscription List are as follows. Genealogists, pay attention! They were; Alexander Wallace, John Speck, William Benson, Ann Pew, Anson Minor, William Imlach, John Burgess, Daniel Dickhout, Esq. *Qune* (I believe it is Squire) King, Archibald Galbraith, Jacob Minor, Mrs. Prise, Mrs. Mass, Barry Amsden (I am not sure of spelling), James McIndoe, David Dickhout, John Capp, Abram Minor, John Root, Levy Carter, Wm. Furry, Wm. Mann, H. W. Dodge, Simeon Dodge, Charles Niece, Silas Kinnaird, Mrs. Mills, Reuben Minor, Peter Dickhout, Samuel Niece, John Deamud(e), W. ?. Mann, David Deamud(e), Robert Speck, Abram Dickhout, John Speck, Henry Dickhout, George Latimer, John Pile (Spelled Pile), John Knisley, M. Lockhart, Henry Minor, Henry Root, Jonas Fury (spelled Fury), Henry Dodge, John, Henry, Barbara, Lawrence, & David Furry, W. M. W. Synes. Thomas Logan would make his payment in Lumber. There were a few other names but I was unable to read the handwriting.

Also found at Divinity College was an 1844 New Testament with a note on the flyleaf - *Sherbrooke Forest*

Library 1855, Harry Minor Esq. 10 feet and no higher. Was this a cryptic message that Harry was trying to leave for us?

The frame church served the Baptists until 1887, when the present brick church replaced it. On December 17, 1887, the first business meeting held in the new church took place under the pastorship of Wm. Pugsley. Business included the election of officers for 1888. In part they were; Thomas Pyle - Treasurer, Creighton Minor - Secretary, Hugh Chalmers - Asst. Secretary, George Pyle, Jno Lockhart, & John Dickhout - Furnishing Committee. Nominations for Deacons were Henry Niece, D. G. Deamude, Emerson Niece; all were acclaimed. Trustees were D. Deamude, E. Niece, H. Niece, Henry Root and John Root. The caretaker was D. G. Deamude who would be paid \$12.00 per year.

All did not go smoothly at the first meeting! On January 28, 1888, the minutes of the December 17th meeting were rejected as a vote had not been taken on the nominations of the Deacons. With this, three of the nominees, D. Deamude, Henry Niece, and John Pyle, collectively resigned their Deaconate. Their resignations were rejected and a vote was held confirming all nominees.

This church, as do all organizations had to deal with some members who occasionally chose not to tow the line. Such was the case in 1890 when Brothers Deamude, Emerson Niece and J. V. Fradenburgh were appointed to visit John Speck, Roland Lockhart, Frank Ross, Charles Ross, and George, John & Henry Pyle, to inform them of the impropriety of their recent bout of drinking and dancing! It takes two to tangle! Sisters Dodge and Deamude were assigned the task of talking with Serra Dougher, H. Pyle, Lence Speck, and the Niece sisters for the same offence, presumably on the same occasion. Things must have worked out as in later years we find many of these young peoples' names in church records doing the work of the Church.

The cemetery across the road was purchased in 1868, and is the property where the log school once stood. In 1900, D. (likely Daniel) Deamude and Wm. Root urged the trustees to make inquiry re purchasing more land for the quickly filling cemetery. This transaction concluded a story begun in 1854, when Wm Furry's land was declined in favour of Samuel Niece's. Now William's descendant sold the same land to the church to expand its cemetery. You know what they say about he who waits!

I would like to thank Rev. Howard Rittenhouse, who presently lives in Chatsworth, but will always be a hometown boy. He served the people of Sherbrooke Baptist Church as their pastor from 1987 until 1993. Howard wrote the churches history in 1990 which contains much of what I have written and considerably more. If you want to know the whole story you should take a gander at his work.

If you have items, you wish written about or pictures you would be willing to lend, please drop me a note. Let me know how you feel about these articles. William (Bill) Arthur Warnick 180 Rosslyn Ave. South HAMILTON, ON L8M 3J5 My NEW E-mail address is wwarnick@cogeco.ca Phone 905 549-6086.