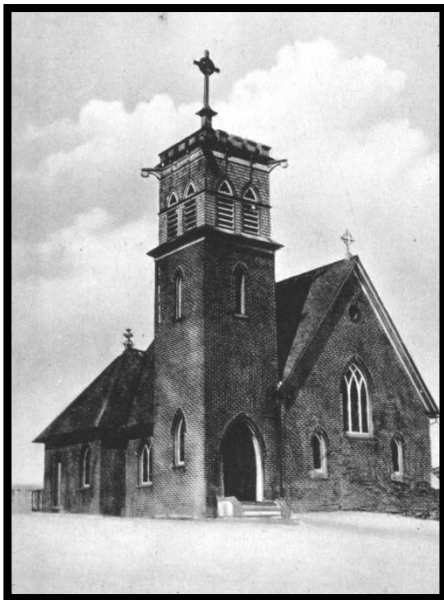

About St. Paul's Anglican Church

by

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Since church history is an important part of the cultural history of a nation and because St. Paul's Church is an integral part of local history in particular, a brief historical background might be useful.

The History

The word *Anglican* originates in *ecclesia anglicana*, a medieval Latin phrase dating to at least 1246, that means *English Church*. The Anglican Church, or the Church of England, of course exists worldwide. It began in the sixth century in England, when Pope Gregory the Great sent St. Augustine to Britain to bring

more "Apostolic discipline to the Celtic Christians". As a result, the Church of England came under the authority of the Pope.

In the 1520's, when Pope Clement VII refused to annul the marriage of King Henry VIII to Catherine of Aragon, this repudiation led to the separation of the Church of England from the Roman Catholic Church, in 1534. It then became the established church in England by an Act of Parliament, with the monarch of England at its head.

Thus then began a series of subsequent events known as the English *Reformation*, which gave rise to protest and splinter groups of English Christians who, in the 16th and 17th centuries, wished to separate from the Church of England and form independent local churches. The Puritans, an activist group within the Church of England, come first to mind. Their efforts to change the established church from within failed, due to the laws controlling the practice of religion. Persecution of this group in particular (though not exclusively) led to a significant exodus of "puritans" from England, with some coming to the new world of North America, especially from the 1620's to the 1640's. This group was pivotal in the early settlement of the Colonies.

From this movement, related religious communities of Quakers, Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists, and a whole range of evangelical Protestants evolved.

As we know, the aftermath and consequences of the American Revolution (1775-1783) brought the first waves of settlement to the area we now call the Eastern Townships. (In general, that was from the late 1790's-1820.) In Potton, our first documented settlers appear to have been the Elkins and Perkins families around 1797, with Heath & Blanchard families close on their heels. The Township of Potton

was established by royal decree in 1792. Legal settlement came later. Settlers, coming here from south of the border, in particular from New Hampshire, Vermont and Massachusetts, brought with them their faiths and their architecture, which explains why older churches in the Townships are strongly reminiscent of a New England style and the faith groups, traditional.

At first, like in every other township along the border, itinerant preachers, mainly from Vermont, came to Potton. People of the Methodist, Baptist, Congregationalist, and later Adventist tradition were first served by these “circuit riders” – all playing a role in bringing God to the new settlements. Evangelist ministers would hold “meetings” wherever convenient – often in private homes or in schools, which were rare then. Schoolhouses doubled as community centres, and so were called “meeting houses”. Very often these folks provided the service for nothing more in return than a bed or a meal. One of the first itinerant ministers who came to Potton, as recorded by history, was Roswell Bourne, in about 1803. Cyrus Thomas writes of this man: *“There being an utter destitution of religious teaching in Potton, Mr. Bourn made this place the more immediate field of his labours, although he travelled and preached in the townships adjoining, and in Vermont.”*¹ Bourne was first a Baptist but later became a Methodist. The Bourne family remained active in the Mansonville Church for years after. Roswell Bourne’s grandson, Leonard Bourne, was our Mayor from 1905 to 1908.

As communities took root, congregations began to coalesce, and permanent places of worship were eventually built. The “established” Protestant denominations were the first to thrive. Potton was part of a Vermont circuit of Methodist “saddlebag preachers”. In 1817, the Rev. Ide, a Baptist minister from Irasburg, Vermont, formed a

church society of 12 people in Potton, as a branch of an older and larger Baptist church of Troy, Vermont. In 1817, another early preacher, the Rev. Levi Parsons, a Congregationalist minister, also came to Potton, and following several conversions, (he) established a Congregationalist congregation here... part of the Troy, Vermont, church. The “New Connexion” Methodists were first active in Potton around 1837, with the Rev. Roswell Bourne as minister².

An early Baptist preacher was the Reverend Francis Jersey, who brought his family from England. *“In 1843, he began a pastorate both in Abbott’s Corner (near Frelighsburg) and Stanbridge Ridge that lasted 14 years. In 1857 he moved to Potton, where he died in 1860.”*³ Because of his age, it is not likely that he preached here regularly. One of his sons, Robert Jersey (1872-1944), farmed and built our Round Barn, in 1912. Another of Jersey’s children was William, great grandfather of Lilian and Norma (Smith) Sherrer, in Dunkin. Other descendants are the Jersey family of Vale Perkins.

Pivotal in the early Christian devotions and ministrations in our Township was the formation, as early as 1826, of the Potton Female Benevolent Society. Rev. E. M. Taylor says it well: *“It is a matter of considerable interest to note that Christian women of the Township of Potton, before the first generation of earliest settlers has passed away, banded themselves together for Christian and benevolent purposes.”* The group was a strong one by any standard, since Taylor also records the names of approximately 55 of the earliest members. *“Their meetings were all opened by prayer, and their annual meetings closed by a public preaching service.”* (In 1839, *“it is noteworthy that from this time on the name of “Female” gives place to “Ladies” – and the change noted in their title: Potton Ladies Benevolent Society.*)

The ladies of the time held their meetings in individual homes or likely *"in the large building erected in 1809 at Coit's Corners, later known as Meigs' Corners... designed to serve the double purpose of meeting-house and school-house"*. Did this meeting house persist for the following 30 years or so? It is hard to determine from the records we have. However, *"... On May 22, 1843 we learn that this Society selected a spot on which the House of Worship was afterwards erected... On January 14, 1845 the Reverend Mr. Merriman preaches in the new Meeting House..."* That building no longer exists. Its exact location and precise date of demise are unknown, though presumed to be by fire. History intimates that the Union meeting house or "the Chapel", as it became known, was multi-denominational and was situated adjacent to the Chapel Hill Cemetery on Chemin Miltimore. It was likely of comparatively small scale, built of materials available and of simple design, sized to satisfy the congregation's numbers. In the tiny community that Potton once was, the pressure to set up new households in the frontier left little for the founding of neighbourhood churches.

The last records we have of the Potton Ladies Benevolent Society are those of the July 1848 meeting⁴. In his examination of the Society's minutes, E.M. Taylor seems to have noticed nothing untoward about the Chapel before that time. It is presumed, therefore, the "Chapel" was still standing in 1848. *Potton d'Antan – Yesterdays of Potton* notes it was still on the landscape in 1881; however, the confirming source is not given. It is also unclear when the Ladies Society was dissolved. Suffice to say that history is a little murky on the issue of the Chapel. As an example, in her book *With Heart and Hands and Voices*, Phylliss Hamilton records: *"It (the Chapel) burned down and another was built in 1847-48 on the site of the present day Anglican church"* (plate 122, *Potton d'antan*). *"By 1856, with the*

introduction of the Church of England to Mansonville, the Baptists decided to sell their Church building to the Anglican congregation and reverted to holding their worship services in the Union meeting-house or in the homes of church members."



Church of England (Circa 1880)

The Church of England began to flourish in general in the Townships, only after the arrival of significant numbers of immigrants from Great Britain in the 1830's and 40's. It seems to have been roughly a decade later for our Township, because history records that until 1856 *"the Congregational, Baptist and Methodist Societies had made inroads on the community"*. An Anglican presence until the mid 1800's was sporadic, and part of the reason for this may well have been that travel from parts north was difficult. Bolton Pass was used for carriage travel only around mid-century.

The first Church of England services took place in the Mission Parish of Mansonville, on January 20, 1848. In total, two hundred people were said to have attended the three services held on that winter's day, conducted by a Reverend Thomas S. Chapman. Where

the service was held is unknown, although it might well have been in the Baptist meeting house, built on the site of St. Paul's.

It is recorded that when Reverend Thomas Chapman preached again in Mansonville in 1849, he was told that his congregation would have been larger *"but for a Rechabite meeting that day"*. It seems that, by then, the temperance movement of the time had found fertile ground in Potton. The Rechabites were a Christian group keen to promote total abstinence from alcohol. The group had their work cut out for them in Potton! According to Reverend Chapman, *"the Rechabites had done a great deal of particular good for Potton – it was one of the most drunken and degraded places possible a year ago – now they're all temperate. The village has doubled in houses and the people have been restored from brutes to human beings again"*. This may well have been Potton's first miracle!

Perhaps buoyed by the success of 1849, the Diocese appointed Reverend R. Lindsay to Brome and Sutton with the oversight of Bolton and Potton. *"For four or five years, Mr. Lindsay was the only clergyman of the Church of England in these four townships. But he laboured with an unflagging energy and with great tact..."*⁽⁵⁾

In September 1856, the Reverend John Godden, a missionary previously situated in St. Hyacinthe, was sent *"to try what could be done to plant the church there and bring the people to a better state"*. Godden became the first *resident* Anglican priest in the Township of Potton, where previously the services were only occasional. *"There were then in Potton (and in Bolton) very few who were acquainted with the Anglican Church or her services."*

In 1858, *"with the help of the Diocese Church Missionary society, friends in Montreal and elsewhere, ... the brick Baptist meeting house, built in 1848, was purchased to become the*

new Anglican church of Mansonville". The church was dedicated on October 2, 1858.

Here it is useful to explain briefly that in a rural environment such as ours, early protestant congregations tended to build simple wood framed rectangular structures, often clapboarded. *"It was what they could afford"*. Using that as a rule of thumb, it would seem that in 1848 when the Baptist congregation funded the construction of a *brick* church, the first in Mansonville, their numbers and proportionate wealth must have been significant; however, according to historical records, the congregation was without a pastor for several years after the departure of Rev. Titus Merriman. This may have mitigated the congregation's decision to sell the building. It seems, however, that the design of the Baptist church may not have met the particular needs of a Church of England church: that is to say that the chancel be defined, and that the high altar and choir stalls in the chancel. I *theorize*, without factual foundation, that the rectangular proportions of the Baptist meeting house could not be modified to meet the need for a defined cruciform interior of neo-gothic design.

Until 1857 when the parsonage was built, Reverend Godden lived with his family in a *"dilapidated farm house"*, but we have no record as to where it was. The newly built parsonage was located across the road from the Church, now known as 310, rue Principale. In 1857, the Reverend Godden purchased and donated part of the land on which the parsonage was located.

About 9 months after Reverend Godden arrived, Bishop Francis Fulford of Montreal visited Potton. Soon after that, history records that *"friends of the mission"* endowed the Church with a *"parochial library"*, which provided the clergy with books to enable them to continue their studies. Additionally, in 1860,

a “bell of 508 pounds was procured for the Church and rung every night for “curfew” for the first year! This, remember, was still the former Baptist meeting hall, converted to the Church of England.

Reverend Godden seemed to be very interested in the welfare of his congregation. He established a day school in 1863 using the gallery of the former Baptist church. He was also instrumental in getting some government financing for educational purposes in Mansonville.

One of the students of that day school was a young fellow from South Bolton, Elson Rexford, who later distinguished himself within the hierarchy of the Church, becoming principal of the Montreal Diocesan Theological College. At the time of his death in 1936, the Rev. Canon E.I. Rexford was one of Quebec’s outstanding educationalists. Among his many accomplishments, was the standardization of the educational curricula in rural protestant Quebec schools.

The first recorded vestry meeting was held October 8, 1856. (The vestry is an administration similar to the “marguilliers” of the Catholic Church.) On that occasion, very familiar and prominent names in the history of our Township were present: Robert and James Manson, Nelson and Sheldon Boright, F.S. Peabody, Levi A. Perkins, J.N. McVey, Milton Bowker, and Oliver Fales⁶. It is interesting to note here that Nelson Boright was also a contributor to the United Church in Mansonville. Robert Manson and Mr. McVey were the first churchwardens to be appointed. Each Church has two.

Churchwardens had, and still have, a duty to represent the laity, in liaison with the Bishop. They are expected to lead by setting a good example and encouraging peace and unity. They are largely responsible for all the

property and moveable goods belonging to a parish. Though the life and time in 1856 must have been far different from today in terms of “encouraging peace and unity”, the warden is still in a position of responsibility within a Church.

Before his retirement in 1866, Reverend Godden, who had accomplished so much for the Church in this community, planned for an ordination service to take place on March 12, 1865. It is on this occasion that student ministers are welcomed to the Church as fully-fledged ministers – sort of a graduation exercise.

Such occasions are important formal occasions in the life of a Church. However, in 1865, the one scheduled for Potton on March 12 was nearly hijacked by Mother Nature. Bishop Fulford and his party left Montreal at 3 pm Thursday, March 9th, already one day late due to a severe and heavy March snow storm. The Bishop arrived at Waterloo Station at 7:30 pm to find that the stage coach from Waterloo station had been cancelled; however, the mail stage was available and was about to leave for Knowlton. Some decided to embark on it, in the hope of continuing on to Potton the following day. *“The night was fine and still, so we got into the sleigh and set off... The snow was very deep, 4 or 5 feet independent of the drifts, and occasionally when we met any sleigh, coming in the opposite direction, and had to move a little to one side of the narrow beaten middle track... we stood in imminent danger of an upset... and the horses floundering up to their bellies.”* The Bishop and some of his entourage arrived in Knowlton, around 11 pm that night – a distance of only 9 miles having been covered.

The following day, Friday, they continued on from Knowlton to Mansonville – this trip took all day – coming through one of the worst storms of the winter. *“Saturday was a cold*

and still day that promised well for Sunday... In the night, there came on again a most furious storm of wind and snow." Many were unable to attend the service; however, the ordination service went ahead. *"Hymns were played on the melodeon by the 11 year old daughter of Mrs. Darling"* (a melodeon is a small accordion). Reverend Godden had succeeded in raising the profile of the Church in Potton. *"He has a regular congregation of upwards of 100 people, and efficient Sunday school and 30 communicants".* Being unfamiliar with the requirements of the Anglican Church, I take this to mean those who are confirmed members of the Church of England, or who have been baptized in the Anglican Church.

The efforts to enlist support of the Church were consistent – and persistent. History tells us that *"the Venerable Archdeacon Ker, the incumbent of Glen Sutton, caused the erection of an Anglican Church in Glen Sutton and in West Potton between 1876 and 1881... Mr. Cunningham... is about to commence Sunday services at a small place named West Potton"*, which as we know was Dunkin. The Anglican Church in West Potton was largely supplanted by the Adventist and Baptist populations of the day. The Church ceased to have a congregation before 1923, when it was purchased by the Protestant School Commission of Potton Township to be fitted out as a school, in use from around 1925 to 1951, when it closed. Subsequently, it was sold to private interests and was renovated into a home once belonging to Quebec filmmaker the late Pierre Falardeau.⁷

About 1890, the Anglican Church reached into the Vale Perkins community, to establish church services, held on alternate Sundays to the Methodists. I am uncertain as to whom the leader of these services would have been. These were held on the first floor of the former Labelle cheese factory, the second floor of

which was used regularly for Saturday night dances in the community. At that time, the Methodist congregation met in the schoolhouse at the corner of Peabody and chemin du Lac, and each of the Anglican and Methodist congregations attended each other's services, I am told.

Highwater was also opened up as an outstation of this mission of Mansonville in 1894. Both Vale Perkins and Highwater outstations operated for some time; however, when St. Paul's was completed, parishioners were likely encouraged to attend services in Mansonville.

Exactly when the Anglican folks decided to build a new church in Mansonville is not known. Surely it had been planned for some time. History records that the demolition of the old and construction of the new took place simultaneously in 1902. The building Committee for the church included David Manson, F.H. Perkins, N.F. McKay, and Walter Lynch, the Eastern Townships bank manager, as financial secretary.

Archdeacon Davidson laid the cornerstone for the Church on August 21, 1902. It is located at the north eastern corner of the building and bears the notation A.D. 1902 on the face, and the name St. Paul's Church above which a simple cross, on the side face.

The first service in St. Paul's Church in Mansonville was held on January 25, 1903 – the Festival of the Conversion of St. Paul. The building was dedicated on March 3, 1903 – an occasion that again saw the arrival of many dignitaries. St. Paul's Church in Mansonville was consecrated, being debt free, on Easter Sunday, April 23, 1916, surely a joyful occasion for the congregation.

This Church is not only a house of worship but also embodies the permanence of common values in the young community that was Potton, when construction first began in this place. It is, in itself, perhaps the strongest symbol. Here, as in our other Churches, we may feel faith, tenacity and the continuity of the ages. We feel fellowship and common purpose. I believe we also feel peace in this building and tremendous gratitude to our forebears who sacrificed and toiled mightily to build it, and others like it in our community. We are thankful for those who continue stewardship of this building. Although this Church itself is comparatively new... the symbols in it are timeless. St. Paul's is after all only 110 years old.

The Building Itself – Outside In!



St. Paul's Church - Today

St. Paul's church, styled in Gothic tradition, is a copy, so it is said, in reduced dimensions, of an old Church in England. It's a shame that history has neglected to name that "old church in England", for it is a country filled with old churches!

Design, budgets, blueprints plus building subscriptions for its construction – none of this could be accomplished overnight. The church construction, proportion and design would have closely followed British models provided to the office of the Diocese and Bishop such as that recommended by the Cambridge Camden Society, later known as the Ecclesiological Society⁸. In 1841, this Society published a pamphlet entitled *A Few Words to Church-builders*, summarizing its ideas about what a "modern" church should be.

In brief, they recommended the early English style for small chapels. The most significant and characteristic development of the early English period was the pointed arch, known as the lancet, used for doorways and windows. The openings could be larger and grouped more closely together, allowing architects to achieve a more open, airy and graceful building. It is apparent that the "Few Words to Church-builders" resonated in Potton!

Churches are generally oriented east west by reason of tradition. One theory is that this orientation, rooted in the Jewish custom of fixing the direction of prayer and orienting synagogues, influenced Christianity during its formative years, when it was customary to pray facing toward the Holy Land. The practice of praying while turned toward the rising sun is older than Christianity. So, from the earliest period, the custom of locating the apse and the altar in the eastern extremity of a church was the ideal.

The liturgy of an Anglican church is supposed to be celebrated "*ad orientum*" (facing east). Accordingly, the transept in St. Paul's is located at the west end of the Church, a common feature in English gothic churches. The eastern arrangement was not implemented in the case of St. Paul's, although it is a Church arranged in the classic, historical cruciform architecture.

The guidelines emphasized that the two essential parts of a church were a nave, which is where the congregation sits, and a well defined chancel of not less than a third of the length of the nave. Though the perceptible division between nave and chancel was essential in the interior, it did not always have to be traced to the exterior.

Notice however that in this case, two roof heights are featured: the lower western portion of this building contains the chancel wherein dimensions are wider and lower than the main Church. The recommendations were also that the “breadth” or width of the Chancel should be a little less than that of the Nave; a difference of four or five feet being considered sufficient. “The height of the Chancel is usually less, in the same proportion.” These rules were observed in the construction of St. Paul’s.

The Church itself is of pleasing proportion and symmetry. The symbolism of the Holy Trinity is immediately evident in the east wall, which faces the street. The triple arches of the main window, the three windows, and the trefoil oculus high on the front wall are repetitions reinforcing the Trinity. Our northern climate requires an acute pitch of roof for reasons with which we are all familiar!

To the exterior, the rules were such that a tower could be in any position, except over the altar. It was not essential, according to the Ecclesiologists. In our case, the side tower provides entry to the building and forms a distinct area from the main body of the nave, called the narthex.

The tower is bricked for $\frac{3}{4}$ of its height. Two very narrow gothic arches pierce its exterior. “A white clapboard shuttered belfry” now surmounts the tower, atop which sits a cross, donated by the late Judith Armstrong, in memory of her husband. Bruce Armstrong

was Mayor of this Municipality from 1973 to 1977. This cross appears to be a croix patonce, a symbol associated with the Anglican Church. For those of you interested, a cross patonce is more or less intermediate between a cross pattée and a cross flory. The Canterbury cross, which has 4 arms of equal length, is also a symbol of Anglican and Episcopalian Churches.

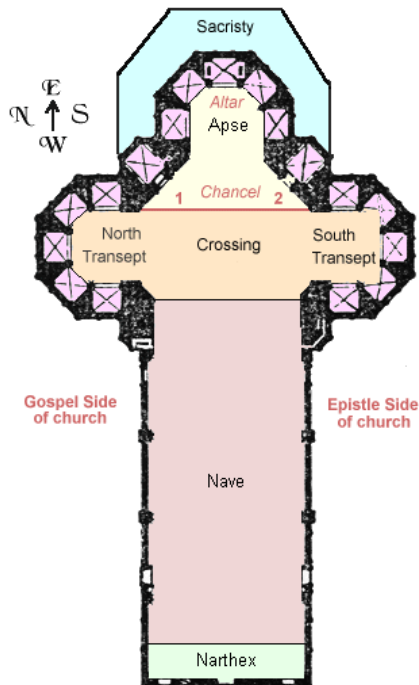
Originally, the belfry extended above the shuttered portion that we see now. A trefoil opening framed by an arch above each louver further respected the gothic theme. The tower extended up beyond these arches to a decorative horizontal moulding, styled to resemble the crenels of a medieval turret. Crenels are rectangular indentations occurring at intervals, originally intended to allow for the discharge of arrows in battle. Curved brackets on each corner reaching outward to suggest gargoyles completed the medieval gothic look. The whole was crowned with a Celtic cross, also called St. Luke’s cross, a symbol of the Anglican and Episcopalian church. Although the original belfry, with its crenels and platform roof, was more pleasing to the eye and faithful to gothic architectural style, it was not practical for our climate. The wood of the original roof rotted and was replaced by the present angled roof to shed water and snow.

The bell of St. Paul’s Church was originally installed in the old Baptist meetinghouse. When this building was demolished in 1902, the bell was reinstalled in the new belfry.

I am told that the ring tones used when tolling the bell for a funeral are, muffled, deep and mournfully sombre, and quite different from that used for the call to worship, when the tone is clearer and more joyous. The use of a separate clapper is the explanation, operated with a different pull cord.

When the Church was first constructed, smaller Celtic crosses were located at either end of the roof of St. Paul's. A traditional cross also crowned the west end of the roof.

The layout of St. Paul's Church follows the classic cruciform design of a church, with the exception of the Sacristy present in Catholic Churches.



The word "nave" is derived from the Latin word for ship, *navis*, and has come to mean the area where the parishioners sit or stand (pews are a very late addition to the nave area, and, even today, parishioners stand during the liturgy in many Eastern Catholic and Orthodox Churches). In Gothic architecture, the nave had an aisle (or two) on both sides.

A true narthex is either an outside, covered porch-like structure or an inside area separated from the nave (the "body" of the church) by a screen, but this word has come to mean "entry" or "foyer".

Inside the Church

Immediately upon entering St. Paul's, one is struck by the Chancel arch with its message: "*Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people*" – words from Isaiah 56: 7-8.

The eye is both drawn forward to the chancel arch and upward to the supporting framing of the roof, which suggests an arcade of gothic arches in the nave of this Church. Notice that the interior arches are not carried beyond the chancel arch, which is the transept or "crossing" of the building. This western portion is structurally lower and wider than the main building making the continued arches unnecessary. The chancel arch frames perfectly the triple lancet stained glass window in the west wall of the Church, where the altar is located.

The Ecclesiologist suggested two or more aisles in a Church, but a single aisle was acceptable, "if that was all funds permitted". The chancel, however, was strictly for the clergy and, according to them, no laity should enter. Only the high altar and choir stalls are in the chancel, which should be raised at least two steps above the nave. Chancel and nave were to be separated by a rood screen, which in the case of St. Paul's is suggested by the Chancel arch.

The pulpit, found on the left side of the Church, facing the altar is called the Gospel side of the Church. The lectern to the right is found in the Epistle side of the Church. The explanation of this significance will be left to others more qualified to discuss its reasoning. In this Church, I am told, the minister gives his sermon from the left, as we face him; and reads the Scriptures from the right, the Epistle side. Both the pulpit and lectern in St. Paul's were acquired in 1878.

On the font, the Ecclesiologists' recommendation was that *"the shape of the basin may be either square, circular or octagonal, an octagon being a very ancient symbol of Regeneration"*. They continue, *"the position of the Font must be in the nave and near a door, this cannot be too much insisted on: it thus typifies the admission of a child into the Church by Holy Baptism"*. Again, St. Paul's conforms to these principles of form and place. The font was acquired sometime between 1881 and 1900 – the exact date being unknown.

Seating, it was said, should not be in closed pews, but open benches or chairs. The issue of seating was controversial in the early 1800's. People used to stand for church services – much as is still the tradition in orthodox churches today. However, when seating was introduced, prestige and cost became associated with the arrangement, with obvious economic spin-off – pew rental became an important source of revenue. The Ecclesiological Society argued vehemently against such arrangements as rented pews on the grounds that it carried an important social agenda. St. Paul's Church has twenty wooden pews, decorated with arches and trefoils – providing comfortable seating for at least 120. I should mention that even the music of the Church was influenced by the Cambridge Camden Society. Under their auspices, John Neale published *The Hymnal Noted*, a collection of more than one hundred hymns, among which *O come, O come, Emmanuel*, which he translated from 12th century Latin. Music and singing is much a part of Anglican services.

Perhaps by now, you will have noticed curious piping at intervals along the walls of the nave. These, I am told once held lighting devices installed when the Church was first built. This may have been provided by acetylene or carbide lighting, which was used in rural and

urban areas not served by electrification. Its use began in the early 1900's.

Calcium carbide pellets were placed in a container, called a generator located outside a building. A reservoir above it was filled with water, and water was allowed to drip into the generator, thus creating acetylene. The gas was then piped to lighting fixtures inside the building where it was burned in a lamp backed with a reflector. By controlling the rate of water flow, the production of the acetylene was controlled. This in turn controlled the flow rate of the gas and the size of the flame at the burner, thus the amount of light produced. Carbide lighting was inexpensive but was prone to gas leaks and explosions. The light produced was broad and surprisingly bright. (Here I must give credit to Brian Waldron who suggested that acetylene lighting was probably used in this Church.)

Now to return to the decorative elements of Saint Paul's: In gothic architecture, triple lancet windows are commonly found in the east wall and symbolize the Holy Trinity. Such is the exact case here in our Church. The stained glass windows of St. Paul's are all of the lancet design and each was installed at the time of construction. Each memorializes members of donor families. The purpose of a stained glass window is not to allow those within a building to see the world outside or even primarily to admit light, but rather to control it. For this reason stained glass windows have been described as 'illuminated wall decorations'.

In my opinion the windows of St. Paul's are its loveliest feature. The depictions are tasteful and well executed. Faces, hair and hands were painted onto the inner surface of the glass in a special glass paint containing finely ground lead or copper filings, ground glass, gum Arabic and a medium such as wine or vinegar. They were then fired to make it

permanent. The art of painting details became increasingly elaborate and reached its height in the early 20th century. Once the window was cut and painted, the pieces were assembled by slotting them into H-sectioned lead comes. Joints were then soldered. The glass pieces are stabilized from rattling and the window is weatherproofed by forcing a soft oily cement or mastic between the glass and the comes. Traditionally, when the windows were inserted into the window spaces, iron rods were put across at various points, to support the weight of the window, which was tied to the rods by copper wire. These are visible here.

Unfortunately, none of the windows is signed and any records indicating the maker have been lost to time. The windows were recently refurbished.

The Altar Window and Chancel



The central panel of altar window depicts Jesus as the Good Shepherd. This window is particularly lovely at sunset when the deep red of the robes is magnificently highlighted. To right of the central panel is perhaps the most well known christogram: the intertwined

I.H.S. monogram, which denotes the first three letters of the Greek name of Jesus, *iota-eta-sigma*. **I.H.S.** is sometimes interpreted as meaning *Jesus Hominum Salvator*, or “Jesus, saviour of men” in Latin, or connected with *In Hoc Signo Vinces* which is a Latin rendering of the Greek phrase meaning “**in this sign you will conquer**”.

To the left of the central pane are the intertwined letters of Alpha and Omega, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet – traditionally interpreted in Christian religions as “the beginning and the end” symbolizing God as the foundation and culmination of all things – that God is eternal. The symbols were used in early Christianity and were found in the catacombs of Rome. The words “Reverence my Sanctuary” are found on the window where again the I.H.S. is repeated, as it is on the the baptismal font.

Only the east and west triple window frames are decorated with the repeated motif of a cross within a shield. Notice the almost imperceptible positioning of the **I.H.S.** sign above the central arch of this window.

Below the chancel window is a *reredos* is an altarpiece, or a decorative screen behind the altar in a church. The word is derived from the 14th century Anglo-Norman word *areredos* which, in turn, is derived from *arere* meaning behind, and *dos* meaning back, from Latin *dorsum*. Reredos were revived in the 19th century as Church features. They were commonly used in the 14 & 15th Centuries and had become nearly obsolete. The one in St Paul’s was donated in 1950 by the family of Cedric Bailey, following the tragic double drowning on July 8th, 1950, which took the life of their son , Wendal C. Bailey, 12, and that of his 10 year old companion, John Edgar Barnett, only son of John and Mary Barnett.

In Anglican symbolism, the cross is sometimes shown with the crucified Christ still on it, the crucifix. More often however, the cross is empty, symbolic of the resurrection. Candles, symbolizing Christ as the light of human kind, are commonly used in the Anglican Church, generally by pairs. Icons of Saints are not common in Anglican churches. Altar cloths in white are common, symbolizing the purity of Christ.

The rise of Anglo-Catholicism around the mid-19th Century exercised a great influence on many church interiors. Symbolic materials became more popular in Anglican worship spaces. That particular trend seems to have been carried into the window pattern designs of this Church. Lilies, symbolizing purity and often found in threes – a symbol of the Trinity, are common in here; wheat or wheat sheaves, an emblem of divine harvest, nourishment of the soul and spirit; the dove which has universal appeal and a common symbol of hope and love, common in almost all religions. On most of the windows, the altar rail, and some of the furniture is the image of the dogwood flower, its four petals symbolizing resurrection, sacrifice and eternal life.

The Signature Window of St. Paul's

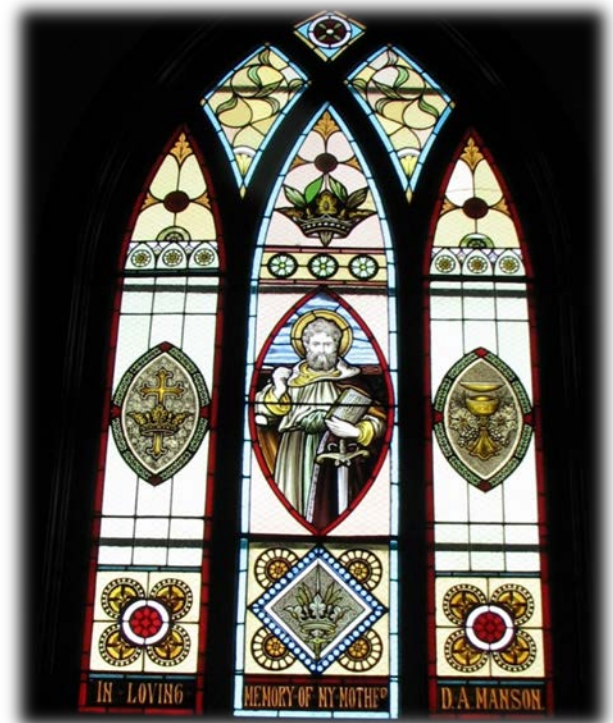
The signature window of St. Paul's is not only beautiful, but enigmatic in its symbolism. It was donated by David A. Manson, in honour of his mother, Martha Perkins. David A. was the grandson of Robert Manson, after whom the village is named.

The principle depiction on this window is that of Saint Paul carrying a book and holding a stylus – the symbolism of which is well known. Paul probably wrote his letters to early Christians between 51 and 63 AD. His letters were to the early Christians, written for instruction and encouragement of new Christian churches. The gospels, which came

later, have the most honoured place in the New Testament, as witnesses to Jesus' life and teaching, His death and resurrection. Paul's letters are an inspired exposition of Christian faith.

The depiction of the chalice entwined with grapes and grape leaves above which the paten of the Eucharist is universally understood.

On the left is a depiction of the Cross and Crown, which is often interpreted as symbolizing the reward in heaven, represented by the Crown, coming after the trials in this life, represented by the cross. This is a symbol appearing in many churches, particularly Roman Catholic.



A nearly identical symbol is associated with Freemasonry, specifically the Knights Templar degree of the York rite, where it is known as "Knight Templars Blood red Passion Cross and Crown" and is often found with the phrase or

insignia *In Hoc Signo Vincas*, the chi rho symbol for Christ and the oldest known. The depiction in Masonry generally shows the cross on angle passing through the crown.

David A. Manson was known to be a Royal Arch Mason, one of the highest progressions of the ancient craft. I could perhaps explain this in practical terms: if one is learning or practicing a trade such as masonry, employing the geometry of architecture – one would learn the fundamentals of building straight and true foundations and walls before the apprentice proceeding to the art of building arches and ceilings.

It may very well be that, in this window, we have an enduring symbol of the Masonic order, which David Mason himself helped found in Mansonville. Beyond all doubt, the Masonic order, its tenets, teachings and beliefs, were of utmost value in the life of David A. to whom we owe this lovely window.

Elsewhere on the Church windows, we find the symbol of the anchor, another of significance in the Masonic order. By it are symbolized hope or eternal life. The symbol of the anchor is found often on Mason's graves. Another such dual symbol is the six pointed Star of David, atop one window, that of Mrs. Levi A. Perkins (Abigail Nott). Mr. Perkins was another early member of the Masonic Lodge. This star is found in many applications – including that of freemasonry, where it symbolizes divine protection. It is also a significant symbol of the Jewish faith. Some see in the symbols of the Anglican Church, the ancient croix pattée. Variations of it are many and are certainly in this building.

As with any type of symbolism, and like beauty itself, we see "what" we want to see. Symbols of Christianity are rooted in its earliest days of Christianity and persecution, when symbols talked and secrecy saved lives.

In my opinion, the use of Masonic symbols, such as they have borrowed from other meanings, is coincidental in this Church. The use of certain depictions was intentional, else why would they be present in these windows? Since not one of these symbols is unique to Masons – what the depictions mean and why they were chosen is known only to those who commissioned the work. They have passed on to eternal rest and can answer none of our questions. It then becomes pure conjecture.



And thus ends our tour of St. Paul's Anglican Church - but before we move to the hall, which itself has an interesting history. I must tell you that in my youth, this Church was truly an important force in this Municipality – made so through not only the Ministry of the Church but also by the support of the kind and tireless ladies of the Ladies Guild. They, and the ladies of my own church, the United, provided the sons and daughters of the day in this community with many lessons, not the least of which, those provided by their example of industry, cooperation and loving kindnesses to others. Many Church suppers were put on by

these ladies, on both sides of the religious divide. They were a community event supported by all. The girls were tireless, or so it seemed. The church was kept clean, windows washed, woodwork polished by the hands of many. My grateful thanks go to those hands that rocked the cradle. Not much could have been done without their willing help through the years.

Additional Notes – Anecdotal in Nature

The Church hall annexed to the main building is also a memorial of sorts. Originally a two storey structure featuring a stable at ground level with a reception hall above, it was built of the original timbers in the former Baptist Church, built in 1847. The stable was removed and the building lowered to one floor, when one evening the hall was being used for a dance. It was noticed that the building was swaying “dangerously” - enough to make the coal oil lamps “dance on their hangers”, it is said. The building was evacuated immediately. This was likely sometime in 1927 or 1928. Coal oil lamps were in use because the electricity had been cut off during the devastating flooding of 1927, which also took out bridges, broke dams and swept away mills in Potton. (Coal oil is the equivalent of kerosene)

As a matter of interest, interesting, though unrelated to the present – the following was recorded in the Vestry minutes of 1861: 3.5 bushels of potatoes were worth roughly \$0.88 (a bushel contains roughly 60 lbs); one cord of good dry hard wood was \$1.00, and one gallon of coal oil was \$0.80. How times have changed!

Notes

- (1) Cyrus Thomas. *Contribution to the History of the Eastern Townships*, 1866, p. 310.
- (2) According to Phyllis Hamilton – *With Heart and Hands and Voices*.
- (3) According to Phyllis Hamilton – *With Heart and Hands and Voices*, & other sources.
- (4) Taylor, Rev. Ernest M. *History of Brome County Quebec*, Volume I, Chapter XII, 1908; information about Potton Female Benevolent Society, pgs 230 and following.
- (5) Taylor, Rev. Ernest M. *History of Brome County, Quebec*, Volume I, p. 188.
- (6) Excerpts from newspaper articles: “Historical Sketch of the Church in Mansonville”, in *The Montreal Churchman*, Volume XIII, no 3, January 1925; and an article in *Record*, August 5, 1991, as well as distillations from Phyllis Hamilton’s *With Heart and Hands and Voices*, published 1996, both provided from the Montreal Diocese archives by Barbara McPherson, archivist.
- (7) Distilled from article appearing in *Yesterdays of Brome County*, Volumes II and III.
- (8) <http://www.ecclsoc.org>.

“This lovely little Church, rich in the history and symbolism of the ages, has been a place for our citizens to celebrate their faith, and the community of fellowship found in the milestones of life’s joys and sadness. On behalf of Potton Heritage, I thank Brian Waldron and my co-presenter, Marina Coté, for sharing the history of St. Paul’s Church and allowing us the privilege of a visit here today. I hope you have enjoyed our presentation.”
