

Augusta Township - History

The First Rector in Augusta

READING ROOM



## THE FIRST RECTOR IN AUGUSTA

These volumes record the names of more than five score of your ancestors, men and women who may live on here for one or two of us but whose careers will not be found outlined in the printed page; for their deeds made no change in the fate of the many, for better or for worse and their influence reached not far beyond their own families, their own neighbourhoods. Yet to those, their families, and to you, their great-grandchildren, their characters are of deeper concern than those of the great, whose records in even their most trivial details are found in the history books - for what these your people did yesterday, your children will do again to-morrow and all that they were you are.

One cannot assume that the attributes of any child come in equal parts from each of its parents, for then we would all be alike, and chance must enter largely into the combination of "genes" which have built up each of us individuals, so that brother differs from brother and the sister resembles neither of them but some long gone great-aunt. Certain dominants seem to persist strongly through a family at the expense of heritage from other forebears. If this is so, then Robert Blakey and his wife, Ann Coates, were of such types whose characteristics have markedly passed on to their descendants. I have seen two portraits of Robert and one of Ann. The likeness between the "Rector" and your Uncle Hubert and his two sons seems obvious and you, Kathleen, when you were a year or two old, had much the same general air, though you later lost it. As to Ann, one need only compare her picture with the photograph of her daughter, Emily, and with your own Mother - while Connie Skinner and your grandmother only vary in degree from the same type.

When you read the record I am trying to make for you of Robert and his family, you must remember that I am writing alone at Cobalt, in the absence of anyone with personal knowledge of the Blakeys. The notes on the Hendersons were written after cross-examination of "Grannie", (not an over communicative witness, as most fortunately and against the habit of most people of her great age, her interest is in to-day not yesterday), and the other papers are based on those things I myself know or on written documents, supplemented by the colouring of someone who had dwelt among and was deeply interested in the families. You, yourselves, find it trying to wade through these dull jottings on the lives of those long buried by the Little Blue Church, but there will be a day when you will not be faring so much for the passing moment of the present, but will want a longer perspective and then even these meagre details of the lives of the Blakeys may prove of as much interest to you as to me, less directly concerned in their succession than you.

Your great-great-grandfather, Robert Blakey, was born in England in 1790. His father was John Blakey, his mother, Eleanor -- ; their home was given me as St. Edmund's in Lancashire, but I can locate no place of that name in the County - might it have been Bury St. Edmund's in Norfolk, or St. Helen's in Lancashire? As a young man he lived in London, but whether with his parents or only as a student, I do not know. His family was one of substance and his education extensive. He read for medicine, apparently under the then declining system of apprenticeship rather than in a University course. As he neared the finish of his studies, against the strong opposition of his father and mother, he dropped medicine and started study for the Church. He became curate at Ecclesfield, five miles north of Sheffield and now practically one of its suburbs. Without doubt he was attached there to the celebrated



St. Mary's Church, known as the "Minster of the Moors". Here he seems to have met Ann Coates, daughter of James and Ann Coates, whose home was in the fair valley of Wensleydale in the North Riding of York and they were married probably in 1812. She was two years younger than he and was one of ten children. That she gives her birth-place as "Wensleydale" rather than in one of the towns along the valley suggests that the Coates home was on a farm. Over steep water-falls deep hidden in thick foliage, the little river Ure runs through Wensleydale, its fertile slopes contrasting with the craggy limestone "fells" to North and South. The place-names have an ancient sound - Askrigg, Aysgarth, or Snaizeholme, Cam Fell, Wasset Fell - and long before Agricola men of Wensleydale from their homes along the valley bottom had driven their cattle to pasture between the Fells. When one recalls the inbred aversion to cattle among their descendants, one finds it hard to believe that the Coates were dairy-farmers, just as one feels that for generations their womenfolk must have worked in their gardens on spring mornings, to have developed such an abiding love of flowers and of their green backgrounds as has filled some of those Coates women I have mentioned. The probable first home of the Huntons was only five miles over the hills from the Ure, while the Burnetts, the Ingalls and others were Yorkshiremen, so that this county more than the others might be called your starting point.

When Blakey left England, three fifths of its Parishes were without incumbents - there was therefore much work to be done at home. It is true that the stipends, when paid at all, were pittance. Politics were rife in the Church, the Bishops and a goodly number of the laymen generally standing for the Low Church- Whig faction, while the majority of the junior clergy were High Church and Tory. The structure was being further undermined by the advent of Evangelism, due in great part to the sensationally successful preaching of John Wesley, although an eventual result was a sturdy revival of interest in spiritual matters within the Church itself. The country was deep in the severe depression that followed the Napoleonic wars.

Under such circumstances Robert Blakey, ordained in 1817, sets out four years later from the heart of Yorkshire for a new parish on the St. Lawrence - sent by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Countries, which must have supplied a portion of his stipend for a number of years. Yet there were no Indians in Oswegatchie to be converted - only a handful of farmers, poor and inclined towards Methodism.

The immediate reason which decided them to apply for the move to Augusta was probably in the Coates family; two of Ann's brothers, James and Thomas, (the youngest of the ten), had come out earlier and, after the death of the father, they seem to have persuaded their Mother to come to Canada and she in turn may have suggested to Ann and Robert the dream of establishing their family in the heart of a new land rather than remaining with Robert a low-paid junior, in an Old Country Church. Yet, years later, when Robert died, Baily put on his stone: "Some time Curate of Ecclesfield, Yorkshire".

So Robert and Ann collect their chattels, buy books and medical supplies, brave a crossing in an immigrant ship and the prevailing cholera, to land on the point in the pine woods above Prescott. This was only a generation or so after the Vicar of Wakefield, but Robert's equipment in life was far different from that of Goldsmith's Vicar. He brought Durham boatloads of furniture - the china, (Minton, Crown Derby, or whatever it may be), now in our corner-cupboard - paintings, including, (according to Barbara Jones' memoir earlier in this volume), a Gainsborough and a



Constable, and one painting on wood which I have seen; that goes back two hundred years before Robert's time - books in great piles - a piano which, having crossed the Atlantic and having been towed up the Long Sault Rapids with much toil and caution, was let fall in the river off the Point at Pine Grove, to be fished out again and its all-wood parts dried, used for many years by the Blakey girls, finally to find a lodging in the little Museum at Fort Wellington. It is quite plain that, however little the Blakeys knew of life in Upper Canada, they did not buy such furniture things to come to the wild lands of the new world. (the tea-set and many of the other things were made at least fifty years before they set out). These, except for the books, must have been the family possessions of either the Blakeys or the Coates long time before the break-up of the English home. It was, of course, Ann who wanted to take nice things with her; she must have had many misgivings about leaving her familiar surroundings in Yorkshire for that strange country across the sea and it was she who decided that, in spite of added toil, she would make a home of their post in the wilderness. Whether the furnishings came from Eleanor Blakey or from some other of the connection, wherever a piece may now be found, it shows a quality, a taste in the choosing, not equalled among other homes along the River. There is one Windsor chair, brought to the Beaven home in Prescott from Pine Grove, to me the most beautiful chair in all of Upper Canada. Our china, with its wide/saucers for drinking tea and the deep

smaller ones to be used when chocolate was served, was complete when Ann first entertained her new neighbours on the Point. The teapot was stolen by a decamping maid and one or two cups have been broken in many washings at Pine Grove or Mapleshurst.

Soon after the original settlement, midway between to-day's Village of Maitland and Prescott, a town plot was laid out: New Oswegatchie Town. It was divided into plots, a portion being set aside for a Church and a School, and those who secured lots must have pictured such a town growing up as they had left behind them in New York Province or New England, but strangely enough not even the scantiest of settlements has ever been started on the surveyed town plot. Below, along the river and extending back into the second Concession, including the pleasant point jutting out into the water and the marsh bordered shore downstream, where the river slowly eddies back, was the grant of James Campbell. In 1817, soon after he arrived from Yorkshire, Thomas Coates, Ann's youngest brother, bought this Campbell farm. The house was near where the contraption known as the "Wayside Inn" now stands, while above the point was uncleared of its original pine down to the water where now the gincerack summer cottages are serried. Coates had done little work on his purchase when, the following year, the settlement along the River was startled by the arrival of three carriages (or sleighs perhaps), driven over the corduroy from Montreal. In the first was a smallish man, dressed in clothes such as no man had worn before along the road. The second was still more interesting: it brought a most beautiful and wondrously begarbed young lady, her features and vivacious manner just as foreign as the officer in the leading carriage. The procession was brought up by a child whose clothes again differed widely from the homespun of the native children, as day from night. Perhaps there were also servants in this third vehicle. The man was a Frenchman, the Count de Bursay, (that is the spelling given me) - the lady, his daughter and the child apparently hers. The Count viewed all the lands from Prescott up the River, while the Loyalists gaped and wondered; he chose the



point on Coates' newly-acquired farm. He bought the river front and a small building used as a brewery which stood near one end of the land. (I am quoting from memory of a conversation in the Beaven home in Prescott one wet Fall afternoon two years ago and may not be too correct in my details). Here the Count set up his establishment; he did not mingle with the local "peasantry" and why he had come to live in the wood by the River caused much gossiping and guessing. Three years the farmers in their deerskins and homespun gaped at the silken finery of the young Parisienne and her child - then one day there was no smoke from the elayed chimney of the cabin on the point; suddenly, taking what they could hastily pack into hired carriages, the Count and his establishment had departed, never to be heard from again in Augusta. Conjectures were many as to their coming and their going; make your own - it will be as close as any. In some dark attic in France perhaps there are still musty letters telling of the family's impressions of the Jones and the Jessups.

When Robert Blakey, Ann, their first children and Ann's mother arrived by bateau that summer, they moved into the cabin the Count had left and took over the Point with its tall pines and called it and the fair, low stone house they were to build: Pine Grove. How they cleared their title and got the Count's name off the record, I wonder. Perhaps Robert might have been content with the log cabin to the "Comte", for he had enough to do organizing his Parish and finishing the new church at Prescott, but Ann quietly but surely insisted that her own house must be built - she did not want one of those temporary places that outlast a generation of postponement, but one which would be for all her time a home to which her daughters and sons would want to return and such it was when, by coaking and driving, Robert and Ann at last got it finished; they had to depend largely on the work of their parishioners, who lost all patience with this preacher who wanted a fanlight over his door and his wife, who made them pull down a partition which they had placed in a much better way than the design she had laid out.

Blakey bought some of the lots in the town plot of New Oswegatchie or the "town of Augusta", as it had now come to be called, and other farm land to round out his Estate. He and Ann were not building for a day or any short period of passing ecclesiastical service, but for the long years to come. Here they were to establish their family, the largest in the Township, but the ever-changing face of temporal things has left the graceful house on the Point, but not descendants of their name to remember Robert and Ann Blakey; a little more than a century later Pine Grove would pass to other lines.

They made their storey-and-a-half house in the Georgian tradition; the wooden verandah which spans the Northern side was, I should think, added later. There is a similarity of thought and design to all these old houses along the River; especially is this noted in Maitland Village; not only does the group all belong to the same period, but the same simplicity, lack of superficial ornament, balance in the design and harmony throughout mark the houses and their outbuildings. This unity seems to apply only to this small corner of the Provinces - elsewhere one finds the occasional early house, but, as at Grafton or Windsor, it will be built with a strong individuality, unrelated to neighbouring buildings. One can only conclude that there was among the settlers in Augusta one craftsman of high artistic skill, who was responsible not only for the general design but for the details of these fine old houses in the Village and down the River.



They are not slavish copies of other models nor patterned closely after the designs shown in the ~~many~~ handbooks of the time. They are reminiscent of the best of the Georgian type in Old or New England, but to some one man must be due the credit for the careful balancing of the surfaces, the classical purity of detail and the general good taste throughout. The standard once established, a later generation made Maplehurst and the splendid Alpheus Jones and Peck houses, in keeping with the first permanent homes and it was not until quite recent years that monstrosities arrived. The last of the tradition has now gone and the houses put up in our day in the vicinity are as close to the worst in the Province as the early ones were to the best. The group, with probably the largest proportion of houses of merit in the Province, was not too seriously encroached on by the coming of the Victorian period with all its ugliness. While the high standard set in the Township declined, the homes of that period remained at least decently plain and one sees comparatively little gingerbread. In the back Concessions the farmers continued to build the simple but attractive small limestone houses and while every single house illustrated by Leavitt in his description of the two Counties in 1879 is of the shapeless Victorian type, "beautified" by rank wood-turning, not one of those he shows is from the ~~Witland~~ area. The good taste of this particular grouping of early settlers shown in the homes they had built continued to influence the neighbourhood, gradually waning for close to a hundred years; then the swing of the pendulum carried to the other extreme. Early conditions expressed in the architecture of the Township came near that Greek ideal: the concentration of ability, culture, wealth and power in the same hands. To-day those conditions no longer exist and other families, without backgrounds, taste or learning, are erecting houses along the river; outvying each other in blatant ignorance, shouting to the world passing along the Highway their want to be noticed. The latest building along the river-front can only be qualified in one word: nauseous. Pretentious, self-exposing, evil in design and loud in cheap detail, it dazzles the eyes and sickens the stomach with its argents roof, ruining the view of a wide peaceful reach of the river beyond, while right and left juke-box boxes blare out, between tawdry tourist cabins, violent in hue and jostling each other along the road and down to the water's edge. Towards Prescott are others almost as filthily ugly. It is curious to see the very children of those who built these finest of the old houses gazing in awed admiration at a villainous pile of dressed stone and concrete north of Prescott, without tree to shield its naked hideousness, the architect for which must have been the man who designed our county jails and who was here given rein to splurge on a palace for some pot-bellied stock-jobber.

The Blakey house differed from the others along the River, not in care for the harmony of its lines, but in reminiscence of English style, rather than the Colonial of the Loyalist. Moreover it had what no other of them had: furniture and a garden. These driven across the border had not been able to bring but little furniture with them from the States. Their homes were fitted with home-made chairs and tables, their crudeness contrasting sharply with the beauty of the dwellings they would put up when the original settlement was complete. Later, when gingerbread styles in house-building replaced the fine lines of the early Colonial tradition they would bring in Victorian furniture of good quality but, except in rare cases, the early pieces in Ontario homes were poorly designed and unskilfully made. Gardens were little appreciated; the settlers were too close to their lifelong fight against the forest in the clearing of their land, to want flowers or bushes, or even trees too close to their homes. No doubt there were exceptions, but most travellers of the day



have noted the lack of flowers among the early settlers. But Ann had a garden - she had brought roots and bulbs with her from Yorkshire and set them out where perhaps descendants of the same plants still grow to-day. All her life she was to work among her plants, taking cuttings from her roses to her friends along the way. In her daughter and her great-grand-daughter the innate knowledge of flowers and the love of moulding a garden would continue.

From this his house, the balanced dignity of its front distinguished by the tracery of the fanlight over its door, Robert Blakey could look up and down the River, or across the road towards the tall pine woods. He had been installed first Rector of the new Parish of Augusta and now his ambition turned towards a new church to hold seat his growing congregation. St. John's at Prescott was being built but in the Township only the Little Blue Church, across the roadway, could be used.

To keep the record, here I must digress and write some local history, not all with direct application to the family. Much of what follows is culled from a letter Robert's grandson, Clem. Beaven wrote to the Prescott Messenger in 1903, during a controversy between himself and his Wesleyan cousin, James Coates. Mr. Beaven's indignation at the twisting of facts by Coates leads him to write an excellent article, carefully documented but somewhat marred by the addition as a postscript of an ignorant note by the editor of the newspaper. I have also drawn on a short and badly printed article by French in the Ont. Hist. Soc. papers called "Gleanings from the Blue Church Burying Ground", on Leavitt and on an almost worthless and misleading book: Withrow's "Barbara Heck".

The third generation of Loyalists was growing up when Robert Blakey arrived off Pine Grove Point. The front was settled and much of the back country and in a day when church-going meant much more than now the lack of church space had been felt from the first.

Two elements made up the original settlers: the families of officers of Jessup's or Rogers' corps, hailing mainly from the Province of New York, such as the Jessups and Jones - and the so-called Dutch: Hecks, Dulmages and so forth. The first group had come from landed families in the countryside - Tory in their sympathies, Church of England in religion. The second type were of curious descent; they had started from the Palatinate in Germany - driven thence by the persecution and devastation of Louis XIV, much more cruel and complete than the destruction that same district is witnessing again as I write these notes. They first took refuge in Ireland where, while adherents of the Church of England, they became enthused with the preaching of John Wesley. The barren Irish land on which they had been placed was not sufficient for this hard-working people and in 1760 they migrated to New York City and it was there that this little group, probably at the insistent suggestion of Barbara Heck held the very first Methodist meetings in America. Before the war the Hecks moved up the Hudson and when the Revolution broke out, they and their friends remained loyal to the Crown which had given them refuge a hundred years before; they came through the woods to Montreal and eventually, in 1785, were moved to the St. Lawrence. The Hecks, nominally remaining members of the Church, brought to Augusta their enthusiasm for Wesleyanism



and it was at their homestead, between Pine Grove and Homewood, that in 1790 William Losee preached to the first meeting in the District. Contrary to the widely-spread report, this was not the first meeting in Canada. Riding parsons had preached in the Niagara country and Losee himself most likely crossed near St. Regis and exhorted in barns as he worked his way up the River. The mis-statement seems to have originated with the romancings of Withrow in his trifling book on Barbara Heck. Losee lost his scattered wits and was sent back to the States, prattling, when Dunham, his friend and fellow-preacher, married a "maid of no little moral and personal attractions", on whom Losee had set his heart. Incidentally, Withrow makes the maid a "neighbour" of the Hecks, although her home was on the Rapases. Other preachers took Losee's place on the circuit and from barn to barn among the German settlers and the growing number of converts in Augusta the meetings moved till in 1816 the first Methodist church was erected in the Township.

The other group of settlers was almost without church service and it is not surprising that many of them joined with the Heck faction. The only ordained clergyman in the whole area was Dr. John Stuart at Cataragui. Sir William Johnston and Rev. Mr. Inglis of New York had, in 1770, obtained from the S.P.G. that they send Stuart as a missionary to the Mohawks in Johnston's country; when the Revolution broke out and the "King of the Mohawks" was driven, fighting, across the lakes, Stuart also came to Canada and in 1784 camped on the point below Prescott, giving to the spot the name of Johnstown after the Johnstown settlement on the Mohawk. While the Loyalists Dr. Stuart brought with him settled up and down ~~the river~~ from the spot which was to have become the District Town, (but which never got further than a court-house and an inn), the clergyman himself made his headquarters at the only town, Cataragui and his visits down the river must of necessity have been most infrequent. From time to time other missionaries of the S.P.G. passed through; one man, named Nichol, unordained, held what were perhaps the first church services in Augusta and later marriages celebrated by him were legalized. In 1801 a Mr. Jackson, afterwards stationed at William Henry, visited the settlement and between 1804 and 1810 Dr. Strachan held services and baptized several children. I assume that by that time the Fighting Bishop had forsaken his Presbyterianism and had already decided that a rich widow for a wife and the Tory element for his friends offered more future to him. In any case he cultivated in Augusta those he considered of sufficient influence to further his ambition; he visited their homes, led them to send their sons to his school at Cornwall and dropped them when he was finally established at Toronto as Bishop and Tory leader.

*parents*

Leavitt states that "at a very early date members of the Church of England attempted to erect a church on one of the sand hills of Augusta near the present residence of Guy C. Reed. Part of the foundation was laid when it was decided to make a grand bee to which all the settlers were invited. A barrel of whiskey was secured for the occasion and for a time all went well merry as a marriage bell but sad to relate the supply of stimulant proved more than a match for the hardy settlers. Things became inextricably mixed - confusion reigned supreme; and in place of the wall going up, it was knocked down and there it remains to this day. After the bee the project of building a church at that place was abandoned."

Another Loyalist, Rev. John Bethune, Chaplain of the 80th. Regt., who settled at Cornwall, held Presbyterian services at various points till



till his death in 1815 and a different John Bethune, (son of the preceding?)— I tried to clear up this point from his descendant in Toronto, but he was much more interested in taking photos of our party of best man and bridesmaid than in the religion of his vague ancestor), was the first ordained clergyman in Brockville, a church having been put up there not later than 1811. Bethune included in his Parish Elizabethtown, Yonge, Augusta and Edwardburg, but in 1818 he moved to Montreal, (where he later became the well-known Dean Bethune), in exchange for Rev. John Leeds. Mr. Leeds continued in the Parish until 1825. In 1821 he married one Inther Houghton to Sabra Billings, which was unfortunate in a way, as had he not done so their great-grandson would not to-day be putting together these dull notes which you three, out of filial courtesy, must at least pretend to read — and later in that same year he assisted at the division of the Parish into two: Brockville and Augusta. It was this new Parish of Augusta into which Robert Blakey was inducted on his arrival from Yorkshire.

Here let Mr. Beaven take up the history:

"The land on each side of the Blue Church was laid out in lots and streets for a townsite. A plan of this, known as the "town plot of Augusta" may be seen in the Prescott registry office and in the centre of it is a strip of land marked 'Church Commons'. It may be interest to record some of the early settlers as shown by the old deeds: In 1786 Frederick Fell sold to Peter Drummond lot 106 in the Town plot of New Oswegatchie, township No. 7, for one and a half Spanish milled dollars. By the by, though Fell's name is written that way in the document, he signed himself Froederick Foel, which together with the pennmanship would make him of German or Dutch descent origin. In 1803 Wm. Scott sold five lots east of the Com. to Sammel Weatherhead. In the same year Hugh McIlmoyle sold two lots to Jas. Chambers, James Campbell and D'Arcy Bolton being witnesses. In 1794 Benoni Wiltse, of Augusta, District of Lunenburg, as he describes himself, sold his lots to S. Weatherhead. In 1788 Joshua Seelye sold lot 17, west of Ch. Com. to Ed. Jessup. He calls it New Oswegatchie settlement, district of Montreal. There seems to have been no settled name for this part of the country for in 1786 Major Watson in his deed to S. Weatherhead calls it Province of Quebec and District of New Oswegatchie. The following are the names of some other of the original owners of town lots, Nicholas Mosher, Philo Hurd, Justus Seelye, Capt. Hugh Munro, Ensign Lanson, Daniel, David and Philip Fell, John Rudebach, Dr. S. Jones, Capt. J. Jones, Thos. Jones, Sammel Whitehead. Others mentioned later on are Jas. Campbell, Justus Sherwood, Luke and Elisha Smades, Randolph or Rodolphus DeBersy and others who held land in the Town Plot or vicinity. The town of New Oswegatchie was laid out in 323 lots, composed of 129½ acres, exclusive of roads and streets."

In Mr. Beaven's last sentence is there not a clue to the identity of the Count of Pine Grove? The name of Rodolphe de Bersy. (Bersy would be more familiar) sounds more genuine than de Bursy. If he bought lots across the road from his point, the Count obviously intended to stay on in Augusta, until some reversal in politics or family death allowed him suddenly to return to France.

Mr. Beaven goes on: "Whether there was any building used for a church on this land before 1800, I have not been able to ascertain, though it is not improbable as there was a considerable settlement in the vicinity, but the first church we have any record of was built in about the year 1809 — two years later this building was burnt down



and a second was erected shortly after."

"This second building is that known as the old Blue Church, and was a good sized frame structure about standing about 75 yards in the rear of the present church., It had three rows of old fashioned box pews, and a regulation 'Three decker', consisting of pulpit, reading desk, and clerk's desk. The walls were lath and plaster, but the roof was ceiled with boards, stained brown, and one of them bore the impression of a man's foot. Children were kept in order by being told it was the footprint of the devil, who would carry them off if they misbehaved".

Twenty-five years after Clem. Beaven wrote this article, he found in the old library of Robert Blakey records which ~~was~~ altered the history of the Blue Church given above. Besides among Dr. Solomon Jones papers at Homewood had been found the original contract covering the first building of the Blue Church and in 1926 Barbara Jones published in the Prescott Journal a sketch of the history of the Blue Church, showing that actually the first church was built in 1791, but was destroyed by fire a few months after its completion. From the time of the fire until 1809 services were held in private houses by visiting clergymen, as recounted earlier, but in 1809 the second Blue Church was built. The following is a copy of the contract, dated January 1st. 1790, for the building of the first Blue Church. The name Salys is evidently the same as the Seelye mentioned by Mr. Beaven. The Paul Heck is the husband of Barbara Heck. The date of signature of the contract was March 24th., 1790. Of the eight trustees, two, Paul Heck and Capt. Brakenridge became leaders of the Methodist church, while Ass. Landon's family became Baptists; the wait from 1791 to 1809 for a church proved too long for them. The contract does not mention any of the subscribers making as his contribution a barrel of whiskey, as does another church contract Barbara Jones has unearthed.

WILLIAM WELBOND



on the 24th. March, 1790.

The contract reads as follows:-

To All people whom these presents shall concern, Greeting  
Know ye that the undersigned impressed with a desire to propagate the  
Gospel and promote the christian religion, do obligate and bind ourselves  
severally, to pay or cause to be paid, the several sums affixed hereunto  
to our names, in such specie or labour as expressed opposite our names,  
in such payments and at such times as our trustees and committees here-  
under named shall appoint, for the purpose of building a church of the  
following dimensions, viz: fifty feet in length and forty feet in breadth  
twenty feet high from the ground sills to the plates which support the  
roof, or as much higher as may be found convenient. The house to be  
framed with timber and boarded on the square sides with pine clap board  
and the roof with pine shingles eighteen inches in length, the floors to  
be made of pine plank, to be lighted with sufficient number of windows  
each window in the square of the house shall consist of fifty panes  
of glass at least and more if our under-mentioned committee shall think  
proper, the whole as above specified to be completed by the first of  
Jan. 1791. Said Church to be built on the Church Common in the town  
plot of the township of Augusta, in or near the burying yard as our  
said committee shall judge most convenient and alighty and we do hereby  
constitute and appoint the following gentlemen our trustees and committee  
for the purpose above mentioned, viz.: Justus Sherwood, Esq., Capt.  
Simon Cavels, Mr. Paul Heck, Mr. Daniel Jones, Mr. Am Landon and  
Mr. Elijah Bottom, of the township of Augusta, Thomas Sherwood, Esq.  
and Capt James Brokenridge, of Elizabethtown, or any five of them when  
the whole cannot be assembled, and it is hereby agreed that when either  
or both of the above townships of Elizabethtown and Augusta shall build  
a church: the sums now subscribed shall be refunded by the Church of  
England people in Augusta and we do hereby consent and agree that the  
foregoing or above written articles be binding in law to us the  
subscribers as far as the sums subscribed shall go toward erecting  
said church by the time above written and our above mentioned trustees  
and committee shall be legally accountable to us the subscribers for  
the true and proper application of the sums subscribed for the purpose  
above written and if any over plus remain, it shall be applied toward  
finishing the inside work of said church.

24th. March 1790.

At a publick meeting of the town holders by publick  
advertisement, the following men were unanimously appointed to act as  
trustees for building the within mentioned church.

The price of a common hand per day is agreed to be three  
shillings and keep himself, and two shillings per day for a yoke of  
oxen or span of horses.

Justus Sherwood, Esq., Mr. Paul Heck, Mr. James Campbell,  
Mr. Daniel Jones, Mr. Thomas Brown.

The above mentioned trustees are to continue till the  
first day of January, 1791, unless put out before by the majority of  
the subscribers and the trustees this day appointed are in place of  
those mentioned in the subscription and it is this day unanimous



agreed that the above named trustees shall employ workmen and carry on the work in the most advantageous and expeditious manner, after the best of their judgement.

In window glass, putty, oil or white lead, or either of them at the option of the subscribers.

In planks, shingles, clapboard or either of them at the option of the subscribers.

In labour, bread, meat or either of them at the option of the subscribers.

In cash,

	L.S.D.	L.S.D.	L.S.D.
Justus Salye,		1-10-0	10-0
Ass Landon,	1-0-0	2-0-0	
Justus Sherwood,	4-0	5-0-0	6-0-0
Daniel Jones,		2-0-0	10-0-0
Joel Smades,	0-10		
John Jones,		5-0-0	5-0-0
Elijah Botton,	2-0	2-0-0	2-0-0
Ass Starkweather,			10-0
Richard Vanorman,	2-0-0		
Joseph Knapp,		1-0-0	1-0-0
Alex. Campbell,	3-0-0		2-0-0
John Livingston,		10-0	
John Bissel,		6-0	
Henry Green,		1-0-0	1-0-0
Fremman Stone,		1-0-0	1-0-0
Seleson Jones,	2-0-0	2-0-0	
Sarah Jones,	1-0-0		
Rufus Harrington,		1-15-0	
Thomas Freeman,		10-0	
John Snyder,		1-10-0	
Lenora Mosher,		1-0-0	
Chas. Manhard,		0-10-0	
Keil Honeywell,		1-0-0	
Joel Hornibrooke,		1-6-0	
Cornelius Miller,		12-0	
John Vic,		10-0	
Janca Chambers,	-10-0		
Ethan Brown,	1- 5-0	2-10-0	
Sam. Featherhead,	1-0-0	1-0-0	
Thomas Brown,	1-0-0	2-0-0	1-0-0
James Gordon,	1-0-0	2-0-0	
William Martin,		2-0-0	





One gathers that it was the Rev. John Bethune who was the spirit behind the erection of the Second Blue Church. He had held his services at the Collins' homestead near Haitland, according to Leavitt, and had also preached at Brockville. His home was close to the Blue Church, perhaps on Pine Grove and in a barn near his dwelling his brother, (later Bishop of Toronto), taught the local school. After Mr. Bethune left to become Rector of Christchurch in Montreal, the incumbent at Brockville must have held occasional services at the Blue Church. It will be seen that in his original article Mr. Beaven's record of the church burning in 1811 was probably due to a tradition of the fire at the first church in 1791, as the papers found in Mr. Blakey's library make no mention of the destruction of the second church.

This second Blue Church was then the one which Mr. Leeds turned over to Robert Blakey as the church for his new Parish. His field took in all of Augusta Township and most of Edwardsburg and as far back as he could work - at least twelve miles in depth and north from the River and close to twenty in breadth. It held about 2,200 people at the time but, for a few years after Mr. Blakey's arrival, their number grew rapidly, Prescott becoming a town of over 2,000 with Augusta township holding 4,000 more and Edwardsburg 3,500; once the Rideau Canal had been finished, traffic was largely diverted through it to Bytown and Prescott stopped growing and is hardly changed to-day from what it was a hundred years ago. Solomon Jones had led the pioneers throughout the years of settlement; Robert Blakey saw the one boom period in the life of the township - between the war with the States and the Rebellion, when Upper Canada was being opened up and the point where the toilsome up-river traffic ceased and the easier travelling through the Thousand Islands and Lake Ontario began was for a generation a thriving and busy place. In Blakey's time the population was quadrupled and in Prescott hopes were high for becoming the centre of eastern "Canada West"; when traffic passed to the Rideau and later to the railways Prescott's importance disappeared. Since Robert Blakey's day it has no longer drawn settlers from outside but has sent its youth westward to faster growing districts.

I suppose Mr. Blakey attended the Diocesan Synods at Kingston, but I have never heard that otherwise he ever left the Parish; he does not seem to have had a desire to revisit his home in England nor to have yearned for a richer and easier Parish. He lived on in Augusta, tilled his lands, raised his large family, fought to hold his congregation from falling away to the more exciting newer denominations. He did not neglect his duties but as the work became heavier he took cuntes to help him meet the exacting physical requirements of a parish without one highway, apart from the privately owned toll road along the front.

The family's friends were rather among the English than from the longer settled Loyalists. There was a wide difference in the type of culture of the official English and the bulk of the people. The language of the settler was backwoods Yankee, their manners grated on the English - their insatiable curiosity about the intimate details of the stranger - the spittoons in the parlor of the richer and the use of the fire by those who could not afford spittoons. The Blakeys were closer to such families as the Feildes, with Old Country ways. Even the letters of the second generation of the family are those of English



folk, contrasting markedly with the very Canadian answers of their correspondents.

Robert Blakey had a large library; huge tomes of sermons and of the dogma of the Church Fathers - medical books left from his early studies or bought in the belief that they would be needed in his work as medical missionary - besides a miscellany of the best general writings of the Eighteenth century. The remainder of the collection is now in the Beaven house at Prescott. I have one of the volumes - a handbook for surgeons. (As far as I can learn he never used his medical knowledge in this country for others than his own children).

He did well his duty in settling a new country, by raising these children; here they are:

- |     |                              |   |
|-----|------------------------------|---|
| 1.  | John,                        | born in Yorkshire in 1814, died 1861.                     |
| 2.  | James,                       | " " " " 1815, died 1878.                                  |
| 3.  | ?                            | " " " " died in England before 1821.                      |
| 4.  | Eleanor,                     | " " " " in 1817, died 1833.                               |
| 5.  | ?                            | " " " " died in England before 1821.                      |
| 6.  | ?                            | " " " " " " " " " " " "                                   |
| 7.  | Mary Ann, (Marianne)         | born at Pine Grove.                                       |
| 8.  | Margaret,                    | born at Pine Grove. <del>ix</del>                         |
| 9.  | Catherine, (or Catharine),   | born at Pine Grove in 1823. Died 1915.                    |
| 10. | Eliza,                       | " " " " " " 1825. " 1895.                                 |
| 11. | Emily E.                     | " " " " " " 1826. " 1884.                                 |
| 12. | Robert,                      | " " " " " " 1828. " 1871.                                 |
| 13. | William Henry,               | " " " " " " 1832. " 1841.                                 |
| 14. | <del>Charles</del> Caroline, | " " " " " " 1834. " 1887; ca.                             |
| 15. | <del>Victoria</del> Clara,   | <del>xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx</del> " " " " " " 1836. " 1837. |
| 16. | Victoria,                    | " " " " " " 1838. " 1882.                                 |

To father such a family must have been almost a profession in itself. Across the road by the Blue Church the first school in the Township had been built. There is still a school there and for some years the Rector supervised the school-work, no doubt filling in from time to time when the schoolmaster was away. There must always have been a goodly number of Blakeys among the pupils, though even their handwriting shows that Robert and Ann added to the 'learning' they got in the little red school.

It is remarkable that even to-day Augusta is strongly Church of England; east and west the church seemed to tire, to become estranged from the lives of the people, so that other sects, more alive, more close to the habits and ways of thinking of the farmers and villagers grew steadily in the number of their communicants, while the pews in the old parish churches became more and more empty. Is it a fair conclusion that the Reverend Robert made such an impress on his congregation that the hereditary influence is still felt?

While he was building his low, dignified home on the Point, he was already watching the putting up of the new church at Prescott on land given by Mrs. Jessup, the widow of the founder of the town. Part of the cost of this church was raised by subscription and the rest by a grant from the S.P.G., which had seemingly adopted the Parish. From the



time it was completed, this, St. John's Church in the rapidly growing town of Prescott, became Mr. Blakey's main church.

In 1827 the church at Maitland - St. James - was completed by the combined efforts of Mr. Blakey and his adherents living near the Village. It is a typical English village church, the building of which is well told in Barbara Jones' account copied with the Jones papers earlier in this Volume and, as Mr. Beaven states:

"From this time the Blue Church, which had been in regular use up to this date, was only used for occasional services, though a Sunday school was still maintained there. Mr. Thos. Coates, who was a brother of Mrs. Blakey, and his wife were among those who taught there. Mrs. Coates also taught in the day school near by, and the old school house being in bad condition, she transferred her girls class to the church, where she taught them the R's and sewing. One of Mr. Jas. Coates' sisters has a quilt which she made in the church, and I am told there are still in existence samplers worked in the old building. The teaching in those days was not as varied or as scientific as that of our public schools of today but may have been more practical. In 1841 the old church was so dilapidated that it was pulled down and part of its material taken to North Augusta to assist in the erection of a church there; and in 1845 the present structure was put up, Mr. Blakey doing a large part of the work with his own hands."

"Though the land was so early set apart and used for Church purposes and though the Church of England had been so long in possession of it, no deed had been obtained, but about 1852 Mr. Blakey got a deed from Government by which possession was vested in the Rector and Churchwardens of St. John's, Prescott. I imagine that one reason for the supposition that this was 'Union' property is that people of all denominations are buried there; but that is accounted for by the fact that the parents or grandparents of many who now belong to other bodies were church people, and they being buried here, their children wished and were permitted to be laid with them. Members of the Heck family, for instance, continued attached to the Church till past the middle of last century, and the same may be said of many others. Besides in early times the Church was the Established Church, and in accordance with English custom, looked on all residing in the Parish as parishioners, and as such entitled to the services of the Rector, and the use of the Church property. When the Church in Canada was disestablished, and all denominations put on equal footing, the Church being left in possession of all property actually occupied might have excluded all who were not supporters, but did not do so. Afterwards many who had no such claim, took advantage of the carelessness or neglect of the Church authorities to make use of the ground, and some of them have taken possession of and fenced in large plots almost in contact with the church. During Mr. Lewis' rectorship he held the Blue Church and land, in connection with Maitland, and at one time used to hold service here on Sunday afternoons; but a year or two before his death he handed them over to the Prescott end of the Parish."

Among the remainder of Robert Blakey's library at Glen. Beaven's home, one comes across thick note-books in which the Rector had written out his sermons; that must have been when he first came to build his house on the Point, for as time went on he seems to have written less and less, contenting himself with thinking over some of the day-to-day problems as he rode the trail from Maitland to North Augusta and no doubt using the resulting sermon in all three churches and in the meeting places he served in the smaller villages. His was not the type of the patriarch, expounding a rigid doctrine to his family and to his Parish; he didn't rule anyone - not even Ann. Rather he



asked of his children and of his flock a degree of gentleness - an avoidance of shouting or of bickering. Among his children's children that gentleness has endured and even to-day throughout the Parish there is a lack of harshness, a subduing of noise or haste, a mellowing of the raw discordant contacts which mark living in many countrysides, that perhaps reach back to the quiet dignity of the old parson who each Sunday for so many years preached to the great-grandfathers of those of to-day, as they sat in their straight-backed box-pews.

He found it hard to approach strangers, hard to go among the inquisitive farmers and talk with them of their personal troubles, harder still to make friends of their womenfolk. He was diffident even with those close to him and not overly tactful, but his learning, his lack of self-seeking and his readiness to work made his influence felt, even though the people were not conscious that they were being led by it. He never became one of them and while he lost that security which comes of knowing oneself a part of a compact whole, yet, just on this account, the community was perhaps more subtly changed by one always a little aloof from their day-to-day living.

He now had four churches - St. John's at Prescott, where the sons of the pioneers of the town worshipped, now beginning to feel themselves drawn into a village aristocracy - St. James' at Maitland which he had himself planned - St. Peter's at North Augusta - and the little Blue Church, seating but twenty-eight persons, set in the graveyard across the woods from Pine Grove. The smaller settlements he only visited occasionally - places such as Lord's Mills, where services were held in the school house and in the "Temperance Hall", and where Mr. Blakey's successor, Mr. Lewis, was to build a church in 1886. As time went on, with the work increasing and his sight failing before his time, Mr. Blakey turned over these smaller places to his curates.

The first Parish Burial Ground was by the Blue Church; here from the time of the very first settlement the Royalists had brought their dead. The grant forms part of lot 15, Con. I, between the Three Mile Road, the G.T.R. and the King's Highway. Mr. Blakey, to the original plot, had added parts of lots 14 and 15 in 1832 and in 1844 some of the "Village lots". In 1853 patent was granted to ten acres in lot 15 to Rev. Robert Blakey, Justus S. Merwin and Alpheus Jones, in trust for the Church of England. It was not till about 1920 that title to the whole piece was vested in the Synod of Ontario. The first church, larger than that of to-day, had stood a little back of the present site and there must have been a green separating it from the nearest graves. From the church the ground slopes downwards towards the river and westward were placed the earliest graves under tall pines, some of which still stand, the last of the original great forest. Across the road a bay in the river cuts in quite close to the cemetery, while to the north the land rises towards the low wooded hills of the back concessions. No geometry was used in laying out the plots; the stones are clustered into little family groups with interconnected families just touching at the corners, all in a haphazard plan, as though the people had gathered under the trees beside the Church on some spring Sunday, keeping more or less together by families and had stayed on where they had sat in the grass.

The oldest stones I saw were three or four recently moved to an open spot - markers made from the flat rocks which shelve along the river bank, the inscriptions roughly cut with axe or coarse chisel, and in single letters only: J.S. D.T.IX D.O.S. 1782 or W.S. D.T.X D.O.N., 1783, which I think to mean: John Snider (or Smades or whatever the name may be), died this ninth day of September, 1782, etc.



No doubt there are more than a few unmarked graves. T. D Barington, a man of distinguished career, who was largely responsible for forming the (Masonic) Grand Lodge of Canada, lay sixty years in such a grave by the Pine Church, till in 1941 a stone was put up by Grand Lodge. How he came to be buried here is something I do not know.

Near the corner and placed like a bill-board overlooking the road is a large and pretentious slab with an elaborate inscription in memory of Barbara Heck, who is buried in her family plot west of the church. ~~Thirty~~ Twenty feet high this monument was put up about thirty years ago by subscription throughout the churches which now claim her as their first missionary in Canada and the United States. While no doubt it has caused many hundreds of carloads of people to stop and gaze, it is a question what of dignity, of interest, or even of religion it has added to make up for the incongruity of its blatant advertising in this peaceful spot. One sometimes wonders, too, whether little old Barbara, who was found dead, sitting in front of her high-roofed limestone house nearby, her great Black Letter German Bible open on her knee, would have appreciated the great stone telling in foot-high letters her name and her honours to a world of truckers and tourists.

There are but two other monuments of any pretence - the others are simple, quiet and unassuming. There is a long inscription to the memory of an English officer in one of the early regiments; this has been lying on its side near the gate for the last two years and, the name being unknown to me, I have queried what change of mind the makers had after they had cut their stone. The second is somewhat curious: it bears a lengthy account of the achievements of Sir Alexander MacKenzie. As the explorer died in Scotland and as Maitland was hardly connected with the story of the Northwest Company, I wondered much at why a stone in the old Parish Cemetery should be erected to such a man. One Sunday evening, driving Connie Skinner to the Maitland Church, I asked her about this stone and here is her explanation:

Alexander MacKenzie had a brother, James, also a trader for the Company. When Alexander, his account of the crossing of the Continent published, returned from England to Montreal, famous, wealthy, the personal friend of the Duke of Kent and now about to start his own fur company, (the X.Y. Company), the brother gave up his post in the Pays d'en Haut and came to Montreal, (Connie in 1943 called it "Lower Canada"), to share in Alexander's glory. He was given a place with the new Company and made eloquent suit for the daughter of a rich Montrealer; he was just finishing his preparations for the marriage when there arrived by sance down the Ottawa a rather fine-looking squaw with two young children: Mrs. James MacKenzie, whose marriage had been made as legal as possible out at the Post in the Northwest. Great scandal and argument ensued. The Montreal wedding was definitely off, but James thought still to hold some place in Montreal society if he could rid himself of the brown wife and the offspring. A plot of land was found for them by the River near Pine Grove; a small house was built, (this must have been about 1802) and the family was packed off to Augusta, while father hushed up the matter as well as he could in the City. The house stood till, the oldest of any building in the district, about the beginning of this war it was pulled down by a new purchaser of the property. Long before then all the other original frame or timber houses of the settlers had made way for larger places, mostly of the local limestone and it is pity that this last one could not have been kept. The two MacKenzie children grew up in the township and married into local families. Connie insisted that some of the descendants always had the straight black hair of the Indian. The last of them, living at Prescott, died a few years



back, a quiet little old lady - a Miss Gunn, who taught piano and French among a few of the older families. Connie told me the children were Daniel MacKenzie and a daughter who married James Gunn. In spite of Connie's great memory, there is something here which will not work. Daniel MacKenzie is buried in the cemetery and he was born 1769 and died 1832. He could not have been born in Alexander MacKenzie's time in the Northwest and would have been thirty years old at the time of Alexander's "reign" in Montreal. Two daughters are buried beside him: Amable MacKenzie, (wife of Neil Dunbar) and Wente MacKenzie, (wife of James Gunn). Might it have been that Daniel was Alexander's brother and that he came at last to age and die beside the Indian wife in Augusta? Perhaps I heard Connie wrongly, but give the tale as I recall it, until such time as we have a better explanation of the monument to Sir Alexander MacKenzie, which seems to have been put up by his great-nephews.

Around these stones are grouped all the families recorded in these pages: Wells and Jones, Hurds, Feildes, Blakeys and Hendersons, Skinners, Beavens - and now there is also a Moss plot.

There is a peaceful dignity throughout the Blue Church and its graveyard, about the Maitland church and the low stone house on the Point, which suggest that Robert Blakey himself was not only the spirit behind the erection, but actually had much to do with the design and details of the work - they remain landmarks of his taste. There is nothing of pedantry in these weathered buildings, as one might perhaps expect. Robert must have felt something more personal about the "Little Church" than either of the others. When he was drawing towards the end of his mission, even though his sight was failing fast, he started having services there on Wednesday evenings.

Throughout the Parish, too, there is a unity of feeling, a suggestion of English countryside, not to be found in the surrounding townships in little of which does the dignity of the older period remain. He had held his congregation, where in these outlying areas many were lost to his Church. One such loss he felt bitterly - the defection of Ann's own kin, the Coates. Both of her brothers became Methodists and, with all the zeal of converts, they and their children strove mightily for the church of their adoption. Coates and Blakeys became estranged and the feud persisted even unto our days. The Coates families spread down the river and multiplied - one is to-day a retired clergyman at Iniquis. One Coates nephew of Ann's married a Wells in Augusta, of no connection with our Wells family. Ann's mother, Ann Coates, lived on with the Blakeys till her death in 1849, when 85 years old.

Robert grew older. Sometimes he must have wondered if he would not have fared better had he gone up to the City like Strachan and Bethune and then again if he had even been successful in his own country Parish. The population had grown and the churches were filled, but many of the older folk had stopped coming to their box-pews. The bitterness which had swept the countryside in thirty-seven still cankered the community; Jones and Henderson were violently against the Rebellion Losses Bill and the Wells and many in Prescott Town said less but gloated when the Bill was enacted. According to a letter which Clem Beaven says he has, from William Lyon Mackenzie to W. B. Wells, had the rebel leader's orders been carried out, many of these old houses along the River would have been burned down.

Robert took long rides on his aging horse through the township. A good road now ran along the river, and close to the water the old century was rotting away; during his lifetime Prescott three miles downstream had



sprung up in the midst of a pine forest, to become a lusty town with a foundry and newspapers and noisy inns, vying with Brockville and Ogdensburg. There was dignity in the services at St. John's, so well filled that soon a second Prescott Church would be built, and St. James' at Maitland was peaceful and satisfying, while the curate tried his hand at North Augusta. When Robert visited one of the big stone houses which now checkered the slopes and the streets from Johnstown to Elizabethtown, it was pleasant to sip sherry by the fire and talk gossip with the local squires and their wives, but he always suffered from a conscience. The call of duty lay not among the gardens fronting Dibble Street but in the back country, in the clearings on the Third and Fourth Concessions, sandy soil, where the settler, disillusioned, raised a few sorry potatoes and pastured his lean cows and, over roads that were little more than cattle-trails Blakey travelled, his saddle-bags behind him so that, if the weather turned rough or darkness came on too early, he could somehow arrange with a farmer to make room for him in his cabin in the bush. Less and less he turned for companionship to those heavy tomes yellowing on the shelves of his study. The basis on which St. Augustine established his Church in England did not seem to have so much importance as it had twenty years before. The crick in his back was not really serious but he made great matter of it and even if the girls began to treat him as if he were a slightly spoiled child, he could always count on Ann. She was so fond of nursing anyway and it was comforting to have her realize the painfulness of his ailments. He had never been able to interest her in the Bangorian Controversy and he often thought she had never tried very hard to understand his earlier (and finer) sermons. She had always praised them, but missed all the fine points. But there was no one like Ann when it came to understanding the real cause of the friction between the Alpheus Jones and the Jessups or to knowing the very thing to do for him when he woke up in the morning with fever in his veins and a rasping feeling in his throat which, from what he vaguely remembered from his medical books, must surely be a rare form of ague.

Then there was the farm to look after; he was only a fair farmer but he had vast quantity of advice and at times even a little real work from his parishioners. Ann was no help to him with the farm; when he went to Synod he had to arrange for someone to come over and milk the cows. She could make of their home a little bit of England transplanted to the clearing on the Point - she had brought out roses with her and they grew and multiplied for her in far more vigour than those of her neighbours along the River. Chickens or ~~dogs~~ dogs or cats she understood; it was just taken for granted that she would care for all these and dress her great brood of children and do her part in the Parish - but she did not like cows and she was afraid of horses.

And when his time came Robert turned his face to the wall and was laid away in the plot he had prepared and which already held three of his children. The inscription on his stone is a little curious: "Rev. Robert Blakey, Rector or Prescott, some time Curate of Ecclesfield, Yorkshire, England, for thirty-six years Missionary in this Township, Departed to his rest in Christ on the 24th. day of March, 1858, in the 68th. year of his age and 41st. of his Ministry." The separation of Mr. Blakey's duties as between Rector of St. John's in Prescott and Missionary in Augusta and the mention of his curacy at Ecclesfield, which one would have thought hardly important, suggest that son-in-law Beaven drew up the wording.

He had few other honours to record - a country parson untroubled beyond the bounds of his Parish, his old age burdened with the cares of



a very large family, he had acquired neither wealth nor high repute. He had not been a leader, but had never shirked his duty along the rigid lines of convention. Criticism he had had; but none of his rectitude or personal way of living. He, more than others, would have denied that his influence, unheralded, might extend into the life of the Parish for two generations.

The management of the Blakey colony passed to Ann - family, farm and house; actually she had done most of it for many years but she had let Robert appear as the ruler. She did not altogether grow old - her mind did not turn back to the days in Wensleydals nor to the shocks and joys of those first years of settlement at Pine Grove. She lived out the day-to-day happenings to her daughters and her friends and when, nineteen years later, she too died, her memory was as she would have expected it to be and would have wanted it to be, not like the rich perfume of her Yorkshire roses but rather like the faint freshness of the wild flowers which bloomed for a day in Spring under the trees across the road from Pine Grove.

If ever in the years to come these pages are read, I think it will be for some scanty facts not to be found elsewhere, gleaned from old letters or papers outlasted by these my notes, rather than for the paragraphs that have given me pleasure in the writing, using the chance words of your Mother to put flesh on such dry bones and give some renewal of life to these your forefathers. For my additions might be made by any other taking time to give these matters some thought and my clothing for the characters will be soon outmoded, but the skeleton facts last forever for later readers to re-clothe with their own imaginings. To them I leave the answer to the problem of the Blakeys which I, neither from questioning of their descendants nor from my own observations can give. Robert and Ann had sixteen sons and daughters - some died in the days of their youth, but the fertility of the parents continued into the children, so that to-day Blakeys and their kin should be found in no small number throughout the land. Had each of Robert's descendants brought forth four children, (and that average is small for their tribe), to-day there would be more than a thousand young Blakeys, sharp of eye, somewhat shy, fond of local gossip but without malice, in the Maitland countryside or scattered westward. Instead, there is not one of the name now alive and, except perhaps in the Felde connection, there are of your generation only you three and your two cousins, in whom the blood still runs. There seems no physical reason why this should be; account for it as you will by a certain diffidence in all the Blakey family which has kept them apart from their neighbours - the never-ending toil to keep the farm earning - I do not know. Not only has the family gone, the very memory of them is perishing. Clem Beaven may still recall the living of his Aunts and Uncles - neither from him nor from your grandmother have I been able to learn their story.

Before Robert and Ann came to Pine Grove they had had six children of whom three had died as babies. John, the eldest son, grew up on the Point and married Mary Ann - . One child they had they called Edith Mary - she died an infant. Of other children I do not know - John died in 1861, not long after his father, and his wife followed him six years later.

James, the second son and Robert lived on the farm. Though James lived sixty-three years, (1815-1878) and Robert forty-three (1828-1871), they did not marry. At Robert set up for a period as a "civil engineer", although he had no great training for the job and particularly lacked knowledge of surveying, almost a necessity for an engineer in a country town.

Eliza, (1825-1895), Mary Ann (so christened but called



Marianne), and Margaret passed their lives at Pine Grove, growing old in this family of aging unmarried brothers and sisters. At least until the father's death, the house was almost always filled with guests. There they put them all I do not know, but the Burritt girls from Burritt's Rapids would spend two or three weeks with Emily, or numerous Feildes would visit for long periods. All the girls had many "beaux", especially Emily as her collection of Valentines shows, though there must have been quite a gap between the well-educated Blakey girls and some of these friends who could barely spell. As time went on there were left only James and the three aging sisters, besides the Beaven family, at Pine Grove.

Emily was your great-grandmother and of her I have written in the Hemerson account.

Three of the children died young in Augusta; Eleanor, (named for her grandmother), at 16 (1817-1833), Clara, (born Nov. 1836, died April 1837) and William Henry at 9, (1832-1841).

Catharine lived to the great age of ninety-two, (1823-1915), spanning in her time all the ~~set~~ history of our people from the settlement until the First Great War. She married Asst. Commissary General Fulford B. Feilde, son of James and Jane de Cazalet Feilde, of Hertfordshire. Of him French writes: "Col. Feilde was a veteran of Waterloo, was sent to Canada in Dec., 1830, married as his first wife a daughter of Capt. James Wickens. A sketch of his life, with portrait, appears in 'Old Penetangishene; Sketches of its Pioneer, Naval and Military Days', by A. G. Osborn, in Pioneer Papers of the Simcoe County Pioneer and Historical Society, No. 6, p. 123. While stationed at Prescott he married as his second wife Catharine, daughter of Rev. Robert Blakey, rector and on retiring after forty years service he settled in Prescott. His widow died June 15, 1915)." ."

Catharine was 24 years younger than he and there were several children by the first wife, one of whom died in Winnipeg in 1836. Catharine herself bore nine more to the Commissary: three boys and six girls. One was named Fulford, (1848-1881), who died at Fort McLeod, N.W.T. A daughter, Bertha, married Alfred N. Suckling of and died at Brigus, Newfoundland, (1851-1882); her baby, Harry, was brought back to Maitland but did not long survive his mother. Another of Catharine's sons, Frederick Edmund married Charlotte -- and their daughter Lottie (1883-4) is buried in the same plot. Among my books is a little volume: "Pity's Gift, a collection of Interesting Tales to excite the compassion of youth for the Animal Creation, selected by a lady from the writings of Mr. Pratt". On the first blank leaf is a note in the writing of one of the older Feildes, "found under a bathing machine on the Beach at Exmouth in Devon" and on the opposite leaf is the sprawling signature of young Edmund Feilde. Justina Feilde was born 1846 and died ten months later. Gertrude married Angus Grant, a Scotch settler of Prescott. Robert lived from 1855 to 1887. A Doctor Feilde, a son of Catharine, still lives in Montreal. This Feilde family was one of those, not uncommon in England, with whom a tradition of service follows from father to son, sending them to the furthest corners of the English speaking world. To the restlessness of such families, of whom the Ravenshaws are another example, does Britain owe its Empire.

Victoria, (1838-1882), "Tory", married Rev. Edward W. Beaven, the third curate to serve under her father. He was the son of Dr. James Beaven, Professor of Divinity in the University of King's College, Toronto, and later, I believe, Provost of Trinity College. His little book, "Recreations of a Long Vacation, or a Visit to Indian Missions in Upper Canada"



will also be found on our shelves; in it you may read that when in 1845 he ~~was~~ started out from Toronto on his pilgrimage to the Indians of Algoma, he took young Edward with him. Of these things I write but darkly, but my impression is that Edward did not follow very closely in the steps of his distinguished father. He seems not to have continued in the Church but, at Ann's request, came back to Pine Grove to run the farm. There were nine children, four boys and five girls, of whom two: Clement W. and Frederic eventually succeeded to the property, the last of the family to live there. At the beginning of this war the place was sold and "Clem", his sister-in-law Edna and his sister Kate (Mrs. C.G. Bates) moved into Prescott. As far as I know, there are no descendants from any of the family.

Caroline married William Skinner and they had three children: Robert, Charles Edward, (born Jan. 1868, died at Gananoque Nov. 1870), and Constance. In the story of the Wells family will be told how George Longley built Maplehurst at the western edge of Maitland Village and of the curious fate of that part of his property down by the River. The upper farm, after Robert Harvey's death was mishandled till farm and garden and that fine Georgian house Longley had so carefully planned were sold for taxes, going at the rather ridiculous price of \$1,200 to William Skinner. Even in his time the property was later sold again for taxes and bought in for Skinner. Your Mother told me that as the years went by he made of it a splendid farm and re-established the distinction of Maplehurst. Yet to me, a farmer neither from experience nor inclination, the soil looks less fertile than the fields up and down the river, and it must have been from great industry that it was made the well-kept place that your Mother described. When barely past mid-life, both William and Caroline became bedridden and for long years they lay in their rooms, tended by their daughter Connie, while Bob did the farming. It was not till about the end of the First Great War that, at not widely separated dates, the father and mother died and Bob and Connie, their youth given to serving their invalid parents, tried to carry on along the lines to which they had been wont, rather than sell Maplehurst, for which they were now offered twenty times what William Skinner had first paid for it. Into the next generation they lived on, in memories of the setting splendour of their house. You, summering some time at Maplehurst, saw more than I did of Cousin Bob, particularly, and can supply your own descriptions. Bob concentrated his resources in the raising of a herd of thoroughbred cattle, buying a bull from some famous stock-farm or a couple of heifers, when he was in funds, from the Perkins Bull place at Brampton. Bob died about 1938 and during the winter his sister was hard pressed to feed the stock. She would not be imposed on by any dealer but arranged a sale by auction. The day came; sleet and rain drenched a cold countryside; a few local buyers turned out to view the condition of the thoroughbreds - they went for what they would bring and paid at least the auctioneer's costs, but little more. The house was filled to its deep eaves with vast accumulation of all things which had ever entered the Skinner home - even the stone wing leading out to the farm buildings was crammed with stored piles of memories. Slowly much of this was sold and the last of the family moved her quarters from room to room till she set up her stove in the hall, sufficient in itself for her living. Other parts of Maplehurst were let out - the ball room to one Alice Higginson - a cousin of Connie's through the Fields connection - a gaunt, meagre woman with goiterish growth at her throat, who lived from dividends from shares in a cemetery, supplemented by fortune telling. She filled the great room with boxes and trunks and chests of books and her toilet articles and her large square piano, so that for years the dust collected on this mass of belongings littering the floor, as if she were always just on the point of packing to move elsewhere. We would drive up, coming from the North, and



hardly had we a chance to speak a few words to Connie, when "Alice" would bounce out of her ball-room, eager to monopolize all our time and tell us of her intimate history and private wrangs.

Vines overgrow the porchway - some flowers still struggle around the driveway circle in front of the house, above where the tennis court once were placed; the park, running from the stony ground at the rear of the village to down across the highway to the river, still raises deep hay which is sold in the field to neighbours. Tall-growing bushes partly hide the old house, but it refuses to take on altogether the look of desolate old age. Still its low broad front, with its many-paned windows set in limestone two feet thick, looks out contentedly and approvingly on the world which passes it by. Like its mistress, it watches the 'change of all temporal things' along the river road, but it lives on changeless a life of its own and still hears around the corners of its deep walls the laughter of young Longleys, Herveys or Skinners.

In March of 1943 a great storm swept down the River from Gananoque to Lancaster. Winter turned springlike with a sudden driving rain but in the night followed slow return to freezing, till every wire, every branch was plated with inch-thick ice - oncoming wind completed the destruction; trees, poles and wires came crashing down in confusion past description. Near Cornwall and Prescott all power lines, telegraph and telephone wires were broken, roads were blocked with great trees across the highways in all directions. A week or more went by before ordinary life could be renewed in the towns along the River. A long avenue shaded by ancient maples leads from Maplehurst down the slope to the river road. One after the other of these gnarled trees, trimmed three generations ago to arch over the way, shattered, their tops overloaded with ice smashing to the ground, blocking the driveway with high piled slash; east and west of the gravel the trunks stood like broken match-sticks, jagged and gaunt against the sky. Even late that fall some twisted boughs still lay around the roots and out into the tall grass growing unchecked half way across the drive. Connie went among them, chopping arm-thick boughs for the stove she had set up in her hall. "The exercise is good for me", said Connie.

A.H.M.  
Osbelt, 1945.