

THE FIRST METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF
NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY

Methodism was established in America in 1766. A company from Ireland settled in New York, among whom were Philip Embury and Barbara Heck.

The first American Methodist Conference was held in Philadelphia, July 14-16, 1773. The first report of members in the Society was made at that conference; there were one hundred eighty in New York; one hundred eighty in Philadelphia; five hundred in Maryland; one hundred in Virginia and two hundred in New Jersey. John Street Church in New York became a center for the holding of Annual Conferences, so that it was necessary for the preachers to pass through New Jersey to and from New York.

Rev. Francis Asbury, a British Wesleyan, was appointed General Assistant or Bishop to John Wesley in America in 1784. He was a man of apostolic spirit and a genuine itinerant - he remained single that he might not be hindered in his work. Bishop Asbury traversed New Jersey on his visits from the south to New York and return. In 1797 he visited New Brunswick, and rejoiced that the preacher from Elizabethtown had already begun a good work there". In 1798 he drew up a subscription paper to purchase a house of worship. In 1799 they elected trustees and had a meeting place. Asbury was there July 15, 1800, held a meeting and "under exhortation many felt the word", then again on May 20, 1802 he preached in New Brunswick from Rev. 17:14, and "on Tuesday gave a discourse at the court house".

The Methodist Episcopal Church, Shiloh, (as it was called) of New Brunswick, was organized in 1803 and the trustees Joseph Williams, Michael Pool, and John Henry purchased of John Bray a lot 49 ft. x 116 ft. next north of John Bray on King St. (now Neilson) on the east side. (See Book C of Deeds, Somerville, Folio 561). Lots on Washington St., mentioned as late as 1809, ran back (south) to the Methodist meeting house lot, or to the Methodist Church lot.

Liberty St. was opened in 1810. The Methodist Episcopal Church, Shiloh, bought a lot on Liberty St. 66 ft. x 100 ft., adjoining the Dutch Reformed Church burying ground, from the trustees of Queens College,