

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NEW BRUNSWICK, N. J.

Presbyterians from several towns in Connecticut settled in Woodbridge very early and gave it its name. Then among the first immigrants to land at Perth Amboy were Presbyterians. Many made their way up the Raritan River, making little settlements in places which afterwards became towns. It is known large numbers of Covenanters came from Scotland during the persecution of 1684-1688, and beginning in 1715 there was a large Scotch-Irish immigration for several years.

The Presbyterians in Woodbridge "raised" a church May 27, 1665, before they had a minister. On June 8, 1669, a committee went to Newark in search of one but evidently failed. John Allen began to preach for them Sept. 1680. The Presbyterian Church of Bound Brook dates from about 1700 and is the mother church of New Brunswick.

The burying ground in Woodbridge is said to be the oldest in the state. In 1705 Samuel Hall and Adam Hude were appointed to "hang the gate", and in 1705 a levy was made to repair the fence. Burials are believed to antedate 1675. New Brunswick had a church and minister - Rev. Gilbert Tennant in 1726. The church was on a lot on Burnet St. a part of William Cox's plantation. How long the church had been organized is not known, there is reason to believe public worship had been carried on for years. All records up to and including the Revolutionary War were lost, it was believed when the house of Dr. Moses Scott, a prominent elder, was plundered, then occupied by British troops during the winter 1767-1777. The names of the founders, first officers, and original families composing the congregation are missing.

The life and works of the first pastor are known. Rev. Gilbert Tennant was the oldest of four preachers sons of William Tennant, Sr., an Irish clergyman of the Church of England, who migrated to this country in 1716; joined the Presbyterian Church in 1718. Gilbert received his education and training from his father. While all his brothers became distinguished, he surpassed them in talents and influence. With such a leader the Presbyterians soon became prominent. The visits of the celebrated George Whitefield in 1739