

THE SDPC 250 *Dissenters* Path

Join St. David's Presbyterian Church as we embark on a journey through time, following the Dissenters' Path through the streets of St. John's that traces the evolution of the congregation from its founding in 1775 to the present day.

Walking Through 250 Years to the Present

 **Thursday, April 24th**

 **2:30 pm – 3:30 pm**

 **The Rooms Theatre**

 **Regular Admission Charges Apply**



Presentation

Welcome Rev. David Sturtevant

Part 1 Stephen Bruneau

Part 2 Glenn Barnes

Artifacts Janet Calver



**Who knew 250 years old
could look so good.**

Celebrate our 250th anniversary with us in 2025
Events, announcements, and more coming soon!



St. David's Presbyterian Church
98 Elizabeth Avenue
St. John's, NL
A1B 1R8

Church Office: (709) 722-2382
stdavids@nfld.com
www.stdavids.nf.ca

Welcome and Introduction

Rev David Sturtevant

The rich history of the Congregation of St David's Presbyterian Church provided many ideas for the congregation when it came to planning the 250th anniversary celebration:

- A Banquet (of course)
- Big food drives, public lunches, art exhibit and sale
- Special Church Services (perhaps including re-enactments!)
- Literary and archival projects
- New church programs, infrastructure . . . And
- Special events like this. . .

I am privileged to have the

Presentation Contents

Welcome

Rev David Sturtevant

→ **Part 1 The “Dissenters Path” Map Project**

Stephen Bruneau

Part 2 The “Religious Society” 1775-2025

Glenn Barnes

Artifacts Cup, Journal, Model

Janet Calver

THE **SDPC** 250 *Dissenters Path*

Join St. David's Presbyterian Church as we embark on a journey through time, following the Dissenters' Path through the streets of St. John's that traces the evolution of the congregation from its founding in 1775 to the present day.

Walking Through 250 Years to the Present

📅 Thursday, April 24th **📍 The Rooms Theatre**
🕒 2:30 pm - 3:30 pm **💰 Regular Admission Charges Apply**

St. David's Presbyterian Church
98 Elizabeth Avenue
St. John's, NL
A1B 1R8
Church Office: (709) 722-2382
stdavids@nfld.com
www.stdavids.nf.ca

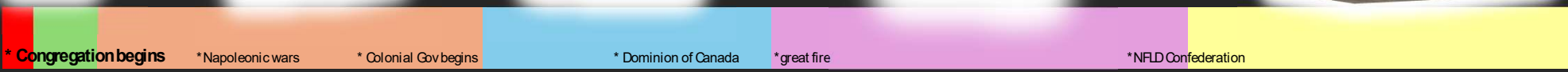
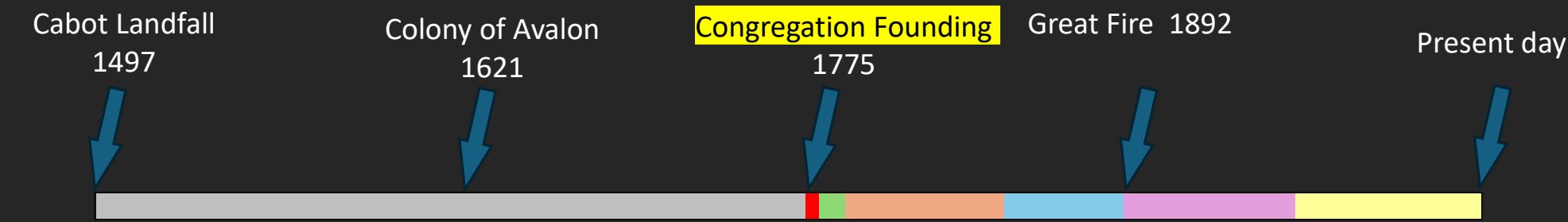
... about the Congregational Church of Newfoundland:

“It is a story of courage and perseverance for it tells of a congregation seldom numbering more than 100 families who, with little outside help, withstood persecution, fire, depression and emigration to witness to the faith of their fathers.

To understand a particular congregation is also to know something of the colourful history of this ancient Island and it is our hope that we have added something to the sum of knowledge of Newfoundland's stormy and exciting past.”

*Ref. The Dissenting Church of Christ at St John's, 1975

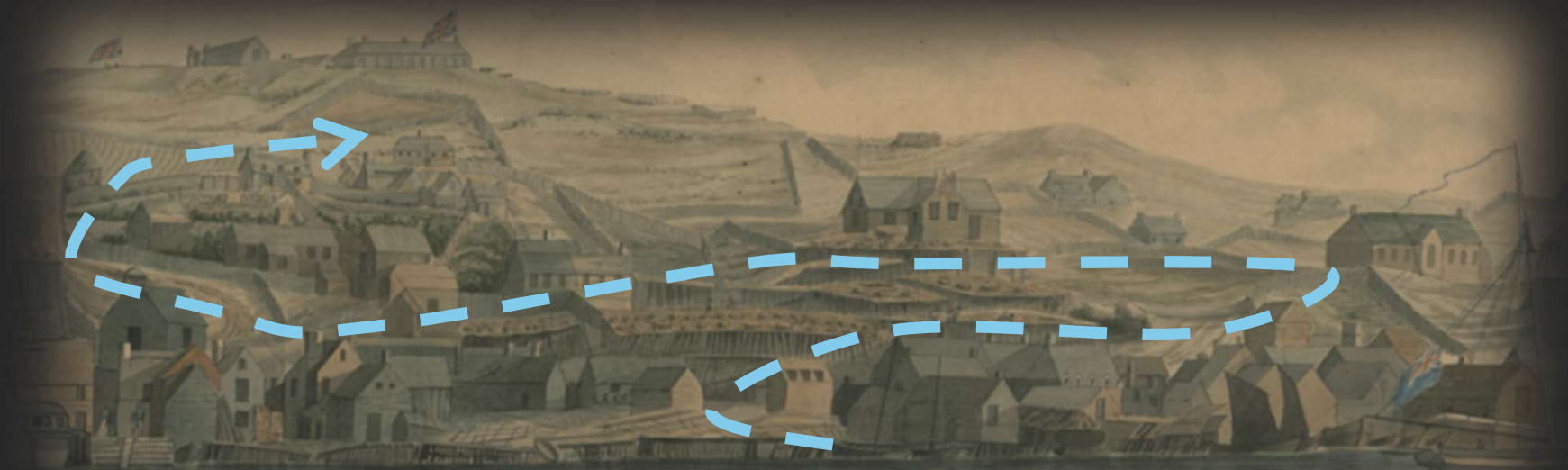
Historical Context of the Congregation in St John's Newfoundland



Congregation Timeline
1775 - 2025

A suggestion was made to consider an interpreted *walk/tour* touching the important landmarks in our congregational history.

... thus, the “Dissenters Path” project began. . .



The Interpreted Walk “Dissenters Path”

The interpreted walk concept was ultimately developed into two things:

1

An **online tour** with pictures, and interpretation beginning at the location of origin in 1770s through to the modern church of St David's today in 2025

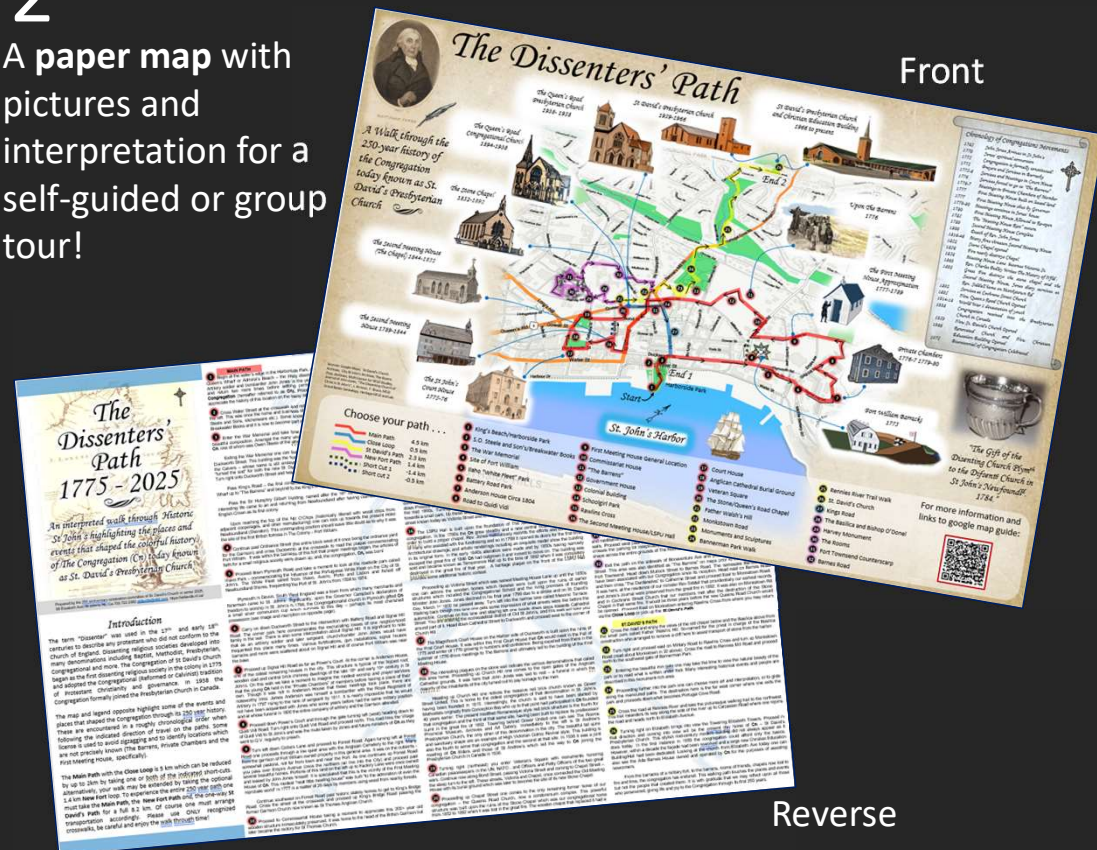
Take a tour in Google Earth

Take a guided tour around the globe with some of the world's leading storytellers, scientists and nonprofits. Explore stories and maps about sustainability, environment and cultural preservation.



2

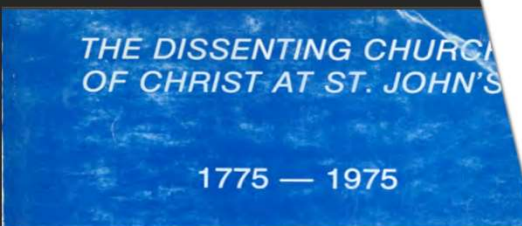
A **paper map** with pictures and interpretation for a self-guided or group tour!



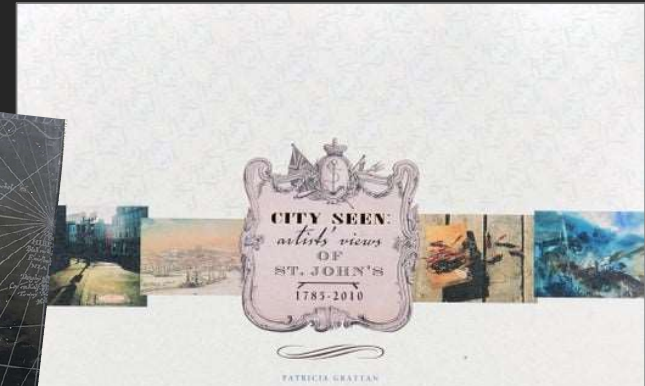
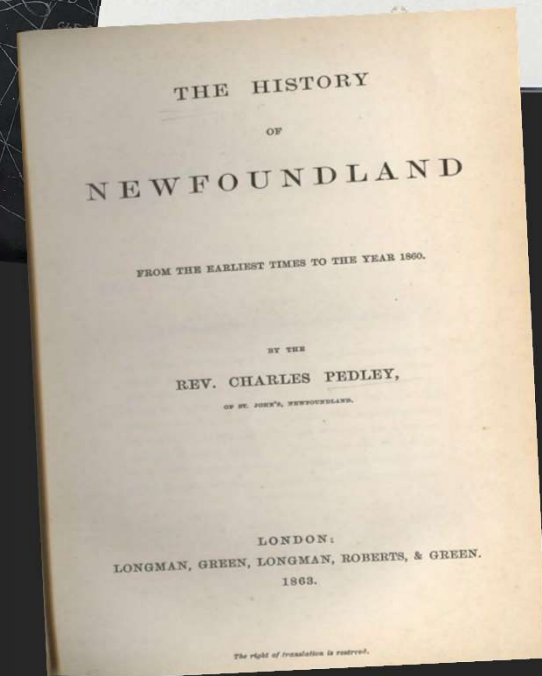
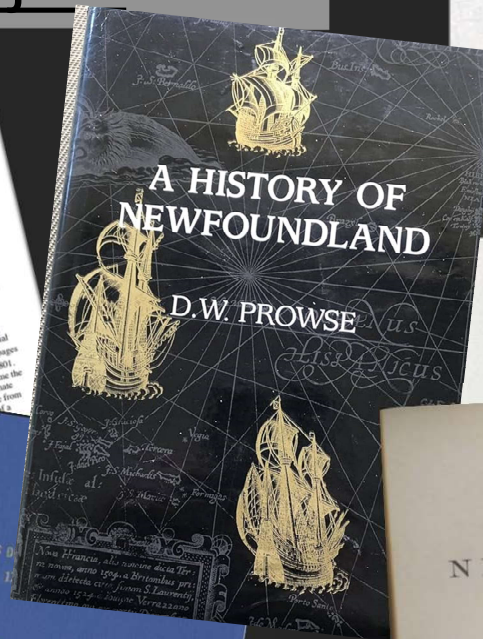
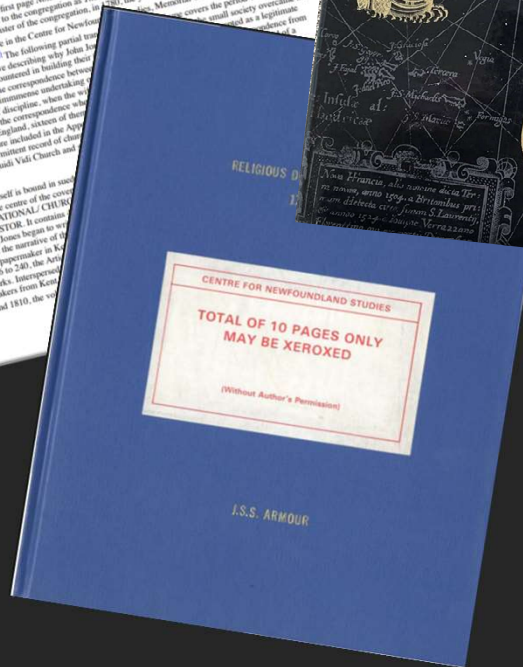
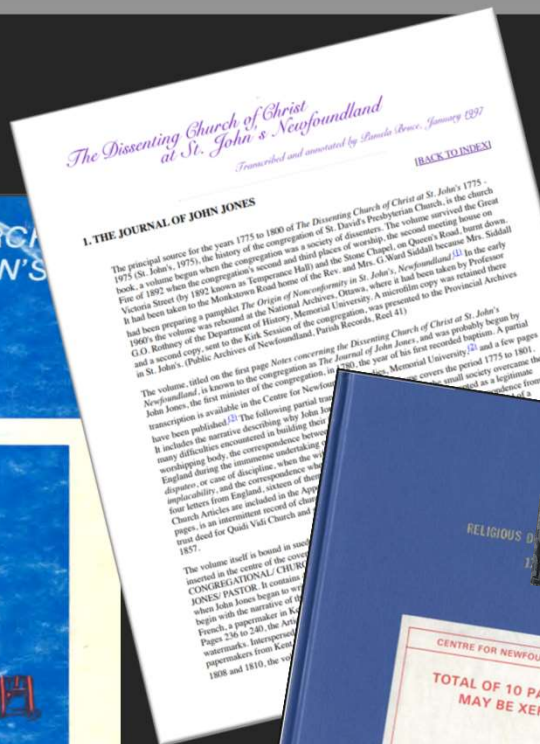
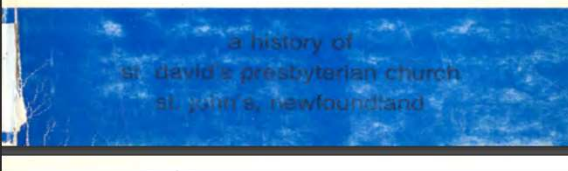
Reverse

The Dissenters Path - Map Project

Resources




N. Frank O'Neil



The Dissenters Path - Map Project

Resources

Wednesday Open 10:00 am - 9:00 pm / [ALL HOURS](#) The Rooms, 9 Bonaventure Avenue, St. John's NL / [GET DIRECTIONS](#)

THE ROOMS  [MENU](#) [VISITOR INFORMATION](#) [CONTACT US](#)

Enter a Keyword to Search The Rooms Website Entire Rooms Website [SEARCH](#)

[THE ROOMS](#) / COLLECTIONS, RECORDS, AND RESEARCH [PRINT](#) [SHARE](#) [f](#) [y](#)

[Home](#) [B,D,M,W](#) [Official Lists](#) [Other Lists](#) [Districts](#) [Historical](#) [Photos](#)

WELCOME TO
Newfoundland's
GRAND BANC
Genealogical and historical data for the Province of Newfoundland

[Home](#) [Accessibility and Inclusion](#) [Contact Us](#) [Tourism](#) [Engage St. John's](#)

ST. JOHN'S [Living in St. John's](#) [Recreation and Culture](#) [Streets and Parking](#) [Building a Development](#)

Archives
[Home](#) / [City Hall](#) / [Archives](#)

The City of St. John's Archives is available by appointment for research purposes.
Established by a Resolution of Council on Jan. 11, 1989, the Archives is the official repository for all City of St. John's



MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY

Memorial University Libraries | CNS

[Research Tools](#) [Using the Libraries](#) [Our Libraries](#) [About Us](#)

Welcome to the Centre for Newfoundland Studies

[About](#)
Resources, Hours, Policies, New titles and Donations


[Help](#)
Ask a Newfoundland/Labrador question, contact us

[NL Journal Articles](#)
The Periodical Article Bibliography (PAB) indexes NL content in journals from 1668 on

[NL Research Tools](#)
Encyclopedia of NL, Newspaper directory, Digital Archives Initiative, Discography, more

Celebrating Memorial's Research
WITH THE CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

[Web](#) [NL](#) [Gen](#) [res](#)



Why the word “Dissenter”??

The term “Dissenter” was used in the 17th and early 18th centuries to describe any protestant who did not conform to the Church of England. Dissenting religious societies developed into many denominations including Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational and more. The Congregation of St David’s Church began as the first dissenting religious society in the colony in 1775 and adopted the Congregational (Reformed or Calvinist) tradition of Protestant Christianity and governance. In 1938 the Congregation formally joined the Presbyterian Church in Canada.



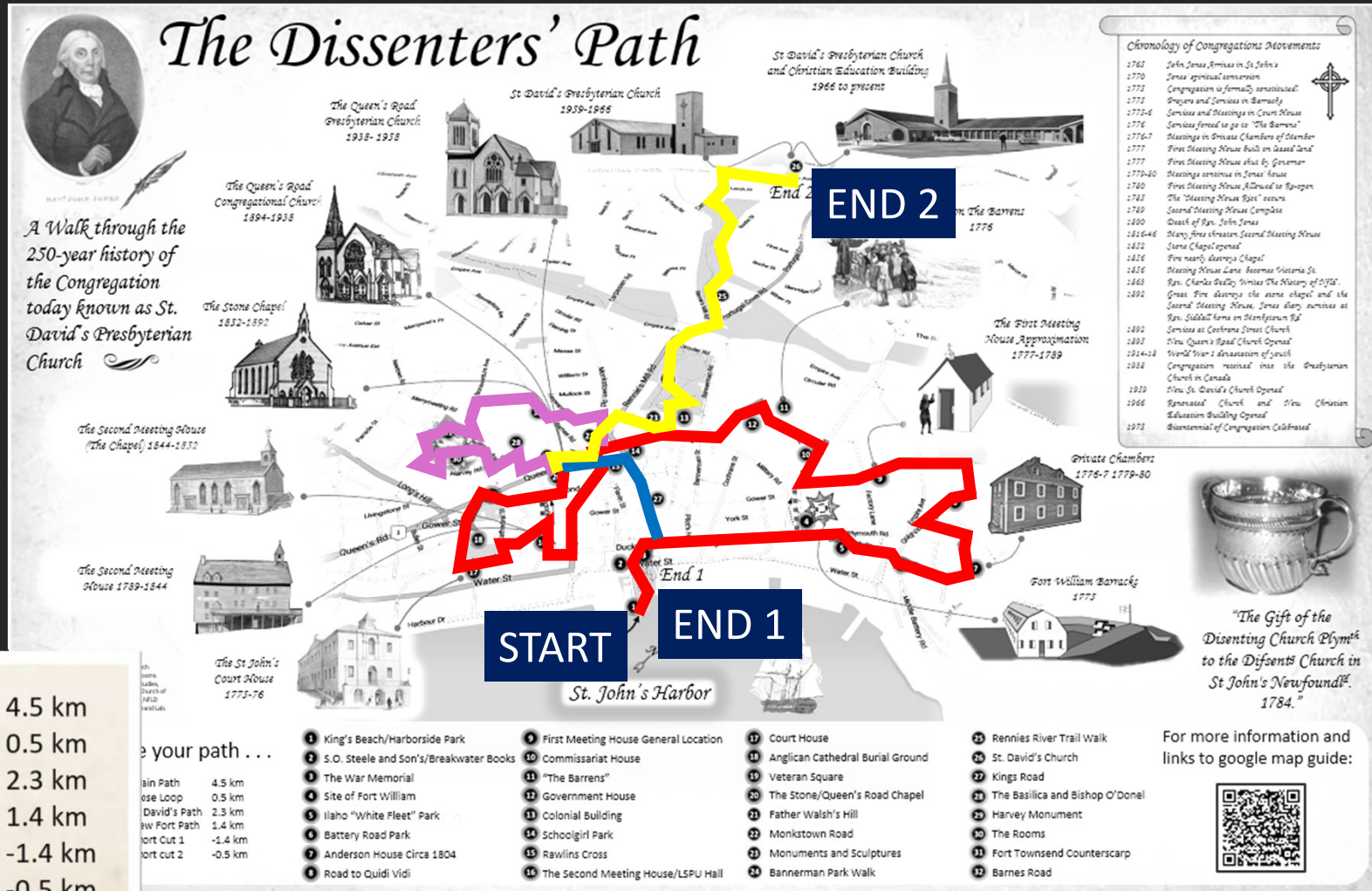
In 2010, for the 235 anniversary of St David’s Church , a 25-minute documentary video chronicling the history of the church was produced. It is freely available on-line on YouTube and is called **The Dissenter’s Way** .

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r4qcmdxA6uI>



The Dissenters Path - Map Project

The map and legend highlight some of the events and places that shaped the Congregation through its 250-year history. These are encountered in a roughly **chronological order** when following the indicated direction of travel on the paths. Some license is used to avoid zigzagging and to identify locations which are not precisely known (The Barrens, Private Chambers and the First Meeting House, specifically).



When and Where did it begin?

Church Founder, John Jones arrives as a Royal Artillery Soldier in St John's in the year 1765. He was far from being a minister at that time, in fact, he later writes that "He vied with his comrades in various kinds of profligacy" and admits "that the Ox never drank water more greedily than he drank iniquity".



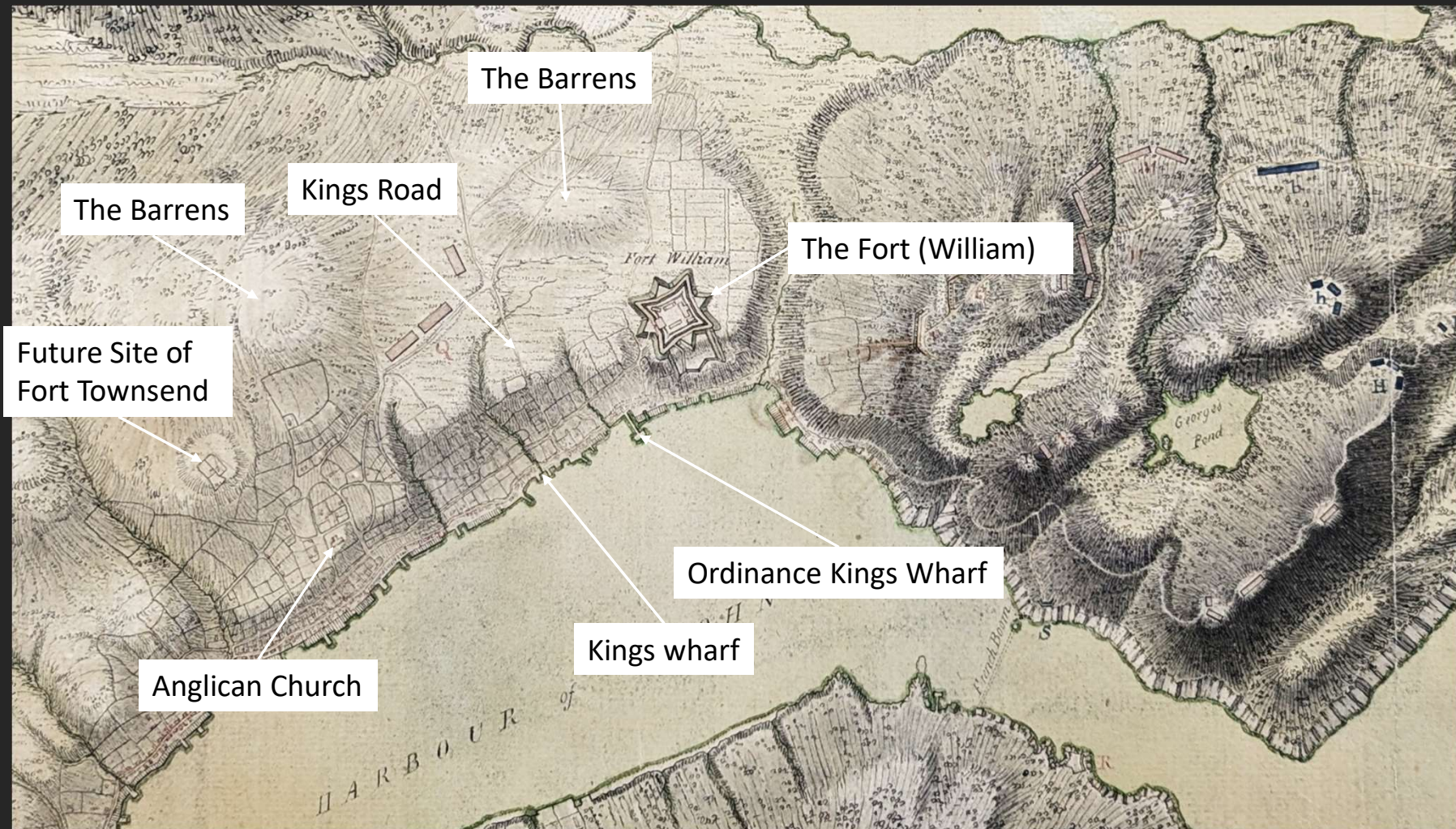
Describing Newfoundland at the time, Jones' friend and historian, Greatheed, said ***"there was scarcely any part of the world more destitute either of the power or form of Christianity"***

Debbings Map of 1762



A Closer look in the 1760s:

Debbings Map of 1762



And in the 1770's

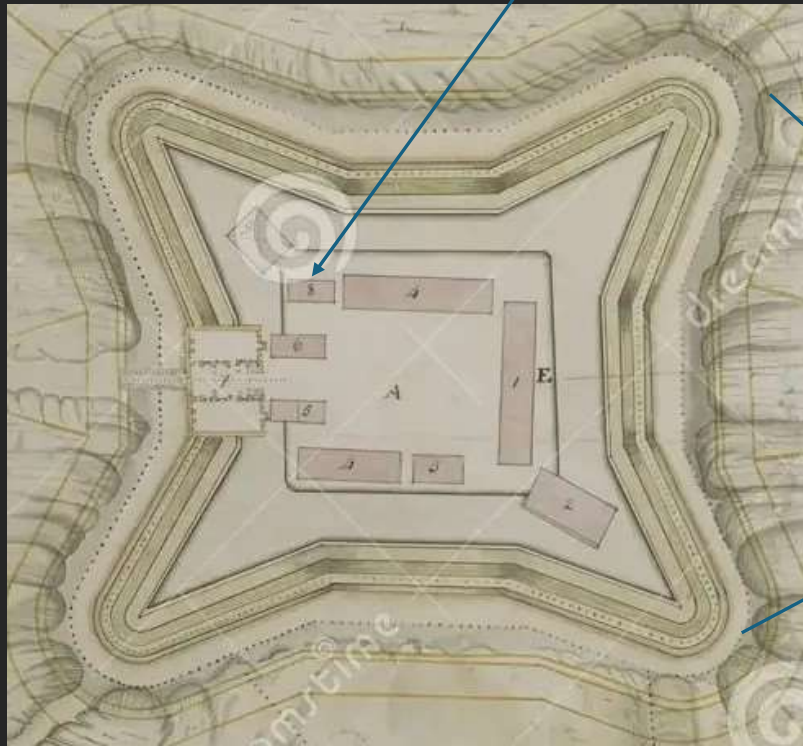
Around 1770, View towards
Kings Wharf and the Narrows



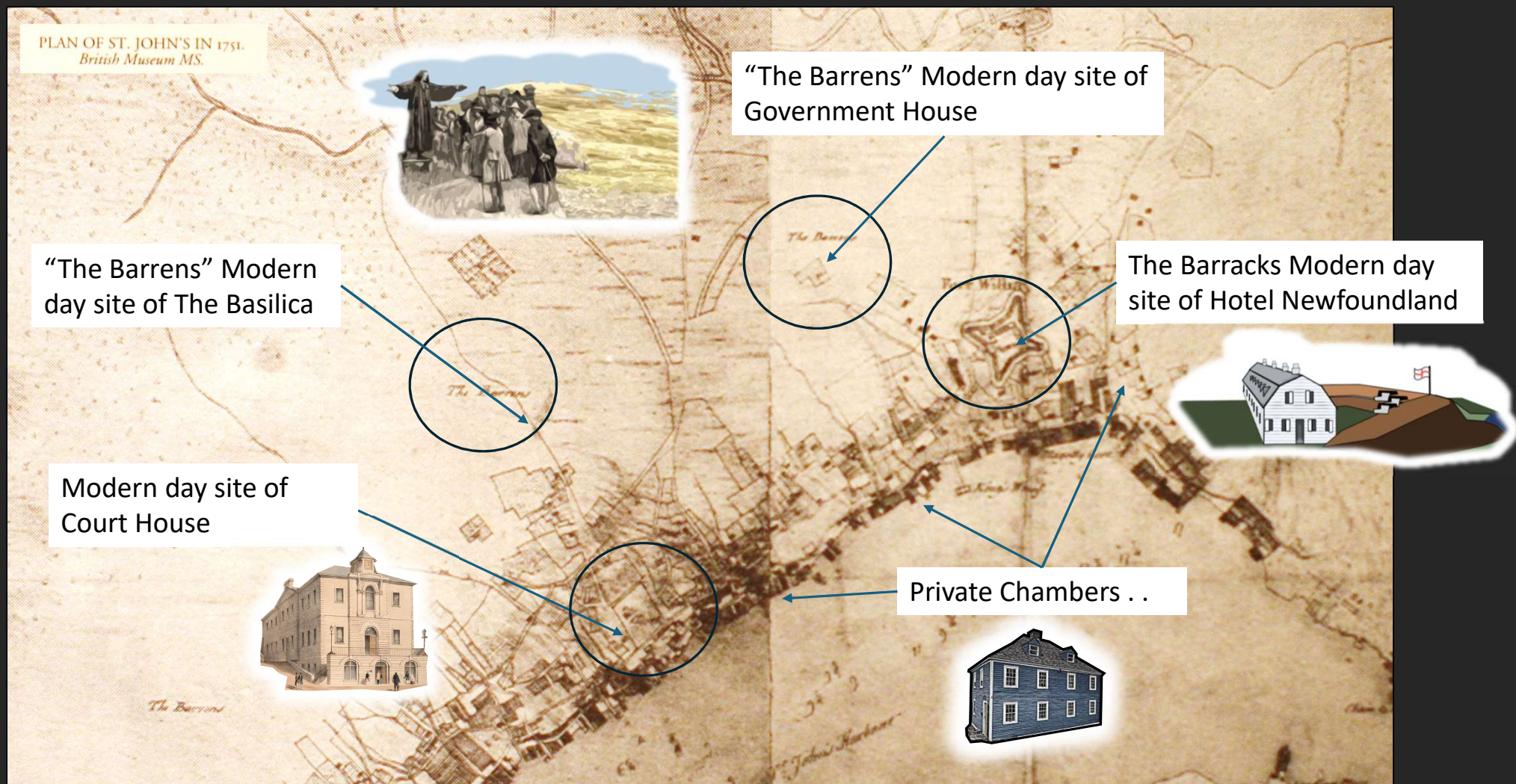
1775 – A transformed Jones begins “Religious Society” in the Barracks

REFERENCES			
A Fort William	1 Governor & Officers Quarters	6 Officers Quarters Room	9 Garrison Magazine
B The Lower Battery of thirteen Guns	2 Chieftains House	7 The Garrison Barracks	
	3 Officers Quarters		
	4 Soldiers Barracks		

"the Lord was pleased to work upon the mind of the present Gaoler and three Soldiers, one of the Infantry and two of the Artillery, who made six in number." They constituted themselves a religious society, drawing up articles for their own government, and thus our congregation had its beginning. "



1775-6 Congregation Meetings: Barracks, Court House, Private Chambers and *The Barrens*!



The First Meeting House 1777-1789

"In the Spring of 1777 the Timber etc. being brought out, the frame of the House was raised and made Tenantable by the Labour of the two Elders and some little help from another man in Twenty Eight days to the admiration of friends and enemies; as soon as it was ready, they entered with joyful hearts that God had done so much for them ... "

REF1.



Forest Road Showing Enclosures

But Where exactly?

" in the vicinity of Forest Road. John Lees, the barrack master and early supporter of the cause owned property there, as well as other military men....

Such a site would be "outside the town" and therefore "not detrimental to the Fishery" and would explain the Governor's reluctance to order its demolition..." REF1.

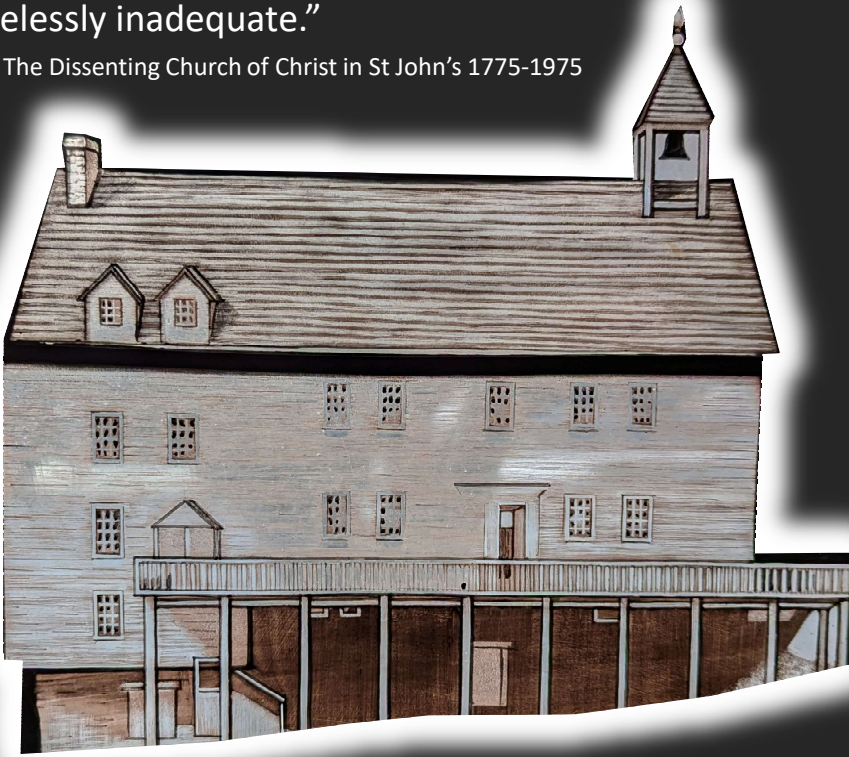


"There were windows with shutters and no chimney. The terms of the lease, which was for 14 years, called for the society to build a chimney, but the cost (£ 20) was beyond them."

The Second Meeting House – 1789 - 1852

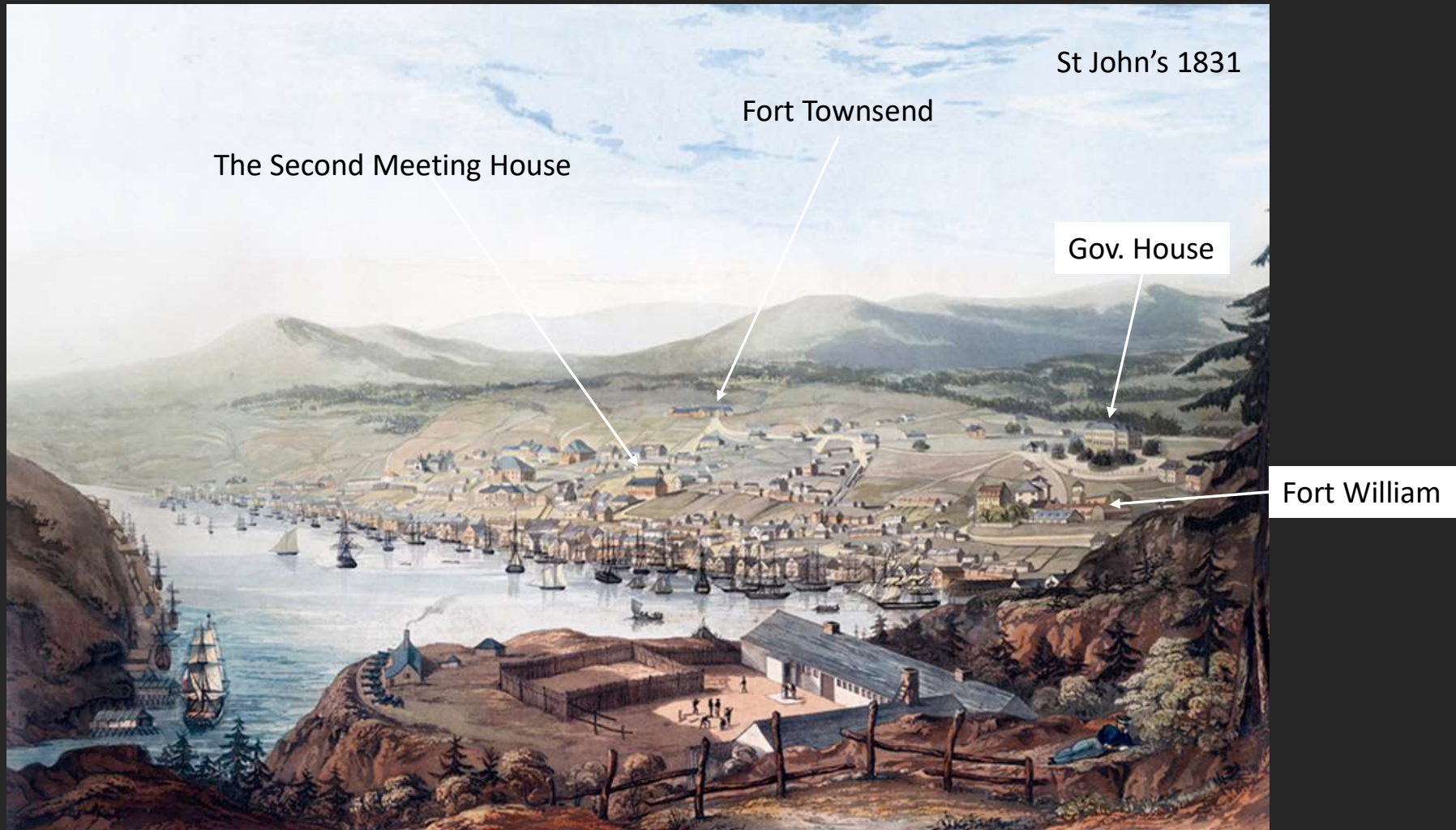
By 1785, the "slight house" (First Meeting House) which served as a church and school was hopelessly inadequate."

REF1. The Dissenting Church of Christ in St John's 1775-1975

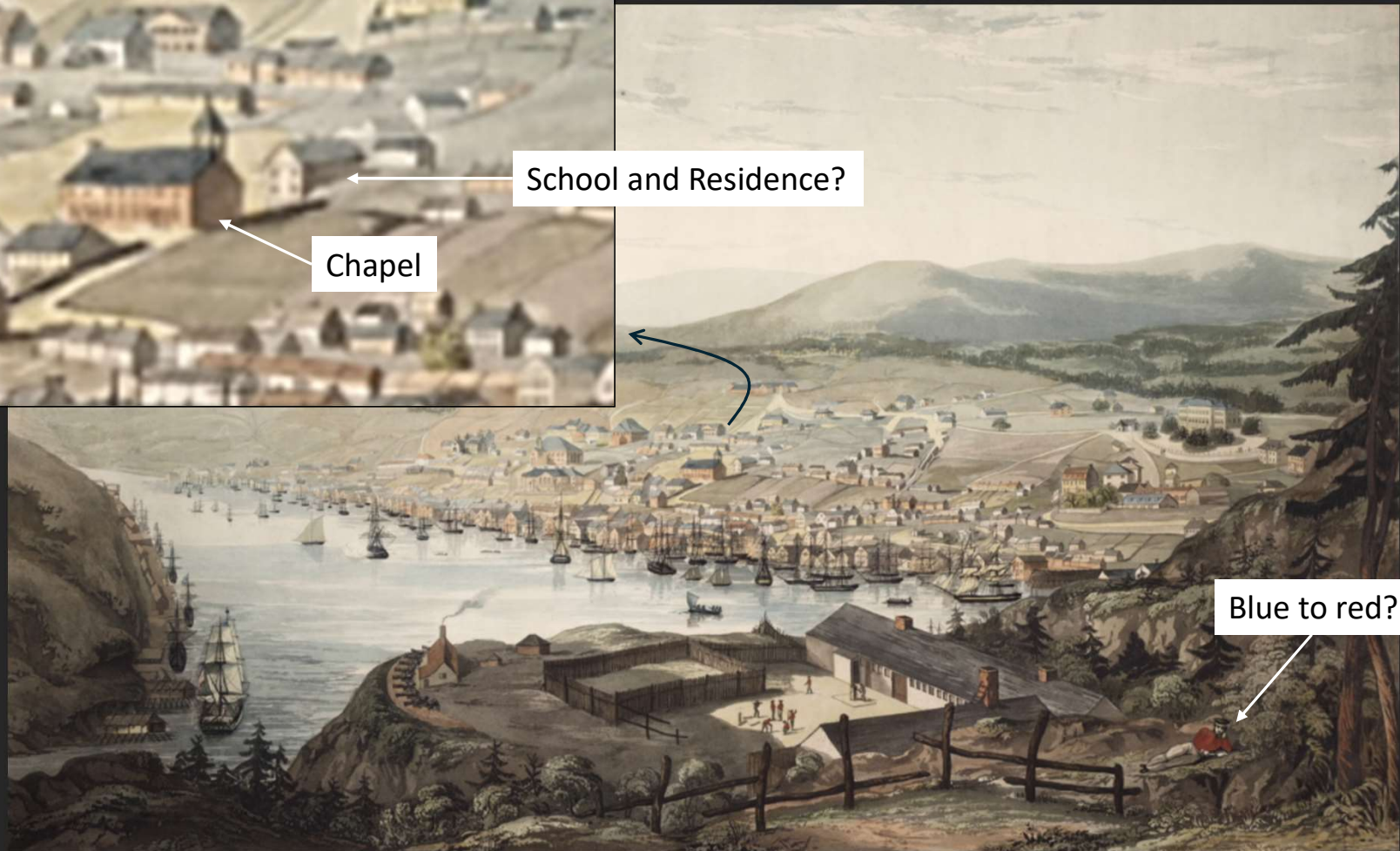
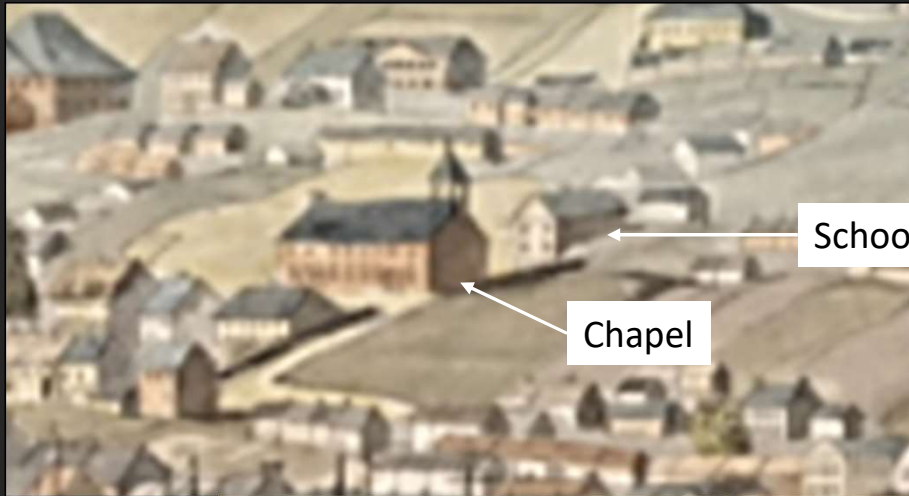


After four years of tremendous effort and with the financial aid of friends, elders, and importantly, backers in Plymouth, Poole and other centers of dissent in England, the Second Meeting house was opened. Much is known about it!

The Second Meeting House – 1789 - 1852

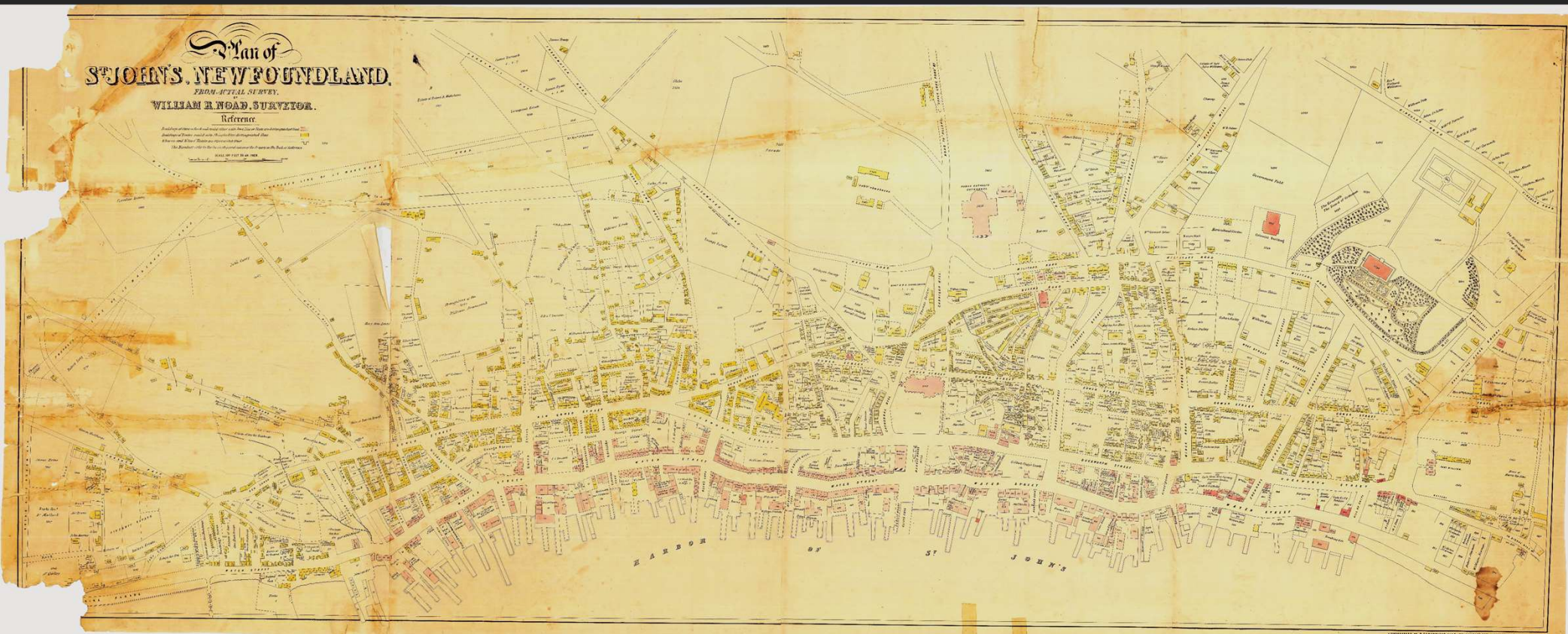


The Dissenters Path - Map Project

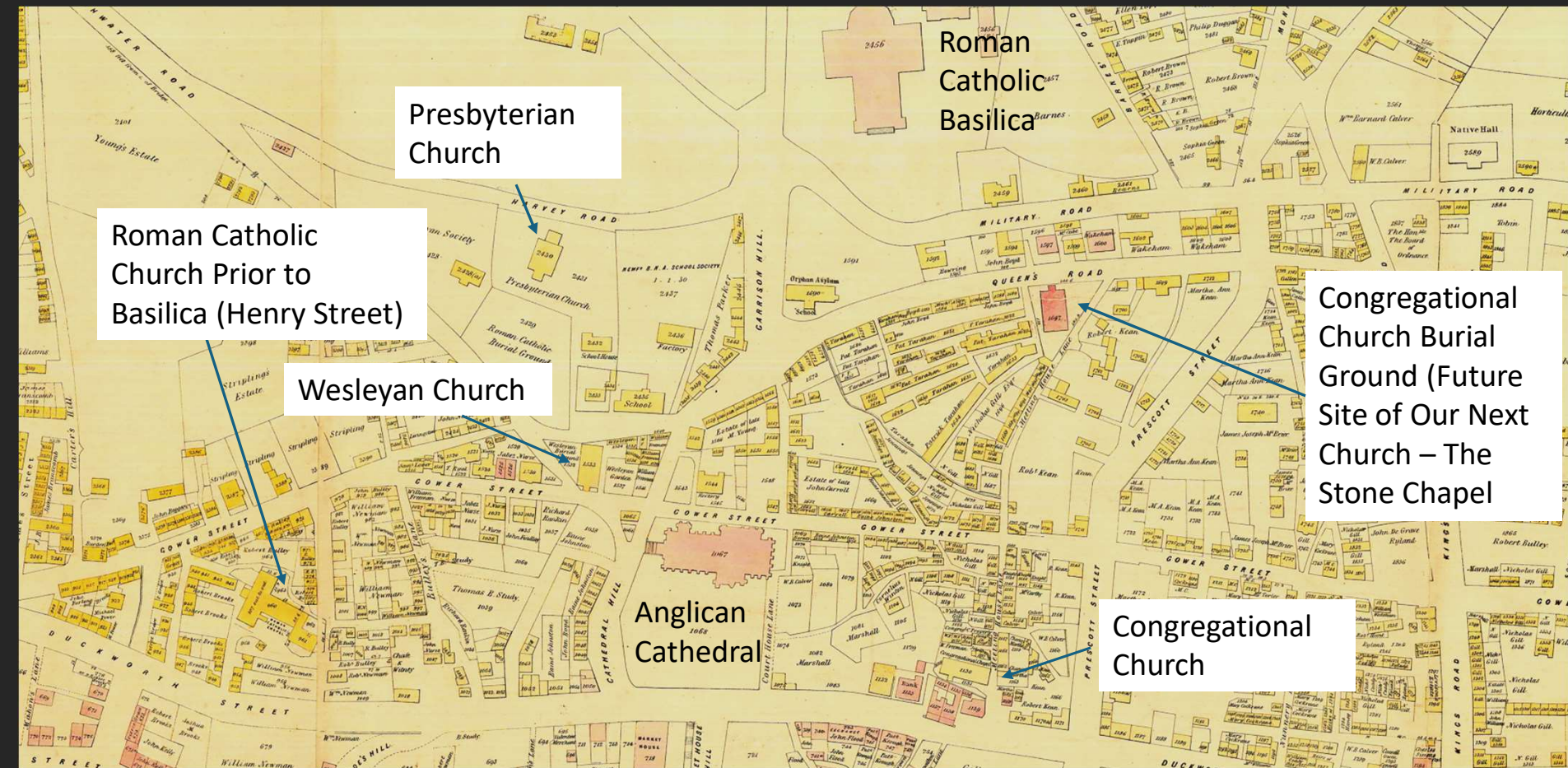


The Dissenters Path - Map Project

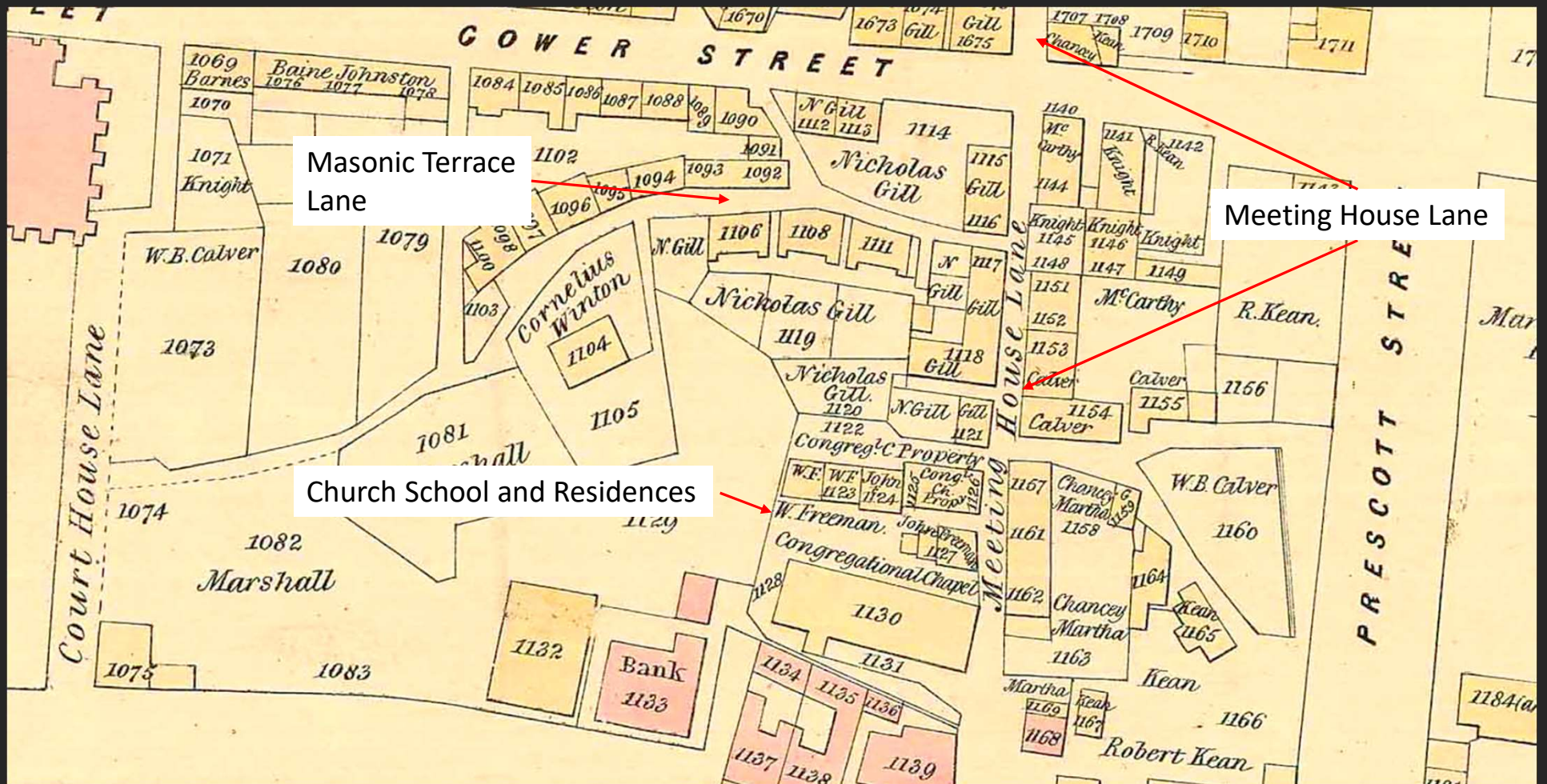
The Noad Map 1849 -1852



The Dissenters Path - Map Project



The Dissenters Path - Map Project



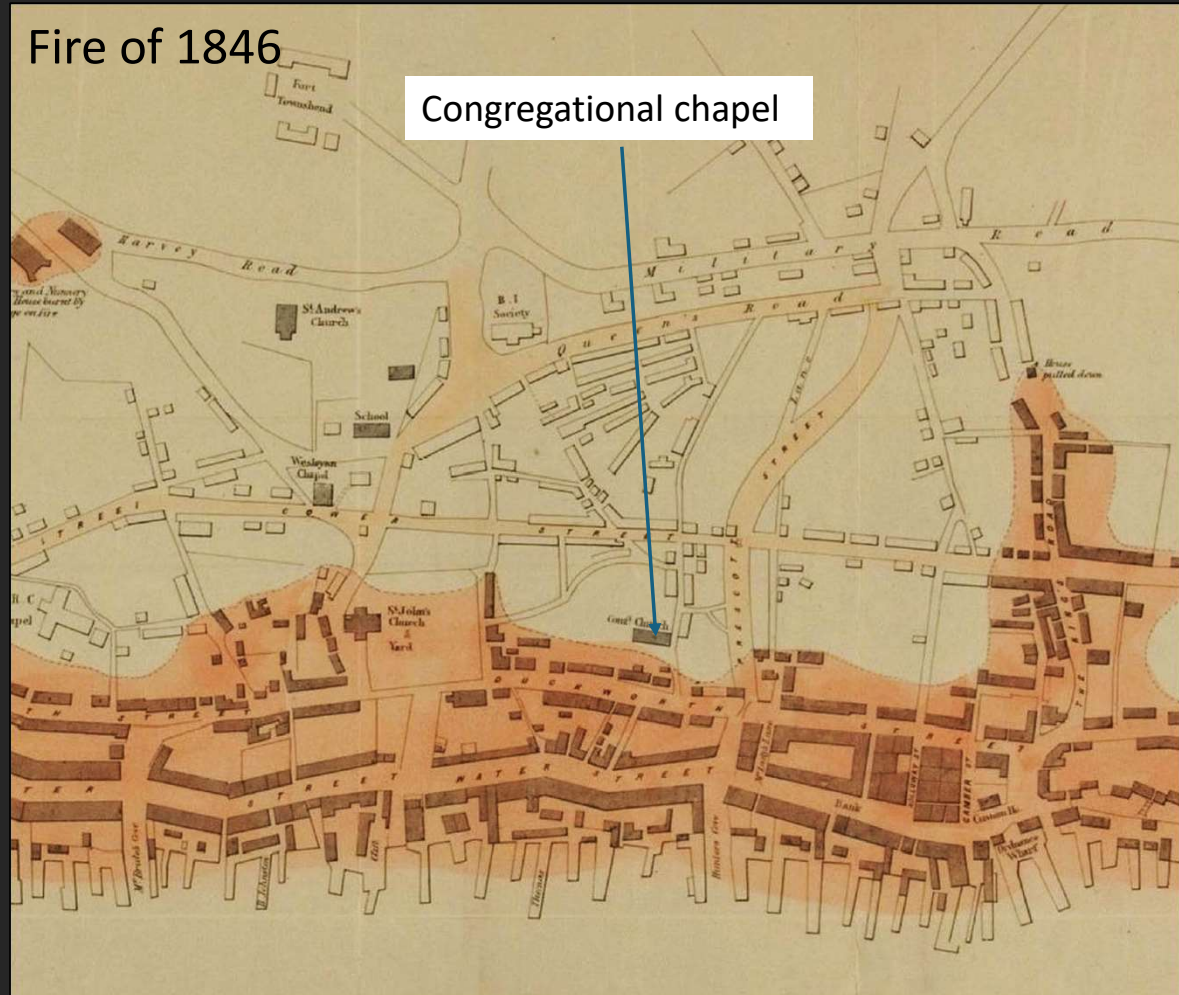
Moving on from the Second Meeting House

"once perhaps admirable (the site of the Second Meeting House), has become always inconvenient, and in unfavourable weather, almost inaccessible" Rev Schofield 1851.

With the opening of the new cemetery at Riverhead, the land on Queen's Road, used as a "Burying Place" by the Congregationalists for more than thirty years became the site for the new chapel. The Ledger reported that the ceremony of laying the foundation stone of the new Congregational Chapel was to take place "on the site formerly occupied as a cemetery and belonging to that denominational interest."

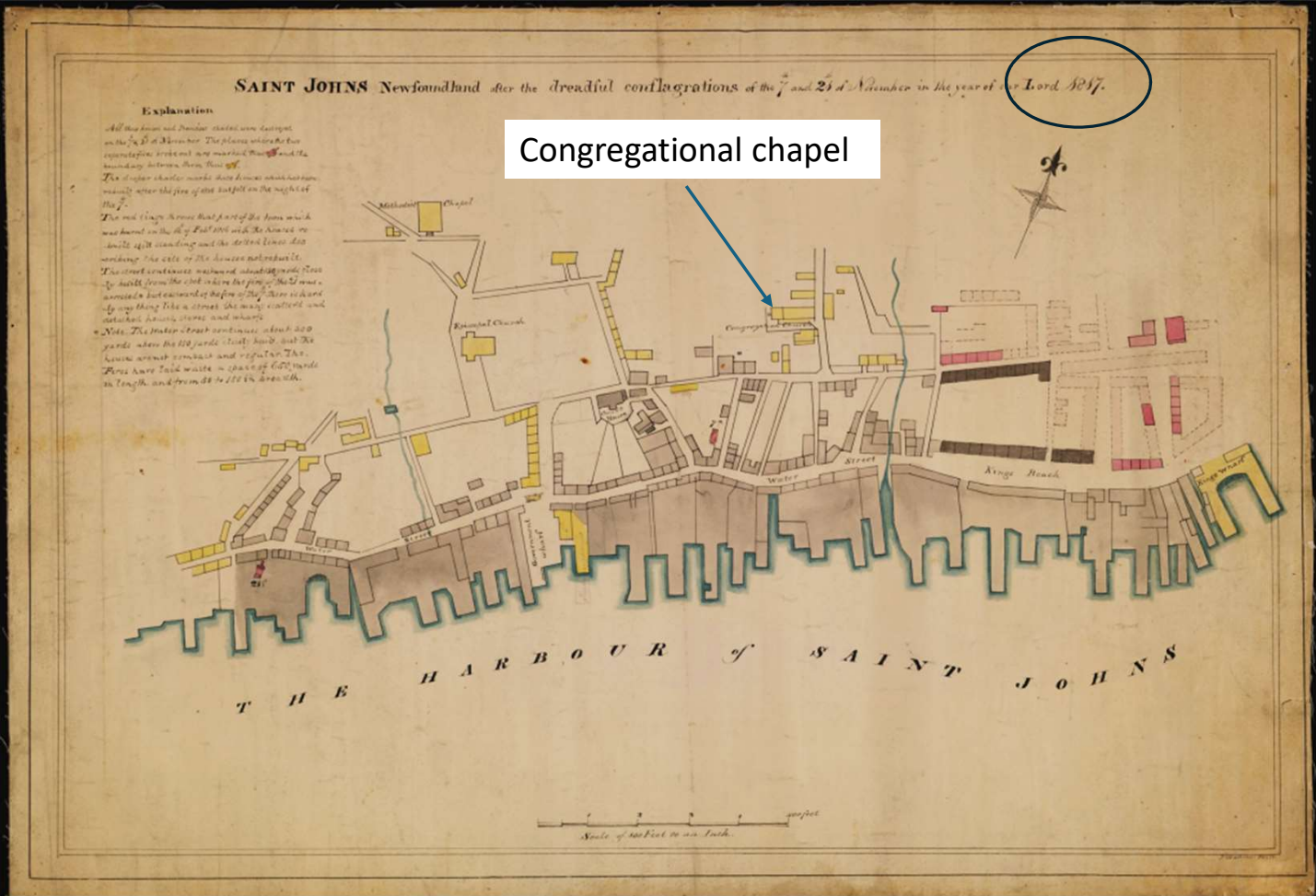
Fire of 1846

Congregational chapel



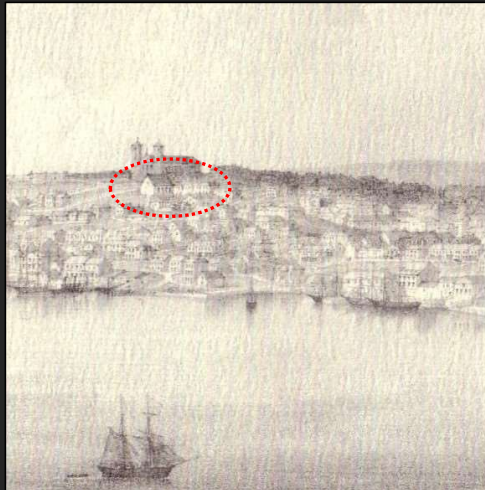
The Dissenters Path - Map Project

Again in 1847 a
very close call!

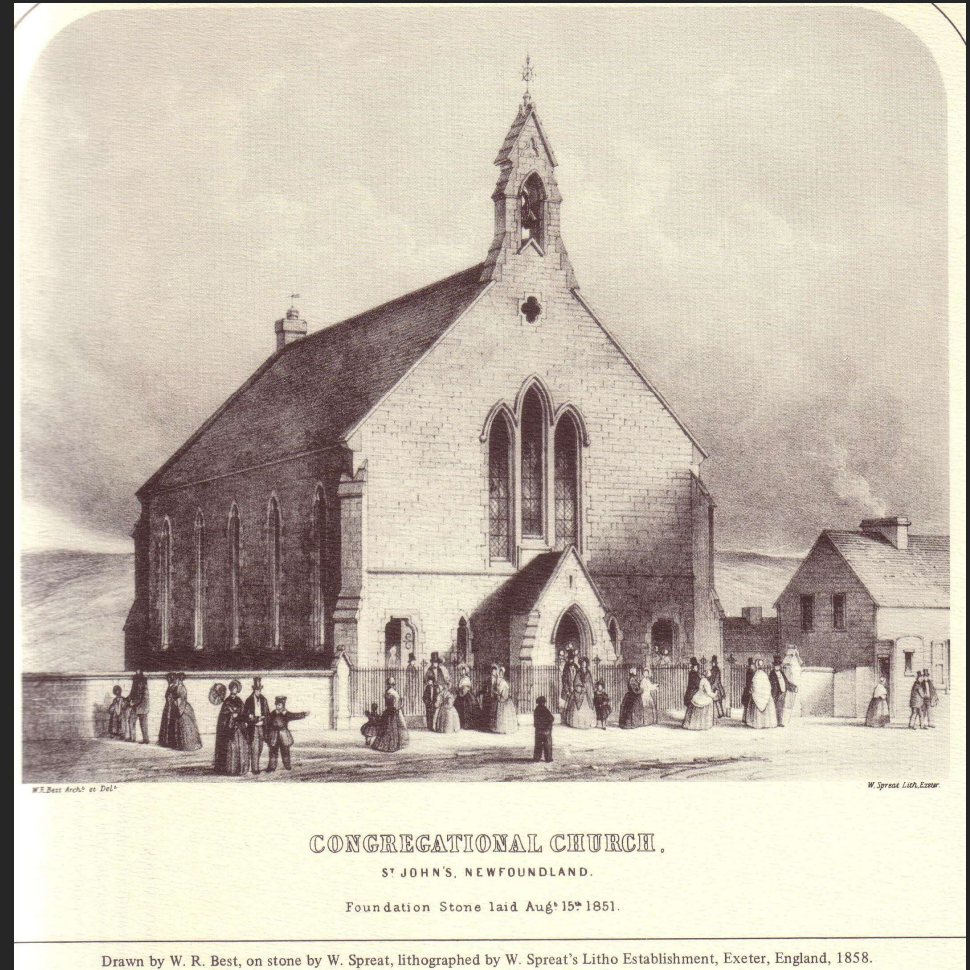


The Stone Chapel 1852 - 1892

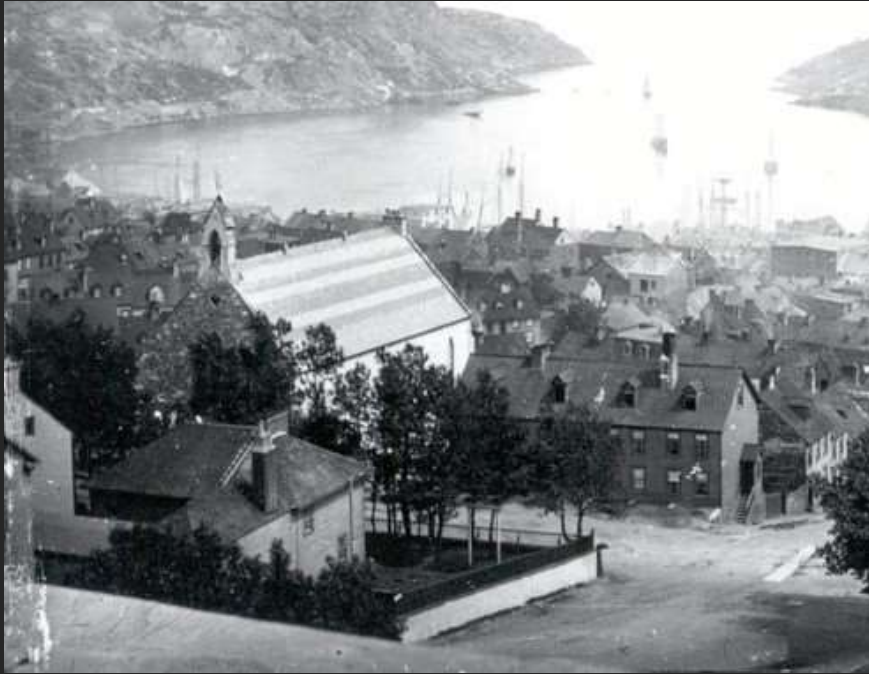
Only two years after being built, the Stone Chapel narrowly escaped burning in the **October 1855 Fire** which devastated the area known as Tarahan's Town - "bounded in the north by the Queen's Road to the Congregational Chapel." The trustees of the Temperance Hall (the new name for the Old Meeting House), the trustees of the Congregational Church and Mrs. Sarah Ward were among those whose property was affected by the subsequent reconstruction of the streets whereby Meeting House Lane disappeared, and Victoria Street was created. REF1. The Dissenting Church of Christ in St John's 1775-1975



Drawn by Best, 1860



The Stone Chapel 1852 - 1892



View from the Steeple of the Basilica

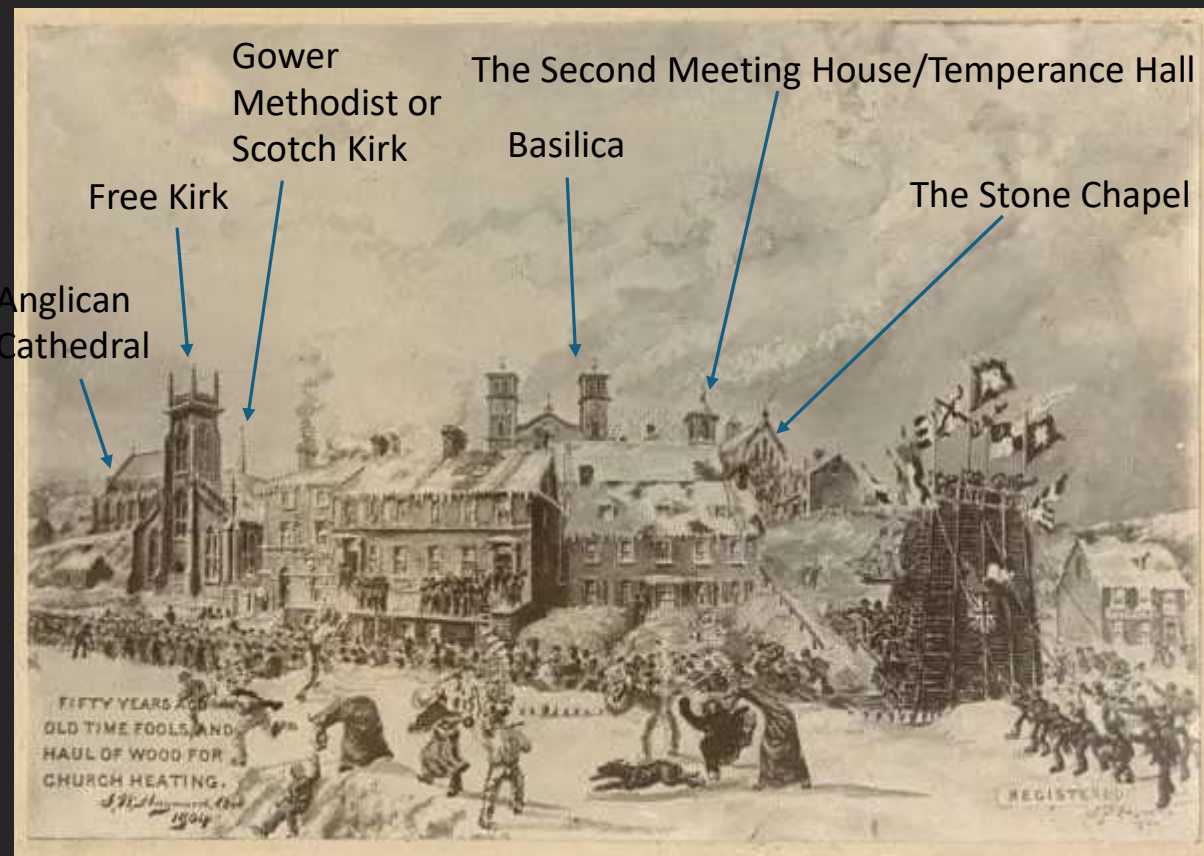


View looking down Queen's Road



View from the Harbour

The Stone Chapel 1852 - 1892



Post Card Art Constructed from an Interesting Perspective

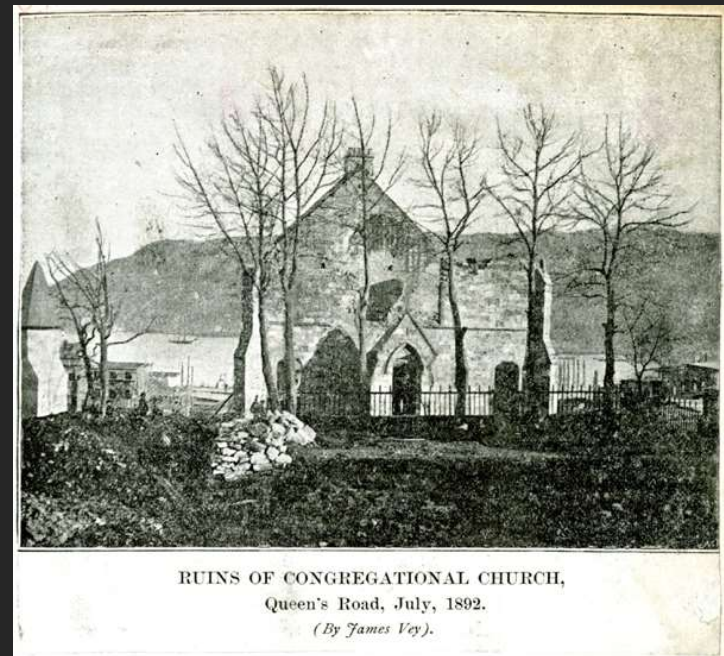


The Stone Chapel 1852 - 1892

From Prowse's History:

St John's Evening Herald Sept 10 1892:

"All the South Side (of Queen's Road) were in flames, but the stone chapel belonging to the Congregationalists stood intact. It was here that a great want of tact was displayed by those in charge of the fire department. A hose which was engaged in playing on some small wooden buildings further to the eastward, and which could not possibly do any service at the time, should have been employed in wetting the side of the congregational church. Had such been done, this building, the one opposite, and in all probability the houses of Mr Greene and of Maxse Terrace, would have been saved. . ."

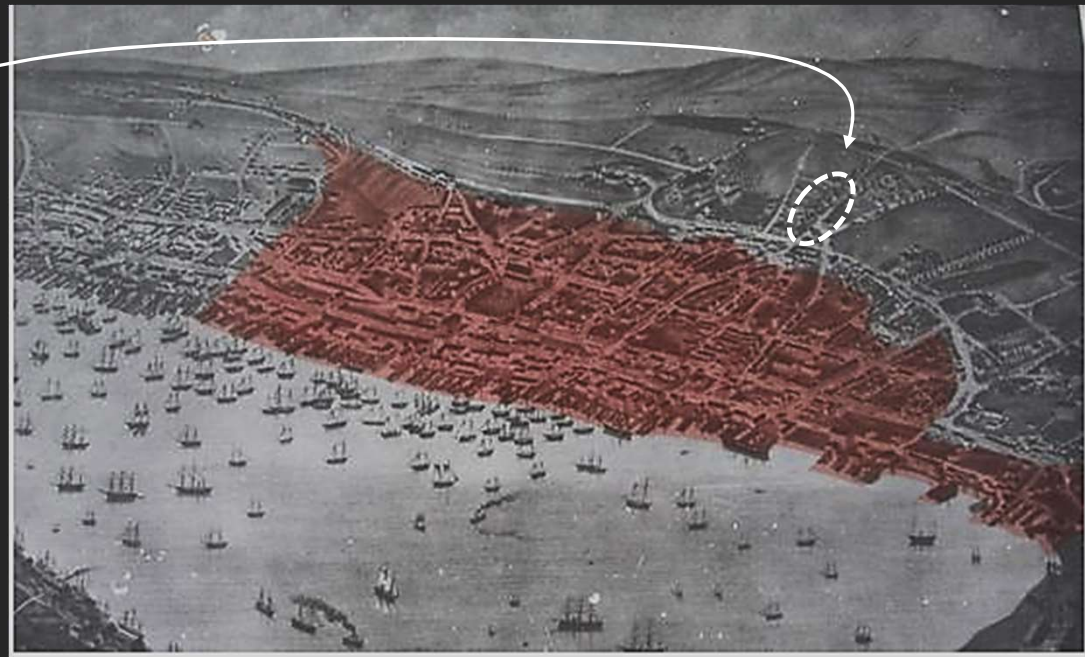
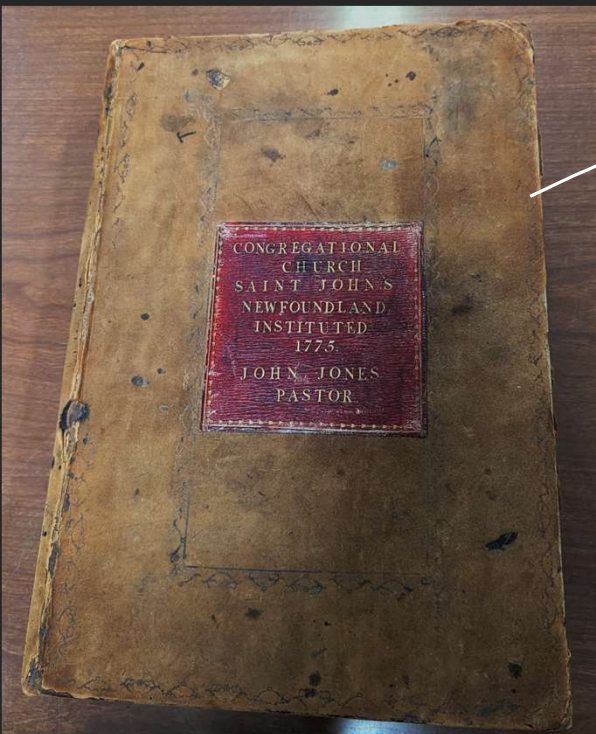


RUINS OF CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,
Queen's Road, July, 1892.
(By James Vey).

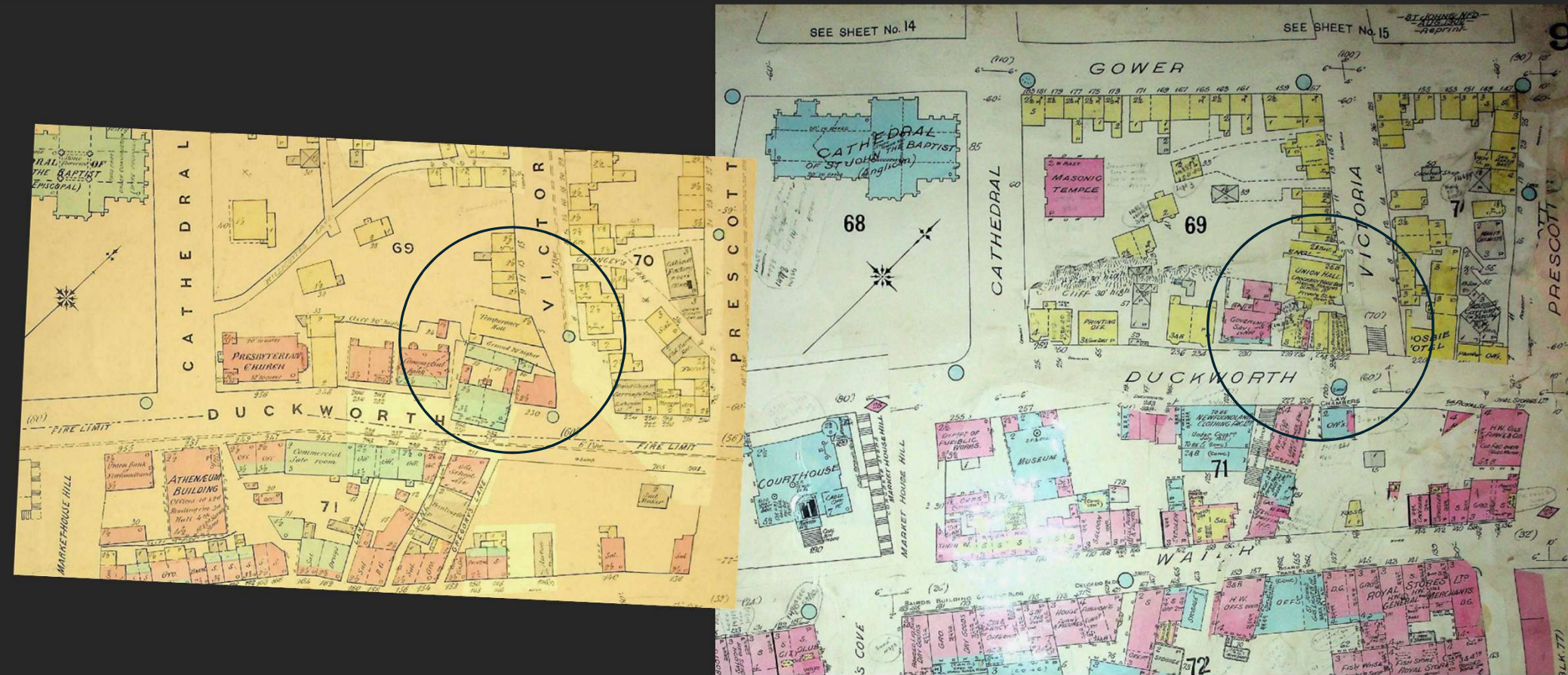
Monkstown Road and the “Journal of John Jones”

“The (critical historic) volume survived the Great Fire of 1892 when the congregation's second and third places of worship, the second meeting house on Victoria Street (by 1892 known as Temperance Hall) and the Stone Chapel, on Queen's Road, burnt down. It had been taken to the Monkstown Road home of the Rev. and Mrs. G. Ward Siddall because Mrs. Siddall had been preparing a pamphlet The Origin of Nonconformity in St. John's, Newfoundland.”

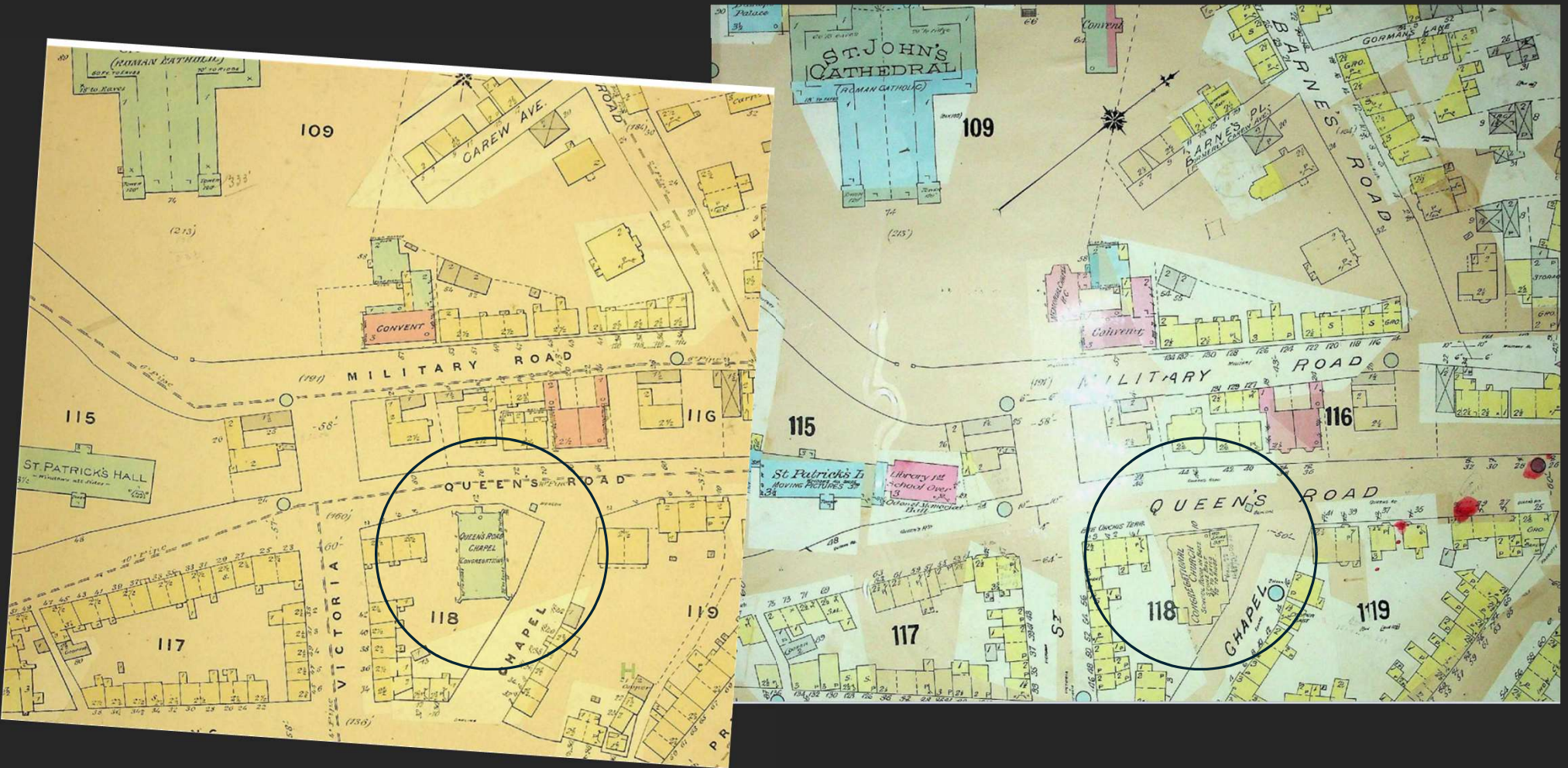
Ref.2 Pam Bruce



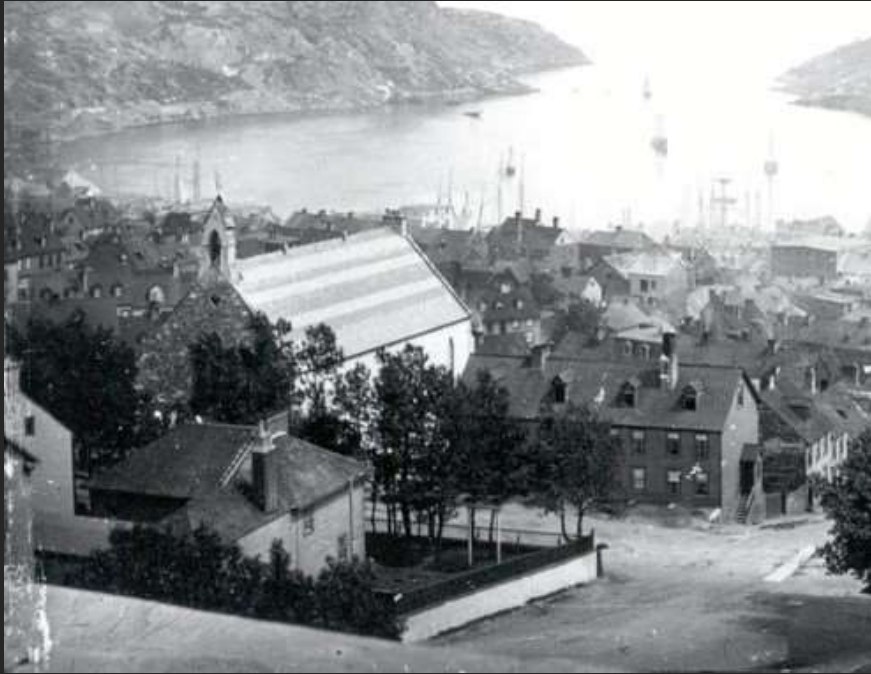
Great Fire: Second Meeting House - LSPU



Great Fire: Queen's Road Chapel



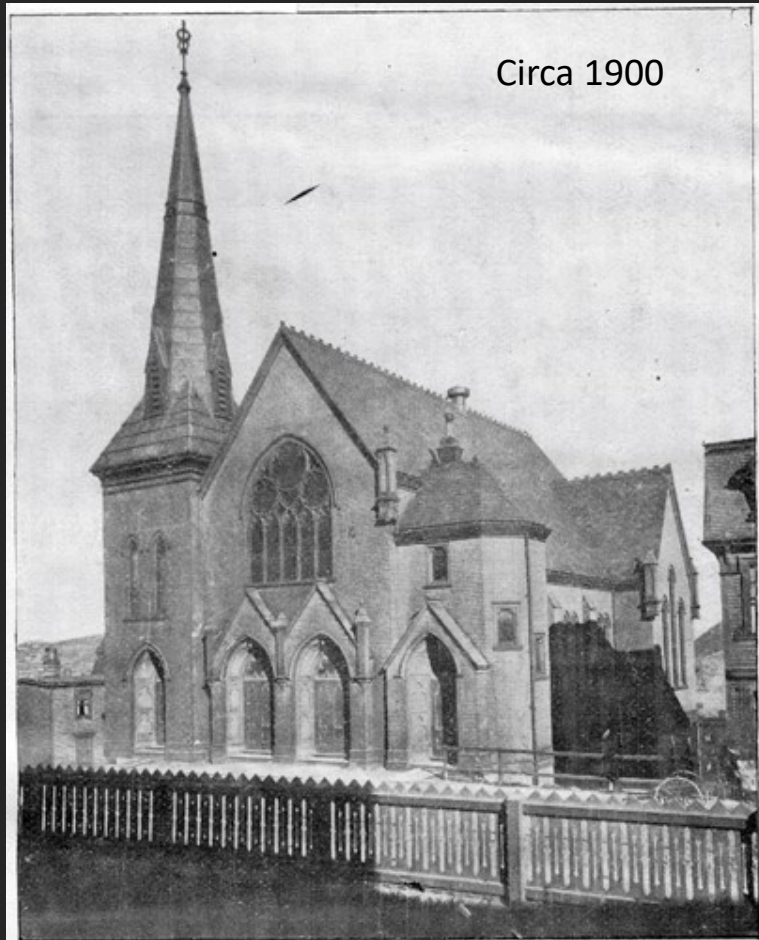
The Queen's Road Chapel



View from the Steeple of the Basilica



The Queens Road Chapel



The Leading Mark into St. John's Harbour!

5. HARBOUR PILOT

Marks for Entering the Narrows, 1885.



Starting in the late 1600s, naval vessels assigned to Newfoundland for the fishing season patrolled St. John's Harbour. Crews from these vessels took to longboats to pilot ships having difficulty entering the Narrows, a common occurrence because of prevailing winds and lack of sea room. Beginning in the early 1700s, captains requiring the expertise of a pilot were advised that "the fishermen are trustworthy pilots, and always to be found off the harbour during daytime."

By 1833 the piloting of boats through the Narrows was a growing business. Four accredited piloting crews used whaleboats in their work. Pilot boats vying for work met ships just off Cape Spear in the sheltered area known as "Pilot's Gulch", or approaching ships could signal their need for a pilot to Signal Hill, from where the request would be relayed to the Harbour Master's office.

Old Customs House



In 1863, the Lighthouse Commission placed a light on a tower directly atop the Customs House. The light assured a safe line to enter the harbour.



Bold New Move – St David's Presbyterian Church Eliz Ave



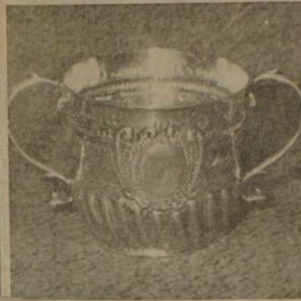
St. David's Presbyterian Church, 96 Elizabeth Avenue, St. John's, NL, A1B 1K6, Church Office: (709) 722-2362, stodavids@ntia.com, www.stodavids.nf.ca

St David's... new church with a long history

Page 32, Evening Telegram, St. John's, Nfld., Friday, Nov. 26, 1965

St. David's...new church with long history

CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH
SAINT JOHN'S
NEWFOUNDLAND
INSTITUTED
1775
JOHN JONES
PASTOR



"John Jones Journal," which is a record book containing the complete records of the former Congregational Church in St. John's from 1775 to 1834, is the property of St. David's Presbyterian Church, Elizabeth Avenue. The Congregationalists joined with the Presbyterians in 1935.

The Pew used in the records of the church is

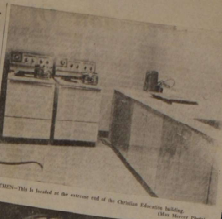
A Convenient, Modern Building For St. David's Congregation

Congratulations to the KIRK SESSION and Congregation of St. David's Presbyterian Church on the Opening and Dedication of the NEW CHRISTIAN EDUCATION BUILDING
ELIZABETH AVENUE
CHURCHILL PARK ESSO SERVICE STATION
Elizabeth Avenue Phone 774-0582

Congratulations to the KIRK SESSION and Congregation of St. David's Presbyterian Church on the Opening and Dedication of the NEW CHRISTIAN EDUCATION BUILDING
CHURCHILL PARK ESSO SERVICE STATION
Elizabeth Avenue Phone 774-0582

Congratulations to the KIRK SESSION and Congregation of St. David's Presbyterian Church on the Opening and Dedication of the NEW CHRISTIAN EDUCATION BUILDING
CHURCHILL PARK ESSO SERVICE STATION
Elizabeth Avenue Phone 774-0582

Congratulations to the KIRK SESSION and Congregation of St. David's Presbyterian Church on the Opening and Dedication of the NEW CHRISTIAN EDUCATION BUILDING
CHURCHILL PARK ESSO SERVICE STATION
Elizabeth Avenue Phone 774-0582



Congratulations to the KIRK SESSION and Congregation of St. David's Presbyterian Church on the Opening and Dedication of the NEW CHRISTIAN EDUCATION BUILDING
CHURCHILL PARK ESSO SERVICE STATION
Elizabeth Avenue Phone 774-0582

The silver Eucharistic vessel and chalice of St. David's church is inscribed "a thank-offering for deliverance from the Great Fire of 1892."

Congregation Of St. David's Dates From 1775

The congregation of St. David's Presbyterian Church in St. John's, Newfoundland, has a long and distinguished history. It was founded in 1775 by John Jones, a Welsh Presbyterian minister, who arrived in St. John's in 1775 and began preaching the Gospel. The church was originally known as the Congregational Church of St. John's, and it was in 1834 that it joined with the Presbyterian Church of St. John's to form the St. David's Presbyterian Church. The church has since grown and developed, and it is now one of the largest and most active churches in St. John's. The church is known for its beautiful architecture, its excellent music, and its commitment to social and community service. The church is also known for its long history of service to the community, and it is proud to be a part of the St. John's community.

The church is known for its beautiful architecture, its excellent music, and its commitment to social and community service. The church is also known for its long history of service to the community, and it is proud to be a part of the St. John's community.

The church is known for its beautiful architecture, its excellent music, and its commitment to social and community service. The church is also known for its long history of service to the community, and it is proud to be a part of the St. John's community.

The church is known for its beautiful architecture, its excellent music, and its commitment to social and community service. The church is also known for its long history of service to the community, and it is proud to be a part of the St. John's community.

The church is known for its beautiful architecture, its excellent music, and its commitment to social and community service. The church is also known for its long history of service to the community, and it is proud to be a part of the St. John's community.

The church is known for its beautiful architecture, its excellent music, and its commitment to social and community service. The church is also known for its long history of service to the community, and it is proud to be a part of the St. John's community.

Bi-centennial 1975 – Banquets, Barrens and Balloons!



If you've come this far – you might need a second car!

JOHN JONES 1698-1776

The Dissenters' Path

A Walk through the 250-year history of the Congregation today known as St. David's Presbyterian Church

The Queen's Road Presbyterian Church 1938-1958

The Queen's Road Congregational Church 1894-1938

The Stone Chapel 1832-1892

The Second Meeting House (The Chapel) 1844-1852

The Second Meeting House 1789-1844

St David's Presbyterian Church 1959-1966

St David's Presbyterian Church and Christian Education Building 1966 to present

START **END 1**

END 2

Chronology of Congregations Movements

- 1765 John Jones arrives in St. John's
- 1770 Jones spiritual conversion
- 1773 Congregation is formally constituted
- 1773-6 Prayers and Services in Barnack
- 1776 Services and Meetings in Court House
- 1776-7 Services forced to go to "The Barrens"
- 1776-7 Meetings in Private Chambers of Member
- 1777 First Meeting House built on "Island Land"
- 1777 First Meeting House shut by Governor
- 1779-80 Meetings continue in Jones House
- 1780 First Meeting House Allowed to Reopen
- 1783 The "Meeting House Spire" burns
- 1780 Second Meeting House Completed
- 1800 Death of Rev. John Jones
- 1816-45 Many fires threaten Second Meeting House
- 1821 Spire Chapel opened
- 1826 Fire nearly destroys Chapel
- 1826 Meeting House Lane becomes Victoria St
- 1863 Rev. Charles DeWitt writes The History of 1776
- 1892 Great Fire destroys the stone chapel and the Second Meeting House. Jones diary survives at Rev. William Jones in Newfoundland Rd
- 1892 Services at Catherine Street Church
- 1892 New Queen's Road Church Opens
- 1924-28 World War I: Dislocation of Youth
- 1928 Congregation "reborn" into the Presbyterian Church in Canada
- 1929 New St. David's Church Opens
- 1966 Renovated Church and New Christian Education Building Opened
- 1973 Bicentennial of Congregation Celebrated

"The Gift of the Disidenting Church Phym to the Dissenters Church in St John's Newfoundland 1784."

For more information and links to google map guide:

	Main Path	4.5 km
	Close Loop	0.5 km
	St David's Path	2.3 km
	New Fort Path	1.4 km
	Short Cut 1	-1.4 km
	Short cut 2	-0.5 km

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9 First Meeting House General Location 10 Commissariat House 11 "The Barrens" 12 Government House 13 Colonial Building 14 Schoolgirl Park 15 Rawlins Cross 16 The Second Meeting House/LSPU Hall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17 Court House 18 Anglican Cathedral Burial Ground 19 Veteran Square 20 The Stone/Queen's Road Chapel 21 Father Walsh's Hill 22 Monkstown Road 23 Monuments and Sculptures 24 Bannerman Park Walk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25 Rennie's River Trail Walk 26 St. David's Church 27 Kings Road 28 The Basilica and Bishop O'Donel 29 Harvey Monument 30 The Rooms 31 Fort Townsend Counterscarp 32 Barnes Road
---	--	---

*... or stay
home and
browse it!*

Presentation Contents

Welcome

Rev David Sturtevant

Part 1 The “Dissenters Path” Map Project

Stephen Bruneau

→ Part 2 The “Religious Society” 1775-2025

Glenn Barnes and Laura Barnes

Artifacts: Cup, Journal, Model

Janet Calver

THE **SDPC** 250 *Dissenters Path*

Join St. David's Presbyterian Church as we embark on a journey through time, following the Dissenters' Path through the streets of St. John's that traces the evolution of the congregation from its founding in 1775 to the present day.

Walking Through 250 Years to the Present

📅 **Thursday, April 24th** 📍 **The Rooms Theatre**
🕒 **2:30 pm – 3:30 pm** 💰 **Regular Admission Charges Apply**

Presentation Contents

Welcome

Rev David Sturtevant

Part 1 The “Dissenters Path” Map Project

Stephen Bruneau

Part 2 The “Religious Society” 1775-2025

Glenn Barnes

→ Artifacts: Cup, Journal, Model

Janet Calver



THE JONES CUP

ST. DAVID'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

250th Anniversary -2024

The Cup

3. FLUTED PORRINGER

London, 1704, John Gibbons
(active c1700-1744)

Diameter (lip) - 10 cm

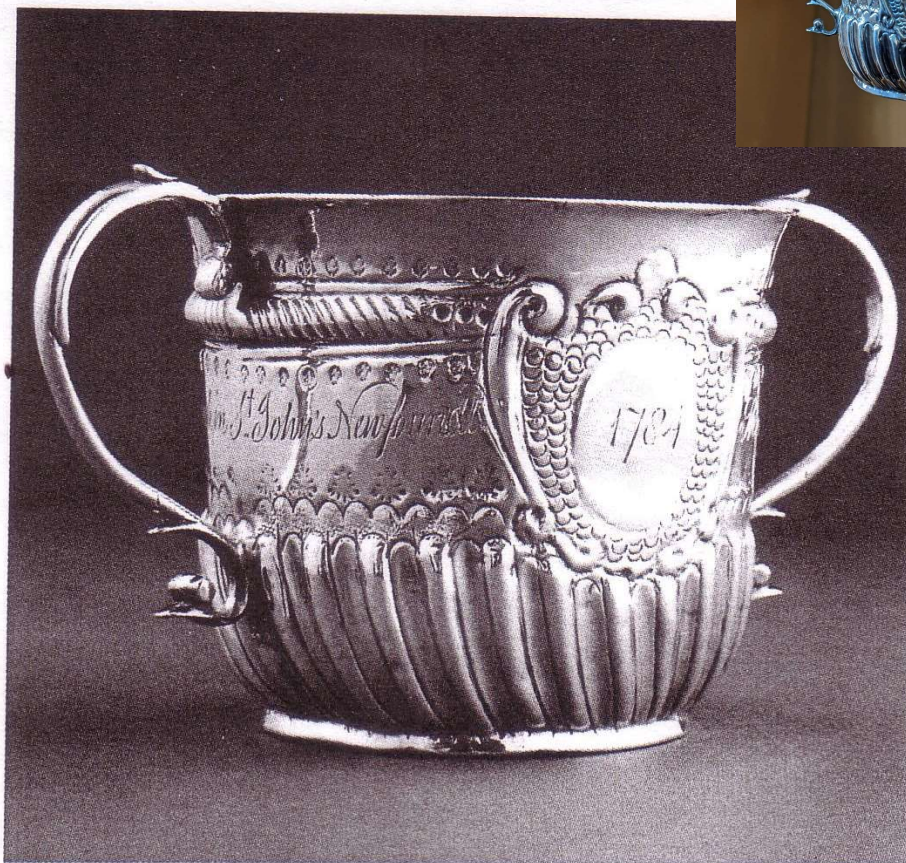
Diameter (base) - 6.5 cm

Height - 8 cm

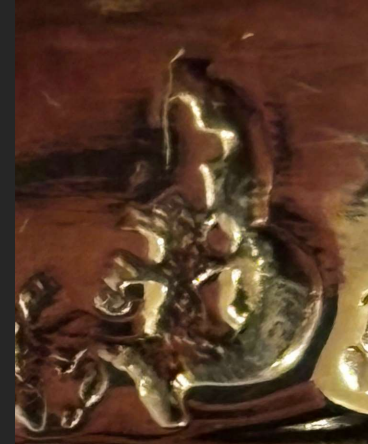
Mark: Gi with star in trefoil escutcheon

Provenance: St. David's Presbyterian
Church, St. John's

Gibbons apprenticed to Francis
Singleton on 12 November 1691, and was
made a freeman on 16 January 1699. He
is known to have entered his mark in



Marks

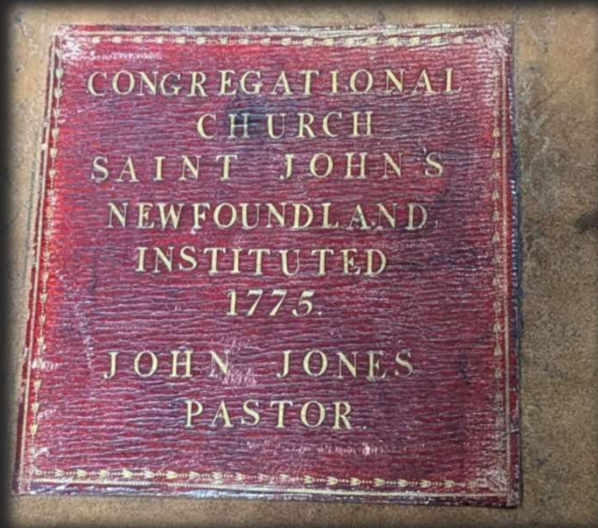


Engraving

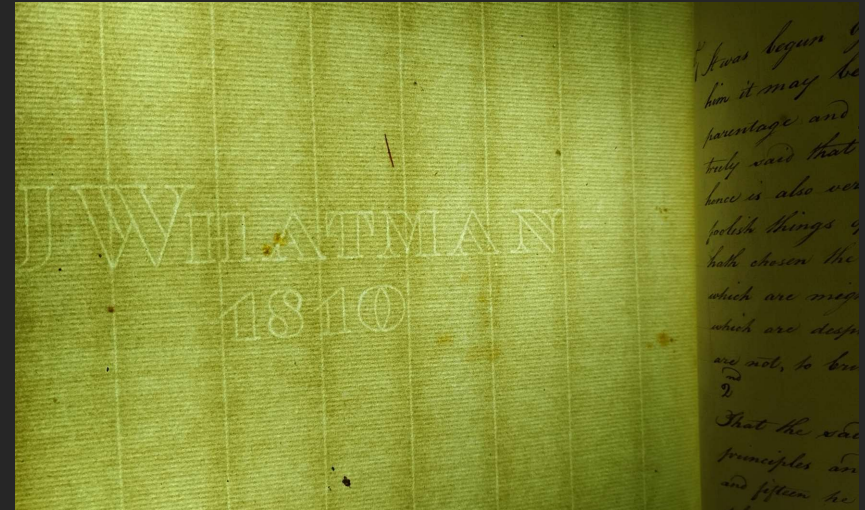
"The Gift of the Dissenting Church Plymth to the Dissent^d Church in St John's Newfoundl^d. 1784."



The Book

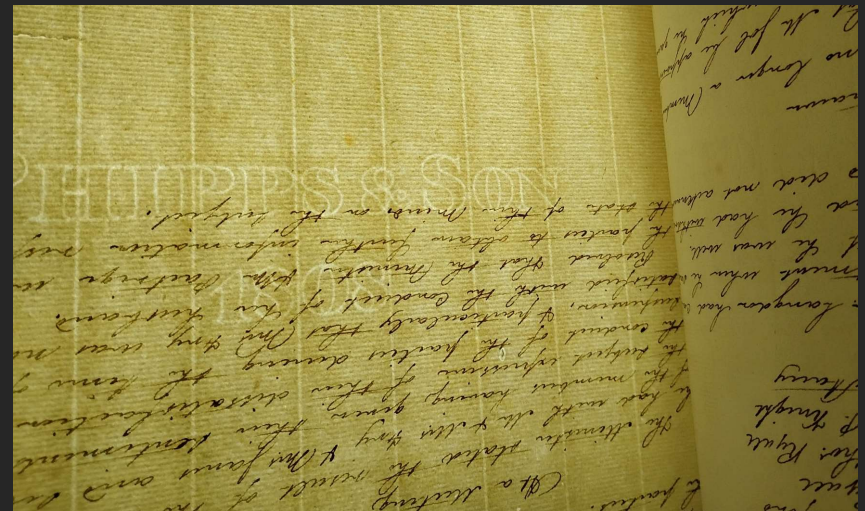


Various watermarks from the pages in the Journal of John Jones



"The volume, titled on the first page *Notes concerning the Dissenting Church of Christ at St. John's Newfoundland*, is known to the congregation as *The Journal of John Jones*, and was probably begun by John Jones, the first minister of the congregation, in 1780, the year of his first recorded baptism."

Ref. Pam Bruce



The Model

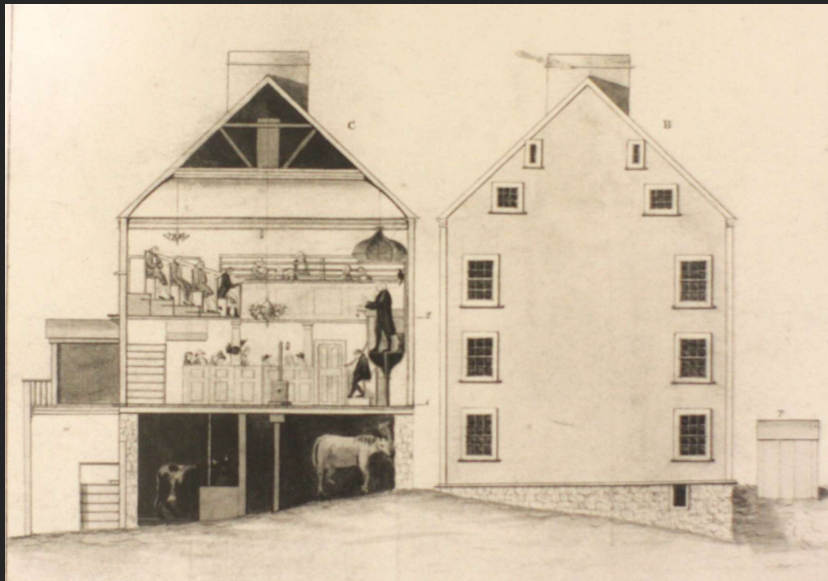
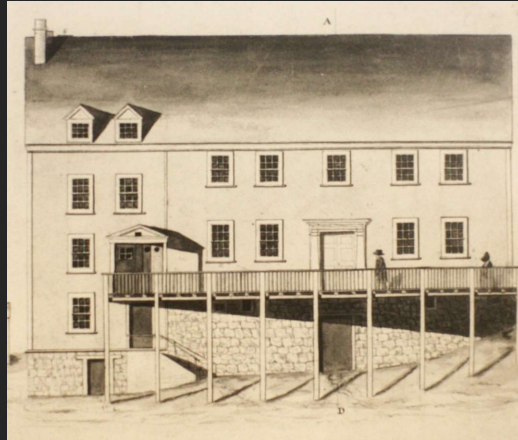
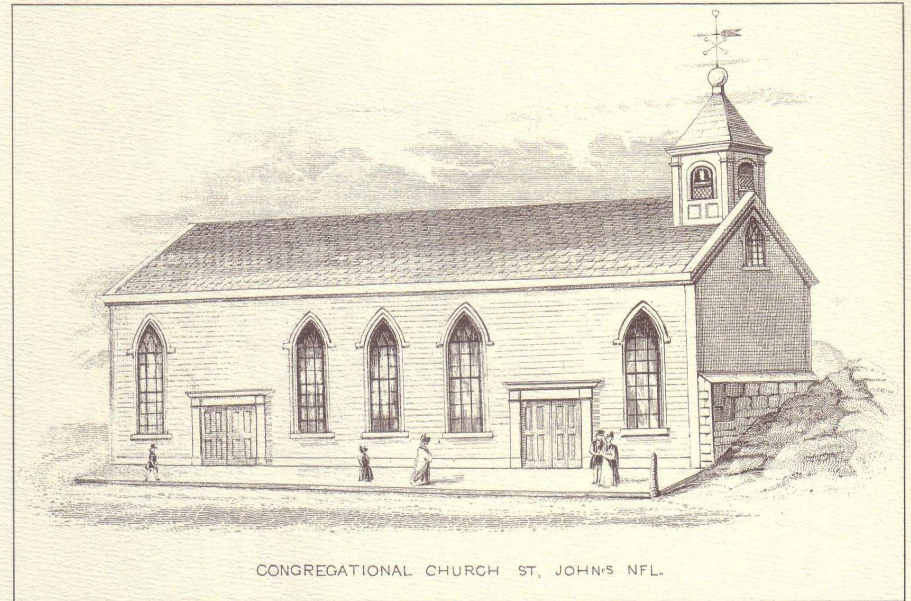


Plate 75 – ST. JOHN'S, CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, 184–

The small body of Christians in Newfoundland now officially designated as Congregational Church is one of the oldest dissenting bodies in the colony; though its numbers have always been very limited it has had considerable influence and has even been distinguished for the learning and ability of its ministers. In 1851 the new stone church on Queen's Road was built; the Rev. George Schofield gave an admirable sermon on the occasion from the very appropriate text, "Let us go hence".

D. W. Prowse, *A History of Newfoundland*, London, 1896

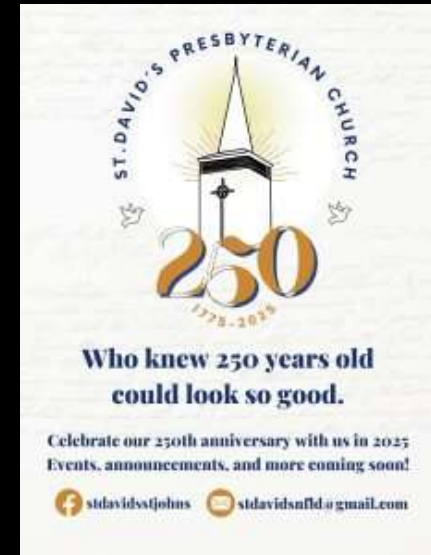


From *Wandering Thoughts or Solitary Hours*, 1846.

Thank you!

Special thanks to:

- The Rooms!
- Mrs. Pam Bruce
- Rev J.S.S. Armour



St. David's Presbyterian Church
98 Elizabeth Avenue
St. John's, NL
A1B 1R8

Church Office: (709) 722-2382
stdavids@nfld.com
www.stdavids.nf.ca