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ORIGIN OF THE NEW ENGLAND COMPANY,  
LONDON, WITH AN ACCOUNT OF ITS  
LABOURS ON BEHALF OF THE NORTH-  
AMERICAN INDIANS.

BY WM. MARSHALL VENNING, D.C.L., M.A., OXON.

(*Read June 1884.*)

JOHN ELIOT, long known as 'the apostle of the North-American Red Men,' and other Englishmen early in the seventeenth century, laboured to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to the heathen natives of New England in their own Indian language, and in doing so, found it necessary to carry on civilisation with religion, and to instruct them in some of the arts of life. Their writings, and more particularly some of the tracts known as the 'Eliot Tracts,' aroused so much interest in London that the needs of the Indians of New England were brought before Parliament, and on July 27, 1649, an Act or Ordinance was passed with this title:—'A Corporation for the Promoting and Propagating the Gospel of Jesus Christ in New England.'

The Act recited that 'the Commons of England in Parliament assembled had received certain intelligence that divers the heathen natives of New England had, through the blessing of God upon the pious care and pains of some godly English, who preached the Gospel to them in their own Indian language, not only of barbarous become civil, but many of them forsaking their accustomed charms and sorceries, and other satanical delusions, did then call upon the name of the Lord; and that the propagation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ amongst these poor heathen could not be prosecuted with that expedition and further success as was desired, unless fit instruments were encouraged and maintained to pursue

it, universities, schools, and nurseries of literature settled for further instructing and civilising them, instruments and materials fit for labour and clothing, with other necessities, as encouragements for the best deserving among them, were provided, and many other things necessary for so great a work.' The Ordinance enacted that there should be a Corporation in England, consisting of sixteen persons, viz. a President, Treasurer, and fourteen assistants, to be called 'The President and Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England,' with power to acquire lands (not exceeding the yearly value of 2,000*l.*), goods and money.

A general collection or subscription was directed by Oliver Cromwell, as Lord Protector, to be made in all parishes of England and Wales for the purposes of the Corporation, and nearly 12,000*l.* was raised in this manner, the chief part of which was expended in the purchase of landed property at Eriswell in Suffolk, which was sold by the Company to the Maharajah Duleep Singh in 1869, and of a farm at Plumstead in Kent, which latter is still in the Company's possession.

The Corporation at once appointed Commissioners and a Treasurer in New England, who, with the income transmitted from England, paid itinerant missionaries and school-teachers amongst the natives, the work being chiefly carried on near Boston, but also in other parts of Massachusetts and New York States.

On the restoration of Charles II. in 1660, the Corporation created by the Long Parliament became of course defunct, but mainly through the exertions of the Hon. Robert Boyle, the philosopher, and one of the earliest members of the Royal Society, an Order in Council was obtained for a new Charter of Incorporation, vesting in the Company then created the property which had been given or bought for the purposes of the late reputed Corporation. The Charter was completed on April 7, 1662, and the Hon. Robert Boyle was appointed the first Governor of the Company, which was revived under the name of 'The Company for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England and the parts adjacent in America,' and was

limited to forty-five members, the first forty-five being appointed by the Charter, Lord-Chancellor Clarendon and other noblemen heading the list, which also included several members of the late reputed Corporation, and many aldermen and citizens of London.

The yearly revenue of the Company's lands, money, and stock was ordered to be applied for the 'Propagation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ amongst the heathen natives in or near New England and the parts adjacent in America, and for the better civilising, educating, and instructing of the said heathen natives in learning, and in the knowledge of the true and only God, and in the Protestant religion already owned and publicly professed by divers of them.'

Commissioners in America were appointed, under whose superintendence the missionaries and teachers resumed their labours without delay, while the printing of the Old and New Testaments into the Natick or Mohican dialect of the Indian language was at once undertaken.

The Company continued its missionary work near Boston and in other parts of New England during the remainder of the seventeenth and greater part of the eighteenth centuries, but few records exist of the work then accomplished. There were no permanent stations or schools, but the Company supported many itinerant teachers both English and native. For a few years after 1775, when the American War of Independence broke out, no missionary work was done in America at all, and the funds were allowed to accumulate. But when the four provinces of Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Maine (part of the old province of New England), together with nine other provinces had been declared independent, the Company could no longer, in compliance with its Charter, carry on its work there, and was advised to remove its operations to the then province of New Brunswick, as the part of America which was next adjacent to that wherein it had till that time exercised its trusts, and which, in all the Charters of the Crown, was considered as part of New England.

In 1786, therefore, the work was begun in New Brunswick, and carried on in the same way as before by itinerant missionaries and teachers (under Commissioners) until 1804, when the Commissioners resigned owing to the ill success of their endeavours.

After much inquiry, the Company in 1808 appointed General Coffin and five others to be their Commissioners in New Brunswick, and a plan submitted by General Coffin for apprenticing Indian children with English families in Sussex Vale, New Brunswick, was adopted, but after fourteen years' trial the scheme was found to have been greatly abused, and was therefore abandoned.

The means by which the Company carries on its work are derived: 1st, from the money that was collected for the Parliamentary Company in 1649; 2nd, from a fund arising under the will of the Hon. Robert Boyle, the first Governor of the Company as re-established after the Restoration; and 3rd, from property devised under the will of the Rev. Dr. Daniel Williams in 1745. These three funds were regulated by three decrees in Chancery in or before the year 1836, and in accordance with these decrees the income of the Company's Trust Funds is applicable to the following objects.

1. The income of the Charter Trust Fund is applicable to 'promoting and propagating the Gospel of Jesus Christ unto and amongst the heathen natives in the parts of America now called Upper Canada and elsewhere, in or near the territories by the Charter described as New England and parts adjacent in America; and also for civilising, teaching, and instructing the said heathen natives and their children, not only in the principles and knowledge of the true religion, and in morality and the knowledge of the English tongue, and in other liberal arts and sciences, but for the educating and placing of them or their children in some trade, mystery, or lawful calling.'

2. The income of the funds subject to the Hon. Robert Boyle's Trust is applicable to the following purpose:—'For the advancement of the Christian religion among infidels in

divers parts of America, under the Crown of the United Kingdom.'

3. The income of the funds subject to the Trusts of Dr. Daniel Williams's will, is applicable to 'the advancement of the Christian religion among Indians, Blacks, and Pagans in any of Her Majesty's plantations and colonies, and in maintaining, educating, and relieving the necessities of the said Indians, Blacks, and Pagans, so far as such application in the maintenance, education, and civilisation, and relief of the necessities of the same Indians, Blacks, and Pagans is connected with or subservient to the purpose of advancing the Christian religion.'

After the abandonment of its mission work in New Brunswick in 1822, the Company transferred its operations to other parts of British America, and has since established stations at various places, those which have been most permanently maintained, and at which the Company has done most of its work, being the following :—

1. Among the Mohawks and other Six Nations Indians settled on the banks of the Grand River between Brantford and Lake Erie.

2. Among the Mississaguas of Chemong or Mud Lake and Rice Lake, both in the County of Peterborough, Ontario.

3. On the banks of the Garden River, in the district of Algoma, near Sault Ste. Marie (the rapids between Lake Superior and Lake Huron).

4. On Kuper Island in the Strait of Georgia, British Columbia.

#### GRAND RIVER STATION.

The Indians of the Six Nations, the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, Senecas, and Tuscaroras, in the American War of Independence proved themselves loyal to the British Crown, and after the Declaration of Independence migrated from the south side of Lake Ontario to various parts of Canada, and principally to the north side of Lake Erie. As a reward for their loyalty and to provide them with

hunting-grounds, a tract of several hundred thousand acres along the Grand River, from Lake Erie to Brantford, partly on the north-east and partly on the south-west side of the river, was in 1782 assigned by the British Government to the Indians of the Six Nations, under the name of an Indian Reserve.

Here between the years 1822 and 1827 the Company, with the assistance of Captain John Brant, son of Captain Joseph Brant, the celebrated chief of the Mohawks, commenced operations, and besides building several schools and a parsonage, repaired the mission church near Brantford, built by the Mohawks about 1782, being the oldest Protestant church in Western Canada, and still possessing the Bible and Communion Service presented by Queen Anne to the Indian Church in the valley of the Mohawk River, New York State, which the Indians had been obliged to abandon during the War of Independence.

In 1828 the Rev. Abraham Nelles (now Archdeacon of Brant) was appointed the Company's assistant missionary at this station, and the annual expenditure at the mission was fixed at 750*l*. The employment of interpreters, the building of school-teachers' houses, and the clothing of some of the children, effectually prevented this limit from being strictly adhered to, and during the last fifteen years its annual expenditure at the Grand River has always exceeded 2,000*l*. and often 3,000*l*.; for the Indians here have increased in number from 1,900, fifty years ago, to 2,800 in 1870 and 3,400 in 1883, and their enforced removal to the south-west bank of the river about the year 1845, in spite of the opposition of the Company and its missionaries, has rendered many of its mission buildings useless to the Indians, and has necessitated the erection of new schools and churches as well as teachers'-houses and parsonages. A large industrial school, known as the Mohawk Institution, has been at various times altered, enlarged, and even rebuilt, and now affords maintenance and education for ninety children of both sexes, as well as instruction in agriculture and mechanical trades for the boys and domestic training for the girls. Nine

day schools on the Tuscarora Reserve were provided by the Company with teachers and school requisites, until the formation of a School Board in 1878. To this Board the Council of the Six Nations have contributed \$1,500 per annum, the Indian department \$400, and the New England Company a grant of \$1,500, which has lately been reduced to \$1,000, it being thought desirable that the Indians on this Reserve should contribute more largely towards the education of their children.

#### CHEMONG AND RICE LAKES STATION.

The village of Chemong is situated on a peninsula between Chemong and Buckhorn Lakes, about ten miles north of the town of Peterborough, Ontario, and eighty miles east of Toronto. The Mission here was commenced in 1828, and nine years later the Company obtained a grant from the Crown of 1,600 acres of land, which have only been partially cleared, and upon which about thirty cottages have been erected by the Company, as well as a chapel, school-house, teacher's-house, and residence for the missionary in charge of the station. According to the census taken this year the population of the Chemong or Mud Lake band of Indians was 181.

The Company's station at Rice Lake is situated about eleven miles south of the town of Peterborough, and was also opened in 1828, 1,120 acres being granted in trust to the Company's missionary for the benefit of the Indians. Here the Company cleared and fenced land, and erected between twenty and thirty cottages for the Indians, who, according to the last return, numbered 93 only. This station is also under the care of the Company's missionary at Chemong, but a resident missionary and teacher being provided by the Methodist body, and the band having greatly diminished in numbers, the Company's expenditure at this station has for several years past been very small in amount.



## GARDEN RIVER STATION.

A grant of 150*l.* per annum was made to the Church of England Mission on the Garden River Reserve, near Sault Ste. Marie, in the year 1855, and shortly afterwards the Company undertook the cost of supporting a missionary of its own there, and continued to do so until 1871, when for various reasons its operations on this Reserve were discontinued, and the missionary was transferred to the Company's Grand River Station.

## KUPER ISLAND STATION.

In June 1881 the Company purchased a farm as a mission station on Kuper Island, in the Strait of Georgia, and about five miles from Chemainus, on the east-coast of Vancouver Island. This was the only farm on which a white man could reside, the rest of the island being Indian land. The station has been placed under the charge of a missionary, who is assisted in his work by his wife and family, and has been provided by the Company with a small sailing vessel to enable him to visit the Indians on the adjacent islands and mainland. A mission-house and school-house for congregational as well as for educational purposes have also been built, and the attendance at the latter is increasing in numbers and regularity.

Besides maintaining and managing the stations already mentioned, grants of money have been made by the Company at various times to different Indian missions throughout the Dominion, more especially for the benefit of the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinté on Lake Ontario. For many years, too, the Company made large appropriations towards the advancement of the Christian religion amongst the negroes of the West Indies. Between the years 1823 and 1840 about 12,000*l.* were so expended. Since that time, however, owing to its extensive operations in Canada and the claims

of its own missions, the Company has been unable to devote any large portions of its funds to these objects, but has occasionally made grants in individual cases, the most noteworthy being that of Dr. Derwent Waldron, a native of the West Indies, who was educated for the medical profession mainly at the Company's expense, and is now a Government Surgeon in the Gold Coast Colony. In conclusion, I should like to express my obligations for much of the matter contained in this brief account of the oldest of our Protestant missionary societies to 'A Sketch of the Origin and the Recent History of the New England Company,' by Mr. H. W. Busk—the senior member of the Company—which was published early in the present year.