

Part 2: Consecration of the Church and Cemetery

Not long after St. Mary the Virgin opened in September 1879 [1], on land donated to the Diocese of Ontario in August of that year by Richard Dagg, the incumbent, church wardens and other inhabitants were able to “*certify [the church] to be free from any legal incumbrance*” and petitioned the Right Reverend Charles Hamilton, Bishop of Niagara, “*to separate the same from all profane and common uses and to Consecrate the said Church and set it apart Forever for the worship of God according to the Rites and Discipline of the Church Of England in Canada.*” [2]

Charles Hamilton became the first Bishop of the Diocese of Ottawa in April 1896 when it was founded and served until 1914. [8]

The petition carried the names of the Rev Edward Hanington and eleven other signatories:

Edward Hanington

William Bradley

Thomas D. Farmer

Charles Dagg

Edward Hopkins

Richard Dagg

Thomas Dagg

John Farmer

William Purdy sr

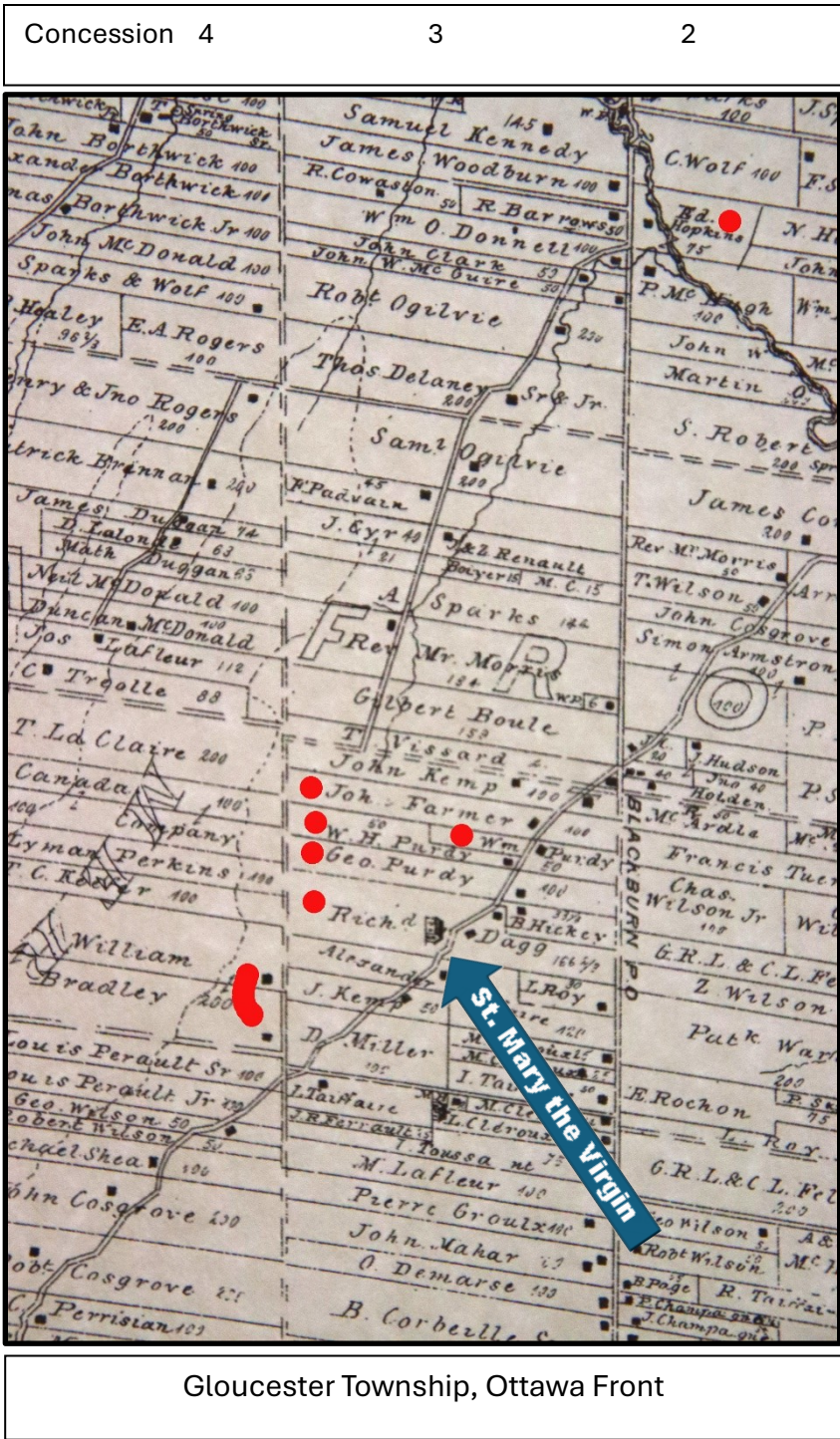
James Taylor

William Purdy jr

George Purdy

A collection of handwritten signatures in cursive script, arranged vertically. The signatures correspond to the names listed on the left: Edward Hanington, William Bradley, Thomas D. Farmer, Charles Dagg, Edward Hopkins, Richard Dagg, Thomas Dagg, John Farmer, William Purdy sr, James Taylor, William Purdy jr, and George Purdy. The handwriting is fluid and characteristic of the late 19th century.

The plan on the page following shows the location of the farmers who signed the petition marked with coloured dots.[3]



Edward Hopkins, con 2, lot 19

John Farmer, con 3, lot 10

William Purdy, Sr & Jr, con 3, lot 9

George Purdy, con 3, lot 9

Richard Dagg, con 8, lot 8

William Bradley, con 4, lots 6&7

On 30 October, 1886, Charles by Divine permission Bishop of Niagara, acting for the Bishop of Ontario, decreed that “by the virtue of the authority ordinary and episcopal to us committed, Consecrate the said building and do set it apart from all profane and common uses and do dedicate the same to Almighty God for the ministration of the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England and no other by the name of **Saint Mary the Virgin**.

And we do pronounce decree and declare that said Church shall remain consecrated, set apart and dedicated forever by our definitive sentence and final decree which we read and promulge by these presents.”

Charles Niagara

In a second decree on the same date, the Bishop also consecrated the cemetery with the words: “Whereas a piece of land situated at Gloucester in the Diocese of Ontario and being part of number eight of the third concession Ottawa front and deeded to the Incorporated Synod of Ontario by Richard Dagg of Gloucester on the second day of August 1879 and registered in the twenty ninth day of January 1880 has been appropriated for the burial of the dead and whereas the said piece of land is sufficiently enclosed and is now ready for Consecration ; And whereas a Petition has been presented to us by the Incumbent, Wardens and other parishioners praying that we would be pleased to Consecrate the same.”.

In the name of God Amen
Whereas a piece of land situate at Gloucester in the Diocese of Ontario and being part of number Eight of the third Concession Ottawa front and deeded to The Incorporated Synod of Ontario by Richard Dagg of Gloucester on the second day of August 1879 and registered on the twenty ninth day of January 1880 Has been appropriated for the Burial of the dead; and whereas the said piece of land is sufficiently enclosed and is now ready for Consecration; And Whereas

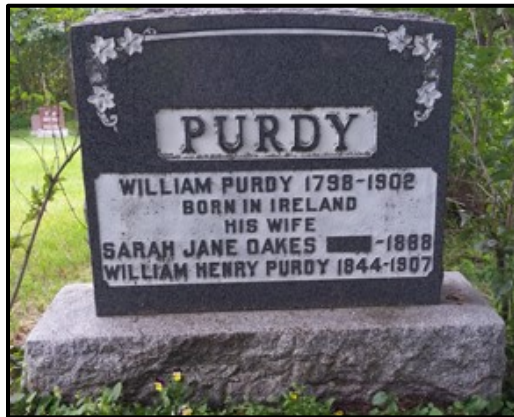
[4]

A copy of the full transcript and images of the petitions and degree can be found in the Annex.

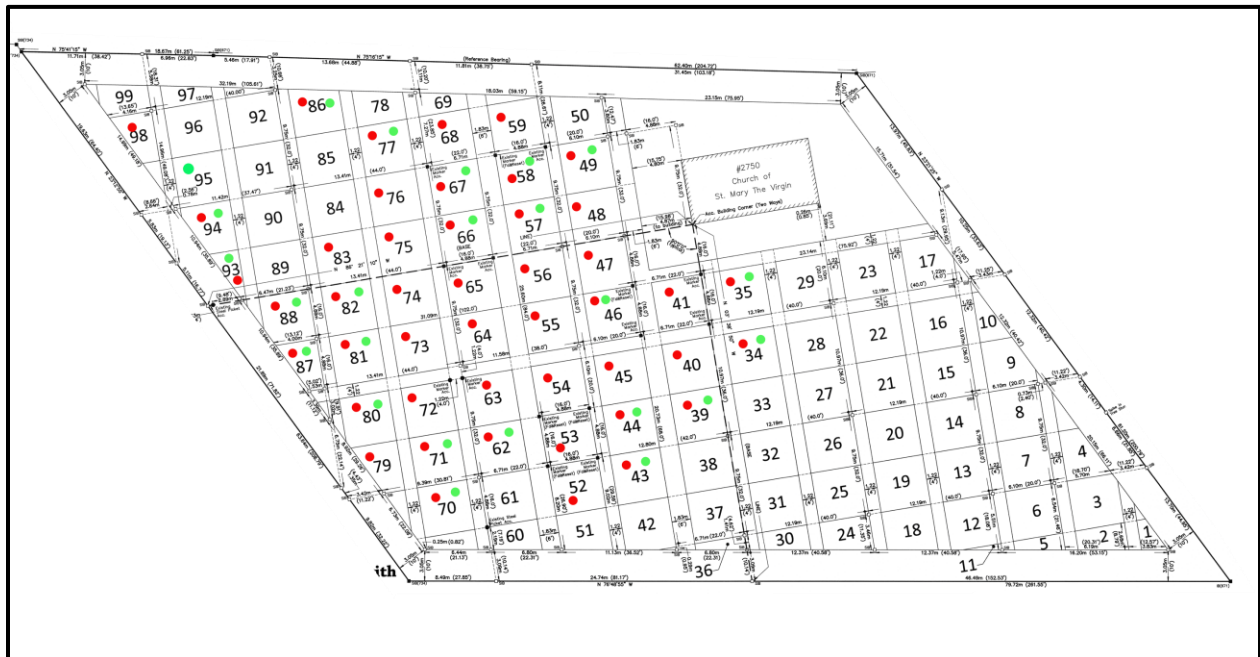
Currently, there are 220 persons buried in the cemetery, but the Cemetery Committee has possession of copies or originals of only 95 permits that allow the deceased to be buried which include death certificates, cremation certificates or funeral home declarations of death. [5]

Although there are no supporting documents, the first person to be buried at St. Mary the Virgin was probably William Purdy. William was born in 1798 in Ireland and was a signatory to the Petition for consecration. He was eighty-eight years old in 1879 when he signed the Petition and died in 1902 at age 104. William is buried in plot 56, grave #8. His gravestone lists his wife Sarah Jane Oakes (1812-1888) and their son, William Henry (1844-1907). The latest Purdy to be buried at St. Mary the Virgin

Cemetery is Dean Kingsbury, William's great-great grandson, who was interred on 14 June 2024, in plot #35, grave #3, urn position #6.[6]



The diagram below illustrates the current ownership and use of plot in the Cemetery. Red dots indicate ownership or at least one grave (coffin) burial and the green dots represent ownership or at least one urn burial in the plot. [7]



Brian Glenn

November 2024

Footnotes:

[1] “St. Mary the Virgin, Blackburn 1879-1979 A History of the Parish” compiled by Helen Stofa (found in the papers held by the St. Mary the Virgin Cemetery Committee)

[2] Copy of the original Petition from the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa Archives.

[3] Extract from the 1879 map of Gloucester Township from the Gloucester Historical Society.

[4] Copy of the original decree from the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa Archives.

[5] From count of documents held by the Cemetery Committee as of November 2024.

[6] Gravestone images taken from FINDAGRAVE.com [Photo of Dean Purdy’s gravestone added to Findagrave.com by Brian Glenn September 2024).

[7] Sketch of Cemetery Layout by Farley, Smith & Denis Surveying Ltd., October 2020 (document held by the St. Mary the Virgin Cemetery Committee).

[8] wikipedia.org (Anglican Diocese of Ottawa) and Anglican Diocese of Ottawa website.

Petition & Consecration of the Church of St. Mary the Virgin

The Petition:

To the Right Reverend Charles Bishop of Niagara

We the Incumbent, Church wardens and other inhabitants of Gloucester having acquired the land amounting to one acre and being part of number eight of the third concession Ottawa Front-Gloucester, deeded to the Incorporated Synod of Ontario by Richard Dagg of Gloucester on the second day of August 1879 Registered on the twenty ninth day of January 1889 On Which there is a Church which we certify to be free from any legal incumbrance Do Humbly Pray Your Lordship to separate the same from all profane and common uses and to Consecrate the said Church and set it apart Forever for the worship of God according to the Rites and Discipline of the Church Of England in Canada.

Signatures of:

Edward Harrington (Rev. Edward A.W. Hanington)

William Bradley

Thomas D. Farmer

Charles Dagg

Edward Hopkins

Richard Dagg

Thomas Dagg

John Farmer

William Purdy sr

James Taylor

William Purdy jr

George Purdy

Edw A W Hanington.
William Bradley
Thos D Farmer
Chas Dagg
Edward Hopkins
Richard Dagg
Thos Dagg
John Farmer
Wm Purdy sr
James Taylor
Wm Purdy jr
George Purdy

The Consecration of the Church:

In the Name of God. Amen

Whereas a Church has been erected at Gloucester within the Diocese of Ontario upon a piece of land being a part of number eight of the third concession Ottawa front-Gloucester, deeded to the Incorporated Synod of Ontario by Richard Dagg of Gloucester on the second day of August 1879. Registered in the twenty ninth day of January 1880 and whereas the said building is now complete and furnished with all the things requisite for the due performance of public worship, and is free from all legal liability for debt, and is now ready for consecration; and Whereas a Petition has been presented to us by the Incumbent Wardens and other parishioners praying that we would be pleased to consecrate the said building.

Now therefore we Charles by Devine permission Bishop of Niagara -acting for the Bishop of Ontario

Do by the virtue of the authority ordinary and episcopal to us committed, Consecrate the said building and do set it apart from all profane and common uses and do dedicate the same to Almighty God for the ministration of the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England and no other by the name of

Saint Mary the Virgin

And we do pronounce decree and declare that said Church shall remain consecrated, set apart and dedicated forever by our definitive sentence and final decree which we read and promulge by these presents.

Witness our hand and seal this thirtieth day of October in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six and from our Consecration this second.

Signature of Charles Niagara

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Charles Niagara", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

The Consecration of the Cemetery:

In the name of God Amen

Whereas a piece of land situated at Gloucester in the Diocese of Ontario and being part of number eight of the third concession Ottawa front and deeded to the Incorporated Synod of Ontario by Richard Dagg of Gloucester on the second day of August 1879 and registered in the twenty ninth day of January 1880 HAS been appropriated for the burial of the dead and whereas the said piece of land is sufficiently enclosed and is now ready for Consecration ; And whereas a Petition has been presented to us by the Incumbent, Wardens and other parishioners praying that we would be pleased to Consecrate the same.

Now therefore We Charles by Devine permission Bishop of Niagara

Do by virtue of the authority ordinary and episcopal to us committed, Consecrate the said building and do set it apart from all profane and common uses and do dedicate the same to Almighty God for the burial of the dead, according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England, that the bodies of the faithful may therein rest in peace and hope of the resurrection to eternal life the Jesus Christ our Lord. And we do pronounce decree and declare that the said land shall remain so consecrated, set apart and dedicated forever by this our definitive sentence and final decree which we read and promulge by these presents,

Witness our hand and seal this thirtieth day of October in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six and from our Consecration this second.

Signature of Charles Niagara

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Charles Niagara", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Note from the Archivist: Rev. Arthur Conway Jones was the incumbent at the time of the petition for consecration but the petition for consecration of the burial ground bears the signature of the Rev. E.A.W. Hanington, probably because he was more senior than Jones.

To the Right Reverend Charles Bishop of Niagara

We the Incumbent, Churchwardens, and other inhabitants of Gloucester having acquired the land amounting to one acre and being part of number eight of the third concession Ottawa front Gloucester - deeded to The Incorporated Synod of Ontario by Richard Dagg of Gloucester on the second day of August 1879 Registered on the twenty ninth day of January 1880 On Which there is a Church which we certify to be free from any legal incumbrance Do humbly Pray Your x x Lordship to separate the same from all profane and common uses, and to Consecrate the said Church and set it apart Forever for the worship of God according to the Rites and Discipline of the Church of England in Canada

Edw M Hamilton.

William Bradley

Thos D Farmer

Thos Dagg

Edward Hays

Richard Dagg

Thos Dagg

John Farmer

Wm Purdy sen

Jasna Taylor

Wm Purdy Jnr

George Purdy

In the Name of God. Amen Whereas a Church
has been erected at Gloucester within the Diocese of Ontario upon a piece of
land being a part of number eight of the third Concession Ottawa front Gloucester &
deeded to the Incorporated Synod of Ontario by Richard Dagg of Gloucester
on the second day of August 1879 Registered on the twenty ninth day of January 1880
and whereas the said building is now completed and furnished with all things
requisite for the due performance of public worship, and is free from all legal liability
for debt, and is now ready for consecration; and Whereas a Petition has been
presented to us by the Incumbent Warden and other Parishoners praying that
we would be pleased to consecrate the said building

Now therefore we Charles by Divine permission Bishop
of Niagara - acting for the Bishop of Ontario.
do by virtue of the authority ordinary and episcopal to us committed,
Consecrate the said building and do set it apart from all profane and
common uses, and do dedicate the same to Almighty God for the
ministration of His Holy Word and Sacraments, and for public worship
according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England and no other
by the name of

Saint Mary the Virgin

And We do pronounce decree and declare that the said Church shall
remain^{ing} consecrated, set apart and dedicated for ever by this our
definitive sentence and final decree which we read and promulge
by these presents

Witness our hand and seal this thirtieth day of October
in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eighty six
and of our Consecration the second -

Charles Niagara