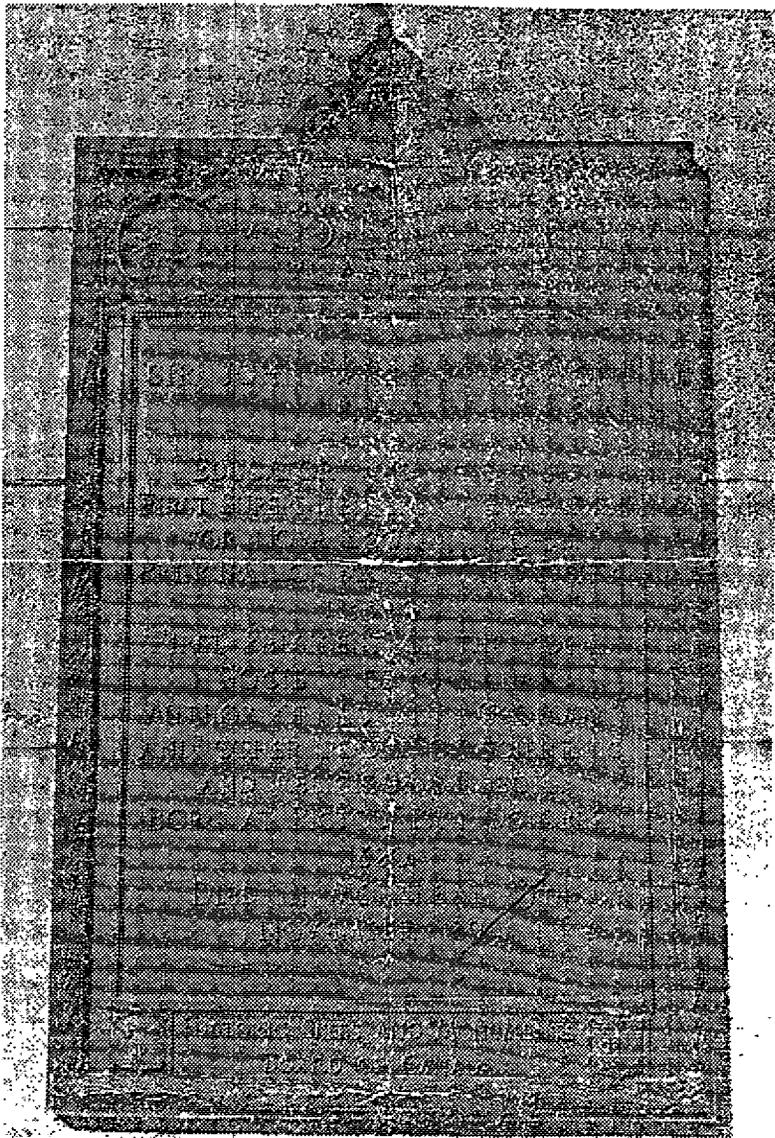


# PROGRAMME

*of the unveiling of the monument to  
Sir John William Dawson*



*Pictou, N. S.*

*October 30, 1957*

# PROGRAMME

O Canada

## *Remarks of the Chairman*

— Mayor J. H. Baillie

## *Presentation of Memorial*

— Dr. C. Bruce Fergusson, Historic Sites & Monuments Board of Canada

## *Address*

— Dr. J. H. L. Johnstone, George Munro Professor of Physics, Dalhousie University,

## *Unveiling*

— Dr. H. L. Scammell, President, Pictou Academy Educational Foundation

## *Prayer of Dedication*

— Rt. Rev. A. D. MacKinnon, Moderator of the Eighty-Third General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada

## *Address to Students*

— Dr. H. L. Scammell

*Placing of Wreath* from the pupils of the Sir William Dawson School

God Save the Queen

*John William Dawson was born on October 13th, 1820, in the house formerly occupying the site where this memorial is now erected. His special interest in geology was apparent while he was still a student at Pictou Academy. He graduated from the University of Edinburgh at the age of 22 and was then appointed to carry out a survey of the coal fields of Nova Scotia. In 1850 he became the first Superintendent of Education for Nova Scotia and, in 1855, Principal of McGill University. His success in this office, his original and authoritative papers on the natural sciences, and his thought-provoking religious writings led to increasing fame and recognition, culminating in a knighthood in the year 1884. He died in Montreal on November 18th, 1899, recognized as the most distinguished scientist in Canada.*

V. A. Barnwell  
Box 237  
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# THE PICTOU ADVOCATE

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BU  
CIRCU

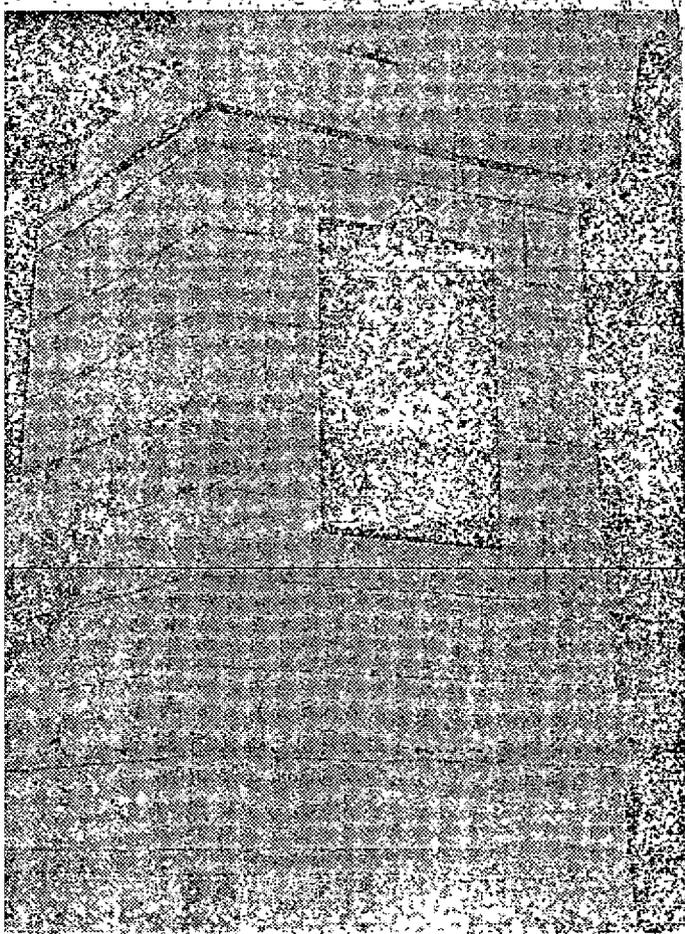
Published in The Shire Town of Pictou County

XIV A Class 'A' Weekly

PICTOU, NOVA SCOTIA, THURSDAY, OCT. 31st, 1957

Ten Cents Per Copy

## Monument to Sir William Dawson Is Unveiled



### Birthplace of Great Scientist Marked at Historic Gathering

A monument marking the birthplace of Sir John William Dawson, first superintendent of education for Nova Scotia, honored principal of McGill University and recognized as the most distinguished Canadian scientist, was unveiled yesterday afternoon at an impressive ceremony attended by almost 600 students of Pictou school and a large number of guests and citizens. Sunny weather favored the program, arranged by the Pictou Academy Educational Foundation and presented under the chairmanship of Mayor James H. Baillie.

**The Export of Brains**  
Opening the program, Mayor Baillie said: "We Nova Scotians often take pride in saying that our most important export is brains and we point to men who were born in our province but who now occupy positions of importance and responsibility in other provinces and other countries." Mayor Baillie said in his opening remarks: "Today, we are honoring one whose career supports this statement. Sir William Dawson is a

of Pictou Academy, Patterston Junior High School and Grades IV, V and VI of Sir William Dawson School.  
The chairman paid tribute to Robert Kennedy of the Adult Education Division of the Nova Scotia Department of Education, a member of the Pictou Academy Educational Foundation, for his service in the program arrangements.  
Councillor E. Earle MacDonald led the singing of "God Save the Queen."

# McCulloch And Dawson Plaques To Be Erected

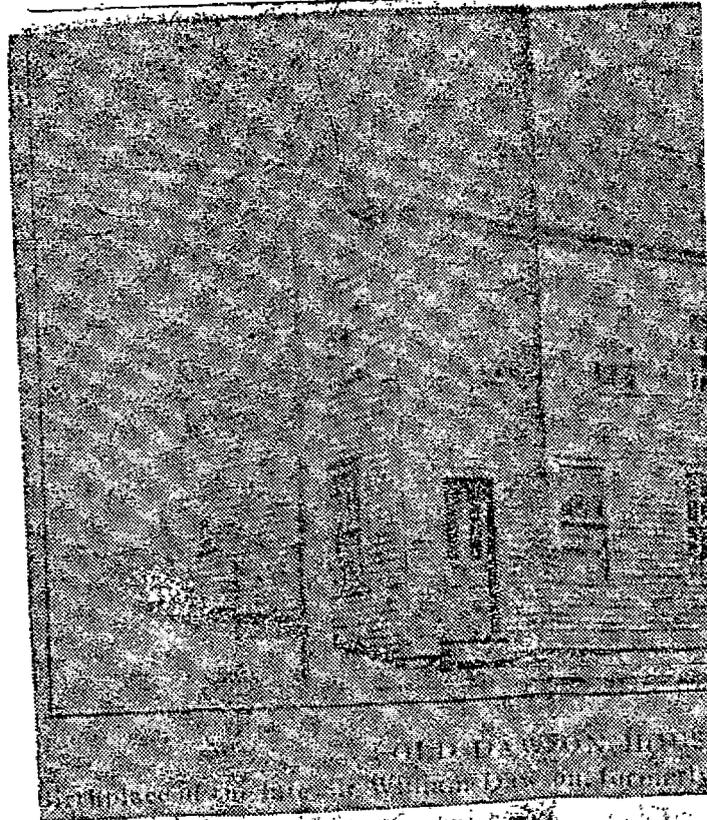
PICTOU. A meeting of the school board was held in the council chamber Monday evening, with Mayor James H. Millie, chairman of the board, residing. In attendance were J. Wigneault, Mrs. S. D. Dyer, both provincial representatives, D. M. MacKillop, council representative, Miss Mary Carroll, principal of Paterson Junior High, Robertsons, supervisor of schools, principal of Pictou Academy, Secretary J. F. English, and Don Feindel, of the department of Municipal Affairs.

## Historic sites

Letters from the National Historic Sites of Canada were read, which stated that historical plaques to Thomas McCulloch and George Mercer Dawson were to be erected in Pictou. The McCulloch plaque will be in the lobby of Pictou Academy and the Dawson plaque on the Sir William Dawson monument on Church St. Dr. Thomas McCulloch was originator of the idea for college for Pictou founder of Pictou Academy and its first principal. George Mercer Dawson was the son of Sir William Dawson, the famous geologist of Pictou. The letter requested information and suggestions on a sponsoring body for the unveiling of the plaques which should be done early in the New Year. The board agreed that the Home and School Association were the logical body to sponsor the unveiling, they will be invited to do

*McCulloch Plaque  
Where to be  
placed*

THE BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS  
OF THE TOWN OF PICTOU  
and  
THE TOWN OF PICTOU  
HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION  
REQUEST YOUR PRESENCE AT THE  
OFFICIAL OPENING OF  
THE NEW AUDITORIUM-GYMNASIUM  
AND AT UNVEILING OF PLAQUES  
IN MEMORY OF  
REV. DR. THOMAS McCULLOCH  
and



THIS OLD HOUSE at the corner of Constitution St., and Church St. was the home of William Dawson, and the site of which is now marked by a monument. On this monument will be placed the plaque

# "Canada" to Pictou

Dr. Scammell spoke as follows: This monument now belongs to the Town of Pictou. It is a gift of the people of Canada. It indicates to every citizen of this town their appreciation, as a national figure, of Sir John William Dawson by marking the very site of the house in which he was born 167 years ago this month. What is given to the men and women of Pictou today will be yours tomorrow. Be sure to take care of it; protect it from all harm; tell your children about this man and be proud to show this monument to them and to strangers. See to it that a good gift is made even better by adding to the beauty of its surroundings when a chance is afforded you to do so in the years to come.

What should this monument mean to you? I shall try to tell you briefly. First of all it informs you that 167 years ago a baby was born here. Now that happens very often and not many monuments are put up to mark such places or events. So it is right to suppose that while John Dawson was likely a very ordinary baby, he turned out to be a very remarkable man. Let us see if we can learn how this came about.

## Remembers The House

I can easily remember the house that stood on this spot. It was only a small one, painted a faded brown. It was not the house of a rich man. John's father was not very poor. He was able to provide for his family, but he was not counted well to do even in those long ago days. Pictou was not very large then. It started about where the present Post Office stands and extended westward to the Old Road. There were not many houses up the hill above Church Street. Around it a short distance away was woods and in front was the harbour. There was only one church building in town when he was born. It stood where First Presbyterian Church now stands, but it faced the harbour. John went there with his parents when he grew a little older. When he was old enough for school he attended one out the Old Road, and later he went to Pictou Academy which then stood on Willow Street across from the Court House.

## Ran Errands Like Other Boys

John did errands for his mother like other boys. He had to carry all the water the family needed from a well where Church Street meets Denoon Street. On wash days there was a lot to carry. His

mother had no washing machine, no dryer and no electric iron. She had to heat all the water, bake all the bread, and do all the family cooking at a big fireplace in the kitchen. There was no stove. Many nights John felt cold going to bed, and even colder getting up in the morning. When he learned his lessons at night it was by the light of a candle. When he wrote it was with a goose quill pen and black ink from a stone bottle. He had plenty of good food to eat, but he never saw a bottle of pop, a candy bar, or an ice cream cone. He never saw a movie. He never played baseball, football or hockey. That sounds pretty dull, doesn't it? But it wasn't dull for John. He just lived at a time when those things which we see and do every day did not exist. He had a boat to row in summer, and all sorts of places to swim. In winter there was the Harbour for skating, and just as much snow and even better hills for coasting than today. I think he threw as many snowballs and got into as much trouble doing it as did any boy in my day or yours in Pictou. But one thing he did which few boys do today: he roamed the woods, the hills and the valleys around the Town and he loved it. At that time Dr. Thomas McCulloch was engaged in making a fine collection of stuffed birds and animals for his museum in Pictou Academy. When John Dawson was old enough to go there he helped the Principal and his sons in this task. He learned not only about birds, animals and trees, but he discovered rocks out at the falls on Halliburton Brook with strange markings on them. These he learned were marks made by huge tree ferns which lived millions of years ago. When they fell they landed in mud, the mud turned to stone, and there to the eyes of this boy appeared in stone a wonderful story of the work of nature. You too, if you look, can find the same sort of stones in the same place that John Dawson did nearly a century and a quarter ago. At the Academy was a library which told something about these strange stones, but not nearly enough for this boy. His curiosity was stirred and he resolved to find out all the rocks could tell him. He was still learning his lessons when he died nearly 80 years from the date of his birth. His search for knowledge carried him to distant lands. As he learned more and more of what was new he wrote books, a great many books. People all over the world who had never seen him knew him by his books. He became world famous. His Queen made him a Knight and honors of all sorts came to him. He did not get rich; he was better known, more respected and better loved than any rich man of his day. Though his later life was spent far away from it, he never forgot the Town where he was born or its people. And the Pictou people never forgot John William Dawson, because he was a good man. A few years ago they called a school after him, and pupils of that school are here today.

## "If Dawson Made It, I Can, Too"

Dr. Johnstone has told you today of another Pictou boy who became a famous scientist. Dr. George Henderson. His father and mother died when he was a young lad and he lived and grew up with his grandparents whose home was opposite First Presbyterian Church. He too went to Pictou Academy. A year or two before his death in early middle age we were talking quietly together of Pictou and its landmarks. He said "I hear the

(Continued from page one)

old Dawson home is torn down. When I was a boy my grandfather, who knew him, told me about him and what he had achieved. Many a time afterwards when I passed that house I said to myself "If Dawson made it, I can too." I hope his birth place will not be forgotten.

As you see today it has not been forgotten. This fine monument marks it and the message it brings to you is the same as the old Dawson home brought to George Henderson: "If Dawson made it, I can too." When the lessons seem hard, when your tasks seem to overwhelm you, when the future seems

uncertain, now the Town and the federal government have joined in recording this as Sir William Dawson's home, the town by purchasing the site and the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada by erecting this fine monument.

We welcome today Dr. C. Bruce Ferguson, Archivist of the Province of Nova Scotia. Dr. Ferguson is President of the Nova Scotia Historical Society and representative in Nova Scotia of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. It is in this latter capacity that he speaks to us today.

Dr. Ferguson spoke as a representative of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada and handed over the monument to the safekeeping of the town.

## Another Distinguished Scientist

Prior to the unveiling, an address on Sir John William Dawson was given by Dr. J. H. L. Johnstone, George Munro Professor of Physics at Dalhousie University and a graduate of Pictou Academy. Mayor Baillie introduced him: "We are fortunate today to have with us Dr. J. H. L. Johnstone who is a native son of our town and a graduate of Pictou Academy. After graduating from Dalhousie University with honors in Physics, he pursued post-graduate studies at Cambridge University in England and later won his doctorate at Yale University. For many years Dr. Johnstone was head of the Department of Physics and Dean of Graduate Studies at Dalhousie. For distinguished service in World War I, he was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire and for further such service in the last war was made an Officer of the same Order. As a member of the Pictou Academy Educational Foundation and one of the most distinguished graduates of Pictou Academy, it seems fitting that he today should pay tribute to Sir William Dawson, another native son of Pictou, and it is for this purpose that I now call upon him to address you."

Dr. Johnstone's address will be found elsewhere on this page.

## Appropriate Assignment

Calling on Dr. Scammell to unveil the monument, Mayor Baillie referred to him as another distinguished graduate of Pictou Academy and Dalhousie University. "His native town is rarely far from his thoughts and few, if any, can match his detailed knowledge of the history of this county. His interest has been demonstrated in more practical ways, also, as President of the Pictou Academy Educational Foundation which, under his leadership, has given every possible encouragement to education in Pictou. It is appropriate that he should unveil the monument day and in a few moments, I shall ask him to do so. We are also happy and honored to have with us the Rev. A. D. MacKinnon of Little Narrows, Cape Breton, who was this year elected to the important office of Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. After the memorial is unveiled, Dr. MacKinnon will lead us in a prayer of dedication."

Dr. Scammell then unveiled the monument and a prayer of dedication was given by Rt. Rev. A. D. MacKinnon, moderator of the 83rd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Following the prayer, Dr. Scammell delivered an address to the students, which will be found elsewhere on this page.

The students of Sir William Dawson School chimed in to purchase a wreath for the occasion, and this was laid at the base of the monument by two students, Ronald Jollymore of Grade VII and Susan MacDonald of Grade 6.

Students present included those

ed. and CRISTIN L. R. Bent 100 sented the University of King College at the request of President Herbert L. Puxley.

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PS

# Outstanding Leadership

Dr. Johnstone's address follows. It has been the good fortune of this county and particularly this town to have had outstanding leaders who were convinced of the vital importance of education. So Pictou Academy was founded in 1817 by Thomas McCulloch and from it came forth a stream of outstanding men who later became famous in church, in state and in the fields of education and scholarship.

No graduate of the Academy achieved greater fame than Sir William Dawson, to whom we are paying tribute to today. He was born in the year 1820, in a house built on the property on which we are standing. He was fortunate in his parents, they were Scottish, the father from the far North and his mother from Aberdeenshire. In 1841, his father emigrated to Pictou to accept employment with the merchant prince, Edward Mortimer. After a short time, he set up in business and became fairly prosperous. He married and a son, John William, was born in 1820. Both parents made the educational interest of their family a first charge on their resources. It was a favorite maxim of theirs that they would rather give to their sons training—something no man could take away—rather than property which might be dissipated or lost.

### At Pictou Academy

During his early school days, young Dawson acquired a great liking for the country side. He roamed along the shores of the harbour and in the woods and soon began collecting shells, fossils, insects and rare birds. In due time, he entered Pictou Academy and was proud to wear its scarlet gown. A great new world was opened to him; he eagerly listened to experimental lectures in physics, mineralogy and the classics with great interest. He was delighted to find mathematics of use in physics and astronomy.

He soon developed a great interest in mineralogy and made extensive collections from the ballast piles on the wharves and in the neighboring quarries. He prepared excellent collections of birds, butterflies and moths. He even ventured as far afield as Blomidon and to South Joggins, where he began his famous collection of fossils. In 1836, he delivered his first scientific lecture, "The Structure and History of the Earth," before the Pictou Literary and Scientific Society, and so began an outstanding career as a scientist.

When his days at Pictou Academy were drawing to a close, it was decided, at a family council, that he should go to Scotland for further studies in Natural Science. So in 1840, he was admitted to what we now call graduate work in the University of Edinburgh. Here he met a number of famous scientists among them, the great geologist, Sir Chas. Lyell, who later came to Nova Scotia to study its coal bearing rocks with young Dawson's assistance. He returned to Pictou in a year's time but went back to Scotland in 1846, studied more at Edinburgh and married Margaret Mercer, whom he brought back to Pictou in 1847.

### At Dalhousie

He had now completed his formal education, and was ready to commence his outstanding career as a research scientist in geology and as a great administrator. At this time, attempts were being made to infuse new life into Dalhousie College, which had reached a low ebb after McCulloch's death, so, in 1849, Dawson came to Dalhousie and gave a series of lectures on Natural History. He also organized classes for practical work in mineralogy and paleontology, which were attended

by students and citizens. He became so popular that he was presented with a silver tea service at the end of term.

At this time, his friends, Joseph Howe and Wm. Young, were engaged in drawing up an Education Act, which required a superintendent to administer. Dawson had already attracted attention by his publications and by his lectures. So he was invited by Howe to become Superintendent of Education. He accepted the position with some misgivings, as he did not wish to have his research work interrupted. During his three years as superintendent of education, he arranged for the establishment of the Normal School at Truro, made many visits to the schools of the Province, campaigned for local assessment for the support of schools, and attended to the routine administrative work of his office. During this busy period, he found time for many geological excursions. During the summer months, he discovered, in association with his friend, Sir Chas. Lyell, the remains of the first reptilian animals recognized in the coal formations of N. America and also the first known paleozoic land shell. He also found the beautiful fossil trees of Joggins.

In 1853, he became so seriously ill that he decided to give up the Education office. So ended one phase of his life.

### At McGill

A new one began in 1855, when he was persuaded to accept the principalship of McGill College in Montreal. He did not apply for this position, as he had hopes of being appointed to the Chair of Natural History in Edinburgh, and it was with some hesitation that he accepted the Principal's office—as he realized that another administrative position would remove him further from his cherished research work in geology. Another received the Edinburgh appointment and so he accepted the McGill offer, on the condition, however, that he would also hold the Chair of Natural History.

He was now confronted with all the problems involved in the building up of a run-down college. The buildings were in partial ruin, the grounds overgrown with weeds, the only access to the college was by a track almost impassable at night. There were only a few hundred dollars, there were but three faculties and only 16 instructors, and but 80 students.

Under his guidance, the institution steadily advanced, and at his death there were 120 professors and nearly 1000 students. As the professor of Natural History, Sir William

(Continued from Page One)  
delivered 20 lectures a week in Chemistry, Botany, Zoology, and Geology. He was described as an excellent lecturer, conveying his enthusiasm to all who heard him. His extensive teaching load was but a small part of his labors. In addition to administering the university, he was first in every movement to further education in Quebec. Over and above all these duties, he found time to carry on original work, and also write many popular articles on science.

Sir William's first original contribution to science was a paper read before the Wernerian Society of Edinburgh in 1851, on an unusual flying field mouse found near Pictou. From then on, he contributed continuously to the proceedings of scientific societies in many parts of the world, and before he died, he had published 557 papers, pamphlets and books, an astounding number for any man, let alone one who occupied important administrative positions for the greater part of his life.

The most important work of his earlier years was an extended study of the geology of the Maritime Provinces contained in his "Acadian Geology". This text book is still regarded as the best treatise on Nova Scotian Geology for students. His studies of the paleontology of the Devonian and the Upper Silurian were famous. His name is associated with the geology of nearly all parts of what was then Upper and Lower Canada and the Maritime Provinces.

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#### Many Honors

As would be expected, honours came to him in great profusion. He held fellowships and memberships in 31 scientific societies in various parts of the world. The greatest of the scientific honours being his Fellowship in the Royal Society of London, which he received in 1862. I am proud, as a Pictonian, to state that he was the first of two Pictonians, both graduates of Pictou Academy, to achieve this great distinction; the other being the late Professor George H. Henderson, O.B.E., of Dalhousie University, who was made F.R.S. in 1942, for his noteworthy researches in Physics. It is interesting to note that Sir William and Professor Henderson were each interested in devising a method of determining the age of geological formations, the former by the study of fossil plants, a geological method; the latter, by a study of pleochroic halos, a physical method.

Three universities awarded him honorary degrees, McGill, Edinburgh and Bishop's College. In 1861, he received the Lyell medal of the Geological Society of London. In 1882, he was made a Commander of the Order of St. Michael and St. George, and in the same year, he was selected by the Marquis of Lorne, as the first President of the Royal Society of Canada. In 1894, he was knighted by Queen Victoria. Up until 1892, notwithstanding a life of exhausting labor, Sir William enjoyed good health. In that year, he was prostrated by pneumonia. He never really recovered his health although he continued as President of McGill until 1893, when he resigned his office. He died on November 19, 1899, after a long illness. He was survived by his widow, three sons and two daughters. One son, Dr. George M. Dawson, later became Director of the Geological Survey of Canada. Another son, William Bell, became Director of the Tidal Surveys of Canada. The third son, practiced medicine in London, England.

It is most fitting that the Historical Sites and Monuments Board of Canada should erect this monument to the most widely known of all Canadian educationalists and scientists. He was a scholar of distinguished — almost encyclopedic learning. He was the greatest paleontologist this continent has produced. As a teacher, he had few equals.

#### Fit To Be An Example

When the tasks he accomplished are considered; — the university he left behind him; — the monuments which were the fruits of his labor; — and his great research activities; — it is amazing that one man could have done it all. But with it all, he is described by one of his professors as "a man of very gracious personality, loved by students and staff, courteous to all. He had all the qualities of a great statesman: — breadth of view, combined with a grasp of detail, foresight, insight, swift decision, patience and tolerance. He was a born ruler, a born teacher, and a born investigator; but the pre-eminent note of Sir William's character was his singleness of purpose, his simplicity. In one word, he was fit to be an example set before the young men of a university."

In no part of Canada was Sir William's career more closely followed than in Pictou. Here he was born, here he was inspired with the spirit of scientific research, here his earliest educational and scientific efforts were made; nor did he ever forget his native province and his native town Pictou may well be proud of producing one of Canada's greatest educationalists and scientists.

Y Front Journal of Educ. November 1955  
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A most significant step was taken by the Government in 1850 by the appointment of the first Superintendent of Education for the province. Fortunate indeed was the choice in the person of Dr. (later Sir) J. William Dawson, a man of outstanding ability, who afterwards became Principal of Mac Gill University. Dr. Dawson entered upon the task of organizing and improving education in the province with his accustomed vigour and wisdom -

Following the general lack of interest in Education by the Legislature Dawson resigned as Dept. of Education in 1851 but he continued to publish "The Journal of Education". Bill passed for establishment of Normal College, on March 31, 1854.

The first Principal was Dr. Forrester who was appointed on the recommendation of Dr. J. W. Dawson to whom the Normal College owes its

✓ This is on the front cover  
Sir J. Wm Dawson  
C. M. G. L. L. D. - F. R. S. - F. G. S. D. C.  
Born Oct. 13 - 1820  
Died Nov 19 - 1899  
Dawn 1858 to 1893 Prin. of  
Mc Gill Univ. Montreal.

M.G. 1  
V.O. 1195A  
#4

Les & Mollie V. Foch Mrs

"George Dawson  
the little giant"  
my page C. Barkhouse  
PP. 131-132-133

Did you know, by the way that  
Geo Mecew Dawson, founder  
Dawson City,

I have some clippings on  
him I will write for you  
information later.  
I also have a letter written  
by his son Dr. Beel Dawson

### Recalls Work Of Pictou-Born William Dawson

HALIFAX — The achievements of Nova Scotia's first superintendent of education, Pictou-born Sir William Dawson, who 200 years ago founded the McGill Normal School, were recalled in Halifax Tuesday during the second annual meeting of Canadian College of Teachers.

The legacy of Sir William in Canadian education is much richer and more extensive than is generally supposed, said Prof. David C. Munroe, director of McGill University's Institute of Education and president of the Canadian College of Teachers.

Sir William lived during the last half of the nineteenth century, said by Professor Munroe to have been a period "of remarkable development in Canada."

The COT president termed Sir William one of the most influential Canadians of the nineteenth century generation.

The work of this man, whose career spanned the half century almost exactly, made a deep impression on education all life in Canada and his reputation as a scientist was widely recognized in the world at large.

William Dawson was born of Scottish parents and educated in the Pictou Academy and by a versatile father who prospered as a shipwright, printer and merchant. He later attended Edinburgh University where he did not qualify immediately for a degree. He soon became interested in the "new science of geology" and applied his studies to the neighborhood of Pictou and in the coal fields of the province.

At the age of 30, Dawson was appointed by Joseph Howe as the first superintendent of education in Nova Scotia.

During the next three years he introduced a number of innovations that served as the foundation for the system of public schools in his native province, Professor Munroe said.

After serving on the Royal Commission on Education in New Brunswick, Sir William was appointed principal of McGill University in 1855, a post he held until within six years of his death in 1898.

In Nova Scotia his task was to arouse public opinion in support of a broad and vigorous system of public education.

Travelling on foot, horse back and by boat, he visited every county in the province in his fight for education, always, however, finding time to devote to his geological inclinations.

Dawson gained a high reputation as a teacher. All nature was God's handiwork and the task of the teacher was merely to expose and interpret, he always advocated.

In his last years, he wrote Inspector as "I have had many successes as a teacher of nature."

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McG  
Vol 1195/7

Sir John William Dawson.

Inscription on plaque which was placed on first  
Pictou Academy by the Duke of Connaught in 1912, building demolished

Sir John William Dawson.

This tablet commemorates Sir John Wm  
Dawson F.R.S. 1820-1899. Geologist,  
Educated at Pictou Academy.

- Supt. of Education of Nova Scotia - 1850
- Principal of McGill University - 1855
- First Pres. of the Royal Society  
of Canada - 1882
- Pres. of the British Association - 1886  
(The Nova Scotia Historical Society)

1930  
plaque  
placed on  
Sir Wm  
Dawson  
School  
1950,  
Pictou  
School  
Board

This was on building on Church St. where Sir Wm  
Dawson was

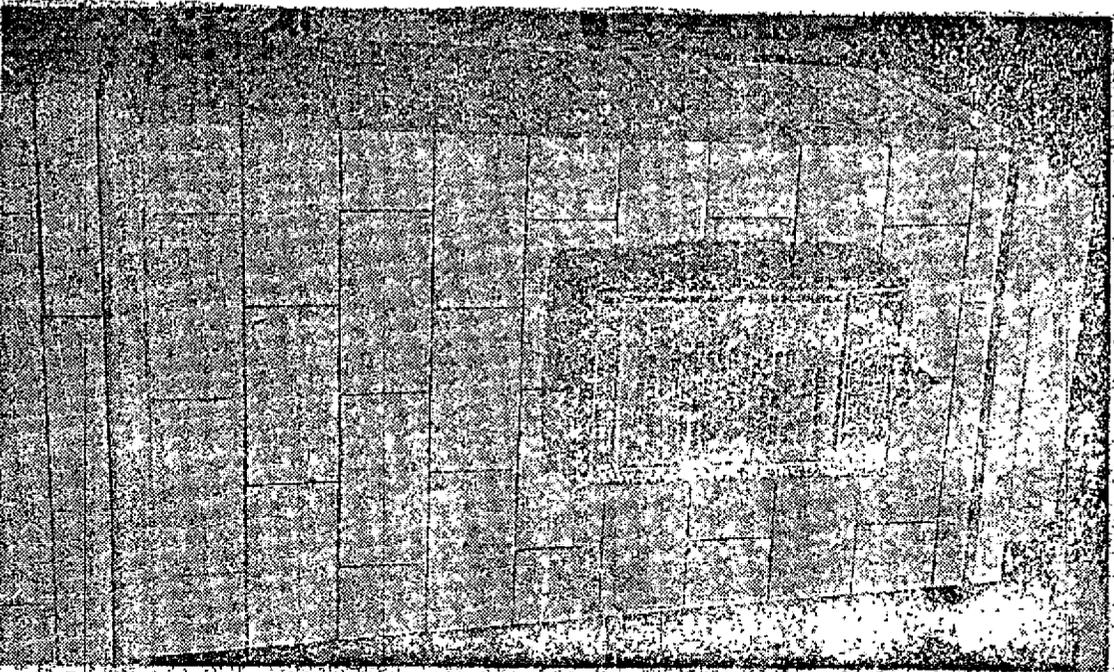
HERE WAS BORN  
SIR  
JOHN WILLIAM DAWSON  
F.R.S.  
GEOLOGIST-1820-  
THE NOVA SCOTIA HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY.

born in 1820.

Carved unveiled  
Oct. 30<sup>th</sup> 1957

See back

This monument marks the birthplace of Sir John  
William Dawson born at Pictou October 13th 1820.  
and is thought out by history to be the 167th. In the old  
house long since removed John Dawson kept his  
geological specimens and the collection of stuffed  
birds. Here too he wrote many of his profound  
papers on sciences. (R. H. Sheppard photo)



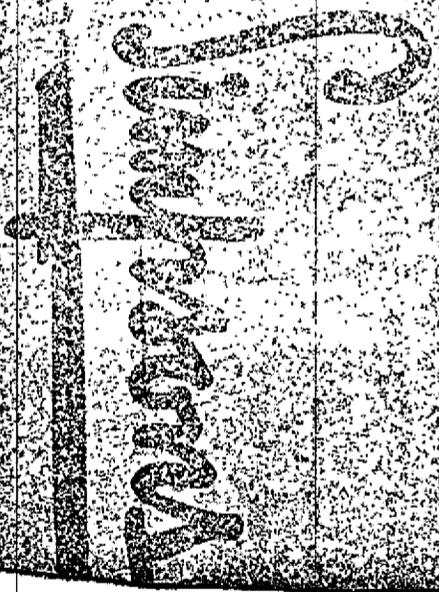
Taken from Pictou  
March 11 - 1960

July 1960

Plaque still in my possession - not from any body responsible

1961  
1965

Plaque given to Peter [unclear] (unclear)  
Not placed



# Pictou Man

## Greatest

## Geologist

By ROLAND W. SHERWOOD

Geologists everywhere still revere the name of John William Dawson, born in Pictou, Nova Scotia, in 1820. His achievements in geology and other fields are so prominent that his name is a household word. He is generally known as the greatest geologist of his time. Recently, a party of amateur geologists, touring Nova Scotia, sought out the monument that marks the birthplace of a famous son of Pictou.

At the monument on Church Street, unveiled Oct. 30, 1957, these amateur geologists stood and discussed the life of the man who, on this very spot, in the house where he was born, kept the geological specimens he collected in his youth.

This house is gone, and the monument marks the place of his birth. It is a fitting and sturdy, but these geologists-to-be knew that it was on this very spot, in one of the oldest houses in Pictou, that John Dawson, a native of Nova Scotia, and they knew too, that here he kept them until he received the first and valuable collection to the University.

EDUCATOR, SCIENTIST, and geologist, Dawson was born in Pictou, Nova Scotia, in 1820. He was the first geologist to be born in Nova Scotia. He was a pioneer in the field of geology and a pioneer in the field of education. He was a pioneer in the field of geology and a pioneer in the field of education.

calion for Nova Scotia from 1850 to 1853, and that he was principal of McGill University in the period 1855 to 1893.

And it was on the spot in the old house that John W. Dawson wrote many a profound lecture which he delivered before the Literary and Scientific Society of Pictou.

From the monument plaque they learn that John Dawson was the first president of the Royal Society of Canada, author of 'Canadian Geology' and other books on scientific and religious subjects. What is generally known as the plaque does not record that John W. Dawson established the first training school for teachers, which became the Provincial Normal College, in Pictou in 1854, and that he pioneered the work that led to the establishment of five schools in Nova Scotia.

**PIONEERING WORK**  
The amateur geologists who came to Pictou recently knew of Dawson's 'Murchison' work and the discovery of the first remains of a reptile in the coal formations of America. They knew he had discovered the fossil forest of the coal areas of Nova Scotia, and they had read some of the findings the great man had put into the many papers, pamphlets and books he had written.

They knew that Sir William Dawson had lectured for 40 years throughout Canada and the United States, and that he received many honors. He was created, C.M.G. in 1882, the year he became the first president of the Royal Society of Canada. He was president of the American Association of Geologists since 1881. In 1884, Edinburgh University made him a doctor of laws, and in the same year Queen Victoria conferred knighthood upon this eminent son of Pictou.

He was the first geologist to be born in Nova Scotia. He was a pioneer in the field of geology and a pioneer in the field of education. He was a pioneer in the field of geology and a pioneer in the field of education.