

HON. *Edward Barron Chandler* 1800-1880

LAWYER, POLITICIAN, FATHER OF CONFEDERATION AND LT.-GOVERNOR OF NEW BRUNSWICK

Born in Amherst and descended from Loyalists, Edward Barron Chandler moved with his wife, Phebe (née Millidge), to Dorchester in 1822 where he built up one of the most successful law practices in New Brunswick, after being admitted to the bar in 1823. By offering training in law he made Dorchester, which had been declared the Shiretown of Westmorland County in 1801, into a centre for legal studies. Until 1862 he was Judge of Probate and Clerk of the Peace.

In 1827, he won a seat in the House of Assembly (later the Provincial Legislature) where for the next 40 years he served in various capacities, including head of the Executive Council (in effect Premier) from 1848. Despite being associated with ‘The Compact’ that dominated government until 1854, he took a progressive stand on many issues

and made two major contributions to the economy and the development of New Brunswick. An avid railway promoter, he was almost single handedly responsible for getting the railroad from Saint John to Shediac underway and was an early supporter of the Intercolonial Railway, which played a key role in Confederation. In 1854, he helped negotiate the Reciprocity Treaty or ‘free trade’ deal with the United States that brought unprecedented prosperity to New Brunswick before its abrogation in 1865. After the defeat of his conservative government in 1854, he remained influential in his position with the Legislative Council.

In 1864, he represented New Brunswick at the Charlottetown Conference and was among the delegates at the Québec City (1864) and London (1866) Conferences

which led to Confederation on July 1, 1867, and his recognition as a ‘Father of Confederation.’

A year later Chandler accepted an appointment as a commissioner of the Inter-colonial Railway. In 1878, he succeeded Samuel Leonard Tilley as New Brunswick’s Lieutenant-Governor, his final appointment in a remarkable career in public life that spanned almost 60 years.



TOP

Edward Barron Chandler, 1879. The original oil painting by James Henry Holman was donated to the Westmorland Historical Society by Ruth Stanley and is on display at Keillor House Museum.

BOTTOM

Rocklyn, built in 1831, was the home of Edward Barron Chandler, his wife Phebe (née Millidge), and their 11 children, and was recognized throughout the province as a centre of elegant hospitality.

