Kent Historical Society

Papers and Addresses

Volume 7

Nineteen Hundred and Fifty-One

Kent Historical Society

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The Case for General Procter

By Victor Lauriston

This discourse need not lack a text. Any work, historical or fictional, dealing with the War of 1812, will furnish at least one reference, usually condemnatory, to Major General Henry Procter.

The French-Canadian Garneau blames him for abandoning the defensive, and a translator's footnote adds that "Tecumseh, who fought like a lion against desperate odds, became a victim of Procter's ineptitude." Miss McIllwraith's novel, "Kinsmen at War," refers to Tecumseh as "striving to stiffen the weak knees of General Procter, an adept at lying only." My own immature verdict in 1913 was that Procter "seems to seek excuses for failure rather than opportunities for success." Such was still my view a few years ago when work upon a novel dealing with this scene and period compelled a closer study of documentary records.

On June 30, 1812, word reached Amherstburg that the United States had declared war. Colonel St. George got himself to strengthen the neglected fort. When, a week later, the American General Hull crossed to Canadian soil, the British garrison consisted of 100 men of the 41st regiment and a handful of artillery, with 300 militia in two minds whether to fight or not — these to oppose an American force of at least 2,500.

There was, though, another important military factor — the Indian tribes, represented at the moment by a scant 150 braves camped on Bois Blanc. The Indians hated the Americans, yet shrewdly waited for some hint as to which side was likeliest to win. The capture of Michillimackinac decided them; the warriors swarmed to Bois Blanc, eager for presents, ammunition and rations from the Great White Father, represented by old Matthew Elliott.

These Indians loomed large in every decision, every movement, on the Detroit frontier. In scouting and irregular warfare they could be very useful. In siege work, or the open field, they were valueless. They knew no discipline and little restraint, and came and went as they pleased. Outnumbering the British regulars, they were a tacit menace. The danger was ever present that they might turn to the Americans. To the British commander on the Detroit frontier, whoever he might be, these Indians were unpleasant and

undependable allies, who must be humored and bribed lest they become dangerous enemies.

To take permanent command on this difficult frontier, Sir Isaac Brock despatched the senior officer of the 41st Regiment, Colonel Henry Procter. This was Procter's first independent command. He was in his early fifties, and had seen more than thirty years' service. Significance might be attached to the circumstance that Brock, knowing the situation and the desperate odds, knowing also the man and his record, chose Procter for the most difficult post in his entire thin line of defence.

Procter, arriving late in July, read the situation with the swift comprehension of the trained officer. Instead of maintaining a cautious defensive, or attempting a frontal attack on Hull's position at Sandwich, Procter struck swiftly at Hull's weakest point — his long line of communication through an almost unpeopled wilderness. For this task he used the force best fitted, the Indians. They ambushed and slaughtered an American convoy at Brownston; and, stiffened by a few British regulars, halted a stronger detachment sent to Maguaga to re-establish Hull's communications. This pressure, as Procter had anticipated, compelled Hull to withdraw from Canadian soil; and his captured despatches, disclosing utter panic, emboldened Brock on his arrival to demand the surrender of Detroit; with what results we know.

Procter's skilful dispositions had prepared the ground for this achievement. We may imagine the earnest conferences between Brock and Procter in their few days together. Procter has been criticized for not maintaining a strict defensive. He had, in fact, argued against an attack on Detroit; but hereafter he made Brock's daring strategy his own. We have a right to surmise that this general strategy — involving the principle laid down by Marshal Foch more than a century later that "the best defence is to attack" — was mapped in these unrecorded conferences between Brock and his subordinate.

One decision reached was that adequate defence of the Detroit frontier required at least 2,000 regulars. Brock might have found these; but Brock fell at Queenston, and the general direction of the war passed on to men unfamiliar with Procter's situation. Official records show that in December, 1812, the two garrisons at Detroit and Malden comprised 377 officers and men — this to overawe disaffected Detroit, to hold the restless Indians in line, and to oppose the inevitable American advance.

Procter had established a small Michigan outpost on the River

Raisin near Frenchtown. Early in January, General James Winchester, eager for glory, snatched the opportunity afforded by General Harrison's absence to attack this outpost as a preliminary to a swift advance on Detroit.

Word reached Procter at 2 a.m. on January 19. At dawn on the 20th, leaving a bare handful of men to hold the two forts, Procter marched with 500 regulars and militia and some Indians. Before daylight on the 22nd he attacked Winchester.

Richardson, writing many years later, criticized Procter for opening with a cannonade instead of making a surprise attack. The fact is, that where the enemy occupied a fortified position of unknown strength, sound tactics called for artillery preparation.

Frenchtown was in many respects the most complete British victory of the entire war. By a forced march, striking deep into enemy territory, Procter not merely defeated but uttely annihilated a superior force strongly posted on its own ground; and, with prisoners more numerous than his own effective force, swiftly withdrew before Harrison's main army could come up.

Judge Woodward, who later gave his name to Woodward Avenue, was then a leading citizen of Detroit. He hated Procter. Yet he wrote thus to Secretary Monroe at Washington: "The operations of the British commander are marked with the same minute correctness of judgment in this instance, and the same boldness of conception and execution, which distinguished, in the former instance, his illustrious predecessor, General Brock. It is a military movement of equal, and, in fact, of greater splendour."

American writers accuse Procter of permitting the massacre of Americans wounded by the Indians. This was Procter's first close-up of actual Indian warfare. Detroit had made no resistance, and there Tecumseh's potent influence had held the savages in check. Procter seemingly expected the Indians to keep their solemn promises to Brock and to himself to spare the prisoners. Unfortunately, Tecumseh was not at Frenchtown. Procter, by threats, persuasion and actual bribes, rescued many of the Americans; and Winchester had left written testimony to the humanity and kindness with which the British general treated the prisoners. But Procter's outspoken disapproval of the savages and his efforts to restrain them marked the beginning of a steady widening rift between the British commander and the Indians.

The cry for vengeance for their slaughtered brothers of the River Raisin roused the Americans to fresh efforts. His Frenchtown casualties had left Procter with less than 300 effectives. Supplies,

alike of food, clothing and ammunition, were precarious, and the men were paid irregularly or not at all. But as soon as some small reinforcements actually reached him, Procter again forestalled a threatened advance by swift attack, this time at Fort Meigs on the Maumee.

His entire available force consisted of 456 regulars and 461 militia, with about 1,200 Indians. Procter's bombardment had not yet effected a breach when on the 5th of May, General Clay's relieving army, descending the river in boats, landed on both banks of the Maumee. Dudley's detachment captured the main British battery. A counter attack promptly drove them out. Of Clay's 1,300 men, barely 500 succeeded in entering the fort.

The Canadian militia, anxious regarding their spring planting, had gradually drifted home; the Indians, sated with scalps and plunder, vanished overnight. Procter found himself with less than 400 effectives to besiege a strong position garrisoned by 1,700 men. He had no alternative but to raise the siege.

Procter had for a third time broken the spearhead of an American thrust at the frontier; but through the spring and summer of 1813 the tragic story of official neglect went on. It is told with damnatory clearness in a long succession of despatches. Supplies were lacking; the men were half fed, ill-clad, unpaid. Brock had estimated 2,000 regulars as needed to hold the frontier; but reinforcements dribbled westward in scant companies and platoons.

Meanwhile, new American armies were massing, and at Presqu'Ile energetic Perry was building ships to dispute the control of Lake Erie. In despatch after despatch, Procter plainly urged the desperateness of his situation. Had he a few men to spare, he would re-establish that needed outpost on the River Raisin. He did try to establish the friendly Indians in the wild country between the River Raisin and Detroit — a shrewd move that, given time, would have created a potential buffer state. But time rushed mercilessly on, unlike the dawdling authorities at Quebec, Kingston and York who hardly moved at all.

They did make promises. The 6th Company and staff would be sent; later, the remainder of the 41st Regiment. Sailors, pork, powder, Indian presents, all things needful were promised. Procter sent the "Queen Charlotte" to Fort Erie to bring the men and supplies; but at the crucial moment the American Chauncey secured command of Lake Ontario, Fort George was taken, communication was cut, and the ship returned empty.

On June 20th Prevost writes that he has instructed the new

commander in Upper Canada, General de Rottenburg, to push on reinforcements and supplies — the remainder of the 41st Regiment, £1,000 in specie, £2,000 in army bills, salt pork, clothing, shoes, trenching tools, equipment for the naval department — all these are to go forward. "Bring forward the united power of both services to crush the enemy's endeavors to obtain the ascendancy of Lake Erie" writes Prevost. But, weeks later, nothing has reached Procter except this exhortation.

Procter sees the situation with tragic clearness, urges explicitly and with a reiteration that becomes monotonous the right move to make. Strengthen the land force, properly man and outfit Barclay's ships, and a joint military and naval attack on Presqu'Ile will yet make Perry's diligent efforts useless. Had that shrewd stroke been made possible, the entire story of the western campaign must have been far different.

Barclay himself pleads for sailors, for naval ordnance. "Indeed," he writes, "the whole line under General Procter must lay open to the enemy in the event of their being able to make his Majesty's squadron retire," and he warns that though he must attack the enemy fleet, unless reinforced, he will fight at disadvantage.

On July 11 Procter writes to Prevost:

"If means had been afforded me, which were no more than your Excellency had repeatedly directed should be sent me, I could in all probability have effected the destruction of the enemy's vessels at Presqu'Ile and have secured the superiority of this lake, and also in so doing have made a powerful diversion in favor of the centre division." Captain Barclay, he writes, has gone to Long Point hoping to find there the promised naval stores and sailors. "If the enemy's vessels should be out," he adds, "a naval engagement cannot be avoided. . . . Three hundred sailors are necessary to man his Majesty's vessels on the lake."

Remember, these sailors and these naval guns are necessary before Barclay can attack Perry with any hope of success. Repeated despatches from Procter and Barclay should have made that point clear. Yet here is the reply that ultimately comes to Procter from Kingston:

"The ordnance and stores you require must be taken from the enemy, whose resources on Lake Erie must become your own. I am much mistaken if you do not find Captain Barclay well disposed to play that game."

In that despatch, official fatuity achieves its ultimate pinnacle.

Prevost repeatedly promises reinforcements; but they do not come. One wonders why. The man between, in that fateful summer of 1813 when Procter and his little army stood with their backs to the wall, was Major General Francis de Rottenburg, commander of the forces in Upper Canada. Unlike Sheaffe, whom he succeeded, or Drummond, who succeeded him, de Rottenburg never fought a battle, let alone won a victory; though he was quick to blame his subordinates for defeat and equally quick to bask in their reflected glory. General Vincent, a good soldier, singularly patient and generous, who out of his own scant resources sent Procter what help he could, shows bitterness toward but one fellow officer—de Rottenburg. When, by the victories of Stoney Creek and Beaver Dams, Vincent, Harvey and Fitzgibbon had made the Niagara frontier safe, de Rottenburg hastened to take command there; when Barclay's defeat threatened trouble, de Rottenburg just as quickly discovered he was needed at Kingston, and to strengthen that position, took Vincent's three best regiments, sorely needed for the defence of Burlington Heights. The evidence may not be sufficient to prove that de Rottenburg deliberately kept for himself the supports intended for Procter; but the suspicion lingers.

Meanwhile Procter's Indian allies, grown restive, demanded, not merely ammunition and presents, but scalps and plunder. A stratagem, suggested by Tecumseh, to lure the garrison from Fort Meigs, was unsuccessful. The Indian Department Officials then demanded an assault on Fort Stephenson, declaring that unless the fort was stormed the Indians would desert. Procter regarded the fort as too strong. Yet it was part of his task, and an important part, to keep the Indians in good humour. Reluctantly he ordered the assault. The regulars were repulsed with heavy loss; the Indians, who had promised to co-operate, fled ignominiously. Harrison, by a swift withdrawal, skilfully extricated his shattered force.

He returned to Amherstburg to find that, too late, additional men of the 41st Regiment had at last arrived. Seamen, 50 of them, and naval guns for the warship Detroit, now ready for launching, were to follow. But Perry's ships were over the bar; and on September 10th Barclay sailed to meet them, his vessels manned by landlubbers from the 41st Regiment and equipped with guns from the forts.

Few people realize how close the battle of Lake Erie came to being a British victory. Impetuous Perry's headlong attack permitted Barclay's weaker squadron to crush the van of the American line before the lagging rear could come into action. The "Lawrence" struck her flag; and the victory was virtually won when the "Detroit" and "Queen Charlotte" of the British fleet fouled each

other's rigging, and, helpless to manoeuvre, were pounded into wreckage. The fifty seamen who would have averted that catastrophe were still east of Burlington where the promised naval guns waited under tarpaulin.

With Barclay defeated, the whole Detroit frontier now lay open to the invader.

Till September 12, Procter clung doggedly to the hope that Barclay had won and pushed on to bombard Presqu'Ile. That day he realized the truth. "It is my opinion that I should retire to the Thames without delay," he writes. Already he had prudently notified Colonel Talbot to provide food depots and prepare the roads for retreat. But de Rottenburg replied that he "did not clearly see the necessity or expediency of immediate retirement."

What de Rottenburg, hundreds of miles away, could not see, Procter saw with perfect clearness. Yet, as at every stage of the defence, the Indians had to be considered. But for the Indians, Procter could have commenced the retreat at once. He lingered solely to persuade them to accompany him.

Much has been written of that dramatic council at Malden where Tecumseh challenged Procter to hand over the arms and munitions to the Indians and leave them to defend the frontier alone. Had every Indian been a Tecumseh, that proposal might not have been preposterous. But where Tecumseh's loyalty was sure, that of his followers was uncertain. Already many were leaving for their homes, or deserting to the Americans. Acceptance of Tecumseh's proposal would have been equivalent to handing over the munitions to Harrison.

Despite his impassioned outburst, Tecumseh could not ignore the necessity for retreat. The forts had been denuded of their guns to equip the fleet. Even with belated reinforcements, Procter in his own words had hundreds where Harrison had thousands. His entire regular force was less than 900 officers and men — not fresh soldiers, well equipped, in the pink of efficiency, but men weary from ten years and more of absence from their English homes. Half starved, ill equipped, ragged, consistently neglected through more than a year of warfare in a dismal wilderness where the only men not down with the fever were up with the fever, the relics of the 41st Regiment turned their backs on the frontier they had held so long. Over trails rendered almost impassable by the early autumn rains, they trudged, day after weary day, till they reached Dolsen's on the Thames. Some small unarmed sailing craft and bateaux carried the wounded, the women and the scant provisions and supplies.

Procter had ordered Dolsen's to be fortified: but officers and men, worn by privations and sickness, had utterly lost heart, and his orders were simply ignored. The place, in any event, was unsuited for defence. While the men rested there, Procter with his captain of engineers rode upstream to seek a better position.

Tradition has it that he promised Tecumseh to make a stand at Chatham. The question is asked, why not? The British on the north bank of the river, the Indians east of McGregor's Creek, were well posted to repel the Americans advancing on the south bank of the Thames. The answer is simple. Perry's smaller ships now lay at Dolsen's; they could readily ascend beyond Chatham, and, enfilading both positions, would instantly render them untenable. They could, just as readily,transfer the land forces to the north bank, to outflank the British.

So, on the morning of the 4th of October, the Indians merely fought a delaying action behind the line of McGregor's Creek, and the retreat went on. That night the British camped east of Arnold's Mills, the Americans a few miles downstream. Next morning the last of the British craft grounded; and the disheartened soldiers manning them surrendered the supplies without firing a shot. Fugitives brought to Procter the tragic realization that his men had no ammunition except the few rounds they carried.

The ultimate stand took place a couple of miles east of the modern Thamesville. Procter's dispositions were skilful. To the left the British position was protected by the Thames, to the right by a large swamp; and a smaller swamp between narrowed the attacking front. One cannon was posted to enfilade the American advance; in the rear five more guns guarded a ford against a turning movement and promised protection for a possible retreat. In the larger swamp to the British right, Tecumseh's force, dwindled to about 500 warriors, was posted. Procter's calculation plainly was that the fire of the cannon and the volleys of the regulars would throw the advancing Americans into confusion, and the Indians, attacking from the swamp, would convert that confusion into defeat.

But the two thin red lines drawn across the road and through the beech woods that October afternoon numbered less than 400 men passably fit to fight. Procter, rising doggedly above all the harassment of neglect, distrust and defeat, trusted implicitly to the proven courage of the 41st in the shock of actual battle; nor does he seem to have realized the utter demoralization of his shadow army. The gamble was desperate, more desperate than he knew, but he faced it in the interepid spirit of Brock.

Those thin red lines had to face, not infantry, but hard-riding Kentuckians who shattered all military precedent by charging on

horseback through the beech woods. The lone cannon was never even fired; the infantry fired two wavering volleys; then the line crumpled.

Tradition that Procter fled at the first volley is inferred from Richardson's narrative, supported by Lieutenant Bullock. These men were far to the right of the line, so far that Bullock escaped through the woods with his entire grenadier company, and Richardson almost escaped — too far, consequently, to see the actual fighting on the British left. Richardson, embittered by Procter's strictures on the 41st, wrote more than a quarter of a century after the battle. But that same night, Captain John Hall, Procter's aide, writing from Delaware with the actual happenings of the afternoon fresh in his memory, simply said: "One of the guns being deserted early in the action, the troops near it gave way and the consequence was a complete rout—notwithstanding the exertions of the general to rally them, so much so that I thought it impossible he could escape being taken." Hall's story, the only contemporary eyewitness story, is confirmed by the fact that early in Procter's flight his pursuers were close on his heels; which would not have been the case had he fled at once instead of trying to rally his men.

To say that Procter should have stood his ground and shared the fate of his soldiers is to confuse the function of the soldier with that of the knight. Procter was a soldier; and in defeat his one duty was still to help win the war. The next day he was at the Grand River, collecting his scattered army.

Procter is depicted by most writers as thrown into utter panic. As to that, his subsequent course furnishes the clearest evidence. On the morrow of his defeat, he began like a good soldier to reassemble and reorganize his little force. He insisted on waiting at the Grand River till Bullock could collect the last of the fugitives; and on keeping his promise to Colonel Elliott to wait for the Indians who were scouting Harrison's movements. Colonel Young at Burlington had ordered a precipitate withdrawal of all outposts. Procter countermanded the order, and sent Colonel Hamilton back to the outpost at Turkey Point. A few days after the battle, Procter had assembled at Ancaster 246 out of the 397 regulars who had actually stood in the battle line at Moraviantown.

On the news of Moraviantown, Vincent had fallen back to the strong position at Burlington Heights. DeRottenburg ordered the abandonment of all Upper Canada west of Kingston. Vincent was reluctant to obey this order. He submitted the question of further retreat to a commission of five regular officers. Procter headed that commission. The commission unanimously reported that they saw no reason for further retreat; and Vincent, in defiance of de Rotten-

burg's orders, held Burlington. Procter's advice was amply vindicated. Within three short months the British regained all the Niagara Peninsula, captured the American Fort Niagara and swept the American side of the river with fire and sword.

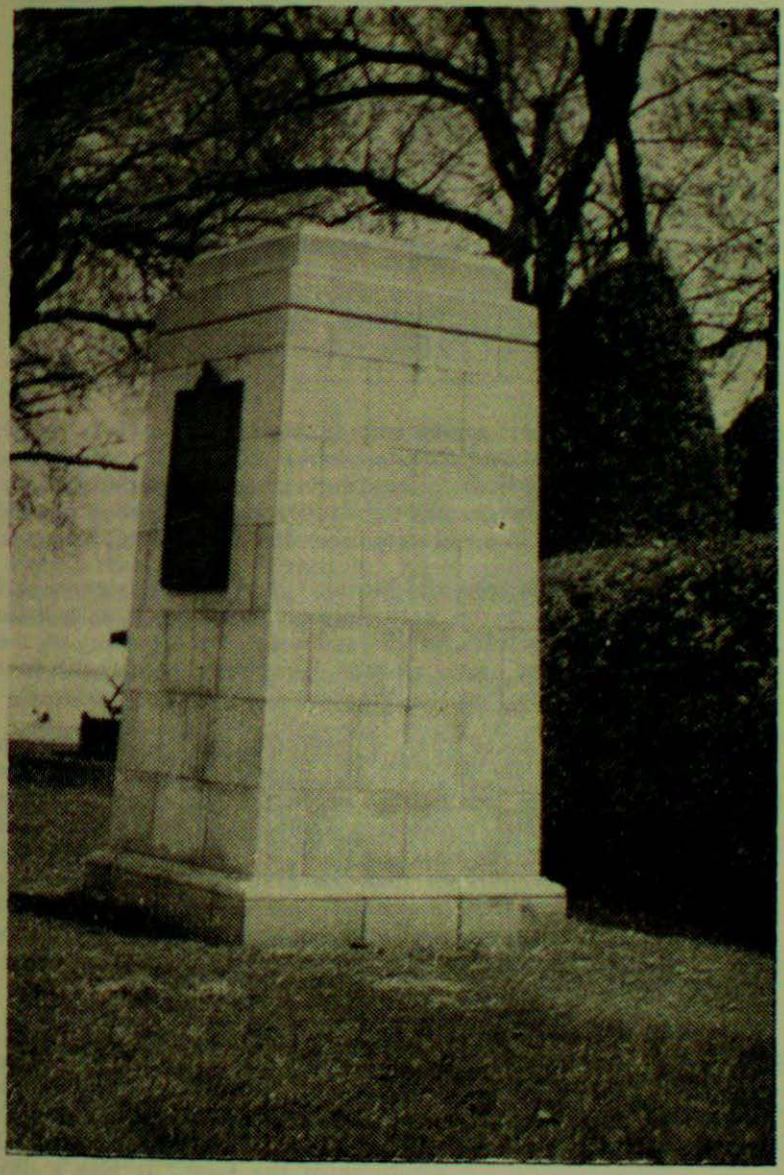
That recommendation, to hold Burlington against whatever odds, was Procter's last great service to the British cause; but he had still a service to perform for his superiors.

On the Detroit frontier, the obvious causes had brought the inevitable consequences. A brave officer with a forlorn hope had been left to hold a weak position against overwhelming odds. At every opportunity he had warned his superiors of the dangers of his position and the modest steps needed to make the frontier safe. His warnings had been disregarded, the needed reinforcements had been sent grudgingly or not at all. Despite this neglect he had been instrumental, partially at Detroit and wholly at Frenchtown and on the Maumee, in shattering on their own ground three enemy forces, each superior to his own. The reward had been neglect, starvation, hardship and eloquent exhortations to carry on in the true spirit of the British soldier.

All that remained was for the superiors whose blind neglect had compassed the loss of the Detroit frontier to safeguard themselves by finding a scapegoat. Procter was courtmartialed at Montreal in December, 1814. The court acquitted him of any neglect and reproach in his personal conduct, but found him negligent and deficient in his handling of the retreat. He was sentenced to be publicly reprimanded and suspended from pay and rank for six months. With that his military career ended. He died in England a few years later.

The erroneous Judgment of posterity is based, not on that courtmartial, but on Richardson's hot resentment of Procter's perfectly accurate statement that the conduct of the 41st Regiment at Moraviantown "was not upon this unfortunate occasion such as I have on every other witnessed with pride and satisfaction. The inclination to retreat was too strong, nor did I receive that cordial aid I sought and was entitled to." Procter, with his exacting standards of courage and endurance and his proud esteem of the British soldier did not realize that he asked, just as his superiors asked, more than men could give.

No other commander and no other men in the War of 1812 were so utterly neglected, or in the face of utter neglect, achieved so much. The time has come to tell Canada the true story of their defence of this forgotten frontier, its sufferings, its hardships, its trumphs, and its ultimate tragedy.



FAIRFIELD MONUMENT

This monument, with plaque, marks the site of Fairfield Indian Village, (adjacent to the Battle ground), which was destroyed by American soldiers on Oct. 6th and 7th, 1813.

History of St. Peter's Parish

1802 - 1947

LOT 1, RIVER ROAD, TILBURY EAST TOWNSHIP.

* History of the Parish of St. Peter's: As compiled and read by Rev. Theo. Martin, at Chatham Theological Conference, October the 24th, 1928.

Nestling quietly and unobtrusively opposite an elbow point, in one of the numerous and tortuous bends of the River Thames, eleven miles west of Chatham, an unpretentious, though picturesque, brick church, built in 1896, marks the spot from where early history on the crooked stream is accurately traced for the past 126 years.

Numerous motorists from the Border Cities and Michigan whirl by this neat Catholic Church with only an admiring glance, little realizing, that in the ancient church-yard adjoining, lie many of the pioneers of Kent, Essex and Lambton Counties; in fact, the first white settlers of that part of the Western Ontario peninsula.

For considerably more than a century, the present church grounds have been the site of St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church, a church that holds the distinction of being the second oldest Catholic place of worship in Western Ontario. Its only rival and predecessor is Assumption Church, Sandwich. So closely linked is the history of the two churches that the first pastor of St. Peter's Church, the Rev. Father J. P. Marchand, also served at the identical time as the Pastor of Assumption. His arduous dual charge was made poossible by this pioneer priest making hurried trips on horse-back along the river and lake trail, at least once a month.

That was the day before buggies, automobiles or aeroplanes. It was even a time before roads, worthy of the name, existed. The hundred and one adjuncts of present day civilization, lying at the very doors of this generation, were undreamed-of possibilities to those early faithful settlers who struggled to wrest a livelihood from the little clearings and products of the hunt. It was a day when, after long and arduous hours of toil on the little clearings bordering the Thames, parents and their children would trudge miles to receive blessings and encouragement, always cheerfully given by Catholic spiritual leaders in Ontario's pioneer seetlements.

It may be said to the credit of the early Roman Catholic Clergy, that they were unceasingly ready to undergo the hardships of the primeval forest with their parishioners, and to share with them their dangers, privations and trials in time of sickness.

For the past eighteen years, as Pastor of this historic church, I have been privileged to guide the destinies of one hundred or more families. I am glad to say that St. Peter's has certainly proved a source of great pride and interest to me. During my service as its Pastor I have endeavoured to place this Church among the most beautiful and interesting Catholic Churches of old Ontario. (This work has necessitated much manual labour which, personally, I have often performed.)

It is interesting to note that every birth, christening and marriage that has taken place in St. Peter's Parish since 1802, is chronicled in well preserved books, the pages of which are written in ink in the handwriting of the Church Pastor at the time of their happening. Among these names are recognized those of many French families of Lambton, Kent and Essex Counties today. Descendants from these early families have multiplied, in Biblical terms, as sands of the seashore.

The parish books, referred to above, often contained the complete cycle of life's major events of those early settlers, including birth, christening, marriage and death. Due to the continual migrations to all parts of the country, especially to the great lumber forests of Michigan, there are many instances where the deaths of early parishioners are not therein recorded. Records of their demise would doubtless be found in the parish books of some distant Catholic Church in the country to which the early habitant had wandered.

The history of the Parish of St. Peter's, of the diocese of London, is inseparably linked with the history of what was later Upper Canada, in 1780. In that year there was but one diocese in the whole of Canada. Its precincts stretched from Halifax to Vancouver. It was named the diocese of Quebec. In addition to all Canadian territory, the diocese stretched far into what later became the United States. It included Michigan, Illinois, Oregon, Ohio, Mississippi, Louisiana and, in the New Engalnd States, up as far as Baltimore.

Up to 1780, Father Hubert (later Bishop of Quebec, and 12th French Canadian Bishop) had filled many posts of confidence in the eyes of his Bishop, His Lordship D'Englis. Father Hubert had been director of his Grand Seminary, and Apostolic Visitor of the

Vicars General, located at various points of the North American Continent which comprised that immense diocese of New France.

Destinies of certain men are fore-ordained in a peculiar way. One day Father Hubert was sent by his Bishop to Illinois to fulfil a very delicate mission with the Vicar General Gibeault. On his return, by way of Fort Detroit, he arrived at the pioneer post just in time for the funeral of Father Bocquet, Recollet Order. Following the funeral, Father Hubert, of necessity, replaced the deceased as parish priest of Fort Detroit and as Vicar General of all the region of the immense Detroit District. That great vicariate embraced all Michigan, the Province of Ontario and the State of Ohio. Such an immense territory was surely enough to occupy the full services and time of such a Vicar General who, by his very nature, was the soul of zealousness and devotion to his charge. If the various missions in his care were not numerous, they were far distant from one another and sufficient to tax the energies and devotions of the strongest of men.

Because the principal center (noyau) of Father Hubert's administration was Detroit and its adjacent territory, that pioneer spiritual leader constructed a church and presbytery there. Immigration to the Detroit district, including what is now Western Ontario, had already gotten well under way. The great fertility of the soil, the admirable climate and wealth of natural resources, had already become known to distant inhabitants of the old and new France. Feeling a great tax on his strength, because of the increasing numbers of settlers under his spiritual care, Father Hubert asked his Bishop in Quebec for several priests to assist him in his missions yet to be established in the immense Detroit field of labours.

Taking the great wooded Detroit River as a natural division, the Parish of Detroit soon became divided into two parts; one a church, L'Assomption at Sandwich, and the other at Detroit, Ste. Anne. On each bank of the river the population, swelled by continual immigration, was growing very rapidly. That tide of growth on the Canadian shores stretched from Bois Blanc Island as then named, to near Sarnia of today. Again, from Amherstburg to Chatham, French Canadians came from Quebec to establish their homesteads along the shores of the rivers and lakes. For all this great territory there were only two churches and two missionary priests.

Following 126 years of early settlement, in the beautiful counties of Essex and Kent alone, we find today more than 35,000 Catholic French Canadians. This number is entirely separate from

the English speaking people of other nationalities. All this territory formerly formed a part of the Parish of Assumption Church at Sandwich and was a second division of the Parish of Detroit. In 1870, at Detroit, the Vicar General, Father Hubert, administered all this region which comprised part of the colony of Detroit. On what is now the Canadian side of the river, Father Pothier (Jesuit) was the only missionary parish priest under the administration of Father Hubert.

Illustrative of the natural increase of French Canadians in this territory, Father Hubert relates that the Campeau family alone counted more thn 3,000 souls. Because of its numerous members this family had erected for itself a little chapel in Detroit, the parish priest conducting mass in it periodically.

Zealous and devoted to his charge, Father Hubert, on observing the continued immigration of French Canadians to the Detroit district, conceived the project of establishing new missions in the most populated sections of his vicariate. With this in view he visited all the region between Amherstburg and Chatham, now known as the Canadian side, but, which at that time, formed a part of the Detroit vicariate. The parish of St. Peter owes its inception to that memorable trip of Father Hubert. On passing the quaint spot along the Thames, he was impressed with its natural charm and geographical position, the ideal center for a great mission. He determined that the day would not be far distant when a missionary priest would be sent to administer to Catholic souls along the beautiful shores of Lake and River St. Clair.

The great dream of Father Hubert, regarding the future of St. Peter, has since become a reality far greater in its fulfilment than even the zealous and devoted disciple of God had anticipated. As a mother church, St. Peter gave birth later to fifteen parishes or missions. Already 23 pastors have faithfully kept this precious flock so dear to Father Hubert (later Bishop Hubert).

So energetic and zealous a priest was destined by God for even greater responsibilities than those associated with his great vicariate at Detroit. While in the midst of his organization projects in our country, he was named Assistant Bishop of Quebec, with future succession. In the fourth year of his episcopate, Rome took from him almost half of his diocese. Pius VI formed an apostolic vicariate in what is the United States of today, having Baltimore as its chief center. In this division, the immense diocese of Quebec lost what is now Oregon, Illinois, Michigan , Louisiana, Mississippi and all the New England States up to Baltimore. News travelled so slowly in those early times that it was four years before Mgr. Hubert learned

of this momentous change. While witnessing has great diocese being taken from him in large sections of territory, he had one consolation in being able to keep what is the Canadian part today, including the parish of St. Peter, for which he had planned wisely and well. This beautiful parish has since given birth to fifteen parishes and missions including Belle River, St. Joachim, Tilbury, Stoney Point, Raleigh, Staples, Chatham, Pain Court, Big Point, Wallaceburg, Thamesville, Bothwell, Lambton and Dresden. Attending these today are twenty-one priests.

Father Hubert believed that the Parish of St. Peter would prove an inexpugnable fort. St. Peter's, accordingly, became the fortress of the Catholic Church in Canada West in those days. The office of a Catholic missionary in those early times was not an enviable post. This path was beset with dangers both physical and spiritual.

Despite the fact that Father Hubert visited all this part of the country during his four years' administration as Vicar General at Detroit, it was not possible for him, because of a long illness, to realize the entire fulfilment of his projects, following his elevation to the Episcopacy. The immensity of his diocese combined with his ill health, greatly curtailed the prosecution of his many projects. Realizing his inability to carry out his plans, he entrusted their execution to Mgr. Denaut, his successor.

The Parish of St. Peter has the distinction of having been visited by Mgr. Plessis, the eleventh Bishop of Canada, in 1816. The parish at that time was known as St. Pierre sur la Tranche, the name La Tranche having been applied to the tortuous and beautiful stream now commonly known as the Thames. St. Peter's was honored in the Bishop's visit by his determination in 1806 to visit every part of his immense diocese from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The great contrast in pioneer travel in the early part of the century to that of today is best exemplified in the fact that the immense itinerary planned by the Bishop took him ten years to complete. Today a similar journey could be accomplished within a few months at the most.

Following visits to the many parts of his great diocese in the east, including Nova Scotia (then Acadia), New Brunswick, Boston, New York and Albany, it was not till the year 1816 that he undertook to visit the western part of his diocese, travelling by way of the St. Lawrence River by boat and portage. At the time there were only four missions in Ontario: Kingston, Malden, Sandwich and St. Peter. He visited St. Isadore of Kingston on May 28 — June 4; Notre Dame of Assumption, Sandwich, from the 20th to the 29th of June. During his stay at Notre Dame of Assumption he visited

St. John of Malden (the Amherstburg of today), and returned in time to arrive at St. Peter's for July 1st, 1816. Just what activities he engaged in at the Parish of St. Peter at the time of his visit is not definitely recorded; but it is certain that he gave Confirmation to numbers of souls there. This deduction is made from his memoirs which record having given Confirmation to 33,725 people during the general visit to his immense diocese. Mgr. Plessis, eleventh Bishop of Canada, was the first to visit the Province of Ontario. Travel was so arduous and difficult in those days that the journey from Kingston to Sandwich consumed 16 days. Mgr. Plessis is regarded as the greatest Bishop of Canada, up to his time.

We owe to Mgr. Plessis the liberty of freely practising our religion in this country independently of the civil power. For his great services he was well named the great Canadian Athanasius, one of the Fathers of the Church in Canada. It was under his regime that the big diocese of Canada was divided into four parts, the division taking effect on December the 5th, 1822, six years after his memorable visit to the whole of his diocese. The division was as follows: No. 1 district: Upper Canada, under the administration of Mgr. Alexander McDonald; No. 2, District of Montreal, under Mgr. Lartigue; No. 3, District of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, under Mgr. McEachern; No. 4, District of the Northwest Territories, under Mgr. Provencher. The four administrators of as many districts were under the dependence or supervision of Mgr. Plessis, the British Government having consented to the arrangement but wishing to settle matters with the Bishop, Mgr. Plessis, alone.

The erection of the Parish of St. Peter is fairly accurately traced to the month of June, 1802, since the first act of baptism is dated July 7th, 1802. The limits of the parish at that time were not well defined owing to the almost impenetrable forest which covered the country between the region of what is now East Kent and the Detroit River. Our ancestors had come to establish themselves in this virgin forest by travelling by boat from Montreal to Detroit; water being the only accessible route. Our missionaries of the time visited the far scattered missions in one of three ways: by foot, canoe or horseback. Roads were unheard of in those pioneer days. The missionaries were content to make the sign of the cross before starting on their long pilgrimages, and placed their respective voyages under the protection of God and the Blessed Virgin.

Detroit was only a little village, the only place for several hundred miles where one could get his grain ground, or get mail from a post office. These hardy ancestors of ours for a number of years came to Detroit by canoe pushed forward by strong arms. They experienced the peculiar joy of splitting the waves of St. Clair

Lake en route to Detroit. Later, when a semblance of a trail had been blazed along the river and lake banks, they journeyed from the Parish of St. Peter to opposite Detroit by slow plodding oxen hitched to that rare carriage of the day — the charette. The trip to Detroit took from three to four days; a trip now acccomplished by motor car in a couple of hours or less. When night fell on them, they slept in the open air along the shores of Lake St. Clair. Their food was extracted chiefly from the hunt by the wayside. It consisted often of fish, wild duck, partridge or other game. By making a smudge, to drive away the troublesome mosquitoes, they slept peacefully under the canopy of heaven.

Further changes occurred as the years passed. The first store in the Parish of St. Peter was situated about one mile from the actual church toward Lake St. Clair, where a post office was established named Dolsen. A little later a hotel was erected near the post office and store, where travellers who made the trip from London to Detroit by canoe or stage — according to the season and passability of roads — enjoyed the rest provided by the pioneer half-way house.

Several years later, another small store appeared below Prairie Siding, together with a small elevator, where grain was brought from the little farms cleared with great labour of heavy forest growth, as well as from those farms nearer what is now Chatham. Another post office, named 'Williams', was established about a mile and a half east of what is Prairie Siding today.

The present Church of St. Peter, a substantial brick structure, is the third edifice to grace the site of the pioneer parish churchyard. It was opened for service in 1896, just 32 years ago. Church history of St. Peter's parish starts with the erection of a chapel in 1802 — which undoubtedly was constructed of hewn logs, no trace of which remains today. It is known that when this pioneer church became too small for the rapidly growing congregation, it was replaced by a larger frame church in 1824, the edifice being blessed by the then parish priest, Father Joseph Crevier, on the 28th of Nov., 1824. The former chapel was used for a number of years after the building of the new frame church as a school. The latter church, which served St. Peter's Parish for close to a century, was destroyed by fire in 1895 — an old chalice alone being rescued from the ashes of the venerable edifice.

During the interval between the burning of the frame church and the erection of the present brick church, Mass was said in the old presbytery; itself since replaced by a more modern brick structure. Following construction of the present church, the old

presbytery, for a while, was used as a separate school and now serves as a stable on the church farm.

St. Peter's Church, as it stands today, is a well constructed edifice, measuring 80 by 40 feet. It was opened for service in 1896, since which time it has received a number of major improvements, including extensive decorations in 1920 (carried out by myself). St. Peter's Church today is not only famous because of its ancient site as a house of God's worship, but too because the walls are adorned by eighteen of the most beautiful and costly ecclesiastical paintings to be found in any church building in Canada. They are the work of George Delfosse of Montreal, the product of whose brush and canvass adorns a number of the famous churches of that Quebec city as well as other notable edifices throughout the Dominion. No more realistic portrayer of scenes during the time of Our Saviour has lived than Delfosse, whose genius for art has greatly enriched Canadians and whose work again proves that some of the contemporary world masters are quite equal in skill to any on the other side of the Atlantic. (The securing of these famous paintings was only obtained through sustained efforts of myself, made possible by the full co-operation and help of the parishioners of my parish.)

In reviewing the history of St. Peter's it would not be complete without reference to that fact that a station or chapel was erected on the site in 1802 by the Rev. J. B. Marchand, a priest of the Congregation of St. Sulpice, and at that time a director to the College of Montreal. He was also Pastor of Assumption Church at Sandwich, the only one in the western peninsula to be erected before St. Peter's. Rev. Father Marchand conducted for years services in both Sandwich and St. Peter's, and won the love and respect of the early settlers along the River Thames.

The popularity of the little chapel soon necessitated the erection of the larger frame edifice, since burned, but which for three quarters of a century provided a place of worship for generation after generation of its faithful adherents. Many there were whose cycle of life began and finished at old St. Peter's. There they were born, christened, married, had their children christened, and when life's span was terminated the impressive funeral services were held in the old frame church.

In 1833, Rev. Father Jean Baptiste Morin, a native of Lower Canada, was called from a mission in Nova Scotia and stationed at St. Peter's, where he laboured faithfully in the discharge of his sacred ministry until the Lord called him to his reward at the ripe age of 70. He was buried on the 17th of December, 1849, under the

sanctuary of St. Peter's on the Epistle side of the altar, as he had requested.

Rev. Father Parent, Pastor of St. Peter's at the time of the fire, had built a new presbytery and barn a year previous, but these escaped the devastation owing to the direction of the wind.

It is most interesting to note the effect of the ever changing banks of the River Thames, especially in the vicinity of St. Peter's Church. The site of the older frame church, since burned, is so near to the present river bank that were the edifice there today it would stand in the middle of the present highway. So deeply has the river cut into the land that in the days of the frame church there was a beautiful sloping lawn in front for more than 300 feet towards the river. This land has since entirely disappeared before the mad spring rushes of the turbulent Thames. At the time of its construction the present brick church was built some 200 feet back from the site of the former church. The bank in front of the present church was first constructed thirty years ago as a protection against the spring floods induced in a great measure by the gradual drainage of more and more land extending towards Chatham. This great rush of water in the spring caused the river bank to be built from Prairie Siding to a couple of miles west of the church. Flood waters necessitated this bank being rebuilt, straightened and strengthened several times, while the river became wider and deeper each succeeding year. Because of its meandering course, the early French sttlers knew the present Thames only by its name of the period, "Riviere La Tranche."

Topography of land along the route of the Thames has formed a most colorful page of history. One hundred years ago Indians were plentiful along its North bank in what is now Dover Township. The river traversed a thick forest through almost all of Kent County and broke into open land in the vicinity of Lake St. Clair, from Mitchell's Bay to the lighthouse at the mouth of the river. Indians in their boats and canoes were to be often seen travelling down the river towards Lake St. Clair, the only route of travel available through the heavily forested country. In a few days these Indians would return, their boats and canoes laden down with the trophies of the hunt and assurances of a well stocked larder for the family board. When stores were replenished, it would mean another voyage down stream to the better hunting grounds along the shores of beautiful Lake St. Clair.

One of the greatest aids to travel is found today in the fine government bridge over the Thames, built in 1924, which connects Dover and Raleigh Townships. Recognized as a crying necessity

for many years, it remained for this fortunate generation to see the ultimate fulfilment of a long cherished dream of quick transport over the Thames. Situated two miles east of the church the new bridge has enabled parishioners from the North bank to drive to Mass each Sunday under far more favourable conditions of travel.

Few Catholic Churches in Western Ontario have to their credit such a fine tract of fertile land as has St. Peter's. This land, a part of the church property, comprises approximately 200 acres which in the year 1832, with ten acres additional, was bought for the munificent sum of 125 pounds from Mark Sterling by the following church trustees: Rev. Angus McDonald (later Bishop of Kingston), Rev. Frederick Fowley (Foley), Alex. Trudell, Frank Trudell and Nicholas Janisse. The land was bought for the benefit and use of the church and clergymen. Several years following the purchase, nearly eight acres of this land were sold to the then Great Western Railway, now the Canadian National Railways, for extension of the road through to the Detroit River at Windsor. On the thirtieth of November, 1853, all this church land was turned over in trust of the R. C. Episcopal Corporation, but again for the benefit of St. Peter's and its clergymen.

Owing to the fact that this church land, along with more than 1000 acres additional, is part of a big drainage system, it is heavily taxed and, despite the fertility and productivity of its soil, there is not the return customary where land is not under such a taxation burden. The drainage scheme was found necessary to protect this church land and other land from flood conditions which obtain along the banks of the Thames almost every spring.

This history of St. Peter's Church would be most incomplete without recording the resident and non-resident pastors of this second oldest ecclesiastical mission and place of worship in Western Ontario:

Rev. Father J. P. Marchand, first Pastor of St. Peter's Mission, served from 1802 to 1820. He was followed by Rev. Joseph Crevier, 1820 to 1825. To him was credited the building of the former frame church which replaced the log mission. Father Crevier blessed this on Nov. 28th, 1824. The ceremony was attended by the priest of L'Assomption from Sandwich and others.

Rev. Father L. F. Fluet served as Pastor of St. Peter's from 1825 to 1832. He in turn was succeeded in 1832 to 1833 by Rev. Angus McDonell and Rev. Father P. Foley. Rev. Father Chas. Francois Maurice served from 1833 to 1834, assisted by Rev. Father George A. Hayes in the latter year. From 1834 to 1846, Rev. Father

J. B. Morin was Pastor of St. Peter's, and at his death was buried under the sanctuary of the church. His body was removed after the church fire many years later and placed under the present church. Rev. Father T. L. Maurice served for a short time in 1846 following the death of Father Morin. It appears that no less than three pastors officiated during the years 1847 to 1851; the three being: Rev. Fathers J. B. Dillon, P. Voin and J. W. Joffroi. It is recorded that in 1851, on the 16th of July, there were 289 persons in the confirmation class conducted by His Lordship, Bishop de Charbonnel, of Toronto.

From 1851 to 1853, Rev. Claude Ternet was residing pastor at St. Peter's. He was succeeded from 1853 to 1864 by the Rev. Fathers J. A. Raynell, Boubat and Girard. From 1864 to 1872 the church pastors are recorded as Fathers Andrieux, Joseph Delallys and J. A. Raynell. Rev. Father A. P. Villeneuve served as pastor from 1872 to 1884, coming to the parish from Tilbury. Rev. Father P. Fauteux, from Stoney Point, was resident pastor of St. Peter's from 1884 to 1886, and was succeeded by Rev. Father L. M. Leveque, first parish priest of Big Point. Father A. Carriere served from 1886 to 1887, in turn succeeded by Father P. Langlois from 1888 to 1892.

In 1891, at a confirmation class held by Mgr. Dennis O'Connor, there were 137 persons confirmed, including myself. Rev. Father Parent, Pastor of St. Peter's from 1892 to 1900, built a new parish house and barn, the old church burning down in 1895 and the new one being constructed the next year. Rev. Father S. Rocheleau served in 1900 from July 11th to November the 4th.

Rev. Father E. C. Ladouceur was parish priest at St. Peter's from Nov. 4th, 1900, to 1910, when I succeeded and have been happy to remain its pastor to the present time. I might modestly record such improvements as I have effected since coming to the parish. These include cement walks, sheds, alterations to the pastor's house, installation of gas in church and house, extensive decorations and a new roof to the church, new stations of the cross and alterations in the presbytery. On December the 21st, 1926, I celebrated my Silver Jubilee in the priesthood, on which occasion I was presented with a purse from my parishioners and a purple vestment and a golden chalice from my confrere priests. (For all this kindness I have ever been grateful to my faithful parishioners and to my fellow priests.)

In 1902 St. Peter's celebrated its centenary, and, although not pastor at that time, I had the honor to be present along with many other priests. His Lordship, the late Bishop McEvay, was in attendance as well as the late Mgr. Boudette of Three Rivers, who

preached the sermon on that occasion. The fact that Mgr. Boudette died suddenly several days later in Walkerville was a most regrettable incident.

In concluding the history of my parish I may say that although St. Peter's occupies a comparatively secluded and isolated site, it is by peculiar coincidence, on direct route of all important lanes of travel today between the Border Cities and Eastern Canada. These include railroad, motor car and even aeroplane routes. In fact, many notables in world history, including members of royalty, government and high ecclesiastical officials of the Roman Catholic Church, have passed frequently through the actual grounds of St. Peter's Church property while unaware of the fact. As they whirled along the rails of the now Canadian National Railway, which for nearly a century has bisected the property of this venerable church, they have been unconscious of the fact that only a stone's throw distant was situated this second oldest Catholic Church in Western Ontario.

As Pastor of St. Peter's I trust that the record of my ministry will be in keeping with the excellent records of the various pastors before me, who so valiantly and faithfully served their people and this historic church.

SUPPLEMENTARY — Sept. 30, 1947.

* **By Rev. Father A. F. Scalisi**

After eighteen years of hard labour, Father Theo. Martin departed for McGregor on December 1st, 1928. He was followed by the Rev. Father A. A. Rondot, who was pastor here for four and a half years, a great spiritual priest who did much to foster and increase the love and devotion of his people to Catholic truths and ideals and made many new improvements to the Church. Father Romeo J. Lefaive followed in May, 1933, remaining until the 23rd of July, 1945. He found a depressing debt awaiting him for solution and in twelve years of planning and saving reduced the debt to $5400.00. To Father Lefaive much credit must be acknowledged and to this day his name is kindly remembered, like those of his predecessors. He, too, left for McGregor.

I, Father Anthony F. Scalisi, followed on July 23, 1945. Since the debt was at the low ebb already noted, improvements could now be made, and to me fell the duty as well as to continue those works of priestly administration in which every Priest of God is specially

trained: to teach, to bless, to pray, to console — in all kindliness and generosity of spirit. If the history of this Parish, venerable as it is, is replete with humbling narrations of priestly privations and hard work, then too must the record of these last Pastors, prior to myself, be written in the same vein of achievement. I follow only to reap what has already been sown. Had any of the others begun where I had the good fortune to, what little I may have done and still pray to do, would have been the same for them. In all modesty I acknowledge this, realizing that pioneer work has already been done and gone down into history.

In re-copying the history of Father Martin, of late memory, so thoroughly and intimately recorded, I have visions of how inspiring and beautiful old St. Peter's must have been, and to my mind there comes the resolve to restore it — if for no other reason than to resurrect what was before, that which others worked so hard to make possible; and, too, a resolve to re-instill a love of their parish in the hearts of these my people.

The picture today?

The banks of yesteryear have been dredged again and floods from the Thames continue their work of havoc. Necessity, a few years ago, closed the old road before the Church and Rectory, in Father Lefaive's time — and often did it become impassable of long rains and soft earth. To my period of service the task befell to re-open this road so that parishioners would not have to continue using the church walk to back their cars so that they could leave as they came in. With the help of parishioners, part of the north cemetery was employed and levelled to act as a juncture between the old road and that leading to the school, now affording all a continuous road circling house, church and cemetery. This road was in the Fall of 1946 given a cover of crushed stone.

The banks in front continue to obstruct the view of those Americans who travelled by in boats, admiring the loveliness of well kept lawns and good order in Father Martin's time. Because of the fact that a new county road behind now isolates the 'reversed' church, there was little inspiration to do much re bushes and lawns, etc. A face-lifting was next in order. A little landscaping, removal of overgrown lilacs and bushes plus the odd mis-shaped pine tree, and a levelling of lawns have accomplished wonders as a beginning. This was mostly due to the efforts of two, three or more tractors, skilfully manoeuvred by some of the younger parishioner element, in 1945 and 1946.

The cemetery boasted a few stones as monuments as some 30-

odd pine trees had been planted in a double row, cross fashion, throughout. The effect was nice but not thought practical as the roots would penetrate into graves. Almost every grave was an elevated mound. All of this obviously made it impossible to keep the grass cut. Twice a year, prior to my coming, a 'bee' was called for men with scythes to come and level the tall grass. The cemetery, therefore, was somewhat unsightly and quite undignified. In the Fall of 1945, men came in response to an appeal, and, with a bull-dozer, every tree and mound disappeared and the debris cleared. The ground was then ploughed, weeded and further levelled. Finally in the Fall grass was sown and the large wooden cross was given a coat of aluminum paint. Later, when the grass is full and the ground firm, monuments will be straightened and markers placed at each grave or plot of graves. Plans are made to include in time a decent fence about. A crushed stone path is already laid and even now the appearance is quite satisfying. A new power mower, already purchased, will keep the grass cut evenly once a week.

The Rectory: Though the present building had been built solidly in 1894, at this date it required going over, with a few necessary additions. Mostly women parishioners, and a few men, aided the pastor in this work until finally in the Fall of 1946 conditions were bettered considerably. The work included the papering of all rooms, new plaster in the dining room and hallway; the bolstering and raising to normal position of the center of the house which had commenced to sag; the installation of an automatic pump ensuring water in the bathroom and kitchen; a new refrigerator and an electric washing machine. Also, the bathroom was completely remodelled. Additional necessary alterations will be given attention in due time.

The Church: First, the pictures. No paint brush had touched anything since Father Martin decorated the entire interior over twenty-five years ago. The beautiful paintings by George Delfosse had become dulled and occasionally through the years one or another of these large murals had left its moorings to hang perilously over the center of the church. Though they have been replaced, further danger was not eliminated. A heavy roof had begun to widen the walls, quite a bulge being noted in the west one; seats were bleak and very tacky; statues were dingy; and the walls and altars were in need of plaster work and paint. These and many other repairs, alterations and improvements were necessary and at the moment are progressing to restore all parts of the church. Tie rods have been installed to hold together the bulging walls, and there have been donated and installed a new oil burning furnace by the Marchand Furnace & Metal Products, Tilbury, and a large electric

clock by Mr. A. E. Archer of the Archer Jewelry Store, also of Tilbury.

The Farms: The present encumbent has met with little success as far as disguising himself as a farmer is concerned. At any rate, he is progressing. But, despite his willingness, the farms have become disappointing and a heavy drain on the parish. This was due, not to the efforts of the men employed by the parish, but to natural interference. Reverses were plentiful in 1946 — early June found a desolating scene as a tornado and subsequent storms flooded all vegetation for over five weeks — the result — a considerable loss through a total farm failure. Others in the parish suffered as well, all to some or a serious extent. A public appeal brought funds to pay the high annual taxes. The next number of years will see these taxes increased as further dredging to the broken banks had to be done in 1946.

We are pleased to note the increase of revenue, due we believe, to the introduction for the first time in its history of Sunday envelopes in St. Peter's. This was effected in 1947.

Note: All these improvements as above noted, and others, were made possible through parties, aid from the Altar Society, parish picnics and kindness of friends and parishioners. St. Peter's Parish has a record for tolerance and counts many friends outside the pale of the Church. Gradually, as finances permit, we shall continue to restore the beauty and orderliness of old St. Peter's. I have asked much of the parish and they have responded nobly. Ad majorem Dei gloriam.

* Printed through the courtesy and with the permission of Rev. Fr. A. F. Scalisi.—Ed.

A Story of the Early Settlement of the Township of Orford

By Edward Bury.

1881

John Colbrook Bury was born in London, England, No. 52 Cheapside, at 4 o'clock A.M., on March 4th, 1764. His ancestors claim to be descendants from the ancient Britons. When invaded by the Saxons, the Danes and the Romans after the Normans, they were over-powered by all these invaders. Some of them lost their holdings rather than submit to the supremacy of the foreign tyrants. The family name was very numerous as far back as the invasion of England by the Iron King, William the Conqueror, from Normandy. As far as I can ascertain by statements from the family, there are towns and places in England by the same name. By the same name there is a town in Summersetshire called Glosten Bury, and other places of note. There are people spelling their name Bery. Some call our name Bery. It is a mistake. It is said the purest English blood is the blood of Wales. When England was invaded by foreigners, the Welsh fled to the mountains with all they could take with them and concealed themselves from their foes andnot mixed so much with the Anglo-Saxon race. The Burys were always loyal to the best interest of thir country but never willing to submit quietly to the supremacy of foreign tyrants. John C. Bury was the third son of William Bury. There was one sister Harriet. George Bury was an officer in the British Army and settled on the Island of Rhodes in the Archipelago. Richard died when quite young. Harriet married a man by the name of Archer and lived in Wales at a place called Brony Windon. She was 97 years of age when I heard from her last many years ago and wrote a plain steady hand. George was 98 when I heard from him long since, and healthy. He was 6 ft. 2 ins. high.

John C. Bury's mother died when he was a child. He was educated and bound apprentice to an architect and builder. When within two years of the expiration of his time, he out-generalled his master in architecture and mechanical works which cleared him of his time. The law provided for the same at that time. When an apprentice could teach his master, he was no more apprenticed to the same. He was employed as a journey-man. This transaction occurred while erecting a very fine and expensive residence in the

County of Wicklow, Ireland, near the City of Dublin, for a man by the name of George Sherwood. Some portions of the work the contractor considered he was not capable of doing. He went to London, England, for a man to complete the work. John Bury considered he had ingenuity sufficient to complete the same. By drawings he satisfied the foreman (during the absence of the contractor in London) until he convinced him to his idea. He engineered the work. When the contractor returned with the elephant, the work was completed in such a manner the sharpest scrutiny could not detect a fault although he was severely censored for the attempt, but the greatest trouble was the master losing his apprentice.

Some years after he married Miss Dorothy Sherwood, daughter of George Sherwood, then living on his estate in Wicklow. The Sherwoods were of English origin. From this marriage there were four children. Two of them settled in Canada and raised families and died at a venerable old age (William, the eldest, lived at Sombra on the St. Clair River; the other, Mrs. Manifold, left three children, one son Richard and two daughters, Mrs. John Ridley and Mrs. Joseph Lampman.)

Two of my father's first family were born in Ireland, two in New York. He came to New York in 1793 or 1794. His wife was in delicate health. She went home to visit her friends; the voyage on ship-board at that time was very long and tedious. She took ill on the way from which she never recovered and died a few weeks after arriving home.

Some time after he contracted to build a mill at Baltimore for a man named Elcote. This was the first mill on record with elevators for cooling the flour. It was his invention. It was many years after in the old world before they worked on the same principle. While in Baltimore he wrote a book of plans entitled "Millwrights Guide." He went to Philadelphia to have it printed there. They would not print the work unless he would take the oath of allegiance. He refused and returned to Baltimore and presented the work to two young men that worked with him. They were great favourites of his for their mechanical ingenuity. They were by name Elcote and Evans. I was talking with a man about twelve months since; he told me the mill is still called Elcote's Mill and improved according to the times. The mill was built about the year 1796. After that he went to Pennsylvania. There he bought a privilege and built a flour mill of his own on the Susquehanna River.

He married my mother there (Pennsylvania) at a place called Logan Town. Her maiden name was Elizabeth Traver. He sold

his property and came to Canada in 1802 or 1803 to Kingston. He remained there some time with his family. He did considerable work there and came west to the Township of Oakland. There he remained to about the close of the War of 1812, not far from a place called Malcolm's Town, now called Scotland. There was a family living there by the name of Malcolm (Finlay Malcolm). The head of the family was a sea-captain. They were Scotch people of considerable enterprise. It was there the survey of Talbot Street was commenced by the advice of Finlay Malcolm to the Government through the country to Sandwich. It was surveyed by Col. Burwell, Surveyor. The Malcolm family were very kind and hard-working people and very charitable. They had built a small flour mill on Malcolm's Creek for which they received a small bonus from the Government, it being the mill farthest west at that time.

My eldest brother, then a young man, was a volunteer in the Burford Militia. His Company was ordered to the scene of action at the Battle of Lundy's Lane. They marched in the night and arrived soon after the battle was over. They remained under arms till daylight. Often I heard him tell of the heart-rendering sight of the mutilated bodies and the moaning of the dying and wounded, too much for words to express. The first man that he saw that he knew was a man by the name of Frank Butler. He belonged to the Camp Militia. There were a few settlements on the River Thames in the County of Kent at that time. They had come there by water up the rivers as there were no roads. Frank Butler was a young married man then or nearing so. Whether his friends ever knew what became of him or not, I do not know further than he was killed in the above-mentioned battle. Some of his friends I believe lived at or near the Sydenham in Dawn. My brother was about lifting him when he found him quite dead. He was shot through the head.

At that time the Americans had possession of that part of the country. They gathered all the grain they could and ground it in Malcolm's Mill and then set fire to the mill and burned it down. After that the neighbours gathered and cut logs and raised the building. My father and brother worked at the running gears and in six or eight weeks the mill was running again.

In the summer of 1815 my father started west with a small sailboat that he built, 17 ft. long, 4 ft. beam amidships. In the bow there was a small cabin for the purpose of holding provisions and a few tools which consisted of saw, axe, augur, and square, a case of mathematical instruments and compaass, with gun, ammunition, a small tent and blankets, chisel, hammer and a few nails to repair the boat in case of accident, also some sketching apparatus. He

drew a sketch of the lake shore and river to Port Huron and marked the places where he stayed overnight or windbound. There were a few settlers at Kettle Creek, now Port Stanley. Colonel Talbot had erected a log cabin at Port Talbot. He was land agent for the Crown. On to No. 9 Creek there were a few settlers then. A few families had settled there in 1812 by the names of John Pierce and family, Lesley Patterson and family, John Storey and family. They had settled on the Lake Shore a little east of Tyrconnel. They came from the State of Pennsylvania, and were of Irish origin. The kindness of these people should not be forgotten for their charity to the people going west. There were no settlers for many miles west of this settlement at No. 9 Creek, called Ireland, on account of the people being from Ireland (or their parents). My father camped overnight at the mouth of Clear Creek and marked the place. Then he spent some little time there looking around and shot some game, which was very plentiful. He called at the Point of Pines (Rondeau). He pronounced it the best place on the lake shore for a harbor and refuge for shipping, — some day later if properly managed. He was windbound for three days at Port Pelee. While there he made a sun-dial, put down a post, set the compass by the north star and set the dial, which he carved from a piece of slate, fastened on the post with four nails.

I was on shore at this place in the year 1829; the post was still there with his name carved in and the year 1815, but the sun dial was gone. This was the 17th day of July, 1829. On his return from what is now called Port Sarnia, home, he stopped two days at Clear Creek. He followed the creek to the head of the springs. He found it was the purest of spring waters It was called Clear Creek from its beautiful clear water. On his return home he concluded to settle at Clear Creek. He had the names of himself and two sons entered for lots number 59, 60 and 61 — 200 acres each. No. 60 he occupied to his death in the year 1850.

About the latter part of April or the first of May he arrived at the mouth of Clear Creek with his family (from Kingston), and put up a tent till they could build a shanty. That was up and covered in a few days; the roofing was what they then called clap-boards, split thin, about 3 ft. long. The flooring was of logs cut the proper length and split where they laid on the sleepers, and the edges hewn straight and laid down, and any over wood on the upper side was dressed off with an adze. This made a very good solid floor. The upper floor was timber split thin and hewn to about two inches thick. When the ground floor was laid down, the family moved in. The building was left for some time. There was a doorway and window cut in the side of the house and some greased paper made a very good substitute for glass. There was a quilt or blanket hung up

which answered very well for a door. Then chopping commenced and burning brush and logs. The logs were cut and rolled together by hand as there were no oxen to haul them. As soon as a few rods of ground were cleared in this way, it was planted with potatoes and corn and with garden vegetables. This was continued as long as they considered there was time for them to ripen. When the corn and potatoes were matured for using, they were very acceptable. Then the clearing was continued for wheat. When the corn was ripe, it was dried over the fire. It was then ready for manufacturing into cornmeal. This was done by means of cutting off a log smooth on the end and fastening a sort of box on the end to hold the corn; then it was ground by pounding the corn with a plunger made of hard wood for the purpose. When a small quantity was ground in this manner, another was and so on. This cornmeal with a little stewed pumpkin made most excellent Johnny-cake. There was a sufficient quantity raised the first crop to last the family to the next crop in the year 1817. When the first crop was planted of corn and potatoes, turnip and other vegetables, work of clearing was continued for wheat. In the latter part of the summer of 1816 when the brush was burned, my father and brother drove in from the east a yoke of oxen and a log chain and two cows through the wilderness for many miles. There were no roads at that time. The logs were hauled together and piled up and burned. The new ground was cleared up and sowed with wheat. There were about five acres of wheat. The wheat for seed cost $2 per bushel and was brought in a boat by water some twenty miles. The corn stocks were carefully taken care of which made fodder for the oxen while working the balance of the time. The cattle got their feed in the wilderness. When the wheat was sown, there was an addition raised to the house and made comfortable for the winter, and a small barn was put up and stabling for the cattle. Before the winter set in chopping was commenced for the next year's crop. The tender part of the brush made fodder for the cattle, it being all the time cut fresh through the winter. When the lake was frozen, my brother started with the oxen and sled to John Pierce's, one of the first settlers at Tyrconnel, then called Ireland, some twenty miles away, and got a load of straw and brought it up on the ice. With a little straw every night and brouse during the day, the cattle wintered first rate, and with plenty of salt, browse is very healthy green fodder in winter for cattle. The wheat ground (land) in the spring was sown with grass seed which answered for pasture the next season. After the wheat was harvested, it was put in small stacks by the barn so one stack could be put in at a time and threshed in the winter. It was all threshed by hand with the flail. This first crop of the yield was about 160 or 170 bushels.

After, there was no scarcity of bread, and to spare, my father

made a hand-mill for grinding. This was constructed by dressing two stones about 18 ins. in diameter. The bed stone was fitted in what we called gum, a piece sawn off a hollow log. The bed stone was fitted in the runner. There was a hole drilled in the centre to run the wheat in and one in the edge of the stone for the purpose of putting a small stick with the upper end in a hole in the joist overhead to take hold of to turn around. This was good exercise on a cold winter's night to grind flour for the next day's bread. In 1817 there were several families settled on Talbot Street. Then there was a market for the wheat, but seldom any money. Sometimes a bushel of wheat for a day's work and so on. My father's and mother's rule was never to let anyone away in want of a meal and some to take with them if there was any to spare. A part of what there was was divided with the needy before the first crop of wheat was ground. Sometimes there was not a particle of wheat bread in the house for weeks at a time; as for meat there was plenty of game in the woods and fish in the lake. The fish were caught by means of a night line. It was always handy to obtain and have plenty on hand. The animals in the woods did not seem very shy; at times they would stand and look as much as to say what right have you here to trespass on our domain. When a deer was shot, the skin was taken off, stretched and dried, and when tanned, made into moccasins, excellent wearing pants, and jackets as they were called. But at this age (1881) that would not be so highly appreciated for they were not very handsome wearing apparel. When they got wet in a storm and dried, they would shrink up to about half way between the ankle and the knee and would require about as much rubbing down as a horse would after a journey in the mud. The flesh of the deer was called venison. The hind-quarters were generally cut in small pieces and dried. It was very handy and excellent food.

Now then as I have wandered a litle ahead of the time of landing at Clear Creek, I will turn back to that time. If I remember right, it was in the afternoon of April 29th, 1816. My mother was a weaver of cloth, a little above the medium size with dark eyes and auburn hair, very resolute and great energy, very kind in sickness and in health. She brought with her her loom and yarn for a web of linen. This loom was put up between two small trees, some poles across and sheets spread over to keep the storm off. After that she had weaving to do for John Pierce's family. The linen yarn was brought twenty miles by water, then woven into cloth. The price for a yard of linen woven was a York Shilling. Sometimes she would get a little money, sometimes flour, sometimes a promise to pay. Money was very scarce; the most of it was cut silver. The English Shilling would be cut into four pieces. Every article was up to war prices except labour. Tea was 12 to 14 Shillings per pound.

It had to be brought a long distance. There were herbs and roots grown in the woods which were used for the purpose sometimes. Burned corn and peas or beans and so on were used; when one thing was used up, there was some other found for a substitute.

Now then I will commence with the time of my birth which was the 31st day of August, 1816, at 12 o'clock P.M. I was the first child of white birth that was born in the Township of Orford, or at least the first there was any record of.

The wheat that was sown in the fall of 1816 was harvested in the summer of 1817. Late in the fall there was a grist prepared for grinding, about twenty-five bushels. A boat was made ready for conveying the same. Provisions were prepared for the journey. A portion of the boatload was to purchase some tea and other trifling articles in exchange for wheat. As for sugar, there was plenty made from the sap of the maple trees in the spring of 1817 to last to the next spring. My two older brothers started on their journey, about fifty miles, in the month of November, to below Long Point to Bacwses' Mill. Sometimes they would be windbound for days at a time on such a journey. There were always fire works such as flint, steel and spunk with other lighting combustives. This was always in store ready for use. Before the bags of wheat were laid in the boat, there were clapboards laid in the bottom to prevent the wheat from getting wet in case the boat leaked or shipped water over the gunwale.

When the wheat was ground, the flour was tightly packed in bags, then the wet would not penetrate into the flour. Sometimes it would take two weeks and more for the journey according to the state of the weather. There was a faithful watch-dog belonging to the house. He would always follow the boat if not prevented. They started about day break in the morning. The wind was fair, the sail was spread and they sailed about five miles; and after about twelve miles, they happened to see the dog following along the shore. They shifted their course toward shore, the dog swam to the boat, he was taken aboard and remained with them until they retunned. At this time my father was away from home; I am not certain whether at Hamilton or York, now called Toronto. He used to be away working at his trade.

My mother had been expecting the boys for two or three days. She retired about midnight after the children were all sleeping. She had not slept, expecting to hear the boys coming. She had not taken off her dress for the night. When she was left alone, she always in those times had a gun charged with buckshot for long range and some other weapon for close quarters. She generally put some wood

on the fire to have a little light. She heard the door latch gently raised and the door open and a great tall Indian came in. She sprang off the bed, grasped the gun and cocked it. The Indian said, "No, no, me good," and laid down his gun. The massacre of the Mohawk Valley by the Indians led on by Butler's Rangers flashed before her in an instant. (Her mother, a poor widow woman, fled with her children to see her effects plundered, and her house laid in ashes.) Just at that time the welcome sound of the row-boat as it came to shore was conveyed to her, and the faithful dog was the first to enter the door as it had not been shut since the Indian entered. She had to scold him to prevent him from biting the Indian. The reader may judge the joy of my mother on the arrival of the boys that night. There were three hardy sons brought up in the wilds of America, that feared no earthly being. There was a warm meal prepared of which the Indian ate very heartily and then lay down before the fire and slept comfortably till morning. There were quite a number of Indians around by times. They were generally civil. They would as a rule ask for bread and sometimes there would be no bread if women were alone. Sometimes they would frighten them to make them give them bread. In a wek's time the same Indian returned with his squaw and four children and wanted bread. It was given to them with flour and potatoes, and the poor things went away very satisfied. They did not return any more.

I may here say my mother was a very healthy woman of great physical strength and firm-minded, also a great provider for the family's comfort. At that time I was about a year and four months old.

In the way I have stated, the process of clearing the land was carried on. Sometimes, if the wheat was harvested, a stubble would be harrowed up and sown with rye. Rye and wheat were the only products there was any market for. Sometimes a bushel of wheat would be changed for one yard of print — sometimes more or less. Rye could be changed for whiskey. The settlers on Talbot Street and over the neighborhood all had whiskey for their logging bees, and sometimes the whiskey would be exchanged for work.

My father bought two ewes. The first spring they had two lambs each. These two sheep were brought a long distance by water. The increase from these two sheep soon brought quite a flock of sheep. The wool was shorn off. It was carded, spun, and woven in the house by hand. Then the process of preparing a portion of the cloth for coats and pants began. It was put in a trough made for the purpose, with soap and warm water. Then it was tramped with the feet. The more it was worked in this way the better it was. Fine sport for the children too. They would get tired when it was too long. It was rinsed and stretched and dried and made into

garments. It was very comfortable in cold weather. The process of colouring was done with a strong liquid made from the bark of butternut trees or walnut bark or the husk from walnuts.

The first sawn lumber that was in the township was sawn by hand. The way this was managed was by digging a pit in the side of the hill at the top. A hill of sufficient size and depth for plenty of room to work was chosen. There were two posts put down in the ground and two round sticks stretched from the level of the ground to the posts. They were fixed to turn around in boxing. A log was hewn flat two sides and lined on both sides into whatever thickness the board was required; then rolled out from the level of the ground. The log was gigged back and forward as required. One stood on the log, the pit sawyer was below. In this way two good sawyers would saw from 200 to 300 feet per day.

Sheep then frequently had to be watched in the day time to prevent them from being worried by the wolves. For their protection at night there were large pens built high with logs and a roof over a part of the pen for shelter. The sheep had to be shut in over night. I have seen their tracks (the wolves) around outside the pen in the morning. This was a very common occurrence. The bears would sometimes kill the pigs. In the fall when there were plenty of nuts, they did not meddle with them, as they were very fond of beech and hickory nuts and got very fat on them. The bears were very fond of corn. They would frequently come in the corn fields and pull down the corn. They took the husks off and ate the corn on the cobs. When they were satisfied, they would leave the field. I remember one circumstance that occurred with a bear in the corn which I am not likely to forget. My mother sent me to bring some corn for dinner. I went to the corn field. I was getting the corn in the bags when I observed a large bear sitting with an ear of corn held in his paw eating the corn. I was not long in making up my mind. If I could kill the bear, it would be a fine thing for me. I ran to the house. There were three muskets in the house. One of them was very little used. The barrel was sprung so they could not depend on it for shooting straight to the mark. Unfortunately this was the only one that was loaded. It had been loaded with ball cartridge for over a year. My mother was in the garden, my brothers were on the next farm cutting some timber. I got quietly in the house and out with the old firelock and back to the corn field. The bear was still eating the corn. I got quickly to a stump and laid the gun on — took aim and fired at the bear. The gun kicked back, bled my face, blacked my eye and sent me over backwards. I could not hold the gun up to shoot without laying it on the stump. When I got up, I saw no more of the bear. I laid the gun carefully through the fence and started home. As I was getting

over the fence, there was a small pole on the fence. It broke and let me fall which was very fortunate for me. My mother wanted to know what or how I got hurt so badly. I said I fell off the fence when I was getting over with the corn. The fall did not hurt me but it was luck in my case. There were no more questions asked. My face was cleaned and plaster put on it. That afternoon I got the gun in the house, put it up in its place, and the family never knew anything about the bear to this day. The report of the gun was heard but that was so common and no notice taken of the same. This occurred in the year 1826. In those times bears, wolves and deer were very plentiful. The wolves worried many of the deer. When chased by the wolves, they would run around in circles of considerable dimensions as they were the superior in the chase. They would stand and listen, then turn on their tracks back some distance, then turn in a different direction to evade their pursuers. If the chase was continued, the next resource was to take to the lake and swim out a long distance, then change their course up or down, make for the shore, and stand in the edge of the water. If the wolves had given up the chase, they would come out, but generally remained close to the water for some time. I have seen them travel a long distance in the edge of the water. This would prevent the wolf from scenting their tracks. I once saw a deer swimming to the shore. I came with the gun intending to shoot the deer as I stood on the beach. The water was icy cold. It came in and stood in front of me. The poor thing was so chilled and fatigued and looked so pitiful I could not shoot it. It remained on the sunny side of the hill not fifteen rods from the house the remainder of the day.

The first school that was taught in the Township of Orford was commenced on Lot No. 57, south of Talbot St. This lot was taken up by a man by the name of David Smith that came from Ancaster. He had built a small shanty on the north corner of the lot, close to the street. The house was fitted up to teach children in, with a few rough benches that were split up and hewn and legs put in. The teacher's desk was made the same, but the teacher's chair was made of four posts, two were longer for the back with slats across. The bottom was swamp ash splints, the same as the Indians make for baskets. There was a door and two small windows with six lights each of 7 by 9-in. glass. The first teacher was an Englishman by the name of George Bigs. The books in the school were different kinds. Some would have the Bible, another the New Testament, some had the alphabet and some spelling and so on. In this way they managed to read and write if they could get paper. Some would have a slate to write on. When they wrote it full, they washed the slate and commenced in the new. In such a system of teaching and learning it is nothing very strange that the youth of some sixty

years ago would be very illiterate and destitute of education. This school was about two and a half miles distant from my father's, with a sled road through the bush and only open in the winter season with deep snow; the children could not get to the school half the time. When the spring opened, the school was closed and they were at work at home. In this way we received very litle benefit from the school.

Sometimes when wheat was in small quantities to spare, it would be sold in exchange for goods. When it was in some demand for shipping, money was paid — sometimes 37c and sometimes 50c per bushel. The wheat was taken to Buffalo or St. Catharines. In the Township of Orford at Clear Creek was a small store-house built for the purpose of storing wheat.

I wish to give an idea of the facilities for shipping some fifty years ago and the present day. To-day we see the fine, large and magnificent steamers and sailing ships with a carrying capacity of 50,000 bushels of grain. The first vessel that carried wheat from Clear Creek was a small craft called the "Catharine." We used to call her "Greasy Kate," from the slovenly way she was kept. Her carrying capacity was from 400 to 500 bushels. It would take her all the season to carry 1,000 or 1,500 bushels of wheat. There was another small vessel about the same size. She was called "The Forty Thieves." It was something of a novelty about her name. There was a company formed of forty men to build the vessel. When she was about to be launched, there arose a dispute concerning the name — the company could not agree. The ship-wright said if the company would leave the naming of the vessel to him he would give her a very appropriate name. It was agreed to by the owners. When she was started on the ways, the builder christened her by the name of "The Forty Thieves." The cause of this name was the company stole all the timber she was built of. By these the wheat was carried to market, and the price received by the farmer was sometimes from 37c to 62½c, the highest price per bushel.

Notes by Edward Bury, born August 31st, 1816, the first white child on record as being born in Orford Township.

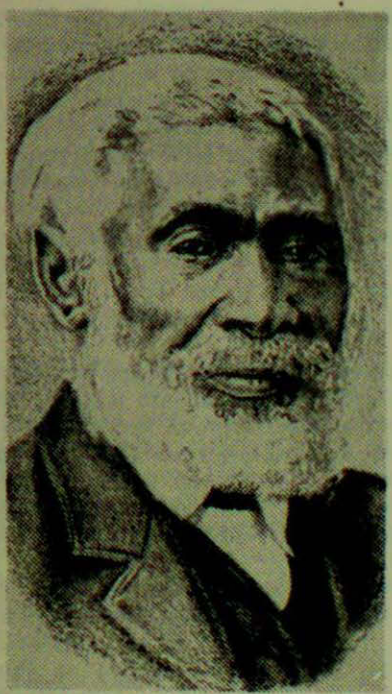
	Born	Died
John Colbrook Bury	March 4, 1764	1850
Elizabeth Traver	1772	1858 Dec. 21

Children of John Bury and Elizabeth Traver Bury

	Born	
Philip	Jan. 12, 1798	In Pennsylvania
Martha (Mrs. Stover)	Oct. 27, 1799	
Mary	Aug. 12, 1801	Died April, 1802
Mary (second)	Mar. 8, 1803	
John Darling	Aug. 18, 1804	
Jane (Mrs. McDonald)	Feb. 10, 1807	In Canada
Richard	Mar. 10, 1808	
Elizabeth (Mrs. Kirby)	Nov. 3, 1809	
William	Feb. 23, 1811	Died 1813
George	Sept. 13, 1812	
Anna (Mrs. Oxley)	Dec. 10, 1813	In Burford Gore
Edward, born Tp. of Orford	Aug. 31, 1816	First white child born in Orford Tp.
Dorothea Sherwood (Mrs. Wade)	April 25, 1819	
Elsie	Sept. 2, 1820	

The Story of Rev. Josiah Henson

By the Late Jean Tallach, (Edited)



REV. JOSIAH HENSON
(Uncle Tom)

Rev. Josiah Henson, better known as "Uncle Tom," believed to be the prototype of Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel, was well known to my mother and father, who heard of his sufferings from his own lips, a story that through Mrs. Stowe's book was to stir the hearts of millions of people, and become an important factor in freeing America's slaves.

The subject of our sketch was born in Charles Co., Maryland, June 15, 1789, on a farm near Port Tobacco belonging to Mr. Francis Newman. His mother was a slave for Dr. Josiah

McPherson, but was hired out to Mr. Newman. His father, for defending his wife against a brutal overseer, was given one hundred lashes and had his right ear cut off. He was then sold down into Alabama, the greatest of all terrors to the Maryland slave, and never more heard of. Following this tragic episode, his mother remained on the plantation of Dr. McPherson.

Dr. McPherson was much kinder to his slaves than many planters, and would not allow them to be abused. From him Uncle Tom, as we shall call him, received his christian name Josiah, after his own name, and Henson after his uncle, an officer in the Revolutionary war. While Dr. McPherson lived, the life of Henson and his mother was relatively care free and happy. Unfortunately for them, however, their master was found dead one morning after a night of merry making. His affairs were badly involved and plantation and slaves had to be sold. His mother became the property of Isaac Riley, while Josiah was sold to a stranger named Robbs. Subsequently Riley bought Uncle Tom, and mother and son were again together. The other children went to different plantations.

Josiah's mother seems to have given him considerable attention and care. She sought to guard him against the temptations by which he was surrounded, and as far as she was able, to bring him up in the fear and admonition of the Lord. She taught him The Lord's Prayer and impressed upon him his responsibility to God. She had her reward in his conversion in his eighteenth year under the preaching of John McKenny of Georgetown.

As a slave, Uncle Tom had his share of cruel treatment. I shall cite only one example of the abuses to which he was subjected. As a boy, he was ambitious to learn to read. He had seen his master's initials I. R. (Isaac Riley) on the butterprints. He made a goose-quill pen and imitated these letters as best he could. Then he wanted a spelling book. He collected some fallen apples from the orchard, sold them for eleven cents, and purchased the desired book. When his master discovered the book, and learned by what means he had secured it, he said he would teach him to sell his apples for so vile a purpose. The result was that the poor lad was beaten so unmercifully about the head and back that he became unconscious, and it was some time before he was able to work again. He carried the scars of this beating to his grave, and his shoulder blades were maimed in such a way that he was never again able to raise his hands to his head.

When Henson was twenty-two years old, he married an intelligent slave girl from a neighboring plantation whom he had met at a religious meeting. Charlotte, the Chloe of "Uncle Tom's

Cabin," had been well taught and she proved a faithful, efficient wife. Twelve children were born to them, four in slavery; seven survived to be a comfort to Uncle Tom in his declining years.

Uncle Tom appears to have been thoroughly trustworthy and conscientious in his work, and the confidence of his master, Isaac Riley, was gradually gained. He was made superintendent of farming operations on the plantation, and was responsible for the sale of the produce in the neighboring markets of Washington and Georgetown.

Riley, however, through shiftlessness and dissipation, fell into financial difficulties and plantation and slaves had to be sold. Before that dire event, Riley came to Uncle Tom and begged him to flee with his fellow slaves to his brother, Amos, in Kentucky. Pleased with this evidence of respect and esteem, and fearful of being sold into Georgia or Louisiana, Henson consented to make the attempt.

In February, 1825, Uncle Tom with his wife and two children, and eighteen slaves began the thousand mile trek through an unknown country to Amos Riley in Kentucky. They had a one-horse waggon well stocked with oats, meal and bacon. The men went on foot; the women and children rode on the waggon. At Wheeling, Va., he sold the horse and waggon and bought a yawl, and the rest of the way was much easier on the waters of the Ohio. At Cincinnati his fellow-slaves begged Henson to make a break for freedom; but he had given his word to his master and was determined to carry out his promise. In after years he seems to have regretted his part in consigning so many of his fellow-slaves to continued bondage.

He arrived in Davis Co., Kentucky, in April, 1825, and delivered himself and company to Amos Riley whose plantation contained from eighty to one hundred slaves. Henson remained here three years; and in consequence of the recommendation for ability and honesty which he had brought from Maryland, was employed as farm hand and general manager. From 1825 to 1828, he took advantage of the privileges his position gave him and tried to improve himself in every way. He was particularly active in religious matters and was accepted as a preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

In the spring of 1828, he secured a pass from Amos Riley to visit his old master in Maryland. He also had an introduction from his minister to a brother preacher in Cincinnati. In pursuance of his plan to secure his freedom by purchase, Uncle Tom preached in

Cincinnati and elsewhere and made earnest appeals for support. The response was generous, and the sum of two hundred and seventy-five dollars was raised. He failed, however, in his negotiations to purchase his liberty and was forced to return to the Amos Riley plantation.

About a year later he was ordered to accompany his master's son, Amos Jr., to New Orleans to dispose of their farm produce. The son had been commissioned by his father to sell Henson as well. Fortunately for Henson, Amos Jr. was taken violently ill with river fever, and Uncle Tom nursed him through his serious illness and brought him back to his father.

Uncle Tom's lot, however, was not improved. In fact it greatly deteriorated. Isaac Riley became more dissipated and cruel, and placed little restraint on the abuses of his overseer, Bryce Lytton, the Simon Legree of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." The result was that Henson resolved to be free at any cost.

His opportunity came at last, and in Sept. 1, 1830, on a dark, moonless night, a fellow-slave in a little skiff put Uncle Tom with his wife and four children across the river and landed them on the Indiana shore. Then the long journey to freedom began. Travelling by night and hiding by day, after two weeks they reached Cincinnati. Here they found friends, rested, and were taken thirty miles further on their way by waggon. They struggled on enduring the cold and wet, pursued by wolves, fed by wandering Indians, until after six long weeks they came upon a treeless plain lying south and west of Sandusky City. Here Henson was given a job helping to load a schooner, and the kindly Scottish captain gave the fugitives free passage to Buffalo. From there, with the captain's assistance, they crossed by ferry into Canada, landing on Oct. 28, 1830.

Uncle Tom spent the next few years in the neighborhood of Fort Erie, working first for Mr. Hibbard, and then for Mr. Reseley. During this time he acquired a horse, a cow and some pigs. He had also become a leader among the hundreds of fugitive slaves who had settled there. As a preacher, he carried on a religious work among them, and in his meetings he urged the negroes to save their money and invest in land. They deputized him to seek out a place where they could form a colony. He accordingly travelled on foot extensively between Lakes Ontario, Erie and Huron in the autumn of 1834, and was particularly impressed with the advantages in fertility of soil, etc., of the area east of Lake St. Clair and Detroit. It was some years later, however, before the colony was established in Dawn (Dresden), Kent Co.

Meanwhile Henson was busy among the settlements of ex-slaves, seeking to teach them habits of industry and thrift. He was active, too, in aiding slaves to escape to Canada. He is said, moreover, to have established the famous "Underground Railroad," those secret hiding places along the way, where the escaping slaves could be rested and fed and assisted further on their journey to Canada and freedom. He is said personally to have assisted in the liberation of one hundred and eighteen slaves.

* During the Rebellion of 1837-38 Uncle Tom with other ex-slaves fought in defence of his adopted country. On Jan. 8, 1838, the Detroit frontier force in which he was serving had its first taste of action. The schooner "Anne," manned by rebels and sympathizers, sailed down the Detroit River discharging their cannon and muskets into the Town of Sandwich. The fire was sharply returned by the defenders of the Canadian shore, and such casualties and confusion were caused on board the ship that she got out of control and drifted ashore on Elliott's Point. A detachment of Essex militia, including the second company of coloured volunteers under Capt. Josiah Henson, was quickly on the spot. The vessel was speedily captured and the men aboard made prisoners.

Through his religious associations Uncle Tom had met Jas. C. Fuller of New York State, a Quaker, who was much impressed with his coloured friend, and concerned about the uplift and well-being of the negro race. He promised to interest his friends in England whither he was going on a visit. He collected there about fifteen hundred dollars, and the question, on his return, was how this money could be spent to best advantage. Henson strongly advocated a settlement where the former slaves would be taught how to work, and, at the same time, acquire the rudiments of a general education. Other funds having been raised by sympathizers, the British-American Institute was formed and steps taken in 1839 to set up a colony in Dawn, south of the Sydenham River, near the present town of Dresden.

Two hundred acres of good land covered with a heavy growth of black walnut and white wood were bought by the Institute at four dollars an acre . Henson purchased two hundred acres adjoining this lot for himself, and an additional hundred which he donated to the colony's plot. Here were established a grist mill, a saw mill, a blacksmith's shop, a carpenter's shop, etc., in which the ex-slaves were taught to do properly several kinds of manual labor. A considerable portion of their time, however, had to be spent in

* See "Upper Canada's Black Defenders" by Ernest Green: Vol. 27, Papers & Records, Ont. Hist. Soc.

school acquiring the elements of education. This settlement was a noteworthy achievement, and its system of vocational education perhaps the first of its kind in Canada. Mr. Chickering of the Boston Piano Manufacturing Co. purchased the first shipment of black walnut from the saw mill of this colony in 1845.

On one of his trips to the New England States on behalf of this settlement a brief story of the life of Henson was published. This, falling into the hands of Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, moved her greatly, and in 1849 she invited him to visit her at Andover, Mass. From this meeting Mrs. Stowe is said to have acquired much of the material for her famous story, "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

Uncle Tom made several trips to England. His first visit was in 1850 when he gave lectures to raise money for the Institute. He had taken with him some of the walnut products of his mill which he displayed at the Great Exhibition in the Crystal Palace in 1851. He was much pleased when he and his exhibit were noticed by the Queen and her attendants.

Rev. Henson was again in England in 1852, and again received many marks of respect and esteem. Among those who admired and befriended him were the Earl of Shaftesbury, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Mr. S. Morley, Mr. S. Gurney, Geo. and Thos. Sturge, and Lord John Russell, the prime minister of England. Before the expiration of the year he was recalled to Canada by the serious illness of his wife, the Chloe of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." She died shortly after his return and was buried near Dresden, Kent Co.

Shortly after his wife's death Henson purchased from slavery his brother for £110. He joined the colony at Dresden.

In 1854, "Uncle Tom" married again, this time to Mrs. Nancy Gamble of Baltimore.

The depression of the late fifties and the general distress following the American Civil War affected the prospertity of the Dawn Institute, and its affairs became so involved that under a court order it was sold, and the proceeds went to set up the Wilberforce Institute in Chatham, Ont.

In 1876, "Uncle Tom" went to England for the third time. Several of his old friends, including the Earl of Shaftesbury, gave him encouragement and support. His lectures in England and Scotland netted him £2,750, sufficient to pay the debts on the Wilberforce Institute and to make some provision for Uncle Tom's old age.

In Feb., 1877, while still in England, Rev. Henson, by Her Majesty's command, visited Windsor Castle and was honoured with an audience by the Queen. Following the reception he was shown through the Castle with all honour. Queen Victoria graciously presented Uncle Tom with a signed, framed photograph of herself. In April of the same year he sailed for Canada.

Shortly after Henson's return from England, he made a pilgrimage to his mother's grave. On his way he called on President Hayes by whom he was graciously received.

During the closing years of his life Uncle Tom lived on his farm near Dresden, preaching regularly and engaging actively in other religious work. But Uncle Tom's long and devoted life was drawing to its close. He had now reached his ninety-fourth year. After an illness of only three days he died on May 5, 1883.

An unusually large number of people attended the funeral of Rev. Henson. The service in the B.M.E. Church was conducted by Elder W. R. Hawkins who had been a fellow-slave on the Riley plantation. His Masonic brethren of Prince Hall Lodge, Mt. Moriah No. 4, of Dresden, and other lodges assisted in the rites when his body was consigned to the grave in a plot on his own farm. There the grave, and the stone that marks his last resting-place, can be seen by any interested person.

The following extract from the late Jean Tallach's will indicates some of the objects that may be seen in the "Uncle Tom" Exhibit in the Chatham-Kent Museum:

(1) "In trust, to give to the Kent. Co. Historical Society at Chatham, Ont., one phootograph of Queen Victoria and autograph by her, and enclosed in frame, which was presented to the late Rev. Josiah Henson by the late queen (Victoria);

(2) In trust, to give to said Historical Society, part of a dinner set consisting of eight pieces presented to the late Rev. Josiah Henson by the late Earl of Shaftesburg;

*(3) In trust, to give to said Historical Society, one Anglican Prayer Book, presented to the late Josiah Henson by the late Harriet Beecher Stowe;

(4) In trust to give to said Historical Society two pieces of a breakfast set presented to the late Josiah Henson by John Lucas, Hermit of Hertfordshire;

(5) In trust, to give to said Historical Society one Wedgwood teapot, presented to the late Rev. Josiah Henson by the late Thomas Sturge; and also any autograph books of the late Josiah Henson and Testimonials."

Note 1. *(3) The Prayer Book was not received and cannot be traced.—Ed.

Note 2. The following letter, the original of which is in the MacDonald Historical Collection, Windsor Public Library, should dispel any doubt of the authenticity of Rev. Josiah Henson as the prototype of Uncle Tom in Harriet Beecher Stowe's famous novel:

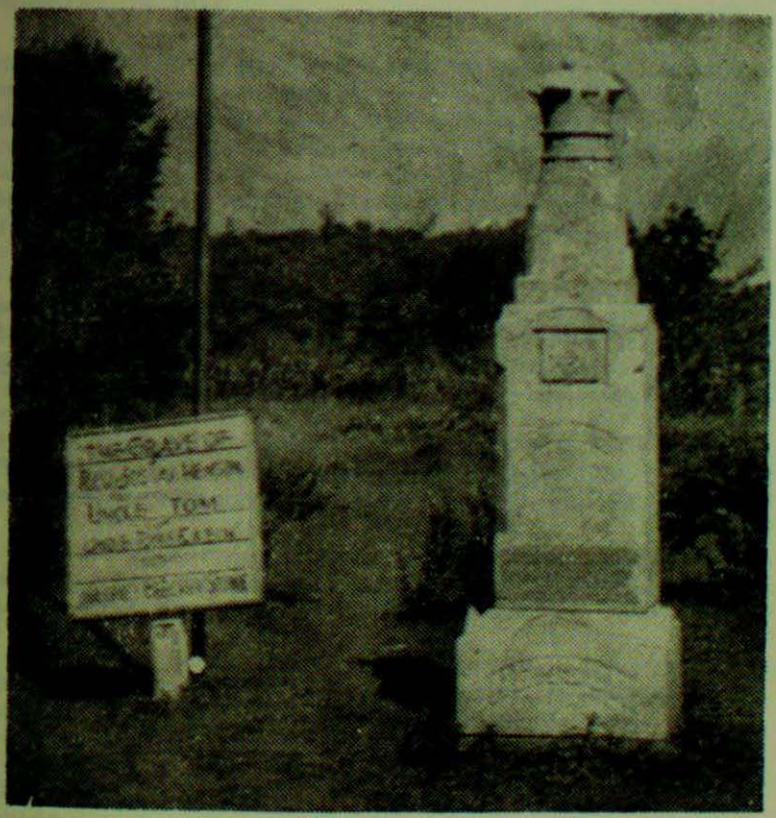
Amherst, Mass., May 15, 1877.

Dear Sir:

I take pleasure in endorsing, with all my heart, that noble black man, Josiah Henson, whom I believe to be worthy of all the aid and help which any good man may be disposed to give. It is also true that a sketch of his life, published many years ago by the Massachusett's Anti-Slavery Society, furnished me many of the finest conceptions and incidents of Uncle Tom's character, in particular, the scene where he refuses to free himself by the murder of a brutal master. The real history of Josiah Henson, in some points, goes even beyond that of Uncle Tom in traits of heroic manhood. He once visited me in Andover, and personal intercourse confirmed the high esteem I had for him. I heartily hope he may have friends to assist him in his difficulties.

Yours very truly,

H. B. Stowe.



UNCLE TOM'S GRAVE
Dresden, Ontario

Wheatley Village

By Mrs. R. W. Leader

Wheatley is situated on the County Line between the Counties of Essex and Kent, but wholly in Kent County for Municipal, Provincial and Federal purposes. It was called "Pegtown" when the first few settlers congregated in this territory on Talbot Road a couple of miles from the shores of Lake Erie. One story has it that there were seven cobblers there; another was that houses were built on posts or pegs without foundations, thus giving rise to the name "Pegtown."

There was a man named Wheatley, a farmer, who was very highly respected in the settlement. He died and it was suggested that the name Pegtown (which did not meet with favor) be changed to Wheatley in honor of the fine citizen by this name.

The nearest trading post was Amherstburg. Sometimes the men had to cross the river to get supplies from Detroit. The nearest mill was in Chatham. The date of the first settlement was around 1800.

The following is a copy of a letter written by Caleb Coatsworth which is on file in the Archives East Block, Parliament Buildings, Toronto:

"To the Honorable
The Commissioner of Crown Lands,
Province of Ontario.

Hon. Sir:

The undersigned petitioner humbly represents that he intends building a dock on the shore of Lake Erie in front of Lot 200 Talbot Road as there is no dock for shipping timber, lumber, staves, cordwood or produce within seven miles to the West of this locality nor to the East for a distance of twenty miles.

That the estimated cost of the dock is five thousand dollars, and your petitioner now prays that you will grant him an exclusive claim as applied for by C. W. Hotchkiss, that your petitioner may have some protection to guaran-

tee such outlay of money on this open coast, his privilege to the exclusion of all others, and your petitioner will forever pray.

Signed

Dated Dec. 19, 1817. Caleb Coatsworth"

From Wheatley East there was a dense forest called the "Five Mile Woods." Many years of work were spent on clearing this territory. Walnut and chestnut and oak trees were abundant. White wood, or the "tulip tree" as it is now called, was also plentiful. In those early days the white wood was used for making furniture for the pioneer homes, axe handles and wagons. It was very durable and would not split. The tulip tree had blossoms in June resembling clusters of large, beautiful yellow and orange and green tulips. There is one tree near Wheatley now, a very old tree about sixty feet high. When the tree is in bloom, visitors come to see it from miles around. Trees that were very valuable were cut down for firewood and many of them were burned after they were dried because of the difficulty of selling the wood and the need of clearing the land.

There were wild animals in this woods, deer and wolves a-plenty, and wild turkey for a meal whenever desired.

Talbot Road rambled along the lake front, a crooked road little better than a trail. It was moved back in places some distance as the lake encroached year after year.

In 1857, there was a fishery operated at the lake by the McLean family. This was said to be the first industry. It continues to be an important business and is still operated by McLeans. There are six or more other large fisheries and fish is shipped to American and Canadian cities, the sales of which are over a million dollars' worth a year. Omstead's filleting establishment is the largest in Canada.

Alexander Wilkinson built the first post office and W. Buchanan was the first postmaster. Thomas Dale had the first store.

The Baptist Church dates back to 1850 and is linked with the names of Elder Wilkinson, Elder Corlett and Elder Fitch. They held meetings for a time in a Methodist Church west of Wheatley and in the public school. Later, George Middleton, hotel keeper, gave the Baptists the use of his bar room on Sundays which they gratefully accepted. Jacob Julien, another hotel keeper, gave them

a lot and a little white church was built in 1866, the first church in Wheatley. Later, they bought their brick building and it has been used ever since. It belonged to the Episcopal Methodists and was built in 1874.

The Methodist Church in the village dates back to 1874. This brick church was bought by the Anglicans about 1918 and services were held in it for a few years. About 1935 it was sold, to be remodelled for an apartment house, but this did not materialize. It was used for a Penticostal Church. In 1914, a new Methodist Church was built on Talbot Street at a cost of $20,000.00. This is now a United Church.

In the Baptist Church a minister named Dodds became dissatisfied with his work and he, together with a number of his members, started the Immanuel Baptist organization, later buying a church building. After a few years it was closed.

Before there was a Methodist Church in Wheatley, there was a little meeting house about a mile West of Wheatley. Rev. Thomas Culbert had charge of thirteen appointments in this territory and this was one of them. He had a young minister and a number of laymen in the district to assist with the preaching services each week. Rev. George Clarke was one of his assistants in 1865 and he was only 20 years old when in this little church he preached his first sermon. He had it well prepared but did not preach on the text he had chosen. Mr. Culbert had told him the members had a way of staying around outside visiting with each other before coming into the meeting. George Clarke decided he would try to teach them to be on time. There was only one man in the church when the service began. The minister and his listener sang the first hymn, then came the prayer and Scripture reading and another humn. The sermon followed. Instead of the text prepared, he switched to a more suitable one — "Thou art the man." As the last hymn was being sung, the members who had been outside, strolled in. At the close of the hymn, he pronounced the benediction. The next Sunday there was no one late. Dr. George Clarke died in Thorold at the age of 97. He preached in St. Paul St. Church in St. Catharines when he was 93.

The first school section was organized in 1871 with M. L. Shaw, William McLean and H. Bickford as trustees. The site of the one room school was on the lake road near W. Derbyshire's home. James Neil was the first teacher. In 1884 a new frame school was built nearby. Up until 1894 one teacher handled all classes. In 1902 the brick public school was built at a cost of $5000.00. W. C. Dainty was principal and three other teachers were employed.

A $30,000.00 continuation school was built in 1922. The public school was burned in 1943, and, until building materials are available, classes will be held in the continuation school.

The Pere Marquette Railroad was constructed in 1890 and brought much delight to the villagers.

The Wheatley Journal was printed first in 1895 by Dan Kenyon. Later, (1899) it was taken over by Epplett Bros. and is owned now by Epplett and Son.

Dr. J. A. Campbell had the first automobile.

Excitement ran high when it was learned that gas wells were being bored in Romney Tp., and there was an abundant supply. Farmers, on whose farms the wells were bored, received $200.00 a year and were each given free gas for heating and lighting. Wheatley streets were lighted with gas and everyone used it for all domestic purposes when it was piped through the village about 1907. There were seven wells bored in the village. These gas wells eventually played out, but even yet at times they are active. It was gas seeping from one of them that caused the explosion of the I.O.O.F. Block in 1935.

Wheatley became an incorporated village in 1914. Previous to this the village, which was partly in Essex and partly in Kent, was controlled by the Councils of Romney and Mersea. Major T. M. Fox was the first reeve.

A franchise was given to Marvin White to use the streets for an electric lighting system to replace the old gas lights. In 1922 Hydro was installed.

The Provincial Highway No. 3 through the village was paved in 1927, and village streets were also paved about that time.

An excellent water supply from the lake was secured in 1929. This is extended each year. In 1946, a $90,000.00 filtration plant was begun and will soon be in operation. This year (1947) the P. M. Railway will be supplied with water.

An outstanding event that brought publicity from coast to coast was the organization of a Community Club in 1935. There are open air concerts every Saturday night from May until the end of September. The Wheatley Band of thirty-three or more members with Ivan Coulter, a local musician, as leader, assists on the programs, and musicians, vocalists, dancers, magicians and other performers provide snappy entertainment for the crowds that attend.

Some of the best speakers in Ontario, including Premier Drew and Members of Parliament, Doctors, Lawyers, Judges, and many others have given outstanding addresses. There are up to date movies and pet shows and various other forms of entertainment during the summer. Maclean's Magazine sent a representative to write it up and a glowing account of this organization and its activities was given. Seldom less than two thousand people attend and there are often many more. The village in 1947 has a population of about nine hundred.

During the winter when snow storms often tie up Ontario in many towns, cities and villages, Wheatley residents sit back contentedly and smile, for seldom, very seldom, does the weatherman inflict severe weather and heavy drifts on the little Lake Erie Village. During the winter of 1946-1947, when nearly all of Ontario was covered with snow drifts, in some places as high as telephone poles, there was at no time a drift to be seen in Wheatley. Two or three inches of snow and of short duration made the winter of 1947 a pleasant one.

About 1910 an English Syndicate bought up 2000 acres of land along the lake front. It was to be divided into 25 acre farms and sold to Englishmen. Before the plans were completed, World War No. 1 prevented the scheme from materializing. The depression which followed was the cause of further frustration. In 1946 this valuable land was sold to a Kingsville Company and they plan to develop it for summer homes and recreation parks and sell land farther back from the lake to farmers.

During the summer months the breezes are usually from the South and South West. Wheatley, being on the North shore, gets the cool breezes from the lake in the summer and the North and North West winter winds are not so cold as on the other side of the lake. It is said that Cleveland, Ohio, just across the lake, is much warmer in the summer and colder in the winter.

There are a few homes in Wheatley that were built about 1867, viz, that of Enoch Shaw, Charles Potts, Ralph Liddle, and Thomas Dales. None of the builders is now living. Mrs. Oscar Lounsbury, Mrs. Arthur Wilson, John Mills, Mrs. Charles Brown, Melvin Batchelder are the only ones now living whose parents were Wheatley pioneers.

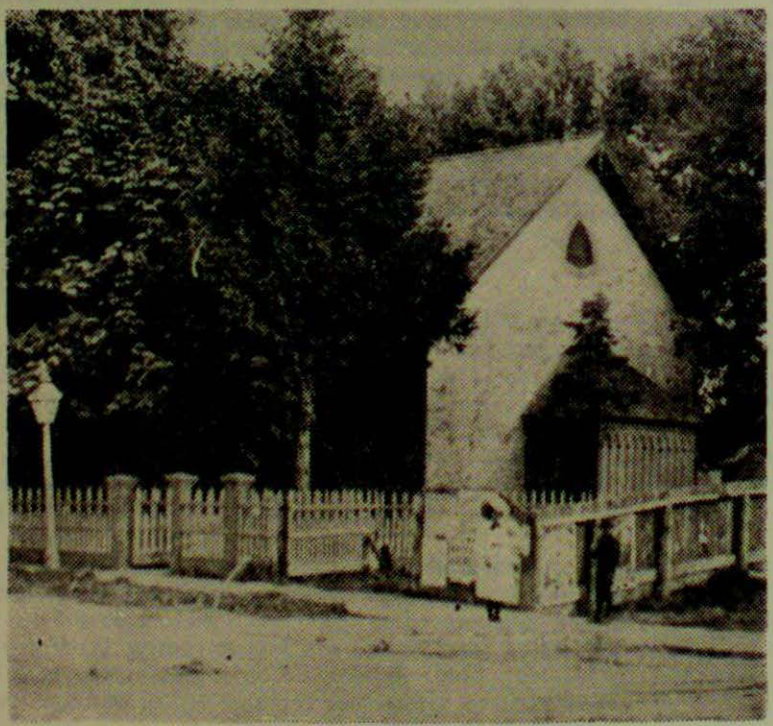
Life in the pioneer days was hard for women as well as for the men. There was little time for pleasure, and driving in home-made wagons over rough trails was far from enjoyable. Buckboards, horseback, were used by many. Women worked from dawn till

dark making by hand all clothing worn by the family. Long distances were driven to get materials for all needs. Food was cheap, so was labor. Women worked for a dollar a week and less. Butter was 10c a pound, eggs 10c a dozen, three dozen for a quarter; beef and pork 3-6c a pound. Chickens were 20c ready for the oven. There were no packaged foods. Sugar, molasses, oatmeal and most other foods were in open barrels. There were no screens in the olden days. Flies swarmed all summer and in the evenings the ceilings were black with them. Those were the days when diarrhoea was killing off scores of children each summer. Flies were responsible for this and many other diseases. If one had tuberculosis, there was no hope. Patients were made as comfortable as possible, but no one ever expected a patient to recover. If a member in one family took the disease, it was thought to be "in the family" and no precautions were taken. There was no insulin, no immunization against infectious diseases, no X-ray, and there were none of the methods that in later days seem so essential to sickness.

History of First Presbyterian Church

CHATHAM, ONTARIO.

By Mrs. J. F. Fletcher



ORIGINAL FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The information contained in the first part of this history is taken from a paper written by the late P. D. McKellar in 1893.

Before giving the history of the First Presbyterian Church, it is well to travel into the past to give the present generation a brief narrative of the struggles, trials and persecution out of which emerged the two churches, viz. the United Presbyterian, called the

"U. P.", and "Free" churches from the union of which the present church obtained its name.

After the Reformation, a Protestant Church was established both in England and in Scotland. In England, it was the "English Church," and in Scotland, the "Reformed Church of Scotland." In the form of Government there was a material differece but both were state churches, that is, it was at the expense of the state that churches, rectories and manses were built, and the stipend of the ministers was paid out of the state treasury. The people had no voice in the selection of their ministers, but were compelled to accept the minister appointed, either by the King or the overlord or nobleman on whose estate the parish church was situated.

King James claimed that he was head of the Reformed Church of Scotland and, therefore, could dictate to the General Assembly in regard to laws for the government of the church. The people resisted this and told the King that they would recognize no headship of their church save Jesus Christ and Him only. The King, knowing that the Scottish people are a stubborn race, wisely relinquished his claim and the General Assembly won its freedom to govern the church. But this skirmish with the King had set the people thinking not only on the question of church government but also as to the rights of the people to choose their ministers, and they so persistently pressed this demand upon the King that he finally conceded this claim also. At the union of England and Scotland care was taken to safeguard the rights of the Church of Scotland, and in the Act of Union they were guaranteed complete liberty as to church government and selection of their ministers; but a few years later the compact was shamelessly violated by an act of Parliament restoring the church patronage to the king and nobility. This act aroused the anger of the Scottish people and they bound themselves as individuals and as a nation to stand by the simplicity of faith and discipline laid down by the reformers. Men of all walks of life signed the "Solemn League and Covenant," hence the "Covenanters."

Out of this struggle grew the most bloody persecution in the history of Protestantism, people being driven from the churches and hunted with savagery over the moors and hills of Scotland. It was only in dens and caves that the persecuted people dared raise their voices in prayer and praise to God. Many were martyred but a few godly ministers remained, and in 1832 forty of them appeared before the General Assembly with an address backed by a petition praying for a redress of grievances. They were refused even a hearing, four of their leaders were suspended and afterwards deposed from the ministry. These four ministers formed themselves

into what they called the Associate Presbytery. This is the origin of the Church of the United Secession, in later years known as the United Presbyterian Church (or U.P. church). It had no share in state endowment and was maintained solely by voluntary givings.

During all these years men had been set over the congregation by the will of the patron, and were in no wise fitted for the office. The moderate majority of ministers had made no effort to abolish the evil and it was through the working of this very law that many of them had obtained their positions.

A law was passed by the General Assembly of 1834 called the "Veto" Act, because though it could not give the people the power of choice in the matter of choosing their minister, it gave them in certain circumstances the power to veto the choice of the patron.

In May, 1843, the Assembly met and four hundred ministers and a larger number of elders withdrew from the Established Church. Thus the Free Church was born. When the news reached Canada the same result followed, half the ministers and people casting their lot with the Free Church.

In 1837, there was only one church in Chatham, viz. St. Paul's Anglican. In 1841, the Rev. Wm. Findlay came to Chatham to organize a Presbyterian Church and to urge the people to erect a place of worship in connection with the Church of Scotland. A meeting held in the old regimental Hospital was attended not only by Presbyterians, but by many of other denominations, who expressed a friendly interest in the movement. The result of this meeting was the appointment of a committe to solicit subscriptions for a church, and apparently the response was gratifying. In November, 1842, Mr. Findlay wrote that if they could raise £130 or £140 currency by autumn for the stipend of a minister, he thought he could procure one. However no minister came and no doubt the disruption of 1843 in the Church of Scotland made it impossible for a minister to be sent to Canada, as there were so many pulpits vacant in the old land and Canada. The church was finally completed in 1847, but they did not have a settled minister till 1853.

In January, 1842, the site of the United Presbyterian church was purchased. This was on Wellington St. near William and the old church is still standing (1949), being a part of the seed store owned by Mr. M. J. Smith, he having purchased it from the Robert Gray Estate. Mr. Gray had obtained it from the Canadian Pacific Railway. This church was begun in 1842 and completed in 1848, and when completed, a minister in the person of Rev. Jas. McFayden

was secured. So that the U.P.'s were the first to have a church and regularly ordained minister.

Then there was the Free Church congregation. In January, 1848, Rev. Angus McColl came to Chatham as their minister. As they had no church and the Church of Scotland had no minister, services were held in their church by both congregations. Mr. McColl ministered to the Old Kirk (Church of Scotland), now St. Andrew's Church, as well as his own till the arrival of the Rev. J. Robb as Old Kirk minister in 1853. It then beecame necessary for the congregation to part company, and in August, 1853, the site on the north east corner of Wellington and Adelaide Sts. was purchased and the Free Church congregation proceedeed to erect a building for themselves. Meantime they worshipped in a building on King St., and for a time in the military barracks then standing on Tecumseh Park.

Mr. McColl's ministry was a strenuous one, and he certainly gave the best in him to the people of Chatham and adjacent country. Every Sabbath after serving his own congregation in the morning, he would ride or drive into Harwich or the Township of Chatham or Dover or Raleigh, hold an afternoon service, then return to hold the evening service in his own church. Once every month after the morning service he would go to Tilbury, a distance of twenty miles, and hold an evening service. This he did Sabbath after Sabbath for years, until these outlying congregations became strong enough to engage a minister of their own. He was indeed a faithful worker in the vineyard of the Lord. A noticeable feature connected with the building of the churches is the fact that they were built and paid for out of the subscriptions made for that purpose and that no debt was placed upon any of the properties.

In 1879, the U. P. and Free Churches, which in 1875 had become connected with the Presbyterian Church in Canada, united under the name of the First Presbyterian Church.

Rev. Mr. McColl (afterwards Dr. McColl) and Rev. Wm. Walker, formerly minister of the U. P. Church, had then a joint pastorate, preaching on alternate Sundays.

At that time the session was comprised of Kenneth Urquhart, John McKay, Wm. Robertson, John McKerrall, Richard Paxton, Jas. Birch, Edward Smith and Thos. H. Taylor.

The trustees were Kenneth Urquhart, H. F. Cumming, Wm. Grant, Edward Smith and John McKinlay.

The Board of Management consisted of Thos. Stone, John Paxton, John Thompson, John McKerrall, T. H. Taylor, Wm. Robertson, K. Urquhart, Chas. Stewart and H. F. Cumming.

The organist was Miss Bessie Walker, and the choir leader Mr. J. B. Flint.

In 1879, it was agreed to administer the Lord's Supper four times a year, on the first Sabbaths of December, March, June and September; also that week day services be held in the morning and evening on the Friday previous to the Communion Sabbath, and on the Monday morning after communion. At that time metal tokens were used at communion and were distributed to members present on the Friday morning and evening services. In 1894 it was agreed to replace the metal tokens by cards to be distributed to members in their homes, but they seem to have still been given out at the Friday meetings for some time after. In June, 1887, the Monday service was held in the evening instead of the morning, and it would seem that this service was discontinued about 1900.

In March, 1881, it is recorded that Mr. and Mrs. Thos. Keith were restored to the membership of the church from which they had fallen by non-attendance. At the same session meeting a petition was presented praying that unfermented wine be used at communion. This petition was granted.

In December, 1881, at a meeting of session, a committee was appointed to wait on Alexander McDugall to inquire why he was absent so often from church.

In January, 1886, a meeting called to consider renting or buying the Methodist Church on Elizabeth St., decided to establish a Church and Sunday School there at which the three ministers would preach, viz., those of First Presbyterian and St. Andrew's churches. In March, 1886, the two congregations decided to rent the church at one hundred dollars a year, the cost to be divided between the two churches, with the privilege of renting it for three more years on like terms. Sunday School was to be held in the afternoon and service at night. The evening service was discontinued after one year, but the Sunday School lasted till at least the end of 1889.

In 1889, a committee composed of Messrs. K. Urquhart, John Rankin, John McKeough and P. D. McKellar and Mr. H. F. Cumming was appointed to secure a site for a new church. The committee obtained options on several properties deemed suitable for the purpose and after a full examination and discussion as to the merits of the several sites, the congregation on April 6, 1891,

directed the committee to close for the present site (1949) purchased from Dr. Tye for $8,000. The contract was let in October, 1891, and Messrs. Alister McKay and Jas. S. Waugh were appointed a building committee. The corner stone was laid June 18, 1892, and in May, 1893, the church was formally opened by Rev. Robt. Johnston. The cost of the church building and reconstruction in 1906 was $31,000. The cost of the organ including the changing and setting up in 1906 was $3,500, making the property worth $42,500, including the cost of the site.

It is a noticeable feature of the spirit animating the whole congregation in giving towards the building fund, that the Children's Aid Society of the church collected and paid to the managers in 1892 and 1893 the sum of $472.23. The Ladies' Aid Society purchased the organ, a two manual twenty-one stop Karn-Warren pipe organ, with a case of grained oak and paid for it before the last instalment fell due, although they had already contributed about $2,000 to the building fund.

During the building of the First Presbyterian Church on Wellington and Fifth Sts., services were held in the Opera House at $13 per Sunday.

The corner stone came from Aylmer costing $20 with inscription.

When the church was first built, there were five furnaces. Later this was changed and only one has been used.

The Walker Memorial Window was dedicated when the church was built, in memory of Rev. Wm. Walker.

In 1893, the session was composed of Kenneth Urquhart, Jas. Birch, John McKerrall, Wm. Robertson, Andrew Thompson, J. B. Rankin and Fred Stone.

The Board of Management was: Thos. Stone, Wm. Robertson, S. M. Glenn, P. D. McKellar, S. T. Martin, J. J. Ross and Fred Stone.

In 1891, the Wellington St. property was sold to the Canadian Pacific Railway for $7,000 and at some time the Adelaide St. church was sold to the Martin Pump Manufacturing Co. for $2,300. Later Mr. Robt. Gray purchased the Wellington St. property from the Canadian Pacific Railway.

In 1896, envelopes for the schemes of the church were adopted.

In 1900, Rev. F. H. Larkin resigned and Mr. W. E. Knowles came in 1901 but remained only till 1903.

In 1904, Rev. A. H. McGillivray was called to the pastorate and he remained till 1909.

In 1908, the family of the late Mrs. T. H. Taylor presented an individual communion service in memory of their mother. In 1921 additional cups and trays were presented by Mr. W. J. Taylor and another set in 1922 by Mr. W. H. Taylor.

In 1907, the members of the Session were as follows: Rev. A. H. McGillivray, Moderator; Fred Stone, Clerk; D. R. Farquharson, Representative Elder to Presbytery; Kenneth Urquhart, Wm. Robertson, John McKerrall, Andrew Thompson, J. B. Rankin, K.C., James Birch, James Law and T. K. McKeand.

The Board of Managers were: D. R. Farquharson, chairman; T. K. McKeand, secretary, and J. J. Ross, S. M. Glenn, F. D. Laurie, Alister McKay, J. S. Black, Geo. A. Gray, E. R. Smith, Thos. Campbell, J. McDougall and W. M. Foreman.

The Trustees were: J. B. Rankin, K.C., S. M. Glenn and Alister McKay.

The Officers of the Ladies' Aid Society were: President, Mrs. S. T. Martin; 1st vice-pres., Mrs. McGillivray; Secretary, Mrs. Wm. Stone; Treasurer, Mrs. S. M. Glenn; Assistant Treasurer, Mrs. W. J. Taylor; Mite Treasurer, Mrs. Wendall Wilson; Assistants, Mrs. John Smith, Miss Green and Mrs. T. H. Taylor

The officers of the Foreign Missionary Society were, for 1907: President, Mrs. D. R. Farquharson; 1st Vice-president, Mrs. Alex. Hall; Secretary, Miss E. Paxton; Assistant Secretary, Miss L. Glenn; Treasurer, Miss S. M. McKerrall; Assistant Treasurer, Mrs. W. Wilson; Glad Tidings Secretary, Mrs. W. Cornish.

In 1906, the space between the Church and the Sunday School was filled in, a large curtain previously having been used to separate the two auditoriums. The seating of the church was also changed to face the north and the organ was also reversed at a total cost of $4540.55.

In 1909, Rev. A. H. McGillivray resigned and Rev. Henry Dickie, D.D., was inducted. He remained till 1920 when he resigned. During his pastorate caps and gowns were purchased for the choir in 1911.

In 1920, Rev. D. H. Marshall became pastor. He resigned in 1930 to take charge of St. Andrew's Church, Guelph.

In 1926, the Ladies' Aid purchased the manse situated on King St. West, and sold the old one on Raleigh St.

In 1927, a set of beautiful collection plates (wooden) was presented by Messrs. S. M. Glenn, F. A. Steinke and Geo. A. Gray (Victoria Ave.)

In 1926, a baptismal font was made by one of the elders, Mr. John Cocker, and donated to the church.

In 1936, a silver communion cup was given by Mrs. John R. McColl, and Mrs. D. E. Colles presented to the congregation a beautiful communion table.

In 1928, an addition was made to the Sunday School in connection with the tower for the chimes of eleven bells, and dedicated as a result of special donations. One of these was from Mr. Edward McKerrall. The familiar hymn, "Abide With Me," to be played each evening at 6.45, was the gift of Mrs. T. H. Taylor in memory of her son, the late Lieut. Wallace Taylor. Dr. Mustard presented a bell in memory of his daughter, the late Miss Elizabeth Mustard. Mr. Alex. D. Chaplin, ex-M.P., of Chatham, presented a clock which plays the Westminster chimes each quarter hour and the hours in turn. The Ladies' Aid Society, under the leadership of Mrs. J. B. Smith, worked hard to bring this about.

The largest bell has a weight of three thousand pounds and the total weight of the bells with mountings is about ten tons. They were made and installed by the McShane Bell Foundry Co. of Baltimore, Md.

The cost of the new building was about $20,000 and of the chimes $10,000.

In 1937, the large chandelier which formed the principal means of lighting in the centre of the church proper was taken down and a modern lighting system installed. Today (October, 1949) as the church stands, its seating capacity is about five hundred and fifty on the main floor, with a gallery on three sides seating an additional two hundred.

In the report of 1948 the Kirk Session consisted of: Rev. M. Scott Fulton, M.D., D.D., Moderator; Wm. McKenzie Ross, Clerk; Gordon Sharpe (Alternate, Earl Peifer), Representative Elder;

Joseph Baker, G. B. Beardall, John Beardall, Bruce Bourne, Eric Brown, Fred Burnie, John Chittim, W. E. Elliott, Robert Ferguson, J. F. Fletcher, Thos. Gow, Stuart Hare, Andrew Jamieson, Edward Johnson, D. D. Johnstone, Jas. Lang, Roy Martin, W. G. McGeorge, Samuel McGuire, Earl Peifer, Robert Rorrison, David Rogers, Alex Ross, Wm. McKenzie Ross, Jr., Gordon Sharpe, J. A. Stenton, Glenn Stewart, Jack Thompson, Wm. McKenzie Ross, Sr.

The Trustees were: Harry Andrew and Dr. Neil Smith.

Managers:

1949	1950	1951
Bruce Bourne	Carl Elley	W. E. Elliott
Walter Chinnick	J. F. Fletcher	Robt. A. Ferguson
W. A. Hammond	Earl Peifer	S. A. Green
Dan Lilley	W. E. Reid	W. G. Lewies
R. J. McIntyre	M. J. Smith	F. McDonald
J. C. Stewart	H. M. Smith	W. G. McGeorge

Chairman—Carl Elley Treasurer—H. M. Smith
Envelope Steward—Alex. Ross Church Officer—Chas. Gammage

Some of the organists and choir leaders of the church, beginning with Mr. J. W. Flint as precentor in 1880, were: Miss Bessie Walker, Miss M. Stephenson, Miss I. Rolls, Mr. and Mrs. Ruthven McDonald (the records show that the McDonalds were to attend Sunday School, prayer meeting and all other services on Sundays and week days at a salary of $250 per annum, increased by $50 a year after their coming to the church), Mr. Robinson, Miss L. Pratt, Mr. E. H. Edwards, Mrs. John Cooper, Mr. T. W. Willmott, Mr. B. Arthur, Mr. John Smith, Mr. Wm. Brackin, Miss Donalda Foreman, Mrs. Mary Jacks, Mr. R. W. Angus, who resigned to go to World War I and resumed in 1919, Miss McKenzie, Mr. L. H. Roberts, Mr. Lewis Challinor, Mrs. Robt. Killop, Mrs. Nona Harrison, Miss Mabel Robinson and in August, 1949, Mr. Craig Hamilton.

A History of the Presbyterian Church

Dresden, Ontario

By Rev. A. C. Jameson.

This brief chronology is by no means complete and is written largely with a view to showing the events in the material history of the church.

1872 Mission station opened in Dresden by the Presbytery of Chatham. Mr. G. G. McRobbie first student minister and Dr. Gilbert Tweedie, M.D., assisted as lay-minister. Five families composed the congregation, the McDonald families and that of Mr. Jas. McConnell.

1876 First church building erected in North Dresden on land donated by Mr. Robt. Whitson, Sr., whose property extended from the cheese factory to the school house lane.

1879 Dresden Church united in a pastoral charge with Knox, Chatham Twp. Original elders for Dresden church are Mr. Allan McDonald, Sr., and Mr. Jas. McConnell.

1881 First ordained minister inducted, Rev. Thos. Talloch.

1885 Earliest minutes of Board of Managers show: Wm. Colville, president; A. H. McDonald, vice-pres.; T. B. Anderson, sec.; Chas. Tassie, treasurer; and Messrs. John Slater, Milton Lent and George Marr. Mr. E. Piggot was the treasurer who retired that year; Mr. Tassie, elected this year, was treasurer until 1902.

1886 System of contribution by weekly envelopes first introduced for those desiring them; but this system did not supplant the older subscription plan with quarterly payments. The latter continued till well past the turn of the century. Dresden church undertakes to raise the portion of stipend formerly paid from the augmentation fund. There is no record of Dresden again receiving aid from such a fund.

1887 Mr. Anderson appointed to see "Mr. Ferguson and the School

Board re purchasing lot for new church and disposing of old church property."

1888 "The secretary of the Board stated that the Ladies' Aid Society of the church had paid him $50.00 to be appropriated to purchasing the site for the new church." A vote of thanks was made, an act often afterward repeated in later minutes for a consistent support up to the present time.

1890 Death of Rev. Mr. Talloch, Feb. 4th; induction of Mr. R. M. Croll.

1892 The last minute in this old record book shows: President, A. H. McDonald; vice-president, J. J. French; sec., T. B. Anderson; treasurer, C. Tassie; and Messrs. O. McVean, T. E. Laird, A. Cuthbert and John Slater.

1895 Rev. Mr. Croll resigns. During the vacancy the church is moved across the river ice on a trestle to the present site, Mr. J. W. Greece and Ed. Morden in charge of the moving.

1896 Rev. T. D. McCullough inducted. Messrs. Wm. McVean, Thos. E. Laird, Allan H. McDonald, Jr., John H. Burnie and Jamin Lawrence ordained and inducted elders. At about this time or earlier the Sunday School was organized under T. B. Anderson.

1898 First Mission Band organized under Mrs. T. B. Anderson.

1899 Rev. T. D. McCullough resigns the charge. Rev. Norman Lindsay inducted.

1900 From an Annual report for that year we have the following: There were 108 members of communion. Choir leader was Thos. King; organist, Miss Switzer; Sabbath School, Thos. Laird, Supt.; Jas. Love, assistant; W.F.M.S. president, Mrs. Lindsay; Y. P. S. C. E., president, Daisy Cuthbert; Ladies' Aid, president, Mrs. I. J. Wiley.

The Board of Managers were: J. I. Wiley, President; S. Shaw, Secretary; Chas. Tassie, Treasurer; and Messrs. Jas. McVean, Dr. H. S. McDonald, W. H. Switzer, Sandy McVean, John Scott and Alex. Cuthbert. The Trustees were Joseph Watson and John Slater.

1901 Renovations of church necessitate service being held in the Town Hall for a few Sundays. On Dec. 18th, Session meet to

allocate contributions for other than local purposes; $43.00 to various schemes of the church, e. g. Knox College, F. Missions, H. Missions, &c.

1902 Session purchases communion set for $23.00. Session draws up minute re death of Mr. Allan McDonald, "many years elder of the Church."

1904 Sunshine Mission Band organized under the W. F. M. S.

1905 Session approve scheme for "forming a home department in connection with the Sunday School.

1906 Mr. Jas. Love and Mr. Jas. Blackburn ordained and inducted elders.

1910 Session agree that Mr. Lindsay supply Kent Bridge for an afternoon service, every second Sunday, during winter. Evidently Dresden and Knox, Chatham Township, no longer together at this time.

1912 Duplex envelopes adoopted for contributions. The church agrees to try to raise $450.00 for the schemes of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

1913 Jas. Blackburn appointed superintendent of Sabbath School; Mr. T. E. Laird, assistant.

1914 Mr. Donald McLarty and Mr. Roy Wells ordained and inducted elders. Death of Mr. Jas. McConnell, one of the original elders.

1915 Rev. N. Lindsay accepts call to Dover and Chalmers churches. Rev. G. A. McCrae inducted.

1917 First "All Presbyterian" Sunday, Oct. 14th. Committee of Session investigate forming a "Men's Club." Bible class organized, Dr. McRae, teacher.

1918 Board of Managers as in first minute book were: Dr. McDonald, chairman; Jas. H. McVean, secretary-treasurer; and Messrs. S. McVean, D. Pattison, F. Law, C. Peters and C. Gammage. Managers purchase a Thomas Symphony organ, $405.00.

1919 Minister's salary increased to $1,500. Death of Jas. Blackburn, elder and supt. of S. School. John Francis and Chas. Tassie

ordained and inducted as elders. Heather Club organized on Oct. 26th to promote the activities of the Young Women of the church." Roy Wells appointed Supt. of S. School.

1920 Jas. Love appointed superintendent of S. School. Dr. McRae accepts call to Detroit. Rev. R. G. McKay inducted. New lights installed in church by Heather Club; piano purchased by Heather Club and Laidies' Aid. Treasurer of "Forward Movement," a fund launched a year or two before, reports subscriptions of $2,258.50.

1922 Minister's salary increased to $1,800.

1923 Presbyterian Hall rented for church purposes, i. e. meetings, etc. Board of Managers: Dr. McDonald, chairman; Jas. H. McVean, sec.-treas.; and Messrs. J. S. Laird, C. Gammage, F. Myers, D. Pattison, Dr. McAlpine. Board reported total income of $2,535.00; balance of $241; remitted to Missions $655.00. Special collection on Mothers' Day for Mr. Lindsay of $210.00.

1925 Church Union — vote was 10 members and one adherent for union and 86 members and four adherents against union. The congregation made its vote against union unanimous. Rev. Mr. McKay accepts call. Rev. G. G. Treanor inducted. Rutherford congregation added to the Dresden charge. United charge to pay salary of $2,000, ($1,600.00 and $400.00).

1926 Mr. E. L. Sharpe ordained and inducted elder. Committee appointed to further plans for S. School Hall. Communion roll reaches 207 members. Heather Club installs new pews in the church. Memorial windows installed.

1927 Committee for new Sunday School Hall are, Dr. McAlpine, N. Law, W. O. Wees, John Francis, D. Pattison, C. Houston and S. McVean, report that cost of building is $5,027.52. John McLachlin ordained and inducted elder.

1928 Post-war economic depression sets in. Mortgage of $1,600 put on manse to finance hall. Heather Club undertakes annual payment on principal and interest of $178.

1930 Communion Roll purged to 163 names. Heather Club receives bequest from Mr. Loucks. Thanks of congregation extended to Mrs. Slater for flowers in church. Ladies' Aid congratulated an contribution financially to church.

1932 Minister salary reduced to $1,800. Permission sought to mortgage manse for $1,000.

1933 Managers express regret in loss of A. Gregory by death.

1934 Congregation records sympathy in death of John Francis. Dr. Treanor resigns the charge.

1935 Rev. F. R. Anderson accepts call as stated supply. C. G. I. T. organized under leadership of Mrs. Anderson and Mrs. E. Dunlop. Mr. Meyers becomes assistant sec.-treas., Mr. Jas. H. McVean having served for 35 years in this office. Managers report a small surplus in the current revenue. Messrs. A. Urquhart and H. Manderson ordained and inducted elders.

1936 Messrs. A. Urquhart and H. Manderson ordained elders. Rev. F. R. Anderson called and inducted.

1937 Managers report deficit reduced. Interior of church re-decorated.

1940 Rev. F. R. Anderson accepts call to London, Ont. Mr. N. Law becomes supt. of Sunday School. May 1st, Mr. W. O. Wees retires from chairmanship of Board after serving from 1929-1940. Mr. C. R. Gammage elected chairman. Mr. A. C. Rigsby retires as sec.-treas., and Mr. John Houston elected April 10th. Rev. A. C. Jamieson inducted. Mr. Gammage undertakes canvas to pay off overdraft.

1943 Heather Club report final payment on mortgage. Death of Mr. H. Manderson, elder. Ordination and induction of Mr. Archie Campbell, elder. Mr. T. E. Laird retires as Clerk of Session after serving for 47 yeas continuously in that office. M. E. L. Sharpe elected Clerk of Session.

1944 Annual meeting, Feb. 2, 1944, moves to form a subscription list for purpose of paying all remaining debts. Canvas made by C. R. Gammage and Roy Stevenson.
April 6th—Congregational banquet for purpose of marking the success of the canvas and burning mortgage.

Due to the incomplete nature of the records and the greatness of the task of recording all details, many noteworthy contributions to the church are not sufficiently recognized in this account. The

Ladies' Aid, for example, have afforded vigorous support to the direct maintenance of the church from earliest time. The Heather Club of comparative recent origin has made several outstanding contributions. The Choir, Sabbath School, andYoung People's Societies have filled a large place in the spiritual life of the church, and in preparation, in the case of the last two, for later work in the church. All of these organizations lost a friend and supporter in the death of Mr. Wm. McVean in Nov., 1938. Mr. McVean was an elder of the church.

The W. F. M. S., organized about 1900, have the complete list of their presidents. They are: Mrs. Peate, Mrs. McCullough, Mrs. Jas. McVean, Mrs. Norman Lindsay, Mrs. John McVean, Mrs. T. E. Laird, Mrs. McLarty, Mrs. McKay, Mrs. E. L. Sharpe, Mrs. I. Shaw, Mrs. N. Law and Mrs. A. Hoyles. The present treasurer, Mrs. Wm. McVean, and sec., Mrs. C. Gammage, have each served over ten years in their offices. A charter member still actively in sympathy with the work is Mrs. Jas. Green.

History of "The Stones"

By S. B. Arnold, Esq., Great-great-grandson of Frederick Arnold

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At Pomerania in North Prussia in the year 1745 was born a boy named Frederick Arnold. About 1766, he was married to his first wife and settled in Berlin. In 1770 he emigrated to Pennsylvania. His first wife having died, he was married the second time in 1774.

In the American War of Independence he sided with the Loyalists, and, consequently, life in the United States became uncomfortable and he came to Canada, locating at Petite Cote on November 17th, 1787. According to entries in the Land Board records in Detroit, which at that time was the seat of the County of Kent, Frederick Arnold, Sr., in 1790, applied for an allotment of land along the River Thames.

Patents of land in Kent were not then being issued. The first patents, according to the Registry Office records, were issued about 1802. On March 3rd, 1803, a patent of Lot Three on the River Thames, in the Township of Howard, upon which the "Arnold Mill" had been erected, was granted to Frederick Arnold. Apparently there are no records as to the dates when the building of the mill was started or completed and we are therefore left to conjecture as to this.

As Frederick Arnold was a millwright, he apparently selected the land on the River Thames because of the presence of water power available in the creek, later known as the "Arnold Creek," with the intention of erecting a mill on this site. It is natural to expect that, within a short time after his application in 1790 for the allotment, it was made, and plans would at once go forth for the erection of the mill. With the facilities then available it would take some time to build the dam, which was of considerable proportions, and the mill.

As no stone suitable for mill stones was then available in this district, and it was necesssary for Arnold to get the stone from New York, and have it labouriously transported to this point. This was done largely by scow especially constructed for this purpose out of canoes.

The mill and dam were constructed a short distance from the River, which at this place was fordable, at a point just East of the present bridge on the South River Road, which crosses the Creek obout the centre of Lot Three. At that time this creek flowed continuously throughout the year, and with the aid of the dam supplied sufficient water to operate the mill the year round. Thus shortly after 1790 was constructed what, according to family tradition, was the first grist or flour mill erected in this part of the country. It was a great boon to the whole community as, prior to the erection, all flour had to be obtained from Detroit or ground by hand. One of the McGarvins living near Chatham was known to have skated to Detroit with a sack of wheat, bringing back the flour.

The above mentioned Frederick Arnold operated the mill until his death, when it was taken over by his son Christopher Arnold, who was thirteen years of age when he landed in Canada with his father. Christopher held a Captain's Commission in the War of 1812. He was at Amherstburg and in the fighting about the Maumee River and Fort Stevenson. Here he met and became a great friend of Tecumseh. When Procter was retreating up the River Thames before the overwhelming American forces under General Harrison, the Indians under Tecumseh put up some rear guard resistance at Chatham, and a slight engagement took place. As a result of this retreat, the mill at Chatham known as Clark's or McGregor's Mill was burned.

As the retreat of Procter was moving up the river, Captain Arnold conceived the idea that his mill would be spared if it was not fit for use, and he hastily removed one stone from each pair and hid them in the brush along the river bank. The mill was saved. Tecumseh stayed the last night of his life with Captain Arnold at his residence close to the mill, and had his last meal with him before being killed that day at the battle of the Thames.

Apparently the stones were never replaced in the mill. Squire Jonathan Brown, who subsequently became the owner of the land where the mill stod, knew where the stones had been hidden, and before his death, pointed them out to Frederick Arnold, who was th great grandson of Christopher Arnold and the third unbroken generation of Frederick Arnolds. Subsequently, and prior to the disposition of the Brown farm, the last mentioned Frederick Arnold removed these stones to his residence at Kent Bridge, where they remained until 1948 when they were graciously presented to the Museum at Chatham by Mrs. Agnes Bennett who was the daughter of the last mentioned Frederick Arnold, then deceased.

These stones represent one stone from each of two pair of

stones used for grinding, consisting of an upper stone and a nether stone. The larger of the two stones was one of the pair used for making domestic wheat flour. The smaller was for chopping the coarser grain. These stones are of historical value, as they are all that is left of what was apparently the first power mill in this part of the country, and represent some of the difficulties encountered and overcome by these old pioneers. They are also monuments to the memory of the Great Indian Chief Tecumseh, representing the place where he last slept and ate before his heroic death in battle near Fairfield.

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