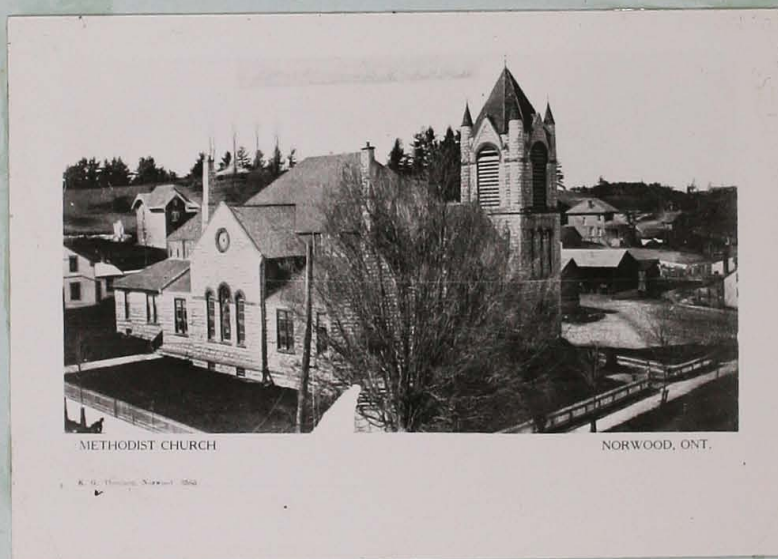


OUR CHURCHES

A complete story of the origin, the rise and fall and steady advancement of our several Churches, would be sufficient for a small volume in itself. I shall, therefore, confine this part of my work, as nearly as possible to the known facts as applied to the earliest records at my disposal.

The "North-woods" community came into being in 1823 - 24, with the building of Keeler's Mills, a fair sized Public School was in existence by 1832 but no mention has been made concerning churches until 1836. Prior to that time, and indeed, for several years afterward, every Religious denomination then represented in the new Community was wont to meet alternately at the homes of their adherents, which forced them to walk long distances over bush trails in foul weather or fair. A little later, these same groups met together in the home of Peter Pearce, then resident manager of the Keeler interests, and where, regardless of faith or creed, they were made heartily welcome by Mr. Pearce and his amiable wife. According to available records, the first Church building in the community was erected by the Wesleyan Methodist people in 1836, followed in 1840 by a small log Church erected by the Roman Catholics about a mile west of the settlement in 1840 and the erection of a "Free" Presbyterian church in 1846.



The first church building erected in Norwood was built by the Wesleyan Methodist congregation in 1836. Its construction was supervised by one Nathan Drury, a carpenter who very shortly before had taken up residence in the community. Most of the material and much of the labour was "gratis" and it has been said that the entire moneys spent on this building did not exceed \$200.00. It was first known as "The Asphodel Mission" and was presided over by the Reverend Ashel Hurlburt and the Reverend John Williams, then in charge of the Mission. A record of the first "Quarterly Session" dated August 27th, 1842 states that, - "on the nomination of the Reverend Mr. Williams, the following persons were elected as Stewards of the congregation, - Peter Pearce, Patrick Cannon, William Ryall, Joseph Metcalfe, John Darley, and Charles Jones with Joseph Wheeler as Recording Steward. The first minister to reside in the community was the Reverend William Young, who remained for a period of three years. During his residence in the village Mr. Young had the distinction of owning and driving the first Buggy ever to be seen in the Township. This building very soon became too small for the growing congregation and in 1854 it was moved back on the lot to make room for a larger structure while the older building was used as a Sunday School room and for any week-night meetings that might have been held.

The second church building to be erected by the same congregation, on the same site was dedicated in 1854 and served the congregation for the next Thirty-five years when it too, like its predecessor, became too small for the constant growth of the community and its increasing membership. This building was sold to another group of the same faith, dismantled and moved to the Ninth Concession of the Township of Belmont where it is still in regular use under the management of the Havelock circuit. It is best known in the community as "The White Church" and is situated about Four miles directly north of Havelock Village.