



THE BAPTIST CHURCH

Although, perhaps, the youngest of our early Churches in point of establishment, the Baptist Church has filled an important place in the lives of our early settlers who were of that Faith.

The first services of that denomination were held in the Town Hall where the first sermon was preached by the Reverend W. E. Orton on July the Eleventh in 1886. So successful was those initial services, that in the month of August, a small group composed of;- James Raddon, Isaac Powell, Mrs. Hugh Drain, Mrs. Elizabeth Wilson and Mrs. Alexander Kempt organized themselves into a regular Church Group under the leadership of the Rev. William Peer, an indefatigable toiler in his chosen field. This small group, through sacrifice and self denial, together with generous assistance from "outsiders" succeeded in erection a Church of their own and furnishing it, according to an old record - "most tastily". Within Two years, they were forced to enlarge the building to its present size and capacity.

Thus, through united effort and perseverance, that little group of Five persons, steadily expanded their circle until a membership of just around 300 was reached in 1894, Eight years after the original inception.

Of the early Clergymen and Officials of this Church, I have been unable to trace anything of particular or "special value" but, as we are well aware, all of them worked together for the common good of mankind, and, of course, for the continued advancement of their denomination.

The writer was privileged to know and admire the Reverend William Peer, first, while a resident in the Town of New Liskeard (New Ontario) in 1909 - 1911, the Reverend gentleman lived just a few doors from where I did. Then, when I came to Norwood in 1913 he was living on Queen Street only two doors away. Two little stories concerning Mr. Peer's labours in the "North" are well worth repeating in this article because, if they cannot be termed "heroic", they will, at least, present a little idea of the type of "Man" contained in his "make-up".

The first story concerns an early settler in that region, who, with his wife and two children were living in a crude cabin about Fifteen miles North and West of New Liskeard. In mid-winter, a fire destroyed the little home and this man, after leaving his wife and children with a neighbour, about a mile away, came into Town seeking help of some kind. Mr. Peer took the matter up at once and soon had a generous supply of food and clothing gathered together as well as a few needed cooking utensils, amongst which was a small "cook-stove". The next problem was to get all this transported to the location of the recent home. The Railway carried the entire outfit free of charge, the first Six miles and left it at "track-side" still nine miles from where it was so sorely needed. The owner of the