

Methodism resulted from the religious movement started in 1739 by John and Charles Wesley, both Anglican priests. It became an organized church in the United States—the Methodist Episcopal Church—in 1784 but was not considered a regularly constituted church in England until after John Wesley's death in 1791.

Methodism in Canada received its greatest impetus after the American Revolution. Many American Methodists fled to Canada and among them were Barbara Heck, acknowledged as the founder of Methodism in colonial America, the children of her cousin Philip Embury, the first Methodist preacher in America, and George Neal, a United Empire Loyalist who settled in the Niagara area.

Neal later was ordained a deacon in the Methodist Episcopal Church. The first Methodist church in Upper Canada, built in 1792 near Adolphustown, still stands in restored condition.



125 Years Old

Rednersville United Church became 125 years old February 17. The church, originally Wesleyan Methodist Church, held its dedication service February 17, 1850. Church members reduced the cost of the structure from 400 pounds to 300 pounds by providing the contractor with limestone from the area. It became Rednersville United Church with church union in 1925.

METHODIST BEGINNINGS IN THE REDNERSVILLE AREA

In 1791 William Losee became the first regular Methodist preacher in Upper Canada, spreading the Gospel among the U. E. Loyalist and other settlers along the St. Lawrence river to Prince Edward County which was later organized as the Hallowell circuit. The itinerant Methodist preachers travelled on horseback over rough roads, logpole bridges, through trailless swamp and gloomy forest without blazed trees, summer and winter in all kinds of weather. All their worldly possessions were carried in saddlebags and their sermons were prepared as they rode along the lonely way.

In 1817, at a revival in the Brickman neighbourhood back of Rednersville, Peter Redner was converted and became their first "class leader". In 1822, another revival took place and the first class was organized among the Thomas Dempsey family on the Bay Shore of Ameliasburgh (Albany) about six miles east of the "Carrying Place". "The brothers - Peter, Isaac and William - were all brought in." In 1823 Anson Green, (Rev. Anson Green, D.D., a distinguished Methodist) a young Yankee school teacher with an "exhorter's license", was prevailed upon to preach to a group of young Quakers in the Bloomfield settlement. The following year he supplied for the Rev. David Wright commencing at German's and Pleasant Bay, then Consecon, Dempsey's and Redners. In 1825 after a year on the Smith's Creek Circuit he returned to the Hallowell Circuit. On Sunday, the 2nd of October, he commenced his work at Pleasant Bay taking Consecon in the evening. On Monday he preached in Bro. Dempsey's house and on the 4th he rode to Mr. Redner's and preached in his own house. On the 5th, in a school-house on "Missasauga Point"; Thursday in Bro. Snider's house. On the 29th he completed his circuit at Mr. German's house, in the seventh town (Ameliasburgh) which included Hillier Township.

By 1848 the Methodists in Ameliasburgh had increased to the extent that those at Rednersville and vicinity held a meeting in the village on the 23rd September and "resolved that a subscription be opened and circulated for the purpose of building a Wesleyan Methodist Chapel in Rednersville immediately". A second meeting was held on the 14th October in the school-house in the village with Rev. Richard Jones, Superintendent of the circuit in the chair at which Owen Roblin, James Redner, Marshal B. Roblin, Philip Roblin and Robert N. Sheriff were appointed a building committee. In January a meeting was held in Rednersville and it was decided to purchase half an acre of land on lot 73 in the rear of the village and that "the building be of stone 36 x 48 feet and have a steeple and gallery on three sides, two windows on each side and two in front of Gothic form". The contract was let "for the sum of four hundred pounds currency to be finished in a workmanlike manner according to a specification to be immediately prepared."

The subscribers were nearly all living in the whole township and on 26th January 1850 the building was accepted from the contractor.

On Sunday 17th of February 1850 the Church was dedicated to the service of Almighty God. The Rev. Enoch Wood, D.D., General Superintendent of Missions, preached at the 11 A.M. Service and the Rev. Peter Jones (Kahkewaquaonaby), Indian Missionary preached the 6 1/2 P.M. service with a collection being taken at the close of each. Mrs. Charles Biggar, of the "Carrying Place" at whose home Anson Green was given a warm welcome on his first and second Circuits, gave a large bible at the dedication service which is autographed by the Rev. Enoch Wood; it is now kept in a case at the church for all to see.

Years later the steeple had to be replaced with the present tower and a choir-loft was added just behind the pulpit. The old horse shed was taken down after the motor car replaced the horses some of whom would whinny if the parson went beyond his usual time. Gone also is the old hickory tree out in front and the lampost. The former Demorestville Presbyterian church was moved in sections and added on at rear for a hall and the original box stoves at the back of the church with their long string of pipes have been replaced by a hot air furnace.

W. Allan Dempsey, Esquire, U. E., B.S.A.
Great grandson of William, convert in 1822



Circuit Rider

Early Methodist ministers in holding services in pioneer settlements and Presbyterians Upper Canada rode through the shanties or in schoolhouses if joined and formed the United countryside on horseback, there were any. On June 10, Church of Canada. (CP Photo) 1925. Methodists, Congreg-