

CENTRE SUNDAY SCHOOL

The early settlers of Centre neighbourhood were very concerned that their children should receive good religious instruction. As was the case in many communities in the early days, they held Sunday School in their local stone school house, built in 1863, until Centre church was erected in 1869, at which time Sunday School was continued in the church building.

An old Township Sunday School Convention book records a visit to Centre Church Sunday School on August 8, 1897 by James Benson and William Anderson. They reported the hour of meeting to be 9.30 a.m. The superintendent was Dorland B. Fox, reported "present - an active and good superintendent." The assistant superintendent was William Lont; the secretary was William H. Redner - "very active and efficient - records well kept." The treasurer was Elwood Spencer. There were 6 classes, and an enrolment of 60 pupils. The Bible Class teacher was John Howell - "The classes were faithfully and intelligently taught." The other teachers were D.H. Eckert, Mrs. George Roblin, Mrs. D. Stafford, Mrs. W. Brickman and Mrs. Wm. Fox. There was no library but a full set of maps and charts, and 5 copies of the Sunday School Times at 50¢ per copy.

On June 12, 1898 Centre Sunday School was visited by James E. Glenn, President, and James Benson, Secretary of the Ameliasburg Township S. S. Association. Their report stated "A first class school, great interest taken in the lesson by the pupils, very attentive and orderly." The Bible Class, taught by John Howell, had 20 members. In 1899 it was also visited by James E. Glenn and James Benson. Their report on this occasion read, "An excellent school, well-conducted. Officers take great interest in their classes."

Centre Sunday School always had a large adult class in addition to the classes for the children. In 1911 the International Sunday School Association awarded a certificate to the Centre Adult Bible Class, at that time comprising 46 members, with John A. Howell the teacher, and superintendent, David T. Stafford. The members of this Bible class were: Mr. and Mrs. George E. Roblin, Mr. and Mrs. Elwood Spencer, Mr. and Mrs. David W. Redner, Mr. and Mrs. David Stafford, Mr. and Mrs. Mack Lont, Mr. and Mrs. B.L. Redner, Miss Muriel Howe, James Howell, Wellington Howell, Miss Minnie Howell, Harold Young, Gerald Young, Nelson Giles, Miss Mary Giles, Mrs. D. Eckert, Mahlon Eckert, William H. Redner, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Redner, Edgar Redner, Miss Gladys Redner, Mrs. P.D. Redner, Mrs. H.E. Redner, Mr. D.B. Fox, Willie Fox, Miss Pearl Fox, Elgin Bellyou, Mr. and Mrs. Francis Wood, Frank Townsend, Mrs. A. Parliament, Mrs. W.J. McFaul, Mrs. J.W. Coulter, Mr. and Mrs. John Vanderwaters, T.S. Dawson, Benjamin Bunn, Arthur Couch, Mr. J.W. Coulter, Freeman Spencer.

Some of the early records are missing, but record books in the possession of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Cairns give some facts. Mr. Dorland B. Fox was superintendent for the years 1897, 98, 99, and again in 1912 and 1913. David T. Stafford was superintendent in 1910, 11, 14, 15, 16 and 17. Nelson Parliament then served as superintendent for 1918 - 1920, Willie Fox in 1921 and Elwood Spencer from 1922 to 1929. Marcus Moy was superintendent through the 30's, followed by Donald Spencer who was superintendent for over 20 years. For the last few years before Centre Church was closed in 1966, various members took turns leading the Sunday School.

Some of those who served as Secretary over the years were: William H. Redner 1897-98, George E. Roblin 1899, Freeman Spencer 1910-1915, Douglas Redner 1914-17, Donald Spencer 1918-22, Ralph Redner 1923, Cecil McFaul 1924, Earl Fox, Ronald Giles 1942-47, Art Adams 1948, Leo Fox 1949, Sybil Redner 1950-54, Allan Vanclief 1955-

Miss Annie Hancock was organist from 1910 to 1921, followed by Miss Helen Redner, Mrs. Clarence Young, Mrs. Winston Pulver, Barbara, Sybil, Anita and Joan Redner, and Mrs. Alfred Cairns.

Mr. John Howell taught the Bible class from 1897 till 1918. It always had a large membership. In 1919 it was divided into two separate classes, the men's class being taught by Nelson Parliament with 23 members and the ladies' by Mrs. John Townsend with 18 members; this continued for 2 years, but in 1921 reverted to one class with Mrs. John Townsend the teacher. Previous to teaching Bible class, Mrs. Townsend had taught an intermediate class for many years. Bible class teachers in later years were Douglas Redner, Mrs. Herb Pulver, Mrs. Donald Spencer.

Supplies in the early 1900's were obtained from William Briggs Publishing Company. More recently the David Cook Publishing Co. supplied them.

A Rally Day was first mentioned in 1915; from that time on it was held annually. Also in 1915 a Cradle Roll, Home Department and Flower Committee were first established. A Christmas concert was always a yearly highlight, was held in the church until 1938 when the hall was erected at the rear. Sunday School picnics were another annual event. In the early 1900's there were picnics in Redner's grove, boat excursions to Presqu'ille, Twelve O'Clock Point, Foresters' Island and Glen Island.

Many dedicated people put in years of service in Centre Sunday School. Mrs. Roy Giles taught primary class for many years, then intermediates, later young people's. Others very active and faithful were Mrs. B.L. Redner, Mrs. Frank Townsend, Mrs. Douglas Redner, Mrs. Earl Fox, Mrs. Cecil McFaul, Mr. Ralph Redner, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Cairns, Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Vanclief, Mrs. Winston Pulver, Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Giles. Centre Sunday School ended in 1966 with the closing of the church.