

The Township of Hagerman has a colourful past

Dunchurch is a village with character, beauty and a colourful past, that is half way between Sundridge and Parry Sound on Highway 124. It is an important part of the Township of Hagerman.

Hagerman Township was named after Judge Christopher Alexander Hagerman, who died in 1847.

The township land consists of 45,859 land acres and 3,577 acres of water. A peculiar type of limestone is found here and there throughout the township.

In the early days, the name Newcombe was attached to the settlement. However, as the postal service improved and the mails came regularly to the Kelcey Post Office, it was discovered there was another place by the same name. Newcombe's mail often went astray or was delayed. In order to correct the mail problem, the Kelceys renamed the village Dunchurch, after their home in Rugby, England.

George Kelcey had immigrated to Canada from Dunchurch, England in 1870. He acquired 600 acres on Whitestone Lake, near the narrows, and there he raised his family.

The first sidewalks, which were wooden, in Dunchurch cost \$9.00 in 1889. The inaugural meeting of Hagerman Township was held May 17, 1890 with Dave Patterson acting as pro term clerk. The first council meeting was held June 28, 1890. At this time James Bayne became the first Reeve, and Frank N. Macfie was the first clerk for council.

In 1870 the new road was built reaching out and up through McKellar to Hagerman and on into Croft, then on to Ahmic Lake. A jail was built in 1890 with four cells. It was used mostly by the children as a playhouse. When the town horse named Ben fell through the floor, the jail was closed.

The first school teacher, Richard Cooper, also made the desks and benches for the school.

Ontario Hydro was installed through the village in 1950. Eleven new streetlights were installed on corners and, at the bridge and dock site, at the end of George Street, now Marina Drive, in 1970.

Bell Canada arrived in Dunchurch in 1969, after buying out McKellar Telephone which had served the area from 1922.

Maple syrup was made every year and is still a big job every spring. Hunting, trapping and cutting wood and logs were done by the farmers to supplement their farm income.

PIONEERS

John Hosiak was the first white child born in Hagerman Township on December 2, 1877. He was the eldest child of James and Sarah Hosiak.

It is believed that the first wedding to take place in Dunchurch was that of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Johnson, who were married November 17, 1897 in St. Andrew's Anglican Church.

The English willow trees, still growing beside the bridge in the village, were planted from seeds brought from Dunchurch, England, by George Kelcey. He planted them all along the street about 1868.

Arthur Millin is remembered for having the first steamboat on Whitestone Lake. Arthur owned a large portion of the lots on the east side of Dunchurch, as well as some on the other side. Mr. and Mrs. Millin came by boat, across Georgian Bay from "Muddy York" Toronto with their family of six children, to Dunchurch in September 1870.

Mary Millin married Frank Macfie and pioneered in Sunnyslope. Their farm is one of the Century Farms in the township. After some years, the Millin family went to the Prairies to live.

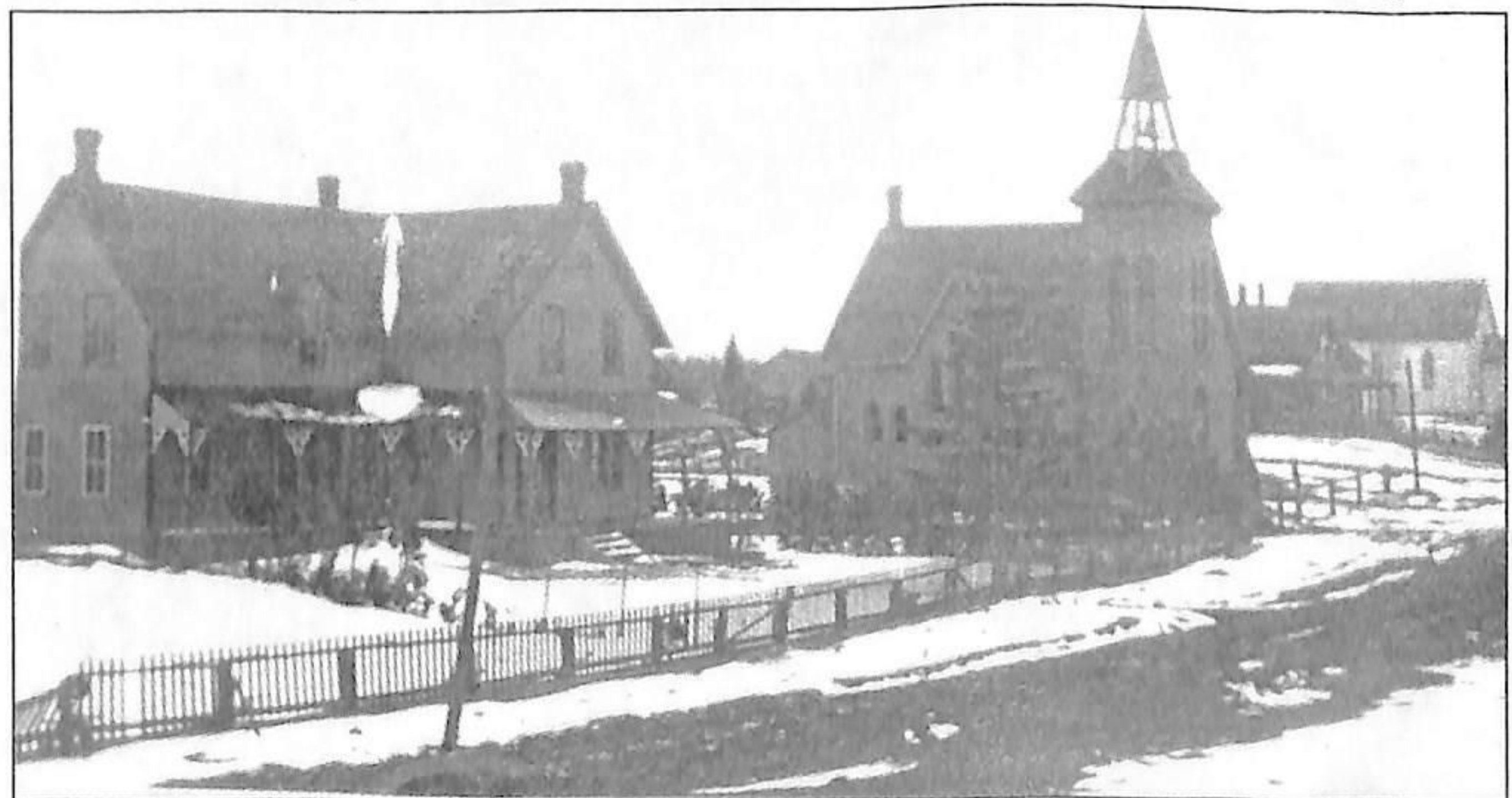
CHURCHES

The churches in Dunchurch are: the Anglican Church - St. Andrew's, which was consecrated by Rev. W. H. French on September 24, 1902; the Methodist Church— The Wesleyan Methodist church, which was built in 1889; and the Presbyterian congregation built the Knox United Church. The Methodists and Presbyterians in Dunchurch united in 1917 and used Knox church. In 1925 the union of the two churches became official over the whole of Canada.

The village was well served by succeeding ministers from 1923 to the present day, 1999. Dunchurch and McKellar are under one charge.

One still expects to see and hear one of the many passing steamboats from eras past while enjoying a walk through town beside the once well-traveled waterway.

The Township Office can be contacted by phone: (705) 389-2466,; fax: (705) 389-1855 or e-mail at: hagerman@vianet.on.ca



Dunchurch circa 1910. Shown from the left are the Robertson house, Knox Presbyterian Church and the Methodist Church.