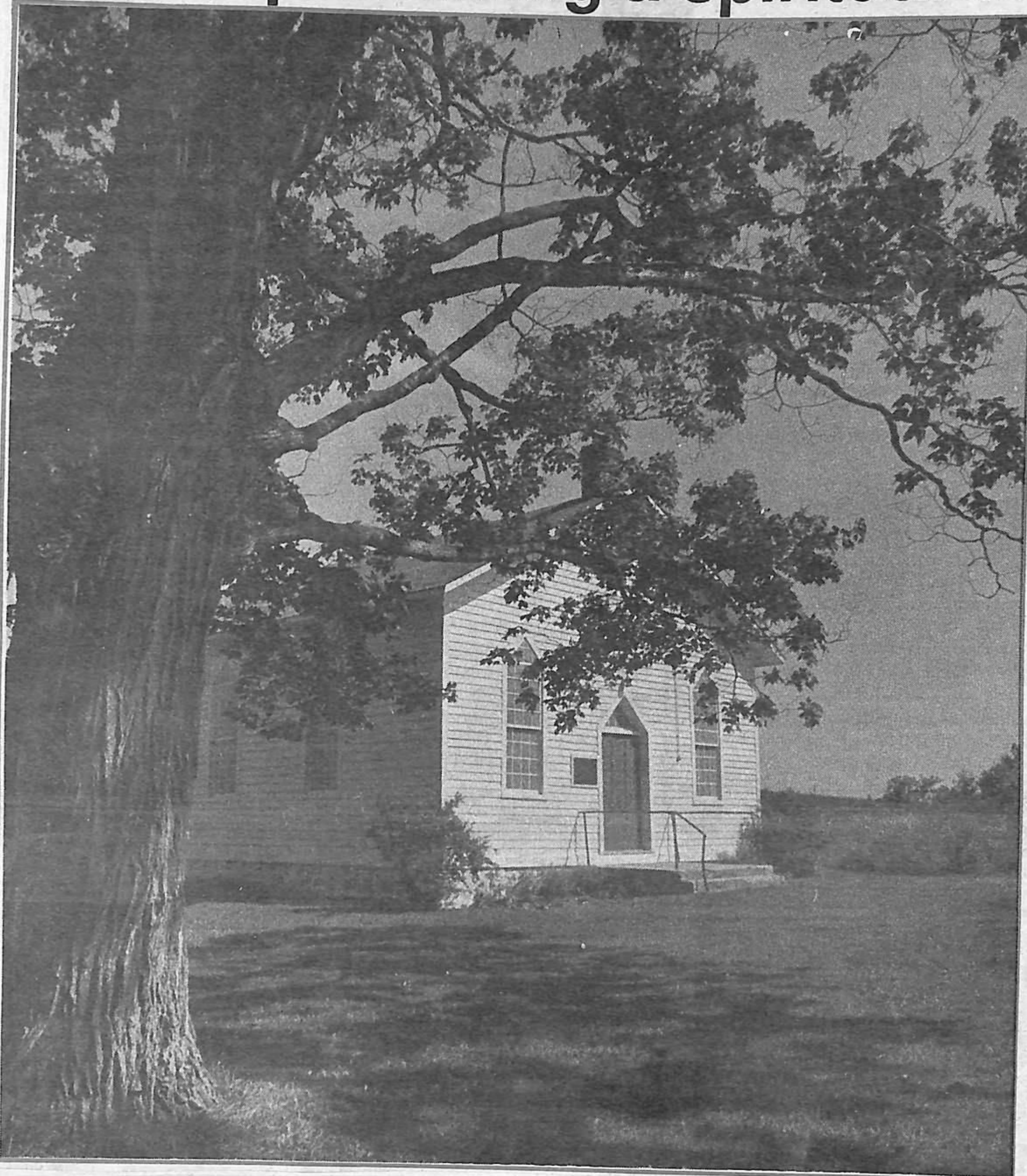


# Shiloh: preserving a spiritual conerstone

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**B**eryl Mutton pulls an old tarnished black and white photo from an album containing a lifetime of history. Her husband Lawrence watches.

Faded at the bottom, the photo reveals a much simpler time when old country churches were the spiritual cornerstones of almost every rural Ontario community.

Today, many of those churches have vanished from the landscape — torn down in the name of progress. Some are renovated into homes, while others are being allowed to deteriorate because of a lack of interest in preserving heritage.

It's a picture of the Shiloh United Memorial Church. There's a horse drawn buggy in the foreground and standing around the church are members of its congregation dressed in turn-of-the-century clothing designed to block the bitter winds that howled off the hill on Penryn Road.

For 140 years the white clapboard framed church has stood as a monument to the pioneer families who built the Shiloh area in Cramahe Township.

The church was dedicated on Nov. 25, 1863 as a Wesleyan Methodist Church.

It was reported in the annual report of the Missionary Society of the Wesleyan Methodist Church for the year 1850-51 that a group was meeting as a congregation called Walkers' in the Shiloh area.

"They were called the Walkers' because they walked to different houses each Sunday for services," said Beryl.

The back of the order of worship for the centennial anniversary service, Sept. 22, 1963, describes the early history of the church. The Shiloh area was then part of the Colborne Circuit in the Cobourg District. The Shiloh congregation had been in existence some 13 years before the name was used. In 1959 the name of class was changed to Mutton's and in 1863 the class became the Shiloh congregations.

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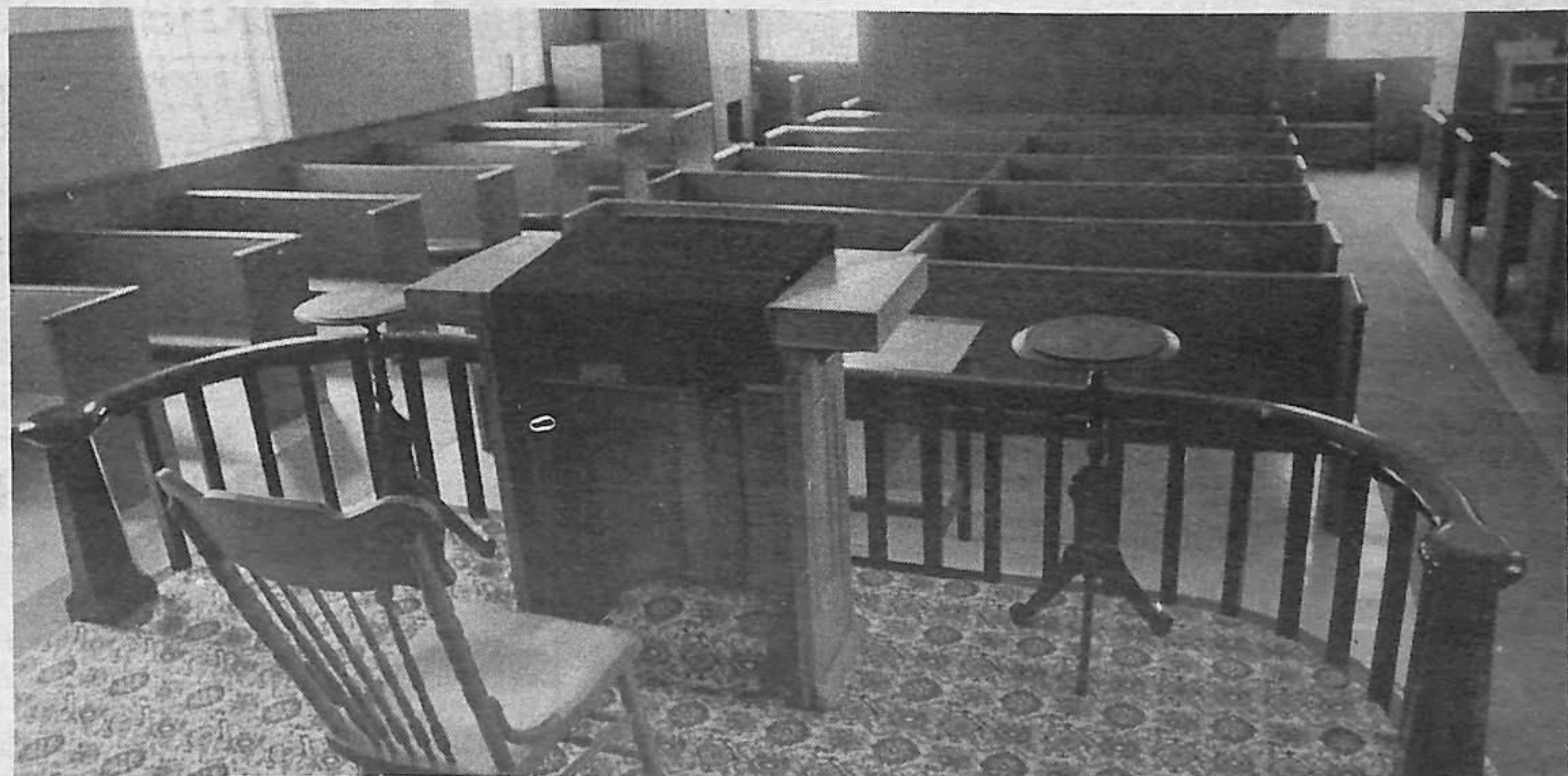
After being in the Colborne Circuit, it was then included in the Castleton Circuit and finally the Hilton Circuit. Just prior to 1924, the Hilton circuit consisted of Bethany, Shiloh and Hilton. That year the circuit changed to become the circuit of Hilton, Eden, Sharon and Shiloh.

Sunday worship was held in the mornings, with a class meeting or fellowship, as it was called then, following the service. Class meetings were regularly held Wednesday nights.

In 1893, the Epworth League, the first church organization for young people was formed and met on Thursday nights.

To ensure that the Church had the necessary funds to pay the minister's salary, two stewards were appointed to divide the area between them. They visited each home in the area four times a year to collect the "quarterage". While the system worked reasonably well, it was not uncommon for an extra collection to be made. Later the collection envelope appeared each Sunday.

Two years after that centennial service the church was closed. The rural



The interior of the Shiloh Church shows that nothing too fancy was needed for true spiritual worship.

population in the Shiloh area shrank and couldn't support the church. Today it stands as a reminder of days gone by.

A loyal group of ex-congregation members, plus a few new neighbours, maintain the church. They called

themselves the Shiloh United Memorial Church Committee.

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