



Hawk Hill, the Henry Dobsons' stone farmhouse near Ayr, was built in 1855 by George Landreth. —Globe and Mail.

Farmhouse Proof of Pioneer Pride

Separate Doors In the Original Windfall Church

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WINDFALL—The church has always been the centre of activities in this community.

As soon as the pioneers of this district had built their homes and stumped enough land for tilling, the need for a place to worship was felt.

Money was scarce in those days but the spirit of co-operation was keen. There was plenty of lumber and a good number of carpenters and laborers willing to give their time.

The land for the building and enough for a burial ground at the back was given by Harvey Miller, who owned and operated a saw mill on the farm near the church. This farm was later owned for years by the Bennett family and was recently purchased by T. Murphy.

The church site is a beautiful one, with a maple grove to the east on the Mackenzie farm. The church is in the centre of the community, with the public school on the opposite side of the road.

Looking south from the church one can see Horner's Creek winding its way. In the spring when the creek is in flood, the church appears to be situated on the banks of a lake.

The first church was a large large frame building. One unique feature of this early building was that there were separate doors for women and children and for the men. The men never sat on the same side of the church as the women and children. The pulpit was placed between the doors. The first congregation was of the United Brethren faith.

Special to The Globe and Mail

Ayr—Almost without exception, early nineteenth century stone houses still standing in Ontario are proof of the pioneer's pride in appearance.

The small, fieldstone farmhouse built between 1855 and 1860 near the hamlet of Ayr is a good example of the thought that went into the placing of one stone upon another. A nice balance has been worked out in the stacking of the chimneys and the placing of the 12-pane double-hung windows and the recessed door. The pattern above door and windows, the oblong transom above the door and the panelled wood trim around the door are a fair amount of decoration for so unpretentious a house.

In 1828, settler George Landreth bought 185 acres and built a log cabin. This was replaced by a frame house, the stone house not going up for at least 27 years. The last of George Landreth's descendants left the old farm in 1900 and the land and house

changed hands many times until in 1946 it was bought by Henry Dobson. Although Mr. Dobson's first plan was to

farm the land, his interest in early Canadian furniture soon developed into a full-time business.

"I know the farmers and the countryside well," Mr. Dobson said, "and wonderful old pieces of furniture are still coming out of old barns and attics." A recent haul, restored with help from his wife, includes a solid pine oval extension table, a cherry corner cupboard, a Pennsylvania Dutch hutch cupboard and a Dutch wardrobe.

The Dobsons, who call their old stone house, Hawk Hill, lease 83 acres to neighboring farmers and have reforested the remaining 100 acres in pine and some hardwoods.

A few years later the church became Congregational in faith.

With the passing of a number of the pioneers, the congregation grew small and it was possible only to have a minister from another charge. With the coming of union the church became United and was placed on the Innerkip charge.

At first the church was a missionary charge, but due to the untiring efforts of the Rev. G. T. Shields, then pastor, and Mrs. Shields, the church soon became self supporting.

Of late years, with the selling of several farms to tobacco growers and several families moving away, the church is once again finding its way with difficulty. The community, however, looks to the spirit of the pioneers to be rekindled and for the new families to unite with the old to bring new life to the church.

In 1899 the old church was taken down and a new brick building erected on the same spot. A number of families who gave of their time and money to build the new church are still remembered in the community: the Wittrich, Fry, Sim, Hewitt, Kalbfleisch, Harper, Wilkins, Bennett, Pruss, Skillings and Pierce families. Several other families who assisted have since moved away.

Mr. Kite of Richwood performed the ceremony of laying the corner stone for the new church.

One lad who watched the solemn procedure wide-eyed recalls hearing it said that Mr. Kite placed a \$100 bill under the corner stone and for some time he believed the bill was still there.

Windfall Church Founded in 1850's

The News is in receipt of a clipping from Mrs. George Pellow, Woodstock, found among the personal effects of her mother, whose maiden name was Mary Ann Atkins, concerning the origin of the Windfall United Church.

The Windfall Church was founded in the 1850's by the United Brethren. Elder Mosier, who came from Pennsylvania, was the organizer. Besides building a church at Windfall, Elder Mosier was also instrumental in having a church built at Canning, then known as Mudge's Hollow.

The site for the Windfall Church was donated by Harvey Miller.

The present, much more modern church building at Windfall was erected in 1899 under the pastorate of Rev. Darius Dafoe. The corner stone was laid by the late David Kyte of Richwood.