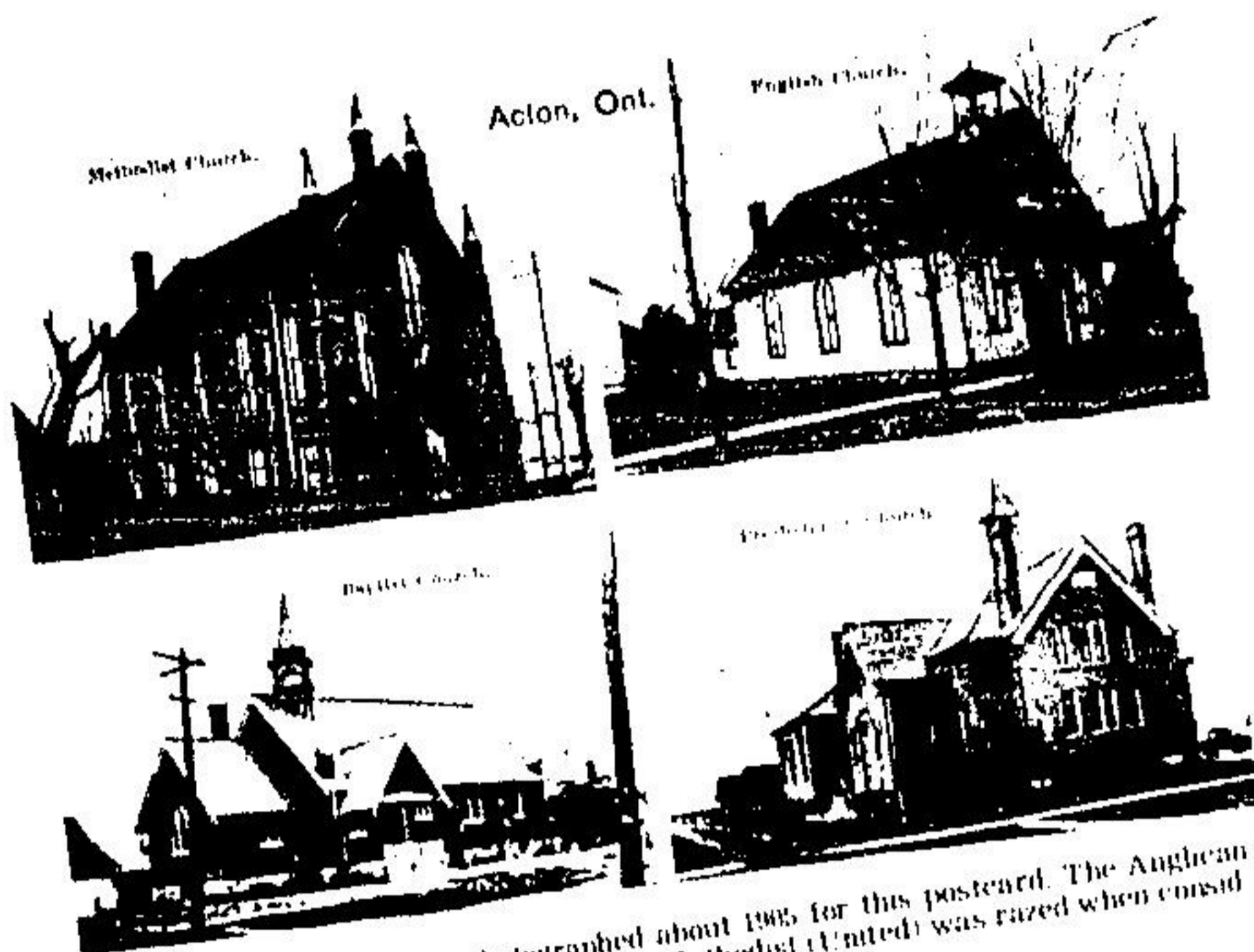


# CHURCHES



FOUR CHURCHES were photographed about 1905 for this postcard. The Anglican church is completely remodelled and the Methodist (United) was razed when considered unsafe about 15 years ago.



ST. JOSEPH'S church was originally built over a century ago for the Congregationalists. It was later used by the Salvation Army and then bought by the Roman Catholic congregation at Dublin.

## The Sabbath was kept holy

The churches were a main centre of activity with several services on the Sabbath and solemn weeknight prayer meetings as well.

**First building**  
The Wesleyan Methodists were the first to have a building of their own and they are worshipping in 1874 in a white frame building at the corner of Church and John Sts. This location had been reserved for a church by the Adams family and so the street derived its name, and the site was determined when Rufus Adams farm was divided into lots.

The faithful had been meeting in the Adams farm kitchen, later their woodshed where there was more room, and then in the little school.

The church was built in 1852 by the settlers "by their own hands", the old record book revealed it was built on barn construction and the timbers and trees for lumber and shingles were given free of charge to the band of men who were chosen trustees. The timber was the best pine from the forests of Esqueping. Angus Kennedy had the carpentry contract for fifty pounds. A year after the church was open its hard pine plank seating was replaced by pews.

### Christmas tree

It was here the first Christmas Tree was added to the Sunday School entertainment with most of the presents from Mrs. Secord's store - a 15 cent leather pocketbook, a 25 cent knife, a 10 cent drawing slate, a 20 cent kaleidoscope or a five cent doll, a yard of hair ribbon, a candy cane and a bag of sweets.

But the members are talking of the need for a large, brick church and they are to get it in 1876. Later it was moved back on the lot and is now three apartments on John St.

### Same location

St. Alban's Episcopal church is located in 1874 at its present site and Rev. Christopher Denroche is the incumbent.

A travelling missionary first ministered to the Anglican people in the 1840's and later a clergyman who lived in Rockwood came and held services in the Temper-

ance Hall. He had congregations at Rockwood, Acton, Bramosa, Erin, Hillsburg and Garatrasa.

In 1872 the mission was divided and the little church was built, given the name St. Alban the Martyr by the Rev. W. F. Swallow who lived in the rough east house at the corner of Main and Bower. It was free of debt four years later.

The rectory (now demolished for the parking lot) was purchased in 1875. Eventually improvements were built right around this first church.

### Gaelic services

The Presbyterians had a thriving congregation in a frame church built on Main N. in 1847, although their history began in 1845.

The Rev. Lachlan Cameron is their preacher, and he preaches fluently in Gaelic as well as in English. One sermon at least was required to be in Gaelic each Sunday. Mr. Cameron was a rigid Sabbatharian, and an early tale has him asking a couple of lassies at the Main St. stream to be sure the water they were drawing was for drinking, not cooking, on the Sabbath. He was a saintly man and friend to all.

Robert Little was Sunday School superintendent.

### Ready in time

This church had been rushed to completion in 1847, in time to claim a gratuity of forty pounds, offered by Mr. Buchanan of Hamilton to each of the first ten churches erected and opened not later than that year. And forty pounds meant something in those days of scarce money!

The congregation is to move to its fine new church in 1894 with 1,000 people at the service.

This first church was moved back on the lot and converted into homes on Main St. N.

### Baptists on Elgin

The Baptists worship in a rough east church on Elgin St., moved there from Ballinalad in 1858. Rev. R. B. Cook was pastor in 1874.

This building was last used for storing salvage in World War II and is now torn down. The present brick Baptist church was built in 1899.

The church was located right beside the drill shed,



REV. Lachlan Cameron was minister of Knox church in 1874.

and it's said its erection in 1867 gave the church a "dim religious light," having cut off most of the light on the north side of the building. But the Baptists were quiet, modest people and didn't offer any objection to the Government planting its drill shed and army there beside them.

But it did become embarrassing to the services at times, especially on Wednesday nights, when the prayer meeting was in progress and drilling was underway with Capt. Allan's stentorian voice commanding the orders, or when the young folks were having a dance and the plow boys were "hoeing it down" in their boots.

### Congregationalists

The Congregationalists were going up to Swackhamer's Hill (Churchill) for their services and were to build their own church in Acton on Church St. in 1877. After a few years of financial embarrassment it was taken over by the Salvation Army, and then purchased by the congregation at St. Joseph's at Dublin.

Many alterations have been made over the years.

### At Dublin

The Roman Catholics in 1874 are still worshipping in the small church completed at Dublin on the eve of the feast of St. Joseph, March 18, 1857. Before that mass was held in the community homes and Jesus Fathers travelled through.

Burnals took place around the church and Dublin

cemetery remains although the old church was torn down.

### First services

The first religious services in Acton were held in 1828 by Methodist - saddlebag preachers, among them two of the village founders, Ezra and Zenias Adams.

Many homes of the new settlers were supplied with Bibles from the Upper Canada Bible Society. Michael Farmer was the first colporteur here.

### Cemetery

At first the pioneers were buried on their own homesteads, but then a village cemetery was started on land behind the original Presbyterian church. The first interment there was the body of Phineas Adams, soon followed by the Rev. Senas Adams, one of the first settlers. The earliest birthdate recorded here is Patience Adams and earliest settler recorded Catharine Ander-

son. The last buried here was Peter McDonald in 1896.

The small cemetery in 1874 was well kept, surrounded by a neat picket fence with a pretty wicket gate.

More land was needed though and after fierce debate Fairview cemetery was purchased about 1890.

The headstones in the "pioneer cemetery" were re-assembled, after years of neglect, in 1933.



W. A. OF the Methodist church included, front row, unknown, Mrs. Frank Kennedy, Mrs. Isaac Wedge, Miss Lottie Speight, Mrs. Alec McDonald, Mrs. William Blair, Mrs. Richard Johnston, Mrs. A. T. Brown, centre Mrs. Wm. Landsborough, Mrs. McIntosh, unknown, Miss Emma Hawthorne, Mrs. Nelson Moore, Mrs. Agnew, Mrs. Spelvogel, unknown, Mrs. Herb Brown, back row Mrs. Albert McKeown, Mrs. John Scarrow, Mrs. Henry Denny, Mrs. Charlotte Johnson, unknown, Mrs. Jim Ramshaw, Mrs. R. H. Wansbrough, Miss Alec Elliot, unknown.



METHODIST SUNDAY school orchestra shows front row William Laird, George King, John Hill, Rudolph Spelvogel, Chester Matthews, back row Lottie Mason, Ern Brown, Ethel Coleman, Nelson Moore, Hazel Mason. The Mason twins were very talented and could play several instruments.