

Church is dead but memory still lives

by Jennifer Barr
The Brick Church is dead and has been for nearly 60 years but it lives on in the hearts of a few Actonians. One of them, Orwell Johnston, remembers going to Sunday School in the little brick church, properly called Siloam Methodist. He reminisces about travelling up the First Line from his family farm behind a trotting horse. The Johnston family didn't take Highway 7 to reach the corner of Highway 25 and Town boundary where the church was situated. There were no paved highways in 1909. Instead, the horse would travel his familiar route from First Line along a sidewalk (now long gone) beside Harry Murray's farm to Town boundary and Second Line.

Many local families supported Siloam Church, founded in 1862, recognizable names such as Allan, Leslie, Snyder, Cleave, McKeown, Near, Mann, Lambert, Johnston and Gamble. Clarence Gamble, another Acton resident brought up in the brick church, believes the founding fathers included grandfather of Gordon Leslie, Eli Snyder, Robert Johnston and John Gamble, his own grandfather. According to "Acton's Early Days", a town history published by the Acton Free Press in 1939, Eli Snyder, a local contractor, built the church.

It was known as the Brick Church, being the only one for miles around made of brick. When the church was demolished in the early 30's by J.B. Mackenzie, the brick was used to face one of the Johnson residences. Orwell

remembers Elwood Johnston's father bought it. The church was closed in 1919 when most of the congregation had dispersed, many of them joining Trinity Church in Acton. The land was later sold and now sports two bungalow houses. The residence of Mr. and Mrs. Roger White now stands on the spot where Siloam once stood.

Church happy place
By our standards very little money was raised by the 50 or less families who supported the church, averaging \$150 in contributions for the years 1898 to 1909. But at the turn of the century a dollar was quite a large amount of money.

The church was a happy place, it would seem, with an enthusiastic Sunday School membership.

Mr. Johnston remembers being taught by Mrs. Albert McKeown, mother of our present postmaster. He loved the classes although they were very different from present day Sunday School. Verses had to be memorized, the bible studied and each day's text absorbed. Competition for picture cards was keen.

Both Clarence and Orwell enjoyed their Sunday School days although they maintain they were well-behaved boys not getting into mischief.

"When you went to church you stayed put, you were seen and not heard", remembers Mr. Gamble.

Mr. Johnston adds, "I had to behave - I had a strict father. If I let a hymn book fall, he would take me out and lick me."

An early Sunday School class of 1896, taught by Miss

Melissa Johnston, included Jennie Allan, Leurene Allan, Ada Allan, Lena Allan, Myrtle Allan, Robert Allan, Eddie Allan, Fred Masales, and Myrtle Mann.

The Epworth League of Christian Endeavor was formed in 1894. This was a young people's group but Mr. Gamble refers to the meetings as a "sparking place". His father, William Gamble was the leader of this discussion and social group.

Built by Snyder
Apparently, the Siloam Church originated from a revival meeting held in a beech and maple grove across from the Churchhill burying ground, so Arlof Dills remembers in "Acton's Early Days".

A church society was formed and Mr. Snyder started the building job on the corner of John Sharp's farm completing the stone driving shed first. He and his wife lived in a couple of temporary rooms in the shed while the rest of the building took place during the summer of 1862.

Church members and friends helped hauling stone and materials, having a shingling bee for the roof.

Mrs. John Gamble volunteered to clean the entire church before the opening ceremonies but unfortunately contracted a heavy cold doing it and died a few weeks later. Her funeral was the first held in the church. Clarence Gamble heard tell of the tragedy through family history.

At one point, a fierce storm blew the church roof off and flattened the driving sheds. The congregation clubbed together and repaired the damage within a few days but Orwell Johnston feels, "the church started to go downhill from then on".

Siloam Church was originally part of the Georgetown Methodist Episcopal Church circuit. Early in the 1900's it

became part of the Everton circuit and finally was joined to Rockwood, Eden Mills and Crewsons Corners.

Dissipation
When the Union of Methodist churches took place in 1884 there was some discussion concerning closing the brick church, only a mile from the larger Acton church. However, public pressure kept it open until 1919 when

war had decimated the ranks of the clergy. It became increasingly hard to staff the church, services were held only twice a month, families moved and dissipated, some joining the enthusiastic Acton congregation.

Reluctantly, the little Brick Church was closed, to be torn down some 12 years later. But the church will live in the memory of people like

Orwell Johnston and his wife Elsie who as a girl, moved across the road from the church in the year of its closing and married one of its former members; and in men like Clarence Gamble who has records of the Siloam church carefully preserved.

These people keep the story alive for your children and mine.



with Nancy Gordon

A letter to our Father

As I watch you now dad, struggling through your therapy and trying to get some life into the heavy leg, my thoughts go back over the years to another time long, long ago. I was very young then, and almost every Sunday we would board the Bloor streetcar, and begin the familiar trip to "Moonside", our special place.

We always headed right for the back of the streetcar, so you could tell us your own version of "Oliver Twist" and we could laugh as much as we wanted without arousing too much curiosity. When the streetcar reached the end of the line, we'd all pile out excitedly and wait outside the drugstore while you bought one bottle of pop for us to share. "Cheap, cheap," we would taunt, knowing well that those few mouthfuls of ginger ale, in a field of wild daisies, would bring more pleasure than any champagne in a fairyland castle.

We can still smell the woods as we tramped along in single file, singing loudly or listening for unfamiliar sounds. "Moonside" held many mysteries, and you hinted that perhaps we'd meet a wildcat, or maybe even see Goldilocks if we were very lucky.

When our little legs were aching, and we

could walk no farther, we'd sit down and eagerly eat the tasty sandwiches prepared by mom, who was at home enjoying the emptiness of the house, and the 'Book of the Month' special.

Remember the day the sky suddenly darkened, and rain began to fall with increasing force. We found an old barn and watched the lightning flash through the trees, and listened to the rain beating upon the thatched roof. Then the sun would creep through the clouds, and we'd run through the wet grass to the river.

The Humber is polluted, they say in Toronto, but we can recall the cool, clear water rippling over our tired feet, as we searched for piliwogs and rare water creatures. One day you swam to the other side and waved to us, and we started crying, afraid you wouldn't come back.

Going home, the trip took on new dimensions as two or three plump little loads hopped through the streetcar window, to the horror of the other passengers. Never mind, you said, we'd catch more next time.

We'd arrive home, thoroughly exhausted, sunburned and totally content, to be greeted by the delicious aroma of beef stew and apple pie.

How lucky we are, to have memories like these. How few are the children who drift to sleep on a summer evening, with the song of the blackbird singing in their heart. You, whose childhood was less than happy, made ours a magic place.

Love,
Diane, Paul, Susan
and David

This letter has been specially requested to share with you.

Please share with us and others what God has done for you by phoning Nancy at 853-2195 or writing to SHARING, P.O. Box 57, Acton, Ontario. L7J 2M2.



MR. AND MRS. ORWELL Johnston look over one of the early financial statements of the Brick Church, properly called Siloam Church. This small Methodist church existed at the corners of Highway 25 and Town Boundary Line from 1862 to 1919.

Dr. Blair Shaw to chair Renaissance Commission

Dr. Blair Shaw, a widely known psychologist, has been appointed chairman of the Renaissance Commission on the Family, it was announced Tuesday by Rev. Ken Campbell, president of Renaissance International, sponsor of the commission.

The announcement was made at a special reception yesterday at the Oakville Holiday Inn.

Dr. Shaw said the Commission is not limited to the philosophic, religious, or educational views of any special group. He and the commissioners are said to represent "a wide range of views, concerns, and geographic origins."

Rev. Campbell said the aims of the commission are to identify, understand and assist in finding practical solutions to the current problems facing families, especially in the areas of the education of children. To this end, he said, the commission shall be holding hearings in all parts of Canada. Every effort will be made to receive written and oral presentations in any language preferred by individuals or groups appearing or writing.

Arrangements will include a telephone system by which any person may make informal comments and suggestions in his own community in any part of Canada.

"Through the very procedures used by the commission each person, be he parent, educator or child, shall be accorded dignity, and their values and aims shall be



Dr. Blair Shaw respected," he added.

Dr. Shaw said it is not a coincidence that the commission's mandate extends through 1979, the International Year of the Child, as designated by the United Nations. The commission is in

basic agreement with the U.N. resolution to promote the ideals of the traditional family unit as the most dynamic social climate in which the child may flourish and mature into creative adulthood.

Dr. Shaw has recently completed a book entitled "The Parent School Book" which he said is a handbook for parents on how to deal effectively and constructively with the public school system. "It is a step-by-step guide on how to assure that the public schooling is responsive to parental priorities." This is a subject about which both Dr. Shaw and Campbell have been interested for some time, and led to the creation of 1974 of the Renaissance movement, founded by Campbell.

St. Joseph's sale sees many winners

Winners of prizes at St. Joseph's bazaar Saturday were: Raggedy Ann and Andy with \$50, purse, Mrs. Shirley Snyder; Holy Family Statue, Mrs. Ann Dolston; Cake draw, Miss Jessie Coles; Tea table centre piece, Mrs. C. Beaton, Churchill Rd.

Penny Sale Winners: green cream and sugar - Dawn Welch; bath salts, Connie McCristall; pyrex dish, Roy Topelko; basket, Sandra Marzo; nylons, Mrs. Mary Smith; brown cream and sugar, Diane Handy; glasses and tea towels, Harriette Helwig; serviette holder with salt and pepper, Jean Precious; green powder and cologne, Dottie McGiloway.

Tote bag, Mary Papillon; gift jams, M. Elliott; candle and holder, Joan Tyers; glasses and jug, Mrs. Snouk; necklace, Louise Papillon; pyrex custard dishes, B. Cavanagh; knitted gloves, Tim Daigle; candle, R. Fountain.

Tea towels and pot holders, Mrs. Schroeder; pillow slips, Mary Dunn; bridge set, Verma Arbie; glasses and mugs, Sandra Marzo; pyrex custard cups, Mark Jennings; candy dish and Avon, Mrs. C. McCristall; printed table cloth, Jean Reed; white table cloth, Mary Papillon; Raggedy Ann doll, M. Watson; candy dish, M. Watson; placemats, Mathew Marcoux.



JULIE CONROY seems to be enjoying herself at the St. Joseph's Church bazaar. Mrs. Conroy was helping sell some of the trinkets.

Bert Leroy REAL ESTATE BROKER
853-2059

R.R. 1, ACTON
if no answer call 853-2980

THE PRICE IS RIGHT
10 ACRES - HOME
5 bedrooms, 2 story home, ground level family room, fireplace, several bathrooms. Pond and steel barn.

LARGEST BOVIS HOME
Excellent condition, ground level family room with fireplace, several washrooms, double garage. Call me to view.

1/2 ACRE COUNTRY
Brick 3-4 bedroom home, fireplace, family room. Vary good country setting. Call me to view.

10 ACRES CONTEMPORARY HOME
This 3-4 bedroom home with walkout, 2 large stone fireplaces, 4 stall horse barn in superior treed setting. Open for your inspection. Possibility of adding hobby greenhouse at low cost.

4 ACRES
Brick bungalow, family room, etc. Trees, large rebuilt 40x60 barn.

FOR RENT
8'x40' mobile home on your lot.

77 REAL ESTATE 77 REAL ESTATE

COUNTRY LIVING
Large lovely 1,700 sq. ft. side split located in country on 1/2 acre lot, 2 miles north of Acton, only 9 miles from the Georgetown GO train. This house boasts 3 bedrooms, large beamed kitchen with brick wall, living room, dining room with walk-out to 21 x 12 cedar deck, family room 22 x 12 with floor to ceiling brick fireplace, den and second washroom plus full basement and double garage has large work bench and cupboards. Property has existing mortgage at 10 1/2 per cent. Price reduced to \$83,900.00.

Call 853 0559 for appointment.

Warner Real Estate

Attractive 3 bedroom, brick and aluminum 1 1/2 storey home located in mature area of town. Close to schools and shopping. Asking only \$57,900.00. Call Joey.

2/3 acre ravine lot, north of Oakville. 3 bedrooms, dine-in kitchen, beautiful rec room and 2 fireplaces. Listed at \$76,500.00. Owner is anxious and open to offers.

COMPLETE TRAINING CENTRE
26 acres, 26 box stalls, indoor therapy pool, indoor hot/walker and much more. A good income property for any horseman. Listed at \$334,500.00.

"\$29,000.00"
"FULLY AUTOMATED DAIRY FARM"
89 acres plus 2 ponds. 1500 lb. milk quota and herd negotiable. Call for details on house, buildings and equipment.

"NOW IS THE TIME TO INVEST"
4400 ft. frontage South of Derry Rd. Excellent farm land or ideal for a Golf and Country Club. 190 acres at \$3,000 an acre it's a Good Deal.

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Church Services

CHURCHILL COMMUNITY CHURCH
Churchill Rd. N.
Minister
The Rev. J. L. McFadden
B.A., B.D.
and Mrs. Eleanor McFadden,
B.A.
Box 731, Guelph,
Phone 821-3215

Sunday, Dec. 3, 1978

11:00 a.m. - Service of Worship
The church on the hill is an interdenominational congregation ministering to the needs of the community.
Everyone Welcome

ACTON BAPTIST CHURCH
80 Mill Street East,
Founded 1842
Pastor: Rev. Das Sydney
B.Sc., M. Div.
Pastor's Phone - 853-1835
Church Phone 853-0690

TUESDAY
7:00 p.m. - Visitation

WEDNESDAY
10:00 a.m. - Morning Bible Study
7:30 p.m. - Young Peoples

THURSDAY
7:30 p.m. - Choir Practice

Sunday, Dec. 3, 1978

9:30 a.m. - Sunday School
11:00 a.m. - Morning Worship

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA
KNOX CHURCH
ACTON
Rev. Andrew H. McKenzie
B.A., B.D. - Minister
Mr. E. A. Hansen, B.A.
Organist and Choir Master

Sunday, Dec. 3, 1978

11:00 a.m. - Divine Worship.
Address by veteran overseas missionary: Miss Ida White of Goderich. Theme: Medical and Nursing Service in India. Lunch and Fellowship Hour following.
Everyone Most Welcome.

UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
TRINITY CHURCH
ACTON
Rev. Chas. Beaton B.A., B.D.
Dr. George Elliott
M.A., Ph.D.
Director of Music

Sunday, Dec. 3, 1978

10:00 a.m. - Morning Worship
10:00 a.m. - Sunday School
Baby Fold and Toddler Care
Everyone Welcome

THE CHURCH OF ST. ALBAN THE MARTYR
1872 - Anglican - 1978
Corner
Willow St. and St. Alban's Dr.
Rev. Leonard Ewing
Rector
Director of Music
Mrs. Frank Oakes

Sunday, Dec. 3, 1978
ADVENT SUNDAY

9:00 a.m. - Holy Eucharist
10:30 a.m. - Advent Service of Lessons and Carols.
10:30 a.m. - Church School and Nursery

EVANGEL PENTECOSTAL TABERNACLE
33 Churchill Rd. N.
Pastor - Rev. B. Rennieck

Sunday, Dec. 3, 1978

9:45 a.m. - Christian Education
11:00 a.m. - Morning Worship
7:00 p.m. - Evening Service

TUESDAY
7:30 p.m. - Family Night
WEDNESDAY
10:30 a.m. - Ladies' Power Hour

MAPLE AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH
177 Maple Ave.,
Georgetown
Pastor, Edwin H. Mitchell

Sunday, Dec. 3, 1978

9:45 a.m. - Family Sunday School
Bus Transportation (416) 838-2330
11:00 a.m. - Morning Worship
Childrens Church
Translation for the Deaf
6:30 p.m. - Evening Service
Nursery at all services, boys-girls youth clubs. Telephone 877-6665 or 877-0320.
"The Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada"

SALVATION ARMY
Gospel Service will be held in the United Church, Acton every Sunday evening at 7:00 p.m. throughout the fall. Everyone welcome.

The family that prays together, stays together