

This preacher had his bulldog by his side

Visual depictions of the history of Georgetown are our churches. More than magnificent structures of antiquated stone, strong oak beams and colourful stained glass windows, churches were built by our forefathers as monuments of our heritage.

At the cost of \$6000, the price of a contemporary new car, the first church was erected in Georgetown in 1845. The first pastor, Reverend Stephen King, was soon succeeded by Reverend John Unsworth and Reverend David Powell. On September 18, 1846, Powell performed the first baptisms of one-day-old Mary McKenny, daughter of Robert and Mary, in their home.

Perhaps members of the 1851 congregation are your ancestors: William Barber, George and Elizabeth Wilson, William and Martha Handy, Joseph and Marion Barber, Robert and Eleanor Maw, Henry Vance, John Duncan, William Anderson, Hugh Frame, Eleanor McClellan, Catherine Anderson, Margaret Vance, Mrs. Mary Denny, Emma, Mary, Thomas Denny, John and Anne Pickard.

When the congregation grew to exceed this original number of 21, the need was recognized for a new chapel. Built at the corner of Park and Church Streets, was a frame chapel with a bell tower. At promptly 10 a.m. Sundays, John Harvey dutifully rang the bell, alerting the townsfolk to the commencement of services. This tradition has survived, though in many cases has been modernized by the use of the broadcasted organ music instead of the original bell chime.

In 1877, the wooden chapel

Reverend Henry Coperwaite Webb, reputedly wore a brown Holland suit and a red vest as clergy attire and insisted that his large bulldog accompany him while delivering sermons. Although Webb was interested enough in the community to start a tree-planting campaign to enhance its aesthetic value, he was dismissed from his position for holding a gala party at the church. Remember this: this was before the time that parish halls welcomed bingo, cub groups, afternoon teas and youth drop-in centres, as they do today.

Contrary to the stereotyped image of grandiose Roman Catholic cathedrals, a meagre, unpainted wooden structure was erected on Main Street opposite today's Knox Presbyterian Church, to serve as a place of worship for Georgetown's early Catholics. Guelph Street was the site of a \$1,000 Catholic Church in 1885, used for 75 years until the existing Holy Cross Roman Catholic Church was constructed on Maple Avenue in 1961.

The Georgetown Alliance Church, which serves the Pentecostal faith, and presently located at the head of Main Street, was originally a Baptist Church. Built of red brick using \$8000, donated by congregation members including J.S. Bessy, J.B. Dayfoot, George Dayfoot and L.W. Goodenow, it replaced a smaller building. In 1847,

Michael Dayfoot was inaugurated as the first Deacon of the original Baptist church while Reverend C. Perrin was the first minister of the new church when it opened in 1869.

A frame building was used as a meeting place by Georgetown Presbyterians for 20 years until 1887 when a brick church was erected. The Knox Presbyterian Church, on the corner of Church and Main, cost \$15,000, most of the money being raised by the Barber family. When Reverend W.G. Wallace led the congregation in 1893, only 150 of the 400 seats were filled on Sundays.

Something interesting to note is the fact that circuit riders, or travelling ministers, preached their way from church to church in the early pioneer days. Way back then, the area of Georgetown stretched from Toronto Gore to Owen Sound, and Fathers would spend most of the week on horseback commuting from one parish to another.

Families would dress in their Sunday best after their Saturday night scrub-downs to partake in the services. As well as being spiritually enlightening, Sundays were

activities: sewing bees, picnics, square dances, barn raisings. The church of yesterday, the focal point of community life, literally was what the pioneers dubbed it, "a meetin' place."

social occasions. Neighbours, residing on isolated farms, would gather together afterwards to exchange gossip and plan recreational ac-



The Methodist Church Circa 1919.



Georgetown's unique train station

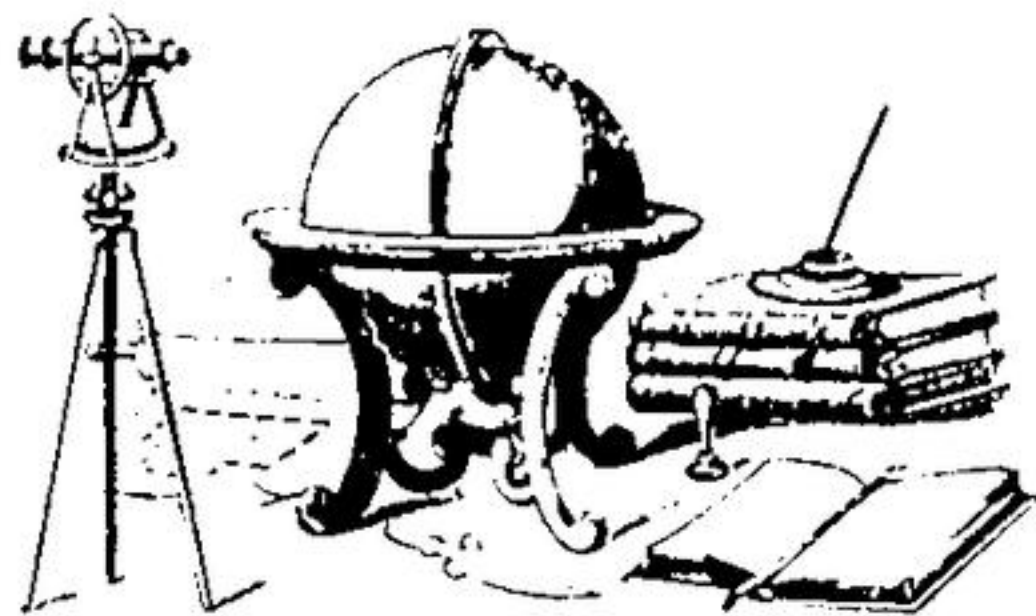
was replaced by the stone church which now houses the Georgetown Public Library, at a cost of \$6,500. A tablet was erected in memory of Mr. James Barber, deacon of the church for 34 years, and a huge stained glass window was installed in memory of his wife Maria.

Many other institutions of worship were operational when the Congregational Church was donated to the town of Georgetown for conversion to a library in 1912.

Shortly after land on Guelph Street was donated for this purpose in 1852 by George and Elizabeth Kennedy, St. George's Anglican Church was built. Charles Dade was the first pastor of this frame church which had a square enclosure for the organ and choir in the centre of the oaks of hardwood seats.

An Englishman, Dade received \$2 weekly as temporary rector of St. George's. One of Dade's successors,

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