

Ballinafad United, 103 years old, looks to the future

Church becomes two-point charge

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1821 to be used for a church, a school, a cemetery and a home for the minister. Eventually this became the centre of the

village of Ballinafad. A log school was built in 1825 on the corner by the cemetery on Trafalgar Road and Concession 42 across from the

Shortill General Store currently operated by Mrs. Shortill's daughter-in-law and grandson. On Sundays, the log school was used for Methodist Church

services given by visiting horseback ministers called "circuit riders". The log school served as church until 1842, when the

first Methodist Church building was erected on the property now occupied by the Community Centre. A small frame building at first, it gained a covering of red brick by 1867, and lasted until torn down in 1954.

A shed to shelter the horses bringing the rural community to church was built close to the road beside the present small barn on the adjacent property in the 1850s. Above it was a large meeting room called the Good Templar's Hall. Later this was known as the Ballinafad Hall. It eventually became the present Community Centre.

As a number of Presbyterian families moved into the community, the Methodist church building was shared with them. The Presbyterians would meet in the morning, while the Methodists met in the afternoon. Although sermons were long, often lasting over an hour, many people attended both services.

OWN CHURCH

By 1878, the Presbyterians built their own church, which is the building now known as Ballinafad United.

In 1925, the United Church of Canada was formed, uniting Methodist, Congregational and Presbyterian congregations. It was decided to use the newer and larger Presbyterian building in Ballinafad and close the older Methodist church except for social functions. Much of

the timber from the old church was recycled when a basement was put under the newer church in 1954. The organ was moved and the pulpit is still used in the basement.

A few years after the Ballinafad church was built, the congregation bought a house for the minister. Maintenance of the manse was the responsibility of the congregation, until it was sold in 1965 when it was no longer needed.

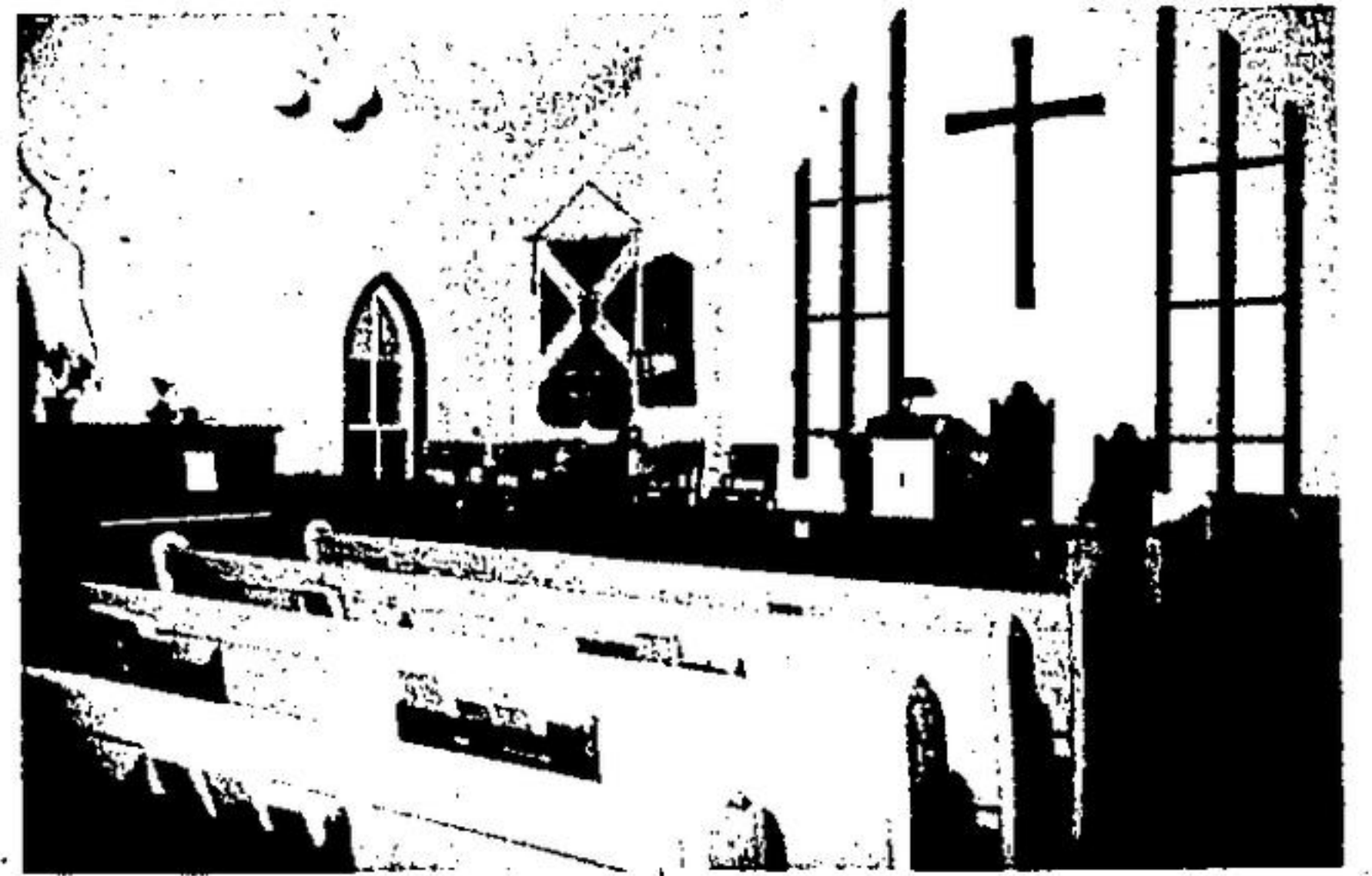
Student ministers served the combined charge of Ballinafad, Melville and Churchhill churches between 1948 and 1968, when the Ballinafad church became associated with St. Andrew's United in Georgetown.

Two wood stoves heated up the church with local farmers bringing great piles of wood for a small payment. Coal oil lamps were hung up to light the church until 1936, when electricity came to the area.

"In those days, whether it was storming or anything else, you never thought of not going to church," Mrs. Shortill said.

CARS LINED

In 1978, the Ballinafad church celebrated its 100th anniversary. Mrs. Shortill recalled how cars were parked for about a quarter mile up and



Three sets of brown-painted wooden pews fill the Ballinafad United Church. A simple country church, it acquired carillons three years ago which ring for 15 minutes twice a day, at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. Before, the church never had bells to summon Ballinafad residents. They would come anyway without fail, no matter what the weather, for going to church was an opportunity to socialize for country folk separated from each other by great distances.

(Herald photo)



Three friendly women busy with their needles and thread are working on a quilt which will raise money for the church. Long-time residents of Ballinafad, (left to right) Rita Shortill,

Alma Sinclair and Margaret Jamieson gather in Mrs. Shortill's basement family room, long designated as the quilting room by the United Church Women.

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