



MARY DAWSON

Our authority on Richmond Hill

By MILLIE STEWART
Liberal Staff Reporter

I asked Mary Dawson for an interview in the editorial office at the Liberal. She was sitting at her desk with a volume of historical issues of the paper open in front of her.

Somehow, that's a fitting setting for her.

Mary celebrated 30 years with the Richmond Hill Liberal June 4. She said, "I came to work at the Liberal June 4, 1948 to give Jack Smith a hand as a linotype operator for a few weeks."

Some few weeks.

Mary didn't come to the Liberal inexperienced. Her family owned and operated the 'Parkhill Gazette' in Parkhill, Ontario, and Mary's training in the newspaper business started when she was only four.

She was called on to take her brother's place catching leaflets as they came down a chute.

She had her first piece, a poem, published in the paper when she was seven years old. The foreman was her friend, and he contrived to publish her poem without her father knowing.

When her dad found out about it, it was too late, and he was angry.

In all her years with the family paper, she worked in every job there was. She sold ads, did linotype work, wrote copy and edited other people's copy.

Her grandfather was editor of the Hamilton Spectator. Her father, of course, was owner-manager of the Parkhill Gazette, her mother was the second woman editor of a newspaper in Canada, and her brothers and sisters all worked in the business.

After Mary came to The Liberal, she worked for 14 years as a linotype operator before she moved to another department.

Mary's move was accidental as well. The editor at that time, Ed Murphy left the paper to follow Lester Pearson on the campaign trail taking with him the only other reporter on the staff.

Sam Cook was the managing editor at the time, and he put Mary in the editorial department. He hired another female reporter,

Richmond Hill's 1878 council

Richmond Hill's 1878 council was composed of Reeve William Trench and Councillors Dr. James Langstaff, P. G. Savage, William Powell and Benjamin Redditt.

WILLIAM TRENCH

Was a blacksmith and manufacturer of carriages.

He was born in 1831 in Dunbar, Scotland, emigrating with his parents at the age of 10. The family settled at Elgin Mills, but William settled in the village in 1857, starting his own business. In 1878 he completed renovations of his plant on Yonge Street at Lorne Avenue. Besides serving as reeve for seven years he was a school trustee for several years.

DR. JAMES

MILES LANGSTAFF

Who started the practice of medicine in Richmond Hill in 1849 was the son of John Langstaff, first teacher in the area and grandson of Abner Miles, one of the earliest settlers in the Hill.

He built Homewood as his residence and office in 1849 and in 1878 advertised in The Liberal: "Dr. James Langstaff is usually found at home at 9 a.m." He also served one year as reeve of the village.

PETER GOULD SAVAGE

Was born in Dundee, Scotland in 1846. In 1878 he had a grocery and general store. In 1911 he became Richmond Hill's postmaster, a position he held until 1917 when he was succeeded by his son.

He was reeve from 1897 to 1905 after serving 14 years on council.

WILLIAM POWELL

A native of Beverley, Yorkshire, England, he was born in 1814 and came to Canada in 1830. He worked for Miles Langstaff for three or four years then rented Col. Moodie's farm for four years. He then farmed in Whitchurch for two years, returning to Lot 47, Con. 1, Vaughan. In 1835 he married Margaret, daughter of Col. Bridgford and after her death married Elizabeth Chamberlain. His family totalled 12 sons and three daughters.

He was a member of Capt. Gapper's troop of horses during 1837. Owner of a brickyard, he sat on council for seven years.

BENJAMIN REDDITT

We have not been able to get any information on Redditt except that in the 1890's he acted as village auditor for the sum of \$5.

When the church towers arrived to form Richmond Hill's skyline

When The Liberal was established in 1878 the skyline of Richmond Hill would not have been dominated as it is now by the distinctive church towers.

North of the old town limits a small, less conspicuous congregation was well established and still flourishes.

Many a traveller used St. John's Anglican Church, located in the area known as Jefferson, below Bond Lake on Yonge Street, as a landmark since it was built in 1848.

There were at least five other religious groups meeting in Richmond Hill 100 years ago, but only one other building still exists with its original use.

The congregation of St. Mary's, on the north-west corner of Yonge Street and Major Mackenzie Drive, met in what is now known as St. Mary's Chapel, which had been constructed in 1872.

But, the distinguishing spire was not added until 1881 when a committee was formed to obtain subscriptions to pay for materials and labour.

Anglican formal service has not changed much since those days, but the time of service has. Meetings were held at three Sunday afternoon to allow farmers to tend to their chores before going to worship.

In December of 1879 a catastrophe overtook the methodist congregation, the forerunner of the present Richmond Hill United Church, when flames consumed the frame structure they had been meeting in, one block south of their present location, at Centre and Yonge Streets.

DIFFERENT COSTS

In 1880 the present structure was erected at a cost of \$17,000 (which must have been a large sum at that time) and again, the steeple was erected a few years later.

The present Presbyterian Church building, beside St. Mary's was completed in 1880 also, at a cost of \$6,366, for some reason much less than the United Church.

The construction of this church added the distinctive four pinnacle tower to Richmond Hill's skyline.

Arrangements have just been completed to move the original Presbyterian Church Manse, built in 1876, to Black Creek Pioneer Village.

By 1894 the fourth tall tower on Yonge Street was added.

The parishioners of St. Mary

Immaculate Roman Catholic Church, consisting of six families in 1894 and meeting in a frame building on Mill Street, pooled their talents to build a church and manse at Yonge and Dunlop Streets.

In 1967 this fine old red brick building was demolished to make room for the modernistic new church now on the site. The soaring white spire was put in place by a great crane in 1967.

No churches were built in Richmond Hill for almost 60 years.

In the 50s and 60s at least six new churches were added, as well as additions made to existing churches, to serve the growing population of the town.

17 PEOPLE

In May of 1955, seventeen people met in the Masonic Hall behind the United Church and decided to organize the Richmond Hill Baptist Church. The church building was constructed in 1958.

In that same year, the United Church added on their Christian Education Building to complete the present complex.

Even with this addition to the United Church, with the rapid population increase St. Matthews was set up in the eastern portion of the municipality.

Until the present St. Matthews was built on Crosby Avenue in 1957, the congregation met in Walter Scott Public School.

St. Gabriel The Archangel followed in 1959 to serve the new subdivision east of Yonge Street.

The church built in the summer of that year was intended to be the parish hall with the church added at a later date. However, the parish did not grow as anticipated so the congregation uses this building as a church.

The present minister at St. Gabriel's, David Metcalfe, said, "This explains why the floors are marked out as tennis courts, under the pews."

In the 1960s three churches, Our Lady Queen of the World, St. Paul's Lutheran and St. John's Baptist, grew in Richmond Hill.

Congregations for Calvary Pentecostal, Richmond Hill Seventh Day Adventist, Free Methodist, Jehovah's Witnesses and Church of the Latter Day Saints also followed as the population exploded.

SPECIAL PLACE

Emmanuel Anglican Church in Richvale has a special place in many peoples hearts, including a

number of people living in Toronto.

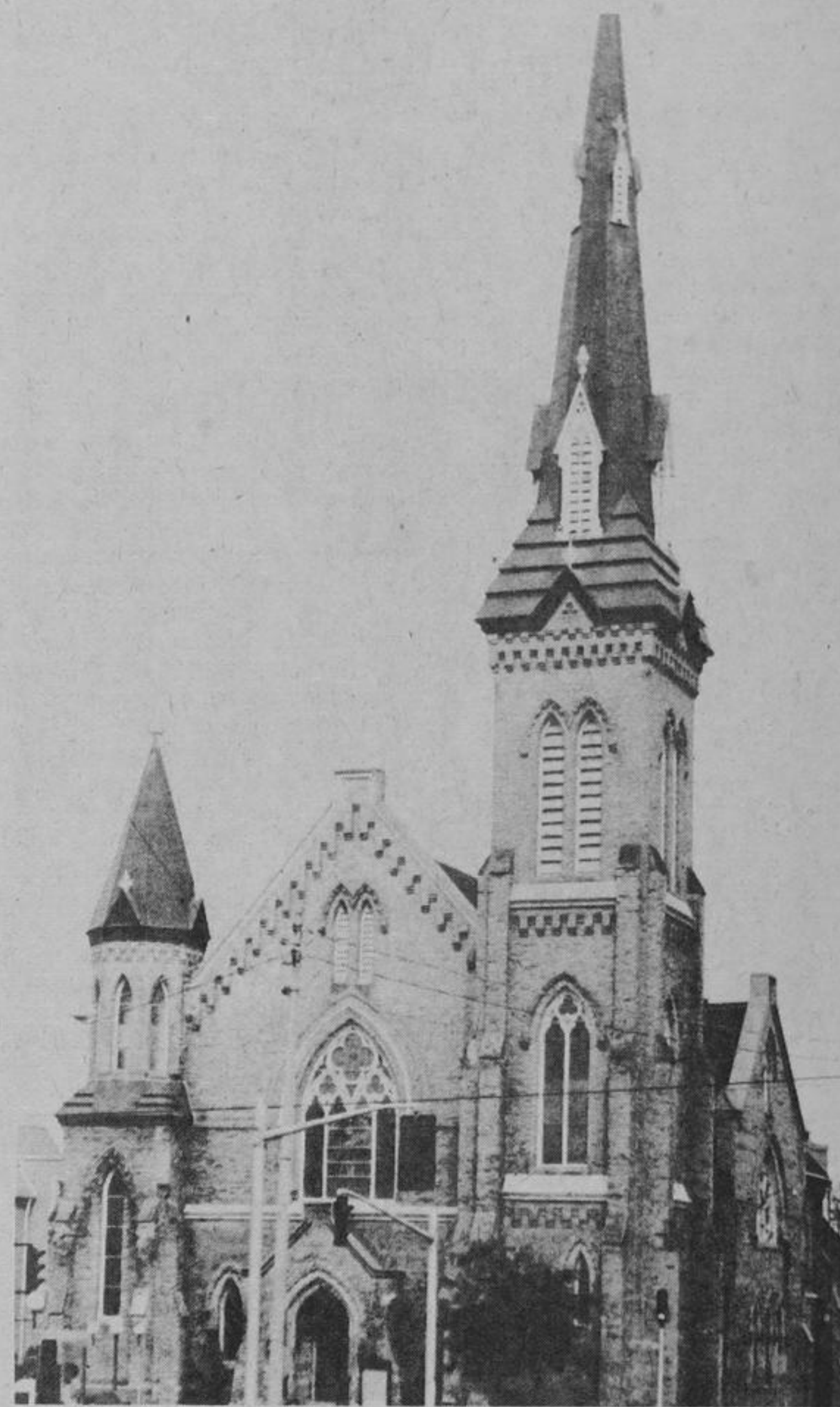
The historic Emmanuel Church at Hanlon's Point on Toronto Island, in effect became the new Emmanuel Church on Mackay Drive in Richvale.

The congregation, then meeting in Charles Howett Public School, built block footings in 1964

and then set the old church building dismantled in 1959 on top.

The first service was held in April of 1965, using all the old furniture and fixings in the original church.

One hundred years later, Richmond Hill is well served by its many churches of all denominations.



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