



A sketch of St. Paul's, His Majesty's Chapel of the Mohawks, as it is today near Brantford, Ontario. The church except for minor alterations and repairs is in its original state and is used daily. It was built in 1780 for Mohawk people who immigrated to Canada from New York during the War of Independence.

## Mar. 15, 1950 Family Herald Chapel of the Mohawks

By G. T. Harris

ONE Sunday morning during the late 1780's "Old Aaron", Mohawk Indian minister, preached his first sermon from the pulpit of Saint Paul's, His Majesty's new chapel of the Mohawks, built on the banks of the Grand River where now stands the city of Brantford.

Open before him in the lectern lay a stained leather Bible. On the altar rested a heavy communion set, both gifts of Queen Anne of England to the Mohawks and carried by them during the American War of Independence from their old church at Fort Hunter, in New York, to be buried under a tree for more than five years, and afterward borne north into the safety of Loyalist territory.

This year the communion service was turned over to the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto and put on display for three months.

Some time ago, nearly one hundred and seventy years later, I spent an hour in the quiet, old historic churchyard, protected by the shade of lovely trees from the hot noonday sun.

Save for a few minor repairs and slight alterations, this little wooden church remains in its original form and is still in daily use. A century and a half of scorching summers and freezing winters of snow and ice, have worn down the soft pine-board walls, leaving the hard knots and old square-headed nails standing out in relief. Yet the structure is still in a fine state of preservation.

Sleeping in the shadow of the church lies Joseph Brant, noble chief and great statesman of the Mohawk people, a generous and faithful Loyalist ally.

Other headstones, leaning and

cracked with age, tell the story of the hardships and sufferings of the Indians and whites alike. One reads:

In Memory of Eliza, Beloved Wife of William F. Hanson, Who departed this Life Sept. 1st, 1857, Aged 37.

Below this inscription are engraved the names of four children, their life's span ranging a few weeks to a meagre six years. All were born and died within seven years soon to be followed by their grief stricken mother.

Harriet, the young wife of the Reverend Luggier, missionary to the Indians, lies close to the church wall, The stone is dated 1829.

Another commemorates Peter Green, an Oneida chief. At the

foot of this grave lie buried three little girls, bearing the same name, presumably his grand-daughters. The eldest 2 years and 7 months, the youngest, five days.

Some lived to a ripe old age, more than their allotted three score years and ten, but the majority of stones are in memory of infants and young mothers, who ill attended, died giving them life, often only for a few short hours or days.

As I stood there I saw my own wife and our healthy young children well fed, warmly housed and clothed, cared for in rare instances of sickness by a skilled physician.

I saw, too, heartbroken Eliza Hanson standing silently beside an open grave for the fourth time in seven years, as her lifeless little Mary Ann was lowered into the ground. I saw the Reverend Nelles, then minister, groping helplessly for words of comfort.

I saw the body of Joseph Brant borne by his sorrowing people to its last resting place. I read a chapter in history more indelibly inscribed than any written book. For an hour I had lived in the past.

And so I left that quiet acre on which still stands the oldest church