

Chapel of the Delaware built from logs

It is officially known as the Delaware United Church, Third Line Tuscarora Township on the Six Nations Reserve. Most, however, know this beautiful little white church on the hill as The Chapel of the Delaware.

It would be hard to find a church with an architectural heritage placed more deeply within the roots of our land. It was fashioned, many years ago, by hand, from felled trees of the forest.

The congregation was founded in 1825 when a church was built under the ministry of Rev. Peter Jones. This was not to be the present building.

In 1853, a Delaware Indian Evangelist, William Montour, came to the Delaware country of the Six Nations Reserve with all his goods packed in an ox cart.

The Delawares were ready to listen to the gospel story, for in casting their lot with the British and becoming United Empire Loyalists they had forsaken their longhouse religion and were floundering in mental turmoil.

Work on building a new church began on land donated by Miss Amanda John (Mrs. John Cornelius). Led by Montour, his nephew John Montour and John Wampun, the Delawares began the work

of building on the beautiful hill top.

The men cut and hewed the timbers with broad axes, while the women cheered them on and served meals right in the bush. Large boulders were hauled, by oxen, up the hill to form the foundation and logs were split to make benches.

The builders of the church were not without opposition. Acts of vandalism were experienced, as some saw this new edifice as a threat to their longhouse beliefs. The builders hurried the roof on when the walls were only five logs high. It now looked not unlike a longhouse and this seemed to please its detractors and so, in 1857, the Chapel of the Delaware was completed.

The building served as a school as well as a church for 19 years. In 1888 work began on remodelling. New logs were hewn to raise the walls and a porch topped with a bell tower was added.

Sad times came to the little church in the 1930s when it was closed. In 1945 the spirit of 1857 was rekindled. Led by George Peters the church was reopened. A basement was created and wiring for electricity installed.

The Chapel of the Delaware, with its log



Delaware United Church, founded in 1825, is located in the Six Nations Reserve.

construction now covered with white-washed board and batten, sits today, toy-church-like, welcoming all to enter its immaculate interior.

Contact is indebted to Bart Peters and the minister of the Church, Rev. Will Kinder for their help and acknowledges use of material loaned to it.