

institute and are still carrying on for which we are very grateful. We welcome our young women and hope they will continue the work so freely given by past and present members.

A motto in one of the old books reads: "The past is never dead unless the present people make it so". Our institute has never been a large one, varying from 15 to 30 members but the work that has been accomplished is amazing to review. One of the first projects was to improve the school grounds by planting trees and cleaning up. Then as money was raised swings were erected and a piano purchased. The institute was instrumental in providing equipment to serve hot lunches for the school children. As the schoolhouse was also the social center of the community the W.I. as the need arose, supplied tables, chairs, an electric plate and kettle, dishes and silver to be used for their own and community gatherings. They were instrumental in introducing music and medical inspections in the school & gave prizes for public speaking. Every year a picnic was held at Port Stanley or in the schoolyard for the whole community. The Christmas concert was always a highlight of the year for pupils and parents alike and once again the W.I. supplied the Christmas bags for the children.

In January of 1931 with a membership of 19, this branch along with some other branches put on the meal for the Kiwanis Farmers' night. This branch sent 25 pies, 2 qts pickles, 1 qt. homemade mayonaise, 5 dishes baked beans. Ten members acted as waitresses.

In April of 1931 an egg shower was held for the children's shelter in St. Thomas, 12 dozen were given. In following years the shelter was remembered with jam, jellies, fruit and vegetables.

In July of 1931 when the picnic was planned, each family was asked to bring sufficient food for their own and 1 lemon per person. Apparently the lemonade must have been made on the spot?

It seems as if the women must have made hundreds of quilts over

the years. In 1931 we read they charged \$1.25 to quilt a double bed size. In 1938 quilt batts were purchased for 59¢. In 1943 we read the price of quilting was up to \$1.50. At a social gathering in May, 1934, tickets were sold at 5¢ on a lovely quilt which was won by Jim Walker of the Coon Road area who was my brother-in-law's uncle.

Mrs. James Barrie donated a pyjama bag. Each member was given 10 tickets to sell at 5¢ a piece, 140 tickets were sold. The difference in prices makes fascinating reading. For layettes sent to Northern Ontario in 1931 flannelette was purchased at 20 yards for \$2.50. Wreaths and sprays for funerals were \$3.00. A baby jacket bought and mailed to a former area girl cost 90¢. Butter was 25¢ pound, salmon 22¢ a tin, bread 12¢ a loaf, coffee 28¢ and sugar 6¢ a pound.

Coming up to 1949 supplies for a weiner roast were: weiners, 28¢ lb., rolls 15¢ a dozen, cookies 2 dozen for 25¢, coffee 35¢ lb., mustard 10¢. In January of 1950 cups were purchased at 11¢ each. The opening ode and the Lords Prayer were always a part of the opening exercises. It was not until 1951 that the minutes record the repeating of the Mary Stewart Collect. In 1937 the Young Girls Coronation Sewing Club Consisting of the leader Catherine McPherson now Mrs. C. Lindsay, Ethel Ashmore now Mrs. Finlay McPherson, Marianne Coleman now Mrs. E. Unger, Mrs. Velma Campbell and the late Mrs. Geanalta Darrac~~M~~ Cron in their project "Cottons May be Smart" obtained first class honours at Achievement Day and were given a trip to Toronto.

At the close of World War II 600 articles of sewing and 526 articles of knitting had been completed by this branch. Quilts, blankets, jams which were made in the homes and honey bought from Mr. Askew were sent overseas. Mrs. Geo Campbell received the Red Cross pin for her untiring work at this time. Besides this the W.I. looked after the boys from this area overseas sending them parcels, cards and letters. They were instrumental in having a new Honour Roll placed in the school with the names of those serving in

World Wars one and two on it. On December 3, 1944 it was unveiled by Mrs. Etta Campbell with Dr. H. S. Rodney speaking and the Union United Choir providing the music.

Rather than telling you of more up-to-date happenings I have tried to take you back to those first years when the Institute had such an influence on the community. A charter member who was president and secretary of the branch later ~~on~~ Mrs. D. B. McPherson was for a great many years superintendent of the Sunday School held in River Road School and was highly respected in the community.

There is so much talk now of branches disbanding that I feel in closing I must tell you of an annual meeting we had in 1959. Our retiring president suggested to us that we might as well disband stating lack of interest, poor attendance, reluctance to take office and lack of funds. This came as a sort of bombshell to us but did shake us out of our lethargy. After some discussion members present were asked to signify if they were willing to take office. Mrs. Fatcher Begg led the way by offering to be president ^{and} ~~as~~ soon all offices were filled. That was 22 years ago and we are still carrying on. May we all endeavour on this celebration of our 60th Anniversary to show renewed interest and go on toward another 60.

Prepared by:

Lillian Ross

FEDERATED WOMEN'S INSTITUTES of ONTARIO

75th Anniversary

On April 20, 1972, all branches of Elgin County Institutes met at Grace United Church, Balaclava St., St. Thomas, to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the F.W.I.O's.

Mrs. Keith Heipleh was chairman and opened the program with the Institute Ode and introduced Rev. L. J. Coates. Rev. L. J. Coates, pastor of Grace Church, welcomed the assemblage and told how he had admired and respected their accomplishments and helping to build good citizens.

Greetings were brought by Mrs. Lorne Daniels, F.W.I.O. Board Director, and from London Area by Mrs. Wallace Laidlaw, second vice-president of the area.

A. V. Langton, Elgin County's representative of the Ont. Department of Agriculture and Food, conveyed his good wishes and those of his department; and he introduced the new home economist, Miss Lois Ferguson, who extended good wishes on behalf of Mrs. O. G Marcou, who has been acting home economist. Miss Ferguson expressed her good wishes to the W.I. and is looking forward to meeting all members.

A paper prepared by Mrs. J. R. Futchter, titled "A Few Highlights of my W.I. Experiences" was read by Mrs. Herb Jackson, who also gave a few details of the Elgin County Rally. The history of East Elgin was given by Mrs. J. Gowan Young, and that of West Elgin by Mrs. Vermont Pow.

Sing Songs were enthusiastically participated in by all present.

The Dutton Highland dancers and a ballet dance group were enjoyed by everyone. A skit - The Women's Institute Work - was given by Mrs. Young and Mrs. McNeil.

A fashion parade of dresses made from toilet paper, crepe paper, bows, burlap bags, funny papers, bread wrappers, see-through plastic, and Christmas wrappings caused much laughter and enjoyment.

Another highlight of the evening was the presentation of the 1972 W.I. Centennial Scholarship of \$100 to Miss Kathy Martin, R.R.8, St. Thomas, to further her studies at the University of Guelph.

The 75th Anniversary Song was sung to conclude this part of the evening and following this, a candelighting ceremony was conducted with Mrs. George Corneil as soloist.

Courtesies were given by Mrs. G. Gow.

The meeting closed with O Canada. Anniversary cake and ice cream were served. Members then finished looking at the different displays that had been set up before the opening of the program.

F.W.I.O. Anniversary...continued

The River Road display arranged by Mrs. C. Campbell, Mrs. C. Lindsay, Mrs. E. Reck, Mrs. J. Palmer, consisted of a picture of R.R.W.I.'s first president and secretary a map of River Road Community, 25th Anniversary of R.R.W.I., 10th Anniversary of R.R.W.I., our English Institute of England, School projects, 4-H projects, Red Cross work, Museum work and Elgin Manor Tuck shop. The display board was covered with blue cloth and gold lettering was used. The Institute Crest was on the top of the board.

Mrs. C. Lindsay took part in the candlelighting service and Mrs. E. Reck helped serve coffee. Mrs. L. Jones displayed the bread wrapper dress.

Those attending from River Road W.I. were:

Mrs. C. Campbell
Mrs. Mae Lanning
Mrs. Jean O'Brien
Mrs. W. A. Metler
Mrs. T. Cook

Mrs. J. Begg
Mrs. L. Jones
Mrs. J. Palmer
Mrs. H. Palmer
Mrs. C. Lindsay

River Road W. I.



This picture was taken at the Grandmothers meeting of the R.R.W.I. at Mrs. F. Joiner's in Aug. 1937.

1st. Row- Mrs Etta Campbel l, Mrs. D.B. McPherson, Mrs. T. McGaw
Mrs. W.A. Metler (with grandson David McPherson in arms)
Mrs. Wyse of London.

2nd. Row- Mrs. Floyd Claus, Mrs. Neil Campbell, Mrs. S. Fulton,
Mrs. Jack Campbell, Marianne Coleman, Mrs. F. Joiner,
Mrs. B. Patrick.

3rd. Row- Mrs. J.N. Spurr, Mrs. Curtis Campbell, Mrs. W. Coleman,
Alma McGaw, Annie McGaw, Mrs. J.H. Mc Pherson.

Little girl in front is Donna Nunney.

A Short History of West Elgin W. I. Branches

In a copy of the Women's Patriotic Newspaper published by the St. Thomas Chapter I.O.D.E. in 1916 with Miss Tessie Ingram as convenor, there are some interesting articles concerning W.I. organizations in Elgin Co.

The first W.I. branch in West Elgin was organized in Dutton in 1905. It later disbanded in 1911 and re-organized in 1916 and has been an active branch since. In 1916 there were 7 West Elgin Branches, Wallacetown, West Lorne, Rodney, Clachan, Iona, Fingal, and Shedden. At Present in 1966 there are 16 branches including all of the above except Fingal and in addition Middlemarch, Paynes Mills, Boxall, Talbotville, Crinan, Cowal, River Road, Wona, Iona Station, Tryconnel. (Talbotville disbanded in later part of 1966)

East Elgin in 1916 had 7 branches, now 16.

The paper also mentions the great activity of all of Elgin's Women's organizations in sewing and knitting for the soldiers in World War 1, as well as the various methods of raising money for this work.

Another item mentions that the 91st. batallion was soon due to leave St. Thomas for overseas.

The 91st. was the batallion raised in this district comprised of many hundreds of local men and officers. they were quartered in th e former broom factory situated near the L.P.S. tracks and east of the armories on Wilson Ave. The building is now the Victor Gasket Plant.

The batallion often went on route marches. I remember them marching down the old Gravel Road (Highway no4) past the school (NO 17 Yarmouth) on the east side of Highway 4 opposite the present school, while I taught th ere. They entrained on Sun. at the N.Y. Station, Many of them never to return.

Mrs. Clara Fulton

RIVER ROAD WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

AREA: LONDON DISTRICT: ELGIN WEST
1972

Mrs. Thomas Cook.
St. Thomas, Ontario.

The 24th. Annual Women's Institute Officer's Conference was held at the University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario on May 2,3,4 1972. There were, according to Mrs. C.L. Murray, between 600 and 700 women from Ontario in attendance. The purpose of the conference was to learn to be officers and leaders; the motto being "Members see; Officers foresee".

Activities over and above actual discussion periods included a tour through the Adelaide Hoodless home and MacDonald Institute Walking Tour.

The speakers consisting of Mrs. E. V. Fulton, National Pres., F.W.I.C., Miss Helen McKercher, Director, Home Economics Branch, Ontario Department of Agriculture and Food, and Dr. W.C. Watson, Director of Gastroenterology, Victoria Hospital, London, were very interesting and informative.

On May 3, 1972 delegates took part in discussion periods. The delegates and leaders talked about the role of all members of the Women's Institute. This information can be found in the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario Handbook. It was stressed that the hadbook be used for answers to queries that may arise.

The conference was very worthwhile and enjoyable.

A few important points which were stressed were;

1. Use the hadbook.
2. Institute pins - We should be proud to be a member and wear pins.
We are entitled to wear F.W.I.O.?
EW.I.C., AND A.C.W.W. pins.
3. Have interesting meetings to keep members interested
4. Payment of dues at the proper time (Ref. pg. 15)
5. Strive for a 20% increase in membership
6. By-laws
7. Life memberships where applicable.
8. Proper meeting procedures.
- 9/ New membership cards on payment of fees.
10. Monthly reports from standing committee members if possible.

WHAT IS THE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE?

"It is an inspirational rural university training for young and old alike to develop personalities, talents, friendliness, and friendships, procedural techniques, and a training in helping others, a homelife improvement study, and a place to see, hear and do with others."

The Fulton Settlement
1947

An extract from a paper of 1905 states "Down in the south part of the township of Southwold one is lost to-day in a maze of the Fultons all descended from one large pioneer family. However at the present time of writing 1947 while there are many relatives of this original family among the residents of River Road but three families bear the family name.

Approximately thirty years or more after the arrival of Colonel Talbot the family of five Fulton brothers came to this section in 1836 from the town of Ballymoney situated in the county of Antrim in the north east of (Antrim) Ireland. They settled in this neighborhood forming what was known as the Fulton Settlement.

These Brothers were Adam, John, Sam, Hugh and James. These names were later given to several of their descendants. Many of Southwold's early settlers were Scotch. Naturally later there were many marriages between the Irish Fultons and their descendants and the Scotch families.

Adam the eldest of the brothers married Margaret McIntosh and settled on the farm now owned by Pearl Fulton and her sister Mrs. J. Darrach. The present fine brick house is the third built on the site of the original log cabin. The children of Adam Fulton were Mary, James, Isobel, Adam, Margaret, George, Caroline Liza, John, Agnes. Mary remained single, James married Annie McPherson of Wallacetown and settled on the Talbot Road near Fingal. They later returned to the farm now owned by Morley Claus and erected the brick house there. Their sons were Hugh, George, James, Adam, Daniel and Sam. The five older sons chose railroading as careers making their homes in or near St. Thomas. Hugh served overseas in World War I. He was married to Miss Ellman and their children were. Ellman, Hubert and Audrey. Samuel married Clara Wismer of Mapleton and they with their three sons. Murray, Donald, Keith, live on the River Road on the farms acquired from John Parker and Adam Fulton. The daughters were. Margaret (Mrs. Hepburn) Grace (Mrs. Herb Johnson) Isabel (Mrs. Russ) and Annie (Mrs. Campbell) Mrs. Hepburn was the mother of Mitchell Hepburn who represented Elgin as Liberal member in the Dominion Parliament from 1926 - 1934 and became Premier of Ontario from 1934-1943.

Isabel the second daughter of the original Adam Fulton married Duncan McLachlin and was the mother of Col. A. F. McLachlin prominent St. Thomas druggist and analyst. They are the parents of two prominent doctors Drs. Angus and John McLachlin. Adam the next son married a Miss McLarty and acquired the A. McIntosh farm on the River Road. The present River Road school erected in 1897 is built on land off this farm. Adam Fulton built the brick residence on his farm in 1881.

(2)

The Fulton Settlement cont.

The other daughters Margaret. (Mrs. Overbury) Caroline (Mrs. Walker) and Agnes (Mrs. Andrews) upon their marriages left this neighborhood. Liza married Mr. Allan Mellor and lived on the first farm east of the Fulton Bridge on the north of the road. Their daughter is Mrs. J. K. Watson. George married Euphemia Walker in 1881 and remained on the old homestead where his two daughters Pearl, Marybelle Darrach and grandson Fulton Darrach now live. A granddaughter Geanalta Darrach Cron lives in Fingal. John Fulton married Alma Walker and settled on the farm known at present as the Griffith Walker farm.

John the second of the original brothers settled in Toronto Samuel the third of the original brothers married a Miss McDiarmid and settled on the farm near his brother Adam. The farm was later owned by James his nephew (Adam's son) and as has been mentioned is now owned by Morley Claus. His (Samuel's) children were Andrew, Archie, Robert, Sam, Jennie, John. Andrew, Archie went to the U. S. Robert and Sam known as the Fulton Brothers lived in Fingal when that village was a thriving centre. They owned a sawmill, a veneer factory where it is said 300,000 feet of veneering was handled annually. They also built a brick building with the purpose of catering to commercial and other travellers. It was called "The Fulton House". Robert was the father of Jennie (Mrs. Black) and Lloyd who lives on the Talbot Road. Sam's children are Jean, Muriel, Earl of Detroit. Jennie Became Mrs. Risdon and Dr. Fulton Risdon of Toronto is their son. Their daughter Lulu is Mrs. Petit.

John the remaining son became a well known doctor. In Miss Lewis Book Early Medical Men of Elgin she writes that "Dr. John Fulton of Fingal rose to great heights and was given a leaders place in Toronto where he passed his later years. He graduated under Dr. John Rolf, lecturing for and with him/ After the Rolf school divided he and Dr. Rolf's son carried on the lecturework and with other brilliant men laid the foundation for the medical part of Toronto University.

To return to Hugh the fourth of the original brothers, we find that he settled on the farm now owned by D. B. McPherson on the first road to the east after going up the hill south of the Fulton bridge. He remained a bachelor and his niece Mary (Adam's elder daughter) kept house for him.

James the fifth brother from Ireland settled across the road from the Coleman farm, west of the River Road school. None of the original buildings remain, in 1842 this pioneer Fulton married Mary Ferguson. In 1856 he became a Lieutenant in the Elgin Militia and in 1858 became a captain. Mrs. G. Campbell says she has seen their marriage license also the original copy of the appointment.

The Fulton Settlement cont.

The children of James and Mary Ferguson Fulton were Sarah, Elsie, Henry, James, Hugh and Mary, Several of their descendants live in or near the River Road community. Sarah married Dugald Campbell and their son John and wife Mabel Westlake and their son and wife Eleanor Fenwick and family now reside in the spacious farm home on the River Road.

Elsie married Ewan McIntyre and their two sons John and James and daughters Emma and Elsie live in the attractive residence surrounded by a beautifully kept lawn on the West River Road.

Henry married Ella, then Louise Jackson and lived on the farm settled by the elder Hugh Fulton. Two sons of of this marriage have since their father's death lived on the Conrod Road section. One daughter Estelle lives at Niagara Falls and a daughter Madeline(Mrs. Parks) at Shedden.

In 1867 the elder James Fulton purchased the farm across the road from where he had settled (The Coleman farm) He erected a fine brick house there, His son Hugh lived there but later sold the farm and moved to London. Mary the younger daughter became Mrs. Herr and lived in California. The pioneer James' remaining son James became a teacher and later a doctor. He graduated from Trinity Medical School. He studied abroad, serving at one time on a boat to Calcutta. He practised in St. Thomas. He was a member of city council and on the board of governors of Amasa Wood Hospital.

Much of the information in above regarding Fulton family was given by Mrs. J. Darrach (Marybelle Fulton)

1960

Some changes and added information to above.

Miss Pearl Fulton, Mrs. J. Darrach, Fulton Darrach are now deceased and the farm owned by Mrs. Geanalta Darrach Cron of Fingal.

John and Mabel Westlake Campbell are now deceased. Their son Kenneth and wife, Eleanor live on the homestead and have four children, Janice, Kenella, Dugald, and Mary.

John and James, the two sons of Elsie(Fulton) and Ewan McIntyre are now deceased.

A. Robert Fulton married Ruth Ferguson, Their daughter Mary married Emer Earnshaw and his daughter is Ruth Earnshaw Fulton wife of Keith Fulton son of Samuel Fulton

↓
grand-daughter

The Robbins Family

One of the pioneer families of the River Road community was that of Adam Robbins. He was born in Devonshire, England in 1823, the son of Richard Robbins. With his parents and several others Adam sailed from England in 1836 on a vessel the "Boliver" as far as Montreal. For the next part of their journey they went in an open boat drawn by horses and oxen. They next proceeded in a steamboat the "Traveller" as far as Coburg where the father was drowned in the lake.

He had brought money, 3 sovereigns, for Richard Penhale who had been a neighbour in England. Penhale had land on the Edgware Road and had kept land for Robbins. Adam's mother's brother Sam Brimicombe was in Yarmouth and he rode a horse down to Cobourg to meet Adam.

They came back to St. Thomas in a cutter which Adam bought and which was drawn by his uncle's horse. The rest of the family came by stage.

Adam lived at Henry Paynes for some time helping to build a sawmill there in 1837. In 1839 he went to Asa Howard's near Yarmouth Centre, to learn wagon making, helping to make the first set of steel springs in the county. This Asa Howard was apparently a prominent man, having been a judge in California and a deputy sheriff here.

He stayed a year at Ambrose Caswell's in Avlmer. In 1844 he bought Lot 6 on East River Road and started farming. His sister Lydia kept house for him for 4 years then she married John Campbell, the grandfather of Neil and Curtis Campbell.

He reports that in 1844 the East River Road was not opened but that they had to go down to the River Road to the lot owned by Pringle later the Francis, then Smith then Beattie farm, to cross over to his lot. This lot had been owned by his uncle mentioned previously and was later purchased by Earnest Siple followed by Jim Todd, and willed to Hepburn the transport trucker now owned by the Shaw family.

Robbins logged the East River Road the first winter he was there and in about three years helped build the first Robbins bridge. Abner Ellison had the contract for it. One of the men who worked on it, George Lawton was nearly killed by falling off into the creek. Bees were held to get out the timber for it.

At that time Patrick Brady lived near by on the now Duynisveld farm. Squire White on the Olver, now Coomb's farm. John Campbell on the now Reiger farm, and Ben Drake on the Chaplow or Van Meppelyn farm.

In order to clear his land, he burned walnut trees for fifteen years. (very valuable now.)

In 1852 he married Lydia, Thomas Francis daughter. A daughter of Adam Robbins wife married Squire Hunt's son, another daughter married a Mr. Davis.

P.S. The above is from notes of Francis Hunt Esq. compiled by Clara Fulton and in Possession of Curtis Campbell.

Thompson Family

Soloman Lee Thompson bought the farm Lot 7 Range 1 West River Road, 100 acres from Colin Munroe in 1857, before this he and his family lived in St. Thomas, in a house on the North West corner of Pearl and Talbot St.

His ancestors came from Ireland to New Brunswick and then here, Soloman Lee's mother lived with the family on the farm. She died at age 96. Soloman owned the block that went back from Talbot to Scott St. and he planted the Maple Trees that grow along Pearl St.

There were ten children in the Family Soloman L. was Married twice, his first wife Evangeline Partridge died at 21 and left him with a boy Benjamin and a girl Julia, Evangeline is buried in the old English Church Cemetery on Walnut St. in St. Thomas. Later Soloman married Sarah Baker and they had eight children 4 boys and 4 girls, Alamander, Chester, David and Edward-Lydie Ann, Rosa, Eliza, and Valona. 4 became school teachers and Benjamin and Edward were Doctors, They married and left the farm.

Soloman and his wife Sarah retired to 16 Scott St. St. Thomas in 1878 and David took over the farm. He married Elizabeth Green from Smiths Creek Mich., near Pt. Huron on Dec. 18, 1878. They had 3 children Francis Everret, Maude E. and Myrtle H. Maude married John N. Spurr of St. Thomas, he was in the theater business, and later went out West but returned to St. Thomas and spent their latter years there. Myrtle married William A. Metler of St. Thomas formerly of Fort Erie Ont. he was a fireman and then an engineer on the Michigan Central Railroad out of St. Thomas. They lived at 21 Fifth Ave. Frank married Mabel Harris of Fingal, her father was a Methodist Minister and had the Fingal charge.

David Thompson and his wife Elizabeth retired to St. Thomas to 23 Fifth Ave in 1915 and Frank and his wife Mabel lived on the farm for a few years, they had one daughter Beth Thompson. They went to Chicago and in 1920 William A. Metler and Myrtle Metler took over the farm. They had 3 children Jean Elizabeth, Lena Maude, and William David, Jean married James H. McPherson, He later was in the construction business. They had 3 children David, Hugh and Karen. Lena married Nyal B. Cook a druggist in St. Thomas, they had 4 children Robert, Paul, Thomas and Marcia. William David (Billy) married Kay Beattie. They lived on the farm for almost 10 years with William A. and Myrtle. Billy and Kay had 5 children, Darlene, Marilyn, Gregory, Douglas and Kathy. They they went to Pt. Talbot to reside and W.A. and Myrtle Metler remained on the farm until 1959 whe William D. and family returned to reside there.

William A. and Myrtle Metler retired to 26 Isabel St. St. Thomas on April 30, 1959.

In Aug. 1968 William D. and family moved to Guelph, and on Aug. 28, 1968 Thomas B. Cook (a grandson of W.A. and Myrtle Metler) and his wife Cathy moved to the farm.

William A. Metler died on Oct. 16, 1968. Thomas B. Cook bought the farm and now resides there with his wife Cathy and daughter Beckey Lynne Cook making the 7th generation of the Thompson family to live on the farm.

Thompson Family --Cont.

Soloman Lee Thompson

Born - Nov. 15, 1802
Died - Sept. 28, 1887

David Simmion Thompson

Born - Feb. 17, 1849
Died - Oct. 15, 1921

Francis Everett (Frank) Thompson

Born - April 13, 1880
Died - Dec. 23, 1961

William Austin Metler

Born - Oct. 15, 1879
Died - Oct. 16, 1968

W. D. Metler
(son of W.A. Metler)

Born - Oct. 31, 1918

Tom Cook (grandson of
W.A. Metler)

Born - May 5, 1945

The White's Station Church

Over a hundred years ago a church was situated immediately east of the pioneer cemetery. It was referred to in records at the Archives in Toronto as, White's Station Church, White Church, and as the Lawton Church. White's Station was a stop on the London Port Stanley Railroad on concession 4 Yarmouth about a mile west of the old Gravel Road, now Highway 4. In all probability few from the River Road community to the west attended there as St. Thomas was more accessible to them. Many of the settlers were Scotch and this pioneer church was affiliated with the Methodists.

The church building doubtless was not too large. It was located on the South-east corner of the Mellor farm on a lot 6 rods by 7 rods, and eleven rods from the Southwold-Yarmouth Townline and adjacent to the pioneer burial ground on the west. It appears on the Elgin Co. Atlas printed in 1877.

Older members of our neighborhood have in years past told that the building was at first used as a school and that a Miss Mary Mellor had a private school there. There were many such schools in those days, before the establishment of public schools. In 1850 the first River Road public school was built so it is quite possible that some of the section's children earlier attended the school taught by Miss Mellor. An earlier school may have been on the Mill Road where the Fultons, McIntoshes, McLartys settled.

The Crown deed to the farm known for so many years as the Mellor Farm, was received in 1820 by Col. Burwell who in the same year re-sold it to Enos Scott. In 1842 Enos Scott sold 25 acres to Charles Scott. Mention was made in reserving on the remaining 73 acres, a part for a school house. In 1847 in a land transaction conveying land from Charles Scott to John Mellor a deed stated that one acre had been reserved as a burying ground.

On June 2, 1871 there was a conveyance of the Church property, 6 rods + 7 rods from John Mellor and Margaret Mary Ann Mellor to the Methodist Episcopalian trustees namely; Abner Homer, Nicolson Basset, Gideon Del Howell, and John Henry Campbell for \$2.

At this time we find the terms Episcopalian and Wesleyan Methodists. From 1816 and after St. Thomas and vicinity were visited by "saddle-bag" Methodist preachers with headquarters in the Westminster circuit. Services were held in a farm building on Stanley St. called "The Seminary". In 1834 a Wesleyan Methodist church was built there near the Old Town Hall.

In 1836 St. Thomas became a separate charge. A lot was secured for the building of a new church and the present site on St. George St. is where the church was erected in 1841. Other churches on the same site have followed. After Union of Presbyterian and Methodist congregations in some places it is known as First United.

Other early Wesleyan meetings were held in the Canada Southern Station and Members homes. A church opened in 1873 on Balaclava St. Named Grace after Grace Rosevear daughter of a member of the original trustee board. No 7 E