

THE FRIENDS' SOCIETY

The first religious services started in South Yarmouth were those of the "Friends" in 1819 at the home of John Kipp (Sanderson) and held every Sunday, alternately, here and at Elias Moore's residence.

In 1820 the first Friends' Meeting house was built of logs - where the Friends' Cemetery now is. Later the log structure was vacated and a larger frame building was erected near the same site. In 1865 the present Meeting House was built in the woods north of Sparta at a cost of \$1,507.57. The building is 36' x 60' with ceiling 14' high, a verandah across the front and end 6' wide. In 1873 a large addition was added to accommodate the Yearly Meeting. Friends' Meeting Houses had a partition in the center. The men sat at one side and the women at the other and shutters were lowered for business meetings only. Men and women each had their clerks and assistant clerks and messages were sent from one meeting to the other. After 1885 husband and wife were allowed to sit together. Quaker garb, speech and customs prevailed. At this time Friends had large homes to accommodate "Yearly Meeting" guests. At times they entertained from thirty to forty in their homes for a week.

The first Gospel Minister in South Yarmouth was Sarah Wright Haight, an acknowledged minister among Friends. She came in 1821. She was the mother of twelve children. Still she found time to go from house to house and to different meetings in New York State to carry the gospel of glad tidings. Her people gave her a pony when she left New York State and she rode it when making her religious visits.

She preached the funeral sermon of the two "Patriots", Joshua Doan and his friend Perley, who were executed in London. Many gathered in the Friends' Meeting House for this funeral.

At a later date another Friends' Minister, Freeman Clark, often came from Norwich to attend the meetings. It was through his ministry that Serena Minard became convinced of Friends' Principles and became an outstanding speaker in the Sparta meetings. She went as a delegate to the World's W.C.T.U. Convention in England in 1895.

William Cornell was an acknowledged minister, and Edgar Haight has given inspired service since 1921.

The Friends' unprogrammed form of service is very old. There are "acknowledged" but no "paid" ministers in this branch of Friends. The Ministry is the responsibility of all - not a few. It is intended that each individual acquire a knowledge of the will of God by his own experience. The "Silent" meeting gives opportunity to feel His presence.

In the early days Friends were much criticized for their Peace Principles. However, the Friends' Service Committee has conducted a humanitarian work in all countries and the Noble Peace Award was offered them by the Norwegian Noble Committee and was awarded to them at the Norwegian Parliament in 1947.

THE FRIENDS' SOCIETY (Cont'd.)

Friends were misunderstood by Tory Officials and subjected to imprisonment and pillage at the time of the 1838 Rebellion. Dr. Dorland says -

"As the majority of the settlers hereabout had originally emigrated from the United States, they were regarded by the Tory Officials as tainted with republican ideas, and hence as "disloyal". The refusal of the Yarmouth Quakers to serve in the militia was evidently interpreted in this way; and they were, as a result, subjected to petty persecution of a most irritating nature. Their homes and property were pillaged. From one Friend they took a fat hog, from another a watch, from another - the blankets off his bed, from others - cheese, books, furniture, wearing apparel, even horses, wagons and grain. The most trifling reasons were made an excuse to bring a Quaker before a Magistrate. On one occasion, however, official zeal overreached itself. A country officer on going to a house in the Yarmouth district, on July 4, noticed something striped, which looked suspiciously like an American flag hanging out of the window. The owner of the house, Edward Welding, was promptly arrested and taken thirty miles to Port Burwell, to answer a charge of treason. The magistrate, Col. Burwell, where the charge was read, ordered the official, who laid the complaint, to produce the offending flag before the court. The "evidence" when produced, proved, however, to be only the hired man's striped shirt hung out to dry. The magistrate swore that any man who did not know the difference between a striped shirt and the American flag was not fit to be an officer."

SPARTA UNITED CHURCH

Just when the first service of the Methodist Church was held in Sparta, is not definitely known, but in the early years of the 19th century Missionaries of the Wesleyan Methodist Church served the settlement. In the year 1851 a chapel of the Wesleyan Methodist Church was built, and Rev. John Bredin, superintendent of the St. Thomas circuit, was minister. Soon after, the Port Stanley circuit, with Sparta as one of the appointments, was formed.

Of interest, in an account of the first meeting of the trustees of this chapel, held in the home of Mr. John A. Bakins on December 29, 1851, is the item that pews were to be rented at the rate of 25 to 15 shillings per annum, and single sitting at a proportionate rate.

Following is an extract from the minutes of a meeting held on March 25, 1870 - "Moved and seconded that the Church of England and Presbyterians be allowed the use of the chapel on Sunday afternoons for the present, by the Presbyterians paying 25¢ and the Church of England the same for each Sabbath it is used."

In the year 1871 the Yarmouth circuit was formed with a membership of one hundred and with Rev. Thomas Hadwin, the first pastor. Shortly afterward, the chapel - a frame building, was enlarged by the addition of wings forming a T-shaped building.

The name of the circuit was changed to Sparta in 1875, and Rev. James H. Stonehouse was first minister. A Methodist church was built in 1877 on the south west corner of Lot 22, Concession 2. This lot was given the Methodists by Mr. Isaac Turrill off his farm. In 1886 this church was moved to Jaffa and is used as a Baptist church.

Following successful revival services, the present brick edifice was built in order to more adequately meet the needs of the congregation. On Wednesday, April 28, 1886, the cornerstone was laid and on Sunday, October 10th, 1886, opening services were held with Dr. Stone of Toronto as speaker. Three services were held that day with an attendance of approximately 650 people at each service. The sum of \$1400.00, the amount still owing on the church, was subscribed that day.

The old frame church was moved back and was first used as a church shed, then a grist mill. At the present time the house owned by Mr. William Pickard is the front part of the old church. The remainder of the church became a barn at the parsonage and was later converted into the present garage.

In 1900, the church was re-decorated, a new ceiling built, and new lights installed. Five acetylene lamps were placed in the church in 1910, and replaced by Delco lighting during the pastorate of Rev. J. N. Gould. In October, 1926, lighting by hydro was introduced.

SPARTA UNITED CHURCH (Cont'd.)

PARSONAGE

The present brick parsonage was built in 1879 when Rev. J. Charlton was minister. Previous to this, ministers lived in rented houses, one of which is the house directly south of the church.

ORGANIZATIONS OF THE CHURCH

Sunday School was begun in the early days before 1875.

The Ladies' Aid (or as it is now known, the Women's Association) was organized on March 20, 1878, with Mrs. J. Charlton as President, and with Miss Bessie Rundle as Secretary. Previous to this time, although not an organized group, the ladies were active in church work - for in the year 1851 the proceeds of a Tea Meeting, amounting to 8 pounds, was credited to the building fund of the first church.

The Woman's Missionary Society was organized December 13, 1894 and the Young People's Society dates back to 1897.

In the 1850's Henry Kirkland, a clerk in the store of John A. Eakins, led the singing unaided by any instrument except a tuning fork. The choir was on a level with the church floor and was arranged in the shape of the letter "U" directly in front of the minister.

In 1870 a melodian was purchased, with Miss Florence Eakins as the first organist. In 1947 an electric organ was installed to replace the reed organ.

Ministers before the present church was built:

1871 - Rev. T. Hadwin	1880 - Rev. John Saunders M.A.
1873 - Rev. Geo. C. Madden	1883 - Rev. Joseph Philip
1875 - Rev. James H. Stonehouse	1884 - Rev. Joseph Ward
1877 - Rev. James Charlton	

Ministers since 1886:

1887 - Rev. George Jackson
1889 - Rev. John Russell
1890 - Rev. Wm. Penhall
1893 - Rev. Thos. McNair
1896 - Rev. T. B. Coupland
1899 - Rev. W. H. Graham, B.A., D.D.
1903 - Rev. S. R. McVitty
Assistants: Rev. B. H. Robinson
Rev. W. B. Midford
1907 - Rev. John W. Robinson
1910 - Rev. Herbert J. Creasey
1913 - Rev. Thos. E. Sawyer
1914 - Rev. Fred T. Kinghan
1916 - Rev. J. N. Gould
1921 - Rev. A. W. Brown
1922 - Rev. James Husser, Ph.D.
1925 - Rev. Wallace Moss, B.D.
1926 - Rev. W. R. Hughes, Ph.D.
1930 - Rev. R. B. Cummings, B.D.
1935 - Rev. N. J. Woods, M.A.
1940 - Rev. C. W. Down
1945 - Rev. J. G. Barnard
1947 - Rev. Joseph Clarke

Compiled by Mrs. Harold Smith.

SPARTA UNITED CHURCH (Cont'd)

Ministers since 1886 (cont'd)

1951 - Rev. Ernest Robertson.
1955 - Rev. Allen Selby.
1960 - Rev. J. C. Carnes.
1964 - Rev. D. S. Mannell
1968 - Rev. E. B. Morden.
1977 - Rev. Madden



Rev and Mrs G.W. Sherman
who was pastor of Sparta Baptist
Church for 21 years. Came to Sparta in
1939 and resigned in 1958.

HISTORY OF SPARTA BAPTIST CHURCH

With the exception of the Christian home, there is no institution on earth that exerts so great an influence for good as the Christian church. So it is no small privilege and honor to be permitted to sketch the history of the Sparta Baptist church.

On August 15, 1869 the Rev. Alexander MacDonald was called to the pastorate of the First Yarmouth church (Plains) at a salary of five hundred dollars in anticipation of his services being rendered at different places throughout present limits.

During the summer of 1869 Mr. John McDiarmid, his son Archibald and his associates of Woodstock college held services in various school-houses and the town hall at Sparta. As there were many members of First Yarmouth church in Sparta and vicinity, and much interest shown, a lot was purchased and a chapel built. On the 31st day of October 1869 the Regular Baptist chapel at Sparta was opened for religious service and after the evening service the church was organized with twenty-one members from the First Yarmouth church. After the formation, church officers were appointed and the ordinance of the Lord's supper held under leadership of Dr. Fyfe assisted by the pastor Rev. Alexander McDonald. The next day, November 1st, 1869, all day services were held in the church when members from various churches met in a council of recognition and the evening meeting the installation of the pastor.

Although all looked favorable for the new organization, it was not many months before discord began to creep in. In 1871 the pastor Rev. A. McDonald resigned. In July 1872 the Baptist church in Sparta became nominally extinct and, according to the terms of deed - the property went into the hands of the First Yarmouth Baptist church. The First Yarmouth church then opened the chapel for services as a Branch of the mother church. After it had existed as such for about eight months the congregation at Sparta asked for permission to separate themselves and become an independent Regular Baptist church body. Thus the second organization of Sparta Baptist church was held March 30th, 1873, which organization is in force to-day. The charter members this time consisted of James Pickard, Thomas Zavitz, A. C. Snider, Joseph Lee, Stephen Turrill, Elder Wm. Gonne, Janet Gonne, Henry Doggrell, Miss Agnes Laidlaw, Mrs. Mary Snider, Mrs. Jane Dangerfield, Mrs. A. Barnum, Miss M. Dangerfield, Miss B. Dangerfield, Mrs. Doggerill, Mrs. E. Andrews, Mr. Felix Smith, Mrs. G. Smith, Mrs. H. Moore and Miss Lenora Snider. The latter two were living at the time of the sixtieth Jubilee.

In May 1873 Rev. McDonald resigned the pastorate to go to Manitoba as a missionary. Then followed short pastorates by J. Vince and Elder Storrey. In August 1877 Rev. D. P. McLaurin took charge. During his pastorate a great revival took place and many were added to the church by baptism - eighteen in one evening.

HISTORY OF SPARTA BAPTIST CHURCH (Cont'd.)

Rev. McLaurin resigned in 1879 and was followed by Rev. Douglas Laing who was ordained to the ministry here, leaving in 1882. The next pastor was Rev. Harryett coming in December 1882 from Stewarttown, Jamaica. He also was ordained here but left in a few months.

In May 1883 Rev. D. B. Davidson, brother of F. S. Davidson, became pastor. In this year also the parsonage and lot were purchased in conjunction with First Yarmouth church for the sum of \$450.00. In 1886 Sparta church assumed full charge of parsonage. Dr. Davidson resigned in April 1886 and Elder Rowland became acting pastor for a few months.

In January 1887 Rev. R. Marshall of Cornwall, England took charge and carried on faithfully until March 1890, when he resigned and was followed by Rev. J. Trickey. During his pastorate the B.Y.P.U. was organized the first time and many united with the church. Plans were also made for remodelling the building. Rev. Trickey resigned in 1894 and was followed in April of same year by Rev. G. B. Davis. The outstanding feature of his pastorate was the renovation of the church. The basement was put under in 1894 and the church bricked up in 1895 in which year the pastor resigned. Rev. J.J. Baker became pastor in May 1896. He, with Rev. W. H. Graham of the then Methodist church, were leaders in a temperance movement which resulted in the closing of hotel at Sparta.

In September 1901 Rev. Baker resigned and later the same year Rev. W. Kirkpatrick became pastor but owing to illness resigned in December of 1902. Many from the Sunday School joined the church during his short pastorate.

In January 1903 Rev. W. P. Reekie became pastor and remained until 1909. In December of 1909 Rev. A. E. de St. Dalmas assumed pastoral charge, remaining until 1913. During his pastorate the present organ was bought and a change made in the hymnals from American Baptist to Canadian Baptist. The B.Y.P.U. was re-organized and this organization has remained.

Rev. Wm. Westell was the next pastor from December 1913 to September 1916. During his term the present communion service was bought.

In December 1916 Rev. J. Marshall became pastor for two years. He resigned in 1919 and Rev. Harry Bower became pastor for four years. During his pastorate many from the Sunday School were received into the church by baptism.

In 1924 Rev. T. C. France became pastor. Due to illness his pastorate was short but his influence was felt in the community. He was called to Higher service in July 1925.