

Methodist Church

ON THE CORNER OF
GORDON AND ARGYLE STREETS
IN VILLAGE OF
WALLACETOWN



LONG BEFORE ANY CHURCHES WERE BUILT IN THIS DISTRICT FOR THAT DENOMINATION, THE WESLEYAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY WAS ACTIVE AND HELD SERVICES IN SCHOOL HOUSE ON MR. ANDREW BACKUS FAR IT BEING A MISSION AT THIS TIME WITH LONDON, THE FIRST MISSIONARY WAS REV. FERGUSON, FOLLOWED BY REV. DR. EVANS, MR. BREDEN AND MR. ANDREWS.

IT WAS A MISSION FOR MANY YEARS. LATER IN 1836 IT BECAME A PART OF ST. THOMAS CIRCUIT WITH REV. CONRAD VAN DUSEN AS FIRST MINISTER. IN 1854 FINGAL AND TYRCONNEL BECAME A CIRCUIT, AND THE FIRST METHODIST CHURCH WAS BUILT IN TYRCONNEL, STARTED IN THE FALL OF 1850 AND OPENED FOR SERVICES IN FEB. 1851.

THE MINISTER WAS S. MANDSLEY. LATER, TYRCONNEL WAS SET OFF AS A MISSION WITH BISMAR BUT VERY SOON BECAME AN INDEPENDENT CHURCH, AND JOINED WITH WALLACE TOWN, WHO FOR ALL THESE YEARS HAD NO CHURCH OF HER OWN, BUT HELD SERVICES IN THE TOWN HALL UNTIL THE YEAR 1875 WHEN THEY BUILT THEIR CHURCH ON SITE DONATED BY

COLIN HENRY, ALTHOUGH NOT A RELIGIOUS MAN WAS PUBLIC SPIRITED ENOUGH TO RECOGNIZE A CHURCH TO BE AN ASSET TO A COMMUNITY.

[READ HISTORY BELOW ON LEFT.]

IN 1925, WHEN CHURCH UNION WAS FORMED, SOME PRESBYTERIANS FROM SISTER CHURCH JOINED IN WORSHIP IN ABOVE CHURCH.



BACK ROW, J. LUCAS, C. KEILLOR

MR. LYONS [LEADER]

FRONT, LILIAN LYONS, E. KEILLOR,

EMMA LYONS, ORGANIST FOR 65 YEARS

EMMA SMALL, IRENE LUCAS.

RIGHT, MRS. D. W. GRAHAM [E. LYONS]

THE CHOIR ABOUT 1906 ON HER 75th BIRTHDAY



History of the Church

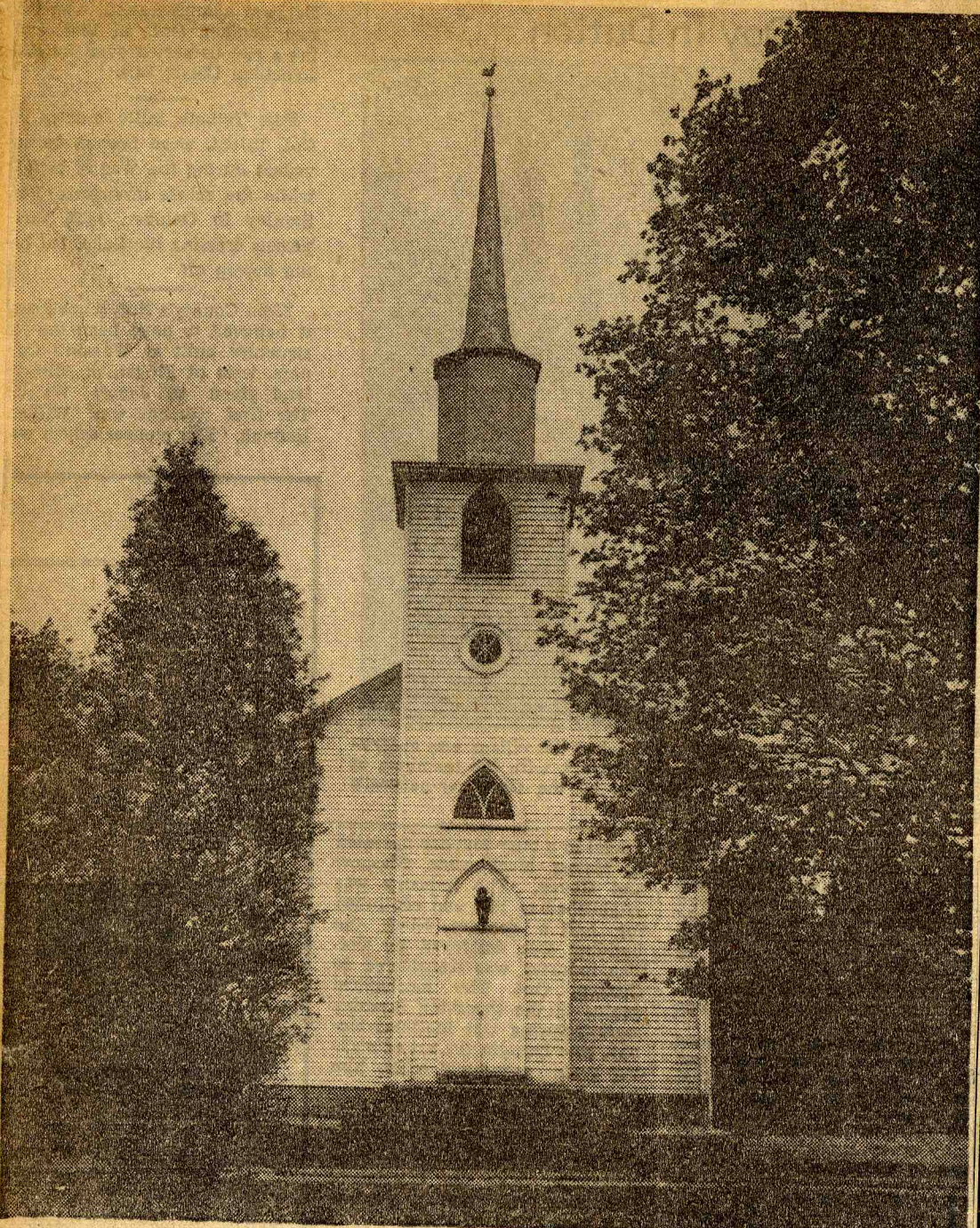
Previous to 1875 the Methodists of Wallace town worshipped in the town hall as an adjunct of Tyrconnell, under the pastorates of Revs. Sherlock, Cragg and Hanna. In 1875 Rev. Teskey undertook to build a church. The members of the building committee were James Hind, D. G. McKellar and J. Risdon. Amasa Wood gave \$500 at the opening and later another \$500. Geo. E. Casey, M. P. also contributed \$500. Duncan McLean was the contractor and builder. Rev. E. Evans, D.D., conducted the dedicatory services, and on the following evening an old fashioned tea-meeting was held. Fingal choir furnished the music, under the leadership of J. Johnston. The organist on the occasion was Miss Dygart, who is now Mrs. Amasa Wood, St. Thomrs. Mrs. Teskey, wife of the pastor, was the first superintendent of the Sabbath School. Of the original church members there are now living Mrs. D. G. McKellar, St. Thomas; Thomas Small and Mr. and Mrs. John Small, Wallace town, and Miss Bella K Gunn, Dutton. The first organist was Miss Cecelia Luton (Mrs. J. Blackwood), who was followed by Miss Bella Gunn, who was organist ten years, when the present organist, Mrs. D. W. Graham, took charge.

The succeeding pastors were: Revs. Watson, McCann, Kanne dy, Pring—the last two associated with Rev. G. Fallis), Earle, Eli Middleton, R. D. Hamilton—under whose pastorate 40 years ago the parsonage was moved to Dutton—O T. Scott, W. C. Beer, E G Powell, George Jewitt, A. I Brown, James Husser, John Kennedy, A KcKibbon, Harvey Kennedy, J A Snell, H Godfrey, and the present pastor, F J Rutherford.

PLEASE READ
 FULLER ACCOUNT
 "OF ST. PETER'S
 IN CENTURY OF"
 SERVICE 1817-1928

A Historic Well-Kept Burial Ground at Tyrconnell Church

Here Also Rest the Remains of Many West Elgin Pioneers



A NEW VIEW OF ST. PETER'S ANGLICAN CHURCH AT TYRCONNELL. THIS HISTORIC CHURCH HAS BEEN IN CONTINUOUS USE SINCE IT WAS BUILT IN 1827-28

YEAR 1952

EARLY WORSHIPPERS
 St. Peter's Anglican Church stands today as a monument to the pioneer past—a beautiful old monument that is still in service. There Colonel Thomas Talbot, George MacBeth and other leaders and thinkers of early settlement days congregated to worship God on the Sabbath—and just across the old road, those pioneers sleep their last sleep in one of the finest examples of well-maintained pioneer cemeteries in Ontario. St. Peter's Cemetery existed at least three years before the church was built in 1827. The Stewart family were related to the Pattersons and a Stewart is said to have been buried in what was to become St. Peter's Cemetery in 1824.

ST. PETER'S CHURCH, TYRCONNELL



THERE are many interesting pages in the history of the Port Talbot settlement and its environs, but none are more beautifully written nor more frequently read than the last page of each pioneer life as it may be found in the cemetery of St. Peter's Anglican church, Tyrconnell.

This is one of the most beautiful as well as one of the most historic spots in Southern Ontario. Situated on a hill overlooking the lake, across the road from the little white church, which will soon celebrate its hundredth anniversary, the monuments that mark the last resting places of the pioneers of "Little Ireland" and the Talbot settlement stand out clearly against the blue of the lake and sky.

The great elm that used to guard the gate is gone and the tall pines that sighed in the cemetery with the mourners of another generation have been cut down, but in their place have grown up a drooping Canadian birch and cedars. And in the shade of these, rise the white stones that tell the history of that pioneer community.

St. Peter's church was built in 1828 and consecrated in 1840, while two years later the cemetery was consecrated. But there were several graves in the cemetery before that time.

Earliest Settlers.

In 1825, Leslie Patterson, the son of Colonel Leslie Patterson, who with his sister, Mrs. Storey, and his brother-in-law, John Pearce, came from Pennsylvania in 1809, was laid to rest in this meadow adjoining the Patterson homestead at the edge of the woods.

It was a lonely grave for some years. Then in 1836, Gillman Willson was buried near-by, and several years later there was added the tiny grave of the infant son of Rev. James Stewart, the first incumbent in Dunwich, a travelling missionary, who served all along the northern shore of Lake Erie from the Detroit river to many miles east of the Talbot settlement. So began the history of the cemetery.

The best-known tombstone and that which draws a great crowd of tourists and travellers to visit the cemetery in motoring weather is not these earliest ones, however, but the large stone table covered with a marble slab, which marks the final resting place of Colonel Thomas Talbot.

Colonel Talbot died in 1853, in his eighty-second year, according to a reference to his birthday in his own diary, although by a curious error, his age is stated as 83 on his

tombstone. In the same reference in his diary, which with other papers was prepared for publication by Dr. J. H. Coyne, of this city, some years ago, is recorded the full name of the colonel, namely Thomas Hans.

There are three other similar monuments within the iron railing that encloses Colonel Talbot's plot. Two mark the graves of George Macbeth, who died in 1870, and Mrs. Macbeth, who followed him in 1911, parents of Judge Macbeth, of London, while the third, a smaller one, is over the grave of "Louisa Anne, eldest daughter of Lieutenant-Colonel Airey and the Hon. Harriette Airey," who died at Port Talbot in 1849, aged seven. Her father, who was later made Lord Airey, was a nephew of Colonel Talbot and lived with him for some years. His small daughter, who was attended at the last of her illness by the late Dr. Travers, of

ONE HUNDRETH ANNIVERSARY

Preparations Being Made To Fittingly Celebrate the Centenary Of St. Peter's

In 1827 a few pioneer families of the Talbot settlement began the erection of St. Peter's Church. In these days of motor travel, when one of the favorite drives of those out for a spin is "round by the church," it takes a long stretch of imagination to look back one hundred years. Indeed, we of to-day, cannot realize what the country was like then, but we know by the few writings of explorers who passed this way that Elgin county, even in those days, was fair to look upon.

One hundred years ago the Talbot settlement was in its infancy. The first settler in Dunwich township, George Crane, took up his homestead in 1806. In 1809 three families came from Pennsylvania—the Pearces, Pattersons and Storeys—thirteen persons in all, five of these being under five years of age. The following year, 1810, Stephen Backus came from Erie, Penn., took up land, and soon after married Anne Storey.

Here, then, was the nucleus of Dunwich township—five families, in addition to the hardships incident to pioneer life, were soon to experience some of the horrors of war, when in 1812 our neighbors to the south undertook to conquer Canada. This is a story by itself, but mention must be made that their homes were robbed and pillaged. Settlers came in very slowly for a while, but by 1817 the Patterson, Pearce and Backus families had 14 young Canadians coming on.

From an old document we learn that Leslie Patterson was employed by Col. Talbot to take the census of Dunwich ending the year March, 1817, and the grand total population was 147 persons, 86 males and 61 females. Fifty-seven of these were under 10 years of age.

We have no record of a clergyman of any church having visited the settlement as early as this. The first recorded is a visit in 1820 from Rev. Charles James Stewart, D.D., a son of the Earl of Galloway. Here was a man of true missionary zeal. He gave up a life of ease and comfort at home, among the highest in the land, in response to an appeal by Bishop Mountain of Quebec for Church of England clergymen to come to Canada. He travelled through by canoe and dog-sleigh from Quebec to Amherstburg, holding service at Port Talbot April 10th, 1820, and baptizing a number of children and adults. Old records show that he was here again in 1822 and in 1825.

In 1826 he was consecrated Bishop of Quebec, his diocese extending from Gaspe to the Detroit river. On August 22, 1827, the first confirmation in Elgin was held at the home of Leslie Patterson, when the following persons were confirmed: William, Richard, Leslie, Catherine and Mary Anne Pearce; Stephen, Anne and Andrew Backus; Walter, Joseph, Mary, Hannah and Lydia Patterson; Anne Moorhouse, Charles Cran, Benjamin Siddal and Martha Farland, 17 in number.

Evidently after this the settlers felt that they must have a church, for we find a record in St. Thomas which reads: "On Sunday, 28th Oct., 1827, I performed divine service in Dunwich, to continue regularly every 6th Sunday till this church is finished, then the first Sunday of each month. A. MacKintosh, Minister."

The church was finished in due time and improvements added as they were able, and it stands to-day in as beautiful a setting as can be found in all Ontario in constant use for a century! If they could speak, what interesting things those sacred walls could disclose!

This old church in Huron diocese has a remarkable record. It was built in 1828, mainly through the efforts of four pioneer families of the Talbot settlement—the Storeys, Pearces, Pattersons and Backus, being used continuously for Divine Service through the storms and sunshine of the last 99 years.

The settlement one hundred years ago received only an occasional visit from a travelling missionary. The Bishop of Quebec, the Honorable and Rt. Rev. Charles James Stewart, visited it in 1825-1827. His diocese extended from Gaspe to Detroit River.

Building a church was a great undertaking for the little handful of settlers, but they were of a resolute type, so at last the building was raised and roughly finished. Ten acres of land was given by Mrs. Mary Storey and the deed, dated May 28, 1828, is one of the earliest recorded in the Registry Office.

In 1829 Rev. Mark Burnham would ride twenty miles from St. Thomas, over a rough forest trail, to hold service every three weeks. Later he was married and the young couple lived for two years at the home of John Pearce, Sr.

There was no rectory till 1843 and Rev. James Stewart was the first resident rector of the parish. The Church was consecrated by Bishop Strachan in 1840.

The bell, which was received about 1845, has this inscription cast on it: "This Bell given to the Church in Dunwich in memory of Charles James Stewart, late Lord Bishop of Quebec—1844."

The Communion Service was given by Charlotte, daughter of Governor Simcoe, who was deeply interested in the Bishop Stewart missions.

Across the road from the Church near the banks of Lake Erie is the resting place of the pioneers. Careful hands have made it a beauty spot, but the graves are mostly marked with plain head stones and the inscriptions give no hint of the toils and struggles of that little band who never forgot their Church even in the midst of alarms.