

# History of COVENANTED BAPTIST Church



ON WALLACETOWN No 3 Hg.

## Eagle United Church One of Earliest In District

Sunday, October 29th, the Eagle United Church observed its 96th anniversary with a reunion tea after the service at the Old School Community Hall.

At this crossroads stood a huge balm tree and in it eagles had nested for years. The roads that met there led south to the lake docks and north to the Longwoods Road (now No. 2 Highway) and later on to Newbury where, in 1852, the first railroad, the Grand Trunk brought in freight by railroad.

So it was a busy corner. People travelling along these roads used to say, "I'll meet you at the Eagle's Nest." When the post office came in 1876, it was officially named Eagle.

### Early Buildings

The first buildings were the Brock's Creek Covenanted Baptist Church, the school (No. 4), a blacksmith shop, Lindenman's store and the Woodsman's Lodge Hall. The church was first built on the northeast bank of Brock's Creek on the Talbot Road. It was moved 75 years ago to the village corner and rebuilt by the Baptists who, in 1925, loaned it to the United Church.

The present church at Eagle has an interesting history. It was always a truly Union Church. Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Lutherans and Anglicans were its first members.

A raft of logs drifted away and was lost in Brock's Creek at the lake. They were never claimed, and Robert Mowbray, who owned the sawmill, suggested they be sawed into lumber and used to build a Union Church. It was a very well built, colonial design building, and still stands firm and in good repair.

There have been continued Sunday services and Sunday School there for more than 80 years. Except for the one year of the flu outbreak, a community Christmas Tree has been held.

## THE COVENANTED BAPTIST CHURCH

The first church of this faith and order in these parts, was built at Brock's Creek in Aldborough about 1820. This was the time when many came from Scotland and settled in that township, and being of this faith, one of their first moves after building their homes, was to erect the log church. This was replaced by a frame building which was later closed and the building sold. Nearby is Brock's Creek Cemetery, near Eagle, sometimes called McColl's, as nearly all the folks of this name and their descendants, are buried here to this day.

A number of these settlers moved to Dunwich Township after a few years and they erected a log church on the spot where the present church now stands on No. 3 Highway, a mile east of Wallacetown.

The first preacher was Elder Thomas Campbell, a native of Scotland. He came out in 1818. He received his call to preach while plowing with his oxen among the stumps on his farm in Aldborough. He would probably be ordained by a minister from Dundas, Ontario, or one from the United States. He was the chief organizer of this and the other churches, as at Duart, Ekfrid, and Lobo, where the church services are carried on to this day. Elder Thomas Campbell as he was then, took Thomas McCall with him and they blazed the trail through the woods to Lobo, a distance of forty miles. They had heard that a settlement of folks of like faith from Scotland had come there to establish homes and a church was set up there.

Later Thos. McCall was ordained. He settled on the farm now occupied by Douglas Lyons, and the present Dunwich church is off this property and the land was given by Elder McCall.

### List of Clergymen

The early ministers were Rev. Mr. Fairley, Mr. Irwin, Mr. Cousins and Rev. Peter Jones (Methodist); Rev. Mr. Scott (Presbyterian); Elder Pollard (Baptist); Dr. Fowler (Church of Christ). Rev. A. Moorhouse (United) is the present minister.

The first members were the Mowbray, Lang, McKillop, Ferguson, Robinson, John Smale, Newton, Grey, Leith, Leitch, Shipley and Lindenman families.

His descendants, the family of Malcolm McCall live on the adjoining farm, which was taken up by the family, around 1820.

Later a frame church was built, which was replaced by the present brick one in 1911.

Succeeding Elder McCall, who with or like Elder Campbell, probably travelled by foot to the four charges, was Elder William Pollard. He was of English birth and his parents settled at or around Dundas, Ontario. He received his call to preach, after reaching manhood and with his family went to Michigan, where they lived for four years, at which time he received a call from the now established churches in these parts. He served them for thirty-three years; travel by this time was easier and his was with a horse and buggy, part time with a team. He was their pastor at the four charges besides Dunwich, where he lived on what is now No. 3 Highway. Aldborough by this time did not hold services regularly. His grandson, W. R. Pollard, now lives on the farm. He died in 1901, and his successor was Elder Wm. Cornell, of Ohio, assisted by Elder Currie.

They were in turn succeeded by Elder J. B. Slauson of New York State. After his death in the late twenties, the churches were for a time without a regular pastor, till Elder George Ruston was called in 1929. He came from New York state but is English by birth. He has served most faithfully in all the four charges, holding the monthly services in each place, as well as at London, also in Toronto occasionally. Now, in 1958, he and his wife reside in Dutton. His family are scattered, a son John, was killed in the Air Force in World War II

He is the moving spirit behind the present well kept condition of the church and grounds. The cemetery adjoining, does not belong to the church property. This plot is from the land taken up in 1919 by Duncacn McKillop and the cemetery bears the name. The farm is still occupied bt one of the same name.

This church still maintains its original order of service, as from the Scottish church, standing in prayer and singing the Psalms and Paraphrases unaccompanied by music. The same truth and doctrine is preached as in the early days.

Quarterly meetings have always been held at the four charges, Dunwich being on the 2nd. Sunday in May and is known by the now traditional name of May Meeting. At one time these services began on Friday but for many years it begins Saturday morning and is finished Monday noon. The two services are held on Saturday and Sunday and the meals are served in the well-equipped basement. The folks from the other charges attend these meetings as well as from the quite distant cities. A visiting preacher also is present.

Communion service is held then and the form of baptism in open water is still observed. The original members and those of the second and third generations have passed on but their descendants still attend. Some families are all gone with no one of the name left.

Issac Watts, the writer of many hymns, seems to have fitly described this spot:

"Christ hath a garden walled around"  
A Paradise of fruitful ground  
Chosen by love, and fenced bt grace,  
From out the world's wide wilderness".

Mary J. McIntyre,  
Shedden, Ont.

## BLACK'S CEMETERY

Black's Cemetery is situated a mile west of Wallacetown on Highway #3 in Dunwich Township, Elgin County.

In August 1854 at a meeting of several people interested in a burying ground, it was proposed that Messrs Duncan McNeil, Daniel J. McCallum, Daniel A. McCallum, Hector McPherson and Archie Brown act as trustees in the improvement and management of the burying ground on the farm of James Black.

It is to be noted that this parcel of land had for a few years before this been used as a burying place. There were graves here as early as 1844, when John Blue was buried there, having been in Canada but one year.

At a meeting on Sept. 4th, 1854 in the Baptist Church it was decided to advertise to receive sealed tenders for fencing the said ground. Lazarus McIntyre was given the job receiving \$128.00 for the work.

A plot could be purchased for \$2.25. In 1875 it was decided to accept D. McClaus' offer to draw a map and to be assisted by Hector McPherson and James Black. At this same time George Everist was appointed to have charge of the cemetery placing the enclosure under lock and to dig the graves.

In 1879 a portion of land was bought from Angus McIntyre for \$150.00 to increase the area of the cemetery. In 1890 a half acre of land at the foot of the hill along the creek, for the convenience of the teams of horses, was purchased from John Drumgould for Thirty Dollars.

Down through the years many men have served as trustees and have taken a keen interest in keeping the cemetery in good shape. Many plot holders have paid for perpetual upkeep and now the funds are held by the Public Trustee. The trustees in this year of 1966 are John C. McKillop, Secretary Treasurer, Grant Cameron and Wallace Clarke.

## LOVE'S CEMETERY

Love's Cemetery land was donated by the Love Family. The first burials there were in 1825.

The trustees in 1870 were Duncan McGregor, Alex Love, John McKillop and John Young, Secretary.

In 1878 the plots cost \$1.00, \$2.00 and \$4.00.

A fence was erected around the cemetery and a levy of \$2.50 a plot was made to pay for it. Each plot owner donated one, two, or three days of help.

Bequests were given by Annie Murrey Ross, Jennie McCallum, Archie McCurdy, Duncan Leitch and Margaret Grey Newton.

Plots now sell for \$10.00, and the perpetual care costs \$60.00 per plot.

In 1965 the trustees were Jim McKillop, Jack Avery, Dave McGregor and Mrs. Jim McKillop, Secretary.

At the time of Ed Avery's Mother's death the roads were so bad that she was carried by men from the back of West Lorne to the cemetery.

## McKILLOP'S CEMETERY

The McKillop Cemetery is a well-kept little cemetery about a mile east of Wallacetown on the north side of #3 Highway.

The land was donated in the year 1870 by Duncan and Mary McKillop for \$1.00 to trustees John McKillop, John McMillan, Robert McDonald and succeeding trustees. Angus Campbell witnessed the signing of the deed.

By the records available those who served were Robert Forbes, H. McMillan, Donald McWilliam, J. B. McKillop, Malcolm Blue, T. R. Small, John A. Small, Andrew McWilliam, Edwin Carswell, and the present board. This board consists of Elder George Ruston, Clarence Blue, James D. Graham and Mrs. J. B. McKillop, Auditor. The cemetery is now maintained with interest from the perpetual fund.

## ST. HELEN'S CEMETERY

St. Helen's Cemetery, in connection with St. Helen's Roman Catholic Church of Wallacetown, is located on the sixth concession of Dunwich township.

Timothy Crowley, in 1887, donated one and one-eighth acres of land for the cemetery. The first burial was his daughter, Maggie Crowley, in the year 1894 at the age of 23 years. Right Reverend Bishop Walsh presided at the consecration with Reverend Father Flannery, parish priest, assisting.

This cemetery serves the townships of Aldborough and Dunwich, in the County of Elgin. From 1887 to 1963 there were 71 internments.

In 1958 extensive improvements were made in the appearance of the cemetery under the direction of Thomas Keogh. Fourteen new oak stations of the Cross were erected and dedicated on Cemetery Day, Sept. 28th, 1958, by Father Reverend Monseigneur V. H. Grestan, Chancellor of the Diocese of London.

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Keogh were the caretakers of the cemetery at this time.

## ST. PETER'S CEMETERY AT TYRCONNELL

St. Peter's church cemetery lies just across the road and a little to the east of the church upon a beautiful knoll overlooking Lake Erie, whose banks are only fifty rods away, yet sheltered on one side by an orchard and on the other by a friendly old forest, it seems to be the very embodiment of all that either the eye or heart could ask for in a last quiet resting place. The land is a portion of ten acres given by Mrs. Mary Patterson Storey and the first inscription marks the grave of Leslie, son of Leslie and Lydia Patterson, aged four years and ten months, March, 1825.

The first entry in the register of St. Thomas Church concerning this cemetery reads: "Nov. 9th, 1825, Mathew Stewart of Orford, aged thirty years, was this day buried by me in Dunwich. A. MacIntosh, minister of St. Thomas." The Stewarts of Orford, were connected with the Pattersons, which probably accounts for the burial at Tyrconnell, probably the only land set aside for a cemetery at that time between Amherstburg and St. Thomas.

St. Peter's Cemetery was deeded to the Bishop of Quebec, and registered May 29th, 1828 but apparently was never consecrated until September, 1842, just two months after the death of the donor. A copy of the deed of Consecration by the Bishop of Toronto, John Strachan, written out in his own hand and sealed with sealing wax pressed by his thumb and attached to the inside of the cover of St. Peter's church first register.

During the week of July 22nd, 1928, a memorial was unveiled, having been erected by the descendants of Mrs. Storey, as part of the centenary celebrations of the parish church. Two additions have been made to the burying ground. Another portion of the original ten acres given by Mrs. Storey and consecrated by Bishop Baldwin. The second addition was purchased for \$100.00 from Messrs. Clapp and Littlejohn in 1914. This addition was consecrated by His Grace, the Archbishop of Huron, and was a gift to the cemetery from John L. Pearce.

An endowment fund has been collected and invested through the Diocesan Treasurer, the interest from which to be used for the upkeep of the cemetery. A cemetery committee was appointed and great care was given throughout the years to make this one of the most beautifully kept cemeteries in the surrounding countryside. Beautiful evergreen trees and flowering shrubs and plants have been tenderly cared for through the years by devoted church members. Some of those serving on this committee through the years were John Pearce and Stephen Backus, the original committee. Joseph Pearce, 1897, B. E. Sifton and John L. Pearce in 1905, John Halpin, 1914, John E. Pearce, 1924 and Edward Docker.

In the original part of the cemetery the mortal remains of the founder of the settlement, Col. Thomas Talbot were laid, of George Crane, the first settler in Dunwich, and of the many families who settled on the adjoining farms. Their graves are marked by marble slabs but the true monuments to their hardships, privations and strenuous lives and dauntless courage are the lovely farms and spacious homes of the surrounding countryside which were carved out of the forest primeval.