



## Free Methodist Church burned to the ground by vandals

Located on Lot 1, Concession Broken Front, Southwold, near where the Iona Road crosses the Thames, the old church was burned to the ground early Thursday morning, October 21st. That same night a tractor and plow were stolen from a farmer in the same vicinity so it would appear that this is another chapter in the continuing rash of

thefts and vandalism in the northern parts of Southwold and Dunwich Townships.

This Free Methodist Church had its beginnings in the 1870's. One of the founding members was Cyrus McKay, 1847-1924, a native of Caradoc Twp. who, while on a visit to Michigan with friends was converted to Free Methodism. Cyrus was always faithful to

his local church and five times served as the delegate to the church conference.

Another charter member was Mrs. Joseph Milton, 1845-1919, nee Elizabeth Hamilton. She, her husband and their family were the backbone so to speak of this little church for most of its existence. One of her sons-in-law was Duncan H. McCallum, 1867-1948,

a Dunwich native, who entered the ministry in 1904, being the pastor of his local church in 1906 and then became one of the pioneer ministers in the Canadian Northwest. He later returned to Ontario and served charges at Walsingham, Port Rowan, Essex, Charlemont and Wabash. Many of his descendants still live in the community of Cowal at the present time.

Other stalwarts of this church were to name a few, Mrs. Ellen (Milton) McCallum, 1882-1904; Joseph Milton, 1836-1918; Mrs. Mabel (McRae) DeLong 1899-1913; Thomas Ibbitson, who was born at Amherst, N.S., 1844-1897; Mrs. Rebecca (Mills) Harrison, 1853-1928; William Agar, 1875-1938; Mrs. Janet McArthur, 1857-1950; Mrs. Amy (Milton) McCallum, 1870-1961, (widow of Duncan H. McCallum); James Milton, 1884-1969; Mrs. Jennie (Milton) Agar, 1873-1971 (widow of William) and Mrs. Alena (Willey) Milton, 1881-1976, (widow of James).

This church was first organized in 1878 under the North Michigan Conference. The church building was completed in 1885. (It was reported in the May 26th issue of the Dutton Advance under Cowal News "The Free Methodists of the Thames River have their new church about finished"). In 1889 it became part of the

Canada Conference and in 1896 part of the West Ontario Conference.

No history of this church would be complete without mentioning the camp meetings, that used to be held in the summer, in the grove of trees on the McNabb farm, across the road from the church. Hundreds used to attend these evangelistic services. Those who came from a distance, camped in the woods for the duration of the get-together and those who lived nearby came for the evening meetings, some of which lasted until the wee hours of the morning. Many were converted at these meetings, while others attended for the entertainment.

Services were held quite regularly until 1959 and intermittently until 1969. In 1970, C. Emerald Walls, a retired minister served the church and when he left in 1971 the work of the church was closed. Since that time the church has been maintained and used occasionally for funerals and other gatherings.

Until last Thursday morning under cover of darkness it met its destruction by cowardly vandals.

*Submitted by Don Carroll and prepared from historical material supplied by Mrs. Mary Ellen Smith of Iona Station, (a granddaughter of James Milton) and the Cowal Tweedsmuir History.*





**COLONEL LESLIE PATTERSON'S HOMESTEAD** – This home, now owned by Alistair and Audrey Littlejohn, was the focal point recently as the Elgin Historical Society hosted the 191st anniversary of Col. Thomas Talbot's arrival at Port Talbot. Those attending heard the history of the home, as well as

watched demonstrations by the members of the Upper Thames Military Re-Enactment Society portraying the Royal Scots (1812) and then moved on to St. Peter's Cemetery, Tyrconnell, to join in toasting Talbot's founding of the settlement.

## Colonel Leslie Patterson and Family History

Colonel Leslie Patterson of County Fermanagh, now Northern Ireland to Pennsylvania with his sisters, Mary Storey and Frances (Fanny) Pearce. Their home was Harbour Creek, near Erie. Lydia (Backus) Patterson was the sister of Stephen and Myron, apparently moving westward from Vermont to Erie.

In 1808 Patterson and John Pearce scouted the south shore of Lake Erie, settling on Tyrconnell. The following spring saw them on their way in a small open boat, Walter

Storey and perhaps the Pearce hired man walking near the shore with their cattle. The cattle may have been purchased in Niagara or Long Point, rather than freighted across the Niagara River.

Colonel Patterson was active in the War of 1812 as a Captain, entitling him to extra land in Howard Township in Kent. Here his sons, Joseph and Walter settled. When Mahlon Burwell became Registrar of Deeds in 1912, Leslie Patterson became his deputy, but for only a handful of documents. In recognition of his worth and his military service, Patterson was appointed a Justice of the Peace. As a result, he wrote documents, swore affidavits and performed marriages. For a brief period, they even operated the Tyrconnell Post Office.

The family of Leslie and Lydia Patterson consisted of nine children, of which only two sons and two daughters were married; the others are buried in St. Peter's cemetery with their parents.

The family are: Joseph 1807-1884, his first wife and three children are here. Walter 1808-1890, married Langford. Mary 1810-1890, married Joshua Bobier. Hannah 1813-1913. Catherine Anne 1815-1896. Olivia 1818-1864. Leslie 1820-1825, scalded. Frances (Fanny) 1822-1881. Lydia 1825-1914, married in 1863 to Archie Duncan who died in 1913.

The Leslie Pattersons were successful and prosperous farmers. Leslie died in 1852, the year before his old friend and drinking companion, old Colonel Thomas Talbot, loved by many and hated and detested by many more. Their farm became the Archie Duncan farm until the sale to the Littlejohns. Littlejohns' farm several of the old farms, including those of Stephen

Backus, Robert Gow and Pearce.



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