

In Tyrconnell, Sunday School has an early beginning, with faithful officers and teachers. These are all listed in an old record book. Caleb Bedford was superintendent, Wm. Braddon secretary and Ezra Bedford treasurer. Organists were Edna Page and Sarah Balsden (Simms), and Mrs. J.A. Page was choir leader. There were different librarians: Wm. Balsden, Charlie Allen, Willie Trothen. Wm. Page taught the Bible class and Jonas Page the young mens' class. Mrs. Caleb Bedford had the young ladies' class, and there were also Mrs. J.A. Page, Mrs. R. Stevenson, Mrs. Philip Bedford, Miss Pearl Trothen, Mrs. A. Koehler and Mrs. Alex. McArthur. On one Sunday 67 pupils were present and 162 verses had been recited. Sunday School papers were: Onward, Pleasant Hours, Dew Drops and Berean Leaf.

In 1908 a Sunday School was started on the ninth concession by Philip Bedford and Mrs. Fred Moore. There were quite a few young people in that area who found the walk to Tyrconnell quite a distance. The first meetings were in Douglas McGregor's old house, then a building was erected on Richard Gilbert's farm. Philip Bedford was the first superintendent, then came Harvey Ripley who taught the Bible class. His wife taught a boys' class. Mrs. Richard Gilbert had a girls' class, and Mrs. Ed Shipley taught the primary class and played the organ. On special anniversaries the Anglican minister would come and bring his choir, and the house would be full. The Methodist and Presbyterian ministers also took their turns. I have heard that Harry Garbutt went to that Sunday school, and from those days came his call to the ministry, then to a mission field in Nigeria. There was also another young man who came out from Scotland at that time and spent two years on a farm farther down the ninth concession. Bert Cumming had decided to come to the New World, and worked for Ernie Backus "in the bush" to use his own words. He soon left for other places, but later decided to enter the ministry and was ordained before church union. Money had been collected from the people of the district to pay for the ninth concession Sunday school building, and a few years after church union it was closed, then later sold and moved away.

Another interdenominational Sunday School started in the early days by the Presbyterians was at Coynes Corners, in 1889. While it was staffed by Presbyterians, children of all denominations in that community attended it on Sunday afternoons. Before the time of organs, the singing was led by Edgar Welch (Norman's father). The book of gospel songs which I have found was "The Canadian Sunday School Organ". Also used was "The Wave", another gospel song book. The first five double pages were a complete Rudiments of Music. One section explained the "Tonic Sol-fa Method" (doh-ray-me) of learning the notes of the scale, and so reading music to sing. The early song-leaders learned this in "Singing Classes", and so could lead songs without instruments.

Source: M. Welch's book "A Century of Service"

A parsonage had been built in Tyrconnell, but in 1880 Wallacetown became head of the circuit, and the parsonage was there. Ministers since 1875: Rev. James Watson till 1878, when Garbutts was closed, then Rev. Wm. McCann and Rev. J.G. Fallis. The history of these South Dunwich Methodists through the years has been that of the lives of countless people fulfilling their day by day deeds. There have been many who by their very lives have gladly and willingly lived out what the New Testament calls "the fruits of the Spirit" to the glory of God. These people have not always had their names recorded in the minute books of the local congregation, but God has certainly recorded them in his Book of Life.

The early communities had their social life also, as recorded the Dutton Enterprise, the first newspaper. On December 29, 1881 it tells about the Christmas Sunday School entertainment by the Methodists: "A Christmas arch was built for a program in Lane's Hall. A large number of people spent a very pleasant evening. The chair was occupied by Rev. Mr. Pringle of Bismark, and the arch was loaded with a quantity of beautiful presents for the Sunday school scholars and others. An election cake was voted on, (I wonder what that was?) which caused excitement and brought in quite a bit of money. The proceeds at the door and from the election cake were forty-five dollars. Mr. Jackson read a very favourable report of the standing of the school. "In the same paper is a story about the opening of the new schoolhouse in Wallacetown, the proceeds of the evening's entertainment being \$20. In March 1882 a report: "The tea-meeting in the church was a grand success, and a very sociable time was spent. After enjoying a tea that did credit to the ladies who prepared it, all assembled in the church to enjoy the intellectual part. Rev. J.G. Fallis in the chair filled the meeting with his good humour. Excellent music was rendered by the church, assisted by Rev. G. Kennedy, Professor Wright and Miss McLean. Addresses of a pleasing character were delivered by Rev. Messrs Pring, Gilmour and Smith. Proceeds were the very good sum of \$72.

But the social life was secondary to the Sunday services. The Quarterly Meeting, especially, held great significance for the Methodist people. An important day was Saturday, and on this day exhortations were given and conversions expected. Routine business was dealt with, but this was mainly a preaching service. On Saturday evening prayer meetings were held, revival songs sung with great enthusiasm, and families gathered for prayer and meditation. Early Sunday morning was the typical love feast, with testimonies being given by several people. This was a time of sharing personal spiritual experiences-- a time of fellowship, comfort and help one to the other. Bread and water were passed and all partook of this.

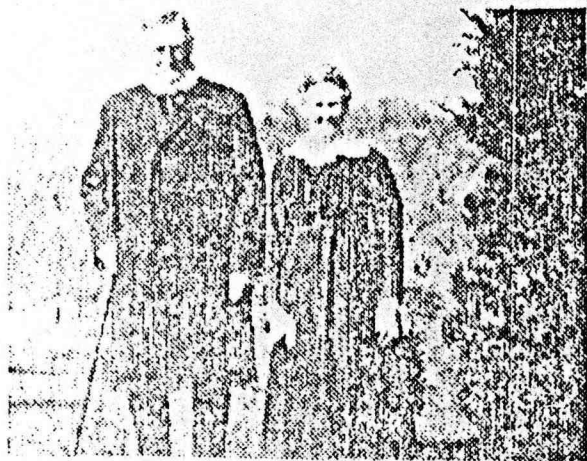
Source: M. Welch's book "A Century of Service"

In 1888 Dutton became head of the circuit, and there is now a book of Official Board records. On July 30th of that year the first meeting of the new Dutton circuit was held in the Wallacetown Methodist church. Rev. Eli Middleton, the pastor, was in the chair. Members present: Wallacetown: Samuel Stidwill, John Lyons, Thomas Small; Tyrconnell: Meredith Conn, George Braddon, Jonas Page. (This is the son of the first Jonas) The financial returns were: Tyrconnell \$52. Dutton \$38.50 and Wallacetown \$33.82. Circuit stewards from Wallacetown: John Lyons, Samuel Stidwill; Tyrconnell: Wm. Church, Jonas Page, George Braddon.

Now there is an interesting newspaper account (November 22, 1888) "The thanksgiving services and tea meeting held at Wallacetown Thursday last, under the auspices of Dutton, Wallacetown and Tyrconnell Methodist churches was a decided success. An eloquent and instructive sermon was preached in the afternoon by the pastor, Rev. E. Middleton. After this, tea was served in Dromgold's hall, which was partaken of by a large number of people. In the evening an entertainment was held in the church. Speeches were made by Rev.'s Middleton and Kelso, also Meredith Conn. (Rev. Donald Kelso had just been inducted into the Presbyterian church, a pastorate he held till his death, 28 years later.) Music was furnished by the united choirs of the three churches. Dr. Ruthven occupied the chair. The proceeds were \$55. to be applied to the parsonage fund. Another notice later in the paper: Wallacetown will hold a garden party on the lawn of Mr. A.W. Bowlby on July 2nd. There will be ice cream, strawberries and other good things. Excellent music, and the gates will be opened at 7:00 p.m. Admission-- 10¢. On March 14, 1889 was a notice that the churches would all be closed for two weeks, because of the smallpox scare.

At the Official Board meeting on May 6, 1889, the examination of local preachers and exhorters was proceeded with, and licenses

renewed: John Bedford and Meredith Conn. The character of the leaders was passed as satisfactory. There was a motion to adopt the envelope system. Thomas Leitchfield was now a steward from Wallacetown, and later a local preacher.



Local Preacher John Bedford and wife

Source: M. Welch's book "A Century of Service"

REV. DR. I. H. MACDONALD

BORN 1862 - DIED 1937

Born at Shader on the Island of Lewis, in the north of Scotland, in 1862, Rev. Dr. I. H. Macdonald came to Canada when 18 years of age. Choosing the ministry as his life work, he served 48 years in all. His first charges were in mission fields in the West. Following his pastorate in Western Canada, he had charges at Kilmartin, Ripley and Kintore, before moving to Wallacetown, where he served for ten years. During his pastorate at Wallacetown he endeared himself to not only his congregation, but to citizens throughout the district. In any movement for the welfare of the community Dr. Macdonald's services were always freely given. He was a member of Dutton Library Board, and also a member of the Masonic Order, being affiliated with Cameron Lodge, Dutton, of which he was chaplain. Dr. Macdonald joined Temple Lodge, McGregor, Man., in 1891.

Shortly after the outbreak of the Great War Dr. Macdonald resigned his pastorate at Kintore, returned to his native Scotland and went to France as chaplain of that famous Scottish regiment, the Seaforth Highlanders. Fluent in Gaelic,

his native tongue, his services among "his ain folk" brought comfort to many during the long struggle. He spent about four years in France and his interest in the welfare of returned men was well known not only in Elgin but beyond its confines. Dr. Macdonald took great interest in the work of the various service clubs in their efforts to assist the underprivileged, which was deepened by the remembrance of his own early struggles. "He served others" would fittingly express his motto in life.

Dr. Macdonald passed away at Wallacetown on Saturday, August 14, 1937, the funeral being held on Tuesday, August 17, from the United Church. The first part of the service was conducted by the Elgin Presbytery, followed by the Masonic service in charge of Cameron Lodge and conducted by Rev. C. L. Langford. The remains were taken to Riverside Cemetery, New Hamburg, for interment.

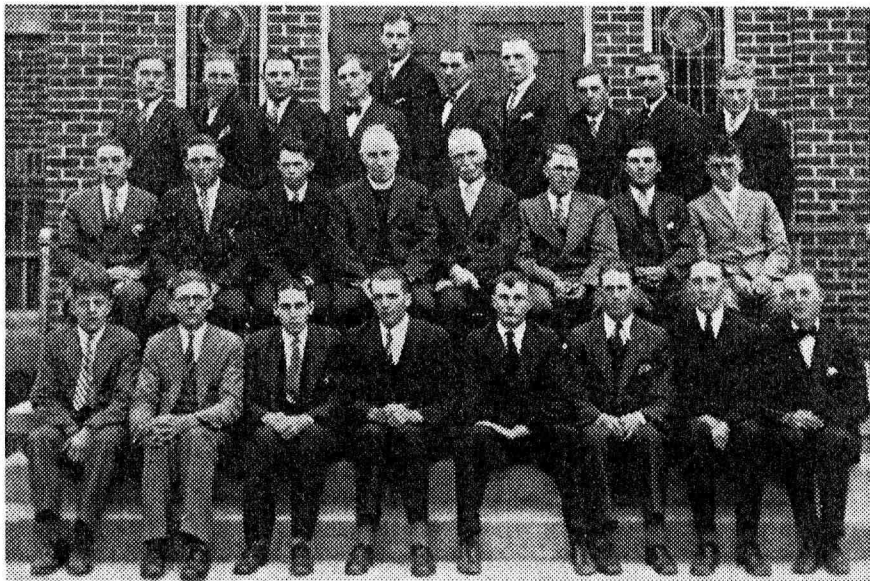
Survived by his wife, formerly Adelyn Ratz, of New Hamburg, and one son, Aubrey; also a sister, Mrs. John McIver, of Shawboat, Scotland.

Dr Mac Donald

He came to Wallacetown in 1927 and was active in the rebuilding of the former Methodist church. He could foresee a bright future for the United Church. The members of the building committee were Cessford Gunn, Frank Smith, Alex McArthur, James Campbell, George Gunn, J. R. Small, John Robb, Inglis Ripley, John Dickson, Dougald MacFarlane, John Campbell, Ed. Clark, Mac Littlejohn, Bert Braddon, Norman Welch, Fred Leitchfield and Stuart Littlejohn, and D. W. Graham.

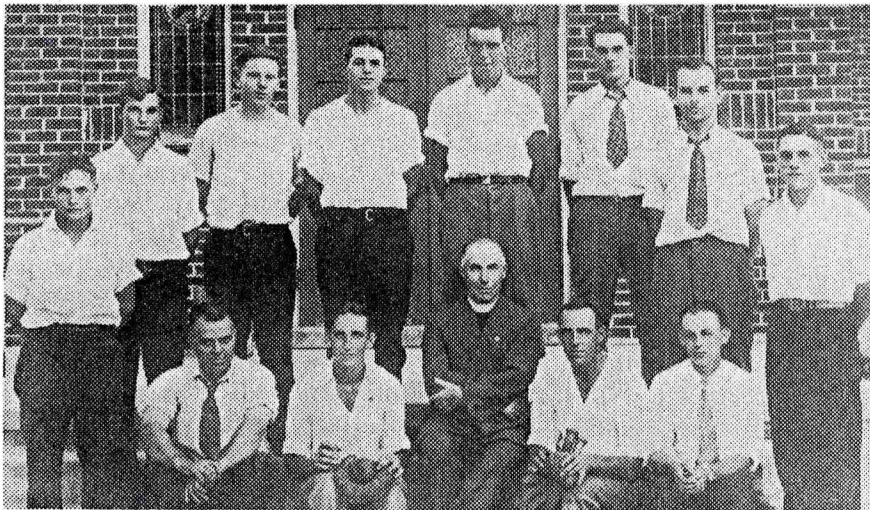
The church ^{was} raised, and a basement put in, a choir loft added and a front entrance. The church formerly white frame was now bricked.

1927



YOUNG MEN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS, 1930

Bottom row: Earl Lucas, Murray Ripley, Harold Lidster, Jack Ripley, Tom Page, Cecil Campbell, Harry Stevenson, Earl Shipley. Second row: Lloyd Lidster, Jack Campbell, Charles Wilton, Rev. Dr. I.H. McDonald, minister, J.C. Campbell, teacher, Harold Ripley, Percy Kirby, George Formie. Back row: Keith Lucas, Jack McFarlane, Kenneth Small, Gordon Campbell, Bill Galbraith, Raymond Braddon, Donald McFarlane, Jim Ripley, Herbert Lunn, George McArthur.



WALLACETOWN UNITED CHURCH Y.P.S. SOFTBALL TEAM

Standing: C. Holland, S.S.; T. Page, R.F.; C. Brown, P.; H. Clark, P.; J. Lamb, L.F.; R. Bradon, 3B.; H. McKellar, C.; J. Brown, C.F. Sitting: C. Hales, Umpire; H. Stevenson, C. and Mgr.; Dr. I.H. Macdonald, pastor; E. Stevenson, 1B. and Capt.; E. Shipley, President of Y.P.S.

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATED

By Wallacetown Methodists—Many Former Worshippers Present

The semi-centennial of the Wallacetown Methodist church was fittingly observed on Sunday, when the pastor, the Rev. F. J. Rutherford, was assisted by Rev. R. D. Hamilton, Aylmer, a pastor 40 years ago. Splendid sermons were given by Mr. Hamilton to large congregations both morning and evening, many former worshippers being present. Excellent music was rendered by the choir, the quartette, also a duet by Messrs. Welch and Forsythe and a solo by Miss Teskey, Leamington. A special feature were the violin solos by Jack Simms, which were much enjoyed. At the evening service Rev. Mr. McKibbon, a former pastor, was also present.

Among former residents present were: Arch. Black and party, Toledo; Mrs. Walter Chalk, Dorothy and Harold Chalk, Detroit; Mrs. Nauncarrow and sons, Cleveland; Mr. and Mrs. Dunseath and Mrs. Marshall and children, Detroit; Mr. and Mrs. McDiarmid and Mr. and Mrs. Hitchcox, Sarnia; Mr. and Mrs. Walter Stidwill, Mr. and Mrs. Neil McLaughlin, Miss McKellar and H. Balkwill, St. Thomas; Mrs. Graff, Minneapolis; Mr. and Mrs. Will Graham and son, Grant, Mayfair; Mr. and Mrs. Fred Unsack and grandson, Buffalo; Miss Cumming, Kingsville; Miss Teskey, Leamington; Misses Nora Whittingham and Grace Gowan, St. Thomas; G. Leitchfield, Brigidon. Special mention might be made of Miss Bella K. Gunn, Dutton, who was present fifty years ago, and who on Sunday presented the church with two lovely oak collection plates to replace the old ones that were used so many years.

On Monday evening an old-time concert was given, with Rev. H. Godfrey as chairman. Musical selections were given by the Patterson family and Miss Walker, of Bleunheim; solos by Messrs. Welch and Keillor. A poem composed by Mrs. Edna Browning-Marshall, of Detroit, was read by Mrs. Ira Robinson and a history of the church given by the pastor. Addresses were also given by Revs. Inns and Douglas.

History of the Church

Previous to 1875 the Methodists of Wallacetown 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. Riadon. 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. Thomas. 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, Wallacetown, and Miss Bella K. Gunn, Dutton. The first organist was Miss Cecelia Laton (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, Kenne 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—C. T. Scott, W. C. Beer, E. G. Powell; George Jewitt, A. I. Brown, James Hysser, John Kennedy, A. McKibbon, Harvey Kennedy, J. A. Snell, H. Godfrey, and the present pastor, F. J. Rutherford.