

For a few years Sparta became a 5-point charge with Kingsmill and Crossley-Hunter added to Orwell and Yarmouth Centre, with student ministers Burton Robinson and Mr. Midford assisting, but this proved unsuccessful and was soon abandoned. About this time Yarmouth Centre decided that better results would be attained if they became an independent circuit, so they severed pastoral relations with Sparta, built a new brick parsonage, with Wm. Sanders (grandfather of Dr. Kenneth Penhale) as building supervisor, invited Orwell to share pastoral relations, and in 1909 invited Rev. R. J. McCormick to be their first minister. Young, vigorous, and fired with ambitious ideas, he and his lovely bride went to work on the new Yarmouth Centre circuit.

With the enthusiasm of a new circuit, growing pains soon set in. Better Sunday School accommodations were desperately needed, a modern basement and kitchen, and better heating and lighting seemed a must. Some one got a vision of the church on the present site, but great were the obstacles, for a large hotel with barns was still in use. However, with some misgivings, much Divine guidance, the unswerving determination of the church folk of that day, and the levelling influence of pastors Conway, Snowden, and Pring between 1912 and 1921, the project was started. The property was purchased, cleared and prepared for the new church site. Harvey Fishbach, contractor, a member of the congregation, gave his services as supervisor, and with Rev. Leonard Bartlett, the new pastor in 1921, and much volunteer labour, stripped the brick and moved the frame with roof to this lot, to be placed on a cement basement and re-sided with the beautiful red brick. Faithful helpers, Andrew Taylor, George Westlake, Silas Penhale, Wm. McGinnis, Joseph Herries, Ben Mahoney, Sam Garton, Andrew Mills and Alfred Gloin, along with Harvey Fishbach and Mr. Bartlett, have now all passed on, but a fine monument to them stands for our use, as a centre of fellowship and worship. Granville Gloin was the efficient secretary of the building committee, and the ladies did their part by serving hot meals in the township hall for the workmen. Hard work, discouragements and sacrifices were endured, and on June 27, 1923, Rev. R. J. McCormick, assisted by Mr. Bartlett laid the corner-stone under which is a metal box containing a history of the church organizations, a few coins, a current copy of the Times-Journal and a few other items of interest.

Since that time, circuit arrangements have changed several times, and we have become the United Church of Canada. We appreciate an electric organ, a memorial to the men who served in World Wars I and II, some of whom did not return, Mrs. George Westlake and other friends. An eternal flame hangs over the pulpit, a memorial to the late Kenneth R. Penhale, and a beautiful walnut pulpit itself was the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Wadland (parents of Mrs. Andrew Paddon).

In the course of time, with the addition of younger members and incoming families, some of which have given outstanding leadership and help, and with the loving memorial financial gifts left by several members who have passed on, a modern Sunday School room has been created, not to mention a well-equipped dining-room and kitchen, a water pressure system, oil heating, landscaping, cement walks and a parking lot.

In connection with many of these activities, a very sincere "Thank you" must be extended to Mrs. Annie Fishbach who has been constantly--and always cheerfully--engaged in the "Martha duties". Truly she deserves the "Well Done" which is sure to be her unsolicited reward.

Throughout the years, the choirs have meant much to the services of worship. The Marlatt families of which the present choir leader, Harry Norman, is a direct descendant, were especially generous with their talents, as were the Huntleys, Morrisons, Wadlands and many others. Each decade seems to have brought its own songsters and organists and we have loved them all.

We are justly proud that two young men have entered the ministry from this church. Rev. George Blewett, Ph.D., son of Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Blewett of the 10th concession, was ordained about the turn of the century, and Joseph Clarke, B.Z., B.D., son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Clarke of the present congregation, has been ordained in the United Church of Canada.

Ministers having served in the new church (seven have passed on) are Mr. Bartlett, Mr. Godfrey, Mr. Finlay, Mr. Armstrong, Mr. Moorhouse, Mr. Morrow, Mr. Newton, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Milley, Mr. Winlaw, Mr. McLagan and our present devoted Mr. Shields, so beloved of the children, the sick, the shut-ins, and those dear elderly friends wending their way towards the sunset of life.

We are today indebted to those who faithfully laid the material and spiritual foundations of our church. Let us hope and pray that in the years ahead, we may, like them, endeavour to follow in our Master's footsteps that this church may continue to be a place of comfort, love, fellowship and happy times for all her growing families.

MINISTERS OF YARMOUTH CENTRE CHURCH AND THE YEAR IN WHICH THEIR PASTORATE BEGAN:

Thomas Hadwin	1871	William Conway	1912
George C. Madden	1873	Thomas J. Snowden	1914
J. H. Stonehouse	1875	Joseph W. Pring	1916
James Charlton	1877	Leonard Bartlett	1921
John Saunders	1880	Henry Godfrey	1924
Joseph Philip	1883	W. A. Finlay	1929
Joseph Ward	1885	D. A. Armstrong	1931
George Jackson	1888	Anson C. Moorhouse	1935
John Russell	1889	Charles W. Morrow	1939
William Penhall	1890	M. G. Newton	1944
T. R. McNair	1893	Angus R. Taylor	1945
Thomas B. Coupland	1896	Scott Milley	1951
W. H. Graham	1899	R. C. Winlaw (student)	1953
S. R. McNitty	1903	R. Evan McLagan	1955
J. W. Robinson	1907	R. C. Copeland (supply)	1958
R. J. McCormick	1909	Geo. A. Shields	1959

\*\*History compiled by Miss Myrtle M. Paddon\*\*

## SALT CREEK CEMETERY

Salt Creek Cemetery, the last resting place of some of Yarmouth's best known pioneer families, is so named because of its location near the Salt Creek ravine. The first bodies were laid there during the 1830s at the time when there was a scourge of cholera in North Yarmouth.

Later, members of the families of those who had been buried in the little plot decided to make it a community grave-yard, as cemeteries were then commonly called, and in the registry of deeds at the Elgin Registry Office it is found that on October 28th, 1847 John Fairgrieve and his wife conveyed to William Baker by deed the south  $\frac{1}{2}$  of lot 9, concession 10, except a half acre, nearly square in shape, which had been granted to Hugh Douglas for a burying ground. On June 2nd 1845 John Fairgrieve had deeded this half acre to Douglas as trustee.

On November 12th, 1846 Hugh Douglas conveyed to Thomas Penhale, John Penhale, Joseph Cole, John Fowler and George Axford, trustees of the chapel of Canadian Wesleyan Methodist New Connection, the plot for the purpose of erecting a church and for a burying ground. The church was linked with the work of the Yarmouth Centre charge and the churchyard became the last resting place of members of such well-known families as the Skeldings, Douglas, Axford, Penhale, Porter, Fowler, Gloin, Baker, Cole and Meeks.

About 1905 the church, which had not been used for services for some years, was moved to Sparta, and was to be used on the parsonage property. With the removal of the little meetingplace from Salt Creek, the little plot with its white slabs took on a most neglected appearance.

In 1917 some of the public-spirited men of the community, headed by George Westlake, Neil Curtis and Alfred Bucke, raised money by subscription and with "bee" labour erected a good wire fence around the property. It was also given a general cleaning of weeds and wild growth. A number of evergreens and hardy shrubs were planted and the tombstones were straightened and repaired. Weather conditions were not too favourable and some of the evergreens died, but were replaced in 1922. After this for several years the weeds were cut annually by Roy Baker.

In 1930 the North Yarmouth W. I. organized a field day to give the cemetery another good cleaning. Several similar "bees" were held in the following years with members of the North Yarmouth W. I. and the community assisting. Roy Baker and his family gave faithfully of time and effort to maintain the plot.

Gary Cruickshank and grades 7 and 8 pupils of Lynhurst public school took the maintenance of the cemetery as a project and did some work in 1959, followed by considerably more work in 1960-61 in cleaning the cemetery and washing off the tombstones. After this Mr. and Mrs. Calvin Watson (Jean Baker) cut the grass with financial assistance from Yarmouth township.

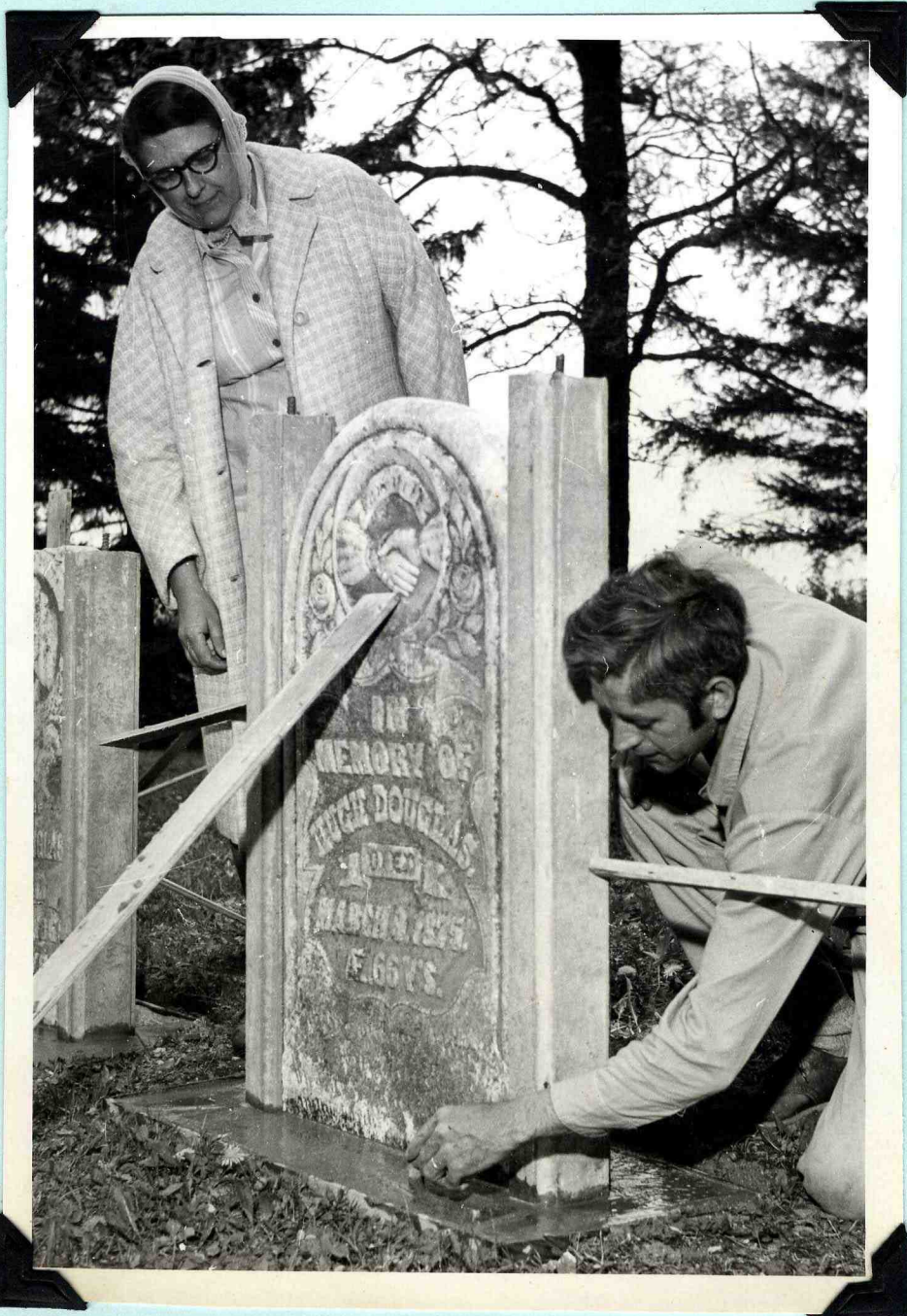
In the spring of 1967, Canada's Centennial year, a group of community-minded neighbours gathered at the cemetery for several work sessions to trim trees and bushes, rake the yard and cut the grass. The stones were in poor condition--in pieces and fallen on the ground. However the plot did look improved in the year that Canada was to "look lovelier". After that a bee was held in the spring of 1968, 1969 and 1970 to rake the yard. Families assisting were: Mr. F. O. Lewis, Mr. and Mrs. Russell McCallum, Mr. and Mrs. Joe. Bechard, Mr. and Mrs. Calvin Watson, Mr. and Mrs. Morris Taylor, Mr. and Mrs. Clayton Reid, Mr. and Mrs. Julien G. Martin. The lawn was cut 4-6 times a season by a young lad of the area under the "supervision" of this group of neighbours.

## SALT CREEK CEMETERY

In the fall of 1970 plans were initiated to permanently repair the old headstones. The prospect of a No. 3 highway bypass and the extension of the highway No. 126 throughway from London running near the property delayed these plans. However with a definite location of the highways elsewhere it was felt to be urgent to repair the stones.

In the spring of 1971 funds were obtained from descendants of the pioneers totaling \$408.00 and from the township in the form of a grant of \$258.68 making a total of \$666.68. Several contractors were interviewed and a plan was formed to steady the stones by placing a post on either side of the headstones and covered by a cap. Jake Bokhorst was named the contractor. He custom-made enough supporting posts and caps of cement for each of the grave-stones. He began his work in March of 1971, completing the job in May of 1972 at a total cost of \$606.68. He was assisted by his brother-in-law, Jack Dekwaadsteniet, of Iona, in pouring the cement bases for the remounted stones.

\$60.00 was reserved to provide a sign giving a historical sketch of the burial plot. Members of the committee responsible for the renovation of the cemetery were: Mr. F. O. Lewis, Mr. and Mrs. Calvin Watson, Mr. and Mrs. Morris Taylor and Mr. and Mrs. Julien Martin. The township now pays for the lawn mowing each season with the committee arranging for the work to be done.



Mrs. Calvin Watson stopped by to check on the progress of the work. Jake Bokhorst and Jack Dekwaadsteniet spent most of Friday May 21st pouring the cement bases for the headstones.

DEDICATION OF  
SALT CREEK PIONEER CEMETERY

Sunday July 2, 1972

Fifty members of the North Yarmouth District Historical Association and descendants of the pioneer families of the Salt Creek community gathered at the newly-restored Salt Creek Pioneer cemetery to take part in a quiet dedication service.

The restoration has actually been going on since 1959, when some children from Lynhurst Public School made cleaning the cemetery their spring project until 1961. Financial assistance from Yarmouth Township allowed community members to keep the grass neatly cut. In 1967 Salt Creek citizens held many work sessions to cut grass and weeds and set up some of the broken stones which had all but disappeared.

In the spring of 1971, after a campaign to collect funds from people of the township and descendants and friends of the pioneers, with a grant from the township, a committee of Historical Association members and others was formed.

The committee hired Jake Bokhorst of St. Thomas to do the cement work involved in the restoration of the stones. Mr. Bokhorst made cement supports for all the grave-stones. After members of the committee carefully pieced together the broken bits of the headstones, sometimes even having to dig them up, because they had sunk into the ground, Mr. Bokhorst repaired the stone itself, then mounted it on a three-foot deep base. Then cement posts were placed on each side of the stone, and a cement cap was placed on top for protection from weather and vandalism.

The land where the cemetery is located was first deeded to Hugh Douglas on June 2, 1845 as a trustee for the burying ground. Members of the pioneer families were buried there as early as the 1830's. On November 12, 1846 the Douglas family conveyed the cemetery to the trustees of the chapel of the Canadian Wesleyan Methodist New Connection, so that the Wesleyans would have land on which to build a church.

This church was linked with the work of the Yarmouth Centre charge of the Methodist Church. The church, a frame building was moved to Sparta about 1905. Members of the Historical Association tried to trace the history of the church building after its move to Sparta, but could find very few references to it in historical records.

With the removal of the church as a meeting place, the cemetery was neglected until 1917, when some men of the community raised money by subscription, and with "bee" labour, erected a wire fence around the cemetery plot and planted some evergreens and shrubs. By 1922 several trees had to be replaced.

The cemetery still fell into a deeper state of disrepair, though in 1930 members of the North Yarmouth Womens Institute held "bees" to clean the plot and cut the grass and weeds. Still, weather and vandals both left their marks on the little cemetery.

Now restoration work is complete, but the grass trees and shrubs must be cared for continually. It is hoped the restoration work will preserve the stones and their inscriptions for many years as a monument to the pioneer founders of the Salt Creek Community.

Many of the names on the stones are still familiar to district residents: the Locke, Penhale, Axford, Porter, Douglas, Cotton and Skelding families are among those whose last resting place is the little cemetery.