



**The Minnie Williams Quilt
School Section #5 (Malahide) Dunboyne**
Loan, The Williams Family

In 1917, the teacher at SS#5 Dunboyne, received this quilt from her class as a wedding present. Minnie Williams, as she was to become, was born Mary Elizabeth Baker in 1892. A granddaughter of a north Yarmouth (Central Elgin) settler named William Baker, she was raised in the house he built of clay in the 1850s which still stands near the corner of Ron McNeil Line and Highbury Avenue.

Minnie, who only taught at Dunboyne for a few years in the World War One era, would have had her hands full. A photograph from this period shows an incredible 48 students of all ages attending the school. She likely left the school following her marriage. Not long before this time, it was required that female school teachers be single and board at a farm within the school section. Following their marriage, Minnie and her husband Cyril Williams had 6 children among them Ray and his brother Don, a founding member of the Kettle Valley Pioneers.

A process of centralization that has continued up to the present caused the systematic closing of rural one-room schools beginning in the late 1950s. Dunboyne School itself was closed in December of 1964 and the building was eventually demolished, though some of the bricks were used in the construction of the house that is now on the site. Though the Dunboyne school house is gone, a number of former students hold an annual reunion keeping the spirit of the school alive. Among them are Vivian Liddle and her sister Carole Bowen who supplied the material for this panel.



Thomas Baker and his children, c. 1910
From *The Family of William Baker and Margaret (Hicks) Baker*
Left to right:
Margaret, Roy, Mabel and Mary Elizabeth (Minnie)



SS #5 Malahide, 1910

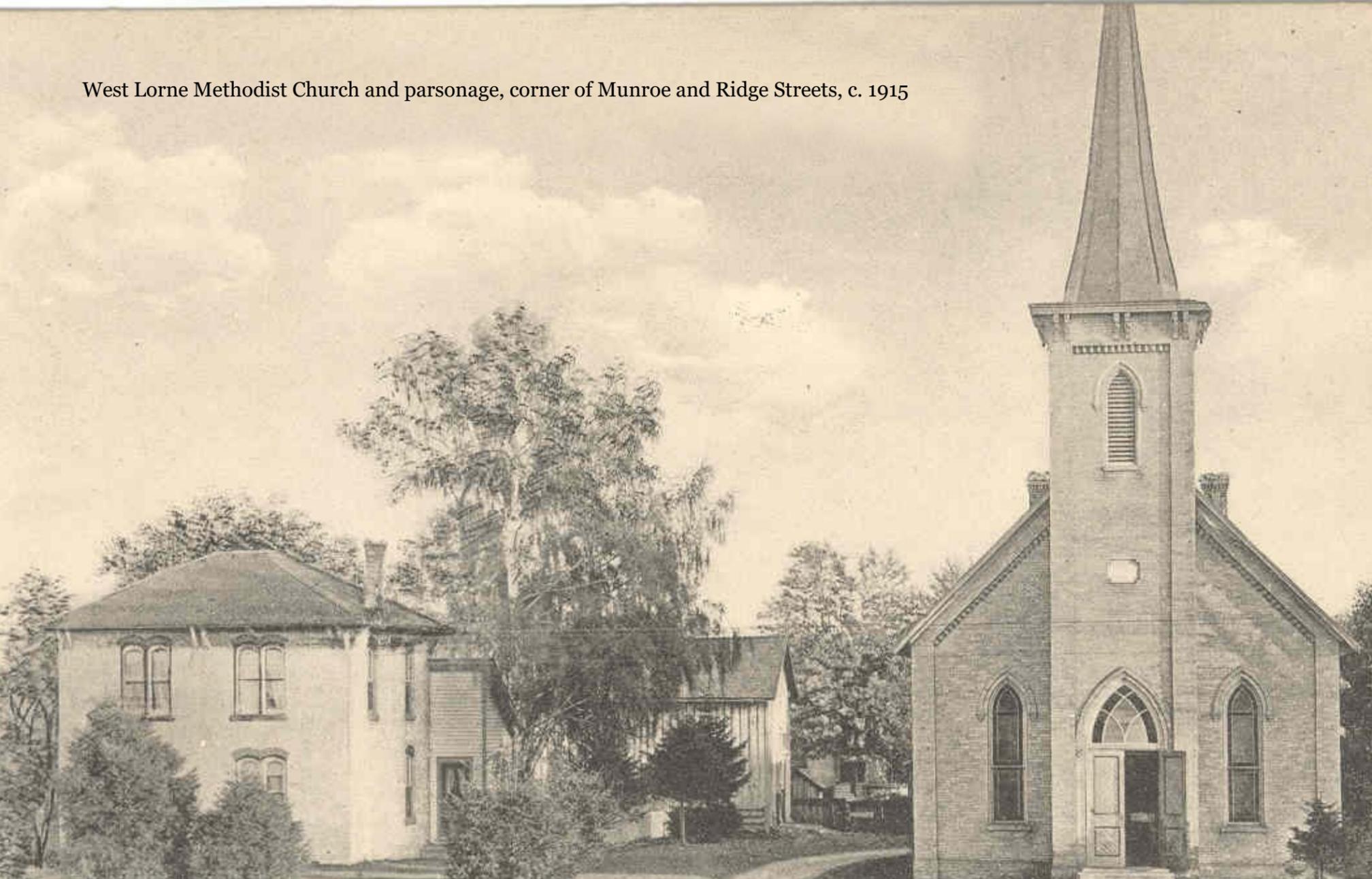


SS#5 Malahide, Spring, 1930
Back row, left to right:
Mrs. Warren, Barbara Van Patter, Hazel Jackson, Helen White, Elsie Boxall, Gwendolyn McKnight, Vera Tate, Beatrice Esseltine, Norma Williams, Jean White, Ruth Kent, Hazel Percy, Marjorie Prideaux
Middle row: Edsel Potts, Donald Williams, Geoffrey Prideaux, Wesley Jackson, Howard Tate, Alan Van Patter, Percy Liddle, Fred Kent, Frank Empey, George White, Ross Van Patter
Front row: Paul Boxall, Harold Carter, Clare Esseltine, Jean Boxall, Doris Williams, Evelyn Kent, Ilene Carter, Helen McTaggart, Dorothy White, Beatrice Percy, Ivy Jackson



Mrs. Cline and students, 1954-55
Front row, left to right:
Shelia Draper, Robert Liddle, Karen Ashton, Carole Liddle
Second row: Butch Creed, Kathleen Creed, Donald Draper, Sandra Draper
Third row: Russell Crosby, David Peters, Rosemary Liddle, Linda Lindsay, Alene Liddle
Fourth row: John Ungar, John Creed, Shirley Ashton, Vivian Liddle, Marion Jibson

West Lorne Methodist Church and parsonage, corner of Munroe and Ridge Streets, c. 1915



West Lorne Methodist Church, 1890

Elgin County Museum

“Autographed quilt - Made by the Mite Society - Presented to Mr. and Mrs. Amasa Woods”

As with others in the exhibition, this West Lorne quilt was made to raise funds for a building. In this case, it was the remodeling of the 1874 Wesleyan Methodist church which included a new bell tower. It was largely funded by Amasa Woods, a wealthy merchant who also gave the bell. Woods assisted many congregations in the county and built the first hospital in St. Thomas.

In the late 19th century, many Methodist churches had a Mite Society, composed of women from the congregation, taking their name from the “widow’s mite” (a small coin). In a bible passage from Luke, Christ observes a widow offering her last two coins to the church and compares her offering to that of the wealthy saying to his disciples that she has given more because it was all that she had representing her complete faith in God to take care of her.

In 1934, the Methodist, now United Church, congregation moved into the former Knox Presbyterian Church located at Graham and Bainard Streets which they still occupy today. They brought the Amasa Woods bell with them.



Amasa Woods



West Lorne United Church, Graham and Bainard Streets, c. 2009

Dutton Methodist church, now St. John's United Church, c. 1890
Reproduced from *Celebrating 100 Years of Worship*

Left to right: Mr. Porter, Anthony Waite, Thomas Woolridge, Chris Sutton, L. J. Wilson, Henry Sutton, Rev. Moore, Thomas Lacey



Dutton Methodist, 1890 Elgin County Museum

When the Methodist church in Dutton burned down in January, 1890, the congregation immediately started a rebuilding campaign. Among the fundraising activities was the making of this quilt by the Ladies Aid under the direction of their president, Mrs. Gusterson. The new church, which still stands at the corner of Mary and Nancy Streets, was commenced just 6 months after the fire and dedicated the following October. 1500 people attended the laying of the second of two cornerstones including over one hundred Masons from the Cameron Lodge, A.F. & A.M.

Following the quilt's completion, a Mr. Franklin Hookway, whose name can be found on the quilt, won it in an auction paying \$100.00 and took it with him when he and his wife moved to St. Thomas, North Dakota. Over 60 years later, the quilt was returned to the church by Mr. Hookway's granddaughter, Mrs. Merle Bolmier, who came in person from her home in Billings, Montana. When it was presented, the minister of day, Rev. J. W. Shaver, stated that it would become an important part of the community record and would be preserved and exhibited for future generations.

The quilt is remarkable for the record it makes of the building of the new church; including the architect's name (Mr. Buffy), the contractor's (Mr. Heard), and those of the building committee. It is one of most colorfully embroidered of the quilts in the collection. Multiple coloured threads are used to create a series of decorative floral patterns and to embellish the capital letters of most of the names, in the manner of an illuminated manuscript.



St. John's United Church, corner of Mary and Nancy Streets, Dutton, 2009



Centennial Service, Frome United Church, 1919

The service was presided over by Rev. J. B. Silcox (figure in black, centre), a grandson of the founder, Rev. Joseph Silcox.
Elgin County Museum



Frome United, 1969

Elgin County Museum
Gift of Frome United Church, 1970

This quilt commemorates the 150th anniversary of the founding of the first congregational church in Canada, formed in Southwold Township in 1819 by Reverend Joseph Silcox. Rev. Silcox came to Canada in 1817 and took up a 200 acre plot on the Talbot Road, west of St. Thomas between what was later Frome and Payne's Mills. He preached throughout the area and in 1842 provided a piece of his farm for a church. The present church, built in 1888, was designed by William F. Silcox, a grandson of Joseph. In 1919, another grandson, Rev. J. B. Silcox presided at a service marking the hundredth anniversary of the founding.

Congregational churches first appeared during the Puritan reformation of the Church of England. Each church maintained its autonomy and was governed by its own members. Frome joined the United Church of Canada during its formation in 1925.

The 150th anniversary service was held on September 7, 1969 with the then moderator of the United Church of Canada, Dr. Robert McClure as guest speaker. Hundreds of people attended the event, many of whom had to be seated in a tent next to the building

The quilt, which has about 685 names, each hand-lettered in pen, was completed under the direction of Mary Silcox, Ada Bogart and Maxine Silcox.



Rev. Joseph Silcox and his second wife Mary Ann Constable
ECM



Rev. J. B. Silcox at his grandfather's grave, Frome United Church cemetery
ECM



Frome United, 2009

Photo: J. Nelson

The plaque in the foreground was erected in 1924 by the Elgin Historical Society and commemorates the establishment of the first Congregational Church in Canada.

Wellington Street School, c. 1910
Elgin County Museum



Wellington Street School, 1934

Elgin County Museum

Gift of Mrs. Irene Schultz, 1979

A reunion and a ceremony marked the closing of Wellington Street School this past June. Opened in 1899 it remained largely unchanged from that time with the exception of an addition built in 1976. It became the French Immersion elementary school for Elgin County in 1970.

Bert Chilton, of Sparta recalled his years at Wellington Street School (1914-1918) on the occasion of the school's hundredth anniversary particularly Frank Poole who was principal in 1934-35:

"Senior 4th Grade was taught by Mr. Frank Poole. He was a fine teacher and a good man. The usual lessons were given especially writing. He would take your arm and get it rotating, no finger movement allowed. Every student turned out to be a good writer. He would also have us singing, leading with a good baritone voice."

It is unknown what prompted the creation of the quilt which contains the name of every student organized by class and grade.



Thought to be Mr. McIntyre's Grade 8 class, 1935

ECM

Row at far right, front to back: Disney Littlejohn, Jack O'Brien, Margaret Hayden, Bob Rattery, Carman Richardson, Viola Davey

Next row, front to back: Jack Knight, Bob Ponsford, Hazel Rickwood, Mary Best, Connie Pineo, Katherine -, Evelyn Rowe

Next row: Muriel Dimick (barely visible), Roslyn McKenzie, Ruth Holmes, Donald Hatcher, Isabel Smout, Lila Freeman, Hazel -

Next Row: Lillian Towers (Williams), Dan Holmes, Jack Wright, Carl -, Bob Freeman, Art Foster

Last row: - Robins, Lucille Smith, Marjory Laird



Charles Eldert's 1st Class, 1937-38 Courtesy, Mr. Lyle Sifton

Row at far left, front to back: Ann McMurtry, Donald Wood, Patricia Voss, Eleanor Moyes

Next row: Ruth Parkins, Peter Palmer, Helen Lawrence, **Lyle Sifton**, Helen O'Brien, Frances Vidler, Shirley Lampman, Margaret Simmons

Next row: **Ian McKellar**, Bill Campbell, Norma Wilson, Donald Williams, Lloyd Brown, Jack (Bud) Edwards, Helen Gray

Last row: Tom McKenzie, Joan Laird, Jack O'Brien, Charles Herr, Dale (Bounce) Swift



Wellington Street School closing, June 14, 2009

Left to right:

Ian McKellar and Lyle Sifton examine the quilt, while Dr. Bob Farley confers with Artist-in-Residence Kirtley Jarvis

Signature Quilts: Community Patterns

The hundreds of names on the average signature quilt represent communal support for a group be it a school, a church, or an organization while at the same time displaying great artistry and technical skill on the part of their makers. This exhibition contains a small number of what must have been hundreds of signature quilts produced in Elgin County since the late 19th century. An enduring fundraising tool they are still being made today though they were far more popular in the last century when more people had the skills and time to make them.

Even these few reflect and document the work and people of a wide range of organizations and institutions. Usually the reason for the making of a signature quilt – the aim of the fundraising or the person or event being commemorated - is evident on the quilt itself. And the names provide a snap-shot of who was involved with the organization at a given time and of those in community who supported their cause.

One of the reasons for mounting this exhibition was to learn more about the people whose names are preserved on the quilts. For the past year Elgin County Museum Artist-in-Residence Kirtley Jarvis with the help of museum staff and volunteers, have transcribed the names found on each quilt and, for seven of them, reproduced the names in a book. Visitors who recognize a name are invited to enter a note about that person in the book such as their relationship to the individual, where they lived or what they did.

Reading the signature quilts is like opening a book at one page in the life of a church, a one-room school house or an organization, an increasing number of which are now gone. The survival of these quilts however, ensures they will not be forgotten.