

**Submitted to The Dunnville Chronicle
Via E-mail; December 23, 2002
For Publishing; January 8, 2003
By William A. Warnick
180 Rosslyn Ave. South
HAMILTON, ON L8M 3J5
Phone 905 549-6086 E-mail wwarnick@cogeco.ca
(Word count 563)**

Photos

ac007 Courtesy Arthur Clark -View of Methodist church and Stromness Cheese factory,

* ems073 Courtesy Earl M. Siddall - Stromness Methodist Church,

* waw616 Courtesy Wm. A. Warnick -former Stromness Methodist church now a barn at Orlin and Pearl Rittenhouse's

* My choice of pictures to use

Unification of the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches Sounds Death Knell for Stromness Methodist?

For a number of months, I have been telling you bits and pieces about some of the historic churches and their members in Dunn and Sherbrooke townships. To day, I will tell you of a church which no longer remains, or at least not as a working church!

This is not going to be a long history lesson on the Methodist Church in Canada, but to tell the story of the Methodist in Stromness, I felt you should have a short history. In 1824, there was only one Methodist body in Ontario, however by 1844, there were six bodies. In 1874, two of these bodies united, and again in 1888, the remaining four merged forming *The Methodist Church: Canada, Newfoundland and Bermuda*. This was commonly known as The Methodist Church. Then unification took place once more. On June 10, 1925, The Methodist Church joined with a group consisting of about ¹seventy percent of members of the Presbyterian church in Canada. This formed the *United Church of Canada*.

In the village of Stromness, on the south side of the feeder canal, just beside Broad Creek on one side and the cheese factory on the other stood a Methodist church. It had been there since at least the early 1880's and I suspect for some time prior to that. One of the first notes I am able to find regarding the Stromness Methodist's is a Grand Tea Meeting held in February 1885, in which several eminent speakers were present and delivered addresses. Music was furnished by the Choir of the Methodist Church in Dunnville. Miss Birdie Montague, the child wonder entertained the audience with recitations and songs. Mr. Fred Hyde, the inimitable whistler was also present. The ad in the Dunnville Gazette promised it would be the event of the season!

¹ This number varies, depending on the source of the information.

What I am sure must have been an unusual event, except it seems in Stromness, was found in the Reform Press of May 1885. *Lachlan McCallum, (Nephew of Senator McCallum) of Sherbrooke, was charged with assault on Alfred Wheatly, Sunday night, and James McNichol and George Pyle with aiding and abetting. All were brought before Police Magistrate Taylor on the 26th instant, pleaded guilty and were each fined \$10 and \$4.90 [\$44.70] cost. The assault took place after service in the Methodist church. Disorderly conduct has been too common at these meetings and steps were taken to put a stop to it in this instance. As the assault took place in Moulton Township, Sherbrooke contributes \$30 to the treasury of that Township.* In another article I have hinted about what the cause of this ruckus was, and in a future article I will, as they say, *tell the rest of the story!*

There was little need for the Stromness Methodist church after unification as there was a United Church on Lakeshore Road in Lowbanks where the new United Church members could attend. The Stromness church was sold and moved circa 1940. Today, it sits as a barn owned by Orlin and Pearl Rittenhouse at Bird Rd and the Feeder Canal Rd., replacing a barn that burnt in 1939. Pearl tells me that she has a note which I will paraphrase; *A woman died and the church was closed.* We do not know who this woman was, nor if her death was the direct contributing factor to closing the Stromness church, but apparently there was some auspicious connection.

If you have items, you wish to have written about or pictures you would be willing to lend, please drop me a note. Let me know how you feel about these articles. William (Bill) Arthur Warnick 180 Rosslyn Ave. South HAMILTON, ON L8M 3J5 e-mail wwarnick@cogeco.ca Phone 905 549-6086.