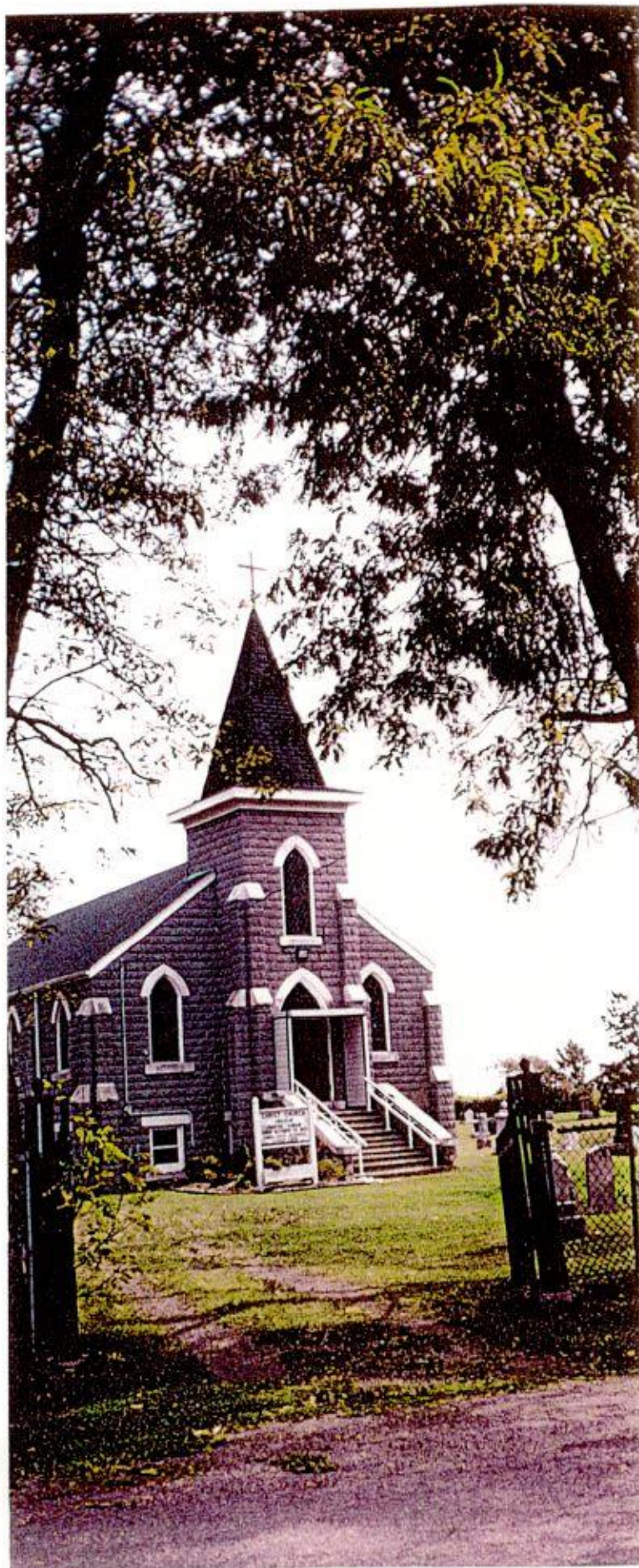
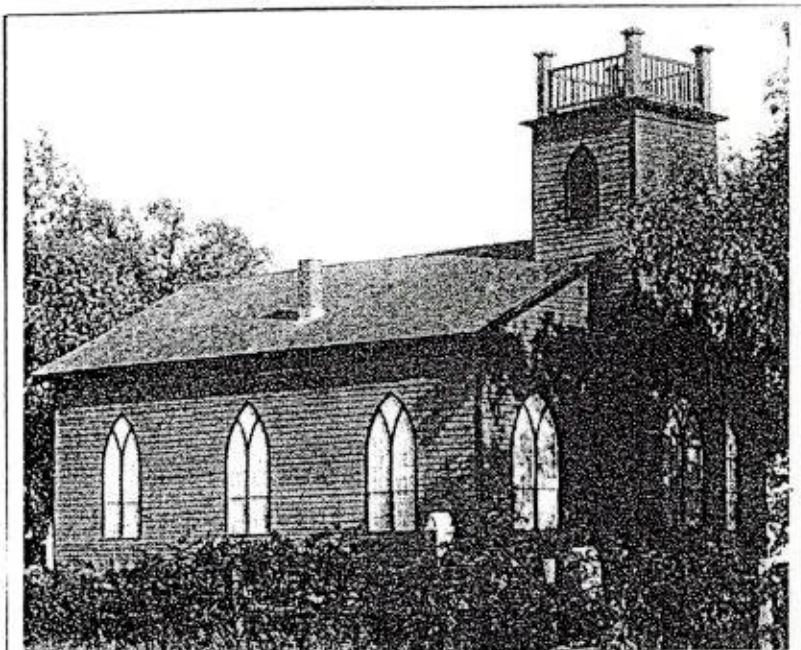


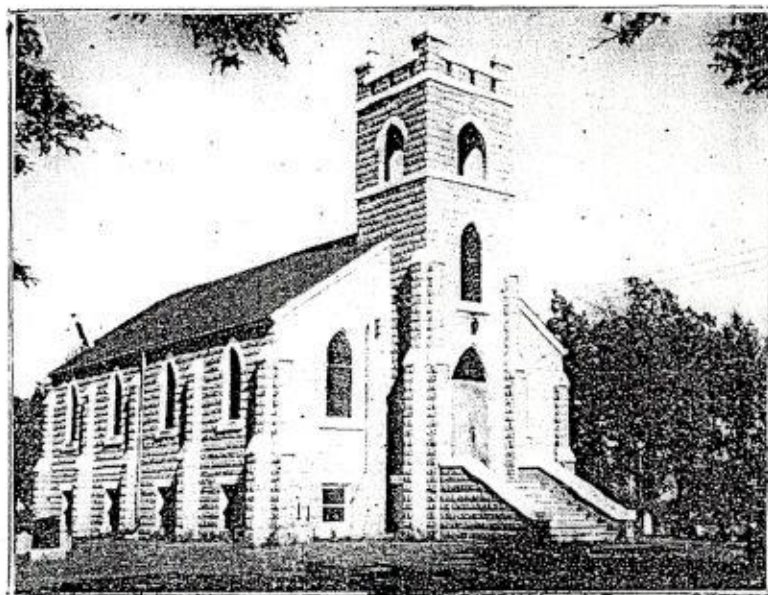
History of
CHRIST'S CHURCH
Port Maitland



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CHRIST'S CHURCH - PORT MAITLAND
Erected on land given by Capt. Francis Dobbs in 1843
and Consecrated June 15th, 1846.



HISTORICAL REVIEW OF CHRIST'S CHURCH, PORT MAITLAND

Port Maitland, at the mouth of the Grand River, possesses the finest harbour on the north shore of Lake Erie, and at an early date became a place of importance, and also a Naval Station during the War of 1812-14. The settlement from which the establishment of Christ's Church stems, really began in 1836 with the arrival of a large party under the leadership of Lt. Col. John Johnson, C.B. Retired. The party consisted of many relatives and retainers. The journey was arduous - six weeks crossing the Atlantic Ocean from London to New York in the sailing ship "Hannibal", with a passenger list of 85 cabin and 500 steerage. Among the cabin passengers was the celebrated Bishop of Ohio, Philander Chase, whose ministrations were greatly appreciated by the colonists and founders of Christ's Church. On arrival at New York, the journey continued via the Erie Canal to Buffalo and thence via the Niagara River, Chippawa Creek to Port Robinson. From there they followed the old Welland Canal to Dunnville, which at that time was but a riverside village centering upon what is now the Queen's Hotel. The accommodations of the villagers were greatly taxed to take care of the party overnight, until they could proceed the next day down the Grand River to the home of Mr. Hyde, two miles west of the harbour. Here they were temporarily lodged.

It is hard for us who know the Township of Dunn and the Grand River, to realize that at this time, it was but a trackless area of bush and swamp, and that the Grand River was a great artery of commerce with boats, both steam and sail, bearing freight between Buffalo and Brantford. These were troublesome times, and the emigrants soon found themselves seeing service in the McKenzie Rebellion. Being loyal and many of them possessing military experience, they joined the volunteers and saw service along the Niagara River, and experienced the general unrest, largely due to the anti-British sympathies of many in the neighbouring Republic. During this period, a Mr. W. Imlach, a grandson of Lt. Col. Johnson, was called to Newark, now Niagara-on-the-Lake, for jury duty. Upon hearing the church bell on a Sunday morning, the first since leaving England, he promptly found God's House. He returned from Newark determined to form a Parish and have regular services at Port Maitland.

We are not sure of the early beginnings of the church services, but there are some accounts of services being held in homes. Rev. Bold Cudmore Hill, M.A., a missionary for thirty-two years, was known as the Apostle of the Grand; he journeyed up and down the river or by trail, astride a white horse. It appears there are no regular records until 1846, though the Marriage Register contains an entry of the marriage of William John Johnson to Louise Eliza Jukes, as performed at Lake Shore, Dunn, on

December 13th, 1836, but it is unsigned.

This whole area belonged to the Diocese of Quebec prior to 1839, when the Diocese of Toronto was formed, and the Rt. Rev. John Strachan became the first Bishop. The name of Rev. P. O'Neil is mentioned as having been successful in first obtaining the use of an empty stable from Capt. Francis Dobbs, and later the latter gave the site for the Church and Burial Ground. His remains, along with those of his wife, lie to the north of the Church. To Rev. C. E. Gribble is given the credit of having visited England to raise the money with which to erect the first Church. He was successful in returning with some \$3,500.00, a considerable sum in those days. It was on June 16, 1846, that The Rt. Rev. John Strachan visited the district and consecrated Christ's Church. He consecrated St. John's Church in South Cayuga on the previous day, and St. Paul's in Dunnville on the following day, on his way to Bertie and Fort Erie. Rev. Adam Townley, 1843-1855, was in charge at the time of consecration, and it is to him, in all probability, must be given the credit of the erection of the first church. He had the care of South Cayuga, Port Maitland and Dunnville, and he lived on the Glebe lands, where NO. 6 Service Flying Training School was built during World War II.

Rev. Adam Townley was succeeded by Rev. John Flood (1855-1866) who in turn was followed by the Rev. Noah Disbrow, thus forming the noble triumvirate of Adam, Flood and Noah. It is recorded that the worst flood of the Grand River occurred during the incumbency of Rev. Flood. Rev. Disbrow remained from 1866 to 1877. He, in turn, was succeeded by the Rev. Percy Smith, who also remained for eleven years, concluding his ministry in 1888, being the last to embrace the three charges of St. John's, St. Paul's and Christ's Church. This is when St. John's and Christ's Church became a separate parish, and is to this day. About 1907 Queen Campbell, a sister of Mrs. Will Fry, gave Christ's Church the church bell. The bell was first rung at her wedding in the Church. Mrs. R. A. Miller of Jarvis submitted this information on January 31, 1966.

There is an interesting story regarding the Church bell. Mr. Sackville Cotter, a former North West Mounted Policeman, went early each Sunday morning by horse and buggy, to ring this church bell. He lived in the big brick house west of the Church along the lakeshore, which is now owned by Rev. William Blott. He always harnessed the horse to the buggy and left her waiting in front of his house, while he finished dressing in his Sunday best. One particular Sunday morning, he apparently took too long dressing and Dolly left without him, and took her usual place in the shed at the Church. Sack was seen hurrying on foot soon after; the bell was rung late that morning! When Mr.

Cotter was unable to carry out this Sunday morning task, he asked Lloyd King, who was only a teenager, to do it for him.

The first rector in charge of the separate parish of Christ's Church and St. John's Church was Rev. Maurice Britton, 1888-1896, who in turn was followed by the Rev. A.W.H. Francis from 1897 to 1914. Bishop Du Moulin confirmed eleven candidates at Christ's Church on June 7, 1907. He also ordained Rev. A.W.H. Francis as priest. Rev. Francis was succeeded by Rev. W.A. Kyle, 1914-1921. Then followed the pastorate of Rev. Dr. A. Grasett Smith, 1921-1938. During the rectorship of Rev. Dr. Smith the old church was struck by lightning and burned to the ground in 1926. The church bell was never rung again!

It was Rev. Dr. Smith who was responsible for the erection of the present church, which stands as a monument of his unflagging energy. It is a fine structure of grey stone block which had an imposing tower entrance at the time of building. In later years this tower was changed to the present steeple. All thirteen memorial windows are stained glass due to the love and generosity of the donors. A number of years ago these windows were covered with plexiglass for protection; this detracts from the outside appearance.

On display in the Church is the silver trowel which was presented to The Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Niagara Derwyn Owen, who officiated at the Laying of the Foundation Stone of Christ's Church on Monday, June 27th, 1927. This trowel was returned to the Church a couple of years ago by Bishop Owen's grandson, Mr. Robert Owen of North York. For the service, Rev. Dr. Grasett Smith was assisted by Rev. Gordon Hern of Dunnville. Choirs from St. John's Church, St. Alban's in Byng, St. Paul's in Dunnville as well as Christ's Church were present. The wardens were Mr. Thomas Docker and Mr. Thomas King. It was most kind of Bishop Owen's grandson to return this trowel, as it is part of the history of Christ's Church. Also on display in the Church is the mortgage which was drawn up prior to the erection of the present Church.

Copied from the Dunnville Weekly Chronicle - Friday, May 20, 1927

NEW CHRIST CHURCH ASSURED

Work Has Been Started by Contractor Robert Bennett.

Christ Church, Port Maitland, was destroyed by fire on Thursday, August 12th, last.

On August 30th a vestry meeting was held, at which it was moved,

seconded and unanimously carried that the church be rebuilt on the same site. From this beginning, preparations have gone forward through the canvass of the parish for subscriptions, the unsolicited sending in of donations by sympathizing friends, the adoption of plans, calling for tenders, and finally the awarding and signing of the contract.

The contract calls for a building of grey granite faced concrete blocks, trimmed with white granite artificial stone. The nave or auditorium will be 33 x 47 1/2 with five buttresses on each side, on the outside of the walls, an apse (chancel) 19 x 10 1/2 at the east end, and a buttressed central tower at the west end projecting five feet from the main building. There will be a basement 8 1/2 feet high, unfinished for the present. The contract price is \$8,300.00, which does not include the front door and steps, not the glass in the church windows, which it is hoped may be put in as memorials.

The contractor, Robert Bennett, has begun the building, and arrangements will be made for the laying of the corner stone by the Bishop of the Diocese about the end of the month, due notice of which will be given.

The treasurer of the building fund furnishes the following statement of the present condition and future prospects of the fund:

Cash in hand, including insurance	\$4,792.84
Subscriptions promised	2,051.00
Total	\$6,843.84

Of the cash in hand, \$1,648.00 was given by friends outside the congregation, a most generous donation of \$1,000.00 being received last week, in addition to which a like amount was given to the capital of the cemetery fund by the same donor. The rector and congregation appreciate the practical sympathy of all friends who have contributed.

It will be a source of the greatest satisfaction that the historic old church that had functioned well on to a hundred years is being rebuilt. Many have contributed to the fund for that purpose, including many who are not members of Christ Church, but wished to help out in such a worthy cause. Any others who wish to contribute may send subscriptions to the rector, or in care of the Chronicle, where they will be publicly acknowledged.

End of excerpt from Chronicle

The thirteen stained glass windows are all memorials; very beautiful for such a small country church. The three above the Altar are in memory of James Bradford and his wife, Ellen;

Daniel Matlock and his wife Hulda; and John Benjamin Matlock. Those on the south side, from the east are Mary Louisa Hornibrook; John Taylor and Margaret Jane, his wife; Francis Ockinley; John Young Orris and his wife, Margaret Jane. The two facing the west are in memory of Maria L. Williams, and The Children of Christ's Church. On the north side Thomas B. Docker and Mary, his wife; John W. and Henrietta Siddall; and Edward and Emma Logan are remembered.

Rev. F.C. Wahling was in charge of the Parish from 1938-39, when Rev. G. Moore W. Smith, a young man, became rector in 1939. He had a human interest in everything in the community, and was a great worker with the youth.

On September 13, 1950, Christ's Church Ladies' Guild was formed during the rectorship of Rev. A.D. Caslor, who followed Rev. G. Moore W. Smith in 1948. This organization was very active; it had turkey suppers, bazaars, wiener roasts, bake sales and teas at cottages and in front of the Church, sales of quilts following quilting bees, card parties in homes and the Church basement and in Grandview School. They catered to Laymen's Banquets and had a door-to-door basket. All of these activities raised money to put flowers on the altar, make donations to the Rectory Fund, give gifts and send cards to sick and bereaved, and make donations to the organist and Sunday School. The money raised paid for repairs to Church roof, bought Sunday School chairs, paid for painting of Church interior, bought organ lamp, had inside doors covered with felt, and had basement painted in 1953. The Guild put crushed stone in driveway in 1954 also. The ladies canvassed for the electric organ in 1959 and had fencing put around the yard in 1967. Sad to say this Guild has not existed for a number of years.

While Rev. A.D. Caslor was Rector in 1950, he compiled a booklet of the history of the Church in celebration of Christ's Church's 104th Anniversary; it is a very complete history up to that time. Following Rev. Caslor was Rev. Evan Jones. Rev. F.C. Musson, our last full time rector, served the Parish from 1954 to 1967. For approximately ten years, we had part-time priests--ones who took Sunday services. Two of these were Rev. Ralph Porritt and Rev. Ron Stublely.

In 1979-1980, it was deemed necessary to sell St. Alban's Church in Byng, and amalgamate the services of the two remaining churches. The Dunn Anglican Parish was formed, composing St. John's Church in South Cayuga and Christ's Church, Port Maitland. The congregations joined. It was decided to hold services in Christ's Church during the winter months and in St. John's Church during the summer months. The Ven. Homer Ferris was instrumental in

drawing up the agreement between The Parish of St. Paul's, The Dunn Anglican Parish and the rector, Rev. Thorne so that the Dunn Anglican Parish has the necessary pastoral and administrative care.

The Province of Ontario Bicentennial Service, including a memorial service for 23rd Royal Welsh Fusiliers, was held on July 14, 1984, at 3 p.m. and was conducted by Rev. Thorne and Rev. William Blott. The guest speaker was Rev. John Docker. The service was followed by a buffet supper in the Fire Hall at Port Maitland. It proved to be quite a memorable event with horse drawn carriage; and old cars transporting people from the Church service to the Fire Hall.

Many fond memories are built in the Church, and many more are buried in the Church Yard. The whole church yard is not consecrated ground; the area around the Church is, but the eastern end did belong to the Township of Dunn, then the Region, and presently, I believe, the County of Haldimand. The first burial was that of William George Spratt, twenty-two, whose tomb is at the south-west corner of the Church Yard. He came out from England, a lad of sixteen, and was one of those who fought in the McKenzie Rebellion of 1837. The Grave Yard also holds many of the bodies of those who were drowned in the tragedy of the steamer "Commerce" on the night of May 6th, 1850. Twenty-five bodies rest in a common grave on the south side of the cemetery. Some graves including those of the Hyde family had been obliterated by the encroachment of the lake sand, but have been uncovered in recent years by Bill and Margaret Moyer and family. Captain Francis Dobbs who gave the site for the Church and the Burial Ground, and his wife lie buried to the north of the Church. Lovely old trees shade the Grave Yard, God's Acre, adjoining the Church, where so many have found a last, long resting place.

Compiled by Hill King

(Excerpts have been taken from many sources; many from "The History of Dunn Township" compiled by my mother, Mrs. Roy (Mabel) Cowell in 1956 and revised in 1967.)