

# HISTORICAL SKETCH

## OF PRESBYTERIANISM IN WINGHAM

1866 - 1916

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**I**N celebrating our first and fiftieth jubilee, we purpose placing on record a few of the most interesting incidents connected with the establishment of the Presbyterian Church in Wingham. We shall also record some of the individual trials and experiences of the organizers of the congregation, as to their efforts in clearing the forest, in making a home in a new country, in planting the Church of God in the wilderness, and in establishing a new civilization where original wildness had reigned for ages. We place these on record in the hope that they may benefit our children and successors, as they may peruse them fifty or one hundred years hence.

The rich wheat lands, known as the Huron Tract, were surveyed and placed on the market in the year 1854, and about the close of the Russian War. As the price of wheat at that time ranged from \$1.50 to \$2.00 per bushel, these lands were rapidly settled by people principally from the British Isles.

The Town Plot of Wingham was placed on the market in the year 1861, and soon became a prosperous centre, and the need of churches and schools was soon felt in the community. The Presbyterians who settled in Wingham and the surrounding townships came from all parts of Scotland, the north of England, and the north of Ireland. The people were not only from different parts of the country, but were also from different persuasions of Presbyterianism. There were people from the Established Church, the Free Church, the Burgers, the Anti Burgers, Cameronians, and the Relief. These people brought with them the various opinions and customs to which they had been used in the Old Lands. These differences of opinion were more of a benefit than otherwise, as they enabled the people to take a more liberal and friendly view of the opinions of others, and elevate their minds to a clearer conception of Divine Truth.

The troubles and hardships which these pioneer settlers endured, were also "blessings in disguise". The people were enabled to start on a new civilization temporally, as well as spiritually. The land was not encumbered by autocratic supremacy, no landlord tyranny, no graded caste society. In the eye