

## CHAPTER I. THE PIONEERS

The earliest records extant of the Presbytery of Brockville date back to the 8th February, 1832, and the names of ministers on the Roll of Presbytery of that date were Rev'd Wm. Smart, Brockville, Rev'd Robt. Boyd, Prescott, and Rev'd Robt. Lyle of Osnabruk, with these Elders, namely, Mr. John Dekey, Mr. Matthew McIntosh and Mr. John N. Ault. These three ministers supervised the work of the church over a large trail of country, and were instrumental in establishing several Presbyterian congregations in what is now the Presbyteries of Kingston, Brockville, Genary and Lanark. Of these men Rev'd Wm. Smart is an outstanding pioneer minister of Presbyterianism. He commenced his labors at Brockville in the year 1811 and is credited with having started the first Sabbath School in Canada. His field of labor extended from Gananoque to Osnabruk, a distance of nearly one hundred miles, and north some thirty-five miles from the St. Lawrence. In conjunction with Rev'd Fr. Boyd of Prescott, who arrived subsequently they established Presbyterian congregations in some fourteen localities which grew into strong self-sustaining congregations, and still exert their influence in moulding the ideals of the communities. The congregations in Edwardsburg Township were among the number. The early settlers of the township who adhered to the Presbyterian faith and form of worship had under the guidance of Missionary effort erected three small churches known at that time as "Spencerville" at Spencer's

Mills, "The Log Church" at Raney's Corners, and the Front Church at Port Elgin. These were organized into congregations in the year 1835, and were known as the Spencerville Charge.

The first settled pastor over these churches was the Rev'd Jas. Geggie, who was inducted at Spencerville January 6th, 1846. Mr. Geggie was Clerk of Brockville Presbytery until his resignation was accepted in 1855. His successor was Rev'd A. Melville, who came to minister to the needs of the widely scattered flock in 1856. At a meeting of Presbytery held in Brockville of that year, a petition was received from the Edwardsburg charge asking for Moderation in a call to a minister. Some intimation was given in this petition to cut off the congregation at the Log Church from regular services. Dr. Boyd promptly held the matter up until a committee should investigate and report on the matter. At a subsequent meeting the report of this committee was given. It recommended that Spencerville and the Front Church at Port Elgin be the only places for regular Sabbath service, and that service be held at the Log Church at the convenience of the minister. Dr. Boyd again dissented, but the report was adopted and the Log Church at Raney's Corners was no longer a part of the charge. A regular and formal call was then made out in favor of Rev. A. Melville, and he was inducted at Spencerville in the forenoon, and Port Elgin in the afternoon of February 5, 1857. Mr. Melville resided at Spencerville and continued his faithful and arduous labors until 1862, when he accepted a call to Westport.