

Historical Sketch of Presbyterianism in Seaforth

*The Committee are indebted to Mr. Wm. Ballantyne
for the early data which is contained in this sketch.*

IN the summer and fall of 1866, Rev. William Graham, of Egmondville, and Rev. Mr. Barr, of Harpurhey, came to Seaforth and preached, occasionally, on the Sunday afternoon in the Temperance Hall. At the same time there were a number of Presbyterian families living in McKillop and Seaforth, who were anxious to found a church in Seaforth. They petitioned the Presbytery of Huron to grant the erection of a church, in connection with the Presbyterian Church of Canada, but this was refused. Rev. William Robertson, of Walton, who was connected with the Presbyterian Church of North America, was then asked to preach on Sunday afternoons, and this, he did for some time. It was then thought advisable to organize a church in connection with the American body, and in February, 1867, the church was then organized in the Masonic Hall with some twenty-five members. In the meantime the Presbytery had again been approached, but again refused, giving as their reason for doing so, that a church in Seaforth would close those in Harpurhey and Egmondville. An appeal was also made to these latter churches, but they refused, unless either Mr. Graham or Mr. Barr be the church minister.

The Presbyterians in Seaforth who were members of either Harpurhey or Egmondville Churches, seeing that a church was to be built independent of their help, proposed that if the new organization would drop their plans and buy a lot on Goderich street they would go in with them, and build a larger church. When Mr. Robertson was told of this plan he advised its acceptance, gave the members their certificates and withdrew from the field.

The next thing to do, was to again approach the Presbytery. Mr. John Cowan and Mr. William Ballantyne were appointed the delegates to present the petition, but again it was refused, on the former grounds. A few days after the meeting, some of the ministers changed their minds and called a meeting, in Seaforth, to re-consider the matter. After a great deal of discussion it was moved by Rev. John Ross, and seconded by Mr. George Walker, one of Mr. Ross' elders, that the petition be granted. Mr. Ross was appointed to organize the new congregation. He did so, some time in June, and the first Sacrament was held soon after, when the following were placed on the Communion Roll: Mr. and Mrs. John Douglas, Mr. and Mrs. John Cowan, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Cowan, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Cowan, Mr. and Mrs. Darling Forsyth, Mr. and Mrs. George Forsyth, Mr. and Mrs. William Ballantyne, Mr. and Mrs. James Nichol, and Mr. and Mrs. James Hastie. Mr. Graham continued preaching on the