

450

Golden Jubilee

1863



1913

Knox Church

Palmerston, Ont.

BX9215
P35
G63
1913
PXXY

His testimony and His law
In Israel He did place,
And charged our fathers it to show
To their succeeding race.

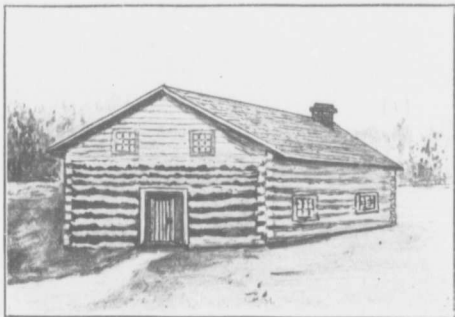
That so the race which was to come
Might well them learn and know,
And sons unborn who should arise
Might to their sons them show.

That they might set their hope in God
And suffer not to fall
His mighty works out of their minds,
But keep His precepts all.

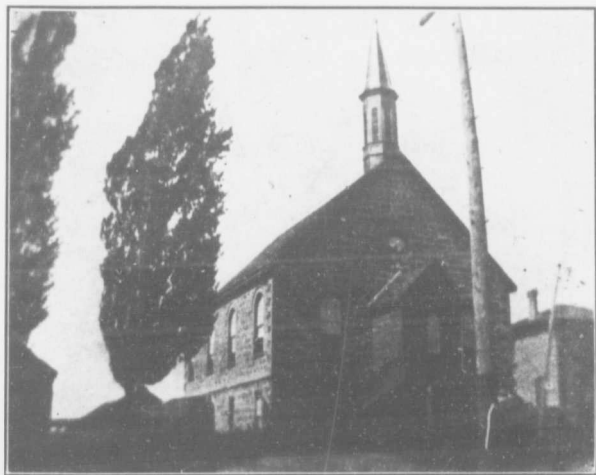
—Ps. 78 : 5-7.



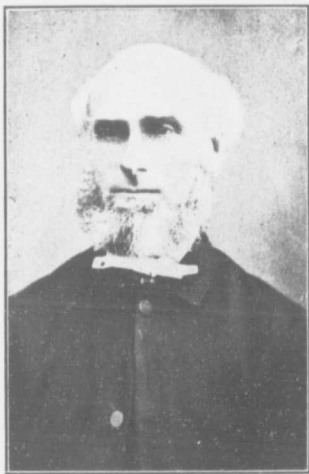
The present Church and Manse.



First Log Building used by Knox Church.
Palmerston, Ont.



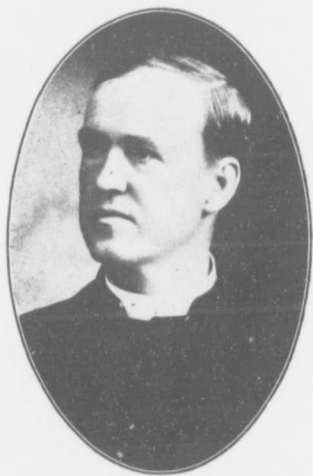
The Stone Church



Rev. D. Anderson



Rev. D. W. Cameron



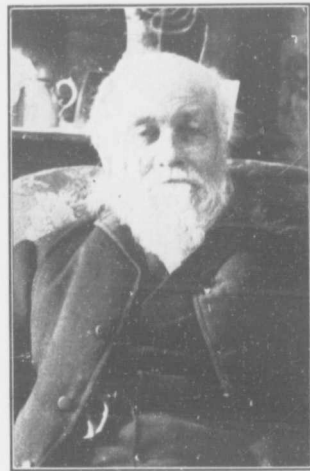
Rev. J. M. Aull



Mrs. J. M. Aull



Mr. and Mrs. A. Carswell



Mr. W. Bent

Historical Sketch of Knox Church, Palmerston.

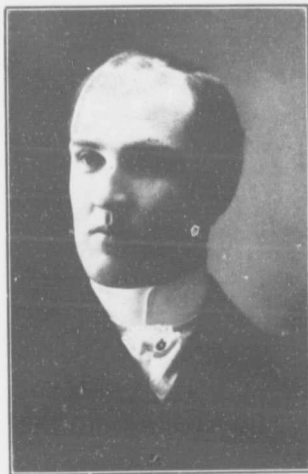


ANY interesting stories have been written and told of the early settlement of Wellington and Perth Counties. It may be said that the difficulties encountered and overcome in the settlement, clearing and development of those portions of Minto and Wallace Townships, now within the jurisdiction of Knox Church, Palmerston, were similar in all respects to what has been recorded and told of the whole of that valuable territory known as the "Queen's Bush."

About the year 1850 the first settlers began to arrive in the neighborhood of what is now the Town of Palmerston. These settlers were in most cases young men and women who, lately united in marriage, had faced the great task of clearing what was believed to be fertile soil, to make for themselves homes that would in the coming years be valuable agricultural areas bringing in rich returns for the labor spent in their development. In the great majority of cases the only capital possessed by these young people was strong constitutions and stout hearts. Those settling in the immediate vicinity of Palmerston were mostly from Scotland and the North of Ireland or were of Scotch and Irish parentage. They had been brought up in a religious air and had strong desire to have the benefit of church services. For the first ten years the opportunities for public worship were few, occasionally a student would come through during the summer months and worship would be conducted in the log houses of the settlers at convenient points, and occasionally they were able to attend church at Harriston, where the Presbyterians were in greater numbers and had a settled Minister.

In 1862 some twenty-seven Presbyterians from the Townline east and west of what is now Palmerston, from the 10th and 8th of Wallace and the 2nd of Minto, decided to ask the Presbytery of Guelph to form them into a Congregation and erected a log Church on the farm of Thomas McComb about half a mile west of the present Church.

At a meeting of the Presbytery of Guelph, held in Guelph on the 23rd day of October, 1862, the application was received from the members of the Church residing in the territory already described, asking that they be formed into a



Rev. R. A. Cranston, B.A.



Mrs. R. A. Cranston.

Congregation and that the Communion be dispensed. As the Church was on the Wallace side of the road it was thought advisable to communicate with the Presbytery of Stratford, and at a meeting of the Presbytery of Guelph on the 12th day of January, 1863, the permission of the Presbytery at Stratford was received. Dr. James Middlemiss, Clerk of the Presbytery, was instructed to give due notice and to thereafter organize a Congregation. On May 5, 1863, Dr. Middlemiss reported to Presbytery that he had organized the Congregation and laid on the table the Communion Roll, containing twenty-seven names, as follows:—George Patterson, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Smart, Mr. and Mrs. William Bent, Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Gray, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Purdie, John Laybourne, Mr. and Mrs. John Patterson, Mary Patterson, Andrew Cowan, John McComb, Thomas McComb, John Yeats, Mr. and Mrs. Willis McLaughlin, George Frier, William Falconer, George Gibson, Mr. and Mrs. James Muirhead, Andrew Carswell, James Carswell. Dr. Middlemiss also reported that it was the unanimous wish of the congregation that Andrew Carswell and William Bent be appointed Ruling Elders. Presbytery thereupon confirmed the Communion Roll and approved the appointment of the Elders, and instructed Dr. Middlemiss to give due notice of a day upon which he would attend at the Church to ordain the Elders and dispense the Communion; accordingly on the 27th day of June, 1863, Dr. Middlemiss, assisted by Richard Fair, James Wilson and John McKay, Ruling Elders of the Rothsay Congregation, ordained Andrew Carswell and William Bent as Elders, and on the following day, Sunday, June 28th, for the first time the Communion was dispensed to the twenty-seven already named members, and the following were received into the membership of the Church and received the Communion:—James Martin, Margaret Ann Carswell, Samuel Leslie, Mrs. Leslie, Agnes Patterson, Sam Leslie, Jr., Mrs. M. Leslie and Mrs. Jane Gregory. Of those who were members at this the first Communion the only survivors who are still members of the Congregation on this the fiftieth anniversary are Andrew Carswell and James Martin.

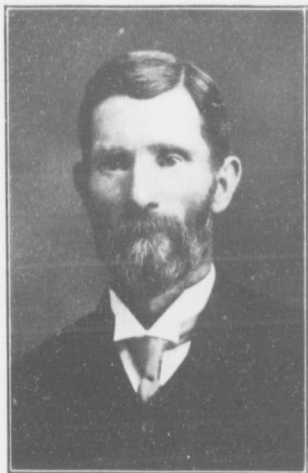
Dr. Middlemiss continued as Moderator, services being held as often as supply could be obtained until the 8th day of October, 1864, when the Rev. Daniel Anderson was inducted as Minister in charge of the Rothsay and the Wallace and Minto Townline Church, and from this time services were regularly conducted, Mr. George Patterson being the first Precentor. During Mr. Anderson's pastorate the records read that the congregation grew in numbers and that the rules of the Church was strictly enforced; frequently some brother was asked to explain his non-attendance at the Sunday



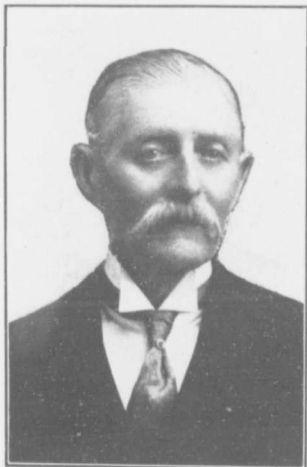
Mr. and Mrs. C. Smart



Mr. J. Yeats



Mr. Major Wooldridge.



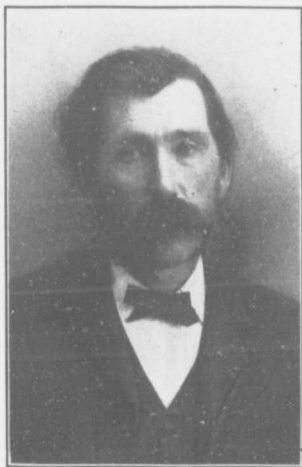
Mr Wm. Beattie.

services, absence from the Communion table necessitated an explanation to the Elders, who in turn admonished and advised; likewise quarrels between neighbors, the excessive use of liquor, non-support of the Church and sundry other offences were fearlessly dealt with and the dignity of the Church upheld. On the 8th day of October, 1865, Charles Smart and John Yeats were elected Elders, and assumed the office forthwith. On April 27th, 1866, the Session considered the matter of the best means to be adopted for the instruction of the young people of the Congregation, and it was decided to hold a Bible Class every alternate week at such time and on such day as shall be convenient.

The hardships of early settlers prevented copious table spreads at the pioneer tea meetings. Some poetic wag not getting enough to satisfy his stomach, started this rhyme, which still lives:—

“ Biscuits from the baker shop, good tea from Sam McComb’s,
We’ve eaten ev’ry morsel up—we’ll try Ben Gray’s spare bones.”

In 1870 the construction of the Wellington, Grey and Bruce Railway was the means of bringing many residents to what was to be the Town of Palmerston, but it was not until 1873 that the records make mention of the Church as situated at Palmerston; prior to that date it was called the Wallace and Minto Church. In the summer of 1873 the Session felt the need of a larger Church and directed that a subscription list be opened to cover the cost of a new Church to be built in Palmerston. On January 1st, 1874, a congregational meeting was held, and it was decided to build a stone Church at a cost of \$2,600.00, and Messrs. James Tait, James Martin, Hugh McEwing, J. D. Caswell, John Yeats and Robert Laybourne were appointed a Building Committee. This Committee diligently performed their duties, and by October of the same year stoves and pipes were ordered to be purchased for the new Church, and a month later a resolution was passed instructing Hugh McEwing and J. D. Caswell a committee to procure and have tin spouts put on the stove pipes and tin pails to catch the droppings from said stove pipes. All who were privileged to attend the stone Church in those days will recollect the tin spouts. A resolution was also passed authorizing the purchase of collection boxes, and those with a six-foot handle were procured. About this time Mr. Arthur Martin was appointed Precentor, and continued in the office for several years. Palmerston grew very rapidly from 1874 to 1876, and it was felt that the congregation should be separated from Rothsay and have a resident Minister in Palmerston. Accordingly Rev. D. Anderson



Mr. John Burns



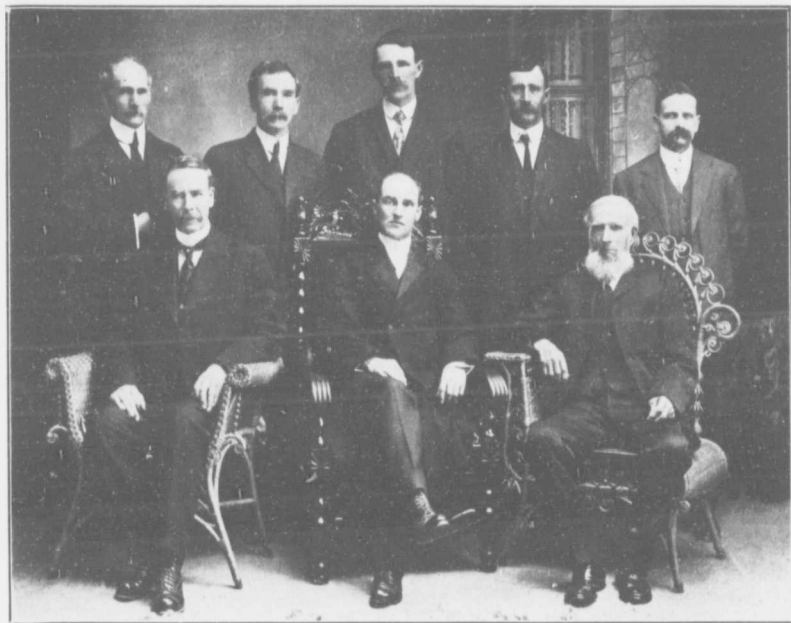
Mr. John Long

l
s
-
t
t
s
s
e
h
re
d
o-
n
ve
h
s,
id
n-
on

resigned the Pastorate in the spring of 1876. The Congregation passed through a very stormy period between 1876 and the spring of 1878, when Rev. D. W. Cameron was called and inducted as Minister. Shortly after Mr. Cameron took charge Mr. William Dillane was appointed an Elder, the Sabbath School which had been organized with Mr. John Yeats as Superintendent was revived and reorganized with Mr. John Gracie as Superintendent. The effect of the location of the railway shops and the sudden growth of the town is evidenced in the records of this period by the first mention of such names as Hugh Hyndman, John Nicoll, James Gamble, A. B. Rigg, Wm. Beattie, Dr. A. Stewart, Alex. Grant, D. Marion, John Oliver, P. Marion, George Lowe, James McKinley, Peter Campbell and many others afterwards intimately connected with the congregation. In January, 1878, the envelope system was adopted and seat rents were abolished.

For many years, under improved circumstances, the Annual Tea Meeting was the event of the year, and with Mrs. Grant to look after "The Meenester's Table," and Mrs. McComb to make the tea, were always a great success and a source of revenue.

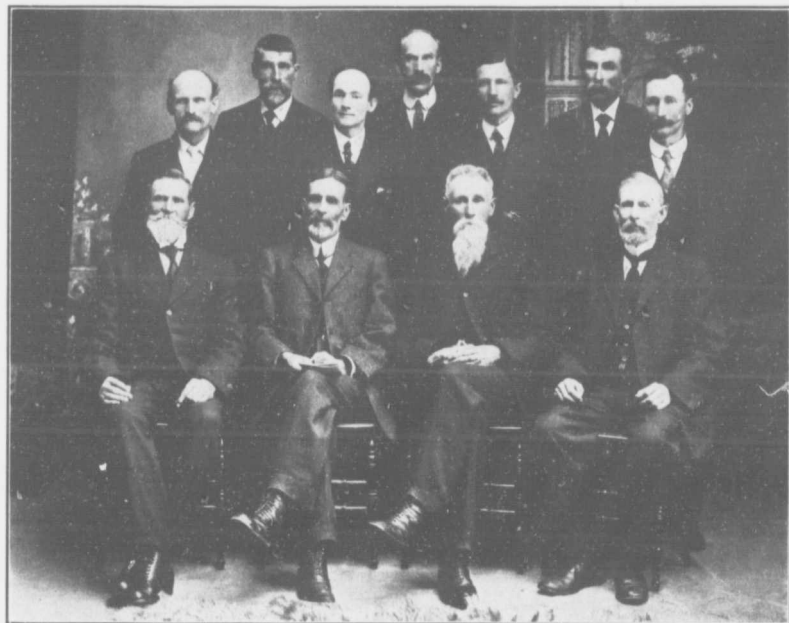
Mr. William Beattie became Precentor in 1878, and was the last occupant of this historic "tuning fork" office so long considered an essential part of the Presbyterian form of worship. Under Mr. Beattie's leadership the first choir was organized. The only persons who were members of that first choir and who are now in the congregation are Mr. Beattie, James G. Comb, Mrs. Hugh McEwing, Mrs. Hobson and Mrs. George Hamilton. Shortly after an organ was introduced and the protests were many and vigorous against its introduction and many of those opposed to its introduction always continued to think that congregational singing had been ruined by its use. In April, 1880, Rev. D. W. Cameron resigned as Pastor, and in November of the same year Rev. J. M. Aull was called and inducted in his place. During the early part of Mr. Aull's ministry a series of evangelistic services were conducted and the congregation was greatly stimulated in all its departments, and Mr. John McBeath was appointed an Elder. From the first year of its existence the Congregation had contributed to Missions, but no separate organization existed to collect funds for the Missionary schemes of the Church. The union of the various branches of Presbyterianism into "The Presbyterian Church in Canada" had been completed, and the new organization caused a more enthusiastic Missionary spirit throughout the Church. In accord



THE SESSION.

From left to right—top row—G. Y. Donaldson, Wm. Robertson, D. Murray, jr., A. H. Baird, E. S. Watt.

Bottom row—Geo. Howe, Clerk, Rev. R. A. Cranston, Moderator, Mr. A. Carswell.



BOARD OF MANAGERS, 1913

Top Row—Mr. Ed. McCormick, Mr. J. B. Skelton, Mr. Wm. Smith,
Second Row—Mr. Jas. Melville, Mr. H. McEwing, Mr. H. Hyndman, Mr. Wm. Murdock
Third Row—Mr. Wm. Smart, Mr. John Oliver, Mr. A. Murray, Mr. John McLaughlin.

with
ciet
has
Mrs
W.

Aid
were
their
Mr.
choic
and
testi
Chri
the C

it wa
to bu
sons
to C
the r
subse
Falec
the d

with that spirit and to increase Missionary effort in the Congregation Mr. Aull organized the Ladies' Missionary Society in 1881, dividing the Congregation into districts which were regularly visited by lady collectors. This Society has continued to do much good work, and among its enthusiastic members might be mentioned Mrs. Aull, Mrs. Foote, Mrs. Meston, Mrs. Lowe, Mrs. Beattie, Miss Hyndman, Mrs. Dingman, Mrs. Wm. McLean, Mrs. James McLean, Mrs. W. Smart, Mrs. Oliver, Mrs. Howe, Misses McMaster and many others.

A movement was successfully launched to pay the mortgage on the stone Church, and this accomplished the Ladies' Aid Society was formed in 1886, having as its object to raise money with which to purchase a Manse. Many socials were held in the country and town homes of the Congregation. The ladies connected with this work deserve all honor for their untiring efforts and the Congregation at length owned a valuable property adjoining the Church. In the same year Mr. John Oliver and Adam Borthwick were added to the Session. In 1888 Mr. and Mrs. M. Wooldridge were appointed choir leader and organist, in which capacity they served the Congregation for many years for a very small remuneration and at great personal sacrifice. Their services were much appreciated and it was always a matter of regret that a suitable testimonial was not presented to them when they retired from the positions. In 1889 the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor was organized by Mr. Aull, and has since continued to do a good work among the young people of the Church, Miss Marion E. Oliver being one of its chief officers in recent years.

The Congregation experienced a steady growth and interest was manifested in all its organizations until in 1894 it was found that the stone Church was too small for the accommodation of the Congregation and it was deemed advisable to build a new Church. The stone Church was accordingly torn down and a new brick Church capable of seating 600 persons was erected on the same site, the corner-stone of which was laid in August, 1894, by Rev. J. Goforth, a missionary to China, and in March, 1895, it was opened by Rev. Dr. Cochrane, of Brantford. When the building was completed the mortgage stood at \$5,000.00. The Congregation had contributed well and one of the three payments into which the subscription was divided had been paid by most of the subscribers. The members of the Building Committee were:—W. J. Falconer, Chairman; H. Hyndman, Jr., Secretary; William Beattie, John Burns and Richard Leitch. One year from the day this building was opened the Anniversary services were being observed, Dr. McKay, of Woodstock, being the



A GROUP OF OFFICERS IN THE DIFFERENT SOCIETIES.

Top Row—G. Y. Donaldson, Jacob Schaefer, Geo. Howe, Rev. R. A. Cranston.

**Second Row—Mrs. G. Y. Donaldson, Mrs. J. C. Richardson, Mrs. B. McCallum, Miss Hyndman,
Mrs. E. S. Watt, Mrs. Jacob Schaefer.**

Third Row—Mrs. Jas. McLean, Mrs. R. Hayes, Mrs. Geo. Melville, Mrs. Wm. Beattie, Mrs. Wm. McLean.

Fourth Row—Mrs. C. Black, Miss Mima Watt, Miss Ida McLean, Miss Lillie McNeish.

prac
o'clock
remain
vices;
in their
the me
rebuild
noon, a
appoint
son, H.
a galler
organ v
material
ing serv
more se
rebuildi
per of t
elected

The
the Wor
increas
Mrs. Au

In
an activ

preacher, and he was also to deliver a lecture on the Monday following, entitled "A Church on Fire." About four o'clock on the Sunday morning fire broke out in the Church and it was destroyed, only part of the walls and the tower remained. The Trustees of the Methodist Church very kindly tendered the use of their Church for the Anniversary services; the offer was accepted. At the close of the morning service Dr. McKay urged the Congregation to stand together in their trouble, and called upon Messrs. John Burns and H. Hyndman, Jr., to address the people. These gentlemen urged the members and adherents to look forward to the future with confidence and to at once organize for the purpose of rebuilding, to forget all differences and to rise above their loss. A Congregational meeting was called for Monday afternoon, a subscription list was opened, and by Wednesday night \$4,600.00 was subscribed, a new Building Committee was appointed, consisting of John Burns, Chairman; H. Hyndman, Jr., Secretary; W. J. Falconer, W. Beattie, W. Robertson, H. McEwing, P. Marion and William Smart. Some improvements were made in the plans of the former building, a gallery to seat 200 persons was put in, the choir chancel was enlarged, the Church furniture improved and a new pipe organ was installed. The money for the purchase of the organ was raised by the Ladies' Aid Society, and they have also materially assisted in the payment of the mortgage which stood at \$6,000.00 on the completion of the Church. The opening services were held on November 22nd of the same year by Dr. McKay, and the Congregation were rejoiced to be once more settled in a comfortable and commodious Church, having passed through a very severe trial; tearing down a church, rebuilding, being burned out and rebuilding again within eighteen months was an experience calculated to test the temper of the people and the executive ability of the Minister. About this time Messrs. John Burns and W. J. Falconer were elected members of Session.

The work of the Church progressed and all the branches of its work experienced a season of prosperity. In 1897 the Women's Foreign Missionary Society was formed, and since has continued to do much, and has been the means of increasing the Missionary giving. Among those who have been prominently connected with this Society might be named Mrs. Aull, Mrs. Meston, Mrs. Beattie, Mrs. Hamilton, Mrs. Donaldson, Miss Thynne, Mrs. Watt and many others.

In 1900 the Congregation suffered a severe loss by the death of Mr. William Bent, who for thirty-seven years had been an active member of Session and had also been a member of the Board of Managers for many years, and had faithfully



GROUP OF LADY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS OF SOCIETIES, 1913.

Top row—Mrs. D. Schofe, Mrs. P. Marion, Mrs. Geo. Howe, Mrs. Geo. Hamilton, Mrs. D. W. Dulmage,
Mrs. John Oliver.

Second row—Miss M. Arbuckle, Mrs. S. R. North, Mrs. Wm. Beattie, Mrs. E. S. Watt, Mrs. Robert Hayes.

Third row—Mrs. Wm. McLean, Mrs. J. C. Richardson, Mrs. R. A. Cranston, Mrs. Jacob Schaefer.

per
of Su
Donal
Schoo
In
work
Missio
Congre
of 190
felt th
porter
He was
He was
was int
home in
Mrs. At
no dem
Dur
at vario
Hay. E.
ton, toge
In F
fortunate
ing, wher

performed the duties of the various offices held by him. In 1903 Mr. Aull felt that he should be relieved of the duties of Superintendent of the Sabbath School, which office he had held during all the years of his Pastorate, and Mr. G. Y. Donaldson was appointed in his place, and has since continued to act in that capacity, rendering excellent service to the School.

In 1904 Messrs. George Howe, A. H. Baird and G. Y. Donaldson were added to the Session, and much of the routine work which had been performed by Mr. Aull was undertaken by the new members, and the mode of contributing to Missions was changed to direct contribution. In 1904 Mr. John Burns died, and the loss was severely felt by the entire Congregation, he having been especially active in all departments of Church work for a number of years. In November of 1906, after having served the Congregation for twenty-six years, Rev. J. M. Aull was called by death, and the people felt that they had lost a true friend and faithful Minister. As a preacher Mr. Aull had few equals, he was a strong supporter of the great underlying principles of Presbyterianism and never ceased to instruct his people in regard to them. He was a close student of world affairs and few men had clearer views in regard to matters of international importance. He was a valued friend in every kind of trouble and many a bereaved one experienced the depth of his sympathy. He was intensely interested in the Church, and by his long pastorate was drawn close to the family circle of nearly every home in the Congregation, having passed through some experience of either joy or sorrow with most of them. For Mrs. Aull the people entertained the very highest regard as she was ever unselfish in her efforts for their welfare, and no demand was ever made upon her to which she did not respond unselfishly.

During Mr. Aull's long Ministry he was able to gather around him many enthusiastic workers, and among those who, at various times, took an active part in the work might be mentioned John Oliver, Jackson Baird, Samuel Freeland, John Hay, E. M. Miers, Alex. Murray, H. McEwing, James Long, Geo. Melville, Major Wooldridge, E. Wooldridge, J. M. Skelton, together with those already mentioned and many others.

In February, 1907, a call was extended to Rev. R. A. Cranston, of Cromarty, in the Presbytery of Stratford. Unfortunately he was ill at the time with typhoid fever and was unable to assume the duties of Pastor until June following, when he was inducted. The interval between Mr. Aull's death and Mr. Cranston's coming was short, the Congregation



THE CHOIR, 1913

From Left to Right—Top Row—Harold Smith, J. B. Skelton, Nelson George.
Second Row—H. McEwing, Wm. Robertson, Hope Clark, Lyla Burns, John Nairn, D. McLean.
Third Row—Jennie Nairn, Mrs. Dr. Greenlaw, Ethel Hamilton, Adeline Kopp, Mrs. Harry Burns.
Fourth Row—Lillie McNeish, Margaret Dulmage, Marion Kopp, Vina Clark.

had
town
of M
of an
of an
fortun
an inc
and ha
Watt.
tem th
contin
as the
membe
Choir
able as
and oth

In
work.

A g
urged th
the end
fully, an
valuable
commodi
in the ea

had not been torn asunder by serious divisions, and they were therefore ready to greet the new Pastor with enthusiasm. The town of Palmerston has had its times of prosperity and also has had its hard knocks. During the first year and a half of Mr. Cranston's Ministry the town and likewise the Congregation gave evidence of growth. Thereafter the closing down of an industry and many changes in the railway service caused the removal of a great many families from the town, but fortunately the Congregation suffered less from these causes than was expected, and each succeeding year has shown an increase in membership and a healthy interest in all the various organizations. In 1908 a new cement shed was erected and has been paid for, making commodious stabling for the farmers connected with the Church. In 1910 Messrs. E. S. Watt, D. Murray, Jr., and Wm. Robertson were elected Elders. Through the introduction of the duplex envelope system the Missionary givings have been materially increased. In 1910 the Adult Bible Class was organized and has since continued an active organization. In 1911 the Church was handsomely decorated, the cost being contributed as soon as the work was completed. The annual meetings of the Congregation are looked forward to with much pleasure by the members and adherents, the reports presented are always full of encouraging details and are intelligently debated. The Choir has rendered excellent service for some years under the leadership of Miss Ethel Hamilton, who has received valuable assistance from Mrs. Greenlaw, Mrs. Fasken, Messrs. W. Robertson, J. M. Skelton, H. E. McEwing, J. B. Skelton and others.

In 1912 a Women's Home Missionary Society had been formed and it is likely to prove a means of doing much good work.

A great deal of interest has been manifested in the fiftieth anniversary now being celebrated, and the Minister has urged the Congregation for two or three years past to make an effort to clear off the mortgage, which stood at \$2,900.00 at the end of 1912, and it is a pleasant fact to record that at this writing the members and adherents have responded cheerfully, and a sum sufficient to clear off the entire indebtedness has been subscribed. The Congregation have now a valuable property, consisting of one of the neatest church edifices in this part of the Province, a suitable Manse and a commodious shed. During the past ten years a larger number of old men and women are in evidence. As was explained in the early part of this sketch the original members were all young men and women, the same being true in regard to



Teachers, Officers and Pupils of Sabbath School and Bible Class, 1913.

th
wi
gr
me
hav
upo
full

and
they
the
their

other

those who came in as employees of the railway and as business men, but as the years have gone by those who remained with us have grown older, and it is now a common sight to see those advanced in years in our gatherings. There are a very great number who have passed through this Congregation and who, while with us, were valuable members, to them the present members extend their hearty congratulations and thanks for the valuable work accomplished while here, and of those who have passed to the great beyond—they have finished their work, and no doubt many a kindly thought will be bestowed upon them by the readers of these pages and the work which they did for the advancement of Christ's cause will be fully appreciated.

During the fifty years of its existence Knox Church has been the centre from which much good influence has radiated, and those who have left its bounds have doubtless in most cases become an influence for good in the communities to which they have gone. In this connection it may be mentioned that from us have gone forth three Ministers of the Gospel in the persons of Revs. A. K. Caswell, William Beattie and Earl R. McLean, all men of ability, working for the uplift of their fellows.

May the blessing of God ever be present with the Congregation in all its interests and with those who have left for other spheres of activity.

