



1856-1906

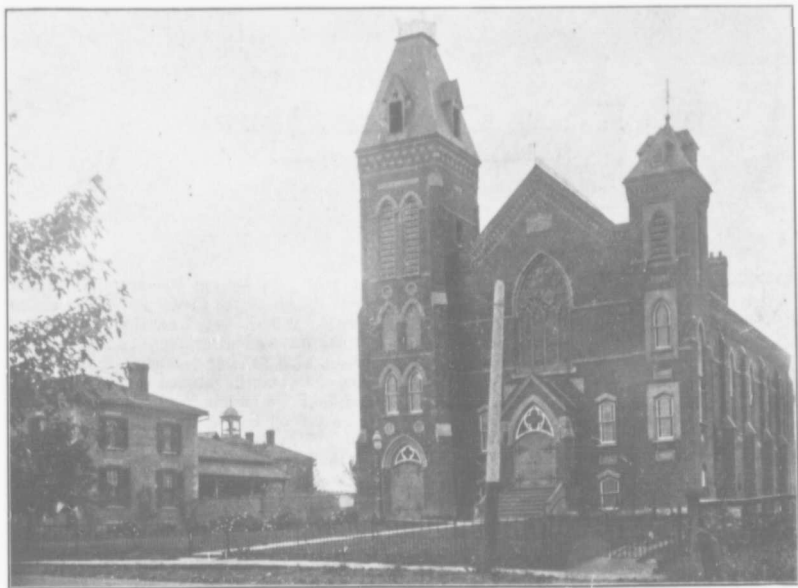
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1906
no. 73



Knox Church Jubilee.



Sept. 23-d, 25th.
1906



KNOX CHURCH, JARVIS, ONTARIO.

Knox Church, Jarvis

Historical Sketch

1856

1906

THE history of Knox Church, during the past fifty years—from its inception to the present—occupies a large space in the history of the village of Jarvis and of the entire community. The original inhabitants of the district were largely from the Old Country—England, Ireland and Scotland contributing in almost equal measure to the inhabiting of the community. The early settlers were a sturdy, God fearing race of people, and to their zeal and energy, together with the fertility of the soil, and the natural resources of the country must be attributed in a large measure, the rich heritage of a beautiful and prosperous country which the people of this district now enjoy. Between fifty and sixty years ago the country was a dense forest and the early settlers coming in at that time had to face the hardships of pioneer life in the back woods of Canada. In those pioneer days the people were not forgetful of spiritual things, and at an early stage in the history of the community steps were taken to secure divine services in their midst. For a time the nearest Presbyterian Church was Chalmers Church, Walpole, the organization of which antedated that of Jarvis by almost a decade.



REV. JOHN MCROBIE



REV. JOHN WELLS, M.A.



REV. D. M. BUCHANAN



REV. THOS. MCGUIRE



REV. GEO. A. MACLENNAN

HISTORICAL SKETCH—*Continued*

In the summer of 1856 the first regular Presbyterian services were held in Jarvis, the services being conducted in the public school. It was on the 30th of September, 1856 that the Presbytery of Hamilton—then a portion of the Free Church branch of the Presbyterian denomination—authorized one of its members, the Rev. Wm. Craigie, of Port Dover, to organize the congregation at Jarvis and to dispense the communion. In a short time afterwards the organization was effected and in connection with Chalmers Church constituted one pastoral charge. It is worthy of note that the union thus formed between the two congregations has been maintained ever since. At the organization there were 18 members and these were augmented by 31 new communicants at their first communion. Thus the congregation practically started out on its career with forty-nine members. Of the original members we only know of two now living, namely, Mr. Samuel Hunter and Mrs. John Horn.

For sometime the services were conducted by students and probationers, but on the 21st of October, 1857, Mr. John McRobie was ordained and inducted over the united charge of Jarvis and Walpole and became their first settled pastor at a stipend of \$300 a year. After Mr. McRobie's induction the place of worship was changed from the school house to the Temperance Hall. But in a little over a year the congregation erected a frame church which was opened almost free of debt. Rev. Dr. Irvine, of Hamilton, conducted the opening services.

The details of the early part of the Church's history are somewhat meagre and some of the dates are impossible to obtain on account of the early records of the church having been lost. It is generally supposed that they were destroyed in the great fire that reduced the major portion of the village of Jarvis to ashes on the 24th of May, 1873.

Shortly after the induction of Mr. McRobie, Mr. John Horn and Mr. Robert McNeill were ordained as the first elders of the congregation and, together with the elders from the

HISTORICAL SKETCH—*Continued*

Walpole church, acted as a united session over the two congregations. At a subsequent period Mr. Samuel Hunter and Mr. John Gowans were ordained to the eldership. These four constituted the eldership of the congregation at the time of Mr. McRobie's translation to Petrolea



JOHN HORN
1813 1901

in January, 1873. During Mr. McRobie's pastorate, which lasted for nearly sixteen years, the membership of the church was largely increased and the front portion of the present manse was built. Mr. McRobie, after serving the church for several years in other portions of the Master's vineyard retired from the active duties of the ministry and is now living in Petrolea full of years and beloved.

After a vacancy of sixteen months the Rev. Thomas McGuire, of Glen Allen, was called and on the 12th of May, 1874, was inducted pastor of the congregations. There were 68 members connected with Knox Church when his pastorate began.



ROBERT MCNEILL

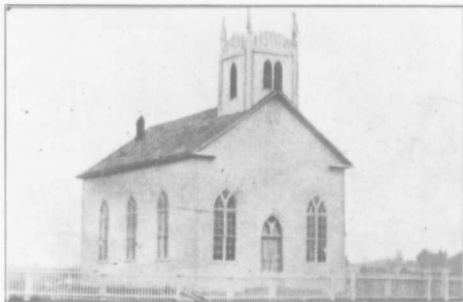
In the early days of his ministry the question of the union of the different branches of the Presbyterian Church of Canada was under consideration. On the 26th of October, 1874, the remit from the Presbytery on Church Union was taken up by the Kirk Session of Jarvis and

HISTORICAL SKETCH—*Continued*

Walpole. The Session unanimously agreed to the Union and took steps to have the matter submitted to the congregations. At a meeting held on the 12th of October of the same year

both congregations unanimously concurred in the Union. The General Assemblies of the different branches of the Presbyterian Church, meeting the following year (1875) in Montreal, consummated the Union and thus Presbyterianism became in Canada one body.

Of these, Mr. Wm Parker, having been appointed registrar of the County, removed to Cayuga, and demitted his office as elder, Mr. Williamson and Mr. Haslett, after serving on



OLD CHURCH

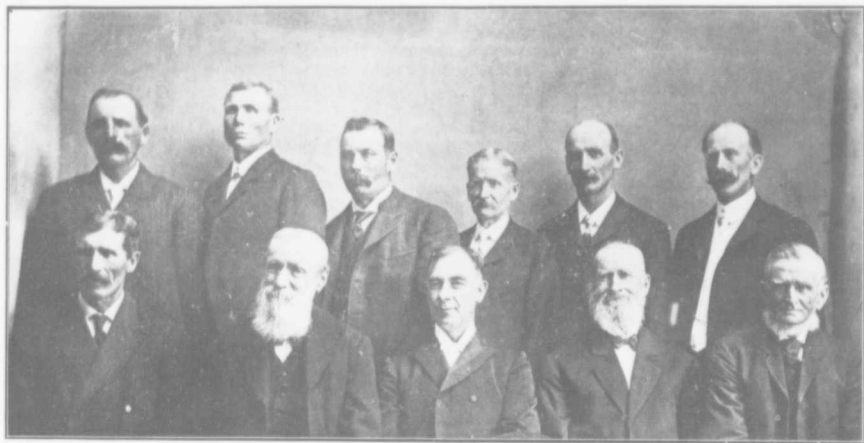
An addition to the eldership was considered necessary, and on Sabbath, Nov. 5th, 1876, Wm. Parker, Neal McNeill, James Williamson, Robert Haslett and Joseph Abraham, having been duly elected by the congregation were ordained and took their places as members of the session.

HISTORICAL SKETCH—*Continued*

the Session for several years withdrew from the eldership and on September 18th, 1888, Mr. Joseph Abraham died. Thus Mr. McNeil alone remains a member of the Session of those who were elected at that time.

Towards the beginning of 1879 a strong feeling in favor of the introduction of an organ into the Church was manifested by many in the congregation. The Session was unanimous for its introduction and submitted the following question to the congregation:—"Shall an organ be introduced to assist in conducting our Psalmody or songs of praise in public worship?" The congregation voted by ballot on the second Sunday of April, 1879, and the result was 47 yeas and 25 nays. Having thus received a mandate from the majority of the congregation the Session took steps to procure an organ and appointed a committee consisting of Joseph Abraham, James Noble and Charles G. Allen to select and purchase an organ in behalf of the congregation.

On the 21st of February, 1881, the congregation lost one of its original elders in the death of Mr. Robert McNeill and a few weeks later Mr. McGuires, having received a call from Emerson, in Manitoba, accepted it, much against the wish of the Session and congregation. His translation to his new sphere of labor having been granted by Presbytery, his pastorate terminated in Jarvis on the 2nd of March, 1881. Mr. McGuires, having been subsequently pastor of several congregations, died in Seattle two years ago last June having been for some years previous to his death Superintendent of Missions of a district in Washington Territory. In Jarvis and Walpole he was highly esteemed as an earnest evangelical pastor and many loving memories of his faithful work still linger in the minds of the people. During his pastorate the congregation grew in membership. Of the ministers that have held the office of pastor of the congregation he has been the first to hear the Master's call to enter the eternal service above.



JOHN THOMPSON, JOHN THOMPSON, WM. JAKES, M.D., D. M ALLEN, JAS. DAVIDSON, JR., W. J. FALLIS.
JAS. B. WILSON, SAMUEL HUNTER, REV. D. M. BUCHANAN, B.A., NEAL MCNIELL, JOHN MITCHELL.

HISTORICAL SKETCH--*Continued*

After Mr. McGuire's translation to Emerson the congregation proceeded to call a minister, but it was nearly three years before a pastor was settled. During this long vacancy several calls were issued to ministers but for various reasons they proved futile until the congregation united in calling Rev. John Wells then minister of Nairn, Ont. It was on the 10th of January 1884, that the Rev. John Wells, M.A., was inducted into the pastoral charge of Jarvis and Walpole.

Previous to the first of January, 1886, the services were held alternately morning and afternoon, but arrangements were then made with the Walpole congregation whereby Jarvis secured morning services every Sunday.

About two years after the beginning of Mr. Wells' pastorate, steps were taken to erect a new church so that on the third Friday of June, 1886, the corner stone of the fine brick church, which stands as a monument of the splendid courage and zeal of both pastor and people, was laid. The Building Committee of the new church consisted of Messrs. Bryce Allen, James Noble, James Williamson, Robert Haslett and Neal McNeill.

It was not until the following year that the church was completed, and on the second Sunday in July, 1887, the opening services were conducted by the Rev. Dr. Lyle, of Hamilton.

Several changes having taken place in the session during the last few years of Mr. Wells' pastorate, it was decided to have some additional elders elected, so that on the 5th of May, 1889, George Miller, Anthony Ionson, James B. Wilson and John Mitchell were duly ordained and inducted to the sacred office.

Mr. Wells, having resigned, his pastorate terminated on April 10th, 1891. Since leaving Jarvis Mr. Wells has fulfilled successful pastorates in Markdale, Ontario, and Holland, Man. During the early part of the present year, owing to enfeebled health, he has withdrawn from the active duties of the ministry and is now living in Toronto in well earned retirement.

HISTORICAL SKETCH—*Continued*

During the vacancy which followed, the hymnal was introduced, and, on Sunday, Nov. 1st, 1891, hymns as well as psalms formed part of the regular service of song for the first time in the church services.

After a vacancy of eleven months the Rev. George A. MacLennan, B.A., was called from Comber to be pastor of the congregations and on February 18th, 1892, was duly inducted. During his ministry, which lasted over eleven years, the membership was increased, the debt incurred by building the church was removed and some improvements were made to the manse.

Changes in the personnel of the session took place as follows: Mr. Anthony Ianson died July 3rd, 1897, and Mr. John Horn, being one of the original elders and having served the congregation for over forty years, passed away on March 29th, 1900, and Mr. George Miller, after rendering efficient service for several years, withdrew from the eldership. On the 16th of January, 1898, James Davidson, David M. Allen and John Thompson, after being duly elected, were ordained and took their places as elders of the congregation. Mr. MacLennan resigned the pastoral charge and his pastorate terminated on March 30th, 1903. He was soon afterwards called to Norwood where he is at present in the active duties of the sacred ministry.

After a vacancy of about a year a call was extended to Rev. D. M. Buchanan, B.A., of Lanark, and on his translation being granted by the Presbytery of Lanark and Renfrew he was inducted into the pastorate on the 21st of April, 1904 by the Presbytery of Hamilton. Two years and one half have passed since the present pastorate began and at this the close of the first half century of the Church's history, the condition of the congregation may be characterized as harmonious and progressive.

On the 6th of May of the present year Dr. Wm. Jaques, John Thompson and Wm. J. Fallis were ordained and inducted elders of the congregation. Mr. Samuel Hunter is the oldest

HISTORICAL SKETCH—*Continued*

member of the session at the present time, having served as elder for upwards of forty-five years and during the pastorates of all the ministers the church has had.

Space will not permit to mention the names of many who have served the congregation faithfully and well in other spheres of the church's work, such as on the Manager's Board, in the Sunday School and Choir. The Managing Board is at the present composed of James Davidson, (Chairman); J. A. Fallis (Treasurer); John Mitchell, John Butcher, D. M. Allen, James Haslett, Lewis Miller, Daniel Steel, Thomas Curwaine, John Thompson, Charles Nichol, Emerson Miller, Stephen Allen and John Thompson.

The ladies of the congregation, under the leadership of the Ladies Aid Society, have done excellent work and have been very successful in procuring funds for the liquidation of the church debt and for the introduction and providing for necessary improvements. The President of the Society at present is Miss McNeill and the Secretary is Mrs. D. M. Allen. The W. F. M. Society has been organized over twelve years and has done good work. Mrs. Dr. Jaques is President and Mrs. C. Mills, Secretary. The Sunday School has ever been a sphere of earnest and devoted work and during all these years it has had a band of faithful teachers who, through love for Christ have sown the good seed of eternal truth in the hearts and minds of the young. Mr. J. B. Wilson is the present Superintendent and Mr. Hugh Davidson is Secretary. The teachers are Mr. Geo. L. Miller, Mr. Ballintyne, Mrs. Noble, Miss Wilson, Miss Ineson and Miss Smith. The services of the choir have been voluntary and much self sacrifice has been manifested in the successful leadership of the church's music by presentors in the early days and laterally by devoted members of the choir. Mr. J. A. Fallis is at present leader and Miss Jessie Bennett organist.

HISTORICAL SKETCH—*Concluded.*

Let us now, in this jubilee season, whilst looking back over the past fifty years, express our heartfelt gratitude to God for His goodness to the congregation during the past half century. Many tokens of His goodness have been manifested towards the congregation and who can tell the richness of the blessing that has been felt by many that have trod these courts and worshiped within these walls but are now no longer with us. Whilst we note with pleasure the outward indications of progress, yet we recognize that the real history of the church cannot be written by human hands. It pertains to the spiritual and unseen. Who can tell the hearts that have been blessed, the consolations that have been felt by sorrowing ones, the inspirations to a better life that have been the turning point in many a career, the aspirations to a heavenly rather than an earthly inheritance that have moulded and inspired human hearts that have worshiped within these walls. When the Great Unfolding Day comes when that which is unseen shall be revealed it will be found that many souls have been led to Christ through the instrumentality of this church, that many hearts have been comforted and that many lives have been sanctified and made better through the sacred influences that have radiated from this house of God. Some of the workers have gone home to their eternal reward—some, having labored long in the Master's work, through infirmities are laying down the sickle. Let us who remain, on whom hangs the responsibility of carrying on the glorious work began by our predecessors, be inspired to more faithful efforts in the future that we, like they, when we pass beyond the veil, may hear the Master's "Well done, good and faithful servant enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."