

HISTORY ^{W. O. LIBRARY}
OF THE
METHODIST CHURCH
IN
LONDON.



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History

...OF THE...

Methodist Church

...IN...

London, Canada.

...FROM...

1820 to 1905.



FACTS

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History of The Methodist Church of London.

To the Reader.

For facts relating to the history of the Methodist Church in London, the compiler of this little book is much indebted to those staunch and worthy representatives of Methodism in London. Mr. Samuel McBride and Mr. Wm. Bowman, whose memories are still as retentive as their courtesy is unaffected. That they may have many years yet to exercise them is the sincere hope of the writer.

As nearly as can be ascertained, the history of the Methodist Church in London, dates back to about the year 1820, when a small congregation of Methodists held their services in an unpretentious little rough-cast building situated on the northwest corner of Ridout and Carling streets. Here services were conducted after the manner of such religious gatherings in those primitive days, and for some years they had no regularly ordained minister.

We herewith quote from a speech delivered by the Hon. Sir John Carling at the laying of the foundation stone of the First Methodist Church in 1895, as follows:

"Sixty years ago, Methodist ministers did not reach the scene of their labors in steam or electric railway cars, or magnificent steamships, but travelled on horseback, not to churches as a general thing but to the scattered homes of the farmers, over roads that were, in many cases, but trails blazed through the primeval forest."

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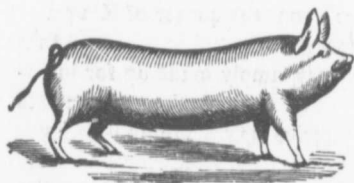
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Sir John's first recollection of a Methodist Church in London was the little roughcast meeting house, already mentioned, where he heard the late Dr. Evans preach his first sermon, in the year 1842. This little meeting house soon proved too small and the growing congregation erected a church on the corner of King and Talbot streets, where a frame hotel now stands, and we are told that what the church lacked in numbers, was amply made up for in enthusiasm. The same spirit of Christianity existed then that exists now and to that progressive and aggressive spirit, Methodism owes the grand position it holds in the world to-day. From that little rough-cast meeting house of long ago, the history of the Methodist Church in London is a history to be proud and thankful for. We doubt if any city of its size, either at home or abroad, can point to finer temples of the Living God.

As it is our purpose however, to try and tell of the progress made by Methodism in London in detail, we will return to the corner of King and Talbot streets, where for a number of years, the new church was ample enough for all purposes. The time arrived however when more space was found necessary and a church was built on Richmond street, nearly opposite where the city hall now stands. It was in the primitive pulpit of this church in 1849, that the Rev. John Carrol, whose name is a household word, among the older Methodists, laid the foundation of the cause, which soon fixed itself permanently upon North street, now Queen's Avenue, corner of Park Avenue, under the Rev. Wm. Pollard, the North Street Church came into existence. The lot was bought on January 13th, 1852, for \$700. On March 9th of the same year, a trustee board meeting was held, consisting of Messrs. Sam. Glass, Geo. Tyas, John Elson, S. Peters, S. McBride and S. Sreaton, Rev. Bro. Pollard presiding, when it was decided to erect a church on the site purchased. In

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1853 tenders for erecting the new church were let and on July 16th, 1854, the first services were held, Rev. Dr. Evans holding divine service in the morning and Rev. Mr. Pollard in the evening, the collections of the day amounting to over \$200.

The trustees fixed the yearly rental of pews and decided to sell them by auction. Mr. Samuel McBride was appointed pew steward and collector of rents. During the same month Mrs. Raymond was engaged as organist. Rev. Wm. Wilkinson succeeded Rev. Mr. Pollard and in 1856 was relieved by the Rev. J. Douse.

In 1878 Mr. S. Screamon after a quarter of a century's faithful and valuable aid in the service of song, tendered his resignation, to the regret of all connected with the church. His portly presence and kindly face had been for so long identified with the choir of the old church his absence from the choir left a void not easily filled.



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First Methodist.

Sabbath services,	- - - - -	11 a. m., 7 p. m.
Sabbath School,	- - - - -	2.45 p. m.
Epworth League,	- - - - -	Mondays, 8 p. m.
General prayer meeting	- - - - -	Wednesday, 8 p. m.
Class meetings	- - - - -	Sabbath 10 a. m., 4 p. m.
Thursday	- - - - -	3 p. m., 4 p. m. and 8 p. m.
Richmond and Kensington missions in charge of Rev. S. Salton.		

York street mission in charge of Evangelist T. L. Belcher.

This church was destroyed by fire in 1895 and a sad and mournful congregation it was, that on that bleak and memorable February Sabbath, found naught but smoke begrimed and dismantled walls to remind them of the stately edifice, where for so long they had worshipped. Sadness and vain regret were not indulged in for long, however, and soon gave way to that energy that had made, years ago, the stately North street Church a possibility. A meeting of the officers of the church was at once called to provide for the congregation. It was decided to engage the opera house, then located on the corner of King and Richmond streets to hold divine service, the city hall for Sabbath school and class meetings and Somerset Hall for Thursday night prayer meetings. Action was quickly taken however, looking towards another home for the congregation, so that on July 31st, 1895, or a few months after the destruction of the handsome North street Church, the corner stone of the elegant and commodious edifice, now known as the First Methodist Church, situated corner Wellington and Dufferin Avenue, was laid by Mr. Sam. McBride with appropriate ceremony Dr. Daniels being the first pastor, to-day it stands as the old North street church stood for years before it, an emblem of all that is best in man.

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Colborne Street Methodist Church.

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Rev. Dr. Daniel,	- - - - -	Pastor
Services, preaching	- - - - - 11 a. m.,	7 p. m.
Sabbath School and Bible Institute	- - - - -	3 p. m.
Epworth League,	- - - - -	Monday
Prayer meeting,	- - - - -	Wednesday
Choir meeting,	- - - - -	Friday

Class meetings at usual hours.

Fellowship meeting every month in lecture hall.

Capacity,	- - - - -	900
Sabbath School	- - - - -	300

While we have endeavored to record the rise and progress of what is known as the First Methodist, yet it is a moiety of what has been accomplished, since the days of the little rough cast meeting-house of 1820. We will endeavor as briefly as possible to show that Methodism, has, as London grew and prospered kept abreast of the times ; that Methodists have reason to be proud of their record.

We find that in 1853, a site was secured on St. James and Waterloo streets and upon it was erected at a cost of \$1,100 a frame church, the pews and pulpits being those hitherto in use in the old Richmond street church. The James street church is still well remembered by the older citizens of London, as are also the rumors that were current at the time of its destruction by fire in 1858, on the eve of the day of Mr. Wm. McBride's election as Mayor.

In the following year 1859, Mr. Thos. Carling, father of Hon. Sir John Carling, deeded a lot on Pall Mall St. near Colborne St. to the church, and upon it a commodious church was built. Several additions were added as the congregation increased, so it was finally

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decided to procure a new site and upon it erect a church that would not only assure the congregation ample space in the coming years, but also a church of such design and proportions as would be in keeping with the surroundings, and a credit to the congregation. As a result in 1877, the Colborne St. Church and Lecture Hall was built, the foundation stone of which was laid by the late Mrs. Dr. Eccles.

Dundas Centre.

Rev. C. T. Scott, B. A.,	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Pastor
Sabbath services,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11 a. m.,	7 p. m.
Bible School,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.45 p. m.
Epworth League,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Mondays,	8 p. m.
Prayer meeting	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Wednesday,	8. p. m.
Class meetings,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Sabbath at 10 a. m.	4 p. m., Monday evening and Thursday afternoon.

While this work in the north end of the city was going on, other sections of the city were by no means overlooked. In the year 1857, the Methodist Church acting as pioneer, rented two small cottages on the south end of Adelaide street. The cost of fitting up same was about \$80.00; this being for seats, pulpit etc. The outlay will convey to the reader how primitive it really was, yet as the neighborhood was at that time sparsely settled. It was found up hill work to keep the congregation together. So discouraging was it, that at the end of the first year a resolution was adopted to abandon it, and



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a committee appointed to sell the furnishings, and settle the outstanding debts. Before it was put in execution, however, Mr. Burges one of the members, determined to canvas the neighborhood, and as a result, the church took on a new lease of life, and God prospered it abundantly. The small cottages being soon found inadequate, it was decided to build a church to seat about three hundred and in the corner of Adelaide and King streets was chosen. For sometime this church was sufficient for the needs of the congregation, as the city became more compactly built, this church was eventually outgrown. It proved however, to be the forerunner of what is to-day one of the finest Methodist Churches and Sabbath Schools in the city, namely, the Dundas Centre. The foundation stone for the original Dundas Centre Church was laid by the Rev. Wm. M. Punshon, D. D., in the spring of 1869. In June 1870 the Rev. Wm. Briggs was appointed Superintendent of the Dundas Centre. On the opening of the Sabbath School, the scholars from the little church on King and Adelaide streets marched in a body to their new home. Thus the exertions of that little band of zealous workers had much to do with the growth and progress of Dundas Centre. Although the congregation sustained severe losses by the total destruction of the church just referred to in 1895, we find that in 1896, the foundation stone of the magnificent structure that now adorns the corner of Maitland and Dundas street was laid with appropriate ceremonies by Mr. Wm. Bowman and the dedication services were held on May 24th of the same year.

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Centennial Church.

Arthur H. Going, B. A.,	- - - - -	Pastor
Sabbath services,	- - - - - 11 a. m., 7. p. m.	
Sabbath School,	- - - - - 2.45 p. m.	
Epworth League,	- - - - - Mondays, 8 p. m.	
Prayer meetings.	- - - - - Wednesday and Fridays, 8 p. m.	
Class meetings,	- - - - - R. Windrow's, Sabbath 4.45 a. m.	
Class meetings,	- - - - - Mr. Tuft's, Sabbath 9.45 a. m.	
Pastor's and Mr. Golding's after morning service.		

Nor was this all, as during the year 1876 the Board with characteristic zeal, planted a cause in East London, now the Queens Park or Centennial Church, which is situated near Queens Park on Dundas street. This has become one of the important churches in the city. The corner stone of this church was laid by Miss Elizabeth Bowman. At this time of writing, the Queens Park or Centennial Church is in a most flourishing condition, its Sabbath School having a large attendance.

In 1895, another new church was built on Hill street, at a cost of \$2,500, this to-day a worthy scion of the parent church, Dundas Centre.

While these churches were being established in the north and east ends of the city, similar efforts were being put forth in the other divisions of the city, for, we are told, that from and including 1854, the congregation of the old North street Church, true to their mission, established churches in Petersville, (now London West), London South, Wellington Street South, besides missions at York street, Richmond street north and in London West, all of them flourishing and live centers of religious influence. The churches, many of them

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magnificent structures that vie in architectural beauty with those to be found in any city, either at home or abroad, churches that are salient features of beauty to this beautiful city, but an evidence as well of the religious zeal, vim and energy that made them possible monuments that point to the fact that Methodism stands to-day as it has stood in the past, in the vanguard against the world, the flesh and the devil. A power for good not only to the citizens of London, but in many cases, the lessons taught within the walls of these sacred edifices, have gone with those who have went out into the world and have been, let us hope, a means of grace unto them.

Hamilton Road Methodist.

Rev. D. E. Martin,	- - - - -	Pastor
Sabbath services,	- - - - - 11 a. m. and 7 p. m.	
Bible School	- - - - - 2.45 p. m.	
Epworth League,	- - - - - Monday, 8 p. m.	
Prayer-meeting,	- - - - - Wednesday, 8 p. m.	
Class meeting	- - - - - Sunday 10 a. m., leader, Mrs. Hayball	
Class meeting,	- - - - - Thursday, 8 p. m., Mrs. Goward	
Sabbath School attendance,	- - - - - 160	
Membership,	- - - - - 135	

On the Hamilton Road, just east of Rectory street is another Methodist church that has been thirty years in existence. It is a substantial frame structure, and we are informed that this congre-

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gation is now in a very good position financially. The erection of the McClary works in the neighborhood of this church has transformed that section of the city, and houses are going up as if by magic at the time of writing. It is evident that a very much larger edifice will be needed to accomodate the increased membership. When that time does come, it is needless to say, means will be found to build a structure in keeping with the surroundings, and of such pretentions as will accord with the wishes of the members.

Wellington Street Church.

Rev. James Livingston,	- - - - -	Pastor
Sabbath services,	- - - - -	11 a. m., 7 p. m.
Sabbath school,	- - - - -	3 p. m.
Epworth League,	- - - - -	Monday, 8 p. m.
Prayer meeting,	- - - - -	Wednesday, 8 p. m.
Class meeting,	- - - - -	Sunday, 10 to 11 a. m.
Class meeting,	- - - - -	Thursday, 8 p. m.
Sabbath School, number on roll,	- - - - -	650
Membership,	- - - - -	500

This church dates back to 1875. Upon the union of the New Connexion Methodists with the Wesleyans, the congregation, which had worshipped for a number of years in the old New Connexion Church, Clarence street, (part of Victoria Hall) decided to vacate the

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old edifice, and erect a church more in keeping with their new condition. Under such circumstances, the building now known as the Wellington Street Church, had its origin. The old building on Clarence street was sold, and the net proceeds of the sale devoted to the funds for the erection of the new. Operations upon the edifice were immediately commenced, and in the spring of 1876, the foundation stone was placed by John MacDonal, of Toronto, and in December dedicated by Dr. Iver, the cost of the church and parsonage being about \$15,000.

Among the first members were :—Rev. Thos. Hadwin, Thos. Glen, John McClary, Samuel Stewart, John Watson, William Thomas, A. Westmen, Thos. McCormack, Rev. David Ryan, Rev. E. Jackson, and Leonard Bartlett. The church property is now valued at over \$20,000. Some brilliant men have occupied the pulpit, and it is to-day in a flourishing condition with a very large number of scholars in its Sabbath School.

Askin Street Church.

Rev. W. G. Howson,	- - - - -	Pastor
Sabbath services,	- - - - -	11 and 7 p.m.
Sabbath School,	- - - - -	3 p. m.
Epworth League,	- - - - -	Monday, 8 p. m.
General prayer meeting,	- - - - -	Wednesday, 8 p. m.
Class meeting.	- Sunday, 10 a. m., 12.30 p. m., Monday and Tuesday evening, 8 p. m., Thursday afternoon, 3 p. m.	

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For the history of the Methodist Church in London South we return thanks to Mrs. A. Westman, of Craig street, as we copy in part from manuscripts given us by that lady as follows.

As a great number of the members and adherents of Askin strees Church know but little of the rise and progress of that church, I have for the pleasure it has been to myself and the benefit it may prove to others, endeavored to give as briefly as possible its history, so that all might become conversant with the pleasures, trials and difficultiet which the Lord in His wisdom has permitted some of the older members to see and experience.

In October of the year 1874, the trustees of the North street Church chose a site in Westminster Township for a Methodist meeting house, and awarded the erection of the edifice to Mr. Thos. Green, who rushed it to completion. Prior to, and during the months that it was in process of building, the services of the talented and now sainted Dr. Freshman, (a converted Jewish rabbi), were procured, to hold services in the old Askin school house. Dr. Freshman, by his zeal and indefatigable labor, advanced the cause of Methodism by leaps and bounds. His efforts may be better understood when the fact is known that his first congregation amounted to six in number. Under his ministrations God prospered it abundantly, and all longed for the day when their new church would be ready for occupancy, as the old school house was far too small to hold their increasing numbers. On the second Sabbath in January, 1875, it was arranged to hold the first services in the new church, Dr. Freshman being instrumental in securing the services of the Rev. James Elliott, then of Montreal, formerly of London, (and under whom the doctor had been converted), to preach the dedication sermon. At this juncture, our hearts were saddened by the accidental death of the beloved Dr. Freshman, who was killed in the following manner :

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Dr. Freshman, with the trustees of the North street Church, were driving over to view the progress being made in the building of the new church, when the hind seat of the carriage upon which the doctor was seated, on a sudden starting of the horse, turned over, it being most unfortunately not fastened. The doctor was thrown to the ground so violently that several of his ribs were broken. From this accident the doctor never recovered, death terminating his sufferings after a few weeks. An estimable wife and large family were left to mourn their sad loss, and the day that all who were interested in the progress of the cause at that time, had looked forward to with gladness, was turned into a day of mourning. The funeral sermon of Dr. Freshman was preached by Rev. Dr. Elliott upon the day set for dedication, and the dedication sermon was postponed for a week. The doctor's violent death ended the career of one whose life had been a remarkable one in many ways, he having been as already stated, converted under the teaching of the Rev. Dr. Elliott, and through Dr. Elliott. Dr. Freshman came to London, and by his earnest work laid the foundation under God, of a great work in this church. The dedicatory services were conducted by Dr. Elliott, and a large congregation assembled.

Rev. William Chapman took up the work of the lamented Dr. Freshman, and during that winter conducted a very successful revival, during which forty souls were born into the kingdom of our Lord. The revival continued unabated until June of '75 when a minister, Rev. Mr. Walsh, took charge, with the assistance of Rev. Jas. Graham, of Queen's Ave. and local help. This continued for one year, owing to the amalgamation of the New Connection and other bodies. Our church increased in membership so quickly, and additions were made and driving sheds for the accommodation of our friends who drive in from the country, were also erected. The

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ladies of the congregation raised the amount needed for the latter, nearly \$150. New life was infused into the little band, and every obstacle to progress merely spurred them on to greater effort. Soon it was agreed that we should have a young minister to look after the fast growing congregation. The matter was brought up at the official meeting, and it was decided that Samuel Thomas, Esq., and the instigator of the movement should call on the Quarterly Board, solicit aid in procuring a young minister.

From the appointment of our first regular pastor, the history of the church has been one of steady progress. In 1877, it was found necessary to enlarge the church by seventeen feet on the east end, at a cost of \$500. The church was now capable of seating 300, but it was still inadequate, and on April 23, 1888, at a meeting of consultation, it was decided to have Mr. Samuel Peters, architect, prepare plans for a brick church for New Brighton, as London South was then called. From these plans the present Askin street Methodist Church was erected, the foundation stone of which was laid by the late Mr. John Mason. This beautiful edifice was completed at a cost of \$11,691.66, including furnishing, \$987.65, being raised for the latter by the ladies, who worked nobly.

Since the erection of the present church, thousands of dollars have been expended for the parsonage, furnishings, additions, gallery, organ, etc. Askin Street Church, not so very long ago, was conceded to be one of the best appointed churches between Halifax and Vancouver, and the success and well-being of the church to-day might be attributed in great measures to the ladies of the congregation.

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Empress Avenue Methodist, London West.

Rev. I. Walwin, B. A.,	- - - - -	Pastor
Sabbath services, worship	- - - - -	11 a. m. and 7 p. m.
Sabbath School,	- - - - -	2.45 p. m.
Epworth League,	- - - - -	Monday evening 8 p. m.
Prayer service,	- - - - -	Wednesday, 8 p. m.
Rev. Mr. Coulter in charge of Hill street church.		
Sabbath services	- - - - -	11 a. m. and 7 p. m.
Sabbath School,	- - - - -	2.45 p. m.

In 1874 a mission was established in Petersville, (now London West), under the control of the North street Church. It had grown so rapidly that in 1876, we are told, it attained the dignity of a church and it was found necessary to place a regularly ordained minister in charge, to look after the spiritual needs of its members, to this end, the Rev. J. E. Lancley was appointed. Its history of the past thirty years is a story of steady progress, many brilliant men having filled its pulpit during that time. To-day the London West Church has a large congregation and well attended Sabbath school.

The New Connexion Church

In 1874, the Methodist New Connexion Church and Primitive Methodists entered the Canadian Wesleyan body, and all assumed the name of Methodist Church of Canada. In 1884, the Episcopal Methodist and Bible Christians entered the union, and to-day unitedly stand, their influence for good ever widening.

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THE JOURNAL OFFICE

Summary.

Total membership, 1904.....	3,720
Total adherents, 1904..	10,900

Sabbath Schools.

1860, Teachers, 46, Scholars.....	414
1904, Teachers, 463, Scholars.....	4,373
Value of Church property.....	25,000

In closing we would state that the roll of honor is so large, of those who have been instrumental in bringing the Methodist cause in London, to such a magnificent position as it now holds, would take a vast amount of time and space, and where all have done so nobly it would be invidious to particularize. It is safe to say, if those interested in the cause of Methodism in London during the 20th century will emulate the exertions of those of the century just passed, their children will have as just cause, to be proud of them, as have the children of those gone before.



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If there are homes our presence has brightened,
Sorrowful ones we have caused to rejoice ;
If there are burdens our hands have lighted
Hearts that have cheered at the sound of our voice ;
This is a retrospect Angels might covet,
Soothing earth's sorrows, drying its tears ;
Glorious recompence ; naught ranks above it,
Growing more blessed as sunset appears.

Choice Selections

True friendship shows up best at the darkest hour.

It is a pity, says a keen observer, that the average man cannot borrow money as easily as he can borrow trouble.

The very best breeding, observes Thackeray, consists chiefly in the utmost unobtrusiveness. To be well bred is to be well mannered.

Hope is an invigorating force. It furnishes the very elements which fear destroys—courage, energy, enthusiasm, determination. It raises the spirits and quickens the endeavors.

Some men who start to rise in the world, says a sage, land in the attic.

Good manners were defined by Swift as the art of making those people easy with whom we converse. Whoever makes the fewest persons uneasy is the best bred in the company.

Fools invest first and investigate later.

To the truly conscientious man the possession of unusual ability brings with it an obligation to give to the world unusual benefits.

Any man may make a mistake, but none but a fool will continue it, said wise old Cicero.

“May not a wife who occasionally blows up her husband,” says a correspondent, “be described as a sort o ‘domestic magazine?’”

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ERRATA—The name of Charles Frazier should on page 33 as \$25,000 should read A QUARTER OF A MILLION DOLLARS.

Dundas Center Methodist Church.