

SEARCE 9.00

St. Paul's Church  
Peterborough



Erected MDCCLIX

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S149

# Seventy-five Years of Presbyterianism



A REVIEW OF THE HISTORY  
OF THE CONGREGATION OF  
ST. PAUL'S CHURCH FROM  
ITS ORGANIZATION IN 1835



Peterborough, Ontario

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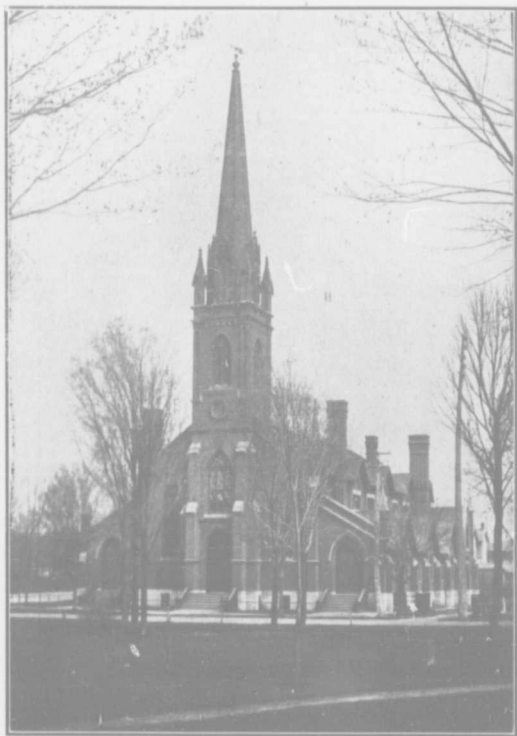
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*St. Paul's Presbyterian Church*  
*Erected 1859*



**P**RIOR to the year 1818, the County of Peterborough was an unbroken forest, untrodden except by the Indian and an occasional trapper or hunter. In the summer of that year the first settlers made their way up the Otonabee River, having with much difficulty reached the shore of Rice Lake from Cobourg. These were men and women of hardy frame and stout of heart, chiefly from Cumberland, England. They had taken up land in the Township of Smith, which was only then being surveyed. Landing at a point about where the C. P. R. bridge crosses the River Otonabee, they built for themselves a temporary log shelter on lot No. 1 west of the Communication Road, which lot had been taken up by William Dixon, whose grandchildren and great grand-children are still connected with this Church. Others followed during that and the next year bearing such good Presbyterian names as Wm. Tully, John Walton, John Harvey, Alex. Morrison, John Yeats, and the following year the Bells, Jacksons, McKibbons, Pearsons and others.

Life was not easy for these early settlers. Set down as they were in the midst of an interminable forest, no semblance of a road to or from anywhere, forty miles from the nearest source of supply, no mill nearer than Port Hope or Cobourg in which to grind their wheat when they had succeeded in clearing enough land to grow any. Some of the younger men are said to have carried their wheat on their shoulders all this distance,



and carried back the flour to the Settlement. In other cases, the stumps of the trees were hollowed and the grain pounded with a heavy mallet. Sometimes the wheat was boiled, and even chewed by the parents, for their children. One lady whose descendants occupy prominent positions in our Congregation, writes in February, 1822, when she joined her husband, the first settler in the Township of Douro: "We found our house unfinished, the doors had not been hung nor were there any partitions. A large opening was left in the roof where the chimney was to be, the floor covered with ice and frozen mortar. We made beds of shavings made by the builders and, spreading our bed clothes, slept till morning with the stars shining through the opening in the roof. Mr. Reid and his family were living in an open shanty having the fire outside, and the sparks occasionally set fire to their bedding. Pea soup and pork were our principal food. Our bread was good when we could get flour or when the yeast was not frozen. Often we had only rye meal, which was not disagreeable, but one season we were obliged to use boiled wheat and were once reduced to bran cakes, which soon disagreed with us." Under such circumstances and many miles from the nearest doctor, the first white child in Douro (for many years a highly esteemed member of St. Paul's Church) was born.

A small mill was erected in Peterborough in 1821, on the spot now occupied by the Peterborough Canoe Company, but with the exception of the miller, Adam Scott and his assistant, there were no inhabitants in what is now the City of Peterborough till 1825, when





REV. JOHN MORRICE ROGER

FIRST MINISTER ST. PAUL'S CHURCH  
1863-1875



the town plot was laid out and the first of the immigrants brought out by Peter Robinson, arrived.

Up to the year 1833, no attempt seems to have been made to supply the spiritual needs of the Presbyterians in the neighborhood, but in that year the Rev. John Morrice Roger, a minister of the Church of Scotland, from Aberdeen, came out to Peterborough and gathered together a small congregation here and on the boundary of Cavan, near Springville. A small building was erected on the north part of lot No. 7, north of King Street, for the use of those meeting at Peterborough. This building was still standing until a few weeks ago.

On the 12th October, 1834, Rev. Mr. Roger, acting under the direction of the Presbytery of Kingston, called upon the heads of the Presbyterian families then assembling to select from their number those considered most fit to fill the office of Elder. The choice fell upon Andrew Tully, John Hutchison, M.D., John Edmison and David Hamilton, among those assembling at Peterborough, and William Robson and Robert Thomson among those assembling at the Boundary of Cavan. These men were duly set apart to the office on the 2nd November, 1834. On the 22nd January, 1835, the Presbytery sanctioned the appointment, and the Kirk Session of Peterborough was recognized and authorized to conduct all competent business in the Congregation.

On the 3rd February, 1835, the Session was constituted and arrangements were made for the enrolment of members of the Church and the observance of the Communion. There is no record of the number of



Communicants, nor of the families comprising the Congregation.

On the 30th May, 1835, a grant was made to the Church of the lot on which St. Andrew's Church now stands, and the following year a substantial stone Church was erected by the Congregation. A substantial Church, indeed, it was, built for use and not for ornament; in character like its minister, it stood "four square to every wind that blew." A square stone building, with cottage roof, square topped windows and doors, no sign of ornament without or within except the white dove with the olive leaf, over the pulpit. In front of the pulpit stood the precentor's desk, from which Sandy Stewart led the service of praise, his only assistance being the tuning fork. One remembers the thrill almost of horror that passed over the congregation when his worthy successor made use for the first time of the pitch pipe. It seemed ominous of later innovations on the wonted simplicity of the service. One remembers, too, "the linked sweetness long drawn out" of the melody of the old Psalms and Paraphrases, and one almost regrets the loss of the grace notes with which some of the elder members embellished Balerma and St. Neots. There seemed a pathos in these old Songs of Zion that is wanting in our more energetic mode of singing. Then the old pews, with their high straight backs and uncushioned seats, with doors securely latched. Ugly and uncomfortable, it would tax our patience now to sit in them for the hour of the sermon, for our sturdy forefathers would not be content with a paltry twenty or thirty minutes discourse, such as their feeble offspring sometimes think all too



long. One remembers these old sermons, divided carefully into their several heads with, at the close, the practical application, when the Minister solemnly closing the Book, and bending over the pulpit, in his loving fatherly way, seemed to pat us on the head and say: "My dear children, you have heard the truth, now go home and carry it out in your daily life and behaviour." The service, like the building, was without much ornament, but it took more than a sunshower to keep us away on Sunday. Many of the members had long distances to come, but their places were seldom vacant. There were others, doubtless, who might be mentioned besides Mr. Thomas Casement, one of the early Elders, who regularly walked the ten miles from Lakefield every Sabbath.

The Sabbath School was begun in 1836, under the Superintendence of Mr. James Hall, one of the Elders. The service here, too, was of the simplest character. There were no uniform lessons, no lesson helps, no hymn books, no organ, but the scholars got as a rule a fair knowledge of the Bible and the Shorter Catechism, and probably knew more of both than the average scholar of to-day. Nearly all the Teachers at the beginning were men.

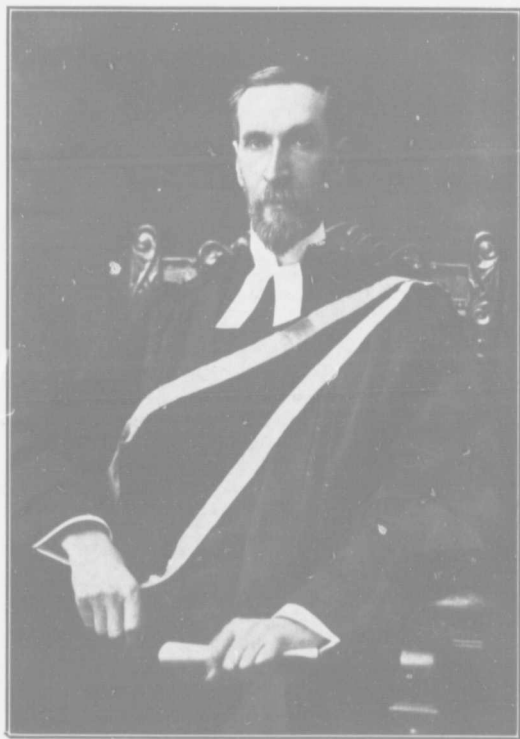
In 1843 occurred the disruption of the Church in Scotland, and in the following year a number of Ministers and Elders in Canada decided to loose themselves from the Church of Scotland and organize a Canadian Church under the name of the "Presbyterian Church of Canada." Amongst the number were Mr. Roger and the representative Elder from Peterborough. The Session, consisting at that time, of Alex. Robertson,



Robt. Thomson, John Stothart, James Hall, David Hamilton and James Hamilton, unanimously agreed with their Minister and their representative in the action taken. On the 4th August, 1844, the question was submitted to the Congregation at the close of the service, and by a standing vote the action of the Minister and Session was unanimously approved.

There being at that time no other Presbyterian body in Peterborough, the Congregation continued to worship in the old stone Church until 1857, when a formal demand on the part of the Synod of the Church of Scotland was served on the Minister and Session, requiring them to deliver up possession of the Church property. Having no choice in the matter, Mr. Roger on the Sabbath following announced the decision come to by the Session to leave the Church, and asked the Congregation to show by standing how many proposed to follow. The whole Congregation, with the exception of about five or six, immediately stood, and during the ensuing week the Agent of the Church of Scotland took possession of the building. For about two years the Congregation were without a settled home, meeting for a time in the Town Hall, and afterwards in a School House belonging to the Methodist Church, the use of which was very courteously offered by that body. Immediate steps were taken, however, towards the erection of a suitable place of worship, and in 1859, a commodious Church was completed on the present site, at a cost of about \$20,000.

Mr. Roger continued to minister to the congregation until 1875, when owing to failing health, he resigned in October of that year, having served his



REV. E. F. TORRANCE, D.D.  
SECOND MINISTER ST. PAUL'S CHURCH  
1876-1907



Master faithfully and diligently for 43 years. At the expressed desire of the Congregation, he accepted the title of Pastor Emeritus, keeping in close connection with his flock until the 8th January, 1878, when, while engaged in conducting family worship at his home,

“God’s finger touched him, and he slept.”

Mr. Roger was eminently fitted for the work undertaken by him. Possessed of a powerful and vigorous constitution, with indomitable energy and zeal, no difficulty seemed too great to surmount, nor hardship too hinder. Long journeys over almost impassable roads had no terrors for one who during his 43 years of strenuous Ministry never once failed to keep his appointments. For many years he ministered not only to the congregation assembling at Peterborough, but also at Springville and North Smith, where in 1853 a small Church was erected a short distance from Lakefield, in which he preached every Sabbath afternoon till 1857, when the Lakefield Church became a separate charge. Stern in rebuke of wrong doing, but always gentle and loving with the offender, full of compassion with the weak and the suffering, he was a man greatly esteemed. One who knew him well says of him: “Every one respected Mr. Roger, and those who knew him loved him. It was a delight to visit Cordach, where the door was always on the latch, and one was sure of a kindly welcome.” He was greatly attached to his congregation and it was with the greatest reluctance that he felt obliged to give up his work amongst them. Some years earlier, on the death of his father, he had re-



ceived a call to succeed him in the Church at Aberdeen, but he felt impelled by a strong sense of duty to remain in his Canadian charge and declined this otherwise desirable call.

After hearing several candidates, the Congregation agreed to extend a call to Mr. E. F. Torrance, of Montreal, and on the 8th of May, 1876, this call, signed by 244 members and 59 adherents, was forwarded to him and accepted. On the 28th June, 1876, Mr. Torrance was duly ordained and inducted by the Presbytery of Peterborough to the charge of St. Paul's Church, and on the following Sabbath, 2nd July, was introduced to the congregation, Rev. Principal Caven preaching in the morning and evening, and Rev. Mr. Torrance in the afternoon. Mr. Torrance, then a young man of 25, entered upon his duties with an evident appreciation not only of the importance and dignity of his office, but with a high sense of the responsibility attaching to it, and during the 31 years of his ministry he endeavoured earnestly and conscientiously to fulfil the duties devolving upon him. A man of refinement and culture, of high ideals, an earnest and diligent student of the Scriptures, he earned the sincere respect not only of his own congregation but of the entire community in which he lived.

Very considerable progress was made in the Congregation during these 31 years. The membership, which in 1876 was 369, had increased to 780, the contributions to ordinary revenue from \$2,618 to \$5,600, and the contributions for missionary objects from \$1,128 to \$2,873. In 1894 the authorities of Knox College manifested their appreciation of his character and





REV. ROBERT POGUE

PRESENT PASTOR ST. PAUL'S CHURCH  
INDUCTED DEC. 5TH, 1907



work by conferring on him the Degree of Doctor of Divinity.

In the summer of 1881, the Rev. E. P. Hammond having been invited by the Session to visit Peterborough, conducted a series of evangelistic services in St. Paul's, extending over some weeks, which resulted in a great quickening of the religious life of the Church and an addition to the membership of 148.

As far back as 1868, the question of the use of instrumental music in the praise service of the Church, was introduced in the Session, when it was resolved that it be allowed if three-fourths of the Congregation voted in favor of it. This resolution was carried by a majority of one vote. In 1878, after considerable agitation, the question was submitted to the Congregation and a vote taken by ballot, resulting in 165 members voting for and 137 against the use of an organ.

In 1880 another ballot was taken, 146 voting for and 96 against.

In 1883 the attendance on the services had so largely increased that it was found necessary to provide additional accommodation, especially for the Sunday School, and it was decided to remodel the Church Building by extending the side walls and adding the addition on the north. This was done at a cost of about \$30,000, and the building as it now stands was reopened on the 3rd May, 1885, with appropriate services, Rev. D. J. Macdonnell preaching in the morning and evening, and Rev. P. McF. McLeod in the afternoon, to overflowing congregations.

The Ladies' Aid Society, which had been organized the previous year, with Mrs. Alex. Smith as Presi-



dent, Mrs. Walsh and Mrs. Dunlop, as Vice-Presidents, Miss Dickson, Treasurer, and Miss Roper, Secretary, had exerted themselves with so much zeal and earnestness during the year that they were able to present to the congregation their magnificent organ at a cost of \$3,000, fully paid for. Mr. J. S. Parker, of Woodstock, presided at the organ, and was assisted by a large choir.

In the spring of 1886, special evangelistic services were held by Mr. Shivera, resulting in an addition of 90 to the membership, amongst the number being Robert E. Knowles, now minister at Galt.

The system of Pew Rents was abolished in 1885, and the weekly offering by envelope for ordinary revenue adopted in its place. In 1894 the envelope system was adopted for the Missionary Schemes of the Church as well.

In view of the proposed Mission Work in the south end of the Town, the Congregation at their annual meeting in 1901 decided to engage an Assistant to Dr. Torrance, and in April of that year Rev. George Yule, now of Winchester, was appointed to that position, retaining it for a year. He was succeeded by Rev. J. A. Wilson, now of St. Andrew's Church, Hamilton. On the 1st February, 1903, the Mission was opened for service, Rev. Mr. Wilson preaching in the morning on the text, "What mean ye by these stones?" Mr. Wilson was succeeded by Rev. Beverley Ketchen, now of Hamilton, followed by Rev. W. M. Mackay, now of Harriston, and Rev. Alfred Bright, now of Ingersoll.

On the 1st January, 1907, the Mission, now Knox Church, was made a separate charge, St. Paul's



Church presenting the lot and building to the new congregation.

In July, 1907, the Rev. Dr. Torrance resigned his charge, and in November of the same year a call was extended to the Rev. Robert Pogue of Philadelphia. The call having been accepted by him, he was inducted into the Ministry of St. Paul's Church on the 5th December, 1907.

In the autumn of 1907 the organ was enlarged at a cost of \$3,000.00, the gift of the trustees of the Nicholls Estate, by the addition of a choir organ and extended console, the whole being made tubular pneumatic. This addition was made under the direction of the organist and choir master, Mr. John Crane, whose musical ability, energy and tact have, with the assistance of an equally zealous choir, contributed so largely to the value of the services of the Church.

During the 75 years of the Congregation's history no less than 70 Elders were ordained to their important office. Of only one or two of these is it possible to say anything in the space allotted. Dr. Hutchison, one of the first to be appointed, was a man of high attainments and great personal worth. Untiring in his devotion to the duties of his profession, he fell a victim to typhus fever contracted while attending the sick in the immigrant sheds in 1847. James Hall, an Elder from 1836 till his death in 1883, was the first Sabbath School Superintendent, holding that office for many years, and was active in all matters affecting the welfare of the community. The two brothers, David and James Hamilton, were staunch upholders of Presbyterianism. Robert Kingan, Session Clerk, 1855 to 1866, a model



Elder, with a deep sense of his responsibility to the Head of the Church, and reverence for the ordinances of His House and Holy Day, wise in counsel and strict in attendance to the duties of his office. William Hall, Deacon, Elder, Sabbath School Superintendent, Session Clerk, Church Treasurer, diligent in all Christian work, dying at his post while attending the General Assembly at Montreal, in 1875. The two brothers in Christ, Dr. W. H. Taylor and John Erskine, elected together in 1875, both zealous in all good works, Dr. Taylor taking special interest in the musical part of the service. Mr. Erskine, Session Clerk from 1876 to 1881, was right-hand man to the newly-chosen Minister, Mr. Torrance, who often expressed his appreciation of his sympathy and help in his work. John Murray Smith and J. H. Roper, under whose Superintendence the Sabbath School made great progress. Time would fail to tell of John Hall, T. M. Fairbairn, Wm. Walsh, Wm. Johnston, Wm. Tully and many others equally worthy of note, who filled this office and helped to advance the cause of God in the Town and neighborhood. Of one, however, special mention might be made:

Lieutenant-Colonel Haultain, R. A., who having retired from the service in 1860, took up his residence in Peterborough in that year, and in 1864 was elected to the Eldership of St. Paul's. The following extracts from a sermon preached by Dr. Torrance on the Sabbath after his death in December, 1882, are a fair appreciation of his character and work:

"Up to the year 1844, he had been a thorough man of the world, living a life of pleasure with the other



young officers, but while in Gibraltar he was awakened by the Spirit, and after a great conflict came out clearly into the light. From this time it was his chief delight to study the Scriptures and to work for Christ. Several traits of his character are worthy of mention: First, his love for the Word of God. From the time of his conversion until his death the Bible was the subject of his constant study, and it was his great desire that others should be led to love it also. With this object he conducted weekly meetings for the study of the Scriptures in various parts of the congregation. Another distinguishing characteristic was his faithfulness in the discharge of his duties as an Elder. He had a very high estimate of the dignity of the office, recognizing that as an Elder he was responsible for the spiritual oversight of the congregation, and that he must minister to those committed to his care. He was specially mindful of the poor and afflicted. He was possessed moreover of great moral courage and an unswerving loyalty to the truth. In cases of difficulty he was ever the one to take the lead, having the courage of a good soldier of Jesus Christ. He constantly magnified the grace of God. It was grace that transformed him from the man of the world to the disciple of Christ. It was grace that kept him steadfast amid the temptations of military life. It was grace that made him an earnest student of the Word, a courageous Christian, a faithful Elder. It was grace that taught him to live a godly, righteous and sober life, and inspired him with the hope of Christ appearing."

"Gone is the forest primeval." The blazed trail of the settler of 1818 is now the well made and well-trav-



elled Chemong Road; the one little shack which until 1825 sheltered the miller and his man, has become the busy and prosperous city of 17,000 inhabitants; the ox cart has given place to the vestibuled train and the automobile. Where in the early days there was the swimming of the Otonabee and the weary tramp through the forest for the doctor twenty miles away, there is now the telephone call and the motor car.

There are still some links connecting the present with the strenuous past. The first settler in this county was a Presbyterian, whose descendants are to-day active workers in St. Paul's. Of the two original settlers in Douro, the son of one was for many years an Elder and his grandchildren worship here; the grandson of the other is the much respected Chairman of the Board of Management, Mr. T. A. S. Hay. The son of our first minister, an Elder for 27 years, is now Judge of Northumberland and Durham. The little band for which the old building on Aylmer Street was all too large, has grown into three well equipped and flourishing congregations, with a membership of over 2,000. "Other men labored, and we have entered into their labors."