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PRESBYTERIAN HISTORY

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St. James' Church  
Mainsville, Ontario

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THIS SKETCH was prepared by the present pastor, Reverend D. H. Currie, B.A., for the 50th Anniversary held June 13th to 15th, 1915, and is dedicated to those who served the Church during past years, some of them of Sainted Memory.

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Rev'd Wm. J. Dey, M.A., D.D., of Simcoe,  
Preached June 13th, 1915.

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The Present Pastor  
REV'D D. H. CURRIE, B. A.

## INTRODUCTION

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Through all ages the world has recognized the Hero. In the earlier days of Mankind it was the man who fought the bravest fight and did the noblest deeds in war who was the Hero. Ideals, however, changed, and in later periods it was the men and women who willingly sacrificed themselves for others who were the heroes. It is of the self-sacrificing labors of the latter class we desire to make mention in these pages. The early pioneers of these Eastern townships of Ontario, who came into the forests to hew out homes for themselves, build churches and schools, open up roads and clear the farms, are no less Heroes than they who have won fame in war in any age of the world. We of the

present day recognize that to us has been given the solemn custody of a rich tradition, a sacred deposit of thought and prayer, and aspiration and achievement. It is good to encircle the walls of Zion, to tell her towers and bulwarks, to sing as we make the joyful round. May the purpose of this celebration be to enable us to enter new covenants and march on with re-inspired hearts into fields of nobler service. Let us be responsive to the Divine claim and we shall be receptive to the Divine Power and be willing to share the Divine travail for souls, thus spiritual life will be quickened and our semi-centennial will be as springtime with promise of an abundant harvest.

## CHAPTER I. THE PIONEERS

The earliest records extant of the Presbytery of Brockville date back to the 8th February, 1832, and the names of ministers on the Roll of Presbytery of that date were Rev'd Wm. Smart, Brockville, Rev'd Robt. Boyd, Prescott, and Rev'd Robt. Lyle of Osnabruk, with these Elders, namely, Mr. John Dekey, Mr. Matthew McIntosh and Mr. John N. Ault. These three ministers supervised the work of the church over a large trail of country, and were instrumental in establishing several Presbyterian congregations in what is now the Presbyteries of Kingston, Brockville, Genary and Lanark. Of these men Rev'd Wm. Smart is an outstanding pioneer minister of Presbyterianism. He commenced his labors at Brockville in the year 1811 and is credited with having started the first Sabbath School in Canada. His field of labor extended from Gananoque to Osnabruk, a distance of nearly one hundred miles, and north some thirty-five miles from the St. Lawrence. In conjunction with Rev'd Fr. Boyd of Prescott, who arrived subsequently they established Presbyterian congregations in some fourteen localities which grew into strong self-sustaining congregations, and still exert their influence in moulding the ideals of the communities. The congregations in Edwardsburg Township were among the number. The early settlers of the township who adhered to the Presbyterian faith and form of worship had under the guidance of Missionary effort erected three small churches known at that time as "Spencerville" at Spencer's

Mills, "The Log Church" at Raney's Corners, and the Front Church at Port Elgin. These were organized into congregations in the year 1835, and were known as the Spencerville Charge.

The first settled pastor over these churches was the Rev'd Jas. Geggie, who was inducted at Spencerville January 6th, 1846. Mr. Geggie was Clerk of Brockville Presbytery until his resignation was accepted in 1855. His successor was Rev'd A. Melville, who came to minister to the needs of the widely scattered flock in 1856. At a meeting of Presbytery held in Brockville of that year, a petition was received from the Edwardsburg charge asking for Moderation in a call to a minister. Some intimation was given in this petition to cut off the congregation at the Log Church from regular services. Dr. Boyd promptly held the matter up until a committee should investigate and report on the matter. At a subsequent meeting the report of this committee was given. It recommended that Spencerville and the Front Church at Port Elgin be the only places for regular Sabbath service, and that service be held at the Log Church at the convenience of the minister. Dr. Boyd again dissented, but the report was adopted and the Log Church at Raney's Corners was no longer a part of the charge. A regular and formal call was then made out in favor of Rev. A. Melville, and he was inducted at Spencerville in the forenoon, and Port Elgin in the afternoon of February 5, 1857. Mr. Melville resided at Spencerville and continued his faithful and arduous labors until 1862, when he accepted a call to Westport.

## CHAPTER II.

### ARRIVAL OF J. B. MULLAN.

The opening of our Second Chapter introduces to our notice a very important personality in connection with the purpose of this historical sketch. One that without whom as far as finite mind can comprehend there would not be any celebration in the year 1915. That person is the much respected and revered Rev'd James Mullan, D.D., who is now enjoying the evening of his earth's pilgrim-



Rev. J. B. Mullan

age at Elora, Ont. Standing on Pisrah's heights viewing by faith and heavenly vision the promised canon of rest, he can look back upon over half a century of time, and with rejoicing and thankfulness, praise the Hand that guided and the Spirit that inspired the activities of mind and body.

As a student of Divinity in Queen's College, Kingston, Mr. Mullan was sent by the Missionary Association of the College to the Mission field at Spencerville in the Spring of 1860. These were the

days when there existed in Canada the "Free Church" with which our first chapter deals, and the Church of Scotland, or the Kirk, in connection with the parent church in the Old Land, and enjoying its patronage. The opening of another Presbyterian Church Service at Spencerville under the Kirk Minister, was at that date perfectly in accord with the regular order of things then in existence. This energetic young student, in looking about to extend his sphere of usefulness, discovered the Log Church at Raney's Corners, which the Free Church in centralizing its work at Spencerville and Port Elgin, was not in a position to utilize for Sabbath service. Arrangements were at once completed to have Mr. Mullan give regular Sabbath afternoon service, it being only some eight or nine miles from Spencerville. Mr. Mullan also discovered several families who maintained their allegiance to the Log Church, a few of which we may mention: Hoppers, Raney's, Scotts, Gores and Paupport on the 3rd Line, Wyles and VanCamp in 2nd Concession, Wm. Byers on the 4th, some three or four families of Kiddies on the 5th Line. Besides the Montomerys and others. Among this number was one who in after years was known as Aunt Jane Hopper, a woman greatly beloved and devoted to her Master and the church, exerted a great influence for good. She, with others, could describe many interesting experiences of early church life, and the long walk to Prescott to hear the Rev'd Dr. Boyd preach. Mr. Mullan returned to college in the fall, and was allotted the same field of labor for the summer of 1861. In the spring of 1862, he graduated and was called by the people of Spencerville and Raney's Corners to be their minister. He was ordained and inducted in July of that year, and carried on the work until 1869. The first work of the newly inducted minister was to secure the election of Elders to serve with him as a Kirk Session. Assessors had to be appointed by the

Presbytery to act as an intermission for their election and ordination. This took place at Spencerville in September, 1862, when Mr. John Crone and Louis Paupore were ordained to the Eldership. Messrs. James McGowan and Andrew Riddle, who had been elders in the Free Church, were received into the United Session of Spencerville and Mainsville. Thus we have the first Elders of the Log Church in Andrew Riddle and Louis Paupore, who with Rev'd Mr. Mullan, formed a Session and Court of the Church. A Communion Roll was opened of those who were members of the church and the first Sacramental Service was held in February, 1863. At that service the following new members were received: Mary Gore, Meriar Burns, Mary Raney, Ann Gore, Margaret Alexander, Wm. Campbell, Margaret Chambers, John VanCamp, Mrs. VanCamp, Mr. Cook, Wm. Boulton, Robert Robertson, Mrs. Lavere, Mrs. Robertson, Mrs. Bodin, James Riddle and Mrs. Byer. In those days it was the custom to dispense the Lord's Supper alternately at each of the two churches. When it came Mainsville's turn to go to Spencerville, practically the whole membership would be at Spencerville early in the forenoon. The roads were rough, and the conveyances not of the easy spring variety and many had to walk. It was no one hour service, but a service to be remembered in united thanksgiving, lasting for two or three hours, but such were the ways of our Presbyterian forefathers. Sermons were not considered up to the standard if they occupied less than from forty-five minutes to one hour to deliver them. The preaching was solid, strong meat for strong people.

### CHAPTER III.

#### A NEW CHURCH.

After worshipping for a time in the old Log Church, the congregation and minister began to feel that they needed more room and a better building. So they said like Nehemiah and his people: "We will arise and build, for the Lord is with us." The people manifested a fine spirit of unity and willingness in the building of the present stone church. None of them were rich, but they all did what they could. Mr. Neil Raney, with the minister, supervised the work, and every man turned out to quarry and draw the stone from around the lime-kiln. The first trustees of the church property who took over the land from Neil Ran-



Church Built 1865.

ey, were Louis Paupore, John VanCamp, John Hopper, James Scott, James Riddle and William Byers. With a determination to enter the church free of debt the minister, Rev'd J. B. Mullan, put himself in communication with friends in Toronto and Montreal, and secured some two or three hundred dollars for the building. The church was dedicated to the worship of God in 1865 with feeling and appropriate services. Great was the rejoicing and gladness on the part of the people. With very few exceptions, service has been held at three o'clock on the Sabbath afternoon, where the truth has been taught and the Word of God faithfully preached for all those years.

The same spirit of unity and harmony still prevails, and the Sabbath service is one of thankful devotion. There was nothing artistic nor elaborate about the new building. It was substantial, but the solid stone walls were unblasted, and the heating was poor, but the people were satisfied and happy in their new St. James' church. From all round the neighborhood, and from the Riddle settlement the people came flocking to church. They still keep up very largely the same good custom and on fine days the large sheds are taxed to their utmost to accommodate the horses and rigs. Fifty years brings many changes, and from the roughly gotten up rigs of the sixties, we now have the splendid carriage, and last of all, the automobile appears in the church yard. This stone church, although only four miles from Cardinal where the minister resides, is a great centre for Sabbath services, and fills a place in the religious life of the township that otherwise would not be supplied. It is a pleasure to preach to the people there and enjoy with them the reunions and expressions of friendship at close of the service.

In closing our reference to the pastorate of Mr. Mullan the writer takes the liberty of inserting in this sketch a quotation from one of his letters in connection with this Jubilee: "What a kind people they were! I would match the Hopper family against any family that I ever met with in all my travels. My horse knew that home as well as I did. I could not get him to pass John Hopper's home. He smelled the oats, and would balk if I tried to pass without tea, or oats for him. Although I am Irish I could sing like a Scotchman, 'Should Auld acquaintances be forgot and never brought to mind.'" It was with great regret the people parted with the minister who was instrumental in reviving the work of the church among them, but Mr. Mullan was called to a larger field of service at Fergus, and Presbyterian like, they

would not put any obstacles in his way. The next minister was Rev'd Elias Mullan, who was inducted in 1870, and remained the devoted minister of The Kirk until the union of the four different branches of the Presbyterian body in Canada in 1875. An election of Elders was held in 1872, when Mr. James Riddle was ordained to that office and became a member of Session. The first minister after the union of the two congregations at Spencerville, and in connection with St. James, was Rev'd Wm. J. Dey, M. A., recently licensed, who was ordained and inducted at Spencerville January 5th, 1876, as the minister of the united charge of Spencerville and Mainsville. Mr. Dey has been for several years the



Rev'd William J. Dey, D. D. efficient minister of Presbyterianism in the town of Simcoe. He was a young man of splendid gifts and scholarly attainments, and has been honored with the highest degree in the gift of his church, that of Doctor of Divinity. To him we are indebted for so kindly consenting to conduct these 50th Anniversary Services. During his pastorate a congregation was organized at Ventnor. The work of the church was extending on all sides, until the Presbytery found it necessary to take up the re-arrangement of pastoral charges in this township. The Church at Cardinal or Port Elgin, mentioned in our first chapter as being in connection with the Free Church

at Spencerville, was after the union placed in connection with Iroquois, to which pastorate the Rev'd Wm. M. McKibben was called in September, 1875, just a few months before Mr. Dey's induction at Spencerville. The re-arrangement proposed by Presbytery was effected with the consent of the people in 1877. By this arrangement Spencerville was separated from Mainsville and united with the newly formed church at Ventnor. Under the pastoral care of Mr. Dey, Cardinal and Iroquois were separated, and Mainsville and Cardinal formed one charge under the pastoral care of Mr. McKibben, and Iroquois was united with Morrisburg. Mr. Dey's last meeting of Session, and last communion at Mainsville was held on the 30th September, 1877. He continued the esteemed pastor of Spencerville and Ventnor until released by the Presbytery to take a position in the Presbyterian College, Montreal, in July, 1882.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### A NEW CONNECTION

The Committee appointed by Presbytery met in the church at Mainsville on 3rd October, 1877, to introduce Mr. McKibben of Cardinal, and consummate the union of these churches into one pastoral charge. Rev. George Burnfield, of Brockville, conducted Divine service. Rev'd Andrew Rowat, of Winchester, addressed the minister and Mr. Dey addressed the people. This began the new connection which still exists. The people very graciously fell in with the new arrangement. Unfortunately for both minister and people, out of their goodness of heart, they saved their minister the expense of keeping a horse, and arranged to bring him out on Sunday and leave him home after service. By the loss of Mr. Paupore, and advancing age of Mr. Andrew Riddle, it became necessary to hold an election of Elders. This election resulted in the ordination of Mr. Joseph Byers and Mr. William

Riddle to that office on 30th January, 1878. Mr. Wm. Riddell soon after moved to Mountain township, leaving two elders, Mr. Jas. Riddle and Mr. Joseph Byers in the session. There is one unhappy incident to record in the pastorate of Mr. McKibben, and the only one in this sketch. The circumstance was such that it was brought before the Presbytery and tested the union of Mainsville and Cardinal, when the Committee of Presbytery recommended the discontinuance of the service at Mainsville under Mr. McKibben, and instructed Mainsville, through its elder, Mr. Byers, to apply to the Home Mission Committee for supply. In our humble opinion this was a very unwise move on the part of Presbytery, and facts abundantly prove that the natural connection for Mainsville is with Cardinal. This movement terminated about three months after by the resignation of his charge by Mr. McKibben, being handed to Presbytery for acceptance on the 8th July, 1884, and his pastorate of nine years closed the following Sabbath. Mr. McKibben was clerk of Presbytery of Brockville for several years, and was greatly esteemed by his co-Presbyters, as the resolution adopted by Presbytery in reference to his resignation shows. During his pastorate the present church building at Cardinal was erected and opened for Divine Service.

After a vacancy of some fifteen months a call was extended to the Rev'd George MacArthur, B.A., of Finch, Ont. This strong young minister was inducted to the charge on 22nd October, 1885. It was like a new beginning of things at Mainsville, and a very close attachment was soon formed between pastor and people. The first recorded meeting of Session at Mainsville after Mr. MacArthur's induction is dated October 24th, 1886. Mr. Joseph Byers had resigned the office of Elder, and some years after retired from the farm to reside at Cardinal. Mr. MacArthur secured the assistance of



an Elder from Cardinal to form a session with James Riddle until December, 1889. At that date Messrs. Thos. Campbell and Daniel Scott were ordained to the office of Elder. About ten years after Mr. Scott moved to near Cardinal and another election was held, when Messrs. John Huton and Jere Wallace were ordained in October, 1899. In 1902 a vacancy again occurred in the session by the death of the Senior Elder, Mr. James Riddle. A minute of session, dated July 20th, 1902, records the deep sense of loss sustained in the death of Mr. Riddle, who for the long period of thirty years, was a faithful member of the Court. An election for an Elder to fill the vacancy was held, and Mr. James Byers was elected and ordained to that office, and became a member of that session on October 5th, 1902.

During Mr. MacArthur's pastorate the organ was introduced in the church, and a choir organized. This very much relieved the minister, who was often called upon to perform the double duty of Precentor and Preacher. The time had also arrived to make some improvements on the building. In this connection we make mention of the late Mrs. James Runions, who was a splendid woman in the church, and whose death caused great sorrow throughout the congregation. The tablet on the wall behind the Runions seat was placed there by her son, Mr. Ed. Runions, in her memory. To her we learn is due the credit of suggesting that the whole church be renovated. An Advisory Committee was appointed, with Thos. Campbell as superintendent. The interior was plastered, painted and tinted, the present comfortable seats replaced the old ones, and a new floor put down, the exterior wood-work painted and the walls painted, thus adding much to the appearance of the building and comfort of the people.

The congregation was now in good condition and working in harmony in connection with Cardinal. Mr. MacArthur was a hard

worker on the whole charge, and being Clerk of Presbytery, became interested in the work of the church throughout the Presbytery. The constant strain of over 21 years in the same pastorate told upon his physical strength, and he was obliged to seek rest and a change. He resigned the charge in June, 1907, much to the regret of his people and co-Presbyters.

The next minister was the Rev'd T. A. Sadler, who was inducted in January, 1908, and remained till



Rev Geo. MacArthur

November, 1913. During his pastorate the interior of the church was re-decorated and the sheds improved. The Session suffered the loss of one of its members in the removal of Mr. James Pyers to Cardinal. The present manse, built by Mr. MacArthur, was purchased by the Cardinal congregation. Mr. Sadler did not enjoy the best of health, and resigned to take less arduous labor in Montreal Presbytery.

He was succeeded by the present pastor, Rev'd D. H. Currie, who was inducted on 12th February,

1914. With his initial year's work as a criterion, anticipations are sanguine for a return of the steadily increasing spiritual progress that has marked the larger portion of our history. The present Session comprises Rev'd D. H. Currie, who is its Moderator, with Messrs. Thos. Campbell, John Hutton and Jere Wallace, Elders. The Board of Managers of financial affairs are Messrs. John Riddle, Robt. Montgomery, Aaron Gore, John Byers, Harvey Irving, Robt. Dodge and A. H. Runions. Mr. Robert Montgomery is treasurer of the Congregational and Missionary funds. The Sabbath School is in a healthy and progressive condition, with Jere Wallace superintendent, and George Briggs his assistant, and a corps of efficient teachers. The Women's Missionary Society is doing effective work in the Pittston Branch, the 3rd Street Branch, and the North Channel Branch, with Mrs. James Riddle as Central Secretary and Treasurer.

#### CHAPTER V THE SEXTON.

There is one feature that cannot be overlooked in this sketch, and one which it is the rare privilege of any church to record in its Semi-Centennial Jubilee. That of having in active service to-day the same person as caretaker of the church and grove's, who began that work when the church was opened for Sabbath service. Duncan Burns can look you in the face, and with a tap of his hand on his pocket, say: "Rev'd Mr. Mullen gave me the keys and charge of the church when it was first opened, and I hold them to-day." Duncan, as he is familiarly called, points with pride to the square stone in the front gable of the church on which is the inscription, "The Kirk, 1865." The Mainsville church is his Temple, and to it he devotes the larger portion of his time, for he is now in a sense a man of leisure. Indeed the place would not seem complete without

the presence of his familiar figure. Neither winter's storms nor summer's heat prevent him from being on time to unlock the door on the Sabbath day. Although there have been some breaks in his period of Sextonship they were not of long duration and appear so faintly on his mind that to him it was one long continued service. The words of the Psalmist found in the 84th Psalm, 10th Verse, might be fittingly quoted in reference to our friend, Duncan Burns. May he long



#### DUNCAN BURNS

##### First and Present Sexton

be spared to unlock the door.

Few are they who are now with us who were the pioneers of the church at its erection; of these Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Brown are the eldest, and remain a splendid type of Presbyterian training, upright, earnest, humble and reverent, the minister's true friend.

The same pulpit Bible is still in use, the gift of the ladies of Spencerville church, at the dedication of the church. Mr. Samuel Montgomery is remembered by his founding the Library for the Sabbath

School. Though time has wafted us on, with the consequent changes, we have reason to be thankful for the many blessings that have been our portion. In accepting the heritage that has been handed down, we desire to give the Head of the Church all the glory. Thankful to our Heavenly Father for those who are still in the Church here, and for His goodness to those who are waiting in the Church above, we praise our God

for the blessings of the past, and hopefully assume our duties of the future.

The Manse, Cardinal, June 3rd, 1915.

P.S.—Many events and names of interested helpers may be omitted from this sketch, but none intentionally. For these omissions we ask forgiveness. We have endeavored to do the best we could with the material at hand.

D. H. C.

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