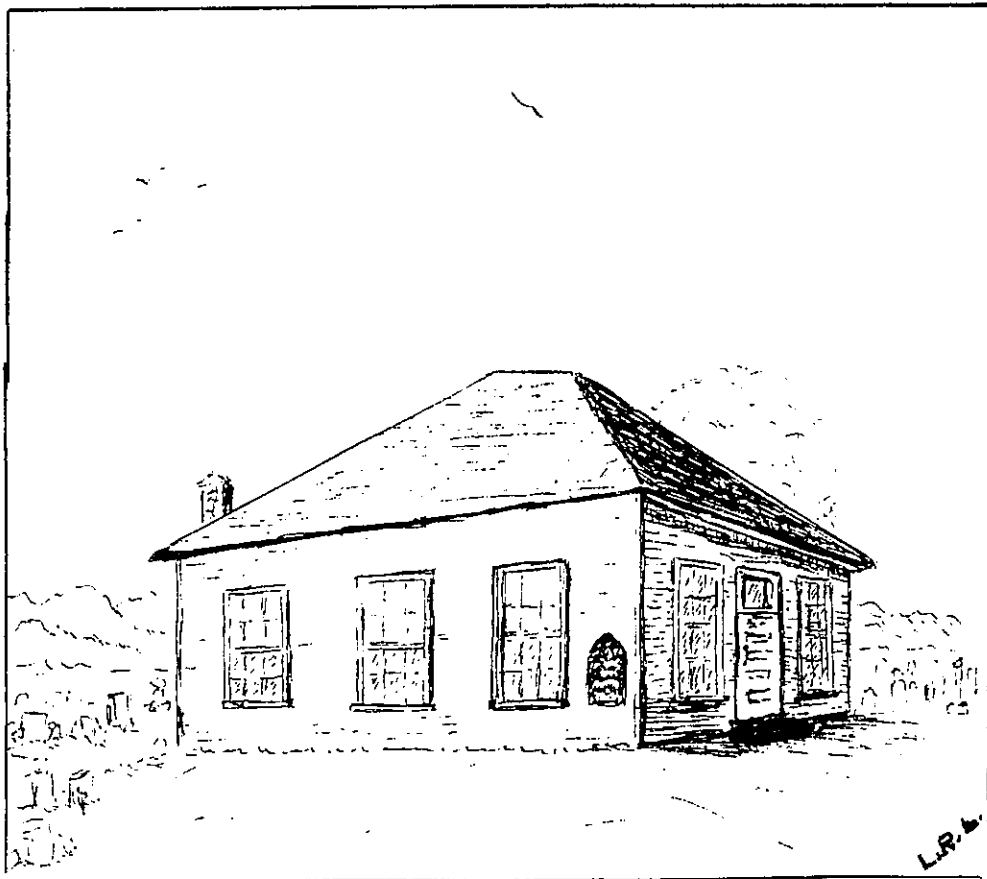


**Knox
Presbyterian
Church
1845 - 1986**

This brief history of Oro's oldest Presbyterian Church is dedicated with love and respect to the friends of Knox - past, present and future.



Knox Presbyterian Church

1845 - 1986

A History

SALM CXXII.

Bha aoibhneas air Daibhidh 'nuair chaidh e de thigh an Tighearn. 6 Ghuidh e air sou sith agus suaimhneis do Ierusalem.

Laoidh nan ceum., le Daibhidh.

Bha aoibhneas orm an uair a thubhairt iad rium, Do thigh an Tighearna theid sinn.

2 Seasaidh ar cosan an taobh a stigh do d' gheataibh, O Ierusalem.

3 Tha Ierusalem air a togail mar chaithir a tha air a coimhcheangal ri cheile;

4 D'an teid na treubhan suas, treubhan an Tighearna, gu teistias Israeil, a thoirt buidheachais do ainm an Tighearn.

PSALM CXXII.

David professeth his joy for the church, and prayeth therefor.

A Song of degrees of David.

I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. e Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Je-ru'sa-lem.

3 Je-ru'sa-lem is builded as a city that is compact together:

4 Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Is'ra-el, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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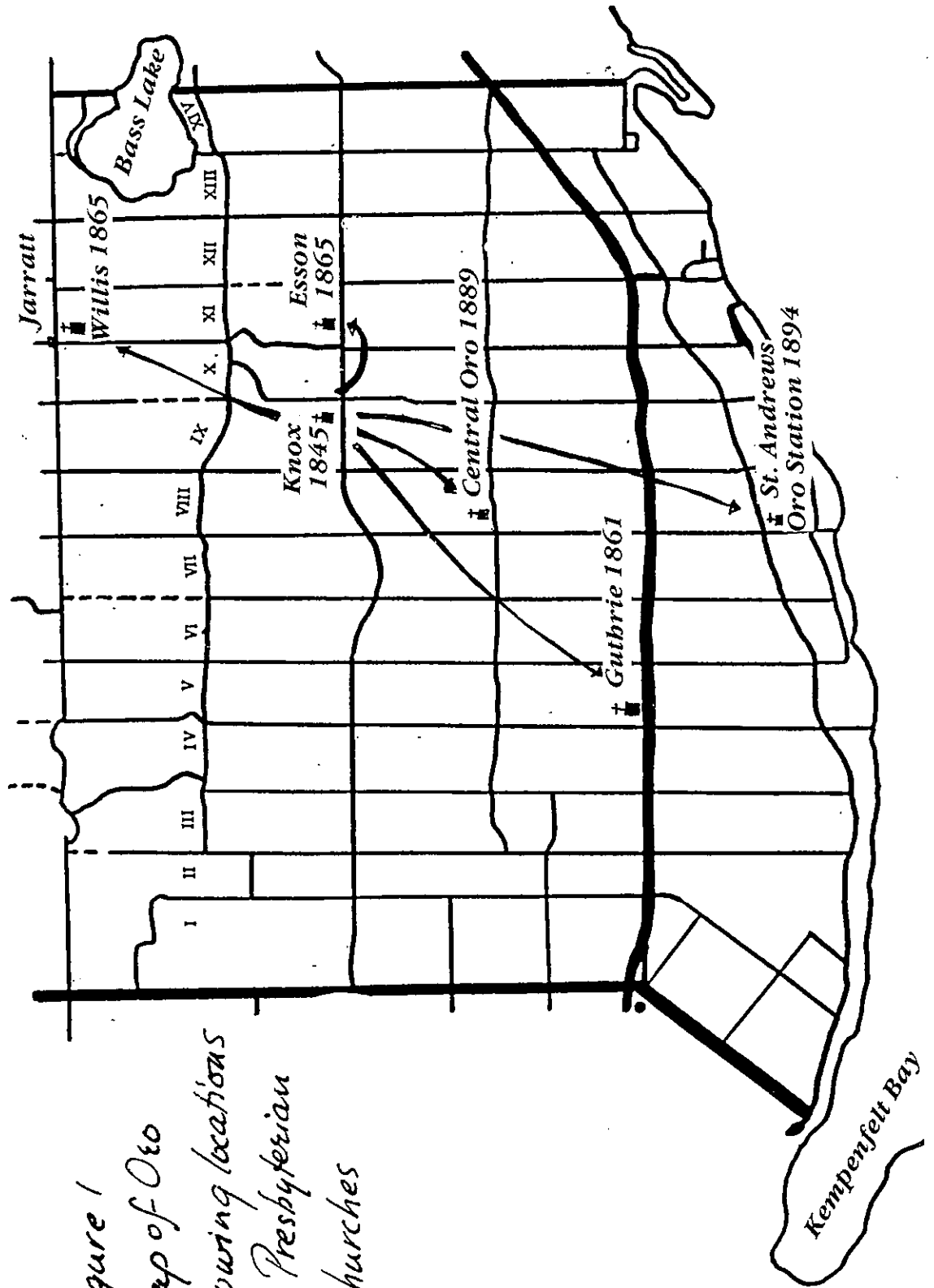
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*Figure 1
Map of Oro
Showing locations
of Presbyterian
Churches*

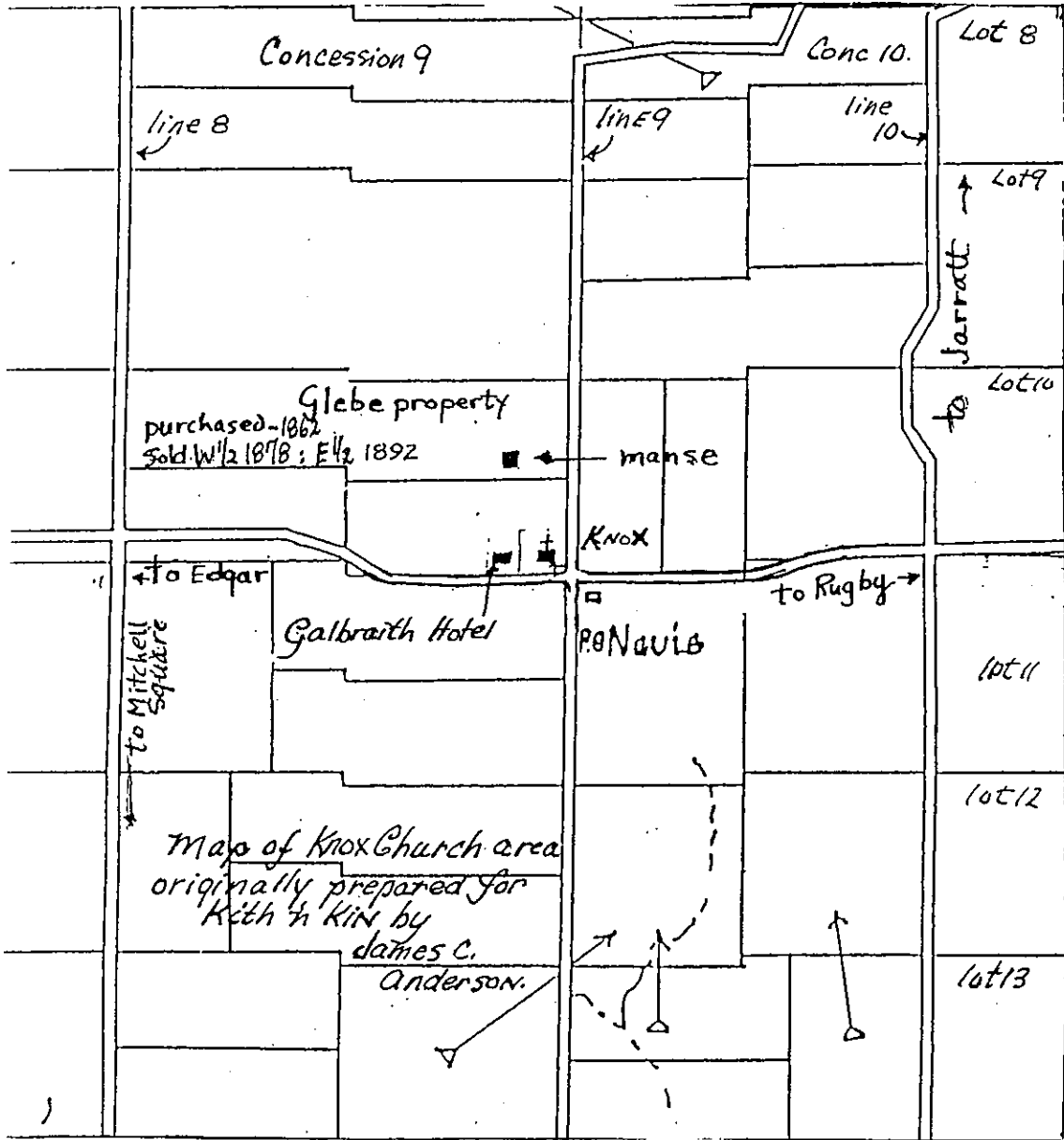


Figure two, Concessions 9 and 10, Lots 8 to 13. Township of Oko.

INTRODUCTION

For over 141 years Knox Church has relied totally on dedicated friends. From its construction in 1844-45, to its restoration in 1912, to the publication of this brief commemorative history, the volunteer efforts of many people (most unnamed) have been evident. Knox has flourished and remains a vital part of Oro's character and spiritual fibre.

The trustees of Knox and the History committee hope that this brief history will provide an enjoyable and informative read. The story of Knox really begins long before 1832 in Oro. It begins in Scotland and is inextricably bound to the history of Presbyterianism. The Kirk was the Church of Scotland and as such its traditions came to Oro and other parts of Canada with the many Scottish settlers who pioneered here.

The eventual development of 13 different synods in Canada serves to reflect the struggles that went on between a reforming and the traditional free church. The effects of these struggles reached as far as Knox Presbyterian, a pioneer church in Oro. Eventually Presbyterianism in Canada developed an identity distinct from the Kirk. The serious questions of psalmody, volunteerism and music in the church (to mention but a few) were addressed by the ordained elders and deacons of Knox. Their spiritual sincerity and devotion facing these grave ecumenical matters can never be doubted.

By reading the carefully recorded minutes and consulting other sources, we have presented the story of Knox chronologically. This is intended as a social history with emphasis on the human factor. The Scottish settlers in Oro built Knox and their unquenchable faith has kept it vibrant. It is your interest which keeps this part of Oro's heritage for your children and their heirs. God Bless!

For those who are interested in reading more about Presbyterianism in Canada, consult John F. Moirs And During Witness.

HISTORY OF KNOX CHURCH

THE EARLY YEARS, TO 1859

By the year 1837, there were already more than 200 families settled in Oro Township. Of these, the majority were Scots, especially in the east and north end of the Township. Of the Scots, most were Gaelic speaking from the island of Islay on the west coast of Scotland. A plague of cholera had spread over Scotland in 1832, which was followed by the great drought of 1836. It was against this background that many immigrants came to Canada, in most instances, bringing very little material wealth with them.¹

In 1836, an appeal was made through the Presbytery of York to the Glasgow Colonial Society on behalf of the Presbyterian settlers in Oro for the establishment of religious ordinances. In response to this appeal, Dr. Robert Burns, later to become Minister of Knox Church in Toronto, visited the settlement and conducted divine worship.²

In 1842, a log school house was built on the south east corner of Lot 12, Concession 9, on farm of Samuel Jerney.³ This school was opened in 1843 and the Presbyterians were given permission to hold services there until such time as they could build their own place of worship. They formed themselves into a parish, although as yet without the leadership of a Minister and without official recognition.

During this time, they were visited at least once by the Rev. John McTavish of Woodville and the Rev. Alexander MacKenzie of Goderich. Other than this, they were led in worship and prayer by the "men". Some of these would have been quite familiar with the order of service. Elders played a much more active role in the worship then, than they do today.

In the meantime, the young continued to marry, children were born, the old and not so old continued to die, so there was a great need of a church and a Minister. For example, 11 full years before Knox Church was built, Gilbert Smith arrived in Oro Township in 1834. Mr. Smith had been sick during the crossing and died of cholera shortly after arriving in Canada. He was buried in Knox Cemetary in September, 1834. This is one of the earliest recorded burials at Knox.⁴

Shortly after the disruption of the church in Scotland, 1843, the Hon. Isaac Buchanan of Hamilton, Ontario was asked to give a subscription of 1000 pds. to endow the Free Church College in Edinburgh. He replied that he would give that amount, but only to help the churches in Ontario. Accordingly, \$200.00 was offered to each of the first ten Presbyterian country churches to be built in Ontario.⁵ Much of Knox was built with the endowment derived from Mr. Buchanan's offer.

The church building reportedly started in 1844 and completed in 1845, was built by volunteer labour,

the timber cut and hewn with broad axe on the site. It would appear from the variance of thickness of the roof boards that they would have been ripped by pit saw on the site. The building was of frame construction, studded and lathed inside and out, plastered inside and rough cast outside, the ceiling and roof supports were of sturdy hewn timber. The builders would probably have had experience in boat building as well as house building. Most of the homes on Islay would have been of stone with roofs of heather thatch. They must have been pleased to find such a wealth of building materials as Islay of that day was almost devoid of trees. The seats were some of squared timber and others of rough sawn planks set on blocks of wood. The trustees of the congregation were John Rutherford and Finlay McKay.

In 1845, John Galbraith obtained from the crown, the south half of Lot 10, Concession 9, ⁶ (Hunter's History of Simcoe County reports that this same lot was settled by Duncan McMillan and his wife in 1831. He was so dissatisfied with the scarcity of water that he traded the lot for a cow and moved to Jarratt. He received no deed for this land). Since the church had already been built by 1845, it is quite plausible that the land was bought on verbal agreement, and the formal papers drawn up at such time as was convenient to all parties concerned.

The church was officially opened the last Sunday of June, 1845. The Minister for the occasion being



REVEREND JOHN MacTAVISH OF WOODVILLE

Reverend MacTavish came from Eldon Township. He helped to organize Knox and he presided over the first service in 1845.

the Rev. John McTavish of Woodville, his text First Corinthians, Chapter 3, Verse 11 - "Other foundations can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ".⁷ It must have been a day of great rejoicing for those who had so long waited for a place of worship that was truly their own. It must be remembered that there would have been two services that day, one in English, the other in Gaelic. More than two-thirds of the congregation were Gaelic speaking. There also would have been some who would understand both languages.

Although the cross road between Lots 10 and 11 across the Township (Old Barrie Road) at that time better known as the Orillia Road, was surveyed before, due to the number of hills between concession lines 5 and 10, deviations had to be made years later, (1847)⁸. One can appreciate that travel to and from Knox Church would have been difficult (Figure 1).

It is said that settlers would walk to church in their bare feet putting on their shoes only to enter the church, removing them again for the journey home. After sitting on those rough sawed planks for up to 3 hours, they would be glad to use their feet and rest their seat.

An unsurveyed settler's road ran from Knox Church corner diagonally north east to the next concession line. The story is told that a woman going to spend Christmas with relatives, was murdered while walking this road in 1853.

John Scott surveyed and mapped out the grounds of Old Knox Church. The surveying of the lots, north side of the Church, was reportedly done by him in 1846.⁹

The registry office records that in 1852, registered in 1855, John Galbraith sold to the trustees of the Presbyterian Congregation of Oro for the sum of 6 pounds, 5 shillings, a 2 acre parcel on the south east $\frac{1}{4}$ of Lot 10, Concession 9, described thus: commencing on the east line limit of the lot, 1 chain northerly from the south east corner, then north 6 chains, 78 links,¹⁰ then west 2 chains, 95 links, then south 6 chains, 78 links, then east 2 chains, 95 links to the place of the beginning, and 1 chain breadth along the southerly end of said two acres for a road, and the use of a well belonging to John Galbraith.¹¹ (See figure 2)

It was some years before they were able to secure the services of a permanent minister. In the intervening years, they were led in worship by ruling elders who were ordained to lead the congregation in praise and prayer. Those ruling elders were namely, Lachlan Galbraith, John McPhayden, Archibald Gillespie Angus Galbraith and Alexander McNabb. The Rev. John McTavish of Woodville also visited the parish at irregular intervals to administer the sacraments and lend guidance to elders and congregation. Lachlan McMillan, Mr. Matheson and Charles Cameron, students at the newly opened Knox College, Toronto also

conducted services here.

The first permanently stationed minister was the Rev. John Gray who came to Orillia in 1851. Records do not tell us whether or not Rev. Gray preached in both languages. We do know he ministered to the English speaking congregation until Esson Church was opened in 1865, after which he continued to minister to that congregation, and to the Presbyterians in Orillia.

The church was built with the intention of securing a minister who could preach in both English and Gaelic. Early records are very sketchy, but it would appear that within a few years of opening, due to the difficulty of securing a Gaelic speaking Minister, the people were formed into two congregations. The English speaking were known as Knox Church East and the Gaelic speaking as Knox Church West. Some friction developed between them over time of service and use of church property. There were other reasons for a splintering of this fledgling congregation.

Due to road conditions, the great distance over which the congregation was spread, it was very difficult for the people to regularly attend services at Knox. Therefore, before and after Knox was opened, services were held in the vicinity of Guthrie known as the Oa (Oa having been a parish in Islay), Mitchell Square, Leigh's Corner and the Town Line (Jarratt). These were known as stations of Knox. In 1861, the Guthrie people built their own Presbyterian church on

the site of the present day Guthrie United Church. While some of the Gaelic speaking continued to come to Knox, many left to attend the new church which was opened in 1862.

Between 1845 and 1859 no written records are available for Knox. It seems inconceivable that neither the session nor the congregation held meetings for 14 years. We assume, then, that these records have somehow been lost. Session meetings were held only with Elders and Deacons. An ordained Minister needed to be present. The chairman was called a Moderator. Matters of a spiritual nature were discussed.

Congregational meetings, on the other hand, were open to all members of the congregation. At these meetings, business matters were discussed. Church repairs and maintenance were often on the agenda.

OCTOBER, 1859 - NOVEMBER, 1891

FIRST SESSION MEETING, OCTOBER 20, 1859

The earliest written records in our possession date back to October, 1859 when the Rev. James Stewart came to Minister to the Gaelic congregation. At his first session meeting, present besides the moderator were elders Angus Galbraith, John McLean and Alexander McNabb; Deacons Archibald Bell, Wm. McPhee and Donald McCalman. At this meeting they had to deal with the case of John Johnstone who had been guilty of "ante nuptial fornication" and had been denied the privileges of the church.

After rebuke and admonishment he was returned to full membership, the session being satisfied of his repentance.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL MEETING, MARCH 15, 1860

The first record we have of a congregational meeting is within Knox Church March 15, 1860. This was a joint meeting of the two congregations. Rev. James Stewart was chairman, George Tudhope was secretary and Rev. John Gray was also present. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the propriety of building a shed and erecting a fence around the church property. "This fence to be built with good rich lumber, 6" to 12" wide and posts 3' in the ground". It was also resolved to build a stable for use of Rev. Stewart and Rev. Gray (presumably for their horses). At this meeting it was recommended that the habit of chewing tobacco in church during service be discontinued. The use of church property between the two (English speaking and Gaelic speaking) congregations was also discussed. It was decided that on the Lord's Day the building would be occupied by the Gaelic congregations until a quarter before 2:00 p.m., after which time it would be occupied by the English congregation. When the sacraments (Communion) were being dispensed that particular congregation would have the use of the building for the whole day.

When the communion season was on, the following days were observed. Friday - A day of humiliation;

Saturday - A day of preparation: the sabbath when elements (bread and wine) would be dispensed, followed by a day of thanksgiving (Monday). Ministers and elders from other congregations were invited and expected to attend these services.

CONGREGATION MEETING (GAELIC) NOVEMBER 25, 1862

Rev. James Ferguson was chairman of the meeting. It was disclosed that the north half of Lot 10, Concession 9, had been bought (for the use of any Minister who might be established among us) to be paid for by subscription of \$2.00 per family.

Reading the minutes recorded during 1860 through 1864 left some doubt as to whom was Minister. Often, sessional meetings were moderated by another man of the cloth. For example, although Rev. James Stewart was Minister from 1859 (October), as early as 1860 we have the Rev. James Ferguson acting clerk at both session and congregational meetings. Rev. Stewart session meetings were held in October, 1859, March, 1860, July 6 & 7, 1861, March 9, 1861 and a congregational meeting March 15, 1861. We have a record of him baptizing one child. There may have been others of which we have no record.

SESSION MEETING, NOVEMBER 4, 1863

Rev. Wm Fraser moderated the meeting at the home of Alexander Fletcher. The elders put forward a motion to petition Presbytery to send one of their members to dispense the Lord's supper.

During the period from 1860 to 1865 much of the time of both session and congregational meetings was taken up with the dispute between the two language groups over the use of the church property. When it became apparent that the two congregations could not reach agreement (it would have been interesting to have record of some of the arguments in English, broken English and Gaelic), the Presbytery of Toronto recommended that the Gaelic congregation pay to the English congregation the value of their share in the church property. To this end, arbitrators were appointed on both sides and Wm. Clark agreed to act for the Gaelic congregation. The award was that the Gaelic congregation pay to the English congregation, the sum of two hundred and twenty-five dollars, this sum to be paid in two equal payments, the first being January 1, 1865, the remainder January 1, 1866. The English congregation was to have the use of the church until four months after final payment. The cost of arbitrators was to be borne equally. As a result, Esson Church was opened in 1865 with Rev. Gray continuing to minister to Esson as well as Orillia. Thus ended the long language dispute but the fragmentation of the original Knox congregation was to continue for some time yet.

The meetings concerning the separation of the two congregations were moderated by the Reverend, (later Doctor), Wm. Fraser of Bond Head. Dr. Fraser was a native of Nova Scotia and spoke Gaelic fluently. He

was Minister at Bond Head for 44 years. His death occurred in Barrie, Christmas Day 1892 at the age of 85 years.¹²

In 1865, Willis Church, Jarratt, was opened. There is very little in Knox Church records of how this came about. Meetings had been held at the "Town Line" for sometime prior to this. However, now having three new congregations, Guthrie, Esson and Willis, the Knox congregation lost some members and also some financial support.

As mentioned before, from reading the minutes of this period, it is not exactly clear which minister had complete charge of the congregation. Three names prevail, those of the Reverends Fraser, Stewart and Ferguson.

On October 4, 1863 thirty-two children were baptized by Rev. James Ferguson. During Rev. Ferguson's pastorate, he baptized just under 300 persons. One of these being Malcolm, son of Alexander (Sandy) MacDuff and Flora McMillan, April 6, 1874. From church records it would appear that there were 75 names on the communion rolls in 1864.

On January 6, 1864 a session meeting was held within the home of Rev. James Ferguson. This meeting was moderated by Rev. Wm. Fraser. At a session meeting within Knox Church, September 8, 1864, it is recorded that Rev. James Ferguson had been inducted into the charge July 13, 1864. Although the exact location of his home was not recorded, minutes show

that Rev. Ferguson was associated with the church before his induction.

Rev. Ferguson inherited a congregation that was almost totally Gaelic speaking; although some of the problems had been solved, still more had to be faced. Minutes recorded during this period indicate that there was prevailing sickness in the congregation and prolonged drought throughout the country. Financial problems then as now, were ever present. There was still money owing to Rev. Stewart, former minister, plus a house rent of \$9.00 to be paid to Alex McLucas. The Minister's salary, \$480.00 half yearly, was due and \$100.00 plus interest owing on the glebe¹³ lot. A soiree¹⁴ had to be held early in the new year (1865) to raise money for the arrears fund. As a result of these financial pressures the congregation requested a grant from Presbytery to help in making up the Minister's salary.

RANDOM SELECTIONS FROM MINUTES - 1864 - 1865

The session "hails the spontaneous efforts of the sabbath school teachers with the children". The missionary association of the congregation was set up, its purpose to raise money for the missionary work. Fifteen ladies of the congregation were appointed to do the collecting. Thanks of the session to the trustees of the Town Line, Leigh's, the Oa and number eight school trustees for use of the school for singing classes in connection with the congregation.

JOINT CONGREGATIONAL MEETING - JANUARY 12, 1866

This meeting was held in Guthrie Church specifically to deal with a request by Presbytery that Guthrie join with Barrie. Knox claimed that Guthrie was still its station and again it was a battle of languages, the English wishing to join with Barrie, the Gaelic wishing to remain with Knox. The meeting had been publically announced, but none of the English speaking attended. Money was still owed to Rev. James Stewart which apparently the English were supposed to pay. They had been getting this service "without any remuneration whatever". It was resolved that the Guthrie congregation retain their connection with Knox. At this meeting collectors were named to raise money to pay off the remaining debt on glebe lot.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING, JANUARY 31, 1866

It was moved by Archibald Bell and seconded by John Johnstone, that immediate steps be taken toward building a manse¹⁵ on the glebe lot, north east quarter Lot 10, Concession 9. Money to be raised by subscription,¹⁶ one third to be paid April 1, 1867, one third October 1, 1867 and one third April 1, 1868. The matter of taking timber from the bush to the saw mill was left to the Deacons.

JULY 14, 1866

The following elders and deacons were ordained into the congregation: Elders John Johnstone, Peter McArthur, Peter Smith, Dugald Carmichael and Wm.

McLarty. Deacons Alexander Fletcher, Donald McIntyre, Peter McArthur, Archibald Reid and Peter McLean were named as well.

The right hand of fellowship¹⁷ having been given the newly ordained elders and deacons, they and the people were suitably addressed as to their duties and responsibilities, in Gaelic by the Rev. Greenfield, and in English by Dr. Burns, Professor of Church History, Knox College.

SESSION MEETING - JANUARY 14, 1867

A circular from the Rev. David Inglis concerning psalmody¹⁸ was read. After due consideration the session unanimously agreed to answer as follows: "The Psalms of David and they alone are used in the public worship and they consider it dangerous, if not subversive to the cause of vital Godliness to elevate any human composition, however excellent, to an equality with them. The session would most respectfully suggest to the committee that in their opinion it would be better to let the whole subject of the Psalmody of the church remain at rest."

SESSION MEETING, MAY 28, 1864

The elders and deacons met in the Council room of Galbraith Hotel. The purpose of the meeting was to arrange for the observance of the Lord's Supper.

Incidentally, the Hotel was situated on the south east $\frac{1}{4}$, Lot 10, Concession 9 (Figure 2), just

west of the old burying ground on the parcel purchased by the trustees in 1975. The property is now part of the present cemetery. The Hotel and stage coach stop were operated by John Galbraith, native of Islay (1803 - 1886).¹⁹ Which was built first - the church or the hotel, we don't know. It is on record that a Council meeting was held in this hotel in 1850. It might be of interest to the reader that across the corner in Lot 11, north west quarter, Concession 10, there was also a hotel which was used as a post office from 1865 to 1875.²⁰

Other hotels, Morningstar (east $\frac{1}{2}$, Lot 11, Concession 6), the Bullfrog (north west $\frac{1}{4}$, Lot 16, Concession 7), one at Jarratt's corner and several in Hawkestone were a great thorn in the side of Rev. James Ferguson, as drinking was most evident, especially at funerals. From minutes of session meeting October 16, 1869 "the attention of the court was called to take cognizance of certain infringements of the law regarding liquor selling on the Lord's day in the neighbourhood, and it was agreed that Dugald Carmichael, Alex McNabb and Archibald Bell be appointed a deputation to admonish certain parties relative to said infringements".

November, 1867, trustees of burying ground to lay out plots and roads about half the size of the old ones for use of persons belonging to the congregation and that space be set aside for those not belonging to the congregation.

STATE OF RELIGION JANUARY 26, 1870

Circulars were distributed annually by the Presbytery. In answer to a circular of that date - "Religious teaching by parents not carried out by some. Some families observe family worship, many do not. Prayer meetings tolerably well attended. Shorter catechism used. The session cannot say that there is any marked change in the religion in the past year. The session regrets to say that intemperance prevails to a greater extent, yet they rejoice that several members testify against the drinking usages by total abstinence".

EXCERPTS FROM MINUTES 1870 - 1891

IN 1871

The congregation still owed money on the manse and glebe lot. A bank note was coming due, in arrears with the Minister's salary. Seven hundred and one dollars had been raised for the year from all sources and pressure was put on members to pay up subscriptions. It was decided to collect minister's salary through envelope system.

IN 1872

Prayer and revival meetings were held and attendance was very small. Intemperance on decrease. Thirteen copies of book of forms were obtained for use of elders and deacons. Some new members were added.

ANNUAL MEETING, CHRISTMAS DAY, 1873

George Shaw's account (for wood) for 1872 to be paid. Envelope system to be continued, list of defaulters given to Deacons and reported to Deacon's court. The supplement of \$50.00 per year from Presbytery for past three years was discontinued. Tribute paid to late Alexander Fletcher who had devoted so much of his time and energy to the betterment of the church and community - effort still being made to pay off debt on manse. Matter of fencing the burying ground was considered. It may be noted that in those years, farmers allowed their animals to pasture on the road or any "common" ground in the area. Papers relative to the contemplated union of all Presbyterians was considered, no action was taken.

IN 1874

The deeds of the church grounds and glebe lot were to be deposited with Dugald Carmichael for safe keeping, and all other books and records belonging to the session, congregation and deacons court to his charge as well.

Rev. James Ferguson resigned from the pastorate early in 1874. He had been with them for more than nine years. Many changes had taken place during his pastorate. New members had joined, others had left. Some of the land that had been cleared by the first settlers, but was found to be dry and sandy was now vacant, the settlers or their offspring moving to

better farms. The communion roll shows seventy communicants in 1874 so there was not a significant change in number from 1864 - then, there being seventy-five. Rev. Ferguson seems to have been well loved by his congregation and they were sorry to see him leave.

It may be of interest to the reader, that among these men of God, the Rev. John Gray, Rev. James Stewart and Rev. James Ferguson were superintendents of education for Oro Township for a total of nineteen years, 1852 to 1871.²¹ They were concerned with the quality of life of the whole community as well as the spiritual well being of their own congregation. We noted that, at this time, 1874 - 1875, services in the Oa (Guthrie) were to be preached in Gaelic in the morning, English in the afternoon.

IN 1875

The Rev. John McLean was inducted into the charge, February 17, 1875. Dugald Carmichael was deputed to speak with some members who had left the congregation to join Guthrie, and who now wish to return to Knox. "Elder John McLean was deputed to speak with Mrs. Morrison regarding some reports circulating concerning her and report back to the session" (no further details given). August 25, 1875 communion services held in the town hall as the church was under repair and was not ready for services. In the matter of Peter Smith and Mrs. Findlay McKay,

John McLean (elder) and Peter Smith were appointed a committee to look into the matter and report to session after service (no further details).

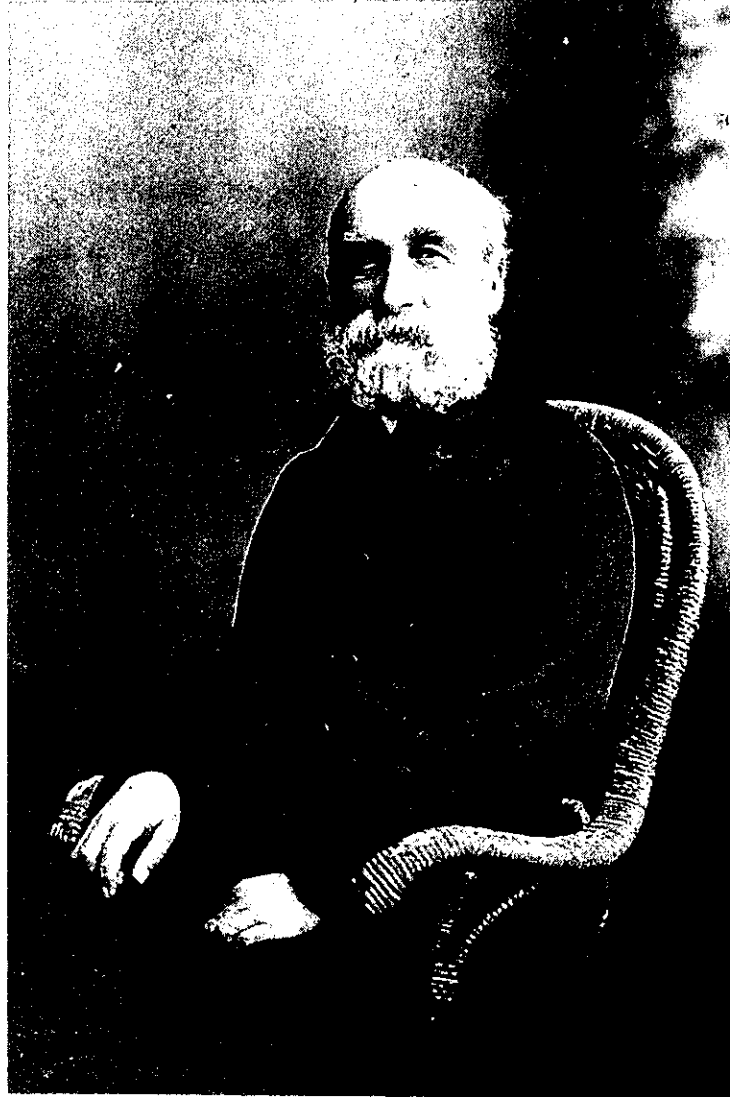
Rev. John McLean died in 1876, while he was Minister at Knox, but no notice or actual date of his death was given. On his inspection of the session book July 27, 1879 Rev. Duncan McDowell noted - "Rev. Fairbairn moderator without notice of appointment. Minute sheets not signed by moderator, no notice of appointment of Rev. Sinclair as session clerk, no notice of death of Rev. John McLean, no reference of induction of Rev. Henry Sinclair". It is recorded that Rev. John McLean baptized Alexander James Fletcher March 26, 1876. He also baptized a child born June 9, 1876 but no date of baptism was recorded. We assume he died sometime after these entries.

CONGREGATION MEETING, MAY 18, 1877

It was agreed that as the manse was disused no trespassing signs should be put up. At this meeting it was decided that "as the people do not come out to hear him, the services of Mr. Angus McLeod will be better dispensed with". Mr. McLeod must have been pulpit supply for at least a few Sundays. What his qualifications were was not recorded.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING SEPTEMBER 17, 1877

Money was needed to pay balance to Mr. McLeod and to pay Donald Gilchrist's note (Glebe and Manse). It was ordered that Mrs. McMillan be paid for



REVEREND HENRY SINCLAIR

Minister at Knox c. 1878 - 1882

Photo courtesy of Simcoe County Archives.

scrubbing the church. The clerk to write to home missions to try to obtain Rev. Henry Sinclair for one or two sabbaths.

MARCH 1878

Twenty-three dollars and sixty cents had been raised to pay Mr. Angus McLeod and twenty-nine dollars and seventy-one cents to pay the salary of the late Rev. John McLean. Session was to try to get Rev. John McKay as pulpit supply for one month. It was agreed at the meeting that the west half of Glebe lot, (north west $\frac{1}{4}$ Lot 10, Concession 9) should be sold. Fifty acres asking price \$600.00 - ad to be put in Orillia Times and Expositor, interest paid to Donald Gilchrist on \$204.00 note at 8%. June 5, 1878 call extended to Rev. Donald McLeod, salary \$500.00 plus use of crop and wood. Apparently, Rev. McLeod did not accept call.

SEPTEMBER 19, 1878

Call extended to Rev. Henry Sinclair of Rosemont, salary \$600.00. Congregation had to give reasons as to why or why not a minister should "translate" from one congregation to another. The reasons in this instance were - (1) it is very difficult to secure a minister who can preach in Gaelic (there seemed to be a difference between a minister who can speak in Gaelic and one who could preach in Gaelic) (2) Rev. Sinclair could preach in Gaelic (3) in his present charge he was preaching in English.

During the time between Rev. John McLean and Rev. Henry Sinclair, Rev. Fairbairn of Willis, acted as moderator and children were baptized by the Rev. D.B. Cameron, Rev. D. MacDonald and Rev. Wright.

SESSION MEETING MARCH 8, 1878

This gathering was held in the manse. The Rev. Henry Sinclair had been inducted into the charge and the manse was once more being used. Gaelic was to be preached in the morning and English in the afternoon. The west part of the Glebe lot, north west $\frac{1}{4}$ Lot 10, Concession 9 was sold to W.F. Clark for \$600.00. It is worthy of note that Mr. Clark sold same lot to Duncan Morrison in 1891 for \$800.00, having reserved the right to cut and remove all the pine, elm, basswood and butternut.

JULY 24, 1879

The following were elected to eldership - Angus McCuaig, John McCuaig, Wm. McPhee, Peter McArthur, Arch Bell, Alex Fletcher and James Coates. Elected Deacons were James Livingstone, John McArthur, Donald McLellan, Duncan McLean, Alex Woodrow, Duncan McCuaig, Angus McMillan, Nichol McIntyre, Hugh McKerroll. The last two declined office.

OCTOBER 15, 1879

A letter came from Dugald Carmichael, former clerk and treasurer who had left the congregation earlier in the year (now of Emerson, Manitoba),

requesting certificate of disjunction for himself, wife and daughter.

NOVEMBER 8, 1879

Trustees to see to repairs to church, also to obtain 2000 rails for the Glebe lot. November 5, 1880, James Coates, Wm. Smith and Neil Beaton to sell all pine inside fence on Glebe lot.

APRIL 5, 1881

A joint meeting of the session and deacons court was held to consider the case of Dugald Carmichael, former elder and treasurer, now of Emerson, Manitoba. This case was concerning monies collected on the death of Rev. John McLean between \$30.00 and \$40.00. Also \$2.00 said to have been paid by him to Miss McMillan, and sixty cents to Angus McMillan for scrubbing the church. This money had not been properly accounted for on the balance sheet when Mr. Carmichael left the congregation. At least five sessions and joint meetings of session and deacons court were held to try to clear up the matter. Finally it went to Presbytery and at a joint meeting in Knox Church after prolonged discussions, the clerk was ordered to forward the certificates to Mr. Carmichael. On the final vote, four voted for, one against and three abstained.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING JULY 13, 1882

This meeting was called to consider the resignation of Rev. Henry Sinclair from

the pastorage of Knox to go to the charge of North Rama and Longford.

Because of the difficulty of securing a Gaelic speaking minister, the congregation was very sorry to see him leave. Rev. Sinclair was with the congregation about four years, during which time he baptized 64 persons, the last being Archibald Currie, son of Arch. Currie and Flora Galbraith. Manitoba had been opened for colonization, so quite a number had left to take up a new life there. As has been said, much of the time at the session meetings was taken up with the Carmichael case. It was very difficult to determine from records how many members were on the roll when Rev. Sinclair left.

A. McMillan, a decendant of the Duncan McMillan who, reportedly, had first settled on lot where church is situated is quoted as saying "Rev. Henry Sinclair, Minister of old Knox Church Oro in the late 1870's and early 1880's, conducted services in both Gaelic and English, a sermon in Gaelic first to a large congregation which filled the church, and after a few minutes intermission, a sermon for the English speaking congregation which was not so large. The long shed would be filled with horses and double buggies. The late arrivals would have to tie their horses to the fence posts. Rev. and Mrs. Sinclair died in Toronto, both at a good old age". When he was leaving the congregation they gave him the crop, including the straw to dispose of at his pleasure. The congregation

was to pay for the harvesting and threshing as usual.

After Rev. Sinclair left the congregation in 1882, there is a record of different moderators including Rev. Grant, Rev. D. McLeod and Rev. Wm. Fraser. A student, Mr. H.C. Howard ministered as supply part of the time. The Rev. John Morrison moderated at session meeting July 11, 1884, although he wasn't inducted into the charge until 1885. During this time, the Presbytery of Barrie had united Guthrie and Knox into one charge. Meanwhile, services were also being held in the Town Hall station. Consideration was given to moving the congregation to a new site, one being north $\frac{1}{4}$, Lot 16, Concession 8, another being north west $\frac{1}{4}$, Lot 15, Concession 8. No action was taken at that time as there was not a permanent minister among them. January 30, 1884, Peter Smith (trustee) reported paying \$5.30 on Glebe lot, also \$2.00 statute labour. During this time the manse was vacant.

OCTOBER 1884

Rev. McDonald and Rev. Fraser were dealing with the subscription list. Money was forever a problem. Thirty names on the list raised \$123.00 and pledged \$220.00. Perhaps 10 more families would subscribe and come to church if a Gaelic speaking minister were secured - obviously, preaching in Gaelic was still important.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING JANUARY 1885

John McNiven and Alex Woodrow were elected trustees. Mr. McNiven was also to be Secretary-Treasurer.

It was unanimously agreed that a meeting of the congregation be held July 12 for the purpose of building a church at Mitchell Square. (There are no records of this meeting in the congregational minutes).

Rev. John Morrison resigned from the charge September, 1886. The reasons for his resignation being that he was not getting the results he had hoped for - so he said! Apparently the Presbytery pressed the Reverend for an explanation. He was told to sow the seed and leave the results to God. During his ministry at Knox he baptized 14 persons, the last being John McLarty, September 21, 1886.

At a session meeting December 21, 1886 Rev. James Ferguson authorized to preside as moderator in place of Rev. Wm. Fraser. From December 21, 1886 to April 26, 1887 Rev. James Ferguson baptized 31 persons.

SESSION MEETING MARCH 3, 1887

The meeting was held at the home of Peter Smith to consider the rearrangement of the Oro congregation as urged by Presbytery of Barrie. The purpose of the meeting was to arrange for a congregational meeting to consider the matter of disposing of the manse and Glebe lot and also of moving the church building nearer to Guthrie as urged by the Presbytery. Meeting to

be held March 11. There is no record of that gathering. A further meeting at the home of Mrs. A. Fletcher, March 21, 1887 was called to consider supply for Guthrie and Knox. It was resolved that Knox would agree to the wishes of Guthrie. As a result a canvas was taken south of the Barrie Road. The session was of the opinion that the congregation should proceed with the erection of a new church. They wanted direction from Presbytery as to how the vote should be taken (from the communion roll or otherwise).

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING NOVEMBER 24, 1887

"It was unanimously agreed that as Edgar is entirely outside the bounds of our congregation, we cannot meet for public worship there and as the Town Hall is the most convenient and central place for our people, and we are accustomed to worship there occasionally for 12 years or more...."

It appeared by this time (1887) that the momentum to build a new church in a more central location was not to be stopped.

The Rev. A.F. MacKenzie was inducted into the pastoral charge of Knox Church which included Town Hall Station. February 14, 1888 at a subsequent meeting Wm. McPhee, Alex Woodrow, Finally McKay and John McNiven were nominated to be elders of Knox but there was nothing to indicate that they were ordained to eldership. At a meeting February 24, 1888 it was moved that the "various minister's board be paid to

Mrs. John McArthur"...."Moved and carried that a new church be built in the vicinity of the Town Hall."

JUNE 11, 1888

A scant three months later during a meeting at Knox Church, it was moved and carried that Gilbert McArthur, plasterer, be asked to look at the manse with view to having it repaired. Neil Beaton agreed to bring sand and lath for repairing of manse. Alex Woodrow to bring lime. They were to be paid at the rate of \$2.00 per day. Charles McArthur and John McNiven to look after building a fence from the manse to the pasture.

At a meeting held in Knox Church it was agreed by majority of those present that the manse and Glebe would not be sold or the present place of worship moved. (Resistance to the very end).

The year 1889 was taken up with the planning for a building of the new church to be known as Central Presbyterian Church. Built on part of the south west $\frac{1}{2}$, Lot 15, Concession 8, Central Presbyterian Church was opened Sunday November 3, 1889.

The Rev. Alex MacKenzie ministered to both stations, both known as the congregation of Knox. Rev. MacKenzie lived in the manse on the Glebe lot which seemed to be continually in need of repair. In July, 1891 consideration was given to the matter of re-shingling the manse and also to insuring it. There were bills for repairing the pump (cistern) on a

couple of occasions. There were also items for hay, presumably for the minister's horse. It would appear that the Glebe was not being farmed.

CONGREGATION (KNOX) MEETING, AUGUST 12, 1891

Interestingly, this meeting concerning Knox was held in Central Church. After some discussion about closing the old church, "it was moved by Wm. McPhee, seconded by Alex Woodrow that we ask the Presbytery of Barrie at its next meeting to take steps about closing old Knox before winter sets in. Moved by Angus McCuaig and Alex Gilchrist that in the event of old Knox being closed we ask Presbytery to dispose of the manse and Glebe, the proceeds to be applied to procuring a manse in a more convenient or central place".

1891 - 1912

Knox church was closed November 15, 1891. As has already been recorded, services had been held at the Town Hall as early as 1875, although not always regularly. So one can appreciate that the congregation of the new church "Central" was more or less a continuance of the original congregation. Some church members in the north and east left to join Esson or Willis.

It is recorded that in canvassing for money to pay for the new church, the canvassers went as far north as the Town Line. Central still had a Gaelic speaking minister in the person of Alex MacKenzie, so this would account for some of the older people atten-

ding Central Church where at least some of the services were held in Gaelic - English in the morning, Gaelic in the afternoon. Rev. Alex MacKenzie resigned May, 1892. During his pastorate he baptized 63 persons, the last of whom was Andrew, son of Neil Beaton and Flora McEachern.

After the resignation of Rev. Alex MacKenzie there were various ministers and supplies at Central. During this time the sacraments were dispensed in Gaelic by the Rev. Henry Sinclair, former minister at Knox (October 15, 1893).

Central and Guthrie were united into one charge and the Rev. Neil Campbell was inducted early in 1894 into the charge. Up to this time the session meetings had all been constituted as the session of Knox Church. On July 7, 1896 the sacraments were dispensed in Central Church when over 100 persons sat at the table. On October 31, 1897 the sacraments were dispensed in Central Church in the Gaelic language by the Rev. James Carmichael when almost 50 persons sat at the table. It is to be noted that only the Gaelic speaking elders were present, namely Peter McArthur, Alex Gilchrist, Angus McCuaig, Wm. McLarty and Wm. McNabb.

St. Andrews Church, Oro Station, was opened in 1894. Thus, from a single central congregation in 1845 over a period of 39 years, five viable congregations had developed by 1894. The Gaelic speaking people have gone from a majority to a minority.

Many of the sons and daughters of the original settlers moved to western Canada, where they again, no doubt, pioneered in the opening of new places of worship in the new settlements.

MARCH 8, 1892

On the Rev. Alex MacKenzie's leaving the congregation the manse was again empty. The managers were now determined to dispose of it. At a meeting of the managers March 8, 1892, "After some discussion about disposing of the manse and the Glebe, it was moved by John McArthur and Neil Morrison that we see Mr. Woodrow and if he doesn't want to buy it, that we let Mr. Crawford have it for the sum of \$800.00 if we cannot get anymore out of him."

So it was that on March 22, 1892 the trustees of Knox Church sold the manse and Glebe lot (north east $\frac{1}{4}$, Lot 10, Concession 9) to Mr. George Crawford who already owned Lot 9, Concession 9, for the sum of \$800.00. George Crawford sold the property to his son Charles in 1901, the manse building being their home until 1926 when Mr. Crawford tore it down using the timbers to build present home of Mrs. Breeden. The manse was on lower ground behind the present house. The building had been rough cast on the outside, the timber of good clear white pine having been straight sawn (not sawn with a circular saw), studs being 3" thick and much wider at one end than the other. The house was very cold and in the spring the water would

come into the basement to a depth of three feet. The source of information on the manse, Edgar Crawford and Mrs. Edna (Crawford) Livingstone, children of Charles Crawford.

MEETING OF MANAGERS OF KNOX CHURCH MAY 16, 1892

At a meeting of the managers of Knox Church on May 16, 1892, it was agreed to pay John McNiven \$25.00 for services as bookkeeper at Knox Church. "The first day of June was appointed to go up to Knox to clear away the old shed and that John McNiven meet us there and bring his books with him." It would appear that this was closing the books as concerning the old congregation of Knox. This also brings up the matter of the shed. Which old shed were they going to clear away?

In 1860 a motion was put forward to build sheds for the use of Rev. Gray and Rev. Stewart. At a later meeting it was agreed to build a shed at the front of the church. We know that there was a shed at the front of the church, this would probably have been used for storage of wood. Comment by McMillan re: Rev. Henry Sinclair's pastorage, "long shed filled with horses", lead us to believe that sheds were built to protect the horses who often had to stand for 2 - 3 hours in the bitter cold. My grandmother used to refer to the burying ground north of the church as the old part, and to that south of the church as the new part. Would it be possible that the

Knox Church around 1905 in a state of grave disrepair



south part was not used as a burying ground until after the church was closed and the stables torn down?

THE CEMETERY AND CHURCH BUILDING

From the closing of Knox Church November, 1891 up until 1900 no record of any transactions concerning burial plots, or of any meeting of trustees or interested persons could be found. In 1900 there are two entries of sales of burial plots, receipts signed by Wm. Shaw. In 1906 there is an entry under the heading "Knox Cemetery Improvement Committee". Twelve dollars was received from various people and starting in 1906 all receipts are signed by W. Forrester.

EXCERPTS FROM MINUTES OF CENTRAL CHURCH ORO JANUARY 19, 1906

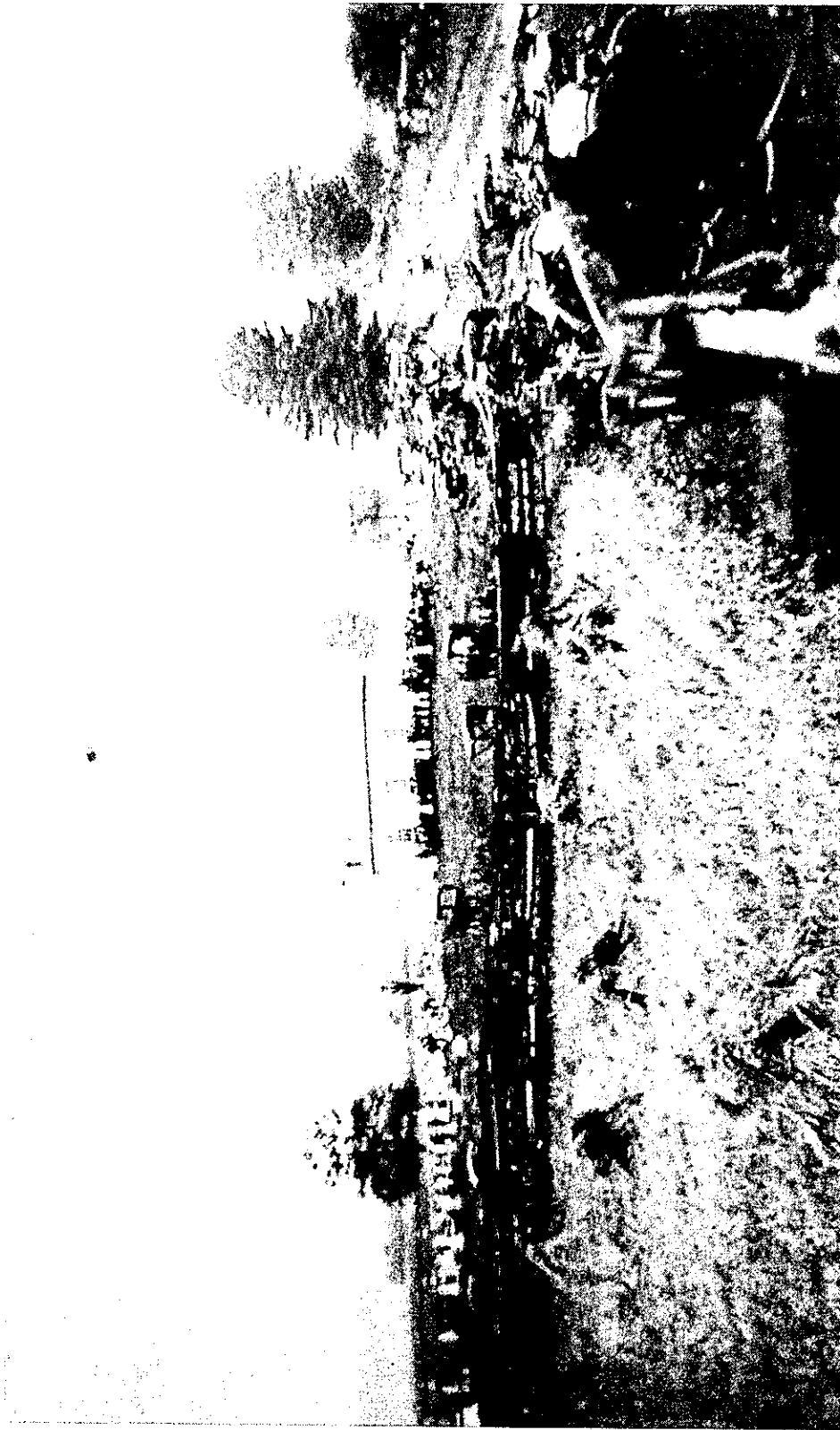
"We the managers of Central Church agree to Walter Forrester as caretaker of Knox Church cemetery with power to sell lots at \$5.00 each and retain \$1.00 for each lot he sells and to give a full report with all the monies due to the Secretary of the Central Church at the end of the year. Caretaker to keep gate closed, repair fence and cut all coarse weeds with privilege to cut any hay that grows. I do hereby agree to these terms - signed Walter Forrester".

In the winter of 1908, seven men were appointed as a board of control for Knox Cemetery to be known as the Knox Cemetery Board of Managers: Gilbert Smith, Peter McCuaig, Wm. McArthur from Central Presbyterian,

Walter Forrester and Henry Tudhope from Esson, Andrew McNabb and James Woodrow from Willis. The board met on May 25, 1908. "The meeting was called to order and convened on the grass on the north east corner of the cemetery". A letter was drafted and 300 copies ordered to be printed and mailed to interested plot holders. What was in that letter cannot be determined. The caretaker was instructed to notify any person obstructing the walks or plots other than their own with earth, stone or other rubbish, to remove such rubbish at once. It was agreed that the old building should be kept locked and that the president should call a meeting of the board as soon as enough money was realized to construct a new fence. At that time a set of by-laws governing the proceedings of the board were drafted. Meetings have been held each year from that initial meeting in 1908 to the present time.

Perhaps, as a result of the letter having been mailed out following the 1908 meeting, money came in from various sources: Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Michigan, Cobalt, to name just a few. Those who had left the community were remembering their roots.

At subsequent meetings, it would appear that persons other than the trustees who attended the meetings were given the same privileges as the board members, as we find motions being put forward by persons other than the appointed trustees.



Knox Church 1912. This photo is taken on line 9 below the Old Barrie Road. Notice the buggies, stooks and absence of trees!!

The movement prospered. Money continued to trickle in from near and far. The old fence was sold, barb wire, old posts, 400 rails at 1½ cents a piece. "The gate was given to Robert Storey as his father had given it gratis". One item of expenses "boy and horse redding up brush, etc. 75¢". It would appear that a new fence was erected in 1909.

Through the years 1910-11-12 the restoration continued. Shingles were replaced, pine siding applied all around. New sash in the windows and the interior relathed and plastered and new chimney erected. The old church was probably in better condition then than when new in 1845. This was done with the co-operation of all interested families. Those who lived in the vicinity donated their time and energy. Those from farther away - money as they could afford. In all this the committee was encouraged by the Rev. Neil Campbell who took a keen interest in the restoration. The Baptists of Mitchell Square who were also among the early Oro Settlers, and had buried at Knox also contributed to the cause. Even the ladies who have so far received so little mention were congratulated for their help "in cleaning up".

1912 - 1986

So it was that on Sunday afternoon September 1, 1912 after being unused for 20 years, a service was again held in Old Knox.

"The committee in charge decided that it would be

fitting to hold a memorial service at least once a year, and the first service of this character to commemorate the restoration of the old building was held last Sunday afternoon (September 1, 1912). Notwithstanding the fact that no particular effort was made to announce the re-opening, a very large concourse of people gathered, mostly descendants of the early pioneers who had built the church and worshipped in it. An hour before the time announced for service every seat in the building was occupied, planks were brought into the aisle and the platform steps were utilized by the young people. It is estimated there were about 350 people in the church and almost as many outside unable to obtain admittance".²²

"Rev. Neil Campbell, minister of Central, Guthrie and St. Andrews Oro, presided and preached an eloquent sermon. Rev. A. McVicar of Esson, Willis assisted. Mr. H. Cooke of Orillia acted as precentor of psalmody and led the singing in the old fashioned way without musical accompaniment. Only Psalms were sung, and the Old Hundredth was singularly appropriate for the opening. Also "Unto the Hills", closing with the 23 Psalm sung to the tune Kilmarnock. Mr. Cooke was privileged to use the old tune book, the property of the precentor of fifty years ago, the late Wm. Greenshield. The service was enjoyed by all whose good fortune it was to be present".²³

A letter was read from Rev. Dr. Gray of Orillia who had held services at Knox sixty years earlier.

Rev. Campbell's text - Nehemiah 2:20 "The God of Heaven He will prosper us, therefore we His servants will arise and build".

In the succeeding years the old building has been kept in very good condition being painted and repaired as needed. The burying ground has been improved over the years, the sunken graves being levelled, the grass cut more often. For many years after the restoration, "bees" would be held a short time before the annual memorial service. The trustees would each bring a couple of helpers, with scythes and shovels etc. Mr. Forrester would clip what he could with a horse drawn mower. Later a lawn mower was purchased. For this work those attending would be paid a going rate of pay - twenty or thirty cents an hour for a 10 hour day. In more recent times the "bees" have been discontinued, the cutting of the grass being let out by contract which has proven more satisfactory.

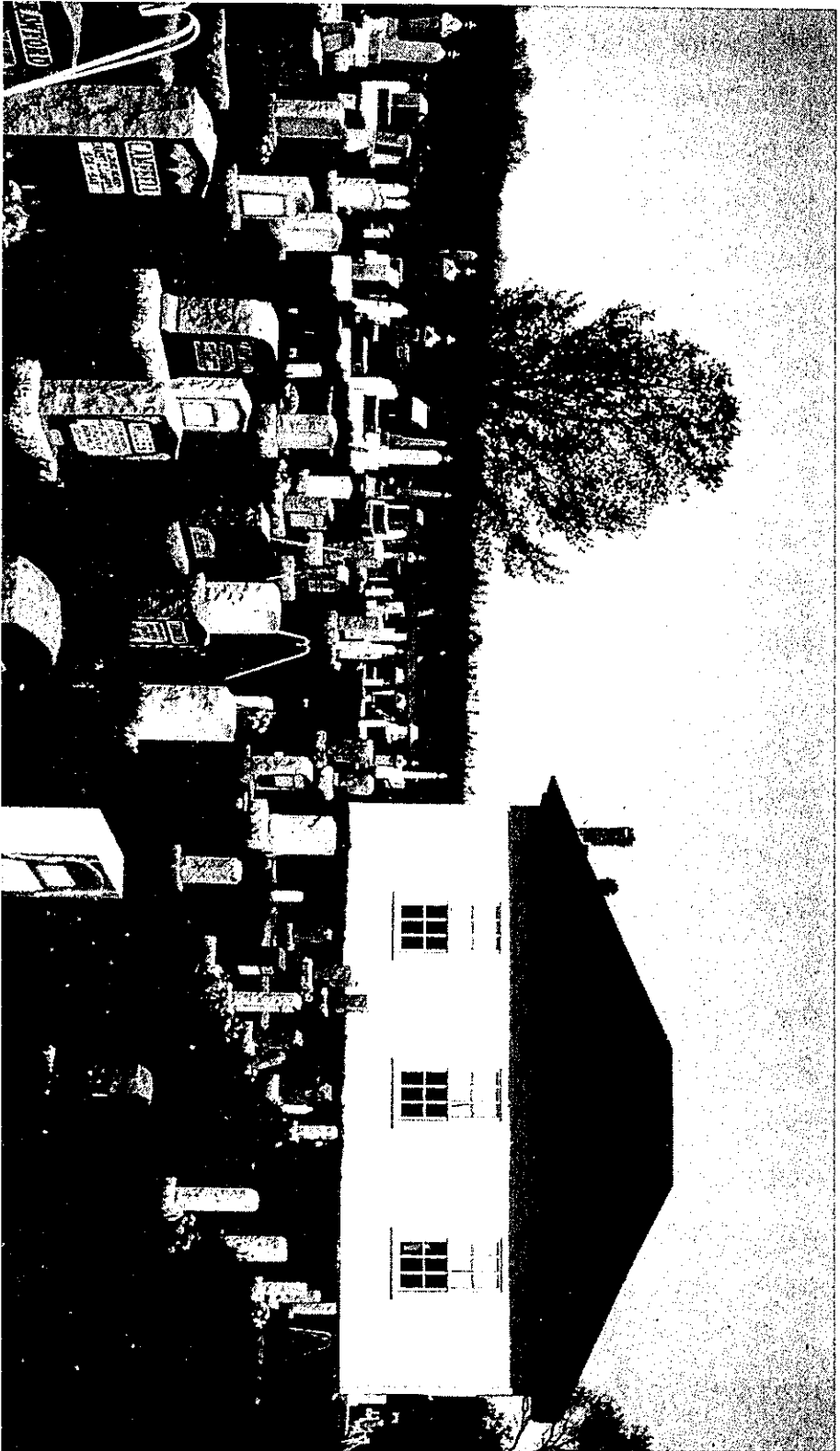
Motion of Woodrow and Campbell in 1919 Mr. Forrester was instructed to build a closet (out house) near the cherry tree, to be 10' x 4' x 6', all the material furnished for the sum of \$40.00.

Relevant to this, a letter came to the committee's attention in 1922. "To the Committee of Knox Cemetery Oro, I am writing this in regard to the breaking of the tomb on my grandfather's plot, and as there is three years since it was broke and nothing said or done about it, you have to place a new one there as good as

the one that was there with all the names on it and the same thickness in the stone, and that building (we presume building to mean the "closet") removed from there as you had no right to put it there without my permission. If it was not there the stone would not have been broke. It will have to be done before the next memorial service or there will be men placed on it to remove it and if any damage will be done, it will be at the expense of the committee. Hoping that you will see to have it done and save costs before legal proceedings will be taken - Yours truly, Arch McIntyre. P.S. let me hear from you at an early date".

So we can see that the trustees had some delicate situations to deal with. No action was taken, but the secretary was instructed to reply with view to having the stone repaired satisfactory to Mr. McIntyre. The closet was never removed!!

On Sunday June 24, 1945 a memorial service was held commemorating the centennial of the formation of the parish. Preachers for the occasion, the Right Rev. J.M. MacGillvary D.D. moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Canada. Officiating clergy Rev. James Ferguson of Barrie, Rev. J.A. MacInnis of Orillia, soloist Mr. Wishart Campbell, M.B.E. (son of Rev. Neil Campbell mentioned earlier in this writing). Organists Mr. J.H. McCuaig, Mrs. T.R. Crawford (daughter of Rev. Neil Campbell).



*Present day Knox.
The church has been renovated rather than restored. Notice that
the roofing has changed as has the siding
and window pane size.*

The committee of care and maintenance at that time - W.B. Tudhope, Chairman, Wm. McArthur, Vice Chairman, Ellis Forrester, Sec.-Treas., and Sexton, Peter McCuaig, Archibald Woodrow, Smith Campbell, John A. Reid and Dugald McKay. Of those taking part in that service, we believe all except Rev. James Ferguson and Smith Campbell have passed to their reward.

By the early 1970's except for a few unclaimed or unused plots, the burial space in the old cemetery was becoming scarce. In 1975 the trustees bought additional land along the west side of the old burying ground thus increasing the size of the grounds considerably. Since that time, quite a number of plots have been sold in the new part.

As the generations pass away, so do elders, deacons, etc. In many cases as the fathers grew frail with age or were taken by death, their sons have taken their place and kept up the good work started so long ago. The present Secretary-Treasurer, Gordon Woodrow is a great grandson of Alexander Woodrow who was trustee of the old church. Their family have continued to serve as trustees through four generations.

Neil McNiven a present trustee, is also a great grandson of a former Secretary-Treasurer, John McNiven.

The annual memorial service is usually conducted by the Minister from the Esson, Willis charge or by a Minister from Central Oro, or a combination of both.

In 1984 a Gaelic speaking minister in the person of Rev. John Robertson, a native of Skye, Scotland, took the service. In 1985, Rev. Lois Johnston, a daughter of one of the original pioneer families (McArthur) was guest speaker.

For the past few years we have been privileged to have a piper, Mary Robertson, also a descendant of a pioneer family favour us with some selections before the service.

It is more than one hundred and fifty years since the first burial, in that time there is no record of any ordained minister having been buried there.

CONCLUSION

Happily, there is no conclusion to the Story of Knox; with continued interest there should be no end to the history of this delightful part of Oro.

The friends of Knox would like to thank all those who helped with this project, especially Walter Hutchinson who read and made notes from the original minutes and Howard Campbell who initiated the project.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Walter Hutchinson - For Knox Church
Howard Campbell - For History Committee
Joanna McEwen - For History Committee
Loreen Lucas - Church drawing

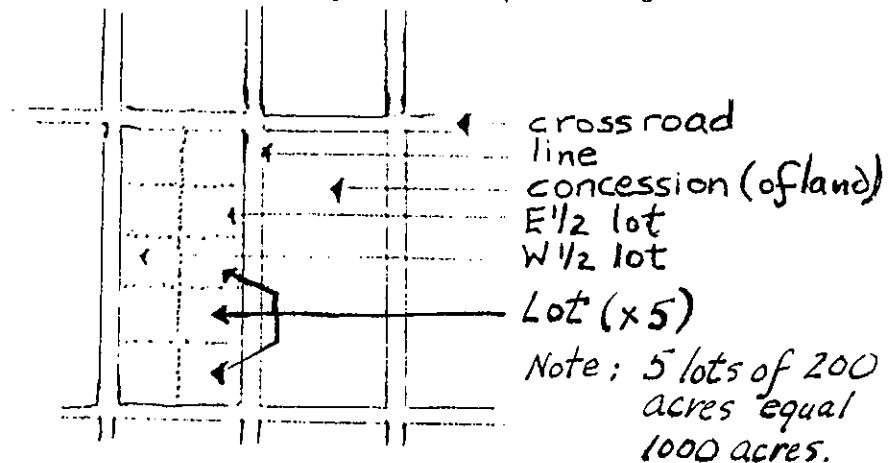
JUNE 1986

PERSONAL NOTES

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Ramsay F. John Ramsay of Kildalton, Coach House Press, Toronto, 1967.
Ms. Ramsay writes of the over population and dreadful living conditions found in the early 19th century on the island of Islay. We know also that the effects of the clearances caused many scots to immigrate to Canada.
- ² Barrie Examiner, July 5, 1945. Reverend J.M. McGillivray D. D. Moderator.
- ³ History of Oro Schools, Township of Oro, 1966.
- ⁴ McEwen, J. Kith 'n Kin, Township of Oro, 1978. p.361
- ⁵ Hunter. A History of Simcoe County, Volume 1, p. 316
- ⁶ Simcoe County Court House "Registry Office", Lot 10, Concession 9, Oro Township.
- ⁷ Barrie Examiner, July 5, 1945. Reverend J.M. McGillivray D. D. Moderator.
- ⁸ Deviations. Originally Ontario Townships were surveyed in a grid, each block designed to create 5, 200 acre parcels. Each line (sometimes incorrectly called concessions) was 1 chain or 66 feet wide and separated by 7/8 mile. Each cross road was two miles from the next one. From time to time the topography did not permit the road to be constructed as surveyed. It would then be re-surveyed as a deviation road. By-law No. 34 passed in the Simcoe County Council Chambers, 5th of February, 1847 enacted that "part of a certain road in the Township of Oro between lots No. 10 and 11 (old

Barrie Road) from the 5th to the 11th concessions, be altered...the said road tending to the public good."



- 9 McEwen, J. Kith 'n Kin, Township of Oro, 1978. p.339.
- 10 1 chain is 66 feet or ~~20.2~~ meters and 100 links equals 1 chain. A township road is 1 chain wide.
- 11 Simcoe County Court House, "Registry Office", Berczy Street, Barrie.
- 12 Hunter. A History of Simcoe County, Volume 1, p.315
- 13 Glebe. A parcel of land dedicated as church property. This ecclesiastic property was often granted. The glebe at Knox N 1/2 Lot 10, Concession 9, 100 acres was purchased by the congregation and sold by Knox (See figure 2).
- 14 Soirée. Pronounced swar-ay or sewr-ee. This word comes from the french soir meaning evening. Soirées were evening gatherings usually with entertainment and lunch. In Oro a lunch can mean a light meal served after supper. Dinner is the meal eaten at noon.

- 15 Manse. House, often on the glebe used by the congregation for the express purpose of housing a minister and his family. For instance, in 1871 the Reverend Ferguson is listed as a tenant on N $\frac{1}{2}$, Lot 10, Concession 9.
- 16 Subscription. Akin to tithes or pledges, subscriptions were used to raise money for various church related projects.
- 17 Right Hand of Fellowship. Literally a hand shake and in this case it was a regular part of the ordination ceremony for elders and deacons.
- 18 Psalmody The psalms of David were chanted. The line was sung by a precentor (who had set his note with a tuning fork) and repeated with embellishments by the congregation. There was no organ. An experienced precentor and an enthused congregation could easily extend the singing of any psalm into $\frac{1}{2}$ hour to 40 min. So we are told! This singing in praise was 'under review'. The deacons were adamant that the psalms were to be sung unaltered!
- 19 McEwen, J. Kith 'n Kin, Township of Oro, 1978, p. 170.
- 20 Story of Oro, Township of Oro, 1972, p. 72.
- 21 Hunter, S.F. A History of Simcoe County, Volume 1. p. 291.
- 22 Orillia Packet and Times, September, 1912.
- 23 Ibid.

- 24 Simcoe County Court House, Registry Office.
- 25 Precentor. A member of the congregation who led the congregation in singing in praise. The psalms of David were chanted. See note 18.
- 26 Church Union. Not to be confused with the Amalgamation of the 13 Presbyterian synods this union occurred in 1925. The congregational and the Methodist churches in Canada agreed to join as the United Church of Canada - the membership did not vote. The Presbyterians decided to allow each congregation to vote on joining the United Church. It is very significant to note that of 5 presbyterian churches in Oro, 4, namely Willis, St. Andrews, Central and Esson opted to remain presbyterian and only Guthrie voted to join the United Church. The margin was very slim, 49 against and 56 for. It is noteworthy also, that a Presbyterian congregation and church are still evident in Guthrie to this very day.

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The trustees of Knox, Knox History editorial committee, friends of Knox, past and present, are indebted to the Township of Oro for supporting the publication of this commemorative History.