Nelson and Palermo United Churches

THE FIRST THIRTY YEARS
::::: 1808 · 1838

John Shearman
palermo, ont .
1982

Introduction

In writing local history several questions must be answered in the process of deciding what to include and what to reject. What is the main thrust of the information at hand? Has it any central theme? Was there some underlying reason why these particular people came to this particular place? Where did they come from and how did that influence what happened to them when they settled here? What special factors were at work in this community creating something different from what one finds elsewhere?

The period covered by this essay has been limited to about 30 years for two reasons. First, there has not been time to do adequate research of all the material available covering the full 170 years since the beginnings of the Nelson and Palermo United Churches. A more comprehensive study will have to wait for a more opportune time. Secondly, in some of the material at hand, especially that prepared for the 100th anniversaries of the church buildings now in use, in 1959 and 1967, the emphasis was on the recollections of the few still living at that time who could remember these communities long ago. These memories were set down with deserved devotion. Little was said, however, about the beginnings of the earliest settlements in Nelson and Trafalgar townships.

The roots of our history in this community go back to the first decade of the 1800's. Since so little was known about this earlier period, concentrating on this period seemed more appropriate.

Few original documents have been consulted. National and provincial archives contain some details of the early settlement in Nelson and Trafalgar; but church records are limited, in spite of the excellence of the United Church's archives at Victoria University, Toronto.

Various histories of Methodism in Canada written in the late 19th and early 20th centuries are rich in detail about the lives and work of the early circuit-riding preachers. They are poor, however, in specific names of most of the families to whom those preachers ministered. Thus families

seeking something known or unknown about their ancestors will be rewarded with scant scraps. Only one family name among the earliest settlers is still represented in either congregation now.

The emphasis in this essay is not on the people who came to settle here or on the geography of this heavily forested plain which they turned into fruitful farms. Rather it is on the events which shaped their lives, events which for the most part were quite beyond their control. In the thirty years we are reviewing there was a war, a major depression, a bitter struggle for political power among prominent churchmen, the formation of a purely Canadian Methodist church, the union of two branches of Methodism and the breaking off of several small splinter groups. All this was in addition to the settlement of all the land in the two townships, the beginnings of three towns and an open rebellion against an autocratic government. These events made these formative years more stimulating than any period since. One can only marvel at the tenacity, to say nothing of the courage and the faith, of those early settlers to whom we owe so much.

Acknowledgements for help in such an enterprise are always hazardous. One is sure to omit the name of someone who did a great deal. Let me avoid that error by thanking all who in any way contributed to what has been produced. The several families who allowed me to read treasured family histories were of special help. I alone am responsible for the result. I shall limit personal appreciation to Kathy Wettlaufer, who prepared the manuscript for publication, and to my wife, Helen, who read the original and criticized it with candor and with kindness. I am well aware that many revisions will be needed as more facts come to light.

Settlers and Circuit-Riders

Having lost the southern thirteen colonies in the American Revolution, the British government decided to create two provinces of its remaining Canadian territory in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River regions. In 1791, Upper Canada was separated from Lower Canada with the Ottawa River as the main boundary. Loyalist Americans made refugees by the war, had flooded into the St. Lawrence valley and along the Lake Ontario shoreline. The lands between Cornwall and Kingston, in Prince Edward County south of Belleville and in the Niagara peninsula were settled before 1800. In 1791, a veteran of the American campaign, Colonel John Graves Simcoe, became the first lieutenant-governor with his capital at Newark (now Niagara-on-the-Lake). Simcoe's governorship of barely five years was marked by three decisions which deeply affected the development of the lands along the northwest shore of Lake Ontario where Nelson and Trafalgar townships lay.

In 1793, under pressure from his superior, Governor-General Lord Dorchester, Simcoe moved the site of the capital from Newark to York (Toronto since 1834). The reason was valid: Newark was too close to enemy territory. Fort Niagara, on the American side of the river, was one of the foremost military outposts on the Great Lakes. It had already been ceded to the Americans and was finally turned over to them in 1796. With its well-protected harbour, York was deemed a more defensible headquarters.

Simcoe's urgent concern, however, was to protect the frontier. To do this he decided to settle the lands to the southwest between Lakes Erie and Huron. A military road to the head of Lake Ontario and beyond was needed. In 1794, Augustus Jones surveyed what was to become Dundas Street. Intended as a highway connecting Montreal with Detroit through Kingston, Belleville and York, it was also to pass through a new capital Simcoe had planned at London. The road was named after Rt. Hon. Henry Dundas, secretary of the Home Department in the British government. As a former Member of Parliament himself, Simcoe knew how to protect his political connections. His dream of a new capital at London in the southwest faded when he left Canada forever in 1796.

Simcoe's first two undertakings made the third inevitable, though it was not accomplished until ten years after he left Upper Canada. The "Toronto

Purchase" of 1793 had reserved for the Mississauga Indians all the lands between Etobicoke Creek and Burlington Bay to a depth of fifty-five miles. This huge tract included most of the present Regional Municipalities of Peel and Halton with adjacent fringe areas. At the time of the British conquest of Canada in 1763, there were no more than 1,300 members of the Mississauga tribe, a branch of the Ojibway. They had moved into the territory in the 1690's from north of Lake Huron. Originally Huron territory, it was empty after the Mohawks had destroyed the Hurons because they were fur-trading partners of the French.

Settlement of Upper Canada by loyalist Americans in the 1790's made the acquisition of the Mississauga territory an urgent necessity. Final terms of the treaty were not negotiated until 1806. They were not generous. For about 1,000 pounds of trade goods the Indians ceded to the Crown all the land from a line 2½ miles north of Dundas Street to the lakefront. A strip one mile on either side of the Credit River was reserved for the Indian village together with fishing rights in two other rivers, the Twelve and the Sixteen. Even these rights were lost in a further treaty when the "New Survey" purchased the remaining Indian territory in 1817.

With the Mississauga Purchase of 1806, often referred to as "The New Purchase" to distinguish it from the 1793 treaty, the first survey of Nelson and Trafalgar townships laid out 200 acre lots on two concessions north of Dundas Street and three south of the highway. In the western end, there was another broken front along the lakeshore. The township names were chosen to celebrate the recent victory of England's famous naval here, Admiral Horatio Nelson, over Napoleon's fleet in the Battle of Trafalgar off the Spanish coast in 1805. Other local place names drawn from the same source are Palermo, after the city in Sicily where Nelson lived for several years before his death at Trafalgar; Bronte, the name of the duchy granted him by the King of Naples in return for helping the king flee from Napoleon's invasion of Italy; and Burnhamthorpe, the name of Nelson's English country home.

Among the first settlers to take up lands in Trafalgar Township were the Hager brothers, David and Lawrence. David's land grant patent dated 1 July 1808 was for Lot 31, Concession 1, North of Dundas Street, (NDS) on the west side of the road allowance that was to become Highway 25. Lawrence bought the property

from David in March 1809. "Late Loyalists" who chose to leave instead of being driven out of the United States, the Hager family moved to Canada from Sussex County, New Jersey. Their first homestead was in Clinton Township (near Grimsby). Lawrence married Susannah Teetzel and with his brother crossed the lake to homestead in the New Purchase. The date of this migration is variously reported as 1806 to 1809. Either date is possible, though like other settlers, they may have been here a year or two before their land grants were officially registered.

Other families who came to the Palermo area of Trafalgar Township about the same time were those of Philip Buck, Sampson Howell, Joseph Smith, Levi Smith, Benjamin Smith, Absolam Smith and William Moore. Most of these took up land fronting on both sides of Dundas Street between Sixteen Mile Creek and the western boundary of the township.

Another land grant patent dated 8 July 1806 bears the name of Hermanus Fisher. He settled on Lot 32, Concession 1, South of Dundas Street, (SDS), but in 1818 gave it to his daughter Elizabeth as her dowry on her marriage to John Inglehart. The Inglehart name is the only one of the early settlers' names still common in the Palermo area. Hermanus Fisher also bought 200 acres on the 2nd Concession SDS (The Queen Elizabeth Way and the Guelph Line) which was settled by his son, Peter, in 1826. The Fisher name remains prominent in the Nelson community, one branch of the family still farming there.

Most of the early settlers in the Palermo community were participants in the beginnings of Methodism in Trafalgar Township. Lawrence Hager (also spelled Hagar) was converted at a camp meeting at Forty Mile Creek in Clinton Township near Grimsby, possibly in 1807. "Deeply impressed with a sense of duty to God," he is said to have written in a diary, he "at once erected a family altar that has never been thrown down." His wife joined him in a common commitment. In their home, it is said, the first gatherings of Methodists in the Palermo area took place. The date has been fixed at 1812, though no clear evidence for that date seems to have been found.

The community was first known as Hagerstown. As late as 1878, seventy years after their arrival in the district, Hager families still owned three of

the four lots at the Palermo corner as well as several other properties in the area. The name Palermo dates from 1835 when the first post-office was established here.

There is strong evidence of the presence of Methodist circuit riding preachers in Trafalgar Township as early as 1808. An unpublished diary of the first such preacher, William Case, serving the Ancaster Circuit, reveals several tours through "The New Purchase" in 1808-09. Specific names are few in the diary, but there is one unmistakable description which can only refer to the valley of Twelve Mile Creek between Nelson and Palermo.

> At length I came to the high banks of the 12 mile creek, which with great difficulty passed. Being very steep and slippery, for some time I could not get my horse to go down, till by getting advantage I pulled him on, so sliding down, sometimes on his feet & sometimes on his belly, for 50 feet at length we landed at the bottom, with some hurt in one of his legs. Then passing along the valley came to a creek where in attempting to cross mired down, but I jumped from him & made my escape, when after some struggle was followed by my horse. Here Satan strove hard against me, tempting me to impatience & call in question why God should require such fatigues. But on commending my care to God on my knees I found relief. Now how to rise the hill I hardly knew, for the clay was so slippery my horse could not stand in many places. (This hill was more than 150 feet high.) Neither could I myself only by the trees & bushes. However after great toil we ascended. Sometimes all his feet would slide from under him & only find safety by landing against a tree. Then trembling would again attempt to recover & again would fail, but patient and faithful he continued his exertion till we gained the top of the hill. Then thro' a muddy way thro' a severe snow storm passed on several miles till at length I came to my appointment, wet and weary. Considerable reasoning passed in my mind why the Lord should require this service, when there was so little possibility of doing good, as the people did but few attend the meeting in the storm. But I came to the conclusion that it might be to humble me instead of some other affliction & so to prepare me for more profitable service in the church in which belief I was more confirmed afterwards, for He mightily stood by me the next Sabbath, so that several sinners were awaked to seek the Lord.

This exhausting journey in a snowstorm took place on Sunday, 14 November 1808 according to Case's diary. Where was he coming from and where was he going? Was it to the homesteads in the Palermo area? Or was he headed west toward the Brant settlement on Burlington Bay which he also mentions in another entry? One can only speculate whether it was to or from any home

associated with the Palermo church. There can be no doubt that he was in this area when he struggled through the slippery valley of the Twelve Mile Creek.

Another possibility intrigues the curious mind, though no confirmation is thus far available. In documents held by the Ontario Archives relating to the 1st Concession North of Dundas Street in Nelson Township, there is a single sheet of paper bearing the following oath sworn before one Richard Holt, justice of the peace for the Home District in which both townships were then located.

> This may certify that Silas Hopkins, Royal Hopkins & Gabriel Hopkins have this day sworn before me, that five acres are cleared, & fenced on Lot no. three, North side of Dundas Street, a house sixteen feet by twenty is built on said lot & the street is cleared two rods wide in front of said lot in Nelson - Flamboro West - the 27th day of February 1810.

The property in question is undoubtedly the 200 acres through which Twelve Mile Creek runs where it is now crossed by Dundas Street. This land is listed in another document as the crown grant to Silas Hopkins on the 29th October 1800. Why it took nearly ten years for him to complete his "settlement duty" of clearing and fencing five acres, building a small house and clearing the road allowance along the front is still unclear. It is likely, however, that Hopkins was there in 1808.

Originally from Wales, Silas Hopkins was an American loyalist who spent three years in jail for his pro-British sympathy. Freed on the payment of a heavy fine, he became a cattle drover bringing sheep and cattle from Pennsylvania to Canada by way of the Delaware River valley. One of the homes where he stayed on these trips was that of the Van Norman family in Northampton County, Pennsylvania. The two families were destined to be near neighbours in Nelson Township. The Van Normans were among the early settlers on the 3rd Concession SDS (Queen Elizabeth Way and Appleby Line). Both families were also active in the early development of Methodism in Nelson Township, the Appleby Church having grown up around the Van Norman settlement. William Case preached at "Brother Hopkins" as witnessed by the following entry made in September 1808.

> Next day pre'd. (preached) to the people in the New Purchase where the Lord helpd me in a special manner so that there was

> great joy among the bretnren, as also in the evening at prayer meeting. On 14 Sept. preachd at br. Hopkins where his son-in-law Mr. Easn. (Eastman) presbyterian meinister attended.

Rev. Daniel Eastman, of Thorold, was married to Elizabeth, one of several daughters of Silas Hopkins. One of the yet unsolved puzzles is the exact location of the Hopkins homestead. Both Flamboro East and West are also mentioned in connection with his name. The weight of evidence seems to point to Nelson, however, in the "New Purchase", as the land patent states. If so, then the entry in Case's diary that he preached at "br. Hopkins" on 14 September 1808 is the first verifiable date of worship in the Nelson-Palermo Pastoral Charge.

Silas Hopkins sold part of his property on Dundas Street to Elijah Secord in 1812. He sold the rest to his two sons Joseph and Caleb. He appears to have moved to the Burlington Bay area where he died and was buried in a private family cemetery near the present Unsworth greenhouses on Plains Road. Later, all the remains in that cemetery were moved to Hamilton.

Caleb Hopkins established his home in Nelson, on Lot 15, Concession 1, NDS (immediately east of the Guelph Line). He lived there from 1814 to 1854. His hospitality for the circuit riding Methodist preachers is mentioned in several journals of the period. He made his mark in Canadian history as Member of the Legislative Assembly for Halton. One of the small group of "True Grits" who originally supported the Reform movement of William Lyon Mackenzie, he took part in the struggle for responsible government though he was not active in the rebellion of 1837. He disapproved of Mackenzie's turn to violence.

In his first journal entry in 1808, William Case spoke of touring the "New Purchase where people have been settling about one year."

> They seemed greatly rejoiced that the Conference had thought to them to send a preacher. In number about 40 I joined in society at several places, principally old members.

Soon after his adventure at the Twelve, he wrote:

> The next day held love feast & sacrament in the New Purchase, first ever held in this new settlement, but rather a dull time

> I believe owing to the uncomfortable situation by reason of the cold.

One can only marvel at the remarkable courage of this first of many faithful circuit riders who braved unbelievable hardship to bring the Gospel to these earliest settlers. In 1809, Case was sent to the Detroit Circuit as a missionary. His new territory stretched from the Grand River westward. He wrote to his bishop, Francis Asbury, who lived in the United States.

> The circuit, on the Canada side about 240 miles, will have twelve regular appointments. I think another preacher will be needed on the Detroit side. My expenses on the mission, about $30, I have already received; also my salary, $80.

Many were to follow this intrepid man. It was normal for the circuit riders to be changed every year or two. In the 30 years after William Case's pioneer travels in the Nelson and Palermo area, no fewer than 56 others were appointed to cover this and adjacent areas. The names of all are known from the excellent records of the Methodist Conferences which made the appointments. The list includes some of the most famous leaders of Methodism in Canada over the next half century.

The War With The Americans, 1812-14

No one was really surprised when the Americans declared war on Great Britain on 18 June 1812. As early as 1808, William Case feared that it was inevitable. The causes were puzzling because they had as much to do with Britain's war with Napoleon in Europe and on the high seas as with the North American frontier. Angry at the British blockade preventing their ships from trading with France and at the capture of American sailors for pressed service on British warships, the Americans saw an opportunity to expand westward into the Indian country southwest of the Great Lakes. The British had helped the Indians resist this expansion. The Great Lakes forts and Montreal were the chief targets of the American attacks. But the war suffered from poor military leadership on both sides and the disfavour of many New Englanders linked closely with Britain by commercial interests.

Niagara and the southwestern settlements suffered the worst effects of the several battles fought over a two year period. Though many of the men from the settlements in Nelson and Trafalgar were enlisted in the militia which fought at Queenston Heights, Stoney Creek and Lundy's Lane, few seem to have been killed or wounded. The names of Absolam Smith, Philip Buck and Peter Hovenhoven (? - elsewhere described as "a manservant of Sampson Howell") are named in a document from the York garrison in 1813. They apparently delivered three pistols and a sword to the garrison after the sacking of Fort York on 27 April 1813.

The people of the townships may have benefitted more than they suffered. American naval superiority on the lakes made the development of Dundas Street a military necessity. As the closest settlement to the front lines, trade with the military forces was brisk as supplies moved forward. Because most of the Nelson and Trafalgar settlers had only recently come from the United States, they may have had some hesitation about being too actively involved in the fighting. Other members of their families still on the American side were being enlisted in the struggle.

Most severely affected were the circuit-riders. Niagara had been the headquarters of the missions through all the southwestern settlements. The war greatly interrupted communications and travel. Since most of the circuit-riders of the time were American-born, like William Case, they were suspect among the British settlers as well as reluctant to engage in hostilities against their American friends. The free flow of ordained and probationary preachers across the border all but ceased for the duration of the war. None of the preachers was able to attend the annual meetings of the Genesee (New York) Conference which had appointed them to their circuits. None of the appointments appear to have changed as was the custom at each Conference. Some particularly sensitive circuits, especially in Lower Canada, were left vacant. Some preachers 'located', a term used to describe leaving the preaching circuit for settlement in a local community. Writing of the difficulties experienced by the Methodist cause some 50 years after the war, George F. Playter, one of the church's early historians, stated:

> It appears that the only preachers who kept to the work during the war were Ryan, Rhodes, Whitehead and Prindle. But the lately located preachers assisted in their own neighbourhoods ... so that the Methodist societies were not so badly supplied with preachers in the commotions and dangers of the times.

One of the happier services of the Methodists during the war was to Canadians taken prisoner in the several battles along the Niagara frontier. Again, it was William Case whose courageous efforts were noteworthy. Writing to a friend from Albany, New York, on 26 October 1813, he told of having visited a prisoner of war camp at Greenbush, not far from Albany. He had preached to "a mixed multitude of English, French, &c., amounting to about 559." He found among them several Methodist "brothers and acquaintances from Canada". An associate identified as "Brother Merwin" was to send Bibles from the society in Albany to the prisoners.

Though no minutes are available, it seems that Henry Ryan, the redoubtable Irish-born presiding elder of the Upper Canada District held three conferences of Canadian circuit preachers during the war period. These were to have fateful consequences for both Ryan and the church. Since there was no official "Canadian Conference", these may have been no more than regular district meetings extended to serve the administrative needs of the critical times. Rev. David Culp, a young preacher who twice served the Ancaster Circuit after the war before locating in Nelson attended these conferences. The meeting of 1813 was held in Bowman's Church, Ancaster, located on the farm of Peter Bowman, Lot 51, Concession 3 in Ancaster Township (on the present Highway 53 southwest of Hamilton).

One of the most important effects of the war was to end most of the American immigration to Upper Canada. In 1811, only 20% of the population of the province was British. The rest were American, though only one in five was true United Empire Loyalist stock. Thus the great majority of the residents of the province were relatively recent immigrants or the children of immigrants from the United States. Active British immigration began only after 1815 and was largely a consequence of the ending of the wars with Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo.

Returning to Britain the victorious army found a society that had greatly changed. Industrialization had been pressed forward as part of the war effort in the previous 15 years. An economic depression soon followed. Surplus population in English cities and in the Scottish highlands had to be relocated. The colonies, especially Canada, offered a likely place to send

them. In the three decades following the Napoleonic War, Britain sent hundreds of thousands of settlers to Canada, many of them greatly deceived in the homeland as to the privations which awaited them here. Many also came of their own accord, dreaming of new opportunities in a land of promise. Willingly or unwillingly, they created a British dominion beyond the seas which was to tax the treasury, the patience and the wisdom of governors and governments for another half century until the colonies united in the confederation of 1867.

The Canada Conference

With the many new immigrants came many clergy, Presbyterians from Scotland, Anglicans and Methodists from England, Roman Catholic priests in lesser numbers from Ireland and Scotland. There had been some English Methodists here before the war, chiefly in Lower Canada. During the war there was tension in Montreal between the English and the American Methodists, who had been unable to supply their chapel with a preacher. After the war correspondence between the American and British Conferences did not settle the matter. In fact, Wesleyan preachers from England soon began to move into eastern Upper Canada disturbing the peace of many of the circuits which the Americans had founded in the previous 20 years. Open rivalries for the support of the people developed with angry overtones.

Many of the circuits were now manned by Canadians, though these were children of Americans. Even they were suspected of disloyalty by the English settlers during and after the war. Efforts to resolve the differences between the Conferences brought some tentative proposals for a division of the territory and for the formation of a wholly Canadian Conference. The Genesee (New York) Conference had authority over the Canadian districts and circuits. On two occasions, in 1817 and again in 1820, the Conference actually met in Canada.

A General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church was held in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1820. There an agreement was worked out whereby the Americans would continue to serve the Upper Canada circuits while those in

Lower Canada would be left to the British. As another Methodist historian, J.E. Sanderson, commented optimistically:

> Thus was an earnest effort made to carry out Wesley's advice in his last letter to the preachers in America twenty-nine days before his death: "Lose no opportunity of declaring to all men that the Methodists are one people in all the world."

Peace was not to be so easily purchased in the Canadian mission.

By 1824 the crisis had reached its high point. Henry Ryan, presiding elder of the Eastern District, brought to the General Conference a proposal for an independent Conference in Upper Canada. The proposal was turned down, but Ryan was determined. Some Canadians attending a local preachers' convention later in the year met separately from their American brothers, declared their independence, adopted a constitution and issued an address asking the concurrence of local Methodist societies. Their precipitous action brought results.

The General Conference sent its two bishops, Hedding and George, to tour Canada and to convene a meeting of Canadian ministers at Hallowell (now Picton) in August 1824. At that meeting a missionary society was organized as an auxiliary to the American society. It was evident, however, that nothing short of independence would satisfy the Canadians. A resolution was drafted citing the reasons for a Canadian Conference, particularly the problems created by continuing oversight by Americans and the probability of more effective supervision by a resident superintendent. The American bishops left for home promising to advance the cause of a Canadian Conference at the next General Conference in 1828. They kept their promise. With some misgivings, the Methodist Episcopal Church established an independent Canada Conference with William Case as president and superintendent of Indian missions. A special committee was set up to promote friendly relations with the British Methodists still supervised by the British Conference.

As may be seen, the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church was quite different from what we now know in the United Church of Canada. There was a General Conference which met every four years with the bishop as the

presiding officer. After the death of Francis Asbury in 1816, two bishops were elected. Regional Conferences with a president were divided into districts, each district having a presiding elder. To serve the widely scattered local communities, there were circuits, usually staffed by two or more preachers, one of whom was ordained and designated as the preaching elder. The associate was frequently a probationer not yet ordained and still in training. Many probationers did not proceed to further training and ordination, first as a deacon and then as a preaching elder.

In Canada in 1816 there were two districts with twelve circuits under the supervision of the Genesee Conference. This Conference had been formed in 1810 by the division of the much larger New York Conference. In each of its two Canadian districts there were six circuits. The Eastern District was mainly in the upper St. Lawrence valley and eastern Lake Ontario. The Western District stretched from York to Detroit. On each circuit there were also local preachers, exhorters and class leaders, all devoted lay leaders who encouraged the faithful and gave instruction in spiritual things as they were able. The first Sunday school was held in Palermo in 1816 with Lawrence Hager as the class leader. Adults as well as children would gather, probably in the Hager home, for instruction in the Bible and basic elements of Christian doctrine.

Each circuit was intended to have a quarterly meeting, though conditions often prevented it. These meetings involved the lay leaders, but district meetings and the annual Conference were restricted to the clergy only. Occasionally, a district meeting was the occasion of a lively series of sermons. Revivals were known to have begun on such occasions as the members on the local circuit where the meeting took place were stirred to deeper commitments. The common American practice of mass evangelism in outdoor camp-meetings was widely used in Canada, though with lesser effect.

The Building Of The First Churches

It is evident from the diaries of William Case and other early circuit riders that worship and preaching occurred whenever and wherever there was a suitable occasion. This was not necessarily on Sundays. Each circuit had a

number of specific 'appointments' where regularly scheduled services were held. At first these were in the homes of settlers like Hager and Hopkins whom the preachers had undoubtedly known elsewhere. Whenever the circuit riders arrived, neighbours were summoned and worship was held. The central part of the service was the preaching of a sermon coupled with the reading of scripture. Singing hymns may well have been done from memory, though a tiny hymnbook published by John Wesley in 1779 bearing the signature of James Tremain has survived from the early years of settlement in Nelson township. At least two of the circuit riders who toured the area as preachers on the Ancaster Circuit, David Culp and David Youmans, were known to be excellent singers.

The homes in which these services were held were very small. As more settlers flooded into the newly opened territories, much larger places of worship became an urgent necessity. By 1816 there were Methodist chapels in twelve Upper Canada settlements. The oldest was at Hay Bay, near Adolphustown on the Bay of Quinte Circuit, dating from 1792.

There is a document in the possession of the Palermo Cemetery trustees dated 20 December 1818 showing that Charles Teetzel sold to Duncan McQueen, James Hoppard and James McBride the northwest corner of Lot 30, Concession 1, SDS "for the sole and proper use of a place to bury the dead (for) the inhabitants of Trafalgar lying between the Twelve and Sixteen Mile Creeks." A framed typescript of this document hangs in the Palermo church hall. Its wording also permitted the use of the site "for a meeting house and a school house should the same at any time be required."

The meeting house was soon needed. By 1824, the Conference records that among the 21 new churches recently built was the Palermo chapel. In 1827, Anson Green, newly appointed to the Ancaster Circuit, visited the 27 appointments in the eight townships which comprised his pastorate around the west end of Lake Ontario. He reported that there were already six churches. An entry in his diary dated 24 September 1827 confirmed that two of the six were at Nelson and Palermo.

> Sept. 24 - Palermo, small church, well filled, class lively. Bro. Hagar (sic) the leader, stirs them up "as an eagle stirreth up her

> nest"; ... Hannahsville, four o'clock, - named after Mrs. (Caleb) Hopkins - a church, a school-house, two stores, post office, hotel, etc. Here I met Rev. D. Culp, located minister.

From this we can conclude that both Nelson and Palermo had strong, worshipping fellowships with church buildings at least 155 years ago. The property on which the original Nelson church stood is the same one where the present stone church stands. According to one source, the original frame structure stood about 40 feet west of where the present building stands. Another source located it on the east side of the present church. The records in the Registry Office in Milton show that the one acre property was deeded on 26 May 1830 by Moses McCay to the trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The vendor was himself one of the trustees. Others named are David Pitcher, Isaac Van Norman, John Bastedo, David and Ebenezer Griffin and Justin W. Williams.

Anson Green's coming to the Ancaster Circuit brought to full flower a touching romance. Caleb Hopkins was the superintendent of the Sunday school "which is doing much good", Green commented in his diary. In the Hopkins home there was always a welcome for the travelling preacher whose residence was across the Dundas valley in Ancaster. On 27 September 1826, the young bachelor Green celebrated his 25th birthday by deciding to marry. He penned a long paragraph describing the ideal minister's wife. Apparently he knew where to look and was encouraged by her parents. "Mrs. H(opkins) has given me a room which I am to call my own, and go to it whenever I please. Such a home, with such a family, is delightful."

Ordained by the Conference of 1827, Green was transferred to the Fort George (Niagara-on-the-Lake) Circuit in 1828. On 27 November 1828, he was married to Rachel, second daughter of Caleb and Hannah Hopkins, of Nelson. The minister who performed the ceremony was Rev. Ralph Leeming (or Lemming), an Anglican minister resident in Nelson at that time. Methodist clergy were not authorized to solemnize marriages until 1831. The Rev. Mr. Leeming graciously returned the marriage fee which Green gave to his new bride with a long letter the morning after their wedding. The letter included what he believed to be their 'contract';

> I have often remarked that I must not preach one sermon the less because of my union with you; nor can you desire it, for you now have a coordinate interest in my success. We will mutually help each other to bear the cross, and not to make crosses for others to bear. From this glad hour you will consider me - next to God - your best friend ... Thus with mutual interest, mutual confidence, and mutual love, we will gently glide down the stream of life together, endeavouring to kindle some fires on its banks which may continue to burn when the hands which kindled them shall be no more seen.

Union and Divisions In The Church

When the decision was made in August 1824 to form a separate Canadian Conference, most ministers and preachers were in essential agreement with the conciliatory approach taken. Not so Henry Ryan. He may have been further humiliated by his appointment as a missionary on the Chippewa and New Settlements Circuit in the southwest. His place as the presiding elder of the Eastern District was taken by William Case while Thomas Madden became presiding elder of the Western District. An impatient man, Ryan continued his efforts to promote his ideal of separation and independence from the American church. At the next Conference meeting in 1825, he was superannuated.

Since 1805 when he joined William Case on the Bay of Quinte Circuit, Ryan had been one of the leaders of the Methodist cause in Upper Canada. He remained active in retirement. Encouraged by the support of the Speaker of the House of Assembly, John Wilson, and the Anglican archdeacon of York, Rev. Dr. John Strachan, Ryan continued to sow division among the Methodists, especially in the town of York itself. In 1827 he was suspected of circulating anonymous allegations against the Canadian Conference and some of its members. When the annual examination of character of all clergy took place at the Conference, William Case charged him with the authorship of these circulars. Investigation sustained the charge. Ryan was officially reproved by Bishop Hedding who was in the chair. In spite of efforts to deal kindly with him, Ryan angrily resigned.

Through the following year Ryan continued to visit widely in a number of circuits, preaching inflammatory sermons and distributing pamphlets wherever he went. He even called conventions of clergy in both districts to ratify his

declarations and carry forward his plans for an independent church. Both conventions completely repudiated his stand; but Ryan was not deterred. He called another convention and with the aid of James Jackson, a long-time supporter, and his son-in-law, Isaac B. Smith, formed what they called "the Canadian Wesleyan Methodist Church". The new fellowship survived barely a decade. Ryan himself died in 1833 and the church made very little progress thereafter. In 1841, the 1,915 Ryanites united with the Methodist New Connexion Church.

The Ryanite movement had some influence in Nelson and Palermo. One of their goals was to include the lay leaders of the church in the decisions of the Conference as well as in the quarterly meetings of each circuit. Local preachers and class leaders of the quality of Lawrence Hager found this much to their liking. Hager evidently sided with the Ryanites, for from 1835 to 1837 he was listed as one who served on circuits for the Canadian Wesleyan Methodist Church. In 1835 he was one of four listed on the Humber and Trafalgar Circuit. In 1836 he served with two others on the Nelson Circuit.

It would seem that it was the circuit boundaries rather than Lawrence Hager who moved. The 1836 list stated that the Nelson Circuit included the townships west of Toronto and east of Hamilton. The Humber and Trafalgar Circuit of 1835 presumably included the townships in Peel County. It was in this area and in York County north of Toronto that the Ryanites had most success. Even that was meagre, for none of the circuits listed more than 200 members for any year. One of the Ryanite churches still well known in this area is Bethel Wesleyan Methodist Church on the Britannia Road west of Lowville.

The New Connexion never really succeeded in making inroads un Upper Canada but benefitted greatly from union with the Ryanites. Its beginnings were in a small faction of British Methodism which had agitated for the rights of lay leaders in the 1790's after the death of John Wesley. Neither Wesley nor his successors would allow the laity any share in district and conference meetings. The New Connexion also stood for the right of Methodists to worship at times of their own choosing and not those dictated by the established Church of England. They further insisted that the sacraments be administered by their own clergy in their own places of worship. In England, these practices were still limited to the clergy of the established church.

In 1837 the New Connexion Methodist Church in England sent a missionary, Rev. John Addyman, to begin work in Canada. He did not get very far. He found a small number of former New Connexion members in Lower Canada and another friendly group of Protestant Methodists. This group was an offshoot of the American Protestant Methodist Church. In union they all found some strength to survive when the Ryanites and the New Connexion joined forces in 1841. In 1843 they were further strengthened by the addition of the Protestant Methodists to form the Canada Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist New Connexion Church of Canada. Distinguished by the longest name, it had the shortest membership list when a subsequent union in 1874 created the Methodist Church of Canada.

Meanwhile other men of greater ability and more powerful persuasion had appeared on the scene. Their work was to be even more significant for the Methodist Episcopal Church and its Canadian Conference. From the Long Point Circuit in the early 1820's came four brothers, George, William, John and Egerton Ryerson; then later, a fifth, Edwy. John, Egerton and Edwy all served on the circuit that included Nelson and Palermo. Egerton began studies in law, but contrary to the wishes of his father followed his older brothers into the work of preaching. In fame and eloquence he was destined to outdo the rest. During his very first year as a probationer, he was drawn into the growing controversy with Rev. Dr. John Strachan, the Anglican archdeacon of York, concerning the clergy reserves and civil rights for all religious denominations in Canada.

In England and Scotland, the Church of England and the Church of Scotland had the privileges of established churches. They alone were recognized by the state and were given the right to baptize and to perform marriages. The Methodists had never been regarded as anything but religious societies within the established churches, not even by John Wesley himself, an ordained priest of the Church of England. In Canada, the Church of England wished to extend its privileges even though only a small minority of the population was Anglican. In Upper Canada, the Methodists were by far the most numerous.

When new townships were laid out, one-seventh of all the lots were set aside as 'clergy reserves' intended for the maintenance of the church. But which church? The Church of Scotland also laid claim to some of these

properties. Methodists had no civil rights at all until 1831 when the British government finally gave them the right to solemnize marriage.

It was not the more numerous Methodists, but the Presbyterian Church of Scotland which ultimately frustrated Archdeacon (later Bishop) Strachan's vision of a well endowed and fully established Church of England in Canada. The rights to the clergy reserves or the proceeds from their sale to settlers became a hot political issue in Canada and in Britain as more and more settlers flooded into the western townships toward Lake Huron. In 1825 the Canada Company was organized to administer crown lands. It was permitted to buy a large block of clergy reserves at a low price. The proceeds were invested with the intention of using the money to maintain the clergy and the parish churches. No decision was made as to which established church in the homeland would create Canadian parishes.

In 1826, Archdeacon Strachan hurried home to England to plead the case for the Anglican Church. He succeeded in preventing the Presbyterians from getting a share of the reserves for a time. He also obtained a royal charter for a provincial university under Anglican control. The university was endowed with 225,000 acres of land and an annual revenue grant of 1,000 pounds for 16 years. The presbyterians protested vigourously and in 1828 won a yearly grant from the funds of the Canada Company, as did the Roman Catholics. The clergy reserves still created a checkerboard of undeveloped lots in many townships.

The Methodists took another approach. Egerton Ryerson became their spokesman soon after a letter of his responding to many of Strachan's criticisms of Methodism was published in William Lyon Mackenzie's newspaper, The Colonial Advocate. Ryerson was named the editor of Methodism's own publication, The Christian Guardian, in 1829. The two newspapers vigourously pursued the issue of the clergy reserves along with a forceful demand for publicly-funded education open to all. These uneasy associates became the strongest voices for reform in politics and religion in Upper Canada.

George and John Ryerson had other interest soon to distrurb the Methodist cause. Sent to England on a missionary tour with Peter Jones,

the first native Indian preacher, George Ryerson was asked to approach the British Methodist Conference on the question of a further union. He found them luke-warm to the idea and even less supportive of the cause of political reform in Canada. In fact,.the British deemed that the agreement of 1820 dividing the Canadian work practically dissolved when the Canadian Conference became independent. Encouraged by the lieutenant-governor, Sir John Colborne, who offered a grant toward missionary work, the British Methodists were considering whether it might now be opportune to re-enter Upper Canada. This offer was never revealed to the Canadians. Instead an envoy was sent out from London in 1832 with twelve missionaries. Two more were added from Lower Canada.

John Ryerson had become enthused by the promise of a union of Methodism in Canada. The Canada Conference of 1832 debated the union question extensively and drew up an official proposal to be presented to the British Conference. Included in the proposal was a major shift in the organization of Canadian Methodism from the American model with a bishop as the presiding officer and general superintendent to the British model of an annually elected president. Egerton Ryerson was named to carry the proposal to the Conference in England. In 1833, the union was consummated, but not with unanimity.

The Canada Conference met in October 1833 to receive the resolution of union passed by the British Conference two months earlier. The Articles of Union were adopted as modified by the British Conference. Only one dissenting voice was raised by Rev. Joseph Gatchell, a superannuated preacher formerly on the Ancaster Circuit. He withdrew rather than vote in opposition. Other dissenters, among them Rev. David Culp, who had located at Nelson, soon joined the opposition. A request was issued for all members of the Methodist Episcopal Church to meet at the Trafalgar chapel in Palermo on 10 March 1834 to reconsider the alleged unconstitutional union. Very few attended. There were no more than 14, six of whom had been local preachers refused permanent circuit appointments as unqualified. The Palermo convention summoned a General Conference to meet at Cumner's Meeting House, on Yonge Street, on 25 June to elect a bishop and adopt rules and regulations for the church.

The heart of the opposition to union was the question of bishops. How would this affect the proper ordination of ministers? Was it right to remove

the bishop and elect a president annually? The dissidents believed that the Conference of 1833 was not legally constituted to make such fundamental changes in the order of the church. They also believed that the rights and privileges of members had been sacrificed by the Conference.

Poor attendance again hampered the Conference at Cumer's Meeting house. Only five ordained preaching elders were present. One of them, John Reynolds, was elected bishop and duly ordained by three others, Elders Gatchell, Culp and Pickett. Two newly ordained elders, John Bailey and James Powley, were named delegates to the next American General Conference. Unfortunately, the American Conference was not hospitable to their petition. The action of the Canada Conference in uniting with the British Conference was upheld. Another rift in the household of Canadian Methodism had occurred.

Many local congregations were torn by the conflict over this union. Not the least of these were the Nelson and Palermo fellowships, where the Methodist Episcopal opposition began. A bitter court case about property ended in 1836 with the confirmation of all property in the hands of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, the name adopted by the union Conference of 1833. The judgement declared those persons continuing in the Methodist Episcopal Church to be seceders.

In many communities, two Methodist churches soon appeared. In Palermo, these were located at either ends of the same burial ground on the south side of Dundas Street. The Wesleyans had denied the Episcopalians the use of their building, so they built their own. So successful was the new congregation that they grew large enough to build the present sanctuary of Palermo United Church in 1867.

At Nelson, the second church was built on the farm of Charles Tuck, once owned by Ephraim Hopkins, at the present intersection of Brant Street and Dundas Street. The Wesleyans built the present stone church in 1859. Both communities were blessed by the union of the Wesleyans and the Methodist Episcopal Churches in 1884.

Both friends and critics may well say that the Methodists were a fractious lot. But the 1820's and 1830's were vibrant, tumultuous times in Canada. In

Great Britain too great political and social issues were causing fierce debate in parliament and press. Democracy was developing rapidly as voting rights were extended to more and more people. The industrial revolution had touched the lives of everyone. In Canada, immigration and large families swelled the population quickly bringing the need for more and more remote settlement. The narrowly organized form of colonial government with a lieutenant-governor and a council able to veto any legislation of the elected assembly could not meet the needs of the growing province. The reform movement in politics led by William Lyon Mackenzie was fervently supported by such "True Grits" as Caleb Hopkins, of Nelson.

Neither leaders or members of the Methodist Church were unanimous in their support of the reform movement. Victories of the church in civil matters, however, were important to the reform cause. Always eager for publicly supported schools, the Methodists sought government aid for the building of their academy at Coburg. Egerton Ryerson in particular fought long and hard for the proceeds of the clergy reserves to be used to fund education for all. John Ryerson, however, openly supported the government of Sir Francis Bond Head in the election of 1836. Some thought that this was due to the controversial acceptance by the Conference of a government grant towards its missionary work and the academy. Dissatisfied with the involvement of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canadian politics, the British Conference dissolved the union in 1840. Reunion was negotiated in 1847. But 17 clergy, among them the elderly William Case, voted with the British that there were more important concerns for the church than the political tumult of the times.

The rebellion of 1837 brought vast changes in government including the union of Upper and Lower Canada into one united province. One of the last acts of the legislature of Upper Canada was to distribute the clergy reserves among all denominations. The British government quickly overturned the legislation, but it also ended forever the reservation of crown lands for this purpose. It also authorized the government of the colony to sell and distribute all existing reserves. Proceeds of the previous sales were also distributed with the Anglican Church and the Presbyterian Church sharing the pot unequally. Any residue was to be used "for purposes of public worship and religious instruction." Not until another government passed legislation dispersing the funds into the public treasury in 1854 was the issue settled.

The Nelson Circuit

Throughout this essay the term "the Ancaster Circuit" has been used to define the circuit of which the Nelson and Palermo churches were a part in their early years. Until 1818, the two townships went no farther north than the Lower Baseline Road (in Nelson, No. 5 Sideroad.) The New Survey extended the land for settlement to Steeles Avenue and added the townships of Esquesing and Nassagaweya beyond that. These areas were quickly settled and in 1821 "the New Settlements" were added to the York Circuit. Included were the communities developing around the Coates, Bowes and Willmott homesteads and Martin's mill on the upper reaches of Sixteen Mile Creek. These were to become Bowes' Church at Boyne and the town of Milton. Rev. Fitch Reed, one of the preachers assigned to the New Settlements in 1821 wrote:

> In Esquesing and Chinguacousy the Lord favoured us with a revival, extending into Trafalgar and Toronto townships. ...Our seven months' labour, I trust, has not been in vain. We have formed six societies -- nearly seventy members. An additional labourer, I hope will be sent into Albion, Caledon, Eramosa and Nelson. Two Sunday schools have been formed, with about fifty or sixty children. One house of worship has been erected, and two others will soon be completed.

It does not appear that these references are to the original settlements in Nelson and Trafalgar Townships. They seem to have remained part of the Ancaster Circuit which extended "over an area of country nine-tenths of which was wilderness -- twenty-eight appointments ..." John Ryerson plaintively stated in 1821. He went on: "My support was sixty-five dollars. I lost my horse and had to buy another. At the close of the year I was very poor and destitute of suitable clothes." Yet in the whole of the Western District from York to the Thames, 20 churches were built in 1822; and there were 40 Sunday schools with a thousand scholars according the the Conference records.

In 1823-24 Isaac B. Smith and David Culp served the Ancaster Circuit with the assistance of a young probationer, Joseph Messmore. The following year Culp located at Nelson and Smith was superannuated. Their place on the circuit was taken by "the pathetic Gatchell" as historian J.E. Sanderson called him without explanation. All three were deeply involved in the quarrels of the next ten years.

The summer of 1826 brought a revival to the area when a successful camp-meeting was held. Sanderson stated that it was held "near the Sixteen"; but Playter gives this account of it:

> Peter Jones with some of the Credit Indians visited some camp-meetings this summer, viz., at Yonge Street and the Grand River in June, and at the 12-mile Creek in July.

Assuming that both reports are reasonably accurate, we can conclude that the camp-meeting took place in the immediate area. The exact location is lost in uncertainty.

Another revival occurred the following year started by the death of two young persons. Camp-meetings were a form of mass evangelism popular in the United States and extensively tried in Canada. They were less effective, however, possibly due to the disapproval of the British Methodists and the less excitable nature of the mixed Canadian population.

Anson Green came to the circuit in September 1826 with Joseph Gatchell remaining as the presiding elder. Green mentioned "a favourable watch-night service at Hannahsville" with his superior; and "a happy New Year with the family of Mr. (Caleb) Hopkins." He also preached to the Indians at the Credit where Egerton Ryerson worked with Peter Jones as interpreter. Jones was the son of Augustus Jones, the surveyor of the New Purchase in 1806. His mother was a Mississauga Indian woman, so he had fluency in the native languages. Converted at a camp-meeting in 1823, he became an active preacher and missionary among the Indians for many years.

The Conference of 1832 which set forth the union proposals also created "the Nelson Circuit". Samuel Belton and John Armstrong were the first circuit preachers. The membership is not stated and the boundaries are unclear. The following year when George Bissell and John K. Williston served the circuit, 555 members were reported to the Conference. The number dropped to 495 and 460 in the next two years, probably due to the defection of the Methodist Episcopal and the Ryanite splinter groups.

At first the centre of the Nelson Circuit was at Palermo where the preaching elder lived in a house rented from "the widow Smith" according to

the Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting. The appointments "at the back part of Nelson" had been transferred to the Ancaster Circuit at an earlier date and presumably were retained in the Nelson Circuit. William Chisholm had sold his hotel at Nelson and had moved to the mouth of the Sixteen to establish a sawmill and shipping port. The new village became increasingly important to the economy of Trafalgar Township as did the growing town of Milton. After several years debate in the Quarterly Meetings, the parsonage was moved to Oakville in 1838.

The Methodist Episcopal controversy greatly disturbed the circuit. Lawrence Hager felt moved to join the Ryanites as one of their lay preachers. The Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting for 13 January 1833 include this angry motion by Sampson Howell:

> 1st. Resolved that the explanation required of the Preaching Elder at the last quarterly meeting conference be given relative to the contemplated union.
>
> 2nd. Resolved that this conference adopt the address drafted to the Reverend William Case remonstrating against the union of the Methodists of this country with those of England.

It is not difficult to see behind these words the flare of hot tempers as the lay leaders of the church challenged their clergy about the union vote in which the laity were not consulted. Nor is it difficult to see why the story persisted well into the 20th century that Lawrence Hager would move back and forth between the two Methodist churches whenever he disagreed with the doctrine preached by one or the other minister.

A letter to the presiding elder of the Toronto District, Rev. James Richardson, who in 1848 became a beloved bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, read in part:

> Our prospects on this circuit are very encouraging. Since Conference a considerable number have attached themselves to our church and the work is prospering among us. The Most High made known His presence in a very special manner at our camp-meeting. Notwithstanding the discouraging circumstances with which we had to contend, we had a season of refreshing coming down from the Lord.

For whatever reason, the author of that letter written 3 September 1835 felt it necessary to write again on 14 October of the same year. He was Rev. Schuyler Stewart, the junior circuit preacher for 1835-36.

> The Lord is reviving his work in several places on the Nelson Circuit; and notwithstanding efforts have been made and are still being made by some to agitate and divide, it has awakened the energies of the Church not to contend for 'party' but to swell the cry, "O Lord, revive thy work!" ... Between 70 and 80 have united with the church within the 3 months past.

These encouraging words may have been penned to boost his own morale as much as to report the promising advances. With political issues moving toward a crisis in Upper Canada as well and some of the most ardent reformers around the Hopkins settlement at Hannahsville, it took brave men to predict that the church would survive the conflicts among its members and clergy. In spite of the defections and divisions, however, the circuit remained within the Wesleyan Methodist Church. In the Methodist Epsicopal Church, Nelson and Palermo were part of the Toronto Circuit from 1834 to 1867 when the Nelson and Oakville Circuit was formed.

We have gone as far as we can in this survey of the early years of this pastorate. Much remains to be told. Much greater growth and greater trials lay ahead. New church buildings were to be erected, filled by faithful worshipped, then nearly emptied by the departure of many families as the communities changed. The list of clergy and lay persons who served in the several congregations which at one time or another formed the Nelson Circuit is an honour roll worthy of praise. We who come after have a noble tradition to uphold as we celebrate those early beginnings and hallow their memory.

Burnside, Albert. The Canadian Wesleyan Methodist New Connexion Church, 1841-74. Toronto: University of Toronto Graduate School of Theological Studies, 1967. Unpublished thesis.

Carroll, John. William Case and his Contemporaries. 5 volumes. Toronto: Wesleyan Publishing Establishment, 1867.

Case, William. Journal, 1808-09. Unpublished journal manuscript in the United Church Archives, Victoria University, Toronto.

Cornish, George H. Cyclopedia of Methodism in Canada. 2 volumes. Toronto: Methodist Book and Publishing House, 1881 and 1903.

Emery, Claire and Ford, Barbara. From Pathway to Skyway: A History of Burlington. Burlington, Ontario: Confederation Centennial Committee of Burlington, 1967.

Green, Anson. The Life and Times of Anson Green, D.D. Toronto: Methodist Book Room, 1877.

Halton Women's Institute. A History and Atlas of Halton County. Georgetown, Ontario: Benson W. Case, 1970.

Holling, Stanley A., general editor. Christ Church - Our Heritage: A Record of 150 Years of Service. Mississauga, Ontario: 1976. Privately published by Christ Church United, Clarkson.

Kewley, Arthur E. Camp-Meetings in Upper Canada Before 1825. Toronto: University of Toronto Graduate School of Theological Studies, 1968. Unpublished thesis.

Mathews, Hazel C. Oakville and The Sixteen: The History of an Ontario Port. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1953.

--------. Pioneers in Halton County. Oakville, Ontario: Oakville Beaver, 1965. Newspaper articles and manuscript for publication now in Oakville Public Library.

Ontario Public Archives. Cemeteries in Halton County. Microfilm.

--------. Index to Land Patents to 1850.

--------. Nelson Township Papers.

--------. The Buck Family Papers.

--------. Trafalgar Township Papers.

Playter, George F. The History of Methodism in Canada. Toronto: Wesleyan Printing Establishment, 1862.

Pope, J.H. Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Halton, Ontario. Toronto: Walker and Miller, 1877.

Sanderson, J.E. The First Century of Methodism in Canada. 2 volumes. Toronto: William Briggs, 1908.

Walsh, H.H. The Christian Church in Canada. Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1956.