

"THE OLD STONE CHURCH"

(DEDICATED IN 1874)



The History of *Little Britain United Church*

— ESTABLISHED IN 1852 —

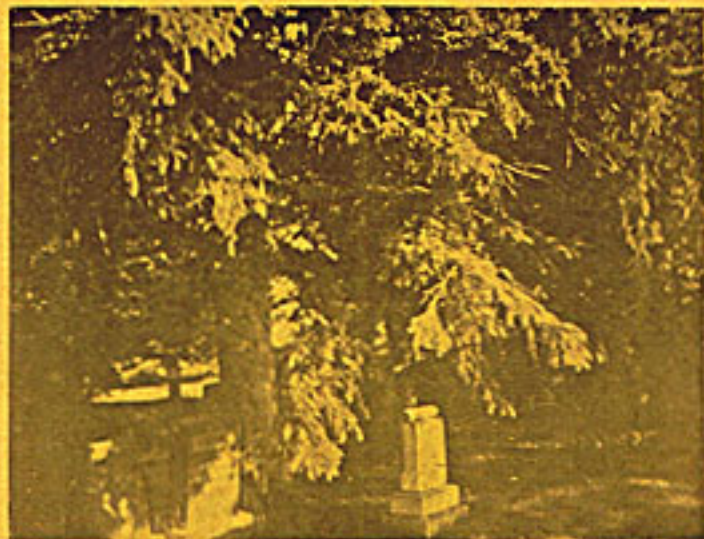
WITH ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-TWO YEARS OF HISTORY,
LITTLE BRITAIN CAN JUSTLY CLAIM TO BE THE
OLDEST UNITED CHURCH CONGREGATION IN WESTERN CANADA,
AND ITS ONE-HUNDRED-YEAR-OLD CHURCH
IS THE OLDEST HOUSE OF WORSHIP, STILL IN USE.

Dedication . . .

THIS HISTORY IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED TO ALL THE MEN
AND WOMEN WHOSE FAITH AND WORK MAKE UP THE STORY,
AND ESPECIALLY TO THE MEMORY OF:

PETER R. YOUNG AND CHRISTOPHER JOHNSTONE

WHO WERE TRULY PILLARS OF LITTLE BRITAIN CHURCH,
SUPPORTING AND SUSTAINING THE WORK OF THE CONGREGATION
FOR MANY DECADES, EACH IN HIS TIME. BOTH MEN WERE
SECRETARIES OF ORGANIZATIONS IN THE CHURCH, AND WE
OWE MUCH OF OUR HISTORY TO THE EXCELLENT RECORDS
THEY KEPT.



Young Family Plot

P. R. YOUNG was born in Ontario in 1833, coming to Little Britain in 1848, and a member of the congregation for over forty years. As well as being Superintendent of the Sunday School for most of that time, he was Elder and Clerk of Session for more than thirty-five years. When he died in 1911 he left no direct descendants and it has not been possible to obtain his picture. He lies in our Cemetery in the shade of tall pines, that had been planted almost a century ago, near the graves of two nephews, sons of Dr. David Young.



Chris Johnstone

CHRISTOPHER JOHNSTONE, a grandson of John Clouston Sr., was born at Little Britain in 1881, and throughout his entire life made his home in the area. He was a member of the church for more than half a century and always prominently and actively involved in all the work of the congregation. As with P. R. Young, his name recurs in the records, in connection with many and varied projects, all adding up to a lifetime of devotion to his church. In grateful recognition of his exceptional work in connection with the Cemetery, the Johnstones were given a family plot, when he died in 1952.



The Red River

"Voyageurs" on the Red River in 1967

The First Europeans

The first Europeans to set foot in Western Canada were explorers, looking for the North-West Passage. They were followed by the men of the fur-trade, employed by the North-West Fur Company or by the Hudson's Bay Company. Many, from the British Isles and elsewhere, were devout Christians, but the history of organized religious services dates from the arrival, at Red River, of the first of the Selkirk Settlers, beginning in 1812.

Before leaving Scotland, the settlers had made a proviso that they should have a minister of their own Presbyterian faith. No ordained man was available, but the Scottish Church sent James Sutherland, an elder, duly authorized to baptize, marry, and hold services. This he did until 1815 when he, along with many of the first settlers, was forced to leave Red River, during one of the attempts by the North-West Company to exterminate the colony. However, Lord Selkirk brought out several more groups of settlers in the next few years and they managed, despite many hardships and continued opposition from the fur-traders, to settle the area around present-day Winnipeg. These were the men of Kildonan.

Establishment of Churches

In 1818, the first missionaries of the Roman Catholic Church came to stay, and in 1820, the Church of England sent the Rev. John West as chaplain to the Hudson's Bay Company. He founded the Upper Church (later St. John's Cathedral). In 1840, Wesleyan James Evans began his work among the Indians in the north, but still the Presbyterians were frustrated in their attempts to get a minister. They kept up their prayer meetings and home instruction through the years while worshipping with, and supporting, the Church of England, whose clergy liberally modified their ritual to meet the more austere views of the Scottish Church.

True to their race, the Scots were persistent, but not all of their pleas ever reached Scotland. In his book about the early days, the Rev. R. G. McBeth, who was the son of a pioneer of 1815, tells of one petition which came back from York Factory as a cover for a crock of butter, more than a year after it had been dispatched.

The Rev. John Black



The Rev. Dr. John Black

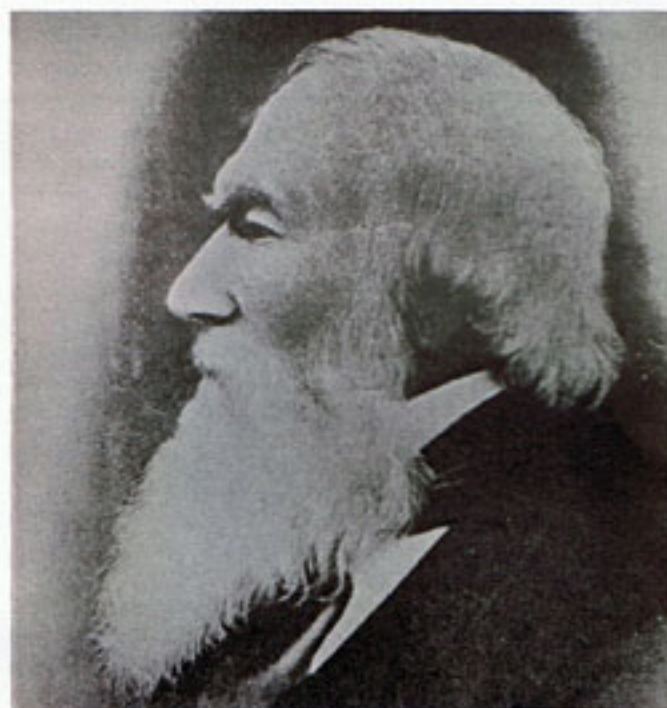
Finally, from Canada, the Rev. John Black was sent to the Red River Colony. He was born in Glasgow in 1818, coming to America as a boy. He studied for the ministry at Knox College, Toronto, and in 1851 made the difficult journey west, via St. Paul. One account states that he completed the last stage of the trip, from Pembina, by birch canoe, another describes his arrival on horseback. Either way, the journey had been an arduous eight weeks, but awaiting his arrival was a company of three hundred, and the congregation at Kildonan was soon organized. In the spring of 1852 a second congregation was formed at Little Britain, twenty miles down river, and their meeting house was ready by fall.

McBeth describes John Black as a man, "mighty in the Scriptures, a great theologian, an evangelical and passionately eloquent preacher." Until his death in 1882, he served the Red River colony, making Kildonan Church a centre of religious influence, also establishing a school at Kildonan, as well as organizing other congregations in the area.

Settlement of The District

Settlement of the district, which came to be known as Little Britain had begun after the Fur Companies amalgamated under the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821. Comprised of narrow lots on both sides of the Red River, it stretched from Lower Fort Garry to a point south of the present-day St. Andrew's Locks, and had its start when six families took up land in the area. The names of four are known, they were William Smith, John McDonald, James Swain and Donald Gunn. All were former servants of the Hudson's Bay Company, and related to one another by blood or by marriage.

The Hon. Donald Gunn



Hon. Donald Gunn

Donald Gunn had come out from Scotland in 1813, and after ten years with the Company, had decided to retire and take up land. He had married Margaret Swain of York Factory, and in 1823, with his wife and young son, established a home on the east side of the Red River near St. Andrew's Rapids, now Lockport. He later left this first home in the hands of his son, John, and built a new place on the west bank. It was there, in 1852, that fourteen families gathered with John Black to organize a "Kirk". The Hon. Donald Gunn was an educated man and a leader, being one of the elected representatives to the first Legislative Assembly in Manitoba, following the Province's entry into Confederation in 1870. In our Session Book, at the time of his death in 1878, tribute was paid to Donald Gunn "for having contributed so largely to establishing Presbyterianism at Little Britain, and for his long service as ruling Elder of the congregation."

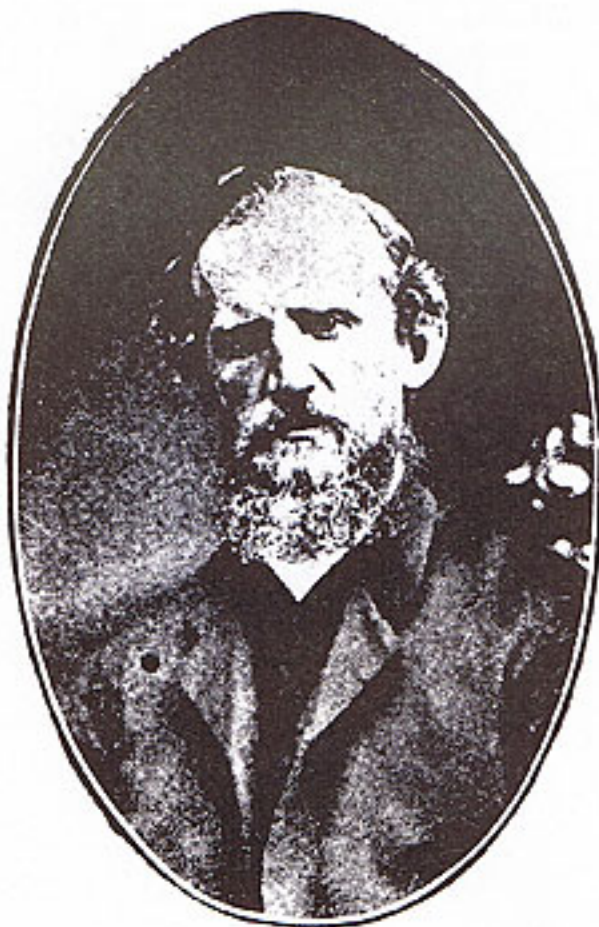


The Meeting House

Artist's Conception
of The Meeting House

A cairn, on the west bank of the river, marks the location on Gunn's Point, of Little Britain's first meeting-house built in 1852. It probably resembled the sketch, although it may well have been white-washed, as were many of the homes. Built of logs and thatched with straw, with wooden benches serving as pews, it held more than 150 people. At least once a month, the Rev. John Black came on horseback from Kildonan to conduct Sunday services, staying overnight at the home of Donald Gunn. As well, he made overnight visits to members of the congregation, often accompanied by an elder. The building also served the community as library and school-house until 1878, being the forerunner of Lockport School No. 6, now closed. Back in 1871, the congregation of Little Britain was still taking responsibility for the day-school, but the teacher, Miss Janet Gunn, had not been paid what was due her. It was resolved "that the trustees raise money by subscription (if they can), and that school be free, if enough funds are obtained".

The Rev. James Nisbet



Rev. James Nisbet

The Rev. James Nisbet was sent out from the east in 1862, to assist John Black, with the prospect, at some time, of doing missionary work among the Indians. He had come from Scotland as a young man of twenty-two, to engage in the work of contractor and builder, but the need for missionaries had prompted him to go in for the ministry. After graduating from Knox College he served for over ten years at Oakville, Ontario, before coming west. His skills as a builder stood him in good stead, it was he who drafted the plans and did much of the interior finishing of the stone school-building at Kildonan (the first home of Manitoba College). During his time, the congregation at Little Britain took on new life. Improvements, including a fine porch, were added to the meeting-house, and it was James Nisbet who drew up the plans for a new stone church. After four years at Red River, he moved on to establish a Mission among the Indians at a spot which he named Prince Albert.

The Grant of Land

Our earliest Minutes are of the Annual Meeting of the congregation, dated October 12, 1863. At that time, agreement was recorded "to appointing three Trustees, to hold in trust the lot of land so liberally bestowed on the congregation by his Excellency, Governor Dallas, on the part of the honorable Hudson's Bay Company". Appointed were John Clouston, Donald Gunn and John Gunn. The following year they reported that the deed had been procured, and the land lay waiting to be put to use.

The Stone Manse

By 1866 no building had begun, but a replacement for the Rev. James Nisbet was expected, and the new minister would need a home, so that must come first. It was agreed "that a stone manse be erected as soon as possible, dimensions to be 30' x 22', a storey-and-a-half high, with a four-foot excavation." It was further resolved "that we send men to the pines" (probably at Pine Ridge or at Bird's Hill) "to chop logs and sleepers, and that members and adherents take same home to the sawmill at the Stone Fort, there to be made into plank and board."



The Old Stone Manse

The building committee, consisting once again of John and Donald Gunn and John Clouston, was voted back into office each year, until 1872, when the manse was fully completed and occupied by the Rev. and Mrs. John McNabb. The ground floor consisted mainly of one room, large enough to seat forty people, as well as a small library and kitchen. Upstairs were four bedrooms.

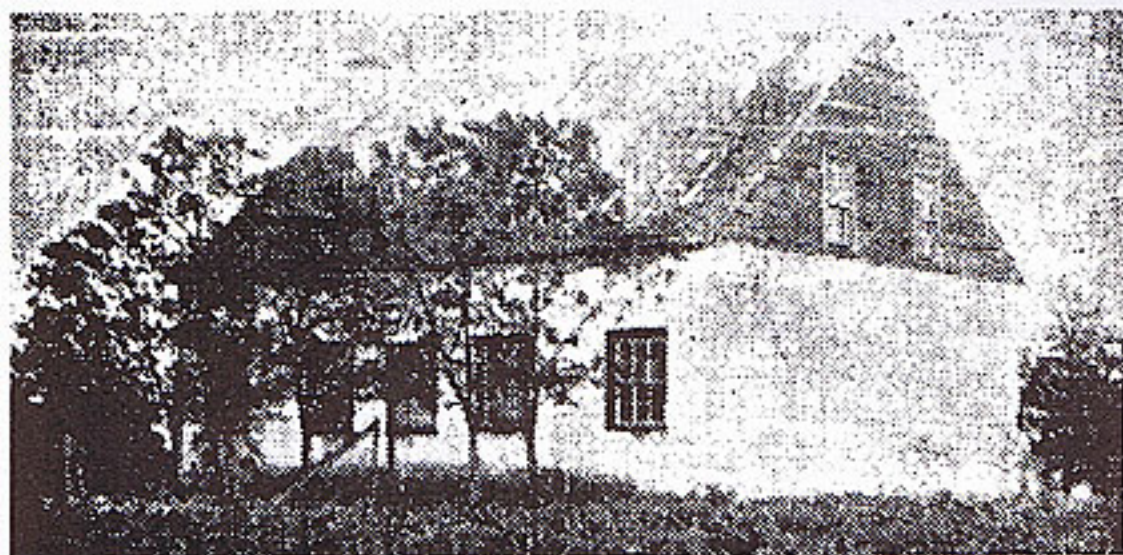
It served as a home for successive ministers until the end of the century, when it was felt that the excessively damp cellar had contributed to the death, by typhoid fever, of the Madill's two-year-old son. Although periodic repairs and renovation were required, it was used for the next fifty years as a Church Hall, providing a place for Sunday School, for Church meetings, dinners, and even for Worship Services during the Depression, being less expensive to heat. Weddings were held in the Manse too. From a scrapbook, owned by Mrs. Helen Cox (nee Franks), we read an account of the fiftieth Anniversary of her parents' wedding, -- both the marriage and the Golden Wedding celebration had taken place in the Manse. For a number of years it was leased to the Wilson-Smiths, as a summer residence, but in 1950 was condemned as unsafe, and demolished the following year.

The Church Hall

Erected on the same site in 1951, the new Church Hall has since been enlarged and improved. Only the men and women who managed to serve a Turkey Supper to 800, without benefit of running water or any indoor plumbing, can fully appreciate the increased space, the gas range, and steam table, the sinks with hot water, and the wash-rooms downstairs, in place of the former arrangements "out back". While still serving the same general needs of the congregation, the present Church Hall is both attractive and utilitarian.



The Present Church Hall



The Ross House

The Ross House

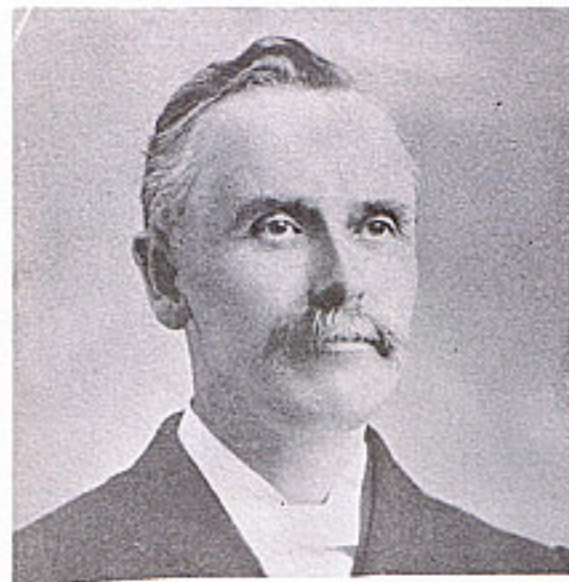
Located on property south of the church lot, this house was rented for the first minister to live in the area, the Rev. John McNabb, until our own manse was finished. Sir John Schultz was said to have hidden in the cellar of this home, after his escape from Riel's forces in 1870. Later it was the home of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Franks.

The "Green" Manse

Finished by 1900, on lot 115 on the River Road, the property having been donated to the congregation by Duncan McLean. It was Little Britain's manse for only twelve years or so, the distance from the church having proved to be inconvenient. In 1913 it was sold privately for \$2500. The picture was taken a few years ago, while it was being demolished.



The "Green" Manse



The Rev. Edward Lee

The Rev. Edward Lee

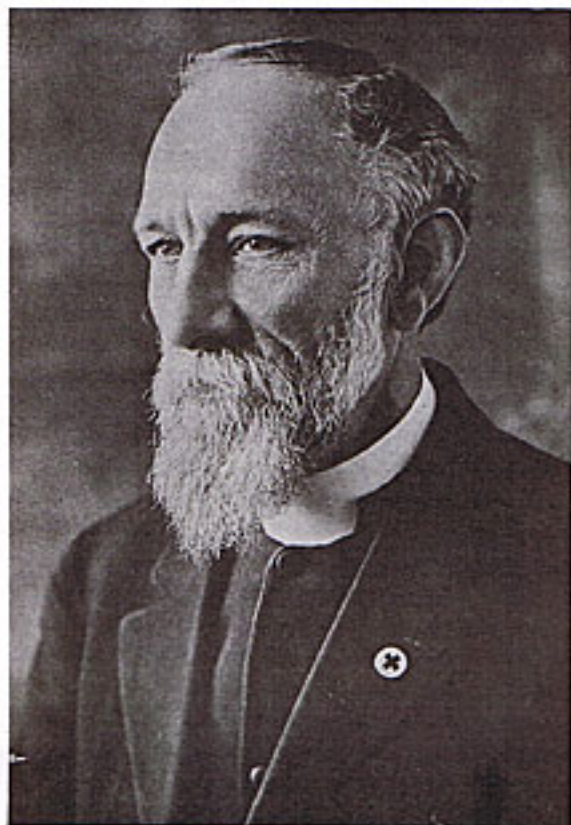
The Rev. Edward Lee was one of the ministers who made his home in the green manse, arriving in 1908. It had been previously occupied by the Madills, the Grahams and the Carswells. It was during Mr. Lee's time that a large tent was erected on the grounds near the church and a week of "Revival" meetings held there.

The Present Manse

The present manse with its seven rooms, has been in use since 1916. The building contractor was Roderick McKenzie, father of Winnie Babisky. On the Building Committee were: the Rev. George Gunn, John Clouston (the second), George Wallace, William Cumming and G. G. Gunn. Plumbing was added in 1924, but most of the renovation has been comparatively recent. The electric stove dates from 1959. Re-decorating was done the following year and an oil furnace installed. New kitchen cupboards were added in 1962. The house is now heated by gas, and another bedroom was added in the basement. In June, 1973, a violent hail-storm necessitated a new roof and other repairs. When the house was still quite new, it was insured for \$2000, with only \$1500 on the church.



The Present Manse



The Rev. G. Faryon

The Rev. G. Faryon

The Rev. G. Faryon was the first of our ministers to live in the present manse. In his day, there was an electric street-car running between Winnipeg and Selkirk, but he refused to use it on Sundays, disapproving of anything which caused people to work on the Sabbath. He used a horse, but the Rev. J. Knox Clark, who succeeded him, had a car, and it became necessary to provide a garage in 1923. While Mr. Faryon may have been strict in his observance of the Sabbath, he was very good at arranging concerts and lectures for week-nights.

Often the artists would come out from Winnipeg, although we noted one entertainment had to be cancelled on account of the General Strike of 1919.



The Stone Church

The Stone Church

Officially named in 1873, to be called "The Presbyterian Church of Little Britain." The Rev. John Black preached the sermon at the Dedication Service, November 16, 1874.

Situated on the west bank of the Red River, about three-quarters of a mile south of the main gate to Lower Fort Garry, the present site of Little Britain United Church, with its manse, cemetery and Church hall, is part of the original land grant from the Hudson's Bay Company. Like other river lots, it extended two miles back from the river with additional haying privileges beyond that. After the Province of Manitoba was formed there was a disposition of the haying privileges, and in 1902, the eighteen acres on the west side of the Lord Selkirk Highway was sold for less than \$200, to help pay for the green manse.

The first plans for a new church were presented to the congregation in 1865, but considered to be too large in size. It was decided to appeal to Scotland and to Canada for funds, to see what might be forthcoming, before settling on the dimensions. Perhaps they were not overly optimistic, because James Nisbet was asked to prepare another plan, for a smaller church. Nevertheless, they resolved to quarry stones during the ensuing winter, but the following year it was reported that no action had been taken, due to a short harvest and unusual amount of sickness in the settlement. Plans were changed, the manse was built first, it was nearly 1873 before much actual work on the church got underway. But, on January 19, 1874, although some interior work remained to be done, the Building Committee reported that they had inspected the structure, and since everyone seemed to be satisfied, the church was considered to be finished, and turned over to the congregation.

It had been built facing the river, not only because that was still an important means of access in those days, but, running along the bank, south from the Stone Fort, was a much used trail, wide enough for a Red River cart.



The Rev. A. Frazer



Mrs. A. Frazer

The Frazers

Minister during the period of construction, the Rev. A. Frazer was noted as a builder of churches. The picture of Mrs. Frazer was taken some years later, after the death of her husband, but they were at Little Britain in 1873. According to their grandson, William Frazer, of Beaconsia, Manitoba, there was a plague of grasshoppers that year, so numerous that the walls of the church and manse were literally covered with them. A way was found to trap and kill them, and they were used as feed for the chickens during the following winter.

Construction and Additions

The contract for the stone masonry was signed by John Clouston, but Duncan McRae was working with him. Some of Wolseley's men from Lower Fort Garry also helped to raise the walls. In 1920, when the bell-tower was dedicated, there was a newspaper account which listed the names of prominent men who had worked on the walls. They were: Hon. Robert Gunn, Captain Kennedy, Dr. David Young, A. L. Young, P. R. Young, Roderick McPherson, Hon. D. A. Smith (later Lord Strathcona), Hon. Alfred Boyd, Hon. Alexander Morris and Dr. John Schultz, several of whom later held office as Lieutenants-Governor of Manitoba. The article also stated that a number of the original members of the congregation were still living in the district, so the information may well have been obtained from an old-timer. For that reason, we have included the list, although there is nothing else in our own records to verify it, beyond the fact that some of those mentioned were members of the congregation.

The church windows were made by John McLeod, a man, 6'10" tall, who died in 1932 at the age of ninety-nine. In 1930, stained glass was installed in the windows along the south side, one being donated by James Pittis, in memory of his parents. The other three were provided by local subscription and the work was supervised by Chris Johnstone. In 1973, a large memorial window was installed, to honor the pioneer builders of the church. The donor was Mrs. Maria Canvin, born in 1887, daughter of Joseph Clouston, youngest brother of John Clouston Sr. Her father's mill was on Lot 1, just north of the Fort.

The Rev. G. Faryon designed the belfrey, which was built in 1920, as a memorial to the men who had fallen during the first World War. The bell was put in place by G. G. Gunn and, once again, Chris Johnstone. Total cost of the project was \$535, about \$60 being for the bell itself. Proper pews had been made for the Meeting-House during the Rev. Nisbet's time. These were moved to the new church and are still in use, albeit, braced. Originally placed with an aisle down each side, a more pleasing centre-aisle plan, first proposed in 1918, was finally adopted in 1969, when a new carpeted floor was laid. The pulpit, hand-made by John Lowe Loutit, was also brought from the old building, as was the Communion Table. The "flower" table was also hand-made more recently, by Bob Chamberlain, who has done most of the cabinet carpentry in the last few years. The Baptismal Font was a gift, in 1943, from Mrs. William Cumming, in memory of her husband, and first used when their grandson was baptized. Mrs. Cumming, herself, was a very active member of the congregation, and her husband had been an Elder for twenty-five years as well as church Treasurer for almost as long.

For about seventy years, three wood stoves (two at the front and one at the back of the church) provided the heat. In the beginning, each family was expected to furnish a load of wood, but eventually it had to be purchased. In 1949, a new furnace was put in, later an oil burner, and recently a gas furnace has been installed.

Coal oil lamps were used until 1914, when they were replaced by electricity at a cost of \$73.40.

An interior view of the church, decorated for a Christmas concert in the early 1900's. The tablet on the wall is the one donated by Sir John Schultz, in memory of Donald Gunn. Those are oil lamps on the chandelier, and real candles on the tree, and that is the original organ. Very apparent are the stove pipes, which were later joined up to one central chimney, and gave a lot of trouble in the form of dripping tar.

The interior walls of the church were plastered and kept white-washed, since many people had their own lime kilns in the early days. The many layers of calcimine are still a problem when decorating. Repairs have been an on-going process, with reports of some work being done almost every year.



Interior View About 1904

The roof has been re-shingled several times, with Mr. Robert Hay Sr., an active member of the congregation since the 1870's, personally collecting enough money for the roofing project of 1912. Considerable renovation was done in 1918, the Minutes speak of the Rev. Faryon doing much of the work himself, and also of "Patriarch John Clouston, wheeling the decorator's outfit to and from Little Britain Station on several extremely hot days." Extensive restoration was done on the church in 1949, "the work being completed through the untiring efforts of Martin Zonneveld" who, as Chairman of the Restoration Committee, spear-headed the drive for funds, as well as supervising the actual work. A bequest from F. L. Quance helped to finance further work in 1969, when Lawrence Porhownik, the Chairman of the Stewards, was responsible for the improvements.

The Cemetery

Paradoxically, the record of burials in our churchyard tells us much about life in the old days. Ten or twelve children in a family was not uncommon but so many infants died in their first few days or months, and so many young wives and children! For example, within a month of each other, two of Rev. Matheson's sons were dead of dysentery. At 26, Mrs. Elizabeth McDonald died of consumption, and Oliver Johnstone, age two, of whooping cough. Typhoid, diphtheria, and pneumonia were common killers too, and more than one person was frozen to death. The heart-break caused by these premature deaths, we can only imagine! Still, many survived well past their allotted span of three score and ten years, the cause of death frequently being stated as "old age."



The Cemetery

The burial of Murdock McDonald, in 1869, is noted in our records, but according to Mrs. Canvin, the first person to be laid to rest in our Cemetery was John Clouston's wife, whom he had returned to Scotland to fetch in 1855. He was married a second time, to Nancy McLeod.

Resolve to fence a graveyard on the church lot was first recorded in 1864, and fencing seems to have been a perennial concern to the congregation for many years thereafter. In 1878, it was reported that the burying ground had been fenced, but must have referred to a limited area, because at the same meeting, it was decided to put up a line fence between the church ground and a neighbor, John Muir. Again, in 1882, it was decided to fence the graveyard all around, with two gates, also that no teams be allowed in the yard at meetings or funerals. In 1891, \$48 had been collected for fencing, reported fully paid for the following year, and of course fences have been mended since then. Mrs. Chris Johnstone remembers the stiles in the fence, which let you get into the churchyard without opening a gate.

In 1878 the sexton had been given the responsibility for digging graves, the charge was to be \$2 in winter and \$1.50 in summer. It was also decided that the ground should be laid out in lots to suit families. In 1897, a motion was passed that a map should be made, and better records kept.

As time has passed, more trees and brush have been cleared and the graveyard surveyed and extended. In 1928, Chris Johnstone was appointed to be secretary-treasurer of the Cemetery, and through his efforts and concern, which went far beyond the call of duty, the standard of upkeep was greatly improved. During the drought years a sprinkling system, using river water, was installed. Graves were levelled, sodded and marked. Stones were straightened, and trees and flowers planted, making it a lovely spot. The need for written records had been recognized, but as long as some of the original members were alive, memory had served reasonably well and the making of a map had been put off. Chris Johnstone contacted many families by letter, and spent hours at the cemetery on Sundays and holidays, when visitors might be around, so that he was finally able to fill in most of the gaps in the records and draw up a pretty complete map. At the present time John Porhownik has the responsibility of maintaining a well kept cemetery.

Duncan McRae's Grave

The churchyard contains many old stones of interest, the one pictured is that of Duncan McRae, stonemason, who also worked on several of the other old churches of Red River, as well as the Stone Fort. His great-graughter tells us that family history has it that he carved his own tombstone. Near by lie many who must have been life-long friends.



The Cemetery

The Care-Taking

In 1863, John Folster was made sexton, his duties being to provide the firewood, tend the fires, light the candles, and keep the meeting-house clean. His salary was only one pound for the year, but in 1866 it was decided to manage without help. Donald Gunn Sr. undertook to light the fires, and the parents of the day-school children were to supply the wood. In 1871, a sexton was once again appointed, the congregation to furnish the wood.

Allister McDonald was the first caretaker of the new church, but in 1876, William McCorrister took over, and for nearly fifty years a member of that family was looking after the church or the yard, or both. For \$25 a year (soon raised to \$30 and then \$35) fires were lit, lamps lighted, and the church kept clean. For extra duties he received a little more, in one instance it was \$1.50 for cleaning after a Soiree. Another time the amount was \$2 for cutting hay in the churchyard, the hay being given to the minister. The firewood was supposed to be already cut into stove-lengths, but not always done, we note that the caretaker received an extra \$4 one year, for cutting wood. After William McCorrister died in 1893, his widow carried on, even including the chores of cutting grass and cleaning the yard. Other help was obtained for digging graves and looking after burials, and from 1897 it was Tom McCorrister, a nephew, who assumed these duties. Mrs. McCorrister continued to be the church-keeper until her death in 1919, and the era ended in 1924, when Tom McCorrister also passed on. The Ladies Aid raised money to erect a tombstone in his memory, and G.G. Gunn provided the base and set the stone in place, as his contribution.

Much voluntary work always has been done by members of the congregation and when extra work was need in the churchyard, the men would hold a "Bee".



Fence-Mending "Bee" in 1922

Those In The Fence-Mending Picture Are:

Back row, left to right: Alex. McDonald, Tom McCorrister, Jim Wallace, Sandy Flett, Harry Cox, William Mowatt, Jim Cumming, Chris Johnstone, Harry Flett, Alex Clarke, Fred Quance, Mr. Sutherland (a visitor), John Clouston Jr.
Front row: Jim Martin, Rev. G. Faryon, G. B. Corke.

We believe James Wallace to be the only living member of the crew who mended fences the day the picture was taken in the fall of 1922. He is also the last of the old guard who helped to erect the cairn, in 1933. It marks the spot, north of Lockport, where the first meeting-house was located. Mr. Wallace told us that he supplied teams to haul the gravel and sand, and also gave us the information that the stone for the base had come from Donald Gunn's new large stone house, still under construction when he died.



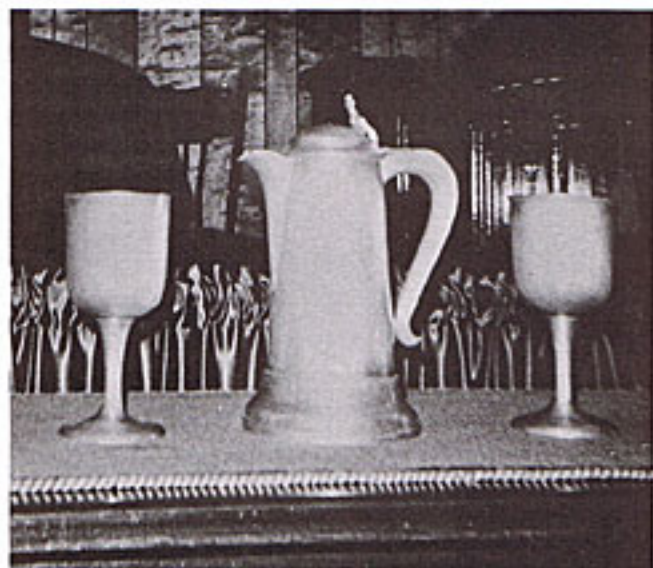
The Cairn

When the Young People's organization was in operation, they turned out as a group to give the church a thorough spring cleaning each year. And, on the occasion of a special Anniversary, the Minutes state that the ladies had scrubbed and polished until the church sparkled. For three years during the Depression, when so many people had to struggle to make ends meet, the Ladies Aid hired a local girl as caretaker, paying her \$5 a month, which was the amount she had to pay as tuition to attend Selkirk Collegiate. It must have been very gratifying when she graduated with a Governor-General's award. During the summer months, in those years, the members of the Ladies Aid took turns with the weekly cleaning chores.

The Session

The first Communion Set, of pewter, replaced in 1924 by an individual set, given to the congregation by Mr. and Mrs. John B. Graham of Hamilton, Ontario. The Grahams' connection with Little Britain is not known but the gift has been very much appreciated.

It seems likely that our first Elders were Donald Gunn and John Clouston Sr. In 1871, the congregation was informed that the Session recommended an increase in their number, and several men were nominated. Among them was Peter R. Young, whom we find to be an Elder when the Session Book begins in 1875, along with Messrs. Gunn and Clouston. The Rev. Alexander Matheson was the Moderator and Clerk of Session and those first Minutes are beautifully written.



The First Communion Set

It would be interesting if we could also read between the lines to know more about some of the items. For instance, several Session meetings went by before it was decided to accept two particular applicants for membership. "An act of contumacy" (defiance of authority) was known to be against them, and in some way both Kildonan and Knox Churches of Winnipeg were involved, because letters went back and forth. Finally Little Britain accepted the two into the fellowship, "lest they fall away to another denomination".

Also intriguing was the time when Donald Gunn, himself, was accused of Sabbath-breaking by Neil McKay, who confessed to having accompanied him. Both were admonished to act more circumspectly, and in the proper spirit of penitence, agreed to do so. The Minutes didn't say what they had been doing!

In the 80's and 90's there is a gap in the Session Record, later filled in from memory by P. R. Young, and duly attested by Presbytery. The Session Book had been mislaid for about ten years, but no mention of where it turned up.

In 1901, the Session met at Little Britain with the Rev. J. C. Madill and Elders P. R. Young, James Gunn, H. J. Clouston, and W. R. McPherson, along with Norman McPherson and Thomas Grieves of Cloverdale, and John MacDonald of Parkdale. Whether to continue week-night meetings at Meadowdale and Highfield was finally left up to Mr. Madill. It was further decided to leave the Sunday Schools at Meadowdale and Parkdale as they were, but efforts should be made to make them more distinctively Presbyterian. The one at Parkdale could be moved to the school-house if the people wished, and it could be open to all children, but on no account was it to be a "Union" school. Highfield was to be revived if possible, and Gonor continued under the Christian Endeavor Society, supervised by the Session. Considering the transportation facilities of the time, these men were looking after the spiritual needs of quite a large area.

Views about being "distinctively Presbyterian" must have mellowed by 1925, when the matter of Church Union came along. How the voting went is not recorded, but among our papers is a list of 42 members who were eligible to vote on the question, and in 1926, Elders were W. L. Cumming, G. B. Corke and J. A. Pittis, and members in good standing numbered 37. So the vote in favor could have been almost unanimous. Membership has fluctuated periodically, at the present time there are 75 active members.

Not until 1964 were women elected as Elders of the congregation, the first two being Isabella Chamberlain and Viola Schneider. This year's Elders are: Rae Tallin, Clerk of Session, W. Raymond Gunn (great grandson of Donald Gunn), John Porhownik, Mike Kreviazuk, Isabel Hunt and William Sprong.

The Sunday School

In more than a century there have been many who have given faithful service in the work of the Sunday School, but the record must go to P. R. Young, who was superintendent for nearly forty years. In January, 1874, he gave the Sabbath School report for the previous year, indicating that Sunday School was already in operation in the days of the Meeting House. Collections had amounted to \$33.40, and expenses for books and papers had totalled \$18.50. Mrs. Canvin told us that when she was a little girl, (in the 1890's), Sunday School met at 1:30 P.M. and lasted until 2:45, after which the children attended regular Church Service with their parents for another hour or two. The practice of renting a pew has been dropped by that time, but each family had its regular place, determined fairly by drawing for the location. The Mowatts, with eleven children, had one whole row.

Although it is believed that there had been a large enrollment in the Sunday School about the turn of the century, attendance records were not reported until 1913, when there were twenty-five pupils. Enrollment seems to have fluctuated greatly du-

ring the years following. Down to 14 in 1922, but three years later, up to 66. A post-war population explosion perhaps? In 1930, the superintendent, G.B. Corke, gave the Sunday School report for the year and commented that the parents seemed to be taking more interest than previously, and encouraging the children to attend more regularly. Mr. Corke, Mr. Pittis, and Dale Johnstone were thanked for their untiring efforts in making such a good report possible. Three years later, another fine report! Nine pupils and three teachers were commended for perfect attendance. Costs had been averaged, and stood at three cents per child, per Sunday. Also mentioned, that four people were transporting the children in their cars, with Mr. Mowatt ferrying some across the river in the summer time.

Probably due to gasoline rationing, Sunday School was discontinued for a time during the war, but resumed again, and re-organized in 1949, when Mr. A. Parsons was the minister. Instituted in the 50's, a two-week Vacation Bible School was held during several summers. These were very enjoyable for the children, with attendance climbing to nearly 100 in 1963, when the last one was held.

For many years, an annual Christmas concert was traditional, long-time members still remember the programs which included songs and recitations, and usually a pageant, with the youngest children always "stealing" the show. Well remembered too, was the bag of treats and the small gift from the tree, for each boy and girl. Another annual event was the Sunday School picnic around the end of June, held at a local spot, or sometimes at Kildonan Park, and always fun for all.

The Sunday School



The Sunday School "Red and Blue" Contest In August 1931

The present superintendent is Linda Tallin, and teachers are: Judy Chamberlain (nee Panting), Leone and Linda Lister and Rae Tallin. Current enrollment is approximately 20, with average attendance a bit less.

Other Youth Groups

Periodically there have been other active youth groups in the church. The first mention occurs around 1900, when the Young People's Christian Endeavor Society was taking responsibility for the operation of a Sunday School at Gonor, on the east side of the river, where, among others, a number of immigrants from Europe had established homes. In the 20's there was a Mission Band, and about the same time, a Junior Ladies Aid, called the Beavers, was formed by Mrs. Faryon. In the same era, Mrs. G. B. Corke organized and led a C.G.I.T. group, including girls from St. Andrew's as well as from Little Britain. The meetings were held in her home, but three years later, Edna Johnstone took over as leader and it was a very active group at Little Britain until 1934. Among their activities were concerts, plays, and annual summer camps at Matlock, Sandy Hook and Beausejour.



C.G.I.T. Camp - 1929



Starting Off For Camp - 1931

Both the above pictures are of Little Britain C.G.I.T. girls. The bathing beauties are at camp at Matlock in 1929. From left to right they are Mena Kirner, Sybil Birston, Jean McConnell, Olive West, Jessie McConnell, Hazel West, Ray Johnstone, Mrs. West (chaperone), Margaret Johnstone, Edna Johnstone (leader).

In the other picture, the girls are setting off for camp with Mr. Larter transporting them in his truck.

A Young People's was still going strong in 1936, they raised the money for a boat to transport the east-side children across the river to Sunday School. In the late 40's another Junior Ladies Aid was organized, and a C.G.I.T. again in the 50's, and another Young People's in the 60's, but as in most congregations, when particular groups grow up, the organizations lapse for a while, to be resumed a few years later with a new crop of members.

Music in The Church

In 1863, Mr. D. McDonald was appointed as precentor for the year at a salary of 1 pound, 12 shillings, his duty being to sound the tuning fork and lead in the singing of hymns and psalms. Not until 1898 was a small organ purchased, and a choir formed. Mr. I. F. Cox was the first leader, and Miss McDougall the first organist. In the Rev. Edward Lee's time (1908-1911), this first organ was carried back and forth to the Chris Johnstone home at the river end of Ferry Road, for choir practice each week. Mr. Johnstone sang in the choir for fifty years, and each of his three daughters, Edna, Margaret and Isobel, served as organist in their turn.

In 1915, a new organ was obtained from the Mason & Risch Co., for \$175. The choir helped to raise the money for it by setting up a booth at the Locks on two occasions. The Locks had become a very popular spot, excursions from Winnipeg by boat, as well as coming by street-car or automobile, made it a great place for a picnic, and lemonade and cookies sold readily.



Mason and Risch Organ Used From 1915 - 1967

The choir have continued to be very active in helping with the finances. They raised a considerable amount to enlarge the Church Hall, and in 1962, new gowns costing \$300 were bought, and a cupboard for them built (another \$120). The present organ was purchased in 1967, again with help from the choir.

Hymn Books have been bought periodically, or inherited from other churches, as were a number from both Grace and Knox Churches of Winnipeg. Fifty were donated by Mrs. L. Fairfield, in memory of her parents, others have also been received as gifts. Recently we have acquired the New Hymnaries.

The Hymn Board was added in Mr. Faryon's time, and the oak box, where the Hymnaries are kept, was made by the Rev. J. A. McConnell.

All through the years, the music provided by the choir has added immeasurably to the Worship Services, and the faithful, weekly service of the leaders, organists, and members has always been appreciated. When Mr. G. B. Corke, the leader for many years, moved away, the choir was disbanded, until the Rev. T. B. Pearson re-organized it in 1958.

The 1961 Choir

Front row, left to right: Lena Hoban, Carolyn Schneider, Judy Porhownik, Dorothy Johnston, Lois Babisky, Ada Todd, Frances Todd. Back row: Richard Swain (Organist), Dennis Swain, Viola Schneider (Leader), Ray Rosky, Winnie Babisky, Murry Schneider, Isabella Chamberlain, Allen Rosky, Hazel Gunn, Lawrence Porhownik, Terry Horner, Gordon Mowatt, Raymond Gunn, Brian Kreviazuk.



The Choir of 1961

The Ladies

The first record of women's work in the church appears in the Minutes in 1882. The Rev. Alexander Matheson read the report of a Tea-Meeting held in the church the previous week. Receipts had amounted to \$165.30, from the sale of tickets, and from donations collected by Mrs. W. McCorrister, Miss Gunn, Mrs. Hay, Miss McKay,

Mrs. Morrison and Miss Taylor. Cakes were also sold, as well as wheat and oats from the canvass. Clear profit was \$161.10, since \$4.20 had been spent for turkeys and eggs. At the same meeting, it was reported that Mrs. Matheson (the minister's wife) and Mrs. D. Young (the doctor's wife) had obtained \$62 in subscriptions for repairs to the church. Obviously, the ladies of Little Britain had been active from the beginning, but not until 1900 did a woman read a report, and it was 1913 before one made a motion at a congregational meeting.

Mention of the Ladies Aid, as such, occurs during the 1890's, but in 1908 we read that it was decided to form a Ladies Aid as soon as possible, so perhaps that was the formal start of a women's organization, although the Women's Missionary Society may have come first. It was in operation, but seems to have included the same group of people. In 1946, they began to hold joint meetings, becoming a Women's Federation in 1959. In the 50's there was a second circle of women, who lived on the east side of the river, but as of now, our U.C.W. is one group of about a dozen women.



The Ladies Aid, About 1930

From left to right: Mrs. J. A. McConnell (minister's wife and president of the "Aid" for quite a number of years), Mrs. C. Johnstone, Mrs. J. Pittis (who kindly lent us some of her old photographs), Mrs. McGregor, Mrs. West and Mrs. W. Cumming.

As the years have passed, the names have changed but always there have been faithful women, working to help maintain the church and its influence in the community. For instance, the 1927-28 season included St. Andrew's, St. Patrick's, and St. George's Day concerts, as well as several Rummage Sales, an Easter Tea, and an Anniversary Dinner. Sales of handiwork, home-cooking, or candy, went along with almost every project. During the Depression, members would be asked to make up 25 cents-worth of sugar into candy, for sale at the next play or concert. Yards and yards of print were made into aprons, countless quilts were created out of patches, and numberless flour and sugar bags were transformed into tea towels and pillow-slips. Teas or Garden Parties were held either at the old Manse or at the homes of members. Miss Bannerman on Donald Road, Mrs. N. Ross at Lockport, Mrs. F. Quance near the church, or later, Mrs. G. P. R. Tallin at Hawthorne Lodge, were among those who opened their homes for "Silver" Teas. During the past few years our annual Tea has been held in the Church Hall, and has included a sale of bedding plants, generously donated by Mr. and Mrs. W. Sprong.

Various groups have been catered for by our Ladies, -- for years the Lanark Old-Timers made an annual excursion to Little Britain, the Rev. J. A. McConnell being their chaplain. One summer the Oxford Group held a week-end retreat at the old manse,

likewise a group from Home Street United Church. A C.G.I.T. week-end was held there too, the girls coming from Winnipeg. Activities of that sort had to be curtailed when food and gasoline were rationed during World War Two. In the last few years we have catered for quite a number of weddings, wind-ups, and anniversaries, as well as having an annual sale of home-baking, usually held in a Selkirk Store. On several occasions we have catered for invited guests, visiting Lower Fort Garry, the latest being for the opening of the R.C.M.P. exhibit to mark their centennial last year.

Unfortunately, Minute Books stress the facts and figures more often than the fun and friendship that goes along with a small group of women working closely together for common goals. However, the record of 1930 does mention an occasion when the ladies enjoyed a sleigh-ride (thanks to Mr. Mowatt) to and from a meeting at Mrs. Flett's across the river. During the Depression it was decided to have some dinners during the winter, more for sociability than to raise money, the first menu was to be Irish stew, and the charge was to be 15 cents. Often too, it was noted that the Managers had joined the ladies for refreshments after their meetings, and a social time had been enjoyed. Likely, then as now, some of the fun arose from the mishaps which occur from time to time, but always coped with in our fashion. Ask our President Dorothy Panting, about a quick way to make cabbage salad, or ask Mildred Johnston, our Treasurer, for her recipe for Turkey gravy.

The Board of Managers

Our First Minutes record the appointment of Duncan McRae, John Clouston and Alex. Gunn to the Board of "Managers" (now called Stewards). The expenses for the year were to be provided by a rate on the pews, to be collected by the managers each June 1st and December 1st. In 1864, a balance of 5 shillings was reported, but by the end of the following year, a deficit of 5 pounds, 2 shillings. The Chairman, the Rev. John Black, urged on the congregation "the exercise of liberality". It was decided that a collection box should be placed at the door each Lord's Day, and a special public collection taken on Sacramental Sabbaths, if necessary.

Expenses for ordinary church purposes were still relatively low, six pounds, 19 shillings was enough for the year of 1868, but the manse was under construction, and subscriptions for that purpose were being collected. At the start of 1871, it was reported that about 264 pounds had already been spent, and a kitchen and stable were still to be built, as well as the finishing of the upper storey.

The money had been raised almost equally from Canada and from Red River, although part of the colony's share represented labour, rather than cash, donated.

By the end of the year, Mr. Flett reported that he and the Rev. McNabb had on hand 40 pounds, and ten more promised, for the building of a new church. The original plans had been for a stone church, but at some time during the intervening years it had been decided that a wooden structure might be more within their means, but in September of 1872 a final decision was reached, it was to be built of stone. The Committee was urged "to prosecute the work as fast and as far as the means at their disposal would enable them to do". In January, 1873, P. R. Young gave the following report:

Subscriptions collected (new)	£100.10.0
" from Mr. Flett (old)	19. 4.0
Concert	17. 0.7
Soiree	30. 0.0
Subscriptions collected by N. Morrison	15. 0.0
	<hr/> 181.14.7

Out of this had been paid:

Mr. McDonald for timber	6. 0.0	
P. Stevenson " "	9. 0.0	
Mr. Fidler " "	8. 0.0	
M. McLeod " stone	4.15.0	
P. Harper " lime	5.10.0	
D. Gunn Jr. " couples & sawing	15.16.0	
"Manitoban" " concert printing	1.12.0	
Advertising " Tenders		
	(2 papers)	1. 4.0
M. McLeod " piling lumber	12.0	
John Gunn " hauling timber		
	& measuring	4. 0.0
A. McArthur " lumber	40. 0.0	
John Clouston on contract	65. 0.0	
J. Muir Jr. for piling lumber	5.0	162. 4.0

Balance in hands of treasurer £19.10.7

Also, because of decision to build of stone instead of wood, there would be for sale, 782 feet of timber (41 pieces).

From that time on, money was reported in dollars and cents, rather than pounds, shillings and pence, but the problem of obtaining funds remained unchanged. Although an additional \$622 had been collected, the Building Committee was authorized to borrow \$1000 in January, 1874, to help pay off the debts.

At the Annual Meeting, following the formal opening of the new church, it was decided that the Board of Managers should henceforth consist of five members, "to take charge of all the temporal affairs of the congregation". Elected to office were: Messrs. William Flett, P. R. Young, Norman Morrison, James Gunn and John Clouston Sr. At the same time it was reported that the amount so far expended on the stone church totalled \$3,125.11, and that besides the mortgage, \$120 was owed. More canvassing for subscriptions to be done!

Money Raising

Voluntary giving has never been sufficient to cover all expenses. The best money-raiser, in the old days, seems to have been the "Soiree", defined in the dictionary as "a social gathering held in the evening", but remembered by Mrs. Chris Johnstone as mainly a good meal. Two very successful Soirees were held in 1878 which together brought in \$513, and at which subscriptions of an additional \$525 were promised. Tea meetings and concerts were held too, the aim being to get out of debt. Mrs. Johnstone also remembers Tea Meetings, held right in the church, with large copper boilers of tea on the stoves.

As time passed, other forms of entertainment came into vogue and proceeds were noted from such things as a Magic Lantern Show, Garden Parties, or perhaps an illustrated lecture. One such, in the 20's, was entitled "4000 Miles in a Ford Car", and no doubt it was a Model T, touring car. Plays had become popular too, and were being put on by our own people. Many of these special events were still being organized by the Managers, but also by the Choir, the Young People's, the Ladies Aid or the C.G.I. T. Mrs. J. Knox Clark, the minister's wife, proved to be a very talented dramatic director, and the Little Britain players attained near-professional standards, and presented their plays at Lockport, Selkirk, and other places as well.



The Little Britain Players

Back row, from left to right: Chris Johnstone, V. Pittis, Mr. & Mrs. McKenzie Gunn, Mrs. Pittis, C. Johnstone, Olive West, Jean McConnell and Keith McConnell. Seated in front: J. Pittis and Mrs. Chris Johnstone.

The Rev. J. Knox Clark

The Rev. J. Knox Clark was the minister at Little Britain from 1923 to 1929, and those were busy and productive years in the life of the congregation. Mrs. Clark too, is still remembered for her enthusiasm and drive.



The Rev. and Mrs. J. Knox Clark

More recently, the Annual Turkey Supper has been the big thing. Instigated by the Choir, to raise money for the Church Hall, it is now more of a U.C.W. project, but really involves the whole congregation. Proceeds have always gone to a Building or Renovation fund. For several years it was held at Lower Fort Garry, when it was the Motor Country Club, but is now held in our own Hall, since it was enlarged. The project peaked in the late 60's (the time 800 were served). Since then, lack of available help has resulted in a cut-back, but last year's Supper, with Rivercrest congregation sharing the work, went off so smoothly that perhaps a new record will yet be set.

In telling the story of the Managers and the Money, emphasis has been placed on the earliest years, but throughout its history, Little Britain has been singularly blessed by the dedicated service of its people. In 1925, recognition was accorded to John Clouston Jr., for his many years of devotion to the welfare of the church, he was first elected to the Board of Managers in 1880, -- 45 years later, the congregation made him a Life Member of that Board. No one else has been honored in just that way, but many others have surely earned a place in our history, both the pioneers and the men and women of our own century, whose faithfulness to the work of the congregation has carried us through two World Wars, the lean years, and the years of change. An Honor Roll would bear the names of Gunn, Clouston, Young, McRae, Hay, Thexton, Flett, Wallace, McPherson, Cumming, Johnstone, Pittis, Cox, McCorrister, Corke, Mowatt, Quance, Waddell, Ross, Fairfield, McDonald, Tallin, and more. Their steadfast faith was equal to the tasks of their time, leaving a shining example for those who follow.

This year's Stewards are: Andy Low, Chairman, Viola Schneider, Treasurer, Frances Panting, Stuart Hamilton, Mildred Johnston, Isobel Kreviazuk, John Porhownik, Albert Anderson, Bob Beattie and Robert Chamberlain.

The Mission Field and Our Ministers

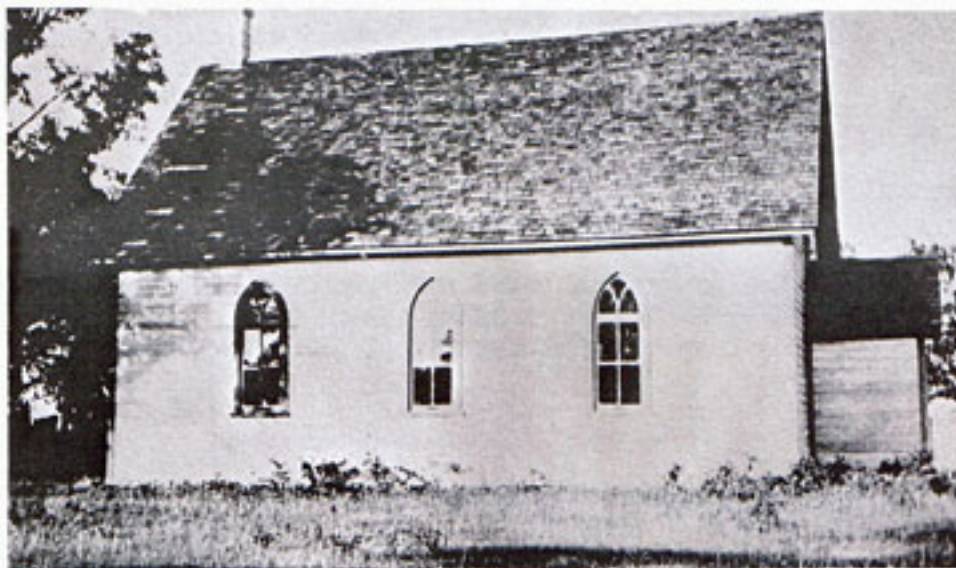
For nearly twenty years after the first Presbyterian congregations were organized in the Red River colony they were considered to be "Foreign Missions" by the Church of "Canada". In 1870, the Province was formed and became part of the Dominion, and in that same year the Presbytery of Manitoba was begun, and the mission stations of Red River became "Home Missions". In his book on the life of James Robertson, Dr. C. W. Gordon speaks about that first meeting of Presbytery with the Rev. John Black appointed as Moderator by the Synod, choosing as his text for the official sermon, "Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not". James Nisbet was far away at Prince Albert, but three ministers, Black, Fletcher and McNabb, deliberated along with their elders, Angus Polson and John Sutherland of Kildonan, and Donald Gunn of Little Britain. When they rose for benediction they had set forward a congregation in Winnipeg and named it Knox Church, they had planned a College, and they had organized a Home Mission Campaign.

Prior to that, Little Britain, being down river from Kildonan, was known as the Lower Station, but other mission stations were being established, and John Black, as the only ordained man in the field, tended them all until 1862, when James Nisbet, and finally others, were sent to join the cause. But the West was opening up, with more settlers each year pushing further afield, so that the demand for ministers was always ahead of supply. After our manse was built, there was usually a man in residence, but all of the early ministers served more than one station, and throughout its history, Little Britain has nearly always been a part of a multiple charge.

Our Kirk Session Book begins December 17, 1875, but at the meeting held on that date, the Minutes of the previous meeting were sustained. Those earlier records have not been preserved, unless they were part of Kildonan's, in the same way that our own book contains accounts of Communion Services and names of people accepted into membership of several congregations in the area. In 1876, the number of members in good standing at Park's Creek (Parkdale) was 8, and at Little Britain there were 40. In 1879, there is an account of a Communion Service at the meeting-house at Selkirk, when 16 new members were admitted to the Lord's Table. The affiliation with Selkirk and Parkdale continued for nearly twenty years, but in 1898 the records speak of the united Stations of Little Britain, Cloverdale, Parkdale and Ashfield. Five years later, it was Little Britain, Cloverdale and Clandeboyne, along with Netley Lake, Parkdale having joined with Stoney Mountain. Eventually, Little Britain and Cloverdale became a joint charge, and continued as such until 1941. There was also mention of a connection with Highland in the 20's, and of a renewed association with Parkdale about 1912. From 1941 we were on our own for a few years, then joined by Rivercrest in

1950, and by Bird's Hill in 1963, making up the three-point charge as it is at present. With three congregations to be suited, the time of Service at each has been a bit of a problem. Currently, Bird's Hill has an early morning service, while both Rivercrest and Little Britain meet at 11 A.M., with lay-members of the congregations conducting the services on alternate Sundays.

The Parkdale Church



The Presbyterian Church at Park's Creek

For more than twenty years the congregation at Parkdale had held Services in the school-house, but in November, of 1899, their church was formally opened to be called "The Schultz Memorial Presbyterian Church". It was built on land donated by Lady Schultz, in memory of her husband, Sir John. We believe that the church was finally closed about 1915, and now there are few who remember it at all.

The Cloverdale Church



Interior View Of The Original Church At Cloverdale

CLOVERDALE. Also opened in 1899 and named "The Madill Presbyterian Church," in honor of the minister at that time. This is a view of the interior of the church, decorated for the wedding of Catherine Taylor and Christopher Johnstone in 1908. A few years later this building burned to the ground and a new church was subsequently built.

While we were still a "foreign mission" there was no mention of a stipend, so the first ministers must have been paid by the Presbyterian Church of Canada. After 1870 our congregation was contributing to the support of its ministers to the extent they were able to support Home Missions. In 1871, six pounds, four shillings had been collected for that purpose, but by 1877 it was felt that it would be desirable to have a resident minister, and a guarantee of \$300 a year would entitle the congregation to petition Presbytery to moderate in such a call. From this point our records show amounts paid directly to our ministers, although the amounts must have been augmented by Presbytery, as well as by the other stations served.

A bit of mystery is the matter of a loan of about 18 pounds, made by Rev. McNabb, out of funds collected for the building of our church. It had been lent to the congregation at Mapleton, to help finish their meeting-house. It seemed possible that it was a helping hand to St. Clement's, until a reference to Mapleton as a Presbyterian station was discovered in Dr. Gordon's book. Where it was, or whether it was the beginning of Selkirk's Knox Church, which dates from 1876, is not clear.

The Rev. Alexander Matheson

The Rev. Alexander Matheson was the first minister of the new stone church, and with us until about 1880, when he was called to minister to the field of Springfield and Sunnyside, but his name continued to appear in our records for a number of years after that. The list of men who served at Little Britain contains many who were here only briefly and just in their "student" days, and on many occasions when the presence of an ordained man was required, it was often the Rev. Alex. Matheson. In our 122 years, less than half a dozen of our ministers have stayed as long as five years. At one point, our Session was appealing to Presbytery for greater continuity, suggesting that less than six months was unsatisfactory.

The Rev. J. A. McConnell

The Rev. J. A. McConnell holds the record, coming in 1929 and with us for nearly twenty years. In 1938 he tried to resign on account of his health, but was persuaded to stay on for another decade, until nearly eighty years of age. Among the many ways he is still fondly remembered is the way he shared his car, filling it whenever the occasion arose, and always making room for one more, if she was small, like Mrs. West. For his farewell sermon he chose the same text with which he had begun his ministry at Little Britain, "For we are labourers together with God". The church was filled, and many, standing outside, heard the service through the open windows.



The Rev. J. A. McConnell in The Pulpit

Dr. T. B. Pearson

Dr. T. B. Pearson was another of our five-year men, serving at Little Britain from 1954 to 1959, after his formal retirement from the ministry. He remained very active, bring renewed vigor to the congregation, also giving great impetus to the building of the church at Rivercrest.



The Rev. Dr. T. B. Pearson



The Rev. and Mrs. Bernard Lee

Our Present Minister

Our present minister is the Rev. Bernard Lee, who came to Canada several years after World War Two. After teaching for a number of years, nine of them at the Norway House Indian Residential School, he decided to study for the ministry, and has been with us since he was ordained in 1970. Both Bernard and his wife, Isobel, were born in England but their family of boys are Canadians. From Great Britain to Little Britain in one generation!

A Thought

For many years, a large sign hung on the wall at the front of the church, bearing the exhortation, "Fear the Lord and serve Him", put there, we believe, by the Rev. G. Faryon around 1918. An item in the Minutes mentions that approval had been given at that time, to putting up a text. We would have thought that it might have belonged to an even earlier era, when the people were frequently warned, from the pulpit, of eternal damnation. No sign has replaced it, but with today's "softer sell" it would more likely be Jesus' Commandment that we "Love one another".

Advantages and disadvantages are inherent in a small rural congregation, and ours is no exception. The financial struggle is always with us, but the fellowship is intimate. New members are welcomed with open arms, and elected to office as soon as decently possible. Involvement is practically unavoidable, but loyalty is tremendous. Too much is left to the few who are most willing, but their efforts are greatly appreciated by the rest of us, who might do well to ponder Mr. McConnell's text. "For we are laborers together with God".

A Note From The Authors

In an attempt to make the past come alive for our readers, we have included, here and there, the odd bit of evidence of human frailty, not from any lack of respect or feeling of superiority, but in the same way you tell anecdotes about your parents and grandparents, - because they are warmly remembered.

OUR THANKS ...

are due to all the Secretaries who kept such faithful records, and to our people with the long memories and big scrapbooks. Most of all, we are thankful to have finished in time.

YOUR THANKS ...

are due to Viola Schneider, who conceived the idea of writing a history and gathered reams of material (and to her husband, Ken, for putting up with it), and to Gwen Fox, who came in late and gave her a hand with the writing.



Another view of the Church, probably taken in the 20's.

Additional Pictures of Interest



The Old Fairfield House

Originally located on the second lot north of the church, it was the home of the Fairfield family, who were active members of Little Britain for many years.



In The Cemetery

To the right of the picture is the gravestone of the Rev. and Mrs. J.A. McConnell. Behind, and to the left, is the unique, fenced plot of the Mackenzie family.



Inside The Church

Interior view, 1974. The big chair, to the left of the pulpit, was originally owned by the Rev. John Black. In 1962, Mrs. P. N. Murray had it restored, and also had the old Communion set refurbished.

Little Britain United Church

As with all the facts in our history, we have tried to be as accurate as possible with the following list of ministers who have served at Little Britain, but many, especially before 1900, are included only because we found their names in a treasurer's report. As was stated earlier, many were student ministers, and whether they were paid much more than enough to cover their expenses was not mentioned in the records, making it very difficult to determine how long they might have been with us.

The Ministers of

“The Old Stone Church”

- 1852 - The Rev. John Black
- 1864 - The Rev. James Nisbet
- 1869 - The Rev. John McNabb (or McNab)
- 1872 - The Rev. Alexander Frazer
- 1874 - The Rev. Alexander Matheson
- 1880 - The Rev. Alexander Campbell
- 1888 - The Rev. C. Bryden
- 1889 - Mr. Wallace
- 1891 - Mr. Weir
- 1894 - Messrs. Gillies and Borthwick
- 1895 - Messrs. Tait, Borthwick, Florence and Moore
- 1896 - Mr. Tait
- 1897 - Mr. John Russell
- 1898 - Messrs. Lowry, Eaton and Peacock
- 1899 - The Rev. J. C. Madill
- 1903 - The Rev. William Graham
- 1904 - The Rev. J. C. Carswell
- 1908 - The Rev. Edward Lee
- 1911 and 1912 - Pulpit Supply
- 1913 - The Rev. J. F. Stewart
- 1914 - The Rev. George Gunn
- 1915 - The Rev. L. Berry
- 1916 - The Rev. G. Faryon
- 1923 - The Rev. J. Knox Clark
- 1929 - The Rev. J. A. McConnell
- 1948 - Mr. A. Parsons
- 1950 - The Rev. D. E. Bennett
- 1954 - The Rev. Dr. T. B. Pearson
- 1959 - Mr. Lachlan McLean
- 1961 - The Rev. Dr. P. N. Murray
- 1963 - The Rev. R. McPherson
- 1965 - The Rev. "Bud" Bewell
- 1966 - The Rev. John McLeod
- 1970 - The Rev. Bernard Lee

NETLEY LAKE
(9 mi. north of Clandeboye)

CLANDEBOYE

MEADOWDALE

CLOVERDALE

SELKIRK

LOWER
FORT GARRY

LITTLE BRITAIN

MEETING HOUSE

LOCKPORT

ASHFIELD

HIGHLAND

GONOR

HIGHFIELD

LORD SELKIRK HIGHWAY

PARKDALE

HENDERSON HIGHWAY

RIVERCREST

THE RED RIVER

KILDONAN

BIRD'S HILL

UPPER
FORT
GARRY

THE MISSION FIELD



LITTLE BRITAIN UNITED CHURCH
Celebrating 150 Years of Worship

1852—2002

Mission Statement

'We are a congregation in a heritage church, energized by Christ to seek justice, resist evil, to love and care for others. Our church is organized to enable us to faithfully use the variety of gifts God gives to build up the body of Christ, in our congregation and beyond.

To fulfill these commitments, we will meet together to worship, study, pray, break bread at the Lord's table, and to celebrate God's presence time in times of joy and sorrow. We will support one another in our quest to become the people that God intends us to be. We will invite young people and others to join us as we encourage one another to explore and grow in faith, to respect God's creation, and to know ourselves and all others as beloved children of God. With God's help, we will endeavour to uphold the best traditions of this faith community."

Constitution Adopted January 26,
2001

*Remember the days of old,
Consider the years long past;
ask your ancestors to recount it,
and your elders to tell you the tale
Deuteronomy 32:7*

Dear Friends,

The year 2002 is a memorable one for Little Britain United Church. As we celebrate 150 years of worship, we thought it appropriate that the history of our Church, first published in 1974, be updated. We owe a great deal of thanks to Viola Schneider and Gwen Fox for their efforts in compiling that first publication.

Much has happened at Little Britain since that time. We have worshipped. We have worked. We have talked and practiced and learned. We have greeted newcomers and said our good byes. We have sacrificed and celebrated and petitioned. Made music. Sang and prayed and laughed and wept. Ate and played together. Learned names to new faces. Gave and received gifts. Cooked and served and washed. Planted and nurtured and raked and bagged. Had discussions, made decisions. Got the news out with newsletters. Tried to be faithful in all our doings. We hope that this addition to the original publication will reflect the Spirit at work within our Congregation.

Through the years many people have come and gone, but always there have been the faithful, both men and women, working to maintain the church and its influence in the community. It is to these faithful people that we dedicate this history. Deep roots have been established at Little Britain.... the oldest United Church in western Canada.

We hope that you will allow yourselves to take pride in the fact that, although we are a small church; we are growing not just in numbers, but also in experience, faith, and works.

June Curtis
Judy Rekrut
150th Anniversary Committee Co - Chairs
September 22, 2002

THE HISTORY OF LITTLE BRITAIN UNITED CHURCH 1975-2002

When Rev. Bernard Lee left our congregation in 1979, Rev. Bob Burton was hired and stayed with us for the next six years, leaving for a new posting at Fisher River.

The next two years were a very different situation as we had what was called "Sunday Supply" ministry. This meant we had a very interesting variety of ministers gracing our sanctuary. These were made up of retired persons, ministers that had gone back to university to expand their knowledge, ministers from other churches who had some time available and even the minister from Stony Mountain Penitentiary. All these good people helped our Church development and made us stronger and even more united in our efforts to continue to expand our ministry.

In 1986 Rev. Ron McIntosh joined our congregation and during the two years of his tenure the three churches that made up Little Britain Pastoral Charge did a great deal of soul searching. Birds Hill, Rivercrest and Little Britain had reached a crossroad in recognizing the need for an expanded ministry and as one minister serving three churches has limited time for extended work at each church, it became evident that a change had to take place. Serious discussions, needs, finances, expectations finally led to Rivercrest leaving the Pastoral Charge and forging their own future an independent group, one that was capable of managing on their own. Such a choice took great courage on the part of congregation and a faith that stood strong. This church is still going strong today.

When Rev. McIntosh left our church in 1988, the remaining churches formed a two-point charge and Rev. Don McKay was hired. During his stay there were a great many changes. These changes include the retirement of Birds Hill United from the Pastoral Charge. His was a severe blow for both churches but it was a necessary move as each church wanted to be on its own. Since both churches are still active, the choice was a good one.

Rev. McKay left in 1992 to accept a post in Airdrie, Alberta. Little Britain was fortunate to find a replacement in the person of Rev. Bob Haverluck. The unfortunate part was the fact that he could only stay with us for one year due to a previous commitment. When Rev. Haverluck left in 1993, Rev. Christine Bridgett accepted the call and serves Little Britain United to the present day.

During the times of the foregoing ministers, Little Britain United has had a number of memorable events take place. Of note is the Province of Manitoba's recognition of one of the most prominent names associated with the church. On May 15, 1983, a memorial plaque was unveiled honouring the contributions of Duncan McRae the well known and well respected stonemason, who has left a great deal of evidence of his building skills along the river and in the community:

St. Andrews on the Red, Captain Kennedy House, St. Peters Dynevor, Twin Oaks and of course, Little Britain.

Duncan McRae was brought to the Red River settlement by the Hudson Bay Company in 1837 to work as a contract stonemason on the new fort the Company intended to build at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. The Fort Garry Gate in the City of Winnipeg is another example of Duncan's skill. At the unveiling, there was a proud group of descendants, including three generations of Duncan McRae. Many distant descendants of Duncan return to the Little Britain Cemetery each year to pay their respects and to return to their family roots. Betty Burziuk, great granddaughter of Duncan McRae, was in attendance at our Homecoming Church service on September 22.

Little Britain was further honored in 1989 when the Church was declared a Provincial Historic site! On February 11, 1989, the designation became official. This was indeed a red-letter day in the life of Little Britain for it ensured the continuation of our Church as well as the preservation of an important part of the district history. This is of great historical significance in church history.

During the summer months of 1989 the congregation decided to do a major restoration on the Church. What a task! The initial thought was to remove materials that were not in keeping with the historic nature of the Church. Plywood paneling was a prime example of unsuitable material. While we couldn't restore the original, we restored back to "of the period". Research was carried out, Historic Resources Branch was consulted and finally on August 1, 1989, work was begun.

The pews were all removed; new pew ends were constructed stained and reinstalled using the square nails that were the type used back in 1874. This attention to detail was carried out in all phases of the restoration.

Walls were scraped down, cracks repaired, primed and repainted. Wainscoting was manufactured, using selected woods; beading was machined in, using a specially constructed moulding blade that matched the beading on the pews. The women of the Church spent many nights staining each individual board prior to installation.

Work of this nature was very time consuming but the end result was well worth the effort. As we came close to the end of the project, the Church Council decided to hold a rededication of the Church on October 18, 1989. A great idea! What a fitting way to say thanks to the volunteer workers and those who worked behind the scenes, doing the research, going for materials, making lunches and above all supplying encouragement. Government officials from the Historic Resources Branch were invited, as were members of the political parties, local dignitaries and of course, any past and present members of the congregation.

As the day grew closer the work seemed to stand still, so much so that there was a concern that it couldn't be finished in time for the dedication. The day was saved by a group of new volunteers arriving in the nick of time. Through a concentrated effort of every able-bodied person, the work was done on time, but just barely! The last of the ceiling was applied at 2:00 a.m. the day of the ceremony. The event went off without a hitch and a great deal of praise was directed toward the volunteers and tradesmen who had worked so hard to make it happen.

When one considers the names associated with the building of the Church, it is well worth any effort to preserve this heritage; names like Rev. John Black, Hon. John Gunn, Capt. William Kennedy, Dr. G. Young, Rod McPherson, P.R. Young, Hon. D.A. Smith (Lord Strathcona), Hon. Alt Boyd, Hon. Alex Morris, and Dr. John Shultz, later the Lieut. Gov. of Manitoba. Soldiers from the Wolseley expedition were also involved in the volunteer labour. What a treasured past we have!

The early days of 1990 brought a grave concern to the residents of St. Andrews when it was announced that the Federal Government was considering closing the Lockport Bridge. What a blow this would be to the community! A committee was stuck and soon a "Save our Bridge" campaign was running. Support poured in from various groups and soon the campaign took on the look of a celebration and kept getting expanded from the original protest meeting. Organizers set the date of July 13-15 as the time for the two-day event to celebrate the official opening of St. Andrews Lock and Dam 80 years earlier. The entire weekend was devoted to the past with residents all donning period costumes, horse and buggy rides, gala balls at lower Fort Garry, fiddlers, dancers, the list of events never seemed to stop growing.

Little Britain took a large role during these events by hosting the "Tea at Three" fashion show put on by the Dugald Costume Museum. Of course, the dress was "of the period" and it was one of the highlights of the weekend.

Little Britain was not finished yet for our Rev. Don McKay was asked to take the part of Chaplain during the official opening of the locks as the first boat made use of the just completed structure. The following Sunday morning saw Little Britain host a special Sunday service with the large congregation dressed in period costume. It brought thoughts of what it must have been like for those who pioneered here so many years ago. The Church conducted tours of the grounds pointing out the historic names and telling the stories of those people who contributed so much. This is continued to this day. Please feel free to drop in and see us. A phone call is all it takes to ensure that a welcome awaits you.

During the past ten to fifteen years Little Britain has hosted many family reunions on the grounds. These include a remarkable three-day reunion of the Gunn, Taylor and Johnstone families. It was a happy, sharing time with a lot of

history being relived. It was their forefathers that were instrumental in the building and sustaining of Little Britain.

Descendants of the Young and Loutit families each had occasion to hold a reunion. If only the stories had been recorded or documented. The stories were not about history but about people.

A new sign was made and placed in front of the church. The combination of limestone pillars and cedar planking blends in well with the historic aspect of the property. Hopefully it will make us more visible to the public.

The Church continues to demand constant upkeep with the shifting soil conditions, but the volunteers continue to be able to maintain the structure and each year progress is made to keep the building in good condition. The latest addition was the installation of new inner doors. These are not ordinary doors; they had to be custom made in keeping with the historic nature of the structure. Unable to find suitable hardware, the Church had a blacksmith make up the necessary latches by hand, forging them to match locks of the time.

With the coming years will come more problems and challenges but one thing is clear, we are here to stay.

- From notes by Viola Schneider

LIFE AND WORK OF THE CHURCH

So many memories are connected with the life and work of our Church...

Fall Suppers

Fall suppers continue to be our main fundraiser. Every October, with many months of planning and preparation behind us, we sit down to enjoy the fruits of our labour. Over the years, we have served up to 800 people in an evening. Our basic menu has remained the same: i.e., cabbage rolls, cole slaw, mashed potatoes and gravy, dressing, peas and carrots, pickles, cranberry sauce, buns, ham, and of course, turkey. Homemade pies of all kinds, served for dessert, have made us famous. We have become very well known throughout the area and beyond as many people from Winnipeg make the trip to a Little Britain United Church supper. Costs have been kept as low as possible as the congregation donates most of the food. For as little as \$5.00 back in the 70's to our present day cost of \$9.00 for adults and \$4.00 for children aged 5 - 12, people are able to eat as much as they want. The aroma and taste of turkey and all the trimmings has prompted many to ask for seconds, and sometimes, thirds!

The hall becomes a beehive of activity prior to the supper. Up until the 1990's, cabbage rolls, potatoes and the vegetables were prepared at home and brought to the hall, hot and ready to serve. Turkeys were prepared at the hall, unstuffed, and sent out to local bakeries in Selkirk to be roasted. Browns bakery and Baker Boy were two of the bakeries that were kind enough to allow us to use their facilities. "Bees" were held at the church hall to prepare cole slaw, dressing, and since the mid nineties, the cabbage rolls. Laughter emanated from the hall, as well as tears while the onions were being chopped. Thank goodness for food processors!

The fall supper is not an adults-only endeavour. The children of the congregation have always participated in the event. They quickly became experts at washing cutlery, clearing tables and serving pies. In the thirties, children sold tickets, and if they sold eight, would get their own supper free. They were, and are, the best ambassadors we could possibly have.

Mildred Johnston relates that records from 1876 show that "fowl" suppers were held with families bringing chickens from home, as well as garden produce. If butter was required, a cow had to be milked, the cream separated and then churned. It would be kept cold on ice that had been obtained from the Red River the previous winter. And we think that we work hard!

From 1930 until 1939, Mildred tells us that the suppers were held in the Manse and convened by the Ladies Aid. Our homemade pies were well received even then. While waiting to be served, guests could wander over to the Church to listen to a variety of musical concerts.

Keeping our guests comfort in mind, we moved the venue of our 2001 supper to the Lord Selkirk Regional Comprehensive School in Selkirk. This enabled us to provide indoor waiting space as well as main floor washrooms. The dish washing machine as well as the number of ovens available made our kitchen tasks so much easier. Comments were very positive and we hope to continue at the school for the near future.

Our thanks to the co-coordinators of this event over the years: Isabella Chamberlain, Viola Schneider, Betty Pahl, Lowise Hamilton, Ruth Carriere and Olga Runnalls. Through their efforts, the suppers were more than just fundraisers. Working together fostered a sense of community as many people got to know each other and formed new friendships.

A Special Fund Raiser

In 1991 we had the occasion to host a very special fall supper for some very distinguished guests when the Province of Manitoba Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism asked us to host a dinner for 24 Ambassadors from around the world. The provincial officials wanted to show these guests a typical Canadian prairie fall supper. What a wondrous time it was! Imagine sitting down to a meal with people from Paris, Rome, London and Hong Kong! There was time to share, time to tour the Church and grounds and time to relate some history associated with the area. The Ambassadors enjoyed their stay and gave rave reviews for the dinner.



Christmas

Christmas has always been a memorable time at Little Britain with the birth of Christ being celebrated in many different ways over the years. The Advent Festival introduces this special season when adults and children share a potluck lunch after a morning of making Christmas decorations, Advent calendars, miniature angels, lumieres, tree ornaments, and icing laden cookies. The Jesse Tree appears next in the church, and each Sunday sees more and more brightly colored hand knit mittens, scarves, slippers and toques adorn it's no longer bare branches. Just before Christmas, these knitted items are distributed to needy children in the area.

For many years Helga Huebsch and her family beautifully and lovingly decorated the Church and Christmas tree. After Helga's death, different members took turns until it was decided that the entire congregation would share in decorating the tree. It has now become a traditional part of the White Gift Sunday Service.

White Gift Sunday, organized by the Sunday School, finds Church members donating gifts and food items to fill Christmas hampers for distribution just prior to Christmas. After Church service, while some folks pack hampers, others form carol - singing groups and visit members of our Church who are confined to home through ill health or age. They take with them, baskets of cookies and mince meat pies.

At this time of year, the choir members work especially hard to provide us with beautiful introits and anthems for the Christmas services.

In recent years, the Church has held a "Longest Night" service. This offers a contemplative and comforting time for anyone, who for whatever reason, feels unable to celebrate the Christmas season, or who find Christmas a time of pain or loneliness or stress rather than joy.

Replacing the Christmas Concerts of earlier times, a Pageant enacting the Nativity was held outdoors at the Fay residence for a few years in the early 1990s. Mary would appear riding on a donkey closely resembling one of the Fay's horses. Live sheep, eagerly herded by little shepherds tripping over their dressing gowns, chickens, roosters and more "donkeys" in the stable, and each year a live baby in the manger surrounded by little angels made for a memorable evening. The Christmas story was narrated and carols were sung as both actors and audience moved around the yard from the "inn" to the "fields" to the "stable". In 1993, CBC taped the pageant and aired it on both television and radio. In 2001, a simple pageant with outdoor carol singing was held at the Grants'. This time the stable was home to alpacas, a goat, and the family dog and cat. And always hot chocolate and munchies on hand afterwards to round out the event.

Two Church services are held on Christmas eve: an early evening family service where the church is always filled to capacity and a quieter, meditative service with Holy Communion at 10 pm. For both services, worshippers approach the Church from the parking area on a path lined with candles in glass bowls glowing in the snow. .a truly magical sight.

Fund Raising

This is an essential activity, necessary to help cover the day -to-day expenses (plus the occasional extraordinary one) required to run a small church with limited membership.. Our largest fundraiser each year is the Fall Supper. Other events, both past and present, include Stew and Bannock suppers held in March, Teas, flea markets and garage sales, bake sales, auctions of both goods and talents, whist drives, the sale of T-Shirts, plates, prints, notepaper and pewter ornaments, all bearing the image of our famous Old Stone Church. The sale of two cookbooks of our members' favourite recipes, one printed in the early 1980s and the other, co-ordinated by Roberta Anderson just in time for our 150th anniversary.

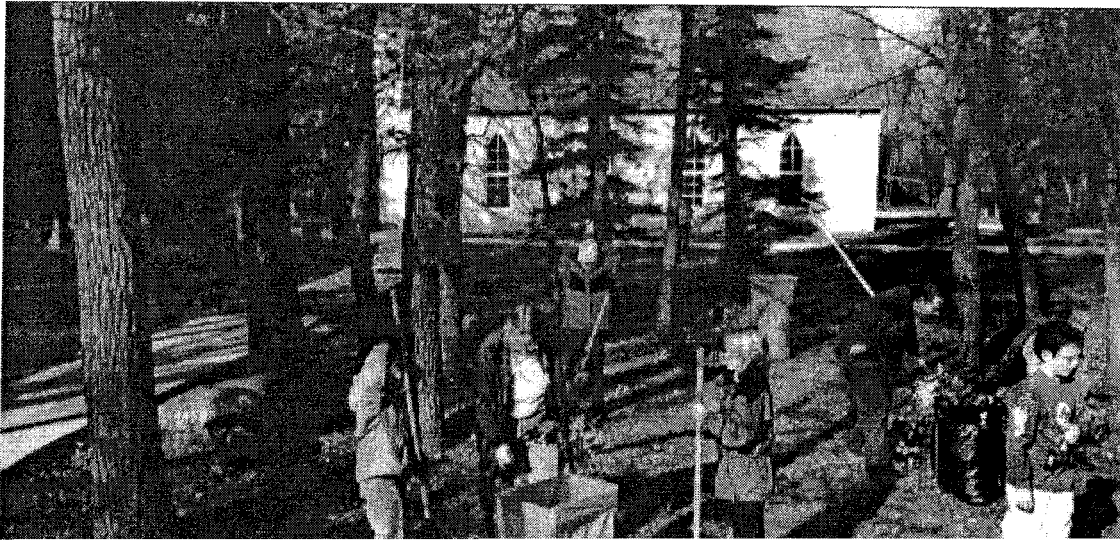
Sometimes there is a fund drive geared towards a specific need, such as the re roofing of the church. People were told the cost of one bundle of shingles and asked if they could donate one bundle, or two.... or more. The target, which seemed as out of reach as the roof itself, was achieved, bundle by bundle, and the roof was duly shingled. In the summer of 2002, a new lawn tractor was required, and again the congregation of Little Britain rose to the occasion.

For many years, Lowise Hamilton led the Fund Raising Committee, and organized countless successful events. Margaret Speer has now taken over, and has introduced many new ways to raise money for the Church.

We also receive considerable help from Fred Haight, who donates brightly colored signage advertising upcoming events or changes at the Church, be it special Church services or a fund raising activity. People driving by on the highway just cannot miss seeing them!

Leaf Raking

Little Britain United Church sits amidst a grove of lovely oak trees. That means leaves. Lots of leaves. Every fall. Bags and bags and bags of leaves. The leaves, unfortunately, do not get into the bags by themselves. As such, a "leaf raking bee" has been organized every fall, under the able leadership of Gord and Shirley Froehlich. This is another occasion that brings members of the congregation together.. Many hands, both young and old, make the task seem lighter and almost enjoyable.. Traditionally, this event has been followed by a pot luck dinner where the congeniality of the congregation continues to show itself.



The day of the Leaf Festival dawned sunny and warm. It was 10 degrees C at breakfast time and went up to 18 degrees by mid afternoon -- record temperatures for Leaf Festival Day.

Record number of people came this year too; 35 participants, ranging from sprouts, seedlings and saplings all the way to full-grown. My parents came to visit for the weekend and found themselves at the end of a rake.

To top it off, we filled a record number of bags - 450 to 475 bags in basic black, Halloween orange, classic clear and a few Frankenstein bags as well. Three quarters of the cemetery was finished in one day. I hope everyone enjoyed our annual leaf aerobics. A great bit thanks to everyone."

Written by Shirley Froehlich in 2001 for the church newsletter

Families

Families were, and still are, an important part of Little Britain. Many brought their children to be baptized. Others began their married lives there after walking down the aisle with their loved ones. For still others the cemetery has become their last resting place. Some moved into the area and became part of the church family and some left the church family moving to other locations. Whether large or small, two or three generations old or relative newcomers, families have been an important part of the foundation of the church. Some families were instrumental in starting the congregation at Little Britain. Where would we be without the Gunns, the Cloustons, and the Youngs? They not only had the desire to build a church they followed through and saw that one was built. And it was up to the future generations to see that the church at Little Britain continued as a place of worship. Another group of families saw the church at Little Britain, which had begun as a Presbyterian Church, become a member of the United Church of Canada in 1925. Names on the voters' list included Cummings, Quance, Pittis, Clouston, Clark, Flett, Swan, Fairfield, Mowats, Swain, Franks, Cox, McCorrister, Taylor and Wallace. Amongst those were the leaders of the church and those whose talents lay in other fields. Some were organists, some were players in the drama group, some looked after the cemetery and the grounds.

As the decades passed more families were added to the rolls. Again these people came with many different talents and gifts. The Tallin family including

G.P.R. (Pete) and his wife, Olive, opened their home, Hawthorne Lodge, to the Ladies Aid for the annual spring tea for several years. Bill and Gertie Sprong brought a trailer load of bedding plants for the church to sell at the tea when it was once again held in the hall. Henry and Marjorie Sprong opened their home for the annual fall supper. The fact that they were residents at the Lower Fort meant that we were able to serve several hundred people in the Big House before it reverted back to a government historic site. Gwen Fox shared with us her artistic talents through her paintings, her unique invitations to the teas and her decorating on special occasions. Helga Huebsch, too, turned church decorations into a work of art. Viola Schneider contributed her musical talents with the church by being the choir leader in the 60's when we had a rather large choir. But there were others who added to the well—being of the church... Kreviazuk, Panting, Hunt, R.Tallin, Johnston, Chamberlain, R.Gunn, Babisky, Kinley, Todd, Halderson, Hobans, Porhownik, Cyr, Dunlop, A. Anderson, Donald, Hrycyk, Carriere, Bowden, Lister, Machnee, Tobin, Baer, Skogan, Flosky, Lowe, Pacholuk, Rekrut, Snider, Pahl, Ander, Hamilton, Curtis, Froehlich, Zaborgurski . . . and the list goes on and on. These were the treasurers, the greeters, the custodians, the builders of the hall, the lay preachers, the Sunday School teachers (and Vacation Bible School teachers), the choir members, the cabbage roll makers, the organizers of the Bake sales, the groundskeepers~ the elders, the communion servers (and preparers), the photographers and generally doers of things that needed to get done. And as time goes on, new families come on board.

Ward, Toews, Connor, Ewbank, Hooper, Wawro, Kopeschny, Leask, Rawluk, Kulchyski, Wege, Grant, Dawes, Runnalls, Speer/Haight, R. Anderson, Nyland -Brook, Muheim. All come with new talents and fresh ideas. Together they work as part of God's family at Little Britain United continuing the tradition begun 150 years ago. Bless them all!

Sunday School

Sunday School continues to be a valued part of our Church Community. Since the early 90's the children have taken part in intergenerational church services. They remain in church until after the Children's Story and then head to the hall for regular classes. They contribute to the service by being greeters, lighting candles and taking offering. White Gift Sunday is organized by the Sunday School. The children participate in the entire service and look forward to that part of the program when everyone is invited to decorate the Christmas tree. The service is complete when all of the children carry the white gifts forward to be placed under the tree. Come February of each year, the children host a Pancake breakfast. In the past, the teachers have cooked the pancakes and the children serve. A few years ago, we asked the youth to prepare the breakfast. They did such a good job, that it is now a tradition. Sunday School wraps up for the year in June when the Church picnic is held. Everyone in the congregation is invited to a potluck Barbeque. Games are played and afterwards, a bonfire is enjoyed. Christmas always includes children, and over the years Christmas concerts and pageants have played a major role in the church community.

It has always been a treat to see the youngsters from the Sunday School help out at the annual Fall Supper. It is a pleasure to see these young people grow -both physically and spiritually. Their spiritual growth has been guided along by a group of dedicated Sunday School teachers that have included Linda Tallin, Tom and Florence Warwick, Amy Cyr, June, Jill and Jennifer Curtis, Jill Baer, Carole Catchpole, Karen Bunt, Dorothy Payne, Vicki Arnold, Deb Esperson, Leone (Lister) Tondeau, Linda Mc Pherson, Joanne Bowden, Linda Hrycyk, Dianne Brokovic, Joanne Vikanes, Brenda Kinley, Linda Ward, Donna and Harry Kopeschny, Tern Hooper, Holly Toews, Shirley Froehlich, Ayleen Eubank, Shannon Leask, Janice and Don Grant, Debbie Lamothe, Kathy Zarichney, Kathy Connor, and Florence (Halderson) Wiseman. Our apologies to those whose names we have omitted.

Enrollment has fluctuated from a low of 31 to 81.

The Sunday School has enhanced its operation by purchasing a sound system TV and VCR for the hall.

At all times, of course, the presence of children in Church reminds us that the future of Little Britain United Church lies in the hands of these young people.

It would seem that our next 150 years are assured.

The Cemetery

Maintaining a well-kept cemetery has been an ongoing task for the congregation over the many years. The cemetery had always been under the direction of a cemetery committee, but by the 1990's it came under the jurisdiction of the church's House and Property Committee. While its financial records remain separate to this day, the maintenance of the cemetery continues to be a part of the church's responsibility.

According to records a single plot in 1974 sold for \$75.00. Since a part of the money from the sale of each plot is designated for perpetual care, it became apparent over the years that it would be necessary to raise the rates charged and slowly they have risen to the present fee of \$700 for a single plot. In the last few years the trend has been towards ash internments and to meet the future demand for such facilities a columbarium has been planned as a part of the new hall. The columbarium would provide space for internment of ashes in niches within a building.

There is always a lot of work to be done in the cemetery such as grass cutting, leaf raking, the removal of dead trees and branches and leveling of the grassed surfaces. These tasks have been and will continue to be done largely through the efforts of many volunteers. Records have to be maintained and burial and cremation plots prepared. A cemetery administrator has assumed these duties. Since 1974 the cemetery administrators have been John Porhownik, Ray Tallin, Bob Cyr, Gordon Bell, Lowise Hamilton and now Judy Rekrut.

House and Property

Since the Rev. Don McKay left the manse has been rented out. Ministers have been given a house allowance in lieu of a house on the church property. It still must be maintained and the rent received helps offset other expenses.

Concern about the hall has resulted in plans for a new hall being drawn up and monies raised to build a new one. The riverbank has been very seriously eroded in the last dozen years and it would no longer be feasible for people to come to church via the river. As late as the 1950's some people including children came to Church and Sunday School by crossing the river — by boat in the summer and across the ice in the winter. The church had a rowboat and there were a set of steps to help climb the bank. Now it is a sheer drop to the river since about ten to fifteen feet of riverbank property has been washed away.

To help access the church from the parking lot and the driveway a beautiful new sidewalk was installed in the summer of 2000. The sidewalk was needed after concerns of safety were raised with the old broken-stone walk. Many thanks are

due to Fritz Muheim and his team of volunteers who worked tirelessly for many days to lay the new walk. Certainly a job well done!

Memories

The following is an excerpt from a presentation written by Edna (Johnstone) Holland and read at the 125th Anniversary of Little Britain United Church in June 1979. Although it does not actually pertain to the last 25 years of our history, we felt that it was worth sharing. I thought of all the changes that had taken place since my childhood and later life away from Little Britain.

Some changes were good and others made some of us a little sad. But that is bound to happen when one's roots are disturbed in the process of change by a different generation. What is important is that the work of the church goes on, and this is certainly evident from the newsletter. As I read, some interesting comparisons came to mind. The Sunday School reports making good use of a 16 mm movie projector. How many of you remember the excitement of our magic lantern? Before the classes reassembled from their assigned corners in the church, a sheet was hung from the pulpit. The magic lantern was set up to show glass slides which Cecil, our brother, had prepared with his black ink drawings of appropriate pictures to review the lesson which was on the same topic for all the classes. With this magic lantern, the superintendent brought Sunday School to a meaningful close.

The mention of music in Sunday School reminded me of one of the times that we had no organist. I had just begun to take music lessons, so it was arranged that I would learn a simple hymn each week. Helen Donald, who came across the river every Sunday, could play by ear, but her repertoire included only one hymn "Work for the Night is Coming". We sang that hymn every Sunday, with "Little Drops of Water", or "Dare to be Daniel" for variety. For me, that was the beginning of 50 years of playing the church organ, here and there. Helen's contribution must surely have contributed to teaching the "work ethic" so important in our day.

I notice that horseback riding, at \$3.50 an hour, was available at the Sunday School picnic, last month. I was reminded that, in my day, members of the C.G.I.T. could go camping for two weeks for \$2.00, and no one was allowed to take more than 50 cents spending money. The first picnics I remember were held in the field and the bluff where the German church now stands. The men put up tents in which food was served. They made a shelter of poles, with a rough counter across the front, and young poplar trees lay across the top, to make a leafy shade, where they sold homemade ice cream and lemonade. The ladies had their sale of work. The U.C.W. report was concerned with the proceeds of the June tea. I thought of the Ladies Aid, and all their schemes for

keeping something in the coffers. They planned tremendous rummage sales, which were held at Gonor, but first we could choose new outfits, new to us that is. There were dinners and teas and many concerts. Since our whole life revolved around the church, every special day was a cause for celebration. St. Valentine's Day, St. George's Day, when Mr. Cork always sang "Drink to me Only with Thine Eyes", and St. Andrew's Day, when the haggis was addressed and lovely old Scottish songs sung with suitable accents.

Those were the good old days, before we were made self-conscious about our little talents. We sang solos and duets with the greatest self-confidence. Plays and readings were popular. On one occasion, Mr. Pittis received such enthusiastic applause for his humorous reading that he was surprised, until his wife suggested that it could have been because he had just had all his teeth out.

I see by a newsletter that Little Britain has a Youth Group. We too, had our youth groups. Someone has said that when saving for old age, one should put away as many happy memories as possible. Many from my store are connected with C.G.I.T. I belonged to one of the first groups in Manitoba. Organized by Mrs. Corke in 1922, it included girls from her Anglican Church and our Presbyterian Church. The program and camping at Traverse Bay impressed me so much that we organized in our church a few years later. Our Church was then United. The depression hadn't yet become a problem for our first two years of camping, when Mr. Corke paid the rent for a cabin at Matlock. Mr. Corke used to say he was a Baptist by faith, an Anglican by marriage, and United by choice, and that was fortunate for us. We were so thankful also, not only to Mr. Corke, but we were thankful for the cars that took us to camp. Just today we were talking about Mike Kreviazuk, and John Porhownik. They took us down to camp. He had a carload of girls and there was no room for you, Peter. They decided to take a short cut to camp over the sand and got stuck. But Keith McConnell always used to take a carload. Then we went on to think about other cars, because this was in the day when it was unusual for people to have a car, not everyone had one, and it was nice that the people who had cars were kind and generous with them. Isabel was remembering about Wilton Flett, who had a car, and in the evenings he would fill it up with kids from around the neighborhood and take them all somewhere to get an ice cream cone. I suppose to Lockport.

That was also ukulele time and we all loved to sing, especially in the evening when we sang everything we knew, in harmony, including "Moonlight and Roses", and "Down the River of Golden Dreams". Remember those? Gradually, the other campers often join in the singing. Finally, when darkness was complete, everyone said good night, and it was quiet.

Then the depression came, but Mr. Corke came to our rescue again. He knew a man, who owned several acres of bush along the lake at Sandy Hook, and his friend also owned a tent rental business. So you can imagine how it ended up. He kindly supplied a large tent at no charge and gave us permission to camp in

his bush. This was even more fun than the cabin. We called our camp "Liddle Place", because that was our benefactor's name. Peggy McGougan brought hammer and nails, a spade and an axe, and proceeded at once to build kitchen and washing facilities to say nothing of satisfactory sanitary arrangements. Close to the tent, a deep hole was dug, in which to keep our provisions cool. There was no need to worry about vandals, when we went on long hikes, or dunks, or even worse when we were in camp. We were all alone in the bush, with our own private beach, where we did our own cooking on an open fire and where we did a lot of singing, with the fishermen singing to us across the lake. What happy days those were!

The Board reports the appointment of greeters for each Sunday. We never knew how many greeters would be sitting on the long back seat that faced the door of the Church. Each new arrival was welcomed by everyone, and in turn, became a greeter for the next. Greeting the minister was a cue to take our seats.

The Board had also hired a grass cutter for the cemetery. Remember how the managers had a bee in the spring to burn the grass! We were sorry about the casualties, because we knew every shrub and every perennial in the cemetery, and sometimes one was missing after the bee. A whole page of the church letter is given to the minister's corner. But Vi Schneider and Gwen Fox have already told you quite a bit about the three ministers that I remember well. I often visited at the manse when the Faryons lived there. Mrs. Faryon would let me brush her lovely long white curly hair. She was not considered to be a very strong person, so she really surprised everyone by climbing the nearest tree when Smith's old black vicious horse came charging down the lane. It kept her there for over an hour. He was an awful horse, but that is another story.

When the Clarks came to Little Britain, Mrs. Clark continued her interest in the Chinese Church, and community in Winnipeg. I had the privilege of going with her to their Christmas celebrations, and sometimes visiting in their homes. It was Mrs. Clark who developed the acting talent in Little Britain to the point that our three-act plays became quite famous. Over the years, these family names appeared on the program. I realized after I wrote these that I had left several out but you can put them in. Pittis, Corke, Gunn, Fairfield, Kreviazuk, McConnell, West and Johnstone. When I looked at the pictures, I realized that I had left them out. On a couple of occasions, mother had the leading role. She was recalling, just the other night, the thrill of receiving a bouquet of red roses given to her at the end of the performance.

The McConnells came in 1929, and immediately became busy in the church and community. Mr. McConnell did a lot of visiting. Mainly due to his efforts Avery active bible class was organized, which introduced a number of young people to the church. The Kreviazuks, Porhowniks, and Romaniuks were among these and you see the result, they are still here, pillars in the church. I particularly remember one of Mr. McConnell's Mother's Day sermons, when he spoke of the

characteristics of several famous mothers, including Nancy Hanks, the stepmother of Abraham Lincoln. Every time he mentioned her name, Harold, who was just a cute little boy, would nudge Mother. Finally everyone was smiling, except Mr. McConnell. He couldn't figure out what he was doing that was wrong. But anyway, Mr. McConnell was the only one who didn't realize that Nancy Hanks was also the name of our well-known cow, who in her way was also quite famous.

Mrs. McConnell was not only a leader in the ladies work but a beloved friend, even as we all grew older and only the faithful few were left. Mrs. McConnell, Mrs. Pittis, Mrs. Waddell, Mrs. West, Mrs. Gumming and Mother. Maybe I have left some people out of there.

We certainly must mention the Townsends who came to live in St. Andrews and were active in our church. Mrs. Townsend had a group of girls who met in St. Andrews Hall and included girls from our Church. They have happy memories of camping. Mr. and Mrs. Townsend are remembered with gratitude for their many activities.

The Loutit family has every reason to feel part of this gathering today. Mr. Peter Loutit, their father, was a lay preacher, and always filled in when our minister was away. Although they lived in Selkirk, the whole family would pile into their Ford car and come to Little Britain. Ann remembers her father having to choose an organist from his own family at the last minute.

We call the next few remarks "Editors Notes", although they don't bear much resemblance to the editor's notes in the Newsletter, but we have to call them something.

Many of us will remember the exciting Red and Blue Contest at the Sunday School. Sometimes, the attendance was over 100. Mr. Pittis and Mr. Corke drove all over the countryside gathering up the members, and I am sure of you will remember when they would drive up to the gate, the doors would open, and they would pour out as if there were no end to the way they were jammed in those cars. Anyway, it really made Sunday School something. You will remember Stanley Nowalski, who worked so hard for that contest. And Marg Luckhurst and I don't know whether anybody else, tried to locate Stanley when we were going to have this reunion because we knew that he would have enjoyed it so much. And then we saw a little notice in the Selkirk paper saying something about his estate, so obviously he had died in the spring.

We can't leave out our good friend Will Mowat, who did so much and managed the church boat for years. Or Mr. Gumming with his pocket full of peppermints for the children, It was appropriate that a christening font was dedicated to his memory. Then there was the Flett family who grew up in Little Britain and then

traveled far and wide to establish themselves. There was Irene Young, who was my friend, and died in the flu epidemic after the First World War

A few years later in 1925, there was the vote on church union. That was when I joined the church, with a group of teenagers, who were hastily prepared, when it became evident that a “no” vote for union was possible. No one told us how to vote, but we probably were aware of the situation, and so a United Church was assured.

Now let us remember the loyal men and women who built this place of worship and hallowed it with their prayers and praises. Their faith was unshakable, and they were not ashamed to declare it. Our great grandfather, John Clouston, and his partner, Duncan McRae, both of whom lived in the community, were the stone masons who had the contract to build the church, which was dedicated in 1974. Twenty years later, in a letter to his son John, John Clouston Sr. inquires about the health of his old partner, now 80 years of age, and partially paralyzed. Then he goes on, “I will be 70 years old, on the 26th of September, and although pretty strong, my time is coming too. Thank God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, we have hope beyond the grave. It is the only thing worthy of our chief attention.” In other letters, he admonishes his son to follow god, always seeking those things that are of lasting value.

Also, in my scrapbook, is a poem composed by J. Creekman, on behalf of the Little Britain Literary Society, in memory of the late Christina MacDonald. Its many verses express a sure faith in life after death. I had never heard of the Little Britain Literary Society, have any of you? When was it organized? What were its aims? Does anyone know who Christina MacDonald was? Did you know that Little Britain was already a thriving settlement, with several business establishments, even before the church was built? Among my treasures, are two bills, for goods, bought by John Clouston from Brookside Store, Little Britain, Manitoba. One dated December 22, 1873 and the other, February 6, 1877. The Manitoba Free Press of November 18, 1872 had a short news item with this heading:

BROOKSIDE EMPORIUM

And this is what it said:

“By this name, Mr. B.R. Ross distinguishes his large mercantile establishment in St. Andrews. Mr. Ross had one of the largest stocks ever brought to the Red River.”

Elsewhere in the same paper is a large advertisement, and it goes this way:

“Mr. B.R. Ross begs to inform the public of Red River that his store, formerly Boyd’s, is now open in St. Andrews north on the Great Highway.”

Now isn’t that something? Capital G, capital H, the Great Highway? Groceries, crockery, dry goods, hardware, fancy goods, etc. etc. etc. at most reasonable

prices. Goods exchanged for grain and other produce. Dad was no longer here so I carried my bills around and asked everyone, but nobody could tell me where the Brookside Store was. Then we found Dad's notes and there was the information in his recollections of Little Britain. The Manitoba Historical Society has preserved those recollections in its Winter 1978 Manitoba Pageant.

I have mentioned these things in order to make a plea for the preservation of old papers, letters, records or anything that will make the bare bones of family or community stories come alive. There are so many different things to save and I save everything, including old post cards.

Just to show you what I mean about this, the other day we were talking about post cards, and I said that I had several scrapbooks full of them. This lady said "I wish I had known, I just burned a big album that belonged to a very old aunt of mine". But it was too late.

Wouldn't you love to have something written by, or to, or about your family in, say, 1879? If you have, treasure it, if you haven't, why not resolve that you will leave something for your descendants to read in 2079? The Red River Historical Society suggests that you should begin as if you were writing a letter to you family. Don't try to write a finished composition; just let your memories flow. Don't be modest, the more you can remember about the who, when and where of your life, the more facts you will have to work with later. Perhaps today will inspire some of you to start, if you have not already done so. Enjoy doing it! I found it a most interesting and rewarding project.

Our memories continue...

We have travelled in the way that Jesus has set, with the Spirit of God in our midst. We think back fondly and thank God for

Sunday School children who lift their arms to volunteer
Christmas and Easter baskets for shut-ins
Financial contributors through envelope, PAR, memorial or occasional gifts
Lay worship leaders serving with gifts of wisdom, time and courage
Flea markets and garage sales
Knitters of mittens and scarves and toques for the Jesse tree
Those who worship in the pews, a smile ever ready to uplift, encourage and sustain
Heroes of mop and broom
Church decorators and donors of decorations inside and out
Cemetery administrators and their helpers
Our Observer representatives
Savers of stamps for the Canadian Bible Society, eyeglasses for
Operation Eyesight, yarn for
Jessie tree knitters, used
clothing for Koats for Kids
Office Helpers
Bake tables, talent auctions
Pastoral care givers and their compassion through cards, calls and visits
Communion bread
Women who sew beauty into quilts
newsletter editors and the newsletter itself
Hamper helpers and White Gift givers
Those who serve us on Sunday as greeters, bell ringers candle lighters and
Communion helpers
Signers of petitions, adding their names to others' work for justice
Council and Committee members and Presbytery reps for their thankless tasks of
meeting, decision-making and planning
Teachers who volunteer to guide our children through this mystery called Faith
Organists, choir leaders and their flock of choristers who lead us in song Our ministers,
both past and present, who minister
Little Britain United Church

A Year of Celebration

Although Little Britain United Church would not officially be 150 years until Nov 16 of 2002, the date on which Rev. John Black dedicated our church, it was felt that it was too long a wait to celebrate such an important event. One idea led to another....

Because we are ethnically rich within our congregation, and because Ukrainian Christmas fell on the first Sunday in 2002, the idea that we would celebrate our ethnic diversity each month at M & M was suggested. Not only would the food of a particular area be featured, but also articles depicting the culture of the country. We recalled the June Tea, held for so many years, but now no longer. We talked about recognition of those who have worked so tirelessly to ensure our viability. What about a sit down dinner where members of the congregation, both past and present, could enjoy eating something that they would not have to prepare or serve? We have never had a photographic church directory. Should we? Since everyone likes to eat, a new edition of our previously published cookbook (1982) seemed in order. And again, since we all do like to eat, maybe too much at times, how about collectively losing 150 lbs. A healthy spirit and a healthy body seemed a good fit. A Homecoming weekend was proposed. Let's invite everyone we can think of.... those married, baptized in the church, past ministers and those who have moved away. Add a few dignitaries as well. A time capsule to be buried on Dec. 31. And the ideas continued.

Celebrating the Ukrainians in our midst

Twelve different dishes are traditional for this meal, which traditionally begins after the first evening star appears. The twelve dishes are to remind us of the twelve apostles. Food for this Holy Supper (brunch in our case) is prepared with no meat or dairy products. Lovely embroidered tablecloths and painted ceramics, courtesy of Tern Hooper and Judy Rekrut set the scene. The food was set out in the order in which it was to be eaten. Kutia is always first, followed by kolach, and borsch that we all enjoyed. We took license with a few dishes, but followed with herring, cabbage rolls, perogies, and a fruit compote. What a feast!

The Scottish

Our area is rich in the culture of Scotland as is evident in our original publication. Names like McConnell, McLean, McPherson, McLeod, and McNabb have been replaced with Connor, Curtis, McKinnon, Snider, Gillis, Drummond.... to name but a few.

This month's M & M was celebrated near to Robbie Burns Day and celebrate in style we did. Robin Connor, resplendent in kilt and dagger, addressed the Haggis with full brogue. We dined on scones, potato soup, Farls, griddlecakes, lemon pudding and real shortbread. We viewed an authentic kilt, books and other memorabilia. No bagpipes!

The Irish

This was a very special celebration, not only because March 17 fell on a Sunday, but because we had the privilege and honor of having the Moderator of the United Church of Canada, the Right Rev. Marion Pardy attend our worship service. Her message, "New Life at 150 years" was appropriate as we began to look towards our future. We enjoyed an Irish feast afterwards; soda bread, coddle, leek and sausage tarts and Irish stew. China, linens and books were on display, courtesy of June Curtis whose father was born in Ireland. Although we were unable to link any specific Irish immigration to Little Britain, A Wm Lane of County Cork in Ireland arrived at Red River to serve in the shop at Lower Fort Garry. Who knows.... he may have sat in the third pew at our own church!

Swiss German

Although few in number, with names like Froehlich and Muheim in our midst, we celebrated in the presence of the Swiss Consul in Manitoba. Serving food with names like Bienstich torte, birchermueslie and knoepfli and geshnaezeltes rind fleish was a first for many, enjoyed by all.

In the months of May and June, we digressed somewhat. Rather than feature another aspect of our ethnic diversity, we decided to "meet the neighbours, to recognize our Organists and to re-invent our Spring Tea.

On May 5, over coffee and cake, we chatted and got to know our Roman Catholic neighbours from St. Margaret's across the highway, as well as some neighbours from the area. It turns out we have a lot in common, each striving in their own way to follow Christ's teachings.

Organists Recognition

On May 12 at our regular church service, nine of our organists, past and present, were honored for their years of dedicated service. Fern Rosky, Madelaine Lenore Yates, Richard Swain, Lena Hoban (who came all the way from B.C), Carole Anderson, Ayleen Eubank, Sandra Richardson and Kathy Connor were presented with a certificate of appreciation.. As well, a scroll with their names has been placed in the church, just near the organ. At the hall, following worship service, our guests found time to enjoy each other's company as they reminisced over their cake and coffee. Many had not seen each other for years.

Church Photo Directory

When information about having a church directory came across Rev. Chris's desk, we debated only a few seconds before deciding that this would be a wonderful way to celebrate our 150th. At last we would be able to put names to faces.... no excuses now for not greeting everyone by name. The organizing took some work, but thanks to Marilyn Wawro, Judy Rekrut and June Curtis,

nearly everyone had their portrait taken. We are hoping the Directory will be ready for our Homecoming weekend. We hope we can continue with updates in the future.

Strawberry Tea and Quilt Display

In years past, the first Wednesday in June was set aside for our annual Tea. It was a sumptuous affair, attended by many in their finest attire. As society changed, the tea was discontinued. Could we re invent it? Combine it with a quilt display? Let's try!

Ayleen Ewbank is a quilter extraordinaire! And she is a member of Little Britain United Church! In 1998, we were fortunate that Ayleen and another of our quilting members, Inez Drummond arranged a Quilt Display at our Church along with the Prairie Quilters.. This is a group that meets weekly in the Church hall. It was a huge success. Ayleen and her group agreed to come again. And Olga Runnalls graciously offered to convene the Tea.

Midst tents set up in the churchyard on a beautiful sunny day, over 400 people were served old-fashioned Strawberry Shortcake along with their tea and coffee, by members of the congregation dressed in period costume. The quilts were set up in the hail and guests were asked to vote for their favorite. It would not be bragging to state that one of Ayleen's quilts came in second by one vote. To keep the children busy, Mia Ross used her talents to do some face painting. As well, over in the Church, Bill Runnalls kept up a running commentary on the history of the Church. He was dressed for the part, wearing an outfit that would have been worn during the 1850's.

Homecoming Weekend

As this is being written, we have not yet experienced our Homecoming Weekend on September 21 and 22. Plans are being finalized as the date approaches. On Saturday, A Family Day is planned. Church and Cemetery Tours are being organized, and games for both young and old will be held. A Bounceroo and Parachute will be available for the children, as well a face painting and a fishpond. Plans for the new hail will be on display, thanks to David Ward and Pat Wege. A noon Barbeque with hot dogs, drinks, cookies and ice cream will be served. Period costumes will again be worn by some. The Manitoba Living History Society will have some of its members, dressed in authentic costume, in attendance. They will put on a fashion show as well as an exhibition of some of the skills in use 150 years ago.(examples)

Saturday evening we will be enjoying a catered dinner of Garden Greens, Buttered Vegetable Medley Stir fry, Oven roasted potatoes, Stuffed Chicken with Fresh Herbs and Lemon Bread Stuffing, and Apple Rhubarb Streusel Pie for dessert. The congregation will NOT have to do a thing but get themselves to the dinner. What a change!

Our Sunday Service, held in the afternoon, will be a special one. Guest ministers will be in attendance; Bernard Lee, John Badertscher, Wayne Larstone and Ron McIntosh. As well, we are honored to have Manitoba's Lieutenant Governor, His Honour The Honourable Peter M. Liba, present. Greetings have been received from the Prime Minister of Canada, Jean Chretien.. This will be framed and placed in the Church. Greetings from other government officials will be brought in person. The Shrine Chanters will once again "lift the rafters in song" In the mid 80's, they sang for us on an annual basis, when we had a Rivercrest United connection. They were so pleased to be asked to come again. Our own flock of choristers, under the able direction of Kathy Connor, will be out in full force. Several members of the choir at Crescent Fort Rouge in Winnipeg will also sing for us. Our own Sunday School has a musical medley planned, under the direction of Donna Kopeschney. Our Church will be filled with song!

Everyone will be invited to the church hall afterwards for coffee and cake, a wonderful opportunity to connect with those we have not seen for years.

In the following months we plan to honor our early Canadian, Aboriginal and Metis heritage. As finales we hope to stage "it's a small world" in which we showcase the many other ethnic groups in our congregation that would include, French, Caribbean, English and Icelandic. In December we will celebrate Christmas around the World with a variety of traditional baking.

A Time Capsule is planned. A Church History, the guest book from our Homecoming Weekend, our newest cookbook, our Photo Directory and other as yet to be chosen articles will be placed in a suitable container and buried with the intent that it be opened in the year 2052. What will the next generation think as they look back on 200 years of history?

It has been an exciting year. Connecting with our past has been a learning experience for many of us. We have gained a greater appreciation for all that we were and all that we are. We have been blessed to have the Spirit of our Lord walk beside us as we journeyed. Our diverse talents and abilities, given to us by God have enriched the life and work of Little Britain United Church.

Building for the Future

Based on mounting maintenance costs, significant limitations of our current space, and health and safety concerns relating to our present Church hall, discussions at Church Council led to a committee being struck in January 2000 to look into the possibility of building a new hall versus renovation of the old. A team of volunteers completed a needs assessment and put forth the recommendation that in order to ensure the growth and success of Little Britain United Church, a new church hall should be constructed. This recommendation was accepted by the church membership, and a committee formed to design and fundraise for this new facility. Under the leadership of Pat Wege and David Ward, the objective was set: to construct a facility that is accessible to persons with disabilities, has main floor washrooms, a space conducive to learning and fellowship for people of all ages, and remains in harmony with the historic character of the Old Stone Church. The mandate of the Hall Replacement Committee is to identify a suitable design and to secure the financial resources to proceed with construction. Committee members, with the ongoing support of Church Council and the congregation, recognize that the future of the oldest United Church in western Canada, is our responsibility. Together, we will work to sustain the vision that began in 1852, and continue to take Little Britain United Church to the next stage in its history.

The excitement is building!

The Ministers of...

The Old Stone Church

...since 1970

1970 - The Rev. Bernard S. Lee

1979 - The Rev. Robert L. Burton

1985 - Sunday Supply

1986 - The Rev. Ron McIntosh

1988 - The Rev. Don Mc Kay

1992 - The Rev. Bob Haverluck

1993 - The Rev. Christine Bridgett

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