

NGHS



Quarterly

April 2013

On the Rideau River, Burritt's Rapids, Ont.



Burritt's Rapids, 1908

The Journal of the
North Grenville Historical Society

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President's Notes

This winter a new Board of the North Grenville Historical Society was elected and through some strange process I ended up as your President. Luckily, the Board contains a group of individuals with deep roots in North Grenville and a wide range of skill sets. They are also genuine residents of North Grenville unlike me, who in fact lives across the river on the Ottawa side. However, despite this grave error on my part, the sirens on the south side of the Rideau are such that I spend much of my time in North Grenville and learned to appreciate the many attractions including the splendid speakers that over the years have provided talks to the Society.

Having had some experience with volunteer organizations, I have noted that their success always depends on at least a few members making a significant commitment of their time and energy. I can say that after only a little over two months, the new Board has already accomplished a number of objectives thanks to this dedication. One of the key approaches that the Board has decided on is to set up the running of the Society by means of a number of committees with Chairs from the Board who then make committee reports at the monthly Board meeting. Committees now include Finance (Harmen Boersma), Program (Ann Newton), Archives (David Shanahan), and a special committee on developing the Society Constitution (Pam Gordon). Other committee work relates to Research and Publications and to Public Relations. The Board would welcome members to contribute to these committee activities by actively joining in the committee work. Committees operate independently of the Board under the Committee

Chairs and meet in the Archives or elsewhere (such as local pubs) to work on their Society projects.

I would like to highlight in this message that the spring program of the Society this year is intended to explore the deeper history of North Grenville in fact reaching back into pre-contact times before any of our non-native ancestors had arrived. Our region has had a human presence that dates back at least 10,000 years so most of our history really happened before the 1600s when our rivers and lakes began to be explored by newcomers. Since this early history is not written, we must depend on the archaeological records. Thus our spring program will try to determine what has been found out about this aspect of North Grenville history. I believe that our program will open many new perspectives on our area and deepen our understanding of the history of pre- and post- contact North Grenville. We hope to include in the Archives, as they become available, some artifacts from this earlier and very long period in our history. Perhaps some of our members have such relics or know of them and will bring them out to the Archaeological Road Show event on Saturday May 25th during the Dandelion Festival.

I look forward to meeting more of our members at our monthly meetings and encourage you to bring along your friends so more people in North Grenville can enjoy our program of talks on local and regional history and perhaps be encouraged to join our Society. Your Board is always looking for new ideas for our Society programs – let us know what you would like to see for next fall's program.

Dr. Bill Adams



NORTH GRENVILLE'S PAST

Year of Anniversaries:

The Ferguson Forest Centre

By Dr. David Shanahan

The announcement, when it came, was like a bolt from the blue, bringing shock and dismay to the residents of North Grenville. Of course, North Grenville didn't yet exist, for this was October, 1995, and the Ontario Government had released their first targets for closures and cuts under the Mike Harris "Common Sense Revolution". The G. Howard Ferguson Forest Station, covering 1,100 acres in Oxford on Rideau Township, immediately north of the Town of Kemptville, was scheduled for closure by June of the next year.

The Station had a long history of providing seedlings and trees to reforestation projects throughout Eastern Ontario, and to other commercial forestry companies throughout the Province. Millions of trees were grown on the Station every year, and the facility brought important economic benefits to Kemptville and Oxford. The Station had grown out of a tree transplant nursery that the Ontario Government had established in 1920 on twenty acres of land, and had been greatly expanded in 1945 and named for Kemptville's one-time Reeve, and Ontario's one-time Premier. But the Ministry of Natural Resources, who operated the Station, were losing \$1 million every year by 1995, and it was a natural selection for the Harris Government to make in its first year of cutbacks and downloading.

The announcement of the planned closure of the Station galvanised the local community and customers of the facility. Within weeks, a meeting



was held in Kemptville attended by MPP Noble Villeneuve and representatives of the Oxford on Rideau Council, the Eastern Ontario Model Forest (who organised the meeting) and various forestry companies. A Community Consortium was set up and decided to prepare a business plan for operating the Station as a private enterprise. In January, 1996, the Consortium met with Ministry of Natural Resources Minister, Chris Hodgson to discuss their plan. They pointed out that a number of commercial companies had shown great interest in taking over the Station.

Although the losses to the MNR were \$1 million per year, the Consortium pointed out that the market was prepared to pay around 29 cents per tree, compared to the 10 cents the Government had been charging. It was clear that the Station had a viable future as a private business. But time was of the essence. It took three years for seedlings to grow to the point where they could be sold. Unless the 1996 crop was planted, there would be no 1999 harvest.

But the MNR seemed to be in no hurry to make any decision on the future of the Station. In February, 1996, Minister Hodgson wrote to Kemptville Mayor Ambrose Etmanskie to say that no decision had been made on the Consortium's plan, and "The Ministry is continuing with its plans to close this Nursery". Although the Consortium, unions and politicians had managed to delay having the equipment removed from the Station, the Ministry

The scale of the looming crisis was underlined by Sandra Lawn, Past Director with the Eastern Ontario Forest Group, in an interview at the time. She pointed out that the service being provided by the Station could not be performed by another facility elsewhere in the Province. "Indigenous species must be grown in the proper time zone and soil conditions. Seedlings from other areas are not satisfactory and do not grow well. The difference from one area to another is highly significant." Urgent representations were being made to Oxford-on-Rideau politicians, and, in March, 1996, the Oxford Council wrote to the MNR about buying the Station at a minimal cost. There seemed to be indications that the Government might be willing to privatise the Station after all.

June, 1996 arrived, and the Station was due to close at the end of the month. Still no word from the MNR, and a public meeting was called at the North Grenville District High School to put pressure on the Government and inform the public. But, although more than seven hundred people had signed a petition supporting the Consortium's efforts, only about seventy turned up for the meeting. What was worse, of the nine guest speakers booked to appear, five dropped out and another one arrived, but refused to speak to the meeting. It seemed that

the commercial sector was losing interest in the issue. But the meeting that night decided that volunteers would be asked to come to the Station and weed and irrigate the three million seedlings in order to save the crop for at least another year. A letter detailing these plans and asking for a decision to be made was sent by the meeting to Premier Harris and Minister Hodgson. Nevertheless, the official closing of the Ferguson Forest Station went ahead at the end of June, 1996.

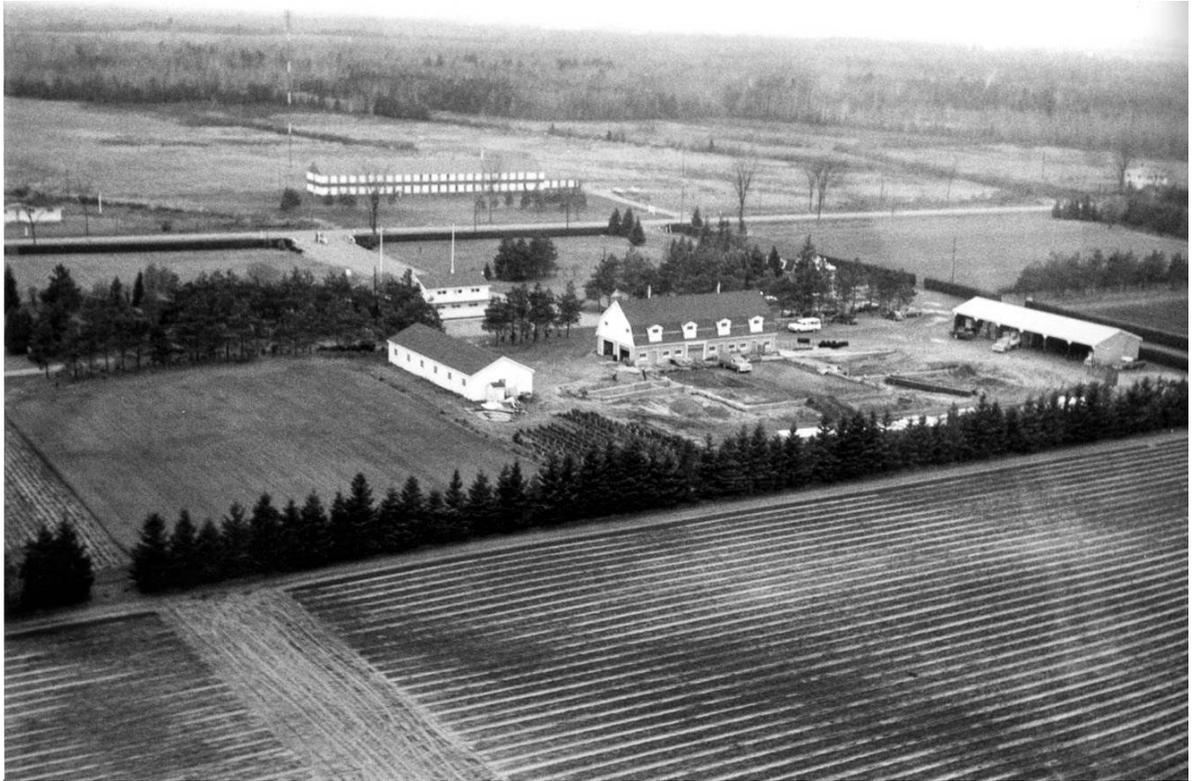


planned to harvest all the 3-year old and two-year old trees, which accounted for about a quarter of the stock, and then plough under the remaining twelve million seedlings. Any potential buyers would have no equipment and no crop for at least three years: not an attractive proposition. However, it seemed that forest industry parties, including the Ontario Forestry Association, were losing interest in saving the Station, and were offering no objections to the MNR plans.

The Province now had to dispose of the property, and under Ontario law, the right of first refusal went to the Oxford Township. If they were not interested, it would be offered to the Town of Kemptville, and after that the Township of South Gower. If all three refused, the land would be put up for sale to private buyers. In July, MNR asked Oxford if they were interested. Oxford Reeve, Don Cameron, and Councillor Owen Fitz'gerald, argued in favour of Oxford expressing an interest in the purchase, if only to get more information about MNR's plans and valuation of the property. Council agreed unanimously with his approach. Don Cameron informed MNR of Council's decision, and added a very significant statement. Oxford would not be changing the zoning on the land, no matter who bought it. It would remain agricultural land. This would obviously make the property harder to dispose of, and limit MNR's choices in the matter. This stand may well have saved the Station.

While negotiations continued between the MNR and Oxford Township, the seedlings still required attention. Weeding and irrigation continued to be provided by volunteers, organised by the Consortium. Local people came to help, as did people from Ottawa and surrounding areas. Buses of Mohawks arrived from Akwesasne to help in the work, and the extent of the voluntary effort must have come as a great source of encouragement to those working to save the Station. They needed encouragement, because there were continuing delays in getting any decision out of the

Government. Responsibility for disposing of unwanted provincial property was handed over to a new body, the Ontario Realty Corporation, and now all the forest stations in Ontario were up for sale, not just the Ferguson. To make matters more complicated, Ontario now decided it only wanted to sell about 360 acres of the Station, the part that was cultivated, and retain the rest for use as a Provincial Park and forest. When Don Cameron was informed of this change in November, 1996, he joked that the township had actually paid for the land already, since



it had given the Station tax-free status for more than fifty years. Ontario did not get the joke.

1997 arrived without any resolution to the issue. Ontario had a valuation of the property done, though they refused to reveal what that value was. In fact, they were asking Oxford Township to pay \$1.2 million for the 360 acre package (including equipment, buildings and crops). Oxford counter-offered \$867,000 for all 1,100 acres in February. The following month, MNR officials met with Don Cameron and other representatives in Oxford Mills and offer the 360 acre package. They demanded an answer by April 15, and payment in cash. Oxford still wanted all 1,100 acres, but the Province say they

can't sell it all because it is part of the Algonquin land claim. By May, Oxford Township had accepted that only the 360 acres were available. They made an offer of \$525,000 for the land, buildings, equipment and crops, and repeated the veiled threat that the land would never be rezoned by the township.

By August, 1997, an agreement was reached between Oxford Township and the MNR, but by then the process of amalgamating Oxford, South Gower and Kemptville was well on its way, and the Amalgamation Transition Board had to give its approval to the purchase terms. Although this was forthcoming, there was genuine confusion, suspicion and unease about what the future of the Forest Station would be, and whether it could be anything other than a financial drain on the new Township of North Grenville (as it was originally called). Oxford Township had set up an Advisory Board in August, a group of volunteers who would oversee the newly-acquired Station and try and build a solid economic foundation for future growth.

Oxford Council informed by Don Cameron on September 17 that previous customers of the Forest Station before it was closed had committed to buying trees from the new facility. Those buying 50,000 or more trees would get them at 22 cents per tree, with a sliding scale to 35 cents. There were about three million trees available. There were also 650,000 hard wood trees ready to harvest, plus about 500,000 larger trees for a speciality market. Funds were raised through the new North Grenville Council, as well as through private donations, to help launch the new Ferguson Forest Centre, and by January, 1998, half a million trees had already been sold, about half of the available stock for that year. The Township of North Grenville, in one of its first acts, agreed to hire a Manager to take over the day-to-day operation of the facility, and with the arrival of Ed Patchell, a new era had arrived for the Station and a tremendous asset had been acquired by the new municipality. Ironically, given the Harris Government's role in all of this, by 1998, the three tree nurseries in Ontario were the only businesses actually sold by his Government. It would take a long time to get things on a secure footing. But as the headline said in March, 1998: the Forest Station was Back in Business Again.

THE NGHS DELVES INTO THE PAST IN NEW WAYS

The NGHS is concentrating in its spring program on the earliest years of the Municipality's past. Long before there was a North Grenville, or even an Oxford-on-Rideau, South Gower, or Kemptville, there was the land, and those who moved through it.

Over the centuries, people have lived and worked, hunted and fought over this land, and in the process they have left artifacts behind them. Everything from the most ancient of arrow heads and pottery, to Coke bottles and plastic bags: all are grist to the mill of the archaeologist and historian.

The Society is bringing in a few of those experts in May to tell us more about their work and our past. Part of this initiative will form the Society's contribution to this year's Dandelion Festival.

On Wednesday May 8th, Dr. Paul Thibaudeau, archaeologist and professor of Sociology and Anthropology brings *The Archaeology Road Show Part I* to the North Grenville Historical Society meeting. Dr. Thibaudeau will speak on archaeology in the area and will focus on his Richmond dig site and a display of artifacts from that dig.

The, on Saturday May 25th the North Grenville Historical Society will host a special event – *The Archaeology Road Show Part II*. Dr. Thibaudeau returns along with Dr. Shanahan and others to discuss and share with the general public information on artifacts and documents. The public is invited to *Show and Tell* about artifacts and documents relative to North Grenville history that are from their personal collections. This event will be the North Grenville Historical Society's contribution to the Dandelion Festival.

This is a new initiative by the Society, and we encourage members and non-members alike to come out to these events. Bring your friends, neighbours and whatever items you may have in your home (or garden) that may be identified or illuminated by the expertise of our guests.

As always, our events are open to all and there is no admission charge.

The Kemptville Centurion

Annotated excerpts from the Kemptville Advance for April, 1923 for the edification and amusement of our loyal readers.

Entertainment in the Old Days

In 1923, radio was beginning to have an influence on how people spent their leisure hours. But Kemptville had a cinema, and it was a busy place. The Empress Theatre stood where the present Post Office is located on Reuben Street, and the films changed every few days. The poster on the right shows is from the April 19 edition of the Advance. The Irish movie is described as "Begorra, it's a foine Pitcher", full of brogue, blarney, Irish wit. But that may even be overshadowed for shiver-inducing effect by the rather innocent description of the following movie, "Singed Wings", which is "Filled with breathless climaxes and dazzling settings". Quite.

A large number attended the progressive euchre party in the Oddfellows' Hall last Friday night, under the auspices of Vimy Rebekah Lodge. Mrs. C. G. Johnson and Miss K. Archibald were tied for first place at the conclusion of the play and in the cut to decide the winner Miss Archibald was successful. After the games a lunch was served, followed by an hour's dancing. During the evening music was supplied by a local orchestra comprised of the Misses Carrie Dickin-
son and Mildred Langstaff, Messrs. Routliffe, Beckett, Allen, Johnston and McFarland. The music furnished was very good and much appreciated. The evening's entertainment was enjoyed by all present.

EMPRESS THEATRE
Friday and Saturday, April 20th. and 21st.
"My Wild Irish Rose"
with an all star cast
"Begorra. it's a foine Pitcher!"
A story full of brogue, blarney, Irish wit.
Prices of Admission
ADULTS 35 Cents. — CHILDREN 20 Cents
Two Shows Nightly at 7.30 and 9 p.m.

Monday and Tuesday, April 23 & 24th.
"Singed Wings"
with Bebe Daniels and Conrad Nagel
From the story by Katherine Nawlin Burt.
The romance of a Spanish Dancer.
Filled with breathless climaxes and dazzling settings

Even an average evening of Euchre seems to have been made into quite an occasion, as the following report shows. It is from the April 12 issue.

After the "progressive euchre party at the Oddfellows Hall, a lunch was served, followed by an hour of dancing. But even this was not the end of the entertainment. An evening of live music was provided by a local orchestra made up of some prominent local families, including Becketts, Langstaffs and Dickinsons. Miss K. Archibald, who won the Euchre competition, was one of the Seniors who led the parade to mark Kemptville's centenary in 1957.

Other organisations knew how to draw a crowd, even to a meeting to organise meetings. The Oxford Township Horticultural Society held a meeting to organise themselves on April 9, 1923. But even that business meeting included "Musical numbers, etc."

Perhaps if politicians and bureaucrats put on song-and-dance numbers at meetings, more people would attend? (Perhaps they already do song and dance routines?).

NOTICE

An organization meeting for the official organization of the Oxford Township Horticultural Society will be held in Town Hall, Oxford Mills, on Monday, April 9th, at 8 p.m. W. M. Crookery, local Agricultural Representative, will conduct the organization and give an illustrated lecture on horticulture. Musical numbers, etc, will be interspersed. Everybody welcome.
mar29-1-c

Here's a completely strange advertisement which perhaps referred to another form of entertainment?

RATS WANTED

D. W. Budd, of Renfrew, wants 25,000 spring rats for which he will pay the very highest price for well handled board stretched rats. Ship in your rats as you get them this year, as the high price may not hold. No matter what the other fellow offers, I will pay you as much or more. Those who shipped me last year will remember that. Phone No. 78 or 215 or write.
D. W. BUDD,
Renfrew, Ont.
ap15-3-c

In 1923, Burritt's Rapids had its own Baseball Club, and a very active and fun group they were. They elected G. Howard Ferguson as their Honorary President, and the Prime minister, Arthur Meighan only managed to get in as 3rd Honorable Vice-President. The real competition was for the job of mascot for the team. Two locals entered into the affray with well-planned campaigns, each eager for the job and the "natty new white suit, which the club is furnishing for the mascot".

BURRITT'S RAPIDS

The B. R. Baseball club held the annual meeting on Friday evening last. Routine business was disposed of and the officers for the ensuing year were elected as follows:

Hon. Pres.—Hon. G. H. Ferguson
 Hon. 1st Vice-Pres.—W. F. Garland
 Hon. 2nd Vice-Pres.—Hon. R. H. Grant
 Hon. 3rd Vice-Pres.—Rt. Hon. Arthur Meighan
 Pres.—Geo. White
 Sec'y—Jno. Davies
 Treas.—Wm. Halfpenny
 Manager-Captain—T. M. O'Neil

The foregoing officers were elected with very little controversy, but when it came to electing a mascot the real fun began. Evidently the two aspirants had not been idle as a count of the ballots resulted in a tie, Elmer Newans, 23, and Thos. Heaphy, 23. The chairman cast the deciding ballot for Thomas and he got the decision entirely on his looks. Tom ought to look lovely in a natty new white suit, which the club is furnishing for the mascot.

There seems to have been quite a lot going on in Burritt's Rapids in April, 1923. In addition to the exciting election campaigns at the Baseball Club, the Women's Institute were busy lighting up the hamlet - literally.

Burritt's Rapids is all lit up like a Christmas tree.

The Women's Institute has had the street light installed by that very enterprising electric light man, Mr. Bowen, who was very ably assisted in the installation by Mr. Hyndman and another young chap by the name of McMullen.

And to make sure all aspects of life were covered, there was a special rally in the Holiness Movement Church in Burritt's Rapids on April 20 - 22, 1923. There was one service on the Friday, two on Saturday, and three on Sunday.

Bishops Mills seems to have just as busy in 1923:

BISHOP'S MILLS

Mrs. W. Nottell spent Thursday at Smith's Falls, visiting her brother, Mr. W. Gregg, who is a patient in the Smith's Falls Public Hospital.

Mr. Frank Greer, of Manotick, was a recent visitor at W. Greer's.

A radio concert was held in the town hall recently.

Miss Nellie Crozier left on Tuesday to engage as nurse-in-training in the Eastern Hospital, Brockville.

Mr. and Mrs. E. Hurlburt spent a few days visiting relatives in Merrickville last week.

Mr. C. H. Manley, formerly of London, Eng., who purchased Sunnybrook Farm recently, is re-modelling his residence and greatly improving the appearance of his property. Mrs. Manley and two daughters will arrive here the first week in May.

In Oxford Mills, William G. Francis had decided to close down his baking business after more than three years in operation. The closure may have had something to do with people not paying their bills, as he inserted a notice in the newspaper on April 23 to the effect that all outstanding debts were to be paid by May 15. "All accounts remaining unpaid after that date will be placed in other hands for collection".

Kemptville was busy growing in 1923, and a new development was being planned on Prescott Street, "between the High School grounds and the Hon. Howard Ferguson's property":

LOTS FOR SALE

Very desirable lots now offered on Victoria and Ottawa streets. You can pick out your lot, or lots, any place between the High School grounds and the Hon. Howard Ferguson's property, adjoining the Methodist Church property, on the avenue from Prescott St.; the most desirable building site in Kemptville. Choose your lot now Apply to U. T. DEPENCIER, Box 284, Kemptville, Ont.

Victoria Street is today the south end of Reuben and Ottawa Street no longer exists. This area is mostly covered by the United Church and the Public School.

Finally, in terms of entertainment and how to draw in a crowd, no-one could beat the Kemptville Citizens' Band. After their "regular practise", they relaxed at 10 o'clock at night with "a hearty repast of oysters, cake, coffee and fruit".



First Christian Reformed Church of Kemptville: 1957-2012 Part Two

The entrepreneurial spirit noted in the last issue is no stranger in the Reformed tradition. It is evident in the immigrants wanting to carry on their familiar worship and social practices in a Reformed church tradition; many across the continent and some locally have participated in opening alternative Christian elementary and high schools, some colleges and universities; some desired a more just workplace by establishing a Christian Labour union. Then there were the Reformed newspaper Christian Courier; a Christian Business Association and Christian political and social justice action groups. Recently Cardus, a Christian think-tank, has made significant strides with its large volume of writers and articles on the internet. All these Christian alternatives in a perceived secularizing North American society have been started by the few, but offer renewed hope in a revival of faith shaping a more just Christian society for many.

Spending on Ministries

As noted above fifty five years have allowed an amazing growth in affluence for families of the church. How has the church handled this affluence in terms of collecting and distributing its financial resources to be faithful and effective in ministry? Please, note that the numbers have been presented in percentages for each ministry of the total amount collected.

In 1958 the minister was a home missionary paid by home missions of the Christian Reformed Church North America. The ministers have been well supported by the local church in their ministry. During its early years the congregation greatly benefited from the itinerant home missionaries that were dedicated and experienced in supporting new families socially and spiritually. Immigrants from a diverse ethnic and church background were bonded together by practical ministry into one congregation.

Church Spending on Ministries

Ministry	1958	1968	1982	1994	2007	2010	2012
(in % of total amount reported on the financial statement) Budget							
Discipleship	5	0.5	3	2.5	3	4	3
Hospitality	--	--	2	--	3	1	4
Mission	--	0.5	3	2.5	2	4	1.5
Prayer	--	--	--	--	--	0.5	
Stewardship	48	28	36	20	25	27	34
Worship	46	12	12	33	18	18	18
Minister	--	59	44	43	46	45	39

Sources: Budget and Financial Statements of the Church Archives

They were being prepared to serve variably in a new land and culture demonstrating the Lordship of Jesus Christ over all of life.

Rev. Charles Spoelhof stated his wish for the Kemptville congregation in 1982 as follows in his congratulatory letter at the twenty-fifth anniversary of the church:

“So I continued through the Winter (of 1962) and well into Spring, serving the Kemptville church full time. I bade the congregation farewell on June 17, using the words of Scripture in 2 Cor 13:11: ‘Finally brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace and the God of love and peace shall be with you.’”

Six ministries were adopted in the Fall of 2010 but for comparison this grid was applied in gathering the numbers from the previous years listed as well. Surprisingly, the mission ministry, especially if the second collections are included which were mostly for local and global mission, has received the most financial support among the ministries. At least five missionaries are being supported by the congregation. The De Ruiters family works in Mali among the Muslim population, Sheila Dykstra lives in Nigeria as a Christian education consultant for West Africa, Christine teGrotenhuis provides primary health care in Indonesia and Cathy VanderKloet assists another mission in Nigeria. Current members Snippe and Dyks enjoy participating in global relief work.

Stewardship, taking care of the physical assets of the church, follows closely. Then comes worship, expenditures to holding worship services and maintaining the relationship in the Christian Reformed denomination. Building a suitable place to gather has been important to this congregation from its inception.

The numbers tell an interesting story where the priorities are: supporting a minister, missions, stewardship, worship and a property.

Ministers.

First CRC of Kemptville has had nine ministers serving a total of forty six out of fifty five years. The task of the minister generally consists of the traditional functions of a minister in an institutional church.

The first two ministers, Rev. Smit and Rev.

Spoelhof, were ‘loaned’ by CRC Home Missions in Grand Rapids, MI, to help the fledgling immigrant church take hold in Canadian society. Rev. Spoelhof was shared with Calvary CRC in Ottawa East. He was like an itinerant pastor similar to those among the 19th century early Methodist people in Upper Canada. Note the following story taken from one of the personal interviews:

When I came to Canada in 1953 as immigrant I went to the church in Listowel, ON and received a hearty welcome by Rev. & Mrs. Spoelhof. But soon I started thinking, how come the Minister did not preach there all the time?

So I was told he had two other churches besides Listowel and that were Stratford and Lucknow. So I realized that a Home Missionary does not have to worry how to put in his time.

The congregations were not very big, but there was a lot of work to do with all these newcomers in a strange country. The Lord blessed their work and soon they started talking about having a church building of their own.

Seen I liked to move around, a couple of friends and I went to look for work in BC. We went to church there in Port Albernie. And to our big surprise we met Rev Spoelhof there, as he was preaching that day. So the minister was just like me. I was not afraid of travelling around.

A couple of years later we were in Drayton church. And who did we meet? Rev. Spoelhof. That was with the installation of their own minister Rev VanderPol. A few years later, more travelling around. My sister came to Canada with her family to Eastern Ont. They settled in Navan Church. So I went there, too, and they told me: They were getting a Home Missionary. Guess Who? Rev. & Mrs. Spoelhof. I don't know if I was running after the Minister, or that he was running after me.

A year later Rev. Spoelhof united us in marriage. My wife and I went to live in Osgoode and joined the Kemptville Church. So as you can guess again Rev. Spoelhof was our minister.

Rev. John and Jane Klumpenhower ended Kemptville's six year vacancy and gave new hope to its survival. Rev. John Lamsma came as a young pastor to Kemptville.

The churches' ad in the Advance, the Kemptville newspaper, on Feb 4, 1976 read:

First Christian Reformed Church of Kemptville

Rev. John Lamsma

Sunday Services 10 am 2 pm
Sunday School 3 pm

While in Kemptville, the Rev. Carl Derksen became renowned for promoting the computer in sermon preparation, even with lengthy articles in Calvinist Contact, to encourage other ministers to consider application of this technology in the ministry. He had been appointed in earlier years as a 'field man' for settling new immigrants in the Guelph area alongside of being a full time pastor. While the resident minister in Kemptville he wrote in the 25th anniversary book: *"We are thankful that the Lord has preserved and guided our church in the past 25 years. It was not on an impulse that some Dutch settlers in this area started a church in Kemptville. It was the driving of the Holy Spirit who brings believers together. Spiritually the old church was ramshackle, it did not have much of a foundation. But one thing is sure, that the early congregation was solidly founded upon faith in the lord Jesus Christ."*

Rev. Dick and Alice Los spoke highly of working in Kemptville during their last five years of pastoral service before retiring. His straight, imposing figure accentuated his knowledgeable sermons. Sometimes his artificial hand hit the wooden pulpit, seemingly emphasizing an important point. He was very experienced in the routines of church work.

Rev. Dick & Peta Velthuisen spend their next ministry in Kemptville. He had been a door-to-door Fuller Brush salesman in Western Canada and brimmed with stories. Rev. Jim & Anita Broekema called for congregational input to formulate a vision statement and do gift surveys with the members. As a friendly, helpful pastor's family they fit right into the congregation. He was recognized in the community for assisting church and community members with a generator on the back of his pickup truck during the 1998 ice storm. Jim loved the feel and dynamics of community. After four years he decided to go back to carpentry where he still serves the Carpenter.

Rev Ponsen & Lori always presented well coordinated morning services. Some time into his tenure, the evening services were changed into study courses, then video series and later small groups in homes. The Ponsen family provided avid piano players for services and expanded the worship team

participation to two morning services per month. Pastor Ben worked persistently on redirecting committees into ministries. Then the Ponsens accepted a call elsewhere.

The pastoral leadership of the congregation has been undeniably Biblical. This is true for the seasoned pastors as well as the candidates. The pulpit has been an important platform for the proclamation of the Word. The baptismal font and the Lord's Supper table have been a visible demonstration of the promises of God to his people. There have been many variations in worship, congregational life and outreach that demonstrate how the Word was received and practiced.

There were nine years of vacancy throughout the history of the church. The vacancy of 1962-68 proved to be difficult for the congregation with a fluctuating membership and a change of student pastors each summer. During the 1995-96 vacancy a serious discussion took place to change the choice of minister from three successive soon-to-retire ministers to a younger (candidate) minister with a family. The 1995-96 and 2000-02 vacancies were both well managed by consistory as church life continued to flourish without pastor. During the most recent vacancy the elders are stepping up to the plate and handling the services ably instead of calling a part time pastor. This congregation has demonstrated significant leadership in moving on with the work of the church during vacancies. Is this evidence of the combined vision and prayers of all the ministers to stay focused on Jesus and trust the leading of the Holy Spirit poured out at Pentacost for the church?

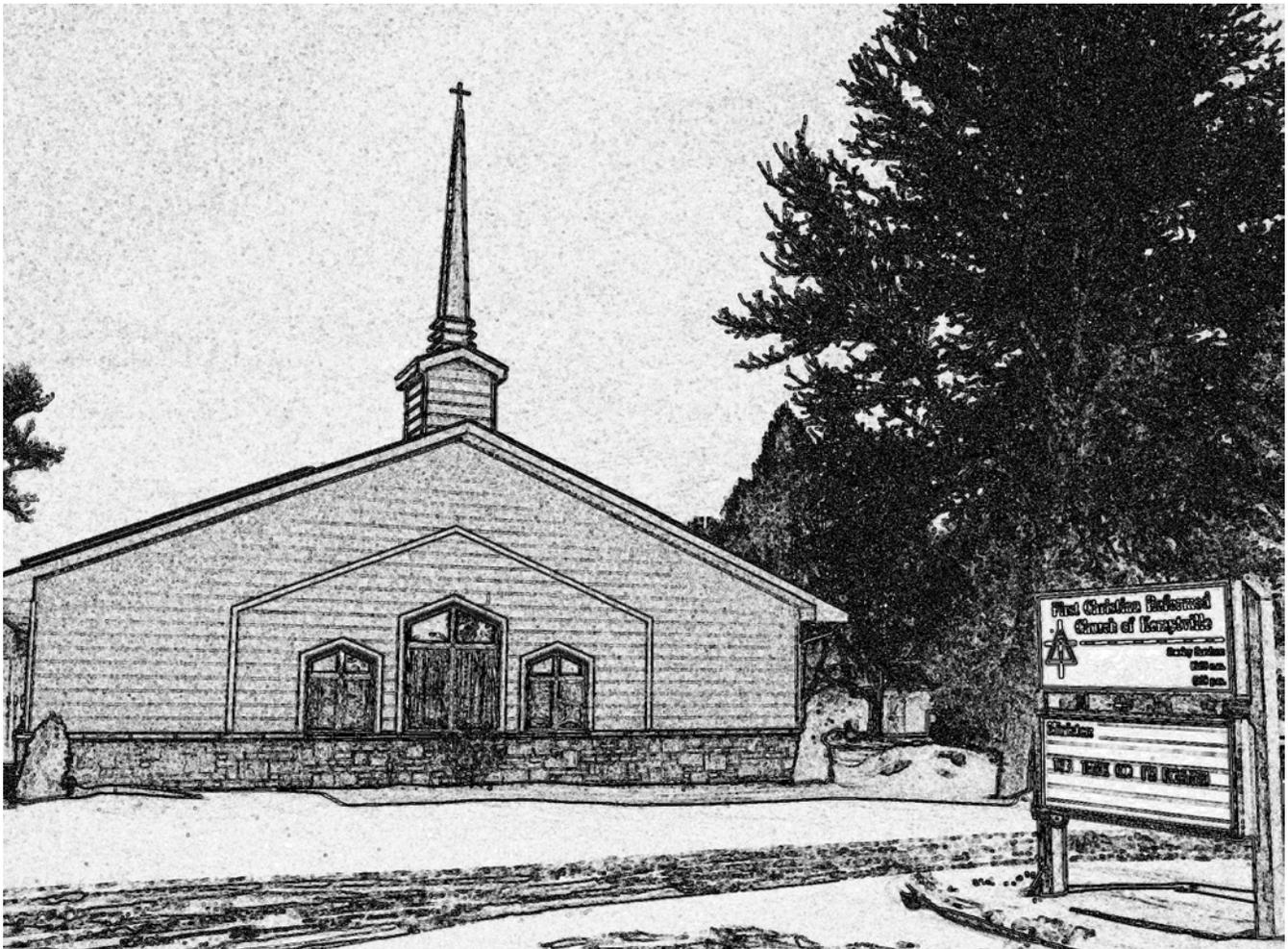
Buildings

The buildings for First CRC of Kemptville have progressed over the years. It does not appear likely that worship services were held in people's home initially. It has been recorded that council meetings were rotated among council members at their homes. It has been told that families would share rides to worship at neighbouring CRC's e.g. Williamsburg. Not every family could afford a car during the early immigration years. Camaraderie and fellowship besides encouragement in faith, were important benefits of these early Sunday outings. Some did venture to attend a local Presbyterian or Baptist church but language remained an initial barrier for most.

Traditionally the CRC and consequently First CRC of Kemptville, offered two worship services per Sunday. One gathering was held on Sunday

to make room for new construction.

It proved trying to remain unified while expanding to a new building. Dutch Reformed



Picture by Harmen Boersma, 2012 Expanded Building opened in 2008

afternoons during the whole year of 1956, in lieu of becoming a locally organized church. The active Kemptville Pentecostal congregation shared their building with .

Then the IOOF building was rented a short period to be able to hold two services per Sunday. In 1958 the Pentecostal church building (referred to as ‘our little white church’) at 108 Oxford St. was purchased for \$4,750. Soon after a parsonage was purchased at on Clothier Street East.

Both properties were sold in 1976. A sales document signed by well known real estate agent Harry Pratt reveals that the building was sold for \$17,000. Not a little for a worn out building that was

farmers were found to be cautious when it came to spending on family, farm or fellowship. However, a new property was found on 2455 County Road 18 (an extension of Clothier St West) on the farm of Bill & Marilyn Henderson. The Advance shows a picture of the sod turning done by Ken Pratt, Reeve of Oxford on Rideau Township, the contractor for the new church building, Karl Norenberg, and the contractor for the new parsonage, Clare Racine. The reporter estimates the total cost of the project at \$140,000. During construction the worship services moved to the Engineering Building at Kemptville College of Agricultural Technology. In the Spring of 1977 the new facilities were dedicated with an attendance of 300 people. The covered porch at the front entrance was closed in during 1985 by member contractor Henry VanRyswyk.

For twenty years families transferred in and

out. As the fiftieth anniversary loomed it was felt that something significant should be done to expand the facilities. By congregational input three items were prioritized: a fellowship hall, a platform and two more classrooms downstairs. A fellowship hall had become the norm in many other congregations. The worship team needed more room in the front and two growing teen clubs were in need of their own room with storage space.

In 2005 enough funds were pledged by the congregation to expand the building at the North side with a podium and two additional classrooms downstairs. A large fellowship hall with kitchen and pastor's office were added on the south side. The building was made wheelchair accessible, a government requirement by January, 2012. Further a small library, a council room, a copying room and lots of storage space were included in the plans. The worship space can hold more pews when needed. In fact the total square footage of the building was doubled at a cost of \$720,000. The congregation is prepared to welcome new arrivals in this growing community.

Worship Services

Two worship services per Sunday had been the practice for over forty years. Initially the morning services were held in Dutch while the afternoon services – remember it was a farming community - were conducted in English until 1968. Diminishing attendance during the second (now evening) service happened from 1989 to 2003 in spite of occasional concerns and discussions. The second service was replaced by eight weeks of study groups during 2005 to 2008 at which attendance increased initially. Then it was replaced by a few small groups in homes or at the church building, tackling selected topics.

From 1957 to 1995 the order of worship remained traditional, following a historic Reformed liturgy, mostly minister or elder led. The highlight of the service was a well composed sermon in which the Scriptures were examined through Calvinist spectacles of the Reformed creeds known as the Three Forms of Unity: The Belgic Confession, The Heidelberg Catechism and The Canons of Dordt. The believers could reflect upon gems from the Bible which challenged their faith and their life. The psalms and hymns enriched the worship experience. Psalter Hymnals, first the Blue Edition in the early 1960's and

then the Gray Edition in the early 1990's, were provided in the pews as well as copies of the American Standard Version later replaced by the New International Version of the Bible.

Psalm singing has been a valuable cultural asset in Reformed worship. The original rhymed Genevan Psalms, commissioned in the 1550's by John Calvin for the churches in Geneva, were translated from French into Dutch by Reverend Peter Datheen during times of severe persecution in the Lowlands. These and later versifications have been sung by Dutch Reformed worshippers well over 400 years. The moods and aspirations of the psalm poets, mostly attributed to David, were maintained in the rhymed version and embellished with the beautiful Genevan melodies. They spoke to the experiences of four centuries of Dutch Reformed worshippers.

On this continent Christian Reformed churches were keener on adapting to existing American hymns then rejuvenating the Genevan Psalms in English. Recently one can find the rhymed psalms with a completely new English versification on the internet and also to hear new ways of playing and singing the Genevan psalm tunes in e.g. the Psalm Project.

From 1995 to 2011 a newly formed worship committee, later redubbed worship ministry, assisted the two most recent young pastors. It led to many changes in worship, with prepared readings and prearranged sermon themes. Resources – offered in the monthly Reformed Worship magazine prepared by the Calvin Institute for Worship in Grand Rapids, MI - guided these transitions. Development of a church year calendar was approved by council. Soon the historic Reformed order of worship was replaced by a more universal model. Now songs are locally selected from ancient to contemporary Christian traditions.

From 1957 to 1990 organ or piano accompaniment for congregational singing of psalms and hymns was the standard. Organists were John TeGrotenhuis, Gerty Schuurmans, Oscar DeRoos, Abraham TeGrotenhuis, Grace Dykstra, Jeff Ritskes and Harmen Boersma. Pianists were Lois Smith, Ruth Ann TeGrotenhuis, Jennifer Kaldeway, Lori Ponsen, Harmony Ponsen and Fayth Ponsen. Serving as musician was and still is offered Pro Deo.

During the early years selections were chosen from the Red or Blue Psalter Hymnals which were the

Synod approved song books for the denomination. At special celebrations such as Christmas, Easter, and Thanksgiving an occasional adult choir would be formed and sing a few rehearsed choral selections with directors Lois Smith or Patti Wijsman. After 1995 the musically much improved Gray Psalter Hymnals were purchased for the pews.

Starting in 2004 an active worship team twice a month, with overhead text display, moved the congregation from singing traditional psalms and hymns to other selections. The team soon covered other parts of the service for the pastor. Musically the worship team is made up of male and female lead singers, a pianist, a flutist, a drummer, a few guitarists as well as occasional violinist, recorder player and organist. Musicians contributing have been John Beking, Gordon Dykstra, Jackie Ritskes, Lori, Harmony and Rachel Ponsen and Betty Boersma as lead singers; John Kaldeway and Andre Geleynse drums; John Kaldeway, David & Joel Wijsman, Fayth Ponsen, Brandon TeGrotenhuis and Rueben VanGilst guitar; Lori & Harmony Ponsen as well as Emely VanGilst piano; Harmony Ponsen and Tina Bus flute; Harmen Boersma recorder, Wendy Smith violin. Most extra services for Christmas, New Year, Good Friday, Easter Monday have discontinued or been simplified to singing and readings.

More could be said about other services of the church. Weekly Sunday school and catechism have been held from the very beginning. Profession of Faith classes, young people meetings, cadet and gem clubs for teens, ladies society and men's life groups, coffee break and small group studies and Bible studies are other activities that have been ongoing over the years.

Naturally, the church has administered the sacraments of Baptism and Lord's Supper. Marriage and funeral services have taken place when needed in this church. Household visits by elders and deaconal services by deacons are ongoing activities as well.

Neighbours

How were the Dutch Reformed families received in the new land? Naturally the experience for each family is different but there are common threads. The desire to farm rather than being a hired hand on the farm and the willingness of Canadian farmers to sell their farm provided a welcoming opportunity. The interviews show that for some working their farm into

a prosperous business for themselves and their children was satisfying. Others demonstrated greater business dreams by buying land, improving it for a few years and selling it for a profit to another, often more recent Dutch immigrant. The price of good farm land was increasing fast as demand kept growing.

In the interviews family members tell heartwarming stories of the way they were received by Canadian neighbours in the rural communities. Some shared how neighbours would come to the house with gifts while others were invited to join in with church and community social events.

One family described their reception this way: *We had good neighbours who organized a welcome evening at our house. The ladies would chat in the living room and the men would talk in the kitchen. One of the men had brought his mouth organ and offered to play some pieces by standing in the open door between the two rooms. Everyone could see and hear him.*

It may seem remarkable to us now that each family would bring a practical gift such as a few pieces of firewood, a small bag of (homegrown) potatoes and other such items. Every year as neighbours we would have a Christmas get together at one of the homes. Our next door neighbour would do the massage (sic) and we also sang Christmas carols.

For the majority of these immigrants language and faith tradition were barriers to integration with the surrounding community. Therefore, the Dutch Reformed gained their own identity in the community by establishing Reformed churches and Christian schools, institutions that were familiar to them historically. A minority were pulled in both directions for church and school choice. Either way a faithful family can continue to be a witness for Christ.

In business the Dutch Reformed settlers appeared on par with their neighbours. In some of the interviews are stories of farmers working with neighbours sharing machinery together. This created opportunities of visiting together and probably eating some meals together. As the immigrants became self sufficient in farming, meeting neighbours became more a visit by invitation during a winter afternoon or an evening. From the interviews it is clear that most of the Canadian neighbours were older and have since passed away.

New neighbours bought the property and moved in. Contact appeared a lot more difficult

because these neighbours, usually not immigrants, work both in the city. They leave early in the morning and come home later in the afternoon or early evening. There are fewer or no children. The only contact now taking place is a wave by hand or a brief chat through an open car window on the way to work or at the stop by the mailbox at the end of the lane.

In terms of reception of the church some of the long time members mentioned that hardly ever a 'stranger' would visit the church. As the Reformed members were not inclined to visit other churches, members of Canadian churches did not visit the Reformed church unless specially invited. Vacation Bible School started in 1961 and hosted as many as over a hundred children during the mornings of two weeks. The Reformed woman would fill their cars by bringing their own and the neighbours children for the event. One mother stated in the interview her surprise that no neighbour had returned the favour with a visit to the Reformed church on Sunday. In later years some of the regular Vacation Bible School children joined the girls and boys club at the church. Recently members of other churches have joined in to keep VBS sustainable for children.

Another surprising longtime connection developed with Rev Schissler, a local Presbyterian pastor. During the first vacancy between 1962 and 1968 Rev. Schissler often led the afternoon worship service since he preached in his own church during the morning service. Many of the older immigrant members benefitted from hearing proper English spoken. An appreciative relationship developed between pastor and the Reformed families which lasted many years.

Most of the 'Canadian' members by marriage have felt welcome in the church. They were encouraged to participate in leadership roles. Some have shared that at times they did not understand certain practices but adjusted quickly when explained.

Recently pastors have encouraged the church to participate in community events, generally those organized by the Kemptville ministerial. The deacons have responded to calls for support in meeting local needs. Therefore the original reception of immigrants by friendly neighbours has grown into an established community wide relationship.

By Harmen Boersma

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