

A community church

"Proceedings in Connection with the building of the first Methodist Church in Stanhope.

"The first meeting of the adherents of the Church at what has been known as Brown's appointment took place at the house of Mr. Higginbottom on January 24th, 1891.

"Meeting opened by singing and prayer. Rev. J. W. Shier presiding.

"The meeting was fairly attended and those present unanimously agreed that the church should be erected during the coming spring and summer months and that every effort be made to push forward the work.

"Moved and seconded that the church be built on the corner of Peterson and Minden Roads, the property of Mr. A. Thomas. Carried."

by Susan Wilson

These words, written with fountain pen in a fine hand, open the Minute Book of Zion United Church. The small black notebook, containing the Minutes, Secretaries' Book and Treasurer's Account Book from 1891 to 1906, is the cherished possession of Joan Fennell, daughter of Jack and Hazel Gregory of Carnarvon, and granddaughter of Alfred W. Moore, known to one and all as Pop Moore.

Moore was a member of the committee appointed

at that meeting in January 1891 to oversee construction of the new church. His daughter, Hazel Moore Gregory, would be baptized in the church in 1907. The others selected to serve on the committee were Joseph Cook, William Cowan, Isaac Higginbottom, Joseph Hopkins, and Robert Moore.

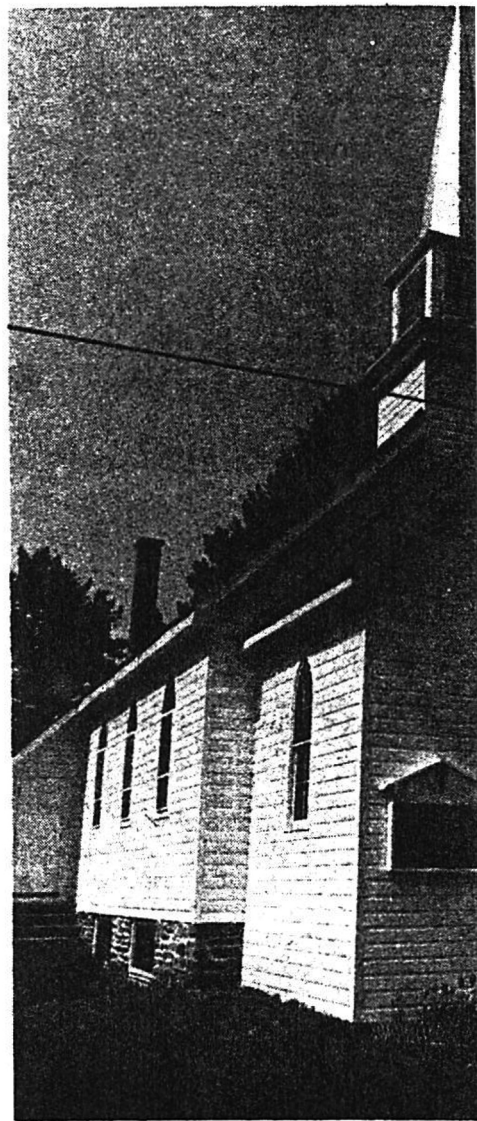
These men determined that the church was to be 24 feet by 30 feet with walls 12 feet high. It would be "sheeted outside with pine lumber, sided with improved waterproof siding". The inside would

be finished "with ash V-joint, oiled and varnished." The side walls and ceiling of the present church are the very ones installed nearly 100 years ago.

About a month after the first meeting, Mr. A. Warner, whose descendants still live in the community, donated a piece of a land for the church at the corner of Peterson and Beech Lake Roads. This occasioned much debate but it was finally decided to accept the offer and the site was moved across the line into Stanhope Township. Peterson Road was the main east-west artery before Highway 118 was built. It still runs past the church door. Beech Lake Road, also known as Halls Lake Road and the Minden Road - depending on how far you were going and in which direction - became Highway 35.

On February 2, 1891, a log bee was held and timbers for rafters and studding were taken from the woods of Moorefield

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Zion United Church has been serving the community for nearly a century. The ceiling are the original ones installed then. The steeple and front entrance were replaced in 1962.

Teas and concerts provided the funds

(from page 4)

Acres where Pop Moore's parents, Alfred and Phoebe Ann, homesteaded. The logs were made into lumber at the sawmill at Buckslide (or Buck's Slide, as it was known then). On February 12, during a second log bee, foundation timbers were taken from the property of Joseph Hopkins and hewn square with broadaxes.

Numerous teas and two concerts were held during the winter to raise money for the construction. One of the teas was held on February 25, 1891, at Moorefield Acres. The minute book indicates that the weather was very inclement with nearly eight inches of slush and water on the ice of the lakes, making travel to the tea very difficult. With roads covered in snow, most people preferred the frozen lakes for a winter highway.

Travellers today along Highway 118 west of Carnarvon pass the Moore homestead. Established by Hazel Gregory's grandparents, it lies immediately west of the bridge over the narrows between Boshkung and Little Boshkung Lakes on the north side of the road. It is not likely anyone slows down enough to notice the plaque on the abutment at the northwest corner of the bridge which names it "Damion's Bridge". After Alfred Moore S. died in 1874 at the age of 32, his wife Phoebe Ann remarried a few years later to Charles Damion, whose family were pioneers in the area from the 1830's.

In May 1891, a number of bush fires broke out

which demanded the time of the men working on the new building. They decided to hire a carpenter, Louis MacDonald, to finish the inside. He agreed to do the job for \$45 (perhaps the equivalent of \$800 or \$1,000 today) and then donated half of it back to the church. The men were back from fighting forest fires in time to shingle the roof.

Naming of the church caused considerable discussion but Zion Methodist was finally chosen on March 20 and the finished church was dedicated on Sunday, September 13, 1891.

It happened frequently in Haliburton, and probably all across the country, that the formal union of Methodist and Presbyterian churches into

HISTORIC CHURCHES

the United Church of Canada on June 26, 1925, was anticipated at the local level. In this case, the Zion Methodist and Twelve Mile Presbyterian congregations joined together in 1921 and became part of the Minden church.

In 1934, a stone basement was put under the church, chiefly through the efforts of T. H. Rogers who had been superintendent of the Sunday School for many years. When Rogers was unable to keep up the post, his son Clayton took over. He was succeeded by Ralph Hussey. The vitality of the Sunday School under these men was a source of great satisfaction to the community. In 1961, it necessitated the construct-

ion of the Christian Education wing of the church for which most of the labour was donated by the congregation.

In July 1962, an electric storm set the church on fire. Jack Gregory, now 86, and Ross Harrison, 81, both helped put it out. As Gregory remembers it, "Lightning hit Richie Harrison's pump, ran through the battery charger in my garage, and leapt over to the front of the church. We had an 800-pound ARP pump which we carried down to Mirror Lake in the centre of Carnarvon and we had one hose. A chemical pump was also brought down from Sherwood Forest to help out. Frank Chambers and I had to climb up on the roof and cut an opening through to get at the flames which were down inside the walls."

"We were our own fire department," said Harrison, who was also baptised in the church. "Whoever had a pump and the motor to run it just showed up."

When the smoke had cleared, considerable damage had been done to the south end of the church. With the insurance money and further donations, a new spire and entrance were built. Later on, the chancel and two side rooms were added. Since then, the only changes to the building have been the stained glass windows and improved lighting.

As its centennial approaches, Zion United Church continues to grow. In the winter, worship services are regularly attended by 40 or 50 people. In summer, the 80-seat nave bulges at the

seams. "We have to add chairs front and back and sometimes people are standing outside," said Gregory. "For three or four weeks there, we'll get up to 150 people coming to Sunday service." The Sunday school remains as strong as ever and the congregation is very proud

of the choir. "You couldn't go anywhere in a country community," says Hazel Gregory, "and find a better choir."

Plans for the centennial celebrations aren't laid yet. But Zion United Church remains as vigorous a part of its community as it was when it was first built. That

bodes well for its second century.

To reach Zion United Church, turn east Highway 35 at the Station just north Highway 118. The church and its cemetery are on the left-hand side of the road. Services are held on Sunday at 9 a.m.

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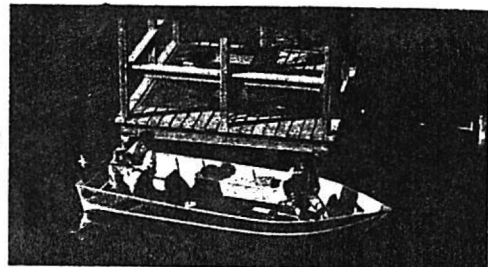
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