

NEWSLETTER

Canadian Churches of Christ Historical Society
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STRATHMORE: HISTORY AND HERITAGE

The Strathmore Blvd., Toronto, Church of Christ now has a history of 90 years and a heritage that stretches back at least 180 years.

On Oct. 19, 2014, the congregation celebrated its founding in 1924. Its roots reach to the first meetings of the church of Christ in Toronto in 1834. Just renamed from "York" (in order to combat the Cholera Epidemic of 1832, the town incorporated with its new name). "Toronto" has had congregations of churches of Christ worshiping and serving in it from its beginning.

James Beaty, who took a leading roll in the fellowship, had arrived in this pioneer community as a 20 year-old from Ireland in 1818. Raised an Anglican, he personally studied his way into New Testament Christianity, accepting baptism at the hands of a friend in the harbour. Joining in worship with an independent fellowship of Baptists, he with some twenty of these clarified their position by 1834, and were meeting in a building supplied by Beaty at 22 Shuter Street by 1841.

Beaty replaced this building in 1862 with a substantial brick meeting house. Under the peak, carved in stone, were the letters drawn from John 8:31, "if ye continue in my word then are ye my disciples indeed."

After 22 years, Beaty recalled the building, and the congregation relocated, after several temporary sites (Albert Hall, Temperance Hall, and Alice Street), on Louisa Street where it met for the next 23 years. (The Eaton Centre covers this location presently.) Following a brief stay on Elm Street, a number of members began meeting in a new building on Bathurst Street in 1902.

In the meantime, disciples began meeting "east of the Don." In about 1889, Duncan Stirling and his wife, Harriet (Trout), from Meaford, held services in their home. Duncan, a preacher, was in poor health. He could neither conduct nor

attend services, but his wife saw that they were carried on.

Reports of their meetings can be found in the *Bible Index*, Aug. 1889, April and Oct. 1892, and Jan. 1893. Baptisms were carried out in downtown churches. Evangelistic meetings were held in a rented hall on Gerrard St. E. Samuel Keffer was one who conducted meetings. Charles Petch and William Forrester also preached.

At some point, the East Toronto church began meeting in a hall located on the corner of Main and Swanwick Streets. This building was owned by Edward Trout and his wife, Jennie (Gowanlock), famous for being Canada's first licensed female doctor. The Trouts refused any rent payments, so the congregation determined to send the equivalent to an overseas mission.

In the early 1920's Ralph Schell was serving as preacher for the group. One of the members, Annie Jones, was holding Bible classes for children in her home on Gillard Ave., just five blocks west of Coxwell and Danforth. This may have been the spark that had Schell conducting tent meetings at the corner of Strathmore and Coxwell. The success of these meetings resulted in the formation of the new congregation at 346 Strathmore Blvd.

While the building was being constructed, the growing Bible classes were being conducted by Alfred Firth at the nearby Earl Haig Public School, on Coxwell Ave. The sale of the Main Street hall, given to the congregation by the Trouts, provided funding for the \$18,000 cost of the building.

The building was constructed by Colin Cameron, a member of the Wychwood congregation. He had learned his brick-laying trade in Scotland, coming to Canada in 1907.

Incorporated into the new building was the 62 year-old lettering from the earlier Shuter Street building, saved when the older building had to be razed in about 1915, donated by Benjamin Kirk, member of Hillcrest Christian Church, Toronto.

Thirty-four members from the former East Toronto church formed the nucleus. In the first year, there were 8 baptisms and 18 placed membership, and by the end of the year there were 60 members. D. H. Jackson, in 1925, was the first preacher to serve the congregation, but his ministry was cut short by his untimely passing. W. H. Cauble served during 1928-33, and J. Scott Greer during 1936-39. A number of evangelists held meetings in the first fifteen years: Maitland Watterworth, Earl C. Smith, Kenneth C. Spaulding, G. Madison Wright, F. L. Brooks, and W. G. Charlton.

Jack McElroy, Chattanooga, TN, played a significant roll in the 1940s, preaching briefly for six weeks, and then recommending young men that he had recruited and trained for service at Strathmore: Raymond Crumbliss, 1940-43; Charles Lemons, 1943-46; Ernie Fletcher, 1947; and T. J. Mitchell, 1947-1950.

Robert McCready, a native son of Strathmore, following schooling at David Lipscomb College, served Strathmore during 1950-1954. Ralph Perry, whose wife, Joyce, was daughter of Strathmore's Herbert Dale, served from 1954 to 1960. Ed Bryant followed, serving through to 1969.

During the first 40 years of the congregation's life, a dozen of its young men chose to enter the ministry. Included were Walter Dale, Geoffrey Ellis, Howard Ewing, Roger MacKenzie, Victor McCormick, Robert McCready, Ronald Meecham, Louis Pauls, Arthur Peddle, Bert Thompson and Blenus Wright. One of these men is still preaching full time, Vic McCormick, 85, in Brooksville, Florida!

In 1954, Strathmore assisted in a church planting in Ajax, supporting its members John and Ardeth Sanna in this initiative.

Marvin Johnson served as evangelist during 1969 through 1982. He holds one of Strathmore's records, having served as an elder from 1974 to the present—40 years! Evangelists during the eighties included Mark Bryson, 1982-83; Roy MacDonald, 1983-86; and Jonathan Tabije, 1986-87.

A second record setting service began in 1987 with the ministry of Max Craddock, whose present service is in its 27th year!

The congregation added its Hispanic ministry in 1969 with the placement of Santiago Molina, of Honduras, taking the lead.

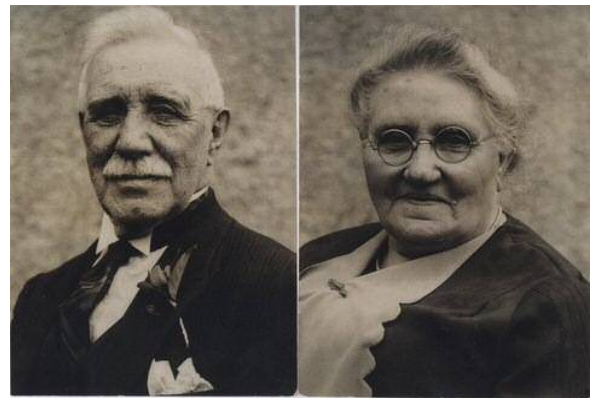
Strathmore is noted for its major efforts in outreach. It hosted the Canada-wide "Good News Is For Sharing" Campaign in 1992, an effort to place a teaching tract in every home in the nation. Then, beginning in 1994 as the

Canadian co-cordinator of the New Mexico based "Key to the Kingdom" TV program, it took over the full production of the cross-Canada program beginning in 2005.

Today, Strathmore is noted for the diversity of its 200+ membership, counting 32 different cultures.

Strathmore has cherished its past as it vigorously faces its future, having marked anniversaries in 1964—its 40th, 1974—50th, 1994—70th, 2004—80th, and 2014—its 90th.

---Geoffrey Ellis



Colin Cameron (wife Jemima) member of the Wychwood Church of Christ who built the Strathmore building.



The Strathmore building under construction in 1924.



The formal opening of the new entrance to the Strathmore building in 1970.

ROY AND EDYTHER WILLIAMS,

ARCHIVISTS OF THE MEAFORD

COLLECTION

The CCCHS board of directors is pleased to be able to announce that Roy and Edythe Williams, Meaford residents, have graciously taken on the responsibilities for the supervision of the historical society's archival collection that is located in that beautiful Georgian Bay town. The CCCHS is doubly blessed in that the collection is housed in a facility made available by the Ron Knight family, and now cared for by the kindness of the Williams couple serving as volunteers. Those wishing to access the materials directly or remotely may do so through the Williams. Roy and Edythe have deep roots in the Restoration heritage in Canada. Roy, having grown up in the Beamsville Church of Christ and Edythe in the Maplewood Church of Christ in Toronto, and both are graduates of Great Lakes Christian College. Since accepting this responsibility, Roy and Edythe have familiarized themselves with the collection and have been active in its upgrading.

Those wishing to access the collection directly, or who might wish to learn of possible materials available, or who desire to order the society's publications, may do so by contacting the Williams: Canadian Churches of Christ Historical Society, C/O Mr. Roy Williams, 135 Algonquin Dr., RR 3, Meaford, ON N4L 0A7. 519-538-5150. rsejwilliams@gmail.com.

George Mansfield
President of CCCHS board of directors



Geoffrey Ellis, Edythe and Roy Williams

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

At the 2014 CCCHS annual meeting, August 16, the Board of Directors acknowledged the reception of the following materials for the society's collection:

"Canadian Reports to the Word and Work Magazine," identified by Ralph Perry and gathered by Geoff Ellis.

A copy of a recently published book, "How the Disciples Grew in Ontario," by Edwin Broadus.

Copies of all Gospel Herald issues to the end of the year. Announced by Max Craddock, representing the Gospel Herald Foundation.

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Early Days of the St. Thomas Church of Christ

In the summer of 1966 Bill Bunting and Wayford Smith graduated from Sunset School of Preaching in Lubbock, Texas. Their dream during their last year of study was to plant a church somewhere in Ontario. Following a trip to Ontario in the summer of 1965, discussions with brethren in the province, much prayer and presentations to supporting churches, they chose St. Thomas as the location for their attempted church planting.

With the encouragement and assistance of the London, Ont. Church of Christ and their preacher, Ralph Perry, the two families settled in St. Thomas. Wayford, his wife, Wilma and three daughters arrived first. A couple of months later, Bill, his wife, Alma and two daughters followed. The church met for the first time September 4, 1966. Locke's Public School was secured as a temporary meeting place.

In addition to the Buntings and Smiths, the Larry Hoover family of Aylmer and the Hugh Kirkland family of Tillsonburg shared the early periods of worship. Steve and Phyllis May were also involved in the church plant in the first two months.

With the help of members of supporting churches, a vacation Bible school was conducted in 1967. With the exception of 1989 (the year of building a church building), VBS was an annual event during the first decade.

Also, in 1967 a GMC van was purchased in order to give area children a ride to Sunday Bible classes.

The group experienced the first four baptisms in 1968. It was in the same year that property was purchased on South Edgeware Drive and work began on the current Church of Christ building.

In these early years the Bunting family was financially supported by the Church of Christ, Plymouth, Michigan and the Smith family by the Johnson Park Church of Christ, Borger, Texas. The Plymouth church assisted in the purchase of property and many churches and individuals contributed to the cost of the church building. Construction of the church building began in 1969. First meeting in the new building was March 1, 1970.

By 1974, four families, who worshipped in St. Thomas, lived in the Tillsonburg area. The Bunting family moved to Tillsonburg in view of planting a church there. On February 2, 1975, the new Tillsonburg Church of Christ began meeting there.

Special guest speakers through these early years included David Bryant, Louis Pauls, Cline Paden, John Clayton, Charles Whitmire, Leroy Cowan, Ralph Perry, Roy Merritt, Wilburn Hill, Virgil Trout, Bruce Love, Donald Perry, Dan Weib and Geoffrey Ellis.

-----Wayford Smith

Recognition

Of Service Rendered

Eileen Dale began her volunteer service to the CCCHS in 2004 when the processing of our collected archival materials began. She worked consistently for the next ten years contributing several hours each week with few interruptions. A considerable portion of the filing accomplished over this period bears her careful handwriting. Eileen took considerable delight in pausing to examine various items that recalled her own earlier experiences with our fellowship. The historical society is indebted to Eileen for her faithful service and considerable contribution of effort in advancing its collection. The archive in Meaford stands as a monument to her memory.



The late Walter and Eileen Dale.