



NEWSLETTER

Canadian Churches of Christ Historical Society
Vol. 2, No. 1, Summer 2006

FOCUS ON HAMILTON

The seventh annual meeting of the Canadian Churches of Christ Historical Society was held in the meeting house of the Fennell Ave. Church of Christ on Saturday, Aug. 26, 2006.

The gathering provided an opportunity to reflect on Restoration activities in the Hamilton area. A 70 page study was presented to the meeting (see below) that, starting in 1821 and concluding in 2001, examined 180 years of effort. Wilma Moore prepared a layout of the city with flags locating the 19 sites where brethren have met over the years. Roy Merritt shared his reminiscences of the beginning days of Fennell Ave., as well as influences that reached from Hamilton to Ottawa and to Thunder Bay.

The day began with registration and refreshments at 10:00 a.m. with the society's business meeting following at 10:30. The meeting re-elected Donald Perry to serve as a member of the board. Eugene Perry reported on the society's finances and the state of the current membership. Progress on the registering and storage of the collection at 120 Moccasin Dr, Waterloo, was noted. And in this connection appreciation was expressed to Eileen Dale who has worked over recent months in recording and filing the collection that now includes some 500 items. The board reported on the developing cooperation between the CCCHS and the archival program at Western Christian College, Regina, SK, under the leadership of Shelley Jacobs, librarian.

David Ellis, Meaford, historian on the board of directors, presented an illustrated report on the electronic index he is developing that will enable a variety of searches of the society's collection.

A sack lunch followed, augmented by food and beverages prepared by Wilma and Tom Moore and those helping them.

Roy Merritt's "Remembrances" were follow-

ed by the presentation of certificates of appreciation both to Roy Merritt and to the Moores for their contributions over the years.

The final event was an interesting power point presentation by CCCHS vice-chair, Ron Knight, Meaford, "Digging up the Past at Trout Hollow," that illustrated how projects aimed at preserving the past can generate community interest and participation.

Consideration was given to next year's meeting and general interest was expressed in meeting in St. Catharines, August 25, 2007.

"ROY MERRITT REMEMBERS"

The Roy Merritt presentation not only reflected on historical matters but in itself was an historical event. Roy in his 88th year, spoke with vigor, clarity of mind, and sharpness of recall. The many who had gathered particularly to hear him were delighted and encouraged by his thoughts that linked the achievements of the past with the ongoing efforts of the present. Roy's thoughts centered in the Hamilton work and concluded with his memories of the work in Ottawa and Thunder Bay.

Roy Merritt was born in Beamsville in 1918, baptized there in 1933, and began preaching in 1946, the year he began his studies at Abilene Christian College. He graduated from ACC in 1950 and from Butler University with his M.A. in 1951. Roy and Lou Nelle Peters of Rogers, TX were married in 1950. Three children were born into their family.

He began working with the Sanford Ave. congregation in 1951 and was their church planting evangelist in launching the Fennell Ave. congregation. The Merritts serve Fennell until their move to Ottawa in 1958 to launch the work in the capital city. After five years of effort in Ottawa, they went on to assist in the new work in Thunder Bay. In 1969, Roy returned to Beamsville to become

dean of the restructured Bible department of Great Lake Christian College where he served twelve years preparing workers for the field. In 1982, Roy and Nelle moved to Bangalore, India where they worked in developing leaders in that country. And throughout much of this time, beginning in 1953, Roy served as the teaching editor of the *Gospel Herald*. In their retirement Roy and Nell reside in St. Catharines, ON

EDITORS IN HAMILTON

While Restoration influences emanating from Hamilton may have been generally modest, four different editors of Gospel papers were engaged at one time or another in publishing and editing in Hamilton: David Oliphant Jr, George Munro, Lloyd Snure, and Roy Merritt.

David Oliphant concluded his short-lived *Message of Good-Will to Men* in mid-1865 following the death of his wife, Cynthia, September 12, 1864, and exhaustion resulting from the contentious debate regarding the "co-operation" issue. In ill health he moved from West Lake, Prince Edward County to Hamilton. Eugene Perry, in his work, *A History of Religious Periodicals in the Restoration Movement in Canada*, states, "In 1868 he [Oliphant] was living in Hamilton and helping a company of brethren with a paper called the *Peace Maker*. It is possible that this started in 1866 immediately upon the termination of the *Message of Good-Will to Men*, but no copies are known to be extant and there is no known record of such for these years. He must have been considered the editor [according] to a notice in the *Millennial Harbinger* for February 1869..." (p. 57). Brethren in Hamilton were assembling in the home of F. H. Mallory at the time (on Bay Street just south of King Street), but there is no record of Oliphant's likely connection with this group.

The second editor, George Munro, began to edit *The Canadian Evangelist* in 1889, a paper that was a continuation of *The Ontario Evangelist* (1886-1889) and which in turn attempted to replace the *Christian Worker* (1881-1886). Originally published in Owen Sound, when Munro moved to serve the church in Hamilton, the paper, now renamed *The Disciple of Christ and Canadian Evangelist*, was then date-lined Hamilton. This series of papers were considered to be a mouth piece for the

Cooperation of that time. When the latter proposed an initiative to unite the Disciples of Christ and the "Christian Church," i.e. the remnant in Can-ada of the former "Christian Connexion," Munro disagreed with the position. He objected both to the suggested acceptance of fellowshiping with the un-immersed as well as to the impropriety of the Cooperation's leadership in encouraging the union. Thus in 1896 Munro terminated his publishing, left Hamilton and Ontario.

The "Church News" department of *The Canadian Evangelist* gives only a limited insight in Munro's time in Hamilton: "The aged A. Anderson fills in for G. Munro for four Sundays" (CE, IX, 18-19, Jan. 15-Feb. 1, 1895, 5); G. Munro "will be cutting back on editing and doing more church work" (DCCE, X, 4, June 15, 1895, 6, 8). And in an "editorial comment," G. Munro reports that he is now longer preaching for the church in Hamilton and is willing to hold protracted meetings in the fall (DCCE, XI, 9, Sept. 1, 1896, 7).

The *Christian Monthly Review* was founded by D. McDougall of West Gore, NS in 1918. He continued to edit and publish the paper until July 1, 1926. In that year publication was transferred to Meaford, ON and the editorship turned over to E. Gaston Collins. Collins served for four years before moving to Detroit and then to Nashville where he took on responsibilities with the *Gospel Advocate*. Leadership of the *Review* then shifted in 1929 to Hamilton where Lloyd G. Snure accepted responsibility as "managing editor" for coordinating three departmental editors and the monthly publication of the paper. This arrangement lasted for one year when 'owing to the pressure of business and many important activities in connection with his home congregation, Bro. Snure has been forced to resign the editorship of the *Christian Monthly Review*' (CMR, XV, Nov. 1930, 2).

The editorship of the *Gospel Herald* was transferred in November 1953 by J.C. Bailey to Roy D. Merritt, Hamilton and Eugene C. Perry, Beamsville. Roy Merritt, engaged in advancing the new congregation at Fennell Ave. in Hamilton, edited the teaching material while Eugene Perry, serving as a teacher and shortly principal for the newly opened Great Lakes Christian College, managed the publication of the paper. Thus, for the period from 1953 until 1958 when Roy Merritt moved to begin a new work in Ottawa, edit-

orial activity was once again centered in Hamilton.

(Information for this piece was gleaned from Eugene Perry's A History of Religious periodicals in the Restoration Movement in Canada.) - G. Ellis

TOM AND WILMA MOORE HONOURED

Tom and Wilma Moore of Hamilton were honoured by the historical society for their "years of faithful witness and outstanding support of Restoration studies and archival preservation."

Earlier this year Wilma presented to the society the fruit of her life's work in gathering and preserving records, photos, and histories on areas and subjects dear to her. Included in the collection are: files on Omagh Bible School, 1937-1945, 1950-2001; congregational histories, including Toronto, Omagh, Hamilton, Fennell Ave., and Montreal; "Heritage Day, 1988" papers; the genealogy of Robert Beaty; and a history of the Omagh region. As well, Tom contributed his personal, illustrated, "Looking Back on a Christian's Experience in the Royal Canadian Navy, 1955-1960."

And as representatives of the Fennell Ave. congregation that graciously permitted the annual meeting to be held in their facility, the Moores worked tirelessly as our hosts for the day. They are appreciated!

"RESTORATION IN HAMILTON, ONTARIO 1821-2001"

Presented to the annual meeting was a 70 page report on activities in Hamilton drawn from the periodicals, research, and the reminiscences of several. Beginning with the traces of David Oliphant Sr's presence in Dundas in 1821-1832 researched by Charlene Jaggard to Wilma Moore's history of the Fennell Ave congregation given on the occasion of its 50th anniversary in 2001, the production gives an interesting insight into Restoration developments over a 180 year span. The report was a collaborative effort drawing on the work of eleven individuals. The effort in locating excerpts concerning Hamilton in the periodicals by Myrna Perry, and Eugene Perry was particularly appreciated. Geoffrey Ellis edited the production as well as researching some of the periodicals. Copies are available by

ordering through the CCCHS. (See below.) The following table of contents will identify the contents of this work.

- I. David Oliphant Sr, Dundas, Ontario, 1821-1832 - Charlene Jaggard
- II. Excerpts from the Periodicals, 1861-1900 - Geoffrey Ellis
- III. Excerpts from Butchart - Geoffrey Ellis
- IV. Excerpts from the *Bible Student*, 1904-1910 - Myrna Perry
- V. Excerpts from the *Christian Monthly Review*, 1919-1931 - Myrna Perry
- VI. Excerpts from the *Gospel Herald*, 1938-1945 - Eugene Perry
- VII. Church of Christ, Hamilton, Ontario, 1921-1968 - Harold Walker
- VIII. Sanford Avenue Church of Christ, 1921-1968 - Dora Hunter
- IX. Max and Cledith Craddock Remember Sanford - Max and Cledith Craddock
- X. Fennell Avenue - 50th Anniversary History, 2001 - Wilma Moore
- XI. The Ritchie Campaigns, 1947, 1948, 1950, 1951 - Geoffrey Ellis
- XII. Hamilton Church Locations

- M. Perry, W. Moore, G. Ellis

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ADDENDUM ("Why I came to the Church of Christ," by Nelle Bachuk; "Further on the Church Planting at Swale's Hall in 1913"; "Ivon Ave. Church of Christ," by Linda Haist.)

"HAMILTON CHURCH LOCATIONS"

- 1849 – Brethren are reported in the city, but no meeting location is known. Itinerant evangelists, A. Anderson and J. Kilgour, hold a weekend meeting.
- 1862 – F. H. Mallory arrives in Hamilton and begins meetings in his home.
- 1869 – F. H. Mallory "sets in order" a congregation of seven. Meetings are in his home "for 13 years": "The first brick house on the east side of Bay St. south of King St."
- 1883 – "38 meeting in a hall at 22 ½ King St. E."
- 1887 – One report: Lediard preaches at A. Anderson's house as there is "no church building," according the

- Ontario Evangelist*, Vol I, No. 12, April, 1887, 3.
- 1890 – September 14, opening service is held in a new building 52X30 feet on a 58X32 feet lot on the corner of Wilson and Cathcart Streets. (The report stated that “in recent years” the church has been renting the Templar’s Hall at King William and James Streets prior to this relocation.)
- 1897 – A second, “non-cooperative,” congregation begins April 4 with five persons at the home of Bro. Wright, 50 Aikman Ave. Meetings continue in various homes, including that of Sis. Standish.
- 1898 – This group then moves to the Foresters Hall on June 22.
- 1899 – Another location is identified for this group in an upper room on King St. E.
- 1902 – This congregation then locates at the corner of Jackson and Walnut Streets and continues there for nearly 11 years.
- 1905 – The “cooperation” church disbands.
- 1913 – The Walnut St. congregation rents the building now owned by E. T. Wright Mfg. Co. located on the corner of Wilson and Cathcart Streets, the same building built by the “cooperation” brethren and remains there for “seven or eight years.” (The *Christian Monthly Review* lists the congregation as meeting in this location until the end of 1923.)
- 1913 – A mission goes forth in March from the Walnut St. congregation to the east end of the city, meeting at Swale’s Hall, Kinrade and Barton Streets. By May, The East End church is meeting at the East End Y.M.C.A. Hall on Barton St. near Milton.
- 1920 – The main congregation, “forced to find a new location,” meets for nearly two years in the Labour Hall on James St. N.
- 1921 – In September the congregation relocates at 77 Sanford Ave. in the former St. Peter’s Anglican building. The seating is received as a gift from the E. T. Wright Co. (The congregation would meet here until September, 1968.)
- 1928 – A new mission is begun in November in the east end, meeting in the Edinburgh Hall at the corner of Ottawa and Edinburgh Streets. It is noted as the East End Church in the directory of the *Christian Monthly Review* and continues for two and a half years (1928-1930+).
- 1944 – The Westdale church is planted by members from Sanford Ave. in west Hamilton at the corner of Sterling and North Oval. This congregation discontinued in 1954.
- 1945 – A further work is begun by several members of the Sanford Ave. congregation in the east end of Hamilton with early Sunday School meetings being conducted beginning May, 1946 in a double garage nearby the corner of Roxborough and Ivan Ave. where the congregation would locate in its own building. The official opening of the unfinished building was Sept. 12, 1948, and of the completed building Dec. 6, 1959. The congregation relocated in Stoney Creek in 1982.
- 1951 – A new work is begun at the corner of Fennell Ave. and East 27th Street.
- 1987 – The West Hamilton church begins meeting at Mohawk College, Fennell Ave. and West 5th Street, Nov. 1, 1987.
- 2002 – The Hamilton North church begins meeting in Aug. 2002 in the Y.M.C.A. at 79 James Street S and Jackson Street.
- Researched by M. Perry,
W. Moore, and G. Ellis
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- AVAILABLE FROM THE CCCHS
- 2003 – Periodical Publishing in the Restoration in Canada from 1822 \$2.00
- 2004 – The Restoration Churches in Toronto \$5.00
- 2005 – Restoration in the Georgian Bay, 1853-1895 \$6.00
- 2005 – Pioneer Churches of the Georgian Bay – CD \$5.00
- 2006 – Restoration in Hamilton, Ontario, 1821-2001 \$8.00
- 2006 – Roy Merritt Remembers – CD

or audio tape \$5.00

*Add cost of postage

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