



NEWSLETTER

Canadian Churches of Christ Historical Society
Vol. 3, No. 3-4, Winter-Spring, 2008

IN THIS ISSUE

Featured in this issue of the CCHS Newsletter is the article by Edwin Broadus, "Update on Daniel Wiers." Edwin has continued his research on Daniel Wiers since giving his paper, "Daniel Wiers in the Maelstrom of the Early Restoration Movement on the Niagara Frontier," at the 2007 annual meeting. With the help of Michael Christie, co-author of *The Early Years of the Barrington's Baptists* (see below), significant new information on Wiers has been gained. Wiers' association with the Freewill Baptists, a people also driven by a determination to adhere to the ancient gospel, shines new light on the early days of the Disciples in Canada. The excerpt from the Freewill Baptist paper, the *Morning Star*, that supplies some of this additional insight, is also included in this issue.

Edwin Broadus has, as well, researched the "Christian Connection" movement in Upper Canada. He will present his findings at the 2008 annual meeting of the historical society in his paper, "The Influence of the Christian Connection on the Restoration Movement in Ontario." The Christian Connection had its beginning in Ontario at Newmarket in 1821. Also to be featured at the annual meeting will be Shelley Jacobs' paper, "The Life of Charles Petch." Petch helped to establish the church at Pine Orchard, nearby to Newmarket. He served elsewhere in Ontario and did significant work in western Canada. The focus of the annual meeting will be upon the "North Shore," the territory east of Toronto and along the shore of Lake Ontario. Excerpts from the periodicals regarding the churches planted in this region will be available at the meeting. Harold Bruggen will submit a paper on the life of Moses Lard of *Lard's Quarterly* fame. Lard spent the Civil War years at Bowmanville.

Also in this issue of the Newsletter is a listing of some of the recent acquisitions to

the society's collection. Of special note is the gift by Donald Perry of Alexander Cameron's collection of United Kingdom publications, including seven volumes of the *British Millennial Harbinger*, four volumes of

2008 ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, August 16, 2008

To be held at the meeting house of

NEWMARKET
CHURCH OF CHRIST

230 Davis Dr.
Newmarket, ON

Featuring:

Shelley Jacobs

Regina, Saskatchewan

"The Life of Charles W. Petch"

and

Edwin Broadus

Burlington, Ontario

**"The Influence of the Christian
Connection on the Restoration
Movement in Ontario"**

also

Studies of Restoration in the North-Shore
(Lake Ontario) Area

10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

the *British Harbinger*, and the book, *The Lives of Robert Haldane of Airthrey and of his Brother James Alexander Haldane* by Alexander Haldane. Seven original bound volumes of Campbell's *Millennial Harbinger* complete the collection. As well Donald Perry passed on four years of the *British Christian Advocate* and *The Christian*

Exam-iner and Bible Advocate, rebound copies from the library of the late A. E. Atkinson.

Of major significance for the membership of the CCCHS and all who are interested in the study of Restoration in Canada is the addition to our collection of a digitized copy of the *Christian Quarterly* (1916-1917) and the *Christian Monthly Review* (1919-1926, 1933). The scanning of the available issues of these publications was done by David Perry. CDs (2) containing this collection in .pdf format are available for purchase. (See below.) This collection will soon be available for examination on our website.

UPDATE ON DANIEL WIERS

Since presenting my paper at the 2007 meeting of the CCCHS on "Daniel Wiers in the Maelstrom of the Early Restoration Movement on the Niagara Frontier," significant new information about Wiers has come to light. Much of this material is from *The Life of David Marks, To the 26th year of his age*, an autobiography published in 1831 in Limerick, Maine, and from the *Morning Star*, a Freewill Baptist publication. Marks was an itinerant Freewill Baptist preacher from New York who went on frequent preaching tours in Upper Canada. I am indebted to Michael Christie, an expert in early Freewill Baptist history in Canada, for providing me with materials from the *Morning Star*. Marks' book is available online.

Wiers, a native of Clinton Township in Lincoln County on the Niagara peninsula, grew up between Beamsville and Vineland, and in 1832 he began what came to be the Beamsville and Jordan Churches of Christ. In 1827 he joined the Beamsville Baptists, and early that same year he accepted that church's invitation to be its minister. A year later he was replaced by James Black, who later was a leader in the Restoration Movement in Ontario. In 1829 Wiers was again preaching for the Beamsville Baptists, but by the end of that year the church expelled him for, among other things, espousing some of the views of Alexander Campbell and using his New Testament translation. However, until now many of the details of this turbulent period in Wiers' life were unknown.

About six months after the Baptists had excommunicated Wiers, David Marks stopped to visit him at his home in Clinton.

This was his first meeting with Wiers, but as he was traveling through southwestern Ontario and was still 100 miles from Clinton, Marks had heard about him and the action the Baptists had taken against him.

When Marks visited with Wiers he learned that during his first year with the Beamsville Baptists the church was unhappy with Wiers because he had questioned some of the Calvinistic tenets of the church. Because of this, with the church's encouragement Wiers enrolled in the Baptist Theological Seminary (which later evolved into Colgate University) in Hamilton, New York. The church hoped that this "would reclaim him from his new theory." Wiers studied in New York for six months, but when he returned the church was disappointed to learn that he was more established than ever in his unorthodox views. Marks said that he had been told that the church's severe action "was designed to convict and reclaim him," and they supposed that "in a few days he would learn obedience." But as time went by, Wiers showed no desire to apply for reinstatement, and, in Marks' opinion, the Baptists had to accept the fact that they had "expelled not only the best scholar they have in the province of U. C. but a young man of gravity, candor, innocence and piety rarely equaled." Marks said that Wiers told him "that a conviction of the Scriptures being a perfect law, sufficient for the government of the church, led him to reject all the disciplines and articles of men, and to search the Bible to find the doctrine that it teaches. The result was, a rejection of the doctrines of Calvinism, and the embracing of his present sentiments."

Since many of Wiers' views at that time were very similar to those of the Freewill Baptists, he said that he would like to attend the next session of their Yearly Meeting in western New York. He did this in August and while there preached for them. In the Elders' Conference the following day he proposed joining them. The conference then appointed six elders to visit Clinton and to hold a two days' meeting there. Whether they did this, we do not know, but Marks said that the council subsequently ordained Wiers as a Freewill Baptist minister.

When David Marks stopped to visit Daniel Wiers in Clinton, he was traveling with another young minister, Freeborn W. Straight, and presumably Straight was with Marks during his visit with Wiers. Straight

would later be remembered as the man who worked most closely with Wiers when he began the church in Clinton. Straight was just 24 at the time. (Marks was about 28, and he estimated that Wiers was a year or two younger.) Straight frequently accompanied Marks on preaching tours in the London and Woodstock areas, and both men married Canadians.

Wiers' activities between August 1830 and August 1832, when he began preaching and baptizing for the remission of sins, are uncertain. Marks says that in 1830 he had preaching appointments, but where we do not know. We have somewhat more information about Straight during this time. As a result of preaching that he did in Batavia, New York in the summer of 1830, a Freewill Baptist Church was organized there, and he was its first pastor. He regularly attended the Freewill Baptist Quarterly Meetings in western New York, and by the summer of 1831 he had the opportunity to meet, probably for the first time, John M. Yearnshaw, a young Freewill minister who had moved to the Rochester, New York area from Rhode Island. Yearnshaw would later, along with Straight, become part of the Restoration Movement. During the first half of 1832 both Yearnshaw and Straight continued their regular attendance at Freewill Conferences, but by the end of the year Straight was no longer attending.

It was apparently by the end of 1832 that Straight openly espoused the views of Alexander Campbell. David Marks says that when he met with the Batavia church January 27, 1833 "the church appeared to be in a good state though they had been affected and tried by the course pursued by their late pastor, Elder F. W. Straight, who, appearing to lose his humility, embraced the peculiar and cold hearted sentiments of Alexander Campbell. That water baptism is regeneration – that unless a man be immersed he cannot be a Christian – that the Holy Spirit does not strive with the world – and that in these days, no man is called of God to preach the gospel."

It may have been some time in 1831 or 1832 that Straight and Wiers obtained a copy of Campbell's *Christian Baptist*, if credence can be given to the story about this that has been handed down in Ontario. Wiers clearly was acquainted with Campbell and many of his views earlier than this, but he could not have obtained the *Christian Baptist* in its

entirety until after its publication as a monthly periodical ended in 1830.

Ironically, Straight was replaced as pastor in Batavia by Porter Thomas, who had been a Freewill preacher in Vermont before going to Michigan for a short time, but who would soon join ranks with Straight, Wiers, and Yearnshaw. Marks reported that Thomas took on his new duties in March 1833.

Thomas and Yearnshaw changed their views by May 1833. In September of that year Yearnshaw sent a report to Campbell's *Millennial Harbinger*, referring to a letter he had written in May and repeating what he had apparently said then: "There are four of us who bore the name of Free-Will Baptists, that are now proclaiming the ancient gospel." He reported Thomas had brought with him a considerable number of members of the church in Batavia. Before we had identified three of these as Straight, Thomas, and Yearnshaw. Now we know that Wiers was likely the fourth, since he, too, had been ordained by the Freewill Baptists.

In the CCHS paper about Wiers, it was suggested that Marshall Wilcox, who preached at Clinton in early days, may have been the fourth Freewill Baptist preacher. But Wilcox has now been identified, not as a former Freewill minister, but as a Methodist exhorter. He lived in the Rochester, New York area, and there he could have become acquainted with Yearnshaw and Straight, for Yearnshaw preached in that area and Straight was from there.

Recriminations followed the defection of at least some of these preachers. Marks publicly proclaimed his disappointment in the course taken by his former co-worker whom he had helped train as an evangelist. After Thomas left, some old charges against him in Vermont in 1830 were revived. Yearnshaw spoke of "anathemas, excommunications, and slanders."

All this sheds new light on the beginnings of the Restoration Movement in Ontario. We now know more about how the Freewill Baptists helped Daniel Wiers during a period of transition, for Wiers told Marks that prior to meeting him he had not known of any others who shared his opposition to Calvinism. The Freewill Baptists also supplied Wiers with some of his best and earliest helpers.

Marks' evaluation of Wiers suggests that he was a man of considerably more talent than

we may have previously supposed and not nearly as disputatious as he seems in the Baptist church records. Marks described him as "a person of few words, unusual gravity, and considerable education and talent."

Yet to be determined is what happened to Wiers after he left Upper Canada in 1834. Colgate University records indicate that he attended the seminary in New York beginning in 1828, that he was a pastor, and that he died "long before 1870" (the year the university, then known as Madison, published a record of the school's first 50 years). Perhaps he died young. But the discovery of so much material previously unknown suggests that someone somewhere may yet answer this question, too.

-Edwin Broadus

Available:

Christie, Michael, Roland McCormick. *The Early Years of Barrington's Free Baptists* (2007). (Send order to Michael Christie, 152 Passage Road, Sheet Harbour, Nova Scotia B0J 3B0, \$24.00 plus postage \$3.00.)

This book examines the precursors to the Free Baptists in the Maritimes up to 1866. Among the eight of those identified are the Christian Churches of Elder Jacob Norton which will be of particular interest to students of Canadian Restoration history.

Mansfield, George. *Early Restoration Efforts in the Maritimes* (2007) (Send order to George Mansfield, C/O Grimsby Church of Christ, Box 181, Grimsby, ON L3M 4G3, \$10.00 plus postage and handling, \$2.50.)

This 33 page colour illustrated booklet is the result of an extended personal search by the author of his roots in the Maritimes.

DAVID MARK'S REPORT OF HIS VISIT
WITH DANIEL WIERS

Morning Star, August 25, 1830, Letter from David Marks, July 26, 1830.

"... Then with Br. Straight left Oxford to return to N.Y. At Clinton, eleven miles west of St. Catherines we called on Br. Daniel Wiers, a young man of respectability, who had been expelled from the C. Baptists for no other cause than embracing and preaching the sentiments of the FWB,

though he had never seen any of our denomination or read any of our writings. About two years since he embraced that sentiments that abstract from all the creeds, disciplines and articles formed by erring men, the Scriptures are sufficient to guide our faith and practice. From this conclusion, he sought the Bible, and soon renounced particular atonement, partial grace, universal decrees, final or certain perseverance, etc., etc. Yet at this time he knew not that any people on earth embraced in the general the same views as himself. After a plain, honest and public declaration and defense of what he thought to be Bible truth, had given dissatisfaction to the church of which he was a member and by whom he was licensed to preach, he designed giving himself to study at the Baptist Theological Seminary at Hamilton NY. From the hope that his location in that Seminary would reclaim him from his new theory, they renewed his license, commending him to that institution or the church in that place. After six months study at this place he returned to blast the hope of his brethren, for instead of being reclaimed to their tenets, he had become fairly established and boldly preached general atonement, free grace to all mankind, free agency etc., etc. A council was called, they decided he had given occasion of grief by preaching contrary to their articles etc. and that he must retract. Upon his answer that he was established and wished not to belong to a church that would be grieved by his preaching what he conscientiously believed to be the doctrine of the Bible, he was expelled. Br. Wiers is perhaps 26 or 27 years old, and has no family of his own, residing with his mother a widow, in Clinton, where he was born and brought up. He is a person of few words, unusual gravity, and considerable education and talent. We first heard of him when more than one hundred miles from his residence and in several places in the province were informed that the severity used in his sudden expulsion was designed to convict and reclaim him, and that the conductors believing it would have this effect, expected in a few days he would learn obedience by the things he would suffer, and they should have the privilege of receiving him back in their communion. But to their surprise as time passed on, his congregations did but increase, and he exhibited no inclination to apply again for membership. Therefore they

have had to settle upon this reflection, that they have with little certainty expelled not only the best scholar they have in the province of U. C. but a young man of gravity, candor, innocence and piety rarely equaled. Br. W. had never till now seen any of our preachers, yet he had seen one or two individuals since his expulsion who were Freewill Baptists, and understood their sentiments coincided with his own. We were affectionately received on Saturday June 26 and spent the Sabbath with him very agreeably. He designs attending the next session of our YM. We left Canada June 28th and the next day came to Elder R. Doan's in Royalton, where we parted with Br. Straight who was on his way to Batavia, intending there to devote his whole time to preaching."

(Copied by Edwin Broadus from a handwritten transcription made by Michael Christie.)

Announcement:

The CCCHS board is pleased to announce that David McWalter, Waterloo, Ontario, has agreed to volunteer his services as web-master for the society's website. David can be reached at dmcwalter@yahoo.ca.

RECENT ACQUISITIONS TO THE CCCHS COLLECTION

- *British Millennial Harbinger*, vols. 12-18 (1859-1865).
- *British Harbinger*, vols. 19-22 (1866-1869).
- *The Christian Examiner and Bible Advocate*, Vols. 1-2 (in one bound volume, 1852-1854).
- Alexander Haldane, *The Lives of Robert Haldane of Airthrey and of his Brother James Alexander Haldane* (1852).
- *The Christian Advocate*, vols. 8-11 (3rd series, 1866-1889).
- *Millennial Harbinger*, (original bound volumes), vols. 4 (1833), 4-5, 7-8 (3rd series, 1851-1852, 1854-1856) 6 (4th series, 1856), 4 (5th series, 1861).
- Moses E. Lard, *Lard's Quarterly*, vols. 1-5 (Old Paths Book Club edition, 1864-1868).
- Butchart, Reuben. *The Disciples of Christ in Canada Since 1830* (1949).

- Brown, John T. *Churches of Christ: In the United States, Australasia, England and Canada* (1904).
- Mansfield, George. *Early Restoration Efforts in the Maritimes* (2007)
- Michael Mazzalongo, *Quebec: A Brief History of the Church of Christ*.
- School notes, West Gore Bible & Literary College (63 pages, 1912-1914).
- Jack Mackey, "History of the Nine Mile River Church of Christ" (3 pages).
- 1913-14 "Announcement," Beamsville Bible School (20 pages).
- *50 Year History of the St. Thomas Church of Christ* (1879-1929).
- Ash, Joseph. *Reminiscences* (published in the *Christian Worker*, 1882-1883, republished in the *Gospel Herald*, 1987).
- "Minutes: Beamsville Baptist Church, 1807-1833).
- *Historical Sketch: Everton Church of Christ, 1861-1961 (Disciples)*.
- McFadden, Edgar. "The First Disciple of Christ in Toronto" (1983).
- Jackson, A. C. *Christian Union* ("An address delivered on the Occasion of the Annual Meeting of Churches of Christ of Ontario, assembled at Toronto, June 3rd, 1907").
- Fewster, Greg. "History of the London Church of Christ" (2008).
- Leblanc, Shawn. "Tracing the Beginning of Instrumental Worship in the Church in Ontario" (2008).
- Miscellaneous Deeds and Indentures re. church property in Beamsville (1891-1937, photocopied).

CCCHS PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

- Perry, Eugene C. *Periodical Publishing in the Restoration Movement in Canada from 1822* (2002) \$2.00
- Ellis, Geoffrey H. *The Restoration Churches in Toronto* (2004) \$5.00
- Ellis, Geoffrey H., ed. *Restoration in the Georgian Bay, 1853-1895: Items from the Periodicals* (2005)

\$6.00

- Ellis, Geoffrey H., ed. *Restoration in Hamilton, Ontario, 1821-2001* (2006)

\$8.00

- Perry, Myrna, et. al. *The Fenwick Church of Christ: Past to Present* (2007) \$5.00
- Perry, Myrna, et. al. *Churches of Christ in St. Catharines: From the Periodicals* (2007) \$12.00
- Broadus, Edwin. *Daniel Wiers in the Maelstrom of the Early Restoration Movement on the Niagara Frontier* (2007) \$4.00
- Ellis, Geoffrey H., *Restoration in the Niagara District & the Niagara Frontier: Excerpts from the Periodicals* (2007) \$5.00
- CDS (or Tapes*) (each) \$5.00
- □ *Pioneer Churches of the Georgian Bay* (2005) by Ron Knight
 - □ *Daniel Wiers in the Maelstrom of the Early Restoration Movement on the Niagara Frontier* (2007) by Edwin Broadus*
 - □ *The Fenwick Church of Christ... Past to Present* (2007) by Don Hipwell
 - □ *The Oldest Church of Christ in the British Isles* (2007) by Jerry Rushford*
 - □ *Restoration in the Maritimes (With Links to Ontario)* by George Mansfield*
 - □ *The Church in Welland* (2007) by Harold Bruggen*
 - □ *Christian Quarterly* (1916-1917) and the *Christian Monthly Review* (1919-1926, 1933). (Two CDs, \$20.00)

(Order: CCCHS, 120 Moccasin Dr., Waterloo ON N2L 4CS, or ccchs1@gmail.com or 519-885-3702.

Cost of postage additional. *Indicate if tapes are desired.)

2008 MEMBERSHIPS ARE NOW DUE

2008 CCCHS membership fees, covering Sept. 1, 2007 through Aug. 31, 2008 are now being received. Annual fees are \$25.00 (for both voting and associate memberships).

Direct your payment to treasurer, Eugene Perry, 4904 King St., Beamsville, ON L0R 1B6.

Would you like to become a member? Contact any member of the CCCHS board of directors for information.

Chairman:

Geoffrey H. Ellis
120 Moccasin Drive
Waterloo, Ontario
N2L 4C3
(519) 885-3702
ghellis@gmail.com

Vice-Chairman:

Ron Knight
516 Ridge Rd
Meaford, Ontario
N0H 1L9
(519) 538-3300
woodco@bmts.com

Secretary:

Donald Perry
4868 Thirty Rd.
Beamsville, Ontario
L0R 1B3
(905) 563-7312
dperry@becon.org

Financial Officer:

Eugene E. Perry
4904 King Street
Beamsville, Ontario
L0R 1B6
(905) 563-8377
eperry@bellnet.ca

Historian:

David Ellis
126 Trowbridge St. W.
Meaford, Ontario
N4L 1G3 (519) 538-2376
de.ellis@rogers.com

E-mail: ccchs1@gmail.com

Website: www.ccchs.ca