

EBENEZER, TORONTO GORE HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

8999 The Gore Rd., Brampton ON L6P 2P7

905-867-3101

www.oldebenezerchapel.com

old.ebenezer.chapel@gmail.com



On Sunday June 20th, 2018, about 65

people attended the Ebenezer, Toronto Gore Historical Foundation's celebration to commemorate the 160th year of the Ebenezer church building. There were historical articles to identify and to reminisce about the years the articles were in use. Most of us remembered the egg candler, wooden rolling pins, food weighing devices, recipe books published by various Women's Institutes in the area, icing sugar spreaders, mustache mugs, and many more antiques from days gone by.

key board. The Ebenezer Foundation President, Fred Julian, welcomed the "congregation", followed by greetings from Peel regional councillor, Gurpreet Dhillon as well Sonia Walters on behalf of Pastor Walters

Kirby read "The 160 years of History of Ebenezer Church" which included the singing of hymns, Will Your Anchor Hold, Come Let Us Sing Of A Wonderful Love, Joyfully, Joyfully, and All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name.



The afternoon began with the playing of familiar tunes taken from old Methodist and United Church hymn books played by Kirby Julian on his violin accompanied by his mother Jean Julian on the



The following is the first of two instalments of the 160 years of History of Ebenezer Church read on June 20th, 2018.

The History of Ebenezer Church **1858 to 2018**

This Ebenezer Primitive Methodist Church is one of the oldest buildings in Peel County. One hundred and sixty years ago, in 1858, this church was opened for the first time for Sunday services. For comparison of the age of Ebenezer Church, nine years later the Brampton court house and jail opened; ten years later, the first church service was held in Grace United Church in Brampton. Even the Ontario Legislature Buildings in Toronto are 40 years younger than Ebenezer Church. Incredibly, this building is still standing.

The sanctuary, at the official opening, looked much different than at the closing of church services in 1998, exactly 140 years later. In 1858, the choir sat on a raised platform in the back corner of the sanctuary. There was a middle aisle with the men sitting in the pews on the left and the women and children on the right. The pulpit was built high with steps leading up on both sides.

Opinions vary as to whether the first lighting in this church was by candles or coal oil lamps. The old, cast iron wood burning stoves were recognized as standard equipment for heating when this church was built.

In the absence of musical instruments, James Sleightholm Jr. led the singing at the church services. James Jr. lived with his uncle James Sleightholm Sr. who, with his wife Ann, deeded the property to build this church and land for the cemetery, for the cost of five shillings, basically a gift.

The bricks were kilned on the Sleightholm farm. As was done in those days, the members of the congregation with horses and wagons, brought the bricks to this location and helped to build the church structure.

In 1858, for the first time, the financial statements of Ebenezer Primitive Methodist Church were given in dollars and cents instead of pounds, shillings and pence!

“Community” and “good neighbours” were extremely important to everyone’s very existence. The story is recorded that one Sunday morning the congregation was very concerned about the absence of one of its members, a widow, who lived alone. Upon investigation it found Mrs. Sarah Allison actively engaged in scrubbing her kitchen floor. Living alone, she had miscalculated the days and thought it was Saturday.

In the same month as the church opening, the death and burial is recorded of William Foster, one of the earliest of Ebenezer’s pioneers. William was a very kind man and Ebenezer history records an interesting story about him; The Indigenous population was very numerous in the area, and one cold night when a severe storm was brewing, a Band asked permission to sleep in his barn. The women, however, were taken to the house by William, where, amid quilts and rugs, they slept comfortably on the floor with their feet towards the fire. The Band never forgot Williams Foster’s kindness and often brought him gifts of venison and other game.

In addition to the Sunday church services conducted by the circuit preachers of the day, there were many other means of worshipping. There were religious meetings at the close of the Sunday morning services; there were Sunday night and week-night prayer meetings; and every winter, revival meetings were held on a weekly basis.

In the summer, there were Sunday field meetings, where the congregation took their lunches with them so they might not miss any of the services. Such a far cry from today where our winter Sundays are often spent on the ski hill and our summer Sundays are spent at the cottage.

When the Circuit Preachers were travelling from church to church, they were required to visit at least fifteen families each week. The distance over the circuit being so long, the preachers often stayed overnight at one of the more distant farms. There is a written record that one preacher arriving late and, not wanting to disturb a family because they had all gone to bed, cautiously raised the window of the spare room and ask "Is anyone sleeping in my bed?"

The saddest and most heart-rending event to occur in the history of the Ebenezer community was the death by diphtheria in the spring of 1882 of the four children of Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Hewgill. Within one month Johnny, Mary, Fanny and Kitty, aged 14, 12, 9 and 6 years, passed away. Can you imagine losing four children from your family?

Cemetery

We could find just one note about the Ebenezer cemetery. In the Spring of 1929 a cemetery project that had been under discussion for many years finally culminated into action. The cemetery was cleared of all undesirable trees and unsightly growth. The grounds were levelled, a new fence put up, and a fund of over \$1,000 was subscribed by the relatives of those interred in the cemetery for perpetual care and upkeep.

To be continued in the next newsletter...

REGRETS

Sadly this summer, Peter Hyde, a long time member of the Ebenezer, Toronto Gore Historical Foundation, resigned from his Board of Directors position. Peter sold his house in Etobicoke and moved to a condo in Burlington. We wish Peter success and happiness in his new location.

Annual General Meeting

On Saturday March 10th, 2018 The E,TGHF Executive and members gathered for the Annual General Meeting. Correspondence was received from Joyce Sparks on behalf of the Hyde and Gardhouse family. Joyce thanked the Foundation for the honey locust tree planted, and the service conducted by Rev. Bill Sparling, in memory of their sister Judy Hyde. Before her death, Judy had been President, and sometimes Treasurer, for 8 years.

2017 Activities Report – President Fred Julian

- the Foundation participated in Brampton's Doors Open on September 30th and in "Highlights on Heritage" at Bramalea City Centre in February of 2017 and 2018.
- acknowledgment of hard work and extra efforts of the volunteers who keep the Foundation running through the year. Frances Johnston presented President Fred Julian with a hat and t-shirt to thank him for the work he does for the Foundation
- The Financial Report was given by Frances Johnston and was received and accepted. The Auditor, Frances Goodfellow was appointed to perform the audit review for another year.
- Board Directors Lynn Codd, David Fieldhouse, Anna Sheardown and Dianne Ray were re-elected for another three years.
- The cemetery report was approved. The cemetery is full and no new graves are available. Grass cutting is expensive. As an alternative, it was found that the Brampton Cemetery Works Department no longer cuts the grass in church cemeteries .
- Working on the Book Project, untitled so far but known as "200 years in The Gore", is still in progress.
- There was a suggestion that the pews in the sanctuary be replaced with chairs. There was a discussion resulting in the fear of the possibility that our Heritage Designation would be taken away.
- Frances Johnston conducted the necessary Fire Drill required by the Town of Brampton Fire Department. This Drill is conducted so that our building insurance is viable.

The Guest Speaker was Heather Broadbent who gave an interesting power point presentation about the 200 years of the County of Peel.

Website Update

ETGHF received a grant from the Federal Government which allowed the foundation to hire a summer student to work on our website and conduct some research. The website will be ready for your viewing very soon. On the right is a picture of Aarani, our summer student with Frances Johnston.

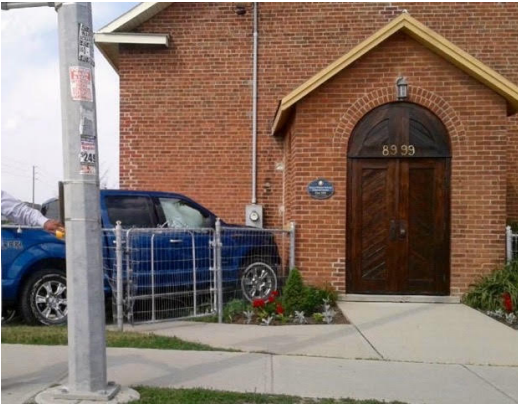


Oh No, Not Again!

Once again the church fence was struck by a vehicle travelling on the Gore Road. Only this time the truck continued on through the fence and

coming to rest beside the church. Luckily there was no damage to the church itself, just the fence.

Thanks Cecil and Dianne for a temporary repair of the fence.



Bruce and Isabel Risebrough's Family – 100 Years Belonging to the Holstein Association

On Saturday April 13, 2018 at the *Annual Meeting of the Holstein Association*” in Quebec City, the Risebrough Family of “Donavon Holsteins” of Mount Albert, Ontario were one of three families recognized with the “Centuries of Holsteins Award.”

The first membership of the Holstein Association was taken out in 1918 by I.A. Risebrough. He maintained this membership until 1933. In 1930 E.M Risebrough took out a membership which ran until 1969. The current membership was taken out in 1957 by Bruce Risebrough thus giving the Risebrough Family continuous membership since 1918. Congratulations to Isabel, Bruce and Family. Isabel is a director of our Ebenezer Foundation.

-----++-----