



EBENEZER, TORONTO GORE HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

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Spring 2019 newsletter

Ebenezer, Toronto Gore Historical Foundation
8999 The Gore Road
Brampton, Ontario, L6P 2P7

Annual General Meeting
March 9, 2019
10:00 a.m.

Guest Speaker: David Cook
“The Black Friday, Avro Arrow”

Cost is \$10 for non members; free for members
2019 memberships are due. Family membership \$20

Refreshments to follow – everyone welcome
Extra parking in the Plaza to the east of the Chapel

Check it out....

Fieldholme Farm, owned by Bryan and Jennifer Fieldhouse, is the location of the latest commercial made for the Dairy Farmers of Ontario. The commercial was filmed in December and is being shown on television now.

Highlights on Heritage, February 9th 2019

Once again, Ebenezer, Toronto Gore Historical Foundation will have a booth at the annual *Highlights on Heritage Fair* at Bramalea City Centre in the Bay Court area. Please come and view our display. Thank you to Sandra Cation for organizing the display this year.

The new *Ebenezer, Toronto Gore Historical Foundation* web site is up and running. Please log on to oldebenezerchapel.com. There are stories and photos about our rural past and also information about booking the chapel facilities for events; weddings, family reunions, business functions, community groups and meetings. The rooms are rented out at reasonable rates. Please email us at oldebenezerchapel@gmail.com or phone, 905 867-3101 for a booking.

This is the second installment of *The History of Ebenezer Chapel* which was read at the 160th Anniversary of the chapel on June 10th, 2018. The first part of this story was printed in our Fall newsletter.

Sunday School

There was no Sunday School at Ebenezer after the church opened in 1858 because the children attended the Primitive Methodist Church Sunday School in Claireville on Sunday afternoons. It was not until seven years later, in 1865 that a Sunday School was established at Ebenezer.

At one time, the children were required to memorize and recite an unlimited number of Bible verses each Sabbath. Prizes were given based on attendance and the number of verses recited. In addition to studying the Bible, the children were taught the evils of liquor!

In the early years, an important feature of the Sunday School was the library with about 150 titles which were circulated widely throughout the community among the children and teachers.

Of special note – 125 years later, in 1990, classes were being held in a construction trailer placed on the lawn at the north side of the church in order to hold Sunday School lessons while the church service was in progress.

The Sunday School Anniversary services were held on the first Sunday in June, followed by a tea-party and concert. The church ladies all met at one home to do the baking. The proverb “Too many cooks spoil the broth” was proven wrong when the tea-party gained the reputation for miles around of being a mouth-watering affair. This popular tea was served for many years in the horse and buggy shed which is where our chapel parking lot is today.

Young People’s Union at Ebenezer Church

The Young People’s Union began at Ebenezer in 1935 and ran for about 40 years. The meetings were usually held in homes, beginning in October and continuing through April. In 1953, the “Ebenezer Young People,” with the help of the Anglican youth in Castlemore, won “The Cup,” emblematic of supremacy in the flourishing softball league at the time. Other competitors for The Cup were the Young People’s Unions from Thistletown, Woodbridge, Ella, Downsview and Sharon United Churches. Money raised by the Young People of Ebenezer was given to the “Save the Children” and other worthy causes. Their motto, “Look Up – Lift Up” was the inspiration of the life work of many of the youth of Ebenezer Church.

The Women’s Groups

Over the years, the women of the church have gathered under various names. In 1926 they were called “Ladies Aid.” A membership fee of twenty-five cents was levied and a collection of 10 cents per meeting was the rule. Later, under the name of the “The Women’s Association” (W.A.) they devised many ways to raise money. They catered weddings, hosted crokinole parties, pancake socials, and wiener and corn roasts. They also had booths at farm sales, ploughing matches and fairs. Bake sales, talent tables and the annual Easter Bazaar in Claireville Community Hall were also money-raising projects for the church.

But the favourite of all was quilting. While they plied their needles, their tongues were being equally busy. In 1953, the WA reported 70 quilts and 4 cot quilts had been hand quilted by the group.

In the war years, the WA packed ditty bags for the Navy and parcels for the church boys overseas. When the war was over, the WA made donations to the Food for Britain Fund, the British Mine Sweepers Auxiliary, British War Victim's Fund, Manitoba Flood Relief fund, the Red Cross and the Canadian Cancer fund.

Some highlights of the successes of the Women's Association are:

- In 1928 the Ladies' Aid assisted in paying the cost of the church renovation, installing electric lights and buying a new organ. They also paid the church hydro bills and parsonage telephone bills.
- As well, in 1928 they provided a new Communion Set for church services.
- In February of 1930 they packed and forwarded a bale of clothing to be distributed among three needy families in the North. In the spring of that year they paid for the planting of trees and shrubs to beautify the church grounds, AND presented the Cemetery Committee with the handsome sum of \$200.00 towards the purchase of a new fence.
- In 1931, they assumed Ebenezer's share of the Thistle town Parsonage debt.
- In 1962, the name of Women's Association" was changed to the "United Church Women" and is the name used today in active churches.

The Ebenezer church's Fall Turkey Suppers, served in the horse and buggy shed, were famous all over Peel and York counties. Everyone in the congregation pitched in – the men were put to work carving the turkeys and mashing the potatoes and turnips in the huge cooking containers. While the suppers were in progress, there was entertainment in the church sanctuary for the people waiting to enjoy the food.

A Few More Stories of the Life of Ebenezer Church Need to be Highlighted:

1. On February 5th, 1882, just 24 years after the grand opening, extensive remodelling and redecorating took place. This time the pews were moved around and there were two aisles, dividing the seats into three rows across the sanctuary, the longer seats in the middle being divided by a partition. However, at this time the choir was not moved and occupied a raised semi-circular space at the back of the sanctuary. The pulpit was brought down to a raised platform at the front of the sanctuary. New lamps and chandeliers were installed at a cost of \$345. After much discussion regarding rental of the pews, the pros who favoured it as a means of revenue for the church won the argument. The cons opposed it on the grounds that it would repel outsiders from attending.
2. In 1882, during the renovation, an organ was purchased by the Ladies Aid.
3. In 1894, the church was again re-decorated. At this time the choir accommodation very wisely was moved from the back to the front of the church on a raised platform beside the pulpit and that is the way it remained until the closing of the church on Sunday, June 7th 1998, one hundred

and four years later. On that day a service was held to celebrate the accomplishments and officially mark the closing of this Ebenezer Church after a long and faithful ministry.

A New Beginning

The story does not end there. In the year 2000, Peter Peachey was driving down the Gore Road and noticed that Ebenezer United Church was standing in disrepair. He approached Don Fieldhouse and Frances Johnston, trustees of the former church, to voice his concern.

An Open House was held on June 29, 2001 to determine if there was sufficient interest in preserving the church. It was decided that the church would be renovated and be open to the community for a reasonable rental fee. A basement would be built under the church structure to accommodate modern heating and air conditioning, washroom facilities, a kitchen and usable meeting space.

The official opening took place on June 1st, 2008. The sanctuary was full to capacity with former members, friends, and other interested people coming from all across Canada to celebrate the reopening of Ebenezer Church.

Since then, the chapel has been officially owned and operated by "Ebenezer, Toronto Gore Historical Foundation" complete with a full slate of Officers and Directors and an official Charity Number.

Written by Ann (Fieldhouse) Price
For the 160th Anniversary Celebration on June 10th 2018

Ebenezer, Toronto Gore Historical Foundation

Membership New/Renewal Application

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Prov. _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Membership Fee of \$20 for one calendar year

Additional donation to the Foundation of \$ _____

Please remove my name from the mailing list _____

A tax receipt will be issued for all donations. Charitable donations number 87678 4315 RR001

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Newsletter issuers:

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