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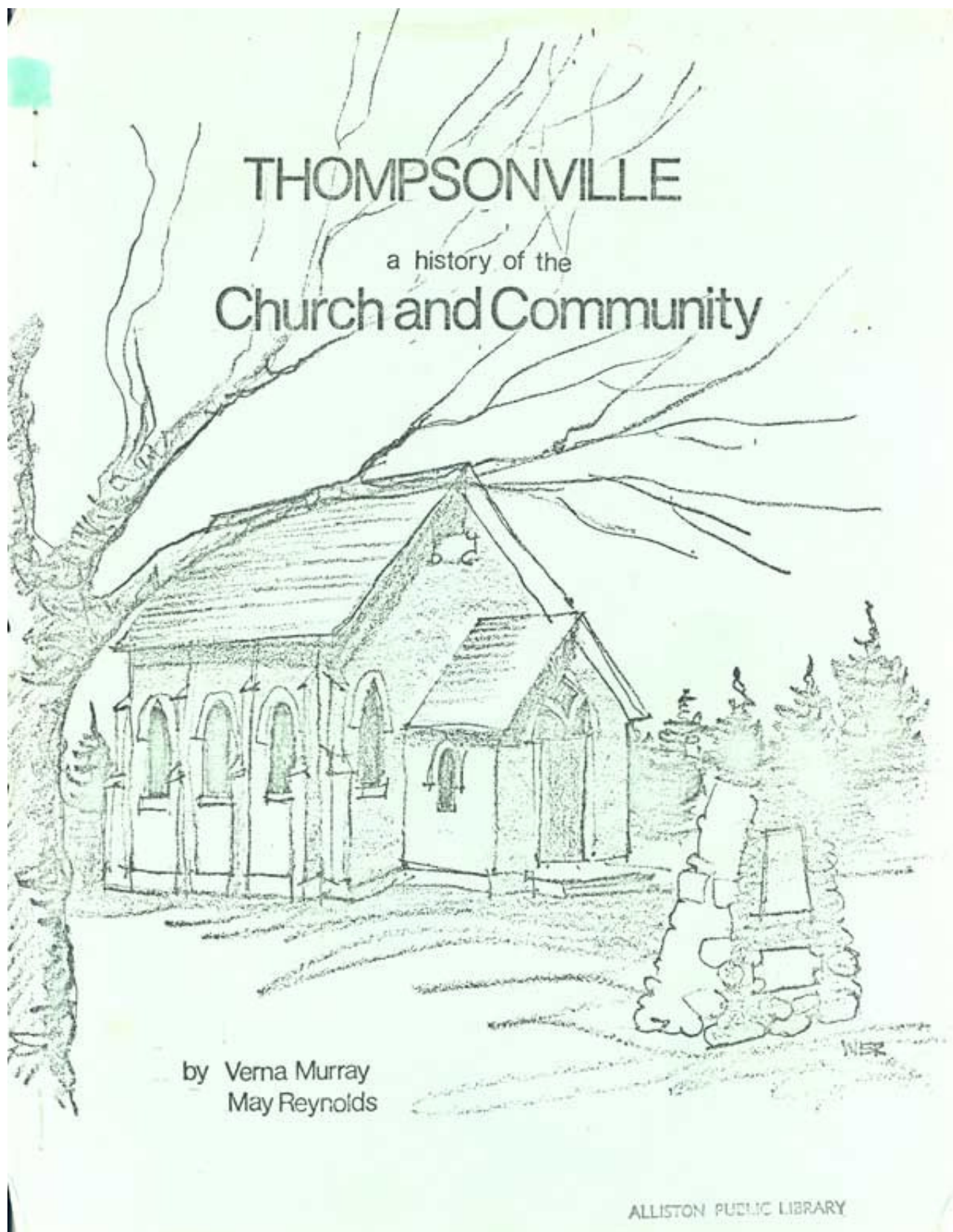
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THOMPSONVILLE

a history of the

Church and Community



by Verna Murray
May Reynolds

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FOREWORD

By Rev. John F. Hoekstra, Minister Trinity United Church Beeton, Ontario.

Little did I expect, that the proposal to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the building of the church in Thompsonville would create so much interest in so many quarters. It all started so innocently simple. During a visit with Mrs. Ed Murray in 1979, not long after I arrived on the Beeton Charge, the conversation turned to Thompsonville and the church, of which Mrs. Murray had been such an active part. She remarked that it was a pity that not even the datestone, which mentioned the year 1880, had been saved when the church was closed and sold. On my way home, passing the spot where that church once stood, it occurred to me, that 1980 would be the 100th anniversary year. My proposal to mark the occasion and to see whether the datestone could still be located, was enthusiastically endorsed by the Churchboard and the committee, which was appointed, took it from there. It was a great pleasure and privilege to serve that committee as chairman and to be a part of the work and the deliberations in preparing for the day in which we would be able to unveil the cairn and plaque. The committee members were able to bring back to life, so to speak, a church community, of which they all had been an integral part and both the cairn with the plaque and the following pages stand as a monument to the pioneers of the village of Thompsonville and those who served that community through the Church of Jesus Christ, from its very first beginning until the closing date. And we rejoice in the knowledge that although the church building does no longer exist we nevertheless may know that the preaching of God's Word and the expression of God's love through the Church in Thompsonville has not been in vain. To God is the glory!

SOURCES

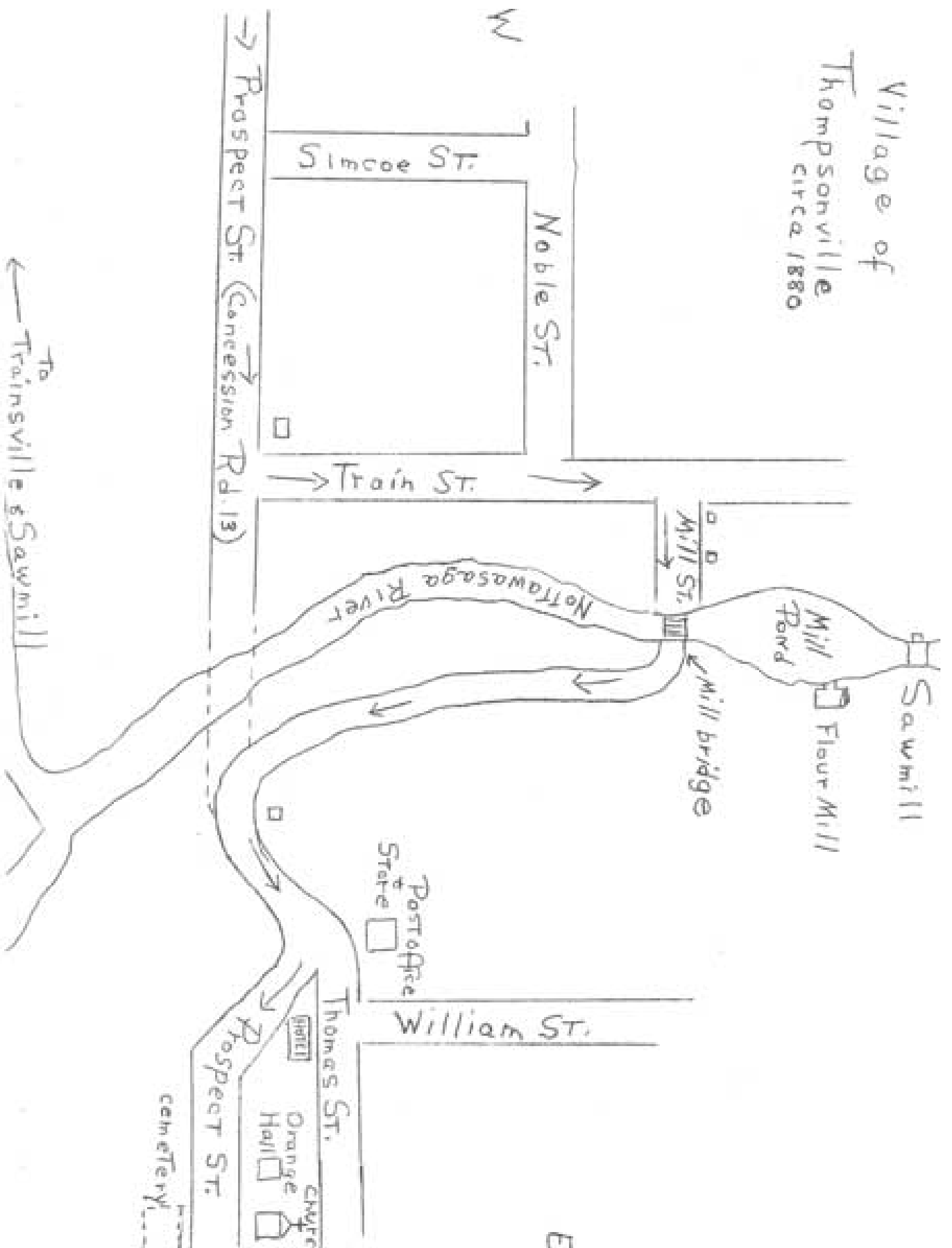
Simcoe County Land Record Office; 1881 Simcoe County Atlas; A history of Simcoe County, by Andrew Hunter; The Visible Past, by Adelaide Leitch; The United Church Archives; The Orange Lodge 676; Minutes of the Quarterly Official Board of West Essa Circuit; The Canada Post Office; reports in the Alliston Herald, Beeton World and Christian Guardian; Minutes of 1880 Building Committee and other record books of the church and organizations.

Special thanks to Mrs. Ethel Hussey, who at 98 years of age, kindly shared with us memories of the community in which she grew up.

Cover designed by: Walter E. Reynolds, M.L.A.

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Village of
Thompsonville
circa 1880



THOMPSONVILLE

A History of The Church And The Community
by Verna Murray and May Reynolds

The early settlers in the northern part of Tecumseth Township, which had been surveyed in 1820, located first on the ridge of high land south of Sharp's Hill. By 1850 most of the lots were occupied and the settlers were working to build their homes and clear the land. The lower areas were not taken up for another fifteen to twenty-five years.

One of the first of these settlers was John Reynolds Sr., who had bought his land in 1824 while still in Ireland. He made his way, taking several years on route and arrived with his family at his location on lot 14, concession 13, about 1839 or 1840.

Thomas Thompson and his family came from Ireland to settle on lot 9, concession 13 of Tecumseth about 1850. He and his sons James and Martin built a dam on the Nottawasaga River which provided power for a saw mill, a grist and flour mill and a woollen mill to serve the settlers in the area. He envisioned a prosperous village growing up around his mills. He had a survey made of the southeast corner of his land and a plan of the village of Thompsonville, consisting of 26 building lots registered in Barris in July, 1856.

John Schmietendorf built a house and store combined, at the corner of William and Thomas Streets, and this general store served the community. In it the first post office was opened in April, 1865 with John Schmietendorf as postmaster. He continued in this position until his death, when his wife was appointed postmistress until the post office closed in 1914. In the early years the mail came by courier from the railway station at Gilford, by way of Cookstown and Clover Hill. After the Grand Trunk Railway from Boston to Collingwood was built in 1877, the mail was picked up at the Thompsonville station which was located a short distance, west of the village. After the post office closed the train did not make regular stops and Thompsonville became a flag station. When the passenger trains were discontinued the station was torn down in 1957.

William Train came to Tecumseth Township in 1868 where he established a lumbering business and mills on the north half of lot 7, concession 12, on the river. A road was built from the 12th concession north to the saw mill, over which logs from the surrounding bush were hauled. He owned 1150 acres, from which he cut the logs and then sold the land to the settlers who cleared it for farms. He built a group of small houses for his workmen near the mill. This settlement became known as Trainsville. There was a road which curved to the south from the 13th concession through Trainsville and along the base of the hill to Thompsonville. When the Grand Trunk Railway was built in 1877 a siding was built for the use of the mill. The train stop was called Trainsville and there was a wooden platform for the convenience of passengers getting on and off the train. Thompsonville station was not built until Trainsville disappeared.

William Train and George Agar bought the Thompson Mills at Thompsonville, then to increase the size of the village, William Train had a survey made on the west side of the Nottawasaga River in 1878, consisting of 42 lots. The streets were named Mill, Train, Noble, Simcoe and Prospect (which was the 13th concession). There was no township bridge on concession 13 over the river and all traffic from the west had to go north on Train Street, east on Mill Street, over the bridge at the dam, and then either north to the mill or south to the 13th concession.

The village of Thompsonville grew, reaching its peak of prosperity between the years 1880-1900. Men skilled in various trades established their places of business in Thompsonville. It is said that there were about 30 altogether, even including a watchmaker. We have some information about a few of them.

The dam at the bridge supplied power for the industries. A second dam to the north ran the saw mill and the flour mill. William Long was an early miller in Thompsonville. He left his trade to settle on the north half of lot 11 concession 11. Another early miller was Alexander Grant who bought a lot and built his house on Prospect Street west. Margaret Grant married William Banting, and they became the parents of Sir Frederick Banting, who was born shortly after the family moved to their farm in Essa. Mr. Barclay was a later miller. After the mill burned, he rebuilt and carried on the business until the mill burned again. Then he bought some of the houses in the village and moved them to Boston.

George Stephenson had a blacksmith shop just west of Schmiestendorf's store. It was a solidly built frame building with stalls to tie up six horses, and a loft above. It was later bought by Thomas Thompson and moved to his farm. Anson Lee, and later Alfred Maynard, had a blacksmith shop which was located on the north side of Prospect Street just a short distance west of Train Street. They, with their men, had difficulty keeping up with their work.

James Aiken operated a foundry west of the dam, where they made iron kettles, parts for machinery and ornamental fences. An unfortunate accident cost Mr. Aiken a leg. Richard Rabjohn was also connected with the foundry.

Thomas Cooper had a tailor shop at the corner of Train Street and Mill Street, where he made both ladies' and mens' clothes.

Also on Train Street lived Frank Budreau, the copper, who made such articles as barrels, wooden buckets and churns.

Thomas Sugget kept the hotel south of Schmiestendorf's store (now the home of Art Irvin) and did much of the teaming from Thompsonville to Bradford.

Andrew Noble had a sash and door factory on the west side of the river, which was "a hive of industry". The Thompsonville fanning mill and cutting box were well known in the area.

Charles Wren lived on Bathurst Street in Toronto. He grew tired of city life and moved to Thompsonville, where he continued as a shoemaker, on Prospect Street west. His son Chris was a trained soloist popular in this area.

James Nesbitt, the local thresher, brought in the first steam engine. One November in the late 1890's the Orange Lodge was having a fowl supper. That day, the Nesbitt threshing machine broke through the bridge at the dam. The horses and buggies coming to the supper had no way to cross the river. They found a shallow place where they were able to drive through the water and continue up to the Orange Hall. The bridge was not repaired and the township had to build a new bridge over the river on the 13th concession. This bridge was built by Ben Dorsey.

Primitive Methodist Church

There had been a Primitive Methodist Church west of Thompsonville on the south side of the road near sideroad 5. In 1882 it merged with the Wesleyan Methodist Church at Thompsonville. The former church was moved east with the intention of taking it around by the bridge to the east side of the river. When they found this to be impractical, they left it on the south side just west of the river. It was used as a residence for years. The old wooden collection boxes with 3 ft. long handles came from this church and have been used on special occasions since.

The Orange Lodge

The Thompsonville Orange Lodge number 676, received its warrant in 1875, being issued in the name of Anson Lee. It was a frame building which later was bricked as it is today. In 1882 there were 42 members with Nat Kirby being the Master.

Thompsonville was an industrious centre but people took time for pleasure. It was noted for its ball team, which seldom lost a game as long as the two Rabjohn boys played as pitcher and catcher.

When the forest covering the district was reduced to timber, William Train sold his saw mill to Joseph Tuer and moved his lumbering business to Meaford and later to Burk's Falls. The Tuers continued to operate the saw mill until it burned about 1888.

Industries and business moved to larger centers. Houses were torn down or moved and the post office closed when rural delivery began in 1914. All that remained was the Church, the Orange Hall and a few houses.

The Early Church

The first record which we have of any regular service of worship in this area is found in a report of 1855 made by Rev. J. Langtry, who was appointed to the Cookstown and Nottawasaga (Anglican) district. "Mr. Banting's House - eight miles from Cookstown in the township of Tecumseth. Here the congregation has almost doubled in the past year". This refers to the house of John Banting Sr. on lot 11, concession 12, who had settled there in 1850. The Bantings were Anglican but when the local Methodist Church was built, they supported it.

John Agnew settled on lot 11, Concession 13, in 1849. His second wife, being a very religious woman influenced her husband to give land so that a Wesleyan Methodist Church could be built. Between 1855 and 1860 a log church was built, facing west at the jog on the 10th side-road between the 13th and 14th concession lines. This was known as Agnew's church. Thompson's branch was first listed on the Cookstown circuit in 1858-1859. In 1860 it was renamed Agnew's a designation retained until Thompsonville Church was built.

In 1863 the Cookstown circuit included Cookstown, Thornton, Hindle's, North Essa, West Essa, Cedar Grove, Agnew's and Alliston. There were two senior ministers and seven lay preachers, the senior ones being Rev. Shepley and Rev. Cold. These ministers alternated from place to place according to a pre-arranged "Sabbath Plan". In 1865 the two ministers stationed at Cookstown were Rev. Matthew Swan and Rev. Peter Addison. The latter ministered to West Essa, Graham's, Agnew's and Sand Hook as well as Alliston.

The West Essa circuit was formed in 1879 with three charges - Graham's, West Essa and Agnew's. The parsonage was at West Essa until that church closed when it was moved to the foot of the 3rd line of Essa township. When Elmgrove church was built in 1884 it was added to the West Essa circuit. Graham's closed first, Everett taking its place. West Essa church closed in 1889, leaving Everett, Elmgrove and Thompsonville on the circuit, until the circuit discontinued in 1919. In 1918 Thompsonville was transferred to the Breton circuit.

Rev. J.W. Stewart who was the minister when it was decided to close the Agnew church and build a new church, was guest speaker at the 50th anniversary of Thompsonville church in 1930. When asked to tell something about the old church, he said "Agnew's church stood at the jog in the road about three-quarters of a mile from the present church. Fifty-one years ago (1879) I was assigned to the circuit which included Agnew's appointment. The old church was in a bad state of repair, and something had to be done". After much discussion at a meeting called by Rev. Stewart it was moved that the church be closed and a new church be built.

At the meeting of the Quarterly Official Board of the West Essa Circuit, Nov. 8, 1879 a committee was appointed for the building of Thompsonville church, who were as follows: Thompson Fisher, Andrew

Noble, John Schmiestendorf, James Banting, William Noble, John Reynolds, and William Banting. This committee met and decided to buy a lot at Thompsonville for the new church. A site on the south east corner of lot 9 was bought from William Train for \$1.00.

A committee including James Banting, James Hipwell and Andrew Noble went over to West Gwillimbury to look at the Sutherland church, which had just been completed. The result of their visit was that the West Gwillimbury church was duplicated at Thompsonville.

Building the Church

From the minutes of the first meeting of the Thompsonville Building Committee:

Thompsonville, Nov. 18, 1879.

The Committee of the church met, those present being - Rev. J.W. Stewart, Andrew Noble, John Schmiestendorf, John Reynolds Jr., James Banting. The meeting was opened in due form, Mr. Stewart in the chair. James Banting was appointed secretary and treasurer. Moved by John Schmiestendorf and seconded by Andrew Noble that the committee purchase stone, sand, lime, brick, and all timber, such as joists, rafters, shingles and the contractor furnish the balance. Moved by Andrew Noble and seconded by John Reynolds that Thompson Fisher, John Schmiestendorf, Andrew Noble and James Banting be a committee to get plans and specifications and to ascertain all the information possible to the cost of building. Moved by John Reynolds, seconded by Andrew Noble that Thompson Fisher, John Reynolds and James Banting be a committee to ascertain how to raise money for the purpose of building.

In subsequent meetings of the committee on Dec. 9, 1879, Jan. 13, 1880, March 22, 1880 and November 1880 the following decisions were made:

- that a church be built 42 ft. by 30 ft., with porch 10 ft. by 12 ft., the walls of church to be 9", strapped on bond timber and lathed walls to 13 ft. high under plate.
- that the windows and all the outside woodwork be painted with the best material, all three coat, all white and all the inside woodwork except the door, pulpit and altar rail to be stained and two coated varnished, doors and pulpit and altar to be painted and grained as the committee requires.
- that the lumber used in the floor to be good second class quality, to be five or six inches in width and all finishing lumber to be good and sound, free from shake and black knots.

- that 50 percent of the work be paid as the work proceeds,
- work to be finished by the first of June and the brickwork to be completed by the first of July, 1880.
- that the plaster be three coat work plain hard finish.
- that the windows be glass such as in Sutherland's church and the six side windows to box frame and upper half weighted.
- that we accept the tender of Messrs. Packham and Noble - that they complete the church for \$1,500. with all the material that is fit for use in the building of the church to be used from the old church.
- that they get permission from the Trustees to move the old church and sheds.
- Fred Schmiestendorf's tender of \$17 a year and one dollar a week for special services was accepted for keeping the church. He was also to supply oil for the lamps at current prices.

First Subscription List

contained the following names --

William Train	David Sheldon
James Banting	Mrs. Grant
James Hipwell	John Wallace
John Thompson Fisher	Francis Sudreau
Samuel Agnew	Edward Robson
John Reynolds	Mrs. Thompson
Manson Courtney	Joseph Murray
Andrew Noble	James Thompson
Robert English	Thompson C. Fisher
Thomas Sugget	James Wathley
Mrs. Mary Lee	Nathaniel Kirby
Alfred Maynard	Mrs. English and William
Thomas Cooper	Samuel Henry
Thomas Reynolds	William Long
Henry Phillips	John McCormack
Timothy Nichol	William Noble
Mrs. Maynard	John Schmiestendorf
H.J. Baker	D.A. Jones
D. Whiteside	William Banting

These people promised varying amounts from \$100 down. A second subscription list included additional names of people in the immediate area as well as the names of a great many people from neighbouring Methodist churches, as West Essa, Graham's, Cedar Grove, and Alliston. Some of these people were as generous in their support of the new church as our local people were.

The promised contributions from the two subscription lists plus the "proceeds from the church opening and tea money and social" \$154.50 and proceeds of old church \$27.00 amounted to a total of \$1,930.00.

The men of the neighbourhood came with teams and wagons to haul the materials for the new church. Work progressed well and the building was finished as the contract called.

The date stone which was built into the brick wall above the entrance has the inscription "Canada Methodist Church erected A.D. 1880".

The Church Opening

The Christian Guardian of October 10, 1880 reports the following: "The new Methodist Church, Thompsonville was dedicated to the worship of God on Sabbath the 10th ult (October) - The Alliston Choir did excellent service - The building is of brick, 30 x 42, with excellent basement - The entire cost, including 112 feet of shed, is about \$2,000. which is all provided for."

The guest preacher was Rev. E. Howland of Aurora.

First Trustees Board 1880 -

James Banting	John Schmietendorf
John Reynolds	Andrew Noble
James Hipwell	William T. Banting

The records show only that there was a social and tea in connection with the opening.

In following years the Anniversary services were held on the 2nd Sunday of October. They held three services on anniversary Sunday for many years.

The church had two aisles, with long centre pews and two shorter side pews extending to the walls. It was heated by two extra large box stoves set on brick platforms in the basement near the south end. Stovepipes went straight up into the church and ran the length of the building to the chimneys in the north end. Several registers in the aisles allowed heat to rise from the basement. There were bracket lamps on the walls to provide light for evening services. Years later these were replaced by Coleman lights hung above each aisle.

The choir at first sat in the northeast corner of the church. After some years a platform for the choir was built in the middle of the north wall. A solid railing was added to enclose the choir area behind the pulpit. At the front door there were wooden steps and a wooden walk to the stepping blocks at the driveway on either side, from which the passengers stepped into the buggies and democrats. These were later replaced by concrete.

Church Shed

The church shed was built along the northern boundry of the church lot. The Orange Lodge sheds and church sheds formed an L-shaped shelter for the use of both. In 1911 lumber was purchased for a box stall for sheltering the minister's horse in the east end of the church shed.

Thompsonville Cemetery

A small plot of land was obtained across the road from the church. Most of the burials took place between 1880 and 1919. It is possible the cast iron fence around one plot in the centre was made in the Thompsonville foundry. Some of the early church members were buried in this cemetery but many had plots in the Alliston cemetery.

The Little Church

In the 1881 Simcoe County Atlas, the map shows a Methodist church located on the north half of lot 6, Concession 10, Tecumseth. It was known as "The Little Church", although we believe it was the Sand Hook church mentioned in the Cookstown circuit of 1863. The minister went from Thompsonville to the little church, the two services being held in the afternoon. For some time before this church was closed permanently, no regular services were held, but there were prayer meetings and visiting evangelists. Some of the families from this church transferred to Thompsonville.

From Old Records

In 1879 the members, adherents and their families numbered - West Essa 280, Agnew's 120, Graham's 100.

On October 23, 1880 Thompsonville church contributed to Missions and the superannuation fund.

August 3, 1891 --- that the minister's salary be \$800., and the moving expenses of \$5.75 and incidentals of \$1.25 be paid by the three churches of the West Essa circuit.

1907 - Mrs. Bray was paid \$30. yearly for caretaking.

1910 - Hardwood was bought for \$3.00 a cord for the church.

1911 - Paid J.R. Hipwell for hymn books - 7 "Voices of Praise" \$2.80.

1911 - 5 gals. coal oil \$1.00.

- References were made to special temperance meetings and Sunday services.

War Memorial

A plaque dedicated to the memory of Pte. Norman S. Henry aged 32 years, Sept. 2, 1918, son of Mrs. S. Henry, and Pte. E.R. Hames, aged 26 years, died Aug. 18, 1917 from wounds received at Hill 70, son of Rev. A.B. Hames. This was placed on the front wall of the church and is now in the Orange Hall.

Church Union

In 1925 the Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational churches united to form The United Church of Canada. Thompsonville Methodist Church joined the Union.

Special Anniversaries

50th Anniversary - Golden Jubilee - Oct. 12, 1930.

Rev. G.H. Snayd was pastor, services at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. From Alliston Herald - "Services at Thompsonville Church Sunday were unique. Rev. J. Wallace Stewart, Pastor of Fifty Years Ago preaches sermon, and Thos. Riley, Chorister of Half a Century Agone, is soloist - many former members of church present. At the opening in October 1880, Rev. J. Wallace Stewart was pastor. It was a day of triumph on Sunday when after the lapse of fifty years Rev. J. Wallace Stewart was the preacher at the Jubilee anniversary". The church was packed to capacity. The outside congregation grew - quite as many people as were in the buildings.

The Ladies Aid minute books record a supper was served in the basement following the afternoon service. Each family was asked to bring: potato salad, cabbage or beet salad, pressed meat to serve 10 persons, jello and pickles, 3 cakes, 2 doz. tarts, 2 loaves bread, 1 lb. butter, small cakes, 1 qt. cream and milk mixed, and fancy dishes! Bread, butter and salmon were to be bought extra, also 200 serviettes.

60th Anniversary - Diamond Jubilee

October 13, 1940 at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. S.T. The pastor was Rev. F.A. Bunt. Printed invitations were sent to former members and friends. The guest minister was Rev. J.A. Wilson of Stoney Creek (a former teacher at Maple Hill School). Special music was supplied by Helen Benting, (of Beeton), Earl McKnight, Jack Blackmore and Marion Atkins. Mrs. Milton Reynolds was organist. The ladies of the church served lunch between services.

Session 1940 - A. Reynolds, C. Brett, R. Long.

Board of Stewards 1940 - A.W. Runnalls, Secretary, R. Long, Treasurer, A.E. Agnew, W.D. Hawkins, W. Wright, J. Kirby, E. Murray, D. H. McKnight, K. Carr, W. Thompson and R. English.

A Fowl Supper was held on Friday, October 18th.

75th Anniversary

October 16, 1955

The pastor was Rev. G.W. Gardiner. Services were at 2:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Special speaker was Rev. F.A. Bunt of Mimico, a former pastor who "ably delivered appropriate inspirational messages at both services". Music was 'rendered' by the Holland Landing Ladies Choir.

Quote from Alliston Herald - "Although it rained heavily all day, the congregation filled the church and almost filled the basement. Following the afternoon service, the ladies of the church held a reception for the large number of visitors and former church

members in attendance. They served a bountiful, attractive full course dinner on 3 long rows of tables in the Orange Hall and over 3 complete sittings were required to accommodate the crowd". John and Walter Kirby were the only ones present who had also been present at the opening of the church.

Weddings

It is interesting to note that no weddings were held in the church for nearly 50 years. Margaret Agnew, the first bride, was presented by the board with a Bible commemorating the occasion. The only other wedding was that of Lorna McKnight.

Presentation

In memory of Thomas Irvin a pulpit Bible was presented by Mrs. Irvin and the family in 1947. This gift was greatly appreciated as the original Bible was badly worn.

Choir

There were always enough people interested in the choir who willingly gave of their talents to provide music for the church services.

Some of the organists were: Mrs. Kinler, Eunie Thompson, Mrs. Milton Reynolds, Basil Thompson, Margaret Agnew, Elva Kirby, Mrs. Arthur Runnalls, Joan Carr.

The Old Pulpit

The small pedestal type pulpit used at the dedication service came from the first Thompsonville church.

Sunday School

The Sunday School was an important part of the Thompsonville Church. James Banting was Superintendent for many years, followed by W.G. Kinler, John Speck, John McWaters, Reaford Long, Ed Agnew, George Whitehead, Mrs. A. Runnalls and Marjorie Carr. Mrs. Schmiotendorf taught the Bible Class for 28 years. Mrs. Speck also taught the class for many years. James Hipwell was noted for his leadership of the young people. Mrs. Ed Agnew had a class of young men, who held an annual pancake supper.

Donations were sent to the Upper Canada Bible Society.

In 1915 the Sunday School gave \$10.00 to the Red Cross.

In 1917 and in 1920, \$20.27 and \$10.56 were sent to the Armenian Relief Fund.

In 1920, a contribution was given towards the War Memorial plaque which was placed in the Sunday School in Memory of Pte. Norman S. Henry and is now in the Orange Hall.

Supplies for the Sunday School were purchased from David Cook Co. and Wm. Briggs in the early years and in later years from the United Church Publishing House. Programs were bought for Mother's Day and Rally Day. Christmas Concerts were held each year in which the children took part and bags of candy and oranges were distributed. A Cradle Roll record was kept and certificates of membership given to the new babies.

At one time, the Sunday School held their yearly picnic in Thompson's bush. High swings in the elm trees were very popular. Some of the young men made ice cream in two large hand-turned ice cream freezers. A booth was built, where treats were sold - ice cream cones, gum and candy and sometimes they had a stalk of bananas. After a ball game, everyone sat down at long tables for the picnic supper, the proceeds going towards the purchase of Sunday School supplies. In later years the picnic was held at Killarney Beach and other locations.

Before the day of the automobile, many children had to walk 2 or 3 miles to Sunday School. Some of them took short cuts, and were warned by their mothers "Be careful you don't catch your clothes on the fence".

Ladies Aid or Women's Association

No history is complete without mention of the women's organizations of the church. Throughout the years the ladies aid and Women's Missionary Society were active and faithful. There is no record as to when the Ladies Aid was formed, but it was in the early years. They made contributions to the upkeep of the church and each year made a donation to the Stewards. They organized cleaning bees, usually twice every year. They bought new carpet for the choir and linoleum for the aisles. After 1918 they paid 1/3 of the Boston parsonage expenses, and they had one member on the parsonage committee. The biggest fund raising projects were the Annual Strawberry Festival in June and the Fowl Supper in October. For the Strawberry Festival long tables were laid on the lawn west of the Church. At all times the use of the Orange Hall next door was available free when needed for church affairs and the Lodge had the use of the church dishes. From the 1927 minutes the list of food to be contributed by each family was: salads, 1 loaf of bread, 1 lb. butter, 1/2 gallon cream and milk mixed, pickles, 3 cakes, 3 pies, 2 dozen tarts, and a pan of biscuits. A sports committee organized ball games or horseshoe pitching, with prizes for the winner, after supper. Later in the evening a play or variety program was put on using an improvised stage. The play in 1934 was "My Wild Irish Rose". For all this the charge was 50¢ and 25¢ which during the depression was lowered to 35¢ and 20¢. During the ball game there was a booth with homemade ice cream and other goodies for sale.

At the Fowl Supper the list to be donated by each family was about the same but as well as the above, each was asked for 1 goose or 2 chickens, dressing and gravy, potatoes and applesauce. Tea was made on the cookstove in the Orange Hall. For this dinner the charge was 75¢ and 25¢. At one place it was noted that each table be responsible for bringing a (milk) can of hot water for washing dishes. A free ticket to the lady of the house was given at one time.

Other popular means of raising money were by making autographed quilts, pancake suppers, crockinole parties and pot luck suppers.

The Fowl Supper was discontinued from 1941 to the end of the war and thereafter a pot luck supper for the congregation was held. A Strawberry Festival was held each year except for a few years during and after the war, when a canvass was held.

The Ladies Aid became known as the Women's Association at the time of Church Union.

Women's Missionary Society

The Thompsonville W.M.S. was organized in 1892 with Mrs. Hipwell as first President. The purpose of the organization was to raise money for missionary work and a specific allocation was given to each society. The group used the Study Book which dealt with the work of the W.M.S. in foreign and home missions. Worship programs as outlined in the Missionary Monthly Magazine were followed. Besides free will offerings, various other means were used to raise money, such as corn roasts, St. Patrick socials, and Halloween parties. A bale of clothing was packed each year.

In 1944 the W.M.S. organized a Mission Band which held meetings in Boston Junction, Sand Hook and Maple Hill schools with the permission of the school boards.

The church meetings added much to the social life of the community. For many years the W.A. and W.M.S. combined their meetings, which were held at the homes of the members.

The Church Closing

The number of people connected with the church declined for various reasons: loss of industry, smaller families, farms growing larger, loss of farms, due to the introduction of tobacco farming and the building of a landing field for the Airforce during World War II (which trained at Base Borden). Although a proposal to close the church had been made in 1951, nothing was done until the Annual Meeting in 1956. A vote was taken to close the church on June 30th to which Presbytery consented.

Tenders were called for and the church and property were sold to the Orange Lodge for \$200. The contents of the church were sold. The Communion set was given to Trinity United Church, Beeton with a suitable inscription to be engraved on it. Remaining funds were sent to Presbytery with the request that they be applied to the Mission and Service Fund. Rev. G.W. Gardiner preached the final service on June 24th, 1956. The families transferred to churches in Alliston, Cookstown and Beeton.

The Orange Lodge sold the church building to Clifford Campsall who demolished it and used the material in the building of two houses. The site was cleared and levelled and used as a parking lot for the Orange Hall.

Ministers of The Church

West Essa Circuit

Rev. James W. Stewart	1879 - 1881
Rev. George Brown	1882 - 1884
Rev. Walter Thomas Leggett	1885 - 1886
Rev. William S. Hughan (Superannuated)	1887
Rev. William Thornley	1888 - 1890
Rev. George H. Kenney	1891
Rev. George Clarke	1892 - 1893
Rev. Fred L. Brown	1894 - 1895
Rev. David D. Frank	1896 - 1898
Rev. Henry E.W. Kemp	1899 - 1900
Rev. Richard Large	1901 - 1902
Rev. Hugh A. Brown	1903 - 1906
Rev. William H. Learoyd	1907 - 1910
Rev. W. Fletcher Roach	1911 - 1914
Rev. James Phimister	1915 - 1916
To be supplied	1917

West Essa Circuit was discontinued in 1919 and Thompsonville transferred to the Beeton Circuit in 1918.

Rev. Arthur B. Hames	1918 - 1919
Rev. A. Bedford	1920 - 1921
Rev. Herbert S. Lovering	1922 - 1925

1925 Formation of The United Church of Canada

Rev. W.H. Adams	1926 - 1928
Rev. G.H. Snoyd	1929 - 1930
Rev. L.E. Atkinson	1931 - 1935
Rev. Frank A. Bunt	1939 - 1944
Rev. Alex H. Halbert	1945 - 1947
Rev. David D. Gault	1948 - 1949
Rev. E.H. Unstead	1950 - 1953
Rev. Gordon W. Gardiner	1954 - 1956

The Cairn

Realizing that 1980 was the 100th anniversary of the building of the church, Rev. John F. Hoekstra, Minister of Trinity United Church, Beeton, suggested to the Session that they sponsor the building of a marker on the site of the Thompsonville Church. The Thompsonville Commemorative Committee was named as follows - Rev. J. Hoekstra, Mr. & Mrs. Reaford Long, Mrs. Muriel Reynolds, Mr. & Mrs. Jack Gray, Mr. & Mrs. Roy Reynolds, Mr. & Mrs. Ed. Murray, and Mr. & Mrs. Irwin Reynolds.

Plans were made for the erection of a stone cairn with a bronze plaque. Mr. George Ashton who had acquired the datestone from the church gave it to be built into the cairn. Grants were received from Tecumseh Township Council and the Heritage Branch of The Ministry of Culture and Recreation.

A service of dedication was planned for June 15th, 1980 at 2:30 p.m.

Reaford Long, a lifetime member of Thompsonville Church unveiled the plaque with the inscription:

Thompsonville United Church 1880 - 1956

Close to this site a Church was built about 1855-60 to serve a congregation which became part of a Methodist circuit, organized in 1851. The log building's gradual deterioration and the growth of the village of Thompsonville led to the erection, on this site, of the Canada Methodist Church, which opened on October 13, 1880. It joined the newly formed United Church of Canada in 1925 and following its closure in 1956 the structure was demolished. The cairn is erected to the devout memory of those who built these churches and served the community of Thompsonville.