

Title: A History of Knox Church Alliston Since 1862. Page 1/4

Creator:

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Description: A photograph and article about the history of Knox Church located in Alliston. The photograph is of the second building (1915-1976). The article describes various events in the church's history.

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A History of Knox Church Alliston Since 1862



The Frame Church

1862-1915

In 1860 religious services were held in Alliston by J. K. Hislop, a student sent out by the Knox College Students' Missionary Society. This was the beginning of Presbyterianism in this community. The first service was held in John Bates' cooper shop. Those present were: Adam Wrightman, Charles Scott, William and John Buyers, John Patterson, James Rose, and William Mawhinney, together with their wives and families.

After holding services at different places during the summer, the people began to think of securing property where they might build a church. To this end they decided to buy a half-acre plot from Henry Fields for \$80, and an additional acre immediately to the west of it for \$110. The deeds were carefully prepared, often necessitating trips to Barrie and Toronto on foot before matters were finalized. The church itself was built by William and John Buyers. They started in the spring of 1861 and finished in the fall of 1862. The opening services were held on September 6th, 1862, the sermons being preached by the Rev. Dr. Robert Burns of Toronto, whose son became Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada in 1887. The new Church was named Knox Church, and services were held both

morning and afternoon. No service was held in the evening due to the great distances the people came on foot and it was necessary for them to reach home or the shelter of some friendly roof before nightfall, due to the wild animals, especially bears and wolves, that roamed the land. At the opening services the singing was led by Gilbert Innes, presentor, for in those days a presentor was used in place of an organ and organist. The offering was taken up in square boxes with long handles by Adam Wrightman and William Buyers. The offering on Opening Day and the proceeds of the tea meetings three months later were given into the hands of the Treasurer, Mr. James Rose.

Shortly after the church was completed, it had a narrow escape from fire. Mr. Mawhinney had a smoke house, used for curing meats, situated near the lumber yard to the west of the church. When the smoke house became overheated and caught fire, it spread to the lumber piles and threatened the church. However, the good work of the "bucket brigade" quickly brought things under control and saved the building.

Mr. J. K. Hislop, who was the student missionary for the first summer, 1860, returned to college in the fall. The congregation had no one to minister to their spiritual wants until the next spring, when another student by the name of Mitchell served the people for the summer months of 1861. In 1862, J. K. Hislop returned as an ordained minister, and continued to serve in Knox Church until November 20th, 1870.

Early in the history of the church, February 19th, 1863, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was first administered. In May of the same year, Messrs. Andrew Mullen and John Buyers were elected to the eldership, thus forming the first session.

A Sunday school was established shortly after the church began, and it has continued in the moulding of the young life of the congregation down through the years. The first Superintendent was William Wright.

Through the years that followed, the untiring efforts of the faithful did much to make this community Christian. Perhaps the most inspiring event that bears remembering in the years that followed the opening and dedicating of the first church in 1862, is that of the Golden Jubilee on October 27th, 1912, during the ministry of the Rev. W. T. Ellison. The Methodist and Anglican Churches withdrew their evening services and the Rev. A. P. Addison (Methodist) assisted on the platform, and the Rev. C. L. Bilkey (Anglican) assisted in the choir. The Methodist Church was thrown open to meet the needs of an overflow congregation and there the Rev. H. D. McCuaig conducted a service. Even this did not accommodate the large number of worshippers present and many had to go home disappointed. The proceeds of the Jubilee Celebration amounted to \$1,200.

In reviewing the history of the Frame Church, it must be recorded that the success that attended the congregation of Knox Church can surely be traced back to those noble men and women who, amid the hardship of pioneering did not allow the spiritual needs of their lives to become neglected.