



1821

THE FIRST 150 YEARS OF

1971

St. Paul's Anglican Church

FORT ERIE, CANADA

RECTORS WHO HAVE SERVED AT ST. PAUL'S

Rev. John Anderson	1828-1849
Rev. Elliott Grasett, M.A.	1849-1859
Rev. Henry Holland, B.A.	1859-1864
Rev. Henry Greenham, M.A.	1864-1870
Rev. Canon Robert Arnold, B.A.	1870-1889
Rev. Percy W. Smith	1889-1905
Rev. A. Cameron Mackintosh	1905-1917
Rev. Canon D. Russell Smith	1917-1926
Ven. Archdeacon Wm. Burt	1926-1949
Rev. Canon W. B. Irwin	1949-1968
Rev. William O. Straw, Lth.	1968-

*...at the bank of the river
they stopped to worship...*

Dear Friends:

On this the One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of St. Paul's as a Parish in Christ's Holy Catholic Church, I join with you in offering our praise and thanksgiving to God for all the blessings so freely bestowed upon us, for the devotion and service and faithfulness of those in the past who have "borne the burden and heat of the day" in the life of our church. They have given us a goodly heritage.

To those of us here and now is the great challenge of the future. Armed with the legacy of the past and the zeal of the present, great things await us.


May God bless you all in the years ahead.

THE REV. W. O. STRAW, LTH.
Rector

A History of St. Paul's Church

Fort Erie

by MRS. G. PAINTER, *Parish Historian*

 ON APRIL 23RD, 1971, the parish of St. Paul's, Fort Erie, celebrated its 150th birthday. It was on this date in the year 1821 that the small band of worshippers in the Village of Waterloo purchased from the merchant William Smith a plot of land 87 feet by 200 feet as a site for a church and a graveyard. Thirty years prior to this date, in 1792, the Rev. Robert Addison had started missionary work in the area, and in the intervening years the settlers had gathered together in the Smith home, or at the mill of Benjamin Hardison, whenever Mr. Addison could make the long journey from Niagara-on-the-Lake to hold worship service for them. There is record also of visits to the community during this period by the Rev. William Leeming of Chippawa, for the purpose of performing marriages and baptisms and conducting funeral services. A lasting memorial to these dedicated men of God is the lovely stone church on the hill, the fruit of the seeds they planted here a century and a half ago. Here in this place, some of the descendants of the original congregation still witness to the faith passed down through eight generations of worshippers, and they are justly proud of their heritage.

Unfortunately, many of the tales of events in the life of the parish during the fifteen decades since its beginning have passed into obscurity with the death of those who shared them, but untold wealth is contained in Parish registers dating from the year 1836 and Vestry Meeting Minutes from as early as 1863. From these carefully preserved records it has been possible to glean some interesting facts and figures that tell their own story, showing the development of the Parish through the incumbency of eleven different rectors until the present day.

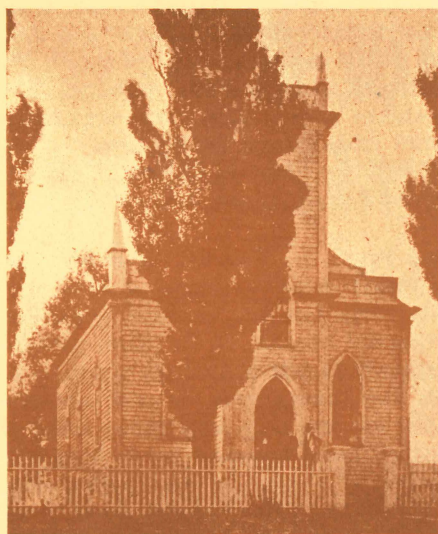
The deeds for this plot of land purchased in 1821 mention the existence of a building already on the site, so it is presumed that this was used for worship services until the first church was erected three years later, in 1824. Built of wood, it stood on a foundation of stones brought from the Old Fort, permission for the use

of these stones being granted by the Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada at the request of Colonel James Kerby. An influential figure in the Village at this time, the Colonel's help in establishing this first church cannot be fully estimated. We know that he was also instrumental in bringing the first organ, duty-free, from Buffalo, and that he later presented the church with a solid silver communion service, still in occasional use. Together with John Warren and William Stanton, and members of the founding congregation, namely the families of Hardison, Miller, Plato, Hall, McAfee, Berger, Powell, Trout and Kerr, he helped to shape the future of St. Paul's.

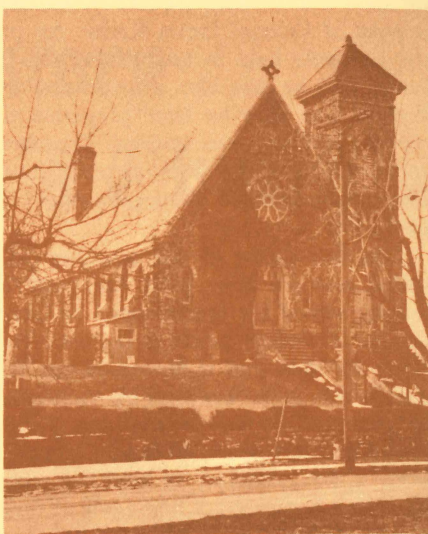
The first rector of the newly-established Parish of Waterloo, as it was then called, was the Rev. John Anderson, who was inducted as rector in 1838 after having served for several years as Chaplain to the Garrison stationed at the Fort and as missionary priest to the area. He remained as rector of the parish until his death in 1849 and is buried in the churchyard, directly behind the sanctuary of the church. In the hands of his successor, the Rev. Elliott Graser, the work continued to grow and flourish in the large parish that in these early years encompassed an area half the size of Welland County. As the district became more widely populated it was necessary to establish other places of worship in the outlying areas, St. John's Ridgemount being one of these, the church in Port Colborne another, and the priest spent many hours on horseback ministering to his scattered flock. Under these conditions no one church could count on having their rector with them every Sunday, and it was not until the incumbency of the Rev. Henry Holland, in the year 1863, that regular Sunday Services were established at St. Paul's, a Mr. Moody from Buffalo conducting the services on those Sundays that the rector was away from the Village.

Not long after this the church at Port Colborne established their own rectory, but this proved a mixed blessing to the people of the Fort Erie church. Until this time their rector had been supported entirely by Glebe Land or Endowment money, paid to the parish by the Crown for this purpose, but the money had now to be shared equally with the Port Colborne incumbent. The Bishop informed the vestry that he would not send a man to the Parish unless he could be guaranteed a minimum stipend of \$600 per year and this created a serious financial problem as there was no longer this amount of money available from the Endowment Fund. Thereby was launched what was probably the first parish Canvass, as members were called upon and asked to subscribe a certain sum of money yearly towards the rector's salary. The fourth rector of the Parish, Rev. Henry Greenham, was the first to receive part of his stipend from the people he came to serve.

Church membership had increased considerably by this time, reflecting the growth of the little village at the mouth of the Niagara River, and the small frame church was fast becoming over-crowded with Sunday worshippers. Vestry books of that decade show sketches of suggested alterations to the interior of the building that might help to solve the seating problem. Any plan that would call for the expenditure of even a small amount of money had to be put aside for the time being, though, as the community was going through a period of economic depres-



The First Church, Erected in 1821



St. Paul's, 1971

sion and money was very scarce. These were discouraging years for both Mr. Greenham and his parishoners as pledge payments lapsed, the books showed a continuing deficit, and only by raising the pew rental fees could the rector's stipend be met. This custom of renting pews to church families and individuals was common in those days and the allocation of the pews was often a touchy subject. First choice was by common agreement given to the family of the rector, but whether or not they had to pay for their pew is not recorded. Although subject to alteration from time to time the rates were firmly established, varying from twelve dollars for a pew at the front of the church to half that amount for one near the back, with two or three seats in the less popular sections left "free" for visitors. This system of family pews was carried over into the present century, to be discontinued in 1919, with all pews declared free.

With the arrival of the Rev. Canon Arnold to the Parish in 1870 the financial picture apparently brightened, as a building fund was started for the erection of a new church. Vestry minutes from those years contain much interesting information concerning the plans for the new building, and at one time an offer was being considered from a Mr. S. M. Jarvis of Toronto for a new site in the Village of Victoria, later known as Bridgeburg. In spite of the fact that the offer carried with it a promise of substantial financial support if the site was chosen it was decided that the new building would stand on the same plot of ground as the old and an architect was engaged to draw up the plans. Records are rather vague as to the exact date when the first stone church was ready for occupancy, but we know they were still using the frame building in 1875, and that this was sold by tender in 1883 for the sum

of \$80, an indication that the new edifice was then in use. Without a doubt one of the better pieces of church architecture to be found in the smaller communities of the country at that time, the church was built principally of stone reclaimed from the useless walls of the Fort, making it a symbol of peace, overlooking the unprotected boundary between Canada and the United States. The first organ in the new building was purchased from Warren and Son in Toronto for the sum of \$1500 and placed in the gallery of the church. This was one of many organs to see service in St. Paul's down through the years, including one with solid silver pipes that was brought from the Cathedral in Buffalo for use at one time in our present church.

By the time the Rev. Percy Smith arrived in the Parish in 1889 there were 85 families on the parish list, a disappointment to the worthy gentleman who had been informed that he was coming to minister to a parish of 200 families and 600 individuals! An even greater setback was in store for Mr. Smith, though, as three years later he was to share with his parishioners the loss by fire of their lovely house of worship, wiped out by an explosion of natural gas on Ash Wednesday, March 1, 1892. At an emergency Vestry meeting held in the Oddfellows Hall a few days later he discussed with them ways and means of dealing with his catastrophe, and after accepting offers from both the Oddfellows and the Presbyterians for the temporary use of their buildings, the work of clearing up and re-building began. Other than locating the organ in the chancel rather than in the gallery, the new building was constructed and furnished in almost identical fashion to the old, and is the one in which we worship today.

During the next decade it became increasingly evident that the church needed a more reliable source of income than the sporadic offerings on the collection plate



The Visit of Archbishop O'Neil, D.D., 1969

each Sunday, and in 1903 the ladies of the Junior Guild set out to canvass the parish for pledges which would launch the envelope system. We are to assume that their efforts were successful as only six years later, on October 21, 1909, Bishop duMoulin paid a visit to the parish for the purpose of consecrating the debt-free church.

Although only occasional mention is made of a Sunday School before 1900, we know one was in existence as early as 1879, as in that year the treasurer of the school sent a substantial cheque to the building fund. Classes were held of necessity in the basement of the church which was also used for meetings of both the Guild and the Woman's Auxiliary after their organization in 1901. Teas and other social functions were usually held in the homes of the members and with these limited facilities it is not surprising that as soon as the mortgage on the church building was paid the ladies started a campaign for the erection of a hall. Due in a large part to their untiring efforts sufficient funds were raised, an architect was engaged once more to draw plans for the structure, and in 1911 the Guild Hall, as it was then called, was opened. In continuous use since that time, the advent of the hall made possible the socials, suppers, bazaars, dances and concerts that have so enlivened the parish during the past sixty years. Its capacity doubled by the addition in 1957, it continues to serve as a centre for Christian Education and fellowship.

The rector of the Parish at the time the hall was built was the Rev. A. Cameron Mackintosh, and he and his family were first to occupy the new rectory, built about the same time as the Parish Hall. This was the third rectory to be owned by St. Paul's, and it replaced a wooden structure that had been purchased twenty years before from a Mrs. Rose for the sum of \$2,500. The price included the lot with 100 foot frontage on the hill behind the hall, the site of the present rectory. Older members of the congregation can still recall the moving of this house to the top of Catherine Street hill, where it still stands as a two-family dwelling. An earlier house situated on the Bowen Road on part of the Miller farm had served as a rectory prior to 1891 when the decision was made to move the rector and his family closer to the Parish Church. The present rector of the Parish, the Rev. W. O. Straw, is the fifth incumbent to house his family in the brick home on the hill during the sixty years of its existence.

The brightness of the first decade of the twentieth century, in which the debt on the church had been paid and the hall and the rectory built, made the troubled years of the second decade seem dark indeed. This was the period of the first World War, which not only robbed the Parish of many of its sons but also took the rector from their midst, the Rev. A. C. Mackintosh taking leave of absence in 1915 to serve as chaplain to the armed forces. During his absence the parish was in charge of the Rev. Frank Walling, one of the many priests who have assisted with the work of the parish through the 150 years, as deemed necessary for one reason or another. Mr. Mackintosh remained only a short time in the Parish after his return from overseas and in 1917 the Rev. Canon Russell Smith came to Fort Erie to serve as eighth rector of St. Paul's.

The post-war period was marked in the Parish, as in the Country, by material progress. No longer was the revenue from pew rentals needed to pay the rector's stipend, and the financial picture was sufficiently rosy as to encourage plans for expanding parish facilities. A building referred to as "Allen's Hall" had been in use for some little while as a Sunday School hall for parish children living in the Bridgeburg area, but more space was needed for additional classes and it was decided to purchase the Crown Theatre on Dufferin Street and convert it into a second Parish Hall. This was in 1919, and three years later further progress was made when a large tract of land at the corner of Central Avenue and Emerick was purchased and a fund started for the erection of a hall, a church and a rectory on the site. The sod for the first of these buildings was turned in April of 1924 and in September of that year the basement was ready for occupancy by the Sunday School. Mr. Albert Ray was superintendent over the 106 pupils and their teachers who gathered in the newly-named St. Mary's Hall on that first Sunday afternoon. We know that the other plans for this site of land never materialized, although the fund was kept open for several years, and requests for action on the matter was being continually made to the Vestry. It was only after ten years of futile attempts to raise enough money to continue the project that it was finally abandoned, the basement was more permanently roofed over, and it served as a centre for many Parish activities for the next 35 years. Largely maintained during the latter years by contributions from the faithful band of workers known as St. Mary's Guild, it gradually proved more of a liability than an asset to the Parish, and when the pupils of its school were transferred to St. Paul's Hall five years ago it became obvious that as a Parish building its days were numbered. In 1969 it was sold, with some pang for the memories it held dear, to the Presbyterian Church.



Induction of the Present Rector

The 100th birthday of the Parish slipped by unnoticed, no one apparently realizing its importance, and it was not until early in 1922 that the oversight was brought to light when Canon Smith discovered the founding date of the church while browsing through old records. Wheels were set in motion for making the belated centennial celebrations something to remember, and as April 23rd fell on a Sunday that year special services were planned to mark the great occasion. The Bishop of Niagara, Bishop Clark, began the day by administering the rite of confirmation to a class of 48, and delivering an eloquent sermon to a congregation that packed the church to capacity. At three o'clock in the afternoon the church was again filled, this time with members of the Sunday Schools, and 15 children were baptized, some of them grandparents of children now attending our school. A service for Veterans followed, with a pipe band from Buffalo leading them in parade to the church and later into the churchyard where the I.O.D.E. unveiled a cross on the grave of Private Albert Miller who was reputed to have carried the "cease fire" orders to Canadian headquarters on November 11th, 1918. Archdeacon Mackintosh, one of several honoured guests attending the celebrations, preached at both this service and the final one for the day held at seven-thirty in the evening. Once again worshippers thronged to the church, to be greeted again by their Bishop. Birthday celebrations continued through the week, with a congregational reunion and supper, a social evening with dancing and refreshments, and a second supper for the children later in the week. To quote Canon Smith in his message, appearing in the May, 1922 issue of Monthly Notes, "the celebration of the Centennial of St. Paul's Church will never be forgotten by the persons who had the privilege of joining in the services and festivities."

These Monthly Notes had been started by the rector not long after his arrival in the Parish and they continued to go to the homes of the parishioners every month for 11 years, finally being discontinued through lack of subscriptions. Four-page, printed leaflets, they kept the subscribers up-to-date on all of the church news, as well as bringing to them a message from the rector and all the vital parish statistics, listing baptisms, marriages and burials, Sunday School pupils who earned a place on the honour roll or did well in their exams found their names in print the following month. Several copies of these Notes are still to be found in Parish homes, and provide an invaluable source of information on Parish history. We learn from them, for example, that the policy of presenting a Proposed Budget to the Vestry dated from 1924, and that it was during this same period that these annual meetings were changed from Easter Sunday to the third or fourth Monday in January, the fiscal year from then on conforming to the calendar one.

When Canon Smith left the Parish in 1926 he was succeeded by the Rev. William Burt who remained here until his retirement in 1949. During these years he was raised to Canon and later to Archdeacon, the only one of St. Paul's rectors who has reached this status. Upon his retirement he continued to live in the district and was later buried in St. Paul's churchyard. Members of his family still worship in the church. The twenty-three years of his incumbency were marked by much discouragement and heartache, encompassing as they did both the depression era and

the Second World War. But there were bright spots, too, especially in the early years. Not long after he arrived in the parish he officiated at the sod-turning ceremony for All Saints, Ridgeway, a mission church stemming from St. Paul's that remained under the wing of the mother church until 1931 when it was strong enough to stand alone and support its own rector. Two years later saw the opening of the Erie Beach Community Hall, another milestone in the life of the church in the community. In June of 1934 the annual visit to the church of the Bishop for confirmation became also a celebration marking the 100th anniversary of the presentation of the communion vessels by Colonel Kerby. An extension to the cemetery was consecrated at the same time, with the Bishop commenting on the splendid condition of the church and grounds and pointing out the importance of this in view of the church's location on a popular tourist route.

In 1938 the church suffered a definite loss in the removal from the community of Mr. A. A. Coulthurst and his family to Niagara Falls. Mr. Coulthurst had been Vestry Clerk of the church for the incredible period of 51 years, having taken office in 1887, and at the time of his retirement the belief was voiced that this was the longest term served by anyone in that office in the Canadian Church. The following year saw the church debt-free for the first time since the hall and rectory were built, nearly thirty years before.

The years of the Second World War brought changes in the Parish, as they did to the town, with many newcomers arriving to work at Fleet Aircraft. Although many left the area after the war others remained to become permanent members of the Parish. Returning service men established homes in the town and many more families were added to the Parish Roll. It was during this prosperous, growing, post-war period that Archdeacon Burt retired and the Rev. W. B. Irwin was invited to become the 10th rector of St. Paul's.

The following nineteen years were fruitful ones for the Parish. St. John's Church, Ridgemount, that had been part of the Parish since it was built in 1840, was, upon request of the Bishop, separated from St. Paul's in 1953 to become part of the Ridgeway charge. This left Mr. Irwin more time to devote to work within the town and especially to the area in the Erie Beach region. The Sunday School, established there a quarter of a century earlier, was still meeting weekly in the community hall, thanks to Miss Caroline Griffin and her faithful helpers. With the blessing of all concerned, the Rev. Mr. Irwin invited Bishop Bagnall to come to the Parish in 1950 for the purpose of consecrating the hall as an Anglican house of worship, and it was re-named St. James' Chapel. For the next few years the work in this area grew and flourished, necessitating the enlargement of the chapel in the addition of a basement and more facilities upstairs. Volunteer workers completely refinished the interior and it was equipped with lovely hand-wrought furnishings, largely the work of the Learn family. For a time regular Sunday services of Evensong were held there, as well as communion services once a month for the Sunday School pupils and their parents. In latter years the attendance decreased to a point where services in the Chapel seemed no longer feasible and they were discontinued entirely. Still maintained as a Sunday School hall it continues to meet the needs of some of the families who live in that part of town.

In 1956 as more and more "war babies" reached school age, attendance at St. Paul's Hall reached an all-time high, far exceeding the facilities offered in the old hall. Once again, as it had been sixty years before, the church was pressed into service as extra school space. It was this unsatisfactory state of affairs that prompted the Vestry to pass a motion for the opening of a Building Fund drive to raise the necessary funds to enlarge and modernize the hall. The Wells organization was hired to conduct a money-raising canvass and under their professional leadership sufficient money was pledged to assure the success of the venture. The first sod for the addition to the building was turned March 31st, 1957 by Mr. Henry Lewis whose father and grandfather had laboured in the Parish since the erection of the first church. On June 16 of the same year the cornerstone was laid, with Mr. Michael Woehl, the oldest parishioner, doing the honours with the trowel. The hall was completed in November of 1957 and the Ven Archdeacon William Burt, former rector, officiated at the dedication service. Although the cost of the project had far exceeded original estimates, the hall was free of debt within ten years. It was the scene of many interesting and happy gatherings during this ten-year period, not the least of which was the World Mission Exposition held in April of 1965, with Bishop Wilkinson as speaker and honoured guest. Believed to be the largest and most comprehensive affair of its kind ever to be held in the Parish it attracted visitors from several distant points as well as many local people.



Missionary Booth, Waldo Robley, Vice-President

One of the most notable events in the history of the Parish took place on May 6, 1962, when the Rt. Rev. Eric Munn, Bishop of Caledonia, now deceased, came to Fort Erie to officiate at the ordination to the diaconate of John Flindall. To date, the Rev. J. Flindall is the only boy from St. Paul's to enter the priesthood in the entire century and a half of its history. Another significant day during this decade was April 23, 1967, when the church celebrated its 146th birthday and the country's Centennial. Among those in attendance at the impressive service on that Sunday were the Mayor and members of the town council, the Royal Canadian Legion and the Air and Sea Cadets. Special preacher for the occasion was the Rev. John Bothwell, B.D. Historical brochures were distributed to all who attended the impressive service.

During the years that the Rev. W. B. Irwin served as rector of the Parish changes and improvements were made in the church building as well as in the hall. In 1953 the old organ, having outlived its usefulness, was retired, and a new memorial organ was installed at the cost of some eight thousand dollars. A fund for the purchase of this instrument had been in operation for several years prior to this time. It had been decided to place the console of the new organ behind the lectern, in the spot occupied at that time by the Font, so a work crew was summoned to move the Font to the back of the church where it now stands. The new positioning of the organ console made more room at the communion rail, its predecessor having taken up considerable space in the left hand side of the chancel. Two years later the Vestry was completely renovated, a project of the Evening Branch of the W.A. This included not only the re-decoration of the room but the installation of a desk, specially designed for the storing of altar linens and vessels, as well as the parish register. With new lighting and a metal locker for vestments, the vestry-sacristy had a completely "new" look.

1960 saw the church given a much needed face-lifting by the men of the parish. The pews were all removed and a tile floor laid, then given a fresh coat of varnish and repaired where necessary before being replaced. The next step in the rejuvenation project was the painting of the interior, and in 1962 professional painters were hired to do this work, and new light fixtures were installed throughout the nave of the church. Later that same year the red carpet was laid in the centre aisle and the chancel, and the vestibule floor covered with matting, both gifts of the Afternoon Branch of the W.A. The congregation once again had a bright and attractive place in which to worship. Not long after this the almost unusable basement was converted into several useful rooms, including a ladies' lounge, a rector's study and a large room that could be used for meetings as well as the Sunday morning nursery. The last major job to be done at the church during this period was the re-roofing of the building with asphalt shingles in 1967, the deteriorating slate roof having been a continual source of expense for many years.

In 1964 the parishioners gathered in the hall to honour the Rev. W. B. Irwin upon his elevation to Honorary Canon of the Cathedral, and also to show their appreciation to him for fifteen years of service as their rector. Four years later, in June of 1968, they met in similar fashion to bid him farewell and to shower him and Mrs. Irwin with gifts and good wishes as they left to take up residence in their retirement home in Chippawa. In September of the same year the Rev. W. O. Straw and his family moved to Fort Erie and took up residence in the rectory, ushering a new era in the life of the parish.

Shortly after the arrival of the new rector St. Mary's Hall was sold, a move that had been contemplated for some time. At the same time a survey was made of St. Paul's Hall and various suggestions made that would improve both its appearance and its efficiency. As a start, a little-used cloakroom was converted into an office for the Church School and the existing office space reorganized into a Rector's study and a business office for the parish secretary. All three rooms and the front hall of the building were panelled, also the ACW room, the ceilings were lowered and tiled and the interior of the entire building redecorated.

There are many projects being considered to increase the efficiency of the church. The section of land to the north of the church property has been purchased, including frontage on Gilmore Road, and plans are being made to convert at least part of this property into a parking lot, at church level. Further plans for the future include an extension to be built on the northwest corner of the church with an entrance hall permitting access to both the basement of the church and the nave, from the new parking lot. Sketches of the proposed addition are in the hands of the building committee and work will commence on this project as soon as funds are available. An extension to the existing parking lot on the east side of Niagara Boulevard has been under construction for some time and should be ready for use in the near future.

At the time of writing, the "St. Paul's Renovation Fund" has been established to allow people to contribute to the projects now under consideration. Already the church interior has been repainted and the entrance panelled in oak, and a rich maroon carpet has been installed.

In this sesqui-centennial year of 1971 there are approximately 480 families on the parish list, and possibly half of these people are actively engaged in some part of the parish work. At least thirty-five adults are currently involved in the Christian Education work being carried on in the schools of St. Paul's and St. James', with a total enrollment of almost two hundred pupils. Upon completion of their courses many of the teenage boys move up into the Servers' Guild, and each year girls and boys return to seek positions on the teaching staff. School concerts and picnics that were so popular in the Twenties are a thing of the past, but the annual Wiener Roast at the Old Fort in June continues to hold an appeal for both old and young alike.

Women's work in the church, officially launched in 1900 with the formation of both a Guild and a Branch of the Women's Auxiliary continues to fill an important role on both the social and financial scene. With no further need for St. Mary's Guild all the woman power is concentrated these days in the work of the two branches of the Anglican Church Women, as the national organization is now called. The Afternoon Branch, an amalgamation of the original Guild and Auxiliary, celebrates its seventieth birthday this year, while the Evening Branch will mark its silver anniversary in November. Suppers, bazaars, card parties and rummage sales are still the means by which the ladies raise most of the money needed for parish and mission work. Bales of clothing are still packed and sent off regularly, although it is doubtful if any of them in recent years has been equal to the one shipped in 1924 that weighed 225 pounds! Several women in the parish find opportunity for service in the Altar

Guild, first organized in 1926 and strengthened in the last two years by the addition of several new members. Others give devoted service Sunday after Sunday as choir mothers and nursery attendants.

Men's Clubs have come and gone during the last fifty years and there is little demand these days for this type of parish organization. The men still manage to carry their weight, though, in the life of the parish, catering to the Annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper and organizing work parties whenever their services are required. Many men are needed, too, to carry on the work of the recently organized Boys' Club, meeting weekly in the parish hall, and several have volunteered their services.

For the younger girls in the parish we have the Junior Auxiliary meeting each Monday in the church basement, and if a leader can be found the Auxiliary for older girls will be re-organized. The A.Y.P.A. is another venture that has met with both success and failure down through the years, and at present there is no group such as this for the teenagers, but there is a Chi Rho for adults of all ages, offering a program of fun and fellowship for both men and women. Another mixed group, the World Missioners, disbanded in 1968 after ten years of parish visiting. Last, but by no means least, on the list of Parish organizations are the fine Senior and Junior choirs whose voices contribute so much to the worshipping life of the church.

St. Paul's was host to an honoured guest in the Fall of 1969 when the Rt. Rev. A. H. O'Neil, Archbishop of Fredericton and Metropolitan of the Ecclesiastical Province of Canada, preached at the morning service. A reception followed in the parish hall. This was the first time in parish history that an Archbishop had visited the church, his Grace coming to Fort Erie from Hamilton where he was attending the meeting of the House of Bishops. During the sessions of the Anglican Congress in Toronto in August of 1963 the Rev. Sospeter Magua, an African priest, spent a Sunday in the parish, and more recently we were hosts to Bishop Hambidge of Caledonia and also a prominent layman from the Diocese of Algoma, both delegates to the General Synod meeting in Niagara Falls. These are only a few of the interesting personalities who have been welcomed to Fort Erie by the rector and parishioners of St. Paul's.

Many changes have taken place in the parish during the 150 years since its beginning, but a stranger entering the doors of the church today will find there the same warmth of fellowship, the same "family" feeling that has characterized St. Paul's since its founding. There is a sense of permanence, too, of comfort in the knowledge that many of those worshipping here today are the descendants of the people who signed the vestry books over a hundred years ago. The names of many of these departed soldiers and servants of the Lord may be found on the small brass plates affixed to the stained glass windows and other articles of church furnishings dedicated to their memory. The beautiful altar and reredos were presented to the church by Mr. J. Q. Clarke, a devoted church worker during the early years of this century, and are in memory of his mother, Margaret Ann Clarke. The name of Alfred Hurrell, who served as warden of St. Paul's from 1906-1916 is found on the pulpit dedicated to his memory, and the lecturn perpetuates the name of George Lewis whose ancestors were among the founders of the parish. The brass plates on the prayer desks read "T. Harding Allen", and the one on the organ pipes "Oscar and Maria Wilkins", with a window



Left to right, front row: The Rev. J. G. Morden, Principal and Dean of Huron College; The Rt. Rev. Eric C. Munn, Bishop of Caledonia, B.C.; The Rev. John Franklin Flindall, Deacon. Back row: The Rev. W. B. Irwin; The Rev. Ralph McKim (now in Fiji Islands); Mr. Carl Philip, Sacristan and Bishop's Chaplain; The Rev. L. K. McKeown, (Hull, Que.); Crucifer, Mark Irwin.

in the north wall of the church bearing the name of their son. A son-in-law of this couple, R. A. Land, was both warden and treasurer of the church in 1919, and his wife placed the memorial in memory of her parents. Carved in the Font are the names of William and Annie Powell, believed to be the same Powells who helped to establish the first church in 1821.

Col. John Warren and Col. James Kerby, also founders of the parish, and the latter's daughter, Mary Margaret Kerby Warren, are remembered by windows dedicated to them in the south wall of the church. Other windows in the nave are in memory of the Riselay family, John and Catherine Lewis, and Enoch and Ester Bown and family, all ancestors of families still worshipping in the church. Mr. and Mrs. Bown, grandparents of Mrs. Walter Kent, moved to this area just over a hundred years ago and their eldest daughter was the first bride to be married in the present church. A Bible presented to her in recognition of this honour is still in the possession of the family. Of the families of Gardner and Ruppensburg, whose names also appear on stained

glass windows, little is known at time of writing. In the vestibule of the church Palmer Lodge A.F. and A.M., the Loyal Orange Lodge and the Independent Order of Oddfellows have all placed memorial windows for their departed brethren who served in St. Paul's. The lovely window above the altar is dedicated simply to "the rectors of the parish". Last item to receive special mention is the altar rail bought with donations from the women and girls of the parish and installed at the time of the 100th anniversary in memory of their Mothers.

Many other memorials have been placed in the church in the last fifty years, lights, communion vessels, vases and prayer books, to mention but a few. The church receives a perpetual income from a generous bequest of stocks from the estate of William Randolph Strickland who also placed the memorial doors on the church in memory of his wife Margaret Lewis, another descendant of a founding family. In recent years a Memorial Fund has been established so that those who wish to remember loved ones may contribute towards the purchase of some future memorial. A Book of Remembrance lists the names of all those so remembered.

On Friday, April 16, 1971 a gala dinner and dance was held in St. Michael's Hall in celebration of our anniversary. This was one of the social events of the year and enjoyed by everyone present.

Sunday, April 18, 1971 marked the great service of Thanksgiving. Over 400 people joined with the Bishop of the Diocese in celebrating the Holy Eucharist. The Bishop also preached the sermon. A reception was held following the service in the Parish Hall that was catered by ladies of A and B Branches, ACW. Those attending as guests were Canon W. B. Irwin, former pastor and Mrs. Irwin; The Hon. R. Welsh, Minister of Education for Ontario and Chancellor of the Diocese, and Mrs. Welsh; Mr. Ray Haggerty, MLA for Welland South and Mrs. Haggerty, Mr. Haggerty presented a plaque to the rector on behalf of the Provincial Government marking the occasion; His Worship Mayor J. Teal of Fort Erie and Mrs. Teal.

In this Anniversary year, when we pay tribute to the Founders of this parish in 1821, let us also remember all the others whose gifts of time and money have been responsible for its continued growth and progress. The names of many of these faithful worshippers of the past can be found inscribed on the stones in the graveyard, their bodies at rest near the church they loved and served so well. For some, only parish registers record their place in the history of the church, their burial places far from this area. But we know that for a time, no matter how brief, St. Paul's, Fort Erie, was their place of worship, their spiritual home. Within the walls of this old church they found comfort and courage and hope for the future, and something of their spirit remains in this place. Ours is a proud heritage. Let us so cherish it and nourish it that it will continue to stand firm with the winds of change and progress that are a part of life today, so that our children and grandchildren may see here not only a treasured memorial of the past but a symbol of hope for the future.

Thank You

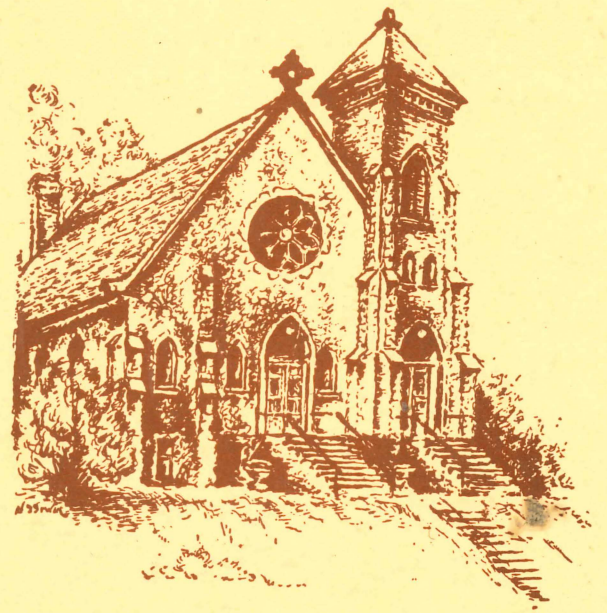
To all those who have worked so hard in this Sesquicentennial Celebration; to Mr. William Bown and his committee for all their untiring efforts; to Mrs. Garnet Painter for the revision of her earlier history of 1967 which is this booklet; we offer our appreciation for her time and attention to detail.

We dedicate this booklet to all who have "walked along the river" with us as members of St. Paul's. Those who have left their marker on the shore and crossed over to the other side. Those who faithfully went with the flow or fought its current and those who now stand upon the shore and look into the rushing torrent eager for whatever it will bring to us.

W. O. S.

THE SESQUICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

MR. WILLIAM BOWN	<i>Chairman</i>
THE REV. W. O. STRAW	<i>Rector</i>
Mr. F. GIRDLESTONE, Q.C.	<i>Rector's Warden</i>
MR. A. E. JEPSON	<i>People's Warden</i>
MR. A. E. BAXTER	MRS. S. GRIFFIN
MR. R. CLENDENING	MRS. G. PAINTER
MR. N. WILKINS	MRS. A. BAXTER
MRS. W. BRUNT	MISS B. KELLAM
MRS. G. GLENNY	MRS. M. E. MARTIN
MRS. G. KENT	MRS. A. D. MARTIN
MRS. R. RENSHAW	MR. E. KEMPSTER
MRS. E. HAWKINS	MR. W. WISBEY



*Dedicated to the glory of God
and in loving memory
of the Faithful Departed of
St. Paul's Anglican
Church*