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THE HISTORY OF  
QUEEN STREET UNITED CHURCH  
FORT ERIE ONTARIO

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1875 - 1974

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THE HISTORY OF  
QUEEN STREET UNITED CHURCH

The first congregation, formed in 1875, was known as the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Fort Erie. Their church was constructed on Lot Number 4 on the north side of Bertie Street. The trustees were Thomas Rainey, Francis Ellwood, William Ellwood, Thomas Loveridge, William Dell and Edwin Atwood. The lot had a mortgage of \$200.00 on it bearing interest at 10%. The building was built by Thomas Rainey, contractor, at a cost of about \$600.00.

Records of the activities at that time are scarce but we do have a page from a notebook kept by Mr. Rainey listing contributions.

The Fort Erie Church, at that time, was part of the Ridgeway Mission. In 1875 there was a total membership of all charges of 119 people. It was made up of churches at Ridgeway, Port Colborne, McAfee's, International Bridge (Victoria) and Fort Erie.

An early record in 1886 lists the names of 58 members in the International Bridge appointment (Central Avenue), 26 members of the McAfee's appointment and 20 members of the Fort Erie appointment.

The McAffee's Church, a solid log building, was located two miles North of Fort Erie on the Niagara River. The McAffee's cemetery still exists near the historic site marking the point where William Lyon MacKenzie crossed to the United States in 1837.

Victoria was the name given to the small community which grew around the West terminal of the railway bridge after its completion in 1873. Also called International Bridge by the railway, the name was officially changed to Bridgeburg in 1916.

The McAffee's congregation slowly dwindled till the church was closed in 1894. Meanwhile a separate Methodist congregation with their own pastor was formed in Amigari. Amigari being the community which grew up around the railway maintenance shops just west of Victoria at the Internaltional Bridge. In 1895 this new congregation replaced McAffee's as a member of the three point charge.

In those days the minister lived in a parsonage built in 1890 next to the Victoria Church (now Central Avenue). He generally travelled from church to church on horseback. In 1893 we are told that the Rev, Edgar Russ used a high wheeled bicycle as his mode of transportation in good weather.

In 1895 the Fort Erie (Bertie Street) congregation split. One group became Free Methodists and agreed to purchase the church. The remaining part of the congregation purchased a lot on

Queen Street from Ernest and Julia Cruikshank for a sum of \$300.00, on which they had a wooden church erected. Trustees for this new Methodist Church of Canada were Charles Treble, Martin Harvey, John Shepherd, Robert Martin and Edwin W. Finch.

The original building on Bertie Street was used as a church till 1918 when it became a school house. In 1930 the Canadian Legion used it as their Legion Hall. Later it housed the Fort Erie Public Library and has presently been converted to apartments.

The Queen Street church known as Fort Erie was part of the International Bridge circuit. Ministers were assigned to the circuit for a three year period, their salary being shared by the Amigari, International Bridge and Queen Street congregations. In 1923 this was changed when Mr. Van Loon, a young student, was appointed to look after Queen Street exclusively. He was followed in 1924 by J. R. Springer.

June 1925 was a crucial period in the life of the Church. It was then that the United Church of Canada was formed.

A separate minister served each congregation till Queen Street and Stevensville formed a joint pastoral charge in 1952. In the same year, a manse was purchased in Fort Erie for the minister's family.

The congregation had now grown too large for the old original wooden building. Church membership was over 150 and Sunday

Church School attendance was in the region of 180. There was a need for more accommodation; more Sunday Church School space; a church kitchen and a recreation area. And with the guidance of the minister, Rev. John Wood, plans for a new church were prepared. The old wood building was raised and a large basement excavated. Much of the construction work was done by members of the congregation in their spare time. Finally, on December 26, 1954, the corner stone for the new brick building was laid.

A brass vial was sealed in the corner stone which contained papers commemorating the event. These have been recovered. They give the names of those committee members active in the church at that time, a brief history of the church, and a page from the Times Review containing an announcement of the dedication service.

In the years that followed, Queen Street United Church continually found it difficult to remain solvent, but somehow they arranged to pay their bills each year. In 1965 the last installment was paid on the church mortgage. However membership slowly declined, as active members passed away. Not enough new members were coming into the church to balance attrition. Costs were rising and contributions could not meet the demands placed upon the budget. So in July 1974 it was regretfully decided to close the church. Members transferred their membership to Central Avenue United Church.

One hundred years after the church so bravely started in 1875, the Queen Street United Church building was sold to the Town of Fort Erie, to be used as a recreation center for Senior Citizens.

THE MINISTERS  
 who served Queen Street United Church  
The Methodist Church of Canada

<u>Years</u>	<u>Conference</u>	<u>District</u>	<u>Circuit</u>	<u>Ministers</u>
1874-1875	London	Niagara	Ridgeway	Thomas T. Campbell
1876	"	"	"	James Mooney, George Turk
1877	"	"	"	James Mooney, W.G. Wilson
1878	"	"	"	James Mooney, John Joslyn
1879	"	"	"	Robt. J. Elliott, D.W. Snider
1880	"	"	Victoria	Wellington Bridgeman
1881-1882	"	"	"	James H. White
1883	"	"	"	John W. Sifton
1884	Niagara	Welland	"	John W. Sifton
1885	"	"	"	Thomas J. Brown
1886	"	"	Int'l Bridge	Thomas J. Brown
1887-1889	"	"	"	Thomas L. Kerruish
1890-1892	"	"	"	H. G. Livingston
1893-1895	"	"	"	J. Edgar Russ
1896	Hamilton	"	Bridgeburg	Thomas H. Orme, G.F. Morris
1897	"	"	"	J. Parker Bell, D. B. Neeley
1898	"	"	"	J. Parker Bell, A. W. Shepperson
1899-1900	"	"	"	J. Parker Bell
1901-1904	"	"	"	George E. Honey
1905-1907	"	"	"	Edwin L. Flagg
1908-1910	"	"	"	Charles E. Stafford
1911-1914	"	"	"	William Smythe
1915-1917	"	"	"	Charles Hackett
1918-1922	"	"	"	Arthur O. W. Foreman
1923	"	"	Fort Erie	Geo. I. VanLoon (supervised)
1924	"	"	"	C. R. Crail (to above)
1925	"	"	"	A. Lloyd Thompson

The United Church of Canada

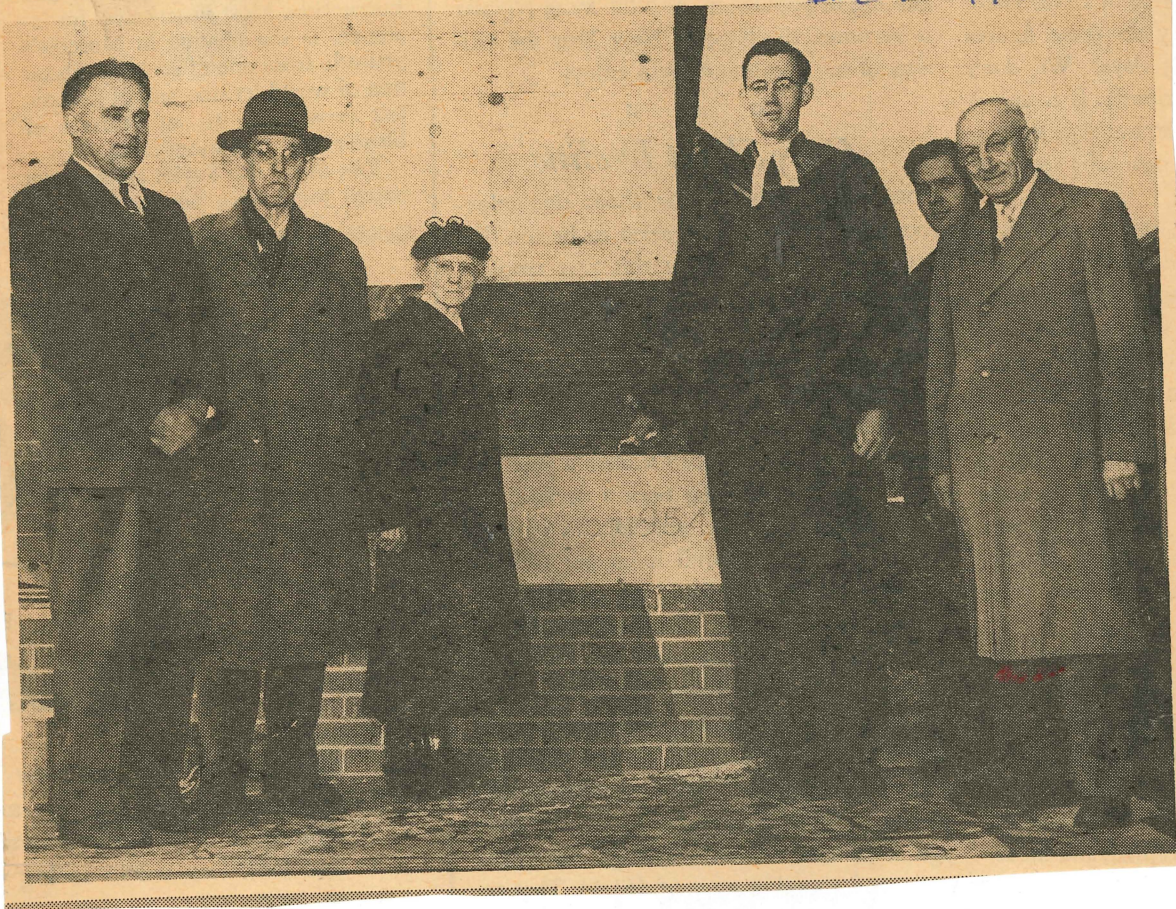
1926-1927	Hamilton	Niagara	Presby.	Queen St.	A. Lloyd Thompson
1927-1928	"	"	"	"	George E. Honey
1928-1931	"	"	"	"	F. R. Hendershot
1931-1936	"	"	"	"	A. W. Thomson
1936-1938	"	"	"	"	R. A. Facey
1938-1942	"	"	"	"	A. G. Love
1942-1944	"	"	"	"	C. J. Beckley
1944-1952	"	"	"	"	Henry S. Fiddes
1952-1956	"	"	"	"	John M. Wood
1956-1961	"	"	"	"	Harold Watts
1961-1968	"	"	"	"	Roy T. Burgess
1968-1974	"	"	"	"	E. Ralph Ingleby

# Long extensive history of Queen Street Church



**CORNERSTONE CEREMONY** Sunday, December 26th was an eventful day for the members of the Queen Street United Church when two cornerstones were laid by several members of the congregation. Left to right are Paul Bloomfield, chairman of the building committee, W. Tape, the oldest male member of the church, Miss M. Duckworth, treasurer and the oldest woman member of the church; Rev. J. D. M. Wood, pastor; Henry Allender, masonry contractor; Warren Finch, member with most years of service. Mr. Finch has been Sunday School superintendent for the past fifty years. Davies & Reichelt

DEC - 26 1954





The chapel of the Queen Street United Church was dedicated at a special service on Sunday May 4 at the Central Avenue United Church.

The chapel was located in the old Queen Street United Church, which is now a senior citizens centre. The church was recently purchased by the town for use as a senior citizens centre.

The history of the Queen Street United Church is long and extensive. Some of the history was found inside a brass vial, found inside the corner stone of the building.

When the congregation was first formed in 1875 it was known as the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Fort Erie. The church building was located on Lot No. 4 on the north side of Bertie Street. The building was built by Thomas Rainey, contractor, at a cost of a about \$600.

At that time the Fort Erie church was part of the Ridgeway Mission and in 1875 the total membership of all charges was 119 people. The congregations were located in Fort Erie, Ridgeway, Port Colborne, McAfee's and International Bridge.

In 1886, an early record lists the names of 58 members in the International Bridge appointment (Central Avenue), 26 members of the McAfee's appointment and 20 members of the Fort Erie appointment.

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After the completion of the railway bridge in 1873 a small community grew around the west terminal, which became known as Victoria. The railway called it International Bridge, and the name was officially changed to Bridgeburg in 1916.

While McAfee church was closing, a separate Methodist congregation was forming in Amigari, with their own pastor. This community grew around the maintenance shops just west of Victoria at the International Bridge. This new congregation replaced McAfee's as a member of the three point charge in 1895.

The Fort Erie, Bertie Street, congregation split in 1895. One group became the free Methodists and agreed to purchase the church while the remaining part of the congregation purchased a lot on Queen Street from Ernest and Julia Cruikshank for a sum of \$300, on which they had a wooden church erected.

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During the early days of the mission the minister lived in a parsonage built in 1890 next to the Victoria Church, now Central Avenue church.

The minister generally travelled from church to church on horseback. In 1893 the minister, Rev. Edgar Russ, apparently used a high wheeled bicycle as his mode of transportation in good weather.

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Sunday School space, a church kitchen, and recreation area. Plans for a new church were prepared under the guidance of Rev. John Wood, with the old building being raised and a large basement excavated. Members of the congregation did much of construction in their spare time and the corner stone was finally laid for the new brick building on December 26, 1954.

In the following years the Queen Street United Church continually found it difficult to remain solvent but managed to pay their bills somehow. The last installment on the mortgage was paid in 1965 but with membership slowly declining as active members died and as new memberships could not balance attrition, rising costs and congregation contributions could not meet the demands placed upon the budget and the church was closed in July, 1974. Members transferred their memberships to the Central Avenue United Church.

One hundred years after the church started in 1875, the Queen Street Church building was sold to the Town of Fort Erie but a chapel commemorating that church is located in the Central Avenue church.

, MAY 14, 1975,

THE TIMES-REVIEW,

FORT ERIE, ONTARIO, CANADA,