

WILLOUGHBY CHURCHES - Z.M. MILLER 1963

FIRST CHURCH - Riverside church erected by Public subscription in 1824. This first church was built of logs and stood on the south-east corner of the Gonder Farm.

Names on subscription list: Abraham Lapp, Joseph Danner, Jacob Gonde Jacob Miller, Henry Miller, Jacob Whisler.

The frame church which was built later was moved to the Sherk farm about 1858 when the side road was opened between the Sherk and Gonder farms. The road was given by the Gonders and the land by Elias Sherk. When the Boulevard was put through, the Park Commission moved the church farther back on the side road, but left it without a foundation and it was never used again and was finally dismantled about 1914.

WILLOUGHBY EVANGELICAL UNITED BRETHERN CHURCH: The first services of "Sauer's Church" as it was then called, were held in Adam Kabel bush and a log church was built in the present location in 1834 and Henry Sauer, who gave the land, was the first licensed preacher. There was a congregation of the same denomination in Chippewa. Christian Kaumeyer and Adam Herbold attended and they often worshipped in the Sauer's Church. Meetings were held in Pelham and Willoughby every two weeks, and Willoughby & Chippewa the next week. This was known as the "Niagara Mission first in the Canada Conference." The present church of brick was built in 1883 and it became known as Willoughby Evangelical United Brethern Church in 1946.

ST JOHN'S EVANGELICAL CHURCH, NEW GERMANY, was organized by a meeting held in Solomon Miller's bush in the southwest corner of his farm, and German settlers built a log church in 1834. The present brick church was built in 1861 and became known as the United Church of Canada in 1956.

ST JOSEPH'S ROMAN CATHOLIC: The first missionary to look after the German settlements here, reported that in June 1837 there were 20 families. The beginning of the congregation dated 1849 and the first baptism recorded May 6, 1849.

DELL CHURCH: Henry Dell gave the land for this church, which was built in 1851 and sold by auction in 1938 and moved to Virgil, where it was rebuilt and still in use. This Henry Dell's father and his wife are buried in the cemetery called "Tom McCredies' Hill" on Lyon's Creek opposite Billie McCredies' home. This cemetery is older than the Dell Cemetery. Henry's father Basnett Dell died about 1808. He and his wife came to Canada in 1789.

THE EBENEZER CHURCH AT KABLETOWN on the front of Adam Kabel's farm, now Mrs Wilbert Detenbeck's on the Niagara Blvd was built by a German Sect who came from Buffalo in 1850. They moved to Buffalo and later to Iowa in 1870.

BLACK CREEK CHURCH: United Brethern on the River Road above Black Creek was organized in 1855. Michael Barnhardt was a blacksmith and gave the land and Menno Beam donated the lumber. About 1930 the Park Commission demolished it after using the site several years as a storage place. In 1962-3 the pastor of Stevensville United Brethern dedicated the original silver communion urn and 2 glass goblets of the first United Brethern Church in the Niagara District which was organized at Black Creek in 1855.

THE OLD MEETING HOUSE::: Sherk farm by river road.  
from the Ontario Historical papers Vo. XX1.

The Meeting house was built in 1824 by subscription, cash and labour. Jacob Gonder, great grandfather of Mr. G. Sherk was the chief promoter, and probably the originator of the project. The meeting hoise was built for all Ministers of all denominations to preach in; and also was used for some time as a school house.

Many early Methodist preachers held forth in the old meeting house. Meetings were held in the Meeting House, regularly by an early pioneer called Miller, who resided by the river. It is said that he belonged to the Church of the United Brethren in Penn., which at that time was desidedly German; and that when he came to Canada he formed a little communal Society which he called Mennonite, and thus they were not required to do military service. ( They had to pay a tax to the government to be exempt). He baptized his converts in the river.

This strip of land ( site of meeting house) 66ft. wide along the north side of my father's farm (Sherk) enclosed the mmmeting house, but was always considered part of the farm. The building was later moved a few rods further north to the Elias Sherk farm, with it's side towards the river. It was again used as a free Church, for Sunday School and the occassional Saboth meetings. After it's renovation ministers of the United Brethren preached in it.

page 427 & 428 of the Ont. Historical papers.