

DELL'S METHODIST CHURCH - 1851 to 1938

On May 13, 1851, Henry Dell, Sr., who was the oldest son of Basenett Dell and his wife, Ann Defields, who were United Empire Loyalists, and came to Canada in 1789, deeded one acre of land to the trustees for a Methodist Episcopal Church for five shillings. A cemetery and a site for a church called Dells' Chapel was to be erected here. Some of the trustees were Daniel Lambert, Peter Dell, William Dell, Thomas Dell and Jonathan Dell.

The Dell Cemetery was located at the rear of the church. The first internments were in 1847, 1849 and 1850, indicating that this was first, a family burial ground. The Dells who died earlier were buried in the Young, or old McCredie cemetery, on the banks of the Welland River, opposite from the Cyanamid Welland plant on Lyons Creek Road. There are over one hundred graves in the cemetery on Reixinger Road which are predominately Dell.

The church was a frame, clapboard building, facing the Reixinger Road and about sixty feet back in from the gate. It was a one-room building with a centre aisle. The twenty or so rows on either side were straight varnished pews, and those who sat for many hours found them most uncomfortable. The church was heated by a pot-bellied stove. Coal oil lamps hanging from fancy iron brackets, were fastened to the side walls.

The church had an organ, and a pulpit on a raised platform. Dr. Sydney Stokes and the late George Heximer purchased the pulpit, which is presently being used in Southminster United Church, Niagara Falls, Ont.

This church, for over seventy-five years, was the scene of Dell weddings, christenings and funerals. Generations of Dells received their religious education here and their social gatherings and family reunions centred around their church.

The Dell church was a part of the Welland circuit and later, the Port Robinson and Chippawa circuit. The ministers of this church are listed in the United Church Archives in Toronto and in the 'Book of Memories' by Dr. Sydney Stokes, who had the Dell church as his first charge in 1913-1914. One of the last to preach in this church was Dr. Harvey Forster