



St. Ambrose Anglican Church  
Baysville, Ontario

Established 1883



## JOHN AND ANN ROBERTS



This narrative is lovingly dedicated to the memory of John and Ann Roberts by the descendants of their daughter, Mary and her husband, William Curran. It is their sincere wish that it may enable others to recall their grand old ancestors who chose the Lake of Bays Mission "as their abiding city".

Mr. and Mrs. Roberts came to Baysville in 1915 from Cheshire, England. They brought their three youngest children with them. Mary (Mollie), Annie (Nancy) and Bill. An older son, Lea, came to the area earlier. Upon their arrival here, they stayed at the home of a cousin of Mrs. Roberts, Dr. Augustus Lea. His location on the Bracebridge road is now the property of Mr. J. Woods. In 1919 Lea purchased Rosebank Farm from the Deakins and the family moved there. Mollie had married two years before and was living in Bracebridge.

Over the years spent here the Roberts made an appreciable contribution to St. Ambrose. Their music abilities added to an already talented congregation. Mr. Roberts served on the building committee following the fire and his sons acted variously as sidesmen and wardens. Besides her thirty years as organist, Nancy also gave time as secretary-treasurer for the church.

Mr. Roberts passed away suddenly in 1925, but Mrs. Roberts lived another twenty-seven years. She died at Rosebank in 1950 at the age of 92. In his ten years at Baysville Mr. Roberts became a close friend of Canon Hazlehurst. During the difficult years of the early twenties he stood by the Rector lending valuable support. For his kindness Canon Hazlehurst presented him with a prayer book containing the following inscription:

*To J. J. Roberts  
From A. W. Hazlehurst  
Friendships sake.*

## FOREWORD

This history of St. Ambrose Church at Baysville, Ontario has been compiled after careful study of material derived from a variety of sources, principal among them being The Algoma Missionary News from 1876 to 1942. Also consulted were Church records, papers of Canon Hazlehurst, data in The Muskoka Herald, The Bracebridge Gazette and The Tweedsmuir History, the Ontario Census and records from the Muskoka Registry Office.

Several people graciously assisted in compiling the necessary material and to them I offer a sincere thanks: Christine Wright, Secretary to the Bishop of Algoma; Marthe Brown, Archivist for Laurentian University, Sudbury, where the Algoma archival material is in repository; Dorothy Kealey, Associate Archivist, Anglican National Archives, Toronto; the personnel of the Mississauga Library System; and the staff of the Bracebridge Registry Office.

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It has not always been possible to ascertain correct dates or details. On occasion there have been conflicting reports. In such cases, I have used material recorded at the time nearest to the event or by the persons most closely involved. Frequently, spellings of surnames varied in different sources. Those used have been verified by the National Anglican Archives. Previous writings about St. Ambrose have indicated that the first church was built at a much later date than was actually the case. This error is not without some justification due to the inaccessibility to early data and the lack of a chronological collection of material. Thanks to the faithful reports of Canon Hazlehurst we now have the correct and complete story of our Church.

Mississauga, Ontario  
July 1998

Sheila Klyn (Curran)

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## THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF ST. AMBROSE - BAYSVILLE, ONTARIO

To guide what'er we nobly do,  
With love all envy to subdue,  
To make all fortune turn to fair,  
And give us grace our wrongs to bear.

From the Latin of St. Ambrose

### PART I - INTRODUCTION

The following history relates to the Church of St. Ambrose, at Baysville, a church unique in name and outstanding in actions since its inception in 1883. Named for St. Ambrose, a Roman Catholic Bishop of Milan in the 4th century, it was a singular choice for an Anglican Church. It appears to be the only one in Canada to bear this title. We can only guess at the choice but we can be proud of our Church's accomplishments in the renowned Bishop's name. St. Ambrose was both a statesman and a theologian. Derived from the Greek, his name means "immortal", and being one of the four great Latin doctors of the Church, he is indeed immortal. A dominant figure of the 4th century, his every action portrayed a man of goodness and courage, but his lasting legacy to the Church lies in his hymns. Given the long history of music within St. Ambrose Church at Baysville, the name has proved to be an appropriate choice; and given the enduring religious strength with which our Anglicans have met their challenges, their work has been a fitting tribute to a great man. Early this century, Mrs. William Brown of Brown's Brae wrote about the early life of our pioneers in McLean Township. Although her words were directed at the community as a whole, they are also an accurate reflection on our Anglican ancestors. "The joys and sorrows, the cares and problems of these boys would fill a book. There must be pioneers in every township but we are indeed glad that these chose McLean as their abiding city."<sup>1</sup>

#### The Faith of Our Fathers

Throughout the century of pioneer settlement in Ontario, the great faith the settler had in his God and his religion, threaded its way into almost every home. In these final years of the twentieth century, when we can have our meals under way at the turn of a dial, complete our chores with the press of a button and be miles down the road in a few minutes, it is difficult to visualize this devotion and the strength it gave to the drive of our pioneer ancestors. It is difficult to understand how they accepted the extremes of climate, the heat in summer, the late spring and early fall frosts and the long cold winters when snow came early and often. It is difficult to understand their perseverance when the heart-breaking disasters of their primitive life occurred.

when accidents, fire, storms and pests destroyed all they had accomplished and diseases took their young families prematurely. But, above all, it is difficult to appreciate the devotion they could still give cheerfully, despite the many setbacks they endured. Never did they sit down to a meal without asking God's blessing on their food. For many families the day began or ended with a prayer or a reading from the Bible, a ritual so strictly adhered to that they set the clock by it. The Sabbath, too, was observed with the utmost reverence. It was a reverence that did not stop at their own doors but was applied to what they perceived as the good of the community. One township of the early days voted that "Notices be put up in the most public parts of the Township calling the attention of the Inhabitants of this Township to the existing Law of the Country prohibiting Labour on the Sabbath day and the punishment inflicted by a violation of this Law."<sup>2</sup> Sunday by-laws banned a good deal of what would be considered acceptable today. Often there could be no fishing in the trout streams or playing of noisy games like horseshoes. It was a day for quiet peace. Church services were held on a Sunday, not just once but regularly in the morning and evening.

This is not to say that our forefathers were of an officiously pious mind. They certainly displayed a grand sense of humour and enjoyed their lighter moments with concerts, dances, sports events and a host of other entertainment similar to ours today. They never missed an opportunity as noted when Mr. Deakin, a prominent Anglican, was planning his extension to Rosebank. All the talk amongst the young people centred around the plans for the upcoming house warming. Irreverent conduct was often a cause for concern, however. An early Free Methodist minister in Bracebridge found it necessary to address the problem of "foul language" heard on the town's streets. He attributed it to the lack of proper guidance for the young men who left their home environment to work in the lumber camps. In Baysville, direct action was taken against this problem when Constable Eheler had occasion to arrest a Saturday night reveler "for using bad language on our public streets....It is to be hoped that our young people will digest this lesson and behave themselves accordingly."<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, this concern for righteous well being influenced the lives of most young families in the early days and it is easy to appreciate the extent to which they were aware of it in their day to day lives. On April 18, 1889, the Baysville correspondent to The Muskoka Herald made his thoughts known on the moral prospects of the village. "The English Church minister, the Presbyterian student, the Free Methodist ladies, occasionally the Roman Catholic priest and several others, besides numerous lectures in our spacious hall, administer to a religious and moral community. With such material and spiritual advantages the future of Baysville is bright

indeed." While many of us would view this pioneer devotion as stern and uncompromising, it was as important to our people of the past as the bread and meat they put on their tables.

Wherein did the root of such devotion lay? Has it been eclipsed in our time by twentieth century technology? Perhaps the answers lie in the words of a contemporary of the early days. In 1836 Thomas Need made these observations when a place for worship was first made available at Bobcaygeon:

"March 9. Sunday. A day ever to be marked with a "white bean" in the annals of our settlement: for on it an humble building, which we had raised for the worship of God, was opened for divine service. The highly-esteemed clergyman of Peterboro' consented to officiate, and never I believe was there a more devout or attentive congregation assembled within the walls of a Christian church. Some time before the hour of our service, our settlers had taken their places, the women seated, and the men for the most part leaning in deep thought against the walls. Several were in tears, and all seemed much affected with the idea of being permitted once more to worship God after the manner of their fathers, in the rude wilderness; perhaps also they thought of friends separated from them for ever, who at the same hour were about to join in the same services with themselves, and wending their way to more costly but not more sincerely dedicated temples. They who are privileged to live within the sound of the church bells, and are in the habit of attending their summons at stated seasons as a thing of course, can scarcely enter into the feelings of the exile on such an occasion as the present, for his habit and mode of life, together with his (in most cases) eternal separation from all his friends, naturally leads him to rely less upon man and more upon his Maker. His undertakings, his successes, even the daily blessings of preservation and food, seem more immediately to flow from a particular Providence, and make him serious and thoughtful...There was but one feeling of devotion and gratitude apparent; and I am sure that not one of the party congregated retired without carrying with him home, and thence into his daily practice, a



spirit of closer union and brotherly love."<sup>4</sup>

### The Place of Worship

The need of a church for their services was not a pressing issue for the early Christian settlers. Often it was several years before a place for worship was erected, and most of these were referred to as "rude" structures. When the Reverend Hazlehurst described the lovely Church built at Baysville in 1898 he pronounced it "entirely different from the barn like buildings called churches that one sees scattered about the country."<sup>5</sup> Yet even the barn like buildings had to wait until the more urgent needs of the pioneer were met. It was usual in most settlements for the first services to be held in the log cabin of a settler. When schools were built they offered more space and were widely used for any group meetings including the Sunday services. Wherever settlements developed throughout Upper Canada so too did taverns spring up. Although it may be considered a mixed blessing, they also provided space for worship. Even in a town like York (Toronto), which was established by Governor Simcoe in 1794, the priority of a church building was not too urgent. It was not until 1803 that the first Anglican Church in York was even discussed. Two years after that it became a reality with the completion of St. James Church (now the cathedral). Until then the services were held in the Parliament Buildings. At first they were read by the schoolmaster but in 1800 the Reverend George Stewart, a missionary, arrived in York and took over the duties.

When the townships were in the planning stage a certain amount of land was reserved for church purposes. In the following tale it is not known what the lasting effects were on the spirit of cooperation, but it is an amusing story. In one small village southeast of Ottawa, the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches were each allotted their land. One Protestant group (I would like to think it was the Anglicans) worked very hard and soon had a building ready for use while the Roman Catholics showed no sign of making a start. Imagine the pride of the early group that trooped off to their church on the first Sunday morning and imagine the dismay they felt when they found only an empty space where their lovely new church had stood not twelve hours earlier. A short distance down the road the Catholics were happily attending Mass in the brand new building. During the midnight hours they had stealthily moved it on skids to their site, -- pioneer ingenuity prevailing over pioneer industry! (Note: the name of the village was "Curran").

## PART II - THE CHURCH OF ST. AMBROSE

While St. Ambrose of Baysville may not have been part of any such caper, it does have a long and varied history. Four buildings have graced the church hill to accommodate its congregation. Three of these have been known as the Church of St. Ambrose. The old school purchased after the fire of 1919 was generally referred to as the Church Hall, but until the new building was ready the Church Hall provided space for services for over three years following the fire. The first steps to build at Baysville predated even the buildings that were completed. In one report to the Diocese, the Reverend Hazlehurst noted that shortly after the church property was purchased a building was started. This became the victim of a storm and was blown down where it lay until the actual first church was erected.

#### The First Church

The first building to be completed was erected in the autumn of 1882. Expecting a visit in January from the Bishop of Algoma, the Right Reverend Edward Sullivan, the congregation hurried to have a building ready. From all accounts it seems to have been little more than the roof and four walls. A report from The Muskoka Herald referred to it as "the church hall...finished up to a point". On Tuesday, January 16, 1883, the Bishop held an evening service in it and followed this with a business meeting during which plans were made to complete the building. At the end of the following year, Bishop Sullivan was again in Baysville to hold an evening service on December 9th, 1884. In his report of this visitation he remarked that "the 7 o'clock service at Baysville was held in the little frame church now dedicated to St. Ambrose."<sup>6</sup> He went on to say that although there were few families and their services had been conducted by lay readers without benefit of a minister for almost a year, "they still showed a practical interest in the improvement of their church".<sup>7</sup> With some help from outside and through their own efforts they had amassed between three and four hundred dollars enabling them to put a good roof on the building, do the plastering and add windows, as well as fence the grounds. Much was still needed, particularly within the church, but a debt of twenty dollars made it necessary to defer further spending at that time.

#### The New Church

Over ten years passed before Baysville became a mission on its own, independent of the minister at Bracebridge. Until then no separate records were kept for Baysville and developments occurring in the interval

are not available. In 1898 it was decided that a larger building would be built using a grant from the S.P.C.K. (Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge). This building was ready for its official opening on February 12, 1899. At that time the little building that had been in use since January 12, 1885, became the Parish Hall and Sunday School. The new church presented an imposing picture in the village. Standing as it did on its hill, it arose some sixty feet from the ground at its east end to the cross on the turret. The Reverend Hazlehurst left us a good description of its interior.

"The church consists of nave, chancel, apse, vestry and porch, with a crypt underneath, large enough for furnace-room and guild-hall, or any purpose of that kind, if required. There is a beautiful triplet window in the east end, which has been erected by the Sunday School scholars, in memory of their late friend and teacher, Andrew I. Swanzy-Slemmont. This window has been pronounced by the Bishop, and, in fact, by all who have seen it, a marvel of beauty. It has been executed by N. T. Lyon, Toronto. The figure in the centre panel is the Good Shepherd, the outer ones, St. John and St. Peter. There are also seven very pretty figured windows, the gift of the incumbent and Mrs. Hazlehurst. The church is finished inside with hardwood put in diagonally, both on walls and ceiling, which not only gives it a pretty appearance, but also does away with any sameness that might otherwise exist."<sup>8</sup>

The church was designed to seat one hundred in the nave and an additional fifteen in the chancel. On its opening, however, it held one hundred and fifty quite easily. The ceremonies of that day marked a very proud moment in the story of St. Ambrose. Two years after its opening, on Whitsunday in 1901, the Reverend Thorneloe, Bishop of Algoma, consecrated this Church of St. Ambrose to the service of God. The first church had not been consecrated. An effort was made to have it and the parsonage spruced up for this milestone, but the exterior work was cut short by a prolonged period of wet weather.

#### The Fire

It was expected that the two original churches would stand permanently to serve the Anglican

congregation of Baysville, but fate took a hand eighteen years later. On September 3rd, 1919 a fire of unknown origin swept through the two buildings about 1:30 in the morning. It apparently started in the basement of the church but was too far advanced before the alarm was given for anything to be saved from within the church. The Sunday School building, which stood too close, was burned also.

It was a very sad and difficult time for Canon Hazlehurst and his people but they carried on immediately. On the following Sunday they met in the Town Hall, but during the next week the old public school and its property were purchased for \$100. This property, which was adjacent to the St. Ambrose land, consisted of three lots, each one-fifth of an acre. One of the saddest ceremonies to take place in this temporary little church occurred only two months later with the death of Mrs. Helena Hazlehurst, wife of the minister. She passed away suddenly on November the 26th from cardiac failure. His Grace, the Archbishop of Algoma, made a special visit to officiate at her funeral which took place on Tuesday, December 2nd. The little building, so recently converted to the church's use, was filled to overflowing with a sorrowing congregation. In January The Algoma Missionary News made these comments: "Mrs. Hazlehurst was remarkable for her devotion and practical helpfulness. She was a most loyal member of the church, who lost no opportunity of advocating its claims. She rests from her labours and her good works follow her."

### The Rebuilding

The little old school house was intended to be used for only a brief time until a new church could rise again from the ashes of the old one, but times had altered since the previous buildings had been erected. Following the First World War we entered into the age of the "cash society". Within a few weeks of the fire a sum of \$400 had been gathered but this was an insignificant drop in the bucket. A dance held by The Women's Auxiliary in 1921 brought in about \$30 for the building fund. Twenty years earlier this would have been considered a very worthy sum but inflation and the need for ready money had come to Baysville, although the village was still mainly a cashless society. The cost of the old church had been \$1800 but a new one could not be built for anything less than \$4000, a conservative estimate at that. Apart from the small amounts raised from church activities and private gifts, the only money forthcoming was \$1250 from the insurance on the grossly under-insured buildings that had burned. Owing to these circumstances the congregation had to resign itself to the idea that a new church was out of the question for the immediate future. Nevertheless, they

immediately organized a committee to coordinate the new church plans and ensure that every channel was explored to add to the building fund. Its members were Mr. George Alldred, Mrs. Emma Ellis, Mr. and Mrs. John King and Mr. John Roberts. In the spring of 1921 a start was made on the foundations. On Thursday, April 28th The Muskoka Herald reported: "Mr. Piper has completed the cement foundation for the new English Church. Mr. John Flynn of Bracebridge did the cement work and did a solid job." On June 21st The Algoma Missionary News carried further information.

"The church people of Baysville in the beautiful Lake of Bays district, have begun work on the new St. Ambrose Church which is to replace the beautiful little building which was destroyed by fire in September 1919. Canon Hazlehurst writes that the foundation is practically completed, and the joists are in place ready for the floor.

"The erection of the church is a heavy task for the small band of people in the mission; and we trust they may not be left without assistance in their effort."<sup>10</sup>

Little more was reported of the building activity but it seems that the construction did not move ahead as quickly as in 1898. By the spring of 1922 a building was in place and the congregation hurried to have it insured for \$2000, but it still required work inside before it could be opened for use. On October 26th The Muskoka Herald reported that "St. Ambrose church is nearing completion and rumor has it that it will be opened about the 1st of November." On November 9th Bishop Thorneloe visited Baysville for a Confirmation Service. If the church was that near completion then it is certain that it would have been used for this service. We can imagine the pleasure the day brought to the three young ladies presented for the rite of confirmation in the new Church. They were Miss Hazel Vanclieaf, Miss Myrtie Rowe and Miss Kathleen Brown. This was not the first ceremony to be performed in the rebuilt St. Ambrose. Four days earlier Miss Margaret Curran was baptized on November 5th. On a return visit on July 29th the next summer, Bishop Thorneloe officially opened the new St. Ambrose which was every bit as beautiful as its forerunner. Unlike the other buildings, it was of brick construction and so, less susceptible to fire.

## PART III - THE BAYSVILLE MISSION

The documented story of the activity in the Anglican Mission at Baysville begins on the 5th of April, 1880 with the purchase of two village lots, 45 and 46 on River Street. This transaction was completed by the Bishop of Algoma, the Right Reverend Frederick Fauquier. Beautifully located on a high point of land in the village, they were a marvellous gift to Baysville Anglicans for all time. In April 1899, The Algoma Missionary News recorded the opinions of both the Bishop of Algoma and the incumbent, The Reverend Hazlehurst, regarding the location. Speaking at the official opening of the new church on February 12, 1899, the Reverend Canon Thorneloe explained the use of rituals in the services of the Church of England including the position of St. Ambrose "standing on the hill and overlooking the village, as though it would cast a blessing on all around it; and with its turret pointed heavenwards teaching everyone a lesson on the great duty of life, viz., to prepare to meet our God."<sup>10</sup> The incumbent had this to say: "The building stands on a hill, overlooking the whole village, and can be seen a long distance away by the traveller approaching Baysville. In fact, it is the first object that strikes upon the view."<sup>11</sup> Being basically a farming and logging community at the time, Baysville stood in an area of open fields which gave the site an even greater prominence than it has today. Sadly in 1958 the original location was somewhat eroded when the highway came to sweep by the church door. Even so, any bride can still feel that the joy of her wedding is enhanced by the beautiful setting. In one brief and vague comment that Reverend Hazlehurst has left with us, one cannot help but wonder if this advantageous site was the centre of an early controversy when the Anglicans prepared to erect their first building. He states in his papers: "In the early days the Church encountered real opposition from other bodies." Unfortunately, he did not elaborate further and we can only speculate.

Whatever the problems may have been, St. Ambrose has stood on the church hill for over a century. It was there when the great log drives were sent over the dam on their way to the mills in Bracebridge. It has seen the villagers gathered for countless events -- regattas, fairs, ball games and hockey games. It saw the school moved away to its new site across the village before disappearing altogether; just as it saw the children who had skated on the bog to the west, move to the open air rink beside the new school and finally into the present arena; and in the days before the highway removed half of its hill, it watched over these children as they sledged down its slopes. From the days of the sturdy, old pioneers, to the present time, it has stood on top its hill and served its people well.

### The Beginning

While the purchase of the land for St. Ambrose may be on record at the Registry Office, it is not known what steps took place to initiate such action. However, on May 1st, 1879, one year previous, the Right Reverend Fauquier paid a visit to the little log church at Stoneleigh. It is most probable that the devoted people from Baysville would have made every effort to attend their Bishop's service. Perhaps the ground work for the purchase of the land for St. Ambrose took place at that time. Sadly, no records have been left for us to piece together these activities.

### Andrew Swanzy-Slemmont

While there is no way we can determine the roll played by each early Anglican, the Reverend Hazlehurst leaves no doubt in his writings regarding the man he felt was "the real founder of the church here in Baysville" and that was Andrew I. Swanzy-Slemmont. His proper name is no longer clear to us today. When describing the window in the church dedicated to his memory, Reverend Hazlehurst recorded it as Andrew I. Swanzy-Slemmont; the Ontario Government dropped the hyphen in the Death Records; and when he signed his name he dropped the "Swanzy" altogether. Mr. Slemmont was in the Baysville area by 1881. At that time he lived with the family of William Tooke before acquiring property of his own on Shewfelt Lake. He was born in County Armagh, Ireland, about 1829, to a family of Huguenot background. Originally destined to enter the church, he was given an education suited to that profession, but as a young man he set out to see something of the world. During the American Civil War he served in the army of the United States. Unfortunately he received a crippling wound, having the toes shot off his foot. Following the war he came to Canada and eventually employment as a clerk and timekeeper with a lumber company brought him to Baysville. His early education enabled him to fill various positions in the village. He appears in early records as the Township Clerk and the Registrar for Births, Marriages and Deaths for the United Townships of McLean and Ridout. He also wrote Baysville news for The Muskoka Herald. Mr. Slemmont died on September the 9th, 1895 in McLean Township. No record was been found for his burial but it is possible that he was interred in the Baysville Cemetery. In a report to the Diocese regarding the development of St. Ambrose, the Reverend Hazlehurst wrote the following description of Mr. Slemmont's contribution to the church.

"Finding there was no church and no church service here he set to work & started to hold a

Sunday School, walking seven miles every Sunday for that purpose. He commenced his S. School with one scholar, a little girl, & then the next Sunday a boy came to the S. S. & that really was the start of the Church here.

"Some time after him starting his little Sunday School class, he was sent by the firm he worked for, a distance too far for him to attend to his school, & when he eventually came back, he found his little flock had drifted during his absence, to the Presbyterian Sunday School. So the first Sunday he went right to the Presbyterian S. S. & demanded his children (he was Godfather to a number of them) back, & got them. After his death his old S. S. scholars erected a very nice memorial window to his memory in the new Church. He started the Church here on good Church lines; & it has been good going ever since. It was not hard to follow in the path of such a good old Churchman. It was a pleasure."

Reverend Hazlehurst arrived in Baysville in 1894 as the first minister, and it was not until September the following year that Mt. Swanzy-Slemmont passed away. These two early St. Ambrose men came to know each other well although it was for a very short time.

#### Visits from the Bishop

The initial visit from a Bishop of Algoma took place on Tuesday, January 16th, 1883, when the Right Reverend Edward Sullivan made an annual tour of Muskoka. In the early days the Bishop made every effort to visit the mission stations as regularly as possible to be able to assist in their development. The Reverend Boydell of Bracebridge referred to it as his annual confirmation tour. It was an apt description since Archbishop Thorneloe confirmed ninety persons from Baysville and its outstations during his thirty years. Unless there was some special occurrence, however, these visits may not have taken place within a twelve month period, but rarely were they as much as two years apart. Generally they followed a defined pattern. On each occasion the Bishop held a service in the church followed by a Vestry meeting to discuss the needs of the church. Often the wardens and sidesmen were selected at this time.

The first Bishops set a grueling pace in establishing the Diocese of Algoma on its path of religious service. They dedicated themselves to their duty, travelling by any means possible over their far-reaching area. -



canoe, steamer, snow-shoe or horse and buggy, they used them all. During the summer their work took them to the northern regions, but for the first twenty years visits to the Muskoka missions were usually scheduled for the late fall or wintertime when severe weather often dictated the means of reaching their people, but seldom deterred them. When the Bishop arrived in Gravenhurst in December 1884, he was faced with a thaw which was reeking havoc on the roads because of the unusually heavy amount of snow that had come early in the season. The first area visited was Draper Township where he held services at Ferrishill, Uffington and Purbrook. In a private letter home on December 8th, he reported the transportation problems encountered. He and the Reverend Osborne of Gravenhurst left town on Friday morning by cutter. They returned on a lumber wagon on Sunday morning just in time for Church services, their horses hitched on behind and the cutter left eight miles back. Although he expressed fear that he would not be able to reach all the outstations, by the time he arrived at Bracebridge winter had returned solving the problem for the remainder of his visit, during which he covered eighty miles and had good sleighing throughout. He travelled from Gravenhurst to Bracebridge on the small steamer 'Lake Joseph'. Upon arrival there he set out immediately for Baysville where he held his seven o'clock service in St. Ambrose. The following morning he went on to Stoneleigh in spite of a Scotch drizzle.

The high degree of importance of these visits to the congregations was remarked on frequently over the years. On February 3rd 1890 the Reverend James Boydel of Bracebridge, wrote to The Algoma Missionary News noting "we are always glad to see our Bishop for his own sake, and as an influence for good, strengthening the hands of the clergy, and fully incorporating and identifying himself with their work. Long may he be spared to us." On March 1st in 1898 the Reverend Hazlehurst also stated his views in The Algoma Missionary News: "These visits of the Bishop are anxiously looked forward to by the Church people here, and pleasantly looked back upon when he has gone."

#### Confirmations

During the Bishop's visits, any person wishing to be confirmed was presented to him at that time. Since he usually came during the wintery months, it was a rare occasion when illness or weather conditions did not prevent some of these people from attending although they had been prepared to do so. In his 1890 letter the Reverend Boydel wrote: "About half the candidates at the three stations (Baysville, Bracebridge,

Faulkenburg) were incapacitated through the prevailing epidemic." After 1905, Bishop Thorneloe began scheduling his tours during more clement weather, but winter illnesses were always devastating for early people. In 1923 Canon Hazlehurst requested to have Church Records note "that through the divine providence of God this congregation has suffered no losses by death during last winter's severe sicknesses."<sup>12</sup> Throughout the winter months of 1923, news from Baysville in both Bracebridge papers carried reports almost weekly of severe instances of pneumonia and influenza.

The first Confirmation service at Baysville took place on February 22nd, 1888. "Mrs. William Took, Mrs. William Shewfelt, Miss Lillie Langmaid, Miss Agnes Newton and Miss Maggie Ellis were admitted to full communion in the Church of Christ by the Apostolic Ordinance of the 'laying on of hands'....A glad sight it was to the few churchmen here, who walk in the old paths, to see these five - the first fruits in Baysville - renewing in the presence of God and of the congregation, their triple vow: 'To fight all evil, To believe the Creed, To obey the Commandments,' by the help of God, to the end of their lives."<sup>13</sup> Indeed, it must have been a very proud moment for these five people to be part of the first confirmation class presented to the Bishop in St. Ambrose Church.

While today it might seem easy to attend classes and be prepared for the rite of Confirmation when the Bishop visits, it was not a simple matter in earlier times. Miss Blanche Piper recalls that her father, Richard Piper, was prepared for confirmation by the minister at Bracebridge. To receive his instruction, he walked the eight miles from the Piper farm on Stoneleigh Lake, to St. Thomas' Church in Bracebridge. At a later time, Mr. Lloyd, a catechist under the incumbent at Bracebridge, travelled throughout the area to prepare those wishing to be confirmed. During the fall of 1891, he prepared six candidates in Ridout to be presented to the Bishop on his visit in January, but by then the roads were in such poor condition that they could not get to the church in Baysville.

#### The Early Ministry

Throughout the settlement of pioneer Ontario it was always difficult to have the benefit of a minister on an occasional basis let alone regularly. The rapid growth of people far exceeded the numbers of minister available to meet their needs. In 1833, Thomas Radcliff residing near London, Ontario, wrote to his father,

the Reverend Thomas Radcliff of Dublin, describing the problems: "I repeat, that it is of the utmost importance to send us men of character and high religious attainments, deeply convinced of the responsibility attached to their calling, and determined that every other pursuit, and care, shall be secondary to the great purpose, for which they are designed, and to which they should be principally devoted."<sup>14</sup> The situation was in no way changed when the Right Reverend Frederick Fauquier became the first Bishop of Algoma. From the earliest days our Bishops made frequent visits to England in search of energetic, young laymen to serve in the missions. As late as 1924 Archbishop Thorneloe was in England for this purpose. In his book, Northern Exposure, the Reverend Richard Warder, second incumbent at Baysville, relates that the great works of this man so inspired him that he called on his Grace at that time to offer his services to the Diocese of Algoma.

Since the benefit of the clergy was as difficult to come by in Baysville as elsewhere, it was very fortunate that the St. Ambrose congregation had Mr. Slemmont in their midst in the early days. His original training would surely have been put to good use in supplying their needs. At first Baysville and Stoneleigh were part of the Bracebridge Mission, but owing to distances and difficulty in travelling, Baysville, at least, had to rely on its own people for the most part, although in Stoneleigh there may have been more regular assistance. On a visitation there in 1876, Bishop Fauquier held a service in a private home, possibly that of Mr. Charles Piper on whose land their little log church was built. Following the service decisions were made for the construction of the church in which the Minister from Bracebridge would hold a Sunday service every other week. A layman was chosen by the congregation and approved by the Bishop to conduct services on the other Sundays.

On this trip to Muskoka the Bishop appointed Mr. W. K. Lloyd as Lay Reader to assist the Reverend J. Cole of Bracebridge. How many services at Baysville were actually taken by these two men is difficult to assess. In the beginning the ministers' visits were infrequent and mostly arranged for a special service such as the baptism of several children. In his notes the Reverend Hazlehurst indicated that there were seven families belonging to St. Ambrose in 1883. Through this small group the word of God was steadily maintained for several years without significant assistance from the clergy. Tradition has it that the minister from Bracebridge would arrive in Baysville on his bicycle. It seems most likely that this occurred after the original days, perhaps in the 1890s. Later Reverend Warder acquired a bicycle with the idea that it would enable him to visit his families on a regular basis. However, the sandy hills curtailed its use and he resorted to horse and buggy until

he purchased a car.

By 1890 the back roads of Muskoka had improved considerably allowing more regular visits from the Reverend Boydell or his counterpart from Port Sydney. On Wednesday, October 28th, 1891 the Reverend A. H. Allman of Port Sydney, was at Baysville to administer the sacrament of Baptism to six children. The news in The Muskoka Herald stated that the entire service was very impressive and that the congregation paid great attention throughout. No doubt the people were very glad to be able to receive regular attention from the clergy and relieved that the sacraments would be administered to themselves and their children more readily.

On August 1st, 1889, The Muskoka Herald reported that Mr. Burt, a missionary student from Trinity College, had arrived at Baysville, noting also that he would be taking services at Dorset. This was the first opportunity that the people at that end of the lake had had to enjoy Anglican services. Mr. Burt returned again as lay-reader the following summer. His imminent arrival was noted in The Algoma Missionary News of July 1890, in a report from the Reverend Boydell. By 1891 at least, Mr. Lloyd was making regular visits to Stoneleigh, Baysville and beyond to the more remote settlers in Ridout and the Dorset area, "a duty involving many a hard walk on all sorts of roads and in all kinds of weather."<sup>15</sup>

#### Mr. Alexander W. Hazlehurst

In his report of Mr. Burt's arrival the Reverend Boydell expressed the need of "an earnest-minded man residing on the spot, so that the Church's service may be held uninterrupted." He called it the only way to maintain interest in the Church. The Bishop must have had similar ideas when he appointed Alexander William Hazlehurst to a permanent position in Baysville in 1894. On December 15th, The Algoma Missionary News reported: "Mr. Hazlehurst, for a long time catechist at North Bay, where he assisted the Reverend A. J. Young, is now at Baysville, in which mission he works under the supervision of Reverend J. Boydell, of Bracebridge." Mr. Hazlehurst was 31 when he arrived in Baysville and when he left, thirty-three years later, he was almost 65. He was born at Halderstone, in Staffordshire, England, on December 23rd, 1862. Emigrating to Canada in 1893, he worked with the Anglican Churches in both Sudbury and North Bay before coming to Baysville. When he arrived he had not yet been made a deacon, but this was soon changed. On Trinity Sunday

1895, he was presented for the Order of Deacons at St. Albans Church in Toronto and ordained by the Bishop of Toronto. The following year, on June 11th, St. Barnabas Day, he was ordained priest by the Bishop of Algoma. St. Ambrose then had its first minister. His was a ministry that lasted a third of a century in Baysville, terminating on November 29th, 1927 when he went to Bruce Mines in Northern Ontario.

With Mr. Hazlehurst's arrival, the Baysville Mission Station came into being. Reverend Boydell described its extent in The Algoma Missionary News in December 1894. "Working under me, and in charge of Baysville, Stoneleigh, and Dorset, I have a catechist, Mr. Hazlehurst, whose sphere of duty extends to a distance of twenty miles beyond Baysville, where he resides, and eight miles in an opposite direction to Stoneleigh, which makes a walk of sixteen miles or so, over very bad and hilly roads. Stoneleigh is an old station....Dorset is a new station." The people of the Baysville Mission thought very highly of their new minister, a fact often remarked on by visitors. His replacement, the Reverend Warder, expressed his thoughts on his predecessor in glowing words: "For thirty-three years he has administered faithfully, not only in Baysville, but in various points on the Lake of Bays. He established a very definite Church tradition, a tradition which made it a great joy for the one who last year succeeded him to take up the work. The people all speak with great affection of their former priest."<sup>16</sup>

#### Growth of the Church

Many developments took place during the Reverend Hazlehurst's tenure at Baysville. Not the least of these was the celebration of all the church festivals. He might have been justifiably proud of his first Lenten Season.

"For the first time in the history of the Church at Baysville has the holy season of Lent been made use of by special services. These services have been held every Friday evening during Lent, and consisted of litany and short addresses. During Holy Week service was held every evening, and consisted of litany and review of the chief events of the Saviour's life as they transpired during that week of our Blessed Lord's life upon earth. These services were well attended, and the addresses were listened to with particular attention, and, with God's blessing, will doubtless be productive of good results for the Church here in the future."<sup>17</sup>

We are very fortunate to have this faithful reporting of the Reverend Hazlehurst still available. Not only does it give us the opportunity to see inside the doors of the St. Ambrose of 100 years ago, but it also gives us food for thought regarding our own place in the history of the Church 2000 years after the birth of Christ.

#### The Parsonage

Within two years of Reverend Hazlehurst's arrival, Lot 43 on River St. was acquired for the purpose of a rectory. This convenient spot, which was only two doors east of the church, was purchased by the Bishop of Algoma on May 20th, 1896 for the sum of \$50. The Hazlehursts purchased Lot 56 on Spruce St. directly behind the parsonage. They later gave this to the Church. During the autumn months of 1896, the congregation again arose to the occasion when they built the parsonage for their minister and his wife Helena. Reverend Hazlehurst showed great pride in his congregation when he reported this newest undertaking to The Algoma Missionary News in April of 1897.

"The Church people here have been very busy this fall building a parsonage. It was a big undertaking for our small congregation, as we have had no help from either diocesan or any outside source whatever. We have only some dozen Church families in the village, but all have done some little towards the erection of the parsonage. So far, we have a debt on the house of \$230, but that is comparatively small - the house as it stands now, with the grounds, being worth from \$600 to \$650. When completed it will be worth about \$950."

This building was home to four incumbents at Baysville prior to 1941 when the Society of St. John the Evangelist from Bracebridge took over the mission at Baysville. Following the departure of Reverend Hazlehurst, the Reverend Warder arrived to take up residence in its spacious rooms in December of 1927. It was here that he brought his bride, Anna Brewer of Sault Ste. Marie, in October 1928. Their first child was a son, Richard Ambrose, born on April 4th, 1930. He could not have arrived on a more suitable date, April 4th being designated as a St. Ambrose Day.<sup>18</sup> No other child has been born to an incumbent. A daughter, Joan, was adopted into the Warder family in 1933 when Reverend Warder was temporarily in charge of All Saints at Huntsville. It would seem that later incumbents have been reluctant to follow the remarkable precedent set by

Richard Ambrose.

When the Reverend Warder left Baysville permanently in 1934 he was replaced by the Reverend Rutherford Tindle. He and his wife Mary, with their son John and two daughters, Joyce and Mary, were the third family to live at the parsonage.

The Reverend Canon Banks was the last incumbent to reside there. He arrived in June 1938 from a leave of absence due to the ill health of his wife, Mrs. Gertrude Banks. Mrs. Banks passed away at Bracebridge on April 19th, 1939. A solemn requiem mass was held in St. Thomas' Church with the Venerable W. A. Burt, Archdeacon of Muskoka, being the celebrant. Although her illness had prevented Mrs. Banks from being at the parsonage in Baysville for long, it is important to appreciate the contribution to St. Ambrose of the wives of our first ministers. They each gave remarkable service in support of their husbands as well as in their own work within the church. In June 1939 The Algoma Missionary News reported Mrs. Banks' death, giving this insight to her character: "Mrs. Banks bore her long illness with faith, courage and patience. Long after many others would have given up she attended four (or even five) services on Sunday, playing the organ at two mission churches, and travelling some fifty miles with her husband." When Canon Banks came to Baysville he was accompanied by his youngest son Cuthbert whose stay was of short duration. When war broke out in 1939 he joined the 48th Highlanders Regiment and served overseas shortly thereafter. Canon Banks left Baysville in 1940 and from that time the parsonage has no longer been home to our ministers. It was sold on the 7th of September 1942, to Mr. and Mrs. Roy Vancleaf. Four years later it became the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Lawson and their family. Today it is the home of Mr. and Mrs. John Lovatsis.

For forty-five years the parsonage on River Street in Baysville was the home of Anglican ministers in the Lake of Bays Mission, but when a permanent minister was again appointed to the area in 1955, it was more expedient to locate the rectory in Dorset where it is centrally located in the circle of churches which make up the Lake of Bays Mission. This is currently the home of the Reverend Tom Cunningham and his wife Shirley, who live there with their two daughters, Heather and Erin.

### The Second Church

Following the completion of the parsonage the next big building step was the construction of the second church in 1898. It opened officially on Sunday, February 12th, 1899, "a memorable day in the annals of Baysville."<sup>19</sup> Indeed it was a memorable day. Three services marked this auspicious event. The first at 8:00 a.m. was a celebration of Holy Communion conducted by the incumbent, Reverend Hazlehurst. It seems very fitting that this man who served St. Ambrose and the community for one third of a century, should be the celebrant at the first service held in the new church. Shortly before service time it was noted that the mercury reading had plummeted to -50° Fahrenheit. Notwithstanding, twenty parishioners arrived to share the historic moment. It should be remembered that Baysville in those days was an early farming and lumbering community in a back township of Ontario and many farm chores would have been completed before church time. Further, while some arrived by team and sleigh, many walked several miles to present themselves. We of today should stand in awe of such great devotion.

At 10:30 that morning, a second service was attended by some one hundred and fifty persons. Although the church was built to accommodate one hundred in the nave and another fifteen in the chancel, Reverend Hazlehurst noted that "they did not seem to be in the least overcrowded." The service began with an address from Bishop Thorneloe and the unveiling of a memorial window in the east end of the church. It was given by the Sunday School pupils in memory of the late Mr. Andrew I. Swanzy-Slemmont, the man who left no stone unturned to ensure that the children received biblical teaching. When the unveiling ceremony was completed, the service of morning prayer then proceeded. After this Reverend Hazlehurst presented three young people to the Bishop for the rite of confirmation. They included Gilbert Vipond, William Langmaid and Sarah Anna Shewfelt. The morning prayer ended with a choral service of Holy Communion, the Bishop being celebrant. For those who had travelled a distance, a substantial dinner awaited them in the church hall, courtesy of the ladies of The Women's Auxiliary. The day concluded with a choral service at evening prayer.

While the day was unique in itself, it also marked the culmination of a very outstanding year in the history of St. Ambrose Church - a year orchestrated by outstanding people. Many villagers today can claim their descent from these first families - Ellis, Langmaid, Newton, Piper, Rhodes, Rowe and Smith to name only a few. In a visit to St. Ambrose on January 12th in 1898, one year before the new church opened, Bishop



Thorneloe had occasion to meet with The Women's Auxiliary. He spoke to them of the need for a new church noting that a grant of 100 pounds from the S.P.C.K. (Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge) was available and could be applied to this end. He suggested that the first church, which had served for over fifteen years, could be left standing to serve as church hall and Sunday school. This building had never been consecrated. Obviously the Bishop knew the group to approach, or perhaps Reverend Hazlehurst did. Whatever the case, the ladies did happen to be at the parsonage that day and there were results. By the mid summer of 1898, the construction of Baysville's new Anglican church was under way beside the original church. On Wednesday, August the 3rd the incumbent spoke the following, perhaps at the laying of the cornerstone.

"O Almighty God, who has built Thy Church upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the head corner stone; grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their doctrine, that we may be made an holy temple acceptable unto Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Amen). Consecrate, O Lord, this building to Thy honour and glory. Bless the congregations that shall be from time to time gathered within its walls. Let Thy holy spirit hover over them, and guide them in their devotions. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Is the devout prayer of the most humble servant

A. W. Hazlehurst.<sup>120</sup>

The wardens who served the church 100 years ago were probably present that day. Robert Ellis was one, a family name that needs no introduction to the villagers of today. The other was Edward Deakin who owned Rosebank Farm at the time. His great grandson, John King, has his cottage on a piece of the original property.

Throughout the year the Baysville news correspondent to The Muskoka Herald kept the villagers abreast of the developments of the new church. On August 4th the news read: "The foundation of the new English church is completed and the other work will be proceeded with shortly. Mr. W. Bushnell will have charge of the building operations." The foundation was built by Mr. Robert Rhodes, a stone mason who lived in the village. As in the case of the wardens there are those still living in the area who are descended from his

family, Mrs. Evelyn Burke now in Huntsville and Mr. Leonard Vanclieaf of Glenmount. Their mother Mrs. Daniel Vanclieaf, was born Annie Rhodes.

On September 1st, a few short weeks later, our good correspondent again reported the progress. It was noted that the roof of the English Church was finished and that the inside work would begin. On October 27th the news again carried a report that the work had been "progressing favourably" and that "the outside was almost finished and looked well."

Progress certainly was favourable throughout the whole year. In such a very short time the people of St. Ambrose had their beautiful church completed, - a worthy testimony to the strength and character of our early pioneer families. Following the Bishop's first tour of inspection, a mere thirteen months after he had first broached the possibility of a new church to The Women's Auxiliary, Reverend Hazlehurst wrote the following in his report in The Algoma Missionary News, April 1899.

"To say that the Bishop was pleased with the church would be to put it mildly. He pronounced the church to be of a type that was entirely new in the smaller places of the diocese - and, to tell the truth, it would astonish some of the larger places too - insomuch that it was churchy in every sense of the word. It is entirely different from the barn like buildings called churches that one sees scattered about the country."

#### The Consecration of the New Church

In 1901, two years after the church was officially opened, an impressive ceremony took place on Whitsunday, May 26th. At a morning service held at 10:30 the beautiful Church of St. Ambrose was consecrated. The account written by Reverend Hazlehurst leaves us with no doubt that it was a stirring moment in the history of the Church and of Baysville.

"The Bishop was met by the incumbent, churchwardens, and sidesmen, on the steps of the church porch. The petition for consecration was read by the incumbent, after which the procession, consisting of the above mentioned officers of the church in the proper order,

followed by the Bishop, marched slowly up the aisle reading Psalm xxiv; then the service was gone through in due order, after which hymn 395 (A. & M.) was sung.

"During Morning Prayer nine persons were presented by the Incumbent for the apostolic rite of the laying on of hands. The Bishop preached on the three great events of this great day, viz. (1) The descent of the Holy Spirit on the first day of Pentecost, consecrating those first disciples for their life work; (2) the consecration of the lives of those newly confirmed to a life of work for God. (3) the consecration of our Church to the service of God. The Bishop took his text from Acts ii, 1. The great events of the day were closely linked together, and were so beautifully explained and illustrated by the Bishop that they carried a lesson to the heart of the crowded congregation - a lesson that they took home with them, and that they will remember for many a long day. God grant it may be a life lesson. Those newly confirmed were greatly impressed....Altogether, the service extended over two hours and a half."

"The Bishop preached again in the evening from the text, Ephesians iv. 30."

"Altogether, the day was a beautiful one, the weather being fine, thus enabling a good number of people to come to the services whose homes were, some of them, eleven miles away from Baysville."

"This day will always be talked about by our Church people. It will live in their lives and memories until God shall call them to that better house of His, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."<sup>21</sup>

It is difficult to imagine the depth of feeling experienced by the nine people presented to the Bishop. To be confirmed on a day that was doubly special would be an awe inspiring experience. Those nine people who could proudly claim it as their day of Confirmation included Arvilla Alldred, Thirza Grist, Laura Kelly (the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Timothy Kelly), John King, Jennie Rhodes, Alice Rowe, John Rowe, Louise Shewfelt and Mary Tooke.

#### The Early 1900s

While St. Ambrose was busy erecting its new place of worship and conducting the special services that went with its opening, it was not the only group considering the need for a church. In the latter part of the

1890s the residents in the Fox Point area had been holding services in private homes and the school house. A catechist by the name of Mr. Harold King, under the incumbent at Huntsville, conducted the work of the Church. In 1900 a building committee was formed to organize the construction of a permanent church. It was made up of Mr. King, Mr. H. Crump, of Ronville and Mr. Thomas Hungerford. Land was donated from the adjoining properties of Mr. Crump, Mr. Thomas Salmon and Mr. Trench. The Church received the name of St. John the Evangelist, although it was frequently referred to as St. John-in-the-Woods. It was ready for services in 1901. In the first days it remained under the direction of the incumbent in Huntsville, but subsequently it became an outstation of the Baysville minister. It is now one of the four churches that form the Lake of Bays Mission.

For the next few years life at St. Ambrose went forward without further remarkable events. There were the usual church festivals and baptisms, confirmations and marriages. One baptism ceremony that must have captured the interest of many in the village occurred on October 2nd, 1907. On that day Minnie Rhodes, the adult daughter of Joseph and Catherine Bigelow, was baptized by the Reverend Hazlehurst in the Muskoka River. Having been raised in the Baptist faith, she requested total immersion at her baptism and was granted her wish.

#### St. Ambrose Cemetery

##### God's Acre

I like that ancient Saxon phrase, which calls  
 The burial ground, God's Acre! It is just;  
 It consecrates each grave within its walls  
 And breathes a benison o'er the sleeping dust.

W. H. Longfellow

In the early 1900s, Mrs. Mary Ann Hazlehurst, mother of the incumbent, came to Baysville from England, to reside with her son and his wife. She was suffering from heart failure and passed away on August 25th, 1910 at the age of seventy. At that time St. Ambrose had not obtained land for cemetery purposes. Thus, Mr. William H. Brown and his wife conveyed one acre of land at the foot of Dickie St. to the Reverend

and Mrs. Hazlehurst. It was part of a hundred acre lot they owned along the Muskoka River south of the village (Conc. 7, Lot 17). The Hazlehursts defrayed the costs involved and in November 1911 they, in turn, deeded it to the Diocese for use as a cemetery. Mrs. Hazlehurst Sr. was the first person buried in these grounds. During a visit to Baysville on Sunday, October 17th, 1925, His Grace the Archbishop of Algoma, held a service of consecration. After fifteen years of use the cemetery officially became God's Acre for St. Ambrose. In 1943 it served a unique purpose. Throughout World War II, victory gardens were grown as part of individual war efforts. The Denison family, who had a summer residence near Langton House, devised the grand idea to grow potatoes on an unused piece of the cemetery. It was an effort highly acclaimed by the congregation of St. Ambrose.

#### A Canon in the Baysville Mission

Throughout the many years the Reverend Hazlehurst was at Baysville, he gave wholeheartedly, not only to the church and its congregation, but also to the area as a whole. Both he and his wife, Helena, dedicated themselves unselfishly to the life of the community. On the many occasions where a chairman or other such dignitary was required, reports indicate that Reverend Hazlehurst was much in demand. It is of interest to mention one very successful entertainment held by the Salisbury L.O.L. (the Loyal Orange Lodge at Baysville) in the spring of 1900. "The chair was taken by Reverend Hazlehurst who gave a brief address and announced the various excellent numbers on the program."<sup>22</sup> Other occasions reveal a musical side of our early minister. "The young people are busy practicing for the W. Institute concert on Friday night. A glee club under the leadership of Reverend Hazlehurst will sing 'The Broken Pitcher'. Maybe."<sup>23</sup> The results of that evening's performance have long been forgotten but it is quite certain that the 'maybe' is not a serious reflection on Reverend Hazlehurst's abilities.

When he left for Bruce Mines in 1927 The Muskoka Herald paid him a glowing tribute for his many contributions to Baysville: "He has been in Baysville for many years and has given excellent service in his chosen work, besides taking his place as a good citizen in every movement for the improvement and welfare of the community."<sup>24</sup> This excellent service did not go unnoticed by his superiors. After a visit to Baysville in 1910, Bishop Thorneloe remarked in The Algoma Missionary News: "No one can visit this mission without soon learning that the Reverend Hazlehurst's people are devoted to him." In tribute to his faithful work

Reverend Hazlehurst was ordained Honourable Canon of Algoma in 1915 by the Reverend Canon Thorneloe, Archbishop of Algoma. He carried this office until he left the Algoma Diocese for Alberta in 1928.

#### "Fire"

It is sad and unfortunate that all activity from St. Ambrose cannot be reported on a positive note, but adversity is also a part of life. While the early difficult days and the later years of almost nonexistent congregations have been stumbling blocks for the church, the real tragedy occurred on September 3rd, 1919 when the church and parish hall were ravished by fire. The beautiful church, the pride of its people, was completely destroyed in a few short minutes. It was not an uncommon occurrence in the early days. In fact it was one of the greatest fears of pioneer people when so much building was done with lumber. Its causes were so varied that there was no way to guard against it. Stove pipes and chimneys went on fire regularly; lightning was the particular scourge of farmers' barns; grass and forest fires were all too common; and more recently, faulty electrical wires have added to the problem. Over the years there have been many cases of this disaster reported throughout the Algoma Diocese. In 1952 the Cathedral at Sault Ste. Marie suffered \$40,000 damage to the altar and sanctuary when the east end of the church burned. On Christmas Eve in 1909 the parsonage in Port Sydney was completely destroyed and the Reverend and Mrs. C. E. Hewitt lost all their belongings. These reports and numerous similar ones make us realize how precarious life is but without adequate insurance it can be a disaster. So it was with the Church of St. Ambrose during that dreadful night when all record of its brief existence was wiped out except the blackened foundations. From the details supplied by Reverend Hazlehurst we can appreciate the significance of this dreadful loss.

"I was awakened at about 1:30 a. m., of the 3rd of September by hearing a woman scream, 'The English Church is afire!' In a few minutes I was at the church, trying to get into the vestry to ring the bell, and endeavour to save some of the movable things. But I could get no farther than the door. I just managed to open it, and found the whole building full of smoke so dense as to render it impossible to enter. Nothing could be done to save the church. The Sunday school building went also. It was so close to the church that it was impossible to save it, though we managed to save the contents. Everything in the church was destroyed.

"The cause of the fire is a complete mystery. No service has been held since the previous

Sunday evening, and there had been no fire in the building since, and no matches. Judging from what one could see the fire seems to have started in the basement, though there was nothing there which could cause combustion of itself...

"A subscription list had been started a few hours after the fire, and in ten days we banked about \$400 in cash, and we have promises of \$150 and a skidway of logs that will cut into about 3000 feet. The church and Sunday school were insured for \$1250. Our beautifully-toned bell is now fused in a lump. We hope it can be recast."<sup>25</sup>

It was a heartbreaking time for the congregation and its minister. As so often happens one disaster is followed by a second. On November 26th Baysville was shocked by the sudden death of Mrs. Helena Hazlehurst. The Bracebridge Gazette carried the following account:

"On Wednesday evening of last week Mrs. A. W. Hazlehurst of Baysville was suddenly stricken with heart failure and expired in a few minutes. The late Mrs. Hazlehurst was born in England and had lived in Baysville twenty-two years. She was very active in church and social work and had a large circle of friends who were shocked to hear of her death. The funeral was held on Tuesday December 2nd. Archbishop Thorneloe of the Algoma Diocese was present and conducted the service which was largely attended. To the sorrow stricken husband and daughter, Daisy, every sympathy is extended."<sup>26</sup>

Canon and Mrs. Helena Hazlehurst appear to have had no children born to them, although those who were in the village while they lived there, speak of their daughter Daisy. It is not certain whom Daisy was but she was born circa 1899 when the family had already been in Baysville over four years. However, she does not appear with the Hazlehursts in the 1901 Census, nor is her birth recorded in the Ontario Government records of the Registrar General. It is possible that she was adopted or that she was the daughter of a relative and came to Canada with Mrs. Hazlehurst Sr. It was not uncommon in early times for children who were not in their natural home to be noted as a son or daughter of the head of the household and even be given his surname. Daisy Hazlehurst appears to have lived in British Columbia later, but little is known of her adult life.

No one can imagine the loss Canon Hazlehurst must have felt from these sad blows. Nonetheless he

willingly gave his every effort to the provision of a new church. At each step of the way he spoke positively during this very difficult time. Still, Archbishop Thorneloe showed concern for his minister and made more visits than had been his custom. In the fall of 1920 he expressed his relief that during the winter months Canon Hazlehurst would take a much needed holiday. Shortly after the New Year he left by train for Vancouver and a trip from there south through the Rockies to California. In April The Algoma Missionary News shared details of a letter it had received, adding its own comments: "The Reverend Canon Hazlehurst of Baysville, who has been in poor health for some time past, is now enjoying a well earned and much needed vacation with his brother in California....We hope that the Canon may return to Algoma fully restored to health and vigor."

#### 1921 - A year of Progress

Canon Hazlehurst's vacation was the first of several positive events in 1921. Upon his return there were reports of work commencing in April on the foundations for the new building. Once again a beautiful church was in the works to take its place on the church hill.

In October another startling but pleasing event took place when Canon Hazlehurst brought a bride to the village to share the work of the mission with him. In November The Algoma Missionary News carried the report of his second marriage.

#### HAZLEHURST-GREGORY-ALLEN

"At Trinity Church, Parry Sound, on Wednesday, October 19th, there was celebrated the marriage of Miss Lena Gregory-Allen of California to the Reverend Canon Hazlehurst of Baysville. The ceremony was performed by the Reverend Canon Burt, Rector of Trinity Church, in the presence of the intimate friends of the bride and groom. Major Auldgoe of Parry Sound gave away the bride. Other friends present included Mrs. Foote, Mrs. Auldgoe, and Mrs. Peters, all of Parry Sound. After the ceremony Canon and Mrs. Hazlehurst left for a short visit to Toronto and other places.

"The marriage is one of unusual interest to Muskoka friends, where Canon Hazlehurst has long been esteemed as a zealous worker for good. The marriage also recalls to her home land,



Muskoka, a lady who has hosts of friends in that beautiful region.

"We extend our best wishes to Canon and Mrs. Hazlehurst for all future happiness."

#### Opening of the New St. Ambrose

The official opening of the newest St. Ambrose Church took place on July 29th, 1923. On July 19th The Bracebridge Gazette announced the agenda.

"The opening of the new St. Ambrose Church, Baysville, will take place on Sunday, July 29th, 1923. The service will be as follows: 8 a.m. Holy Communion; 10:15 a.m. matins: at 10:45 a.m. unveiling Memorial Windows and Tablet to memory of Harry Langmaid, killed in action, France. As many soldiers as possible are earnestly requested to be present at this service. After above service will be Confirmation, Holy Communion and Sermon by His Grace the Archbishop of Algoma, Metropolitan of Ontario.

"Evensong at 7 p.m., Sermon by the Archbishop. The clergy assisting at these services will be the Incumbent Reverend Canon Hazlehurst, Reverend Canon Allman, Rector of Gravenhurst and the Reverend R. T. Sadler, M.A., Bracebridge. Offertory during the day for church debt fund."

#### The Second Consecration

Two years later on May 17th, 1925, the congregation of St. Ambrose once again witnessed the beautiful service of consecration. Three people who had been participants in the service twenty-four years previously, again took part this time, Bishop Thorneloe, Canon Hazlehurst and Mr. Robert Ellis, the Minister's Warden. His Grace the Archbishop, the Venerable Archdeacon Gillmor and Canon Hazlehurst were met at the church entrance by Mr. Ellis who read the petition for consecration. He was accompanied by Mr. Alfred Winder, People's Warden and Messrs. John King and Lea Roberts, Sidesmen. The procession then entered the church where the service continued.

"The instrument of donation was read by Canon Hazlehurst, and the sentence of consecration by the Archdeacon. The Archbishop preached from the text 'My house shall be called the house of prayer.' The service was well attended and there was a goodly number of communicants. Since the consecration of the first church in 1901 many of the older members

of the congregation have passed beyond our sight: but we felt that they were with us at the second consecration, especially at the celebration of the Holy Mysteries. The congregation is much smaller today than twenty-four years ago, many families having left this part of the country.

"At the evening service His Grace confirmed three persons, a young man and his wife, and a young girl. His sermon was based on the words, 'Grow in grace'; and was in a sense a sequel to the morning sermon. Then he had dealt with the material building, which had been set apart and given to the service of God. Now he spoke of the newly confirmed as being in a similar manner set apart and given to God's service as living temples."<sup>27</sup>

The three people who came in procession to be presented by Canon Hazlehurst were Mr. Oscar and Mrs. Gertrude Alldred and Miss Blanche Piper. It was the last visit Archbishop Thorneloe paid to Baysville. After giving thirty years of service to the Diocese of Algoma, His Lordship retired in 1927. These two, the Archbishop of Algoma and the Honourary Canon of Algoma, the Reverend Hazlehurst, had fulfilled their duties. They had been present for the opening of the beautiful church in 1899 and twenty-six years later had seen the consecration of its replacement. Baysville had its church and their task was completed.

#### Canon Hazlehurst Moves On

Two years after the second consecration, Reverend Hazlehurst decided it was time to move on. After thirty-three years of service in the same community it must have been a very painful decision to make with many problems to be considered. Being only a few months short of his 65th birthday, he was nearing the age when others retired. His popularity was so great that if he spent his retirement in the Lake of Bays area it could have been difficult for his successor unless that man was a very dynamic person. On the other hand he must have thought about the many milestones he had passed in the thirty-three years of his life spent at Baysville and found the decision hard to make. First his mother and then his wife had passed away during his days here. Both were buried in the St. Ambrose Cemetery surrounded by many of the old pioneers who had willingly given so much of their time to the Church. He must have thought of the many children he had baptized - babies that he saw grow to Sunday School age and then their teens when he prepared them for their confirmations; and he must have considered the joyous weddings of many of them, recalling the mothers' tears and smiling at remembered sighs of relief from fathers who no longer had to concern themselves with their

daughters whereabouts in the evenings. Above all else he must have been affected by thoughts of the lifetime of Sunday sermons he had delivered weekly in St. Ambrose and the other stations in his mission and had a difficult time to turn away from all his old friends. He left Baysville to spend a short period at Bruce Mines. In 1928 he left Ontario for the parish of Hanna in Calgary, Alberta. Two years later in 1930, he retired and moved to Vancouver Island where he took up residence at Deep Cove. He called his home "Muskoka Cottage". There is a very good picture of him in the vestry at St. Ambrose. It was taken during his retirement and sent by his wife Lena. The Reverend Canon Hazlehurst died on July 10th, 1938 at his home. Following his cremation, his remains were returned to Baysville where a memorial service was held on August 15th. It was taken by the Reverend Archdeacon Burt, who had been the first missionary student some fifty years before. He was assisted by the incumbent, the Reverend Canon Banks. He was laid to rest beside his first wife and his mother in St. Ambrose Cemetery:

All the toil, the sorrow done,  
 All the battle fought and won,  
 May the God of peace and love  
 Be with him always.

#### The Reverend Richard Cartwright Warder

In December of 1927 the Reverend Warder arrived in Baysville to take up his duties as priest. If Canon Hazlehurst did consider the effect his presence might have had on a new incumbent, it was an unnecessary worry. His replacement was the dynamic person required to fit smoothly into the area which hitherto had been the precinct of one man alone. Reverend Warder quickly carved out his own place in the community which had given its heart to Alexander Hazlehurst. Within six weeks he was appointed to the Agricultural Committee and soon became active in the Scouts besides adding his own ideas to the work within the Church. He was a newly ordained priest when he arrived, having just passed that milestone on November the 6th at a very impressive ceremony in Sault Ste. Marie. In his book, Northern Exposure, he wrote a highly interesting and often amusing account of his years in Baysville, which not only relates information of historical value to St. Ambrose, but also gives us insight to the life of a northern Ontario minister before the days of good highways and winter snowploughs. There were two developments of note to mark the five year period Reverend Warder was in charge of the Baysville Mission. The first was the acquisition of "The St. Mary of

Stafford", a launch which enabled him to reach his stations by water from May to October. The other was the construction of a church at Norway Point. The means to obtain the launch was furnished by the parish of St. Mary, Staffordshire, England and was purchased by the Bishop in 1928. It was built of cypress wood, eighteen feet long and eight feet in the beam. It was to have been a grand asset to the incumbent and his summer students, but unfortunately it soon proved to need a permanent mechanic to keep it plying the waters of the Lake of Bays. It was sold and a smaller launch became the second St. Mary of Stafford. This also proved mechanically unsound and had to be replaced. The Reverend Warder then approached Mr. Molesworth who sold Peterborough boats on the Lake of Bays. He purchased a seventeen foot boat with an outboard motor. A piece of tudor oak from a beam of the old St. Mary's Church in Staffordshire was fastened to the dashboard making it truly a gift from the benefactors in England. When it took up its duties in Muskoka waters, Bishop Rocksborough Smith arrived to dedicate St. Mary of Stafford III. He was accompanied by Canon Hyde of Westminster Abbey and Canon Stacy Waddy, the general secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, one of England's earliest missionary societies.

When Reverend Warder arrived at Baysville he found that there were several Anglican residents as well as summer visitors at Norway Point. Having been approached by a delegation requesting that he hold services in a private home there, he decided that it was the duty of the church to provide a permanent means of ministering to these people. During the summer of 1928 he set up a tent in which he held services and the following winter made use of a vacant house. Meanwhile the congregation planned a permanent building which would hold sixty people. The land was conveyed to the Diocese on March 1st 1929 by Mrs. Grace Tyrell, the widow of the late Dr. Robert Tyrell. As long before as 1890, the Reverend Boydell had expressed hope that a church would be built that summer on land donated by Mr. Jessie Ryerson, Head Master of the Orillia Collegiate. This land was located past the Bigwin docks close to Grove Park. In 1928 it was considered too distant from the congregation it would serve, instead it became Edgewater Cemetery and was consecrated by the Bishop on August 15th, 1934.

The Church of St. Mary the Virgin was officially opened in August 1929 by Bishop Rocksborough Smith. It was given several gifts which included "an altar, prayer desk and lectern from Baysville; a Bible, candlesticks and frontal from England; a silver bread box from the Bishop; and a chalice and paten from

Dorset."<sup>26</sup> Their organ was a gift from Mr. A. F. Bailey. Many gifts of money were received but the most surprising of these come from the former Archbishop of Canterbury and Primate of England, Baron Davidson. Over the thirty years of its life time the numbers at St. Mary the Virgin declined steadily. In 1960 the chapter of its brief history ended when the church was closed and the land sold to Mr. Norman A. Kelly of Baysville. The Edgewater Cemetery is still the property of the Diocese of Algoma.

By January 1933 Reverend Warder was temporarily at All Saints in Huntsville while the incumbent took a leave of absence in England. He returned to Baysville in June 1934 for a brief period. In October the Warders left Baysville permanently when Reverend Warder was appointed priest at Bala.

#### The Reverend Alfred Rogers

The Reverend Alfred Rogers was only in Baysville for eighteen months as the temporary replacement while the Reverend Warder was in Huntsville. He was a young bachelor who apparently was popular with the young people around the Lake of Bays. In his brief stay he set an interesting record. On October 13th, 1933 he presented twenty candidates to Bishop Rocksborough Smith during a service of confirmation at St. Ambrose. It is a record which still stands.

#### The Reverend W. Rutherford Tindle

In November 1934, the Reverend Rutherford Tindle became the third permanent minister at Baysville. He was a married man with three young children. Joyce and John were already in school, and Mary was still home with her mother, also Mary. During the Reverend Tindle's time in Baysville, the Church of St. James at Port Cunningham, was completed and added to the churches in his charge. It was built on land donated for a cemetery in 1912, by B. H. Cunningham. On July 12th, 1936 Bishop Rocksborough Smith officially opened it and returned the following summer for its consecration. The Reverend Tindle stayed at Baysville until 1938 when he moved to Bala to once again replace Reverend Warder who had been posted to the Diocese of Quebec. Later he moved to Little Current. Mrs. Tindle's popularity there will be of great interest to those who recall the family while they were here. As a centenary project, the Mary Tindle Branch of their A. C. W. produced a cook book with a thirty-seven page historical sketch of Manitoulin Island, including a history of Holy Trinity. It was dedicated to "the Revered Memory of Mary Stevenson Tindle, 1892-1965".

### The Reverend Canon Alfred Percy Banks

The Reverend Canon Banks was the last Anglican rector to reside in Baysville. When he arrived in June 1938 he was no stranger to the Diocese. In the early years of the century he was the incumbent in Gravenhurst. He resigned from this Parish at the end of 1910 to take a six month leave to return to England. The six months had stretched to thirteen years when he returned in August 1924 to take charge at Byng Inlet, north of Parry Sound. During his absence from Algoma, he had spent several years in the service of the American Church. Just prior to his return he was rector of St. Paul, Frederiksted, St. Croix, in the Missionary District of Puerto Rico. During the impressive ordination service held in Sault Ste. Marie in November 1927, when Reverend Warder was ordained priest, the Reverend Canon Banks had a busy part in the week long program. He was one of several speakers to address the candidates. His topic dealt with the ministry and children. Throughout the ordination service Canon Banks and the Reverend B. Fuller attended Bishop Rocksborough Smith as Deacons of Honour. He was also selected to read the special epistle in the service of Holy Communion. When he arrived here at Baysville it may have been that this was just another charge in his long career but to the St. Ambrose congregation it was a proud moment to receive such an illustrious and widely experienced rector.

### The Cowley Fathers

When Canon Banks left Baysville in 1940, no resident minister was appointed to fill the position he left vacant. The Society of St. John the Evangelist located in Bracebridge, added the Baysville Mission to the list of churches they served throughout Muskoka. Over the years several different members of their organization, came to take the services in the various churches around the Lake of Bays. They were generally known as the Cowley Fathers, a name taken from Cowley in England where their first house was established. The Reverend Father Richard Morley was the first and most well known to give service to the Baysville Mission, but several others came here also, including Fathers Frith, McCausland and Boyd. In a very sad accident on May 29th, 1954, the Reverend Father Morley and the Reverend Father Hubert Hanlon, a visitor from Chicago, disappeared near Bigwin Island while travelling in the St. Mary of Stafford on the Lake of Bays. They were presumed drowned. Lake of Bays is an extremely deep body of water and their bodies were never found.

When ministers were again appointed in 1955, the day of the Cowley Fathers in Baysville came to an end except for an occasional visit. The Reverend Roy Nixon became the first permanent minister to usher in the modern era of Anglican life on the Lake of Bays.

#### The Lake of Bays Mission

From its very first days, St. Ambrose has not stood alone as part of the Diocese of Algoma. In the beginning it was under the care of the incumbent at Bracebridge, together with St. Peter at Stoneleigh. By 1889 the summer divinity student, W. A. J. Burt, was attending Dorset as well and in 1894 St. Mary Magdalene was built there. In 1901, St. John the Evangelist was completed to serve those who lived on the west side of the Lake of Bays. St. Mary the Virgin at Norway Point in 1929 and St. James at Port Cunningham in 1936 completed the churches which have been part of the Lake of Bays Mission as it has been called since 1955.

Each of the churches has been special in its own way but St. Peter at Stoneleigh merits further mention. After a visit there in January 1876, Frederick Fauquier, Lord Bishop of Algoma, purchased one acre of land from Mr. Charles Piper and a small log church was built on this. On a subsequent visit, May 1st, 1879, he had great praise for the work of Mr. William Piper, the Superintendent of the Sunday School which at the time had twenty-two youngsters on its roster. In his visit in 1884, Bishop Sullivan referred to the church as "of the roughest description." It was decided at that time, to seek a grant of \$50 from the S.P.C.K. to make it serviceable. In his reports Reverend Hazlehurst noted that its numbers had dwindled over the years due to settlers leaving the area. From the 1880s onward, good farmland in Manitoba and on the Prairies became available. Those living on marginal farmland here were quick to move to the west. Nevertheless in January 1898 The Algoma Missionary News reported improvements being made at St. Peter, Stoneleigh:

"The church at Stoneleigh has undergone complete renovation. There is a new altar, also a cover and frontal. The church has been painted inside, some very tasteful texts and a banner, painted by Miss Gilbert, have been hung in the church. The chancel has been carpeted, and various other improvements have been effected. This has been done by The Women's Aid Society. A picket fence in front of the church has taken the place of the old barbed wire fence. The pickets were given by Mr. Sydney Smith, of Port Sydney, and the work was done by the men of the congregation at a 'bee'."

The last record found for Stoneleigh was from 1906. Further records of any activity in the church seem to have been lost or did not exist. Consequently there is no data regarding the date it was closed and subsequently dismantled. A cemetery in the Churchyard was consecrated by Bishop Thorneloe on May 21st, 1901. One must admire the people attending this despite its being at the height of mosquito and black fly season. St. Peter's Cemetery still remains today at the end of Stoneleigh Lake much as it was 100 years ago.

As each church in the mission has taken its place, another link between the peoples of this large area was forged. There has always been a great spirit of sharing, not only of the ministers who have served, but also in interaction between churches. From the earliest days news items have reported various occasions when the congregations have travelled between the villages to support or share the efforts of each other. This close spirit has made the Lake of Bays Mission a truly Christian community.

#### PART IV - MUSIC AND MUCH MORE

It was the original intention that this history of St. Ambrose would be a linear description of the development of the Church over the years. However, the aspects to be considered in doing justice to our little church have proved so varied that it has become necessary to go beyond this plan and record other facets of the story of the Church of St. Ambrose if we are to fully appreciate its worth.

##### Music

The Anglican Church at Baysville set itself a great challenge from the very first. Given the name of St. Ambrose, the Mission had a high standard for which to aim, but from the outset to the present it has continued to meet this. Nowhere in its record has this been more apparent than in its long history of music. Over the years from the very start the church has been blessed with people highly qualified to establish and maintain this standard. An early family to enter the area was that of Mr. Samuel Langmaid. He was followed soon after by his son, John, whose growing family brought an abundance of musical talent to the village. Mr. John Langmaid is well remembered for the Baysville fife and drum band which he organized for the youth, but his family's contribution to music within the Church is no less remarkable. When the new church opened in 1899 it could boast of a twenty-five member choir, no mean number for a town twice the size of Baysville. There is no data



left for us to gather a detailed account of its days, but Mr. Langmaid was largely responsible for its creation. Nor did the family's contribution stop there. His daughters were accomplished organists and are recorded as the first persons to hold this position at St. Ambrose. At one time Miss Lily Langmaid played the organ for all three churches in the village. Her granddaughter, Jeanne McLean of New Liskeard, has a beautifully written letter in her possession presented to Miss Langmaid in 1887 along with a bible. It expresses the appreciation of the Presbyterian Church for her service there as organist (Appendix I).

With Reverend Hazlehurst's arrival, another person of musical background was added to the existing talent. From the number of appearances he made in the village concerts we can assume that he was blessed with a voice of quality, but he was also an accomplished organist. It was in this respect that he gave a long lasting gift to St. Ambrose. Among the students he taught to play this instrument were the Misses Alice and Blanche Piper. In later years both of these ladies served the church as organists.

After their arrival in Baysville in 1913, the Roberts family also contributed greatly to the music of St. Ambrose. Mr. John Roberts possessed an excellent tenor voice and had at one time sung tenor solo in Chester Cathedral, England. He passed this quality to his son Bill and daughter Mollie Curran whose duets are still recalled in the village. The longest musical contribution from the family came from his daughter Nancy who was church organist for over thirty years. A vote of thanks in January of 1927 indicates that she held this position by 1926 at least. She continued until illness forced her to end her long service in 1957. At that time Miss Blanche Piper became the official organist and also gave long and excellent service until her retirement in 1987. Two others have since given of their time and talent. Mr. Jack Winder, a grandson of Mr. John Langmaid, has at times acted as organist and more recently Mr. Frederick Bishop has taken on the role during the summer months. His wife, Mrs. Joyce Bishop, is the granddaughter of John and Ann Roberts. Once again the church has a permanent organist. Mrs. Margaret Mills, who lives on Tooke Lake, is continuing the great tradition.

In earlier times music seems to have added a greater dimension to the Church's services than it often does today. Various references appeared over the years describing services held at St. Ambrose as choral in form. In a report on the Reverend Warder's wedding in 1928, The Algoma Missionary News notes that "the

service was fully choral." This arrangement suggests that the Reverend and Mrs. Warder were quite prepared to continue the musical traditions of St. Ambrose. When Reverend Warder pondered over the pleasures that he found in the "lovely little church of St. Ambrose"<sup>29</sup> he included the "Sung Eucharist" played by Miss Nancy Roberts. With so much professional music available today have we lost some of the enjoyment of the past in not developing our own talents?

#### They Also Served

"Reverend Rogers wishes to express his appreciation to the Church Wardens for their help during the year, also Miss Roberts for her very kind assistance with her duties as Organist. The very great help that the W.A. and its officers have rendered to assist with the business of the Church. I also wish to thank Vera Winder for her services assisting with the Sunday School and the members of the Congregation included."<sup>30</sup>

These thoughts were expressed by the Reverend Alfred Rogers in 1934 and accurately sum up the extent of the dedication displayed by the congregation of St. Ambrose over the many years. They might also have included the Girls Guild which played an active roll in the church life of earlier days; and they might have included all the summer residents who gave generously when adversities made it difficult for St. Ambrose to make ends meet. It is not possible to do justice individually to each sector that has served St. Ambrose but there are those who should receive some recognition for their part in its history.

The St. Ambrose Church Women's Aid - This was the ambitious title the Reverend Hazlehurst gave to a group of loyal, hard-working ladies of St. Ambrose. Generally it was known as the W.A. before it changed to the A.C.W. in June 1966 (Anglican Church Women). Within the Anglican Church the 'A' of W.A. officially stood for 'Auxiliary'. Reverend Hazlehurst's use of 'Aid', however, is an apt name for this "little band of willing workers" as he called them. Time and again there are references to their readiness to contribute to the needs of the church. If there were lunches to be prepared they gave; if there was money required they found a means. In his report to The Algoma Missionary News in 1925 describing the consecration of our present church, Reverend Hazlehurst noted that in the two years after the second church opened in 1899 the W.A. had successfully paid off a debt of \$450. Again between 1923 and 1925 they played a large roll in canceling the

\$500 owing when the present church was completed. The roots of the A.C.W., to give its current name, are as firmly embedded in the Church Hill in Baysville as those of the church itself. The exact date that the organization was formed is not known, but it was in existence over 100 years ago. Whenever Canon Hazlehurst or Reverend Warder sent reports to *The Algoma Missionary News* from Baysville, they made reference to the sterling work of "the little band" and expressed their thanks to them as seen in these words of Canon Hazlehurst.

"There is a little band of willing workers here, 'The St. Ambrose Woman's Aid'. They have been a great source of help to the clergyman and church wardens during the building of the parsonage. I cannot speak too highly of them; they are always to the fore whenever anything is wanted, either for help in any good cause or work in the church, such as decorations, etc., during festive seasons. The band numbers fifteen. Officers: Mrs. Hazlehurst, president; Mrs. Burknell, financial secretary."<sup>31</sup>

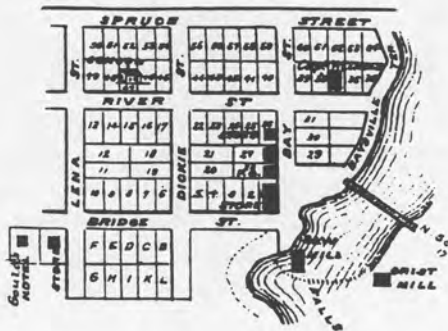
In *The Algoma Missionary News* of March 1931, the Reverend Warder reported the dedicated work that was still being accomplished in his day. It is of great interest since it notes changes made to the parish hall. It would seem that it was at this time it came to look more like the building of today than the original school house did.

"At Baysville The Women's Auxiliary has provided the Wardens with the means of completely renovating the church hall. The roof and sides of the building have been shingled, the woodwork painted, and a much needed kitchen built on. The foundations have also been repointed. The parsonage has been furnished with a new pump and sink, and the exterior of the house painted all over, and it looks very nice. Much credit, is due to the ladies for their constant and faithful work for the Church."

It was over a century ago that the little band began its good works, but it is still there today to extend its "help in any good cause". Many ladies have given freely of their time to the work of this worthwhile group, but in terms of long service two have been exceptional. In 1986 Miss Blanche Piper completed thirty years as secretary-treasurer for the A. C. W. At a much earlier time Miss Louisa Ellis gave twenty-three years in this position.

Service of the Men - While the men of St. Ambrose may not have been organized as the ladies were, nevertheless they have given yeomen service in carrying out the business of the church over the years. Since the first church opened in 1883 they have acted as officers performing their duties with great dignity. In Reverend Hazlehurst's first full year in 1895, they included Messrs. Robert Ellis and Edward Deakin, church wardens, and Messrs. George Piper and William Tooke, sidesmen. When the Bishop paid his visits they proudly acted as host or chauffeur to cover the needs of his stay. They have formed work parties to maintain the church and its grounds each man arriving equipped with his own hammer, saw and paint brush. If special questions arose they formed committees or appointed individuals to deal with the problem at hand. One of many such cases which is of interest, concerns the acquisition of the three lots which comprised the original school grounds. When the church burned and St. Ambrose obtained the first school for its purposes, Canon Hazlehurst reported that they had also purchased the land. The arrangements were not quite that simple, however, and the legal possession of this property was not completed for several years. In 1924 Messrs. Robert Ellis and Lea Roberts were appointed to approach the McLean Township Council to ascertain how title for these three lots, (47, 48, 49), could best be obtained. In September 1926 a Tax Deed was recorded in the Provincial Registry office indicating that the Reeve and Treasurer of the Township of McLean had granted this land to independent Agents of the Diocese of Algoma for \$10.16. St. Ambrose then owned one acre of land, five village lots, which ran westward from Dickie St. Its boundary on the west appears as Lena St. on the historical map of 1879, but this street was never extended north of Bridge St. In area it is comparable to the block east of the church which today extends from the home of Mr. Russell Jackson to the Pro Hardware Store. This move by the men was only one of many actions taken to meet the needs within the church but it gives us an insight into the work voluntarily carried out over the years by this important part of the congregation. While individual names are gone for the most part we can bow to their most valuable contribution.

## BAYSVILLE



The Sunday School - As seen earlier, the Sunday School played an important role from day one at St. Ambrose. For many, many years it was a strong part of the lives of St. Ambrose children as long as young families formed a significant part of the congregation. It is sad that we no longer have this aspect of church life to ensure tomorrow's participation, but the tendency of young people to move away leaves a gap in the life of the church. It is important, however, to pay tribute to each lady and gentleman who worked hard over the years to introduce the youngsters to the teachings of the church. Through the Sunday School, the children were enabled to add significantly to the life of the Church of St. Ambrose. Reverend Warder described explicitly a pageant the children performed during the Christmas season in 1928. Perhaps there are those in '98 who will recall their part in it.

"St. Ambrose Church, Baysville, staged its first Christmas tableaux, entitled 'The Eternal Child', on St. John the Evangelist's Day, December 27th. The scenes were represented by members of the Sunday School. The tableaux began with a prelude which described the motive of the representation of the sacred subjects as an act of devotion performed by the children in honour of Him who was once a Child.... There were nine scenes, and at each the portion of Holy Scripture referring to the subject was read, and each scene was prefaced by a well-known Christmas hymn. The eighth scene, entitled 'The Friend of Children,' showed the

Blessed Mother with the Babe on her knee, surrounded by children. The last scene showed the priest, vested, at an altar with cross and lights, and with children in the costumes of different nationalities kneeling around. During this scene, St. Luke's account of the Institution was read; and there was also a reference to the Altar as another Bethlehem, a 'House of Bread' where the faithful meet and worship their Incarnate Lord. The children took their various parts very well indeed, and the whole was an act of worship which helped us more than ever to appreciate the glorious message of Christmas."<sup>33</sup>

The Girls Guild and the Altar Guild - In earlier days there were two other groups organized to share the life at St. Ambrose. The Girls Guild was formed in very early times, quite possibly by Helena Hazlehurst. Its program was for the young girls of the church and embraced functions similar to those of the W.A. There were many occasions for their participation in parochial matters, not the least being the large contribution they made to bring in money for the rebuilding fund in the 1920s. They also established a schedule of missionary work to enhance their knowledge in that area. A third and important aspect of their program was the aim to develop social fellowship among the youth and to this end they held the motto 'Grow in Service and we grow in Strength'.

The Altar Guild was organized to maintain the church on a weekly basis. Their duties were many and varied. They prepared for the forthcoming services in accordance with the church seasons as well as ensuring that the chalice and paten were cleaned, the brass polished and the linen laundered. They have dusted and they have swept and as a final touch cared for the flowers as required. Today this function is the responsibility of the A.C.W. at St. Ambrose but to the many, many ladies of the church since 1883 who have happily devoted their time to keep it in perpetual readiness, we extend our gratitude.

#### Church Festivals and Special Days

St. Ambrose has held its share of special celebrations to mark the church festivals and commemorate the special events of our Church. The Reverends Hazlehurst and Warder reported them faithfully to The Algoma Missionary News. In the April issue of 1897 there is an informative description of the Christmas services held in 1896:

"Christmas services here were well attended and were very bright. They were as follows: Celebration of holy Communion, 8:30 a.m. (choral); matins at 10:30 a.m.; Evensong at 7:30 p.m. (choral). After Evensong the choir sang a selection of carols."

Celebrations of Christmas have changed so vastly over the last 100 years that we cannot help but compare this with our own where presents and plum pudding bear as much acclaim as the service of worship attended.

The Easter Service - The pattern of earlier times, followed that of Christmas with three services being held and the Evensong ending with the choir's selection of Easter hymns. The Reverend Hazlehurst again described this occasion in 1897 and remarked on the participation of the ladies with their decorations.

"The church was beautifully decorated for the occasion, many of the lady members of the congregation bringing choice window and house plants as early as six o'clock on the Sunday morning to help make bright the church of the living God...The nights in this northern country about the season of Easter are apt to be cold and frosty, and to have put the flowers in on Saturday night might have meant having them frozen."<sup>33</sup>

It is interesting to note that the ladies decorated the church with their plants even way back then. To share personal possessions is a simple way to promote a strong feeling of belonging in the church. It is a very worthwhile tradition to keep throughout the second century of St. Ambrose.

The Harvest Festival - This was always a welcome time for the priest and the congregation both. By autumn the farmers had their summer work nearly completed and could forget the effects of drought and early frosts for another year; and the priest could picture his larder being restocked. The church was lavishly decorated with the fruits of the farmers' gardens and these were donated to the pantry of the parsonage after the services were finished. Not only was there a goodly supply of all variety of vegetables and fruit, but butter, eggs, preserves and even dressed chickens and ducks found their way to the minister's table from the Harvest Festival. Autumn leaves and garden flowers made a profusion of colour throughout the church. Sheaves of grain were placed on either side of the altar, and on the altar itself there was a large harvest loaf of bread. All was proudly provided from the gardens of the congregation including gourds especially grown for the day. Early in the

season farmers cut some brief text into the soft skin of a marrow or squash. As it grew the verse also expanded making a thought provoking decoration for the Festival. Another custom which has been long held at this time, illustrates the unity the church has always enjoyed. Anglican ministers have arranged among themselves to preach in one another's churches, just one more small way to experience the meaning of sharing. The Harvest Festival has always been well attended and congregations still fill the church as they did when people arrived by horse and buggy.

The Special Days which have marked the history of St. Ambrose have been noted in the year to year story of the mission. No doubt today's people who reflect on them, will feel pleasure and pride in the church akin to that of the early congregations. The thought of one young lad in the time of Canon Hazlehurst is still with us today. At the service of consecration in 1901 "one of the choir boys (and a faithful Church boy he is) was so impressed with the service that when he got home he said to his mother, 'There, that ends it; no more talking in the church porch now, it is all done with.'<sup>34</sup> It was the custom of the boys to linger in the porch until the second bell when someone would scuttle them off to their places.

His Majesty King Edward VII passed away on May 6th, 1910. In respect for him as our monarch and as the head of the Anglican Church in Canada, St. Ambrose was draped in black for its Sunday services on May 9th. One cannot help but wonder what mark of respect would be applied in the present day at such a time.

A Parochial Mission was held during the week of Sunday, March 16th, 1930. The Reverend Father Palmer of the Cowley Fathers conducted this interesting event, which, from all accounts, was beneficial to all. He was present for all the Sunday services, preaching at a sung Eucharist. Each morning throughout the week there was a celebration of Holy Communion. In the evenings mission services were held also. Many questions were raised by the people and all of them received informative answers. On the first and last evenings the W.A. served refreshments which gave the people an opportunity to meet with Father Palmer. After school each afternoon a children's service was held and most children of the village, regardless of religion, attended. Those people who could not reach the church were not forgotten. Each day Reverend Warder took Father Palmer to visit a different home. In Reverend Warder's words, "Both priest and people were refreshed, and their faith strengthened."<sup>35</sup>



The many special days at St. Ambrose have left us with an heritage which is unsurpassable. They have been happy times, impressive and memorable. May God bless this Church with many more such fruitful events.

#### The Church in Society

The story of St. Ambrose is a complex story covering many facets of the lives of our earlier people. It speaks not only of their religious life but also of the whole of the society in which they lived. A great part of the activity within the early communities was organized from within the church. No doubt there were prejudices, misunderstandings and a host of other difficulties in the early days, but the spirit of cooperation, so necessary to pioneering people, had an overriding influence on their activities. It was not a cooperation confined within each church but it spread outside to the wider community. At times the planned programs were conducted entirely within a congregation but just as often they were joint efforts of the various churches, designed to benefit all. One of Baysville's more renowned groups was the Dramatic Club of St. George, the Roman Catholic Church. When its Presbyterian neighbours across the street required funds for new seats, St. George gave a sterling performance both on the stage and in generosity. Living as we do today in the shadow of racial prejudice, we might reflect more often on the pleasures derived from interaction.

Our early people led a very active and varied life within the framework of the churches. Steamboat cruises on the Lake of Bays, picnics in Ellis' grove, concerts, plays, lawn parties, all kept them busy in what spare moments they had. Some of the activities were purely for entertainment but a large number brought in much needed money for the church. One very successful entertainment was given by St. Ambrose in 1888. Ordinarily the proceeds amounted to between \$20 and \$30, but on this occasion the church funds were enriched by \$50. \$26 of this came from an "election cake" contest. The candidates were Miss Gray and Miss Cook. Miss Gray was the winner. Obviously there was a great deal more to this story than was reported in The Muskoka Herald and it is sad that time has erased our knowledge of such customs, preventing us from enjoying the fun. It seems that these competitions were very popular. Some years later the L.O.L. made close to \$70 with a keen competition between Miss Alldred and Miss Tooke.

Concerts and plays were popular forms of entertainment sponsored by St. Ambrose. The participants probably had as much fun rehearsing for them as the audience had when they were performed on stage. On

occasion members of the Church of St. Peter at Stoneleigh added their talent to that of the Baysville cast. The entertainment always included a "sumptuous repast" provided by the Church ladies. The prospect of inclement weather did not deter these people from spending their winter evenings gathering to prepare for their parts but unfortunately in 1897 the day set for such an event turned very stormy causing many to miss the occasion. Those who did attend were treated to an enjoyable time. A lovely supper was laid out on small tables throughout the hall. After this was finished there was a program consisting of choral music provided by the church choir, a duet by Reverend Hazlehurst and Mr. H. Grist, instrumental music courtesy of Mr. H. Smith and a recitation from Mr. Bushnell. The evening ended with a very entertaining farce, "Bobby A 1". The cast included:

Frank Tooke as Charles Wright, a medical student

Mr. Salmon, a reporter

Miss Emma Alldred, Poll, a servant girl

Miss Deakin, Lucy, a daughter of Mrs. Hutterton,

Mrs. Hazlehurst, Mrs. Hutterton, Widow Lady<sup>36</sup>

No doubt those who did manage to get to the town hall that evening were well entertained and went laughing to their homes. The program was not always in a comic vein. On an earlier occasion the audience were treated to a sterling performance of the trial scene in "The Merchant of Venice", a recitation presented by Mr. Rumball.

The Sunday School Christmas Concert was another event eagerly awaited by the children. Reverend Hazlehurst left us a first hand report of the one from December 1897.

"The Christmas Tree in connection with the St. Ambrose's Church Sunday School was held in the Town Hall, Baysville, on Christmas Eve. The program was given entirely by the children, nearly every child in the Sunday School - big and little- numbering over forty, taking part in it. The entertainment by the children went off very well, and the audience were delighted. Not so much money was taken at the door as last year. We made a mistake in having a collection instead of making a charge. Never mind, we shall know better another year. The tree was resplendent with beautiful presents, some given by the Cathedral Branch of the Girls' W.A., Toronto, some from the Sunday School, others from the teachers of classes.

The most interesting part of the program, to the children, was the distribution of presents, each child going away delighted with two or three nice gifts, besides a bag of candies. Some of the younger children anxiously enquired how long it would be before Christmas comes again.<sup>137</sup>

A summer picnic was held each year usually in August. Sometimes they were attended by members of one denomination only, but more frequently they were an occasion for inter-church cooperation. In the early days most events were opened by an address given by a noted citizen. On September 3rd, 1891, The Muskoka Herald carried an account of "the Sunday School picnic lately given in a beautiful grove near the town, interesting and instructive addresses were given by Reverend Fairberry, Methodist Missionary at Dorset, Reverend T. Lloyd, the English Church Missionary here, and Mr. Budge, the student in charge of the Presbyterian Church." The usual grand lunch was provided by the ladies, including such delicacies as chicken, salads, pickles, sandwiches, pies and cakes, watermelon and lemonade. The children amused themselves swimming in the river and playing ball, tag and many old games now long forgotten. Foot races for young and old were always a part of this day. When bicycles became available races on these were added to the programs. It is a pleasure to see the good fellowship of these events of the past, but it is sad to think we might have lost much of the essence of those days.

Lawn Parties were entertainment enjoyed by all in the past. For the best part of half a century St. Ambrose was well known for ones that it sponsored. There are those amongst us who still recall these events taking place on the lawns at the parsonage, Rosebank Farm or other homes including that of Mr. Carl Campbell. Timed to coincide with the largest influx of tourists for the season, they provided a means of adding to the church funds. Much like today's bazaars, sale tables were laid out for various handicrafts and baking. "Fish ponds" were very popular amongst the children. For a few cents they could "fish" for prizes on the bottom of the "pond". The most popular spot for the afternoon was the tea table, complete with a booth arranged in gypsy style for tea leaf readings. In the early '30s, Mrs. Bill Roberts dressed in suitable attire, raised the hopes and expectations of many visitors to the booth. These affairs usually extended into the evening with entertainment. At Rosebank, a platform was set up on the lawn to accommodate performances of local and tourist talent. The piano was moved outside and Miss Nancy Roberts provided the accompaniment as she did

for many Baysville events. The most vividly recalled item of these evenings was supplied by the talent of Reverend Warder. His ghost stories still bring a smile to the faces of those who were children in his day. In 1923, a strawberry social held on the lawn at Campbell's was followed by an evening of 'movie pictures', the feature being Charlie Chaplin. The Muskoka Herald reported that they "were much enjoyed by old as well as young folks." At a much earlier time the Baysville correspondent of the Herald described another such event that took place on the evening of September 8th, 1893.

"On the evening of the 8th inst., there was a garden party here under the auspices of St. Ambrose Ladies Guild, on the lawn of Mrs. Alexander Salmon, which was artistically ornamented for the occasion by Mr. E. Deakin. After partaking of a sumptuous tea, provided as is there wont, in luxurious style by the ladies of Baysville and its suburbs, some of the younger played bear and blind-man buff on the lawn; some young ladies and gentlemen reclining on the mossy sward, indulged in animated and sportive converse, while others drank in the sweet strains of enchanting music. The Misses Wyld, of Toronto, sojourning here for the purpose of inhaling the health-restoring atmosphere of balmy Baysville, caused great excitement among the young, in the chamber of mysteries, by prognosticating future events, in the guise of Gypsies. Quantities of grapes, watermelon, peanuts and lemonade were dispensed by the ladies, in their tastefully arranged bower, and were much appreciated by the sweet-toothed youth of both sexes. As a finale, three young ladies and a gentleman, not young but an evergreen, performed a Spanish mazurka, in a graceful and dignified manner, which elicited much applause. After enjoying themselves to their hearts content, the large gathering wended their way harmoniously to their peaceful abodes."<sup>38</sup>

Life in the past may have been very hard by the standards of today, but the old people learned to get the most enjoyment from it. With strength gathered from their convictions, their remarkable spirit rarely failed them.

### The Ellis Family

In relating the story of St. Ambrose, special mention must be made of a family that gave unfailingly to the church for over half a century, the family of Mr. William Ellis who came to Baysville from Wales in 1874. They were part of the Church history from its first days. During the Bishop's early visits to the village, Mr. and Mrs. Ellis acted as their gracious host and hostess. In later years their son Robert and his wife, Emma, filled this function. Their daughter, Miss Louisa along with Robert and sister Maude gave unstinted service year after year to the work within the Church. In 1932, the members of St. Ambrose acknowledged Robert's contribution with a vote of thanks for his 36 years of work as Church Warden (Appendix II). Three years previously, Miss Louie was honoured at an evening gathering in the parsonage. In May of 1929, The Algoma Missionary News carried a report of this event.

"There was a very happy gathering at the parsonage at Baysville on Wednesday evening, April 3rd, when Miss A. L. Ellis was presented with an address, a silver tray and bouquet of flowers. The presentation was made by Mrs. Warder. The priest in charge, The Reverend R. C. Warder, read the address, and the flowers were presented by Miss Madeline Ellis.

"Miss Ellis has been a faithful worker in the Church at Baysville for over thirty years, for twenty-three of which she has filled the duties of Secretary-Treasurer of The Women's Auxiliary. Though Miss Ellis has resigned from office, she is still working for the Church and takes the keenest interest in all activities.

"The tea tray is a beautiful one, and is inscribed as follows:

*Presented to Miss A. L. Ellis by The Women's Auxiliary  
and the Congregation of St. Ambrose Church, Baysville, as  
a token of appreciation of duties long and faithfully  
rendered.*

"Refreshments were served, and a very happy evening spent."

When David Andrew and Daniel Wesley, the sons of Garth and Patty Vanclieaf, were baptized at St. Ambrose in recent years, they became the sixth generation of this long time family to have been part of St. Ambrose. Their mother was Miss Patricia Ellis before her marriage. The descent is from Patty, through

Donald, George and Robert to William. It is interesting, also, that these two boys are sixth generation Vancleafs of Baysville. Both their great and great great grandparents on that side were confirmed in St. Ambrose. There are still many of today's families whose roots are deep within the history of St. Ambrose. It is regretted that early contributions have been lost in time and we are not able to give them their proper recognition, but we can appreciate with pride the long contribution made by the Ellis family to the Church and to the village.

#### Our Ministers

No story of St. Ambrose could be ended without a very special mention of the superior work done by the priests in charge from the day Canon Hazlehurst arrived in 1894 until the present day with Mr. Cunningham as incumbent. The large numbers of people who have been received into full Communion in the Church is a direct tribute to the earnest work of these gentlemen. Apart from the hundred and four years of regular services, there have been many reports of the special occasions when their management has produced a day worth remembering. Many changes have taken place throughout the years and not the least of these has been their means of keeping in contact with the people regardless of difficulties. Even today, close timing is needed to travel to all stations on a Sunday; but one hundred years ago our men worked from Stoneleigh to Dorset over roads that resembled an obstacle course for much of the year. When Bishop Thorneloe arrived for a visit in May 1901, he was met in Bracebridge by the incumbent who noted that while the Bishop thought the country was beautiful, he "was not by any means struck with the beauty of the roads, except, perhaps in a literal sense where in a few instances some of the road, in the shape of mud, which was very plentiful at this time, struck the occupants of the buggy."<sup>30</sup>

From his book, Northern Exposure, we have more insight into the Reverend Warder's experiences than those of the other men. Nevertheless, all of our priests must have many a story which would leave us filled with awe. One difficult period occurred during Reverend Warder's incumbency at Baysville. The Depression era is a time that most of us affected by it would like to forget, but it does illustrate the extremes that our clergy will attempt to improve the lot of their people. At that time the government initiated as many work projects as possible to ease the plight of the people. One of these was the construction of the current road to Dorset. Many men from the cities arrived to man the six camps between Bracebridge and Dorset. They were ill-

prepared in the extreme for the job ahead of them. Reverend Warder, like many of his peers across Ontario, saw the need for a chaplain in such camps and immediately sought permission from the Bishop to extend his help to them, both spiritually and materially. The conditions he found were "a crying shame". The first men arrived in November when snow had already fallen. They came in open trucks dressed in thin clothing, with no mitts nor work socks. Reverend Warder immediately fired off letters for help but the need was so great everywhere that little was forthcoming. As in many other circumstances, he turned to the ladies of his churches who made mitts out of old pants and coats. With these added to some collections from city churches, the Warder parlour became a virtual "warehouse of old clothing" which the good minister undertook to deliver. In his trips to the camps he came to know these men well. Realizing how much they needed some little pleasures he risked bankruptcy buying pipe tobacco for them, but his reward must have been great when he saw the camaraderie which developed in these camps. On pay days the men hastened to give him his payment first and those more fortunate often gave a little extra to cover men who had greater commitments for their money. During these months of construction, Reverend Warder set aside one evening each week to hold a service in the cook house or bunk house of each camp in turn, and on occasion he held an early Holy Communion service. While these were desperate times that required desperate measures, it still gives us peace of mind to know that we have persons of the calibre of our ministers to give us support as we need it.

Another facet of the lives of our ministers who could not rely on good roads was their willingness to set off on foot over the miles of rough roads to reach the people. In winter they made their way on snowshoes along the Lake of Bays often having to break their trip over night at the home of some accommodating parishioner. Reverend Warder wrote of these long tramps that he and his wife made in travelling from Baysville on the mission business.

"For some reason it often occurred that people who lived away up the lake would decide to get married in the wintertime. One such expedition I will relate. The request came in so my wife and I started off. First we caught the mail sleigh drawn by horses; then we donned our snowshoes and walked some miles to a big house. We stayed the night. We found we were crossing wolf tracks, lots of them, big prints. Timber Wolves. Next morning we set off again accompanied by our hosts from the house. We walked for hours up the lake...We left the

house for our return trip down the lake in the late afternoon, having found it difficult to break away from the festive scene. By the time we had reached the centre of the lake the moon was coming up, and it was a crisp winter night. We were making good time on our snowshoes. Then we heard what sounded like a bell-like jingle. It sounded far away, rising to a crescendo then dropping to rise again. Gradually it became louder. 'Wolves' said one of the men. 'There are quite a few out there,' said another of our fellow travellers. Nothing else was said, but I noted an increase in our speed of travel. The wolf calls grew more distinct as they drew nearer. We had two lanterns with us. We had not lighted them because of the bright moonlight; we now lit them. The four of us felt quite small on the expanse of ice, with the cry of the animals. We hurried until we were hot beneath our sweaters. We could now see Black Point, the place where the big house stood. We would soon be indoors. Then we saw, away out on the ice, dark specs moving along while the frosty air made the mixture of yelps and barks come clearly to our ears. We left the ice and climbed the hill under the pine and spruce trees, and how glad we were to close the door and light the lamps. All agreed that the wolves had never been known to hurt people in Muskoka, but all the same, it is never too late to create a precedent. Next morning we went down the hill to the lake, and there, sure enough, were the tracks clearly to be seen: the big gray animals had actually come to the foot of the hill.<sup>140</sup>

Despite such incidents which might have sent other people looking for easier ways, our men seemed to have enjoyed the life of a rural minister and kept a grand perspective regarding their work. Soon after his arrival, Reverend Warder assessed the pleasures and benefits he had found in Baysville. "The work of this mission is most fascinating. It's a glorious outdoor life. One great charm is its variety. There is no monotony. This missionary in the winter visits the lumber camps to hold services for the men of the village who are working far back in the woods. In the spring and summer he is going by boat from point to point ministering to the residents and the tourists at the various summer resorts on the Lake."<sup>141</sup> While these words came from our most prolific writer, I am certain that our ministers have all possessed a positive attitude equal to that of the Reverend Warder. They have each in turn been the good fortune of St. Ambrose and of the Lake of Bays Mission.



## Epilogue

Having reached the end of the narrative it is worthwhile to consider the relevance of its contents. Hopefully these few pages will give us cause to remember that we are not "like a child born in the night who sees the sun rise and thinks yesterday never existed."<sup>42</sup> Just as the pioneers built their church along solid lines learned from their past, so, too, should we advance the works of St. Ambrose while we hold it in our trust. Only then can tomorrow's people receive an heritage worthy to be kept. We have this rare opportunity of being able to see and understand our roots, but we ought not stand too long beside the ashes of yesterday. There are still high goals to be sought and, with God's blessing, won.

From the Latin of St. Ambrose

---

Come Holy Ghost, who ever one  
Art with the Father and the Son.  
Come Holy Ghost our souls possess  
With thy full flood of holiness.

In will and deed, by heart and tongue,  
With all our powers, Thy praise be sung;  
And love light up our mortal frame,  
Till others catch the living flame.

Almighty Father, hear our cry  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord most high,  
Who with the Holy Ghost and thee  
Doth live and reign eternally.

Tr. (1836) by Reverend J. H. Newman.

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To  
Miss Langmaid.

We the members, and adherents of the Presbyterian Church, Bayville, desire to give expression to our gratitude, for the voluntary service so efficiently rendered by you, during the past year, as an organist. Your untiring zeal has added very materially to the success of our meetings. And we sincerely hope that in the future, as has been the case in the past, God may make you a blessing to those with whom you come in contact. Please accept this Bible as a slight token of our high appreciation of your service coupled with our earnest prayer for your future prosperity.

Waggon How  
Charlotte Howland  
Waggon Prater

SAINT AMBROSE DAY  
 APRIL 4<sup>TH</sup> 1932

TO ROBERT A. ELLIS, ESQ

WE, THE INCUMBENT AND CHURCH WARDENS OF SAINT AMBROSE CHURCH BAYSVILLE, ON BEHALF OF THE CONGREGATION, TAKE GREAT PLEASURE IN PRESENTING YOU WITH THIS ARM CHAIR, AS A TOKEN OF OUR SINCERE APPRECIATION OF THE DEVOTED WAY IN WHICH FOR THIRTY-SIX YEARS YOU FULFILLED THE DUTIES OF CHURCH WARDEN. FOR MANY YEARS YOU HAVE RENDERED VALUABLE SERVICE TO OUR CHURCH, AND HAVE BEEN EVER WILLING TO ASSIST WHENEVER CALLED UPON. FOR A CONSIDERABLE TIME YOU ALSO SERVED AS LAY READER UNDER THE LICENCE OF HIS GRACE ARCHBISHOP THORNELOW, AND PROVIDED SERVICES WHEN OTHERWISE THE CONGREGATION WOULD HAVE BEEN DEPRIVED OF MINISTRATIONS. WE TRUST THAT YOU WILL ACCEPT THIS SMALL TRIBUTE OF OUR AFFECTION AND APPRECIATION, AND WE ARE WELL ASSURED, THAT YOU WILL BE IN THE FUTURE AS YOU HAVE BEEN IN THE PAST, A WORKER FOR THE GLORY OF GOD, AND THE GOOD OF HIS HOLY CHURCH, IN THIS PARISH.

IN CONCLUSION WE EXTEND TO YOU AND YOURS, OUR BEST WISHES, AND THE ASSURANCE OF OUR PRAYERS THAT GOD MAY RICHLY BLESS YOU IN THE YEARS TO COME.

ON BEHALF OF THE CONGREGATION

REV. RICHARD C. WARDER, PARISH PRIEST  
 ALFRED WINDER, MINISTERS WARDEN  
 J. HER. ROBERTS, PROPHECY WARDEN.

### Appendix 3 – Ministers Serving at St. Ambrose, Baysville

Reverend Canon Alexander William Hazlehurst	1894 – 1927
Reverend Richard Cartwright Warder	1927 – 1933
	June 1934 – October 1934
Reverend H. Alfred Rogers	1933 – June 1934
Reverend W. Rutherford Tindle	1934 – 1938
Reverend Canon Alfred Percy Banks	1938 – 1940
S.S.J.E. (Cowley Fathers)	1941 – 1955
Reverend Roy H. Nixon	1955 – 1959
Reverend Tom James	1959 – 1963
Reverend James Francom	1963 – 1967
Reverend Robert Lumley	1967 – 1973
Reverend Jonathan Patrick Earle	1973 – 1974
Reverend Murray Bradford	1975 – 1983
Reverend Ray B. Porth	1983 – 1989
Reverend Michael Cottrell	1989 – 1993
Reverend Tom Cunningham	1994 –

THE CHURCHES OF ST. AMBROSE - Baysville, Ontario



Original Churches  
left 1882-1919  
right 1898-1919



Existing Parish Hall  
the original  
school built  
in 1870s

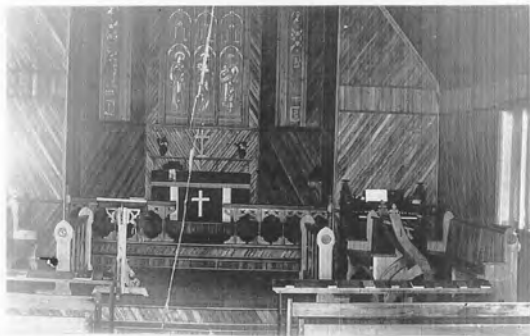


Existing Church  
begun in 1921  
opened in 1923

Church Interiors



First Church  
(1882)



Second Church  
(1898)



Present Church  
(1921)



Present Church  
(1921)



Parish Hall



Martha and John King  
of Langton House



Church Organists



Lily Langmaid - 1st organist



Fred Bishop  
(1990s)



Nancy Roberts  
(c1926-1957)



Blanche Piper  
(1957-1987)

Scenes from St. Ambrose

Right: Sunday School Class - 1940s

Seated: ?, Janet Brown  
2nd step: David Brown, Albert Anderson  
3rd step: Murray Ellis, Christina Anderson,  
Shirley Hammond, Jerry Maynard  
4th step: ?  
5th step: Allan Ellis, Joan Franks, Betty  
Dawson, Shirley Dawson  
Top step: Daisy Dawson, Blanche Piper,  
Priest, Lois Anderson



ANGLICAN PICNIC BAYSVILLE LAKE OF BAYS ONT



Left: This picture appears to have been taken at a picnic held by the various churches since another exists with the same children but different adults.



Special Service - 1978

Top: Father M. E. Bradford  
 Centre: Grace van Seters (warden)  
 Blanche Piper (organist)  
 Bill Excell (sidesman)  
 Adrian van Seters (warden)  
 Rose MacKinnon (warden)  
 Front: Servers Gene and Kevin MacKinnon



"THE ST. MARY, STAFFORD"



Confirmations

1974

Bishop Wright  
 Darlene Bassie  
 Carol Jackson  
 Bev Crosson  
 Betty Jackson  
 Sharon Jackson  
 Kevin MacKinnon  
 Rev. Jonathon Earl



Top: 1960, Bishop Wright and the Reverend Mr. James

Baysville: Michael Seymour, Randolph Jewet, John Teackle, Harold Teackle, William Brown, Jean Brown, Ann Ellis, Penny Jackson, Gail Roberts, Susan Vowels

Dorset: Richard Hayward, Eva Field, Sylvia McEachern, Judy Lock, Ryder Johnston



Below: 1962, Bishop Wright and the Reverend Mr. James  
Adrian vanSeters, Warden

Russell Jackson, Willie MacKinnon, Arnold MacKinnon, Ruth Jewett, Deborah Jewett, Edith MacKinnon, Shirley MacKinnon, Victoria Roberts, Patricia Teackle



Rebecca and Richard Piper  
and Daughter Allie (Mrs. Carl Campbell)

Edward and Mary Deakin  
of Rosebank Farm



J. S. Ely, 117 E. Main St., St. Louis, Mo.

Eliza and John Langmaid  
and daughter Lily  
(Mrs. Joe Brown)



John Langmaid Family  
Front: Annie and Mary  
Back: Henrietta, Mr.  
Langmaid, Lily,  
Mrs. Langmaid,  
and William

Joel Alldred Family  
Front: Mr. and Mrs. Alldred  
Back: Effie, George, Emma,  
Oscar and Arvilla





Mrs. Robert Ellis  
(Emma Alldred)



Mr. Robert Ellis  
with grandson Allan

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Ellis





William Ellis Family  
William Robert and Margaret Ellis with son Robert  
and daughters Louisa, Maude, Urinia and Margaret



William Henry Brown Family  
Mrs. Brown (Betsy), Lowell Brown, Mr. Brown, Pulford Henderson,  
Ida ? Lily (Mrs. Joe Brown), her son William, and Joe Brown





Samuel Langmaid  
brother of John



Mrs. Daniel Vanclief  
(Annie Rhodes)  
served 12 years  
on ACW executive



Mrs. Len Henderson  
(Mary Langmaid)



front, the children of Rev. Mr. Tindle  
Mary, Joyce, John  
back, Mrs. Tindle, Mrs. Moeller, ?

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2. Minutes: Osprey Township, March 21, 1853.
3. The Muskoka Herald, May 19, 1892, p. 1.
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5. The Algoma Missionary News, April 1899, p. 26.
6. *Ibid.*, March 1885, p. 75.
7. *Ibid.*, March 1885, p. 75.
8. *Ibid.*, April 1899, p. 26.
9. *Ibid.*, June 1921.
10. *Ibid.*, April 1899, p. 27.
11. *Ibid.*, April 1899, p. 26.
12. Minutes: Vestry Meeting - St. Ambrose, April 27, 1923.
13. The Muskoka Herald, March 15, 1888, p. 1.
14. Edited by the Rev'd Thomas Radcliff, Authentic Letters from Upper Canada, The MacMillan Co. of Canada Ltd., Toronto, p. 115.
15. The Algoma Missionary News, February 1892, p. 12.
16. *Ibid.*, April-May 1928, p. 52.
17. *Ibid.*, May 1895, p. 40.
18. Note: The exact date and year of the birth of St. Ambrose is not known. He died on April 4th, 397 which is an official day designated as St. Ambrose Day. However, since this often falls within Holy Week or Easter Week, it is usual to celebrate St. Ambrose Day on December 7th, the anniversary of his consecration as Bishop of Milan.
19. The Algoma Missionary News, April 1899, p. 26.
20. The Papers of Canon Hazlehurst.
21. The Algoma Missionary News, August 1901, p. 63.
22. The Muskoka Herald, April 16th, 1900.
23. *Ibid.*, April 28th, 1910.
24. *Ibid.*, December 1927, p. 5.
25. The Algoma Missionary News, November 1919, p. 124-5.
26. The Bracebridge Gazette, December 4, 1919.

27. The Algoma Missionary News, June-July 1925, p. 73-4.
28. Ibid., December 1929, p. 122.
29. R. C. Warder, Northern Exposure, Pageant Press New York 1957, p. 59.
30. Minutes: Vestry Meeting St. Ambrose, January 1934.
31. The Algoma Missionary News, April 1897, p. 3.
32. Ibid., March 1929, p. 33.
33. Ibid., June 1897, p. 49.
34. Ibid., August 1901, p. 63.
35. Ibid., March-April 1930, p. 30.
36. The Muskoka Herald, March 4th, 1897, p. 1.
37. The Algoma Missionary News, January 1898, p. 15.
38. The Muskoka Herald, September 14, 1893, p. 1.
39. The Algoma Missionary News, August 1901, p. 63.
40. Richard C. Warder, Northern Exposure, Pageant Press Inc., New York, 1957, p. 93.
41. The Algoma Missionary News, April/May 1928, p. 53.
42. William Somerset Maugham, A Writer's Notebook, Bookprint Ltd., Kingswood, Surrey, Eng., p. 65.