

A Preacher, a Young Girl and Some Irish Linen

No, they didn't enter a bar, but they did become part of the history of a small rural church. Starting just over a 100 years ago together they weave an interesting tale well worth remembering the next time you approach the altar.

The young girl in the story born in 1909 was raised by a family that was staunchly Methodist. However, at a very early age the young girl became intrigued by the church across the road, an Anglican church. Although lacking parental support she did go each Sunday and stand by the front door awaiting two spinster sisters who you might say adopted her for an hour each Sunday morning and with whom she sat for the service. Although her parents were not pleased they tolerated the young girl's quest for independence. Ironically, some years later the young girl's Methodist father who owned the local sawmill donated the cedar shingles to re-cover the Anglican church roof.

Over a period of several years the young girl became very attached to her new found church home and was inspired by the Preacher of the day and hence was eventually confirmed before she left her little country church to pursue her career. Soon after beginning her working career she was transferred to the 'big city' and in due course became a devoted member of St. Michaels and All Angels in Toronto. By an interesting twist of fate she met a young man who had also been raised for a period of time in the same small village she came from and they were married in 1929 by none other than her minister from the small country church some 200 miles from St. Michael and All Angels. For anyone that hasn't driven or taken a ride in a pre-1929 motor vehicle you will have to take my word for it that it would have been a challenging if not an heroic effort on the part of the minister to travel and then officiate at the wedding ceremony but such was the dedication of this particular Anglican minister.

Now enters the Irish linen and a lady called Anne, originally from Newcastle England. She was highly proficient in needlework and helped make and repair vestments and linens for churches across Canada. On a visit to the village where the little country church was located she met and became good friends of the members of the then Alter Guild of the church. Anne was so engaged by the members of the group and having seen the need, she volunteered to craft a set of altar linens. Linen was ordered directly from Ireland and fine needles and thread from Belgium. The task was completed and the linens were donated by her daughter and dedicated in 2010 in memory of the young Methodist girl who crossed the street a 100 years earlier to become a confirmed Anglican.

Cast of Characters:

Small Rural Church: Christ Church, Lion's Head

Preacher: Rev. 'Daddy' James Christ Church Rector (1912-1933)

Young Girl: Catherine (Kate) Pedwell (Ganton)

Young Girl's daughter who donated the alter linens: Isobel Ganton

Father of Young girl: Charles Pedwell early settler and sawmill owner in Lion's Head

Needlework/seamstress: Anne Robson

Alter Guild/Needlework Friends: Pat Horner, Ann Jose, Frances Warder & others

Credits:

Isobel Ganton whose remarks made at the dedication in 2010 provided much of the detail for this ' Daily Meditation '.