

# Sunday School Mission Was Start Of John Black Memorial Church

John Black Memorial United Church grew out of a Sunday School Mission that was started on the east side of the Red River in 1907.

S. R. Henderson, who later was to be the municipality's reeve from 1918-23, was the superintendent of this new venture of Kildonan parish.

The Sunday School grew rapidly and accommodation was a big problem for a few years. On April 11, 1914, a public meeting was held to plan the erection of a Sunday School building. But at that meeting it was decided that a congregation ought to be organized as well.

When the congregation was formed by action of Presbytery, it took the name of John Black Memorial, in commemoration of the first minister of Kildonan Church.

The original scheme was to build a sizeable church in the district. But these plans were set aside with the outbreak of the First World War. A small frame building was erected and opening services were held on Sunday, Oct. 4, 1914. The church opened debt-free.

The congregation decided to call a minister and the call went to the Rev. J. W. Little, of Shoal Lake, Man.

Mr. Little was inducted on Feb. 11, 1915, and rendered an effective ministry through the war years, until he left in 1918 to undertake Christian Education field work for the Presbyterian Church.

George Kennemore, one of the original elders of the congregation elected during Mr. Little's ministry, still serves on the Session as Roll Clerk.

Dr. Hugh J. Robertson was called to the church and inducted April 11, 1918. His was a long and splendid ministry, lasting until June, 1932.

During those years the congregation went into Church Union in 1925, weathered the disruption brought on when fire destroyed the first church in 1926, and carried through the erection of a fine church building on Roberts avenue in 1927.

A worthy successor to Dr. Robertson was found in the Rev. J. R. Mutchmor, who was then in charge of Robertson House, Winnipeg, and a valued friend of John Black community.

Mr. Mutchmor was inducted on July 8, 1932. During the years of his ministry the congregation struggled with the problems and chal-

lenges of the depression situation and carried on a variety of helpful programs.

Dr. Mutchmor resigned in 1936 to take up work with the Church Board which he now heads, the Board of Evangelism and Social Service.

The Rev. P. V. Samson was called from Minnedosa to serve the congregation. His was the longest pastorate in the church's history — from 1936 to 1954, a challenging and fruitful period of years.

One of the high moments of this ministry was the occasion on Feb. 12, 1947, when the mortgage on the church was burned, marking the success of an earnest congregational effort.

In the final years of this period East Kildonan was beginning to expand rapidly, and there was a marked increase in the enrollment of the church school and congregation.

Upon Mr. Samson's retirement from the pastorate, the Rev. C. H. Forsyth was called from Sioux Lookout, Ont., to serve John Black Church.

From 1955 to the present, the planning work and canvass program has been carried on which has resulted in the present church building extension.

After half a century in East Kildonan the congregation of John Black Memorial Church proudly held its first services on May 28th in their new \$160,000 church building.

