



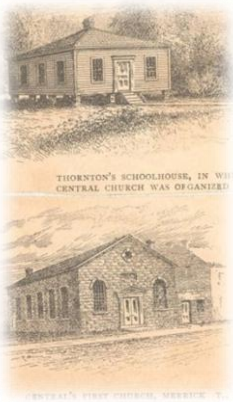
Central in Context

A growing church in a changing city, 1908

In 1908, Central Presbyterian Church opened a new building at the corner of Caroline and Charlton. This building replaced an earlier one destroyed by fire in 1906.



Before the fire...



A schoolhouse at Jackson and MacNab streets was the first meeting place for the ten members and two adherents anxious to form a new church. From these small beginnings in 1841, the congregation built its own church on Merrick Street. Later, in 1858, a much larger building was erected on the original schoolhouse site. There the growing, thriving congregation of the United Presbyterian Church of Hamilton, later renamed Central Presbyterian Church, worshipped until fire tragically destroyed the building in 1906. The reconstruction offered the opportunity to move from the downtown, where the church was one block from both St. Paul's and MacNab Street churches, to the expanding western part of the city.

The new Central...

The new church was designed by the architect John Lyle, famous for the Royal Alexandra Theatre, Union Station, and his influence with the "city beautiful" movement in the early twentieth century. It is architecturally and historically significant, being the only church he ever designed. Lyle accepted the commission because his father was the minister at the time of the fire which destroyed the earlier church.



The rebuilders...

This exhibit is intended to provide some insight into the people of Central and the city in which they lived a century ago when this building was dedicated. There are many members about whom we know little more than a name, and so we are faced with deciding which stories to tell. We have chosen the members of the building committee and significant donors at the time of construction in 1908. These are their stories, and in them are shadows of Central's and of Hamilton's history.





William Hendrie

1831-1906

William Hendrie was a very successful business man and horse breeder who had lived in a large estate called Holmstead on Bold Street.



Around town...

William Hendrie was born and raised in Glasgow. He began working with a railway in England and emigrated to Hamilton upon being offered a post with the Great Western Railway in 1855. At first he was stationed at the Niagara Falls office, but was very quickly transferred to the head office in Hamilton. Within a year he partnered with John Sheddon to form one of the first companies in North America to act as agents for railway cartage. This simplified the process of transporting goods for both the railways and their customers.



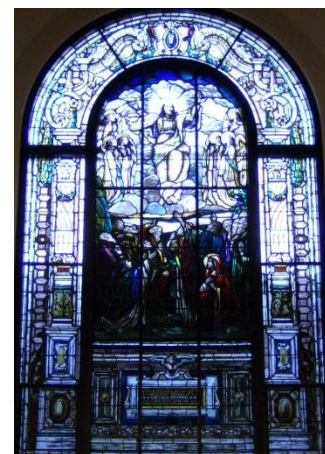
In the news...

William Hendrie became a prominent horse breeder and promoter. In 1866 he was steward of the Hamilton Riding and Driving Association, formed to arrange the running of the Queen's Plate in the city. In 1881 he helped form the Ontario Jockey Club, of which he was president from 1892 until his death. He had about 80 horses on his farm in Aldershot (now RBG) which were exhibited both locally and internationally.



At Central Presbyterian...

Hendrie died in 1906, the year of the fire which destroyed Central on Jackson Street. His widow, Mary Murray Hendrie, and children donated the largest stained glass window, the Ascension, in his memory. This gift required Lyle to reconsider the plans he had drawn up for the chancel, splitting the organ pipes and choir stalls as you see them today.





John Morrison Eastwood

1864-1927

In 1908 Eastwood had just lost his second bid for a seat in Provincial parliament.

Around town...

After several years of working for his father, Eastwood joined the Times Printing Company in 1890. Remaining with the Hamilton Times until it closed in 1920, he rose to secretary treasurer and vice president. Eastwood preached "A Greater Hamilton" and sought that end in all civic interests. He was one of the first members of the Independent Cemetery Board and introduced the highly successful Perpetual Care Maintenance Plan with Judge Teetzel.

Eastwood was a city alderman from 1903-1906, a Director of several large industries as well as of the Hamilton and Barton Incline Railway Company. His home, *Linden Place*, still stands at 7 Blake Street.



In the news...

As chairman of the Bayfront Commission, Eastwood inaugurated many important projects in Hamilton Harbour. These included the building of long revetment walls to reclaim the swamps cut into the bayshore, and the construction of Burlington Street along the enclosed land.

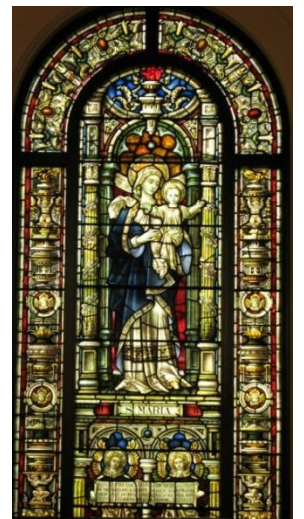
Eastwood Park commemorates his work.



At Central Presbyterian...

Eastwood was a long time member of Central and served as a trustee. In 1906 he married twenty-two year old Florence Mary Gibson (left), a daughter of Senator William Gibson. Pictured at left, she later married Lester Merrick. The

Eastwood window in the North balcony was donated in memory of John's mother, Esther Maria (Kerr) Eastwood, who died in 1905.





Benjamin Ernest Charlton

1835-1901

Charlton served in municipal government as councillor, alderman as well as mayor. His wife donated a window to honour his memory.

Around town...

Charlton was the son of an Englishman whose family traces its roots back to the Norman Conquest. He was educated at the public school in Brantford before attending Toronto Normal School. He received his teaching certificate at age nineteen and came to Hamilton where he was hired to



teach at Central Public School. Leaving teaching shortly after this, he founded the Hamilton Vinegar Works in 1855 and later helped to establish the Royal Distillery Company. Charlton also served as president of the Hamilton Street Railway and as a director of the Hamilton Steamboat Company. He was also the president of the Hamilton Board of trade and a director of the Mechanics Institute.



In the news...

Charlton was very active in municipal politics. As a councillor, he was Chairman of the Finance Committee. In 1867 he was chosen as mayor by a vote of the Aldermen from amongst their members, and at thirty-two may be Hamilton's youngest mayor. He was chosen mayor again in 1873 and his election in 1874 marked the first time that the position was decided by civic vote.

At Central Presbyterian...

The Charlton window on the north wall, "Boy Jesus in the Temple" depicts lawyers and rabbis gathered around a young Jesus listening intently. The window was erected in memory of the late Mayor by his wife Sarah Elizabeth Barber (a memorial window had been installed in the old church and was destroyed). Charlton who died in 1901, lived on Bay Street just south of Hannah, which would be renamed Charlton Avenue in his honour.





Ladies' Aid Society

1908

In 1908 the Ladies' Aid Society existed to raise funds for use within the church, and provided much needed funding for the beautification of the sanctuary.

Some women astounded us...

In 1907 the Building Committee told architect John Lyle that they proposed saving money by omitting the nine foot high oak panelling (or dado) in the sanctuary. Lyle was appalled at this request, as the dado was important to his overall design. After much discussion the Ladies' Aid agreed to meet half of the two thousand dollar cost, and the architect paid the balance out of his own pocket. In addition, the Ladies' Aid, which had installed a window in the old church, agreed to purchase one in memory of their deceased members in the new church. This window, made by McLausland, cost them \$750, part of which was covered by insurance. They also paid for carpet in the new church.

Over the years, funds were raised by the annual Scotch luncheon, which in 1907 brought in \$323. When the church was opened, they took orders for Hassocks for the church pews, took part in the Garden Songs entertainment, and ran both a Spring Fete and Travel Souvenir Sale.



Over the years, the funds that they had were used for renovations to the Sunday School, the Home Mission Fund, the Sanford Avenue Mission, the Young Men's Union and the pulpit decorations. As Stella Lowe wrote in 1909 "the Harvest truly is great, but the Labourers are few."

The Ladies...



The officers of the Ladies' Aid Society, as listed in the 1908 annual report of the church were as follows: Mrs Davis, President; Mrs Pennington, 1st Vice-President; Mrs Hawkins, 2nd Vice-President; Mrs Furnival, 3rd Vice-President; Mrs G. Rutherford, 4th Vice-President; Mrs Dickson, Treasurer; Mrs Lowe, Secretary. (Photo is of Elizabeth Lyle in 1899)



Robert Knight Hope

1848-1943

In 1908 Robert Knight Hope was serving as the Registrar of Deeds for Wentworth County. He and his brother donated the Hope window in memory of their parents.

Around town...

Robert Knight hope was the second son of Charles and Jane Mary Hope to join their uncle's hardware firm. As a young man, Hope was a lieutenant in the Thirteenth Battalion before joining Adam Hope and Co. in 1868. Robert Knight became a junior member of the firm in 1875 and remained until 1898 when he was appointed Registrar of Deeds. He remained in this position until 1935, and even after retirement stopped at the office almost daily. Hope was involved with social welfare work, and after becoming treasurer of the Boer War fund in 1939 used some of the money to aid families of local fighting men. He was a thirty-second degree mason, and belonged to both the Hamilton and Thistle clubs.



In the news...

A life-long athlete, Robert Hope was a valued member of the track team at Upper Canada College. At the University of Toronto he became "one of Canada's outstanding cricket players." He maintained his interest in sports and in 1872 played in the first inter-provincial football match between Ontario and Quebec. He helped establish the Hamilton Amateur Athletic Association and acquire its grounds. He also followed baseball and soccer and continued to curl and bowl until late in life.

At Central Presbyterian...

Robert Knight Hope served for many years as an elder at Central Presbyterian Church. He and his brother George donated the Hope window in the sanctuary in memory of their parents, Charles and Mary Jane Hope. Robert, a bachelor, lived with his brother's family in their home at 43 Duke Street.





George Hope

1846-1933

In 1908 George Hope was a prominent business man in trade, manufacturing and finance. He was chairman of the building committee for Central's reconstruction.

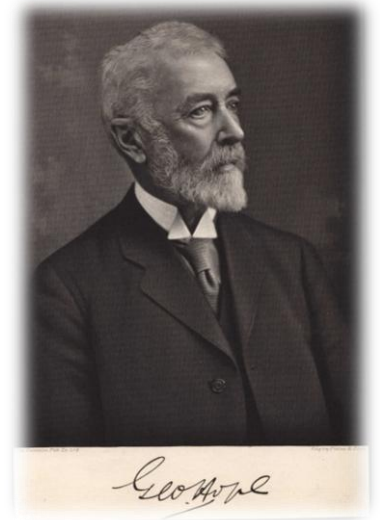
Around town...

George Hope was one of two sons of Charles and Jane Mary Hope of London who came to Hamilton to work in the firm of their uncle Adam Hope. He became associated with the Hamilton Provident and Loan Society in 1903 and

became much more involved in the bank after his retirement from the family trade in 1909. By 1916 when George Rutherford died, Hope was unanimously elected president. He also held interest in the Union Hotel Co. Ltd., the Steel Company of Canada (Stelco) and the Cataract Paper Company.



Hamilton Provident and Loan
Kearney and Thompson Services



In the news...

George Hope was highly regarded as "one of the most honourable men in the whole range of Hamilton commerce." As the Hamilton Herald reported, twenty years after the firm of Adam Hope and Co. became insolvent and creditors received only 40 cents on the dollar, George Hope repaid the balance and accumulated interest, even though at the time he "was in no way connected with the defunct company other than what he himself thought was a moral obligation."

At Central Presbyterian...

When the church at Jackson and MacNab was destroyed by fire, George Hope was selected as chairman of the building committee for a new church. He was a long time elder and senior manager who, when he died in 1933, was the oldest member of the congregation. Hope lived in Sandyford Place at 43 Duke. Central, like his other charitable works and causes, benefited greatly from his generosity and commitment.





George Rutherford

1837-1916

In 1908 George Rutherford was the Clerk of Session at Central. He laid the cornerstone of the present church.

Around town...

George Rutherford was born in Ottawa, educated at Madras College in Scotland, and moved to Hamilton in 1854. Within four years he became a partner in the wholesale drug firm of Winer and Co., becoming president in 1887. He was also a partner in the Hamilton Glass Works in 1865, and later the Burlington Glass Works, where he remained until 1891. He was director, and later president of the Hamilton Provident and Loan Society, and director of the Mercantile Bank and the Bank of Hamilton. He was an



active supporter of the YMCA and served eight years on the Board of Hospital Governors.



In the news...

In 1870 the Rutherfords moved from Park Street to several acres of land at 734 Main Street East, just west of Sherman Avenue. His first wife, Deborah Harris (1841-1895), bore several children, but only two daughters survived. He married again in 1904 to Harriet Harvey, nearly thirty years his junior.



At Central Presbyterian...

Rutherford served on the Music Committee, the Board of Trustees, the Session, and as Sunday School Superintendent for twenty-five years. His \$7,500 donation was one of the largest to the building fund, and he was chosen to lay the cornerstone in 1907. After his death, the family donated the Echo Organ in the rear gallery in his memory.





James Dickson

1873-1909

In 1908 James Dickson was a barrister with the firm of Nesbett, Gauld and Dickson and a city alderman. He was a member of Central's Board of Managers.

Around town...



James Dickson's father, William, and Sibella Murdoch emigrated to Canada from Scotland in the early 1850s. They met on the same ship, fell in love, and married in Hamilton. A builder and contractor by trade, William (left) was responsible for many buildings in Hamilton, including his own home at 128 Duke Street. The summit of his career may have been building *Sans Souci*, Senator W. E. Sanford's cottage on Lake Rosseau, which was set on a hill on the largest of the Senator's seven islands with a private steam yacht, the 75-foot *Naiad*. William and Sibella (pictured) had seven children in Hamilton, including a daughter, Annie, who was the Superintendent of Central's Junior Christian Endeavour Society, and James, a prominent Hamilton barrister.



In the news...

James Dickson was an Alderman from 1905-1908, chairman of the Hamilton Finance Committee, president of the Britannia Athletic Association, member of the Ramblers Bicycle Club, and a Mason. Because of ill health, he and his wife, Isabella Hilliar travelled to England in 1909, where he died in July. His body was shipped home for burial in Hamilton two weeks later. The couple had no children.



At Central Presbyterian...

Though James Dickson's will provided for a memorial window to his parents William and Sibella, Dickson could not have anticipated when he wrote it that he would pre-decease one of them. The window, which was installed in 1910, includes reference to it being done in fulfilment of the will. Perhaps because his mother was still living. She died in 1915.





Sir John Strathearn Hendrie

1857-1923

In 1908 John Strathearn Hendrie was MPP for Hamilton West, and sat on Ontario's first Hydro-Electric Power Commission. He donated windows memorializing his father and one of his sons.

Around town...



Hendrie, who was raised in one of Hamilton's wealthiest families, attended Upper Canada College and worked for a time with the Great Western Railway. He then joined his father's Hamilton Bridge Works Company where he began as a civil engineer, became a manager and ultimately vice president before turning his attention to

politics. In 1901 he was elected mayor of Hamilton on a promise to bring "business methods" to the administration of the city. His term was very short lived as he ran successfully for the seat of Hamilton West in the provincial legislature within a year of his mayoral victory. He was to serve this office until his appointment as Lieutenant Governor to succeed John Morison Gibson in 1914.



In the news...

Hendrie was offered the ministry of public works by Premier Whitney but declined, preferring to serve as minister without portfolio and chairman of the legislature's railway committee. His drive to bring the principles of business to government led to the creation of the Ontario Railway and Municipal Board and the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario as independent semi-judicial bodies.



At Central Presbyterian...

An active member of the congregation, Hendrie along with his mother and siblings donated the large chancel window in memory of his father William. John Strathearn Hendrie and his wife, Lena Maud, also donated the window depicting "Jacob's Ladder" as a memorial to their son Hugh (left) who died at the age of fifteen in 1907. The family lived at 252 James Street South.





Peter Thomas McCullough

1862-1901

A gregarious travelling salesman, McCullough sold stocks in the Northwest before the Canadian Pacific Railway was built. He was known throughout Ontario.

Around town...



For many years, Peter Thomas McCullough was one of the city's most popular citizens. Born in Hamilton, he went through the city schools and found employment with the foundry firm of James Stewart and Company, for whom he was a long serving travelling salesman. With extraordinary talents as a singer and entertainer, he was a social favourite, invited to parties of young and old alike. As well, he was a popular speaker and story teller at banquets and other festive occasions, not only in Hamilton, but in many other towns around Ontario. His brother John donated the clock at Central Public School.



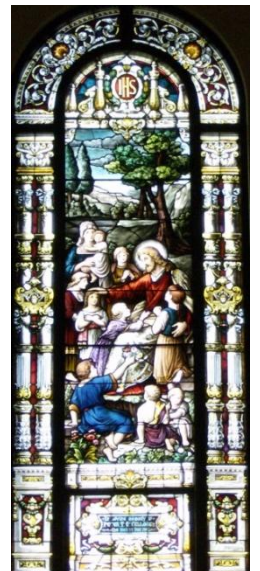
In the news...

The Christmas season had sad significance for this respected family. While still a child, Peter lost two brothers to scarlet fever immediately following Christmas in 1870. On Christmas Day of 1891 Peter's brother James was burned to death just one month after his wedding. Having married his brother's widow, Peter himself died of pneumonia on December 27th 1901, leaving a three month old son. Two other siblings had died in infancy, and Peter was survived only by his brother John, a life-long bachelor who lived until 1936.



At Central Presbyterian...

Peter's mother, Annie McCullough, and his brother John donated the beautiful window "Jesus and the Children," as well as the baptismal font in Peter's memory. His grandson (and namesake) remained a member of the congregation until his death in 1986. Perhaps it should not go unnoticed that having lost so many of their own, the family's memorials both in the community and the church centre around children.





John Crerar, QC

1836-1904

John Crerar had been a prominent Hamilton lawyer and Crown Attorney. He was also a city alderman and founding member of the Hamilton Law Society.

Around town...



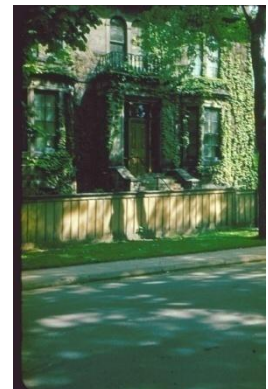
John Crerar came to Hamilton from Crieff, Scotland in 1857. He married Jessie Anne Hope (an aunt of George and Robert Hope). Crerar started out in banking before embarking on law studies at Osgoode Hall and was called to the bar in 1871. One notable case involved the unsuccessful 1876 defence of

Michael McConnell, who had murdered prominent businessman Nelson Mills. Crerar was a prominent Liberal, and a proponent of Free Trade, opposing John A. Macdonald's National Policy. Outside of his business pursuits, John Crerar was a freemason, honorary president of the St. Andrew's Benevolent Society and the founder of Canada's first amateur theatrical society, the Garrick Club.



In the news...

In 1896, Hamilton Society was invited to a lavish St Valentine's Day ball to honour the débutante Miss Carrie Crerar at his home, *Merksworth* (north-east corner of McNab and Herkimer). Seventy-five guests enjoyed the eighteen dances and letters from the post box, distributed by Cupid during the ball.



At Central Presbyterian...

At the time of his death, John Crerar was the chairman of the Board of Managers. A memorial window was installed in the south gallery of the new church by his wife Jessie Anne. It shows St. Andrew holding a saltire cross.



Sir John Morison Gibson

1842-1929

In 1908 Gibson was appointed Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, an office he held for six years. He was also a member of Central's building committee.

Around town...

Gibson joined the militia during his university days and had achieved the rank of lieutenant when he served with the Hamilton contingent in the Battle of Ridgeway against the Fenians. His law firm, Mackelcan and Gibson, were named city solicitors for Hamilton in 1872, an indication that they were one of the most important legal firms in Hamilton at that time.



He was elected to the provincial legislature in 1879. Gibson was a founding partner in the Cataract Power Company in 1896 and promoter of a scheme which set out to create an integrated, electricity based, industrial power and transportation network with Hamilton as its hub.

In the news...

Gibson was active in the drive to admit women into the University of Toronto and served as provincial education minister in the 1880s. As Provincial Secretary in 1893, he championed through the legislature a bill "for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children," also known as the Gibson Act, which was responsible for the establishment of Children's Aid Societies in Ontario.



At Central Presbyterian...

Gibson was a member of the building committee in 1908. Lady Gibson gave a substantial endowment "in lieu of pew rents" to maintain the family's pew in the sanctuary (today the only plaqued pew). His funeral was conducted from Central in 1929 with full military honours. He lived at 311 Bay Street (right), moving to Ravenscliffe on Aberdeen in 1911 (above right).





James Joseph Evel

1849-1932

In 1908 J. J. Evel was the founder of the Evel Casket Company on King Street. He had been an elder at Central since 1899, and was the Sunday school superintendent.

Around town...

Having apprenticed as a cabinet maker, Evel quickly established himself in the casket making trade in Hamilton, entering into partnership with Arthur Semmens. Semmens and Evel grew to employ one hundred people in their Florence Street factory which fronted on three sides of the city block. In 1908 he founded his own Evel Casket Company and was also a director of Mercury Mills. As a philanthropist, Evel was a founder of the

Hamilton Sanatorium, working first through the City Improvement Society, and later as president of the Hamilton Health Association. A substantial gift in his will to the Sanatorium led to the construction of the Evel Pavilion.



In the news...

In 1879 while admiring cloth covered caskets from Buffalo on display at the Provincial Exhibition in Hamilton, Evel addressed a friend saying he could make "as fine caskets if only I could compete with the Buffalo people." A dignified gentleman turned and said, "You think you could do as well with the work if you only were protected from competition, I will see what can be done to help you." Evel had not recognized the gentleman as Sir John A. Macdonald, who adjusted the National Policy accordingly and the Hamilton factory began producing cloth covered caskets.



At Central Presbyterian...

As the Sunday School Superintendent when the old church at MacNab and Jackson was destroyed by fire, it was J.J. Evel's suggestion that a location further west of the downtown be chosen. He argued that many of Central's young people were from the area. Ultimately this led to the selection of the present site at Caroline and Charlton. It was Evel's factory that produced the Communion table which he donated to the church. Married to Jessie Gay, he and his family lived at 51 Stanley Avenue.





Music at Central

1908

Musically, the opening service in June must have been a bit of a disappointment for some. Although the forty-five voice choir directed by C. Percival Garratt sang a *Te Deum*, there was no organ. Central's organ, which was to be "more sonorous and effective" than the organ at Centenary Methodist was not to be ready for another month. Numerous delays had prevented the Casavant Brothers of Quebec from obtaining the clean, quiet working environment necessary to have the instrument working properly. While John Lyle would have preferred never to see a choir in street clothes in his church, not until the following year was the choir robed, a growing trend among large urban Presbyterian (and Methodist) churches at the time.



C. PERCIVAL GARRATT.

C. Percival Garratt (1868-1954)...

Garratt came to Hamilton in 1874 as the son of Central's first organist. He went on to study under Dr. Whiting at the Boston Conservatory before working in North Carolina and Tennessee. He returned to Hamilton in 1900 to accept the position of organist at Central. After a dispute with George Rutherford in 1911, Garratt refused to apologise and was dismissed after the Palm Sunday service. He went to Hollywood, where he played the organ for the silent film "The Birth of a Nation." The remainder of his life was spent in Los Angeles where he played a church service the Sunday prior to his death.

Harold Hamilton (1880-1932)...

Hamilton was the bass soloist at Central from 1902 to 1910, and sang at the opening services in June 1908. His brother James was the head of the Music Committee at Central for many years. After his marriage to soprano Margaret Bruce McCoy, who sang professionally, Harold and his children continued to attend Central until church union in 1925. He was also the founder and President of Burlington (later Slater) Steel.





Samuel Lyle, D.D.

1841-1919

In 1908 the Reverend Samuel Lyle was the minister when Central began worshiping in its new building designed by his son John.

Around town...

Born and educated in Ireland, the Reverend Samuel Lyle was ordained in 1868. Ten years later he accepted a call to Central Presbyterian Church and brought his family to Canada. Lyle assumed the pastorate of the church when Hamilton was evolving into a major Industrial centre. With his strong personality, organizing ability and scholarly leadership, he exercised a powerful influence on the intellectual and cultural development of his community.



In the news...

Lyle's crusading spirit made him a leader in all forward movements of the day and he served many boards and clubs over the years. He was one of the founders of the Hamilton Art School in 1886. He also campaigned to establish a free Public Library and became one of the original members of the Hamilton Public Library Board.

At Central Presbyterian...



Samuel Lyle was inducted into Central in February of 1868. Near the end of his active Ministry fire completely destroyed the Jackson Street Church. Dr. Lyle's son John M. Lyle was invited to be the architect of a new Church which would be built on Caroline Street. In 1908 John Lyle also designed a new home for his Father, and the family moved to Glenfern Ave. Samuel Lyle retired from Central in 1910, becoming Pastor Emeritus until his death in 1919. A stone plaque dedicated to the long serving minister was erected in the front vestibule of the church.



Elizabeth Orr Lyle

1849-1932

In 1908 Mrs. Lyle was a well known philanthropist and the wife of Central's minister. Her son, John Lyle, designed the present church.

Around town...

Born and raised in Antrim, Northern Ireland, Elizabeth Orr married Samuel Lyle in Dublin, coming to Hamilton when her husband accepted a call to Central. Once here, she was a force for social change. She was associated with the Local Council of Women from its inception in 1892. She was also involved in the formation of the Associated Charities movement and the Hamilton branch of the V.O.N. In later years she became involved with the cause of conservation, presenting a paper on "Town Planning and Housing in Connection with Health" to the Western Ontario Town Planning Association.



In the news...

Mrs. Lyle is most celebrated for her tireless efforts advocating fresh air treatment of tuberculosis. Working with two other local women (Mrs. Evans and Mrs. Southam) she secured a ninety-eight acre farm with a half-mile of escarpment on which was built the Hamilton Sanatorium. The institution earned continental recognition in the treatment of tuberculosis.



At Central Presbyterian...

Elizabeth Lyle was largely responsible for the formation of the Ladies' Aid Society and the Mission Band. In 1918 the Mission Band gained permission to "call ourselves in her honour Elizabeth Lyle Auxiliary." The group later merged with the Women's Missionary Society and is still active at Central. Her home, designed by her son after the death of her husband, still stands on Chedoke Avenue today.



John Mackintosh Lyle

1872-1945

John Lyle was the son of Dr. Samuel Lyle, Central's minister, and Elizabeth Orr Lyle. Central Presbyterian is the only church he ever designed.

Around town...



John Lyle was born in Ireland and came to Canada with his parents in 1878. He was educated in Hamilton and spent two years at the Hamilton Art School. In 1891, he attended the Yale School of Fine Arts before being lured to Paris, where he studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts. He then moved to New York City in 1896 where he worked with Carrere and Hastings, Warren Wetmore and James Brite, before returning to Canada in 1905. In Hamilton Lyle designed the fountain in Gage Park, the Imperial Bank (bottom left) and the High Level Bridge.



In the news...

His first Canadian commission in 1905 was for William Hendrie's new home *Gateside* on Aberdeen Avenue in Hamilton (right and below). This was followed by the Royal Alexandra Theatre, Toronto (1907); and Union Station, Toronto, (1914-1921). Although he was trained in the classical Beaux Arts style, Lyle became drawn to Art Deco and produced many buildings using Canadian motifs.



At Central Presbyterian...

It's tempting to echo words written about Sir Christopher Wren, the architect of St Paul's Cathedral, London: *If you seek his monument, look around you.* Every facet of this building was designed by Lyle - windows, carving, the organ cases, the pew ends, even the lock plates on the doors. When the original roof balustrade needed replacement in the 1930s, Lyle designed the parapet that we see today.





Towards a Canadian Design

The architectural legacy of John Lyle

While Central is the only church John Lyle ever designed, his record is one of landmarks in Hamilton and across Canada.

The images...



Clockwise from right: John Lyle, his Toronto studio, Union Station under construction, interior, Runnymede Branch (Toronto Public Library), Memorial Arch (RMC), Bank of Nova Scotia (Halifax), Wynnstay (Ancaster) Royal Alexandra Theatre, High Level Bridge.





This Place of Worship

A growing church in a changing city, 2008

In 2008 Central Presbyterian Church celebrated the centennial of its historic building and 167 years of Christian witness in Hamilton.

Our people...



Central today is a vibrant and exciting congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. The people of Central form a community where God is present and worshiped, and where Jesus calls us to grow as His disciples. We are committed to being a community where we care for one another, and take God's love into the world through service.



Our building...

Since 1908, there have been few changes to John Lyle's original design. In the 1930s, the Roman stone was badly decayed, and the urns on the tower were removed. The balustrade around the roof was also removed, but Lyle himself designed the present cornice. Inside, Lyle's original lighting fixtures (brass dishes with uncovered bulbs) were replaced in 1966. The south transept was redesigned as a chapel in 1957 and furnished by the Zimmerman and Allan families. There have been several additional windows since 1908, including a two panel window in the north transept given in memory of Mary Chambers Hawkins, a window in the chapel given by Mrs.



Alexander Zimmerman in memory of her husband, and the window in the north gallery given by the Young Men's Club in 1976. Recently, significant investments have been made towards the restoration and refurbishment of this landmark building. In 2008 it was named the McPherson chapel to honour the Reverend Dr. Alan McPherson.

Acknowledgements...

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