

The John Puska family at the christening of Miriam in 1921.

Back row: Tuevo (Ted) and Tanno (Donald).

Middle row: Kerttu (Trudi); Anna Sofhia—wife of Jussi (John) Puska, née Karsama, holding Viola (Miriam) in christening gown; Taivo (David).

Front row: Wiljo (Tarmo) and Katri.



Miriam Puska

JOHN PUSKA bought shares in the Finnish community of Sointula on Malcolm Island north of Campbell River, Vancouver Island, and came from Vancouver to Webster's Corners on 1 January 1905. He stayed until 1908 and then returned to Peräseinäjoki, Oulu, Finland, and started up his own taxi business. He and his wife Anna Sofhia had two children before returning to Webster's Corners in 1912. According to family folklore the couple and their two children were scheduled to take the ill-fated *Titanic* from Liverpool to New York but missed the sailing by one day.

Donald Puska later started up Albion Boat Works and between about 1940 and 1985 built hundreds of gill net boats for the commercial fishing



Webster's Corners United Church

Text of the plaque at the entrance of Webster's Corners United Church, commissioned by the Community Heritage Committee in 1996

The Methodists built the church in 1912 on land donated by Mr. Biggs. When the building was two thirds finished the Methods learned that the church would need to be moved because the land survey had mistakenly included 33 feet on the property of a neighbouring banker. The two Ansell families contributed \$200 to purchase the extra land and construction continued. The church was built almost entirely with donated labour and materials. The only paid labour was for one carpenter from Haney.

Reverend D. Scott was the first minister. The church also functioned as a community facility

for banquets and concerts by fitting a platform over the altar steps to form a stage. In the 1920s the church was raised and a basement was added. By 1925 the basement was still not finished and winter drafts made the floor very cold. A Ladies Aid Society was formed to raise funds and insulate the basement. The work was finally completed in 1926 and the ladies of the congregation were so excited they held a grand supper in the still dirt-floored basement. Church union led to the name change to Webster's Corners United Church in 1926. Eighty-five years after it was constructed, the church still holds services for a small but dedicated congregation.