

Building Programs at South Apalachin Baptist Church

The Owego Free Baptist Church was started in October 1816 by traveling preachers (Circuit Riders). They met in homes and barns until 1844 when a church building was completed. The church continued in that building until November 12, 1859 when the building burned to the ground. They returned to house meetings until 1865. A dedication service for the new church building was held January 3, 1866. Services continued to be held in that building for the next 100 years. There was a period of time between 1912 – 1925 when the congregation was so small that they could not afford a pastor and the church was kept open by teachers and students from Practical Bible Training School. The church began to grow after WWII and there was a need for Sunday School rooms. An annex was added on the back of the existing church sometime between 1943 and 1946.

Mystery surrounds the installation of stained glass windows in our old church. The original windows were large, the same size as the stained glass windows, but were made up of small panes of plain glass. The exact date of the window replacement has been lost due theft of the church safe. Some older members hold to an installation in the 1930s. Others believe the 40s are correct. Since there are ten memorial name plates in the display in our church stairway all ten windows in the church including the two back windows that were covered by the new annex must have had stained glass. This would mean the stained glass windows were installed before the annex was built. However, one photo shows the original annex completed with at least one church window with plain glass. It is possible not all windows were replaced at the same time although all the windows had the same basic design. So our church history, like the Bible, contains a mystery.

At the time the windows were replaced the church treasury could not afford the cost so the idea of a memorial windows was entertained. If a family or group would buy a window their name would be added in stained glass at the bottom. There was sufficient interest that all the windows were funded and the old windows were replaced. The names of the families and groups that purchased windows are as follows: Mr. & Mrs. William T. and Ethel Yates, Adult Bible Class, Mr. and Mrs. Ben and Mary Tracy, The Stephens Family, Young People's Society, Andreassen's Family, Mr. and Mrs. Leland and Nettie Fox, Mr. and Mrs. Philip and Edna Storozow, Mr. and Mrs. Gomer and Lelia Davis, In Memory of Rev. and Mrs. Ralph Chaffee. Since the stained glass windows were installed over 60 years ago many of the families that purchased a window are no longer represented in the congregation. However, a number of them are represented by their children. William and Ethel Yates had a daughter named Lois who married Bill Hall. Their daughters Kathy Welch and Mary Johnson now represent that family. The

Andreasen family is represented by Art and Carl's families. Philip and Edna Storozow are represented by Elmer and Harriett Storozow. Many who were in the Adult Bible Class or Young Peoples Society are still in attendance at church today.



When the new church was built and the old church abandoned, thought was given to how best to keep the memory of the stained glass windows in the old church alive. The name plates of the families who had purchased a window were removed and placed in a display case that is mounted in the church stairway. Each of the stained glass windows was built with a section that opened to let air circulate in the church. These sections had their own frame and could be removed from the larger windows. The lighted stained glass column at the church entrance way is made up of these sections of the original windows. At night the lighted stained glass column is a nice reminder of our church history.



The size of the congregation continued to increase and the need for additional meeting rooms dictated expansion. In 1954 a basement was constructed on the north side of the church building and the existing church building was elevated and moved to rest on the new basement walls. The annex that was at the back of the church was enlarged in width and height and rooms were added to the second story for Sunday School Classes and Junior Church. In ten short years the church was too small for the congregation so the present church was constructed across the creek from the old building in 1965. The present parsonage was built in 1970 in back of the old parsonage which was removed once the new one was livable. The present gym building was added in 1978 to complete the church complex as it stands today.



SABC in 1949, Before Construction in 1954