

HISTORY OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF CAMPBELLSPORT

By Wayland Helmer (undated)

The origin of the First Baptist Church of Campbellsport is closely tied in with the settlement of this Community.

The first settlement in Auburn was made by Ludin Crouch on a branch of the Milwaukee River, where he built a log dam and erected a saw mill. The saw mill was later replaced by a flour and grist mill. The log dam went out in a Spring Flood and was replaced by the present stone dam by Jonas E. Helmer & Sons. The settlement was called Crouchville.

The first marriage – R. Hemmingway and Harriet Hull in 1847

The first death was Mrs. Baldwin in 1846, the funeral service was conducted by Rev. H. A. Sears, a Baptist minister from Byron.

The first school was taught in the Crouch home in the summer of 1848 by Maria Bristol. In Ashford the first religious service was held in the home of Henry Barnet, father of Mrs. John Hendricks Sr., by Rev. H. A. Sears in 1846. The first marriage there was Eleager Cisco and Fanny Pryer.

The first white baby born was Cyrus D. Helmer, Feb. 6, 1847

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The first school was taught by Miss C. Colvin of Byron in 1847.

Auburn was named by R. F. Adams after his native home, Auburn, New York.

On Feb. 28, 1852 a group of Baptists met in the school house, District #1 Auburn (Five Corners), for the purpose of establishing a formal Church organization. Rev. H. A. Sears – moderator, Joseph Vining – clerk, others – Eleayer Cisco, Martin Dyer, William Tuttle, Theodore Brown and their wives; voted that a meeting be held the 4th Monday in April for the purpose of being recognized as an established Baptist Church. A council was called of several Churches for the purpose. Churches called were Newark, Byron, Cascade. R. F. Adams was elected church clerk, April 24, 1852.

At a business meeting held in the school house District #1 Auburn, Joseph Vining, Eleayer Cisco, and R. F. Adams were appointed as a committee to act with the council in being recognized as an established church. It was voted that the name of said church be The First Baptist Church of Auburn and Ashford.

April 28, 1852 – School House District #1 Auburn
Council of Churches met with local membership
Rev. Hamilton, Newark
Rev. H. A. Sears, Byron
Rev. Irwin, Cascade

Articles of faith were read and the Council agreed to recognize said bodies as a Regular Baptist Church in good standing.

Sermon by Rev. Hamilton

Prayer of Recognition and Right Hand of Fellowship by Rev. H. A. Sears

Charge to the Church by Rev. Irwin
Benediction by Rev. Hamilton

May 22, 1852 – District #1 Auburn
Rev. H. A. Sears accepts pastorate of Auburn and Ashford Baptist Church, Salary \$100 per year/

Oct. 21, 1854 –
Services held in the school house in Crouchville

July 25, 1857
At a business meeting held in the home of William Odekirk a committee of five: John James, Henry Barnett, Jonas E. Helmer, Alason Wheeler, and R. G. Adams was appointed to procure a site for a church building in the New Cassel Village plot.

December 23, 1860
At a business meeting held in the home of Lorenzo Bump arrangements were made to obtain the use of a hall owned by Orin Helmer as a place of public worship. At the intersection of Hwy 67 and County Trunk V.

1866
Rev. Levi Fosdick came as Pastor.
At a business meeting held at the home of Lorenzo Bump a building committee was elected to supervise the construction of the church building. The committee consisted of Henry Barnett, Jonas E. Helmer, F. W. Tanner, William Scheid, and Christian Yancy. Christian Yancy donated the building site. Much of the timber came from the William Scheid and Henry Barnett farms. Others donated lumber and labor. Cost of the structure was \$2200. Rev. and Mrs. Levi Fosdick visited the church later when they celebrated their 24th anniversary from a Pastorate at Pella, Iowa in 1894.

July 4, 1873
The tornado of this date narrowly missed the church. A picnic had been planned by the church members who were gathered in the church building when the storm broke. The picnic grounds, a grove where Ed Spoerl's Residence now stands was flattened. No Picnic!!! About this time the name of the Church was changed to New Cassel Baptist Church.

1892
Rev. A. T. Miller came as Pastor. During his pastorate the Sunday School room was added.

1897
Rev. W. D. Wells came as Pastor and during his stay the parsonage was built. The name of the church was changed to The First Baptist Church of Campbellsport.
Officer personal during these and later years – John C. Schmidt, Gottlieb Schmidt, John Becklinger, Frederick Borchert, John Hendricks Sr., Frank Bump, Charles Burnett, Mrs. Ella Loebs, William Zielleke, Rudolph Miske, Sophia Helmer, Margaret Rothenberger, Edna Hendricks, R. L. Raymond, Alice Hendricks.

Many improvements have been made to the church property during the pastorates of C. A. Freeman, J. W. Taylor, D. C. Anderson, Burton Moore. Present pastor Robert Horn and his good wife continue in the best Baptist Tradition. A hard working and generous membership has made these things possible. Gifts

by Frank Scheid, Dr. R. Raymond and the Rothenberger Memorial was used to good advantage. The Ladies Aid under the direction of Mrs. Ed Kock did much to bolster the morale of the church. Looking back over the years of effort by the members of the First Baptist Church of Campbellsport an autonomous body one is reminded of a verse by Edgar Guest:

God builds no churches, By His plan
That labor has been left to man
No spires miraculously rise
No little mission from the skies
Falls on a bleak and barren place
To be a source of strength and grace
The humblest church demands its price
In human toil and sacrifice

There is no church but that proclaims
The gifts of countless generous names
Ages before us spires were raised
Neath which Almighty God was praised
As proof that He was then as now
Those sacred alters, where men bow
Their heads in prayer and sorrow lifts
In heavy weight, are Christian gifts.

The humblest spire in mortal ken
Where God abides, was built by men
And if the church is still to grow
Is still the light of hope to throw
Across the valleys of despair
Men still must build God's house of prayer
God sends no churches from the skies
Out of hearts they must arise.