

A Tour of Main Street - #3689: Second Baptist Church of Walworth

By Donna Klaeyesen

Editor's Note: This is the 8th in a series of stories spotlighting the businesses and homes on Main Street. The tour begins on the west side of the four corners and travels south.

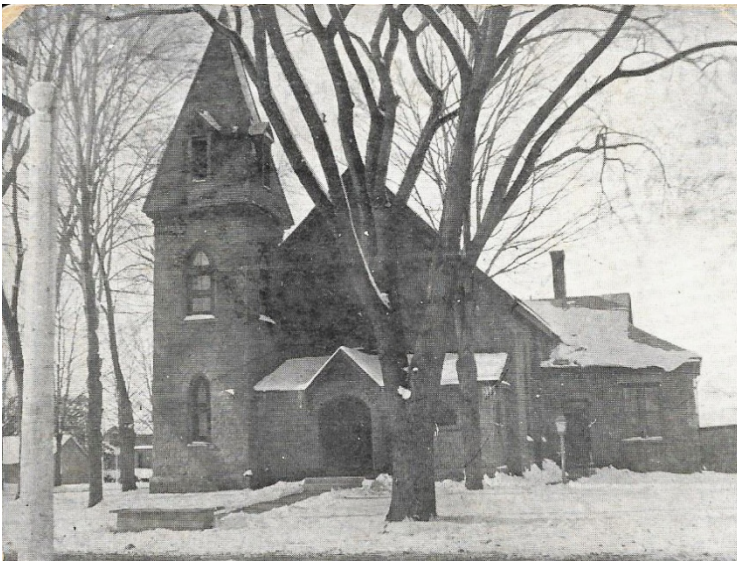
Second Baptist Church began on the 10th of June in 1832 when twelve men and twelve women met in the little red school house near the four corners of Walworth. Here they formed what was called a conference to walk together in brotherly love. The next day they met again and drew up Articles of Faith and Agreement and a covenant for adoption. On July 12, 1832, they met with representatives of seven other churches - Palmyra, Macedon, West Walworth, Ontario, Marion, Penfield, Manchester and Greece. And they were a church. The first pastor was Brother Peter Turck who, after his ordination, became minister to both the Walworth and West Walworth churches. His salary was whatever people and local Society could afford.

It was the following March when they were officially organized into Second Baptist Church, fully incorporated according to law. The date, April 13, 1833, is noted in the clerk's office. Three Trustees were also elected at that time: Rev. Peter Turck, Levi Ward and Vaniah Yeomans. The deed for the building site was recorded at the same clerk's office on August 15, 1833. The site cost \$100. The building, which was constructed of stone drawn from Lake Ontario, cost \$2,611. Members pledged their time and a record was kept of the hours each one worked.

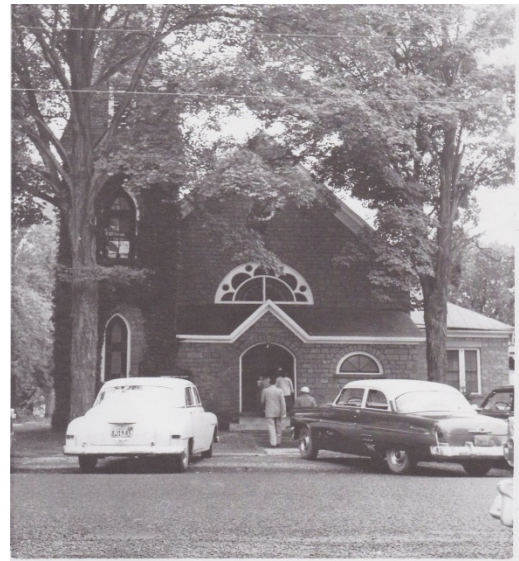
The early sanctuary was heated by two stoves, one on each side of the room. The pews were rented out to the families. For the support of the church, each member paid \$7.00 a year; the rest was raised by subscription. The offering was taken only once a month in the beginning, moving to a weekly offering in 1894. An envelope system was adopted in 1874. It was also during this year that some of the front pews were removed and a platform was built for a choir.

Through the years various changes were made to the building and grounds. In 1874 hitching posts were added for the horses and in 1881 the front sidewalk was installed. 1887 brought bigger changes when \$5,000 worth of renovations were made. A prayer room was added and a steam boiler replaced the two outdated stoves. The new building was rededicated on November 30, 1888. While renovations were made, the members joined with the Methodist Church for worship.

In 1914 a lot on High Street was purchased and a parsonage was built. Rev. and Mrs. Kent were the first occupants. In 1920 the church was again redecorated at a cost of \$1,257.39, which included painting the walls and woodwork, laying a new carpet, purchasing new hymnals, and buying chairs for the choir. In 1924 the church and parsonage were wired for electricity. An inside bathroom was added in the early 1930's. In 1947, more renovations were needed and an Old Home Day was held. This included a Callithumpain Parade with a band concert and community singing held on the church grounds. The next day, a Sunday, brought an Old Home Day service followed by a luncheon. A replica of the church, sketched by Wilbur Reybrouck, was placed in the bulletin case outside the church.



**The Second Baptist Church of Walworth in 1907
from an early postcard**



**The Second Baptist Church of
Walworth circa 1950's**

A variety of fund raisers - including our first Harvest Auction - were held during the next few years. We finally raised enough money for the new Education wing. Gladys VanHaneghem and Robert Magin shared the honor of turning the first shovel of dirt for the new building. On Sunday, October 2, 1955, a dedication service was held in the new Fellowship Hall. A new heating system was also installed at this time. The total renovation cost \$30,000.

The building, like the congregation of Second Baptist, continues to grow and change. In our 185-year history, we've had 49 pastors, some long term, some not so long. We continue to host the Harvest Auction on the second Wednesday of October. We purchased the grass lot on Church Street in 1999. In 2003, the church purchased the former Masonic Lodge. It is now our Walworth Baptist Community Center (WBCC) and is home to the Walworth Youth, which is sponsored by Scarlet Thread, as well as for other groups. The WBCC is available to the community for various functions.

In 2010 the church sold the parsonage on High Street. We now have a website: www.SecondBaptistWalworth.org where we post information about the church, our activities and missions and upload the weekly messages of our current pastor, Rev. Joseph Stupin. We still seek to provide a place where God's people can come to worship and grow in His love.



The church education wing 1954



**The Second Baptist Church of Walworth
as it appears today**

Editor's Note: Donna obtained Information for this story from papers written by Wilbur Reybrouck, Beezie Conant and Gladys VanHaneghem; assorted Board minutes; and notes.

Next building to be featured:
Walworth United Methodist Church, 3679 Main Street

If you have information about this building, contact Dorothy French at 315-986-1098. We are always looking to update our museum files about people and places in the Walworth area.