

150th Anniversary
Fenner Baptist Church



1801 - 1951

Observance August 19, 1951

History of Fenner Baptist Church

The first settlements by white men in what is now the Town of Fenner were made in 1793, and in 1794 the area was leased from the Indians by Peter Smith and was called the New Petersburg Tract.

It wasn't until April 22, 1823, that the Town of Fenner was formed from Cazenovia and Smithfield. It was named after Governor James Fenner of Rhode Island.

These early settlers were industrious, God fearing people and in their desire for spiritual and religious guidance they organized the first Baptist Church and society on August 23, 1801.

It was organized by seven men and their families. They were John Fisher, Moses Davis, Isaac Davis, Thomas Robbins, Daniel Woodworth, Jonathan Munger and Thomas Tuttle.

The first pastor was Elder Nathan Baker. The first deacons were Ephraim Munger and Roswell Glass. It was recorded in the early church minutes that the pastor was to receive \$1.60 for the first six Sabbaths and after that his salary was advanced to \$1.50 per Sunday for his services. Meetings were held in school houses and in dwellings until the first church was erected in 1820. Many of these meetings were held at the home of Jonathan Munger and his wife, Elizabeth.

Many sites for the church were under consideration and after considerable discussion it was determined to erect a building 40 by 50 feet, the building to include a steeple. This was on a lot purchased from Ebenezer Dunton on the northeast corner of his farm. It is stated in the church minutes that Mr. Dunton was to be paid on demand one farthing per year for the land on which the church and sheds were to be built. It was built at a cost of \$2601.42.

The Church Society continued over the years with varying degrees of prosperity.

In 1851, during the pastorate of the Rev. D. B. Collins, they celebrated their fiftieth anniversary.

In 1877 occurred the great revival, after which about 80 members were added to the church. The Rev. Eli Barber was pastor at that time.

In 1901 the Centennial was observed with all-day ceremonies. The Rev. C. W. Bachelor was pastor.

In 1934 Old Home Day was observed. Many former members were present and joined in a parade of horse-drawn vehicles and ancient autos. At this service the Rev. Frank Otis Erb of Rochester, a former pastor, officiated and the Rev. Richard E. Barnes was chairman of the committees on program.

For the past few years the church has been known as the Fenner Community Church because of so many of the older people having died or moved away and new families of other denominations having moved in. All work harmoniously together through the church for the good of the community.

Memorial Day, 1948, a bronze plaque imbedded on one of Fenner's native boulders was placed on the green in front of the church bearing this inscription: "In honor of those from the Town of Fenner who served their country, erected by their fellow townsmen."

Many former residents and representatives from nearly all towns of the county were present at the dedication. There were several speakers among whom were Kenneth Webber of Cazenovia, Howard Zeller of Munnsville, the Rev. Carl Swift, pastor of Perryville and Chittenango Churches, and the Rev. Richard J. Lynch of Cazenovia. Leslie Giles of Perryville made the presentation of the plaque.

Regular services have not been held for the last several years but the church has been open several Sundays each summer for services.

The Fenner Church cordially invites all who can to attend this year's summer services to help keep alive that spark of Christian faith that was kindled here one hundred and fifty years ago.