

Bethinking of Old Orleans ¹⁰⁻⁵⁻⁸³

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150 YEARS FOR LYNDONVILLE PRESBYTERIANS

It was on Oct. 15, 1833 that the First Presbyterian Church of Yates was organized with sixteen members. This meeting took place with a commission from the Niagara Presbytery in an upper room of a building known as the old fulling mill. The church first convened in the Lyndonville Methodist Church and the session met in the schoolhouse or homes of members to consider church business. The need for their own church edifice was recognized as early as 1835 but the location posed problems as several sites were offered. Early in 1836 a site was located at Yates Center but later this decision was annulled. Following this, a request signed by all-male members of the church proposed that a commission of the Niagara Presbytery be formed to locate the site with everyone agreeing to abide with the decision. After careful deliberation, the commission decided the church edifice should be located on a site across from the Methodist Church in the Village of Lyndonville. The principal reason for this was that the village would always be a center of business. The original church building which was erected in 1838 cost \$3,000 and by this time there were 95 members. During the first three-quarters of the 19th century it was served by many pastors, fifteen, to be exact during the first fifty years.

By 1887 it was felt that a major renovation was necessary to the church building as more room was needed and changing tastes suggested improvement with the fashion of the times. Early in 1888 construction started taking place which totally transformed the old church building into what this vintage photograph shows above. The original steeple was replaced with one on the northeast corner and the seating arrangement was changed from west to south facing into a newly built alcove. Vestibules, lecture room, dining room and kitchen were also added at this time. A bell was furnished for a cost of \$300 by William Martin of San Francisco, California and the whole interior was refurbished with carpets, seat cushions, etc. all for a cost of \$3,500. Throughout the years the church has kept pace with the times with further improvements. In 1911, new seats were installed, in 1926, hardwood floors were laid. In 1928, the congregation voted to remove the horse sheds from the rear of the church. These, in fact, show in the lower right corner of the accompanying photo. In 1953, a new kitchen and dining room were added and in 1966, a second addition included Sunday School rooms. One of the last major additions to the church was a new organ console in 1977 dedicated to the memory of Elinore Bluhm.

Throughout the years, changes have not only occurred in the physical structure but also in worship and outreach. In 1940, the first daily vacation Bible School was held and in 1941, the first Methodist and Presbyterian Good Friday Union Service was held. In 1946, the number of elders was increased from four to six. Also in more recent times there have been attempts to somewhat evangelize the area. Although the people and issues have changed over 150 years, "God's Promises Endure".