

## **Historical Sketch of The First Presbyterian Church Seneca Falls, New York**

Welcome to the First Presbyterian Church of Seneca Falls. We like to refer to our church as First Church. It is one of the nearly 11,000 similar congregations spread across the United States which make up the Presbyterian Church (USA).

The oldest church in the village of Seneca Falls, the First Presbyterian Church of Junius was organized in 1807, worship taking place in a barn owned by Col. Daniel Sayre located in Bridgeport. In 1816, to ensure membership growth, First Church relocated in a schoolhouse immediately south of the current site of this church. Receiving the present lot from Col. Wilhelmus Mynderse as a gift, First Church in 1817 erected a frame structure seating about 200. The church's location name was changed as a result of an 1829 act of the state legislature dissolving the township of Junius into four new townships, one of which was Seneca Falls. As the community grew, a new building with a columned front, a central tower, and a much greater seating capacity was constructed in 1842, the old structure having been removed to nearby State street. Continued growth of both community and church led First Church in 1871 to commence the construction of the present building, completing it at a cost of \$60,000 and dedicating same on January 14, 1873.

In 1923 during the 75th anniversary celebration of the first Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, the National Women's Party drew up the first Equal Rights Amendment, the proclamation of which by Alice Paul, the party's vice president, occurred in this church. For many years a reenactment of the original 1848 Women's Rights Convention has been presented here.

In 1953 Priestley Doane became the first woman elder in this church.

In 1965 this church played a major role in the foundation of Eisenhower College which is now the campus of the New York Chiropractic College.

ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION (see next page for accompanying glossary)

Although modernization and remodeling have occurred, the essence of the church has been preserved. The structure was designed in the (then) modern English or Victorian period of Gothic architecture, the exterior being executed with pressed bricks laid in plumb bond and abundantly decorated with sand stone. At the first corner rises the main tower, originally 166 feet high, now considerably reduced

This tower starts from the ground with massive buttresses which terminate near the belfry and are capped at intervals with strong offsets, molded belts, and pointed windows between the various sections, the whole culminating in a (once) majestic spire. On the opposite corner is a similar smaller tower, also now reduced in height. In the belfry is hung one of Meneely and Kimberly's Troy bells weighing 3,500 pounds. Between the two towers are three large windows resting on a heavy stone belt course and enclosed in a triple pointed arch with elegant stone capitals and arches. Above these windows is a solid ornamental belting course and in the tympanum of the gable, a beautiful rose window 12 feet in diameter encircled with stone moldings. The gable is crowned by a simple cornice and beam tracery in the apex.

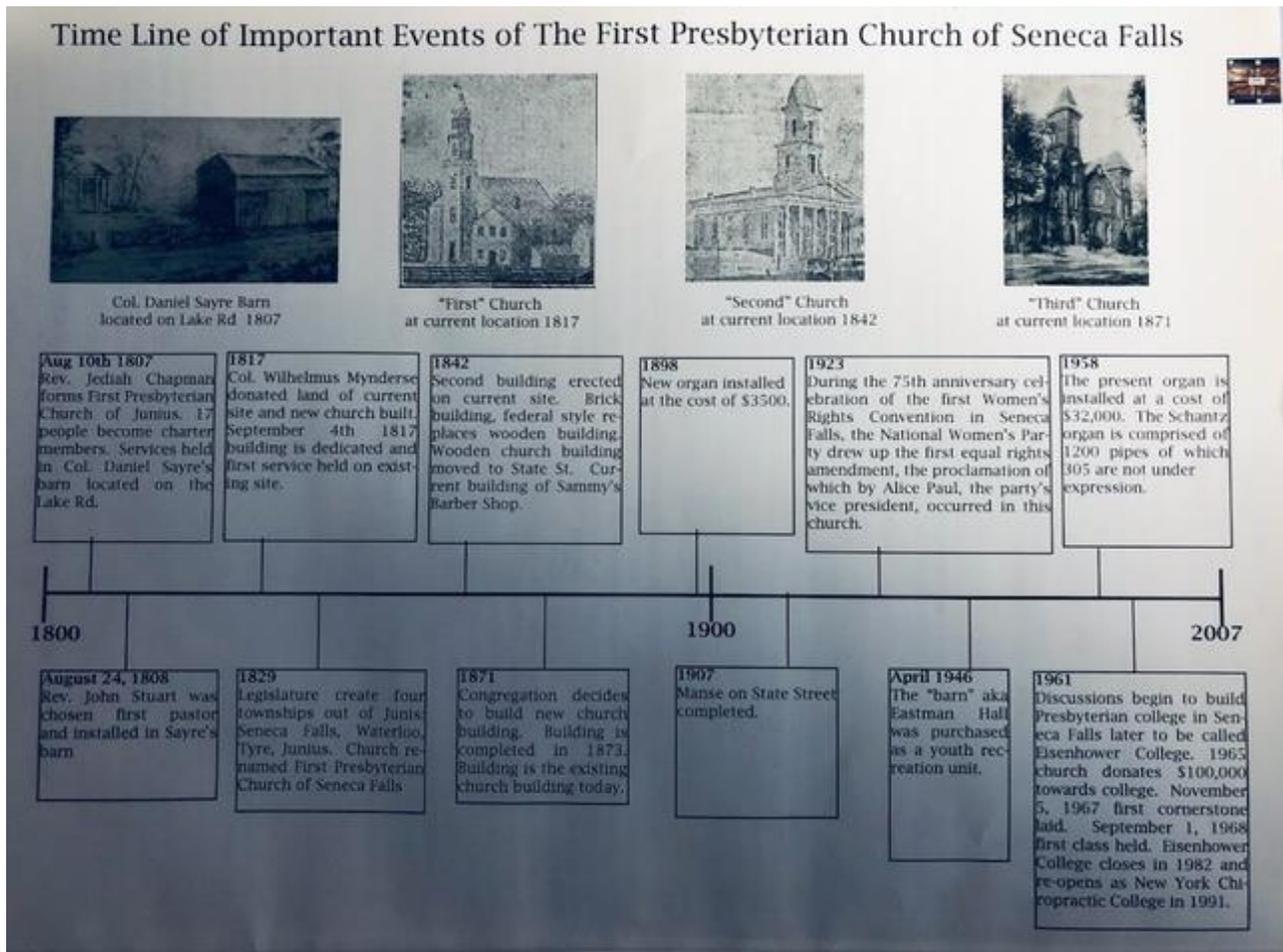
The sides are of the same style as the front and are divided into six panels each with massive buttresses richly dressed with capitals and arches. The windows are filled with cusped tracery and crowned with stone arches.

The interior consists of two divisions, a basement and a superstructure. The entrances are of solid white oak and are placed in the two towers which are approached by ample (formerly) stone steps and open upon a landing midway in height between the two floors. From these landings in either tower, the basement stairs descend and the main stairs ascend to the sanctuary. The principal vestibule in front is reached by broad flights of easy stairs from the entrances in the towers, and from this vestibule the sanctuary is entered through wide arched doors. The ceiling is divided into aisles (each 26 feet high) and nave (40 feet high) and is finished entirely of black ash worked in massive moldings, bosses, corbels, and beam tracery. The structure was subsequently reinforced with steel rods. From the ceiling are suspended three splendid reflecting (now electrified) chandeliers. At the rear of (the sanctuary is a balcony which projects beyond the vestibule four feet

with cusped panels all of black ash. The whole sanctuary is wainscoted in the same style of work and of the same materials.

The pews are all of solid black walnut. The windows are filled with stained glass which renders a very pleasing subdued light, and in the tracery heads of seven sanctuary windows are emblems representing (clockwise) Holy Scripture, lamb, wine (grapes), lily, decalogue, bread (wheat), dove, and anchor.

The present lectern is made of solid black walnut, on the front of which is represented the monogram of our Lord, the Alpha and Omega. All furnishings with the exception of the pulpit are original. The present organ, installed in 1958 at a cost of \$32,000, is a Schantz organ comprised of 1200 pipes of which 305 are not under expression.



## **Dedication of Church 1873 Records of the Society**

DEDICATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH When on Tuesday morning the 14th inst. "the church-going bell" rung out. joyous sound speaking as plainly as the tongue of a bell could speak, "come let us go to the house of the Lord," a large number of people caught the inspiration, and turned their faces in the direction of the new Presbyterian Church, which was that morning to be dedicated. While the organ pealed forth a voluntary, well executed, six gentlemanly ushers were busily employed seating the people, who at once manifested by their countenances the interest they took both in the new church and the approaching exercises. A large and elegant basket of flowers (the gift of Mrs. S. S. Gould) most exquisitely arranged, adorned the table facing the congregation, and with smaller collections near the desk contributed largely to beautify the place both by their bright colors and fragrance.

At 11 o'clock, the hour appointed for the services to begin the vast concourse arose to their feet, when the doxology filled the whole church, reverberating to the very arches. Remaining standing, the invocation was pronounced by the Rev. Dr. Hawley of Auburn, in a most impressive manner. Then followed the glorious anthem "O, pray for the peace of Jerusalem" executed by the best musical talent of our village.

An appropriate selection from scripture was then read by Rev. Mr. Thompson of Canandaigua. The grand old Psalm, "Glorious things of Thee are spoken", followed, Chas. A. Hawley, Esq., next stepped forward, and in a few fitting and admirably adapted remarks paid a high compliment to both the architect and builder of the church, not forgetting the ladies in their efforts in furnishing the building, making special mention of the one who presented the beautiful bible, (Mrs. Nancy Dey,) and then in the name of the board of trustees of which he is a member presented the pastor the key of the church, making mention of his fidelity and zeal in cooperating with them in their arduous labors during its erection. Again, amid a most impressive and solemn silence, the assembly arose, and listened earnestly to the words of the Rev. J.

D. Krum, the pastor, who dedicated the beautiful structure to the service and worship of God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Dr. Woods of Geneva followed in a touching and heart-felt prayer, and that sweet hymn "From every stormy wind that blows" was sung. The interest of the congregation had now reached its climax, for the rare pleasure of listening to the Rev. Dr. Upson of Albany was next in order. He chose his text most appropriately from the 7th Psalm, 13th verse: "Thy way, O God, is the sanctuary. The sermon was delivered with dignity and simplicity characteristic of the true man, who always bears the "child-like spirit." His discourse will long be remembered by those who heard it, as both profitable and eloquent. Prayer followed, by the Rev. Mr. Page of Wolcott. The 137th Psalm, "I love thy kingdom, Lord The place of Thine abode", was very finely sung by the choir, followed by the benediction of Rev. Dr. Willers, who though quite veritable, is still wonderfully active. As the audience dispersed the organ tones' followed them with the sweet strains of "Home, sweet home."

Clergymen and laymen from our own and neighboring towns--among them were the venerable Dr. Hall, and Dr. Boardman of Auburn--were present, and lingered to extend their congratulations, which with a hearty shake of the hand produced the best of feelings, and each and all felt that the exercises passed off in the most satisfactory manner, and the dedication of the new church is an event "to date from" in the history of the Presbyterian Society.

In the evening a large assemblage again filled the house in every part. After singing the opening Psalm and reading of the scriptures by Rev. Mr. Parmelee of Castleton, prayer was offered by Rev. Mr. Torrance of Ovid. Mr. Krum then spoke of the regret felt by all at the absence of Rev. Dr. Gridley, who had been expected to preach in the evening, and who has been very much endeared to this people by many manifestations of kindness for more than thirty years, and read a note which he had received from him in the afternoon, expressing sorrow that he was detained from the services by sickness, and his great gratification at the completion of the work which he "had regarded as imperatively necessary long before it was attempted", and his profound sympathy with them in their present joy.

Then came the sermon by the Rev. Mr. Millard of Syracuse. His subject was the Fatherhood of God, from the words, "For as many as are led by the spirit of God they are the sons of God." It was delivered in a very impressive manner, entirely without notes, and showed careful analysis and earnest thought, and will leave a permanent impression upon many minds. He then offered a brief prayer, and the services of a delightful day was brought to a close by the assembly rising and singing "All Hail the Power of Jesus' name", and then benediction by Rev. Dr. Upson.

The music throughout the services was rendered in a very effective manner. Miss Anna Henion, the accomplished organist of the church, played very finely, and the organ, which has been retuned and otherwise improved, never sounded more sweetly. The usual choir was very effectively aided by the choir of the Trinity church who kindly gave their assistance for the occasion.

THE NEW BELL-- "What a splendid bell!" "THAT is a bell!" These are the expressions heard during the past few days, when the rich, deep and mellow tones of the new bell put into the tower of the Presbyterian church on Saturday last have been borne upon the clear winter air. Everybody is pleased with the new bell, and well may they be. Among the dozen or more bells of Seneca Falls it is the monarch, not in size alone, (being four feet eight inches in diameter,) but in the musical richness and fullness of its tone. As we stated last week, this fine bell is from the foundry of Meneely and Kimberly, Troy. It is the fourth bell of 3500 lbs. pattern which that firm have placed in churches in New York State during the past few months. They have, also, recently furnished several other heavy bells for churches in this vicinity, and are about to place yet another in Auburn. Col. Meneely personally superintended the putting of the bell in the tower. Hereafter, on the church bell question, you will find Seneca Falls unanimously in favor of Meneely and Kimberly.

THE NEW PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH -- Our citizens have no doubt regarded with much interest the progress made in the erection of the new, church edifice for the First Presbyterian society of this village, and it is with pleasure that we are now permitted to announce its entire completion, and that it will be appropriately dedicated to the service of God on Tuesday next, the 14th inst., on which occasion the sermon will be preached by Rev. Anson J. Upson, DD, of Albany.

For a number of years past the increase of membership and the general prosperity of the society had rendered the building of a new edifice almost imperative, and accordingly early in the summer of 1871, it was determined to at once commence the undertaking which has been crowned by such abundant success, and has given to the citizens of Seneca

Falls, one of the most complete and elegant structures for divine worship that can be found in Central New York, and of which we all can justly feel proud, and is a lasting monument to Christian zeal and devotion, though accomplished only by much sacrifice and the exercise of unbounded faith.

The work was commenced in the summer of 1871; a building committee with Mr. John Cuddeback as chairman was appointed, and Mr. Archimedes Russell, architect, of Syracuse, was commissioned to prepare the plans which were perfected by him after much careful attention and study, the result of which must be a satisfaction to himself as well as to the society.

The pastor, Rev. Josephus D. Krum, who has ministered to this society for the past eight years, is entitled to great credit for the untiring energy he has displayed in urging forward this good work and in him the society has a most faithful servant who is entirely devoted to their interests.

The contract was awarded to Mr. Ruel Taylor of Auburn, a contractor of large experience and ability. The old building was immediately removed and the new work commenced, the corner stone being laid Sept. 12th, 1871 and from that time the work has steadily advanced to completion, and it can be truly said there is not a better constructed building in this part of the State.

The structure is designed in the modern English or Victorian period of gothic architecture, the exterior being executed with pressed bricks laid in plumb bond and abundantly decorated with Ohio sand stone, furnished by the McDermotts of Cleveland, Ohio. The exterior dimensions are as follows: length, 117 ft., width, 63 ft., width of front, across the towers, 78 ft. At the first corner rises the main tower to the height of 166 feet. Starting from the ground with massive buttresses which terminate near the belfry and are capped at intervals with stone offsets and molded belts and pointed windows between in the various sections, the whole terminating with a majestic spire. On the opposite corner is a similar smaller tower. rising to the height of 96 ft. In the belfry is hung one of Meneely and Kimberly's Troy bells weighing 3,500 lbs. Between the, two towers are the three large windows resting on a heavy stone belt course and enclosed in a triple pointed arch with elegant stone capitals and arches; above these windows is a solid ornamental belting course and in the tympanum of the gable, a beautiful rose window.

12 ft. in diameter encircled with stone moldings. The gable is crowned by a simple cornice and is surmounted with an ornamental passion cross and beam tracery in the apex. The sides are of the same style as the front and are divided into six panels each with massive buttresses richly dressed with capitals and arches; the windows are filled with cusped tracery and crowned with stone arches. The slating was done by the Norcott Bra's of this village, in uniform black slate, in the highest style of workmanship. The interior consists of two divisions, a basement and a superstructure. The entrances are of solid white oak and are placed in the two towers which are approached by ample stone steps and open upon a landing midway in altitude between the two floors; from these landings in either tower the basement stairs descend and the main stairs ascent to the auditorium. At the foot of the basement stairs is a vestibule 15 x 24 ft. and from this vestibule is a corridor 8 ft. wide extending toward the rear to the Sabbath school room; on one side of this corridor is the ladies' parlor 23 x 27 ft. and on the other side the pastor's study and Bible class room, each 13 x 23 ft. and in the rear of these rooms the Sabbath school room 41 x 66. This room is also entered from the side through a commodious entrance porch. In the rear of the Sabbath school room is located

the furnace room and kitchen and a stair-way leading to the apse above. The whole basement is abundantly lighted by large mullioned windows filled with enameled glass, all wood work being executed in black ash; sliding doors are arranged to communicate with the ladies parlor and class room. All the rooms are 12 feet high in the clear and are elegantly decorated and furnished, and are eminently fitted for the purposes intended.

The principal vestibule in front is reached by broad flights of easy stairs from the entrances in the towers and is 15 feet wide and 57 feet long, from which the auditorium is entered through wide arched doors. The auditorium is entered through wide arched doors. The auditorium is 57 x 84 ft. 26 ft. high in the aisles, and 40 ft. high in the nave. The ceiling is divided into aisles and nave and is finished entirely of black ash worked in massive moldings, bosses and corbels and beam tracery, oiled and highly polished. From the ceiling are suspended three splendid reflecting chandeliers furnished by Messrs. Archer and Pancoast of New York. In the vortex is an organ gallery, which projects over the vestibule four feet, cusped panels all of black ash; the whole auditorium is wainscoted in the same style of work and of the same materials.

The pews are all of solid black walnut, seating 776 persons, and are -marvels of ease and comfort; the design is elegant and are all richly upholstered with the best ponceau terry stuffed with hair entirely, the upholstery being from the well known house of M.S. Price, Syracuse. The walls are most appropriately decorated in fresco in a style perfectly harmonizing with the architecture employed, and does much credit to the artist, Mr. S. B. Ryder of Elizabeth, N.J. The windows are filled with stained glass which renders a very pleasing subdued light, and in the tracery heads of the auditorium windows are represented in emblems, the lily and decalogue, bread and wine, crown and cross, Trinity, cup, dove, lamb, anchor and holy Scripture. All the glass is from the manufactory of Mr. H. W. Lewis of Utica. The pulpit is of extremely tasty design of solid black walnut, and in front is represented the monogram of our Lord, the Alpha and Omega. The pulpit is placed in front of a deeply recessed apse, the effect of which is much improved by a beautiful fresco in perspective. The furniture and communion table are very appropriate, and are from the house of Hunn, Smith and Spencer, Rochester. The altar carpet is of rich Wilton velvet, drab, orange, and brown. Messrs. Nye and Wait of Auburn, furnished the auditorium carpet, which is a beautiful design in scarlet and black.

The whole building is thoroughly heated with the most improved apparatus and a thorough system of ventilation employed both in the basement and superstructure, and these most important details are most successfully accomplished.

At the close of the Annual Meeting of the First Presbyterian Society of Seneca Falls held on the first Tuesday in February 1871 (Feb. 7th) the proceedings of which are recorded in a former volume, the Board of Trustees consisted of: Sidney L. Monroe; John Cuddeback; Jas H. Gould; Chas A. Hawley and Cornelius Hood.

At this meeting the following resolution was passed:

"Resolved that the Trustees of the Society be and they are hereby instructed to circulate a subscription to raise \$20,000 towards the erection of a new church: such subscription to be valid when \$15,000 shall have been subscribed: and when \$15,000 shall have been subscribed that the Trustees proceed to erect such new church upon the lot now occupied by the building now in use"

The Board of Trustees held a meeting after the adjournment of the Annual

Meeting of the Society and elected John Cuddeback President

Cornelius Hood

Treasurer

Chas.A.Hawley

Secretary

Their proceedings are also recorded in the previous volume.

From that point the following record begins; and it is designed to embody in it not only the proceedings of the Society and its Board of Trustees but such facts and memoranda as may be of future interest and value.

Chas. A.Hawley,

Secretary Memorandum of Church

Subscription

After the above resolution the Trustees prepared and had circulated a subscription for the erection of a new church which was in the form and subscribed in the manner following

#### Copy of Subscription

For good and valuable Considerations we the Subscribers do severally promise and agree to

pay to the First Presbyterian Society of Seneca Falls, the sums set opposite our respective names to be expended by said society in building a new Church Edifice which we severally request it to build upon the lot where the present one stands.

Such payment shall be made in four equal installments viz, on the first day of May, August, November, and February next, But provided however that no part of this Subscription shall become due or payable until at least fifteen thousand dollars shall have been subscribed for the purpose aforesaid.

Dated Seneca Falls February, 1871

## Organ Dedication Program 1959

### The Chancel Choir of The First Presbyterian Church

Seneca Falls, New York

presents

John S. McIntosh  
April 15, 1959

Guest Organist  
8:00 P.M.

#### Program

Sonata II	Mendelssohn
Grave	
Adagio	
Allegro Maestoso e Vivace	
Allegro Moderato (Fugue)	
Diapason Movement	Walond
Gavotte and Variations	Stanley
Aria da Chiesa	composer unknown
Trumpet Dialogue	Clerambault
Prelude and Fugue in C Minor	Bach
OFFERING	For the benefit of the Memorial Organ Fund

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Air with Variations	Leo Sowerby
Scherzo (from Symphony II)	Vierne
Chorale Prelude on 'Rhosymedre'	Vaughan Williams
Paraphrase on the 'Te Deum'	Jean Langlais

You are invited to attend a coffee hour in the church parlors following the recital.

The pipe organ that we are to enjoy this evening was built and installed in 1958 by the Schantz Organ Co., of Orrville, Ohio. Plans and specifications for it started some three years before, when it became evident that the old Kimball Pipe Organ was close to the end of its 58 year life.

The new organ consists of three manuals, or keyboards; the Swell, Great, and Choir. The Choir organ and Swell Organ are under expression as is part of the Great Organ. The diapason chorus of the Great Organ is unenclosed. The complete organ has about 23 ranks of pipes as well as a set of Mass chimes. The console is depressed in the floor of the choir loft directly behind the pulpit.

We are very pleased to have the opportunity of hearing Mr. John McIntosh play his recital upon this instrument and hearing the fullness of tone and the dynamic range of which it is capable but seldom heard during the course of a regular Sunday morning service. Anyone wishing to examine the interior of the organ at the completion of the recital will be welcome.