

Newspaper Articles about the Kendaia Church

Geneva Advertiser, January 9, 1894

A committee has been appointed to gather statistics and prepare a history of the Baptist Church of Kendaia with a view to celebrating its one hundredth anniversary.

Rochester Democrat & Chronicle, August 18, 1898

--The name of the Romulus Baptist Church has been changed to that of the Kendaia Church as the former name was confusing.

Geneva Daily Times, April 13, 1899

Ovid...

Rev. Wisner Kinne, who recently resigned as pastor of the Kendaia Baptist church, has, upon the unanimous consent of his parishioners, consented to withdraw his resignation.

Geneva Daily Times, December 23, 1903

KENDAIA.

Kendaia, Dec. 22 – Rev. Mr. Wood of Rochester university, has been engaged to supply the Kendaia Baptist church for the winter months.

Rochester Democrat & Chronicle, February 5, 1909

KENDAIA GRANGE STANDS EJECTED

By Decision of Appellate Division.

CAN'T USE BAPTIST CHURCH

Division of Supreme Court Sustains County Court in Holding That Worldly Organizations Have Had Relation of Tenants to Church

Waterloo, Feb. 4.- The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court has just handed down a decision in the case of the First Baptist Church of Romulus, respondent, against the Kendaia Grange, No. 64, of Seneca county, appellant, affirming the judgment of the lower court in an action of ejectment.

The original case was tried before a jury in county court, and presaged an unusual situation. The church in question brought the action to prevent the grange mentioned from continuing to hold its meetings in the basement of the church building, a practice that had continued since the organization of the grange, about 1875. Other secular organizations, including the local brass band, had used the church for meeting since its erection more than a half century ago, and until a new board of church trustees recently determined to exclude from the sacred edifice the worldly organizations.

The grange then refused to be ejected peaceably, and on one occasion even forced an entrance after the trustees had locked the basement door. The grangers contended that their right to use the building was based on an agreement dating back to the foundation of the church, when its promoters secured subscriptions from the worldly-minded on the premise that the secular societies of the community should have the right to meet in the church building.

The County Court held that the relation of landlord and tenant had existed and that the ejection was proper, and this the Appellate Division upholds, though Justices McLennan and Robson dissent from this view.

Geneva Daily Times, February 13, 1917

KENDAIA CHURCH OLDER THAN THE ONE AT LODI

To the Editor of the *Geneva Daily Times*:

Dear Sir:--I note in your issue of Feb. 9 that in writing of the Reformed church at Lodi your Interlaken correspondent speaks of the Lodi church as the first church established in Seneca county and then says that its organization dates from the year 1800.

I wish to call your attention to the Romulus Baptist church at Kendaia. This church was organized in June, 1795, with seven members. In the "Manual of Churches of Seneca County" I find the unchallenged statement that "this was the first church organized in Seneca County."

The church building was built in 1808 and was remodeled in its present form in the early fifties. It is still as sound as a dollar and in excellent repair. The interior was redecorated and a gas lighting system installed in November last.

Very truly yours,
PAUL BALDRIDGE.

Geneva Daily Times, Wednesday, December 21, 1921

KENDAIA

Baptist Church Notes

Kendaia, Dec. 21, - Christmas exercises under the management of the Sunday school will be held Sunday evening December 25 in the Baptist church. The program will consist of songs, recitations and music. Presents will be distributed to the children of the primary department. All are cordially invited to come and enjoy the evening's entertainment.

A special collection will be taken at the service next Sunday morning at the Baptist church for the relief of the starving Russian children.

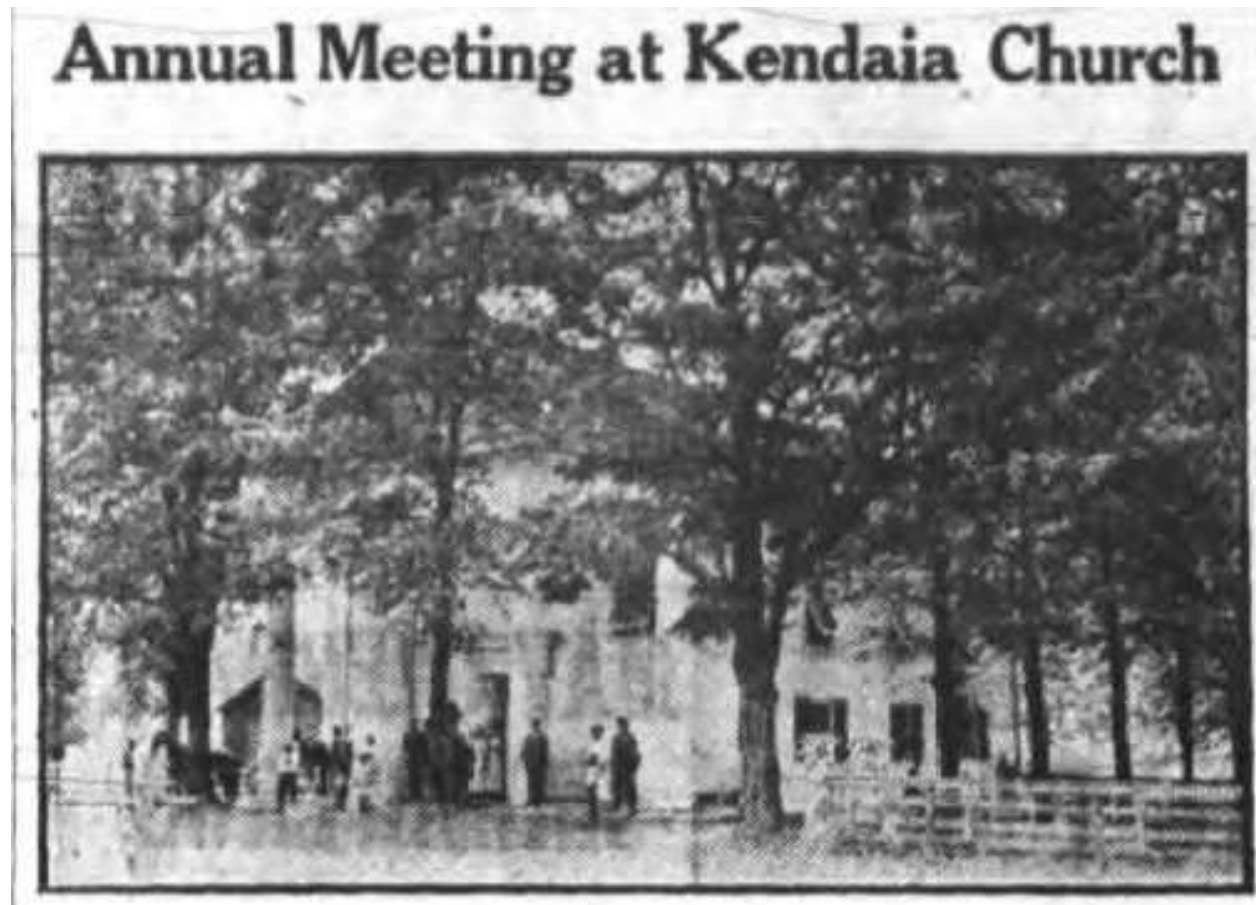
The Baraca banquet to be held by the Baraca Bible class will be held January 18. Tickets are now on sale. Names of speakers will be announced later.

The church parlor has been enlarged by the removal of the partition which will add to the comfort and convenience of the room for social affairs. The room is being refloored, papered

and painted. A new kitchen fourteen by twenty six feet is being erected at the back of the church, which will be a much needed convenience.

The annual corporate business meeting of the Baptist church will be held January 4, at ten o'clock for the election of officers and the transaction of other business. The election of church officers will be held in the afternoon. Dinner will be served at noon. All members of the church and congregation are requested to make a special effort to be present at the meeting.

Geneva Daily Times, January 15, 1932



Kendaia, Jan. 15---The annual corporate business meeting of the First Baptist church of Romulus at Kendaia was held in the church auditorium Wednesday morning, Jan. 6th. H. J. Williams was elected chairman for 1932, W. L. McWhorter, secretary for one year.

Paul Kinne, treasurer, gave the financial report for 1931. Starting the year with a balance of 16 cents the total receipts were \$2,111.81. Expenses \$2,002.44, leaving a balance of \$19.37. The church and parsonage were wired for electricity, the work being done by Howard Warner of Seneca Falls. The church auditorium was repapered and painted by volunteer help at a cost of about \$3,000 and many other needed repairs made.

Officers elected were: Tellers, Harold Updike and A. J. Covert; Trustees, Mark Baldrige and W. L. McWhorter; treasurer, Paul Kinne; auditors, Mark Baldrige, and W. L. McWhorter.

A vote of thanks was given to Paul Kinne for his efficient work as treasurer; to Edwin P. Thorpe and Paul Kinne for their interest and help in the paper of the church; also to the Philathea class for their contributions to the expenses of the church. The budget of \$1,700 was read and adopted.

Dinner was served in the basement. The church meeting in the afternoon was called to order by Rev. B. A. Wagner. After a short devotional service the report of the church clerk was read followed by reports from the other organizations.

Officers elected were: Church Clerk, Mark Baldrige, asst. church clerk, Pearl Smith; organist, Aletha Covert; asst. organist, Ruth McWhorter; chorister, A. J. Covert; asst. chorister, Paul Kinne; flower committee, Mrs. J. B. Miller; decorative flower com., Marjorie Baldrige; benevolence treasurer, Henrietta Miller.

The present membership is 145. Sixteen additions and two deaths during the year.

Mrs. Susan Coryell, who has for several years been a deaconess, was elected deaconess emeritus. Mrs. Henrietta Miller was elected a deaconess.

Geneva Daily Times, August 19, 1935

Kendaia Reunion Picnic Attracted Crowd of 300

Kendaia, Aug. 19—About 300 persons attended the Reunion Picnic at Bartlett Beach Saturday. This is the first time that such a neighborhood reunion has been attempted but many of those present expressed a wish to have a similar occasion next year and the committee in charge of this year's picnic was chosen to plan for 1936. This committee consists of Rev. Russell H. Crane, Mrs. Helen Folwell Coryell, and Dr. Paul Baldrige.

The picnic supper was followed by a concert by the Kendaia Band and community singing led by Mrs. Paul Baldrige. This was followed by short organization meeting and by remarks by Dr. Paul Baldrige of Geneva, Rev. Russell H. Crane of Cameron, N. Y., and Seward H. Wells of Buffalo.

Out-of-town guests were present from Lakewood, Ohio, Saginaw, Mich., Buffalo, Little Falls, Ithaca, Clifton Springs, Watkins Glen, Groton, Rochester, Penn Yan and Geneva.

Group At Kendaia Reunion Saturday



Geneva Times Photo Engraving

The above shows a number present who had passed the 75-year point. From left to right they are:
Top Row—N. P. Coryell, Kendaia; C. K. Benjamin, Geneva; Dr. C. H. Sample, Saginaw, Mich.; Addison
Baldridge, Stanley; Miss Mary A. Birdsell, Watkins Glen.
Second Row—A. R. Thayer, Geneva; Mrs. N. P. Coryell, Kendaia; Mrs. Jane E. Pontius, Waterloo; Mrs.
Belle S. Rappleye, Interlaken; Mrs. W. R. Walker, Kendaia; Miss Nellie M. Sayre, Penn Yan; Mrs. Carrie A.
Roan, Ovid; Mrs. Martha McWhorter, Kendaia.
Bottom Row—Mrs. Carrie M. Sayre, Lakewood, Ohio; Mrs. Ada Deal, Kendaia; D. C. O'Connor, Romulus;
W. R. Walker, Kendaia; C. R. Kennedy, Kendaia.

Geneva Daily Times, March 31, 1936

Supper and Program at Kendaia Church

Kendaia, Mar. 31—A Hostess Supper was held last Friday night at the Baptist church. There were twenty-one tables.

The program consisted of devotionals led by Rev. Wagner, guitar duet, Earl Smith and Arthur Johnson; kitchen band by the Philathea Class; a reading by Mrs. Mark Baldridge; a scare-crow quartette by Earl Smith, John Harris, J. B. Miller, Albert Covert.

Mrs. John Harris played a musical saw; music by Arthur and Howard Smith on trumpet and piano; horn duet by Mrs. Mark Baldridge and Mrs. John Harris; violin solo by Elinor McWhorter; a duet by Doris Crane and Mrs. Charles Hicks; Arthur Smith gave several selections on the piano; mouth organ duet by Earl Smith and Arthur Johnson; solo by Albert Covert; another selection by the band in closing.

Geneva Daily Times, July 22, 1941

Exodus of Farm Families From Kendaia Area Begins

Kendaia, July 22--The exodus of farm families from the northern end of the 9000-acre tract taken over for the Seneca Ordnance Depot has begun.

As work on the \$8,000,000 defense project proceeded apace today and as men and machines cut clearings for roads, the first group of families in the northern sector were either moving out or preparing to leave momentarily. More are expected to be off the depot tract by the end of the week and with the accelerated pace at which the work is now progressing, it is possible that by August 1, all families in the whole depot tract, may have to move.

This announcement came from Col. Paul H. Parker, Constructing Quartermaster in charge of the project. Col. Parker also paid tribute to the spirit of cooperation and patriotism shown by farmers and residents of the area who are responding wholeheartedly to needs of the War Department's time schedules.

A 30-miles speed limit for the depot area and 15-mile limit for all congested or important sections of it, were announced today by Col. parker.

Digging and clearing operations on road work were begun Monday on the northern sector by a force of 200 men and a number of machines. Work, meanwhile continued at the Kendaia station sector of the tract, where a force of men and machines are clearing ground for machine shops and storage yards and warehouses.

Construction work on temporary office and administration buildings around the old site of the Smith warehouse, is continuing with the dazzling speed which has marked the work on the project from its inception.

All employees, including the civilian workers in the War Department and those on the payrolls of the contractors, had been furnished with identification buttons today. Automobiles of workers had been identified last week with stickers issued against registration certificates.

Officials in charge of construction said that they expected the force of construction workers to increase rapidly from now until the peak employment figure is reached. A steady stream of workers, skilled and unskilled, were added to the contractor's employment rolls Monday.

The force of 30 guards that have been hired by the contractor to protect the area during the period of construction, will don khaki uniforms within a few days. Although not a regulation uniform, the new garb of the guards will include leggings and a campaign hat.

Geneva Daily Times, August 30, 1941

Historic Kendaia Church to be Razed by War Dept.; Last Services Sept. 7th

Kendaia, Aug. 30—The historic First Baptist Church of Romulus, located near Kendaia and built in 1808, is to be taken over soon by the War Department and will be destroyed shortly afterwards.

It will be open for services tomorrow at 10:30 and the final service will be held in the old building September 7th at the same hour.

The pastorate of the present minister, the Rev. B. A. Wagner, is the longest in the history of the church, which was organized in June, 1795. The Rev. Mr. Wagner, who has served thirteen years, has resigned and his very successful pastorate will end with the final service on Sept. 7th.

The Board of Trustees, in reaching a settlement with L. P. Walker of the government land acquisition department, requested that the church building be left intact due to the sentiment of the surrounding countryside. Information just released by Mr. Walker to Mark Baldrige, chairman of the Board, however, is to the effect that the old edifice must be razed.

The Baptist cemetery adjoining the church property is to be fenced and maintained and assurance has been given that not even a tree will be molested.

Geneva Daily Times, September 6, 1941

Last Service Tomorrow in Historic Baptist Church At Romulus

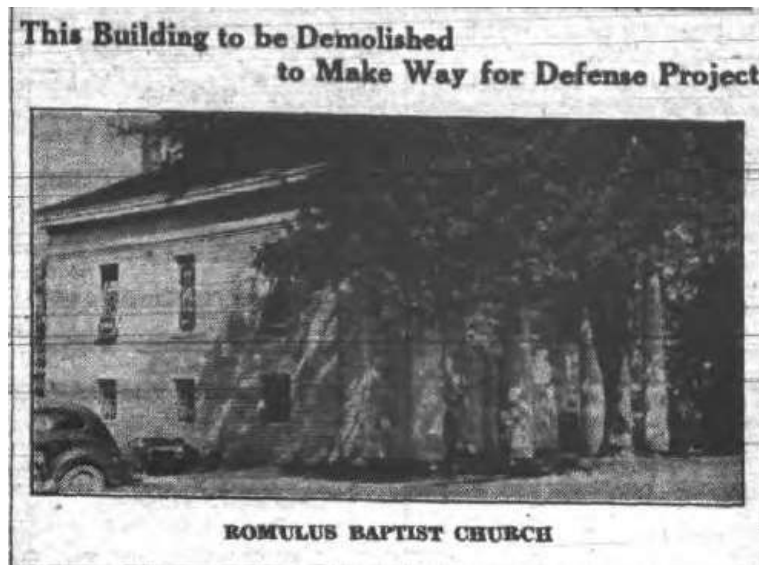
Romulus, Sept. 6--The last service ever to be held in the Baptist Church of this place will take place tomorrow. The church is soon to be demolished as the property has been taken over for the new ammunition storage depot now being built by the government in Seneca county.

The trustees made every effort to have the building spared as an historic landmark, but to no avail. So, after tomorrow the building will be closed as a church after having been in use for 134 years.

There will be no special program or observance in connection with this last gathering in the building. Just the usual preaching service will be held, with sermon, by the pastor, Rev. B. A. Wagner.

Mark Baldrige, chairman of the Board of Trustees of the church said that inasmuch as most of the members of the church are farmers and are busy at present harvesting their crops, they could not spare the time to get up on rather short notice any special service for the occasion.

But the work of the church and congregation is to be carried on until another site can be secured and a new edifice is erected. In the meantime the Episcopal church in Kendaia, which has been vacant for the past two years, has been secured as a temporary home of the members until a new church can be built.



History of the Church

The historic old Baptist church, soon to be no more, has an interesting history.

In 1807 Stephen Miller of Kendaia traded a piece of his property for a piece, approximately the same size, of William W. Folwell's land. Mr. Folwell in turn gave the land he had received over for the building of a church, or meeting house as it was called then. This is the same church that now occupies the land the Depot is taking over. It was, originally, a square, white frame Colonial type building. At the present time the original building, while still standing, has been enlarged to include a four-pillared portico. Inside the church the present auditorium was remodeled, necessitating the removal of a balcony which ran around three sides of the building. The church sits back about 26 feet from the road. Elm and oak trees surround the building. It presents an excellent example of Colonial architecture.

Inasmuch as the old records of the First Baptist Church of Romulus were destroyed by a fire the first mention of the church is found in the records of the old Church of Chemung, organized in 1789, three years before the First Baptist Church of Romulus. This record speaks of members living in Romulus or Apple Orchard. It also mentions the baptisms of two members, James Finch and Mary Stevens, probably as members of the Church of Chemung. Indicative of some religious gatherings here which increased until, as a result, the First Baptist Church of Romulus was constituted in June, 1795, with a membership totaling seven.

The seven original names are not positively known, but the first enrollment includes Absalom Bainbridge, Peter Bainbridge, John Green, John Finton, Mrs. Sally Sayre, Mrs. Denton, Samuel Blain and wife, Barna Swarthout, Mahlon Bainbridge and wife, William W. Folwell and wife and Elijah Abbott. The first pastor, according to this list, was Absalom Bainbridge and the first deacons John Green and John Finton. Descendants of these first founders of the church in Kendaia still live there.

Mahlon Bainbridge was the first member baptised in the church.

It is known that the Baptist Church of Romulus did "give Venice, N. Y. fellowship as a Church of Jesus Christ, in sister relation with them, by the name of the First Baptist Church of Socippeo." This was the first church organized in Seneca county.

For some years these early members of the First Baptist Church of Romulus met without a stated house of worship until, on New Year's Day, 1808, William Watts Folwell gave them a lot on which to build a meeting house. It was to be known as the First Baptist Church of Romulus, being of the same faith and order as the Philadelphia Baptist Association. The lot given was also to be used as a burying place for the dead and some of the earliest graves in the section were located here.

The church was partially completed that same year. Instead of money, often payments for work appear in flour, beef and mutton. A bridle is mentioned in the records as payment for work. Money was, of course, accepted but the entries in an old account book speak more frequently of grain, as a means of trade. One yoke of steers was given by J. Green, valued at \$30. One axe by Silas Beers, valued at \$3. Beef and grain by John Finton, \$11.97.

The records show that "one day's work going for nails, hauling lumber, measuring lumber, boarding carpenters, hauling stone, use of grindstone." Also a number of charges were made for whiskey by the gallon. This last is explained by the following, taken from the record: "I think it no discredit to mention this last item, knowing as we all do the common use of whiskey in those days."

When first built the church stood a little north of its present site and faced the south. It was not occupied, the whole year round, until 1824 when the building was finally completed. Later it was moved slightly.

The high, old-fashioned pulpit stood at the entrance of the house, and the audience faced the door, as did the preacher. Originally the first floor was the auditorium with a gallery on three sides. Foot stoves gave way to a huge drum stove just in front of the minister, the pipe passing the length of the building, then being joined by another pipe from another stove at the back of the building and then passing up through a radiator in the gallery and out of the roof without the use of a regulation brick chimney.

The first Baptist Church of Romulus was one of the constituent members of the Chemung Association in 1796 but withdrew in 1804 to unite with the Cayuga Association and again joined the Chemung Association. In 1820 it was dismissed and became a member of the Seneca Association, which was formed soon afterward.

Geneva Daily Times, December 3, 1942

KENDAIA

Kendaia, Dec. 3—...

A social was held in the basement of the Baptist Church last Saturday night for the sailors. There were fourteen sailors present. A group of Houghton college students furnished the entertainment.

Geneva Daily Times, January 11, 1943

Legal Technicalities Cause Kendaia Title-Clearing Suits

Waterloo, Jan. 11--A condemnation proceeding has been begun over the Baptist Church of Romulus, whose property was taken over by the Federal Government for the Seneca Ordnance Depot. The proceeding is a technicality necessitated by the fact that the title to the property is not clear.

The church, in good faith, sold its property to the government at a price agreed upon. Then it was discovered that the cemetery attached to the church was owned by a cemetery association which is not incorporated.

As the cemetery association was not incorporated, there was no one legally empowered to sell the property to the government. A second difficulty appeared when it was discovered that there was doubt as to just how much of the property was owned by the church and how much owned by the cemetery association. In order to clear this up, the government is proceeding to condemn the whole tract of 5.25 acres.

George L. Grobe, attorney for the Western New York District with headquarters in Buffalo, appointed Mayor Victor G. Mount of Seneca Falls, Daniel McGuane and Daniel H. McGrain of Waterloo as a commission of condemnation. Several hearings have been held and a decision is expected in two or three weeks.

Inasmuch as the church and government are not in disagreement about the purchase price, it is expected that the amount agreed upon, approximately \$17,000 will be awarded.

The congregation now is using the former Episcopal Church at Kendaia. The old building is being used as a mess hall.

The cemetery was not disturbed by the government. Standing almost in the middle of the Ordnance Depot, it is fenced off from the rest of the project and surrounded by a fence-in roadway, leading from it to the highway. Persons can visit the cemetery as before. It is necessary to enter through the proper gate and be accompanied by a guard.

Another condemnation proceeding involving 221.75 acres of land at the depot is under way. This property was willed Violet B. Yates, now of Auburn, to be hers for life and then to pass to her children or to children of her deceased children. The will caused a technicality.

The property cannot legally be sold by Mrs. Yates. Her children and grandchildren, some perhaps as yet unborn, have an interest in the property.

A third condemnation proceeding involves 58.57 acres belonging to Jay Van Riper, who now lives near Canandaigua. He purchased the property in 1920 from the heirs of the late Anne Lyon.

At the time of the purchase one of the heirs was under 21 and therefore did not sign the deed. When the government went to this man to obtain his signature and clear the title it was found he now is incompetent, making it necessary to condemn the property to obtain legal title.

Geneva Daily Times, May 24, 1944

Kendaia Cemetery Grounds At Depot Will be Opened

Kendaia, May 24—Through the cooperation of Colonel Arthur D. Elliott, commanding officer of the Seneca Ordnance Depot, the grounds of the Cemetery Association of the First Baptist Church and Society of Romulus will be open to the public on Memorial Day from 10 a. m. to 7 p. m.

According to information given out this morning, visitors may enter at Post Two, near the underpass, on route 96-A on at Post 17, adjacent to the former Smith packing house.

Until recent years, C. C. Garrison was in charge of appropriate Memorial Day services in Kendaia Grange Hall which were usually followed by decoration of soldier graves in the Baptist Cemetery. Those having flowers are asked to take them Tuesday for decoration of graves of soldiers.

The historic edifice of the First Baptist Church of Romulus, adjacent to the cemetery, has been very nearly restored to its former condition by the Seneca Ordnance Depot, and will also be open to visitors. This building was used in 1941 and 1942 as guard headquarters and later as an eating place for Seneca Ordnance field-workers.

Inability to obtain suitable lumber has delayed restoration of pews in the auditorium of the old edifice.

According to Col. Elliott, the church will soon be available for funerals and other gatherings.

Geneva Daily Times, June 28, 1951

--In Historic Kendaia Church--

Revival Camp, Airmen's Center Slated at Sampson's Back Door

Kendaia church will have a congregation again.

Closed except for occasional services since 1945, the Baptist church in the booming little crossroads community will become a revival camp and servicemen's center tomorrow night.

An evangelist pastor of the Assembly of God hopes to crowd the old church to the doors with airmen from Sampson, just across the road. The church stands at the four corners in Kendaia, near the truck entrance to the base.

Rev. Leroy K. Dodge of Williamson, and Rev. Mary D. Crandall of Waterloo and Kendaia have leased the building and grounds from the First Baptist church of Romulus, Mark Baldrige, chairman of the church board, said today. The historic parish was founded in 1795.

A large tent top will be set up in the vacant field next to the church, and the church basement will be turned into a servicemen's center, Assembly of God churchmen said. The plan is to hold nightly revival meetings and church services at Sampson's back door.

Rev. George Hubbard, pastor of Geneva's Assembly of God church, said churchmen had watched Kendaia come alive with servicemen since the Air Force moved into Sampson. They had seen the taverns and trailer camps spring up, he said.

It seemed to the churchmen there was room for religion. Rev. Dodge cancelled his summer schedule of evangelism and made his plans to open the old Baptist church, Rev. Hubbard said.

The basement of the church will be fitted as a reading room and snack bar. There will be food, music and fellowship for servicemen--in a Christian atmosphere--every night.

Assembly of God churches in Geneva, Waterloo, Lyons, Canandaigua and Auburn are cooperating with the effort. Each congregation will send volunteers to the Kendaia church one or more nights a week. Funds for the project will come from donations by churches and individual members.

Mr. Baldrige said the Kendaia church building was originally erected at Dey's landing, on the east shore of Seneca lake, by an Episcopalian congregation. About 1905 the building was moved to its present spot.

Services were held there regularly for many years, until the Navy and War departments bought most of the private property around Kendaia in 1941. Seneca Ordnance depot and Sampson Naval Training station were built on the land.

As the residents moved out, the Episcopal church lost much of its congregation. Meanwhile the First Baptist church had lost its building--it still stands in the center of Seneca Ordnance depot.

The Baptists bought the Episcopal church in 1941, Mr. Baldrige said. Regular services were held until 1945, then lapsed into occasional meetings. Much of the congregation has been attending services with nearby congregations.

Rev. Dodge plans to open the servicemen's center with a revival rally tomorrow night at 8. A number of churches in the area will send delegations to help with music and a welcome to the airmen.

Geneva Daily Times, November 24, 1952

Officers Named

Ovid – Harry J. Williams, N. Main St., was elected president of the Kendaia Baptist Cemetery Association at the annual meeting of that group. Other officers are Mark Baldrige, Kendaia, secretary and treasurer; Alice Folwell, Archie McWhorter, Percy Smith, directors.

Geneva Times, August 8, 1966

[part of 25th anniversary of Seneca Army Depot 12-page story]

On Depot Site -

Church Property Acquired

When the government decided to build an ordnance depot in the area, it acquired the church property along with neighboring farms and lands. The congregation was paid \$17,000 for building, \$5,000 for the parsonage, and \$162.50, by condemnation, for the cemetery and church lands.

The congregation moved to a former Episcopal church in Kendaia, which soon became part of another huge tract of land bought by the Navy for Sampson Naval training Station. Finally, so few church members remained in the area, the congregation eventually disbanded in the forties.

The Baptist church itself remained in a quiet location for a time. Then, after a de-sanctification ceremony by the former owners, the church was used successively as a guard headquarters and as a field dining room.

By 1952, when the church was no longer in use and had deteriorated considerably, it was decided to arrange for its disposal. When member of the Cemetery Association of the First Baptist Church and Society of Romulus heard of the proposed disposal, they wrote to congressman John Taber expressing regret at the decision because the "Old Church, a symbol of Christianity, was the sole remaining physical evidence of the organization of the first Church between Seneca and Cayuga lakes, in 1795." The situation was resolved when the government sold the edifice for \$1 to Mr. G. L. Freeman, who re-erected it as part of a 19th century village restoration in Old Irelandville, near Watkins Glen. The pews went to a Rochester synagogue and some of the stained glass windows were returned to the families, in whose memory they had once been given.

But the three and a quarter acre cemetery, with its more than 850 inhabitants, was allowed to survive. By agreement with the depot and the Cemetery Association of the First Baptist Church and Society of Romulus, its operation can continue forever.

Although the burial rate has dwindled to fewer than six per year, the family plots continue to fill up. A visit to the isolated location will indicate that those buried there are not forgotten. Just after memorial Day, many of the graves are adorned with wreaths, bouquets and new plants. Special markers identify the graves of U.S. veterans, not only of recent conflicts but of Civil and

Revolutionary War vintage. Bordered by rows of tall maples, the cemetery is dotted with white pines and hedges of white spirea.

The older half of the cemetery occupies the northern half of the plot. It is here that four-year old John McMath Bainbridge, the first recorded burial, was laid to rest in April of 1812.

South of the grassy rectangle, where the church building once stood, lies the newer section of the cemetery, which is the area of the most recent burials.

Between these two sites, lie other Bainbridges, McWhorters, Coryells, Kennedys, Sayres, Sebrings, Simpsons, Wilcoxes, Thorpes, VanNostrands and Cranes, and a host of other old county names.

A minister, the Rev. Henry McClafferty, the second recorded burial, was followed by 18 of his relatives in the years between 1814 and 1872. Haynes Bartlett, a soldier in the Revolutionary War, occupies one of the oldest graves. Inscribed names like Charity, Temperance, Hiram and Silas bear testimony to change in fashionable Christian names.

One of the newer headstones adorns the grave of Philip S. Pontius, who died in 1959, after 20 years as the cemetery's caretaker. Depot staffers remember his frequent visits to the cemetery on horse and wagon and his long hours spent fixing the plots. For a time, he was the only civilian entrusted with a key to the depot, allowing him unchaperoned entry.

The cemetery continues under the watchful eye of the Association, but no eight grave family lots have been sold since 1941, when the government bought the land. Relatives of established owners, however, may be buried there as long as space exists.

Under the terms of the agreement with Seneca, the cemetery association is completely responsible for the upkeep. The depot requires 24-hour advance notice of burials, maintains a fence around the cemetery to keep resident deer from damaging grounds and headstones, allows access for burials and visits, and mows the grass where the church once stood. The rest of the responsibility is that of the association.

According to association officials, difficulties arise as time passes and surviving relatives of those buried in the cemetery pass away. Modest operating funds for the upkeep, repairs and burial costs come from perpetual care funds set up years ago. Three dollars per lot assessments are made annually and sent to surviving relatives from Wisconsin to California.

The old cemetery is more than a historical institution. It is a marker of the past, a solid example of the way time can stand still amid the furious advances of the 20th century.

Geneva Daily Times, August 8, 1969

Through the years –

Depot has dates to remember

March 31, 1941 – A survey of the Kendaia area was made by some “strangers.”

June 11, 1941 – The War Department announced approval of a site in Seneca County for a proposed Ordnance Depot.

June 23, 1941 – A government office was set up in a barn on a fruit farm in Kendaia.

July 9, 1941 – Construction work began.

Aug. 9, 1941 – Seneca Ordnance Depot was officially established by War Department General Order No. 8.

Sept. 13, 1941 – The Ordnance Corps officially took over the operation of Seneca Ordnance Depot.

Jan. 6, 1942 – The first incoming shipment of ammunition was received.

Jan. 31, 1942 – The first outgoing shipment of ammunition was made.

Aug. 15, 1945 – The depot celebrated victory. Lt. Gen. H. H. Campbell, Jr., Chief of Ordnance, extended congratulations to all Ordnance personnel for the part they played in helping bring about final victory.

Feb. 2, 1955 – 1120 acres at the north end of the depot were transferred to the New York District, Corps of Engineers, for construction of additional buildings for a new storage activity.

Nov. 14, 1958 – The former Sampson Air Force Base airstrip and facilities and certain other buildings were turned over to the depot. The property included 21 family housing units along Seneca Lake.

Oct. 19, 1959 – A contract was awarded for the construction of 120 family unit Capehart Housing facilities.

Mar. 31, 1960 – Maj. Gen. Frank A. Tobey, Chief of Army Chaplains, dedicated the depot chapel.

Aug. 9, 1961 – 20th anniversary was celebrated.