

THE CASS CITY CHURCH OF CHRIST

The history of any of the American churches of Christ should really begin in the nineteenth century with events that occurred throughout the United States and Canada. After the Revolutionary War when the separation of church and state became the law of the land, there began a reformation in religious thinking. Men and women began to examine their inherited religious doctrine. Debates, and often heated discussions, resulted in the formation of independent religious groups whose plea became, "Speak only where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent." Among the people who proclaimed this doctrine was a preacher whose name was Harmon Black, a circuit rider in the Thumb of Michigan, which at that time had a considerable number of these small, independent groups. He was well known in at least Yale, Speaker, Harbor Beach, Deckerville, Cass City, and Akron. Also prominent at that time was the Quick Family. Mrs. Basil Coltson (Viola Quick, a native of Cass City) relates the following:

"My grandfather's father was converted in Bedford, Ohio after hearing the ministers, A. Campbell, Issac Everest and others. After he and his family moved to Michigan, they lived near Pine Run and Farrandville. He is buried in a cemetery south of Akron and on a road to the west. Forest fires burned out the area and the only school where services could be held."

In the late nineteenth and early twenty centuries, a rift developed among these groups, not only in Michigan, but nationwide. As Mrs. Coltson puts it: "I think, probably, this was before the church had members who wanted instrumental music and Ladie's Aid Societies. My grandparents, M. H. Quick and Julia Ellen Quick worshipped with vocal music. I think my father led the singing when he grew up. My great parents were the same and great grandfather Sylvester Smith was minister of the church. I think that they held their meetings in the Quick school in the very beginning, then, I don't know the particulars, but think part of the members left and the Novesta Church was organized. Sylvester Smith didn't use instruments. I was raised in the Novesta Church and really didn't give much thought as to why we were different."

In the late 1940's John Webb and family moved to Cass City from Speaker an area near Yale. His grandmothers's sister was Harmon Black's mother and they, like the Smiths, had remained as part of the noninstrumental persuasion. Because the noninstrumental group was no longer in existence in Cass City, the family attended services in Akron. In the 1950's the Lyle Clarke family, also of the noninstrumental group moved to Cass City. After much deliberation the two families decided to begin meeting in Cass City and the first service was held in the Clarke home the third Sunday in September 1963. Those present were; John Webb, Neola, his wife, Jennie Mathews (Neola's mother), Lyle Clarke, his wife Jean, and their children Margie, Carol, Sharon, Kathy, and Robert. A few weeks later Andrew Eubank, his wife Wilma and their children Zan, Victor, Blaine, Melissa, and Dana also moved to the area and met with this group. In the fall of 1967 the congregation broke ground for a building located at 6743 Main Street, which was considered complete enough for use in December of 1968. A formal opening was held the following spring. The congregation has been served by John Webb and Lyle Clarke as elders, and by a number of men as part-time ministers over the years.

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