



## NORTH GREENBUSH NOTES

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### Happy Birthday Blooming Grove Reformed Church

Not only people celebrate birthdays. This year the Blooming Grove Reformed Church celebrates the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding.

The history of the formation of this church is interesting. Until the 1790's, many people in the North Greenbush area worshiped across the river at the Dutch Reformed Church in Albany. As the Wynantskill area population grew, members left the Albany church and formed their own congregation in Wynantskill and many people from the North Greenbush area joined this congregation.

The Wynantskill Church shared a pastor with the Greenbush Reformed Church and housed their Pastor at Blooming Grove, which is now Defreestville-halfway between the two churches.

By 1814, the church membership had grown to a point where they felt they should have their own pastor and congregation. This was accomplished in late 1814, 200 years ago.

As with many churches, there were internal squabbles: church minutes record that Betsy Deforrest was disciplined for "neglecting the stated ordinances of the church" and for stealing several items from a store in Albany. Deacon Jacob Hogle was charged with "falsehood" in certain conversations with fellow men. My favorite is a complaint from a neighbor that he could see the pastor's laundry hanging in his back yard.

The first building on the church's property was completed in January 1817. By the 1860's

the original church building was found to be inadequate for the congregation's needs and it was torn down and a new building was erected in 1867. However on New Year's Eve, 1910 the sanctuary burned. Only the communion ware and the steeple bell were saved. For a short time, the congregation worshiped in the schoolhouse building just south of the church property. Because of the economic conditions of the times and the onset of World War I, the new sanctuary was not completed until 1925.

Other improvements to the church property include an educational wing, and a new parsonage built in 1962, office space in the upper level of the educational wing, a Samaritan Counseling service and a solar panel system.

Also, as the area demographics have changed, the church population is different. The first members were predominantly from farming families. The last farming family sold their farm just before 2010. What changes will Blooming Grove Reformed see in the next 200 years?