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H97-1301. Michigan, Holland. Pillar Church. Records, 1847-2003. 12.75 linear ft. PARTIALLY RESTRICTED

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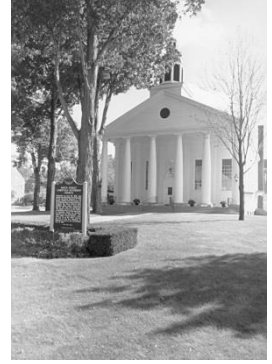
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H97-1301. Michigan, Holland. Pillar Church.

Records, 1847-2003. 12.75 linear ft. **PARTIALLY RESTRICTED**



Abstract

Holland's first church congregation of the Dutch Reformed Church. Served by Rev. Albertus C. Van Raalte (1849-1867). Affiliated with the Reformed Church in America (RCA) (1849-1884) and later the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) (1884-2012, and now shared by both denominations). Records include consistory, Deacons, Ladies Aid Society, Ladies Auxiliary, Men's Society and Philathea Society minutes; Accounting, administrative, baptismal, dismissal, transfer, and other membership information; Fynaart congregation of East Saugatuck minutes; and the historical publication *The Pillar Church: A Book of Remembrance* published in 1984.

Accession No.: H97-1301
Provenance: Pillar Christian Reformed Church, Pillar Church
Donor: Pillar Christian Reformed Church, Pillar Church
Processed by: Kevin DeYoung, August 1998
Michelle Smith, March 2001

History

Pillar Church traces its beginnings to the very inception of Holland Kolonie. The well known story of A. C. Van Raalte's voyage from the Netherlands to America in hopes of building a new home not incidentally includes the forming of a new church. In 1847, the same year in which Van Raalte arrived in Holland, the same group that would later inhabit what it is now Pillar, began building their first church, aptly named Log Church.

As the community began to grow and the center of town shifted from the site of Log Church (now Pilgrim Home cemetery) to the shores of Black Lake (now Lake Macatawa), a new church building became a concern. Construction began in 1853. On June 25, 1856, Rev. Van Raalte dedicated the finished work. In 1871, this structure, now known as Pillar Church, was one of only a handful of buildings to survive Holland's Great Fire. In 1975, Pillar Church was awarded a Michigan State Historical Marker, and after persistent labors by church and community members, Pillar Christian Reformed Church was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1998.

The legacy of this storied church is, however, much more than just structural. Pillar Christian Reformed Church, though proudly heralded as Van Raalte's church (he served there until his resignation in July of 1867), has also achieved the dubious distinction of being the church that caused a split in its faith. After a favorable report issuing from Rev. I. N. Wyckoff's visit to Holland, Classis Holland was invited to join the Reformed Church in America. The classis, of which Van Raalte's congregation was a part, accepted this invitation on June 2, 1849, and a year and one week later the Synod of the RCA officially accepted Classis Holland. But on April 8, 1857, four churches from Classis Holland seceded and formed the Christian Reformed Church.

Pillar did not secede during this initial split, but rather during the Masonic Controversy that boiled over some twenty years later. At a meeting of the congregation on February 27,

1882, by a margin of 86 to 18, Pillar Church voted to leave the Reformed Church in America. To deal with the schism, Classis Holland called a meeting for March 1 at Pillar Church, but when classis members arrived they found themselves refused entrance to the locked church by Elder Teunis Keppel. After deliberation among the United Presbyterians and the Christian Reformed Church, Pillar officially joined the Christian Reformed Church on December 3, 1884. This switch proved much more noteworthy than the one in 1857. Not only did a much larger constituency defect, Pillar's congregation among them, but the late Van Raalte's very own church left the RCA for the CRC. In recent years, ill will between these two denominations has been mitigated and merger occurred in 2012.

Scope and Content

Most of the Pillar Church collection is the meeting minutes of different entities within the church. Most helpful, and most historically intriguing, as they contain the work of A. C. Van Raalte, are the Consistory minutes (Boxes 1 and 2). The Deacons, Ladies Aid Society, Ladies Auxiliary, Men's Society and Philathea Society are represented in fairly complete minutes (Boxes 2, 4, 6, 7). Box 3 contains sporadic accounting information. Minutes of the short-lived Fynaart congregation of East Saugatuck are in Box 4.

Another key historical record is the membership rolls, five massive and detailed volumes in Box 5. These detail baptisms, deaths, births, dates when members came to the congregation and when they were removed, and dates when members became communicants. Entries in these logs are organized by person, not date; hence, they are in rough sequence but not exact order, and statistical information on the abovementioned events must be collated from the entries.

Box 7 holds articles of incorporation, the will of Arthur Lappinga (1986), and a copy of part of the court record of 1883. Pending reorganization of the collection around further Pillar Church accessions, Box 8 continues the Consistory minutes begun in Box 1. **Consistory minutes are RESTRICTED for 50 years past date of creation.**

Container List

Box 1

Consistory Minutes

- 1850-1855 (original and translated) (2 folders)
- 1855-1868 (original and translated only to 1860) (2 folders)
- 1868-1891 (original and translated) (5 folders)
- 1891-1899
- 1899-1906 (translation) (includes 2 CDs)
- 1899-1910

Box 1.1

Consistory Minutes (cont.)

- 1899-1906 (hand written translation)
- 1899-1905 (translation)

1910-1921

Box 1.5

Consistory Minutes (cont.)
1921-1933 (transcribed version on CD)
1934
1935-1940

Box 2

Consistory Minutes (cont.) (**RESTRICTED for 50 years past date of creation**)
1941-1994 (original, photocopies, digital) (20 folders)

Box 3

Deacons' Minutes
1869-1887
1893-1908
1908-1914
1914-1922
1922-1928
1928-1934
1934-1947
1948-1960
1963-1965
1965-1966
1967-1968
1968-1971
1974-1986

Box 4

Funds

All Funds
1868-1896
1913-1937
1958-1961
1962-1967
1974-1980
Building Fund
1944-1965
1966-1979
Individual Giving

1868-1896
1881-1896
1958-1962
1963-1967
Mission Fund
1972-1982
Receipts and Disbursements
1952-1978 (Missionary Society)
1956-1967 (Charity Fund)
1968-1989 (Charity Fund)
1961-1985
Quarterly Giving
1924-1978

Box 5

Fynaart Church (East Saugatuck) (Dutch/some English translation)
1873-1880
1880-1882
Ladies Aid Minutes
1895-1896
1897-1901
1901-1904
1904-1908
1917-1924
1924-1931
1932-1940
1945-1956 (attendance)
1947-1953
1954-1960
1960-1966
1966-1971
Ladies Auxiliary Minutes
1932-1934
1935-1939
1937 (attendance)
1939-1940 (attendance)
1939-1943
Mission Society
1946-1959
1959-1975
1975-1979
Pastor's Ready Reference Record

Box 6

Membership Rolls (includes baptisms)
1854-1885
Late 1800s-early 1900s (4 small books)
Volume I
Volume II
Volume III

Box 7

Membership (cont.)
Volume IV
Volume
Membership of Pillar Church for 50 Continuous Years or Longer, ca. 1998
Baptismal (see Membership Rolls, too)
1847-1880
1966-1969
Dismission, 1972-1977
Inactive (transferred, deaths, lapse, etc.), 1982-1999
Transfer
1971-1973
1983-1985

Box 8

Men's Society Minutes
1907-1910
1915-1917
1915-1917 (translation)
1953-1962
1962-1976
1976-1979
Young Men's Society Minutes
1892-1894
1894-1896
Mr. and Mrs. Club Minutes
1973-1989
Philathea Minutes
1941-1942 (attendance)
1943 (attendance)
1944 (attendance)
1943-1944
1945-1947
1948-1955
1945-1949 (attendance)

1950-1953 (attendance)

1954-1958 (attendance)

1959-1961 (attendance)

Sunday School

1877-1889

1877, History of Sunday School (translation)

1977-1990

Talent Survey

Archival Records

Articles of Incorporation

Articles of Incorporation, By-laws

Court Records

Lappinga, Arthur; Last Will and Testament (1986)

History, 1912

Ministers, Reyneveld, Clarence, 1992

Publications

9th Street Christian Reformed Church: Faith of Our Fathers-Living Still, 1847-1947, 1947

“Our Birthdays, 9th Street Church Family,” 1973

The Pillar Church: A Book of Remembrance, 1984

Pillar Church in the Van Raalte Era, 2003

The Rooster on the Steeple: The Story of Engbertus Vander Veen, an Early Dutch Immigrant to Holland, Michigan by Judy Tanis Paar, 2009

Box 9

Special Offerings, 1989-2002