Index to

The digitally scanned

Pierce Avenue Presbyterian

Part of

The Buffalo State College Regional History Collection

Copies are housed at
The Buffalo State College Archives and
The Monroe Fordham Regional History Center

The papers were digitally scanned in
The Monroe Fordham Regional History Center at
Buffalo State College

2010
The collection was assembled and digitally scanned by student assistants in the Monroe Fordham Regional History Center – Chris Root, graduate assistant Lynn Lombardo and work study Michaeille Moureau. The supervision of this project was by Dr. Jean Richardson, Associate Professor, History and Social Studies Education Department.
Pierce Avenue Presbyterian Church

Pierce Avenue Presbyterian Church emerged in 1893 from the First Presbyterian Church located at the corner of Falls Street and Mechanic Street (now Prospect Street). The first service was held in the autumn of 1892 in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Connell at the corner of Pine Avenue and Stedman Street (now Nineteenth Street). The first service was such a success that a second meeting was held at the home of Arthur E. Morgan at 20 Stedman Street. Meetings continued to be held in private houses as chairs were carried from home to home in the neighborhood as the number of those attending services increased.

Later that year, Jacob F. Schoellkopf, a member of the First Presbyterian Church, donated a lot at what was considered the corner of Pierce Avenue and Stedman Street. Soon a chapel was erected and opened for services in the middle of April 1893.

On a Tuesday evening in April 1893, the original services in the new chapel were held with a congregation of 125 present. Mr. Eugene A. Butler spoke as did the Rev. Albert S. Bacon, the Rev. George W. Porter and the author of a brief but informing historical sketch of the church, and the secretary of the local Y.M.C.A, Mr. Harry P. Crowell. On April 22, 1893, the Sunday school was organized with Mr. E. A. Butler as superintendent. The church was to be known as the Pierce Avenue Presbyterian Church.

Pierce Avenue derives its name from one Gad Pierce, who settled at what is the corner of Portage Road and Main Street in 1807, was elected as one of the poor masters of the Town of Niagara in 1812 and kept a tavern at the junction of Portage Road and Pierce Avenue where his farm was located. He was an active figure on the Niagara Frontier during the War of 1812 and was one of the first vestrymen of the parish of Christ Church (now St. Peter's) elected in January 1829.

Eugene A. Butler was the virtual founder of Pierce Avenue Presbyterian Church. Born in the town of Pendleton, Niagara County, in 1846, he came to Niagara Falls as a small boy. He gathered scores of children in his wagon and brought them to the Sunday school and church so that they might hear “the old, old story of Jesus and His love.” Mr. Butler died on the morning of May 10, 1922 in Mt. St. Mary’s Hospital in Niagara Falls.

The service of organization of the church by Niagara Presbytery was held at seven o’clock on the evening of September 19, 1893 in the church which stood on the rear portion of the lot. It was also the service of installation of the first minister, the Rev. George Nicholls. At the organization and installation service, baptism was administered by the Rev. Albert S. Bacon, moderator of Niagara Presbytery. The Rev. Henry K. Sanborn of North Church, North Tonawanda, presided along with the Rev. George W. Porter, the retired Baptist minister. The Scripture lesson was read by the Rev. Seth Cook of the Knowlesville Church and the installation prayer for the newly-elected elders and the pastor was offered by the Rev. S. Seymour Phelps of Somerset Presbyterian Church.

The elders elected were: E.A. Butler, Samuel Lyness and John Lundy. Some thirty-seven charter members were received, twenty of them by letter and seventeen on profession of faith. A great number of those who were received by letter came out of the First Presbyterian Church.

The Rev. George Nicholls, the first pastor of the church, was about forty-five years old when he came from the Presbyterian Church of Wampsville, New York. He continued as pastor from 1893 to April 5, 1896 when he went to the pastorate of the Presbyterian Church of Old
Forge, in Herkimer County, New York. Mr. Nicholls died in Seneca Falls, New York on November 18, 1934 at the age of eighty-seven years.

The first building erected at 1815 Pierce Avenue and in 1904 an addition was added. In 1911 it was decided to proceed with the erection of a larger building with a seating capacity of 750. It was completed in 1913 and a pipe organ was installed in 1921. In 1924 it was decided to demolish the original building and erect Butler Memorial Building to accommodate the Sunday school; this was completed in 1926.

The following is the list of Pastors who were instrumental in the church’s history:

- Reverend George Nichols: July 1893 – April 1896
- Reverend J. W. Ross: June 1896 – Oct 1897
- Reverend H. D. Leland: Dec 1897 – April 1898
- Reverend E. D. Hardin: Oct 1898 – May 1903
- Reverend O. B. Pershing: Dec 1903 – Feb 1906
- Reverend U. S. Schaul: April 1906 – Sept 1917
- Reverend W. C. Crofts: Dec 1917 – Nov 1939
- Reverend G. Hall Todd: Feb 1940 – Feb 1944
- Reverend Richard A. Davis: Aug 1944 – March 1949
- Reverend Bruce G. Tucker: Sept 1949 – June 1955
- Reverend Robert Bellingham: March 1974 – April 1996
- Reverend Harold Tyson: June 1996 – Oct 1999

Pierce Avenue Presbyterian Church was dissolved and closed December 31, 2006.

A large fire began in the former church at 7am Friday, March 11. The remains of the building were torn down that night.
Pierce Avenue Presbyterian Church of Niagara Falls

Church History
- 20th, 50th, 65th Anniversary Booklets
- Accounts – Church Closing Documents
- Constitution
- History
- Original Deeds – Copies

Church Register
- Register of Church Membership
- Church Members 1904
- Church Register Early 1900’s
- Church Register 1910-1930
- Church Register 1930-1960
- Baptisms – 1946 – 1948
- Member Roll Changes 1946 - 1948

Session Minutes
- Session Minutes – September 1893- January 1924
- Session Minutes - April 1923 – April 1931
- Session Minutes – April 1931 – April 1934
- Session Minutes – May 1931 – March 1934
- Session Minutes – January 1934 – April 1946
- Session Minutes – April 1934 – April 1937
- Session Minutes – May 1937 – April 1942
- Session Minutes – April 1942 – December 1954
- Session Minutes – January 1955 – September 1961
- Session Minutes – February 1962 – October 1971
- Session Minutes – October 1971 – December 1988

Photos
- Photos – Undated
Miscellaneous

- Church Bulletins
- Miscellaneous
- Newsletters – 1970’s
- Newspaper Articles (Dated 1st, Undated 2nd)