

# **Summer Hill, NY. Summer Hill Congregational Church**

Records, 1831-1977

RG 0733

2 linear feet

No access restrictions. Received at an unknown date.

Processed December 1998 by Johanna Carll and Virginia Hunt.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Summer Hill Congregational Church held its last service September 29, 1974. Due to unresolved issues concerning membership as well as legal and financial dealings, the records continue into 1977. The records came to the library from an unknown source, at an unknown date, so the provenance and the history of the collection are not well known. The records arrived at the Congregational Library in a loose arrangement determined by the church's filing system, however there are some instances where the arrangement was determined by the archivist. The papers of J.Gurnesy Allen, a church clerk, are also included in the records, as they were given to the church by Earl H. Thayer, the pastor at the First Congregational Church of Moravia.

The records document the history of the Summer Hill Congregational Church through minutes, legal papers, financial records, correspondence, and photographs. Included among the records are the records of some of the auxiliary groups which were connected to the church, such as the Ladies Heart and Hand Society, the Ladies Aid and Home and Women's Foreign Ministry, the Society of Congregational Christian Women, the Young People's Society, Sunday School, and the Ministers, Missionary, and Widows Old Age Fund. Also contained in the collection are some parish records, including some pertaining to the Cortland Larger Parish and the Cortland-Summer Hill Parish, both of which Summer Hill was a member of at different times. Items deaccessioned from the collection include duplicate copies, envelopes, and canceled checks; information which is also reflected in the bank statements.

## **HISTORICAL NOTE**

The Summer Hill Congregational Church was legally formed by the people of East Locke and constituted with 70 members April 17, 1827. Prior to this incarnation, it had been the East Congregational Society of Locke. In January 1841 the church was destroyed by fire. It was later rebuilt and dedicated in September of that same year. In 1896, the church was redecorated with alterations including a shift of the pulpit to the south end of the church. The church was rededicated in May 1896. In 1906, the building was repaired, a basement was constructed, and the memorial windows were put in place.

In 1925, the Second Congregational Church of Cortland, the Congregational Church of Groton City, and the Congregational Church of Summer Hill joined to form the Cortland Larger Parish. After a 3-year trial basis, this arrangement became a permanent association in 1928. Trustees

from each church formed the Cortland Larger Parish cabinet. The activities of the Cortland Larger Parish included purchasing the Cortland Larger Parish Parsonage, establishing the Cortland Larger Parish Men's club, Cortland Larger Parish Women's and Youth meetings, and holding of annual Cortland Larger Parish Thanksgiving services and Holy Week services. The Cortland Larger Parish became defunct when, on April 15, 1947, the Congregational Church of Cortland was released from the union.

In April 1947 the Tri-County Parish (Rural Parish) with representatives from Cortland County (where Summer Hill is located), Tompkins and Cuyaga counties replaced the Larger Parish. In 1950, the county's population had diminished leading to the proposed union of Groton and Summer Hill in 1952. On July 16, 1953, Groton City Congregational Church voted to separate itself entirely from Summer Hill. In 1954, the first meeting of the Cortland-Summer Hill Parish Cabinet was held. The Summer Hill Congregational Church disbanded in 1975 after holding its last service September 29, 1974.

From 1835-1938, the clerkship of the church remained in one family, starting with Winslow Hamblin, then moving to his son-in-law George Allen, and ending with his son J. Gurnsey Allen and thus his papers are included with the collection.

### **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

Records in this collection span from 1831-1977, and contains two linear feet of material. The series are arranged in accordance to Congregational Library guidelines and are as follows: Series I, Summer Hill Congregational Church Records, Series II, Summer Hill-Cortland County Parish Records, Series III, Financial Records, Series IV, Legal Records, Series V, Auxiliary Organizations, Series VI, J. Gurnsey Allen Papers, and Series VII, Printed Material and Photographs. Within the series are subseries which are arranged primarily in chronological order or in accordance with a loose filing system detailed in a list found in the records. A photocopy of the list is attached to the finding aid.

The church records are comprised of annual meeting minutes, minutes of the board of trustees, and pastor's annual reports and records of baptisms and marriages. Also included in this series are records pertaining to membership including requests for letters of dismissal (1894-1974), letters of dismissal from other churches (1887-1950), receipts from letters of dismissal from other churches/admissions to other churches (1886-1967), and inactive member lists (1950, n.d.). Correspondence includes letters of resignation (1926-1966), and general correspondence (1896-1976), concerning the results of recent meetings and membership issues such as transferring worship to other churches and inactive membership.

The Parish Records series includes records from the Cortland Larger Parish (1940-1948), the Cortland-Summer Hill Parish Cabinet (1954-1955), the Ecclesiastical Council (1952, n.d.), a list of voters and electors (1861-1866), and a "list of strays"--a record kept by the parish clerk regarding livestock losses in the community.

The Financial Records series includes the treasurer's account books, the financial secretary's report (1955-1956), pledge books (1927-1946), bank pass books (1929-1977), bank statements (1969-1974), other misc. financial documents.

The Legal Records series is comprised of contracts and legal documents (1905-1975), wills and bequests (1936-1972), legal correspondence (1941-1972), and documents pertaining to the church closing (1974).

The Auxiliary organizations series contains reports and accounts of Ladies Heart an Hand Society (1886-1909), the records (1921-1935) and a cookbook produced in 1899 by the Ladies Aid and Home and Women's Foreign Ministry. The bulk of the records in this series are concerned with the records (1937-1962) and the financial records (1951-1960) of the Society of Congregational Christian Women's group which later became the Women's Fellowship group. Also included in this series are the records of the Young People's Society (1887-1892), the undated Sunday School records of Dora Flatt's Sunday School class, and the reports of the Ministers, Missionary, and Widows Old Age Fund from 1948.

From 1835 to 1938, the clerkship of the church remained in one family: Winslow Hamblin, his son-in-law George Allen, then J. Gurnesy Allen, some of whose papers are found in this collection. These papers, dating from 1905-1949, are mainly concerned with a trust established by Henry E. Ranney and relate to church business. The papers were given to the church by Earl H. Thayer, pastor of the First Congregational Church of Moravia.

The final series dates from 1896-1974 and contains printed materials and photographs including a church history prepared for the church's 120th anniversary celebration and other special event programs, such as the rededication of the church in 1896. Also included are a small number of portraits, a copy of The Council Manual for Congregational Churches (1896), and several hymn books including The New Crusade Song (1944), Sabbath Songs, and Gem of Gems Hymnal. While the majority of the arrangement of this collection was determined by the arranger, some of the groupings were determined by a filing system whose key can be found at the end of the finding aid.

### **SERIES DESCRIPTION**

#### Series I. Summer Hill Congregational Church Records

- A. Minutes, 1831-1976
- B. Membership, 1886-1974
- C. Correspondence, 1896-1976

#### Series II. Summer Hill-Cortland County Parish Records, 1833-1955

#### Series III. Financial Records

- A. Treasurer's Account Books, 1900-1956
- B. Pledge Books, 1927-1946
- C. Bank Statements and Other Financial Documents, 1929-1977

#### Series IV. Legal Records, 1905-1975

#### Series V. Auxiliary Organizations

- A. Ladies Heart and Hand Society, 1886-1909

- B. Ladies Aid and Home and Women's Foreign Ministry, 1899-1935
- C. Society of Congregational Christian Women, 1937-1962
- D. Young People's Society, 1887-1892
- E. Sunday School, n.d.
- F. Ministers, Missionary, and Widows Old Age Fund, 1948

Series VI. J. Gurnesy Allen Papers, 1905-1949

Series VII. Printed Material and Photographs, 1896-1974

## BOX LIST

### BOX 1

Series I. Summer Hill Congregational Church Records

A. Minutes, 1831-1976

Folder 1. Record Book, 1831-1957.

-Minutes, 1856-1904.

-Vital Statistics (Baptisms, Marriages), 1831-1957.

Folder 2. Record Book (Minutes), 1887-1938.

Folder 3. Record Book (Minutes), 1939-1974.

Folder 4. Annual Meeting Minutes, 1961-1974.

Folder 5. Minutes of the Board of Trustees, 1927-1976 (gaps).

Folder 6. Pastor's Annual Reports, 1942-1952 (gaps).

Folder 7. Reports to the Congregational Conference (Congregational Yearbook), 1940-1960 (gaps).

B. Membership, 1886-1974

Folder 8. Requests for letters of dismissal (to transfer from other churches to Summer Hill), 1894-1974.

Folder 9. Letters of dismissal from other churches (to transfer to Summer Hill), 1887-1950.

Folder 10. Receipts from letters of dismissal from other churches/admission to other churches, 1886-1967.

Folder 11. Inactive Member Lists, 1950, c.1959.

C. Correspondence, 1896-1976

Folder 12. Letters of Resignation, from pastors and other church officials. 1926-1966

Folder 13. General Correspondence, 1896-1976. Includes open letters to the congregation informing them of the results of meetings, letters concerning new place of worship, small financial matters, and inactive members.

Series II. Summer Hill-Cortland County Parish Records

Folder 14. Cortland Larger Parish Records (Minutes, Reports, Correspondence), 1940-1948.

Folder 15. Cortland-Summer Hill Parish Cabinet Minutes, 1954-1955.

Folder 16. Ecclesiastical Council Minutes, 1952, n.d.

Folder 17. List of Voters and Electors, 1861-1866.

Folder 18. List of Strays, 1833-1902.

### Series III. Financial Records

#### A. Treasurer's Account Books, 1900-1956

Folder 19. Treasurer's Account Book, 1900-1924.

Folder 20. Treasurer's Account Book, 1938-1948.

Folder 21. Secretary and Treasurer's Account Book, 1947-1948.

Folder 22. Treasurer's Account Book, 1949-1951.

Folder 23. Financial Secretary's Reports, 1955-1956.

Folder 24. Account Book, 1969-1977.

#### B. Pledge Books, 1927-1946

Folder 25. Pledge Book, 1927-1928.

Folder 26. Pledge Book, 1928-1929.

Folder 27. Pledge Book, 1934-1939.

Folder 28. Pledge Book, 1942-1946.

#### C. Bank Statements and Other Financial Documents, 1929-1977

Folder 29. Bank Pass Books, 1929-1977.

Folder 30. Bank Statements, 1969-1974 (gaps).

Folder 31. Bank Statements, 1974-1977 (gaps).

Folder 32. Misc. Financial Documents, 1948-1976. Includes a budget from 1949, a realty appraisal, and stock reports.

### Series IV. Legal Records

Folder 33. Contracts and Legal Documents, 1905-1975. Includes a contract on the trust established by Henry E. Ranney, a tax deed, and insurance contract.

Folder 34. Wills and Bequests, 1936-1972. Notifications of gifts to the Summer Hill Congregational Church through wills or bequests.

Folder 35. Legal Correspondence, 1941-1972. Issues concerning wills and bequests and the ownership of the church once it became defunct.

Folder 36. Documents Pertaining to the Church Closing, 1974. Real estate assessment, notification of meeting concerning the future of the church, and the transfer of membership from the defunct church.

### BOX 2

### Series V. Auxiliary

#### A. Ladies Heart and Hand Society, 1886-1909

Folder 1. Reports and Accounts, 1886-1909.

#### B. Ladies Aid and Home and Women's Foreign Ministry, 1899-1935

Folder 2. Records, 1921-1935.

Folder 3. Winnowed Gems Cookbook, 1899.

#### C. Society of Congregational Christian Women, 1937-1962

Folder 4. Records of the Society of Congregational Christian Women, 1937-1948.

Folder 5. Records of the Society of Congregational Christian Women (later becomes the Women's Fellowship), 1949-1962.

Folder 6. Financial Records for the Society of Congregational Christian Women, 1951-1960.

D. Young People's Society, 1887-1892

Folder 7. Records, 1887-1892.

E. Sunday School, n.d.

Folder 8. Records of Dora Flatt's Sunday School Class, n.d.

F. Ministers, Missionary, and Widows Old Age Fund, 1948

Folder 9. Reports of the Ministers, Missionary, and Widows Old Age Fund, 1948.

Series VI. J. Gurnesy Allen Papers, 1905-1949

Folder 10. J. Gurnesy Allen Papers, 1905-1949

Series VII. Printed Materials and Photographs, 1896-1974

Folder 11. Church History (Manuscript) and Special Event Programs, 1896-1974.

Folder 12. Photographs.

Folder 13. *The Council Manual for Congregational Churches*, 1896.

Folder 14. *The New Crusade Song*, 1944.

Folder 15. *Sabbath Songs*.

Folder 16. *Gem of Gems Hymnal*.