

Buffalo Church Timeline

The Evangelical
Church Years
(1876-1946)

1844: Rev. J. G. Miller of the Evangelical Association, in a letter written from Galena, Illinois on October 2:

On the west side of the Mississippi River in Dubuque, are many Germans: but because of the expense of crossing the river I was going to give up the work there, but the people urged me so much to come again that I could not forsake them. After I had preached four times, seventeen joined the church. . . . May these new members prove to be an honor to the Evangelical Church, a foundation and pattern to coming generations as the first congregation West of the Mississippi—the outward border of Germans inside the Indian Territory.

In the same year, the first annual conference of churches related to the Wesley tradition was held in Iowa with 17 original member churches.

1849: Godfrey and Mary Quaas emigrate from Germany. They were both born in Saxon-Aldenburg, Germany in 1823 and were married in 1846. After arriving in Muscatine, they hired a wagon and a team of oxen and traveled overland to Marion, arriving on May 25, 1849. In September they bought 80 acres of land at New Buffalo in Monroe Township, five miles northwest of Cedar Rapids, and erected a log cabin on a wooded tract about a quarter mile south of the present Twin Pines golf course.

In the Church's notebook of historical documents is a typed, two-page, undated document describing the trip with their two young children from Germany to New York. [Spelling, punctuation, and grammar as in original document]

[Godfrey and Mary] were married May 12th, 1846 in Germany. due to haveing to spend a certain length of time in the German Army each year, they deecided to come to this new Country, with their two small children. (Selma and Lewis) Three other young couples deecided to make the trip over togeather. and left their home country in a sail boat. spending about six weeks on the ocean.

When they landed in New York, N.Y. May 15th. 1849, Godfrey was ill with the cholera, a young German Drugist in New York City, heard about this young German just landed and was sick, he went to see him, then bro't medicine to him until he was well enough to travel again.

They took a boat up the Hudson River, to Albany, N.Y., then to the rail road to Buffalo, N. Y. rideing in a box car, from there to Detroit Mich., then to Chicago, Ill. -takeing a Steamboat down the Ill. river to the Mississippi River to St. Louis Mo. and from St. Louis Mo. they came by train to Muscatine, that being as far west as the railroad came at that time.

In Muscatine they hired two teams of horses and wagons, carried the women and children, and what belongings they bot with them on the wagons, and the men walked.

They traveled just mere trails, no paved trails then. after three days travelling they made the trip from Muscatine, Ia. to Marion Ia. Men where to go from there [word undecipherable] there was just a path in and thru the big timber going west from Marion, they deecided to take it, women carrying the children, the men carrying their bedding and belongings, by night fall, they arrived at a sheep shed, south side open a wild grass roof and dirt floor, they deecided to put up for the night there. the men going down in the slough, culled grass by twisting it into ropes to pull it. this was put on the ground of the sheep shed to lay their bedding on.

This sheep shed was what is now the Cartkrift farm, on Blairs Ferry Road. just a little north of

the house, about ½ mi. east of Buffalo Church.

The next morning the men left the women and children there and the men took their axes and struck out south, and found a small clearing, and started to build a one room log cabin, having it half up by night, they went back to their women and children. next mor. they took them with them and the cabin which was completed that day. there was no nails in this house, just wooden pegs and hinges, no windows, just a door at each end.

Two of the couples continued moving west into what is now Benton County. Godfrey and Mary chose to stay. The manuscript describes their initial efforts to settle in this area.

Godfrey was a wagonmaker by trade. . . . he worked for John Glass, who run a grist mill. finally Godfrey cleared a small field, then walked to Muscatine to get a plow, carrying it home on his back, soon acquired a yoke of oxen then he could raise wheat, he carried the wheat to the grist mill on his shoulders, and the flour back home for bread for his family. They finally acquired 80 acres, which was later purchast by a grand son W. R. Quaas which is located S. of twin Pines Golf Course.

1849: Illinois Conference of the Evangelical Association assigned Rev. William Kolb to work in the Cedar River valley, extending from Buffalo and Otter Creek in Linn County to points in Louisa County, the first mission of the Evangelical Church west of the Mississippi River. "Equipped with the traditional saddle bags, he rode horseback preaching, performing wedding ceremonies and ministering to people, primarily in homes and their schoolhouses." Godfrey and Mary Quaas welcomed Rev. Kolb into their home, north of Cedar Rapids, and this became Rev. Kolb's first preaching station and the site of the first quarterly meeting held west of the Mississippi. According to some sources, Mr. and Mrs. Quaas became the first converts to the Evangelical Church west of the Mississippi River. Rev. Kolb's area included Buffalo, Otter Creek, Grand View, and North Bend. The Quaas family provided a resting place for many itinerant preaches. Godfrey and Mary later recalled that on one occasion a Rev. Himmel slept in their cabin loft, only the clapboard roof providing protection from the Iowa storm. In the morning, he awoke and discovered he had eight inches of snow covering his bed. Godfrey Quaas was a wagon maker by trade, but he also worked as a carpenter and helped Father Burkhart, later a class leader of the Evangelical Association, build the first two-story house in Cedar Rapids.

1850s: The first church in Buffalo was a Presbyterian Church; John McArthur, Frank Kortson, and Herman Bleedner served as trustees. It was built of stone from a nearby quarry and destroyed by a cyclone about ten years after being erected.

1874: Evangelical Church meetings began to be held in the Buffalo school, located on Blairs Ferry Road, immediately west of where the future Buffalo Church would be constructed.

1876: Erection of the first permanent church building for the Buffalo congregation. The building was 30 x 40' and was dedicated "free of debt" in October by Rev. C. W. Anthony, pastor of the congregation. Charter members were Mr. & Mrs. Godfrey Quaas, Mr. & Mrs.

Herman Bleedner, Frank Kortson, James Fitzgerald, and Wallace Wilson. The Buffalo church was one of two churches to be built on the road to Blair's Ferry, an important site for crossing the Cedar River. The purchase price for the double lots was \$50; the deed signed on April 18.

1879: Rev. J. E. Stauffacher, Buffalo's pastor, was chosen by the Des Moines Conference to start a new "mission" in west Cedar Rapids, the beginning of Salem Church.

1880s: During a seven year period, the Buffalo church had three pastor: L. F. Yerger(1880-1881), W. King (1882-1883), and D. W. Fink (1884-1887)

1884: Organization of Buffalo's first Sunday School. Within ten years it had become the largest rural Sunday School in Linn County.

1888: The United Brethren had a long and vigorous opposition to secret societies. For example, ministers were expected to expel from a congregation any member of a Masonic Lodge. At the denomination's general conference in York, Pennsylvania in 1888, the Church leaders voted to change the Church's constitution, allowing for members to belong to secret societies. In protest, Bishop Milton Wright (father of Orville and Wilbur Wright and one-time resident of Cedar Rapids) led a minority of members in leaving the association and creating a new denomination: the Church of the United Brethren in Christ—Old Constitution. The new constitutionalists composed the United Brethren congregations that would eventually join with Buffalo's Evangelical denomination to create the Evangelical United Brethren in 1946.

From 1888 to 1894, the Cedar Rapids circuit of the Des Moines Conference included Buffalo, Union, and Shueyville. George L. Kolb became Buffalo's 7th pastor, serving a two-year term that began in 1888.

1891: A. Goetz became Buffalo's minister, serving for one year (1891-1892).

1892: L. F. Smith began a three-year period of service as Buffalo's minister (1892-1895).

1893: Buffalo purchased its first church organ.

1894: The United Evangelical Church officially breaks away from the Evangelical Association.

1895: Buffalo's circuit was reconstructed so it now included Lincoln, Kline, and Union. Covington was added to this circuit in 1890.

1896: In May, a Young Peoples Alliance was organized; Rev. W. F. Buttman was the Pastor. Charter members were:

Rose Schrimper	Mary Schrimper
Charles Bachman	Mary Quaas
Mary Bleedner	Frank Bachman

Henry Werner
Ed Quaas
Matilda Bachman
Chartles Bleedner

Newton Bleedner
Mary E. Bleedner
John Burgess
Ed Bachman

1900: The Evangelical Church's annual conference was held at Buffalo Church.

1904: A fire caused by a defective furnace destroyed the Buffalo Church building. Former pastor, Rev. L. N. Day, donated \$15, initiating the building fund that produced a new building the next year.

1905: Dedication of the new Buffalo Church building, "The Little White Church in the Vale." The cornerstone for that church reads "Bethel Evangelical Church" and is now located at the southeast corner of the Buffalo Church on 30th Street. Church records are not clear in identifying when this congregation acquired the name "Bethel", nor when the name was dropped.

1907: The year of a notably successful revival, led by the Evangelist F. I. Haas. Thirty-eight members were added to the church at that time. J. W. Zimmerman was the pastor.

1911: A testimonial written by L.(?) H. Yaggy in honor of "Father and Mother Quaas, aged veterans of the Evangelical Association." The document includes the following tribute to Godfrey Quaas:

For many [years?] Father Quaas worked at his trade in Cedar Rapids, going back and forth from his home in the country to his work in the city. By his pathway through the timber stood a big oak tree, where he would stop to pray. This was his trysting place—'sein Kaemmerlein,' the neighbors said—his place for secret prayer.

The lady who owned the land said, when his labor in the city ended and his visits to this place ceased, "Now the blessing of God has departed. Father Quaas prays under that tree no more."

This incident will tell the reader that these secret prayers were sometimes heard and all who knew this stalwert "Israelite Indeed," can recall many similar occasions when a mighty volumn of prayer poured forth from a most deeply consecrated soul, until the very trees seemed to move, and the heavens opened with showers of blessings upon all within reach of the heavenly benediction, for such indeed were his uctuous prayers in the sanctuary, and around the family altar in the days his prime.

1912: Construction of the Buffalo parsonage, next to the church building, at a cost of \$650.

1913: Ladies' Aid organized; Mrs. J. A. Sutera first president.

Mary Quaas, founding member of the Buffalo Church, passes away on July 12, at the age of 90. Her husband lives to be 92, passing away on January 4, 1916.

1915: Five church Trustees for 1915: J. A. Sutera, R. W. Bleedner, John Vannote, W. A. Quaas, & Henry Werner.

1916: Financial Report as of January 1.

Balance on hand as of January 1: \$2.41

Total receipts from Members, Sunday School, etc, first week of January: \$39.88

Expenditures for first week of January:

Coal: \$17.32

Switching fee for Parsonage Phone: \$1.00

Furnace Pipe & Grate: \$13.50

Oil & Lamp Glasses: \$3.15

Incidental: \$0.15

Balance on hand as of January 4: \$7.17

Minutes of January 4 Board Meeting. "The board examined the condition of the Church Building and found that the foundation wall is settling away from the sills and in one place the wall is in such shape that if not repaired, it will tumble into the cellar. Also found the chimney in very bad condition. The Jacket of the furnace also needs repairs. In view of these findings, the board agreed to have the walls of the Church raised and to have the chimney taken down and rebuild from the rock bed. James Vannote was elected Sexton for the Year 1917 at a Salary of 30 Dollars pr. Year. The board agreed to have a well drilled for the parsonage. Adjourned. W. Werner, Secretary."

1917: On June 4, a special meeting of the Board of Trustees of Bethel Evangelical Church of Covington Mission, Iowa Conference met at the Church in Buffalo. From the Minutes: "The president stated the object of the Meeting, which object is to consider, whether we build a basement under the Church or not. . . The Motion to postpone the basement proposition indefinitely was Carried. The Board agreed to have the wall in the North East Corner of the Church repaired starting in the bottom of the cellar. Henry Werner was appointed to make an assessment and collect 100 Dollars from the Members of Buffalo Church and 10% of this sum should be paid to Rev. Crippen for his labor on the parsonage porch. W. Schrimper donates his labor. W. A. Quaas was appointed to contract for the repair of the church wall and the building of the chimney."

1918: Summary of church expenditures for 1918: \$51.55. Expenses for the year included the following:

Cans of oil: \$2.67

Labor for moving Out House: \$5.00

Lumber & Labor on Barn: \$5.98

Janitor: \$30

Clock Repair: \$1.00

1920s: The following pastors served the congregation during the 1920s:

David Lang (1918-1922)

W. C. Brauch (1923-1924)

E. J. Knopf (1924-1926)

L. J. U. Smay (1927-1928)

J. R. Nolte (1929-1931)

For whatever reason, few church documents from the 1920s and 1930s have survived.

1927: Minutes of the January 9 congregational meeting. By congregational ballot the following board members are elected:

John Van Note 3 yrs

U. H. Schrimper 3 yrs

Rob Sloan 2 yrs

Lawrence Schrimper 1 yr

Orval E. Quaas 1 yr

1932: G. A. Kite became Buffalo's new pastor; unfortunately he was diagnosed with TB and died a few months after he began his new position at Buffalo.

1934: H. F. Yingst replaced Rev. Kite as Buffalo's new pastor.

1936: H. L. Sunderman, Buffalo's new pastor, served from 1936 through 1939.

1939: Minutes for meeting of Board of Trustees on 13 June 1939:

Roll Call showed all Members present. Motion was made and seconded that Rev. Sunderman and Carl Krapf. assume the responsibility of having Church and Parsonage wired for electricity. Motion Carried. Estimate on Building Material was read by Sec. and matter discussed. Motion was made and seconded that estimate be secured on addition to Church on South side of Building. Shape and dimension of Addition to be decided upon later. Motion carried. Minutes of Meeting were read and approved. Motion was made and seconded that meeting adjourned. Motion carried. H. W. Kindig, Sec

1940: To a packed church, members of Buffalo's Evangelical League of Christian Endeavor produced a pageant entitled "The Passing Years" on the history of the congregation. In the audience were two children of Godfrey and Mary Quaas, first converts of the Evangelical Association in Iowa. Many of the 35 participants in the production (ranging in age from 3 to 75 years) were direct descendants of the church's founders. The pageant was directed by Mrs. H. L. Sunderman, wife of the pastor.

In 1940 Everett E. Pencook began his pastorate at Buffalo, replacing H. L. Sunderman.

1941: Minutes of the September meeting of Board of Trustees: *By unanimous vote it was decided to have 27" Chandler Furnace installed by Home Oil Co, Cedar Rapids. This to be installed complete with cold air pipes to 4 Registers, Furnished with Five Year Guarantee for total cost of 110.00. It was also decided that painting should be completed as soon as possible.*

1942: Excerpt from a letter by Pastor Pencook sent to Mystle Blair in October 1976, responding to an invitation to attend Buffalo's 100th anniversary celebration. Pastor Pencook reflects on the years (1940-1942) when he served at Buffalo:

We well recall the big lawns that needed to be mowed; the bantam chickens that more or less belong to the parsonage family; the early Easter morning (5 am) wedding of Roy and Louise Blair; the ice cream socials on the church lawn; the painting of all of the property on the exterior, including the little ball on the steeple of the church I remember painting; the Armistice Day storm.

In 1942, Pencook was replaced by Ellis Russell, who served as Buffalo's pastor during the years 1942-1944.

1944: Minutes of Board of Trustees meeting at parsonage of Buffalo Evangelical Church, 4 February.

Matter of decorating interior of Church building was discussed. It was agreed to varnish interior of Church building. Rev. Russell to apply varnish. Motion was made and seconded that chimney in Parsonage be repaired. Motion carried. It was also agreed to do painting and varnishing on interior of Parsonage. It was agreed to contact Ladies Aid in regard to papering kitchen. Motion was made and seconded that Lawrence Schrimper do the soliciting for funds to finance work.

1945: Minutes of meeting of Board of Trustees at home of Orval Quaas. "The matter of raising chickens on Church Property was brought up and it was decided that no chickens should be raised on account of being to[o] close to Church Building."

In 1945 L. T. Olson became Buffalo's new pastor, serving until 1952, the longest term of a minister's service during the congregation's first 100 years.