

North American Baptist Heritage Commission

# Church Histories



Orchard Community from cover of 160 year anniversary collage

## Orchard Community Church, Rochester, New York

When was the last time you saw wire lattice work across church windows — to keep away stones thrown to break those windows? And — what friend of yours has lost a job because of the accusation by an employer, “I found out you’re a Baptist”?

Ridiculous, you say? But 160 years ago in Rochester, New York, those conditions existed. How so? Well, “In November 1850, a German immigrant, Andreas Henrich, came from Buffalo, NY to lead the Rochester mission. He was an orphan who had had an extremely harsh childhood. He arrived in Buffalo from Germany in 1849. While there he attended the German Baptist Church. His pastor, Alexander von Puttkammer, along with August Rauschenbusch, recognized that Henrich had many ministerial talents. They encouraged him to travel to Rochester to use his gifts among the missionary endeavors...He accepted the challenge and was licensed to preach.” (from a 150th anniversary booklet of the Andrews St./Latta Road Baptist Churches, page 9.)

The seven people he started with in Rochester grew to twenty-one and on June 5, 1851 they organized a church. They hesitated to use the name Baptist, but called themselves “the church of baptized believers, usually called Baptists.” Soon after, brothers Doppler and Richard lost their jobs and homes when it was discovered they were Baptists. The Dunning family took them in.

The new congregation met at various places, — a former school building, or a room over a paint shop formerly used as a blacksmith’s shop, until in 1854 when they purchased Rochester School #10 on Andrews Street for \$2,000. It later became Andrews Street Baptist Church. In 1870 the church members voted to install wire lattice over the windows to protect those windows from stone-throwing by unfriendly people!

In 1901 the fiftieth anniversary booklet was published in German, in what Berneice Westerman, our Archivist, calls *fraktur script* — German lettering. As I examined the booklet in our files, I

## 1851

found ten serious faces staring back at me as I slowly turned the pages. Silently the faces of those first pastors of the church spoke to me of the courage and determination of the church's founders. In those early years, the church was helped immeasurably by the presence of students from the *German Department* of the Rochester Theological Seminary. However, this changed in 1949 when that Department reorganized as The North American Baptist Seminary and moved to Sioux Falls, South Dakota, a move that impacted the church profoundly.

Even so, by June 1970 the church had grown sufficiently to need a new site, 2285 Latta Road in a suburb of Rochester, taking the name of that site, Latta Road Baptist Church. This church continues in the same place today, but with a new name, Orchard Community Church, adopted in August 2008. The current pastor is Dave Daye. May the Lord continue to use this church and its people who have a "goodly and godly heritage".

Adapted from *Heritage Horizons*, Vol 19 No 1, Winter 2012



Picture of Andrew Street Baptist Church, constructed in 1871 and reproduced from page 11 of 150 years celebratin.

### **Bibliographical sources:**

*Latta Road Baptist Church-Andrews Street Baptist Church 150 years 1851-2001*.28 pages

*Dedication Latta Road Baptist Church program*, June 1970

*A hundred years in thy sight: Andrews Street Baptist Church 1851-1951*.

The Story of Latta Road Baptist Church, web story printed in 2000 and 2001

### **Archival sources in North American Baptist Heritage Center:**

Geschichte der Ersten Deutschen Baptisten-Gemeinde zu Rochester New York Sunfzigjahrigen Bestehens 1851-1901 (German, 36 pp. 5"x7") [History of the First German Baptist congregation Jünfzigjährigen to Rochester New York existence, 1851-1901]

Souvenir Ersten Deutschen Baptisten Gemeinde, Rochester, NY 1909 Herausgegeben vom Jugend Verein (German, 16 pages 8"x10" [Souvenir First German Baptist Church, Rochester, NY 1909 Published by the youth club]