

REFORMED CHURCH OF E WILLIAMSON (Site)
HISTORY SHEET
General Information

Name of Structure: Dutch Reformed Church of E Williamson

Address: 5049 Ridge Rd

Parcel ID: (544600) 67117-05-139807 Lot 12 (house on site now was built in 1945)

Atlas: 1853: unmarked building¹, 1858: "D.R.Ch."; 1874: "Dutch Ref Ch";
1904: "W.P. Freer Cold Storage"

When Built / Mason: 1863, members of the Dutch Reformed congregation

When Razed: 1930s; stopped being used as church in 1891

Why: Unknown

Original Owner: Trustees

Subsequent Owners: W. B. Freer
Charles L Fisher and Isaac ("Ike") Hartsen (brothers-in-law)

Original Use: Church

Subsequent Use: Cold storage (Wellington B. Freer)
"Fisher & Hartsen, Hay & Straw" sign on building
(Charles L Fisher & Isaac Hartsen)

Photographs: Two. A newspaper clipping² shows extensive repairs made to the façade;
historical photograph shows church before repairs and alterations.

Description:

Design details:

1-story, typical schoolhouse-type design; gable end faced the road, three windows along each long side. Center entrance with date stone above and a small rectangular decorative grill (sometimes referred to as "frieze window") high in the gable. The door was flanked by one window on each side. There were lintels and sills on all windows and a lintel over the door. Cannot tell from existing photograph if they were of wood or stone. There was a wooden cupola on the roof at the front of the church, a chimney at the rear elevation.

¹ In 1853 this village was named Pickleville; by the 1858 map it was shown as E Williamson.

² Photograph in <https://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074529/1982-06-03/ed-1/seq-1/>
The Williamson Sun and The Williamson Sentinel, June 3, 1982, Page 1, Image 1 - No date is given for when the photograph was taken.

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Masonry details:

Quoins appear to have been red sandstone. On the façade, small cobbles were set 4/Q; slightly larger stones on the sides 3/Q. Cobbles on the front appear to be rounded lake stones, cannot ascertain the nature of cobblestones on the side. Mortar detail cannot be ascertained.

The later photograph shows that the cobbles on the entire right half of the façade as well as the entire area above the door to where the gable begins had been repaired (replaced) with bricks. The date stone was gone. The original window on the right side was replaced with a much smaller one. Most of the cobbles in the area between the left window and the door had fallen off exposing the rubble interior structural wall. Above the door hung a sign: "Fisher & Hartsen Hay & Straw".

References

George Cowles writes in his "Landmarks of Wayne County" © 1895³: "The Reformed Church of East Williamson was organized November 1, 1854... In 1852 a cobblestone church was built and it was used until 1890, when the present frame edifice was built at a cost of \$6200."

The cobblestone church stood on north side of the road; replacement church was built across from it on south side. The cobblestone church was used for other purposes before being razed in the 1930s. A photograph shows repairs, using brick, made to the right side of the front gable end and the building in use as "Fisher & Hartsen Hay & Straw". In comparing photographs of when in use as a church, then later for storage, notice quoins are of sandstone, except the for 5th one from the top which is limestone. Photographs are from Town Historian (2012) Chet Peters' collection.

Church

Rochester NY Democrat Chronicle 1947 - 3078.PDF (6/12/1947)

East Williamson Reformed Church Marks 100th Anniversary at Services Tonight

"East Williamson—The century-old Reformed church at East Williamson, founded in 1847 by a small group of hardy pioneers from the province of Zeeland, Holland, this week is observing its 100th anniversary ... Tomorrow evening an historical pageant ... which depicts the history of the East Williamson church ... first episode shows the ban of pioneers as they prepare to leave their native land for far away America; the second episode portrays the arrival

³ <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=loc.ark:/13960/t1jh49v0n&view=page&seq=364&q1=reformed%20church>

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of the band at Ellis Island; the third shows the building of the cobblestone church which was started in 1862 and took 10 years before it was completed ...

The East Williamson church, whose membership after 100 years still is to a large extent comprised of the descendants of the early emigrants from The Netherlands, gradually has dropped many of its original Dutch customs. The substituting of the English language in place of the Holland language in the church services was one of the first customs to change. As early as 1882 English was introduced into the Sunday school. In 1893 English began to be spoken at the evening services, but it was not until 1932 that English was employed throughout all the services.

During the 100 years of its existence the church group has met in three different buildings, first in a small wooden structure which stood on the site of the old East Williamson cemetery, later in the "cobblestone" church, and finally in the present white church edifice which was dedicated in 1891 ...'

Rochester NY Democrat Chronicle 1962 - 1420.pdf (1/7/1962)

Faith of Our Fathers In East Williamson, By Photographer Fred Powers and Historian Arch Merrill

"In 1845 a band of 156 adventurous Hollanders left their homes in Zeeland Province and sailed across the Atlantic for the New World. They settled in a little place on the East Ridge Road with the curious name of 'Pickleville,'" which was soon changed to East Williamson.

These pioneers were a thrifty farming people who began building many homes of native cobblestone. They also were a deeply religious people. At first they worshipped in homes and in the district schoolhouse.

In the Old Country they had belonged to the State Reformed Church but they found that in their new home they had to organize their religious society as Presbyterian. So in January, 1847, the East Williamson Presbyterian Church was formed. For many years that church was to be interwoven with the story of the Hollanders. Among their number was Johannes DeVisser, who became their first pastor. They worshiped in a small frame church purchased from the Methodists. Later it was moved to Pultneyville.

In 1851 the flock divided. Some members remained in the Presbyterian fold. Others formed the East Williamson Reformed Church, serving East Williamson and Pultneyville.

Members of the Reformed congregation began building, largely with their own hands, a cobblestone church on the old Ridge Road. It was 12 years before it was completed in 1863. The previous year the Presbyterians and Reformed group had joined hands and they worshipped together in the Stone Church. That picturesque structure was supplanted in 1891 by the present handsome white edifice, built directly across the highway.

Because a new generation had grown up which was unfamiliar with the Old World customs of their fathers, it was decided in 1932 that all services would henceforth be in English."

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<https://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074529/1982-06-03/ed-1/seq-1.pdf> and
<https://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074529/1982-06-03/ed-1/seq-8.pdf>

"The early settlers of the Dutch Reformed denomination were from the Hudson River Valley area. Being removed several generations from the Netherlands, they were readily assimilated into sister denominations, such as Presbyterian and Congregational ... but we find the Dutch immigrants coming to this area from the Netherlands in the late 1830s - 1840s ... being a distinct ethnic faction, could not be at home in an English-speaking congregation. In the year 1845, the settlement of a colony of Hollanders was started at East Williamson. They arrived under the leadership of Mr M Clicquenois. They left the old country and settle in Pikkleville [sic] the name by which East Williamson was known at that time. ... The immigrants arriving here ... felt the need of preaching of the Gospel in their native tongue."

After years of struggle in getting an official domination started, they "requested Classes of Cayuga to organize them as a Reformed Church congregation, which was granted, and the Church organized in May 1851 as the Reformed Church of Pikkleville ... In 1852 the corner stone was laid for the Cobblestone Reformed Church at Pickleville. With constant immigration, the congregation size increased rapidly. ... The Church at Pikkleville became known as the East Williamson Church; the change in name occurring with the establishment of a Post Office.

W.B. Freer Cold Storage

Rochester NY Democrat Chronicle 1951 sp - 6324.pdf (5/16/1951)

"Today is the birthday of two Williamson men, who have done much toward shaping the lives of their fellow townspeople. There's W.B. Freer, known throughout Wayne County as 'Welly' Freer, who will be 82 and 'Archie' Dunn who will be 76 on that same day.

Freer is one of the pioneer celery growers of this area and has been a prominent farmer in Williamson for well over a half century. He was a charter member of, and helped promote two cold storage plants in this township, (the Williamson Storage and Ice Co. Inc. and the Wayne Cold Storage at East Williamson) as well as helping to promote and becoming a charter member of the Fruit Belt Preserving Company at East Williamson and the Williamson Fruit and Vegetable Cooperative Inc.

For more than 40 years now Dunn has controlled the comings and goings of Williamson folks, first as station agent for the old Rochester and Sodus Bay trolley line and later as local bus stop manager. More than that, he is the chief sounder of fire alarms ... 'Archie' has long been Williamson's key man in emergencies. He tells how during World War 2, when blackout warnings were passed, it was his duty to notify the local director of Civilian Defense and pass the word to the town's three fire departments. Residents throughout the village and rural areas are accustomed to calling Archie when a fire breaks out, so that he can blow the village siren ...

Archie is fond of telling how many years ago, one winter the snow banks were so high that the Sodus Bay trolley could not get through for several days. Freer got tired of staying

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home after the first day so he walked through the drifts from his farm to Archie's place (a distance of nearly a mile) to pass away an afternoon with his friend. ... They plan to spend part of their birthday together again this year, swapping yarns about the good old days."

Rochester NY Democrat Chronicle 1954 - 0911.pdf (1/22/1954)

Wellington B. Freer Dies; Pioneer Celery Grower

... At Williamson he was one of the original promoters and charter members of the Williamson Storage and Ice Inc, the Williamson Fruit and Vegetable Cooperative Assn Inc, and the Wayne Cold Storage at East Williamson ...

Fisher & Hartsen

Many newspaper ads, such as these in the Williamson Sentinel:

<http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074517/1923-02-01/ed-1/seq-8/>

"For Sale—Mixed car of cheap hay and wheat straw. Fisher & Hartsen Phone 46-F-12 Williamson"

<http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074529/1930-11-27/ed-1/seq-8/>

"For Sale—BALED OAT straw, nice and dry. \$12.00 per ton delivered Fisher & Hartsen, Phone 46F-12"

... and the last ad for hay, straw, oats ...

<http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074529/1931-06-11/ed-1/seq-7/>

"FOR SALE—Baled Hay, \$16.00 per ton. Fisher & Hartsen"

Unclear if this reference is significant or not as it is not clear if this "store house" was the "Straw and Hay" place or not.

<http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074529/1935-09-26/ed-1/seq-7/>

Fisher & Hartsen have sold their store house to F.L. Dean of Sodus

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Ancestry

Fisher & Hartsen Families

Both Charles L Fisher and Isaac Hartson, brothers-in-law, are interred Ridge Chapel Cemetery
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/213894707/charles-l-fisher>

CHARLES L FISHER marries

MABLE HARTSEN (Mabel is daughter of John Hartson, sister of Isaac) —>

Isaac Hartson and Charles L Fisher are brothers-in-law.

(1896 - 1945) wife: Mable Hartsen Fisher (1898 - 1949); son Carl Fisher

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/213894720/mabel-fisher>

FISHER—Entered into rest at Clifton Springs sanatorium Friday, June 24, 1949,
Mable Hartsen Fisher of Williamson, N. Y.

She is survived by one son, Carl;

her father, John Hartsen; one brother. Isaac Hartsen; several niece s and nephews.

—Friends may call at the Young Funeral Home , W. Main St.. Williamson, from where services
will be held Sunday afternoon at 2:30 o'clock. Interment, Ridge Chapel

ISAAC HARTSEN marries Ruth A Fisher (1895-11/13/1979)

1910 census

Household Role Sex Age Birthplace

John Hartsen Head Male 39 Holland

Anna Hartsen Wife Female 42 Holland

Isaac Hartsen Son Male 14 New York

Mabel Hartsen Daughter Female 12 New York

<http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074529/1979-06-14/ed-1/seq-4/> Williamson Sun
and the Williamson Sentinel

FIVE YEARS AGO - June 13, 1974 ... Isaac Hartsen, a Williamson-based cattle dealer for more
than fifty years, died at the age of 78 ...

Ridge Chapel Cemetery

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/213894793/isaac-hartsen> (1896-1974)

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/213894805/ruth-a-hartsen> (1895-1979)