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Bethinking of Old Orleans

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WHY THE KENDALL UNIVERSALIST CHURCH WAS BUILT

A Baptist Church was built at Kendall in 1834 with all denominations uniting in defraying the expenses, with the understanding that they should have the privilege of using it when not occupied by the Baptists. The Universalists often found distasteful "the lurid pictures of a vengeful and angry deity" which was typical of Baptist preaching 125 years ago and would have a Universalist minister come about six times a year to preach a "love" sermon. But even six such sermons were too many for the baptists who issued the following document:

The Kendall Baptist Church

"To All whom it may concern:

Whereas it is understood that the Universalists wish to occupy our house of worship as heretofore, and whereas the church deem it inadmissible to grant said use of their house,

Resolved, 1st, That we are unwilling that our house of worship be any longer occupied by Universalists except it should be wanted for funerals,

Resolved, 2nd, That the true reason of this action is the utterly irreligious character of Universalism in the estimation of the church. She does not admit Universalists to be a religious denomination at all. She admits the right of men to hold the most infidel opinions, but not the claim that she shall admit and respect those opinions as religious. She regards Universalism in all its distinctive sentiments and practical actions as going most directly to counteract the cause of truth and piety and salvation, for which alone she built her house of worship.

Resolved, 3rd, That the church feels it her duty to object to the said use of her house as a formal and solemn expression of her utter disapprobation of Universalism; and not with any wish to give unnecessary offense to any parties whatever sentiments they may hold, and if offense is taken at the aforesaid action, she will be obliged to feel that offense was necessary and that she could not consistently do otherwise,

By Order of the Church."

Kendall, July 3, 1852

Grieved, indignant and outraged they retired from the Baptist edifice, sought a Universalist minister and engaged the hotel dancehall for services. In 1855 they erected a church building on land given by Alanson Whitney which functioned until the mid 1870's.

Then in 1887 the Lutherans used it for 3½ years and thereafter it became the Kendall Town Hall. Moved to the Cobblestone Museum in 1978 it will be dedicated in 1980 when it is 125 years old, as Farmers' Hall (an exhibition hall for 19th Century agriculture tools and implements.)

On Saturday evening, August 18, 1979 the Cobblestone Society will hold a dance at Farmers Hall to celebrate its restoration.