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WESLEYAN CHURCH EAGLE HARBOR



Our photo this week shows the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Eagle Harbor around 1910. Erected in 1846 it was representative of the Greek Revival Style so prevalent during that period of history. Many such meeting houses or churches of that time utilized this style. It must have given our settlers a sense of heritage that we didn't have in a new land. I think too, that the Greek Revival also gave a feeling of permanence to our image, although such was not the case here with the Wesleyan Church.

It seems that on March 30, 1918 when the grounds were being raked and the burning of leaves was taking place, the fire got out of control and destroyed the church. I rather surmise that the two front doors were for men on one side and women on the other. Isn't it interesting how our Christian ancestors emulated a style of architecture originally used for pagan temples.

Although we don't usually think of the Greek Revival Style as Victorian, it most certainly is. During the Victorian Age or reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901) there were many different styles and influences upon our culture. In Victorian architecture the underlying theme in most styles was eclecticism. The Greek Revival Style was the

beginning of this Victorian passion for borrowing something from a different period and reinterpreting it.

The Eagle Harbor Wesleyan Church was organized in 1843 only two months after the denomination was legally formed. Basic reason forming included: congregational or democratic rule, abolition and temperance. The establishment of this church indicates the great religious fervor which was being experienced here in New York State at this time.

The Eagle Harbor Wesleyan Church was located just east of the canal bridge on the Albion-Eagle Harbor Road in the Town of Gaines. The church backed up to the canal on the north. To the far left in our photo we can just catch a glimpse of the church sheds which were located on the west boundary of the property. The church appears to be fairly close to the road. The stained glass windows which appear, would have been added as replacements of clear glass sash around the turn of the century. What a shame we lost this fine example of rural architecture. The only other Wesleyan Church to be formed in our county is at Ashwood. Once the church burned at Eagle Harbor, the congregation soon afterward disbanded.