

;; Kanwaka Hall

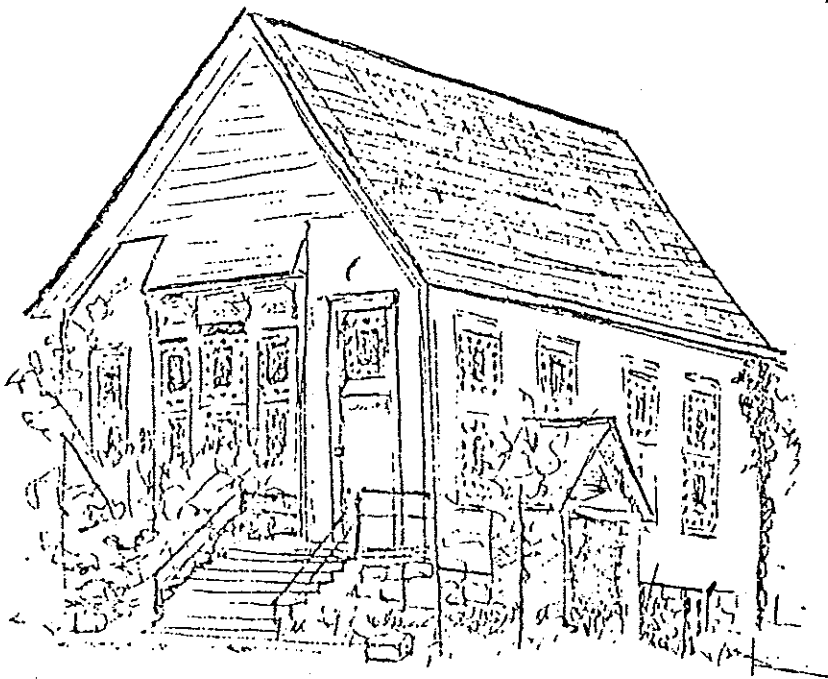
For nearly fifty years the settlers of the Kanwaka area held Sunday School classes and religious services in houses, groves or in the "Little Stone School House" at the Herman Cox residence. In 1890 the Congregationalists decided to build a church. Money was raised by subscription among residents of the community. When Mrs. Lewis Duffee learned that the plans did not include a basement, she led another fund drive. With a church and basement, argued Mrs. Duffee, the building would be much more useful to the community. Convinced neighbors donated the extra funds, and work began. Lewis Duffee was the head carpenter.

The basement served as a meeting place during the first year while the building was being completed. Measuring 26 feet by 64 feet, the room had sturdy plastered limestone masonry walls, deep window wells and a wooden floor. From the southwest corner of the room came the rosy warmth of a large wood-burning furnace.

The top floor was under construction in 1891. A high-pitched roof and colored glass windows created an impressive exterior. Inside, the new church featured swinging doors which opened from the vestibule into the sanctuary. A large gilt chandelier held eight kerosene lamps, and ornate grills covered the furnace openings. The minister stood on a raised platform at the north end of the sanctuary.

Kanwaka Hall has stood for almost a century with little structural deterioration. The building has housed the Fraternal Aid Lodge and Insurance Company. For a time the building was maintained by three trustees of the Kanwaka community. Dances, parties, theatricals and community activities of all kinds took place within its four walls.

As Mrs. Duffee predicted, the basement has served well as a meeting place for 4-H and other organizations. Purchased in 1938 by the Board of Kanwaka Township, it became the official township hall. Kanwaka Hall has been designated an historical building of Douglas County.



Congregational Church

Kanwaka

