

The Congregational church was organized in 1838. During the first few years they spent more money on religion and education than any other town. Of the 22 heads of the families all but two were members of the Congregational Church.

By 1837 the village stretched out a mile long from East to West with two rows of log houses fronting the street ten to forty rods apart. There was one frame house. The log houses featured floors split out of white ash, roofed with peeled basswood, a ladder through a hole in one corner to go upstairs, a trap door in the floor for the cellar, a huge fireplace made of stone and clay, and a chimney of sticks, plastered with mud on the inside.

Before candles could be made, a strip of cotton flannel placed in an open dish of lard, and resting on the edge was used to furnish the light. Dr. Kedzie bought his first gallon of kerosene for \$1.50 and a lamp with chimney for \$3.00, in the fifties.

Dr. Robert Kedzie came to Vermontville in 1852 to practice medicine. He enlisted on Dec. 1861 as assistant surgeon of the 12th Regiment of Michigan Infantry, leaving his wife and 3 boys. His first encounter was at the battle of Shiloh, where he was captured with all his hospital.

Dr. Kedzie was Professor of Chemistry at Michigan Agricultural college, a position he held for 39½ years. He was an Abolitionist along with Armstrong, Hopkins, and Willard Davis. Davis was only one of the colonists, though one of the best read men in town and a political outcast until the other 3 moved in. He was elected as a representative in the State Legislature in 1857.

For about the first ten years of the Village's life, until he moved away, Norton's Blacksmith shop was the place for general discussion. A store was open in 1853.

Saway or Saaba, the Chief of the local Indians, the Pottawaromies, was a frequent visitor in the area. He became enamored with a bright young lady of the village and made proposals of marriage to her father. He proposed to buy her and offered to give 4 ponies and \$25.00 or 5 ponies and no money.

In 1843 the Congregational Chapel was built on the Northwest corner of the Square to be used for a school and church. This building is still standing, and together with the Congregational church are registered Historic Landmark Buildings.

An Academical Association was formed in 1846, with the Reverend W. U. Benedict, the new Congregational minister as the first Superintendent. This school attracted scholars from various parts of Eaton County and Battle Creek.

The present Congregational Church was built in 1862. The Methodist (United) Church was moved to the Public Square in 1877. Both Churches have been in continuous operation from that time.

The Vermontville Historical Society was founded in February of 1966, to preserve the history of this area. The Chapel and the former Vermontville Academy is now being used as an Historical Museum and was opened to the public for the first time at the Maple Syrup Festival in 1967. The public is cordially invited to visit this museum. No fee.