

Historical Marker - L483 - Graafschap Christian Reformed Church / Graafschap Christian Reformed Church (Marker ID#:L483)



Front - Title/Description

Graafschap Christian Reformed Church

Erected in 1862, this church was the center of the Dutch immigrant community. The first settlers in this area arrived in early 1847, led by the Reverend Albertus C. Van Raalte. In June of that year a separate group of seventy people from Graafschap Bethem, near the Dutch border, founded this village, which they named Graafschap. Joined by thirty-four other immigrants from Drenthe, the Netherlands, the villagers shared common religious views and spoke similar dialects. Before erecting a log church in 1849 near this site, these early settlers attended services conducted by Van Raalte in nearby Holland. Graafschap followed Van Raalte's example by affiliating with the Reformed Church in America in 1850. Seven years later the congregation severed that tie and reasserted its independence.

Significant Date:

Civil War and After (1860-1875)

Registry Year: 1976 **Erected Date:** 1977

Marker Location

Address: 621 Church St.

City: Fillmore Twp

State: MI **ZipCode:**

County: Allegan

Township: Fillmore

Lat: 42.75293600 / **Long:** -86.13298400

Web URL:

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Graafschap Christian Reformed Church

Those who established this church were among thousands of Europeans who sought to escape religious and political persecution and economic depression by emigrating to America in the 1840s. Later Graafschap was one of the founding members of the Christian Reformed Church which bound itself closely to Dutch customs and ways of thinking, as evidenced by the fact that this church's parishioners continued to speak Dutch for two generations. This structure is made of hand-hewn timber and one of the roof beams spans its entire length. Although modified by the addition of educational facilities in 1922 and the expansion of the entry in 1937 and 1949, the main church structure remains intact. The Graafschap Christian Reformed Church is a noteworthy symbol of continuity in what is still a predominantly Dutch-