

Remembering an historic site

By Douglas Ayres Jr.
Special to the C-S-E

STONE ARABIA — The Stone Arabia Stone Church (the former Reformed Church), takes its name from the locality Stove Arabia, rich in history.

Stone Arabia is not a name that originated here. It was brought from Europe by the Palatines. The name also is found on a tract of land where North Troy is situated today. A deed to that land dated 1670 specifically identifies it as Stone Arabia.

In Europe, Stone Arabia carried the connotation of happiness, blessedness, security, and by extension when applied to a home free from persecution in the New World, "The Promised Land."

It was with thankfulness for their delivery to a life of peace, from turmoil and strife, that the Palatines erected their temple of worship.

The first church, a log structure, on the present Lutheran Church site, was built in 1729. Four years later a frame church was constructed by the combined efforts of Lutherans and Reformed congregations. When that name to call the church proved to be an obstacle that could not be resolved, the Lutherans returned to the log church, the Reformed group finished the new church.

This 1733 edifice was burned by Sir John Johnson's raiders, Oct. 19, 1780. On that same day, Col. John Brown, with the Fort Plain Militia, attacked the enemy about one mile from the church, when the Colonel and 30 of his men lost their lives. These Revolutionary heroes are interred on Glibe land a few rods westerly of the present Stone Church.

Eight years after the battle, this sturdy, native limestone temple of worship was placed on the site of the 1733 frame building.

In so doing the Palatines erected their own monument, a testimonial to their faith in God, and a basic American principle, "In God we trust."

The church, now under the custodianship of the Stone Arabia Preservation Society, no longer conducts services.

But in architecture, interior design and documented history, it speaks to us eloquently of the vital place it once filled in the life of the Stone Arabia community.

Viewed from afar the steeple of the old Stone Church focuses our attention on the hub of Stone Arabia. Indeed, that steeple symbolizes Stone Arabia during this 205th year of existence.

It seems to remind us of our indebtedness to those patriots of long ago, who sacrificed so much to establish the freedom we enjoy today.