The North Collins Friends of Human Progress was one of a number of "Progressive Friends" groups established in the late 1850s and 1860s. The Progressive Friends had begun as a movement of the more radical minded members of the Hicksite branch of the Society of Friends (Quakers) in the late 1840s, but by the early 1850s the meetings of the Progressive Friends of Waterloo, New York, and elsewhere attracted a broad spectrum of radical reformers interested in anti-slavery, woman's rights, peace and other reforms of the day. By the time of the formation of the group in the North Collins area in 1855, the Progressive Friends in New York, Michigan and elsewhere had evolved into open meetings of reformers representing a variety of religious opinions. The North Collins Progressive Friends seems to have been dominated by Spiritualists by the 1860s, though it retained a decidedly reformist platform and meetings included presentations by non-Spiritualist reformers.

Giles B. Stebbins, a frequent participant in the Collins meetings, described the North Collins meetings in his autobiography, Upward Steps of Seventy Years (1890):

"A large hall in a grove near the railroad is the North Collins gathering place, -- hospitable people near, entertaining, doors and hearts open, and the social hours very pleasant. Anti-slavery, temperance, peace, woman-suffrage, religious ideas, Spiritualism, and other living questions were taken up, with earnest utterance of differing opinions, and an avoidance of heated controversy....

"From a thousand to over four thousand was the usual attendance in the rustic Hemlock Hall at North Collins. There and at other like meetings I have met Oliver Johnson, Rev. Charles G. Ames. Rev. Samuel J. May, C.F. Burleigh, C.D.B. Mills, Susan B. Anthony, Mrs. E.C. Stanton, W.L. Garrison, Frederick Douglass, Parker Pillsbury, George W. Taylor, Henry C. Wright, Sojourner Truth, Selden J. Finney, Mrs. Lydia A. Pearsall and others, and have heard excellent words eloquently spoken.

"The good order and good conduct at the gatherings was remarkable. In the old anti-slavery days there were angry threats sometimes, but never an outbreak. One morning I reached Hemlock Hall to attend the North Collins meeting and met my friend Joseph Taylor. He came to the platform just before the meeting opened and we shook hands. Something in his manner impressed me singularly. His tall and stalwart form seemed stronger than usual, his face an aspect of quiet resolution, he seemed like a charged battery, and took his seat on the platform, which he usually did not do.

"The meeting opened with a searching anti-slavery discussion in which I took part, looking occasionally at my friend who sat erect and resolute as though ready "to put ten thousand to flight." All passed along quietly as I supposed it would, and it was some days after, at Joseph Taylor's house, that he solved the riddle for me. "Did you know why I sat on the platform at the hall?" he asked? I replied, no. "Well," said he, "I heard that some fellows were going to fling you off the platform if you made an abolition speech, and I kept close by to have a hand in the business. I thought it well for "some fellows" that he did not "have a hand in," and my heart went out to my dear brave friend for his watchfulness." (pp. 148-9).

The following list of meetings has been compiled from several sources including meeting announcements in the Banner of Light, the Religio-Philosophical Journal, Erie County Independent, and other sources. Beginning in 1861 (possibly 1860), meetings were held in Tucker's Grove, a mile west of North Collins. References from 1865 onward refer to Hemlock Hall in Tucker's Grove. In the 1880s, meetings were held in Hibbard Hall (also called Forest Temple?) in North Collins. The Friends of Human Progress was incorporated in 1883, and built a meeting place known as Forest Temple in North Collins in 1887. How long the group continued to meet after 1900 is unclear. The property was sold in 1933.

18555081856 2nd Presbyterian Church, Kerr's Corners, Aug. 29-30 1857 3rd Friends Meeting House, Sept. 25-27
1859 5th Friends Meeting House, Sept. 8-9
1863 August 28
1864 9th Tucker's Grove, Sept. 2-4
1865 10th Hemlock Hall
1870 15th Hemlock Hall in Tucker's Grove, August 26th
1871 Hemlock Hall
1874 Hemlock Hall, August
1875 20th Hemlock Hall, August 27th
1876 21st Hemlock Hall, Sept. 2-3
1877 22nd Hemlock Hall, Aug. 31- Sept. 2
1878 23rd Hemlock Hall, Aug. 20- Sept. 1
1880 25th Sept. 3-5
1881 26th Hemlock Hall, Sept. 2-4
1883  Hemlock Hall
1884 28th
1885  Hemlock Hall, Sept. 4
1888 33rd Forest Temple, August 30 - Sept. 2
1889  Second Annual Spiritualist Festival, Forest Temple,  June 15-16 (Susan B.Anthony to attend)
1889  Annual Meeting, Aug. 29- Sept. 1
1901 48th Forest Temple, Aug. 31 - Sept. 1
1902? Forest Temple
1905? Forest Temple