

BAPTIST CHURCH CORNER STONE LAID; GROUND BROKEN BY FIRST METHODISTS

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Historic Records Sealed in Copper Box at Eventful Service

Impressive services marked the laying of the cornerstone of the First Baptist church yesterday afternoon. As the court house clock finished striking the hour of three, the bell in the belfry of the First Baptist church on Liberty street, was tolled for a period of five minutes.

As its dulcet strokes reverberated through the air, those attending the cornerstone exercises bowed their heads. When the last note had pealed from the tower, Rev. Harold Stoddard opened the ceremony with a prayer.

This was followed by a selection from the quartet composed of Miss Viola Lindmark, Mrs. Harold Stoddard, A. P. Blake and Henry Messenger.

Rev. Stoddard then read several verses from the 28th chapter of St. Matthew which was followed by remarks on the momentous occasion for the First Baptist church of Warren. The laying of the cornerstone was of interest to other people besides those in Warren, Rev. Stoddard said, who expressed a desire that the blessings of this occasion may be manifest throughout the entire universe.

Mrs. Mary Blair, the oldest member of the church in point of service, having joined the church in 1866, represented the generations that have pass-

ed, and placed into the copper box, that was to be sealed in the stone wall, a copy of the ancient history of the church.

Miss Helen Klinefelter, the youngest member of the church, who was received in baptism Easter Sunday, represented the generations that are to come and placed into the copper box the Bible used in the services, which had been donated by the Women's Bible class, also a list of all present members of the church and the names of all those contributing in any way to the erection of the new house of worship.

The copper box was then closed and placed into the niche in the wall by Mrs. A. J. Hazeltine, and the cornerstone slowly lowered into place, L. H. Burkhardt, chairman of the building committee, spreading the mortar as the stone was sealed.

This was followed by a prayer by Rev. Stoddard and the doxology by the congregation.

Motion pictures were taken of the ceremonies, and following the doxology, pictures were taken of various groups. Mrs. Mary Blair and Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Hazeltine posed in one group, representing church membership for a period of over 50 years.

Another group assembled representing those connected with the local church for 40 years, while the children were grouped representing the generation that is to come. Pictures were also taken of those attending the cornerstone laying exercises.

These pictures will be developed and later shown upon the screen at the Library theatre. The film will be kept as an official record of the ceremony attendant to the laying of the cornerstone and exhibited at various church functions.

It is estimated that fully 300 people attended the laying of the cornerstone, which opens a new page in the records of achievements for the First Baptist church of Warren.

The organization of the First Baptist church in Warren dates back to Friday, May 2, 1834, when a conference was held in the court house and the following 16 persons enrolled as members:

Pond Curtis, Olin W. Shaw, William Morse, William Gildersleeve, Elisha Doty, Parmelia Curtis, Fanny Curtis, Hannah Give, Polly Doty, Maria Shaw, Polly Waters, Elizabeth Morse, Polly Strong, Loisa Wheeler, Mary Comstock and Emma Comstock.

Elder Martin Coleman, a missionary from the New York state convention, attended the meeting at the court house and preached the first sermon.

The church struggled along for eight years without a regular pastor, but traveling missionaries presided at many of the meetings during this time.

On November 1, 1842, Rev. Alfred Handy assumed the pastorate and at that time there were 29 members on the roll, 13 having been added since the church was organized 8 years previous. All these years the church had worshipped in the court house, but shortly after the coming of the first pastor the services were held at the academy building.

On October 25, 1857, Rev. B. Willoughby became pastor of the Warren congregation and it was during his tenure of office that a Baptist meeting house in Kiantone was purchased and moved to Warren. This is the same building that today stands on Liberty street and in which edifice the Baptists have worshipped continuously all these years.

During the summer of 1889, the church needing a more commodious house for the accomplishment of its work, built an addition to the edifice to be used as Sunday school class rooms. Dedication services were held on February 23, 1890, Rev. P. S. Henson, D. D., of Chicago, preaching the sermon.

From the old church records the following extract will prove interesting to many:

"The days and years pass rather uneventfully until we reach the 17th of April, 1870, when we find the baptistry used for the first time. The first candidate to go down into the baptismal waters within these sacred walls was Sister Laura A. Walker. On December 31st, of the same year, Brother and Sister A. J. Hazeltine, were received by letters from Busti, N. Y."