

Laying The Corner Stone

The Hackettstown Gazette, July 15, 1887

Notwithstanding the intolerable heat, there was hardly room in the old M. E. Church for the crowd that gathered to listen to the exercises preliminary to the laying of the corner stone of the new church yesterday. The exercises, though long, were instructive and interesting and held the undivided attention of the large gathering from beginning to end. Presiding Elder Barnes, of the Paterson District, presided, and grouped around him on the platform were some of the old pastors, the participants in the exercises and prominent members of the church. After an anthem, Presiding Elder Barnes read the ritual address, which was followed by congregational singing. A prayer from the ritual, followed by responsive reading, preceded the lesson from I. Corinthians III, 9-23. After more singing, Dr. Whitney was introduced. He began by saying that forty years ago the whole capital city of the nation turned out to see laid the corner stone of the Washington Monument to be the highest and grandest on earth. Last year the same city and all the land was filled with rejoicing when the cap-stone of the monument was laid. Today we gladly come to lay the corner stone of a church in honor of Jesus Christ, the Saviour not of a people, not of a nation, but of the whole world. The doctor quoted from a late issue of the *Christian at Work*, showing that the Methodists of the United States have 47,302 churches; the Baptists, 40, 847; the Presbyterians 12, 868, the Episcopalians 4,524 - making a grand total of 109,816 Christian churches, whose corner stones have been laid in this country. The Methodist Episcopal Church (North) has 20,000 churches, valued at \$66,000.00. Dr. Whitney went on to show that there are people who do not give much to churches. There are selfish people, who spend large sums on self. Like old-time Esopus who spent \$400,000 on a single dish or Caligula who spent \$400,000 on a single meal, the tobacco bill is millions of money in a year. The liquor bill of this country is \$800,000 every year. This money so satanically spent would every year build 240,000 churches like the \$25,000 one now owned by the Methodists. In view of all these facts, the doctor congratulated his fellow citizens who had contributed to this noble work, and briefly exhorted all who had not given to come nobly forward and have their names and deeds enrolled among the grand lists of those who build for eternity. At last when the cap-stone of God's great church on earth is laid, all earth and heaven shall come together with shoutings of "Grace, grace unto it!"

Dr. Buttz was introduced and began his address by complimenting the congregation upon their determination to erect a handsome and commodious church to the worship of God. He took as the subject of his address "The Church". His address was one of those

dignified, learned and comprehensive addresses that bespoke the learned and scholarly name and the able theologian that he is. No hasty report could do him justice. The fact is, our reporter became so absorbed in the address, that he couldn't find a place to break in with his notes until he was brought to a sense of his business there by the Doctor's happy closing. The address could not be reported, but the day would not have been complete without it.

The residing Elder followed with a few practical remarks, and then came the practical part of the exercises, the report of the building and finance committees which was as follows:

Contracts already made, including mason and carpenter work and the sealing of the building.....	\$21,000.00
Amount paid to date.....	\$15, 513.00
Organ Aid Society has on hand.....	\$ 8, 376.50
Ladies League has on hand.....	\$ 626.22
Total cash on hand.....	\$ 9,302.70

He added some very pertinent remarks concerning the old building and its unsafe condition, and truthfully said that they all had a right to rejoice that they had gotten out of the old building without a serious accident. The old bear story "go it Jennie, go it bear" was told with effect and led to a very pertinent begging talk, which wound up by calling Robert A. Cole to the front as secretary and cashier, and appointing a number of solicitors, who passed through the congregation. The begging went on in good earnest for a long time. It was hard pulling, but it came in small amounts to be sure, but a grand total of \$2, 635.00 came in hundreds, fifties, twenty-five, ten and five dollar subscriptions.

At the close of the soliciting the congregation adjourned to the new church where the box was presented and J. C. Allen, Esq. read a list of the contents as follows:

The contents of the corner stone of 1858; a Bible; a hymnal, with tunes; a copy of the Discipline of 1884; Year Book of the Methodist Episcopal Church; Church periodicals of current date - Christian Advocate, Our Youth, Heathen Woman's Friend and Mount Tabor Record; Newark Conference Minutes of 1887; the local papers the Hackettstown Gazette and the Warren Republican; the names of the officers of the Church, the Building and Finance Committees, the architect, the contractors, Sunday School officers and teachers, officers of the church Societies, subscribers to the new church enterprise; the coin collectors of the Ladies' League and paper descriptive of the League, with names of charter members; program of the exercises attending the laying of the corner stone; a photograph of the old church and present parsonage; outline history of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Hackettstown; catalogue of

the Centenary Collegiate Institute for 1886; item from the Industries of New Jersey descriptive of the Institute; brief history of the First Presbyterian Church; names of the officers of the Auxiliary of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Church; names of the officers of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union; paper descriptive of the Hackettstown Lyceum and Free Reading Room; officers and annual statement of the Hackettstown National Bank; officers and members of the Fire Department; business directory of Hackettstown, prepared by J. D. Flock, by request; officers of Independence Lodge, No. 42, F. & A.M.; officers of Musconectcong Lodge, No. 81, I.O. of O.F.; officers of Pequest Tribe, No. 80, L.O. of M.M.; officers of Hackettstown Council, No. 776, A. I. of H.

The box was then placed in the stone, the masons placed the capstone in position and the exercises closed with the doxology and benediction.

Probably one of the most interesting of the articles enumerated above is the statement of the business interests of the town, taken from the old stone and prepared by D.V.C. Crate. At that time there were seven business houses in town, with an invested capital of \$25,000 and doing a yearly business estimated at \$75,000. We would have gladly given this paper in full had the committee thought wise.

Among the participants in the exercises beside those on the program were Revs. Munroe, Trumbower, Thomas and Meacham and Rev. John Lowrey, of the Presbyterian Church.

It was indeed a proud and happy day for the membership of this Methodist Church, being as it was the first public day in the history of their new church. They have a right to be proud of this auspicious beginning and the bright outlook for its completion. Behind the Building Committee, composed as it is of the practical, earnest men of the congregation, is a united congregation who heartily second their every effort. The church will go on to a successful finish. It will be an ornament to the town and be dedicated a year hence under circumstances that will be a credit to this particular congregation and a pleasure to every citizen.