

Register of Old Buildings
Macon County Historical Coordinating Council

Address: 525 N. Church Street, Decatur, Illinois
Antioch Missionary Baptist Church.

Date of original construction: Construction of auditorium started April 22, 1890.
Cornerstone laid May 28, 1890.
Dedication - November 20, 1890.

Name of original owner: First Congregational Church.

History: The first meetings of the First Congregational Church were held in the Women's Christian Temperance Hall, 316 N. Main Street, from December 1888 to 1890.

On July 6, 1889 thirty-seven founders signed their names to a document and purchased the land at the northwest corner of Eldorado and Church Streets. On February 19, 1890, the building committee was authorized to proceed on the erection of a church at a cost of \$3470 for the lot, with the church building to cost \$13,000.

On April 22, 1890, construction of the auditorium began. Brick and stone walls were about 16 feet high when the cornerstone was laid May 28, 1890. The church was dedicated November 20, 1890.

On February 22, 1902, church trustees approved a resolution to complete the church building. \$8500 was pledged for an addition to include kitchen and social areas (north end of building).

From October, 1902 until March, 1903, the congregation returned to W.C.T.U. Hall for meetings while the addition was built, carpeting laid, and organ installed.

The first service was held in the newly remodelled church on March 25, 1903.

Major repairs were made in 1921 for brick work, decorating, carpeting, electric work, roof and painting, at a cost of \$3454.00.

In 1928 the church was re-roofed and a complete renovation carried out.

This building continued to serve the First Congregational Church congregation until 1958 when the building was sold to the Antioch Missionary Baptist Church. The First Congregational Church was relocated on North Mac Arthur Road.

The above was written and submitted by Mrs.
Esther Post, January 24, 1974.

Present owner's name: Antioch Missionary Baptist Church, Decatur, Illinois.

525 North Church
Antioch Missionary Baptist Church
1890



Photo - Margaret M. Meyer, 1975

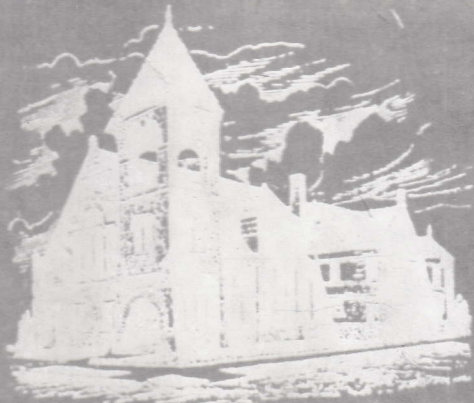
THE FIRST PUBLIC SERVICE

Held in the New Congregational Church—Sermon by Dr. Edwards.

Picture of the Handsome Edifice as it will appear when Completed—Meeting of the Springfield Association—The Organization.

The members of the Decatur Congregational society held their first public service in the new edifice last night, at the opening of the annual meeting of the Springfield Association, and the handsome church was filled by the membership and the ministers and members of other churches in the city, who rejoice with the Congregationalists in the erection of their new home of worship, a picture of which, as it will appear when completed, is given below. Those present fastened their eyes upon the convenience and beauty of the edifice, and all pronounced the new church a gem in construction and tasteful embellishments.

The choir, which comprised Mrs. O. F. Spaulding, Miss Leddingwell, R. W. Chilson and Bert Gher, with Miss Nora Redoliff as organist, occupied the alcove at the right of the rostrum, and with Rev. W. C. Miller, the pastor, upon the platform, were Dr. Richard Edwards, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Springfield; Rev. Tupper, of Joy Prairie, and Rev. Fairbank, of Waverly. There was a profusion of tropical plants and cypress-plantains placed near the sacred desk. The choir led the congregation in sing-



THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

ing "Praise God, from Whom all Blessings flow," followed by a brief invocation by Rev. Miller. Mr. Chilson gave a solo, "Hear Us, Oh Father," when Rev. Tupper read the scripture lesson, beginning at the 19th verse of the 18th chapter of St. John. Hymn, "Joy to the World, the Lord is Come;" prayer by Rev. Fairbank; offertory by the choir; hymn, "Come, Let us Join in Our Cheerful Song."

Rev. Miller presented Dr. Edwards as the "victorious candidate of our true public schools." The Doctor prefaced his sermon with appropriate remarks on

the pleasure it afforded him to see such a handsome sanctuary erected to the worship of God. We have beautiful and attractive houses. It is proper that our churches should be equally beautiful and attractive; and yet the speaker had heard some of the brightest and grandest sermons and thoughts spoken in humble places of worship.

Dr. Edwards selected for his text the 56th verse of the 18th chapter of John: "My kingdom is not of this world," the words of Christ in his great hour of trial. The sermon had been carefully prepared and was read from manuscript. The main thought of the sermon was the power of the christian religion to bring happiness and peace to the soul here and hereafter. Christ referred to the spiritual kingdom, not to the material—that which the Jews wanted. Sometimes churches are formed for selfish purposes; such organizations are out of God's kingdom. They belong to the world; such churches in reality are no better than political parties, and are not as good as some parties. The Doctor spoke of the churches on the western borders, whose leaders had sought to teach the lessons of earthly power for temporal power and advantage. They wield the sword of power. If the sword makes might, then the man who holds it is always the judge. We congratulate ourselves in this country on our freedom—say that religion is made easy. The reverse is true. True men endure adversity better than prosperity. Wealth is our greatest danger. We need a check, a balance wheel, in this country, and the true balance wheel is the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. This we need, and this we must have. The true citizen is the man who strives to live right and do good. The sermon was scholarly in language and arrangement and held the close attention of the large congregation to the end.

"Under the Shadow of Thy Wing" was a sweetly-rendered solo by Mrs. Spaulding. "Oremation" was the closing hymn, Dr. Edwards pronouncing the benediction.

A HANDSOME CHURCH

THE HOME OF THE CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY.

An Interior on Which Rare Taste Has Been Skillfully Exercised—A Most Satisfactory Result—The Capacity—The Cost—Some "Hastings."

Not the Congregationalists alone, but the people of Decatur as well, may be and will be proud of the handsome new church the society has built. The outside needs but little description. So many pass the corner of Eldorado and Church streets, and so many have gone there to see the building that doubtless nearly all are perfectly familiar with its appearance. The foundation and tower of cobble stone, the main body of pressed brick, the slate roof, all go to make a handsome structure that is an ornament to the city.

The interior pleases the eyes and satisfies all the artistic sense that one may have. The finishing is neither elaborate nor gorgeous. It is rich. It is elegant. The most perfect taste has been exercised, and the result is a harmony that could not have been improved and could scarcely have been made more effective, by the expenditure of many times the money that has been spent here.

Entrance to the building will be through two low arched doorways, in which are doors of antique oak. Inside either doorway is a square vestibule, from which other doors just in front open to the auditorium, and at the left on one side and the right on the other side, to a lobby at the back of the church. This lobby is a most attractive feature of the building. It is under the gallery, about 15 feet deep, and is separated from main audience room by three broad low arches. At the back is a large open grate, over which is a handsome mantel of tiles and carved woods. Four other arches, two for each side, form other lobbies at the entrances from the vestibule into the auditorium and give a support to the gallery above, which sweeps in a wide and graceful curve from one side of the church to the other. The front of the gallery is cherry wainscoting. This gallery fills up that part of the building, and besides furnishing seat for 150 persons, adds to the appearance of the interior by making it look complete.

The best view of the interior of the church is obtained from the pulpit platform, as all the windows, the roof, and the back of the church, with the open lobby and the series of arches on short columns with bronzed capitals, may be seen then at a glance. Back of the pulpit platform panel-work of cherry wood reaches half way to the arched opening at that end of the building. All the woodwork is cherry except the roof. That is of rich yellow pine, arranged according to a unique design. The walls are a delicate brown, the pews are of cherry in almost the natural color of the wood, and the carpet is a red and brown that is not too bright. The whole effect is most harmonious and pleasing.

The chandelier is of polished brass, as are also the many fixtures around the walls. The fixtures will be supplied with gas burners and electric lights, so that either can be used.

In the northwest corner of the building a choir loft is built that projects partly outside the main wall of the structure. This is raised to the level of the pulpit platform. A brass rail on which hangs a plush curtain from a front for the loft and seems to separate the singers from the congregation, though the curtain reaches only a short distance up from the floor.

and the main wall of the structure. This is raised to the level of the pulpit platform. A brass rail on which hangs a plush curtain from a front for the loft and seems to separate the singers from the congregation, though the curtain reaches only a short distance up from the floor.

The windows are of stained glass and wonderfully beautiful. Inside or outside the colors are pleasing. At night when the building is lighted up, they look to one outside as rich and rare as the costly windows of some old cathedral, where every window cost a fortune. People who were passing last night while the lighting arrangements were being tried, paused to admire the rich illumination.

On the main floor, which slopes gently to the preacher's platform, are pews which furnish seats for 360 persons. In the gallery will be seats for 150 more, making about 500 in all. Then all the aisles are very wide, the spaces in front, between the platform and the pews and at the back are broad, and by placing chairs in them and in the lobby at the back of the church, seats can be supplied for 150 or more people, making between 650 and 700 in all. A congregation of 565 people is unusual. The building as far as completed has cost between \$14,000 and \$15,000. The chapel, study, parlors, and other rooms, in the part of the building to be erected next year, will cost about \$5,000 more. When that is done the Congregationalists will have as handsome and complete a home as any church society.

A word or two might be said about the work that has been done on the building in the last three or four weeks. A month ago there was six weeks work, actual work to be done on the inside. The firm that was to make the pews said they couldn't possibly have them here before Dec. 1, the carpet men thought they couldn't do much better, and the windows were only partly promised by this time. To many it looked as if all hopes dedicating the building by the 20th must be given up. Rev. W. C. Miller, the pastor, decided to have the more essential things done, however, and he went to work with an energy that those who were behind couldn't resist. Six or seven weeks were crowded into four, many of the articles needed came by express, considerable work at night was done, and altogether everything and everybody was "hustled." The result is a success that was hardly expected. Workmen were busy the larger part of last night, putting in the tiles around the fire place, setting the pews, and putting other finishing touches. The workmen will tonight hardly leave the building before the audience and ministers will assemble for the opening meeting of the Springfield association.

Visit to the Antioch Missionary Baptist Church
December 16, 1974

The chandelier has been replaced and the original wall lights are gone.

The choir is in the center behind the pulpit. A railing of turned balusters is in front of the choir. Organ behind choir.

The floor is hardwood, with runners in all three aisles and in front of the pulpit and choir.

The church clerk told me that Antioch Missionary Baptist purchased the building in 1957. This parish has installed a tiled baptismal font on the west side. They have also installed storm windows, which protect the original stained windows which have designs of geometric shapes, curves and dots, with colors ranging from pale blue and turquoise to red, brown, amber, orange and pink, with some green.

The fireplace is still on the south wall, and the south entrance is still used.

The clerk stated the pews may be different from the original ones.

Margaret Meyer

CHURCHES. DECATUR
CONGREGATIONAL

"Local History"

A HISTORY OF
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
DECATUR, ILLINOIS
IN IT'S
FIRST SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS
1888-1963

DECATUR
PUBLIC LIBRARY

MAR 29 1974

DECATUR, ILLINOIS

By Joyce H. Thompson

*A copy of the story of First Congregational Church.
Original copy filed elsewhere in the Decatur
Public Library.*

railroads served the city with at least thirty-five passenger trains arriving and departing daily.

A dozen pension agents vied for the business of veterans of the Indian and Civil Wars who sought pensions for their service and there were several agents for western lands to serve those who sought fortune in the West.

Decatur had twelve boot and shoemakers, seven carriage and wagon makers and two were listed as "feather makers." There were two dyers and scourers, three bath operators and one ice dealer who made much of supplying "pure Pekin ice" cut from the Illinois River.

The baseball park was out from town on the west side of Oakland Avenue south of Main Street, and Oakland Park was where Millikin University now is located.

Among clubs were the Bicycle Club, Decatur Turn Verein and the Hiberians.

It was in this setting -- a small but thriving city in rich farmland and reaching-out industry -- that the First Congregational Church of Decatur, Illinois, was formed.

The first meetings of the group that was to finally found First Congregational Church in Decatur were held in homes of persons interested in forming the new church.

Mrs. J. Foster F. Waltz, who died March 27, 1961, remembered in later years attending meetings with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Buckmaster, who became charter members of the church.

Eighteen of the charter members were members of First

Presbyterian Church.

Their letter to the Session of First Presbyterian Church, dated November 30, 1888, stated:

"The undersigned members of the First Presbyterian Church of Decatur, believing the time has come for the formation of a Congregational Church in this City, and that we can better serve the cause of our common Master in this new Church, hereby present our application for letters of dismissal from your Church and commendation as Christians for the purpose of uniting in the formation of a Congregational Church in this City. In severing our connections from your membership, we wish to express our appreciation of the Christian kindness and fraternal spirit that has existed in our relationship with you and the Church. We shall ever rejoice in your success and be ready to co-operate with you in the work of our Lord and Master.

Signed:

H. C. Frederick

Hattie M. Frederick

Mrs. E. B. Pratt

Abbie A. Pratt

Reuben Nims

W. R. Buckmaster

Alice Buckmaster

O. Z. Greene

C. A. F. Greene

J. H. Bevans

CHARTER MEMBERS - 1888

James H. Bevans	Mrs. J. W. Mitchell
Mrs. Eleanor Bevans	John P. Drennan
Howard C. Frederick	Miss Eunice Drennan
Mrs. Hattie C. Frederick	Miss Annie Schaub
Oliver Z. Greene	T. L. Evans
Mrs. Clara Greene	Mrs. Anna Childs Evans
Luther Barnard	Frank L. Evans
Mary Barnard	Mrs. Margaret Childs
Charles C. Barnard	George W. Battles
Allison F. Barnard	Mrs. Elizabeth P. Battles
Mrs. E. B. Pratt	W. R. Buckmaster
Miss Abbie Pratt	Mrs. Alice Buckmaster
Mrs. A. R. Irwin	G. E. Cain
Reuben Nims	Mrs. Anna E. Cain
Mrs. Diana Nims	David M. Robbins
Mrs. Mary C. Bradford	Mrs. Jane I. Hawkes
Dr. J. W. Mitchell	T. W. Battles
Mrs. Susan Hankins	Mrs. Lucy Battles

The men and women who made up the founding band of the First Congregational Church of Decatur, Illinois, were persons of great religious conviction and missionary zeal.

Three of them -- William Riley Buckmaster and John P. and Rebecca Riley Drennan -- were leaders in the founding of eight Congregational churches during their lifetimes.

William Riley Buckmaster died in 1943 at the age of 88. He was born in Alton in 1854 and at the age of 20 joined the Pacific Express Co., a firm for which he worked 50 years. He and his wife, who was Alice M. Stuart before her marriage, were living in Decatur at the time of the founding of the church, but later moved to St. Louis where they led in a movement for establishment of the Pilgrim Congregational Church. They also aided in the founding of two other churches.

John P. Drennan and his wife, Rebecca Riley Drennan, also were Congregationalists with missionary zeal. They were charter members of Congregational churches in Mansfield and Cincinnati, Ohio, and in Alton, Roodhouse, and Decatur in Illinois. Mr. and Mrs. Drennan were married in Mansfield, Ohio, in 1846, and lived in several other cities before moving to Decatur in 1888. Mrs. Drennan was a native of Connecticut and had moved to Illinois with her family at an early age. Her family home was near Godfrey on land where Monticello Seminary later was built. Mr. Drennan died in 1907 and Mrs. Drennan died in 1904 in her home at the corner of Cerro Gordo and Church Streets. Their daughter, Eunice, who married Jean Mannheim, also was a charter member, living in the early days of the church at 136 W. North Street. She died in 1909.

Mr. and Mrs. George W. Battles moved to Decatur in 1880. Mr. Battles, born in 1851 in Mount Vernon, N. H., had in his early life overcome a serious attack of paralysis. He and Elizabeth Parker Battles came to Decatur on their honeymoon in 1880 to visit relatives, liked the town and remained. Mr. Battles first taught

school, later switching to a job as a shoe salesman. For many years he served as Sunday School Superintendent and he and J. H. Bevans were the first deacons of the church. George Battles died in 1911 and his wife died in 1922.

Thomas W. Battles and his wife, Lucy Stevens Battles, were the parents of George Battles. They moved to Decatur in 1887 from New Hampshire to be with their son. Thomas Battles died in 1907 at the age of 90. His wife died in 1900.

James H. Bevans, who was born in 1830 in Green Bay, Wisconsin, of parents who were New Englanders, was perhaps the most widely traveled of the founding fathers. Mr. Bevans' father had taken his family to the backwoods settlement of Green Bay to serve as a physician and surgeon. At the age of 30, James Bevans went by ox team and wagon to Colorado and returned to Wisconsin two years later. The next year his wanderlust took him to California and he returned to his native Wisconsin by crossing the Panama Isthmus, long before the canal was built. For several years he worked as a traveling salesman, coming to Decatur in 1885, where he operated the City Book Store. He went to California in 1906 and died there in 1910. His wife, Eleanor, died in 1929.

Thomas L. Evans, in whose home early meetings of the new congregation were held, was the educator among the founders. Mr. and Mrs. Evans and a son, Frank L., made up one of the family groups as charter members. T. L. Evans, a son of Quakers, was born in Ohio in 1833 and was graduated from Otterbein College in 1861. Shortly after graduation he enlisted in the Ohio Volunteers,

being discharged from Civil War service with the rank of captain. He served in 13 battles, including the seige of Vicksburg, and was held a Confederate prisoner at Camp Ford, Texas. In 1866 he was married in Ohio to Miss Anna Elizabeth Childs and they came to Decatur in 1880. For several years he was principal of city schools and later was county superintendent of schools. T. L. Evans died in 1916, Mrs. R. L. Evans died in 1923, and Frank Evans, prominent in business as a grain dealer and known for his hobby of raising orchids, died in 1958 at the age of 89.

Mrs. Margaret Childs, the mother of Mrs. T. L. Evans, also was a charter member. She was born in East Beekmantown, N. Y., August 11, 1817, and was married to Franklin L. Childs in Urbana, Ohio. One who knew Mrs. Childs well cited her appreciation of religion and education, her strong faith, acceptance of suffering and her cheerful outlook at the time of her death in 1906.

One of the church's most enthusiastic supporters in its early years and a man who gave generously of his material wealth, was Oliver Z. Greene. At his death in 1909 in his home, where First Baptist Church now stands, it was estimated that Mr. Greene had given \$17,000 toward support of the church, a considerable sum reckoned in dollar value of the early years. Among his gifts were \$5,000 for the building of the church parsonage at 436 W. Eldorado Street on a lot given by Mrs. Frances Winslow. In a quiet and unassuming way, Mr. Greene also had generously supported the Y.M.C.A. and a fledgling school to be known as Millikin University.

Mr. Greene was born in Lowell, Mass., where he learned the carpenter trade. In 1853 he went to Alabama, where he took a job as foreman of the bridge department of the Chattanooga and Memphis Railroad. From there he went to Minneapolis, where he built houses, and then later to McLean County, Illinois (Bloomington). In 1862 Mr. Greene moved to Harristown and served as postmaster under appointment of Abraham Lincoln. He prospered as a contractor and grain dealer and moved to Decatur in 1873 when he bought into the Decatur Coffin Co. His wife, who was Clara French, died in 1901. His daughter married Kilborn H. Roby, Jr., and they lived in California, where both died in 1961.

Mrs. E. B. Pratt, who was Emeline Bierce before her marriage to Enos B. Pratt, was also a charter member of the church. Her husband died in 1887, a year before the church was founded, but he had worked enthusiastically toward setting up the church before his death. Mr. Pratt was born in Goshen, Conn., taught school there and was a member of the Connecticut Legislature before coming to Illinois in 1874. In Decatur, until his death, Mr. Pratt was in the wholesale and retail grocery business. A daughter, Miss Abbie Pratt, also was a charter member of the church. Miss Pratt was born in Goshen, Conn., in 1860 and was thirteen when the family came to Decatur. She was graduated from Decatur High School in 1880. From 1893 until 1921, Miss Pratt was head of the Primary Department of the Sunday School and for many years was in charge of the Cradle Roll. Miss Pratt died at the age of 80 in 1940 in her home at 561 N. Church Street. In

her will she left \$5,000 to the church and there were bequests to the YMCA and the YWCA.

The Pratt family was a member of the Alden Kindred of America, tracing its ancestry to John Alden. Uncles of Miss Pratt owned the Pratt Cereal Mill Co. on the site of the present A. E. Staley Mfg. Co. Miss Pratt's sister was Mrs. Heston I. Baldwin, whose husband founded the Baldwin Grain Co.

Mrs. Susan N. Hankins was born in 1819 in Wheeling, then in Virginia, as Susan McFadden. When she was young the family moved to Ohio and it was there that she married Enoch Hankins. In 1861 Mr. and Mrs. Hankins came to Macon County, settling on a farm near Argenta. Mr. Hankins died in 1865 and in 1888 Mrs. Hankins moved to Decatur and lived on East Whitmer Street. She died in 1904 at the age of 84.

Luther Barnard, his wife, Mary, and their sons, Allison and Charles, were charter members of the church. Luther Barnard was born in Bellevue, Ohio, in 1844 and served during the Civil War in a regiment from that state. He came to Decatur soon after the war and worked for the Decatur Coffin Co. for 25 years. He was a church trustee. He died in Freeport in the home of a son in 1920. Before leaving Decatur, he was made a life deacon in the church and was cited for his long and faithful service. Mrs. Barnard was a daughter of Reuben and Diana Nims, also charter members. She was born in Shelburne, Mass., in 1870. Mr. Nims died in 1889 and his wife in 1901.

Mrs. Jane L. Fiske Hawkes of 262 W. Main Street was born in Shelburne, Mass., and lived in Decatur 25 years before her death April 10, 1899. She was married in 1848 to David Hawkes, who

died about 1889 in Decatur. Mrs. Hawkes left a son, A. R. Hawkes; a daughter, Mrs. Clay Dempsey, in whose home she died, and a brother, the Rev. Asa Fiske, Washington, D. C.

G. E. Cain and his wife, Anna, were charter members who lived in 1888 at 509 N. Water Street. They later moved to St. Louis and he died in 1901.

H. C. Frederick and his wife, Hattie, lived at 452 W. Prairie Avenue, and a church note of May, 1889, says that Mr. Frederick resigned as church treasurer at that time. Transfer of his letter was approved in 1895.

Dr. J. W. Mitchell and his wife, Medora, lived at the time of the church founding on Kawan Street, then two blocks west of Monroe Street. The doctor had an office in his home. The church letters of Dr. and Mrs. Mitchell were transferred July 1, 1903, to Manchester, La.

David M. Robbins is listed in city directories of the time as a painter with the Union Iron Works and lived at 613 E. Condit Street. He died in Springfield in 1910.

Mrs. Alta Barber Irwin was born in Sheldon, N. Y., October 29, 1839, and died April 29, 1898 in her home at 366 W. Decatur Street. Mrs. Irwin was married in Farmington, Illinois, November 10, 1857, to John Irwin and they moved to Decatur in 1860. He died June 13, 1894. Mrs. Irwin left two daughters, Lilliam and Aldyth.

Anna L. Schaub was married to Philip Colborn, and a transfer of her letter to First Presbyterian Church of El Cajon, Calif.,

SECTION III

THE FIRST CHURCH

The first meetings of the First Congregational Church were held in the Women's Christian Temperance Union Hall, 316 N. Main Street, from the time of its organization in December, 1888, until the fall of 1890.

Only seven months after the thirty-seven founders had signed their names to a document creating the church, ground was purchased on the northwest corner at Eldorado and Church Streets for a cost of \$3,470. This was on July 6, 1899.

In speaking of this undertaking in a later year, George W. Battles, a charter member, said:

"With faith in God, the head of the church, we began the difficult task of procuring the funds to erect a building. The money came from the wee toddler in Sunday School and from the pockets of the rich and the poor. All seemed to give willingly."

The cornerstone of the church was laid May 29, 1890.

Rev. W. C. Miller was master of ceremonies, the Rev. Mr. Post, Springfield, gave the address, and Deacon Reuben Nims guided the stone into place.

On May 8, 1889, in a meeting at the W. C. T. U. Hall, the subject of selecting a lot for the church was discussed, and it was agreed to meet the next evening at the home of W. R. Buckmaster to decide the matter. The meeting resulted in the unanimous choice of a lot at the corner of North and Edward Streets. On May 23 of that year the committee on the lot reported that they had been unable to secure the property at North and Edward Streets and the lot selection was referred to

the trustees with power to act at their discretion.

On February 19, 1890, the building committee was authorized to proceed on the erection of a part of the proposed church building at Eldorado and Church Streets, with the cost, including the \$3,470 for the lot, to be about \$13,000. The church minutes of this date state that the part of the building to be constructed was to be the north section, all except the auditorium. It was also reported at this time that \$10,000 for the work was already in sight, including \$2,000 promised by the Congregational Union.

On April 1, the plans for the erection of the north section of the building were changed and the construction of the auditorium section was voted. Ground was broken on April 22.

It was for this section that the cornerstone was laid May 29, 1890, at a time when the brick and stone walls were about 16 feet high.

In the cornerstone were placed a copy of the Scripture, the Congregational yearbook for 1889, the sixty-second report of the Home Missionary Society, the minutes of the 46th annual meeting of the Congregational Association of Illinois, copies of each of the Congregational publications, a historical statement of the church, a full list of names of members, and copies of the Decatur Daily Republican, Decatur Morning Review and the Morning Herald-Dispatch containing a program of the cornerstone laying.

The church, then only the auditorium section, was dedicated November 20, 1890, with the Rev. F. W. Gunsaulus, Chicago,

giving the sermon.

By January 1, 1900, membership in the church had reached 322 and with a complete revision of the church roll in 1901, membership was reported at 275.

At an annual meeting January 15, 1902, the Rev. R. L. Strain reported that he hoped soon to tell the congregation of plans for the building of the remainder of the church at an expenditure of about \$15,000.

On February 22, 1902, the church trustees approved a resolution that the church building be completed during the year and that a building committee be appointed to carry out the plans. The congregation approved. It was reported that \$8,500 toward the addition had already been pledged conditionally by five families.

Members of the building committee were O. Z. Greene, J. L. Drake, C. D. Hayward, G. R. Bacon, E. P. Irving, G. W. Battles, C. B. Hall, C. A. Wait and T. T. Springer.

On August 12, 1902, ground was broken for the addition with ceremonies held on the east side of the grounds under the shade of the trees with about 50 persons attending. The Rev. Horace L. Strain was master of ceremonies, and G. W. Battles gave the history of the church.

Of the contemplated building, E. P. Irving, Superintendent of the Sunday School and a member of the building committee, said:

"Today we begin to see the active realization of the prayers

and expectations of the people of this church for many years and it is fitting that we pause before the work of construction is begun to recall the past, to forecast the future, to return thanks for the divine providence that has led us and to beseech a continuance of such guidance for the years to come.

"The cost of improvements we begin today will be \$15,000. This amount has been secured in pledges. The church membership gives \$13,000 and friends who have been solicited give \$2,000."

Mr. Irving spoke of the need for the addition for Sunday School work and Mrs. George R. Bacon, president of the Ladies Society, spoke on the need of the addition in terms of the social life of the church.

The first spade of dirt was turned by J. H. Bevans.

Since the addition was to include the kitchen and social areas, a ladies' auxiliary to the building committee was named, and the members were Mrs. G. R. Bacon, Mrs. J. H. Bevans, Mrs. E. P. Johnson, Mrs. G. W. Battles, Mrs. A. Robertson, Mrs. T. L. Evans, Mrs. D. L. Nixon, and Miss Ella Glore.

A meticulous businessman, probably a member of the building committee, has left for us the bills for the church addition.

In an envelope, which fortunately has been kept these many years, are the signed receipts for work done and supplies bought.

Architects for the addition were Patton & Miller, also architects for Millikin University, with C. W. Mendenhall as superintendent. H. S. Baker was the general contractor, who died during the time of construction, on October 15, 1902.