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Atlantic Highlands Churches.

The Religious Development of the Town.

Six Churches of Five Denominations, Another Will be Built Soon.—Nearly $100,000 in Church Property.—New M. E. Church and Parsonage Cost about $30,000.—New Central Baptist Cost $20,000.—An Endowment of $12,000 for The First Baptist Church.—Growing Presbyterian and Roman Catholic Churches.

THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH.

In 1815 there were but five Baptists on all the peninsula between the Shrewsbury river and Sandy Hook bay east of High Point Chapel, now Chapel Hill. Three of these were John Burdge and Capt. William Leonard and wife. The Methodists were more numerous and held services at High Point. The Baptists attended the old Middletown church. In 1852 the Riceville (since Navesink) Baptist church was organized and became the nucleus of Baptist growth in this vicinity.



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, CORNER HIGHLAND AVENUE AND AVENUE D.

About the year 1872, Mrs. P. J. McClees, then Miss Emma Morris, while teacher of the public school at Leonardville and boarding at Mr. Jas. H. Leonard's, gathered a number of her scholars on Sunday afternoon in Mr. Leonard's house for nearly two years. In 1874 this little Sunday school was removed to the school house near what is now Leonard Avenue, and R. A. Leonard was chosen superintendent. For nine or ten years the sessions of this school were regularly held, also a weekly prayer meeting. In the winter of 1882-3 there was quite a revival of the religious life of the neighborhood, under the preaching and labors of the Rev. C. T. Douglass, pastor of the Baptist church at Navesink, and in 1883 a church edifice was erected at the corner of Highland avenue and Avenue D. The Sunday school was again moved to the new structure, and a preaching service, Sunday school and prayer meeting were held every Sunday.

In 1890 the Atlantic Highlands Baptist church was organized by the 107 members who had withdrawn from the Navesink church for that purpose. In 1893 about 40 members withdrew to organize in connection with the Navesink church, the present Central Baptist church of Atlantic Highlands.

The Atlantic Highlands Baptist church has a comfortable and commodious edifice, and have lately come into possession of a pretty parsonage well located on valuable lots, together with other property worth in the aggregate about $12,000. This property is the generous gift or the late Elizabeth Ann Leonard, who bequeathed it as an endowment fund for the use and benefit of the church. The pastor and officers of the church are at present: Rev. H. W. Hillier, pastor; Thomas Leonard, R. A. Leonard, E. Welling Leonard, Wm. B. Savidge, Deacons; Thomas Leonard, R. A. Leonard, Chas. T. Leonard, Moreton Southall, E. Welling Leonard, A. C. Watrous, trustees; John Southall, clerk; Thomas Leonard, treasurer.

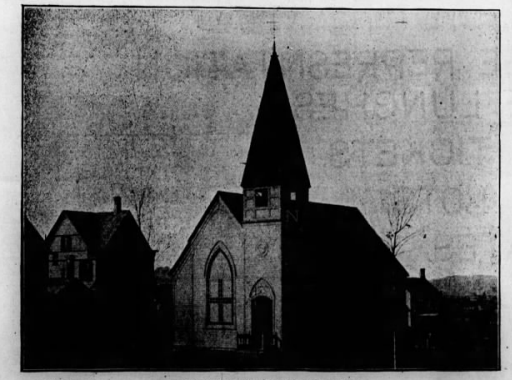
The Sunday school is in a flourishing condition with R. A. Leonard still as superintendent. The Y. P. S. C. E. of the church numbers nearly 50, the average attendance large, and all the members are full of zeal and loyalty for the society and church, always ready to take their part and do all they can to make the meetings interesting and profitable. The church as a whole was never more united in purpose nor more eager to do their Master's work.

The members of the Atlantic Highlands Baptist church celebrated the opening of the new year in a most happy fashion. The ladies of the church prepared a bountiful supper and shortly after six o'clock all present sat down to the well-piled tables. A splendid representation of the entire membership was present and greatly enjoyed the occasion. Before leaving the tables in response to the call of the pastor, Deacon E. Welling Leonard spoke on "Our church and the prayer meeting;" John Southall on "Our church and the unconverted;" William J. Leonard on "Our church and its music;" Mrs. Moreton Southall on "How to reach the members of Sunday school class;" Miss Emma Savidge on "Suggestions for the lookout committee" and R. A. Leonard on "Our church and the future."

The former pastor, the Rev E. Loux was also present and spoke in a most affectionate and cordial manner. Deacon R. A. Leonard in his remarks called for an expression from all those who were ready to hold up their pastor's hands as Aaron and Hur in days gone by, and all indicated by the uplifted hand their personal regard for and confidence in their pastor. The pastor thanked them for this expression of their goodwill, pledged himself to work with greater zeal and urged his people to renewed efforts. Enthusiasm was general and all went away with a stronger attachment for their church home and determination to do more for her peace and prosperity.



METHODIST CHURCH AND PARSONAGE, THIRD AVENUE



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, THIRD AVENUE.



CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH, CORNER OF HIGHLAND AND THIRD AVENUES.

THE METHODIST CHURCH.

The First Methodist Episcopal church of Atlantic Highlands was organized in 1882, and during the period of about 13 years the society has built two churches and a parsonage.

The first church building was located on First avenue below Mount, and was afterward moved to the corner of Mount and Third avenues, and the lot on First avenue sold; the church thus moved further away from the business part of the town, was used as a place of worship until November 25th, 1894, when a new church structure on Third avenue, between Mount and Bay View avenues being finished, and the first church property having been disposed of to Mr. S. T. White, the dedication services were held. Since the organization of the society the following ministers have been appointed as preacher in charge: Rev. J. E. Lake, Rev. J. H. Conover, Rev. L. B. Edwards, Rev. J. G. Reed and the present pastor Rev. Jno. B. Haines.

Plans for the erection of the new church were completed and work begun during the last months of the pastorate of Rev. J. G. Reed, the contract having been given to Wm. C. Cottrell of Asbury Park. L. B. Valk & Son of Brooklyn were the architects who furnished the original plans, which plans it was found necessary to modify somewhat and the changes were made under the direction of Mr. T. J. Emery, architect, and the contractor Mr. Wm. C. Cottrell. The fine pressed brick of which the body of the church is made were furnished by Sayre & Fisher of Sayreville. The stained glass windows by Wm. Colgate o New York city, the oldest art glass window manufacturer in the city; the pews by the Grand Rapids Pew Co.; the gas machine by Tirell & Co. of New York, and the organ by J. W. Steere & Son. of Springfield, Mass., a firm that has had nearly half a century's experience in making church organs and that in every organ built by them guarantees workmanship in construction, and quality of tone.

The new church was dedicated on Nov. 25th, 1894, by Rev. Bishop E. G. Andrews of New York, and for five weeks after the dedication had a very gracious series of revival services, during which the church was greatly benefitted in its membership and twenty-five souls were converted and added to it.

The peal of four bells that were made and hung in the bell tower by the McShane Bell Co. of Baltimore, were presented to the church, very largely through the liberality of Mr. S. B. Thorpe.

The church and parsonage are valued at $35,000 with the following board of trustees as custodians of the property: S. T. Champion, T. T. Rogers, Wm. Letts, T. J. Emery, S. T. White, Wm. T. Franklin, Wm. Fallman, Frank Gillett, S. B. Thorpe, from which the following were selected as the building committee to have charge of the erection of the structure: S. T. Champion, W. T. Franklin, T. J. Emery, with the pastor as chairman.

THE CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH.

The Central Baptist church is the youngest church organization in town, but as healthy as the healthiest. It was organized January 26th, 1894 with fifty-three members. Prior to its organization, however, a number of Baptists residing east of the creek organized, in March 1892, the "East Side Baptist Sunday School." The interest grew and two lots on Mount avenue were purchased and in January, 1893, the church was organized, most of its corporate members withdrawing from the First Baptist church. In February the Navesink church voted to disband and unite with the Central church, and forty were added to its membership in that way. The Navesink church conveyed its church edifice and grounds and parsonage to the new organization. Since then eighteen have brought their letters from this church and ten baptized and one received by experience, making in all 122. Three members have died and three removed from the town and taken their letters, leaving the present membership 116. A number of converts are awaiting baptism.

On October 1st, 1893, Rev. Frank C. Colby, then pastor of the Asbury Park Baptist church, accepted a call, and has since labored assiduously for both the spiritual and temporal growth of the church. At the

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