Dedication of Omaha's Magnificent New First Baptist Church



THE OLD FIRST' AT FIFTEENTH AND DAVENPORT STREETS.

Several other churches were organized

largely by members from the First church.

Prominent Nam a in Memerahip.

The membership list of this old church

has the names of many men and women

who have been intimately connected with

the life and growth of Omaha. Its board

of trustees in 1867 was made up of Darius

Pearce, William H. Churchill, Thomas

Bonner and Watson B. Smith. The last

named was a colonel in the army, United

States commissioner and clerk of the fed-

office in the old custom house in 1881, a

martyr to the cause of civic righteousness

A fearless defender of the law, he fell at

But the present First Baptist church, as

In the early '80s the rapid growth of

Omaha to the southwest and the rapid de-

velopment of the Hanscom park district

T. LOUIS, Oct. 22.—(Correspondence of The Bee.)—I give

cials of the German empire. He is con-

nected with the interior department and

is one of the imperial privy councillors,

Before giving my talk with him I would

say a word about the German exhibit. It

is one of the finest and most complete of

all sent in from abroad. The emperor is

anxious to increase the friendly relations

and Germany, and he has done all in his

power for the St. Louis exposition. This

man pavilion, which is composed of rooms copied after some of the most famous

apartments of the imperial palaces. The

emperor has sent over his own paintings

and tapestry for these rooms, and in one

presents. Indeed, the pavilion vies in beauty with many of the palaces of Europe,

showing what the Germans can do to re-

produce the glories of their historic past.

the live, up-to-date, scientific, pushing, in-

dustrious, thrifty Germany of today. It

would take columns to describe them, and

I will only say that they indicate the won-

"What is your situation as to labor mat-

"We have our troubles, too, but we are

far better off than you are. Our people are

more willing to give a fair day's work for

oming more skillful through our technical

"What are you doing in insuring your

individual exhibitors.

The exhibits in the other buildings show

can be seen by visiting the imperial Ger-

(Copyright, 1904, by Frank G. Carpenter.) workingmen?"

which obtain between the United States all told about \$1,000,000,000.

a chat with Dr. Theodor Lewald,

the kaiser's commissioner genera...

on the Twentieth Century Ger-

apletion of the new edifice corner of Twenty-fifth and Hamilton of the First Baptist church marks streets. an important stage in the devel-Omaha and in the state.

Baptist work began in Omaha in 1855, when Rev. Stephens opened a mission in a small building at the southeast corner of Capitol avenue and Fifteenth street, and continued work until 1857. In 1858 the First Baptist church was organized, Rev. J. W. Daniels of Glenwood, Ia., preached the recognition sermon, and Rev. G. W. Barnes became the first pastor. He came from New York state under the appointment of the Home Mission society and organized churches also at Florence, Cum- eral court, was shot at the door of his ing City and Bellevue. He left Omaha the following year, and during the period of the civil war the church seems to have made little or no progress. But in 1865 the hand of a cowardly assassin. work was revived and services were held in the court house, which then stood already suggested, is a union of the old upon the corner now occupied by the Pax- First church and the Beth Eden church. ton block. The following year Rev. W. J. This sketch therefore calls for the nar-Kermott of Almond, N. Y., having come rating of the history of this latter organwest some years before as a missionary of the Home Mission society, became pastor of this church, and continued till 1870, during which time the church made encour-

Shortly after Mr. Kermott began his work a lot was purchased on the corner of Davenport and Fifteenth streets, and a foundation put in for a brick edifice. The church being unable to go forward with the enterprise, a temporary wooden structure was built upon the foundation. After having been occupied for several years, this building was bought and removed by the Swedish Baptist church. In 1870-71, during the pastorate of Rev. J. W. Daniels, the basement of the new building was completed and occupied for church work. Several brief pastorates followed and the church had little growth until in 1876, Rev. E. H. E. Jameson became pastor. served with marked efficiency till 1880. During this time the membership showed an encouraging increase, and good work was done in paying a floating indebtedness.

Erection of Old First.

The pastorate of Rev. J. W. Harris, extending from 1880 to 1886, covered an imper- many. Dr. Lewald is one of the high offi- so grown since then that we have a regular general benefit of the workingmen. Through I do not know that the cost of the ind atant period in the history of the church. The work of completing the building was at once undertaken and it was dedicated in 1881. The property had cost \$45,000. Ten He was commissioner from Germany to the thousand dollars of this amount had been exposition at Paris, and he has had everysecured from the Missionary society in New York as a gift and \$10,000 as a loan. The latter, however, was soon pain in full, Mr. W. T. Seaman giving one-third of the amount. The membership increased during this pastorate from 150 to 407. During the last two years of this pastorate the membership was greatly reduced by persons withdrawing to start four new enter-

Rev. A. W. Lamar, from South Carolina, was the next pastor, serving from 1887 to 1891. Large congregations and encouraging church growth marked this period. The building at this time was repaired at a of them are cases containing his wedding cost of \$5,000, and membership increased

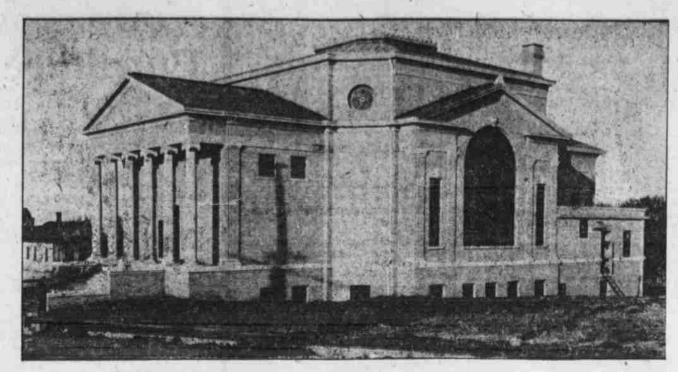
In 1892 Rev. W. P. Hellings became pastor and continued until 1896. This was a period of important changes. December 4, 1894, the building at the corner of Davenport and Fifteenth street, which had long been the center of the life and activities of the church, burned. After worshiping a year in the Young Men's Christian association building a new site was secured at Thirty-fifth and Farnam streets and a temporary building was provided. After continuing work at the location for about a year Dr. Hellings resigned and was succeeded by Rev. T. L. Ketman, who served till September 1, 1888. Shortly afterward measures were taken which led to the union of this church with the Beth Eden Baptist courch, This union will be referred to more fullyfurther on.

New Branches Spread Out.

It is now necessary to go back and note the beginnings of other interests growing out of the First church. There are at present three colored Baptist churches, two Swedish churches, one German church and six English speaking churches in Omaha American workmen. We used them in and South Omahs, all directly or indirectly erecting our buildings and the wages were connected with the old First church. Also a number of members were dismissed to assist in forming a church in Council be considered second class workmen. They Bluffs. In 1870 this work of going out regan would work only eight hours per day, and when the Tabernacie church was organ- if we found fault with their work or asked ized. But it became apparent that there was not at that time a demand for another Baptist church and soon this body disbanded and went back to the First church. But as Omaha grew it, in time, became evident that new Baptist churches

must be organized. March 19, 1886, Rev. F. A. Gentus and out the United States, but if they do they eleven others were given letters to organize cannot but work to your industrial injury.

a German Haptist church. In 1885 a mission chapel was built on ters, Dr. Lewald?" Twenty-fourth, near Cuming street, at a cost of \$1,300. The work here developed rapidly and on November 22, 1886, letters granted to forty-eight persons to a fair day's wage and they are yearly beform the Calvary Baptist church. The missien property was given to the new society. schools, which are now to be found in This church now has a memberahip of over every industrial center." 200 and occupies a fine new edifice on the



NEW EDIFICE OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF OMAHA,



Amos Field. Dr. E. E. Womersley. J. A. Sutherland. BUILDING COMMITTEE-WHICH HAD CHARGE OF ERECTION OF NEW CHURCH.

made it apparent that a Baptist church Clarke and Mr. J. H. Dumont. Later the purchased for \$7,000 on Park avenue, just beginning and among its earlier acts was was needed in that portion of the city. On St. Mary's Avenue Congregational church south of Leavenworth street. Upon this the adoption of a schedule for benevolent November 4, 1886, forty-eight persons hav- was secured for a Sunday afternoon and lot a building was erected at a cost of collections. At its first regular annual ing received letters from the old First a Thursday evening mosting. It was about \$10,162.28 and dedicated March 25, 1885. Dr. business meeting January, 1887, Dr. E. church organized a new society, to be five months before the first pastor, Rev. H. C. Woods of St. Paul, Minn., preached Womersley, J. L. Worley and J. S. Rich- D. D., whose pastorate continued for three

was the reply. "The movement for work- validity.

men's insurance began with Emperor Wil-

workingmen, and in a single year some-

thing like 5,000,000 persons receive help of

the seventeen years from 1885 to 1901 50,000,-

"The money for this insurance fund,"

ployer. In addition to this there are work-

thing to do with the exhibit at St. Louis, in this way upon the protection of our ingmen's insurance is excellent."

accident or death,

Of the forty-eight constituent members thirteen are still connected with the church. Start of Beth Eden. The earlier meetings of this new organiza-Immediately after organization steps were committee on that occasion.

mittee, presented the report of a similar trustees.

workman receives financial assistance in men, public baths, systems of waterworks shown. Sometimes it pays; sometimes not.

case of accident, sickness and invalidity or and other sanitary improvements. Indeed, We had a great difficulty to get our manu-

old age. More than \$300,000 is daily spent it seems to me that our system of work- facturers to exhibit at Par.s, but those

one kind or another from this source. In Louis exposition, and I asked Dr. Lewald fair and at the close they opened an es-

000 people were so benefited. They received ernment and its exhibitors to show their they are doing business there still. One of

continued Dr. Lewald, "is raised by a tax will pay Germany for the trouble it is play at Paris, and this was the case with

among our manufacturers, owing to your

This tax makes it out of the question for

wares at such places. He said:

of about 4 per cent on the wages of the spending upon it. That is a matter for the many others.

employes, two-thirds of which is borne by future trade to determine. There is a

the employes and one-third by the em- prejudice against American expositions

ingmen's clubs which give benefits to their high duties. They say: 'What is the use

members in sickness, and we have associa- of our trying to compete when we are

tions providing for indemnities in case of taxed 45 per cent by the customs house?"

"The insurance against invalidity includes Germany to send many of its products to

old age. Every German workman over 70 the United States, and the result is that

gets a pension, and if one of the insured our exhibit here does not adequately rep-

becomes an invalid through accident he, resent the industries of the country. It is

land, chairman of the present building c m- mont, A. M., Clarke and J. A. Sunderland

tion were held in the homes of Mr. A. M. taken to secure property and a lot was This church was self-supporting from the March 31, 1891. The church membership fifth and Farnam streets, looking toward

who did so got a large business. Take the

The conversation here turned to the St. instance. They had a big trade during the

whether he thought that it paid his gov- tablishment in Paris near the opera and

"We cannot tell whether this exposition money from the French through his dis-

inventors and makers of Kalserzinn, for

our plano factors made a great deal of

The Kaiser Our Friend.

to take part in any international affair of

this nature fathered by you. At the pres-

ent time the United States is much looked

up to in Germany and American goods are

very popular. Indeed, they are quite the

"What does our trade with you amount

"In 1902 it was about \$240,000,000, of which

more than \$220,000,000 was made up of our

purchases from you and a little over \$112,-

000,000 of what you bought from us. We

buy more than twice as much from the

more from it than from any other nation,

and next to Great Britain we are your best

customer. It must be remembered, how-

ever, that much of our purchases consist

of food and raw material, and that we sell

The American Shoe in Germany.

you chiefly manufactured articles."

cheaper.



BETH EDEN BAPTIST CHURCH.

more than doubled during this time, in- the uniting of the two churches. creasing from 62 to 135.

Rev. E. N. Harris became pastor October 12, 1891, and after a successful pastorate of nearly two years resigned his charge and went as a missionary to Burma, Asia, where he and his devoted wife are still

Period of Stendy Growth. Mr. Harris had been gone from the church less than two months, when Rev. D. D. Odell, Ph.D., of Peorta, Ill., was secured to take up the work. Dr. Odell's pasness. Many were added to the church, the membership increasing from 146 to 275. Au- uary 1, 1902, gust 31, 1895, greatly to the regret of the

church, Dr. Odell closed his pastorate to take up work at Lansing. Mich., where the very existence of the church was imperiled by a crushing debt. Dr. Odell believed that however promising the work in Omaha he must go to rescue the Michigan church, which work he nobly performed. The following November Rev. W. W. Everts came from Haverhill, Mass., to the pastorate of this church and remained two years. While this period was not marked by large additions to the church, it was

a time of careful organization and helpful instruction. Mr. Everts resigned to accept a call to St. Paul, Minn. He was succeeded March 25, 1898, by Rev. C. B. Allen, years.

Shortly after his entrance upon his work negotiations were begun with the First Mr. House's pastorate continued until Baptist church, then located at Thirty-

Union of Two Churches. This union was effected October 25, 1898, and the following resolutions were adopted by the united church:

Resolved, First, That it is a union of the First Baptist church and the Beth Eden Baptist church under the corporate organization of the Beth Eden Baptist church and under the corporate and under the corporate name of the First Baptist church.

Second, That such union is not the absorption of either church by the other, but a voluntary union of the two for the better uppullding of the Master's cause.

The manufactable of the combined churches.

The membership of the combined churches torate continued two years and was char- amounted to 443. But many of these were acterized by great activity and aggressive- nonresidents, and a thorough revision of the list reduced the number to 345 on Jan-

Shortly after the beginning of the present pastorate, February 1, 1902, steps were taken looking toward the erection of a new house of worship. The following were appointed as a building committee: J. A. Sunderland, H. H. Baldrige, John R. Webster, Amos Field, D. L. Shane and E. E. Womersley. This committee began at once to look for a site, and on January 28, 1903, the lot on the southeast corner of Park avenue and Harney street was unanimously selected by the church. This lot faces 170 feet on Park avenue and 135 on Harney street and cost about \$9,000. On Easter Sunday, April 12, 1903, pledges were taken for the new building amounting to nearly \$30,000. John McDonald of Omaha was selected as architect and work would have been commenced at once had it not been for the general strike at that time.

Laying of the Corneratone. The building was begun October 29, 1903. The cornerstone was laid with appropriate exercises January 14, 1904. Dr. W. M. Walker of Des Moines, Ia., delivering the principal address. D. L. Shane has been The New Germany of the Twentieth Century superintendent of construction and the work has been done with marked satisfac-

tion to all concerned. The building is a departure from ordinary church architecture and presents an imposing appearance. The style of archiof trade. We have for instance, a good German commissioner. "We have a large tecture is Italian rennaissance. The length "In addition to this the insurance fund drug and chemical d.splay and a fair ex- population in proportion to our area, but so is 113 feet, width 70, height 64. All exterior helm I. He proposed it in a message in has accumulated a reserve capital of about hibit of art works. Transportation is well far we have plenty of room. We have now walls are pressed brick, with Bedford stone 1881, and the sentiment in favor of it has \$375,000,000, which is being used for the shown and the government exhibit is large, almost 59,000,000 people. This is 20,000,000 trimmings. It is cruciform in shape, with less than the United States, and we are in- an octagonal dome. The principal feature system of insurance under the control of it we are constructing workingmen's trial exhibit will be repaid by a p. opostion- creasing at the rate of 2,000,000 or 3,000,000 a of the front is a portice thirty-three feet in height, supported by six Ionic stone columns twenty feet high and two feet in "How about your emigration? Is it as diameter. Under this portico is the main entrance, which is reached by a flight of

> stone steps twenty feet wide. The features of the north and south sides are the projection of transepts, with pediments, and rich art glass windows. In fact, one of the striking features of the building is the beautiful art glass throughout the entire structure. A large basement, wholly above ground, on the Harney side, is divided by rolling partitions into "What kind of Germans come to this parlors and Sunday school rooms, with all the modern appliances for church work. Immediately back of the pulpit and under the organ and choir is a Mezzonine story, where are located the pastor's study, choir

room, robing room, tellet and so forth. The main entrance leads into a vestibule, twelve by thirty-eight feet, from which broad oak stairs' lead to the gallery above and also to the basement. The auditorium, occupying the main part of the building, is sixty-six by sixty-six feet, not including the galleries. The vaulted ceiling, forty feet high, is finished in the center with a skylight of art glass, twenty feet in diameter.

Fine Interior Pinish.

The interior wood work and furniture are of quarter sawed white oak, with a rich old English finish. The beating is direct steam and very special attention has been given to a thorough system of ventilation.

The organ, built by the Austin Organ company of Hartford, Conn., is an instrument of great range and power. It is really five organs in one. Great organ, swell organ, orchestral organ, pedal organ and solo or "echo" organ.

The entire cost of the building and furnishings, including the organ, was about \$51,000, making the cost of the entire property \$60,000.

The work of the church is prosperous. The present membership is 435, and it is confidently expected that the annual meeting next Thursday evening will show all current bills paid and the balance due on the new building all covered with satisfac-

The dedicatory services will be held Sunday morning. October 23, at 19:39 o'clock. special organ installation service.

On Monday at 8 p. m. there will be a reception and fellowship meeting, with greetings from other churches.

Tuesday at 8 p. m. will be given an organ recital and concert, with Prof. J. Louis Browne, the noted organist, and Prof. Hans Albert, the celebrated violinist, giving the leading numbers on the program. Wednesday evening will be given to historical sketches and reminiscences.

eatt and business. Friday evening a rally of the Tri-City and Omaha Association of the Baptist Young Peoples' union. J. W. CONLEY.

Thursday evening, annual banquet, roll

ties that you may be able to make them are increasing." "How about your trusts?" "How are your colonies doing, Dr. Lewald?" I asked. "Have you many rich people?"

"Fairly well," was the reply. "We hope they will pay us in time. We have a vest territory in our colonial possessions. They man standpoint, but very few rich from are altogether more than 1,000,000 square the American standpoint. We have, you miles, or more than five times as large as know, an income tax, and we can tell just Germany itself. We are developing some of what everyone owns. According to the asthem and prospecting others. In German sessments in Prussia, which country has East Africa we are raising cotton, and in about three-fifths of our people, there are German Southwest Africa we are experi- a large number of millionaires, but a millmenting with cattle. Some of these lands ion marks is equal to only about \$150,000, are so new that we do not know yet just so that they do not represent a very great what they contain nor what they will pro- amount, after all."

also, is pensioned. There are now more fine in comparison with that of other na-"Is not Germany overcrowded?" "More than almost any other country," than 13,000,000 persons insured as to in- tions, but it is limited to a few branches "I do not think so," said the imperial

the government, by which every German dwellings, hospitals, homes for traveling ate increase of orders of such goods as are year." America a German Nation.

great as in the past?" "No: business is now good, and everyone has plenty to do. Our emigrants increase during hard times and fall off when times are good. So far you have had the bulk of the Germans who have gone abroad. It is estimated that 5,000,000 of our people have come here since 1820, and that now onesixth of all your population have German blood in their veins."

"A very good class. The lowest classes "The profits of these expositions are not have not the money to go away, and they only commercial," continued Dr. Lewald, do not consider foreign emigration se-"they are political and social as well. That riously, although they do move from one fair at Paris did much to wipe out the hard part of Germany to another. We are now feeling the French held as to the Germans. having a considerable exodus from the We made many friends there, and as a refarms to the cities, but that is going on all sult the anti-German sentiment is dying over Europe and to some extent here." out. Our exhibit here at St. Louis is largely "Then the towns are growing at the exa matter of international friendship. The pense of the country?" emperor and his people look upon the United States as their friend, and we want

Yes, the movement away from the farms began shortly after 1871. Since then the town population has gained 16,000,000." "Give me the size of your biggest cities,

Dr. Lewald," said I. "I will reply to that after the American method, taking each city and its immediate suburbs. The Greater Berlin has now 2,534,-00; Hamburg, 988,000; Essen, 758,000; Dresden, 634,000; Leipsig, 566,000; Munich, 526,000; Barmen Elberfeld, 519,000; Cologne, 481,000; Breslau, 475.000; Frankfort-on-the-Main, 439,000, and six other cities over 300,000 each, We have 1,000 towns ranging between 5,000 and 100,000 and thirty-three of more than United States as we sell to it. We buy 100,000 each. Altogether more than onesixth of our people now live in towns of 100,000 or over."

The Germans as Manufacturers. "I suppose the increase in the cities indicates the change of Germany from an agricultural to a manufacturing nation?"

"Yes. At the time of the Franco-Prussian "How about the American shoe?" I asked. war a great many of our people were en-"That is an anomaly which our people gaged in farming. Today there are more cannot understand. They say there is no working at industrial pursuits than upon reason why shoes made here should be sold the farms, and the farm population steadin such quantities in Germany. We have ily decreases. The tendency is to large facthe same leather that you have. We imtories rather than small ones. It used to tory pledges. There will be no mortgage port our machinery and our workmen are be that we had a yest number of workmen placed on the property. better than yours. Nevertheless, your shoes who carried on their trades in their own continue to compete with ours in our home homes, and there were many small manumarkets. I can only explain it by the fact facturers. These are decreasing, and es- Rev. M. W. Haynes, D. D., of Chicago will that you make shoes in such large quanti- tablishments managed with large capital preach. In the evening there will be a

"We have some, but not on such a scale

"We have many well-to-do from a Ger-

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

derful advance that that nation is making along educational, industrial and social lines. I am told that the German government has spent more than \$1,000,000 on its exhibit, outside the money spent by the American and German Workmen. The first part of my talk with Dr. Lewald was devoted to the American workingman in comparison with the German. Dr. Lewald had to use the American inborer to put up his great buildings and to arrange his exhibits. He don't think much "I can't understand how the United States can hold its own in the markets of the world if the labor conditions of St. Louis are typical of those of the rest of the country. We have had a terrible time here whenever we have had to employ outrageous. We have paid \$1 an hour to ion mechanics who in Germany would them to remedy any defects in it they would throw up the job and leave. They seemed to have no desire to please us, and their sole object was to put in the time and get the money. One of our German mechanics, who came over with us, thought the conditions outrageous. I don't know that similar ones prevail through-

GERMAN COMMISSIONER GENERAL AT THE ST. LOUIS WORLD'S FAIR