

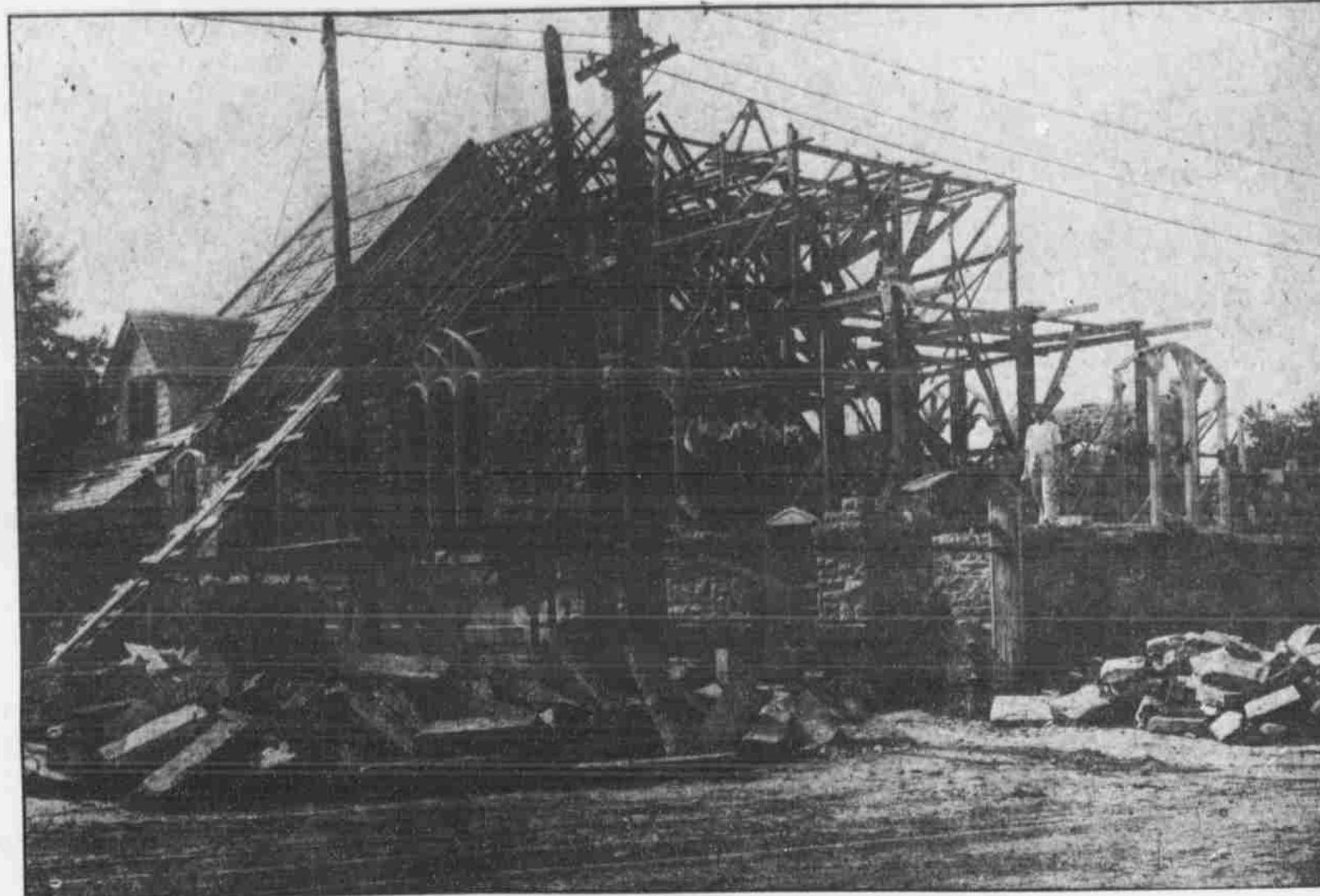
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BUILDING A BEAUTIFUL CHURCH FROM SCRAP MATERIAL

Energetic Pastor of the First German Presbyterian Congregation of Omaha Has Accomplished an Undertaking that Would Discourage Anybody but a Most Enthusiastic and Indefatigable Optimist



FIRST GERMAN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, WHICH THE PASTOR, REV. SCHWARTZ, IS BUILDING FROM "JUNK."

WHEN the grey stone building of the First German Presbyterian church is completed at Twentieth and Willis avenue it will present to the world an appearance of stable and dignified beauty. Very few of the people who pass it will fail to notice it as a handsome edifice, but almost no one will realize that it will be in fact an architectural anomaly, a new building built of junk. It will represent what few earnest and hard working men can accomplish under the leadership of a preacher with an inspiration. Rev. Julius F. Schwartz determined when he first came to Omaha three years ago that his congregation should have a new church. The fact that the members numbered only sixty and the whole property of the corporation was about \$5,000 troubled him not at all, and he began to build a church with as much faith as if he had the riches of Solomon. His plan was to gather everywhere, whenever he could, all the old but strong timbers, all the iron junk available for structural use, all the loose and irregular stone and all the generally discarded building materials that could be found in Omaha, and from them to build a church. It was not to be a mean and ugly house of worship, but a well equipped, well arranged, ample meeting place for his people. He has now extended it to include an eleven-room house for his own family, and the whole property would have cost \$30,000 if it had been built by contract. As built by Rev. Mr. Schwartz and his fellow laborers it will cost less than \$15,000. The other \$15,000 has been saved to his people by the perseverance, energy and ingenuity of the pastor.

The first charge that Mr. Schwartz took when he left the theological seminary was at Connersville, Ind. For six years he remained there, and was called to Omaha three years ago on a recommendation from one of his instructors in the theological school.

At that time, two and one-half years ago, the First German Presbyterian was in the frame church in which they are still holding services at 815 North Eighteenth street. As soon as the new pastor came he announced that the church was too small and in the wrong location. Most of the members live north of Cuming street, and he wished the church to be nearer to them. To build a church with a membership of sixty seemed out of the question, to all but the pastor. He thought he knew a way, and he set about it with almost no support, at first, from the others.

For a year he sought for a suitable location, and finally purchased the lot the new church is on for \$1,800. When he bought this tract the fund which he drew from amounted to \$57. His first move was to sell the old church for \$1,850. As soon as the lot was paid for he shouldered a spade and replacing his ministerial dignity with a grim and effective energy he began to dig. The first thing that a church needed was a foundation. He had no money, but he could make the foundation himself, and that would be one step toward it.

That was last November. He asked for contributions from friends outside of Omaha, and waited for his own people to contribute voluntarily. The dollars came slowly, but they came with sufficient steadiness to assure him that he could make a few purchases for a start. While walking on Douglas street one day he saw that in repairing the street the old curbs were being taken up. "These are good stone blocks," said the pastor-builder, and he bargained with the contractor to take them off his hands. That stone went into the foundation.

His next lot of material came when the wall that supported the yard of the old Rosewater residence on Douglas street was to be torn down. Men hired by Mr. Schwartz did the work and the brick and stone was taken out and put into the walls that were gradually rising on the church site. Some of his congregation began to contribute two or three days' work with teams in gathering material.

The south steps from the old high school building followed and these made the "water table" on both sides of the church part of the building. The parsonage end was being added to from the stone that could be picked up around stone yards for small expenses and converted into suitable blocks.

An opportunity came to the builders when the driveway was constructed leading down to the Union station on the north side. Here was bought 15,000 feet of lumber that had been used in scaffolding and a carload of fine red sandstone was purchased for \$20. When, a few weeks later, a contractor offered Mr. Schwartz \$70 for that same carload of red stone because he needed it to fill a contract in a hurry, the minister gave up his material and added \$50 clear to the fund. This was the only enterprise for profit that was entered into for the benefit of the cause, except a little deal in lead pipe which the minister had with a prominent fraternal order.

He bought some old lead from the lodge for \$1.50 and sold it for \$15 to a junk dealer.

All winter long he has been haunting the repair gangs about the streets, visiting stone yards and junk heaps and adding to the pile of materials that is being made into a building by his men. One of his biggest and most profitable finds was a pair of iron pillars in excellent condition which he bought from the street railway company for their price as old iron. The street railway company also furnished him with the most novel use of old material in the whole building, which is the making of rafters out of old steel rails. The rails are more than strong enough and were bought for the price of junk.

The church, which consists of a basement, with a beautiful fireplace, and an auditorium which will seat 300, measures 44x73 feet. The roof extends back over the parsonage, making it a full three stories high, with one room in the attic. The house part is 24x50 feet in ground dimensions and has eleven fine rooms.

On the front of the church will be a tower which will be just as high and substantial as it can be made from what is left of the stone after the rest of the structure is finished.

The plans for all of it were sketched by Rev. Mr. Schwartz and made exact by an architect. There are no specifications in use. The plans are followed not by getting material to fit them, but by conforming them as nearly as possible to material that can be cheaply bought.

The church probably will be done by Thanksgiving. The work goes slowly, because Mr. Schwartz cannot afford to put on a large force of men. He has ten now and they make progress, but twice as many could be put to work if funds were available. His foreman, Fred Slather, is a German stonemason. The wages of the men are the one debt which Mr. Schwartz does not intend to neglect, and his men are paid every Saturday as if they were working for a wealthy contractor who had thousands to back his operations. To do this the builder has had to rely upon the kindness of his other creditors, who have helped the cause by not pressing their claims.

The \$6,000 that has already been put into the work was gathered mostly from the contributions of friends all over the country. Other pastors have taken up benefit collections, a friend in Indiana sent \$200, and the congregation has contributed far beyond what might be expected from their means. Mr. Schwartz

made a house to house campaign of four days down in Riley, Kan., and raised \$200 in that way. One of the church trustees, who declared when the project was begun that he would not do anything to aid it, has already given \$100, and others have given \$100 and \$200 contributions. Churches have promised contributions that will probably average \$25 each and several hundred dollars more is expected from that source.

"If I just had \$6,000 more I could finish it," says the minister, and he seems not to lack faith that the \$6,000 will come as it is needed.

The biggest addition to the fund that has come so far was the \$2,500 got from selling the old parsonage, which the pastor advised as soon as he saw the possibility of making a home for himself as a part of the new building. It is believed that enough more can easily be raised to put on a roof so that services can be held in the basement, and after that the money will come in faster. In the meantime the minister is watching everywhere for anything that will make his church more commodious or his home more attractive.

"The reason for my doing all this," said Rev. Mr. Schwartz, as he laid aside the tools with which he was helping the workmen, "is that I believe that right here is the best field for work among the Germans that there is in all the northwest. My life occupation is missionary work among my German people, and the only reason why I want to stay here and put up this big church for my small congregation is because from here I can reach so many Germans. I was born an American, but came from German parents, and am thoroughly German in thought and feeling. When I decided to become a minister I saw that the greatest need was among my own people, so I studied at a German seminary. My position makes it possible for me to reach many who are in need of help, and many who are strangers, and I want to stay here and make my work effective in helping the German citizens in this country."

It is because of this sincere desire to be of help to his church that Mr. Schwartz has labored with his hands and brain to build the new church. It has arisen out of what seemed to be insurmountable difficulties. Not only the cornerstone, but every stone in it was once refused by the builders, but when it is finished there will be no fault found with its smooth grey walls, its modern equipment and its generous dimensions.



WORKMEN WHO ARE HELPING REV. SCHWARTZ BUILD HIS CHURCH.

Long Service on Omaha Police Rewarded by Honorable Retirement

UON the first day of August, 1909, Michael Whelan, sergeant of the Omaha metropolitan police force, retired from active service as a member of the department and was placed on the pension provided for those who have served twenty-one years.

Mr. Whelan first became a member of the force in 1882, when Omaha was far from being the metropolitan city it is today. He has seen the town grow and has kept pace with it and his acquaintance ship has been as wide as that of any man who lives in Omaha.

As a police officer his career has been out of the ordinary, even on a force which boasts some of the most clever and astute criminal catchers in the United States. They are criminologists in a practical sense. They spin no fine theories, but they know the ways of law-breakers through long years of dealing with them, and they get results. The records of the Omaha police force, in respect to the number of important catches made, will compare favorably with that of any city in the United States, regardless of size, and it has been among such men as these that Whelan has stood out, recognized as one of those who could be depended on in any emergency.

Mr. Whelan has a number of characteristics which made him a success as an officer of the law. First of all has been his absolute fearlessness. During all the years he has been dealing with law-breakers, some of them the most desperate and reckless criminals of the country, never once has there been a time when he gave the slightest inclination that he thought of danger to himself or paused to consider whether or not he should take the risk that presented itself.

Another trait which he has always exhibited has been good judgment and tact, which, combined with his courage, has made him the efficient officer he has been.

These two characteristics have made him respected and to this there has been added the further fact of his fund of Irish humor and unfailing good nature which has made him loved of all who know him.

Mr. Whelan has been brave, sometimes to the point of seeming foolhardiness. He would go into places where many another man would well hesitate. Many years ago Pat Horrigan was county jailer. "Big" Frank Jones had been arrested on a charge of burglary and was also known to be one of the most desperate house-breakers and "stick-up" men in the country. Taking advantage of some moment of carelessness, Jones knocked Horrigan down and escaped. A hurry call was sent to the police station for help in capturing him and Whelan and Dempsey were sent out. They traced Jones to a house belonging to a hack driver named Parker, located in what is now the wholesale section of the city. The house was searched without success, when it occurred to Whelan to go through the garret. This had no window and was absolutely dark. It was before the day of the electric flash light, which has done so much to aid the officers in just such cases, and all Whelan could depend on for light was the matches he had in his pockets.

Added to this handicap was the further fact that in the struggle at the jail Horrigan had lost his revolver, and it was thought that Jones had secured possession of it and had it on his person. Here

Veteran Omaha Policemen Now on Pension



SERGEANT MICHAEL WHELAN.



PATROLMAN D. J. RYAN.

around the police station, such men as Captain Mostyn, Lieutenant Hayes, Desk Sergeants Havey and Marshall and others, can tell dozens of similar occurrences in Whelan's career.

Sometimes Whelan would take risks which seemed unnecessary. In the days following the Haymarket riots and bomb-throwing episodes by the anarchists of Chicago Omaha underwent a similar scare, although it missed the bloody events which have made such a mark in Chicago history. The outburst of public sentiment there forced the anarchists to give Chicago a wide berth and they scattered over the country and it was believed that some of them were in Omaha. Then there came a bomb-throwing scare. Section of gas pipe, with the ends plugged, were found by the police and on one occasion a number of small, cartridge-shaped explosives were found in the street.

The custom was to throw such things in the river as soon as possible, but these small and apparently harmless bits of metal aroused Whelan's curiosity. Against the advice of those around the station, which was then located at Fourteenth and Davenport streets, he took one of them to the barn for a little investigation. His plan of making the investigation was to secure a hammer and strike the alleged bomb a hard blow. An explosion which was heard for blocks followed. The hammer was blown from Whelan's hand and through a window. The patrol horses broke their halters and ran panic-stricken from their stalls. The officers in the station came running expecting to pick up a mangled body, but as the smoke cleared away Whelan stood smiling without a scratch. He had found out what the cartridge would do and he was satisfied.

Many of the stories told of Whelan have a humorous turn, for he dearly loved a practical joke, and in addition had the rare faculty of enjoying one even when it was played at his own expense.

Patsy Havey, now desk sergeant, out formerly much with Whelan in outside work, has a fund of stories of humorous incidents, jokes played by Whelan and on Whelan, and when so minded he can spin these yarns by the hour. Havey and Sergeant Sligart share the enviable distinction of being the two arch conspirators who get the blame for any practical jokes which happen while they are around the station.

On one occasion, about twelve years ago, when the station was located at Thirteenth and Jackson streets, somebody, and it was always believed these two knew more than they ever told about it, secured a strong electric battery which they placed in the basement of the station. The office was surrounded with a lattice work of heavy wire similar to that used at present. A wire was run through the floor and the entire cage, with the iron door, was heavily charged with the current.

The trap was laid and the jokers lay in wait for victims. Whelan was the first man to come in. He walked around to the door and attempted to open it as usual. He got a shock which knocked him back and gave him a turn and a surprise which dazed him. He thought someone had struck his arm with a club and the things he said to the men inside were forceful, if not elegant. Havey was sur-

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