

June 15, 1896 – CHESTER TIMES

RIDLEY'S NEW CHURCH – Yesterday's Storm Caused a Postponement of the Dedication – History of the Organization – How the Movement Began and Has Steadily Progressed – A Description and Illustration of the New House of Worship

The dedication of the new Ridley Park M. E. Church did not take place last evening as arranged, owing to the hindrance caused by the heavy rain to the other services of the day. A later date will, therefore, be fixed, probably the 28<sup>th</sup> inst.

Presiding Elder F. B. Lynch was present and preached an eloquent sermon in the morning. In the afternoon, Sunday school exercises were held, and were of an interesting character.

Dr. Lynch, who has sickness at his home, left during the afternoon. At the evening service the church was filled in anticipation of the dedicatory services. After an explanation of the cause of postponement Rev. Francis Clemens, the pastor, preached an excellent sermon and there was some very fine singing.

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH – Methodism was first organized at Ridley Park during the early fall of 1891, when Sunday school services were conducted on Sunday afternoon at Ward's Hall, with Hilary Marion as superintendent. Mrs. Joseph M. Bottomley of Chester, then of Ridley Park, with Mrs. F. D. Haviland, and Mr. Marion were the first active movers in the cause.

On September 15, 1891 it was decided to hold prayer meetings on Thursday evenings and on September 28<sup>th</sup>, a Board of Trustees were elected, with Hilary Marion as president; Samuel Corkran, secretary; E. E. Harding, treasurer, and the following members: Hilary Marion, E. E. Harding, W. H. Pugh, Joseph M. Bottomley, M. K. Brown, Samuel Corkran, Richard Shone, F. D. Kane, P. B. Coleman.

Shortly afterward Mrs. Joseph M. Bottomley, Mrs. F. D. Haviland and Samuel Corkran were made a committee to procure the charter and the incorporation of the church.

On November 11, 1891, it was decided to call the church, "the Ridley Park M. E. Church," and a committee was appointed to secure the services of a pastor, to conduct preaching services on the every Sunday, which was done, the services being held in Ward's Hall.

The pastors so far have been: Rev. W. H. Knapp, Rev. Vincent Nichols, Rev. C. W. Dempsey and the present incumbent, Rev. Francis Clemens, Jr.

The above beautiful edifice stands at the corner of Swarthmore Avenue and Darby Street and is built of local granite, chiefly in the Gothic style of architecture. It was designed by Architect C. J. Urban and has been built under his direct supervision by the local workmen chiefly, thus saving a good deal of expense. The foundation stone was laid on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1895, and the cornerstone was subsequently laid by Presiding Elder Lynch.

The lot was purchased from the Ridley Park Association for \$500, the Association kindly reducing the price considerably.

The officers of the church are: Trustees, F. P. Lewis, president; Job Smith, secretary; C. J. Urban, treasurer; G. P. Stackhouse, Julius Smith, I. D. Hamilton, H. Marion.

Building committee – C. J. Urban, G. F. Stackhouse, J. E. Smith.