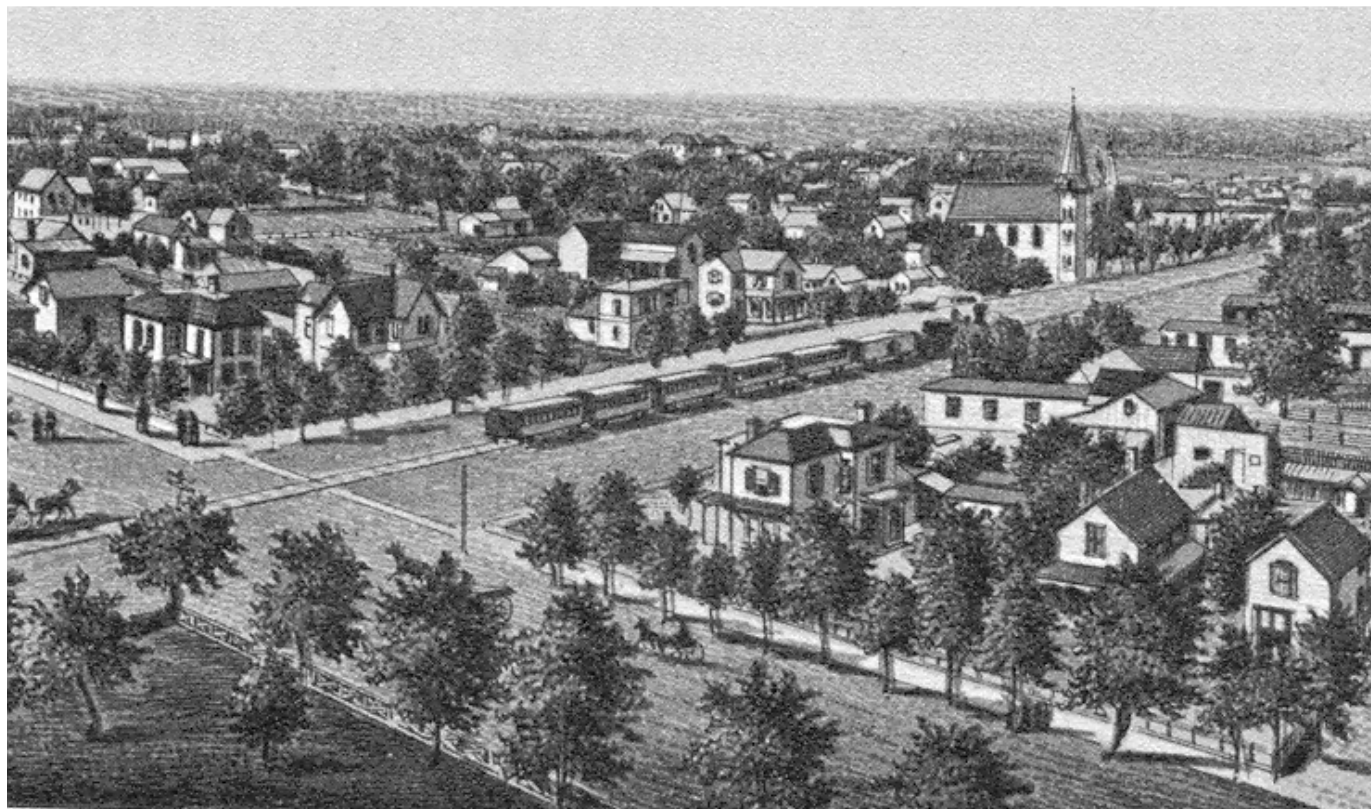


1864

Ottawa was founded and became the county seat for Franklin County in 1864.

1866

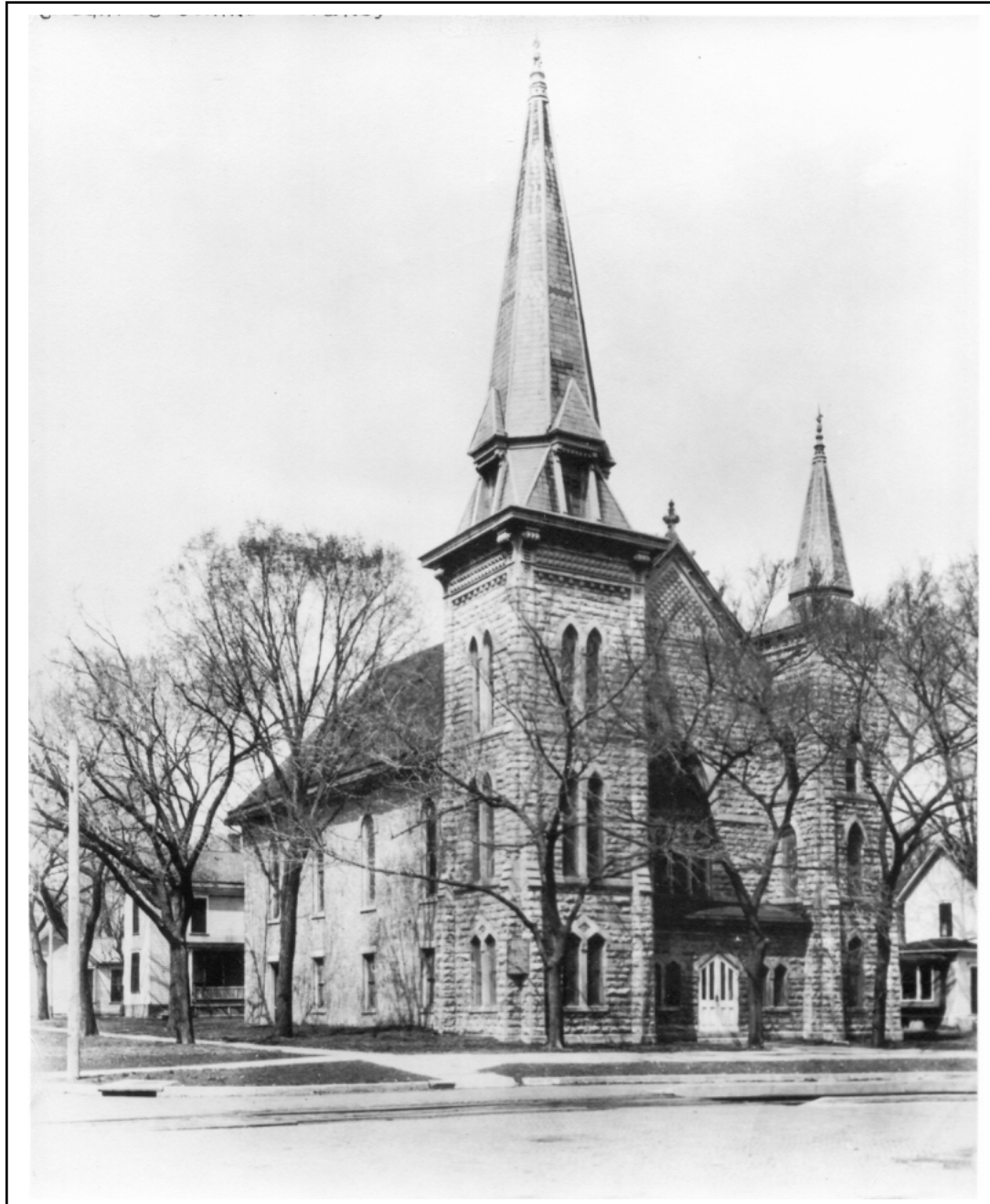
The circuit name was changed to the Ottawa circuit and the first Methodist Episcopal Society was organized in Ottawa with eleven members. Services were first held in a small building near the downtown and in Pickrell Hall, a brick building on the south-west corner of 3rd and Main. Services were also held in homes at 114 Locust and 113 Elm.



An artist's drawing of early Ottawa showing 5th & Walnut in the foreground, the house on the north-west corner is there today.

The Methodist Church on the north-west corner of 4th & Walnut is in the background.

Imagine a smoking, noisy train passing by during a service. Walnut is shown wider than it is.



1868

The foundation for a new church building was begun at the north-west corner of 4th and Walnut.

1871

The church was completed and dedicated November 19, 1871.

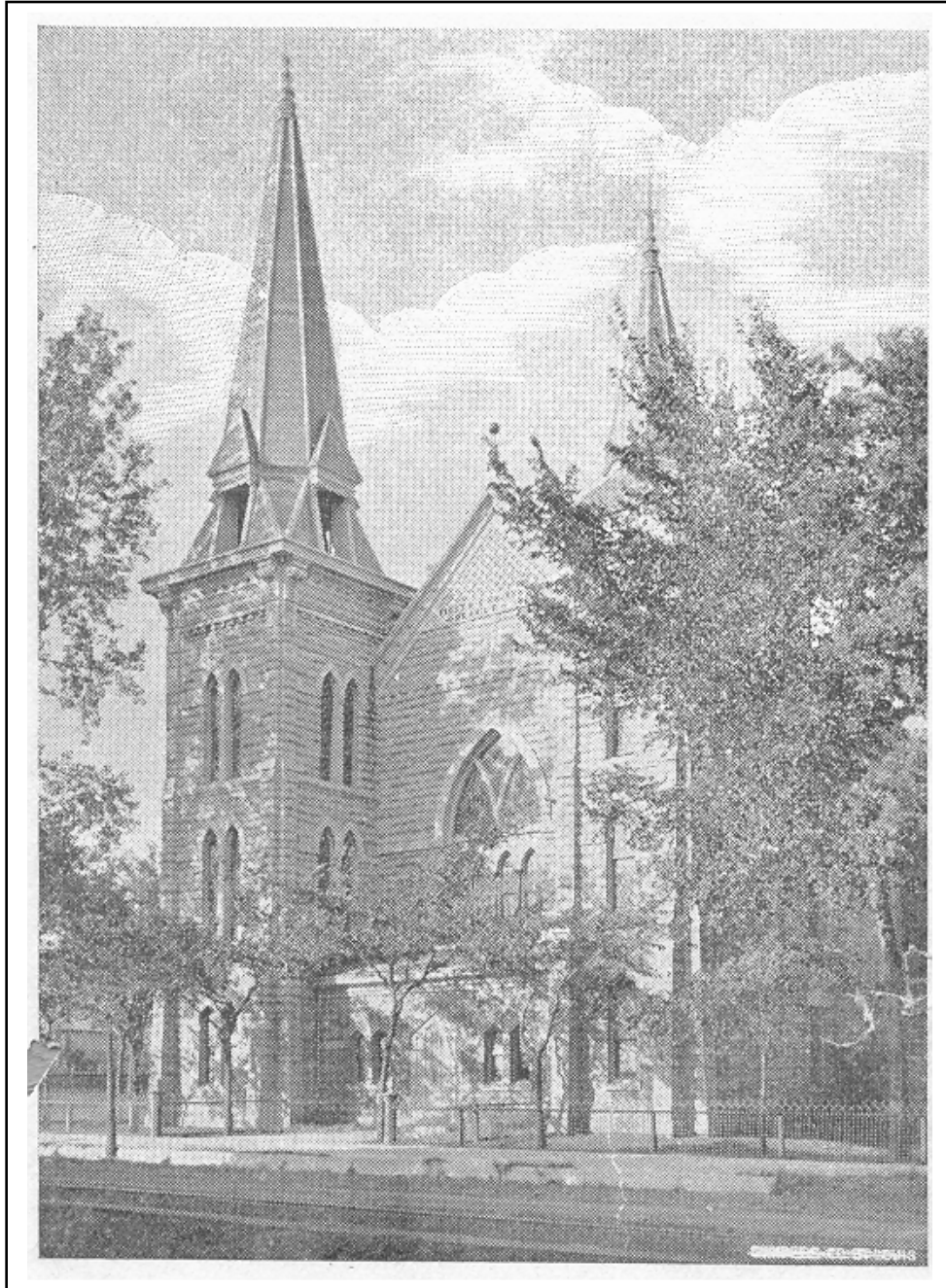
1883

From the Board of Trustees Minutes:

March 14, 1883; The need to repair the church tower and raise the ceiling was freely discussed and a committee appointed to see an architect and get some plans.

The picture on the left is a photo of the church on the north-west corner of 4th & Walnut showing the East Front designed by George Washburn. The view is from the south-east

The original, simpler, church can be seen to the rear.



April 20, 1883; Committee reported a plan by G.T. Washburn, architect, to repair the church at a cost of \$4,000. Report received and plan adopted substantially as submitted.

April 30, 1883; George Washburn is present. After reviewing proposed plans he is ordered to add a gallery and stairs connecting the first and second floors at the NW corner.

May 8, 1883; A building committee was appointed and Washburn was directed to prepare specifications according to plans he had presented.

July 18, 1883; A special meeting of the congregation because there was not enough money subscribed to complete the church as planned. After free discussion it was decided to build as planned.

*A later view of the church at 4th & Walnut from the north-east.
Note the fence/hitching rail at the front.*

1898

August 10, 1898 – There is a fire in the Church basement.

1902

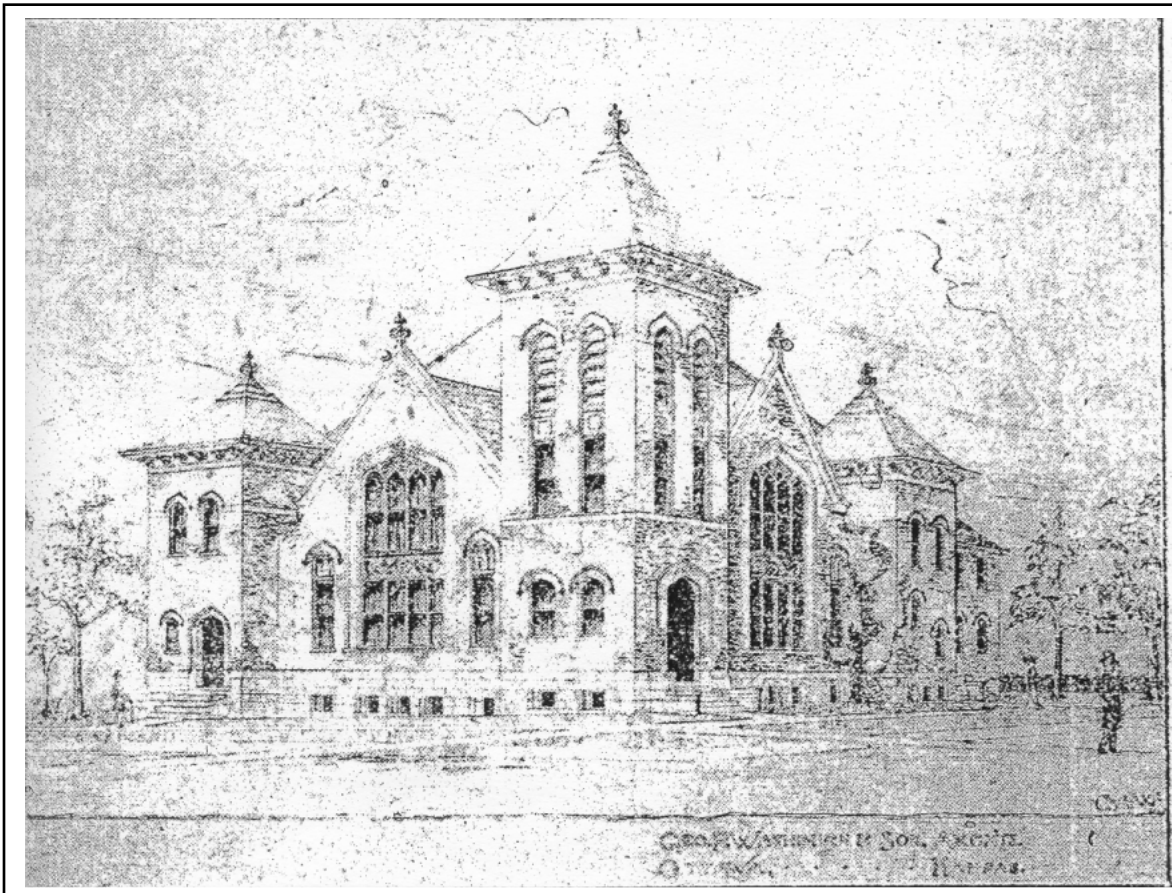
S.B. Rohrbaugh gave \$20,000 for a new church to be built at 4th and Hickory at a cost of \$30,000.

From the Board of Trustees Minutes:

September 8, 1902 - Directed William Wallace and Rohrbaugh to go to the architect, Geo. P. Washburn, and get the contract and the bonds and place them in the hands of the Trustees. Appointed J.P. Mason superintendent.

1903

The church was dedicated on August 30, 1903.



This sketch of the church was published in December of 1902 and identified George Washburn and Son as the architect. The initials "CW" or "GW" in the lower right corner are of the artist, perhaps George or Clarence Washburn, the son. The sketch is nearly exactly as built.



1904

Money was raised to help pave the dirt streets, add hitching posts at the alley and put a telephone in the Pastor's Study.

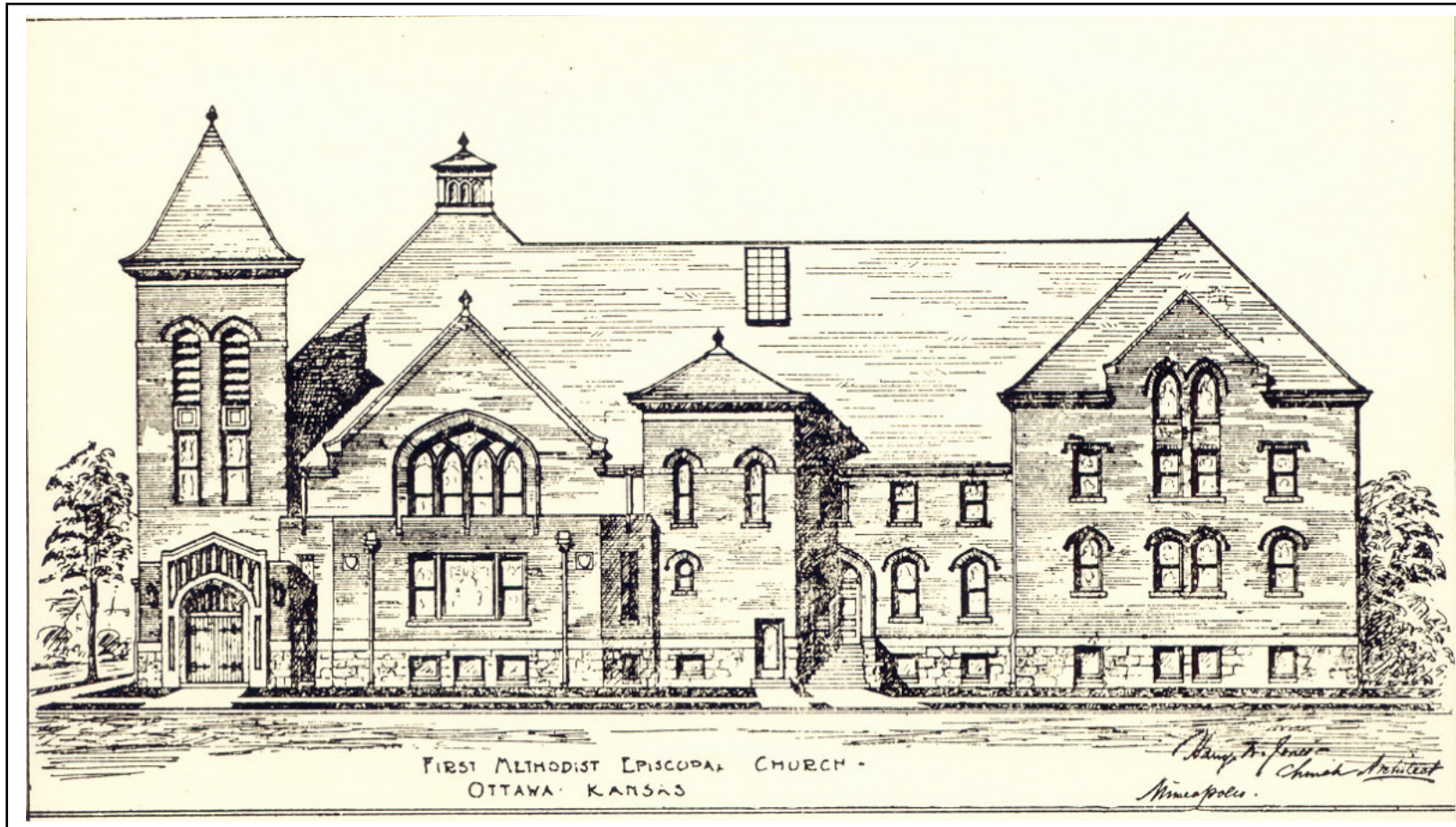
An historic photo of the church while the streets were still dirt.



This color photo is from a postcard.

1923

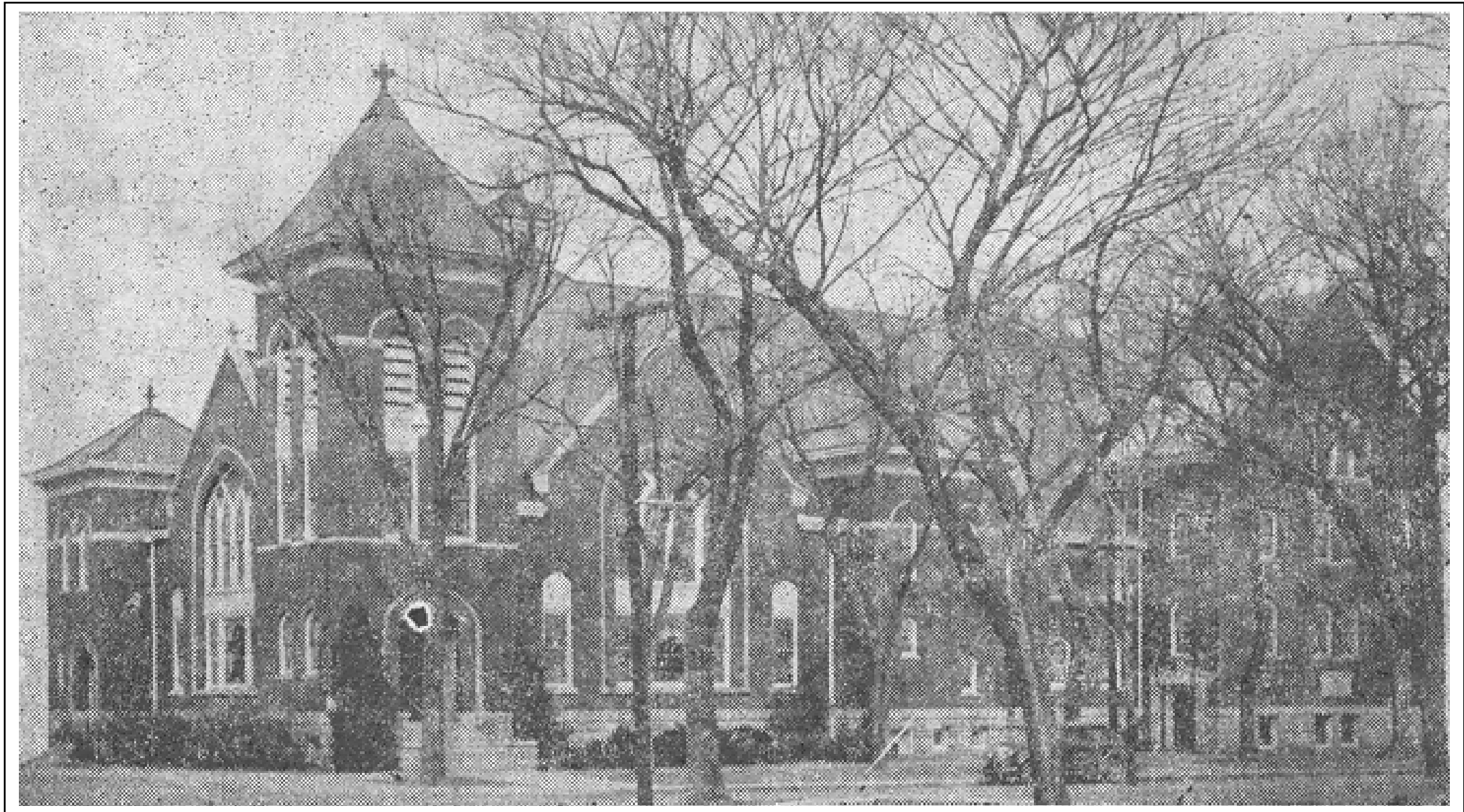
During the latter part of Rev. Franklin Lewis' pastorate \$50,000 was raised to build a 3-story "Sunday School Temple" on the east side of the church. Rev. Zook came during 1924 and the "Temple" was completed and equipped at a cost of \$58,000. At the same time a new organ was purchased and additions on the north provided room for the organ mechanism, office, and choir room. The first service was held there on Palm Sunday of 1925.



The Architect's drawing of the south side of the church showing the "temple" addition.

Harry Jones, a church architect from Minneapolis was the architect.

Note two parts that, happily, were never built; one an "English Gothic" bay at the south-west entrance that covered the steps and two, flat-roofed bay with angled sides that would have covered the lower stained glass windows.



An historic photo of the Church with the “Sunday School Temple Addition”

1949

During the pastorate of R.B. Pruitt, the church was a beneficiary in the will of Mary Elizabeth Bunyan. It made possible the remodeling of space on the east side of Fellowship Hall into a Chapel. Construction began in July of 1949 and was completed in September thanks to much volunteer labor. It was dedicated March 26, 1950.



The Chapel served for 52 years as a place for small services and weddings and as a Sunday School classroom. It was remodeled into offices in the Spirit 2003 renovation.



The picture above shows the Chancel as it was from 1925 to 1959. The Attendance and Offering Board on the right, above the organ, says it is 1948 and the total attendance last Sunday was 449 with a total collection of \$31.63.

The picture below shows the Chancel after the 1959 remodeling





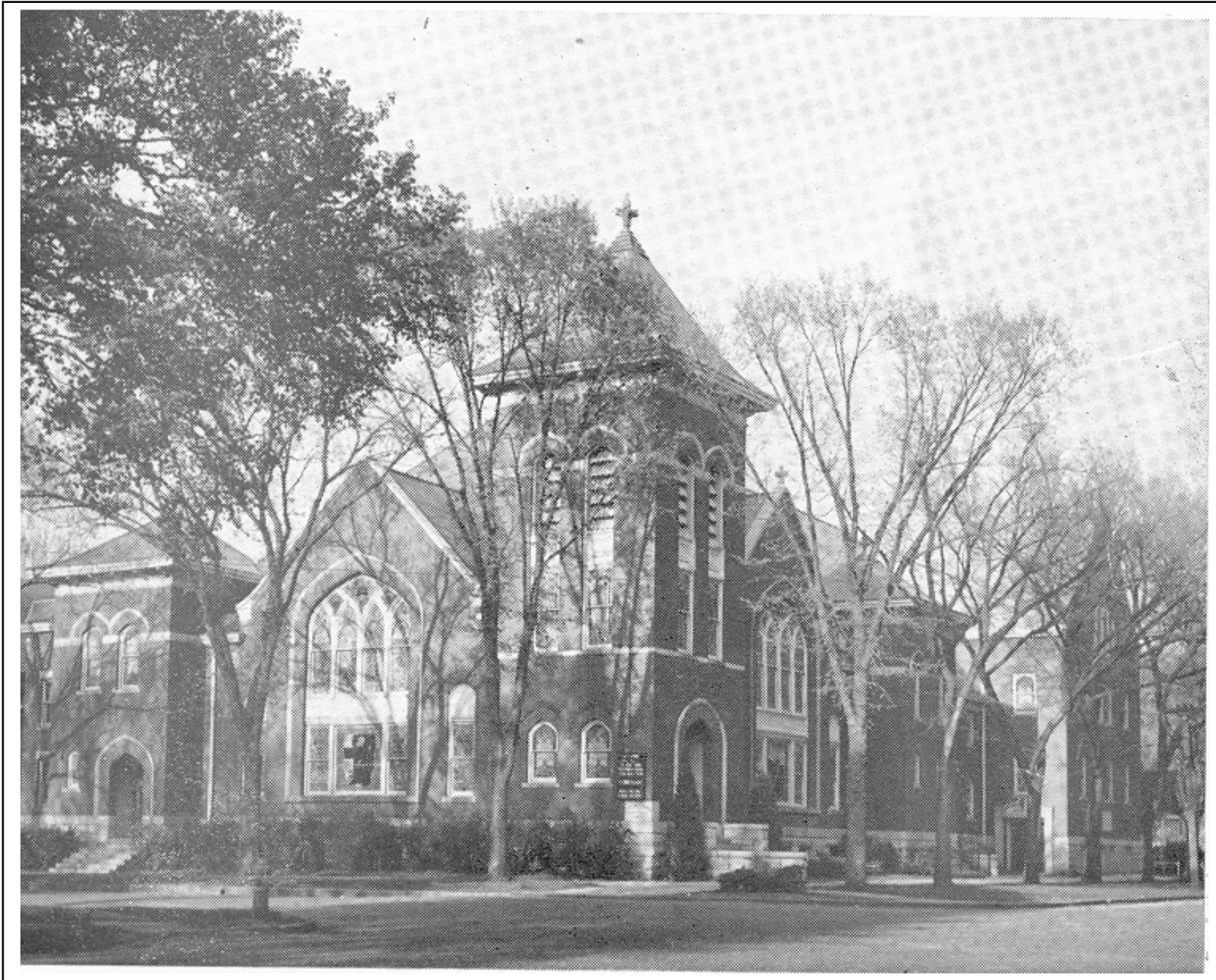
1959

Claire Forester gave a gift of a new Chancel in memory of her late husband, Mark H. Forester.

At that time new carpeting and pews were also installed and the Sanctuary wood was changed from the original darker stained wood to a lighter shade.

Dedication was in September of 1959.

A photo of the remodeled Chancel dedicated in 1959. A major change in the Sanctuary was the rearrangement of the seating to have a center aisle.



A historic photo of the Church with the Sunday School Temple addition..

Note the trees on both the west and south sides. This is before diagonal parking on both streets.



An historic photo of a summer Sunday morning.

The tradition was to gather for visiting under the shade trees on 4th Street before and after the church service.

This was before the parking there was changed from parallel to diagonal.

It is also probably before air-conditioning because many windows in the sanctuary are partially open for ventilation.

Can you identify all the vintage cars?

1960

The Junior Department rooms in the Sunday School Temple were converted into combination Parlor and Music Room. A Yamaha grand piano was purchased.

1965

The organ underwent a major renovation by Reuter Organ of Lawrence, replacing all moving parts with new at a cost of \$20,000.

1976

The Congregation approved a major renovation: electrical system improved to safety standards; repaired exterior by cleaning, tuckpointing and waterproofing; made necessary repairs and improvements to the heating and plumbing system; repaired and preserved the stained glass, painted & carpeted where needed. The budget was \$150,000 and the work was completed in 1979 within the budget.

1981

A ramp was designed and built at the south-west entrance to make the Sanctuary accessible to the disabled.



The Church today showing the ramp added in 1981.

1980-1991

During this time ongoing repairs and improvements totaled nearly \$374,000. The large and small dining rooms were renovated, and there was new roofing.

1999

The Church was damaged by a powerful wind. See the panel on Adversities.

2001

During Kent Melcher's pastorate, Spirit 2003 was the name given to a drive to raise \$800,000 for a major remodeling. This project would make the building accessible for the disabled, add an elevator, improve the heating and air-conditioning, update the electrical system, move the church offices nearer the entrance door and add partitions and doors to the basement small dining room for better use of the space.



Two photos showing the remodeling work. The left photo shows the conveyors moving the dirt removed for the elevator pit out of the building.



The project was approved by the congregation in August of 2001. When 75% of the funds were raised the project began in January of 2001. The first phase was completed in 2003.