

[First Universalist Church of Herkimer]

Herkimer County
Our Special Correspondence

Herkimer, June 18—The corner stone of the new church on Liberty street was laid with appropriate ceremonies under the auspices of the masonic fraternity, in the presence of over four hundred people, yesterday afternoon. At 2 visiting masons Utica, Ilion, Mohawk, Frankfort, Little Falls, Newport Middleville were escorted to the church site by the members of Herkimer lodge No. 423, F. & A.M., headed by the old Herkimer band. Hon. John W. Vrooman acted as grand master, and was assisted by District Deputy Grand Master Joseph S. Johnson of Ilion and Wardens W. J. Piper of Frankfort and Charles L. Earl of Middleville. The ceremony in laying the corner stone was that which has been so long in use by the Masonic fraternity. The first address of the day was delivered by John Graves of this village. He was followed by Rev. J. J. Brayton, pastor of the Society, the Rev. Mr. Gilbert of Little Falls, and Sir Knight Crosley of Utica. The addresses were all short and exceedingly interesting, receiving the close attention of the audience. The box placed within the corner stone contained a copy of all the county papers, articles of incorporation of the church society, an outline of the exercises attending the laying of the cornerstone, [an] autograph book containing the names and amounts subscribed for the church edifice, and photographs of Henry McNeal, chairman of the building committee; Mrs. A. H. Prescott, president of the Ladies Aid society; Mrs. Marckres and Mrs. Eaton, two of the trustees of the church; and Miss Zenia Prescott, a youthful but earnest worker of the society.

I give a brief history of the Universalist society. On the 23d of March, Dean Burgess, a member of the Universalist church and a wealthy citizen, died leaving an estate valued at \$100,000. In his will, he provided for the payment of \$1,000 to be used in erecting a Universalist church here, provided he members of the society raised [\$?,000]. Within a year from the date of his death, Judge Prescott took the matter in hand and within the prescribed time he had the necessary amount raised and was ready to proceed with the church edifice.

[On] Nov. 28, 1881 the Universalist Society of Herkimer was organized, with Amos H. Prescott, George M. Helmer, Orson G. Stearns, Henry McNeal, Amanda R. Marckres and Amanda A. Eaton as trustees. Early [in] the present year a building committee consisting of Judge Prescott, Judge Graves and Henry McNeal was chosen. A desirable lot was purchased on Liberty street, Architect Patrick furnished plans for the church, and about a month ago work was commenced on the new edifice. The church is to be built of brick and will be thirty-five feet wide and sixty-five feet long on the ground. There are to be two towers in front, the taller 80 feet high, on the northwest corner, and the other, about 45 feet high, on the southeast

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corner. The two entrances to the main floor are to be in the same corner as the tower. The vestibule is to be 9x32 feet. From it, stairs will descend to the basement, which is to be finished for a Sunday school room. Two doors lead from the vestibule to the gallery, which will have a seating capacity of one hundred and will stand directly over the vestibule. The main room will seat about three hundred and fifty persons, and its size is 44x32 feet. The altar is in the end of the church, with a pastor's private room on one side and the organ on the other. The choir will be located back of the altar. The wainscoting of the main room is to be of cherry and ash finished in oil; the ceiling of cherry and spruce, ceiled diagonally. The seats are to be made of ahs and timed with cherry; the windows of stained glass, gothic style. The church will be heated by a furnace and lighted with gas. The work is al being done by Herkimer contractors, as follows: masonry by Charles Bates; carpenter work by John [Mentler?]; and painting by Eugene Hartman. The work is all to be done under the personal supervision of Henry McNeal, one of the trustees and chairman of the building committee. The contract provides for completion of the church, ready for occupancy by November 1. It will be a handsome structure and an ornament to the village.

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