

[Mount Vernon, Westchester Co. NY]

FOR THE NEW CHURCH

With impressive ceremonies that were well attended, ground was broken on Saturday afternoon for the new Universalist church on South Second avenue.

A feature of the exercises was the attendance of the Universalist Crusaders, the boys' brigade of the church, about 30 strong, in uniform. The company arrived at the grounds at 3:30 and stood at attention during the program.

The exercises were opened by James A. Blanchard, president of the board of trustees, who in an appropriate address, recounted the history of the local Universalist church organization, its struggles and accomplishments. He congratulated the members on the advances that have been made and on their devotion and unselfishness that have made the erection of a new edifice possible.

"We have been endeavoring for a long time," he said, "to do what we are about to do today, and it gives me great pleasure to see so many here to witness the ceremony."

Mr. Blanchard stated in sketching the history of the local church, that it is the oldest church organization in this city, having been founded May 22, 1852, when Mount Vernon was a village. He also stated that the first call for troops in Mount Vernon during the civil war was made from the steps of the old church at Third avenue and Fourth street.

Following his address, prayer was offered by Rev. Otho F. Bartholow, of the First M. E. Church, and then a spade was handed to Rev. Clarence R. Skinner, pastor of the Universalist church, to formally break the ground. In planting the spade and turning up the earth, Mr. Skinner said:

"We hope that this new building may be one, the beneficent influences of which shall reach out into the world and be instrumental in building up a better type of Christianity. We hope that men may ever come to it without wrangling, and enter into a broad fellowship as lofty as the love of God and as ample as the needs of man."

As he concluded, the audience rose and joined in singing the doxology. The Universalist Crusaders executed a series of manoeuvres. When they finished Mr. Blanchard presented the organization with a handsome flag and standard, saying: "Boys, there are two things I want you always to remember—never disgrace your father and mother, and never disgrace this flag." The commander of the brigade extended to Mr. Blanchard the thanks of the organization.

The exercises ended by the audience singing "America," after which many present went to the strawberry festival held in the old church building.

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