

VINCENT METHODIST

METHODISM in Nutley, known in the olden days as Spring Gardens, goes back to 1824. Records of the circuit indicate that Methodists were active here from that date on. A church, however, was not organized until 1830 when the locality became known as North Belleville.

The church erected at that time was on Passaic Avenue, opposite the land between Park and Oakridge Avenues (in what is now the Methodist Cemetery) and was a plain one-room building of stone, measuring approximately 30 x 40 feet. It was used for all church and Sunday School purposes until 1853. That year, Reverend John H. Vincent, who subsequently became an honored bishop of the church, was named as pastor, this North Belleville church being his first pastoral charge. Under his leadership plans were prepared and a new and larger building erected. The stone of which the old church was composed was used for the basement of the new one, the upper part being of frame construction. The basement was used for Sunday School and social activities.

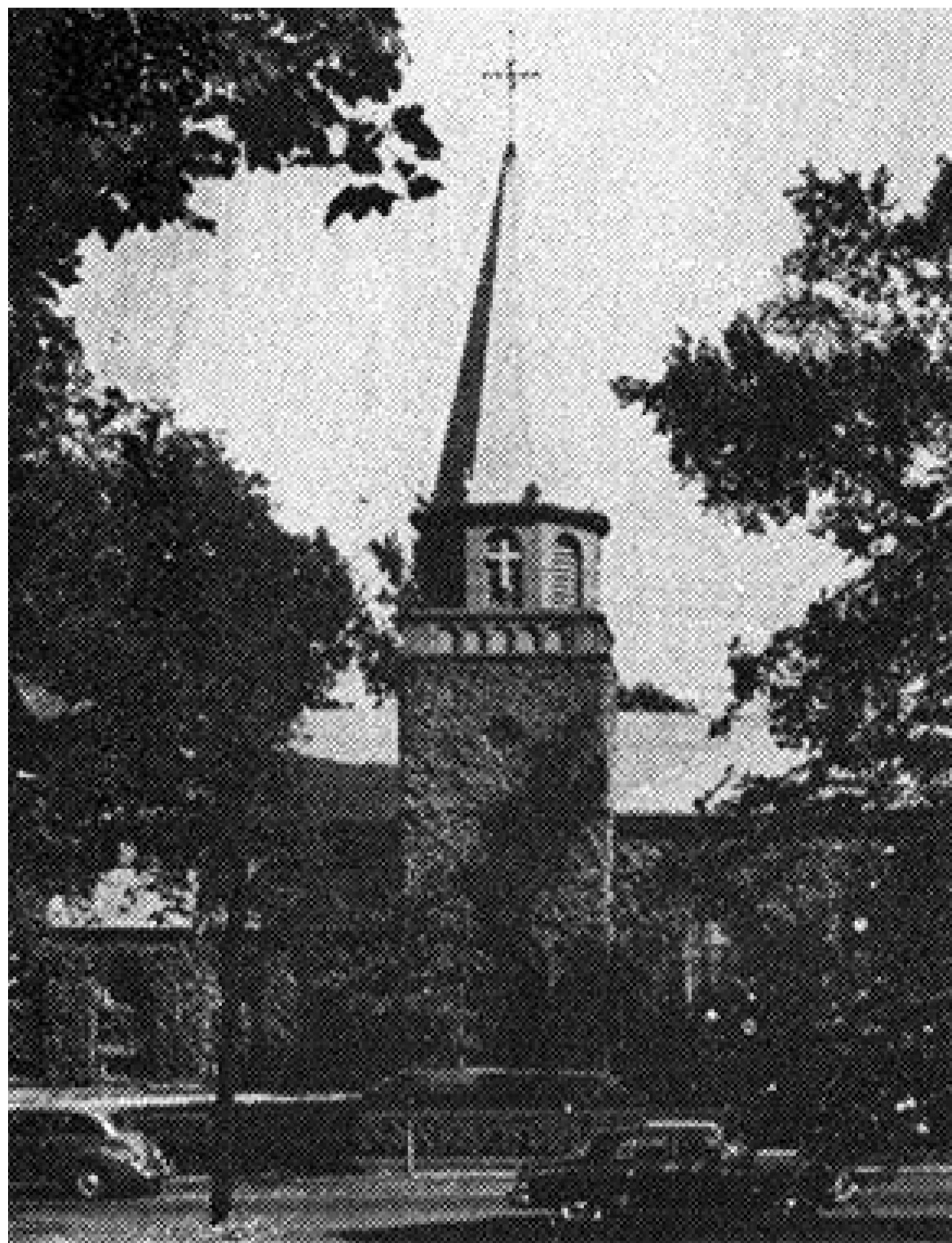
Around the turn of the century a group of members of the congregation, who objected to some of the Methodist ways and doctrines, decided to set up their own institution in another part of town, and this group eventually became the nucleus of St. Paul's Congregational Church.

In 1906 a movement was inaugurated for the building of a new church in a more central location. In Vincent Place, then known as Elm Street, at the location of the dismantled Woolen Mills, ground was broken on January 6, 1909, for the present church. The corner stone was laid by Bishop Neely on April 3, 1909, and the church was dedicated by Bishop Vincent on Sunday, January 2, 1910.

In 1928 a need was found for better facilities for the rapidly growing church school and a committee was appointed to consider the question of enlarging the present building to meet this need. Plans submitted by the late William T. L. Armstrong, local architect, were adopted in February, 1929, and the building, a three story education building, including a chapel commemorating the long service of one of Nutley's outstanding citizens, Dr. George B. Philhower, was completed in time for the 100th anniversary celebration of Methodism in Nutley from April 13 to May 4, 1930.

Following the erection of the present edifice in 1910, the name of the church was changed to the Vincent Methodist Episcopal Church in honor of Bishop Vincent, who, throughout his eminent career as preacher, author and lecturer always retained a kindly interest in this, his first charge.

The present ministers are: Dr. Robert Drew Simpson; associate minister, R. Webb Leonard.



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