

Heritage Square gets 'religion'

By Roger Swanson

Religion has finally come to Heritage Square and it was greeted with great enthusiasm if not huzzahs and hosannas.

The event was the arrival of the former Lincoln Avenue Methodist Church which in recent years had stood vacant and was in danger of demolition by the United States Postal Service, which owned the property.

"We are just delighted to have this new tenant in Heritage Square," said Illeana Welch, coordinator of the Cultural Heritage Board. "We had been hoping to find a church and when this one became available we accented it eagerly."

The church becomes the sixth structure to be moved to Heritage Square which eventually will be a Victorian era street depicting a late 1800s community in Los Angeles. Four of the buildings are historic homes and the fifth is the Palms Train Depot which had been the most recent addition.

MOVED IN SECTIONS

The church was moved to Heritage Square on Homer Street off the Pasadena Freeway at Avenue 43 Tuesday night in several sections.

The 51-foot square sanctuary with a 50 foot tall steeple was severed in half for the move. The steeple

was removed by a crane and a portion of the former meeting hall attached to the sanctuary by folding doors was also removed. The meeting hall will become an exhibit gallery at Heritage Square.

A wing of former classrooms will be attached to the south side of the church building for a proposed kitchen and public facilities.

Built in 1897, the Lincoln Avenue Methodist Church served an active congregation until several years ago when the postal service bought the property for future expansion.

The church would have been demolished to make way for a new post office

parking lot if a new home could not have been found.

DESCRIPTIONS

A description of the church prepared for post office records by Los Angeles architect Ray Baland notes that "the design embodies the distinguished characteristics of the carpenter Gothic architectural style, with Queen Anne and neo-classic influences.

"The massive hipped roof with projecting gables forms the core of the structure which is in keeping with the Methodist tradition of non-axial church plans. Outstanding features include the octagonal spire over the main corner entrance, large circular windows set in gable arches which support a Greek cross design, classical pediments over each of the three entrances and a partial Arroyo stone foundation."

The original finish-scale shingles have been retained in the gable jetties, Baland said, and the horizontal and vertical tongue-and-groove construction is still present in lower gable areas and above the foundation.

The church was designed by architect George Kramer, noted for a number of important ecclesiastical buildings throughout the country in

the latter part of the 19th century. The church was constructed by W. A. Ben-

shoff, builder-architect.

ROUTE

The move began at nearly midnight on Tuesday, following Orange Grove Avenue from Lincoln to Mission Street in South Pasadena, west over the York Blvd. bridge to North Figueroa Street, south through Highland Park and then east to Pasadena Avenue, crossing the Pasadena Freeway and into the rear entrance of Heritage Square.

Restoration of the five buildings which preceded the church continues although funding remains a problem and some of the elaborate plans for the square have been delayed. Originally, it was to be a working street with such business firms as a bank, restaurant and small retail shops occupying the southern-most area of Heritage Square near Pasadena Avenue.

The commercial area would have occupied new buildings, constructed in the Victorian style to complement the old homes which would be open to the public for tours. Eventually, the restored homes will be available for public inspection. If that is to be an active commercial area, it is many years in the future.

"We still hope to encourage large firms and foundations to participate in the funding of the expensive restoration work," said Welch this week.

Much of the early restoration work involved such non-visible improvements as new wiring and plumbing and shoring of foundations.

GRANT FUNDS

Members of the Cultural

Heritage Foundation hope that as exterior cosmetic improvements are made to the buildings, large firms and foundations will be more willing to grant funds.

Homes in various stages of restoration include the Hale House, the Valley Knudsen House, the Ford House and the Mt. Pleasant House.

All are being restored with donated money except the Mt. Pleasant House which is owned by the Los Angeles-Pasadena Committee of the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America. The house had a stucco exterior when it was moved to Heritage Square but the covering has been chipped off, revealing finely crafted wood which is being restored.

When the Mt. Pleasant House is fully rehabilitated it will serve as the headquarters of the local committee of the Colonial Dames.

TOURS

Several rooms of the Hale House have been restored and can be viewed by the public on the first and second Sundays and the third Wednesdays of each month. Tours are held from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at a cost of \$1.

Merrill Winans, who for several years has served as an unpaid curator and volunteer foreman of restoration work, said approximately \$260,000 has been spent on the Hale House and a total of \$1 million on all the buildings.

Foundation officials envision a street of between 20 and 25 buildings when it is completed. Cost is estimated at about \$15 million.

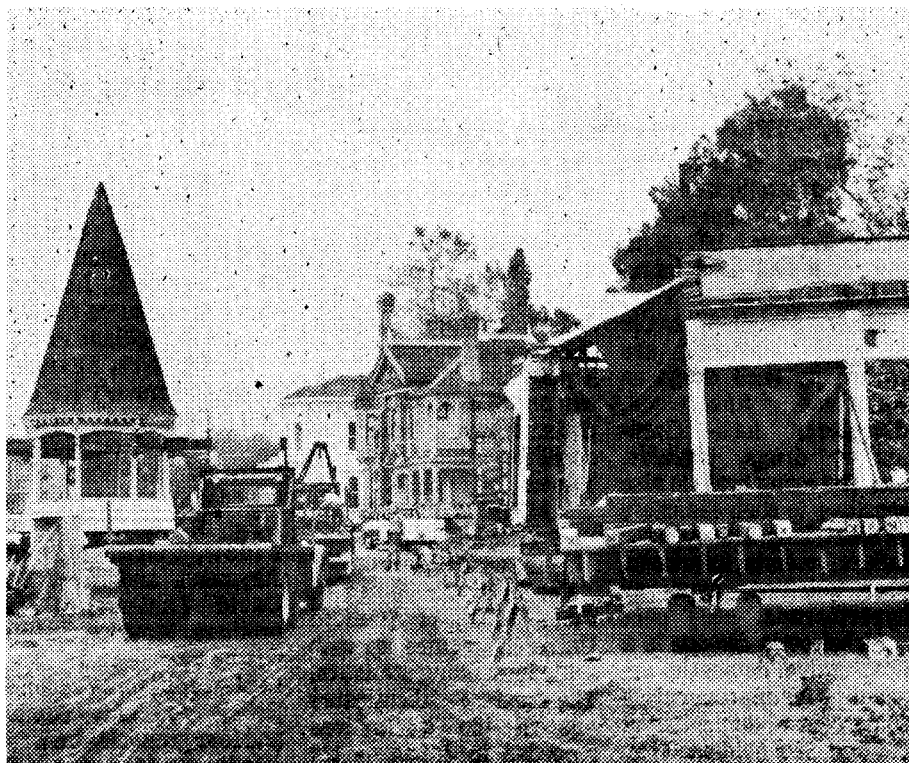
Church moves to Heritage Square



Northeast Newspaper Photo by Henk Friezer

The church divided

Sawn in half for its move from Pasadena, the Lincoln Avenue Methodist Church joins five other structures at Heritage Square off the Pasadena Freeway in Highland Park. The two halves will be rejoined in several days but extensive restoration will have to wait until money from private firms and foundations becomes available.



FINAL JOURNEY — The steeple of the Lincoln Avenue Methodist Church (left) rests on blocks after its early morning move to Heritage Square last Monday. The steeple will be reshingled and painted before it is lifted by crane atop the church which was constructed in 1897.