

Photo of the Month

Central Methodist Episcopal Church
By Jennifer Sweet, Collections Assistant



Central Methodist Episcopal Church, c.1910
Third and Elm Streets, Rogers, Arkansas
Neg. # N010226

In 1881, not long after the railroad came through and Rogers was officially established, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South was organized. Members met in the old Osborne Hall on North First Street. The first church building was a frame building built in 1882 on North Second Street. The church moved again in 1889 to a brick building on the corner of Second and Cherry Streets.

In February 1907, the Official Board of the church voted unanimously to build a new church. Property at the corner of Third and Elm Streets was purchased from Hugh Miller at a cost of \$2200. The building was designed by architect A.O. Clarke in the neoclassical style popular at the time. It featured columns at the entranceway, Romanesque arches and a domed ceiling in the sanctuary. The building of the church cost \$13,000. The new church was called Central Methodist Episcopal Church.

The church also featured a steeple and stained glass windows. The windows were memorials, which were designed and installed by Thomas E. Gaytee. They were made in the Studio of Ford Bros. Glass Co. in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The windows can still be seen in the church today. The original steeple was

destroyed by lightning in 1911. It was not replaced until 1997.

In 1940, a fire started in the furnace room at the church. The basement filled with water, which froze hard enough for children to skate. The stained glass windows escaped damage thanks to the efforts of many people who came to help fight the fire. Repairs to the building would be finished in 1941 and cost \$11,619.02.

This church was not the only one designed by A.O. Clarke. He designed five churches in Rogers including First Methodist Episcopal Church, which stood at the corner of Second and Chestnut. This building was very similar to Central Methodist Episcopal and was also completed in 1908. The churches merged in 1937 and used the Central United Methodist church building. The First Methodist Episcopal Church building was torn down in 1970.

The name of the church changed to Central United Methodist Church in 1968 when the Methodist church merged internationally with the Evangelical United Brethren Church. In 1995, Central United Methodist moved to a new building on New Hope Road. A group of church members split off to form First United Methodist Church, which remained in the old building.

Education wings were added to the sides of the building in the 1950s and 1960s, but the original building is still there on the corner. It is the only church designed by A.O. Clarke that is still standing in Rogers.