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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOR THE YEAR ENDING JANUARY 8th, 1925.

During the year, the Executive Council of the Society met from time to time in accordance with the provisions of the By-Laws of the Society.

The following is a report of the membership of the Society:

ANNUAL MEMBERS

Number of members reported January 10, 1925.....	217
Members added during the year.....	3
	220
Loss by death, not heretofore reported.....	8
By resignation	3 11
	209

LIFE MEMBERS

Number of Life Members.....	28
	237

We regret to record the loss by death of the following members:

NOTE.

THE ELEVENTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF PHILADELPHIA.

BY HARRY PRINGLE FORD.

Seventy or more years ago, the Eleventh Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia, better known at the time as "Johnnie Grant's Church," was, with its large congregations and membership of over 550, one of the most flourishing churches of the city. It has long since been practically forgotten. Its neglected old building, which stood on the south side of Vine Street, east of Thirteenth Street,—about 170 feet from the corner to the central door,—was torn down in May, 1922, and prominent business men, whose offices were in the same square, and who watched its demolition, did not even know that it had ever been occupied by a Presbyterian congregation. Such are the mutations of time!

In view of the origin of this Church in the Second Church, of its own good works, and of its development into the present Arch Street Church, its history is well worthy of review and preservation.

The enterprise had its inception in a Sabbath school which had been organized in January, 1828, and conducted in a room at Race and Juniper Streets. The first meeting looking to the organization of a church in connection with this work, was held March 29th, 1828, in the lecture room of the Second Church, which then stood at the north-west corner of Third and Arch Streets. Plans were formulated for the organization of a congregation and the erection of a suitable building in what was then "the northwestern section of the city."

At a meeting of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, dated "Neshaminy, Pa., October 21st, 1828," a petition was "presented from sundry persons for the organization of a new Presbyterian Church, to be located in the City of Philadelphia, near the corner of Vine and Twelfth Streets, whereupon Dr. Ashbel Green, Dr. Thomas H. Skinner, and Rev. George C. Potts, were appointed a committee to proceed, if they shall find the way clear, to the organization of a Presbyterian Church, to be located agreeably to the petition."

On the 21st of November, 1828, the following minute appears on the session book of the Second Church: "An application was read from the undersigned, members of this Church, for a dismission to unite with a Presbyterian Church, to be located and now forming, in Vine Street, near Eleventh." The entry should have been, "in Vine Street, near Thirteenth." The petition was signed by Jacob Eldridge and

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wife, Wilfred Hall, Elizabeth White, William Wallace, James Wilson, Hiram Ayres, John Umstead and wife, and Joseph W. Martin. The request was granted, and "the clerk was directed to issue certificates accordingly."

The Church was officially organized by the Presbyterial committee on the 26th of November, 1828, "The parties originating and organizing it were all members of the congregation of the Second Church." Twelve were men and ten were women.

The infant congregation proved itself to be a remarkably active one. The year after its organization, the building which was torn down in May, 1922, was erected. With the exception of the new Church, "there was not a stone or a brick in the whole square." The structure was of brick, and stood a little back from Vine Street. The Sunday-school room and other rooms were on the ground floor, and the main auditorium was on the second floor. It was thought by many to be entirely too large, but the venture was signally successful from its beginnings, and such large congregations gathered that it became necessary to enlarge the building by extending the front wall to the street line. This was done in 1850.

The Church became a part of the Third Presbytery, New School; and had, with but one exception, at one time the largest congregation in connection with that Presbytery. "No other Presbyterian Church in the whole region sent forth more ministers and missionaries, to say nothing of the good it accomplished in the community," says a writer in *The Christian Observer* of July 16th, 1853.

It began to lose prestige, however, when "complaints injurious to the ministerial and Christian character" of the pastor, Mr. Grant, were circulated. He resigned in 1850, after a successful pastorate of over twenty years. In October, 1854, the field was abandoned and the property sold to the Central Methodist Church. The congregation removed to the south-east corner of Eighteenth and Arch Streets.

At a meeting of the Eleventh Church congregation held on the 21st of January, 1850, it was resolved to sever the ecclesiastical relations with the New School and to make application to the Old School Presbytery of Philadelphia to be taken under its care. The Church was received by the Presbytery of Philadelphia at a meeting held March 5th, 1850.

At a meeting of the Presbytery of Philadelphia held on the 4th of April, 1855, the following action was taken: "In view of a change of name determined upon by the congregation of the Eleventh Church, in moving to their new building [at Eighteenth and Arch Streets], and which is in a process of being rectified by the proper civil tribunals, *Resolved*, That the Church be known in the records of Presbytery hereafter as the West Arch Street Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia." The name thus appears for the first time in the General Assembly Minutes of 1855.

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After being used as a Church by the Methodists for some years, the old building at Thirteenth and Vine Streets finally degenerated into and ended its existence as a storage warehouse, although its outward appearance remained unchanged to the last. In digging the foundations, in 1922, for the new buildings to be erected on the site of the old warehouse, bones and broken grave-stones were unearthed. On one of the stones could be deciphered the name of Catherine, who died in 1832, "daughter of John and Catherine Umstead." The father and mother were doubtless the "John Umstead and wife" who in 1828 signed the petition to have the church organized.

The Rev. John L. Grant, a child of the Second Church, was the first pastor of the Eleventh Church. "In this good work," says the writer already quoted in *The Christian Observer*, "Mr. Grant was faithfully aided by laymen, who entered heartily into the enterprise, which was then regarded as the most successful of the kind ever made in the city or county of Philadelphia." He was elected pastor June 15th, 1829, and was installed over the new congregation on the evening of the 18th of the following November. He resigned at a congregational meeting held February 21st, 1850, and was succeeded by the Rev. John Miller, son of the distinguished Rev. Samuel Miller, D.D. He was elected pastor on the 13th of May and installed July 10th, 1850. As he continued as pastor until December, 1855, he was the last to officiate in the old Eleventh Church and the first to have pastoral charge over the new West Arch Street Church.

The congregation continued to worship in the old building at Vine and Thirteenth Streets until October, 1854, after which it met in the lecture room of the West Arch Street Church, which room was by that time completed. The corner-stone of this Church was laid May 21st, 1853, and the building was dedicated on the 15th of October, 1855. Mr. Miller preached at the morning service, Dr. Henry Steele Clarke in the afternoon, and Dr. Henry A. Boardman in the evening.

The new structure was erected at a cost of over one hundred thousand dollars, and although more than three-score years have passed since it was built, it is still one of the handsomest church edifices in Philadelphia. The West Arch Street Church and the Arch Street Church consolidated in 1901, under the name of the Arch Street Church.