

NEGRO CHURCH SEEKS MADISON AVE. HOME

Makes a Favorable Offer for the
Pilgrim Congregational Prop-
erty at 121st Street.

ALARM IN NEIGHBORHOOD

Real Estate Men Fear Effect of the
Change—Pilgrim Congregation
to Move Further West.

Many of Harlem's old-time residents learned with surprise and consternation yesterday that the Pilgrim Congregational Church, on the northeast corner of Madison Avenue and 121st Street, was likely to become in the near future the headquarters of a colored congregation. The Rev. Frederick Lynch, pastor of the church, admitted that a very definite and favorable offer for the property had been made within the past week by representatives of a downtown African Methodist Church.

A few years ago the Pilgrim Church was one of the largest in point of membership in Harlem. Changing conditions in the neighborhood and the removal of many of the members to the west side have weakened the working force of the church to such an extent that last Fall it was decided to sell the property and move further west. The church occupies a splendid location, fronting Mount Morris Park, which is surrounded with private houses and new apartment houses. The Madison Avenue blocks, however, in the last few years have lost much of their old-time private residential quality.

The news that there was a possibility of a colored congregation coming to Madison Avenue aroused protests from real estate dealers and the dwellers in the locality. Wells L. Baker, President of the Board of Trustees of the Pilgrim Church, when asked what was going to be done, said the officers had decided to wait awhile.

"The situation is just this," said Mr. Wells. "We have had a positive offer from a colored church that contemplates moving uptown. Many of the Trustees are averse to selling to colored people, knowing the agitation it would cause. Undoubtedly it would affect the value of property in the neighborhood. On the other hand, the church is not growing in its present home, we cannot remain there much longer, and it may come to a point where we will accept the best offer, regardless of buyer."

The colored population of Harlem is centred around 135th Street, Lenox and Seventh Avenues. The territory has been gradually expanding, and negro tenants are now well established in 132d Street. In 129th Street, east of Fifth Avenue, there is a larger apartment house given over entirely to negroes, and some of the old houses in West 129th Street, near Eighth Avenue, are occupied by colored families. In one of the latter houses the Rev. Reverdy C. Ransom lives. He is pastor of the African Methodist Bethel Church in West Twenty-fifth Street, between Seventh and Eighth Avenues.