



# Home Mission

A History of the  
First Congregational, United Church of Christ  
Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin

First  
Congregational  
Church

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP

9:30 O'CLOCK

WISCONSIN RAPIDS

1001 N. WISCONSIN STREET

# Home Mission

A History of the First Congregational, United Church of Christ  
Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin

by  
Dave Engel

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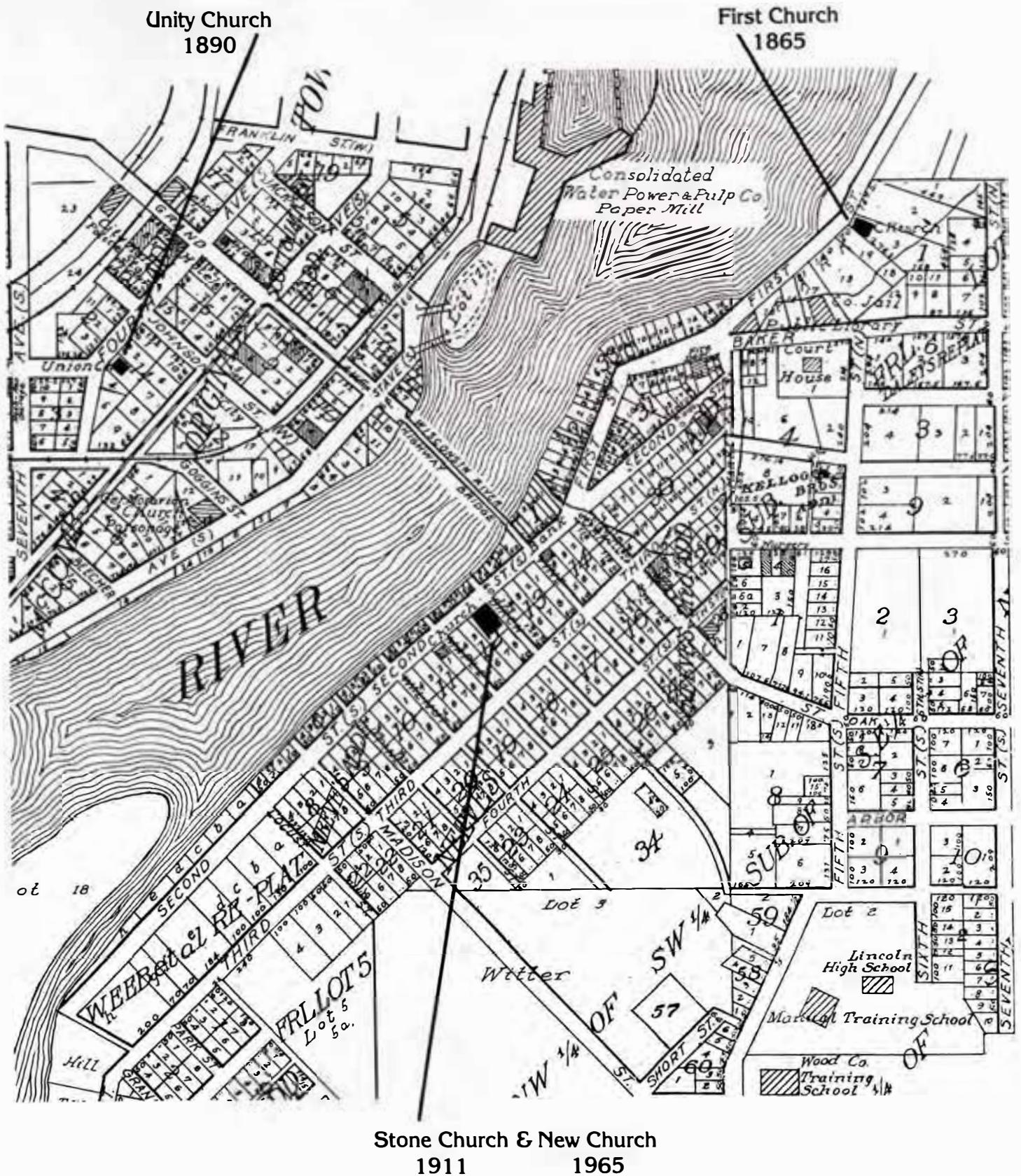
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# Standard Atlas of Wood County, 1928





# This is the congregation

This is the congregation that has not only built and used four houses of worship, but can maintain what we have, and do it again when future need arises.

This is the congregation that has seen the ordination of at least three men at the beginning of their ministry here; that now has two theological students and could have more in preparation for Christian leadership.

This is the congregation that has had a commendable record of giving to mission enterprises near and far, that has seen a member in foreign ministry service for a time, and could send yet more of its substance and its talent.

This is the congregation that has had a most unusual number of lay people, both the youth and mature, willing to lead out in discussion and preach the word when needed here and among our neighboring churches. It can be done again and it can be done better.

This is the congregation that has, through the years, accorded its ministers a pulpit wherein they may freely speak the truth as they see it. And this is the church that can continue to hold up the arms and hands of its pastors in receptive mind, thoughtful suggestion, loyal support and constant encouragement. This is a church which is on record as excluding no one because of race, class, color, nationality, language or economic or social status, welcoming all who make a Christian profession and seek Christian fellowship. We can make the welcome warmer yet.

Let our home be a place of hospitality. Let it be a House of Prayer, a House of learning, a House from which we go forth repeatedly, and continually, to serve; "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord."

The pioneers of more than a century ago were resolved to plant the cross of Christ in the wilderness. The planting goes on, to be renewed and improved by each generation.

October 10, 1971

Observance of the 5th Anniversary of the church building  
dedicated October 9, 1966

Robert W. Kingdon.

# Home Mission

In 1856, before there was a Protestant church building, Congregationalists joined in this contract:

We the undersigned citizens of Grande Rapids do hereby promise and agree and bind ourselves to pay the amounts as herebelow sett oppisite our respective names unto the Reverend Jesse Edwards for a proportion of his services at the above named place. Say from the first of June 1856 to the first of October 1856 every fourth sabbath two sermons. And from the first of October 1856 to the first of June 1857 every second sabbath two sermons.

Dated Grande Rapids September 1, 1856

Henry F. Black	\$20.00
E.R. Smith	5.00
John McElna	5.00
David Baker	3.00
Joseph Hausbrouk	3.00
H.S. Jackson	2.00
Lemuel Kromer	10.00
L.P. Powers	5.00
J.H. [Lunt?]	10.00
B. Buck	2.00
[G.A. Binks?]	2.00
Geo. Neeves	10.00
[K.K.?] Kline	3.00
James R. Scott	5.00
Hiram McCollum	3.00
William Roe	5.00
W.P. Butler	2.00
Manuel G. [Heyhram?]	3.00
Seth Reeves	2.00
Francis A. Hoffman	3.00

The signers of this document shared, with the pastor they called upon, the sense of mission that brought the Congregational Church to the northwoods frontier known as "The Pinery." In the

mid-1800s, missionaries from the eastern U.S., often born in the British Isles, came to central Wisconsin. Their work was subsidized by the Home Missionary Society and the Congregational Union.

The task was to spread a spiritual Word but immediate problems seemed to happen in the material realm. Church edifices had to be built and paid for. Missionaries and ministers wanted salaries and they wanted to be paid on time. Families had to be clothed and fed. Young congregations often had not the will nor the way to take care of their responsibilities. Eleven preachers came to Grand Rapids in forty years.

Yet the mission succeeded in both the material and spiritual realms. It translated into a strong sense of reform in the late 1800s and carried over into the 20th Century.

Four churches were built: the first white frame riverbank church in the 1865 wilderness; the 1890 Unity Church in which the congregation split and later reunited; the 1911 monument of stone; the new church built a century after the first, combining artfully the old and new.

Finally, the contributions began to flow not toward but out from the First Congregational Church of Wisconsin Rapids, to home missions and foreign missions alike. As the demands of the material world were met by a modern church, the sense that brought hardy missionaries to the Wisconsin River continued to pervade the consciousness of church leaders.

# *New Years Greeting*

— 1926 —

## THE FLEETING YEARS

By

J. Merle Stevens

The years fly swiftly, swiftly by—  
It matters not how much we try  
    We cannot stay their flight.  
Noon treads upon the heels of mourn,  
And e'er the day seems fully born  
    Down comes the dark'ning night.

The buds and leaves burst forth in spring,  
The birds make woods and meadows ring  
    In bright and sunny May;  
And then autumnal breezes blow,  
And winter comes with blinding snow,  
    And summer flees away.

How soon we tire of childhood's toys!  
How fleeting are our youthful joys!  
    The moments will not stay,  
But rosy cheeks grow thin and pale,  
And backs are bent and hands are frail,  
    And raven locks are gray.

How short the path of life we tread!  
At first the cradle is our bed,  
    The coffin then is made.  
A little while on mother's breast  
We sleep, and then we take our rest  
    And in the grave are laid.

The sands of life, my friend, run fast,  
These golden hours, they will not last,  
    Then give a helping hand  
To one who falls beneath life's load.  
Or totters on the stony road,  
    And help a brother stand.

The time is short, do not delay,  
Tomorrow is too late, today  
    Let something good be done,  
Some breaking heart or furrowed brow  
Needs comfort; give, oh, give it now,  
    Before life's sands are run.



# United Church of Christ

The desire to unite with entities of like belief has always been strong in the Congregational Church. This tradition formed the basis for the 1957 merger between the Congregational Church and the Evangelical and Reformed Church that resulted in the United Church of Christ.

The defining characteristic of the Congregational Church is that each congregation has free control over its own affairs, recognizing as its head only Jesus Christ. With other Protestants, Congregationalists share a belief in the sovereignty of God and the priesthood of the believer without intervention by bishop, presbytery, priest or magistrate.

Preaching has been central to Congregational worship because of the importance of the word of God as revealed in the scriptures. The only sacraments are baptism and communion because only they were installed by Christ. Music and hymns are a long tradition and form an integral part of most Congregational devotions.

Congregationalism had its start in England of the late 16th and early 17th century as the radical wing of the Puritan movement and became dominant in 19th century New England.

Two somewhat contrasting groups, both in opposition to the Church of England, arrived in Massachusetts and formed the beginnings of the Congregational Church in America, where it was to help determine the character of the

early civilization and the nation that developed from it.

The "separatists" had left England and the English church for religious freedom in the Netherlands. After twelve years, wanting their sons to grow up as Englishmen rather than Dutchmen, a large part of the company sailed for the New World in 1620 aboard the Mayflower. Their Plymouth colony proved to be a cornerstone of the tolerant free state.

Another, less liberal set of immigrants came in the form of the Puritans, a much larger and more powerful community who established in Massachusetts Bay a theocratic government. In 1648, the Separatists and the Puritans united to produce the Cambridge Platform, a declaration of common faith.

The spiritual descendant of Calvinism evolved, however, to encourage a much more open and fresh spirit of inquiry as demonstrated by the founding of educational institutions and an unusually intense interest in the intellectual avant-garde. With Congregational support, Harvard had been founded in 1636, Yale in 1701 and Dartmouth in 1789.

After the success of the Great Awakening led by Jonathan Edwards came a divisive event: the breaking away of the American Unitarian Association in 1825. Unitarianism represented religion as a social principle of human betterment. It exalted man at the expense of God, thought traditional believers. Most of the

older Congregational churches in eastern Massachusetts went over to the Unitarian movement.

Mission interest among the American Indians had begun as soon as the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth. Along the western frontier, the Congregational Church seemed to go wherever New Englanders went.

The 1801 Plan of Union set aside sectarianism between Presbyterian and Congregationalist so the two churches could together supply missionaries to the frontier. The American Home Missionary Society, founded in 1826, supported many northern and western churches in which a minister typically found it hard to make ends meet, making do with donation parties, cast off furniture, clothing and provisions.

The growing liberalism of Congregationalists, combined with the notion that the Plan of Union seemed to work to the advantage of the Presbyterians, caused "the plan" to weaken and to be discontinued in 1852.

The latter half of the 19th Century was characterized by reformist activity in the areas of women's rights, racial injustice, poverty and prison reform. Missionary work continued in such states as Illinois and Wisconsin.

In 1888, the Congregationalists united with about a third of the Congregational Methodist churches, a group in the south that had abandoned the episcopal system. In 1925, Congregationalists united with the Evangelical Protestants, a liberal group of German extraction in the Ohio valley. Congrega-

tionalists united in 1931 with the Christian Church, a denomination of the late 1790s and early 1800s that had been formed in reaction to the rigidity of Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist churches.

As stated, Congregationalists united in 1957 with the Evangelical and Reformed Church in the United States.

The Evangelical church had been founded at St. Louis in 1840 by Lutheran and Reformed ministers belonging to the Evangelical United Church of Prussia. They formed the Evangelical Union of the West, later the German Evangelical Synod of North America and the Evangelical Synod of North America.

The Reformed Church in the United States originated in Switzerland and Germany, following the tide of German immigration to Pennsylvania in the 18th Century.

Both churches were German denominations with their roots in Calvinism.

At the time of its merger into the United Church of Christ, the Evangelical and Reformed church had 810,000 members in 2,740 churches. The Congregational church had 1,419,171 members in 5,500 churches.

On July 8, 1957, representatives of the Congregational Christian churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church adopted at Oberlin, Ohio, a statement of faith for the United Church of Christ. It was meant to be a testimony, not a test. The local churches would remain autonomous. That was the "Congregational way."



## Mission to Wisconsin

The Congregational Church was at work in to Wisconsin before statehood. The first missions were among the Stockbridge Indians. The Stockbridge tribe was itself a newcomer to Wisconsin Territory, having been driven westward from Massachusetts. Congregationalists had ministered to the Stockbridges in Massachusetts and continued to do so in Wisconsin.

In 1827, Jesse Miner was sent by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions as first missionary pastor to the Wisconsin Stockbridges. He was succeeded in 1830 by Rev. Cutting Marsh.

The first Congregational church of our state was formed at Waukesha on January 20, 1838. It was followed that year by others at Kenosha and Beloit. Nine years later, Beloit College came into being. Ripon College opened in 1853.

In Wisconsin, Presbyterians and Congregationalists held cordial relations in conjunction with the Plan of Union. At Troy in 1840, eight Presbyterian and eight Congregational churches joined in the Presbyterian and Congregational Convention of Wisconsin. All

members of either denomination were regarded as brethren in the faith although each church was allowed to choose either the Presbyterian or Congregational mode of government.

In Wisconsin, as in Illinois, the white immigrants, beginning in 1835, were administered to through the American Home Missionary Society. At first associated with Presbyterian and Congregational churches, in the course of time the Home Missionary Society became the organ of the Congregationalists.

Rev. Stephen Peet was appointed Agent of the Home Missionary Society in 1841-48, followed by Rev. Dexter Clary in 1840. "Fervent, evangelistic, gracious in intercourse, dignified in pulpit ministrations" (Jubilee Memorial, 1840-1890), Clary had been born in Conway, Mass., in 1798. He studied a little theology at New Haven and knocked around as an evangelist on the New York/Canadian border before becoming pastor of the Congregational Church in Beloit. Clary remained Home Missionary Bishop for 22 years, resigning in 1872. "His acceptableness to the





Rev. Dexter Clary

missionaries, and the missionary families whom he counseled to wisely, and helped so lovingly, is attested by the affectionateness with which his name is spoken and his memory is cherished among them," said the *Congregational History in Wisconsin*, 1933.

The largest number of dependent churches on the rolls was in 1859-60. In 1858, the General Convention formed a second district that took five churches from the Madison Convention and six

from the Winnebago district and seven not connected. The new district was named the Lemonweir Convention. It extended from Juneau, Adams, Marquette and Waushara counties north and included Wood County.

The American Home Missionary Society was replaced by the Wisconsin Home Missionary Society (organized 1872) in 1883.

In conjunction with the American Home Missionary Society, the Congregational Union was funded initially at a convention in Albany, N.Y. After 1852 it carried on work to financially aid "feeble" churches in building houses of worship. About \$7,000 was available for Wisconsin.

Although conditions surrounding the churches were primitive, the buildings themselves tended to reproduce relatively sophisticated styles of the states their builders had come from. The builders themselves, however rustic their new surroundings, carried with them the tradition for learning and free thought that had characterized the New York and Massachusetts churches of the 1800s.

Already in the early 1840s, even as they were being installed in the wilderness, the churches of Wisconsin had taken strong stands against slavery and intemperance.

## No Pretensions to Religion

A rare look at the first years of the white man's history here is found in a stack of small, handwritten diaries kept by the Rev. Cutting Marsh and preserved by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison.

Clarifications and additions to the original Marsh diaries have been drawn from Malcolm Rosholt's book, *Pioneers of the Pinery* (Rosholt, 1979).

Marsh, born July 20, 1800, in Danville, Vt., was licensed to preach by the Andover Association of Congregational Ministers in 1829. He also was ordained as a missionary and departed in 1830 to serve the Stockbridge Indians in Wisconsin.

While in Wisconsin, Marsh helped organize Presbyterian churches in Milwaukee (1837) and Green Bay (1838).

He was commissioned in 1848, by the Congregational/Presbyterian American Home Missionary Society, to establish churches and Sabbath schools throughout north-central Wisconsin.

In 1851, Marsh moved from Green Bay to Waupaca and covered the territory between the Fox and Wisconsin rivers. He died at Waupaca July 4, 1873.

As a missionary, Marsh visited Plover and Grand Rapids in 1849, providing a general description of the lumbering community along the river.

Four miles above Grand Rapids, at Fay's Mills [Biron], were two saws. Grand Rapids had two double mills totaling four saws.

Six miles below Grand Rapids was Merrill's Mill [Port Edwards], containing two saws. One mile below Merrill's [not accurate], said Marsh, was Wakely's Mill, containing one saw.

Ten miles below Grand Rapids were Whitney's Mill [Nekoosa], a double mill with a lath machine attached.

Within three or four miles of Grand Rapids, Marsh counted 23 families and from 100 to

300 people, according to the season of the year. He said 75 votes were polled at the latest election [Zachary Taylor was elected president and Millard Fillmore, vice president].

Three "millions" [board feet] of lumber were made annually at the Grand Rapids, said Marsh, who noted "Mr. Miner of Gr R thinks that no more than 15 thous bushels of cranberries have been gathered this year in the pinery."

Over toward Plover, the "We-bit-a-sebe" or "Tooth River," which had three mills, emptied into the Wisconsin on the west side. "The white people call it Mill Creek," he wrote.

The Wisconsin had received the more earthy Indian appellation, said Marsh, of "Wisconse" or "bladder that never runs dry."

Marsh came down to Rapids from Plover on Friday, Nov. 9, 1849. He described level sandy soil growing oak and pine shrubbery three or four feet high. There were no habitations along the road.

At Grand Rapids, Marsh stayed with E.S. Miner, son of Jesse Miner, who had preceded Marsh as a missionary to the Stockbridges prior to Miner's 1829 death.

On Nov. 10, Marsh had a long conversation with Miner that prompted the response: "Probably he never had any change of heart. Now gives evidence of being unreconciled to God. Gave the Tract to him. Can you die tranquil? . . ."

Marsh also called upon "Old Mr. Klynnes' family. Himself once a Methodist professor [believer] but now an intemperate man. Heard of no others excepting [Mr. Use?]."

It is not certain in what tone Marsh concluded that Grand Rapids was a very "romantic" place.

On Nov. 12, Marsh again arrived to preach to a room full of people from the text of Hebrews 3:7-8.

On "Tues 13," Marsh estimated the distance going south from Grand Rapids to [Nelson?]





*Rev. Cutting Marsh.*

Strong's way station [near highways 21 and 13] at 24 miles and 12 more miles to [William] Sylvester's station, 34 miles north of Portage [at Grand Marsh].

"Probably, there are 40 or 50 men below Grand Rapids and some half-dozen families, principally half-breeds," Marsh said.

"The country from Grand Rapids to Mr. Sylvester's generally covered with oak shrubbery about 4 ft high. Now and then, a grove of small pines and some few groves of oaks."

On the way from Grand Rapids to Strong's, the trail passed a north-south mass of rock rising suddenly. Marsh said it did not cover more than a quarter of an acre while rising to a height of 100 feet. He described two peaks "and a 3rd which does not rise quite as high," suggesting Rabbit Rock. "I ascended as far as I could . . . The highest peak too abrupt that a ladder would be necessary, perhaps 10 ft high," he wrote.

Marsh stayed at Sylvester's and left Wednesday morning. The previous evening, he wrote, Mr. S. "was so much under the influence of liquor as to appear silly."

On Nov. 5, 1850, Marsh called again on Mr. Klyne and visited "a few other families." He noted that there was no day school and no Sabbath school. "Roman Catholics building a church on the opposite side of the river [Centralia]," he wrote.

At least one person at Grand Rapids wanted to start a program of instruction. George Neeves, a sawmill owner, pledged two dollars per week and travel expenses for a teacher.

On Friday evening, Nov. 29th, Marsh addressed a small collection of Grand Rapids residents. From John 8:53, he took the message, "Except ye eat flesh of son of man, etc." Serious attention, he said, was paid to the word. "Few females present, the audience composed mostly of males."

On Saturday, Nov. 30th, the ground was covered with snow. Marsh visited with Neeves and Mr. Searls, who, he said, was a son-in-law of old Mr. Klyne.

Marsh called upon Mr. Warner's family. "Mr W a member of the Meth Ch in the state of NY but makes no pretensions to religion here. His wife intelligent and agreeable but not pious. Gave her the tract, The Time not Come."

The Grand Rapids experience could not have been encouraging. Four years later, on June 7, 1854, Rev. Dexter Clary, Beloit, chief of Wisconsin's Home Missionary movement, wrote: "Begin . . . At Portage City on Wis. River and go up that 200 miles & you will find but one of our missionaries, Mr. Turner at Stevens Point. And yet there are people and families, & they need Sab. Schools & the gospel ministry."

One of those sorely in need of reformation, according to Marsh's account, was Robert Wakely, whom Marsh met at Portage. "His face was red and bloated. I heard him use profane language, and he evidently appeared at evening as if under the influence of intoxicating drink. Oh! what a life to live to have no reference to that what is to come."



## Hiram Freeman 1860

FREEMAN, HIRAM, son of Constant and Prudence (Cleveland) Freeman, was born in Waitsfield, Vt., 1811, March 20. Burr's Seminary, Manchester; Oneida Institute. Graduated, Gilmanton Theological Seminary, 1843. Ordained, East Concord, N.H., 1843, Sept. 27, dismissed, 1846, June 10; acting pastor, Potosi, Wis., 1846-9; Oshkosh, 1849-57; without charge, Ripon, 1857-60; acting pastor, Kewanee, Ill., 1861-4; without charge, Oshkosh, 1864-7; acting pastor, Blairstown, Io., 1867-9; without charge, Ames, Dexter, and after 1881, Sioux City. Married, 1840, Jan. 9, Adelaine Weare, daughter of Joseph and Phoebe (Jefferson) Guernsey, who died 1891, Aug. 4. Of three children, a son and a daughter are living. Died of dropsy, 1896, June 27, aged 85 years, 3 months, and 7 days.

*Hiram Freeman* went west from Vermont to make a career out of serving small new churches in the Midwest. He resided in Grand Rapids at the time of the 1860 organization of a Congregational church of six members but does not appear to have been the pastor of record, at least not at the time of an 1860 Congregational report.

## Home Missionary Agent

A Report from H. Freeman  
Grand Rapids, Wood County

So far as can now be ascertained, no New School Presbyterian or Congregational minister has labored in Wood County previous to January, 1860. Grand Rapids has been to a great extent neglected and overlooked. The Home Missionary Agent visited this point and has endeavored to secure ministerial service for this people, but was not successful till recently. The fact that this point is located in the lumbering district, among a people supposed to be rough and almost wild, prevented the

earlier occupancy of this field. I have not been on the ground three months; and in this time have been able to visit nearly every Protestant family included in the population.

Grand Rapids occupies the east side of the Wisconsin River, and Centralia the west side. The foreigners, on both sides of the river, are numerous. They are mostly French, and comprise about one third of the population. Some of them have Protestant tendencies; the greater part are Romanists, though the liberal class.

Much good may be done among them by judicious and faithful labors. Learning that an advocate of the strange theory, that man's soul dies and sleeps in the grave with the body till the resurrection, had been here, and by his extreme fluency had commended his views to many minds, it appeared to me desirable that a course of lectures be given, on the powers of the human soul and its immortality. As soon as the new hall was completed, where our services are now held, I entered upon a course of lectures on the subject named above, and addressed them particularly to the young men. Our hall is well filled in the morning with attentive listeners; but is more densely packed in the evening, when the lectures are given.

I do not know, in the whole population on both sides of the river, estimated to embrace about fifteen hundred souls, over thirty persons who give visible evidence of piety. The Gospel has here no outside helps, or next to none; but it is nevertheless commanding the attention and respect of many, at the present time. There are only a few in this community who sympathize with the minister but many treat him with consideration and kindness.

## An Exploring Tour

In compliance with the request of a business man, I spent one week in the western part of Wood County, and gave two discourses in a little village where the Gospel was never published before. Every person in the community that could be present to hear the word, attended those two meetings. No hymn book of any description could be found in the settlement; though the lady by whom I was cordially entertained remarked, that she had a hymn book, which, she thought, was lent to someone. The proprietor of the village extended to me the kindest hospitality, desired me to preach there at least once a month, offered to raise a subscription to secure the services of a minister a part of the time, and made me a handsome present as I parted from him. I gave, before my return, two other sermons, in another lumbering village, which were heard with attention. This exploring trip, over a space of seventeen miles, convinced me, that another minister is greatly needed in this county.

Printed in

**The Home Missionary:**

for the year ending  
April, 1861

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published by

**The American Home Missionary Society,  
1861**

## A New Book

We are under obligations to H.A. Temple, Esq., of this town, for a very neatly printed volume, substantially bound in embossed morocco, with a label printed across its back in gilt letters, which reads, Holy Bible.

We have employed much of our leisure moments, since its receipt, in examining its pages. We find it divided into two parts—called the Old and the New Testament.

The former part we find to be a curious compilation by different authors, and treats very largely of the wars and amours of a strange people, who descended from a very cunning, artful and dishonest man named Jacob, who defrauded his brother and extorted the perpetual blessing of God by a falsehood to his blind old father.

Some parts of this book is very obscene. The story about the Lord's meeting Moses at an Inn and seeking to kill him, excites our wonder.

The New Testament we have given a cursory glance. The character and sayings of Christ we admire exceedingly, and are astonished that the "Lord's chosen People" should have treated him so badly; but when we consider the dishonesty and selfishness of their ancestry, perhaps there is no reason for wonder.

The above passage, written by editor Jack Brundage in the Wood County Reporter on March 24, 1858, excited an immediate rejoinder by William McFay of Rudolph.

"I see in your sheet of the 24th ult., you notify the gift of a New Book from your second begotten, which book you criticize in an unjust, absurd and inconsistent manner.

"Unjust in that you hold up some of the vices of the Fathers, without saying a word of their virtues, to a community who in

general are more capable of judging the qualities of shingles, lumber, river running, &C., than they are of distinguishing between the virtues and vices, truths, precepts and examples enclosed in that Book you so scoffingly call the Bible . . .

"Inconsistent, in that after spewing out your calumnious venom against the Book, you sum up by saying that after all you think it the best book extant."

On the same page, Brundage replied to McFay in a two-column defense.

"If by 'forbidden ground' you would



imply that we must not speak the truth about any book, being or principle in the universe, we would simply ask why has God implanted in our organisms a precious faculty called Reason?

... "We do not approve of many teachings of the Bible, among which are the following:

"1st. It sanctions drunkenness, when it declares 'it good to take a little wine for the stomach's sake' . . .

"2d. It approves of a community deliberately murdering a man . . . The Bible says, 'An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and blood for blood' . . .

"3d. Two sentences in the Bible as emphatically establish the institution of Slavery as being divine, as other portions repudiate it. 'Servants, obey your masters' . . .

"4th. God is there exhibited as a being of revenge, tyranny, anger, imbecility, jealousy, and a God of war and cruelty.

... "And the book itself should not be condemned because it contains a history of ancient semi-barbarous people, but the blame should be attached to those who constantly reiterate that the characteristics of the Almighty are described therein and no one must gainsay its infallibility.

"A great portion of this book is so repulsive and absurd, that it is a matter of great surprise that much of it should ever gain credence, even in the darkest ages of antiquity; infinitely more so, that it should be tolerated by the professed intelligence of the nineteenth century."

The next stage in the debate was a full page dialogue in the Reporter in which Brundage answered the Stevens Point Pinery and a "friend" who signed as "Veritas."

"... When the Pinery says we war against Christianity, it does us great injus-

tice. We claim to be among those who admire, imitate (so far as our propensities allow) and enforce the beautiful and philosophical teachings of 'him who spake as never man spake;' and if this is 'levying a war against Christianity,' then we are proud of our effort."

The two-column response of "Veritas" is quoted in the same April 14 paper.

"... Again you 'wonder' that the Lord 'sought to kill Moses.' . . . it was not Moses' life that was threatened, but the son of Ziporah, and this threatening was made in consequence of the nonfulfillment, on the part of his parents, of a part of the covenant engagement, viz circumcision . . .

"Your allusion to the 'Lord's chosen people' and their 'ancestry,' is nothing against the inspiration of the sacred text, it goes to show more clearly that the record, concerning their fearful plunge from the apex of pristine purity—their inherent depravity, and moral corruption, is everlastingly true—Censure is implied or expressed, in reference to actual crime the Bible through . . .

"Now sir, if there is no difference between 'murdering' and 'capital punishment,' then we are dull of apprehension. Murder is the act of 'killing a human being unlawfully and with premeditated malice.'

"Capital punishment is the execution of an individual, convicted of murder, and executed by the 'laws' of the country . . .

"Slavery, in the common acceptance of the term, DID NOT EXIST IN 'Old Testament' times.

"The Bible had withstood the combination of force and intellect—infidelity has brought its worst weapons into the field, sectarian bigotry, sometimes its professed friend, has tried to consign it to oblivion by fire and fagot—by 'proscriptive edicts' and

'damnatory creeds' . . . yet the Bible stands peerless, in the minds of the best scholars and wisest men of any and every land, and will to the end of time."

Brundage replied to his "respected friend" with three more columns of arguments, citations and logic.

"You deny the assertion that it was Moses' life the Lord sought to take . . . that it was the son of Zipporah who was to be annihilated, because, forsooth, his parents had neglected to circumcize him! Why, sir, such a rendition of justice would, on this 'depraved' mundane sphere, sink the arbitrator so far beneath the level of even barbarians that the trump of Gabriel would fail to arouse him.

"When Christ quotes with approbation, 'Thou shalt not kill,' he makes no exception . . . capital punishment is wicked, because many an innocent man has undergone execution . . .

"As to the dissimilarity of Slavery in Bible times and American Slavery, we desire to be enlightened. Were not the slaves bought?"

Brundage offered another specimen of what he considered imbecility in Gen. vi. 5-7.

"And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

"Then the Infinite was unable to foresee that man would be 'only evil continually,' and he was 'grieved at the heart,' by reflecting upon the act he had so thoughtlessly performed, and resolved to make amends for his own shortsightedness by destroying the result of his own careless labors!" wrote Brundage.

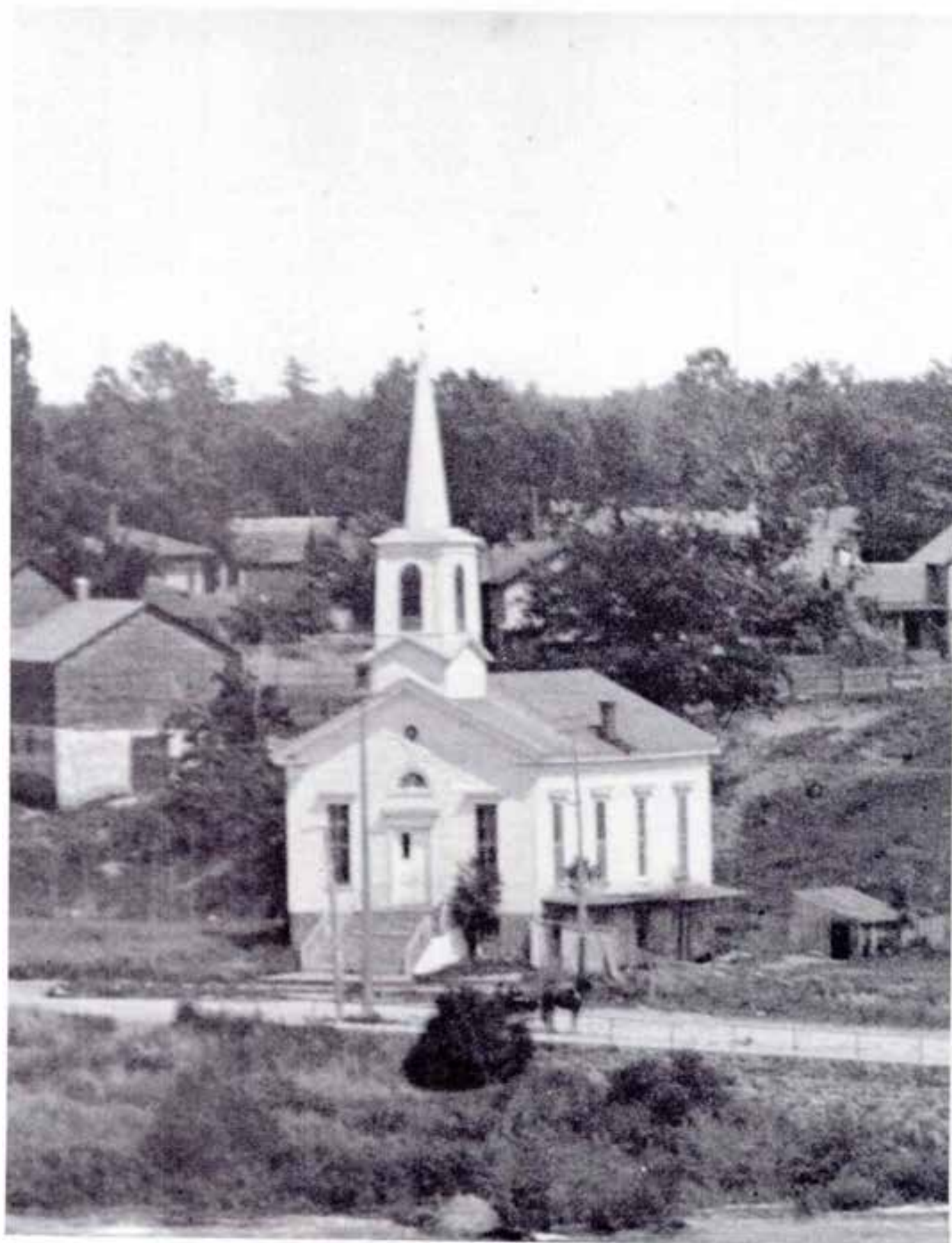
"O, how little do men who believe this know of, and how low they estimate, the character of the Being they thus so wantonly traduce and blaspheme.

"The Almighty is represented as having tried his hand at experiments, in which he has failed; as having created man for happiness, but owing to the bad conduct of the created being, the result will be misery to all but a mere fraction of the race!

". . . We could multiply similar passages until our columns should be filled; but we will pause here, and thus afford you an opportunity to breathe awhile if you are fatigued . . ."

Brundage, as editor, was able to get in the last word. His strong feelings and those of his intellectual adversaries demonstrate the vitality of the issues involved—the nature of the Bible, the infallibility of the Bible and seeming contradictions between the spirit of the Old and New Testaments. Even among the first generation of residents on the riverbank frontier was theology of paramount importance.





1865 Church



# First Church

The Congregational church here had its origin in 1856, when a few people of that faith secured the services of Rev. Jesse Edwards, an "old school Presbyterian" from Plover who conducted services in LaVigne's hall on the East Side. The building also was used as a boarding house by French-Canadian lumberjacks. It is said that their snores, or worse, shouts of "high, low, jack and the game," could be heard from behind a partition as services were conducted on Sunday mornings.

The Baptist-Congregational Society was organized in 1858 under Rev. Smith, a "free will Baptist."

Services were conducted in the old schoolhouse. Methodists also were included in some Congregational attempts to worship at a time when few denominations had church buildings. "There will be public preaching tomorrow, April 24 (1859), by Rev. Mr. Harris, at the Magnolia Hall at half past ten o'clock A.M., and at O. Garrison & Co.'s Hall at two o'clock P.M.," said the Wood County Reporter "Spinal Column" writer, H.B. Philleo.

On Feb. 4, 1860, a benefit was reported for Rev. C.H. Smith at Magnolia Hall. It raised \$70 in cash and "articles for family consumption." Various amusements were indulged in, although "one species of amusement, we didn't exactly fancy," said Philleo.

"This selling of kisses for five or ten cents seems rather cheap, although we haven't observed the quotations in the Buffalo papers of late. Perhaps it makes a difference when the proceeds go for the furtherance of the Christian religion."

As reported previously, Rev. H. Freeman, a Home Missionary, had been working in the area in 1860. *Churches in Wisconsin, 1850-1860*, says the Grand Rapids church was organized in 1860 with six members but was also "vacant" in 1860. The church had been charged with \$300 of total aid from the Lemonweir Convention Home Missions and had returned in total contributions \$5.

In February 1862, the Reporter observed that "the Congregationalists are endeavoring to obtain the services of a Minister of the Gospel of that denomination, the present year."

That minister was James W. Harris, "a young

man without previous training or experience, but full of faith in the holy spirit," according to 1874 church records. A church was organized at a meeting in Hurley's Hall on March 27, 1862, by Rev. Dexter Clary, agent of the American Home Missionary Society. A member of the 1862 congregation, Mrs. S.A. Pratt, wrote, in 1891, that a church member said to Clary, "We are few in number, poor in worldly goods, and weak."

"Well," said Clary, "you will have to creep for a while before you can get on your feet and walk."

On Dec. 6, 1862, the Reporter announced a series of Home Lectures at Hurley's Hall, the first to be delivered by Rev. Harris.

In January, a "donation" was conducted at Roe's Hall for Rev. Harris, raising \$120.

Many innocent games were indulged in, wrote Philleo, and enjoyed. "Although we have ever been an earnest admirer of the old antedeluvian game of leapfrog," he said, "still, on this occasion, a lack of sufficient quantity of pantaloons in the sitting down position of our pants prohibited a participation in this cherished game."

Resident pastor Harris was ordained at a ministerial convention of Presbyterian and Congregational churches in Grand Rapids in February 1863, "being the first of the kind that ever took place in Wood County."

In the week of March 10, 1864, a "jolly crowd" assembled at Rev. Harris' to prepare two barrels of pickled "esculants" for Union soldiers. John Norton boasted of his powers of endurance "in filling a barrel with pickled potatoes through the bung."

The subject of erecting a new church came up in April 1864, when the ladies of the Congregational Society organized a sewing sociable in order to contribute to a building fund. A dance to aid the construction was publicized on June 9, 1864. It would be held at Arpin Hall at a cost of \$2 per couple. "Those desirous of assisting in building a church, who love to dance, don't love to attend meetings, and who object to directly rendering such aid, have now a special chance to give the much-needed aid in their own way, and as much of it as they choose to give," said Philleo. "The music



## James Watson Harris 1862-1868

**HARRIS, JAMES WATSON**, son of David and—(Watson) Harris, was born in Cornwall, England, 1831, April 25. Came to America, 1843. Kenosha Academy, Beloit College, 1852-3; ordained, 1862, March 27; acting pastor, Grand Rapids, 1862-8; Evansville, 1868-77; The Dalles, Ore., 1878; Albany, 1879-86; Salem, 1886-8; Arlington, 1888-9; Salem, without charge, until death. Married, 1854, Oct. 4, Maria A., daughter of Alanson and Eliza (Robinson) Foster of Union Grove, Wis. One daughter living; a son and two daughters deceased, one of whom was Mrs. W.W. Curtis, of the Japan mission. Died of softening of the brain, 1889, May 16, aged 68 years and 21 days.

will be furnished by the Metropolitan Band."

The dance was "gay" but few attended. Philleo, a Congregationalist, wanted to know why. "This mode of raising funds is rational—one of the sensible things the church has recently done. Where's the harm in contracting and relaxing the muscles of the legs in a ball-room, to the music of catgut and resin? . . . We thank God the church is becoming revolutionized—sensible.

"About forty dollars were realized at the dance, which will materially aid the society in erecting a tasty church."

A building committee was elected in July 1864, at Hurley's Hall, and the frame for the church was erected in late August 1864. "It is located on a beautiful eminence on the Kline estate, just south of the bakery," said the Reporter.

All did not transpire pacifically, however. On Tuesday afternoon, while the belfry of the new church was being raised, "a portion of the frame gave way, precipitating a large number of men, with lumber and timbers, to the floor twenty feet below.

"Several were terribly bruised, and it is almost miraculous that none were killed outright." Among the injured were Peter Larrimee, Wm. Kline, R.W. Lyon, R.C. Worthington, J.A. Norton, Michal Abrel and Rev. Harris.

Many resumed their occupations the following week. Rev. Harris, more seriously hurt, suffered a relapse and remained in critical condition.

Exactly when the building was actually finished is not certain.

T.W. Stevenson, an architect who held the contract for Chicago & North Western Railway bridges, presented the Reporter with a drawing of the new Congregational Church. "If the church looks half as well as the design," said the newspaper, "it will indeed be an ornament to our town."

On December 21, 1865, church officers signified that the House of Worship built by the First Congregational Church of Grand Rapids had been completed and that the \$400 offered by the American Congregational Union would be sufficient to pay all debts.



## John H. Cameron 1869-1870

**CAMERON, JOHN H.**, born in Pennsylvania, Dec. 22, 1834. Ordained: 1864; entered Congregational fellowship, 1868. Congregational Pastorates: Grand Rapids, Wis., 1868-70; Markesan, Wis., 1870-73; New Richmond, Wis. 1873-76; Pewaukee, Wis., 1876-81; Stockbridge, Wis., 1882-84; Pewaukee, Wis. (second pastorate), 1884-92; Bristol and Paris, Wis., 1893-98; Pewaukee, Wis. (third pastorate), 1903-15. Died at Pewaukee, Wis., Jan. 25, 1926.



**The New Congregational Church**—A few days since were shown a draught of the new Congregational Church, executed by T.W. Stevenson, Master Architect. It was a fine specimen of drawing, and reflects great credit upon the architectural skill of Mr. S. If the church looks half as well as the design, it will be indeed an ornament to our town.

Mr. Stevenson is one of the best architects in the north-west, which accounts for his obtaining the contract to construct the bridges and aqueducts of the C. & N.W. R.R., the material for which he purchased while in Milwaukee last winter.

December 8, 1864

**Miss Susie Rablin** came near meeting a serious accident in passing out of the Congregational church after rehearsal last Saturday evening. Owing to a misstep she fell upon the

boards bridging the space between the church and the walk, striking her lip upon the points of one of those little charms—a pair of scissors—now so much worn. Fortunately, it was only a trifling wound. It might have been worse.

July 7, 1873

**Grading**—The street which is being straightened north of the Congregational Church is being graded just north of the Roche House. The sidewalks have been taken up, and a comfortable squad of men are busy with scrapers, shovels and barrows. When the street is finished it will be one of the finest in the City. The residents have taken care to plant shade trees the past few years, and the result is, that north of Mr. Rablin's store our city has the finest walk within its precincts.

August 7, 1873





## Ezra Greenwood Carpenter 1870-1871

CARPENTER, EZRA GREENWOOD, son of Dan and Roxanna (Crawford) Carpenter, was born in Potsdam, N.Y., 1829, Dec. 20. St. Lawrence Academy. Theological study, for a few months, in Chicago Theological Seminary, and with Rev. W.B. Dada, of Minnesota. Ordained evangelist at Maiden Rock, Wisconsin, 1868, Dec. 30. Acting pastor there, 1867-70; Grand Rapids, 1870-2; Corning, Iowa, 1872-4. Installed, Stuart, 1874, Aug. 22; resigned, 1875, March 17. Acting pastor, Winthrop, 1875-6; Golden Prairie, 1877, till death. Married, 1852, Dec. 24, Amanda M., daughter of William and Martha (Harrison) Bishop, of Fairwater, Wis. One of three children is living. Died of consumption, 1879, Aug. 25, aged 49 years, 8 months, and 5 days.

The new foundation just put under the Congregational Church is at last completed. We now hope to see the wood work, and plastering commenced at once, and the rooms fitted for the purposes for which they were intended. The sooner this is done, the sooner the platform and steps will be completed, and the people may get in and out of the church without the fear of breaking their necks.

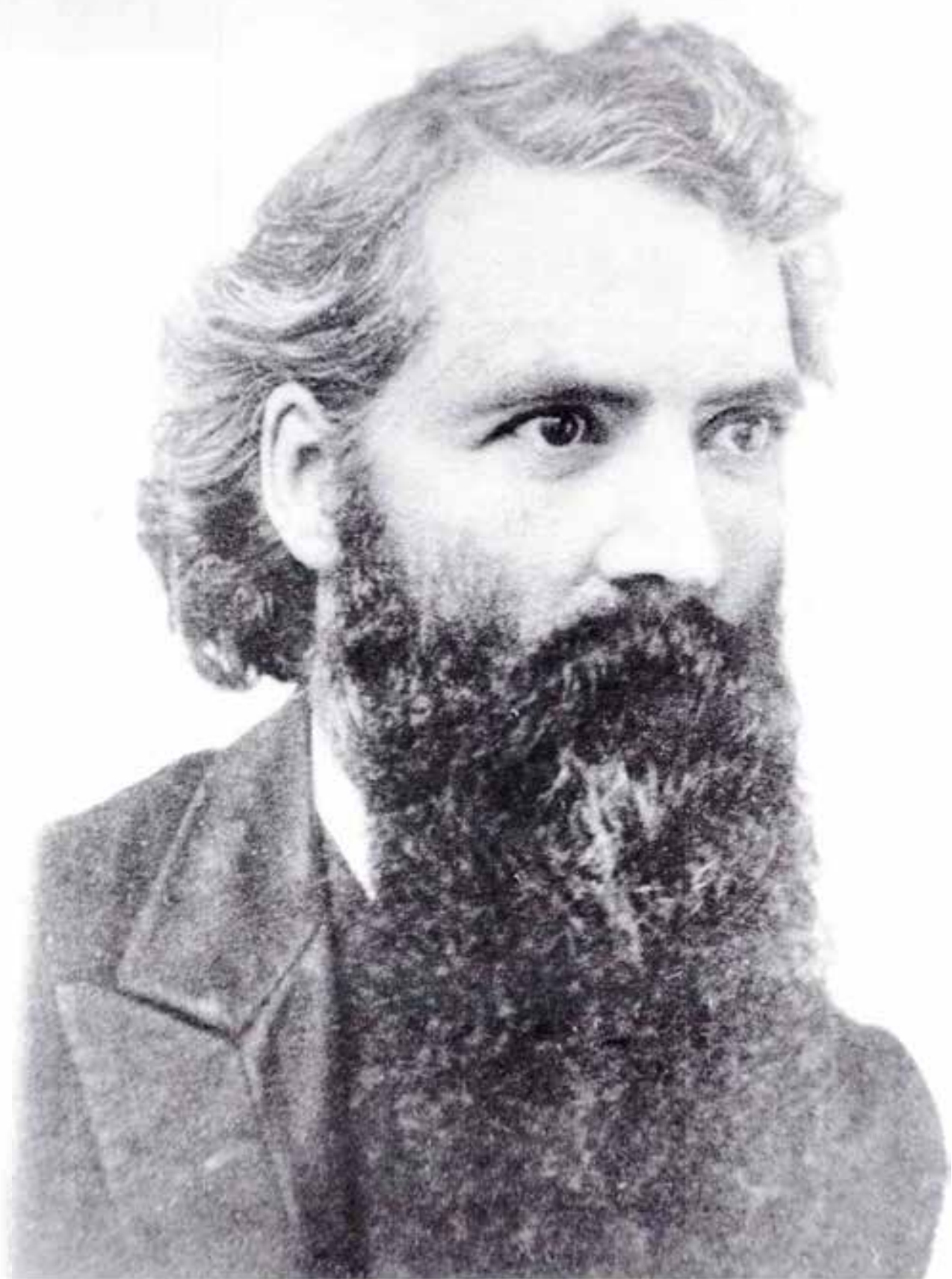
Everything seems to be coming in a lump this Thursday. To-day. The Congregational Sociable has a picnic at Ed. Smith's grove and in the evening the Rev. Bishop Armitage preaches at the Methodist Church, and Supt. Fallows lectures at the Congregational Church. The Institute is in session all day, and the Republican Assembly Convention holds its session at

Friendship. Our wife is making soap, and we are sweating to get off the *Reporter*, and consequently stand a good show to enjoy nothing but the soap making. Such is the life of an editor. For real solid comfort we would much prefer a basket of peaches without the cholera attachment, of course.

**August 21, 1873**

There has been a new stairway erected in the Congregational Church connecting the upper room with the basement from the inside of the building. This was done to prevent the necessity of going outside the building to get to the basement, also to make the arrangement more convenient for Sabbath School purposes.

**February 12, 1885**



H.B. Philleo



# H.B. Philleo

In Civil War times, a personality emerged in Grand Rapids who was less politic than polemic, less industrial than intellectual, more poetic than pragmatic. Having come of age in the civilized East during the flowering of Transcendentalism, H.B. Philleo embodied the vitality and vision of the fully-engaged 19th-century church.

Philleo's Huegenot ancestor, John Fillow, had fled Catholic persecution in France around 1700 for America. Philleo's parents were Bonaparte and Eliza Benchley Philleo. H.B.'s grandfather, Enoch, fought on the side of the American army at Valley Forge.

Bonaparte (1801-1855) served as a role model for his son. He was for a brief period a professor in the Fairfield Medical College, N.Y., and practiced in Herkimer County, N.Y. He early became identified with the anti-slavery cause, in the days when to advocate the rights of humanity, according to H.B. was to be "persecuted of men." The Philleo family history states that Bonaparte espoused anti-slavery and temperance reforms "with all the fearlessness and fervor of his nature" and consequently "suffered a martyrdom at the hands of liquor and pro-slavery elements."

A man of strong, broad and liberal religious nature, Bonaparte had no sympathy with bigotry. A Democrat in the Jackson days, he later identified with the Liberty party. His brother, Calvin, married Prudence Crandall, originator of free-Negro schools in Rhode Island.

Hart Benton, probably named after Thomas Hart Benton, Missouri anti-slavery senator, was born at Cedarville, near Utica, May 16, 1834. His sister Helen said in 1884 that the family house was a station on the underground railroad and that her mother taught an old black man to read while he stayed.

The Philleos, said Helen, who had helped run a school for women at Boonville, N.Y., were radicals. "They were of those who have lead the

way to the present emancipation of women."

H.B. or "Benton," received a "common school" education, mainly at Newport, N.Y. After leaving school, he moved with his family to Utica, where Bonaparte added the drug business to his professional practice and the son remained until 1856, when he headed for the West and a primitive frontier town on the bank of the Wisconsin River. He had been preceded by his uncle, Samuel Benchley, brother of John Benchley (or Bensley) and brother of Eliza Benchley Philleo.

In October, 1856, Philleo, in partnership with one of the Benchleys, engaged in the mercantile and lumber trade in Grand Rapids until, it is said, the general financial crash of 1857 wiped him out.

Throughout his boyhood, Philleo showed a fondness for study but poor health prevented him from taking the college course. He was able to fulfill his desire for the literary life when he signed on as local editor of the Wood County Reporter in 1858.

At the same time, he, as had his father, carried on a drug store trade, H.B. with J.E. Ingraham, who in 1873 joined him as partner in the newspaper.

Philleo continued as political editor of the Reporter. For six years, he acted as a deputy director of internal revenue. He was appointed postmaster of Grand Rapids in 1861 and held the post for almost eight years.

During the later years of his life, Philleo served as clerk of court for Wood County. He was president of the school board for several years.

Philleo had been an Abolitionist but joined the Republican party upon its organization, "believing that it embodies the only political ethics which can result in the highest good of the nation."

In 1877, Philleo stood five feet nine inches and weighed 165 pounds.



## Benton's Plight

Letters from the collection of Jean Nash show the course of history threatened by unrequited love. The several billets-doux portray vividly cruelties not only of nature but of romance.

"Owing to the amount of business on hand before starting down the river, it will be impossible for me to keep my engagement this evening," wrote H.B. Philleo to his best gal, Isabella Ingham. "I shall start tomorrow morning . . . and will write the first chance I have."

About the time Philleo left, in late February 1858, his sister, Helen, wrote from Boonville, New York, to Isabella, whom she had never met. "We are glad you find our black brother (he was black when he came home last summer) interesting & loveable & we hope you will ever find him, as we believe he is, noble & faithful."

Philleo wrote to "Bella" April 14 from Portage: "We have had a very disagreeable time up to this morning. Nothing but snow, rain and wind night and day. A frozen blanket is not a very agreeable companion, especially when one is soaking wet and almighty tired and hungry. One of our boats has been broken three times and, of course, sunk immediately but energy and perseverance will accomplish almost anything."

Of his dreary Sunday, Philleo wrote: "How much I would have given could I have been with you . . . I will expect to hear from you . . . I trust you will not think I am asking too much. A letter from you would cheer many a dreary hour."

In closing, Philleo apologized for the appearance of the letter: "My fingers are so numb it is almost impossible for me to

make a mark."

In the ensuing two weeks, Philleo suffered much. On April 28, he wrote from Davenport, Iowa, his destination: "It is quite cheering to once more think I am on dry land, where I can assume the appearance of one of God's creatures . . . sometimes I do think I am some distant connection to that same veritable being."

Philleo cursed the shingle boats and lumber rafts he apparently had accompanied: "I've sworn more at those boats since I left Grand Rapids than ever the D . . . I expected I could have done."

"Did you receive a poorly written letter from me mailed at Portage? I was most dead when I wrote it and should have neglected writing wholly had I not felt it to be my duty to keep my engagement."

Philleo continued to fret: "I wish you would write me, Bella, if you love me. I go to the office every morning but am at each time disappointed. A letter from you would ever be acceptable and treasured above all else and more especially while a stranger in a strange land."

He implored Bella to write but only if so doing would be in accordance with her true feelings.

Where was that letter? Having not received it yet by May 5, Philleo belabored his unresponsive love alternately with lamentations and insinuations:

"Nearly four long weeks have elapsed since I left Grand Rapids with the cheering hope that I should receive occasionally a letter from you. We both promised to write—solemnly promised—I have now written you four letters but as yet have not



Benton

received a single line from you . . . . This is something—Bella, I did not expect neither can I account for it. I did not think, Bella, I would so soon be forgotten.”

Philleo followed with a rhetorical man of straw he must have hoped soon would be run out from the garden:

“It is evident that your feelings towards me are assuming a rapid change—else I should hear from you. If such is the case, Bella, I have nothing to say . . . My most faithful wish is, that your future life may be perfectly happy . . .”

A stab, however, followed immediately: “I cannot believe you to be a coquette.”

Since it would be “ungentlemanly” to write again without knowing his correspondence was “acceptable,” Philleo vowed to cease.

By May 12, the gloom lifted abruptly.

“You cannot tell my delight upon receiving a letter from you dated May the 8th. The first I have received since I left home nearly five weeks since. I could not believe but that you had written. Still, I could not account for their non-reception.

“Bella, I am very sorry I wrote so hastily in my last letter. I must ask you to overlook what I sent while in such an unpleasant state of mind. I certainly thought I was forgotten by you . . .

“All that was dark and gloomy—now looks bright and encouraging.”

He later returned to the subject of an absent lover’s plight: “The five weeks I have been away have seemed like ages. I never was so lonely in my life. Not even a letter from Mr. Benchley.

“Oh! Bella, if you knew how I felt because I did not hear from you . . . I did not doubt your love for me, although I made the expression you mentioned. My impulsive temperament caused me to write such lines I would gladly have obliterated upon a sober, second thought—but it was too late—the letter was gone.”

Philleo, knowing he had waxed self-indulgent previous, finished with a final plea: “Now, Bella—you will overlook that trashy letter of mine, won’t you? Just think of enquiring at the Post Office for five weeks, every day—and receive nothing—but a short, quick ‘no’ from a menial of Uncle Sam’s Agent—Buchanon.

“I have sat up until after 12 to get time to answer yours as I received it about 9½—the evening—so good night—Bella, and believe me to be

“Yours Most Affectionately

“Benton”

In spite of any early trials, on September 1, 1858, Bella married her anxious lover, H. Benton Philleo.



# Spinal Column

Because he recorded in print much about his life and that of his community, H.B. Philleo's prominence in our history has been assured. It is also to his credit that what he wrote he wrote with wit, grace and humor.

## **The Spinal Column**

Many of Philleo's observations came to us through "The Spinal Column," an informal, early "River City Memoirs" that appeared in the Wood County Reporter of the 1860s and 1870s.

On Nov. 9, 1861, Philleo, under his usual pseudonym, P.P. Maccaroni, wrote: "We shall now endeavor to present to our readers local matters, weekly, served up in the latest French editorial style, without sauce, and we can assure our readers they shall be presented in a style, as they ever have been, clothed in the pleasing regalia of blushing modesty and unassuming innocence . . . . We shall endeavor to fear God and keep our bowels open, and trust to the generosity of our friends in placing us in that lofty niche of fame, of which we have heard so much, yet never reached, owing probably to a spinal complaint with which we have been afflicted for the past two years."

## **"Grafted"**

The continuity of "The Spinal Column" was seriously threatened when, on November 26, 1863, a list of conscripts for the War Between the States included the name of H.B. Philleo. "Yes, we—that is, P.P. Maccaroni, is 'grafted into the army,'" wrote Philleo. "Uncle Abraham

called us, and we heard him. The idea that he was joking didn't occur to us. We knew that he was in earnest, and visions of blue pants, bob tailcoats, and a little cap that will hold a half pint of peanuts, and an old Belgian rifle that shoots both ways, came up before our eyes, and we sang, 'I'm a conscript, I'm a soldier.'

"Now, if the law exempts us, we shall stay at home; if not, we shall go to war; and, though not in the habit of boasting of our valor or prowess, still, when the tug of conflict comes, if Secesh don't see some of the d-----t fighting she ever saw, then Jeff. Davis can have our head for a footstool and our bones for ornaments. Wouldn't our teeth make a pretty necklace for some secesh damsel?"

If Scarlett O'Hara wore Philleo's teeth around her neck, she got them in a pre-emptive strike. A Dec. 9 document from the draft board attests to his exemption by reason of "loss of all the teeth of the Superior Maxillary Bone. And all the molars of the Lower."

## **A Three-Cent Business**

Whatever his literary talents, Philleo did not earn a living by writing alone. He worked simultaneously as a local businessman, an appointed government official and as teacher.

A "banking institution" was associated with Philleo's Wood County Drug Store, at which also was conducted (by Postmaster Philleo) the U.S. Post Office for Grand Rapids.

His remarks in the Reporter offer some



insight into federal service on the 1860s frontier. On May 11, 1861, Philleo announced that the drug store, "heretofore Maccaroni's private office but now gratuitously tendered to the P.O. Department, will be open during usual business hours."

In June, he said, "The business is a three-cent one, and thirty-three and a third of the little papes constitute a dollar. We are disposed to accommodate but can't at a sacrifice."

Philleo continued to demand payment in cash. He posted a note to that effect on his door and wrote in the Reporter: "If this don't break the ice, we'll begin to talk plain to your faces for, by the Eternal, as long as we retain our commish, the regulations have got to be obeyed."

In November, Philleo said that, due to the cold weather, the post office would close at night. "It's poor fun to handle frosty locks and frozen shoe leather at an early hour of the morning."

An ancillary occupation was announced in June 1861. Philleo said he was connected with one of the best law firms in the state and that he stood ready to assist discharged soldiers, widows or heirs to obtain pensions, bounties and back pay.

### **Home Lecture Society**

From 1859, Philleo supported the Home Lecture Society as an organizer and lecturer.

Another newspaper editor analyzed one of Philleo's lectures, finding it an excellent production read in an admirable style and flawed by a few sentiments even the author found "untenable." "But we must not criticize these lectures," continued

Jack Brundage, who had married a sister of Philleo's wife, Isabella, "or someone will pull our hair."

### **Jenny Linds & Black Swans**

A method of enhancing both the fine arts and material living was the opening, in 1860, of a singing school at Hurley's Hall, where Philleo promised to teach the rudiments of vocal music. "All ye who desire to become Jenny Linds or 'Black Swans' prepare to come."

The singing school opened and enjoyed at least temporary success.

### **Serving Mrs. Maccaroni**

On Dec. 20, 1862, Philleo explained that the post office would be open for only one hour on Sundays.

"We have many good friends who imagine that it is a heap of fun for us to devote the whole of Sunday to the wants of the Dear People. They don't think that we, being a slave for six days, require the 7th.

"After this day, we propose to devote our Sundays to our own use—to sit by our own fire-side, read the Bible, Shakespeare, Tim Titcomb's Letters, the N.Y. Tribune, the Sentinel, Wood County Reporter, Mother Goose's Melodies and Almanac, if we so desire. Or smoke our pipe and closely scan Ike Marvel's Reveries, or preach, pray or sing as our conscience dictates, without feeling ourself under any obligations to become a Sunday minute man at the option of those who feel that we are a bound out slave and have no inalienable right.

"No, gentlemen! We propose to devote ourself in the future to the pleasing society of Mrs. Maccaroni and Maccaroni Jr., so don't disturb us on Sunday, if you please."

# Abstract of Sermon

R.M. Webster  
Dec. 29, 1872

We will take a look backward and a look forward. 'Tis greatly wise to talk with our best hours, and ask them what report they bear to heaven, and how they might have born more welcome news."

Various indeed are the reports which, during the last year, have gone heavenward, from the various persons and the various lives of this congregation. I cannot doubt that many of these reports have honored and pleased—have satisfied, our Father. I cannot doubt that many have grieved him. For, there has been self-denial, but there has been self-pleasing also; there has been faith and hope and charity, but there has been unbelief, despondency, and selfishness. I should like to know which sort of reports out-numbered the other . . .

At least, as I have gone about among the members of this church during the year, I have seen much more to admire than to condemn, much more that is beautiful than is bad, and to me there is very much more that appears hopeful than appears discouraging.

In the beginning of the year, some special meetings were held, in connection with the week of prayer, which were a means of grace to many, and a very special blessing to a few. At the close of those meetings, twelve united with the church, every one of whom is in good repute among us all today.

During the year we have parted with four members: James Smith, who united with the church at Ripon; Kate Compton, now Mrs. Townsend, who joins the M.E. church with her husband, at their new home; Mrs. Gardner, who is at Necedah, not as yet connected with another church; and one of our number, Elbert Clark, has gone to Paradise.

We have gained, during the year, 8 members. We now number 83, four of whom are at present away from us, to wit: Paul Arnidsee, who is working at Wausau; Henry Searles, who is with his

friends in Adams Co.; Mrs. Wm. Wards, who has moved farther down the river, but not near to any church; and Freddie Webster, who is at school at Ripon.

During the year the young peoples' Monday evening prayer meeting has been one of our successes. Sometimes it has numbered 30; often less than 15; but, though not large in numbers, it has been a valuable help to some of our young people, who by it have become more familiar with the Bible, more established in the truth, and more thoroughly furnished unto good words and works. I believe it would be a much greater success, had we a proper room to meet in.

The regular Wednesday evening meeting has furnished, each week, an opportunity for Christian conference and inquiry and prayer. Not so many have attended as during the previous year, though I believe this is not owing to a greater lack of the spirit of prayer.

Many of our regular attendants have been sick; many praying mothers have been kept home during the year to look after the new responsibilities which God has given them. It is well worthy of remark that if "the promise is unto us, and to our children," and if the children of Christians are born within the church, according to the orthodox notion of the "Abrahamic covenant," then 12 have been added, during the year, to our church by virtue of their being born into our church families—God help us so to regard these children, that we may watch for them and train them up in the church of Jesus Christ!

The Sabbath School connected with the church has flourished during the year, with a varying history. The regular teachers' meeting on Friday evening has been well attended by the teachers and others. There has been better teaching than during the previous year.

We owe many thanks to God for our Superin-





## Robert M. Webster 1871-1875

**WEBSTER, ROBERT M.** Born London, England, Dec. 3, 1840. Hanover, Indiana College. Theology at Oberlin. Ordained 1867. "Before his departure, he [Carpenter] invited Rev. Webster to come and assist him in holding a series of meetings. Mr. Webster was then enjoying a successful pastorate at Brandon, Wis. The spirit of the Lord was graciously present and many were added to the church. Immediately after the revival, Mr. Carpenter resigned, and in April, 1871, Mr. Webster began his pastorate."

tendent, and not a few to the Superintendent [H.B. Philleo] himself.

The congregation attending the regular services of the church has averaged near about 150. The number of friends has increased. We cannot estimate the value of the moral influence exerted upon the community by the regular services of this church. That the truth of God has had free course, and will in the end be glorified by many whom it has inspired and comforted, we cannot doubt.

We have had to contend with many opposing influences—more than usual—unusual depression in the regular business of the town, for want of water—a perfect shoal of singers, show men, actors, who have dissipated thought far more than they have inspired it—the advent of the Railroads—the horse disease—an unusual amount of sickness, (I have attended fourteen

funerals) together with the usual antagonism of a selfish or careless world. Yet, by the grace of God, we have not gone backward. There has been growth—numerical, mental, and, I trust, spiritual.

There have been failures. Much more should have been done. We have cause for confession and humiliation.—Our showing, at the close of the year, ought to be much better, whether we regard growth in knowledge, in numbers, in spiritual power, or take a look at our finances. Our heads have been together in some things, while our hearts have not been united.

Now, as we look forward, what shall we say? Let us make the week of prayer, the beginning of good things! Let us put our hearts together as we plan and purpose for the church. We are part of the grand company of the Saints—of that universal church whose names are written in heaven.



## Sociables

When Warner installed two "Dictator" stoves in the remodeled 1873 Congregational Church, the draft was so strong that a log chain fastened to the floor would go quivering up the chimney and stand on end like a trained rattlesnake.

So said Fred, the janitor.

Warner thought he would try out the new stoves so he touched 'em off and, in a twinkling, away he went like a rocket up the flue.

Fred grabbed him by the boot, which was lucky for Warner since "nineteens" don't easily go up an eight-inch pipe. Off came the boots and up went Warner.

Fred ran outdoors in time to see Warner shoot out the chimney, a little blacker than usual, with a length of stove pipe in one hand and his hat in the other, shouting, "stoves and hardware."

As Warner passed the weathercock on the spire, he left his coattail and shot off toward the Four Mile.

Later in the day, he was found in the German settlement, negotiating with a good-natured German for a "Frontier" cooking stove.

Warner says his stoves draw well.

"Maybe some folks will think this a great big story," wrote H.B. Philleo, in the Wood County Reporter. "Ask Warner."

Philleo, as editor, was in a good position to depict goings-on in the early Grand Rapids Congregational Church, to which he belonged. He also kept in close touch with the only other Protestant Church in town, the Methodist Episcopal.

The original Congregational Church had been built in 1864. In 1873, it was raised four feet, and a basement parlor and kitchen were added. A new cook stove "and all the appurtenances" were placed in the kitchen.

Philleo suggested to the trustees of the church, on April 16, 1874, "that they empty the pipe of the stove in the parlor in the basement.

"Smoke is a good thing where it properly belongs. It is hard work for one in attendance at the social meetings of the week to tell positively whether he is a Christian or a sugar-cured ham.

"The meetings might be held upon the roof, shoving the firewood in the chimney; in this way, a good draft could be gotten up in the right direction. At any rate, let something be done."

In a postscript, Philleo added: "We had forgotten that we are one of the trustees of that church. We'll see that

the matter is attended to at once.

Much activity surrounded the early church, both in the building and out.

"Donations," such as that for the Rev. D.A. Peek in February, 1862, at Magnolia Hall, were early attempts at fund raising.

"All are invited to bring something with them, if nothing more than a peck of oats.

"If we can be allowed to turn somersaults, stand on our head; practice the highly amusing, instructive and beneficial gymnastic exercise of Leap-frog, we propose to go in.

"We don't propose to suck our thumbs, for in that there's nary nutrition. If the twelve Apostles could be in attendance, we'd bet on their participating in a little worldly pleasure, especially Mr. Judas.—Let's Go."

In June, 1873, a "Quaker Festival" at Worthington's Hall featured strawberries and ice cream. A "sociable" in August, at Ed Smith's grove, preceded an evening lecture at church.

In 1874, the ladies of the Congregational Society Sociable had a "quilting party" at the church. A "centennial tea" in 1876 proposed that the attendants wear costumes in keeping with Revolutionary times.

The Ladies Social and Literary Society had regular "parlor" events designed to engender a friendly and social feeling among the "people in general."

Of special interest to Philleo was the Musical Society, which was expected to prove not only entertaining but conducive to moral and intellectual culture.

Philleo attempted to resign in 1873 as "chorister" or choir director but was re-elected by the congregation. The Sabbath School and church choir offered well-attended concerts.

The choir, in January, 1879, put on an "oyster supper" that raised enough money to buy a new church organ.

Weekly "union meetings" were conducted in the '70s with the Methodist Church. Sermons were by Methodist Rev. Jesse Cole or Congregationalist Revs. R.M. Webster and, later, L.M. Foster.

The "Wood County Bible Society," of which Philleo was president, also united the two churches in reading and prayer.

Christmas occasioned special events. In 1873, "considering that the school indulged in no excursions last summer," the Sabbath School was allowed to have a Christmas tree.



## Lauren Matthew Foster 1875-1879

**FOSTER, LAUREN MATTHEW**, Born Meriden, Conn., April 1, 1843. Parents: Albert and Hannah (Merriam) Foster. Education: Yale Divinity School, graduated, 1871. Ordination: Congregational Council, Hudson, Wis., Oct. 22, 1872. Pastorates: Hudson, Wis., 1871; Grand Rapids, Wis., 1875-78; Mauston, Wis., 1879-81; Ironton, Wis., 1881-83; Salem, Wis., 1883-85; Poplar Grove, Ill., 1885-97; Black Diamond, Cal., 1902-05. Other activities: Chinese Mission, Berkeley, Cal., 1902-09; in business, California. Married Della Ann Fuller, Harvard, Ill., Aug. 10, 1880; 5 children, Mildred F. (Savage, Albert M.), Frank L., William M. (deceased), Eva D. (Wagner). Died San Jose, Cal., April 23, 1939.

"Of course, the giving of presents is voluntary," wrote Philleo, "and let no one feel any obligation resting upon them, only to have a happy time . . . There will be a festival in the basement, where the choicest viands will be served up to the hungry multitude."

In 1876, Santa was coaxed to come from the chimney by three little girls who were appointed to go to Fairyland and find out why they had been neglected.

"Two funny dwarfs and a little fairy, who came at Santa's bidding, finely conjured up a basket full of little red, pink, green and blue stockings, all filled with nuts, candies and raisins, and the school had their fill after all," wrote Philleo.

After Christmas, business matters remained crucial. The worst problem seemed to be paying the salary of the minister.

When the Rev. Foster took two weeks' vacation, Prof. Chittendon, of Grand Rapids, filled in and was paid by the taking up of a collection.

In the meantime, wrote Philleo, he hoped those indebted for salary and who should contribute for Fos-

ter's support during the next six months, would "not be dilatory in performing what is a duty and ought to be a pleasure."

The congregation indeed was dilatory in its duty and, in September, 1879, "was obliged to confess its inability to pay so wholly worthy and Christian a man as Rev. L.M. Foster, his salary. Consequently, the society will be without a pastor after next sabbath.

"Should the church have to be closed," Philleo speculated darkly, "the public would soon be convinced of its usefulness as one of the moral, social and religious lighthouses upon the coast that skirts the great sea of life."

Foster departed but the Rev. Norris accepted the pastorate on Jan. 1, 1880.

"Next sabbath, a collection will be taken for the purpose of paying Mr. Norris for the time he has been with the society prior to Jan. 1st," wrote Philleo as the ongoing struggle of the flock to reward its shepherd continued.



## The Blackboard of Hell

After Henry Jackson got drunk and shot himself in the head, H.B. Philleo wrote: "Whiskey chronicles another victory and scores 'one' on the blackboard of hell."

Because Patrick Miscell got drunk and fell fatally from a stairway at the music hall, "The demon of drink chuckles over another victim," wrote Philleo.

"Upon the heads of the saloon men of our city rests the deep damnation."

When Willie Compton, seduced by whiskey and gambling, swallowed a lethal dose of strychnine, Philleo said: "Let the better part of our community ask themselves if they can afford to have their city made a slaughter house for souls."

As Grand Rapids considered, in April 1874, prohibiting the licensing of liquor vendors, Philleo depicted a caricature of the system. "We would place a man in fine apparel, bejeweled and adorned, behind an elaborately furnished bar, dealing out the pleasant beverage, with smiles, to the young, the gay, the gentleman and the sot . . .

"Before him, a multitude of weeping mothers, wives and sisters, and ragged, attenuated children, entreating him in the name of God to quench the flame of living death . . . "

"And behind him we would place a Jupiter of majesty—the law—with uplifted arm grasping a cudgel inscribed—'License \$200. Sell! Sell!!' "

Philleo urged a vote against licensing. "We would ask what is it that has given Grand Rapids the hard name it bears abroad? Isn't it whiskey that has made our

name a bye-word all over the state?"

Despite Philleo's editorializing, the licensing prohibition failed, initiating a jeremiad of ecclesiastical proportions entitled, "Whiskey is king!"

"With the county in the hands of political desperadoes;

"The city governed by a Council whose whiskey constituents most reasonably expect will be obedient to the behests of rum;

"Taxes uncollected; certain officials whose duties remain undischarged leagued with iniquity in every form;

"The county's wealth being devoured by hungry gourmands and dishonest men, whose hands are ever ready to pilfer, and with power to legalize their robberies,—

"We are in a slough of bankruptcy, and are drawing near to a reign of terror that threatens to demolish and morally ruin us."

Centralia, across the river, had implemented a temperance ordinance. Her example, said Philleo, would prove that a city could thrive even without liquor-produced revenue.

The temperance movement in the twin cities was supported mainly by the Methodist and Congregational churches, although the Catholic denomination also was touched. With Father DeCalver's blessing, selling liquor at the Catholic Festival and dancing after midnight on Saturday were opposed, albeit unsuccessfully.

Local societies calling for first moderation and later abstinence from or prohibi-



tion of liquor were chapters of national organizations.

The International Order of Good Templars sprang to life ephemerally in 1873. They were supplanted by the Grand Rapids Temperance and Literary Society in December, 1874. It held weekly meetings at the Congregational Church.

Another setback came in May '74, when the Centralia City Council once again authorized the granting of licenses to sell liquor.

The next group arising to combat this bifurcated licentiousness was the Temple of Honor, drummed up by Mr. Benns of Fond du Lac in November, 1876. Among the 37 men who took the pledge to abstain were Paul Fontaine, George Wood and Henry Hayden.

By February, 1877, 100 temples had been formed in the state, of which Wood County was No. 77. By April, 128 were counted, with 10,000 members.

The Temple of Honor, a fraternal organization based on abstinence, resisted identification with any particular religious or political affiliation. Although the society held secret rites, open meetings were presented monthly, featuring speeches, programs and music.

The brotherhood, however, did not lean to a somber sobriety. A Thanksgiving dance featured fiddle music until "flap-jack time."

Feasts grew so bountiful that devotees, such as Philleo's brother-in-law, Jack Brundage, had to be choked off before they killed themselves eating, said Philleo.

In August, 1878, several temples met in Grand Rapids and marched with the Centralia Brass Band from the depot to the fairground for speeches by Brundage and

state temple founder Col. Watrous. Music and dancing till dawn followed.

At least one vendor of the venomous felt called to the cause. Frank Russell, in April 1874, announced that he was opening a "temperance saloon" that would sell only candy and soft drinks.

Other saloons continued to operate even on Sunday, which Philleo called illegal. They were uninhibited by the city marshal, who seemed "as listless as a Cardiff statue."

The Temple of Honor was supplemented by a revival of the Good Templars. "Excelsior Lodge" was started, with 29 charter members in 1880, at the Methodist church, by Genie Nash, state deputy for Wisconsin.

By March, six Templar lodges had opened in Wood County: Grand Rapids, Doudville, Rudolph, Auburndale, Pittsville and Dexterville. Marshfield and Nasonville, said Miss Nash, were next on the list.

The Temple of Honor rented rooms in the Odd Fellows building for several years before utilizing their own hall over the City Cash Store. This "Temperance Hall" also housed the Good Templars.

Although, by 1880, Philleo's influence, due to ill health and his resignation from the Reporter, had ebbed, his words of caution over the decade no doubt continued to resound in men's minds.

*When Dominikus Bulmeier got drunk and walked out the rear door of the saloon under the Post Office into the river and drowned, Philleo wrote:*

*"Whiskey scores another chalk mark on hell's blackboard . . .*

*"Next?"*

## Hayden's Sin

When H.B. Philleo, editor of the Wood County Reporter, depicted the sins of Wood County Judge Henry Hayden, he didn't mince words.

"The Black Vomit" headlined commentary on June 26, 1879. The subject was "the enormity of the wickedness of the licentious fiend who has despoiled a once happy home, by his wiles and insidious advances."

Hayden, Philleo believed, had committed adultery with the wife of a bank cashier, Mrs. William H. Cochran. This news had been earlier published in the Reporter but Hayden had neither admitted the crime nor had he been tried in court.

Hayden had been a candidate of the Greenback party for Attorney General and aspired also to the circuit judgeship of the Seventh District, "a position he hoped to reach by means employed so degrading and low as to disgrace him in the eyes of every right-minded man; still later striving to become mayor of our sister city, and prior to all holding the position of city superintendent of our Howe High School, and during whose administration such scandal arose as to warrant the Board in peremptorily closing the school.

"This polished devil in broadcloth has made a specialty of destroying virtue and debauching homes," said Philleo.

Philleo called Hayden an "assassin of the home," a "blood-clotted fiend whose absence from hell creates a loneliness among the fiends of Plutonian darkness," a "Glossy wretch whose course must almost make Divine love abhor and hate" and a "fiend incarnate—who has sworn to protect and defend before the sacred altar of a noble institution, whose happiness he has slaughtered in cold blood to satisfy a devilish lust."

The good editor's distaste for Judge H. was

no sudden whim.

Although in March, 1878, Philleo printed letters from Hayden commenting on political topics, ("We give Mr. Hayden's communication room, with pleasure.") by Aug. 22, the two had engaged in a vituperative exchange.

In *The Torch of Liberty*, Hayden had, under a pseudonym, insulted the editor of the Reporter through an article entitled, "A Foul Bird." Philleo in reply penned a piece called "Vermin! Vermin!"

Subsequently Hayden commenced an action for libel against Philleo for damage to character totalling \$10,000.

The *Shawano Journal* advised H.B. "Go for him, Philleo, a politician that is so thin skinned that he cannot bear criticism, should be shown no mercy."

The *Waupaca Republican* speculated, "Philleo is the editor of the Grand Rapids Reporter, and he can't nor won't, neither,—forgive Judge Henry Hayden for being and existing at all."

In November, 1878, Hayden, said Philleo, served notice on Charley Podeville to move a wood pile. "Said wood pile encroached on jujayden's premises a trifle, and jujayden couldn't strut around and put on the peacock-statesman-style that was so absolutely necessary to his existence here.

"We are informed that Charley will bring in an offset of fifteen dollars for jujayden's pukin' on the floor of Charley's saloon at sundry times when he thought he was running for Circuit Judge."

The libel case scheduled for December, 1878, was dropped but without any reconciliation.

"Mr. Hayden laid his hands on the editor of this paper the other day, but took them off promptly on being notified that he must do so or get hurt," wrote Philleo on Dec. 28.



The revelation that occasioned the "Black Vomit" epithet came through a correspondent's report in the June 19, 1879, *Reporter*.

"Nest-Hiding!" shouted the headline. "The County Judge of Wood Co. Rotten to the Core."

Without documentation, the June 19 correspondent from Centralia charged Hayden with seeming "intimate" with several women and engaging in "nest-hiding" intercourse with another.

"I did not say that Judge Hayden did have criminal intercourse with Mrs. C., but as she and her husband have separated and she has taken up another bed and other board, it is reasonable to suppose that the two parties, above named, did violate the laws of decency and chastity. Everybody believes they did."

No fault was attributed to Mrs. Hayden or Mr. Cochran. Cochran owned, according to the source, the finest dwelling in Centralia.

The *Phillips Times* said that Philleo had struck a vein upon which he could thoroughly abuse his "friend" and was "doing the work up in good artistic style."

Philleo replied that he had "no disposition to abuse even the filthy, hypocritical, lecherous guardian of the widows and orphans of Wood County. We only want to show him up in his true character."

Philleo's brother-in-law, political opponent and editor of the *Grand Rapids Tribune*, Jack Brundage, formerly a supporter of Hayden, asked that Hayden step down from office.

Hayden had "not only invaded, prostituted and ruined one home, but he has studiously obtruded himself into the presence of respectable ladies, addressed amorous letters to others over an assumed name, and boasted (falsely, of course,) of having sustained relations of criminal intimacy with a large number of the wives and daughters of our citizens."

Brundage described Hayden as, "Always elaborately dressed, varnished, and scented with 'killing' cosmetics."

The *Clark County Courier* wrote that "Hayden is spoke of so often in the *Reporter* that they run out of capital Hs and have to spell his name with a small h. 'Sort up' Philleo."

Philleo retorted that he got 'out of sorts' having to deal with as vile and lecherous a being as Hayden, a libertine and damnable demagogue saturated with pleasant stink to catch the unwary.

The fray seemed to be getting on Hayden's nerves. Philleo said Hayden had taken his *Reporter* from the post office and had torn it into little bits.

"It is unbecoming in so pure (!) and virtuous (!) a man as JUDGE h. to vent his spleen upon a piece of helpless paper," taunted the *Reporter* editor.

On Sept. 18, Philleo dared Hayden to take him and Brundage to court, as before. "He has been floundering around the court ever since, in search of a Judge or Jury—first one and then the other—who are not prejudiced against him so that he can get a 'fair trial!' And he has not found them yet!"

If Philleo had mentioned "the thing named hadn" too often, it was that any noisome smell that threatened the public comfort should be exposed. Perhaps he would refer to the smell less often.

"People are apt to think they are reminded of them often enough by the wind."

For a while Hayden confined his rebuttals to items he placed in the *Wausau Torch*. In September, 1879, he purchased the *Centralia Enterprise*, in which there appeared an article that severely criticized not Philleo, but the cuckold of Mrs. C.

The vendetta of H.B. Philleo against Judge Henry Hayden ended abruptly on Oct. 9, 1879, when William H. Cochran met the Judge on Main Street and shot him to death.

(For more information on the Hayden trial see *River City Memoirs*, April 27 and May 4, 1985.)

# Dakota

H.B. Philleo preferred to believe it wasn't his heart that caused him so many problems.

"The real trouble, I believe, is in the liver, stomach and circulation. I am greatly debilitated and any exertion tires me terribly," Philleo wrote in a Feb. 6, 1879, letter to his wife, Bella.

Philleo described "mental trouble" in business and 836 miles of travel in a month. Complained the 45-year-old writer: "I hoped, in my declining years, to be able to rest but I have to work harder than ever."

A year later, when Philleo's wife's brother, J.E. Ingraham, sold his interest in the *Wood County Reporter* to Philleo and son, H.B. maintained:

"The *Reporter* will be stalwart Republican in politics, as heretofore. It won't deal in taffy but will be bold in denunciations of devilry."

Two months later, on April 4, 1880, Philleo retired from the newspaper business when he signed the *Reporter* over to two employees, Paul and Albert Fontaine.

Philleo, hinting at other causes, attributed the move to his pressing business as a deputy federal tax collector.

"To mingle with the good fellows of the fraternity, and to scribble for the edification of the readers of the paper we have come to love as a dear friend, has always been a pleasure which we now forgot with much of regret, not to say sorrow," Philleo wrote in his "Valedictory."

A year after leaving the Grand Rapids newspaper, Philleo resigned as tax collector. He was about to follow another brother-in-law, Jack Brundage, into a new land of promise—the Dakotas. Before he left, a few friends gathered to say goodbye.

When 50 members of the Congregational Church Society surprised Philleo and his family as they sat about the fireside, Rev. Norris presented Philleo with a gold-headed ebony cane from the group "as a slight token of their esteem for you as a man, as a citizen and as a brother in Christ, and, particularly, as expressive of their high appreciation of your valuable services, rendered through many years, as chorister of our church."

What had been, since 1873, the Northern Pacific Railroad's "13th Siding" in Dakota Territory (later Kidder County, North Dakota) was named Dawson in 1881.

That same year, Philleo built the first general merchandise store there, advertising dry goods, clothing, boots, groceries, provisions, flour, feed, drugs, paints and oils.

Irving Philleo, H.B.'s son, was named first postmaster of Dawson's new post office in October 1881.

Attempting a new business and breaking a farm at Dawson brought forth from Philleo a familiar plaint of the plains: much promise and more pain.

"We have as yet no water," Philleo wrote on June 19, 1881, to his beloved wife, Bella.

"Jack's well is not good and he will drive further. We shall bring it from the depot in a barrel if we don't strike it next effort. We will get 100 acres broken.

"I am trying to get a storefront. Have sent to Fargo and Minneapolis to get it soon. Can sell a good many goods but I ought to have money enough to buy by the carload, for the freights are awful high."

Philleo said he and his family would live summers in Dakota and winters "at home" until Dakota acquired a few amenities.

On June 20, Philleo said he was sick and couldn't walk without tiring "but don't be alarmed. It is only weariness."

Quinine and whiskey would help, wrote the temperance advocate. "Send me 25 cts worth of quinine in an envelope. Tell Fra Wood to charge it or, if you have any money, you may pay for it."

Discouragement needed hope. "Lots of settlers are coming in and, next year, the village will boom big and the store pay. We have about 27 acres broken."

In July, Philleo wrote that the weather was so dry farm work had become impossible, "so we all, with Dolph, came to the store today and are opening goods and marking them. The store will be done by Saturday night, except upstairs and building chimneys."

Philleo said he wanted his son, Irving, to take full control of the business and leave himself to supervise. A "good man" would be hired to run the farm "on commission."

Having moved into the store that week, Philleo immediately encountered a problem he had not anticipated.

Almost all residents of the nearby "section houses" were Catholic. For an unstated reason, the Congregationalist Philleo believed that ruled out their trade.



# 1881: Philleo Looks Back

In preparing a history of the First Congregational Church of Grand Rapids, and its no less adjunct, the Sabbath school, I find it exceedingly embarrassing to give a strictly correct and wholly impartial recital of its vicissitudes, encouragement, and its discouragements, during the period embracing a quarter of a century . . . first, the records of the Church were most unfortunately destroyed in the fire which consumed the stock and business of H.B. Philleo & Co. in March 1872. Second. Of the old residents and members . . . not one now remains in our midst.

I have thought best, in presenting this interesting subject, to go back to the first ministerial labor performed in this ministering field. The first services held in what is now Wood County was in 1843. Rev. S.M. Hurlburt in that year preached in four points, at Mrs. A.B. Sampson's residence, but where the family resided I am unable to determine, at Robert Wakeley's at Point Bousse, at Grand Rapids and Centralia, then one town, and Mill Creek. He received his pay in lumber and ran it down the river at opportune seasons.

Rev. Mr. Haywood followed Rev. Hurlburt in 1850. He resided at Plover, and, of course, his services were irregular. In 1853 Rev. Holmes followed Rev. Mr. Haywood, and in 1854 Rev. Mr. Annas preached a short period. He was followed by Rev. Edwards in 1856.

Mr. Edwards held services at LaVigne's Hall, a commodious building standing on ground now occupied by the First National Bank, once in four weeks. This is the first service we attended, having arrived from the East that year.

The hall was divided by a partition near the entrance way in the rear, which extended nearly to the ceiling. The rooms back of the partition were occupied as sleeping apartments by Canadian French who made it a point to be late to bed and late to arise, especially on Saturday evening and Sabbath morning. It was not unusual to hear the snore of a lusty sleep mingle with the "High, low, Jack and the game" uttered in broken English from a game of cards during the progress of the sermon. Tobacco fumes and plug tobacco at that were redolent through the hall. Such was the experience of the early efforts to plant the standards of the cross in Grand Rapids.

As the town progressed, and business brought new settlers to the "Rapids," Christian work received new impetus. In the fall of 1857, the Methodist conference

sent Rev. Mr. Tracy hither, and at the same time Bro. J.H. Lang with others, was instrumental in procuring the services of Rev. Mr. Smith, a Baptist minister, to officiate for those who were inclined towards Congregationalism. The twain occupied the old school house just north of Albert Pierce's residence, on alternate sabbaths, and there the Methodist and Congregational Societies were organized.

The Congregational Society was organized under the pastorate of Rev. Smith, and not a little humor was provoked in its establishment. It was denominated the Baptist-Congregational Society.

Mr. Smith labored faithfully and was succeeded by Rev. Mr. Freeman in 1860. In 1861, Rev. J.W. Harris was called to preside over the little flock of Christians laboring together. Rev. Harris organized the present Church in Hurley's hall in 1861 [chartered, 1862] and by his energy and enthusiasm the building in which we now worship was erected in 1864.

A sad accident occurred in raising the structure, by which several of our citizens were injured, some quite seriously . . .

Rev. Harris remained in the Church he founded six years. He was eminently successful, and had the esteem and affections of all the parishioners. Rev. Mr. Cameron succeeded Mr. Harris in 1867, followed by Rev. E.J. Carpenter who remained during 1869 and 1870.

During Mr. Carpenter's pastorate Rev. R.M. Webster, a friend of Mr. Carpenter was invited to aid Bro. Carpenter in revival work. The Church was blessed under his ministering wonderfully, over forty uniting either by letter or upon profession of faith. Mr. Webster remained nearly five years, and was followed by Rev. L.M. Foster after an interval of about seven months. Bro. Foster remained with the Church as its pastor nearly five years, and was succeeded by Rev. J.L. Norris [1880-82] our present pastor, after a period of about five months.

. . . The first [Sabbath] School was organized by Rev. J.W. Harris . . . at the date of the Church organization.

. . . The first choir was organized nearly twenty-two years ago, and since that time nearly one hundred seventy persons have been numbered among its singers. Many are gone home, others are removed from us, but all are blessed in singing the songs of Zion.

## Goodbye

"We will have to wait till this country settles up more . . . In all probability, we will all be home this fall to remain till spring. I am very lonely but not discouraged. If I had more money and better health, I would be all right, though I want to see you all so badly I can hardly live."

So wrote H.B. Philleo in one of his last letters to Grand Rapids from Dakota territory. He arrived home himself soon thereafter, in poor health. Heart disease at intervals prostrated him and confined him to his house. Although he managed a visit or two to his old newspaper office, the new owners, the Fontaines, found him looking pale and weak.

In his latest newspaper column, Philleo had written: "Ours has ever been a stalwart sheet in the exposition of wrongs and errors, and, in the expose of villains, we have not swerved a hair's breadth from the path duty has pointed out to us. To those who have deserved the wounds our pen has made and who yet bear upon their characters the unhealed scars, we have only to say: We abate not one jot nor tittle of our utterance. You have sown the wind and you have reaped the whirlwind."

"While his sufferings have not been intense," said the Reporter, "they have been that peculiar suffocating feeling and want of breath that always follows heart disease."

On Dec. 16, 1881, Philleo felt so weak that Dr. Witter prepared him a solution of milk and alcohol. Philleo took a swallow, which seemed to choke him, and expired instantly.

It had been ten years since Philleo joined the Congregational Church although he had been active in church matters since his

arrival in 1856. He had directed the choir and had acted as Sunday School Superintendent. Upon his death, Rev. J.S. Norris delivered an appropriate panegyric:

"As a government and municipal officer, he was efficient and faithful; as an editor, he used the pen of a versatile and ready writer; and, as a singer, he possessed unusual ability, combining a correctness of ear and extraordinary power of expression, a voice of wonderful compass, sweetness and volume.

"Brother Philleo was the possessor of many shining qualities, both of head and heart. His hospitality was unbounded. He was a most companionable man, genial, sympathetic and wholehearted, unsuspecting and confiding, possessing to a large degree the 'charity that thinketh no evil.'

"It was my privilege not only to know him when in comparative health but also when disease had laid its palsying hand upon him. Those last few times I saw him, I shall not soon forget. There was such a blessed sweet spirit of resignation, of implicit trust in the Savior, of soul rest, of glad hope, of fervent devotion and of purest love upon him.

"Christ was so near and precious, the angels so encamped about and ministering to him, that the very atmosphere seemed full of heavenly influence."

Other words, Philleo's own, come to mind.

"We won't say 'farewell.' We'll only say 'goodbye' for we may some day return to shove the Faber and write obituaries; true if not altogether pleasing.

"Till then, with only good will toward all humanity, we 'pass on.' "





H.B. Philleo

**A Few words to Mr. Pomainville, Keeper of Saloon, &c.**—The ladies of Grand Rapids are not going to wait for an invitation to visit your saloons. Our husbands, sons and brothers do not wait for an invitation, nor do you think it necessary. When we think it expedient we intend to come five hundred thousand, thousand strong in spirit, if not in numbers.

A FRIEND TO TEMPERANCE.

3-26-74

**The Temperance Lecture.**—The Congregational Church was crowded almost to repletion last Sunday evening to hear the temperance talk. It was a union meeting; the two churches joining hands in the furtherance of the good work. At a much earlier hour than is usual for an audience to gather the church was full, and chairs were brought into the aisles for the accommodation of the increasing multitude. The two choirs too, joined their forces and rendered the stirring anthem, "Here we Raise our Banners" with excellent effect, after which an earnest prayer was offered by Rev. R.M. Webster followed by a patriotic glee, "Land of our Heroes." By this time the church was crowded to its utmost capacity. Rev. Jesse Cole made an address full of excellent points and so forcible in its conviction that only those purposely blind could fail to denounce the whiskey traffic as the greatest bane of our national prosperity. He depicted the curses arising from the sale of intoxicating liquors, in such a manner as to force conviction it would seem upon the most skeptical. Mr. C. occupied an hour after which a hymn was sung, when Mr. Philleo read an extract from the N.Y. Evening *Post* giving statistics of the whiskey business which must have startled the audience, for such an array of facts, deplorable and damning were never before gathered. After the reading a vote was taken in reference to the question of "License" or "No License," nearly the whole congregation voting in the negative. It was then suggested that those favoring license as the

more proper and politic course to pursue, arise. Two only arose, though we presume there were others present whose honest convictions were that it were policy to grant license rather than declare for strict prohibition. Rev. R.M. Webster closed the exercises with a powerful address in which he earnestly advocated prohibition.

The meeting closed by the choir singing "America," in which the congregation joined heartily. Take the meeting all in all it was the most powerful temperance meeting ever held in Grand Rapids. It were plain to observe that a great tide of public sentiment is setting in against the unholy traffic. Our people seem to have caught the enthusiasm prevailing in the great states south, east and west of us, and King Alcohol begins to tremble upon his throne builded of desolated hearthstones and bleeding hearts, lest his enemies here shall catch the infection of the gigantic movement that is being prosecuted elsewhere with such earnestness that his gods are being overwhelmed and utterly discomfited. It is claimed that prohibition will prove a failure, and that more liquor will be consumed if no licenses are granted. Even if this be true, which we cannot believe, we say "no license." A wrong cannot be made right. If it is right to legalize murder and incendiarism by the agency of whiskey, then it is right to license a limited number of ruffians to murder with cold steel. Such logic cannot be otherwise than lame.

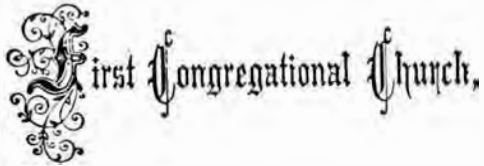
**A Good Scare.**—When the ladies' meeting at the Methodist Church adjourned on Monday, a portion of them came down into the business part of the city, Rev. Mr. Cole accompanying them. The saloon men thought they were to be prayed for and "made haste" beautifully behind their defences, and out came the innocent men who support such institutions and hied them to their homes. O it was amusing! Don't be frightened, boys; the ladies will tell you when they are coming.

4-16-74



# MANUAL

—OF THE—



—OF—

## GRAND RAPIDS,

## WISCONSIN.

—O—

1875:

J. E. INGRAHAM & CO., PRINTERS,  
GRAND RAPIDS, WISCONSIN.

### CHURCH MANUAL.

#### HISTORY.

This Church was organized March 27, 1862, by a Council, called for that purpose, in accordance with Congregational usage.

On the same day and by the same Council Mr. J. W. Harris, the first Pastor of this Church, was ordained to the ministry of the gospel.

The names of those, who first united in the organization of the church are :

Mr. J. W. HARRIS.	Mrs. J. W. HARRIS.
" J. H. LANG	" J. H. LANG.
" B. SOLMAN.	" B. SOLMAN.
Mrs. L. CLARK.	" C. EDMISTER
Mrs. H. F. BLACK.	" CHAS. LEMLEY.

Up to the present date.—Oct 1st, 1874—there have been added to the church, since its organization 100 members, making (with the original 10) 110.

There have been removed either by death

2

### CHURCH MANUAL.

or by letter of dismission, 25 members ; leaving now—Oct. 1874—a nominal membership of 85.

There are also absent from the place 13 others, who will probably take letters from the church to their new residence, or be otherwise removed, making the total number of resident members, at the present date (Oct. 1874) 72.

Mr. Harris resigned the pastorate here in 1868.

Pastor Cameron succeeded Mr. Harris, and resigned in 1869.

Pastor Carpenter then filled the position for one year ; after whom came R. M. Webster the present Pastor who began his ministry here in April 1870.

### CHURCH MANUAL.

3

#### CONSTITUTION.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF GRAND RAPIDS WISCONSIN.

##### ARTICLE I.—NAME.

The name of this church shall be the First Congregational Church of Christ, in Grand Rapids Wis.

##### ARTICLE II.—GOVERNMENT.

Section 1.—The government of this Church is vested in the body of believers who compose it, whose majority vote is final. It acknowledges the Lord Jesus Christ only as its head and receives the Scriptures as its only infallible guide in matters of faith, order and discipline. It is amenable to no other ecclesiastical body.

Section 2. This church, while it will control its own affairs according to its understanding of God's word, will yet recognize

## Woman's Suffrage

*You don't know whether the ballot is quail on toast or a bonnet, something to eat or to wear. You only know that it's something you haven't got and you're bound to have it.*

—Stella Baker's husband

On March 29, 1879, the well-known "suffragette," Susan B. Anthony, was engaged by the Congregational choir here to deliver her famous lecture, "Woman wants bread, not the ballot," as part of a series of appearances from St. Paul to Chicago. Admission for the Tuesday night event at Witter's Hall was 25 cents and 35 cents.

"Miss Anthony enjoys a world-wide reputation as one of the strongest minded women in the American lecture field," said the April 3 *Wood County Reporter*. "Her lectures are sound, argumentative, instructive and entertaining."

Katherine Anthony's biography, "Susan B. Anthony," quotes the famous lecturer: "I do not believe I shall ever be able to make but one satisfactory speech and that is my Bread and the Ballot or Powers of the Ballot."

"The fundamental idea which she wished to plant in the mind of her audience was the power of the ballot," said the *Reporter*. "With this idea positively understood and acted upon, all the various and multiform ills which beset society may not be only ameliorated but positively cured."

Through the vote, the power of the Negro had come to be respected, said Ms. Anthony. But women could not vote. "The depraved, the vicious, the ignorant, the bigoted, all, of the other sex, no matter how low down, or

how inferior in intelligence," could vote and make the laws "which control every woman, good or bad, in the nation . . . give them the right of franchise, and all these evils will be corrected," she said.

The enthusiasm over women's rights did not end with Ms. Anthony's departure. Another champion of suffrage arrived in the person of the Rev. Olympia Brown of Racine's Church of the Good Shepherd, who spoke in August, 1879, to a small but appreciative audience at Garrison's Hall and later at the Congregational church.

On Aug. 21, 1882, an "Equal Rights Meeting" was held at the Congregational church to elect a delegate to represent Wood County at the Woman Suffrage Convention in Madison.

Ms. Stella Baker was selected. She reported on her experience as delegate on Sept. 28, 1882.

Ms. Baker said a state organization organized 14 years ago had been replaced at the Madison convention by a more complete organization called Wisconsin Woman's Suffrage Association.

Ms. Baker repeated the contention that only murderers, lunatics, idiots and women were not allowed to vote in Wisconsin and that it was about time women rose up out of their degradation and took their own part. "I



know that women taken en masse do not know much about politics, and no one is so cognizant of the fact than our husbands. Even my husband said, when I told him I was going down to Madison as your delegate, 'Why, my dear, what do you know about politics? You don't know whether the ballot is quail on toast or a bonnet, something to eat or to wear. You only know that it's something you haven't got and you're bound to have it.' "

Stella Baker "violently asserted" her expertise. "Yes, in my own heart, I knew that I never had given the subject very much study or thought . . . but I do not imagine that were the ballot given me, but that now I could use it quite as intelligently, on important questions . . . as a two-thirds drunken man."

Ms. Baker concluded with an inspirational message. The convention's influence, she said, "will be felt. I believe, throughout our state, giving encouragement to believers whose hearts have grown sick with hope deferred, making many, by the force of sound reason, see light where it was darkness and giving to all over-burdened, sorrowing, disheartened women reason to hope that the time is not far distant when she, with ourselves, may be endowed with equal rights, and freedom to exercise them."

A state referendum was held in 1885 and submitted in the general election of 1886 as to whether women should be able to vote in "any election pertaining to schools." Although passed by a narrow margin, the result was confusion. Which elections pertained to schools?

In November, 1886, Susan B. Anthony, Clara B. Colby and Rev. Brown, along with other advocates of woman's suffrage, conducted conventions around the state, "preaching the gospel" of human equality and working for a suffrage 16th amendment.

The group stopped in Grand Rapids on

Nov. 19 and 20.

On Friday afternoon, a reception at the courthouse was given by Rev. Brown. On Friday evening, the convention opened with music by Misses Weinzeriel, Voyer and Chase, and Mrs. C.O. (Stella) Baker.

Rev. Brown discussed the Woman Suffrage bill just passed in Wisconsin. She said women could vote on "all matters pertaining to schools," which, she asserted, should include governor, common councils and mayors.

Eva L. Fontaine of Grand Rapids welcomed the Saturday afternoon session eloquently. "The sooner we march to the music of the grand thoughts that are given to us today by the noble women of our land, the sooner we will see life as it should be—equality here and happiness hereafter."

The convention succeeded in producing enough interest to warrant formation of a local Woman's Suffrage club. Ms. Fontaine was president; vice presidents were Jennie Pomeroy of Grand Rapids, Mrs. C. Jackson of Centralia, Hannah Albee of Rudolph, Mrs. R.H. Boyington of Pittsville and Ms. Baker of Dexterville, and other officers were Mrs. J.D. Witter, Mrs. S.E. Vaughn and Mrs. J.L. Beadle.

The 19th Amendment was proclaimed 34 years later, on Aug. 26, 1920, declaring, "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex."

"The good she is doing may not be felt today but, when our children shall have taken their places upon the 'boards,' where society is enacting the dramas, the farces, the tragedies of life," prophesied the *Reporter* in 1879, "the name of Susan B. Anthony, with those of Mrs. Livermore, Cady Stanton and score more of God's true souls, will be forever blessed."

**Church Matters.**—The annual meeting of the Cong. Church Society was held at the parlors of the church last Monday evening. The Society is having new life installed into it by the presence and energy of the new pastor, Rev. Mr. Norris. There is more of unity, and a determination is shown to make the present year one of great success, both spiritually and financially. The board of trustees was reorganized and now stands;—S.N. Whitlesey, three years, Geo. Ferguson, two years, and H.B. Philleo, one year. Much other work was accomplished which will put the society upon a stable and prosperous footing. The "Envelope system" was discussed and will be fully explained next Sabbath morning by the pastor, so all who have subscribed, and wish to contribute weekly, may fully understand the matter. It is the desire of the trustees, and the society as well, to have this system fully tested. It is simply this. A person wishing to contribute weekly, decides upon the sum he wishes to give, and envelopes are furnished him, in which he deposits the amount, placing his or her name upon the envelope, and it is taken up with the collection each Sabbath morning. The amount for the year is ascertained by the Clerk and charged up to the person, and each envelope contribution is credited to him or her upon the Clerk's books. In this way many find it easy to give, who otherwise would feel unable to give either quarterly or yearly

January 5, 1880

### **Harvest Service.**

The harvest service decorations at the Congregational church is something worthy of much praise. The society went to work under the directions of their pastor and decorated very beautifully, the entire church, with evergreens, apple tree limbs loaded with fruit, sheaves of wheat, oats, millet, sunflower plants, house plants, flow-

ers, cucumbers, pumpkins, and everything imaginable in the fall crop line. It made the old church look handsome and was the result of drawing out a large congregation both morning and evening. The sermons delivered by Rev. Norris were full of thought and practical illustrations, and delivered with an earnestness that made the Reverend quite eloquent. The choir rendered several beautiful anthems, besides leading in the usual manner the congregational singing. The services were such that they will never be forgotten by those who had the pleasure of being present. Much good will be the result of these services, without doubt.

September 2, 1880

**Rev. J.S. Norris** and wife who were called to Hammond the past week to attend the funeral of a brother's child, returned home Friday, also Mr. E.J. Norris, leaving father John Norris to spend the winter at Hammond. Rev. Norris has a large book practice in this neighborhood. He informs us he has now on hand one of his beautiful organs for sale, which can be examined at his residence on Church street.

December 15, 1881

**Sunday last**, a week, a friend of the Sunday school work in this city made a liberal offer to the Cong'l School agreeing to pay \$2 for every dollar the school would appropriate for increasing their library. The school voted to appropriate \$50 for new books under this liberal offer. Supt. Wood will appoint a committee to select the books this week. It is surmised that Mr. J.D. Witter is the liberal donor. Mr. Witter has a number of times before this made liberal donations to the Sabbath Schools in this city for library purposes. The gift is highly appreciated.

January 22, 1882





## John Samuel Norris 1879-1881

**NORRIS, JOHN SAMUEL**, son of John and Harriet (Chalk) Norris, was born in West Cowes, Isle of Wight, England, Dec. 4, 1844. Was educated in Canada. Ordained to the Methodist ministry in Oshawa, Canada, 1868. After serving in the Methodist ministry in Canada, New York and Wisconsin, he entered into the Congregational fellowship at Hammond, Wis., then served churches as follows: Mondovi, Wis., Hixton, Wis., 1878; Grand Rapids, Wis., 1879-81; Shullsburg, Wis., 1882-83; Ames, Ia., 1884-86; Webster City, Ia., 1887-89; Parkersburg, Ia., 1892; Des Moines, Ia., without charge, 1892-98; Peterson, Ia., pastor, 1899; Tripoli, Ia., pastor, 1900; without charge, Chicago, Ill., 1901 until death. Iowa state evangelist. Wrote over one hundred songs, mainly sacred: "Empty Me of Self, Dear Saviour"; "The Golden Years are Rolling On"; "The Lord is my Shepherd"; "Where He Leads, I will Follow," etc. Married, 1870, in Sunderland, Canada, Elizabeth Ann, daughter of Elizur and Phoebe (Goldsmith) Hurd. Seven children, three living. Died Sept. 23, 1907, in Chicago, Ill., of enteritis, aged 62 years, 9 months, 19 days.

Mr. Norris is an able congregational clergyman, born in the English Channel, on the Isle of Wight, Dec. 4, 1844. He received an academic education, and came to Canada, locating in Ontario. Having a decided taste for music, he early became a teacher of this art. He began a course of theological study, and not being very robust, he engaged as a traveling agent for a mercantile house, then took a charge in Rochester, N.Y., where his health failing, he came West at the end of a year, on a vacation, and the Wisconsin air seeming to brace him up, he located in Milton, Rock Co., in 1873 and since then has done considerable evangelical work, having organized several churches. In 1879, he was stationed as pastor of the Congregational Church in Grand Rapids, which charge he resigned in September, 1881, on account of failing health. Mr. Norris has been a successful author, contributing to the current literature of the church, furnishing hymns and music. He was married, Oct. 10, 1870, to Miss Elizabeth A. Hurd. They have three sons and three daughters.

(History of Northern Wisconsin, 1881)

**Rev. J.S. Norris** returned from Fox Lake, on Tuesday A.M., to which place he was called by invitation of the Executive Committee, of the Wisconsin Female College. He informs us that he has been engaged by the Board of Trustees as General Agent of this institution. The College is located in one of the most beautiful, healthy and quiet cities of the west, and has just closed the twenty-sixth and most prosperous year of its existence. Its aim is to provide a higher education for young women. Any one desirous of giving their daughters an education equal to that given by the best Female Seminaries would do well to call upon or write Elder Norris, who will give them all needful information.

June 29, 1882

### **A Gentle Admonition.**

Our Sabbath evening services have been so disturbed of late by certain ones—well known—that we deem it best to say in this way that they must cease at once or we shall be compelled to resort to the provisions of the civil law to protect ourselves and others against the annoyance. These disturbances consist in making sport, and in running out and in during the hours of service with no apparent good reason. We heartily welcome all to our houses of worship; but we insist that having entered the sanctuary they must remain and behave properly till the close of services, unless it is necessary for them to leave sooner—which is rarely the case. The practices of two, three, or more jumping up and running out as has often been done by the persons referred to will be hereafter regarded as a misdemeanor, not to be tolerated. We withhold names now, but shall address private notes to a few of the ring-leaders that they may understand that we know of whom we are speaking and be admonished to conduct themselves with propriety hereafter.

P.S. BENNETT.  
J.S. NORRIS.  
T.J. COOPER.  
D.J. COLE.  
S.A. SPAFFORD.  
J.W. FREEMAN.  
SETH REEVES.

June 30, 1881

**Mr. John Rowland**, late of Ireland, contemplates giving an extemporaneous talk in the near future about Ireland, its past and present condition. How the people live. How the lands are owned. The way that tenants are treated and in fact briefly as possible to give his life experience while in Ireland. A small admittance will be charged. Everybody should attend and receive some enlightenment on this most interesting subject from

an eye witness. Mr. Rowland is an interesting speaker.

June 29, 1882

**Rev. John Rowland** is one of these good natured Irishmen, and is chock full of fine selections of poetry and on this evening rendered one entitled "The Reveler's Dream." He has a natural gift in this line and renders his selection with elocutionary power and often leaves his audience in tears.

November 16, 1882

**The sermon last Sabbath morning** on the "Teachings of Scripture respecting the person of Christ," by Rev. John Rowland pastor of the Cong. church was ably delivered and wrought convincing truths to his hearers. His logic was excellent and the treatment of the subject was methodical and clear. The large quotations of scripture brought forth showed him to be a "workman that needeth not to be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth." Mr. Rowland shows himself to be a close bible student. His congregation was large and appreciative. He entered into the spirit of his subject, and held the wrapt attention of his hearers to the close. Mr. Rowland's congregations have been large and keep increasing, which is an evidence of the high esteem in which he is held by our people.

February 22, 1883

**Dr. Lockwood** occupied the pulpit of the Cong. church Sunday morning and evening. A vote was taken upon the question of retaining Rev. Rowland. Total vote cast 97, of which 87 were "yes." Quite a number of the congregation did not vote. The church has never prospered better than it has under the pastorate of Rev. Rowland.

April 18, 1885

**In 1883**, the Ward property just north of the church on 1st Street N. was purchased at \$1,000 for a parsonage.





## John Harvey Rowland 1882-1886

ROWLAND, JOHN HARVEY, born, Urker, Armagh County, Ireland, Aug. 19, 1849. Education: Private Classical School, 1869, graduate; Dublin Theological Seminary, 1874, graduate. Ordination: Congregational Council, Big Springs, Wis., Nov. 22, 1882. Congregational Pastorate: Grand Rapids, Wis., 1882-86; Necedah, Wis., 1886-89; New London, Wis., 1889-95; Waupun, Wis., 1895-1900; Kaukauna, Wis., 1900-03; Clintonville, Wis., 1903-06; Durand, Wis., 1906-09; Union Grove, Wis., 1909-17; Wakonda, S. Dak., 1917-20; Berea Church, Chicago, Ill. (supply), 1921-22. Died at Chicago, Ill., Dec. 28, 1932.

### The Farewell Social

Upwards of two hundred and fifty people were provided with the good things of life at the basement of the Cong'l church on last Thursday evening.

. . . During a lull in the festivities, Dr. Lockwood appeared on the rostrum donned in feminine habiliments, and characterized the Congregational society as the wife, in pastoral affairs of Rev. Rowland.

"Rev. Rowland:—It's now nearly four years since you first came shining around me, you know I as a church wanted a husband, but there were some other fellows hanging around at that time, so you kept off to the edge of the charmed circle, then I invited you to call and you did.

"The first year I loved you at the rate, as a prattling child would say '600 bushels' and the next year 750 bushels, and the next year 800 bushels and then I heard that a girl up at Clintonville was casting sheep's eyes at you, then I

took hold, as my Sunday school man Frank [Wood] would say "so to speak," "as it were" I took hold and loved you \$830 bushels . . .

"It seemed then, that for quite a while back a girl living down at Necedah had been making love to you and I didn't think either one of you had much independence for I get it from good authority that she did the proposing and you accepted . . .

"And so you are going to leave me? . . .

"Why do you go Rev. Rowland? You see I want to know, because I am going to have another husband right away. Yes I am—are you not jealous? Albert is coming the first of May. It's Albert or Alexander I don't know which . . .

"Now John!—Rev. Rowland—I do love you and although you are not entitled to any of the furniture of the house, I am going to give you two of my best rockers to take with you to remember me by.

"Children, bring the rockers!"

*Grand Rapids Tribune*

April 17, 1886

### **Another society**

Friday evening last the young ladies connected with the Cong'l Church organized a new society and named it the "Arbutus Band." The object of this society is to assist in foreign missionary work and stimulate an interest in this line in these two cities . . . The society is made up of young ladies only, but they console the young men with the information that they will be invited now and then.

*Wood County Reporter*  
March 17, 1887

At the business meeting held at the Cong'l Church Monday evening, the Clerk's report was read and accepted. The Society is free from debt, the Minister is all paid up, and there is still a few dollars in the treasury. The Society was never in a better condition. A.L. Fontaine was re-elected Clerk, and Mr. B.G. Chandos was elected as trustee in place of Frank Timeon. Rev. Rowland was voted a three weeks' vacation to date from Monday next. Several improvements will be made on the church and premises in the near future.

July 31, 1884

### **Electric Light**

The Congregational society have accepted the kind offer of Mssrs. Mack & Spencer, proprietors of the electric light plant, whereby the latter are to light the church free of charge, and for an indefinite length of time, provided the society will defray the expense of putting in the necessary paraphernalia. The requisite sum was raised "at one sitting" last Sunday evening, and the lights will be put in as soon as possible.

*Grand Rapids Tribune*  
November 27, 1886

### **New Pastor**

At the recent business meeting held at the Cong'l church the society voted to invite Rev. A.L.P. Loomis, of Rosendale, Fond du Lac county. The salary was fixed at \$1,000. A committee was also appointed for the purpose of investigating the question of buying a parsonage. The meeting was businesslike and harmonious.

*Wood County Reporter*  
March 1, 1886



## Reminiscences

A very interesting service was held in the Cong'l Church last Sunday evening. The work of the Cong'l Church in this city during the last 29 years was reviewed in a letter received from Mr. J.H. Long [Lang], one of the charter members now residing in Oberlin, Ohio, whose recollections go back to the year 1858 when services were held in the old schoolhouse on the hill. This was followed by a very interesting sketch by Mrs. S.A. Pratt, read by Mr. M.S. Pratt, in which the work of the Church was passed under review from the year 1862 to the present time. Mr. A.D. Tennant then gave some reminiscences of the early struggles of the Church when there were but few who took an active part in Churchwork and expressed his pleasure in seeing younger men shouldering the burden. Letters, full of tenderness, were then read from Rev. J.A. Cameron, now of Pewaukee, Wis., and Rev. L.M. Foster, of Poplar Grove, Ill. who cherish kindly remembrances of their work in these communities. Dr. Witter referred particularly to the work of Rev. J.H. [J.W.] Harris, the first pastor of the Church, as an educationalist and the noble work done by the faithful few in the building of the Church in those troublous times. Mr. F.J. Wood was then called upon for a few remarks and spoke of the work of the Sunday School and Choir with which he has been so long associated paying a loving tribute to the labors of the late Mr. H.B. Philleo in these departments of the Church work.

*Wood County Reporter*  
April 2, 1891

## Mrs. Pratt's Memoirs

The Church was organized in a Hall known as Roe's Hall which occupied the upper story of a building standing on or near the site of H.H. Compton's Brick Store Building and in this hall services were held until the church was built . . . Rev. Harris was our first pastor. He was a young man and this his first Pastorate. To me and to the others I can safely say. It was a day of great interest and solemnity. A small company, only 17 in No. banded together as we were. Rev. Clary then of Beloit, Wisc. A man who had grown grey in the service of the Master, was with us. I remember one of our number said to him "We are few in number, poor in worldly goods, and weak."

"Well," said the good old man. "You will have to creep for a while before you can get on your feet and walk."

In the winter of 1871 Rev. Robert Webster came to us and at this time a special religious fervor seemed to exist and a series of meetings lasting several weeks was held conducted by Rev. Webster and a large reinforcement was added to our already growing society.

. . . In the early winter of 1881, Mrs. Van Cott, a Methodist-Evangelist conducted meetings here in

Grand Rapids for a number of weeks alternating in the Congregational and Methodist churches.

. . . Rev. John Rowland . . . came to us from the Emerald Isle a poor man and a willing laborer doing with his whole might—whatever honorable employment, be it ever so lowly, he could find to do for the support of his family of little ones. Our pulpit was still empty—and Mr. Rowland asked the privilege of holding service for one sabbath in our church.

. . . And at the close of the service he had pleased so well that he was asked to speak to us again and this resulted in his being engaged as our Pastor . . .

. . . He was succeeded by Rev. A.L.P. Loomis assisted by an Evangelist . . . He left us in 1890 & again for the 3rd time in the history of our church we were without a Pastor.

. . . but in the fall of '90 our present Pastor Rev. Wm. Kilburn [1890-1896] was engaged.

I should like to be with you tonight on this 29th anniversary of the birth of the Congregational church in our little city but I've already passed the allotted 3 score years and 10.

[Mrs. S.A. Pratt]

## An 1891 Fragment

. . . while it was to me a period of experience, it may have been to them a means of discipline and a dispensation of trial. If little good was accomplished, it would be a comfort to know that no harm was done. I am glad to know that the church has survived.

Great changes must have come to you through the past 20 years. The places of some are vacant. Some have moved to other parts, while others have passed into the invisible life. Two or three of the latter I recall: Mr. Purdy, Mr. Philleo, and Mr. Tennent.

I recall no events of special note during my stay among you. It was only a short period of service, and not eventful. It was a time of laying of foundations and of sowing the seed. If I have not forgotten, I followed Mr. Harris who was the first pastor of the church.

[Rev. Cameron]





Unity Church

# Loomis Reports

## Pastor and Secretary's Report From April 6, 1888-April 9, 1889

Preaching services have been sustained every Sabbath during the year. Once I exchanged with Bro. Campbell of Pittsville, was once supplied by Dr. Steel of Wilbraham, Mass. and once by Rev. S. Smith of the M.E. Church.

Very soon after our last annual meeting, the loss of our bridge and the consequent difficulty for the Centralia people to attend Church on this side of the river, made it seem right to Bro. Smith & myself to offer our help for an afternoon service in the City Hall in Centralia.

This offer was gladly accepted and what was thought of at first as only a temporary accommodation has continued to the present, and resulted in the gathering of a congregation of about 100, the organizing and sustaining of a S. School, fully as large, the supporting of a weekly union prayer meeting, the organizing of a Ladies Aid Soc., and Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, and now promises in the near future the building of a Church Edifice.

On account of this afternoon service a plan was proposed which was acceded to by both our churches to hold a union evening service in Grand Rapids, alternating between the churches. These services have generally been well attended especially by the young people. During a portion of the year I have given a series of evening discourses on "Things which minister to a successful life." The W.C.T.U. organized last fall have also conducted temperance services on the last Sab. evening of each month.

The Prayer & Bible Study meeting has been regularly sustained Thurs. evenings, but I am sorry to say that during the most of

the year the attendance has been small. There has been quite a gain during the last few weeks. A similar meeting on Wed. evenings in Centralia in the home of the members has been very encouraging in attendance & interest. The Y.P.S.C.E. on Mon. & lately on Sunday evenings, & the Junior Soc. on Sat. afternoons will be reported by their Secretaries.

During the year 13 have been received to our membership, viz. Mrs. Geo. Huntington, Miss Lida Belknap, Miss Lina Hasbrouk, Mrs. Geo. Wood, Mr. & Mrs. Charles Fox, Mrs. Blackmer, Miss Torino Blackmer, Theodore Tyler, Mrs. Gertrude Ridgman, Mrs. Estelle Jackson, Mr. Charles Lucius Bingham. Five of these were received by letter, 8 by Prof . . .

I have attended 10 funerals during the year among them that of one of our members, Mrs. Geo. Wood, greatly beloved by the church & a large circle of family friends & greatly missed among us. Thus we have a net gain of 7 to our membership our present number being 126, 26 males and 100 females, 20 of these are absent leaving our resident membership, 105, 19 males and 86 females . . .

Of our resident members 24 about 1/4 live in Centralia . . .

The church has taken three collections for benevolences during the year viz.

In June 1888 for A.M.A.	\$12.78
In Sept. 1888 for H.M.S.	30.00
Increased in Dec. by private offerings	5.00
In Feb. 1889 for Foreign Missions	<u>22.70</u>
Total	\$70.48



. . . There are many things encouraging in this report, yet I am impressed with the thought that we are not doing our best. If there could be manifest a more earnest love for Christ & his Church, a warmer fellowship between Christians, a better attendance at the prayer meeting, a more general participation in the finances of the church & its responsibilities, so that the discouragement of having these things drag could be overcome, we might shortly become a much stronger, a far more efficient church & have far greater enjoyment in our work.

The Special Meetings lately held in the M.E. Church have greatly revived many of our young Christians & we trust quite a number of youth have newly started in the Christian life.

Shall we not each one strive to perform with renewed activity our Christian duties, and as God gives us opportunity endeavor to build up his kingdom?

## Alba Levi Parsons Loomis 1886-1890

LOOMIS, ALBA LEVI PARSONS, son of Albemarle and Sarah Kingsbury (Hubbard) Loomis, was born in Coventry, Conn., Aug. 2, 1836. Was educated at Yale University, graduating in 1860; Hartford Theological Seminary, 1860-61; Andover Theological Seminary, graduating in 1863. Was ordained to the Congregational ministry, Aug. 15, 1865, at Coventry, Conn. Pastorates: Assistant pastor, South Coventry, Conn., 1863; pastor, Columbus, Wis., 1865-66; pastor, Fort Atkinson, Wis., 1866-68; pastor, Elkhorn, Wis., 1868-71; pastor, Downer's Grove, Ill., 1871-73; pastor, Mattoon, Ill., 1873-76; pastor, Milton, Wis., 1876-81; pastor, Rosendale, Wis., 1881-86; pastor, Grand Rapids, Wis., 1886-90; pastor, Plainview, Minn., 1890-95; pastor, Windsor, Wis., 1895-1901; pastor, Rochester, Wis., 1901-06; pastor, Randolph, Wis., 1906 until death. Was missionary of the First Presbyterian Church, Chicago, Ill., 1864. Married, July 18, 1868, at Fort Atkinson, Wis., Fannie S. Peck, daughter of Garry and Sarah (Ruggles) Peck, who survives him. Five children, four living. Died April 20, 1911, at Randolph, Wis., of general blood poisoning, aged 74 years, 8 months, and 18 days.



A.L.P. Loomis' Yale and Andover degrees and twenty years of experience could not get him a paycheck on time. At the April 8, 1890, annual meeting, the church owed Loomis \$309.78 of the \$1,000 they had promised for the year.

At the time of the meeting, there were 45 families in Grand Rapids and 19 in Centralia with a membership of 130. Loomis, in his four years as pastor, had brought membership up from 65, made up of 12 males and 53 females, by adding 10 males and 44 females. The Congregational church had been painted and shingled. The Unity Church was built, parsonage property acquired, a Sunday School established along with other groups—but still he could not be paid.

In 1889, Loomis received a call elsewhere, "which in some respects was more inviting than his present work," according to the Centralia Enterprise of May 11, 1890. Following

many personal pleas and a petition with a generous number of signatures, Loomis said he would remain another year.

After the year was up, Loomis resigned. "I do not feel that I have such active and hearty cooperation of the church as a body as to enable me to accomplish all that a pastor ought to accomplish among you," he said. "And second the salary being allowed to get so far behind not only makes it very difficult for me to meet the family expenses but makes me feel that I am a financial burden to the church."

The trustees hoped to make good on their contract at least. They voted to mortgage the parsonage property if necessary to pay Loomis.

On May 3, 1890, the ladies of Centralia had a little surprise for the outgoing pastor. They gathered at the parsonage and bestowed upon him and his wife a token of a silver spoon in the latest style with oxidized handle. They also contributed surplus funds of about \$2.



# Lake Emily

On July 16, 1891, Grand Rapids and Centralia newspapers announced a "Lake Emily Excursion" sponsored by the Congregational Sunday School under the direction of superintendent F.J. Wood, to take place Wednesday, July 22.

From two to four special coaches on the Green Bay railroad would be attached to the regular morning train going east and would return in the evening at eight o'clock.

Each family was asked to provide refreshments for themselves, "so that the acute hunger of all will be satisfied." The price of tickets was placed at "the very nominal sum" of fifty cents for the round trip for adults, and twenty-five cents for children.

"Let it be distinctly understood," said the *Wood County Reporter*, "that not only the members of the Congregational Sabbath School and the families there represented are invited and expected to join in the excursion, but all the people of the two cities who desire to spend a pleasant day at one of the most beautiful little lakes in the state, are cordially invited to do so." In case of threatening or "auspiciously bad" weather, the excursion would be postponed one or two days.

On July 30, the *Reporter* said, "According to postponement," the outing started Thursday morning when River City citizens from little children just able to walk to the oldest inhabitant made preparations to attend the much talked of Congregational Sunday School picnic. "By six o'clock people were seen coming from all direction in carriages, buses and on foot,

loaded down with huge lunch baskets and overflowing ice-cream freezers, hammocks, camp chairs, fishing tackle, and everything conducive to a good time on such an occasion, all having one central point in view—the Green Bay depot. Long before the time of departure the platform and waiting rooms of this depot were crowded to their utmost and a great rush was made for the train when it pulled into the depot after having backed over to Centralia to get a part of its load at the platform on that side."

Seven coaches were filled. Many riders had to stand but didn't complain much since they were going to a picnic. As the train pulled out of town, F.J. Wood passed through the cars and counted those on board. He found about 500.

At the lake, the coaches were left on the side-track and the crowd immediately scrambled for boats. Because there were only 25 available, boats were at a premium.

"The hammocks were stretched, lunches stowed away until they would be needed and everyone proceeded to have a good time according to his or her own inclinations, and a big time they had to be sure."

About 4 p.m. a heavy shower drove the picnickers into the coaches and cottages "with exclamations of 'Oh Shaw,' 'What a shame,' etc."

But the sun came out shortly and all was merry until 7:45 when the home bound train pulled out and the Congregational Sabbath School Picnic for 500 was over.

# Unity Church

"In the enterprise which has now reached a successful end, and which, we believe, was first advocated through the columns of this paper, the people of this community have done nobly in providing the necessary funds to carry on operations," wrote the Centralia Enterprise and Tribune on February 1, 1890.

The "enterprise" in question was the new "Union" church, known more commonly as Unity Church. It had come into being after the flood of 1888 took out the bridge across the Wisconsin River, making it difficult for both Congregationalists and Methodists from the West or Centralia side to join their brethren in Grand Rapids. A temporary ferry service was installed and rather quickly, a new bridge, but the Centralians continued to worship on their side of the river, for a time in the city hall.

The Methodists and Congregationalists soon combined to build Unity church. The plan for the building was by Ernest Greene of New York. Greene was an architect with the American Congregational Union who offered a duplicate of other churches such as the Congregational Church at Java, New York. The building was praised by the Wood County Reporter of February, 1890. "The people of Centralia have good reasons for being proud of their new church edifice, as it would be an honor to any church to possess such a neat and attractive church building. The church is gothic in style and will seat about three hundred people. It is nicely arranged inside for convenience, the seats being placed in form of parquet circle, and the inside decorations are plain but rich. The windows contain stained glass which casts a soft and shaded

light throughout the audience room."

At the dedication ceremonies, Unity church members were joined by Congregationalists from Grand Rapids, and Episcopalians, Methodists, and Lutherans.

The cost of the church building and fixtures had come to \$3,174.86. The two lots cost \$550 for a total expense of \$3,724.86. Of that amount, the church society after the building had been completed, still owed \$1,556.86.

On the day of dedication, said the newspaper, \$1,031 additional was raised to which at the last minute John Edwards, a Methodist, added \$100. The debt totaled \$425.86.

A page torn from a national Congregational mission book has the following information scrawled across in pencil.

*The list that I made from memory for Rev Loomis*

*13 persons give \$910*

*The S.S. about*

	<u>28</u>
	938
	<u>62</u>
<i>Balance due</i>	\$1000
<i>J.D.W. [Witter]</i>	300
<i>J.A.G. [Gaynor]</i>	100
<i>F.J.W. [Wood]</i>	100
<i>Geo. R.G. [Gardner]</i>	100
<i>G.F. Witter</i>	50
<i>E.B. Rossier</i>	50
<i>W.T. Jones</i>	25
<i>Robt. Farrish</i>	25
<i>John Farrish</i>	75
<i>J. Canning</i>	25
<i>D.P. Morrill</i>	10
<i>Brown &amp; K[?]</i>	<u>50</u>
	910



## William Kilburne 1890-1896

**KILLBURNE, WILLIAM**, born Trindon Grange, Durham, England, Nov. 30, 1860. Parents: Richard and Anna (Searr) Kilburne. Education: University of Chicago, 1907; Theological Institute, New Castle, England, graduated 1887. Ordination: Congregational Council, Chase, Mich., Nov. 13, 1888. Pastorates: Chase, Mich., 1888-89; Ashland, Wis., 1889-90; Grand Rapids, Wis., 1890-96; South Kaukauna, Wis., 1896-99; Burlington, Wis., 1899-1905; Spring Valley, Ill., 1905-09; Woodstock, Ill., 1909-17; Canton, Ill., 1917-36, pastor emeritus, 1936-39. Married Mina Goudir (died 1926), Winifred Bass, Apr. 17, 1937; 4 children, William, Edith, Mrs. William S. Swett, Mrs. Caroline Wallace. Died Canton, Ill., Aug. 26, 1939.



A new voice was heard in September, 1890, at morning services in the Congregational Church and afternoon service at the Unity Church. It was that of Rev. William Kilburne of Ashland whose name was being used as a possible successor to Loomis. Kilburne's audition was successful and he was invited to come to the dual church.

In July, 1893, Kilburne was laid up with an attack of rheumatism "about as painful as Job's boils." "The reverent gentleman bears his affliction with patience and ever cheerfulness," reported the local newspaper.

In October of 1893, Kilburne was invited to preach at Rhinelander and received a call from there. Being very popular in "both cities" of Centralia and Grand Rapids, Kilburne decided to remain here.

In July, 1894, Kilburne was noted as one of

the most disconsolate men in the two cities, keeping "Bachelor's Hall" at the parsonage. Mrs. Kilburne and the children were attending a Young Peoples Society of Christian Endeavor convention in Cleveland.

That year, Kilburne exchanged pulpits with former pastor Rev. J.H. Rowland of New London.

In March, photographs of the various pastors were obtained to adorn the walls of the church.

However popular he might be, the recurrent pains of Job in the area of finances led Kilburne to resign in 1896 to accept a call at South Kaukauna. At that time the church owned him \$116.17 plus 1896 wages. The bill was proportioned between Grand Rapids and Centralia.



**Fred Sharon Wheeler  
1896-1898**

**Born Painesville, Ohio  
November 5, 1868  
Lawrence University  
Chicago Institute of Theology  
Ordained December 15, 1897  
at Grand Rapids**

Rev. Frederick S. Wheeler, who had yet to be ordained by Lawrence College, was hired by the pulpit supply committee in December, 1896. That month, the meeting was held in the Ladies Exchange room of the Wood County National Bank, which the Ladies Aid Society had rented to sell needlework, cakes and pies.

The economy of the nation and area was at a low ebb. This was reflected in church balance sheets.

Average attendance for the past year had been about 75 at morning services and 30 in the evening. Collections in the mornings had averaged \$1.37 and none were taken in the evenings. Salary and expenses amounted to \$21 per week. Outstanding was a bill of \$325 which was paid by special subscription and extra efforts of the ladies so as to commence the new pastorate free from debt.

At the end of the first year, Wheeler was ordained in the Grand Rapids church. He was

requested to continue at an increase in salary to \$800 per year, not including "the parsonage." It is said that Wheeler rode a high-wheel bicycle and used it to lead at least one funeral procession.

Salary problems continued to plague Wheeler and his employers. The pastor called a business meeting on June 16, 1898 to discuss, "finance." The question was brought up by F.J. Wood whether to ask Wheeler to release the church from their contract. "After desultory conversation and talk on the part of most all present meeting adjourned without action."

It was voted to borrow \$70 if necessary to pay for Wheeler's requested vacation trip.

Wheeler's retention became a contention in November, 1898. In December, a vote was taken of 31-25 against recalling Wheeler. After his departure, there was no preaching in the Grand Rapids church from December 20, 1898, until July 1, 1899.



# Reunion

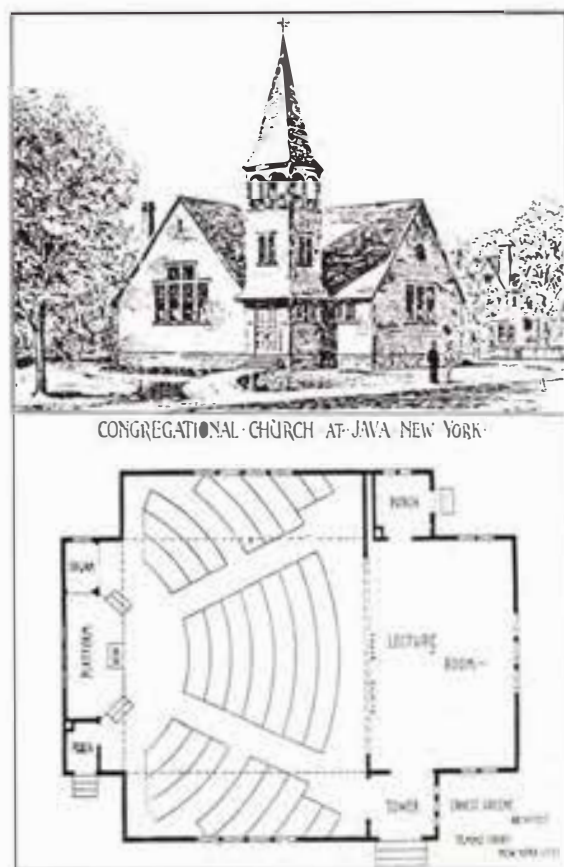
Even as Unity Church carried out its mission, the First Congregational church continued to go about its business. In April, 1890, pastor A.L.P. Loomis, who served the Centralia group on alternate Sunday afternoons, reported that the older Grand Rapids building had been shingled and painted on the exterior, papered and painted within and provided with new pulpit facilities by the "young ladies."

An unsigned narrative states that at the Unity Church, "sometimes our congregations were small. At one time Mr. Cooper was our only man to pass the col. plate and he was absent . . . We needed the money so tho it was before women's rights, one of us passed the plate."

During the agitation for consolidation of Grand Rapids and Centralia in the 1890s, the question arose of reuniting the west side and east side Congregational groups. Several public meetings preceded the decision, held among the First Congregational, Unity and Methodist churches.

A congregational committee under Rev. B.J.H. Shaw suggested that its group should accept the invitation of the West Siders and experiment with a combined worship at the Unity Church with their former fellow parishioners, many of whom had never been removed from the church rolls. The rapprochement proved a success. On April 11, 1900, the First Congregationalists decided to close up their 1865-constructed church at 800 1st Street North in the also-united city now named Wisconsin Rapids.

Mrs. George R. Gardner wrote from San Antonio with a message that seemed to express a common opinion. "I move and vote for the church on the West Side. Our old church and parsonage ought to bring enough to buy out the M.E. People and we have such good members on the West Side and the church is good, and it seems to me it would be like beginning anew and things would pick up with



Unity Church followed the same plan by Ernest Greene as this church in Java, New York (Congregational Union).

us. Many of them have come on our side for years and now let us go to them."

A week later, the Congregationalists now together offered to buy out the Methodist interest in Unity Church for \$1,000. If the Methodists did not choose to part with the property, Congregationalists would sell to them at the same price.

The Methodist agreed to dissolve their partnership in the Unity Church by selling. Consequently, the First Congregationalists sold their East Side church building and parsonage in 1902 to the Christian Scientists and moved themselves and the church bell to the West Side.

## **New Regime for Unity Church**

The first services at Unity church under the new regime were conducted last Sunday morning by Rev. Shaw and were attended by a large congregation of people, who seemed to enjoy very much the logical and excellent discourse of the pastor. The singing of the choir under the direction of T.A. Taylor, who has recently taken charge as chorister, was more than usually good. In the evening F.J. Wood gave an interesting and timely talk on the recent changes in the church home and the future prospects of the society, which was supplemented by an address by Prof. Van Dusen on the necessity of counteracting the materialistic tendency of the age.

The Congregational people seem to like their new quarters. This church was owned jointly by the Methodist and Congregational societies of the two cities, whose ministers alternated in conducting services every Sunday afternoon in Centralia but after the consolidation of the two cities, it was thought best for one of these societies to hold services exclusively on the west side of town and the other on the east. The Methodist people offered to give or take \$1,000 for their interest in the Unity church property, which proposition was accepted by the Congregational people. The old Congregational church on the east side was built in 1864 and has since been the home of that society. There is a parsonage in connection with this church but the age of both buildings has about ruined their usefulness, and this fact was one of the important factors in bringing about the change. Enterprise-Tribune, May 1900

## **The Rededication of Unity Church**

The unusual interest manifest in this event was shown by the presence of a large audience on Thursday evening filling the building. The service being the formal recognition of the fact that hereafter this place of worship will be known as the First Congregational Church, it was felt that the occasion was one of especial importance. Though the prominent feeling was one of thankfulness and gladness, yet with some, there was doubtless a mingled feeling. This was natural

enough, for it could not be expected that those who had been associated with the old Church all their lives would be able to leave it without regret; it had been endeared to them by fellowship, by service, and many sacred memories, it is therefore most gratifying to know that the transition from the old to the new position has been made without friction. When we consider the fact that so many people had to be consulted it is remarkable to have made the change with such unanimity, and shows that a wise, christian spirit must have guided the people, giving a willingness to choose what would be for the best interests of the church. With all the Congregational forces now concentrated there will be power to do a greater work in the community. There is every condition and sign of success in the future—the promise that energy and enthusiasm will enter into every department of the Church's work.

It is evident that special attention will be given to the music of this church and that it will form an important part of every service. It was a pleasure to listen to the fine choir of choice voices which has been organized by Mr. T.A. Taylor. The singing was of a high quality, accompanied with great taste and feeling by Mrs. Irving Philleo. It must be a privilege appreciated by all, to listen every Sunday and enjoy the refining, uplifting influence of such music.

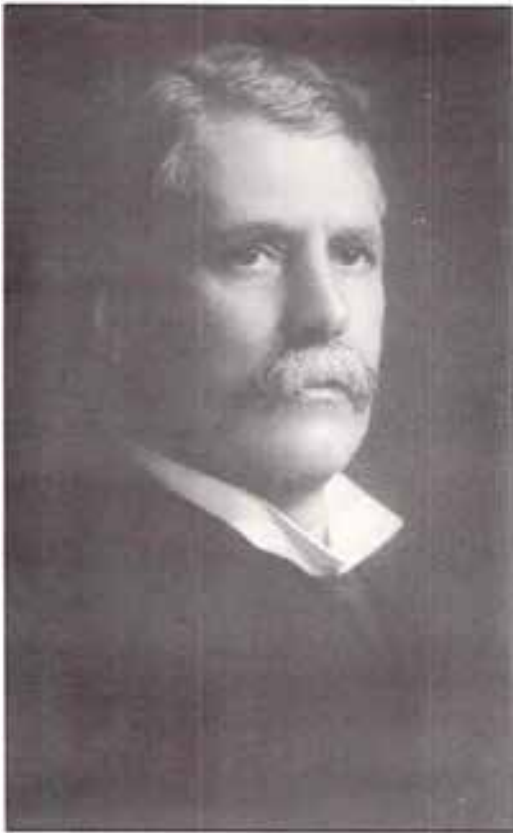
The sermon of Rev. Titsworth was full of strong thought and delivered with great earnestness. The view of life and work which he gave must have sent everyone away with an exalted idea of daily duty, inspired with fresh energy to do it cheerfully. He showed the divine purpose in the simplest, commonest tasks, and that when the divine presence was realized they would become glorified and delightful. The preacher made a deep impression and convinced us that when the pulpit is filled by a man with a living message that it has power to inspire faith in it.

The church was beautifully decorated with plants and flowers.

We congratulate Rev. Shaw and his people on having made this change so harmoniously and rejoice with them in the bright promise of success which it gives.

Wood County Reporter—July 5, 1900





## Benjamin John Hemingway Shaw 1899-1904

**SHAW, BENJAMIN JOHN HEMINGWAY**, son of John and Deborah (Moore) Shaw, was born at Huddersfield, England, July 25, 1849. He was graduated from Owen's College (England), 1878; was ordained in August, 1882, to the ministry of the United Methodist Free church at Manchester, England. He was in pastorates in England until 1897, when he came to this country and entered the Congregational fellowship. Pastorates: Hartland, Wis., 1897-9; Grand Rapids, Wis., 1900-4; Amboy, Ill., 1905-8; West Swartstown, N.H., 1908-10; Kensington, N.H., 1910-12; Lunenburg, Vt., 1912-15; Piermont, N.H., 1915-17. He was married at Market Rosen, England, Aug. 18, 1876, to Mary Ann Dent, who survives. Four children—two living. He died July 1, 1921, at Croydon Flat, N.H., of apoplexy.

F.J. Wood traveled to Hartland to hear Rev. B.J.H. Shaw and in May, 1899, the pulpit committee extended the call. Shaw began work on July 1, 1899. Under his guidance, the Unity and Congregational churches of the twin cities joined. His salary was raised to \$1,000 per year. In May, 1900, it was voted to extend the call to Rev. Shaw for an indefinite time.

On July 1, 1901, a treasurer's report was read which showed the finances to be in a better condition than at any time during the history of the church. June 16, 1902, brought the purchase of the "Falk Property" for parsonage. The "Schnable Property" was investigated as a replacement.

By July, 1903, the Congregationalists were discussing whether to enlarge the former Unity Church or to build a new structure.

Financial problems were finally ameliorated, largely due to the building of the Consolidated mill and George Mead's election in 1904 to the finance committee. Also serving that body were J.W. Natwick, E.C. Ketchum, Mrs. A. McMillan and Mrs. J.W. Cochran.

When Shaw resigned and was replaced by Fred Staff (on the recommendation of George Mead), the preacher's salary was raised to \$1500 and was paid on time.

At the annual church meeting of July 10, 1905, treas-

urer E.L. Hayward presented a treasurer's report "which caused great rejoicing as it shows no claims or liabilities of any kind against the Church Society and a cash balance in the treasury of \$2.46."

In 1906, the church purchased the Saul Preston residence (formerly owned by H.B. Philleo's daughter, Hattie Philleo Preston) at 360 1st Avenue South, for a parsonage.

### Spray of the Rapids

"Rev. B.J.H. Shaw, pastor of the Congregational church of this city, last week received the news of the death of his father, which occurred at Huddersfield, England, on February 1. Rev. Shaw was the oldest of his sons. B.J. Shaw, Sr., was of Scotch descent, and the owner of the Milnsbridge Iron Works in the city of Huddersfield. He was one of the founders of the Congregational Methodist denomination, and took part in the religious and political life of his home city. He was a widely known lay preacher, thoroughly non-sectarian in spirit, who gave his services and money freely to the assistance of other churches."

March 29, 1900

## **THE PICNIC TUESDAY.**

**August 2, 1900**

### **Great Day of Enjoyment for the Children and Older People As Well.**

Great preparations had been made for the Congregational Sunday school picnic that took place Tuesday and as the day was an ideal one for such an outing everything passed off as smoothly and pleasantly as the most interested could desire.

Grounds had been cleared and prepared on the first island above the Centralia Pulp & Water Power Co's dam. This island contains a trifle over 25 acres of ground and is at least 15 feet above the water. The surface is level with plenty of trees for shade, while a sandy beach surrounding it affords excellent opportunity for bathing. Across the channel on the east bank of the river are some fine springs of cool, soft water which afford an abundant supply, no matter how large the crowd. The island and its surroundings makes capital camping and picnic grounds, and an attempt will be made to secure it so the people of this city may have near-by a nice, clean, respectable place to camp or hold picnics or other outings.

About 300 people attended the picnic, which started from the city about 10 a.m. Many of the young people in charge of competent boatmen made the trip to the island from the Esther Lyon's homestead by water, while the more timid and older people went by carriage to South Centralia and were ferried to the island from that point.

It was a pleasing sight to see the large flotilla of boats loaded with a happy crowd of children, as they pushed off down the river from the Lyon's homestead. The day was spent in boating, bathing, singing and in having a general jolly good time outdoors. There was a picnic dinner and also a supper, many of the businessmen going

down for supper. One of the interesting sights was Ed. Ketchum, the ice man, out with 31 little girls in a rowboat. While Geo. Hill went him one better by performing the trick with 32 small boys.

All in all it was a day long to be remembered by the many who attended.

### **Resolution Praising Shaw Upon His Resignation, Oct. 20, 1904**

That his work has brought the Church to its present fine condition;

That he has brought to the aid of the Church, gentlemen who were heretofore indifferent to Church interests generally, their presence at Sabbath services being a direct testimony to the high esteem they entertained of him;

That we have never had a pastor, in whom and to whom, Businessmen generally without reference to Church affiliation, evidenced so much interest and felt so kindly;

That by his direct influence the music has been of an unusually high character and greatly appreciated;

That his sermons are scholarly, instructive and inspiring . . .

### **Arrange Their Coiffures**

R.F. Staff, pastor of the Congregational Church, gave the ladies of the congregation a pleasant or somewhat unlooked for surprise in the form of a request for them to remove their hats during services and continue to do so hereafter. The ladies promptly responded and next moment were busy arranging their coiffures. This will be greatly appreciated by the audience generally as most spring hats are so large that preacher and pulpit are hidden from view.

*Reporter: April 29, 1909*





## Fred Staff 1904-1913

**STAFF, FRED**, born, Tveta, Sweden, Oct. 24, 1866. Ordained: Congregational Council, Chicago, Ill., March 4, 1896. Congregational Pastorates: Forestville, Chicago, Ill., 1894-97; Fort Atkinson, Wis., 1898-1904; Wisconsin Rapids, Wis., 1904-13; Santa Ana, Cal., 1913-14; Sierra Madre, Cal., 1915-16; First Church, Colorado Springs, Col., 1916-24; Sierra Madre (second pastorate), Cal., 1925. Died at Sierra Madre, Cal., Nov. 7, 1925.

### THREE WISE MEN

To The Editor:

My three wise men lived in a small city which was divided by a good sized river into two separate parts known as the east and west sides.

The Congregational church at this time was a wooden building located on the west side, now used as a Masonic Temple.

The first of the three wise men was a preacher, below average height but broad shouldered and erect in carriage. His face was usually serious, but when he smiled it transformed his whole appearance. He had piercing black eyes that seemed to see at a glance everything that took place and at the same time made young and old feel that they had found a friend. Children and young people instinctively knew that here was one who understood their problems. He was never too busy to advise and sympathize. He always had a special sermon for the young people Sunday mornings. Three front rows were reserved for the Sunday school members and were always filled to overflowing.

\* \* \*

The third of my wise men was a businessman whose ability has carried him to the top in his line of work. In the above Sunday school was a class of unruly boys who tried the patience of all their class teachers. Finally this businessman was appointed and accepted the responsibility of teacher of this class. The change was miraculous—from a group of mischief makers to the best class and one that could be depended on when anything was needed to be done. This class had a very nearly perfect attendance record, a class that remained as a unit until high school days were over.

\* \* \*

Would you like the names of my three wise men? The preacher was the late Rev. Fred Staff, of whom it was said, "A little man with a big heart." The teacher was the late Prof. M.H. Jackson of the Wood County Normal school, a friend to all the young folks he helped to become better citizens of this great country of ours.

The businessman was George W. Mead who has achieved great things in the business world. To my notion, the greatest thing he has ever done was in taking a class of boys, making them see a bigger and better world in which to live and work.

So ends my simple story of three wise men. May their tribes increase.

John E. Newman,  
Rural Route 2,  
Pittsville, Wis.

December 30, 1949

## Congregational Bible School



A CLASS OF YOUNG LADIES, MRS. GEO. M. HILL. Teacher



George W. Mead's Sunday School Class: Front—George Hill, Fred Ebert, Dean Brundage, Sam Schroeder, Will Damon. Middle Row: Alex James, Grim Natwick, Walt Wood, ..., Earl Hill, Lloyd Miller, George Mead, teacher. Back Row: Laird Warner, Alec Jorgensen, Ryland Boorman, Earl Price, Marvin Hatch, Buff Natwick, Clarence Jackson, Eric Karberg, Percy Daly, Will Waser.



# Grand Rapids, Wisconsin—1908



M.H. JACKSON, Superintendent

## LOCATION OF SCHOOL

The School is held in the Congregational Church building, 216 4th Ave. S.

## TIME

The Sessions begin promptly at 12 o'clock every Sunday and close at 1:00.

## INVITATION

All strangers in town are welcome. Come and study with us.



GEO. M. HILL, Superintendent, 1900 to 1906

## EXPENSE

A small tuition fee should be charged to defray the incidental expense of the school, but this school follows the custom of all similar schools, providing for the expense by a collection at each Sunday session.

This makes the school free to all, but parents are requested to take an interest in the finances of the school, and be ready to assist by voluntary contribution as occasion requires. The returns for the money expended are very large and all parents should take pride in seeing the school well equipped and properly supported.

# LESSONS FOR YEAR

Jan. 5—The Word Made Flesh,	Talk by	Earl Hill
Jan. 12—Jesus and John the Baptist,	"	M.H. Jackson
Jan. 19—Jesus and His First Disciples,	"	Rev. Fred Staff
Jan. 26—Jesus Cleanses the Temple,	"	Reiland Boorman
Feb. 2—Jesus the Saviour of the World,	"	Lillian Jorgenson
Feb. 9—Jesus and the Woman of Samaria,	"	G.M. Hill
Feb. 16—Jesus Heals the Nobleman's Son,	"	Gertrude Hohler
Feb. 23—Jesus at the Pool of Bethesda,	"	Laurie Drumb
Mar. 1—Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand,	"	Lillian McDermid
Mar. 8—Jesus the Bread of Life,	"	Inez Timm
Mar. 15—Jesus Heals the Man Born Blind,	"	E.L. Hayward
Mar. 22—Review of Quarter's Work,	"	H.S. Youker
Mar. 29—Temperance Lesson	"	Mrs. Jennie Gilkie
April 5—Jesus the Good Shepherd,	"	Mrs. Fred Staff
April 12—The Raising of Lazarus,	"	Luella Jackson
April 19—Jesus Anointed at Bethany,	"	Ruby Natwick
April 26—Jesus Teaches Humility,	"	Mrs. E.B. Brundage
May 3—Our Heavenly Home,	"	Mrs. G.W. Mead
May 10—The Mission of the Holy Spirit,	"	Ed. Govier
May 17—Jesus Betrayed and Denied,	"	Mrs. M.H. Jackson
May 24—Jesus' Death and Burial,	"	Rena Philleo
May 31—Jesus Rises From the Dead,	"	Eric Newman
June 7—Jesus, Appears to the Apostles,	"	E.L. Hayward
June 14—The Risen Christ by the Sea of Galilee,	"	Constance Steele
June 21—Review of Quarter's Work,	"	Mrs. G.M. Hill
June 28—Temperance Lesson,	"	F.J. Wood
July 5—Israel asks for a King,	"	O.H. Siewert
July 12—Saul Chosen King,	"	Pearl Jorgenson
July 19—Samuel Warns Saul and the People,	"	Mrs. Inez Crane
July 26—Saul Rejected by the Lord,	"	Irene Gilkey
Aug. 2—David Anointed at Bethlehem,	"	Mrs. Herman Knudson
Aug. 9—David and Goliath,	"	Verna Lyon
Aug. 16—Saul Tries to Kill David,	"	Mrs. J.W. Natwick
Aug. 23—Friendship of David and Jonathan,	"	A. Decker
Aug. 30—David Spares Saul's Life,	"	Frank Natwick
Sept. 6—Saul and Jonathan Slain in Battle,	"	Will Damon
Sept. 13—David Made King Over Judah and Israel,	"	George Hill, Jr.
Sept. 20—Review of Quarter's Work,	"	W.C. Knoelk
Sept. 27—Temperance Lesson,	"	Bessie Bradford
Oct. 4—David Brings the Ark to Jerusalem,	"	Marvin Hatch
Oct. 11—God's Promise to David,	"	Myron Natwick
Oct. 18—David's Kindness to Jonathan's Son,	"	Mrs. Geo. R. Gardner
Oct. 25—The Joy of Forgiveness,	"	Helen Gilkey
Nov. 1—Absalom Rebels Against David,	"	Gwen Owen
Nov. 8—David Grieves For Absalom,	"	Eric Karberg
Nov. 15—The Lord our Shepherd,	"	Mrs. W.F. Jones
Nov. 22—Solomon Anointed King,	"	Inez Reichel
Nov. 29—The World's Temperance Sunday,	"	F.H. Smith
Dec. 6—Solomon Chooses Wisdom,	"	Guy R. Wood
Dec. 13—Solomon Dedicates the Temple,	"	Vera Rockwell
Dec. 20—Christmas Lesson,	"	G.W. Mead
Dec. 27—Review of Quarter's Work,	"	Clarence Jackson





F.J. WOOD  
Superintendent from 1876 to 1896

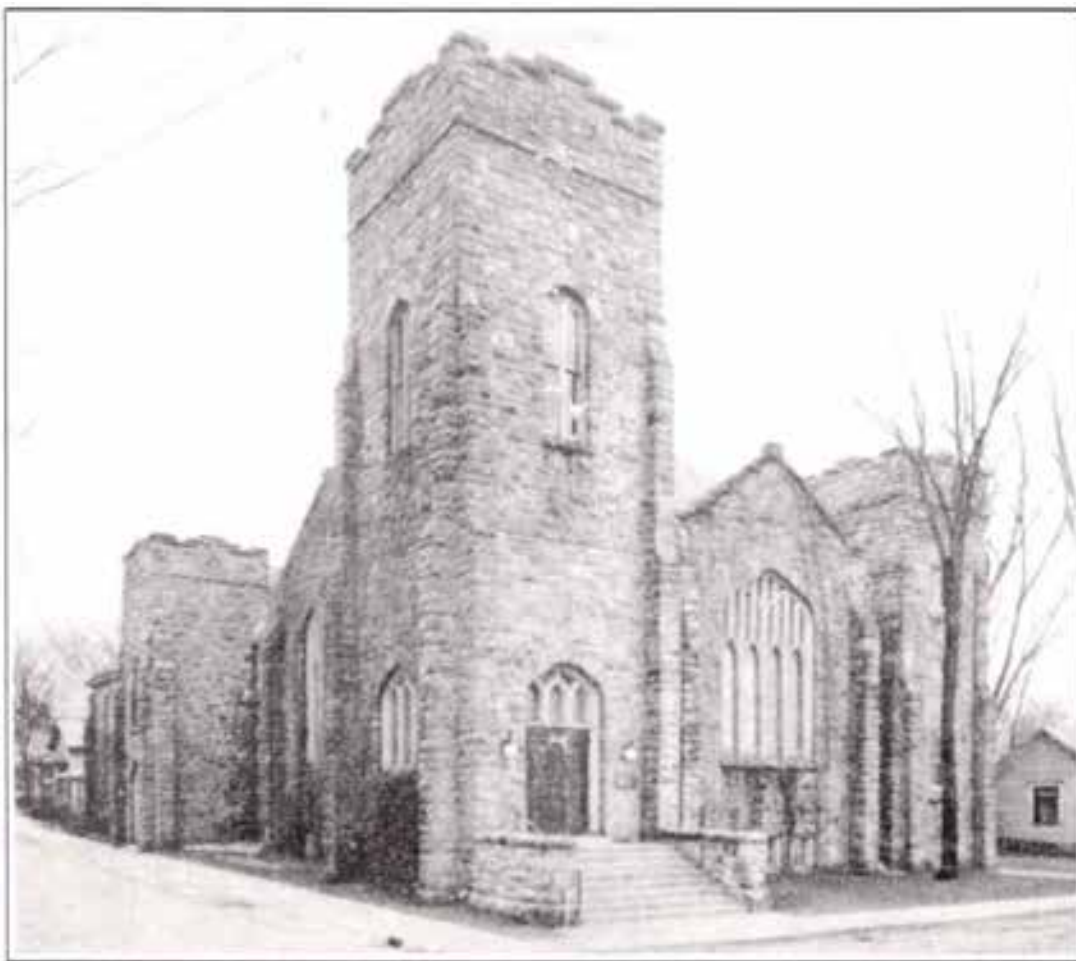


CLASS OF BOYS, E.L. HAYWARD, Teacher



CLASS OF GIRLS, MRS. HERMAN KNUDSON, Teacher





**1933 (95th Annual Meeting Wis. Congregational Conference)**

Church built of native stone. Completed November 1, 1911  
Rev. Fred Staff, Pastor

Trustees—F.J. Wood, Geo. W. Mead, E.W. Ellis, Guy Nash, Archie McMillan

Building Committee—E.W. Ellis, Earle Pease, T.A. Taylor, Rev. Fred Staff

Chorister—Mrs. Guy Nash; Organist, Mrs. Frank Natwick

Sopranos—Mrs. Nash, Mrs. Wright, Mrs. Natwick, Mrs. Horton, Miss Lyon, Miss Hayward, Miss Jones, Miss Gill, Miss Fontaine

Altos—Miss Ames, Miss Bradford, Miss Eggert

Tenors—Mr. Wright, Mr. Normington, Mr. Clark

Bases—Mr. Roberts, Mr. Jackson, Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Warner, Mr. Natwick.

Mr. Clarence Shepard will preside at the organ for these services

Mrs. Charlotte Campbell and Mr. Clyde A. Nichols will assist the choir



## Grand Rapids Church

The First Congregational Church had begun at the east side of the Grand Rapids. From the front steps could be viewed lumbermen rafting the rocky chutes. The Centralia faction separated after the bridge went out in the flood of 1888. Services were carried on simultaneously on both sides of the river until 1900 when the riverbank was abandoned, the congregation reuniting at the Union Church in Centralia, on 4th Avenue. When a new church was needed, the east bank was again looked at for a location.

In September, 1908, the trustees voted to purchase the Kromer homestead on 1st Street South for \$2,500. This was meant to be possibly the site of a new church. The means were provided in part by a \$1,000 bequest from J.D. Witter to each of the local churches.

The ability to construct a new church was also enhanced by large gifts for that purpose from E.W. Ellis, George Mead, F.J. Wood and Frank Garrison. A \$5,000 mortgage to the Congregational Church Building Society finalized financial arrangements.

On April 7, 1910, The Wood County Reporter noted

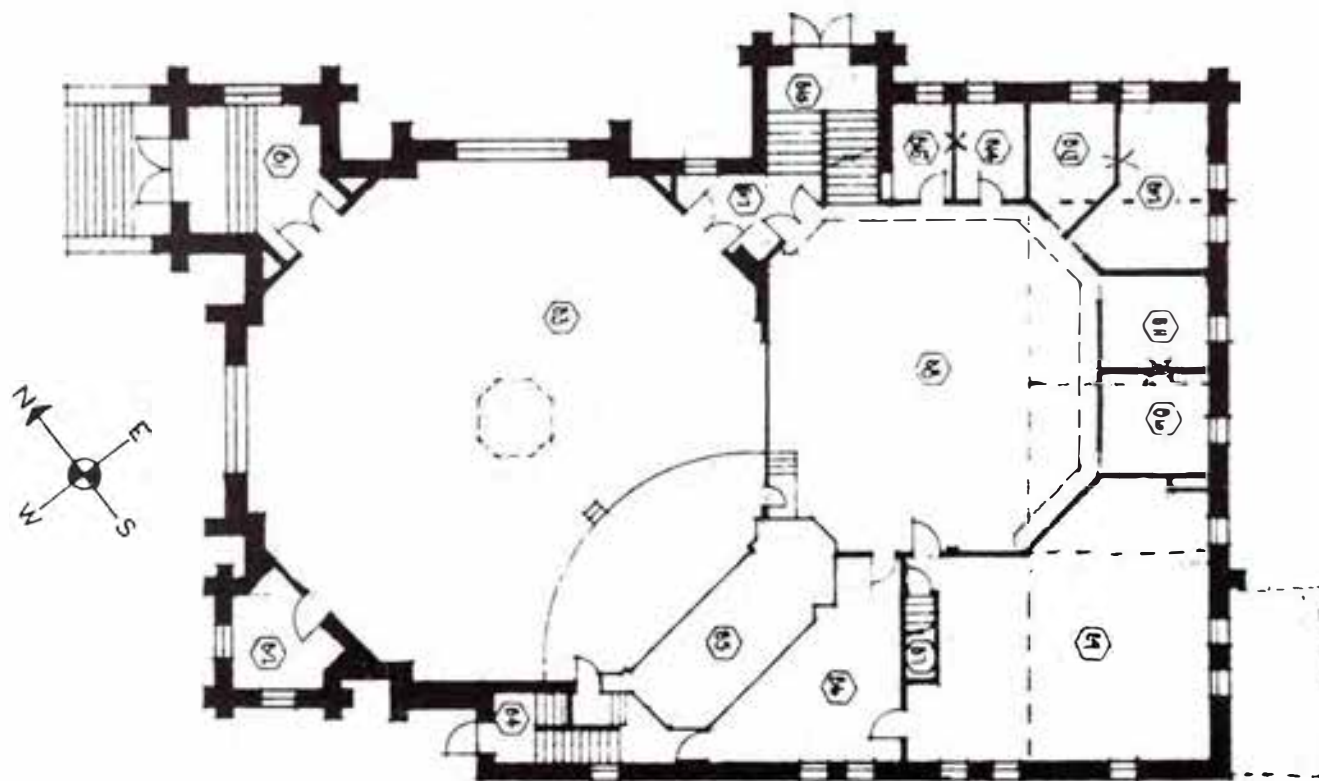
that plans by Chandler and Park of Racine had been accepted for a new church, either of stone or pressed brick on a lot 80' by 130'.

By September, the church, built by architect A.F. Billmeyer with his brother F.F. as foreman, was almost completed. The basement had been finished in Georgia pine with a large furnace room and coal bunker, two storerooms, a complete pantry, serving room and kitchen, dining room and amusement hall.

The first or main floor contained a large 53' x 53' auditorium finished in Mission Oak at a "diagonal" across the buildings. Actually, it was octagonal. A pastor's study had been included on the southeast corner. The main entrance was on Second Street with two additional entrances. Five classrooms had been built off a large Sunday school room finished in birch in the west part of the building. On the second floor were ten classrooms. Hardwood floors extended throughout.

As the church was being completed, Rev. Fred Staff secured a commitment for a state convention in 1912 by a speech in which he included this: "Today the church





FIRST FLOOR PLAN

comes into competition with, not only the devil, but also the interurban railways, the automobiles and the electric theatres. Yet this is not a time for churches or ministers to quit."

The new church was opened for the first time on October 18, 1911, a Wednesday morning, for the wedding of the local Caroline Garrison to Rogers Mott, of Chicago. Over 150 friends, mainly those of Miss Garrison, gathered to hear Rev. Staff perform the marriage ceremony in a setting enhanced by palms, evergreens and lilies. The bride, said the Reporter, presented a charming picture in her exquisite gown of white with a bridal veil, gracefully carrying a shower bouquet of lilies of the valley.

The last services were held in the old 4th Avenue S. church on November 19. It had already been sold to the Masonic order.

The new church opened to a pipe organ recital on Saturday night, Nov. 25, 1911. The music, said the Reporter, was "the most beautiful it has been pleasure to listen to. It truly defies description, and words simply fail us there."

The style of the 74 feet six inch by 112 feet 6 inch building was described as Gothic-Romanesque. The

Milwaukee Sentinel called it cathedral style. It had been constructed of local sandstone with steel trusses and girders. The tower reached 62 feet. The auditorium and Sunday school rooms each seated 350.

"It faces the river and is the most imposing public building in the city," said the Sentinel.

F.S. Gill was the decorator. Electric lights and wiring were provided by Staub and Natwick.

At the dedication services, Rev. Ozoro S. Davis of the Chicago Theological Seminary and Rev. F.M. Sheldon, superintendent of the Wisconsin Congregational Association took part in the services.

The evening ceremony was a union service including other local congregations. Rev. F.A. Pease of the M.E. church extended a fraternal greeting. A solo by the renowned Lottie Lynn-Campbell highlighted the evening.

"It is the intention of this society to keep this church open for all good purposes that will in any manner make the citizenship of Grand Rapids better, and the Christian growth stronger. It stands for the uplift and purity of your youth and a better Grand Rapids," said the Reporter.

The full-page spread included photographs of the new church and the two preceding churches.

February 22, 1912

## **NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS IN NEWER WISCONSIN**

The Congregationalist and Christian World published in Boston by the Pilgrim Press Co., on February 10, 1912 contained the following writeup of Rev. Fred Staff and the dedication of the new 1st Congregational church building in this city. We re-publish their article because it will give our readers an excellent idea of the Bostonian's idea of this part of Wisconsin. The author of said article should visit Wisconsin and he would probably have a better idea of the civilization and conditions in this central part of Wisconsin. The article follows:

Most of North Central Wisconsin is still in the pioneer stage, its cut-over lands only occasionally subdued to the plow and its permanent industries, following in the wake of lumbering, only in the beginning of development. The erection of a commodious stone church in this region is a rare and notable achievement. But the seven years' pastorate of Rev. Fred Staff in First Church of Grand Rapids has so solidified a resident membership of about 200 and given church and pastor such standing in the community that they were able to dedicate recently the most beautiful and substantial house of worship in this section of the state. The cost of the completed building, about \$35,000, would have been considerably larger except for the fact that the superior quality of sandstone used is native to the region and the hardwood finishings, oak and birch, are produced in the lumber mills of the city.

Rev. Fred Staff, the pastor, has refused

inviting calls to larger churches in order to lay permanent foundations in this newer and smaller field. The new stone church is a fitting symbol of the rugged character of this Wisconsin minister, honored by his brethren by his recent term as moderator of the State Association, and the enduring quality of his influence. The pastor of the Congregational church in Grand Rapids is highly influential as a citizen as well as minister, and the new church is particularly dedicated "to all good purposes that will in any way make for a better city."

From the January 16, 1925

*Wood County Reporter*

## **FATHER AND SON WENT TO CHURCH TOGETHER**

C.E. Jackson tells an interesting church story on the Rev. Fred Staff who formerly occupied the local Congregational church pulpit.

One day Rev. Mr. Staff met a man who said: "Mr. Staff, I am quite interested in your church. In fact I subscribe each year to the church fund. I have decided to send my boy over to your Sunday School and church. I'll send him over next Sunday."

Mr. Staff said nothing. The man looked askance at the pastor when he saw that he apparently was not pleased.

Finally Mr. Staff said, "No, don't send him over."

"Why?" gasped the man who thought Mr. Staff would be pleased to learn of his decision.

"Because I want you to BRING him over," answered Mr. Staff.



# American Days

"Truth is stranger than fiction." The American Days are more marvelous than the Arabian Nights. From the facts recorded in the metropolitan newspapers during the last fifty years one might compile a volume of tales that would rival in interest the world-famed stories by which Shahrazad charmed a cruel sultan so that he postponed her execution every day till the dawn of another morning that he might hear the finish of the tale. No lazy loafers like Aladdin, but men of toil and tireless industry have rubbed the lamp of science, and the forces of nature have responded like the genii of Oriental phantasies. First came steam; then electricity with all its manifold applications; then coal, stored for untold centuries in the vaults of the earth, appeared like a black giant, saying: "What wouldst thou have? I am ready to obey thee as thy slave, and the slave of all those who have that lamp in their hands; I and the other slaves of the lamp." Now the air is being conquered. Man has demonstrated that he can fly without the aid of the fabled "roc." An airship has carried nine passengers a distance of nearly five hundred miles, and landed at the port for which it set out. Men have been flying like big birds, against the wind, describing all kinds of geometric figures in their flight, and going up or down according to their own pleasure. A Frenchman has crossed the English channel on wings. Messages have been sent from ship to ship at sea, and from continent to continent across the ocean without a visible messenger. The sun had been weighed as in a balance, and Orion has been analyzed as in a chemical test-tube. What more can man do? Who knows the limit of human achievement? What new forces will science discover in the future, or in what new ways will the forces already known be used?

It is only a little over a century since the great Napoleon, with his little measuring line in his hand, scoffed at the idea of crossing the English channel in a steamboat. What would he have thought if he had lived to see Bleriot fly across the English channel before breakfast on a fine morning? Not many years ago a member of the scientific department of the French Academy declared to the solemn conclave of learned men that the phonograph was nothing but an imposition of a Yankee ventriloquist, because, as every sane man must know, the human voice cannot be reproduced by machinery! And was it not yesterday that the whole scientific world smiled a very superior smile at Marconi's crazy idea of sending intelligible signals across the Atlantic without a wire? There are learned men and women living right in our own midst who knew positively a few years ago that no one could ever navigate the air without the use of a balloon, who may live to see a flying machine alight in front of their own houses as easily as an automobile stops now. Ten years ago it was hard to tell where an automobile would stop after it had once started, and harder still to tell when it would start after it had once stopped. Let

there be the same relative improvement in flying machines during the next ten years and we may all turn into birds.

Truly, this is a wonderful age. Is it not a dangerous age also? Consider what changes modern invention has brought about in manufacture and commerce. I can see it clearly within the short span of my own life. My father was a tailor and his boys learned the trade. We lived in a little red cottage where two country roads meet, twenty-eight miles from the nearest city. Our shop stood close to the home. Our customers were the farmers and the mechanics of the neighborhood. Our nearest neighbor was a cabinet maker; a little further on lived a shoemaker; then a blacksmith. In another direction there were farmhouses, a watchmaker, a weaver, a painter, a grocer, a bookbinder, and so on. But it is not so now. Some of the little cottages that sheltered mechanics and their families have been torn down, some stand empty, in some of them the old folks still live, but the children have moved to the cities. You will find them in the factories in Stockholm and Gothenburg, in Rockford and Minneapolis, and in Chicago also, where they have helped to change a dismal swamp into a metropolis of more than two million inhabitants within the memory of living men.

This terrestrial ball is getting too small for the permanent separation of its inhabitants. In some way the East and the West will meet, and the day of this meeting will be God's judgment day of European and American civilization. On what basis shall judgment be pronounced? Shall that race survive which can work the hardest and live on the least, or the race which has developed the highest degree of moral and spiritual excellence, the members of which have learned from Christ how to live together in mutual helpfulness and brotherly love? Our children may live to feel the effect of that judgment, and their children may see another race than ours setting the standard of living for the workers of the world.

There are those who think that this race conflict can be prevented by excluding the Asiatics from the American shores; but with modern means of transportation the factories will go where the labor is cheapest and the ready made goods will come back to be sold at a price for which it cannot be manufactured where the toiler lives as a man, and the tariff walls will crumble at the bidding of those in obedience to whose commands they were erected in the beginning.

A deeper sense of brotherhood is needed in the management of a transcontinental railway than for the management of a private bus line. I tell you, it is positively dangerous for men at the present time not to practice the precepts of Jesus. Airships can not lift men above the sordid plane of selfishness. Dirigible aeroplanes will not steer human conduct towards the Kingdom of God. Wireless telegraphy is a poor substitute for conscience and brotherly love. More than ever before we must emphasize the right of Jesus to master the lives of men.

by Fred Staff  
(December, 1909)



August 8, 1912

## **SABBATH SCHOOL OUTING GREAT- LY ENJOYED**

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Eating and merriment, dinner and games, preceded and succeeded by a good old fashioned trolley ride, is the story of the annual Sunday School picnic of the Congregational church, held at the Moccasin Creek Pavilion Wednesday, July 31. Tickets with detachable coupons had been dealt out, entitling the picnickers to a full day of joy free of charge. It was refreshing to see and hear the care free frolics of the children, and entertaining to watch the older one's abandon their austerity to join the juveniles.

A wholesome dinner of the out-of-door type was served to 250 hungry souls at noon, and according to enthusiastic reports, the delicious chicken-chowder, prepared by Burton L. Brown, and a corps of able assistants, was the leading feature of the menu. Ice cold lemonade and ice cream cones were available at all times during the day.

Just before dinner the merry crowd gathered in front of the pavilion to pose for a photograph which was taken by Walter Baruch.

The contests were all strenuous and exciting in true Olympic style. The running race by married women was especially entertaining, the results being so close that a second contest had to be tried.

B.G. Eggert greatly distinguished himself by hurling the sand bag a record breaking distance while on the railing, out doing gaunt Grim Natwick by a narrow margin. In a similar contest Ruby Natwick proved that her abilities are not only vocal but also athletic.

August 7, 1915

## **THE COMIC STUNT**

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The Comic Stunt, and it was a dandy, was the Suffragette Parade and Speech.

The Parade was a dream and the speech, well if Grand Rapids don't vote for Women's Suffrage the next time it comes up, the young lady who delivered the speech won't be to blame even if some admirer of the present suffrage system did let loose a mouse on the floor and cause a general stampede. It wasn't a real mouse—just a mechanical one.

July 22, 1915

## **BIG SUNDAY SCHOOL PICNIC**

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An old fashioned basket picnic will be held by the Congregational Sunday school Tuesday afternoon, July XX at the Ball Park and Kipp's Hill.

Special cars will leave Grand Ave. bridge at 2:30 and free round trip tickets will be given every member of the school. All parents and members of the congregation are specially invited and everybody will meet at the cars at 2:15.

Besides the street car tickets the school will be given tickets good at the stand for ice cream cones and lemonade, and additional treat tickets will be given as prizes at the races and contests.

A fine program of field events have been prepared, and special games arranged for the Primary Department.

Bring your lunch and a smile.

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### Congregational Church Chorus Choir Concert March 28, 1928

Top: Alfred Hornigold, —, —, Ruth Bossert, Evelyn Gazeley, Hazel Nye, F. Leech, Jessie Talbot, Mrs. James Simpson, Mrs. Stanton Mead, —, Clarence Harney. 3rd Row: James Plzak, Ern Plzak, Ethel Eckland, Mrs. Del Rowland, —, Elizabeth Philleo, Miss Ellis, Margaret Bossert, Barbara Smart, Mrs. Wm. Thiel, Mrs. Stevens, Dr. Glenn Bennett. 2nd Row: Lawrence Jones, — Moore, Clarence Jackson, Eileen Ecklund, James Simpson, Gertrude Kellogg, Mrs. Pfeiffer, —, Dorothy Normington, —, Genevieve Gouchee. Front: —Welton, Walter Mead, Howard Bell, Lyman Beaman, Dwight Teas, — Casberg, Stanton Mead, Tom Taylor, Del Rowland, — Welton.

On May 1, 1913, Rev. Staff tendered his resignation. He said it was not because he was dissatisfied in any way but because of his health and that of his two little daughters. He said the winters were difficult to stand and a change to a milder climate would be beneficial. Staff told the church board, "If I did not go at this time I should almost surely regret it next winter."

A January 29, 1914, Reporter said, "The First Congregational Church Society of our city, during the past seven years, under the pastorate of Rev. Fred Staff, has been conspicuous in the good it has accomplished in the city and vicinity. This church has always been quite remarkable for the general activity shown in the various departments, though

there have been times when this fact has been more noteworthy than others."

Rev. Staff delivered his farewell sermon on June 5, 1913.

"Rev. Staff has been a hard worker, giving the best of his energy and talent to the church, and to Grand Rapids. His pastorate for the past nine years has been a very successful one, not only in increased membership in church and Sabbath school but from a commercial standpoint as well. He leaves the church society with property worth over \$50,000, a large membership and an excellent corps of workers in all departments of the church," said the Reporter.

## **Robert J. Locke 1913-1918**

**LOCKE, ROBERT J.** Born, Kingston, Ontario, Canada, Jan. 1, 1876. Chicago Theol. Sem. Ordained, Sharon Wis., June 19, 1903. Pastorates, Cedartown, Ga., 1903-07; 1st ch, Ottumwa, Iowa, 1907-13; Grand Rapids, Wis., 1913-18; Champaign, Ill., 1918-25; supt., Ill. Conf., 1925-34; Kalamazoo, Mich., 1934-39. Died, Kalamazoo, Mich., Oct. 12, 1959.



The new pastor, Rev. Robert Locke, had a passion for efficiency. He and "his admirable wife" immediately organized societies auxiliary to the church, combining them into one large Women's Association. "The plan seems to be accepted with considerable ardor by most of the members and is becoming more popular as it is being more fully understood and tried out," said the Wood County Reporter. Mrs. Locke became first president of the new "Ladies Aid."

In part due to Locke's efforts, a proud day came when, in November, 1914, the big state Sunday School convention was held in Grand Rapids. Convention headquarters were the First Congregational Church. Sessions were held mostly in the Congregational and Methodist churches but some went to the Baptist and Moravian buildings.

"Grand Rapids woke up Tuesday morning decked in gala attire in honor of the Convention of the Wisconsin Sunday School Association, which started to hold its annual convention in this

city," said the Wood County Reporter. Banners spanned intersections and nearly every store and office window was decorated with a triangular banner that read, "Welcome W.S.S.A."

At a May 15, 1914, business meeting, another step in organization was taken—incorporation as First Congregational Church of Grand Rapids.

Money problems were hinted at on January 13, 1916, when it was declared necessary to impress upon people that they "must contribute somewhat more financially than was necessary in the little church on the west side."

External issues intruded at the January 10, 1918, annual meeting. A motion passed that the clerk send letters to the boys who had gone as soldiers to fight the great war in Europe to let them know they were thought of and assure them a hearty welcome upon their return. Cordial relations seemed to predominate between Rev. Locke and the church until he resigned on October 1, 1918.





## Noel Jerub Breed 1918-1923

**BREED, NOEL JERUB**, born, Michigan City, Ind., Dec. 25, 1891. Pacific Sch. of Rel. Ordained, Cong., Grinnell, Iowa, Sept. 18, 1913. Pastorates, Lander, Wyo., 1913-15; Italian ch., San Francisco, Cal., 1915-16; Evanston, Ill, Asst., 1916-17; Pilgrim ch., Evanston, Ill., 1917-18; Grand Rapids (now Wisconsin Rapids), Wis., 1918-23; Hastings, Neb., 1923-25; pf, 1925-26; p. Eden ch., Hayward, Cal., 1926-27; 1st ch., Petaluma, Cal., 1927-33; 1st ch., Stockton, Cal., 1933-59; ncr 1959-60. Died, Stockton, Cal., Dec. 3, 1968.

Rev. Noel J. Breed was assigned a new perquisite: an office downtown. Miscellaneous references bring us through Breed's term: a vote of thanks on January 19, 1919, to Mr. Smart, "for his faithfulness with the moving picture machine at the Sunday Evening Club;" a motion January 15, 1920, to continue Eagle River as this church's particular branch of Home Missionary work; a motion by George Mead to deed the river bank in front of the church to the city for parking purposes; a name change on June 13, 1921 to First Congregational Church of Wisconsin Rapids; a motion to close the church for the summer on July 1, 1923; the downtown office discontinued January, 1924—after Breed had gone.

A resolution praised Breed for a successful campaign to clear the church from debt, for the great advance in Sunday School work, for increased membership of the church, for his effort to increase social activities and a feeling of brotherhood, but above all, for the strong, fine Christian sermons. Yet it was clear, as so often when the pastor steps down, that wrestling with the material world has disillusioned yet another potential visionary.

When Breed resigned in 1923, he wrote, "Among the Congregational Churches of Wisconsin, we have risen from 14th in membership to 10th. In benevolence, we

have increased from 22nd to 15th. In Home Expenses, we have just about maintained our position of 10th. In salary, we have dropped from 10th to a tie for 27th.

. . . At the Annual meeting, the Pastor presented a program of forward steps. It called upon the Church to set itself to the elimination of the \$2,000 deficit by various means, during 1923. It pledged the membership to the support of an adequate budget that would make deficits impossible. It challenged the Church to write into the budget the support of a Director of Young People's Work who could help us in the wonderful opportunities that are ours in the children and young people of this Church. It set as a goal the full underwriting of the missionary apportionment.

. . . But, at the Annual Meeting, no action was taken upon this program.

. . . If what I have been able to do here, has not stimulated the Church to meet its high possibilities, I have no hope that another year or two years, will bring about anything further along that line.

. . . Knowing that a Church, if it is to be a Church, must go forward: recognizing that there is no immediate disposition on the part of the Church to go forward, I hereby tender my resignation."

## Arthur Eastman Leonard 1923-1925

LEONARD, ARTHUR EASTMAN, born St. Lawrence Co., NY, Jan. 2, 1867. ed Ripon (Wis.) Coll., BA, MA, 1891; Chicago Theol. Sem., BD, 1895. hon degree, DD, Ripon (Wis.) Coll. ord Cong., Forrest, Ill, May 7, 1895. p Pleasant Valley (now Dalton), Wis. (lic), 1891-92; Forrest & Healy, Ill., 1895-98; Menasha, Wis., 1898-1903; Columbus, Wis., 1903-06; Menasha, Wis. (2nd pas), 1906-09; 1st ch., Eau Claire, Wis., 1909-16; La Grange, Ill., 1916-23; Wisconsin Rapids, Wis., 1923-25; Jacksonville, Fla., 1925-57; Eau Claire, Wis. (2nd pas), 1927-32; Jacksonville, Fla. (sup), 1933-35. m Lillian Bow, Kingston, Wis., 1895 (d 1939); 1 dau, Margaret L; m 2nd, Mattie Louise Ivey, Daytona Beach, Fla., 1943. d Daytona Beach, Fla., May 11, 1948.



The pastorate of Arthur E. Leonard was not a distinguished one due to his own ill health and that of his wife. Leonard, of La Grange, Illinois, was hired on March 21, 1923, at a salary of \$3600 with use of the parsonage. He was given six weeks of vacation. This was the peak of remuneration for many years. The twenties were prosperous for most of the nation and for the First Congregational Church of Wisconsin Rapids.

At the time of Leonard's resignation, he had been absent four and a half months.

In parting, Leonard wrote:

"I also regret more than I am able to express in words that my work in this church has been so broken into by my sickness and enforced absence. Even when here, I have not been able to give to the work more than the effort of half a man.

"None of you has seen as clearly as I have where the work has failed for this reason. Even if Mrs. Leonard's health did not require this move on our part, I should not be willing to go on without being able to do for the church the many things in organization and other ways that need very much to be done."



## Julius Merle Stevens 1925-1934

**STEVENS, JULIUS MERLE**, born, Mount Vernon, Iowa, Dec. 9, 1868. Education: Drury College; Yankton College, B.A., 1893; Divinity School of Yale University, 1894-95; Chicago Theological Seminary, B.D., 1896. Honorary Degree: D.D., Knox College, 1922. Ordination: Congregational Council, Chicago, Ill., 1897. Congregational Pastorates: Morton Park and La Vergne, Ill., 1896-1900; Pacific Church, Chicago, Ill., 1900-07; Union Church, Peoria, Ill., 1907-25; First Church, Wisconsin Rapids, Wis., 1925-34. Died at Wisconsin Rapids, Wis., June 2, 1935.

On November 1, 1925, Rev. J. Merle Stevens came from Peoria. The same year, George McMillan left \$10,000 in Consolidated stock to the First Congregational Church of Wisconsin Rapids.

On January 15, 1926, the church committee changed to the church council, composed of all officers and heads of departments.

A portrait of Rev. Staff, who died in California in 1925, was presented on April 22, 1927. F.J. Wood offered to obtain pictures of other pastors in anticipation of an inclusive historic display.

In 1927, the Lemonweir Convention disbanded and the Rapids church joined the Winnebago Association.

The popular Rev. Stevens was offered a church in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1928, but letters from the congregation persuaded him to stay in Grand Rapids.

According to earlier agreements, a representative from the anti-saloon league occupied the pulpit one Sunday each year. On May 3, 1929, in the midst of prohibition, a board member wondered if the church really wanted to continue the tradition.

On September, 1929, Mr. and Mrs. Stanton Mead offered the use of their moving picture "projectile" to the Sunday School.

At the January 9, 1930, annual meeting, Rev. Stevens gave a short talk, "commending our virtues, but at the same time pointing out some of our weak points. His three outstanding suggestions were, that we make our church attractive to outsiders who seldom attend any church, that we make our own attendance a habit and that we use our church building more."

In 1931, George Mead, then 60, resigned as a trustee. Wood resigned the same year. The church at that juncture was described as "in excellent financial condition." Nevertheless, on January 20, 1933, a treasurer's report showed that the finance committee had been obliged to make serious cuts in their expenditures, due to a much smaller income, "but they had kept within the budget, and free from indebtedness."

A reference was made on January 19, 1934, to the universal effect of the depression on church work in general, although it was felt to be offset locally by generous donations from Mrs. Mead and Mrs. Laura Corrigan.

The reverend "Dr." Stevens resigned January, 1935, giving as his reason ill health and a feeling that the work was beyond his strength. He was replaced by Rev. Fred Hyslop. Stevens died on June 2 of the same year.



## Frederick H. Hyslop 1934-1940

**HYSLOP, FREDERICK H.** Education: Grad. Univ. Wis., B.D. Chicago Theological Seminary. Also studied at Union Theological Seminary, Presbyterian Seminary, University of California at Berkeley, Pacific School of Religion and Yale University. Pastorates: Summer service at Crested Butte, Col.; Wisconsin Rapids, Sept. 19, 1934-Sept. 1, 1940; St. Louis; La Crosse; Greeley, Col., 1956-1965; Hilo, Hawaii, 1965-?



The mid-20th Century has been characterized as a period of steady growth under pastors who were outstanding in the pulpit. One minister who held one of the longer tenures in church history was Frederick H. Hyslop. Not much, however, has come down from his years in office.

On January 15, 1935, "a very delightful and instructive entertainment followed, starting with the earliest recollections of the church. Mrs. Wood, Mrs. Rablin, Mr. ? A.L. Fontaine, Mrs. Minnie Palmetier, Mr. Tom Taylor and Mr. John Roberts, carried us along the years, marking the growth of the church from its beginning in a rough lumber camp up to the present time, climaxed in the unveiling of a portrait of Rev. Stevens, presented to the church by the Sunday School."

The following January, 1936, it was noted that "improvements have been made on the manse, but only such as were considered needful. Mr. Purvis reported that there were a number of repairs also necessary on the church building, in order to preserve the property, and showed that the funds available were not enough to meet such need."

The statement hints at a problem. The depression was taking a toll on the church and the pastor. When Rev.

Hyslop was hired, the salary dropped from \$3600 to \$2700. It remained in the \$2700 range while he was pastor.

These matters are reflected in the resignation of Fred Hyslop, May 19, 1940.

Hyslop said he would miss the beauty of the river and the neighborliness of a small community when he answered the call to the First Congregational Church of St. Louis, Missouri. Yet, three factors had influenced his decision:

First, he said, the salary scale was inadequate. He would be receiving a 50% increase.

Second, although the Manse had one of the most beautiful locations in Wisconsin, its rotting sills and joists, sagging walls and cracking plaster were discouraging.

Third, and most telling, was his own discouragement.

"The Minister of the Church only applies the match to the tinder, the flame results because the Congregation burns. Too often I have felt that match after match has gone out without results. This Church needs to dare great things for God and expect great things from God. It needs to feel the strain of a great undertaking and rise to the challenge of it."



## Robert Wells Kingdon 1940-1968

**KINGDON, ROBERT WELLS, b Hitchcock, SD, Aug. 3, 1903, o Hyde Pk. Cong., ch., Chicago, Ill., June 3, 1928. p Kahului Union ch., Kahului, Hawaii, 1928-36; Pilgrim ch., Honolulu, Hawaii, 1936-40; 1st Cong. ch., Wisconsin Rapids, Wis., 1940-68; Pastor Emeritus, 1968-81. Kalahikiola ch., Kapaau, Hawaii, 1969; Imiola ch., Kamuela, Hawaii, 1969-70; Waioli Hui'ia ch., Hanalei, Hawaii, 1971-76. d Marshfield, Wis., Mar. 15, 1981.**

Beginning in the 1940's, a burst of energy brought about important events affecting the local church and its denomination. In 1940, Hyslop was succeeded by Robert W. Kingdon.

Kingdon had served Kahului Union Church and Pilgrim Church of Honolulu, Hawaii. His undergraduate work was accomplished at Huron College, Huron, S.D., and his master's degree at the University of Chicago. Kingdon was ordained June 3, 1928, at Chicago Theological Seminary. He and his wife Catherine had three children.

Before ordination, Rev. Kingdon had served as a student minister in South Dakota, a part-time student minister at Myrtle Beach, Conn., and Director of Religious Education at Rogers Park Congregational Church in Chicago.

The Kingdons had come to Wisconsin Rapids just after the beginning of World War II and before the United States entered combat. Two months after they came, the National Guard was called up and young men from the congregation

began leaving. After Pearl Harbor, more men were called until a temporary shortage of males developed, particularly in the couples club and the ushers' ranks.

Although materials were difficult to obtain, the organ was rebuilt in 1941 and four hand-fired furnaces converted to stokers. Finally, one furnace for the entire building was installed.

After the war, the church grew rapidly through the care of the Kingdons and the generosity of the baby boom. Baptisms, weddings and funerals came in great numbers as the church building was more than ever the center of activity.

In January, 1948, a proposal was discussed for merger of the Congregational and Evangelical and Reformed denominations.

It was voted to cover the deficit in the "Relief of War Victims and the Reconstruction of Churches in Devastated Areas" fund.

In 1949, 641 members were counted. Additions to the church building were considered.



Top Row: Jim Taylor, Roman Schmid, Lawrence Murtfeldt, Bernice Weiland, Mrs. Minnick, Don Thompson, Peg Bell, Carol Ede, Miles Barker. Middle Row: Judy Urban, —, Ramona Marti Lubeck, Dick Babcock, Jack Schaller, Don Molsberry, Wynne Winter, Margaret Crook, Don Minnick, Oliver Williams. Bottom Row: Marge Simolke, Iola Cox, —, Kathy Barker, Shirley Joosten, Elaine Longjohn, Audrey Knuteson, Shirley Babcock, Jean Schaeffer (c. 1962)

The proposed merger of the Congregational and Evangelical and Reformed church continued to be the topic of discussion. The difficulty of merger stemmed in part from the insistence that each Congregationalist be included in the vote and that each congregation decide individually.

On the issue of local autonomy, the Wisconsin Rapids First Congregational Church at first resisted merging; but when a new basis for union was drawn up nationally, after much study, the local church voted to join the United Church of Christ.

It was under Rev. Kingdon that the original loan from the Congregational Union for the 1964-65 building on 1st Street North was paid off.

The Kingdons lived in the old manse on 360 1st Avenue South until 1955. It was a house in which Harriet Philleo Preston, H.B.'s daughter, once gave piano lessons. A new manse was built at 640 Witter St.

In 1955, 66 new members were added. The 1957 annual report listed 672 active members, 288 male and

384 female with an average attendance of 226. The report for 1958 listed 728 members.

In 1959, Donald Minnick was engaged as part-time student minister during his senior year at the Chicago Theological Seminary. The expectation was that he would continue to serve once ordained.

The 1960 annual meeting voted unanimously to adopt the constitution of the United Church of Christ. Henry Baldwin moved that an invitation be extended to the Vesper Congregational Church to join in worship as they did not have a pastor.

In 1963, another piece of property on the church block was acquired for future expansion.

In 1964, Minnick was released to accept a call at Mukwonago. Lyman F. Newton was called to replace Minnick as assistant minister.

In 1965, Rev. Ramon Hernandez, Minister of Youth of the state conference visited to help Newton initiate plans for a ministry to youth. In that year, most activity centered on another project, the building of a new church.



# Vesper Congregational

The first Congregational services were held in Vesper, according to the earliest record, on July 24, 1898, in a frame building that had been erected for a public hall, and which stood on what is now the south central part of Cameron Park. They were presided over by Rev. A.A. Martin of Pittsville. It is said, however, that the Rev. Victor F. Brown of Union Grove, had previously held services here.

The building above mentioned was in use for church services for two or three years. After that the congregation worshipped in a hall built by John Q. Rote on the east side of Cameron Park, services being held only occasionally, as there was no regular pastor, the people depending on supplies from Grand Rapids, and later from Pittsville.

The next building in use was a lodge hall on the west side of Cameron Park, belonging to Mr. Goldsworthy, and that was used until the present substantial church edifice of red brick was erected in 1912.

A more circumstantial account of this organization, taken from the church records, is as follows: "During the spring of 1898 ministers of different denominations in towns adjacent to Vesper, were asked by some of the people of Vesper to take up a regular appointment in the town, but met with poor success. However, in June, District Missionary F.N. Dexter, of the Home Missionary Society, visited Vesper with a view to conducting religious services in the village. At his suggestion Superintendent George C. Haun came and organized the Sunday school June 17, 1898, and the Rev. Albert A. Martin was asked to preach in Vesper Hall on Sunday afternoons.

The use of the hall was donated by C.R. Goldsworthy. Rev. F.H. Dexter, Rev. George C. Haun and Rev. A.A. Martin conducted meetings from Oct. 16 to Oct. 23, 1898.

At the close of the sermon on the date last

mentioned District Missionary Dexter read the covenant and creed commission of 1883, which was assented to by Mrs. Fanny Murgatroyd, Fred Schultz, Miss Bertha Rozelle, Oscar Dingledyne, Mrs. Ermina E. Merrill and Miss Maud Murgatroyd.

Officers were chosen and the advisability of starting a Congregational church was discussed. It was recognized that the lumber industry was passing away and that the settlers then coming into the village were likely to be permanent. Some of the German Lutherans were then working in the Congregational Sunday school, and within 15 months 150 families had moved to within seven or eight miles of Vesper. They would be likely to do their trading in the village and so make the life of the town assured.

A meeting for organization and the election of officers was held Jan. 2, 1899, at the home of John Murgatroyd, and the name Unity Congregational Church was decided upon by unanimous vote—a name that has since been changed to Vesper Congregational Church.

On June 11, 1899, a call was extended to Rev. W.J.D. Stevenson of Friendship, which was accepted and he became pastor. The church was then associated with that at Pittsville, the Vesper church paying \$100 of the minister's salary. By 1902, through changes, removals and deaths, the congregation had diminished in numbers to such an extent that services practically ceased, and were not revived until 1910.

The Vesper congregation was increased in November [1913] by the accession of about 20 new members, and the erection of a church edifice was discussed. In May plans for the same submitted by Mr. Fred Rockwood of Vesper were accepted, and the cornerstone was laid June 25, 1912.

*History of Wood County [1923]*

## St. John's

On April 22, 1958, Rev. Kingdon sent an invitation to the members of St. John's Evangelical and Reformed, United Church of Christ, Wisconsin Rapids. "There is now a close bond of Christian fellowship between us, since the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the Congregational Christian Churches have joined together in the United Church of Christ . . . In view of the fact that the pastor of St. John's Evangelical and Reformed has recently resigned, it has seemed to us that this might be an opportune time to consider yet closer fellowship between us. We wish to take the opportunity of informing you . . . that we extend to you a very sincere invitation to consider uniting in full fellowship with us in the First Congregational Church."

St. John's had been organized, on May 23, 1915, according to the 1923 *History of Wood County*. Charter members, some including their families, were Robert Sanger, William Gleue, Herman Loock, Ernest Miller, Charles Gurtler, John Fehrman, Gus Sanger, Ben Knuth, Fred Panter, Frank Sommerfield and George Ottenberg. Its first religious meeting was held April 25, 1915. Services were held in the old G.A.R. hall on Oak Street until completion of a church building in 1920. At that time, there were 110 communicant members. Rev. Pauloweit designed the church and assisted in its construction. He also wrote much of

the choir music.

A unique feature of the 1920 church (dedicated Sept. 25, 1921) was its "direct shower lighting," in which lights placed above the ceiling were softened through diamond-cut lenses. In the early years, services were held in the German language. The first baby baptized was Irma Fehrman, later Huchthausen.

On February 1, 1923, Rev. Pauloweit resigned and moved to Marinette. Pastors through the years included Revs. Gunther, Birkner (1931), Langhorst, Gruenwaldt (1933-34), Lowenbergh (1935), Ronicke, Hermanson and Becker. Pastor from 1960-1966 was Paul Schippel. Rev. E. Evans served as interim pastor until Melvin Vilhauer. Rev. Jack Grether was an interim pastor. In 1968, Benjamin Moore began his controversial pastorate, leaving in 1977. For many years, pastors were shared with St. John's of Arpin.

When the Redevelopment Authority of Wisconsin Rapids required the church site for an expansion of Jackson Street, a six-acre parcel was purchased at the corner of 32nd Street and Lake Road to build a new church. However, over the ensuing nine years during which the project was developed, the congregation diminished. Many joined the First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ.

In 1977, the sale to the redevelopment authority was finally completed.





By that time, St. John's membership had declined to 37, mainly older men and women. After much internal debate and meetings with Rev. James Savides of the Northwest Association of the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ, the decision was made to close St. John's. In 1978,

the 32nd Street property was deeded to the Wisconsin Conference in Madison. When the building at 131 Fourth Street was razed in connection with the Jackson Street project, two stained-glass windows from St. John's were incorporated into the First Congregational Church.





"AND THIS STONE, WHICH I HAVE SET FOR A PILLAR, SHALL BE GOD'S HOUSE . . ."—With these words from Genesis 28:22, the cornerstone was laid Sunday for a group of three new buildings of the First Congregational Church of Wisconsin Rapids. In the foreground, are Edward Knuteson, right, and the Rev. Robert Kingdon who together performed the ceremony symbolizing the joining of lay persons with the clergy in the building program. Observing are members of the building committee, left to right, Herbert Jackson, Walter Wefel, Max Andrae, Marvin Schaeffer, John Cole, Mrs. John Natwick, Dr. George Handy, Miles Barker and Clifton Winter. The outdoor event was participated in by the congregation during the 11 a.m. worship service. Overlooking the scene from the rear appears not to be a guardian angel, but a small unidentified boy.

Wisconsin Rapids Tribune, October 26, 1964

Tribune Photo

## New and Old Joined

The year previous has been rugged, according to the January 13, 1955, annual report. The cost of remodeling and redecorating the church in 1954 had come to much more than the original estimates suggested, "which invariably happens when remodeling an old building," said the report.

The first moves to secure more space around the church building were made in 1955. About that time, Anna McMillan became a trustee, having been for several years on the Board of Religious Education. It was a crucial alliance.

The following year continued to be challenging. Plans for the new manse, on a Witter Street lot donated by George W. Mead, had been completed. The church-owned "Bronson home" had been sold and proceeds placed in the manse building fund. In October, the Kingdons moved from 1st Avenue to the new parsonage at 640 Witter Street.

On March 10, 1956, the old manse on the west river bank was sold for \$9,500. Property north of the east side church was leased to the city for a parking lot. George Mead donated a lot to the south known as the Walsh property. Decisions were made and actions taken that were to loom large in future events.

In 1957, Anna McMillan died. Her will, dated only four months earlier, left substantial money "for building and maintaining suitable quarters for educational and recreational activities of the young people."

A 1960 report said Mary McMillan Burt had donated \$3,000 for "expansion." The "Sakolosky property" was purchased at 3rd

and Maple streets for \$18,000 to prepare for possible future church expansion. Preliminaries continued to be expedited.

The Board of Religious Education reported on church school overcrowding, lack of heat, poor lighting, drab surroundings and general unhandiness in the church school. In 1959, money was budgeted for study. A complete "utilization and need" analysis was presented on August 29, 1960, by Rowland Associates, an architectural firm of Wisconsin Rapids, to a Board of Trustees made up of George Handy, M.D., Henry P. Baldwin, William F. Huffman, Jr., Rolland Murgatroyd, Del G. Rowland, Dwight H. Teas, Walter Wefel and John F. Natwick.

Deficiencies were found in restroom facilities, lighting levels, storage areas, lighting and color, heating and general arrangement. The church itself was seen as adequate only in size. The cost of remodeling was estimated at \$31,000.

Recommendations were made for changes that would be necessary to fulfill the present needs of the church school program within the existing structure.

The remodeling, however, was not recommended by the board. "Too many disadvantages in the existing structure would plague us in the future." A new church school building would solve many problems. Temporary use of the Sakolosky house was considered.

"The stone church edifice had no campus," wrote Rev. Kingdon in 1971. "It was built close to the sidewalk line and there were houses to the south and east walls of the church. The block was filled with church



November, 1964. Cornerstone lower left. Looking south



Looking north toward stone church and downtown



and seven residences.”

Plans for church development were actively discussed. With property surrounding the church having been acquired, said church minutes, “Now it is up to the membership to decide if we should stay at our present location along the river, having enough room to do so if we desire. Or to purchase other property and move to a new location. Since the utilization survey it is our impression that any major remodeling of our present structure would not be economically sound. Our Sanctuary is adequate for our present membership but the Sunday School facilities are inadequate in most respects.”

On Oct. 12, 1961, Rev. John Scotsford, an authority on church remodeling and building visited Wisconsin Rapids. His recommendations were to carry much weight.

A sermon preached by Rev. Kingdon on Sept. 30, 1962, recommended building a new church as well as a new educational building.

On October, 1962, Max Andrae was asked to serve as chairman of the Worship and Fine Arts committee, one of nine committees instrumental in planning the new church. For his committee, Andrae said he chose Percy Cox, Emmet Hurst, Mrs. M.C. McLendon, Shirley Babcock, H. Bennett, Bob Dosen, Bill Nicholson, Truman Rascoe, Mrs. R. Kingdon and Ed Krueger.

“Little did I realize what a large task it was going to be,” Andrae wrote later.

Other committee chairmen were: Survey Committee, Marvin Schaeffer; Christian Education, Miles Barker; Fellowship and Recreation, Mrs. Quesnal Gross, Administration Facilities; Walter Wefel, Jr.; Furnishings and Equipment, Mrs. John Natwick;

Plans and Construction, Dr. George Handy; Finance, William Huffman, Jr.; Promotion, Clifton Winter.

The January, 1964, report said the major work of the year had been that of the building committee which had acquired the entire block surrounding the church with the acquisition of the Baumel and Holliday properties. The old Baptist church next door to the south also had been purchased.

Remodeling the existing church continued to be discussed but it appeared more economical to raze the structure and use the footings for a new church. What kind of building would be planned was not yet clear. “The committee found very early that there was not universal agreement on what is attractive nor what a Church means to each of us so far as the physical plant and arrangement is concerned,” said architect Rowland.

“I recall the many long houred meetings of the various chairmen and the architect, how we agreed, how we argued and slowly how we all jelled out ideas into a set of plans,” said Andrae.

The heart of the entire rebuilding project was the McMillan Fund, \$280,000 worth of Consolidated stock left by Anna McMillan upon death on July 30, 1957. In addition to the McMillan money, the building fund contained \$47,000, of which \$37,000 had been donated by Emily Mead Baldwin for a chapel to be built in memory of her husband and son.

The cost of the new church was estimated at \$540,000 of which a usable \$280,000 was at hand. Final drawings were requested for church plans so construction could begin. A fund drive also was approved. Anna McMillan's sister, Mary McMillan Burt, petitioned the court to release funds from the Anna McMillan trust.



Looking north toward downtown: C. Winters, B. Rowland, Dr. Handy, H. Jackson



The Choir



The Sakolosky house, the Baumel and Gee houses were sold to be moved.

Construction of a new edifice at a cost of \$575,000 was approved on March 9, 1964, by members of the church.

The Rowland family had been members of the congregation for years. At the time of their selection as architects, Rowland Associates had designed such local structures as Woodside School, Lincoln High School additions, Ann Pitsch School, Washington School, the Tribune and WFHR Building, First English Lutheran Church, St. Luke's Lutheran Church and the Reorganized Church of Latter Day Saints.

The firm consisted of three brothers: Robert, an architect and engineer who practiced as an architect; David, a Colorado architect and Gene, a professional heating engineer. When their father, Delbert, retired from Consolidated Papers, Inc., he became business manager.

"What precipitated replacement," said Bob Rowland in a 1986 interview, "was that they thought if we were going to build this amount of addition, why not build it on another site." Land costs, however, became excessive when other sites in central Wisconsin Rapids were considered. It had been a common understanding that the church would remain on the river bank, allowing parishioners on both sides of the river to walk to church.

In Congregational fashion, a committee including George Handy, Bill Huffman, Walter Wefel, Max Andrae and Edith Dudgeon, worked closely with Rowland. Trips were made to Madison and Minneapolis to examine other church and synagogue buildings. "In so doing," said Rowland, "the committee got enthused about a new sanctuary." With concurrence of the major

donors, they decided to rebuild on the same site.

In another property-oriented measure, an old "tavern-hotel" type building toward the Wood County Bank was acquired, said Rowland, for a parking lot. Now the entire church block could be used for building and not parking.

The design was the result of Rowland working with the committee. "They were a strong committee, a moving committee," he said. "One member would want a modern box, one a colonial, one laminated beams." The result was an original combination of ideas that was not modeled on any prototype or any other church. "Our final thought was to maintain a colonial motif, to make it as functional and modern as we could get it, and to marry it to the site."

A booklet was published to explain the design by Rowland Associates who were also to be the final architects. The design presented a multiple unit adapted to the hillside location. It was imaginative, functional, modern and symbolic. It was also strongly rooted in the styles of the early Congregational Church.

"We had asked our architect to design something that would be suggestive of the Church as a gathered company of believers," wrote Kingdon in 1971. "Some of the straight lines, the white walls, the pews and the hardware may put one in mind of the colonial heritage from which some of our fellowship has sprung."

The colonial-Puritan theme was carried by white walls that echoed the white clapboard walls and plastered ceilings of New England. An octagonal seating arrangement similar to the previous stone church came into being. It had no center aisle. The interior was unadorned. The cross was built



into a tapestry of wood.

Philosophy governing these choices was provided in part by theologian Paul Tillich. Stress was placed on the predominance of the Word over the sacrament and of the congregation over the liturgical leader. According to Tillich, an ideal plan would have the congregation look at each other with the minister among the congregation.

Protestant aesthetics forbade blatant idolatry. Representative patterns in stained glass were closely scrutinized. Symbolism, in general, was kept to a minimum. Unity was achieved by using continuous use of identical materials, walls, and rooflines. It was to be a cluster of buildings connected by functional wings. Halls with no purpose were avoided.

Preliminary notes of the Committee on Fine Arts & Worship compiled by Max Andrae contained the statement that, "Equipped with the congregation's feelings and needs the architect must design a building that suggests the Church is a people with a history, whose source of life is beyond history and whose work is in the present."

Practical advice was provided by Rev. J. Scotford in "When You Build a Church." He commented on parking, windows, colors and decorations in a practical manner. "Have a good sign that advertises your church." "Worship is the most profitable item in the program of the church." "There are two preeminent symbols—The Table, *The Cross. Neither the Table nor the Cross* should match anything else in the room in either color or texture."

The entire congregation had substantial comment to make. "We'd project on a screen to show where we were and how we got there and where we are going," said Rowland.

The Tribune of January 10, 1964, reported a progress report by Dr. George Handy, chairman of the executive building committee. Nine subcommittees had been studying for a year, said the Tribune. The resulting plan was demonstrated by a model displayed by Robert Rowland for church school, dining facilities, chapel.

On March 9, a \$575,000 complex consisting of sanctuary, educational building and fellowship hall, administrative section and small chapel were approved by a vote of 147-90. A fund-raising campaign began, chaired by William F. Huffman, with a goal of raising in excess of \$200,000 toward capital funds needed. Rowland Associates were directed to prepare drawings, plans and specifications necessary for construction bids.

The fund-raising did not meet expectations. In July, the budget was trimmed by \$50,000, causing disappointment in many circles. Rowland was asked to lower the cost of building by at least 10%. This was done by reducing floor to ceiling height.

Construction of a \$508,000 set of buildings was approved in October, 1964. Successful bidders included Gritz Builders, Wisconsin Rapids, general; Van Ert Electric, electrical; Brostowitz Plumbing & Heating, plumbing. By now three frame residences had been moved from their foundations and three had been razed to make way for the new construction.

The old church was demolished with a *foot of water in the basement and finally* burned in June, 1965. The new church would be built on its foundation. Temporary quarters for the church were in the Anna McMillan educational building.

In building the new facilities, an innovation in building was used for the first time locally. This was "slump block," manufac-

(continued on page 96)



*In October, 1967, the First Congregational Church received an award from the American Association of Nurserymen for the outstanding landscaping of the new church. The beautification program by Franz Lipp & Associates, Chicago, was sponsored by Emily Baldwin, who accepted the award at the Statler-Hilton Hotel in Washington, D.C. from Laurence S. Rockefeller, chairman of President Johnson's Citizen's Advisory Committee on Recreation and Natural Beauty.*

*These photographs by Don Arndt accompanied the application.*



tured by Wisconsin Valley Concrete, a half-height concrete block cast so that it belled out at the sides. It was considered more attractive than concrete block and cheaper than glazed brick.

At the first worship service in December, 1965, prior to dedication, date stones were laid. Included was a stone dated 1910 from the former church.

At the end of 1965, the board accepted 600 shares of C.P.I. stock from Mrs. Emily Baldwin Miller for landscaping the grounds and providing a chapel garden.

An open house was held May 15, 1966, and the complex was dedicated in October when landscaping had been completed and the organ rebuilt. Three buildings and three connecting units had been built: the church sanctuary, the Baldwin Memorial Chapel and the Anna McMillan Building connected by an administrative unit, the narthex and the fellowship room.

At the October 16 dedication, Anna Carol Dudley, daughter of Rev. and Mrs. Kingdon, came from Berkeley, California, to thrill an audience of 200 with her singing, accompanied by Mrs. Eldon [Judy] Urban. "An excellent pianist and superb at the organ console, she is without peer in this area," said the *Daily Tribune* of October 22, 1966. At the dedication, Rev. Ramon Hernandez brought greetings from the state conference.

The church sanctuary was designed to give prominence to both the preached Word and the sacraments, as had been suggested. The pulpit and communion table were near the center of the chancel. A silver communion service given to the Union Church in 1891 by the Ladies Aid Society was placed on the table.

Carried over from the stone church in the sanctuary at Second and Birch were the

octagonal shape, the two aisles, the arrangement of pews and a slanted floor. "We struggled over the cross symbolism and looked at free hanging silver or metal crosses, wooden crosses and many other versions until it finally dawned on us that the slender colored cut glass window formed the vertical segment of the encircling wooden member and thus inadvertently we had the ideal symbolism," said Andrae.

Colonial style pews were used. Clear glass of New England meeting houses was rejected in favor of red, blue, amber and clear faceted art glass to add a contemporary element. The Kimball organ that had dominated the old church was rebuilt with donations from Mr. and Mrs. Stanton Mead. (In 1976 a new 32 rank Schantz Pipe Organ was installed.)

"As the pews were finally installed and bolted to the floor someone discovered that the installer had forgotten to calculate in the sloped floors," said Andrae. "During the next week all the pews were removed and the bottom members re-shaped to fit the floor."

A companion building was dedicated October 9, 1966. The Baldwin Memorial Chapel at Second and Maple had been provided in memory of Henry Perrine Baldwin II by his widow, Mrs. Emily Mead Baldwin Miller.

Baldwin was the great grandson of missionary families who brought Christian culture to Hawaii in the early 19th century. Closer to home, Baldwin was a businessman who gave generously of himself in local and national levels of Congregational church activities.

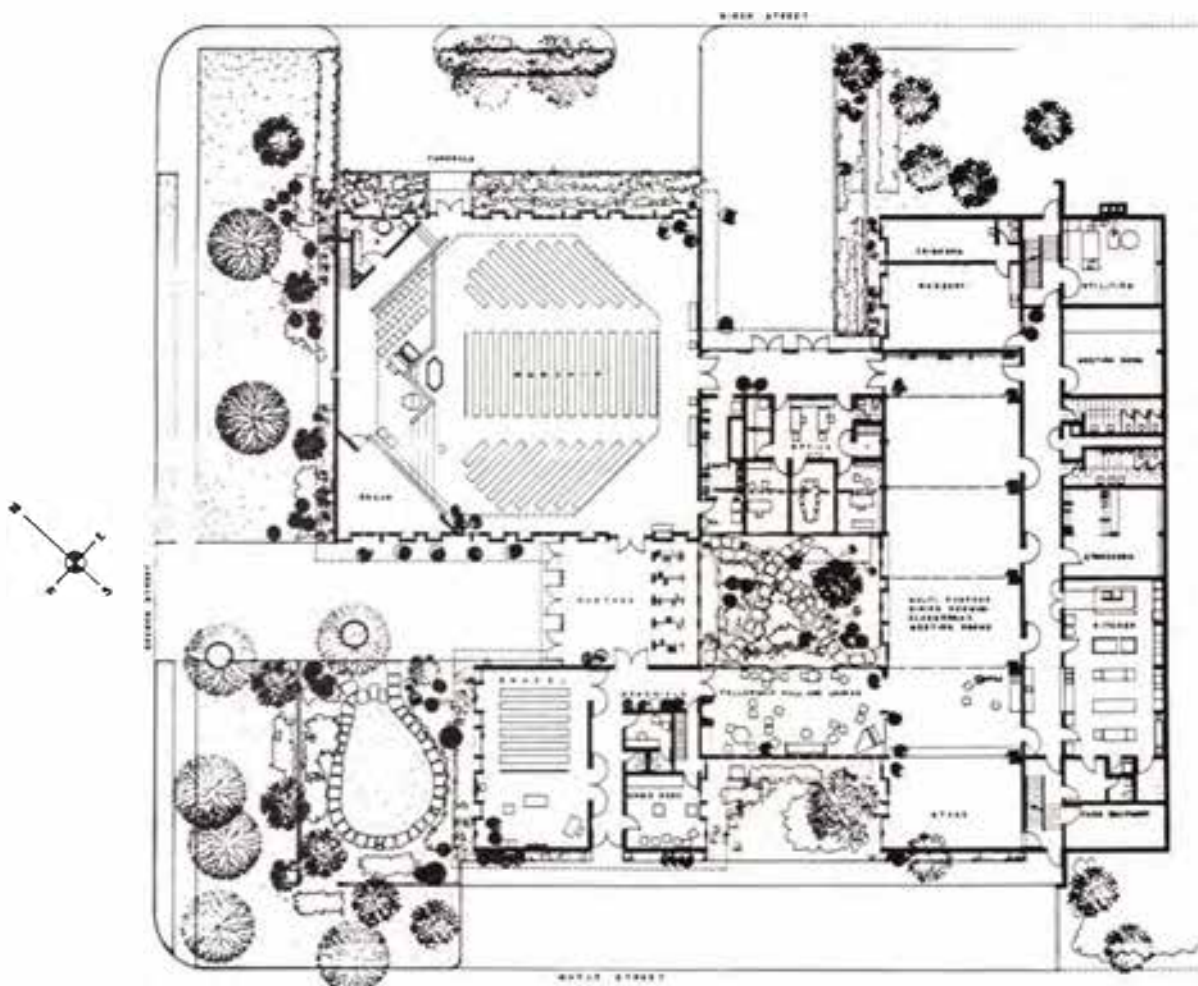
Also memorialized was the Baldwin's son, Henry, who had been confirmed and married in the First Congregational Church, who sang in the choir and who died in the

(continued on page 98)





Looking west along Birch Street



service of his country.

Certain furnishings in the chapel were carried over from the old church, including the pulpit, pew ends, baptismal font, two minister's chairs, and communion table.

Considering the downtown location, it was speculated that the chapel might provide a useful means for daytime meditation, weddings, funerals, baptisms, meetings and a small group worship area.

Separate from the sanctuary and chapel, the Christian Education Building named in honor of Anna McMillan housed classrooms, dining room, kitchen, furnace room, custodians' workroom and a Youth Room called "The Well."

A Fellowship room in a connecting section fronted on Maple Street. Its conception stemmed from the "Colonial Room" of the old church. It contained a workable fireplace.

An administrative suite in a connecting section fronted on Birch street. It held offices for ministers, secretarial space, storage area, a vault and a small meeting room.

The narthex connected the sanctuary with the chapel building. It contained the main coat room and a large area for people to meet informally before and after Sunday morning worship.

A tunnel originally intended as a route to the front of the church had its floor at the elevation of the old church basement.

A carillon tower was dedicated on the second Sunday of September, 1966, at an outdoor concert played by John Klein. The carillon had been donated by the Leland Barker family in honor of Mrs. Helen Bass Barker. Schulmerich carillons were amplified through a system of nine speakers on

top of a 68-foot tower at 3rd Street and Birch.

The cost of the carillon, not including the towers, approached \$20,000. Small, specially tuned bronze rods in cabinets within the church, when struck by hammers, produced faint but perfect tones which were amplified. Recorded music reproduced from slotted rolls of paper resembling those of a player piano could also be used.

A dining hall and kitchen inside and a simple but dramatically tall steeple outside finished the architecture.

The final building committee was headed by Walter Wefel, Sr., the two previous chairmen, Dr. Handy and Schaeffer, having moved from the community. At the time of completion, the committee included Wefel, Andrae, John Cole, Mrs. Quesnal Gross, Herbert Jackson, Mrs. John Natwick, Oliver Williams. Also mentioned by Rev. Kingdon for recognition were Miles Barker as chairman of the Christian Education committee, Clifton Winter, a long-time member of the Executive Building Committee, William Huffman, who had begun on the building committee but withdrew to head the Church Building Fund program and Rev. Donald E. Minnick, who had been on the church staff and who had worked especially hard with the Christian Education committee. Rev. Lyman Newton also assisted.

In the annual report for 1965, given on January 13, 1966, Rev. Kingdon said, "We of this church have just lived through a year of extraordinary frustration, expectation, and realization. We are not anxious to live 1965 again—and we wouldn't have missed it for anything in this world!"





Looking west from river bank



Sanctuary



## **Calvin Paul Fischer 1968-**

**FISCHER, CALVIN PAUL**, born Defiance, Ohio, March 6, 1929. Education: High School at Manitowoc, Wis., B.A. Elmhurst College, Ill., 1950; McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, B.D. 1953. Pastorates: St. John's United Church of Christ, Belvidere, Ill., St. Stephen's United Church of Christ, Merrill, St. John's United Church of Christ, Monroe. Married Judith Louise Richerson, Casa Grande, Ariz.



The fifth quarter-century in the life of the First Congregational Church of Wisconsin Rapids began with a new edifice from which to conduct its expanding home mission. At the same time, the whole church entered a new phase in which the United Church of Christ was formed by the 1957 merger of the Congregational Christian churches and the Evangelical and Reformed church.

The process began nationally with the adoption of a statement of faith, the writing of a church constitution and the gathering of the denominations into one at Cleveland in June, 1957. In Wisconsin, the United Church of Christ was completed with the organization of the Wisconsin Conference and the Northwest Wisconsin Association of the United Church of Christ, of which the First Congregational Church became a member, in 1962.

Symbolic of the formation of the United Church of Christ was the calling of Rev. Calvin P. Fischer, who had come out of the Reformed tradition of the Evangelical and Reformed

church, having been trained at Elmhurst College, Ill., an E & R institution and at McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, a Presbyterian seminary. Prior to coming to Wisconsin Rapids, Fischer had served two of the largest Evangelical and Reformed churches in Wisconsin: St. Steven's in Merrill and St. John's in Monroe.

During the tenure of Rev. Fischer came many members of the St. John's Evangelical and Reformed, United Church of Christ of Wisconsin Rapids. With the closing of their own church building came members with a deep sense of loyalty and commitment to missions and service. St. John's had been proud of the highest per capita giving to missions in what had been the North Wisconsin Synod of the E & R church.

Also joining the First Congregational, United Church of Christ here were new community members having varied denominational backgrounds, such as Presbyterian, all contributing to an ecumenical spirit.

Into the new building came evidence of the social mission. For children with special needs was established the South Wood County Day Care Center. In 1970, the congregation called Rev. Gerald W. Bertsch as Minister to Youth. The educational building soon housed the New Ways Learning Center for youth of high school age, providing high school age youngsters in the community with an alternate education not available in the public school system.

A Mission and Social Concerns Committee was formed to continue the commitment of the United Church of Christ. Special support was given to Sunburst Youth Homes, Northland College, Lakeland College, Winnebago UCC Mission Church and Fairhaven Retirement Home. On the denominational level, support was provided to the UCC Black College Development Program, New Initiatives in Church Development, the Midwest Seminary Development program, Chicago and Eden Theological Seminaries.

Prominent local missions have included the South Wood County Emergency Food Pantry and the Family Center, a shelter for victims of physical and emotional abuse. In 1980, sponsorship was given to a Laotian refugee family. Other services have been directed toward local projects such as the Wood County Inter-Tribal Council, North Central Community Action, Infant Rehabilitation Center, Youth for Christ and Opportunity Development Center.

In 1975, Keith R. Weiland, son of Bartlett and Bernice of Wisconsin Rapids, a confirmed member of the congregation, a graduate of Lincoln High School, Elmhurst College, Elmhurst, Illinois and the United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, was ordained to the ministry. He accepted a call to become the Associate Minister of the First Congregational, United Church of Christ, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Within the church building another important development came with the new Memorial Organ. The old organ, built in 1910, had been moved to the new church but, despite attempts at repair, could not be rehabilitated. A Schantz pipe organ costing \$70,000 was purchased by congregational subscription as a memorial in 1975 and dedicated on Easter, 1976. "The

Memorial Organ shows the dedication of this congregation as a whole to its music," said organist Judy Urban, in 1987.

A Steinway grand piano was also added in 1980 as a memorial.

Since 1980, sermons from the First Congregational Church have been broadcast over local radio station, WFHR.

Sponsorship of missions to foreign countries was established through Lawson and Vivian Hazel Adzaku in Ghana and Shirley Babcock in Botswana.

A united mission of further significance occurred with the concert tour of churches and agencies of the Evangelical church of Germany by the First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Wisconsin Rapids, between April 30 and May 18, 1981.

A diary written by Ramon Hernandez and published in the June Church newsletter gives an inside look at the cultural mission. A Lufthansa 747 Jumbo Jet took the choir members from Chicago to Frankfurt, where they arrived May 1. The first performance was for a formal military ball at Mainz for 250 U.S. Army officers and their wives. Concerts followed at Dusseldorf, Kaiserworth, Warendorf and Munster.

The repertoire consisted of about 23 selections, of which 20 were sung at each concert. The selections were divided between classical, Early American religious, and contemporary American religious music. Often, between the second and third sections, Earle Garber presented a trumpet solo and Ray Hernandez brought "guessewort" (words of greeting).

The following quotes the entry for Saturday, May 9:

"The morning was free, and each host gave a different experience to each American. Some went driving in the countryside. Some went shopping in the city center, where they saw a university students' demonstration, as well as the fascinating sites of many pedestrian-only shopping streets. By mid-afternoon, we returned to the church for a warm-up, before going to the City Hall to be officially greeted by Lord Mayor of Bielefeld. Again, official words of greeting from the Wisconsin Rapids mayor were given, and then toasts to Bielefeld-



Wisconsin Rapids friendship were exchanged. In addition, each American received a gift packet from the mayor. At eight o'clock in the evening we were scheduled to sing. Heinrich Kronsage went out on a limb, by billing our choir as "THE FAMOUS" Wisconsin Rapids choir. Both Bielefeldt newspapers sent a reporter and photographer. The local radio station sent a recording team to tape the concert for a delayed broadcast to the area hospitals and nursing homes.

"Five hundred persons packed the large Ubbedisson church—another gothic type church with a high vaulted ceiling. This was our sixth concert—and probably considered to have been our best performance, if for no other reasons than this was most dramatic. Musically, it was excellent.

"In the general classic sections, you could hear a pin drop from the audience. Entrances, dynamics, tone—all the "finessing" a choir does when it works well together—came to a head at Bielefeld. By the American sections of the concert, there was enthusiastic applause, and by the time we ended with "Elijah, Rock," the Negro spiritual, it was thunderous.

"What a fitting finish to the evening, when we gave the encore, 'Let There Be Peace On Earth and Let It Begin With Me.' Monday's papers carried photographs and highly complimentary reports of the outstanding American choir. One paper went so far as to say we were good enough to sing in the Bielefeld main concert and would have won the hearts of all Bielefelders, as we had done with the Ubbedissons. One could sense the spirit of God welling up at the concert giving inspiration both to singers and to the audience."

Further concerts included Buren, Bethel, Rengershausen, Hofgeismar and West Berlin.

A final diary entry evokes the importance of this musical mission.

"We came home on Monday, May 18, with hundreds of memories and experiences. How much we learned about the church in Germany—its problems, its life and work, its mission, its people, and its love for 27 Americans from an almost-obscure small city in America's heartland. How they admired the gifts and talents of

Judy Urban! How they wondered at Peter Crawford's ability to evoke such a good sound from 22 amateur singers—how well they blended! There were such deep, sometimes intense discussions and exchange of views and feelings! The members of our church will forgive us if you hear us talk about this experience now and then. Please understand. It was a deeply emotional, religious experience, we will NEVER forget.

Chairman of tour: Ramon Hernandez.

Organist & Minister of Music: Judy Urban.

Choir Director: Peter Crawford.

Choir Members: Judy Fischer, Fern Hernandez, Shirley Joosten, Toni Moore, Pauline Pfeiffer, Helen Remaly, Marge Simolke, Wendy Crawford, Karen Fischer, Lois Furgason, Sue Hopfensperger, Barbara Paul, Tanya Soukup, Bruce Fischer, Earle Garber, Bob Zimmerman, Ray Hernandez, Jack Moore, Justus Paul, Jim Pfeiffer, Jack Schaller, Roman Schmid.

Helpers: Bob Furgason, Shirley Schmid, Betty Zimmerman.

At the 1981 Appleton UCC conference, the choir reported on their tour by singing and became the first choir to sing at that event. In 1982, the choir and church hosted the German choir from Ubbedisson.

Beyond the German tour, the choir continued its labor of love, led by two former Lutherans, Judy Urban, organist for 32 years in 1987, and Peter Crawford, choir director for 14 years. The choice of music was demanding. Composers and themes were carefully chosen to complement the Sunday services and seasonal formats. Such compositions as Brahms' "German Requiem," Bach's "Jesu, Priceless Treasure," Vivaldi's "Magnificat," Schubert's "Mass in G" and Handel's "Coronation Anthem" were performed successfully.

Handel's "Messiah," sung by a community choir, was the Congregational choir's gift to the community in 1984 and 1985. A bold ecumenical-style presentation came in 1986 when the choir brought a Latin mass and Gregorian chant to Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church, continuing a unique and time-honored sense of mission with a contemporary flair.



# Amerikanischer Chor eroberte sich alle Herzen in Übbedissen



Also shown are members of the Übbedisson choir.

## Senior Choir, 1986

Dick Babcock  
Kathryn Bishop  
Tom Coley  
Peter & Wendy Crawford  
Gary Dillingham  
Paul Field  
Karen Fischer & Sue Litang  
Judy Fischer  
Jan Foerster  
Jeff Fox  
Marsha Glenzer  
Sue Hopfensperger

Ann James  
Barry Jens  
Ruth Ann Johnson  
Shirley Joosten  
Jeff Konkle  
Paul Lemke  
John & Carolyn Lutz  
Linda Luebke  
Carla Mastalski  
Jack & Toni Moore  
Larry Murtfeldt  
Justus, Barb & Ellen Paul

Jim & Brian Pfeiffer  
Helen Remaly  
Jack Schaller  
Roman Schmid  
Todd Shortell  
Marge Simolke  
Jill Urban  
Judy Urban  
Shirley Weldon  
Bob Zimmerman  
David Stedman

# Communal Witness

by Ann James  
Associate Minister

Matthew recorded that after Jesus's resurrection, just prior to his ascension, he gave his disciples his ministry.

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age."

Mt. 28:18 (RSV)

For many of us, these words describe the fundamental identity and task of the Church. Jesus Christ is our Lord ("All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me") and, as Lord, commands us to do His work ("Go therefore . . ."). The work we do is not animated by some vague sense of altruism, but with the deliberate intention of making more Christians, of getting others to recognize that Jesus Christ is Lord ("make disciples").

As one reviews the history of our congregation, one is impressed with what faithful disciples have been among us. Those who first formed our congregation were themselves the benefactors of other disciples: the missionaries who made disciples in Europe, the men and women who came to North America to build the New Jerusalem, the settlers who created communities of faith on the prairies and the plains.

At their time and place, our founders and their children looked beyond their own culture and supported the making of disciples among Native Americans, among Africans, Asians, and Pacific Islanders. But our forebears also recognized that evangelism is not only a "foreign" activity; it is one to be practiced at home as well. It is not only "to all nations," but to *this* nation that the Christian principles of faith, hope and love must be brought. We see such discipleship in the invitations to Susan B. Anthony and in the memorial service for Dr. King.

Our generation of disciples has had to struggle with how widely and how strongly we should press, as a congregation, to bear witness to Christ's lordship over

our civic life. We have willingly and generously supported healing ministries in Christ's name—one thinks of SWEPS, of the Family Center, of Shirley Babcock's work in Botswana, of the donations for the orphans at the Celedon Development Center in Nicaragua. We have been much more cautious in accepting any call to bear a civic, a political witness.

When one looks over the names of those who serve this community in government or in the schools, through Rotary, Jaycees, A.A.U.W., or The Children's Service Society, with the hospital auxiliary, political parties, or the Arts Council, one finds many names of our members. A sense of civic responsibility runs deep within our individual identities. Yet we cannot bring ourselves to bear a corporate witness, not even to think about or talk with one another about our congregational civic responsibility.

Caution is good; timidity is not. We must learn to believe that Christ is with us in all facets of our life . . . and that includes discussions of politics! We must learn to believe that our faith brings a collegiality to bear "When we walk together as Christian brethren . . . seeking to do all in fellowship and service." And the collegiality is empowering.

Such is the experience of our brothers and sisters in the Philippines, when they act as a body to transform a dictatorship into a democracy. Such is the experience of our brothers and sisters in South Africa and in Latin America as they become advocates for the disenfranchised and poor.

Such was the experience of those who worked to build our present facilities. Of course, there were painful discussions and times when nothing was clear, but, in reviewing the history of that accomplishment, in seeing the building that reflects so strongly our sense of communal witness both in the planning and in the structure itself, one is impressed by the perseverance and dignity with which people worked together.

It was with joy I saw how Christ was with those planners as they sought to create concrete witness to their Lord. It is with faith and with hope I anticipate that in coming years this congregation will build upon its heritage of civic sensibility and shape a communal witness in this community.



## Oldest Church

On the historic east bank of the Wisconsin stands Wisconsin Rapids' oldest church building. Completed in 1865 by the First Congregational Church, it was sold to the Christian Scientists in 1902 after the reuniting of the Congregationalists on the West Side.

In 1915, the structure was remodeled. A stucco finish replaced the white clapboards. The steeple at some time was also removed.

This photograph was taken in 1903 from the Consolidated mill that was just being constructed. Landmarks are from left, John Arpin house or "Chateau," Dan Arpin house with pillars (Wilkinson Mortuary), Christian Science church, county jail, city hall and library, Wood County Courthouse, and, rear right, Howe School.



# Old Grand Rapids

The subject of the historic debate was about as controversial as you could get. Should industry be unionized? Taking the affirmative was Arthur Gazeley. His opponent was Stanton Mead.

The confrontation was not on neutral grounds; it was at the Mead house on Belle Island.

But not to worry. Gazeley and Mead were only schoolboys and the debate, purely an academic exercise. "We got over it pretty well," Gazeley said just before his 88th birthday on Nov. 23.

They got over it so well that Gazeley worked for Mead's Consolidated paper company from World War I until retirement 45 years later.

Gazeley spent much of his career operating steam turbines and working in the Rapids hydro plant. Prior to his retirement, he was superintendent of the Rapids boiler house, filter plant and turbine room.

Gazeley's 1898 birthplace was Mauston, where his father, Lester, owned a creamery.

"The Elgin Dairy people wanted to buy him out," said Gazeley. "He didn't want to sell, but they threatened to build their own creamery and pay farmers more and run him out of business. He decided to sell and went to work for them."

Abruptly, the Elgin Dairy, said Gazeley, claimed bankruptcy and went out of business, paying what they owed Gazeley at 17 cents on the dollar.

The senior Gazeley came to Grand Rapids in 1903 and started a creamery on the south side of the tracks, across from the St. Paul depot.

Gazeley said his father soon moved to a location "under the post office" in partnership with Mr. Chambers. In 1907, Gazeley sold out and moved to Nekoosa, where he started another creamery.

The younger Gazeley acquired an engineering education inadvertently when WWI interrupted his Consolidated employment.

He and Art Hatch had gone to Milwaukee to register for the World War I draft but decided to join the Navy instead. They went to the recruiting office but found themselves placed on a waiting list.

As they toured Milwaukee, Gazeley and Hatch saw a sign that posed the question, "Are you a high school graduate? Join the Army Engineering Corps and go to the Milwaukee School of Engineering."

The two Rapids boys signed up. Their new home was a barracks in a lakefront garage building. Training consisted of class in the morning, drill in the afternoon and study at night.

Before they could be shipped to Waco, Texas, the armistice was signed and Gazeley came home.

In the pre-union years at Consolidated, said Gazeley, the company threw a big picnic every summer. It also sponsored baseball and basketball teams to the extent of allowing workers to play on company time.

Gazeley's memories of old Grand Rapids feature many of the

elements that characterize that city. They make up a familiar hometown I have not seen but have learned to recognize.

There is a swimming hole in the river by the east end of the Green Bay railroad bridge.

"Consolidated took some old dryer belts and put seats around," said Gazeley. "We'd go in and change clothes. There were nails on posts to hang clothes on. Below the tracks were a few posts in the water, with a rope around it."

There is a pop factory next to the brewery, where a thirsty swimmer can get a nickel bottle of soda.

There is the old stone Howe School, the bandstand at Baker and 5th streets, the old courthouse, the market square and its horse-watering trough, the old city hall/library, the jail.

Going south along the river, there is the bicycle shop, Bodette shoe repair, Daily Reporter (press downstairs, office upstairs), the old Armory, Regan furniture, the Eagles Club upstairs, Witter Hotel, Beardsley grocery, the opening to the river.

Also, Cohen's department store, Geoghan's, Steib's drug store, Daly drug store, Sampson & Mullen clothing store, the old theater upstairs (always had a girl playing the piano), Barne's candy and ice cream parlor, Gleue's shoe store.

There is the Opera House—where they don't have operas.

In the winter, there is the Drake Street hill, closed and iced for toboggan slide. "We'd get up enough speed to take 1st Street up to the old library," said Gazeley.

There is the swampy farmland all the way down from Grand Avenue to the hospital. Grand does not go up the hill to the old Lincoln High. You must take Oak Street or go around and up by the Normal school.

There is the old iron bridge. When a circus comes to town, the children run down and watch the train unload, then run like the dickens to get across the bridge before the elephants get there to make it shake.

At old Lincoln, Gazeley and his future wife, Bessie Shearier, go to dances in the gym. After high school, she attends Normal college, and begins teaching, first at Children's Choice, then Marshfield, Portage and Arpin.

In summer, the two take the streetcar to the old pavilion for dances. There are springs under the floor. "Everybody would get it going and you could feel that floor give," said Gazeley.

He also takes the streetcar to play baseball at the south side park. The city team plays Wausau, Merrill and Mosinee.

Gazeley rides his bicycle to Biron to court Bessie at her father's. He nearly meets his doom one night on the new concrete road.

At Bauer's Creek, he hits something and flies over the top of the bicycle. A large chunk of concrete lies on the pavement. After that, he carries a flashlight.

Lucky he does. Who knows what might have happened if he had not seen in time the big cow blocking the Biron road by Bauer's farm on that dark night while heading back to old Grand Rapids?



Sunday School Class of 1917: Top: L. Taylor, Spencer Clapp, Arthur Gazeley, ?, Warner, Russell Alpine, Lawrence Jones. Second Row: James Sales, Delbert Rowland, Teacher Dean Brundage, Roy Normington, Harvey Borman, Grant Gee. Holding flag: Arthur Kluge, Addison Philleo.

## Gazeley knew three churches

Having come to what was then Grand Rapids just after the turn of the century, Art Gazeley knew three Congregational church buildings here: the Unity Church, the old stone church and the 1965 church.

When Gazeley first came, he walked from the East Side to Sunday school on 4th Avenue. He said there were a lot of things going on all the time. Rev. Staff, a small man physically, was a good pastor who took quite an interest in the children. "He'd come in and spend a little time with the class," said Gazeley. \*

Church picnics were held on the east river bank above Biron near an island that's washed away now. The kids from Biron were invited to the picnics too. "That was the first time I ever saw my wife," said Gazeley. "We sat on the steps of the White House where they had Sunday school and visited for a while. After the picnic I never saw her again until junior high school when she sat in the seat in front of me in the assembly room of old Lincoln high school."

In 1914, Gazeley joined the Congregational Church. In the

same class were Stanton Mead, Roy Normington, the Gross brothers, Addison Philleo and Jimmy Sayles. Mrs. Pease taught the class. "She kept the class until we were about freshmen in high school. Then she thought we ought to have a man teacher," said Gazeley. "We got Dean Brundage, who worked over at Consolidated. We were known as Company D. I don't think it had a meaning. I guess the kids made up their mind they wanted some name."

Mrs. Pease lived on the north end of Mead's Island. In summer she invited the class down two or three times for picnics.

In the back-top part of the stone church were all the little rooms for Sunday school classes. "You could see the trees outside the window. One Sunday Mrs. Pease went to do something. While she was gone one kid opened the window and down he went."

One Sunday morning during the service a chip of the top framework fell down and hit Henry Baldwin on the side of the head, Gazeley said. Baldwin got up and left. "Just before services were over he came back in and sat down to let us know everything was all right," Gazeley said. "That's when they began thinking about getting a new church, I guess."

# The Yearbooks

## Statistics from Congregational Annual Reports

Provided by Harold F. Worthley  
 Congregational Library  
 14 Beacon Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02108

(Grand Rapids is listed first in the 1862 report, although the year of organization is recognized variously as 1858, 1860 and 1862. Statistics are for the previous year.)

Year of Report	Ministers	Church Members				Additions			Removals				Baptisms		
		Male	Female	Total	Absent	Prof.	Letter	Total	Deaths	Disin.	Excom.	Total	Adult	Infant	Sab. School
1862	Vacant	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1863	J.W. Harris	1	5	6	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	110
1864	J.W. Harris	6	12	18	1	6	7	13	0	1	0	1	5	0	100
1865	J.W. Harris	5	14	19	0	2	1	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	130
1866	J.W. Harris	6	16	22	2	1	0	1	0	2	0	2	1	1	100
1867	J.W. Harris	4	16	20	5	1	1	2	1	0	0	1	0	2	120
1868	J.W. Harris	4	19	23	4	5	3	8	0	7	0	7	4	2	110
1869	None	8	15	28	6	1	4	5	0	3	0	3	1	1	80
1870	J.H. Cameron	6	21	27	3	3	3	6	0	3	0	3	2	6	125
1871	E.G. Carpenter	6	26	32	6	6	4	10	0	1	0	1	2	0	120
1872	R.M. Webster	16	58	74	1	47	4	51					36		140
1873	R.M. Webster	16	58	74	1										140
1874	R.M. Webster	16	60	76	6	4	1	5	0	1	0	1	1	3	160
1875	R.M. Webster	24	43	67	14	6	3	9	4	3	0	7	2	2	150
1876	L.M. Foster	28	43	71		4	0	4	0	2	0	2	0	1	120
1877	L.M. Foster	20	57	77	10	5	0	5	0	2	0	2	2	0	80
1878	L.M. Foster	21	61	82	11	4	0	4	Di	L	Dc	To	2	3	90
1879	L.M. Foster	24	69	93	12	10	1	11	1	8	0	9	6	0	90
1880	John S. Norris														
1881	John S. Norris	15	56	71	15		2	2	2	4	20	26			108
1882	John S. Norris	26	89	115	15	33	14	47							115
1883	John Rowland	29	97	126	26										180
1884	John Rowland	20	70	90	10	0	3	3	0	4	0	4	0	1	140
1885	John Rowland	21	80	101	29	4	2	6	2	2		4	2	5	125
1886	John Rowland	18	77	95	26	2	1	3	1	4		5		5	175
1887	Alba L.P. Loomis	19	83	102	30	2	0	2	1	3	2	6	0	9	200
1888	Alba L.P. Loomis	22	103	125	32	26	7	33	2	4	0	6	11	6	200
1889	Alba L.P. Loomis	23	101	124		5	3	8	2	2	3	7	3	10	293
1890	Alba L.P. Loomis	23	105	128	26	4	4	8	0	3	0	3	4	5	243



Year of Report	Ministers	Church Members				Additions			Removals				Baptisms		Sab. Schools
		Male	Female	Total	Absent	Prof.	Letter	Total	Deaths	Disin.	Excom.	Total	Adult	Infant	
1891	William Kilbourne	22	106	128	34	8	0	8	1	8	0	9	2	12	207
1892	William Kilburn	22	99	121		6	2	8	4	0	11	15	3	4	175
1893	William Kilburne	22	102	124	26	2	2	4	1			1	2	8	182
1894	William Kilburne	22	103	125	26	2	2	4	1	2	0	3	1	9	170
1895	William Kilburne	24	107	131	29	7	2	9	2	0	1	3	4	4	140
1896	William Kilburne	23	106	129	30	0	1	1	2	1	0	3	0	8	142
1897	(Fred S. Wheeler)	23	106	129	30	0	0	0	2	2	0	4	0	0	80
1898	Fred S. Wheeler	23	93	116	15	0	0	0	3	1	0	4	0	0	96
1899															
1900	Benjamin J.H. Shaw	10	50	60	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	5	0	0	125
1905	Fred Staff	42	108	150	34	1	5	6	0	1	0	1	0	0	190
1910	Fred Staff	74	141	215	30	27	1	28	Di 3	L 2	R 35	To 40	8	3	250
1915	Robert J. Locke	126	200	326	67	32	18	50	Dth	Let	Rev	To	14	11	465
1920	Noel J. Breed	196	277	473	110	31	17	48	2	12	0	14	4	10	314
1925	J. Merle Stevens	212	349	561	64	35	10	45	0	0	0	0	6	15	346
1930	J. Merle Stevens	242		643	126	27		33	0	15		15			299
1935	Frederick H. Hyslop	235		625	160	18		41	2	11		13			305
1940	Robert W. Kingdon	239		496	13	25		42	8	4		12			273
1945	Robert W. Kingdon	273		559	61	19		28	7	13		30			242
1950	Robert W. Kingdon	284		622	60	18		44	3	21		33			221
1955	Robert W. Kingdon			649	48	21		47	6	25		34			336
1960	Robert W. Kingdon			724	60	25		54				32			336
	(D.E. Minnick)														
1965	Robert W. Kingdon			773		31		49				32			280
	(L.F. Newton, Jr.)														
1970	C.P. Fischer			683				51				177			230
1975	C.P. Fischer			577				47				22			250
	(G. Bertsch, R. Kingdon)														
1980	C.P. Fischer			724				41				19			200
	(R. Kingdon)														
1985	C.P. Fischer			673								107			200
	(A.E. James)														

#### Associate Ministers

Donald E. Minnick, 1959-64

Lyman F. Newton, 1965-68

Gerald W. Bertsch, 1970-76



Christian Science Church, 1986



A May 4, 1976 visit to the old church



**NEW USE FOR OLD BUILDING**—Once a church and more recently used as the Masonic Temple, this building on 4th Ave. S. has now been leased by the Wisconsin Rapids Scouts Drum & Bugle Corps and is being converted into a clubhouse and drill hall for that organization.

Tribune Staff Photo

## A River City Memoir

"Dance?"

She is daringly, devastatingly young. Infatuated by her deep brown eyes, white socks and witty ways, I don't care.

The big room is a dark, smoky sanctuary throbbing with the bass guitar runs of the Rockin' Catalinas: "Go go go, Johnny B. Goode."

I am 17, young enough to drift through a smog of abstract words and intoxicated enough to twist the night away on the Corpsman Hall dance floor.

The pretty girl refers to mother as "Madge."

"Madge won't be home until late," she says.

For me, life has taken a turn toward paradise.

The way to heaven is blocked when I open the door of the men's room and look into the bloodshot eyes of a being abstract words cannot define: engineer boots, jeans falling off hips, soiled shirt open at the neck, tattoos picked in arms with pins, greased-back ducktail, thin face twisted like a wrecked fender.

He is angry. He doesn't like my looks. Even so, he wants to go outside and chew on my ears.

"You make me sick," he says.

What does a young man on his way to youth and beauty do when confronted by the outcast of the universe?

My problem is rectified without honor when a friend of mine takes the outcast to the back yard and beats the heck out of him.

Although it has been a quarter-century since I visited the Corpsman Hall on 4th Avenue South, only lately have I learned facts of its long history that contrast sharply with the impressions of my careless delinquency.

When I met the pretty girl and the outcast in August 1962, the building served part-time as a dance hall operated by a drum and bugle corps. It was used mainly for practice, drill, banquets, meetings and lounge.

Leased from its owner, John M. Potter, in 1961 by the Boy Scout Drum and Bugle Corps and later reportedly used by the Royal Guard, the building had been a Masonic Temple from 1902 until construction of a new temple in 1959. Before that it was the Unity Church.

Now its site is buried somewhere under the former Woolco store. The original owners of the structure hardly could have envisioned that conclusion.

by Dave Engel



## Charter Members:

March 27, 1862

Mr. J.W. Harris  
Mr. J.H. Lang  
Mr. B. Solman  
Miss L. Clark  
Mrs. H.F. Black  
Mrs. J.W. Harris  
Mrs. J.H. Lang  
Mrs. B. Solman  
Mrs. C. Edmister  
Mrs. Chas. Lemley

## Roll of Members

1874

Mrs. H.F. Black\*  
Mr. J.W. Harris\*  
Mr. J.H. Lang\*  
Mrs. Chas. Lemley  
Mr. B. Solomon\*  
Miss L. Woodworth\*  
Mr. John Norton\*  
Mr. Frank Anderson  
Mrs. Athrop  
Miss Fannie Baker  
Mrs. Henry Balcomb  
Miss Lou Barker\*  
Mrs. James Canning  
Miss Ella Compton  
Mrs. Dennis  
Miss Alice Edwards  
Miss Sophie Fontaine  
Mrs. Freeman\*  
Miss M. Gardner\*  
Mrs. Hutchins  
Mrs. Frank Hubbard  
Mrs. J.E. Ingraham  
Mr. Clement Jones  
Mrs. Chas. Kline  
Mr. McClatchie  
Miss Marry Merrill  
Mrs. John Moore  
Mr. Henry Panter  
Mr. H.B. Philleo  
Miss Clara Pierce  
Mr. Pratt†  
Mr. Marcus Pratt  
Mrs. Samuel Purdy  
Mrs. John Rablin  
Miss Kate Rablin  
Miss Lavinia Rablin  
Mr. Seth Reeves  
Mrs. E.B. Rossier  
Mrs. James Robb\*  
Miss Kate Rumsey  
Mrs. John Snyder\*  
Mrs. William Scott  
Mrs. D.W. Spaulding  
Mrs. Edgar Tenant†  
Mrs. Thos. Stevenson  
Mrs. William Trahern  
Mrs. M.C. Warren  
Mrs. R.M. Webster  
Miss Fannie Webster  
Mrs. Geo. Whitney  
Mrs. Geo. Weller  
Miss Rosa Weller  
Mrs. William Ward†  
Mr. L.B. Warner  
Mrs. Ralph Worthington

Mrs. Chas. Edmister\*  
Mrs. J.W. Harris\*  
Mrs. J.H. Lang\*  
Miss Lucinda Clark\*  
Mrs. B. Solmon\*  
Mrs. Crawford  
Mrs. John Norton\*  
Mr. Paul Amidsee  
Mrs. Willaim Ashford  
Mr. David Baker  
Mr. W. Balderston  
Mr. William Brown  
Mr. Elbert Clark†  
Miss Kate Compton\*  
Miss Annie Dutruit  
Mr. G. Ferguson\*  
Miss Marie Fontaine  
Mrs. Gardner  
Mr. Frank Gould  
Mr. Henry Gressler  
Mr. J.E. Ingraham  
Mrs. H.W. Jackson  
Mrs. Clement Jones  
Mrs. H.W. Lord  
Mrs. McClatchie  
Mrs. McVay  
Mrs. Samuel Parker  
Mrs. Lyman Page  
Mrs. H.B. Philleo  
Miss Lina Pierce  
Mrs. Pratt  
Mr. Samuel Purdy  
Mrs. L.P. Powers  
Mrs. John Rablin Jr.  
Miss Susan Rablin  
Miss Sarah Ann Rablin  
Mrs. Seth Reeves  
Miss Celia Rossier  
Mrs. Chas. Raymond  
Mr. Henry Searles  
Mr. James Smith  
Mr. D.W. Spaulding  
Mr. A.D. Tenant  
Mr. Edgar Tenant  
Mr. F. Timeon  
Miss Mary Wagner  
Mr. M.C. Warren  
Miss M. Webster†  
Miss Winifred Webster  
Mr. Geo. Weller  
Mr. Charles Weller  
Mr. George Wood  
Mrs. Orlando Ward  
Mrs. L.B. Warner

\* Dismissed. † Dead.

## Members

Oct. 1st, 1887

[\* DENOTES ABSENCE]

Ashford, Mrs. William  
Athrop; Mrs.\*  
Baker; Miss L.\*  
Brown; W.H.  
Brown; Mrs. W.H.  
Brown; Minnie  
Baker; Mrs. G.W.  
Bean; Mrs. H.A.  
Beadle; Mrs. J.R.  
Beadle; Cora  
Beattie; Mrs. Helen  
Belknap; Mrs. Lovina M.  
Belknap; Charles J.  
Burr; Ella A.  
Canning; Mrs. James  
Carrington; Mrs. Lovina  
Carrington; Miss Grace L.  
Carrington; Miss Lovina A.  
Carman; Ida  
Cary; Dudley F.  
Cary; Frank E.  
Crawford; Mrs. E.  
Cornish; Mrs. L.A.\*  
Compton; Mrs. Ivah  
Compton; Celia  
Daley; Mrs. J.  
Denis; Mrs. O.  
Dutton; Mr. F.J.  
Dutton; Mrs. F.J.\*  
Eilertson; Mrs. Marion\*  
Farrish; Mrs.  
Farrish; Mrs. Anna  
Farrish; Ella A.  
Favel; Mrs. Ella F.  
Ferguson; Mrs. J.M.  
Freeman; Mrs. Bethia  
Fontaine; Albert  
Fontaine; Mrs. Ernestine  
Gardner; Mrs. Geo. R.  
Gardner; Mrs. Mary  
Garrison; Mrs. Frank  
Gass; Mrs. Mary\*  
Gressler Mr. Henry  
Gressler; Mrs. Henry  
Gray; Mrs. Orrin  
Hand; Mrs. F.W.\*  
Hicks; Mrs. L.S.\*  
Hodges; Mrs. Caroline  
Horton; Mrs. Alice M.  
Horton; Mary  
Ingraham; J.E.\*  
Jackson; Mrs. Henry  
Jones; Mrs. Carrie  
Jones; Mrs. Clement\*  
Ketchum; Edward  
King; Mrs. E.S.  
Lemley; Mrs. Charles, Jr.\*  
Lindsley; Mrs. Alex\*  
Lindsley; Mrs. C.†  
Lord; Mrs. W.H.†

Lord; R. Heber  
Lord; Charlie  
Loomis; A.L.P.  
Loomis; Mrs. A.L.P.  
Loomis; Arthur C.  
Loomis; Louise F.  
Loomis; Florence S.  
McCann; John  
McCann; Mrs. John  
Miller; Emma  
Morrill; D.P.  
Morrill; Mrs. D.P.  
Morrill; Carrie  
Panter; Mrs. Henry\*  
Philleo; Mrs. H.B.  
Philleo; Mrs. Minnie  
Powers; Mrs. Levi  
Patrick; Mrs. Edna  
Pratt; Mrs. Shumway  
Pratt; Marcus  
Pratt; Cora  
Pratt; Jennie M.  
Pratt; Gratia  
Pride; Mrs. Mamie  
Preston; Mrs. Hattie  
Rablin; Mrs. John Sr.  
Rablin; Mrs. John Jr.  
Rablin; Mrs. Mary J.  
Rablin; Mrs. Sarah A.  
Rablin; Mrs. Lavina  
Raymond; Mrs. Charles  
Reaves; Seth  
Reaves; Mrs. Seth  
Robinson; Mrs. Arinna  
Rossier; Mrs. E.B.  
Schultz; Mrs. L.O.  
Slocum; Mrs. Charles  
Solar; F.J.\*  
Solar; Mrs. F.J.\*  
Smith; Mrs. Ellen  
Scott; Mrs. Wm.  
Spafford; S.A.  
Spafford; Mrs. S.A.\*  
Spafford; Tille D.  
Stocking; Mrs. Jennie\*  
Swenson; Mrs. Minnie  
Squire; James S.  
Squire; Mrs. James S.  
Tenant; Mrs. A.D.  
Timeon; F.  
Ticknor; Mrs. Amelia  
Voyer; Emma  
Voyer; Mary Emma  
Voyer; Laura A.  
Warren; M.C.  
Warren; Mrs. M.C.  
Witter; G.F.  
Witter; Mrs. G.F.  
Whitney; Mrs. George\*  
Wood; F.J.  
Wood; Mrs. F.J.  
Worthington; Harry\*  
Worden; Mrs. M.  
Young; Mrs. Ella O.

# Resident Covenant Fellowship 1987

## Church Officers 1987

MODERATOR—Carlene Sanborn  
VICE—MODERATOR—James Custer  
CLERK—Leanne Hodge  
TREASURER—Carl Lemke  
FINANCIAL SECRETARY—Jon Neidhold  
BOARD OF DEACONS—AI Tozier  
BOARD OF DEACONESSES—Jan Sisley  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES—John Hane  
BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION—Randy Ring  
CHRISTIAN ENLISTMENT COMMITTEE—Donald Smith  
MISSIONS COMMITTEE—Christine Hagen  
PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE—Phyllis Hunger  
MUSIC COMMITTEE—Robert Zimmerman  
WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP—Jennifer Lemke

## Church Personnel

MINISTER—Calvin Fischer  
ASSOCIATE MINISTER—Ann James  
MINISTER OF MUSIC—Judith Urban  
SANCTUARY CHOIR  
DIRECTOR—Peter Crawford  
JUNIOR CHOIR DIRECTOR—David Stedman  
CHURCH SCHOOL  
SUPERINTENDENT—Dorothy Kopelke  
SECRETARIES—Joyce Smith & Dorothy Kopelke  
CUSTODIAL & JANITORIAL—John Lutz, Mildred Hefty, Diane Leitner

## Resident Covenant Fellowship

A

Adams, L. Earl  
Ahles, Dorothy (Mrs. Alvis)  
Albers, Tom & Joyce  
Albrecht, Vicki J. (Mrs. Lee)  
Came, Jane  
Andrae, Max & Pat  
Arndt, Richard  
Arnold, Dorothy (Mrs. John)  
Athnos, Gregory & Nancy  
Nikki

B

Babcock, Curt & Leah  
Jacob Babcock, David  
Babcock, Amy Lamb  
Babcock, Richard & Jean

Babcock, Shirley (Mrs.)  
Babcock, William & Jean  
Luke, Crystal  
Babler, William & Susan  
Heather  
Balts, Joanne (Mrs. John)  
Steven, Deanne  
Leland Barker Family  
Bassett, Richard  
Bean, Howard & Carol  
Belanger, Orville  
Bell, Emily Baldwin  
Bell, Margaret (Mrs. Chester)  
Bell, Steven & Paula  
Elizabeth, Rebecca, Margaret  
Bender, Elsie (Mrs. F.F.)  
Bennett, Henry & Deborah  
Bernet, Allan & Sharon  
Bevins, Elizabeth  
Beyer, Arla (Mrs.)  
David  
Billings, John & Hazel  
Bird, Olga (Mrs. Edgar)  
Birkner, Cheryl  
Heidi  
Birkner, Dorothy (Mrs.)  
Bishop, George & Winnifred  
Kathryn

Blanchard, Howard & Charlotte  
Blomberg, Alice  
Blomberg, Beverly  
Blystone, Roberta (Mrs.)  
Tina  
Boehm, Clara (Mrs. Paul)  
Bonsack, Roland & Clarice  
Bovre, Donald  
Andy  
Bovre, Nancy  
Nicole, Natalie, Tyler  
Boyer, Ralph & "Babe"  
Brandt, Jim & Beatie  
Charlene  
Brazeau, Barbara (Mrs.)  
Brostrom, Mildred (Mrs.)  
Brostrom, William  
Bryant, Roy & Leslie  
George, Jessica  
Bubolz, Al & Marge  
Buchs-Hammonds, Charles & Linda  
Jonathan, Justin, Laura

C

Capek, Arlene (Mrs.)  
Chadwick, Jake & Dorothy  
Chambers, Lloyd  
Cherney, Laura (Mrs. Dennis)  
Tyler, Simon  
Clark, Brian & Linda  
Danny, Ross  
Clark, Ray & Irma  
Colby, Lester  
Coley, Tom & Judy  
Craig, Viola (Mrs.)  
Crawford, Peter & Wendy  
Crook, John & Margaret

Custer, Jim & Phyllis

D

Dallman, Gene & Joan  
Gina  
Daly, Viola (Mrs. Don)  
Danielson, Helen (Mrs.)  
Dau, Nicole  
Day, Lloyd & Frances  
DeLong, Marie  
Dempze, Iris (Mrs. Gordon)  
DeWitt, Emma  
Dickinson, Robert F.  
Dillman, Debra (Mrs. Robert)  
Cara, Niki  
Dix, Kenneth & Lucille  
Dosen, Bob & Doris  
Dudgeon, Edith  
Dudgeon, Lucile

E

Eichhorn, Georgia  
Jacqueline, Jeremy, Jason,  
Joshua  
Ellis, Thomas  
Joseph  
Emery, Val & Mildred  
Exner, Alice (Mrs. Frank)

F

Fancher, Kenneth  
Farris, Lily  
Farrish, Don & Marion  
Fausch, Stewart  
Fawcett, Peter & Elizabeth  
Rachelle  
Fehrman, Gary & Cathy  
Megan, Tyson  
Felix, Maria  
Fencil, Darrell, Debra  
Alyssa, Darci  
Feutz, Lynn & Ruth  
Fey, Jane (Mrs.)  
Field, Paul  
Fischer, Karen  
Sandra, Stephan, Suzanne  
Litang  
Fischer, Calvin & Judith  
Flieger, Ruth (Mrs.)  
Foerster, Bill & Jan  
Michelle, Jennifer  
Foerster, Donald & Rae  
Nicholas  
Fox, Jeff  
Fredlund, Henry  
Fredrick, Jeffrey & Audrey  
Stacey, Jenna  
Friday, Walter & Elizabeth  
Fritz, Wyatt & Nancy  
Wyatt E.  
Frost, Don & Evelyn  
Fuehrer, Deborah (Mrs. William)

G

Garski, Tony & Janet  
Mark

Galloway, Erma (Mrs.)  
Gazeley, Art & Bessie  
Gazeley, Art & Lois  
Gerend, Susan (Mrs. Michael)  
Megan, Matthew  
Gilmaster, Art & Ruby  
Gilmaster, Douglas  
Glenzer, Dale & Marsha  
Amy, Sherry, Lori  
Glenzer, Vernon & Charlotte  
Goehring, Ida (Mrs.)  
Good, Norm. (Dr.)  
Gorham, Mary Jane  
Gottschalk, Guy & Kathleen  
Fawn, Andrew  
Gottschalk, Robert  
Gouchee, Dorothy (Mrs.)  
Greeley, Esther (Mrs.)  
Greenaway, Roger, & Marcia  
Penny, Tami  
Gritzmacher, John & Shirley  
John, Lisa  
Gross, Kathleen  
Ann Marie, Michael  
Gross, Marion  
Gross, Loren  
Gross, Ruth (Mrs. Quesnal)  
Gross, Terry & Joan  
Curtis, Michelle  
Gross, William & Sally  
Gruetzmacher, Dennis Jr. & Polly  
Sharlene, Dennis  
Grund, Richard & Natalie  
Steven, Michael

H

Hael, Richard & Doris  
Haferman, Glenn & Dorothy  
Haferman, Herb & Joyce  
Hagedorn, Theodore & Mary  
Debra, Wendy, Kelly  
Hagemann, Bob & Mary  
Hagen, Dale & Christine  
Alice, Sarah  
Hall, Emil & Marie  
Hall, Wilhelmina  
Hamre, Gilbert & Valerie  
Seth, Lorraine  
Hane, John & Mary Jo  
David, Matthew  
Harding, David & Carol  
Samantha Harding,  
Jason Olson, Jennifer Olson  
Haupt, Sandy (Mrs. Kenneth)  
Jason, Kayla  
Hayward, Alice (Mrs. Arthur)  
Heath, Leslie & Dorothy  
Hefty, Mildred (Mrs.)  
Heger, Marguerite (Mrs. A.A.)  
Heger, Rogers  
Heilman, William  
Hein, Loretta  
Hellerud, Harley, & Linda Olson  
Hemming, Amy  
Henderson, Lennart & Carol  
Kevin, Laura



Hentschel, Minnie  
 Hernandez, Robert  
 Hilgard, Bertha (Mrs. T.W.)  
 Hill, Jennie  
 Hill, Ken & Diane  
     Wendy, Heather  
 Hobart, Winnie  
 Hodge, Edna  
 Hodge, Leanne  
 Hoffman, Wm. & Rebecca  
     Susan, Mary Ann, Pam  
 Holmes, Elaine (Mrs)  
 Hopfensperger, Sue (Mrs. Ken)  
     Rian, Seth, Eric  
 Hopfer, Susan (Mrs. D)  
     Sheila, Aric  
 Hornig, Roger. & Portia  
 Hornigold, Lillian (Mrs. "Duke")  
 Hostvedt, Esther (Mrs. John)  
 Huchthausen, Irma  
 Huffman, Bill & Phyllis  
 Hunger, Phyllis

Ironside, Frank & Illa  
 Ironside, Larry & Sandy  
     Cindy, Shane, Heather  
 Ironside, Leonard & Mary  
     Elizabeth, Lee, Matthew  
 Ives, Wally & Linda  
     Michelle, Jason

**J**  
 Jackson, Herb & Eunice  
 Jacobs, William & Jordie  
     Chris, Andy, Molly  
 Jacobson, Ellen (Mrs. Lester)  
 James, Ann (Rev.)  
 Jens, Barry & Nancy  
     Eric, Heidi, Tom  
 Jens, Virginia  
 Johnson, Charles & Dorothy  
 Johnson, Jim & Ruth  
     John, Joni  
 Johnson, Kim  
     Jamie  
 Johnson, Louise (Mrs. Dale)  
 Johnson, Nellie  
 Johnson, Ruth Ann (Mrs. Robert)  
 Johnson, Ruth E. (Mrs. Russell)  
 Jones, Jack & Fran  
     David, Bryan, Karyn  
 Joosten, Karen (Mrs. James)  
     Daniel, Donald  
 Joosten, Leroy & Sally  
     David, Dale  
 Joosten, Norm & Shirley  
     Amanda  
 Junkman, Howard & Helen

**K**  
 Kell, Ella  
 Kempfert, Barbara (Mrs. Michael)  
 Kickert, Bob & Joanne  
 King, Doris (Mrs. Herbert)  
 Kingdon, Catherine (Mrs. Robert W.)  
 Kingery, Lori & Jeff  
 Ryan, Christy  
 Kinney, Naidiene  
 Kissner, Eva (Mrs. Tony)  
     Lexi  
 Kniess, Max & Harriet  
 Knuteson, Merita (Mrs. Ed)

Knuth, Elsie  
 Koehntopp, Jim & Byrdie  
     Terika, Shalisa, Devon  
 Kofnetka, Richard & Shirley  
 Konkle, Robert & Sally  
     Jeffrey, Tammy  
 Kopelke, Dorothy  
 Koth, Signe (Mrs. Herman)  
 Kranick, Richard  
 Krings, Ron & Debbie  
     Shane, Kristopher  
 Krueger, Ed & Jean  
 Kufalk, Dale & Deborah  
 Kuhn, Harold & Donna  
     Timm, Todd  
 Kurtz, Phil & Kay  
     Tim, Jeff  
 Kwasigroch, Irene (Mrs. J.)

**L**  
 LaChapelle, Harvey  
 Lafler, Harry & Bonnie  
     Bruce, Gary Dillingham  
 Lamb, Mark  
     Amy  
 Lamb, Russell & Sue  
     Kathy  
 Langer, Al & Laura  
 Latimer, Tom & Valda  
 Lauritzen, Roger & Deborah  
 Legro, John & Deborah  
     Janelle, Kevin, Erin  
 Leitner, Roger & Diane  
     Dawn  
 Lemke, Carl & Jennifer  
     Sarah, David, Paul, Joel  
 Lohman, Darlene (Mrs.)  
     Carmen, Paul  
 Long, Harold and Judy  
     Wendy, Ginger  
 Lovelace, Michael & Debra  
     Adam  
 Lovell, Hazel (Mrs. Art)  
 Luebke, Linda  
     Jay  
 Lutz, John & Carol

**M**  
 Mahnke, Gloria (Mrs. Ralph)  
     Greg, Andrea, Gordon  
 Marshall, Mary Ellen  
 Marshall, Kevin & Betty  
     Jeremy Lee  
 Marti, Inez (Mrs. Orville)  
 Marti, Rod & Jacqueline  
     Corey, Christopher  
 Martin, Vynetta (Mrs. C.R.)  
 Martin, Erwin & Jane  
 Martin, Martha (Mrs. Louis)  
 Masko, Amy  
     Monica  
 Mastalski, Kenneth & Carla  
     Cari, Diana  
 Mathison, Faye  
 Matthews, Mark & Sara  
 Mead, George & Helen  
 Mead, Stanton & Elvira  
 Meeks, James & Marilyn  
     Danielle, Donna, Rhonda Cook  
 Meier, Rex & Marilys  
 Meyer, Philip & Constance  
 Midthun, Olive (Mrs. A.J.)  
 Midthun, Joyce  
 Midthun, Morgan & Dorothy

Miller, Gordon & Marie  
 Mills, Bill & Pat  
 Moerchen, Louretta (Mrs.)  
 Moffat, John & Priscilla  
     Lindsey, Elizabeth  
 Mohr, Bill  
 Montogomerie, Larene  
 Moore, Jack & Toni  
 Morris, Ralph & Karen  
     Michelle, Wendy, Adam  
 Mortenson, Don & Lucille  
 Murtfeldt, Larry & Helen  
 McArthey, Dennis & Glenda  
     Colleen, Mollie  
 McCandless, Dorothy  
 McCarthy, Marlene  
 McDonald, Ken & Svea  
 McDonald, Susan  
 McDougall, Brian  
 McDougall, Homer & Louise  
 McKay, Isabelle  
 McKay, Mrs. Robert

**N**  
 Nash, Jean  
 Natwick, John & Mae  
 Neidhold, Jon & Marlene  
     Nancy, Jay  
 Nelson, James & Sharon  
     Todd, Melanie  
 Nelson, Olive  
 Nelson, Van  
 Neve, Ed & Arlene  
 Nicholson, Bill & Eloise  
     Pat  
 Nieman, Hazel (Mrs. Herbert)  
 Nordman, Leonard & Mary  
     Patrick, Cassondra Appel, Lisa  
     Nordman  
 Noska, Kathryn (Mrs. Joe)  
 Novotny, John

**O**  
 O'Day, Carol (Mrs. Grady)  
     Kerry, Erin  
 Oltesvig, Wayne  
 O'Toole, Susan (Mrs. Patrick)  
     Brian, Shannon  
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## The Covenant

*We confess our faith in God, our Heavenly Father, and our reverent love for Jesus Christ, our Saviour, and our willingness to be guided by the Holy Spirit. We promise as members of this church to walk together as Christian brethren, obedient to the teachings of the Holy Scriptures, and to submit to the government and discipline of this church, until we are regularly dismissed therefrom. And this we do for the glory of God, for the good of our fellow men, and for our mutual growth in Christian grace, seeking to do all in faith, fellowship and service, in the spirit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

# Home Mission

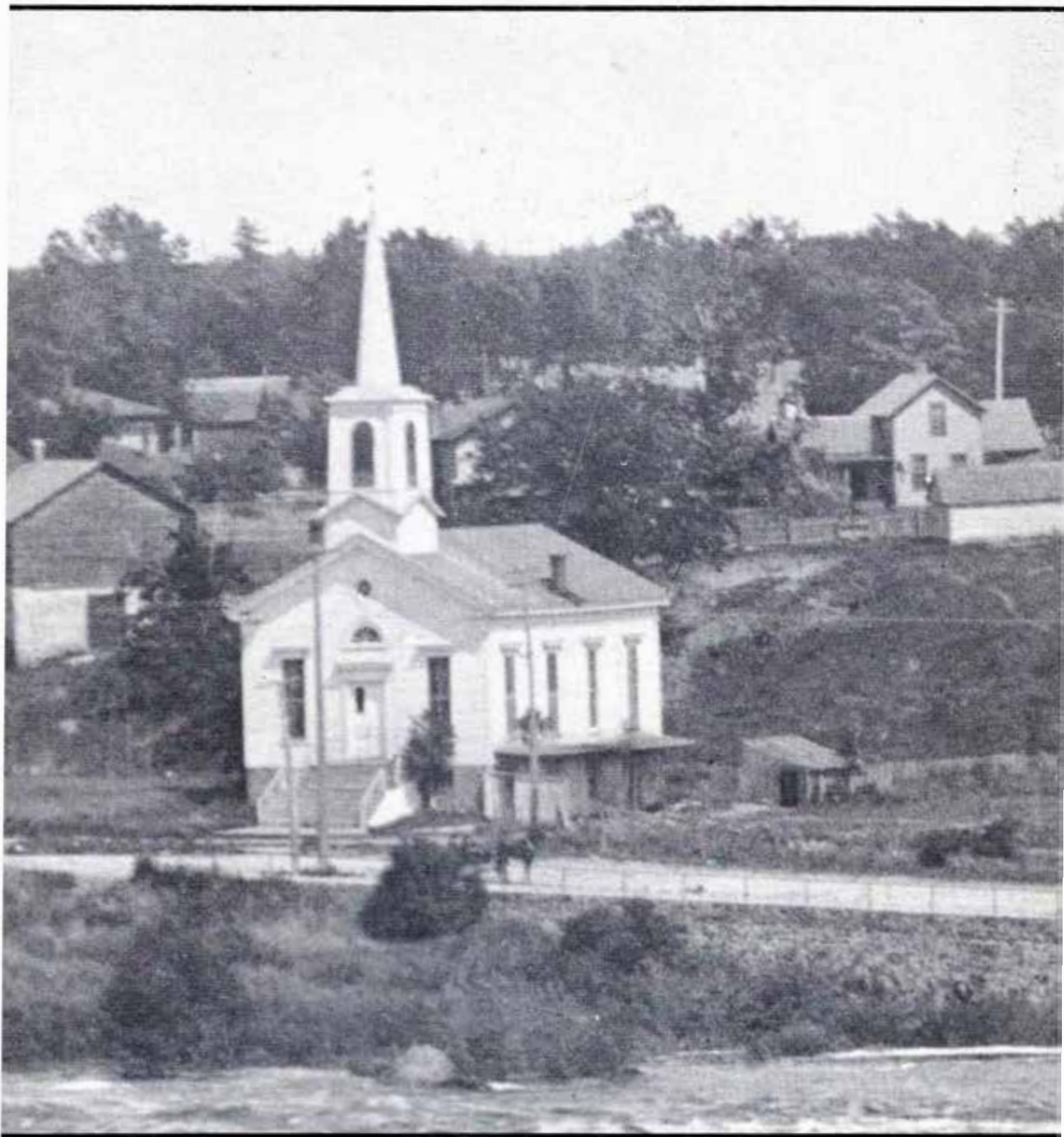
A History of the First Congregational, United Church of Christ  
Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin



by  
Dave Engel



# Home Mission



**Dave Engel**