

**IN COMMEMORATION: FIFTIETH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE
ORGANIZATION OF THE
GENERAL CONGREGATIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF ILLINOIS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649520336

In Commemoration: Fiftieth Anniversary of the Organization of the General Congregational Association of Illinois by Various

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

VARIOUS

**IN COMMEMORATION: FIFTIETH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE
ORGANIZATION OF THE
GENERAL CONGREGATIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF ILLINOIS**

IN COMMEMORATION

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

ORGANIZATION

OF THE

GENERAL
CONGREGATIONAL
ASSOCIATION

..... OF ILLINOIS.

PUBLISHED BY THE ASSOCIATION.

OTTAWA:
REPUBLICAN-TIMES PRINTING HOUSE
1894.

The Gift
Presented by

COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION.

- REV. M. K. WHITTLESEY, D. D.
- REV. H. N. HOYT, D. D.
- REV. G. S. F. SAVAGE, D. D.
- PROF. H. McD. SCOTT, D. D.
- REV. J. D. WYCKOFF.



47,342

BK
7148
.I4
E4



**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,
OAK PARK, ILL.**

INTRODUCTORY.

At the meeting of the General Congregational Association of Illinois, in Canton, 1893, "it was by vote ordered that the Programme Committee, in preparing the programme for next year, recognize the fact that it is the fiftieth anniversary of our State Association, and provide for some suitable commemoration of that fact." The Programme Committee was Rev. Walter M. Barrows, D. D., of Rockford; Rev. Samuel H. Dana, D. D., of Quincy; Rev. George H. Wilson, of Hinsdale. The churches in Oak Park and Ridgeland united in inviting the Association to meet with them in the church edifice of the Oak Park Church. The programme for the memorial exercises, accepted and adopted by the Association, named Wednesday, May 23, 1894, as the time, with order for proceeding as follows: Devotional Meeting, Rev. John B. Fairbank, Waverly; The Record of Fifty Years, Rev. M. K. Whittlesey, D. D., Ottawa; The Pioneer Ministers, Rev. J. M. Startevant, D. D., Aurora; Fifty Years of Theological Development, Rev. E. F. Williams, D. D., Chicago; Influence of Congregational Churches on Schools and Colleges, Rev. Richard Edwards, LL. D., Bloomington; Influence of Congregational Churches on Theological Education, President Franklin W. Fisk, D. D., Chicago; Fifty Years of Home Missions, Rev. Jos. E. Roy, D. D., Chicago; Fifty Years of Sunday-School Work, R. E. Jenkins, Esq., Chicago; Then and Now, Reminiscences, Rev. Geo. S. F. Savage, D. D., Chicago; Our Fifty Years of Foreign Missionary Work, Rev. Moses Smith, Glencoe; Fifty Years of Church Building in Illinois, Rev. Eli Corwin, D. D., Chicago; Congregationalism in Southwestern Illinois, Rev. William A. Collins, Quincy.

The afternoon of the day following, "Woman's Hour" was set apart for kindred themes, under the general topic, Fifty Years of Woman's Work in Illinois: Mrs. Isaac Claffin, Lombard; Mrs. Hiram Foote, Rockford; Miss Sara F. Anderson, Rockford College; Mrs. A. E. Arnold, Avon. For the evening of Thursday, closing exercises, The Message of the Past to the Present, The Church and the University, Rev. I. N. Rubinkam, D. D., Chicago; The Message of the Past to the Present, The Church and the People, Rev. Jean F. Loba, D. D., Evanston.

At an early period in the reading of the Jubilee Memorial Papers it

was suggested by Prof. S. L. Curtis, that these papers presented be printed. The suggestion ultimately took form, as follows: "That the jubilee papers presented at this Association be carefully condensed and edited by a committee of five appointed for said purpose, of whom the Registrar shall be one, and these papers be printed in pamphlet or such other form as may seem to the committee best. The committee is also requested to add and publish such other papers as may command themselves on the ground of historic fact and value." The committee appointed by vote of the Association for this purpose was: Rev. M. K. Whittlesey, Rev. H. N. Hoyt, Rev. G. S. F. Savage, Professor Hugh McDonald Scott, Rev. J. D. Wyckoff.

Some persons on the committee leaving the State soon after the close of the meeting of the Association, a full attendance for conference could not be had till October. As result of such conference these papers are given to the public. Others, at the suggestion of and in accordance with the wishes of their authors, are withheld.

THE RECORD OF FIFTY YEARS.

BY REV. M. K. WHITTLESEY, D. D.

Congregationalism, as an evangelizing force, began its work here in 1812. Rev. Samuel J. Mills, with Rev. John Schermerhorn, sent by Eastern societies on an exploring tour to the West and Southwest, passed on horseback through the southern part of Illinois. In 1814, on a second tour, Mr. Mills, accompanied by Rev. Daniel Smith, over nearly the same route, namely, through Pennsylvania, Virginia, Ohio, Kentucky and Illinois, entered St. Louis, a city of 2,000 inhabitants, three-fourths of whom were French Catholics. On Sabbath, Nov. 6th, they preached in a school-room, the first sermon preached on the west side of the Mississippi river. They were well received. The published reports of this exploration, read in New England, kindled a fervor of enthusiasm to evangelize the valley of the Mississippi. Illinois Territory at that time contained a population of about 25,000. Two-thirds of the Territory, all its northern portion, was the possession and home of the Indian. The next year, Dec. 20, 1815, Rev. Salmon Giddings, a native of Hartford, Conn., educated at Williams and Andover, ordained by Hartford North Association, was commissioned by the Connecticut Domestic Missionary Society for work in St. Louis and vicinity. After a thousand miles horseback journey through the winter, he arrived in St. Louis April 6, 1818, having preached along the way in New York, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. After one and a half years' labor he organized (Nov., 1817) the First Presbyterian Church in St. Louis, with *nine* members, five of whom were from one Congregational family from New London, Conn. After eight years of hard labor, and several visits at the East for pecuniary help, he dedicated the first Presbyterian house of worship in St. Louis, 1823. Before the close of his life work, he had organized seventeen Presbyterian churches, of which about one-half were in Illinois.

In 1818 Stephen Bliss, a native of New Hampshire, graduate from Dartmouth, in class of 1812, having studied theology, failing in health started westward in search of a milder climate. He made his home in Southeastern Illinois, not far from midway between Olney and Vincennes, Ind. In 1819 he opened a Sunday-school. In 1823 he is ordained a minister and labors far and near efficiently, receiving support for three years, eventually, under the American Home Missionary Society. He did a great work.* But like that of Giddings it was under the name of Presbyterianism. And such was the work of all the New

* In Oct. 9, 1820, Mr. Bliss started afoot, with a rude knapsack, to return to New England for a wife. The journey of 1,330 miles he accomplished in fifty days. Was married January 9, 1821, and started West April 30th in a two-horse wagon, arriving after eight weeks "at the beginning of the barley harvest."

England missionaries here for more than twenty years after the beginning in 1812.*

To illustrate, at a meeting of the Center Presbytery of Illinois, constituted in 1829, we find among those present (some coming 300 miles) Jn. Minot Ellis, Julian M. Sturtevant, Theron Baldwin, and Artemas Bullard sent by Massachusetts as Sunday-school Missionary, and Cyrus L. Watson. At this meeting they arranged to fill the entire State of Illinois with Sunday-schools. At a meeting of Ottawa Presbytery, in 1833, we find as members Rev. Messrs. Nath'l C. Clark, Flavel Baseom, Ralph W. Gridley, Lucien Farnham and William Kirby. All Congregational Ministers from New England. The American Home Missionary Society, after its organization in 1826, to 1833, had employed eighty-five years of labor in Illinois, at a cost of \$159 for each year's labor, in which not a Congregational church was formed, or a Congregational minister commissioned.

In 1833 a company of Christians in Mendon, not far from Quincy, was organized as a Congregational church under a Presbyterian minister (Sol. Hardy). A church was organized at Naperville without ministerial aid. One was organized at Jacksonville against the powerful dissuasion of Rev. Edward Beecher. "Two leading brethren, Elishu Wolcott and W. H. Reed, spent an evening on this matter of organization, with Mr. Beecher," said Dr. Sturtevant. "Brother Beecher did all he could to dissuade them, while I favored their principle. I said: 'We are too weak. Work on till we are stronger.' We could not shake their purpose. They said: 'This thing is determined on.' Beecher would not preside at their organization. I did so, reluctantly, from a feeling of chivalry. I vindicated their right, while I could not go with them. Being in some sense between (Presbyterians and Congregationalists) I got blows from both parties. Before, I was looked upon with favor and as a friend. Afterward I was treated coldly. Neither Beecher or I regarded the matter as expedient or wise." Mr. Sturtevant suffered odium and reproach all his life for the part he reluctantly took in presiding at that organization, though for twenty years after he remained in the Presbytery. Thus it was that Divine Providence overruled the ministry of that period, and Congregationalism had a name and an institution as a church in Illinois in 1833. "This thing is determined on," they said, these sons of the Puritans. Seemingly, like one of old, they had said: "In the name of our God we will set up our banners." Ps. 20:5.

The churches formed at Mendon, Jacksonville, Quincy, Griggsville

* Said Rev. Wm. Carver: "When I came to this State in the autumn of 1832 I had no other thought than that of laboring entirely in the Presbyterian church, and to build up Presbyterian churches. The Presbyterians had, as they claimed, possession of the ground, and I had no other wish than that they should retain it. But one of the first things I found after coming to the State was that Congregationalists from New England claimed the right to form churches of their own order when they could do so without interfering with others." Memorial Illinois Association, 1832.