PRESBYTERIAN AND CONGREGATIONAL MISSIONARY ACTIVITY IN EARLY WISCONSIN

BY

Hazel Dora Cunningham

A Thesis Submitted for Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of MASTER OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

1936

Table of Contents

Introduction

To many persons the study of church history seems quite unimportant and unrelated to the real history of America or of any one of the States. Why bother to study it at all? I think one of the best answers to this question is given by Dr. J. Franklin Jameson, president of the "American Historical Association" in 1908. "In every other period of recorded time, we know that the study of religion casts valuable light on many other aspects of history," he says. "Why should it be otherwise with the religious history of America?"[1]

Since the churches in the United States were not managed from above by a governmental ruling class, but rather were decentralized and managed by the laity, we see the imprint of the acts and thoughts of the common people in church history everywhere. In Wisconsin as well as in the United States, the church history shows the character of the people, the actual conditions of backwoods existence, the crude schools and log cabins, the fevers, revivals, and limitless hospitality. The attitude of the people on slavery, temperance, strict moral conduct, and education is clearly shown. Very often the minister was the universal Yankee type, inventive, resourceful, brimming over with energy and enterprise, and of a cheerful and hopeful spirit which not even the "rigors of ultra-calvinism" could destroy. "Of all the means of estimating the American character from American history, the pur-

1. J. Franklin Jameson, "American Acta Sanctorum," in American Historical Review, XIII, 302 (Jan., 1908).

suit of religious history is most complete," says Jameson.[2]

The specific subject of Presbyterian and Congregational Missionary Activity suggests a preliminary survey of the sources of the early population in Wisconsin. The first settlements, about 1827, were in the lead mining regions in the south west in the present counties of Grant, Iowa, and La Fayette, and were made by people who came up the Mississippi and Ohio rivers from the South.[3]

Later there was an influx of Yankees and foreigners, especially the English, Irish, Welsh and German. The people of the South knew little of Congregationalism but much of the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Baptist faiths, with which the Welsh and Cornish miners readily affiliated; while the Irish and some Germans wanted Catholic churches and some English and Americans wanted Episcopalian ones.[4]

According to an early Methodist missionary, Rev. Alfred Brunson, the whole state of Wisconsin was really Indian territory until after the Black Hawk was in 1832. The few hundred settlers who were there sooner were miners, army and government officals, traders, Canadian French and mixed bloods. After that war, the Indian title being fully extinguished to the region lying south and east of the Wisconsin and Fox rivers and Green Bay, "the country commenced to settle in the western style; this period properly constitutes an era in the history of the state and really the commence-

2. Jameson, op. cit., 298.
3. Joseph Schafer, "Congregational Beginnings in Wisconsin," p.2 (A typewritten manuscript in the Wisconsin Historical Library.)
4. Schafer, op. cit., p. 5.

ment of the white settlements."[5]

The bulk of the settlers in Wisconsin, which was organized as a territory July 4, 1836, began to come into the southeastern counties now called Kenosha, Racine, Milwaukee, Walworth, Rock, Waukesha, Jefferson, Fond du Lac, Dodge, and Dane, in large numbers the year of her territorial organization. The census of that year assigns to the original Milwaukee County, containing most of the counties named above, a total of less than three thousand persons. Almost all of these settlers, and those that were to come in the next twelve years, were Yankees from the East, particularly New England, New York, Northern Pennsylvania, and Northern Ohio, where Calvinism in the form of Congregationalism and Presbyterianism was particularly strong.[6]

Three years after the first census, a missionary at Lake Geneva said there were 20,000 inhabitants in the territory, 19,000 of whom probably came from the Eastern states, especially from New York and New England, "there being but few foreigners and but few from the more southern states."[7]

In 1850 the same counties contained a population of 180,000, sixty three per cent of whom were native Americans, chiefly Yankees, and the balance foreign born. There were about 100,000 Yankees in Wisconsin in 1850, and 63,000 natives, mostly children of Yankees, which roughly enlarged the constituent of the Yankee missionary to perhaps 140,000.[8]

5. Alfred Brunson, "Early Wisconsin," in Wisconsin Historical Society Collections, IV, 250.
6. Schafer, op. cit., p. 4.
7. Lemuel Hall, D.D., Letter to the American Home Missionary Society, February 27, 1839.
(Photostatic copies of the originals of the Missionary Letters are in the Wisconsin Historical Library).
8. Schafer, op. cit., p. 4.

Since the Congregational and Presbyterian churches were strong in the East and in New England, it was natural that they should also predominate in Wisconsin as long as the majority of the population was from those regions. We may study the work of the missionaries of the two denominations with little differentiation for two reasons. First, they differed chiefly in organization or government rather than in doctrine, and in 1841 in Wisconsin they were uhited in one body called "The Convention", which I shall explain later in more detail, to replace separate Presbyteries and Associations or Conventious. Secondly the "American Home Missionary Society" unpartially sent out and supported or helped to support missionaries of both denominations.

The east not only contributed liberally of its population to settle Wisconsin, but of its means to care for the religious life of the people here. This was possible because of the agency of the "American Home Missionary Society" which was organized to send out and support Calvinist missionaries, which included Presbyterian, Congregational, Reformed Dutch, and German Reformed churches.[9] The missionaries were required to write quarterly reports to the society, which fortunately were preserved, and furnish a valuable record for us.

The "Society" also published a magazine, the "Home Missionary" which printed accounts of frontier regions, appeals for missionaries and pecuniary aid, reports of missionaries already in the

9. Editorial in the Home Missionary, VIII, 27, (June, 1835).

field, and the religious views and developments of different sections of the country, "furnishing altogether a valuable mass of facts in relation to the progress of society, especially in the newer states . . . . . The generous sympathy and aid which the older churches . . . have furnished for the establishment of learning and religion among those which are more recent, have been elicited mainly by the investigations and appeals of the agents and missionaries of the American Home Missionary Society, communicated through this periodical."[10]

The instructions of the "Society" to its missionaries are very illuminating in helping us to understand their activities. Although preaching of the gospel was one of the highest duties, still in places where religion was not well known and established, other duties were important also, namely:

1. The missionary was expected to stay chiefly in his assigned field, so that the church would increase in numbers and financial abilities, and the people would appreciate and desire a settled ministry.

2. Visiting all the families in his charge, and visiting the sick were urged on the missionary as being second in importance only to his preaching. Visits should be "religious and ministerial", urging upon individuals the "necessity of repentance towards God", and faith in Christ and teaching families the importance of religion.

10. Home Missionary, X, 1.

3. Visiting the schools, and the establishment and superintendence of Sabbath Schools, and Bible classes were urged. These, it was thought, would give the missionary the affections of the youths, and a moral influence in the educative system. In the schools he should encourage weekly catechetical instruction and daily religious worship.

In the Sunday Schools, he would be expected to use the approved methods of instruction, and to get libraries as soon as possible. He was himself expected to superintend of teach the Bible class to give biblical instruction to adults and youths.

4. The missionary was to promote meetings for prayer, and to hold the monthly Concert for Prayer on the first Monday evening of each month, which he would announce publicly beforehand from the pulpit. At it he was to give the people such missionary news as he had received during the month.

5. "The Committee take a deep and lively interest in the cause of Foreign as well as of Domestic Missions, and in the objects of the Education, Bible, Tract, and Sabbath School Societie's, and will expect you . . . to promote these great enterprises of christian benevolence."

He should try to form Societies or Associations auxiliary to the American Home Missionary Society, or to the nearest County, State, Synodical, Presbyterial or other Society connected with the American Home Missionary Society.

"For the purpose of supplying the destitute with-in the

bounds of your missionary charge bibles, tracts, and Sabbath School books" he was told to correspond with the National Societies and to organize societies auxilary to them. He was to do most of the distributing of Bibles, tracts, and books.

6. The committee was pleased with and approved of the recent efforts of the churches, the physicians, and leading citizens for the cause of temperance. The use of "ardent spirits" counteracted means for improvement of mankind and salvation of souls. The missionary therefore should instruct his people as to the causes, symptoms, and consequences of intemperance, and try to persuade them to abstain from the use of intoxicating drinks.

7. "Lastly and particularly, it is desired, that not only 'in doctrine you be uncorrupt', but that you 'show yourself a pattern of good works'; 'by manifestation of the truth, commending yourself to every man's conscience in the sight of God'. . . . . 'Follow peace with all men'; and avoiding reflections upon other denominations of Christians let your conversation in the world show that you have at heart, not the interests of a sect or party, but the salvation of souls, and the prosperity of the Redeemer's cause. Be eminently a man of prayer; and . . . 'preach Christ and him crucified'."[11]

11. Peter G. Mode, Sourcebook and Bibliographical Guide For American Church History, 422-24 George Banta Publishing Company, Menasha, Wis. (1921.)

Chapter I

Galena, Head of the Lead Region

In April, 1828, the American Home Missionary Society received a letter from a citizen, Mr. C. R. Roberts, of Galena, Illinois, the head of the lead region, describing its location and need of a minister. Situated on the west bank of the Fever river, three miles east of the Mississippi, Galena was not then known to be either in Wisconsin or Illinois, but "they knew it was near the line" said Roberts. Although two years earlier there were not over 50 people there, he now estimated the population to be about 1200, from all over the United States, and Ireland, the latter being Catholics. The majority of the rest, he said, were Presbyterian.[1]

The lead region was comprised of a small triangle of land in north-western Illinois, an adjacent strip along the Mississippi river in Iowa, (the Dubuque mines) and the three counties of Grant, Iowa, and La Fayette in Wisconsin, all then known as Iowa county. Roberts estimated that there were six or seven thousand employed in the mines for none of whom was there any "public means of Grace". A Catholic priest had visited there once, and in 1827 a Methodist clergyman, but there were none when he wrote, and "the Sabbath was not much regarded", although the mines did not work on that day.[2]

Now, however, the writer believed there were a number of persons in the village who wanted to have a minister settle there. "There were a few pious persons and quite a number friendly to

1. C. R. Roberts, Letter to the A.H.M.S., April 26, 1828.
2. C. R. Roberts, Letter to A.H.M.S.

religion." In later missionary letters we learn that the pious were those who had joined or would join a church; the number of friendly on lookers was usually much greater. A subscription paper had been started in Galena, and two persons alone had subscribed one hundred and twenty five dollars; hence Roberts thought they could easily support a minister, but he didn't know what could be used as a church. All the houses were made of logs, and were too small, but he thought a building could soon be put up.[3]

By 1829 the entire region had been prospected, many mining towns started, lands cultivated as well as mined, and a certain measure of economic stability was established.[4]

The society which was found there, however, was a mingling without blending of many different elements. A large percent were men of intelligence and cultivation from the south and southwest, who in other situations would have been leaders in churches; but here "amid the almost universal profanation of everything savoring of religion, they were discouraged about the prospect of sustaining churches."[5]

Desirous of improving moral conditions, a company of forty-four citizens of Galena petitioned the A. H. M. S. to send them a clergyman of "talents, education, and piety", whom they promised to pay the liberal salary of $530.00.[6] This petition came to the society just when Rev. Aratus Kent was asking to be sent to a region "so hard that no one else would take it". That would be Galena and the lead region.

3.C. R. Roberts, Letter to A.H.M.S.
4.Schafer, "Congregational Beginnings in Wisconsin", p. 11.
5.Congregational Beginnings in Wisconsin, p. 11.
6.Ibid. p. 12.

Rev. Kent was born at Suffield, Mass., in 1794, studied at Westfield Academy, entered Yale College, from which he was graduated with Dr. Timothy Dwightes class of 1816, and then spent four years in the study of theology. For six years, he labored as a missionary in New York, and Ohio, and was ordained at Lockport, New York in January 1825.[8]

When he went to Galena in 1829, Rev. Kent found few New Englanders there, but he formed a Presbyterian church in 1831, which had grown to only 25 members at the end of two years.[9] However in time more of that class came, and it has been estimated that he "made himself one of the most powerful agents for promoting religion, education, and morality throughout the mining region".[10]

Since he was the only minister in this region for quite awhile, and traveled extensively to meets the needs of the whole region in Wisconsin, as well as in Illinois, we may examine his achievements as typical of the influence of religion on the mining region for this early period.

Following the instructions of the American Home Missionary Society, Rev. Kent at once established public worship and Sabbath Schools on Sunday. Having no suitable place to hold meetings, he purchased a house, issued a subscription paper and solicited aid to repair it. In four weeks two hundred dollars had been raised, and paid out for repairs.[11]

When he had been there less than a year, Kent wrote to the Society that "a singing society of twenty-five male members started

8. Congregational Beginnings in Wis., p. 11.
9. Rev. Aratus Kent, Letter to A.H.M.S., Feb. 9, 1830.
10. Schafer, Congregational Beginnings in Wisconsin, p. 12.
11. Rev. Aratus Kent, Letter to A.H.M.S., Feb. 9, 1830.

into being of itself," and he had started a day school of fifty scholars, partly because of the great need for it and partly to gain access to a class of people otherwise inaccessible.[12]

It was a popular measure for Kent to offer to teach gratuitously, and he was successful in his purpose, as there were only four or five families which he did not gain the confidence of. He introduced scripture and prayer into the school, hoping to make this a precedent, and often made the whole school repeat after him the ten commandments. He considered the scholars to be miserable spellers with no ambition to excell; therefore he offered as a premium to those who were ahead at night, an apple or a tract,(an apple costing two conts). Almost always, to Kent's delight, the tract was chosen, and once a month he gave them each a tract.[13] By July Kent believed he had secured the "confidence and affection" of the youth.[14] Horatio Newhall, a laymen, tells us a few years later, that Kent had a deep interest in children, and it was partly due to his efforts that the school in Galena in 1836 had twelve teachers and eighty scholars.[15]

Nor were the girls forgotten; in October, 1836 Kent reported that he had built a small house of two rooms for a "female school".[16]

On Sunday mornings Kent had about sixty in church "of the most respectable people". He said the merchants generally shut up their shops and came to the meetings, and the teamsters coming in found it difficult to do business as they used to on the Sabbath.

12. Rev. Aratus Kent, Letter to A.H.M.S., Feb. 9, 1830.
13. Rev. Aratus Kent, Letter to A.H.M.S., Feb. 9, 1830.
14. Rev. Aratus Kent, Letter to A.H.M.S., July 31, 1830.
15. Rev. Aratus Kent, Letter to A.H.M.S., Jan. 8, 1835.
16. Rev. Aratus Kent, Letter to A.H.M.S., Oct. 4, 1836.

On Sunday evenings at six o'clock he had about as large a group "of another description who will not attend by day" and thirty in the Sabbath School made a total of about one hundred and fifty under religious influence each Sabbath. He also conducted weekly prayer meetings and a "Monthly Concert" to collect funds for the Missionary Society. His grief was that "none are inquiring the way to salvation", yet he thought, a good influence was being exerted on the people.[18]

Although he held meetings and preached, Kent did not organize a church in Galena until October 29, 1831, over two years after his arrival. He then constituted the church with only six members, and it adopted the principle of entire abstinence from ardent spirits as an article of its covenant.[19] In 1833 it had grown to twenty members,[20] and in 1836 the total was forty-five, only twenty of whom lived in the village. The rest were scattered over one hundred and fifty miles of country from the Wisconsin river on the north to Rock river on the south, and from west of the Mississippi, east almost to Lake Michigan, and Kent's journeys sometimes went even further.[21]

In the summer of 1832, Kent took a trip east to get his wife, family, and household goods. It was winter by the time he had returned to St. Louis, and, as the steamboats had ceased to ply between St. Louis and Galena, he bought a covered wagon and made the 350 mile trip in that, using it as a parlor, dining hall,

18. Kent, Letter to A.H.M.S., Feb. 9, 1830.
19. Kent, Letter to A.H.M.S., Dec. 1, 1831.
20. Kent, Letter to A. H.M.S., Sept. 3, 1833.
21. Horatio Newhall, Galena, Ill. Letter to the A.H.M.S., March 7, 1836.

sanctuary, ferry boat, and at times a lodging place. Arriving in Galena about Christmas time, 1832, he found "the judgments of God, was, and pestilence" had been there; the country was thrown into confusion and the population changed, and "almost every vestige of former benevolent efforts and of benevolent societies were obliterated." But he thought the people were more serious and better displsed toward religion: and they soon rebuilt their group and had to enlarge their place of worship.[22]

The first elder was ordained in January 1833, at a communion service, and a "female prayer meeting" was then established.[23] The Bible class was already divided into one for women and one for men,[24] and in addition a class for infants and for colored persons was now formed.[25] Thus early on the frontier we see the sex and race distinctions being made.

It is interesting to read that the Sabbath School had a fourth of July celebration in 1836 at which time the teachers gave each child a piece of cake; a bunch of raisins, and a flagon of water for refreshments.[26]

Like later churches, the Galena church noticed that Rev. Kent's family being large, it was harder to support that a smaller one. But in defense Kent said, "If my family is expensive it is also useful, furnishing four teachers for the Sabbath School, and an Infant School teacher"; it was the "main support of the female prayer meeting and the weekly Female Benevolent Society," besides

22. Kent, Letter to A.H.M.S., March 1, 1833.
23. Ibid.
24. Kent, Letter to A.H.M.S., December 1, 1831.
25. Kent, Letter to A.H.M.S., March 1, 1833.
26. Kent, Letter to A.H.M.S., July 6, 1836.

assisting him in visiting people and conversing on religious subjects.[27]

In spite of his large family his entertaining of most of the visitors to the town, Kent spent only three hundred dollars for the year 1834.[28]

Most of the early missionaries worked in harmony with those of other denominations and Kent certainly had no trouble. In February 1830 his companion in the day school was a Baptist, a young man, who, Kent said, "coincides with me in everything".[29] That of course would be a good reason for lack of argument. In May 1830, he had been looking for more ministers of his own order, but the only person who came was a Methodist preacher, who was getting a separate meeting. Kent invited him to preach once every Sabbath, and the full time every fourth Sunday during the summer as he expected to itinerate then.[30] Three years later, the Methodists, with the generous aid of a merchant, completed a little chapel of their own. "Up to that time they had had the gratuitous occupancy of the Presbyterian house of worship every third Sabbath when their own minister was absent" wrote Kent.[31] Evidently he changed from itinerating every four to three weeks.

The next year Kent had to stop going to the country every third Sunday to look after his own church and Sabbath School. There were fifty left in the Sabbath School after the Methodists had drawn off twenty-five. The Methodists also drew a share of the congregation to their regular Sabbath preaching.[32] Thus we see rival denomina-

27. Kent, to A.H.M.S., January 7, 1834.
28. Kent, to A.H.M.S., January 8, 1835.
29. Kent, to A.H.M.S., February 9, 1830.
30. Kent, to A.H.M.S., May 10, 1830.
31. Kent, to A.H.M.S., September 3, 1833.
32. Kent, to A.H.M.S., January 7, 1834.

tional churches developing in our very earliest communities.

In January 1835, Kent reported that there were Methodist and Episcopal Ministers in Galena at stated times.[33]

Carrying out his instructions, Kent visited the families in the village but he feared he was "unfaithful in urging the necessity of repentance. "It is exceedingly difficult to introduce religious conversation in this place", he said.[34] Three years later he observed that public sentiment had changed considerably, for "conversation on religious subjects is now tolerated".[35] Not only did he visit in the village but he visited and preached in the whole province of the mining region. In the winter of 1830-31, which he described as being very cold and having much snow, he rode on[36] horseback three hundred and fifty miles, preached fourteen sermons in all, and had the poor average attendance of eighteen.

As was often to happen later in various settlements, this early one experienced an epidemic of some sort. Kent wrote to the society in 1830, "God has scourged this sinful people with a distressing sickness, and every family and almost every person has been brought low by it." He visited thirty or forty a day before he was taken down with it himself, when he was ill for nine weeks. However there were only two deaths, so that its seriousness did not seem to be fatal. Then as later, it was observed that the disease seemed to be restricted to the vicinity of the Mississippi river and the inumdated bottom lands.[37] Three years later Kent

33. Kent, to A.H.M.S., January 8, 1835.
34. Kent, to A.H.M.S., May 10, 1839.
35. Kent, to A.H.M.S., March 1, 1833.
36. Kent, to A.H.M.S., February 26, 1831.
37. Kent, to A.H.M.S., November 13, 1830.

informed the Society that during the prevalence of cholera, twenty-five deaths had occurred, including a Catholic priest, a man of full habit.[38]

As for books and Bibles, Kent reported in May, 1830, that seventy seven dollars and fifty cents had been raised and sent to the Illinois Sunday School Union for books.[39] In February 1831, two hundred dollars had been subscribed to the church and Kent's salary, one hundred and eight dollars of which was to go for Bibles. Soon afterward a Bible Society was formed, which raised forty-one dollars at once and began a canvas for more. It ordered seventy one Bibles from St. Louis.[40] This society, called the Galena Bible Society, was very active and a year later reported that all the families in the counties of Crawford and Iowa in Wisconsin Territory, and of Davis, and Rock Island in Illinois, were supplied with Bibles with the exception of 20, whose Bibles were expected on the next boat.[41]

Tracts were extensively circulated also, in February 1831, Kent believed the prejudice against them to be subsiding. Besides those in French and English, there was a demand for German tracts which he hoped to supply from St. Louis.[42] Tracts were used extensively during the early period in the west as auxiliary aids to the ministers, and occasionally conversation would occur through them.[43]

Since it was his duty to report quarterly and to note his success and difficulties, Kent began a letter in May 1830 with

38. Kent, to A.H.M.S., September 3, 1833.
39. Kent, to A.H.M.S., May 10, 1830.
40. Kent, to A.H.M.S., February 26, 1831.
41. Kent, to A.H.M.S., March 1, 1832.
42. Kent, to A.H.M.S., February 26, 1831.
43. Home Missionary, VIII, 8.

what was uppermost in his mind, the difficulties.[44]

One of the foremost was financial. He had not received his allowance from the A.H.M.S., and he owed one hundred and thirty dollars for board and "horse-keeping". "The school-keeper", he said, "can get no cash from his winter's work, and a quarter's school-keeping will not pay a week's horse-keeping. The country is completely drained of money. You will please therefore send a check on the U. S. branch at St. Louis for the amount due me." If he did not get money he declared he would have to sell his horse and not itinerate.[45]

Sabbath Observance

Although in February, 1830, Kent reported that most of the merchants closed their shops and come to the meetings,[46] in December, 1831, a different situation existed. The mail-boat arrived and left between nine A. M. and three P. M. on Sundays, and the business men felt they had to stay away from church to answer and dispatch letters; miners and smelters also came in to do business, teams brought wagonloads of lead which had to be weighed and return loads furnished, strangers came and left, and altogether the Sabbath was anything but a day of rest.[47]

Gambling

A prevalent form of winter amusement which Kent greatly deplored was gambling. In 1830 he had remarked the need for anti-

44. Kent, Letter to A.H.M.S., May 10, 1830
45. Ibid.
46. Kent, Letter to A.H.M.S., Feb. 9, 1830.
47. Kent, Letter to A.H.M.S., Dec. 1, 1831.

gambling society,[48] and in 1832, with two Methodist ministers he was on the list of grand jurors for the purpose of checking this vice, "which has recently become flagrant".[49] The miners themselves organized a "Benevolent Society" of twenty four members who pledged entire abstinence from gambling; and when a negro established a "Farro Bank", " the gamblers became alarmed for they saw their craft falling into disrepute".[50]

Temperance

Another question which engaged Kent, and all of the later missionaries, was that of temperance. In June 1831, he reported that a Moral Association of twenty six members had recognized the "principle of entire abstinence from ardent spirits."[51] Six months later the Association, alias Temperance Society, resolved to hold meetings in the country "for the purpose of extending knowledge and influence on the subject." It requested its members to abstain from the use of wine, and appointed a committee of five to invite the youth to take a part in this reform and to help them organize a Juvenile Temperance Society.[52]

The church, as previously noted, adopted the principle of entire abstinence as an article in its covenant, when it was organized in October 1831.[53]

When one miner gave Kent a contribution of one dollar, he told him it was the last of one hundred and eighty three he had

48. Kent, Letter to A.H.M.S., May 10, 1830.
49. Kent, Letter to A.H.M.S., March 1832.
50. Kent, Letter to A.H.M.S., March 1832.
51. Kent, Letter to A.H.M.S., June 6, 1831.
52. Kent, Letter to A.H.M.S., Dec. 1, 1831.
53. Ibid.

spent in Galena during the winter. Another sold out his claim for one hundred and fifty dollars to have a "spree", as he said; he left Galena penniless and almost died from the "excruciating disease brought on by his excesses. He now promises to be temperate," said Kent.[54]

In spite of the efforts of the church, and the different societies, improvement was not rapid and noticeable enough to suit Kent. In December 1835, he complained of the prevalence of "soul-destroying vices"; "if we estimate in this last those who sell spirits and drink to intoxication, those who frequent the gaming table, we shall probably include a majority of our population," said Kent.[55]

In July 1836 Kent was of the opinion that the temperance cause was doubtful. A Mr. Turner had lectured several evenings and got seventy-two names to his "tee-total" pledge, but Kent considered that this would make little impression on the drunkenness of Galena.[56]

Shifting Population

Another one of Kent's problems was the continually changing population. In 1831 he noted that the population was a "floating one"; many had left the previous year on account of the "pressure of the times", and nothing much was expected until the land was offered for sale and permanent improvements could be made.[57] Even the teachers of his Sabbath School moved away so that he

54. Kent, Letter to A.H.M.S., March 1832.
55. Kent, Letter to A.H.M.S., Dec. 31, 1835.
56. Kent, Letter to A.H.M.S., July 6, 1836.
57. Kent, Letter to A.H.M.S., Feb. 26, 1831.

had to discontinue that for awhile.[58]

In 1833 Kent declared that the "inhabitants of the mining country are as fluctuating as the waters of Lake Michigan."[59] However he thought it very important that the miners should be followed in their wanderings, "lest they forget the Lord, and profane the Sabbath." To look after them he would have to cross the Mississippi river for, he said, "the opening of the country usually called 'Dubukes Mines' is drawing thither a great multitude of adventurers."[60]

Sabbath-Keeping Boat

One of the most unique efforts on the frontier to raise the moral standards of the people was the establishment by a "good Epescopalian brother" of a "Sabbath-Keeping Boat" on the Mississippi river.[61] When Rev. Kent went to attend a meeting of the Synod at Jacksonville, Illinois, he took the Sabbath-Keeping, anti-gambling, temperance boat for St. Louis; on it he had the privilege of daily family worship, of Christian fellowship, and of preaching on the Sabbath.[62]

Protracted Meetings

The Presbyterian and Congregational ministers did not hold tent meetings in this northern region of Illinois or in Wisconsin, but they had "protracted meetings" or revivals several days in length.[63] In December, 1836, two other ministers assisted Kent

58. Kent, to A.H.M.S., March, 1832.
59. Kent, to A.H.M.S., June 2, 1833.
60. Ibid.
61. Kent, to A.H.M.S., March 16, 1836.
62. Kent, to A.H.M.S., October 29, 1836.
63. In all of the letters of Wisconsin missionaries to the A.H.M.S., the only reference to a tent is made by Kent, March 17, 1837.

in a protracted meeting in which they had preaching daily for two weeks. Kent said the results were a quickening of the church, the recovering of six or seven "backsliders", and the "hopeful conversion" of about fifteen persons.

Whether or not anyone was converted, frontier ministers thought revivals quickened and increased the zeal of church members. Always in a new region were those who had in the East professed their faith by belonging to a church, that is they were "professors", but in the west they refused to acknowledge their faith by affiliating with a church. Such men were called "backsliders" and were a great handicap to the progress of religious organizations.

In March, 1837, seven years after Kent's arrival, and five and one-half years after he founded the church, he wrote to the American Home Missionary Society that his church was now able to support him, itself. He had received $200 support from the Society every year but one (when he received $100) since his arrival and felt very proud to have his church sustain him.[64]

In summing up his career to date he said: "I have now been seven years a recipient of the bounty of your society . . . For more than two years I labored alone, without Christians enough to form a church, or to maintain a prayer meeting. Our church now numbers sixty two. We have morning and evening meetings for prayer, a female benevolent society, a maternal association, and a prayer meeting. The monthly distribution of tracts has been in

64. Kent, to the A.H.M.S., March 16, 1837.

successful operation for a year. We have commenced a house for public worship and have $4,000, out of total of $7,500, subscribed. We have two good schools taught by members of our own church. We have had, during ten whole time, an interesting Sabbath School, and many are now scattered over the country who were once under its influence."[65]

After Kent took his leave of the Society's care in 1837, we hear nothing of the work at Galena for awhile. But as evidence that it still flourshed, we read in a letter from Rev. Holbrook of Dubuque in 1844, that the session of Mr. Kent's church at Galena had sent for him "as their pastor had providentially been called away for a season, and there was an evident awakening in the church and congregation". He preached daily for three weeks, at the end of which ninety persons had "publicly expressed their anxiety for salvation". He left then for Platteville to hold a meeting but returned for three weeks, and other ministers filled the rest of the time so that there was steady preaching there for nine weeks. As a result seventy six united with the church, and thirty or forty more were examined and approved. Besides this about two hundred united with the Methodist and the same number with the Baptist. This shows the custom of the ministers in working together in a revival, and then letting the convert choose the church he wished to join.

65. Kent, to the A.H.M.S., March 16, 1837.

Chapter II

Rev. Kent in Southwestern Wisconsin

Having seen the activities of Rev. Kent in his home church, which were essentially along the same lines as those followed by all the later missionaries in Wisconsin, we come now to his itinerating tours in the mining region.

On July 5, 1830, he started for Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, ninety miles away, at the request of General Street, who was the Indian agent there. Filling appointments in a circuitous route, he arrived in time to preach on July 11, at the meeting of a council with the Indians, of whom eight hundred from different tribes were present. His congregation consisted of two hundred of the greatest variety of people that, he thought, had ever listened to one sermon together. General Street gave him five dollars, and as came to be the missionaries custom, Rev. Kent requested the American Home Missionary Society to send him the "Home Missionary" magazine. In this manner the west, as well as the east, was kept informed of the progress of religion in its own and other communities.[1]

In the winter of 1830-31, heavy snows kept Kent from going to Prairie du Chien, but since a Methodist minister had come to Galena, he proposed to spend one third of his Sundays, when the weather permitted, either in Prairie du Chien or Mineral Point in Wisconsin, or in Rock Island, Illinois, where the people had been asking him to preach.[2]

1. Kent, to the A.H.M.S., July 31, 1830.
2. Kent, to the A.H.M.S., February 26, 1831.

In March he went to Prairie du Chien, where he was received with the utmost cordiality. They requested him to spend a part of his time there regularly, or else to send them a minister.[3] He also visited Mineral Point, thirty seven miles north of Galena, several times that spring, and considered these both important preaching posts, but it embarrassed the Sabbath School in Galena to have its Superintendent absent, and he could not go as often as he would have liked.[4] By the end of the summer of 1831, Kent was able to say that besides his labors in Galena, he had spent every sixth Sabbath in Iowa County, Wisconsin Territory, as a part of a circuit of one hundred and forty miles, in which he was absent for nine days, and preached nine times to assemblies of about twenty each and tried to keep two Sabbath Schools going.[5]

On his last tour forty four children had memorized the Ten Commandments, as he had previously promised, he gave each a large children's tract; nearly all of these had also repeated the Lord's Prayer. A number repeated"Watt's Catechism" for children and little hymns from books he had given them. On his next trip he expected to hear from forty to sixty repeat the twenty-third Psalm.[6] Thus did Rev. Kent begin on the early training of the young. He believed that every child who learned the Ten Commandments became a preacher to the whole family, for they had to hear the "law of God" rehearsed daily. Making friends with the children he believed to be the readiest way to win the hearts of the parents. Their

3. Kent, to A.H.M.S., June 6, 1831.
4. Ibid.
5. Kent, to A.H.M.S., September 1, 1831.
6. Ibid.

eagerness for books made them anxious for the ministers next visit, and thus prevented his appointments from being forgotten. "Then the books are so beautiful, so entertaining and instructive even to adults" said Kent, "that the missionary should count on every book thus given as an auxiliary . . . in the furtherance of his object."[7]

The older people too had tracts, and books, for Kent said he had sold, in the summer of 1831, about fifty bound volumes of Baxter and Doddridge's works, Watts Psalms and Hymns, Bible Dictionaries, and the Presbyterian Confession of Faith to meet a demand created by their being three hundred and fifty miles from any bookstore; and "since I have been here", he said, I have put into circulation more than one hundred thousand pages of tracts. The mails of course were slow, and he had been waiting five months for the books he had ordered.[8] He figured there were two hundred and fifty families scattered over his territory outside Galena, on whom he hoped to produce some small influence for good by his preaching, visits, conversation, Sabbath Schools, books and tracts, and attention to children.[9]

In December, 1831, Kent reported a recent trip to Prairie du Chien, which he thought was "abundantly compensated". When he arrived at his destination, he found many people in a house there, praying, and they knelt and thanked the Lord for sending them a minister. He preached twice on the Sabbath and attended their Bible class, in which he said they used the "Union" questions of the American Bible Society. On Monday they held their monthly

7. Kent, to A.H.M.S., September 1, 1831.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.

concert and determined to continue it; they appointed a committee to get Foreign and Domestic Millionary information for them, and a treasurer to take up monthly collections for the American Home Missionary Society.[10] The first collection amounted to eleven dollars, "the first benevolent offering recorded in the history of the State",[11] and besides this they paid Kent's expenses for the visit. Kent considered this a good beginning for the most distant outpost, "so distant that our good Methodist Brethern have not yet pushed their visits so far."[12]

At Prairie du Chien, in 1832, Kent thought a church of ten or twelve might be organized, and there were others who would cooperate with it in benevolent efforts. There were several intelligent and efficient men there who sustained a Tract and Temperance Society, a Bible class, and weekly religious meetings. They were anxious to have a preacher and contributed liberally to the American Home Missionary Society.[13] If the proposed minister would spend one-half of his time at Prairie du Chien, he could use the rest to preach at Mineral Point, Cassville, and other settlements in the mining country. During the summers he could visit Fort Armstrong at Rock Island, Fort Snelling, at the Falls of St. Anthony, by steamboat, and Fort Winnebago at the Portage between the Wisconsin and Fox Rivers, one hundred and twenty miles northeast. From all these places Kent thought he would be able to derive one-half or three-fourths of his support immediately. But the greatest con-

10. Kent, to A.H.M.S., December 1, 1831.
11. Dexter, op. 2.
12. Kent, to A.H.M.S., December 1, 1831.
13. Kent, to A.H.M.S., June 14, 1832.

sideration to Kent was the importance of being "early on the ground to grow up with the country and to enter promptly into any field of usefulness which shall open suddenly before him".[14] Being early on the ground was urged again and again by the later missionaries.

In the summer of 1833 Kent visited Fort Winnebago, and gave there the first Protestant preaching they had ever enjoyed. "I was persuaded to linger there two Sabbaths," he said, "and was treated with such marked attention and politeness as in a good degree ovliterated the impression of the perils attending our journey," They gave him the liberal contributions of thirty-two dollars and fifty cents, which was very welcome to him as he had not received anything at Galena for eighteen months, had spent fifteen dollars to make a trip to Chicago (which he described as a flourishing village), and had to spend five hundred dollars in coming to Galena the previous fall with his family.[15]

He also visited various parts of the mining country, including Dubuque's mines on the Western side of the Mississippi river, eighteen miles from Galena. Because of the rich mineral treasures there it was expected to be settled with great rapidity. The town of Dubuque had been started in June 1833, and a couple of months later had forty houses in it. That part of the country would also soon be demanding attention from the American Home Missionary Society, according to Kent.[16]

14. Kent, to A.H.M.S., June 14, 1832.
15. Kent, to A.H.M.S., September 3, 1833.
16. Ibid.

In order to show the society just how he was carrying out their instructions, Kent wrote them an extract from his diary, which likewise shows us how very active he was. Part of it runs as follows:

May 17, 1834--Rode to Apple River.
May 18, 1834--Preached at 11 A. M., and rode six miles and preached again. There was a good attendance at the latter place and several persons came three miles on foot. At the former there were about 70 souls, and they said there had been no preaching there for near 3 years, and no Sabbath School for want of teachers.

June 1 --Preached at eleven A. M. to a congregation of 60, and rode 14 miles, a long Sabbath journey over a beautiful tract, as yet uninhabited, to a congregation of 50. At each place a Sabbath School of 25 or 30 might be gathered but for want of teachers.

After preaching, rode 4 miles to lodge with a member of our church. At her house is a S. S. of 38 scholars, gathered by a young lady who came to this land with my family two years since.

June 2 --Rode home. Had traveled 63 miles.
J June 3 --Rode to Craig's mills on Apple River and preached. Several persons came 10 miles. They requested that my app'tment might be at mid-day that they might go and return by day light.
June 4 --Rode 6 miles and preached at a place before mentioned on Apple R. at 11 A. M. and rode 6 miles more and preached at 5 P. M. and reached home before dark.

June 15 --Preached at 11 A. M. to a congregation of 50 at Elk Grove, W. T., Rode to Platteville and preached at 5 P. M. to a congregation of 15, my app'tment not having been circulated.
June 16 & 17--Rode to Cassville, 35 miles, over a new road just cut out through a timbered country. Preached at 5 P. M. and had nearly all the settlement together. They have no preaching since I was there in the fall of 1831.

I proposed a subscription for a library for the Sabbath School to be opened the next Sabbath and in 20 minutes had 20 . . . Cassville is on the banks of the Mississippi about 60 miles above Galena.

June 28 --Found 2 streams too swollen to ford so lost two app'ments. Got across at a 3rd place only to find that no notice of the app'tment had been made.

June 29 --To Dodgeville W. T. at 1 P. M. and to Mineral Point at 5 P. M. Congregations of 40 each.

July 1, 1834-Rode home. Had traveled 384 miles since May 17.[17]

17. Kent, to A.H.M.S., July 3, 1834.

Chapter III

Green Bay, Wisconsin

Not only did the Presbyterian and Congregational churches unite to support domestic missions, but also foreign ones, for whose promotion they organized the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missionaries.[1] Religious work among the American Indians was undertaken by the latter organization, and in Wisconsin, missions were established at La Pointe, Odanah, and Stockbridge.[2] The missionary who came to Stockbridge in 1831 not only worked with the Indians, but also preached in Green Bay, the first Presbyterian minister ever to do so.[3] This was Rev. Cutting Marsh, a graduate of Dartmouth College and Andover Theological Seminary, where he finished in 1829, and on April 30, 1831 he arrived at the Stockbridge settlement on the Fox river.[4] These Stockbridge Indians had been moved to Wisconsin from New York in 1821, and were moved again by a treaty in 1832 to what is now Calumet County. The Rev. Jesse Miner had been their missionary from 1825 to 1829, when he died; hence Marsh's call to come here.[5]

Mr. Chancey Hale, a teacher at the Stockbridge Indian Mission, wrote to the American Home Missionary Society that Rev. Marsh had visited Green Bay in the early part of January, 1836, and organized a church of about twenty members, and he petitioned the society to send Green Bay a minister as it was important that religion should be extended there.[6] Mr. Hale seems to have misunderstood one

1. Schafer, op. cit., p. 10.
2. Chauncey Hale, to the A.H.M.S., January 25, 1836.
3.
4. John E. Chapin, D.D., "Sketch of Cutting Marsh", Wisconsin Historical Collections, XV, 25.
5. Ibid. p. 26.
6. Chauncy Hale, to the A.H.M.S., January 25, 1836.

matter, important from a historians point of view, for Mr. Marsh's own journals indicate that he organized a small company to whom he preached several times, but not a formal church.[7]

To Rev. Moses Ordway, who came to Green Bay in October, 1836, goes the credit for organizing the church at Green Bay, which was also the first Presbyterian church in Wisconsin; Rev. Marsh was on hand however to assist him.[8]

Ordway had had a varied carrer in Massachusetts working as a blacksmith, carpenter, wagon maker, factory worker, and doctor's apprentice before he decided to enter the ministry. Then he worked his own way through college and Theological Seminary and began preaching in 1822 at the age of thirty.[9]

In the spring of 1824 he was ordained as an evangelist and proved to be very successful. The people at one of his meetings he reported to be "tender in feeling and thoroughly convicted" and he says,"I did not have to spend days in convincing them that their salvation came out of Zion, and that sinners were converted by the sovereign Grace of God. They understood that they must ask God to do the work and God would answer their prayers." In this revival forty members were added to the church.[10]

Soon he went to Warsaw, New York and assisted the minister in revival meetings, and became a missionary in the great revivals of the day in Steuben, Genesee, and Monroe Counties.[11]

7. Thomas S. Johnson,"Moses Ordway, Pioneer Presbyterian Missionary," Wisconsin Magazine of History, II, 269, (March, 1919). In Footnote number five.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid, p. 267.
10. Thomas S. Johnson, op. cit., p. 267.
11. Ibid.

In his journal he writes of his decision to go west, as follows: "On my way home from my revival meetings in . . . 1836, I was violently taken with the Wisconsin fever. Hearing about the opportunities for missionary work in that wonderful new world that was opening up so grandly, I concluded it would be wisdom to be in season, and to go there to do needed work in the new settlements."[12] In October, 1836 he travelled on an old steamboat that only ran by day, and in fourteen days from Buffalo, New York, he reached Green Bay, Wisconsin Territory.

Going at once to the garrison at Fort Howard, he called on Dr. Satterlee, the surgeon, who welcomed his arrival and cooperated later in the founding of the church.[13]

When he went across the river and talked to the people, he found that the Episcopalians had held services in the school house on Sunday mornings, the Methodists in the afternoon, and they suggested he should hold his in the evening. But Ordway did not think that a very wise policy; instead he declared he would not preach or be known in public until "we had a meeting place of our own." Whereupon the people bought a storehouse which was nearly all built, and finished it for a place of worship.[14]

While they were finishing the church building, Rev. Ordway looked up prospective members, and found sixty who had been "professors" before they came to Green Bay. Only nine however were willing to be formed in a Presbyterian church which, before the building was finished, was organized in November, 1836.

12. Thomas S. Johnson, op. cit., p. 268.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid, p. 269.

In one month however Mr. Ordway had made seventy converts both from those who had and had not belonged to a church before.[15]

Evidently there was enough need of some moral reinforcement in Green Bay. Of the four thousand inhabitants there, Ordway says they seemed to be agreed on only one thing and that was to blaspheme God and indulge in all kinds of wickedness. "About every other night they would have a bonfire and by the help of a whiskey-band would have a dance which was so wicked and so wild that many of both sexes would lie drunken on the ground the next morning."[16] Ordway says his first discourse which was on the subject of "the carnal mind being at enmity with God" was so well illustrated by the lives of the people that it went "home to many hearts".[17]

In March, 1837, Messrs. Ordway and Marsh went to Milwaukee, where they organized the second church of the Presbyterian faith in Wisconsin, on April 11, 1837. Ordway did not go back to Green Bay then, but selected a piece of government land at Prairieville, a few miles west of Milwaukee, and returned east for his family.[18]

In August, 1837, Rev. Marsh wrote to the American Home Missionary Society commending Ordway&s work and asking if he could be commissioned for Green Bay. He stressed the need of a minister at Green Bay for he said, "some had forgotten their vows and were lapsed professors; Intemperance, infidelity, andSabbath breaking were spreading moral death and destruction, and scenes of intoxication, and avarice took place among the whites as well as the

15. Thomas S. Johnson, op. cit., 269.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.

Natives. He deplored traveling on the Sabbath.[19] Another might not have been quite as severe in his condemnation as the minister, but at least we have this picture of Green Bay as Rev. Marsh saw it.

Rev. Ordway however had other plans, and built a home on his land at Prairieville. With that as a center, he preached at several towns or settlements nearby, and eventually organized over a dozen churches.[20] However we shall meet him later in that region to explain his activities there.

Rev. Ordway was succeeded as pastor at Green Bay in October, 1837, by Rev. Stephen Peet, from Buffalo, New York, a minister who was well prepared for his work. His father having died in Ohio in 1814, when Peet was 17 years old, he had worked his own way through Yale, graduating with honors in 1823; then he studied theology at Princeton, New Haven, and Auburn Seminaries.[21]

In 1826 he was ordained as pastor of the Presbyterian church at Euclid, Ohio, where for seven years he gained fame as a preacher of power and developed his talents as an organizer. Then he went to work at the Sailors' Mission in Buffalo, and edited the Bethel Magazine and Buffalo Spectator, a religious paper afterwards merged into the New York Evangelist.[22] As Buffalo was the clearing house of information and the point of departure for the Northwest, it is not surprising that Peet came to Green Bay, the fartherest corner of settlement in Wisconsin Territory.

The session of the church requested two hundred dollars aid

19. Cutting Marsh, to A.H.M.S., August 14, 1837.
20. Johnson, op. cit., p. 270.
21. Joseph Emerson, Professor at Beloit College, "Stephen Peet", Congregational Review, X, 416 (1870).
22. Ibid.

from the American Home Missionary Society. They could raise six hundred dollars, but because of his large family, Rev. Peet could not live on less than eight hundred a year.[23]

Because he found the church at Green Bay too "strait" or small, Peet succeeded, shortly after his arrival, in getting a new church under way. This was another reason why Green Bay needed help to pay his salary, for churches cost money too.[24] In the Home Missionary for May, 1839, he tells of its dedication:

"Our church was completed and dedicated on September 9, 1838, just 8 months from the day on which the meeting was called to take measures for its erection. It is a neat and commodious place of worship . . . . . What greatly adds to our convenience, a fine bell was hung last week in the steeple--a donation of J. J. Astor . . . . . and the only one of any size in the territory."[25]

Green Bay was an old fur-trading station as well as military post, and because of his interest in the fur-trading company, Astor gave the bell and five hundred dollars toward the church building.[26] Washington Irving also contributed a gift of fifty dollars to the building.[27]

In February, 1839, Rev. Peet began a revival by holding evening meetings for two weeks, at most of which there was preaching either by Rev. Marsh or himself. Prayer meetings were also held daily in small groups or as a church. "Soon sinners began to be awakened," said Peet, "and to inquire what they must do to be

---

23. Application of Green Bay for Aid, to A.H.M.S., July 11, 1838.
24. Ibid.
25. Peet, to A.H.M.S., Home Missionary, XII, 46, May 1839.
26. Joseph Emerson, "Stephen Peet", Congregational Review, X, 420.
27. Peet, to A.H.M.S., Home Missionary, XII, May 1839.

saved. Thirteen give good evidence of having been born again--all of them adults." Ten of them were young men just entering into business. To Peet's gratification also one "rum-selling establishment" was turned into a temperance store due to the conversion of its owner.[28]

Peet says the means he used in the revival were "the simple exhibition of the truths of God's word in preaching, and the application and pressing of the same truths in private conversation."[29]

He remarked on the stillness and solemnity of the meetings, and on the fact that it was the first revival in Green Bay. He believed it was very good for the life of the church in that the "holiness of the people advanced, the tone of piety deepened, the spirit of prayer increased, and the habit of religious action was much improved."[30]

Part of the converts belonged to Peet's "preaching places" in the neighborhood, one six miles up the Fox River and the other ten miles down the Bay.[31] Observing that these would be nuclei for future churches, Peet early shows his propensity for finding new places to plant the church. Rev. Marsh remarked in 1837 that"much of the work to be done at present is to collect together and to organize churches".[32] Rev. Peet seemed to be the man of the hour, for he could not restrain himself from going when called, nor did he give the American Home Missionary Society any peace but called

28. Stephen Peet, to A.H.M.S., March 29, 1839.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Cutting Marsh, to A.H.M.S., August 14, 1837.

on them constantly to meet the needs of the Territory. He declared that the scattered families in the interior need to be visited, instructed, encouraged and shown how to hold meetings and to get a minister.[33] For that purpose he planned a tour in June 1839, "a reconnaisance of religious conditions in the Territory", as Schafer puts it, especially of those parts peopled with Yankee people of Northeast.[34]

33. Peet, to A.H.M.S., April 9, 1839.
34. Schafer, op. cit., p. 15.

Chapter IV

General Survey of Wisconsin

The tour which Peet took in the summer of 1839 was very significant in the religious history of Wisconsin for his account of it was published in full in the Home Missionary. Other ministers had described the Territory also, its soil, settlers, and economic conditions, and the immediate and imperative need for more ministers, more funds, and more Christian settlers. Now, in 1839, Peets letter came as a climax to all that had been said before; many men in the East who had read the earlier letters and now read Peet's powerful appeal did come to Wisconsin to settle. Let us then see what Wisconsin was like in the eighteen thirties according to Peet and the other Missionaries here.

Rev. Kent was the first of many ministers to describe Wisconsin Territory as almost ideal, and to urge New Englanders directly by request, and indirectly by the description of an ideal land to come to settle here. Most of these reports were published in the Home Missionary magazine which had a wide circulation in the New England region especially.

As early as February, 1830, Rev. Kent of Galena voiced his opinion that the mining country would fill up very fast when opened for sale, which would probably be in two years, for its "soil, salubrity, minerals, and water power offered a combination of inducements unequalled in the United States." He was anxious that "labourers should take the field in time, and not linger until the weeds of error and vice shall get above our heads."

Laymen in New England as well as ministers he thought were in duty bound to go west where they were most needed.[1]

In December, 1831, Kent again discussed the subject of laymen emigrating. "A half dozen families of the right stamp, in company with the missionary, would render his labors doubly efficient; and they might come out without expense to the society if they were convinced of their duty."[2]

In June, 1832, his opinions had not changed. He says "I am more and more confirmed in the opinion that the Emigrants from New England will in a few years pour into that country (around Prairie du Chien) with great rapidity. It must be so. Its healthful climate, fruitful soil, mineral productions, and pure springs without number, its navigable waters and abundant streams for Hydraulic power, constitute a combination of inducements to the enterprise of the Northern men which will not be overlooked."[3]

And he did not want to arouse everyone to come, but rather to persuade a few pious people to come in advance of others, as that would give them a chance to "mould the character of future generations." Hence the missionary should be an Eastern man who enrolled a colony of pious families, say seventy to one hundred, from the White or Green Mountains. This done he should go on ahead and select a good location for farmers on the waters of the Grant or Wisconsin Rivers, some ten or twenty miles from Prairie du Chien, and report to them the best time and route to come to the country.[4]

1. Kent, to A.H.M.S., February 9, 1830.
2. Kent, to A.H.M.S., December 1, 1831.
3. Kent, to A.H.M.S., June 14, 1832.
4. Ibid.

He considered it very important that a missionary be sent to the counties of Iowa and Crawford, Wisconsin Territory, lying North of Illinois between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi river.[5]

At the beginning of 1837, Rev. Cyrus Nichols of Racine wrote a letter to the American Home Missionary Society, in which he said, "I believe this is a very healthy country; and it is certainly fertile, and the most beautiful I have ever seen. Prairie and timber are interspersed much as in Illinois."[6]

In August, 1838 Rev. Gilbert Crawford of Milwaukee likewise described Wisconsin to the Society saying, "But this Wisconsin for gentle stream anddale and friutful valley and easy subjugation and incomparably fine climate, and good water is not second to any portion of the Nation."[7]

In the Home Missionary for December, 1838, Rev. Hall spoke of Walworth county being more thickly settled than Racine county "on account of the richness of the soil and the beautiful alternations of prairie and woodland."[8] A few months later he expressed himself to greater lengths including the whole territory. "The Territory as far as I am acquainted with it, is very beautiful, and doubtless will be rapidly and densely settled. It does not suffer in comparison with the most beautiful and fruitful sections of the West. There is less prairie and more timber in this Territory than in Illinois; consequently it is capable of being more densely settled. As the country is elevated and rolling, there

5. Kent, to A.H.M.S., June 14, 1832.
6. Cyrus Nichols, a letter in the Home Missionary IX, 181, February, 1837.
7. Gilbert Crawford, to A.H.M.S., August 20, 1838; reprint in Home Missionary XI, 130, October, 1838.
8. Lemuel Hall, a letter in the Home Missionary XI, 175, December, 1838.

is little or no stagnant water, in consequence of which the country is heathful. Those who have been in Wisconsin longest think there is far less of snow and rain than in the East . . . . Situated west of the great chain of lakes we are not exposed to their vapors, which are driven eastward . . . . Most of the time we have a clear sky and an elastic air. It is the experience of numbers who came into this country with feeble health that they have rapidly recovered."[9]

"Our eastern fellow citizens and the Eastern church send multitudes of their youth of both sexes, and of all ranks and employments, to seek fortune and fame among the natural meadows, fertile dales, and flowing streams of this inviting country--; it is and is to be the great depot of emigration for the rising generations of the East."[10]

To summarize, emphasize, and enlarge on these descriptions, Rev. Peet gave his views in the report of his tour of the summer of 1839 as follows: "The central and southern portions are chiefly prairie and 'openings' with occasional strips of heavy timber skirting the lakes and rivers. These 'openings' are beautiful, rolling land, having a sparse and low growth of oak, the ground being covered . . . . . with grass; with no underbrush or fallen timber to intercept the view or incommode the traveller . . . . The prairies have a smooth though undulating surface and afford the finest roads for any kind of carriage and in any direction. Some-

9. Hall, to A.H.M.S., February 27, 1839; reprint in Home Missionary XI, April 1839.
10. Crawford , to A.H.M.S., March 5, 1839; reprint in Home Missionary May, 1839.

times they stretch on before the traveler till the rising swells seem to blend with the blue sky in the distant horizon. They strike the unaccustomed beholder with perfect astonishment and admiration . . . . . how vast! how infinite!!"[11]

Times had never been very prosperous in Wisconsin, unless it were in the lead region, and the far reaching effects of the panic of 1837 were quick to be felt here. For a time the reports of the economic suffering here might have held back emigration; however Peet's letter and others in 1839 were designed to dispel any fears on this ground. First let us see what the earlier conditions were, according to the reports the Easterner read in the Home Missionary.

In the issue for July 1838, a missionary asks for aid beginning with the previous September. The magazine did not choose to divulge the name of the sender, but as there were only six missionaries sponsored by the Society then in the Territory namely Nichols at Racine, Peet at Green Bay, Ordway at Prairieville, Heaton at Elk Grove, Crawford at Milwaukee and Kent in the lead region, and since we have a copy of a similar letter written by Crawford just at this time, it looks as though it might have come from him.

The manuscript copy dated June 19, 1838, in the Wisconsin Historical library says: "The church here . . . is very feeble, and . . . quite unable to support me. I am with them nine months and got perhaps one-third of my provisions for my family--as for money, it is out of the question. My stock of food is well nigh gone and I am without the means to replace it. Thus situated I

11. Peet, to A.H.M.S., July 20, 1839; reprint in Home Missionary September, 1839.

want to know in behalf of the church whether you will let us draw on you for one hundred dollars for the current year."[12]

The letter published in the Home Missionary for July 1838, says: My dear flock are at present greatly straightened. . . Not but what provisions can be had, but we have no means to buy. I have been here eight months and have not had ten dollars in current money . . . . My stores brought with me are consumed, and I am . . . compelled to ask aid . . . . Will you give or will you loan one hundred dollars to this church and society beginning last September? I must have assistance. When we plant the banner of salvation in the wilderness . . . . without pork, or butter, or a cow, or a horse, or a road or bridge . . . . . our good brethren at the east ought to help us."[13]

The hard times or "pressure" came to Wisconsin so soon after many emigrants arrived that they had no chance to plant and harvest crops, so as to have something on which to live when it suddenly became impossible to borrow money. Many of them came without much cash or credit, and would have had trouble getting along even in prosperous times.

Rev. Cyrus Nichols of Racine in the Home Missionary for July, 1838, reported that "owing to 'hard times' the number of inhabitants is considerable diminished . . . . . I believe one half of the people in this region are destitute of meat; not a few families within the circle of my acquaintance are subsisting on potatoes and milk . . . . several families not far distant, and many, as I

12. Gilbert Crawfor, to A.H.M.S., June 19, 1838.
13. Undersigned Letter, Home Missionary, XI, 60, July 1838.

am informed, farther back in the country, subsisted for weeks on turnips alone. There is no credit, and almost no current money. Labor will not procure money or provisions except to a very limited extent. The cry is 'what shall we eat?', and it is difficult to divert their attention."[14]

Rev. Gilbert Crawford at Milwaukee seemed to feel the pinch of poverty most keenly judging from his letters. In spite of his brave resolves to see it through here, as given in the following letter, he finally did return to New York state. He says:

"Had it not been that I came to this upper country for life, have built me a house, and dislike fitfulness and change, I should be this fall on the line of march back to the "empire state". . . . But I am here to live or die: and if my family is spared, and we can get a little clothing, and <u>one good meal a day</u>, I am west of the great lakes, doing what little I can for my dear Master, in what is indeed a '<u>waste howling wilderness</u>' . . . . Ministers are greatly needed though there is at present little to support them. . . . . As we get all our materials of living from the East, we have to pay from twenty to fifty per cent more for these things than you in the city . . . . Rely on it your Missionaries have not said too much about the difficulties of living on the frontier."[15]

From Racine Rev. Cyrus Nichols wrote that "instead of the inquiry, what shall I do to be saved? It is . . . . How shall I procure my land, my home? How shall I provide for my family? This is the reason why I must content myself with almost nothing from the people this year."[16]

14. C. Nichols, Letter in <u>Home Missionary</u> XI, 64, July 1838.
15. Gilbert Crawford, to A.H.M.S., August 20, 1838; reprint in <u>Home Missionary</u> 11: 129, October 1838.
16. C. Nichols, Letter in <u>Home Missionary</u> XI, 131, October, 1838.

Rev. Peet realized the difficulties that the ministers and settlers had but by 1839, he believed that they no longer needed to worry about the body and could give more attention to caring for their souls. His tour in the summer of 1839 seems to have crystallized his opinion on this matter. In the conclusion of his report he says: "This country felt severely the late "pressure", and suffered greatly for a time from its effects. The first settlers endured peculiar trials and privations. Provisions were scarce and enormonsly dear, and no money in the country. . . . . It was as much as the people could do to provide for their own necessities, and had no time or means to spare for other objects. But the struggle is over in Wisconsin. The people are now in comfortable circumstances . . . . They have comfortable dwellings, a supply for present wants, a fine crop of every kind on the ground . . . . The greatest evil to be feared in the future will arise from "the dangers of wealth".[17]

Another vital need in Wisconsin which the Missionaries recognized and emphasized was that for more good ministers and more pious families. The first to raise this cry for Wisconsin was Rev. Aratus Kent who wrote the Society in June 1832 that they wanted "not a man of such effeminate habits that he can thrive only in a hot bed, and one who has all his lifetime been dandled on the lap of indolence. But we want a man who can endure hardship as a soldier, a man who can face a prairie wind in the winter and swim the swollen creeks in spring, and eat what is set before

17. Peet, to the A.H.M.S., July 20, 1839; reprint in Home Missionary, XII, 109, September, 1839.

him and ask no questions . . . . A man who can sleep sweetly on the soft side of an oak plank or on the green sod of Mother Earth with no covering but his blanket, or no company but his horse. . . who in the meantime can preach with apostolic zeal wherever he can collect a dozen precious souls to listen . . . . he must have patience to delay his journey an hour or two while they are collecting, though it should subject him to the inconvenience of riding in the night and the danger of losing the trail which conducts him to the next cabin . . . . Also want a man of easy manners . . . this is important . . . in one who would exert . . . influence on the officers of the forts."[18]

Mr. Samuel Hinman, a layman of Milwaukee, appealed to the "Society" for a minister, not just any minister but a strong one. He said: "Feeble men will not do for the west generally and particularly for places like this; . . . We want one sober, grave, temperate, and dignified, strong in intellect, and strong in faith, with deep piety, courteous and cheerful in his address and social intercourse, and withal such weight of character as will command respect among those that neither fear God nor keep his commandments."[19]

Rev. A. Hale of Jacksonville Illinois, in describing the wants of the lead region said: "We need immediately, two missionaries, to plant within forty miles of Galena. But they must be men--men who can meet opportunities, bear insults, and who are willing to labour hard and bear reproach, for Christ's sake."[20]

18. Aratus Kent, to A.H.M.S., June 14, 1832.
19. Samuel Hinman, to A.H.M.S., November 24, 1836.
20. Andrew Hale, letter in Home Missionary IX, 139, December, 1836.

Rev. Hall of Geneva said he received many letters of inquiry from ministers about moving into his territory to be missionaries. "But", he says, "they were not such men as we want. Ministers who cannot find employment at the East would not effect much here. It is painful for me to say a word to you on this subject as there is so much need for ministers."[21]

Having impressed on the American Home Missionary Society and the readers of its magazine, the kind of men needed here, the missionaries also emphasized the urgency of the need. They knew it was hard for the Easterners to realize just how few ministers there were and how large the Territory they had to care for. Rev. Peet declared in his report of July 20, 1839, that at least ten ministers should be sent to Wisconsin at once.

In May, 1835, the Home Missionary published a letter of Kent's, in which he said many could not hear one sermon in a year within a reasonable distance of their homes. Many members of the Presbyterian church of Galena were so far away that they did not attend more than once or twice a year.[22]

In 1839 Rev. Crawford of Milwaukee said that in the Territory there were eight or nine ministers, all of whom were Presbyterian but one. Three of them Messrs. Peet, Crawford, and Marsh of Stockbridge Indian Mission, had a pastoral charge preaching mostly in one place; the others Nichols, Hall, and Adams had a county or more to range over preaching where and when they could. "What can one missionary," he asked, "effect on a surface larger than any

21. Lemuel Hall, to A.H.M.S., April 1, 1840.
22. Kent, letter in Home Missionary VIII, 7, May, 1835.

two counties in York state? Next to nothing. Today he can feed the sheep a handful, but they are nearly starved ere he can see them again; and one sermon a month, or one in three months can under ordinary circumstances effect but little toward the conversion of the multitude that are on the broad road. It is hardly a drop where a shower is needed. Half a dozen blasts of the gospel trump in close succession will annoy the Devil more than a hundred at long intervals."[23]

It was not that the missionaries here were not active. Every letter carried an account of their activies, and Rev. Peet's account of his tour is a fair example of how busy he usually was; others followed his example as they were able. He says: "I was absent nearly five weeks; traveled five hundred and seventy five miles; visited thirty one different places and sixty four families; preached fourteen sermons, delivered one temperance address; . . . . attended one funeral; organized one church; administered the communion three times, and the ordinance of baptism twice; . . . attended the meeting of the Presbytery; distributed several Testaments, a few of Baxter's Call and Allein's Alarm, and several thousand pages of tracts and children's books; . . . conversed with a large number of professing Christians and others relative to the interests of religion personal duty, or the concerns of their souls."[24] No it was not that the missionaries were not busy, but there were so few of them.

Naturally the ministers who thought of coming to Wisconsin were interested the way they would be received there, and the

23. G. Crawford, to A.H.M.S., March 5, 1839.
24. S. Peet, to A.H.M.S., July 18, 1839; reprint in Home Missionary XII, 102, September, 1839.

prospective settlers would be interested in the kind of neighbors they would have. Although they did not plan a campaign to advertise Wisconsin, the missionaries there quite generally agreed that the people were of good character and religion should prosper. Although the sins of a few were flagrant, in most places the majority were sober and industrious. In 1839, Rev. Crawford said: "The people in general are in favor of education and Christianity . . . . I mean only that they are favorable to religion with the usual latitude of private interpretation, and there are but few scoffers."[25]

Basing his judgments on the people in and around Milwaukee, Rev. Crawford thought the people of Wisconsin "generally" respected the ministers, appreciated their services and attended their sermons. He said: "A devoted, intelligent, and judicious ministry will, I think, meet with all reasonable acceptance both from saint and sinner. Nay many of our most thoughtless youth here can shed a tear when you remind them of a praying mother and father, sister or brother 'down east'".[26]

The editors of the Home Missionary judged from the information they had received that the population in Wisconsin was a desirable one. They said "a large proportion of its inhabitants are from early association, if not from principle, desirous of the Gospel. Education, temperance, industry, and respect for law must meet with support in such a community.[27]

Rev. Isaac Heaton, of Elk Grove in the mining region, considered the moral character of that country to be varied. "To sum up

25. Crawford, to A.H.M.S., March 5, 1839.
26. Ibid.
27. Editorial in the Home Missionary XII, 146, November, 1839.

the whole in one word", he said, "it is striped, as usual without piety. In some respects good and in others different. Sabbath breaking is lamentable common, there are few religious persons in the region."[28]

Rev. Peet, of course, was a Wisconsin enthusiast and Mr. Dexter quotes him as saying that few states had a more intelligent and enterprising population than Wisconsin, many of them being from the first circles of the East. "It was not uncommon to find pianos in log houses," he said, and "ladies that had graced the parlors in the cities of the east would entertain the traveller and the stranger with great hospitality."[29] No other missionary mentioned pianos and perhaps Peet's ideas of "uncommon" differed with those of others.

After his tour in the summer of 1829, in which he visited Fon du Lac, Fox Lake, Fort Winnebago (Portage), Madison, Watertown, Fort Atkinson, Whitewater, Prairie du Lac (Milton), Janesville, Beloit, parts of Walworth county, Racine, and Milwaukee, he should have been very well informed as to the character of the settlers in Wisconsin and he reports: "A large portion of the population of the territory are of the best class of emigrants from the Eastern states--intelligent, enterprising, and decidedly in favor of educational and religious institutions. An unusual proportion are professing Christians of some denomination. There is a large amount of educated mind in Wisconsin. I met with a great number of females of refined and finished education,

28. I. Heaton, to A.H.M.S., September 11, 1837.
29. Dexter, "Missionary Influence in the Settlement of Wisconsin", p. 13.

qualified to fill any station . . . In almost every log house you may see upon rough board shelves . . . a library which would do honor to any New England family."[30]

The missionaries however did not try to hide the sins of the people in Wisconsin from those in the East, but rather proclaimed them as a warning to those who planned to come here. As the early Christians in Palestine found their worst troubles were with those of their own faith and not with the "Pharisces", so the missionaries in the west found a stumbling block in those who had once belonged to the church, but were now indifferent. "The churches in Wisconsin", said Hale, are as scarce as ministers. All is new . . . a few professors of religion, scattered over the field, panting for the bread and water of life, and a large number who once were enrolled among the people of God, but are now twice dead, and among the most formidable obstacles to the progress of religion."[31]

And Rev. Isaac Heaton, of Elk Grove bitterly declared that many concealed their profession until some accident exposed it. "They give decisive evidence that they were not of us", he said, "for if they had been . . . , they would no doubt have continued. It would be a melancholy report to say that one half evince this character; yet 'facts are stubborn things' . . . . One such professor will do, and has done, more injury to religion here than a score of infidels." One gentleman told Heaton he thought that though it once had been an honor to be a minister, he no longer

30. S. Peet, to A.H.M.S., July 18, 1839; reprint in Home Missionary XII, 108, September, 1839.
31. A. Hale, Jacksonville, Illinois. To A.H.M.S., December, 1836.

thought it a recommendation to any man. So many defective Christians made him question if religion were deceptive, and he wondered how many in New England would "fall away" if exposed to the situations and temptations of the West.[32]

Crawford (March 5, 1839) declared that the "greatest trouble in building up the Redeemer's Kingdom is not from the non-professing world; but from the troops of renegado Christians. These I am concerned to say are not few; and their example and influence is killing to serious Godliness. You will find them working on the Sabbath, using the profane oath, drinking with the drunken, and advocating fatal error . . . These often make the minister of Christ and the godly to weep in secret."[33]

Rev. Lemuel Hall of Lake Geneva complained of the dereliction of professors. One of the many things that a missionary to the west learned, he said, was that "the religion of many professors at the East does not bear transportation . . . that it is not a certain criterion of piety, that a person was once a member of a church."[34]

Hall thought he saw a reason for this defection in the poor training or instruction given to church members. He said "there are mulitudes who have assented to truths at the East, and then removed to the West, and were unable to detect error or to defend the truth; . . . . they either fell in error, or became apostates. It costs no mental effort to receive error as it generally consists

32. Isaac Heaton, to A.H.M.S., September 11, 1837.
33. Crawford, to A.H.M.S., March 5, 1839.
34. L. Hall, to A.H.M.S., June, 1839.

in not believing. Every well instructed Christian is an accession of strength to any place but uninstructed and unstable professors are an injury wherever they locate."[35]

This "dereliction of professors" prompted the missionaries to appeal to the East for the right kind of settlers. Rev. Kent thought that a "half dozen families of the right stamp in company with the missionary in many places would render his labors doubly efficient."[36] Rev. Keaton thought that the persons who would be most useful as preachers, teachers, or settlers needed to have genuine piety, not merely fashionable. "An intelligent consistent Christian is here a living witness that all are nor hypocrites, and such . . . we need. Many sons and daufhters of New England who are very useful there, might be far more so here."[37]

- Although Wisconsin needen more ministers to care for the spiritual welfare of the settlers, it was necessary to support them, and the appeal for funds was constant. One of the most unique reasons for supporting the church in the West is that given by Rev. Crawford, to whom giving seemed the most practical way to save. He says:

"We earnestly lift the Macedonian cry for Wisconsin and Iowa. Come over and help. Let your opulent merchants give nobly on this enterprize; for their extensive commerce with this great west will speadily and amply repay them. Far better for the merchant to give his money, not to say his prayers, to make the people good where he entrusts millions of property, than to spend it upon bailiffs,

35. L. Hall, to A.H.M.S., September 9, 1842.
36. A. Kent, to A.H.M.S., December 1, 1831.
37. I. Heaton. to A.H.M.S., September 11, 1837.

to apprehend his runaway creditors; or to collect his debts among the dissolute people without either responsibility or principle. The gospel is the most economical police on earth."[38]

Although the missionaries stressed that Wisconsin needed more ministers, good ministers, and more Christian settlers, they did not forget to emphasize the urgency of this need. Rev. Peet very ably summed up the general feeling on this subject when he said: "But no single statement can present our conviction . . . of the importance of doing whatever we can for this region without delay . . . If any minister who reads these lines has a purpose of ever becoming an inhabitant of that fair region . . . we say with emphasis, GO NOW. Every year's delay is a great loss; already have you staid away too long. If in forming the character of an individual, youth is more impressionable that manhood . . . for forestalling the influences of evil, it is even more important to cast in the power of religion, among western society in the beginning, inasmuch as the forming period--the decisive era in the history of new settlements--is so bridf, that if lost, it is generally lost forever.. . . . . The time has come when this country must be provided with the ministration of the Gospel . . . . I earnestly call on you and our brethren, and the churches throughout the land--send us ministers - send us good ministers - SEND THEM NOW!"[39]

The number and character of these appeals could not fail to produce results; an increase in the ministers, settlers, and

38. G. Crawford, to A.H.M.S., March 5, 1839.
39. S. Peet, to A.H.M.S., July 20, 1839. Reprint in Home Missionary XII, 109, September, 1839.

financial support that came to Wisconsin was immediate. The Executive Committee of the American Home Missionary Society proposed to send missionaries as soon as they could procure them to each of the ten places Peet had mentioned, namely: Milwaukee, Southport, Madison and vicinity, Jefferson County, Whitewater, Prairie and vicinity, Troy, East Troy and vicinity, Prairie du Lac and vicinity, Frankfort and Fon du Lac, Mineral Point and vicinity, and Sassville and vicinity. One minister had already offered himself, and the sum necessary for his support had been pledged by the ecclesiastical body to which he belonged. Others were corresponding with the society about their coming here.[40]

One of the most startling effects of Peet's letter was a pledge of one thousand dollars sent to the American Home Missionary Society, by an unknown contributor, who wrote as follows:

"Believing that one dollar by way of prevention, in regard to the moral and religious interests in the Territory of Wisconsin, is of more value than a hundred of reparation, I propose to do something immediately for that Territory; and therefore now enclose you two hundred and fifty dollars toward the support of ten missionaries, to be appointed by the Executive Committee of the Home Missionary Society for the ten stations mentioned in the report of the Rev. Stephen Peet in the Home Missionary this month."[41]

Evidently the giver was not exceedingly wealthy for in quarterly installments, "provided always", he said, that I am alive, and

40. Report of Executive Committee of A.H.M.S., Home Missionary XII, 146, November, 1839.
41. Home Missionary, XII, 146, November, 1839.

enabled . . . to appropriate the funds without depriving my family of the necessaries of life."[42]

That the effect of Peet's climaxing appeal in 1839 was felt at once in the increased immigration of ministers to Wisconsin, was the belief of Mr. Frank N. Dexter, a recent minister of the Congregational Church at Elroy, Wisconsin. "The 'Wisconsin Boom' was popular among church people, he said, and thus a most excellent class of men and women were drawn to our state, and provision made in a degree for their spiritual matters." Wisconsin was a new New England, and the Easterners sought to move to just such a place where they would have congenial neighbors and the religious teachings they had always been accustomed to.[43]

A year after the publication of his appeal, Rev. Peet wrote: "Ministers are coming among us in considerable numbers. Five have already arrived, and others are expected soon."[44] For the sake of clearness and future reference it might be well to state here that those ministers who had already come were: Rev.'s Cyrus Nichols and Moses Ordway in 1836; in 1837 Rev.'s Gilbert Crawford, Stephen Peet, and Isaac E. Heaton; in 1838, Rev.'s Lemuel Hall and C. C. Cadwell; in 1839 Rev.'s Daniel Smith and O. F. Curtis. This made a total of nine who had come in four years. In 1840 eight more came: Rev.'s N. Kingsburg, D. A. Sherman, Dexter Clary, Jeremiah Porter, J. A. Parsons, S. Hubbord, William Arms, and Solomon Chaffee. Thus Peet's appeal for ten missionaries to Wisconsin was nearly answered.

42. Home Missionary, XII, 146, November, 1839.
43. Frank N. Dexter, "The Missionary Influence in the Settlements in Wisconsin" (1921). (A Typewritten manuscript in the Wisconsin Historical Library.)
44. S. Peet, letter in Home Missionary XIII, 102, September, 1840.

In 1841 and 1842 a few more came and then a grand total of eleven in 1843.[45]

45. Frank N, Dexter, Editor. A Hundred Years of Congregational History in Wisconsin, 31. Published by the Wisconsin Congregational Conference, The K and K Print Shop, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, 1933.

Chapter V

Green Bay

Since missionaries and settlers came into Wisconsin more rapidly after 1839, it is not surprising that there was an increase in religious activities. In surveying these beginnings in the various parts of Wisconsin let us first of all see what happened at Green Bay after Peet took his momentous tour of Wisconsin.

Rev. Peet stayed there only a few months after his tour, for in October, 1839, the Presbyterian church in Milwaukee called him to replace Rev. Crawford, who was returning to New York.[1] Peet was rather pleased to accept the call for Green Bay was not growing and was so far away from the other settlements. In July, he had reported that two families in one of which was an elder of his church, had moved to Walworth County and he had organized a church there.[2] Thus his own church and community was being weakened by removals.

Being a man of great energy Peet wanted to get into a more populous area, where he could help fill the need for the organization of churches.

Again without a pastor, Green Bay tried to secure Rev. O. C. Thompson from Michigan. He was so delayed by the poor boat schedule and boats breaking down that he finally went elsewhere.[3] Mr. Daniel Butler on behalf of the Green Bay church then wrote to the American Home Missionary Society to ask them to send a minister. Having had excellent sermons from Ordway and Peet, the church at

1. Application of Milwaukee Church for Aid, to A.H.M.S., October 5, 1839.
2. S. Peet, to A.H.M.S., July 18, 1839.
3. Daniel Butler, Green Bay, to A.H.M.S., December 3, 1839.

Green Bay would not be satisfied with less than a good preacher, said Butler. Incidentally the church would also like a young man or one with a small family, for Rev. Peet's large one had been hard to support.[4]

Finally on June 12, 1840, Rev. Jeremiah Porter from Chicago arrived in answer to a call from Green Bay.[5] Mr. Porter had visited here in 1834 and knew Dr. Satterlee and Mr Butler so that he was not unacquainted with his new church and new territory. His arrival was saddened by the death of one of his children, who had been ill on the way, but he accepted it as a part of God's will, and took up his new work. He found the members of the church scattered over two or three counties, and a population in Green Bay county of two thousand,one hundred, of whom one thousand five hundred were French Catholic. In the two counties south and east of Green Bay were three or four hundred settlers, many of them Presbyterian. Being the nearest minister of that order, Porter felt a pastoral responsibility in them and tried to reach them on his itinerating journey.[6]

He preached at Green Bay or at Des Peres, the county seat, six miles south, twice or three times every Sabbath for the first three months he was there. Then he made an excursion into the interior and visited members of the churche who lived along the Fox river, and then the settlers at Fond du Lac, seventy miles away.[7]

4. Daniel Butler, Green Bay, to A.H.M.S., December 3, 1839.
5. Jeremiah Porter, Letter in the Home Missionary XIII, 196, January, 1841.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.

Since there was a special meeting of the Presbytery at Troy, October 6, 1840, Rev. Porter set out from Fon du Lac, accompanied by a delegate, and traveled the one hundred and seventy five miles on horseback in five days, during four of which it rained intermittently. The union of the Congregational and Presbyterian churches that was formed at this memorable meeting at Troy will be explained presently.[8]

Rev. Porter's trip, although physically wearing for him was also interesting. He says: "I passed the Sabbath both going and coming from the convention with two Presbyterian families on Rock river about one hundred miles south of Green Bay. They have been there about three years and never . . . had preaching on the Sabbath from a minister of their own name." A few families, several of them Methodists, assembled and Rev. Porter preached to a group of about twenty of them there.[9]

When he left them he took an Indian trail which he followed for twenty miles seeing no signs of life except a few marked trees and the remains of Indian lodges. The minister had to be a woodsman as well for he said, "had I lost the trail which like a thread led me through forests and marshes and prairies, through patches of ripe strawberries and acres of roses, my situation would have been very embarrassing". However, without mishap he returned to a settlement on the west side of Lake Winnebago which he had never visited before and in which were several members of his Green Bay church, and after a day there he journeyed to the Stockbridge mission where he had left his family. It was just two weeks from

8. Jeremiah Porter, Letter to the Home Missionary XIII, 196, January, 1841.
9. Ibid.

the time of his departure, and he reported that he had been much stimulated by his contact with the other ministers at Troy.[10]

During his first winter at Green Bay in 1840-41, Rev. Porter seemed to revive the church considerably. Hardly a week had gone by that winter in which he had not had some conversions, according to his account, and the converts had been of all ages and classes of society, although most of them were between twenty and forty years old.[11] In the spring twenty one members were received into the church, nineteen of whom had never belonged to a Protestant Church before. Porter was especially pleased to see the heads of families brought together in their religion. He said four couples came into the church at this time, and two husbands whose wives had previously joined. "They speak of themselves now as perfectly happy, while tears of joy run down their cheeks", said Porter. "Six other husbands have begun to pray, several of whom think to unite with our church at a future communion. There are twelve or fifteen more indulging hope besides about twenty who have connected themselves with the Methodist or Episcopal church."[12] Although it seems to be a moot question today, in those days religion was taken seriously and affected the daily lives and thoughts of the people.

One of Porter's converts was from Montreal, a Catholic woman seventy years old, who also converted her husband. Another said: "Until this winter I hated the very sight of a Presbyterian".

10. J. Porter, to A.H.M.S., Home Missionary, XIV, 101, September, 1841.
11. J. Porter, to A.H.M.S., Home Missionary, XIV, 7, May, 1841.
12. Ibid.

Evidently Rev. Porter was a powerful preacher, a worthy successor to Messrs. Peet and Ordway. One man and his wife, just come from England, had never been Christians, but were now seemed very happy in the church. The husband testified as follows: "I bless God that he brought me all the way to Green Bay to convert my sour."[13] From these examples, we may see that the thoughts and conduct of many pioneers were closely influenced by religion.

In Porter's second winter here a series of revivals seemed to sweep the country and Green Bay was again affected. On January 28, 1842, Rev.'s O. F. Curtis and Spencer Baker, after being hindered a week by severe storms, arrived to aid Rev. Porter in a protracted meeting. The Methodists also had meetings and Porter said that such harmony existed between the different denominations as to convince the world that "Christians were seeking to honor God and save souls, not merely to build up a sect or party."[14] Bishop Kemper, a famous Episcopalian clergyman, arrived during the meeting and preached almost daily for a week; and the Catholic Priest directed mass to be said for nine successive days. "For once at least", said Porter, "ours might be said to be a church going people."[15]

The meetings lasted a fortnight with conversions from almost every class of society: "the high and the low; the moral and the most profligate; the professed infidel and universalist; the back slider and the Papist; the wholesale dealer in alcohol, and the owner of the degrading grocery and bowling alley, and the intemperate; and the honorable women not a few." Those converted who had

13. J. Porter, to A.H.M.S., Home Missionary, XIV, 7, May, 1841.
14. J. Porter, to A.H.M.S., Home Missionary, XV, 43, June, 1842.
15. Ibid.

engaged in the liquor trade of course relinquished it, and only one bowling alley was still open to continue its "sickening roll from morning till night". A total of thirty joined the Presbyterian church, thirty-five the Methodist, and twelve the Episcopalian.[16] Rev. Porter stayed with the church for eighteen years until he died in June, 1858, so we may now consider this a settled church past its period of pioneer missionary labor.[17]

16. J. Porter, to A.H.M.S., Home Missionary, XV, 43, June, 1842.
17. Frank N. Dexter, the Editor, A Hundred Years of Congregational History in Wisconsin, 53.

Chapter VI

The Convention

The first ecclesiastical organization in the Territory of Wisconsin was a Presbytery, formed at Milwaukee, January 17, 1839, called the"Presbytery of Wisconsin".[1] It included the Presbyterian Church of Milwaukee and the Congregational Church of Prairieville (Waukesha), four ministers, viz. Gilbert Crawford, Lemuel Hall, Moses Ordway, and Cyrus Nichols, and two lay delagates, Elder Samuel Hinman from the Presbyterian Church at Milwaukee and Deacon Asa Clarke from the Congregational Church at Prairieville.[2]

The ministers were all Presbyterian, Mr. Clarke was Congregational and Elder Hinman later became a Deacon in the Beloit Congregational church so that we know he was not a strict partisan. Rev. Ordway had been a pastor for several years in Western New York and was well acquainted with the "Plan of Union" used in central New York. Hence it is not to be wondered at that one of the acts of the new Presbytery was to invite Congregational churches to join it on such terms that in cases of discipline the decision of the whole church should be final; but "if the alleged offence be heresy, then either of the parties may bring the case before the Presbytery."[3] It has been said and reasonably so, that these ministers were sensitive on the point of heresy because they had just been accused of it themselves. Eighteen months before this, a split occured in the

1. G. Crawford, to A.H.M.S., March 5, 1839.
2. S. Peet, History of the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches and Ministers in Wisconsin, 9. Published by Silas Chapman, Number 7 Michigan Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1851.
3. Rev. J.N. Davidson, "Beginnings" in One Hundred Years of Congregational Church History in Wisconsin, 1818-1918, Part I, 10. Published by members of Historical Committee, Madison, Wisconsin. Copyright by J. N. Davidson, 1917.

Presbyterian church dividing it into "New School" and "Old School" men. The "New School" had been cut off from the regular General Assembly because of its "errors in doctrine and method". These "New School" men did not believe that their duty was merely to gather the elect out of the world; they believed in revivals and preached the doctrine of unlimited atonement. They agreed with Lyman Beecher on the subject of temperance. "Enmity to the liquor traffic was their politics and in their sermons." They believed in social service and had intensely anti-slavery views.[4]

The Presbytery adopted the Constitution, Confession of Faith, and Discipline of the Presbyterian Church of the United States, but it was never connected with any Synod or the General Assembly. A resolution was adopted allowing Presbyterian Churches to elect their Ruling Elders either for a limited period or for life, as they might choose.[5]

At the second meeting July 5, 1839, at Racine the name of the Presbytery was changed to the Presbytery of Milwaukee instead of Wisconsin. Rev. Crawford was dismissed to the Presbytery of Niagara, New York, and Rev. Peet was received, as were the Churches of Green Bay, Geneva, and East Troy. The Presbytery requested the American Home Missionary Society to commission a general missionary to look after all the churches and missionaries in the territory and Rev. Peet applied for the position if they approved.[6] It is safe to say that he was the prime mover for the Presbytery's request,

4. Rev. J.N. Davisdon, "Beginnings" in One Hundred Years of Congregational Church History in Wisconsin, 1818-1918, Part I, 10. Published by members of Historical Committee, Madison, Wisconsin. Copyright by J. N. Davidson, 1917.
5. Peet, History of the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches and Ministers in Wisconsin, 9.
6. Peet, to A.H.M.S., August 13, 1839.

for he was then completing his tour of Wisconsin and had fresh and vivid impressions of its need as a whole. He thought it very important that the religious forces of the Territory be combined so far as possible, and proposed inviting the Congregational churches of the Territory to send delegates to the next meeting of Presbytery "to confer and agree upon a plan of union and cooperation between Presbyterians and Congregationalists in the Territory;" and also "that a committee of five be appointed to prepare articles of practice and rules for regulating Presbytery, based on principles embraced in the constitution of the Presbyterian church and the 'Plan of Union', and adapted to the circumstances of the churches in this Territory."[7]

At the third meeting of Presbytery at the south school house in Prairieville or Prairie Village on February 11, 1840 the Presbyterian churches of South Prairieville, Pike Grove, and Racine were received as well as the Rev. O. F. Curtis, a Congregationalist.

At the fourth meeting at Geneva, June 11, 1840, it was arranged to hold a special meeting at Troy. At the time of the meeting of a convention of the Congregation churches there in October; both meetings to be held to form a Union of the Presbytery and convention.

The Home Missionary informed its readers that "a meeting is about to be held in this Territory (Wis.) for the purpose of effecting a union between the Congregationalists and Presbyterians, or at least of making such arrangements that both may belong to the same

7. Rev. Henry Austin Miner, "Men at the Heart of the Movement", in One Hundred Years of Congregational Church History in Wisconsin 1818-1918, Part I, 16.
8. Peet, History, p. 10.

church, without the sacrifice of their respective peculiar principles. The meeting is anticipated with no ordinary interest,"[9]

Rev. Otis F. Curtis seems to have been most active in persuading the Congregationalists to accept the new plan. Since there was as yet no Congregational convention organized, he drew up and circulated a call for a convention of Congregational ministers and churches to be held at Troy, October 6, 1840, to consider the plan of union proposed by the Presbytery of Milwaukee, or adopt such other form of organization as will best subserve the interests of religion in the Territory. On the same sheet were the twenty-two articles of the proposed "plan of union" and a call for the meeting of Presbytery, signed by Rev. Peet "who, fired with missionary zeal for the Kingdom rather than any sect, is easily the leading spirit."[10] Finally on October 8, 1840, the name of the Presbytery was changed to that of "The Presbyterian and Congregational Convention of Wisconsin", and the constitution adopted was that of the old Presbytery with a couple of articles omitted.[11]

According to Rev. Porter's account of the convention there were five Presbyterian and four Congregational ministers present from more than that number of churches. Many considered it very important that in laying the foundations of the region there should be no division between the two churches. "For this we prayed very earnestly", he says, "and a union was consummated after two days candid deliberation, and after a touching season of prayer."[12]

9. Home Missionary, XIII, 152, November, 1840.
10. Miner, op. cit., 23.
11. Miner, op. cit., 31.
12. J. Porter, to A.H.M.S., Home Missionary, XIII, 196, January, 1841.

Rev. Hall of Geneva favored the "Convention" for different reasons. One was that he thought the Congregationalists "peculiary exposed in this country to the wiles of errorists. They come under the name of Congregationalists but they are not the Congregationalists of New England." Another was that by combing they avoided rivalry which would tend to make both feeble.[13]

Rev. Frank N. Dexter has recently said that the Plan of Union enabled the ministerial forces of the state to be placed most wisely. "To this plan is due in a large measure the fact that in most of the smaller places where there is a Presbyterian church on the ground, there will be found no Congregational church and vice versa.[14]

At the regular meeting of the Convention, June 14, 1842, the District Conventions of Milwaukee, Beloit, and Mineral Point were erected[15] and at another meeting September 17, 1846, the District Convention of Madison was set off from that of Beloit.[16] Rev. Holbrook and the Dubuque church united with the Mineral Point convention, it being the most convenient ecclesiastical body. Holbrook seemed to approve of the union and explained the convention as follows: "It is constituted on the principle of permitting every church to adopt its own mode of government, while all are united in this body as a bond of union, and look to it as a judicatory or advisory body, according to the principle of government adopted by the individual church."[17]

The General Convention met at first semi-annually and then

13. L. Hall, to A.H.M.S., November 10, 1840.
14. Frank N. Dexter, "The Missionary Influence in the Settlement of Wisconsin," 20. Wisconsin Mss.
15. Peet, History, 14.
16. Peet, History, 22.
17. J. C. Holbrook, Dubuque Iowa Territory, to A.H.M.S., September 26, 1842.

after 1843 it met annually.[18] Discussions were held and resolutions passed by the various Conventions on such subjects as: slavery, temperance, education, Foreign and Home Missions, Colportage, Peace Societies, and revivals. For example at its third meeting the Convention adopted Sabbath rules saying it would "deprecate all travelling on the Sabbath except for purposes of worship or mercy; all changing of mails or frequenting the Post Office, all social visiting, and literary or secular reading on that holy day."[19]

The Convention report for 1845 said the "Plan" worked well and that "the principles of the Convention are permanently established . . . Congregationalists and Presbyterians are here emphatically one denominations."[20] Nevertheless the Convention held its last meeting only five years later due to the organization of a New School Presbytery which soon abxorbed all the Presbyterian churches.[21] Although there were eight churches of each denomination when the Convention was formed, in 1850 there were twenty-eight Presbyterian and eighty-three Congregational. Although there were more Presbyterian ministers at first and Rev. Peet the General Agent was Presbyterian, and the settlers were free to elect their own form, so many being from New England where Congregationalism was very strong, it is not surprising they chose that church.[22]

However, as Dr. A. L. Chapin said, "the arrangement did good service in its day, giving unity and efficiency to the founding of

---

18. Peet, History, 15.
19. "Narrative of the State of Religion within the Bounds of the Presbyterian and Congregational Convention of Wisconsin Presented at its Meeting at Racine in February, 1841", in Home Missionary, XIV, 53, July, 1841.
20. Dexter, "Missionary Influence in Settlement of Wisconsin", 20.
21. Frank N. Dexter, A Hundred Years of Congregational History in Wisconsin, 84.
22. Ibid, 83.

the churches, and saving our state from the rivalries and jealousies which have marred the peace of other states in the early stages of their religious development."[23]

F. N. Dexter, "Missionary Influences...,"20.

Chapter VII

Milwaukee

The first place mentioned by Rev. Peet in his recommendation of places in Wisconsin that needed attention was Milwaukee. Although he was there himself, he could use help and perhaps already he was contemplating a position as General Missionary for the Territory.

The first one to call the attention of the American Home Missionary Society to Milwaukee was a layman, Mr. Samuel Hinman already mentioned as a delegate to the first Presbytery meeting. He estimated that at least thirty persons would join in forming a Presbyterian church if they had a minister to lead them and that they could pay about one thousand dollars a year. His estimate of the salary proved to be a gross exaggeration as their first minister later reported. Hinman thought a church should be formed as soon as possible because as yet "no particular form of religious error" had come into Milwaukee in an organized form and the field could be occupied with more advantage than if that were the case.[1]

In November, 1836, a few months later he again urged the need of a minister for donditions were becoming more difficult; there were more differences about building a church, and the location for it. Also "times are much harder" he said, and it would be harder to get the people to try to support a church. Other denominations, namely the Paptist and the Methodist already had ministers there, and the Episcopalians expected one soon. A few had gone into those

1. Samuel Hinman, to A.H.M.S., August 15, 1836.

churches, and although he believed the Presbyterian people were still numerically the strongest he wished they would hasten to occupy the ground before any more were drawn into the other churches. Hinman declared he had nothing against the other evangelical churches but wished them well. "Still as I love my own church better", he said, "I am particularly anxious that it should lose nothing."[2]

As has already been mentioned, the first church in Milwaukee was the Presbyterian one which Rev.'s Ordway and Marsh organized on April 13, 1837.[3] The two ministers had ridden ponies from Green Bay to Milwaukee in the middle of March, sleeping on the snow two or three nights on the way. Marsh reported that they found a "heterogenous mass of one hundred and fifty men and thirty women who seemed to take some interest in our work."[4]

Soon after the church was organized Rev. Gilbert Crawford arrived in Milwaukee to be its pastor. He had come at a very discouraging time for Milwaukee was just going through the depths of depression. Crawford said he had been comfortably located in Lockport, New York, when the people here sent for him and promised him one thousand dollars a year. He came because he had been "desirous for some years to experience some of the hardships of Frontier life and out-post service in the hopes it would make me (him) a better man." He found they could not pay him "one thousand coppers" and had little but hardships to offer.[5]

2. S. Hinman, to A.H.M.S., November 24, 1836.
3. See page 33.
4. Thomas S. Johnson,"Moses Ordway, Pioneer Presbyterian Missionary," Wisconsin Magazine of History, II, 269. Quoting from the journal of Rev. Cutting Marsh.
5. G. Crawford, to A.H.M.S., August 20, 1838.

As was customary with nearly all the Missionaries Rev. Crawford preached three times on the Sabbath, "it being my chief day for getting the people together", he wrote. He held a Sunday School, Bible class, Monthly concert, and "several seasons of social praying during the week", and helped to promote a Temperance Society.[6]

Since he was given almost no salary on which to live and the only money he had was the aid received from the Home Missionary Society, Rev. Crawford wrote long letters describing the economic conditions in Wisconsin, letters for which he is now chiefly remembered. In July, 1839, at the second meeting of the Presbytery Rev. Crawford sought and obtained a dismissal to the Presbytery of Niagara, New York, and Milwaukee was again without a minister.[7]

Rev. Peet of Green Bay was now called and arrived in October 1839, to assume his new charge.[8] At first Rev. Peet was kept so busy answering letters which his report of Wisconsin in the September Home Missionary had evoked, and also answering calls to preach or organize churches in nearby communities, and distributing Bibles for the Bible Society that he didn't report very much about the Milwaukee church. However he thought the chief immediate problems there were those of establishing a good meeting house and meeting the competition of other denominations.[9] In July 1840 he declared the cause was taking a deep hold on the community and five had just been converted, which showed they were progressing.[10]

For their meetings they moved to a large room in the second story of a ware house, situated near the ferry between the two parts

6. G. Crawford, to A.H.M.S., August 20, 1838.
7. Peet, History , p. 9; also letter to A.H.M.S., July 20,1839, p.10.
8. Application of Milwaukee church for $200 aid, to A.H.M.S., October 5, 1839.
9. Peet, to A.H.M.S., July 6, 1840.
10. Ibid.

of the city. Peet thought it advantageous in being a central location, and described the room as being well fitted with slips, or pews, a pulpit, and a singer's platform, all neatly painted and the room well lighted. The slips were rented and families sat together, something they had not hitherto done here. As was to be expected, Peet's sermons attracted large audiences, and he said shortly after they had this new arrangement that the place was already too "strait", or small, and the people were thinking of building.[11] Rev. Peet spent much of his time visiting among the people and was pleased to get a lawyer, who was also an elder in the church to take charge of the Sabbath School.[12]

Like Rev. Kent at an earlier time, Rev. Peet found his expenses increased by entertaining company. All the ministers, agents, etc who came to Wisconsin to preach, see the country or buy land, either stopped at Milwaukee first of all or visited there. Peet said he could not send them to the Taverns as was done in the East and most of the people had too small houses, too large families, or lived too far out to have company, so Peet had no choice. Postage for his many letters also increased his expenses.[13]

Having received thirty-five new members in the year ending March 15, 1841, Peet was able to report to the Society that his congregation had doubled since his arrival.[14] On June 1, 1841 Rev. Peet left the Milwaukee church to become the General Agent for the American Home Missionary Society in the whole Territory of Wisconsin.[15] Rev. C. L. Watson took his place for awhile, but

11. Peet, to A.H.M.S:, October 1, 1840.
12. Ibid.
13. Peet, to A.H.M.S., December 10, 1840.
14. Peet, Annual Statistical Report to A.H.M.S., March 15, 1841.
15. Peet, to A.H.M.S., June 25, 1841.

the Milwaukee church had now become independent financially of the Society, and there was no quarterly reports to give us the details of its progress.

Rev. Aaron L. Chapin, who later founded Beloit College and was its President for thirty-six years, became pastor of the Presbyterian church in Milwaukee from May, 1843, to February, 1850. Under his leadership a new church was finished in 1843, and enlarged in 1847 and the total membership in 1851 had reached one hundred and seventy five.[16]

Two Congregational churches were established in Milwaukee during this early period. On May 20, 1841 the Plymouth Congregational church was organized with twenty four members, which had increased to one hundred and seventy five in 1851. Under the leadership of Rev. J. J. Miter a church was built in 1843, and a new one in 1850 which would accomodate eight or nine hundred people.[17]

A third church, the Free Congregational, was founded in 1847 by Rev. O. F. Curtis. Its membership in 1851 was only forty-five, but it was still quite young, and had built a church that would seat four or five hundred people.[18]

Rev. Peet tells us that there were only three small churches of different denominations in Milwaukee in 1839, with no good house of worship, but in 1851 there were twenty four church organizations and twenty one church buildings. In 1839 there were a total of about thirty Congregation and Presbyterian members there;

16. Peet, History of the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches, 17. Ibid.
17. Ibid, 135.
18. Ibid, 136.

in 1851 there were four churches of these two denominations, each with a house of worship and a minister although he does not tell us what the fourth church was.[19]

In order to make clear the part Rev. Peet played in the church history of Wisconsin from 1841 to 1850, let it be remembered that he was appointed on June 1, 1841, as a General Agent for Wisconsin. His duty was to organize new churches, to report on the progress of the churches already organized and of their ministers, and to recommend the amount of aid to be given to the various missionaries by the Society.[20]

To avoid personal enmity as well as to relieve him of too heavy a burden, he requested that a committee be appointed to help him recommend ministers for different places, and the amount of appropriations they should receive. Accordingly the Executive Committee of the American Home Missionary Society appointed a Board of Agency for Wisconsin. Its first meeting was on December 12, 1843, at Milwaukee, its being Messrs. Miter, Chapin, Holton, and Bonnell. The committee favored a settled ministry when practicable and wanted their men to have sound views and good attainments.[21]

19. Peet, History of the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches, 136
20. Peet, to A.H.M.S., June 25, 1841.
21. Peet, to A.H.M.S., December 12, 1843.

Chapter VIII

Southport, Racine and Vicinity

When one entered Wisconsin along the Lake shore from the south, the first large settlement in this early period that one found was Southport, which in 1850 was incorporated as Kenosha.[1] A church of eighteen members was organized here June 25, 1838, by Rev. Crawford of Milwaukee, and Rev. C. C. Cadwell became the minister. However he stayed only one year before going to Racine, and Southport had a difficult time getting a minister.[2]

When Rev. Peet visited it on his tour in July 1839 he said there were about three hundred persons there. A Presbyterian church of thirty members was organized but it had no minister. He urged that one be sent and estimated that two-thirds of his salary could be obtained from that church. There were then Methodist and Baptist churches there also and two "Temperance Taverns, which surprisingly were well sustained, a very uncommon occurrence."[3]

In 1840 when revivals were beginning in many places, Rev. Lemuel Hall said that the one at Pike Grove had extended into Southport, although he had received no particulars. In the meeting of the convention in Racine, February 9, 1841, full particulars were given. It was said "the whole population was moved. Meetings were attended continually for several weeks." Over one hundred united with the Presbyterian and Congregational churches and some

1. Peet, History, 126.
2. G. Crawford, to A.H.M.S., August 20, 1838.
3. Peet, to A.H.M.S., July 20, 1839.

with the other churches. In a few weeks a protracted meeting was held and another revival was in progress.[4]

In June, 1841, Peet again reported a visit to Southport, admitted eight to the church and administered the Lord's supper. Since they had a young licentiate preaching to them, and since he could not according to the church laws, administer that sacrament, they had not had communion service for a long time.[5]

The following year Southport had difficulty in choosing a location for a church because of two factions in it. When Rev. Peet came, he got a committee appointed of three members from each side with himself as chariman. In one hour they reached a unanimous decision. The ground selected was owned by a universalist, who, contrary to all expectation, donated the lot to them.[6] By 1844 the church was finished.[7]

In 1842, Rev. O. P. Clinton came to Southport as its fourth minister. Evidently he was too big a man for the job for was soon commissioned as an Itinerate Missionary for all of Northern Wisconsin, then meaning the region around the Fox River valley, where he founded over a dozen churches.[8]

By 1851 the Southport Presbyterian church had had seven ministers in its twelve years of existence since the last one had been there four years, and the church had a membership of one hundred and seventy, it seemed at last to be well established.[9]

Pike Grove

About four miles west of Southport was a small settlement

4. Report given at the convention in Racine, February 9, 1841, in Home Missionary, July, 1841.
5. Peet, to A.H.M.S., June 25, 1841.
6. Peet, to A.H.M.S., October 26, 1842.
7. Peet, History, p. 126.
8. Dexter, "The Missionary Influence in the Settlement in Wisconsin", p.
9. Peet, History, p. 126.

called Pike Grove where a church was organized March 15, 1840 by Rev. Peet. Rev. O. F. Curtis became the minister and the following month held a revival at which about forty were converted.[10] In 1841 Southport and Pike Grove shared Rev. J. A. Parsons, and the following winter Peet reported that another revival had been held, in which twenty five or thirty were converted, beginning when they had no minister.[11]

In December, 1842, Rev. Peet had to go to Pike Grove to settle trouble. Rev. Moses Ordway, who was then preaching there, was a rigid disciplinarian and had the most active deacon under discipline.[12]

In 1843 Pike Grove lost its minister due to the death of Rev. D. S. Sherman,[13] and in 1844 they shared Rev. Barlow with Mount Pleasant.[14] Pike Grove seemed to be one of the smaller places which were watched carefully by the General Agent but found it difficult to grow very rapidly.

Racine

The very first missionary, sent by the American Home Missionary Society to settle in Wisconsin, was Rev. Cyrus Nichols who came to Racine in August, 1836. He did not try to organize a church at once, due as he said to a "lack of persons to take a stand for God." for he found only ten or twelve Presbyterian or Congregational professors there. From thirty to fifty attended his meetings however.[15]

10. Lemuel Hall, to A.H.M.S., April 1, 1840.
11. Report given at the Convention in Racine, February 9, 1841, in Home Missionary, July, 1841.
12. Peet, to A.H.M.S., December 30, 1842.
13. Peet, to A.H.M.S., December 23, 1843.
14. Peet, History, p. 55.
15. C.Nichols, to A.H.M.S.,Home Missionary,X, 142, January, 1838.

Rev. Nichols was born in Reading, Massachuesetts in 1799, was a graduate of William's College, and studied theology at Auburn, New York. He preached at both Kenosha and Racine until he was called to Prairieville in 1839 and for forty years he served as a missionary in the state.[16]

Because he was able to earn his own living by cultivating eleven acres of ground,[17] and received some support from his own church, Rev. Nichols did not need to ask support of the Missionary Society, and we learn of him not from quarterly reports but occasional letters published in the Home Missionary.

He said he found "many opposers of religion in this infant town, as may be seen by their riding, hunting, shooting, and attending to their ordinary business on the Sabbath; yet I am assured they are improving in these respects."[18]

Rev. Nichols was constantly being asked to preach at various places from thirty to three hundred miles away, and declared that he needed "help more than the tongue can describe".[19]

In his religious program, Nichols reported that he had about thirty in his Sabbath School and he had a good library. The children were mostly from Methodist families, and their parents seemed to have little interest in the School or Church.[20]

Rev. Nichols found that land troubles occupied the people in this region to the exclusion of very much interest in religion.

16. Thomas S. Johnson, "Moses Ordway, Pioneer Presbyterian Missionary," Wisconsin Magazine of History, II, 270.
17.
18. C. Nichols, to A.H.M.S., Home Missionary IX, 181, February, 1837.
19. C. Nichols, to A.H.M.S., Home Missionary X, 143, January, 138..
20. C. Nichols, to A.H.M.S., Home Missionary XI, 130, October, '38..

In 1838, he says the people had hoped for a little time after the pre-emption bill to "procure the means to pay for their lands. Nothing could have taken them more by supprise than the advertisement for the sale of this so recently settled portion of the territory." Very few, even of the wealthy were ready for it, and those who spent all they had in making small improvements and providing food and shelter for themselves, now found they would be left to the mercy of the speculator. Nichols said he was afraid most of the people would borrow at a high rate of interest, and then eventually would have to give up the lands. The excitement was high and universal; and the effect was such that instead of the people asking "What shall I do to be saved?", they would say "How shall I procure my land? my home? provide for my family?"[21]

By April 1839, Rev. Nichols was more optimistic about the religious life of his people for he said: "The interest on the subject of religion has evidently been on the increase for several months past." He is the only minister besides Rev. Kent to mention that he had a singing school, as well as an excellent day school.[22]

Mount Pleasant

In February 1837, Rev. Nichols mentioned the small settlement of Mount Pleasant in a grove about seven miles west of Racine. "It has long been an Indian trading post," he said, "and a considerable number of the red men still reside there," although most of them had gone west of the Mississippi River.[23]

21. C. Nichols, to A.H.M.S., Home Missionary XI, 130, October, '38.
22. C. Nichols, to A.H.M.S., Home Missionary XI, 272, April, 1839.
23. C. Nichols, to A.H.M.S., Home Missionary IX, 181, February, 1837.

Four years later Rev. J. U. Parsons of Pike Grove reported the installation of a new minister and revival at Mount Pleasant. In December 1840, he was called to be on an ecclesiastical council with Rev. Curtis of Prairieville, and Rev. Sherman of Troy, and delegates from their churches, to ordain and install a Mr. Macpherson to the ministry. The council was the first body of the kind to be constituted in the Territory.[24]

Parsons described Mount Pleasant as a beautiful farming township lying west of Racine, where a little more than a year before, several families had come in from Sturbridge, Massachusetts, and others from England and Ireland. Among the latter group was the pastor elect who had lived in England.[25]

The Sturbridge families set up religious worship, and began a Temperance society which at the time of the ordination had one hundred and fifty in it--almost the whole settlement. It had succeeded in closing one retailing tavern, and banished intoxicating drink from that part of the town.[26] In the spring of 1840 a Congregation Church of seven members had been organized.[27]

Now at Ordination and Installation services, held in a large school-house, just finished with desks in a New England style, Rev. Parsons said of it that:

"The sisters especially had been pleading in their closets and in the female prayer meetings for a blessing." There was to be preaching the evening of the ordination, but previous to it a

24. Parsons, to A.H.M.S., Home Missionary XIV, 6, May, 1841.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.

young man, the only son of the pastor was "hopefully brought to repentance". At the close of the meeting "almost all the impenitene" expressed "anxiety for their salvation". Among them was a man fifty-six years old, the former keeper of the tavern, and a pioneer of the settlement. "It was now evident that God was in the midst of us" said Parsons. Therefore he with Rev. Curtis and the new minister continued for more than a week preaching each evening and occasionally in the day time. The meetings were well attended and the result was that nearly all in the settlement were "brought, as we hope, to the fold of Christ. Many a household altar which had been broken down was repaired and many new ones erected.[28]

One mother had come from Massachusetts with an "impenitant husband" and nine children. The four above ten years old and her husband were now converted. She said: "My friends tried to dissuade me from coming and taking so large a family away from religiour privileges; but I told them that God could spread a table for me in the wilderness. But I little expected it would be so soon or so wonderful."[29] Rev. Parsons considered this an example of the beneficial results of families associating together to carry religious institutions with them to the west.[30]

Other places in this region where there were Congregational or Presbyterian churches and preaching were Pleasant Prairie, eighteen miles west of South Port, Bristol six miles west of it,[31] and Prairieville, now Waukesha. Of these the last named was the most important.

28. Parsons, to A.H.M.S., Home Missionary XIV, 6, May, 1841.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Peet to A.H.M.S., March 8, 1844.

Prairieville

Rev. Nichols went from Racine to Prairieville on May 1, 1839 and stayed there one year, succeeding Rev. Ordway.

On April 10, 1840 Rev. Peet wrote that he had just attended a special meeting at Prairie village, which was the same as prairieville. The "meeting" lasted five days and he had to do all the preaching, but he said there were "forty clear cases of conversation". "There is a glorious work there, still, solemn, deep--no noise and no opposition", wrote Peet. "O how easily God can do the work when he takes it into his own hand."[33]

In December, 1842, Rev. Baker of Lisbon said there were two churches in Prairieville, both of which had ministers who were aided by the Society. The Congregational with a membership of one hundred thirty to one hundred forty members be considered large enough to support itself. It had a church finished and clear of debt, and the farmers around were prosperous and had their land paid for. The other church was in the township of Prairieville about four miles away and received one hundred and fifty and annual aid from the Society.[34]

32. Thomas S. Johnson, op. cit., 270.
33. Peet, to A.H.M.S., April 10, 1840.
34. Baker, to A.H.M.S., December, 1842.

Chapter IX

Lisbon and Vicinity

Located eighteen miles west of Milwaukee and eight miles north of Prairievile (Waukesha), Lisbon received a minister of its own on August 14, 1841, in the person of Rev. Spencer Baker from New York. Taking Rev. Peet's advice he chose Lisbon and Summit fourteen miles west, as his places of preaching.[1]

The Congregational Church, which had already been organized at Lisbon, contained twenty-four members, and the only other religiour organization in town was a class of seven or eight Methodists.[2] Rev. Baker used the regular system of having Sabbath School, a Bible class, weekly prayer meetings, andmonthly concerts. One year after he had gone there Baker reported that his people had built two schoolhouses, which were also used for meetings.[3]

In the first year he was at Lisbon, the population increased one-third, or about thirty families settled within four miles of the place of worship, and Warren and Pewaukie increased in nearly the same proportion. Baker said Christians settled as near these centers as they could so as to be able to attend services.[4]

According to Baker's explanation, the people in the churches of Lisbon, Pewaukie, and Warren were on the "Carroll Reserve", a grant by the Territorial government of a strip of land from Lake Michigan to Rock River, ten miles wide, the alternate sections being appropriated for the construction of a canal through the land grant;

1. Spencer Baker, to A.H.M.S., December 5, 1841.
2. Ibid.
3. Spencer Baker, to A.H.M.S., August 22, 1842.
4. Ibid.

"these lands were sold at twenty shillings per acre on a credit of seven to ten years, and were settled by those who had no money to pay down, and were therefore unable to do much to support a church."[5]

Shortly before his report in December 1842, Rev. Baker, with the help of Rev. H. Kellogg, had conducted an eighteen day meeting which resulted in about sixteen conversions. "In three instances", he said, "whole families were the subjects of converting grace." Episcopalians, Catholics, or "Papists", and Lutherans would not attend or allow their children to,[6] showing the tendency of these three churches to stand aloof from the Protestant Evangelical ones.

Summit

According to Baker's plan, one-half of his time was to go to Summit, where Rev. Peet assisted him in October 1844, in organizing a church of eight members. The meetings were attended by a respectable number, some from Rock river, ten miles away and very slowly the membership grew.[7] On March 15, 1842, Baker reported that two had been added to the church by letter and two by profession of faith. Also in March they were beginning Sabbath School.[8]

In his visiting, Rev. Baker found many who had been members of the church at the east but had not "professed Christ here". He succeeded in getting many of them to come to meetings, and hoped joining the church would be the next step.[9] Shortly after

5. Baker, to A.H.M.S., December, 1842.
6. Baker, to A.H.M.S., December, 1842.
7. Baker, to A.H.M.S., December 5, 1841.
8. Baker, to A.H.M.S., March 15, 1842.
9. Ibid.

he went to Summit, two Episcopalian ministers began "operations" there and told the people they preached for nothing; as a result only twenty dollars were raised for Baker's support, a thing which made him indict the community as "the most indifferent one" he had seen "as respects religion or morals".[10]

Warren

In May 1842, Rev. Baker preached half way between Lisbon and Summit, a distance of seven miles at the town of Warren on Bark river. He thought the prospect so much better for doing good here than at Summit, that he decided to spend a part of his time there instead and this he could do with-out neglecting his duty, as Summit could be supplied anyway.[11]

Pewaukie

June 16, 1841 Rev. Peet visited Pewaukie, a settlement three miles west of Lisbon, and reported a total church membership of twenty four. They could raise two hundred dollars for a minister and wanted one very much.[12]

In December, 1841, Rev. Baker wrote to the Society that he preached at Pewaukie in the evening of the same day he preached at Lisbon.[13]

Baker was glad that in his territory there were churches for he frequently heard inquiries such as, "What kind of a society have you? Have you a church and a minister?" Here the emigrants were met with a religious influence, he said, a situation just developed in the east two years, and one not yet existing through-

10. Baker, to A.H.M.S., August 22, 1842.
11. Baker, to A.H.M.S., August 22, 1842.
12. Peet, to A.H.M.S., June 25, 1841.
13. Baker, to A.H.M.S., December 5, 1841.

out the territory.[14]

In December 1842 when the eighteen day meeting closed at Lisbon, another protracted one was begun at Pewaukie. Baker reported that many who had been church members in the East were here brought to profess their faith again; "they confessed their backslidings and returned to God and to duty." Two heads of families were converted, began to attend prayer meetings, and erected family altars; eleven were added to the church.[15]

The Pewaukie church invited Baker to preach a part of the time statedly for them and he accepted but it kept him very busy. Commenting on this he said: "I am in labors night and day from house to house, and in my study."[16] Other denominations caused him more worry than was then usual.

"Catholics, Lutherans, and Episcopalians are on three sides of us and constitute a very formidable barrier to the rapid progress of work," he said. "What is to be done for this great valley? Portions of it are rapidly falling into the hands of Catholics; they are now planting their colonies and carrying out a great work for themselves. Why cannot Christians at the East colonize and take the ground in advance and intercept the power of the beast."[17]

Rev. Baker left his three charges of Lisbon, Pewaukie, and Warren in May 1843, and Rev. Lewis Bridgemann took his place. The three town agreed to raise two hundred dollars for his salary

14. Baker, to A.H.M.S., December, 5, 1841.
15. Baker, to A.H.M.S., December, 1842.
16. Baker, to A.H.M.S., December, 1842.
17. Ibid.

and asked two hundred dollars of the American Home Missionary Society.[18]

Rev. Bridgemann thought that Pewaukie and Lisbon alone should have a missionary, and Warren and its vicinity another, but since there was no minister to take the extra charge, he divided his time between them.[19]

Several Scotch families, members of the Presbyterian church had moved in around Warren and the region was settling very fast. Bridgemann thought that two new churches should be formed to which the Scotch would be nearer; one four miles from Warren and one seven, both of which places were centers of population as mills were located there.[20]

Oconomowoc

The first mention of Oconomowoc was made by Rev. Spencer Baker in December, 1841, who said it was then his custom on Sabbath evening to go to Oconomowoc, which was three and one-half miles from Lisbon, at the junction of two of nine or more lakes in succession. There were about thirteen dwellings besides mills and shops and no preaching except when Baker went there. He said there were two "Churchmen" (meaning Episcopalians", two Baptists, one Methodist and several who had been members of the Presbyterian church before they came here.[21]

In November 1846, Rev. John P. Foster, who had come in March, 1844,[22] reported that he was to stay to preach another year at

18. Lisbon, to A.H.M.S., November 22, 1843.
19. Bridgemann, to A.H.M.S., September 20, 1844, Pewaukie--Post Office at Prairieville.
20. Ibid.
21. Baker, to A.H.M.S., December 5, 1841.
22. Peet, to A.H.M.S., March 27, 1844.

Oconomowoc and Summit, so evidently Summit must have joined with Oconomowoc some time after Baker chose to leave it out in favor of Warren. At Warren, Foster seemed to be bothered by other denominations as Baker had been at Pewaukie. Near Oconomowoc he said he had to give up for the winter an encouraging field of labor in the Northern part of the township because of the poor roads. "This costs many a tear there", he said, "but being unable to own a horse, or to keep one if owned, . . . my tours are all those of the pedistrian."[23]

Foster had a part in a Lyceum at Oconomowoc in which he said he tried to present to the young men connected with it "certain truths, religious, moral, scientific, and literary, and I find that by so doing, their attention to Sabbath privileges is better recieved." He also spoke whenever he could for Temperance and Anti-Slavery.[24] Truly the Missionaries in this region filled the need and desire of the people for a church, and influenced the social movements of the day.

23. John P. Foster, to A.H.M.S., November 6, 1846.
24. Ibid.

Chapter X

Rev. Moses Ordway

One of the most colorful figures in the whole history of the churches in Wisconsin and the one who dominated the region of Beaver Dam for this period, Rev. Moses Ordway. We have already traced his activities until he helped organize the Green Bay church in 1837, and then he seemed to drop from sight. In 1841, Rev. Peet said that Ordway had been living on his farm near Prairieville for four years and was reputed to be very wealthy. At the time of his writing the church at Pike Grove had called Ordway and Peet believed he was doing a good work there. Rev. Ordway was very bitter against the Methodists and Baptists and wanted to indoctrinate his people. He argued that a man was either a Calvinist or a Universalist, and contended for the doctrines of divine sovereignty, election, and infant baptism. He tried to use something of the system of revival he had used in Michigan where he made the church confess everything, searching and dragging out all its sins.[1] As has already been noted Ordway was a dicip-linarian and Rev. Peet had to intervene at Pike Grove in December 1842, to save the most active deacon.[2]

At Waukesha Ordway said he preached for two years for nothing and when they got Rev. Nichols he paid fifty dollars toward his salary, and preached a year at West Troy for nothing.[3]

At Beaver Dam he preached for more than three years without a salary and built them a house of worship in April 1844 with very little help.

1. Peet, to A.H.M.S., August 18, 1841.
2. See page (79) Peet, to A.H.M.S., December 30, 1842.
3. Thomas S. Johnson, "Moses Ordway, Pioneer Presbyterian Mission-ary", Wisconsin Magazine of History, II, 270.
4. Ibid., p. 272.

Dexter says that though Beaver Dam had no house to meet in; "Thomas Mackie had logs which he cut and drew to the site of the proposed church, and under the inspiration of Moses Ordway's leadership the people gathered and fell to work. Beginning on Monday they hewed the logs, framed the building, errected it, put in floors, doors, windows, and pews, and had their house of worship ready for use on the Sunday following."[5]

When in 1845 they engaged Rev. Alexander Montgomery at Beaver Dam, Ordway says he paid fifty dollars for his support and went to Fountain Prairie fifteen miles west to form a church.[6] He also organized churches at Horicon, Juneau, Fox Lake, Lake Emily, Oxford, eighteen miles north of Portage, and Columbus.[7]

Ordway recognized that he was criticized for being wealthy for he said: "If some of my ministerial friends think I have been a very worldly minister, doing little for the Lord and much for myself, there is some truth in this for I have done a large amount of manual labor, but I have made it all contribute to the glory of God and the up-building of his church."[8] His life in Beaver Dam shows he practical bent in full. When he went there the settlement had just begun for he says: "it was a dense forest--no houses, no mills, no roads and no fences" and only a few scattered people. Ordway helped to clean the streets and plot the lots; he surveyed, and located, all the roads in and out of Beaver Dam as they now run to Watertown, Waupun, Columbus, Fox Lake, Lowell, Horicon, and Fall River." When the people needed a gristmill he built one,

5. Dexter, "The Missionary Influence in the Settlement of Wisconsin", p. 27.
6. T. S. Johnson, op.cit., 270.
7. Ibid, 272.
8. T. S. Johnson, op. cit., 271.

and when they had trouble with the sawmill he bought and superintended it.[9]

Because of this work, however Ordway was able to say that about two-thirds of the time he had received nothing from the new and young churches, and besides supporting his family he gave liberally to other ministers.[10] "I have . . . never sought for an easy place where they could pay a large salary", said Ordway, "but . . . have . . . for a miserable place where no harm could be done . . . Where the people were so poor, stupid, or heartless that they would not ask a minister to preach to them, and would take pains to say they would not be able to pay, as a gentle hint for you to let them alone. In such a place I delighted to put my foot."[11]

His methods of preaching were calculated to make an effect even on such places, as to this he says: "I never preached to them the love of Christ to harden them for a long siege but began with St. Paul's doctrines, and very soon there would be a new face on things. As soon as they were awake and God began to increase them, and they began to want to pay me, I would open the door for some anxious minister, who was ready for work, and I would go to another place."[12]

T. S. Johnson says he was an "ernest and fearless preacher of righteousness, unfolding the gospel plan of salvation with great clearness and power." He thought the older settlers would

9. T. S. Johnson, op. cit., 271.
10. Ibid. p. 270.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid, p. 271.

never forget his pungent sermons. Another writer says: "He was one of the most vigorous, original and disinterested of all the early missionaries of Wisconsin, but, on account of his downrightness and his strong prejudices, he was always opulent in critic's among his brethren."[14] And a third tells us that Ordway was a tower of strength in his day, that his opinions and sayings were prized, and we find him taking a part in all Conventions, and im many revivals and church organizations.[15]

14. Jos. Schafer, "Congregational Beginnings in Wisconsin", p. 14.
15. John E. Chapin, "Sketch of Cutting Marsh", Wisconsin Historical Collections, XV, 34.

Chapter XI

Walworth County

The sixth missionary to come to Wisconsin, Rev. Lemuel Hall, began work in Walworth County forty five miles west of Racine, in September, 1838.[1] He visited every part of the county to ascertain where churches could be gathered with the most hope of permanency.[2] He decided that Geneva at the outlet of "Bigfoot" Lake had the most favorable prospects of growing and accordingly settled there.[3] At first they had only a room, occupied by a family, in which to meet, but nevertheless on April 5, 1839, Hall organized a Presbyterian church of twelve members. The three elders who were chosen were ordained the following day, when the first Comminion services ever enjoyed in Walworth county was held.[4]

According to instructions Hall held weekly prayer meetings and a Monthly Concert, established a Sabbath School, with one of the elders as Superintendent, and a Bible School, which he secured a Baptist lawyer to teach.[5] By November, 1839, a schoolhouse was finished except for the plastering and meetings were held in it with greater comfort and a larger attendance.[6] Six new members were taken in the first year and others had sent for their letters so they could come in soon.[7] In the summer of 1841 six members built a house of worship, and Hall thought that more interest was

1. Lemuel Hall, to A.H.M.S., Home Missionary, XI, 175, December, 1838.
2. L. Hall, to A.H.M.S., November 14, 1839.
3. L. Hall, to A.H.M.S., February 27, 1839.
4. L. Hall, to A.H.M.S., June 2, 1839.
5. L. Hall, to A.H.M.S., April 1, 1840.
6. L. Hall, to A.H.M.S., November 14, 1839.
7. L. Hall, to A.H.M.S., April 1, 1840.

shown now that they were alone, for until then they had been meeting with the Baptists and Methodists. One member said: "We want to worship God in it every Sabbath, and we want our children there, for we have given them in covenant to God." The average attendance at church services that summer was reported as one hundred and twenty to one hundred and fifty, and the Baptists nearby were said to have about the same.[8]

In April 1840 Rev. Hall had to get a small frame house built to protect the health of his family for he had been living in a poor log house, and his wife had to have a warm house because she was a semi invalid.[9] The house was to be a story and a half high and by November one-half of it was finished and his family had moved in. Hall thought that the people in the East did not realize that a minister found no house to be rented when he came to this section of the country, and none built but log cabins; furthermore the people were neither so able or so willing to help him as they were in the East.[10]

Rev. Hall of course was a supporter of the temperance movement, and he was quite proud of one of his elders, who owned the mills on the outlet of the lake who refused to grind grain for distillations, and won a lawsuit on the subject.[11] Rev. Peet tells us that some illustrious temperance battles were fought here in the early days when the temperance men refused to grind grain for the distillers and rumsellers.[12]

8. Hall, to A.H.M.S., July 29, 1841.
9. Hall, to A.H.M.S., April 1, 1840.
10. Hall, to A.H.M.S., November 10, 1840.
11. Hall, to A.H.M.S., August 3, 1841.
12. Peet, History of Churches, p. 121.

Although he thought it quite easy to organize a church where there were enough members, Rev. Hall considered that the prospective members should have some previous training first.[13] In this respect a Bible class was very useful to instruct the people in the doctrines and institutions of the Bible. If he gave this training, Hall said that though his church members were surrounded by almost every species of error, he did not fear that they would embrace any of the heretical opinions. "It is an observable fact," said Hall, "that those who have declined from faith at the west, and become apostate, or joined other denominations were such as had not been well instructed in the doctrines of the Bible, . . . and of course did not understand what they professed to believe."[14]

In his report for August, 1844, Rev. Hall expanded on his views of training in religion. Sometimes, he said, he used the time for a sermon to examine or prove a doctrine or truth in the manner of the Bible, class, or he would take an Epistle and explain it as thoroughly as he was able. If a congregation had an exercise in the scriptures once a week in which individually they had to give their own views of a doctrine or the meaning of a passage of scripture, they would have the advantage over such as pursue the usual course of receiving instructions chiefly from sermons. "I find that people generally are averse to mental effort", said Hall, "and it is much more pleasant to set as judges of anothers investigation or ingenuity that to apply themselves to the work. Is it not a fact that many intelligent people attend preaching regularly for a series of years and yet acquire but little theological knowledge? A popular address may be well

13. Hall, to A.H.M.S., November 14, 1839.
14. Hall, to A.H.M.S., September 9, 1842.

adapted to excite people to act, but it is doubtful whether it is best fitted to induce them to think and investigate."[15]

Soon after he settled at Geneva, Hall began spending one-half of his time at the Virginia settlement, twenty five miles south in McHenry County Illinois.[16] Finally in September 1840, they asked him to spend all of his time there, and as there was no other minister of the Presbyterian or Congregational order in the county, he accepted.[17] From June 1841 to June 1843 Rev. L. Rogers took his place at Geneva, and in October 1843 Rev. Charles R. French was called.[18] Rev. Rogers seemed to have little to report but Rev. French was very much concerned with the Sabbath School situation and the desecration of the Sabbath.

When he came to Geneva, Rev. French found that the Sabbath School had only a dozen in it and was very dull, due partly to a lack of the realization of its importance and partly to the lack of a library for it did not have a supply of either Bibles or hymn books. French led a campaign to remedy both faults, and succeeded in increasing the school to forty, and in getting ten dollars toward a library, which he sent to the American Sunday School Union at once to purchase what he could.[19]

Rev. Hall had regretted that the Sabbath was violated by hunting and fishing,[20] and Rev. French echoed his thought, "that you may get some idea of the extent of its desecration among us",

15. Hall, to A.H.M.S., August 9, 1844.
16. Hall, to A.H.M.S., April 1, 1840.
17. Hall, to A.H.M.S., November, 1840.
18. Peet, History of Churches, p. 121.
19. Chas. R. French, to A.H.M.S., January 9, 1844.
20. L. Hall, to A.H.M.S., August 4, 1840.

he said, "I will state that in going or returning from worship, it's no uncommon thing to pass teams with loads of pork or grain on their way to market, or to see persons on the lake fishing, in one direction and hear the report of a hunter's gun in another." Nevertheless he realized that the violations were less there than farther west in the mining region.[21]

Delavan

West of Geneva in the center Walworth County were settlements around what is now Darien or Turtle Prairie, Delavan and Elkhorn. Rev. Peet in his work as Agent pioneered in this field and gave the first sermon by a Presbyterian in July 1841.[22] In August he organized two churches, a Congregational one at Delavan, and a Presbyterian at Elkhorn, with ten members each.[23] Rev. Amnon Gaston from Illinois was called to be pastor at Delavan at a salary of four hundred dollars a year. In a request for one hundred and fifty dollars aid from the society, the church reported that the region was fast filling up with enterprising people, and they wanted to keep the institutions of the gospel apace with the rising population.[24]

In his approval of this request, Rev. Peet said that Rev. Gaston had settled in a small log house with his wife and two children and was much liked by the people. "He is a Congregationalist of the moderate stamp, and studies the things that make for peace. I hope you will grant the full amount as he cannot stay

21. C. R. French, to A.H.M.S., March , 1844.
22. Peet, to A.H.M.S., July 15, 1841.
23. Peet, to A.H.M.S., November 26, 1841.
24. Chauncey Parsons and Hiram Humphrey, Deacons, to A.H.M.S., October 1, 1841.

there with less."[25]

Spring Prairie

In his itinerating journeys in 1838, Rev. Lemuel Hall found a settlement called Spring Prairie, seven miles north of Geneva, which he expected to make a place of preaching. He said a young man there had gathered and sustained a Sabbath School there, and also held meetings at which he read sermons to them.[27] A few months later Hall said he preached there frequently and although it was a fine settlement there were few professors there of any denomination. At first he had held his meetings in the house of a Methodist professor but now that he had moved, he had to go other places in the vicinity.[28]

By November 1840, a church which had been formed at Spring Prairie was seeking aid of the Society to support a minister. The settlement, begun four years before, then numbered six hundred, and, the writer said,"infidelity open and undisguised is prevalent. It is found principally among those who are migratory in their habits, and who will probably remove if a Gospel influence is permanently established."[29] Sugar Creek Prairie, eight miles west of Spring Prairie was reported to be similar in moral condition, and desirous of joining Spring Prairie in supporting a minister.[30]

In July, 1841, Rev. Peet reported that Rev. Nichols resided at Spring Prairie, and also preached at Gardner's Prairie, six miles East and Sugar Creek Prairie eight miles west on the road to Racine.[31]

27. L. Hall, to A.H.M.S., Home Missionary, XI, 176, December, 1838.
28. L. Hall, to A.H.M.S., February 28, 1839.
29. Application of Church in Spring Prairie for Aid. to A.H.M.S. in Home Missionary, XIII, 152, November, 1840.
30. Ibid.
31. Peet, to A.H.M.S., July 15, 1841.

Meachanis Settlement and East Troy

Six miles north of Spring Prairie lay Meachanis settlement, where by February 1839, Rev. Lamuel Hall was preaching every fourth Sunday. (In the evening of the same day he preached at Troy, five miles north east) there he found ten or twelve families from Hadley, Massachusetts, who all attended the meetings and appeared anxious to enjoy the "means of grace".[32]

Meachanis Settlement came to be called Troy, or West Troy to distinguish it from East Troy, five miles east of it. Those at West Troy were Congregationalists while those at East Troy were Presbyterian and they did not want to form one church.[33] Hence at Meachanis Settlement or West Troy, Rev. Hall formed a Congregational church in August, 1839, of nine members, three men and six women. The church adopted a covenant requiring total abstinence from all intoxicating liquor. Rev. Hall had thought it wise to insist upon this in each of the three churches he had organized.[34] After its formation Rev. Ordway preached there a season, holding a revival which was said to have strengthened the church.

At East Troy on June 22, 1839, Rev. Peet assisted Rev. Hall in organizing a church of twelve members, five men and seven women. It would seem that the women were the most religious of the two sexes. On sacramental occasions the two churches met together.[35]

Although the two churches were of different denominations, when Rev. D. A. Sherman came in 1840, he preached alternately at

32. L. Hall, to A.H.M.S., February 27, 1839.
33. Hall, to A.H.M.S., June, 1839.
34. Hall, to A.H.M.S., November 14, 1839.
35. Ibid.

the two places. At a "female boarding school" in East Troy, kept by Mrs. Vail, there had been a revival in the winter of 1839-40, which included all the scholars in the school andsome persons in the neighborhood.[36] In 1842, Rev. Baker of Lisbon went to Troy to assist Rev. Sherman in another revival, in which eight or ten were converted.[37] In November, 1842, Rev. C. E. Rosenkrans located at Troy, spending one fourth of his time at Sugar Creek Prairie,[38] and stayed there until 1849, during which time the church became well established and no longer an object of missionary activity.[39]

Gardner's Prairie

In the latter part of February 1842, a protracted meeting was begun at Gardner's Prairie by the Baptists in which they invited Rev. Cyrus Nichols to take part and also a Methodist minister. As Nichols describes it, it seems to have been one of the most powerful revivals of the day. He says: "The brethren and sisters were humbled before God. Confessions were spontaneous . . . . No flaming appeals were made to the impenitent to bring them to the anxious seats, and singing was little resorted to for that purpose. Kind invitations and silent prayer, under the influence of the Holy Ghost accomplished the object."[40] Rev. Nichols here speaks of the "anxious seat" which was a seat in the front of the room used quite commonly in Presbyterian and Congregational revivals for those who expressed anxiety for their souls and wanted to be

36. D.A. Sherman, to A.H.M.S., in Home Missionary, XIII, 153, November, 1840.
37. Spencer Baker, to A.H.M.S., March 15, 1842.
38. Peet, to A.H.M.S., December 20, 1842.
39. Peet, History of Churches, 111.
40. C. Nichols, to A.H.M.S., Home Missionary XV, 42, June, 1842.

converted. Quite commonly also in this early period the missionaries of different denominations worked together as has been noted in various places.

The early settlers often endured great hardships to attend religious services and so this meeting. Although a February thaw had set in so that the snow was melted and there was much water and mud, still the teams came in "loaded with anxious souls" in the day and evening from all quarters. The house was only nineteen feet square, and most of the time it was stuffed full from six to eight hours a day. The seats were mostly composed of single slabs, which couldn't have been very comfortable.[41]

41. C. Nichols, to A.H.M.S., Home Missionary XV, 42, June, 1842.

Chapter XII

Beloit, Janesville and Madison

The original settlement at Beloit on the Rock River adjacent to Illinois was formed by twelve families from Colebrook, New Hampshire, and six from Bedford. Without the "brightening and elevating influences" of a church and a college, they feared they would degenerate, their children would become ignorant, and lose their spirituality and moral life. Therefore from the beginning they planned for these two institutions.[1]

They had a deacon in their midst to look after a church, and their first meetings which the prairie people came in "ox-wagons" to attend, were held in a kitchen. The church was organized December 30, 1838 by Rev. Wm. A. Adams who served as their pastor until October 1840, when they started a church building they got their shingles from Racine on credit hauling them across the country by oxpower. "The church they built was the most stately of the three Congregational churches in Wisconsin in 1844."[2]

One of Rev. Adams most interesting experiences at Beloit was a protracted meeting in the summer of 1840 in which about fifty were converted, a number of them being heads of families so that nine new family altars were erected in one week. There were also some youth and two old men. Of these one had been a sea-captain and remarked that he had seen "so much bickering and contention among Christians in our own and in foreign countries, and

1. Henry M. Whitney, "American Settlement of Beloit", Wisconsin Historical Proceedings, 1898, p. 134.
2. Peet, History of Churches, 98.
3. Whitney, Wisconsin Historical Proceedings, 1898, 134.

so much priestcraft, that he had determined to have nothing to do with religion. But he found that he was off upon a wide sea, without compass or chart that his attention had recently been called to the subject, and he trusted he had found peace in believing."[4]

Rev. Dexter Clary served as pastor of the Congregational church at Beloit from 1840 to 1850, at which time there were two hundred and seven members in the church, and it was safely past the precarious beginning stage.[5]

Janesville

At Janesville, fourteen miles north of Beloit, little was done until Rev. C. H. A. Bulkley arrived in August, 1844. He began at oncy by organizing a weekly prayer meeting made up of all denominations, as there were not enough members of any particular denomination to sustain one alone. Before he formed a Bible Class, he gave a week's notice of it, and stated that an opportunity would be given "for the investigation of the truth of the Bible and the evidences of its authenticity." Some young infidels and universalists thought they would come to his meeting and take advantage of his offer. Rev. Bulkley spoiled their fun by saying he meant to form a class of those who should give their names and who alone would have the privilege of asking questions. He got sixteen names then and fourteen more in the nest two meetings including Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists, Campbellites, and Universalists but no infidels. The bars of

4. Rev. William M. Adams, to A.H.M.S., in Home Missionary, XIII, 78, August, 1840.
5. Peet, History of Churches, 98.

denominationalism were indeed lowered on the frontier.[6]

Rev. Buclkley was well grounded in doctrine and talked and lived it to his people. He thought "more souls should be inquiring the way of salvation", and he hoped to see the "spirit of the Lord descend upon them like a flood." "The adversary of evil," he said, "had soared among them with a lion-mouth", and one of his strongholds had "come up in the shape of a nine-pin alley which is frequented day and night, by young and old."[7]

One of the ever present problems for the pioneer missionary was the building of a church. Of his efforts along this line, Rev. Bulkley in February 1845, said: "Our church building is not completed nor sufficiently warmed as to exclude the pierces of prairie winds and render it comfortable for worship"; yet in spite of this they had sixty or seventy and sometimes one hundred attending services, a number which agreeably surprised Rev. Peet when he addressed it, said Bulkley.[8]

Madison

In Madison the first church was of the Dutch Reform denomination, which was organized with the understanding that the form might be changed when a majority of the members desired. At the end of one year, in June, 1840, the church became Congregational and joined the Convention.[9]

A year later the church invited Rev. J. M. Clark, a Presbyterian minister, to be its pastor. When he came he found a church of nine members, only two of them men. However the average

6. C. H. A. Bulkley, to A.H.M.S., February 4, 1845.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Peet, History of Churches, 131.

attendance was reported as seventy-five and more when the legislature was in session. The population of the village of Madison was then only two hundred and a large church could not be expected. [10]

Rev. Clark held meetings in a private house, a barn, and a schoolhouse, shifting as was necessary. It seemed impossible to build a church at once but the use of a reem in the Capitol, now nearly completed, had been promised. At the end of his first summer Rev. Clark judged that: "This is generally a church-going people, and there is by no means an unusual degree of intemperance, sabbath-breaking, and profanity among us." However he thought political excitement and animosity were cherished to an unhappy extent, and th the exclusion of much more important subjects.[11]

By December of that year Rev. Clark had seen the legislature in session and deplored its effect. He found the town flooded with grog shops, and gambling houses, and he thought the number of professing Christians so small that they were "almost lost among the multitude of the wicked, their influence buried beneath the tide of immorality that has rolled in upon us."[12]

Rev. Clark was appointed as Chaplain of the Legislature that winter for which he received two hundred dollars, and the Governor Doty gave him the use of his own room in the Capitol for services, brought his own family to worship, and contributed liberally to the church.[13] Rev. Peet visited Clark that winter

10. Application of Congregational Church of Madison for Aid, to A.H.M.S., June 24, 1841.
11. J. M. Clark, to A.H.M.S., September 24, 1841.
12. J. M. Clark, to A.H.M.S., December 24, 1841.
13. J. M. Clark, to A.H.M.S., March 24, 1842.

and described him as "amiable in deportment, a pleasant writer, and a persuasive preacher", but some would like a stronger man. He considered it a hard spot to fill as the church was so very weak and the community so careless.[14]

As a sidelight on the literature of the Ministers, at least, we find Clark's request for more books on science and theology, such as The Way of Life by Rev. Hodge, Barne's Notes on Isaiah, Robert Hall's Works, Chalmer's Discourses, Massilon's Bellamy, and Dr. Payson's Sermons.[15]

Rev. Clark left Madison in the summer of 1843 and in October Rev. S. E. Miner accepted his post. The church was still very weak, having twelve members only three of whom were men. Rev. Miner reported that the church would not be willing to elect any one of the men to the office of deacon. "That says enough about them."[16]

In his first year Rev. Miner nearly doubled the membership of his church, and intinerated to nearby settlements as well. One of the stronger settlements of forty families had just come in the last eighteen months from New York and New England; Log houses were springing up, and everywhere the rapid immigration provided a ready topic of conversation.[17]

In 1845 Rev. Miner still found conditions in Madison very discouraging, and the growth of his church was slow. "It seems almost impossible for pure and undefiled religion to flourish in

14. S. Peet, to A.H.M.S., March 31, 1842.
15. J. M. Clark, to A.H.M.S., September 24, 1842.
16. S. E. Miner, to A.H.M.S., January 22, 1844.
17. S. E. Miner, to A.H.M.S., November 6, 1844.

such a pestilential atmosphere as we are compelled to breathe during the legislature", said Miner. "With a population not much exceeding five hundred, and that mostly of a decidedly irreligious character, we are wholly unable to maintain our ground against the corruption that flows in upon us from every quarter, The moral and even the business character of our village is . . . under the . . . legislative influence. We are much in the condition of a newly captured village garrisoned by the enemy with soldiers quartered in every house."[18]

By 1851 the church had a membership of forty, and had built a house of worship.[19] In spite of uphill going it had gradually become established.

18. S. E. Miner, to A.H.M.S., March 4, 1845.
19. S. Peet, History of Churches, p. 131.

Chapter XIII

The Mining Region

Platteville and Vicinity

Aside from Rev. Kent's visits to the mining region during the 1830's the miners heard no Presbyterian or Congregational ministers until the end of the decade in 1839. In that year Rev. Hale and Rev. Kent organized a Presbyterian church of twelve members at Platteville, near the little Platte River, about sixteen miles from the Mississippi. The Methodists had already organized a church and erected a building, the basement of which was used for an Academy. The teacher, Mr. A. M. Dixon, from Jacksonville College, Jacksonville, Illinois, was one of the elders in the infant Presbyterian church.[1]

Mr. Dixon had a strong desire to preach as well as to teach and at a meeting of the Convention in Platteville on March 3, 1842, he ordained as an Evangelist for the mining region. Platteville sought his services until June.[2] However he retained his work in the Academy and by June had from seventy to one hundred and ten pupils of all ages and both sexes.[3]

In June, 1842, Rev. Dixon made his first successful evangelistic efforts and formed his first church. He held a three day meeting at the village of Big Platte, eight miles northwest of Platteville of which he says: "The Holy Ghost fell upon us; the backslider was reclaimed; the hearts of Christians melted together

1. Samuel S. Howe and David Kendall, to A.H.M.S., January 22, 1840.
2. Peet, to A.H.M.S., March 31, 1842.
3. Peet, to A.H.M.S., June 18, 1842.

and the proud heart of the sinner was made to bow to Jesus." He founded a church of fourteen members, and he says,"six others were propounded."[4]

Most of June and July 1842, Dixon preached in Plattebille but having the true evangelistic spirit he also visited various mining settlements. For three days he visited a place called Snake Hollow diggins and preached several times to the miners. "The Spirit of the Lord was with us, and one or two took the anxious seat and declared their conversion before I left," Dixon reported.[5]

Next Rev. Dixon traveled eighteen miles to Fair Play diggings, where he announced his intentions of holding a revival "for the salvation of souls". The few Christians there assured him that any such attempt was hopeless, but he visited about one hundred miners at their cabins, mineral holes, and places of washing mineral dirt, and invited them to come to the meeting that evening. Many came and the second night the church was crowded. Rev. Broadman, who was working with him, also preached, and the miners would not consent to let them go until they promised to come and preach often. Evidently Dixon did not find the miners a "hard and hopeless" as they were reported to be.[6]

The following week they went to the Red Dog diggins. The school house there was too small to hold the people who came so they used the Methodist old campground. Dixpn judged the meeting a great success for he said: "The Holy Ghost fell upon the people;

4. A. M. Dixon, to A.H.M.S., June 19, 1842.
5. A. M. Dixon, to A.H.M.S., September 20, 1842.
6. Ibid.

this was evinced by the falling tear, the deep sigh, and by some coming to the anxious seat and others rising to express their desire to find salvation."[7]

In January, 1843, Rev. Holebrook of Dubuque, Iowa, came to assist Dixon at a revival at Fair Play in which the whole village seemed moved. Fourteen joined the Presbyterian church and probably as many or more the other churches according to Dixon's estimate. Many difficulties accompanied this meeting and Rev. Dixon did not find it easy to make conversions. After preaching in the evening all who would talk about the salvation of the soul were invited to stay and the whole congregation remained. Dixon went through the house talking to each individual. One young man whom he asked to "submit to God", said "No", for he did not like the means; the Bible did not say anything about anxious seats.[8]

Rev. Dixon soon decided to quit the Academy and devote all his time to the interests of the Home Missionary Society[9] for he had said earlier: "I love my mission, I love to tell the simple story of the cross to the miner." The miners he regarded as children of the East, as intelligent and thoughtful as any population anywhere, and their need was greater, for they had no home ties but only the church to restrain and guide them.

A missionary was also needed because the population was migratory. When a prospect was struck in one place they would rush there "like an army of locusts"; soon the excitement there would die down and a prospect would be struck some miles away.

7. A. M. Dixon, to A.H.M.S., September 20, 1842.
8. A. M. Dixon, to A.H.M.S., January 20, 1843.
9. Ibid.
10. A. M. Dixon, to A.H.M.S., September 4, 1842.

This process was continually going on, and said Dixon, "unless the missionary is ready with his boots on, his hat in his hand, and his sermon in his head, the multitude will be without the means of grace, and fall a prey to sin if not finally to Satan."[11]

Not just any missionary would or could fill this need and Dixon cautioned the Society in its choice. "If you have any who will lay off their gloves and go to work (I don't mean secular employment), full of the Holy Ghost, that will preach the cross in such a way as to command attention, send them. If you have any that want to . . . . show exactly how they can split a theological hair, keep them at home . . . . Minds excited all the time in view of a 'big lead' cannot be interested with such preaching, but will go to sleep under it."[12]

Since Rev. Dixon did not stay much in Platteville the church there found in necessary to get another minister, and in January, 1843, Rev. Ebenezer G. Bradford was called. He had left Vermont in 1842 and brought his family to Beloit. Rev. Kent of Galena had sent him north and he was stopped at Platteville. Here the place of worship was a room in the Academy which had broken windows, and a poor stove, green wood for fuel, and rough planks for seats and the parishioners were bankrupt people, who would make pledges for the support of a minister and never redeem them.[13] The idea of becoming their minister was rather repulsive to him and yet he could not resist. He says: "I had come out to the West to do good, and here was a field before me needing cultivation . ... . Here

11. Dixon, to A.H.M.S., March 28, 1843.
12. Dixon, to A.H.M.S., January 20, 1843.
13. E. G. Bradford, to A.H.M.S., March 27, 1843.

were a few struggling as Christians are rarely called upon to do in the Eastern churches. They took their stand as Christians in the face of infidelity and blaspheming, and as Presbyterians in the midst of an overwhelming opposition of Methodism, of the prejudice which Methodism is accustomed to produce against what we believe to be the important truths of our holy religion."[14]

One year later Bradford was able to report a better house of worship, well seated, well lighted, and well warmed; a more respectable congregation; a choir of singers; and serious attention given to the preacher's word. This he called "seed sown, that will one day bear fruit to the Glory of God."[15]

Mineral Point

A Presbyterian church was formed at Mineral Point in the summer of 1839, with fourteen members. No additions were made until in the spring of 1841. Rev. Gallaher, an evangelist, held a revival, after which some united with the Methodists, and twenty six joined tne Presbyterian church. Rev. William M. Adams was called soon after that to be a permanent pastor, and he reported that already some of the twenty six had begun to "walk". A Mormon missionary had visited there and some had become followers of that "delusion", and it was evident the church needed a minister to look after its people. The church was the only Presbyterian one in Iowa County, out of a population of four thousand, and there was no other Presbyterian or Congregational minister within fifty or sixty miles.[16]

14. E. G. Bradford, to A.H.M.S., March 27, 1843.
15. E. G. Bradford, to A.H.M.S., December 8, 1843.
16. William M. Adams, to A.H.M.S., January 3, 1842.

Rev. Adams found difficulties similar to those elsewhere in the mining region. The people were of every shade of character, did not possess kindred feelings, "no could they act together for a common interest."[17] In fact they did not even speak the same language for Adams requested tracts in German, French, Italian, and Danish, as well as English.[18] There was much low vice, gambling, drunkenness, and fighting, and, said Adams, "these things are done by some who have wealth and influence."

In spite of all this, the church, Sabbath School, and Temperance Society grew. Even the funerals "which used to exhibit scenes of disorder and intoxication" came to be conducted with solemnity and propriety.[19] Church attendance varied. When the sleighing was good, some who occasionally attended profaned the Sabbath by riding for pleasure and amusement, said Adams. When the weather was bad, they would consider it an insurmountable obstacle to attendance. However the attendance steadily increased, according to Adams report, and "some men of influence who used seldom to attend are now quite constant."[20]

In March 1842, Rev. Peet wrote that Mineral Point had sustained a great loss in the death of Mr. Adams. He had visited there on a tour and found him well when he went out; when he came back he was told that Rev. Adams had died a week earlier.[21]

Mineral Points second choice was not such a happy one. Rev. Noah Cooke came in 1843 but left again in May 1844 to go to

17. William M. Adams, to A.H.M.S., January 3, 1842.
18. W. M. Adams, to A.H.M.S., Mardh 1, 1842.
19. W. M. Adams, to A.H.M.S., January 3, 1842.
20. W. M. Adams, to A.H.M.S., March 1, 1842.
21. Peet, to A.H.M.S., March 31, 1842.

Michigan. Rev. Peet thought his coming had been a mistake and said Mineral Point now needed a good man.[22]

He was not disappointed when Rev. Zacheriah Eddy arrived from the East in November, 1844. Mr. Eddy reported that he preached his first sermon to a congregation of about sixty, and in two months it sometimes exceeded three hundred, and never fell below two hundred.[23]

He found the community quite free from the evils of sectarianism, there being no Universalists, Campbellites, Mormons, or Unitarians there, His opinions on the Methodists however he expressed fully to the Society, with request that they not be published. He undoubtedly would have made many bitter enemies had he been so undiplomatic as to express himself as forcibly in Mineral Point, as he did in the following burst of condemnation: "The popular Methodist preaching of this country is calculated to make infidels by the wholesale. So much ignorance blended with intolerable self-conceit and affectation--such bombast and grandiloquence--such rabid sectarianism--and such unblushing Jesuitism in management cannot but make the very name of religion . . . a byword among persons of discernment and intelligence. The great prop and handmaiden of Methodism in the Territory is Freemasonry."[24]

About February first, Rev. Eddy began a revival and requested Rev. J. C. Holebrook from Dubuque to help him. Eddy aimed to preach in such a way that "the great doctrines of the gospel,

22. Peet, to A.H.M.S., March 8, 1844.
23. Z. Eddy, to A.H.M.S., January 4, 1845.
24. Ibid.

especially the total depravity of the unrenewed man, the holy and spiritual law of God, the necessity of regeneration, the all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ, the dependence of sinners upon sovereign grace for salvation--were kept before the people."[25]

Eddy soon found his study filled with "anxious sinners". Those who had been drunkards, profane swearers, gamblers, and Sabbath-breakers were among the first subjects of the work. All classes of the community were affected andin three weeks more than forty were taken into the church. Ordinarily the converts were kept longer on probation, but Eddy feared the "proselytizing efforts of another denomination." None however were received without a thorough instruction in a catechetical class. The Westminister Confession of Faith was made the textbook for the cardinal doctrines of the church and the Gospel.[25]

Almost exactly the same conditions prevailed in the other mining towns as in the ones given here. The people were of every nationality, and class of society; they were constantly changing and shifting from place to place. Gambling, swearing, drinking, and fighting were the order of the day. Nevertheless many of the miners had come from good homes, and had had religious training or environment. Having leisure in the evenings they went to the meetings, and being constantly in an excitable state of mind about striking "leads", they were easily impressed and aroused by the evangelistic ministers. No doubt many of them did realize the error of their ways, and certainly the missionaries had an effect on the manners as well as the morals of their communities. They themselves

25. Z. Eddy, to A.H.M.S., January 4, 1845.

endured great hardships to organize churches in these new regions which still exist today.

Conclusion

After the attendance of Rev. Peet and a delegation of ministers from Wisconsin at a Convention in Ohio in 1844, a campaign of mild detraction was begun in the form of letters to the Home Missionary Society by dissatisfied ministers in Ohio and elsewhere. The Society reported these charges to Rev. Peet, the General Agent, in answer to which he wrote an elaborate defense, twenty pages long on large sheets of paper sixteen by ten inches.[1]

This defense is a valuable source from which we may ascertain the prevailing condition of the churches in Wisconsin in 1845. One of the first charges against Wisconsin churches and church leaders was that Oberlinism was too readily tolerated. Now at this time in the Presbyterian church, there were several different factions based on the attitudes of the ministers toward revivalism. One great revivalist, Charles G. Finney, substituted for the rigid doctrine of election his theory of the freedom of the will to choose either salvation or damnation. Schafer says Finney was a prototype of Dwight L Moody "only with more brimstone in his composition, and perhaps more philosophy".[2] When he became head of the seminary in Oberlin in 1835, Finney's personality and methods, and the better prejudice against him among the clergy, made a faction in the church which was commonly known as Oberlinism. "Men trained at Oberlin were generally suspecte to orthodox Presbyterians and had to prove their personal freedom fron the taint in order to be acceptable to orthadox churches."[3]

Now Peet's earlier letters had indicated very clearly to the society his stand on this issue, and he was justly indignant at

1. Peet, to A.H.M.S., February 24, 1845.
2. Schafer, "Congregational Beginnings in Wisconsin," p. 18.
3. Ibid.

being charged with fastering Oberlinism. In November, 1842, Peet had remarked that this "scheme" had no advocate among the ministers of the Territory. "With it we have no sympathy" he said. "The notion that absolute perfection is attained in this life is not held by any one of the brethren . . . . Most of them are decidedly and openly opposed to it."[4] Rev. Bridgman was the only minister in the Territory from Oberlin and he did not profess its peculiar doctrines; nevertheless Peet said he had to assure the people over and over of Bridgman's orthodoxy.[5] A month later Peet remarked that he was going to Southport soon to protect the people from error as an Oberlin perfectionist had been preaching there.[6] In March, 1844, Rev. Peet recommended Rev. Samuel Thompson of Jefferson and Watertown for aid as he was a very good man. Although he came from Oberlin, Peet said he did not preach perfectionism.[7]

Wisconsin itself, he declared, maintained an orderly Orthodoxy under the "Convention". Every local church had to adopt the creed handed down by the New England churches, and the Westminister Confession of Faith was accepted without reservation by the ministers. Their orthodoxy was that of the New England churches rather that those of Western New York and Northern Ohio, and the circulation of unsound denominational journals was vigorously discouraged in Wisconsin. Lyman Beecher and Prof Stowe of Lane Theological Seminary, who were noted as conservative Presbyterians had put their seal of approval on the work in Wisconsin, declared Peet.[8] With

4. Peet, to A.H.M.S., November 10, 1842.
5. Ibid.
6. Peet, to A.H.M.S., December 30, 1842.
7. Peet, to A.H.M.S., March 27, 1844.
8. Peet, to A.H.M.S., February 24, 1845.

Peet said there were then, in 1845, sixty churches in the Territory, forty Congregational and twenty Presbyterian, twenty two of which he had organized, and not one was divided by Oberlinism Abolition, or any of the "ultra reforms of the day".[9]

One character of Oberlinism, which perhaps formed a basis for the charges against Peet and Wisconsin, was anti-slavery, for there was keen interest in that subject here. Peet himself was unalterably in favor of emancipation and "would be ashamed" not to be, he said.[10] In 1843 the Wisconsin Convention passed a resolution "to withhold Christian fellowship from all those who persist in enslaving, or holding in slavery, their fellow-men."[11] Likewise the convention approved of Peet's action at the General Assembly in 1849, when he refused to take communion from the hands of a slaveholder, as "in accordance with our oft expressed views".[12]

As to the other reforms for which Oberlinism stood, Wisconsin churches had taken a stand on temperance but had not considered the rest of them, such as anti-tobacco campaigns. Almost every missionary reported that temperance societies had been organized in his region, and he marked its advance from time to time, usually using his influence to help it. The earliest society formed in Wisconsin was at Prairie du Chien in November, 1831, when Rev. Kent of Galena reported that he had formed a temperance society there of twelve members, and raised money to procure the temperance magazine, "Journal of Humanity".[13] By 1839, Rev. Crawford of Milwaukee said

9. Peet, to A.H.M.S., February 24, 1845.
10. Ibid.
11. Peet, History of the Churches, p. 45.
12. Ibid.
13. Kent, to A.H.M.S., December 1, 1831.

there were a number of local temperance societies in the Territory, two or three county societies, and recently at Milwaukee the "Territorial Temperance Society of Wisconsin" had been organized.[14]

Two years later, a report, given at a meeting of the Convention in Racine, said that the Territorial Society had annual and semannual meetings, and published a "Temperance Journal" at Milwaukee. Futhermore, nearly all the churches included the total abstinence pledge in their confession or covenant. It was said that in Southport, with a population of four hundred, not a drunkard was to be found; in Spring Prairie more than half of the "freeholders" belonged to the society; and at Mount Pleasant, where a society was less than one year old, every person within four miles of its location belonged, making a total of one hundred and sixty six members.[15] These were only examples of the many societies in the Territory.

In 1844, the Convention itself took this extremely advanced stand for that age: "Resolved that the traffic and use of intoxicating liquors as a beverage is a practice wholly inconsistent with Christian character, and should be a barrier to Christian fellowship; and that it is the duty of the churches and ministers, after suitable admonition, to debar those who are guilty of such practice, from the communion.[16]

In 1849 Rev. Cutting Marsh made the closing speech at a stirring temperance meeting in Beaver Dam. "The next morning his

14. G. Crawford, to A.H.M.S., March 5, 1839.
15. Home Missionary, XIV, 54, July, 1841.
16. Peet, History of Churches, 47.

horses tail was found to be cropped as the expressed resentment of the enemy."[17] Temperance taverns often to be found.

One point in Peet's defense which particularly takes one's attention as showing the difference in what was socially proper then and now is the subject of "female praying" in public. As early as 1842, he had discussed this subject and said that this practice was of rare occurrence, and he believed it would go into discise as the number of praying men increased, and the circles of prayer and social meetings were enlarged.[18]

Now in 1845, Peet again discussed the subject in detail. In the early days when the Congregationalists and Presbyterians met with Baptist or Methodists, "our female members did occasionally, and in some places frequently lead in prayer", said Peet. "But the increase in the number of men, and the gradual divorcing of the meetings from those of looser sects, has changed all that. Now the voice of a female is seldom heard in any mixed meeting. It is more than two years since I have seen an instance."[19] This was a proof to Peet of the "orderliness" of the Wisconsin churches of the forties, while to us it suggests something of the important mental and moral agitations which have intervened between then and now, says Mr. Schafer.[20]

At the Convention at Cleveland, Rev. Peet said many were reporting errors and heresies. On the whole he thought Wisconsin quite free from them for Romanism, though trying to establish itself, had not as strong a hold as elsewhere in the West; Mormonism

17. John E. Chapin, "Sketch of Cutting Marsh", Wisconsin History Collections, XV, 35.
18. Peet, to A.H.M.S., November 10, 1842.
19. Peet, to A.H.M.S., February 24, 1845.
20. Schafer, "Congregational Beginnings", 21.

had little or no influence; Campbellism had no organization and but few adherents; Millerism had not an advocate among the ministers and hardly an individual follower in all the churches. In his opinion Wisconsin appeared more progressive and more orthodox than any other region. "Our whole reports from Wisconsin", he said, "our plan of union, our harmony, our revivals, etc. were a rebuke to those who had been contending and hunting heresy until they were forsaken of the spirit of God, and instead of revivals had only heresies and errors to report."[21]

However "errors" had not been unknown in Wisconsin and had often been mentioned by the missionaries as an obstacle. Rev. Hall of Geneva, in 1842, said the errorists were "trained in active service although they may not be learned in books; they are acquainted with men and know how to humor them. They will preoccupy the ground when we have appointments, misrepresent the truth," and some of them, such as "Universalists", "Christians", "Unitarians", "Unionists", or "Arminians", might venture an attach. "I think no minister need be better prepared and ready for an attack than he who is placed on this frontier", said Hall.[22]

The Congregational and Presbyterian ministers were frequently troubled by competion from those of other denominations, as well as of "errorists". The first church in a community was apt to draw in all the Christian settlers; hence the missionaries stressed the urgency of taking the field early. Although they often cooperated in revival meetings, Sabbath School, and Bible classes,

21. Peet, to A.H.M.S., February 24, 1845.
22. L. Hall, to A.H.M.S., March 31, 1842.

still each minister quite naturally thought his own church best. In 1839, Rev. Peet said that "for want of attention and encouragement, some are inclined to take up with the means furnished by the Methodists, and in some instances are beguiled into a permanant union".[23] The people in his own church however had "no itching ears after other denominations".[24] Rev. Hall's opinion of the Methodists was apparent when he spoke of a minister from that church, who had united with the Presbyterian, as being "quite superior to the generality from that denomination".[25] In 1842, he organized a church of only five members at Diggins Settlement due to the opposition of Methodists.[26] At Madison it was feared that if the Congregational minister should leave, the Episcopalians would take hold.[27] At Lisbon fifty or sixty families of Irish Catholic had settled and it was thought that their influence might be "fatal" if no Congregational or Presbyterian minister were there.[28] At Kishwaukid, Hall observed that a preacher of the "Christian" sect had about as many followers as any other there, the Universalists, Baptists, or Methodists. Unless more Presbyterians went there, he feared the"ignorance and prejudice" of the others would prevent their entering.[29] These are only a few examples of the feeling toward other denominations, some of which have previously been given.

The Methodists were the strongest competitors of the protestant denominations, and in 1850 when the population of the

23. Peet, to A.H.M.S., April 9, 1839.
24. Ibid.
25. Hall, to A.H.M.S., August 4, 1840.
26. Hall, to A.H.M.S., May 25, 1842.
27. J. M. Clark, to A.H.M.S., June 10, 1842.
28. S. Baker, to A.H.M.S., October 18, 1842.
29. Hall, to A.H.M.S., May 25, 1842.

territory was about three hundred thousand, there were about five thousand Congregationalists and Presbyterians, nearly eight thousand Methodists, counting two thousand probationers, about three thousand Baptists and one thousand, three hundred Episcopalians.[30] By 1851, one hundred and twenty different ministers had been helped by the Society, which hads spent about sixty five thousand dollars in Wisconsin; of the eighty-three Congregational and thirty one Presbyterian churches organized, only ten that had once been aided, supported themselves.[31] Of the total number of churches Rev. Peet had organized twenty nine, six of which were Presbyterian and the rest Congregational.[32] The most of these were in small communities, thus proving Peet's determination to plant churches wherever people were in favor of one of the two types which he represented. The preponderance of Congregational foundations by a Presbyterian agent indicated the prevalence of that denomination among the immigrants before they came to Wisconsin, and also that Peet had lived up to his agreement of being non-partisan. Proving in another way that he lived up to that character, he helped to establish the Congregational College at Beloit and also the Congregational Chicago Theological Seminary.[33] It has been well said that "to this great-hearted, keen-visaged man, Wisconsin owes a debt that never may be fully realized",[34] and again that to his "faith, zeal, personal devotion, an energy" was due the expansion of the two churches which the "spread of

30. Peet, History of the Churches, 197.
31. Ibid., 190.
32. Schafer, "Congregational Beginnings", 16.
33. Ibid.
34. Dexter, "The Missionary Influence in the Settlement in Wisconsin", 28.

Yankeeism in the new state" justified.[35]

To the common people as well as to the ministers, religion played an important role, for their thoughts, acts, and characters were colored by it. The life of the territory, and later of the state was affected by the influence of religion on the social movements of the day, such as anti-slavery and temperance, as well as by the permanent founding of churches which would help to mold the character of its citizens for years to come.

35. Schafer, "Congregational Beginnings", 16.

Bibliography

I Manuscripts

American Home Missionary Society Letters by Its Missionaries in Wisconsin 1827-1845. Wisconsin Mss. GV. Two Hundred Letters. (Photostatic copies of the originals which are in the Library of the University of Chicago.

Dexter, Frank N., "The Missionary Influence in the Settlements of Wisconsin." 1921. Wisconsin Mss. MF. (Typewritten).

Schafer, Joseph. "Congregational Beginnings in Wisconsin". Wisconsin Mss. IL. (Tyepwritten).

II General Guide to Reference Works

Mode, Peter G. Sourcebook and Bibliographical Guide for American Church History. George Banta Publishing Company Menasha, Wisconsin, 1921.

III Articles in Periodicals

Brunson, Alfred. "Early History of Wisconsin". Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, IV, 223-252. (1906).

Chapin, John E., "Sketch of Cutting Marsh". Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, XV, 25-39 (1900).

Emerson, Joseph. "The Work and the Man: A memorial of Rev. Stephen Peet". The Congregational Review, X, 415-425 (September, 1870).

Jameson, J. Franklin., "The American Acta Sanctorum". American Historical Review, XIII, 286-303 (January, 1908).

Johnson, Thomas S., "Moses Ordway, Pioneer Presbyterian Missionary". Wisconsin Magazine of History, II, 266-274 (March, 1919).

Whitney, Henry M., "American Settlement of Beloit". Proceedings of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. XLIII to XLVI, 129-137 (1899).

IV General Histories

Dexter, Frank N., Editor. A Hundred Years of Congregational History in Wisconsin. Published by the Wisconsin Congregational Conference. The K and K Print Shop, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. 1933.

Peet, Stephen. History of the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches and Ministers in Wisconsin. Published by Silas Chapman, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1851.

One Hundred years of Congregational Church History in Wisconsin, 1818-1918, Part I. Published by members of Historical Committee Madison, Wisconsin. Copyright by J. N. Davidson, 1917.

Approved by J. D. Hicks

June 5, 1936