



1895 – 1924:  
SERVING A WORLD  
TO BE REDEEMED

*“As for me and my house, we will  
serve the Lord.”*

**Joshua 24:15**

An original poem was written by Professor W. H. Wynn of Iowa State College. It was read at the laying of the cornerstone of the new church, on October 2, 1899. It was based on one of the sayings of “Logia Christ,” found by Grenfell and Hunt, “Wherever they (my disciples) are, they are not deserted by God; and as one is alone, even so I am with him. Raise the stone and thou shalt find me, cleave the wood and I am there.”

*“History can be used to say we have left the Garden of Eden; history can be used to tell us we are on the way to the Garden of Eden; history can be used to tell us there never was a Garden of Eden.”--*

*Lawrence A. Cremin, American historian*

As a new century emerged, citizens of many nations realized transportation advancements and technological innovations made communication with others in far away countries possible. Two popular books fanned the flame of exploration and expansion. John R. Mott wrote *The Evangelization of the World in This Generation* in 1900. The second book, published in 1901, was written by the Canon of Canterbury Cathedral, William H. Freemantle. It was entitled *The World as the Subject of Redemption*. Inspired by these works, college students became missionaries in unprecedented numbers. It was no accident that early in the century a war was named the first World War. A number of events and technologies impossible in 1900 occurred in the first two decades that followed. If one tries to picture the typical high school or college graduate of this period, it would be a person who is loyal to his/her country, willing, however, to be an exporter of values and economic systems to make the world more “civilized,” or in religious terms, “redeemed.” Being in a liberal congregation in Ames, Iowa, a “town and gown environment,” it was more evident there than in many communities that the boundaries of the state or the nation were giving way to a global outlook.

## THE WIDER WORLD

### Social, Economic and Technology Events

- 1892 – John Froelich invents and builds the first gasoline/petrol-powered tractor in Clayton County.
- 1895 – The Anti-Saloon League of America is organized.
- 1896 – U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, upholds segregation in travel accommodations with its principle of “separate but equal.”
- 1899 – The Philippines demand independence from the United States; the battleship Maine is sunk in Cuba resulting in the ten-week Spanish-American War.
- 1900 – Sigmund Freud writes *Interpretation of Dreams*.
- 1903 – The Wright brothers make the first controlled human flight.
- 1905 – Albert Einstein formulates his special theory of relativity.
- 1906 – The San Francisco, California area is devastated by an earthquake.
- 1907 – The Boy Scouts organization is begun in England by Baden-Powell.
- 1908 – The Model T Ford is produced.
- 1909 – The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is formed.
- 1909 – The Rockefeller Foundation is organized.

Albert Einstein



1912 – The Girl Scouts organization is formed; the ship Titanic sinks on its maiden voyage from Europe to the United States.

1913 – Henry Ford introduces the standardized production line in his automobile plant.

1914 – The Panama Canal is opened; the First World War begins.

1915 – Alexander Graham Bell makes first transcontinental phone call.

1917 – The Russian Revolution begins (ends in 1922).

1918 – The World War ends; the world remains in the grip of Spanish influenza.

1919 – The Eighteenth Amendment established the prohibition of alcoholic beverages by declaring illegal the production, transport, and sale of alcohol.

1920 – The Nineteenth Amendment gives American women the right to vote.

1921 – The first regular radio programs are broadcast by a Pittsburgh station.



### Literary, Musical, and Education Events

1901 – John Dewey’s philosophy of progressivism (student interest guided by teachers rather than a predetermined curriculum) gains popularity.

1903 – The Religious Education Association is formed.

1904 – *Peter Pan* by James Barrie is published.

1906 – Journalist Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle*, an expose of the meatpacking industry is published.

1908 – *Graduale Romanum* is released; it is the official Vatican collection of chant melodies, gathered largely from the Benedictine Abbey of France.



The Age of Ragtime and Jazz

1910s-1920s – The age of ragtime and jazz begins.

1916 – John Dewey writes *Democracy and Education*, on his progressive ideas for schools.

1922 – T. S. Eliot writes *The Waste Land*.

### Cultural Changes

**Military and Political Events.** During the thirty years from 1895 to 1924, the planet’s inhabitants witnessed a world war and increased colonizing of the globe by European nations and the United States of America. To show the military power of America, President Theodore Roosevelt sent “a great white fleet” of ships on a tour of foreign ports. Both abroad and in the United States, world fairs exhibited the products of business and industry. The world was also a victim of great economic depressions, which forced governments to take more direct responsibilities regarding citizen relief as all levels of society suffered. Boundary lines of African nations changed

frequently and Latin American countries had a pattern of revolutionary change.

**Civil Rights.** The expanding world cultures brought several counter forces into play. One was the growing power of isolationism. Deportations of immigrants grew, especially after World War I began. Some states passed legislation forbidding schools to teach in German or other foreign languages. The issue of race dominated the news. Segregation in schools was reinforced by a Supreme Court decision that permitted states to offer “separate but equal” transportation to Blacks. Advocates of separate schools for minorities quickly applied that ruling to schools. Minorities were not treated fairly in housing or job applications.

**Media Changes and technological advances.** Begun in the 1870s, the Chautauqua movement gained popularity into the first decades of the 1900s. It was called “the most American thing in America.” During the summers, “tent” chautauquas brought “culture under canvas” to tens of millions of Americans in small town and rural America. By the mid-1920s, Chautauqua programs were losing their appeal. As radio broadcasting became more reliable, stations grew in number and influence. Newspapers and magazines increased in circulation. But for entertainment, “talking pictures,” or motion pictures showed citizens new worlds as well as ways to escaping their concerns about economic worries.

**Schooling and Learning.** American formal education during these years underwent significant changes as well. While one-room schools in rural states would last until mid-century, school districts in cities and suburbs had substantial growth. Curriculum changed slowly as enrollments increased and more high school graduates attended college. Mathematics and science were emphasized while the humanities were reduced. John Dewey led an educational reform called “progressivism.” While private and parochial education was recognized legally in 1925 (U. S. Supreme Court, *Pierce v. Society of Sisters*) that did not mean that they were entitled to public tax funds.

## IN RELIGION

1895 – Today’s use of the term “fundamentalism” began at a Niagara (NY) Bible Conference.

There, “the Five Points of Fundamentalism” had their development. They include: inerrancy of Scripture, divinity of Jesus, the Virgin Birth, Substitutionary Atonement, and the physical resurrection of Jesus.

1896 – Charles M. Sheldon’s book, *In His Steps*, asks what Christ would do.

1897 – The *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* are discovered (included in it are fragments from the *Gospel of Thomas*, and the oldest known example of church music).

1900 – John R. Mott writes *The Evangelization of the World in This Generation*. Beginning in this year Andrew Carnegie and Rev. Henry Ward Beecher promote the concept of the Gospel of Wealth, a belief that one’s wealth is earned as a result of righteous living. They suggest donating to the needy promotes laziness.

1901 – Form criticism gains acceptance. It is a scholarly approach that analyzes the form or structure of texts in the Bible to determine their authorship and history. Hermann Gunkel applies form criticism to the *Book of Genesis*.

- 1901 – The *American Standard Version* of the Bible is released.
- 1902 – William James writes *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, which concludes that there are multiple factors that influence spiritual development.
- 1905 – The concept of the “Protestant work ethic” as a major factor in the economic success of the New World is advocated by Max Weber in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.
- 1906 – William J. Seymour begins the Azusa Street Revival (California), one of the pioneer Pentecostal worship centers in the USA; Albert Schweitzer authors *Quest of the Historical Jesus*, which argues that it is difficult to truly understand Jesus’ message and Jesus as an historical rather than mythical figure.
- 1906 – Some churches within the Disciples of Christ denomination decide to call themselves Christian Church/Churches of Christ.
- 1907 – *Christianity and the Social Crisis* by Walter Rauschenbush promotes the “social gospel” message, i.e., the need for the Church to address societal problems more visibly and systematically.
- 1908 – The Church of the Nazarene denomination is begun as is the Federal Council of Churches; the Gideons organization begins the distribution of Bibles.
- 1910 – *The Fundamentals* are published. It is a twelve-volume series of tracts that defends biblical inerrancy and other traditional doctrines. It also attacks the emerging field of biblical criticism.
- 1911 – The Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America, or “Maryknoll Missioners,” is begun to prepare missionaries for foreign lands.
- 1914 – The Assemblies of God form a denomination at Hot Springs, Arkansas.
- 1918 – The Central Conference of American Rabbis adopts a program for social justice.
- 1918 – Karl Barth writes his *Commentary on Romans*, a highly influential text for biblical scholars and preachers on how that capstone book should be interpreted.
- 1919 – The movement called empirical theology is in vogue; it blends scientific and technological concepts with religion.
- 1923 – Martin Buber writes *I and Thou*, promoting the idea that dialogue is more than conversation; it requires a willingness to truly understand another’s point of view.

## Religious issues

**Attempts to Change.** By 1900, in both Europe and North America, church beliefs and practices were being challenged by the shift from rural to urban life and the increasing growth of businesses and industries. Major Christian bodies developed elaborate programs of education and forms of ministry. Larger buildings were constructed for worship; increasingly common were huge urban congregations with extensive music programs and huge organs. Although not in every denomination, leadership roles for women expanded. More denominations began to ordain



women and denominational offices added programs for women. However, some changes were met with conflicts and signs of religious decline began to appear. Some did not want to support the “social gospel.” The attendance of men, high in some regions in the later 1800s, began to drop. Some young adults heard the call to redeem the world and their levels of commitment brought amazing results.

**Efforts of Ecumenism.** Several organizations represent the efforts to consolidate religious programs. At the turn of the century, there was an international student movement that concluded “the world is our subject for redemption.” Students led a number of missionary programs; in the United States, the Young Man’s Christian Association (YMCA) had been a source of that supply. The Federal Council of Churches was formed in 1908.

**Fundamentalism Rises.** At the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, German and European biblical and historical scholars had produced literary and archeological evidence that challenged the belief that the Bible was without error. The authorship of certain books was questioned (e.g., that Moses wrote the Torah, or first five books of the Bible, and David wrote all of the psalms). Conservative religious groups responded to what they considered an attack upon their core beliefs. In 1910, *The Fundamentals*, a twelve-volume-set of books was produced that contained a series of essential or fundamental doctrines for evangelicals of that day. In addition to believing that the Bible was without error, other fundamentals included, but were not limited to, the belief in the birth of Jesus to a virgin and the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross as the only means of salvation.

**Denominational Changes.** By 1890 the seven Plains states held 14.2% of the total American population. Congregationalism flourished in these states. The denomination’s percent of membership in the Plains states peaked at 16.4% in 1910. In that same year, the percent of Congregational churches represented 22.8% of the total number of Congregational churches in the country. (SOURCE: Taylor, p. 35)

Congregationalism is based on individual congregations having the power to make their own decisions. There are no bishops, as in Methodist system. There are no higher ecclesiastical bodies, such as in the Episcopal or Anglican Church, making pronouncements or policies the local congregation must follow. However, there had been state meetings of congregational churches and eventually of a national meeting of church representatives. A national convention held in Albany, New York in 1852 had abolished the Plan of Union with the Presbyterians. In 1871 the National Council of Congregational Churches was organized in a meeting at Oberlin, Ohio. In the first years of the twentieth century, the Congregational Church made efforts to coordinate governance policies and terminology, according to Richard Taylor (*Congregational Churches on the Plains* [Providence, RI: self-published, 2012]: p. 58). For example, general associations became known as “conferences.” The somewhat independent “home missionary societies” became united with the state conferences. In 1910, the General Association became the Congregational Conference of Iowa. It replaced the Iowa Association of Congregational Churches. As the chart indicates, Congregational congregations and church membership in Iowa during these years were very strong compared to neighboring states.

### Congregational Churches and Membership in the Plains States

State	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	
Iowa	279 23,562	317 36,222	295 37,469	269 39,515	242 41,206	# of Cong. Churches # members
Kansas	186 12,042	173 13,258	165 15,572	136 16,297	111 16,359	# of Cong. Churches # members
Minnesota	182 13,250	235 18,178	224 22,443	223 25,436	201 27,905	# of Cong. Churches # members
Missouri	78 7,607	77 9,816	74 10,982	61 9,989	51 11,098	# of Cong. Churches # members
Nebraska	172 9,844	204 14,821	203 17,410	186 19,623	158 23,758	# of Cong. Churches # members
N. Dakota	68 1,662	88 3,029	213 6,916	229 8,356	173 9,990	# of Cong. Churches # members
S. Dakota	132 4,892	147 7,056	200 9,802	224 13,440	201 14,874	# of Cong. Churches # members
Total	1,098 72,859	1,242 102,380	1,374 120,594	1,328 132,656	1,137 145,190	# of Cong. Churches # members

Source: Richard H. Taylor, *Congregational Churches on the Plains* (Providence, RI: Congregational Library, 2012, p. 33)

Meanwhile, in 1911, the Evangelical Protestant Church of North America was formed. It brought together different groups that were in the Midwest, primarily from the Saint Louis and southern Illinois regions. One of the groups was the Evangelical Synod of North America. A characteristic of these churches was their belief in educated clergy.

## LOCAL LIFE

### AMES AND IOWA STATE COLLEGE

	1895	1900	1905	1910	1915	1920	1924
Ames population	1,893	2,422	3,292	4,223		6,270	9,324
ISC enrollment		940	1,000	1,723		4,475	
First Congregational Church of Ames membership**	150	223	320	412	492	482	646

1896 – Ames builds a municipally-owned electric light plant; the city’s first street lights are installed.

1898 – Iowa Agricultural College becomes the Iowa State College of Agriculture & Mechanical Arts

1899 – A Roman Catholic Church, the Church of the Good Shepherd, is organized. The Campanile is erected at a cost of \$5,885.

1900 – A new depot opens in Ames to accommodate 24 passenger trains each day.

1903 – Ames Savings Bank is founded; it eventually becomes First National Bank.



- 1904 – Iowa State College is designated by the state legislature to act as a Highway Commission. With the donation of several lots and a \$10,000 gift from the Carnegie Fund, Ames builds a library on the corner of Sixth St. and Douglas.
- 1905 – Bethesda Lutheran Church is organized in May.
- 1906 – The Catholic church builds a new brick church to replace the original wooden structure and becomes St Cecelia Church.
- 1907 – The Iowa State women’s basketball team plays its first game, defeating Simpson College at Indianola, 16-13.
- 1907 – The first movie house in Ames, the Scenic Theater, opens on Main Street.
- 1908 – The Iowa State men’s basketball team plays its first game, losing to Kansas University, 53-35. One week later, the men’s team defeats Drake, 36-17.
- 1908 – The Methodist congregation dedicates a new church at Sixth and Kellogg.
- 1910 – Onondaga Street is renamed, officially, as Main Street. It was paved with creosote wood blocks.
- 1910 – The First Baptist Church dedicates a new church building in May.
- 1911 -- An estimated 4,000 people hear Billy Sunday speak at the Ames Chautauqua auditorium.
- 1912 – Mrs. C. F. Curtiss organizes the first Girl Scout troop in Ames; a new high school building is erected on Clark Avenue.
- 1913 – The tango was banned from fraternity dances by the Inter-fraternity Council.
- 1914 – ISC sponsors a music festival featuring the New York Symphony Orchestra.
- 1915 – The first airplane to land in Ames does so in June.
- 1916 – President Wm. H. Taft spends several days in Ames; he speaks in State Gym.
- 1916 – The Sheldon Munn Hotel officially opens on May 31; Mary Greeley Hospital is dedicated in September.
- 1917 – Collegiate Presbyterian Church is dedicated on December 9th.
- 1918 – The flu epidemic claims 51 lives on the Iowa State campus during October and November.
- 1921 – The Wesley Foundation dedicates its first building in the campus area.
- 1921 – Carrie Chapman Catt gives the commencement address at ISC.
- 1922 – WOI radio begins broadcasting.
- 1922 – The Veishea celebration is established, combining the activities of Veterinary Medicine, Engineering, Industrial Science, Home Economics and Agriculture divisions.
- 1924 – The last “tent” Chautauqua program is held in Ames.



1924 – The Ku Klux Klansmen of Iowa hold a “Klonklave” at Maxwell Park on September 4th. A crowd estimated at 8,000 witnesses between 300 and 400 Klansmen conduct rituals and burn two crosses.

1924 – The United Brethren Church dedicates a new church.

## SERVING A WORLD TO BE REDEEMED

### OUR MEMBERSHIP

The fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the First Congregational Church was celebrated on Friday, November 5, 1915; the church had been organized on November 5, 1865. A November 10 article in the *Ames Times* reported that Mr. Robert Shearer, age 92, was able to attend the morning worship service, but not the afternoon or evening festivities. Mr. Shearer was the last living member of the original eight charter members. He missed the supper which was served to 200 people. On Sunday, November 7, the congregation continued to celebrate. The afternoon consecration service witnessed the receiving of thirty-six new members by confession of faith or letter of transfer. Children were baptized. The newspaper article concluded that all the services were enriched by the music under the direction of Professor and Mrs. Harris of the Conservatory of Iowa State College.

The second thirty-year period of the congregation’s legacy is one filled with much promise in terms of membership growth. A constellation of factors made it possible: a blend of talented and visionary young ministers and seasoned, loving, and community-minded pastors, a university growing in reputation and enrollment, a national economy that while volatile at times, offered favorable working conditions for many.

On January 30, 1907, the congregation adopted the following resolution about student membership:

*Members of other evangelical churches, residing in Ames as students in educational institutions, may be enrolled as student members of this church during their residence in the city, when recommend by letters from the churches of which they are members.*

*[Source: FCC Annual Report, 1908]*

The resolution added that the students would not lose their memberships in their home churches. To what extent that increased the number of student members is not clear. However, on June 22, 1912, a resolution was passed that the congregation hire a college pastor to assist the minister.

Statistics from the congregation’s Annual Reports, indicate the increasing numbers of members, separating them by gender. After 1916, the gender differences were not reported. An increasing concern is that from 10% to 20% of those listed as church members were not active; they were sometimes listed as non-residents. A number of members that transferred to other congregations received what were called “letters of dismissal.” College students who received such letters were instructed that the transfers were “to any evangelical church.” Left unsaid was what constituted an evangelical church.



First Congregational Church of Ames Membership, 1896-1916

	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	07	08	09	10	11
M	65	75	78	81	77	83	86	88	111	110	125	138	152	113	172
F	107	128	129	142	146	144	153	184	210	210	221	224	245	259	275
Ttl	171	203	207	223	223	227	239	272	321	320	346	362	391	412	447
NR*			32								41		40	34	

\*Non-resident; occasionally called Absent Members

[Not all years included; only those with gender included; the data are cited as being at the end of the previous year; taken from the Annual Meeting, usually held in early January]

John Hawley, the son of the Rev. Henry Hawley, alleged in a letter of remembrance that his father once went to the chairman of the Trustees, Mr. H. W. Stafford, and told him that since membership of the church had doubled since he arrived in 1915, his (Hawley's) salary should be doubled. According to John Hawley's version of the story, his salary was doubled; a different account indicates it did not happen. Such a story is a reminder that reports about church membership are always to be taken with caution. The following table, although incomplete some years, indicates the increase in membership during this segment of Hawley's ministry. The membership at the end of 1914 was 487.

First Congregational Church of Ames Membership (1915-1924)

	1915	1916	1917	1918	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924
Male	194	201	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Female	298	304	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Total	492	505	445**	NA	NA	484	521	607	NA	646
NR*		107						100		129

\*Non-resident; occasionally called Absent Members

\*\* indicates that there are two different totals for this year]

The congregation revised its Constitution in 1915. One reason stated was that "we need to clear up our creed." It is not clear whether that meant that the creedal statement of faith was dropped. But another change of interest was a new section, Article VIII, on discipline. The church was to maintain an Examination Committee whose members were to describe the worthiness of persons for membership. The Committee was bestowed with the responsibility of seeing that members were to continue to live godly lives. Should rumors arise, the Committee was authorized to investigate their validity. Although this was in force, i.e., the Committee had the power to dismiss members (the term "excommunicated" was used at times). There are rare entries when members were actually removed for improper behavior.

In the first thirty years of First Congregational Church of Ames, the Congregational Society controlled the church's theology and business affairs. Only men 21 and older could belong to the Society. Even after the word "male" was stricken from the Society's laws, it took another three years before women joined. In some ways, the women remained in what were considered their

roles. Year after year, the Annual Report begins with a thank you to the ladies of the church for the wonderful meal that was served prior to the business meeting. But changes were made. In the Manual of 1903, the deaconesses joined the deacons in having responsibilities for fund raising. Perhaps with some recognition for her graduation from Ames High School in 1904, member Ada Hayden received more attention when she became the first female recipient of a PhD from Iowa State College or more correctly, Iowa State A & M, in 1918.

## OUR MINISTERS AND STAFF

[Note: To indicate the “succession” of ministers, each chapter will identify by continuing numbers from the previous chapters, where the pastor was in the line of succession.]

- 9) **Rev. Harlan Paul Douglass** (1896-1900). Born in Osage, Iowa on January 4, 1871, Harlan Paul Douglass was the first Iowa-born minister of the Congregational Church of Ames. For many years, his father was the state executive of the Iowa Home Missionary Society, which meant the family moved a number of times. However, Grinnell became their home for Paul's early years. He graduated from Grinnell College in 1891. Although he attended Chicago Theological Seminary initially, he graduated from Andover Seminary in 1894. His first parish was in Manson, Iowa and he was ordained there in 1894. An academic at heart, he had an additional year of higher education at Harvard College in 1895-96. He became one of the original members of the honor society, Phi Beta Kappa. After his year at Harvard, he wished to return to pastoral ministry. He accepted the call from the First Congregational Church of Ames.



A popular preacher, he quickly stimulated growth in church membership. He was described as “bringing youth and a vigorous enthusiasm” to the congregation. Plans for a new church building moved forward. On October 2, 1899, the congregation laid the cornerstone. Rev. T. O. Douglass, H. Paul's father, was the speaker at the dedicatory service. The new church building was completed and dedicated during his ministry. In November 1900, Rev. Douglass offered his resignation. He left to become the minister of First Congregational Church in Springfield, Missouri, where he was also appointed a professor of philosophy at Drury College in Springfield. The college had been founded as a Congregational College.

In 1906 Rev. Douglass was called to be Superintendent of the American Missionary Society. He was to oversee the seventy-some institutions of the Congregational Church in the South; many were educational schools and colleges. In 1909 he wrote his first book, *The Christian Reconstruction of the South*. [SOURCE: T.O. Douglass, ed., *Builders of the Commonwealth*, Vol. XII, pp. 70-75; Boston Congregational Library]

A biographical article about Rev. Douglas concluded that he had four stages in his life: 12 years as a pastor, 12 years as a “missions administrator,” a similar period as a social scientist, and a “fullness of life” retirement. [Source: Jeffrey K. Hadden, “H. Paul Douglass: His Perspective at Work,” *Review of Religious Research*, Volume 22, No. 1 (September 198, pp. 66-88)]. Due to Douglass' seminal research, an annual lectureship was established in his

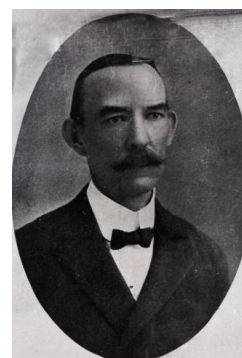
honor by the Religious Research Association in 1958. Douglass was active in promoting ecumenical relations as his involvement with the Federal Council of Churches reveals. He remained an avid promoter of missionary activities throughout his career and retirement years.

- 10) **Rev. Charles H. Seccombe** (1901-1902). One could say that Rev. Seccombe was well prepared to become a minister. His father was Rev. Charles C. Seccombe who for some forty years was the Home Missionary Superintendent of Congregational churches in Minnesota. His mother, Harriet, was a graduate of Mount Holyoke College. The youngest child in the family, Charles was born in Zumbrota, Minnesota on January 26, 1868. The young Seccombe received his bachelor's degree from Carleton College in 1892 and then a master's degree in 1895. He attended Chicago Theological Seminary, graduating with a bachelor of divinity degree (B.D.) in 1895. During his seminary days, he served a congregation in Park Manor, Illinois and was ordained in that congregation. He married Georgia May Luley of St. Paul, Minnesota in 1893. [SOURCE: T.O. Douglass, ed., *Builders of the Commonwealth*, Vol. XIII, pp. 175ff; Boston Congregational Library]



Before coming to Ames, he served the Congregational Church in Sibley, Iowa from 1896 to 1901. He began his work in Ames in March 1901, at age 33. In May, 1901, a Recognition Council was called (similar to an Association meeting today). At that Council, Rev. Seccombe read a paper presenting a statement of his "Christian life, expression, education, and faith." [SOURCE: FCC Manual, 1903]. According to church records, the membership grew both by letters of transfer as well as confession of faith. Church records indicate that large numbers of students attended the evening worship services. During his first year, fifty-five "ascensions," or new members joined the church. He worked with the superintendent of the Sunday School to reorganize the church's educational program. Together, they chose a new curriculum called The Graded Bible School. Rev. Seccombe designed a systematic course of study that increased Bible study. Rev. Seccombe ended his ministry in March 1903 at First Congregational Church of Ames, two years after he began, to become the pastor of the Congregational Church of Waterloo, Iowa. His work habits were such that he had a nervous breakdown three years later. He eventually moved to California where he served several congregations before leaving the ministry for a career as a realtor.

- 11) **Rev. Horace D. Herr** (1903-1905). The search for a new minister took only one month. Rev. Herr began his ministry in Ames on April 1, 1903. He was a Midwesterner rather than a New Englander. He was born in Indiana in 1852. He received his theological education at Union Biblical Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. [Note: His obituary states that the name of the seminary was Bonebrake!] His first years of ministry were in Kansas in United Brethren congregations and colleges. He became affiliated with the Congregational Church in 1884. After serving as a pastor of one of the college churches in Kansas, he made a tour of Europe. After the trip, he returned to the Jayhawk State, accepting a call to a Kansas City church, where he



served for six years. Following that ministry, he became the minister at the First Congregational Church of Muscatine, Iowa. That pastorate also lasted six years. From Muscatine he came to Ames. He and his wife, Mary Ann Howard, whom he had married in 1874, were the parents of six children.

Unlike most of the previous ministers of the congregation, he was older than they when he began his ministry here; he was in his fifties. Also unlike his predecessors, his ministry lasted longer, six years! One member summarized his ministry by saying: "The Church was blessed by his devotion and his rich spiritual sermons." Mrs. Herr was "much depended upon for her leadership in the Missionary Society." During his years as minister, the debt on the church building was paid off. During his years as minister, a new parsonage was constructed.

After leaving Ames, he served congregations in Humboldt, Weaver, and Farragut, Iowa. He became an author, publishing such titles as *The Tenters* (1906), *Country and Riverside Poems* (1910), *The Caravans* (1923), and *Harvey Vonore or The Making of a Minister* (1934).

[ED. NOTE: The First Congregational Church Annual Report of 1907 reveals that on February 11, 1906, the congregation voted unanimously to call the Rev. Walter H. Robbins of Wilmington, Massachusetts, as its pastor. However, on March 4, 1906, Robbins submitted his resignation, which was read to the congregation and accepted. There is no cause stated for his reason for resigning. On April 10, 1906, at a special meeting of the congregation, the Rev. William James Minchin of Tewksbury, Massachusetts is called as pastor. He accepted and began his ministry on May 27, 1906.]

- 12) **Rev. William James Minchin** (1906-1914). The congregation returned to its tendency to call New Englanders when it reached out to Minchin. He was born in Newburyport, Massachusetts, in 1865. He graduated from Bangor Theological Seminary in 1896. Prior to coming to Ames, he served a congregation in Canada and two in Massachusetts. He married Mabel E. Odde of Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1894. They had one daughter, Medora. When he and his family came to Ames, he was in his early forties.

Remembrances of his ministry suggest that the Rev. Minchin was very active in the community. In his first full year of service (1906 to 1907) the congregation begins its support of a "college pastor" for Iowa State College. This program was the prototype of campus ministry programs many decades later. Another indication of his community activity was his service for one year as the manager for the Chautauqua tent programs. In his resignation letter Rev. Minchin declared of his almost nine years in Ames, "These years have been the happiest and most prosperous of all my years and it is with regret that I lay down responsibilities that have been intrusted (sic.) to my care." While that may have been true, the Rev. Minchin submitted his resignation in January 1909, claiming that his health demanded he needed a rest. He was asked by the congregation to reconsider which he did, continuing to serve until 1914.

There seemed to be a good atmosphere in the church during his ministry. One commented, "All departments were reported as doing good work. The Women's work, the Sunday School and the Men and Religious Forward Movement, were all emphasized during his pastorate. The amount paid to benevolences were the largest ever paid up to this time."

After leaving Ames, Rev. Minchin became the pastor of the Mason City Congregational Church. From there, he was selected to be the Superintendent of Congregational Churches in Colorado (1917-1922) and then the Superintendent of the North California Conference (1922-1929). His retirement years were spent in Santa Barbara, California. His activism in the communities he served and the administrative positions he assumed make clear he was a respected leader. Further evidence of the esteem in which he was held are the two honorary degrees (Doctor of Divinity) he was awarded. One was from St. John, New Brunswick, Canada (1896), the other from Grinnell College (1913). While his length of service was longer than any previous minister, it paled in comparison to his successor.

- 13) **Rev. Henry Keeler Hawley (1915-1935).** Rev. Hawley and his wife, Theodosia, were natives of New Hampshire. Both were graduates of Oberlin College. He received his divinity degree from the Oberlin Theological Seminary. She was an active partner in his ministry. For an earlier milestone celebration, his son John recalled that both his parents visited members of the church during the week. The Hawley's had two sets of twins -- Elizabeth and John, and Ruth and Robert. According to John, Rev. Hawley also raised a garden every year. He was prone to illnesses, perhaps worn out. Each summer the family took two months' vacation, one month paid for by the church, the other at Rev. Hawley's expense. Twice he tried to resign and each time the congregation refused to accept the resignation. It should be noted that he was 52 years old when he began his ministry in Ames in 1915 and 72 when he retired.



Chapter 2 will focus on his ministry from 1915 to 1924. A foretelling of his positive ministry in Ames can be found in correspondence from the Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin church that he served prior to coming here. The members of that congregation indicated that they were reluctant to lose their pastor, but they wished First Congregational Church of Ames the best, assuming that they would be well-served by Rev. Hawley. "We, the citizens of Fort Atkinson, mass meeting assembled, extend to you our congratulations on securing Mr. Hawley as your pastor. Deeply as we feel his loss, we rejoice with you in your gain." During his first year, the congregation was celebrating its fiftieth-year. On November 5, 1915, Rev. Hawley preached at the evening service. The title of his sermon was "The Church of the Future." His main point was that the church should be of service to others, including the nation. Perhaps he anticipated the war in Europe that would envelop the United States. Although we do not have a copy of the 1915 sermon, Rev. Hawley's message in the 1919 Annual Report contains a "sermonette" that might well be a likely twin to his earlier thoughts of the future of the Church. He began the 1919 remarks by acknowledging that he and the congregation had been in favor of winning the global conflict and had reduced their budget to help the war effort. But now that the war had ended, it was time to look forward. He said:

*Please let me once more remind you that the only object of maintaining an organization, known as the Congregational Church of Ames, is that it may be of service to the community, to the Nation, and to the world. A whole new field is opened to our endeavor by the successful closing of the war. The doors of opportunity stand wide open beckoning the Church to a wider and more fundamental service among the nations*



*than ever before [what followed were remarks on the need to increase giving, ending with the sentence, “We send strong men and women to save whole States and Nation to Brotherly living.” . . . But ... our first duty is at HOME. I believe we have a particular duty in a town like this to preach a gospel that is relieved from the trammels of any outworn forms of expression – and from now on I propose to test every effort more carefully than ever before by the standard of service. We must build here an organization where men and women of all kinds of traditions and with all points of view can labor together – each one interpreting for himself or herself every detail of belief or conduct, but cemented together with a purpose of loving service. One thing shall bind us in this fellowship of service –Discipleship of the Great Servant of All.*

While temperance was still an important issue for Congregationalists, another secular practice bothered the Rev. Hawley. The Ames Times of May 21, 1916, featured an article headlined: “Rev. Hawley Speaks About Sunday Laws.” That issue of businesses remaining open on Sunday, i.e., the “blue laws,” had been a national issue as far back as the Chicago World’s Fair in 1893. Showing movies, especially on Sundays, would become a heated topic in Ames at a later time.

By 1917, the United States was involved in the Great War. Along side the casualties of military conflict – the First Congregational Church would change two blue stars on its banner to gold – they were casualties not of battle, but of influenza. In a six-week period more than 50 students at Iowa State succumbed to the flu. Church services were suspended. Nearer the campus, Collegiate Presbyterian Church became an infirmary as did the Iowa State Armory.

Reflecting on his father’s preaching, John Hawley recalled that his father had a pattern of preparing sermons. The Rev. Hawley would typically wait until after midnight Thursday evening to write out his sermon. He would make notes in the margins. He would take the manuscript into the pulpit, but his son commented that his father never read the sermon. Rev. Hawley also took his watch out; he rarely went beyond twenty minutes. As for attire, he did not like to wear a robe. Most often, he wore a Prince Albert coat.

Farwell Brown and others report that the Rev. Hawley was known for “political” sermons. That is, he would often speak about what was going well or not going well in the state and nation’s legislative houses. One word used to describe his sermons was their “salty” language. That doesn’t mean cursing; rather, he used down-to-earth language. During one notable sermon in the early 1920s, the Rev. Hawley became quite dramatic. He role-played two men who were debating a controversial issue. The argument became so heated as Hawley portrayed it and voiced it, “that it would take two more trips to the boneyard [cemetery?] to settle the matter.” At that point, a female member of the congregation rose and yelled at the minister, “Don’t ever say that again!”

## OUR BUILDINGS AND BUDGETS

Many years in the planning, a new house of worship was constructed in 1899 and dedicated in March 1900. One file note called it a “tasty” building; another referred to the church’s style as “English country.” In 1897, the Ladies Aid Society established a Market Day to raise funds for the





new church. In two years, 1897 and 1898, the total exceeded \$400. The church building cost approximately \$13,000. The new pipe organ cost \$1,200. A new parsonage was also built. Fundraising was so successful that by 1913 a final payment of \$2,576 was made on its debt.

While the Hawleys lived in the parsonage, it had to be used for Sunday School classes. John Hawley remembered bringing as many as fifty (small) chairs from the church building to the parsonage. The parsonage was located on the north side of Sixth Street (217 6th St) between Douglas Avenue and Kellogg Avenue, to the west of the alleyway and adjacent to the Congregational Church. Eventually this parsonage was later moved to the south side of Seventh Street (216 or 218 7th St), just a block north of its original location, when the church was enlarged in 1961-62. That parsonage was razed around 1989 or 1990 when a multi-floored apartment building was constructed on the site. (SOURCE: Ames Historical Society citation: 121.665.1-2) Although their move to Frisbie House did not occur during this thirty-year period, the family moved to Frisbie House while the parsonage was remodeled to better equip it for Sunday School use.



## OUR ACTIVITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

### Social Action

On September 1st, 1912, Miss Daisy Brown, [PHOTO in vol. 3 of Farwell Brown's histories of Ames] a daughter of the congregation, was commissioned in a service at First Congregational Church to become a missionary to China. She went under the auspices of the American Board of Foreign Missions to Foochow, China. As stated in one report, she was to give "words of eternal life to (a) nation in darkness." Another young woman, was also commissioned during this time period as a missionary to China. [Data is in Ames Historical Society file.]

As indicated earlier, in 1906 a new and powerful strategy began. Under the leadership of the Rev. William Minchin, the congregation began to develop the vision to call a student pastor to work with Iowa State students. On June 22, 1912 the congregation passed a resolution to hire a college pastor at \$1,200 a year. On September 8, 1912, Anton T. Boysen (or Boisen) accepted the call of the congregation and he began his work that fall. Those who followed as student or college pastors included:

- Anton T. Boysen (1912 to ???)
- Theodore Dunn (1914-1917) He becomes ordained in 1916, then left to become a military chaplain in the Army Y.M.C.A.
- Royal Montgomery (1917) He also left to become a military chaplain; his wife remained at Frisbie House and assumed many responsibilities, including hosting events for returning veterans.





- H. H. Lindeman (1919 and 1920)
- Mr. Clyde (Need more information -- name and dates)
- G. Bryant Drake (1923-1928). He was assisted in the work by his wife Alberta.
- W. Norris Wentworth (1928) “There are four classes of fellowship meetings Sunday evenings. 226 students attend the church services which averaged a few over fifty and the attendance at our parties averaged over 70.” (a report of 1/11/1928)
- H.B. Schmidt (Arrives September 1930. He is described as the Associate Pastor in the First Congregational Church in a 1958 congregational report. He lives at Frisbie House. He was a graduate of Yankton University, Yankton, SD. In 1928 and later he taught in the public schools of Bleemfield, NE.

In 1916, the State Congregational Conference built Frisbie, House, named for the Rev. A.L. Frisbie, long-time pastor at Plymouth Congregational Church of Des Moines. Located on Lincoln Way across from Lake LaVerne, Frisbie House opened in 1916. It was built to be a “home for Congregational students who were away from their home churches.”



### Worship services and church music

The modest budget of the infant congregation plus Congregational heritage ruled against printed bulletins. Or so it seemed. During the Rev. Minchin’s ministry, orders of services are printed. For some years, Rev. Hawley used a similar order of worship:

Organ Prelude (all standing)  
 Doxology “  
 Invocation “  
 The Lord’s Prayer “  
 Gloria “  
 Response Reading – a Psalm  
 Hymn  
 Scripture Lesson  
 Quartette  
 Prayer  
 Offering  
 Offertory Solo  
 Hymn  
 Sermon  
 Hymn  
 Benediction  
 Organ Postlude

The retellings of First Congregational Church’s beginning have understandably focused on the

communion set brought by Cynthia O. Duff from Syracuse, New York. What is often forgotten is that the Syracuse congregation also provided “singing books.” We do not appear to have any copies of those books in our files. For the curious, the hymns in the orders of service from the 1910s and 1920s were identified by number not name. The quartette and solo selections frequently did have titles and composer names. Additionally, it was noted at the 1915 Fiftieth Anniversary service that Mrs. Lydia Tilton’s solo, “Hark, Hark, My Soul” by Shelly, was the same song that had been sung in 1900 at the dedication of the new church building.

The Rev. Hawley was of the opinion that the two most influential forces of the church were sermons and music. Apparently, very early in his ministry he wanted the congregation to eliminate the Sunday evening service. One strategy was to indicate how difficult it was to maintain good music. He wrote in an annual report, “The task of the music committee is very delicate.” He did not succeed initially in dropping the evening service. Referring to the problems that continued after the war’s end, Hawley noted in 1919:

*As all branches of church work have been subject to unusual conditions during the past year, so the work of the Music Committee has been handicapped by these same conditions. The taking away of so many of our young men seriously crippled our attempt to have a chorus, but during the short life of this chorus, we felt that some good music under the leadership of Mrs. Judisch was given, especially the Easter concert that deserved a larger audience than it received. In order to give those taking part [in each?] class of music that they were entitled to work upon, it was necessary to employ trained soloists to take the solo parts.....” [Ed. Note: Rev. Hawley goes on to indicate that after the organist, Mr. Clemmer left,] we attempted to have a voluntary choir and organist from our own church membership.*

Speaking of music, church records indicate on March 22, 1900, four days after the church’s dedication, Prof. R. G. Cole, Director of the School of Music at Iowa State College, gave an organ recital to dedicate the new pipe organ. Orders of service from this period indicate that a paid quartette rather than a choir was often featured in the church services. However, volunteer soloists appeared frequently. Because the printed Sunday bulletins list hymn numbers and not hymn titles, it is difficult to determine if hymns written during these three decades were used.

Some hymns from this era that became “classics” include:

Date	Title	Author/Source	Tune
1901	“Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life”	Frank Mason North	GERMANY
1901	“This is My Father’s World”	Maltbie Babcock	KENTUCKY 93RD
1904	“God Will Take Care of You”	Civilla Martin	MARTIN C.M.
1905	“His Eye Is On the Sparrow”	Civilla Martin	SPARROW
1907	“Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee”	Henry Van Dyke	HYMN TO JOY
1913	“The Old Rugged Cross”	George Bennard	THE OLD RUGGED CROSS
1921	“Lift Every Voice and Sing”	James Weldon Johnson	LIFT EVERY VOICE
1923	“Great Is Thy Faithfulness”	Thomas Chisholm	FAITHFULNESS

## Religious education

From 1888 to 1890, Mrs. Lydia Tilden, a matriarch of the congregation, joined the list of others who would be the Superintendent of the Sunday School. During her tenure, the attendance would average between 75 to 100 students, with a teaching staff of fifteen. [SOURCE: Patty Beneke and Sue Futrell paper, "Ames 1848-1899, in Ames Historical Society files]. Recollection letters from former members reveal the "teachers" were often girls who were in the 7th grade and/or about the age of 15.

The Bible School, as it was sometimes called, continued to grow during the early 1900s. In 1904, the church adopted a resolution that described an elaborate organizational structure. It was to have officers, teachers, and an Advisory Board. The officers were to be elected by the Bible School while the teachers were appointed by the superintendent with the advice of a Cabinet. The Advisory Board was elected by the Church. The Cabinet, responsible for the financial well-being of the Bible School, was composed of the pastor, superintendent, secretary and a member from the Advisory Board.

Sunday School Attendance reported from various years included: 1908 – 81, 1913 – 101, 1915 – 150, and 1917 – 177. 1919 – 179, with the largest Sunday attendance 287 in 1919(which include the Frisbie House class). The report added that a total of 9300 hours of instruction had been provided by the teachers! Also astonishing was the Cradle Row membership. According to the 1913 report, there were 61 names on the Roll with attendance some Sundays reaching 59. Average attendance from year to year during this period was 36. No information was found on the ages of those on the Cradle Roll. We can speculate that it included infants and toddlers.

In 1919, the Rev. Hawley remarked at the congregation's annual meeting that the church appreciated the twelve years that Mr. and Mrs. Hultz lead the Sunday School. With the assistance of Mr. E. L. Quaife, Mr. H.F. Brown, Mr. Stacey, and Dr. E. R. Smith, the Sunday School had held a high rank, winning honors among the Sunday Schools of the state. (CHECK THAT OUT!) Mention was made in other reports that Mr. Hawley preached a "junior" sermon at the beginning of the Church School. An annual report account adds that an orchestra of the Church School added to the minister's inspirational sermons. Mrs. Hawley was active in Sunday School work, serving as leader of the Beginners group. In 1926, due to the use of the parsonage for Sunday School classes and the plan to house an unmarried assistant, Mr. Norris Wentworth, there, the Hawleys moved to Frisbie House.

## Organizations

The dominant minister of this period is the Rev. Henry Hawley. On more than one occasion, he said "the machinery of the church is in good smooth working order." That descriptive word, machinery, could apply to the Boards of Trustees and Deacons. It could reflect the large number of Women's Clubs and the annual Harvest Home dinners. Especially after the World War Frisbie House activities functioned like a well-oiled machine.

Before the Rev. Hawley arrived, the First Congregational Church became a member of the Des Moines Association of the Congregational Conference of Iowa (1910). The Conference agreed to hold its spring meeting in Ames. During that same year, a new group was organized at First



Congregational Church of Ames – the Men’s Brotherhood. With the Rev. Minchin’s leadership during this time, another group formed was Religious Forward Movement. In 1917, a Congregational Brotherhood Class with 54 members began.

One of the most active families in the church during this period was the Davidson family. In recalling her involvement and that of her family and friends, Margaret Davidson remembered the Bazaar. She added, “C.E. – Christian Endeavor—was high on my lists. Recently I’ve talked to a couple of friends who, all those years ago, were C.E. friends. First off we chatted about parties, dances, ice skating events and tennis matches before we got to the list of projects and studies that were part of the program. John Hawley, one of H.K. Hawley’s sons and a contemporary of mine, said, ‘Dad liked us to have good times – much better than other things we could be doing.’” Not mentioned in Ms. Davidson’s letter was another group, the Girls Opportunity Club that was organized in 1907. Perhaps by her time, it had come and gone.

Our traditions and heirlooms

Add later