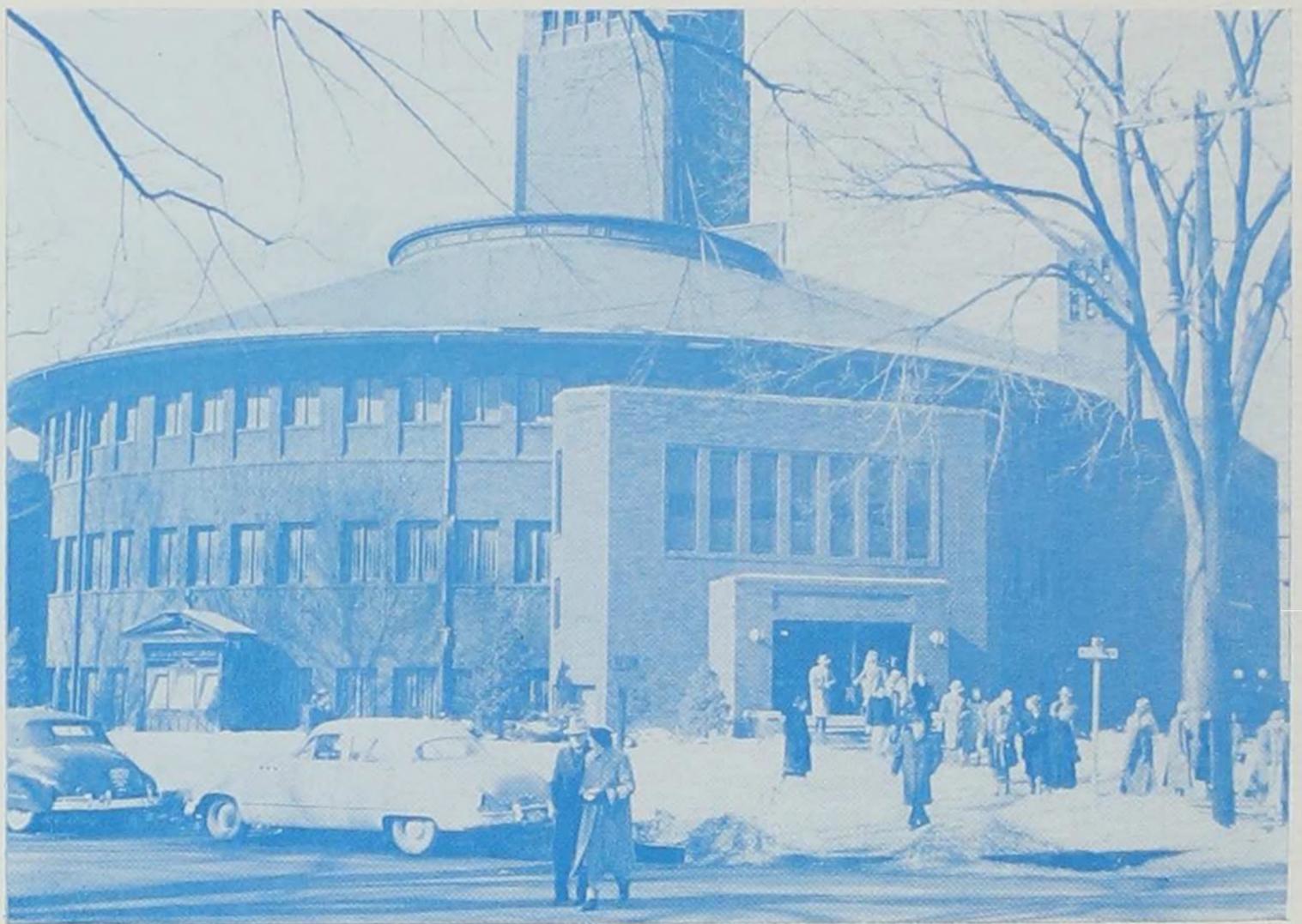


*The*  
**PALIMPSEST**

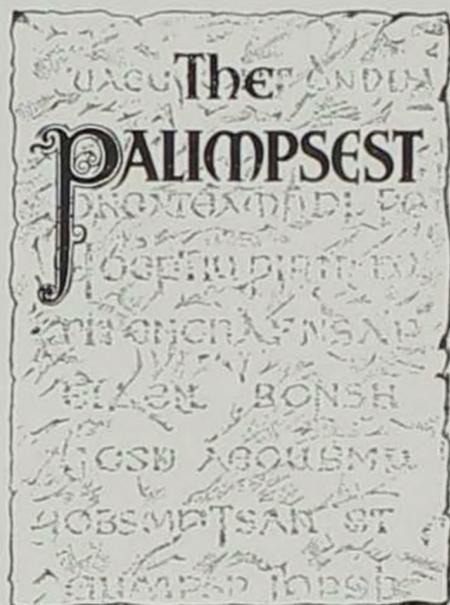


Published Monthly by

**The State Historical Society of Iowa**

Iowa City Iowa

FEBRUARY 1951



## The Meaning of Palimpsest

In early times a palimpsest was a parchment or other material from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the records of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

## Contents

### THE METHODISTS IN IOWA

RUTH A. GALLAHER

Meet the Methodists	57
Building Churches	66
The Circuit Riders	75
Church Organization	85
Faith and Doctrine	94
The Ministry of Healing	103
The Ministry of Education	107
The Methodist Church Today	117

## Cover

*Front* — St. Paul's Methodist Church in Cedar Rapids — February, 1951. Largest Methodist Church in Iowa — 3,383 members.

*Back* — Inside: Subscription list for Methodist Episcopal Church in Dubuque—First Church in Iowa — 1834.

*Back* — Outside: Two Des Moines Churches:

*Top*: First Methodist, Rev. C. Clifford Bacon, Minister.

*Bottom*: Grace Methodist, Rev. Newton E. Moats, Minister.

ENTERED AS SECOND CLASS MATTER JULY 28 1920 AT THE POST OFFICE AT  
IOWA CITY IOWA UNDER THE ACT OF AUGUST 24 1912

PRICE — 15 cents per copy; \$1.50 per year; free to Members

MEMBERSHIP — By application. Annual Dues \$3.00

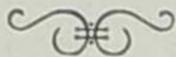
ADDRESS — The State Historical Society, Iowa City, Iowa

# THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY WILLIAM J. PETERSEN

VOL. XXXII      ISSUED IN FEBRUARY 1951      No. 2

*Copyright 1951 by The State Historical Society of Iowa*



## Meet the Methodists

It is impossible to write the biography of a man without knowing something of his ancestry and childhood; it is equally difficult to write of the work of a church or denomination without knowing the environment in which it sprang up and developed.

Methodism began with the birth of John Wesley on June 17, 1703, in the rectory at Epworth, in Lincolnshire, England. His male ancestors on both sides were clergymen, many of them Non-conformists. Taught in his early years by his mother and sent to the Charterhouse School in London when he was ten, John Wesley entered Oxford University at seventeen. Here he became a member of the "Holy Club," a group of students, devoted to intensive religious practices, which had formed around his younger brother, Charles, the famous hymn writer. The name of the club seems to have been applied, in derision, by their fellow students, who also referred to the members as bigots and "Bible moths," as well as "Methodists."

"By rule they eat, by rule they drink,  
Do all things else by rule, but think —  
Accuse their priests of loose behavior,  
To get more in the laymen's favor;  
Method alone must guide 'em all,  
Whence Methodists themselves they call."

John Wesley was ordained as a deacon in the Church of England in 1725. For a time he preached for his father at Epworth, and in 1728 he took priestly orders. The England of his day was a challenge, but Wesley was in no mood to meet it. The government was corrupt; the common people found solace from their hunger and misery in drink. Crime, though cruelly punished, was rampant, and disease stalked the path of the ill-fed, unwashed, badly clothed workers. The Church had fallen into a political slough: many of the clergy spent their days in hunting and their evenings in unclerical amusements.

The unrest of the time reflected itself in John Wesley's indecision. Though a priest, he was dissatisfied with his own spiritual condition. The answer to his religious perplexities came from his association with the Moravians both in England and in Georgia, where he served as a missionary to the Indians from 1735 to 1737. While on the stormy voyage to America, Wesley had observed that the Moravians alone of all his fellow passengers seemed unafraid of the terrors of the Atlantic and inwardly at peace; but it was difficult for an Oxford don to accept their simple faith.

Back in England, Charles Wesley was the first of the brothers to experience conversion, but three days later John passed the crisis in his spiritual life "about a quarter before nine" in the evening, Wednesday, May 24, 1738. While attending a Moravian prayer meeting in Aldersgate Street, London, Wesley felt his heart "strangely warmed," and "the peace of complete fellowship with God fell upon him."

From that time until his death, John Wesley never faltered. He went out to tell the story of his experience: his faith that God would receive all men who came humbly to seek forgiveness, his confidence that all could be saved from sin. Excluded from many of the churches, he began preaching in the open air, often to large crowds. Gradually he built up a great following — a few clergymen, some of the nobility and landowners, and many of the poor. Wesley and his leaders visited the prisons. No man or woman, he proclaimed, was too poor or too sinful to be accepted as a child of God, but once accepted he must turn away from drink, crime, and immorality, even from worldly amusements and pride.

Thus began an organization under John Wesley, as field marshal, which was religious but not a church. To supervise the work he traveled some 250,000 miles, most of the time on horseback. To assist him, Wesley used the few ordained clergymen who joined him in his work and numerous lay

leaders to shepherd the societies he formed. After some hesitation he decided to permit carefully selected laymen to preach. Among Wesley's associates was George Whitefield, the famous revivalist of the Great Awakening in the colonies.

The Methodist societies formed by Wesley and his followers were, at first, supplemented by bands made up of those whose sins had been forgiven. These devout members met for mutual counsel, confession, and testimony. Later, classes were organized under class leaders. Gradually the classes took over the spiritual nurture of the members, and the bands disappeared. Another practice of the Methodists was the "love feast," with bread and water in place of the bread and wine of the sacrament. These meetings were accompanied by prayer, testimonies, songs, and other manifestations of religious fervor. After a time the love feast came to be associated with class meetings and prayer meetings. Most meetings were for members only; transgressors were expelled.

The Methodist movement was a yeast which tended to leaven British society. Wesley's followers were often poor, but they ceased to be depraved. They were often ignorant, but they could sing hymns and learn to read the Bible. They were humble, but they could give certain testimony of their salvation. They took pride in their fellowship with God and with one another, and they went out to convert others by the thousands.

On June 25, 1744, John Wesley held the first conference of the Methodist societies in the Foundry, London, with six clergymen of the Church of England and four lay preachers present. Two years later the area covered by the Methodist work was divided into seven circuits. In spite of this organization, Wesley insisted that the Methodists must return to their regular churches for the sacraments.

By the time of John Wesley's death on March 2, 1791, there were 240 Methodist societies in Great Britain alone, with 134,549 members in good standing, under the supervision of 541 itinerant preachers, many of them laymen.

It was not until after Wesley's death that a church grew out of the Methodist movement in England, but in America the Revolution hastened the transformation. By 1760 a few Methodists had arrived in the colonies. Philip Embury came to New York in that year, and six years later started a Methodist society, which, in 1768, built Wesley Chapel. Other societies were formed in Maryland and Virginia by Robert Strawbridge, and steadily the movement covered more and more territory. It was but natural that American Methodists should make their wants known to John Wesley — they required money and preachers. The British Methodists sent out ten preachers including the indomitable Francis Asbury, who came in 1771. In 1773, when the first Methodist

conference in the colonies was held at Philadelphia, ten preachers came in from their circuits. Thomas Rankin had been sent over by John Wesley to superintend the work in America which, however, was just getting under way when the colonists defied George III and the Parliament.

As for John Wesley, rebellion was not to his liking. In religious matters he was a Nonconformist like his ancestors, but politically he was a Tory. Not long after the trouble in the colonies began Wesley issued (1775) *A Calm Address to Our American Colonies*, urging loyalty to the crown. This pamphlet was bitterly resented in America, and Methodism might have been destroyed had it not been for the devotion of its workers. They bowed to the storm but did not lose faith.

When the war was over, John Wesley was fair minded enough to see that Methodism in the United States could not stand in the same relationship to English Methodism as before; the feeling still existing against England made this an impossibility. A demand that the Methodist preachers be authorized to baptize and to give communion had already threatened the work in 1779 and 1780. Wesley now realized that a break was inevitable and that a new church was the answer. He ordained two lay preachers — Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey — to act as presbyters or ministers in the United States. He also

appointed Dr. Thomas Coke as the superintendent of the new church and instructed him to ordain Francis Asbury as joint superintendent.

The three men sailed for the United States in 1784, bearing John Wesley's instructions for the American Methodists. On November 3 they arrived at New York where they were welcomed to Wesley Chapel. Asbury quickly assigned them to a wide circuit in order to acquaint them with frontier conditions.

The Christmas Conference, held in the Lovely Lane Chapel in Baltimore from December 24, 1784, to January 3, 1785, was attended by more than fifty Methodist preachers whom Freeborn Garrettson, an American-born Methodist preacher, had rounded up from their circuits. By the vote of this conference, the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized. Asbury was ordained as a deacon in the new church, on the following day as an elder, and on the next day, after his election by the conference, as a superintendent.

Thus, in 1784, the first national church organization in the new nation came into being with 18,000 members, 104 traveling preachers, 104 local preachers, 208 licensed exhorters, 60 chapels, and 800 preaching places. In 1789, a month after George Washington was inaugurated as President of the United States, he was visited by four leaders of the new church who gave their blessing to the new government. By 1810 the Methodist

Episcopal Church reported 175,000 members, and in 1830 the membership reached 476,000.

The Methodist Church in America followed many of the customs which Wesley had developed in England. There were societies (later, churches), classes and class leaders, lay preachers, and conferences. Only accepted members could attend some of these meetings. In 1777, for example, the conference ruled that funeral sermons would be preached only for those who died in the fear and favor of the Lord. In place of the great meetings in England, America developed camp meetings and revivals, usually lasting several days, since distances in the United States often made it difficult to collect a congregation for a single sermon.

The doctrines of the Methodist Episcopal Church were largely determined by the teachings of John Wesley, who selected twenty-four of the *Thirty-nine Articles* of the Church of England. These, together with an additional article pledging allegiance to the new republic, became the constitution of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States. The doctrines of the new church were based on John Wesley's sermons and his *Notes on the New Testament*. The church government was placed in the hands of the bishops or superintendents. In the early years, Francis Asbury was the dominant personality, but gradually the number of bishops was increased and the

important decisions of the church were made at the general conferences held every four years.

In a church so new, operating in an ever moving, ever widening field, differences of opinion were unavoidable, and several divisions occurred in the Methodist fold. In 1830 a dissenting group organized, without episcopal government, as the Methodist Protestant Church. In 1844, the antislavery sentiment caused the withdrawal of a large contingent and the organization, in 1845, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. These branches of Methodism were not reunited until 1939 when, following the adoption of the Plan of Union, they were brought together at Kansas City, Missouri, to form "The Methodist Church."

For almost fifty years before the settlement of Iowa was begun, the Methodist Episcopal Church had vastly enlarged the circle of its ministry. With bishops in general charge of its work, with doctrine, organization, and administration in the hands of annual conferences, with an army of itinerant preachers pushing out to the most remote settlements, with hundreds of congregations singing and praying in the cabins and schoolhouses, the Methodist Episcopal Church was on the march across the continent.

## Building Churches

"The groves were God's first temples," wrote William Cullen Bryant, but through the ages man has felt the urge to build temples as a tribute to whatever gods he worshiped and to provide a place in which to carry on that worship service. So the Egyptians, the Greeks, and the Romans built temples in honor of their many gods; so the Jews worshiped Jehovah in a building dedicated to the Lord; so the craftsmen of the Middle Ages wrought the great cathedrals decorated with intricate carving and lovely windows of many colors. The people who settled America believed that God dwelt in a place not made by hands, but His people needed a sanctuary in which to worship. And so each pioneer community built churches — log or frame at first, perhaps, later brick or stone, and partly because most were poor.

The Methodists of England and those in the American colonies worshiped in chapels, usually with severe exteriors, plain glass windows, and simple furniture. This was done partly because ornate cathedrals and beautiful churches had become associated with formality and lack of spiritual life, and partly because the early Methodists were usually poor people.

The first church building in what is now Iowa was built by the Methodists at Dubuque, under the direction of the circuit rider, Barton Randle. When he arrived at that frontier mining village on November 6, 1833, he found a straggling collection of log cabins housing some four hundred pioneers. That evening Randle held a meeting in what was known as the Bell Tavern on the site now occupied by the Hotel Julien Dubuque. Later, a small room over a grocery (a store in which liquor was sold) was rented for a meeting place. The entrance was by a rickety stairway outside. While the congregation was engaged in singing, praying, testifying, and listening to the sermon, those in the grocery below were drinking, cursing, and fighting.

Early in the spring of 1834, some devout women organized a union Sunday school and on April 24 the first Methodist prayer meeting in Iowa was held at the home of John Johnson. When the first Methodist class in Iowa was organized on May 18, Johnson was named as class leader. That spring the Dubuque Methodists, "encouraged thereto, by some friendly sinners," decided to build a church. The original subscription paper, still preserved, described it as follows:

To be built of hewn logs: 20 by 26 feet in the clear; one story, 10 feet high; lower & upper floors; shingled roof; painted with lime & sand; one batten door; four 20 light & one 12 light windows — cost estimated for completing in

good plain style \$255.00. The above house is built for the Methodist Episcopal Church — but when not occupied by said Church shall be open for Divine service by other Christian Denominations; and may be used for a common school, at the discretion of the Trustees.

Below this statement are the names of seventy donors, their subscriptions ranging from \$25.00 given by Woodbury Massey to twelve and a half cents pledged by Caroline Brady — perhaps the widow's mite. The signatures reveal Dubuque's cosmopolitan population. Three names were followed by the word "collered," two of the three donating twenty-five cents and the third fifty cents. All the Negro subscribers are said to have been slaves. One, "Tilda," was a sister of Ralph, the slave whose fight for freedom constituted the first case heard by the Iowa Territorial Supreme Court. Nigley was described as "a dutchman," Duplissey was apparently French, while Patrick O'Mora was undoubtedly from Ireland.

A lot for the building was secured from Thomas C. Legate, the federal superintendent in charge of the mining area, for the land was not yet for sale. Work was begun on the building on June 23, 1834, and on July 25 John Johnson recorded in his diary that they "raised the meeting-house with a few hands and without spirits of any kind." Perhaps the lack of liquor, the usual refreshment provided at frontier "raisings," accounted for the few hands. The building occupied a site now

forming the southeast corner of Washington Square and apparently faced south. On August 23 and 24 the first Methodist quarterly meeting in Iowa was held in this log church, and the church organization was complete — class meeting, Sunday school, prayer meeting, preaching service, and quarterly meeting. At this two-day meeting the building was dedicated. The membership of the newly organized church was made up of five men and seven women. One of the women was Charlotte Morgan, a colored sister.

Several terms of court, under Michigan Territory, are said to have been held in this church building. The town of Dubuque was also incorporated in it. In the spring of 1836, Mrs. Caroline Dexter conducted school in the church, giving instruction in writing, arithmetic, and sewing.

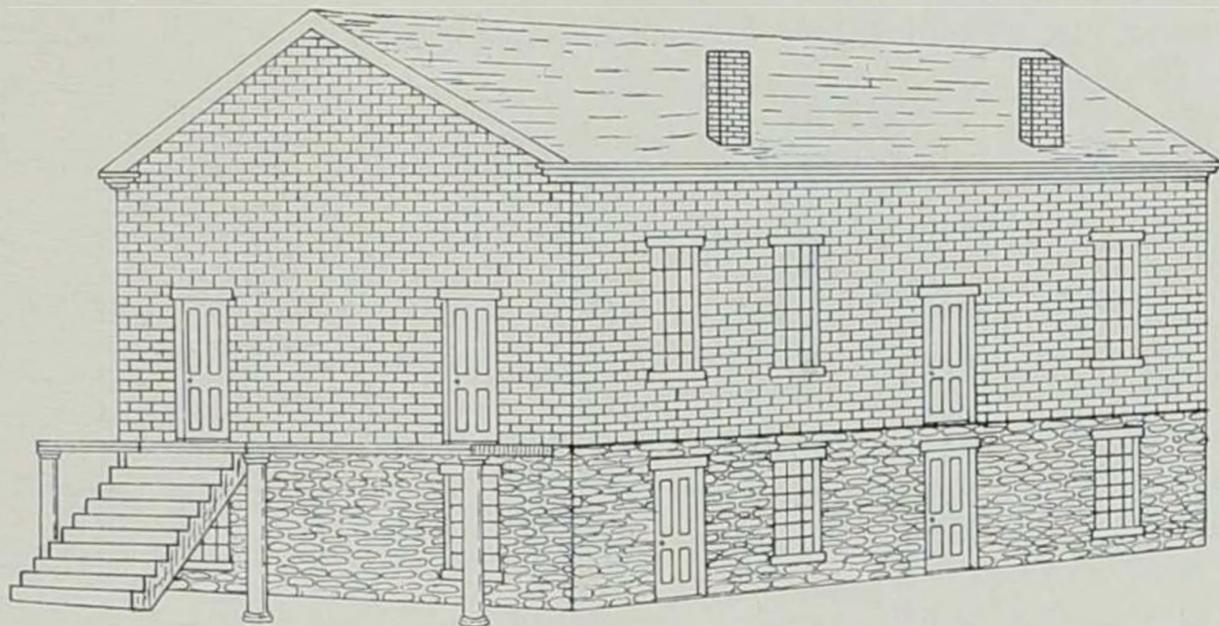
The log church was soon outgrown. By 1840 a new building, known as the Wesleyan Centenary Church, in commemoration of the first Methodist chapel built at Bristol in 1739, was erected on the northwest corner of Seventh and Locust streets, and the old log building was moved to a site near the corner of Bluff and Dodge streets, covered with clapboards, and used as a dwelling. Its later history has not been recorded. By 1850 the Centenary Church had also been outgrown, and a new building was soon erected on the west side of Main Street between Eleventh and Twelfth streets. The Main Street Church was

later remodeled and served until 1895 when it was torn down to make room for the present-day St. Luke's Methodist Church, which cost almost \$100,000 and has a seating capacity of fifteen hundred. Dedicated on May 16, 1897, St. Luke's is a lineal descendant of the first church in Iowa.

More widely known than the little log church at Dubuque was the brick church erected by the Methodists at Burlington in 1837. This church was one of the projects of the Methodist class organized in the cabin of Dr. William R. Ross in the spring of 1834. It was Dr. Ross who purchased the two lots on the west side of Third Street between Columbus and Washington streets in Burlington and donated them as a site for the proposed church. Money was scarce on the frontier in 1837, and Reverend Nicholas S. Bastion was sent east to solicit funds. He was unsuccessful, however, and had to borrow twenty-five dollars to pay his expenses home. The pioneers, as usual, took over the responsibility, and the church was built.

As originally constructed, the Burlington church was a plain brick two-story building forty by sixty feet in size, without vestibule, tower, or bell. The second story was the church auditorium or sanctuary and was reached by steps leading up to an open platform along the front of the building. The basement, with stone walls two feet thick, extended some eight feet above ground and

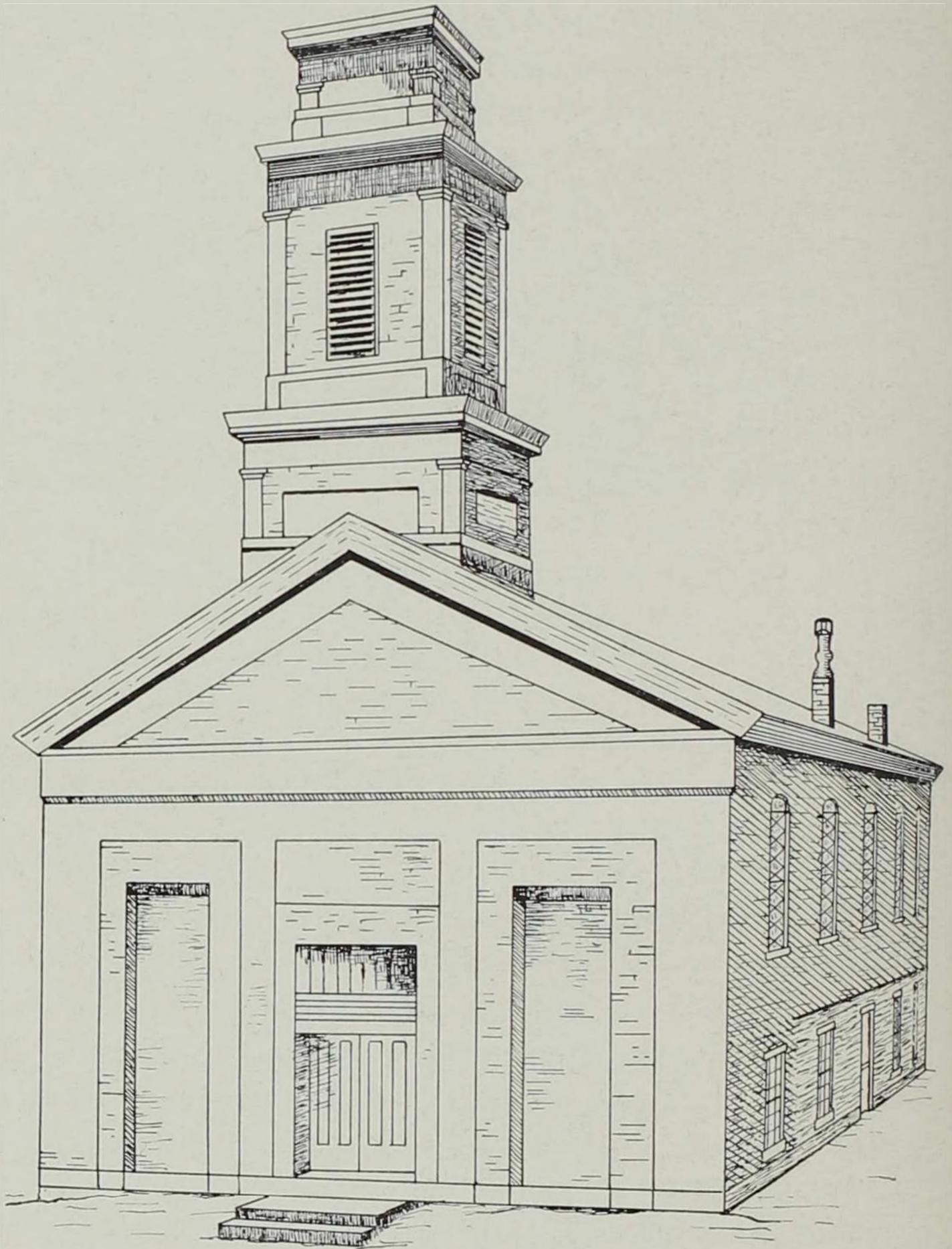
was apparently intended for Sunday school classes and smaller group meetings.



SKETCHED BY DONOVAN G. TEMPLE FROM AN OLD DRAWING.

#### THE FIRST CAPITOL OF IOWA TERRITORY

But the "best laid plans of mice and men ging aft aglee." The church was approaching completion when, on December 12, 1837, fire destroyed a building which had been erected by Jeremiah Smith to house the Legislative Assembly of Wisconsin Territory. A building to take the place of the burned structure was needed, and the men responsible for the debt of the church needed money, so both financial and patriotic considerations led to an agreement by which the recently completed church building was rented to serve as the temporary capitol of Wisconsin Territory. A year later, on November 12, 1838, the First Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Iowa convened in it. The House of Representatives used the upper story and the Council met in the basement.



SKETCHED BY DONOVAN G. TEMPLE FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.

OLD ZION CHURCH

A total rent of over \$2,000 was paid to the church authorities, but this was not sufficient to take care of the debt. The building was about to be sold when Dr. Ross came to the rescue by selling his \$3,400 home for \$1,200 to save the church.

Beginning in 1841, the legislature held its sessions at Iowa City, but the brick church continued to be used by the government for several years. There the Territorial Supreme Court met, and from the pulpit the death sentence was read to the notorious Hodges brothers. There, too, Governor Robert Lucas met his Indian wards, and there on July 4, 1839, he presided over a celebration at which Augustus Caesar Dodge read the Declaration of Independence and youthful James W. Grimes was the orator of the day.

These activities did not, however, interfere with the use of the church for worship on the Sabbath, the elect in the "Amen Corner" sitting on straight-backed rough benches, and the run-of-the-mill congregation on backless seats. In 1845 more comfortable seats were provided, and the front platform, supported by the three turned posts, gave way to a dignified two-story vestibule. A belfry was provided in 1850, and a bell weighing 1,450 pounds was installed. It was, perhaps, to raise money to pay for this innovation and certain repairs that a festival was advertised in 1851 by a handbill which declared "Old Zion wants a new roof." From that time the historic building was

popularly known as "Old Zion Church." Fourteen years later the interior was remodeled, and the windows, formerly plain parallelograms, were arched. Finally, in June, 1864, the church was formally dedicated.

The career of Old Zion was, however, running out. In 1853 a second Methodist Church had been built in south Burlington and named Ebenezer. In 1879 the two congregations were combined in the Ebenezer church building as the First Methodist Church of Burlington. The old bell brought to Iowa in 1850 was moved to the newer church building, and in 1881 Old Zion was torn down to make room for a theater. Only a bronze tablet now marks the site where the pioneer church and capitol once stood, but more than the inscription on the tablet commemorates the church. How many lives were benefited by its ministry cannot be learned, but one man, Charles C. McCabe, converted at a watch night party at Old Zion on January 1, 1851, lived to raise millions of dollars to build new Methodist churches on the frontier and to become an honored bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

These pioneer churches were only two of the many Methodist churches which were built in Iowa communities and towns. There were hopes and sacrifices, tragedies and defeats, growth and prosperity, but each church added something to the moral and spiritual development of Iowa.

## The Circuit Riders

There is much interest today in displaced persons — the millions uprooted and sent into strange lands by war, racial hatred, or religious persecution. Over a century ago, Iowa was the Mecca for thousands of displaced persons, not victims of oppression or prejudice but self-reliant pioneers. They had seen a vision of a new home where the soil was more fertile, land was cheaper, and life more democratic. They sold their houses and lands, if such they owned, disposed of the chattels which could not be transported, loaded their treasured belongings and their families into wagons or boats, and set their faces westward, "bound for Iowa." They left behind advantages enjoyed in the older communities — stores, schools, and churches.

Gradually there filtered into the new Iowa settlements teachers, physicians, lawyers, merchants, bankers, priests, and ministers. In the forefront came the Methodist circuit riders — men who had dedicated their lives to preaching the gospel. On horseback or on foot, with a Bible, a hymnal, a copy of the *Discipline* of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and a change of raiment in their saddlebags or knapsacks, these men kept pace with the

onrushing frontier. Usually they found food and lodging in the crowded cabins. Sometimes they slept on the ground; sometimes they were compelled to swim the rivers and flooded creeks; sometimes they encountered blizzards or thunderstorms. But nothing stopped them long.

Their chief purpose was to preach salvation to those who accepted Christ and his teachings, but they also performed marriage ceremonies, held burial rites for the dead, comforted the survivors, and reprimanded those who did not live according to their profession. In a land where men and women had to depend largely on their own efforts for survival, where pestilence and danger threatened, where life was full of hard work and solitude, the circuit riders were welcome guests. They brought the message of God's help and love and forgiveness and offered the promise of rest and security in the future life.

The organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church was well suited to work among pioneers. The societies which John Wesley had formed in England and which were continued in America were informal organizations supervised and instructed by itinerant preachers and shepherded by class leaders. As the societies multiplied, circuits were formed and preachers were appointed to visit them as often as they could make the rounds.

Of whom was this vanguard of the church made up? The circuit riders were common men, some-

times almost illiterate men, but wise in the wisdom of the frontier and willing to sacrifice wealth and comfort at the call of duty. They believed sincerely that persons who did not accept and follow the New Testament way of salvation, as they understood it, would be condemned to everlasting punishment. They felt keenly the burden of saving souls from a Hell which they envisioned clearly and described graphically. They were also socially conscious leaders — men who taught the practical virtues of honesty, generosity, kindness, and morality. For those who accepted Christ and fulfilled the obligations of a Christian life they described a Heaven of light, rest, and plenty, with golden streets, where the fortunate ones constantly rejoiced in the presence of God.

The godfather of Iowa Methodism was Peter Cartwright, a dynamic leader of circuit riding preachers. Born in Amherst County, Virginia, on September 1, 1785, Cartwright preached in Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois, but his hand reached out to the new parish across the Mississippi. Converted at sixteen, he became a Methodist, soon began to "exhort," and in 1806 was ordained as an elder. Shrewd and fearless, equally ready to pray or to fight, at first knowing few books except the Bible, Peter Cartwright was, in many ways, typical of the frontier preachers. His *Autobiography*, written in 1856, mentions only one visit to Iowa and the date of that is not given. Eye-

witnesses, however, have stated that it took place in the summer of 1834. Cartwright describes a two-day meeting held near Burlington, then a place with only a few cabins, not one of which could hold the people who came. The congregation and the preachers repaired to a near-by grove.

Cartwright described this meeting in his *Autobiography*:

Years before this time an old tree had fallen down across a small sapling and bent it near the earth. The sapling was not killed, and the top of it shot up straight beside the tree that had fallen on it, and it had grown for years in this condition. The old tree had been cut off, and they scalped the bark off of that part of the sapling, that lay parallel with the ground. They drove a stake down, and nailed a board to it, and the top of the sapling that grew erect, and this was my handboard, and I stood on that part of the sapling that lay near and level with the ground. This was my pulpit, from which I declared the unsearchable riches of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and we had a good meeting.

Cartwright also gives a nostalgic picture of the change that had come over the Methodist Church during his lifetime.

The Methodists in that early day dressed plain; attended their meetings faithfully, especially preaching, prayer and class meetings; they wore no jewelry, no ruffles; they would frequently walk three or four miles to class meetings, and home again, on Sundays; they would go thirty or forty miles to their quarterly meetings, and think it a glorious privilege to meet their presiding elder, and the

rest of the preachers. They would, nearly every soul of them, sing our hymns and spiritual songs. They religiously kept the Sabbath day. . . . The Methodists of that day stood up and faced their preacher when they sung; they kneeled down in the public congregation as well as elsewhere when the preacher said, "Let us pray." There was no standing among the members in time of prayer; especially the abominable practice of sitting down during that exercise was unknown among early Methodists. Parents did not allow their children to go to balls or plays; they did not send them to dancing-schools. . . . But, how things have changed for the worse in this educational age of the world.

It was Peter Cartwright, presiding over the meeting of the Illinois Conference at Union Grove, Illinois, in September, 1833, who sent Barton Randle to preach at the Dubuque lead mines. John Johnson was appointed as the class leader there. Later, as presiding elder in the Quincy District of the Illinois Conference, Cartwright sent Barton H. Cartwright, possibly a cousin, to organize a Methodist class at Burlington in April, 1834; Dr. William R. Ross was appointed as the class leader.

Barton H. Cartwright was, after a fashion, conscripted into preaching. One day he walked three miles to attend a preaching service on the Illinois side of the Mississippi River opposite Flint Hills (Burlington) in Iowa. When he arrived at the cabin in which the preaching was to be held, he found Barton Randle, the preacher, ill of a

fever and lying in the loft of the cabin. Cartwright visited him and showed him his church letter. After some conversation Randle said, "There are two or three families in the grove, and they will be here today, and you must hold meeting for them." At first the young man refused, but later convictions of duty came to him and he talked to the group. That afternoon Randle handed him a license to exhort. "I went about," he says, "breaking prairie in the day-time, and talking to the people at night; they called it preaching." On March 22, 1834, Peter Cartwright licensed him to preach and sent him to the Flint Hills, "to preach and form societies, if practicable, and to report to the Church."

Desiring to be self-supporting, Barton Cartwright took with him four yoke of oxen, a breaking plow, and a load of supplies. He was described as "a young man in vigorous health, of good proportions, dressed in plain linen pants, homemade cotton vest, common shoes, without socks, with no coat, and with a common chip hat." It was later said of him that he was "a man with a big head, and a good one, a broad chest and heavy shoulders, having a mouth plentifully wide, with lungs capable of the highest degree of intonation, who could make bass enough for any congregation, and sustain a prayer-meeting to the end, and as honest as old Abe himself."

Barton Cartwright soon returned to Illinois, and

in September, 1835, his place in southeastern Iowa was taken by John H. Ruble (or Rubel), sent by the Missouri Conference. Ruble was described as good-looking, affable, and intelligent, familiar with the Scriptures, gifted in song, and fervent in prayer. His circuit had some thirteen stations, including Burlington, Yellow Springs, Farmington, Fort Madison, Augusta, and Mount Pleasant. These were the Sunday preaching centers. On week days and nights the circuit rider preached wherever he found people to listen. For most of his duties the church was the only authority needed, but legal authority was required for the solemnization of marriages. On October 31, 1835, Dr. William R. Ross, Clerk of Court of Des Moines County, Michigan Territory, authorized the young minister to perform marriage rites in that county.

In January, 1836, Ruble married Diana Bowen, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Bowen, prominent both in the community and in the church. But tragedy soon overtook this young couple. In making his monthly round of his circuit, the missionary was stricken with what was called influenza. He died on April 14, 1836, saying, "The Will of God be done! Welcome, Death, I am prepared to go!" It is said that he was the first minister to marry in the Iowa country and the first one to die and be buried there. A marker, erected in the cemetery at Mount Pleasant in 1858 and restored in 1934,

records that "Rev. John H. Rubel died May 8 A. D. 1836, age 26 years 2 mos." Apparently both the spelling of the name and the date of death were given from memory; the Missouri Conference records give the spelling as Ruble and the date as April 14.

The era of the circuit riders lasted until after the Civil War, for the frontier continued in some parts of Iowa for almost half a century. One of the later circuit riders was Mahlon Day Collins, a Friend who became a Methodist preacher. Collins was born in New York City in 1838 and lived for a time in the Quaker settlement around Salem, Iowa. Just before the Civil War began, young Collins and a companion made a trip to the gold fields in Colorado and the southwest. Upon his return to Iowa, Collins married Keturah Ann Williams, another Friend, and the couple established their home at what was known as Lotts Creek, now Livermore, in Humboldt County. At a revival in 1862 both became converted and transferred their affiliations to the Methodist Church.

Mahlon Day Collins was soon licensed as a Methodist exhorter in the Fort Dodge District of the Upper Iowa Conference. He served two years in this capacity while he studied for the ministry, improved his 160-acre farm, and preached every Sunday. In the fall of 1864 he was admitted on trial to the Des Moines Conference

and assigned to the settlement at Denison, some 150 miles from Lotts Creek. From that time on during his active ministry Collins and his family literally had no home. Two years later he was transferred to a circuit including Onawa, Smithland, Correctionville, Moingona, and Floyd's Creek — a distance of some 200 miles. In 1867 he was sent to Jefferson, a new railroad town. At the eastern point of his circuit a small Methodist group started a church. Collins and his wife sold their land on Lotts Creek and gave the money for its completion. The settlement became Collins, Iowa; the church, "Collins Chapel."

For six years the Collins family traveled on these circuits, using a two-seated surrey in summer and a bobsled in winter. During winter storms the wife and children might be protected under blankets and buffalo robes, but the minister had to face the wind and snow, often tramping ahead of the team to break a way through the drifts. Hardships took their toll in life as well as in suffering. Mary Collins, two years of age, died at Denison, and Edith, a baby daughter, died at Jefferson. Two other Collins girls, Lillian and Stella, died of scarlet fever at Boonesboro, but the work went on. Collins usually held four quarterly meetings and started at least one revival meeting each week. Camp meetings were held in the summer and fall. Prayers, songs, and exhortation, interspersed with shouts of "Amen," "Praise God," and "Hal-

"lelujah," echoed from the camp grounds. Whenever a person stood up and thereby announced his conversion, the congregation signified its joy by shouts and songs.

The good done by these self-sacrificing people cannot be computed. In spite of their lack of education, inadequate compensation, and great hardships, they made an invaluable contribution to society. Mary Carolyn Davies has written a tribute to these "minute men" of the church, the circuit riders.

God rides out on his ancient quest,  
Healing, saving, commanding;  
Here in the savage, unknown West;  
Settlement, cabin, landing —  
Well they know the steady beat,  
In the stillness, of God's horses feet.

God leads to grace the pioneers,  
Who walk each hour with danger;  
Knows these grim men for his peers,  
Gives his bread to the stranger;  
Doing all that a neighbor can,  
God rides still, a weary man.

## Church Organization

The Methodist Episcopal Church was well organized for work on the frontier. Under the watchful eyes of the bishops the country was divided by the General Conference into conferences whose members were the ordained elders and deacons. Each conference held an annual meeting, presided over by a bishop, who read the list of appointments for the year. On the following Sunday each minister was expected to preach in his new charge. Each annual conference was subdivided into districts, consisting of a number of circuits made up of churches, classes, preaching stations, and missions.

Methodist ministers were usually recruited from the ranks. When a young man felt the call, he was given a license to preach for a probationary period. If he qualified, he was ordained first as a deacon and then, after further preparation, as an elder. He was then admitted into a conference by vote of the members, and was ready for appointment as a traveling preacher. The 1784 Conference had fixed the circuit rider's annual salary at \$64; this figure was raised to \$80 in 1800 and to \$100 in 1816. Some allowance also was made to the preacher for his wife and children. In 1804 a

rule was adopted limiting to two years the time that a preacher might serve the same congregation, but this period was increased to three years in 1864 and to five years in 1888. In 1900 the time limit was removed.

The charge to which a member of the conference was appointed might be a station, a circuit, or a mission. A station was a community where the minister resided and preached regularly. A circuit consisted of several settlements where preaching services were held more or less regularly. Some circuits required the preacher to travel from fifty to two hundred miles or more. Beyond the regular circuits was the mission field. Each church was expected to carry on the usual Methodist activities — preaching, prayer meeting, Sunday school, and class meeting. It was also the preacher's duty to visit all the members and to reclaim those who had "fallen from grace." Four times each year the presiding elder visited each charge in his district, held quarterly conference, heard reports, preached, and conducted the communion service. In the early days, a two-day revival might be held at the time of the quarterly conference meeting.

The Methodist Episcopal Church sent its first worker into the Iowa area in the autumn of 1833, when Peter Cartwright sent the Reverend Barton Randle to Dubuque. In southeast Iowa, the Missouri Conference for a time competed with the

Illinois Conference for the supplying of this mission field; but in 1839 the Iowa area was made a district in the Illinois Conference. A year later, when the Illinois Conference was divided, Iowa became part of the Rock River Conference, with the Iowa District and the Burlington District. In 1843 the Rock River Conference met in the new Wesleyan Centenary Church at Dubuque, at which time a third district, the Des Moines, was created.

Two of the four delegates selected to represent the Rock River Conference at the General Conference of 1844, which met in New York, were from Iowa — Henry W. Reed and Bartholomew Weed. It was at this General Conference that the Iowa annual conference was organized. Its first session was held at Iowa City, August 14-19, 1844, with eleven members and fourteen candidates for ordination present. At that time Iowa Methodism reported 5,504 members, including 69 lay preachers. Seven men were ordained as deacons by this conference and three as elders.

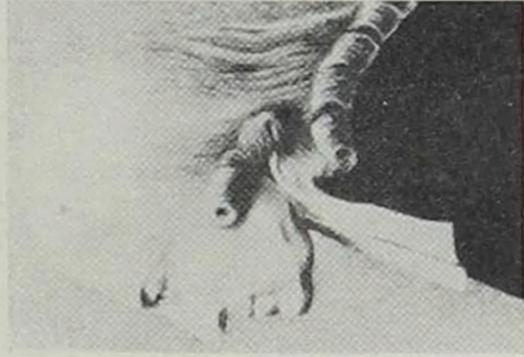
The population of Iowa was increasing rapidly. In 1856 the Iowa Conference was divided: that part lying north of a line running from Davenport to Iowa City, thence up the Iowa River to the south line of Benton, Tama, and Marshall counties, and thence due west to the Missouri River was organized as the Upper Iowa Conference. Its first meeting was held at Maquoketa, August

27-September 1, 1856, with Bishop Edmund S. Janes presiding. The Reverend Landon Taylor, an outstanding frontier preacher known as "weeping Taylor" because of his great earnestness, was elected as the Conference secretary. In 1860 the western part of the Iowa Conference was organized as the Western Iowa Conference. Four annual meetings were held; but for some reason, not shown in the *Minutes*, this arrangement was discontinued in 1864, and the entire western half of the state was set up as the Des Moines Conference with six districts. By 1872 settlement in the northwestern area had increased and the Northwest Iowa Conference was established, with Dakota included in its jurisdiction.

For sixty years Iowa Methodism was grouped in these four conferences. By 1932, however, automobiles and better roads had cut the measure of distance, encouraging consolidation. In that year the two southern conferences were united to form the Iowa-Des Moines Conference, and in 1949 the Upper Iowa and Northwest Iowa conferences were united as the North Iowa Conference.

An interesting sidelight on the above divisions is found in the career of the Reverend Bennett Mitchell, one of Iowa's great clergymen, who was born in Indiana at the time of the Black Hawk War. Coming to Iowa in 1852, he received a license to preach and was ordained by the Iowa Conference three years later. When the West-

SOME HISTORIC LEADERS AND SOME MODERN BISHOPS



JOHN WESLEY



CHARLES WESLEY



THOMAS COKE



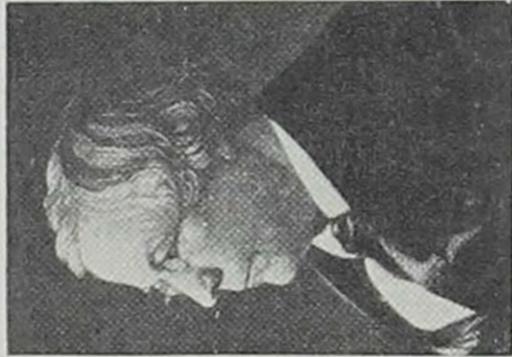
FRANCIS ASBURY



EDWIN H. HUGHES



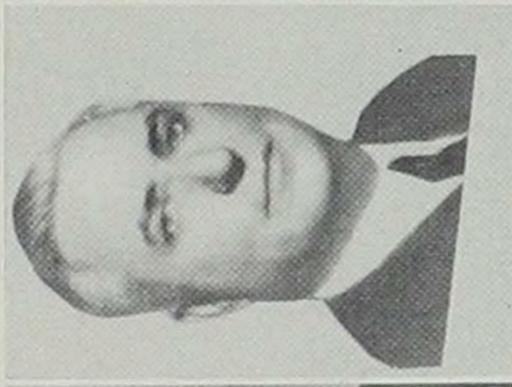
RICHARD C. RAINES



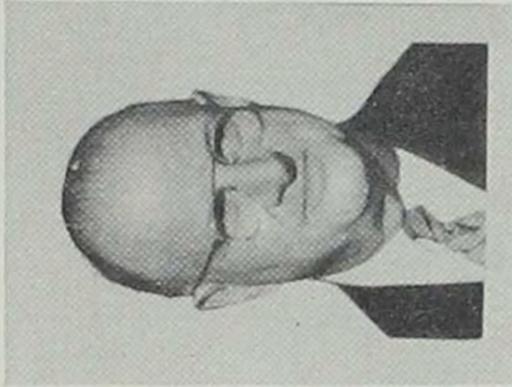
T. A. MORRIS



E. G. ANDREWS



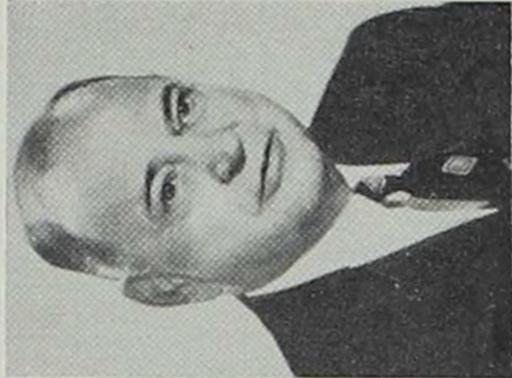
EDWIN F. LEE



J. RALPH MAGEE



TITUS LOWE

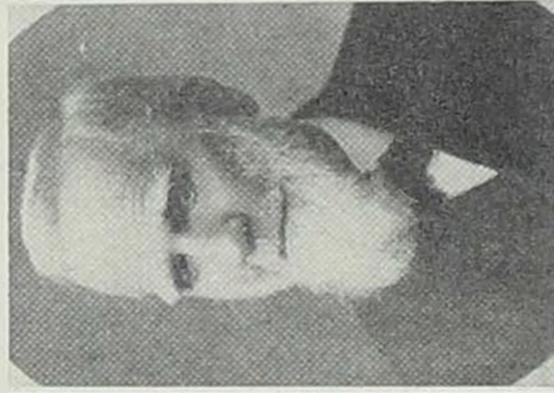


C. W. BRASHARES

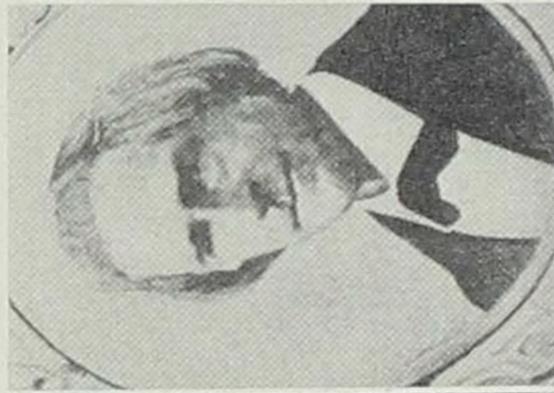
SOME CIRCUIT RIDERS



GEO. B. BOWMAN  
*Iowa Conference*



BENNETT MITCHELL  
*N. W. Iowa Conf.*



LANDON TAYLOR  
*Upper Iowa Conf.*



PETER CARTWRIGHT  
*Illinois*



BARTON CARTWRIGHT  
*Burlington*



BARTON RANDLE  
*Dubuque*

SOME MODERN PREACHERS



RAOUL C. CALKINS  
*Des Moines*



JOHN P. HANTLA  
*Sioux City*



MARVIN B. KOBER  
*Cedar Rapids*



L. L. DUNNINGTON  
*Iowa City*



JOHN D. CLINTON  
*Des Moines*



L. A. GUSTAFSON  
*Mason City*

SOME LAYMEN OF EARLY DAYS AND SOME OF TODAY



ROBERT LUCAS  
*Iowa City*



WM. S. BEARDSLEY  
*New Virginia*



ANNIE WITTENMYER  
*Keokuk*



LOUISA H. HUGHES  
*Bloomfield*



ROBERT L. LARSON  
*Iowa City*



JOHN R. MOTT  
*Postville*



J. L. PETERSON  
*Webster City*



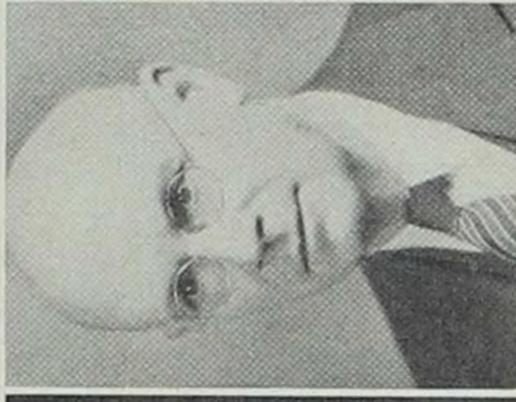
RALPH L. JESTER  
*Des Moines*



MRS. F. G. BROOKS  
*Mount Vernon*



MRS. R. C. ARMSTRONG  
*Cedar Rapids*

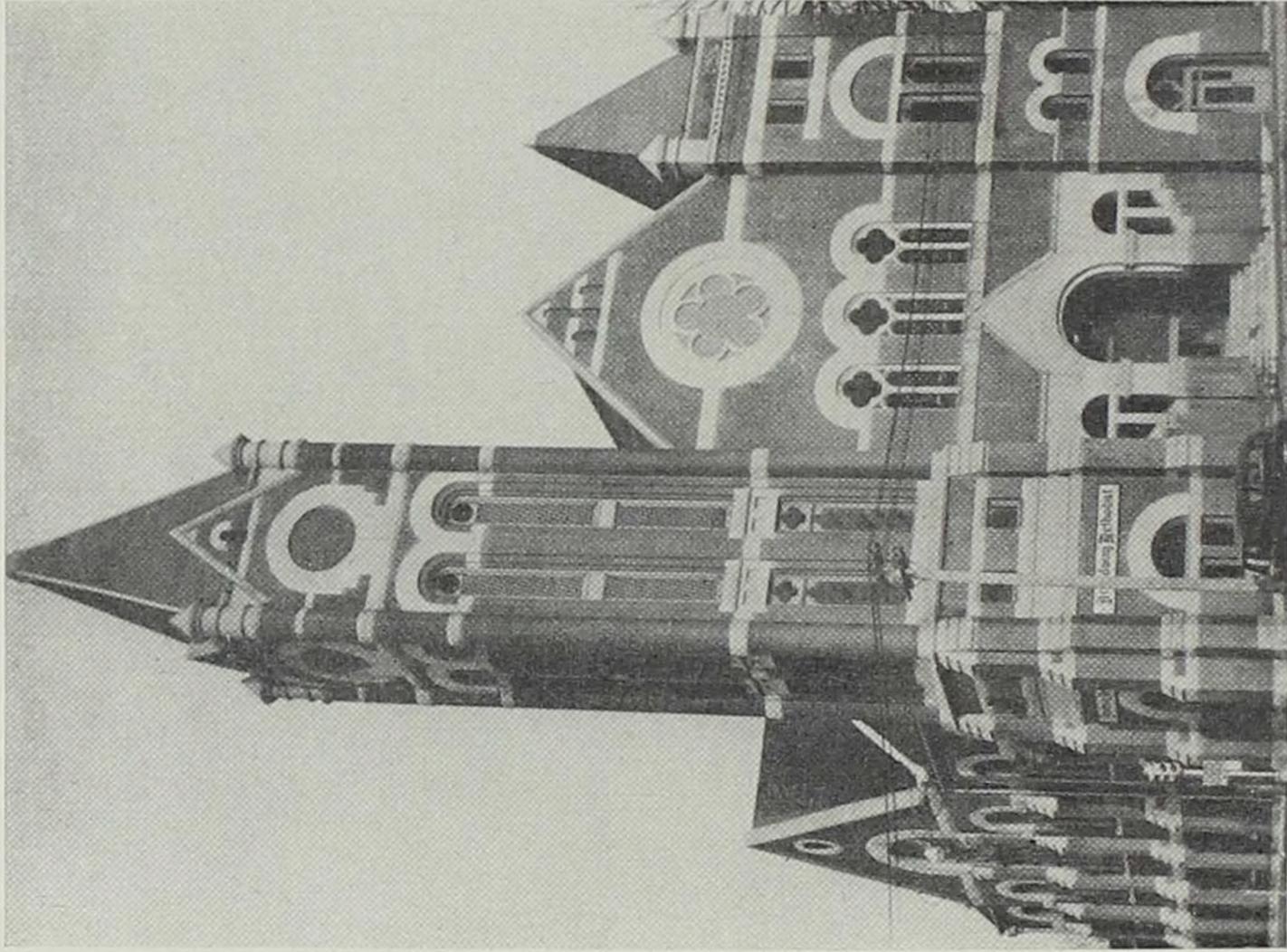


B. O. GAMMON  
*Des Moines*

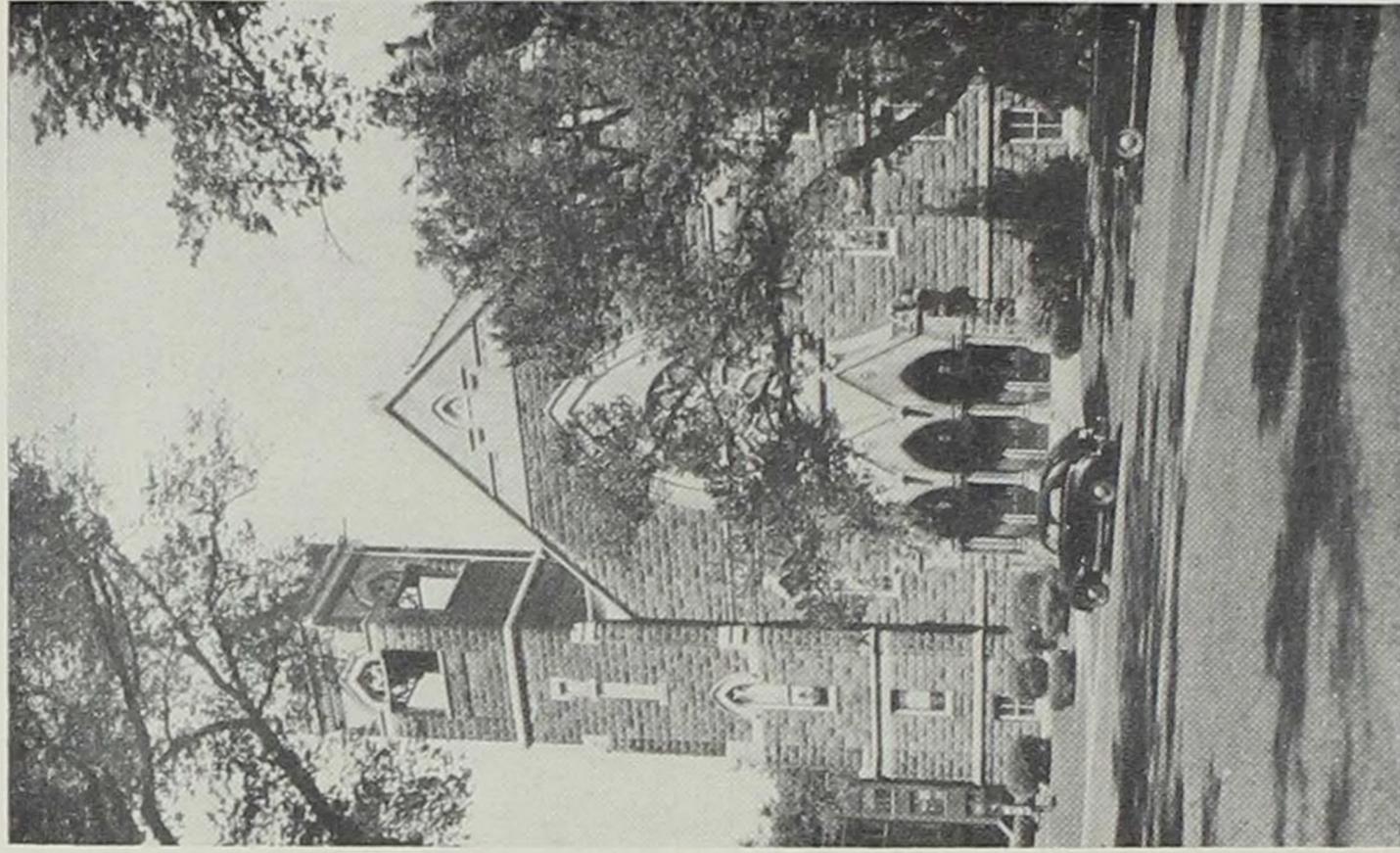


EARL ELIJAH  
*Clarence*

SOME IOWA CHURCHES

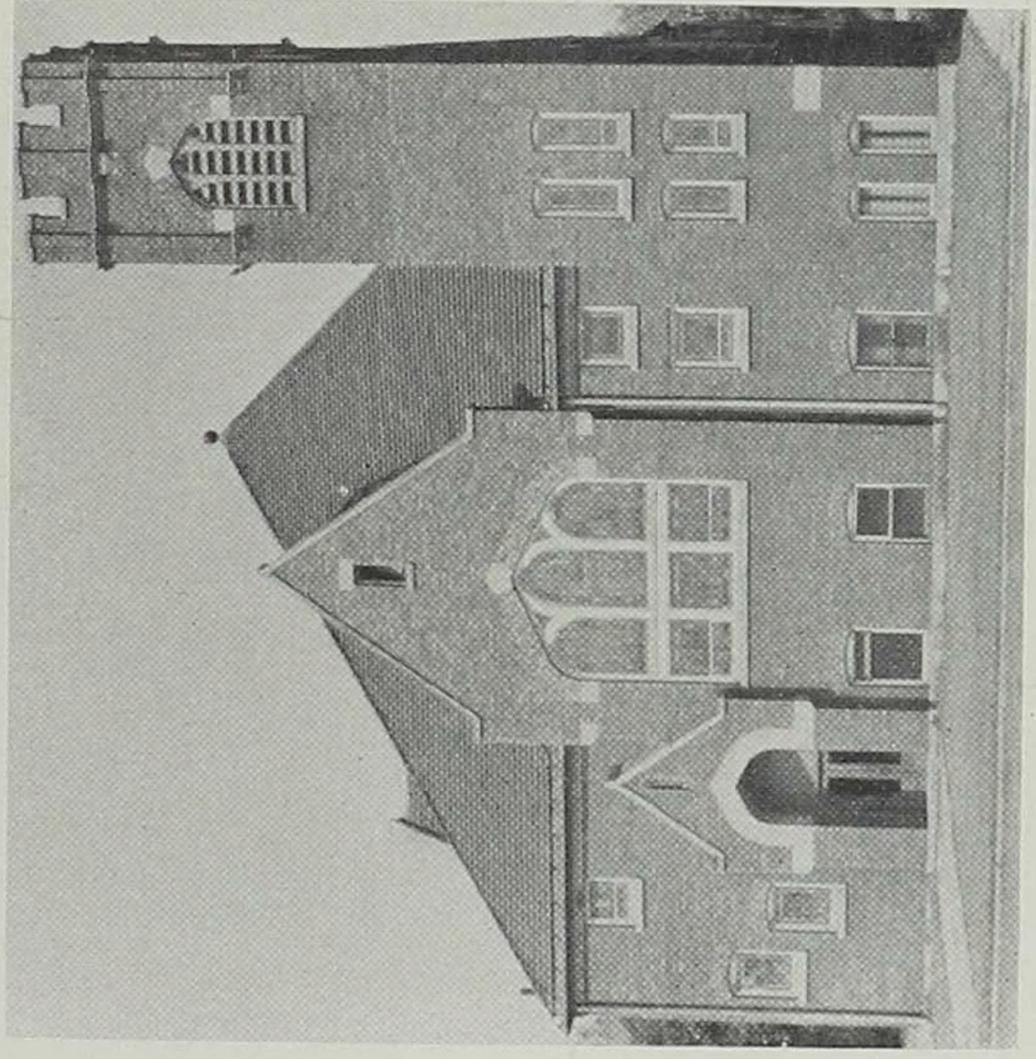


Broadway Methodist, Council Bluffs

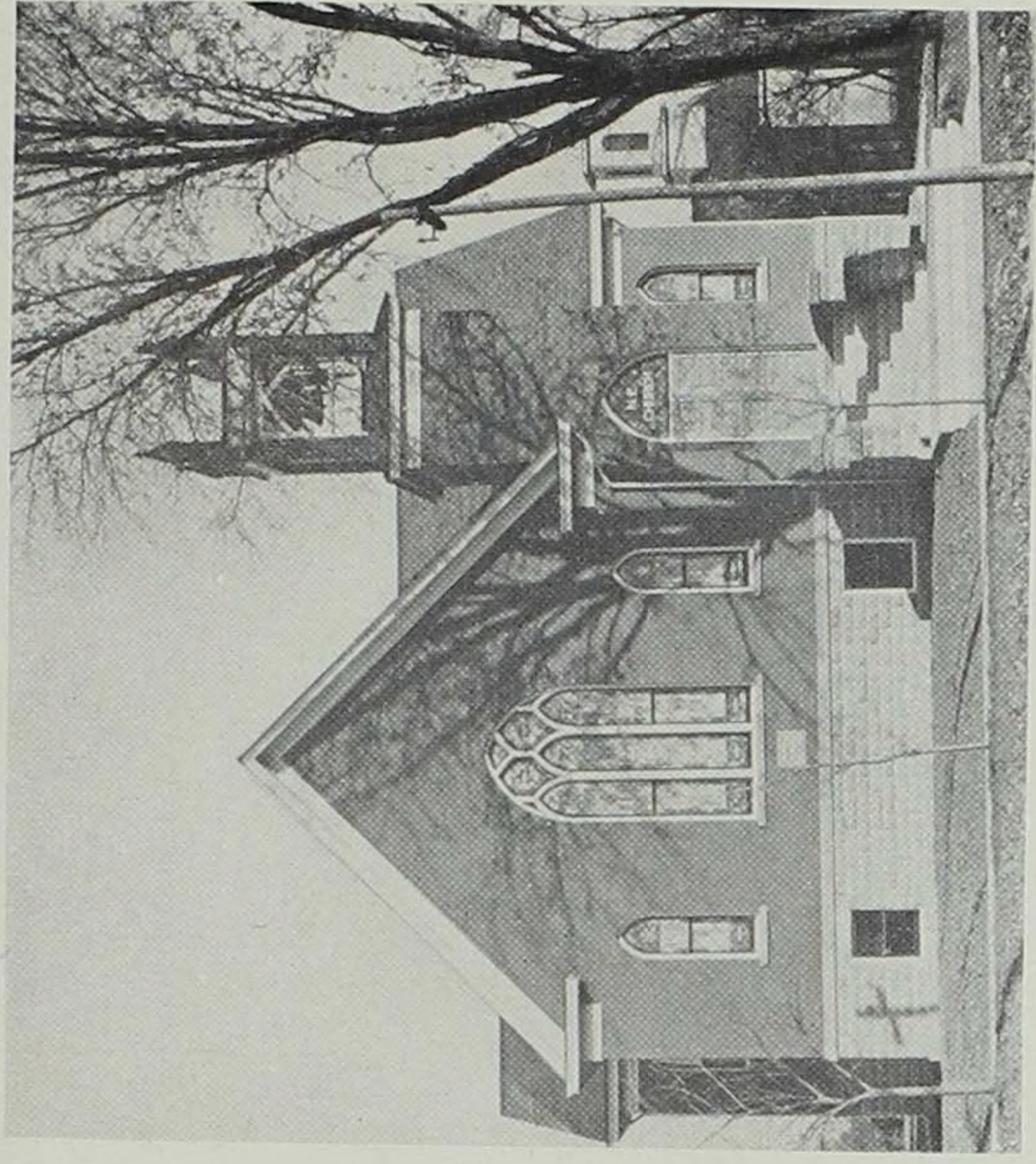


First Methodist, Iowa City

SOME IOWA CHURCHES

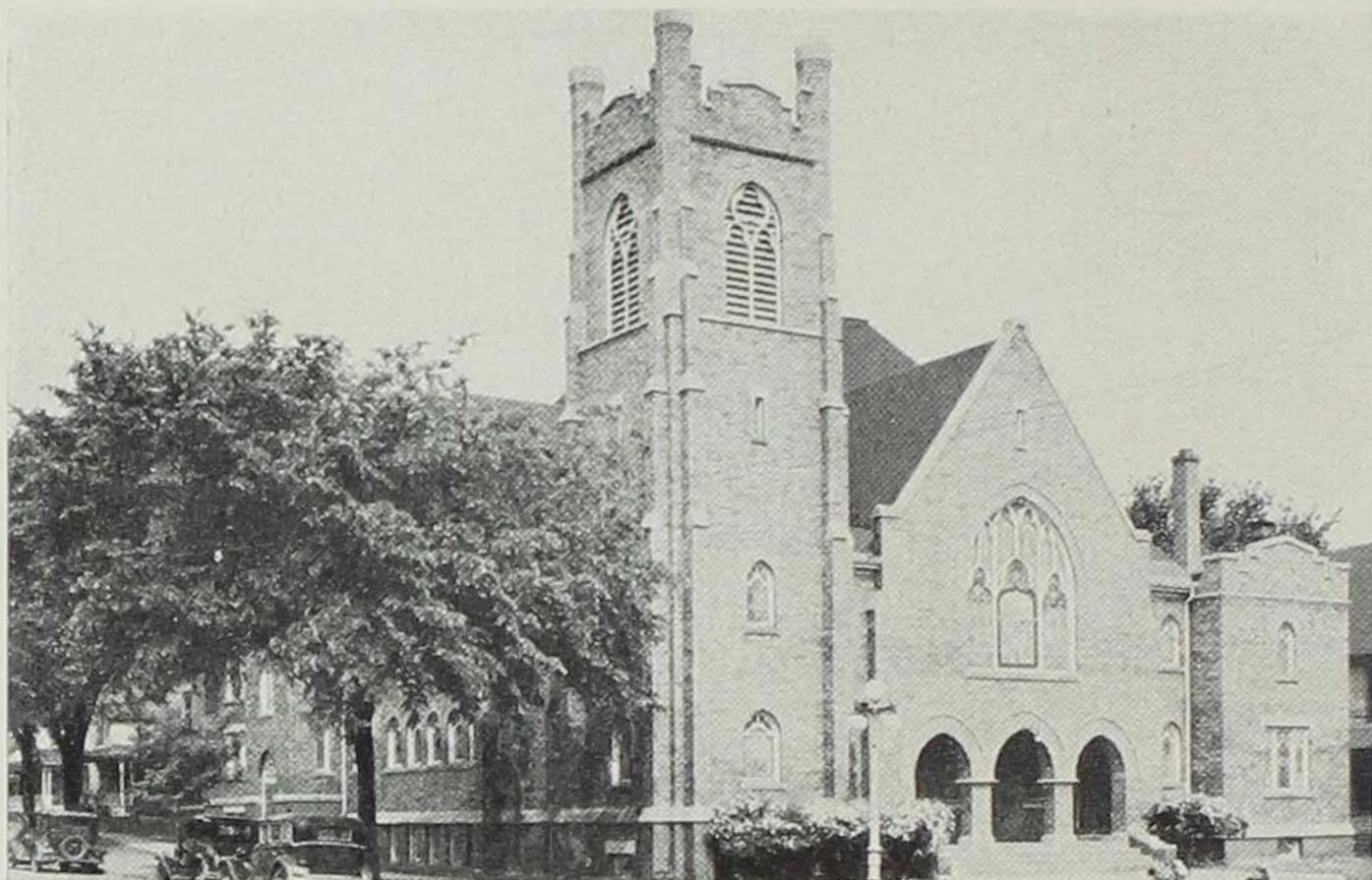


First Methodist, Marengo

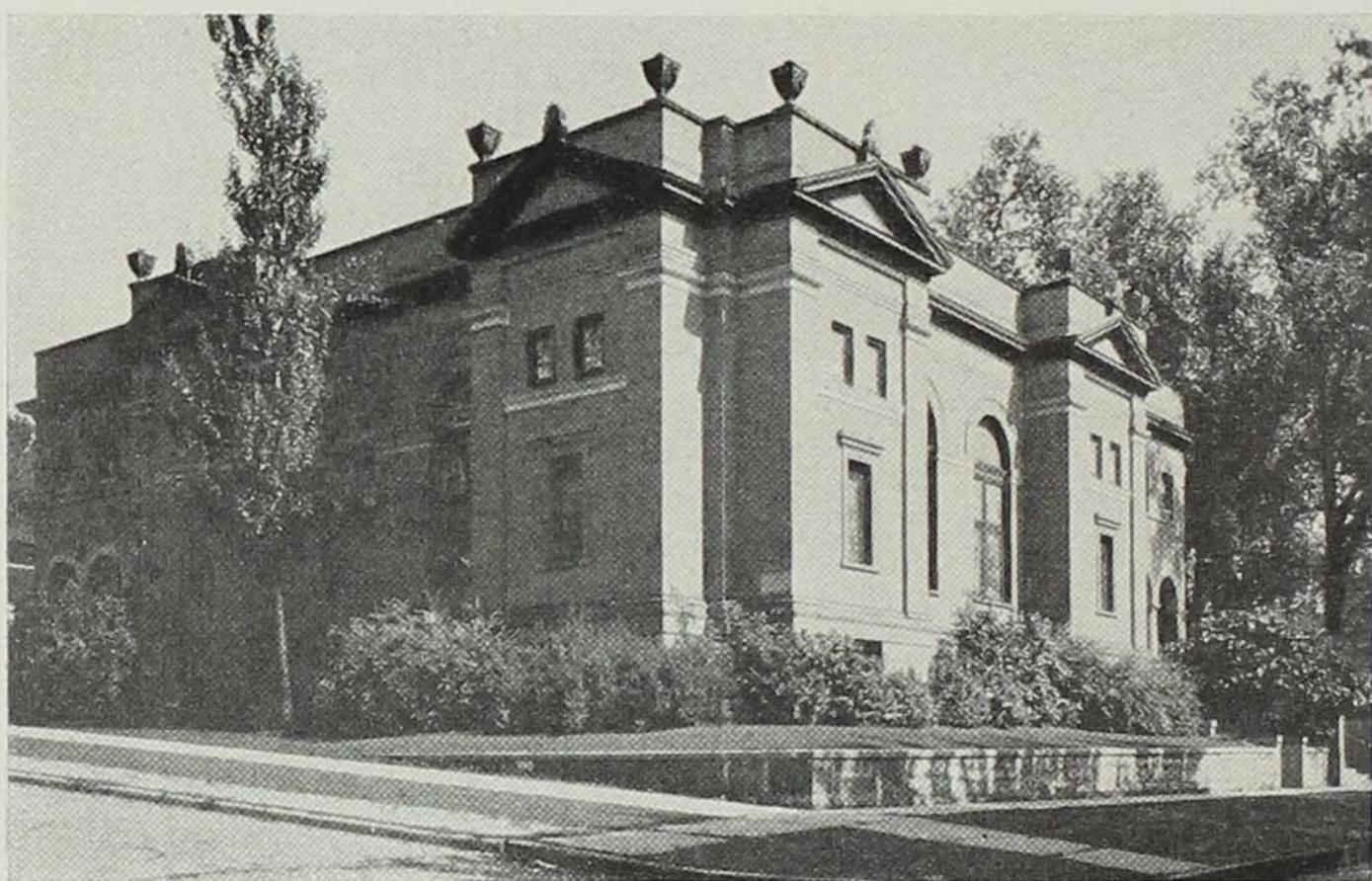


First Methodist, De Witt

SOME IOWA CHURCHES



First Methodist, Webster City



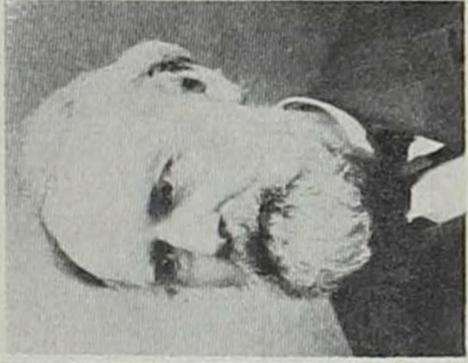
First Methodist, Red Oak

SOME PRESIDENTS OF IOWA METHODIST COLLEGES

IOWA WESLEYAN — MOUNT PLEASANT



A. J. HUESTIS  
1842-49



JAMES HARLAN  
1853-55; 1869-70



J. R. CHADWICK  
1950-

SIMPSON — INDIANOLA



ALEXANDER BURNS  
1868-78



EDWIN E. VOIGT  
1942-

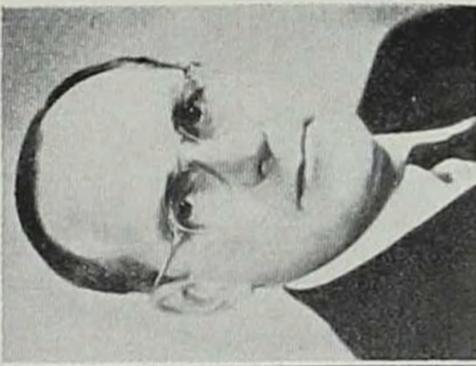
CORNELL — MOUNT VERNON



WILLIAM F. KING  
1865-1908

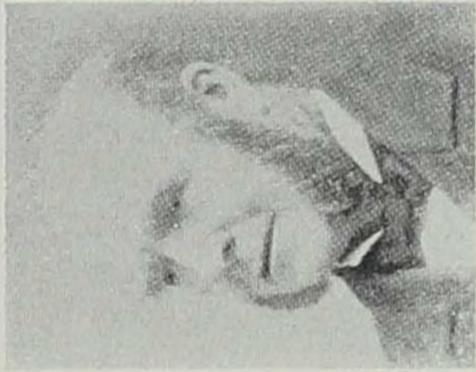


JOHN B. MAGEE  
1939-43

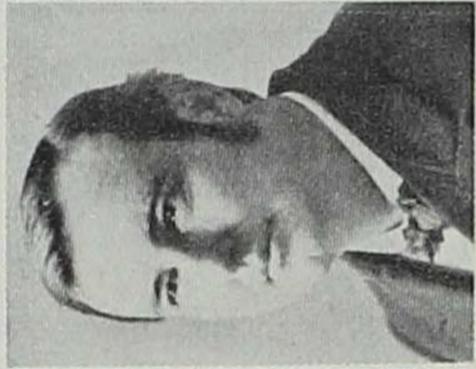


RUSSELL D. COLE  
1943-

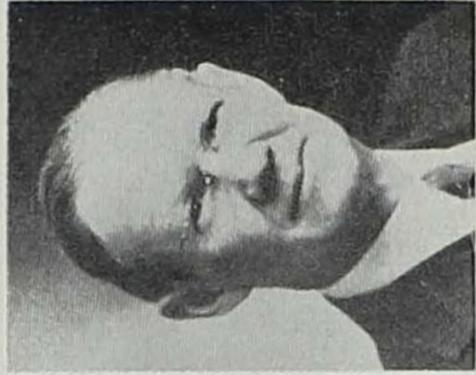
MORNINGSIDE — SIOUX CITY



GEORGE W. CARR  
1894-96

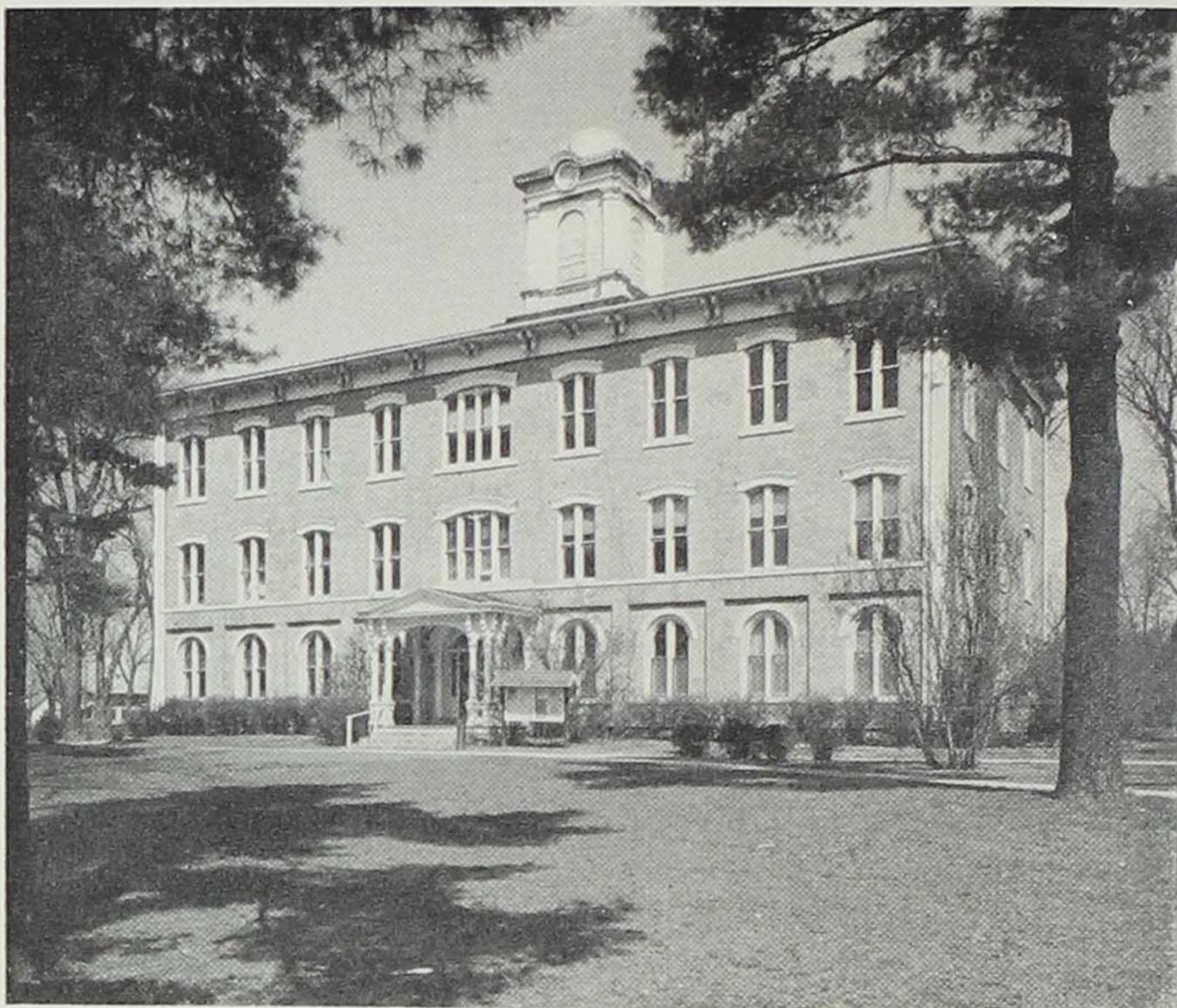


WILSON S. LEWIS  
1897-1908

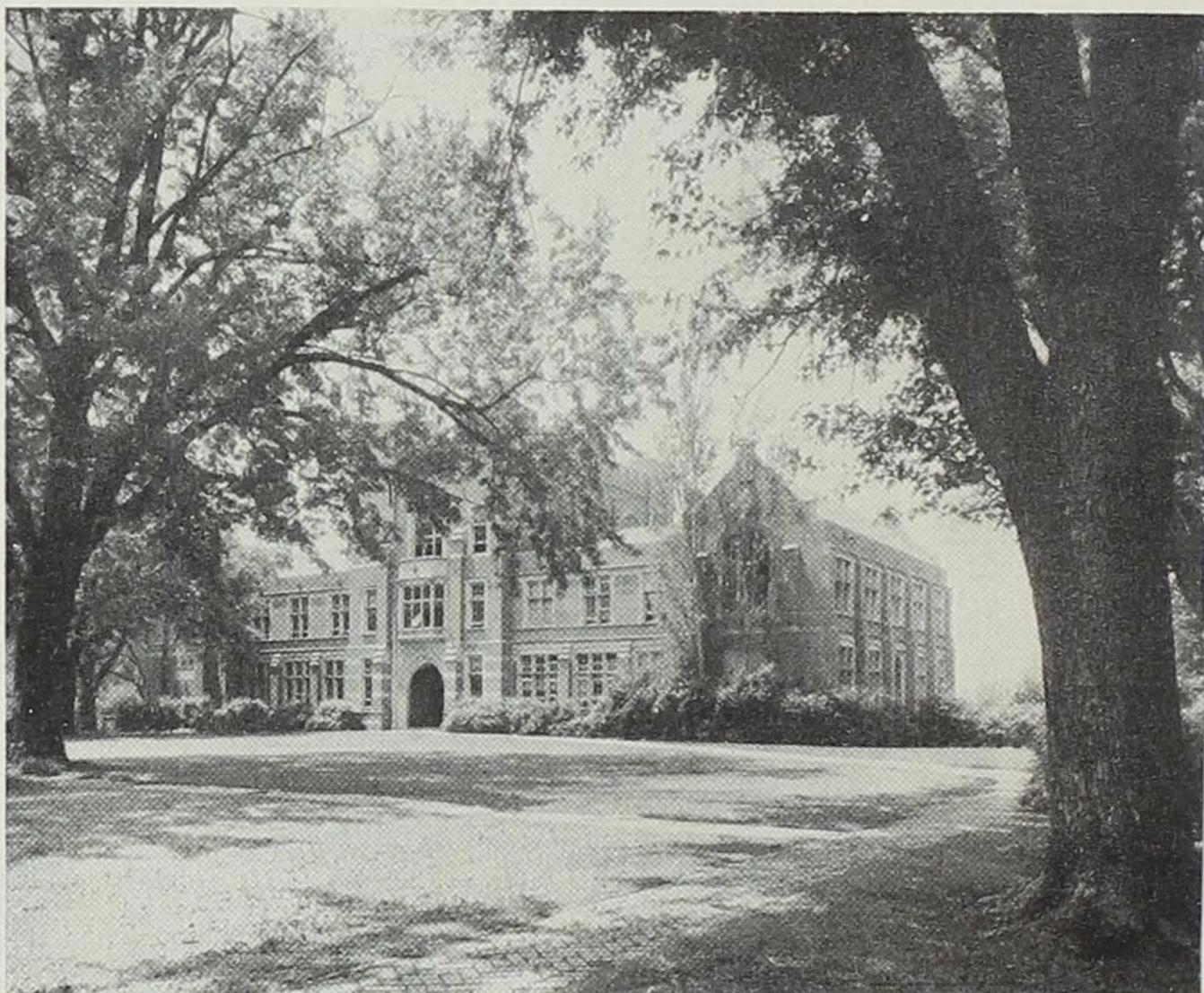


EARL A. ROADMAN  
1936-

IOWA METHODIST COLLEGES

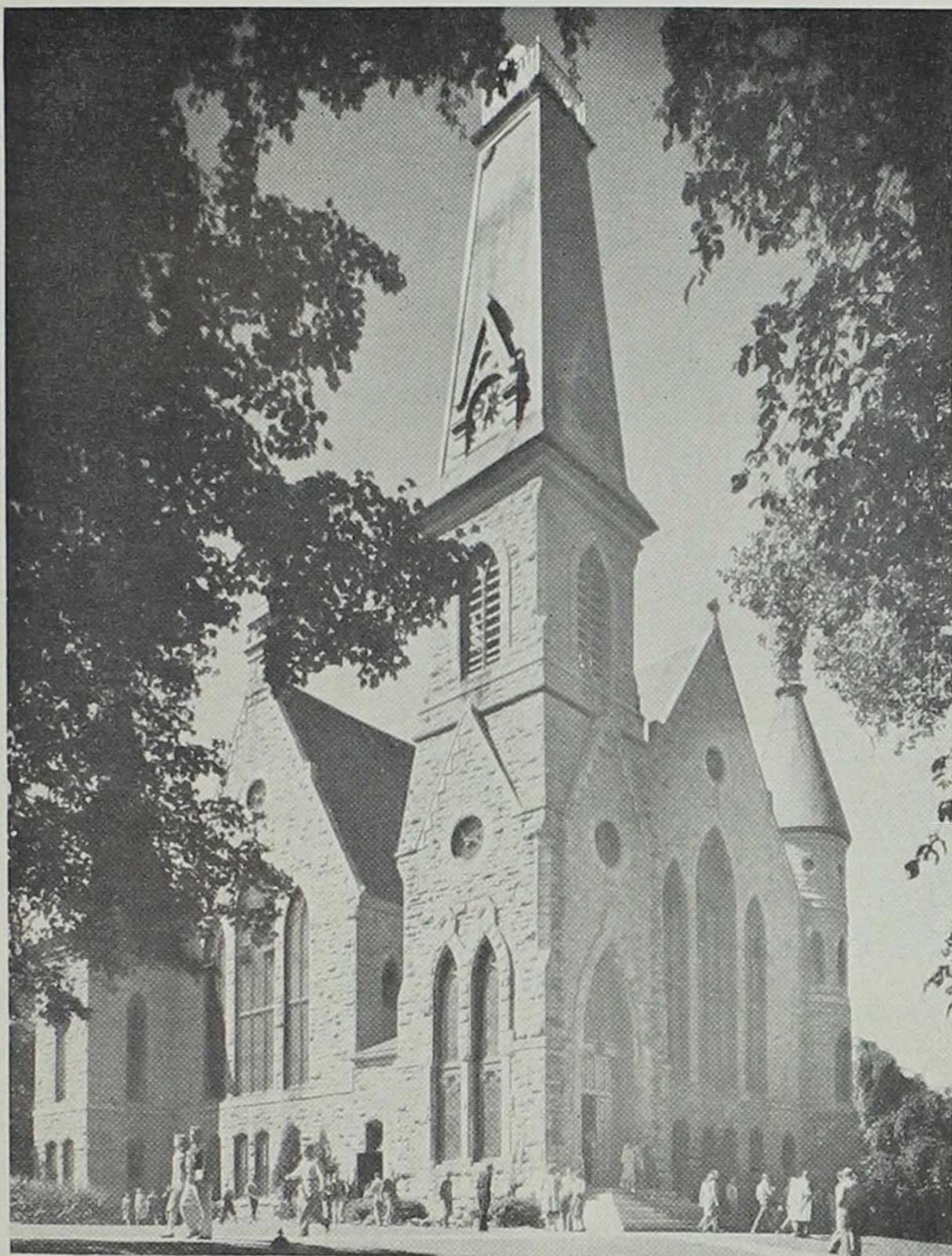


"Old Main" — Iowa Wesleyan College

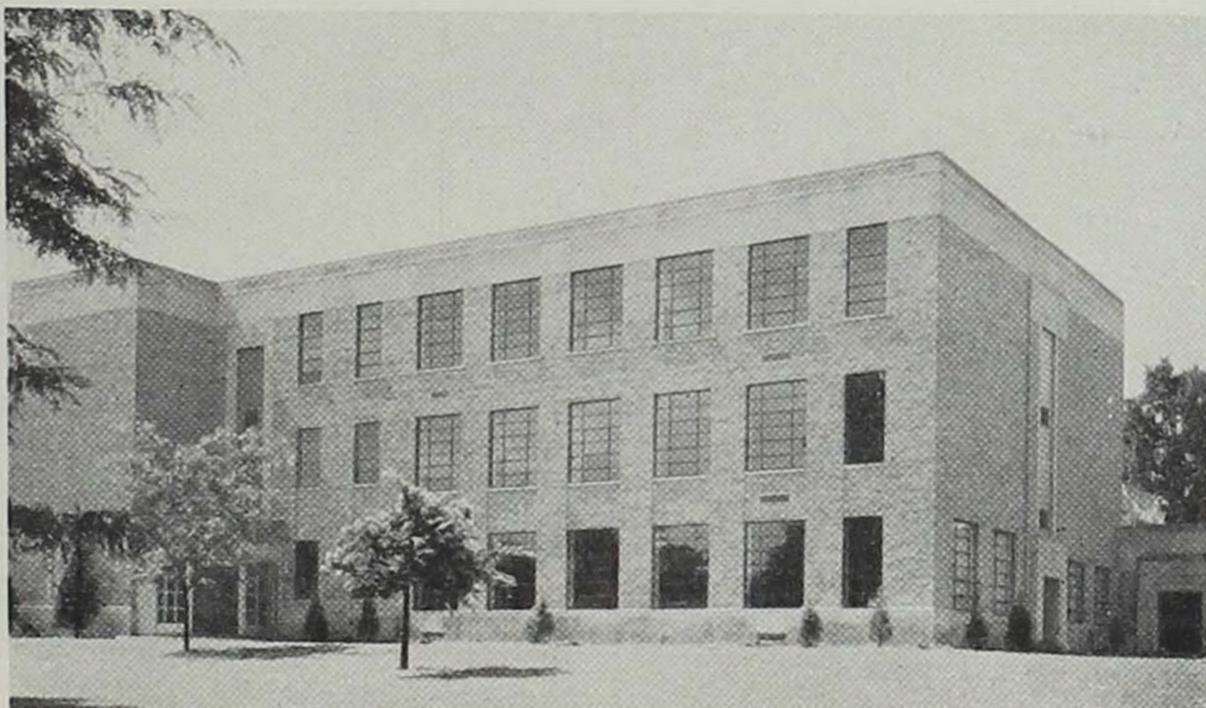


Administration Building — Simpson College

IOWA METHODIST COLLEGES



Chapel — Cornell College



A. W. Jones Science Building — Morningside College

FOREIGN MISSIONS  
ST. PAUL'S METHODIST CHURCH, CEDAR RAPIDS

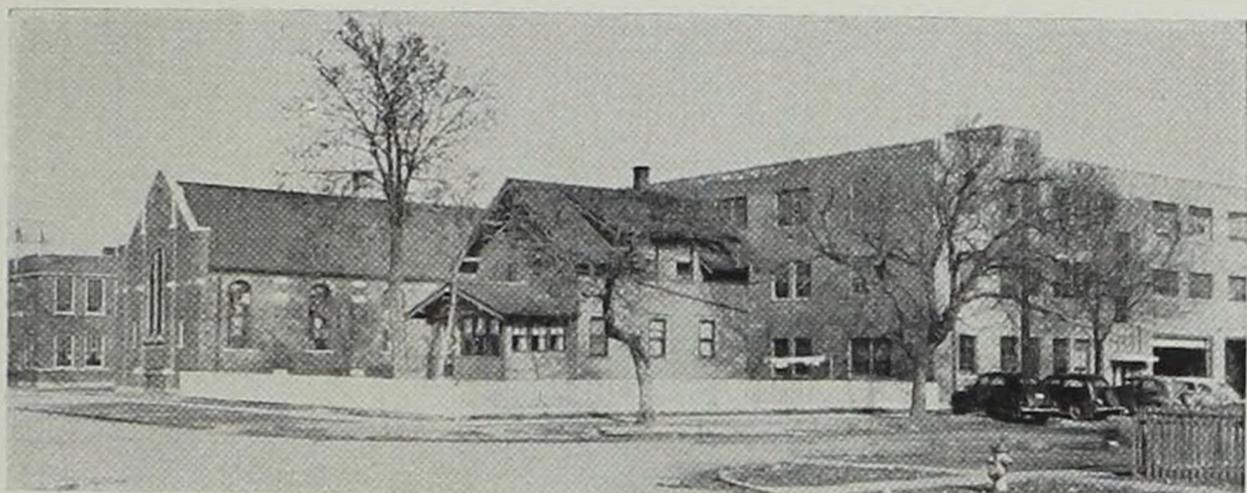


Woman's Society of Christian Service



Clothing for Overseas — Young Adult Sunday Evening Club

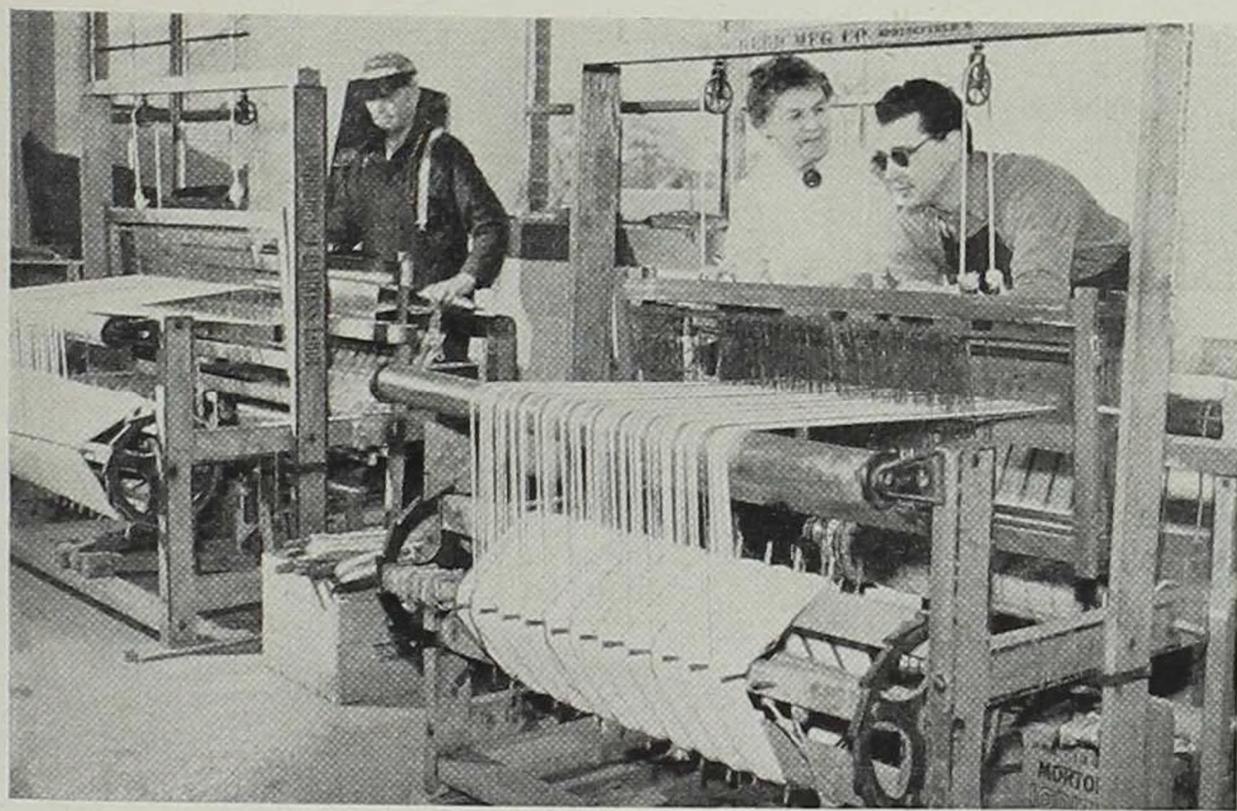
## WALL STREET MISSION IN SIOUX CITY



Church of All Nations — Good Will Industries

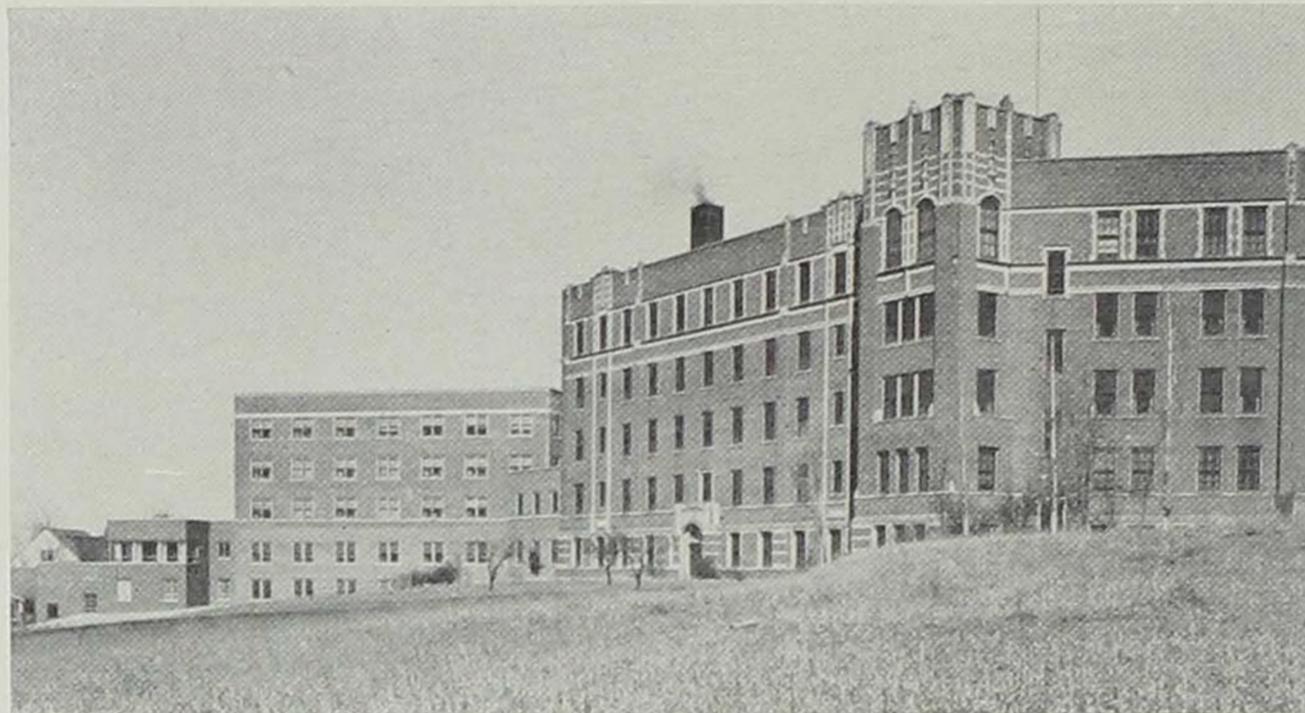


Harriet Ballou Day Nursery



Blind Weavers at the Good Will Industries

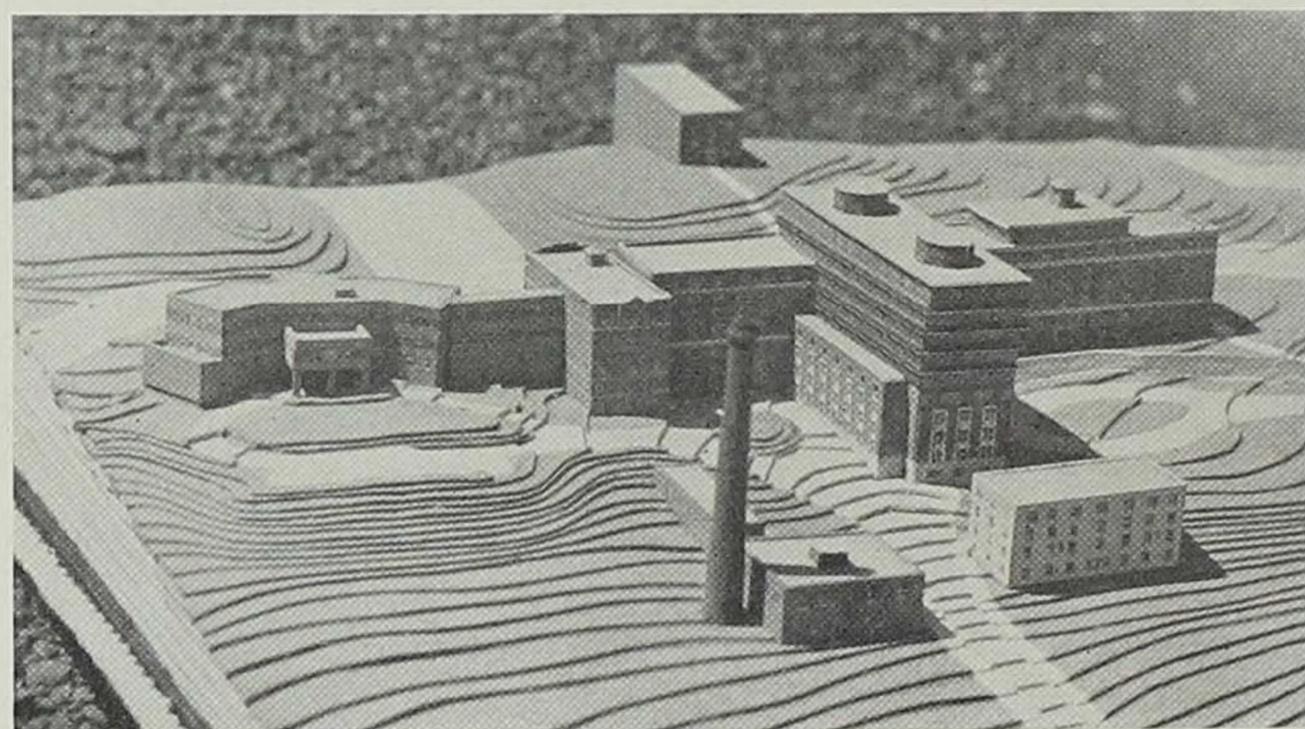
IOWA METHODIST HOSPITALS



Methodist Hospital — Sioux City



St. Luke's Methodist Hospital — Cedar Rapids

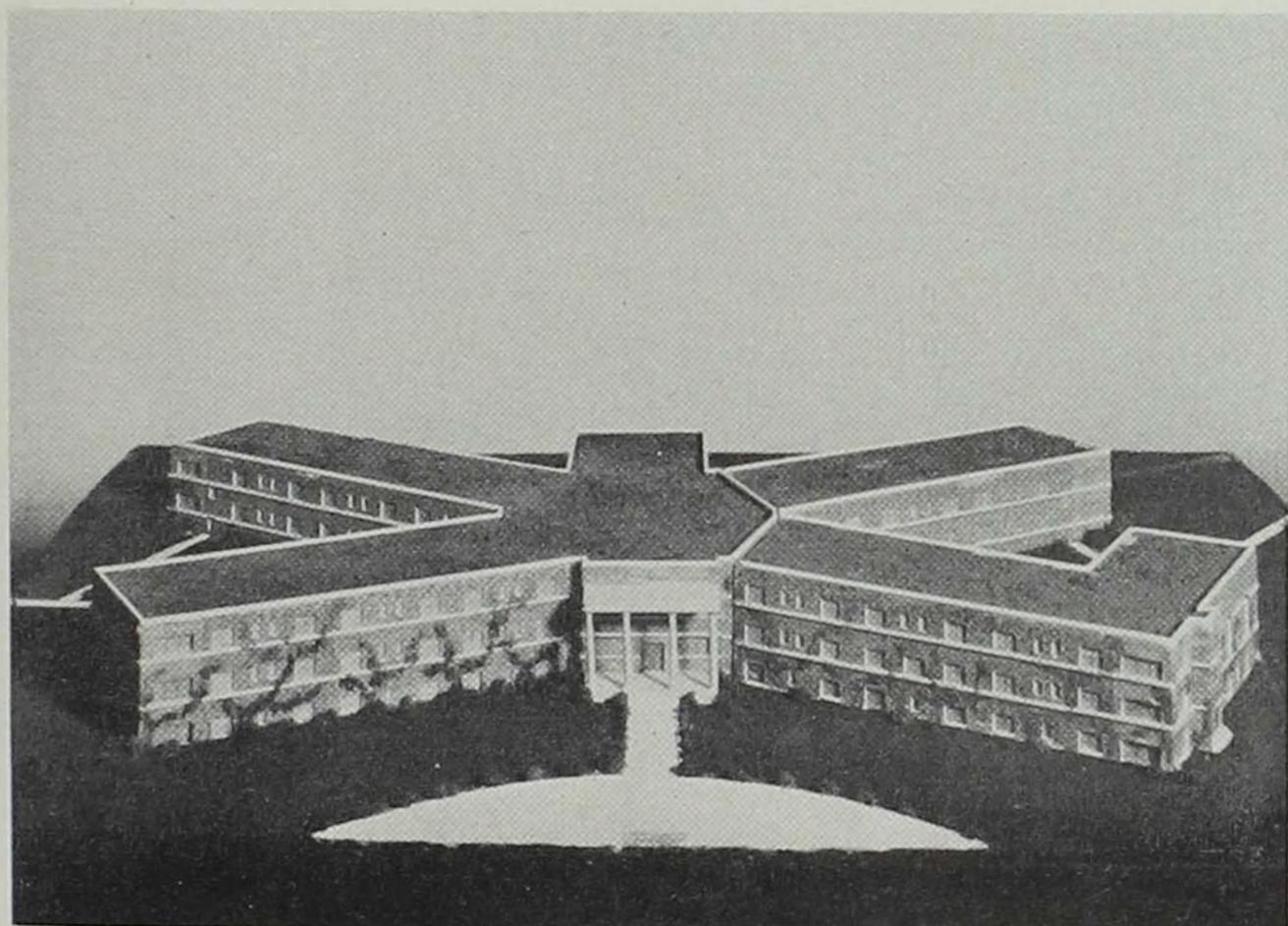


Iowa Methodist Hospital — Des Moines

HOMES FOR THE RETIRED AND THE AGED



Wesley Acres — Des Moines

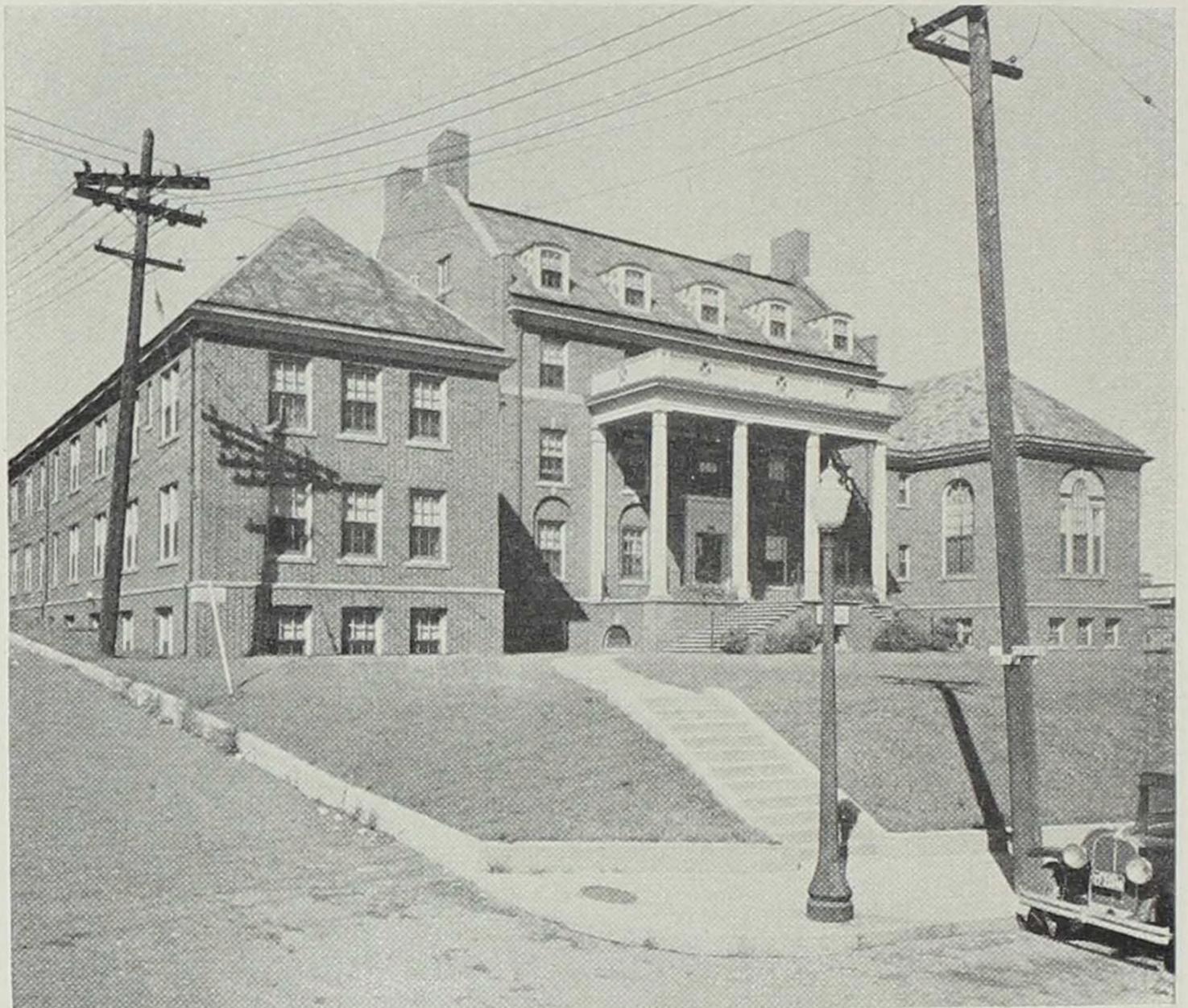


Friendship Haven — Fort Dodge

TWO METHODIST PROJECTS

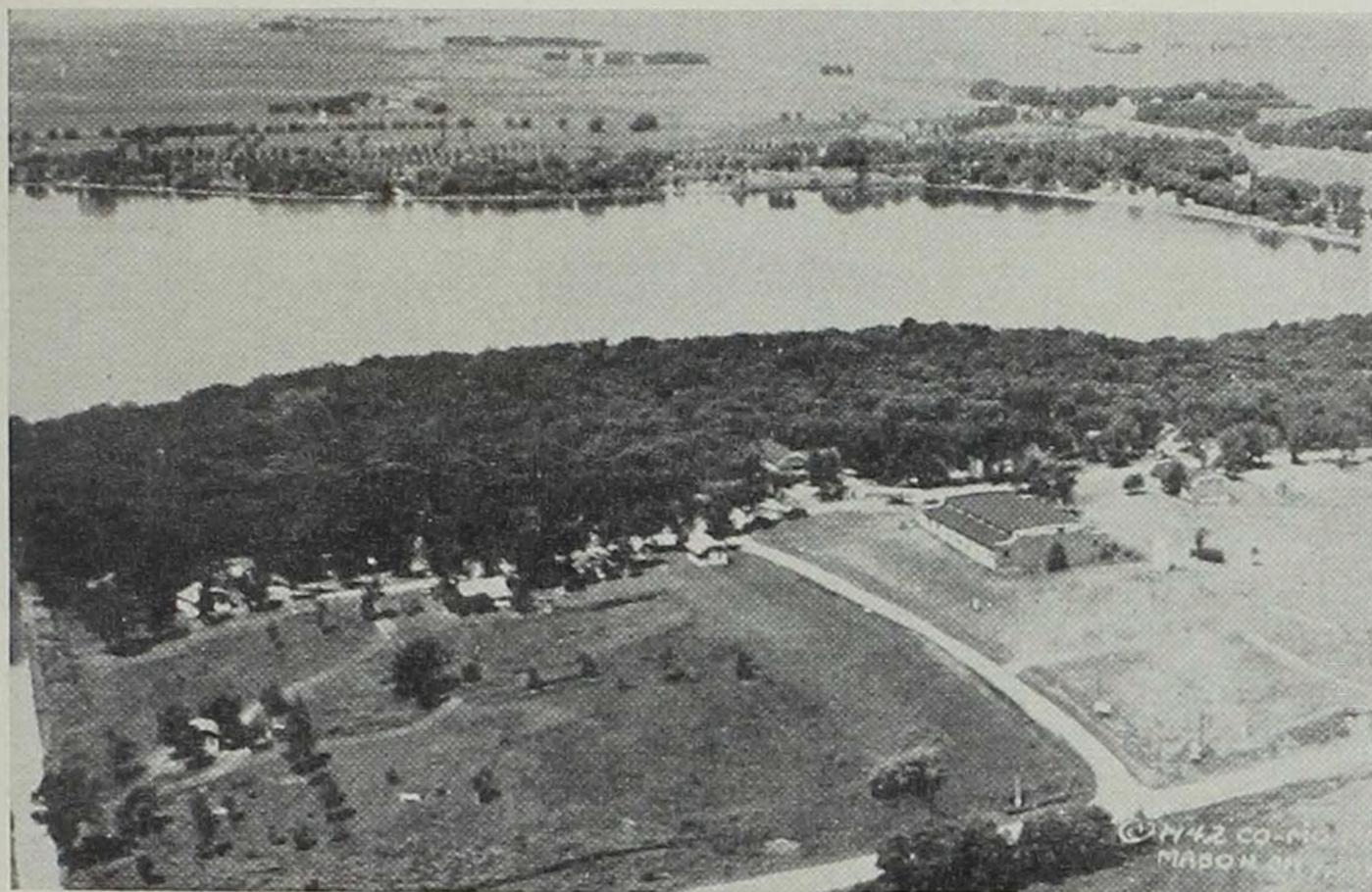


Hillcrest Baby Fold — Dubuque

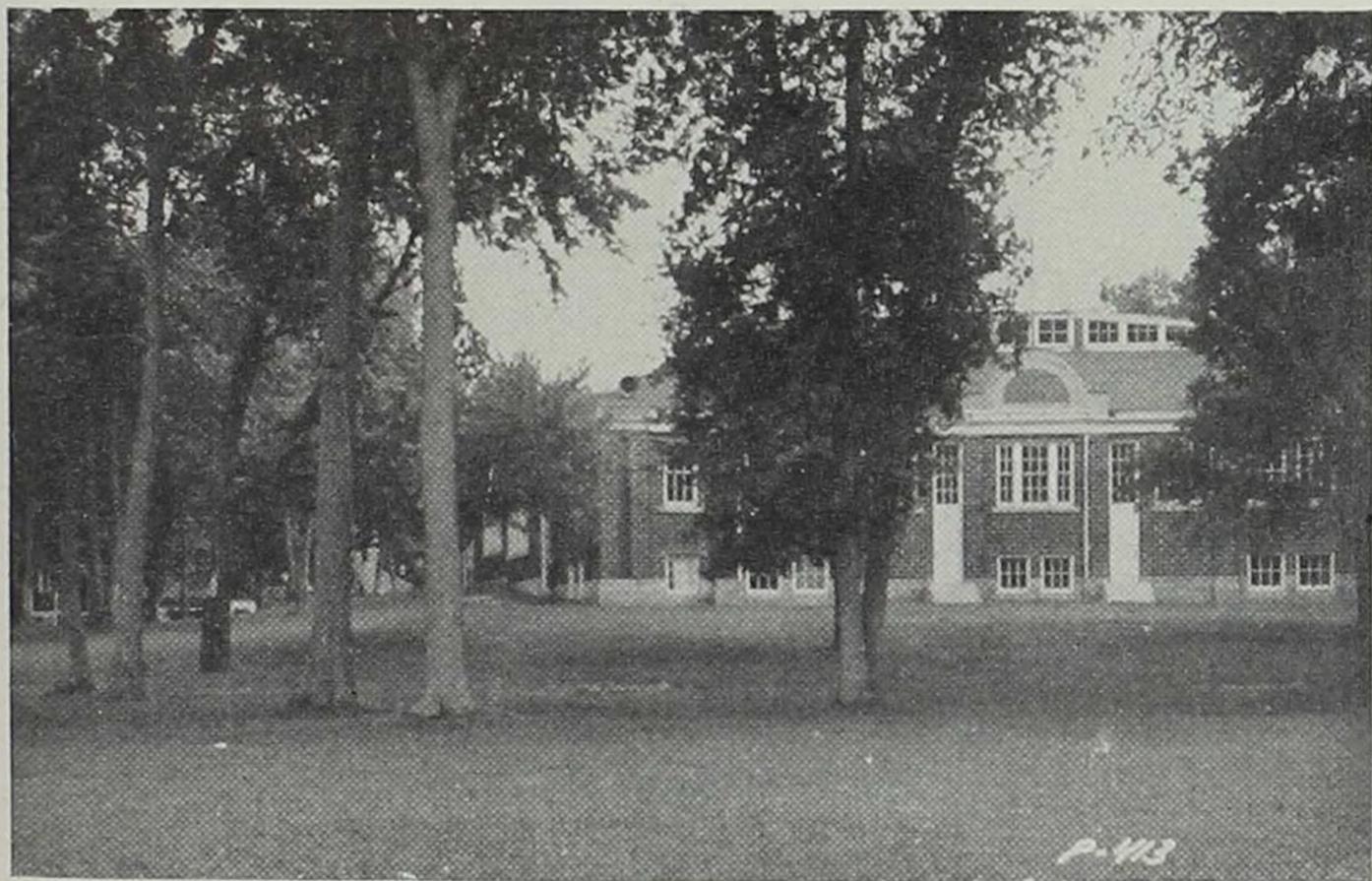


Iowa National Esther Hall for Employed Girls — Des Moines

YOUTH AND FAMILY CAMPS

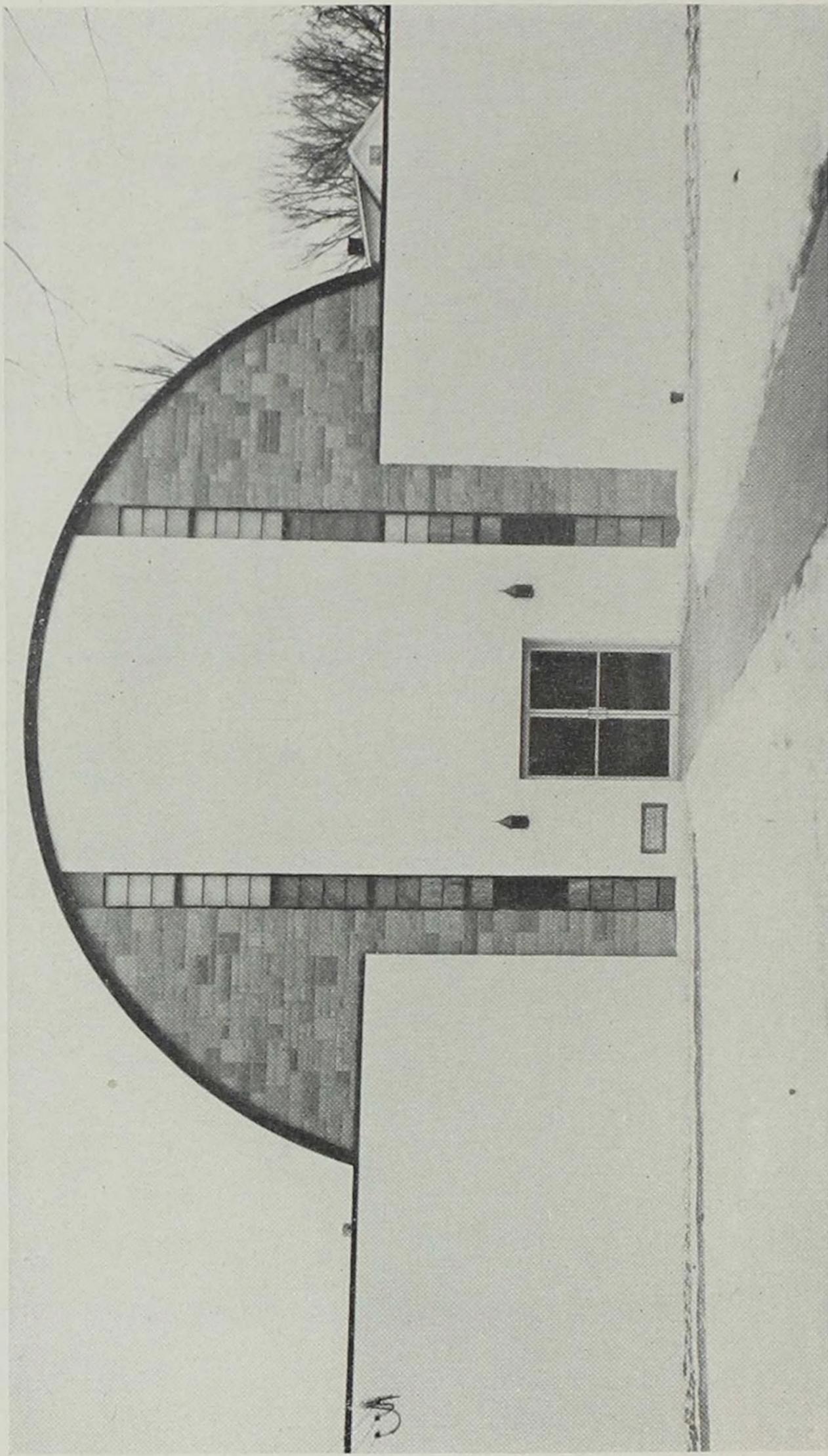


West Lake Okoboji



Clear Lake

THE FIRST NEW METHODIST CHURCH IN IOWA IN FIVE YEARS



A symbol of the modern crusading spirit of Methodism is revealed in Windsor Methodist Church in Des Moines. Under the direction of Rev. John D. Clinton, Area Crusader, a brand new congregation was formed and a brand new church built within two years. Dedicated by Bishop Brashares November 5, 1950.

ern Iowa Conference was organized in 1860, Mitchell was an original member of that annual conference. In 1864 he was included in the new Des Moines Conference and in 1872 in the Northwest Iowa Conference, always without a personal transfer.

One matter of church policy which has arisen during the years has been the participation of laymen in the councils of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Methodism was always democratic in extending the offer of salvation to all, rich or poor, respectable or of bad repute. It was, perforce, democratic also in its use of unordained and often unlettered preachers. As Andrew Jackson contended that any voter was qualified to hold office, so the Methodists held that any devout man who was "called" to preach was, after a period of training, to be accepted as a worker in the field.

But the Wesleyan movement in England and to a lesser extent in America was "the lengthened shadow" of John Wesley, and he was a benevolent autocrat. When Francis Asbury became the dominant leader in American Methodism he followed Wesley's example. The authority of the new church was vested in the bishops and to a lesser extent in the elders, but was not shared with the laymen. The ministry was self-perpetuating and all-powerful.

The growth of American democracy called attention to this lack of lay representation in the

Methodist Episcopal Church. There came a demand for the participation of laymen in the decision of church matters and for a curb on the dictatorial powers of the bishops. In 1830 the Methodist Protestant Church was formed by those who wanted a congregational form of government or at least some participation by representatives of the congregations. The Methodist Protestant Church built the first church building in Iowa City, and for a time it was active in a number of Iowa communities. Its lack of centralized control, however, seems to have been a disadvantage, and most of these congregations died out.

Not until 1872 were laymen admitted to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. From 1871 until 1931, in each Iowa conference, lay electoral conferences were held every four years to choose representatives from Iowa. In 1932 the General Conference made laymen's meetings a regular part of each annual conference, and joint meetings of laymen and ministers were held to discuss finances as well as social and educational problems.

Since the 1939 consolidation, lay delegates have been an integral part of the annual conferences, except for the executive sessions of the ministers. Also, in the election of delegates to the General Conference, the two orders ballot separately.

Another problem which concerned the government of the church was the status of women.

Since early Christian times women have been workers and martyrs in the Church. Susanna Wesley may well be called "the mother of Methodism," for it was she who stood beside her famous son on that day when he broke with precedent by preaching in the fields to the needy and degraded. Women welcomed the early Methodist movement not only because it offered hope for their own salvation, but also because of the good effect it had on their homes.

Yet Wesley and the early Methodist leaders in America took the Apostle Paul's advice and denied to women official positions in the church. When Methodism came into Iowa, for example, women could be class leaders and Sunday school teachers, but not deacons or elders. They could pray and sing, but not serve on the governing boards of churches as stewards or trustees. They could give their testimony, but they could not preach.

Women, however, found other ways to serve. Like Martha, they became the housekeepers of the church, "helpmeets" to the church and the pastor as well as to their husbands. Before the Civil War, they timidly formed societies known as the "Ladies' and Pastors' Christian Union." During the war public-spirited women formed "Aid Societies" to help care for wounded soldiers and for the families of soldiers. The Ladies' Aid Society continued as an auxiliary and soon became

the standard organization of the churches, putting on dinners, bazaars, and quiltings, organizing charities, and helping to raise the church budgets. The Woman's Foreign Missionary Society was organized in 1869 and was formally approved by the General Conference three years later. Ministers welcomed representatives of the society into their pulpits. In 1880 the Woman's Home Missionary Society was organized, and much later (1921) the Wesleyan Service Guild — a society of business women interested in home and foreign missions — gained status as a church organization. With Methodist unification, the various women's organizations were combined in the Woman's Society of Christian Service. Currently the national president of this organization is Mrs. Frank G. Brooks of Mount Vernon, Iowa.

The admission of women to official positions in the church has been a slow process. When lay representatives were admitted to the General Conference in 1872, women were not specifically disqualified; but when five of them, including Frances E. Willard, appeared as delegates in 1888, the General Conference refused to seat them. This same General Conference, however, created the order of deaconess. In Iowa, no woman was chosen during this period.

In 1904 the doors of the General Conference were opened to women. The laymen's conferences were open to both men and women after 1932.

In this same year the General Conference authorized the ordination of women as deacons and elders, but excluded them from enrollment as traveling preachers. In effect, this rule permits such women to preach, to baptize, and to perform marriage ceremonies, but leaves them still outside the circle from which the regular appointments are made.

## Faith and Doctrine

Churches differ as to government and doctrine. The Methodist Church is episcopal in its organization, on this point resembling the Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant Episcopal churches, and the Church of England, in that all have bishops. The line of "apostolic succession" in the Methodist Church came through the ordination of Dr. Thomas Coke as superintendent, or bishop, by John Wesley, a presbyter of the Church of England. Wesley, however, had long since given up any belief in the apostolic succession, and though his procedure has been questioned by some, the Methodists have been more than satisfied that his stand was justified. For them, episcopacy is an "office," not an "order."

As to doctrine, there have been major disagreements within churches and minor differences between churches and sects. Because of these variations in official teaching, thousands of Christians have been persecuted, tortured, or put to death.

John Wesley had little quarrel with the theology of the Church of England; it was the lack of real spirituality which disturbed him. He was never much interested in opinions, except in a few fundamentals. "Persons may be quite right in

their opinions, and yet have no religion at all; and on the other hand, persons may be truly religious, who hold many wrong opinions."

What Wesley desired and Methodists sought was a change of heart, more fellowship with God, more love for one's fellowmen. The one condition that Wesley prescribed for membership in his societies was an affirmative answer to the question, "Dost thou love and serve God?" If the applicant could answer, "Yes," and if his conduct indicated that he meant what he said, Wesley would reply, "It is enough. I give thee the right hand of fellowship." This does not mean that Wesley did not have his opinions, for he earnestly sought answers to many theological questions, and he gave learned yet lucid expositions to his congregations.

If doctrines meant less than spiritual life to the university-trained John Wesley, it is not surprising that itinerant Methodist preachers cared little for theological abstractions. Their textbook, often their only reference book, was the Bible. They believed, as did all Christians of a century ago, in the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. The higher criticism — research into the composition and translation of the books of the Bible — and the theory of evolution did not reach the frontier until the middle of the nineteenth century.

This did not mean that doctrinal questions were not discussed. In an area where religious beliefs, social standards, and economic positions were un-

settled, the preachers debated the doctrines which aligned the people with or against the churches. There was, for example, the doctrine of original sin. Was man condemned forever because of Adam's disobedience? And if salvation from sin was the gift of Christ, through his death, was this sacrifice limited, as the Calvinists believed, to those already foreordained or predestined to salvation? The Methodist preachers had definite opinions on these points. They taught that man was by nature evil, that he was unable, of himself, to free himself from sin; but they paid little attention to original sin as inherited from Adam.

As to a second point, free will versus predestination, the Methodists were aggressive exponents of free will. They conceded that all men had fallen short of the divine standard, and they taught that only God's grace could free them from past sins and keep them from sinning in the future. But they also taught that any person could receive this forgiveness and assurance. The key word for the Methodists was "whosoever," and they stressed the love of God for the sinner. The Calvinists' doctrine of predestination was anathema to the Methodist preachers.

The gift of salvation might be given anywhere, but revivals and camp meetings were frequently the scenes of mass conversions. Frontier preachers were often dynamic speakers and practical psychologists. In facing men and women who had,

perhaps, been too busy to think much of their spiritual responsibilities, and deeply concerned that the people who listened should repent and be saved, the preachers used every means to persuade them to seek the Lord and to turn over a new leaf. Those "under conviction" crowded to the altar or so-called "mourners' bench." Prayers, songs, exhortations, and other emotional appeals were used to encourage those at the altar to give up their sins and worldly interests and to seek the forgiveness of God and the witness of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes these meetings continued far into the night. Once the decision was made, the man or woman rose to testify, to pray, or to sing, and those around joined in the rejoicing. The early camp meetings were sometimes accompanied with abnormal physical manifestations of hysteria, including the "jerks," but this stage had largely died out before the Methodists began their work in Iowa.

The Methodists also disagreed with the claim of Baptists and "Campbellites" that immersion was the only acceptable method of baptism, even though on many occasions Methodist converts were baptized in a near-by stream or lake. Children were presented for baptism at an early age.

Pioneer Methodists disapproved of the ritualism of the Catholic and Episcopal churches, recalling that ritualism and formality had once been associated with worldliness and complacency in the

presence of evil. Sometimes their opposition to form and ornamentation led them to refuse to use formal prayers, instrumental music, stained glass windows, and similar aids to worship; instead, they depended on the sermon or exhortation, extemporaneous prayers, and congregational singing led by the preacher or a layman with or without musical ability.

Nor did the Methodists quite agree with the Lutherans that faith was the sole consideration in religious matters. Faith was, indeed, the gift which made possible spiritual life, but the light secured by faith must shine forth in "good works." First among these, for members in good standing, was obedience to the Ten Commandments and the commandments in the New Testament. Among such commands were the love of God, keeping the Sabbath holy, honesty, chastity, respect for life and property, giving honor and obedience to one's parents, baptism, prayer, and loving one's neighbor. Profanity was definitely a sin and no doubt one frequently committed by the frontiersmen. Breaking prairie with several yoke of oxen provided plenty of provocation. Attendance at prayer meetings, church services, Sunday school, and class meetings was an informal requirement and the means of protection against the wiles of the Devil. Members were also expected to have family worship morning and evening, to say grace before meals, to read the Bible daily, to pray, and

to testify in prayer and class meetings. In 1784 the Conference resolved that Methodists must follow the Golden Rule in buying and selling, "particularly in selling horses."

To the biblical commandments the church added others. Most Methodists believed that certain habits and forms of recreation were incompatible with holiness. Theater-going, card-playing, and dancing were considered extremely sinful by the early Methodists, many of whom also frowned upon ruffles and jewelry. The ornamentation of churches, instrumental music, cushioned pews, and colored windows were also opposed.

The Methodist societies in England were formed, in part, to help free their members from the temptation to drink. Drunkenness and the buying and selling of spirituous liquors were strictly forbidden for the leaders and frowned upon for the members. On the American frontier, liquor was made and consumed in great quantities, thus creating a baffling problem for all the churches. The Methodist rule pertaining to the trade in intoxicating liquor was stricken out in 1789 and was not restored until 1848 at which time the Iowa Conference unanimously approved its restoration. For the past hundred years the Methodist Church in Iowa has been an active opponent of the liquor traffic. In 1886 the Reverend George C. Haddock, pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church at Sioux City and active in the prohibition

fight, was shot by a man who was never convicted. The property of John Mahin, a newspaperman of Muscatine, suffered damage because of his opposition to the Mulct Law.

Another habit which attracted the attention of the Methodists was the use of tobacco. Its use was not forbidden by the rules of the General Conference, but the church opposed the habit both for ministers and for members. Many of the early preachers, however, came from the ranks of the frontiersmen and had acquired this habit before their conversion and dedication to the ministry. There are frequent references in the conference minutes to efforts to eliminate the use of tobacco by ministers. In 1867, for example, the Upper Iowa Conference adopted a resolution advising all addicted to its use to practice self-denial and to give up this pernicious habit while those not so addicted were urged not to form it. A rule against the use of tobacco by ministers of the Upper Iowa Conference evoked the rather reasonable protest at the session of 1871: "That we consider the above rule useless, so long as members in full standing continue the use of the weed in any form." In 1890 a committee of the Northwest Iowa Conference declared, "That the use of tobacco be considered a bar to any man's entering the 'Northwest Iowa Conference' or advancement in the ministry."

The Methodist Church has also steadfastly op-

posed the display and sale of literature which contributes to indecency and immorality; even so, Methodists have never compiled an *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*. In 1883 the Iowa Conference passed a resolution condemning the circulation of such papers as the *Police Gazette*, *Saturday Night*, and *Fireside Companion*. The last of the three certainly had a disarming title.

A touchy subject in the early and some later churches has been membership in secret societies. Methodists seem to have had little trouble with this problem, although the Iowa Conference of 1845, taking notice of the anti-Masonic movement, passed a resolution, "That in the opinion of this Conference it is inexpedient for our ministers to connect themselves with Masonic Lodges and similar institutions and that we respectfully request those members of this Conference who are now connected with Masonry to discontinue their attendance on the lodges." Three years later the Conference added a resolution urging its members not to speak or lecture publicly against Free Masonry or the Odd Fellows. By 1850 the Conference decided that membership in such secret societies was a personal affair, and the matter was dropped.

The attitude of the Methodist Church toward war has varied, depending upon the cause of the war. In most cases the church has permitted its members to make their own decisions. Wesley

opposed the American Revolution. It was, in his opinion, more important for men to free themselves from the bondage of sin than to secure greater political freedom. The attitude of Americans on the Mexican War depended largely on how they felt about the extension of slavery. The Iowa Methodist Conference seems to have ignored this war.

In the Civil War, however, the moral issues were more distinct. By that time Methodists in the South had withdrawn to form their own church, while the Methodist Episcopal Church whole-heartedly supported the Union and advocated the abolition of slavery. Of the contribution of churches in the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln wrote to the General Conference in 1864: ". . . the Methodist Episcopal Church sends more soldiers to the field, more nurses to the hospitals, and more prayers to Heaven than any other." Among the nurses were two Iowa Methodists, Mrs. Annie Wittenmyer of Keokuk, who started diet kitchens for army hospitals, and Mrs. James Harlan of Mount Pleasant, of whom it was said that she "outranked Halleck."

Methodists differ as to many theological questions, but there have been no major divisions of the church on doctrinal lines and but few charges of heresy; John Wesley's broad-minded acceptance of all who love God and their fellowmen has set the pattern for Methodists.

## The Ministry of Healing

Care of the sick has been a responsibility of the Christian churches since Jesus healed the blind, the lame, and the afflicted. Professional and scientific care of the sick is, however, a comparatively new service. In pioneer times, a kindly friend or neighbor might visit the sick or give aid in nursing; not until after the Civil War were hospitals considered civilian necessities. The early hospitals were ill-equipped, and patients often had less care and poorer food than at home. With the increase in surgery and the evolution of asepsis and anesthesia, hospitals became necessary, and the churches emphasized the ministry of healing.

At first, the Methodist Episcopal Church of Iowa seems to have given its support to Wesley Hospital in Chicago, for in 1893 the Iowa Conference voted to recommend this Methodist institution to members of the Iowa churches and to permit agents to solicit funds for it. Soon afterward, the Conference extended the same recognition to Asbury Hospital at Minneapolis. In 1897 the Upper Iowa Conference appropriated \$300 to endow a bed at Wesley Hospital and \$300 additional, if funds became available, for a similar gift to Asbury Hospital.

The first Methodist hospital in Iowa was started in 1901 in Des Moines, in the building formerly occupied by the Callanan School for Girls. In the beginning, this Iowa Methodist Hospital had only seven beds, but it grew rapidly. In recognition of the fact that the hospital gave free care to ministers and their wives, the Upper Iowa Conference gave \$500 to furnish a room. By 1909 the Iowa Methodist Hospital had a new six-story building with 125 beds and was caring for 4,000 patients each year. Today its property is valued at more than \$1,250,000. Until 1920 it was jointly supported by the four annual conferences, but at that time the Northwest Iowa Conference decided to support a hospital of its own. Two years later the Upper Iowa Conference gave its support to a similar undertaking.

The Methodist Hospital at Sioux City had its beginning as St. John's Hospital, founded by Dr. William Jepson. In 1919 Dr. Jepson offered this institution to the Northwest Iowa Conference, and at the Conference session held at Humboldt, in 1920, a committee reported plans for a hospital with 250 beds. The beginning, however, was made in a small building, with one doctor and an indebtedness of \$5,000. In 1924 the trustees purchased a new site, formerly occupied by the Samaritan Hospital, and a year later a new building was dedicated. The plant is now valued at more than \$426,000.

A third hospital — St. Luke's at Cedar Rapids — was given to the Upper Iowa Conference in 1922. This institution began in 1876, financed by a Charity Ball — but not by the Methodist Church. It was in charge of Grace Protestant Episcopal Church, and the cornerstone was laid on May 4, 1884. Hospitals, however, cost money, and a considerable debt had been incurred. Grace Church offered the institution to any organization which could finance a good hospital.

Bishop Homer C. Stuntz encouraged the Upper Iowa Conference to accept the offer, and on October 2, 1922, St. Luke's Hospital began operation as a Methodist-sponsored institution. Since that time a new wing has been built, and a financial campaign has helped to liquidate the debt and pay expenses. As the second half of the twentieth century begins, a new unit, costing \$1,250,000, is being built.

An offshoot of the hospital responsibilities of the Methodist Church is the White Cross, organized in 1921 with Bishop Stuntz as its first president. White Cross serves as an agency for the collection of money for hospital services provided by Methodist institutions.

One institution is maintained by Iowa Methodists for needy children. For some time prior to 1914 an organization known as "The Women's Rescue Society" operated a home in Dubuque for unmarried mothers and their babies. In 1914 the

home was about to be closed for lack of funds, and the building was offered to any Protestant organization which would keep it up. The offer was accepted by Miss Anna B. Cook, a Methodist deaconess, who operated the home for a time with the assistance of St. Luke's Methodist Church and other Protestant churches. Interest was heightened by the disclosure of an unsavory "baby farm" in Dubuque. Renamed the "Hillcrest Baby Fold," this institution, sheltering annually an average of thirty-three infants and children, is one of the objects of benevolence of the North Iowa Conference. A small fee is charged for board if those responsible are able to pay. The buildings, valued at more than \$40,000, stand on Asbury Road.

As the number of aged persons in the state or community increases, and the housing space tends to decrease, the problem of caring for old people has become more acute. The Methodist Church is attempting to help meet this problem by opening two homes for aged Methodists and Methodist preachers — Friendship Haven at Fort Dodge and Wesley Acres in Des Moines.

## The Ministry of Education

The early Methodists had, as a rule, few educated members or pastors and this lack of college-trained men characterized the church for at least half a century. A Methodist writer said in 1845: "While we constitute one-fourth of the population . . . yet scarcely one in fifty of the public functionaries and the professional men in the country is a Methodist." Many Methodist leaders of the time had but little formal education, nor did they consider it essential to salvation. As one writer expressed it, "Gaining knowledge is a good thing; but saving souls is a better [thing]." But from the beginning the Methodist Church has realized that it must have some form of religious training for its young people and better trained pastors and preachers if it hoped to hold its membership in the settled communities.

Teaching the children has largely been the responsibility of the church school, usually the Sunday school. In the beginning, these schools, sponsored by Robert Raikes and other public-spirited men in England, had been organized to teach poor children to read and write. With the beginning of the industrial age thousands of children were employed long hours in the mines and

factories. There was no time for them to attend school except on Sundays even if day schools were available.

By the time Iowa was settled, Sunday schools had become an integral part of the Methodist Episcopal Church. They were no longer expected to teach children to read; that responsibility had been assumed by day schools. But they did give practice in reading the Bible and they emphasized learning hymns and Bible verses, thus training the boys and girls in the dignified English of the King James translation.

The first Sunday school in Iowa was organized in Dubuque in March, 1834, by Mrs. Susan A. Dean, a Methodist, although other Protestant denominations were represented. A report given at the first meeting of the Iowa Conference at Iowa City in 1844 listed 27 Methodist Sabbath schools, with 181 officers and teachers, and 1,811 pupils. These schools had few books, except the Bible, and no lesson helps. Two years later an Iowa Conference committee commented: "We view the Sabbath school as a most powerful and efficient auxiliary . . . and we deeply regret our past remissness in this most important work."

Beginning in the sixties, the Methodist churches began to provide helps for the harassed teachers in the form of Serial Lesson Leaves, published by the Sunday School Union. Modern education and psychology have now joined with religion to pro-

vide materials for Sunday school class work, but Peter Cartwright would no doubt have looked upon them with disdain and suspicion. Each age must provide its own tools.

The need for trained ministers and Christian leaders presented another problem. "Book learning" was not always held in high esteem on the frontier, and men could preach and practice medicine or law without much formal education. Everywhere men turned their hands to new work under new conditions, confident that they could learn the necessary skill to carry on.

This was true, to a large degree, in early Methodism. Its converts often came from the underprivileged classes, and many of the Methodist circuit riders had attended school for only short periods, although regular study of the Bible and other prescribed books was an obligation second only to prayer. Other denominations, especially the Presbyterians and Congregationalists, had already made provision for academies, colleges, and seminaries, and their ministers were usually college men. The Methodist leaders soon realized that their church must meet this competition. One writer commented in 1845, that "three-fourths of all [Methodist young people] who have been educated in colleges not under our direction are lost to our cause." The church leaders recognized that the Methodist Church must provide educational institutions to furnish an educated ministry and

to train Methodist young people to be teachers, professional men, and government officials in their communities.

When the Iowa Conference met at Iowa City in 1844, two embryo colleges sought its favor and support. One, the Iowa City College, had been incorporated by act of the territorial legislature in February, 1843. The founders had visions of a college rising at the eastern end of Iowa Avenue to match the stately stone capitol on the hill above the Iowa River. The second educational institution to bid for Methodist sponsorship was Mount Pleasant Literary Institute begun in 1842 and incorporated in 1844, to be "kept open for the education of all denominations of white citizens." The Iowa City College was the first and favored applicant, but it closed in 1847. In September, 1849, the Iowa Conference adopted a resolution that it "do gratefully receive the proposition on the part of trustees of the Mount Pleasant Collegiate Institute to donate the said institution to the control and patronage of the Iowa Annual Conference." The conference added the provision that no funds were to be spent on the institution; the college profited from the association, by the publicity given it in the churches, and from gifts by relatively wealthy church members.

In 1855 the name was changed to Iowa Wesleyan University, possibly because the State University was then at low ebb, and plans were made

to provide courses in medicine, law, and theology at Mount Pleasant. Hard times soon came, however, and the new "University" was satisfied to do college work. In 1912 the institution became Iowa Wesleyan College.

It was George B. Bowman, a frontier preacher and circuit rider, who had visioned a Christian college at the eastern end of Iowa Avenue in Iowa City. That college failed, but Bowman carried his vision with him as he rode across the hills of northeastern Iowa. One day in 1851 Bowman stopped his horse upon a hill near Mount Vernon and gazed across the prairies and forests stretching away in all directions. In his mind's eye he saw a college rising on this hill; dismounting, he knelt in prayer, dedicating the site and himself to Christian education. On July 4, 1852, Elder Bowman called a public meeting at the chosen site, and James Harlan gave the address on "Education." Then Bowman broke ground for the first building of Cornell College — Science Hall.

Institutions are often started "on a shoestring," but Elder Bowman had not even that. He had no money and neither he nor the church he represented owned the land. His faith was rewarded, however, and in September, 1852, the Iowa Conference, meeting at Burlington, accepted fifteen acres of campus upon which a building was then being erected. Bowman also helped to plat the town of Mount Vernon. The school was first

called Mount Vernon Wesleyan Seminary. In 1854 it was incorporated as the Iowa Conference Seminary, and in 1855 it was rechristened Cornell College in honor of William W. Cornell of New York City, a contributor. Reverend George B. Bowman is commemorated by Bowman Hall to which he contributed some \$10,000, a princely gift for an itinerant Methodist preacher.

As the population moved north and west there was a demand for new schools to serve new communities. Fayette Seminary was organized in 1854 and was accepted by the Iowa Conference the following year, but with the division of the conference in 1856 it became the ward of the Upper Iowa Conference. In December, 1857, it was renamed Upper Iowa University. When the Upper Iowa Conference was asked to undertake a campaign to raise \$1,200,000 for the two colleges then under its wing, it decided to unite Upper Iowa University and Cornell College at Mount Vernon. The trustees of Upper Iowa refused to agree, and since 1928 Upper Iowa University has carried on as an independent college, outside the circle of Methodist-sponsored institutions.

The fourth Methodist college in Iowa is Simpson College at Indianola. In August, 1860, the Western Iowa Conference agreed to accept a "Male and Female Seminary" as soon as the people of Indianola should erect suitable buildings valued at not less than \$3,000 and debt-free; but

it was agreed that the Conference would "not be responsible in any way for funds necessary for the future prosecution of the enterprise." Thus, with purely moral support from the church, the Indianola Male and Female Seminary was incorporated on September 10, 1860, and opened its doors that fall, only to close them almost immediately. Local supporters came to the rescue and soon raised \$5,315.50, thus permitting the institution to reopen in temporary quarters. It was soon housed in a substantial brick building painted blue and nicknamed "Old Bluebird."

In 1865, after the reorganization of the annual conferences, the Indianola Male and Female Seminary was adopted by the Des Moines Conference and renamed the Des Moines Conference Seminary. By 1869 the seminary was offering work of collegiate grade and was rechristened Simpson Centenary College in honor of Bishop Matthew Simpson. The "Centenary" was dropped in 1885.

A Negro boy, born in slavery, was once a student at Simpson College before going on to complete his graduate studies at Iowa State College. In recalling his college days, George Washington Carver wrote: "I managed to get to dear old Simpson with ten cents in cash, and every opportunity was given me to pursue my most cherished desire." In 1941, just two years before his death, Carver was invited to return to Simpson College to deliver the baccalaureate address. "It

was at Simpson," Carver said, "that I first realized I was a human being."

Latest-born of Iowa Methodist colleges is Morningside at Sioux City. Plans for a college in this area where prairies and plains meet were started in 1894 by the Northwest Iowa Conference. For thirty years the churches in this area had been supporting colleges outside the conference boundaries. Morningside, a suburb of Sioux City, was chosen as the site, and in December, 1894, Morningside College received its charter. The new college was to take over the University of the Northwest, a private institution with only one building and, apparently, no funds. When Morningside College opened its doors on September 11, 1896, it had a campus of sixteen acres, one four-story building, and the foundations laid for a second building. The first president was the Reverend George W. Carr, who served two years in this capacity. The principal founder and second president was the Reverend Wilson Seeley Lewis, who was elected as a Methodist bishop in 1908. In 1914 the Charles City College, founded by the Northwest German Conference, was incorporated with Morningside College at Sioux City.

There were also a number of local secondary schools started and maintained for a time under the wing of the Methodist Church. This was natural since public high schools did not come into general service until after the decade of the seven-

ties. There was at one time, too, a more or less serious proposal to establish a Methodist State University at Des Moines. In 1888 the city offered financial aid in the establishment of a graduate institution, but the supporters of the struggling Methodist colleges realized that it would be a formidable competitor both for students and for contributions, and the university never materialized. Some of the proffered aid probably went later to Drake University.

Another problem for the Methodist Church was presented by the Methodist young people in the three state-supported institutions. Here the future teachers, physicians, lawyers, nurses, engineers, and other leaders were being prepared for life in Iowa communities. The first recognition of the responsibility of the church for Methodist young people at the state institutions came in 1910, when an Inter-Conference Commission was named to consider the problem. The members of the Commission were the Reverend Elias Hardy, pastor of the Methodist Church at Grinnell, Dr. Charles N. Pace, later President of Hamline University, and Joe R. Hanley, later Lieutenant Governor of New York. These men considered the various possibilities, and the Reverend L. F. Townsend was sent to the State University of Iowa in the fall of 1913 as the first student pastor. At the same time the Reverend William Hints initiated the work at Iowa State College at Ames. The stu-

dent work used convenient centers with student pastors or counsellors working in connection with the local pastor. Since 1917 the governing body of the student work has been termed the Wesley Foundation.

## The Methodist Church Today

The Methodist Church of today is more settled and sedate than it was in pioneer times. There are few circuit riders, and these use cars instead of horses. The membership is recruited largely from church schools and young people's societies. Some are older persons who join church after private conferences and decisions rather than during camp meetings and revivals.

From the physical standpoint, the Methodist Church has prospered. Midway in the twentieth century the total valuation of Methodist property in Iowa was estimated at approximately \$34,412,085, of which \$26,762,028 represents the church buildings and sites. There were 432 ministers in active service, 237 on the retired list, 47 on trial, and 120 listed as accepted supply preachers, not for regular appointments. Of the 120 supplies, 18 were women.

The North Iowa Conference is divided into eight districts with 313 charges, while the Iowa-Des Moines Conference has six districts with 324 charges. Of these charges, 222 had two appointments, eight had three preaching places, one had four, and 22 were circuits. Of the pastors, ten were women. The total membership was 276,466,

though almost 40,000 were listed as inactive. Approximately one-tenth of Iowa's population belongs to the Methodist Church. The largest membership is at St. Paul's in Cedar Rapids with 3,336. Six other churches have more than 2,000 members, while 37 others have more than 1,000. Seventy-four churches reported less than fifty members each. There are over 12,000 Methodists in Des Moines and vicinity.

But a church is more than its buildings, ministers, and members. A church must have spiritual appeal and moral force if it is to aid in establishing the right relationship of its members with God and with the world. The Methodist Church has lost some of its emotional momentum. The camp meetings and revivals, with their tears of conviction and shouts of triumph, have largely disappeared. Visitation programs and conferences are used to bring the indifferent and undecided into the church and help them with their spiritual problems. The minister preaches less often of Hell and perhaps too seldom of the punishment for wrong-doing. Instead, he portrays the peace which comes from fellowship with Christ and obedience to the laws of God. The Devil has been almost forgotten.

With these changes in emphasis there has been a change of moral standards. Dancing and the theater are no longer taboo in Methodist circles as they were a hundred years ago. Few object to

ruffles, jewelry, and musical instruments, while religious objects such as crosses and candles are recognized as aids to worship. Social card games are tolerated, but the Methodist Church as a whole opposes gambling, the sale of liquor, and obscene and immoral literature. A small minority advocates peace, but only a few call for peace at any price. The Methodist Church in Iowa stands for racial toleration and for the abolition of barriers based on race or color.

Young people's work is promoted by the Methodist Youth Fellowship, successor of the Epworth League. A spiritual life retreat is held for members of this organization at Clear Lake in the North Iowa Conference. Summer camps are also held at Lake Okoboji. The church schools continue to be a most vital part of the church's activities, with almost 150,000 Iowa children and adults enrolled in them.

Retired ministers and ministers' widows are provided for by annuities. For retired ministers in the North Iowa Conference the amount paid is \$33 annually for each year of service; for widows, \$23.10 — the total being \$210,000 per year. The Iowa-Des Moines Conference pays less — \$24 to each retired minister for each year of service in the Conference, and approximately \$16.80 to each widow. The total paid out by both conferences amounts to approximately \$350,000 annually.

Statistics, however, are an inadequate basis for judging a church. What does Methodism mean to Iowa in human values? It means a Methodist church in most Iowa towns and all Iowa cities, with neighbors meeting at the morning service. It means the sound of hymns undergirded by a piano or perhaps a great organ. It means children learning Bible stories or young people talking over the problems of life. It means an invitation to all to accept the way of salvation offered to every man, woman, and child. It means comfort for the sick and old. It means a standard of public and personal morality. It means groups of women meeting to sew and to pray, to study and to raise money for missions. It means that the laborer and the factory owner, the farmer and the banker are equally welcome in God's house. It means that each functioning church in the smallest town reaches out to the ends of the earth.

The Methodist Church of today is not the church of the pioneers. The great evangelistic crusade now being conducted will, it is hoped, bring a new spiritual awakening for Methodism. The church cannot go back, but it can go forward, holding, as its motto, John Wesley's final comment: "The best of all is, God is with us."



