

HISTORY  
Of The  
CHURCHES OF GOD  
IN CHRIST JESUS  
IN IOWA

H I S T O R Y  
Of the Churches of God in Christ Jesus in Iowa

The Church of God in Christ Jesus has led a precarious existence in Iowa for over one hundred years. Levi Marsh of Irving, Benton County, was the moving spirit in erecting a building and organizing a church in Irving in 1874, which is considered the first church of God in Iowa. He came to that community in 1853 from Plainfield, Illinois where he had settled in 1846, which is a community in which the gospel of the Kingdom was preached long before the Civil War. It became apparent that Levi Marsh had knowledge and contact with those who were influential and vocal in the advocacy of Restitution ideas in the time following the Civil War. For he induced H. V. Reed of Chicago, a man of eloquence and literary ability, to dedicate the Irving church; and also succeeded in getting W. H. Wilson, editor of the Restitution (forerunner of the Restitution Herald), to come to hold revival meetings. In addition he persuaded A. J. Eychaner, who was associated with Mr. Wilson in the publication of the Restitution, to move to Iowa in 1873.

From a historical account of the history of the Church prepared by Mr. Eychaner and read at the conference of 1937, we learn that the present organization in Iowa of the churches of God was begun in Story County, Iowa. In the spring of 1886 when A. J. Eychaner (at that time making his home in Marshalltown, Iowa) was holding a series of meetings at Hickory Grove in Story County. Brother Charles H. Watkins and his wife asked if a meeting could be held the next year at Watkin's Wells, Story County, Iowa. It was planned, if possible, to organize a conference and systematize the work of the state. At that time the only church organization in the whole state was the one at Irving. The meeting was held as planned in June 1887 with an attendance 23. The speakers at that conference were G. M. Myers and A. J. Eychaner.

We would call attention to the fact that Iowa

had organizations and small conferences where groups of believers gathered previous to the re-organization at Watkin's Wells. Such conferences were held at Irving and Rock Creek in the fall of 1876, and even as early as 1865 in other parts of Iowa. The earlier organizations were in the nature of pioneers and while they were temporary in organization, they were the real foundation of all subsequent work of the Church of God, teaching the mortality of man's nature, and of the Kingdom to come.

And so it was that the first conference of the Church of God in Christ Jesus in Iowa met at Watkin's Wells, near Story City, Story County, June 1 to 11, 1888. In all 26 people were present. Mrs. Anna Eychaner preserved a little pocket account book of her husband's (Albert J. Eychaner) in which he recorded the names of those present. The addresses were from Gladbrook, Sac City, Melbourne, Laurens, Ames, Marathon, Nevada, Alden, Floyd, Dunkerton, Story City, Iowa, and Lanark, Illinois. From the list only the names of Allard, Eychaner, and Garton have significance for us at the present time. Through the years we find these names appearing often in the conference minutes. Of the Allards listed we find the names of Joseph, Greenleaf, Sr., Greenleaf, Jr., O.J. and O.J. Allard gave a considerable ministerial service, many times to small audiences for which he received little compensation. He also served many years as conference president. He retired from this position in 1919. The Gladbrook church has been composed mainly of descendants of the Allard family.

Although Mr. Eychaner's family was not large, their influence in the work was considerable over a long period of time.

John Garton was a farmer near Marathon who held a ministerial license for many years and did limited preaching.

Officers selected for the year 1888-1889 were: Libbie Palmer, president; Mrs. A.J. Eychaner,

secretary; and A. J. Eychaner, treasurer. Thus it was the women as usual who were pressing for an extension of the Lord's work. This gathering adopted a plan to employ a conference evangelist who was to go to the various communities where there were believers and hold protracted meetings as long as interest continued with a view to organizing churches. This was set forth in a printed appeal, a four page tract, a copy of which is still in existence, which was sent to the scattered members asking for financial support. The officers named were also "The evangelist committee". T. J. Whitesitt was selected as evangelist and was to be paid one dollar a day. A detailed report of his activities was set down in Mr. Eychaner's little book. From September 22, 1888 to September 23, 1889, Mr. Whitesitt reported 177 sermons given, 23 baptized, and \$202.50 received with an average of \$1.15 per sermon. The cost of gaining each convert was \$8.80. The number of sermons necessary to gain a convert was 7. Similar reports were recorded covering several years.

In this little book are listed 9 churches and members. The members in 1889 as follows: Irving with 31 members; Gladbrook, 16 members; Alden, 5 members; Marathon, 40 members; Hickory Grove, 23 members; Lester, 5 members; Levey, 12 members; Clarksville, 19 members; Urbana, 13 members; and Decorah, 18 members. There is also a list of names of people scattered over the state who were members of the church at that time, 227 in all.

The Iowa State Conference has had as its presidents starting in 1889 the following: A. Hipsher, G.M. Myers, A.J. Eychaner, O. J. Allard, Eldred Marsh, Arthur Jones, Herman Hunt, J. Arthur Johnson, and Louis Cronbaugh.

Annual state conferences of the Church of God in Christ Jesus have been held regularly since 1887 as follows:

1887 - Watkin's Wells, Story County, Iowa



1888- Watkin's Wells, Story County, Iowa

1889 - Ferguson

1890 - Ferguson

1891 - Sac City

1892 - Webster City

1893 - Clarksville

1894 - Nevada

1895 - Marshalltown

1896 - Marshalltown

1897 - Marshalltown

1898 - Marshalltown

1899 - East Waterloo

1900 - Waterloo

Since 1900 all annual conferences have been held in Waterloo.

In 1890 a tent was purchased for \$145.00. This amount was raised by subscription. This tent was to be used as a center in which a conference evangelist held meetings in various communities. It was under the supervision and control of the evangelist committee appointed by the conference. It did service for a number of years.

A. J. Eychaner was selected conference evangelist for the year 1890-1891.

In 1896, conference convened at Marshalltown, Iowa because of its central location and railroad connections. This meeting opened on August 14 and the first minute books of conference proceedings date back to this conference. Apparently there were daily business meetings. The conference sessions were held in the large tent and those in attendance camped out around the central tent. Flies and mosquitoes were also in attendance in hordes. Reports from specific churches were not listed. By action of the conference itself, the following were granted ministerial licenses for a year: J.M.Primmer, John Garton, P. B. Stouffer, A. J. Eychaner, W. L. Crowe, G. M. Myers, George Moyer, Libbie Palmer, D. M. Huddler, C. F. Kennedy, O. J. Allard, and J. B. Craton, conference evangelist. (Later the power to grant ministerial licenses was conferred on the conference board.)

A. J. Eychaner was paid \$309.95 for his work as conference evangelist for the preceding year. G. M. Myers and A. Wilson gave reports of their work.

From 1896 adequate minutes of the business proceedings have been kept. There have been groups, some of them from six to a dozen members, that reported to the conference or were acknowledged as existing in the following communities or cities of the state: Eagle Grove, Alden, Blairsburg, Irving, Gladbrook, Hickory Grove, Lester, Levy, Avon, Koszta, Pleasant Prairie, Sac City, Marathon, Clarksville, Stanhope, Waterloo, Marshalltown, Ferguson, Lake Mills, Urbana, Decorah, Laporte City, Belle Plaine, and Spring Valley, Minnesota. Some of them reported a few times and then dropped out. None of them has a longer continuous existence than Gladbrook. There was a work in Gladbrook community prior to 1884 when Mr. Eychaner gave a funeral sermon for Allie, son of Greenleaf Allard, Sr., in that community. In 1893 Eychaners moved to Gladbrook and in 1894 the church house was erected. It would seem that only Eagle Grove, Marathon, Irving, Gladbrook, Koszta, Pleasant Prairie, Lake Mills, and last of all Waterloo by the erection by the conference in 1932 of a building had houses of worship.

In 1898 the conference met again at Marshalltown. The following churches reported: Eagle Grove, Alden, Blairsburg, Irving and Gladbrook. Among activities mentioned was the distribution of "tracts". At this conference the Berean Society was organized. A. J. Eychaner was largely responsible for this project. The name was suggested by Brother C. C. Ramsey. In 1914, the Iowa Society affiliated with the National group. A cradle roll department was added in 1931 to the organization and is presently maintained. The Berean Searchlight was first published in 1937. The continuance of this publication and the success of its distribution has depended largely on the efforts of Sr. Blanche Harland and the ones who help her to edit and print the material which is mailed monthly

to many, many people.

In 1899, the conference met at East Waterloo. The principle item of business was the purchase of the camp ground comprising 1.6 acres. The purchase of the grounds was financed by thirty-three persons giving \$10.00 each. These individuals were named as grantee in the deed. Thus all those jointly became owners of this tract. This produced complications, because later when residential lots were sold fronting on Riehl St., for the tract extended that far, the surviving owners or their heirs had to be found and deeds conveying their interest secured from each of them. This tract of ground, large as it was, did not extend to nor give access to Conger Street. Meanwhile the strip of ground between the grounds originally secured and Conger Street had been purchased by W. L. Crowe. \$600.00 was raised by subscription and this strip acquired from him. Meanwhile the conference had become incorporated so the deed ran to it as a corporation and not to the original donors. Stanhope, Sac City, and Lakeview Churches are first mentioned at this conference as having been organized during the preceding year.

The minutes of the 1899 conference contained a great deal of emphasis on Temperance. Later conferences also show that a whole session was given to the consideration of Temperance. Mrs. Eychaner was active in WCTU and this emphasis was due to her agitation. Among the resolutions passed was one "that any brother addicted to the use of tobacco should desist from its use."

The session in 1900 was listed as the thirteenth. Its principal feature was the dedication of the camp ground on August 19. At this session Articles of Incorporation were adopted.

In 1901 it was agreed that the conference evangelist, W. L. Crowe was to receive \$1.75 per day for 67 days work in the field, a total of \$117.25. The offerings taken in the course of

his work fell short of that amount so he had to look to the generosity of the conference for the balance.

Also in 1901, a principal item of business was the construction of a shed on the camp grounds to protect the horses driven to conference. People then attended the sessions of conference under far different conditions than we do now. They journeyed by train or buggy drawn by horses. Trunks were packed and shipped as baggage in anticipation of the week's or ten days' length of sessions. Cooking was done on the grounds and people slept in tents near by. Each conference had a railroad superintendent whose duty it was to meet the trains to see that the perspiring believers and their baggage got from the down town depot to the camp grounds. An iron fence and gates were built around the grounds about 60 years ago. No one was supposed to stray away at night. Self-appointed guardians of innocence and virtue searched the tents to see that the young folks were nestled safely in their beds. Woe be to the individual who was lured to Electric Park or a carnival and had to climb the fence to get back in at 10 or 11 P. M.!

In 1905 a directory of the Churches of God in U. S. and Canada was issued. This was a cooperative effort of S. J. Lindsay of Illinois and A. J. Eychaner of Iowa. The directory contained a great deal of valuable information concerning the organization and activity of churches. Each conference carried on its promotional activities about like the Iowa conference, with an evangelist making the rounds of churches or groups and holding occasional services. Indiana conference was the only one refusing to furnish information. Arkansas seemed to have the largest membership. She reported 1500 in all. Iowa estimated 600 members with 279 in attendance at the 1904 conference. \$904.00 was raised for conference activities. The churches of Fonthill, Ontario and Niagara Falls, New York were listed in this directory. The membership of the Niagara Falls church included the parents



and grandparents of Linford Moore, pastor of the Waterloo church.

Also, the 1905 directory listed the following publications as fit for the brethren to read: The Restitution published at Plymouth, Indiana; Last Days, San Francisco; Present Truth, St. Paul, Nebraska; and Gospel Trumpet, Center Ridge, Arkansas.

Through the years the conference minutes reveal interesting facts of the conditions of the times and approach to solution of problems presenting themselves. In 1906 the minutes showed 198 feet of fencing purchased at a cost of \$152.00. In 1907, 67 rods of fence were erected around the entire camp ground.

For many years programs were printed and sent out in advance to the believers. A number of these programs have been preserved. We find the first mention of Joseph Williams' presence in Iowa in a 1906 program.

In the 1906 program were these announcements: "The Nineteenth Annual Conference of the Churches of God in Iowa will be held at the beautiful camp ground at Waterloo, commencing August 18 and continuing over Sunday, August 26.

"A rate of one and one-third fare for the round trip on the Certificate plan has been granted by all railroads from all points in Iowa. Full fare is paid on the going trip and one-third fare on the return trip if you present your certificate properly signed by the Railroad secretary of the conference. Be sure to get your Certificate from the agent when you buy a ticket; otherwise you can get no deduction.

"On arriving at Waterloo give your checks to the Conference Baggage man. If he is not there bring your checks to the campground. Our baggage man will have a badge on his hat reading 'Conference Baggage men'. Give checks to no other!"

"Take a street car for Cedar River Park and get off at the Campground."

"Tents will be furnished for all. Bring your straw ticks and a few comforters. Board at the dining hall. Ten cents per meal or three meals for 25 cents. This is certainly cheaper than you can board at home. "

"Begin at once to plan on being at the meeting. We need your presence and counsel on the questions of vital importance which will come before the Conference. Come on the first day and stay thruout the entire meeting. "

"Now Brethren and Sisters, we know you cannot afford to miss this meeting. Please read Malachi 3:16 and let the words of the prophet sink deep into your hearts and create within you a stronger desire than ever before to be present at our annual meeting."

"Invite your neighbors and friends to come and spend a ten days vacation in this beautiful park."

"Remember to get a certificate from each agent of whom you purchase a ticket, and try to come in time to be present the first day of the conference. Remember the tickets for the going trip can be purchased August 17th to 23rd, inclusive; and will be good for return trip up to and including August 29th."

"Each year resolutions were presented and adopted by the conference expressing gratitude to God for His blessings, commending those coming into the church, extending sympathy to bereaved, and appreciation for those working to keep the conference going. Occasionally some eloquent soul out-did others in flowery wording. The minutes of 1907 illustrate this in the following: "Resolved that we feel thankful to Almighty God for permitting this gathering together of His blessed body, to talk of the hope, to encourage and strengthen each other for the work of another year.

"Trusting that the time spent here may not have been in vain, but that some one may have been made better, others encouraged and still others may be influenced to accept the conditions of eternal life and that we may meet them in God's beautiful home.

"Resolved, that we extend heartfelt thanks to the officers and committees of this Conference for their very faithful work done."

"To the dear young people for their helpful music, to the thoughtful ones for their floral offerings and all for kind words, cheerful acts of love, and for helpful words from visiting ministers.

"Resolved, that nothing is more encouraging to the older members or more conducive to the growth of the cause in Iowa than the interest manifested in the attendance at this conference of so many young men and women, and of the children's meeting each morning, where the dear sisters are leading the lambs of the flock Zionward, and-whereas-Death has continued his work in our midst and removed dear ones from the household of faith, therefore be it Resolved-That we pray God to care for their sacred dust and in the morning for the first Resurrection beautify them with Immortal life and may the God of all Love be with and over all in the work of the ministry and in the various manifestations of love for the coming year."

In 1908 the conference evangelist reported his activities as follows: Gladbrook, 10 sermons, 36 average attendance, \$3.47 average collection; Eagle Grove, 12 sermons, 17 average attendance, \$2.54 average collection; Irving, 12 sermons, 40 average attendance, \$2.50 average collection; Marathon, 16 sermons, 20 average attendance, \$.78 average collection; Hickory Grove, 15 sermons, 42 average attendance, \$.68 average collection; Sac City, 2 sermons, 38 average attendance.

From the minutes of the 1909 conference we note that the conference charged those attending 10 cents per night for comfortables and blankets for the first 5 nights or 50 cents for 10 nights. O. J. Allard was evangelist during 1908 and 1909 and reported having given 172 sermons, 34 of which were in constituted churches and 138 in new places. He had received \$514.00. The church reports showed a church at Laporte City.

In 1910 the sidewalk south of the grounds was put in at a cost of \$94.88 which was paid in eight installments with 6% interest on the balance. A committee was appointed to prepare a church history but no action was taken by the committee.

Also in 1910 a general conference of all the churches in the U. S. was held August 29-31 on the camp grounds. Delegates to it were appointed and specifically instructed not to vote for the adoption of a specific creed but to stand for the Bible alone as a sufficient creed and discipline.

An account of the 1911 conference has been preserved in a copy of "Present Truth". A. J. Eychaner, O. J. Allard and John Garton were the preachers within the state. The sermons given in the churches in the course of the year were Gladbrook 21, Marathon 14, Eagle Grove 5, Sac City 13, Hickory Grove 27, Irving 4, Waterloo 14, and Avon 21. Out-of-state visitors included Mrs. King, Alta and Lillian from Nebraska. The conference voted to loan the tent to be used at Holbrook, Nebraska for a meeting. Apparently there had been some discussion as to which publications were fit for the brethren to read and effort made to endorse certain ones. As a result the conference passed a resolution stating the brethren were free to subscribe to whatever publications that were in harmony with the principles of the Churches of God. Certainly this was a wise decision and free from the shackling bigotry the other viewpoint implied.



The report of the 1912 conference published in the Restitution Herald has also been preserved. Its sessions were from August 24 to September 1 with 152 registered. Apparently there had been some discussions over disputed points of understanding, that had grown acrimonious, even then, but the reporter, Eva Stearns, said that "the brethren in Iowa had made a marked advance in charity and had grown in the spirit of love for each other in the last few years." Sounds very recent, doesn't it?

In the 1912 report the names of Joseph Williams and A. M. Jones of Eagle Grove are among those listed as present at all conference sessions. Joseph Williams was hired as conference evangelist for a few months.

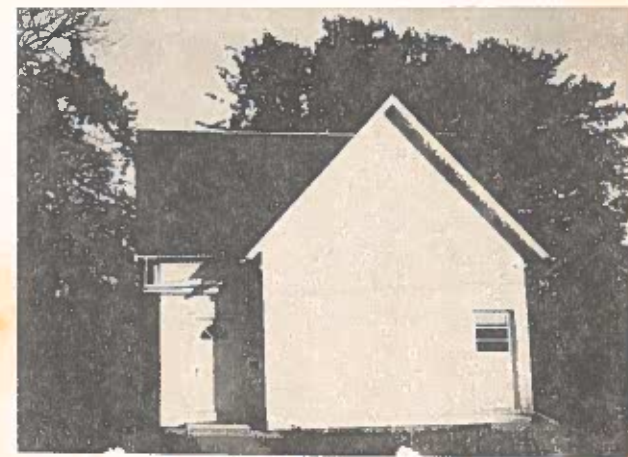
In 1913 the minutes note that a number of blankets and "comfortables" were donated. We find that a policy was adopted of charging 50 cents for 1 mattress, 50 cents for springs, 50 cents for bedding, 25 cents a bed for 1 night, \$1.25 for 5 nights or \$1.50 for the season.

In 1914 the paving was put in on Conger Street south of the church. The Iowa Conference of the Evangelical Church asked to buy a half interest in the camp ground. Inasmuch as the grounds were owned by the individual stockholders who would not convey their interest it was impossible to make such a deal. That denomination later bought and built up the beautiful grounds at River View Park, Cedar Falls.

The 1914 conference appointed A. J. Eychaner and Elmon Marsh to sell the church building at Irving. The money was to be put in the church fund. Later information reveals that the building was bought by the Hickory Grove Church, taken down and moved to Maxwell where it was re-assembled and dedicated on September 5, 1915. This building had originally been erected by Levi Marsh, a pioneer of the Irving area in 1874. The bell in the cupola had been imported from



Church Home near Koszta



Church Home at Gladbrook



Left to right on picture:

Arthur Johnson, A. J. Eychayner, L. E. Conner,  
O. J. Allard, Jos. Williams, C. W. Howe,  
W. L. Shook, Herman Hunt.



Church House at Waterloo

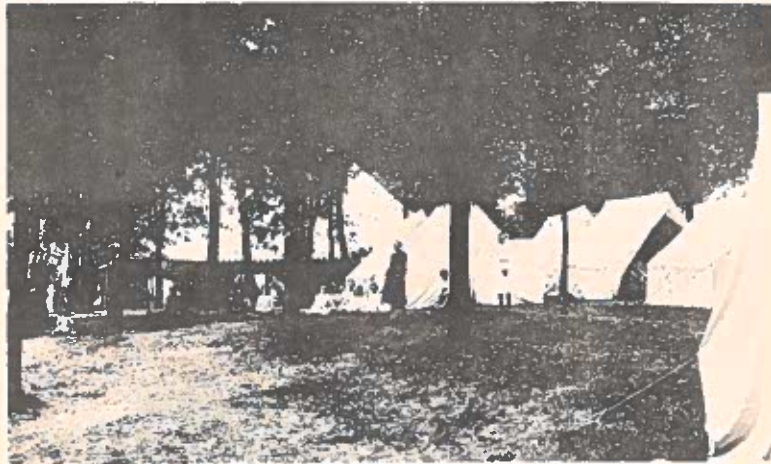


Entrance to Camp Grounds



Dormitory at Waterloo





Camp Grounds at Waterloo

Belfast, Ireland by Mr. Marsh.

The conference board of 1915 hired Joseph Williams as State Evangelist for the first time. The report given by him at the 1916 conference showed 199 days of work, 168 services conducted, 129 sermons given and 38 lessons taught. He had received \$495.00 plus \$86.59 travel expenses. Thus was begun the long years of self sacrificial labor that saved the life of the churches of Iowa.

We note that the 1916 conference devoted some time to the discussion of the virgin birth of Christ.

In Joseph William's report of 1917, he included 48 sermons given at Koszta. This is the first reference in the minutes to concerted effort there. As the work at Koszta was to grow through the years, and it took the place in the state activities of other groups that winked out. That year the churches showed there were Sunday Schools at Eagle Grove, Gladbrook, Hickory Grove and Waterloo with a combined average attendance of 56. The 1917 conference undertook to support a Bible Faith Missipn in India. This continued for several years. Conference attendance was 308.

In the 1918 minutes we note the name of Herman Hunt. He was appointed to care for the automobiles on the grounds. This is the year the grounds were lighted by electricity for the first time.

In 1920 we find that the delegates who formed the General Conference met on the camp ground. Hence, in Iowa was a unifying work begun that has grown through the years. We note that C. W. Howe affiliated with the Church of God in 1920.

In 1921 a committee was appointed to get the original stockholders to the camp ground or their heirs to execute quit claim deeds of their

interest in real estate to the Iowa Conference Corporation. This proved to be something of a task to locate and induce all to sign, and was not fully accomplished until 1930.

In 1922 the General Conference was looking for a place to locate the National Bible Institution. An earnest effort was made to get the Conference to locate the headquarters in Iowa. The camp ground was offered as a site to the General Conference. This was rejected. A committee was appointed to secure an option on purchase of a 15 acre tract in Cedar Falls for \$15,000 to be offered to the National organization with Iowa retaining an interest in the property. This, too, was rejected. The National Bible Institution was located in Oregon, Illinois and the disappointment of this plus other issues being raised have been a barrier through the years to close cooperation in General Conference projects.

The Resolutions committee of 1923 of which Alta King was a member, offered the following "Your committee on resolutions respectfully submit- Where-as-God the supreme being of the universe, in His infinite wisdom and mercy, has by His grace bestowed such a blessing on us the past year and again permitted us to assemble in fellowship to meditate on our blessed hope and salvation; therefore, be it resolved, that we, the Church of God in unity of Spirit, offer Praises and thanksgiving for His contined favor and grace. That we express our sincere appreciation for the services rendered by our Conference president and Conference board, also ministers and teachers for their faithful services, to those who have helped in the song service and the dining room committee for its efficient service in supplying our physical needs.

"That we call attention to the work of the Bereans for the Pageant. That we extend our sincere sympathy to those suffering in sickness and to those who are the bereaved of loved ones. This committee recommend an expression of

appreciation to those who through their wisdom and far-reaching vision, purchased these beautiful grounds for our use. We call attention to their unusual beauty, their splendid natural trees providing abundant shade, its luxuriant growth of grass making for us a lovely carpet on a soil rich but not muddy, sloping enough for good drainage, but not hilly--near enough to a city to have its advantages with but little of its objections--sufficiently near the center of the state. As we come each year to see again those we love and hear again the old, old story and gather new truths from God's store house, we are impressed more and more of its beauty and loveliness. We can not help but feel that the hand of a loving Father led its founders here to make it Holy by giving it to the Churches of God in Christ Jesus. The committee with much pleasure calls attention to the sweet brotherly spirit evident in our Bible lessons and sermons of the 36th annual meeting.- - - - - "

Herman Hunt was elected conference president for the first time in 1923.

In 1927 a Sunday School was organized at Koszta. The average attendance for 1927-1928 was 27.

The church house at Marathon was sold in 1931 for \$655.00. The City of Waterloo extended Riehl Street through the camp grounds the same year. The conference realized \$1,250.00 from the sale of the grounds involved in extending the street. These amounts sparked the enthusiasm for building a church. Work was immediately begun. Excavation for the basement was made and the super structure erected in the fall and winter of 1931-1932 at an initial cost of \$2,182.00. The interior was not completed with doors, casings, and base boards until 1938.

Financial stringency of the times necessitated a change in policy in 1933. The conference did not employ an evangelist to supply the



churches with periodical preaching, but each church was left for its own work with the conference supplying whatever evangelistic work its finances would permit. This policy is still in effect.

At the suggestion of Mrs. L. M. Kiger at the 1934 conference the minutes began to include the sermon subjects and the musical selections as well as reports, resolutions and motions. A record of the truths set before the conference was thus established.

In the minutes of the 1936 conference is recorded a discussion of prospects for a preacher at Koszta. John Denchfield was secured to divide his time between Koszta and Hickory Grove at \$60.00 per month. The minutes also show that charges for meals and tents were dropped and voluntary contributions were made to cover expenses. For the first time the president appointed conference secretaries in each local group.

The only wedding recorded in conference minutes was that of Esther Sealine and Oscar Jenkins in 1938.

In 1939 C. C. Lapp held a revival meeting at Koszta. It is also noted that a new building was being projected at Koszta.

Since the projection of Riehl Street divided the conference grounds it was deemed advisable to dispose of the north part. It was offered to the city for a playground. This offer was rejected by the council. The land was then sold to Mr. Sorenson for residential purposes.

1940 minutes noted a new church house dedicated at Koszta on June 16 with a church membership of 19 members.

The minutes of 1941 record a suggestion made by Oscar Jenkins that a dormitory be erected. The idea met with favorable response but due to war time restrictions on building materials it was

deemed advisable to postpone building.

In 1944 the fine bulletin board at the front of the camp ground property was donated by Mr. and Mrs. Eldridge Ellis.

Due to the war in 1945, the office of Defense transportation reluctantly granted permission to hold the conference. Ration points for purchase of meat and sugar had to be obtained. This is the year that the small tents used for camping on the grounds were sold for \$150.00. Their sale revived the discussion of erecting a dormitory. This building was the special interest and project of Brother Oscar Jenkins. He continually agitated for it and headed the building committee that supervised its erection in 1948.

The tract of ground that squared out the grounds to the street west was purchased in 1945.

The minutes of 1946 noted that Linford Moore, pastor at Macomb, Illinois, was in attendance at the conference. He made such a favorable impression that repeated offers induced him to come to Waterloo in 1950. 1946 marks the year that the Williams family moved to Washington State, much to the dismay of the Iowa churches.

In 1947, Earl Reinhard was elected state treasurer for the first time. We note also that this is the first year that Louis Cronbaugh became active in the conference.

The 1948 minutes showed completion of the dormitory. There was not enough money on hand to pay for the building so the articles of incorporation were amended to make it possible to borrow on and mortgage the conference property. \$5,000.00 was borrowed.

Herman Hunt retired from the conference presidency in 1949 after twenty-five years of service in that capacity. J. Arthur Johnson was chosen to fill that position.

In 1953 the sidewalk from the church house to the dormitory was laid. The work at the Pleasant Prairie Church had dwindled and the church was sold. From the proceeds of the sale the State Conference received \$200.00 and the balance was presented as a gift to Joseph Williams.

A new ceiling was put on the church sanctuary in 1955 at a cost of \$768.00. The Gladbrook church reported much needed repairs of a basement and sidewalk.

Louis Cronbaugh was elected president of the conference in 1956. The church reports were summarized into one report and mimeographed copies distributed to all members. Koszta's report showed the purchase of new pews and communion table.

In the 1958 session of conference used pews were purchased from a church at Lowden for \$500.00. This purchase was financed by a bequest of Mrs. James Cassen.

In 1960 Mrs. Mae Sienknecht was elected treasurer to succeed Earl Reinhard.

In compiling this history it was found that the conference minutes were for the most part legibly and neatly kept in a variety of penmanship. Names appear and then after a few sessions disappear. One wonders where they went, whether they died, moved away or lost interest, or having made their contributions returned to the ranks to let others carry the load of responsibility. But certainly one name that appeared in many capacities over 29 years of service on the conference board was that of Mrs. Florence Allard. She was at different times corresponding secretary, treasurer, and recording secretary. Then she assumed the directing of the dining hall committee from 1946 until late in the 1950's. She was of inestimable help in compiling this account.

As we look back across the years the casualty of small groups seems large, but no more

so than in other religious groups. Reports show that the many preachers and conference evangelists were busy, self sacrificial men. Perhaps they went into over-churched communities as was often the case with the late 19th century religious leaders. We feel that God blessed us with ministers that compared favorably with the average ability of preachers in other groups and were for the most part far superior in their knowledge of and ability to quote the Bible. We would pay special tribute to A. J. Eychaner and Joseph Williams. In the fragments of his utterances which have been preserved we see Mr. Eychaner to have been a careful eloquent speaker. In Joseph Williams we see a brilliant Bible student who left a deep impression on his hearers. His tracts, his booklets and his book, "Songs in the Night" are treasured parts of many of his hearer's libraries. Lack of financial resources prevented these men from making their initial efforts grow into substantial and permanent work. Yet the total membership has not varied much through the years, for as one work subsided we find expansion in another place.



This history was compiled by Gordon Smith, pastor of the Koszta church, and given by him to the 76th conference of the Church of God in Christ Jesus in August, 1963.

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The death of Joseph Williams on October 20, 1963 prompts us to add a bit of his biography and a tribute to his memory.

"Joseph W. Williams, son of David and Elizabeth Nightingale Williams, was born in Big Rock, Illinois, on August 6, 1874, and died on October 20, 1963 in Tacoma, Washington, at the age of eighty nine years.

He was reared in Kansas, where he attended the State Normal School and taught grade school for several years before becoming a Christian minister.

His ministry covered the states of Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri, Michigan, Minnesota, Arkansas, and Arizona. Most of his active years as a minister were spent in Iowa, where he served from 1915 until his retirement in 1946, with the exception of the year of 1921 in Arizona. Early in his ministry he discovered the great truths from the Scriptures, such as Justification by Faith, Salvation by Grace; the Sovereignty of God; and the ultimate reconciliation of all mankind to God. He was a strong advocate of these truths throughout his ministry.

A TRIBUTE TO JOSEPH W. WILLIAMS  
by Gordon Smith

Inasmuch as the writer has been acquainted with Joseph Williams for thirty years, he wishes to offer this tribute to his memory, realizing that the people of the Church of God in Iowa look back to him as their leader and the mold of their thoughts on religious matters.

He was in attendance at the Iowa Conference for the first time in 1906 but was called away from its sessions by the last illness of his father. In 1912 he was for the first time in attendance at all its sessions. From there on he attended them regularly until he moved from Iowa in 1946.

He was endowed with a good mind and most retentive memory, being able to memorize the entire New Testament and was able to pick up any passage and quote it at will. He gave exhibitions at times of that skill by quoting at random verses that were called for by his auditors. He, like G. Campbell Morgan, was preeminently a man of one book, the Bible, which he diligently studied. He had a command of pure, chaste English so that he ever clearly expressed his thought. Even tho one might not have agreed with him, there was no question about understanding him.

Because of his kindly, sympathetic nature, he came in his thinking to espouse a teaching of eventual universal salvation for the human race as the solution to the problem of evil. To this conclusion he attached and harmonized a teaching of predestination to salvation of the church in the gospel dispensation. Being convinced of the correctness of these views, he diligently presented them to the groups in Iowa to which he ministered. His ability as a Biblical expositor won over to his viewpoint the vast majority of the membership of the churches of God in Iowa. Because they accepted his views the churches in Iowa were alienated from the rest of the brotherhood of churches. Yet in a modest, unassuming spirit he labored on.

His command of English led him to put his views in writing and expositions of the book of Job, the parables, a primer on predestination, a study of the problem of evil, the nature of the gospel, his book "Songs in the Night", besides several brochures and tracts came from his pen. Any and all of these should be preserved by

members of the church who have them in their possession.

Mr. Williams "cared not for riches, neither silver nor gold" almost to the point of a fault. Like Paul, "having food and raiment" he was content. He selflessly labored for the churches and his conceptions of truth in Iowa for over thirty years. It is very doubtful that the churches of God in Iowa could have survived had it not been for his ministrations. On the other hand, let us not look back to the past of his ministrations, but be mindful and apply the exhortation of Joshua of old when he said,

"Moses my servant is dead. Speak to the children of Israel that they go forward."