

CHAPTER XVIII

RELIGIOUS HISTORY

The different religious denominations represented in the county are: The Methodist Episcopal Church, the Christian Church, the Free Methodist Church, the Roman Catholic Church and the Latter-Day Saints Church all located in Knox and each have a good membership; the Baptist Church, the Lutheran Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, United Brethren Church at North Judson; the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Lutheran Church, the Roman Catholic Church at San Pierre; the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the Wesleyan Methodist Church at Hamlet; the United Brethren Church at Grovertown; the United Brethren Church at Round Lake, and several churches over different parts of the county.

These go to show that the religious life is not forgotten by the people of Starke County. In the country where there were no church buildings especially provided, the schoolhouses in the neighborhood were used for that purpose so that all who desired to attend might feel at liberty to do so. The time was before schoolhouses were a common thing for meetings to be held in private houses but that is a rare thing now as churches have been built in all towns and some in the country accommodating all the people.

In various chapters, mention has been made of several of the leading church organizations of the county. In the following are found some individual sketches of leading church organizations:

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

No community is complete without churches. Almost the first thing that is asked by a "newcomer" coming into a town or community is—How is the town in regard to churches? No one contemplating to move into a strange place regardless of just what he believes or whether he is a church member or not, but admires and respects any town or community all the more if he sees above the elms, the oaks and the maples the steeples and spires of church buildings.

In addition to what has been said before about the churches it would be well here to present you with a list of the Methodist ministers, the names and the year that they had charge of the churches here, beginning with the year 1853, two years after the organization of Knox, as follows: Francis Cox, 1853; N. L. Brakeman, 1854; (supply), 1855-56; John

T. Jones, 1857; J. B. Odel, 1858-59; Wilson Beckner, 1860; (supply), 1861; J. C. Crouch, 1862; R. D. Utter, 1863; R. H. Sanders, 1864; (supply), 1865-66-67-68; W. J. Forbes, 1869; (marked S), 1870; — Atkinson, 1871; Geo. Guild, 1872; (supply), 1873; J. C. Taylor, 1874; Levi Moore (also marked supply), 1875; A. J. Clifton, 1876; (supply), 1877-78; S. C. Platts, 1879; J. M. Jackson, 1880; S. M. Brown, 1881; Z. Lambert (also marked supply), 1882-83; (supply), 1884-85-86-87; E. P. Bennett, 1888-89; S. W. Goss, 1890-91; R. G. Hammond one-half, N. E. Tinkham one-half, 1892-93; G. M. Williams, 1894; C. H. Leason, 1895; B. H. Beall, 1896-97; W. F. Clark, 1898-99; Robert J. Reid (resigned, G. A. Reeder), 1900-01; O. H. Berry, 1902-03-04-05; E. W. Strecker, 1906-07-08-09; J. M. Williams, 1910; Robert O. Kemberlin, 1911-12-13-14.

There is a tradition that Reverend Munson preached the first sermon in the Methodist Episcopal Church in Knox. Although it is so given in some of the histories, his name does not appear on the church record.

CHRISTIAN CHURCH AT KNOX

The Christian denomination has existed in this place for a good many years and they have had preaching from time to time by local preachers perhaps but there seems to be no record or list of their names or the time they filled the pulpit before 1892. The information obtained from some of the members I have succeeded in securing shows the following names and the dates so far as could be ascertained from them. Having tried to find a record of those ministers and failed I give the names as well as I can. It seems as though there is no record back of 1892, although the Christians were an organization prior to that time. Mr. Guy M. Wells furnished me with the following list: E. C. Faunce, from 1892 to 1896; W. W. Denham, from 1896 to 1898; E. C. Faunce, January 1, 1898, to September 1, 1898; Grant Waller, September 1, 1898, to January 1, 1899; no regular minister until June 1, 1899; Fannie E. Mickel, June 1, 1899, to January 1, 1900; then no regular minister until June, 1900; H. E. Luck, June 1, 1900, to July 1, 1901; M. W. Nethercut, July 1, 1901, to August 1, 1902; W. A. Foster, August 1, 1902, to January 1, 1904; D. W. Wakeman, January 1, 1904, to August 1, 1905; W. A. Foster, August 1, 1905, to July 1, 1906; H. M. Streibeck, July 1, 1906, to January 1, 1907; T. P. Bauer, March 1, 1908, to January 1, 1909; E. B. Cross, July 1, 1909, to January 1, 1910; L. E. Page, April 1, 1910, and is the present minister.

Prior to the year of 1892 it appears as though no record was kept of those ministers until E. C. Faunce came here and took charge of the church in that year.

The present new building was built during the time that Rev. D. W. Wakeman was in charge in 1904-05. They have a good membership and take great pride in all their church affairs, always having an organist and also a splendid choir. They have their regular Sunday School in

charge of a competent superintendent. The Christian Endeavor is a great auxiliary to the church, which is not neglected by those ever wide-awake Christians. One thing is very noticeable in their church and that is the organist, who is always at her place to play the organ, never hesitating to do her part. Mr. Page, the minister in charge, is a man well versed in the Bible and besides he has traveled considerably over the world and can interest all who have the opportunity of hearing him tell of the different countries he has had the privilege of visiting, telling of the character, the customs and the manner of living in a foreign land.

LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The following is a list of the ministers that have been engaged to preach at this church, also giving the state from which they came, but the date that each occupied that place could not be ascertained, although the names are given in rotation beginning with the year 1860: 1, Elder James Blaksley, Galien, Mich.; 2, Elder Wilsley, Illinois; 3, Elder E. C. Briggs, Lamoni, Iowa; 4, Elder L. B. Scott, Galien, Mich.; 5, Elder Lamfere, Plano, Ill.; 6, Elder Jesse L. Adams, Buffalo Prairie, Ill.; 7, Elder Steven J. Stone, Illinois; 8, Elder James B. Prettyman, Knox, Ind.; 9, Elder Francis Earl, Chicago, Ill.; 10, Elder W. S. L. Scott, South Park, Ind.; 11, Elder Samuel Stroch, Coldwater, Mich.; 12, Elder Charles W. Prettyman, Knox, Ind.; 13, Elder E. L. Kelley, Indianapolis, Ind.; 14, Elder Wm. Kelley, New Albany, Ind.; 15, Elder Edward Blaksley, Galien, Mich.; 16, Elder J. W. McKnight, Galien, Mich.; 17, Elder Columbus Scott, Lamoni, Iowa; 18, Elder J. M. Smith, Flora, Ill.; 19, Elder Wildred J. Smith, Michigan; 20, Elder G. H. Hillerd, Jeffersonville, Ill.; 21, Elder W. H. Pender, Nebraska; 22, Elder M. T. Short, Indianapolis, Ind.; 23, Elder Wm. Waterman, Lamoni, Iowa; 24, Elder Joshua B. Prettyman, Knox, Ind.; 25, Elder W. W. Blair, Lamoni, Iowa; 26, Elder Clyde Ellis, Michigan; 27, Elder James Bagerly, Southern Indiana; 28, Elder John Scott, Southern Indiana.

Thus you see that while the Latter-Day Saints have not had regular ministers hired by the term or year, they have been a long way from not having ministers to preach to them as the above list shows beginning with 1860, one year before the great Civil war swept the southern states. Some of those ministers are residents of Knox and many more of them were well and favorably known by our people here. There are a goodly number of those Latter-Day Saints located in Knox and they are good quiet law-abiding citizens.

This list was handed to the writer by Elder Joshua B. Prettyman, whose name appears on above list as No. 24, and I take it to be correct as Mr. Prettyman was personally acquainted with every one of those ministers, having lived here himself since 1846 except perhaps for a short absence from the county.

This shows that the Prettyman family were residents of this county

or where Starke County was afterwards surveyed out, before the county was organized, about four years ahead of that date, and are living in the town today in apparently good health.

FREE METHODIST CHURCH

Having referred to the Free Methodist Church at Knox, and not having the names of the ministers and the years in which they were employed, Rev. P. W. Newcomer furnished the following list of the pastors who served Knox Free Methodist Church from 1882 to 1914 as follows: J. O. C. Huston, 1882; Henry H. Cannon, 1883-84; C. P. Miller and E. H. Calkins (supply), 1885; H. Ferguson (supply), 1886; George B. Day, 1887-88; Robert Clark, 1889; William Davis, 1890-91; A. F. Goodwin, 1892-93; U. V. Hoover and J. A. J. Tannehill, 1894-95-96; N. S. Cotterel and J. A. J. Tannehill, 1897; J. A. J. Tannehill, 1898; D. G. Briggs, 1899; B. J. Vincent, 1900-1901; H. G. Ingersoll, 1902-03; John Fenner, 1904; T. J. Russell, 1905-06-07; J. A. J. Tannehill, 1908; Monroe Williams, 1909; Anna Bright, 1910-11; J. A. J. Tannehill, 1912; W. T. Loring, 1913; P. W. Newcomer, 1914.

Those ministers were all well known by the people of Knox, especially was this the case among the members of the Free Methodist Church. Some of those ministers reside in and near Knox and are all known to be first-class citizens, faithful to the church that they belong to, always being present at their services unless detained or kept away by sickness. The present pastor, Reverend Mr. Newcomer, is a man of great ability as a minister and will see to it that the Free Methodist Church will prosper under his care as long as he shall stay with them. There are some of the church members belonging to that church living here that have been residents of the county before it was organized (since 1844) and are active members of that church, filling their places in the services from the foundation of that church in Knox until the present day.

Like all churches in a new country they had many severe battles to fight in order to keep up all the expense incident to maintaining their church and paying their pastors, but good Providence has furnished a way whereby they could meet all those demands and has brought them triumphantly above all those obstacles and put them upon a sound financial basis where they can now worship God as all others do "according to the dictates of their own conscience."

CHURCHES AT HAMLET

The minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church at Hamlet is Rev. George Albert Emerich. The minister of the German Lutheran Church is Rev. B. C. Barth. The minister of the Wesleyan Church is Rev. K. C. McCullum. The Catholic Church is in charge of their priest.

Any town without churches is lacking in a great measure of the uplift of the moral and religious standards of the place. But Hamlet is

well provided for in this line; churches so essential for the betterment of all its citizens. Each denomination has its good and commodious church building, with its spire pointing toward the skies. This speaks well for the town and surrounding neighborhood.

No one, whether he is a member of a church or not, would care to live in a community where there are no churches. It is an indication of morality and good citizenship to see neat and commodious churches in any town. It shows the respect the people have for the neighborhood in which they live. It indicates the attitude the people have toward the principle of right and the advancement they hold in their homes and their respect for the Bible, the book of all books, a book that should be read and studied more and more by everybody in the land. It is an inspiration for the young people in any town or country to live in the midst of churches. To hear the ringing of the church bells gives an invitation to come together where they can meet in friendly fellowship with each other.

Having referred to the churches at Hamlet, after endeavoring to get some information concerning the names of the pastors I met with little success except the names of the present ministers. I have since been furnished with the names of the ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church at Hamlet by the Rev. George Albert Emerich, whose name appears elsewhere. Their names are as follows:

Rev. W. A. Mathews, pastor 1891 to 1892; Rev. Lyman Bates, pastor 1892 to 1895; Rev. J. O. Linock, pastor 1896 to 1897; Rev. J. N. Harmon, pastor 1897 to 1899; Rev. C. F. Taylor, pastor 1899 to 1900; Rev. E. H. Edwards, pastor 1900 to 1902; Rev. John B. Smith, pastor 1902 until the summer of 1904, when he died; Rev. Robert Turner, filling his place until conference in the fall of 1904; Rev. J. E. Watson, pastor 1904 to 1907; Rev. J. J. Rankins, pastor 1907 to 1909; Rev. G. C. Richardson, pastor 1909 to 1910; Rev. H. H. Cannon, pastor 1910 to 1912; Rev. G. H. Black, pastor 1912 to 1913; Rev. C. L. Marsh, pastor 1913 to 1914; Rev. George Albert Emerich, pastor 1914, is the present pastor, who so kindly furnished the above list to the writer, for which he has my kind thanks. This society was organized in 1890 by Rev. W. A. Mathews and the church was built in 1891. The parsonage was built in 1894. Much credit is due to the ministers, the members and to others for the liberal donations they gave and the assistance they rendered in building this elegant church building at Hamlet. It stands on the west side of Main Street with an east front, with its spires pointing towards the skies, beckoning to all the citizens of Hamlet in good will and affection, that feeling that all good people should have for each other, that love and esteem we owe to our neighbors, our church members and our God. Several active members who so faithfully worked and gave their time in building this church have long since gone to their final rest, but they are not forgotten and will ever remain in the minds of those who stood heart to heart and hand to hand until the last nail was driven and the last bit of paint was spread, and the last dollar was raised, thus complet-

ing their building, an honor to them, a credit to the town and a blessing to all. Many hard battles are fought and many discouragements have to be met in building churches, for not many have the funds to build from the foundation to completion, but the pluck and good will towards each other, such as the people in Hamlet have, will accomplish much and this is why this fine building was raised, built, completed and paid for without a hitch, without a murmur from any one. The writer extends to them his best wishes and may they all be happy to the end.

The first one of the church buildings in Hamlet was built by the Catholics in the year 1891. The German Lutherans built in 1902. The Methodist Church was built in 1891. The Wesleyan Church was built in 1893.

Not many towns the size of Hamlet have four good substantial churches. As near as I can learn, they are all paid for, which speaks well for the people of Hamlet. Many hard efforts are put forth by some of the citizens to accomplish some enterprise commenced, but to stick to it is the only solution and then success is yours.

There is one thing very noticeable about the people of Hamlet and that is they all take pride in standing together and boosting any good thing that will promote the welfare of the town.

This is a disposition that will help to build up any town and maintain a friendly feeling towards each other. It maintains their churches, maintains the schools and maintains good citizenship in all classes of business, in everything they undertake to do.

This has been the prevailing watchword from the earliest settlement of the town to the present time. No community can accomplish much unless this disposition is shown among its citizens.

There may be churches of different denominations just as you find it to be in Hamlet and for that matter in all towns, but while that is true the same friendly spirit can prevail and the work of all be carried to a successful end.

Each church having its own Sunday School where the young can be taught many good lessons regardless of what church or denomination it is, it all counts for the better education of the whole community from a religious standpoint, and a standpoint of morality which shall go with them through the many vicissitudes of this life.

“CHURCH OF THE FIRST BORN”

There is a class of Christians in this county known as the “Church of the First Born,” which holds its meetings in schoolhouses or rented halls. They are a very conscientious people, advocating and preaching what they honestly believe to be the true scriptures, keeping Saturday for the Sabbath day, and they strictly adhere to that belief, never yielding or shrinking from that faith. They are a very kind and honest people, always ready to assist in case of sickness, always willing to do any kind of Christian kindness that will help to alleviate the distress

of any sufferer and render any assistance to those bereaved by death of any member of the family.

Rev. Charles Edward Groshans living in Hamlet, Indiana, is the only minister in Starke County of the Church of the First Born, although it is frequently the case that some minister from abroad will assist in their meetings. There are some thirty members of this church and all are very strict in living up to their faith.

Nothing could be said against their belief that would in any wise disturb or change their views upon the Bible. Mr. Groshans was born and raised four miles from the Town of Hamlet, the town where he resides, and is well and favorably known by all the people within a radius of several miles and is universally honored and respected by all who know him. While there may be some that would take issue with Mr. Groshans in his church belief, there can be none as neighbors and friends that would say he and his estimable wife would overlook any act of kindness that it was in their power to render to those deserving of a kind and sympathetic word or any act of kindness that lies in his power to give. It is not so much as to the name of the church to which one belongs as it is to the acts of Christian kindness bestowed by the members upon the unfortunate that furnishes the true basis for judgment of any sect.