1949

History of the Baptist work in Montana

Oscar John Grindheim

The University of Montana

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HISTORY
of
THE BAPTIST WORK
in
Montana

by

Oscar J. Grindheim
B.A., Hastings College, 1947

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

Montana State University
1949

Approved:

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PREFACE

The reason for the Baptists coming to work in Montana was their inherent belief that they shared the responsibility of winning the world for Christianity through missionary efforts. The Baptists have always placed missions first on their program. There may be a few who call themselves Baptists who do not share this view, but they are very few. To take care of home missions the American Baptist Home Mission Society was organized. This society pushed the missionary efforts along with the development of the frontiers.

The Baptists were not the first ones to establish permanent work on Montana soil. Before they came other missionary minded churches such as the Catholics, Episcopalians, Methodists, and Presbyterians were already busy at work.

It was not the purpose of the Baptists to compete with these fine forerunners of other denominations but to minister to those of their own faith who had arrived in Montana.

The Baptists felt that they had a message for the nation which was vital in their religious growth. Throughout the years the Baptists have been known to accept the New Testament as their only basis for their belief. No creed is written for the Baptist Church. The absolute liberty of each believer as to his belief is the cardinal principle among the Baptists. Another strong principle is the autonomy of the individual
church and one of the strongest of beliefs is the separation of the church and state. Further the Baptists hold to no other means of baptism than by immersion.

These teachings are not unique for the Baptists only, some of these teachings are practiced by other protestant churches as well.

It is the story of this missionary enterprise, how it succeeded, that we have attempted to tell to the best of our ability and as research material has been available.

The author is fully aware of his own shortcomings and the deficiencies of this thesis.

Montana is a large state and the distances are vast. The Baptist churches are scattered in all directions and in every corner of the treasure state.

This made it impossible for the author to visit every church. But this handicap was greatly remedied by the centrally located Montana Historical Library in Helena. The help rendered in the research in this library by Lucina B. Scott, librarian, and Anne McDonnel, assistant librarian, is appreciated and acknowledged. Further acknowledged for helpful services rendered in making this work possible are the following: Reverend F. Johnson, Kalispell; Reverend G. M. Walker, Livingston; Reverend C. R. Martin, Stevensville; and Reverend R. H. Moorman, Billings.
CHAPTER I

THE EARLIEST BAPTIST WORK IN MONTANA

VIRGINIA CITY

It was way back in 1816 that a young mother looked down at her sleeping son and wondered, as have mothers through all the ages, what part her boy would play in molding the destinies of men. We wonder what her reaction would have been had she had the foreknowledge to know that forty-eight years later he would be the first "torch-bearer" of the West to venture into that ill-reputed mining city of Virginia City, Montana. Perhaps she would have inwardly rebelled against such a destiny for her boy, but on the other hand, most likely a man such as Reverend A. H. Torbit had a mother who would have said, "Thy will be done, whatever your will for him is, Lord, that he shall do".

This young boy followed the rest of his companions through elementary school, high school and then on into college. It was while he was at college that he made a decision which changed the entire course of his life. It was there that he felt the call of God to the ministry and in reply to that call he said, "I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord".

After finishing his college work he accepted a small
pastorate near his home in the East. It was not long before he accepted a call from the First Baptist Church of St. Paul, Minnesota. Thus he was moved from his native soil and already he had taken his first step westward. He was now living in the very frontier of our land for St. Paul was then one of the last larger cities on the Westward trail.

In St. Paul he was brought closer to the new frontier and the papers frequently contained stories and new articles from Montana, the newest and wildest land of adventures. Filled with the spirit of Christ to reach the lost humanity he made up his mind to go where sin and crime were most in evidence. The latest place where men were rushing for gold and adventure was Virginia City, Montana. Reverend Torbit felt sure that these men who were risking everything they had in search of gold must have some longing within them for something even greater and more lasting than gold, they must also need the peace of God. And so it was not long before he resigned his pastorate in St. Paul and began to pack his possessions in anticipation of a westward journey.

During the winter there had been much talk and propaganda regarding the organization of the second Fisk expedition. Several men may have expressed their intention
of going along as far as to Benton, Montana, and then seeking transportation down to Virginia City or any other place where prospecting was good.

Reverend A. M. Torbit evidently decided to go along with the expedition. We do not know if it was the first or second Fisk expedition which brought Torbit to Montana, McLemore says: "Came from St. Paul with Fisk expedition, (1862-1863?) Baptist minister". Then we read that a Methodist minister, Reverend Stateler, had learned that a Baptist preacher, Torbit, had preached in Virginia City in the fall of 1864.

When he arrived in Fort Benton, Montana, the journey southward to Virginia City had to be made. Exactly when or how he travelled we have no way of knowing. That he arrived in Virginia City we do know for in Vaughn's book Then and Now we read:

That winter (1863-64) I stopped in a little cabin (Virginia City). I hired a man named Talbot, who was a Baptist preacher to cook and stay with me. I paid him $20 a week for his services and companionship.

There is no doubt that this minister referred to as Talbot was Reverend Torbit.

1 Rev. E. J. Stanley, Life of Stateler, Dallas, Tex.
2 Robert Vaughn, Then and Now, Minneapolis, 1900, p. 213.
The second sentence of "Fourth of July"

Cold and dreary, and only possible beauty

The deceit of the country and its fancies

of the greatest and best of men.

For had he seen they had ever been kept out.3
Strange sights such things were for one who had been accustomed to law and order. We marvel at the stamina which the men of God showed forth in those early days. When we think of Reverend Torbit's arrival in Virginia City we realize how vastly it differed from St. Paul.

Having made breakfast for his employer, we see him tidying up the shack, taking his coat and hat in hand and beginning his missionary work in that vile city. From shack to shack he walked, even tents were the dwelling places of some prospectors. He knocked at doors and rough faces met him. Kindness and love seemed a remote element. At one door he was met by cold indifference. He walked on some more. On the corner he witnessed a fist fight, shaking his head he turned and walked home. Reflecting on the day's accomplishments, discouragements, hopelessness, he opened his Bible and from it's pages he drew new hope and courage to carry on through the days ahead.

Armed with the Bible, wearing the armor of faith, he carried the "torch of God" high day after day. Sin was still rampant all about him, but in a few homes he was welcomed. It was not long before some expressed a desire for a church. There were those even in Virginia City, Reverend Torbit found, who declared their faith in God. Some of these were Baptistic in faith. On the dark horizon where he had
once thought all was despair a small ray of light now
came bursting through to illuminate the way for the
Baptist pioneer. He took courage again. Now he began to
think about a public religious meeting and so he sought
for a place where such a meeting could be held. Trusting
the Lord to provide every need, Reverend Torbit went ahead
with his planning. God is always faithful to those who
are faithful to Him. Therefore the lonely preacher was not
alone with his problem for long.

Across the town there lived a pious, deeply religious
family. The parents had long witnessed with deep sorrow
the sin and evil which prevailed in their city. It had
been their daily earnest prayer that some man of God would
come to establish worship services. It was to this family
that the lonely Baptist preacher wended his way one day.
He had heard that this family might be interested in services
and he earnestly prayed that this hearsay was fact. What
a joyous meeting this minister and this Christian family
had. Each knew that the prayers sent up in faith had found
a glorious fulfillment.

"But where can we meet for services?" Torbit asked

"Right here in my home", the man replied enthusiastically.

Beaming with joy, his heart full of praises to God
our preacher friend walked with light steps, his head
high, for his first dream had come true. Meetings would be held. There was no newspaper in Virginia City yet so he could not employ that means of advertising the meetings. But in spite of this he went ahead depending on word of mouth communication to spread the news. Success crowned his efforts. It was not long before the meetings were held regularly in the court house. Morning service was at eleven each Sunday morning and Sunday School was held at two in the afternoon. The work progressed rapidly. Where it had at first seemed that no one cared about the gospel now it seemed that all protestants welcomed this effort.

The work progressed and grew so rapidly that it became evident that a church building was needed. The same courage which characterized the brave preacher in coming to this camp of evil was shown in his proposal to build a church. In 1864, either in the spring or summer, the work on a small church building was begun. As God had blessed them at the beginning, so He did in the continuation of the work. Reverend Torbit had the joy of seeing the church completed and of holding services in it. The dedication service was held January 1865. The Montana Post of January 28, 1865 had this to say about it:

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1 Montana Post, Virginia City, January 29, 1865
The Union Church on Idaho Street was dedicated to the worship of God, on Sunday last. The sermon in the morning was by the Reverend A. M. Torbit and was from Revelation, 19:10 "Worship God." The first instrumental music ever heard in a place of worship in Montana was performed by Prof. Heath.

There will be services for the future on every Sabbath as follows: Morning Service, 11 A.M.; Sabbath School 1:30 P.M.; Evening Service 7 P.M.

No one was excluded from this church since the word "Union" did away with any denominational ties. Reverend Torbit faced the same problem as most churches and ministers face, namely, how to pay for the new church. The ladies in this case evidently acted upon past experiences in the East and middle West, they held a grand social to raise the money needed. It was a "Fair" according to the Montana Post. The church was located at Idaho Street next to Spencer and Harrison Lumber Yard.

Words fail to tell of the joy which the people felt because a house of God had been erected. To put words into Reverend Torbit's mouth would fail us and so we let it stand as it is, he had succeeded in building a church in this most wicked city of the West. Perhaps Reverend Torbit felt that he was called only to do the pioneering work for God in this city. In 1865 we find that he had given up the task of preaching and had hired out as a clerk.

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1 The Montana Post, December 31, 1864.
in the city. At this job he did not last long for early
in the spring of the same year he had left the city.

Only God knows how far reaching the work of this
heroic preacher was. The ground was rough and stoney
but patience and perseverance cleared it enough for the
fruit to grow. As Baptists we are truly proud of our
fore-runner in the work in Montana.

1 Stanley, Historical Sketch of the Methodist
Church South, p. 287.
CHAPTER II

BAPTIST CHURCHES FOUNDED AND ORGANIZED BEFORE 1900.

THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF MONTANA

The above title is claimed by the Baptist Church in Helena. This claim may be historically correct because we have no record available showing that any other Baptist church was organized in Montana prior to the Helena church. However, there was some Christian work done in the Territory of Montana along the Baptist lines prior to Helena, namely Reverend Torbit's work in Virginia City whose story we have recorded in the opening chapter.

The work in the capital city was begun as early as "previous" to 1879. The moral conditions in the city were as they were in any other mining camp of the time. That Helena had been made the capitol city did not change the scene very much. The usual amusement establishments were there and the places where the gold diggers lost most of their gold at times were also present, namely "hurdy-gurdy" places. Into this all-sided society the Christian workers of all the leading denominations entered. The Baptists entered at the above date and began to do some work.

The original work of the Baptists in Helena was
begun by a colporteur, Mr. Cady, who was travelling for
the American Baptist Publication Society. It was the
work of the colporteur not only to sell the publications
but also to preach in obscure places where no Christian
work was being done, and also to survey possible locations
for a Baptist church and organize one if possible. Mr.
Cady stood true to his mission and entering Helena he evi-
dently visualized the city as having a future of being one
of the leading cities of Montana. Consequently he reasoned
that there was room for a Baptist church. Upon commencing
a survey he soon found some Baptists already dwelling in the
city. Courageously he organized a church composed of the
Baptists who held membership elsewhere but who now moved
their letters to the Helena church.

Two ladies, well known to Baptists in Helena, Mrs.
Johnston and Mrs. Lakey, were leaders in this early attempt.
Mr. Cady left the city for more pioneer work elsewhere and
the small new church was without a shepherd. Soon, however,
another adventurous Baptist minister came to Helena,
namely Reverend L. B. Woolfolk. He arrived in Helena
via Ogden, Utah, in 1871 and stayed for one year or perhaps
two. The meetings were held in the courthouse and theater
alternately. He reported good attendance. It has been re-
ported by persons who can recall their kinfolks talk about
Woolfolk's stay in Helena that he was a good humored person and was rather well liked. The Lord blessed his work for he baptized three persons while there. Regardless of how the work went forth, Woolfolk decided to leave Helena. His salary was not much more than $1,200.00 a year, of which the American Baptist Home Mission Society paid $1,000.00. Due to the high prices which always followed the gold camps Reverend Woolfolk found it hard to make ends meet in supporting his large family. Since finances became a problem for him he decided to leave. Now the church became shattered because no man followed to take up the work.

In the meantime prominent men from the East came to seek a future position in the new West. Many of them came to Helena and among them was a very prominent man, namely, John W. Eddy. He was a Baptist and evidently missed the fellowship he had enjoyed at home in the Baptist church. The fact that there was not a Baptist church in all of Montana began to work on him, and consequently he set out to see how many Baptists he could find in Helena. His survey revealed that there were fifteen families there. Inspired by this fact he wrote a letter to the East pouring his heart out about the deplorable situation of not having Baptist work in such a great territory. The following was his appeal to the East:

I have been looking around for the people of
our faith in this vicinity, and have enrolled fifteen names of pronounced Baptists. There are several here who were formerly members of Baptist churches, but are now connected with the Presbyterians and Methodists. There are no rich men among our people, but I am sure there are some good willing workers here. The president of our bank, who is a resident of the west side, on my suggesting that I would like to see a good church built on the west side by the Baptists voluntarily offered to give $250 toward establishing one, providing one should be erected worth not less than $5,000. I have no doubt others would give toward such an enterprise, were there reasonable hope of its consummation. Is there not some way to do it? Think of it! Not a Baptist church in all Montana! I think I could possibly manage $1,000 of the cost here through the friendship of those who desire to see the town grow, and have its best good at heart, but how can we get the $4,000? Has not some one been so prospered in the East, where business has revived in such a marked degree during the last year, as to be willing to build the First Church for the Baptists in Montana? I have letters from several Baptist ministers who would now be willing to come and work with us, provided means could be that would enable them to work advantageously, and I am satisfied that a grand work could be done here by the right kind of a man, for the denomination and the general good. 1

Perhaps it was this appeal of Judge Eddy that promoted the American Baptist Home Mission Society to send Reverend Mason to take up the work at that time. His labors resulted in the organization of the present church on December 5, 1880. The Helena church enjoyed the fellow-

1 John Eddy Scrapbook, Montana Historical Library, Helena, Montana, vol. 3. Article taken from Examiner and Chronicle, November 27, 1879.
ship of prominent men such as Territorial Governor Leslie, Judge Rddy and others. Centrally located and perhaps having more Baptists than any other church in the state in the decades of the eighties, the Helena church also enjoyed being looked up to as the central place for the Baptists to meet. This is indicated by the fact that the following call was issued to all Baptist ministers and interested laymen to meet in Helena:

A call has recently been issued and signed by all the (five) Baptist pastors in the Territory, for a general rally of Montana Baptists, at the capitol, September 19th and 20th, for the purpose of organizing a Baptist Association for the Territory, and for the mutual acquaintance and counsel.

The call included delegates from each of the (nine) Baptist churches now organized, and also an urgent request for the presence and counsel of representatives of Baptists from every portion of the territory where no church exists.

Sermons and addresses will be delivered by Rev. C. W. Clark, of Butte, Rev. George D. Downey, of Miles City, Rev. D. McGregor, of Missoula, and others.

Every Baptist who reads this notice is specially requested to send a copy to every Baptist he may know residing in the territory where no Baptist Church exists.

During the years from 1880 to 1883 the Helena Church had been engaged in building a church. The laying of the

1 See Chapter V for the complete story of these men.

corner-stone on September 20, 1883 may have been at the completion of the church. The future of this church was bright and it went forth under the leadership of very able pastors to accomplish great things for the Kingdom of God. The same ups and downs which visit the average church came to Helena too, but instead of being defeated the church pushed on and undoubtedly set a good example for the other churches which were to follow.

At this time the church is being served by the Reverend Henry M. Koslow.
THE MILES CITY BAPTIST CHURCH

Perhaps we could give this church another name more in keeping with the location, namely, "The Cowboy Capitol Baptist Church".

Miles City was in the earlier days the capitol of the cowboys. We must not, however, draw the conclusion that they were the instigators and the executors of the deeds which described Miles City as the "Tough Place" in 1880 and 1881. It was the invasion of the dens of evil which gave rise to the above description, for we read "Dance halls and saloons were plentiful and did a thriving business". The same author called Miles City the "Tough Place". This description cannot be questioned when we consider that drinking and fighting were the order of the day. To make the situation no brighter, the law enforcement was very slack, leaving nothing for the wrongdoers to be afraid of.

From this brief description of Miles City we can readily understand that it was not a paradise into which the

Reverend J. R. Hewitt, a Presbyterian, walked when in 1879 he ventured his first visit to the Cowboy Capital. Following him came the Methodists and the Episcopalians as well as other denominations, the Baptists being the last to come in 1882. At that time there was no church building in Miles City. Rev. Huntley came to represent the Baptists.

The North Dakota and Eastern Montana prairies were wide open spaces, sparsely populated, but the Reverend Huntley was prepared to travel without the comforts of cars or trains. His vision and zeal had taught him to see Montana as a mission field ready for the harvest and so he "set his face as a flint" westward. It was thus that he entered Miles City. The fact is that this General Missionary for the American Baptist Home Mission Society had decided that he would promote the building of a dozen churches along the Northern Pacific line between Fargo, North Dakota and Miles City, Montana.

The ground was ready in Miles City for the sowing of God's Good News by Baptist agencies. A number of folks of Baptist faith had already settled in the city. Reverend Huntley at once contacted them and invited them to a meeting which was to be held in the schoolhouse. The response was favorable and the work was begun.

The little band of Baptists decided to organize into
a church and on February 5, 1882 this decision became a reality. The following were charter members -- C. A. Winchester, Arthur W. Miles, M. W. Hunt, W. H. Campbell, Mrs. Flora Dexter, Mrs. Ada Nevit, and Mrs. F. A. Routhin.

We marvel at the courage and faith which these staunch people possessed. Surely they must have had no fear of man, only a holy fear of God. There seemed to be no opposition to Rev. Huntley's plan, the church building was erected in April of this year. It may be of interest to future readers to know that the Baptists were the first to erect a church building in Miles City.

Since Reverend Huntley was a General Missionary and not able to remain permanently on the field, this band of Baptists were soon faced with the problem of calling a pastor of their own. It was first necessary to request financial help from the Home Mission Society. This was granted and Reverend George D. Downey, Clifton Park, New Jersey, became the choice. Reverend Downey answered the call in the affirmative and came into Miles City in April of 1882, just in time to promote the completion of the church edifice. The work made rapid progress and the first Sunday in June, just eight weeks after the beginning

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1 The Yellowstone Journal, Miles City, August 19, 1882.
of the work, the church building was sufficiently completed to hold services in it. It was in August of the same year that the church stood completely finished as a testimony to the earnest faith of this band of God's people. We read, "The cozy little Baptist church is now complete, the seats having been placed in position Wednesday". We have no further information in regard to the cost of this building, all we know is that the American Baptist Home Mission Society assumed one third of the cost and the church was responsible for the rest.

Everything was now in order for the forward march, the church had a pastor, a building of their own, and a loyal band of Christians to undergird the work. The Lord looked with favor upon this good start and He manifested Himself in their midst by adding some new members in August of 1882. The next two year period proved to be a time of much hard work with few results. The Lord blessed them by giving them one convert who was baptized on June 29, 1884. As far as is known, this was the first baptismal service held in the Yellowstone Valley. From that time on the work must have progressed rapidly for in 1886 the church edifice became too small for the congregation. Something had to be done

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1 The Yellowstone Journal, Miles City, August 19, 1882.
and it was decided to build an addition to the church. A committee was appointed to investigate the matter and when they gave a favorable report the work was begun at once. Real sacrifice by the members together with liberal gifts from outsiders made this decisive step a victory. It was felt that the new structure needed a bell and so two men of national repute stepped in to fulfill the need. General Nelson A. Miles gave fifty dollars and William Rockefeller, Vice President of the Standard Oil Company, gave one hundred dollars.

Then the great day arrived both for the whole United States and for the Miles City Baptist Church, namely July 4, 1886.

For the Miles City Church this fourth of July is remembered as the date when they dedicated the remodeled church. Dr. G. B. Morse from Bozeman came to assist in this great celebration and he preached the sermon of the day.

Two years later (1888) the church lost its very able leader, Rev. Downey. He was called to take up the work in Pendleton, Oregon.

The church did not call a pastor to serve them at this time, instead they asked the principal of the city
schools to take over the duties of a pastor. He assumed
the duties of pastor and his work was so efficient that
he continued to serve until 1900.

During this time the church had a great help in
Chaplain Isaac Newton Ritner, U. S. Army, stationed at
Fort Keogh. He conducted weekly prayer meetings and preached one Sunday a month. Before becoming a chaplain, Reverend Ritner had been the pastor of the Eleventh Street Baptist Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The church did not survive the great economic depression which struck the city at this time. The members became unable to support the work and the Home Mission Society was equally unable to lend its support. Consequently, the church dissolved itself about the time of the turn of the century and the property was sold in 1906 and became the first Miles City hospital. Later the building was remodelled into apartments.

It seemed now that the Baptist work in Miles City was ended. But there must still have been a remnant left who cherished a hope of seeing the Baptist church re-established. This hope took the form of a reality in 1917 when the Colporteur Missionary for the American Baptist Publication

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1 The above information concerning Ritner was supplied by Mrs. G. N. Hiles, daughter of Ritner, who, together with her husband gave the church a four piece pulpit in memory of her father.
Society arrived in the city. A meeting was called in the courthouse and the following persons resolved to organize a church - Reverend and Mrs. Nicholas Wakeham, Edward L. Horton, V. F. Stamford, Mrs. Rachel Dunlop, Mrs. Lucia Dunlop, Peter Mortensen, Miss C. Ray, Mr. and Mrs. C. B. Lebsicker. Later in the year new members joined and a new church edifice was planned. To the joy of the members, the lots of the original Baptist church were for sale and they spared nothing to purchase the same. It was fully realized that huge sacrifices would have to be made on the part of each member if a church edifice was to be built. Facing this, but having undaunted faith, this small band once again ventured into the deep and in 1913 a small church was built.

The present educational plant was made possible through funds received from the estate of Mr. S. Fred Cole of Miles City. This fund did not entirely cover the cost of the present twenty thousand ($20,000) dollar plant. The church gave $2.50 for each dollar received. This plant is a three floor structure. The basement is used for audience room, the first floor is used for classrooms and church parlor and the second floor is used for Intermediate and Junior departments of the Sunday School. The whole church plant as it now stands (1934) is worth $45,000.
This church was supported by the Home Mission Society until 1931 when it assumed its own support.
THE BUTTE BAPTIST CHURCH

It is often that two things happen at the same time and that the one becomes famous, yes, world famous, and that the other works in more or less obscurity. This is not to say that the less known is of less importance but that it is not recognized by all to have equal importance with the greater event.

In Butte two events happened the same year, one event was the cause of giving Butte the nickname "the richest hill on earth", the other event was the cause of bringing hundreds of souls to find peace in heart and mind. The one event has caused a book to be written entitled "The War of the Copper Kings", the other event has caused no book to be written, but has caused many names to be written in the "Lambs Book of Life". The two events are: "The discovery of the Anaconda copper mine" and "The organization of the First Baptist Church of Butte".

In the restless days of gold discoveries in Montana thousands of men were ready to move from camp to camp on a mere moment's notice. When Alder Gulch was discovered Bannack became almost depopulated. So it was when the rumors came that gold was discovered where Butte is located today. Hundreds of men moved northward. But the gold in the hills of Butte was not plenteous enough to warrant
the building of a city. There was enough gold, however, to tempt some hundreds to stay. But it was the copper discovery which revolutionized the economic picture of Butte and it caused that rocky landscape to become the site of the largest city in Montana.

We need not assume that Butte was a gentler spot in Montana in 1882 than were the rest of such mining establishments throughout the state. The need of a transforming power on man's heart for the good was just as necessary as the capitalistic forces entering Butte to utilize the copper fortune.

Reverend M. T. Lamb, sent to Montana by the American Baptist Home Mission Society, came to Butte in the last part of December. This was in the year 1881. The survey of the city's population to find out their church affiliations resulted in a discovery of thirty or more Baptists. With that many who he felt would respond to a series of meetings he rented a vacant store and equipped it mainly with his own money, paying $40.00 a month in rent. Some money would of course come in at the meetings and he hoped that such offerings would cover the rent. The meetings continued for five weeks. At the close of this series of meetings Reverend Lamb wanted to organize a church.
Previous to Reverend Lamb's arrival in Butte
Reverend L. B. Woolfolk, who we found left Helena in 1873, had labored on the field for some time and had drawn the Baptist people together. Then when Reverend Lamb arrived the people were ready to join together in a church organization. At the meeting on February 23, 1882 both Reverend Woolfolk and Reverend Lamb were present.

There are two accounts of the organization of the Butte church. One is a report sent to the Montana Baptist Association Meeting, Helena which reads as follows:

Rev. M. T. Lamb, of Illinois, sent to Montana by the American Baptist Home Mission Society to labor in such field or fields as after consultation with Brother Mason, of Helena, might be thought best, came to Butte City the last of December, 1881. After finding thirty or more Baptists, decided to remain and organize a church. Rented a store room for $40.00 a month, and fitted it up mainly at his own charges, began a series of meetings, which were continued about five weeks, when, with assistance of Reverend Dr. Woolfolk, a church was organized, with sixteen (16) names upon the list, February 23, 1882.

The second account we have was submitted to the church in conference June 8, 1890 and ratified by same.

The report reads as follows:

Our church was organized February 16, 1882 under the direction of Rev. L. B. Woolfolk of Tracy, Dakota, who had, by preaching and working in the

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1 Minutes of the Montana Baptist Association, Helena, Montana, 1883.
community, drawn the Baptist people together.
B. E. F. Pelton, who has since served the church long and faithfully, acted as clerk. Besides the ones mentioned, there were present the following: Mary A. Pelton, Mary A. Carey, Mary Powell, Vine Humphrey and Rev. M. T. Lamb, the latter rendering valuable assistance in its organization.

We need not discredit either of these two respectable ministers. It is very possible that Rev. Woolfolk had settled in Butte for a while and did rally the Baptists previous to Lamb's coming. We find, however, no notice in the local paper at that time of Woolfolk holding religious meetings. We find, however, that he was giving a public lecture on the same day as he was to have organized the church. We read: "Dr. L. B. Woolfolk will lecture on 'The Future of America' at Renow's Hall, Thursday evening Feb. 16. Price of admission 50 cents."

We feel that the account of Rev. Lamb's work is correct and that Rev. Woolfolk was on the field and rendered valuable help, both ministers helping in the series of meetings. We accept February 23, 1882 as the date of organization of the Butte church.

The Reverend Lamb seems to have taken over the work of this small group in the months that followed. The meeting place was in the Caplice Hall. The outlook for good work in Butte and vicinity must have been promising for we

1 Report submitted to church in conference, June 8, 1890.
2 Weekly Intermountain, Butte, February 16, 1882.
find a lay missionary E. C. Brauch arriving on the field in March of 1882. The church at this time had an organized Sunday School under the direction of Mr. Brauch. The first session was held May 4, 1882.

Reverend Lamb was called by the church to be their pastor for six months; he accepted. We do not know what caused Reverend Lamb to resign from the church after serving only three of the six months. This left the new church body without a trained leader who could devote himself fully to the work and it proved to be somewhat weakening to the church as a whole. There was enough enthusiasm to hold them united until the latter part of November when Dwight Spencer, American Baptist Home Mission's missionary, arrived on the field. He conducted a series of meetings which proved helpful to the church. Old members were revived and several persons were added to the church by letter and baptism. Spencer had to close his work with the Butte church for that time and go on to other needy fields.

Mr. Brauch, the lay missionary, supplied the pulpit until June 24, 1883 when C. W. Clark, appointed by the Home Mission Society, was able to get to the field. He took charge and acted as pastor of the church. Not much noticeable progress was made under his leadership but he did get the people to think in terms of a house of worship.
These thoughts soon materialized into a fine house of worship on the corner of Broadway and Montana Streets. The dedication service was held December 21, 1885 with Reverend H. D. De Witt, from Salt Lake, delivering the dedicatory sermon. Reverend and Mrs. Hartly of Ogden, Utah, assisted in the service.

Under the leadership of Reverend G. R. Darrow the church experienced a great lift financially which made them able to clear the entire debt of the church.

The Butte church has since remodelled the church and purchased a two apartment house next to the church where there is ample room for the pastor's office, Sunday School rooms, young people's rooms, and also a very fine place for such meetings as pastor's conferences.

The First Baptist Church can look back up its work with pleasure. It is now one of the leading Baptist churches in the state, if not the leading one. The present pastor is a very able man and has presented many fine ideas to other churches regarding ways to enlist all the various departments of the church in full cooperation with the whole church program. Reverend Roy Barnett is certainly a very capable pastor for this most active church.
In Stevensville many Baptists from other parts of America had come to live. When the number became so great that some of the leading men became interested in having a church they responded favorably to Reverend J. T. Mason when he came to visit them. Reverend Mason was at that time general Baptist missionary for Lanton. Those people were visited several times by Reverend Mason before an attempt was made to organize into a church. Then on August 27, 1892 Rev. Mason and some of the Baptists came together to organize a Baptist church. This meeting took place at Lona. Before any move was made to organize the church Rev. Mason read from Ps. 142:4 which reads: "I looked on my right hand, and behold, but there was no man that would know me, refuge failed, no man cared for my soul." After reading from God's word the Reverend expounded it to the blessing of all present.

Then Mason had closed his exposition Brother H. Dickson moved to organize a Baptist church. This motion was seconded by J. C. Williams. Reverend J. T. Mason

1 "Records of the Stevensville Baptist Church" 1882-1910.
acted as moderator, J. C. Bond as secretary, trustees were Joseph M. Simpson and J. C. Williams. At this moment in the meeting the following agreement was entered into:

We the undersigned, as Baptists, holding letters from different Baptist churches, do hereby enter into solemn covenant to be governed by the rules, doctrines and usages of the Baptist denomination, as compiled by Rev. J. Newton Brown, in the encyclopedia of religious knowledge, and to use our efforts for the promotion of Christianity in our midst. This body shall be known as the Etna Baptist Church of Christ.1

The following people signed this agreement: J. J. Bond, Moton Dickson, Sarah J. Simpson, Sallie P. Sanders, Annie C. Simpson, Laura P. Powers, Joseph M. Simpson, Rickard B. Powers and Callie Williams. With the above business completed the meeting adjourned. It seemed as though these people kept silent the rest of the summer.

We have no way of knowing whether more people joined this group during the fall. In November of the same year the church met for the purpose of calling a pastor; their choice was Reverend D. McGregor. The members seemed to be dissatisfied with the name originally given the church for at this meeting it was decided to change the name of the church to "Stevensville and Corvallis Baptist Church".

Evidently there were several Baptists in the vicinity who had watched the development of the church with

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1 Ibid.
interest but had not had enough courage to join the original group for the record of the church states that at almost every meeting at this early stage people came with their church letters to join the group.

It was decided that the church should hold a business meeting once a month on the Saturday which was most convenient.

Communion was celebrated quarterly.

Now the church was fully organized and Reverend Mc Gregor accepted the call. Everything was set for a forward march. Where these people held their meetings before they built a church we have not been able to discover. We may assume with some certainty that they met in the school house when it was available. We read: "During winter several services were held in the School building". No specification is stated who met there, therefore we may conclude that the Baptists also met there sometimes. This situation could not continue forever and the people realized that a house of worship would eventually have to be erected. Consequently it was agreed upon at a regular business meeting in March 1884 to look into the matter of securing lots in Stevensville. Brother Bond was chosen

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1 Sunday Dissoulian, June 12, 1949.
to investigate the matter. Evidently his report was favorable for in July the church voted to buy lots in Stevensville. The lots were secured and the building was begun at once. In order to hurry up the work before the winter snow and wind would come Reverend Mc Gregor was asked to move to Stevensville so that he could act as supervisor and "pusher" of the work. We find no record of how fast the work progressed. The church record shows that Reverend Mc Gregor continued as pastor through 1885. In the early part of 1886 he must have been away. The record shows that he was back again in March at which time he notified the church that he was resigning. In the records we find that at a business meeting in November of 1885 the following business was discussed:

The Baptist Church of Stevensville met in regular church conference the second Saturday in November. After worship and conference business was called, but few present. Brother Mc Gregor informed the church that they would have to raise him a salary of $200 to enable him to carry forward the work. No action taken.1

We read that Elder F. R. Bestwick gave the discourses during January, February and March of 1886. This is an indication that Reverend Mc Gregor took some time off.

Then in March 1886 when he returned the church asked him

1 Ibid.
to stay for another six months. This he must have consent-
ed to do because we find him present at the business meet-
ing up to June; after that he was absent which makes us con-
clude that he resigned in June or July 1886.

The building program moved ahead very slowly and
the dedication service was held on the first Sunday of Aug-
ust 1886. Dwight Spencer, Baptist Home Mission missionary
in Montana, was present at this time. Among other items on
the program, the financial status in regard to the church
building was presented. It showed that the church cost
$2,904, of this $1,462 was already subscribed. At the meet-
ing another $400 was subscribed. A collection of $30.45
was given at the meeting. The church asked Reverend
Spencer to negotiate with the Baptist Home Mission Board
for the loan of $400.

Now the church was all set to go ahead peacefully
in their work for the Lord. We are inclined to believe
that they did so because thirteen years later we read:

**Stevensville Progress**, a helpful roll call.
Cleaned up church debt, painted church, laid
sidewalk and built fence. Clean record to close
the year.¹

The Stevensville Church has kept on working ever since
and at the present time is under the able leadership of
Reverend Charles R. Martin.

¹ Annual Session of the Montana Baptist Assoc., 1889, p. 6.
THE DILLON BAPTIST CHURCH

In 1883 there lived in Dillon some Baptists who were eager to have a church. At the same time there were Baptist pastors in the "Treasure State" who were very willing and eager to help places such as Dillon to organize into a vital active Baptist church. Reverend Lamb whom we met in Butte also came to Dillon to look into the situation. Finding the prospect encouraging he called Reverend Woody at Helena to come down to Dillon to help organize a church. The few Baptists who lived in Dillon met together with these pastors on March 31, 1883 in the home of John Dingley, and there organized the First Baptist Church of Dillon.

The small church was not able to call a full time pastor at once and so Reverend Lamb came down occasionally and held services for them. This situation could not continue for long if the church was to grow and become a blessing to the community. The church members were fully aware of this and so they ventured to call a pastor. Their choice was Reverend C. C. Frost of Butte. He closed his ministry in Butte on February 8, 1886 and came to Dillon shortly afterwards.

For a time the church had meetings in various places about town wherever there was room. More
effective work would be done if they had their own building. Lots had been secured, it remained only to erect the church. The Dillon Baptists were a courageous group of people and they did not shrink from this gigantic task even though they were but thirty-six in number.

The foundation was soon laid and the work was going ahead. At first it was estimated that the building would cost only $3,000.00 but it was soon discovered that double this amount would be needed to complete the structure. The dimensions of the church are forty by eighty feet with a tower forming the entrance which measures twelve by twelve feet. It is a brick building painted red except for the trimmings which are white. The building was completed late in the fall of 1886 and the dedicatory service was held in November of the same year.

The church had a right to be proud of its accomplishments. It had both a church and a pastor. Therefore we find the trustees, Mr. B. F. White, Mr. H. R. Melton, Mr. J. T. Dingley, and Mr. J. R. Halden, filing the articles of incorporation.

Before this time it had been hard to have a regular Sunday School. Now one was organized and Dr. C. G. Noble became the first Sunday School superintendent.

The church now moved ahead at slow pace under the
leadership of a number of different pastors.

The next of important events which we note is the erection of a parsonage. Reverend Henry S. Cope was pastor at this time and under his leadership the parsonage was quickly erected. The church members as well as many of the citizens of the city gave liberally to this cause.

The work of the church prospered under the leadership of Reverend Henry S. Cope. A report of the church in 1900 is very encouraging and reads as follows:

This is one of our strongest churches, and is a prosperous organization doing much for the cause of Christ in the important college town. We are glad to report that the same pastoral relations exists. Reverend Henry S. Cope, the pastor, has proven to be a faithful and wise leader, not only appreciated by his church but by the city at large. His congregations are large, and made up of many who are not Christians. All branches of the church work have been pushed. A troublesome debt has been paid during the year. Harmony prevails.

That same year the church was able to make some changes such as replacing chairs with pews, laying a new carpet, etc. A generous gift was presented to the church in form of a large pedel organ to replace the old. The giver was Mr. George B. Conway.

The growth of the church has been slow but steady in the years since it was organized. Always on the alert

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The Lontana Baptist Association Annual, 1900, p. 13.
for improvements, a cottage was purchased for social gatherings. The old furnace had served its days and so a new one was secured. To meet the need for a baptistry the men of the church built the very best, a fine concrete structure.

The Dillon church is still a fine growing church.

The present pastor is a lady, L. B. Long, a fine returned missionary from the foreign field. The church seems to be satisfied with a lady at the head of the work and things are running both smoothly and harmoniously.

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1 The material from which this write up was secured is taken from two newspaper accounts and The Montana Baptist Annual.

b. The Dillon Daily Messenger, Mar. 21, 1933.
c. The Montana Baptist Association Annual, 1900.
THE BOZEMAN BAPTIST CHURCH

Bozeman is a beautiful little city on the main line of the Northern Pacific, the home of one of our state schools, and prominent in many other ways to the inhabitants as well as to the entire state. This city was visited by the Baptist home mission workers long before it became the ideal city it is today.

The early records of the First Baptist Church have been lost. We, therefore, assume that Bozeman, as well as Livingston and Billings, were visited by workers of the home mission board whose calling it was to seek to establish new Baptist churches as the towns sprang up. Probably these workers were the then residing pastors in the state. In 1883 the Montana Baptist history was still in the early stages. Few churches were in existence and the work was just being begun.

From personal testimony it was learned in 1906 that the First Baptist Church of Bozeman was organized on August 6, 1863, with ten (10) charter members. The first clerk of the church was Frank Hill. Reverend L. L. Wooddy of Helena was there on that occasion, showing that that

1 Minutes of the Montana Baptist Association, 1906, p. 27.
energetic worker may have had Bozeman at heart and worked toward organizing a church there.

Shortly after they organized a minister was called. The call fell to the very able leader, namely, Reverend G. B. Morse. In him the church had a man of keen vision. He sought to make Bozeman a Baptist center in Montana. Not only was his interest in the church, but he had the community as well as the whole Montana Baptist youth at heart.

The church had the blessing of keeping him for eight years. In 1883 the church edifice was erected. The local paper relates: "The Baptist Congregation is erecting a neat church edifice on the east side of Bozeman Creek." In 1888 the report from Bozeman was that they had had a goodly number of baptisms.

In addition to his work for the church Dr. Morse established an academy for the Baptists and other children. In a Bozeman paper we find this interesting advertisement in regard to Dr. Morse's school:

Bozeman Baptist Academy, Preparatory Department, Instructor, Principal, Rev. Byron Morse, M.D., Ph.D.; assistants John F. Stack, Mrs. Jno. Stack, Class B. Tuition $25 pr. term of twenty weeks. Class A.

1 Avant Weekly Courier, (Bozeman), August 30, 1883, p. 3.
2 Minutes of the Montana Baptist Association, 1888, p. 7.
Tuition pr. term, $25. In class B, of this department Kindergarten methods will be adopted and the youngest scholars cannot but find learning pleasant. Mr. Stack is a musician of fine attainments and will take general charge of the music in the academy. Mrs. Stack has had considerable experience in teaching and will devote all her time to this department thus insuring thorough instruction.

Parents will do well to address Dr. Morse before September 28.

This academy evidently did not succeed. We have not been able to trace it any further and thus we conclude that it at least came to a close at the time of Dr. Morse’s leaving Bozeman.

In addition to this school Dr. Morse also established a small library. This he gave to the city when he left.

The First Baptist Church of Bozeman has since it was founded been on the upward trend. Today (1949) it is one of the finest churches in the state. The pastor at present is the very able leader, Reverend H. M. Kriebel who came to the church in 1944. Under his guidance the church is enjoying good growth and fine fellowship.

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1 Bozeman Weekly Chronicle, September 23, 1885.
THE LIVINGSTON BAPTIST CHURCH

By 1888 Livingston, located centrally in Montana, was a prosperous little city. Ranchers from far and near had come to settle the outlying ranchlands and with them had come the usual business men who accommodate such trade. And as is always the case, these new settlers sought to band themselves together with others of like faith in order that together they might serve and worship God. The Livingston church had a unique beginning. Among the newcomers there was an ever increasing number of those who were dissatisfied with the forms of worship which did not include the important doctrines of immersion of the believer, freedom of speech and separation of the church and state. The result of such feeling led to the organization of a Sunday School on July 26, 1888 with Mrs. E. Harmon and Mrs. Anabel Martin as teachers. From this Sunday School came the organization of a church just one month later on August 26, 1888. Rev. Dwight Spencer, General Missionary for the Rocky Mountain District, came to help these Baptist organize and when he left he seemed to have left behind him some of his flint-like courage and holy determination. And so these charter members, Ella D. Carter, Mrs. E. J.
Merril, Mrs. H. E. Harmon, Carrie Harmon (by letter), and Bettie J. Allen (by experience), began the First Baptist Church of Livingston.

No record has been left of that first year when the church was but an infant but the second year when the Territorial Baptist Association met in Bozeman we find that the Livingston group requested membership into the association. The request was granted.

The next venture of faith was the erection of a church edifice. The Northern Pacific Railroad had reached Livingston and through the generosity of this company the church was able to secure three lots at the nominal cost of only fifteen dollars with the provision that within a year they were to erect a building costing no less than fifteen hundred dollars.

In the fall of 1889 the group felt the need for revival meetings and called Reverend J. L. Pilliam as speaker. The meetings, held in the McMan building were highly successful and a strong attraction to the type of messages which Reverend Pilliam brought led the group to call this man as their pastor. The call was accepted and this able leader stepped into a vigorous building program. The American Baptist Home Mission Society supported generously by paying one thousand dollars ($1,000) of the twelve hundred ($1,200) which was paid Reverend Pilliam in salary.
Busy days lay ahead for the church. The spirit was high and great enthusiasm was manifested at the laying of the foundation of the church on November 13, 1889. That a thrilling day when the group gathered for the first worship service in their very own house of worship on May 11, 1890. At that service Reverend D. B. Haggard of Norton, Kansas preached, indicating that Reverend Pillican had left. The following Wednesday at Mid-week service a covenant meeting was held and at a business meeting following, a church clerk and treasurer were elected. It is not hard to realize that when this group on July 6, 1890 partook of their first communion since the erection of their church that their hearts burned within them for joy.

Two months later on September 7, 1890 they met to dedicate the edifice which now stood completed. Reverend C. B. Allen of Helena preached the sermon and when it was suggested that a carpet was needed, the hat was passed and the silver dollars mounted to a sum of seventy six ($76.00), not a meagre sum in those days.

The days which followed saw the carpet laid and up in the tower a bell was installed to herald worshippers to God's House. Perhaps it was pride in that which was already accomplished which led them to desire an even more perfect edifice and so it was not long until electric lights were installed, quite an addition in those early days.
It seemed that the church was now complete and in every detail ready to carry the torch with flaming fire for the Master. Although they were a missionary church, they had their eye on the Master's harvest fields elsewhere for they ventured their first missionary offering, a sum of twenty-five dollars, to the Home Mission Society in November of 1894.

However, they were not so progressive as not to be practical. An insurance policy was purchased and when the fancy electric lights proved an unnecessary expense they reverted to kerosene lamps knowing that "God looketh not on the outward appearances but on the heart" and that the heart was as readily seen by flickering lamplight as by the new-fangled electric bulbs. As time went on a new furnace replaced the pot-bellied stoves and pews replaced the uncomfortable chairs. By 1914 the church family had increased to one-hundred and one members.

By 1909 they had begun to think about a dwelling place for their man of God but it was not until 1934 that the present parsonage was erected. Through the generosity of Dr. C. F. Tyrell they were able to secure a loan from him of one-thousand dollars ($1,000) on a five year plan with 8% interest.

By 1914 the church felt strong enough to enlarge
the governing setup of the church. An official board was elected consisting of the regular officers of the church plus four members elected at large. Even while this board was at work lightning struck the edifice. Enough insurance was secured to permit renovation of it.

The congregation made healthy growth throughout the years. By 1919 the membership totaled 118 in all. A year later both the church and parsonage received some renovation. By 1924 they were able to assume the responsibility for their own support. They now earnestly sought to be on the giving end of missions rather than on the receiving end.

Every growing group seeks to enlarge and so in 1926 when courage and faith seemed at a peak a building fund was begun. Of course none knew nor could any foretell the depression which was so soon to sweep our country. We can therefore readily understand the grief which these noble folks experienced when their building fund was lost in the nation-wide bank closure.

But since a church is not built of such corruptable things as silver or gold we see not a retrenching but a stride ahead and in 1931 they reported 223 members and 156 enrolled in Sunday School.
Realizing that one loss does not mean eventual failure they again proposed a building fund as well as a spiritual campaign. So great was their faith that they suggested a thirty-nine (39) room plant costing thirty-four thousand (34,000) dollars.

Nothing seemed able to frighten them now and so when the plans for this building came from Merrill, Humboldt and Taylor of New York they were readily accepted and the structure was built as planned.

This three-unit structure is designed to meet the educational, social, and worship needs of the community. It includes and air-conditioning system, heating plant and pipe-organ. To crown the efforts seven beautiful art windows were added.

Great strides were made in the forward direction from 1931 to 1938. By this time the contributions annually mounted to eleven thousand (11,000) dollars.

During its history they had seventeen ministers and at present (1949) the church is an active spiritual group under the able leadership of Reverend Helvin J. Walker.

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1 The information on which we have based the writing of this report was received from Rev. Walker in the form of a committee report for the fiftieth anniversary celebration in 1938. The committee consisted of - Hanna Kobbee, Arna Brown and Lyra Leuson.
THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF GREAT FALLS

The Baptists were rather late in arriving in Great Falls to begin their work. The reason for this we do not know, but it was nine years after the First Baptist Church of Montana was organized that Baptist work was begun in Great Falls and the church organized. We have not been able to obtain the necessary information as to who were the very first workers on the field nor have we been able to secure the number and names of the charter members.

As any other newly organized church they faced the need for a church building. But this did not stop them from holding meetings. One of the local papers had this to say:

The First Baptist Church services will be held today at prompt 11 a.m. in Minot Hall. Sermon by the pastor, Joseph Anderson, subject "The World's Regeneration". Everybody cordially invited to attend. The hall should be well filled.

From this notice we glean the information that Reverend Joseph Anderson was their pastor.

True to the customary Baptist principles during those

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1 "Two letters have been sent to the Great Falls church requesting information but neither has been answered to date", July 30, 1949 (the author).

2 Great Falls Leader, Sunday, November 24, 1889.
early years the church commenced with a building program rather soon after they organized. This custom was made possible for the churches in Montana because of the strong aid received from The American Baptist Home Mission Society not only in money but also in architectural blueprints. We assume, on the basis of what happened in the other churches in this decade, that this was the situation in Great Falls also.

The church was organized July 1, 1889 and in November of the same year the local paper carried this notice:

The First Baptist Church, in course of construction, is fast nearing completion. The out and inside are being finished in California red-wood and when the building is done will be one of the most impressive church edifice in the city.1

Exactly when this building was finished we have no way of knowing but we know that on November 20 the local paper once more remarked about the church:

The sound of the carpenters hammer is heard in all directions throughout the city. The new Baptist church looms up prominently and is enclosed and ready for shingles. The interior will be pushed to speedy completion.2

The church was now ready to go ahead and we should have expected that only good reports would come from the work. But such was not the case. In 1901 the report

1 Ibid., Sunday, November 16, 1889.
2 Ibid., Thursday, November 20, 1889.
from the church read in this fashion: "After a period of haphazard experience the church has been quickened by the coming of Rev. F. A. Agar, and has begun a season of what we hope will be permanent healthy growth". This indeed is an indication that up to this time the church had not prospered in every way. Growth had not been as healthy as was expected and desired.

It is encouraging, however, to read that the "hopes and prayers" were not in vain. In 1906 we find this encouraging report from Great Falls:

The Great Falls Church has also had a year of noteworthy progress. After having greatly enlarged and improved its house of worship it has most heroically decided to assume self-support at the beginning of the present year, (September 1st, 1906).

Since then the Great Falls Church has been in the line of those Baptist churches in our state which have assumed full responsibility for their own support and have helped other fields by missionary giving both at home and abroad. The report from Great Falls for the year ending April 1948 is as follows: Value of property $85,000, membership 395, missionary giving $2,760.15. The able leader of this prospering church is Reverend J. O. Timmons who came to the church in 1946.

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1 Minutes of the Montana Baptist Association, 1901, p. 32.
2 Ibid., 1906, p. 13-14.
THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF MISSOULA

The Baptists cannot claim to be pioneers in Missoula in regard to Christian work. Before the Baptists began their work, the Catholics, Methodists, Disciples of Christ, and the Presbyterians had already pioneered in the field and established themselves in a progressing ministry.

However, among the churchgoers in Missoula there were a few Baptist folk who did not quite feel at home without a Baptist church. In their hearts they longed for a church of their own faith and since America is a free country and since the West had plenty of elbow-room in those days as well as plenty of souls who were not attending any church, the few Baptists in Missoula felt that there was yet room for a church of their denomination in Missoula. Consequently, they sought for a clergyman to come to assist them in organizing such a church.

At this time the Baptist work in the Bitter Root Valley was in full progress. Rev. McGregor was serving the Stevensville Baptist Church. Since he was the nearest Baptist minister, the Missoula folks called upon him to assist them in organizing a church. In November of 1882 Rev. McGregor came to Missoula. A church was organized.
No pastor was called but Reverend McGregor consented to come to Missoula once a month to conduct services. We pay all honor to this noble pioneer minister who was willing to travel on horseback the long distance from Stevensville to Missoula during the coldest of Montana winter in order that he might minister to this small handful of Baptists. The services were held in private homes at first. We read with interest the description of Missoula which Reverend McGregor gives, "The town (Missoula) is very ungodly but is growing rapidly, is expected to become quite a railroad center". The Baptists did not give him much encouragement in regard to removing the above mentioned "ungodliness", for he says that the Baptists were "far behind and weak".

This weak condition must have continued in the church for some time. Mrs. W. J. Pullen, former Mimi Spurgin, says of the Baptist church when she arrived in Missoula in 1884:

We arrived in Missoula on February 7, 1884, and about Easter time that year L. L. Woody who lived up at Bitter Root at the time, came down and organized the first church. There were

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1 The Sunday Missoulian, April 14, 1940.

2 Ibid.
seven members, my father and mother, William and Rushannah Spurgin, Dr. and Mrs. Wagoner, Wallace P. Smith (Mrs. Wagoner's brother), Miss Clarissa Hart and a negro woman (I do not remember her name). The meeting was held in a hall over Joe Deschamps' blacksmith shop on Front Street just below the K. M. Implement Store. Shortly after this the meetings were held in the old Presbyterian church up near the courthouse. As the town grew and more Baptists affiliated with the church, a permanent minister by the name of Benedict was called and it was during his pastorate that the old church and parsonage on Spruce Street was started. I think the old church is used for a paint shop now. The Benedicts are the ones who insisted and got the name Emmanuel Baptist Church established. Mr. Benedict was followed by a very young man by the name of Hale, who stayed only a short time until Mr. Salzman came.

As previously stated in this narrative the church was organized in 1882 and this event in 1884 which Mrs. Fullam speaks of was undoubtedly a reorganization or rallying of the Baptists for another effort.

A Sunday School was organized in 1884, but the work fell back once again and practically disappeared.

In 1889 a family came from Helena to live in Missoula. One of its members, Mrs. Alice M. Marshall, now residing in California reveals to us how the situation was in the Missoula Baptist Church at that time:

We moved from Helena to Missoula in 1889 and the work was already there then. There was

1 Ibid.
no pastor there at that time, but a small
group of us met in Dr. Wagoner's dental
office. We just had a Sunday School and
a prayer and Testimony meeting in the after­
noon. The group consisted of Dr. Wagoner
and his wife and two children, the doctor's
sister, whose name I have forgotten, Mrs.
Wagoner's brother, Wallace P. Smith, a young
unmarried attorney, Mr. Hart and Miss Hart,
a brother and sister, Mary and Alice Swartz
who had a boarding house and myself and two
sons, Claude and Jesse.

The church building was finished in
the fall of 1890. My youngest son, Jesse,
aged three years, died December 2, 1890, and
we had to send away for a Baptist minister
to conduct the funeral service. A Rev. Mr.
Hale, one from the New England states, came
as pastor in 1891. I have forgotten his
initials, but he was there perhaps two years.
Then came Reverend J. K. Salsman. He was
pastor for twelve years. 1

From Mrs. Fullam we received the information that
the Reverend Benedict began to build the church and par­
sonage. It was early in 1890 that Reverend Benedict
came to Missoula. Until that time the church had lingered
along as best it could without any real progress. The
purpose of Reverend Benedict's coming was, of course,
to see if he could not aid in establishing the work on a
real and vital basis. Upon his arrival he at once called to­
gether any who he thought might be pillars in the church. This
meeting took place again in the dental parlors of Dr.
Wagoner's office on March 4, 1890. Among others present

1 Ibid., p.5.
we know of Dr. and Mrs. Wagoner, Mr. and Mrs. Spurgin, Mrs. Alice H. Marshall, Miss Clarissa Hart, Mr. Hart, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Stiff, J. C. Slaughter, Wallace P. Smith and Mr. Benedict. It is this date which the First Baptist Church of Missoula recognizes as the real beginning of their present work.

Steps were soon taken to incorporate and on April 7, 1890 the articles of incorporation were adopted. Trustees were then elected and Dr. Wagoner, Henry C. Stiff, and James C. Slaughter were given authority to file the articles. The latter was done on April 23, 1890.

With these initial steps taken care of, the church felt the need for a church home of their own as well as the need for a permanent pastor. Accordingly they went ahead to make an application to the Baptist Home Mission Society to secure help both toward building a new church and toward sustaining the support of their minister. The church, as already stated, was located on Spruce and Harris Streets. It was completed in the fall of 1890. This church building was sold in 1910 after the first unit of the present church was completed. The old church is now used for business purposes.

The church now experienced a steady growth and it was not long before a parsonage was erected on Alder Street.
Reverend Salsman resigned in 1905 after having completed a very successful ministry in Missoula.

The same year, 1905, was a red-letter year for the church. Rev. Van Engelen was called to follow Rev. Salsman. Evidently Reverend Van Engelen felt that there was no need for the church to receive further missionary aid and so he stipulated in his reply to the call which was extended to him that he would accept the call only if the church would be willing to assume all of their own support. The church took the step of faith and ever since has maintained the status of a self-supporting church.

Another red-letter year followed five years later when the Missoula Baptists witnessed the completion of the main unit of their present church. That same year, 1910, Reverend Van Engelen resigned and Reverend Allen came to take over the pastoral duties. Reverend Allen had the honor of presiding at the dedicatory services in the fall of 1910.

In the years which followed several fine men of God came to serve the church from time to time, each one contributing his part to the rapid progress which the church has experienced.

In 1930 Reverend Gilson was pastor. He is remembered for his efforts to secure an educational plant
for the church. It was during his pastorate that the
two story wing was added to the main unit.

God has richly blessed the Missoula church and
today it has grown to a vigorous group of Baptists
totaling 400 members with a property valued at $23,000.
THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF KALISPELL

A town was started, the first buildings were erected, and Kalispell, Montana came into being. This was in the year of 1891.

That same year two Christian gentlemen with vision and zeal began a work for their Lord and Master Jesus Christ in this new town. These men saw the need for a Sunday School and set forth to organize one. Since no church had any organized work at that time in Kalispell these men were broadminded enough to invite children of all faiths into their Sunday School and thus it became an undenominational work.

The school was a great success and all went well until the Presbyterian denomination stepped in and organized a church with this Sunday School as a starting point. This was in 1892 and the school at that time had an enrollment of eighty pupils. Undoubtedly there were some pupils in the school who came from Presbyterian background. However, this merger of the Sunday School with the church did not agree with Mr. Gilliland because of the way in which the school had originated; he had nothing to do with the compromise.

The result of this action was that Mr. Gilliland
became concerned about the Baptist pupils who were in the Sunday School and consequently he set about to canvass the town in an effort to locate every Baptist and solicit their support. He found fifteen persons of such inclination namely, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Bartholomew, Mr. and Mrs. Burges, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Croig, Mr. and Mrs. Walter, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Whiteside, Mr. and Mrs. Cummings, Mr. G. W. Proctor, who with Mr. and Mrs. Gilliland made a total number of seventeen Baptists. They met in the Gilliland home on 446 Second Avenue East.

The plans for a church were discussed thoroughly and at great length which resulted in a vote being taken which showed that everyone was interested in communicating with the Baptist Home Mission Society to find out if they would assist in the proposed project, namely a Baptist church in Kalispell.

During those early days that little band of Baptists met with many discouragements. Many told them that they were fool-hardy for even suggesting a church of their own. These folk must not have known of the faith and courage which is a vital part of our Baptist heritage. We who have lived to witness the courage of these seventeen Baptists in Kalispell thank God for such faith.

The Kalispell Baptists did not have to fight their
battle alone too long. The Home Mission Society stepped in with reinforcements at once. Reverend L. G. Clark, General Missionary for Montana, was sent to Kalispell and with his help the Baptists were able to prove that the thing which had been deemed impossible, fool-hardy, and useless was quite sensible and sane as well as a part of God's great plan for evangelizing the wide open West. An even greater step of faith was taken when they went about to obtain pledges for the erection of a Baptist church in Kalispell.

The response to these pledges was favorable. The result was that adequate funds were raised and architectural plans were sent for to the Home Mission Society. The contract for building was let on October 6, 1892 to Leach, Webber, and Weaten for $5,880. This sum is an indication of the response received from the Baptist appeal for help. The townsite had donated a lot for the church but the members did not feel that the site was at a suitable location. To the joy of the members, a man who had a lot at Third Avenue and Third East was willing to trade and thus the church became located where it is today.

All went well at the beginning but soon the contractors found that they had bid too low and consequently they
left without finishing the work. Very little was left to do; only the roof was incomplete, and Mr. Gilliland and Mr. Whiteside felt something had to be done so they secured donated labor and persuaded the contractors to return to assist. The work went on now under Mr. Gilliland's supervision. At this time Mr. Gilliland was operating a saw-mill two and a half miles from town and the transportation problem in those days posed a greater problem than it does in these modern times.

With real determination mixed with a great love for God, the work was completed in the spring of 1893 at a cost of $7,674.00, a considerably higher cost than originally estimated. The church stands as a memorial to the undaunted courage of these early Christian pioneers of the wild and wooly West.

The total indebtedness at the time of completion was only $1,350.00. The annual of the Montana Baptist Association of 1899 reports that the indebtedness had been removed.

While the church edifice was in progress of completion, the church had its articles of incorporation written and approved on January 7, 1893. There were sixteen (16) charter members who received the right hand of fellowship at that time. The names and location
of churches from which they came are as follows--

Mattie E. Bartholomew  Malcome, Idaho
W. Bartholomew       Salubria, Idaho
Mrs. M. Christen      Helena, Montana
Mathias Christen      Helena, Montana
W. R. Schultz         Helena, Montana
Mrs. W. R. Schultz    Helena, Montana
Mr. D. M. Pearce      Miles City, Montana
Mrs. D. M. Pearce     Miles City, Montana
Mr. Fred Whiteside    Miles City, Montana
Mrs. Fred Whiteside   Miles City, Montana
Mr. B. Gilliland     Dillon, Montana
Mrs. B. Gilliland    Dillon, Montana
Laurana F. Proctor   Gloucester, Mass.
Hector McLean         Clanis (State unknown).
Mrs. Agnes Lamb      Missoula, Montana
Reverend W. C. Hale   Missoula, Montana

Reverend Hale was acting pastor at that time. Shortly afterwards he was called back East because of death in his family. He did not return.

The day which these Baptists had anticipated for so long came on June 10, 1893, namely the dedication of their new church. Reverend Allen of Helena preached the sermon of dedication. Reverend L. G. Clark, General
Missionary for the district, was present and the new pastor, just graduated from seminary, Reverend J. W. Falls had arrived for the momentous day.

The church made steady progress and souls were won for the Lord. The first manifestation of this was the baptismal service held on September 3, 1893 in Stillwater River. Those baptized were Mr. Harder and Harry Dunn.

Another baptismal service was held December 22, 1895 when Mrs. Emma Proctor became the first convert to be baptized in the church baptism.

Hard times hit the town and many of the pledges made in good faith could not be paid. The result was that the church was sold at public auction on October 10, 1894 for $800.00. Reverend Clark, Reverend Falls, and Mr. Gilliland witnessed the sale and at once went to work to raise the money needed to redeem the church. The original mortgage of the church read that whenever the church ceased to be a Baptist church the property would go to the Home Mission Society.

In 1910 the church was again on its feet and was able to buy the house next to the church for use as a parsonage. This was used by the pastor until 1947 when a new parsonage was purchased for $10,000.00. The final payment on this property was made in the spring of 1949. This
was accomplished under the able leadership of Reverend Fritjof Johnson.

The years 1927 and 1928 were hard years for the Kalispell church. An effort was made to unite the Presbyterian and the Baptist churches. The Baptist church was to be sold and the proceeds were to be applied on the debt of the Presbyterian church. When all particulars were found out about the terms of the mortgage all interest was lost in the proposed union.

However, this talk of union aroused the State Convention to action. Reverend Curry, executive secretary, and Reverend Shepard arrived in Kalispell. They gathered the members and were able to arouse the interest in the church. The result was that the church raised $1,700.00 in pledges and the State Convention supplied $3,400.00 to be used for renovation of the property. The church was raised and redecorated, a new furnace was bought, a new kitchen built, and other minor repairs were added.

Dedication services for these new improvements were held on April 28, 1929.

These efforts seemed to have spurred the members into action and steady progress was made. The year of 1934 marked the burning of the mortgage which had been placed on the church.
The Kalispell church in spite of many obstacles has been an evangelistic church. Today the church is self-supporting and marching forward with sure steps under the able leadership of Reverend F. Johnson, a truly consecrated Christian leader.

1 The information on which this historical sketch is based was taken from "History of the First Baptist Church of Kalispell", Reverend E. L. Hills, Pastor (1936).
THE DARBY BAPTIST CHURCH

The Darby Baptist Church was organized in 1894 but due to the loss of the original record we have not the exact date of organization. However, we have some information about the very first Baptist work in Darby.

Some years before the Baptist church was organized in the Darby vicinity a man and his wife arrived to take up a homestead on the hill side. No one knew a great deal about this couple and none would have dreamed that hidden under that worn out old hat was the mind of a minister. But that is how it was. Franklin Benjamin Cooper was that homesteading minister. It was not long before he let folks know that he was a minister and when he found no church in the community he set about to originate a church of his own.

He had noticed as he had surveyed the town in search of a church that there was a hall in which dances were being held every Saturday night. Reverend Cooper decided that since this hall stood empty on Sunday mornings it would possibly be available for use as a Sunday School room.

The owner of the building was most cooperative and even

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1 Letter from Rev. C. R. Martin, pastor of the church April 7, 1949, "The records of the organization of the Darby Community Baptist Church were lost in fire a few years ago".
heated the building on Sundays when heat was needed. The Sunday School continued to grow and soon Mr. Cooper decided to hold Sunday Services once a month. He met with real success, many came to the services.

Reverend Cooper and his good wife worked their own farm and made their living from the soil. When a collection was taken none of it ever went into Frank's pocket. Every cent was used for Sunday School material and other necessary literature for the church.

Reverend Cooper did not have the joy of seeing the Darby church as it is today. Perhaps he was present to organize it but did not live long enough to see a building erected. The church recognized his service and preserved his memory by dedicating one of the windows of the church with his name on it.

The Darby church never grew into one of the leading churches in Montana. The work of God was carried out year by year according to the ability of the little flock.

The church is now included in what is known as the "Bitter Root Larger Parish" and is served by Reverend Charles R. Martin who has an assistant missionary helping him on this large field.

The Baptist work in the "Smelter City" was begun by the American Baptist Home Mission Society. Reverend L. G. Clark, the general missionary for Montana from the above mentioned society, came to Anaconda to survey the city to see how many Baptists he could find. A resident of Anaconda, Mrs. Fred Clark had already done some work along that line in Anaconda. These two, with the same name but not related, did a wonderful work. They called on every Baptist family and announced that a meeting would be held to determine if a Baptist church could be organized. On January 16, 1896 these Baptists met with Reverend Clark and organized the present church in Anaconda.

Thirteen people joined this church and became the charter members. The field evidently looked promising to Reverend Clark for he suggested calling a full time pastor at once. The Home Mission Society promised aid in paying the pastor, otherwise it is doubtful that this handful of willing people could have undertaken such a task. Reverend Spencer who was serving at Butte at that time was called.

Reverend Spencer resigned the church in Butte and accepted the call. He came to the field in May.
During the first year three different places were used as meeting places for the First Baptist Church — the first place was in a building on the present Hasly Block on Commercial Avenue and Oak Street, the second was the Scandinavian Church, now Grace Baptist Church, the last place was the small brick building on the west side of the Montana Hotel in downtown Anaconda.

The building program was begun early in 1897 and the church was completed in October of the same year. The dedicatory service was held October 3, 1897. A very substantial brick building was erected at a cost of about $15,000. Reverend Spencer resigned as soon as he had helped the church to finish their house of worship.

Reverend Jenkins from Livingston took up the work when Spencer left.

The Ladies Aid Society was organized in December of 1897. This organization has meant a great deal to the church during the years of its existence. Financial aid both for the pastor's salary and for repairs of the church have been forthcoming from this society.

Since Anaconda is a smelter city with the entire population dependent upon the smelter for their living, Anaconda has become a city with a fluctuating population. This has made it hard for the church to move forward with
steady, even pace. Some new people who were good Baptists would move into the town and would swell the ranks for a time. Then all of a sudden something would happen and several of them would leave. This left the old members alone again with the struggle.

The year 1905 and 1906 saw some improvements made in the church. The building was renovated and cathedral colored windows were put in to replace the plain glass windows. Pews of modern design were put in to replace the individual chairs.

In December of 1927 the church was partially destroyed by fire. The annex and apartment under the annex were saved. The cause of the fire has never been known. Slowness on the part of the fire department due to an accident which one of the trucks encountered enroute gave the flames the advantage and the interior of the church was demolished. The local paper gives this account:

Baptist Church is ruined by fire. Redecorating and reshingling almost complete when fire breaks out. A fire which broke out in the interior of the newly decorated and reshingled Baptist Church, at the corner of Locust and Fifth streets, reduced it to almost total ruins yesterday afternoon and left little but the four brick walls standing. The fire broke out shortly after 3:30 o'clock the alarm coming into the station at 3:50 o'clock.

With the fire well under way and breaking
through the roof of the building, and temporarily
hampered through the loss of the new truck in an accident
which occurred at the corner of Cedar street and Park
avenue when it collided with another car, and forced
its return to the station, firemen fought an uphill
battle and with little hopes of saving any portion of
the building.

Calling the old truck into action as soon as
the crash of the new truck occurred, pressure was
found too weak to reach the top of the building and
the crippled machine was sent for. With pumps going
full blast and three hose lines playing constantly
on the flames, the fire's advantage was gradually
diminished, but not before it had ruined the building.¹

This was a great loss to the church when we realize
that an insurance policy of only $4,000 was held on it.
The loss was estimated at $30,000.

The pastor, Reverend Norwood a highspirited man, did
not hesitate about what to do. He called the deacons and
trustees and put a plan before them. They approved the
plan and at once the rebuilding program was started. It
was arranged that the deacons and trustees should go out
in pairs to every business enterprise to solicit funds
for the building program. The newspaper account says:

Baptists Launch Drive for Funds. Members of the
congregation of the First Baptist Church will launch
a campaign this morning for $15,000 to reconstruct
and modernize the church, which was recently destroy-
ed by fire, the Reverend H. R. Norwood, pastor of the
church announced last night. The board of trustees
and deacons, organized into teams of two persons
each, will visit the business and professional men,

¹ Anaconda Standard, December 20, 1927.
soliciting their support in the work this week. The building must have progressed rapidly for within a year the dedicatory service was held in the rebuilt sanctuary. Huge sums of money were spent in redecorating. Two of the largest and most beautiful stain-glass windows in Anaconda are found in the Baptist church and were installed in 1928. Beside these two large windows there are nine smaller ones. These windows are all memorial windows.

During the time of the rebuilding the congregation met in the Swedish Baptist Church, the members and pastor of said church so graciously arranged their services that the First Baptist Church congregation could worship in their house.

Still one more building was lacking to make the property complete and that was the parsonage. We marvel at the courage with which these people undertook the building of a beautiful parsonage just nine years after the rebuilding of the church.

The church had been paid for in full. In 1930 the parsonage was completed, but a heavy debt was incurred. Shortly after this the depression set in and the smelter shut down. This heavy debt on the parsonage pressed down upon the people until in 1947 a successful effort was made

1 Ibid., January 11, 1928.
to clear this debt.

The last milestone of brave action of the church is taken this month, August 1949, when the church assumes its own support for the first time. The writer of this paper is pastor of the church at present.
The Baptist work in Billings originated with a small band of Baptist women who felt that they ought to do something to aid the missionary work of the Baptist denomination. In January of 1898 three women, Mrs. Lydia Trask, Mrs. Clara White, and Mrs. J. D. Simineo organized themselves into a society which they named "The Earnest Workers Society". Soon other ladies joined this society and their number grew to eleven. Meetings were held frequently during that spring and summer. They met in the various homes and a small amount of money was raised at each of these meetings. By the end of the summer the fund amounted to quite a nice little sum. The original idea of this fund had been to send it to the foreign mission field, but over in Livingston there was a small struggling church which seemed to need help so the members of "The Earnest Workers Society" decided to show a neighborly spirit of friendliness by sending the money to this church.

When the money arrived in Livingston the people there were overwhelmed and they wrote a letter to the ladies expressing their gratitude. But they did not stop with a letter to Billings, they also sent a letter to Reverend L. G. Clark, General Missionary of the American Baptist
Home Mission Society, telling him about the ladies in Billings. Naturally Reverend Clark was curious about these Baptist ladies and so he took a trip to Billings to see for himself.

When he arrived a meeting was called. They met in the Methodist church. At this meeting it was decided to meet again on October 9, 1898. The result of this meeting was the organization of the First Baptist Church of Billings. The charter of the church was not closed before in 1899. At the first meeting, October 9, 1898, only eleven members joined but before the charter closed eighteen had signed. The following are charter members:

Mrs. Lydia Trask  Mrs. Lettie Mix
Fielding Wilhite  Julia Norman
Mrs. Fielding Wilhite  Anna Norman
Mrs. M. H. English  H. M. Grayton
Mrs. Reno Hopkins  Mrs. H. M. Brayton
Mrs. W. H. Clanton  Mary Brayton
Mrs. George Pierrie  Harriet Brayton
J. S. Simineo  Wm. O. Parker
Mrs. J. S. Simineo  Mrs. Wm. O. Parker

During the first year the meetings of the church were held in Yellowstone County Courthouse. Funds for a building of their own began to accumulate and in the summer of 1900 lots were purchased on North 29th Street
First and Second Avenues. This first venture in the direction of a church building completely drained the building fund. As is so often the case, the church had no rich members. The work stood still until 1901. That summer the foundation was completed. This not only drained the treasury but also discouraged many hearts to the point of utter depression. Reverend Remington seemed to be the only one with enough faith to believe that a church would be built for he preached sermons on topics related to the building of the church. This resulted in a rallying of the entire church from the charter members down to the smallest child in the Sunday School. Everyone and every society in the church pitched in and the church stood ready to receive its members to worship in their own house on May 3, 1903. We read this interesting account of the building of the church:

In the summer of 1900 lots were purchased, which exhausted the funds, and there being none of the members rich with this world's goods, there was nothing done until the summer 1901, when excavation was commenced and foundation completed, which again exhausted the church's treasury. Now comes the struggle in the history of the church. Faint hearts wavered, but Pastor Renington - noble man - with great faith in God, spoke words of encouragement and said time and again: 'It will come, it will be built'. A rallying came, the members went into their pockets liberally, the Home Mission Society gave $500 and kind friends came to the relief. The Ladies Aid gave $300, the Sunday School from the youngest to the oldest, came with their pennies to the extent of $100. May 3, 1903 Church opened for service with a membership of 43.

The building was finished and the people were doing very well. It was not long, however, before the need for additional room became pressing. The hardship of building the first house of worship was soon forgotten, and when the demand for an addition came to the attention of the people it was soon built.

As the city expanded and needed more space for establishing business enterprises, the Baptist church also grew and needed more room. This situation caused the church to feel that they would be wise to sell their property at the good price they could get for it and move to another more suitable location. This was done and the present church site on Division and Thirty-fourth was secured. A great building program was planned. The cornerstone was laid in October 1922 and the building commenced. A structure was erected for use as a Sunday School plant. At the finish of the building of this it was discovered that the funds were diminishing very rapidly. Instead of a Sunday School plant the structure had to be built to accommodate church services. This new church was ready for services in the spring of 1923.

Since then the church has had a building fund accumulating and it is said that in 1948 this fund amounted to the large sum of $51,000. It was hoped then that the original building plans could be carried out and finished
For the past fifteen years the church has been under the able leadership of Reverend Robert R. Moorman, D.D. Much credit should go to him for promoting a building program such as the $55,000 or $60,000 one which has been proposed.
CHAPTER III

BAPTIST CHURCHES FOUNDED AND ORGANIZED AFTER 1900

LEWISTOWN

Lewistown may well be said to be one of the leading cities in central Montana. The Baptist work was begun in that city by Reverend L. C. Clark, general missionary for Montana. Although some Baptists had assembled there before Reverend Clark came they had never had any organized work there. On August 25, 1905 these people came together with Clark and under his leadership organized the First Baptist Church of Lewistown. Those who were present at this meeting were Mrs. Ellen Strong, Mrs. L. W. Acly, Mrs. J. Barnes, Dr. Ezra Noble, and Mrs. A. J. Johnson.

At this time there was a very able missionary-minded pastor available and Lewistown was most fortunate in securing him. Under Reverend William Remington's leadership the church received a good start.

The meeting place for the church in the early days was a small frame house which was converted into a church. In 1914 under the leadership of Reverend Clifford Crass a stone foundation and basement were built. This was used for meetings for many years. In 1935 under the leadership of Reverend R. O. Shannon the main church building was
erected. Dedication of the building took place Sunday, January 26, 1936. Present at this occasion were Reverend Huxley, Reverend C. H. Cottam, Sunday School missionary and Reverend S. H. Danley who all took part in the program together with Reverend Shannon the pastor.

Since then the church has grown and progressed with slow but sure steps.

The present pastor is Reverend S. G. English who came to the field in 1946 and is leading the church in a progressive program.
THE LITTLE BROWN CHURCH, LODGE GRASS

In 1915 the missionary efforts of the Baptists in Montana were extended to include Lodge Grass. Finding enough people of the Baptist faith as well as a number who looked with favor upon the Baptist principles, the missionary for the Baptist Home Mission Society, Reverend W. A. Petzoldt, decided to organize a church. Through the years this church has carried the friendly name of "The Little Brown Church".

Soon after the church was organized a building fund was started and on September 30, 1917 a building was ready for the dedication service. It was a happy group of Baptists who met in The Little Brown Church that day. Not only had a church been built but enough money had been raised to pay for it. Even better, money was left over with which to purchase stoves, chairs, and the many other little extras which go into making a church home. All was set now. Participating ministers in the dedication service were Dr. Clifford Cress, Reverend E. R. Curry, and Reverend Gould. Besides these Dr. Bruce Kinney was present to lead the dedication Sunday.

This church is located in the Crow Indian country of our state and has had a vast opportunity to minister the
Word of God to the Indian race.

The church is making steady progress and was able
to report in 1949:

Our church has been making steady progress, assuming
a third more of the financial support of the pastor's
salary and increased its mission giving to the Northern
Baptist Convention in a very substantial sum. 1

The property of the church including the parsonage
has been redecorated. A new heating system has been
installed in the church, and the one in the parsonage has
been completely modernized. Reverend Howard Pary is the
able leader of this promising church.

THE WYOLA BAPTIST COMMUNITY CHURCH

This church was organized in 1917 and is closely
related to The Little Brown Church. No early history has
been discovered. The church is progressing very well
under the leadership of Reverend Howard Pary who is greatly
assisted by Miss Julia Brand who came to the field to
serve in 1948.

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1 Reverend Howard Pary, "Letter to the author".

2 The source of information for this church is an
unpublished bulletin printed for the celebration for the
Thirtieth Anniversary of The Little Brown Church.
THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF GLASGOW-

The colporteur for the Northern Baptist Publication Society came to Glasgow in 1914. Reverend N. Wakeham had been sent out by the above society to sell literature, preach in needy places, and if possible to organize a church where prospects for such a work seemed good.

It was not long after he came to Glasgow that he realized that this town ought to have a Baptist church to band together those of Baptist faith. He called a meeting in the Odd Fellow Hall on April 19, 1914 and at that time organized on a temporary basis the First Baptist Church of Glasgow. This organization kept on until August of the same year when the State Evangelist, Reverend William E. Parks, a colporteur, came to complete the organization and have it recorded and recognized as a duly organized Baptist church. The man who accepted the call to the pastorate of this church was Reverend Hupp.

A building project was begun in February of 1915 and the cornerstone was laid just two months later in April. The work progressed very well and the dedication service was held another two months later on June 7.

A debt of gratitude is owed the "Helping Hand Society" for the large part which they played in raising the
funds for the building of a church. We marvel when we note that they raised $1,500 in the period between February 1 and August 1, 1915. Surely they did lend a helping hand.

From this time on the church moved ahead with some measure of regularity and made steady gains both in membership and finances. This progress was marked by the fact that in 1928, under Reverend O. D. Martin's leadership, the church was able to make the last payment on the debt which had rested on their shoulders the past thirteen years.

In 1937 the church reported that many improvements were being made and that a parsonage was being built.

The present pastor is Reverend J. B. Gleason who is leading the church in an aggressive missionary program. The church has 157 resident members and is becoming one of the leading churches in the state.

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1 The source for the information above is Glasgow Courier, Golden Anniversary Edition, November 20, 1937
SOME OTHER CHURCHES

The churches which we place under the above heading are those from which no response has been received to the letter sent them requesting information regarding their organization or the names of charter members who might be able to give such information.

Research on these churches has proven fruitless except for the very bare facts which are given in the brief sketches of these churches which follows:

**Eureka.** In Eureka a Baptist church was organized in 1906. At that time a church edifice was begun, we do not know the date when it was finished. The church has progressed through the years and today has a large place in the life of the community. The pastor at present is Reverend F. L. Lewno. He is a fine man and doing a good work. In 1948 the church bought the vacant Methodist church and remodeled it for a parish house. The Baptist church had long before taken over the work of the Methodist church.

**Pryor.** The Pryor Baptist Church was organized in 1910 and the leadership of the church is now in the hands of Reverend W. E. Parks, a very able pastor.

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1 Montana-Idaho-Utah Baptist Messenger, No. 8, February, 1949, p. 3.
Belgrade. The Belgrade Baptist Church was organized November 14, 1909 by Reverend Edward A. Stevens, with eleven charter members whose names are as follows: Mrs. Camie Cowan, Miss Penelope Cowan, Dr. C. E. McCoy, Mrs. C. E. McCoy, Reverend Edward A. Stevens, Mr. S. A. Ulimer, Mrs. S. A. Ulimer, Miss Alice Ulimer, Mr. John H. Watson, Miss Fannie Watson, Miss Alice Watson.

In 1910 this small group set out to erect their own house of worship. Energy and sacrifice were the virtues which made a reality the church edifice of the Belgrade Baptist Church. Perhaps it was felt in 1931 that Belgrade had too many small weak protestant churches for in that year there was a federation between the Baptists and the Presbyterians. Thus they formed a Federated Church. The Presbyterian edifice was retained as the future meeting place for this church. The present pastor is the very able Reverend Arthur G. Heath.

Valier. The Baptist church in Valier was organized in 1916. The church has its own edifice and parsonage. The present pastor is an energetic man with a real vision of what can be done both through efficient pastoral work and also through the means of the radio. This church is now sponsoring weekly radio broadcasts and through this medium reaching hundreds of unchurched folks.

1 Unpublished church bulletin of the Federated Church, Belgrade, May 1, 1949.
The future of the Valier Church looks very promising under the gifted leadership of Reverend F. S. Mercer.

Hardin. The Baptist work in Hardin was begun in 1922. At that time a church was organized. Since then a most lovely and unique log church has been built. As far as we know this is the only log church in the entire state. For many years this church shared their pastor with the Crow Agency church. This year, 1949, the church has called a pastor of their own on the field and they are now erecting an $8,000 parsonage. The pastor came on the field early this summer, 1949.

Other Churches. There are a few more Baptist churches in Montana of which we have no other information except the year of organization and the name of the present pastor. These churches are:

Havre Baptist Church Organized 1912 Rev. J. W. Bowles
Gilford Bap. Church Organized 1912 Rev. V. C. McKnight
Victor Baptist Church Organized 1915 Rev. C. R. Martin
Wyola Baptist Church Organized 1916 Rev. Clara E. Olds
McCabe Baptist Church Organized 1916 Rev. G. C. Dryden
Roundup Baptist Church Organized 1917 No pastor at present
Crow Agency B. Church Organized 1925 Rev. C. A. Bentley
Vida Baptist Church Organized 1944 Rev. G. C. Dryden
Whitetail Baptist C. Organized (?) Rev. G. C. Dryden
CHAPTER IV

BAPTIST CHURCHES ORGANIZED BUT NOW EXTINCT

There seems to have been a tendency in the early Baptist missionary efforts in Montana to organize churches in places where the membership constituency was very small and the future outlook not very bright. Perhaps this was stimulated by the hope that Montana would some day be populated very densely. When this did not happen the churches suffered. And so, in some cases there were not enough Baptists living in the community to warrant a church.

Another factor which influenced the discontinuance of Baptist work in some localities was the fact that the distances between the towns was too great to make it possible to form a "Larger Parish" such as we have in the Bitter Root valley today.

In other instances the small churches "federated with some other small church in town. A "Federated" church is one composed of Baptists and Presbyterian, or Baptists and both Presbyterians and Methodists.

In this chapter we shall deal with the churches which are discontinued and those which have been absorbed into a federation. We shall also be aware that some of these churches have become extinct when the members have joined churches of other faiths because the struggle for existence in their own
church had become too great. There may be a case or two where the church is still existing but not as a Baptist church.

Glendale. The first of the church which was discontinued was the Glendale Baptist Church. Reverend Lamb came and organized this church on August 6, 1882. There were twenty-two members. A storehouse was rented for $100 per year. This store was repaired and renovated and in October of that year regular services were held in it. Reverend Lamb was pastor. There were one hundred chairs, a table, a small organ; these composed the furnishings. They boasted one hundred hymnals. The Sunday School had a library of 180 books. The ladies had provided all these good things at a cost of $350. The church people paid half of the pastor's salary. Since this church was built around a mining camp which eventually failed the church failed with it. The church was discontinued after a couple of years.

Corvallis. The Corvallis church was organized March 1, 1888. We have no record of how the work was begun or who began it. But we do know that the band was small and therefore handicapped in doing much work. Later in 1901 we read that Reverend W. R. Rickman, a most able and good pastor, was serving in Corvallis. The report from the church in

1 Minutes of the Montana Baptist Association, 1900.
1903 was that the church was not progressing as fast as was wanted but neither was it going backwards. Reverend Rickman resigned in 1904 and Reverend Kneeland took over the work. The church met in the Presbyterian church for one service a month.

In 1932 we find that the Corvallis church is a Federated church and in 1948 no mention is made of the Corvallis church. This puts it in the rank of discontinued Baptist churches.

Boulder. The Boulder Baptist Church was organized July 5, 1895. Five years later the report was that the church had been without a pastor for so long that not much progress was being made. The last report we have from Boulder reads as follows:

This church has had no pastoral oversight for a number of years past, and the membership is so reduced that it does not seem wise at present to put a man on that field.1

This was the last report from the Boulder Baptist Church. It was discontinued shortly afterwards.

East Gallatin Baptist Church. The East Gallatin Baptist Church was organized in 1894. This church, it was reported in 1900, held a great influence in the Gallatin Valley. Reverend W. W. Lewis served the church then. There

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1 Minutes of the Montana Baptist Association, 1901, p. 31.
were some losses in this church in 1901 because some people moved away. In the annual report in 1907 the East Gallatin Church did not report. In the following two years it was not heard from so we can draw the conclusion that the church discontinued in 1907.

**Belt.** The Belt Baptist Church was the next church to become extinct. The organization for this church took place April 26, 1896. The church was going strong at the turn of the century and had a full time pastor. In 1901 several reports of loss in membership were noted. In 1924 the membership was only ten and they had no pastor. It seems that the church discontinued between 1925 and 1932. By 1932 there was no report of the church in Belt.

**West Gallatin.** The West Gallatin Baptist Church was organized July 14, 1901. It had a good beginning but could not survive. Reverend T. L. Lewis was the pastor and it seems that he was also the organizer. It seems that both East Gallatin and West Gallatin churches were the work of Reverend Lewis. The church was discontinued before 1908 since no report from that church appeared in the Annual Report of the convention.

**Other churches.** There are several churches which are

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1 Minutes of the Montana Baptist Convention, 1923 & 32.
2 Ibid., 1908.
extinct now and for which no historical account is available. We list these as to date of organization:

- Manhattan Baptist Church 1908
- Laurel Baptist Church 1908
- Polson Baptist Church 1912
- Seines Baptist Church 1912
- Whitefish Baptist Church 1912
- Cohagen Baptist Church 1916
- Three Forks Baptist Church 1918
- West Garfield Bap. Church 1920
- Knowlton Baptist Church 1921
- Timber Creek Baptist Church 1921
- Reno Baptist Church 1922

CHAPTER V

THE AMERICAN BAPTIST HOME MISSION SOCIETY'S SHARE OF BAPTIST WORK IN MONTANA

We may say that the origin of the American Baptist Home Mission Society was the Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Society which was organized as early as 1802. The purpose of this society was to bring the gospel of Christ to the destitute unreachc sections of our land.

From that time on State conventions as well as a great many individual persons have been active in the propagation of the Gospel in outlying frontiers.

In 1812 Adoniram Judson and Luther Rice turned to the Baptist view. Rice became the one to appeal to the Baptist churches in America to unite in an effort to get missionary work going in Asia. Adoniram Judson as we all well know became the famous Baptist missionary to Burma.

Rev. Rice's appeal resulted in the formation of "The General Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States of America for Foreign Missions". It soon became evident to Mr. Rice that the frontiers of America needed missionaries just as urgently as did the heathen lands. The Board appointed by the convention for promoting foreign missions hesitated to take any action without first having the approval of the convention.
By an amendment to the constitution of the board power was granted to include home mission work at the discretion of the board. As a result of this action two missionaries were appointed to the far west, the well known John Mason Peck and James E. Walch. Soon the board found it best to discontinue the home mission end of its activities. Several individuals and state boards were in the home mission work already when in 1832 "The American Baptist Home Mission Society" was formed.

About thirty eight years after this the Home Mission Society entered Montana to begin work. It was in 1869 or 70 that the colporteur missionary came to Helena to work and from that day to this "The American Baptist Home Mission Society" has poured thousands of dollars into this vast state of ours.

In Helena the board spent much money to get the work going. Reverend L. B. Woolfolk received $1,000 a year for two years. Then in 1880 when the church was finally organized some help was forthcoming.

From Helena we go to Miles City. The Home Mission Society missionary, Reverend Huntley, came to Miles City and organized the church there in 1882. He arranged for a loan to assist in building a church and also for the aid for the salary of the pastor.

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Butte was started in their Baptist work by a man from this society. And so we could go on telling the story of every church, Dillon, Billings, Livingston, Kalispell, Missoula, and down the line for every Baptist church in the state. By now, 1949, all of these churches mentioned are self-supporting and are giving liberally toward mission work both at home and abroad. But there are churches still receiving a small amount of help each year.

The American Baptist Home Mission Society poured into the Montana field several thousand dollars a year in order to promote the cause of Christ. The annual report of the general missionary fund in "The Annuals of the Montana Baptist Convention" indicates that for several years (1900-1905) the Home Mission Society granted a sum of $5,500. for the work in Montana. In the "Annual" of 1923 we read that the total amount of missionary funds released by the Society through the convention was $17,539.04. One year later in 1924 the total amount of missionary funds released through the society in Montana, not counting the Crow Indian Mission, was $19,944.39.

We are glad to report that at this time (1949) the Baptist churches of Montana are not only on the receiving end of missions but that now many times the amount of money which comes into the state is being sent out of the state through missionary channels.
In the year which ended May 1948 the total giving by the Montana Baptist Churches to the missionary drive called "World Crusade" was $64,284.21.

The Baptists mission among the Indians in Montana is located on the Crow Indian Reservation. The Home Mission Board has supported that mission for years and has been the main force in making this great work a great success.
CHAPTER VI

PROMINENT LAYMEN IN THE EARLY BAPTIST HISTORY OF MONTANA

Very often the success of any movement is due in a large measure to the laymen who affiliate themselves with it. Very often the work of such laymen is not given due credit. The Baptists in Montana have real reason to be proud of some of their staunch laymen of the early pioneer days. We are fully aware that in our present day we have several prominent laymen among our Baptists. We feel, however, that some other writer in the future may write up a biographical sketch of them.

Governor Green Clay Smith. The earliest of our prominent Baptist lay leaders was the venerable Governor Green Clay Smith. He was appointed the Second Territorial Governor of Montana in 1866 and arrived in Bannack the same year. His journey westward from Kentucky took him over the hills and plains. But we may suppose with accuracy that the journey from Ogden, Utah, to his destination gave him the surprise of his life. From Ogden he rode the stage coach to Bannack City where he first held office. It may be of interest to some that the tickets were supposed to have cost $500 per person to Ogden. This seems quite a sum to pay for a wife and two children who should
be young enough to go for half fare.

Governor Smith was a well-to-do man. His estate of three thousand acres in Castle Union evidently helped him in his financial affairs because his salary as governor was not very high.

His training and experience fitted him well for the task of being governor at the time when the Indians began to be rebellious. We read the following account with great interest:

Gov. Smith came to Montana well equipped for the duties of Chief Magistrate and commander-in-chief of the territory. He was of mature years and had been schooled by distinguished Virginia and Kentucky ancestry who were eminent in the affairs of the state; he was himself a learned lawyer and well versed upon constitutional Construction, he had served nearly four years in Congress and had a large acquaintance with public affairs, also he had served with marked distinction in the union army, as commander-in-chief of the militia officers.1

Bishop Tuttle writes about calling on several people and then he said of his visit with Governor Smith, "He is a stout, pleasant-looking man of about 35, dressed in grey, and with 'haif-fellow-well-met' manners. He is a Baptist and his wife a Presbyterian".2


2 Daniel Sylvester Tuttle, Reminiscences of a Missionary Bishop.
The capital was moved to Helena while Smith was governor, so his last days in Montana were spent there.

The governorship of Montana Territory was the last public office which he held. When he had served his time in Montana he went back to Kentucky and entered the Baptist ministry.

As he was an able governor and soldier he also became one of the most eloquent preachers in Baptist history. Governor Leslie of Montana Territory knew Smith as a preacher and he says this about him:

He was a Baptist, sound and true, and much beloved by his denomination and all other Christian people who knew and loved him. He and I were both native born Kentuckians, he in Madison Co., I in Waine, (now Clinton), one hundred or more miles apart. I knew him well and intimately from 1870 till his death when he was sixty-three years old. He was pastor of the Baptist Church at the capital for the state for a number of years comprising part of the time I lived there, and as such was my pastor. He was a minister of great ability and wholly consecrated to the work, under the call of his God. He was greatly beloved by the membership and always in his place. Indeed, he was a success in every sense of the word. No stain or spot of color ever attached to his name, or tinged in any way his character as a Christian gentleman and preacher of the good news of salvation through the years of his service as such. He loved all Christian people, was a true friend.1

Judge John W. Eddy. The second prominent layman who took an active part in promoting the Baptist cause in our

state was Judge John W. Eddy. We have previously mentioned his work in connection with the work in Helena. He worked unceasingly to establish a church in Helena, he supported it generously with his means, and many feel that he had a large part in rallying the Baptist work in Montana.

Governor Preston H. Leslie. Of all the early pioneer laymen for the Baptist cause, Governor Leslie stands out in prominence. He came to our Territory in 1887 and served as Territorial Governor for four years. After this he was appointed District Attorney for Montana for four years.

When he was still a young law student back in Kentucky, Brother Leslie had become a Christian and united himself with the Baptist church. He was elected county attorney in his home country, later he was elected to the house for two terms after which he served in the senate. He was its president, thus serving as Governor of Kentucky twice to fill in vacancies. He was also elected Circuit Judge in his own state.

Then in 1887 he became Territorial Governor of Montana by appointment by President Cleveland.

Governor Leslie had not been in Helena long before he became active in the Baptist work. This led him into contact with the Montana Baptist Association. At the session in 1890 of said association Governor Leslie was elected moderator.
Re-election followed every year for fifteen years with the exception of two years when he was not present. To fully understand how the honorable governor felt in respect to the cause of Christ we quote him from his response to the election as moderator for the tenth successive time:

I may be pardoned if I refer to the fact that in civil life I have often been accorded places of distinction and trust among my fellow men and I think I have not failed to be duly grateful for the mark of confidence and the exalted conception of esteem which was thus shown me. I looked upon it then, and still do cherish it as a valuable heritage to my children and grand-children and shall always regard the memory of these distinguished honors even in civil affairs as of more value than gold, but without undervaluing these in the least, I want to say (and I would, if I could, have it put upon record for the coming generation of boys and young men as my conception of the comparative value of earthly distinctions) that I prize, most of all, the distinctions and honors which from time to time have been conferred upon me by my brethren in the churches and associations like this and larger bodies. I shall always remember with tender gratitude the confidence you have reposed in me and I want to do my part in the furtherance of the good of this body in the coming year and to pray that this may be a most successful year among us in the Lord's work.1

In 1905 when he was re-elected he requested that someone else take his place. Then the association honored him by electing him Moderator Emeritus.

Governor Leslie passed away at the age of eighty-eight on February 7, 1907, at his home in Helena. Governor Toole said at this occasion: "He was an illustrious citizen, whose

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1 The Eighteenth Annual of the Montana Baptist Association 1900, p. 12
eminent learning, high character and civic virtues entitle his memory to a secure place in the affection of our people."

We have limited this chapter to three outstanding laymen of the Baptist faith who served in public life in our state. There were of course many more to whom we cannot pay tribute here.

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1 The Twenty-fifth Annual of Montana Baptist Association, 1907, p. 21.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The success of the Baptist work in Montana may be contributed to a large extent to the patience and zeal portrayed by the God sent ministers and missionaries who came here to serve their Lord and Master.

Another factor in the success of this work was the understanding of the directors of the American Baptist Home Mission Society who gladly considered every appeal and did as much as was humanly possible to assist with ready financial aid. Without such aid the work would have been greatly hindered.

A third factor in the success of this Baptist work was the devotion and sacrificial giving of both time and money on the part of those Baptist lay folk who came to Montana to settle. Without such devotion we know that the work would long ago have suffered shipwreck.

We conclude, therefore, that the united work of all three of these factors was absolutely essential to the success of the work.

Much history remains to be written of the great army of men and women who down through the years have given themselves to the winning of the lost through the means of the Baptist church. It is hoped that some one will devote them-
self to writing a history of these lay folk.

The future outlook for the Baptist work in Montana is bright and with the same spirit of devotion which our forefathers showed much can still be done for God in the great treasure state.
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