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# VERMONT

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## A VERMONT SKETCHBOOK

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### I. THE ABNAKIS, THE IROQUOIANS, AND VERMONT by JOHN C. HUDEN

The Indian phase of Vermont history is littered with confusion. Our older historians are of no assistance, and we have given Dr. Hudon the assignment of trying to bring knowledge, understanding, and order out of the confusion. His first paper on the theme appeared in the January issue, the second in July. These papers are intended to be preliminary and exploratory only. He is a member of the faculty of the University of Vermont, Burlington, Vermont.

Who were the Abnakis (Abenakis, Waubeneakes)? How are they related to the Algonkians (Algonkins, Algonquians)? Who were the Iroquoians (Iroquois, Long House, Five Nations, Six Nations)? How do these fit into the grand sweep of events that is Vermont's history?

In the first place, the Abnakis are a sub-group of the great Algonkian language-stock which spread from New Brunswick to the Continental Divide north of the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes, and southward from the Maritimes along the Atlantic coast to the Carolinas; also from Canada west of the Great Lakes southward, through much of the Mississippi-Missouri watershed north of the Ohio River.

The Abnakis are just one of some thirty tribes which spread or spoke very similar languages, called Algonkian dialects. Other Algonkian nations included Montagnais, Massachuset, Micmac, Narragansett, Penacook, Penobscot, Wampanoag, Wappinger, Delaware, Chickahominy, Cree, Kickapoo, Menominee, Shawnee, Ojibwa (Chippewa), Arapaho, Blackfoot, Cheyenne, and the (almost extinct) Montauk group.

The general name "Algonkian" may mean "People of the Other Shore," and comes from a French mispronunciation first mentioned in the early 1600's or late 1500's by Gallic explorers. Although the Indians had no alphabet or systematic writing until supplied by missionaries, the surviving literature in Algonkian languages is very extensive; Pilling's *Ethnology Bulletin of 1891* contains six-hundred

2. CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES OF VERMONT *by* RAYMOND A. HALL

This review of the history of the state's Congregational churches is the last in a series which began in our April, 1952, number. The series, thus far, has covered the Episcopalian, Catholic, Baptist, and Methodist faiths. The author is Chaplain of the University of Vermont, also its Associate Professor of Religion and Executive Secretary of its Religious Life Committee. He is at work on a definitive study of the religions of the state under a grant by his University. Such a history is urgently needed.

The genius of the Congregational Church is perhaps best indicated by the fact that even today Congregationalists are more prone to think of themselves as churches rather than a Church. This fact recalls the early strife between those who favored what came to be called the "New England Way" and those who favored the Presbyterian way. It is no accident that Thomas Hooker, founder of American constitutional government, was, with John Cotton, a champion of The New England Way which was to triumph over compromises such as the Cambridge Platform. The shrewd New England faculty found here that to which it responded: the independence of each church for its own affairs, and their responsibility with other churches for the common well-being.

The name "Congregational" was of gradual growth; the early English groups had no name for themselves; their enemies had many names for them, few complimentary. The term "Browneist" was applied (after an early leader) even to the Plymouth Church. Gradually the term "church" and the Christian Congregation became synonymous; and John Cotton, with others, writes of the Congregational Way and the Way of the *Churches* rather than of *the Church*.

How late in the Congregational story Vermont appears is realized when we find that in 1760, two years before the first church was founded in the state, Ezra Stiles estimated that Massachusetts, Connecticut and New Hampshire had 530 churches. Harvard and Yale had been founded (1636 and 1701); Rhode Island's first church's date was 1643; Maine's, 1673. The Great Awakening under Jonathan Edwards had swept the colonies, to be succeeded—in the days when Vermont was being settled—by a new mood of rationalism and naturalism taking the religious form of Deism, a mood well suited to the independent, self-reliant adventurous pioneer of this new mountain country.

In this frontier country the first Protestant service was probably in 1704 when the Rev. John Williams, pastor of the Deerfield, Mass., Church, en route to Canada as a captive of the Indians, preached a sermon in Rockingham to the remnant of his congregation. Fifty-eight years later, in 1762, December 3, one year after the founding of the town, the first Protestant church in Vermont was founded in Bennington. The church building was erected 1763–65. It seems strange that the first church was not built in Brattleboro because the first independent English settlement in the state was at Fort Dummer (near present Brattleboro). This fort was built in 1724 and in 1728 had a Congregational chaplain, Rev. Daniel Dwight by name. In 1730 the Rev. Ebenezer Hinsdell was chaplain.

This first church in Bennington was formed by a union of churches from Hardwick and Sunderland, Massachusetts, whose members had emigrated in a body. These were soon joined by another church from Westfield, Massachusetts, and their pastor, Jedediah Dewey, became the first pastor of the Bennington Church, August 14, 1763. Some members of a church at Newent (then in Norwich, but now in Lisbon), Connecticut, also joined the Bennington fellowship.

These churches which united to form this first church were all "separate" churches—that is, they were not in fellowship with "regular" Congregational churches. The "separate" movement in Massachusetts and Connecticut was widespread, originating in a protest against the "halfway covenant" and formalism and in a stricter insistence on a vital religion in the pulpit and in those claiming membership. These new demands and consequent separation were stimulated by the "Great Awakening" brought about by the preaching of Whitefield and his associates, a movement attended by many excesses, but perhaps good in its total effect.

So the first church—the Bennington church—was quite "irregular" in its founding, as was the case with several of the early churches. It became officially Congregational in 1832.

The formation of other Congregational churches in the state followed the two lines of immigration in the western and eastern sides. Beginning September 17, 1764, well up the Connecticut valley at Newbury, churches were organized in this order down to 1780:

Westminster	June 11, 1767	Newfane	June 30, 1774
Windsor	September 28, 1768	Weathersfield	1775
Guilford	1767-1768	Putney	October 16, 1776
West Brattleboro	1770	Marlboro	October 20, 1776
Norwich	1770	Royalton	October, 1777
Hartford	January 23, 1771	Townshend	1777
Thetford	1773	Halifax	July 24, 1778
West Rutland	October 20, 1773	West Windsor	1778
Rockingham and Chester	October 27, 1773	Dummerston	August 18, 1779
		Hartland	September 6, 1779

Only two of these churches, Bennington and West Rutland, were west of the mountains.

How were these churches organized? Some, like Bennington and Newbury, were formed almost as soon as the town, as the natural response to the demand of church groups forming the town. This was far from being the universal practice, for the frontier town in New England was not, any more than frontier towns anywhere, naturally religious—certainly not pious. W. W. Sweet says Colonial New

England was most "unchurched" of all christendom. Thus new churches were also the result of efforts and forces from without. Connecticut and Massachusetts sent missionaries to Vermont, the General Association of Connecticut, deputing two ministers in 1780 for service in "Vermont and parts adjacent." It is not known whether they were sent. In 1788 the New Haven West Association did send two into Vermont. Sometimes ministers from Connecticut undertook on their own responsibility or that of their associations temporary missions into the settlements of New York and Vermont—often in answer to urgent appeals from their Connecticut parishioners who had moved to the new regions. In 1798 the Missionary Society of Connecticut was formed. Some of the Connecticut pastors who came on "Vermont Missions" not only founded churches but stayed on as ministers of some of the early churches. Their visits were usually during summer vacations, on horseback, one such extending to 800 miles. In 1793 this vote of a local (Conn.) Association is recorded:

the term of service is to be for 4 months, the allowance 4½ dollars a week over and above 4 dollars a week for the supply of their pulpits.

One interesting account of a trip taken by a Connecticut minister into the "wilds" of Vermont was given by the Rev. Nathan Perkins of Hartford, Connecticut, who travelled from April 27 to June 12, 1789. Nathan Perkins was graduated from Princeton in 1770, Yale Divinity School in 1774, and he was awarded a D.D. degree by Princeton in 1801. For more than sixty years he was pastor of the Third Church of West Hartford, Connecticut.

His diary gives the story of his missionary trip on horseback to the "New Settlements" in Vermont, to which he was appointed by "Ye Association of Hartford County at the instance and request of the General Association of Connecticut." He preaches at many settlements, more often than not in homes of settlers, he organizes at least one church; he meets many whose theology pains him: "raving Arminian Methodists," Baptists, Quakers, Deists, Universalists. He finds the wilderness of the North a distressing contrast to Connecticut's civilization and says so in no uncertain terms, thus:

wretched bed, eat up with fleas, no hay—my horse starving—no cheese anywhere—no beef—no butter—I pine for my own table—miserable cooks—people nasty—I suffer for want of drink—mayple cyder horrible stuff—no malt in ye country—their beer poor bran beer—no candles, pine splinters used instead—

Perkins makes his own census of religious affiliations: "about

1/10 Quakers, Anabaptists, Episcopalians and Universalists; 1/4 Deists." He states that one half of the people want religious services and a ministry; the other half want none of it.

For the clergy whom he meets on his journey he has little regard, calling one group at an association meeting "illiterate, miserably appearing," but says they listened to him as to an oracle. He records the praise given his preaching by groups of resident ministers and tells of meeting another missionary from Stamford, Connecticut, who was "full of envy at my popularity."

Nathan Perkins is revealed as a very human person and as a very industrious one, probably a typical example of the missionary preachers to frontier Vermont who had something to do in establishing religion in the new land. In 1798, as we said, The Missionary Society of Connecticut was formed for this very purpose.

Up to the start of the 19th century the aid given by these missionary agencies in organizing and supporting churches was really only incidental. Ninety-four Congregational churches were reported in existence by 1800—75 having been organized in the 20 years after 1780, the year when the General Assembly of Vermont passed an act empowering towns to levy taxes for building and repairing meeting houses and supporting their ministers, who naturally had to be of the "Standing Order"—meaning Congregational.

Likewise, the grants given by Gov. Wentworth (and later by the governors of Vermont) for the settlement of towns were a contributing incentive for the building and organizing of churches.

The Wentworth grants usually contained lots in each township for glebes, for the first settled minister, for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, and for schools. The first and third of these were English rights and were subject to continuing legislation, the legislature granting them to all denominations and for school purposes. To combat this the "SPGFP" in 1816 appointed Bishop Griswold of Rhode Island and two Vermont laymen to represent them, bringing suit in 1823 against the town of New Haven for their lands and carrying the case to the Supreme Court with Daniel Webster appearing for Vermont. The Court ruled that the Revolutionary War had not invalidated the English rights; Vermont and Daniel Webster lost their case, and the Episcopal Church, to which the Society had conveyed its claims, later secured the lands from other towns and secured substantial income from them.

The grants made by Gov. Chittenden and other governors of

Vermont in the northern part of the state were for churches having no English origin. So (we must conclude) it was these grants which were a more direct cause of church beginnings up to 1800 than were the missionary activities of out-of-state clergymen. In Bennington and Rutland counties on the West side of the state and on the East side in Windham County and the Connecticut valley up as far as Newbury the records show no evidence of missionary visitation. It is also evident that in the settlement of the Champlain valley and the North the itinerant missions from Connecticut and Massachusetts were of short duration and sporadic.

In 1804 we have the beginning of missionary activity originating in the state when a committee of ministers acting for the Consociations of the Western Districts of Vermont issued a circular letter to the churches asking for funds for the expenses of missions to the new settlements. By the fall of 1805 five men had made missionary journeys which had used \$228 of the \$327 contributed. These men usually made eight week tours in missionary activity, sometimes adding a period when they preached as candidates in churches already settled. A typical report of one of these "missionaries" includes these items: 41 fields visited, 127 sermons preached, 42 public conferences attended, 2 churches formed, baptized 9 adults and 61 children, administered communion 7 times.

Two of these first five were settled pastors, one of them being the famous colored minister of West Rutland, Rev. Lemuel Haynes.

In 1807 the first state Home Missionary Society was organized; in 1818 this gave place to another organization, the Juvenile Missionary Society, which was the result of the inspired work done by Levi Parsons, who later died in Turkey after a brief missionary term there. A new name was adopted by the Society in 1826: Vermont Domestic Missionary Society, which became an auxiliary to the American, afterwards the Congregational Home Missionary Society. It was chartered in 1872 and in 1906 became organically a part of the National Society.

Certain crises or landmarks appear in the background of the formal history. In 1819, for example, Rev. Daniel Haskell, Burlington pastor, pointed out at a Randolph meeting the low state of religion in the state, showing that of the 243 towns in the state (Census of 1810) 97 had "no stated preacher of the gospel, of any religious denomination; and 154 towns are without a Congregational or Presbyterian Minister." His sermon was published in full and the need for a more adequate and constructive program realized.

The methods used in carrying out a constructive program have

been various, showing enlightened adaptation to changing conditions. The pioneer and aggressive itinerant method was succeeded gradually by what may be called the sustentation method which involves aid granted to a church organization or body of Christians which has demonstrated itself capable of partially supporting a year-round program. This second method (which still operates) was strengthened in the early fifties when the low state of the churches because of emigration to the West was realized. (The Grafton Sunday School lost 45 members ca. 1840). An increased budget for this work was made possible by the proffered gifts of Thaddeus Fairbanks of St. Johnsbury. Direction of the program was put in the capable hands of Rev. Henry Fairbanks, son of Thaddeus, who started the employment of theological students during their vacations in the then four-term school year. This system has been continued, with some necessary variations, to our time, and the summer of 1955 saw thirteen students from theological seminaries in summer parishes in the state.

Another special need was pointed out—again at a Randolph meeting—by Rev. Henry Fairbanks, who had secured at his own expense an accurate census of the state of religion in 44 representative towns of 5 different counties. From these figures and population statistics he had made a chart and drawn a map with which he came before the conference to appeal for the more than half of the state's population who never attended a religious service of any sort, many of whom lived in the "gores" lying between the parishes. The answer to this appeal was the employment by the Society of young women from the Moody schools in Northfield and Chicago who were sent out two by two into these unchurched regions, taking their simple gospel message from house to house, holding cottage and schoolhouse meetings and sometimes opening up an abandoned meeting-house. A modification of this method is seen today in the 1955 summer projects carried out under Conference auspices in remote areas of the state by six young women who again, two by two, try to revive or kindle anew a religious interest.

As people continued to come into Vermont in the early decades of the 19th century (the population grew from 154,000 in 1800 to 280,000 in 1830) Congregational churches increased. From 1801 to 1830, 104 new names of churches appear, besides some new re-organizations.

Other denominations—Baptists, Methodists, and Free Baptists—had come in and their churches were increasing during the same period.

Even in these early days some of the towns soon were overchurched

through denominational rivalry so that some churches were given up; some churches, too, had internal dissensions resulting in "splits." There was also a shifting of population very early and "abandoned farms" were appearing. For example: from 1810 to 1820, 63 towns lost population; from 1820-1830, 44 towns lost population. This had its effect on the churches.

In the story of these early days as today church finances were important. Perhaps first to note is that both in Massachusetts and Connecticut whence most early Vermonters came, the Congregational churches formed the "Standing Order," and the building of houses of worship as well as the maintenance of ministers was subject to general taxation. It was against this—among other things—that the Separatists protested; naturally the other denominations protested also. In 1780 the Vermont General Assembly passed an act giving towns the right to levy land taxes for building or repairing its meeting-house or supporting its ministers, provided that no person be compelled to contribute, "contrary to the dictates of his conscience." In 1783 this was made more explicit by declaring that all persons should "be considered of opinion with the major part of the inhabitants within such town or parish," and so be liable for taxation to support the church favored by the majority, unless a certificate should be produced signed by an officer of some other church, to the effect that the person in question was a supporter of that church. The following is a copy of such a certificate:

Certificate:

*To all people to whom these presents come,  
Greeting:*

*Know ye that I, Joseph Crawford, am minister of the sect  
of Christians called Methodists, in the town of Bradford,  
and do certify that Wm. Peckett is of the same sect as the  
subscriber in Bradford, in the County of Orange and State  
of Vermont, May 29th, 1799.*

*Attest, Joseph Crawford*

*Received on record June 1st, 1799*

*Attest, Andrew B. Peter,  
Town Clerk*

In 1801 the law was relaxed so that any voter could certify for himself that he did not "agree in religious opinion with a majority

of the inhabitants of the town" and thus free himself of the legal obligations. In 1807 all laws uniting church and state were repealed, and the support of public worship in every form was made purely voluntary.

The year 1830 is chosen by J. M. Comstock as a turning point or a new beginning for Congregational churches. Immigration had practically ceased and had changed to emigration to the West. From 1830 till quite recent times more churches became extinct than were newly started. The new ones were usually those in newer villages begun or fostered by the railroads—or reorganized by the shifting of population.

Many causes militated against growth of the state and of churches. Young life was being drained from farming towns; powerful internal and divisive movements almost fatal to Church life, such as the anti-Masonic fever, Millerism, anti-slavery agitation (divisive at first, later unifying) and new measures in evangelism all had their effects.

About the beginning of the 20th century, there was a resumption of activity in the organization of new churches until the total number rose to 214 (in 1914). Some of these new ones were short-lived and others of longer life disappeared until in 1942 the total number was 198. The current number is 194 and membership 27,923—about 4000 more than 1941.

In recent years, of course, the smaller and agricultural towns have been losing population; larger and industrial towns have gained. This makes understandable the decreasing numbers and smaller financial support of many of the smaller churches. The moving into the state of many French Canadian Catholics has had its effect likewise.

One way in which these new conditions have been met is by uniting forces with other similarly handicapped denominations. The first of these unions resulted in a federated church in Williston in 1899—Methodists and Congregationalists. Many others have followed until a few years ago Vermont led the nation in percentage of united and federated churches. The general plan is a union for worship and service of the churches in question with each keeping its own organization and membership. In rarer cases the churches have merged into one organization with no denominational connection. Some churches have been "yoked" for pastoral services with churches of their own or other denomination in a nearby community. This has all tended to diminish sectarian rivalry and misunderstanding. The national union of Congregational and Christian Churches in 1931 was generally supported by Vermont churches as is the pending merger between

the Congregational Christian and the Evangelical and Reformed Churches.

Perhaps the most progressive sort of union in rural towns is the so-called "larger parish" where several churches unite and call upon the services of a staff of ministers, one usually as worship leader, one as religious education director. An example of the larger parish plan in the state is "The Lake Region Parish" organized in 1944 by the Barton Congregational Church, the Barton Methodist Church, the Glover Community Church (combining former Congregational, Methodist and Universalist Societies), the West Glover Congregational Church, and the Westmore Congregational Church. This union might be viewed as the culmination of an earlier series of cooperative undertakings: the forming of the Glover Community Church by three denominations, sharing of pastors, yoking and union of churches. These were all built into the structure of a more complete working together when in 1944 the persistence and patience of a courageous and determined few were rewarded by these lesser unions becoming the fuller union of the Larger Parish.

Through these eleven years of its existence the Larger Parish has had a staff of two ministers, a pastor in charge and an associate responsible chiefly for religious education. This assures a continuity and quality in the regular work programs of the churches but also makes possible cooperative enterprises enriching the lives of all the churches without duplicating what is done by the churches independently. A Parish Brotherhood, larger use of students for a summer ministry, a series of mid-summer outdoor services by the shores of each of the lakes, a vigorous Vacation Church School, The Lake Region Parish Youth Fellowship, an annual Easter Dawn Service and Breakfast, weekly bulletins for all the churches and weekly Home Prayer Letters to the invalids and aged of the Parish are typical of activities made possible to the churches of this Larger Parish because they have pooled their resources.

#### *Organizations*

In the story of the Congregational churches the different steps of organization are first, the church itself, then a Ministerial Association, next a Consociation of Churches, then a Conference of Churches (the present associations), and finally the state organization now called the Vermont Congregational Conference.

In 1775, October 17, the Windham ministers formed the first ministerial association followed by a Rutland group in 1788. Fourteen

others were formed, the Lamoille being the latest in 1858. For a considerable time these groups examined and licensed candidates for the ministry, with membership in the ministerial association considered a prerequisite for good standing in the association of churches and the state Conference. These ministerial associations are now all inactive.

The second "grade" of organization also began in Windham and Rutland counties. In 1797 the Windham Consociation of Churches was formed; in 1798 the Rutland, which united churches and pastors for fellowship but with delegated authority also over member churches and ministers. The evolution here was that these groups grew into "Conferences" of churches with no authority and with fellowship their chief aim. To coincide with national Congregational procedure the name was changed from Conference to Association; responsibility for the standing and licensing of ministers was reassumed—a responsibility later largely handed over to the state Conference.

The founding of the Vermont state organization took place in the study of the President of Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire, August 27, 1795, when delegates from ministerial associations decided to organize a General Convention of Ministers in the State of Vermont, consisting of two members of each association or presbytery in the state. It is significant that no denominational name appeared for many years, for there was little or no distinction between Congregational and Presbyterian. Someone might guess that the hope was that the Grafton Presbytery, with churches on both sides of the Connecticut River might unite. The hope was vain.

In 1822 membership in the State Convention, originally only ministerial, was opened to delegates from the consociations, who might be laymen; and when the consociations became conferences, they were given memberships as were the ministerial associations. The changing names of the state organization indicates the structural changes, for in 1841 the name became General Convention of the Congregational Ministers and Churches in Vermont. In 1892 membership in the Convention was specified as of direct representatives of the member churches: an elected delegate and the pastor. In 1898 the name became The Congregational Convention of Vermont, in 1908—to conform to national custom—The Congregational Conference of Vermont. Then in 1926 when the State Conference and Missionary Society formally united, the name became The Vermont Congregational Conference and Domestic Missionary Society, Inc.

We have seen that it was in 1804 that a group of ministers acting

as a committee appointed by the Consociations of Western Vermont circularized the churches in Western Vermont asking them to contribute for missions in our new settlements; that then in 1807, at a meeting of the General Convention of Ministers held in Middlebury, it was voted to form a society known as the Vermont Missionary Society—which for eleven years did the missionary work, sending out from six to fifteen men each year, usually pastors who gave part of their time to this work. This Missionary Society, with the change of name already noted, became eventually an integral part of the Vermont Congregational Conference and Domestic Missionary Society as we know it today.

Since 1926 officially, and longer than that practically, the state work of the Congregational churches has been centralized in one office in Burlington whose executive officer has been called successively superintendent, secretary and now minister. Besides secretarial help there have been at various times financial secretaries and associate secretaries or ministers, a youth worker and a religious education worker. The present staff includes the Minister of the Conference, Rev. Max H. Webster; Associate Minister, Rev. Howard E. Paige; Religious Education Director, Miss Julouise Paulsen; Minister to Students, Rev. Edward J. Tyler and office staff of two.

The duties of the state officers are various and diversified. The term "Minister of the Conference" is significant, for there is involved a ministry to churches and pastors which supplements the executive function. Much of the administrative work involves finances, for the State Office is the clearing house for gifts of the churches to home and foreign missions; it administers the appreciable funds of the Conference for the benefit of churches being aided; it invests funds entrusted to it by the churches; it oversees the distribution of the Fairbanks Funds for Education and Relief of Ministers; it aids in the raising of special funds such as the recent addition to the national Building and Loan Fund.

In conformity with Congregational principles the final authority in these matters is delegated to elected representatives of the churches, the Conference Board of Directors and other committees, but the burden of most of the tasks belongs to the full-time officers of the Conference.

The value of this careful oversight of the churches is evidenced by the considered statement that between  $\frac{2}{3}$  and  $\frac{3}{4}$  of all the churches in the state have either been founded or aided by the Conference and Missionary Society; this includes churches now grown to strength and prominence.

The State Office maintains liaison between the national Congregational bodies and the churches, organizes the annual state meeting and aids with the various association meetings, obtains summer pastors from the seminaries and college girls for the summer projects, advises churches seeking pastors, acts—in short—as the heart and brain of the churches.

The editing of a state paper is also a Conference office duty with the present monthly periodical being called *Congregational Vermont*. The predecessor of this magazine was *The Vermont Missionary*, the successor to the *Chronicle* which first appeared weekly in 1826. The *Chronicle* had followed *The Evangelical Monitor*, a fortnightly magazine published privately in Windsor 1821-3 which followed the first of the state magazines, the *Vermont Advisor* edited 1809-15 by ministers of the state appointed by the state Convention.

The State Conference has continued since its inception in 1917 the Annual Convocation of Vermont Congregational Ministers held each year in September at which each of several distinguished religious leaders gives a series of lectures. This has proved a very valuable and stimulating feature of the church year, serving as a "refresher" course and affording an unrivalled opportunity for fellowship.

#### *Women's Organizations*

From early days the women of the churches have been the strong support of the missionary enterprise home and foreign; to the very first appeal made by the Consociations of the Western Districts of Vermont women responded. The first year of the work, 1804, saw a missionary organization founded by the women called the "Female Society," to raise funds for home missions in the state. The second such group was soon formed in Middlebury and a little later in other towns. Sometimes they were called "Female Cent Societies" with membership conditioned on paying a cent a week. When the Juvenile Societies were begun under the inspiration of Levi Parsons, some were composed of both sexes; others bore the name "Female" or "Young Ladies Juvenile Societies." By 1826 there were 72 women's societies. In 1872 the Vermont Branch of the Woman's Board of Missions was formed. In 1888, the Woman's Home Missionary Union was formed, and then later the present societies developed for aid to the home church and for both foreign and home missionary work. Sometimes there are three separate organizations in a church, sometimes a society for aiding the home church, another for all missionary endeavor, but increasingly the three objects are combined in one organization. In 1926 the two state women's missionary so-

sieties combined to form the Woman's Missionary Society of Vermont. Then in 1941, the name was changed to the Fellowship of Vermont Congregational Women in order to include all women of the churches.

It is altogether fitting that the churches of the state have recognized the importance of the work done by women and have opened the offices and the pulpits of the churches to them, even as the National Council elected a woman Moderator.

#### *Men of the Churches*

Although the men of the churches have never maintained a state organization comparable with the Fellowship of Congregational Christian Women, there are signs of an awakening. The Owl's Head fall conference for laymen, the schools for churchmanship, the training for and the increasing use of lay preachers are some of these signs.

#### *Conclusion*

Space fails to describe some of the recent developments in church programs: summer camps for young people, Pilgrim Fellowship for Sunday evening high school groups, training meetings for church school teachers, young couples' clubs, use of visual aids. These must be evaluated later.

Space fails also to deal with many dramatic moments in the story of the Congregational churches: the many disciplinary trials, the strife between denominations, the Unitarian Controversy, church founding meetings, the 1812 and Civil War days, political views of clergy and the Washington Benevolent Society, length of sermons, early funeral customs, and not least the story of the many Vermonters who went as missionaries to the West. In this year when the churches are studying the American Indian we should remember Samuel Austin Worcester who became a champion of the Cherokees, was imprisoned in Georgia, and died just before finishing his translation of the New Testament into Cherokee.

In a recent report the Conference Minister, Rev. Max H. Webster, used these words:

"We have sought a synthesis of freedom and fellowship, and our history has been an interplay of individualism and cooperation. Perhaps individualism too often has had the upper hand, though there have been magnificent instances of group action. . . .

"It is my opinion that in Vermont, also, man's work and man's

character show the impress of a God active in history from the beginning, entering it in a special way in the Incarnation, and still knocking at our door through the institution of the Christian Church. If our history as a denomination counts for anything, it is because light has broken forth from God's Word through the witness of our churches. If we have any destiny, any meaningful place in tomorrow's world, it will be because God has sent his Spirit upon us with power, so that a world of dissident voices hears and understands."

*Author's Note*

The general outline of material in this paper is dependent on John M. Comstock's *The Congregational Churches of Vermont* (1942) and Rev. Charles H. Merrill's *An Historical Address* commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Vermont Domestic Missionary Society (1918) supplemented by records of the churches and the Conference, Nathan Perkins' diary, etc. R. A. Hall.