

Conference Address: Decatur, Illinois

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CONFERENCE ADDRESS:
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DEAR BRETHREN AND SISTERS: In the kind providence of God, we are permitted to assemble in this beautiful park for our annual State Conference. Upon this occasion it may be proper to call your attention to some facts respecting the past history of our Conference. On September 27, in the year 1862, the Illinois and Wisconsin Conference was organized at Avon, Wis. Elder Wm. S. Ingraham was chosen president, and J. G. Wood secretary. That organization was composed of six churches in Illinois and eight in Wisconsin. The exact membership was not reported.

The first annual session of the Conference was held at Avon, Wis., Oct. 3, 1863. At that session the State constitution, recommended by the General Conference for State Conferences, was adopted. Elder Isaac Sanborn was elected president, T. M. Steward secretary, and Ivory Colcord treasurer. The number of Sabbath-keepers in the Conference was reported as 390.

The second annual session of the Conference was held at Clyde, Ill., Oct. 7, 1864. At that meeting the same officers were chosen as at the previous session. The membership reported was 622, or an increase of 232 during the year. It was at this Conference that Elder J. G. Matteson first received a license to preach the third angel's message.

The third session of the Conference was not held until after a lapse of twenty-one months, or on June 22, 1866. This Conference was held at Johnstown Center, Wis. At this meeting the State Constitution was so changed as to provide for an Executive Committee of three. Isaac Sanborn was chosen president, and Elders Ingraham and Andrews as the other members of the Executive Committee.

The fourth session of the Conference was held at Clyde, Ill., May 30, 1867. The officers elected were, Elder R. F. Andrews for president, Elder I. Sanborn, and H. W. Blanchard. It was my privilege to be present at the sessions of 1866 and 1867.

The fifth session was held June 4, 1868, at Little Prairie, Wis. The same officers were re-elected. In the fall of that year, September

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23-28, the first Seventh-day Adventist camp-meeting in the Conference was held at Clyde, Ill.

The sixth session of the Conference was held in connection with the camp-meeting at Clinton Junction, Wis., Sept. 23, 1869. At this meeting it was reported that the tithes paid into the treasury the previous year amounted to \$3,314. The officers elected for the year were, C. W. Olds, president; G. W. Colcord, secretary; and for the Executive Committee, C. W. Olds, N. M. Jordan, and O. A. Olsen.

In the year 1870, June 17, at the Conference held at Nora, Ill., the Illinois and Wisconsin Conference was divided into two Conferences. Elder R. F. Andrews was chosen as president of the Illinois Conference, G. W. Colcord as secretary, and J. H. Bennett and Seth Newton as the other members of the Executive Committee.

In 1871, June 8-12, the first annual session of the Illinois Conference was held at Sheridan. At this time five more churches were voted into the Conference, making a total of twelve churches, with a membership of 246, who paid a tithe of \$1,560.17. The same officers were re-elected.

In 1872, May 31, to June 3, the second annual session of the Illinois Conference was held in connection with the camp-meeting, at Aledo. One church was voted in. The tithes were reported as amounting to \$1,653.86. Elder R. F. Andrews was again elected as president, B. F. Merritt as secretary, and J. R. Whitham and Seth Newton as the other two members of the Executive Committee.

The third session was held in Pontiac, Sept. 25-29, 1873. The membership was reported as 285, with \$1,603.86 of tithe. The officers of the previous year were re-elected.

The fourth annual session was held June 12, 1874, at Sheridan. At this session three churches were received into the Conference, and the same officers were re-elected, with the exception of the secretary, whose office was given to Adam Rudd.

The fifth session was also held at Sheridan, in connection with the camp-meeting, June 10-15, 1875. Four churches were received at this session. G. W. Colcord was elected president. The other two members of the Executive Committee were Elder R. F. Andrews and C. H. Bliss. The tithe paid was \$1,368.02.

The Conference and camp-meeting for the year 1876 were held at Waldron, Kankakee county. Elder Colcord was re-elected president.

August 23, 1877, the seventh annual session of the Conference was held at Clinton. One church was voted into the Conference. This

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raised the membership to 500. The tithe was reported as amounting to \$2,170.55. Elder Colcord was still retained as president.

In 1878 the Conference was held at Bloomington, on August 28. At the Conference five churches were received. Tithes for the year were reported as \$2,470.86. Elder Colcord was still retained as president. The other members of the Executive Committee were Elder R. F. Andrews and Alfred Foreman. During this session of the Conference, the State Sabbath-school Association was

organized, with Elder R. F. Andrews as president, and Sister L. S. Campbell as secretary.

In 1879, from August 2, to September 2, the ninth annual session of the Conference was held in Bloomington. Four more churches were voted into the Conference. The membership was reported as 676, and the tithe paid for the year was \$3,084.28. Elder R. F. Andrews was again elected president.

In the year 1880, Sept. 1-6, the Conference was held at Decatur, and Elder R. F. Andrews was re-elected as president. Four more churches were received at this Conference, making forty in all, with a membership of 760, who paid, for the year, a tithe of \$3,116.76. The Sabbath-schools in the State numbered 924 members, the increase for the year being 125 members.

In 1881, August 31 to September 6, the Conference was again held at Bloomington. The tithes reported amounted to \$5,001.67.

Sept. 5-12, 1882, the Conference was held at Watseka. Tithe reported, \$5,070.80. Sept. 18-25, 1883, the Conference was again held at Sheridan. The tithe was reported as being \$4,154.50. For the years 1881-83, Elder Andrews served as president. The tithes were not reported in 1883.

On Aug. 20, 1884, the thirteenth annual session of the Conference was held at Peoria. At this meeting pledges were taken for the \$10,000 fund which was to be applied as follows: \$2,500 to the State Tract and Missionary Society, \$2,500 to city missions, \$2,500 to the educational fund, \$1,500 to the Battle Creek College, and \$1,000 to foreign missions. Elder Andrews was retained as president of the Conference, although some changes were made among other officers. It was reported at this Conference that the tithe had dropped down to \$3,204.31.

The fourteenth session of the Conference was held at Aurora, from Sept. 9-15, 1885. Elder R. M. Kilgore was elected president, Geo. B. Starr secretary. The other members of the Executive Committee were J. F. Ballenger and A. O. Tait. Four churches were

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voted in at the time of this Conference, and the tithe was reported as \$4,393.27.

The fifteenth session of the Conference convened at Clinton, September 8-14. The officers of the preceding year were re-elected. The membership of the Conference was reported as 784, whose tithes amounted to \$5,177.32.

The sixteenth session was held at Springfield, from Aug. 23-30, 1887. Three churches were received into the Conference. The same president was retained. The tithes were not reported. It was during this year that the work of erecting the mission houses in Chicago, Springfield, and Bloomington, was entered upon.

The seventeenth session was also held in Springfield, during Sept. 4-11, 1888. Elder Kilgore was re-elected president. At this session the number of the Executive Committee was increased from three to five. The four members elected to serve with Elder Kilgore were, A. O. Tait, brethren Johnson, Craw, and A. Hobbs. The tithes and membership were not reported.

The eighteenth annual session was held at Bloomington, from Sept. 3-10, 1889. The report of membership and tithes was not given.

The nineteenth session of the Conference was also held in Bloomington, from Sept. 2-9, 1890. The membership of the Conference was not reported. The tithes

paid the previous year amounted to about \$8,500. The officers elected at this Conference were: President, R. M. Kilgore; Vice-President, A. O. Tait; Secretary, E. J. Hobbs; Treasurer, J. Craig. Executive Committee: R. M. Kilgore, A. O. Tait, Geo. B. Starr, G. H. Baber, and R. Vickery.

At the time of this session, the organization of the Illinois Conference Association was completed, by the adoption of a Constitution and By-Laws. The Board of Managers of the Association elected was: President, R. M. Kilgore; Vice-President, A. O. Tait; Secretary, G. H. Baber; Treasurer, J. M. Craig; Auditor, J. L. Vandermark; Councilmen, R. Vickery and A. Craw. By these persons the affairs of the Association were managed until the time of the General Conference session, March, 1891, when it was proposed that, as Elder Kilgore's time was occupied principally in the Southern Field (Dist. No. 2), he be released from the presidency of the Illinois Conference, and that Elder J. N. Loughborough be appointed as president of the Conference for the remainder of the term of office.

Elder A. O. Tait was called to the secretaryship of the National Religious Liberty Association, which left vacant the office of vice-president

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of the Conference and the presidency of the Tract and Missionary Society. Elder O. J. Mason, from Ohio, was removed to Illinois, taking the place of Elder Tait as vice-president of the Conference, and Elder Loughborough was appointed president of the Illinois Tract and Missionary Society.

At the close of the General Conference, Brother J. M. Craig resigned his position as treasurer of the Conference, and A. W. Rothwell was appointed to fill the vacancy, and also to fill the office of secretary of the Tract Society, made vacant by the removal of Elder Tait from the State. Thus the affairs of the Conference and the State Tract and Missionary Society have been managed during the summer and up to this date.

Not having been privileged to labor in the State since the State Conference was organized, and most of the previous managing officers being out of the State, it has been with some difficulty that I have become acquainted with the situation in the different organizations.

It was my desire, in coming to Illinois, to do what I could for the cause in all parts of the field; but the general meetings in this State, and the superintendence of the work in other parts of General Conference Dist. No. 3, have made it impossible for me to meet personally with all the companies in the State. I have, however, tried to provide help so that all, both organized and unorganized companies, and scattered believers, should have some attention and labor. I think all will bear witness that they have been visited.

On the part of the brethren and sisters, I have been greatly cheered as I have seen their willingness to respond to the calls made for help in the work, at a time when we were short for tithing money with which to push on the Conference work. We have also had tangible responses in the furnishing of fruit for the Central Bible School. What I have seen of your liberality, and what I have learned of your financial help in the past, give me great confidence as to your willingness to second judicious efforts that may still be made to build up the work.

It may be proper that I make some statements respecting our financial standing in the State. I find that, in order to erect the mission buildings of Chicago, Springfield, and Bloomington, it became necessary to incur quite heavy debts. It was supposed that provision would be made for meeting the interest on these sums, and that, year by year, something might be paid on the principal. Thus it was thought unnecessary to wait until all the means needed could be

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donated before erecting the buildings, and that a better plan would be to borrow the money, and enter at once upon the labor of saving souls at these important points.

For the exact figures in this enterprise, we find that the cost of the lots in Chicago was \$8,650, expenses of transfer of real estate, cost of building, machinery, furniture, etc., \$19,215.62, making a total of \$27,865.62. The cost of lots in Springfield was \$3,000; cost of building and fixtures, \$5,142.51, making a total of \$8,142.51. The cost of lots in Bloomington was also \$3,000; cost of buildings and improvements up to July 1, 1890, \$2,991.29, making a total cost of \$5,981.29, or a grand total of the first cost of the mission property in the three places, of \$41,989.42.

There was donated to the Chicago Building Fund, from the sale of the Princeville church building, \$500; individual donations, \$7,117.18, making a total of \$7,617.18, leaving a debt on the Chicago building of \$20,248.44. Of this there was without interest the sum of \$3,000, leaving the sum of \$17,248.44, bearing interest at the rates of 6 and 7 per cent.

Of the \$8,142.51 invested in the Springfield property, there was donated the sum of \$75.25, leaving a debt on that mission of \$8,067.26, bearing interest at the rates of 5 and 7 per cent.

On the Bloomington property there was received in rent and donations, up to July 1, 1890, the sum of \$93.29, leaving an interest-bearing debt of \$5,888, drawing 5 and 7 per cent interest. Thus you will see that the interest-bearing debt of the three institutions, at the time of their completion, was the sum of \$31,203.70.

Up to May 1, 1891, there was paid out in interest on the Chicago property, \$2,346.68, and received in rents and donations to the interest fund, the sum of \$1,005.74, leaving accrued interest on that property to the amount of \$1,340.90.

Up to May 1, 1891, there was paid out in interest on the Springfield property the sum of \$451.84, and received in rents and donations to Springfield interest fund the sum of \$250.75, leaving at that date a balance of accrued interest at Springfield of \$201.09.

Up to May 1, 1891, there was paid out as interest on the Bloomington property the sum of \$258.04, and received in house rent and pledges, the sum of \$98.97, leaving a balance of accrued interest on that building of \$159.07, or a total on the three buildings of \$1,701.06. To meet this debt, money has been borrowed at 6 and 7 per cent. This added to the original debt made a total, at the above-mentioned date, of \$32,904.76. Adding to this the sum paid for needful repairs

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on the buildings, and interest on money borrowed from the tract society without interest, we have at the present date a debt on the institutions of \$36,224.

I have not presented this financial situation before you as any cause of discouragement, or to suggest the idea that we are involved in an inextricable dilemma. If our people know the exact situation, they will better understand the necessity for doing, and will be more ready to enter into our plans for relieving the difficulties. The first necessity in saving a ship is to stop the leaks; so in this case provision should be made that interest shall not accumulate, but be promptly met and gradually reduced. Some in the State have made pledges to an interest fund. These, in many instances, seem to be indefinite. These pledges should be renewed. Aside from rents received for office rooms and church privileges in the three institutions, there should be provision made for at least \$1,000 per year as a sinking fund, with which to meet the \$1,900 yearly interest, until it can be reduced by payments on the principal.

There is one mortgage on the Chicago property of \$2,000 at 7 per cent, which falls due in June next. From some source, money must be obtained to lift that mortgage. I trust all will prayerfully weigh these matters, and that good counsel may prevail at this time.

When we look at the good that has been accomplished by the Bible workers in connection with these missions, we cannot but rejoice and praise God that it has been our privilege to have such institutions in Illinois.

I gather from the reports of our Bible workers in this State, for the past year, that not less than thirty persons have fully accepted the truth, and come into the ranks by this means, and that the interest in the work was never greater than at the present time. Not all of the Bible readers have reported on this point. Probably a report from all our workers would show more than thirty brought to the truth by the Bible work. Let us also bear in mind that in addition to this, many who are now doing efficient work in other States, have received their training for the work in the Chicago Central Bible School.

There is one feature of our work in this State which is especially encouraging. I refer to the canvassing work. At the time of our last annual meeting, there were twenty-five canvassers in the field, who had sold, the previous year, \$20,175.46 worth of books, from the sale of which the tract society received a gross profit of about \$2,000, or, deducting the expense of company leaders, a net profit of about

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\$1,700. The report made at this time shows an average of fifty canvassers in the field, who have sold \$35,000 worth of books, on which the gross profit is \$3,500, or a net profit of nearly \$3,000. For this we are grateful to God, that by this means the precious truths contained in the books have been introduced into the homes of so many families. We are also thankful that by this means the tract society has been enabled to favor the Conference Association and Central Bible School with the loan of money without interest. This means should be returned as soon as possible to the society, that it may be enabled to push on unimpeded in its laudable work.

We are glad to see an increase in our force of canvassers who are to go out from this meeting. The Lord grant his signal blessing upon the canvassers, is our prayer.

In the Illinois field we find there are openings for labor and calls for help in every direction. God is moving upon hearts. Souls are accepting the truth, not only from the efforts of ministers and Bible workers, but from reading the books obtained from the canvassers. We thank God for the privilege of meeting so many upon this ground who have accepted the truth since the last annual camp-meeting.

With the increase of believers and workers in the State, we are glad to see so earnest a coming-up on the part of our people in their efforts to sustain the workers. There seems to be a marked increase over last year in tithes in this Conference. The tithe for the Conference year ending in 1891 was about \$8,500. The tithe paid for the past year up to July 1, 1891 (present quarter not yet paid), was \$10,248.05. To God be the praise that our people are arousing to render to the Lord a faithful tithe!

Why shall we not expect from the Lord a bountiful out-pouring of his Spirit? Has he not said, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it"? So may it be, and fruit will abound to God's glory in every branch of his precious cause in the Illinois Conference.

J. N. LOUGHBOROUGH.

NOTE - By reports gathered since the Conference, we learn that there are in Illinois in the twenty-two organized churches, 840 members; in the unorganized companies and counting the scattered ones, 150 members, or a total of about 990 Sabbath-keepers in Illinois.

