

## Beginnings of the Episcopal church in Minnesota, and the early missions of Park Place, St. Paul /

### **BEGINNINGS OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN MINNESOTA, AND THE EARLY MISSIONS OF PARK PLACE, ST. PAUL.\* BY BISHOP M. N. GILBERT.**

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Three blocks away from where we are now sitting, on the first rise of the bluff, is situated Park Place, a square or more in extent, with a pleasant little park in the center. Summit avenue bounds it on the north, St. Peter street on the east, College avenue on the south, and Rice street on the west.

Entering this park from St. Peter street, you will discover on the south side, in the midst of a row of neat cottages, a medium-sized frame building, rather antique in its style of architecture, with its gable end toward the street, like the old Albany houses in Knickerbocker days. This modest structure, now neglected and uninviting, has a history, and that history is connected with early days of St. Paul. This little house was builded by the founders of the Episcopal Church in Minnesota, and was occupied by the first missionaries of that church for some years. This was in 1850, when St. Paul was a small village of one thousand inhabitants, confined to the plateaus below the site of Park Place, and grouped about the upper landing, at the foot of what is now Chestnut street. Park Place then was in a very real way the edge of the wilderness, which, almost unbroken, extended northward into the frozen land of the unknown.

It may be of interest to many, and will serve the intent of this paper, if I briefly sketch the history connected with the 182 purchase and occupancy of this tract of land at that early day. It is so closely linked with the history of St. Paul and Minnesota, that it should

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not be overlooked by the one who, in the future, may write the history of this city and commonwealth.

This early history is closely linked with the life and experiences of a very remarkable man, the Rev. James Lloyd Breck. Let us take a condensed retrospect of his career. It has within it a combination of remarkable qualities, illustrative of the character of the men who, in all ages, have been the pioneers of institutional life, both in the affairs of Church and State. Man is always the central fact around which, and from which, springs the crystallization of all organism in the growth and development of the race. In studying man we study the meaning and motive of every organism, and become cognizant of the substantial purpose which underlies all. The more mature development of the institution may, and doubtless will, depart widely from the form involved in the personality of its founder, but the energizing force generated by that founder is never wholly exhausted. This law and principle are wonderfully illustrated in the work of this early missionary and founder of ecclesiastical institutions, James Lloyd Breck. He was born in Philadelphia in 1818, graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1838, and from the General Theological Seminary of the Episcopal Church in New York in 1841.

It was during his seminary course that the project of going into the wilderness of Wisconsin, and founding there an associate mission, almost monastic in its character, first entered his mind and crystallized into a purpose. The first missionary bishop of the Northwest, Jackson Kemper, visited the seminary and in glowing language, and with high enthusiasm, told the story of the new land and its vast possibilities for devoted missionary endeavor. His words sank deep into the impressionable heart of the young theological student, and he, unhesitatingly, offered himself to Bishop Kemper for this work. Two others, classmates, Hobart and Adams, threw in 183 their lot with him. On their graduation and ordination in the early summer of 1841 they started on the then long and fatiguing journey to the Northwest. Wisconsin then was almost a wilderness, but the tide of immigration was swelling and flowing over its prairies and into its forests. Breck, and his co-laborers, planted their standard on the outward edge of this outflow by a cluster of

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beautiful lakes in the very heart of the virgin forest, and began their singularly courageous and self-denying work, which lives to-day in the flourishing Theological Seminary of Nashotah.

Their life was one of extreme simplicity, and their missionary labors most primitive in their character. For their daily bread they relied upon the continued interest of eastern friends; their lives were full of privation, but the record, as read in their letters, was one of enthusiastic, unconquerable zeal. The institution grew; it was the Iona of the west. Missionaries trained therein went forth with the advancing population, preaching the gospel and founding churches.

Years went on; this school of the prophets became a permanent fact. Breck grew impatient of this circumscribed life. His soul longed for the freedom of a new missionary field, where the seed could again be sown in virgin soil. Others now could carry forward the work he had founded and nurtured. His eyes turned longingly toward the west, to the border of the upper Mississippi, to the Territory of Minnesota, just organized. It was practically an unknown land. The white man had founded a few small settlements upon its extreme eastern border, but its vast interior was the home of the Ojibway and the Sioux. The voice of God called him to go in and possess this land for the gospel and his church. Like St. Paul, he was “not disobedient unto the heavenly vision,” but, hearing, obeyed.

With two kindred spirits, Timothy Wilcoxson and John A. Merrick, he left the comfortable environs of Nashotah and started westward. They reached the Mississippi, where now stands the thriving city of La Crosse. The Rev. Mr. Wilcoxson 184 son in a letter tells the story of their experiences there in the following words:

We spent the fourth Sunday after Trinity, June 23d, 1850, at Prairie La Crosse—then a hamlet of fifteen or twenty houses. We held service and celebrated the Holy Communion in the morning, on a bluff about two miles back of the landing. In the afternoon we held a service by the river side at the house of a German named Levy. The next morning we

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paddled a canoe over the river. some distance above La Crosse, and there kept the Feast of St. John the Baptist. And there, for the first time, the Associate Mission for Minnesota stood on the soil of Minnesota. A rustic cross was reared beneath a large and spreading elm tree; and the stone on which the elements of the Holy Sacrament were consecrated was the same thin slab of limestone that the day before served as an altar on Altar Rock, back of La Crosse landing.

Such a scene carries us in imagination back to those days of primitive Christianity when the groves were God's temples and the blue sky the canopy of their altar. The picturesque simplicity of the lives of these men was one of their distinguishing and unique characteristics.

Leaving La Crosse, they came on northward to St. Paul, then a struggling village at the head of navigation, where they were to found their permanent center of missionary work. This was forty-eight years ago. The population of St. Paul was, even then, most cosmopolitan in its make-up. This was the distributing point for the whole interior and the point from which the far away settler in Rupert's Land obtained his supplies and carried them back over the hundreds of miles of prairie in his primitive cart to his home on the border of the Red river of the North. A few years afterward, the English traveller, Laurence Oliphant, described in vivid, if not in flattering terms, the condition of life then existing in St. Paul. He wrote:

As the Territory is only six years old, all here are strangers and adventurers; and the most confused Babel of languages greets our ears as we stroll along. Of course, the Anglo-Saxon language, in its varied modifications of Yankee, English, Scotch, and Irish, prevails; 185 but there is plenty of good French, and the voyageur *patois*, Chippewa or Sioux, German, Dutch, and Norwegian. The possessors of these divers tongues are, however, all very industrious and prosperous, and happy in the anticipation of fortune-making. Joining ourselves to some of these, we may enter with them a bowling-saloon, as these afford great opportunities for observing the manners and customs of the inhabitants.

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The roughest characters from all parts of the West, between the Mississippi and the Pacific, collect here, and from morning till night, shouts of hoarse laughter, extraordinary and complicated imprecations, the shrill eries of the boy markers calling the game, and the booming of the heavy bowls, are strangely intermingled, and you come out stunned with noise and half blinded with tobacco smoke. Some of these men were settlers from Pembina and the Red River settlements. They come down to Traverse des Sioux with a long caravan of carts, horses, and oxen. These they leave here, and take steamer to St. Paul for a hundred miles down the St. Peter, and lay in their luxuries of civilization, and those necessaries of life which are unprocurable in their remote settlement. They were just starting for their return journey when we were at St. Paul, and did not expect to arrive at Pembina for a month or six weeks. \* \* \* \* The country through which they pass abounds in buffalo, but it is also infested with hostile Sioux, who have lately been particularly earnest in their quest for white scalps, and they are consequently compelled to raise a breastwork for protection at the camping-ground every night. In winter, the journey is made with dog teams and snow-shoes. The population upon the Red river is made up of half-breeds, buffalo hunters, and Scotch farmers, besides a few Indian traders.

Into this strange and composite life and humanity, these three men, bearing the message of peace and good will, entered. Surely there was need for their message, and abundant opportunity at their very doors for the preaching of righteousness, and the gospel of an universal brotherhood in Jesus Christ.

Changes were going rapidly forward in this new land. A commonwealth was coming to the birth. The transition from the wilderness to the cultivated farm and tidy home was taking place.

Fredrika Bremer, who, as the guest of Governor Ramsey in 1850, spent some time in St. Paul, thus graphically described the steps in this transition:

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The trees fall before the axe, a little log house is erected on the skirts of the forest and banks of the river; a woman stands in the door with a little chubby child in her arms. The husband has dug up the earth around the house, and planted maize; beyond, graze a couple of fat cows, and some sheep in the free, unenclosed meadowland. On the shelf is a Bible, a hymn book, and some other religious book. A little further off stands a somewhat larger log house, where a dozen or two of children—the half wild offspring of the wilderness—are assembled. This is the school. The room is poor, without furniture, but the walls are covered with maps of all parts of the globe. Anon other houses spring up, some of framed timber, some of stone; they become more and more ornamental; they surround themselves with fruit trees and flowers. You see a chapel of wood arising at the same time with the wooden houses; but when the stone house comes, then comes the stone church and the State House. The fields around are covered with harvests; flocks and herds increase. Motherly women institute Sunday Schools in the church, and assemble the little children to instruct them in Christianity, and establish an asylum for orphaned little ones.

The scene depicted herein is a true photograph of the evolving condition of a new State, and has been reproduced again and again in all our great, new West. It is the counterbalancing picture to that presented by the English traveller.

Breck and his companions, upon their arrival, pitched a Sibley tent on the bluff near the corner of what is now Summit avenue and St. Peter street, in which they lived until the completion of a small house, twelve by sixteen feet in size. The domestic duties of this little home were performed by some one or more of the party in turn.

A youth, the present Rev. T. J. Holcombe, of New York, who was the original student of the Diocesan Theological Seminary, in a series of interesting reminiscences recently published, gave some vivid pen pictures of the experiences of these pioneer missionaries. He wrote: "From the first all domestic duties were looked after chiefly by Mr. Wilcoxson and myself. He did the cooking, and the washing fell to my lot, as I was the only

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experienced hand. I had learned the trade at Nashotah, having there served on the washing committee, with other distinguished men, for the best part of a 187 year. Dr. Breck occasionally assisted at the wash tub, but he could not iron a collar or shirt to save him.”

On the date of their arrival in St. Paul, the Rev. E.G. Gear, who was then the chaplain at Fort Snelling, was the only clergyman of the Episcopal Church in the Territory. Prior to their arrival he had held occasional services in the town. The Roman Catholics had some time before erected a small chapel dedicated to St. Paul; and Rev. Edward D. Neill (*clarum et venerabile nomen*) had also built a Presbyterian church on the corner of Third and St. Peter streets. The Methodists the year preceding had completed a small brick chapel on Market street, which is still standing. The Baptists had organized, but had not completed a house of worship.

Dr. Breck, with a wise far-sightedness, recognized the advantages of St. Paul's location, and prophesied its future, and proceeded to secure property for his Church. By enlisting, through correspondence, the interest of a few friends in the East, he succeeded in procuring means for purchasing a site for the future Christ Church, and also real estate as a foundation for general church work in the Territory. The first purchase for this purpose was two acres of land, which now form the easterly part of Park Place Addition to St. Paul. This was conveyed by Vetal Guerin and wife to James Lloyd Breck by deed dated July 2nd, 1850, for a consideration of \$100. Very soon afterwards another purchase was made of Vetal Guerin of one acre adjoining the first purchase on the west, for a consideration of \$50. The following year the Rev. Dr. Gear purchased for \$50, and gave to the mission, one acre next west of their former purchase. About the same time Dr. Breck secured from John R. Irvine, for \$100, two acres next west of the above. These six acres were long known as the Episcopal Mission Grounds, but were later platted as Park Place Addition. Afterward Dr. Breck secured of Mr. Irvine a lot facing on Rice street and running back to the line of property already secured.

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You can see at once that there was thus secured a very valuable foundation in real estate for the Church, and this at almost a nominal price. For some time it was occupied solely by the Associate Mission; but afterward some of the ground was leased and a hotel erected thereon, known as the Park Place, which was destroyed by fire in 1874. Later the corporation which held the property donated an ample tract in its center for a public park, on condition that the city would improve, preserve, and adorn it. I am sorry to say that this condition has not been satisfactorily fulfilled. In 1880 heavy assessments, required by extensive street improvements, made it necessary to dispose of a portion of this land. With the money accruing from these sales a certain number of the remaining lots were improved, by the erection of dwelling houses.

The income from this property is used for the support of the episcopate in the Diocese of Minnesota. In 1890 a net income of over \$4,000 per year was realized; but the falling of rentals of late years has reduced this amount more than one-half. The property, as the most casual observer can see, is well and pleasantly located, and will, in time, be of great value to the Episcopal Church in the state.

It is a fine illustration of the wisdom of securing property in the earliest days of a city or village. This property, which in 1850 cost not more than \$500, is now valued at \$75,000. It has always been wisely administered by a board called the Minnesota Church Foundation, which has numbered among its members such men as Bishop Whipple, General Sibley, Col. D. A. Robertson, William Dawson, and Harvey Officer, of St. Paul; Judge Wilder, of Red Wing; and Judge Atwater and Henry T. Welles, of Minneapolis.

To return to our pioneer missionaries and their life under the oaks of the future Park Place. We have already given one glimpse of that primitive household; let us glance again and note some other incidents of that earlier day. Mr. Holcombe was the only student of that theological seminary, but the rules and regulations were the same as if there had been twenty. The household retired at ten o'clock and rose at five. As Mr. Holcombe humorously puts it: "The first roll call was made from the region of Dr. Breck's

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corner, and was answered readily, as we each had a cot in the same Gothic 189 roofed chamber, and so were within easy hearing distance. The second call was at six o'clock to morning prayer, a full service; then breakfast according to Wilcoxson, which, because of his inexperience, was not always a success. The faculty met once a month, or as the exigencies of the occasion might require. As a hen scratches as diligently for one chick as for ten, so one student will sometimes try a faculty more than a full contingent."

It was in these simple, yet potential duties, that those early missionaries labored. It was the day of the laying of foundations, and they were careful to lay them well; yet the demands of petty detail in no wise absorbed their attention or time to the exclusion of other and larger work. It is the mark of a truly great mind to strike a true balance between near and remote duties, to never allow the view of the hillock, at his own door, to obscure the higher and raster mountain ranges beyond.

These men had come to this new land to plant their Church, to spread the tidings of the gospel near and far, to minister to the few scattered over the prairies, and in the hamlets of the country round. Park Place and its little mission house was virtually a point of departure, as well as a haven of refuge and rest on the return. Here they planned their campaign, and here together they related their individual experiences on their missionary journeys, and took sweet counsel one with another.

The Episcopal Church in Minnesota was born in that little Gothic structure, and from thence it has spread over the whole extent of the state. Like the early missionaries of the cross, they were without "purse or scrip," and lived with extreme abstemiousness and simplicity. The Mission was unable to keep a horse, much less to support one, consequently their journeys were all made on foot. Cheerfully and uncomplainingly they traversed in this way prairies and forest lands. Missions were established within the year at the Falls of St. Anthony, Stillwater, Willow River (now Hudson), Prairie La Crosse, Cottage Grove, Marine Mills, and Sauk Rapids. With two or three exceptions, these were the only settlements in 190 the Territory. General Sibley and Henry M. Rice were living at

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Mendota, and there was a trading post at Traverse des Sioux on the Minnesota river, near the present site of St. Peter.

Picture to yourselves These men of God, going on foot through a country, virtually a wilderness, to Sauk Rapids, seventy miles to the north, and to La Crosse, one hundred and twenty miles to the south. Neither summer's heat nor winter's cold and storms dismayed them. Duty called and they obeyed. Such a life was little understood by the men of that day, who had come to this new land simply to win a worldly future. Some at first scoffed, but soon silent admiration and respect prevailed. Men might not imitate such sublime devotion and self-sacrifice for spiritual things, but they could honor the high spirit which prompted it. A simple incident illustrates the devout purpose of the head of the mission, and the consciousness of his responsibility to others.

On his way to one of the stations he came to a stream. There was no bridge. It was already late in the season, and the chill of the autumnal air warned of the danger of fording the stream barefoot. A stage-coach, by chance, was passing that way, and the driver, recognizing the clerical dress, kindly invited the traveller to ride. The passengers pressed him. To their surprise he declined the offer, and, removing his boots and stockings, he waded the stream and pursued his journey, reaching the village at the hour appointed for service. Few could understand this. But it was done as a rule of daily life, and an act of self-discipline, a relaxation of which would have tended to unfit him for his severe manner of life.

These missionaries' journeys at times (to quote the language of our diocesan historian) lay through the wildest woods and over the bare rolling prairies, where the cabin of the settler appeared only at a distance of ten or fifteen miles. The missionaries had all the experiences of a frontiersman in his foot marches, and in his coarse diet, and in the exposed sleeping apartments. The journeys on foot not infrequently extended into late hours in the night, and through parts where all was solitary, save to the wild beast, which at any moment might be roused from his lair to the great discomfiture of the traveller.

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191 The huge black bear and the wolverine were common to the forests of the St. Croix; and many a sharp and shrill cry of surprise arose from deep dell and towering tree on the approach of human footsteps. At times the way was lost, and sometimes not found before the next morning. Two missionaries passed, after this manner, a night in the open air, and were drenched before morning by the falling rain of a thunder storm. On another occasion a missionary, lost in the thickets, wandered about in fruitless search all the day, and at sunset emerged at the same place where he had entered early in the morning.

Many were the experiences of so new a country. In the spring and summer, streams broad and deep must be waded, in the winter they could be crossed on the ice; but then the snow had filled up the trail, and the missionary, as a foot traveller, was subjected to continuous plunges, up to his waist, in the snow drifts, which he must contend with for twelve miles together, after his morning service, in order to meet his night appointment. Again the settler was not always mindful as he ought to be of the comfort of Christ's minister, who came to preach the word and break the Bread of Life, and he would be left to satisfy his hunger from the scant contents of his knapsack; and one occasion is recalled wherein he was left in the log schoolhouse to pass the night alone, and it was a cold one, and the hard oaken bench was his bed. But then the welcome home to the mission house on the bluff in St. Paul made him forget that he had been neglected. Had there been no brother to ring out the merry peal from the bell, from its natural turret in the oak tree, it would have been a cheerless return. But the fellow laborer and sufferer was there, the enthusiastic young Divinity student was there; and above all it was home, and within that home was sympathy, love, and cheer.

Soon after their arrival and settlement on the Mission Grounds, they took steps to organize a parish and hold a church service in St. Paul. A meeting of citizens was called, a vestry organized, numbering, among its seven members, our own honored and respected townsman still with us, Hon. R. R. 192 Nelson. Ground was secured, and in December, 1850, Christ Church was opened for Divine service. It was a modest edifice, measuring 20 by 40 feet, with a turret and chancel, and was situated on Cedar street between Third and

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Fourth streets. Many of our older citizens will recall it. Therein were baptized their children, and from it were carried their dead. Dr. Breck became its first rector, to be succeeded in 1853 by his associate, Rev. Timothy Wilcoxson. Two prominent names of clergymen are associated with this Mother Parish of the Diocese of Minnesota, Rev. Dr. Van Ingen and Rev. Dr. McMasters. It has also had connected with its history some of the most honored and influential citizens of our city. Churches were erected also the following year in St. Anthony and in Stillwater.

The first visit of Jackson Kemper, the missionary bishop of the Northwest, whose home was at Nashotah, in Wisconsin, is thus pleasantly and vividly described by one who knew him:

At last the expected day dawned, and, ere its close, the venerable missionary bishop was welcomed by the ringing of the mission bell, hung in the boughs of an aged oak. The distant whistle of the steamer had brought nearly the whole motley population to the levee. Anon the signal is given, a moment of stillness follows, the engines are reversed, the boat rises and falls, there is a mingled confusion of clicking and splashing and hurrying, and she moves into her mooring under the burden of boxes and bales, the hawser is cast, the gang plank grates along the sand, and a man with the dress and mien betokening his commission is met by one whose tall form and priestly appearance distinguish him amid the careless jostling crowd on the shore. Greetings follow and the bishop is escorted to the mission house, where due preparation awaits his expected arrival. Wednesday is the day noted in the diary of the bishop, a July day, when the days are at their brightest, ere the foliage has been blighted by heated winds over acres of upturned loam.

There was then but a bridle path, or the wheels of an occasional cart had merely worn away the turf, where now four streams of commerce are parted. A year and upwards had passed. The well kept garden, the enclosure, the walks, and the grassy lawn, were silent witnesses of the care of busy hands. Each gable seemed expectant of some distinguished visitant. The diamond-shaped windows were transparent, as was meet for such an

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occasion. The cot in each corner of the 193 attic, the floors. the snow-white linen, the utensils in the kitchen, all bespoke the faultless housekeeping of the brothers. Morning prayer had been said, the litany hour had already passed. The day was now drawing to its close. In the little schoolroom the weary lad had yawned for the last time over the blurred sentence. Evening prayer Was said; the bishop gave his absolution to the kneeling household, after the evening bell, the Angelus of the neighborhood; and each rested.

At the "sweet hour of praise" the Holy Eucharist was consecrated; It was Thursday, the day then and long afterwards observed by an early weekly communion. Later came, at the "third hour," morning prayer; then each member of the household went forth to his duty; and as the shadows lengthened the evening prayer shut the day. Thus four days passed with their changing seasons of duty and devotion. The twentieth of July was Sunday, the ideal Sunday of George Herbert, a day full of interest to the church fold in the consecration of their first house of prayer, named after the Master, Christ Church.

This is almost an idyllic picture, but it is a faithful portraiture of the simple sanctity of the life at the Mission, and of the experiences of a pioneer bishop.

The Associate Mission continued until 1852, when it was dissolved. The work entered upon another stage. Parochial clergy began to arrive. The work of the embryo theological school was merged into that of the older institution at Nashotah, and the members of the mission entered upon other work. Rev. J. A. Merrick, for reasons of health, sought a milder climate; and Rev. Mr. Wilcoxson, as above stated, became the rector of Christ Church. Breck, the leading spirit and head, with that ever venturesome and apostolic spirit, which was his marked characteristic, turned his face northward, penetrated the wilderness two hundred miles, and began, at Gull lake, a mission among the Ojibways.

It falls not within the scope of this paper to follow in detail the careers of these courageous souls. We may note, however, that the Rev. Mr. Wilcoxson, after two years' successful charge of Christ Church, resigning his care, threw himself with ardor into the more

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congenial work of the itinerant missionary, and for years gave himself unreservedly to it, during which time he was the rector of St. Luke's Church, Hastings; until at last, broken in health by the hardship and exposures, 13 194 he retired to his native state of Connecticut, where he entered into the rest of Paradise in 1884. His widow, full of years, loved and honored by all who are privileged to know her, abides with us still, and tells, with never flagging interest to listeners, the fascinating story of these early pioneer times, when "all the world was young."

The story of the experiences of James Lloyd Breck, after leaving St. Paul, is full of romance and pathos, of devoted labors and never waning zeal, of high purpose and wise foundation laying, which have made his name the synonym of the ideal missionary to the whole American Church.

Building by the shining water of Gull lake a little chapel, which he called St. Columba, after the pioneer missionary of Scotland and northern Britain, he gathered around him a band of Christian Indians, who looked up to him as a father and a heavenly guide. Soon turning this work over to other hands, his restless energy carried him still farther into the northern wilderness, and again he became the founder and head of a mission among the Ojibways on Leech lake. Great success attended him. The little church was filled with worshippers, children of the forest gathered in his school, the seed was planted, it was taking root and promising a bountiful return, when disaster fell upon him and the mission.

Crazed by the "fire water," which in those lawless days the white man dealt out unstintingly to the Indian, the heathen Indians, of the Pillager band, drove this man of peace and of God away from their midst, destroyed the mission buildings, and frightened into silence and seclusion the few faithful natives who had declared themselves Christians. It was not until seventeen years afterward that this work was revived, when it was found that many had retained their faith, and ever prayed for the return of the messenger of the Prince of Peace.

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Undismayed, recognizing in this trying dispensation the leading of God's hands into other fields of work, he went southward to Faribault. Here he laid the foundation of the noble educational work upon which Bishop Whipple has so wisely and successfully builded.

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After nine years of remarkable work, the voice of God seemed once more to call him to again lay foundations. Leaving Faribault, he crossed the continent in 1867, and at Benicia in California, at the head of another Associate Mission, modelled after the one with which he began in St. Paul in 1850, he laid the foundations of a college and theological seminary. Here on the outermost border of his native land, by the shores of the great western sea, worn out by cares and labors, he passed into a well won rest in the bosom of God.

Last October, I stood underneath the oaks, and by the crystal lakes of sylvan Nashotah, and with bowed head, witnessed the reinterment of all that was mortal of this saint and confessor of the nineteenth century, this apostolic missionary, this true soldier of the cross, James Lloyd Breck. The story of his life is forever inwrought, not only into the history of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Northwest, but into the history of its civic life as well, for he was always the harbinger of civilization and the promoter of its truest weal.

I have thought it best to give in outline the story of this unique life as a small contribution to the history of this State, which, through this noble society, is striving to enshrine and perpetuate the lives of its heroes and founders.

I have endeavored to bring before you the beginnings of the Episcopal Church in Minnesota, with the setting in which these beginnings were framed, and with some of the figures standing out more prominently in that picture.

Up to the year 1850 the Church had never before entered a Territory so young and so completely a wilderness as was this, in the literal sense of the word. There were only three

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villages throughout an area greater than New York and all New England. The number of communicants was fifteen, of whom six belonged in St. Paul. Only a narrow strip of land, eighteen miles wide and one hundred and fifty in length, had yet been ceded by the red man to the United States. The missionaries, when they pitched their tents on the high bluffs of St. Paul, could look beyond the Mississippi river and see the aborigines in their wigwams and wild attire. The country was a fairy land, but nature could tell of dark deeds of violence, 196 and as late as 1850 Stillwater witnessed a scalp dance. There was wisdom in entering the land thus early. The Episcopal Church has reaped the benefits of this policy, in the after history of the Diocese of Minnesota. The church is relatively stronger here than in any of the other states in the whole Mississippi valley. While she has not become, by any means, the largest in numbers of any of the Christian bodies, owing largely to a population naturally unsympathetic with her methods of worship, yet I think I may confidently affirm that she has won a first place in the respect and confidence of the people of the state. The men who laid her foundations were men of large heart, catholic spirit, and far reaching vision. The intense earnestness and sincerity of these men left upon the population, who believed in reality and not in shams or show, a lasting and honorable impression. For nearly half a century she has stood for the Vincentian formula, "In essentials unity, in unessentials liberty, in all things charity."

But it is not my province to-night to laud the Episcopal Church. Its history is not concealed. It speaks for itself. It has been my simple privilege to be a "relator temporis acti." The providence of God watched over the work of its early founders, and will, I trust, still continue its beneficent mission. We are refreshed by quaffing the sparkling water in the clear fountain at the source of the stream. May I venture to hope that in a measure at least we have been so refreshed to-night.