

One Hundred Years Ago This Month (February, 1910)

Ads. Worship Services. Editorial. In Brief. Ladies Missionary Societ. End Notes

The revenue for publishing *The Adjutant* (a church publication) came from subscriptions (at 50 cents/year) and ads. In the February issue there were twenty four 2" X 3" ads that give a glimpse of the town life¹ 100 years ago: dry goods ("cloaks and suits a specialty") for sale at Cadzow's; Citizen's National Bank brags about having \$100,000 in capital and \$80,000 in profit;



<p>Ball Sells the Best Shoes for the Least Money. Oxfords 75 Cents to \$2.00</p> <p>Ball's Cash Shoe Store No. 30 Market St. Potsdam, N. Y.</p>	<p>The BUTLER STORE ∴ TWO BIG DEPARTMENTS ∴ Jewelry and Silverware China and Stationery</p> <p>YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO VISIT US 27 MARKET STREET.</p> <p>G. W. SIMSON R. L. SIMSON F. R. SIMSON P. W. LOVELL, Manager at Topper Lake, N. Y.</p>
<p>COAL COAL</p> <p>PLACE YOUR ORDER NOW AND GET THE SPRING PRICE. WE ALSO KEEP BRICK, CEMENT, FERTILIZERS AND WOOD.</p> <p>J. P. BONNEY & CO.</p>	<p>The A. Sherman Lumber Co. MANUFACTURERS CALL UP HOME PHONE 200 FOR WOOD OR LUMBER. HOME OFFICE, POTSDAM, N. Y.</p>
<p>Hardware, Plumbing, Furnaces, Tin Work.</p> <p>Maxfield & Needham DEPOSITORS POTSDAM, N. Y. BROWN & FERRIN OUT LEAKING CAN BE CARRIED WITH "PARKER PENS" THAT THIS IS THE WAY</p>	<p>DUTCHER ... SELLS ... Ceresota Flour Best Bread Flour on the Market</p>
	<p>ILLUMINATE</p> <p>MAKE THE HOME MORE ATTRACTIVE BY USING OUR ELECTRICITY ∴ ∴</p> <p>Potsdam Electric Light & Power Co.</p>

George W. Sisson at Hillview Farm offers standard bred Shetland ponies for sale; Batchelder & Sons offer the "best chamber suit in town" for \$16; there's coal at Sanford's, coffee at Benson's, hardware and appliances (including ice cream freezers) at Weed's; then there's two ads for shoes, more coal, more hardware; jewelry to china and stationery at Butler's store, lumber at another shop; "Ceresota Flour" is sold at Ducher's, and electricity for sale elsewhere; one druggist (with a sense of humor – see his ad left) sells "Parker pens, and another has "everything new, fresh and wholesome"; there's doors, windows, etc. there, and a boy's and men's wear shop here; The People's Bank (offering a "modern steel vault"); and finally a telegraph place (at J. R. Weston's) and "The Courier and Freeman" touts itself as "the home paper of Northern New York" (...and it's still going!)

The list of services in February 1910 is a telling proof of how times have changed. (Choir practice on Saturday nights? It must have been one of the Social events of the week.)

SUNDAY SERVICES:

Morning Worship with Sermon – 10:30am; Sunday School – 12:00pm (The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is administered on the first Sundays of January, March, May, July, September, and November.)

Y. P. S. C. E. Meeting – 6:45pm [Young Peoples' Society of Christian Endeavor was formed in the 1880's and "in its earlier days our Chapel was barely large enough to contain the young people who regularly attended the Sunday evening prayer meetings."²]

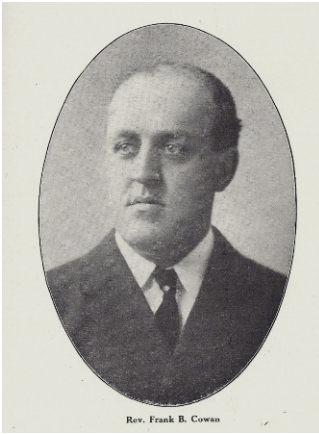
(Y. P. S. C. E. also holds a business meeting once a month)

Evening Service – 7:30pm

MIDWEEK SERVICE every Wednesday at 7:30pm

WOMAN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY meets the first Monday of each month at 8:00pm

CHOIR meets every Saturday evening at 7:30pm



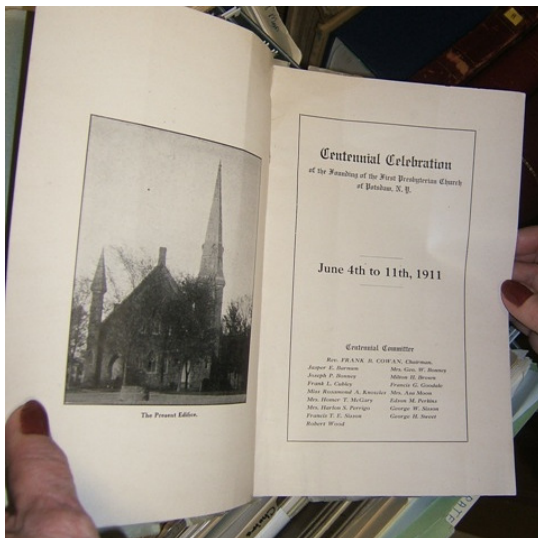
The editor of *The Adjutant* was none other than the minister himself – The Rev. Frank B. Cowan. It is not surprising, therefore, that there is an editorial by him in the February issue of the publication. What is surprising is that the editorial + his "In Brief" column runs on for 9 ½ columns of the 16 columns devoted to the purpose of the newsletter which, as stated in the first column header, is "All Church News of general interest..." Also surprising is that the content of these pages goes beyond comments on the life of the church into criticism of flaws in society, and local and state corruption.

Appropriately for the month of February, the first topic Rev. Cowan addresses is the worth "of America's two greatest men": Washington and Lincoln. In his remarks he registers his disgust with the "legislative scandals [bribe taking] at Albany" and contrasts the actions of New York legislators with the honorable actions of Presidents Washington and Lincoln. "Does it not make one hang his head in shame to think that such men could ever represent us in the enactment of laws for our state, much less be chosen by their colleagues to the position of highest honor among them." He urges his readers "to cultivate similar characteristics in our own beings [i.e. similar to those of Washington and Lincoln]."..."It is interesting that one of these came from the ranks of the rich and no one found him lacking in any of those qualities which make for manhood of the noblest type, whereas the other came from the ranks of the lowly. While a boy he had to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, and his education was gained through devotion to a great ambition. We cannot find two men in all our history more unlike in temperament and training, and yet it is impossible to find two more devoted to the highest interests of their country. He reemphasizes his point: "It is unnecessary for the rich to become poor in order to succeed, and likewise it is unnecessary for those in poverty to become rich in order to climb the ladder of fame."

Many political notes are struck throughout the section called "In Brief" which Rev. Cowan also composed. He sides with Vice President of the U. S., Mr. [Charles Warren] Fairbanks, who turned down an audience with the Pope in Rome to address members of his own (Methodist) faith. "He is a consistent member of the Methodist Church and very manfully he said that he could not break his promise to speak for the Methodist pastor – the visit to the Pope he could forego." Rev. Cowan also reports on a story that one British clergyman who was offered a position in a Presbyterian church in NYC, was asked by a "personal messenger from King Edward of England" to decline the offer because the [conservative] pastor was needed back home in England. Rev. Cowan also had a few choice words for the Supreme Court of Tennessee who struck down the union of the Presbyterian and Cumberland churches – "This is only another illustration of the cost of bigotry to the welfare and peace of the Church catholic." And, closer to home he remarked, "We would welcome a little more earnestness on the part of our village police to enforce the law [on the sale of liquor]."

Repeating his call to act justly and to be part of the "elect," Rev. Cowan quotes Henry Ward Beecher [prominent Congregationalist clergyman and social reformer, abolitionist and speaker] 'The elect are whosoever will; the non-elect are whosoever won't.' This is equaled by the definition given by a colored preacher: "Brethren, it is this way. The Lord, He is always voting for a man; and the devil, he is always voting against him. Then the man himself votes, and he breaks the tie'."

The section "In Brief" does contain church business - who has: joined the church, moved away, moved into another house in town, gotten married, recovered from illness, or died. Rev. Cowan also gives thanks to the Session for granting him a brief leave of absence, and he thanks the hymnal committee for the new hymnals which just arrived. He also makes a plea for more people to come to the Wednesday night services. The other church business mentions range from recent talks given and selling property to meetings (including an upcoming monthly meeting of the Potsdam Ministers' Association).



Rev. Cowen shares good news about a couple of students: Ernest P. Hawthorne (off to study with "a noted Austrian music master") and Dixon R. Fox (who received honors in all his subjects was elected "General Secretary of the University YMCA"). In his address given on the occasion of the centennial celebration of our church in 1911, Rev. D. A. Ferguson (Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of St. Lawrence) lauds our church for serving the college crowd and the importance of that service. "We all owe a debt to Potsdam Church in the efficient service it has rendered in its spiritual care and oversight of the students who have come from our homes into your midst. Thus your influence is felt all over our county, all over the state, all over our land, and I have no doubt, is also felt in many other parts of the world."³

The third "meaty" section of this issue of *The Adjutant* delivers news about the Ladies' Missionary Society. The voice of this section is not that of Rev. Cowen, but of someone within the Society itself. The author takes great pleasure in reporting that the year's study is on missionary "work being done within our own borders...among the Indians and Negroes who are peculiarly our own charges, and among the thousands upon thousands of foreigners who having settled here are also to be counted as belonging to us." The missionary topic for the January meeting was the "Great Southwest." The author relates some of the facts and figures given by the speakers (Mrs. Grace Pert and Mrs. Eastman) on New Mexico, Arizona, Oklahoma and Texas. One such fact: "Fully three-fourths of the men and boys and one-half of the entire population are outside of the church." Mrs. Pert reported that there is a "call for starting 20 churches in the Southwest at a cost of \$250 each." Included in the evening were two interesting letters – read aloud – from the Albuquerque mission school; and one of those letter writers is a "graduate of our Normal and her salary is being paid by this missionary district." The meeting included some music: a duet by the Misses Hurlburt ("O Love Divine") and a closing solo by Miss Hickok ("My Redeemer"). The February meeting of the Ladies' Missionary Society was on the topic "The Indians." Mrs. Cowan was to give a "map-talk" but she had to cancel. Mrs. Pert "read a very instructive paper upon the subject; "The Relation of the United States Government to the Indian." "Mrs. Geo. W. Sisson Jr. read an article showing the progress that Indians are making today..." This meeting concluded with a solo sung by Miss Clark ("Abide with Me").

End Notes:

Rev. Cowan is Treasurer of the "Benevolence Account." Number of pledges to the Ladies' Missionary Society Account: 66; Amount pledged: \$594.83

Pianists for "Church Nights" on Wednesday evenings: Miss Elizabeth Reynolds, Mrs. Fred R. Sisson, Mrs. Alonzo H. Thomas, and Miss Ruth Sisson.

SOURCES: **1)** The February 1910 issue of *The Adjutant* Vol. XIII: No.8 (a publication of the "Men's League"); **2)** *A History: First Presbyterian Church, Potsdam, New York, 1811-1961* (a booklet compiled by Jessie J. McNall in conjunction with the 150th year celebration of our church); **3)** Address of Rev. D. A. Ferguson, D. D., Hammond, N.Y., Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of St. Lawrence. *Centennial Celebration of the Founding of the First Presbyterian Church of Potsdam, NY. June 4th to 11th, 1911, p.45.*