

QUARTERLY NEWS

MARY BAKER EDDY MUSEUM

and Historic Sites



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PIONEERS IN THE WEST

"For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

Matt. 24:27

The following article is concerned with a number of pioneer workers in Christian Science whose portraits are on display at the Mary Baker Eddy Museum. Its theme is the interrelationship of many of these early pioneers as Christian Science spread westward to California. Pioneers in the Chicago and the Kansas City areas are largely omitted as they will be covered in subsequent articles in the Quarterly News.

IT WAS FROM the newly purchased Broad Street house in Lynn, Massachusetts, that the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health* by Mary Baker Glover (Eddy), was first issued in 1875. The healing truth embodied in its pages began to change the lives of hundreds of people in widely scattered cities and villages across the country. While the early teachings of Christian Science had been centered in Massachusetts up to the issuance of the textbook, after its publication its message spread rapidly westward and was already known in California in the 1880's. Reports of healing resulting from the study of this new teaching were arousing interest.

In 1882 Bradford Sherman of Chicago witnessed a decisive Christian Science healing when in Boston, and on his return



Roger Sherman's healing work was instrumental in helping to spread Christian Science in the Middle West.

began himself to practice healing. Mrs. Sherman, and their son, Roger, joined him in this healing work. At first they had only the textbook to guide them, and realizing their need of a clearer understanding they entered Mrs. Eddy's Primary class in Boston on February 25, 1884. Mr. Sherman and Roger had additional instruction in a Normal class with Mrs. Eddy in February 1885, and after further successful practice, received the degree of C.S.D. Roger chose to devote his life to healing, and his card as a practitioner was listed in *The Christian Science Journal* without a break from June 1884 to the late spring of 1920. Bradford Sherman became an authorized teacher.

One of Roger's patients in June 1885 was Mrs. Mary M. Hall of Denver, Colorado. She and her two daughters, Minnie and Nettie Hall, had stopped in Chicago on their way to New York where Mrs. Hall was to receive medical help. In Chicago a friend suggested Christian Science treatment and, through Roger Sherman's work, Mrs. Hall was healed of

total blindness and severe lameness. She and Minnie then had class instruction with Bradford Sherman before returning to Denver.

As word of Mrs. Hall's healing spread, its effects were far-reaching. A crippled scissors-grinder, who swung his body between two crutches, stopped at the door of the Hall home and became one of Minnie's first cases of healing. While he was grinding some knives, Minnie told him of her mother's experience and he asked if she would come to his house and treat him. She went to him accompanied by her mother and he was healed. Later he met Minnie on the street and told her he was out of a job as all his time was being taken up with answering questions about his healing. As a result of this experience Minnie and her mother were plunged suddenly into the practice of Christian Science. They felt the need for help and invited Bradford Sherman to come to Denver and form a class. He taught two classes of about fifty students each, the first in December 1885, and the second in February and March 1886, with day and evening sessions.



Mrs. Mary M. Hall was healed of total blindness in 1885.



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Sculpture of Mary Baker Eddy by Luella Varney (Serrao).



Mrs. Edward H. Collins arranged to have the bust of Mrs. Eddy made.

Among Bradford Sherman's students were Mr. and Mrs. Edward H. Collins who had recently returned from Europe. In Rome they had met the American sculptor, Luella Varney (Serrao), who had just been decorated by the King and Queen of Italy for her exhibit in the National Exhibition which the Collinses had gone to Rome especially to see. Because of an acute attack of an illness long suffered by Mr. Collins they were forced to return to America. On arriving in Denver they met their old friend Mrs. Hall and found that her former physical difficulties, including blindness, had been completely healed. After investigating other cases of healing among their friends, Mr. Collins asked Mrs. Hall and her daughter Minnie for help in Christian Science and he was healed. Both he and Mrs. Collins entered Bradford Sherman's second class. Mr. Collins began at once after having class to practice Christian Science healing, and a year later he and Mrs. Collins entered

Mrs. Eddy's Normal class, beginning on February 7, 1887. Early in 1888 Mrs. Collins wrote to Mrs. Eddy asking permission to have a bust of her carved in Carrara marble by Miss Luella Varney, the American sculptor whose work she and her husband so admired. She asked for two photographs to work from, but before she could send them to Rome, Mr. and Mrs. Collins met Miss Varney in Cleveland, where she was visiting her father. Afterwards she went to Boston to make a clay model of Mrs. Eddy from life. Today one of the five reproductions of the bust by Miss Varney is in the Smithsonian Institution, National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C., and another is in the Mary Baker Eddy Museum, Longyear Historical Society.

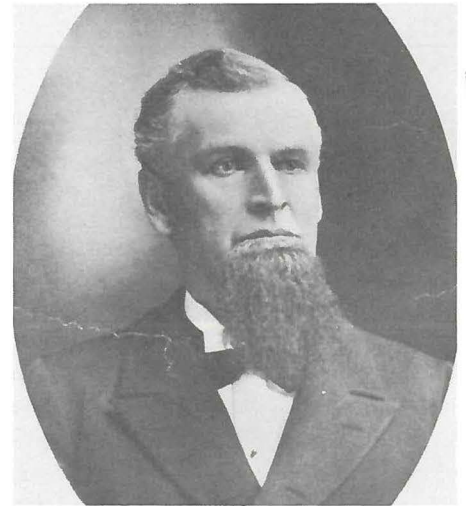
After studying with Mrs. Eddy in 1887, Mr. Collins was called to Cleveland, Ohio, to teach a class in Christian Science, the first taught in that city, and Miss Varney entered the class. At the time, teachers were at liberty to hold classes in any place to which they had been invited for that purpose. Mr. Collins subsequently taught at Ashtabula, Ohio; Ithaca, New York; Jacksonville, Florida; and Los Angeles, California; settling at length in Denver, his former home, where he practiced and taught for many years.

Another itinerant teacher was Janet Colman, a New Englander, who had been invited to teach a class in Beatrice, Nebraska. By that time considerable interest in Christian Science had been stirred by the healing of Mr. and Mrs. Ezra Buswell, residents of Beatrice. For a number of years Mrs. Buswell had suffered from a condition which neither



Janet Colman taught an early class in Beatrice, Nebraska.

doctors nor change of climate had alleviated. After a futile sojourn in Colorado Mrs. Buswell returned home, and a friend who had been healed a short time before while in Boston told her of Christian Science. Mrs. Buswell sought help from Mrs. Jennie B. Fenn in Omaha, Nebraska, who healed her through Science. Mr. Buswell, also in ill health, recovered by reading the textbook. As a consequence of their own healings, they did all they could to carry the message of healing to their friends and neighbors, sharing their literature, the textbook, holding discussion meetings, and taking steps to form a church. They welcomed Mrs. Colman, who began on October 5, 1885 to teach the class organized for her. Mrs. Buswell entered the class and later she and her husband had three classes together with Mrs. Eddy in 1887, 1888, and 1889. They were called to Concord, New Hampshire, in 1895, and there he secured at Mrs. Eddy's direction the land and the building which was remodeled as Christian Science Hall. He carried out Mrs. Eddy's wishes in its reconstruction and served as First Reader when services were initiated.



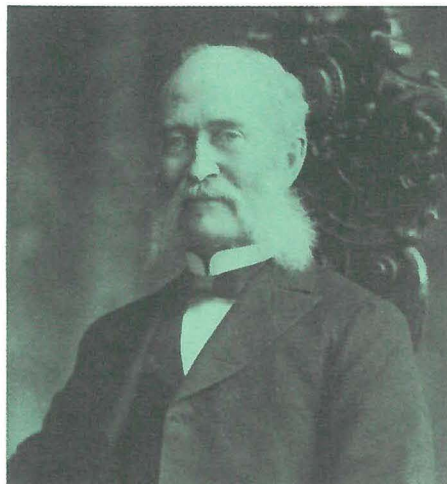
Ezra Buswell and Christian Science Hall where he served as first First Reader.



Mrs. Colman taught three classes in Beatrice. Among students in the second class held March 1886 were Alfred Farlow, his brother William S., and two sisters, Sarah and Emma. On November 8 of the same year a third class of eight students was taught in Beatrice with William and Pauline Farlow, parents of the young Farlows, and Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Armstrong of Irving, Kansas, among the number. Mr. Armstrong was a businessman of many interests, including the presidency of the Armstrong Bank. After the healing of his wife he began the study of Christian Science, and, following class with Mrs. Colman, had three classes with Mrs. Eddy and became a teacher. He taught and practiced in the West, first at Irving, Kansas, and later in Springfield, Ohio. From there he was called to Boston in 1892 to become the publisher of the periodicals and later also of Mrs. Eddy's writings. He was made a Director of The Mother Church, supervising for The Board of Directors the construction of the original edifice. His book, *The Mother Church*, describing this activity, is known to all Christian Scientists.

Mrs. Colman taught classes elsewhere in the West—in the states of Iowa, Illinois, Missouri and Kansas, returning to Massachusetts in 1889. Thomas Hatten studied with her in St. Louis in June 1887, and James A. Neal had class with her in Wichita, Kansas, in May 1888. Several of her students after further study with Mrs. Eddy were later called to Boston to serve the Cause there. Alfred Farlow, William S. Farlow, James A. Neal, Thomas Hatten, all had valuable experience as practitioners and "missionaries" in the Midwest. Through their healing work and informal meetings the seed of Christian Science was firmly planted in many small communities and cities in the Midwest within the range of Kansas City as the focal point. This city was early hospitable to Christian Science and through its portals were to pass over the years many dedicated workers who would serve Mrs. Eddy and the Cause she espoused, the last in her lifetime being Adam H. Dickey, her trusted confidential secretary between 1908 and 1910.

In 1883, when Christian Science was first reaching Chicago, Dr. Silas J. Sawyer, a successful dentist in Milwaukee, and his wife, Jennie E. Sawyer, were introduced to this Science. At this time



Dr. and Mrs. Silas J. Sawyer were the first students from the West to be taught by Mrs. Eddy.



Mrs. Sawyer was in failing health and Dr. Sawyer applied to Mrs. Eddy for help. Mrs. Eddy invited them to enter a class, and in December 1883 they arrived in Boston, the first students to come from the West for teaching. The class began on December 27th and at its close Mrs. Eddy told Dr. Sawyer to return to Milwaukee to teach, and Mrs. Sawyer, whose health had been regained by what she had learned, to heal. Dr. Sawyer held his first class in March 1884, and in May he took several students to Chicago for the last five meetings of Mrs. Eddy's class which she taught there at that time. That summer Dr. Sawyer organized an Association of his pupils, and with their help he and Mrs. Sawyer chartered the Wisconsin Metaphysical Institute for teaching and healing. Soon thereafter they were taking steps to form a church. Recognizing Dr. Sawyer's organizing abilities, Mrs. Eddy asked him to serve as a kind of "trouble-shooter" among young churches and groups. In 1887 at Mrs. Eddy's request he went to New York to assist in organizing

a church there, serving as chairman of the group which agreed in January 1888 to organize a church. While he was on these assignments, Mrs. Sawyer, who was also a teacher, took care of the growing work in Milwaukee.

On August 8, 1884 Mrs. Eddy taught her first Normal class at the College in Boston in which students who had had an earlier class with her were prepared to become teachers. Although some of Mrs. Eddy's students had been teaching, this new development, which anticipated the Board of Education established in 1898, was to provide qualified and accredited teachers who would ensure accurate teaching of Christian Science.

One of the early students to benefit by this new provision of Mrs. Eddy was Mrs. Laura Lathrop who was living in Freeport, Illinois, in 1885. She was suffering from what seemed to be a hopeless condition when she heard of Christian Science and sought healing from a student of Mrs. Eddy, Mrs. Hannah Larminie of Chicago. As soon as possible after her healing, Mrs. Lathrop went to Boston for instruction from Mrs. Eddy. The following year, 1886, she had Normal class and Mrs. Eddy asked her to settle in New York and to work there especially to establish a church. Her son John went to New York with her. She became a successful healer and teacher and through her leadership, and the help of many of her students, Second Church of Christ, Scientist, New York City, was opened in April 1901 with Mrs. Lathrop as First Reader and her son as Second Reader.



In 1885 Mrs. Laura Lathrop came into Christian Science after her healing.

It was about this time that Christian Science reached California. Sue Ella Bradshaw of San Jose, California, was called to Philadelphia in 1884 to receive a legacy, and while there found Christian Science through a relative and was healed by it. She returned to California by way of Chicago, stopping in that city for class with Mrs. Caroline D. Noyes. To increase her knowledge and understanding of Christian Science she traveled from San Jose to Boston in 1885, 1886 and 1888 for class instruction with Mrs. Eddy, and became a teacher. For many years she practiced and taught in San Francisco, and was one of the charter members and organizers of First Church of Christ, Scientist, San Francisco.

Dr. Francis J. Fluno, a trained physician, was brought up and largely educated in Wisconsin. He abandoned medicine in 1885 for Christian Science which offered to him greater opportunities for helping mankind. After practicing and teaching Christian Science in Kentucky, he was called to San Diego, California, and later invited to become pastor in Oakland where he lectured, taught, and healed, helping to establish firmly First Church of Christ, Scientist, Oakland, which was dedicated in 1902. Late in 1898 he was appointed to the Board of Lectureship, serving for twenty-one years, lecturing around the world. He gave the first lecture in Hawaii, and in 1909 the first one in South Africa. In appearance he was rather like one of the ancient patriarchs



Dr. Francis J. Fluno, a physician, abandoned medicine in 1885 for Christian Science.

Mrs. Annie M. Knott — teacher, lecturer, Associate Editor of the periodicals, member of the Bible Lesson Committee, and member of the Board of Directors.



and his deep and broad love for humanity endeared him to all and enriched the field he served.

Pioneer Christian Scientists, wherever located, met constant challenges in their practice of the new faith. Many lawsuits against practitioners of Christian Science healing are recorded in the late 1880's and early 1890's. Only three are here mentioned. Ezra Buswell was indicted in 1893 for the illegal practice of medicine, contrary to a legal statute of Nebraska. He was brought to trial and when questioned by his attorney, was able to testify to his success in healing, thus presenting much of his own defense.¹ The judgment rendered was in his favor and was reported by the *Beatrice Daily Times* of March 5: "The verdict is generally regarded as what might have been expected, in the face of the evidence produced."

In Colorado, a bill designed to abolish the practice of Christian Science was pending in the Legislature. Mrs. Minnie Hall (DeSoto) was invited by Judge Willard B. Felton, a member of the Senate, to appear in the chambers to speak in defense of Christian Science. Despite her timidity about speaking before the senators, she told them of her mother's experience and healing, and invited anyone who wished, to come to her office for treatment and healing. Two responded and were healed, one of them being the

Judge, himself. The bill was passed into law without further hampering effect on Christian Science practice.

Mrs. Annie M. Knott, an active worker in Christian Science in Detroit, went with other Christian Scientists to attend a hearing of a bill pending in the Legislature of Michigan, designed to restrict the practice of Christian Science in that state. She had not expected to speak but towards midnight, when a bitter argument ensued, she asked to be allowed to speak for a few minutes. Her request was granted and her name was announced. A small figure rose and moved from the back of the house to the platform and in a voice clearly heard by all she told of two cases of healing. Much faithful work was done by the Christian Scientists before the final session. An amended bill was passed into law, favorable to the practice of Christian Science.

Later, Mrs. Knott was to become well known as one of the first women to serve on the Board of Lectureship, and the first woman Director of The Mother Church.

The pioneers herein mentioned were in the vanguard of hundreds of others who within the next decade would be working in the West—healing, teaching, and organizing Christian Science churches.

A.H.W.

¹ Recorded in May, 1893 *The Christian Science Journal*, Vol. XI, p.65ff.

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