

**AU SABLE GROVE  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
One Hundred Years

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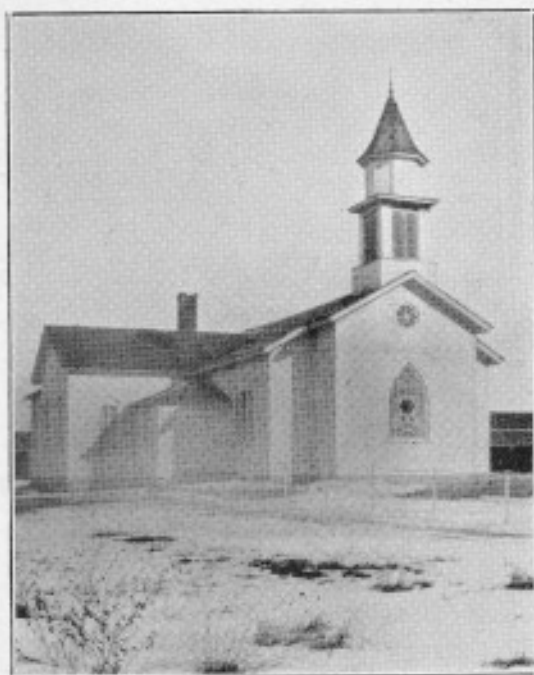
One Hundred Years

**1848 - 1948**



Printed as a Part of the  
One Hundredth Anniversary  
Celebration

YORKVILLE, ILLINOIS  
Na-au-say Township



## Dedication

IN GRATITUDE . . . to you who have been  
an active part of the Au Sable Grove Presbyterian  
Church . . . to others who have been good  
friends . . . to the stranger who has tarried to  
bow his head in prayer . . . And to the Glory  
of God . . . this brochure is reverently dedicated.

# History of the Au Sable Grove Presbyterian Church

The Au Sable Grove Presbyterian Church is One Hundred years old. Who could really write the history of any Church that has lived and grown and filled a vital place in the Spiritual Life of a community as has this "Our Church?" Certainly not this person, but we will do our best.

Go with me back through the old yellowed pages of the Church records and through the four histories already on file in the Church safe. It will be some task, for some of the writing is beautiful and some of it terrible.

Dr. Townsend Seely wrote the first history. He was the man who invited his neighbors to his home, a log house, sixteen by twenty feet, then located where the John Schobert family now reside, for the purpose of "Divine Services."

We read from Dr. Seely's history, just as he wrote it: "There had not been any religious meetings near us at the time, and feeling the lack of which, we obtained the services of the Rev. Daniel Chapman, who was then living in Plainfield, supplying the Congregational half of the time, being at liberty the other half, he came every alternate Sabbath and preached for us, occupying our log house which soon became crowded when the weather was fair. By fall our present school house twenty-four by thirty-four feet was enclosed and seated, when we occupied it, when the audience still more increased." The school house referred to, is the Union School house one-half mile west of the church. This group called themselves the Church of Kendall.

Dr. Seely mentions there were few families on the Prairie, besides his own, in that April of 1846 when he settled here, only the Jeremiah Shpherds and the Robert Gates' to his west and the O. C. and Daniel Johnsons to the east.

Using Dr. Seely's words again we quote: "In January of that year the school house being finished, a series of meetings were commenced by our Methodist brethren, which resulted in the conversion of a number of persons, who with those who came here professing religion formed a Methodist class." Nothing is written further about this Methodist class.

The minutes for February 26th, 1848 state that a Congregational Church was formed by the Rev. David Chapman, consisting of Mr. and Mrs. A. K. Wheeler, Mr. and Mrs. Noble Graves, Mr. and Mrs. Rollin Wheeler, and Mr. and Mrs. Townsend Seely and son Edmund.

The Church remained Congregational until September 2nd, 1854, when it was changed to Presbyterian because a large number of families had moved into the vicinity, from the east, who were Presbyterian and preferred its government.

The Congregation met on May 12th, 1857 at the Union School House to choose trustees. The minutes record: "We chose trustees and there-by became a corporate body and it was deemed expedient to change the name of the Church to the Presbyterian Church of Au Sable Grove and that it

should be known and distinguished by the above name hereafter." We find in the minutes of January 11, 1922 at the 60th annual business meeting a motion was made and seconded to change the name to the Na-au-say Church but the motion was lost.

Along in the latter part of 1857 we find the session meeting in the new "Parsonage House." There is a list of the donors, and the amount they gave toward this "Parsonage House," in an old account book. Six hundred twenty-five dollars was donated and the cost as itemized was five hundred ninety-six dollars and eight-five cents, leaving a balance of twenty-three dollars and fifteen cents. The wood shed was built next and the fence followed. Some of the expenditures might interest you men. Two hundred eighty-four and one-half pounds of wire for fence, \$19.92; seventy-nine and one-half pounds of nails, \$3.26; three hundred ninety-seven feet of plank, \$4.37, and for you ladies with budget trouble, the carpenter's board for six weeks, \$10.50. The Rev. John Walker and his family were the first to live in the "Parsonage House."

The minutes for the annual meeting of the year 1865 record: "The eighth annual meeting of the First Presbyterian Society of Au Sable Grove was held at the Union School House." The minutes for the next annual meeting state the meeting was held at the church. This is the first we find any record that a church was to be built or had been built, though Dr. Seely in his history writes that the seats in the Church were first rented on the 13th of September, 1866, the present house being finished at that time.

Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Jessup of Florida, New York, visited their sons and their families who had migrated here from New York. It was soon after the Church was built. In letters he wrote while on this visit he says of this country: "We rode from Oswego to Bristol Station, and thence to Yorkville. Our route being chiefly along the banks of the Fox river where the country was settled earlier. The improvements in houses, barns, yards and fences, along the Fox, are far ahead of those here in Na-au-say. The soil is more gravelly along the Fox and consequently easier to get about there. Our people coming later had to take farms of this black dirt in Na-au-say. Some of my pre-conceived notions of this country are correct, but others wide of the mark. We think more of it than we expected. The scenery is beautiful and I believe the land productive. The people are industrious and the land is rapidly being brought under cultivation. My sons and their wives here seem to think as much of their home as Ma and I do of ours, back in New York." He also mentions they attended the picnic during the week and met many of the Church people, and they attended Church on Sabbath and says, "They have a very neat little Church here."

The old session minutes do not record much business. They must have been solemn and dignified meetings. They opened with prayer, closed with prayer and their actions were blest with prayer. Their chief duty seemed to be the disciplining of their Church members. A citation in those days was a far different thing than a citation today. These minutes, as now, were examined and approved by Presbytery. Quite often the examiner wrote in little notations, such as, too careless about omitting dates, we do not agree with a certain item, or you omitted opening with prayer. They were governed by the Book of Discipline.

These early elders attended their elders' meetings too, or they gave an excuse and the excuse had to be a worthy one, worthy of acceptance. The time for their meeting was set definitely, such as the third Thursday of the month at six and one-half o'clock at the Union School house. A familiar phrase one hears today, that no doubt over one hundred years of progress and speed has brought about is this, There will be a short session meeting following Church.

The Rev. Theodore Jessup came to preach a trial sermon in 1873. His father, Daniel Jessup in New York, wrote to Rev. Jessup's youngest brother here, the following: "Your brother Theodore preached a sermon in your Church House, I trust it came up to the expectations of his brothers, but what did others say about it?" Rev. Jessup became the pastor and remained for fourteen years.

The Woman's Missionary Society was organized during Rev. Jessup's pastorate, the date for that organization being March 19th, 1879. Mrs. Jessup was elected president, Mrs. O. C. Johnson vice-president, Miss Mary Goudie secretary and Miss Sarah Jessup treasurer. An item which appears quite often in the minutes is an expression of concern because new members and the younger ladies couldn't be induced to become interested in the society, but one also notes at each yearly election, for eight years in succession, almost without exception, these same ladies re-elected themselves to office. Their meetings were opened with prayer and they always sang a number of hymns. Hymns such as, There's Power in the Blood, Nothing But the Blood and Peace Sweet Peace the Gift of God's Love.

The president conducted the lessons. The members were given lesson sheets and were to study their lesson at home and come prepared to recite. Quite often they were reprimanded for being negligent and careless about their lesson preparation, and it was pointed out to them, that because of their neglect and carelessness, a poor meeting resulted. The minutes for November 10, 1881, the president also admonishes them She said it was to be deplored that a feeling of restraint existed among the ladies which seemed to prevent giving utterance to their thoughts as freely as might be wished, that there was no reason why it should be so any more than in their own homes and that she hoped they would do their best to overcome it.

Our Missionary Society today, or the Women's Association as they now call themselves, is one of the most active organizations of the Church. In their early beginning a membership fee was twenty-five cents. Ten dollars paid a life membership in the Society. The over-all budget of the Woman's Association for the past year totalled \$877.73, it was given so that it helped spread the Gospel throughout the world.

Another active group is the Westminster Fellowship organization, with Eleanor Swanson, sponsor. It is the outgrowth of the Christian Endeavor Society formed in 1887, when a committee composed of O. C. Johnson, C. F. Sexton and Miss Clara Seely (Mrs. Harry Jones) was appointed to present a constitution and by-laws to the session. What a step forward that was! The Young People were given a place and a responsibility in their Church. And Oh! the dramas, plays, lectures, lyceum courses, pageants and entertainments the young people have produced! There was Queen Esther which ran two seasons. A Professor Danforth furnished the cos-

tunes and properties and did the directing. Only recently this production was brought to mind when we studied the Sunday School lesson on Queen Esther. One of our class members said, "Oh, do you remember years ago, when our young people here gave Queen Esther? The gallows was on the stage to hang Hamon. I was just a little girl, and I didn't care if they hung Hamon, but I didn't want them to hang Shelly Johnson." Besides Queen Esther there was Al Martin's Country Store, Uncle Ephriam's Summer Boarders, All on Account of Polly, and many others, and do you know, as a rule after one of these fine productions it wasn't long until there was a wedding, or two or three, and our young people married and settled down in our midst.

Now for a few miscellaneous items that might be of interest.

The first songs were sung from the "Book of Psalms" and John French led them. He got the pitch by using a tuning fork. Then there was the organ which had to be pumped by some strong man. Arthur Price and Albert Potts performed this duty for many years. The new organ which came next was a big improvement, for if you pedaled fast enough, you could operate it by yourself. The pianos came next and now we use the electric organ. Mrs. Margaret Stewart Goudie was instrumental in getting the electric organ for our church.

We have sent out three ministers, Rev. Henry McClain, Rev. Oliver C. Johnson and Dr. Paul Johnson. Many of our former Pastors' sons have become ministers, Billie Bingaman, son of Rev. and Mrs. S. R. Bingaman, and Donald, son of Rev. and Mrs. E. S. Martin, being students at McCormick Seminary at the present time.

We have sent no missionaries, though we have been a mission-minded Church. Our records show a steady increase in benevolent giving. Two great-great grandsons of Dr. Townsend Seely are, however, on the Foreign Mission Field at the present time. Francis McClain Seely is in Chiengmai, Siam, and Merrill Seely in Columbia, South America.

Our lighting system has no doubt come from home-made tallow candles to the electricity from the high-line. A bill appears quite often of four dollars for a can of carbide. The sale of the old Delco plant is recorded.

The linen spread for the Communion table was purchased in 1906.

In 1900 the church was remodeled. New seats and the new pulpit furniture were added at that time.

The steeple was declared no longer safe and was removed in June, 1931.

The new parsonage was completed January 5th, 1916, at a cost of \$3,592. The old parsonage was moved to the church for more Sunday School rooms. Rev. and Mrs. E. S. Martin were the first family to live in the new parsonage.

Quite a bit of ditching has been done on the church property.

We have had our own orchestras, baseball teams, a two-year high school practice drill teams and several Father and Son banquets.

We have had three Communion Sets. When the set of silver goblets was purchased, the old set was given to a needy church. Later the individual set we now use was presented to us as a gift.

In the minutes for March 29, 1903, we read, Mrs. Mary Hall came by letter herself and brought her class, Robert Everett Hall, Ida Mae Penman, Kenneth Charles Darfler and Edmund Hills Seely, asking for membership. Mrs. Hall is still coming and teaching and bringing her class.

Two other Churches in our vicinity have celebrated their One Hundredth anniversary also this year, the Prairie Evangelical Church near Oswego and the Scotch Presbyterian in Wheatland.

We have a budget in all our church organizations. We pledge and we pay it. We used to earn it with chicken pie suppers and ice cream socials. We think it is more blessed to pledge and give.

The price of land would average around three hundred dollars an acre now. When the first settlers came the land was "taken up" from the government. One dollar an acre was a good price then; when the Church was built land prices had risen to forty and fifty dollars an acre.

Descendants of the early settlers still live here to the sixth and seventh generation. We are a stable people in our thinking, in our working and in our religion.

We have written the history as best we can for the period of One Hundred years in the past. Now, what message shall we write for the historian for the anniversary One Hundred years from now? Would it be like this?

We are living in the era after World War II. It is called the beginning of the Atomic Age. We don't understand the meaning of Atomic Power. So far we have only used it to destroy. We have our United Nations conference to work for Peace, but we prepare for war. Our incomes are the highest they have ever been. This black soil out here in Na-au-say has proved to be one of the most productive spots in God's whole world. We practice modern farming methods, we use power machinery, we know about soil conservation and use soil-building practices, we travel in high-powered streamlined automobiles. Our young people go through high school and many go through college or study in some specialized field. Our Church has grown in number, our benevolences have increased, we have built up our Church property, the Spiritual side of our life has been led by twenty-four Pastors, we know Christ's last commission: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel." We have sent the word into all countries of the world; still there are many who do not know the Christ. Some in our own country have not heard; others are indifferent. There is much yet to be done. The harvest is ready.

We now have \$20,166.50 in our Building Fund, and a plan has been adopted to raise \$10,000 a year for the next three years, and at the end of that time a committee should make definite plans to build the Church. This fund was started by the young people of the Christian Endeavor in 1926 when they presented the Trustees a gift of twenty-five dollars for the purpose of starting a Building Fund for a new Church, the future of which is in the hands of our young people.

Substituting a few words from a paragraph in the report of the fiftieth anniversary, we will close with the following quotation:

"The past one hundred years have not been all that we would have desired; there has been sunshine and shadow; neither have we accomplished all that we might have done, but with confession of our past faults we begin the next century with firm confidence in Christ, the Head of the Church, believing that our prospects are as bright as the promise of God. It is our hope to direct the feet of our children and all who come within the range of our influence to the Cross of our Beloved Redeemer and at last the "White Raiment, "The New Name" and a seat with Him on His throne above, which he hath promised to the Church that "Overcomes."

RUTH M. DEVEREAUX,

August 14, 1948.



# AU SABLE GROVE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

ORGANIZED FEBRUARY 26, 1848

The following Ministers have served as Pastors or stated supplies:

Rev. Mr. Chapman .....	1848-1850
Rev. Royal Reed .....	1853-1856
Rev. John Walker .....	1856-1859
Rev. James H. Board .....	1860-1861
Rev. L. N. Loss .....	1861-
Rev. Daniel Bassett .....	1861-1864
Rev. A. K. Wood .....	1864-1866
Rev. E. J. Stewart .....	1866-1870
Rev. A. W. Colver .....	1871-1873
Rev. Theodore F. Jessup .....	1873-1887
Rev. Robert Carson .....	1888-1891
Rev. J. H. Read .....	1892-1893
Rev. Henry Arlen .....	1893-1898
Rev. James A. Smith .....	1898-1900
Rev. M. E. Todd .....	1900-1903
Rev. D. T. Robertson .....	1903-1905
Rev. Robert McCain .....	1906-1908
Rev. Geo. H. Harris .....	1909-1912
Rev. W. H. Liggett .....	1912-1915
Rev. E. S. Martin .....	1915-1920
Rev. S. R. Bingaman .....	1920-1924
Rev. J. C. Nansen .....	1924-1935
Rev. Wesley L. Kosin .....	1936-1940
Rev. H. C. Chapin .....	1941-1947

## THE ELDERS

RALPH SCHLAPP  
OTTO CHRISTIAN  
JAMES HOPKINS  
ALLEN McMICKEN  
BERT KELLOGG  
CURTIS COONEY  
CLARK MOTTINGER  
ALLEN SCHLAPP

## THE TRUSTEES

CARL SCHOBERT  
ROBERT DEVEREAUX  
HUGH GOUDIE  
JOHN BRISBIN  
ELNATHAN WHEELER

President, Women's Association  
MRS. FRED KELLOGG

President, Westminster Fellowship  
RAYMOND BRISBIN

Sunday School Superintendent  
CLARK MOTTINGER

## POSTSCRIPT

The purpose of this brochure has been to tell something of the work of our Church during the past century, to capture something of its spirit of loyalty and devotion, and to give a picture of her ongoing program.

In writing this there is of necessity some overlapping and also some omissions. We who have written and compiled this work present it with humility and a full knowledge of its inadequacy. The true worship, witness and work of the Au Sable Grove Presbyterian Church cannot be captured nor contained by the printed page. We present this brochure with praise to God for His rich blessings, and with reverent appreciation for the men and women who have poured their lives into this Church through these many years.

The future opens before our congregation with great opportunities for Christian service and in the name of her Lord your Church asks for your continued loyalty and support in the years ahead. You can help to insure the future of this great work by making regular pledges to the annual budgets and by remembering the Building Fund.

### The Centennial Committee

MRS. CLARENCE HALL  
MISS ELEANOR SWANSON  
MISS MAE HOWELL  
MRS. LEWIS WHEELER  
MRS. ORA WOOLLEY  
MRS. ROBERT DEVEREAUX  
CLARK MOTTINGER  
RALPH SCHLAPP  
HUGH GOUDIE