

# 1847 A NOTABLE YEAR IN CHICAGO RELIGIOUS LIFE

## Ten Men Hold Meeting with Significant Result

BY THE REV. JOHN EVANS  
The year 1847 was a notable one in the city's religious development. On April 26 of that year, 10 men gathered in a little meeting house at the corner of Ohio and La Salle sts., and founded a church which today has an inclusive international membership of nearly two million persons. It was named the Evangelical Lutheran synod of Missouri, Ohio and other states.

That year saw the founding of the first synagogue in the west. The German Jewish immigrants who founded it named it Kehllath Anshe Mayriv, "The Congregation of the Men of the West."

In the village of Du Page a dozen Presbyterian ministers gathered in mid-October of 1847 and founded the presbytery of Chicago. One of the founders, sole member of the group who was a native of the middle west, was the Rev. Dr. W. C. Patterson, father of Robert Wilson Patterson, editor of THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE from 1899 until his death in 1910. Third Presbyterian church was founded in 1847.

**Found Catholic Churches**  
St. Patrick's and St. Bridget's Roman Catholic churches were founded in 1847. Bishop William I. Quarter, first Catholic bishop of Chicago, was entering his final year before death in 1848. During his four year episcopate his diocese grew from two to 30 churches, he chartered the University of St. Mary of the Lake, under which St. Mary of the Lake seminary, Mundelein, now operates, and founded a convent for the Sisters of Mercy.

Pope Gregory XVI had erected the diocese of Chicago in 1843 as an outpost in the wilderness. When Bishop Quarter arrived the next year the city's population of 6,000 inhabitants sloshed thru mud streets. He found six priests here. But his short episcopate was prophetic of what the archdiocese of Chicago now is—numerically as well as possibly in investment in churches and institutions—the greatest archdiocese in America with 1,700,000 members. At the time of his death Bishop Quarter had ordained 29 priests and had brought two scores more to Chicago from other dioceses.

**Establish Methodist Church**  
German immigrants on the north-west side of town (Grand av., between Wells and Franklin sts.) founded what is now the Armitage Avenue Methodist church, pastor of German-American Methodism. It was a German language congregation until 1940.

Fifty-four Dutch religious refugees from the Netherlands arrived at Lake Macatawa in Michigan in 1847 and founded the town of Holland, which was destined to have wide influence on the Reformed movement in Chicago. The Holland founder, Dr. Albertus C. Van Raalte, envisioned a religious colony in free America while he languished in an old-country prison for infractions of religious regulations of Code Napoleon. The Netherlands had lost their independence to France.

**Largest Protestant Communion**  
Those 10 Lutherans who, with their pastor, the Rev. C. A. Selle, had met on April 26 to found their own church out of a minority of the members of St. Paul's Evangelical church at Ohio and La Salle sts., could not foresee the founding of Chicago's largest Protestant communion of a century later. Nor could they realize they were giving impetus to what is probably now the most rapidly growing Protestant communion in the country—the Lutheran church, Missouri synod.

Factor Sells was succeeded by the Rev. Henry Wunder in 1851, one of the great builders of the Missouri synod. He served First St. Paul's, as it came to be known, continuously for 62 years.

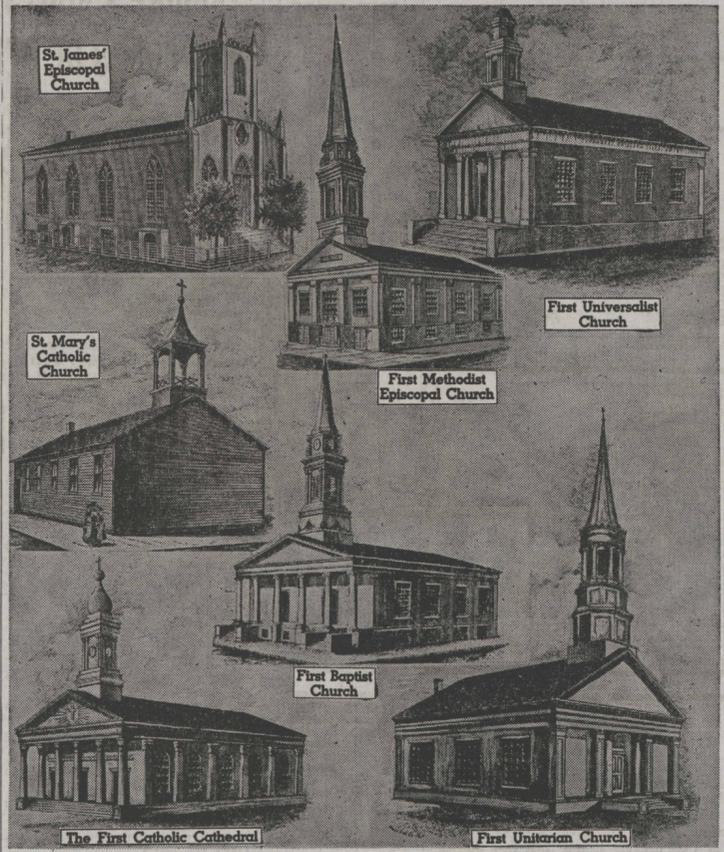
Possibly unique in the country's church history was Pastor Wunder's extraparochial activity. Whenever he heard of a new German community during the period of extensive German immigration, he would on one go there and found a new congregation. At least 500 congregations trace their history to Pastor Wunder's activity. Pastor Wunder baptized nearly 18,000 babies.

**Historical Drama**  
Probably more historical drama was associated with the 1847 founding of the presbytery of Chicago than with any other religious association. Slavery, abolition, "old school" and "new school" Presbyterians and nearly all other foci of struggle which cast light on the federal union's approaching crisis of Civil war were involved.

In 1801 the Congregational and Presbyterian churches had adopted their "plan of union," an arrangement whereby neither church would found a congregation where the other was at work. The Presbyterians had been at work in Chicago since 1833. This meant that when Congregationalists migrated west from New England they became Presbyterians. Abolitionists to the Ohio, these New Englanders and Western Reserve immigrants from Ohio came into relationship with southern Presbyterians, such as Cyrus H. McCormick, who had come from Virginia. He was a Democrat and not an abolitionist.

Presbyterians of neither school believed in the institution of slavery, but there was disagreement concerning abolition. The Congregational-Presbyterians did not like being Presbyterians. In 1837 the "plan of union" produced a division

## Some Churches of Chicago's Early Days



between "old school" and "new school," with Cyrus McCormick leading the old school vanguard into the creation of an old school presbytery of Chicago in 1852. He founded the seminary which bears his name to advance interests of the old school group.

**Oldest of Group at 54**  
The 1847 presbytery became known as the new school group. The men who founded it, with the exception of Dr. Patterson, were young missionaries from New England. They elected the eldest, Dr. Hutchins Taylor of Joliet, as moderator simply because, at 54, he was the oldest of the group. Dr. Patterson's family had moved north to Rice, Scott county, from Tennessee because of its hatred for slavery. Dr. Patterson was graduated from Illinois college, Jacksonville, and from Lane seminary, Cincinnati, O., now merged with McCormick seminary.

Old First church had become divided over the slavery question, and Second church, of which Dr. Patterson became pastor, was built just around the corner from First, on Randolph st., between Clark and Dearborn sts. It soon became too small, and was cut in two and extended. In 1847, Third church, first to be erected west of the river, was founded.

Meanwhile the abolitionist groups in Second and Third churches continued to become more vocal. More Congregationalists continued to arrive in Chicago and the demand for their own church, despite the "plan of union," increased. Finally, in 1852, First Congregationalist church was founded out of Second and Third churches.

**Important Effect on Chicago**  
The political and social ferment in central Europe during the mid-1840s, which finally burst into flame in 1848, had a profound effect upon Chicago religious life. Families of social and cultural importance were emigrating from Germany in increasingly large numbers. By 1847 when the Missouri synod was founded their religious influence in Chicago and the central west had become undoubted, with the whole pattern of religious life in this area soon to be unalterably modified by their presence.

By 1845 the Buffalo synod had been organized. Many of its members had moved westward by 1847, and settled in Illinois, Iowa and Wisconsin. Shortly these were to become the Evangelical Lutheran Joint synod of Wisconsin and other states, and the Evangelical Lutheran synod of Iowa and other states. The Buffalo and Iowa synods later were to be merged in Chicago and were to become the American Lutheran church. The Wisconsin synod was soon to become a founder of the Synodical conference with the Missouri synod. This conference now includes Norwegian, Slovak and Negro groups.

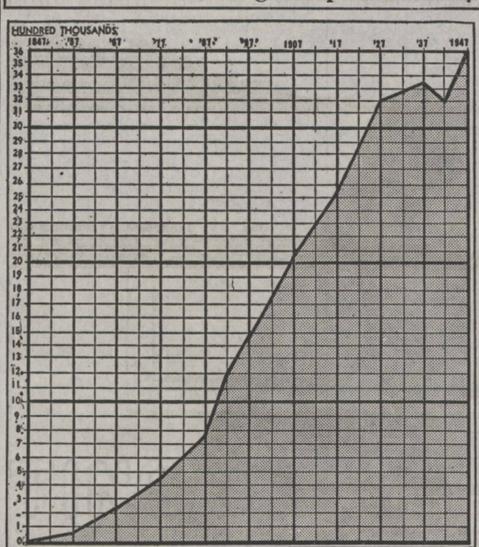
**Numerical Predominance**  
A survey has disclosed a current numerical predominance in these Lutheran churches of Germanic origin over all other Protestants in the states of Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, Indiana and Michigan. Figuring in these totals is the membership contribution of the United Lutheran church, which was merged a quarter of a century ago from two German Lutheran synods of the east which dated from colonial times.

No list of the early builders of Chicago in cultural, economic and political areas, as well as in religion, would be complete without reference to another Germanic immigration which, by 1847, had become numerically strong enough to found the first synagogue of the west.

The first synagogue was erected on the southeast corner of Clark st. and Kehlath Anshe Mayriv. A bronze plaque on the federal building memorializes the site. K. A. M. early became a leader in the Reform Judaism movement. The present temple is located at 920 E. 50th st. The anniversary will be signaled this fall by appropriate observances.

**Guardian Angel Mission First Church in Chicago**  
The first church in Chicago was the Mission of the Guardian Angel, opened in 1696 by Father Pinet, a Jesuit missionary. It was closed within about a year on orders of Count Frontense, French governor of Canada, during a quarrel with the Jesuits.

## Growth of Chicago Population



## Status of Government in Year of Tribune's Founding

**Federal**  
In the United States, 1847 was a year of war. Even the question of slavery had been temporarily obscured by the hostile Mexican attitude following the annexation of Texas in 1845 and later by the victories of American troops as they swept across Mexico. "Manifest destiny" was the battle cry.

All four points of the Democratic platform on which James K. Polk had been elected in 1844 had been settled by the end of 1846. The tariff had been reduced, an independent treasury had been established, at least half of Oregon had been obtained by compromise with the British, and Texas had been annexed as a slave state.

**Disposition of Land**  
During 1847, even as Generals Zachary Taylor and Winfield Scott were winning battle after battle, the slavery issue reappeared. What, for example, was to become of the land Polk proposed to take from Mexico? Polk was a southerner and his expansionist policy was called "slaveryocracy." The Wilmot proviso, forbidding slavery in any part of this land, was passed again and again during the year by the house, but was as often defeated in the senate, where the slave states had a majority of two.

Polk was criticized frequently during 1847 for a vacillating war policy resulting, it was charged, from political jealousy of his two Whig competitors. Anxious to stall the political rise of Gen. Scott, he let the initial glories of the war fall to Gen. Taylor, whose popularity as the hero of Buena Vista projected him into the White House in 1849.

**Admit Iowa and Wisconsin**  
The tide turned against the administration in the next elections after Iowa and Wisconsin were admitted as free states, restoring the balance in the senate. The next year Oregon was organized as a free territory, and slavery alone became the dominating, the well straddled, issue of that year's Presidential campaign.

The Whigs nominated Gen. Taylor, a slave owner from Louisiana, and the Democrats put forward Lewis Cass, a northerner and advocate of "squatter sovereignty," the right of each state, as admitted, to settle its own slavery status.

The estimated population of the United States in 1847 was 22 million. England at that time had about 17 million inhabitants, France, 34 million, and Russia, 70 million. The Mexican war brought the national debt that year up to \$38,826,000, the following year to \$47,044,000. It had topped 100 million dollars in the war of 1812, and did so again in 1862. It passed one billion dollars for keeps the following year.

**Not an Issue Yet**  
British industry was growing and needed markets and raw materials. The government was relatively stable, and its business men sought the protection of the British flag in their far flung ventures. But also 1847 saw British military activities in China, Burma, India, New Zealand, South Africa, Argentina, and Nicaragua. Imperialism was not to become an issue for 20 years.

## CHICAGO FIFTH CITY OF WORLD IN POPULATION

### Opening of Indian Lands Brings First Boom

By a growth more rapid than any other large city except Los Angeles, Chicago has become the fifth most populous city in the world. The story of its population reflects the frontier days, when men and women were scarce, and old folks stayed in the east. It reflects the economic crises of the nation, and the arrival of refugees from turbulent European countries.

Chicago's first boom began in 1833, when the Indian lands were opened for speculation and the sea-way to the Mississippi was being planned. Its population rose from 350 in 1833 to 4,170 in 1837, but then dropped slightly in the financial panic of that year, discouraged speculators either going home or farther west.

The only other year which showed a decrease was 1942, when a large number of persons went into military service.

**The Economic Effect**  
The arrival of newcomers, however, has lessened during each economic slump. The city grew eightfold between 1834 and 1845, but the rate of increase slowed during the panic of 1857. Increases of 30,000 a year around 1870 dropped to 5,000 in the depression of 1872-77 following the fire.

The 1890 population of 503,185 was more than doubled during the following 10 years. A record 200,000 jump between 1889 and 1890 was partly due to annexation of the farming communities of Lake View, Jefferson, Lake, and Hyde Park. In 1890 the city passed the million mark and outstripped Philadelphia.

Between 1920 and 1929 the population bounded at the rate of about 85,000 a year. During the decade following the financial crash of 1929, on the other hand, the total increase was only 20,000. The decrease in 1942 reduced the population to 3,204,412, the lowest since 1927. War industries retrieved part of this loss, and the return of service men since the war brings the estimated 1947 population to 3,645,000.

**The Men Predominated**  
In 1837 there were three times as many men between the ages of 21 and 45 as there were women. And there were 513 babies under 5, more than twice the number of "old folks" of more than 45. In 1940 the population of 3,396,808 was divided approximately as follows: 214,000 under 5; 787,000 between 6 and 19; 1,431,000 between 20 and 44, and 966,000 over 44. The males had a narrow lead in each group.

The earliest records do not list the national origin of the population. By 1850, however, half of the city's 29,863 inhabitants were foreign born. This included 6,000 Irish, 5,000 Germans, 1,890 English, and 610 Scots.

Heavy immigration from Germany, Ireland, and Scandinavia maintained the half-and-half ratio until 1870, when 144,557 of the city's 298,997 inhabitants were foreign born. The Germans took the lead in that year and held it thru 1900, when they numbered 203,733. The

## First City Owned School in Chicago



The first schoolhouse owned by the village of Chicago. It was built at the southeast corner of Madison and Dearborn sts. in 1836, and was known as the Runsey school. [Chicago Historical Society]

## Chicago Proud of Schools —All Four of Them—in 1847

Chicago's once impressive public school fund had been all but annihilated when its remnants were turned over to the newly incorporated city government in 1837. Despite this handicap, the board of school inspectors opened four up-to-date grade schools by 1847, and the bustling, mud-splashed prairie town took pride in a free educational system as modern as any in the east. It was not until two years later that a public school system was established in New York.

The oldest and largest of the four schools was on the north side of Madison st. just east of Dearborn st., and was known as School No. 1. Municipal officials had frowned upon the school when it was opened in 1845, and suggested that it be used as an insane asylum for those who had ventured to build such a colossus. But the wisdom of its planners soon was proved.

**Build Second School**  
Later that year a second school, later known as the Kinzie school, was erected at Ohio and La Salle sts. A school built at Clark and

total foreign born population in 1900 was 587,112, or barely one-third of the total. It included 90,000 Scandinavians and 73,912 Irish.

**Poles Move Into Lead**  
Poles, Russians and Italians began leaving their unsettled countries shortly before 1900, and the Poles soon took the lead, which they still hold. In 1940, 672,805, or one-fifth of the city's population, was foreign born. The following were the largest groups: Polish, 111,294; German, 83,424; Russian, 66,950; Italian, 66,472; and Swedish, 46,258.

Chicago is exceeded in population only by New York, London, Paris, and Moscow. Before the war Berlin and Tokyo also were larger, but war time evacuation has reduced their populations.

In 1833 Chicago was bounded by 22d st., Halsted st., and Chicago av. By 40 annexations and the filling in of nearly three square miles of land, its area has since risen to 211 square miles.

The Democratic party, firmly entrenched in Illinois ever since statehood was won in 1818, elected Augustus C. French as governor in 1846. State issues never had figured prominently in these state campaigns, and they were even less noticeable during this one because of excitement over the war with Mexico.

Illinois had gone all out for the war, and requests for volunteers were repeatedly oversubscribed. But as 1847 wore on, the New York and New England immigrants, who by then made up a majority of the state population and were by large opposed to the extension of slavery, lost their enthusiasm. Abraham Lincoln was sent to congress, where he vigorously criticized the war policy, and state affairs attracted more attention.

**Convention Meets**  
The voters had approved the drafting of a new state constitution to replace that of 1818, which was outdated, and in June, 1847, a convention met for this purpose. It later became the Constitution of 1848 and included many uncontroversial changes, such as that voters should be by ballot instead of orally.

The suffrage, hitherto open to any inhabitant with six months' residence, was restricted to citizens with one year's residence. This was opposed in the north, where nearly 40,000 Germans, Norwegians, and Swedes had settled in 20 years.

More important at the time were the financial provisions, for they touched a sore spot. Earlier state administrations had arranged some intricate deals with state chartered banks by which the latter helped finance the state's promotional schemes. With the crash of 1837 the schemes folded, the banks failed, and the state ended up \$15 million in debt. The Democrats summarily abolished state charters for banks in 1843.

**Stabilizing Influence**  
During 1847 the Whigs urged state charters as a stabilizing and regulatory influence, but the Democrats remained adamant and the constitution not only forbade state bank charters, but prohibited the state from contracting debts of over \$50,000.

The population of Illinois in 1847 was approximately 830,000, of whom 366,000 had arrived since 1840. The principal occupation was farming, and by 1856 all of the federal lands in Illinois had been sold. The leading politician was John Wentworth, Democratic congressman from the fourth district, which included the entire northern third of the state and which is now represented by 17 congressmen. At that time there were seven from the state as a whole.

## CULTURAL LIFE: A SLOW START, A FAST FINISH

### Library Growth: 300 Books to 2 Million

Altho Chicago has since become the home of some of the leading civic institutions of the world, its only cultural boasts in 1847, beyond a few grade schools, were the Mechanics' institute, an organization for the development of scientific learning which later dissolved, and the Young Men's association.

The Young Men's association was founded in 1841 and succeeded the Chicago Lyceum, a debating society which met when the condition of the streets permitted and which, because it kept 300 books in a corner of the old courthouse, can be considered the city's first library.

**Fire Destroys Books**  
The Young Men's association was known after 1857 as the Chicago Library association. William Cross, a former Tribune editor, was its president when the fire of 1871 wiped out its collection of 8,000 books.

The following January his former newspaper associate, Mayor Joseph Medill, called a meeting with a view to establishing a municipal library. The idea was approved. Gifts were solicited and flowed in from the east and Europe, and in 1873 the first public library was opened at La Salle and Adams sts. The present 2 million dollar building at Randolph st. and Michigan av. was opened in 1897. The collection of books there and in its 60 branches numbers more than 2 million.

Walter L. Newberry, one of the founders of the Young Men's association, died in 1886, leaving 2 1/2 million dollars for the establishment of a free library, and John Crerar, pioneer manufacturer, died three years later, leaving nearly 3 million dollars for a similar purpose. The Newberry library, specializing in the fine arts, philosophy and history, was opened in 1893. The Crerar library, which deals with the physical and social sciences was opened in 1897.

The Chicago Historical society was organized in 1856 on the suggestion of the Rev. William Barry, who became its first librarian. Among its sponsors were William B. Ogden, J. Young Scammon, Dr. Charles H. Ray, a former Tribune editor, and William H. Brown, a banker who became its first president. Its priceless collection was destroyed in the great fire, but in 1893 a new building was erected on the site of the old, at Dearborn and Ontario sts.

**A Larger Home**  
In 1932 it moved to its present larger home at the south end of Lincoln park. Besides its library of 100,000 volumes and 50,000 manuscripts, it has a wide collection of historical relics representing the growth of Chicago and the rest of the nation.

The Chicago Academy of Sciences, one of the earliest museums in the country dedicated to natural history, owes its conception in 1857 to Robert Kennicott, who died five years later on an expedition.

The predecessor of the Art Institute was the Academy of Design, which was incorporated in 1869 after a series of art exhibits, beginning in 1859, had proved increasingly popular. In 1870 it leased a new building at Adams near State st., which was destroyed.

**Springs to Life Again**  
The academy came to life again in 1879 and reincorporated as the Art Institute. Charles L. Hutchinson was elected president, retaining that position until 1924. Its present building was built for the Columbian exposition, but was not occupied until 1894. Its collection of 19th century French paintings is unexcelled, and in other fields it ranks among the leading art museums of the world. Its attendance is exceeded only by the National Gallery in Washington.

The Field Columbian Museum of Natural History was founded in 1893 thru gifts totaling more than nine million dollars from Marshall Field, pioneer merchant. It first occupied the old fine arts building in Jackson park, and in 1921 moved to its own building in Grant park. The value of its exhibits is estimated at \$5 million dollars and is exceeded only by those of the American Museum of Natural History in New York and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington. The name of the Field Museum recently was changed to the Chicago Natural History museum.

The Shedd aquarium in Grant park was founded by a three million dollar gift from John G. Shedd. It is the largest aquarium in the world and contains 10,000 fish of more than 400 varieties. During 1931, the year following its opening, it drew an attendance of 4,600,000.

**First Outside Europe**  
The Adler planetarium in Grant park was the first to be built outside of Europe. It was made possible thru a \$750,000 gift from Max Adler, former vice president of Sears, Roebuck & Co. Adler also donated a unique collection of antique astronomical instruments. Since this planetarium was opened in 1930, four others of approximately similar size have been built in this country.

The Museum of Science and Industry, formerly the Roosevelt Museum, was opened in 1933 in the Jackson park building formerly used by the Field Museum. A park bond issue of 5 million dollars and an equal gift from Julius Rosenwald, chairman of the board of Sears, Roebuck & Co., provided for the complete renovation of the exterior of the building and an initial collection of exhibits. With eight acres of exhibit space, the museum is now the largest of its kind in the world.

A gift of land by Mrs. Edith Rockefeller McCormick in 1921 led to the establishment of the Chicago Zoological Gardens in Brookfield, which have the largest capacity in the world and were opened in 1934. The Lincoln Park zoo, operated by the park district, began its gradual growth with the receipt of two swans from New York in 1868.

## FIRST ILLINOIS PAPER PRINTED AT KASKASKIA

The first newspaper in Illinois was the Illinois Herald, published in Kaskaskia, Randolph county, in 1814. The first extant issue, dated Dec. 13, 1814, is numbered Vol. 1, No. 30. If the paper was regularly issued and numbered before that, the first edition would have been printed June 24, 1814, but an advertisement in this first extant number is dated May 28, 1814.

Matthew Duncan, first printer in Illinois, was the publisher. He was a native of Kentucky, a graduate of Yale college, and edited papers in Russellville, Ky., before coming to Kaskaskia. Ninian Edwards, first territorial governor of Illinois, met Duncan when he practiced law in Russellville, and thru him Duncan obtained the contract to print the first edition of the Illinois Territorial laws, in 1813. In 1817, Duncan sold the paper to Daniel P. Cook, Illinois' first congressman, and Robert Blackwell.