

History Moment for January 2012- 1893 to 1915

With Darwin's scientific treatise on the evolution of human beings to Faraday's introduction to the force fields of electricity, magnetism and gravity, the mysteries of life were coming unraveled. The miracles of the scripture were up for debate. These discoveries of biology and physics drew a line between the post-Reformation and the beginning of a new way of thinking, being and believing.

The Bible Conference of Conservative Protestants was held in 1895 in several places in the US. The group in Niagara, NY issued a statement of the five principles to claim true Christian belief: the inerrancy of the scripture, the divinity of Jesus, the historicity of the Virgin birth, the substitutionary nature of the Atonement and the physical and corporeal return of Jesus the Christ. They became known as The Fundamentals and "fundamentalist" entered our language. Two more were added later, an obligation to evangelize and a belief in Jesus as a personal savior became the core of evangelical Christianity.

Sigmund Freud opened the new area of the conscious vs. the unconscious. Carl Jung followed with writings that were more easily understood by laity as well as scholars. Jung was a great influence on Joseph Campbell with whom we all are familiar. Christian exclusivity, the belief that Christianity is the only route to salvation was being questioned. Dr. Ozora Stearns Davis was our pastor from 1897 thru 1900. He went on to be President of the Chicago Theological Seminary and then Moderator of the National Council of Congregational Churches in America. Rev. Allen Ferrin, who followed until 1906, tried to present both sides of "the new theology" in his sermons. William Woolson reported in our history that one Deacon during this time took to leaving church and going home the back way. He was "afraid of being asked what he thought of the sermon and he could not tell a lie."

We had two services, one at 10:30 am, 6:30 pm with Sunday school at noon and a youth group at 5 pm. Dr. John Morley, 1906-1909, was a great preacher but did not relate well to the younger generation. Under his leadership we made more strides in mission both abroad and at home. Many jars of home processed food went to the hospital. The Ladies Home Missionary Society furnished and maintained the three bed ward at the hospital. Rev. Raymond Beardslee was called in 1910 with 53 cents in the Treasury and many needed repairs on the building. A pew assessment of 10% was made on each pew and depending on the location of the family pew, this brought in \$20 to \$100 per pew.

Electric lights were up on Main Street in 1901 and a phone system was in place. Years before the Model T was built in Detroit, William Woolson was driving his "gasmobile" in 1901 from Boston to Springfield in about 8 hours. There was a lot of joking in the town about which roads he took and how many tires he changed.

In 1902, our Ladies Society gave an Edison Projector to the Town Hall for the first showing of moving pictures. The machine tool companies were doing well. Slack and Brothers, a shoddy mill reclaiming old rags for their fiber and re-spinning them into cloth, was an employer of many of the Russian and Polish immigrants most of whom lived on Valley Street. The gold rush in the Klondike was on and a few years earlier, the first modern Olympic Games were held in Athens, Greece. In 1903, Marconi accomplished the first two way wireless communication. Wilbur and Orville Wright had their first flight. In 1906 San Francisco was struck by an earthquake. President Roosevelt established National Parks. The Titanic sank in 1912.

Springfield's machine tool industry hit an all time low following the recession of 1913. In 1914 President Wilson declared our official neutrality in the European conflict that would lead to WW1. The machine tool industry rebounded from poor to nonexistent profits with the demands of the European war. The Lusitania was sunk by a German U-boat and tensions were mounting to enter the war.

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