

THE RECORD NEWSPAPERS

TROY, NEW YORK

Troy, Dec. 30, 1931.

My dear Cousin Sophie:

Your good letter of recent date was received. I certainly was glad to hear from you and yours. I also was pleased to know that you are in good health and able to enjoy life as it goes.

Inclosed you will find a few reminiscences of my dear father and his work at the Sand Lake Baptist Church. I often marvel that he could give three years of his life to a service which brought him little worldly increase and much trouble. But if ever a man thought he had a mission leading him to the Throne of God, father was that man. Still, I have always been glad that he returned to his first love, the editorial chair. There he wielded great influence for good. If the few words I am sending you can draw aside the veil which time has drawn over the work of my dear parent, I shall feel pleased.

Come and see us when you can. If you are in Troy any time, I would be pleased to welcome you at The Record office.

A Happy New Year.

Very sincerely yours,

Albert F. Deming.

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My father, George W. Demers, was in the early twenties when he was persuaded by the late Albert Fox to accept the pastorate of the Sand Lake Baptist Church. He had attained success in the newspaper profession, had delivered an impassioned speech at the Union State Convention and thereby hastened the adoption of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, and had ^{attained} a position which assured a liberal competence in time.

The year 1863 was one of the most depressing periods of the Civil War. One of my father's brothers was lying wounded in a hospital near the field of Gettysburg, and one of my mother's brothers was dying in a Confederate military prison. Death had invaded nearly every household. The light of a better day seemed far away. Richmondⁿ remained as firm as the Rock of Gibraltar. Hope prevailed, but it languished at times while waiting for the end of a fratricidal struggle.

My father accepted the call to your church. That edifice was to him a shrine which called for lasting worship. In poor health, encumbered with many cares, he filled his place joyously and successfully. At the end of three years, he was convinced that he could wield greater influence in the newspaper field. So he returned to his first love. Until the end of his short life—for he died in his thirty-second year—he held the members of the Sand Lake Baptist Church in constant esteem. They were his brothers and they remained his support until the end. He was a builder of character, a molder of souls.

I wish to present two extracts from my parent's Diary for the year 1863. The first extract is dated Sunday, September 12, 1863. It follows:

"This has been a great day for my soul, and for my little church. Got up at 7. Found it raining. After breakfast walked to Sabbath School. Despite

storm, 49 scholars and 13 teachers were present. Talked to the scholars. A goodly audience present. Preached from the text, "Today, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." Deeply feeling was shown. After dinner called with Brother (Albert) Fox on his mother, and saw his aged grandmother. Lay down for a short rest from 5 to 6, and thought over spiritual truths. At 6:30, walked to church with Brother Fox, and helped him prepare for service. To my astonishment the house was filled. Preached extemporaneously from the text, "And the door was shut." Gave earnest invitation to come forward. To my astonishment, again, six did so, and a blessed season of prayer was enjoyed. The Lord can work wonders."

I quote from the second extract, under date of Sunday, October 4, 1863:

"Up at an early hour. Prepared the groundwork of a sermon on communion and baptism. Attended Sabbath School--108 scholars and 24 teachers. Preached to an audience densely packed; hundreds unable to procure admission. Found Brother Fox's grounds thronged on reaching there. At 2 o'clock met converts, marched with them to enclosure, and buried the forty in the baptismal grave. The Lord filled my soul with great joy. Three thousand people were present; 300 teams were standing about. At 4, rode to Mr. Tabor's, saw Ruth, talked and prayed with her. At 6:30 held conference meeting; many new inquirers. At 7:30 held services at which Brothers O'Bonnell and Waltermire, and the forty converts, spoke for Jesus."

From the preceding one may gain some idea of the fruitful gathering which ensued during the pastorate of my father. He built wisely and well, and those who preceded and followed him as pastors of this hallowed church are associated with him eternally in a glorious mission.

"Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea."

Ever faithfully yours,

Albert F. Demers.

Bro, Dec. 30, 1901