

the youngest in the family apparently contributed to his being a very shy boy. When he began school at the age of seven his teacher (described as an "Irish bachelor") ridiculed his shyness so badly that George considered himself a "semi-idiot" until he was thirty-five years old. Though the writer doesn't say what happened to change that idea for George. For, by the time that he was thirty-five he had been the pastor of two churches, the superintendent of Grand Prairie Seminary, and a professor at Quincy College, in Quincy, Illinois. The town of Quincy was a Mississippi River town only sixty miles south from where Gray had been a student at Wesleyan College.

George Gray left home in 1854 at the age of twenty to attend Iowa Wesleyan College in Mount Pleasant, Iowa. It was just thirty miles west of the Mississippi River in southeastern Iowa. The obituary notice in the Minutes of the Central Illinois Conference for September 1914 says that he also went to Ohio Wesleyan College, but no further information about that has been discovered.

Although there is no information about how Gray got from his home in Piqua, Ohio to the college in Iowa the following is possible. The Cleveland, Columbus, and Cincinnati Railroad was built in 1850. By 1852 both the Michigan Southern and the Michigan Southern routes were completed to Chicago. The Chicago and Burlington branch of the C, B, & Q railroad went to Burlington. In 1851 a wooden plank road was built from Mount Pleasant, Iowa to Burlington. The first rail locomotive crossed the Mississippi River at Rock Island in April 1856 on the Chicago & Rock Island line. Along with that, Nebraska became a territory in 1854. Gray could have taken the train to Cleveland, then west to Chicago and on to Quincy, been ferried across the Mississippi, and taken the stage coach to Mount Pleasant.

In an August 1891 letter he described how he worked his way through college. He writes, "I worked my way through college at a great deal of sacrifice by sweeping rooms, ringing bells, and living on very cheap food; boarding myself part of the time on 25¢ a week; living on boiled potatoes...rice, bread & milk, with the milk made half water..."

He graduated from Wesleyan on June 20, 1858 after delivering the salutatory address to his class. It was just ten years before the little village of Saugatuck, Michigan was to become incorporated. It didn't mean anything to him then, but it would become important to him during the last fourteen years of his life.

After graduation from Iowa Wesleyan there is a two year gap until he was received into the Central Illinois Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1860 with a group of sixteen other candidates. He was assigned as a provisional pastor at Hamilton, Illinois. Hamilton is town near the Mississippi River, directly south of Mount Pleasant, Iowa where he went to school. He stayed there two years. During that time he married Sarah Boyes of Metamora, a town just northeast of Peoria, in 1862. He must have known Sarah while at college because the Northwest Christian Advocate newspaper account of the 50th wedding anniversary mentions a "delightful personal tribute" to Mrs. Gray from a "fellow student with Mrs. Gray in the early days of Iowa Wesleyan..."

During the same year that he was married he was assigned to the pastorate of the Methodist Church in Onarga, Illinois. Onarga was almost as far east in the state as Hamilton was west. The farmers of the neighboring villages of that part of Illinois brought with them the conviction that a reasonable education was essential for their children. So, in early 1863 a group of people under the leadership of neighboring Methodist clergy and laymen met at Onarga to discuss