

For one year Gray was assigned as the pastor of the church at Rushville, Illinois in 1880. Then, without any further comment, the Minutes of the Illinois Annual Conference of 1881 noted, in response to the question "Have any been transferred & to what conference?" Gray had transferred to the Arkansas Conference.

GRAY IN ARKANSAS

Once again there is a gap of a year this time before Gray is listed as a member of the Arkansas Conference of the records of 1882. He stayed in Arkansas for the next ten years, in one capacity or another. Apparently he came to work in the Freedman's Aid Society, though no hint of any experience or interest in this field had surfaced in any of the previous records or accounts of his work. The Freedman's Aid Society was the financial arm of the Methodist Church's educational ministry to the colored people of the South. The church had a number of schools for the recently freed slaves, and it was the responsibility of the FAS to raise the money to operate those schools. Perhaps it was George Gray's apparent ability for administration that prompted his change to this work.

At the Tenth Session of the Arkansas Conference in February 1882 the Minutes report that Gray was the Secretary of the Conference's Board of Church Extension, the President of Central University in Little Rock, Secretary of the Committee on Education, and Chairman of the FAS's report. As usual, there is no information as to either how or why he was in all these positions in his first year in the conference, and himself only 48 years of age. His rapid beginning is all the more mysterious in view of his disappointing experience just ten years away.

In the appointment listings for the next nine years Gray is reported as the Western Agent for the Freedman's Aid Society. But in 1888 it lists his port office address as Chicago, though by 1892 his address has changed to Cincinnati, Ohio. Then the following year, after his trip to Omaha as Editor of the General Conference newspaper, he transferred back to the Central Illinois Conference with an address in Galesburg.

GRAY IS BACK IN ILLINOIS

In 1893 he was received back into the Central Illinois Conference as the Secretary of the Methodist City Evangelism. At this time his address is listed as Galesburg. But in the following year he is now the Secretary of the "American City Evangelization Society" and his address is Epworth House in Chicago. His titles change from year to year, as they did in Arkansas, but his address remains "Chicago" though his home is still in Evanston, Illinois.