

DEATH of GRAY

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On December 11, 1913 the Head Resident of the Forward Movement settlement house in Chicago, Miss Mary Dix wrote that the doctor (Gray) was ill and that he "seemed to have lost courage". The next day a letter from the "Ass't Supt" was sent to the new caretaker, J.W. Schreckengust of Saugatuck, that "Dr. Gray was sick and it will be some time before it will be possible for him to come to the Park".

Gray died on December 21, 1913 "after 16 days illness". He was 79 years old. A funeral service for him was held in the First Methodist Church according to the Minutes of the 59th Annual Session of the Central Illinois Conference which met at Kenwaukee, Illinois on September 16, 1914. The funeral service was conducted by Dr. T.B. Frost with the assistance of Dr. Frank W. Gunsaulus. Some accounts say that Gray was an "Associate Pastor" with Gunsaulus at Central Methodist Church.

It is ironic that a letter was written to Gray in October by a friend of his in Miami, Florida who said, "...I am confident that if Mrs. Gray and yourself would spend the severe part of the winter here it would prolong your life for many years, which I know it has done for me..."

The Executive Committee of the Forward Movement met at the office of Edward G. Pauling (a real estate agent & member of 4th Presbyterian Church) on December 26, 1913. Six men were present. The Minutes of that meeting begin, "Absent, Dr. George Gray..." Then they continue with, "The eloquence of sadness is expressed by the rollcall. At no previous meeting of the Executive Committee, Board of Directors, or Membership of the Forward Movement, during the 17 years since the Forward Movement was started, has the beloved founder and incomparable leader of the Forward Movement been recorded as absent. The General Superintendent has obeyed a final call, forward and upward..." Then followed a summary of the work and devotion of Gray for the past twenty years.

When the annual meeting of the Forward Movement was held at their settlement house location at 1356 West Monroe Street on March 9, 1914 the minutes read as follows. "One thought brought all present into sympathetic relation as all missed the grasp of a vanished hand and the sound of a voice that is still. Lack of the physical presence (of Gray) was felt by each as a personal loss. He was present in the picture on the wall that revealed his kindly face and in the heroic bust upon the mantel".

In the 1912-13 copy of the Evanston residence directory George and Sarah Gray are recorded as living at 1639 Hinman Avenue. In the 1914 copy there is no listing, not even of Mrs. Gray.

This account of the life of George Gray was written by the Rev. G. William Lankton, the current Director of the Presbyterian Camps of Saugatuck, Michigan, which was begun by Mr. Gray. Mr. Lankton is a staff member of the Presbytery of Chicago (1966-). He is a former pastor of churches in Mountainview, Wyoming & Holly, Michigan.