PRAIRIE PREACHER

Edited by ROBERT S. RAYMOND

I. INTRODUCTION

THE REVEREND E. O. RAYMOND, my grandfather, came to Kansas as a Methodist minister in August, 1888, at the age of 36, with his wife and four children, and settled on a farm halfway between Wilsey and Delavan in Morris county. He had to farm because no small frontier church could provide a living for his family.

Elbert Olin Raymond was born July 14, 1852, in a one-room log house, in Attica, Ohio, the son of Jepperson and Elizabeth Matilda Robinson Raymond. In 1856 Jepperson and Elizabeth moved their family, including Alice R., Eva A., Elbert Olin, Edwin G., and Frank J., to Stark county, Illinois. E. O. Raymond was graduated from Hedding College in Abingdon, Ill., and in 1876 joined the Central Illinois [Methodist] Conference.

On December 24, 1879, E. O. married Laura Elizabeth Scott. The daughter of John and Phoebe Ann Scott, Laura had been born July 1, 1854, in Hacketstown, N.J., and later moved with her father's family to Stark county, Illinois. Laura was one of nine Scott children including Julia, Frances, Will, Anna, John, Alva, Charles, and Rose. The family of E. O. and Laura Scott Raymond eventually totaled seven children. Leroy, Scott, Harry, and Anna Elizabeth were born in Illinois, and Glenn Theodore, Rollin, and Paul after the move to Kansas.

The following excerpts from the E. O. Raymond autobiography, written from 1922 to 1928, describe the hardships of a Kansas preacher's life with a family of seven children. The autobiography covers the years 1852 to 1922 and comprises 115 typewritten pages when transcribed from his handwritten journals. The first half describes frontier life in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, where he grew up, was educated for the ministry, married, and served several pastorates.

Two events persuaded E. O. Raymond to move his family to Kansas. First, he contracted
pneumonia and was advised by his doctor to move to a drier climate. Second, his sister Alice had married a minister, Theodore Henry, and they had settled near Wilsey. The last half of his autobiography related his experiences while preaching at churches at Wilsey, Delavan, Council Grove, Herington, Topeka, Overbrook, Havensville, Centralia, Westmoreland, Olivet, Dunlap, and Mount Ida. He retired at age 70 in 1922, after 43 years as a Methodist minister, and died in 1935.

II. THE REMINISCENCES
WILSEY AND DELAVAN, 1888-1893

We remained at Raritan [Ill.] until August of the second year, and then loaded all of our stuff onto a Santa Fe car at Medford, a few miles south of Raritan, prepaid the freight to Diamond Springs, Kansas.5 Put my brother Frank in charge of the car, and “let her go Galligher.” Mother Raymond was then with Alice and we all got together again. It was a green foolish trick to send Frank alone with the car, for we had four horses and several head of Jersey cattle in it and he was young and inexperienced, but he got through all right, safe and sound.

The Wilsey Circuit, on which Brother Henry lived, was without a preacher. He had left and gone to school, and we were transferred to that work and promised three hundred dollars for the last half of the year. But there came a dry spell and spoiled their crops greatly and they did not raise that much by considerable.

A good many of the people had come from Illinois and some from the Terre Haute charge, and we felt at home at once and joined our fortunes with the pioneers on the “Front” in Kansas. I had a work consisting of Wilsey, Olive Branch Schoolhouse, Delavan, and Highland.6 Had only one church; that was at Highland, out on the prairie.

Because there was no place in either of the towns Wilsey or Delavan where they could bestow my goods, they rented a house for me on a farm halfway between the two towns on the main road and just a mile south of Brother and Sister Henry’s. It was an eighty-acre farm with some improvements and a good well of water, which was very fortunate. The man who owned the farm had not raised anything and could not stay there for the winter, so he moved to Osage City, the coal mining center, and went to mining coal, which he understood. He was done farming. As my health was improving I was getting along all right. Mother Laura thought it was better for us to stay there for a while, so we bought the eighty acres for a thousand dollars, and had a tussle to get it paid for. Paid over five hundred dollars interest before I got through.

The children had a good school one mile away, in sight of Sister Alice’s house. When we arrived at Brother Henry’s our stuff had all been hauled up from Diamond Springs and was in this house on the farm, where it stayed for ten years. Five of which we preached at Wilsey. We put our stock on good pasture and soon had all that we needed of cows, horses, pigs, and poultry. And since Laura and I had both been raised on farms, it came quite natural.

The people did not demand much of us except to fill appointments on Sunday, and were very willing that we should do anything that we could do to help make a living for self and family. We cultivated what ground was broken up, and broke up considerably more and improved the place what we could, and lived like the people whom we served. When they did not have money to spare they gave us things that they could spare to help out our living, such as meat, grain, vegetables and fruit. But as I think of it now, it would be difficult to get together a more representative

4. Theodore Potter Henry was born March 27, 1847, in Hackettstown, N. J., and moved with his family in 1851 to Illinois. He joined the Central Illinois (Methodist) Conference in 1871. On May 13, 1874, he was married to E. O. Raymond’s sister Alice, and in 1888—Alice Marie Henry Comp. A Tribute to the Res. T. P. Henry by His Granddaughter (no imprint), pp. 6, 8, 11, 13.

5. These towns can all be found in east-central and northeastern Kansas in the counties of Morris, Dickinson, Shawnee, Osage, Pottawatomie, and Nemaha.


7. Diamond Springs was located in Morris county, and was active as a post office from 1839 to 1863, and from 1898 to 1930.7—Ibid., p. 35.

8. See the introduction.

9. "Mother Raymond" is referring to his wife, Laura Scott Raymond.

10. "Alice" is referring to his sister, Alice Henry (see footnote 4).

11. The term "circuit" describes "a number of appointments in different locations" that a "preacher" visits in regular succession.2—Cyclopedia of Methodism (Philadelphia: Everts & Stewart, 1878), p. 219.

12. No exact location has been determined for the Olive Branch school house or for Highland, but likely they were both located in Morris county.
lot of families in any country anywhere, east or west.

There were Simeon McCulloch,\(^{13}\) Robert and Jake, Mary and the rest; William Ray and family, Henry Kingman and family, George Tebow, Doctor Ray, Noah Riley, Dave McKinney, Frank Ingmire, William Hopkins, Elijah Dixon, Frank Swift, William Markley, Father Houston, George and Will Amrine, Albert Ray, Bratton, M. F. Wireman, Mr. Wakefield, Dad Vining, Uncle John Evans, Frank and Henry Schuyler, Father Ray, Will, John, Newton and "Daddy" Fay, Charles Whiting, F. R. Wyckoff, Walter Bell, "Pappy" Taylor and family, Pet-tycord, George Coffin, Kinkel family, H. Blair, Doctor Carey. Every one of these families was a center of religious influence. And they all combined to make it a country where the church and religious life was respected.

[When we first arrived] Theodore and Alice met us at White City and we went first up to Jenkins' store and met the Jenkins men and then we drove down to Olive Branch, across open prairie most of the way, but passed in sight of the Highland church, one of our preaching places.

When we got down to their home, we found that they had built a story-and-a-half house, with two rooms downstairs and two upstairs unfinished. They had a well with a windlass and bucket, a corn crib and smokehouse combined, a hen house and wagon shed, and a small pasture fenced east of the house and a small field broken out, and the rest was all open prairie. Sam Seek had his house up, but we could go to Wilsey across open prairie most of the way, and in fact I drove to Highland across lots over open prairie most of the way, had to drive around Tierts' farm and one or two more.

The old Olive Branch schoolhouse was there and it was, or had been for some years, a preaching place for the Methodists. Was one of the first preaching places in the country. It was called Hackett's Schoolhouse and was a part of the first Methodist circuits in the country, even before we had a church at Council Grove. The first time I preached there was one Sunday afternoon and we had a house full. People came in farm wagons. There was but one buggy that he had brought from Illinois, and Albert Ray had a two-seated spring wagon, a Democrat, as we called them then. When people came to church then they brought the whole family with them in a wagon. Brother T. P. Henry had brought his buggy with him too, I believe.

We were met by Uncle John Evans and Frank, Uncle Sim McCulloch and family, Father Ray and family, Elijah Dixon and family, and all the old timers. They did enjoy a regular old-fashioned Methodist meeting, and they gave us a most cordial welcome. Old Brother Houston was there with his family, a blessed old soul, and Brother Samuels, an Englishman, and Brother and Sister Bratton. Instead of feeling like strangers, we felt as tho we had only just come home, for many of them were from Illinois. Brother George Tebow was there too, and I never had a better friend than Brother Tebow. He was a regular pioneer, and he helped us very much in many ways. He and old Mr. Fay were always an inspiration to us.

At Wilsey we held our services in the Presbyterian Church. They had built the church but were unable to plaster it or seat it. So the Methodists went in with them and finished it and furnished it so as to hold meetings there. The Presbyterians had services only occasionally, and the one house accommodated us all for a few years. Then they got a preacher from White City who got jealous because he failed to do as well as I did with a Fourth of July address at Delavan. Some of his friends, members, lived near Delavan, and they asked that he be invited. Said that Brother Raymond had monopolized the whole thing so far and that they wanted their minister to have a chance. He came puffed up beyond measure with the idea of personal importance that was fatal for "Out West" at any time. He failed to get started off right and got confused and embarrassed, and made a mess of the whole thing without getting anywhere, and when he quit he got no applause.

I extended to him every courtesy and asked him to speak first and take all of the time he wanted. I had spoken there many times and was glad for a change. That seemed to go to his head, and he started in with the wrong idea of what was expected. I have made failures myself and know how it feels, but after they sang a patriotic song, Doctor Ray in his usual way

\(^{13}\) There are some variations of spelling for McCulloch, e.g., McCullock, in the original handwritten manuscript.
introduced me as their resident pastor, and so on, quite unique. I knew that those people were just common folks from the farm homes of the surrounding country and had come there at evening for a celebration because we had no grove nor any hall nor other place to go. They wanted to visit and hear a short spacy speech and go home. I was very fortunate in meeting their wishes and heartily cheered.

But the next Sunday our people were given notice that we could not use their Presbyterian church at Wilsey any more. Once their claims of an educated and superior ministry failed to function. When our Methodists moved out they took the Bible, the organ and all of the chairs and should have taken the plaster off the walls with them. We then held meetings in the schoolhouse and then rented the Christian Church, and finally in a few years built a church of our own. Brother Henry was preaching for them by that time, however.

It is strange that none of the other churches have the staying qualities in their machinery to go into a place and stay and keep things going until the country is thoroughly settled. But they come out afterwards and want to divide things up. If Wilsey had depended on the Presbyterian or the Christian church to keep alive a religious influence and services for the people to attend, there would not have been anything doing one-half of the time since I have known the place, and yet they have hung on and claimed to be a church. Seem to think that they have done the work needed.

When we got out to Kansas, August 28, 1888, they were putting up prairie hay, and it was fine fall weather, but better than we were used to. Theodore was working with a neighbor, Frank Brown, but to keep things going they needed another man, one to bring the hay in to the stack. For that they used a homemade rake called a “go-devil.” To use that the driver had to walk, and it took quite a little travel to clean up a field. I thought that I could do that easily. So I started in enthusiastically, and lasted about half an hour.

I was weak and nervous and had no appetite and soon found out that I needed tempering up to it. I kept at it as much as I could stand, and Theodore was very much afraid that I might get sick, and then he would have a job on hand. So he held me back all the time. We had considerable of hay to put up, and since I had come out with several head of stock that made it necessary to put up more hay. Hay was a reasonably good crop and we had plenty of hay land. So we kept at it and before long I began to get a Kansas appetite. I was hungry all the time, could eat fat pork and beans and corn bread and anything. Things that I had not dared to touch for years now seemed to be a substantial diet, and I got to feeling well.

Had quite a lot of work to do to get things ready for winter, sheds and stable and corrals and so kept out of doors and exercising and came through all right. We were all well and satisfied with Kansas. I soon started to hold some extra meetings and tried to round up the churches the best we could and keep them in going order, and so before we were aware of it Spring came.

And there is no more beautiful place to live than out on the prairie in springtime. Oh, the smell of it and the feeling of it! It’s fine. No finer place to be on this earth than out on the prairie in Kansas in spring and fall.

While we men were working together and having a good time, Alice and Laura and the children were enjoying it as much as we were. They too were able to throw off a lot of responsibility and care, and just enjoy God’s out o’doors. They were so glad that they had each other for fellowship and company that they forgot to be lonesome. They could see the children grow and get strong and lose that pinched and unnatural look so peculiar to town-raised children. The little ones could run and play and did not have to be called back every few minutes or guarded against the human vultures that play on the streets of the town and always hang around your place if you have children.

While we were now deprived of a lot of things that we did enjoy in our work in Illinois, we now were really enjoying life on the frontier. We were without experience and did a lot of foolish things for a new country, yet we stuck it out and learned a lot of useful lessons.

When Theodore [had come] out to Kansas [in 1886] he moved on to a quarter section belonging to the Reverend T. J. Pierson,14 who

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14 Rev. T. J. Pearson was an "ordained Congregational minister," and as a young man was "ordained a minister in the Methodist Church, for thirteen years he was a member of the Central Illinois Conference. In 1882 he settled with his wife and six children on a farm near Cornell Grove, Kansas. In 1885, he went to Strong City, Kansas, as pastor of the Congregational church."—George Willard Nelson, A History of the First Presbyterian Church of Herington, Kansas (Herington: Advertiser Print, n. d.), pp. 22, 25.
was also a Central Illinois Conference preacher. He had not made much at farming and wanted to get his children into school. So he took the pastorate of the Congregationalist Church at Cottonwood Falls and left the pastorate of the Congregationalist church at Diamond Springs that he had been serving. He recommended Brother Henry, who took up the work, which necessitated his driving about twelve miles every Sunday morning and back in the evening, or sometimes staying for evening services and coming home in the night. The road to Diamond Springs was over open prairie, through ranches and over rock hills and around gulleys that would make a tender-foot faint away. But Theodore kept it up faithfully for several years. While they lived on the Pierson place he built their house and had some prairie broke out and got ready to move onto their own place.

But this was quite a task, for there was not a thing on their quarter [section] except coyotes and grass. Had to build the cellar walls from the bottom up, and get all the material and hire help to do the building. So they had no time to get lonesome. But they had done a lot of work and had a good start in the two years before we came. There was not a tree or bush in sight. All had to be planted and cared for. You cannot realize now that it is the same place.

But it did not come by accident or mishap, but by honest persistent effort. Hard work and a lot of it. Some had developed all this country and brought it in from a howling wilderness to what it is today. And they did it in the hardest way and with the least possible help by way of improved machinery or methods. And do we give them reverence? We ought to have a Pioneers' Day and be compelled to go and stand beside their graves with uncovered heads. And just be made to stand there and think for half an hour.

We get into our autos and get out on these hard-surfaced roads and go whizzing along and never stop to think how they came to be there, and many don't care a whoop either. Many of these ungrateful and spoiled citizens never did any good hard day's work in their lives, such as the pioneers did, and yet they are living to enjoy the fruits of their labors. If they were thrown upon their own resources to provide for their own wants or die, the whole country would be strewn with their worthless carcasses. In a large measure the young generation has lost respect for honest toil. They do not take seriously the commandment, "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work," and verily, verily I say unto you, they shall have

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15. The complete title of this Methodist conference is Central Illinois Conference, M.E. Church. It was organized in 1896, originally under the name of Peoria Conference.

E. O. Raymond was assigned churches on several occasions when the minister he replaced had "fallen down." One of these appointments was at Council Grove where "after the shock and embarrassment of the brother's leaving passed over," he "got the work well in hand . . . [and] had a glorious year." Part of Council Grove's Main street is shown in this early photograph.

their reward. The violators of God's laws never go unpunished.

So one generation succeeds its predecessor and learns by experience the things to use to advantage and what to avoid. We can never pay our debts to the pioneers, but we can all do our best to continue the progress they initiated.

I remember that one day in the fall of the second year at Wilsey, I began a revival meeting and at the same time was improving our farm and getting it in shape to live on and take care of what little stock we had.

We had to have sheds to protect the stock from winter storms and no money to buy lumber, and no timber closer than south of Diamond Springs. So Theodore and I started off a little after daylight to get each a load of poles to build our sheds with. Had to cut and load and get there and back and over to Wilsey in time for church services, which I could not do in the time we had. It was time for church to begin when we got home, and Laura was worrying. So I unhitched my team and put them in the stable, and got out and hitched to a cart the horse that was at home, and drove to Wilsey as fast as I could, four miles. And when I got there they were singing and waiting for the preacher. And the house was packed from one end to the other and a lot of people standing. I got to the front and preached the sermon that I had been thinking about all day, and we had a good meeting, fine spirit and attention. Then all I had to do was to drive back home, unharness and feed my team, do my chores, eat some supper, and go to bed feeling that perhaps we had done a full day's work for one "lazy preacher." We had no telephones and no autos, but we did have some good horses, thank the Lord.

At that time the old soldiers had quite a strong G.A.R. organization at Wilsey and we began the celebration of Memorial Sunday and Decoration Day. As I remember, the first one was held at the Christian church, then new and over in the east end of town, across south of the school house, and we had a wonderful crowd and a big day. I think that they had had a sermon preached once before on the Sunday, but had not observed Decoration Day until

17. This Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) organization is possibly the Meriden Post no. 926 at Wilsey.—Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Kansas, Roster of the Members and Posts (Topeka, 1894), p. 124.
then. And I remember that Frank Hannah read the call from a copy of the "Youth's Companion."

From then on I always had the friendship and companionship of all the "Old Soldiers" in Morris County, and we had many happy meetings and associations together. I spoke to them often, always did my best, and always received a warm congratulation, sincere appreciation and applause. They were a bunch of fine men, good neighbors and loyal friends, and I never had the friendship of any group of men that I appreciated or enjoyed more.

Our work for five years consisted of rounding up the families who were already there and welcoming the new ones as they came in, and building up a community of good citizens.

We had many hardships and discouragements in those days. 1889 was dry and we raised very little surplus stuff to sell. Hot winds burned up the corn and made the grass short, and for three or four years we just barely made a living. There were times when we had no flour in the house and depended on corn meal. Our potatoes failed and we lived on beans instead. Meat was scarce, and we always could get rabbits and quails. Always some way to get along. Mrs. George Cofin told me that sometimes when they could not buy shoes for their children in winter, she sewed pieces of old quilts on their feet instead and kept them in the house.

Our church people were always loyal and sympathetic, and while they had very little money, they always divided what they did have to live on, and we did not suffer. The women had to make their own clothes and those for their children and do a lot of patching. One thing we did not compromise on severely was our common schools. We always tried to have a good school for our children, and many of them who graduated from the common school never got any more school advantages and yet made fine intelligent progressive citizens.

We did not have a Methodist church in either Wilsey or Delavan while I preached for them. At Wilsey we used the Presbyterian church and the school house until it burned down and then they built a church.

I preached at Delavan in the morning, and many times drove back to Brother S. McCulloch's and ate dinner and then drove on to Highland. Brother S. McCulloch was a very fine old man and his wife was a saintly woman. They had a large and interesting family, all good loyal Methodists and good workers. They were cultured, educated and refined. They read and studied, taught school, and some of them attended our State Agricultural College at Manhattan. It was a fine place for a preacher to go and he always found a cordial welcome. I always appreciated their kind hospitality and their loyalty to me and my work. We buried him and son Jacob and daughter—at Delavan. Also Mother McCulloch as the years went by, and hope to meet them all in Heaven.

The five years passed rapidly. The work grew heavier and our family had increased to six children 18 by then, and it required more money for our living and more time to care for the growing children. So at Conference 19 in the spring of 1895 I asked for a location 20 and it was granted. Which was a great mistake. I should have asked for supernumerary 21 relation.

Only a few weeks after Conference 22 a son 23 was born, and because of my wife's condition it seemed impossible for us to move, and I felt that it would be better now for them to have a minister who could give his whole time to the

19. "Conference" here and throughout the remainder of the article is making reference to the annual sessions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Kansas Annual Conference.
20. It is likely that the author means 1889 rather than 1895, as the Annual Conference minutes for 1892 showed that "E. O. Raymond was granted a location at his own request."—Methodist Episcopal Church, Kansas Annual Conference, Minutes of the Thirty-Seventh Session, Kansas City, 1892 (Kansas City: Kansas City Gazette Co., 1892), p. 9.
21. "Location" for a Methodist minister meant "formal cessation from the travelling ministry of the Methodist connection; by one who thereby is no longer under the appointment of a bishop, but who does not lose his status as a Local Preacher. Location may be granted by a formal vote of an Annual Conference when a member requests it. Many otherwise acceptable and useful men find it necessary to locate for personal reasons—for instance, family conditions. After location, one takes his place in the ranks of the local preachers, and his membership goes into the local church where he continues to work under the direction of his pastor or the district superintendent in such ways as may be possible."—Encyclopedia of World Methodism, v. 2 (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1974), p. 1441. Historically the full-time minister in early Methodism was called a "travelling preacher" in contrast to the local preacher, who was part-time.
22. "Supernumerary Preachers, in the Methodist Episcopal Church, are such as are by reason of impaired health temporarily unable to perform effective work. They may receive an appointment, or be left without one, according to the judgment of the Annual Conference to which they belong. Whenever supplying a charge, they are subject to the same limitations and discipline as effective ministers."—Encyclopedia of Methodism, p. 843.
23. This son is the seventh and final child, Paul.—"Elbert Olin Raymond Autobiography," p. 75.
work. So I came home from Conference feeling sad and lost and disheartened, but took up my life work as it came to me that day.

COUNCIL GROVE, 1893

It so happened that in only a few weeks, after our baby was born and wife was up and going strong again, the preacher at Council Grove fell down and had to leave the work. The presiding elder appointed me to take that place, which I did. After the shock and embarrassment of the brother’s leaving passed over and we got the work well in hand, we had a glorious year. We learned to love and appreciate the people, and they did certainly receive me royally. It seemed to be a mutual adaptation. Our church was filled at every service and often packed to the doors. It called for the best that was in me, and I responded with all of my power. We had a very superior congregation there, and it was a delight to prepare and preach for them, for they appreciated the effort.

We had two editors of the county papers, the county superintendent of schools, teachers of the city schools and their superintendent, two of the leading lawyers of the county, a member of Congress, and several leading business men of the county seat. They were all very kind and helpful, seemed to be delighted with our ministry and were very encouraging and complimentary. Then, too, we had two old men from the old Central Illinois Conference, one Elder Henderson Ritchie and one Doctor O.S. Munsell. Elder Ritchie had been for several years a presiding elder in Illinois, was a strict theologian and a debater in those old days of conflict with the Universalists and Campbellites, and he delighted in “skinning them alive.” He could be very severe and sarcastic. One of the old-time presiding elders who gloried in the distinction and exaltation.

I was afraid of him and expected him to jump on to me, as he had done with some of our preachers at Council Grove. But I was very much mistaken. He took me to his heart like a father, and helped and encouraged me greatly. Glad to have one of the (his) boys from his old Central Illinois Conference for his preacher. And he entertained me often at his home, advised and counseled [sic] with me like a father and true friend. Amen and praise the Lord! For if he had been against me I would have been a

Edwin Locke (1857-1918) was presiding elder of the Methodist Church, Topeka district, and served as secretary of the Kansas Conference from 1894 to 1903. He sent a telegram to E. O. Raymond asking him to come to Topeka as “another dear brother had gone wrong.”


25. Henderson Ritchie, a native of Illinois, came to Kansas in 1875 and “engaged in farming and stock-raising.” He was active in Republican politics, and was “a resident of Council Grove for thirty years.” He died in 1918.—Kansas City (Mo.) Journal, March 3, 1918, Topeka Daily Capital, June 28, 1892.

26. According to one account, Dr. Oliver S. Munsell came to Kansas in 1878, after retiring from the Methodist ministry in Illinois. He “engaged in the peaceful avocation of a farmer on Hill Spring farm, Morris county.”—Topeka Daily Capital, February 23, 1881.
goner, for I was afraid of him at first and he gave me great concern.

Oliver S. Munsell was then an old man but a great scholar. He had been for eighteen years president of our Methodist College at Bloomington, Illinois, and was editor of the psychology textbook that I used in my college course. He and his wife attended my church regularly and he gave strict attention. I felt very small indeed trying to entertain a man like that. But he was a kind-hearted generous soul. He took me to his home and put his library and his services at my command and was a God-send to me there and then.

I was working on a sermon one Saturday night and it was about midnight and I got stuck. Looked out of my window and saw a light still in his window. I went over to his study, and found him very kind and somewhat surprised. And he said, “Son, what is the matter?” I said, “I am stuck on my sermon for tomorrow morning. The text is Psalms 37:6, “He will bring forth thy righteousness as the light and thy judgment as the noonday.” I said I felt all right until I got to studying the word “judgment.”

“I have gone over all the books that I have with me and know that you are an expert on Psychology and do not want to offend you nor your spirit of worship by making a mistake in my interpretation of judgment as it is used in this text, judgment developed until the noonday.”

“Oh,” he said, “I see your point. Sit down and let me see about this.” That room was very quiet for ten or fifteen minutes and then he opened up and gave me a wonderful lecture. I listened and retained all of it that I could hold, and went back and finished up my sermon and went to bed.

In the morning I told the people that I knew what Doctor Munsell said in his textbook that I studied in college, but that last night about midnight he gave me this interpretation of this application to the text. And I had it down pat. It pleased the old man wonderfully. He was delighted to think that he and his life work had been recognized in his home town.

Two things to learn from this: It costs but little to recognize other people and make them feel that they are useful and appreciated. That a good sermon, is the product of just so much good honest effort. Good sermons are not found on easy street. Doctor Munsell was from that day until his death a great friend and admirer of mine. I got next to him by recognizing his real ability when he did not expect it. He had been sadly neglected by our preachers.

We finished up the year in fine shape and brought victory. The entire congregation by a rising vote, put by Doctor Munsell, and the entire quarterly conference petitioned the Conference [1894] for my return to them for the next year and appointed a committee to go to Conference to make the request. But when they did, Bishop Vincent 27 said, “Oh, he is retired and that is a first class appointment and we must give that to a member of the Conference.” I had been in more than ten years and out less than three months. Selah! And the reason I was out I have stated. I was disappointed, and the church was outraged, and women cried in the street where I met them after Conference. They said, “We took the man you sent us, paid his moving expenses, and he disgraced us and the cause, and now we have the man we want, and all that we ask is to let him alone.”

They sent a man there and the people were disheartened and felt that they had not been well treated, and were cold. The poor man failed to win them and time was lost and bad feeling engendered. All for what? If I had known enough to ask for supernumerary relation they could not have pulled that stunt.

There is jealousy among preachers, and good old Elder John R. Madison said to me, “Raymond, if you were not half as good a preacher as you are, you would find a more cordial welcome in this Conference. They don’t want a man who goes up.” I had transferred to Kansas and taken a country appointment to regain my health, and now that I had served one place five years and come back to Conference with a call to a first class place at my own county seat, it was a different story. The Lord bless their little envious souls! They are all dead now, and I am alive.

We took the best report to Conference that year that had ever gone up from Council Grove. Everything paid up in full and left money in the treasury. A good feeling. Much

27. Bishop John H. Vincent was president of the 39th session of the Kansas Conference, 1894.—Methodist Episcopal Church, Kansas Conference, Official Minutes of the Thirty-Ninth Session, Abilene, 1894 (n. p.; Edwin Locke, n. d.), p. 5.
was due to the splendid services of Miss Mary Fox and Mr. F. Behring, who handled our finances successfully. Due to a better organization and a better understanding and more work. It took Council Grove several years to recover from what they considered bad treatment from the Kansas Conference officials. They did not think they had been considered honestly.

HERINGTON, 1894-1895

I went back home from Conference wondering about some men. But feeling that if God permitted it, it would all work for good for His Kingdom. So I began to plan for my work at home, for more farming, more stock and greater income.

I had got things going in good shape and my corn planted, and had gone to take the planter home, when a carriage drove into our house, in which were our presiding elder and a member of the official board from Herington, a young, growing railroad town twelve miles west of us, while Council Grove was twelve miles east.

Since I was not at home and they wanted to get back to Herington for the elder to get his train to his next appointment for quarterly conference, they left and asked my wife to have me come to Herington as soon as possible for they wanted to see me on important business. That Brother Ross, their preacher, "had a bad throat and was going away." I knew that that was not so, for I had just seen him at Conference and he was a fine specimen of physical manhood. But after scolding around awhile, I decided to drive over to Herington and see what was the matter.

I found that Brother Ross had vacated the place, surrendered his parchments and left for Oklahoma and taken his throat along, but not a very good reputation. He had recently attended an I.O.O.F. lodge meeting in Junction City as a delegate from Herington Lodge, and was met by a young woman, not his wife, and had

23. The "case of David W. Ross" was presented before the 1895 Kansas Annual Conference, "with a request from Brother Ross to be permitted to withdraw, and was permitted to do so, his credentials being deposited in the Conference Archives." — ibid., Fortieth Annual Session, Leavenworth, 1895, p. 11.
roomed with her at the hotel. Had offended a "traveling man" who was an adjuster for a Philadelphia insurance company and gotten into a discussion which attracted attention, and had got it into the newspapers and circulated around Herington and made him unpopular as a Methodist preacher. The church at Herington wanted a steady, unimpeachable man to take up the task of restoring confidence to a community that had been disgraced and humiliated.

The dear old Elder William Henderson said that he believed that my being left without an appointment was simply "providential," for a man to take that place must have wisdom, tact, and experience besides a good name; and that he believed it was my job. The church elected me for the rest of the Conference year at the same salary, gave me the rent of the parsonage, and allowed me to still live on our farm and give them what time I could besides the Sunday services, and I consented to do that.

A young growing railroad town is about the hardest place on earth to restore confidence in, but I thought there must be some avenue of approach and God is not dead, and it is His work and He has promised not to leave or forsake us. So I went at it very carefully and prayerfully.

The first Sunday, May 20th, I drove over in the morning, put my team in the livery stable, and went to the hotel and registered for dinner. When the last bell rang, I started for the church, only two blocks away. There were not two dozen people in the house and they were sitting around in groups whispering. I walked up into the pulpit and began the service, as the nothing had happened, from the text "Fear not, little flock, it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." Came thru all right, announced evening service, and went back to the hotel. By evening the news had spread, and we had a congregation of curiosity seekers that filled the house very respectably, and then I drove home and let it soak in.

It was a long hard pull, but finally the opportunity came. The wife of the master of the Masonic lodge died, and they wanted a preacher who was a Mason to preach her funeral, and after some effort, they failed to find the man. So they came to me and told me about it and asked me to preach the funeral. This woman was the matron of the Eastern Star, and we had their ritual at the burying, and it went off very satisfactorily. Then they told me that the Methodist preachers had usually been Masons and had acted as chaplains of their lodge and they had raised both Brother Randall and Brother S. Betts to the degree of Master Mason and asked me if I had ever thought of Masonry, and so forth.

I told him (Brother Wilson, who was acting "The West") that I thought favorably of the order, but that we had a large family, seven children, and that I could never spare the money to join, as I understood it was quite expensive. He told me that he was glad to know that, and that they needed a chaplain right now. That if I would like to join them, in consideration of my services, they would gladly confer the degrees at no expense to me. So I gave him my application. It was taken before the Lodge, investigation made, reported favorably and consent received from the Parkerville Lodge, 29 under whose jurisdiction I had my residence. And on I was raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason. And I have never to this date, March 8, 1928, moved my membership from there.

When I made my speech of gratitude to them, I told them that now since they had investigated my character and judged me worthy of this honor, I needed their fellowship in my peculiar relation to the people of their city. I felt embarrassed and handicapped by the unfortunate conduct of my predecessor, who had disgraced my calling and made it hard for me to be recognized as a minister among them. While I was entirely innocent of any wrong-doing myself, I had to stand the disgrace of his unfaithfulness.

They were a bunch of fine-spirited men, but had not thought of my position in that light. They made speeches and by personal promises assured me of their sympathy and guaranteed me their hearty cooperation and fraternal encouragement as long as my life was consistent among them. From that hour my stay and associations among the people of Herington were very pleasant.

The atmosphere was different, and they

29. The Masonic lodge of which E. O. Raymond was a member was the Kansas Lodge no. 307 in Herington, which was chartered February 10, 1886.—Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of Kansas, Proceedings, 1889-1891, v. 8, p. 1, 2, 3 (Kansas City, 1891), p. 125; ibid., Proceedings, 1936, v. 23, pt. 3 (n. p., 1930), p. 762.
treated me with cordiality and respect. They helped me in many ways to put my work across. I gave them one evening service and invited all Masons and their wives and lady friends to come and occupy the center of the church and have their own ushers and sing their own selections of songs and feel at home in my church. It pleased them wonderfully and created a fine spirit of fraternal fellowship that was very much needed, and appreciated by me and the church. Delightful.

We finished our year in fine shape, and they circulated and signed a petition for my return to them for another year, and the senior engineer in point of service on the Rock Island Railroad was appointed by the Rock Island Railroad men to handle the petition. "Those Wise Men" in the Cabinet flew up again and objected. I offered to give them back my Certificate of Location to go in regularly.

It was during that same year that the church at Council Grove was so seriously sore over their disappointment that the old presiding elder and the railroad representative just told them plainly that it would never do not to leave me alone at Herington, unless they wanted to kill the support of the railroad men and put the church out of business in Herington. The men did not, many of them, belong to the church, but their wives and families made up the large majority of the church’s support.

They cursed and discussed Brother Raymond pretty thoroughly, I was told; and since they "could find no fault in him," except that he had grown worldly minded and was making a success as a farmer and stockman, because he had to support his young family and had the ability to do it,—they decided to appoint me to the work as supply under the elder. I did not personally appear in any of their deliberations nor make any requests or suggestions. I just stayed out of it.

I had plenty of warm friends in the Conference, who treated me with every confidence and respect of Christian ministers and true brotherliness in Christ. Saint Paul and our blessed Savior had the same experience of lack of fidelity among the brethren that I had, with much the same result. It did them more harm than it did us, and the work went right along. "Trust in the Lord and do good." Give the Devil plenty of rope and he will always hang himself.

I attended a church dinner at the church in Herington a year ago. After thirty years of absence, I had a delightful reception. "Your labors shall not be in vain in the Lord." Then, Brother Ross's case was up before that session of the Conference and no one seemed anxious to take over the job, but after one more very hard year's work, it was in better shape and many wanted it. Selah!

During the two years that I served Herington, I made the acquaintance of some very fine men and women whom I always respected, and was glad to have known them. Looking at it now across thirty years of life and experience, I remember them as two very happy years of very hard work, perplexing conditions, many hindrances, and great victory. The good Lord was with us all the way and His grace sufficient.

The church and I worked together harmoniously. We had a good year the second year, a good revival, many converted, church strengthened, and closed the year in good shape. Left the church working harmoniously and the spirit of the Master shed abroad in our hearts and growing in grace and the knowledge of God. I went up to Conference with a fine report, and at the last quarterly conference the entire quarterly conference voted for our return. But I knew that the work of the Cabinet the last year had forestalled that, and they did vote against my re-admission and appointment. They said that I was a farmer and business man now, and the preachers, who had no other means of support, needed and were entitled to these first-class appointments. They never alleged one thing against my character or acceptability as a preacher, only that I was in the way of somebody who wanted the places for themselves and yet had no ability to make them for themselves. Amen!

I came home from that Conference and overcame all feelings of bitterness, and con-

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30. "Cabinet is a term sometimes employed to designate the bishop and presiding elders when, in session at an Annual Conference, they are engaged in arranging the appointments for the ensuing year." Encyclopedia of Methodism, p. 352.

31. Reference to "them" and in the following line to "they," apparently refers to the annual conference.

32. Apparently Raymond finished Ross's 1894 term at Herington and served again through 1895. In the 1895 conference "Appointment" he is listed as the "supplied minister for Herington."—Methodist Episcopal Church, Kansas Annual Conference, Minutes of the Fortieth Annual Session, p. 36.

33. Reference is being made to the 1896 annual conference held in Atchison.
cluded that the Lord was still on our side. We still had faith in God, a good home, a happy family, a blessed wife who never wavered in her faith or her helpfulness. Our family all had good health and were all doing well in school. We had the love and confidence of our neighbors, and all had a willingness to work, and we were glad to be relieved from the responsibilities of public service and able to live and labor together to raise our children in the fear and admonition of the Lord. And we prospered far beyond our expectations.

We worked and planned together. From our little start we soon had a fine herd of purebred Jersey cattle. Twenty or more fine Jersey cows, a span of black Percheron mares. One of these was imported, and the other registered Percheron, a fine purebred registered stallion of the same breeding; their produce was a good stout team of geldings. We had all of the hogs and chickens that we needed, and we knew how to take care of them.

COUNCIL GROVE, 1900-1905

We sold the land that we had out at Olive Branch and bought a quarter section two and a half miles west of Council Grove, and moved our family and stuff over there. We bought that quarter section cheap and made a good home, close to a good district school and only two and a half miles from a high school at Council Grove in plain sight of our home. We arranged it so that our children who had finished district school could drive over to the high school and continue their education and still live at home. They appreciated their opportunity and made good use of the advantages.

They made many friends in the school and in the church, Sunday School and Epworth League in Council Grove, and soon took their places in all of these activities and grew in knowledge and fine Christian character. We never regretted the change.

There was still plenty of opportunity to preach the Gospel. The brethren of the Conference knew where we lived, and they and the elder had plenty of work for us. I held quarterly meeting for the elder, who had a large district. Took up an appointment at Canning Creek Schoolhouse and at Helmick 34 and was able to assist in building a new church at Helmick. Was busy all of the time. There were more Sundays that I preached twice than those that I did not preach at all. Preached many funerals, and young people called on us for their wedding ceremonies. Our home was the scene of many weddings, there on the farm.

We were happy and contented, and the Lord was on our side and blessed us abundantly. We also had many deprivations and many struggles for existence incident to pioneer life.

We had moved over to the Council Grove farm in 1900. We had a good living, but money was hard to get and we regretted exceedingly that we could not give our children all of the things that we felt that they needed. But they were very brave and sensible and never complained or found fault with us. We appreciated them and praised the Lord for giving us such a fine family to love and who loved us and made our lives a joy despite our hard times.

TOPEKA, 1905-1906

After a few years, namely in the spring of [1905] the presiding elder of the Topeka district came to Council Grove and called me over to the parsonage. He said that he was short of good men and had a place for me, and wanted me now, since our children were well grown and we had prospered, to come back into the regular work. The church needed me.

I told him that I would go home and talk it over with my wife and would do exactly as she said.

We talked it over, and she said that she thought that my place was in the ministry. And that now since we had a farm home where we could come at any time if we wanted to, that she would be very glad to go back with me into the active work. So I told the elder, and that we would make only one reservation. That we should not be sent to any place that would interfere with the completion of the education of our children still at home, and that if he would consent to that, I would give him my Certificate of Location, and if the Conference decided to do that, to go ahead.

So my wife and I got ready and went to

34. Helmick was located in Morris county, seven miles southwest of Council Grove.—Montgomery, "Lesser Known or Extinct Towns of Kansas," v. 8. No location for Canning Creek school house has been determined.
Junction City to the conference. On Friday morning Elder S. A. Bright got up and stated that he needed some more good men and that he had my Certificate and moved that it be accepted and that I be made effective. The vote carried enthusiastically, and we were cordially welcomed by the brethren of the Conference back into the work and stationed at Chapman.

Chapman was then a nice clean little town on the Rock Island Railroad in the heart of very rich farming country in Dickinson County, the seat of a very fine county high school. There were two appointments, one a nice little brick church four or five miles south of town, and a good church in town. As it was the spring of the year and closing up the school year, we decided not to move and take the children out of their schools until they closed up their year and got their credits. And too, we had a lot to do to make the change and move off the farm. So we decided that I would drive up there on Saturday and preach that Sunday and stay the week after and preach the next Sunday, and then drive home and stay until Saturday and go back again. It was fifty miles, but I had a good pair of roadsters and the road was not bad.

I kept this up for a couple of months and was waiting for them to repair the parsonage, which needed plastering and redecorating. Which seemed to go slowly because the Ladies Aid seemed to be the only ones interested.

Then one morning I received a telegram from Doctor Ed Locke, the presiding elder of Topeka District and (I was then in the Junction City District) for me to come to Topeka at once, signed by both presiding elders, Lock and Bright. I was greatly surprised and wondered what happened, and I took the first train for Topeka.

There had been a consultation held the day before I arrived, by three presiding elders of the Junction City, Topeka and Kansas City districts. Another dear brother had gone wrong on the woman question—, and they wanted me, since I had not yet moved my family to Chapman, to move to Topeka instead and take the pastorate of the Parkdale church. Our dear brother was accused of having illicit relations with three of the "sisters," had been faced down with evidences, and he decided to sur-

36. Reference is being made to the 1905 annual conference held in Junction City.
37. Sedwick A. Bright is recorded as the presiding elder of the Junction City district, 1905—Methodist Episcopal Church, Kansas Conference, Official Record and Minutes of the Fiftieth Session, Junction City, 1905 (Overbrook: Charles G. Bear, n. d.), pp. 6, 10.
38. Edwin Locke served as secretary of the Kansas Conference from 1894 until 1903. He is recorded as the presiding elder of the Topeka district, 1905.—ibid., p. 12.
In 1907 E. O. Raymond was assigned the Methodist church in Overbrook where the former pastor had a debt to raise on a remodeled building. The church, pictured here, was found by Raymond to be “a nice, rebuilt church with a good basement, furnace-heated, and acetylene light, and the finest, most commodious pulpit platform that I have ever seen or used.” He got a cordial reception and before long “the work went forward beautifully.”

render his credentials and quit the ministry and the church, which he did.

The officials said that I had had experience in management of churches under such circumstances, and had done so splendidly that they all wanted me to take one more job to save a church. I was dumbfounded and thought that I had developed a strange reputation in a very distasteful sort of service. This man’s wife had quit him, and was living with a neighbor, and refused to go home, within two blocks of our church, and the whole community was in an uproar and the church in confusion and despair.

I did not know what to do; we had never lived in a city, and Topeka was the Capital of the State. I was told that they had a high school there that was second to none in the State. It was the pride of the city and much superior to the school at Chapman, while that was a good one.

So we decided to take the place and do our best. We put Anna and Glenn into that high school, and it was fine for them. Anna graduated from it, and Glenn was ready for his senior year when we moved away. It was a wonderful privilege for them, and they made a lot of friends and were happy. But it was different with Rollin and Paul, who had to go to the ward school. The morning that they started to school first, a group of boys gathered around the street corner and were laughing about what they would do to the “preacher’s kids.”

Our boys had been well fed and had had plenty of exercise out of doors and were not afraid. I told them to speak to the boys kindly and be sure to give them no offense. “Go ahead and tend to your own business, but if they start something, stand your ground. Don’t run or be afraid, but keep together. Don’t let them get you separated. Stay right together, and if you have to fight, give them all you’ve got.”

Well, they had six fights before they got to school, and at the last stand they were getting out of humor. They knocked their tormentor down and got astraddle of him on the concrete sidewalk and got a hand in the throat of his shirt and proceeded to churn his head up and down on the concrete until he saw stars. The blood spurted from his nose, and he began to holler bloody murder and begged them to let him up.

As soon as he was loose, he and all of the rest of them ran for the schoolhouse. They said, “We have no use for them kids. They are too stout. Why, they could lick a box of wild cats. You let them alone.” They did, and had no more trouble. Preacher’s kids do not run from town kids, any way or any time. Selah!
I suppose that we did act a little strange, and acted green, just coming off the farm, not being accustomed to city ways. But we got assimilated with the conditions we met, and got along very well and felt at home.

Instead of Brother Sawyer’s leaving the city, as he had promised to do, he still hung around and sowed dissension. (We all have some friends). He was said to be a magnetic fellow and preached good sermons and was what they called a “mischer.” I am always skeptical of them. They usually mix too much. He told his friends that I was a presiding elder’s pet and wanted to come in from some little country town and get into the city, and that they had thrown him out to give me a place, and so forth. Some of his friends withdrew from the church and some changed to other churches, but the good reliable honest Methodists stayed by me and helped me to restore confidence.

It took a lot of careful hard work to get started up hill again, but we kept up a good prayer meeting and class meeting, and things began to come our way. However, it cut the financial support badly. A lot of them simply quit paying. A poor excuse will make money hide out. We [Laura and I] had a little money ahead, so we lived and kept the children in school, and gradually got the church back to normal.

There were many fine loyal Christian people in that congregation, and we loved them. They showed us many favors and kindly helped us in many ways, which we appreciated.

. . . There were eight Methodist churches in Topeka, and there was a fine spirit of cooperation. Doctor Frank Lynch was at First Church, H. Wark at Walnut Grove, G. E. Holcomb at Lowman Chapel, E. O. Raymond at Parkdale, William Reed at Kansas Avenue,
A. S. Boyd at Oakland, Bryant at — and Doctor Ed Lock on the district.

The fall of the first year we held union revival meetings for the city. Doctor Wilbur Chapman and his helpers were in charge of the whole affair. We held services in all of the different sections of the city and then all went together for a grand “round-up” at the city auditorium. We had street meetings, marching and singing, and a regular campaign for four weeks. We forgot about our local troubles and got a new inspiration for our work.

Then we ran along until the next winter. Then we held a union meeting among the Methodists, and we had a Brother Smith, a young man from California, to lead us. We held meetings around among all eight of our churches and then all came together at the First Church for evening services.

At nine in the morning all of us preachers met at an “Upper Room” in First Church, and held a prayer meeting which was a feast unto our souls. Doctor Lynch was in his prime and a great inspiration to us all. Doctor H. Wark and Brothers Reed and Holcombe were especially blest, as well as myself, and we had meetings that were wonderful and ever to be remembered. Our fellowship was great. Our prayers were answered and we had a great meeting.

Then the next fall we got Brother Williams, the Drummer Evangelist of California, to come to Parkdale and hold a meeting. I did not like his eccentricities. He was crude and rough talking and hard to handle, but we had a good meeting all the same and stirred things up in the east part of the city—that helped.

OVERBROOK, 1907-1909

When it came time for Conference, our folks met in the parsonage the evening before I started for Conference. We had a fine social meeting and all seemed to enjoy it immensely. They raised all they owed in salary and passed a resolution for our return. But they did not report that meeting to Elder Lock, and he decided to change us to Overbrook, where Brother Charles Bear had gotten into confusion among the farmers and they had a debt to raise on a remodeled church and to dedicate and raise a lot of money, and he was not the man for that emergency.

Among our people at Parkdale . . . the men worked in the Santa Fe shops in the daytime, and at night did the plumbing, put gas heat and lights into the church. We had things in fine shape. I had been invited to hold meetings at the Santa Fe shops every Thursday at noon and preach to the men that stayed there and ate their dinners out of their pails. I worked under the auspices of the Railroad Young Men’s Christian Association . . .

At Overbrook we had a very cordial reception, found a nice, rebuilt church with a good basement, furnace-heated, and acetylene light, and the finest, most commodious pulpit platform that I have ever seen or used. It was adaptable for all activities of a Methodist Church.

Arrangements had already been made for Dr. Iliff to come and conduct the dedication services. When he came on Saturday afternoon before the services were to be on Sunday, we had the Trustees together for a prededication service. He was surprised to find that the Board had cold feet and they expected him to get the money out of the congregation. They would simply sit on the fence and enjoy the proceedings.

But the old Doctor Iliff had another idea about how to do the thing successfully. He had had years of experience in dedicating churches and wanted to know from each one of them how much they intended to give to start the thing off, and they informed him that they had given their share and expected him to raise the balance then due. He said a few things and dismissed the meeting and told them to meet him at the parsonage next morning.

He then went over to the parsonage and asked for a list of the names of those men and then called up Brother Cordts, the cashier of the First National Bank where they did business, and asked him to call at the parsonage after supper. When he came he asked him the rating of every man on the Board and then thanked him and sent him home, and the good Doctor went to bed.

When they came in the morning he was ready for them. He asked them how they felt. And then he told them that he had arranged for them a scale of giving, and that unless they agreed to take up half the indebtedness he would not go over to the church at all, but would take the first train out of town. I never heard a bunch of men get such a lecture as he gave them. He shamed and berated them until some of them cried. He was severe and earnest.
They agreed to do it his way and to respond promptly when he called them. He preached his dedicatory sermon, called for the money to pay the debt so that they could give the church to the Lord free of debt, and got all of the debt and four hundred dollars over, besides one hundred dollars for his services. Amen! praise the Lord for a man who has "innards" and is not afraid.

There was a bunch of fine progressive prosperous farmers living in one of the best and most prosperous agricultural parts of Kansas, who were actually too stingy to enjoy religion for fear that it would cost them something. I knew then why Elder Lock wanted me to go to Overbrook. All of the other preachers had been afraid to go up against that bunch and make them come across. Glory Hallelujah! We then had a well broken host to do something with.

The work went forward beautifully. We had a good revival that winter and a better one the next year, and the last year the best of all.

After our meeting closed at Overbrook it was nice weather and since I had already held a few services down at the Valley Brook Schoolhouse, I asked them if they would like to have me spend a few evenings in a special meeting for them, and they all voted for the meeting.

I hunted up some old oil lamps out of the junk at the church, took them down to the schoolhouse, put them up and bought a five-gallon can of oil. Drove down there and began a meeting with only three or four members to help.

When we had run a week I asked if they wanted to quit, and those men who had never paid attention to religious teaching said no and said that they thought it would be a mistake to quit. I told them that I did not want to force a meeting on them, but was willing to stay with them and do my best as long as they wanted to attend. It was only four or five miles, and I was feeling well and had only been then in revival meetings four or five weeks. I was just getting into working shape. So went ahead.

Before that week was up, conversion began to come naturally. The Holy Spirit was poured out abundantly and sinner men and whole families were surrendering to the Lord’s service. They had different ideals, the whole community was aflame with holy zeal, and we had crowds that we could not seat or find standing room to accommodate.

It was the most blessed revival that I ever held, the most far reaching in its results. Just transformed the whole country and made the salvation through Jesus Christ the most popular subject. Old-time sinners were born again, testified of God’s saving grace, would pray or testify or do anything to show what a genuine conversion they had received, and praised the Lord for it.

We took them into our communion, organized a class and a Sunday School, had a prayer meeting that ran right along through spring farm work, harvest time, and everything, and got better all the time. They learned their mistake in judgment and that the religion of Jesus Christ was for the common people. One poor sinner, after coming to our mourners’ bench and praying for a while, got up and said, “I don’t know what to call it, but I certainly got something. My load of sin and condemnation left me and I am as happy as I can be. Praise the Lord.” And he looked it, and his conversion brought a lot of others to the altar.

It was wonderful. The meeting just ran itself. All that we had to do was have faith and pray, believing and it was done. Souls were saved and God’s work was advanced. Topeka did not look quite so fine just then. We made a lot of friends at Valley Brook, for whom we have prayed ever since and whom we expect to meet in Heaven.

We had the best chorus choir at Overbrook I ever had in my ministry. I. T. Richardson was superintendent of the school and he had the ability and willingness to organize and drill a choir that was simply wonderful for a country place. They worked together beautifully and were very proud of their success. We had some fine voices and unusual ability and they trained and developed beautifully. I was proud of them.

One other thing occurred at Overbrook worthy of remembering. The Daughters of the American Revolution arranged to mark the old Santa Fe Trail, a natural highway that extended from Kansas City to Santa Fe, New Mexico, a distance of seven hundred miles, four hundred of it in Kansas. Over which thousands of tons of goods were hauled in wagons drawn by oxen, mules and horses.
They went in organized caravans of a hundred or more teams and men so as to defend themselves against the hostile Indians in crossing the plains. That highway was selected and used for many years without one dollar of public expense for bridges or grading, and it took in watering places to supply their needs. Many people died on that trail and many families were massacred, their wagons burned and stock driven off by the Indians. As the country settled up, the old trail was liable to be lost.

So the D.A.R. decided to preserve its history by placing large stone markers along the route, and Overbrook was directly on the trail. It ran across right where the Methodist Church stood. When the marker was delivered, we all turned out to set it and then called an Old Settlers’ Day and celebrated the occasion.

In the forenoon we met in the schoolhouse, and the old men, some of whom had worked at freighting on the trail, and others [who] had lived close to it and had known all about it, held a “love feast” and testified. It was very interesting. While all of those old fellows insisted that they could not make a speech, yet we kept at them until we got them going and then they all had something to say, and we did have a good time. Then we had a basket dinner. I was the guest of Sylvanus Heberling that day and had a great dinner and fine time. He was one who had driven on the trail.

In the afternoon we were to meet at the rock marker, unveil it, and have some speaking. But unfortunately a regular Kansas wind started blowing and by two o’clock we had a regular tornado almost, and we took our meeting to the new Methodist church. There State Senator Geo. P. Morehouse, an old Council Grove boy delivered a very interesting address. He had lived as a boy where he could see the caravans pass and had gathered up many incidents and reminiscences of the early days of Kansas, and it just suited the occasion and pleased the people.

I also made an address. I had gone to considerable extent in research in the local libraries and state library to develop facts and matters of interest in the history of the old trail. But as no one had ever written a history of it, it was all fragmentary. The state library people were kind to me and helped me to find material for my address, which was all second-hand.

Don’t you see? And while I had a fine address, as addresses go, yet it lacked the vital fire of the eye witness. People were very courteous and complimentary, yet I liked the talks of the old ox drivers better. “Experience beats book learning.”

Oh Yes! “Yorks Spring” is only about a mile out of Overbrook, which was one of the famous watering places on the trail, and we had a barrel of the water on tap at our celebration that day.

We never were associated with a finer lot of men. There were John A. Cordts, William T. Coffman, O.F.B. Coffman, J.W. Harbour, George Coffman, William Long and family, Andrew Daniels family, William Holbert and Ed Badger and family.

The church put on a campaign for finances for Baker University [Baldwin City] and Conference claimants and some other activities and tried to bring the church up to the standard of tithing and missions. I guess that the Overbrook people thought that I emphasized money giving too much. Some of them got sore and when my three years were up we moved to Scranton, ten miles west.

But we left many very warm, loyal friends at Overbrook. Nineteen years afterward I was in the old Research Hospital in Kansas City and they heard about it and when I was strong enough to recognize it I saw a very fine bouquet of flowers on my dresser and asked the nurse where they came from. She looked at the card and said “From Overbrook, Kansas.” I cried like a baby to think that they had remembered me after so many years.

They insisted that as soon as I was able, I should come down to them and allow them to take care of me until I was well. My wife was dead and I was lonesome in my affliction. The Ladies Aid Society gave a supper and reception for me and John A. Cordts and his good wife took me into their home and we had a glorious time together while I was convalescing. “Trust in the Lord and do good, and verily Thou shalt be fed.”

III. EPILOGUE

E. O. Raymond spent the remaining years of his ministry in other small Kansas communities: Scranton (1910-1912), Havensville (1913-1914), Centralia (1915-1917), Westmoreland...
(1918), Dunlap (1919), Mount Ida (1920-1921).

In 1922, when Raymond was 70 and had spent 43 years in the ministry, he retired because his wife’s health was failing. They moved to the home of their son, Harry, in Tulsa, where Laura Raymond died August 18, 1922. E. O. Raymond spent the last six years of his life at the home of another son, Glenn, in Muskogee, Okla., where he died May 6, 1935.

40. Of his wife, E. O. Raymond writes, “On the morning of August 18, 1922, she quietly passed away, just gradually sank to rest, faded out, and was gone.” — Elbert Olin Raymond Autobiography,” p. 113. Both E. O. Raymond and his wife are buried at Wiley.