

ADDRESS.

At the laying of the corner stone of the 1st  
Congregational Church, Washington, D.C. Thursday,  
Oct. 4th, 1866.

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No. 5, Vol. 11.

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SUBJECT.

First Congregational Church.

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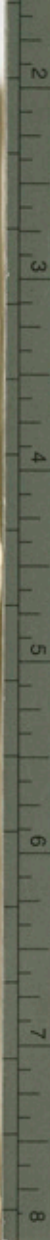
1  
Brethren:

Having been selected to present a few facts with reference to our Church, on an occasion of so much interest, I should be pleased to have done so in a more acceptable manner than my time will allow. With reference to the organization of the Church, I will make a few quotations from an able and complete history, furnished to the public last year by one of our most active members.

The present Congregationalist Church seems to have taken visible shape, <sup>(or rather to have been initiated)</sup> in 1864, in the words of "the historian"

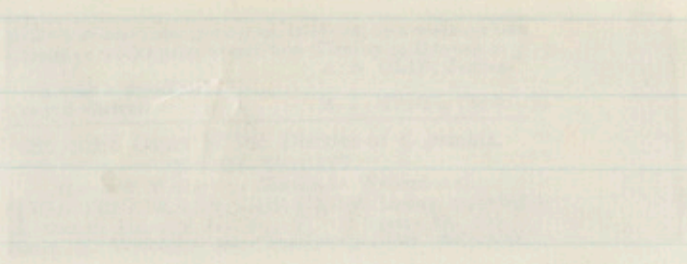
The vast increase of population which has been brought to this city during the war had early turned the inquiries of the people of the Congregational faith to the subject of establishing a church of their own, and in March, 1864, Rev. Mr. Powell, of the State of New York, came to this city, and, after consulting a few earnest friends of the denomination, commenced ministrations in Willard's Hall. The place of meeting was changed after one Sunday's service to the Union League Rooms, on Ninth street.

(over)



Johnson

During the winter of 1880-81  
the first reference to the Church, in an account of its work  
about which is found in a more complete  
reference than our own will allow. With reference to the  
organization of the Church, I will make a few quotations from  
the old and reliable history furnished to the public last year  
by one of our most active members.  
The first Presbyterian Church was founded  
in 1792, and has since that time  
been the chief support of the cause.

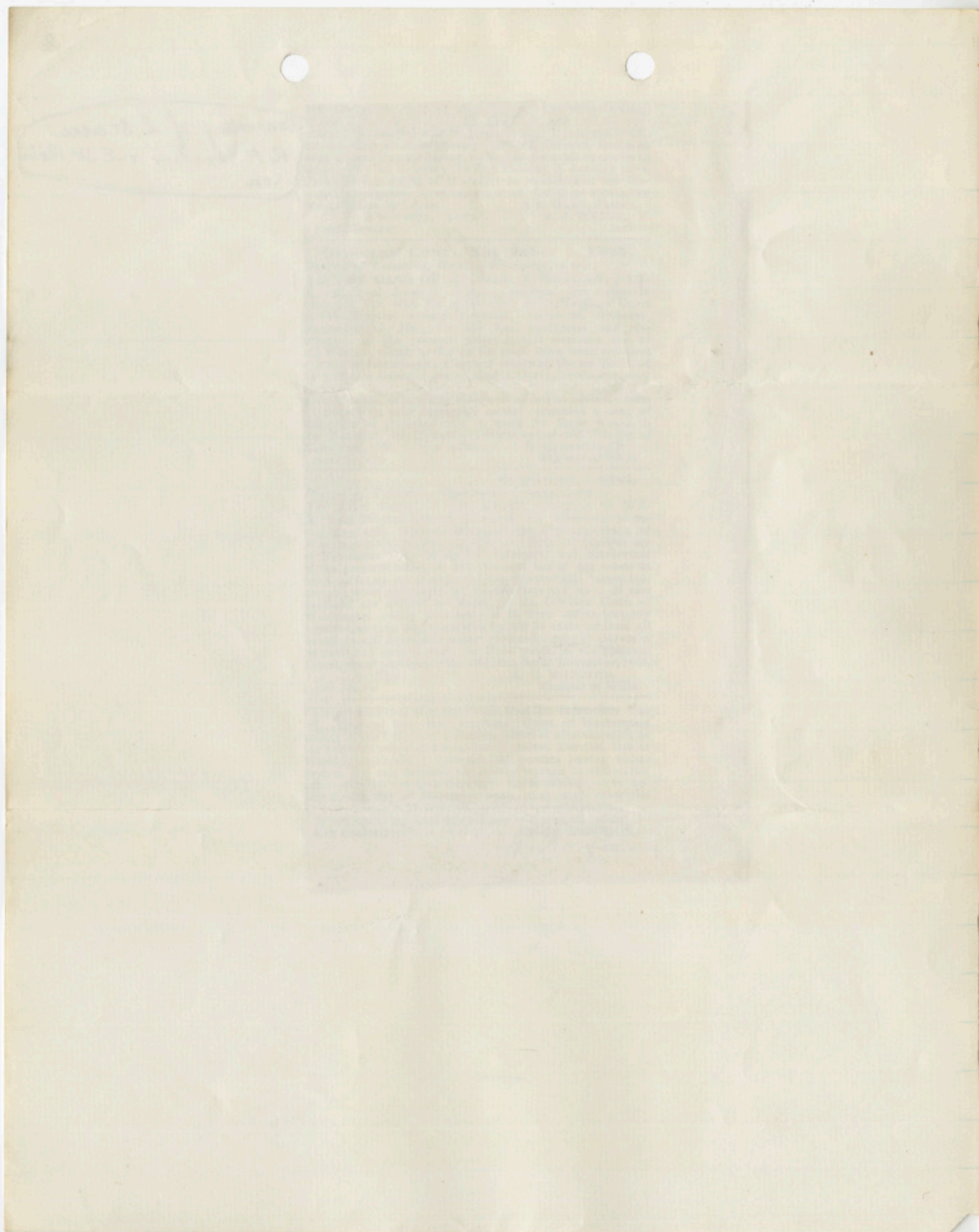


After worshipping here for some months, it was decided to suspend exercises until the autumn; and a committee was appointed to make such arrangements for then recommencing services as might, after deliberation and consultation, be deemed best. This committee was unable to mature any satisfactory plan for this purpose; but in May, 1865, they prepared an appeal, addressed to the National Council, then soon to assemble in Boston, which was signed by some sixty persons, presenting the condition of things to Northern Congregational friends. On the 10th of June, 1865, a meeting was held at the office of Geo. W. Woolley, over the Union League Rooms, on Ninth street, the object, as stated, being "to promote the interests of Congregationalism in Washington." Rev. E. W. Robinson was chairman and C. H. Bliss secretary. Rev. B. F. Morris and W. R. Hooper were chosen as a committee to present the condition of this field and its claims to the National Congregational Council, which took place on the 14th of that month. This original meeting consisted of Rev. E. W. Robinson, Rev. B. F. Morris, G. W. Woolley, C. H. Torrey, J. W. Sargeant, C. H. Bliss, and J. Walton. At the second meeting, August 17, Rev. Mr. Morris, who had attended the National Council in Boston, reported verbally that he was cordially received and his mission favorably entertained by the Council, and that all encouragement that could be justly desired was extended by the members to their project. The following resolution was thereupon unanimously adopted, on motion of Mr. Hooper:

*Resolved.* That in our opinion measures should now be adopted to inaugurate a Congregational Church and Society in the city of Washington.

On the motion of C. H. Bliss, a committee of seven members, C. H. Bliss, L. Deane, W. A. Thompson, D. G. Blakesley, C. H. Torrey, B. F. Morris, and E. W. Robinson, was appointed to secure the names of those desirous to embark in the enterprise, and to carry into effect the spirit of the resolution. This meeting consisted of nineteen persons. At the next meeting, August 31, the last-mentioned committee reported favorably to the enterprise, and presented a code of rules for the society which were adopted. Twenty-one persons present. At the next meeting, September 14, Major General O. O. Howard and Hon. E. H. Hodges were elected members of the committee, in place of Messrs. Torrey and Blakesley, who had permanently left the city.

Consisting of L. Deane.  
R. H. Hooper & E. W. Robinson



3.

The first sermon was preached by Rev. Charles B. Boynton, D. D., formerly of Cincinnati, in the Unitarian Church, which, not being occupied by the Unitarian people during the autumn, had been rented by the committee for three months, ending with November.

On the 20th of September, pursuant of notice from the pulpit, a public meeting was held in the church for the purpose of perfecting the organization of the society, and of taking measures for permanently supplying the pulpit.

On motion of Mr. Daniel Tyler, it was unanimously voted to invite Dr. Boynton to continue his ministrations. The invitation was accepted, and Dr. Boynton has continued with great acceptance to preach to a crowded congregation. At this meeting, which completed the organization of the society, the committee was specially authorized to act till January 1st, 1865. Thirty names were added to the rolls of the society, making at that time seventy members in all.

The first meeting for forming a church was held at the Unitarian Church October 11th, 1865, when a committee of five—Dr. C. B. Boynton, Rev. B. F. Morris, E. W. Robinson, H. O. Brewster, and Wm. Russell—were selected as a committee to prepare and report a Covenant, Articles of Faith, and Rules for the Church. Another committee of five, viz: Silas R. Hodges, L. Deane, W. R. Hooper, Wm. Wheeler, and Leonard Watson, was appointed to arrange for a Council of Churches, and make all needful arrangements for the meeting and sessions of that body. Twenty churches were invited to act in the Council. "The First Congregational Church of Washington" was adopted as the name of the church. Subsequent meetings were held on the 18th and 24th of October; and, after much consideration and discussion on the latter-named meeting, the Articles of Faith, Covenant, and Rules were adopted as we have given them. At a meeting on November 1st the church voted a confirmation of the call of an Ecclesiastical Council, and at the same time invited Dr. Boynton to occupy its pulpit as their religious teacher for the same period (six months) as had been designated by the action of the society. At a meeting for that purpose on Sunday evening, November 12th, of the committee to examine the credentials of those proposing to unite in the membership of the church, a list, consisting of nearly one hundred, was reported.

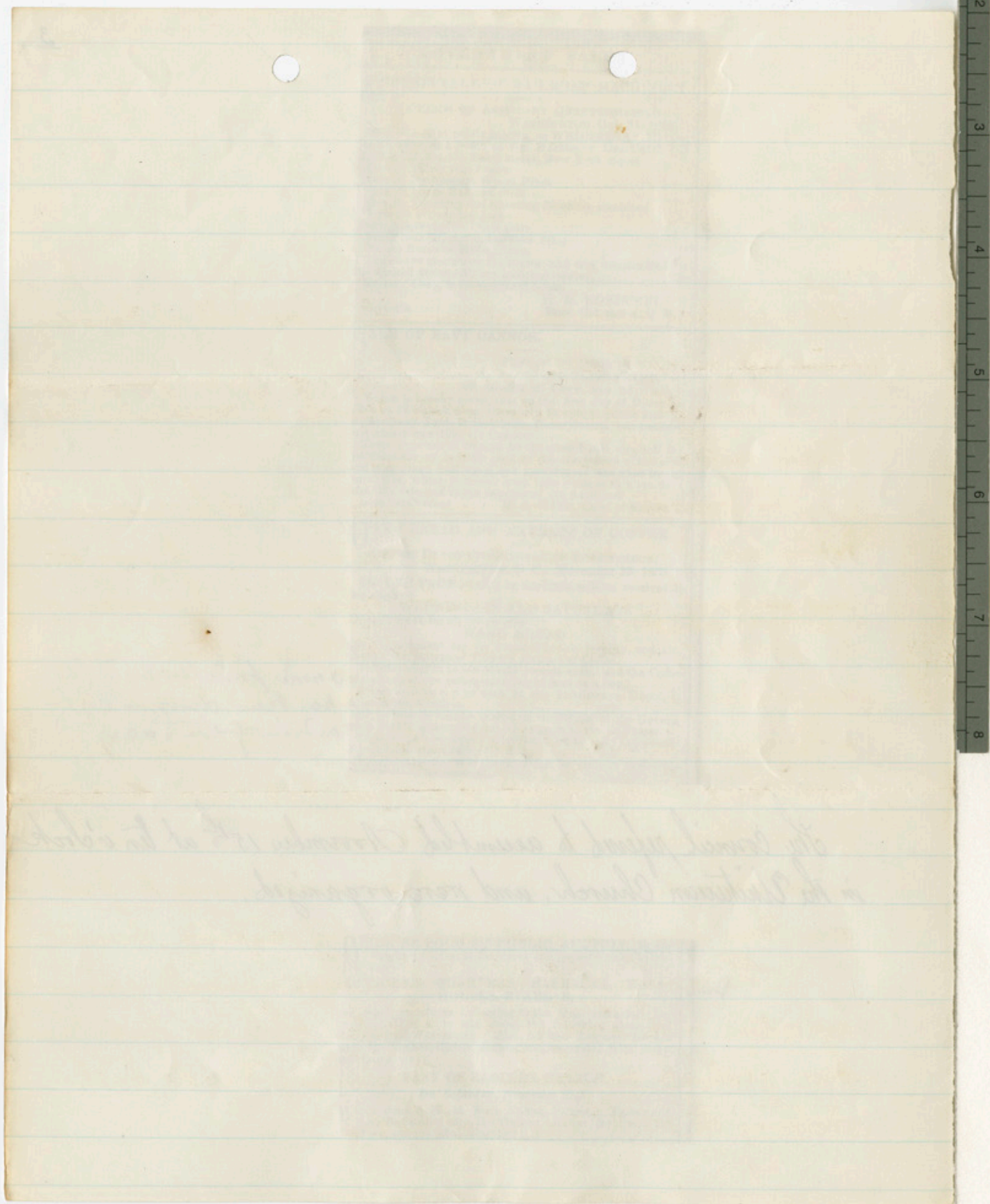
*same found (six months) as  
has been designated by the  
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*The Council referred to assembled November 15th at ten o'clock  
in the Unitarian Church, and were organized.*

*Dw.*

After some discussion of an able and interesting nature in regard to the Creed, Covenant, and Rules, a resolution presented by Dr. Thompson, declaring them as well as the manner of the organization of the church satisfactory, was unanimously adopted by the Council; the same resolution also declaring that the Council would proceed to the public services of recognition ~~this evening~~.

A full and free discussion of the plans and prospects of the church in the matter of erecting a house of worship and sustaining the ministry succeeded. The scheme of building on leased land was not entertained by the Council. The following preamble and resolution were adopted:



Whereas a special recommendation was made to the churches by the National Council, at Boston, that a Congregational Church should be organized and sustained at the National Capital:

Resolved, That this Council recommend the First Congregational Church of Washington to the Congregational Union and to the churches for immediate and liberal aid in the erection of a permanent and solid church edifice.

It was stated that the church was amply able to meet all the expenses which they were now incurring for worship—\$3,800 a year—and that without extraordinary effort, and that they were ready to contribute largely to secure a place of worship.

4.

The interesting ceremonies of recognition were held at Wednesday evening November 15<sup>th</sup> 1845.

Since the organization of the Church its membership has steadily increased and now numbers 164.

The Congregations are large and regular, both at the Sunday services and at the weekly prayer meetings. During the last session of Congress our Pastor officiated as Chaplain of the House of Representatives, and the Church attended his ministrations in the morning at the Hall of the House, and in the evening at Webster's Hall. We have a flourishing Sunday School at the same Hall, before the morning service, - numbering <sup>about</sup> 100 scholars, as an average. Teachers 4.

All our services during the past year have been of a most edifying and satisfactory character.

The members of the Church have been unusually zealous and active in the work of the Master, while our Pastor has been faithful and fearless in proclaiming to us the truth—declaring the whole counsel of God.



Our Church early put itself  
in cordial communication with  
~~the~~ many of the great benevolent  
organizations of the day; particu-  
larly the American Board of  
Commissioners for Foreign Missions  
the American Missionary Society<sup>Association</sup>  
and the Congregational Union,  
and has contributed willingly and  
generously to the funds of these  
Societies, besides having made  
special donations to Sabbath  
School enterprises.

44  
Our Church, early but chiefly  
in social communication with  
the many of the great benevolent  
organizations of the day; for their  
help, the American Board of  
Commissioners for Foreign Missions  
the American Missionary Society  
and the Congregational Mission  
and her constant willingness and  
generosity to the friends of these  
societies, besides having made  
special donations to the  
School Enterprise.

51.

With regard to our contemplated church edifice I would be pleased to present to you a detailed history of the work of your Committees, but will let it suffice at this time to give a brief summary.

Our church and Society decided to construct a building, here at the Capital of the Nation, not only to meet their present wants, but owing to our peculiar position, to provide for the numerous transitory population, that comes and goes, at this place more perhaps than elsewhere; having particular regard to the demands of Congregationalists, who have hitherto had no house of worship of their own in Washington. Our plans have been matured. <sup>(at the Corner of 10<sup>th</sup> & G. Street)</sup> This site for a church edifice has been purchased at a cost of a little upwards of twenty three thousand dollars (\$23,000<sup>00</sup>). Towards which the sum of fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000<sup>00</sup>) has been paid, and the title secured. The estimated cost of our proposed building is about sixty five thousand dollars. (\$65,000<sup>00</sup>.) Towards the entire cost the Treasurer and Finance Committee have received already - from various sources, by subscription and contribution, about thirty five thousand dollars (\$35,000<sup>00</sup>). The Building Committee have had their plans and specifications completed - the proper excavation and preparation of the ground effected, - the stone foundation nearly laid, and



have made all the necessary arrangements to proceed with the work of construction. I need not say to you that we are looking with a steady confidence to our brethren throughout the United States, to aid us in finishing what we have begun. - for in the words of the "Boston Recorder" the members of this church are not rich in this world's goods "They gave the Council assurance of their ability to meet the current expenses of the enterprise out of their own resources, but they must look to wealthier Christians for aid to erect a suitable 'meeting house'".

We will say to our friends throughout the country - we have been diligent, - we have laid the foundation - we have already pledged or collected among ourselves about \$16,000 which evidences our unwillingness to be merely passive recipients of Christian relationship, and striving to benefit and bless all with whom they come in contact.

We hope to preserve the same fervent spirit of patriotism, that our Congregational brethren elsewhere

we have already  
collected in collection

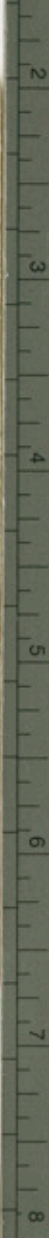
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We will say to our friends throughout the country - we have been diligent, - we have done what we could - we have laid the foundation of a noble enterprise, - we propose to put a veritable church of the Puritans at the Capital of our nation, and we ask from you a generous support. We hope to have continuously - what we now have - a living, working, membership, thoroughly loyal to Christ, knit together in the closest ties of Christian relationship, and striving to benefit and bless all with whom they come in contact.

We hope to preserve the same fervent spirit of patriotism, that our Congregational brethren elsewhere



The work of the missionary organization is to spread the  
 word of Christianity. It is not only to give the  
 people a better way of life, but also to give them  
 the knowledge of God. It is to show them that  
 there is a God who loves them and who wants  
 to be with them. It is to show them that  
 there is a way of life that is better than  
 the way of life that they are now living.  
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24.  
have almost invariably manifested. We look  
to the Christian Churches in this city for friendly cooperation,  
and trust we may aid them, and they us, in making un-  
ceasing inroads upon the territory of our common enemy,  
and engage continuously with them, in giving a helping  
hand to the poor and the lowly. And perchance  
God may see fit to pour out untold blessings upon  
Washington and upon the Nation of which it is  
the Head, in answer to our united and humble  
petitions.

Remarks made by Ben. Sher-  
wood at the laying of the  
corner stone of the 1<sup>st</sup> Cong.  
Church. Thursday, Oct. 4<sup>th</sup>. 1846.