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METHODIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY,
Miss. Valley - 1832

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WESTERN METHODIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

=

PRESENTED BY
J. FLETCHER WILLIAMS,
St. Paul, Minn.

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

BOARD OF MANAGERS

OF THE

WESTERN METHODIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

IN THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY;

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THE ORIGIN OF THE SOCIETY, ITS ORGANIZATION, CONSTITUTION, ADDRESS, CIRCULAR, &c.

CINCINNATI:

PRINTED AT THE METHODIST BOOK ROOM.

1839.

The chairman stated the objects of the meeting, and in a most interesting manner had reference to olden times, and named many of the pioneers of Methodism, who are still living, and from whom much information on the subject of the meeting may be expected.

On motion, it was

Resolved, That it is expedient, in the judgment of this meeting, to form a society, to collect materials for a complete history of the Methodist Episcopal church in the valley of the Mississippi.

Rev. J. F. Wright offered, for the consideration of the meeting, a constitution, prepared by Mr. Samuel Williams, Rev. C. Elliott, and himself; which, after some amendments, was adopted.

On motion, the chairman appointed Rev. C. Elliott, Rev. W. H. Raper, and Rev. Maxwell P. Gaddis, a committee to nominate officers for the society.

They reported the following, who were unanimously elected:

WILLIAM BURKE, *President*.

JOSIAH LAWRENCE, *Vice President*.

WILLIAM NEFF, *Recording Secretary*.

SAMUEL WILLIAMS, *Corresponding Secretary*.

J. P. KILBRETH, } *Assistant Cor. Sec'y.*

J. W. HOPKINS, } *Treasurer.*

J. W. MESSICK, } *Managers.*

J. G. RUST,

N. W. THOMAS,

SAMUEL LEWIS,

JOHN REEVES,

A. M. SEARLES,

E. B. REEDER,

The following constitution, after mature deliberation, was adopted by the society:

CONSTITUTION

Of the Western Methodist Historical Society.

ARTICLE 1. This Association shall be called and known by the name of the "Western Methodist Historical Society." Its object shall be to procure, collect, and preserve all the necessary and suitable materials for a complete and authentic history of the Methodist Episcopal church, west of the Alleghany range of mountains.

ART. 2. Any member of the Methodist Episcopal church, contributing annually one dollar to the funds of this society, shall be a member thereof; or by the contribution of ten dollars at one time, shall be a member for life.

ART. 3. The officers of this society shall be, a president, a vice president, recording secretary, corresponding secretary, and two assistants, and treasurer; who, together with seven managers, shall form a board for conducting the business of the society. The officers

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE BOARD OF MANAGERS OF THE WESTERN METHODIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY, IN THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY.

Many members of the Methodist Episcopal church have long thought that the annals of Methodism in the west, were of such importance as to call for such measures as would terminate in rescuing them from oblivion. Nevertheless, nothing of a general nature has been formally proposed in this matter till recently. In the Western Christian Advocate of January 11th, 1839, a communication appeared from the Rev. James B. Finley, proposing to form an Historical Society for the purpose of collecting the early annals of Methodism, as well as to continue the narrative, down to the present time. A long editorial article, recommending the measure, appeared in the same paper.

A meeting of preachers was called immediately, at which it was resolved, to request the preachers in charge in Cincinnati, to call a joint meeting of the two stations, for the purpose of taking into consideration the propriety of forming such a society as brother Finley suggested. Accordingly, the Rev. John Ferree and Rev. W. H. Raper called such a meeting, to be held January 25th, in the Methodist church on Ninth-street. The following is the notice referred to:

NOTICE.

A meeting will be held on next Friday evening, half past 6 o'clock, at the Methodist church on Ninth-street, for the purpose of considering the expediency of forming a society, in view of the suggestions found in the 246th number of the Western Christian Advocate, respecting a history of the Methodist Episcopal church in the valley of the Mississippi. All the members of our church in this city and its vicinity, friendly to the organization of such a society, are respectfully and earnestly invited to attend.

JOHN FERREE,
W. H. RAPER.

Cincinnati, January 20, 1839.

In pursuance of the foregoing notice, a large number of preachers and laymen met on the 25th of January, 1839, when the following proceedings took place:

The meeting was opened with prayer by the Rev. Charles Elliott. On motion, the Rev. William Burke was called to the chair, and William Neff appointed secretary.

The chairman stated the objects of the meeting, and in a most interesting manner had reference to olden times, and named many of the pioneers of Methodism, who are still living, and from whom much information on the subject of the meeting may be expected.

On motion, it was

Resolved, That it is expedient, in the judgment of this meeting, to form a society, to collect materials for a complete history of the Methodist Episcopal church in the valley of the Mississippi.

Rev. J. F. Wright offered, for the consideration of the meeting, a constitution, prepared by Mr. Samuel Williams, Rev. C. Elliott, and himself; which, after some amendments, was adopted.

On motion, the chairman appointed Rev. C. Elliott, Rev. W. H. Raper, and Rev. Maxwell P. Gaddis, a committee to nominate officers for the society.

They reported the following, who were unanimously elected:

WILLIAM BURKE,	<i>President.</i>
JOSIAH LAWRENCE,	<i>Vice President.</i>
WILLIAM NEFF,	<i>Recording Secretary.</i>
SAMUEL WILLIAMS,	<i>Corresponding Secretary.</i>
J. P. KILBRETH,	} <i>Assistant Cor. Sec'y.</i>
J. W. HOPKINS,	
J. F. WRIGHT,	<i>Treasurer.</i>
J. W. MESSICK,	} <i>Managers.</i>
J. G. RUST,	
N. W. THOMAS,	
SAMUEL LEWIS,	
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ART. 3. The officers of this society shall be, a president, a vice president, recording secretary, corresponding secretary, and two assistants, and treasurer; who, together with seven managers, shall form a board for conducting the business of the society. The officers

and managers must be members of the said church, and shall be annually elected by the society.

ART. 4. The editors of the Western Christian Advocate the book agents in Cincinnati, the bishops, the presiding elder of the Cincinnati district, and the preachers in charge in the city, shall be *ex officio* honorary members of the board of managers.*

ART. 5. The board of managers shall regulate its own proceedings; fill all vacancies occurring in the officers or in the board; shall prescribe the duties of the officers, and may constitute them an executive committee, for the more convenient transaction of the business in the recess of the board; and may appropriate money to defray incidental expenses.

ART. 6. The board of managers may recognize and admit as an *auxiliary*, any similar constituted society, formed for a like purpose, and which shall agree to transmit its historical collections, free of expense, to this society.

ART. 7. This society shall have authority to elect to *honorary membership*, any person, whether a member of the said church or not, and whether resident in the city of Cincinnati or elsewhere, who may contribute suitable and approved matter to its historical collections, or who may at any time render important or valuable service to the society.

ART. 8. The board of managers shall have authority, whenever they may judge it expedient, to issue a *periodical or other publication* in this city; to embrace selections from its historical collections, biographical sketches, obituary notices, religious experience, and such other suitable matter as the board, or a publishing committee to be appointed by it, may judge proper: *provided* that sufficient patronage be obtained, and means secured to sustain the expenses of such publication.

ART. 9. The board of managers shall have authority, whenever they may judge it requisite, to appoint one or more historiographers, to collect historical information at places where it cannot be otherwise procured, and to perform such other appropriate duties as they may direct, and to pay a reasonable compensation for their services.

ART. 10. The board of managers shall have authority, whenever they may think it advisable, to devote a portion of the funds of the society to the purchase of a select *historical library*, for the use of the society and the board, embracing especially, such works as may aid in any way the objects of the society.

ART. 11. The annual meetings of the society shall be held on the first Thursday of May, at which time the board of managers shall lay before the society a written report of their doings for the preceding year, and the treasurer shall present a statement of his accounts, and the officers and managers for the ensuing year shall be elected.

* This article was introduced by S. Williams and W. Neff.

ART. 12. Five members of the board, and fifteen members of the society, at their respective meetings, shall be a quorum. Special meetings of the society may at any time be called by the board, when they shall judge necessary.

ART. 13. This constitution may be altered by the society at any annual meeting, or at any special meeting which may be called by the board of managers, by a vote of two-thirds the members present.

Cincinnati, O., Jan. 25, 1839.

The board of managers of the Western Methodist Historical Society, met at the editors' room, at the Methodist Episcopal Book Concern, at 2 o'clock, P. M., on Monday, the 28th January, 1839.

Present—William Burke, president; Josiah Lawrence, vice president; James P. Kilbreth, John F. Wright, J. G. Rust, A. M. Searles, E. B. Reeder, Charles Elliott, L. L. Hamline, and Wm. Neff. The president in the chair.

The meeting was opened with prayer, by the Rev. J. P. Kilbreth.

On motion, *Resolved*, That a committee be appointed to prepare suitable by-laws for the government of this board. The president appointed J. F. Wright, J. P. Kilbreth, Samuel Williams, and William Neff, said committee.

Resolved, That a committee of three be appointed to prepare an address to the members and friends of our church, soliciting their aid and co-operation in attaining the objects of this society. Whereupon the president appointed E. B. Reeder, J. G. Rust, and Chas. Elliott, said committee.

Resolved, That the corresponding secretary and his assistants be requested to prepare a circular, embracing such questions as will be most likely to elicit information relative to the objects of the society.

Resolved, That the secretaries and treasurer be authorized to provide such books and stationary as may be needful for their respective departments, and that the treasurer pay for the same from the funds of the society.

Resolved, That notice be given in the Western Christian Advocate to all friends who have in their power to contribute books, pamphlets, &c., to address the same to the treasurer, J. F. Wright.

Ordered, that 200 copies of the constitution be printed, and that the whole board be a committee to circulate them for subscription.

Resolved, That the corresponding secretary and his assistants be requested to draft a suitable constitution for auxiliary societies, and report the same to the board.

In pursuance of the foregoing resolutions and proceedings in connection with some additional action by the board, it was resolved to issue the present little manual, and publish it in pamphlet form, containing those particulars which the board deemed of any use in aiding their friends to engage in collecting the contemplated materials for the history of our church.

ADDRESS.

In commencing their labors, and with the view of enlisting the friends and members of the Methodist Episcopal church, in the laudable work of snatching from oblivion the interesting facts connected with the planting of our church in this great valley, the following statements and reasons are presented by the board:

They would request their brethren to recollect, that the *importance* of the object is no small inducement to attempt its accomplishment. It is the history of God's grace and providence. It occupies a field—the great Mississippi valley, and westward to the Pacific, and northward to our inland seas; which, for extent of territory, variety of climate, fertility of soil, and the prospective number of its millions of inhabitants, gives it an interest excelling any other portion of the globe. The facts too, connected with the *first planting* of the gospel in this valley, will possess a value in the view of future generations, of which we can scarcely form an idea.

It is necessary in order to accomplish this end, that the work be *immediately* commenced. Many of the eye witnesses of the events to be recorded, will soon leave us. The traditions of those which are deceased, and are now stored in the memory of their descendants or survivors, will soon be beyond the reach of the historian, and must perish for ever, unless speedily committed to writing. Not only so, but many events now transpiring, if unrecorded, will, in twenty years, be found in the catalogue of tradition, and twenty years more will bury them in everlasting oblivion. If, then, the history of the past and present be of any real use, it must be collected and arranged *now*, otherwise it will be impossible to obtain it at a future time.

Will the *aged members and preachers* of the church now use their best endeavors towards aiding in this undertaking? They only can faithfully transmit to posterity what they have seen and heard. And though the infirmities of old age, and in some cases a deficiency of early education, may much increase the labor to which they are invited, yet by doing what they can themselves, and calling to their assistance the pens of others, the facts of the past may be recorded, as far as the interests of religion are concerned.

The *descendants and acquaintances* of the deceased members of our church, especially where *mother societies* have been formed, are requested to furnish their aid. You can commit to writing, or detail

of his times and societies? And surely the doings of God in this great valley, through the instrumentality of the first race of Methodist preachers, and those of the present time, are worthy of the most accurate and detailed narrative; that men may bless the Lord for his goodness and his wonderful works among the children of men.

In short, to collect, arrange, compose, and transmit to posterity this history, is a *moral duty* which we owe to God. It may be said we owe it to posterity, or to ourselves; but then this resolves itself into the same; for what we properly owe to any human being, whether dead, or alive, or yet to live, is a duty which God requires of us. The Israelites were particularly instructed to communicate to their children, the history of God's providence. But we need not here enlarge, as the good sense of every one will see the importance of the subject, and therefore its moral obligation.

Our friends are requested to pay particular attention to the accompanying *circular*, and study carefully its different parts, and furnish answers to its inquiries. By this means, a more complete detail of events will be furnished for the future history.

CIRCULAR

TO THOSE WHO MAY ENGAGE IN COLLECTING HISTORICAL MATERIALS.

By the foregoing proceedings of a meeting held in the Methodist church in Ninth-street, in the city of Cincinnati, on the 25th January, 1839, with the constitution adopted thereat, and by the foregoing address, with the various publications on the subject in the *Western Christian Advocate*, you will be fully informed of the specific design of the formation of the "*Western Methodist Historical Society*."

The present year will complete the *first century* of Methodism. And while we pause and look back upon the eventful past, with the deepest sense of gratitude to God for the great things he has done for us, it seems to us a very fit period to set about rescuing from oblivion and collecting together the necessary materials for the annals of our church. This has been too long delayed; and thereby the knowledge of many valuable and important facts has been irrecoverably lost. And the danger of losing much of the remainder, admonishes us that what we do, we must do quickly.

Such considerations as these have impelled us to the course we have taken. Had any other more effectual plan been devised, we would have gladly adopted it. In the prosecution of our plan, it will be obvious to all, that upon the zealous co-operation of our brethren and friends throughout the west, we must mainly rely for success. Humbly trusting, then, in the blessing of God upon our well meant endeavors, and confidently relying upon the aid of our brethren, we commence the task assigned us by the society.

Desiring to avail ourselves of your kind assistance in the work, I am directed by the Board of Managers, to respectfully request that you will undertake and prepare a succinct and detailed account of the rise and progress of Methodism to the present time, in the circuit or station in which you reside or labor.

Without presuming to point out to you any particular order or method to be pursued in your narrative, we take the liberty of suggesting a few points which we consider proper to be noticed. To these we invite your attention, and on each of which, together with such others as may occur to you, we request you to give full and minute information.

1. The name of the society, station, or circuit, and the district and conference in which it is embraced.

2. When, and by whom the first Methodist sermon was preached therein, and by what preachers he was succeeded, and when.

3. When, and by whom the first class was formed, and the names of the leader and members thereof.

4. When the society was taken into a circuit, and regularly supplied with preaching.

5. The name, geographical boundary or territory, extent in miles, and number of appointments in the circuit at that time.

6. The house where your first meetings were held, its description, location, and to whom then belonging.

7. Interesting anecdotes, incidents and occurrences, particularly of the early period of the history of your society.

8. Persecutions or oppositions—either from other denominations or from the world.

9. Notices of the other religious denominations then in existence in the vicinity of your society.

10. Accounts of all considerable revivals of religion in the society.

11. Remarkable conversions, cases of sanctification, and of religious experience.

12. Signal displays of the power and presence of God, either at public or social meetings, or elsewhere.

13. History of scisms in the church, and secessions from it, if any in your society, the causes, progress and present condition thereof, with the apparent effects upon the church and upon the seceding members.

14. Notices of remarkable cases of apostasy, whether of preachers or members, with the circumstances thereof.

15. Notices of remarkable declensions in the society, if any.

16. Memoirs or biographical sketches of deceased traveling and local preachers, and of members distinguished for piety or usefulness, or for their prominence in the world. Such notices of the early pioneer preachers and members are particularly desired.

17. The names, ages and residence of each traveling preacher who has located, and now resides in the bounds of your circuit or station, with some notice of their pecuniary circumstances and business.

18. The same notice of superannuated preachers.

19. Names and ages of members of long standing in the church—say of forty years or upwards, with the time and place of their admission.

20. All the circumstances worthy of any notice, attending the introduction of Methodism into the place, with the facts and incidents occurring;—things which might seem now unimportant;—such as the dress, equipage, deportment, conversation, &c., of the preachers;—their ministerial labors;—character of their preaching;—their manners and habits;—the kind of entertainment they received;—the hardships and privations they endured;—their pecuniary support;—the provision made for their families, &c.

21. The number of meeting houses in your circuit (or station), where located, when erected, with their dimensions, cost, and value, including the ground.

22. The same information about parsonages.

23. The number and description of religious meetings, and at what hours on the Sabbath and through the week.

24. The number of classes in your society, and the usual number of members in each.

25. Your Sabbath schools, if any,—their condition and success.

26. Your benevolent societies, such as Bible, Tract, Missionary societies, and whether flourishing.

27. Whether your members are well supplied with our books.

28. Whether our periodical publications are well patronized in your society, and Methodist families generally supplied with them.

29. *The present state of religion* in your circuit (or station), such as the spiritual condition of the members,—their deadness to the world,—their holy living, godly walk and conversation,—their conformity to the rules of the society, and the Discipline of the church generally,—their attention to class meetings, *band meetings*, and other means of grace,—their regular observance of fasting and abstinence,—their keeping holy the Sabbath. Whether there are any, and what, innovations of, or departures from, the original purity and simplicity of Methodism,—any conformity to the world, in dress, manners, habits, conversation, &c.

30. Whether the "General Rules" and the "Thoughts on Dress," are regularly read in each society, as required by the Discipline.

31. Whether the children of Methodist parents are formed into classes, and instructed by the preachers, as required by the Discipline.

32. What universities, colleges, seminaries, or other institutions of learning, are in the bounds or in the vicinity of your circuit or station, under the patronage of our church, with their condition and prospects.

33. Any manuscripts, such as diaries, letters, minutes of quarterly conferences, obituaries or memoirs of the pious dead, &c., would be valuable aids. If the originals could be sent, they would be preserved and returned, if required; or copies of them, written in a fair hand, duly attested, would answer the purpose.

Be pleased to inform us of the names and address of other persons known to you, wherever resident, whether preachers or members, who, in your opinion, would be able to contribute valuable historical information, suitable for the object of our collections.

You will please favor us with your opinion of the proposition mentioned in the 8th article of our constitution,—to publish a *periodical* on the plan there suggested; and whether such a work would be approved and patronized in your circuit or station.

It may be that you have heretofore resided or labored in some other section of the west, and may be in possession of much valuable

information respecting the history of Methodism there. If so, you would much oblige us by committing the same to writing and transmitting it to us. The communication of interesting facts and information of any kind, suitable for the annals of Methodism, in any section of the country, east or west, will also be thankfully received, and carefully preserved in our historical collections.

An early compliance with the request of the Board, contained in this circular, will enhance the value of your communications.

All communications should be addressed to the undersigned,

SAMUEL WILLIAMS,

Corres. Sec. of the West. Meth. His. Soc., Cincinnati, O.

PLAN OF A CONSTITUTION
FOR AN
AUXILIARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

The following plan of a constitution for Auxiliary Societies, is respectfully submitted to our brethren in the several circuits and stations in the western conferences; and is intended merely as an outline, or as hints, to aid in the formation of such associations. Each society will, of course, make such variations from the plan as may be deemed proper.

PLAN OF A CONSTITUTION
For an Auxiliary Historical Society.

ARTICLE 1. The subscribers, members of the Methodist Episcopal church in _____ circuit (or station), _____ conference, approving of the object and constitution of the "Western Methodist Historical Society," in the city of Cincinnati, agree to form ourselves into an association, to be called the "*Historical Society of _____, auxiliary to the Western Methodist Historical Society.*" Our object and design shall be to co-operate with, and aid the said society, by collecting and transmitting to it, all the materials which can be obtained for the history of Methodism in the said circuit (or station).

ART. 2. Subscribers of _____ or upwards, annually, shall be members of this society; or by the payment of _____ dollars or upwards, at one time, shall be members for life.

ART. 3. The officers of the society shall be a president, vice president, secretary and treasurer, who, with five managers, shall form a board for conducting its business. They must be members of said church, and shall be elected annually by the society. The presiding elder of this district, and the traveling preachers on this circuit (or station), shall be *ex officio* members of the board of managers. At all its meetings five members shall be a quorum.

ART. 4. The board shall have authority to make rules for its own government, and fill all vacancies occurring in the board during the year, and shall report its proceedings, in writing, to the society at the annual meetings thereof.

ART. 5. It shall be the duty of the board to take all proper measures, and to use all practicable exertions to obtain, in writing, full and authentic historical information of the origin, progress, and present condition of Methodism in the bounds of this circuit (or station), on the plan suggested in the circular of the parent society; and to transmit the same from time to time, free of expense, to their corresponding secretary.

ART. 6. It shall be the duty of the board, whenever it may be in their power, to obtain and transmit as above, similar historical information of any other society, circuit or station, in our church, in any other part of the United States.

ART. 7. After defraying the incidental expenses for each year, the remaining funds, or such part thereof as the board may see fit, shall be transmitted to the treasurer of the parent society at Cincinnati, in aid of its funds for the general purposes of its institution.

ART. 8. The annual meetings of this society shall be held on the _____; and at all meetings thereof, _____ members shall be a quorum.

ART. 9. This constitution may be altered at any annual meeting of this society, by the vote of two-thirds of the members present.

ART. 10. A copy of this constitution, with the names and residence of the officers, and also a copy of each annual report of the board, shall be transmitted by the secretary, as soon as practicable, to the corresponding secretary of the parent society at Cincinnati.

By order of the Board,

WM. NEFF, *Secretary.*

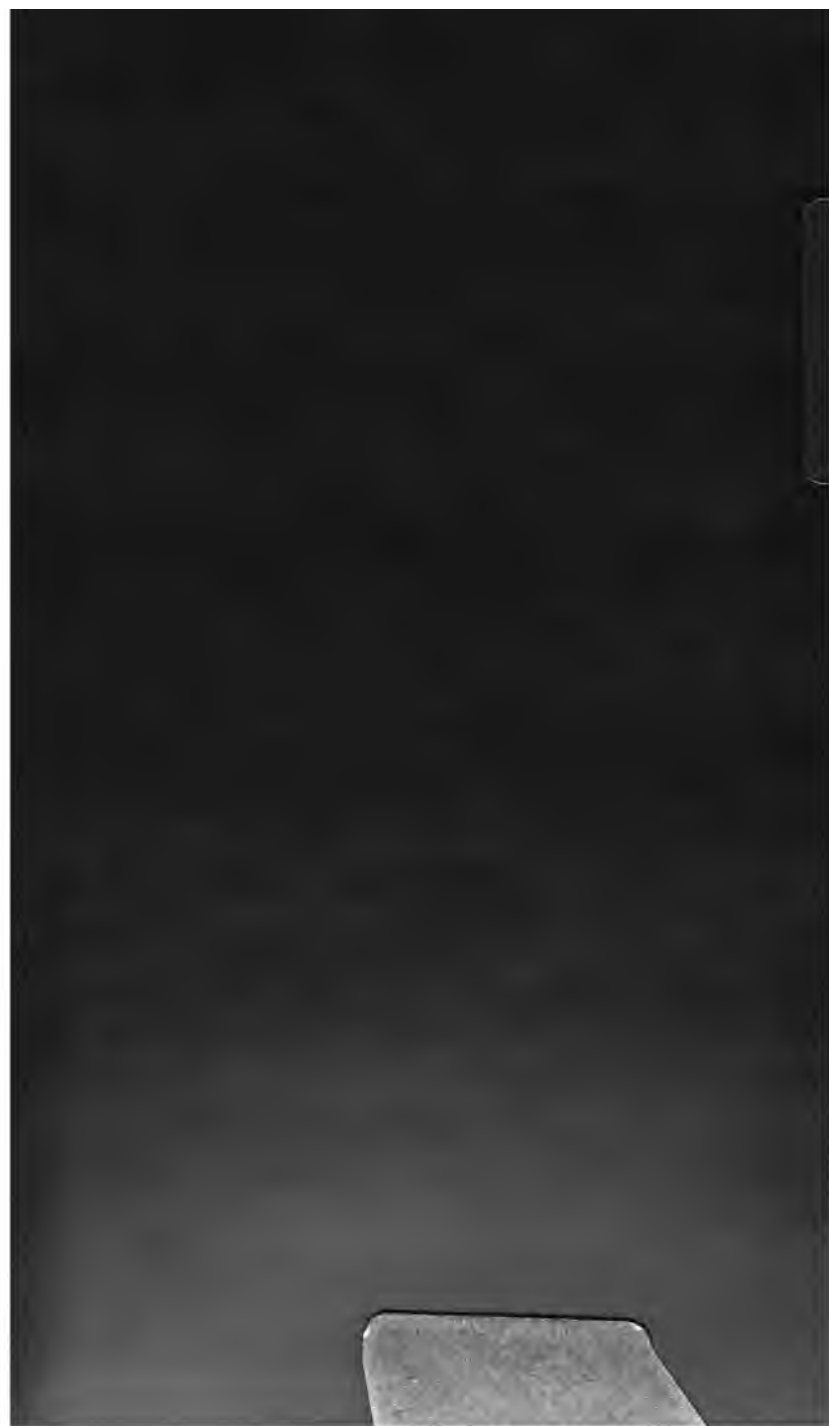
WM. BURKE, *President.*











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