

### **Upham, Mary Cornelia (1843 – 1912)**

On the path of life's journey, with its manifold trials, perils and temptations, when the road is hard or treacherous, the feet weary and the heart despondent; when we are painfully conscious that in the heedlessness of youth, or the cynicism of maturer years, we "have done the things we ought not to have done and left undone the things that we ought to have done," and there is no help in us, how blessed it is to feel the unexpected grasp of a helping hand, and to hear a kindly and sympathetic voice bidding us take new courage, forget the mishaps and stumbles by the way save only as timely warnings, and with God's help struggle onward to the firmer and smoother ground of right principle and high endeavor, where Faith, Hope and Charity henceforth shall be our companions to the Eternal City. Among us all how many there are who need such a friendly voice, such a helping hand, and how few there are, comparatively speaking, who have the strength, heart and soul to render such aid to others instead of needing it rather for themselves. To those who have received such timely aid what a blessed privilege it is to have known such a friend, the very memory of whom, years afterward, has power to warm our hearts when all around is cold and dreary. To Mary Cornelia Upham was it given to be such a friend to many, and especially to the young. Though nearly ten years have passed away since she went to her heavenly reward, in all the deeper and larger parts of her nature she is still with us, and the fires of hope, courage, self-sacrifice, purity of life and earnest endeavor in the path of righteousness that her hands lighted in many hearts are still brightly burning. The material facts of her earthly career may be briefly told. She was born in Cleveland, Ohio, Jan. 21, 1843, daughter of James H. and Elsie Kelley. At an early day the family moved to Wis. and Mr. Kelley engaged in the lumber business at Racine. There Miss Kelley became identified with the Presbyterian church, of which she remained a devoted member to the end of her life. On Dec. 19, 1867, she was married at the home of her parents in Racine to Lieut. William H. Upham, the occasion being a double wedding, as Mr. Upham's sister was married at the same time. Mr. and Mrs. Upham went at once to Detroit, where Lieut. Upham was then stationed with the Fourth United States Artillery, attached to the staff of General Robinson. After two years there Lieut. Upham resigned from the army and they moved to Kewaunee, where he was employed by Slauson, Grimmer & Co. In 1872 they went to Angelica, a new settlement in a clearing between Shawano and Green Bay, then at the end of the wagon road, where Mr. Upham built a shingle mill of his own. Mrs. Upham, who held the degree of M. D. from a college of medicine, finding there was no physician within a less distance than 16 miles, laid in a small stock of home remedies and ministered to the needs of every man, woman and child who became ill. Urged by her and with the co-operation of the young couple, the people put up a little church where Congregational services were held.

In 1878 the Uphams came to Marshfield, where Major Upham (as he has been for many years called from his services in the Civil War) built a sawmill and a frame store building, the first store of any size in the village. Mrs. Upham planned a home of three rooms over the store, in which they lived for two years before the present large residence was built. With the help of a few others Mrs. Upham organized the First Presbyterian Church of this city in the spring of

1879, a few months after coming here, and this church has continued to prosper and do good work in the community ever since. In the early days her home remedies were a very present help in time of trouble to many a distressed family. Among her many acts of usefulness she organized a temperance society or club for boys, in whom she took a great interest. It was called the Band of Hope and met every Saturday evening in a little house across from the Upham residence on West Third Street, near Walnut. Many a Marshfield resident who has since grown to manhood and brought up boys of his own has good reason to remember the unselfish devotion of Mrs. Upham to the Band of Hope. Informal entertainments, sometimes with a little spread, a stereopticon program, or other attraction, marked the history of the organization, which took the place of a Y. M. C. A. for the lumber town. In her later years all of Mrs. Upham's waking thoughts were centered upon making the world and those around her happier and better. Although deafness and approaching blindness made the last years of her life painful and trying to a degree, she was always optimistic, hopeful, sympathetic and unselfish. Writing numerous letters every day, though unable to see what her pencil has written, occasionally turning her ready hand to a poem of topical interest, and lending her strong support to the work of the W. C. T. U., she was always trying to do good. One of her poems, containing much depth of feeling, was written in commemoration of American manhood's heroism when the Titanic sank. For a number of years before her death, though unable to walk alone, and never quite free from pain, Mrs. Upham preserved a great interest in current events, in the church and in her home life. On Friday, Nov. 29, 1912, the weak thread that bound her to earth was gently parted and she passed to her Redeemer's rest. With the family she had just previously spent some time in Chicago, where she had felt unusually comfortable, and had taken pleasure in selecting Christmas gifts for her friends, each of which she carefully wrapped and addressed and laid away with a loving message. On the return journey, made November 21, she took a slight cold, which soon, developed into bronchitis and then into pneumonia, from which she seemed in a fair way to recovery when heart failure brought her life to a close. So gently did she pass away that her husband and those around her bedside hardly knew the precise moment when she breathed her last. Her funeral was a community tribute, the musical parts of the service being rendered by some of her numerous friends and the pall bearers being chosen from the family. One of the most comprehensive tributes to Mrs. Upham's life and character was written immediately after her death by Lloyd Kenyon Jones, who, among other things, said: "Mrs. W. H. Upham - Aunt Mary Upham - arose supreme and superior above the mere plane of morality, for morality itself is too often a moribund thing, a point of least resistance. Hers was different from ordinary goodness, or ordinary charity, or ordinary love. Others have had compassion, others have loved, others have been considerate. But she-well, she Understood, and very, very few ever understand. She understood the frailties of the human kind and had compassion for those who erred. She understood to that Divine degree where she let censure go unuttered, and guided the faltering, weary and mistaken feet back from the thorny paths of wrong to the broader highway of right. This noblewoman of the Northland had that rarest of all faculties of making her precepts abiding. They settled deep into the minds, hearts and souls of growing boys and girls, and became stronger and more purposeful when those same boys and girls became men and women. Were we to canvass the years and the days of the past and interview all those who came in contact with her we could not find one who was not better off for having known her. In all who knew her she touched a responsive chord that caught the vibrant sincerity of her message. And she had courage. She had the moral force to condemn wrong and champion right. It was a

courage that brought forth no militant resentment from those most concerned. Rather, it shamed them, for it is resident in all human breasts to realize and recognize the right, and offer no combat against it when it is presented in its wholesome simplicity. And today, scattered over the face of the earth, are the grown up boys and girls who learned and appreciated and felt the truth in her Band of Hope hall, when the network of trees hedged in the little town in the great North woods. What an unselfish life was hers! She had the means to travel and enjoy; she had every facility for comfort and surcease from labor. But to her, in the breadth and truth of her mind, her boys and girls were dearer than the fame, the honor, the social prestige that were hers for the asking. And remember, these boys and girls were not geniuses, but ordinary children, part of the vast maze of census figures; and out of that raw material she fashioned goodness and a high regard for right. She found their points of view. She considered their circumstances. She smoothed away their cares and taught them as only a gentlewoman can, how to arise from the troughs of the stormy sea of life up onto the crests of the waves of achievement. And while her day's work is completed we are glad she lived. We thank her for the sermon that she lived, the truths she made us feel. We thank her largely for what she did in passing, but mostly for the undying impress that she left; and, finally, we thank her for the privilege of having known and felt the unending blessing of The Woman Who Understood.

Shawano County *Centurawno* 1853-1953

## TOWN OF ANGELICA

Previous to the days of 1871, Menominee Indians and pioneers around Angelica, who wished to gather for the worship of God and religious education, met in a log cabin schoolhouse.

In 1871, the Peshtigo fire destroyed the log school, forcing the settlers to flee for their lives.

The history of Angelica is bound closely with the history of the Angelica Methodist Episcopal Church.

Because many of the early records of the Township have been lost or burned, the historical incidents recorded for the Centennial were taken from the Angelica Methodist Church history.

After the Peshtigo fire, the lumber mills moved in to manufacture the burned over timber into lumber.

The first known minister to preach to the mill hands and owners, as they sat in the eight seats of the new school building, was Rev. Dulap, "a howling Wesleyan Methodist," who rode on horseback from Waupaca. In 1872 he performed the wedding ceremony which united Robert Black and Emma McMillian as they took their vows over a teacher's desk.

In 1875 a group of ladies, Mrs. Kellogg, Mrs. McClaren and Mrs. Button, led by a mill-owner's wife, Mrs. William Upham, organized the First Congregational Church of Angelica. Mrs. Upham held an M.D. degree and was an invaluable help in tending to the congregation's

physical, as well as spiritual needs, especially after the explosion of the Laird sawmill. Later, the Uphams moved to Marshfield. Mrs. Upham's husband had returned to Racine from the Civil War, after his funeral service had been performed when it was believed he had been killed. He was elected Governor of Wisconsin in 1894, and Mrs. Upham was for years the first lady of the State.

The Upham mill was located in the region of the John L. Johnson farm. Mr. Upham furnished the lumber for the erection of a church building.

In the winter of 1876 the first wedding was performed in the newly erected church between Merrill Wheeler and Cora Kelly of Racine. Robert Upham of Shawano, nephew of the church founder, attended that ceremony. The pulpit Bible, used for the Golden Jubilee celebration in 1937, was presented to the Congregational church by Mrs. A.C. Sanford.

When the burned timber was used up, the mills moved to Marshfield, taking with them many church leaders.

The cut-over land was sold to farmers, and such enterprising concerns as J.J. Hoff & Company brought Polish settlers from Milwaukee, Chicago and Detroit. As yet, Pulaski was little more than a swamp hole and a store built by V. Peplinski. Angelica and Laney had post offices.

Among some of the early settlers were: Perry Miller, McChesney, Tibbits, D. Williams, Richard Evans, C.A. Briggs, John Courtice, H. Miracle, M.E. Mills, C.W. Iverson, J.S. McKenna, William Marsh, Anna Marsh, Mr. and Mrs. Clark Ames, T. Colsvir, Mrs. Nettie Boyden, T.D. Smith, A. Richmond, Wm. McMillian, James Magee, John Black, Louis Johnson, Charles Wilson, George Frazer, F. Thompson, Le Schay, H. Wescott, Delos Krake, Hans Peterson, Blake Hurley, Alex McKenna, Jacob Erb, Tom Lutsey, Alex Stronach, Julius Martins, William Ainsworth, Fischer Brothers, Christian Arneman, Mrs. E. Stronach.

In 1888 the Rev. O.C. Christian married Melvin Robbins and Hanna J. McKenna.

There were no church funerals in those days as people were buried in cemeteries on their own farms. Vehicles were scarce and whenever possible, one large wagon or sled would pick up all the folks along the way and bring them to church or to such sociables as "hot maple sugar" pound parties, peach and ice cream socials, or Fourth of July picnics, to which the ladies brought their own variety of home made ice cream. On Christmas Eve all families gave out Christmas presents around the Church tree.

In 1890 there was but one saloon in the whole of Angelica and that was McMillian's saloon, located across from the church. However, under the leadership of men like Delos Krake and Albert Fischer, the saloon was voted out. In former years, Mrs. Upham, who was a prominent temperance leader, had started a Temperance Lodge. Her husband built a dance hall for the Community in which alcoholic liquors were forbidden to be sold.

In 1895 the Church sent Anna Frazer to Milwaukee as a Deaconess, who later attained renown in

Howard City, Michigan, by founding a school for orphan children.

In 1897 the active lodge worker, E.D. Upson, familiarly known as the "horse jockey", came to serve the Church. On his bicycle he covered the charge until O.W. Smith, former angling editor of "Outdoor Life," disciple of Izaak Walton, and famous naturalist writer, took over the parish and stayed until 1903. The present church parsonage was built by him.

Edison Allen came in 1917 and he was the last of the ministers to be moved by members of the congregation with horse and wagon.

The removal of the stage brought many changes in the community, such as the installing of telephone and light lines.

Mrs. Wm. Upham, Mrs. Etta Ball, Harriet Hutchinson, Mrs. Nettie Boyden, Rev. O.C. Christian were the first Methodist Sunday School leaders.

A Ladies Aid was organized at the home of Mrs. Jane Spence in 1889. The Aid became famous for its excellent lunches held at noon. The men paid ten cents and the women paid five cents. The meals became real banquets, and grew to such proportions that a heavy fine had to be placed by anyone exceeding the menu set by the bylaws.

When the Military Road was completed to Shawano, Angelica became a stopping-off place for travelers going on to Fort Howard.

Information taken from:  
Angelica Methodist Church Golden Jubilee Booklet, as submitted by  
Mrs. Fred Johnson,  
Pulaski, Route 1.