

This Week in Eden History
May 12 | Congregational City Missionary Society of St. Louis



Olive Branch Congregational Church Sunday School, 1906. Olive Branch Church (later Presbyterian), was located at 2203 Sydney St. in St. Louis City. | Source: The Annual Report of the Congregational City Missionary Society of St. Louis, 1906.

The American Home Missionary Society (AHMS)—later the Congregational Home Missionary Society—was a Protestant missionary society in the United States founded in 1826 "to assist congregations that are unable to support the gospel ministry, and to send the gospel to the destitute within the United States." Recognizing the need for Protestant ministers to lead German immigrant congregations in the Midwestern frontier of the mid-nineteenth century, the

Society provided financial support in the 1840s and 1850s to many German Evangelical congregations and their pastors including George Wall and Joseph Rieger.

Goals like those of the AHMS were expressed locally when the Congregational City Missionary Society of St. Louis was incorporated on May 12, 1887, "...to promote religion and morality... by the employment of missionaries, the establishment of and support of churches, Sunday schools, mission stations and chapels for the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ." The Society supplemented pastors' salaries for struggling congregations and provided land and funds to build or expand church buildings. The Society also reached out to individuals outside the Church by creating Sunday schools and organizations like sewing groups for children in poorer neighborhoods.

The St. Louis Society created missions specifically for German, Bohemian, and Swedish immigrants when there was a perceived need. By its fifth year of activity, the Society was assisting eleven churches and missions and paying wholly or in part eight missionaries for their work in St. Louis communities. The Society continued its work into the twentieth century, uniting with the Federation of Evangelical and Reformed Churches of Greater St. Louis in 1964 to become The Missionary Federation of the United Church of Christ of Greater St. Louis.

Eden Archives has copies of correspondence between the AHMS and the German Evangelical congregations it supported, as well as minutes and records of the St. Louis City Mission from 1887 to 1964.

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