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Records of the Central Congregational Society and Church
(now Cadman Memorial Church)
1845-1945

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Introduction

This collection was donated by William (Bill) Sikes, a Trustee of the Cadman Congregational Church, in 1989 and accessioned as 1989.003. The collection was foldered and cursorily described in a paper finding aid at some point afterward, following which it was OCR'ed by Pratt GATEWAI intern Quinn Lai in September, 2006 and edited by Dr. Pettit January, 2007. Dr. Samuel Parkes Cadman (1864-1936) was the highly respected pastor of the Central Congregational Church and the leading Congregational clergyman in the US, as well as the first US radio preacher, for much of his thirty-six year pastorate. A portion of Stiles's description of the original church is attached at the end of this finding aid, indicating that the church was founded in 1853. The church was re-named in Cadman's memory in 1939 and in the 1950's merged with the Clinton Avenue Congregational Church at the latter's location, and afterward came to be known as "Cadman Memorial Congregational Church," located in 2007 on Clinton Avenue at Lafayette Avenue in Ft. Greene. Dr. Cadman's name and the original location of the church were perpetuated in 1939 as "Cadman Plaza Park," adjacent to the Brooklyn Bridge. This land was acquired by the city's Parks Dept. in 1935 and the old elevated train tracks and a number of buildings were razed to create an automobile ramp, park land, and an auditorium that was never built. A World War II memorial was erected in the park in the 1950's.

The Cadman Memorial Society of Brooklyn and the Cadman Memorial Church brought suit in 1949 against the Moderator of the General Council of Congregational Churches, on behalf of themselves and other Congregational Christian Churches, protesting the union between Congregational and Christian churches with the Evangelical and Reformed Church into a "United Church of Christ." The Cadman Church, with others, including Plymouth, succeeded in staying out of the UCC, and the Cadman Church afterward merged with Clinton Congregational to become Cadman Memorial Congregational Church.

The collection includes papers, correspondence, account books, deeds, bills, and publications from the Central Congregational Society of Brooklyn and its affiliates.

Container List

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Dates</u>
1	1	Church correspondence	1912-1942
	2	Parish house improvement bills	1908-1910
	3	Deeds, Contracts, Insurance Policies and Papers Relating to Other Church Properties	
	4	Miscellaneous correspondence	Undated
	5	World War Activities	1917-1921
	6	Trustee Minutes	1856-1873
	9	Pew Rental Records	1896-1908
	10	Committee of Church and Society Minutes (St. Paul's Church and Central Congregational Society?)	
	12	Passbooks	1903-1912
	13	Cash book	1904-1909
	15	Pew rentals	1906-1912
2	16	Checkbook & Parish House Expenses [also see folder 2]	1908-1912
	17	Cash book	1909-1918
	18	Cash Account	1909-1913
	20	Cash Book	1913-1916
	21	Check Stubs	1914-1916
	23	Expenses	1916-1923
	24	Cash Book	1916-1920
3	25	Pew Rental Records	c.1916-1919
	26	Income and Expenses	1919-1932
	27	Cash Book	1920-1925
	28	Cash Book	1925-1927
	29	Income and Expenses	1927-1930
	30	Minutes: Deacon's Meeting	1928-1930
	31	Pew Rental Records	
	32	Business Women's Club Minutes	1927-1932
	33	Simpson Auxiliary of Women's Foreign Missionary Society: Minutes	1934-1940

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Dates</u>
3	34	Simpson Auxiliary of Women's Foreign Missionary Society: Receipts and Disbursements	1908-1924
	35	Women's League of Clinton Avenue Community Church: Account Book of Receipts and Disbursements	1924-1940
	36	Women's League of Clinton Avenue Community Church: Minutes and Financial Reports	1937-1940
4	37	Annual Reports (missing 1895-1898, 1911-1917, 1922, 1933, 1934, 1936, 1938	1894-1940
	38	Central Messenger (missing all of 1928 and 1930; also scattered issues elsewhere)	1927-1940
	39	Church Calendars	1921-1927
	40	Church Calendars	1931-1940
	41	Sermons of Dr. J. F. Behrends (three copy books)	1888-1900
5	7	Member Lists (with addresses) and Baptisms	1882-1995
	8	Member Lists (with addresses) and Baptisms	1891-1906
	11	Cash Book	1902-1904
	14	Ledger	1905-1907
	19	Ledger	1911-1913
	22	Ledger	1914-1915
	42	Composition Book containing Treasurer's Report of Ball and Chain Club	1935-1941
	43	Board Minutes Ledger	1871-1909

<http://www.panix.com/~cassidy/STILES/CONGREGATIONALCHURCHES.html#ORMOND>

Central Congregational Church, Ormond Place. 1.4.07. (From Stiles.)

The church in Ormond Place, now occupied by this society, was erected in the year 1853, by Mr. R. L. Crook, with the intention of disposing of it, at a reduction from its cost, to such protestant religious association as should seem to embrace a majority of the surrounding population, and manifest sufficient interest to render the permanency of their organization probable.

In February, 1854, several gentlemen, residing in the neighborhood rented the building from Mr. Crook for two years, commencing May 1, 1854. The Rev. Henry W. Parker was engaged to supply the pulpit, and on the second sabbath in April, the house was opened for public worship.

An ecclesiastical society was formed under the style of the Central Congregational Society of Brooklyn, and on the 27th of November, 1854, a church of thirty members was organized by a council of pastors and delegates from the Congregational churches of Brooklyn and vicinity. The following persons were its founders: Mr. Thomas W. Abbott, Mr. D. Austin Taylor, Mr. William T. Cutter, Mr. W. R. Robinson, Mr. Andrew Van Tuyl, Mr. Charles N. Kinney, Mr. Cranston Howe, Mr. John L.

Merrill. Others, of course, soon connected themselves with the enterprise. Messrs. Abbot, Cutter and Kinney assumed the pecuniary responsibility, for the first two years of the existence of the society.

On the expiration of the lease, strenuous efforts were made to raise the amount necessary for the purchase of the edifice, which for a time were unsuccessful; and the society was compelled to vacate the building, and temporarily worshiped in the mission school house, in Van Buren street, the use of which was kindly tendered by its trustees.

At length, however, being largely aided by the Plymouth Church, and the Church of the Pilgrims, the society was enabled to effect the purchase of the property, and on sabbath, 16th of November, 1856, the house was reopened for the public worship of Almighty God. The church edifice stands upon the south-east corner of Ormond place and Jefferson street. Its lots are One hundred by one hundred and thirty feet.

The Rev. Mr. Parker having removed to another, field of labor, the pulpit was occupied by various clergymen, as temporary supplies, until the Rev. J. Clement French, having accepted the unanimous call of the church and society, was ordained and installed as pastor on the 5th of March, 1857.

In 1863, the church was closed for three months, during which time it was thoroughly renovated and improved both within and without, and a new organ placed in the gallery, all at a cost of about \$6,000. Two years later, the house and lot, No. 13 Ormond place, adjoining the church, was purchased for a parsonage. During May, 1867, the building was again closed for three weeks for the addition of galleries, affording accommodations for one hundred and seventy five persons, and greatly increasing both the value and beauty of the edifice. A few months later, the basement of the building was extensively improved at a cost of several thousand dollars. During the past two or three years, the demand for pews has been much beyond the capacity of the building. The rental of pews exceeds \$6,000.

In December, 1869, a mission sabbath school, located at the corner of Marcy avenue and Monroe street, was organized and provided with a commodious and tasteful building, filly by sixty-six feet, capable of accommodating three hundred and fifty scholars.

Justus Clement French, pastor of the Central Congregational Church, was born May 3d, 1831, at Barre, Vt.; and was the youngest of four children of Rev. Justus Warner French, who preached at Barre, Montpelier and Hardwick, Vt., daring eleven years. When J. C. F. was a year and a half old, his father went to Geneva, N. Y., and became principal of the Geneva Lyceum, for the education of young men for the ministry. Here, and at Albion and Palmyra, the subject of this sketch pursued his academic studies. In 1850, he entered Williams College, Maw., (Sophomore); graduated in 1853, as valedictorian of his class. He entered Union Theological Seminary, N. Y., in autumn of 1853, where his theological studies were pursued; and he was licensed to preach the gospel by the association of Albany in 1856. A throat difficulty seeming to forbid public speaking, he entered upon the work of teaching, but accepted occasional invitations to preach. In the month of December, he received an unanimou's all to become the pastor of the Central Congregational Church of Brooklyn, N. Y., which he accepted.

During the period of eleven years the church has had, in all, between five and six hundred members. The sabbath school connected with the church numbers four hundred scholars; and has a missionary association, organized October, 1865, whose yearly average of contributions has been \$1,250. The sabbath school employs as a special missionary a portion of his time, the Rev. Anson Gleason, for forty years a missionary among the Indians. The Mission Sabbath School numbered nearly one

hundred scholars during the first quarter of its existence. A weekly prayer meeting and sabbath evening preaching services are maintained at the mission school building. The membership of the church, at date of ordination, was twenty-seven. Present membership, three hundred and fifty.

<http://www.firstparishchurchdover.org/sermons.php?sermon=20031123.html> (sermon 2005) 1.4.07 (indicating that the church still existed. Name of clergyman not given.

The story begins 25 years ago in Brooklyn, New York. I was pastor of Cadman Memorial Congregational Church. It was a huge church building with a gymnasium and four lanes of bowling alleys. The church sat on the edge of what had become a racially mixed and rather tough neighborhood. By day I was pastor of an integrated church, by evening I was self appointed, unpaid, director of the Cadman Christian Community Center. It began because I moved my Sunday morning Sunday School class to Friday evenings. The kids had to listen to the Bible lesson first and they could play in the gym. Soon the word got out and my class grew. In a couple years I had as many as 70 young men and women, mostly minorities, coming to my Bible class each Friday night. I needed help, and that is when I called on Bill Tetreault and New Life to come and help me. One young man was Barry Moody, kid who was always seemed ready to give me a hand, always able to make peace if there was a disturbance, and was just a great guy to have around. He was sweet natured, but knew how to be in charge. He was only fifteen, but I made him my sexton, the elderly gentleman we had doing that work had been slowing down considerably. Barry became sort of like a third son to Connie and me. On the day we left Brooklyn the moving van showed up at six a.m. and so did Barry. With a small school photograph of himself to give us, and tears in his eyes, he said goodbye. There were tears in my eyes too. But that was the last I heard of Barry until two months ago Ray took a call and yelled across the room, "David, there's a Barry Moody on the phone." I yelled back, "The only Barry Moody I know was a kid I said goodbye to in Brooklyn twenty-three years ago." It was the same Barry Moody. He is now a lieutenant in the New York City Police Department, and personal bodyguard to the Chief of Police of NYC. His girlfriend had looked up my number and Barry was calling to ask if I would marry them. Barry and Karen came for a wonderful stay with us over Columbus Day weekend, and of course we talked about old times as well as the wedding. They both loved Dover, but I said there were some things that I still missed about NYC, for one thing you still had to go to NYC to get a really good bagel. Two weeks later we received a Federal express overnight delivery package – about sixteen inches on a side. It was a dozen fresh NYC finest H and H bagels, lox and cream cheese in a stay cool pack. We sat down to enjoy them when a knock came on the door. It was a guy making the rounds for one the presidential candidates. (Note: this fellow was a letter carrier in California, who saved up his vacation time to come here and work for the candidate of his choice. He had been doing so for almost 30 years – hasn't picked a winner yet). We asked him if he wanted to join us for lunch and he eagerly accepted. And so in the best tradition of Thanksgiving we had a stranger at our table, and in the best NYC tradition we feasted on bagels and lox and cream cheese. Of course not every day has such serendipity.