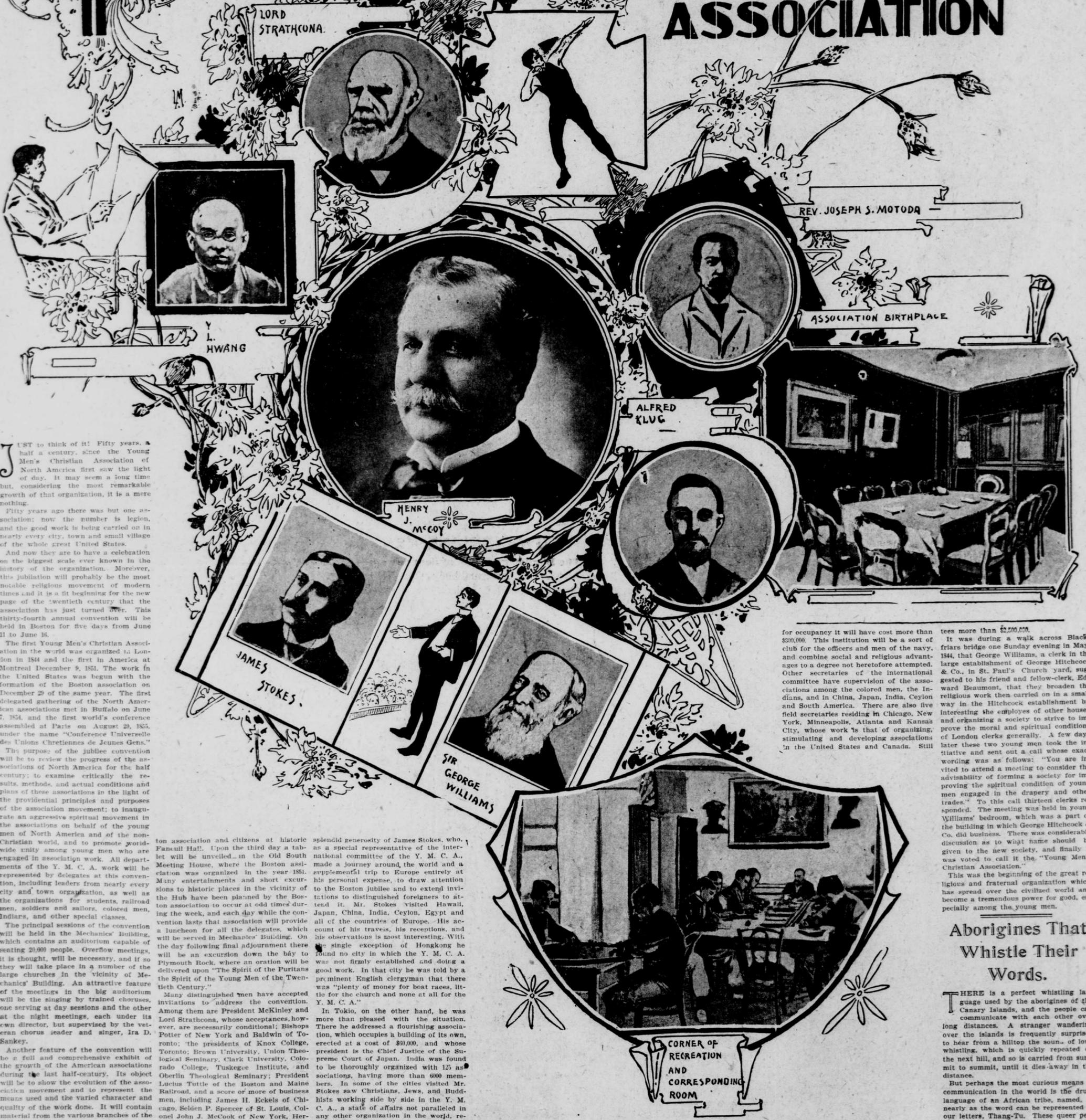


THE STORY OF THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION



JUST to think of it! Fifty years, a half a century, since the Young Men's Christian Association of North America first saw the light of day. It may seem a long time but, considering the most remarkable growth of that organization, it is a mere nothing.

Fifty years ago there was but one association; now the number is legion, and the good work is being carried on in nearly every city, town and small village of the whole great United States.

And now they are to have a celebration on the biggest scale ever known in the history of the organization. Moreover, this jubilee will probably be the most notable religious movement of modern times and it is a fitting beginning for the new page of the twentieth century that the association has just turned over. This thirty-fourth annual convention will be held in Boston for five days from June 11 to June 16.

The first Young Men's Christian Association in the world was organized in London in 1844 and the first in America at Montreal December 9, 1851. The work in the United States was begun with the formation of the Boston association on December 29 of the same year. The first delegated gathering of the North American associations met in Buffalo on June 7, 1854, and the first world's conference assembled at Paris on August 29, 1855, under the name "Conférence Universelle des Unions Chrétiennes de Jeunes Gens."

The purpose of the jubilee convention will be to review the progress of the associations of North America for the half century; to examine critically the results, methods, and actual conditions and plans of these associations in the light of the providential principles and purposes of the association movement; to inaugurate an aggressive spiritual movement in the associations on behalf of the young men of North America and of the non-Christian world, and to promote worldwide unity among young men who are engaged in association work. All departments of the Y. M. C. A. work will be represented by delegates at this convention, including leaders from nearly every city and town organization, as well as the organizations for students, railroad men, soldiers and sailors, colored men, Indians, and other special classes.

The principal sessions of the convention will be held in the Mechanics' Building, which contains an auditorium capable of seating 20,000 people. Overflow meetings, it is thought, will be necessary, and if so they will take place in a number of the large churches in the vicinity of Mechanics' Building. An attractive feature of the meetings in the big auditorium will be the singing by trained choruses, one serving at day sessions and the other at the night meetings, each under its own director, but supervised by the veteran chorus leader and singer, Ira D. Sankey.

Another feature of the convention will be a full and comprehensive exhibit of the growth of the American associations during the last half-century. Its object will be to show the evolution of the association movement and to represent the means used and the varied character and quality of the work done. It will contain material from the various branches of the association, arranged in departments, such as historical, religious, educational, physical, boys' work, army and navy work and miscellaneous. Interesting exhibits from some of the foreign associations have already been received. Awards of merit will be given for the best showings in the various departments.

At the opening session of the convention addresses of welcome will be delivered by leading citizens of Massachusetts, and at the evening session of the same day a reception will be tendered to President McKinley, Lord Strathcona, High Commissioner for Canada, and a number of distinguished personages who bear greetings from foreign governments. During the week there will be receptions to the delegates by Governor Crane at the State House, and under the auspices of the Bos-

ton association and citizens at historic Fanueil Hall. Upon the third day a tabular list will be unveiled in the Old South Meeting House, where the Boston association was organized in the year 1851. Many entertainments and short excursions to historic places in the vicinity of the Hub have been planned by the Boston association to occur at odd times during the week, and each day while the convention lasts that association will provide a luncheon for all the delegates, which will be served in Mechanics' Building. On the day following final adjournment there will be an excursion down the bay to Plymouth Rock, where an oration will be delivered upon "The Spirit of the Puritans of the Spirit of the Young Men of the Twentieth Century."

Many distinguished men have accepted invitations to address the convention. Among them are President McKinley and Lord Strathcona, whose acceptances, however, are necessarily conditional; Bishops Potter of New York and Baldwin of Toronto; the presidents of Knox College, Toronto; Brown University, Union Theological Seminary, Clark University, Colorado College, Tuskegee Institute, and Oberlin Theological Seminary; President Charles Tuttle of the Boston and Maine Railroad, and a score of more of business men, including James H. Eckels of Chicago, Selden P. Spencer of St. Louis, Colonel John J. McCook of New York, Herbert B. Ames of Montreal, and Edwin L. Shney of Dayton, Ohio. All of the foreign delegates and guests of the international committee from abroad are expected to speak upon special topics or participate in general discussion, and reports will be made by the foreign secretaries from Calcutta, Peking and other places. Army and navy secretaries will tell of the work done in field and camp in the Philippines, South Africa, Cuba and China.

This convention will be made notable above any of its predecessors by the attendance of distinguished men to the number of more than 100 from twenty foreign countries, representing Europe, Asia, Australasia, Africa and South America. This gratifying feature will be chiefly the result of the personal visitations and

splendid generosity of James Stokes, who, as a special representative of the international committee of the Y. M. C. A., made a journey around the world and a supplemental trip to Europe entirely at his personal expense, to draw attention to the Boston jubilee and to extend invitations to distinguished foreigners to attend it. Mr. Stokes visited Hawaii, Japan, China, India, Ceylon, Egypt and all of the countries of Europe. His account of his travels, his receptions, and his observations is most interesting. With the single exception of Hongkong he found no city in which the Y. M. C. A. was not firmly established and doing a good work. In that city he was told by a prominent English clergyman that there was "plenty of money for boat races, little for the church and none at all for the Y. M. C. A."

In Tokio, on the other hand, he was more than pleased with the situation. There he addressed a flourishing association, which occupies a building of its own, erected at a cost of \$50,000, and whose president is the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Japan. India was found to be thoroughly organized with 125 associations, having more than 9000 members. In some of the cities visited Mr. Stokes saw Christians, Jews, and Buddhists working side by side in the Y. M. C. A., a state of affairs not paralleled in any other organization in the world, religious, semi-religious, or secular. In these associations are many "associate members," who, because of the liberal spirit of the Young Men's Christian Association, are enabled to co-operate with members in full fellowship in the work of elevating the morals of young men, without the sacrifice of any principle or duty which they hold sacred. On the whole, Mr. Stokes was greatly impressed with what he beheld in the various countries of the old world, and he returned more than ever convinced that there is no other organization that does so much for young men.

The central agency for the extension and supervision of its work in North America is centered in a body of men, forty-five in number, known as the international committee. These are business

and professional men residing in the various States and provinces. The international committee raises money and expends the same for association work in North America and the non-Christian lands. There are more than 6000 Young Men's Christian Associations in the world, of which over 1500 are under the watchful eyes of secretaries chosen by the international committee. Eight secretaries have general oversight of the students' associations, of which there are some 600, with nearly 32,000 members. Six secretaries devote their entire time to caring for the welfare of the railroad associations. Of these there are 151, having 37,000 paying members, and carrying on a work which costs about \$30,000 a year, one-half of

which sum is contributed by the railroad companies. Three secretaries supervise work growing out of the Spanish-American and South African wars, embracing army posts in the United States, Cuba, Porto Rico, Alaska, the Philippines and in the camps of the Canadian troops in South Africa. The naval branch of the work is also important. There are associations at several navy yards and on battleships and cruisers. At the Brooklyn yard a splendid building, intended to be the headquarters of the naval branch of the Y. M. C. A., is nearing completion. It is being erected by the Women's Auxiliary of the international committee, and chiefly at the expense of Miss Helen Gould. When ready

others look out for association libraries, for the department of physical culture and healthful sports, for administrative work in the home office and for the large publishing business. The total membership of associations in North America and the non-Christian lands is probably at this time over 300,000. The value of real estate owned by associations, over and above incumbrances, is \$20,246,437. The expenditures of the international committee have increased from about \$600 in 1866 to somewhere between \$160,000 and \$180,000 in 1900. This sum is raised almost entirely by the committee itself. The State and provincial committees expend not far from \$100,000 per annum and the local commit-

tees more than \$2,500,000. It was during a walk across Blackfriars bridge one Sunday evening in May, 1844, that George Williams, a clerk in the large establishment of George Hitchcock & Co., in St. Paul's Church yard, suggested to his friend and fellow-clerk, Edward Beaumont, that they broaden the religious work then carried on in a small way in the Hitchcock establishment by interesting the employees of other houses and organizing a society to strive to improve the moral and spiritual conditions of London clerks generally. A few days later these two young men took the initiative and sent out a call whose exact wording was as follows: "You are invited to attend a meeting to consider the advisability of forming a society for improving the spiritual condition of young men engaged in the drapery and other trades." To this call thirteen clerks responded. The meeting was held in young Williams' bedroom, which was a part of the building in which George Hitchcock & Co. did business. There was considerable discussion as to what name should be given to the new society, and finally it was voted to call it the "Young Men's Christian Association."

This was the beginning of the great religious and fraternal organization which has spread over the civilized world and become a tremendous power for good, especially among the young men.

Aborigines That Whistle Their Words.

THERE is a perfect whistling language used by the aborigines of the Canary Islands, and the people can communicate with each other over long distances. A stranger wandering over the islands is frequently surprised to hear from a hilltop the sound of loud whistling, which is quickly repeated on the next hill, and so is carried from summit to summit, until it dies away in the distance.

But perhaps the most curious means of communication in the world is the drum language of an African tribe, named, as nearly as the word can be represented in our letters, Thang-Tu. These queer people can talk to each other with large drums made of bamboo hoops, over which the skin of some animal is stretched. The drum is used only on important occasions—such as the meeting of war or the trial of some members of the tribe who have broken some of the complex religious rules. Then the head man of the village, who is hidden behind a rough grass screen, asks questions of the witnesses by tapping on the drum, and finally delivers judgment by giving either the three sharp bangs, which means death to the prisoner, or the one light tap, that means freedom.

It is believed that the figures of the recent English census will prove more reliable than any similar returns previously made.