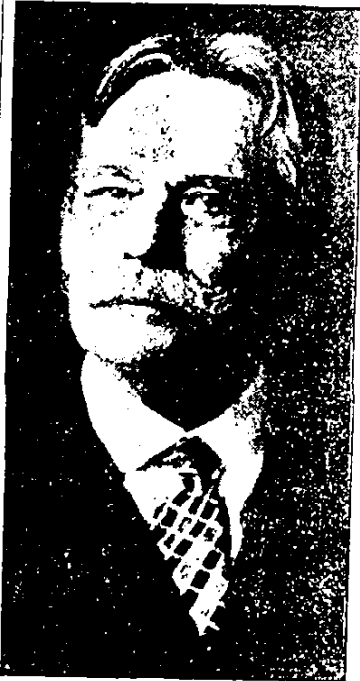


JANUARY 20, 1938

DEATH WRITES "FINIS" TO A RICH LIFE

Funeral Service Friday
at Congregational
Church.



REV. E. M. VITNUM.

Grinnell's grand old man reached the end of life's pilgrimage when Rev. Edmund March Vittum passed away, full of years and honors, at the quiet home at 1132 West street where he has spent the declining years of his life in well earned retirement.

Clergyman, educator and author, Dr. Vittum has left his impress on the life of Grinnell in many ways. His was a well furnished and fertile mind, rich in classic lore and steeped in the songs of poets. His sermons were eloquent, forceful and graceful. He was a pastor as well as a preacher and the homes of his people knew him in their hours of joy and sorrow. During his pastorate of the Congregational church he exercised a potent influence, not only on the lives of his own people but on the entire community, and even when he

sought to retire his people would not let him go. Up to the last few years, when the increasing infirmities of age compelled his withdrawal from all active duties, he was constantly in demand at weddings and funerals and in many ways he was the recipient of the affectionate interest of those to whom he had ministered

for so many years. He had been failing rapidly during the past year but his last illness had been of less than 24 hours' duration. He passed quietly away at his home on Wednesday evening at the ripe old age of 82 years.

Dr. Vittum was the authentic successor of the sturdy New Englanders who had founded Grinnell. He was a New Hampshire man, having been born at Sandwich Oct. 24, 1855, the son of Stephen and Ruth (Tappan) Vittum. He graduated from Dartmouth College in 1878, took his master's degree in 1888 and received his Bachelor of Divinity Degree from Yale in 1884. In 1898 Grinnell College conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity.

Even prior to his graduation from college Dr. Vittum had entered the educational field, serving as principal of Orleans Liberal Institute in 1873-74. Immediately following his graduation in 1878 he became professor of mathematics in Roberts College in Constantinople, where he served until 1881.

Ordained in the Congregational ministry in 1884, he accepted his first pastorate in Guilford, Conn., on the sea, where he served for four happy years. It was during that time that he met Miss Annie Griswold, who became Mrs. Vittum on May 16, 1889, while he was pastor in Cedar Rapids. Mrs. Vittum came to Grinnell with him and continued her college work, graduating with the class of 1900, which has ever since claimed Dr. Vittum as one of its honorary members and he has been an honored and prominent figure at a number of class reunions. Mrs. Vittum was the possessor of a beautiful soprano voice and for a number of years was soloist in the choir of the Congregational church. She passed away in 1903.

Dr. Vittum came west in 1888 to accept the pastorate of the Congregational church in Cedar Rapids. He served there until 1891 when he came to Grinnell to begin his real life work as pastor of the Grinnell Congregational church. His pastorate continued without interruption until 1907 and during that time the church

became known as one of the largest and most influential of the Congregational churches of the state.

He resigned in 1907 to accept the presidency of Fargo College in North Dakota, where he served until 1909, resigning to become professor of English literature in the Georgia Normal College in Milledgeville, where he remained happily until 1917.

During the World War, when Rev. E. W. Cross went to the front as a chaplain, Dr. Vittum returned to Grinnell and supplied the pulpit from 1917 until the return of Dr. Cross in 1919, when he accepted the pastorate of the First Congregational church in Muscatine, where he remained until he retired in 1925 and returned to Grinnell to make his home.

Since his retirement he has served in the capacity of pastor

emeritus for the Grinnell church, which has loved and honored the man who had given to it the choicest years of his active life.

This is the bare record of an extraordinarily rich and active career, but no words can describe the unique quality which Dr. Vittum brought to his pastorate in Grinnell. He was truly the shepherd of his people. From his student days the writer can remember him as he drove along the streets in all kinds of weather behind his little black pony on all sorts of errands of mercy and helpfulness. He was unique as a preacher also, for those days, when ministers almost universally spoke from manuscript. Dr. Vittum needed no manuscript. It was his custom to advance before his pulpit and standing at the very front of the rostrum, he poured forth the riches of his well furnished mind and his overflowing heart before his people. His fame as a pulpit orator was wide and many of his sermons were classics.

Dr. Vittum was also an author of repute. Among his books are listed "Church Festivals in a Meeting House" (1888); "Faith on the Frontier" (1890); "Head of the Firm" (1891); "A Modern Dreamer" (1919); "The Vittum Folks" (1921). Several of these books were stories and in their day had a prominent place in Sunday school libraries.

Though most of his active life was spent in the middle west, Dr. Vittum never lost his love for the New England hills. For many years he made a summer pilgrimage back to North Sandwich, N. H., where he owned a rocky farm that was especially dear to him and in these beautiful surroundings he renewed his strength and refreshed his spirit.

He had been honored by membership in Phi Beta Kappa, national scholastic fraternity, and his name for years has appeared in "Who's Who." Since returning to Grinnell to make his home he has been a beloved member of the Kiwanis club and has been regular and faithful in attendance even on days when advancing years would have made it perfectly allowable to remain at home. He enjoyed the fellowship which he found at Kiwanis and the Kiwanians appreciated his ripe wisdom and his friendly nature.

Dr. Vittum is survived by two sisters, Mrs. Clara Bean of Meriden, N. H., now 86 years old and very feeble, and Miss Bertha Vittum, who has kept his home here in Grinnell and has given him loving support and comfort in these declining years.

Funeral services will be held from the Congregational church, the scene of his devoted labors for so many years, at 3 o'clock Friday afternoon and his body will be taken for burial to Guilford, Conn., where it will rest beside his own true love, who preceded him in death so many years ago.

It is given to few men to live so richly, to labor so fruitfully and to die surrounded by the love and honor of so many friends.

Dr. Vittum was Grinnell's grand old man.

LAST HONORS FOR BELOVED CLERGYMAN

Funeral Services for Rev.
E. M. Vittum Held
Friday.

A beautiful tribute by his pastor, Rev. Robert Inglis, personal reminiscences and an eloquent prayer by Dr. E. A. Steiner, suitable vocal solos by Mrs. Margery Bouma and appropriate organ music by Elbert M. Smith combined to make an unusually suitable service for Rev. Edmund March Vittum, pastor emeritus of the Congregational church, Friday afternoon. The service was appropriately held in the church which Dr. Vittum had served so devotedly during the years of his active life in this community.

Pallbearers were Judson Blakeley, A. M. Burton, F. J. Kiesel, Carl E. Child, Professor D. E. T. Spencer and John Evans.

One of Mrs. Bouma's selections was very appropriately a musical setting of "Crossing the Bar," the poem by Tennyson which Dr. Vittum loved and which he was accustomed to quote so frequently at funeral services. At the close of the services she sang the lovely "O Rest in the Lord."

1907 SKETCH AND AN APPRECIATION OF REV. E. M. VITNUM'S 15 YEAR'S WORK IN GRINNELL.

The following address was presented by Professor Charles Noble before the Council called recently for the purpose of taking action upon Rev. E. M. Vittum's resignation from the pastorate of the Congregational church in this city. The words are so appropriate and so true that we cannot imagine any reader who will not concur in them most heartily.

Professor Noble on behalf of the committee appointed by the church society, spoke as follows:

"The committee appointed to represent the First Congregational church in Grinnell before the Council called to advise the church with reference to the resignation of their pastor, Rev. E. M. Vittum, offer the following statement as expressing what they believe to be the feeling of the church and congregation in the matter.

Dr. Vittum's fifteen year's ministry in Grinnell has been one of marked usefulness. The number of persons added to the church, something over eleven hundred altogether, might perhaps be considered the result of the steady on goings of the church.

life, rather than as the direct result of the individual labors of the pastor; but to have held the church steadily to its regular work, to have avoided and overcome the difficulties and obstacles which might have hindered its success, to have been the leader under whom this remarkable, steady accession, averaging seventy-five each year, took place, is no small achievement. If the history had been of another sort; if dissension, terrible spiritual apathy had marked the church life, the pastor would have had to bear no small share of the blame. As the history has been one of peace and prosperity, he should not be refused his share of the praise.

This period has been one of advancement in the equipment of the church. By the putting in of galleries the seating capacity has been increased by about 400. The church building has been completed, its heating and lighting apparatus renovated. A new and unusually excellent organ, costing about \$10,000 has been installed, replacing the large but unsatisfactory instrument which for several years has surely tried the patience of organists and of congregation. At the same time the benevolent gifts of the church and congregation have steadily expanded.

Through some periods when the materials for factional strife and confusion were abundant, and when an unwise leader might easily have torn the church into fragments, we have been kept free from factional disputes, and the wide and somewhat intense theological differences which formerly divided the church into parties have passed entirely away.

Dr. Vittum has made the church a leader in projects for the betterment of social and civic conditions. The evening free-parliaments, when citizens of Grinnell, of all churches and of no church, come together in our auditorium to discuss topics of interest to the whole community, have been a characteristic feature of his leadership. The most enduring and conspicuous monument of this place of Dr. Vittum's work is pro-

bably the Stewart Public Library which certainly is deeply indebted to him for its inception, and whose interests he has continuously fostered, is the chairman of its board of trustees. Another striking example of this phase of Mr. Vittum's usefulness is the raising of \$1500, at such a free parliament, for the aid of the sufferers from the San Francisco earthquake and fire.

In the pulpit Dr. Vittum has given us strong scriptural preaching. Without the usual tricks of pulpit orators, he has always called upon his hearers to think for themselves, no he has always put before them the

results of his own independent thinking. Probably his most effective pulpit work has been in the discussion of special topics, he being one of the few preachers who can make a missionary address of more than average interest.

Dr. Vittum has been constantly faithful to the work of the Congregational churches in the state at large. He has never failed to represent his church and to do his full share of work at state and board association meetings.

Dr. Vittum's private life and character have greatly strengthened his public ministry. He has never spared himself. The most severe criticism that can be made upon his methods would be that he has done too many things himself rather than make others do them. His spotless purity and manly integrity of life have set before his congregation and the community an unflinching example of Christian manhood.

So vigorous and effective a minister as Dr. Vittum could not fail to receive propositions as to other fields of labor; and his friends understand that such propositions have come to him at times during these years. Mr. Vittum has never troubled his people with reports of this kind, having felt always until now that his work lay with us. A definite call to another field of labor having now come to him and he being evidently inclined to accept this call, the church and congregation have joined with him in calling this council to advise with them. We feel that Dr. Vittum has peculiar adaptations to the special work to which he is invited and that

the call constitutes an opportunity for increased usefulness for him. His fifteen years service in Grinnell, particularly in the close association of his work with that of Iowa College, has doubtless well prepared him for this new opportunity. Many of us who have been his friends and fellow-workers in these years, will miss his fellowship and cooperation; but we shall rejoice with him in the success which we are confident will be his. The church is not disposed to put any hindrances in the way of Dr. Vittum's accepting the call that has come to him; and while we realize that to find a leader who will do as good work for us as he has done may be very difficult, we yet see no other right course than to join with our pastor in the request that the relationship between him and the church be dissolved and he be made free to accept the call to the presidency of Fargo College.

CHARLES NOBLE.

C. F. CHILDS.

L. F. PARKER.

Committee to represent the church before the Council.

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY LIBRARY BOARD.

At a meeting of the trustees of the Grinnell Free Library Monday evening December 10, 1906, it was voted that the following resolutions be sent to our retiring President, the Grinnell Herald and Register—

Resolved:

That we take pleasure in spreading upon our records the expression of our appreciation of our retiring President, Rev. Edmund M. Vittum D. D. and of his service in developing the Library of this city before it had a home, or its present name, and of his success in promoting its interests, as its President ever since it became the Stewart Library.

We shall cherish grateful recollections of his diligent attention to its interests, his literary skill in the selection of books and magazines, his promptness, wisdom and accuracy in the direction of its business, and of his uniform courtesy in all relations.

Committee.

L. F. PARKER.

E. W. CLARK.

Mrs. D. W. MORRIS.

MISS EDNA DAVIS,

chairman protem.

Mrs. W. S. ROBY,

Secretary.

This and preceeding

article from Steenhoek
RESIGNS PASTORATE.
collection

Rev. E. M. Vittum Tendered His Formal Resignation to the Members of the Congregational Church Yesterday Morning. Will Accept the Presidency of the Fargo Congregational College.

'Tis not often that a paper is called upon to chronicle a change which is of so much importance as that which took place yesterday when Rev. E. M. Vittum closed a pastorate extending over fifteen years of the city's history, by the reading, at the close of his morning's address of his formal resignation from the duties of pastor of the First Congregational church of Grinnell.

In leaving pastoral work to take the presidency of the Fargo College, Mr. Vittum does not enter a field to which he is an entire stranger but on the contrary takes to the position an intelligent understanding of the workings of educational institutions, obtained thru three years professorship in Roberts College at Constantinople and since his residence in Grinnell, thru close connection with the affairs of Iowa College as member of the board of trustees, all of which has given him a clear conception of the needs and problems of denominational schools.

Fargo Congregational College is located in Fargo, N. D. one of the

most flourishing cities in the state. It had its beginning 18 years ago, since when it has advanced steadily, and now contains an enrollment of 250 students. It is located in a state which is rapidly developing and which offers great opportunities. Aside from the state university there is no other institution nearer than Minneapolis, which allows a large territory for the two schools to draw from.

During the fifteen years which have elapsed since Mr. Vittum took charge of the church it has made many improvements. The membership has increased from 740 to approximately 1,050, and this in spite of the fact that two new churches have been established in the meantime to divide the membership. The increase of the city's population during this period has been 40 per cent, while the increase in the church membership has been 50 per cent. During this time substantial improvements have been made in the church, the new gallery built, also the tower and the church has been decorated and a ventilating system installed, and last, but by no means least, the splendid new pipe organ has been added. All this speaks in highest terms of the energy and ability which Mr. Vittum has put into his work. Mr. Vittum is a man of a vigorous personality, a personality which has left its imprint upon the history of the city and its development, which years will not soon obliterate and which it is not easy to estimate. In leaving so congenial a field containing so much of value in friends and associations, and going into a new field to meet and overcome new obstacles, Mr. Vittum enters a line of work for which he is especially well adapted because of his experience and ability as an administrator and organizer. In going to this new field he takes with him the kindest wishes and sincere interest of the many who have learned to respect and admire him as a man and a pastor.

As soon as the board of trustees have acted officially upon the resignation, steps will be taken looking to the selection of a successor. It is not definitely known just when Mr. Vittum will assume his new duties but he will proceed at once to close up his affairs here and make ready for the change.

JANUARY 21, 1938

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One of Mrs. Bouma's selection was very appropriately a musical setting of "Crossing the Bar," the poem by Tennyson which Dr. Vittum loved and which he was accustomed to quote so frequently at funeral services. At the close of the services she sang the lovely "O Rest in the Lord."

In his brief remarks, Dr. Steiner referred to three documents which had been placed in his hands. Two of these were Church Greetings. In one of them, printed at the time of Mrs. Vittum's death, Dr. Vittum expressed his thanks for the help and sympathy which he had received from his congregation. In the other, which contained the announcement that he was relinquishing his pastorate, he expressed his faith in Grinnell and in the Grinnell church, and briefly reviewed the

Continued on Page Two.)

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LAST HONORS FOR BELOVED CLERGYMAN

(Continued from page 1)

results of his pastorate. Professor Steiner emphasized the fact that during that pastorate 1,153 new members had come into the church. The third document was a little folder which contained two pictures of Dr. Vittum, one taken when he entered the ministry and one fifty years later, and about these two pictures the

speaker wove the thought of his loving tribute.

The Herald-Register is privileged to report the remarks of Rev. Mr. Inglis in full, in the belief that may friends of Dr. Vittum who see this paper in Grinnell and elsewhere, will be glad to preserve them.

Rev. Mr. Inglis spoke as follows:

"What a wonderful world we live in! A world which gives us men like Dr. Vittum. God has not solved all the problems, nor has He answered all our questions, nor has He removed all our sorrows or our sins from us. But He has done more than that. He has endowed His children with life. He has given them a commodity of very great value, and is a most impressive thing when someone, either by the dedication of talent or by dint of de-

Dr. Vittum was born at Sandwich, N. H., on October 24, 1855, the son of Stephen and Ruth Vittum. He graduated from Dartmouth College in 1878 and received his master's degree in 1888. He received his bachelor of Divinity degree from Yale in 1884 and in 1898 Grinnell College conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity.

He served his first pastorate at Guilford, Conn., for a period of four years. At this time he met Miss Annie Griswold and was united in marriage with her on May 16, 1889, at Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Mr. and Mrs. Vittum came to Grinnell where Mrs. Vittum continued her educational training in Grinnell college from which she graduated in 1900. Mr. Vittum first came to Grinnell in 1891 and began his pastorate with the local church which he held until 1907. During that time the Grinnell church became one of the largest and most influential in the state. He left Grinnell in 1907 and served for many years in other positions returning to make this his permanent home in 1925.

VOL. 5

GRINN

Rev. Vittum⁶⁻¹⁶

Last Services
Jan. 21, 1938
Held Friday

A Congregational Minister
Who Brought Renown
to Grinnell Church

Last services for Rev. E. M. Vittum, pastor emeritus of the Congregational church, who passed away at his home at 1132 West street, were held at the Congregational church last Friday afternoon with Rev. Robert Inglis conducting. At the services, Rev. Robert Inglis gave a beautiful tribute to the life of this well known Grinnell builder, Dr. E. A. Steiner recounted many personal reminiscences and delivered a prayer and Mrs. Margery Bouma sang a musical setting of "Crossing the Bar" passages, a favorite with Rev. Vittum, and "O Rest in the Lord."

Pallbearers included A. M. Dutton, John Evans, F. J. Kiesel, Carl E. Child and Professor E. B. T. Spencer. His body was taken to Guilford, Conn., for burial beside that of his wife who preceded him in death.

14 PAGES IN THIS ISSUE
A Newspaper Devoted to
the Best Interests of
Grinnell and Vicinity

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(Continued On Page 2)

SIGNS TO MAKE

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DAY, JANUARY 21, 1938.

rites HELD



Funeral services for Dr. Edmund March Vittum, 82, of Grinnell, Ia., former pastor of the Congregational church there, were Friday at Grinnell. Dr. Vittum died at his home Thursday morning. The body will be sent to Guilford, Conn., for burial.

Since his retirement he has merited in the capacity of pasteuritus for the Grinnell church which has loved and honored the man who had given to it the hoicest years of his active life. This is the bare record of an extraordinarily rich and active career, but no words can describe the unique quality which Dr. Vittum brought to his pastorate at Grinnell. He was truly the shepherd of his people. From his student days the writer can remember him as he drove along the streets in all kinds of weather behind his little black pony on all sorts of errands of mercy and helpfulness. He was unique as a preacher also, for those days when ministers almost universally spoke from manuscript. Dr. Vittum needed no manuscript. It was his custom to advance before the pulpit and standing at the very front of the rostrum, he poured forth the riches of his well furnished mind and his overflowing heart before his people's fame as a pulpit orator was made and many of his sermons were classics.

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Dr. Vittum is survived by two sisters, Mrs. Clara Bean of Meriden, N. H., now 86 years old and very feeble, and Miss Bertha Vittum, who has kept his home here in Grinnell and has given him loving support and comfort in these declining years. Funeral services will be held from the Congregational church, the scene of his devoted labors for so many years, at 3 o'clock Friday afternoon and his body will be taken for burial to Guilford, Conn., where it will rest beside his own true love, who preceded him in death so many years ago.

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