

The Second Congregational Church's Certificate of Donation for the Steamship "Morning Star" in 1884 to the American



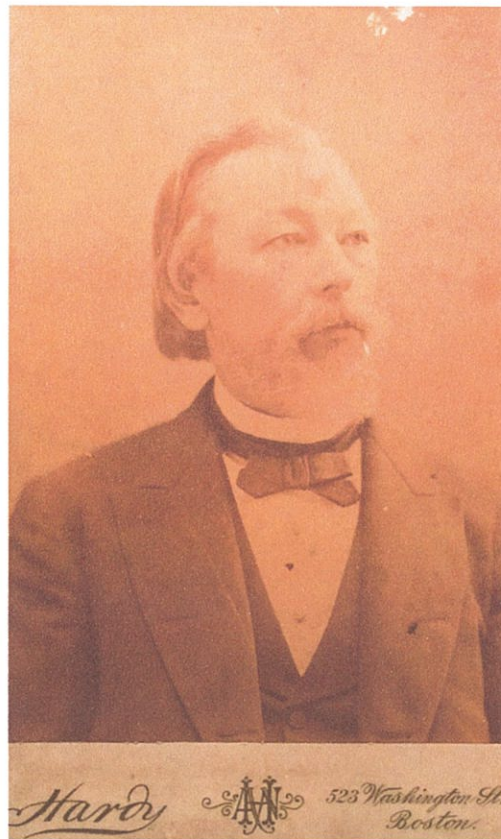
Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions

This certificate has hung in the front parlor of the Second Congregational Church for some time and acknowledges a \$36 donation from the church's Sunday School in 1884. The donation helped finance the construction of a steamship with a barkentine rig that was constructed in Bath for the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. It was the fourth

ABCFM ship to be named “Morning Star” and was destined to serve as a supply ship for missions, clinics and settlements in the South Pacific. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was organized in Williamstown Massachusetts in 1808 and started sending missionaries into the American West and overseas beginning in 1812. An arm of the Congregational Church, ABCFM missionaries served in the Dakota Territory, Michigan, Wisconsin, Hawaii, Oregon, Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, China, Brazil and India.

The ship may have been named for a passage from the Book of Job (Job 38:7) and ultimately finished its days as a supply ship for the Alaska Gold Rush. It is noteworthy that a \$36 donation in 1884 is equivalent to nearly \$900 in 2015 — a very generous gift indeed from the Sunday School at Newcastle’s Second Congregational Church.

The ABCFM's Treasurer for sixty years was Langdon Storer Ward whose original signature appears on the certificate. Ward was born in Saco Maine



in 1825 and married Laura Bliss whose parents had been Congregational missionaries in Istanbul. The couple had eight children of whom seven served themselves as missionaries in Turkey, Lebanon, India and China in various medical and educational capacities. The eighth was for many years employed by the Boston Public Library. Upon Langdon Ward's death in 1895, his widow fulfilled a promise to secure a college education for each of her children. She moved to Amherst Massachusetts where four of her sons graduated from Amherst College. Three daughters graduated from Mount Holyoke College in nearby South Hadley.

Langdon S. Ward was my great-grandfather and I got to know three of his eight children very well. As a child, I listened to many stories about their adventures in the mission field during the early years of the 20th century. The three included my Godfather, Mark Hopkins Ward, his twin brother Earl

Dodge Ward and their sister Laura Dwight Ward, residents of Newton Highlands and Amherst in Massachusetts. Laura was famously captured by Chinese pirates in the South China Sea, as reported in 1927 in newspapers around the world, but ultimately was released unharmed.

This lithograph was conserved in December 2015 at the Terry Marsh Art Conservation studio in Damariscotta, by means of careful erasure of soil on the print's surface, flattening of the print using a humidified press and the addition of Japanese hinges so that the print now hangs behind conservation glass but is not in contact with it. The print was reframed at Salt Bay Framers in Damariscotta where Brad Perry repaired damage to the original frame with gilded paint.

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