

Benjamin J. West, One Hundred Years Old Today, Says This World Is Not a Bad Place to Live In

HE CAST HIS FIRST VOTE FOR W.H. HARRISON

TIPPECANOE & TYLER TOO

CALIFORNIA OR BUST

BENJ. J. WEST

HE LIVED IN THE DAYS WHEN THERE WERE NO RAILROADS

HE SAW SLAVERY IN ITS HEYDEY

HE WOULD STILL PREFER AN OLD WHITE HORSE TO AN AEROPANE

HE SAW THE GOLD RUSH TO CALIFORNIA

THE CIVIL WAR

VISITED PRESIDENT LINCOLN AT THE WHITE HOUSE

HE IS STILL ON GOOD TERMS WITH THE G.O.P. AND EXPECTS TO VOTE FOR PRESIDENT TAFT

PHOTO BY BRANCA

BENJAMIN J. WEST.

Centenarian, Whose Memory Retains Events Early in the Country's History, Laughs and Chats Gaily With Old Friends Who Come to Call.

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ONE hundred years ago today, Benjamin J. West was born in Botetourt county, Virginia. Surrounded by his family, his friends and a host of acquaintances, who came to give him the glad hand of fellowship, he is celebrating today at his home, 1926 Fifth avenue south, the one-hundredth anniversary of his birth, in good health, in better spirits and not yet ready to admit that he is "down and out."

"I don't feel as buoyant as a bull moose," he said to a friend in reply to an inquiry about his health, "but I guess I'm all right at that."

Mr. West is in full possession of his faculties and seemed heartily to enjoy meeting the friends who came to greet him at the reception given in his honor by his son, Benjamin J. West, Jr., and Mrs. West. He had a word for every one, and a word of cheer at that, part of his philosophy being that this old world is not so bad a place to live in, and that people ought to make the most of it.

Talks Politics.

He talked politics with those who were politically inclined and was ready and willing to give seasonable hints on the hygiene of longevity with those who sought the benefit of advice from his unusual experience. Throughout the day he chatted, joked and laughed with the many visitors who came to greet him.

He is particularly proud that he has not been obliged to consult a physician in four years and that his health continues good. Yet he has no hard and fast rules of living and ascribes long life to good care, simple eating, methodical habits, regular exercise and freedom from worry. He eats but two meals a day, smokes part of a cigar daily, takes a short walk when the weather allows, calls regularly on his friends and writes one or two letters a day to old friends and old acquaintances. He is particularly interested in politics and in news generally and lets no day pass without reading the newspapers.

To Vote for Taft.

"I guess I'll be able to vote for Taft all right this time," he told his son lately. "I don't expect to get a chance to vote at more than one or two more presidential elections." His first presidential vote was cast for William Henry Harrison, whose inaugural he attended

at the White House, and had a personal acquaintance with the following presidents: James Madison, James Monroe, John Quincy Adams, Andrew Jackson, Martin Van Buren, William Henry Harrison, John Tyler, James K. Polk, Zachary Taylor, Millard Fillmore, James Buchanan and Abraham Lincoln.

In his long life Mr. West has been a farmer, a merchant and a banker, retiring from business when he was 75 years old. He saw slavery when it was in its heyday and tells how his grandfather left his native Virginia and moved to Illinois because of his opposition to slavery and slave owners. He lived in days when the railroad was unknown, when messengers and mail coaches were the principal mediums of intercourse between peoples, when stamps cost 25 cents a piece, when applied electricity was unheard of and when a number of other things, such as the telephone, wireless telegraphy, etc., that are taken as a matter of course today had not yet entered the minds of men.

Sceptical About Aeroplane.

Mr. West has lived to see the aeroplane, but he confesses to be somewhat sceptical about that method of locomotion. He is fond of contrasting it with a famous ride which he had on a white horse part of the way between St. Louis and Baltimore more than 70 years ago, and which he says he enjoyed much and which, on the whole, he believes to be a more satisfactory means of covering space than whirling through the air in an aeroplane.

But this does not mean that he is behind his time, or that he is not keenly alive to the value of present-day progress. He believes in scientific education and might have sent a thrill of joy through the hearts of the conclave of bankers and educators assembled in Minneapolis two weeks ago, had he given them his views on the importance of educating the tillers of the soil.

"Agricultural education," he told a friend lately, "means more to this country than any other form of education. We must create in the mind of the farmer an appreciation of the individual obligation he is under to the soil." Then he expatiated on the value of fertilization, crop rotation and intensified farming.

Mr. West often regrets that he was

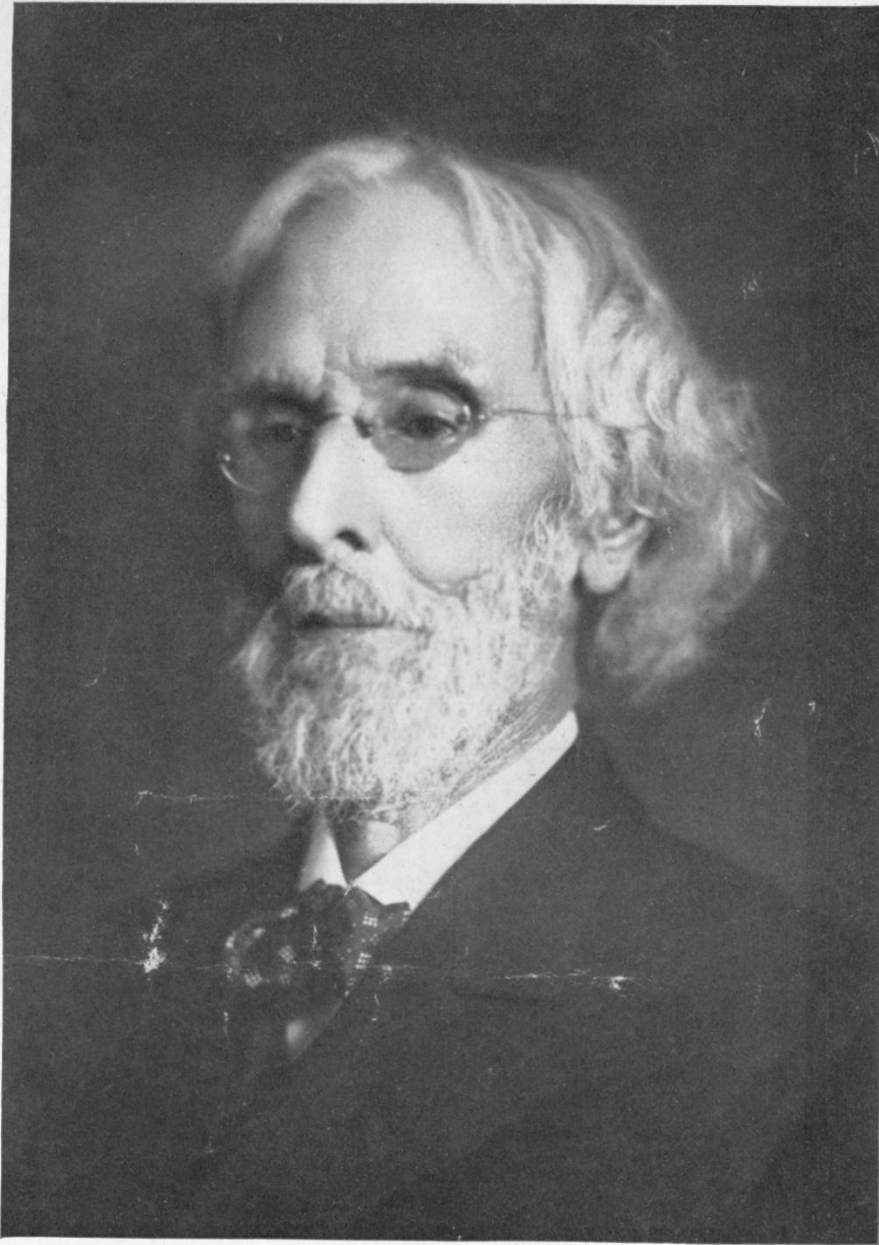


too old to enlist when the civil war broke out, having been 49 years old in 1861. Twelve years before that he had seen the gold rush to California, but even that did not attract him, for he remained at his business in the little Illinois town in which he had made his home. He visited President Lincoln at the White House, voted for Henry Clay and had a personal acquaintance with Daniel Webster.

Of abstemious habits, Mr. West is withal a believer in the rights of the individual, and has no time for iron-clad rules about diet and ways of living. He eats a piece of toast and drinks a glass of milk or cream for breakfast and the other meal of the day is in

the evening and consists mostly of fruit, vegetables and a little meat. He has no decalogue through the observance of which other people may hope to live 100 years, but believes in moderation, plenty of exercise, good fellowship and the casting worry to the winds.

Mr. West married Louise Mitchell of Liberty, Va., the marriage following a pretty romance. They had three daughters and four sons, with one of whom, Benjamin J. West, Jr., he has made his home since he came to Minneapolis in 1900. He is a member of the Hennepin Avenue Methodist Episcopal church and attended the general conference of the Methodist church last May. He is keenly interested in the growth and the welfare of Minneapolis and expects to cast his vote on the Republican ticket on primary election day. With good luck, good care and good living, Mr. West says he sees no reason why a man should not live to be 120. We come of the same stock, he says, as the men who were counted out only after they had registered as 900 years and over.



Benj. J. West

The copy for this signature was written on the occasion of
Mr. West's one hundredth birthday.

**Hennepin Avenue
Methodist Episcopal Church
and the
Coburn Hill Congregational Church**
Rev. Luther Freeman, D. D., Minister.

Services for Sunday, Aug. 25, 1912.

Benjamin J. West

Benjamin J. West was born in Virginia, August 23, 1812. Mr. West's father early felt that slavery was wrong and so moved with his family to Illinois in 1818. He immediately freed his slaves and ever after trained his children to love liberty for all men.

In 1836 Mr. West married Miss Louisa A. Mitchell. Miss Mitchell's father at first objected to the marriage on account of Mr. West's delicate health. Four sons and three daughters came to this home, but only two are now living. Mr. West conducted a successful mercantile business in Belleville, Ill., for more than forty years, and for several years has made his home in Minnesota with his son, Benj. West, Jr.

In 1832 Mr. West united with the Methodist Episcopal Church in Belleville and has been one of its faithful supporters.

We count ourselves highly honored to have this noble Christian man as our guest today. We pray the continued favor of God upon his life.

Morning Worship—Ten Thirty O'clock

Prelude—"Andante Grazioso" - - - - Smart

Hymn No. 7—"Jesus, Thou Everlasting King" - Watts

The Apostles' Creed.

The Prayer, concluding with the Lord's Prayer.

Anthem—"O Lord, Thou Art Great" - - Coombs

The Scripture Lesson: Matt. 28.

Offertory Duet—"O Morning Land" - - Phelps

Hymn No. 277—"Father I Stretch My Hands to Thee."

**The Sermon, "How We Ought to Think About
Immortality."**

Hymn No. 180—"All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name"

- - - - - Perrouet

The Benediction.

Postlude.

Evening Worship—Eight O'clock

Prelude—"At Evening" - - - - Buck

Hymn No. 53—"Softly Now the Light of Day" - Doane

The Prayer, concluding with the Lord's Prayer, chanted.

Anthem—"Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me" - - Schneckner

The Scripture Lesson: Luke 15.

Offertory—"O Divine Redeemer" - - - Gounod

Hymn No. 325—"Break Thou the Bread of Life" Lathbury

The Sermon, "The Redemptive Process in Jean Valjean."

Hymn No. 88—"God Is Love" - - - Bowring

The Benediction.

Postlude.

The ladies are requested kindly to remove their hats after the singing of the second hymn.

Calendar for the Week

Sunday, 9:30 a. m.—The Class Meeting in the Chapel.

10:30 a. m.—The last of Dr. Freeman's sermons on the theme, "How We Ought to Think on Some Important Matters." Our people cannot sufficiently express their gratitude to Dr. Freeman for the instruction and inspiration of his summer pastorate among us.

12:00 m.—The Bible School awaits you with a cordial welcome in the Chapel.

7:00 p. m.—The devotional service of the young people is for all the young people of the congregation. "Self-Renunciation as a Preparation for Service," is the subject for this evening.

8:00 p. m.—By special request, Dr. Freeman will present his study of "The Redemptive Process in Jean Valjean."

Thursday, 8:00 p. m.—**The Mid-Week Service.** As below stated, we shall have our pastor with us in this service. As it will be his first service after the vacation, let us show our joy at his return by being present.

On Wednesday evening at the home of her parents, 3127 Second avenue south, Miss Carrie H. Smith, a member of our church, was married to Mr. F. J. Rucker, a prominent newspaper man of Winona. Mr. and Mrs. Rucker will make their home in Winona. The best wishes of our people follow them.

Next Sunday.—Dr. Gillies and Dr. White will be in their pulpits next Sunday. While we always rejoice that our pastors may have ample opportunity for necessary recuperation, we miss them sorely, and are delighted to welcome them home.

The following note has been received from Dr. Gillies:

To the Members of Hennepin Avenue Church:

My vacation is over and I will be in my place Thursday evening. The subject will be, "What Thomas Missed," and irregular attendants are specially invited. Next Sunday morning in observance of Labor Sunday, I will preach on "The Root of All Evil."

Faithfully yours,

ANDREW GILLIES.