THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

The early Sunday Schools taught the primer used in the public schools as well as the Bible. From 1896 to 1930 Bethel Sunday School developed until it became one of the foremost Bible Schools in the connection. It was a pioneer in modern methods, having the first teacher training classs, cradle roll, home department, organized classes, Boy Scouts of any school in the District and perhaps in the Conference. It gave leadership to the Springfield District, where S. S. methods and organization became standardized and the District became one of the foremost in the Connection. The S. S. membership was upwards of 200 and the attendance ran above 100 each Sunday. At various times - three of four, the School boasted of excellent S. S. Orchestras. After the hour was changed from afternoon to morning the attendance decreased, especially that of adults.

Men's Baraca Bible Class came into existence in about 1906, and the corresponding Women's Bible Class - the Philathea was organized about the same time. The Baraca Class dug out the basement under the auditorium, concreted the floor and put on a steel ceiling. It also operated a public Reading Room up town for a few years. With the Philathea Classes it maintained a S. S. Playground in 1916-18. At one time the Baraca Class held a meeting at which Dr. Booker T. Washington spoke and gave a reception for him. He honored the Class by taking honorary membership. September 13, 1907 the Class was honored by a visit from its National President and Founder, Marshall A. Hudson of Syracuse, New York. The class entertained the Negro members of the Illinois General Assembly on their biennial visits to the University many times. It also furnished lecturers and speakers from the University of Illinois and the local community. The class still exists. The present Lyceum was organized by the Baraca Class nearly thirty years ago.