

History

1809 was the birth year of Abraham Lincoln, Frederic Chopin and Edgar Allen Poe, it was also the birth year of the Connecticut Bible Society, the second such society established in the United States, shortly after the Philadelphia Bible Society the previous year. These societies were followed in quick succession over the following years, to the point where some 118 such groups existed in the New World. Their inspiration was taken from the British Movement begun in the previous century which recognized the importance of the Bible in the formation and maintenance of meaningful lives.

From its inception, the mission of the Connecticut Bible Society has always been the distribution of Bibles "without note or comment." It was the first Bible society in America to print, at the Hartford printing presses of Hudson and Goodwin, an English-language Bible for distribution. In the early years a particular emphasis was the publishing of "School Bible," which was widely used as a teaching tool in Connecticut schools. At the present time the CBS has located once copy of this early publication, dated 1815, which is on display at the CBS headquarters, South Church, Hartford.

Over the years many prominent Connecticut residents served on the Board of the Society, including The Reverend Rockwell Harmon Potter, who served as President for sixty years from 1904-1964. Although the Board was made up primarily of Congregationalist (at one time the "State Religion" of Connecticut), it now includes Methodists, Roman Catholics, Lutherans, etc. and it also included women members, not even considered in the early years of the Society.

As it has always been, the aim of the Connecticut Bible Society is to encourage citizens of Connecticut to read and study the Bible. With financial aid from the American Bible Society and its own resources, thousands of Bibles are distributed yearly.

An expanded and documented history of the Connecticut Bible Society is available in the recent publication of "The Story of the Connecticut Bible Society 1809-2001," researched for and written by the late John Henry Stadlander, for eleven years President of the Connecticut Bible Society.