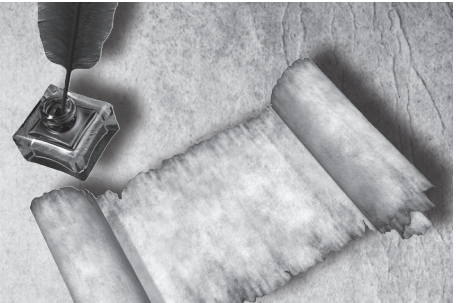


# HISTORIAN'S DIGEST



Volume 50, Number 1

Winter, 2010

## The Pacific Northwest Issues Invitation to 2010 Annual Meeting in Seattle, Washington

You are all invited to join us in the Pacific Northwest from July 19 – 22 at Seattle Pacific University (SPU), for the annual meeting of the HSUMC, as we highlight some of the people, places, and events that have historical significance for us within the United Methodist Church. Our conference will begin at 3 PM on Monday afternoon and will feature a Reader's Theater on William Roberts and James Wilbur, early Methodist missionaries, who were sent in 1846 from New York to Oregon on the Bark *Whiton*. On Monday evening the HSUMC Ministry of Memory Award and the Saddlebag Selection will be presented.

Tuesday morning there will be presentations by two faculty members at SPU. Dr. Priscilla Pope-Levison will speak on "African American Women Evangelists and Interracial Cooperation in the Progressive Era," featuring Amanda Berry Smith, a well-known figure in Methodist history, and Emma Ray, a little known figure. Emma lived the last 30 years of her life in Seattle, so she, in particular, will be the connection with local Methodist history. Dr. Douglas Strong will speak about the AMEZ evangelist, Julia Foote, and the way in which she epitomized the late 19th century holiness movement. The HSUMC Annual Meeting will follow these presentations. At lunch Debbie Dimitri will bring Catherine Blaine to life through drama. David and Catherine Blaine were the first Methodist pastor and teacher in Seattle from 1883-1886. Later the group will travel to the Seattle waterfront and depart at 4:30 PM on a scenic ferry ride to Tillicum Village, where a Salmon dinner will be served, followed by a presentation of Native dancing.

Wednesday will be a tour day and will include a visit to our conference office and Archives West, worship at Des Moines UMC (led by retired Bishop Jack Tuell), and a visit to the University of Puget Sound with Jim Lewis as interpreter, where information about David LeSourd, one of Tacoma's first pastors and the founder of the University, will be presented. We will then travel to the Tacoma Community House (which is celebrating 100 years of service), to Steilacoom (remembering their first pastor, John Richmond), to Dupont (to celebrate a new memorial sculpture dedicated to Chloe Clark Willson, first American teacher in the Puget Sound) and finally to Nisqually Mission (where Dick Seiber will be our interpreter).

Thursday morning will conclude the program with a presentation by Dale Patterson, the Archivist for the General Commission on Archives and History and closing worship, led by Dan Swinson, HUSMC President and Robert Williams, GCAH General Secretary. Please see the enclosed registration form for detailed information about accommodations and costs. **Registration deadline is June 15.**

## Lincoln Avenue Methodist Church Saved by Heritage Square Museum

Heritage Square Museum is a unique institution in the City of Los Angeles. Eight historic structures at the site were actually moved to the location in order to save them from a worse fate, providing a wonderful backdrop to tell the story of the development of our region. Among those saved and brought to the site was the Lincoln Avenue Methodist Church.

Built in 1897 by George Kramer in the Akron style, in the 1940s the church became one of the first integrated churches in Pasadena. Following World War II, the Reverend Byron G. Deshler, recognizing the growing African American presence in the community, spent the first two years of his pastorate "preparing the church for its inter-racial program by deepening the spiritual life of its members." During services and private conversations, he "sought to hold up 'the mind of Christ' as our criteria for racial relationships." Around 1947 the church hired its first Afro-American staff member, Lillian Gordon, as Director of Community Service and saw its first Afro-American couple join the congregation. In the early 1950's the first American Associate Pastor, Rex Jones, was hired and "church leadership as well as membership became inter-racial." With this forward-looking attitude, the congregation exploded in growth and by the 1960s had to move into a larger building. However, the original structure continued to be used as the Lincoln Avenue Methodist Social Service Center. Unfortunately, maintaining two buildings simultaneously became an incredible challenge and in 1981 the building was cut into six pieces and moved to Heritage Square. It is only recently, however, that funds have finally become available to undertake major restoration on the building. For more information, go to the Heritage Square web site [www.heritagesquare.org](http://www.heritagesquare.org)



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Please send address changes to Phil Lawton. Editorial correspondence should be directed to Pat Thompson. The deadline for submissions for the next issue is April 1, 2010.

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## Letter from the President

I have been reading John Wigger's new biography *American Saint: Francis Asbury and the Methodists* (Oxford University Press, 2009). He makes strong claims for Asbury's significance in American religious history. In his own time, Wigger claims, the peripatetic Asbury was better known by sight to most Americans than founding leaders like Jefferson and Washington. In the broader scheme, Asbury's persevering ministry shaped American religion in ways still felt today.

Wigger's book, part of a broader reassessment of the place of Methodism and its leaders in the American past, is a far cry from the fare I had in graduate school in the seventies. In Gerald Brauer's revivalism seminar at the University of Chicago, the story tracked from Perry Miller's New England mind, to William McLoughlin on revivalism (which, in *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform* managed to turn a meager two page discussion of Wesleyan influence into an affirmation of the Puritan, Calvinist "culture core" of American religion), with a stop at Micea Eliade's History of Religion categories. Explanations of revivalism bounded from Jonathan Edwards, to Charles Grandison Finney, to D. L. Moody, to Billy Graham, with barely a glance downward.

We can be grateful to many folk—scholars, conferences, publishers, academies, inside and outside the world Methodist community—who have helped change this perspective. We can find out "what's bugging the people" (one of Martin Marty's sometimes litmus tests for historical narrative) with more of the people, including our own.

This task has a continuing imperative, though. I have noticed a rising interest in religion among students of the American Civil War. Unfortunately, many write from the perspective of the dated scholarship cited above. The result seems to be as follows: The Puritan Calvinist culture core of New England is modified by liberalism and embraces abolition, a parallel culture core in the South entrenches in conservatism and defends slavery. Virtually anyone influenced by Wesley in that period would have difficulty recognizing their motivations in this schema. We need to shake the tree.

Another tree we might shake is in our own back yard. I noticed Methodist history, even from the Kingswood imprint, is mighty thin at our local Cokesbury store. The staff was not even aware of the Asbury biography. They indicated that "corporate" decides what will be in local stores.

I know that the book trade is in difficulty, that the books are available on line, that ways of receiving information are changing, etc. Not to play the part of the Wil Smith character in *I, Robot*, who was compared with the curmudgeons who "tried to save the libraries," but can we encourage Cokesbury to have some historical "eye candy" within sight of those seeking curriculum, VBS materials, graduation and confirmation gifts, and so on?

After all, as Lucas Endicott reminded us in the most recent issue of *Methodist History*, publishing is also part of our history.

Just wondering.

Dan Swinson

Did you know that the African American Methodist Heritage Center (AAMHC) is now located within the Methodist Archives Center and Library at Drew University as a result of a new partnership between GCAH and AAMHC? Go to [www.gcah.org](http://www.gcah.org) and click on, "GCAH Celebrates Black History Month" for more information.



# ANNOUNCING THE 2009 "SADDLEBAG SELECTION" OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The Historical Society of the United Methodist Church is pleased to announce the fourth year of its annual "Saddlebag Selection" award. This designation will be given to the outstanding book on United Methodist history or a related subject published during 2009. **Members of the Society are hereby solicited to make suggestions to the selection committee for books that might be considered.** The committee can then ask the publishers to enter their books in the competition.

The following selection criteria have been adopted:

- a. The selection should achieve a balance between the scholarly and the popular. The selection should be respectable and readable, serious and accessible.
- b. The selection should be on a significant subject of general interest to United Methodist audiences, that is, related to Methodist history or polity or theology or biography or similar matters.
- c. The entry will have been published during the specified calendar year.
- d. A publisher may submit more than one entry in a given year.

The Selection Committee for the 2009 competition is composed of Dr. Charles Yrigoyen, Jr., former General Secretary of the Commission on Archives and History of the UMC; Rev. Lyle Johnston, pastor of Globe United Methodist Church in Arizona; Ms. Linda Schramm, secretary of the Detroit Annual Conference; and Dr. Rob Sledge, Distinguished Professor of History, Emeritus at McMurry University in Texas.

If you have a suggestion for a book which might be considered, please contact Dr. Robert W. Sledge, Box 637, McMurry University Station, Abilene, Texas 79697; [rsledge@mcm.edu](mailto:rsledge@mcm.edu); 325-793-4699 as soon as possible as the entry deadline is April 1, 2010.

Announcement of the winning work will be made as soon as possible. The presentation of the awards will be at the HSUMC annual meeting in Washington State in the summer of 2010. For more on the Historical Society, see [www.historicalsocietyunitedmethodistchurch.org](http://www.historicalsocietyunitedmethodistchurch.org).

Dr. Robert Sledge

## Winter Reading Suggestions

We have received a number of suggestions for reading related to United Methodist history. Why not chose one to read while you're waiting longingly for Spring to come?

### From Chuck Yrigoyen:

John H. Wigger, *American Saint: Francis Asbury and the Methodists*, Oxford University Press, 2009, \$39.95. This will be the definitive biography on the most important early American Methodist leader.

William J. Abraham and James E. Kirby, editors, *The Oxford Handbook of Methodist Studies*, Oxford University Press, 2009, \$150. Obviously a pricey reference book but one which will be appreciated by those interested in Methodist history. Has a global approach.

Randy L. Maddox and Jason E. Vickers, editors, *The Cambridge Companion to John Wesley*, Cambridge University Press, 2009, \$85; \$59 (paperback). An important reference work on the life, theology, and legacy of John Wesley.

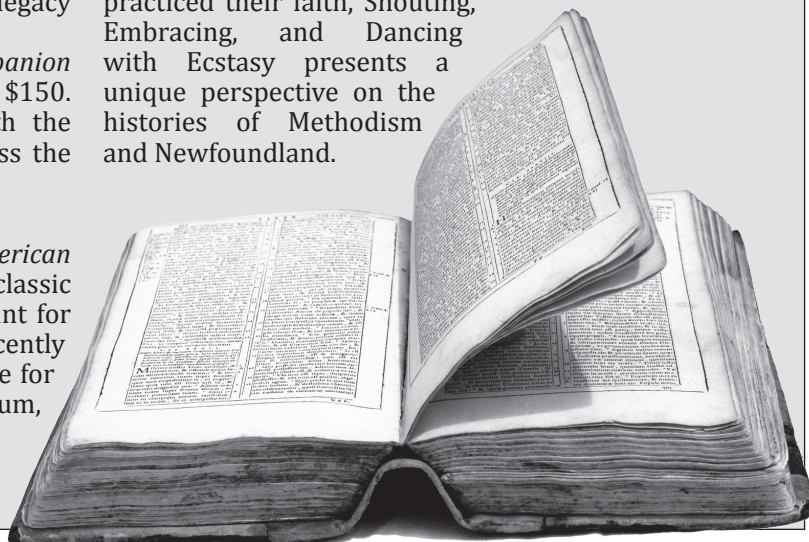
Charles Yrigoyen, Jr., editor, *The T & T Clark Companion to Methodism*, T & T Clark/Continuum, 2010. \$150. Another pricey volume and one that deals with the Wesleys, their theology, Methodism's spread across the world, and main themes in Methodist life.

### From Phil Lawton:

Dr. William William's book *Garden of American Methodism* has a well deserved reputation as a classic study of early Methodism, but has been out of print for some years. The Peninsula-Delaware CAH has recently had it reissued as a paperback. Copies are available for \$10 plus \$4 S&H from Barratt's Chapel & Museum, 6362 Bay Road, Frederica, DE 19946.

### From Our Canadian Friends:

Calvin Hollett, *Shouting, Embracing, and Dancing with Ecstasy The Growth of Methodism in Newfoundland, 1774-1874*. This book is due to be released in March, 2010 and can be ordered for \$85. from: McGill-Queen's University Press, 3430 McTavish Street Montreal, Quebec H3A 1X9 Canada. Fax: (514) 398-5443. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, Newfoundlanders, who often lived in small, mobile communities where they supported themselves with strenuous work and ingenuity, increasingly broke away from Anglicanism to find joy and comfort in the Methodist tradition. In this remarkable study of a region's reasons for changing how they practiced their faith, *Shouting, Embracing, and Dancing with Ecstasy* presents a unique perspective on the histories of Methodism and Newfoundland.



# In Memoriam

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of two of the Historical Society's long-time members and supporters.

The Rev. Lyman Ellis, a retired clergy member of the California-Pacific Conference, died on November 30, 2009. Lyman will be remembered for the many hours he spent, along with his wife Evalyn, at our HSUMC Annual Meetings recording our sessions so that we would have a record of our proceedings. Condolences may be sent to: Mrs. Evalyn Ellis, PO Box 120502, Big Bear Lake, CA 92315-8942.

Ruth Schell, wife of the Rev. Edwin Schell, retired clergy member of the Baltimore-Washington Conference, died on January 18, 2010. Ed and Ruth faithfully attended HSUMC meetings as long as their health allowed and Ed is one of our Honorary Life Members. Condolences may be sent to Ed Schell:

715 Maiden Choice Lane, Apt PV 308,  
Baltimore, MD 21215.

## A Moment From Our Past

– by Lyle Johnston – McKendree Chapel

McKendree Chapel, near Jackson in southeast Missouri, was organized in 1809. The building was built of logs in 1819 and named for Bishop William McKendree (1757-1835), who was elected American Methodism's fourth bishop in 1808. The Missouri Conference held its first conference here in 1819. The Chapel is the oldest Methodist church building west of the Mississippi River and was a regular appointment until about 1890. Its logs were covered with clapboards for many decades until the latter part of the 20th century, when they were removed to expose the original structure and to put a protective metal roof over it. The building is a National United Methodist Heritage Landmark and listed on the National Register of Historical Places. I lived in the vicinity from 1970-73 and visited during one of their annual events: a trustees meeting. It is also available for weddings and reunions. It is an impressive location among the trees along Interstate 55. Brad Biri of Jackson, MO, offers tours.

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