

**A GLIMPSE INTO A FEW OF THE
GENERAL COMMISSION ON ARCHIVES AND HISTORY'S
COLLECTIONS AT THE
METHODIST ARCHIVES CENTER**

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Archivist and Records Administrator**

Some of our most interesting material documents the twentieth century. Of course the Methodist Archives Center, located in Madison, New Jersey, has the third-largest collection of Wesleyana material and significant material on Francis Asbury and other early founders of Methodism within the United States. But material from the twentieth century opens significant windows into our past. What follows is a brief description of a few of these collections.

Mission Photograph Album Series

In the opening years of the twentieth century, the Boards of Foreign and Home Missions created photograph albums documenting the work of the church around the globe. Comprising over 1/4 million images in 256 albums which were assembled in the early 1930s. The images span in time between the turn of the twentieth century to the late 1920s. A few albums were added to the series after the Second World War and were taken in the late 1940s or very early 1950s. The series is split almost evenly between the United States and the rest of the world. Within the U.S. Collection the albums were arranged into the following categories: Cities, Rural, Mountains, Education, and African Americans; outside the U.S. the albums are arranged by region, country or area, depending on how the mission work was organized. So there are several albums on Europe, but several on individual countries of Asia—such as India, China, Korea, and Malaysia. The title of the album is very much a clue as to the size of the mission work within the region.

So why were these images taken and compiled? Some of the images appeared in the church press of the day and others appeared in lantern slide productions. In an era before the internet, before the news reels shown at the movie theater, the only available multimedia was the photograph. For the average reader of the Methodist newspaper or journal these images may have brought the world to them for the first time. And that leads us to ask the question of how were the images used? The images appear to fall into three broad categories. The first one is “church life.” These are images of churches, schools, and hospitals. The images show how mission funds were used. We need to remember that the opening decades of the twentieth

century was the high-water mark for mission work in the U.S. In any given year there were hundreds of missionaries out on the field—we know this because we also have their correspondence here at the Archives Center—and these images relate to that work; it shows what had been accomplished. The second category is images of “need.” These could be images of natural disaster, hunger, and illness. It could be as straightforward as a photograph of a young child in a U.S. city slum smoking, or a cancer patient in China or India. These images would be used to show the continuing need for support, funds and missionaries for the world. Finally the last category of images falls under “daily life.” These images capture how people lived or how the world looked. In many respects, these are the most touching and haunting images. In a world homogenized by global economics, these photographs manage to capture a moment of a past still rich in variations and yet bound by our common humanity.

Many of these images are currently being scanned and we hope to have selections placed on our web site in the future.

Papers of Bishop Burt

The opening decades of the twentieth century are represented in the work of William Burt, a Methodist Episcopal Church pastor, missionary, and bishop, was born in Padstow, Cornwall, England, on October 23, 1852. His family immigrated to the United States. Burt graduated from Wesleyan University, in Middletown, Connecticut, in 1879, and from Drew Theological School in Madison, New Jersey, in 1881. Burt went to the Italy Annual Conference in 1886. In 1888, he moved to Florence, establishing a theological school, and became superintendent of the Italy Mission. Coming to Rome in 1890, Burt was instrumental in establishing the Methodist Building, the Boy’s College, a Theological School, Publishing House, and Young Ladies College. He also led in building several churches and schools in other parts of Italy.

In 1904, Burt was elected a bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and appointed resident Bishop of Europe. While in charge of the work in Europe, he organized the France Mission Conference, the Austria-Hungary Mission Conference, the Russian Mission Conference, and the Denmark and Finland Annual Conferences. In 1910, he organized all the Methodist work in Europe into the European Central Conference.

Bishop Burt also visited other areas of the world. These included England, Africa, China, Japan, the Philippines, India, Korea, and the Malay Peninsula. In 1919 Burt was called upon to study post-war conditions in Europe with the purpose of rebuilding Methodist Episcopal churches.

The Bishop William Burt Collection offers a wonderful window on the first quarter of the twentieth century. His ministry spans the years of enthusiastic optimism of the possibilities of interdenominational cooperation and the improvement of society to the crushing loss of dreams brought on by the First World War. His correspondence, diaries, and photographs reflect this changing world in Burt’s ministry.

The Bishop W. Angie Smith Papers

The middle years of the twentieth century are captured in the work of William Angie Smith (1894-1974). An American Methodist bishop, he was born December 21, 1894, in Elgin, Texas. He graduated from Southwestern University in 1917 and was ordained elder in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1924. In 1944, he was elected bishop by the South Central Jurisdictional Conference and assigned to the Oklahoma-New Mexico Area, which comprised of the Oklahoma, Oklahoma Indian Mission, and New Mexico Annual Conferences. Smith served these conferences for twenty-four years. He also served as president of the Board of Evangelism from 1952 to 1964 and as president of the Council of Bishops in 1957. Smith was also heavily involved with the World Methodist Council and the United States military chaplaincy program. Smith married Bess Owens in 1920 and had three sons: William III, Bryant, and Shelby. Mrs. Smith was also very active in the Methodist Church, particularly with the Bishops Wives Association. Bishop William Angie Smith died on March 15, 1974, at the age of 79.

This collection contains scrapbooks and other materials detailing the ministry and life of William Angie Smith, bishop of the Methodist Church. The first part of the collection consists of fifty-nine scrapbooks that document Smith's life from high school until shortly after his retirement from the episcopacy in 1968. While the majority of the materials in these scrapbooks encompass the dates listed for each scrapbook, there are exceptions to the rule. Three other scrapbooks attributed to Bess Smith, wife of the Bishop, contain congratulatory letters on the occasion of their retirement. The final segment of the collection is comprised of loose materials that contain his retirement years and portraits. The records themselves illustrate almost every accomplishment Smith achieved whether it is sacred or secular. Methodist related schools in Oklahoma and Texas are well represented. Local church information tends to center on his evangelistic meetings and correspondence with the pastors. Other correspondences are representative of his work with general church boards, jurisdictions and various conferences; Native American work in Oklahoma is strongly represented.

Night Call Radio Program

In the 1960s, the Television, Radio and Film Commission—the predecessor to United Methodist Communications—created a ground-breaking radio program. Starting in the late summer of 1969, the program went on the air, dealing with social issues and various questions of the day. It was one of the first successful national call-in talk radio shows. They developed the equipment to broadcast a phone call clearly over the radio. For a program created by the church there were the expected topics—“Is Protestant Worship Sterile?”, “The Mark of the Vatican Council II,” and “the Bible’s Challenge to Today’s Woman.” But there were other topics which sound amazingly contemporary: “Should we Control the Sale of Guns?”; “What is My Right to Work?”; “How You Can Get Safety in Your New Car”; and “Is Teenage

a Disease?” with Charles Schulz. Others were topics dealing with the day’s current topics, such as “Is Radio being Perverted by Politicians?” and “Is the American Negro Losing Ground?” A few were designed to be fun, including “Flying Saucers” and “Why We Like James Bond.” The Night Call program only lasted a few months but still offers an amazing window into the world of the 1960s. The program’s host, Russ Gibb, invited a guest on for each show—sometimes there would be three a week—and after the guest and Gibb had brief introduction about the topic, they opened the phone lines and took calls from interested listeners from around the country. How different is this 1960s show from the from current radio talk shows? You can be the judge. The entire 70+ programs have been digitized and are available on our website.

Just from these four collections we can discover many of the issues and concerns not just of a church, but of a country, of a world. These are all examples that our lives are not lived in isolation; each life is bound together to others and to the world in which we live. And the past is there waiting for us to discover and quiz it.

**DOCTORAL THESES
IN WESLEYAN AND METHODIST STUDIES, 2010**

COMPILED BY CHRISTOPHER J. ANDERSON

Booyse, Adonis Carolus. "The Sovereignty of the African Districts of the African Methodist Episcopal Church." Ph.D. thesis, University of the Western Cape, 2010.

Choi, Eugene. "Adaptive Reuse of Religious Buildings in the U.S.: Determinants of Project Outcomes and the Role of Tax Credits." Ph.D. thesis, Cleveland State University, 2010.

Cunningham, Joseph William. "Perceptible Inspiration: A Model for John Wesley's Pneumatology." Ph.D. thesis, University of Manchester (Nazarene Theological College), 2010.

De Blasio, Marlon Domenic. "The Conscious Experience of Grace and the Transformation of Life: John Wesley's Theology of Conversion with Particular Reference to his Sermons." Ph.D. thesis, University of St. Michael's College, 2010.

Eby, Patrick Alan. "The One Thing Needful: The Development of Charles Wesley's Theology of the Restoration of the Image of God." Ph.D. thesis, Drew University, 2010.

Farrell, Michael. "Blake and the Methodists." D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 2010.

Hart, David John. "Emergence and Development of Methodism in Norwich, 1754-1802." Ph.D. thesis, University of Manchester, 2010.

Kim, Hyung-Rae. "The Formation of Christian Initiation in the Korean Methodist Church, 1885-1939." Ph.D. thesis, Drew University, 2010.

Kimball, Elizabeth. "'A Perfect Knowledge of Our Own Tongue': Language use and learning in Philadelphia, 1750-1830." Ph.D. thesis, Temple University, 2010.

Kirton-Roberts, Winelle Joann. "Evangelical Protestantism in the Post-Emancipation Caribbean: The Contribution of the Moravian and Methodist

Missions towards the Development of the Former Slaves in Antigua and Barbados, 1834-1914.” Ph.D. thesis, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, Barbados, 2010.

Loyer, Kenneth M. “Spirit of Love: The Holy Spirit and the Christian life in Thomas Aquinas and John Wesley.” Ph.D. thesis, Southern Methodist University, 2010.

Oglevie, Heather M. “Perfect through Suffering: The Sanctification of the Son of Man.” Ph.D. thesis, Southern Methodist University, 2010.

Pridmore, John Eric. “Disability in the Methodist Tradition: An Exploratory Study analyzing the Understanding of and Response to the Disability Rights Movement by the General Conference of the United Methodist Church, 1968-2004.” Ph.D. thesis, Drew University, 2010.

Skipper, Jodi. “‘In the Neighborhood’: City Planning, Archeology, and Cultural Heritage Politics at St. Paul United Methodist Church, Dallas, Texas.” Ph.D. thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 2010.

Smith, Tash Brandon. “‘Capture these Indians for the Lord’: Indian Churches and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in Oklahoma, 1865-1939.” Ph.D. thesis, University of Oklahoma, 2010.

Wilson, David Robert. “Church and Chapel: Parish Ministry and Methodism in Madeley, c. 1760-1785, with Special Reference to the Ministry of John Fletcher.” Ph.D. thesis, University of Manchester, 2010.

**THE SEVENTH HISTORICAL CONVOCATION
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

THURSDAY, JULY 21 – SUNDAY, JULY 24, 2011

**Oklahoma City University
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma**

**United Methodism in the Land of Many Cultures:
Native American and Latino History**

The Convocation is open to all persons interested in Methodist history. The Convocation will include the annual meeting of The Historical Society of The United Methodist Church and will be preceded by the annual meeting of the General Commission on Archives and History of The United Methodist Church. Co-sponsors include the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference, the Oklahoma Conference, and the North American Section of the World Methodist Historical Society.

The Convocation begins with registration at 1:00 pm on Thursday afternoon and concludes with worship on Sunday morning.

Program questions may be referred to the General Commission on Archives and History: Michelle Merkel-Brunskill, Administrative Assistant, (973-408-3189) or Robert Williams, General Secretary (973-408-3191), rwilliams@gcah.org.

CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS: 1 CEU will be offered.

GENERAL INFORMATION

(Full details and a registration form can be found at <http://www.historicalsocietyunitedmethodistchurch.org/meetingarchives/2011-reg-form.pdf>.)

TO REGISTER, please complete the registration form and return it with your check for the full amount to: Christina Wolf, Archives, Oklahoma City University, 2501 N Blackwelder, Oklahoma City, OK 73106.

The registration fee of \$150 includes everything except room costs. Golf carts will be available to provide transportation between Centennial Hall and meeting rooms. Confirmation of your registration will reach you within 3 weeks of receiving your registration. Fly to Will Rogers Airport in Oklahoma City. Transportation from the airport to the campus will be arranged.

Housing will be at Oklahoma City University. Cost is \$40 per person (unless a couple wishes to share a full-size bed—then the cost will be \$50/couple. Please see website listed above for further details. All rooms are air-conditioned. For a listing of motels which offer a special “OCU Rate,” see: <http://www.okcu.edu/visitors/lodging.aspx>. For local arrangements questions, please contact Christina Wolf (405-208-5919).

HISTORICAL CONVOCATION PROGRAM SUMMARY

(Tuesday-Thursday, July 19-21: Annual Meeting, General Commission on Archives and History)

THURSDAY, JULY 21

9:00 am	Board of Directors, The Historical Society
1:00 pm	Convocation registration opens
4:00 pm	Buses depart for the Oklahoma History Center Tour of the History Center and Presentation by Archivist William Welge
6:00 pm	The Distinguished Service Award Banquet Award recipient: Dr. Kenneth E. Rowe

FRIDAY, JULY 22

9:00 am	Plenary Address: "We May Not Be the Same in Color, But We Are the Same in Heart: The Indian Roots of Oklahoma's Methodism." Dr. Tash Smith
10:45 am	Presentation of the Saddlebag Award
11:30 am	Chairs of Annual Conference Commissions meet Annual conference archivists meet
Noon- 1:30 pm	Lunch
1:30 pm	Plenary Address: "An Alternative Concept of Evangelism: Latina Protestants' Participation in the Evangelistic Witness." Dr. Paul Barton
3:30 pm	Presentation of the Ministry of Memory Award
5:00 pm	Depart for OKC Hillcrest - Fuente de Vida UMC
5:30 pm	Dinner
6:30 pm	Program Latino Oral History Project-Bishop Joel Martinez
8:30 pm	Return to Oklahoma City University

SATURDAY, JULY 23

9:00 am	Plenary Address: Dr. Michelle Pesantubbe
10:45 pm	Annual meeting of the Historical Society of UMC
Noon	Lunch
1:00 pm	Depart for Salt Creek United Methodist Church; tours of Citizens Potawatomi Nation Cultural Heritage Center and The Seminole Nation Museum
5:30 pm	Dinner
7:30 pm	Evening Program Return to Oklahoma City University

SUNDAY, JULY 22

8:30 am	Worship at St. Luke's United Methodist Church Preacher: Bishop Robert Hayes, Oklahoma Area
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ON-LINE VERSION UPDATE

<http://dmbi.wesleyhistoricalsociety.org.uk/>

The on-line version of what is becoming known as DMBI continues to expand. The monthly report on numbers of “hits” is encouraging and shows that the majority of those using the Dictionary are from North America, predominantly, no doubt, in academic circles.

In recent months two new features have appeared: illustrations, especially portraits, and quotations to supplement some of the entries. References to other sources of information are regularly updated as new articles and books are published; recent examples include Methodism in Scotland, the West End of London and Gibraltar.

The majority of new entries are biographical. Those on the most recent Presidents and Vice-Presidents are updated every five years, but in general we rely on obituaries to alert us. We are doing our best to represent categories that were sometimes overlooked in the past, including lay Methodists (especially women and members of non-Wesleyan denominations).

At present the greatest need is for more entries summarizing the history of Methodism in particular towns and cities. But it is difficult in many cases to find anyone with reliable local knowledge.

John Vickers, editor (Email: jav@vickers.me.uk)

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