Michigan Methodism in the Civil War
by Margaret B. Macmillan

In 1860 the Methodist Episcopal Church in Michigan had two annual conferences, 16 districts, 254 appointed preachers, 207 churches, 140 parsonages, and 28,380 members. The Detroit Conference included the eastern half of the lower peninsula and all of the upper peninsula, while the Michigan Conference covered the western half of the lower peninsula. There were 619 “Sabbath Schools” with 29,229 “scholars.”

These statistics reveal little of the patriotism, the anti-slavery sentiment, or the political republicanism of the majority of Michigan Methodists of that day. The ministerial condemnation of slavery was repeatedly expressed in conference resolutions during the 1850s. One report adopted by the Michigan Conference in 1854 said in part:

American slavery is an invasion of the rights of God, it is an infraction of the eternal law of Jehovah; it is opposed to the spirit and teachings of the Bible; it is distracting and dividing if not destroying the Churches of Christ in this land; it is subversive of all the true interests of the nation, and is threatening the very existence of our Federal Union and Republican Government.¹

While conference pronouncements may be conventional and cold, there can be no doubt that some Michigan Methodists felt deeply on the subject of slavery prior to the Civil War. In 1859 A. R. Bartlett was pastor of a small church at Lexington on Lake Huron. In the memoir of his widow which appears in the Detroit Conference Journal for 1907, his daughter says she remembered still that her parents held advanced views for their day and she recalled distinctly her mother’s tears when the bells tolled following the execution of John Brown in 1859.

M. A. Dougherty, pastor of First Church, Grand Rapids, wrote in 1861:

Nearly all my congregation were loyal Union men and red-hot Lincoln men. I was the same. Nearly every sermon was preparatory of the great struggle just before the country. It was the moral struggle that led to the civil conflict and my sermons were a strong mixture of gospel and politics.²


² Michigan had but one conference until 1856 when the two were created. Civil War conference minutes must be used with care. They were hastily done, the printing was not painstaking, and some ministers made mistakes in their arithmetic.

³ Joseph B. Ware, 75th Anniversary History of First Methodist Church of Grand Rapids, pp. 11-13.
On the other hand, a few of the churches in Detroit strongly opposed abolitionism prior to 1860. Laymen admonished their pastors to exercise caution about speaking on political subjects in the pulpit. For example, John M. Arnold, pastor of Woodward Avenue Church, was warned by leading members that “it would not do to discuss national matters in that pulpit.” However, Arnold said that such objections only made him the more determined to “push the claims of patriotism in the sacred desk.”

The contemporary religious press and church histories give the impression that Michigan was less disturbed by the Civil War than states like Illinois and Ohio, which were closer to the Confederacy and therefore more apprehensive concerning possible invasion by Southern armies. The exception for Michigan was the occasion of the Trent Affair in November 1861. The residents of Detroit were afraid that the arrest of Mason and Slidell at that time would bring England into the war on the side of the South and that this would result in the bombardment of Detroit from Canada.

The availability of much public land in Michigan, as well as the state’s geographical distance from the Confederacy, accentuated the lack of concern with the war and its outcome. Throughout the war pioneers were moving to and settling in the newly opened counties in the state. The *Northwestern Christian Advocate*, July 3, 1861, noted that there had been large immigration in Sanilac and Huron Counties during the spring and summer. Actual settlers claimed more than 2,000 acres of Federal and State lands in one week. The editor of the *Advocate* said there was similarly large immigration in Iowa and Minnesota.

Now out of a population of 775,881 in 1860, the State of Michigan sent 90,048 men to the war between 1861 and 1865. Of these men 14,855, or about 16 percent, did not come back. Only 2,820, or about three percent of the total who went to war, were killed in action. Some 1,387 died of wounds, and the appalling total of 10,136 died of disease.

The statistics on Michigan Methodism’s participation in the Civil War are incomplete and possibly inaccurate. Neither annual conferences nor individual churches kept adequate records concerning the number of their members who went to war. There was no uniform procedure for making note of members who served in the military. Some pastors gave letters of dismissal to men who went away to the war, while others merely entered beside their names on the church roll, “Gone to the army.” It is, therefore, impossible to say just how many Michigan Methodists went to war. The best guess is 5,000 to 6,000.

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8 M. A. Boughton, ed., *Autobiography of J. M. Arnold*, p. 26. Woodward Avenue Church was one of the two churches that later combined to form Central Detroit Church.
During the war the total number of adult Methodists in Michigan decreased by a little more than 1,000. The drop in aggregate membership was greater in 1862 and 1864 than in other years of the war period.

It is fair to say of the ordained Michigan Methodist preachers that during the war their patriotism was sometimes more pronounced than their religion. About one dozen of the preachers enlisted, were drafted, or raised companies and went to the war as officers. However, most of the preachers frowned on members of the clergy serving as combatants in the conflict.

Twenty-four members of the two Michigan annual conferences became chaplains during the war, but only six of these gave more than one year in this capacity. Fifteen of the older preachers spent brief six-week periods as field delegates of the U. S. Christian Commission. In each of the Michigan annual conferences more than 100 preachers continued throughout the war under episcopal appointment as regular pastors or circuit riders.  

Devotion to the regular pastoral ministry on the part of the great majority of the Methodist preachers accounts in part for Michigan Methodism’s progress in certain areas during the war. Although, as already noted, Methodism in the state lost more than 1,000 adult members between 1860 and 1865, nevertheless during that same period it had a net gain of 14 preachers, 28 churches, 14 parsonages, and 6,500 Sunday school “scholars.” Also, during the war years contributions to missions increased 300 percent in the Detroit Conference and 350 percent in the Michigan Conference. T. M. Eddy, editor of the Northwestern Christian Advocate, attended dedicatory services for a new church in Saginaw and then wrote in his paper:

Methodism is asserting its rightful position in Michigan. The old class of church edifices are being replaced by better ones; . . . and the Peninsular State so rich in soil and other resources is determined that Christianity in earnest shall have its proper place and influence.

Now perhaps brief accounts of three Michigan Methodists who served in the war will give us a clearer understanding of Methodism’s role in the conflict. We shall consider a Methodist layman who served as a private in the army, a presiding elder who was a chaplain, and a preacher who gave six weeks as a U. S. Christian Commission delegate.

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4 For information about chaplains and Christian Commission agents see W. W. Sweet's The Methodist Episcopal Church and the Civil War, particularly the appendices containing lists of names for all northern states. Sweet’s spelling of names is not entirely correct. See also William C. S. Pellowe, “Michigan Methodist Chaplains in the Civil War, 1861-65,” in Michigan Christian Advocate, September 14, 1961, pp. 10-11, 21. Also Conference Minutes from both Conferences for 1861-65 and all Memoirs up through 1907.

5 Northwestern Christian Advocate, March 9, 1864.
It is difficult to say what part religion played in the life of a Civil War soldier who was a Methodist before 1861. Since most letters written by soldiers during the war do not mention religion at all, usually the denomination of the writers cannot be determined. We learn from their letters that churchgoing Protestant soldiers were generally critical of many chaplains, deplored the constant swearing and gambling in the army, and complained that they had few or no opportunities to attend church or properly observe the Sabbath for months on end. Israel Cogshall, a Michigan Methodist chaplain, declared, "War knows no Sabbath."

One hundred fifteen letters written by and to Private John Harvey Faxon have been preserved. His wife, brother, and friends corresponded with him while he was away in the war. Faxon was born in 1827. He served in the Quartermaster Department of the First Michigan Cavalry. During most of the war he was stationed in Virginia and in Washington, D.C. There can be no doubt that Faxon was a Methodist because letters written to him note that he is missed from class meeting and the quarterly conference.

John Faxon’s brother, W. H. Faxon, wrote to him from Ovid, Michigan, on October 14, 1861:

I begin to be quite patriotic. I attended the Conference in Detroit and never before heard such talk as I did from some of the New York preachers. I begin to think that the subject at issue should be a complete extermination of that wicked sin and curse Slavery. What say you?

A letter by the same writer on November 19, 1861, shows that relief work for the soldiers was already under way. He says:

Last night there was a donation party at church for the benefit of the soldiers. They received over $12 in cash and today the old folks attend and bring in everything needful for their comfort that can be thought of it will be forwarded to the Sanitary Commission.

In some letters W. H. Faxon commented on the sermons he was hearing. On November 4, 1861, he wrote that he had "heard Bassett preach but it is rather stale to hear him Sabbath after Sabbath he lacks power from on high. You know it requires the unction to make a discourse interesting." On December 23, 1861, he confessed that he cried all the time while writing as follows from Duplain, Michigan:

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6 All letters to and from Private Faxon are from The John H. Faxon Papers, Michigan Historical Collections of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.
We had a melting time at our Quarterly meeting. The Lord was present in our hearts and we were made to praise Him for his goodness. The Elder referred to our Brothers and Husbands in the field of battle beautifully.

During this same period John Faxon sent letters to his brother. On October 31, 1861, he wrote, "How glad I am I know something about trusting my all in the hands of my Redeemer." On December 9, 1861, he laments, "Yesterday did not seem much like the Holy Sabbath." The reason was a dress parade and other military activities which, he felt, desecrated the day.

On January 2, 1862, one E. Nethaway wrote to Private Faxon about attending quarterly meeting and watch night services at Elsie, Michigan, and concluded:

What are you doing down there except keeping bread and beef from spoiling. . . . We had a good quarterly meeting but there was a feeling of sadness came over me at the thought that so many seats were here vacant which were wont to be filled by those we loved and my heart went up to God in prayer that those who were away might be the subjects of His peculiar care.

The majority of the Faxon letters passed between Private Faxon and his wife Mary. On January 1, 1862, Faxon wrote her that on New Year's Eve he was on the corporal's guard duty. He said all the rest of the men drank and swore and thought it strange that he would do neither. In the letter he recalled how one year before he and his wife had prayed together at the watch night service. Her letters to him were usually long. On February 7, 1862, she wrote from "Moscow Village" where she was visiting "brother and sister" Copelin. She heard Copelin preach in the morning, attended a good class meeting, and after dinner went with them to his afternoon appointment at a schoolhouse nine miles out. They spent the night at the home of a widower where the preacher married the man to his housekeeper. The preacher received a fee of $5.00, and he gave the couple "such a pretty certificate that I would like to marry over to get one." She noted that Copelin had changed his manner of preaching:

I told him that it seemed to me a new thing for him to use notes he laughed well finally said he had been advised to for his health and found it beneficial it did not require so much tax of the memory and strength; he improves, his style is quite different more sermonising it was formerly . . . more exhortation.

On Monday Mary Faxon attended a soldier's funeral conducted by Copelin, apparently in the schoolhouse where the Sunday service had been held. She describes the solemn ceremony in the same letter, February 7, 1862:
Brother Copelin preached a funeral discourse, from 'Let me die the
death of the righteous'. It was a soldier who hurt himself drawing a
cannon uphill and came home to die, a noble looking youth, dressed
in full uniform, corporal I saw by his sleeves, after the congregation
were all seated, the bearers came in two by two bringing the flag—the
stars and stripes—and spread it over the coffin, and marched around
on the other side and out, it looked solemn, I could not but think of my
own husband all the time, they said he was glad to die.

Similar funeral services were no doubt held for many soldiers in
Methodist churches over the State of Michigan during the war.

John Faxon wrote that it was difficult for him to keep up his ac­
customed religious practices. He attended church in Leesburg,
Virginia, noted that only a few people were there, and said that he
"did not feel much interest in [the preacher's] discourse, have not
full confidence in his piety." The next day Faxon learned that the
preacher he had heard was "secesh" and that he had been com­
pelled to take the oath of allegiance.

Faxon often deplores the fact that there is so little to restrain the
men in his company from evil. He wrote from Leesburg on April 20,
1862:

Sabbath is not regarded as a day set apart for rest or worship. A few
of us are locked up in a room, trying to be quiet, four are . . . writing.
I have spent the Sabbath reading, the best employment I could find for
the Holy Sabbath. Have not heard a sermon since I have been in the
State . . . it would seem real good to hear the Word preached again.

Apparently the "secesh" preacher did not count religiously for
Faxon.

Faxon spent Sunday, June 30, 1862, in Washington, where he at­
tended a Presbyterian church and accepted an invitation to dinner
by some Navy Yard folk whom he found to be Methodists. Then by
chance he had the unexpected privilege of attending a class meet­
ing; while walking down the street he heard singing and went in.
He wrote to his wife:

I had the privilege of giving evidence for Christ, was profited thereby
and was called upon to close by prayer being the first time I have
prayed in public since I left Frederick. I done the best I could.

On July 14, 1862, Mary Faxon wrote to her husband that on the
previous Sunday their preacher delivered a fine sermon, read the
Discipline, and "talked some plain things." There was a large con­
gregation and two class meetings were held.

A gap in the letters during 1863 and certain references in Faxon's
communications for 1864 indicate that Mary Faxon spent some time
with her husband in Alexandria, Virginia during the summer of
1863.
Throughout the war Faxon apparently remained loyal to his religious convictions and commitments. On July 5, 1864, he wrote from Washington:

I have to be very careful or I carry cheerfulness into levity and I fear I do to some extent after all but will try and refrain from that which is evil, that I may ever meet with the approbation of my Heavenly Father which outweighs all other pleasures.

On the same day he attended Ebenezer Church, heard a good sermon, took communion, and wrote his wife, "I enjoyed it very much."

The records show that John Faxon was promoted to corporal and that he returned home safely from the war. Also, on August 5, 1865, he was licensed as an exhorter by the Ovid Circuit Quarterly Conference, Lansing District.

Nothing more is known about John Faxon, not even the date of his death. However, the 1870 Minutes of the Michigan Conference show that his brother, W. H. Faxon, was one of the first laymen ever elected to membership in that annual conference—the first group was made up of 15 laymen from the eight districts in the conference. W. H. Faxon was immediately appointed to the Conference's standing committee on temperance.

James Shirley Smart
Presiding Elder and Chaplain

Certain national regulations pertaining to chaplains prevailed in all of the northern states during the Civil War. One chaplain to each regiment was permitted. Chaplains must be ordained ministers. At first the officers of each regiment elected the chaplain, but since some of the first chaplains proved to be unworthy, Congress decreed in 1862 that all chaplains must be regularly ordained, must present testimonials of good standing, and must be recommended by a recognized church body or by five accredited ministers of their respective denominations. Chaplains were paid $100 per month and drew two rations per day. Their duties included the submission of monthly reports to the adjutant general on the moral condition of the men under their care, religious services at the burial of soldiers, and the conduct of worship services on Sunday "when practicable."

The records show that there were some 514 Methodist Episcopal chaplains in the Union armies. Of this number Illinois furnished

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7 The 1866 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South voted for the first time to admit laymen to its annual conferences, and the 1868 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church adopted similar legislation.
Civil War chaplains may be classified in three ways, according to available information concerning them and their work. (1) Those for whom one can find only a name in a government list. (2) Those concerning whom we can learn a bit more from their memoirs in the conference minutes. (3) Those who left diaries, wrote for the secular or religious press, or penned family letters which have been preserved. The account of a Michigan Methodist chaplain who falls in the third or articulate category is presented here.

Each Michigan conference had a presiding elder who served as a chaplain in the war—Andrew Eldred from the Michigan and James Shirley Smart from the Detroit body. Both men were urged to raise companies and go as captains, but they felt constrained to render spiritual rather than combat service.

James Smart was born in 1825. He served in the Methodist itinerancy from 1848 to 1892. Smart was widely known for his patriotism, and he prevailed upon young men to enlist when no one else could. He was said to have an "explosive voice and an earnest manner." A presiding elder when the war began, Smart agreed to serve one year as chaplain with the Twenty-Third Michigan Infantry.

On the Sunday before the regiment left Saginaw, Smart preached to the soldiers and held a prayer meeting later in the day. He said there were 200 Christian men in the regiment and that "a more respectful and attentive audience one could not wish to see, and, if they fight as they pray, we need have no fears."

During this period of service which was spent in Kentucky and Tennessee, Chaplain Smart wrote often to the Northwestern Christian Advocate. His correspondence shows that he was unfavorably impressed with the land and the people; he said the one was devastated ... by slavery and was fifty years behind the times. On one occasion Smart and the regimental field officers went to a house

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*Estimates based on lists in W. W. Sweet's *The Methodist Episcopal Church and the Civil War* plus the Michigan Adjutant General's Reports for the war years. Search in the Conference Minutes of both Michigan and Detroit was also rewarding. Often mention of a minister's chaplaincy occurs only in his Memoir many years after the Civil War. I was able to add four names to the Michigan list with the aid of Dr. Pellowe. Sweet's list, done in 1912, is neither complete nor correctly spelled. Often a minister's service, if less than a year, does not appear in any conference minutes. The *Northwestern Christian Advocate* published in Chicago is a valuable source for information about Methodist chaplains in the Civil War. At the time the paper had 6,000 subscribers in Michigan alone. It is thought that the only complete set of this Advocate for the years 1861-1865 is in the library of Garrett Theological Seminary, Evanston, Illinois.*
seeking lunch. The householder said he would provide a meal only if they paid for it. The man voiced complaints punctuated with profanity. Smart wrote of the occasion in the *Northwestern Christian Advocate* for December 10, 1862:

When seated at the table, according to my custom I gave thanks to God and invoked his blessing. The man started back. 'Is that a minister of the Gospel?' 'Yes, this is our chaplain.' I ask your pardon for swearing, I used to profess to be a Christian myself—but the armies have burned all my fences, stolen my horses, taken all my hay and corn forage and I'm just ruined so I've taken to swearing.' I told him if no higher power than myself heard him, it would not be of much importance. . . . The snack was coarse corn bread and bacon, a bit of fried chicken and most abominable tea. He charged the officers 40¢ but would take nothing from the minister.

In January 1863, Chaplain Smart was sent in charge of 22 sick soldiers ahead of the regiment to Bowling Green, Kentucky. He found that one-third of the town had been burned by rebels and that many churches had been turned into hospitals. The Episcopal Church was opened for him and his sick charges. It seemed strange to him that while all the Protestant churches were commandeered for hospitals, the "romish chapel" was left untouched. Smart preached in the courthouse every Sunday. At the time there were 3,000 sick and wounded soldiers in Bowling Green. They were crowded into miserable rooms and were dying at the rate of 10 to 24 every day. Smart conducted many funerals using the Methodist ritual, and when he thought of the bereaved families of these dead soldiers he was deeply moved:

Last Sunday I visited the burying place to deposit there the body of one of my own Company and the figures on his headboard said 664 Union soldiers had been buried there before him. Did you ever see 665 new made graves in one field? If not, you can't understand my emotions as I stood there in the presence of that vast congregation of the Dead. As I thought of . . . the loved ones mourning in silence, it seemed as though my heart would break and then I thought of the scoundrels who had brought on this war and my revolver felt warm in my pocket. I never felt so much like fighting this out as then. It is the only time that I ever regretted that I did not come into the army as a fighting man.⁹

Smart visited the hospitals daily and wrote of the religious needs of the sick and wounded soldiers:

I find many of our soldiers really hungry for the word of life. . . . If the real presence of Jesus is manifest anywhere on earth, it certainly is at times among these very men. One man in my own regiment was at first very opposed to religion. Taken seriously sick, left in hospital alone with all his attendants strangers, he could think only of One who said, 'Lo I am with you always.' When I visited him, I found him

⁹*Northwestern Christian Advocate*, January 21, 1863.
humbled and of his own accord he asked for prayer. Now he is recovering and the New Testament is his constant companion. Still very weak he can read only a little but he feasts on every verse. The Spirit illuminates the Word.10

After one year of service as chaplain, Smart returned home and gave much time “to visiting and arousing the people” which, according to the Northwestern Christian Advocate, did “the State good service—he has aroused the ire of the Vallandighamers and other patriots of like caoutchouc fibers.” On December 2, 1863, Smart preached at the Thanksgiving service in the new lecture room of Central Church, Detroit, from the text, “For the Lord will not forsake his people for his great name’s sake: because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people.” (I Sam. 12:22). His theme was “The Nature and Probable Results of Our Present National Struggle.” Smart predicted final triumph for the Union and freedom from slavery everywhere in the world.

Among Smart’s appointments following the war were two years as financial agent for Garrett Biblical Institute, four years in the same capacity at Albion College, and six years as presiding elder of the Flint District. His advocacy of greater support for the superannuates and for the cause of temperance were long remembered in Michigan. Smart himself never superannuated; he died following a stroke on his way home from a quarterly conference in his sixth year on the district.11

Seth Reed

U. S. Christian Commission Delegate, Preacher, and Presiding Elder

Notwithstanding the shock and the dislocations caused by the war, most Michigan Methodist churches held to their yearly round of activities from 1861 to 1865. In the Detroit newspapers and the religious press one finds hundreds of notices of camp meetings in summer, protracted or revival services in winter, watch night services, district Sunday school gatherings, donation parties, and regular annual conference sessions. New church buildings were erected. Afraid that the war would have an adverse effect on contributions for missions, church leaders assiduously promoted the cause with surprising results, as already indicated.

The man to be cited as representative of our third type of ministerial war service, the Christian Commission delegate, was one of the best known preachers in Michigan Methodism. Seth Reed (1823-1924) was admitted to the Michigan Conference in 1844 and answered the first roll call of his annual conference 79 times, a

10 Ibid.
11 Minutes of Detroit Annual Conference, 1892, pp. 56-60.
record that can be matched in few if any annual conferences. He served such churches as Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, Monroe, Port Huron, and Woodward Avenue, Detroit. For 19 years he was a presiding elder, serving on five different districts. When past 80, he and his wife helped to start the Detroit Conference Old Peoples' Home at Chelsea. He served as a member and as corresponding secretary of the board of trustees, while his wife was housekeeper for the institution. Older ministers today still remember Reed’s tall gaunt frame, his flowing white beard, and his deep voice. To many younger men who knew him, Reed was the embodiment of the spirit of Methodism.

During the war Reed served two Detroit churches and the church in Ypsilanti. Charged with the responsibility of promoting the missionary program in 1862 in the Detroit District, he planned special meetings and urged every pastor to preach on the subject. Arrangements were made for special agents to circulate during the year and collect money for missions. When Reed was asked if the church could meet the demands placed upon it, he replied, “She can and will if all will ask the Lord what am I to do.” Noting that the Detroit District gave 31 cents per member during the preceding year, Reed said, “The present exigencies of the missionary cause demand unusual effort.” He wrote in the *Northwestern Christian Advocate* for January 22, 1862:

> Perhaps no State in the Union has suffered less financially from the war operations than ours and in no part of ours less than in the Detroit region. A vast amount of money has been put in circulation here in a few months past. A common remark has been ‘business was seldom better’. We must test for God our abilities and Christianity now. ... We had an outpouring on the altar of patriotism last spring. Now when perils gather round the blood-bought missionary cause, shall we not do likewise?

The diligent efforts of Reed and other preachers certainly accounted in part for Michigan Methodism's trebled contributions to missions during the war.

Seth Reed served as a delegate of the U. S. Christian Commission from September 28 to October 26, 1863. The Christian Commission was organized nationally in New York in 1861. It was first established in Detroit in June, 1863, with George Taylor, a Methodist preacher, as state agent. All field delegates of the Commission were

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12 Account of Reed’s experiences with the Christian Commission based on his own *Story of My Life*, written many years later, and his *Pocket Field Record Book* with printed rules and notations taken at the time. Every delegate was required to keep such a record book. Reed’s is in the Michigan Historical Collections of the University of Michigan with the Seth Reed Papers.
expected to labor six weeks without any pay except expenses. Delegates usually served in camps, in hospitals, and on recent battlefields. Their work was much like that of the chaplains.

The Christian Commission assigned Reed as a field delegate in the Army of the Cumberland. His official board at Ypsilanti “said to go and they would take care of things at home.” He was sent to Nashville, Tennessee, where he first visited a barn hospital crowded with sick and severely wounded soldiers. The only light came from a few candles. The air was filled with deep groans. Reed later wrote, “I was not anticipating the shock which the scene produced upon me—for I had to retreat immediately and seek quiet before I could do anything for the suffering.” From then on he was kept busy distributing books, papers and tracts, sending telegrams, writing letters, holding religious conversations, and giving out “housewives.” 13 Also, he gave New Testaments to men who wanted them, and held prayer in the hospital wards. Reed preached one to three times on Sundays, but was distressed over the unconcern of most of the soldiers about “Sabbath observance.” He was moved by the brotherly affection, the longing for a distant wife, and the anxiety for sick children at home which he witnessed among the soldiers.

Reed, like Smart, was unfavorably impressed by the South and its inhabitants. He saw utter desolation, heaps of ashes where homes had been. He was aware of the bitterness of the natives and became convinced that hatred of the North was taught in the Sunday schools. All the Southern Methodists whom Reed met were “violent secessionists.” He saw many recently escaped slaves kneeling in prayer in the streets. Visiting Negro schools, Reed noticed the wide variation in the color of the children. He was shocked when he saw former slaves with white skins, blue eyes, and auburn hair.

After the battle of Chickamauga, Reed was sent to a field hospital in Stevenson, Alabama, a hard fifty-mile trip over bad roads. He arrived at midnight in a pouring rain and went to the only hotel where he paid 75 cents for a bed which had neither a pillow nor a blanket and besides was located under a leaky roof. The hospital was crowded with 1,400 badly wounded soldiers. Reed found only one church and it was in a dilapidated condition as was the case “in most of these towns.”

While Reed was in Nashville, an unfinished hotel crowded with Confederate prisoners collapsed from the fourth floor down. He assisted in digging out the dead and wounded from the debris. Asking one man whom he was helping about his identity, Reed was surprised to hear him say, “Oh—I am a Methodist preacher and I wish this thing was ended.” Reed gave him a handkerchief to wipe

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13 Small sewing kits with threaded needles, buttons, etc.
his face and said, “Well, I am a Methodist preacher and I too wish this thing was ended.”

The foregoing accounts show that patriotism and denominational loyalty were about equally combined in Michigan Methodism during the Civil War. And while 75 years would pass before Northern, Southern, and Protestant Methodists would unite to form The Methodist Church, Michigan Methodism achieved a small reunion two years after the war. As is well known, Orange Scott and other Methodist abolitionists organized the Wesleyan Methodist Church of America at Utica, New York, in 1843. When the war was over and slavery was abolished, many of the Wesleyan Methodists were ready for reunion with the Methodist Episcopal Church. Seven of the Wesleyan Methodist preachers were readmitted to the Detroit Conference at its meeting in Saginaw in 1867. All were received as elders and were given certificates of good standing. Bishop Edmund Janes shook hands with each man and the entire conference sang the doxology. Luther Lee and John McEldowney had been connected with Adrian College and were the best known of the seven men. Prior to the war, Lee was an active abolitionist. In his semi-centennial sermon at conference in 1879, Lee remarked that he was mobbed five times by pro-slavery people but was never seriously hurt, although he did have a new suit ruined on one occasion. J. M. Arnold then moved that the conference pay Lee for that suit, and he was given $50.

Some saw the modest Michigan Methodist reunion of 1867 as a symbol of larger hope for the future. One B. Stringham, a Methodist, saw it thus when he wrote to Henry W. Hicks of the Detroit Conference on July 19, 1894:

> When God pardons a sinner, his past sins are forever forgiven. . . . President Grant pardoned all connected with the Civil War and the bitter feelings of strife fast melted away. . . . It is no more than right when all things are considered that . . . a friendly feeling of national Brotherhood should be cultivated. . . . Doubtless there is today thousands of Union and Confederate men in heaven where all fraternal strife is done away forever. The human family Collective regardless of race or color are the Sons and Daughters of God by creation . . . all are responsible alike to him God their Father.”

\[14\] From a letter in the Henry W. Hicks Papers deposited in the Detroit Conference Collections, Adrian College Library, Adrian, Michigan.