Joseph Beekman Smith, Methodist Artist, and the Original Painting of John Street Church *

By Arthur Bruce Moss

Joseph Beekman Smith’s superb painting of Wesley Chapel, the first edifice of John Street Methodist Church, New York City, is one of the outstanding works of art pertaining to early American Methodism. An accurate and beautiful representation of the building designed and erected by Philip Embury in 1768, it is a priceless trophy of Methodist origins in America. The painting recently came into the ownership of John Street Church through the bequest of Miss Ethel Howell.¹ The City of New York has arranged for its permanent care and display on loan at the Museum of the City of New York. At the request of Mayor Robert F. Wagner, the painting was exhibited in the New York City Pavilion at the 1964 World’s Fair. National and international recognition for the painting came when the Smithsonian Institution included it in its exhibit in the United States Building at the 1958 World’s Fair in Brussels, Belgium. It was accorded this distinction because it is regarded as the best extant original canvas portraying a typical American colonial church in its surroundings.

The artist’s father was Joseph Smith (1765-1840). The elder Smith was born in Brooklyn, New York, February 11, 1765, but little is known of his life until he had passed his majority. He was a cork-cutter by trade. Following conversion at a camp meeting, he entered the circle of John Street Church, where he gave half a century of devoted service. On September 2, 1792 his name was re-

¹ Note: Some quotations included in this paper state unequivocally that John Street Church in New York is the first Methodist Society or the first Methodist Episcopal Church established in America. These statements are allowed to stand in the article because they are direct quotations. Their appearance on the pages of this magazine is not to be interpreted as an effort on the part of the author of the paper or of the Editor of Methodist History to settle the question of priority in the beginning of American Methodism. Our position is the same as that taken in the new three-volume History of American Methodism, page 74, which reads, “Methodism arose in America in the 1760’s under the leadership of unofficial lay preachers. The documents bearing witness to their work are less precise than would have been the case with officially delegated missionaries. There are several claims to priority. In determining the exact date of the first society in America the sources will not allow us to decide the issue.”—Editor.

¹ Miss Ethel Howell died in Brooklyn, New York, June 19, 1962. The writer conducted her funeral service. She was the daughter of the late Rev. Francis G. Howell (1865-1915). New York East Conference. The painting had come to her under the bequest of her father, who, during his pastorate at John Street Church, 1891-1895, had bought it from the family of the artist.
corded as a member “on trial,” and on December 6, 1793 he was “read into Society.”

Joseph Smith manifested a religious experience that grew in depth and radiance. Possessing gifts of leadership, he soon became a class leader and then a local preacher; he continued in both capacities until his death. He was noted for a Saturday night prayer meeting which he conducted for years. Elected to the New York State Legislature, he maintained a weekly prayer meeting in Albany throughout his term of office, 1815-1817. J. B. Wakeley declares that Smith “was emphatically the servant of the church,” and that his name was “as familiar as household words to the early Methodists in New York.”

Joseph Smith was one of the founding Managers of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church at its organization April 5, 1819, and he served in this capacity the rest of his life. He was deeply devoted to John Street Church. In addition to spiritual leadership, he gave unmeasured service as steward and trustee, holding the presidency of the board of trustees during his last years.

During Smith’s time of leadership in John Street Church, the trend of residence was steadily “uptown.” This increased the problems of membership and finance for the congregation. A crucial decision concerning the sanctuary came to focus as the city decided to widen John Street. This required either modification of the 1817 building or removal to another site. The Trustees’ Minute Book reflects Joseph Smith’s wise guidance; the ultimate plan for rebuilding on the original site bears his imprint. His last official act, completed less than a week before his death, involved the formulation, signature, and dispatch of a statement of the property problem for the attention of the 1840 General Conference then in session at Baltimore.

An accident plunged Smith under the wheels of a heavily laden cart, fatally injuring him. He suffered intensely for several days and died on May 28, 1840. The John Street pastor, Buel Goodsell, attended Smith faithfully following the tragedy, and in writing his obituary he declared, “His zeal for God was not a temporary ex-

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3 Wakeley, op. cit.

4 Reid, op. cit.
citement produced at various times, and on special occasions; it was uniform, and not affected by any change of time, person or place. 5 The John Street trustees placed a tablet honoring Smith in the new church edifice when it was dedicated in 1841, where it may still be seen. James Harper, one of the founders of Harper Brothers publishing firm, succeeded Smith as president of the church trustees.

Joseph Smith's oldest son, John Mott Smith (1795-1832), received the degree of Bachelor of Arts at Columbia College in 1816, and later was awarded the Master of Arts degree. In 1817 he entered the New York Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church "on trial," and was appointed to the Jamaica Circuit, Long Island. In 1818 he served the Suffold Circuit in eastern Long Island, and at the 1819 Conference he was received into "full connection," ordained deacon, and appointed to Stamford Circuit in Connecticut.

John Mott Smith corresponded with the newly organized Missionary Society, of which his father was a manager. However, a proposal of the young preacher to enter missionary work among the French-speaking people in Louisiana did not materialize, and he remained under appointment in the New York Conference. On November 19, 1820, he married Amanda Day of Norwalk, Connecticut, and they reared a family of three sons and a daughter.

In 1821 John Mott Smith was appointed Principal of Wesleyan Seminary in New York City, an institution of the New York Conference, where he served with distinction for five years. In 1826 his appointment was to establish White Plains Academy, likewise a school of the New York Conference, and he continued there five years.

Wesleyan College was organized in 1832 at Middletown, Connecticut, under the presidency of Wilbur Fisk. Fisk invited John Mott Smith to be Professor of Latin and Greek Languages and Literature and Acting Professor of Natural Science. His promising career was cut short by his untimely death from typhoid pneumonia December 27, 1832, when he was but 37 years of age. He was buried in Middletown Cemetery. However, in 1836, when Wesleyan College established a burial ground on the campus, his remains were reinterred, the first to be buried in that place. 6

Joseph Smith's third son was named William. After completing

5 Goodsell, op. cit. Buel Goodsell was the father of Daniel B. Goodsell, noted bishop of a later generation.
his medical studies, he established practice at Rushford, New York, a small town in Allegany County. As the center of a circuit, Rushford had become an appointment in the Genesee Conference some years before William Smith settled there. Frontier living conditions still prevailed and they are vividly described in the Smith family's extant letters.\(^7\)

The second son in the family, Joseph Beekman Smith (1798-1876), was the artist. Although born in Brooklyn, young Smith grew up under the influence of John Street Church in New York City. He was converted in his teens at the Sing Sing Camp Meeting, where his father was a leader. Imbued with love for the old church, he devoted his rapidly developing artistic talent to the faithful portrayal of Philip Embury's Wesley Chapel on John Street.

On Friday, May 11, 1810, Bishop Francis Asbury wrote in his Journal: “We are in New York. . . . I preached at old John Street: this is the thirty-ninth year I have officiated within the walls; this house must come down, and something larger and better occupy its place.” \(^8\) However, it was not until 1817 that plans were perfected and funds provided for the careful demolition of the original Chapel, then almost fifty years old, and the construction of a more commodious and conveniently appointed edifice. “The old church,” as it was affectionately called, was held in veneration by the entire denomination.

Before demolition was started, Joseph B. Smith, at eighteen years of age, made drawings of the chapel and of all the adjacent houses which were later to be elaborated into several lithographs and engravings under his supervision. These drawings were also to be the base for his own masterpiece and for the steel engraving of that canvas by Lewis Delnoce.

Moved by a providential impulse, Joseph B. Smith, then a mere youth, gifted with a rare skill for draughting, and filled with a love for Methodism—imbibed from his pious father—determined to preserve a likeness of the FIRST METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN AMERICA, which had been built on Golden Hill in 1768 and which it was intended to take down and re-build. But for the sketches made by him upon the spot, the outline of this edifice, so dear to every Methodist, has been lost.\(^9\)

On January 20, 1819, Joseph B. Smith was married to Ann E. Steell, daughter of the late William Steell, a physician, of Belleville, 1868, and carrying the endorsement of Bishop Edmund S. Janes, in John Street Church Archives. The appellation, Golden Hill, had been given to the environs from the earliest Colonial period, reminiscent of the grain fields as seen from East River.
New Jersey. The ceremony was performed by Nathan Bangs, the senior elder of the New York Circuit. Two sons and two daughters were born to them: William, who followed his father in art and became his partner; Deborah; Joseph, who became a physician after aiding his uncle at Rushford, New York; and Susan.

The first adaptation of Joseph B. Smith's early drawings of the John Street Chapel appeared in 1824. It was published in the form of a tinted engraving as cover and frontispiece for a pamphlet describing the organization of the New York Society by Philip Embury, the preaching of Captain Thomas Webb, and the building of Wesley Chapel. Two names stand in the customary location under the lower corners of the engraving—left, Joseph B. Smith, artist; right, A. Dick, engraver. The pamphlet measures 15 by 12 inches, with an elaborate title page and seven pages of text. It is entitled, "A Short Account of the Early Society of Methodists Established in the City of New York." The author's name is not given, but the following statement appears:

Printed and Published by W. and P. C. Smith, and sold by them 59 Fulton Street, by the Methodist Book Agents, 55 Fulton Street, John C. Totten, 9 Bowery, Wm. Hilton, and by Booksellers in general—Accompanied with an Accurate View of the Old Methodist Chapel, in John Street, the First Erected in America.

Seaman reproduces the engraving with this comment: "It is from a picture, I believe, by one of the printers, who were the sons of Joseph Smith, a prominent member who died in 1840, after a membership of more than fifty years." 11

The distinguishing characteristics of this first engraving are the close-up view of the Chapel's facade with little compensation for its depth; the display of only the rear half of the adjacent parsonage, standing at an offset angle from the contour of the Chapel, and without any indication of other nearby church towers behind the Chapel. The hallmark of all of Joseph B. Smith's drawings of the Chapel, or of their lithograph and engraving derivatives, is present in this first instance—the figure of Peter Williams, the noted Negro sexton, on duty at the door. 12 This design was also employed on the medals that were struck to mark the Centenary of American Methodism in 1866.

In the 1824 pamphlet engraving, three small groups of people stand

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10 New York Evening Post, January 21, 1819. As a young man Dr. Thomas Steell had served as "Surgeon's Mate" in the 7th Regiment of Foot (Royal Fusileers), British Army. His commission, signed at Westminster, England, by Colonel Robert Bertie, commander of the regiment, is in John Street Church Archives.

11 Seaman, op. cit., pp. 36-38, illustration and footnote. William and Peter Smith, brothers of the artist; the name of Joseph B. Smith stands under the left lower corner of Seaman's reproduction.

12 For biographical data of Peter Williams see Wakely, op. cit., pp. 438-73; Seaman, op. cit., pp. 485-90.
before the Chapel. On the sidewalk at the center are Captain Thomas Webb, identified by his eye-patch, and Philip Embury, in formal dress, together with two others, probably William Lupton, trustee and treasurer, and Henry Newton, steward. Behind Webb and Embury are Paul and Barbara Heck. On the other side two men are talking, probably the trustees, Richard Sauce and Charles White, who had come from Ireland in 1769.

A later adaptation of this first drawing by Joseph B. Smith is included in Wakeley's volume in the form of an engraving. The proportions of the building and the environment are strengthened by placing the observation point across the street. A sense of depth is secured by lifting the observer's eye level to the height of the second story. Clumps of trees along the line of Maiden Lane appear behind the Chapel, and the towers of two nearby churches stand against the skyline.

When problems arose in 1839, making the continuance of the 1817 building impossible, Joseph B. Smith executed a drawing to perpetuate the likeness of that structure. A lithograph of this was made in 1844 under Smith's direction, carrying the names, Chapin and Felter, as lithographers. This identifies the 1817 edifice by the paths between the church and the adjacent houses, three small entrances on the street, and the cenotaph of John Summerfield which had been placed on the western front corner soon after his death in 1825.

The city authorities had notified the John Street Church trustees that John Street would be widened during 1840. The 1817 building was imperiled, as it would protrude several feet into the new fairway. In August 1839, Joseph Smith presiding, the trustees designated a committee to "ascertain what can be done." Final action was taken in April and May, 1840, to demolish the 1817 building, and to erect a new church on the original lots, together with commercial structures of three stories and basement on each side to be leased for income purposes. Upon Joseph Smith's sudden death, James Harper became president of the trustees and carried forward the plans for the third and final building on the historic site.

Soon after the dedication of the new edifice, April 5, 1841, Joseph B. Smith made another drawing, similar to those repre-

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13 Wakeley, op. cit., facing p. 108. The engraver, A. H. Ritchie, noted in his craft in the mid-century, provided numerous excellent items for Wakeley, Abel Stevens, and others.
14 Wakeley, op. cit., 580; Seaman, op. cit., facing p. 205; Abel Stevens, op. cit., p. 164; and others.
15 John Summerfield (1798-1825) was a brilliant young British Methodist preacher who had come to America at the urging of Rev. (afterward Bishop) John Emory, in the hope that his health might be restored. He gave a brief but distinguished service at John Street. When the 1841 building was completed the entablature was mounted in the sanctuary where it may still be seen. The eulogy carved on the cenotaph was composed by Bishop Joshua Soule.
senting the earlier buildings. This drawing presents the third structure as somewhat narrower and higher than its predecessor, with the main entrance restored to the street-front. The commercial buildings on either side are indicated, with no pathways between them and the church. A lithograph bearing the name “Felter” was prepared; it has been frequently used by historians and other writers.16

Sometime prior to 1840, the artist completed a life-size portrait of his father, Joseph Smith. The original canvas may be seen among the art treasures at John Street Church.17

In 1844 Joseph B. Smith prepared and published a large composite lithograph which included the three basic units representing the John Street Church buildings as well as other significant material. The printers were Endicott and Company. The items were organized in two horizontal rows separated by a formal statement in small lettering:

Entered according to the act of Congress in the year 1844 by Joseph B. Smith in the Clerk’s Office of the District Court of the Eastern District of New York.

Beginning from the left, the top row consisted of a neatly ornamented medallion presenting the names of the church trustees in 1844; at the center was the lithograph of the first building; and at the right a similar medallion with the trustees of 1817. The lower row was made up of a lithograph of the second building (1817) at the left, and there were two items in the center—a medallion of the first trustees and founders over a small lithograph of the “Old Rigging Loft”18 where the Society had worshiped prior to purchasing the John Street property, and a lithograph of the third building at the right.

The lithograph of the Rigging Loft represents a drawing made by the artist. In his personal notebook there is a drawing entitled, “The Old Rigging Loft as it now stands, 120 William Street 1844,” and endorsed in his handwriting, “Taken on the spot by Joseph B. Smith 1844.” The building was two stories high, 18 feet wide and

16 Wakeley, op. cit., facing p. 585; Seaman, op. cit., facing p. 280; Abel Stevens, History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, I; Matthew Simpson, Cyclopaedia of Methodism, pp. 501-2.
17 In the catalogue of the trophies at John Street, the year 1830 appears for this painting as a notation by the late Mrs. Anna Onstott, who was the church’s archivist in the 1930’s. She does not state her source of information for this date.
18 “The Rigging Loft” was located at 120 William Street just north of John Street. The site is included in the much larger tract now occupied by a huge office building, the premises of the East River Savings Bank representing the old lot #120. The owners of the building plan to install a bronze plaque in the main foyer, using this drawing of the Rigging Loft, and referring to the occupancy by the early Methodist society, 1767-68.
60 feet deep. The center entrance was flanked by a window on each side. The upper floor had two windows and was open to the apex of a high, sharply peaked roof. Sails could be hung from the rafters or spread on the floor for repair. Wakeley reports its demolition in 1854:

I looked on with mournful interest as they were taking it down to make way for a more commodious building. . . . The timbers were sound, and were made into canes. . . . An ivory head was placed upon each stick . . . and the following inscription—'Rigging Loft, 1766, Philip Embury'.

The multi-unit lithograph was eagerly received and widely distributed. The artist's notebook carries the names of 259 persons who directly subscribed to him for copies. Among these are the nine trustees of the Church; Bishops Soule, Hedding, and Janes; ministers, such as Nathan Bangs, Valentine Buck, William K. Stopford, George Coles, P. C. Oakley, Phineas Rice, and Robert Seney; and many prominent laymen. Reuben C. Bull, 11 Park Row, New York City, a trustee of John Street Church, carried the picture for sale at his shop.

The New York Commercial Advertiser, May 28, 1844, presented a notice of the print:

A very large, handsome and interesting colored lithograph has been published by Joseph B. Smith from the lithographic press of Endicott & Co., representing the well known church in John Street, at three stages of its existence; . . . faithfully delineated in accordance with existing reality at the time. . . . The print altogether is full of interest not only to Methodists but to citizens generally, who like to trace the progress of 'improvements.'

The Christian Advocate, March 26, 1845, also gave an extensive description of the print, saying, in part:

We notice, with pleasure, the publication of a print, representing the several sacred edifices that have appeared on the venerable spot, the cradle of Methodism in John Street, during the last three-quarters of a century. . . . The picture is done in color, and the drawings were taken while the buildings were standing, by J. B. Smith, son of the late venerable Joseph Smith, and brother of the late Professor John Smith, of the Wesleyan University, and published by him. As an historical print, it is correct as well as beautiful; and to the lovers of Methodism, we know of few or any that can be more interesting.

The artist's notebook also includes several certifications of unique interest and value. The first is dated, "New York, 1st May, 1844":

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Wakeley, op. cit., pp. 45-49; Seaman, op. cit., frontispiece and pp. 24-27. One of the canes may be seen in John Street Church Museum.
We the Trustees of the First Methodist Episcopal Church in America, have examined a print, published by Joseph B. Smith of the First Methodist E. Church in John Street, N. York, from the Lithographic Press of Endicott & Co., N. Y., handsomely colored; and from our personal knowledge testify to the correctness of the drawing and the finished style of its execution; we cheerfully recommend it to our Brethren and Friends, not only as a work of art, but as having in connection with it the Historical account of the formation of our Society in this section of the World.

Then follows the autographs of the nine trustees, headed by James Harper as president, who was at that time also Mayor of the City of New York.

Below the Trustee attestation is the following, bearing the signature of Nathan Bangs:

From an intimate knowledge of the History of Methodism in America, and a recollection of the First Churches in John Street, I can unhesitatingly say that the Historical part of the print is correct, and cheerfully concur in the above recommendation.

Three of the very early trustees were still living and effective, although in advanced years. They individually signed this declaration:

We the surviving trustees of the First Board organized in this country, having subscribed for the drawing by Jos. B. Smith, can testify to its correctness, and cheerfully acquiesce in the sentiments as expressed by the Board at present attached to that Church.

Then follow three autographs, with record of age: William Mead, 77; Gilbert Coutant, 79; George Suckley, 80. The first two were dated January 22, 1845; Suckley's signature was dated January 24, 1845. It is worthy of note that Wakeley had a tracing made of the autograph of George Suckley and included it in his statement concerning that distinguished layman.\(^{20}\)

The artist's notebook contains the copy of a drawing he made late in 1844 of the church then erected on Cherry Street between Clinton and Montgomery Streets, New York City, near his residence. It was known as Mariners' Methodist Episcopal Church and continued on that site until 1861. A notable lithograph was produced from this drawing, published in late November, 1844. A list of 364 subscribers is appended to a certification signed by Henry Chase, president of the board of trustees, and by the pastor, J. Poisal.

The eager and devoted interest of both the artist and his father in the Sing Sing Camp Meeting has been mentioned. The artist's notebook indicates that two drawings relating to the Camp Meet-

ing were published in 1838. One represented the campground between services and was called "Interval." The other, entitled "Preaching," featured Nathan Bangs on the platform. The original painting of "Interval" was dedicated to the artist's father, Joseph Smith, and the second painting to Peter McNamara, president of the Camp Meeting Association. Reproductions of these drawings were widely circulated and are still available in old print shops.

While preparing his monumental work, *Lost Chapters*, J. B. Wakeley requested Smith to provide a drawing of Philip Embury's residence on Augustus Street, where he conducted his first services and organized the New York Society in 1766. The house had long since been demolished, and the artist consulted "one of the men of olden time" and presented a drawing to Wakeley. This drawing appeared in Wakeley's book and was copied by later writers.21

The centenary of American Methodism was celebrated in 1866. Many projects were carried out, some denominational in scope, others of conference or local significance. Smith's original drawing of the Wesley Chapel was used in striking the medals circulated during the celebration. A large pamphlet was also distributed which presented the basic facts of the organization and early development of Methodism in America. The page size of the pamphlet was 12 x 16 inches, and it carried a number of illustrations. Included in the illustrations were Smith's lithographs of the three John Street churches and the Rigging Loft. The double-page spread in the center of the pamphlet was devoted to the Sing Sing Camp Meeting, showing the great crowd assembled for preaching. This illustration was based on the painting entitled "Preaching," which is described above, and the page size is large enough to allow one to identify the preacher as Nathan Bangs.

On Sunday, October 25, 1868, John Street Church marked the Centenary of the dedication of Embury's Wesley Chapel on the John Street property. Bishop Edmund S. Janes presided at the afternoon mass meeting, and addresses were given by Abel Stevens, J. B. Wakeley, and Joseph J. Roberts, President of the Republic of Liberia.

A large superbly executed and elegantly framed steel plate engraving of the first church edifice and parsonage was presented to the church by the artist, Joseph B. Smith, son of Joseph Smith, Esq., one of the early trustees. Copies of the exquisite engraving may be obtained at the Book Room.22

For the promotion of its sale Bishop Janes provided a signed endorsement, dated December 28, 1868:

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22 From the extensive report of the services, "John Street Centenary Anniversary," *Christian Advocate*, October 29, 1868, p. 349.
I have examined it carefully and am convinced of its historical accuracy, and of its great merit as a work of art. Few American engravings equal it. I know of none of the kind that excel it. Its excellence as an engraving entitles it to a place in the Picture Galleries and Libraries of the land. The association of the edifice, represented in the picture, with the rise and progress of the Methodist Branch, of the Church of Christ in America, gives it a deep religious interest, especially to the members of the Methodist Church.  

The engraving bears the title, *The First Methodist Episcopal Church in America*; Joseph B. Smith is named as the artist, and Lewis Delnoce, an outstanding craftsman, as the engraver. Following a statement that the engraving had been entered according to law are these words, “From the Original Painting in the Possession of Joseph Smith, M.D.”

The engraving includes the central two-thirds of Smith's master painting, omitting the last buildings at the far distant street corners. The printing reproduction is careful and clear. John Street Church has on display a copy of the engraving which has been expertly tinted in water-color. The subscription price was five dollars, and a neatly carved frame was provided if desired. Good copies occasionally appear in print shops, attesting the fine workmanship of a century ago.

Among Joseph B. Smith's multifarious works, the painting on which he lavished the ultimate of his skill and the one he personally liked best was the canvas of the first John Street Church that formed the basis for Delnoce's notable engraving. Francis G. Howell, pastor of John Street Church 1891-1895, believed that Smith began the painting quite early in his career but supposed that in view of the maturity which the work demonstrates in technique and composition, it was completed years later. Smith did not display the painting, but it was always keenly admired by those who saw it in his home or at his office-studio. Indeed, it received no public acclaim until Francis G. Howell arranged for its care and display on loan at the Museum of the City of New York. Clear and precise in line, rich and unfaded in color, the painting still maintains its fascination after more than a century and a quarter.

The canvas measures 60 by 30 inches. The entire south side of John Street is presented; this is the block between William and Nassau Streets. The viewer's position is the spot where Dutch Street reaches John Street, and it maintains adequate treatment of the facade while presenting the depth and height in true proportion and perspective.

Joseph B. Smith developed the painting from his first drawings made in 1817, and it was completed not later than 1840. About 1865

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33 See footnote 9.  
34 Younger son of the artist.
he presented the painting to his physician son, Joseph Smith, and it was in his possession when the Delnoce engraving was made and published under the artist's supervision. On the death of Joseph Smith, the physician, title to the painting passed to his widow. During his pastorate at John Street Church, Francis G. Howell found the painting still in Mrs. Smith's possession. Since there were no immediate heirs, she sold the painting and many related items to Howell.

When Mayor Robert F. Wagner requested and received permission to place the painting in the New York City Pavilion at the 1964 World's Fair, he issued a Proclamation which reads in part:

WHEREAS, the John Street Methodist Church is the oldest Methodist Society in America, having been organized in 1766, and
WHEREAS, the John Street Methodist Church has for nearly two centuries made important contribution to the spiritual welfare of the City
NOW THEREFORE, I, Robert F. Wagner, Mayor of the City of New York
DO PROCLAIM October 5, 1963 as
JOHN STREET METHODIST CHURCH DAY
in New York City, and direct the attention of all citizens to the rich spiritual and historical heritage of this religious institution.

Joseph B. Smith's artistic talent was not limited to Methodist subjects. He was fascinated by the stately beauty and driving power of the sturdy clipper ships and gave himself to their portrayal until a notable technique was acquired, placing him among the masters of marine art. Marine subjects have constituted one of the most popular series in the wide range of the Currier and Ives prints, and although many of their pictures carry no artist designation, a number are directly ascribed to J. B. Smith. "Another name appearing frequently in the marine prints is that of J. B. Smith & Son, Brooklyn, L. I. Several splendid prints are credited to this firm." Among these are "Great Republic," "Ocean Express," "Adelaide," "Hove To For A Pilot," and "Red Jacket." In the summer of 1849 the artist executed a painting of the new ship, "Mechanic's Own," and lithographs of this proved popular, more than 430 copies being sold. For a period Smith maintained a studio close to the Brooklyn waterfront, eventually taking his son William into partnership under the title, J. B. Smith & Son, Marine Artists.

In later life the artist developed a sideline in which he took much delight—"gently humorous sketches" and water-colors of a genre nature—sometimes using the sobriquet, J. Cruikshank Smith.

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26 Harry T. Peters, Currier and Ives, Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1942.
27 Notebook of the artist, John Street Archives.
28 Directory of the City of Brooklyn, quoted by Ethel Howell, op. cit.
29 An example from the Howell Collection, "Friends Meeting in a Barn," appears in Antiques, op. cit.
Joseph B. Smith spent his last years at Camden, New Jersey, and Philadelphia, where he died in 1876.

Many leaders of American Methodism have given wise guidance and devoted service to historic John Street Church. An uncounted multitude have worshiped in its sanctuaries and have given of their substance and effort for its support. Few have rendered more notable service than Joseph Smith, trustee for many years, and Joseph Beekman Smith, his son, whose consecrated artistry tells the story in pictures of living worth. The father devoted half a century to the church in the first and second buildings, and would have brought to fulfillment his plans for the third and present structure save for the sudden, tragic accident which cut short his life. The tablet in his memory and the portrait lovingly painted by his son bind him to the vivid present in the building which he envisioned in his dreams. The son worshiped in and profoundly loved all three churches. His art preserves the first and second so that memory of them does not fade. His supreme skill sets the original Wesley Chapel in such simple beauty that it has become a symbol of American Methodism known throughout the world. The Methodist Church is indebted to these able men—father and son—whose blended lives, high integrity, rich endowment of talent, and Christian devotion bring to life in physical property and inspiring art the idealism and consecration of our Founders.