THE METHODIST COLLECTIONS AT GARRETT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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The collection of Methodistica at Garrett Theological Seminary is extensive. Although it is difficult to know how it compares with other similar collections this brief attempt to describe it will provide an idea of its scope and contents. The largest part of the collection consists of manuscripts, in holograph, books and pamphlets. However, there are other materials such as a bronze bust of John Wesley, for which he sat, and other artifacts relating to Methodist history. The bulk of these items is housed in the Garrett Library. Some other items are in the care of Frederick A. Norwood, Methodist Curator at Garrett.

The manuscripts in the collection actually fall into two groups. The first group consists of the papers of former Garrett faculty members and numbers over 12,000 items; letters, sermons, lectures, diaries, documents and miscellaneous items. Of special interest in these papers are such things as letters exchanged between John Dempster, first president of the school, and Philo Judson, a founder of Garrett. In one letter, dated December 9, 1853, Dempster tells Judson that he had met with a committee from Bloomington who were willing to finance a biblical institute. Then, undoubtedly referring to Eliza Garrett, he asks, “Will you be so kind as to inform me whether the lady in Chicago, who intends erecting one [i.e., a biblical institute] will advance means to put up a building for recitations within two years from this date & to meet the current expenses ...” There are many letters of similar historical interest. For example, among the papers of Henry B. Ridgaway are thirteen letters of Miss Frances E. Willard, prominent nineteenth century temperance leader. These few letters are of special value when it is realized that a large number of Miss Willard’s papers were destroyed shortly after her death.\footnote{Earhart, Mary, Frances Willard, University of Chicago Press, 1944. p. vii. from prayers to politics. Chicago, Uni-}

Terry and H. G. Mitchell, of Boston University, were singled out for attack by such leaders as James M. Buckley, editor of the Christian Advocate. One very large group of papers are those of former President Charles M. Stuart whose wide ranging interests included poetry, hynmolgy and literature in addition to theology. Other faculty members represented in this section of the manuscript collection are: Samuel G. Ayers, Charles W. Bennett, Frederick C. Eiselen, Doremus A. Hayes, Francis D. Hemenway, Daniel P. Kid-
The second group of manuscripts is a varied set of materials embracing Methodism from the time of its birth to the present century. The core of this collection was purchased and given to Garrett by William Deering (1826-1913), successful Chicago merchant and industrialist, who served as a trustee of Garrett from 1880 until his death in 1913. For eleven years, 1889-1900, he was also president of the board. Deering formed a close personal friendship with Charles J. Little (1840-1911) who was elected to the chair of church history at Garrett in 1891 and who subsequently became president of the Institute in 1895, serving until his death in 1911. The two men worked closely together in guiding the collection of these early Methodist manuscripts. A person well informed in Methodist history was needed to locate materials for purchase and Deering was fortunate in securing the services of John Atkinson. Atkinson had been interested in the subject for many years, authoring a centennial history of the denomination along with several other volumes, and he traveled extensively in the eastern states contacting heirs of the early preachers. It is interesting that most of the manuscripts were valued highly by the descendants and Atkinson found it essential to use tact, patience and liberal quantities of Deering's money to secure them. In some cases families refused to part with their heirlooms while others were very reluctant to see these materials leave the eastern states.

Atkinson worked the better part of two years, during 1895 to 1897, with Deering and Little. One of the most significant purchases Atkinson made was in October 1896, when he succeeded in buying the papers of Ezekiel Cooper which covered the years 1784-1847. Cooper (1763-1847), one of the first native-born American preachers, was influenced by the preaching of Freeborn Garrettson, converted and entered the ministry in 1785. He worked with Jesse Lee in New England and later served in the eastern seaboard states. In 1798 he was appointed book agent of the church and in 1800 was made head of the Book Concern. He was a capable manager and in eight years succeeded in greatly enlarging the Concern's interests. Cooper's papers include his journal, November 1784 to October 1802, in many volumes. In addition the papers include his autobiography, his writings on church government and the episcopacy, sermons, articles and writings for the press, seven letters of Freeborn Garrettson (1807-1826) and seventeen of his own letters (1789-1820). In this last group is an undated letter written to John Wesley in which Cooper reverentially apologizes for presuming to consume the aged leader's time. There are other letters included in the collection.
bearing such names as Jesse Lee, Martin Ruter and Nicholas Snethen. The Cooper manuscripts have been calendared by the Illinois Historical Records Survey Project in the *Calendar of the Ezekiel Cooper Collection of Early American Methodist Manuscripts, 1785-1839* . . . (Chicago, 1941). The only modern critical life of Cooper, based on this collection and other Cooper papers at Drew University and Lovely Lane Museum, has been written by Lester B. Scherer.2 This work was awarded the 1968 Jesse Lee Prize by the Association of Methodist Historical Societies of The Methodist Church. More will be said later of some early pamphlets that were included in the Cooper papers.

Another large group of materials containing 194 holograph pieces, and originally collected by John Davies, was purchased in February 1897. Davies (1799-1876), a Methodist minister, had emigrated to America in 1827, entered the New York Conference in 1834, serving in the active relationship until 1861. Manuscripts, autographs, and letters of virtually every person prominent in the early history of Methodism in both England and America are to be found here. For example, John Wesley is represented by three letters, there is a four page sermon manuscript by William Phoebus, who was present at the Christmas Conference of 1784, and an 1842 letter of Bishop John W. Roberts, second missionary bishop for Africa.

A remarkable acquisition in July 1897, which greatly strengthened the collection, was purchase of the William Colbert papers covering the years 1739-1834. Colbert (1765-1833) was admitted to the Philadelphia Conference in 1790, continued in the traveling ministry until 1811, located and was readmitted in 1826 to continue a semi-active ministry until his death in 1833. His thirteen-volume journal covers the entire forty-three years of his ministry. Peck had quoted from this journal in 1860.3 He characterized Colbert’s itinerating ministry through primitive parts of Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, Delaware and Virginia as “missionary work.” 4 This journal is not only a valuable piece of Methodistica but also an impressive piece of Americana. Other papers collected here are six of Colbert’s own letters, three of Francis Asbury, two of George Whitefield, four of John Wesley, one of Charles Wesley, and twelve others from such leaders as Thomas Coke. Today when black history is becoming increasingly important it is interesting to note that Colbert had a genuine concern for the blacks. After deciding to preach Colbert tells us, in a brief autobiographical account, “I was not restrained from

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making an appointment, to speak to a few poor blacks, whose wretched condition always on reflection excited pity in my breast.” Other documents in the Colbert papers are manuscripts of hymns he wrote, a journal of his wife’s and miscellaneous papers.

In October 1896 Atkinson closed negotiations to buy nineteen letters which had belonged to Thomas Morrell (1747-1838). Morrell was a soldier in the American Revolution having attained the rank of major. He was converted in 1785 and was ordained an elder in the New Jersey Conference. Serving as a presiding elder in New York City 1789-1790, he later traveled and preached as his health would permit. The collection of letters numbers two of John Wesley, six of Francis Asbury, two of Adam Clark and six of Thomas Coke, as well as several others. Unfortunately, Atkinson could not persuade Morrell’s grandson to sell him the valuable journal of his ancestor.

Two additional journals are those of Thomas Rankin (1737-1810) and Bishop Richard Whatcoat (1736-1806). Rankin fell under John Wesley’s influence and accompanied him on his tour of the British Isles in 1769. In 1772 Wesley appointed Rankin as general superintendent to enforce Wesleyan Methodism in America. Rankin arrived in 1773 and remained through the outbreak of the Revolution until 1778 when he returned to England. His journal covers the period August 29, 1773 through August 12, 1777. This gives a good account of his experiences in America and helps us to understand his conflict with Asbury. Rankin’s journal was purchased from R. Thursfield Smith.

Whatcoat, like Rankin, was sent to America by Wesley. He landed in America November 3, 1784 with Dr. Coke and Mr. Creighton. He traveled extensively through the states, sometimes with Asbury, sometimes by himself. Whatcoat was well liked and was elected bishop in 1800. His journal covers the periods August 1, 1789-May 25, 1791; May 23, 1794-June 7, 1796 and August 13, 1797-May 30, 1800. Deering purchased this journal from John Davies of whom he also purchased the collection of manuscripts described earlier.

Deering was also able to purchase some other small groups of material. These included three letters and miscellaneous notes of John Summerfield (1798-1825). Summerfield was a remarkable young man who made a lasting impression on the large crowds to whom he preached both in England and America. His interests were varied and he united with ministers of other denominations to form the American Tract Society. Two of his letters, composed in 1822-1823, are addressed to William M. Willett, his biographer, who has recorded much of Summerfield’s correspondence and sermons.5 The

5 Willett, William M., A New Life of Summerfield. Philadelphia, J. B. Lippin-
other letter in this group is dated 1823 and addressed to Thomas Sargente.

It soon became necessary for Deering to make contacts in England in his efforts to secure British Methodist materials. He succeeded in engaging R. Thursfield Smith of Highfield, England as his agent. Mr. Smith had a notable collection of his own and also was able to purchase items from the collection of Thomas Brackenbury. Seven-teen holograph letters were purchased from Smith late in 1897 including six of John Wesley, 1769-1789; two of George Whitefield and a manuscript of six sermon sketches by John Fletcher. Many book and pamphlet materials were also secured from Smith and more will be said of these later.

An interesting acquisition Deering made was a collection of some 1,000 steel and copperplate portraits of English evangelical ministers from about 1790-1830. Many of the portraits are of Methodists. In May 1897 Adam Miller (1810-1901), who wrote several histories of American-German Methodism, wrote a one-hundred leaf manuscript at Deering’s request which he entitled, “A historical sketch of the commencement of German missions in the Methodist E. Church.”

In 1896 Deering corresponded with Alvaro Dickinson Field (1827-1909) asking him to collect documents and manuscripts on Methodism in the old Northwestern territories and states. Field, who had written two volumes on the history of the Rock River Conference, replied that he was too old and invalid to undertake such a work. Field would have been superbly suited for this task since his long associations around Chicago would have given him a knowledge and advantage few other men would have possessed. However, Field had already amassed a sizable collection of his own over a forty-year period. These he sold to Deering and they are contained in six large bound volumes. All the materials relate to circuits and churches of Illinois and the Northwest. There are two volumes of documents, two volumes of correspondence, one volume of correspondence from bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and one volume of official documents from the Littleton, Illinois circuit for the years 1854-1872. This last volume is unique in that it contains records of church trials on such charges as “immorality in lying.”

Apart from Deering’s efforts a number of other papers were acquired. One is a very large volume containing letters, portraits and signatures of Wesleyan Conference Presidents (British) from 1736-1889. There are two John Wesley letters, one Charles Wesley letter and a holograph copy of the latter’s hymn, “Jesu, in whom the weary find their late, but permanent repose.” This hymn appears in

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6 The person, life and work of the Rev. John Wesley, M. A. (the founder of Methodism) illustrated by engravings and medal busts and books, manuscripts let-
ter, &c. . . . from the collection of the Rev. Thomas Brackenbury, Bolton, E. Duckworth, 1891. 36 pages.
the older British Methodist hymnals but not in any twentieth-century American editions.

A brief but fragmentary journal is that of John Smith (1758-1812) a circuit rider in Virginia, West Virginia and Pennsylvania. His journal begins May 12, 1786 and concludes July 8, 1788, the period of his service on the Greenbrier, Redstone and Holston circuits. Bishop Stephen Mason Merrill’s (1825-1905) unpublished autobiography is here. Bishop Merrill was a prolific writer, served as editor of the Western Christian Advocate, and concluded his career as episcopal leader after serving in that position for thirty-three years (1872-1905). Other manuscripts acquired through the years have been over five hundred sermons of Chicago minister Lancaster Coventry Burling (1850-1914) and over seven hundred sermons, diaries and other papers of Thomas Mears Eddy (1823-1874) Indiana pastor who served as corresponding secretary of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1872-74. John Lee’s (1850-1922) papers relating to his interests in religious liberty in South America consisting largely of letters from government and religious leaders in the period 1876-1921; the diaries and journals of George Kenneth Morris (1837-1918), Methodist minister in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Ohio, plus his correspondence 1873-1914; and all the research papers of Kimball Young (1893- ), professor emeritus of Northwestern University, relating to Mormonism. Young, a grandson of Brigham Young, spent many years collecting these materials which formed the basis of his writings including the book Isn’t One Wife Enough?

Having surveyed the manuscript collection our attention is now directed to the book, pamphlet and periodical collections of Methodistica. In October 1955 Lucy W. Markley, Assistant Librarian, estimated that the collections numbered 17,000 volumes or about 8,500 titles. Of these 7,000 volumes, or 500 titles, were periodicals. Of works published prior to 1930, she estimated that about 7,000 titles were equally divided between British and American Methodism. The British Methodism represented “about 800 titles of Wesleyana, 900 titles of individual biography, 500 titles of controversial literature, with lesser amounts of minutes, polity, history, local history, finance, liturgy, creeds, sacraments, etc.” There has been a continuous acquisitions program in Methodistica, both current and retrospective, in the almost fifteen years since these estimates were made. Ted Martin Young, Head of Technical Services, estimates that the present holdings are 20,000 volumes. This is probably a conservative estimate since 470 titles and 821 volumes of Methodistica were added between September 1967 and April 1969.

7 This journal has been transcribed and published by Lester F. Sherwood in Journal of the Greenbrier Historical Society. 1 (October 1966), pages 3-40.
In recapitulating the acquisition of these materials it is once more appropriate to mention the efforts and generosity of William Deering. By early 1895 he had succeeded in purchasing a large collection of Methodistica in England. A contemporary description provides the basic information about this purchase,

"The generosity of Mr. William Deering, of our Board of Trustees, has made the Institute possessor of the collection of Mr. Francis M. Jackson, of Alderly Edge, England (3,500 volumes). This is the result of a hundred years' careful selecting and is the largest and richest collection of Methodist literature in the world. It was begun by the grandfather of Mr. Jackson, a distinguished Methodist preacher, and has been the pride of three generations."

The addition of 1,400 more volumes, from various sources, increased the total gift to 4,900 volumes. These materials have since been known as the Deering-Jackson Collection. Charles M. Kelly, Book Steward of the British Methodist Conference, confirmed the appraisal of Jackson's collection given above in a letter to Charles J. Little, president of the Institute, when he wrote, "His [i.e., Jackson's] collection is supposed to be the largest and rarest in the world. We have nothing to equal it in any of our public Institutions or Colleges." 10

Jackson's collection contained many items of Wesleyana. Charles Wesley is represented by some twenty titles and thirty-five volumes while John Wesley is represented by an estimated 430 titles and 750 volumes. Included here, among John Wesley's works, are forty-eight different editions and/or imprints of A collection of Psalms and hymns; forty-five of A collection of hymns for use of the people called Methodists; thirty-two volumes of the Extracts of the journal; as well as two editions of the Christian library, one dated 1749-55 in fifty volumes and the other dated 1819-27 of thirty volumes in fifteen. Most of this Wesleyana was reported to the checklist of Jones and Kline in which they noted that Garrett probably has the most complete collection of editions of Wesley hymns.11 A good measure of this particular strength is derived from Jackson's collection. This collection also contains some anti-Methodist publications most of which were published in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

There are some very rare books in the Deering-Jackson Collection. One is Devereux Jarratt's Sermons on various and important subjects, in practical divinity, adapted to the plainest capacities, and suited to the family and closet . . . (Philadelphia, Printed by Johnson

10 Letter from Charles H. Kelly to Dr. Charles J. Little, dated January 23, 1895, in the Garrett archives.
11 Jones, Arthur E., Jr., and Lawrence O. Kline, ed., A Union checklist of editions of the publications of John and Charles Wesley (Based upon the works of John and Charles Wesley; a bibliography by Richard Green) Madison, N. J., Drew University [1959?] p. ii.
& Justice . . . 1793-94) 3 vols. The imprint on volume three shows William W. Woodward to be the printer. Another is Nathan Bangs's A discourse on the occasion of the death of the reverend Wilbur Fiske . . . delivered in the Greene-Street Church, New York . . . 29th of March, 1839. (New York, T. Mason & G. Lane for the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1839.) A polemical work, of which there are many in this collection, is John Firth's Truth vindicated, or, a scriptural essay, wherein the vulgar and frivolous cavils, commonly urged against the Methodist Episcopal Church are briefly considered in a letter to a friend. 2d. ed., rev. (New York, Hitt, for the Methodist Connection in the United States, 1810.)

Jackson's collection contained most of the literature generated by Wesley's attitude toward the American colonies during the Revolution. As late as 1768 Wesley was favorably disposed toward the Americans but by 1775 his opinion had changed and much to the embarrassment of the American Methodists he issued his famous A calm address to our American colonies. (London, R. Hawes 1775). A storm of protest broke out and Wesley was forced to modify and soften his views although he remained a staunch Tory and royalist. An anonymous pamphlet A constitutional answer to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Calm address to the American colonies. (London, Printed for E. and C. Dilly, 1775), attacked Wesley as did Caleb Evans in two pamphlets: A letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley, occasioned by his calm address to the American colonies. (Bristol, W. Pine, 1775), signed Americus, and Political sophistry detected; or Brief remarks on the Rev. Mr. Fletcher's late tract entitled American patriotism; in a letter to a friend. (Bristol, W. Pine, 1776). John W. Fletcher, Methodist theologian, entered into the controversy by coming to Wesley's defense in two pamphlets: American patriotism farther confronted with reason, Scripture and the constitution being observations on the dangerous politicks taught by the Rev. Mr. Evans and the Rev. Dr. Price. (Shrewsbury, J. Eddowes, 1776), and A vindication of the Rev. Mr. Wesley's Calm address to our American colonies, in some letters to Mr. Caleb Evans. (London, Printed and sold at the Foundry 1775? ). There is also the second corrected edition of 1776 in the collection. Wesley's old adversary, Augustus M. Toplady, author of the hymn "Rock of Ages," could not pass up the opportunity of needling Wesley and he did so, under the pseudonym "By a Hanoverian," in a pamphlet with the somewhat humorous title, An old fox tarr'd and feather'd occasioned by what is called Mr. John Wesley's Calm address to our American colonys. 2d. ed., corr. (London, Printed for M. Lewis, 1775.) The controversy did not end here but continued for sometime, the result being that the American Methodists were accused of being Tories. There are other
similiar groups of material that show the richness of the Deering-Jackson Collection.

Some invaluable and very rare pamphlets were added to the library and were a part of the Ezekiel Cooper collection mentioned earlier. There is found here important literature surrounding two of the early controversies in the American church. They are James O’Kelly’s *The author’s apology for protesting the Methodist Episcopal government.* (Richmond, John Dixon, 1798) and his *A vindication of the author’s Apology, with reflections on the Reply, and a few remarks on Bishop Asbury’s annotations on his Book of discipline.* (Raleigh, J. Gales, 1801). There is Nicholas Snethen’s rejoinder entitled, *A reply to an apology for protesting against the Methodist episcopal government. Compiled from original manuscripts.* (Philadelphia, H. Tuckniss, 1800). O’Kelly objected to the large authority and life-tenure of the superintendents and when his efforts to secure a modification of prevailing practices failed he and his followers finally withdrew from the church to form their own denomination. The second controversy centered around William Hammet whom Wesley had ordained and sent to Newfoundland. Being unable to land in Newfoundland he finally came to Charleston, South Carolina where he preached to the Methodist society. As a result of his outstanding preaching they clamored for his appointment as their pastor. Francis Asbury was upset by this and refused to make the appointment. Hammet began attacking both Asbury and Coke in pamphlets. Thomas Morrell, a gifted member of the New York Conference, came to Asbury’s defense in several pamphlets entitled, *Truth discovered, or an answer to the Reverend William Hammet’s Appeal to truth and circumstances.* (Charleston, I. Stillman, 1792), the Garrett copy has the signature of Jesse Lee on the title page, and *A vindication of truth discovered; designed as an answer to the Rev. William Hammet’s Rejoinder.* (Philadelphia, Perry Hall, 1792). Another rare pamphlet from Cooper’s collection is Bishop Richard Allen’s *A collection of spiritual songs and hymns, selected from various authors.* (Philadelphia, Printed by John Ormrod, 1801). This copy has Cooper’s annotations and corrections and bears his signature on the title page. Bishop Richard Allen (1760-1831), it will be remembered, was the first black Methodist bishop in America and the founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

R. Thursfield Smith, mentioned earlier, was able to supply a large number of Wesleyana including more hymnology which added to the strength of the Deering-Jackson Collection. Smith also sold a large group of biographies on the lives of the Wesleys and such items as portraits, busts and medallions. He was instrumental in helping secure an original contemporary bronze bust of John Wesley sculpted by Enoch Wood. Commissioned by Adam Clarke (1762-
1832), the bust was purchased from George John Stevenson, executor of the estate, by Judge O. H. Horton of Chicago and presented to Garrett in 1900.

This description gives some idea of the scope, breadth and richness of Garrett's Methodistica. It should be pointed out that there are other sources here which seem so standard that they can be easily neglected. For example, the complete files of the Minutes of the Annual Conferences, the Journals of the General Conferences (especially the Methodist Episcopal Church and its successors), the Minutes of the British Conference, the reports of the many agencies of the church and the journals of countless annual conferences are complete. The periodical collection is outstanding with complete files of many titles and these have been reported in the new union listing of Methodist serials. In recent years an effort has been made to expand the holdings of Canadian Methodism, Irish Methodism, Primitive Methodism, the Methodist Protestant Church and local church histories. There are important titles available on microfilm while some otherwise unobtainable items have been secured, in Xerox print, through other libraries. As John D. Batsel, Librarian, noted several years ago in an appraisal of the Garrett Library, "the Garrett collection presents fine resources for research, particularly in the area of Methodist history and theology."

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