News in Brief

Awards Program

The General Commission on Archives and History has announced the winners in two essay contests which it sponsors.

Seminary Award: Annual awards of $200 (first prize) and $100 (second prize) are offered to students of United Methodist seminaries for papers on various aspects of denominational history. First prize this year goes to Mrs. Linda M. Durbin, Duke Divinity School, for her essay on “The Nature of Ordination in Wesley’s View of the Ministry.” Second prize was awarded to James L. Lubach and Thomas L. Shanklin, Drew Divinity School, co-authors of a paper entitled “Arbitrations and Trials in the Methodist Episcopal Church: Excommunications and Expulsions of Members, 1776-1860.”

Sarah Dickey Award: An annual award of $100 is given to the student of an accredited college or university who submits the best paper on a study of black church history. The award this year goes to J. Carleton Hayden, Howard University, for his essay, “Conversion and Control: Dilemma of Episcopalian in Providing for the Religious Instructions of Slaves, Charleston, South Carolina, 1845-1860.”

Five Points Mission

One hundred twenty-five years ago a group of Methodist women established in a ghetto section of the city’s Lower East Side the first mission in New York City and the first in Methodism. Organized by members of the New York Ladies Home Missionary Society, it has continued and grown in its work to the needy. At the intersection of five streets, it has been known through the years as the Five Points Mission. In 1879 it inaugurated a Fresh Air Program for ghetto children that sent them into the country for two-week vacations. In 1901 it opened its own fresh air home on a donated 22-acre estate in Cornwall-on-Hudson.

Shrine and Landmarks Designated

The 1970 special session of General Conference approved the designation of Whitaker’s Chapel near Enfield, North Carolina as the fifteenth national historic shrine, and the sites of Lovely Lane Chapel, Baltimore, Brooklyn Hospital, and McMahon’s Chapel in Texas as the first national historic landmarks, following the procedures established in the 1968 Discipline. A special service recognizing the designation will be held by the North Carolina Conference Commission on Archives and History, Sunday, October 11, 1970, 11:00 a.m. at Whitaker’s Chapel.
International Methodist Historical Society

The International Methodist Historical Society will hold its quinquennial meeting in Denver, Colorado, August 17-18, 1971. Its sessions will immediately precede the World Methodist Conference which opens on the evening of August 18.

A special committee met in Washington, April 14, 1970 and formulated tentative plans for the program at Denver. There will be an address by the president of the Society, and since 1971 will be the two hundredth anniversary of the arrival of Francis Asbury in America, it is expected that there will be a paper on the man and his contribution. Other suggested themes for addresses include the Genius of the Autonomous Churches in Latin America, the Future of Methodism in an Ecumenical Era, and the Values in Methodism Which Should Be Preserved.

Hoping to make the Denver meeting representative of world Methodism, the committee proposes to limit the number of Anglo-Saxon speakers; if possible several Methodists of other races will be enlisted for addresses.

It is hoped that many delegates and visitors to the World Methodist Conference will arrive in Denver in time to participate in the sessions of the International Methodist Historical Society. There will be a small registration fee for attendance at the Society’s meetings.

The International Methodist Historical Society was organized at Springfield, Massachusetts in 1947. At the session in London in August, 1966, Dr. Maldwyn L. Edwards of Wales was elected president, while Dr. Albea Godbold became the American secretary, and the Rev. Thomas Shaw the British secretary.

Special Observances

The North Mississippi Annual Conference was organized November 30, 1870. The centennial will be observed at a special session of the Conference on November 30, 1970, at the First United Methodist Church, Water Valley, Mississippi, 10:00 A.M.

The Jesse Lee United Methodist Church, East Readfield, Maine, is celebrating its 175th anniversary this year. In recognition of the observance the Maine Annual Conference held a special session at the church June 21. The Northeastern Jurisdiction Commission on Archives and History held a session of its annual meeting at the Jesse Lee Church in May.
HISTORIC ANNIVERSARIES

Centennials

First Church, Everett, Massachusetts, New England Conference
First Church, Fredonia, Kansas, Kansas East Conference
First Church, Ogden, Utah, Rocky Mountain Conference
First Church, Salt Lake City, Utah, Rocky Mountain Conference
First Church, Wichita, Kansas, Kansas West Conference
Knight's Landing Church, Woodland, California, California-Nevada Conference
Middletown Church, Middletown, California, California-Nevada Conference
Niwot Church, near Longmont, Colorado, Rocky Mountain Conference
St. Luke's Church, Long Branch, New Jersey, Southern New Jersey Conference
Spurgeon Memorial Church, Santa Ana, California, Southern California-Arizona Conference
Wampum Church, Wampum, Pennsylvania, Western Pennsylvania Conference
Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York

125th Anniversaries

First Church, Marion, Illinois, Southern Illinois Conference
Five Points Mission, New York City
Old Alexandria Church, near Troy, Missouri, Missouri East Conference
Wyoming Seminary, Kingston, Pennsylvania

150th Anniversary

Centre Church, Malden, Massachusetts, New England Conference

175th Anniversary

Jesse Lee Church, East Readfield, Maine, Maine Conference

200th Anniversary

Embury Church, Cambridge, New York, Troy Conference
Book Reviews


John Vickers has very wisely kept to a single purpose: a scholarly biography of the sorely neglected Thomas Coke. It is, nonetheless, inevitable that institutional history becomes part of the study. Thus not only does one witness the personal tensions, struggles, aspirations, growth, defeats and triumphs of Dr. Coke, but one likewise encounters almost identical struggles within British and American Methodism. The nascent church was in the throes of seeking to define itself, to discover its raison d'être. Coke’s life is so intertwined with Methodism that one can scarcely study the man without delving into ecclesiastical structure.

Wesley, now “an ageing, though still active, man of seventy-three . . .” (p. 1) needed an assistant. Those he had groomed as possibilities—Charles Wesley and John Fletcher—were obviously not suitable, “Thomas Coke was the man to match this hour.” (p. 1). It was he who “. . . was to throw in his lot with the Methodists and to become not only the right-hand man Wesley had long been seeking, but also joint-superintendent with Asbury of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, a leader of British Methodism in the formative years after Wesley’s death, and the pioneer of its missionary work, both at home and overseas.” (p. 2)

Coke’s struggle to discover both a vital personal faith and to find vocational fulfillment progressed from his Oxford experience which included a fleeting encounter with Deism (p. 14 ff), to his taking Anglican orders (p. 17 f) and subsequently serving as curate in the Somerset village of South Petherton (p. 18 ff). Wesleyan ideas and ideals had become increasingly significant to the youthful Coke, and the eventual meeting of the two prompted Wesley’s note, “A union then began which I trust shall never end.” (p. 2)

Coke, once initiated into the vicissitudes of the British Societies—1777 (p. 37), found larger assignments awaiting him. These included Wesley’s design for the Methodists in America. Having wrestled for years with the dilemma of ordination, “Wesley’s own explanation is simply that the so-called ‘logic of events,’ or the challenge presented by the desperate spiritual needs of the newly independent American states, led him eventually to put into use the power he had long believed to be his, . . .” (p. 73). Coke was thus the man to be “set apart” at 4 a.m. at John Castleman’s in Bristol, September 2, 1784 (p. 68).

Coke sailed for America (p. 79 ff) and was a key figure in the epochal events that followed. In his sermon from Revelation 3:7-11, at Asbury’s consecration, Coke firmly maintained, “Wesley, . . . was the spiritual father of the American Methodists and therefore, ‘after long deliberation, saw it his duty to form his society in America into an Independent Church.’” (p. 89).

Returning to England, Coke was constantly embroiled in hammering out multitudinous problems regarding the future of British Methodists. A reoccurring problem was ordination. After Wesley’s death Coke once proposed that “. . . a three-fold hierarchy of superintendents, elders and deacons would bring a much-needed stability to the British
connexion" (p. 199). The proposal was promptly voted down. Likewise, "The century which saw the rise of Methodism thus ended with a determined refusal on the part of the Church of England to take any measures to draw back into the fold those who had been allowed to stray through intransigence and lethargy in the Establishment." (p. 204).

It is in the development of the mission ideal that one sees Coke both at his creative best and also in his most frustrating assignment. "Despite his other multifarious activities, not least his important role in American Methodism, it is as founder of the overseas missions of British Methodism that Coke is chiefly remembered." (p. 131). It is indeed worth noting that Coke published his Plan of the Society for the Establishment of Missions among the Heathens in 1783, eight years prior to William Carey's Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians (p. 133). Later, in 1786, Coke wrote a very practical appeal for funds An Address to the Pious and Benevolent, (p. 136). Coke's total concept of missions is breathtaking. It eventually embraced not only "Islands in the Sun" (pp. 149-172 [the West Indies, his favorite] but Africa, Nova Scotia, France, India, Gibraltar, and also included home missions in Wales, Ireland, Scotland, England as well as a ministry to French prisoners of war. With the passing of time, however, "It was becoming increasingly clear . . . that the basic weakness . . . was too much of the responsibility has been concentrated into one man's hands." (p. 270). In spite of all his mission enthusiasm, Coke had to have assistance but when a committee was finally appointed " . . . he took it as an attempt to usurp his authority, and deeply resented it as a reflection on his ability to sustain the work." (p. 274). Finance, " . . . 'want of money' was a perennial pre-occupation of both Coke and the missionary committee . . ." (p. 282).

A query regarding this splendid biography: is Coke the vibrant human being somehow buried beneath the erudition? One sees Coke, but is it through the scrutinizing lens of a very technical microscope? In the final analysis, however, an author must be free to choose for himself the design and full prospectus of his work. The ponderous appearance of Mr. Vicker's volume, formidable price, and savant's style are apt to prevent its becoming household reading. It is, nonetheless, a must for every library, and essential reading for all students of Methodist history.

Warren Thomas Smith
First United Methodist Church
College Park, Georgia
Conference Histories:


Local Church History:


General Publications:


*The Historical Trail*, special Bicentennial issue of the Southern New Jersey Conference Historical Society, $1.00 each.


*Methodist History*, approximately 64 pages, quarterly, single price, $1.25; yearly subscription, $5.00; two years, $8.00.

**Pamphlets:**
Smeltzer, Wallace Guy: *How to Write and Publish the History of a United Methodist Church*, second printing, 1969, 14 p., single copy free; additional ones, 10¢ each or $1.00 per dozen.
Clark, Elmer T.: *Charles Wesley*, second printing, 20 p., 5 cents each.
The Fourteen Original Historical Shrines of The United Methodist Church, reprinted by permission of Together Magazine, 1966, 16 p., 45¢ per dozen; $3.25 per 100.

**Miscellaneous Items:**
Film Strips: “Live or Die, I Must Ride,” 80 frames, 1966, limited supply, special price—$5.00. (Methodist Church history, narrated by Lowell Thomas)
Grave Marker (see illustration below): bronze marker, $20.00; in quantity of five or more, $15.00 each.
Medallions: Methodist Bicentennial Medallion, bronze, shows four earliest church structures in American Methodism erected in the 1760's, $1.00.
Prints: Color Prints of Susanna Wesley, Charles Wesley, Thomas Coke, and Francis Asbury, taken from the Frank O. Salisbury portraits, and John Wesley, taken from the Jackson portrait, 50¢ per set.
Slides: Color Slides of the five portraits listed above and the World Methodist Building, Lake Junaluska, N.C., 25¢ each.
NEW ITEMS
Jason, William C., Jr.: Black Power as It Relates to The Methodist Church. Published by Northeastern Jurisdiction Commission on Archives and History, 1970. 20 pp. 50 cents.

GRAVE MARKER
This official marker for the graves of Methodist ministers has been adopted by the General Commission on Archives and History, The United Methodist Church. It is made of Bronze and designed so that bolts in the back of the marker can be embedded in the tombstone.
A number of annual conference committees have expressed an interest in securing the markers for use in connection with their annual memorial service.
The marker can be ordered from the Commission on Archives and History, P. O. Box 488, Lake Junaluska, North Carolina 28745. The price is $20 for one marker, or $15 each in lots of five.