HISTORIAN'S DIGEST

Volume 52, Number 1 Winter, 2012

2012 Annual Meeting Theme: Methodism's Civil Wars

The Commission on Archives and History of the Northeastern Jurisdiction and the Historical Society of the United Methodist Church will come together May 15-17, 2012, in Gettysburg, PA, to experience a unique integration of American and United Methodist history.

The American history component will concentrate on the Battle of Gettysburg, with optional battlefield tours available to participants before and after the scheduled programs of the annual meeting. Presentations by three prominent area scholars will explore the intersection of the nation's secular and religious histories during this crucial time. "The Spirituality of Abraham Lincoln" reveals the complexity of Lincoln's spiritual dimension and his relationships with the Methodist Episcopal Church. "The Gathering Storm" summarizes the North-South cultural differences that led to first the split in Methodism and then to the split in the nation. "Retreat from Gettysburg" tells the little-known story of what happened after the battle, and will be delivered in a country church building (formerly Evangelical) that actually witnessed the events being discussed.

The United Methodist history component will center on the civil wars that occurred in the three predecessor denominations of the United Methodist Church: the 1830 Methodist Protestant and 1844 Methodist Episcopal South splits in the Methodist Episcopal Church, the 1869 United Christian and 1889 United Brethren Old Constitution splits in the United Brethren Church, and the 1894 United Evangelical and 1922 Evangelical Congregational splits in the Evangelical Church. The Susquehanna Conference is uniquely situated to host meetings on this theme, as it had congregations, personalities, and events within its boundaries relating to each split.

The tour on Wednesday will follow the post-battle retreat of Lee from Gettysburg, PA, to Williamsport, MD, with stops and comments along the way about the role the area also played in Methodism's civil wars. Significant time will be spent at Chambersburg PA – which was the site of significant United Brethren split activity, and the pre-Harper's Ferry home of John Brown, and the Civil War's second most conflicted Northern village (after Gettysburg). After a presentation at the world's largest United Brethren (Old Constitution) Church, attendees will have a choice of several options/tours/programs to further explore the town of Chambersburg according to their own particular interests.

Former MEC in Gettysburg pressed into service as a hospital during the battle, where devotions will be held on Wednesday morning.

Mini-presentations throughout the three days will relate the stories of area persons within United Methodism, both lay and clergy, whose lives and ministries were significantly affected by the Battle of Gettysburg. These and other stories will be documented in a 96-page publication [the 2012 volume of *The Chronicle*, the journal of the Historical Society of the Susquehanna Conference] given to each attendee.

For more information, see the Program and the Registration Form accompanying this article. Any questions or comments may be directed to Milton Loyer at loyer@lycoming.edu .

Please note: Bob Williams, General Secretary, GCAH, is creating a group list serve through Google groups so announcements of interest to Historical Society members and others can be shared electronically. This was approved by the Historical Society as its meeting last summer. Bob will serve as manager which means that he sends an invitation to persons who may be interested. The person can either accept the invitation or ignore it. Creating a Google account is necessary but instructions come with the invitation. Anyone wanting to send an announcement must send it to Bob as the manager. This will prevent an overload of messages. It is his intent to keep the frequency of messages to about once a month. You can send email addresses to him and he will then send out the invitation to join. As of early January there were 57 in the group. The goal is that everyone in every conference historical society or conference commission would be part of the group. Any questions can be sent to Bob at rwilliams@gcah.org

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Please send address changes to Phil Lawton. Editorial correspondence should be directed to Pat Thompson. The deadline for submissions for the next issue is April 1, 2012.

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From the President, Dan Swinson

I don't often gasp in surprise anymore. Too much effort. But I did so recently. In section two of *The United Methodist Reporter* (December 2, 2011), Managing Editor Sam Hodges described the lobbying and advocacy efforts centered in The United Methodist Building in Washington, D. C.

A Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life study lists The United Methodist Building and the denomination as prominent in religious advocacy. Hodges noted that the historical section of the study recounted that the building was constructed in 1923 across the street from the Capital through the efforts of the Methodist Episcopal Board of "Temperance, Prohibition, and Tolerance" (gasp in surprise!). Of course, the building was constructed by the Board of Temperance, Prohibition, and Public Morals (BTPPM), successor of the Methodist Temperance Society, and a predecessor body of the Board of Church and Society, giving BCS the lobbying location "to die for" in the Nation's Capital.

I e-mailed Sam with the correction, asking if the miscue was in the Pew study. He graciously responded, taking responsibility for the lapse himself. I am hoping there will be a correction.

The miscue was the more interesting since BTPPM stalwarts like Clarence True Wilson, the Board's first head, would probably have eschewed the implication. As biographer Robert Dean McNeil opined, Wilson was "valiant for truth." In this passion, Wilson's daughter Margaret Wilson Collins noted that the man she knew as compassionate and accepting could sound "harsh and judgmental" (McNeil, *Valiant for Truth: Clarence True Wilson and Prohibition*, p. xi). Thus, at a time when Methodism mustered the power of numbers, the position in society, and the issues of concern to flex political lobbying muscle that approached if not surpassed that of the Anti-Saloon League, tolerance would not have been high on the list of Board virtues.

In this year of General Conference/general election, considerations of advocacy and civility remain pertinent. While power, position, and issues may have changed, our rich and varied history of advocacy in the U. S. political context remains instructive, especially if we who watch over history help those who would use it keep things straight.

In the same issue of *The Reporter*, Staff Writer, Mary Jacobs, wrote of growing pains in Williston, North Dakota. Reflecting on the efforts of a local church to accommodate a population boom, Jacobs reached into United Methodist history and found context in the nineteenth century work of the Methodist Episcopal Church Extension Society and C. C. McCabe. Again, our past spoke to our present.

These two examples from the end of 2011 are reminders of the importance of what we represent through the Historical Society. Our past is important to our present. We who keep and cherish the past need to keep tabs on its use in the present, helping United Methodists to understand and use our shared heritage. We need to be proactive, inserting ourselves into the process with reminders of the historical context that helps make us who we are.

To this end, I believe that our participation in the Historical Society (as well as other organizations) is important. It is important to attend the annual meeting in Gettysburg. It is important to respond to Bob Williams' invitation to be on the Historical Society list serve. It is important to track the Church press and send reminders and corrections. It is important to do presentations on history wherever and whenever we can. It is important to support the Society financially through membership and the Albea Godbold Development Fund. It is important to let our voices be heard in concern over the kinds of changes to the General and annual Conference commissions (and the general order of the Church) that are being proposed by the Connectional Table (see Bob Williams' article in the last Digest.) It is important. Otherwise, we may all be gasping in surprise.

By the way, Sam Hodges asked my opinion on Mark Auslander's *Accidental Slave Owner: Revisiting the Myth of Race and Finding an American Family*. It is on my "to read" list, but my copy has not come. Those of you who know more of the Athens, Georgia/Emory/M. E. South/Bishop Andrews/Miss Kitty nexus and have read the book might consider sharing an opinion with Hodges at *The Reporter*.

JOINT MEETINGS

Northeastern Jurisdiction Commission on Archives and History
Historical Society of the United Methodist Church
TUESDAY – THURSDAY, May 15-17, 2012
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

Accommodations: Rooms are reserved at America's Best Value Inn, 301 Steinwehr Avenue, Gettysburg PA 17325 [717-334-1188] for $66.50 per room (1-4 occupants) per night. This very special per room rate includes all taxes and complete continental breakfast. It is good for United Methodist historical attendees until April 15. You may also stay extra days before and/or after the conference at that rate. Let the motel know of any special needs. **ATTENDEES DEAL DIRECTLY WITH THE MOTEL.**

Transportation: If you need transportation between Gettysburg and the Harrisburg International Airport (HIA), indicate so on the registration form and you will be contacted.

Meetings: Except for the tour, all meetings and meals will be at the Gettysburg United Methodist Church, 30 W. High Street, about 10 blocks from the motel. Car-pooling and shuttle transportation between the motel and the church will be arranged. 1.5 CEU's will be available for those attending all sessions.

Registration: Registration forms and checks payable to "Susquehanna Conference" should be directed to the registrar, Rev. Cheryl A. Houser, 15620 Paxton Run Road, Newburg, PA 17240-9663. Questions may directed to Milton Loyer, 717-766-0977 (home) or 570-321-4088 (archives) or loyer@lycoming.edu

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REGISTRATION FORM

Name(s) _____

Address _____

_____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____

Conference _____

Special needs _____

Registration fee (includes all meals & events listed in the program) @ $100 each _____

Optional guided battlefield tour (check: Mon _____ or Thurs _____) @ $15 each _____

Optional Gettysburg walking tour (check: Mon_____ or Thurs _____) @ $10 each _____

Late fee (after April 15) [no registrations accepted after May 1] @ $15 each _____

Total Enclosed: (make checks payable to Susquehanna Conference) _____

I request transportation from/to Harrisburg International Airport

____ arrival: date/time/flight # _____

____ departure: date/time/flight # _____

PROGRAM THEME:
UNITED METHODISM'S CIVIL WARS

Monday, May 14, 2012
(pre-conference events)
1:00 – 5:30 guided battlefield bus tour*
2:00 – 3:45 guided town walking tour*
1:00 – 5:00 HSUMC executive committee
6:30 – 8:30 NEJCAH executive committee

Tuesday, May 15, 2012
9:00 opening worship
10:00 *The Spirituality of Abraham Lincoln*
11:15 GCAH Report
12:00 lunch
1:00 *The Gathering Storm*
2:30 *Evangelical Civil Wars*
3:30 1st business session NEJCAH
5:00 supper
6:00 HSUMC program
Saddlebags award/speaker
annual business meeting

*these are optional items available for the costs indicated on the registration form

Wednesday May 16, 2012 (tour day)
8:00 board busses
8:30 Old Gettysburg MEC
10:00 Chambersburg King Street UB(OC)
United Brethren Civil Wars
John Brown/Chambersburg sites
12:00 lunch
2:00 Cearfoss MD: Mt. Zion EV
Retreat from Gettysburg
3:30 Williamsport MD: Rehoboth UMC
Methodist Civil Wars
5:30 supper
Civil War songs/entertainment
8:30 return to motel

Thursday, May 17, 2012
9:00 special presentation/worship
10:00 2nd business session NEJCAH
11:00 closing worship
12:00 lunch
(post-conference events)
1:00 – 5:30 guided battlefield bus tour*
2:00 – 3:45 guided town walking tour*

From the GCAH General Secretary, Robert Williams: Commentary on the proposal of the Interim Operations Team

In the previous issue of this newsletter, I indicated that there is legislation coming to General Conference to combine all the governing structures of the general agencies into one 15-person board and also to allow annual conferences to place the functions of the conference commission on archives and history in an alternate structure. This letter continues my commentary on these proposed changes. I encourage you to be in touch with your general conference delegates, especially the persons serving on the General Administration legislative committee.

As General Secretary of the General Commission on Archives and History, I want this agency to remain free-standing with its own governance structure and accountable to the General Conference and those structures that the General Conference has created to provide agency oversight. I do not want to surrender governance functions to another body. You may say that I am protecting turf and lobbying for the status quo. You are right. When I was elected as general secretary, I came to this job with deep commitment to the value of heritage in forming identity, informing vision for ministry, and transforming individuals to be disciples of Jesus Christ. Our work is vital to the health of The United Methodist Church and any action that would diminish our effectiveness must be opposed.

I was pastor of local UM congregations for 35 years prior to my service at GCAH, starting with a small rural congregation, serving as an associate in a large church, and concluding with a worshiping congregation of about 300. I believe that these churches had the marks of vital congregations. I am grateful for the conversation generated by the Call to Action and Interim Operations Team and for all efforts that will assist congregations to be all that God intended them to be, but I regret that so much focus seems to be on altering the governing pattern of the general agencies. This is misplaced, but it doesn't excuse those of us in leadership of the general agencies from commenting on the potential impact of this proposal.

The current membership of GCAH includes 24 persons, 10 of whom are nominated by the Council of Bishops for election at General Conference, 7 at large members selected by a nominating committee of GCAH directors, 5 persons who serves as chairpersons of jurisdictional commissions on archives and history, and 2 bishops, one of whom must be from a Central Conference. Also, of the 24, three must be from the Central Conferences, with each region represented. In addition to the firm commitment to reflect the rich diversity of the church, there are needed persons with competencies in archival work and historical studies. The current set of directors include the Assistant Archivist for the National Archives of Mozambique, the chair of the South Carolina State Commission on Archives, two current university faculty members, a former editor of the *Christian Century* and theological school professor, and chairs of conference commissions. It is an extraordinary group, and I could go on at some length about each director and what he or she brings to our work together. There is no reason to remove from them decisions about budgets, evaluation, personnel, strategic planning, and other governance issues. A 15 person committee, a 45 person advisory council, and the creation of smaller advisory groups for specialized work like this cannot bring the same level of expertise and focus.

In addition to the expertise that commission members bring to the table, there are unanticipated benefits. One of the most striking illustrations involves a contact made by a GCAH director who presently leads the English-speaking UMC in Moscow, Russia, with a descendant of Bishop Gilbert Haven, abolitionist and advocate for racial justice from the 1850s through the 1870s. This relationship led the family to place with the United Methodist Archives at Drew University a collection of over 1,000 letters to and from Haven that was hitherto unknown to scholars. Without the director's assistance, the materials would have gone to another depository that serves fewer researchers and is not a center of United Methodist research.

I want to be very clear about the value of those who serve as directors of the commission. I take great umbrage with those who suggest the directors are controlled by staff. Anyone who has ever attended a GCAH meeting knows the level and liveliness of thoughtful interaction and discussion that takes place.

I have two significant concerns about the proposals as a whole. First is the lack of any serious historical work by the authors of the proposals about previous restructuring schemes, including a lack of historical consciousness about the trajectory of membership and its causes. There has been a complete lack of historical and sociological analysis of church membership patterns. The focus has been on corporate systems analysis rather than history or theology. The current proposals seem to be more the dying gasp of an old paradigm than envisioning a new paradigm. My other concern is that the proposals concerning the structures of the general agencies lack any evidence to support claims that the church will be better off or that more vital congregations will be created. It is simply an effort to cut the budgets. This is an ideologically-driven plan that does not indicate how it will benefit the church or achieve its claims. The original study by Towers Watson was data-driven. These proposals are not. Nothing that I have seen speaks of the importance of pastoral care, the place of ritual for all of life's transitions, and how that contributes to vital congregations.

Perhaps the wisdom of the apostle Paul might be brought to bear in this situation as I believe that the body of Christ has many parts but it is not necessary to merge all parts into one whole in order for it to be an effective and coordinated organism (cf. I Corinthians 12).

THE LONG HISTORY of the ARKANSAS CONFERENCE HISTORICAL COMMISSION, HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM

Not unlike other Annual Conferences, Arkansas Methodism has a long, diverse history of preserving its history – in carrying out its "ministry of memory". Across that rich history of the current Arkansas United Methodist Conference and its predecessor annual conferences in the state, collecting and preserving historical materials related to the ministries of the Conference and the local church have been a high priority. As early as 1869 official action was taken to collect such. In 1892 the first history was published, *History of Methodism in Arkansas* by the Rev. Horace Jewell. Various Conference Historians have been named, with action taken to create a History Commission. The Commission would then be changed to Conference Historical Society, then back again.

The Little Rock Conference and the North Arkansas Conference established the Conference Commission on Archives and History in each of the conferences by 1968. In 1986 the Historical Society of Arkansas United Methodism was formed, somewhat independent of the Commissions on Archives and History. By 1990 the two Conferences acted to create the United Methodist Archives in the library at Hendrix College for the repository of printed documents. The archives were no sooner established than 3-dimensional artifacts were identified and donated. Thus the Historical Society soon was searching for a suitable plan and site to create a Museum. By 1994 the Museum was in its first location.

The Historical Society had created a Museum and a Museum Board to provide oversight. The board was a standing committee of the Historical Society structure. Thus, the Museum was something of an orphan child. And the Society had no structural ties to the *Book of Discipline* mandated Conference Commission on Archives and History.

With the 2003 merger of the Little Rock Conference and the North Arkansas Conference into the Arkansas Conference, the Arkansas Conference Commission on Archives and History was established. There a was growing awareness that the Commission, the Society, and the Museum needed to be restructured in order that all three operated more as a unified entity of the Annual Conference. The endorsement of such a restructuring occurred at the June 2011 Annual Conference.

Some fifteen years after the establishment of the museum, the artifacts, with no place to go, were placed in storage because of the need to vacate the site. After a diligent, time consuming search the third, and hopefully, permanent site for the Museum was identified in early 2011 in the old historic downtown First United Methodist of Little Rock - and, in the oldest portion of that facility. History does beget history. The Annual Conference Trustees finalized a lease arrangement with the church trustees, thus making the Arkansas Conference Museum a full-fledged Annual Conference Museum, purportedly the only such Annual Conference Museum in the US - *that is, fully in the structure of the Annual Conference.*

The United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas made a one-time grant of $25,000 for remodeling the facility and to assist in the re-location expenditures. The grant enabled the Museum Board to engage a part-time professional museum curator to direct the relocation process, to guide the display of artifacts, create appropriate files, develop an adequate marking system, set up electronic and hard copy files, and perfect policies to guide the accessions procedures. Much thought was put into developing a mission statement thereby setting goals for the two-way support between the local church history committees and the Annual Conference repository. That statement reads: *"To preserve the inclusive history of Arkansas United Methodism by collecting, preserving and exhibiting artifacts for a diverse audience, providing opportunities for exploring this history and culture."*

Dr. Robert Williams, General Secretary of the General Commission on Archives and History, was the guest speaker for the April 9 annual meeting of the United Methodist Historical Society of Arkansas, devoting time to giving helpful guidance and support to the restructuring and expanded museum plans. The official grand opening for the greatly enhanced Arkansas Conference Museum is set for Saturday, Jan. 14, 2012.

Submitted by Ed Matthews.

United Methodism Says Good-bye to a Great Friend

The Rev. Edwin Schell died on November 25, 2011, at age 88. Ed was a unique individual in the United Methodist historical community and beyond. Possessing an almost encyclopedic memory when it came to both the history of the Baltimore-Washington Conference and United Methodist history in general, it was often said of him, "If Ed doesn't know, probably no one does."

Ed was ordained as a deacon in 1952 and an elder in 1953. In 1958 he was elected President of the Baltimore Conference Historical Society and worked toward its re-chartering in 1961. At the same time, he did post-graduate work in History and Archival Administration at Wesley Theological Seminary and at the University of Maryland.

In 1962 Ed assumed the position of Executive Secretary for the conference society and held it for the rest of his career while also serving part-time pastorates. He guided the society's work in national celebrations of the bicentennials of the beginning of American Methodism in 1966 and of the Christmas Conference which organized the denomination in 1984 and played a significant role in the acquisition of the Robert Strawbridge House in 1973 and the relocation of the John Evans House to the Strawbridge site in 1979.

Ed was also active at the Jurisdictional and General Church level, serving as the first President of the Northeastern Jurisdiction CAH when the Commission was formed following the 1968 merger of the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church. He was one of the original members of the General Commission on Archives and History, serving from 1968-1976. In 1995 he received the Distinguished Service Award from the General Commission, He was one of the charter members of the HSUMC and received an Honorary Life Membership in the Society in 2002. For a wonderful eulogy of his life, see: www.bwcumc.org/news/rev_edwin_austin_schell.

Roger Gramling, a member of the South Carolina Historical Society, has recently completed the second book in his series on Methodism, entitled: John Wesley and the *Beginnings of Methodism*. For more information contact Roger at 155 Hunters Blind Dr., Columbia, SC 29212-1624.

HSUMC Seeking Nominations for Ministry of Memory Award

Letters have recently been sent to the Chairs of the Annual Conference Commissions on Archives and History and the new HSUMC Google group seeking nominations for the Ministry of Memory Award presented annually by the Society. This award is given to recognize and encourage excellence in archival and historical work in the local church, annual conference, jurisdictional or central conference. Such activities as collecting records, recording oral histories, leading archival/historical groups, teaching archival methods, creating videos, caring for and preserving records, writing history, and preparing exhibits may be considered.

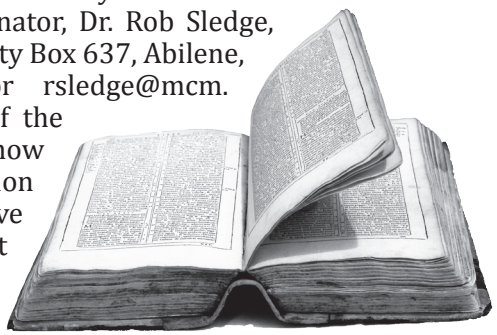
If you know of someone whom you would like to nominate for this award, please contact Bob Williams, General Secretary of GCAH, @ rwilliams@gcah.org for a nomination form or call 973-408-3189. Nominations may be sent to that e-mail address or to Dr. Robert J. Williams, PO Box l27,Madison, NJ 07940 by April 1,2012.

2012 Saddlebag Selections Sought

Another year has ended and it is time to seek entries for the Saddlebag Selection of the HSUMC. The Saddlebag Selection honors the best book on United Methodist history, polity, biography, or theology published in a given calendar year.

Solicitations go out the various publishers who may have produced a candidate book during the year, but inevitably, some worthy possibilities are missed. So the Society asks its members to suggest possibilities. The selection committee will approach the publisher and invite an entry, which consists of an entry form and four copies of the book.

Since 2005, the Saddlebag Selection has annually honored a distinguished publication on Methodism. The choices have been remarkably various, including volumes from several different fields and from several publishers. Last year's winner, chosen from works published in 2010, was *The Methodist Experience in America: A History* by Russell Richey, Kenneth Rowe, and Jean Miller Schmidt. Nominations may be made to the Saddlebag Coordinator, Dr. Rob Sledge, McMurry University Box 637, Abilene, Texas 79697, or rsledge@mcm.edu. Members of the HSUMC, if you know of a 2011 publication that should receive consideration, let us know about it!



April 20, 2012 **Indiana UMHS and the Conference CAH** workshop for local church historians at First UMC, Bloomington. The IUMHS will hold its annual meeting the following day, on April 21. For more information, contact: Phil Williams @: Phnwms@aol.com.

April 28, 2012 **Holston Conference Historical Society** spring meeting at Vermont UMC, Kingsport, TN. For more information, contact Roy Howard @: howard156674@bellsouth.net.

March 23-24,2012 **Texas UMHS** annual meeting at Cochran Chapel, Dallas, with the theme, Our Texas Methodist Musical Heritage. For more information, contact: William Hardt @: wchardt@gmail.com.

June 2, 2012 **New England UMHS and the Conference CAH** spring meeting at Cox Memorial UMC in Hallowell, ME, focusing on the life and ministry of the Rev. Melville Cox, first missionary to be sent to a foreign country by the MEC. For more information, contact Pat Thompson @: pajt8817@aol.com.

Editor's Note: Many of you have already put my name on your mailing list – either e-mail or snail mail. If others of you have not done so, I would love to receive your mailings and will try to include as many upcoming events and other news as space permits.

Also, we have added the Presidents of the Historical Societies whose names appear on the GCAH web site to our mailing list for Historian's Digest, so some of you may be receiving a copy for the first time. If so, we would invite you to go to the link for our website on the GCAH web page: www.gcah.org and consider joining the HSUMC. The more members we have, the more resources we will have to produce this newsletter and try to keep those of us interested in the United Methodist historical community better connected.

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