BOOK REVIEWS


The American churches have always been deeply involved in higher education. The vast majority of institutions in the independent sector have had or do have historic or formal ties with religious denominations. This compact study introduces the general reader to the most recent group of such institutions, the so-called “Christian College.” Older schools may currently be described as “church related” or even as a “church college.” But the group of schools studied by this book celebrates a more doctrinal, non-denominational approach.

The significance of the group is fairly described by the author, although his title is too ambitious for the task he has set himself. Less a history of Protestant higher education in America, it is an informative and balanced description of the conservative and fundamentalist wing of that movement.

The author has not dealt with recent developments in the extensive church-related sectors of higher education represented by major denominations. It is difficult to conceive church-related higher education today outside the broadest ecumenical context. The “Christian College” is obviously wrestling with precisely the same dilemmas that have been faced in earlier times by other institutions, now proud to be church-related but no longer comfortable with the adjective “Christian.”

F. Thomas Trotter
Nashville, TN


According to the dust jacket of Riders of the Long Road, the book is “A Novel of the American Circuit Riders.” Certainly circuit riders, including Francis Asbury and the fictional Silas Will, are a part of the action, but the novel’s main focus is elsewhere: it is a frontier adventure. Silas Will, the exhorter, is Daniel Boone or Davy Crockett with a Bible. We do not go with him on his circuit; we see him when he is battling the
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evil Lefevre, his men, and whiskey. Thus we do not gain a sense of the life of traveling on a circuit as we do from reading Asbury's *Journal*, for instance.

One strong point in the depiction of Silas Will is that he is not the stereotypical Protestant minister of U.S. fiction, who is often either a fanatically moral person with hidden sexual sins and a failure to grasp the meaning of grace or is a charlatan. Although Will is eccentric, he also conveys a sense of strength.

The main character is Jonathan Barratt (really Jonathan Will), who becomes a circuit rider after his birth father is killed by Lefevre. As with the plot line of the rest of the book, this ending is expected. *Riders of the Long Road* is formula fiction set in late eighteenth century Virginia and Kentucky and hung in the frame of the formation of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1784. The novel opens with young Jonathan losing his mother and our learning that her husband is not really his father. In his twenties, Jonathan meets Silas Will, who is traveling with Francis Asbury at the time. About the same time, Jonathan is given a letter by one of his servants which reveals the exhorter is his father. The young man then sets out to become acquainted with Silas (who does not know he has a son), perhaps to kill him. The novel concludes with Jonathan's attending the Christmas Conference at Lovely Lane Church in his deceased father's place and meeting Francis Asbury again.

*Riders of the Long Road* is an adventure novel, which contains a lot of action and description of the terrain and population of the time. We see the characters from the outside; they are moved along by events. The book is popular fiction and has its audience but will not be a novel which endures.

Nancy A. Carter
Union Theological Seminary, NY


Researchers have demonstrated that listeners remember anecdotal stories longer than the "facts" presented in a lecture or sermon. This makes the current volume a veritable treasure chest for any writer or speaker dealing with early American Methodist history. It consists of a reprint of Ware's 1839 "Sketches of The Life And Travels of Rev. Thomas Ware." These memoirs contain beautiful anecdotal sketches about early Methodist figures, incidents, and administrative and disciplinary practices current in that period. Some of Ware's accounts, drawn from over 50 years as an itinerant preacher, regarding the practice of love feasts, camp meetings,
the circuit system, clergy pensions, celibacy and marriage, Asbury's process for examining a candidate for ministry plus Ware's graphic depictions of the Methodists caught in the grip of the American Revolutionary War should enliven any presentation. Thus I believe this book will be appreciated by many United Methodist professors and clergy. The editors' addition of an index greatly enhances the value of the reprinted "Sketches."

Those attracted by the title's emphasis on the Christmas Conference may be slightly disappointed. Ware's volume focuses on that subject less than one sixth of the time. The editors seem sensitive to this and have added "miscellany" including a reprint of Ware's 1832 article, drawn largely from his "Sketches," entitled, "The Christmas Conference of 1784," Ruckle's famous painting of Asbury's ordination, a map locating the Lovely Lane Meetinghouse of 1784, plus a good bibliography on the Christmas Conference compiled by Kenneth E. Rowe.

Larry A. Moody
Madison, Wisconsin


A journal often unfolds the thoughts and feelings of a person in a far truer light than correspondence might. It has been written primarily for the author's own edification and not for others. Such seemed to be the case of Thomas Morrell's journals. His diary became a depository record for his ministerial career—with impressions, feelings, statistics, events.

Although the journals cover 1785 to 1838, the most extensive coverage was given to the period November, 1791 to October, 1809. Even herein these years summarized certain periods with many omissions.

The New Jersey State Library in Trenton houses the Thomas Morrell collection, although a microfilm copy of the entire collection is now in the Archives and History Center in Madison, New Jersey. This publication has become the first printing of that journal.

As one reads this account, one wonders why Thomas Morrell continued to preach when his health had become so poor. And yet, he like so many of those early preachers of the Wesleyan tradition, could do no other than to serve God fulfilling the call to the ordained ministry. In spite of poor health Thomas Morrell lived to be ninety-one years of age.
The last eleven pages of the book consist of a paper delivered by Dr. Kenneth E. Rowe, Methodist Librarian, Drew University, to the Northeastern Jurisdiction Commission on Archives and History, at its 1982 annual meeting. In popular and quite abbreviated fashion he gives the history of dissent within The United Methodist Church beginning with its branches—Methodist Episcopal, Church of the United Brethren in Christ, and Evangelical Association. Dr. Rowe enables us to see that the present day tensions are not unusual, only slightly different in perspective.

We owe appreciation to the Historical Society of the Northern New Jersey Annual Conference for publishing this combination as one of their historical contributions during the American Methodist Bicentennial year, 1984.

John H. Ness
Mont Alto, PA


One of the basic purposes of a book review is to suggest for whom a particular book would be valuable. In the present instance *Edge of Ministry* will mean most to the men and women who have been Methodist chaplains to the military, educational institutions, hospitals, prisons, and industry. It will mean most to them because it is about them and, indeed, in a sense by them since Dr. Boozer’s work revolves around a 1980 “Questionnaire for United Methodist Chaplains since 1945.” Its meaning for them will lie on the one hand in the bringing together of their deepest concerns and their collective understanding of their ministry and, on the other, in the broad historical, sociological, psychological, and religious framework of their service. From Dr. Boozer’s viewpoint and verified by the questionnaires, chaplains conceive their ministry differently from their civilian counterparts and, so, precipitate a comparison that calls into question the traditional role of the clergyperson. Add to that the insights each will acquire about the emphases we gave to our chaplaincies and even the unconscious motivations which attracted us to this profession, and you will appreciate why this book will be an exciting and deeply personal encounter with oneself, with one's fellow chaplains, and with the Christian faith.

But it is hoped that there will be a wider range of readership, too. Church historians, clergy (especially those who want to gain a new perspective on themselves and their office), young chaplains at the outset of their careers, persons who want to review the crises of the past 40 years as well
as those who want a reasonable overview of the Christian faith's response, teachers of ethics—all of these need this book's message for now and for the rest of this century.

George E. Thomas
Perkiomen School

PROCEEDINGS
1985 ANNUAL MEETING
GENERAL COMMISSION ON ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

The General Commission on Archives and History of The United Methodist Church held its 1985 Annual Meeting on September 20-22 in the Archives and History Center in Madison, New Jersey.

The Commission heard reports from its staff members and conducted its business. The following major items reported and discussed were:

(1) The successful completion of workshops on women's history at the "grassroots" and archival procedures, both held at the Archives and History Center in June, 1985.

(2) Four racial/ethnic history consultations were held in the fall of 1984 and the winter of 1985. Each consultation decided to work toward the publication of a history of its tradition within United Methodism. Conversations with the United Methodist Publishing House are to be held in October, 1985 to pursue publication of these histories.

(3) A grant of $77,076 was received from the George Ruck Trust to be used for the Commission's research and publication projects. Other gifts for endowment will be sought.

(4) The General Commission approved plans for the reinstatement of the Jesse Lee Prize to be awarded in 1988 and every four years thereafter.

(5) It was decided to seek the extension of the women's and ethnic history projects into the next quadrennium.

(6) Plans were made for the celebration of Heritage Sunday for the years 1987 through 1990.

(7) The Commission's data processing program continues and directions were given to the General Secretary to expand the program during the ensuing twelve months.

(8) An annual budget exceeding $500,000 was approved for 1986.

(9) Plans were begun for the 25th anniversary of Methodist History in 1986.

(10) Plans were announced for a shrines and landmarks workshop to be held in Madison at the Center in September, 1987.