WILLIAM PENN CHANDLER
AND REVIVALISM IN THE EAST, 1797-1811

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William Penn Chandler (1764-1822) is today all but forgotten in the Methodist church for which he labored. He kept no journal that details his career. None of his sermons survives to allow us to judge why his contemporaries considered him so remarkable a preacher. Even his memoir in the Minutes of the Philadelphia Conference in 1823 deals more with the circumstances of his death than with the achievements of his life.

Yet Chandler's brief ministerial career, once sketched from the reminiscences of his contemporaries, suggests that this preacher helped to shape the denomination which forgot him. For Chandler was a revivalist, one of that new breed of preachers who changed American preaching and evangelism during the Second Great Awakening. That he lived and worked in the East at the very time when new forms of revivalism were blazing out of the West suggests that not all of the new revivalistic method was a frontier invention. The revivalism of the Second Great Awakening was forged not only at Cane Ridge but also on the banks of the Chesapeake Bay, and in this latter arena William Penn Chandler was a major figure.

Almost nothing is known of Chandler's early life. He was born in Charles County, Maryland, on June 22, 1764, and at some unknown date married a woman known to us only as Mary. While still a young man he moved to Philadelphia, and there on August 20, 1790, he was converted in St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church.

Chandler must have cut quite a figure among the Methodists of that day. Of medium height and "expressive countenance," he was, according to Laban Clark, "very urbane and gentlemanly... no stranger to cultivated society."1 By profession a dentist, student and colleague of Philadelphia's renowned Dr. Benjamin Rush, Chandler bore the stamp of an educated man. Henry Boehm, who was converted under Chandler's preaching and who was always ready to speak glowingly of him, insisted that Chandler was "great physically, for he had a noble body; great mentally, for he had a noble mind; great morally, for he had a noble soul."2

2Sprague, 289.
Chandler’s career as a Methodist minister was brief and can be briefly told. In or about 1797 he was singled out by Thomas Ware as “gifted, enterprising, and every way well qualified for the itinerant work.” Ware persuaded Rush to release Chandler from his studies and “prevailed upon” Francis Asbury to give him an appointment. 4 Admitted on trial in 1797, Chandler was in that year assigned to the Strasburg Circuit in Pennsylvania, a newly formed charge. The following year he and Daniel Higby traveled the same region, with the addition of Chester. The two ministers had a total of 391 Methodists under their care. After ordination as deacon in 1799, Chandler served two years on the Cecil Circuit in Maryland. He was ordained elder in 1801 and served in quick succession Bristol, Pennsylvania (1801), St. George’s in Philadelphia (1802), and Milford, Delaware (1803). In 1804, only seven years after entering the ministry, he was appointed presiding elder of the Delaware District, and after a four-year term there marked with “uncommon success,” he became presiding elder of the adjacent Chesapeake District in 1808. The Chesapeake District included the city of Philadelphia and was at that time the central and strongest district in the Conference, perhaps in American Methodism. There were now almost ten thousand Methodists under Chandler’s charge, and to such prominence he had risen in eleven years. 5

This promising career took an abrupt turn for the worse in 1808, when Chandler’s health failed and he was forced to cease work. After a brief return to the intinerancy in 1810, he was by 1811 listed among the “worn out preachers,” and in 1813 he “located,” living thereafter in Philadelphia engaged in the business of “physick,” or medicine. 6 He remained active in church work until a paralyzing stroke struck him in the middle of a sermon in 1820, forcing him to curtail virtually all activity. As he approached the end of his life, he requested the privilege of being listed again among the active preachers of the Conference. This request was granted in May 1822, and on December 8 of that year Chandler died. 7

What this Methodist record does not tell us, though his contemporaries knew it, was that from the opening days of his ministry William Penn Chandler was not simply another Methodist itinerant, but a revivalist. Like his more famous contemporary, the Presbyterian James McGready in Kentucky, Chandler was deeply involved in revivals and greatly concerned to promote them. The careers of the two ministers parallel markedly for several years. McGready assumed the pastorate of his three churches in Logan County, Kentucky, in January 1797, the same year in which

5Sprague, 287, and records of the Philadelphia Annual Conference, 1797-1808.
7Minutes of the Philadelphia Annual Conference, 1823, 402-403.
Chandler accepted his first circuit in Pennsylvania. McGready's churches were beginning to experience revival by the summer of 1798, at the same time revival was coming to life in Chandler's circuit. Revival was in full swing in Logan County by the summer of 1799, by which time revival had followed Chandler across the state line to his new appointment in Cecil County, Maryland. A general inter-denominational revival erupted across Kentucky after the first camp meeting at Gaspar River in the last week of July 1800, by which time the Chesapeake region was also aflame with revival and the Methodists had gathered for their General Conference in Baltimore amid "the greatest [revival] that has ever occurred during the session of any General Conference." 8 Finally, the famous Cane Ridge camp meeting convened in Kentucky in the summer of 1801, and by then the Chesapeake revival was blazing generally through "the Peninsula" of Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. Though crowds in the East were smaller than the estimated twenty thousand who participated in the Cane Ridge camp meeting, it was not uncommon for Methodist circuit riders to preach to two or three thousand people at a time as they made their rounds on the Peninsula.9

This eastern revival began under Chandler's ministry in Strasburg, Pennsylvania, in 1797, and from there spread ultimately as far north as the lake country of western New York state and southward down the Chesapeake until "the whole Peninsula was in a flame of revival."10 Both Thomas Ware and Henry Boehm assert that the revival began under Chandler, and that it was from the Peninsula that Chandler's revival leapt across Chesapeake Bay to Baltimore and the General Conference of 1800.11

There is much to suggest that this eastern revival was not altogether spontaneous but broke out wherever Chandler worked because, in part, Chandler had a genius for promoting revival. Though his ministry lasted only a few years, it is possible to see in it the evolution of a distinctive revivalistic technique, decades before the means of revivalism became codified under Charles G. Finney's "new measures."

The first of Chandler's techniques was to "talk up" a revival, and he used this technique in the first year of his first appointment. According to Thomas Ware:

At the commencement of the second quarter [1797], Dr. Chandler began covenanting with the people. He obtained a pledge from them to wholly abstain from the use of ardent spirits, and to meet him at the throne of grace three times a day—namely, at sunrise, at noon, and at the going down of the sun, to pray for a revival of the

10Ware, 229-230. Boehm, 158.
11Boehm, 49, 158. Ware, 233.
work of God on the circuit, and especially that He would visit them, and give them some token for good at their next quarterly meeting. As the time for the meeting approached, he pressed them to come out without fail, and expressed a belief that the Lord would do great things among them. Soon after he commenced this course, there were evident indications that the work was beginning to revive; and many began to predict with the preacher that something great would be done at the Quarterly Meeting.12

Such careful and persistent laying of the groundwork bore fruit. When Ware finally convened the meeting the crowd was large, and the opening ceremonies were within two minutes “drowned in the general cry throughout the house,” the outbreak of a revival that lasted three days without interruption.13 From that early date, advance promotion among the people by prayer and word of mouth became an important part of Chandler’s revivalistic method.

A second component was added to Chandler’s technique in 1799, during his second pastorate in Cecil County. After a sermon at Back Creek Church, now Bethel near Chesapeake City, Chandler invited those moved by the sermon to come forward to kneel at the altar. About twenty people responded, and among the dozen or so who were converted was Lawrence Laurenson, later a popular preacher on the Peninsula. This, asserts Henry Boehm, was the first known “altar call” among the Methodists. And, insists Boehm, it was Chandler’s invention.14

Whether Chandler was the first, or sole, inventor of the altar call is not beyond dispute. The altar call was, for instance, in use by August 1801 among the Baptists of the Kehukee Association in North Carolina, no doubt quite independently of developments on the Chesapeake.15 Regardless of its origins, the altar call became a very important addition to the techniques of revivalism, the “invariable practice” during the revivals of the Chesapeake region,16 and among a significant portion of the Methodists its origin was always associated with Chandler. Prior to its use, the cries produced by revival fervor were uncontrolled and likely to interrupt sermons or meetings, as Thomas Ware discovered in Strasburg in 1797. The effectiveness of the altar call in organizing this uncontrolled element of revival was immediately noted, and the altar call was widely copied among revivalists.

Preaching, of course, was another important component of Chandler’s revivalistic method. Since none of his sermons survives, we are left to judge what his preaching was like from the opinions of his contemporaries, and from the stories told about his preaching.

12 Sprague, 287.
13 Sprague, 287.
14 Boehm, 134-136.
15 Boles, 76.
16 Boehm, 135.
Chandler's preaching was generally held in high regard by his contemporaries. His “high reputation as a Preacher” was explained by Laban Clark: “The general tone of his discourses was strongly evangelical, his thoughts consecutive and well-arranged, and his utterance fluent and impressive. You felt that his whole soul was in everything he said, and that he lost sight of every thing else in the one all-absorbing desire to save the souls of those whom he addressed.”

William Colbert, commenting on one of Chandler's sermons in 1809, agreed that his delivery was lively, but questioned his organization: “There was life in his application, but great darkness and ambiguity in the arrangement of his sentences in his sermon.” Colbert is virtually alone in commenting unfavorably on Chandler's preaching.

Henry Boehm wrote little about the content of Chandler's sermons, but much about their effects on congregations. “He could move the masses as the wind stirs the leaves on the trees,” wrote Boehm. “Powerful scenes were often witnessed under his preaching. Scores would be awakened under a single sermon. Sinners seized with trembling would fall to the ground like dead men, while the shout of victory from the redeemed could be heard afar off.”

Chandler's persuasiveness is attested by Joshua Thomas, a waterman from Tangier Island, Virginia, who heard him preach at a camp meeting in 1805. “The Word took effect on my mind somewhat,” Thomas later recalled, “and convinced me that I had not the knowledge of God, and with all my good resolves I knew I often fell into sin.” But Thomas was not converted by Chandler's preaching. “I do not know that I might have learned the way of salvation had I remained [there], but [my companion] kept at me to go [home].” Several weeks later Joshua Thomas was converted at another camp meeting, a conversion initiated if not completed by Chandler's preaching, and he went on to become a local preacher of almost legendary stature on the Chesapeake.

Three anecdotes about Chandler in the pulpit suggest not only that his preaching was bold and forthright, in the revivalist manner, but also that he may have brought to preaching a knowledge of scientific matters that was not common among his Methodist colleagues. According to Thomas Ware, Chandler once promised the Methodists of Cecil County that gathering rainclouds would not spoil their outdoor gathering: “Mark my word, there will be no rain in this vicinity until the Quarterly Meeting

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17Sprague, 289.
19Boehm, 148, 150.
20Adam Wallace, The Parson of the Islands (Philadelphia: Published by the author, 1861), 77-78.
21Mariner, 47-48.
is ended." And as Chandler had predicted, "the rain was withheld until the meeting closed and the people generally had reached their homes." 22

Boehm tells a similar story that took place at a camp meeting in Delaware in 1805. When a "dark thick cloud gathered over the encampment, and there was a prospect of a tremendous shower," Chandler not only refused to dismiss the people and cancel the meeting but even prayed aloud before all that the rain would not fall. "The cloud parted when right over the camp, and he rained on either side but no sprinkling on the camp ground," cites Boehm, adding, "I make no comment, but simply state the fact of which I was an eyewitness." 23

Joseph Morgan, a local preacher from Delaware who was not an admirer of Chandler, tells yet another story of Chandler's preaching. At a Delaware camp meeting in 1806, Chandler, according to Morgan, used his knowledge of an impending total eclipse of the sun to awe the crowd into fear for their salvation. Morgan records the event with evident distaste, insisting that in so doing Chandler "imposed upon the credulity of the ignorant," and observing that the noise that arose from the frightened crowd when the eclipse occurred was not the "shouting of the praise of God" but merely "a great yelling." 24

To the modern ear such anecdotes seem to border upon the kind of apocryphal tales told of local saints. Yet the fact that Methodists repeated and believed such things about Chandler's preaching suggests that he was known and remembered as an unusually forceful and dynamic preacher. As the Methodists of the Peninsula were fond of saying, "If Dr. Chandler was placed on one end of a stand at camp meeting and Solomon Sharp on the other, they could preach the devil out of hell." 25

After his appointment as presiding elder in 1804, Chandler was in a position to promote revival and to practice revivalism more widely, and as he did so he added yet another new component to his revivalist repertoire: the camp meeting.

The camp meeting was not, of course, Chandler's invention, and most likely the link between the camp meeting of the western revivals and William Chandler, the eastern revivalist, was Francis Asbury. Asbury, accompanied by Richard Whatcoat and William McKendree, happened upon a camp meeting in Tennessee in October 1800, even before the great Cane Ridge gathering. 26 Asbury was favorably impressed, and hailed these "great and glorious revivals" in a series of newsletters sent throughout the church. Not until 1802 was a camp meeting held as far east as Tidewater, Virginia, 27

22Sprague, 288.
23Boehm, 158-159.
24Morgan, 44.
25Boehm, 159.
27Boles, 85.
and by then Asbury was advocating the camp meeting for the East as well as for the West. "I wish you would also hold campmeetings," he wrote one presiding elder; "they have never been tried without success."28 By 1804 the Bishop was able to report that as many as two or three hundred camp meetings had been held, some as far east as New England.29

No one followed Asbury's advice more enthusiastically, or adopted the camp meeting more eagerly, than William Penn Chandler, presiding elder of an area where revival had been flaming since 1799. Within a matter of a few years the camp meeting, under Chandler's sponsorship, had replaced the Quarterly Meeting as the primary setting for revival on the Peninsula.30 In the summer of 1804 two great camp meetings, planned in detail by Chandler, were held in opposite ends of his district, in July near Smyrna, Delaware, and in August near Pungoteague, Virginia. Both camp meetings bore the unmistakable stamp of Chandler, who determined to make of the camp meeting a more organized and controlled tool of revival than it had been in the West.

As a first improvement, Chandler refined the basic floorplan of the camp meeting. The benches in front of the speaker's stand were laid out in neat rows divided into "front court" and "back court," with cross streets named "New York" and "Philadelphia" between them. Chandler installed not one but two "mourner's benches," for men on one side and for women on the other, and covered each with a bower. In a prominent place near the speaker's stand stood the large "preachers' tent," into which no lay person could enter except by special clerical invitation.31 Lorenzo Dow, who saw this floorplan in use at the Pungoteague camp meeting, pronounced it "the most convenient I have seen."32

Not content with simple geographic refinements, Chandler conceived the campground as a self-governing and virtually autonomous community while the camp meeting was in session. The specific bounds of the campground were to be patrolled by local preachers, exhorters, and class leaders, six or eight forming a guard under a captain, all wearing official badges of identification.33 (To wear the badge of manager, guard, or "dog whipper" was considered a mark of distinction among the young men of the Peninsula.)34 Within the campground not civil but Methodist law held sway, with the result that smoking was prohibited, bottles of alcoholic

29Agnew, 518.
31Morgan, 37-39.
32Lorenzo Dow, Exemplified Experience, or Lorenzo's Journal (New York: Sheldon, Lamport & Blakeman, 1854), 111.
33Morgan, 39.
34Wallace, 80.
beverages sought out and smashed, and even cakes made of rum and brandy overturned upon the ground and ruined. On the Delaware camp-ground a small wooden jailhouse was erected to house violators of these laws.\(^{35}\) The camp meeting was to be a small, self-contained, and visibly godly state while it was in session, and in this concept Chandler was seconded and supported by Richard Bassett, Asbury's old friend and former governor of Delaware.\(^{36}\)

Time, also, was well organized in Chandler's camp meeting. At sunrise on the first day trumpets called the people to prayer. Thereafter for five days trumpets announced the time for preaching at 8:00 in the morning, 3:00 in the afternoon, and 8:00 in the evening. Times of preaching were followed by long periods set aside for "the work" of conversion, when mourners were prayed for and exorted individually. Occasionally Chandler would permit one preacher to "draw off" a part of the congregation for a specific sermon on a specific theme, but generally all present attended to the same events at the same time. Finally on the sixth day, two of the preachers processed around and through the camp blowing trumpets, all of the preachers assembled on the preaching stand, the congregation filed into their seats a final time, and there followed a celebration of the Lord's Supper and an emotional parting.\(^{37}\) There was little if any time left unstructured, with the result that, in Jesse Lee's words about the Delaware camp meeting, "the work went on beautifully and powerfully."\(^{38}\)

In another deliberate attempt to improve upon such western camp meetings as Cane Ridge, the number of whose participants is in dispute to this day, Chandler devised a system of counting and reporting the number of participants and converts at his camp meetings. The captains of the guard were responsible not only for policing the grounds but also for counting the numbers of wagons, tents, and people present. When after preaching "the work" began, it was their duty also to count the number of converts, reporting directly to Chandler. With this system, Chandler could cite with specificity the number of people converted or sanctified on a given day of a given camp meeting. But that the system produced an accurate count of converts is disputed vigorously by Joseph Morgan, who insisted that the figures were usually inflated since the same converts were counted and reported by more than one, or even by all, of the different guards on duty. Morgan, however, stands alone in his criticism of the counting system; not only Chandler but also Henry Boehm, Jesse Lee, Lorenzo Dow, Thomas Ware, and Francis Asbury all accepted the figures reported to Chandler without hesitation.\(^{39}\)

\(^{35}\) Morgan, 42. Williams, p. 86.
\(^{36}\) Morgan, 42.
\(^{38}\) Jesse Lee, \textit{Short History of the Methodists} (Baltimore: Magill & Clime, 1810), 308.
There was yet one more technique which Chandler used to extend the influence of the camp meeting. Once the camp meeting was over, he conducted a vigorous campaign of reporting its successes to any and all who were interested. In particular, long and detailed descriptions of the camp meetings, complete with statistics of the number of converts, were sent to Asbury, with briefer reports appended to other correspondence. Asbury was thrilled by these reports, and spread Chandler's name and successes around lavishly. “O, the wonders of Doctor Chandler’s report!” he crowed upon receiving the news of the 1805 camp meetings. “What hath God wrought!” he exclaimed when letters brought more news of further success in 1806. Chandler’s 1805 report to Asbury was reprinted in the *Methodist Magazine*, and among the preachers to whom Asbury wrote praising and quoting Chandler were Thornton Fleming, Edward Dromgoole, Henry Smith, Daniel Hitt, and Thomas Coke in England. “These things will stretch the credibility of your British Brethren,” Asbury told Coke. This spreading of the news of revival success was, in effect, another technique for promoting revival, and using it Chandler, with Asbury’s help, anticipated such later revivalists as Charles G. Finney and Dwight L. Moody, who made ample use of the mass media available to them to tell the public of the progress of revival.

The two camp meetings of 1805, under Chandler’s direction, were an unqualified success. The day prior to the Delaware camp meeting found Chandler on the campgrounds “making arrangements,” and the night before found him “encamped” there with about fifty people “to keep a little guard stationed.” At 8:00 in the morning the trumpets sounded, the “rules of the meeting were read,” and Jesse Lee took to the preacher’s stand. In Chandler’s own description of the scene to Asbury: “The work broke out and went on until the trumpets blew for preaching at three o’clock, but every thing was as orderly thro’ the camp as in a Court of Justice.” By the third day the camp ground contained 189 tents, 32 traveling preachers, 37 local preachers, 15 exhorters, 24 class leaders, about 1000 carriages, and between seven and eight thousand people. About ten thousand were present on the following day. “There was no intermission in the cries of the mourners, the singing of the joyful, the praying with the distressed, except in the time of public preaching.” Between 150 and 200 people were converted on the fifth day alone, making a total of nearly four hundred.

“I think [this camp meeting] exceeded any thing that I ever saw for the conversion of souls and for the quickening influence of the Holy Ghost upon the hearts of believers,” wrote Jesse Lee, confirming Chandler’s enthusiastic account.44

The Virginia camp meeting the following month was equally successful. Chandler himself again “worked hard in clearing the ground and fixing the seats.”45 As many as three thousand people were present on the first day, when the afternoon preacher was the celebrated Lorenzo Dow, who chanced to be traveling down the Peninsula when the camp meeting opened. So great was the response to Dow’s preaching that “the work went on so that there could be no preaching until ten next day, though the meeting had been appointed for eight at night and morning.”46 Other writers attest that converts, black and white, totalled about 500. According to Boehm, “the work went on day and night without intermission from Thursday till Monday.”47

In 1806 serious cracks began to appear in Chandler’s attempt to create the orderly camp meeting that Asbury had so long sought. Chandler held not two but three meetings across the district that year, in June and July near Dover, Delaware, and in August near Pungoteague, Virginia, and in both states the order that Chandler had tried so hard to impose temporarily broke down. In Delaware, Joseph Houston and Harkless Pollock spent one night tied in the slab jailhouse for some violation of the rules.48 Far more serious were the disturbances in the Virginia camp meeting, where a scuffle broke out when the preachers tried to enforce the rules against smoking. After a general brawl between the Methodists and local young toughs, the alleged offender was captured by the faithful, bound hand and foot, and held overnight. The following morning it was learned that the captive was not the offender, and soon a sheriff’s posse appeared at the campground and arrested Chandler, along with several of his preachers and some prominent local Methodists.49

Francis Asbury was in Georgia when he received the news of these events in December. “More good news from Doctor Chandler,” he wrote. “The work of God is wonderful in Delaware. But what a rumpus is raised! We are subverters of government—disturbers of society—movers of insurrections. Grand juries in Delaware and Virginia have presented the noisy preachers—lawyers and doctors are in arms—the lives, blood, and livers of the poor Methodists are threatened: poor crazy sinners: See ye not that the Lord is with us?”50

44Lee, 308.
45Boehm, 132.
46Dow, 111.
47Boehm, 133. Dow, 111.
48Morgan, 42.
49Mariner, 46-47.
On May 30, 1807, Chandler and six others came to trial in Drummondtown, Virginia, charged with trespassing, assault and battery, and false imprisonment. Two of the six were found not guilty, but Chandler, William Seymour, Richard Lyon, and William Barcroft were found guilty of the charge of trespassing and fined a total of $2,000. This considerable sum was paid largely by subscription among the Methodists of the district. And it is possible that just this once Chandler was not so eager to report about his work to Francis Asbury. Wrote Asbury of the Drummondstown trial in July 1807: "All earth and hell is roused against field [camp] meetings, but we will endure fines, imprisonment, and death sooner than we will give them up. We have 25.00 [not $2,000.00!] to pay on the Eastern shore of Virginia, no law, or justice for Methodists." 

Perhaps in reaction to these difficulties, Chandler seems to have reduced his direct participation in camp meetings on the Peninsula after 1806. Succeeding camp meetings in Delaware became smaller and more clearly under the sponsorship of the local circuits. In 1807 the site of the Virginia camp meeting was moved to Tangier Island, in the middle of Chesapeake Bay, where Joshua Thomas, who had first heard Chandler in 1805, assumed control of it and oversaw it until his death in 1853. It is clear that the rules for camp meetings which the local circuits began to pass at this period legislated a camp meeting in the Chandler style. In 1807 the Annemessex Circuit (Somerset County, Maryland) resolved "that the Quarterly Conference systematize a plan by which all our meetings in the woods are to be hereafter regulated," and specified that "the regulations be printed and entered on the journal and labels [identifying] the managers and guard" be printed." The rules of the Accomack Circuit (Virginia) for the same year, so similar in wording as to suggest that in each place the locals were following a standard form, provided for five managers, who need not be "confin'd to the members of Our Church Alone, but may be made so as to include any man of Respectability and Influence that may belong to any other Church." This stipulation may have been in response to the difficulties with the civil authorities at the 1806 camp meeting.

In yet one more way Chandler foreshadowed later developments in revivalism: He was not universally popular, was often criticized, and was frequently perceived as being interested only in money. There were rumors of large sums collected at the Peninsula camp meetings, from which

51 Accomack Order Book, 1806-1807, 341.
52 Morgan, 43.
53 Asbury, vol. III, 370. Is the $25 mentioned by Asbury his own personal share, or "pledge," in the $2,000 subscription?
54 Wallace, 80. Mariner, 49, 69.
55 Wallace, 79-80.
56 Journal of the Quarterly Conference of the Accomack Circuit, 1804-1866, January 19, 1807.
Chandler was alleged to have benefited personally. Once when he was pulling away from a camp meeting in his four-wheel carriage, a wheel fell off, and rumor had it that it broke under the weight of the vast sums of money (coinage?) collected at the camp meeting. However even Joseph Morgan, no admirer of Chandler, attests that "the truth was some designing, mischievous person contrived to take the lynchpin out of the axle . . . and the wheel fell off," and that the collections at the camp meetings often did not cover expenses. 57 Some years later the Philadelphia Annual Conference investigated Chandler's financial affairs, and exonerated him. Yet some of the details reported at that time indicate, perhaps, why tales of his profiting from revivalism circulated. He was not, compared to most itinerants of that time, a poor man. He had had some resources prior to entering the ministry, still held notes of several hundred dollars against persons in debt to him, and apparently did not fit into the mold of the virtually penniless circuit rider of that day. 58

Most of his contemporaries spoke highly, almost in adulation, of William Penn Chandler; Joseph Morgan, on the other hand, paints the picture of a self-serving man virtually without principle. Somewhere in between these two opposites, no doubt, is found the real man. It is ironic that the official memorial to this man in the records of the Methodist Episcopal Church speaks so much of the circumstances of his death and so little of the achievements of his life. More to the point is the testimony of Henry Boehm, who at least for once spoke of him with some objectivity: "He was a great revivalist . . . He was wise in planning, judicious, skillful, and effective in executing; so that the revival was under the most able management. A great deal depends upon the arrangement of matters in revivals, and Chandler was a General." 59

Notwithstanding the sparsity of details about his work, William Penn Chandler deserves more mention than we have given him in the evolution of American revivalism.

57Morgan, 44.
58Morgan, 45.