DEAREST ELLEN

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Before the building of the railroads, America, including its Methodists, moved at the speed of the horse. Methodism's association with that animal is well known due to the exploits and legends surrounding its circuit riders, but the iron horse proved more significant in the long run. The implications of this change dawned on me first when writing a biography of Bishop William C. Martin and I became aware that crucial to his episcopal service was the availability of frequent and inexpensive train service. During a recent sabbatical, I realized its importance all over again while reading the papers of the third president of Southern Methodist University and later Bishop, Charles C. Selecman. In each of his seventeen years at SMU his correspondence contains at least one large folder which is labeled "Railroads." They contain the application forms and correspondence related to "Clergy Certificates." These certificates, more popularly known as "clergy permits," were issued to ordained persons by the railroads and provided free transportation to the holders. The application, filed in one of four regions where the line was located, had first to be endorsed by the local agent. The applicant was then required to submit information about denominational affiliation, official assignment, the date when ordained, and the official document, including the number of the page on which it was recorded. The rules governing eligibility, in tiny print, occupied almost an entire page of the application. For individuals, like university presidents or bishops who traveled widely in the country, it was necessary to negotiate a number of permits from the various regions. The essential proviso for any applicant, Rule #1 on the application, stated, "A permit will not be issued until the Secretary of the [appropriate region] Southeastern Clergy Bureau is satisfied that the applicant is engaged exclusively in worthy religious work and has no other occupation whatsoever." Permits good for a year were sometimes issued to frequent travelers, but they always had to be renewed, and there was nothing automatic about it. Selecman was denied a permit in 1936 by the Chicago Great Western Railroad, but was told he could apply for a single trip pass when traveling on that road. He was unsuccessful in getting one granted to Professor Kilgore after he was no longer acting dean of the Theological School at SMU.

Moreover, the permits were not good on all trains. The Southern Pacific

\footnote{Application for Clergy Permit, Southeastern Region, 1931. Charles C. Selecman Papers, Bridwell Library, Perkins School of Theology.}
would not honor clergy permits on the Sunset Limited, and the Santa Fe would not honor them on transcontinental trains running between Chicago and Los Angeles listed on the back of the permit. The permits were never honored for travel on Pullman cars. This required upgrading to a first class ticket and paying the surcharge for the Pullman accommodation. Round trip first-class fare from Dallas to Houston in 1936 was $7.60. A lower berth added $2.50 to the fare each way. That surcharge was comparable to the cost of a first-class hotel room for one night.

Nobody was more dependent on the trains and the largess of the railroads than Methodist bishops. William C. Martin, who, along with Selecman, was elected at the last General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South in 1938, was assigned to its 11th Episcopal District. That district at the time was comprised of five annual conferences located in Texas (the Western Mexican Conference), Arizona, California, Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. Bishops in the southern church received a monthly allowance of $125 to cover the costs of housing, office, and travel in addition to their salary. In the first three months he was a bishop, Martin spent more than sixty nights away from home, many of them on the train. Bishop A. Frank Smith, who lived in Houston during his entire episcopal service, for years did not maintain an office, but did his business from the train or on the mezzanine of the Rice Hotel downtown. Smith would take his correspondence with him on the train, answer the letters, and mail them at the next stop. Sometimes it was not easy to read what he had written. Methodist bishops have always been on the road.

A brief review of the history of railroads in the United States is probably in order at this point. The first national transportation system in this country was a network of turnpikes on which stage coaches were operated. They carried both passengers and mail. That was followed by the introduction of an extensive system of canals—the Erie Canal was finished in 1825. The early railroad ventures were associated with mining operations and used horse drawn carriages running on wooden rails. One of the earliest, known as “the Granite Railway,” was two miles long and used to haul the blocks of granite to build the Bunker Hill monument in Boston. The first line in America ran from Quincy, Massachusetts to the Neponset River and dates from 1826.

American foreign trade and commerce grew rapidly in the 19th century. By 1828, “the New York Custom House was collecting sufficient duties to pay the entire expenses of the federal government.” Baltimore was second to New York in traffic, and the major cities in America: New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Boston and Charleston, were looking for ways to

3M.P. Curtis, Division Passenger Agent, Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad to Gertrude Selecman, May 28, 1936.
5Stover, 11.
trade with the rapidly expanding frontier in the west. James Watt's invention of the steam engine in the middle of the 18th century paved the way for the building of the first steam locomotive in England in 1804. Locomotives were imported to the United States in 1829, but proved too heavy to operate on the existing tracks. Matthias Baldwin of Philadelphia began to design and build steam engines suitable for use in America. His "Old Ironsides" weighed five and a half tons and could eventually travel 28 miles an hour.

The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad began operating in 1828 with 13 miles of track and horse drawn carriages, but in 1830 bought the now famous "Tom Thumb" steam powered locomotive built by Peter Cooper. It was too light to operate successfully on the lines, but in 1831 the locomotive "York" went into actual service. That year American railroads grossed over $260,000 and operated with seven locomotives, more than a thousand freight cars, and forty-four passenger cars. Most of the earliest lines were short and connected the cities of the east coast. Only the Erie Railroad at this time projected operations on a larger scale. It was designed to link the Hudson River steamboat traffic with the Great Lakes, but the east coast was not finally connected with Chicago until 1853. A year earlier, 1852, rails reached the Ohio River at Wheeling, West Virginia, and Secretary of War, Jefferson Davis, in 1853, was directed to survey possible routes to the Pacific.

The first sleeping cars were introduced on the Cumberland Railroad between Philadelphia and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania in 1836. They featured three tiers of berths on one side of the wooden car, but offered no linens or blankets. More modern versions were designed and patented by George M. Pullman in 1856. In 1858 his "Pioneer" car contained curtains, carpets, wash basins, and toilets. It had ten bunks which converted to seats. Blankets were furnished and men were required to remove their boots before bedding down. The dining car was introduced on the run from Baltimore to Philadelphia in 1863. Because of the long distances involved in the country, they were soon in widespread operation. Trains ran 40 mph before the Civil War. Brittle, cast iron rails, which had replaced the first wooden rails, were converted to steel by 1863. The decade 1840-1850 saw the number of track miles in the U.S. increase to 9,021. The discovery of gold in California spurred the demand for overland routes west and by 1860 the miles of trackage increased to 30,626. The Civil War provided a great impetus to the construction of rail lines to facilitate the movement of troops and equipment. Two acts of Congress (1862, 1864), strongly supported by Abraham Lincoln who needed California money to help fund the War, initiated the building of the transcontinental railroad. Lincoln designated Council Bluffs, Iowa as the eastern terminus in payment for their support. This project has been

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6 Stover, 24.
7 Stover, 13.
8 Stover, 13.
9 Columbia Encyclopedia.
11 Stover, 64.
described as the "technological example of manifest destiny." The Union Pacific built west from Nebraska and the Central Pacific built east from California. They were joined in Utah on May 10, 1869, with the driving of a "golden spike." By 1873 the number of miles of track had doubled from the number in 1860. A Federal mandate required the transcontinental lines to be built with a gage (distance between the tracks) of 4' 8½". By 1880 all the railroads had adopted it, making it possible to transfer cars from one road to another. Prior to that time eight changes of cars were required on a trip from Charleston to Philadelphia.\textsuperscript{12} The Interstate Commerce Commission was established in 1887.

Vast fortunes were made in the development of railroads and names like Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jim Fisk, Jay Gould, Daniel Drew, Leland Stanford, Collis P. Huntington, Mark Hopkins, E.A. Harriman, and others amassed fortunes which still exist today, but should be given credit for putting up the money which made much of the construction possible. After Gould, with Drew's help, sold Commodore Vanderbilt 150,000 shares of worthless stock, he claimed the experience, "learned me never to kick a skunk."\textsuperscript{13} Most of the financing, however, came from land grants given to the companies by the federal government.

With the building of railroads the speed of travel took a quantum leap forward. A week's travel in 1800 from New York City brought you to Pittsburgh, PA or to Wilmington, North Carolina. By 1860 a day's travel out of New York took you to Norfolk or Cleveland. In three days you could reach Florida or central Iowa and a week's journey from New York could find you in northern Texas or Eastern Nebraska.\textsuperscript{14}

But there was a price to be paid. Accidents on the trains were so common they were rarely reported. Animals strayed on the tracks, brakes were inadequate, couplings failed, poorly maintained tracks and roadbeds washed out during storms, bridges failed, locomotives exploded, and sparks set wooden cars on fire. Drinking on the job by railroad personnel was against company rules, but was the cause of many mishaps. Engineers would sometimes be rousted out of taverns to take their runs. There were frequent delays and schedules were always uncertain. The passenger cars were not only dangerous but uncomfortable. Heat was provided by one stove at the end of a car. If you were nearby you were hot, and if you moved to the middle or rear of the coach, you were cold. Passengers were subjected to bumpy rides on hard seats, blowing dust, soot, and sometimes people throwing rocks. Bishop Matthew Simpson wrote his wife in 1869:

\begin{quote}
At Cleveland I was detained. Some person threw stones at our car about 30 miles before reaching it. One passed through the car I was in breaking the windows on
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{12}Stover, 45.
\textsuperscript{13}John F. Storer, \textit{The Routledge Historical Atlas of the American Railroads} (New York: Routledge, 1999), 70.
\textsuperscript{14}Storer, 70.
both sides and just missing one man’s head. The train was stopped as speedily as possible, and run back to find the perpetrator, but in vain.15

Antecdotal evidence from studies of Methodist preachers at the United Methodist Archives suggests that more of them died from railroad related incidents than for any reason other than natural causes.

While information like this helps to provide the big picture, it does not adequately describe what it was like to ride and depend on trains in the early years of railroading. That can, however, easily be illustrated by the experience of a Methodist bishop, Matthew Simpson. Only fourteen men were elected to the office between the Christmas Conference in 1784 and the separation of the church in 1844. In that period of time the Methodist Episcopal Church grew to be America’s largest Protestant denomination. Each man had a vast area to cover in order to preside in the various annual conferences and fulfill the duties of the office. Asbury, in his “Valedictory,” described Methodist bishops as riding “five or six thousand miles in nine months, for eighty dollars a year, with the traveling expense.”16 Simpson and his contemporaries, with the increased speed of rail travel, averaged about 25,000 miles a year.17 Between 1784 and Asbury’s death in 1816, there were only three bishops who regularly itinerated throughout America: Asbury, Whatcoat, and McKendree. One year, Asbury, who never owned a house, traveled farther holding nine Methodist annual conferences than Lewis and Clark did on the Voyage of Discovery. He was truly “itinerant.”

Matthew Simpson was elected a bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church on April 25, 1852, and served as a bishop until his death in 1884. Prior to his election, he had been a medical doctor, pastor, professor of natural science at Allegheny College, President of Indiana Asbury College, now DePauw University, (at age twenty-seven), and Editor of the Western Christian Advocate. Before his death he was widely recognized as the most influential leader of his denomination. The rules of the General Conference in 1852 allowed the bishops to live anywhere in the country. So, influenced by their friend John Evans, the founder of Northwestern University and later Territorial Governor of Colorado (Mt. Evans is named for him, too), the Simpsons decided to settle on the shore of Lake Michigan in the newly established town of Evanston, Illinois. Their choice was perhaps also motivated by the fact that Simpson was born in Ohio and was living in Cincinnati when he was elected. He was 42 years old with a young and growing family, some of whom would soon be looking at college, too.

After his election, Simpson was almost never at home and Ellen, his wife, was left to cope with family, house and life without a husband.

Simpson was not unaware of that fact.

The choice of my brethren led me to very serious reflection. My health was delicate; my life had been largely sedentary. . . . I had greatly enjoyed the society of my family, and had several children in whose education I was deeply interested. But, as I had resolved to accept the voice of the Church as the will of God, and as I have never solicited in any manner a vote as a delegate to the General Conference or for any office connected with it, I felt that the arrangement was wholly Providential. 18

That is just about the sum of what most say after their elections, but the question for Ellen, who in addition to other children had a new baby and was staying with her parents in Pittsburgh, was whether she felt the same providential mandate and call in her life, or even any part of it. Not all episcopal spouses have. The wife of Eugene Hendrix, upon receiving the news of his election in 1886 wrote, “The telegram bearing the sad tidings of your election to the office of a bishop reached me about an hour ago. How can I give you up my husband? I hope I appreciate the honor the church has bestowed upon you, but what a lonely life my future will be.” 19 Fifty years later, Sally Martin sat in the gallery in Birmingham, Alabama, and wept when her husband was led forward to be consecrated. Years later Will Martin would write every new bishop upon election to welcome them to, “The fellowship of the riders of the long trail.”

The bulk of Simpson’s papers, including his correspondence, is housed in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, but significant collections of his letters are also at Drew University, and in the museum of Old St. George’s Church in Philadelphia. Drew also owns numerous copies of Simpson letters from the collection in Washington. Many of those cited in this study are also at Drew. They reveal the loneliness, stress, danger, and travails of train travel and the difficulties and frustrations it created for those he left behind. Unfortunately, only a handful of the letters Ellen Simpson wrote to her husband remain and we are mostly left to read her thoughts through his. But her distress is often clear and poignant.

The procedure of assigning the bishops to their work was simple enough, but doing it was complicated. The Board of Bishops met annually to draw up a “Plan of Visitation.” As a rule, no bishop presided two years in succession in any annual conference and the number of conferences each would hold in a given year was determined by the number of bishops available. Yet, it was not uncommon for more than one to be present at least for some of the sessions. The Board of Bishops in the Methodist Episcopal Church, of which Simpson was a member, was very small during the Civil War, and, because of the conflict, travel was even more difficult. In 1863 he held nine conferences scattered from Maine to Michigan. 20 Doing this work required a great

19Roy H. Short, Chosen to be Consecrated (Published by the Commission on Archives and History for the Council of Bishops, 1976), 37.
Dearest Ellen

Dearest Ellen,

deal of physical stamina and determination. Sometimes there were mishaps and illness. In December, 1863, he arrived in Buffalo in a snow storm with a sprained ankle. “It was very painful all day & much swollen. . . . It was so severe that I shd. [sic] have returned, had I not disappointed Buffalo before.” Always there was fatigue.

I arrived here this morning very much fatigued. I closed Conf. Last evening — rode all night changing routes twice, and had no sleeping car. I do not feel very well today, but hope to be as usual by tomorrow. I leave this afternoon for Romeo, which I hope to reach tonight. . . .

A year later he wrote,

I arrived here last night — a day behind time. I had a very unpleasant time on my way — missed nearly every connection, lost my trunk, had to live in a depot one night, etc. etc. But I am here, had a good night’s rest and feel right as usual this morning. I hope to get my trunk in a day or two.

In addition to their regular conferences, the bishops were expected to provide supervision to mission conferences. Simpson was hardly settled in the episcopal office before he was assigned to hold the conferences in California and Oregon, a trip that took six months, exposed him to yellow fever in the Isthmus of Panama, and provided the added adventure of being shipwrecked in the mouth of San Diego harbor. One of his companions on the voyage was a racehorse bound for the tracks in California. He was sent to Texas in 1855, and to Europe to represent the Methodist Episcopal Church at the British Methodist Conference. Even the normal assignments required being out of touch with home and family. Writing from Utica, NY, to a sick wife Simpson said:

I was very glad to learn . . . that you were better, and I hope the disease has passed away. I shall be obliged to fulfill the appointment at Middletown on Sabbath, and as soon as I can with propriety leave thereafter I will turn my face homeward, but probably shall not get home before Friday week.

He continued in the same letter, “My duties are pressing — God has laid them upon me and I dare not shrink from them, as I should sink beneath his curse. Yet these duties call me from home and you feel the burden imposed upon you.” Simpson, who even as a youth thought his life would be short, continued, “Yet if I desist from doing my duty God can soon remove me altogether from you. Your life and mine hang by little threads and God can soon sever them if we refuse to do his work.”

His letters, which always begin, “My Dearest Ellen,” reveal a great deal about him, his relation to her, the genuine affection and concern he felt for his family, and the difficulties which he encountered almost daily in the work he was doing in the church.

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21 M.S. to Ellen, December 1, 1863, ALS, L.C.
22 M.S. to Ellen, September 15, 1863, L.C.
23 M.S. to Ellen, September 9, 1864, ALS, L.C.
24 M.S. to Ellen, July 27, 1853, ALS, L.C.
25 M.S. to Ellen, July 27, 1853, ALS, L.C.
Last night after writing to you as I could not find a bed, I turned to writing and dispatched a number of letters. About twelve the cars came thundering along. ... We arrived in Loveland [Ohio] about 8 o'clock [after riding all night] and found but one tavern, and that was selling out today at auction and changing hands in some method so that we could not be received. The train will not be here till 4 this afternoon so that we looked around us and got ourselves invited to a Methodist family in the vicinity, where we have taken dinner and some rest. 26

Less than a month later he had an experience which made not finding a bed seem a minor inconvenience in the larger scheme of things. He and his sixteen-year-old son, Charles, were traveling to New York when, he reported:

In crossing the mountains, we were detained first nearly an hour by a locomotive having run off the track and obstructed our way. When ascending the first plane on the mountains, Charles and I went forward into the first car as I wished to show him the mode of ascending and as soon as we had reached the top, we turned back to see the next cars coming up. As the freight train went down, just before they met, the axle of the first freight car broke and turned toward the passenger train striking the corner of the car where the saloon was. It ran a beam of timber into the room marking up everything, and then turning it fell over on the other side of the track. I expected great injury to follow, but as it turned to the other side, there was but little injury done except detention of an hour. 27

The schedule of a bishop, even without mishaps, was difficult to keep. In May, 1855, Simpson left Philadelphia on Friday at 7:00 am and arrived in New York just before noon. He visited the Five Points Mission in the afternoon and spoke to a large audience that night. On Saturday at 1:00 pm, he took “the cars” to Dobbs Ferry where he dedicated a church at 3:00 pm. Leaving immediately after the service, he was back on the train for Troy, NY to preside at the annual conference. He arrived at 10:30 pm and began Conference the next morning. 28 The day before his conference closed, he received word that Bishop Scott was ill and unable to meet the New York East Conference and that he was needed there. 29 When the Troy Conference closed at noon on Thursday, Simpson took the overnight Hudson River steamer for New York in order to arrive in Danbury, Connecticut, by Friday morning in time to open the New York East Conference. That evening he preached and the next afternoon left for Maine to resume his regular schedule. 30

On almost every trip there was something to inconvenience or distract. Traveling to Buffalo from Pittsburgh, the train was delayed for an hour by a broken rail which caused him to miss dinner in Alliance. Being hungry, he paid eight cents for a mince pie and three apples, two of which he saved. With the train still running late, he arrived in Cleveland just in time to make

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26 M.S. to Ellen, September 27, 1853, ALS, L.C.
27 M.S. to Ellen, November 20, 1853, ALS, L.C.
28 M.S. to Ellen, May 7, 1865, ALS, L.C.
29 M.S. to Ellen, May 21, 1865, ALS, L.C.
30 M.S. to Ellen, May 21, 1865, ALS, L.C.
his connection and missed a planned dinner visit with friends. This time the price of mince pie had gone up to a dime. Hoping to get supper in Erie, he was frustrated yet again by a late arrival and made do with a third pie plus a piece of cheese that he purchased for eleven cents. To make already bad matters worse, on the train he met a “Bro. Longard, once of the Cincinnati Conf., who enlightened me on the annihilation of the wicked, the personal appearance of Christ, the millennial reign, the new earth and prophecy in general.” And there was still more to come. In Hudson a Presbyterian preacher with his wife and three children boarded and recognized the Bishop. Naturally, he informed Simpson that his father had been “an old John Street Methodist” and began to talk. “We had a long talk,” Simpson told Ellen, “in the midst of which a rosy cheeked girl of about three years old threw up her dinner over the skirt of my overcoat — and a big dinner she must have eaten. We had quite a wiping scrape and I have a dirty handkerchief as my share of the profits.” Finally, able to doze off, he awoke in Buffalo where he said he “had a moderate night’s rest” in a cold room at Bennet’s Temperance Hotel. That night, after his lecture, he left for Newark, a hundred miles away.31

In the midst of it all, he often thought of home and family. In October he told Ellen, “I am sad to think of your being so weary and so oppressed in your feelings. I wish I were with you.”

How gladly would I sit down by your side and talk over the various matters which so greatly interest us both. I have great confidence that God will take care of you in my absence as I believe I am necessarily absent engaged in his work. But dearest, we are not far apart when we meet at a throne of grace. While I look up at the moon these clear night I can fancy that it shines also on my own loved ones on the shore of Lake Michigan, as brightly as it shines on me here, not far from Lake Ontario.32

From Detroit three months later he wrote:

How I feel the absence from my family. I do not regard my own hard work nor my exposure, as I feel anxious for my family. Were it so that I could remain at home constantly with duty how glad I would be. But God can take care of my loved ones in my absence. . . .33

In one letter he noted that, “you said you felt as if you had nothing to lean upon.” “Dearest Ellen,” he replied, “take courage to leave all your cares and anxieties in the hand of Him who careth for you.” But in the same letter, he also told her where to get more money if she wanted to purchase anything in Chicago, to ask Mr. Pearson to bring a load of wood, and for advice on renting a pew at the church. While he was at home, he had been unable to get all the books for Sibbie, their older daughter, and Ellen should get them,

31M.S. to Ellen, January 17, 1856, ALS, L.C.
32M.S. to Ellen, October 13, 1859, ALS, L.C.
33M.S. to Ellen, January 7, 1860, ALS, L.C.
too. Perhaps all of these tasks were too mundane for the Almighty to manage.34

Bishops from Asbury to the present have seriously considered resigning the office though only less than a handful have actually done it. Not only was the travel itself difficult, he was constantly in the company of strangers and out of touch with home. Simpson often complained he did not hear from them as often as he thought he deserved. He complained when Ellen did not write, once told her that he was going to “command” his son, Charles, to write. Moreover, even if they wrote he could never count on the mail catching up with him. After protesting to Ellen on Friday that he, “had looked for a letter every day, and I have felt disappointed when day after day none has come,” he expressed hope that he would hear something in Watertown on Tuesday or Wednesday.35 He later learned that she had been ill and unable to write. Once in awhile, he was actually in real danger. “Yesterday one of our young men just admitted on trial died of cholera which created quite a sensation both in the conference and among the citizens.”36

From his correspondence with Ellen, we are able to follow the Bishop as he made his way to and fro across the country. A few examples from his regular schedule clearly show what it was like. In December, 1858, Simpson had been ill and was recuperating for almost ninety days in the home of his in-laws in Pittsburgh.37 Although he told Charles he was not able to preach, he left in March, 1859, to hold a conference in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. The Conference ran from March 10-15. When it adjourned, he returned to Evanston for a week and then went to New York on April 2.38 From there he went to Haverstraw, New York, where he held a long and difficult conference that did not adjourn until Saturday, the 13th. Rather than leave the area, he went back to New York City and waited until the 16th when he went to Auburn, New York to preside in the Oneida Conference. It met from April 17-22.39 From there he went to preside in the Troy Conference and then to Barton, Vermont to hold the Vermont Conference.40 In this letter he reported he had not attempted to preach but had, “stood conf [sic] duties better than I anticipated.” It lasted from May 4-9 at which time he went back to New York City.

During the fall of that year, he was working in the Midwest. September 5 he took the sleeper from Chicago to Davenport, Iowa where he connected for Muscatine, Iowa, where he was to hold conference and give a lecture on September 8.41 Conference adjourned on the 12th.42 The next day he returned

34 M.S. to Ellen, September 20, 1859, ALS, L.C.
35 M.S. to Ellen, May 27, 1853, ALS, L.C.
36 M.S. to Ellen, September 4, 1854, ALS, L.C.
37 M.S. to Charles, December 14, 1858, ALS, L.C.
38 M.S. to Charles, April 2, 1859, ALS, L.C.
39 M.S. to Charles, April 21, 1859, ALS, L.C.
40 M.S. to Charles, April 29, 1859, ALS, L.C.
41 M.S. to Ellen, September 6 and September 8, 1859, ALS, L.C.
42 M.S. to Ellen, September 12, 1859, ALS, L.C.
Dearest Ellen

via Iowa City to Evanston to be at home for ten days. On the 19th he left Evanston for Chicago to catch a train to Danville, Illinois. Upon reaching Chicago he learned that the road running through Lake Shore had been washed away by high water and he was forced to wait until midnight to go another route. After riding through the balance of the night, he missed his connection in Ilona, Illinois for Danville. That resulted in yet another wait until 3:00 pm in order to cover the last 40 miles to his final destination. He arrived in Danville at 4:30 am, slept for an hour and began the sessions of the conference. The conference lasted a week. He was back in Evanston on September 29, but left on October 3 for Detroit and then to Buckport, New York for his conference. He arrived the evening of the 4th and began conference the next day. He preached to 3,000 people in a tent on Sunday, October 9th. The conference was extended and ended on the 17th because of a number of trials which resulted in four members of the conference being expelled as a result of the “Nazarite” controversy. Many of his letters home were written during the proceedings.

Without going into all the specifics, we know that he was on his way to Little Valley, New York, from Cincinnati on October 31. On the overnight trip to Toledo, he shared a lower berth with Bishop Edward R. Ames who accused him of, “taking his half out of the middle.” They were in Cleveland by 10:00 in the morning and in Little Valley that afternoon at 5:30. Simpson preached at 11:00 am on November 2nd, took the 5:30 pm train for the all-night ride to Little Falls, New York for a meeting of the bishops which likely began on the 3rd. He was in New York City on November 5 to preach at St. Paul’s Church the next day and speak at a missionary meeting the night of November 7. In the meantime, Ellen wrote asking his advice on purchasing a buggy. “An excellent bargain,” he responded, but “a poor one for us” since “two horses cost a great deal to keep.” He remained in New York until Saturday, November 12 when he went to Baltimore to preach at High Street Church on the 13th. He lectured the night of November 14, baptized a baby of a friend the afternoon of the 15th and went to Pittsburgh on the November 16, arriving the next afternoon. There he discovered that the lecture which he thought had been scheduled for November 18 had been postponed until the evening of the 21st. He wrote Ellen that he would be in Chicago at 11:00 on the 23rd and home from there.

We can pick up his travels again the following spring. Leaving Evanston, he traveled to Pittsburgh, on April 1, 1860. The next morning he left at 3:00 am for a “dusty ride” to New York City. Spending the night of the 2nd there,
he left at 8:00 the morning of the 3rd for Manchester, New Hampshire. The trip took a full day. He opened the conference on Wednesday, April 4.\textsuperscript{51} It stayed in session until the 9th — the regular pattern was to begin on Wednesday morning and adjourn the following Monday. Because of its proximity, he was able to be in Stamford, Connecticut on the 10th to begin conference on Wednesday, April 11.\textsuperscript{52} It ran long, but did not delay his reaching Rome, New York, to begin another on the 19th. The bishops met in Batavia, New York on Thursday the 26th, just after the adjournment in Rome.\textsuperscript{53} From there he went to Buffalo for the sessions of the General Conference, arriving on May 2 at 4:30 a.m.\textsuperscript{54} It lasted for the next three weeks.

It is obvious in a brief review of Simpson’s itineraries that waiting was a constant feature of his travel. It is interesting, however, that he almost never says how he spent the time while waiting. Another feature of his work was that he was almost constantly with strangers. In many of the places where he went, he did not know the people with whom he stayed and sometimes he had to share a room with another member of conference. Only in the places where he went often did he know where he might be staying.

Sometimes his behavior is perplexing, too, but his priorities are abundantly clear. In December, 1859 (on a Sunday) he wrote Ellen that he had agreed, “to stay here over next Sabbath [Christmas Day] to preach.” He had preached in the city that morning, he wrote, was scheduled to speak the next evening in Newark, be back in New York on Tuesday evening to preach at St. Paul’s Church, and then go on Thursday to Mamaroneck where he was to preach and give an address in the evening at the home of Aged Females. Christmas day he was booked in Brooklyn at Hanson Place Church, but on Monday, (Dec. 26) he planned to begin the trip home — except for one stop on the way to preach in Altoona, PA.\textsuperscript{55} On the 23rd he wrote that he had added an engagement in Troy, New York, on the 24th. He now planned to stop with friends in Philadelphia Monday night, speak in Altoona on Tuesday and, after yet another stop in Pittsburgh, to arrive in Evanston on Thursday by noon, “if God wills it.”\textsuperscript{56} He wrote on Christmas Day to say that he would probably also speak in Philadelphia on Monday evening, but failed in the letter to wish Ellen or any of the family members a Merry Christmas. As a matter of fact, he did not even mention the day. He was home from December 29 until January 6 when he left again for Detroit. It was a cold, all-night ride. Too late, he discovered that the place he was going, Holly, was

\textsuperscript{51}M.S. to Ellen, April 4, 1860, ALS, L.C.
\textsuperscript{52}M.S. to Ellen, April 10, 1860, ALS, L.C.
\textsuperscript{53}M.S. to Ellen, April 19 and 26, 1860, ALS, L.C.
\textsuperscript{54}M.S. to Ellen, May 2, 1860, ALS, L.C.
\textsuperscript{55}M.S. to Ellen, December 18, 1859, ALS, L.C.
\textsuperscript{56}M.S. to Ellen, December 23, 1859, ALS, L.C.
not on the railroad line and was an hour late to his engagement after a long
cold ride in a wagon.\textsuperscript{57}

The Civil War began with the attack on Fort Sumter in Charleston harbor
April 12, 1861. It made travel even more difficult and further stressed the
resources of an already overworked cadre of bishops. Simpson was addi-
tionally in demand as a patriotic speaker. The flood of invitations stretched
an already overburdened schedule. Simpson was best known and in demand
to deliver an address which is called by several titles but was popularly
known as his “War Speech.” In it he argued that the Union would not be dis-
solved because, “God cannot afford to do without the United States.” His
regular contacts in Washington included Lincoln, who came to hear him
whenever he preached in the city; Edwin M. Stanton, Lincoln’s Secretary of
War; and Senator James Harlan who also served as Secretary of the Interior
during the second Lincoln administration. Simpson officiated at the mar-
riage of Lincoln’s son in the White House and gave the eulogy at the fallen
president’s grave in Springfield. In recognition of his work on behalf of the
Union cause, he was invited in April, 1865, at government expense to wit-
ness the raising of the United States flag over Ft. Sumter. On the order of
President Lincoln he was to be given free passage on the ship to accompa-
ny Major General Anderson who would conduct the ceremony and raise the
flag. Unfortunately, he had to telegraph the Secretary that he would not be
able to leave his conference.

The Simpsons eventually moved from Evanston to Philadelphia, some-
what nearer the center of the Bishop’s activities. As he became the senior
bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church, he was given more discretion
over the places he would go. But he never ceased to travel, and it was never
easy.

\textsuperscript{57}M.S. to Ellen, January 7, 1860, ALS, L.C.