

**IN THE WILD DARK PINES:
CRISIS, LEGITIMACY, AND THE ORIGINS OF THE
NATIONAL CAMP-MEETING ASSOCIATION
FOR THE PROMOTION OF HOLINESS**

SAMUEL AVERY-QUINN

In June of 1879, the Philadelphia *Christian Standard and Home Journal* published an account of the origins of the National Camp-Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness.¹ The Association, an organization of Methodist ministers, orchestrated camp meeting revivals throughout the United States between 1867 and 1929. The revivals drew thousands of adherents of holiness theology, were widely-reported in the press, and became one of the most public faces of the nineteenth-century holiness movement.² The *Standard's* editor, the Rev. John Swanel Inskip, served as the first president of the Association.

Inskip's article, for the most part, repeated a common narrative about the planning for the Association's first National Camp-Meeting held in Vine-land, New Jersey, in July of 1867.³ The common narrative began in August of 1866 with Harriett Drake, a Methodist laywoman from Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, traveling in the company of the Rev. John A. Wood, a popular holiness author. They were headed for a camp meeting in Long Branch, New Jersey, where, like many Victorian camp meetings in the Northeast, organizers would set aside a tent for the experience meetings of holiness Methodists. Lamenting their marginalization, Wood suggested someone should hold a camp meeting entirely for the promotion of holiness. Drake

¹ See George Hughes, *Days of Power in the Forest Temple: A Review of the Wonderful Work of God at Fourteen National Camp-Meetings, from 1867 to 1872* (Salem, OH: Allegheny Wesleyan Methodist Connection, 1975[1873]); Kenneth O. Brown, *Inskip, McDonald, Fowler: "Wholly and Forever Thine"* (Hazleton, PA: Holiness Archives, 1999); Delbert Rose, *Vital Holiness: A Theology of Christian Experience* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany Fellowship, 1975).

² The Holiness Movement was "a revival movement rising mainly within American Methodism in the late 1830s. It was dedicated to the promotion of the Wesleyan doctrine of Christian perfection understood as a call to Christian believers to experience entire sanctification as a second instantaneous work of grace subsequent to that of justification and regeneration," Melvin E. Dieter, *The Historical Dictionary of Methodism*, edited by Charles Yrigoyen, Jr. and Susan E. Warrick, (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2005), 155.

³ The origin story for the Association stemmed from Inskip's diary entries and letters between April 16 and July of 1867. The diary, now lost, was a primary source for a posthumous 1884 biography—William McDonald and John E. Searles, *The Life of Rev. John S. Inskip* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1985[1885]). Inskip drew on this material for an account printed as the first chapter of *Peniel; or, Face to Face With God*, eds., A. McLean and J. W. Eaton (New York: W.C. Palmer, Jr., 1869). The story was retold with some expansion in Hughes's *Days of Power in the Forest Temple*.

embraced the suggestion and offered to help pay for the endeavor. At Red Bank, John Wood discussed her offer with the Rev. William Osborne of the New Jersey Annual Conference. The following spring, Osborn pitched the idea to John Inskip.

In his 1879 account, however, John Inskip adds a striking detail to the story. Before planning the first National Camp-Meeting he learned that

there had been several meetings in the lower part of New Jersey, which were designated "full salvation conventions." The brethren who united in holding these were greatly quickened, and many were gloriously saved. At the time, we heard of these meetings with the deepest concern and regret. They seemed to be so novel, radical, and entirely at variance with our views of Church order and propriety, that we could not refrain expressing emphatically our fears and dissent. We supposed the result of all such things, would be that our brethren would become extreme, and their good would "be evil spoken of," and the cause we all loved would in this way suffer.⁴

That Inskip, a holiness advocate in Brooklyn, New York, would so strongly disapprove and fear the effects of holiness revivals a hundred miles away in the Pine Barrens of southern New Jersey opens a window onto the formation of the National Camp-Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness as well as anxieties holiness advocates and groups held in maintaining cultural legitimacy within the Methodist church.⁵

For John Inskip and other holiness advocates of the middle decades of the nineteenth century, adherence to the cultural codes of Methodism demonstrated the authenticity of their Wesleyan social identity and their loyalty to the Methodist Episcopal Church. Cultural legitimacy was a resource holiness advocates could draw upon in seeking acceptance within the church. Despite their loyalty, the holiness movement of the middle decades of the nineteenth century was a marketplace of holiness orientations with competing claims of Wesleyan authenticity. As a whole, the movement faced a range of criticisms and debates on the immediacy of sanctification, the need for an experience of a heart strangely warmed confirming sanctification, and the dangers of uninhibited emotionalism for Methodist propriety.⁶ In such a milieu, cultural legitimacy could be threatened by an event seeming to

⁴ "Origin of National Camp-Meetings," *Christian Standard and Home Journal*, July 14, 1879.

⁵ Borrowed from organizational sociology and management studies, legitimacy, as defined by Suchman, "is a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions," Mark C. Suchman, "Managing Legitimacy: Strategic and Institutional Approaches," *Academy of Management Review* 20.3 (1995): 571-610. See also Alex Bitektine, "Toward a Theory of Social Judgement of Organizations: The Case of Legitimacy, Reputation, and Status," *Management Review* 36.1 (2011): 151-179; Scott Droege, Michelle Lane, and Shane Spiller, "Intersecting Three Muddy Roads: Stability, Legitimacy, and Change," *Journal of Managerial Issues* 23.1 (2011): 96-112; Steven E. Kaplan and Robert G. Ruland, "Positive Theory, Rationality and Accounting Regulation," *Critical Perspectives on Accounting* 2.4 (1991): 361-374.

⁶ For mid-century debates on holiness, see Melvin E. Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1996), 20-35.

confirm criticisms of the movement.⁷ For holiness advocates, a legitimacy crisis, perhaps widely-reported displays of uninhibited emotionalism in holiness revivals spreading through the wild dark Pine Barrens of New Jersey may have fostered efforts to counter the crisis—reactions that created a new organized form of holiness revivalism.⁸

John Inskip and Parlor Holiness

When John Inskip learned of holiness revivals in southern New Jersey, he had participated in the holiness movement for little more than a year. Born in Huntingdon, England, on August 10, 1816, Inskip converted to Methodism under the sway of a revival near his family's adopted home of Chester County, Pennsylvania, in 1832.⁹ Even before his ministerial career in southeastern Pennsylvania, Ohio, and, by 1852, New York City, Inskip's inner life was marked by a sense of spiritual discontent. Twice—once in 1835 as a student at Dickinson College in Pennsylvania, and again in 1853 after attending a camp meeting at Sing Sing, New York—he stood on the cusp of an experience he suspected was entire sanctification, what John Wesley described as a “habitual disposition of the soul” beginning “the moment we are justified . . . till, in another instant, the heart is cleansed from sin.”¹⁰ Each time, however, the experience proved fleeting.

Inskip became increasingly ambivalent about holiness theology. While he found the idea as expressed by Wesley appealingly clear, the holiness he saw in practice was much less appealing. Writing in his 1851 *Methodism Explained and Defended*, he claimed that too often the sanctification experience was misrepresented by “wild and deluded enthusiast[s].”¹¹ Further abusing the doctrine were new and contradictory theories seeking “to explain a subject already glowing with enrapturing simplicity.” For Inskip, debates over holiness detracted from the core of holiness as a state of keeping the commandment to “love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.”

Inskip's argument was not far from the orthodox orientation to holiness that mid-century Methodists including Timothy Merritt and Nathan Bangs helped establish.¹² Orthodox Wesleyan holiness was the long spiritual walk beginning at conversion/justification. The path was marked not by wild extravagance, but by the quiet assurances of what Bangs called the “witness

⁷ Blake E. Ashforth and Barrie W. Gibbs, “The Double-edge of Organizational Legitimation,” *Organization Science* 1.2 (1990): 177-194.

⁸ See also, Russell E. Richey, “Shady Grove, Garden and Wilderness: Methodism and the American Woodland,” *Methodist History* 51.4 (July, 2013): 258-274.

⁹ McDonald and Searles, 10.

¹⁰ John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, as Believed and Taught by the Reverend Mr. John Wesley, From the Year 1725, to the year 1777* (London: R. Hawes, 1777).

¹¹ John S. Inskip, *Methodism Explained and Defended* (Cincinnati, OH: H.S. & J. Applegate, 1851), 60-61.

¹² Delbert Rose includes Merritt and Bangs, along with Wilbur Fisk, Stephen Olin, James Caughey, and Bishops Leonidas Hamline and Edmund Janes as mid-century proponents of Wesleyan holiness (30).

of the Spirit.”¹³ Pursuit of holiness was not all-consuming so that advocates developed identities and allegiances separate from the Methodist church. Yet, for a denomination with a tradition of practical theology and active lay movements, the existence of orthodoxy was not sufficient to inhibit new theological interpretations. By mid-century a growing number of writers offered a range of interpretations, one of which was embraced by John Inskip’s wife, Martha.

Like her husband, Martha Inskip had experienced multiple “seasons of special consecration,” and so too would each pass.¹⁴ In the winter of 1863, Martha’s spiritual disquiet led her to attend holiness gatherings at the New York City home of Phoebe and Walter Palmer. Calling her orientation a shorter way, Phoebe Palmer answered Wesley’s paradox of holiness as both a process and an instantaneous event by reorienting the traditional view so that sanctification could occur in an instant followed by a process of self-monitoring and public testimony.¹⁵ Martha Inskip’s instant of sanctification occurred at a Sing Sing, New York, camp meeting in August of 1864.

Upon learning of Martha’s sanctification experience, John Inskip was mortified. In the weeks that followed, contrary to his expectations, Martha did not behave as a deluded enthusiast. She seemed to have such joy and peace that she reminded John of his experiences of near-sanctification.¹⁶ Later that August, Inskip had his third sanctification experience when a sermon to his South Third Street, Brooklyn congregation turned into an exhortation to consecrate their lives to God. Inskip punctuated his sermon by proclaiming, “I am, O Lord! wholly and forever thine.”¹⁷

On September 14, 1864, John Inskip accompanied Martha to his first Tuesday Meeting at the Palmers. The meetings were a social nexus for the holiness movement, providing space for performing the holiness theology Phoebe Palmer wrote of and the texts thousands of holiness adherents read. Attendees often overflowed the cultural hearth that was the Palmers’ Victorian parlor. The parlor space allowed holiness advocates to maintain the intimate sociability and self-assessment of the primitive Methodist class-meeting, while conducting a Victorian exercise in self-presentation—the fashion, use of space, and comportment of middle-class, genteel selfhood were on

¹³ See Nathan Bangs, *The Errors of Hopkinsianism Detected and Refuted* (New York: Printed for the Author, 1816), 264-268.

¹⁴ “Perfect Peace,” *Guide and Beauty of Holiness*, February, 1866. See also Kenneth O. Brown, “‘The World-Wide Evangelist’: The Life and Work of Martha Inskip,” *Methodist History* 21. 4 (1983): 179-191.

¹⁵ See Phoebe Palmer, *The Way of Holiness, with Notes by the Way; Being a Narrative of Religious Experience Resulting from a Determination to be a Bible Christian* (New York: Printed for the Author); Richard Wheatley, *The Life and Letters of Mrs. Phoebe Palmer* (New York: W.C. Palmer, Jr., 1876); Charles E. White, “The Beauty of Holiness: The Career and Influence of Phoebe Palmer,” *Methodist History* 25.2 (1997): 67-75; idem., *The Beauty of Holiness: Phoebe Palmer as Theologian, Revivalist, Feminist, and Humanitarian* (Grand Rapids, MI: Asbury Press, 1986).

¹⁶ “A Thrilling Testimony,” *Guide to Holiness*, January, 1865.

¹⁷ McDonald and Searles, 151.

display in a see-and-be-seen setting.¹⁸

Following his sanctification, John Inskip wrestled with his impetuous nature, gave up tobacco, avoided “foolish and unbecoming mirth” which exercised a “mournful influence upon the soul,” and became a regular attendee of the Tuesday Meetings.¹⁹ He subscribed to Phoebe Palmer’s *Guide to Holiness*, purchased her published works, and read extensively on holiness.²⁰ The synthesis of holiness theology Inskip created during this period would strongly shape his later ministerial endeavors.

The central tenets of John Inskip’s post-sanctification orientation to holiness were within the mainstream of holiness theology in the 1860s. Writing in his diary, he claimed there were “three points of the utmost importance” for promoting holiness.²¹ He stressed that sanctification was in addition to the justification experienced at conversion, that faith was necessary for obtaining sanctification, and that sanctification, “when obtained, it should be acknowledged” through social testimony. As much as Inskip’s three-part model of sanctification mirrored Phoebe Palmer’s shorter way, his published writings and diary entries from 1864 to early 1867 describe a holiness practice that sought to avoid doctrinal disputes, focused on a restrained personal experience of sanctification, and sought to clarify the relations between faith and experience.

Returning from a June 11th New York Preachers’ Meeting, Inskip lamented that the discussion was bitter. Critics of holiness theology attended the meeting prepared to debate the nature of sanctification.²² Inskip found no pleasure in the debate. Before his sanctification, he claimed that whether sanctification was gradual or instantaneous was “of but little consequence” as holiness was “more a matter of experience and practice, than of theory and discussion.”²³ In his post-sanctification thinking, Inskip embraced the holiness movement’s claims for sanctification as a process distinct from conversion. He remained, however, convinced the controversies on “incidental

¹⁸ For specific treatment of the Tuesday Meetings see George Hughes, *Fragrant Memories of the Tuesday Meeting and the Guide to Holiness, and Their Fifty Years’ Work for Jesus* (New York: Palmer and Hughes, 1886). On the balance of social respectability, class, and Methodist identity at mid-century, see Kathryn Long, “Consecrated Respectability: Phoebe Palmer and the Refinement of American Methodism,” *Methodism and the Shaping of American Culture*, eds., Nathan O. Hatch and John H. Wigger (Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books, 1992). On the religious and cultural significance of the Victorian parlor, see Katherine C. Grier, *Culture and Comfort: Parlor Making and Middle-class identity, 1850-1930* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press); Thad Logan, *The Victorian Parlour* (New York: Oxford UP, 2001); Colleen McDannell, *The Christian Home in Victorian America, 1840-1900* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1986).

¹⁹ McDonald and Searles, 159.

²⁰ Phoebe Palmer, *Pioneer Experiences; or, The Gift of Power Received by Faith* (New York: W. C. Palmer, Jr., 1872), 57.

²¹ McDonald and Searles, 181.

²² The debates were published in *True Method of Promoting Perfect Love*, ed., George W. Woodruff (New York: Foster & Palmer, Jr., 1867). For the controversy surrounding the meeting and the publication of Woodruff’s edited volume, see A. Gregory Schneider, “A Conflict of Associations: The National Camp-Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness versus the Methodist Episcopal Church,” *Church History* 66.2 (1997): 268-293.

²³ John S. Inskip, *Methodism Explained and Defended*, 62.

and non-essential” theological points of doctrine detracted from what was far more a matter of personal practice than a subject for public debate.

For Inskip, correct understanding of the core of the doctrine of holiness was necessary for correct holiness practice. Engaging in holiness practices without correct knowledge was fraught with dangers, and the emotional life of the holiness adherent was of particular danger. Inskip wrote that his own emotional life required vigilance. He was in need of patience and resignation, and, as he confided in his journal, he suspected that “exultant joy may not, as a prevailing form of experience, be best for me.”²⁴ The holiness seeker, Inskip feared, relied too much on emotions as indicators of authentic holiness experience. Addressing the New York Preachers’ Meeting in 1866, Inskip argued that “the faith of the well-instructed believer is not based upon his experience, however clear and bright that may be. His experience is the fruit of his faith. He does not believe because he feels, but he feels because he believes.”²⁵ Emotions, while dangerous, were an acceptable part of the experience of holiness if subordinated to the rule of faith. If emotions were too central, faith would be weak and leave new adherents with an improper theology.

In the winter of 1865, the Methodist press in New York put holiness emotionalism on display. Accounts of a growing holiness revival in the New Jersey Pine Barrens shocked Inskip. He found the reported Pine Barrens revival practices unfamiliar to his own experience of Victorian parlor holiness. More like the uninhibited emotionalism of the Second Great Awakening that John Fanning Watson’s 1814 *Methodist Error* derided as “enthusiasm,” or the kind of religious exercises Isaac Taylor’s influential 1853 *Fanaticism* characterized as “fanatical extravagance,” the revivals had dangerous implications for the holiness movement.²⁶

²⁴ McDonald and Searles, 177.

²⁵ “Entire Sanctification. Address of Rev. J. S. Inskip Before the New York Preacher’s Meeting,” *Christian Advocate* (New York), March 14, 1866.

²⁶ The novel, radical revivals risked the wild delusion Inskip criticized in his *Methodism Explained and Defended*. Yet, public displays of emotionalism and their defense had long accompanied the Methodists. Wesley’s 1749 sermon, *The Nature of Enthusiasm*, was a response to critics charging his young movement with too much emotionalism. Facing the emotionalism of Second Great Awakening camp meeting revivalism, Watson divided the fervent display of the newly converted from the wild exercises of the already converted. While allowing for the former, he derided the latter as enthusiasm. See John Fanning Watson, *Methodist Error: or, Friendly Christian Advice to Those Methodists who Indulge in Extravagant Emotions and Bodily Exercises* (Cincinnati, OH: Phillips & Speer, 1819[1814]). By mid-century, use of the term enthusiasm in Methodist and interdenominational holiness circles shifted closer to the margin of fanaticism, see Isaac Taylor, *Fanaticism* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1853[1833]). By the late 1860s, detractors of unorthodox holiness orientations seized on the phrase “sanctification fanaticism.” Methodist and holiness advocate Daniel Steele defined the phrase as a milder version of religious fanaticism which throughout history had proved malign. In Steele’s caricature, the holiness fanatic, under the supposed direction of the Holy Spirit, abandoned reason and broke standards of propriety in worship. See “Fanaticism - Sanctification,” *The Primitive Methodist Magazine, For the Year 1874, Volume XII (New Series)*, 512-517.

Cape May on Fire

The Pine Barrens are an oak-pine forest covering over 1.4 million acres on the Outer Coastal Plain of New Jersey. To the south and east the pine lands are bordered by salt marshes broken by bays and river inlets, while to the north and west deciduous forests roughly follow the line of the Inner Coastal Plain. For nineteenth-century travelers, this division meant passing from one region of rolling farmland and oak forests, and into another region of flat, sandy pine land, cedar swamps, and mosquitos.²⁷

The area was a backcountry, tied to Philadelphia and towns on the Inner Coastal Plain by few roads and fewer navigable rivers such as the Maurice and the Tuckahoe. The economy of the Pine Barrens rose and fell throughout the century with changing demands for fuel wood and charcoal that came with the growth of Philadelphia. Many Barrens residents took seasonal work chopping wood, preparing charcoal, milling, and in maritime trades. They grew modest amounts of corn and rye, and raised cattle. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the region was dotted by mill villages and modest towns with sizable labor pools not just in timbering, but also iron and glass-making.²⁸

Methodism intruded upon the southern Barrens as early as the 1772 travels of Francis Asbury. While living in Philadelphia, Asbury frequently ventured into southern New Jersey. On one visit to the mill village of Batsto in 1791, he found its residents to be “rude and rough, and strangely ignorant of God.”²⁹ Asbury’s sentiments paralleled prejudices against the region held throughout the nineteenth century by visiting urbane travelers. Describing the southwest margins of the Barrens in 1861, Philadelphia lawyer Charles Landis claimed the area was “a wilderness of a forbidding aspect” and its scattered residents “wood choppers and charcoal burners who lived around in log cabins with clay floors, a people as simple, and almost as barbarous in their habits as though they lived a thousand miles from Philadelphia.”³⁰ Visiting the same tract of land in 1868, New Yorker Mary Schley complained “of the sand into which one’s feet sunk at every step” and the “mosquitos which settled on face, hands and clothing. They sawed, they bored, they pumped.”³¹

Negative perceptions of the region were aided by low population density,

²⁷ See Jack McCormack and Richard T. T. Forman, “Introduction: Location and Boundaries of the New Jersey Pine Barrens,” *Pine Barrens: Ecosystem and Landscape*, ed., Richard T. T. Forman (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1979), xli-xlviii.

²⁸ Peter O. Wacker, “Human Exploitation of the New Jersey Pine Barrens Before 1900,” *Pine Barrens: Ecosystem and Landscape*, ed., Richard T. T. Forman (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1979), 3-23.

²⁹ Francis Asbury, *Journal of Rev. Francis Asbury, Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, Volume II (New York: Lane & Scott, 1852), 135.

³⁰ “The Settlement of Vineland in New Jersey,” *Fraser’s Magazine* (New Series) XI (January, 1875).

³¹ Mary Schley, “Early Settlers of Vineland, West of Malaga Road” *The Vineland Historical Magazine* 1.1 (1916): 7-11.

swampy terrain, and few towns sizable enough to feature Methodist societies who could afford substantial brick and stone church buildings. By 1860, the New Jersey Annual Conference boasted 19,466 members, more than half of the state's Methodist population.³² However, Methodist societies in the Barrens accounted for less than 18% of the conference's membership.³³ Yet, it was among these small, backcountry congregations that holiness revivals spread in 1865 and 1866.

In August of 1865, word of a camp meeting spread through Methodist societies in southern New Jersey. The meeting was to begin on August 21 near Seaville, New Jersey.³⁴ Central to planning the revival were the Reverends Charles H. Whitecar and William Osborn. Both were holiness advocates. Whitecar, the Bridgeton District's Presiding Elder, was well-known and widely-respected. Osborn was an eccentric, fervent preacher. Having rarely stayed in one pastorate for long, his tempestuous ministerial energies would, within a dozen years, propel him to co-found the National Camp-Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness, fundraise for a southern New Jersey seminary, found the camp meeting resort of Ocean Grove, preside over northern Methodism's district in Jacksonville, Florida, and serve as a missionary in India.³⁵

Holding the meeting near the line of the Glassboro-Millville-Cape May Railroad which connected Philadelphia to the vacation resort of Cape May, Whitecar and Osborn expected thousands of attendees.³⁶ The railroad company provided reduced price excursion tickets for passengers, their tents, and supplies for the nine day meeting. Although not explicitly a holiness camp meeting, advocates such as the Rev. John Stockton of Bridgeton thought otherwise.

Seaville was John Stockton's third camp meeting that August. In a letter to the *Guide to Holiness* he described his weeks in the woods as a "happy privilege" as he witnessed "so much interest among God's ministers and people on the glorious subject of holiness to the Lord; and many, very many, were purified" at Pennsgrove, Pitsgrove, and, especially, Seaville.³⁷ At

³² *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church for the Year 1860* (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1866), 42-44.

³³ Although the boundaries of the Pine Barrens in the 1860s are difficult to determine with precision, Harshberger's work in the region provides a glimpse of the pine lands at the turn of the twentieth century. See John William Harsberger, *The Vegetation of the New Jersey Pine-barrens: An Ecologic Investigation* (Philadelphia: Christopher Sower Company, 1916). Given the boundaries Harshberger identified, Methodist societies at least partially in the Barrens in 1860 included: Absecon, Bargaintown, Cumberland, Farmingdale, Lebanon, Longcoming, May's Landing, Medford, Millville (First Methodist Episcopal Church and Second Street Church), Pemberton, Port Elizabeth, Tom's River, Vincentown, Waterford, Williamstown, Willow Grove, and Winslow.

³⁴ *Cape May Ocean Wave*, July 19, 1865.

³⁵ See Lucy Drake Osborn, *Pioneer Days of Ocean Grove* (New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1911); idem., *Heavenly Pearls Set in a Life: A Record of Experiences and Labors in America, India and Australia* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1893).

³⁶ "Camp Meeting," *Cape May Ocean Wave*, August 23, 1865.

³⁷ John Stockton, "Revival in New Jersey," *Guide to Holiness*, November, 1865.

Seaville, ministers on the grounds received “the blessing of perfect love, and baptism of fire” and preached so that “truly the stand was on fire.” Stockton declared the Seaville meeting a “Full-salvation Seminary in the woods.” Yet, he claimed his letter failed to capture the profound nature of the meeting. He urged the *Guide* to print a full account from another attendee—perhaps, he suggested, the Rev. George Hughes.

In December of 1865, the *Guide* reprinted George Hughes’ report of the meeting as it appeared that October in the *Christian Advocate* (New York).³⁸ For Hughes, as for Stockton, the Seaville camp meeting kindled a great fire of holiness in southern New Jersey—yet, for Hughes, such fire was not a surprise. Calling Townsend and Osborn “burning heralds of ‘full salvation,’” Hughes, a holiness advocate, was the Presiding Elder of the Trenton District of the New Jersey Annual Conference, and previously served in southern New Jersey with both men. During the preceding year he knew they preached to Methodist societies which subsequently experienced holiness revivals.

Expecting more holiness preaching at Seaville, Hughes arrived to find “a cloud of glory covered the encampment” while “angels and chariots of fire” surrounded the grounds.³⁹ During the meeting, as sermon after sermon was delivered by preachers whose hearts were strangely warmed, Hughes saw scores of attendees “plunged into the purple flood.” The first Sabbath evening, Hughes’s preaching found a fervent and emotional flood of backwoods revivalism.

That Sunday, services lasted well into the night. For readers of the *Guide to Holiness*, Hughes’s account conjured images of “seekers of pardon and holiness” gathered before the stand, amidst the Divine presence:

woods were resounding with the cries of those who were pleading at the throne, and the shouts of those who had entered into liberty. About midnight it seemed as though all heaven was aglow above us with fire, and the flame ran along the earth, and melted all hearts. The scene was marvelous. I knelt down upon the stand, overpowered with the divine presence. A Quakeress standing upon a bench, her eye kindled with unearthly light, was prophesying; a Baptist was jumping and shouting; and a Presbyterian, amid fast-flowing tears, lifting up his voice in shouts of praise. The whole assembly was wrapped in a mantle of fire.⁴⁰

The fire spread through the grounds and continued the following day and evening of the revival. What John Stockton saw as a “holiness seminary in the woods,” Hughes declared a Pentecost.

Following the camp meeting, holiness revivals spread through the region. The *Christian Advocate*, *Methodist Home Journal*, and the *Guide to Holiness* published announcements and brief accounts of these southern New

³⁸ George Hughes, “Cape May on Fire,” *Guide to Holiness*, December, 1865.

³⁹ Hughes, 178.

⁴⁰ Hughes, 179.

Jersey revivals and holiness conventions.⁴¹ Revivals swept from the Seaville camp meeting to Millville where the Rev. Philip Cline, fresh from his sanctification at Seaville, kindled a holiness revival that fall at First Methodist Episcopal Church. Visiting the southern Barrens in January, 1866, the Rev. Ruliff V. Lawrence found a holiness revival at the Head of the River church near Tuckahoe. Holiness was a central theme of a Glassboro revival in May, 1866, as well as at that summer's camp meetings including Pennsgrove in August and Belle Plain in September. The pastor of Millville's Second Street Church in the winter of 1866–1867, the Rev. Alfred K. Street, wrote to the *Christian Advocate* of what the paper called “the most gracious display of revival power.”⁴² Before the close of the year “greatly increased interest had been cherished by the members on the subject of entire sanctification” and during a revival beginning on January 2, Street claimed over 200 attendees were converted.

For urban holiness advocates such as John Inskip, the southern New Jersey revivals, framed by accounts of the first Seaville meeting, may have seemed far from the restrained propriety of urban parlor holiness. Coupled with the negative backwoods stereotypes of the region, the revivals sparked by Charles Whitecar and William Osborne exposed a raucous and rural face of the movement. Yet it would be William Osborn spending an evening with John and Martha Inskip that would bring the New York minister and urban parlor holiness to the New Jersey woods.

A National Camp-Meeting in the Pine Barrens

On April 16, 1867, John Inskip wrote in his diary: “Bro. W. B. Osborn, of the New Jersey Conference, spent the night with us. The evening was occupied in talking over a proposition to hold a camp-meeting for the special purpose of promoting the work of entire sanctification.”⁴³ After listening to the proposal, Inskip knelt with his guest and prayed for guidance. Waiting followed prayer, weeping followed waiting, and an experience Inskip describes as “the heavenly glory” came upon them. The experience was compelling and soon they turned to their ministerial networks for help in planning the meeting.

On May 11, 1867, the *Methodist Home Journal* reported on a planned “National Encampment” promoting holiness to be held “early in the season” in New Jersey.⁴⁴ The announcement drew swift criticism from holiness op-

⁴¹ The *Guide* took particular interest in the area during this period, publishing multiple longer accounts: “Revival in New Jersey,” *Guide to Holiness*, November, 1865; “The Work of Holiness in Millville, N.J.,” *Guide to Holiness*, January, 1866; “A Day at Tuckahoe, N.J.,” *Guide to Holiness*, February, 1866; “A Spring Revival,” *Guide to Holiness*, July, 1866; “Are You Going to Camp Meeting?,” *Guide to Holiness*, August, 1866; “A Minister’s Vacation,” *Guide to Holiness*, November, 1866; “Penns-Grove Camp-Meeting,” *Guide to Holiness*, November, 1866.

⁴² *Christian Advocate* (New York), March 21, 1867.

⁴³ McDonald and Searles, 187.

⁴⁴ “National Encampment,” *Methodist Home Journal* (Philadelphia), May 11, 1867. A second announcement appeared as “Camp Meeting,” *Christian Advocate* (New York), June 6, 1867.

ponents.⁴⁵ Critics claimed a special camp meeting for holiness was divisive and outside the structure of the church. In Philadelphia, opposition forced Inskip and Osborn to hold their June 13th meeting in the Methodist Book Room on Arch Street instead of Spring Garden Methodist Episcopal Church as planned.

That morning on Arch Street, George Hughes could almost hear angels' wings. A "holy atmosphere seemed to pervade the room," he claimed, as participants, confirmed Vineland, New Jersey, as the location for the camp meeting and delegated planning tasks to two committees.⁴⁶ Most participants were Methodist clergy whose advocacy of holiness, according to John Inskip, "had long been well defined" and "whose views were known to be purely Wesleyan."⁴⁷ Serving in an axis from New York City to Trenton, and Salem, New Jersey, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Baltimore, Maryland, more than half were at larger urban churches. Eight of the urban ministers, together with John A. Wood and Alfred K. Street, formed a National Committee tasked with directing the revival.⁴⁸ A second, local Committee of Arrangements would prepare the grounds, announce the meeting in local newspapers, make arrangements for railroad service, and for tents and supplies. This committee consisted of six ministers and five laymen from southern New Jersey, including Bridgeton District Presiding Elder Aaron Ballard, and Stephen A. Garrison, the Superintendent of the Glassboro-Millville-Cape May Railroad.⁴⁹

For George Hughes, the selection of Vineland was providential. Crediting the holiness revivals in South Jersey with "preparing the place," he praised the accessibility of the state as its location, "situated as it is between the two great cities of New York and Philadelphia, and its accessibility from every quarter, gave it the desired geographical advantages."⁵⁰ While Hughes saw New Jersey as centrally accessible, it is questionable whether his view was widely shared. Only one rail line, the Camden and Amboy, connected New York City with Philadelphia, and observers had long complained the

⁴⁵ "Vineland Camp Meeting," *Christian Advocate* (New York), July 1, 1867. For criticisms Bridgeton District Presiding Elder Aaron Ballard faced for his support of the Vineland camp meeting, see his testimony in McLean and Eaton, *Penuel*, 469-470. The challenges of securing a location for the June 13th planning meeting in Philadelphia are discussed in Brown, *Inskip, McDonald, Fowler*, 79.

⁴⁶ Hughes, *Days of Power*, 51.

⁴⁷ McDonald and Searles, 188; A. McLean and J. W. Eaton, 9.

⁴⁸ John Inskip in New York City, Benjamin Adams in Brooklyn, New York, Ruliff V. Lawrence in New Brunswick, George Hughes in Trenton, New Jersey, Anthony Atwood and Alfred Cookman in Philadelphia, and George C.M. Roberts and Andrew Longacre in Baltimore, Maryland.

⁴⁹ Local committee ministers included William Osborn, H.M. Brown and John Heisler of Salem, Charles K. Flemming of Millville, and Robert J. Andrews of Vineland.

⁵⁰ Hughes, 37.

company's monopoly stifled the accessibility of southern New Jersey.⁵¹

Closer to Philadelphia than New York City, Vineland was located on the line of the Glassboro-Millville-Cape May Railroad, and was much closer to the geographic core of the 1865 and 1866 holiness revivals than any location on the northern New Jersey line of the Camden and Amboy. If not centrally-located, Vineland may have offered a supportive location for a holiness gathering that would not interfere with the operation of other camp meetings in the region.⁵² Regardless of its geography, George Hughes praised the character of the community. He found the town idyllic, occupied by residents from "almost every State in the Union," who were "characterized by intelligence, culture, and social refinement."⁵³

At that margin of the Pine Barrens, Vineland offered holiness advocates a stark contrast to the backcountry woods. Founded in 1862 by Philadelphia lawyer and land speculator Charles K. Landis, Vineland was one of several quasi-utopian experiments in the wilds of New Jersey.⁵⁴ Vineland's utopian communalism celebrated merchant/commercial capitalism, individualism, and, through landscape design, urban Victorian ideals of both a model city and life in the country. Landis reasoned that individual prosperity, industriousness, contentment, and virtue could be promoted through material conditions and such moral strategies as he could instill through landscape design and the civic contract of his settlement.⁵⁵

By 1867, over 8,000 settlers, mostly from New England and Pennsylvania, subscribed to Vineland's civic contract, its moral order or a set of definitions about what is proper to do and what can be reasonably expected from others.⁵⁶ Landis fostered settlers' civic endeavors. He provided churches, schools, and civic organizations with free lots and encouraged regular festi-

⁵¹ By the 1860s, four railroad lines carried passengers from New York City to Boston, more between the city and Albany, and yet only one line connected the city to Philadelphia—a shorter trip than to Albany and a trip that cost almost four times as much, George L. A. Reilly, "The Camden and Amboy Railroad in New Jersey Politics, 1830–1871," Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1951. For a history of railroads in the southern Pine Barrens, see Jeffrey M. Dorwart, *Cape May County, New Jersey: The Making of an American Resort Community* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1992), 93–99.

⁵² In the context of Vineland boosterism, Charles Landis's support for the National Camp-Meeting came at a time when Landis was actively promoting Vineland's bid for a new Methodist seminary. See "The Methodist Seminary," *Weekly Independent* (Vineland), May 18, 1867; "Methodist Seminary," *Weekly Independent* (Vineland), June 15, 1867. A July meeting would have been well before the area's camp meeting season—camp meetings at Pennsgrove, Glassboro, and Seaville, New Jersey, held their revivals in a period from August through September.

⁵³ Hughes, 57–58.

⁵⁴ See Perdita Buchan, *Utopia, New Jersey: Travels in the Nearest Eden* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rivergate Books, 2007).

⁵⁵ Charles K. Landis, *The Founder's Own Story of the Founding of Vineland, New Jersey* (Vineland, NJ: Vineland Historical and Antiquarian Society, 1903[1882]); idem., *The Settlement of Vineland in New Jersey*.

⁵⁶ Robert Wuthnow, *Meaning and Moral Order* (Berkeley, CA: U California P, 1987). For the close tether of moral orders to a sense of place, see Ethan Yorgason, "Creating Regional Identity, Moral Orders and Spatial Contiguity: Imagined Landscapes of Mormon Americanization," *Cultural Geographies* 9 (2002): 448–466.

vals. Edward Hale, an advocate of urban social reform, noted that in 1867, the town boasted eleven agricultural societies, five fraternal orders, three health associations, sixteen district schools, one private school, a Methodist seminary, a library, a historical society, seven societies for art and literature, three benevolent associations, twelve churches, and five newspapers, but, Hale cautioned “many of these are doubtless larger on paper than anywhere else, still they represent something.”⁵⁷ Acceptance of Vineland’s social contract and participation in civic life gave residents a social identity distinct from people “over there in Jersey,” and, by contrast, left traditional rhythms of daily life in the Pine Barrens morally suspect.

On July 16, 1867, F. P. Crocker’s *Vineland Weekly Independent*—which advertised in trade publications with the slogan “The Wilderness has Blossomed as the Rose”—reported on preparations for the National holiness camp meeting.⁵⁸ On the northern edge of Vineland’s downtown, workers cleared a 40 acre tract to make way for both mundane and sacred temporary architecture. At the margins of the park, workers dug wells, prepared livery yards, and, pitched boarding tents, congregational tents, and so many family tents that no reporter attempted to count their number. Workers created a central worship area at the core of the park. They erected a preacher’s stand, cleared sandy ground and nailed together pine plank benches. Northeast of the central worship area, they built “a large enclosure fitted up for a daily prayer meeting,” and covered it with “roof well supported and well covered with boughs.”⁵⁹ During the meeting, the bough-covered tabernacle would host daily prayer meetings led by Phoebe Palmer.

When the meeting opened, the afternoon of June 17, 1867, was warm with clear skies over Vineland. Shortly after 3 o’clock, after the final verses of the hymn “There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood” were sung, John Inskip led the congregation in prayer. Ending the prayer, Inskip looked to the gathered hundreds of mostly Methodists and proclaimed “it is evident to me, and it must be to all, that God is present in this place, and the fact of His special presence is to us a clear indication of His approval of this meeting.”⁶⁰

Inskip followed the opening service’s declaration of the manifest presence of God by addressing the behavior of attendees. Awareness of the Divine presence required attendees to set aside differences, disputes, and fault finding. The meeting should be marked by a “spirit of mutual forbearance and brotherly love.” The idea of “holiness to the Lord” should, he argued, be the subject of every sermon, exhortation, and prayer, and the men and women present should exemplify holiness. He encouraged participants to take their time on the grounds with “Godly seriousness” by leaving “all trifling

⁵⁷ Edward E. Hale, *Sybaris and Other Homes* (Boston, MA: Fields, Osgood, and Company, 1869), 140-143.

⁵⁸ “Camp Meeting,” *Weekly Independent* (Vineland), July 16, 1867. Beginning with the July 6, 1867 issue of his paper, Crocker provided extensive coverage of the preparation for and events of the camp meeting.

⁵⁹ “Camp Meeting,” *Weekly Independent* (Vineland), July 16, 1867.

⁶⁰ McLean and Eaton, 15.

and temporal matters aside, and in all soberness, talk of our experience in the deep things of God.”⁶¹

Inskip’s concern for holy comportment was buttressed by the meeting’s liturgical landscape. The central worship area would be consecrated, “holy ground, covered with the divine panoply.”⁶² Services at the stand were the encampment’s largest-scale liturgical performances. Here the holiness advocates of the planning group made an explicit case for an institutional sanction for seeking the higher Christian life, and for the genuine Wesleyan roots of holiness theology. While Presbyterians, Congregationalists and others were on the grounds, from the meeting’s opening remarks by Aaron Ballard, to Bishop Matthew Simpson’s sermon on the meeting’s final Sabbath, any trappings of interdenominational holiness were subsumed by the Methodist character of services at the stand.⁶³ The presence of Bishop Simpson and his family was widely-reported and drew thousands of new attendees to the meeting that weekend. While his presence did not speak for the whole of the Methodist episcopacy, holiness advocates translated his presence as tacit approval.

Apart from the imprimatur of one Methodist bishop, most of the meeting’s twenty-six speakers were Methodist ministers from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York. Their sermons demonstrated a common concern for expressing the doctrine of entire sanctification in clear language. Sermons by John Inskip, John A. Wood, and J. W. Horne placed the experience of entire sanctification within a traditional Wesleyan framework of sin, redemption, and justification.⁶⁴ Sanctification, as Inskip and others claimed, was a full cure for the disease of a justified, but impartially sanctified and restless self. Other sermons by Alfred Cookman, George Wells, and Benjamin Pomeroy, cast holiness as a powerful refining fire sufficient to revitalize the Methodist church in the face of skepticism, formalism, and worldliness.⁶⁵ The sermons had a didactic quality of offering doctrinal statements on holiness, appropriate steps to take in pursuit of holiness, and promises of the individual, collective, and institutional fruits of the experience.

As much as services at the stand were an opportunity for holiness advocates to frame their holiness teachings as truly Wesleyan, the camp meeting also provided an opportunity for testimony and the social modeling of holiness on an unprecedented scale. In line with the larger holiness movement’s emphasis on experiential religion and social reinforcement, holiness advocates stressed the efficacy of small group gatherings in the tabernacle and congregational tents. Indeed, the bough-covered tabernacle in which Phoebe Palmer and her husband Walter directed experience meetings was the largest

⁶¹ McLean and Eaton, 17.

⁶² Hughes, *Vineland Encampment*, 91.

⁶³ Hughes, *Days of Power in the Forest Temple*, 59.

⁶⁴ McLean and Eaton, 15-17, 20-28, 89-95.

⁶⁵ McLean and Eaton, 30-35, 38-49, 128-136. See also Benjamin Pomeroy, *Visions from Modern Mounts, Namely: Vineland, Manheim, Round Lake, Hamilton, Oakington, Canton, with Other Selections* (Albany, NY: Van Benthuysen, 1871), 7-30.

structure on the camp ground. For George Hughes, such gatherings provided occasions for “simple testimonies . . . bearing upon the great theme, smote hearts with conviction which had resisted the most powerful preaching, the most searching pulpit appeals.”⁶⁶ Attendees “melted down into the mould of love” where the ground was “swept by the mighty power of God.” This power, as a number of attendees claimed, was a manifestation of the Holy Spirit—not through uninhibited emotionalism, but through an authentic sociability marked by “hours of burning testimony.”

Conclusion

In September of 1865, the *Guide to Holiness* printed George Hughes’s account of the National Camp-Meeting at Vineland. Declaring the meeting a “modern pentecost,” if not the “most memorable encampment of modern times,” Hughes portrayed Vineland as a divinely-sanctioned success. Sermons were earnest and “clothed with power.” Experience meetings were times when “heaven and earth were in glorious contact” bringing at least 500 attendees into the sanctified fold. In contrast with his report of Seaville where the Holy Spirit burned with an emotional fire, at Vineland Hughes found the Spirit in solemnity. Exhortations were deep and searching, attendees were in reverence, testimonies were “thrilling,” and only shouts of praise and weeping suggested emotionalism. In claiming the meeting a grand success, Hughes spoke for the planning committee.⁶⁷

At the end of their ten days in Vineland, the planning committee gathered in a tent. Electing John Inskip as President and George Hughes as Secretary of a new, formal organization, the National Camp-Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness, the gathered ministers turned their attention to the fruits of the Vineland meeting. In the following months, members of the Association spread their work throughout the cultural hearth of the holiness movement. In the following years, no more “full salvation conventions” were reported in the regional Methodist press. Just as agriculture had pushed the margins of the pine lands further away from Vineland, the fervor of Pine Barrens revivalists seemed subsumed, pulled to the propriety of religious exercises at Ocean Grove and other Methodist campgrounds. Raucous Pine Barrens holiness revivalism was at an end and a new form of holiness camp meeting revivalism began.

⁶⁶ Hughes, 91.

⁶⁷ McDonald and Searles, 193-194; McLean and Eaton, 148.