

TEXAS UNITED METHODIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Editor's Letter by Wm. C. Hardt

Let me talk to those of you who majored in history. Did anyone ever ask you, "Why are you majoring in history? What is it good for?" Consider recent news stories:

Ben Affleck Asks PBS Producers to Conceal Ancestor's Slave Owning
Obama Avoids Use of Word "Genocide" in Describing Events in Armenia in 1915
Supreme Court to Decide Whether Texas Can Ban Confederate Flag License Plate

In each case the passion behind the headline is based on differing views of history. How could anyone still ask "What's history good for?"

It should be obvious that one's view of history shapes his or her very identity and provides the lens through which our present experience is refracted.

What about your Methodist identity? Did you ever think about the historical influences that have shaped you and your religious life?

For many of us our Methodist historical identity is intertwined with family history and also with a particular place. You could probably list many saints who have gone to glory—Sunday School teachers, grandparents, pastors, musicians—who were influential in shaping you and your faith. Our personal Methodist history is also often tied to a particular place such as an encampment, university, or church.

In addition to our individual histories, we are also shaped by our denomination's corporate historical experience. I am reminded of the "ties that bind" whenever I am on vacation and attend a Sunday worship service in a church where I know no one. I still feel at home. I am also reminded of that common bond of denominational history when someone requests research help for genealogical or local church history purposes. It doesn't matter if the request is from the 1850's or 1950's, the records are perfectly intelligible because of the historical continuity Methodists have employed in keeping those records. I feel right at home in those records too.

Cultivating an appreciation of this common denominational heritage is a major purpose of the Texas United Methodist Historical Society. It does so through its publications, annual meetings, providing platforms for dialogue, and most especially by nurturing the community in which our historical consciousness is forged.

Is not a Society with such important goals worthy of your support? I encourage you to increase your participation in the work of the TUMHS.

News From Bridwell

Bridwell Archivist Timothy Binkley (pictured below with President Garry Nall) has informed us of two exhibits of great interest to *Newsletter* readers.

The first is the

The First Five African American Graduates of Perkins School of Theology

which will be available May 1 to August 21.

The other is

Early Texas Methodism: 1815-1860

August 28-December 11.

1815?? That means Texas Methodism is celebrating its bicentennial this year! But I thought Texas Methodists celebrated the Centennial in 1934. What's up?

The 1934 celebration was in honor of the establishment of McMahan's Chapel in Sabine County. There had actually been Methodist activity in Texas for almost two decades before that—including the first documented Methodist preacher in Texas, William Stevenson who preached to settlers along the Red River in northeastern Texas in 1815.

We thank Professor Ted Campbell for editing Stevenson's *Autobiography*. Bridwell intends to distribute the *Autobiography* as a pdf. It was originally published in the *New Orleans Christian Advocate* in several installments in 1858. Check the Bridwell home page for the exhibits and release date of the *Autobiography*.



Central Texas Conference Journals On Line

If you've been to the annual meetings you already know Calvin Scott, the Central Texas Conference Archivist. Perhaps you didn't know that he wears two hats for the CTC. He is also the computer whiz for the conference.

That special knowledge made him just the man for one of the most exciting projects in Texas Methodist history to occur in a long time—the digitization of the CTC Journals—available online at <http://www.ctcumc.org/journals>

The Central Texas Conference was organized in 1910, and that's where the digitized Journals begin. The collection spans the years 1910-2013 with only one issue (1950) missing. You know how valuable Journals are for historical research, so we all should give Calvin a big round of applause for making them available.



Calvin Scott (on the right) chatting with Rev. Bruce Hay, Tx Con. (ret.)

Thank You Dallas Friends!

The 2015 TUMHS Annual Meeting was a great success thanks to the organizing efforts of our friends in Dallas including Tim and Michelle Binkley, Bill Bryan, Dean William Lawrence, former Dean James Kirby all from Perkins; Kent Roberts from Highland Park UMC, John Dillard NTC Archives and History Chair, and many, many others.

The theme of the meeting celebrated the opening of SMU to students for the fall semester 1915. The speakers were excellent and the demonstrations, such as by Joan Gosnell, SMU's Archivist, were intriguing.

Bill Bryan announced two Warnick winters (FUMC Temple and Decatur UMC) in his usual entertaining style.



Ben Hensley, one of Ted Campbell's Methodist history students, delivered his prize winning paper to a rapt audience. He provided documentary evidence to show that it was Oak Lawn Methodist Church that provided much of the leadership and resources for the founding of Highland Park Methodist—fascinating!



Other Meeting Pictures



Save the Date

Part of the business meeting is always setting the date for the next annual meeting. We decided to continue the practice of combining the Jurisdictional and TUMHS meetings again for 2016.

Beryl Waddell, NWTX Conference Archivist, invited the group to Lubbock, and the membership enthusiastically accepted the invitation.

Put these dates on your calendar—Oct. 6-8, 2016. You say you don't have a 2016 calendar, get one. More detailed plans will follow. Let the anticipation begin.

Historic Church Pictures

Each issue of the Newsletter has an image of one of our historic churches. Last issue's church shown below is that of Fredericksburg UMC in the Rio Texas Conference.



Methodism in Fredericksburg goes back almost to the city's founding by German immigrants in the 1840's and embraces both the MEC and MECS streams of our heritage. The present building pictured above is constructed of limestone and provides a

striking addition to the community. It was built in 1981 with additions in 2002 and 2006.

Fredericksburg was comparatively isolated and in a semi-arid, rocky land. Making a living was tough for the German pioneers, but a strong Methodist faith community was able to establish itself and put down roots in that rocky soil.

In recent years Fredericksburg has experienced a boom based on recreation and retirement—as trying to get through the traffic jams on a weekend afternoon will prove.

Fredericksburg UMC cherishes its roots and seeks to respond to the changes in its parish.

Here is the next historic church for you to identify.



World Methodist Conference to Meet in Houston

Houston will host the World Methodist Conference August 31-Sept. 2, 2016. Part of the Conference will be an extended historical tour of Methodism in the Houston Area sponsored by the World Methodist Historical Society and planned by Houston Methodists.

We are please to announce that the tour is in the planning stage under the direction of Mr. Gary Hickman, Historian of First UMC Houston. If you would like to help, let me know.

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Membership/Registration Information

We do not send annual membership renewal statements. Our not doing so means that many of us neglect to send our annual dues. If you can't remember the last time you sent dues, it's probably time to send them again. Please print this page and send your dues and gifts to Mr. Caffey's address shown above.

Name(s)_____

Address_____

Email_____ **telephone**_____

Annual dues

\$20_____

(If you wish, you may join at the lifetime dues rate of \$300)