

# METHODIST HISTORY

July 2017

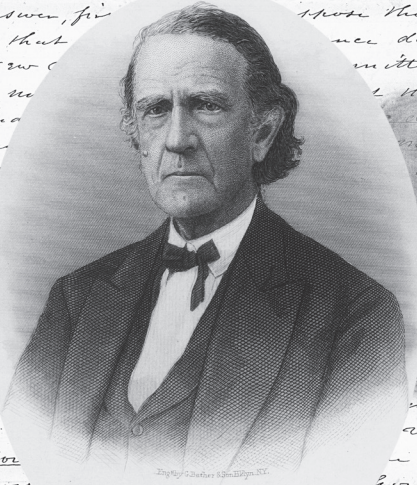
Volume LV  
Number 4

*The Position & Bearing of the New Chapter  
on Slavery or Slaveryholding in the M.E. Church.*

Does the New Chapter on Slavery make a  
New Test of Membership ~~in the~~ Slaveryholding  
a disqualification for Membership in the M.E.  
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Levi Scott



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General Commission on Archives and History

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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*Cover: This image shows the first page of a statement by Bishop Levi Scott relating to the controversy in the 1860 General Conference over the "New Chapter on slavery" in the Book of Discipline. Scott image and background letter are from the Drew University Methodist Library collections.*

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METHODIST HISTORY (ISSN 0026-1238) is published quarterly for \$25.00 per year to addresses in the U.S. by the General Commission on Archives and History of The United Methodist Church (GCAH), 36 Madison Avenue, Madison, NJ 07940. Printed in the U.S.A. Back issues are available.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to METHODIST HISTORY, P.O. Box 127, Madison, NJ 07940 or email [mmerkel@gcah.org](mailto:mmerkel@gcah.org).

# METHODIST HISTORY

Alfred T. Day III, Editor

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VOLUME LV

JULY 2017

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Methodist History is included in  
*Religious and Theological Abstracts*,  
*Historical Abstracts and America: History and Life*  
*ATLA Religion Database*

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Manuscripts submitted for publication and all other correspondence should be addressed to  
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## EDITOR'S NOTE

It appeared as a postscript at the bottom of an e-mail—one of those quotes a sender places below their signature—ending the communication with a word of wisdom or inspiration. Sometimes it is a verse of scripture or a line from great literature. This particular postscript quoted a historian so it likely appeared in my General Commission on Archives and History inbox:

Every renewal of the church, every great age in history has been grounded in a renewed reading of history. – Justo Gonzalez

Justo is not only a friend and important contributor to this journal, he is also a leading scholar in the areas of Christian, denominational, and particularly Hispanic-Latino church history. His words about the rejuvenating and reforming powers of reading church history breathe new life into this and every issue of *Methodist History*.

Ted Campbell's "The Challenges of Being a Local Church Historian" speaks to the quickening power and influence of local church histories and historians. The essay offers a broad perspective on the unsung work of local church chroniclers, including seven particular challenges that local-church historians face: telling the truth, documenting our histories, using primary historical documents, using standard resources for local church and broader history, contextualizing our narratives, organizing our narratives, and writing our narratives. The author encourages historians to begin writing early in the process of their research: only writing tells how much research is left to be done! The result of their work is much more than a recitation of the past but formative, even *transformative* for congregational visioning of the future.

Russell Richey's "Methodism in the American Forrest: Living in, but Seeing through and beyond, Nature" addresses the reviving effects Methodists experienced in the American woodland. When crowds exceeded the capacity of a home or chapel, Wesley's preachers gathered American listeners in the shade—cathedraled in a stately forest or under an oak's embracing branches. The preachers also found the woods a place for solitude, prayer, and devotions. As Francis Asbury and cohorts took Methodism into sparsely-settled areas and particularly as they followed the frontier west, they also found forests to be wilderness, full of dangers, some life-threatening, a challenge. All three experiences of the American woodland: shady preaching spot—the wooded retreat for prayer, or dark and sometimes dangerous forest challenging to itinerant preachers—stimulated early American Methodism.

Joseph DiPaolo's "So Shall Their Chains Fall Off": Bishop Levi Scott and Nineteenth-Century Black Methodism" refreshes awareness of little-re-

membered Bishop Levi Scott (1802-1882), who played a prominent role in the struggle of African Americans for recognition and status within the ME Church during the mid-nineteenth century. Converted in the home of a free black, Scott was elected to the episcopacy in 1852, and provided stimulating leadership for the denomination amid the difficult days of slavery, Civil War and Reconstruction. He was the first ME bishop to superintend an annual conference session outside the continental United States (in Liberia); the first to oversee organized conferences of black preachers in the USA; and founder today's Morgan State University, the largest historically black university in Maryland. This article is the first significant treatment of Scott's life and contributions since the 1880s.

David Mitchell's "The Making of Modern Education: Methodists Claflin University, 1869-1913," examines the Methodists' debate over the idea of "modern" education in late nineteenth-century South Carolina. The result of this discourse reshaped higher education in the state. Ironically, Claflin University—a historically black college touted for its strong liberal arts programming—was among the state's first colleges to adopt a science and engineering curriculum. As Claflin prospered, it compelled white South Carolinians to begrudgingly invest in their own public education. Methodist leaders played an important role in helping citizens reconcile their racially and religiously conservative ideals with the promises of a New South.

May your reading of July's *Methodist History* be full of spiritual, intellectual, and seasonal renewal.

Alfred T. Day III