

# TEXAS UNITED METHODIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Spring, 2016 vol. 7, #4

Editor's Letter by Wm. C. Hardt

My home congregation, Brenham FUMC, has a tradition of Lenten luncheon devotional services that I find most inspirational. This year the devotional speakers included a number of community leaders who are not members of our church but who had testimonies to share about how the Holy Spirit is working through various charitable agencies in Washington County and beyond.

The format of the sessions includes singing two "old time favorite" hymns---songs we associate with a previous era. At one of the recent sessions the two hymns were *Bringing in the Sheaves* and *Revive Us Again*. At the conclusion of *Sheaves* my seat mate turned to me and said, "That takes me back to the Methodist church in P\_\_\_\_\_ and listening to my grandmother." It was obvious that he relished the memory.

I have to admit to being less enthusiastic. These are not really "old time songs." *Revive Us*, 1863, and *Sheaves* 1874, both come from a relatively recent era. Our really "old time" songs are Wesleyan, at least a century older and contain a much richer theology of love and grace. Isn't it time to update our metaphors? Nobody could possibly know much about sheaves. Perhaps something like, *My Google Search Found Me Jesus; I'm Texting for the Lord*; or *There's a Cloud of Witnesses in the Cloud*.

The episode did make me think of the role of nostalgia and its uses as we in the TUMHS try to promote an appreciation of our Methodist heritage. We find ourselves constantly blurring the boundaries between nostalgia critical analysis of our history. Is our interest a retreat into the rosy glow of nostalgia or does our historical interest inspire us to "serve the present age"?

Forty years ago I was inspired by a saying that helps me live in the two worlds of nostalgia and history. Our nation was celebrating the bicentennial of the Declaration of Independence, and my father, John W. Hardt who was serving First UMC Beaumont, used the opportunity to preach a series of sermons on our religious heritage. The series began in January and culminated not in Beaumont but at the Texas Annual Conference where he was invited to preach to the entire conference. The thirteen sermons were later published as a book.

The concluding line of the conference sermon served as the title for the published collection. It is a saying we should all keep in mind as we involve ourselves in the work of Methodist history, preservation, historical research, and celebration. It was simply an admonition:

*Let us take from the altar of the past. . . not the ashes, but the flame!*

## **SAVE THESE DATES: Tuesday, October 4-Friday, October 7, 2016!**

On **Tuesday afternoon** there will be a **pre-Convocation workshop** for the SCJ Archivists as designated by their Conference, facilitated by L. Dale Patterson, Archivist-Records Administrator, General Commission of Archives and History at Drew University, Madison, NJ. On **Tuesday, October 4**, there will be a late afternoon **RECEPTION** sponsored by the NWTX Conference Commission on Archives & History at **The OVERTON HOTEL & Conference Center**. **Wednesday, October 5**, The Convocation will begin with a tour of *FUMC-LBB (The Cathedral of the West)*, speaker, and lunch; the afternoon will be at *TTU...tour of SW Collection* and presentations by Monte Monroe & staff; then a bus tour of campus public art. Entertainment Wednesday will conclude at an all Convocation banquet at **The OVERTON HOTEL** with Andy Wilkinson, TTU Artist-in-Residence, as our entertainment.

**Thursday, October 6**, begins with a tour and presentation about ranch life at *The American Wind Power Center*; next we will travel to the *National Ranching Heritage Center* for a guided tour, a chuck wagon lunch, and presentation by author, rancher, and Methodist, John Erickson; our tour day continues at the *Buddy Holly Center* before an evening banquet.

**Friday, October 7**, begins with a Breakfast Buffet, then the annual TUMHS meeting at 9AM, to include general business, recognition of the Kate Warnick Award and Walter Vernon Essay Award winners; following the meeting, and box lunch, there will be a Workshop for Local Church Historians with L. Dale Patterson, facilitating, TOPIC: Celebrating Church History, and Q&A throughout the workshop.

**Registration forms and more information about the October 2016 Convocation will be mailed soon!**

## **Let Us Remember and Celebrate**

Since the last *Newsletter* two of our members have reminded us of landmarks worthy of celebration.

First, Vice President Dan Flores has reminded us that we are in the bicentennial of the creation of the Course of Study by Rev. Nathan Bangs. The Course of Study has been invaluable in providing practical theological education to our denomination. You may learn more from Dan's book on Bangs at <http://amzn.com/1517702844> Dan has also supplied a picture of Bangs in stained glass. See p. 5. Bangs has a direct connection to Texas Methodism. During the establishment of the Texas Mission, he was in New York at the Publishing House. He handled the missionary correspondence for the denomination and wrote the guiding document *Instructions for Missionaries*.

Second, Kent Roberts, Historian at Highland Park UMC, reminds us that on Wednesday, May 4, we will celebrate the General Conference action to grant fully clergy rights to women. Such action occurred at the 1956 General Conference of the MC. Kent has supplied links to a *Reporter* article on the subject <http://unitedmethodistreporter.com/2016/04/13/the-debate-that-changed-the-church-60-years-of-clergy-rights-for-women/> He also supplied a link to the transcript of the proceedings. [http://umc-gbcs.org/content/blog/Full Clergy Rights for Women - the 1956 Gen Conf Debate.pdf](http://umc-gbcs.org/content/blog/Full_Clergy_Rights_for_Women_-_the_1956_Gen_Conf_Debate.pdf) Thank you Kent for reminding us.

## News From SMU

TUMHS members will be interested to know that Dean William B. Lawrence is retiring after 14 years of service to SMU. We have become good friends of Dean Lawrence whose academic career included significant publications in Methodist history. We wish him well in his new endeavors.

SMU has announced that Dr. Craig C. Hill will assume the duties of Dean of Perkins School of Theology on July 1. We welcome Dr. Hill to Texas.

### Current Exhibition:

The Bridwell Library exhibition *Frances Asbury (1745-1816)* is open through May 14 in the Bridwell Library Entry Hall. It can also be viewed online at <http://www.smu.edu/Bridwell/SpecialCollectionsandArchives/Exhibitions/Asbury>.

February 1, 2016 – July 1, 2016  
The Elizabeth Perkins Prothro Galleries

Highlights from the Ruth and Lyle Sellers  
Medical Collection

<http://www.smu.edu/Bridwell/SpecialCollectionsandArchives/Exhibitions/Sellers2016>

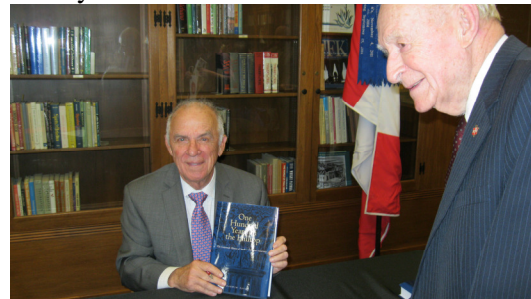
All Bridwell Library exhibitions are open to the public free of charge during library operating hours (<http://blog.smu.edu/bridwell/hours/>).

## Centennial History of SMU Published

On April 15, SMU released the new centennial history of SMU, *One Hundred Years on the Hilltop*, by Darwin Payne.

TUMHS members will recall that Dr. Payne delighted us at our 2015 Annual Meeting with a talk on the founding of SMU.

Here is an image of Dr. Payne during a book signing at the release of this important history.



The author has just signed a book for Bishop John Wesley Hardt who began his relationship with SMU in 1940 when the university was celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Three of his professors were original faculty members who began their careers in 1915.

Ordering information can be found at

<http://www.smu.edu/News/2016/founders-weekend-book-12april2016>

Speaking of Bishop Hardt. . . Tony Pederson, The Belo Foundation Distinguished Professor in Journalism at SMU, has recently interviewed Bishop Hardt about his life and work. The 45-minute video can be seen at <https://vimeo.com/161238398>

## Historic Church Pictures

Each issue of the *Newsletter* contains the image of a church for you to identify. Here's the one from the last issue.



You will recognize this church as the former church in Atlanta, Texas, in Cass County. You may have seen it because it stands prominently on the main highway in the town of about 5,000+.

This church has particular significance in my personal history. Our family was living in the parsonage directly across the street from this building when it was constructed. I was an elementary school student who had a front row seat for the demolition of the previous church building and the construction of the building you see pictured here. Many afternoons after the crews quit work, I crossed the highway to look at the progress of the demolition or construction. My most vivid memory is of the bee colony that had taken up residence in the walls of the former church.

During the demolition and construction, the congregation met in a movie theater and in the high school auditorium. That is the

reason that when I joined the church, I did so in the school auditorium rather than an altar rail.

I also have an image of the church that was demolished.



The congregation of Atlanta FUMC has since relocated to a site with more room for expansion, but I am happy to report that the building is still being used by a sister church of another denomination.

Here is the next historic church for you to identify. (Hint: You will notice the THC marker in the picture.)



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Here is Nathan Bangs in stained glass, courtesy of Dr. Flores.



## 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)