

TEXAS UNITED METHODIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Fall 2012 vol. 4, #2

Editor's Letter by Wm. C. Hardt

Methodists love to celebrate centennials, sesquicentennials, and so on. When the Texas Conference was organized on December 25, 1840, participants mentioned that the MEC had also been founded on Christmas Day. In 1884 there was a grand celebration of that conference. Northern and Southern branches temporarily came together in a joint celebration. In 1919 there was another joint celebration of the centennial of Methodist missions. In 1934 Texas Methodists came together in San Antonio to celebrate the centennial of the founding of McMahan's Chapel in 1834.

As 2012 comes to an end, Texas Methodists are beginning to celebrate dodransbicentennials. (I had to look that one up. If you prefer, use septaquinquacentennial.) It means 175th. Our celebrations are occurring because of several significant events that occurred in 1837. San Augustine Methodists celebrated on Oct. 28, San Felipe Methodists will on Nov. 3, and Montgomery UMC has already started plans to celebrate its 175th anniversary next year.

1837 deserves to be lifted up. Every 7th grader learns that Texas won its independence in April 1836, but Methodist bishops didn't send missionaries immediately. They waited to see if independence was for real. In April 1837 the bishops authorized a three person missionary team to Texas. . All three members of the mission team, Ruter, Fowler, and Alexander, entered Texas in 1837. They set about organizing circuits, holding camp meeting, acquiring lots and building churches.

The three appointed missionaries found that local preachers and dedicated laity had preceded them in laying a firm foundation for Texas Methodism. The first three missionaries were also quickly joined by more volunteers from the United States. Those missionary efforts of 1837-1838 are now being celebrated in 175th anniversary celebrations.

Each celebration is unique. There will be historical re-enactors, period costume, "old time gospel singing," dinner on the ground, special memorial services for the sainted dead, and worship services. These celebrations are a good time to invite members of other churches who happen to be historically minded. It's a chance to spread the message of our proud heritage and the role Methodists had in the shaping of Texas history.

Thank You New Mexico!



The biennial South Central Jurisdiction Convocation of Archivists took place in Albuquerque and Santa Fé, New Mexico, in August. All the participants (pictured above) owe a great big tip of the hat to the New Mexico Annual Conference and especially **Will Steinsiek** and his committee from the Commission on Archives and History. The organization, program, amenities, and attention to detail were all excellent.

The conference packed so much in a 48-hour period without ever feeling rushed that we all left with a sense of gratitude to the organizers.

There were so many high points that it is difficult to squeeze them all in this short article.

One aspect I appreciated was that we met in various locations, including UM churches with MEC, MECS, and EUB roots. Details such as that show the level of planning that went into the conference. In addition to churches we also met in the Albuquerque Museum of Art and History,

the New Mexico History Museum, and the Special Collections Department at the University of New Mexico Library.

The venues mixed church and public facilities, and the speakers were a fine combination of church historians such as Larry Castillo-Wilson, and archivists who work in the public sector. The New Mexico State Historian, Rick Hendricks was an after-dinner speaker, and Tomas Jaehn shared insights into preservation of historic documents. Dale Patterson, our good friend from GCAH, won the prize as the attendee who travelled the greatest distance. Texans were well represented from the Texas, Central Texas, South West, and North West Texas Conferences.

Another real highlight was learning how to get around northern New Mexico on a budget. We took the commuter train from Albuquerque to Santa Fé and back and enjoyed each other's company as the beautiful desert landscape zipped past. Naturally we partook of the distinctive New Mexican cuisine and its perennial question from the wait staff, "Red or Green or Christmas" You can't lose with any choice of enchiladas. .

Your *Newsletter* editor was particularly gratified when our friends from the South West Texas Conference offered to host the 2014 event in San Antonio. It appears we will be going from one delightful tourist city to another. When the dates are announced, put them on your calendar. It's not just for archivists—it's for everyone interested in Methodist history.

Save the date!

The next issue of the Newsletter will give full registration details, but I wanted you to put the dates on your calendar now for the 2013 Annual Meeting of the TUMHS.

March 14-16, 2013.

Marvin UMC in Tyler will be the host church, and the planning committee has already begun organizing a great program that combines historical presentations, tours, dramatic performance, and inspiration.

Marvin UMC is named for Bishop Enoch Marvin who was first bishop to have been elected after serving a Texas pulpit (Marshall). In the fall of 1866 he then became the first bishop who had served a Texas church to preside over a session of one of the Texas annual conferences.

Marvin UMC holds a distinguished place in the history of the Texas Annual Conference. For many years it has been the largest membership church outside the Houston Metro area and is widely recognized as one of the conference's leading churches. Its pastors have been among the most prominent, and the laity is well known for conference leadership. .



For those of you not from East Texas, I think you will find Tyler to be beautiful in mid-March. Although it's known for its roses, we can hope to see azaleas and dogwoods (weather permitting).

Church historians find Tyler fascinating. It's one of the "most church-ed" cities in America. Although it's a fairly large city (215,000 metro area), it retains characteristics of traditional small towns about religion. A newcomer is usually asked very soon after arrival, "and what church do y'all attend."

Part of Tyler's religiosity has been a concentration of non-mainline churches. Garner Ted Armstrong located his Church of God International nearby, and Gary North moved his Institute for Christian Economics there. The religious landscape of Tyler is full of independent churches and their associated parochial schools.

Look for full program details including registration material in the next edition of the *Newsletter* which should come to your inbox on February 10.

Bridwell Exhibits

Bridwell Library at Perkins School of Theology has two exhibits that will interest many Texas Methodist Historians. The first is *Early Methodists and Their Books*, which will run through Dec. 14. The other is *Books in the Jewish Tradition* which runs through Dec. 7.

You may access both exhibits via the web. <http://www.smu.edu/Bridwell/Collections/SpecialCollectionsandArchives/Exhibition/s/EarlyMethodists> and <http://www.smu.edu/Bridwell/Collections/SpecialCollectionsandArchives/Exhibition/s/BooksInTheJewishTradition>

TUMHS Officers

President Dr. Garry Nall
7206 Versailles Dr.
Amarillo, Texas 79121
gnall@att.net

Vice President Dr. Daniel Flores
P. O. Box 64394
Fort Worth, Texas 76164
dflores.phd@gmail.com

Secretary Rev. Barbara A. Huggins
901B Palestine Street
Jacksonville, Texas 75766
bh@jacksonvillemethodist.org

Treasurer Mr. Stewart Caffey
701 Scott Place
Abilene 79601
stewacs@aol.com

Mr. Caffey has asked me to remind members that the annual dues are \$20. A life membership can be purchased for \$300. If it has been a year or more since you last paid your dues, please remit them to Mr. Caffey at the address above. Checks should be made out to Texas United Methodist Historical Society. Your dues support the following projects:

The Walter Vernon Student Essay Contest
The *Heritage Journal*
The Kate Warnick Awards for Local Church Histories.
The Annual Meeting

Newsletter items should be directed to Wm. C. Hardt, wchardt@gmail.com
Or 10375 New Wehdem Rd.
Brenham, Tx 77833