

# TEXAS UNITED METHODIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Editor's Letter by Wm. C. Hardt

As those of us on the various conference Commissions on Archives and History go about our work of lifting up our Methodist heritage, we occasionally meet someone who does not share our appreciation of that heritage. We sometimes hear, "History may be interesting, but how does it help us today?" One common response to that question is that our heritage can inspire present congregations to greater devotion and faithfulness. We are always delighted to see examples of such inspiration.

The Texas Methodist Foundation Annual Report for 2011 <http://www.tmf-fdn.org/documents/2011TMFAnnualReportSpreads.pdf> is a thrilling example of a congregation that continues to be inspired by its history to serve the present age. The Annual Report tells the story of La Trinidad UMC and Diamond Hill UMC in Fort Worth, led by our good friends Rev. Dr. Daniel Flores and Rev. Thelma Flores. La Trinidad grew out of a Sunday School Class organized by Deaconess Eugenia Smith around 1910. The north side of Fort Worth was booming as immigrants sought employment in the packing houses nearby. Smith worked in the neighborhood to provide a variety of services for both body and soul. La Trinidad continued that tradition by offering classes including ESL and computer literacy. When another UM church on the north side of Fort Worth, Diamond Hill, became available, the La Trinidad congregation saw the opportunity for greater mission. The Eugenia Smith Dream and Go Center is now underway at the former Diamond Hill location. It offers classes, a community garden, summer youth programs, and the bread of life.

In June, 2010 several of Eugenia Smith's grandnieces came to La Trinidad to celebrate the centennial of their aunt's arrival in Fort Worth. It was an inspiring day as the congregation celebrated its past and looked forward to even greater service in the future. Dan Flores, in addition to his pastoral duties, is vice president of the TUMHS. I hope you will click on the link above and read about the good works in Fort Worth.

While you are on the Texas Methodist Foundation website, you will also want to read about how Bruno Schmidt's generosity continues to bless Texas Methodism. <http://www.tmf-fdn.org/services-for-churches/gift-planning/bruno-schmidt-endowment-fund/> Bruno, who died in 2011, was editor of this *Newsletter* for seventeen years.

## LON MORRIS COLLEGE



Earlier this summer the trustees of Lon Morris College in Jacksonville announced that they were seeking bankruptcy protection and investigating reorganization plans.

Part of the official announcement was that the LMC Archives would be removed to Southwestern University which agreed to assume the responsibility for those materials. The TUMHS is grateful for Southwestern's doing so.

There were, however, many items of historic interest not included in the official archives.

First UMC Jacksonville pastors Joel McMahon and Barbara Huggins were called to Lon Morris College to receive certain artifacts and hold them for the Texas Conference Archives.

There were 12 wall size portraits of former presidents of Lon Morris which had hung in the Board Room. They removed paintings, pictures, and other memorabilia from the Chapel archives. Among the other treasures were a heavy metal bell which previously hung in the

old Twin Towers building and a slab of stone from that building.

Lon Morris College has long occupied a unique place in Texas Methodism. It has provided the first two years of college education to hundreds of young people since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is owned by the Texas Conference and numbers among its ex-students many church leaders including bishops, seminary professors, missionaries, preachers, and other church workers.

Jacksonville First UMC has had a close relationship with Lon Morris College since 1894 when it moved from Kilgore. We are grateful to Rev. Huggins who is TUMHS Secretary for reassuring us that many of the historical artifacts are being safely stored.

Lon Morris College once housed the Texas Conference Archives. In 2010 those archives were removed to rental units in Jacksonville. They remain there while the CAH plans a permanent home.

In the meantime, the conference archivist has created a basic research library consisting of duplicate copies of Journals and vertical files. Those materials are now housed in an office provided by FUMC Brenham.

## News from North West Texas

The North West Texas Conference had a Kate Warnick Award winner! White Deer United Methodist Church in the Northwest Texas Conference won with their 2011 hundredth anniversary book. With the encouragement of The Rev. Dr. Jerry R. Lane, Nancy O'Neal and Linda Germany wrote *History of White Deer United Methodist Church 1911-2011*. TUMHS president Garry Nall presented the award on June 10.

Dr. Nall also tells us that Bishop Dr. D. Max Whitfield and Mrs. Whitfield were given TUMHS memberships upon his retirement. Bishop Whitfield has been named Bishop-in-Residence at Perkins School of Theology.

In addition to the presidency of the TUMHS, Dr. Nall continues as chair of the NWT Conference CAH. Dr. Robert Monk is Conference Historian and Beryl Waddell is Archivist.

## Jurisdictional History Released

The 2012 South Central Jurisdictional Conference was one for the history books. It was therefore appropriate that a history of the jurisdiction was distributed at the conference.

The new publication, *The South Central Jurisdiction: The History of the South Central Jurisdiction: 1968-2008*, by Dr. Theodore Agnew and Dr. David Severe, builds on an earlier volume by Dr. Agnew. The main work of a jurisdictional conference is electing bishops, and this volume does not disappoint on that front. It gives details of the balloting and the

background of the announced episcopal candidates.

Here is how Dr. Severe described how the history came to be

*Early in the quadrennium the family of the late Professor Ted Agnew, long-time delegate to the South Central Jurisdiction and General Conferences and historian of note, approached me with a request. Before he died Ted asked that Bishop John Wesley Hardt and I finish the work he had begun writing a comprehensive history of the South Central Jurisdiction since the Union of the Methodist and EUB churches in 1968. For several years he had compiled the history, but the illness and death of his wife, honored, if a little scared, to be asked to do this, but with the assurance of Bishop Hardt's assistance, I agreed. His guidance, wisdom, and unbelievable memory have been priceless as we worked to complete the volume. Thanks to the decision of the Mission Council, who voted to provide the funds for the publication, a copy of the history will be given to each delegate, alternate, and Bishop during the Jurisdictional Conference. Additional copies will be for sale in the Cokesbury Bookstore at Conference.*

This work builds on Dr. Agnew's earlier work, *The South Central Jurisdiction 1939-1972*. (1973)

The South Central Jurisdiction consists of UM annual conferences in Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, and Texas. Jurisdictional Conference 2016 will be in Wichita, Kansas. Its archives are housed at Bridwell Library. The Jurisdictional Archivist is the Rev. Bill Hedges.

## TUMHS Officers

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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