

HISTORIAN'S DIGEST

Volume 48, Number 2

July 2008

Dakotans Offer Gracious Hospitality

The Dakotans provided gracious hospitality and interesting programming for the annual meetings of the Historical Society of the United Methodist Church and the North Central Jurisdiction Commission on Archives and History.

Boyd Blumer and Bishop Deborah Lieder Kiersey opened the meeting with a Wesleyan style worship that included the service of Holy Communion from the 1888 Discipline.

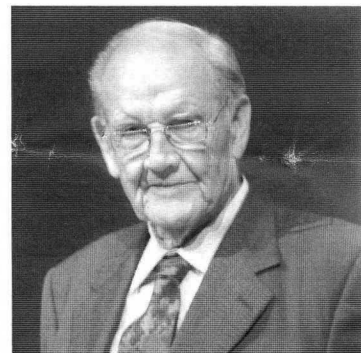
Former U.S. Senator and 1972 Democratic Presidential candidate George S. McGovern spoke about Methodist influence on his life and the lives of Dakotans over the years. His father was a Wesleyan Methodist minister and he studied at Dakota Wesleyan University (DWU), which is still supported by the Dakotas Annual Conference. The new DWU library and archives center is named for George and Eleanor McGovern and houses the Dakotas Conference archives and McGovern Legacy Museum. The Senator ruefully admitted that he wasn't certain his conservative parents would have voted

for him. "They might have," he said, "but it would have been a stretch."

The 2008 Ministry of Memory Award went to Richard Seiber of the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference. Jim Walker, Chair of the Pacific Northwest CAH recounted Dick's involvement in both the Conference CAH and the Western Jurisdictional CAH over many years. Dr. Rob Sledge then presented the 2008 Saddlebag Selection Award to Dr. Rex Matthews and Abingdon Press for his book, *Timetables of History for Students of Methodism*.

Dr. Stephen Perry presented demographic information on the Dakotan Methodism from several different perspectives. One interesting observation was the relationship between the decline in the birth rate in America and the decline in church membership.

Dr. Bruce Forbes provided a history of our traditional Christmas celebration. Long before Christmas as we know it today was celebrated, early and medieval mid-winter festivals helped folks in the Northern



Senator George McGovern

Hemisphere get through the long, dark days of winter. The early Christians did not celebrate Christmas until around the fourth century and thus, our "traditional Christmas" was placed in the midst of these mid-winter festivals and has been influenced by them ever since. Forbes's book, *Christmas: A Candid History*, was published in 2007 by the University of California Press.

The next two recipients of the Ministry of Memory Award will be Lois Olsen, Wisconsin, 2009 and Milton Loyer, Pennsylvania, 2010.

Secretary Mary Bakeman reported that the Board re-affirmed Jane Donovan for another year as editor of *Historian's Digest* and Dan Smith as webmaster. She reported on the questionnaires mailed to members in early June, noting that we had an 18% return, which is fairly high. The Board reviewed the results and discussed ways in which to improve annual meeting programs to include at least one major academic paper each year. There were many suggestions of ways to improve *Historian's Digest* and implementation plans are underway.



Stagecoach at Hansen Wheel and Wagon.

Historical Society of the UMC

Patricia J. Thompson, President
P. O. Box 538
Morrisville VT 05661
802-888-2185
pajt8817@aol.com

Jim Morris, Vice President
1103 Joshua Avenue
Creston IA 50801
641-782-2715
mjmorris_jm@hotmail.com

Mary Bakeman, Secretary
1178 County Road BW
Roseville MN 55113
mbakeman@parkbooks.com

Charles Yrigoyen, Treasurer
950 Willow Valley Lakes Dr., #I-106
Willow Street PA 17584-9663
717-464-3276
jyrigoyen@cs.com

Jane Donovan, Editor
3710 Swallowtail Drive
Morgantown WV 26508-8821
304-594-3914 (voice)
304-594-3915 (fax)
donovanjb@comcast.net

Program Committee:

Dan Swinson
djswinson@wowway.com

Carol Roszell
croszell@txwes.edu

Linda Schramm
lars@greatlakes.net

Rob Sledge
rsledge@mcm.edu

Dan Smith, Webmaster
rodansam@nc.rr.com

The Historian's Digest is published quarterly by the Historical Society of the United Methodist Church. Please send address changes to Phil Lawton at Philip.Lawton@dol.net. Editorial correspondence should be directed to Jane Donovan. The deadline for submissions for the next issue is September 15, 2008.

Letter from the President

Dear Members and Friends of the HSUMC,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Society, thank you to Ted Rath, Boyd Blumer, and all the members of the Dakotas CAH for hosting such a wonderful annual meeting. All of the hard work and planning that went into sponsoring such a successful meeting is greatly appreciated.

Thanks also to everyone who answered the questionnaire about how we can make the Society more interesting and relevant. The Board reviewed the collated results and will be attempting to implement your suggestions during the coming months.

One area of particular focus will be expanding this newsletter. Many of you requested short biographies of persons who had provided significant leadership at annual conference levels. There was also interest in knowing the kinds of research being done at various levels in the church. I will be working with our editor, Jane Donovan, over the coming months to gather such news stories for publication in the Digest. Please send information and/or stories to either Jane (donovanjb@comcast.net) or to me (pajt8817@aol.com). If you don't have time to write up a specific article, you may send the information to me and I will formulate an article for you – or you may write your own and submit it. Newsletter content depends upon what you submit, so please let us know what you are doing at the college level, in your annual conference, your historical society or your local church so that we can share it with others around the connection.

One more request: please share membership information about the HSUMC with your friends and colleagues and encourage them to take advantage of the 10% discount available by joining through your regional/conference historical society so that they, too, can learn about United Methodism across the connection.

Peace,

Pat Thompson

Minnesota Church History available

The Rev. David Laechel of the Minnesota Annual Conference and Historical Society has completed the last in a series of mini-church histories. It covers the Metro-West District (Minneapolis, Hennepin County, and the surrounding area). The book is available for \$7, which includes

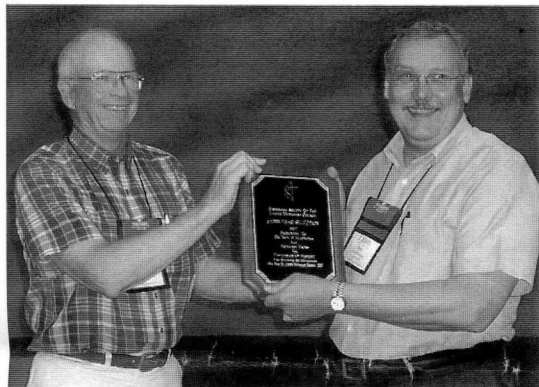
postage. Copies of the earlier volumes on the other five Minnesota districts are still available for the same price. Buy an entire set of six for only \$35!

Please send your check to David Laechel, 806 Church Street, St. Charles MN 55972.

**Have you visited
the HSUMC web site?**

www.historicalsocietyunitedmethodistchurch.org

2008 "Saddlebag Selection" is *Methodist Chronicle*



Rob Sledge presents the Saddlebag Selection Award to Rex Matthews

The Historical Society of the United Methodist Church is pleased to announce its third annual "Saddlebag Selection," honoring the best book published in 2007 on the history, biography, polity, or theology of United Methodism or its predecessor bodies.

This year's entries included Kevin J. Corn, *Forward Be Our Watchword: Indiana Methodism and the Modern Middle Class* (University of Indianapolis Press); Gregory A. Johnson, *Armstrong Chapel United Methodist Church, Indian Hill, Ohio* (Micropress); F. Belton Joyner, ed., *The Unofficial United Methodist Handbook* (Abingdon); John R. Tyson, *Assist Me to Proclaim: The Life and Hymns of Charles Wesley* (Eerdmans); and Robert Wuthnow, *After the Baby Boomers: How Twenty- and Thirty-Somethings Are Shaping the Future of American Religion*. All of these were excellent choices and the decision was difficult.

The winning entry was *Timetables of History for Students of Methodism*, by Dr. Rex D. Matthews of Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta. Abingdon Press published the volume, which was reviewed in the October 2007 issue of *Methodist History*.

The work emulates some secular timeline volumes, displaying events year by year across the pages in eight categories of historical events, cultural milestones, and a column each on American Methodism and "British and World Methodism." The chronicle begins with 1700, three years before the birth of John Wesley, and continues through 2005. The work is impressive for the massive amounts of research that went into it and for the concept of relating ecclesiastical events to contemporary secular developments. This is a modern book – the bibliography includes a major section of web-based sources – and attached inside the back cover is a searchable copy of the complete work on compact disk.

For the third year, Rev. Lyle Johnston of Arizona, Ms. Linda Schramm of Michigan, and Dr. Charles Yrigoyen of Pennsylvania worked as the Saddlebag Selection Committee with the coordinator, Dr. Rob Sledge of Texas.

Dr. Sledge presented the award to Dr. Matthews at the 2008 meeting of the Historical Society in at Dakota Wesleyan University in Mitchell, South Dakota on July 8.

The Board of Directors approved three changes in the process of choosing the next Saddlebag Selection. The first is that any member of the society may nominate a book to Dr. Sledge, who will then approach the publisher to complete the process. Publishers will also continue to receive general invitations. The second is that the deadlines will be moved forward a month to allow for better lead time in arranging for the author to be present at the annual meeting. Additionally, arrangements can now be made to have copies of the winning work available for sale at the meeting.

Further information is available on the internet at www.gcuh.org, then click on "Historical Society of the United Methodist Church Home Page." The Saddlebag Selection process will continue for works published in 2008, with results to be announced in May 2009. Questions and nominations may be sent to:

Robert W. Sledge, Ph.D.

Historian-in-Residence,

Grady McWhiney Research Foundation

McMurry University Box 637, Abilene, Texas 79697
rsledge@mcm.edu 325-793-4699

Dakotans Offer Gracious Hospitality

continued from page 1

President Pat Thompson contacted the presidents of the various historical societies of the UMC, urging them to consider offering joint memberships with the HSUMC, taking advantage of a 10% reduction in HSUMC dues. The HSUMC was organized in 1989 with more than 1,000 charter members. Today our membership is at 246. Our goal is to reach 500 members by our 20th anniversary in 2010.

Dr. James McLaird reviewed his efforts to determine the true story of Calamity Jane, the famous Dakota frontierswoman whose real name was Martha Canary. His recent book, *Calamity Jane: The Woman and the Legend*, was published in 2005 by the University of Oklahoma Press. At her death, Dr. Charles B. Clark, the Methodist Episcopal minister in Deadwood, where she died and is buried, agreed to do her funeral despite her dubious reputation, perhaps living out the Methodist belief that grace really is available to all.

The afternoon ended with a field trip to Hansen's Wagon and Wheel shop, a family-owned business that repairs, refurbishes and builds all types of 19th century wagons and stagecoaches.

The meeting concluded Thursday morning with the Rev. Scott McKirdy's talk on A. B. Smart, an early Methodist pastor who significantly influenced the Mitchell area. We departed on our various ways, with appreciation for the gracious hospitality of our friends in the Dakotas.

Now's your chance: Suggest New Officers

Terms of office for the Historical Society leaders expire shortly. Our bylaws call for a nominating committee to prepare a slate of officers (president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer) this year to be elected next year by mail ballot. The nominating committee must present at least two names for each office unless they can demonstrate a good faith effort to find two names

Mark your calendar!

Future annual meetings:

June 29-July 2, 2009, Lake Junaluska NC, celebrating the 20th anniversary of the UMHS.

July 18-24, 2010, Seattle, Washington

Summer 2011: Oklahoma City, in conjunction with the 7th Historical Convocation sponsored by GCAH.

without success. We encourage you to submit suggestions for nominations for the committee's consideration. Officers serve a 4-year term with the option of re-election to a second term. The Board meets once a year in conjunction with the annual meeting. Travel expenses are paid for all Board members.

For the upcoming quadrennium suggestions for nominations are being sought for all four offices; however, only the president's position must be filled as current president, Pat Thompson, has served for two quadrennia. Vice President Jim Morris, Secretary Mary Bakeman, and treasurer Chuck Yrigoyen are all eligible for a second term.

Before you submit a suggestion for nomination, please be certain that your nominee is willing and able to serve, is a member of the Society, and,

ideally, has attended at least one or two annual meetings so that he or she has some familiarity with the workings of the Society. Officers must be able and willing to conduct business via e-mail. Please submit a short biography with your suggestions, including your reasons for making the suggestion.

Nominating committee members are Linda Schramm, North Central Jurisdiction, convener (lars@greatlakes.net); Janice Sherick, Northeastern Jurisdiction (jes6521@paonline.com); Jim Walker, Western Jurisdiction (jkdwalk01@aol.com); Jim Pyatt, Southeast Jurisdiction (pyatt@bellsouth.net); and Jean Traster, South Central Jurisdiction (jeanhtraster@yahoo.com). Submit your suggestions to any of these persons no later than October 1 so that a slate can be prepared for the January issue of *Historian's Digest*.

PRSRRT STD
US Postage
Paid
Morgantown Printing
& Binding

Historian's Digest
c/o Jane Donovan
3710 Swallowtail Drive
Morgantown, WV 26508-8821