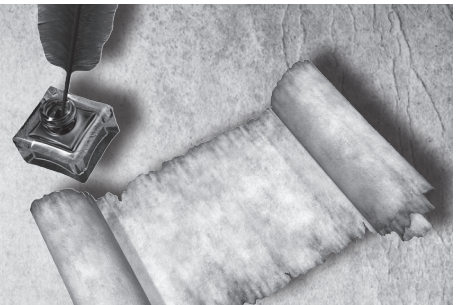


# HISTORIAN'S DIGEST



Volume 51, Number 2

Spring, 2011

## 2011 HSUMC ANNUAL MEETING and THE SEVENTH HISTORICAL CONVOCATION OF THE UMC TO FEATURE LATINO AND NATIVE AMERICAN HISTORY AND HERITAGE

Have you registered for the 2011 annual meeting yet? This year's annual meeting held in conjunction with the Seventh Historical Convocation promises to be of great interest and somewhat unique in its presentations. For the first time one of our Historical Convocations will focus on the history and heritage of two of the ethnic groups in our United Methodist Church: Latino and Native American. Besides a number of scholarly presentations on various aspects of Native American and Latino history, the Convocation will also feature visits to the Oklahoma History Center, the Citizen Potawatomi Nation Cultural Heritage Center and The Seminole Nation Museum. The Oklahoma History Center is an 18-acre, 215,000 square-foot learning center exploring Oklahoma's unique history of geology, transportation, commerce, culture, aviation, heritage and more.



*Oklahoma History Center*

The Citizen Potawatomi Nation Cultural Heritage Center's 36,000 square foot, state-of-the-art facility houses the Nation's museum collection, library, Veterans memorial, archives and genealogical research facility, event center, and recording site for the Tribal Heritage Project.

And the Seminole Nation Museum documents and interprets the history and culture of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma and the people and events that make its



*Seminole Nation Museum*

capital, Wewoka, one of the most historically significant and culturally diverse communities in Oklahoma. We will also be visiting OKC Hillcrest – Fuente de Vida UMC in Oklahoma City, and the Salt Creek UMC, one of the churches in the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference.



*Salt Creek United Methodist Church*

All of the presentations and visits will offer an exciting view of the rich history which our Native American and Latino brothers and sisters bring to the United Methodist Church. Don't miss this exciting opportunity. The registration deadline has been extended to June 15 (see insert).

**Note From the Editor:** We are currently seeking articles for the *Historian's Digest*. If you are researching a individual, event, issue, etc. or your church is celebrating a special anniversary which you think might be of interest to other United Methodist historians, you are invited to submit an article no longer than 1000 words to the editor (see page 2 for contact details).

Note on the updated website for the HSUMC. At our 2010 annual meeting, the Board voted to make the web site of the HSUMC a link on the GCAH web site. The website has now been updated and you can view it by going to GCAH.org and clicking on the link for the Historical Society or going to: [www.historicalsocietyunitedmethodistchurch.org](http://www.historicalsocietyunitedmethodistchurch.org).

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Please send address changes to Phil Lawton. Editorial correspondence should be directed to Pat Thompson. The deadline for submissions for the next issue is July 15, 2011.

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## Letter from the President *(cont. from the Winter issue)*

In the long awaited first volume of *The Methodist Experience in America*, Russell Richey, Kenneth Rowe, and Jean Miller Schmidt pause at General Conferences in 1816, 1884, and 1968 for snapshots of Methodism dominated by "three distinct Methodist phases that this volume depicts: a Pietist, a nurturing, and an advocating" (*The Methodist Experience in America: A History*, Vol. 1, p. xv). While piety, nurture, and advocacy are always in the warp and woof of Methodism, they note that each has had it's day in the limelight of the church.

The authors' categorization, along with their recounting of the complex tensions which worked on Methodism in the American context, is compelling and will serve to structure much future study, even the inevitable revisions. Also inevitable will be the suggestions for other snapshots illustrative of continuity and change in our history. In this regard, I would suggest a pause at the General Conference of 1852 for a snapshot of change, in this case the change between the period dominated by piety and that dominated by nurture.

The controversy over lining the hymns is but one part of this snapshot. The General Conference of 1852 featured an array of issues. Methodist preacher John S. Inskip appealed his censure by the Ohio Conference for advocating and facilitating family seatings in local churches. Termed "promiscuous seatings" by opponents, the practice of allowing men and women to sit together in worship contravened a disciplinary requirement for separate seatings and, according to traditionalists, opened the door for rented pews, musical instruments, choirs, grand church buildings, and a host of "New England" innovations that would destroy the landmarks of "old Methodism." Not only was Inskip's censure reversed, but the Committee on Revisals recommended changes to the Discipline which allowed the very innovations which prior practice forbade. The changes were approved by substantial, but not overwhelming, majorities.

Those who held to the old ways (called "old fogies" by opponents) were the pietist rearguard who, until the split in 1844, could muster nearly two thirds of the delegates to maintain the disciplinary restrictions. With the loss of the southern conferences, which Henry Slicer of Baltimore noted were "sound upon this question of free seats," a new majority (called "ultraists" by their opponents) prevailed. The agenda of the traditionalists, featuring unaccompanied lined hymns, simple houses of worship without instruments, free seats, separate seatings, and a firm adherence to the class meeting, remained one possibility for Methodists. But the progressive agenda, which tended toward the nurturing emphasis which would mark the latter half of the century, opened the way for the innovations listed above, as well as the growth of a Christian education program that touched both camp meetings and Sunday Schools.

Advocates on both sides were also aware of deeper meanings to their actions. The "old fogies" insisted that theirs was a church of the poor, which leveled distinctions of the world. They criticized the "ultraists" for opening the door of influence to the rich, especially in building pewed churches amenable to renting pews. The "ultraists" countered that most people wished the changes that they sought, and that the Church could only be strengthened by attracting the "better classes."

If this snapshot is valid, then the tensions, behavior, and language are illustrative of ways in which change has happened in our denomination. Given the conversations in United Methodism about the future of the denomination, an acquaintance with this history may have an important place in the here and now. Richey, Rowe, and Miller Schmidt have separately and together advocated for a view of history that speaks to our present reality, both in their exceptional joint project, and in their individual scholarly work. We who know and guard the vast repository of the history of the people called Methodists would do well to add what we know to the discussions. That knowledge is more significant than many might realize.

Dan Swinson



# 1836 - "THIS FAR BY FAITH" - 2011: MORENCI, MICHIGAN, UNITED METHODIST CHURCH CELEBRATES 175 YEARS

This year marks the 175th anniversary of the Morenci, MI, UMC. A celebration will take place at the church, 111 E. Main St., on June 25 and 26, including an ice cream social, special services and historical displays.

The church began in 1836 as the Bean Creek Mission meeting in a log schoolhouse 2 miles North of Morenci on the property of Simon Wilson. Although church members met weekly for "class meetings," preaching services were only held every few weeks because the circuit rider was only able to come that often. In 1843 a log parsonage was built on Simon Wilson's farm.

At this time the old log school house was replaced by a frame one. In 1846 a new school house was built 1 ¼ miles north of Morenci. Since this building was closer to town, the church moved its services to this octagon-shaped edifice. After the relocation a frame house was purchased nearby to serve as a parsonage, first occupied by Rev. Robert Dubois in 1847.

In the 1850's baptisms took place in Silver Creek, and the church began meeting in another schoolhouse in Morenci at the corner of what is now the corner of North and Congress Streets. About mid-summer 1850 the first Union Sunday School was organized in Morenci - inter-denominational in nature, with Dr. Joseph Rogers, a Methodist, the superintendent, and Ichabod Haarwood, a Presbyterian, his assistant. There were 39 students who attended that year.

In 1851 the church obtained from Frank Cawley the lot where the current church now stands. A 36 X 50 wood frame church was completed in May of the next year. By 1853 the church had grown sufficiently strong to be placed at the head of the newly formed Morenci circuit including Morenci, Medina, Dover, Fairfield, and Seneca Townships.

A bell for the steeple was purchased in Troy, New York at 30 cents a pound (960 pounds) plus \$18.00 for the yoke for a total of \$306.00. Even though the original warranty expired in 1854, the bell still calls worshipers to services each Sunday morning.

In 1856 the Detroit Conference was created and William Donnelly became the first preacher to reside here year round bringing an end to the era of the circuit rider. In 1857, the parsonage was on the corner where the congregational church now stands. In 1868 the Congregational church purchased the property for their church. To replace this parsonage, property was purchased from Davis Saulsbury across the street from the church where a parsonage was built and used until 1902 when the present brick parsonage was built to the east of the church.



The wood church withstood two fires and many updates, but in 1910 the decision was made to replace the wood structure due to over crowding, and in 1913 a temporary structure called the tabernacle was built on the South side of Locust street just East of North Street. It was completed in 1 day.

The current structure was completed in 1914 at a cost of \$20,000. The pipe organ was purchased in 1915 and used until 1974 when it was replaced with an electronic organ. The church during these years was officially the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Morenci, but in 1968 the Evangelical United Brethren Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church merged and the United Methodist Church was born.

The church has been served by 64 different pastors during its 175 years. Some stayed only months, and some years. One pastor was blind, one played the marimba, the son of one fell out of the upstairs parsonage window and broke his arm, and one helped start the Morenci Sportsman Club which first met at the church. Many people have added to the rich heritage passed down to the present congregation and some of the names of the those early members still sound familiar; such as Wilson, Atwood, Wakefield, Osgood, Holt, Shapley, Reed, Cawley, Baldwin, Barker, Ranger, Salisbury, Coomer, and Smalley. *(article submitted by Carol Van Havel).*

# The 2011 Convocation and HSUMC Annual Meeting Program Summary

Tuesday - Thursday, July 19-21: Annual Meeting, General Commission on Archives and History

## THURSDAY, JULY 21

9:00 am Board of Directors, The Historical Society  
1:00 pm Convocation registration opens  
4:00 pm Buses depart for the Oklahoma History Center: Tour of the History Center and Presentation by the Archivist  
6:00 pm The Distinguished Service Award Banquet - Award recipient: Dr. Kenneth E. Rowe

6:30 pm

Program: Latino Oral History Project - Bishop Joel Martinez  
Return to Oklahoma City University

8:30 pm

## SATURDAY, JULY 23

9:00 am Plenary: Dr. Michelle Pesantubbe  
10:45 pm Annual meeting of the Historical Society of The United Methodist Church  
Noon Lunch  
1:00 pm Depart for Salt Creek United Methodist Church, Citizen Potawatomie Nation Cultural Heritage Center and the Seminole Nation Museum  
5:30 pm Dinner  
7:30 pm Evening Program  
Return to Oklahoma City University

## FRIDAY, JULY 22

9:00 am Plenary: Dr. Tash Smith  
10:45 am Presentation of the Saddlebag Award  
11:30 am Chairs of Annual Conference Commissions and Annual conference archivists meet for networking  
Noon- 1:30 pm Lunch  
1:30 pm Plenary: Dr. Paul Barton  
3:30 pm Presentation of the Ministry of Memory Award  
5:00 pm Depart for OKC Hillcrest - Fuente de Vida UMC 5:30 pm - Dinner

## SUNDAY, JULY 24

8:30 am Worship at St. Luke's United Methodist Church; Preacher: Bishop Robert Hayes, Oklahoma Area

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