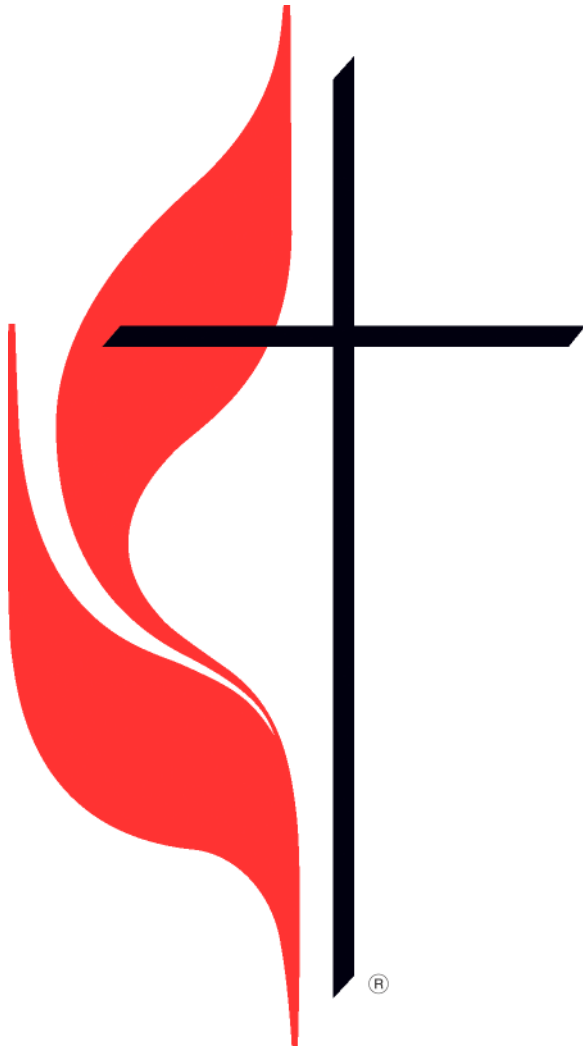


## LOCAL CHURCH HISTORIAN'S GUIDE



Wisconsin Commission on Archives and History  
June 2009

## WISCONSIN UNITED METHODIST CONTACT ADDRESSES:

### Wisconsin Annual Conference Center

750 Windsor Street  
P.O. Box 620  
Sun Prairie, WI 53590-0620  
608-837-7328      Toll-free 1-888-240-7328

### Wisconsin Conference Archives

Wisconsin Conference Archivist:  
Lynn Lubkeman

Wisconsin Conference Research Archivist:  
Mary Schroeder

750 Windsor Street, Suite 101  
P.O. Box 620  
Sun Prairie, WI 53590-0620  
608-837-7328, ext. 243

[archives@wisconsinumc.org](mailto:archives@wisconsinumc.org),  
[llubkeman@wisconsinumc.org](mailto:llubkeman@wisconsinumc.org),  
[mschroeder@wisconsinumc.org](mailto:mschroeder@wisconsinumc.org)

[www.wisconsinumc.org/archives](http://www.wisconsinumc.org/archives)

**GUIDE FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH COMMITTEE ON  
RECORDS AND HISTORY  
AND FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH HISTORIAN**

A Word From The Chair:

Our local church history is like so many aspects of our life. We never truly appreciate what is precious to us until it's gone. Sadly, the task of preserving the story of our local churches is often neglected, unappreciated and under resourced. Even when a member feels called to this ministry, they can feel unsure and overwhelmed by the task at hand. The Commission on Archives and History hopes to address this need with the contents of this booklet. Let me say up front that this is not a "how to" booklet, instead it's a "where do I get my questions answered booklet." The truth is that there exists numerous excellent guides and manuals on the nuts and bolts of good archival practices. Our intention is not to duplicate these efforts with this booklet, but is to connect the local church historian with the many resources already available to help with their ministry. In particular, we hope to bring awareness of the many tools provided within their own Annual Conference including the activities of their Commission on Archives and History, the collection at their Conference Archives, and the access to their history provided by the Conference Museum.

So, if you are someone who feels called to the ministry of memory within your local church and are in need of support and guidance, let this booklet be your roadmap. Remember, your work is important and invaluable to the generations to come. Let us all strive to preserve and remember so that the future will be enriched.

Yours in Christ,  
Sandy Kintner,  
Chair, Commission on Archives and History  
Wisconsin Conference, UMC  
May 2009

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*The Commission on Archives and History would like to acknowledge the dedicated effort of our Conference Archives Staff (Lynn Lubkeman and Mary Schroeder) for compiling and editing this guide.*

## WHAT DOES THE DISCIPLINE SAY?

THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, 2008 states clearly some of the responsibilities of the local church historian and, where organized, the Committee on Records and History.

The disciplinary paragraphs are: ¶233, page 153-154; ¶247.5, a & b, pages 160-161; ¶1711.1, a & b, pages 664-665.

¶247.5, pages 160-161:

a.) It is strongly recommended that the charge conference elect a church historian in order to preserve the history of each local church. The responsibilities of the historian are to keep the historical records up to date; serve as chairperson of the committee on records and history, if any; cooperate with the annual conference commission on archives and history; provide an annual report on the care of church records and historical materials to the charge conference; and also provide, with the pastor and the committee on records and history, if any, for the preservation of all local church records and historical materials no longer in current use. Records and historical materials include all documents, minutes, journals, diaries, reports, letters, pamphlets, papers, manuscripts, maps, photographs, books, audiovisuals, sound recordings, magnetic or other tapes, or any other documentary material, regardless of form or characteristics, made or received pursuant to any provisions of the Discipline in connection with the transaction of church business by any local church of The United Methodist Church or any of its constituent predecessors. The church historian may be a member of the church council. This person may also hold another elected position on the council.

b.) There may be a local church committee on records and history, chaired by the church historian, to assist in fulfilling these responsibilities.

## WORK OF THE CHURCH HISTORIAN

There is an excellent guide available from Cokesbury for the church historian entitled, "Church Historian: Remembering the Past and Inspiring the Future." It will guide the church historian through the main points of how to establish and care for a local church archives. It is available from Cokesbury at [www.cokesbury.com](http://www.cokesbury.com) or 1-800-672-1789 for \$2.95. The main steps, however, can be summarized here:

1. Survey the records that already exist in the church and collect in one permanent and safe spot in the church.
2. Determine what records you have, what might be missing, and try to locate any important missing documentation.
3. Determine which records need to be saved permanently. Once you decide on this, you will know which records to look for each year to add to your archives. There are guidelines available in the Cokesbury manual and also guidelines published by the General Commission on Archives and History (GCAH). See the GCAH website ([www.gcah.org](http://www.gcah.org)) for the manual "Guidelines for Managing Records of the Local Church and Annual Conference." But in general, here are some of the records you must try to save permanently:
  - a. Membership records, including baptisms, marriages, deaths, and transfers, are the key documentation of your church. The register is a permanent record that should always remain in the church. If you keep the membership records electronically, print out a hard copy of the record annually. Membership directories should also be saved.
  - b. Legal documents, including property records and deeds should be saved permanently in a safe place.

- c. Annual budgets and year-end financial audits.
- d. Charge conference reports, church council or administrative board reports.
- e. Church committee records, especially minutes.
- f. Church newsletters and church organization news letters or publications.
- g. Scrapbooks, photos (identified), and other special mementoes of important occasions.
- h. Church histories and bulletins from special occasions.
- i. Information about past pastors, including photographs.

4. Organize the records that need to be saved permanently. In general, records should be grouped by the creator of the records. For instance, all financial records would be grouped together, as would all membership records. Likewise with the various committee files (organized by each individual committee). Other categories would include legal files, newsletters, scrapbooks. You may also want to have files on the pastors that served your church that might include photos.

5. Preserve and care for the records that you want to save permanently. In summary, you will want to collect the records in one spot that is located in an area that is not subject to light or extreme humidity or temperature changes. Store your records in acid-free folders and boxes. Unfold paper records. Do not use tape, rubber bands, or paper clips on your important records as they will cause deterioration. Do not write on the papers. (However, if a document is un-

dated and you have a reasonably good idea of its date, you should indicate that at the top of the paper in pencil and put it in brackets, i.e. [1975] to give later historians a clue to the date.) Fragile paper records can be copied on to acid-free bond paper for preservation. If you have special conservation issues, consult others for advice. The GCAH can help with questions and you can also utilize conservation websites such as those listed on page 18. Special attention should be paid to the issue of preservation of electronic records. Many of the issues regarding the long-term preservation of electronic records have not yet been resolved. It is therefore recommended that you print up a copy of any records that need to be saved permanently.

6. Tell your church's special story and embrace the idea of the importance of the ministry of memory. Here are some suggestions:

- a. Write a history or your church, or update an earlier one.
- b. Do oral histories or interviews with members of your church, or with your pastor.
- c. Create a photographic record of your church and its activities.
- d. Celebrate a special church anniversary.
- e. Create a display spot in your church to highlight the importance of your church's history.
- f. Become involved in your Conference's Commission on Archives and History and participate in their Fall Heritage Tour.
- g. Visit the Conference Historical Museum in Greenfield, WI.

- h. Organize a Heritage Sunday in your local church.
- i. Become a member of the Historical Society of the United Methodist Church. Information is available from the General Commission on Archives and History. Membership dues for individuals are \$30 for one year, \$55 for two years. For churches, one year is \$43, two years are \$80. You will receive a subscription to the publications Methodist History and Historian's Digest, for the term of your membership. There is also a World Methodist Historical Society you can join. Memberships are \$5 for one year and \$20 for five years. You will receive the newsletter of the Society, the Historical Bulletin. Information on both of these memberships can be found on the General Commission on Archives and History website: [www.gcah.org](http://www.gcah.org), or at the address listed in the contact section.
- j. Order an official gravemarker, (for the graves of United Methodist ministers). It is made of bronze, approximately 5" in diameter, and is designed so that bolts in the back of the marker embed it in the tombstone. It may be ordered from Cokesbury. See contact information on page 18.

## WISCONSIN UNITED METHODIST CONFERENCE ARCHIVES

We are here to help in the important task of preserving the history of the United Methodist Church and its predecessor denominations in Wisconsin. We have both a conference archivist and a reference archivist to help with your questions.

We collect materials relating to the history of United Methodism in Wisconsin, including information on its predecessor denominations. We collect materials relating to the local churches in Wisconsin and the pastors that have served them. Our collection of materials is described below. Remember that we are both a resource for information for the local church and its historians and also a repository for important historical materials. We have a temperature and humidity controlled archives in the Conference center where we are able to care for and preserve the historically significant manuscripts, documents, books, records, and artifacts that make up our collection.

The Conference Archives is open to researchers on Thursday mornings. We also provide reference service for local churches and other interested researchers. You can contact us by letter, phone, or email.

If you are working on a history of your local church, we may have information here that would be helpful to you. You are encouraged and welcomed to come and consult the material yourself. If that is not possible, we can do some research for you and send information to you.

We also are here to answer your questions regarding archival practices and issues concerning the local church archives and the work of the local church historian. So again, contact us with any questions or concerns.

We can only build our collections here with the help of the local church. So we appreciate you sending to us copies of any church histories or photos, pastor photos, membership directories, or special anniversary bulletins for preservation here in the Archives. If you have any other historical materials that you think should be preserved for future generations here in the Archives, please contact us.

We should receive all the records from closed or discontinued churches here in the archives. Records of merged churches should stay with the newly formed church.

Finally, a word about our collection here in the Conference Archives. We have files on many of the local churches in the Wisconsin Conference. They contain information like newspaper clippings, photographs, membership directories, special anniversary bulletins, any church history that may have been written, and any other historical information we may have about the individual church.

We also maintain biographical files on pastors within the United Methodist Church and its predecessor denominations. This file might contain the service record of the pastor and hopefully a photograph. The pastor photographs are often requested when a church is working on a church history and wants to document the pastors that have served the church. We also appreciate receiving copies of any photographs or other information like this that you may have to help build our files.

The Archives also has a complete collection of yearbooks and journals from the UMC church in Wisconsin and an incomplete collection of yearbooks from some of the predecessor denominations, including the East Wisconsin and West Wisconsin Methodist Conferences, the Evangelical United Brethren, the United Brethren, and the Evangelical Association. If you have any older yearbooks that you do not need

to keep in your archives, be sure to check with us first to see if we need here to complete our collection.

We have on file and collect both The Book of Resolutions and The Book of Discipline for the UMC, as well as earlier copies from any of the predecessor denominations.

The Conference Archives also has a library of books relating to the history of United Methodism in Wisconsin and of the predecessor denominations. Early historical works also include a large collection of hymnals and Bibles many dating back centuries. The Conference Archives also has a large library of books relating to the history of United Methodist and the predecessor denominations in Wisconsin. We also have historical works on John Wesley, Albright, and Otterbein, as well as books written by Wisconsin Annual Conference members. We also collect books that refer to the history of any of our local churches in Wisconsin. Our collection also includes many early German works of historical importance from the Evangelische Gemeinschaft Kirche and many 19th century books of sermons in both German and English. Again, we welcome and encourage donations of any historical works to add to our collection.

Publications from any of the denominations that joined to form the United Methodist Church also comprise an important part of our reference collection in the Archives. We have copies of Badger Tidings, Together, Methodist History, Evangelical Missionary Word, Builders, and Der Christliche Botschafter, to name a few.

The Conference Archives is also the repository of the historically significant records of the Wisconsin Conference itself. We collect and save records from the various Conference committees, groups, and organizations, and also from the proceedings at Annual Conference.

In the Conference Archives we also have some manuscript collections given to us by various past members of the Wisconsin Conference. These include collections from several past pastors from the Conference. W. D. Ames, Michael Benson, and Joseph Austin are some of the early ones.

In addition to our hard copy collections, the Archives has been able to create an online database of the United Methodist churches in Wisconsin and the pastors who have served them. Through the work of Archives' volunteer, Robert Gruetzmacher, who has been working for years on a project of going through past yearbooks both the UMC and the predecessor denominations to collect this data, we now have access on our Conference website to this informational database. You too can access this database to get appointment histories of various pastors who have served in the Wisconsin Conference, or to see the various pastors that have served an individual church. You can find this database two ways on the Conference website at [www.wisconsinumc.org](http://www.wisconsinumc.org). First, under the heading "Conference Information," scroll down to searchable databases, then finally, "appointment history." You can also find it through the "Archives and History" section on the Conference website ([www.wisconsinumc.org/archives](http://www.wisconsinumc.org/archives)).

Finally, all of us who work in the Archives - both the archivists and our many valuable volunteers - would like to welcome you to come and visit us in the Conference center in Sun Prairie. Stop by to say hello and to see our display case and the many wonderful historic photographs that we have framed and hung in our Archives. You will recognize the archives by the large historic picture of the ordination of Francis Asbury that hangs just outside our door.

## **CONFERENCE COMMISSION ON ARCHIVES AND HISTORY**

The mission of the Commission on Archives and History is to promote stewardship of faith memories by collecting, preserving and making available to the public the publications, records, and artifacts of the United Methodist Church in Wisconsin, including data relating to the origin and history of the conference and its antecedents.

The Commission is made up of volunteers from all areas of the state who are interested in and committed to the historical mission of the commission. If you are interested in becoming involved, please contact the Commission.

The Commission is part of the North Central Jurisdiction Commission on Archives and History of the United Methodist Church. A convocation is held each year in July, hosted by the various Annual Conferences on a rotating basis. It is open to all who are interested in attending.

Also, the Commission sponsors an annual Fall Heritage Tour to a site of historical interest within our state. Watch for the information on our website.

Information on the commission can be obtained from:

Wisconsin Conference Commission on Archives and History  
Chair and Historian: Sandy Kintner  
2727 Highway T  
Sun Prairie, WI 53590  
608-837-0043  
[www.wisconsinumc.org/archives](http://www.wisconsinumc.org/archives)

**Publications:**

The Commission also publishes an historical newsletter, Flashbacks, three times a year. It contains articles relating to the history of our conference, information about special anniversaries and events at local churches in Wisconsin, and other stories of historical interest relating to United Methodism in Wisconsin. The editor, Lois Olsen, is always interested in any historical material relating to your church that you may have to share, or information about special events at your local church. You can contact her at:

Flashbacks

Editor: Lois Olsen

St. John's Tower

1840 N. Prospect Avenue

Milwaukee, WI 53202

414-347-1745

lcolsen@execp.com

Subscriptions: \$12/ year

Sandy Kintner

2727 Highway T, Sun Prairie, WI 53590 608-837-0043

**Books Available to Purchase:**

The Wisconsin Commission on Archives and History has facilitated the publication of several books. The following books are available and may be ordered from the Wisconsin Conference Archives. Prices include shipping and handling.

**1. William Blake, *Cross and Flame in Wisconsin: The Story of United Methodism in the Badger State*,** Worzalla Publishing Company, 1973. The history of a congregation is part of a larger whole and this book is a history of the denomination, the conference and the greater fellowship responsible

for the growth of many local churches. The history of the local church is woven into the history of the conference and the denomination and the earlier predecessor conferences.

Hardcover: \$25; Hardcover, autographed: \$30 ;  
Softcover, \$20

**2. Herman A. Block, *Historical Data, Wisconsin Conference, Evangelical Association, the Evangelical Church, the Evangelical United Brethren Church, 1840-1969*,** published by Ken Cook Transnational, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1971. An illustrated history of the Evangelical United Brethren Church, written by Herman Block, formerly a pastor and Conference historian of the EUB Church in Wisconsin. The book illustrates the heritage from these two branches of our ecclesiastical family tree.

Softcover: \$15

**3. Anthony J. Farina, *I Must, I Must, I Must: The Story of the Italian Evangelical Church of Wisconsin*.** Published by the Wisconsin Commission on Archives and History, 2008. An illustrated history of the Italian Evangelical Church in Wisconsin and its contributions to the United Methodist Church, written by Anthony Farina, a retired United Methodist pastor in the Wisconsin Annual Conference.

Softcover: 12.50

**4. Sandy Kintner, *Church Building Preacher: The Life of Rev. William Hein*.** Published by the Wisconsin Commission on Archives and History, 2007. A biography of a German Methodist preacher from Sun Prairie WI, who served churches in Iowa and South Dakota.

Softcover: 10.00

5. Lois C. Olsen, **All God's Children: A History of African American Methodists**, published by Lois C. Olsen, Milwaukee, WI, 2007. A history of the African Americans in the Methodist Church in Wisconsin.

Softcover; \$10.00

6. Lois C. Olsen, **Contentment is Great Gain: A Missionary Midwife in Sierra Leone**, published by Leone Press, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1996. An autobiographical story written by Lois Olsen describing her 12 years spent as missionary and mid-wife in Sierra Leone from 1952-1963.

Softcover: \$12.50

7. Lois C. Olsen, **Goodly Tents: A History of Camp Meetings in Wisconsin**, published by the Commission on Archives and History, Wisconsin Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, 2002. A compilation of information about camp meetings in Wisconsin.

Softcover: \$10

## CONFERENCE HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Our conference museum stands at Forest Home Avenue and 52nd Street adjacent to the Greenfield Memorial Church and the Evangelical Cemetery. The museum committee takes responsibility for exhibits on subjects of historical interest to Wisconsin within the United Methodist denomination. Previous displays include the Native American church, campgrounds, the African American Church, and the Korean Congregations.

The first class of the Evangelical Association in Wisconsin was organized in Greenfield on February 9, 1841. The original church was a log structure built in 1844. Pews from that early church still provide seating. The pulpit and altar rail are early furnishings from other churches. The brick building, now our museum, was erected and dedicated in 1858. It served the congregation of the Memorial Church until 1929.

Tour groups of confirmation classes, United Methodist Women, or any interested party may be arranged from the contacts below.

Wisconsin Conference Historical Museum  
3480 South 52nd Street  
Greenfield, WI 53219  
Contact:  
Russ Mathers: 414-543-5177  
Lois Olsen: 414-347-1745  
Ann Towell; 262-251-3091

## OTHER MINISTRY OF MEMORY RESOURCES

### General Commission on Archives and History of the United Methodist Church

Robert Williams, General Secretary  
36 Madison Avenue  
P.O. Box 127  
Madison, NJ 07940  
973-408-3189  
www.gcqh.org

Information that can be found on GCAH website at www.gcqh.org includes: Guidelines for Managing Records of the Annual Conference and the Local Church, Manual for Annual Conference Commissions on Archives and History, the United Methodist Church Archives and History Directory, Historical Society Membership information, Methodist History: subscription information and back issues, lists of other publications of interest about the history of United Methodism, and information on preservation/conservation.

### Wisconsin Historical Society

816 State Street, Madison, WI 53706  
608-264-6400; archives: 608-264-6460  
www.wisconsinhistory.org

It should be noted that prior to 1960 the West Wisconsin Conference of the Methodist Church used the Historical Society as their official depository. There are significant Conference, District and Local records in their collection. In addition, the Historical Society has created a network of area research centers to house archival records in the relevant geographical area. You can find where your area's records that the historical society holds would be located at: <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/libraryarchives/arcnet/>

### Cokesbury Store

1-800-672-1789  
www.Cokesbury.com

Cokesbury offers the Church Historian manual, "Church Historian: Remembering the Past and Inspiring the Future," for \$2.95 and also other items such as the official gravemarker for the graves of United Methodist ministers.

### Archival Supplies:

Demco  
P.O. Box 7488, Madison, WI 53707  
1-800-356-1200  
www.demco.com

### Gaylord Brothers

P.O. Box 4901, Syracuse, NY 13221  
1-800-488-6160  
www.gaylord.com

### The Hollinger Corporation

P.O. Box 8360, Fredericksburg, VA 22404  
1-800-634-0491  
www.hollingercorp.com

### Conservation information:

Canadian Conservation Institute  
[www.preservation.gc.ca](http://www.preservation.gc.ca) or [www.cci-icc.gc.ca](http://www.cci-icc.gc.ca)

Conservation OnLine, a project of Stanford University Library Preservation Department  
<http://palimpsest.stanford.edu/>

### Historical Sites to Visit



Conference Museum, Greenfield, WI  
see page 16 for more information



United Brethren in Christ Church - Rutland WI  
Site of the first Wisconsin Conference UB in 1859  
5 miles north of Evansville on Hwy 14

### Your Wisconsin Conference Archives Sun Prairie, WI



The Stacks



O'Neil Research Room

