



"Fellow-citizens, we cannot escape history." — A. Lincoln

FLASHBACKS



Revealing glimpses of our creative past

Official newsletter of the

UNITED METHODIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WISCONSIN

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Every noble life leaves a fiber of itself
interwoven forever in the work of the
world. - Ruskin

DOROTHY BRICE HEADS COMMISSION

Mrs. Dorothy Brice, wife of Rev. Kenneth Brice, Richland Center, has been elected chairperson of the Conference Commission on Archives and History to serve for the 1981-1985 quadrennium. The election was held at the fall meeting of the Commission in Matthias United Methodist Church, Beloit October 23, 1980. Mrs. Brice is the author of Springs in the Valley, a history of Peace United Methodist of Richland Center, published in 1975.

Rev. Richard A. O'Neil, Arlington, is now vice chairperson, Rev. Thomas E. White, Baraboo, secretary, and Rev. Wayne Helmerich, Sun Prairie, conference historian.

Rev. David Chevalier, Sun Prairie, is conference treasurer under the Conference rules. Mrs. Kitty Hobson, archivist, holds that position indefinitely, as a paid employee of the Conference Commission

* A thousand years in Thy *
* sight are but yesterday *
* when it is past - *

REV. WILLIAM BLAKE CONFERENCE HISTORIAN EMERITUS

William Blake, Berlin, has served as conference historian since 1969. He has not only published books on Methodism in his own right but has contributed numerous articles to Flashbacks and elsewhere. He will still write for his church and his God.

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The Commission expresses its thanks to Dr. Arlow Anderson, outgoing chairperson, for his splendid leadership during the last four years. Dr. Anderson asked to be relieved of this responsibility as that he can devote more time to his forthcoming book dealing with Scandinavian immigration in the United States.

BLACK HISTORY FOCUS OF PILGRIMAGE

A large and enthusiastic crowd participated in the annual Historical Pilgrimage of the Society held in Beloit on Saturday, October 25, 1980.

It began at noon with a dinner at Wesley Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, 1760 Shore Drive, served by ladies of that congregation. Following the meal brief histories of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church were presented.

The African Methodist Episcopal Church had its beginning in 1796 in Philadelphia, when a group of black members, led by Richard Allen, walked out of St. George's Church to protest segregation in seating. Allen, who was born a slave, but bought his own freedom, later became the first bishop of the new denomination. He received ordination at the hands of Bishop Francis Asbury.

The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (originally Colored M. E.) was born in the aftermath of the Civil War, when most of the black members were granted autonomy, and bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church South consecrated the first bishops of the new body. Later the name was changed to Christian Methodist Episcopal Church.

From Wesley Church the pilgrims proceeded to Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, 314 Athletic Avenue, where the story of that congregation, the oldest Black Methodist Church in Beloit, was detailed.

The next stop was at the building which formerly housed the old Second Methodist Church (Lexington Conference), mother congregation of both Wesley C. M. E. and St. Matthias United Methodist Churches. Here Rev. Mary Council and a group of children presented a skit which brought to life the struggles and problems faced by the congregation in its previous history. The contributions of various pastors were depicted, and the deep loyalties of many members of the congregation during the past years were revealed.

At Wesley Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, the next stop, the story of the building of its present imposing structure and the transfer from the Methodist to the C. M. E. denomination was retold.

The final stop was at St. Matthias United Methodist Church, pastored by Rev. Jodi Joiner. It is located at 727 Henderson Avenue. The struggle of the group to remain identified with the United Methodist Church was related, a movement which resulted in the organization of the present congregation and the building of its present home.

Rev. Robert Kuhn, president of the United Methodist Historical Society of Wisconsin, directed the affair. Plans and arrangements were made by Rev. Mary Council, acting with a local committee.

It is hoped that this Pilgrimage will give impetus to the collection of historical material to be used in preparing a history of Black Methodism in the Badger State. The Conference Commission on Archives and History has already endorsed the project.

MEMORIAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The Memorial United Methodist Church of Milwaukee, Wisconsin held a celebration of the beginning of preaching in Greenfield by John Lutz, the missionary went out from Ohio to the settlers in the wilderness of the Wisconsin Territory.

PAPERWEIGHT KEY TO HISTORY OF A CHURCH

In October, 1980, a paperweight bearing a picture of a crude log church labeled Bethel Methodist Church, Richland Center, Wisconsin; Pastor Rev. Pow was brought to the County Room of Brewer Library, Richland Center, by Mrs. Pickel of Baraboo. After deciding that Richland Center was the mailing address, Twylah Kepler, archivist, began to search for information through the local paper.

It was known that very early there was a Bethel School District in the southern part of Richland County and that up on English Ridge there was still a little frame building bearing the large letters: Bethel Chapel, 1880.

Gradually information came in. The little church was the forerunner of the English Ridge Bethel Chapel built in 1912. A copy of a warranty deed showing the plot of ground was purchased in 1880 from Joseph Robbins was brought in. Mr. Robbins must have lived near for the story is told of the crude structure having wide cracks in the floor boards which increased the squeal and dust disruption when Robbin's dog chased the pigs under the church.

A picture of a boy on a horse came in. No one remembers his name but in the years 1909 to 1912 he rode his horse around the countryside selling postcards and paperweights picturing the church. It was reported that he sold five hundred paperweights at \$.25 each and postcards at \$.10, which won him a prize from Rev. Robert Pow.

The new church was dedicated in 1912 with Mrs. Rosa Berkshire, Mrs. Nina Queen, Edgar Doudna, and Henry Buroker as trustees. In 1969 when the Methodist Conference was to dispose of it, interested parties bought it, where today it stands as a memorial to the past.

AUDIO-VISUAL TO HONOR HERMAN BLOCK

A sound filmstrip on United Methodism in Wisconsin will be dedicated to the memory of Rev. Herman A. Block. Action was taken at the fall meeting of the Commission on Archives and History in Beloit October 25, 1980.

Herman Block was originally a minister of the Evangelical Association, and served for many years as its conference historian, and later as historian of the Wisconsin Conference of the Evangelical United Brethren Church. He was the author of Historical Data -- Wisconsin Conference -- E. U. B. Church, besides a number of brochures, pamphlets, and leaflets dealing with various aspects of the history of that denomination in Wisconsin. He died February 29, 1980 at the age of 100 years.

Materials for the project have been gathered over a period of several years. Rev. Wayne D. Helmerich, conference historian, is presently working on the completion of the audio-visual. When finished it will be available for churches and organizations throughout the state.

In addition to the remainder of the fund contributed by Ideas Unlimited initially for the production of Cross and Flame in Wisconsin, donations in memory of Mr. Block are to be used to finance the venture.

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Material of historical interest, such as church anniversaries, recollections, activities of local church historical committees, and historians should be sent to her at the above address.