



FLASHBACKS

Promoting the Ministry of Memory



The Official Newsletter of

*The Commission on Archives and History,
Wisconsin Conference, The United Methodist Church*

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Changing of the Guard

After over a decade as Editor of *Flashbacks*, Lois Olsen has resigned and turned the reigns over to younger hands. She will remain as a member of the Editorial Board and a major contributor to *Flashbacks*. The Commission extends their deepest gratitude for all the tireless effort that Lois has put into making *Flashbacks* such a valuable asset to our ministry. Generations to come will benefit from Lois's gifts. In fact, most of the articles in this issue are contributions from Lois. The Commission wishes Lois the best and, of course, will continue to welcome any article that she is able to send our way.

– *The Editorial Board*

Second Annual Archives Retreat

Following our successful Archives Retreat held at Pine Lake Camp in November, 2011, the Commission on Archives and History and the Board of Camp and Retreat Ministries are pleased to announce that they will be sponsoring another Archives Retreat in 2012. This year's Archives Retreat will be held at the Rader Retreat Center, Pine Lake Camp, Westfield, Wisconsin on Thursday and Friday, October 18 and 19, 2012. We will begin at noon on Thursday and continue on through 3 p.m. on Friday. On our first day of the retreat, we will consider some of the special stories found within the history of our Wisconsin Conference. Lois Olsen, a missionary and nurse/mid-wife in Sierra Leone in the 1950s will lead a discussion on Wisconsinites in Mission. The mission theme will be continued as Conference Historian, Sandy Kintner, shares insights about Elizabeth Tennant, long-time missionary to Japan. Her extensive archives are just one of the many located in the Conference Archives. We will then look further into some of the other special treasures to

be found in the Conference Archives. Rev. Wil Bloy, an Archives volunteer, and Geraldine Raddatz Foster, a frequent researcher in our Archives, and also great-granddaughter of Gustave Fritsche, author of *The History of the Wisconsin Conference, 1840-1920 (The Evangelical Church)*, will lead this session. Finally, day one of the retreat will conclude with a talk by the Rev. Dan Dick, Director of Connectional Ministries of the Wisconsin Annual Conference, on the topic “Those Who Forget Their History Are Doomed to Delete It.”

Day two of the retreat will focus on local church histories and practical help for the local church historian. We will hear from Rev. Edward Johnson, Archives volunteer, about the “Vanishing Churches in Wisconsin.” Then several local church historians, including Hazel Matzke from Juda, Wisconsin, will discuss some of their successful strategies for the local church historian. An afternoon work session, led by Lynn Lubkeman, Wisconsin Conference Archivist, will focus on record-keeping basics and present an overview of archival principles.

The cost for the two day retreat is \$68 for double occupancy and \$99 for single occupancy. Four meals are included with the two day registration. One day registration, which also includes meals is available for \$25 for day one only and for \$15 for day two only. Please contact the Archives or the Camping Office to receive a brochure. You may also find further information and a copy of the registration form at the Commission on Archives and History website: www.wisconsinumc.org/archives or at the Camping Office website: www.WIMCAMPS.org/archivesretreat . It promises to be an interesting event and we would love to see you there.

Exciting News for the Archives



Last year the Conference Archives was contacted by the Rhodes Foundation, which was in charge of overseeing the estate of the Revs. Lourinda and Charles Sanford. Lourinda and Charles were both members of our Conference until their death the late 1990s. Lourinda and Charles left behind home in Neenah full of materials relating to their many years in the ministry including their extensive travels overseas. Given their interest in Methodist history, (indeed they served as Editors of *Flashbacks* for many years) it is not surprising



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that they hoped that their estate would be used to preserve a lasting memory of their ministry. To fulfill this wish, the Rhodes Foundation has agreed to fund the Commission on Archives and History’s effort to create the Charles and Lourinda Sanford Archives Center to be located in the Conference Center. Lourinda was one of the early women elders in the Wisconsin Conference and together they were one of the first clergy couples in Wisconsin. The Commission plans to expand upon the archival collection of Lourinda and Charles

Sanford and include in the Sanford Archives Center materials from other pioneering women in the Wisconsin Conference (both clergy and lay) Wisconsin missionaries, and other clergy and clergy couples from our Conference. We hope to dedicate a space in our Conference Center in Sun Prairie to the memory of the Sanfords, both to preserve this archival collection for future research use and also to create a display that will be open for the public to visit and learn about this important part of our history. Watch for further news about this exciting new initiative for the Archives in future issues of *Flashbacks*. If you know of anyone who should be included in the effort please contact the Archives.

Revisoning the Conference Museum



The Commission on Archives and History is beginning another important project. Our Conference Historical Museum is located on the grounds of Greenfield Memorial United Methodist Church in Greenfield, WI. The museum is housed in a lovely cream city brick building, built by the Zion congregation of the *Evangelische Kirche* in 1858. This brick building replaced the original log church which had been constructed by its members in 1844 as a place of worship for the first Evangelical Church congregation in Wisconsin, originally founded by the Rev. John Lutz.

The brick church served the congregation in Greenfield for seventy-one years until the present Greenfield Memorial Church was built in 1929. The original brick church was officially made the Conference historical building of the Evangelical Church in 1939. Then in 1963 the brick church was moved back off of Forest Home Avenue to its present location to make room for an expansion of the Greenfield Memorial Church. Its role as an historical museum continued after the merger of the EUB and the East and West Wisconsin Conferences of the Methodist Church in 1969. The future of the museum was secured by a generous bequest left Leah Weiler. The original brick building now serves as the museum for the history of the Wisconsin Conference of The United Methodist Church.

After several years in which a series of displays and exhibits were mounted in the Museum, the need for a permanent display in the Museum that will tell the history of our Conference and the various denominations that joined to form it, illustrate the many and varied stories of those who make up our Conference, and continue to collect the new stories we create together, was recognized. The existence of our Historical Museum is an unknown gem within our Conference. We want to work to make it a more vital part of the Conference's ministry. Anyone that is interested in working with the Museum Committee, please contact the Archives for further information.

Local Histories

SARONA: PLACE OF ABUNDANCE

The Sarona United Methodist Church was named after the Biblical village, Sarona. In Isaiah, Chapter 35, Sarona was mentioned as a place of abundance. The history of the church mentions that early German-Russian settlers were "amazed at the abundance and luxurious growth of clover and timothy growing wild among the stumps of the over cut land". The village was thus named Sarona.

The village of Sarona is located in Washburn County on Highway 53, close to nearby Spooner. Early settlers met in a one-room school house, the services led by pastors who came by train from Rice Lake. A Methodist Congregation was organized on January 8, 1910. The Rev. Myron Taylor led the meeting. It was decided at once to erect a church building. The new building was dedicated on February 12, 1911, by the District Superintendent, F. W. Straw.

During the first year, three pastors served the congregation: C. S. Russell, J. N. Mills, and then Theodore Reykdahl. The Rev. Reykdahl was also a student at Lawrence University. Later the Rev. Myron E. Taylor served the congregation, driving down from Spooner on an Indian motorcycle when the weather and the roads would permit.

Later the Rev. Earl L. Lindsey served. He was unable to find a house in Shell Lake so he moved to Sarona and lived in the church basement. During his second year, on April 28, 1915, his third son, Byron was born in the church basement.

Over the years, the Sarona congregation was related to several circuits. In 1919, it was the Spooner circuit. In 1924, they were a part of the Shell Lake-South Dewey Circuit. In 1943, they became part of the Spooner circuit. In 1952, Sarona returned to the Shell Lake Circuit. Finally in 2011, Sarona and Shell Lake became Circuit one which includes churches to the north.

There have been numerous physical changes in the original building. In 1929, electric lights were installed. In 1939, new shingles were used to repair the roof. Shortly after that the interior of the sanctuary was refinished. New windows and congregational seats were purchased. In 1949, a new wood shed was built. In 1980, the basement and kitchen were remodeled, painted, and carpeted. In the 1990s, two gas furnaces replaced the oil furnaces and a new cement block furnace room was built with a fire resistant door. In 2002, there were major physical revisions. The bell tower was renovated and cement blocks were installed under the bell tower. A new entrance door was installed. Outside a new deck complete with ramp and

steps made the entry handicapped accessible. Two years later, a new 12 x 16 two story addition was built. The next year, a well was drilled in preparation for a bathroom and running water for the kitchen. A septic system was added to the addition. In 2009, most of the wooden sections were scraped, sanded and stained. A new cement entrance steps, landing and sidewalk were installed.

But not all of the activity of the congregation was limited to the building. There were many other activities. The first Ladies Aid was organized in 1911. In 1927 and 1928, Vacation Bible School was held. The Rev. C. Paul Nulton was pastor from 1926 to 1930. After his death in 1949, his wife, Ethel, took over his work, taking training by correspondence and summer schools. She was ordained as local elder in 1957, becoming one of the first women in Wisconsin to serve as a pastor in the Methodist church in Wisconsin

The congregation was faithful in recognizing their anniversaries. Celebrations were held in 1936 for the 25th, in 1951 for the 40th. A Rededication Service was held in 1961. The 50th anniversary was celebrated on April, 16, 1961.

In 1935, the UMW discussed whether social dancing should be held in the building by the Methodist Youth Organization. It was agreed that would be okay. In 1956, Weber West donated a Brown Swiss Bull as a fund raiser. Howard Trumbower was the highest bidder. In 1960s, the UMW made Christmas ornaments for the Christmas tree and they are still used today. In the 1970's, Robert and Verna L. Klaus allowed a path on their property as a cross-country ski-athon. The annual event took place for several years as a joint fundraiser for the Sarona and Shell Lake Churches. A number of paintings and hand made pictures are a part of the sanctuary. Cross and Flame signs, made by one of the members, are both on the front and the back exterior walls of the building.

The Centennial celebration was held on August 27 and 28th, 2011. The service included musical numbers by the Shell Lake Choir as well as other musical tributes. Several former pastors presented memories. The service was followed by a lunch and opportunity to visit the rest of the building.

Submitted by Lois Olsen

TRINITY IN RACINE

Between 1851, when Willerup founded the first Norwegian Methodist Church in Wisconsin, and 1943, when the Norwegian Danish conference merged with the Wisconsin Conference, approximately fifty Norwegian Danish congregations were established in Wisconsin. One of the early ones was organized in Racine, established in 1853.

The first class had sixteen members. This congregation, like the other Norwegian Methodist Churches was a part of the Wisconsin Methodist Episcopal Conference. However in 1880, all the Norwegian speaking churches in Wisconsin were brought into the Norwegian Danish Conference, a language Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The first building in Racine was constructed along the Root River. During the winter, vessels tied up at the church dock. The church served many of the sailors who sailed the Great Lakes and throughout the St. Lawrence Seaway out to the ocean. A ship's wheel has been placed above the center door of the nave.

Some of the key events in the church's history follow:

In 1863, a Sunday School was organized.

In 1872 a Ladies Aid society was organized.

In 1886, the Racine Church changed its name to the Norwegian-Danish Trinity Church.

In 1888, the Racine property was sold. Services were held at the Y.M.C.A until the new building was constructed.

In 1893, the Epworth League was organized.

In 1905, a parsonage was purchased. Services continued to be conducted in Norwegian until 1924, when English began to be used for services. By 1935, Sunday School membership was 731.

In 1957, the congregation decided it was time to relocate to a new building. It was recommended that four acres of land on the north side of the city be purchased. The area was mostly vacant land. There were few houses and no stores or apartments. A decision was made to purchase the land for \$220.00. The *parable of the talents* was used to raise some of the money for the purchase.

The 312 church members were each given a new \$1 bill and 50 children were given new quarters. Each was told to return this talent 30 fold. Then the fun began as each person tried to think of new ways to increase the talent. They baked, sewed, cooked, washed cars, baby sat, sold gadgets, dieted, give some permanents and charged friends the equivalent of bus fare for riding with each other.

In 1963, the present church was built. On December 8, services were held in both churches. The mortgage was paid off by 1974.

In 1945 the old parsonage was sold and a new one was purchased.

In 1978, there was a celebration of the 125th anniversary of the congregation. On September 21, 2003, the Sesquicentennial was celebrated.

Submitted by Lois Olsen

MARTELL



Martell's Methodist Episcopal congregation was formed in 1859, under the leadership of Nils Christopherson, a Norwegian immigrant who converted to Methodism, during his two visits to his home region in Norway. He attracted many Norwegians from the Drammen and Modum regions of Norway to the Upper Midwest. Early church members, some of them from New Centerville and Gilman Township, met in area homes and school houses until a decision was made to build a church building. The congregation built a humble parsonage for visiting preachers before they chose to erect a church in 1873-74 at New Centerville, St. Croix County. Nils Christopherson was appointed pastor. He remained in that capacity,

though still serving several circuit churches, until 1880 when he requested to become inactive and was replaced by P. B. Smith. That same year, the church became part of the Norwegian-Danish Conference. By 1897, the church had 75 members.

In 1900, under the oversight of Pastor John Lorentz, the church building was moved from New Centerville as a result of changing membership. A larger church building was constructed.

The building still stands adjacent to a community cemetery established before 1870. Nels Kolberg arrived from Norway to take charge of the Hartland, Viking and Martell Churches. He remained in all three churches between 1921 and 1941 when he was reassigned to Ellsworth and Diamond Bluff in addition to Hartland. The Martell congregation, which until that year had services only in Norwegian, was united with the Hammond and New Centerville Churches.

In 1951, another forward thinking event occurred with the appointment of Ethel Nulton, the church's first female pastor. She oversaw the installation of six colored memorial windows and the addition of a new communion table, rug and roof. Pastor James Hansen organized the Methodist Youth Fellowship in 1957. In 1974, the congregation brought land across from the church and built a baseball field.

After 100 years of serving the Methodist community in Martell, the congregation began to decline to one third of its peak size. After valiant efforts to attract new members, the congregation voted to disband in 2006. The historic building is now used as the Martell Town Hall.

Submitted by Lois Olsen

FROM THE ARCHIVES

(Treasures discovered in our stacks)



✠ How do you ring a church bell? Sounds simple enough, right? Not necessarily so. Eighty years ago the Quarterly Conference of Emmanuel Evangelical Church, in the little northeastern village of Lark, approved detailed instructions for the janitor on how to ring their church bell. Right from their humble beginnings the ringing of a bell, held aloft in a tower or steeple, was an important part of the ministry of all our rural and village churches. Found in the Quarterly Conference minutes, December 30, 1931, of Emmanuel Church, were the following bell ringing rules:

“It shall be the duty of the janitor to ring the bell on Saturday evening at 5:00 p.m. from October 1st to April 1st, and at 6:00 p.m. from April 1st to October 1st, and to ring the bell one hour

before the Sunday School and Service is to begin, and again when the Sunday School and Service is to begin, with the exception of the interval between the Sunday School and the morning service when he shall only ring the bell twice with three tolls and a short interval between. In case of a death he shall ring the bell between eleven and twelve noon, ringing three times at five minute intervals. If the ringing of the bell is on Sunday he shall ring the bell after the morning service. At a funeral service he shall ring the bell when the funeral processions comes in sight until it arrives at the church, and again when it leaves the church to the cemetery, and toll the bell when the casket is brought from the hearse to the vestibule, and toll again when the casket is brought from the vestibule out to the hearse.

Wilmer Thiel, Secretary”

Much can be learned about church life in the early half of the 20th century by reading documents, minutes, etc. found at our United Methodist archives in Sun Prairie. If you're searching for the record or information of some particular church or clergy person, talk to either Lynn or Mary at the archives. It's a priceless resource of our Annual Conference churches and clergy.

Submitted by Wil Bloy, Archives Volunteer

✚ From the Conference Yearbook of the East Wisconsin Annual Conference of the Methodist Church (1946)

Report of the Appleton District Superintendent:

“I drove up to one of the District parsonages, and there was the youngest member of the family, a 1st grader, busy with the help of a little playmate running paper streamers around the parsonage. At the supper table the little fellow spoke to me and said:”Do you know what I was doing when you came”? I said: “No, what were you doing”? And he said: “I was putting a string around the house. I wanted to get it done before you came...and I was having my mother write a sign to hang up saying: “Please don't move us this year.”

Submitted by Mary Schroeder, Conference Researcher

✚ From a letter written to West Wisconsin Historical Committee, January 11, 1956, from Roger Steiner concerning the New Lisbon Methodist Church

“The church was founded by circuit riders in the day when New Lisbon was a big, bad, rip-roaring town of 3,000 people, eight hotels, etc. It was the place where the railroad ended and freight and passengers were transferred to stage coach or Conestoga wagons.

Union Solders sent here during the civil War to quell the Indian uprising (which had culminated in the massacre of the Salter family near-by here) helped raise the frame for the church building. At first it had no windows or floor. The first year or so cranberries were stored in the church so that the rent from the storage would pay for a floor. The first members of the church made their own church pews, and bought their own candles to services.”

Submitted by Mary Schroeder, Conference Researcher

ESSAY CONTEST

In the last issue of *Flashbacks*, an essay contest was promoted. So far only two essays have been received. Lois Olsen would like to see more.

There is no designated topic, but the material should be related to The United Methodist Church in Wisconsin. The paper should be limited to six pages, double spaced. A face paper with the name of the article and the author's name and address should be attached to the front of the article. Do not put the author's name on the subsequent pages.

The deadline for submission is extended to August 1, 2012. The winner will be awarded \$25.00 and winning submission will be printed in *Flashbacks*. The submissions will be judged by the members of the Archives and History commission of the Conference.

Please mail the essay to Lois Olsen editor, 1840 N. Prospect Ave. Milwaukee, WI 53202.

UMC HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETING

On July 20-24, 2012 the 7th quadrennial Historical Convocation and the 22nd annual meeting of the Historical Society met in Oklahoma City. The meeting was held at the Oklahoma History Center.

The Distinguished Service Award was given to Dr. Kenneth E. Rowe, long-time Methodist librarian at Drew University and leading scholar and bibliographer on Methodist History. The 2011 Saddlebag award was given to Russell Richey, Kenneth Rowe, and Jean Miller Schmidt for the publication of the second volume of their two-volume work. *The Methodist Experience in America*. The Ministry of Memory Award was presented to John Gooch, from the Missouri Annual Conference. John has been involved in Missouri archives and history for many years and is the long term editor of *Toward the Rising Sun*, the semi-annual journal of the Missouri United Methodist Historical Society.

Dr. Tash Smith presented the topic *We May Not Be the Same Color, But We are the Same in Heart: The Indian Roots of Oklahoma's Methodism*. He presented the history of the churches which today make up the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference. Methodism became the strongest denomination in the area due to the facts that Methodists incorporated more Native pastors into their churches than did other denominations.

Dr. Paul Barton gave an address on the role of Latina women in the proclamation of the Gospel. It is only recently that these women were allowed to preach but they witnessed to the Gospel through serving the needy and meeting the needs of other women.

The role of Choctaw women in the church was discussed by Dr. Michelene E, Pesantubbee. Bishop Joel Martinez presented an overview of the Oral History Project of Hispanic/Latino United Methodism. This project grew out of conversations with many in the church of the need to preserve the faith stories of Hispanic/Latino leaders in the church while they were still living.

The 2012 annual meeting was held in Gettysburg, PA, May 14-17, hosted by the NEJCAH. Subsequent locations are Drew in 2013, Southeast Jurisdiction in 2014, and Chicago in 2015.

Submitted by Lois Olsen. (see the General Commission on Archives and History's website for a full description of the meeting in *The Historian's Digest*, Summer 2011.

(<http://archives.gcah.org>).



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