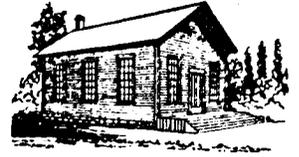




"WE are the end-product of our history."

FLASHBACKS



Revealing glimpses of our creative past

Official newsletter of the
UNITED METHODIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WISCONSIN

Vol. 15 No. 3

September, 1988

1988 HISTORICAL PILGRIMAGE WILL FEATURE METHODISM IN AND AROUND EAU CLAIRE

Randall R. Richter, pastor of the Lake Street United Methodist Church, Eau Claire, will coordinate activities for the Annual Fall Pilgrimage sponsored by The United Methodist Historical Society of Wisconsin on Saturday, October 1, at the Lake Street Church.

The pilgrimage will celebrate the 131st anniversary of the Lake Street congregation beginning with a noon luncheon at the church, located at Lake Street and Fourth Avenue, three blocks west of downtown via the Lake Street bridge over the Chippewa River.

Highlights of the program will include readings from local Methodist settlers, a history of Methodism in the Eau Claire area, readings from the journals of circuit rider Joseph J. Austin (Vermont and Wisconsin) and an overview of the old Northwest Conference.

The Conference Archives and History Commission will meet at the church at 9 a.m.

Officers to be Elected at Pilgrimage

Officers of The United Methodist Historical Society of Wisconsin will be elected at the annual fall pilgrimage to be held at our Lake Street United Methodist Church in Eau Claire on Saturday, October 1, at 12:45 p.m. following a noon luncheon served by the women of the church.

LOIS OLSEN SHARES WESLEY'S HISTORY WITH HISTORICAL SOCIETY AT CONFERENCE

Lois Olsen, membership secretary of the United Methodist Historical Society of Wisconsin, shared slides of her trip to Aldersgate and other historical Wesley sites with those who gathered for the society's annual meeting held during the Wisconsin annual conference at UW-Stevens Point.

Lois narrated the slide story of John Wesley, beginning with his birth place at Epworth on June 17, 1703, to His burial site behind the church. She closed with a picture of the City Road chapel which was completely restored in 1978.

Wesley's father, Samuel, was an Anglican Curate in London, South Ormsby and Epworth, who fancied himself to be a poet, Lois said. He was "high" church and vigorously disciplined dissenters in his congregation.

John's mother, Susanna, had 19 children in 20 years of marriage. John was 15th and Charles the 18th. Only nine survived to adulthood. When

someone set fire to the manse, all of the children escaped except for John, who was saved when one man stood on the shoulders of another and was able to reach him. His mother said, "Is this not a bird plucked from the burning?"

Slides of Epworth culminated with one showing John preaching atop his father's tombstone which he did for eight evenings after the church pulpit was refused him.

Nearly 17, John entered Christ Church, Oxford, where both he and Charles were ordained. In 1726, he became a fellow at Lincoln College where his group was given the name "Methodists."

(continued on Page 2)



In 1735, John and Charles went to Georgia to minister to the Oglethorpe colony. "My chief motive," Wesley said, "was the hope of saving my own soul."

Although he left in disgrace, he met some Moravians who convinced him to preach faith until he had it, and then because he had it, to continue to preach faith.

A slide of the plaque in Aldersgate Street prompted the story of Wesley's experience.

"I went unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans," he related. "About a quarter before nine, while he was

describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ alone for my salvation, and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

In 1739, John went to Bristol to carry on the work of George Whitfield to the miners where he preached in the open air to crowds of 20,000. Here he built the "New Room," a community center with book shop, hotel, school and dispensary.

Lois concluded with slides of the City Road Chapel built in 1778 and the house where Wesley lived.

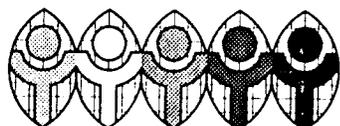
RECORDING SECRETARY RUTH STEFFEN SEEKS CHURCH HISTORICAL RECORDS

Ruth Steffen, Stevens Point, recording secretary of the United Methodist Historical Society of Wisconsin, actively seeks out the history and heritage of the churches in Wisconsin. She is particularly concerned with the preservation of historical records of churches which can be used by genealogists.

"Many times," Ruth said, "the only sources of family history are the records maintained by the churches."

"Records need to be carefully made and saved, either locally or in the Conference Archives," she said.

As a librarian, Ruth is always looking for ways to share information from our history.

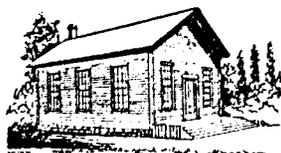


United Methodists

**The World Is
Our Parish**

Join the

UNITED METHODIST
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
of



WISCONSIN



WISCONSIN CONFERENCE
COMMISSION ON ARCHIVES & HISTORY
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
April 23, 1988

Dear members and friends of the Schevenius family:

The time that we knew must come has arrived. Our mutual friend, Rev. Carl W. Schevenius, has made the great transition from the earthly to the heavenly. Each of us has his or her own story to tell concerning this unusual man whose saga covers over a century of time. While he lived a life of almost unsurpassed length, it was also one of great intellectual and spiritual dimension. To relate his many characteristics and experiences is impossible, but let this incident serve perhaps to illustrate his inspiring qualities:

We are told that on one of his rather frequent trips to the hospital in later years he was walking in the corridor one day. Near the elevator a little black boy approached him and said pleadingly, "Sir, would you pray for me?" Our friend, taken by surprise and aware that the two of them were standing virtually in a thoroughfare near the elevator, replied, "Yes, but where shall we pray?" "Right here," said the boy, pointing to the floor. As they were kneeling in prayer a young nurse came by and asked, "Sir, would you pray for me too? I'm so unhappy." It is not often that one finds a person of such magnetism as to gain the trust and confidence of strangers as readily as our friend Carl Schevenius. One knew by observing him that he was a man of both warmth and distinction.

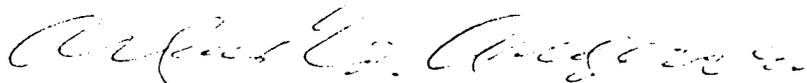
We are told that at John Wesley's grave the inscription reads: "This great light arose, in the singular providence of God, to enlighten these nations." Rev. Schevenius would probably not lay claim to matching Wesley's contribution, but let it be said that, while he blew out hundreds of candles on his many birthdays, he also lit many candles.

Let me close by emphasizing that this man wore a coat of many colors as pastor, poet, essayist, hymnologist, literary critic, preacher, and more specifically as the acknowledged leader in the former Norwegian-Danish Conference. As chairman of the committee which assembled the Norwegian-Danish hymnal, he and his wife Alice, a graduate of the University of Minnesota with a major in English, translated from English into Norwegian many of the numbers in that highly recognized collection. He also translated many poems into English. Let me close with two verses from Aasmund Vinje's lines on the mountains, a reminder of Carl's own childhood on a mountainside in Telemark:

(over)

Once more I see such mountains and deep valleys
Like those I saw in my first childhood day,
The same cold wind about my forehead rallies
And gold lies on the snow as then it lay,
A childhood voice recalls to me and tallies,
It makes me thoughtful and yet also gay
With youthful memory that talk is seething,
It moves me still it nearly hampers breathing.

Yes, life streams on me as it first was streaming
When by the snow I saw the fresh green straw,
I dream again as I was always dreaming
When peaks like these in the blue sky I saw,
I now forget, as then, the strife and scheming
When I towards evening saw the sun with awe,
I trust I find a house that may receive me
When home tonight the sun will kindly lead me.



Arlow W. Andersen
Conference Historian
Wisconsin Conference

To the Editor:

The above material is not exactly in line with John Wesley and his Aldersgate experience, but perhaps we can agree that many, like Rev. Schevenius, my former pastor, were so touched by his message indirectly that they too demonstrate the worldwide extension of Methodism.

In a way, Rev. S. is related to Wisconsin Methodism. As a district superintendent for the Chicago District, and later for the Minneapolis District, of the former Norwegian-Danish Conference he visited regularly for fifteen years (nine from Chicago and six from Minneapolis) many charges in the Badger State: Racine, Westby, Milwaukee, Stoughton, Cambridge, Waupaca, Neenah, Marinette, Kendsha, Sheboygan, Deer Park, Hartland, Martell, Viking, Diamond Bluff, Superior, and others.

The film "Arene" (The Years) is available from our archives. It is in color and runs for sixty minutes. Where the conversation is in Norwegian there are English translations below in the frames. The narrator himself, a graduate of Oxford University, is proficient and very clear in both Norwegian and English.

Katherine and I could not attend the funeral services in the Asbury UMC (the former First Norwegian-Danish M. E. Church) on Saturday, April 23, but I did submit this tribute, in the event that it would fit into the service. I last saw him when he was 105, and he insisted on taking me out to lunch! He was of great help to me when I was writing The Salt of the Earth: A History of Norwegian-Danish Methodism in America, published in 1962.

CHARTER MEMBERSHIP IN UM HISTORICAL SOCIETY IS OPEN THROUGH DECEMBER 31

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

CHARTER MEMBERSHIP YEAR - 1988

The General Commission on Archives and History is pleased to announce the establishment of The Historical Society of The United Methodist Church. The plan for the Society was adopted at the Commission Annual Meeting September 20, 1987. Charter membership is now open through December 31, 1988.

The charter membership drive for the Society is geared to build upon the celebration of Heritage Sunday and the observance of the 250th Anniversary of John Wesley's experience at Aldersgate. We see the event of General Conference and the beginning of the new quadrennium as a good time to remember the past and learn from it as a charter member of the new Historical Society.

Charter membership is \$16.00 (outside the USA - \$18.00 because of postage rates). The first year fee will cover the balance of 1988 and all of 1989!

Charter members will receive a certificate of membership as well as a wallet-size membership card. After January 1, 1989, there will be the small card only.

Members of the Historical Society will receive these benefits:

- a. Linkage with others who care about our history and heritage, and an opportunity to be informed and involved in preserving and telling our story as United Methodist Christians.
- b. Subscription to METHODIST HISTORY (Quarterly Journal).
- c. Subscription to THE HISTORIAN'S DIGEST (Society Newsletter).
- d. 10% Discount on Commission and Society publications.
- e. Reduced registration fee for Historical Convocations and annual meeting programs.
- f. Adjustment in genealogical and research fees.
- g. Membership in one of the four sections of the Society: Local Church, Commissions and Historical Societies, Education and Research, or Genealogy

Until the organizational meeting of the Historical Society in July, 1989, the History Committee of the General Commission is the organizing committee to implement the plan and make such other decisions as necessary. The Committee will also serve as the first nominating committee and present a slate of officers.

The Society has a solid foundation in the earlier societies of its antecedent bodies. The first meeting of the Historical Society of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ was held May 4, 1885 in Dayton, Ohio. The first meeting of the Historical Society of the United Evangelical Church was held March 12, 1907 in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and became the parent Historical Society of The Evangelical Church in 1922. In 1946, the Historical Society of the Evangelical United Brethren Church succeeded the societies of the two former denominations. The Association of Methodist Historical Societies was organized in May, 1923 in Baltimore, with its first annual meeting December 10, 1925 in Philadelphia.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Charter Membership Application

I wish to join the Society. Enclosed find my check for \$16.00 (\$18.00 outside USA). I understand my membership begins immediately and continues through December 31, 1989.

My Name _____
(Please give your name as you wish it to appear on mail and membership lists.)

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

My Choice of Sectional Membership (Choose one only):

_____ Local Church History _____ Commissions and Historical Societies

_____ Genealogy _____ Education and Research

Please make check payable to: HISTORICAL SOCIETY, and mail with this membership application to: HISTORICAL SOCIETY, P. O. Box 127, Madison, NJ 07940.

ARENÉ (THE YEARS)

A FILM ABOUT MAN, TIME & PLACES

The magic we experienced as children on the knee of a grandparent or great-grandparent while hearing the story of our family's history was a precious gift—something never forgotten in a lifetime. "The Years—A Film About Man, Time & Places," gives viewers the rare privilege of hearing first-hand the history of one of the oldest living Norwegian immigrants in Minnesota. It is the touching, personal story of the Reverend Carl Wilhelm Schevenius, now 101-years-old, who emigrated to America from Norway in 1897.

Norwegian author Andor Birkeland produced "The Years" last year for Norwegian State Television and KTCA, in commemoration of Rev. Schevenius' 100th birthday. The film mixes breathtaking scenes of the Norwegian countryside around the Schevenius family farm with scenes retracing Rev. Schevenius' life in America. To capture the scenes set in this country, Birkeland and a film crew followed Rev. Schevenius on a week-long pilgrimage through three states (Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois) back to many of the sites of his youth.

Also recorded in the documentary was the celebration in honor of Carl's 100th birthday last summer at the Asbury

United Methodist Church in Minneapolis. The proceeds went to fight starvation, and Carl, remarkably, delivered the sermon. Carl finds nothing remarkable about it, however. In fact, he says he didn't realize he was about to become a centenarian until the television researchers sent him the birth records to prove it. "I didn't want to believe it," says Carl, eyes twinkling, "but I had to yield to facts!"

A year after the documentary was made, Carl Schevenius, 101-year-old, sits in his study. His white hair is precisely combed, his clear blue eyes are steady, self-possessed. He seems a bit weaker now, and more pale. A recent illness has kept him from his daily two-mile walks around south Minneapolis, and he misses them. He was also forced to cancel a trip to Norway in June, where he was to have been guest of honor at the Norwegian Methodist Church in Bergen.

How does Carl feel now about the life he left behind in Norway, the life of a farmer? "While the work I did when I was young was difficult, I came to understand its value later," he says. "Agriculture is one of the most important vocations there are. I'm sorry to see so much land going into house lots. What we lose, we never get back. Go to Europe and see how cramped they are! It's a big problem how to bury their dead. I tip my hat to anyone who chooses the life of a farmer. It's a better life, but you have to have a creative side—the fine arts—as well. Agriculture passes season after season. You must have something that abides."

Carl is himself an indefatigable lover of the arts, and in younger days journeyed regularly to Chicago to attend performances by the likes of renowned sopranos Kirsten Flagstad and Lillian Nordica, opera immortal Enrico Caruso, and violin virtuoso Yehudi Menuhin. He even heard the oratory of William Jennings Bryan.

And what of the awesome changes in society, particularly in technology, he has witnessed in his lifetime? "Electricity, wireless communication, the atom, space travel—all the advancements made may be good," says Carl. "It de-



Rev. Schevenius

pends on how they're used." He pauses, then adds, "But I do think life has improved. I'm no pessimist—I believe in advance. But I think we have gone back some, too. People don't grasp religion as they did in the past. The world has turned, but a firm belief can make you steady."

Despite his unequivocal views about religion, the Reverend Schevenius isn't hostile to faiths other than his own. "I agree with their fundamentals," he says, "but I believe that Christ is the key. As for my theology, I learned long ago from Soren Kierkegaard to take on faith the paradoxes in religion that cannot be explained by reason. That has helped me over many a hurdle."

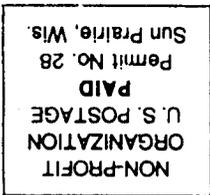
The bookcases in Carl's study tower to the ceiling. They are stacked with books by Kierkegaard, by Pascal, by Ibsen and Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, by a pantheon of great minds. They show gentle wear. Carl has said he believes firmly in striving for a broad outlook, an open mind. The wear in his books bears him out. And his optimism, too, is genuine. From a poem he wrote, entitled "Resurgence":

"Then surely there is a tomorrow
Out somewhere beyond the spheres,
Where joy is not blighted by sorrow
And love is not grieved by tears."
"It has been a good life," Carl says,
and means it.



Address Correction Requested

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SUN PRAIRIE, WI 53590



FLASHBACKS

Official newsletter of the United Methodist
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(Phone 414-787-7616)

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

OFFICERS OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Rev. Charles B. Sanford, president
Rev. Wm. Jannusch, vice president
Ruth Steffen, recording secretary
Linn C. Emerick, treasurer
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Lois C. Olsen, membership secretary,
Executive Committee treasurer
P.O. Box 10326
Milwaukee, WI 53210

Membership applications and dues should be
sent to the membership secretary at the
above address.

Wisconsin Conference

1852



1988

HISTORICAL PILGRIMAGE

Saturday, October 1

LAKE STREET UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

337 Lake Street
Eau Claire, Wisconsin

The Schedule of the Pilgrimage is as follows:

- 9 a.m. Conference Archives and History Commission meeting
- 12 noon Luncheon at Lake Street United Methodist Church
- 12:45 p.m. Historical Society meeting
- 1:30 p.m. Historical Presentations on the history of Methodism in the Eau Claire area, readings from the journals of circuit rider Joseph J. Austin, and an overview of the old Northwest Conference.

Cost of the Luncheon of chicken casserole, rolls, relishes, salad, desserts, coffee, tea and milk will be \$ 4.25.

Send reservations to:
Lake Street United Methodist Church
337 Lake Street
Eau Claire, WI 54702-1205