



"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. 17 No. 3

September, 1990

At Appleton Emmanuel Saturday, Oct. 6

## COSTUMED GREETERS TO HIGHLIGHT 150th YEAR CELEBRATION OF EVANGELICAL WORK

The annual Fall Pilgrimage of the United Methodist Historical Society of Wisconsin will be held at Emmanuel United Methodist Church, 740 E. College Avenue, Appleton, WI 54911 on Saturday, October 6, beginning with dinner at 12 noon. The cost is \$ 5. Write or phone (414) 731-3288 for dinner reservations by September 28.

A short business meeting and election of officers will follow at 12:45 p.m. The worship service and program is scheduled for 1:30 p.m., led by the Revs. Ruwal Freese, pastor of Emmanuel UMC; Charles Sanford, president of the Historical Society; and Solomon Cramer, local committee chairman.

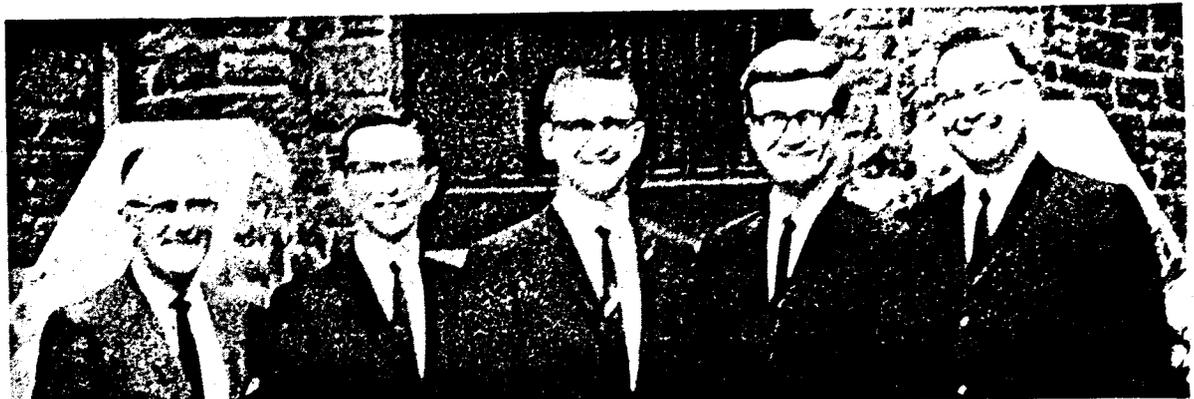
"You will be greeted at the door by the Rev. G. Zellhoefer, who was the founding pastor of Emmanuel church in 1870," the Rev. Cramer said. "Former Evangelical churches in the area are invited to bring items which may be of historical interest."

Since 1990 marks the 150th anniversary of the beginning of the Evangelical Church work in Wisconsin, the program will highlight our Evangelical history. The Rev. Bryce Armstrong, retired pastor of Greenfield United Methodist Church, will tell the story of the pioneer work begun in Greenfield 150 years ago. Artifacts from the early Greenfield church, now our United Methodist Conference Museum, will be on display.

The Rev. Freese and members of the church historical pilgrimage committee, with the Rev. Sol and Irene Cramer, will tell "The Story of Emmanuel Church of Appleton" which is 120 years old. Former Evangelical pastors and older members will share recollections of earlier times of the church. A special attraction of the day will be costumed greeters and an exhibit of early church pictures, records, artifacts and historical movies.

The Trust Company, the Conference Quartet made up of former Evangelical pastors (l. to r.) Stanley Hayes, Lynn Kollath, Norman Silvester, Kenneth Knoespel and Rolland Ferch, will sing a number of selections to celebrate the event. German songs will be sung by children of the church.

THE  
TRUST  
COMPANY  
(1971)



From the Album of Photographer Nick Stassi

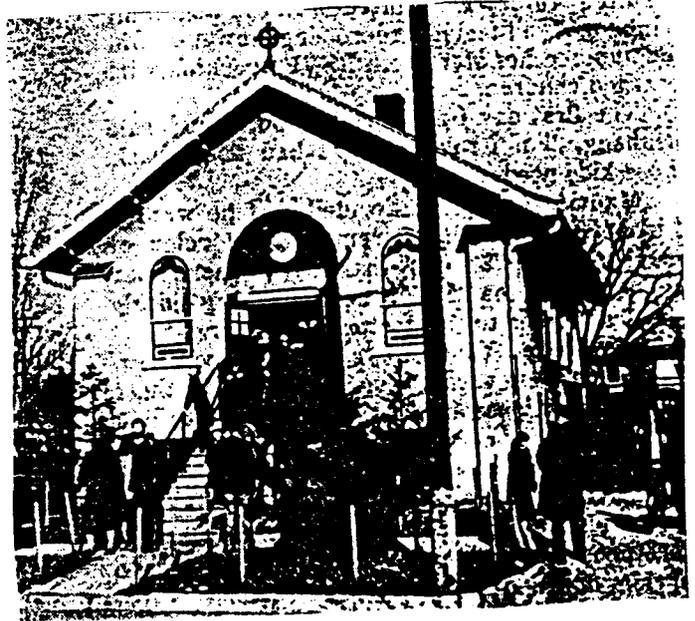
ARCHIVIST MARY SCHROEDER SHARES CLIPPINGS ABOUT MADISON ITALIAN METHODISTS

Nick Stassi, whose hobby is the history of Madison's Little Italy and whose photos accompany a series of articles published in the Madison (WI) Press Connection concerning Madison's Italian Methodists, recently took his scrapbook of newspaper clippings to Conference Archivist Mary Schroeder for filing in the Wisconsin Conference Archives.

In a story run on Aug. 24, 1978, reporter Frank Custer began his article, "Who was Madison's first woman preacher? Was she Mrs. Rose Pallotta?"

He continued, "If so, to the Italian Methodist Church in 1920 goes the distinction of providing the first woman to preach a sermon in a Madison church."

The article explained that Rose Pallotta, a trained Methodist Deaconess, was the wife of the Rev. Philip Pallotta, second minister to serve the new congregation of the Chiesa Italiana, or the Italian Methodist Church. The church was in its fifth year of existence as a mission when Mrs. Pallotta, according to a news item published on Aug. 27, 1920, preached to the new mission church.



—Photo by R. N. Stassi

The Madison Methodist Union paid tribute to the Pallottas in its 1920 annual report with these words, "We have secured a real leader in the person of the Rev. Philip Pallotta, who with his wife's help, will direct the work the best they know how....Our mission is the most effective Americanized agency...."

The mission operated in Madison's Little Italy among more than 1,700 Italian and Sicilian immigrants in the Greenbush area, it was reported. The Methodist pastoral judgment at the time described the area residents as "Protestant in mind and heart...."

The "colony," the report went on, contained 175 "faithful Catholics." The remainder were sought from members of the Protestant faith, who "need the Gospel of Christ or they may become skeptics, anarchists, Black Hands, infidels, or what not."

Presbyterians started Madison's work among the Italian residents with volunteer assistance from other denominations. When other denominations lost interest, Methodists were put in charge of the missionary work.

Three groups of Italian settlers were targeted for mission membership: first, the Greci, or Albanian Sicilians who in the 1400s fled Turkish oppression in Albania and settled in Piana Dei Greci, near Palermo, Sicily. Living in the Regent Street area, they included such names as Cuccia, Barbato, Paratore, Stassi, Maisano, Colletti, Traino, Parisi and Licari.

Another group, according to the news story, was the "true Sicilians," such as the Navarra, Fiore, Tartamela, Caruso, and Amato families who lived in the Milton Street area. The third group included Lombardy Italians who came from Northern Italy. These Madison settlers included the families of Dirienzo, Audini, Pedracini and Capitani.

## TONY FARINA TELLS STORY OF ITALIAN METHODIST WORK IN MILWAUKEE AREA

The Rev. Anthony Farina, Madison, related the dramatic story of Italian Methodist work in the Milwaukee area when he spoke during the annual business meeting of the United Methodist Historical Society of Wisconsin held during annual conference at UW-Stevens Point.

Using the topic, "The Italian Methodist Pentecost," Tony detailed the Italian influence on Wisconsin United Methodist history and heritage, beginning with Catherine Eyrick, a school teacher from Ohio, who felt God's call to become a missionary to China. She attended Evangelical Theological Seminary at Naperville, IL, for two years, applied to the Board of Missions for work in China, but was denied because she was single. She continued to teach school.

The Board of Missions picked up on the work in Milwaukee and Catherine moved to Milwaukee and lived among the Italian-speaking people, demonstrating her compassion and heart for mission work; she also inherited the work of the American Bible Society there. Finding the church to be the center of the Italian community, she responded to the call of the local church to work among Italian immigrants, teaching language classes, sewing classes, citizenship preparation, and youth activities.

Feeling a need to study Italian language and culture, Catherine enrolled at Methodist University in Rome. There she met Augusto Guiliani, nephew of a cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church in Rome. Augusto had met an American engineer in a Rome hospital who shared his faith with him. Before he died, the American gave him his Bible. He read the book of Romans, had a conversion experience and entered Methodist University to study Reformation Theology. Catherine and Augusto were married the next April and together began an important work among the Italians in Milwaukee, establishing Sunday schools and working with youth as far west as Waukesha.

"They gave themselves unconditionally to the work," Farina said. "It was not without controversy and oppression. Guiliani became an interpreter for the police. One day a small package was found in a church pew; it was taken to the precinct and a bomb exploded."

Farina testified that an article in True Detective Magazine described the battle with police and Scottish, German and Roman Catholic anarchists.

"You know," he said, "that a persecuted church is a growing church. Youth were converted to the Lord, among them Guiseppi Busacca and Angelo Germanotta."

Guiliani started Faith Church in Milwaukee, also Italian mission starts in Racine and Kenosha. Young people were still the key to church growth. The focus was on fellowship groups and Bible study, picnics and fun times. But the prime focus was on a new relationship with God in Jesus Christ.

"These were my spiritual ancestors," Farina said. "The work grew through the help of English-speaking churches, Care packages, support of the Board of Missions and the help of the deaconesses like Gertrude Bloede, Sunday School teachers like Rose Hauerwas and Irene Haumerson. As a boy, I can remember that Wisconsin churches supported Italian Missions."

"In the early '50s, we gave up our national identity to become a part of the New Church," Tony said. "It was Faith Community Church, not the Italian Mission Church."

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Society of Wisconsin  
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#### NICK STASSI SHARES STORY OF MADISON'S LITTLE ITALY

Preceding the Pallottas, who continued the work in 1917, was a Rev. Leitz, first mission Methodist worker, who led the Italian congregation for its first two years. During the Pallotta's pastorate, the church was formally organized in 1920. A small church building was erected at 103 S. Lake Street in 1921 and dedicated in February, 1922.

When the Pallottas moved to New Orleans in 1927, the mission church was served by the Rev. John Buono for two years. Then came the remarkable and active 30-year pastorate of the Rev. Antonio Parroni.

With the Triangle Redevelopment project of the early 1960s, the Italian residents lived through the destruction of the colony, the loss of homes, and the ultimate scattering into other areas of Madison, Mr. Stassi said.

"The razing of their little stucco church provided the death knell of a successful congregation," the article concluded.

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