

# *The Indiana United Methodist Historical Society* *Newsletter*

P. O. Box 331, Greencastle, Indiana 46135

Fall 2012

## Trail and Trial



Laura Galloway tells Sallie Hester's story.

In the last issue of this newsletter, the reader's interest was teased by a shortened version of a letter from Howard W. Derby of San Francisco to Rev. W. H. Wylie of Bloomington, Indiana, concerning a wagon train which made its way from the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Bloomington to California at the time of the Gold Rush. The reader learned of the involvement of Rev. E. R. Ames, Dr. Matthew Simpson and, foremost, Rev. Isaac Owen, the supervising missionary-leader of the train, who had been selected by Ames and Simpson. Mr. Derby admitted an absence in his records of any account of the crossing of the American plains; and it was asked whether Laura Galloway, the morning speaker at the 17<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of IUMHS, could fill in this hiatus in Mr. Derby's records. Laura Galloway could and did.

Laura Galloway's primary source for her presentation was the diary of Sallie Hester, a 14-year-old girl whose father, Craven Hester, was a prominent attorney in Bloomington. The Hester family's wagon was part of what was called the Missionary Train, from the fact that

Rev. Isaac Owen (Owens, by Sallie's spelling) and other Methodist ministers were venturing west together as missionaries to California.

The road to New Albany, Indiana, a "big city" to Sallie's eyes, was so rough that all occupants of what Sallie refers to as "our carriage" were thrown out at one point. The road would be rough for 2,000 miles. At New Albany, the Hesters boarded the steamboat Meteor for St. Joe, Missouri. On the Missouri River, "the worst river in the world" (in Sallie's words), sticking on and breaking free of sand bars consumed most of the passengers' time. One sand bar stopped the boat ten miles below St. Joe. In St. Joe, Sallie wrote: "As far as the eye can reach, so great is the emigration, you see nothing but wagons." Many waited a week to be ferried – "men, women, and lots of children and last but not least the cattle and horses upon which our lives depend."

The Conestoga wagon was too large and too heavy to weigh upon the oxen. The prairie schooner, being about four feet wide and ten feet long, was nimble enough to handle a rocky terrain and light enough not to impede the four to six oxen. Traveling ten to fourteen miles per day, the humans walked, not adding weight to the load. Oxen were the animals of choice. They could eat foliage and required less water than horses.

The terrain between Indiana and California was varied and demanding. The rivers not only blocked progress with their sand bars; they took lives. Sallie reports a lady and four children being drowned in a ferrying accident on the Platte River. Vegetation changed. In 400 miles through Nebraska, trees were very few and shade nonexistent. Grass and water had to be provisioned for the oxen before crossing the desert, a mostly nocturnal trip of forty miles and three to four days. Trees were sometimes cut for cattle to browse on. Wagons

*(Article continues on page 2.)*

*("Trail and Trial" continues here.)*

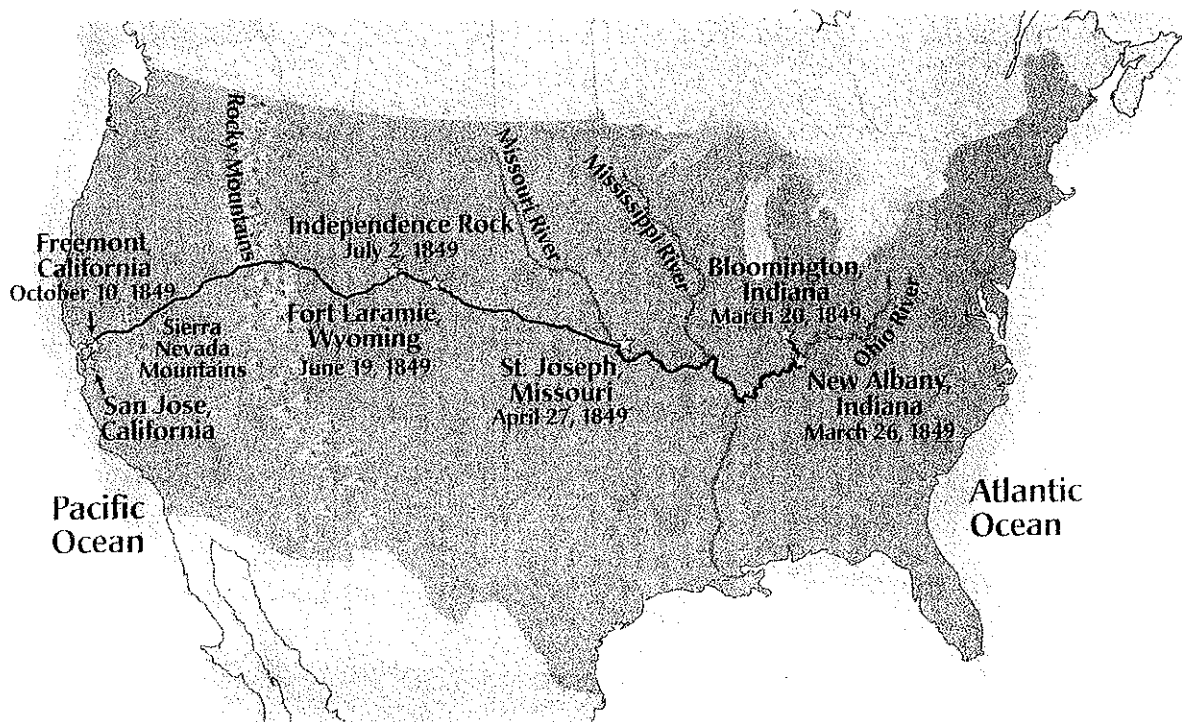
were taken to pieces, especially at river crossings; and mountains posed special problems, wagons sometimes being lowered by rope. A schedule had to be met. It was critical to reach Independence Rock before October; to fall behind was to miss crossing the mountains when they were free of snow. Pioneers had to reach the west coast before winter. Failing that goal, they would most likely die from exposure to cold weather on the plains.

Another danger was found in the water. Fifty percent of deaths on the trail were due to cholera, attributed to "dirty water," water which bathed people and livestock and was often the only drinking water available. Cholera victims died within hours. Sallie comments: "The cholera is raging. ... graves everywhere." Two young men were buried on the banks of the Blue River, "far from home and friends ... a beautiful spot." There were many beautiful spots. Engraved on Sallie's "tablets of memory" was the view from the summit of Sierra Nevada:

*It was night when we reached the top,  
and I shall never forget our descent  
... our tedious march with pine knots blazing  
in the darkness and the tall, majestic pines  
towering above our heads. The scene was  
grand and gloomy beyond description.*

The diet on the trail was simple. "We live on bacon, ham, rice, dried fruits, molasses, packed butter, and milk as we [the Hesters] have our own cows." Occasionally, one of the men would kill an antelope; and the group would have a feast. Sometimes there would be fish on Sunday. Resources, security, and care were found within the group. Wagons were circled to form a corral to hold the cattle. The group the Hesters traveled with observed the Sabbath. There was preaching in the camp; and, gathered around a fire, the service was "camp-meeting style." The train did lose members who were anxious to move on and felt constrained by the Sabbath Day stops. For those who did remain with the train, the nearby encampments made a pioneer feel "not quite out of civilization."

Six months after leaving Bloomington, the Hesters arrived in California. The original party of fifty wagons was now down to thirteen. Sallie Hester said they were "[s]trangers in a strange land." The rigors of a rough and taxing journey still weighed upon the Hesters and their fellow sojourners. When Sallie's father returned from San Jose, California, he gave glowing accounts of a lovely climate. Sallie wrote: "We are all glad that we are going to have a home somewhere at last."



## Two Presidents



Gayle Williams

William Daily and Cyrus Nutt were both pastors at First Methodist Episcopal Church in Bloomington and both presidents of Indiana University (Daily, the third president; Nutt, the fifth). By being I.U. presidents, they dispelled a belief that had divided supporters of the state school in its early years.

The perception of a problem was a problem for the school. As Gayle Williams, second speaker at IUMHS's 17th annual meeting, stated, "Presbyterians required an educated ministry." L. C. Rudolph, making the same point, has elaborated that "Presbyterian clergy were trained according to the standards of Europe and the eastern seaboard." Since an educated clergy was expected, it is understandable that Presbyterians were into higher education early and in number; and the resulting presence of a predominantly Presbyterian faculty led to the suspicion that sectarian teaching must also be present. Actually, as James Woodburn, I.U. historian, attests: "all evidence that I have thus far found proves there was no such [sectarian] teaching."

As Gayle Williams stated, "the word 'non-sectarian' did not exist." James Woodburn has described the mind-set of the time: "To most men it was inconceivable how a college that was not under some sort of church supervision could exist and not be infidel. ...How natural the question, 'If some church, why not my church?'" Woodburn states: "Some people ... said there

was such [sectarian] teaching, and many people believed them and the college suffered."

Eventually, a Methodist was elected to a chair at the state school; but the liberality came too late. Asbury (DePauw) had been established by the Methodists partly out of a spirit of opposition to Indiana University on account of the perception of sectarian control.

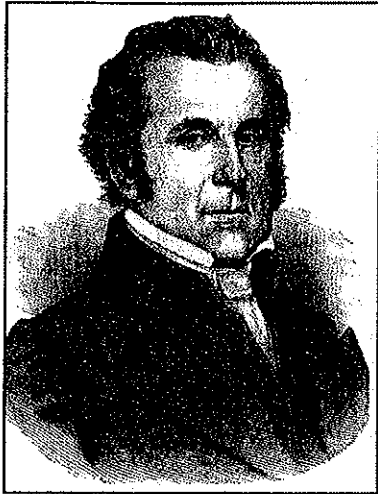
William Daily, minister at First MEC through 1835-1836, the first Methodist president of I.U., was elected to office in 1853. His talents were probably better displayed away from the campus than on it. The public speaker was regarded as a successful man, and Daily was regarded as a stirring revivalist of the camp meeting style. Daily's accomplishments in a scholarly realm were less; but he made no pretense to scholarship, having learned his Latin grammar on horseback while riding a circuit.

Daily's tenure was troubled. Formal charges on the grounds of immorality were brought against him by his church, and charges of plagiarism were brought by the board of trustees of Indiana University. To avoid injury to the university, Daily resigned, putting the university before himself.

Cyrus Nutt, pastor of First MEC from 1843 to 1845, became president of I.U. in 1860. He had previously been president of Fort Wayne Female College (which would later become Taylor University) and Whitewater College. It was while Nutt was president of I.U. that the Morrill Act of 1862 was passed, and Nutt traveled Indiana trying to bring land-grant status to Bloomington. He lost that campaign to what would become Purdue. However, Nutt did see the admission of women to Indiana University with all the rights and privileges enjoyed by men.

Gayle Williams believes that Midwestern state colleges assumed a leadership role in American education, opening doors to all regardless of religious beliefs, gender, or ethnicity. Denying admission or privileges on the basis of religious belief had been prohibited by an act of the Indiana Territory in 1806 and by acts of the state of Indiana in 1828 and 1838.

## Two Proponents



Nicholas Snethen and his gravesite

The laity is well represented in the Methodist Church. This high level of lay representation is not an accident. Nicholas Snethen promoted it.

Born in 1769 in Long Island, New York, Nicholas Snethen showed a talent for religious discourse. He entered the itinerancy of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1794 and was appointed to circuits in New England over the next four years. He studied Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and French, mastering the last with such fluency that he could converse and translate articles in French for the American press.

Snethen eventually was appointed to Charleston, South Carolina, and subsequently became Asbury's traveling companion on and off for four years. Against the wishes of Asbury, who wanted none of his ministers to marry, Snethen married Susannah Hood Worthington in 1804. He remained in the itinerancy for ten more years until locating permanently from the ME Church in 1814 to educate his children and

farm at Linganore, Maryland. It was while he was free of holding an itinerancy that he became a contributor to the *Wesleyan Repository*, which allowed him to express his views on lay representation.

Typically American, Snethen argued that the ME Church as it then stood was too autocratic, all of its powers residing with the bishop, presiding elders and, to a lesser degree, the itinerants. No powers resided with the laymen. Snethen found no historical basis in the New Testament or in Christ's teachings to justify autocracy; and, in light of the Declaration of Independence and the U. S. Constitution, autocracy seemed a foreign concept destined to corrupt ministers in their quest for power and eventually to wean the church from its people. Furthermore, Snethen believed that laymen were not only capable of governing their own local churches, but should send representatives to annual conference and have a vote in the proceedings.

*(Article continues on page 5.)*

*(Article on Nicholas Snethen continues here.)*

Snethen's persuasive arguments brought about the first major division in the ME Church. The "Reformers," as they were called, held their own convention in 1828, electing Snethen as its president. That convention led directly to the November 1830 convention, in which the Methodist Protestant Church was formed.

Financial difficulties forced Nicholas Snethen and his family to move from Maryland to a new farm near Merom, Indiana, high on the bluffs overlooking the Wabash River. There Snethen's daughter, Anabella, died on October 30, 1830, followed by Snethen's wife, who died only two weeks later.

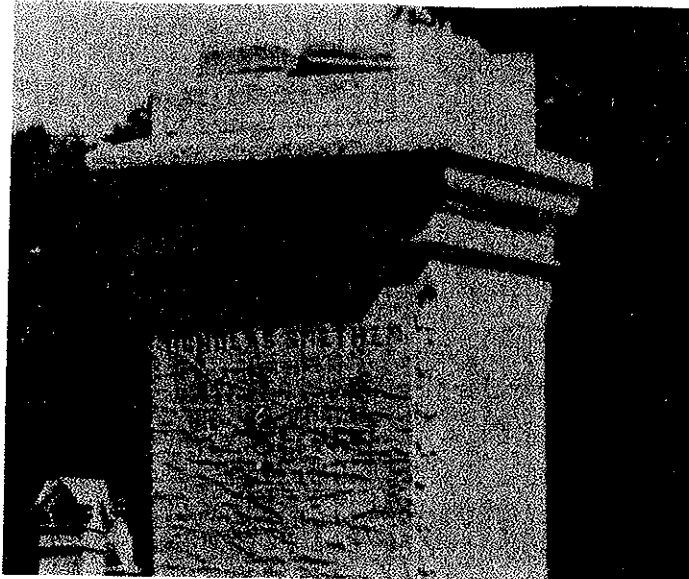
Then, at the age of 61, Nicholas Snethen united with the Ohio Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church, re-entering the itinerancy and serving churches near Louisville, Cincinnati, and Zanesville, Ohio.

When Dearborn College was founded by the MP Church near Lawrenceburg, Indiana, in 1836, Snethen was made its first president.

In 1845, Snethen was on his way to Iowa City to head a seminary there, when he died suddenly at Princeton, Indiana, where he is buried. His grave is a United Methodist Historical Site.

That this gravesite is a historical site is no accident either. Its recognition was promoted by a founding member of the South Indiana Conference United Methodist Historical Society (now IUMHS), namely, Ivan Blaine Emily, who died on May 4, 2012. John Baughman has identified Ivan Blaine Emily as the leading proponent for recognizing Nicholas Snethen's gravesite as a United Methodist Historical Site. In an exemplary way, Emily acted to establish a marker to our Methodist past. This proponent from our society, Emily, will be remembered for the historical site he caused to be recognized.

*The major portion of the article above was adapted from "Nicholas Snethen (1769-1845)," Historical Bulletin No. 10, prepared for the South Indiana Conference United Methodist Bicentennial Coordinating Committee, by John R. Riiggs, Archives Researcher, Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism*



**Snethen gravestone**

*Photo used by permission of DePauw University Archives and Special Collections*

## Business Session, 2012 IUMHS Annual Meeting



Rev. Robert Epps presents a special award to Rev. Douglas H. Davies in recognition of his service to IUMHS.

A major revision was proposed to the by-laws of the Indiana United Methodist Historical Society. Concerning Article V, on the subject of officers, it was proposed that the editor of the society's newsletter be made an officer who will be voted on at the annual meeting and that a fourth at-large member be added to the already existing three at-large members. The reasons given for the changes were that it is desirable to have the editor's position be a continuing position within the society and that a fourth at-large member would provide a broader representation of the membership.

A slate of officers for 2012-2013 was printed in the program:

President	Susan Truax
Vice President	Riley B. Case
Treasurer	Richard Stowe
Membership	Douglas H. Davies
At-large	
Members	Phil Williams
	Bob Epps
	Jennifer Woodruff-Tait
4 <sup>th</sup> At-large	
Member	_____

The proposed changes in the by-laws were approved; and, upon their approval, Phil Williams moved from being an at-large member to occupying the new officer position of editor of the newsletter, leaving a need for two at-large members, Jan Shippis was accepted as an at-large member. A fourth at-large member will be named at the next meeting of the Executive Committee.

Richard Stowe reported that upon reinstatement of the tax-exempt status of IUMHS the society's EO status was restored and made retroactive to May 15, 2010. The treasurer's presumption is that all recent and future donors may deduct contributions to the society.

The treasurer further reported that through May 31, 2012, a total of 63 persons had participated in two workshops for local church historians sponsored by IUMHS and the Conference Commission on Archives and History. By year's end, 38 new members had joined IUMHS as a result of the workshops.

The attendees at the 2012 annual meeting discussed the possibility of beginning electronic transmission of the newsletter. Two positions seemed firmly stated: (1) the society should never have only an email version of the newsletter; (2) a member should be given a choice between receiving an email version or a paper copy of the newsletter.

The meeting closed with Rev. Robert Epps presenting Rev. Douglas H. Davies with a physical token of the appreciation of the Executive Committee for Davies' service as president of the society. This token was an original work of art in stained glass by United Methodist layman Rodney Stover titled "Easter Sunrise." An inscription on its stand reads: "With deep appreciation, we recognize the Rev. Douglas H. Davies' dedicated service as president of the Indiana United Methodist Historical Society."

## CONVO 2012 in review



**Bishop Michael Coyner speaks to attendees at Indiana Landmarks Center.**

Nearly fifty people from throughout the North Central Jurisdiction attended the annual meeting of the North Central Jurisdiction on Archives and History at the University of Indianapolis from July 9 through July 12 of 2012. Ten of eleven conferences were represented. Rev. Dr. Robert J. Williams, General Secretary of the General Commission on Archives and History, and Daniel Swinson, President of the United Methodist Historical Society, were present for all four days of the CONVO.

Delegates reported on the work in their conferences in an atmosphere of tightening budgets. They also attended lectures and took tours of historical sites in and around Indianapolis.

On the first evening, the attendees were greeted by Don Findlay, Chair of the Indiana Conference Commission, before boarding a bus to tour Indiana Landmarks Center, formerly the Central Avenue UMC of Indianapolis. There Bishop Coyner gave a short message and served communion.

On Tuesday, Greg Clapper, a professor of philosophy and religion at the University of Indianapolis, gave a presentation titled "Misunderstanding Wesley's 'Heart Religion': Why the 18<sup>th</sup> Century's 'affections' are not the 21<sup>st</sup> Century's 'emotions.'" That afternoon the group took a bus tour to Conner Prairie, Fishers, Indiana, to experience a "behind the scenes" look

at one of the nation's finest outdoor interactive history museums. From this living museum, the group went to Union Chapel UMC to enjoy a supper prepared by the United Methodist Women of Union Chapel, followed by a concert performed by Barnes United Methodist Sanctuary Choir.

Jason Vickers, who teaches Wesley Studies at United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio, gave the Wednesday lecture, "The Five Languages of American Methodist Theology." Wes Wilson, the Indiana Conference Archivist, demonstrated how to approach preserving historical documents. Michael Cartwright, Associate Professor of Philosophy and Religion and Dean of Ecumenical and Interfaith Programs at the University of Indianapolis, gave the final presentation: "J.T. Roberts and the Founding of Indiana Central University."

The final day concluded with an evening banquet with guest speaker Todd Outcalt. Rev Outcalt is a pastor, author, and speaker, who presently serves at Calvary UMC. He is the author of twenty books.

The Conference Planning Committee consisted of Susan Bartelt, Susan Truax, Jennifer Woodruff Tait, and Doug Davies.

Next year's Convo will be hosted by the East Ohio Conference at Canton, Ohio.

– reported by Doug Davies

## WINNERS

Winning is receiving recognition for exceptional work. The Local Church Historian may at times think that the historian's work of preserving a congregation's history goes unnoticed, but the other church members do notice. The Indiana Annual Conference Commission on Archives and History, on the basis of nominations made to it, awards the Local Church Historian of the Year awards. Four such awards were made for 2012:

**John Rutherford of Carmel UMC**  
**Anne Abernethy of First UMC, South Bend**  
**Jane Nichols of Trinity UMC of Lafayette**  
**Helen Bartlett of Gethsemane UMC, Muncie**

---

Religion is a part of all of life's activities. Planning the communion service for her wedding, Jennifer Woodruff Tait, an at-large member of the Executive Committee of IUMHS (also an adjunct professor at Huntington University, Asbury Theological Seminary, and United Theological Seminary), encountered a challenge since planners differed on whether to use wine or grape juice in the service. The discussion piqued her interest in the Methodist switch from wine to grape juice. Why did the difference arouse passion? Why is temperance such an important witness?

Her book, *The Poisoned Chalice: Eucharistic Grape Juice and Common-Sense Realism in Victorian Methodism*, explores how alcohol was suspect, along with smoking, dancing, and card playing. *The Poisoned Chalice* was the 2011 Saddlebag Selection of the Historical Society of the United Methodist Church for the best book on Methodist history, biography, theology, or polity published within a given year. Jennifer Woodruff Tait, yet another award winner, credits her receiving the award to her coming up with "a big, global explanation" for the puzzling controversy over wine versus grape juice.

Jennifer Woodruff Tait's book is available from Amazon or from the University of Alabama Press in hardback, paperback, or ebook versions.

## New IUMHS President



**Susan Truax**

Susan Truax, the new president of the Indiana United Methodist Historical Society, has worked in historical endeavors most of her life. She graduated from DePauw University in 1981, having majored in history and receiving a certificate in social studies in secondary education.

Susan started working for the Indiana Historical Society in 1981 and remained there until 1985. She continued to work for the society for three years as a free-lance historian. As a free-lance researcher, she worked independently until 2008 when she began working part-time for the Avon-Washington Township Library in Avon, Indiana, as the library's local historian.

Being co-owner of a family farm, Susan has been a 4-H leader for 28 years and has been on the Hendricks County Farm Bureau Board for 26 years. Having homeschooled her three children, Susan helped develop the high school classes that her homeschool group uses to educate its high school level students. She has served on the board of that homeschool group for six years.

Susan Truax joined Calvary UMC when she moved to Brownsburg, Indiana, with her parents. She has been active in church life (more than just at Calvary UMC), which includes serving on the Pastor-Parish Committee, Mission Committee, and as a Jr.-Sr. High Sunday School teacher.



## *A Scavenger Hunt*

Mae had been a faithful church historian for Mt. Lofty UMC, carefully preserving the baptism and membership records, administrative minutes, even VBS rosters. She had lovingly put photos and clippings into albums, storing them neatly in acid-free boxes.

But Mae had never set foot in the town library to see what its newspaper index said about Mt. Lofty. In the Victorian mansion down the street, a thick folder lay undisturbed at the local historical society. These sites hadn't occurred to Mae.

In the Recorder of Deeds office in the county courthouse on the square, Mae would have discovered the congregation's first building stood on land reserved by treaty for Miami Indians. She would have learned that the second church had gas lighting.

County histories told of the earliest class meetings, of services held in Stockton's Tavern, together with the roll of members of the first society. But Mae didn't look.

A bird's-eye map of Mae's town revealed that the church's third building stood near an opera house, a fine hotel, and a livery. A later fire map showed that the Methodist parsonage was made of brick, two stories tall, with an "el." The county historical society owns these maps, but Mae had never seen them.

Then, there was the diversity of members — from bootblack to banker — who peopled the church and whose lives populated the pages of the old city directories.

Although the United Methodist Archives at a nearby private college was eager to share a rich store of information about the pastors and presiding elders whose circuits had included Mt. Lofty, no one had ever suggested that Mae go there.

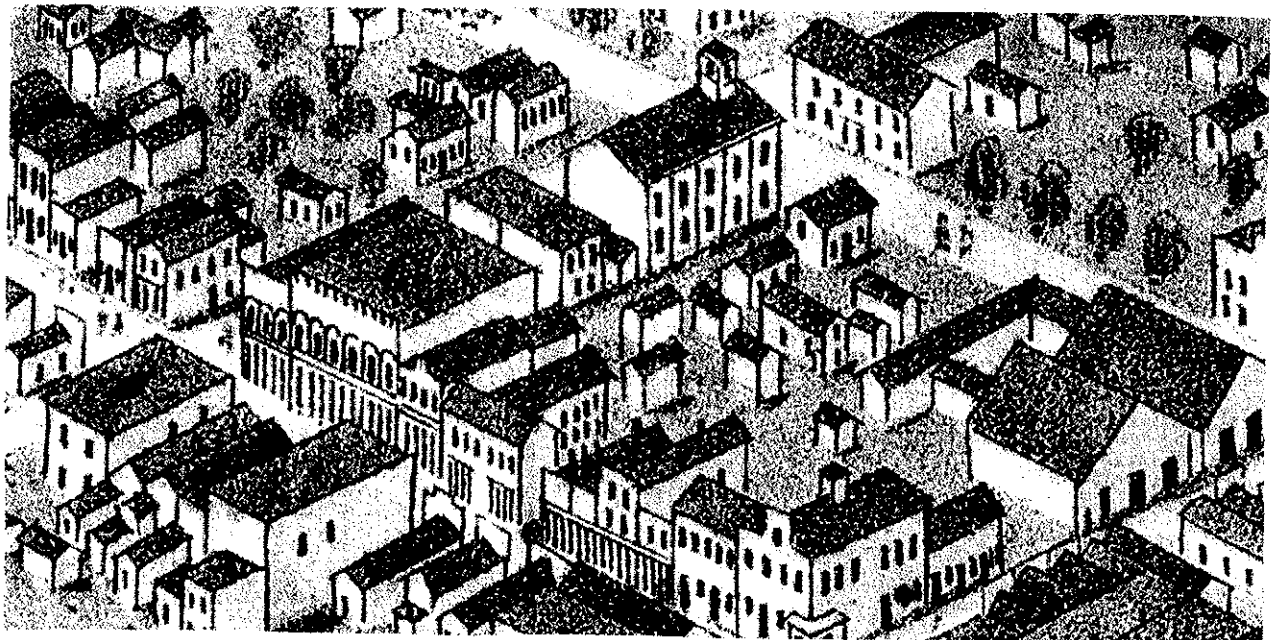
The Annual Conference had a United Methodist Historical Society whose programs and newsletters spoke of the remarkable events that had shaped United Methodism in Mt. Lofty's district. But Mae did not know that she could belong.

There was information on the Internet, but Mae hasn't learned to access it; and no one volunteered to help her search.

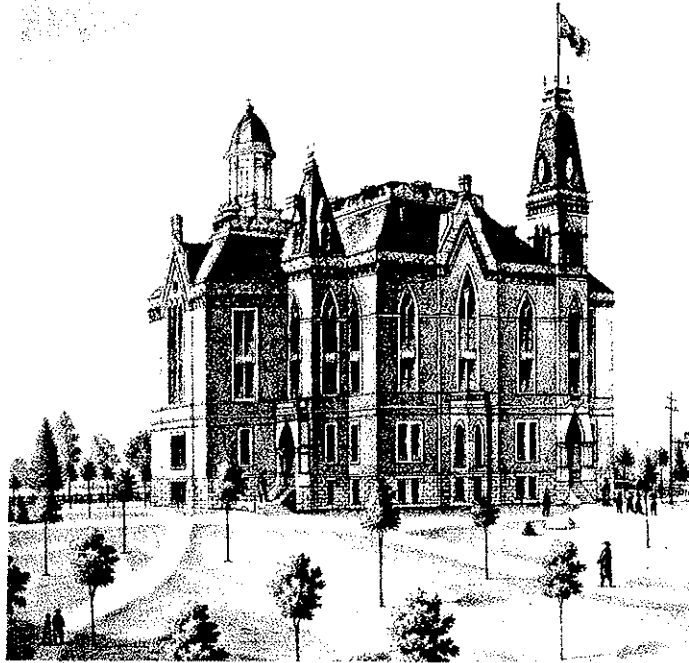
Sadly, Mae remained unaware of the wider picture that would have enriched her in-house records. The lives of churches, like people, are not lived in isolation. They draw seasoning from their surroundings, and their stories are incomplete without the intriguing details.

So go on a scavenger hunt. Take your fellow church members with you on a group search. They'll have fun; so will you.

*A. Wood*



## At DePauw University in 2013



**East College, the centerpiece of the DePauw University campus**

The 18<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Indiana United Methodist Historical Society will be held at DePauw University on April 27, 2013, with attention being given to the Archives of Indiana Methodism.

Ordinarily, DePauw University is thought of as a Methodist institution as, indeed, it is, having been founded in 1837 by the Methodist Church. Less known is that from its very conception the university (then known as Indiana Asbury University, having been named for Francis Asbury, the first American bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church) was “forever to be conducted on the most liberal principles, accessible to all religious denominations.” Its doors were open in an ecumenical embrace of all citizens.

In 1840, three years after Asbury’s founding, Matthew Simpson was inaugurated as the school’s first president, and the first college class graduated.

The university started with one professor and five students, but grew quickly, although in time many men left to fight in the

Civil War. In 1867, the school, with the strong support of the faculty and Board of Trustees, admitted a small group of women students.

The construction of East College began in 1870. The building remains the centerpiece of the campus. During the economic hardships of the ensuing decade, Washington C. DePauw and his family gave over \$600,000 to the university. Out of gratitude, the trustees authorized a change in name to DePauw University. The DePauw family took special interest in the formation of the School of Music. Founded in 1884, it is one of the oldest schools of music in the country.

Indiana’s first Phi Beta Kappa chapter is located at DePauw; and DePauw students with a concern for a meaningful written public record founded Sigma Delta Chi, a national journalistic honorary fraternity, in 1909. The latter honorary is also known as The Society of Professional Journalists.

When IUMHS meets at DePauw University, it will be helping commemorate the 175<sup>th</sup> year of the institution’s existence.

# News from the Methodist Archives

A Special Page Announcing New Acquisitions in the  
Archives of Indiana Methodism, DePauw University, Greencastle, Indiana

Roy O. West Library, DePauw University

Page 11

## Newland T. DePauw



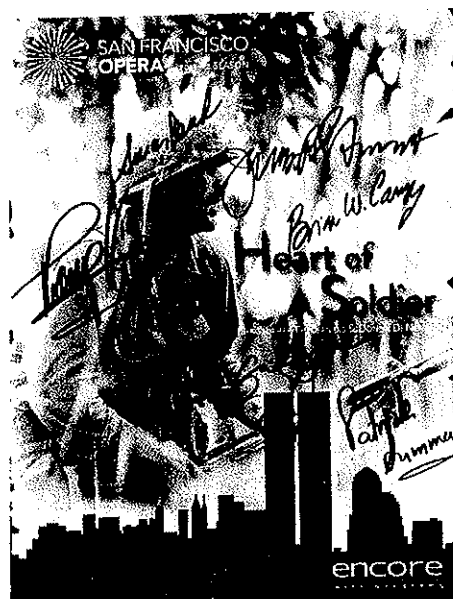
Photograph of Newland T. DePauw, DePauw University class of 1879. Newland was the son of DePauw University benefactor Washington C. DePauw. He was president of the Alumni Association (1882-83) and member of the board of trustees (1887-1913). [D012.030]

## James Riley Weaver



The Civil War diary of professor James Riley Weaver, a colonel in the U.S. Army. He became U.S. charge d'Affaires in Vienna. Joining the DePauw University faculty in 1885, he taught German, French, and political science, among other subjects. [D012.037]

## James B. Stewart



Autographed 2011 San Francisco opera program for "Heart of a Soldier," which was adapted from a book written by James B. Stewart, DePauw class of 1973. The program is signed by Brian Casey, president of DePauw University; James B. Stewart; Christopher Theofanidis, composer; Patrick Summers, conductor; and others. Pulitzer Prize-winner James B. Stewart is a columnist for the *New York Times* and a staff writer at *The New Yorker*. Stewart is a former front-page editor of *The Wall Street Journal* and founding editor of *Smart-Money*. He is also the Bloomberg professor of business journalism at Columbia University. [D012.044]