

Indiana United Methodist Historical Society Newsletter

P O Box 331, Greencastle, Indiana 46135

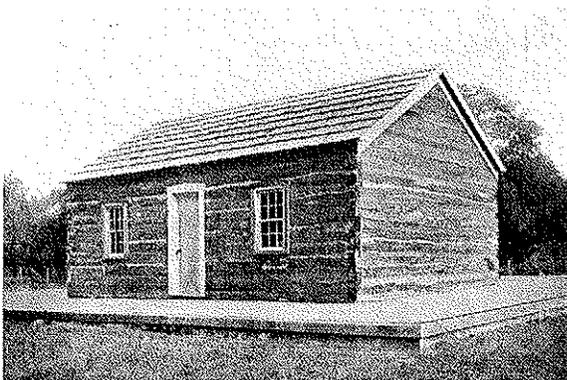
March 2016

INDIANA METHODIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING WILL BE HELD APRIL 2

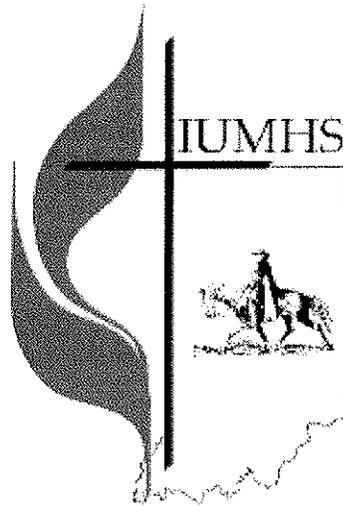
The annual meeting of the Indiana Methodist Historical Society will be held at North Church, 3808 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, on Saturday, April 2, 2016. A registration form for the event is included in this newsletter.

An outstanding program is scheduled for the event featuring Dr. Duncan Stroik, professor of architecture at Notre Dame School of Architecture and editor of *Sacred Architecture Journal*, who will make a presentation of "Expressing Sacred Space." Dr. Stroik is nationally renowned and is editor of the *Sacred Architecture Journal*, a journal devoted to church architecture.

In addition there will be a presentation on Indiana United Methodist Church architecture, 1800 – 2016 by Riley Case. There will also be an opportunity for a guided tour of North Church, and another showing the Akron Plan, one of the best examples of the Akron Plan of church architecture.



CHARLESTOWN METHODIST THOUGHT TO BE THE FIRST METHODIST BUILDING IN INDIANA. MEETING HOUSE STYLE. INSIDE A PULPIT AND BENCHES, PERHAPS AN ALTAR RAIL. CHURCHES WERE OBLONG



Indiana United Methodist Historical Society

Another option for attendees will be a "Scanathon" workshop on preserving historical pictures for your church history and archives (or for your family history). The workshop will be conducted by Joan Hostetler.

The Historical Society annual gathering will start with registration at 9:30. There will be refreshments and snacks. The welcome and hymn sing will start the meeting at 10:00. The presentation on Indiana United Methodist will be at 10:40. Lunch and the annual business meeting will be at 11:30. Lunch is paid for with the registration.

The presentation by Professor Duncan Stroik will be at 12:40. At 1:30 persons can choose either the tour of old Central Church or the Scanathon workshop conducted by Joan Hostetler. A round table reflection is scheduled for 3:00 and the day's activities will end at 3:30.

WHERE WERE (AND ARE) THE SACRED SPACES IN METHODIST CHURCHES?

By Riley Case

Persons interested in American Methodist church history might want to consider that the theme of the Historical Society's annual meeting, *Expressing Sacred Space*. United Methodists have been known for many things, but not for their understanding and expression of "sacred space."

There are historical reasons for this. Methodism in England started as a movement within the Church of England. Even after Methodist groups grew to have a life of their own and met in their own buildings under the leadership of lay preachers, they were not "churches." For John Wesley a church was where the sacraments were administered by a duly ordained priest. So the buildings were called "chapels." Methodists were expected to attend services in the Church of England along with their Methodist classes.

When Methodists migrated to America, they were, supposedly, still under Wesley's leadership. As such they were not allowed to be "churches." Wesley believed (unrealistically) that the Methodists in America should still relate to the Church of England, which, because it was connected with the King of England, was not thriving during the Revolutionary War period.

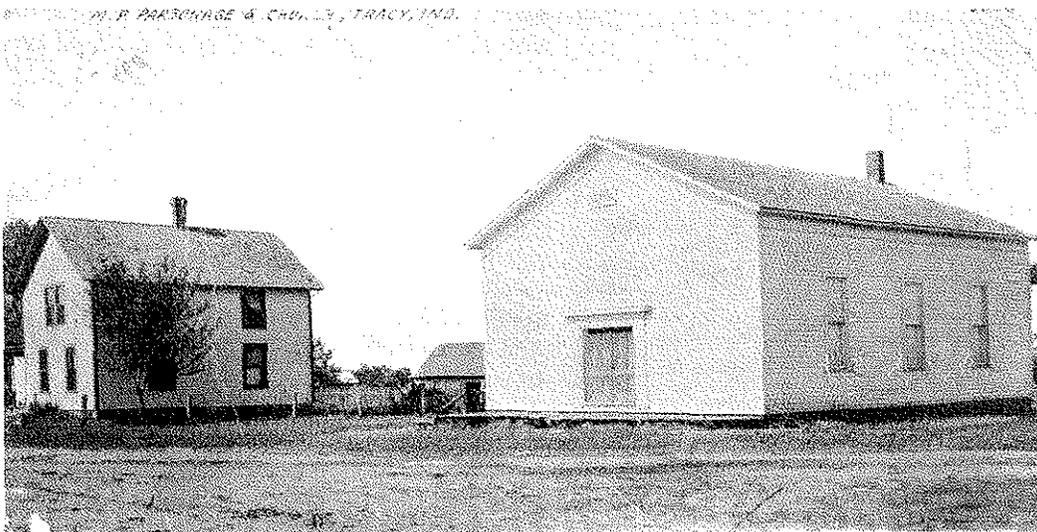
In 1784 Wesley gave permission and direction for the Methodists in America to ordain ministers, select a leader, and organize themselves into a "church." The Americans did not understand that this would be a Church of England type church. What impressed them about Wesley was not his turned-around collar or his Sunday Service, but his admonitions, "You have nothing to do but save souls" and "spread Scriptural holiness throughout the land." Early Methodists were not influenced at all by the understanding of "sacred space" that characterized the more catholic type churches. Methodist's buildings were not erected for beauty or even for the glory of God but to serve a functional purpose, to shelter the worshippers.

Plus Methodists were suspicious of pretense. To them "holiness" was not connected with buildings or space but with how they lived. One good reason for this is that Methodists were, at that time, or reaching persons of influence or means. Methodists were the poor people. They were also plain. They preached against frills, against the wearing of gold, and against fashion. This extended to buildings. An article in the July 18, 1834 *Western Christian Advocate* expressed concern that if...

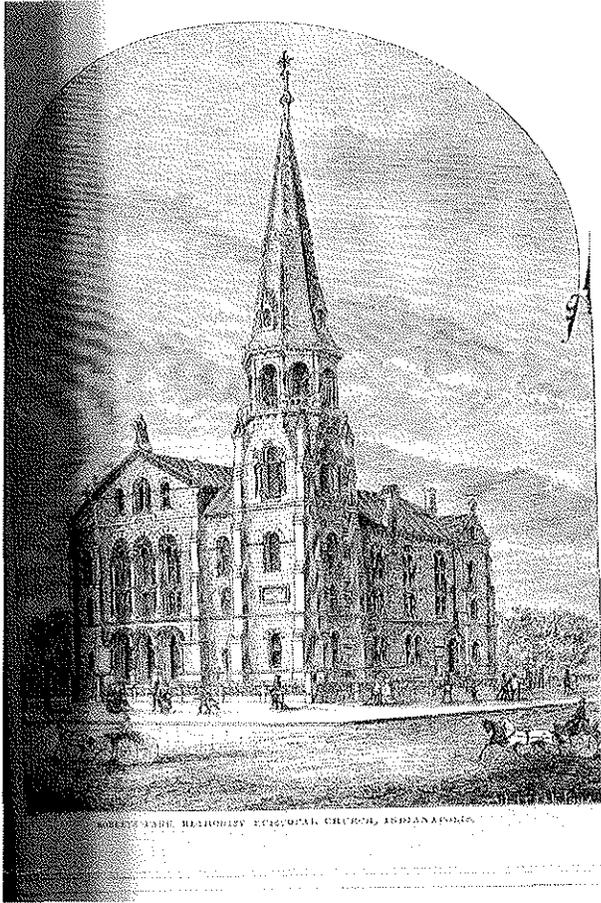
Methodism would one day give itself to "fashionable appearance" and "popular address" and suffer sinners and delinquent Methodists to pass unreprieved, that it would be followed and caressed by the wealthy and fashionable and popular crowd, and when it shall have declined thus far, another part of the plan would be to erect houses of worship more for show than usefulness. Instead of multiplying plain, cheap, and convenient chapels, with increased numbers as they are needed, and as a means accumulate, efforts will be made to rear a few stately edifices with bells, steeples, vestibules, cushioned pews, velvet pulpits, etc. etc.

It is telling that from the 1850 census, the property value of the average Methodist building ranked lower than any other denomination that was recorded in the census. The ranking is as follows: Unitarian \$18,440; Dutch Reformed \$12,644; Jewish synagogue \$11,987; Presbyterian \$3,135; Baptist \$1,244; Methodist \$1,174.

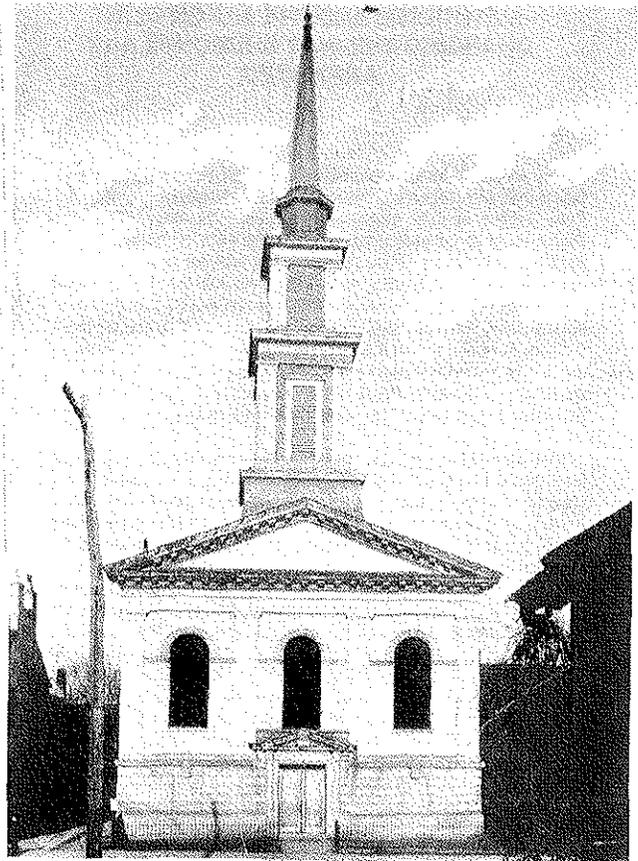
This would change and was changing even by 1850. By the 1830s and 40s Methodists in the East were gaining respectability (and wealth). Methodism had vaulted into the middle class and more. Methodist churches began to build brick churches. They began adding steeples and, in the East, began to rent pews like the Episcopalians. Indiana Methodism was soon catching up.



THE METHODIST PROTESTANT CHURCH, TRACY. PLAIN, MEETING HOUSE STYLE

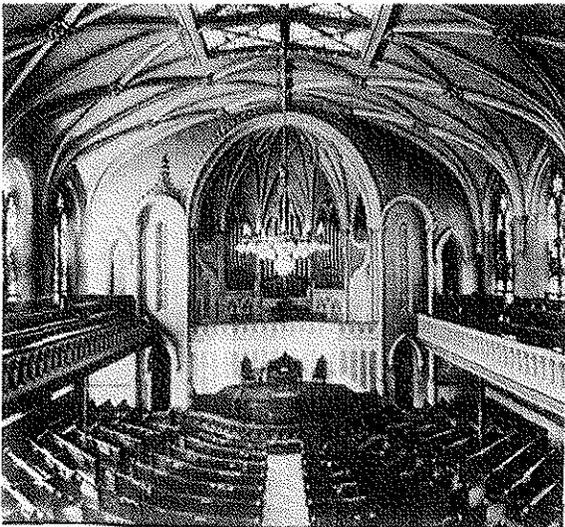


Roberts Park M.E. Church was one of the prestigious churches in Indianapolis and Indiana Methodism. The church building is still there but without steeple.



Methodist Church, Aurora, Ind.

One of the early "prestigious" church buildings in Indiana. The Aurora Church is a Greek revival church with tall steeple, dates from before the civil war Barcelona Plan.



This impressive building interior has vaulted ceilings with circular pews (Akron Plan Influence), but where is the sacred space? There is no cross. The altar would be the kneeling area. The organ pipes and choir are behind the screen.



The church on the right illustrates another Methodist understanding of "sacred places." While not highly liturgical in the early 1900s and while not investing a lot in church architecture, Methodists were leading the way in what might be called "Victorian Decorating." This church interior is prepared for a Thanksgiving or Harvest Festival Theme, complete with corn stalks, pumpkins, and squashes and many flowers. It is also cluttered with flower stands, a Sunday school bookcase. Again, there is no cross. The stands probably were used for Communion and to place offering plates. They would not have been referred to as "altars." The "altar" would be the kneeling steps.

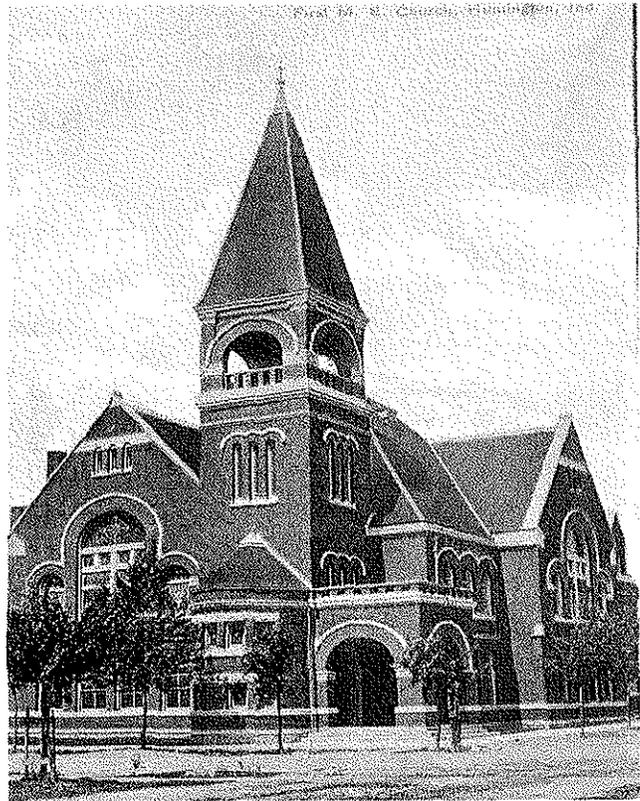
METHODISM AND THE AKRON PLAN CHANGING THE WAY CHURCHES ARE ARRANGED

By Riley Case

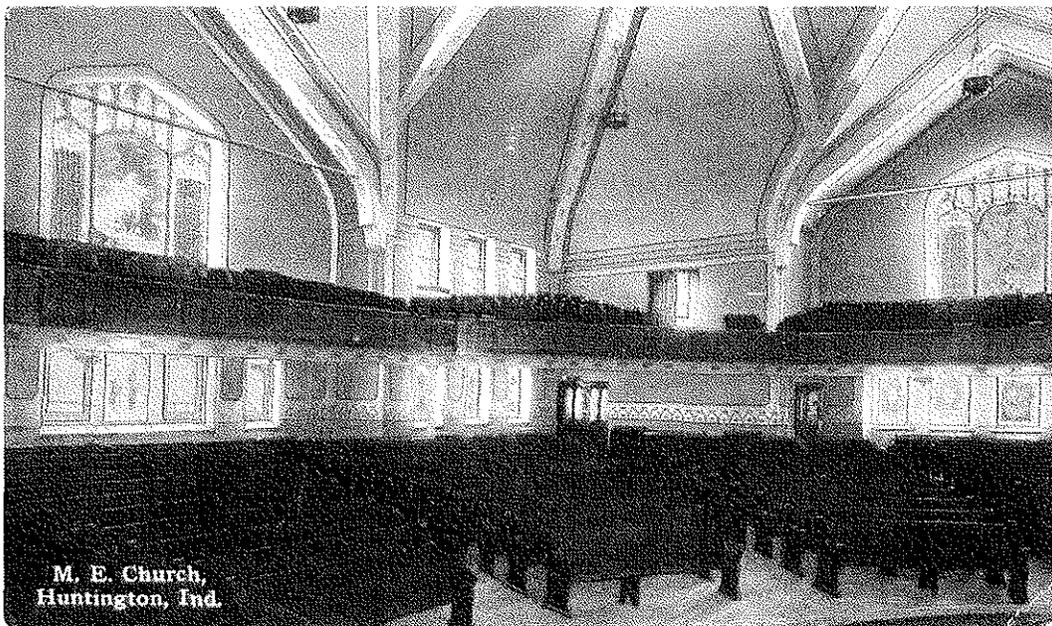
Any person in Indiana interested in church architecture, particularly if they are United Methodist, should know about The Akron Plan, a rather specific way of arranging church interiors. The Akron Plan can be specifically dated: 1872 in the First Methodist Episcopal Church in Akron, Ohio, Jacob Snyder was the architect. It was not designed for its beauty, or even for how it directed attention to any "sacred space." The Akron Plan was an architectural design emphasizing function, namely how to make use of space for the Sunday School. From the 1870s the Akron Plan with all of its variations, would dominate the interior designs of non-liturgical churches—Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, and Congregational—in America for the next 100 years (and even today).

Instead of what might be called the Basilica Plan, long oblong buildings with a center aisle and a prominent altar, associated with Catholic, Lutheran, and Episcopal Churches, or the Meeting House Plan, a very simple room with a pulpit and benches or pews facing forward, the Akron plan in its original form featured a square sanctuary, often with a sloped floor, an adjoining assembly room for Sunday school assembly with class rooms opening to the main floor or a balcony. The Sunday school assembly room could be opened to the worship area and used for overflow seating. The seating area was in a semi-circle facing a corner. There would be two side aisles, and a center pulpit. The Akron Plan reflected the American revivalist movement in several ways: the focus of worship was not the center altar but the pulpit which usually held a "pulpit Bible." It conveyed the message that the Word of God in the Bible and not the Word of God in the sacrament, was supreme.

The Akron Plan usually included a table resembling an altar, used for communion and for the receiving of offering plates, but the "altar" had now become the kneeling rail surrounding the pulpit, where persons would come forward to pray. In this understanding of altar the sacrifice made was the person himself or herself. The Akron Plan was uniquely American. It is almost impossible to find churches (even Methodist Churches) in England or Europe that used the Akron Plan. It was the most common form of interior architecture used in the period from 1880 to 1920. It is difficult to find examples of the Akron Plan in its pure form after 1920 but it continues to influence church interiors even today in one way or another.



HUNTINGTON TRINITY The corner entrance and the massive stained glass windows on two sides give this impressive Romanesque church away as an Akron Plan Church. Sanctuary is square, four sections (most Akron Plan churches had three sections). Originally the center pulpit was in the corner; the choir was to the side.



**M. E. Church,
Huntington, Ind.**

TO DIVIDE THE CHANCEL

By Riley Case

"The chancel" is the term used of present-day Protestant churches to indicate the part of the church containing the altar and seats for the clergy and the choir. The area is usually referred to as "the sanctuary" in a catholic-type church (though Catholics would never allow a choir in such a holy place). Early Methodists never referred to the area as the "chancel." It was simply the "platform." Following the Calvinist and then the revivalist tradition, the focus of the chancel was the pulpit.

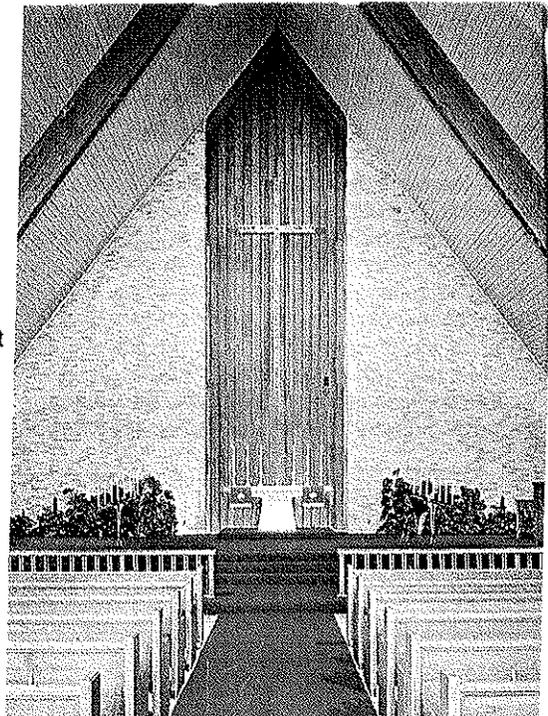


Note the platform (this photo is from about 1910 before Methodists ever talked about a "chancel") arrangements: center pulpit with a pulpit Bible. No altar table. The church has a stand supposedly where offering plates were placed. No cross, except the church has a small painted cross on the wall. The curved pews reflect the Akron Plan influence. A bit of gothic influence is the pointed outline behind the pulpit. The choir is on the side. The "altar" would be the altar rail used prayer and for commitment during revival services.

In the 1920s Methodists rediscovered "high church" worship and began to make an "altar" the focus of worship. The pulpit was moved to one side. The minister usually used the pulpit. A lesser pulpit-looking stand was called the lectern which helped to balance the appearance of the chancel area. As part of this emphasis the 1935 Methodist hymnal replaced "O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing," a salvation hymn, with a worship hymn, "Holy, Holy, Holy," based on Revelation 19, Isaiah 6 and the altar in the temple (and written by an Anglican).

From the late 1930s on through the 1960s many newly-built Methodist churches featured a basilica style sanctuary with a center table altar and a pulpit and lectern on the side. In Calvary Church Elkhart the choir sang from the balcony.

Almost all United Methodist churches of today, in building new buildings or in redecorating existing buildings "divide" the chancel using the altar as the focus of worship.



Calvary Church Elkhart was built in the 1960s. The high-church influence is clearly seen. There is a center altar. The organ and the choir are in the back balcony. A number of 1960s and 1970s churches follow this pattern.

HOW METHODIST SUNDAY SCHOOLS INFLUENCED CHURCH ARCHITECTURE

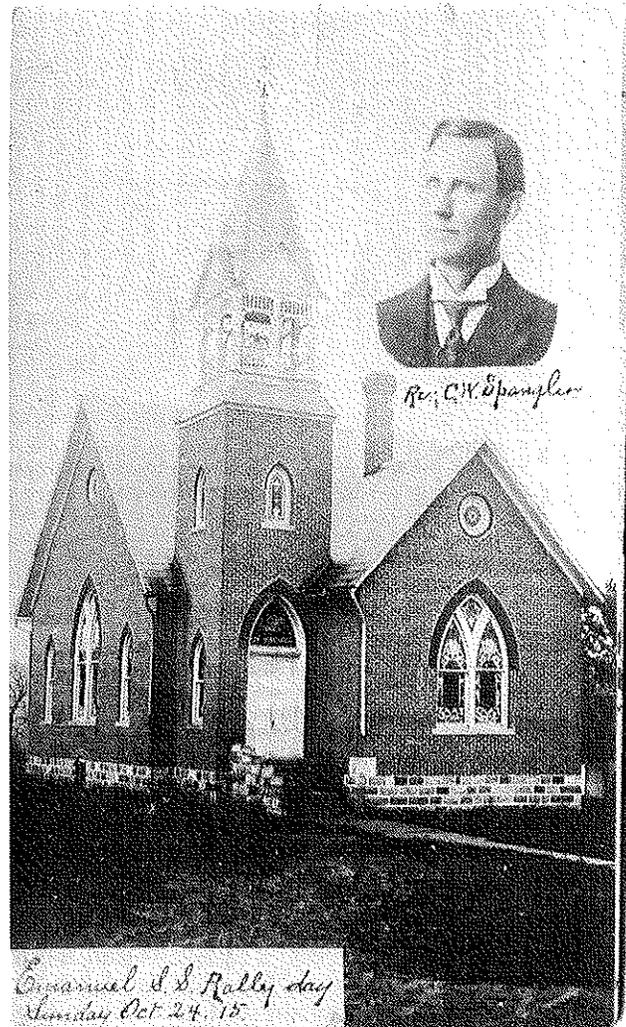
By Riley Case

The influence of the Sunday school in American Methodism has been under-reported and under-emphasized in the story of American Methodism. This may be because preachers were not the main players in the story.

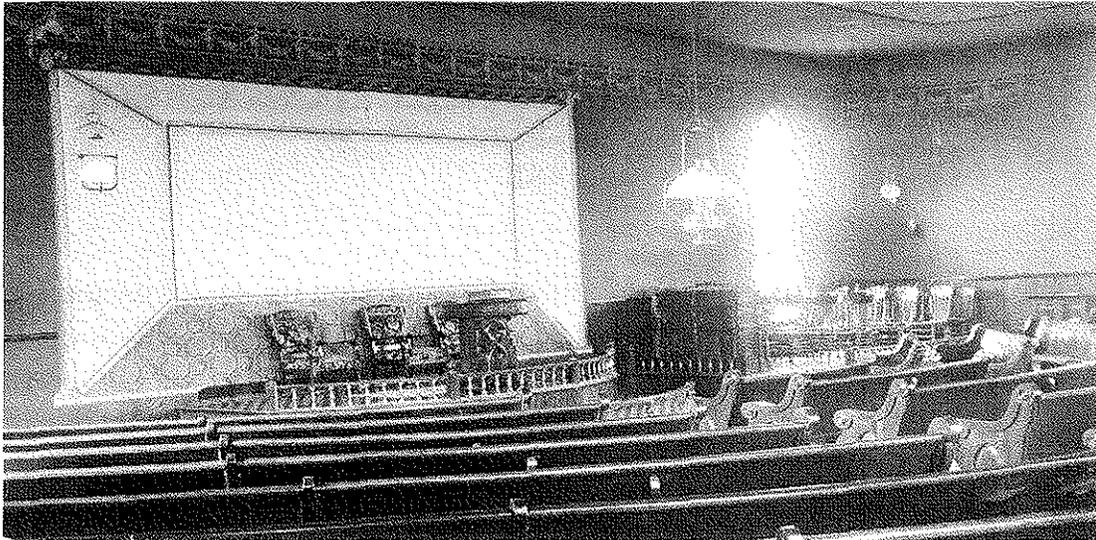
A large part of Methodism's success in America was because of the circuit rider and the circuit system. The circuit rider would stop at a frontier cabin, get acquainted with the family of the cabin, and offer a religious service. Sometimes neighbors were involved. If the family was receptive the circuit rider would offer to return at a future date. By this method a circuit rider could schedule as many as 30 regular preaching appointments on his circuit. The preaching appointments were organized into classes and eventually into churches. Since most of the preaching appointments were not on Sunday, classes would often meet on their own on Sunday without the preacher. Besides testimonies and singing, the classes would study the Bible or the catechism. These in turn became Sunday schools.

A point to be emphasized is that these were totally lay-led. "Stations"—appointments in which a preacher pastored a single church, were almost unknown in Indiana Methodism until the 1850s. The earliest two "stations" in Indiana Methodism, Madison and Salem, were not established until 1825. By 1842 when Indiana Methodism claimed 55,000 members there were still only 11 "stations" in the state. Because of the circuit system preachers were almost never involved in the Sunday schools.

Still, the Methodist Sunday schools were so successful that it is estimated that by 1850 one out of every ten persons in Indiana were enrolled in the Methodist Sunday school. During this time there were no such things as educational units. Often all Sunday school classes met in the same meeting room held for worship services. Thus the Akron Plan became a boon for our Sunday Schools. It was well into the twentieth century when worship attendance surpassed Sunday School attendance. the Sunday schools.



Special postcard advertising Sunday School Rally Day Emanuel is an open country church in Miami County.



An other typical Methodist Church interior from before 1920. Center pulpit with Bible, no cross, the altar is the kneeling area.

Indiana Church Historian Recognition

Friends,

Here's how you can help to recognize and honor an exceptional person.

In past years, the Indiana Commission on Archives and History has Honored "Historians of the Year" around the state with a special award. Now we need a short letter from you nominating a member of your team or another colleague who has given outstanding service to a local church's program of history.

What is "outstanding service"? There are many kinds that will qualify.

The very things that quite a few of you have reported doing as part of the LCH School exercises could very well be worthy of this recognition. So, just write a one-or two-page statement detailing that person's accomplishments, and be sure to identify his or her church and office. Nothing fancy, "just the facts, Ma'am."

You may either send the statement to me and I'll forward it, or you may email or mail it in confidence to Dr. Don Findlay, the Chair of the Commission, at Don Findlay <dcfindlay2@gmail.com> or 615 N. Riverside Drive, Elkhart, IN 46514-2608.

The nominations must come in before March 12 to be in time for the mid-March meeting of the Commission. As you may recall, this semi-annual meeting will be of great importance, not only for the HOTY awards, but for approving certificates for LCH participants who have finished the School by then.

Heritage Sunday 2016

Oh, yes, many of you have said you are planning to observe this year's Heritage Sunday in your local church. Great! Here's what I have learned about this year's observance from the GCAH website:

"The theme for 2016 will be 'Roots, Shoots, Branches,' remembering the 200th anniversary of the African Methodist Episcopal Church as well as the other African Methodist Churches, and noting the 200th anniversary of the death of Bishop Francis Asbury."

The traditional date to observe this historically high point of the year is Aldersgate Day or the Sunday preceding that day. This year, that would be May 22. But each local church is free to observe it on another date. Also, each church may modify the theme to best match its own Story.

Don't forget-- I'll be looking for your HOTY nominations!

DON FINDLEY

END-OF-COURSE REPORT AND TABULATION OF THE LOCAL CHURCH HISTORIAN'S SCHOOL

In October 2014, the Indiana Conference Commission on Archives and History named a coordinating committee for a Local Church Historian's School. The committee submitted a proposed curriculum, operating plan, and budget request to the Commission which approved it with an allocation of \$1000 for promotion of the School. Oversight of the School was to be provided by a three-person committee appointed by the Commission. Dick Stowe, conference historian, was named director for the school with responsibility for coordinating promotion, registering participants, authoring or assembling instructional materials, managing and distributing the materials, maintaining communications, tabulating end-of-course results and issuing reports to the Commission.

A total of 192 persons enrolled in the 12-week course conducted by email messages. The following report on the school and on the status of church historians in United Methodist churches in Indiana is made by Dick Stowe:

Of 1,100 churches in the conference 450 report having church historians. Thirty of the enrollees in the school helped form teams to help establish Records and History Committees in their churches. A provision for such committees is found in the United Methodist Discipline (para. 247.5b). Data was received from participants in the school with those who responded to a survey reporting the following: 92.2% of the churches have a written church history. The average year of the latest history was 1998. 68.3% of the respondents from the school indicated they were in the process of revising an older history or working on a new one. 64.7% of those reporting indicated that their churches provide space for archival collections. A number of participants indicated a new appreciation for their church history and were planning a celebration of their history and heritage, including one whose church was celebrating a 200th anniversary in 2016.

The school was such a success that there is interest from other annual conferences in the design and instructional materials of the Indiana school.

Indiana United Methodist Historical Society

2016 MEMBERSHIP AND EVENTS REGISTRATION

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE ___ ZIP _____ PHONE _____

EMAIL (please--very helpful) _____ Check if Church Historian

Church you attend _____ City _____

Check if: (1) Individual (3) You are a life member of IUMHS

(2) Congregation (4) This congregation is a life member

Please Note: If you are not a life member, your annual membership fee is now due and should accompany this form. Thank you.

New or Renewal	TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP:	How many?	Amount
0 0	\$20 Individual, for one year	_____	@ \$20 \$_____
0 0	\$30 family, for one year	_____	@ \$30 \$_____
0 0	\$50 congregation, for one year	\$50	\$_____
			Subtotal for Membership \$_____

REGISTRATION for ANNUAL MEETING & LUNCHEON, 9-3, APRIL 2, 2016

NORTH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, INDIANAPOLIS,

Deadline: March 20, 2016

Members registering for ANNUAL MEETING _____ @ \$25 \$_____

Non-members registering for ANNUAL MEETING _____ @ \$30 \$_____

Registration to attend Duncan Stroik lecture _____ @ \$5 \$_____

Subtotal for ANNUAL MEETING \$_____

Additional DONATION to help IUMHS accomplish its mission (Thank You!) \$_____

TOTAL enclosed \$_____

Please make your check payable to "Indiana United Meth. Hist. Society" and mail it with a copy of this form by April 8 to: Susan H. Truax, 6759 N