

THE CHRONICLE

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editor

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

On behalf of the Historical Society of the Susquehanna Conference of the United Methodist Church, I present volume XXIV of *The Chronicle*. For over twenty years, the society has produced a mix of scholarly, entertaining, informative and inspiring stories of United Methodism – all united by a common theme. This volume continues that tradition.

This year we present a series of previously unpublished papers from the “Methodist” (as distinguished from “Evangelical” or “United Brethren”) collection in the conference archives. The papers are introduced in chronological order according to main content and embrace a wide range of topics and styles, but all concern Methodist work within our conference boundaries – from the first circuit riders serving in the 1700’s while the mid-state was still part of the Baltimore Conference, to the 1918 celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Central Pennsylvania Conference.

The authors for this volume represent a mix of perspectives. Stephen Barninger was teenager from Duncannon when he delivered his paper “Forever Beginning” in 1966; he later studied theology and medicine and has worked primarily as a corporate consultant. Raymond Bell was an 84 year old retired physics professor when he wrote his article “Methodism Moves into Central Pennsylvania” in 1991.

William Deavor’s two papers were written in the 1890’s, while he was a young pastor, and provide a glimpse of the family background and educational experiences of the pastor of yesteryear. David Brouse writes in 1902 as a preacher approaching mid-career and reflecting on his early service, first as a supply pastor and then as an ordained minister.

Finally, Alfred Bowman and Milton Foster come to us as retired pastors charged with leading the 1918 Central Pennsylvania Conference in a meaningful celebration of and appreciation for its first 50 years. Bowman presents an insightful narrative involving the personalities and congregations of the “Beginnings and Early Developments” of the Conference, while Foster focuses on the statistical and financial aspects of that development.

Nestled among these accounts is a paper by the editor on the 1830’s “Coffman Class of the New Bloomfield Circuit” illustrating that there are still stories about our heritage waiting to be discovered. Our prayer is that this issue of *The Chronicle* will inform and inspire us all to continue studying our heritage and making those discoveries that will mold us into better witnesses for Christ.