

THE CHRONICLE

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of the
United Methodist Church

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editor

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Comments on the Organization of Volume XXX

The development of United Methodism in central and northeast Pennsylvania can be broken down into four eras.

- I. The period of the founding fathers of the predecessor denominations – who experienced the new birth, sought to introduce others to this saving faith, and began to gather the believers together in classes and circuits.
- II. The period of expansion, in which those gathered together by the founding fathers began to reach out into new communities – whether by the natural migration of believing families or by the sending out of missionary circuit riders.
- III. The period of setting down roots, during which church buildings were erected, conferences and districts were established, and circuit riding preachers gave way to clergy who lived in parsonages and served more compact charges.
- IV. The period of maturation, in which conferences and districts began to develop the auxiliary programs necessary to meet societal needs and minister to the whole person through educational institutions, camps, benevolent homes and new ways of thinking.

This volume of *The Chronicle* organizes the chapters and content, as described in the **Editor’s Preface**, around these four eras of development.

EDITOR'S PREFACE

On behalf of the Historical Society of the Susquehanna Conference of the United Methodist Church, I present volume XXX of *The Chronicle*. For thirty 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, with the uniting theme being the official historic sites of the Susquehanna Conference.

In the 1990's, the Central Pennsylvania Conference printed a brochure giving directions to and a brief description of each of its historical sites. In 2010 that body united with the Pennsylvania portion of the former Wyoming Conference, including its historic sites, and was re-named the Susquehanna Conference. Recent cries to produce a new informational brochure naming and describing all of our official historic sites in a single document gave rise to the idea of dedicating a volume of *The Chronicle* to presenting a more thorough treatment of these important reminders of our spiritual heritage. This is that volume.

Our conference currently has nineteen official historic sites, recommended by the Commission on Archives and History and approved the annual conference. They embrace the three denominational branches of United Methodism: the Evangelical, Methodist and United Brethren traditions. They come from two recently-united long-standing conferences of United Methodism: the mid-state's Central Pennsylvania Conference and the Wyoming Conference of the northeastern region of the state. They include all facets of United Methodism: church buildings, benevolent homes, campgrounds, educational institutions, and family homesteads.

Rather than present these sites in a series of articles, with nothing to link them other than an occasional reference to "the United Methodist Church," we choose to present them essentially in chronological order, as they fit together as chapters in the story of God's handiwork in the development of United Methodism in central and northeastern Pennsylvania. While each chapter can stand alone as an article about a particular historic site, taken together the chapters form a continuous narrative that hopefully will inspire each of us to more fully understand, appreciate and celebrate our rich spiritual heritage. Happy reading.