

NEW MEXICO CONFERENCE UNITED METHODIST HISTORICAL JOURNAL



**Mert Melvin Lampson
1906 – 1983**

**Published by the NM Conference Historical Society
Volume 1 2021**

May 2021

XXVII

**NEW MEXICO CONFERENCE
UNITED METHODIST
HISTORICAL JOURNAL**

**Volume 1 2021
May 2021**

**Published by the NM Conference Historical Society
Willard L Steinsiek—editor
XXVII**

NEW MEXICO CONFERENCE UNITED METHODIST HISTORICAL JOURNAL

Volume 1 2021

May 2021

CONTENTS

Page

- 3 “Retired Pastor Reminisces”
 By Mert Lampson
- 8 “Decline”
 By Alfredo Nanez
- 15 “Navajo Find Christ”
 By Paul West
- 18 “Sacramento – War & Reconstruction”
 By Cliff Hall
- 30 “First UMC Shiprock”
- 36 “The Springer Record Book”
 By Will Steinsiek
- 40 “In The Aftermath”
 By Will Steinsiek

A&HS Pages

- 42 “Archives and Historical Society”
 3
- 44 “Last Word “ - Mert Melvin Lampson



Retired Pastor Reminisces

By Mert Lampson

One of the world's noted Biblical scholars, teacher and preacher has said that there are two significant beginnings in the life of every successful person. First is the physical birth; second, is the moment he or she discovers why he or she was born.

My first beginning was a meager one.

My folks were farming on an Indian reservation on leased land. Only a mid-wife attended my birth. It was never recorded, so in later years when I needed a birth certificate, it took my father six months, with the aid of a lawyer, to prove that I had been born!

My second beginning occurred at the age of sixteen while I was attending an encampment of Epworth League young people. The name has now been changed to United Methodist Youth Fellowship.

I responded to a challenge⁴ for commitment to full-time Christian service, went forward, and in my mind

made an irrevocable and unequivocal decision to give my life to the Christian ministry.

Later, I tried to bargain with God. I had met with some success in raising poultry. Why couldn't I be a Christian poultryman? I had won some essay contests and sold some free lance articles. Why not the life of a Christian writer? Physical education had been one of my college majors. Why couldn't I stay in that field, where I had already won some important recognitions?

So I played the role of Christian maverick for several years. Finally, it was as if the Lord said to me, "Well, you have fooled around long enough. You haven't found a real sense of inner satisfaction. Go back to your original commitment and follow through on it. Only so will you experience inner peace. Only so will you realize your fulfillment."

There were problems. Since my folks could give me limited help, I worked in churches and stores at odd jobs, and made necessary loans from the Methodist Student Loan Fund. Twelve years after I first matriculated I earned an A.B. from the then Washington State College (now, Washington State University). Four years later I had been awarded two seminary degrees by the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, an M.A and a B.D. Then I began preaching in earnest.

I served churches for eight eventful years. Then, a world shaking event, the invasion of Pearl Harbor, took place. I listened to the account of it on the radio that Sunday morning, a short time before going to the church for the morning worship. Little did I realize what a change in my life would soon begin. Within a

few months, young men and women from my church were writing home, asking "where are the Methodist Chaplains?" Other churches were responding to the need more quickly. Why were we holding back, they wanted to know.

Within eighteen months, I experienced a call to the chaplaincy, just as clear and even more urgent than my original call to the ministry. I became an Army Chaplain and served in that capacity for the next twenty years. Upon leaving the service I returned to the civilian scene and preached for ten more years before ill health made my permanent retirement necessary.

Looking back over the years as chaplain and minister, I know that there could be no fitting substitutes for many of my privileged services:

Holding a baby in your arms for a baptismal service, and giving the child a kiss of benediction on the forehead.

Bringing a boy or girl, young man or woman or an older person to Christ for the first time.

Offering what comfort is possible to a broken-hearted couple over whose child you have just pronounced the final rites.

Joining a blushing bride and a handsome groom in marriage. Later, counseling them intensely in an attempt to keep the marriage from breaking up.

Interpreting the sacredness and mystical beauty of the communion service. My congregations, both military and civilian, have appreciated my efforts in this area.

No substitute for the challenge of interpreting the Lord's Word so winsomely and effectively that lives are changed.

Certainly no substitute for the many mutually supporting and enriching friendships with other chaplains, ministers and lay persons.

In the service, the hours of counseling enlisted men and officers to help them make the difficult adjustment to military disciplines; in imminent danger, the prayers you hold with the men to minimize their fears, helping them to find strength, courage and hope.

The guidance given to distraught and temptation burdened young men and women who find it difficult to live up to their ideals while surrounded by what seems to be an almost wholly pagan society.

In all of my ministry I have found the deepest personal satisfactions. It has been possible to realize continuous growth and fulfillment as one disciplines his time and energies wisely.

I feel at the ending of my career that it has been infinitely worthwhile.

This must be said, in conclusion. You cannot retire from God. You cannot even take a vacation from Him. If you are in Serious business with your Maker, He will always guide you into worthwhile services, be they large or small.

The only compensations I cherish are the goodwill and affection of those I have tried to serve. Then, perchance, there will be that greatest of all blessings when one hears these words: "Well done thou good and faithful servant... Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

RESOURCE

McAhran, Julianne. "Retired Chaplain Reminiscences about His Years of Service." NM United Methodist Reporter, Oct. 1974.

Before becoming a chaplain Mert Lampson served several appointments in the California-Nevada Conference: 1937 Farmington/ Knights Ferry; 1938 Walnut Creek; 1940 Roseville, CA; 1942 Watsonville, CA. While serving in Watsonville, California in 1943 he joined with other pastors there in denouncing efforts to keep Japanese Americans from returning to their homes, following their internment. Their joint statement read in part,

"It has always been America's pride and boast that neither race nor creed nor color are a bar to citizenship. Equality of treatment, fairness in the application of her laws, is the essence of American Democracy. Suspicion and fear must never form the basis of an accusation, for this is persecution. Nor should one person be held guilty of another's crime where no association can be shown. We hold then, that persons of Japanese ancestry, equality with those of any other, who by birth are citizens of these United States, are entitled to the opportunity of proving their loyalty, and having proved it, are entitled to all the privileges of any other citizen. It is by patience and understanding, not by hatred and suspicion, that we shall build the security of our nation's future."

During his military service he was Awarded the bronze star with Oak Leaf Cluster, and the Army Commendation Medal. He returned to the pastoral ministry in 1963, and later served three appointments in the New Mexico Conference: Wink, TX in 1965; Jal in 1968; and Paradise Hills ABQ in 1972 before his retirement in 1974.

Decline

Excerpt from History of the Rio Grande Conference

By Alfredo Nanez

In 1907, when the Mission Conference was at its zenith and the prospects for the future appeared bright, there was a change in the administration of the work. Since 1902 Harwood had served as general superintendent of the Mission Conference, as one of the presiding elders, and also as president of the Boy's School. At the annual meeting of 1907, for the first time in thirty-five years, Harwood was not named either superintendent or presiding elder. His appointment was to serve as president of the Boys' School, a responsibility which he kept until 1914 when, at the age of eighty-five, he retired from active duty.

The educational work that had been so important during the years of the mission and the Mission Conference began to change, due mainly to the expansion of the public school system...

By that year (1905) there were only five mission schools left open in the Territory (besides the two in Albuquerque): Tiptonville, Costilla, Cerro, Los Griegos, and Garfield. The reason, according to Harwood himself, was that "we try to avoid placing a mission school where it would interfere with the public schools." This decline in the number of schools did not bother Harwood; rather, he was glad that the influence of the Methodist schools had contributed to the development and improvement of the public school system.

From 1907 on, the year when Harwood's position as superintendent was severed, the church began to

show signs of decline. The statistics for 1908 show that the Mission Conference had lost 417 members. For the following two years, one district was reduced each year. Finally in 1914, the three districts which had been left were reduced to one, and the Reverend Thomas M. Harwood, a nephew of Thomas Harwood, was placed in charge of this district. By that time the number of appointments had been reduced to twenty-two.



From 1914 to 1939 the work seemed to be without direction, and the different structural changes that were tried, more than efforts to save the situation, were momentary decisions made with the hope that the problem would go away. The leadership in the field and the leadership in the Missionary Society, together with the episcopal leadership, were not strong enough to give direction and save the efforts of almost half a century of hard work. Perhaps the work Harwood developed so faithfully was weak internally, depending more on the leader than its own internal impetus. Perhaps also Harwood in his zeal overextended the work to the detriment of the whole structure.

In 1915 another step was taken that further weakened the work. The Mission Conference was reduced to the status of a district in the English-speaking mission. The Reverend Thomas M. Harwood was left as presiding elder of the Spanish-speaking district of the New Mexico Mission. That year only fif-

teen pastors were appointed in this district, twelve charges were left to be supplied.



Another change in leadership came about in 1918. The Reverend H. A. Bassett was made presiding elder of the Spanish district and at the same time president of the Boys' School. This arrangement further weakened the

work, for in reality both the school and the missionary district needed the exclusive attention of one person.

In 1923, at a conference in Las Cruces, New Mexico, a new effort was made to revitalize the Spanish work; it was separated from the English mission and organized into the Southwest Spanish Mission. The new organization was to include the Spanish-speaking churches in Arizona, Colorado, Kansas, and New Mexico. There were twelve appointments that year, eight of which were in New Mexico.

The new structure did not stop the downward trend. By 1927 there were only three more appointments than there were in 1923, making fifteen appointments in the four states, but four were left to be supplied. Of the eleven ministers appointed, only five were stationed in New Mexico. The following year, only fourteen appointments were made, four of which were in New Mexico. In 1928, the Boys' School was closed because of financial difficulties, and that was another blow to the work.

At the 1930 annual meeting¹¹ of the Southwest Spanish Mission, the bishop announced that the

Board of Home Missions of the Church was recommending that the mission be merged with the Latin American Mission of California.

The matter was discussed at great length. Finally the vote was eight to five in favor of merger.

The matter of merger had also been presented to the Latin American Mission in 1924, but at the time they voted non-concurrence. They had several reasons for so voting - the great distances involved; the financial obligations that would have to be assumed if they organized into an annual conference; the differences of the constituencies and the fact that the conference members would have to give up their membership in the Southern California Conference. The matter was presented again in 1930, and after reviewing the entire Spanish-speaking work, it was approved. The merger was consummated in 1931.

There is no report for the year 1931 for the Southwest Spanish Mission.

In 1932 the following appointments for New Mexico appear in the Latin American Mission Journal:

From 1932 to 1936 the appointments for New Mexico appear in the minutes of the Latin American Mission.

Albuquerque	Higinio Costales
Deming-Lordsburg	Eulalio M. Yrene
El Paso	H. A. Bassett
Hatch-Garfield	E. N. Candelaria
Las Cruces Circuit	Juan C. Chavez
Socorro	Antonio Ayala
Wagon Mound	Dionicio Costales

Due to the great distances involved, the cost of travel, and the failing health of the superintendent of the mission, Dr. Vernon M. McCombs, a new arrangement was worked out for the Spanish-speaking work in New Mexico.

In 1936, by action of the General Conference, the charges in New Mexico were attached to the New Mexico English-speaking Mission. The Reverend A. P. Gains was appointed superintendent of the entire work. The Reverend H. M. Hilliard was appointed pastor of Orchard Park, an English-speaking congregation, and El Buen Pastor, a Spanish-speaking congregation, both in El Paso. He was also to serve as missionary to the Spanish-Americans of the southern Rio Grande Valley.

Reporting about his work in 1937, Hilliard writes:

Since the last conference I have travelled 17,000 miles in the interest of the mission and its work. Many homes have been visited where a Methodist preacher has not been for years. One splendid Spanish-American Christian whose father was a veteran preacher for years in this mission, said when I told him I was a Methodist missionary, 'We thought that the Methodist Church had quit...

The unification of Methodism brought changes to the work of the Church among the Spanish-speaking people of Texas and New Mexico, changes that brought a renewed interest in this work on the part of the Church in general, and^{3a} a period of great development on the part of the work itself.

When the New Mexico Mission met for the last time before the actual unification took place, June 1-4, 1939, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, the superintendent, the Reverend A. P. Gains, in his reports declared that



The Spanish-speaking Methodists have been permitted to drift about for long periods of time without a shepherd... Our ministry in the Spanish church is inadequate. We have able men among them, but they are not enough in numbers...We now must rely on supplies. A great number of small denominations have sprung up to claim our members...Many of our former members have left us, enticed away by what seems to be a more promising gospel, etc.

The report of the missionary to the Spanish churches, the Reverend Hilliard, was not more optimistic. He reported about the neglected churches and members scattered all over the field, many of them going to other churches because they were left without leaders.

The work that once had been the New Mexico Mission Conference with five districts, 3,117 members and probationers and some 4,000 adherents, in the last report showed 489 members and six ministers, three of whom were supplies.

That there were apprehensions about the future of the work at the time of unification can be reflected between the lines in a resolution offered by the Rever-

end William B. O'Neill, then pastor of El Buen Pastor Church in El Paso:

Whereas the Spanish-speaking churches of New Mexico and Texas are to be gathered into a conference of their own; and Whereas these churches will be more or less cast upon their own resources by this action;

Therefore be it resolved, that we, the members of the New Mexico Mission, do hereby request the New Mexico Annual Conference to devise ways and means of continuing the financial support hereto given to the Spanish-speaking churches of this area.

With the unification of Methodism in 1939, what was left of the Spanish-speaking work of the Methodist Episcopal Church in New Mexico was merged with the Spanish-speaking work of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South in Texas to form the Southwest Mexican Conference. This final reorganization took place in Dallas, Texas, November 1939. Four ministers from the New Mexico Mission were transferred to the Southwest Mexican Conference: Alfredo Macias, Y. M. Yrene, Jose' Hernandez, and Prospero Jaramillo.

A new era had begun for the Spanish-speaking work of Methodism in the states of Texas and New Mexico!

RESOURCE

Náñez, Alfredo. History of the Rio Grande Conference of the United Methodist Church. Dallas, Bridwell Library, Southern Methodist University, 1980.



Navajo Find Christ

By Paul N. West, Circa 1985

A new Christian must express his faith---some in words, some in deeds, some in building a Hogan Chapel.

Oscar Damon, a retired layman of the Shiprock United Methodist Church, became a committed Christian only a few years ago. Two years ago the Administrative Board proposed a Hogan Chapel to help Navajo people more easily identify with the church, Mr. Damon accepted the project as his own. In a year and a half, Mr. Damon hand shaped every log and piece of wood to fit. In fact, he singlehandedly built the whole 30'x30' octagon- shaped hogan, at the age of 75. When asked why he did it in spite of arthritis - his only reply is;¹⁶ "God did so much for me, I only wanted to do something for Him."

Navajo Indians in the Navajo Nation - the largest tribe on the largest reservation in the U.S.A. - are finding Christ through the ministry of the United



Methodist Church under a new project; the "4 Corners Native American Ministry."

Mrs. Eleanor Clah said previously she only attended church occasionally but sent her children to the Navajo Methodist Mission School. Then her father became very ill, The medicine man was called in at great expense to the family. When he saw Eleanor crying he said, "Don't worry, young lady, you'll be saying 'Daddy' for a long time". In spite of the Navajo ceremony, her father died. Eleanor says in her witness, "I saw right then that the medicine man could do nothing. I turned to Jesus and he has done everything for me."

At a home prayer meeting 3 years ago Mr. Curley was miraculously healed of high blood pressure, congestive heart failure and kidney trouble. His wife, Marie, says, "Before Don's healing we often sat on the fence. Sometimes we would go to the medicine man and sometimes we would turn



Don & Marie Curley

to the church. But now we are 100% for the Lord." Since Don and Marie's retirement, they have served as full-time volunteers for the church.

Not only are the Navajo Christians holding a strong faith but they are sharing that faith in positive ways through their "4 Corners Native American Ministry" project (the board is 90% Indian). One of these ways has been to establish the first Home for Battered Women and Abused Children on any Indian reservation in the U.S.A. In 3 years, almost 280 women and children have been directly ministered to by the church. Several Navajo church members - including Eleanor and Marie -are serving as counselors to these women and children.

How can we tell all that God is doing? His moving is always a wonder and a mystery to us. But praise God, Jesus not only speaks Navajo but He is Navajo to our people.

RESOURCE

Four Corners History. Scrapbook. NM Conference Archives.





Youth Camp June 3-10, 1953

Sacramento – War & Reconstruction

By Cliff Hall

In 1940 a goal for Sacramento was "a conference-wide assembly for Intermediate and a Conference-wide assembly for Young People to be held at Sacramento in June, and an adult assembly, together with a program for ministers to be held for one week in July, with representatives from each church in the Conference attending these assemblies."

Goals revealed the growing contributions being made at Sacramento. War makes its impact in many ways, land upon tasks and efforts in places never intended to be touched by the massive conflict of World War II. In December 1941 Japan exploded dreams

with its strike on the Phillipines. The United States was involved. The war effort required rationing of foods such as coffee and sugar. Travel was hindered by rationing of tires and gasoline. The result was a temporary closing of facilities at Sacramento.

The Assembly was still being supervised and the Annual Conference, in 1945, was presented a resolution to transfer management and control from the Board of Managers set up in 1933 to the Conference Board of Education. The resolution was approved, and authority was transferred as requested, but effective October 14, 1944, due to omission from the 1944 Conference Journal.

Following this action the Board of Education recommended a Board of Managers and instructed them to "make whatever investigation is necessary to determine the evaluation of the Assembly property and make a thorough study to determine the future of said Assembly at its present location; to determine, the feasibility of selecting other sites and the amount of money necessary to improve and develop the present assembly grounds or the building of another and report back at the next Annual Conference." So the purpose and need for facilities and program was much alive but the "where" was to be determined.

From 1942 to 1947 Sacramento was pretty much in limbo. It was not unusual to think of relocating. In six years Bryan Hall, J. V. Schurtz and Clifford Hall made an exploratory trip to see what could be salvaged. Bryan Hall was much in favor of "fixing it up" because of what so many churches had invested in the Camp. John Klassen was aware also of Bishop

Smith's determination to rebuild. A first hand, on the spot report from Clifford Hall tells "What we found was both encouraging and depressing. The basic buildings were in reasona-



ble condition. Las Cruces cabin was under a good roof. The small "Douglas" cabin (owned for some time by Dr. A. C. Douglas and family and burned in the 1974 fire) and the "Marfa" cabin (also burned in the 1974 fire) were usable but empty. "Boaz Hall" was in pretty good condition but the lower partial floor had water and mud damage. The old dining hall with canteen, kitchen, ice storage and registration area was in pretty good condition. The recreation hall sagged but was fixable. "Ruth" and "Esther" the boys dorms were stable and well built. They are the basic units of the large structure between the present (1991) dining hall and the Lodge.

On the east side of the circle, going down the hill, "Roswell" and "Trinity" dorms were skeletons. "Alamogordo" was a shell with a good portion of the roof missing. Further down and across the road was the three room managers place which was made into the Caretakers cabin. Back on the east side of the road and further down were "Albuquerque" and "Asbury" cabins. The spring house (a low covered

structure) and the generator house were where the present outdoor classroom is now just outside the present dining hall and toward the Lodge.

“Las Cruces” was two story. The lower rooms were a mess from being washed in pine needles, mud, etc.

Most glass was broken. The perimeter fence was just one wire. The rest of the fence had been purloined. All copper wire from the generator house to the dorms had been stolen. Lavatories, commodes, sinks, hot water tanks and pipes were all gone. A good bit of corrugated tin from the roofs, being in short supply, was no doubt taken and used on local houses...

"I recall the general opinion that was expressed on the way home was to fix and not lose the investment various churches had made to build their respective dorms. This was the policy prior to the war. Trinity and Asbury were the two El Paso churches. The girls basically stayed in the named dorms and the boys and men counselors stayed in Ruth and Esther. The exception was Asbury. This was a beautiful design which allowed boys and girls to use separate sleeping areas but had a common lobby with a fire place. My older brother, Jack, and I expressed our displeasure about the decision to tear this down. Albuquerque and Asbury were both torn down to obtain building materials. They were the farthest down the canyon. It was felt that consolidation toward the new lodge area would be desired. Roswell and Trinity were fixed and used with Trinity finally being torn down about 1956.

Alamogordo was turned over to the crew to fix as

they saw fit and we had a great time fixing bunks, domino table lights, etc. Many memories and good times in this cabin. It was torn down and the crew moved to the Roswell building probably toward 1960. The first two summers Dad managed, the boys went across the creek to toilet and shower and washing machine area which was below the nurses quarters.



For #1 we had fixed a convenient knot hole with a ten foot section of galvanized gutter nailed to the outside wall. This carried the urine away from the building where rainfall and a little Clorox would take care of the odors.

We had an ongoing split as to how much of the roof we wanted to fix. During my years there we always left about three feet ²⁴ of the roof off. The' third summer we fixed our own shower and indoor plumb-

ing. The girls dorms had propane gas hot water heaters with the old side arms. These had to be watched closely and turned off so they would not explode. The men's buildings and the kitchen used wood. The men's dorms had a large coil of pipe under which fires were built to heat the water. The kitchen had a water heater connected to the cooking stove with a water jacket. During early winter camps the kitchen had the only running water and inside toilet...

Now I will turn to the chapel. Dad wanted to separate the old chapel from the recreation hall and approached Alec Buckner if we had the knowledge and man power to construct a chapel with local materials and not a lot of cost. Alec had a tractor with a power take-off and knew where we could borrow a 30" mounted saw. A chain saw was purchased and used with a two man cross-cut to cut the logs off the camp property. The cross-cut was soon abandoned. Alec's oldest son, Lynell, cut most of the trees with Robert Lawrence of Anthony as spell man and gauger. Trees were selected for 12 inch maximum at trunk, 7 inch minimum with at least two ten foot logs from each tree.

The clean up and brush piling as well as log pulling was done with two man log tongs (large ice hook like tool with a swivel handle about 5 feet long.) The hook was placed in the log at one end with one boy on each end on the handle and the log dragged off the hill to where a pick-up could get in to get it. We would load about six on the pick up and haul them to the saw which was set up in ~~the~~ the canyon about a hundred yards above the present dining hall. Alec drove the

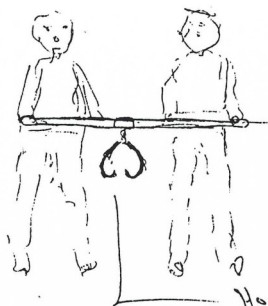
pick up. The logs were pulled by Sammye Buckner, Cliff Hall, Jon Mathews, (preacher's kid) and a fellow named Don Mawson. The four of us got pretty stout that summer.

The logs were run through the saw and milled flat on opposite sides. The butts cut square. They were hauled down to the building site stacked in ricks to start the drying and the two unmilled sides skinned. Numerous people got in on the skinning. Younger brother Ivan did a many of them.

A Mr. Godley had a "Cat" which prepared the building site. Digging of the footings was done by the same people. When the cement was poured, we started early in the morning so that we could finish in one day and not have a lot of joints in the concrete. A Mister Buster Forbis came up from El Paso and helped in the pour. We used a two cubic foot mixer and wheel barrow and it took about ten hours. Bolts were set in the footing to fasten the first logs to the footing and is the only metal in the main structure until you get to the roof.

A mortar leveling was used and a minimum of seven 5/8 inch wooden dowels used to pin the logs together. Holes were drilled through the lower log so that each layer of logs is fastened to at least two other layers. When the walls were completed a tape was placed on opposite corners to see how far off square we were. At that time opposite corners were 3/4 of an inch off.

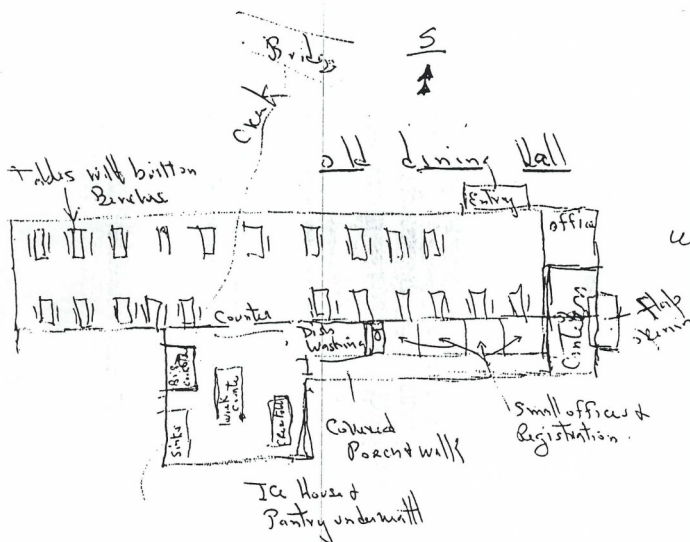
The exterior logs on the first four rounds were treated with tung nut oil to²⁶ prevent bugs and rot. From there up is varnish only.



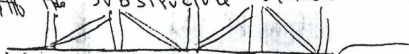
Chapel construction

Wood Handle with metal Collar
+ Swivel Hooks. I've Drawn
the Hooks a bit too small.

Hook would open up to Grip about
an 18" log which is about all any two
Guys would want to handle.



the Foundation across the Creek
Was 4 large Sugar Pine logs cut Green
with the Substructure placed on the logs
Creek clearance 3 1/2'



(11)

Sammye Buckner and I placed probably 80% of the logs. We would mortar and place as much of one round of logs as possible in one day, let the mortar cure overnight then drill and dowel the next day, start again on the next round. It went slowly due to the selection of the logs, no joints: over each other and the curing time. I remember Rev. Willingham coming up and being very disappointed that the walls were not finished in July. Actually they were not completed until the next summer. The cross beams were brought down from Fullers mill and placed on the north end of the wall. Sammye and I, with a rope on each end, would pull and slide the logs to the other end and space them as measured. I fell off the wall during this action, landed on my back. Fortunately I was young and in good shape, no serious damage. Sometimes I think I feel it now in my later years.

The gable ends were done next and this got high and tricky. As we got toward the top we had very little room to stand up there with a drill and do the dowel holes. The roof went well and fairly fast with four and five of us working ¹up top and two below handing up materials.

The inside braces were a different story. Actually this whole part was painful. Skinning the smaller logs and cutting the angles took a big part of the third summer. Alec Buckner oversaw the log placing and was involved personally until he felt comfortable with Sammye and me doing it right. He would check on our progress, as would Dad, many times a week.

The cross was cut out ~~48~~ with the intention of placing fluorescent light tubes in it but the wiring never



got done. I don't remember why. By the time we got to the tower roof I remember being pretty darn glad we were at the end. Sam and I both expressed our desire to go do something else for a change...

The first camps after the war were at the YMCA skyline ranch which is in Haynes Canyon west of Cloudcroft. I don't know if the church rented it or paid using fees but I attended a camp in 1946. I attended camp at Sacramento in the summer of 1947 when C. A. Clark was manager. He started the lodge that summer.

Dad was named manager early in 1948 and we moved up there in May at the end of



school. Summer of 1947 operated only three weeks. I recall Dad wanting to extend the camping season to seven weeks his first summer. (1948) The trip mentioned earlier with Dad and Mr. Schurtz had to have been in the spring of 1946 before C. A. Clark or any one was up there.

RESOURCE

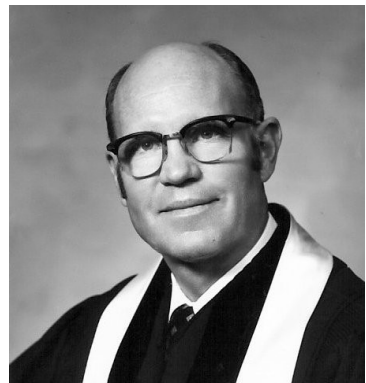
Cyril Stone. A History of Sacramento Mountains Methodist Assembly, 1930-1990. Unpublished Manuscript. 1991.





First United Methodist Church Shiprock

On a fall day in 1957, Rev. Robert W. Brooks, pastor of the Navajo Methodist Mission, Farmington, New Mexico, was passing through Shiprock on his way to Gallup, New Mexico. He was acquainted with various alumni of the Mission who lived in Shiprock, as well as other Methodists and citizens of Shiprock who had been connected with the Mission in various ways. On that day, an idea was born. Shiprock needed a Methodist church for those graduates of the Mission who lived there. After mulling this over in his



mind, Rev. Brooks contacted his friends, Bonnie and Edna Gibson, and suggested they get as many Methodists together as possible to determine what might be done about organizing a Methodist church. A handful of people met at the home of Bonnie and Edna Gibson to work out the beginning of the dream.

The first Methodist church on the Navajo Reservation was officially organized at Shiprock, New Mexico on October 8, 1957. There were 35 charter members...

Rev. R.L. Willingham, District Superintendent, presented the charter to the new church, with Rev. Robert W. Brooks from Navajo Methodist Mission as pastor. The new Church met in a classroom in the old four-room public school. The membership consisted of Navajos, Oklahoma Indians, Negroes, and Caucasians.



Serving as the first stewards were: Stanley Stanburry, Mrs. Herman Lee, Carl Todacheeni, Vance Carnal, Bennie Gibson, Miss Evangeline Bobb, R. C. Harris, and John Morris.

In 1958, the church met in the Valley Elementary School. Due to the extreme cold during the winter, services were moved into a wide hall in the building. Music was provided by Rev. Brooks' Mother who came with him from Farmington each Sunday. In this year, there were 56 members shown on the Quarterly Conference Report and 72 members shown on the report of March 10, 1959. ³²

During the first three years of the church's life,

Rev. Brooks was pastor of the Navajo Methodist Mission and was loaned to Shiprock. Worship services were held at Shiprock at 9:00 am and at Navajo Methodist Mission at 11:00 am. In 1960, Rev. Brooks was appointed by the New Mexico Annual Conference as full-time pastor for Shiprock.

Since no living quarters were available for Rev. Brooks and his family, a trailer was purchased for living quarters and a small trailer for office space was loaned by Mrs. Lena Lindsey. 1960, the church moved from the Valley Elementary school to the new Junior High School lobby. There were 89 members.

In December 1961, after two years of negotiations, Rev. Brooks and Kenneth Benally conferred with the Navajo Tribal Advisory Committee and subsequently, two acres of land on the north mesa were granted for the construction of the Methodist Church. Rev. Brooks was again appointed at Annual Conference to serve our church. Membership was 129 at this time.



On April 1, 1963, a building fund Sunday was established. The first Sunday in each month was designated for the offering to be deposited in the building fund account, which boasted the sum of \$10,000. Membership had grown to 178.

Plans for the new church were made by the building committee which consisted of: William Vineyard, Mrs. Herman Lee, Frank Larson, Arthur Shulte, Miss Esther Munsterman, Carl Todacheeni, Oscar Damon, David Hilborn, Byron Houseknecht, and Rev. Brooks. Money was not available for the complete church as designed and the first section, consisting of the sanctuary, pastor's study, five classrooms, and a kitchen,

was constructed at a cost of \$83,000. A consecration service was held on May 17, 1963. Mrs. Nellie Wolfe presented a beautiful organ to the church in the memory of her loved ones.

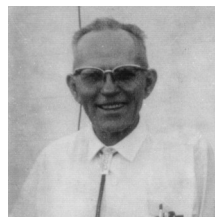
The influence of the Navajo Methodist Mission has been tremendous in many phases of our church. We have received encouragement letters, as well as the loan of their pastor, song books, communion service, etc. Their influence extended to the granting of the land by the Tribal Council. Several alumni of the Methodist Mission were members of the Tribal Council and sympathetic with our cause of bringing Christianity to the Navajo people. Many of our charter members are alumni of the Navajo Mission. Our church has assisted two young Navajo men, Fred Yazzie and Thomas Atcitty, to begin the first phase of their education toward becoming Methodist ministers.

Since Rev. Brooks' idea was born in 1957, the First Methodist Church has been blessed with four more devoted pastors. Following Rev. Brooks, the Annual Conference sent us,



Rev. Vester B. Irby
June 1964 - May 1966

Rev, George R. Ditterline
June 1966 - July 4, 1967



Rev, Maurice Haines
August 1967 - May 1975



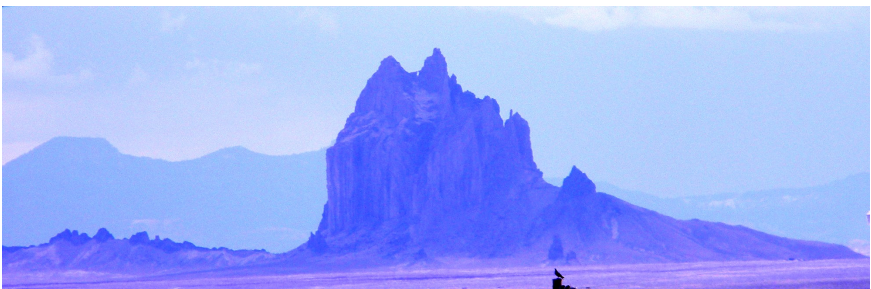
Rev. Paul West
July 1975 - (1985)

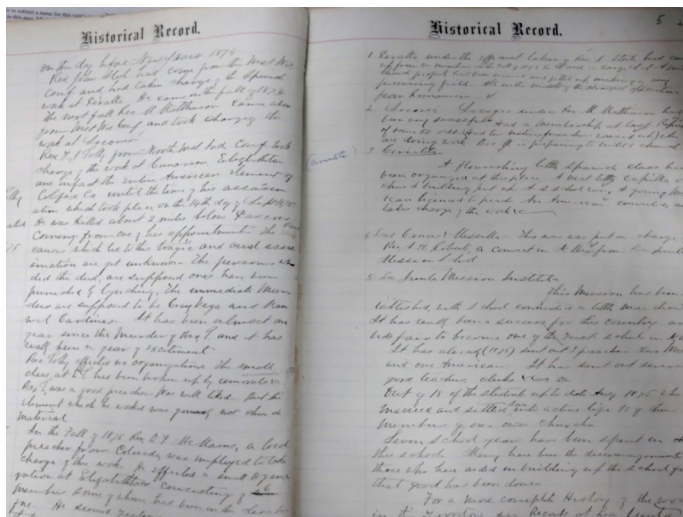
This church, which was consecrated to bring Christ to Navajoland, looks forward to being the center of the extended ministry across the reservation, with outposts being served by Navajo ministers.

The Shiprock, towering 1800 feet above the desert floor, a spectacular landmark for the great southwest, has become a symbol for the First Methodist Church. "It stands as a sentinel, giving protection to the wanderer, and direction to the traveler." This is the goal of our church, to be a mighty rock in a weary land.

RESOURCE

West, Paul N. *Mortgage Burning and Service of Dedication*. Typescript, NM Conference Archives of the UMC. November 7, 1976.





The Record of the Methodist Episcopal Church Elizabethtown, Cimarron, and Springer

By Will Steinsiek

The earliest record book of church activity in the NM Conference Archives is called the “Springer Record Book.” It is a bound book made in New York, with all the common sections required and necessary for keeping church records.

For instance there is a section for recording Baptisms, and here we find that Thomas Harwood recorded that on October 27, 1872 there were five children baptized at a service in Elizabethtown.

Robert Henry Lee Howell, the infant child of Andrew J & Francis Howell, was born March 22, 1872, and is described by Thomas Harwood, as a “fine looking little boy from Ute Creek.” Other records show that his father was from Virginia and his mother was from Missouri. At the time of his death at the age of 42, from peritonitis, Robert was a rancher in Arizona. Sadly, his father Andrew, born in 1838, signed his

son's death certificate. He and Francis also had two other children, Edward and Laura.

Also baptized that day were Lucy, Sylvia, Lydia, and Jennie Lee Pascoe, the children of Henry and Elizabeth Pascoe. According to the entry by Thomas Harwood, Sylvia and Lydia were "twins, fine looking little girls." Lucy was the oldest at 11, and Jennie Lee was 8.

The record is not quite in chronological order, as Thomas Harwood later added a Baptism which took place in 1871 for Antonio Jose Mitchell, born April 12, of that year.

Also recorded is the baptism of John Elsworth, an adult, in June of 1872, noting that this was the "first immersion in the Mora River." The location was listed as La Junta, now known as Watrous. The Rio Mora flows nearby.

The Baptism record continues on other pages with entries made by other pastors from 1883 to 1957. Locations listed also include Cimarron, Maxwell, Dawson, Baldy, and Springer.

The Marriage record begins in 1870 with the marriage of H.S. Russell and Racine McKay in Elizabethtown. Notably in the footnotes Thomas Harwood says that H.S. Russell was a "professional gambler" and that the marriage took place in "Garnick Hall" in Elizabethtown with "about 300 persons present."



Later on the record notes the marriage of Captain Keys and Virginia Maxwell adding that they were "married in the 3rd story of the grist mill at Cimarron."



Virginia was the daughter of Lucian Maxwell, and you will find that story told elsewhere in Harwood's History of New Mexico Missions, and in many other histories of New Mexico as well. Again the record continues for many pages ending in 1955.

There is also a record of Probationers in La Junta, Fort Union, Ocate, Las Vegas, Wagon Mound, Maxwell, and Springer with notes of when these young people became full members.

Added to this record by someone in Springer is a list of "Boys who were in War II."

Then there are "Class Records" giving the leader of the class and notes about how the class in Elizabethtown, led by Hiram Collins was "organized by Thomas Harwood in 1870 – a Church built and dedicated July 3, 1870. It cost \$2000. It has since blown down and ruined in 1879."

The class record for La Junta included Emily J. Harwood as a member.

Records in the Members in Full Connection do not begin until 1890 with pastor J W Sinnock recording. Other pastors made additional entries up until 1921. It seems that the class list was sufficient up until 1890, and no doubt later on church membership began to be recorded in a new record book.

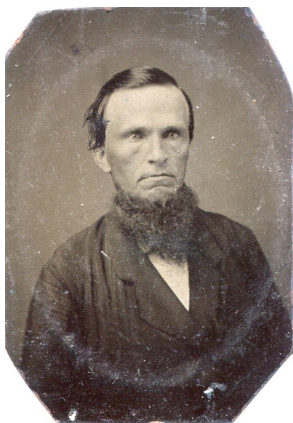
Another page lists some early Trustees and Stewards in the 1870's and then also in the 1900's.

Before all of this there is the Historical Record.

The record begins by giving credit to John Dyer, saying "In the year 1867 Rev. John Dyer came into New Mexico and made his headquarters at Elizabeth

City. He was a member of the Colorado Conference. He traveled a great deal and preached wherever he could get a congregation...”

Different hands appeared to make additional entries at different times, chronicling the history of the mission field in that area all the way up to 1959. Thomas Harwood himself is presumed to have written the following entry.



Rev F J Tolby from Northwest Indiana Conference took charge of the work at Cimarron Elizabethtown and in fact the entire American element of Colfax County until the time of his assassination which took place on the 14th day of September 1875. He was killed about 2 miles below Pascoll coming from one of his appointments. The causes which led to this tragic and cruel assassination are yet unknown. The persons who did the deed are supposed to have been punished by lynching. The immediate murderers are supposed to be Cruz Vega and Manuel Cardinas. It has been almost a year

since the murder of Bro. T and it has been a year of excitement.

Bro. Tolby effected no organizations. The small class at ET has been broken up by removals, etc. Bro. T was a good preacher, was well liked, but the element which he worked was generally not church material.

Later entries in the history seem to focus primarily on the Springer Maxwell charge. One note is particularly interesting as it regards the later use of the record.

After 1915 the Harwood record ceased to be used as the record of church membership. The membership list was copied into a small record book, and the old Harwood record seems to have been out of the hands of the church part of the time, for once Lockridge surrendered it to the Conference and again it was surrendered to Thomas Harwood himself for historical purposes. Whole years and groups of years are missing. And where information is given, many details are often omitted.

A different hand then picks up the pen later to begin to fill in the missing years.

The Historical record is sometimes difficult to read. It is not always written very legibly and parts have faded over the years. As a project of historical interest however, it might be worthy of attempting to transcribe this valuable window into the past.

RESOURCE



In The Aftermath

By Will Steinsiek

On a visit to the Book Concern in Chicago, Thomas Harwood learned the news of Tolby's death and hurried home.

Rev. Tolby had not left a will, but then he had very little anyway.

Allen H. Carey of Cimarron was appointed to look into the matter. Since Tolby left no will, Carey made an inventory of his estate. He found that Tolby left a cook stove valued at \$15.00; a brass kettle \$1.50; one meat dish worth seventy-five cents; fourteen dinner plates totaling \$1.50; eight cups and saucers. Total value of the estate: \$48.65. An auction was held and someone bought the stove and furniture for \$25.00; saddle and halter for ten dollars; crockery for \$6.90; wood hatchet for two dollars; mirror for three dollars; washstand and cupboard for \$6.50; bedstead for \$7.00; knives and forks for \$1.20; brass kettle for \$1.00; two candle sticks for thirty cents each; a

picket pin and rope for fifty cents; pepper box for ten cents; coal oil can and other things for \$4.60. A. H. Carey, as administrator, was allowed \$6.30. He paid off Tolby's debts which amounted to \$26.50. Court costs including executor amounted to \$37.35. The balance for the widow came to zero.

Mrs. Annie Crocker took in Mary E. Tolby and her two children, Rachel and Grace. Mrs. Tolby was also expecting a third child, who would never know his father...Harwood collected money to help the mother and children return to Indiana.

She was accompanied on the stagecoach by a Mr. Terhune until she reached Trinidad. There Mr. Bahamon safely escorted them back to Indiana, where she was met by a cousin and taken to the home of her parents, John and Rachel Russell. Mary named the child she was carrying when she left Cimarron, Frank. He later died at the age of 25.

In 1884, she married Erastus H Smith, becoming Mary Elizabeth Russell Smith. She bore him a son, also named Erastus.

It is said that her daughter Grace suffered much trauma from this earlier event. In 1911 she had a mental breakdown, screaming at Ghosts or Angels that only she could see, and was admitted to a psychiatric hospital for treatment. She died in 1914.

Mary Elizabeth Smith passed away on January 19, 1923 and was buried in the Battleground Cemetery in Tippecanoe County, Indiana.

RESOURCE

Willard Steinsiek. "All This Will Be Your Work"⁴² Unpublished Manuscript.

Archives and Historical Society

Preserving our History

Purpose: The purpose of this Society shall be to aid in the collection and preservation of facts, documents, reports, records, relics, memoirs, books, periodicals, reminiscences, etc. which may be of historic value relating to the origin and growth of the United Methodist Church and its historic antecedents within the bounds of the New Mexico Annual Conference.



Membership in the NM Conference Historical Society is open to all interested persons.

Officers for the Historical Society shall be chosen annually by a ballot mailed to all members. Only members in good standing shall be eligible to vote.

Annual dues are \$12.00 per calendar year, which shall include 2 copies of the New Mexico Conference United Methodist Historical Journal to be received by mail in May and November.

Archives and History Endowment: A fund has been established to benefit the NMAC Archives. Donations to this fund are tax deductible. An amount will be allocated from this fund each year to purchase supplies for the day-to-day operations of the Archives, and to carry out projects to preserve photos, books, documents and historical objects found within the Archives. We welcome any and all donations. Please consider supporting this fund to help preserve and share our history.

Donations can be sent to

Archives and History Endowment
NM Conference of the UMC
11816 Lomas Blvd NE
Albuquerque, NM 87112

Sharing Our Story

Heritage Tour: The NM Conference Historical Society sponsors an annual Heritage Tour, highlighting places and events in our NM Conference History.

Kate Warnick Award (TUMHS) for the Best Local Church History written during the past year. Guidelines are available and entries should be addressed to W. J. Bryan III, P.O. Box 750133, Dallas, TX 75172 by January 31. Copies of the guidelines can be obtained by emailing wbryan@smu.edu.

Recognizing Service

Living Archives Awards are presented at the Annual Conference. The purpose of the award is to lift up and honor exemplary individuals of the conference whose work and/or spirit provide hope and inspiration. The full criteria for this award can be found in the 2011 Conference Journal, page 214, and is available on request.

Nominations may be made either by letter or EMAIL to the Archives at the NM Annual Conference Office, prior to February 15th. The nomination should describe the reasons you believe that the individual deserves consideration, sharing their spiritual journey, any offices held, recognition or honors received, and their contribution to the life of the NM Annual Conference.

The Last Word



The problem of chaplains and others who are in constant contact with service people was complicated by unfortunate, unpredictable developments at home, and by accidental deaths aside from the combat deaths which were the natural accompaniments of any overseas military venture. We did our best, but there was never any civilian or military certainties upon which we could confidentially rely. We were forced by the exigencies of the inescapable vortex of affairs to fall back on whatever securities our religious faith could afford. Unless God was still in control of his universe, and unless he cared for us as individuals, whether we were civilian or military soldiers, nothing made any sense. There was nothing but separation, loneliness, suffering and loss, hatred and insecurity in the present or in the future, unless God revealed in Jesus Christ was with us in every exigency...

- Mert Melvin Lampson, January 4, 1978