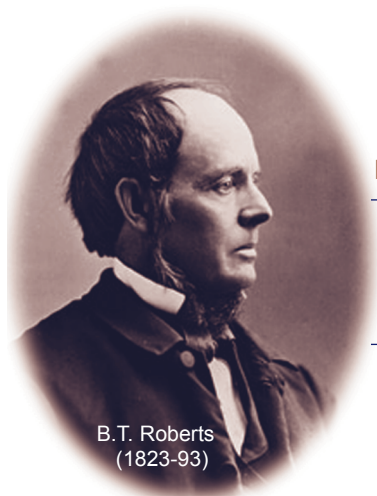


FREE METHODIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

WINTER 2010 — Volume 11, No. 2



B.T. Roberts
(1823-93)

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Shorter Roberts Biography in the Works

B. T. and Ellen Roberts and the First Free Methodists, an abridgement of Howard Snyder's extensive 2006 Roberts biography, is in preparation. The 220-page book will be available in late spring 2011, and will be on sale at the Free Methodist Sesquicentennial General Conference in July.

Prof. Daniel Runyon, assisted by his copyediting students at Spring Arbor University, has skillfully reduced the length of the original while preserving the remarkable story of B. T. and Ellen Roberts — their lives, spiritual formation, romance, and key roles in founding and leading the Free Methodist Church from 1860 until B. T. Roberts' death in 1893. The book also narrates Ellen's life until her death in 1908 and tells the stories of the Roberts children.

As an added bonus and supplemental resource, a digital version of the original 975-page book, *Populist Saints: B. T. and Ellen Roberts and the First Free Methodists*, will be made available. The digital version can be read on devices such as the Kindle, iPad, or computer screens. It will include all the photos, footnotes, and index entries found in the original book, thus providing readers of the abridged version an easy way of "digging deeper" on particular points. □



The old way of making books.

the QUOTABLE Roberts

Our laws should make provision for the breaking up of great estates upon the death of the owners ... the whole bent of our laws must be unfavorable to the acquisition of a vast amount of property by any one person, and to the handing it down unbroken from generation to generation.

— B. T. Roberts,
First Lessons on Money, (1886), p. 142

TEN YEARS OF PROGRESS IN HISTORY AND ARCHIVES

Add it all up, and it's an impressive list. With limited resources but lots of denomination-wide participation, the Marston Memorial Historical Center has dramatically expanded its ministries since 2000.

KEY MILESTONES, 2000-2010

- ▶ For the first time, a headquarters-wide Records Management Policy was implemented to provide for orderly transfer and preservation of key documents and records.
- ▶ The former chapel area in the Historical Center was transformed into an archival storage area, and professional compact storage was installed.
- ▶ The thrice-yearly *Free Methodist Historical Society Newsletter* began publication in 2000 and now goes to 2,500 persons in the U.S. and worldwide, either in print or digital form. Many FM founders, missionaries, and leaders have been profiled.
- ▶ A professional archivist was hired part-time to expand and improve the Historical Center's operation. The Committee on FM History and Archives was expanded and has launched a dozen strategic initiatives.
- ▶ The Center's reputation as a global research center for scholars, pastors, and genealogists has been cemented. The Center answers between 150 and 200 inquiries per year.
- ▶ Free electronic dictionaries for refugees to the United States and native populations in Central Africa were made available.
- ▶ Three "Search for the Free Methodist Soul" gatherings were held, stimulating new interest in FM history and mission.
- ▶ Major archival collections have been digitized and some made available on the Internet, including B. T. Roberts' important monthly, *The Earnest Christian*.
- ▶ The Historical Center helped make possible the publication of key biographical and historical studies:
 - *Populist Saints: B. T. and Ellen Roberts and the First Free Methodists*
 - *Edward Payson Hart: The Second Man of Free Methodism*
 - *"Live While You Preach": The Autobiography of Methodist Revivalist and Abolitionist John Wesley Redfield (1810-1863)*
 - *Soul-Searching the Church: Free Methodism at 150 Years.*

The Historical Center now works cooperatively with other collections and archives such as those at Roberts Wesleyan College, Spring Arbor University, and Asbury Seminary.

- ▶ Center staff have conducted training workshops at General Conferences and in various other venues.
- ▶ An Oral History Project was launched; video recordings of numerous FM leaders, including former missionaries, pastors, bishops, and college presidents, will eventually be made available.
- ▶ A research Sabbatical Program has been established at the Historical Center. FM researchers from other countries as

well as from the U.S. have made use of the Center.

- ▶ The Center has supported social action by supplying essential documents to relief organizations.
- ▶ The Historical Center assisted in preserving the historic North Chili tavern that B. T. Roberts purchased in 1866.
- ▶ The Historical Center's website has been expanded and improved, and it now has a Facebook presence.

How is all this possible? Through a combination of personal contributions, denominational funding, FM Historical Society Memberships, and careful planning and oversight.

These initiatives have been resourced by the Historical Center's unique set of holdings: Tens of thousands of photographs; scores of diaries, journals, and scrapbooks from missionaries, pastors, and others; two original John Wesley letters; General Missionary Board files and letters; financial ledgers from our earliest churches and General Conferences; papers of bishops and other leaders; plus over one hundred annual conference and organizational boxes containing extensive files and archives. Records of conferences or churches which have closed or merged are preserved.

In addition, the Center has a select research library of over 10,000 books, including hundreds by FM authors, and doctoral dissertations and theses covering issues ranging from women's ordination, mission history, social ministries, education, to debates about sanctification. Thousands of original sound recordings of sermons, special events, and *Light and Life Hour* broadcasts are also preserved. Finally, artifacts from early missionary frontiers give an archeological map of Free Methodist global growth—items ranging from elaborate Zulu belts to delicate porcelains and items of clothing.

The Committee on Free Methodist History and Archives is currently assessing the challenges of the next decades. It is forming a key advisory strategy group to assist in facing the difficulties and opportunities ahead. □



Joshua Gillespie, age 9, volunteered his time this summer at the MMHC. He carefully placed acid free paper between the many pages of our missionary scrapbook collection.

HISTORY AND ARCHIVES: SERVING WHERE NEEDED

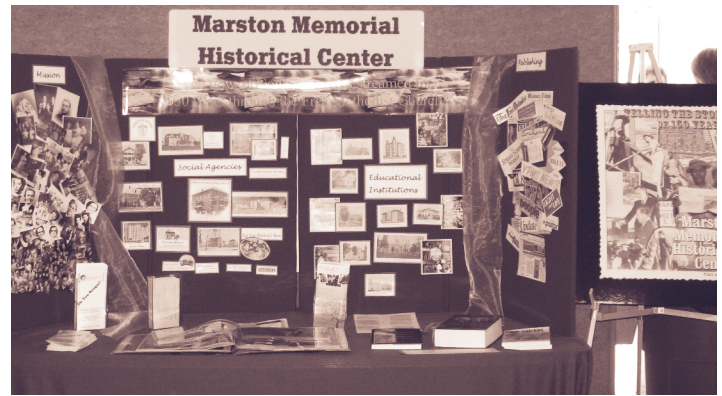
During the past year Cathy Fortner and I represented the Marston Memorial Historical Center at three very different and uniquely Free-Methodist events.

Cathy traveled to Florida in April for the Overflow Conference where pastors and delegates from Bishop David Roller's annual conferences gathered. She was pleased to hear the bishops lead the enthusiastic group in recommitting the church to its founding principles. This provided a perfect launch for the Free Methodist Sesquicentennial Year. Cathy discussed with attendees how their churches and conferences could celebrate their unique history.

Over the summer, Cathy attended the Wabash Conference's 125th anniversary gathering. Dedicated church members had created displays of photographs, documents, and ephemera, and offered commemorative pottery and T-shirts for sale.

In July I spent a pleasant afternoon at the East Michigan campground discussing oral history within the local church. An unexpectedly large crowd showed up. I walked away impressed with the work being done and planned. The "star attraction" was veteran missionary Betty Ellen Cox, who appeared by DVD interview from the Center's collection.

Meanwhile, the day-to-day work at the Historical Center goes on. One day a Chicago realtor called. She was in the process of selling the building that was once the Free Methodist Publishing House at May and Washington Streets in downtown Chicago.



Overflow Conference display

She asked about the building's history, so Cathy Fortner immediately went to Bishop Marston's and Evelyn's Mottweiler's resourceful pamphlet files. She found great pictures and what seemed to be an inspection report from 1934-35. A special issue of *The Free Methodist* was full of details, photos inside and out. More information appeared in a 1935 *Free Methodist* about the headquarters move to Winona Lake. Cathy says, "I love to find information, respond in a timely manner, and help out in a pinch." — *Kate McGinn, Archivist*

News Notes &

▷ The PREVIOUS ISSUE of the *FMHS Newsletter* (Summer/Fall 2010, Issue 11:1) was distributed as an insert in the July/August *Light & Life* magazine. If you did not receive a copy, please notify us at history@fmcna.org and we will send you one or more copies. Feature articles included "The Bishop's Dream Fulfilled," by Evelyn Marston Mottweiler, and "Why James Hudson Taylor Became Free Methodist," by Howard Snyder.

▷ CHECK OUT the Marston Historical Center on Facebook. If you have a Facebook account, you can search for: Marston Memorial Historical Center & Archives of the Free Methodist Church, and join that link. Some great historical photos, among other things, are available. You can also find historical photos on the FM General Conference website: www.gc11.org.

▷ WESTERN CANADA HISTORY — Free Methodists in Saskatchewan have formed a committee to help preserve archives and artifacts from Western Canadian Free Methodism. Providing leadership to the committee are Prof. Alan Guenther, who teaches history at Briercrest College and Seminary, and Jean Mercer of First Free Methodist Church in Moose Jaw. Jean has recently published *The Call Was Clear: Superintendents of the Free Methodist Church in the Canadian Prairie Conferences, 1901-1995*. This is an updated and expanded edition of the original 1979 compilation by Grace (Garratt) Climenhaga.

▷ PASTORS' SABBATICAL PROGRAM applications are now available. Contact the Historical Center for information on scholarships and scheduling.

▷ ILLINOIS CHURCHES MARK ANNIVERSARIES — Pastors and members from three Illinois FM churches researched their church histories at the Historical Center. The St. Charles Church is celebrating 150 years; Neoga is 120 years old; and the Birds Free Methodist Church is marking 125 years!

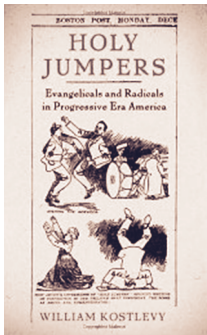
▷ JACOB DeSHAZER — A new website featuring the life of the World War II Doolittle Raider — his imprisonment and conversion in Japan and later FM missionary work — has recently been created: www.jacobdeshazer.com. It includes a video clip of a 1989 interview with DeShazer.

▷ NEW ACQUISITIONS — Two pastors, Darren Anderson and Richard Devendorf, who attended the Starting Strong (New Pastors' Orientation) at the World Ministries Center in September later sent histories and documents from the early days of their churches to add to the Historical Center's growing collection. The Center now has a Record Transfer Form to facilitate such donations.

▷ EXTRA COPIES of the Newsletter are available free of charge upon request (up to ten copies to one address). If you wish to send current or back issues to friends or family, contact the Historical Center by phone or letter or by email at History@fmcna.org.

Book Review

Holy Jumpers: Evangelicals and Radicals in Progressive Era America. By William Kostlevy (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). xii + 239 pp. \$65.00 (clothbound).



Scholars generally characterize the nineteenth-century Holiness movement as conservative, seeking to recapture the message and spirit of John Wesley. This is only half the story however, argues William Kostlevy (Tabor College). Examining key figures such as Phoebe Palmer, William Boardman, John Inskip and other leaders of the National Holiness Association, Kostlevy shows that by the end of the century the movement had divided into two groups: a moderate wing

affiliated with the NHA, and a radical wing led principally by Martin Wells Knapp. Kostlevy here recovers the story of radical holiness, which was deliberately suppressed by the moderates.

In contrast with the conservative moderates, radical holiness folks saw modern culture as a harbinger of Jesus' Second Coming. Kostlevy traces this emphasis to Knapp's advocacy of the doctrines of divine healing and premillennialism. These teachings reflected the pessimism of working-class American culture, a response to *laissez-faire* capitalism. The acute conditions in Chicago for instance contributed to a system that funneled wealth into the hands of the few and led to the despair of labor.

The greatest expression of radical holiness, the Metropolitan Church Association (commonly called the "Burning Bush"), originated in the urban ministries of two young Chicago business

leaders, Edwin Harvey and Duke Farson. These men advocated a view of Christian perfection that embraced demonstrative worship, denunciation of compromise (especially among the moderates), and communalism as mandatory for the sanctified life. Due to their demonstrative worship, the media started calling them "Holy Jumpers." Their energy stemmed from the conviction that Christ's imminent return would bring in a new social order that would establish justice for the poor.

These beliefs generated controversy and conflict not only with secular culture, but with holiness moderates as well. It is difficult however to draw a clear line between moderates and radicals, since many people (including the leaders) straddled the lines or crossed back and forth over the years. Kostlevy provides a ground-level view that reveals just how complex these relationships were; how parties on each side were alienated from the other—or remained perpetually mixed in their loyalties.

With time, economics undermined the MCA's communalism. Although they invented and produced the Scripture-text calendar, eventually this product could endure only through absorption into a secular corporation. The autocratic policies of second-generation leadership virtually insured the demise of the MCA by the third generation.

Closely examining archival material, Kostlevy finds important evidence that MCA adherents shaped the emergence of Pentecostalism at the Azusa Street Revival in 1906, contributing to its prominence and influence as a worldwide revival.

Through *Holy Jumpers*, Kostlevy allows readers to see the Holiness movement from a novel perspective. A number of Free Methodists were involved in radical holiness; Free Methodism in the Progressive Era was radical enough to encourage affinities with the MCA. — Barry W. Hamilton, *Northeastern Seminary*

GREENVILLE COLLEGE ARCHIVES PRESERVES FM RECORDS

Under the direction of Archivist Marilyn Starr, the historical collection at Greenville College in Illinois serves as a resource to the denomination, as well as the college. Some historical records of the Free Methodist Church are found in the archives, as well as documents relating to Greenville's predecessor school, Almira College, and local history for Greenville and Bond County.

The collection includes books, letters, minutes, newspaper clippings, manuscripts, photographs, and other materials. It documents campus life over the century and more of the college's history and includes writings and publications of faculty, staff,

and administrative personnel.

The archives is located in the lower level of the Ruby E. Dare Library. On September 20 the Committee on Free Methodist History and Archives visited the Greenville College Archives as part of its two-day meeting on the Greenville campus.

The committee also hosted an ice cream social in Greenville to publicize the work of the Marston Memorial Historical Center. Strengthening links between the Historical Center and the college and its resources and with the local Free Methodist community fits into the Center's larger objective of serving the church in the present age. □

UNDERWRITE FREE METHODIST LEGACY THROUGH PLANNED GIVING

You are needed to help preserve Free Methodist history and mission. Consider leaving a legacy through gift planning. Include the Marston Historical Center in your estate planning as well as current giving.

Contact the Free Methodist Foundation at 800-325-8975, or visit the FMF website at www.fmfoundation.org. A wide variety of giving options is available, ranging from gifts and bequests to annuities, trusts, and family foundations.