EDITOR'S PREFACE

On behalf of the Historical Society of the Central Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church, I present volume X of THE CHRONICLE. For ten years, the society has tried to produce a mix of scholarly, entertaining, informative and inspiring stories of United Methodism. This volume continues that tradition.

The lead article and cover story is an expansion of a hymn program that has been given across the Conference. It describes the direct connection of 21 hymns in the United Methodist Hymnal to the Susquehanna River Valley. Organized geographically and presented in the context of a journey down the river, the material covers two centuries of religious issues and musical styles while providing insight and commentary on life within this major river valley.

A.D. Gramley's 1945 story of his 50 years in the ministry contains all that one might expect from such an account. Gramley is from the Evangelical tradition of our United Methodist Church. All three predecessor denominations (Evangelical, United Brethren and Methodist) used to invite to the platform of their annual sessions clergy celebrating the golden anniversary of admission to the Conference. Until this practice is revived, those interested in hearing such renditions must content themselves with offerings from the past. Fortunately, there are many to choose from. Perhaps future volumes of THE CHRONICLE will present others of these accounts. Because Gramley's account runs from 1895 to 1945, and many changes have occurred since those years, substantial end notes have been provided to clarify references that were clear to Evangelicals of 1945 but may be confusing to United Methodists of 1999.

The three stories of Methodist heroism continue our practice of presenting at least some of the articles on a common theme. The series is introduced more fully on page 43. The varied perspectives, circumstances and time frames involved in these examples of Methodist heroism might make them appear unrelated. But they do connect, and together they present a more comprehensive picture of what it means for the people of God to be heroic.

The article on the Central Pennsylvania Conference (EV) from 1850 to 1871 attempts to fill a major void. Journals for those years have never been published, and the minutes exist only in manuscript form. The books are frail, and the handwriting and misspellings and faded print make looking for specific information a real chore. Yet researchers, including those writing congregational histories, would like to know certain key facts: what appointments were on what circuits? when were buildings erected or sold? what was the status of different itinerant or local preachers?

While transcribing and printing the annual minutes in their entirety might be
the ideal solution, that must wait until another day. In the meanwhile, all that inform-

mation relating to the circuit placement of appointments and the existence of church
buildings is now presented. Following the material from the minutes is a section of
explanation -- bridging the gap between the names of the mid-1800's and more
readily available histories. This format and information should prove both interesting
and useful. For those whose interest is piqued by the article, even earlier manuscript
Evangelical minutes are available in the archives -- but only in the German!

The final article is a series of vignettes by Evangelical historian Ammon
Stapleton taken from his classic 1908 work *Flashlights on Evangelical History*. Each
vignette comes from the 1850-71 time frame of the previous article and relates to a
particular appointment mentioned therein. The author and the vignettes are intro-
duced more fully on page 86.

Finally, there is a unique aspect to the particular authors presented in the
series on Methodist heroism. THE CHRONICLE continues the tradition begun in
1993 of dedicating the journal to an individual whose life has reflected Jesus Christ
and inspired others to live for Him. Adona Sick, author of *Bishop Asbury's Rock*, is
this year's dedicatee. Charles Berkheimer, author of *John L. Lenhart, Chaplain of the
Cumberland*, was the inaugural dedicatee. To present these two dedicated Meth-odist
researchers in a single volume is a distinct privilege.

Letters preserved in the archives between Adona's sister and Rev. Berkheimer
make this event even more meaningful. Although Miss Sick was raised in Sullivan
County, she spent most of her adult life ministering within the bounds of the
neighboring Wyoming Conference of the Methodist Church. That she and Charles
Berkheimer had contacts over the years is almost certain. When Adona died in 1964,
her manuscript on the Churches of Sullivan County, from which the account of
*Bishop Asbury's Rock* is taken, was still in draft form. It was through the interest of
Rev. Berkheimer, who himself would die within a few years, that Adona's sister was
encouraged to complete the work that was published as Miss Sick's final earthly
contribution to area Methodism.

It is with special privilege, therefore, and through the generosity of
anonymous donors, that this volume of THE CHRONICLE is dedicated to Miss
Adona Ruth Sick.
ADONA RUTH SICK

A native of Sullivan County, Adona Ruth Sick is listed in the 1952 edition of *Who's Who in Methodism*. Born in 1894 on a large farm overlooking the village of Nordmont, Miss Sick received her early spiritual training in the Cherry Grove Methodist Episcopal Church. Land for a church and cemetery at Cherry Grove (a.k.a. Elk Lick) was given in 1858, and the graveyard was established at that time. As the Methodists were contented to continue meeting in the local school house, however, the church was not erected until 1892. The congregation, which was served from Laporte, used the building until 1918 when the remaining members elected to join the United Evangelical Church one mile away in Nordmont. That local union was prophetic of the denominational union that formed the United Methodist Church exactly 50 years later. Each year on the Sunday before Memorial Day, the Cherry Grove Cemetery is the site of a moving community service -- which Adona returned home to participate in for many years. She is also remembered in her home community by a room named in her honor in the educational building of the Nordmont Church.

After graduating from Bloomsburg State Teachers College and New York University, Miss Sick taught elementary for one year in Vermont and served for four years as the high school principal in Estella, Sullivan County. Certified in three different areas, she then served as librarian at the High School in Endicott NY from 1920 until her death in 1964. Extremely active in the First Methodist Church of Endicott, she was a prolific author and popular speaker who shared her Christian witness in a wide variety of situations. During the war, she served for three years as the Broome County director of Civil Defense. She also organized the Wesleyan Service Guild of the Wyoming Conference. Perhaps her most significant contributions were in the area of leadership training, and she served as Director of Leadership Education for the Wyoming Conference.

Throughout her life Adona displayed a keen interest in and grasp of history. Present researchers find her *History of the Churches of Sullivan County* an invaluable resource. That work was her final labor of love. She began compiling the information in the 1950's, but the manuscript was still an unorganized draft when she died in 1964. At the encouragement of our Conference Historian Charles Berkheimer, Adona's sister Emmabelle Sick Boyles compiled the material and oversaw its publication in 1965. It is from that work that the story of *Bishop Asbury's Rock* that begins on page xx was taken.

THE CHRONICLE is pleased to honor Miss Sick by presenting its 1999 volume in her memory.