

OKLAHOMA
CONFERENCE HISTORY

1904-1908

Raymond A. Tolle, Historian

Joe C. Sawyer, Conference President

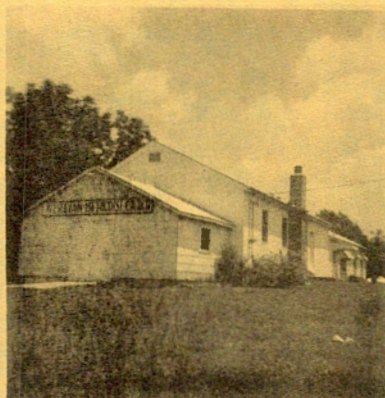
OKLAHOMA CONFERENCE
Wesleyan Methodist Church of America
Fall of 1968

14
General Secretary of Church Extension, on February 15, 1968, assisted by Conference President Joe C. Sawyer.

The Dallas congregation is an enthusiastic group and is endeavoring to carry a heavy financial load along with an effective witness in its community.

W. K. Banz and J. L. Landrey served this church as pastors the first two years. John L. Newell came in 1962 and is the present pastor.

HIGHLAND



HIGHLAND WESLEYAN CHURCH



REV. AND MRS. A. D. ROYALTY

In March of 1952 Conference President D. O. Dorr met in Harrison, Arkansas, with some people who were interested in establishing a church in that vicinity. A site six miles northeast of Harrison was selected and construction of a church was started. It was finished that fall and was dedicated December 7, 1952. The next day organization of the Highland class was effected by Conference President Dorr, with 22 full members. In 1963 an annex to the church was built for pastor's living quarters. This was modernized and is now adequate for the purpose.

This is another rural church, located in the foothills of the Arkansas Ozarks. This is not a wealthy neighborhood, but through the years the Highland Church has maintained its witness to the community at the cost of considerable sacrifice, particularly on the part of the pastors who have served there.

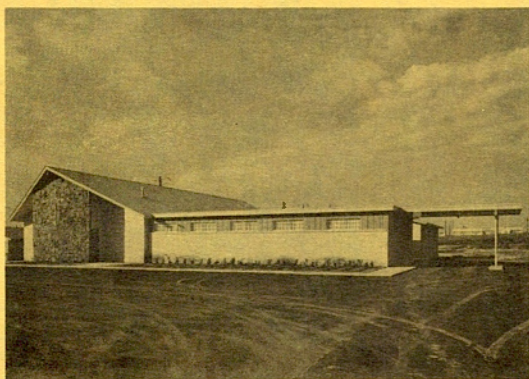
Floyd Joslin was pastor of this church from its beginning to 1961. Following have been Gordon Hada, who was compelled to resign in August of 1966 because of illness in the family; A. D. and Opal Royalty came in 1967 and are the present pastors.

ficially changed from Winchester to Cedar Grove at the 1931 Annual Conference. A very nice parsonage was built on the church grounds in 1943.

Throughout the years additions and improvements have been made and today the Cedar Grove church and parsonage are among the nicer rural churches in the area. Another remodeling program is anticipated in the near future. The Cedar Grove church is well accepted by the progressive community and attendance is very good, with some of the congregation having to drive many miles in this thinly settled area.

Pastors of the Cedar Grove charge have been John E. McGraw, 1931-33; Vida Burnidge Robinson, 1933-34; J. F. Insley, 1935-37; Marion F. Bess, 1937-41; F. L. Elrod, Fred Groves, Loretta Wilson and Walter Simpson, 1941-43; James Harris, 1943-44; H.V. Brannon, 1944-46; F. C. O'Neal; Glen McMurphy, 1946-55; Robert Farley, 1955-63; Roger Jamieson, 1963-66; Frank Allen, 1966-68. Glen McMurphy returned in 1968 and is the present pastor.

DALLAS



DALLAS CHURCH



PASTOR JOHN L. NEWELL

On February 8, 1961, the members of the Wesley Holiness Church, an independent group meeting in the Oak Cliff section of Dallas, Texas, affiliated themselves with the Wesleyan Methodist Church with Conference President Joe C. Sawyer presiding. They continued to hold services in the church at 1917 Kingsley Street in southeast Dallas. During the next two years the church was remodeled and more Sunday School classroom space was made available. Even so, more facilities were needed and the question of building or relocation began to be considered. In 1964-66 several building sites and church plants were investigated but all doors in this direction were closed and even tentative purchases fell through. At the time, this seemed quite baffling, but in the end was seen to be providential. A parsonage was purchased at Idaho and McVey and a site for a new church was selected in Duncanville (a suburb of Dallas). The old property was sold and the new site was purchased.

Building plans were drawn up and approved later in the year. Pastor John L. Newell gave an untold amount of planning and labor toward the construction of the new church. A beautiful and functional building was finished and dedicated by Rev. C. Wesley Lovin,

a new spirit of optimism. But as members died or moved away, it seemed best to disband at the close of conference year 1967-1968 and join with the New Hope church only a few miles away.

Records before 1930 are incomplete; therefore there may be more who should be added to the list below. Available records show that the following served as pastor at Carville up to 1929: Lydia H. Smith, Glenn Tilton, C. E. Sears, H. E. Macy, T. S. Walter, Fred Drake, G. H. Scott, C. F. Badger, George Cameron, J. M. Batman, E. E. Wiseheart, W. A. Houck, W. F. Ridgway, W. J. Kuntz, Myrtle Nash, M. S. Litell, Arthur Rothfuss, K. R. Meade, 1927-1929; W. J. Kuntz, 1929-32; Effie Ross, 1932-33, 1935-37 and 1946-48; Marion F. Bess, 1933-35; G. L. Burtler, 1937-38; Glenn I. Boardman, 1938-39; Paul Batman and Glen McMurphy, 1939-44; Christie Stites, 1944-46; Leon Jackson, 1948-50; Carol Blomberg, 1950-51; K. R. Meade, 1951-53; Abe Schmidt, 1953-56; W. N. Snider, 1956-62; A. D. Royalty (with New Hope), 1962-64; Loyal Leisher, Joe C. Sawyer, and Glen McMurphy, 1964-1968.

In August of 1968 the church building was sold and the earthly existence of Carville Church ceased. But only Eternity can reveal the contribution that this Church has made to the building of the Kingdom of God on earth.

CEDAR GROVE



The Cedar Grove church, located seven miles west, ten miles north and $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles west of Alva, Oklahoma, was built in 1930-31 and dedicated by Rev. T. P. Baker, who was then the Home Missionary Secretary, on March 8, 1931. Conference President Paul Hodge assisted in the dedication ceremony.

Wesleyan Methodism began in this community about 1906 or 1907 when religious services were started in the Winchester school house. A class was organized in 1909 and although there is no report from this

charge for several years after 1912, Sunday School was continued and preaching services were held whenever possible. In 1924 the class was reorganized and made a part of the Mt. Olive Circuit (see below).

The Rev. C. L. Crane had been working in a community a few miles southeast of Winchester, and an organization named Mt. Olive was formed in 1915, with Rev. Crane as the first pastor. A church was built and the class thrived for a few years, although it was usually associated with another church in a circuit. Finally, in 1930, the Mt. Olive membership was transferred to the Winchester class and the Mt. Olive church building was torn down. Salvable lumber from the old church was used in the construction of a new church building not far from Winchester. The name of the church was of-

Work in Blackwell, Oklahoma, began on September 13, 1937, when Conference President Paul H. Hodge began revival meetings with Rev. G. C. Cockrell and Rev. Marion F. Bess assisting. The meetings were fruitful and on November 30 a class of 30 charter members was formed. Rev. G. C. Cockrell was appointed pastor of the new church. For some years services were held in a dwelling house with minimal living quarters included for the pastor. A new church building was finished and dedicated on November 15, 1953, and the original building was thereafter used as a parsonage.

The Blackwell Church had its good years as well as its difficult ones. In the light of the coming general merger services were discontinued, and in October of 1966 the Blackwell Wesleyan Methodist Church was merged and federated with the Pilgrim Holiness Church of Blackwell. This arrangement has worked out to the mutual benefit of all concerned. The church building is presently rented to another denomination. Pastors of the Blackwell Church have been G. C. Cockrell, 1937-39; K. R. Meade, 1939-43; Ray O. Cooper, 1943-44; Paul Batman, 1944-48; Robert Hollen, 1948-49; Jerrold Powell, 1949-50; Leon Jackson, 1950-57; Alvin and Opal Royalty, 1957-60; John L. Newell, 1960-62; Wayne McCartney, 1962-63; Joe C. Sawyer 1963-64; J. Burton Landrey 1964-65; J. L. and Beulah Landrey and Robert Hollen 1965-66.

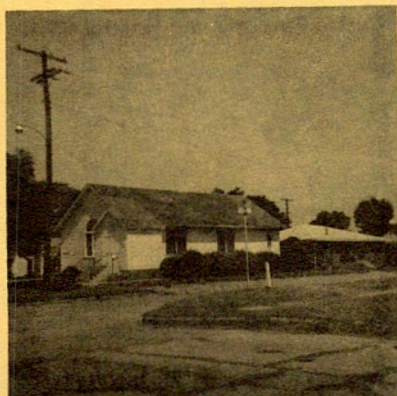
CARWILE



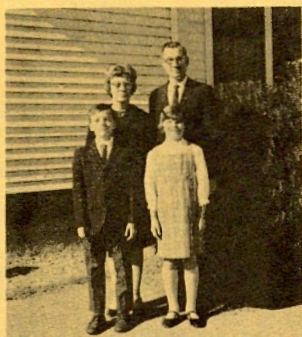
The Carwile Church, located three miles west and about six miles north of Ringwood, Oklahoma, has the distinction of being the only Church represented at both the first and last sessions of the Oklahoma Conference.

The Church at Carwile resulted from the work of Mrs. Lydia H. Smith in about 1902-1903. In 1904 the first session of the Oklahoma Mission Confer-

ence was held at this church with Rev. Eber Teter, Missionary Secretary, presiding. Carwile flourished during the early years of the new Conference. In 1905, 83 members were reported, but in 1910 the number had dropped to 31. In the two decades before and after the Depression this Church owed its continued existence to the sacrificial efforts of the pastors and people. Carwile was affected by the problems which faced all rural churches; and except for a few brief periods of growth, it was a bit of struggle to keep going. In 1960-1961 the church was enlarged and remodeled, bringing



ALVA WESLEYAN CHURCH
Alva, Oklahoma



REV. RICHARD J. O'CONNOR
and family

Work by Wesleyan Methodists in this vicinity began about the turn of the century. A class was reported in 1902 at Star, near Alva; and several rural churches near there were organized in the next decade. Among them were Bethel and Carmel Chapel. In 1924-1925 these classes were disbanded and the church buildings were torn down. The lumber was hauled to town and used to build a new church at 302 Church Street in Alva. The class at the new church was organized on June 5, 1925, by Rev. Oliver G. Wilson, Conference President, with 22 members, including most of the former members of the two disbanded churches. The new church building was dedicated on June 7 of that year by Rev. W. F. McConn. This building served until 1948-1949 when an extension was added to the north end. This is the structure presently in use.

The parsonage of the Bethel charge was moved to Alva and used for the same purpose. In 1958-1959 it was sold and moved away and a beautiful new brick dwelling was put up to house the pastor.

The following ministers have served as pastors of the Alva Church: A. F. Messer, 1925-27; Oliver G. Wilson, 1927-29; J. F. Insley, 1929-34; K. R. Meade, 1934-37; I. L. Conley, 1937-40; Charles Wilson, 1940-43; Floyd Kaiser, 1943-46; Dollie Gum, August- November, 1946; L. J. Cherryholmes, 1946-50; S. M. Yonally, 1950-54; Dudley O. Dorr, 1954-57; R. J. O'Connor, 1957-62; Roger C. Rider, 1962-65; Joseph Fralick, 1965-67; and R. J. O'Connor again from 1967 to now.

In July of 1968 following the Merging General Conference the former Pilgrim Holiness Church in Alva was merged with the Alva Wesleyan Methodist Church. They were warmly welcomed by the former Wesleyan Methodists and are greatly appreciated. The congregation and pastor are looking forward to a more effective witness in this city of northwest Oklahoma, and have voted to build a plant that would better serve the requirements of our day. Plans call for the new church to be built on the present site with construction expected to begin soon.

Many operating procedures of the Conference have been definitely changed by the Merger; and though it was impracticable to put all of these into effect immediately, for the interim year 1968-1969 it was considered advisable for the new procedures to be implemented as soon as possible and where this was not practicable to continue to operate as heretofore. The determination of new boundaries will be the main concern in merging of the Central District and the Texas District of the former Pilgrim Church and the Oklahoma Conference of the former Wesleyan Methodist Church. District Superintendents Colaw, Powell and Sawyer, along with the District Boards of Administration are working out the details and the date of the merging Conference has been tentatively set for June 17 - 19, 1969.

One more comment should be made before this is finished. In the following pages the churches which reported to the 1968 Conference are described. However, there are several other churches which no longer exist that should at least be mentioned. These were all rural churches whose membership either moved away or was merged with larger nearby classes. Bethel (1906-1925), southwest of Alva and Carmel Chapel (1915-1925), west of Alva, were leading churches in the early years of the Conference, but were disbanded to form the Alva Church. Evergreen, (1899-1920), near Kremlin, Oklahoma, Springdale (1903-1947), not far from Jefferson, Oklahoma, and Wesleyan Chapel (1914-1964), were at one time or another the leading churches of the Conference. But more important than that, from these churches have come ministers and laymen who have been a powerful influence for righteousness in the community and effective leaders in the Conference and Denomination. The families of many of these people, even to the fourth generation, are active and effective workers in God's Kingdom today in our own conference and elsewhere.

In looking back on the vision and exploits of our Conference fathers (and mothers), we can consider the accomplishments and possibilities of our own time. Now let us recognize and develop the resources and opportunities which merger with our Pilgrim brethren brings us. May we be faithful until 'He comes, to the work which God has entrusted to the Oklahoma Conference of The Wesleyan Church.



Rev. Joe C. Sawyer
Conference President

1960 -

Rev. Eber Teter was President from 1904 until 1909. During this time classes at Mountain Park, Spring Valley, Lynn, Greenwood, Ruby, North Eagle, North Enid, Sunny Slope, Bethel, Oak Grove, Etna, Highland (Oklahoma), Chattanooga and Winchester were Organized. Rev. E. S. Higgins and Rev. Iva E. Crofford were mainly responsible for these new churches. The Conference mourned the death of Rev. E.S. Higgins in 1911.

In 1909 Rev. A. B. Bissey was elected President. Brother Bissey had come into the Conference from another denomination and served the Conference long and well in various capacities. He was President from 1909 to 1912, 1913-1915 and from 1919 to 1923. Most of this time he was pastor of a church as well, besides furnishing most of his family's support. Other Conference Presidents during this period were Mrs. Iva E. Crofford, March to September, 1912, and from 1915 to 1919. Mrs. Crofford was an excellent preacher and organized several of the churches in the Alva area. Rev. E. V. Potter was President in 1912-1913. This was a rather difficult time for the new conference although new classes were reported from Carmel Chapel, Mt. Olive, Wesleyan Chapel, Mt. Hope, Flagg, High Prairie, Pleasant Ridge, Ellis, Enid and Pleasant Valley. Perhaps the most significant action as a Conference during these years was the change in direction away from a predominantly rural Conference. A class was organized in Enid, and since that time the emphasis has been toward pioneer work in urban areas.

At the Annual Conference at Etna in 1910, a Conference Women's Home and Foreign Missionary Society was organized with Mrs. Iva Crofford, President, and 43 members.

Rev. Oliver G. Wilson was Conference President from 1923 until 1929 except for a period in 1926 when Rev. W. J. Kuntz served for a short time. From 1929 to 1940 Rev. Paul H. Hodge was President. During this time new classes were reported from Freedom, Hennessey, Oak Dale (later New Hope), Farry, Blackwell and Ponca City. New organizations at Alva and Cedar Grove were formed from the discontinuance and merging of other churches and new church buildings were put up in these places.

The Home Mission Department had been trying to get some churches started in the state of Texas, and two churches in Houston had been organized. In 1935 the churches in Texas were officially transferred from the Texas Conference to the Oklahoma Conference and Texas became a part of the Oklahoma Conference. These churches were finally disbanded and the buildings sold in 1940-41.

Rev. Roy S. Nicholson, Home Missionary Secretary, was president in 1940-41. Rev. I. L. Conley was elected President in 1941 and served three years. In 1944 Rev. G.C. Cockrell became President and served until 1950. Enid was first in the conference with a splendid brick building erected in 1940. A new class was reported at Wichita Falls, Texas, where Rev. Glen McMurphy tried valiantly to re-establish Wesleyan Methodism in Texas. But the difficulties were too great, and it was disbanded in 1944. Bro. McMurphy then opened up a new work in Oklahoma City; a class in Tulsa was organized; and another state was added to the Oklahoma Conference when Rogers, Arkansas, was reported in 1950.

The Conference of 1945 was held on the Free Methodist Campground at Perkins, Oklahoma, and the Campmeeting was a joint effort by both denominations. In 1946 a house was purchased at Enid for use as a home by the Conference President. When not used by him, it has been rented and the income used for Conference work. Church buildings were purchased at Oklahoma City and Tulsa, and a new church was built at Rogers. Rev. W. C. Brannon was President of the Conference in 1950-51.

Rev. Dudley O. Dorr was Conference President from 1951 to 1960. This was a time of prosperity, and the Conference began a program of expansion into the metropolitan centers as well as building additional facilities where needed. New churches were built at Blackwell, Highland, Ponca City, Enid Westside, Oklahoma City and Houston;

HISTORY OF THE OKLAHOMA CONFERENCE
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WESLEYAN METHODIST CHURCH

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Because of the merging of the Wesleyan Methodist and the Pilgrim Holiness churches into the new Wesleyan Church on June 26, 1968, the sixty-fifth annual session of the Oklahoma Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church at Enid, Oklahoma, on July 15-19, 1968, was also the last. The Conference Board of Managers felt that it would be appropriate to include a short history of the Conference in the 1968 Conference Minutes, and Mr. Raymond A. Tolle was selected to prepare it. We have tried to be as accurate as possible, but if errors are detected, it would be greatly appreciated if such errors are called to our attention for future history.

In the limited space available, it would be impossible to give the attention deserved to each person who has contributed over the last 70 years to the development of the Oklahoma Conference. For each person mentioned here for some particular reason, there are many more who labored equally hard and faithfully at the tasks assigned them, particularly in local church work. For this reason, few laymen are named because others equally deserving would of necessity have to be omitted. The same problem arises with regard to ministers. A great number of dedicated men and women have worked and sacrificed for a time in the Conference as pastors of classes that no longer exist or as evangelists and supply pastors. All honor to these unrecognized servants of God.

The first work of which there is any record in what is now the Oklahoma Conference is mentioned by Rev. I. F. McLeister in his "History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church". Rev. H. S. Abbott staked a claim near Purcell, Indian Territory, and began meetings in a school house near there which resulted in the organization of a class in 1891. In 1889 Rev. E. S. Higgins, who probably did more than any other one man to bring about the Oklahoma Conference, organized a class near Kremlin, Oklahoma Territory. Oklahoma at that time was a mission project under the Kansas Conference. The new class was named Evergreen and was received by the Kansas Conference in 1899 with 24 members. In the next few years organized church societies were reported at Star, near Alva, and at Mound Ridge, near Evergreen Church, at Carmen and at Carwile near Ringwood.

The Oklahoma Conference as such had its beginning in 1904 when Rev. Eber Teter, Connectional Missionary Secretary, organized the Conference September 8, 1904, at Carwile Church. There were four churches, Evergreen, Carmen, Carwile and Springdale with 113 members. Since Brother Teter was living far away, Rev. E. S. Higgins was elected vice-president and treasurer, and Mrs. Lydia H. Smith was the Conference secretary. E. S. Higgins was also elected Treasurer of the Missionary Board and was appointed Superintendent of the new Conference.

The first years were times of both encouragement and frustration. Encouragement, because the gospel message presented by our Church was well received in most places, and frustration because many of the newly organized classes did not long endure. There were 18 classes organized between 1903 and 1909, yet there were only nine in operation in the latter year. This was understandable because most of these new Church Societies were in school houses with no permanent base and economic conditions were hard in this country which had been opened to settlement for little over a decade. There was very little cash and opportunities were few to obtain employment. So these early pastors had to support themselves while preaching at from one to three appointments each Sunday. We owe a great debt to these early pioneers of the faith in our own area.

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Wesleyan Church ARCHIVES

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Work under the Wesleyan Methodist Church in the city of Enid itself was started in June, 1915, by J. V. and Iva Crofford with C. L. Moore appointed pastor. In 1916 Rev. Lila Savage was pastor and 15 members were reported. The thirteenth Annual Conference was held with the Enid Class in 1916. The meeting place was at Fourth and Randolph. In 1918 a church was built at Ninth and E. Cherokee Streets. In September of that year a camp meeting was in progress in a tent on the church grounds. Rev. Eber Teter, Missionary Secretary, and the congregation walked from the tent to the new church; and it was dedicated on September 15 by Rev. Teter.

In 1923 the Enid Class was the largest church in the Conference, with a membership of 57 and has maintained that position since. The 100 mark was passed in 1929 when 101 members were reported. The continued growth of the congregation made a larger church imperative. Land in the 900 block of East Maine Street was purchased, and a splendid brick church was built under the able leadership of Rev. H. K. Sheets. In November of 1940 the structure was dedicated by Rev. Roy S. Nicholson, Home Missionary Secretary, who was also Conference President at that time. The church, along with an excellent parsonage on the grounds, was the nicest in the Conference.

Again more room was needed and in 1955 construction began on an Educational Annex and Fellowship Hall. This was completed and dedicated in February of 1956. A complete air-conditioning system has recently been installed.

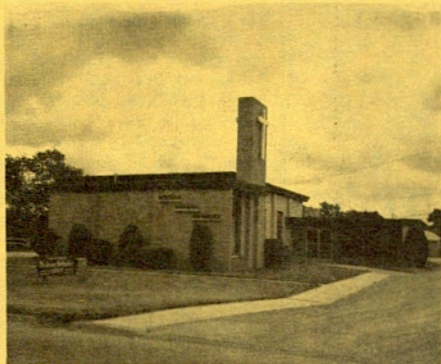
The second church in Enid, Enid Westside, was sponsored to a large degree by Enid First Church, which contributed prayers, finance, and members to the new venture. Enid First has been host to the Annual Conference for many years; and the hospitality and facilities have been greatly appreciated by the other churches of the Conference.

Other pastors of this church have been A. B. Bissey, 1916-17; M. S. Litell, 1917-19; Iva and J. V. Crofford, 1919-21; O. G. Wilson, 1921-27; Paul H. and Olive Hodge, 1927-36; F. L. Berkebile, 1936-38; H. K. Sheets, 1938-45; W. C. and Erma Brannon, 1945-59 and 1964-68; H. L. Speas, 1959-64; Ira G. Gross is the present pastor.

—Rev. W. C. Brannon, having served the Enid First church for 18 years, served more years in one church than any other pastor in the history of the Oklahoma Conference.



REV. AND MRS. W.C. BRANNON



The Enid Westside Church, located at 501 S. Cleveland, is the result of the concern and vision of the pastor and members of Enid First church for a second Wesleyan Methodist church in this growing city. A location on the west side of town was purchased, and in January of 1953 ground was broken and construction was begun. The church was completed by summer and was dedicated on September 6 by Dr. J. R. Swauger, General Secretary of Home Missions, assisted by Conference President Dorr.

Rev. Robert Hughes, who had been Music and Youth Director at Enid First, was appointed the pastor of the new work and remained for 15 years, until 1968. The

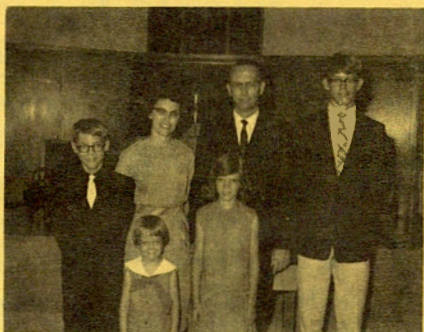
first year the Sunday School averaged 90. The new church grew rapidly, and attendance reached an average of 161 for the year 1963, the highest average in the Conference for that year.

In 1955 an annex was added to the rear of the church to be used as living quarters for the pastor and for additional Sunday School class rooms. Soon the growth of the Sunday School necessitated the purchase of a lot on the north side of the church where an attractive new parsonage was completed in 1960.

Recent improvements in the church were the installation of air conditioning, new draperies and carpet, and a baptistry.

The Westside Church was organized on July 19, 1955, with eight full members. It has enjoyed a steady increase through the years and is now the second largest church in the conference with 72 full members being reported in 1968.

When Bob Hughes accepted the call to another pioneer work, the church called Robert Kraus, who moved to Enid following Conference in 1968.



THE ROBERT HUGHES FAMILY



The Etna Church, now located 13 miles west and 4 miles north of Geary, Oklahoma, was organized in 1907 and is next to the oldest existing Church Society in the Conference. Mrs. Lydia H. Smith, who was teaching in the community, organized the class with 17 members. At first services were held in Hopewell school house where Mrs. Smith taught. Soon the need for a church building was recognized, and a site was chosen on the El Dorado Walters farm just east of the school. Labor and materials were donated by the people, and in about 1909 the building was finished. It was named Etna because a post office by that name was just one

mile away. The seventh annual session of the Oklahoma Conference was held in the new church in September of 1910. Rev. Eber Teter, Missionary Secretary, dedicated the church.

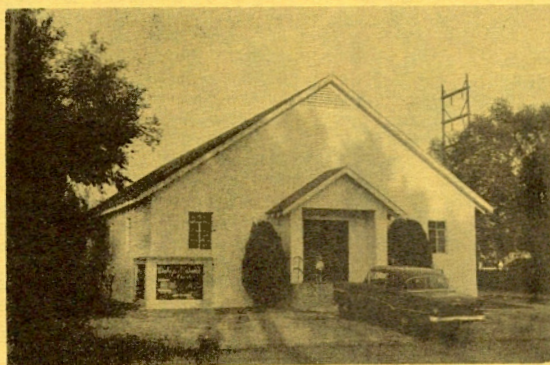
Membership grew rapidly in those early years, and for a while Etna reported the largest membership in the Conference. In 1913 a site northeast of the church was donated by Andy T. Anderson and a parsonage built in 1914. Two local preachers at Etna, A. T. Anderson and C. L. Moore, with pastors Tynan and Bowman, organized classes in nearby school houses at Pleasant Ridge and High Prairie, which lasted several years.

The decade of 1940-1950 was a particularly difficult time for the church. In May of 1949 a tornado completely demolished the church and damaged the parsonage; however, the church people and community rallied and built a new church just north of the parsonage. Rev. J. R. Swauger, Home Missionary Secretary, assisted by Conference President Dorr, dedicated it in February of 1953. About the same time a new parsonage was built, using some of the materials from the old Springdale Church. Much of the labor was done by Pastor Royalty.

Pastors were: C.W. Mendenhall, 1907; C.C. Tynan, 1908-10; V.C. Bowman, 1911-12; A.T. Anderson, 1913-16; J. M. Batman, 1917-18; C.R. Belknap, 1919-20; C.C. Tynan, 1921; Thomas Ashton, 1922; Paul H. Freeze, 1924; Glenn I. Boardman, 1925; J.M. Batman, 1926-32; Glenn Cockrell, 1933-34; G.L. Gurtler, 1935-36; J.M. Batman, 1937-38; Effie Ross, 1939-42; R.D. Smith, 1946-47; Paul Batman, 1948-49; A.D. and Opal Royalty, 1951-57; James LaRue, 1957-58; Wayne McCartney, 1959-62; Wm. Becker, D. Kellin, Robert Hollen, 1962-1964; John E. McGraw, 1965 to the present.



THE JOHN MCGRAW FAMILY



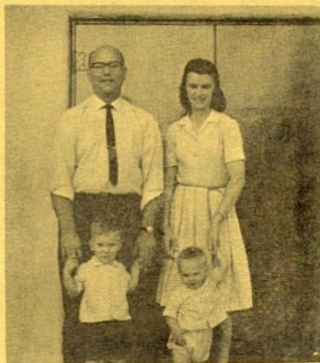
GUYMON CHURCH

Our church in this pan-handle city was brought about by the concern of Mr. and Mrs. Everett Hager for a Wesleyan Methodist Church in their area. Conference leaders also were interested and began looking for property. Soon another couple joined ranks, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Wilson, who were Pilgrim Holiness. A Church of Christ building at 101 S. Lelia was offered for sale, and it was purchased for a reasonable price. This has proved a very lovely sanctuary with adequate educational facilities.

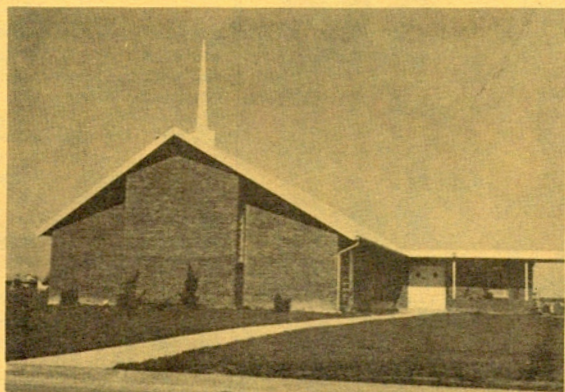
In 1962 Rev. J. Richard Ernst was assigned to Guymon as pastor. The conference house trailer was used for the parsonage. The new venture prospered from the start, and in 1965 the Guymon class was organized with 19 full members. In 1966 a commodious, partially furnished parsonage was purchased at 513 N. James.

Though a number of church families have moved away from time to time because of employment, in spite of these losses the Guymon people have persisted and prospects are encouraging.

Pastors of the Guymon Church have been J. Richard Ernst, 1962-1966; E. W. Stanislaus, 1966 - 1967; Ralph Vreugdenhil, who came to Guymon in 1967 and is the present pastor.



THE RALPH VREUGDENHIL FAMILY



Houston, Texas, a city of one million people, surely needed a Wesleyan Methodist Church. One of two Wesleyan couples who already had residence there decided to bank their tithe in anticipation of a new work.

In the spring of 1958 the Conference President, D. O. Dorr, and Rev. Joe C. Sawyer, pastor at San Antonio, made a trip to Houston to check on possible property and to visit the two interested families, the Marvin Hinds and the Norris Morrisons. By conference time in August it was decided that the Sawyers would move to Houston to locate property and begin the

new work. A comfortable parsonage was rented by the cooperating couples; and at the first meeting in the parsonage on a Wednesday night the group decided to begin with a token salary of \$40.00 per week for the pastor. With a challenge of faith and venture the idea of tithing the church income for Missions was presented and found a ready response in the hearts of the group. They voted unanimously to accept the challenge and put Missions in proper focus.

A choice property at 8403 Crestmont was purchased in the fall of 1958, and construction began in the spring of 1959. That fall the building was completed. On October 9, 1960, the church was dedicated by General Superintendent H. K. Sheets, assisted by Conference President Joe C. Sawyer.

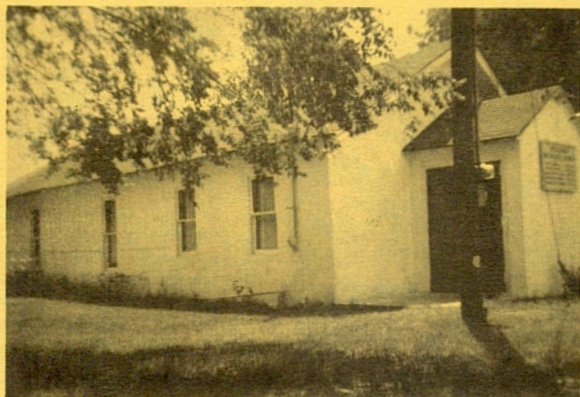
While construction was underway, services were begun in a nearby school. On Easter Sunday there were 50 in attendance. By the end of 1961 the Sunday School average was 81, and by 1963 it had reached 103.

In 1962 a very nice house near the church was purchased for a parsonage. By 1964 more facilities were needed, and an annex for assembly and fellowship was erected. Further improvements were made and new pews were purchased in 1967.

Joe C. Sawyer was pastor from 1958 to 1961, when he moved to Oklahoma having been elected Conference President. He was succeeded by Larry Hughes, 1961-64; E.W. Stanislaus, 1964-66; Ronald G. Rhoades, 1966-68. Rev. D. O. Dorr returned to the conference in 1968 and is the present pastor.



REV. AND MRS. RONALD RHOADES



In the early years of the Conference the area around Ringwood, Oklahoma, was the scene of much activity. A number of classes were organized, but with the exception of Carwile they did not long survive. The organization known today as New Hope Church began when Rev. Glenn Boardman formed a class in May of 1932 at Oak Dale school house, with 14 members. There was considerable opposition in the community to using the school house for church services, and plans to build a church mater-

ialized. An abandoned filling station was purchased and wrecked, the material being used to build a new church three miles south and one mile west of Ringwood. The name was changed by the Annual Conference in 1933 from Oak Dale to New Hope. In 1949-50 a parsonage was built just east of the church and was dedicated May 7, 1950.

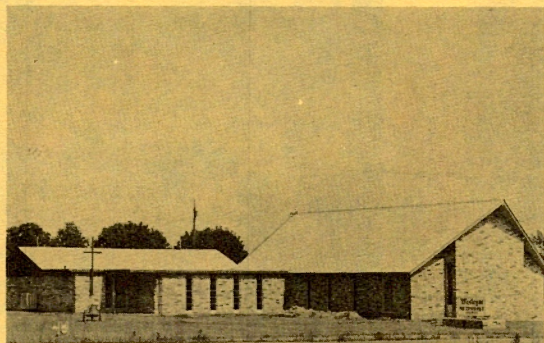
In recent years serious consideration has been given to relocation of the church in the town of Ringwood. Property north of the town limits was given for a building site in 1968, and funds are being raised in anticipation of this accomplishment for future preservation of the work. At the close of conference year 1967-68 the Carwile class was transferred to New Hope. The church has never shown spectacular growth but through the years has "let its light shine" and many souls will be in Heaven because of it.

Pastors of New Hope Church have been: Glenn I. Boardman, to 1933; J. M. Batman, 1933-35; Marion F. Bess, 1935-37; Effie Ross, 1937-39; John E. McGraw, 1939-43; J. M. Batman, 1943-45; Robert Hollen, 1945-48; Clarence B. Mills, 1948-49; Grady P. King, 1949-51; Carol Blomberg, 1951-55; John C. Friske and Abe C. Schmidt, 1955-56; Donald DeHaven, 1956-59; Ralph Speas, 1959; A. D. and Opal Royalty, 1959-67; Glen McMurphy, 1967-68.

Robert Bonner came to the church in 1968 and is the present pastor.



REV. AND MRS. GLEN MCMURPHY



was completed, and dedication was on May 29. It was given the name, Home Mission Church. A Wesleyan Methodist class was organized January 11, 1950, by Conference President G. C. Cockrell. This was the first Wesleyan Methodist Church to be organized and erected in Arkansas.

In 1962 relocation within the city was considered advisable. Through the efficient leadership of Pastor Joe Phillippe lots on North Sixth Street were purchased, the old building sold, and new construction begun in 1963. The first service in the new building was held on September 1, 1963. Dedication of the beautiful parsonage-chapel unit was on November 3 or that year.

The church continued to grow, showing need for increased facilities. Groundbreaking for a new study, nursery, and sanctuary was held July 3, 1966. Soon the study and nursery were in use; and on June 18, 1967, the first service was held in the new sanctuary. Dedication by Dr. H. K. Sheets, assisted by Conference President Sawyer, was on November 19 of 1967. Because of labor donated by the congregation, material given by friends and business men, and especially the careful planning and hours of toil of Pastor Phillippe, the cost of this edifice is amazingly low. The building is beautiful and functional and witnesses to God's blessings.

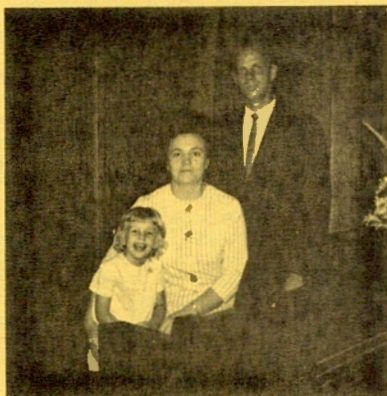
Pastors are R.J. Eling to 1950; C.J. Mowrer, 1950-52; E.A. Anderson, 1952-61; Joseph G. Phillippe, 1961 to present.



THE JOE PHILLIPPE FAMILY

A pioneer meeting in Rogers, Arkansas, was carried on by song evangelists Horace and Esther Conley in 1947. Assisting them were Rev. Clara Spurgeon, who had moved to Rogers from pioneer work in Harrison, Arkansas, and Ethel and Hazel Brenton of Rogers. Worship services were held in Mission Hall at 214 N. First Street in Rogers. In June of 1948 R. J. Eling became pastor of the church.

In October of 1948 work began on a new church located on an acre of land north of Rogers, donated by Mr. Conley. In 1949 the church



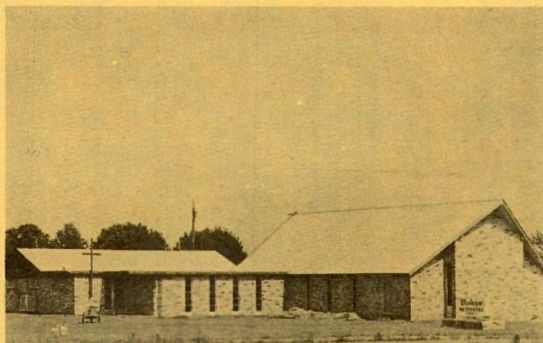
Having felt called of God to pioneer in Texas, Joe C. Sawyer moved to San Antonio from Fairmount, Indiana, in the fall of 1952. Contact with Conference President Dorr revealed two interested families in the city. After several weeks of carefully evaluating available properties, the former Lutheran property on West Hildebrand Avenue was selected. On the opening Sunday in late October, 1952, a fine group of 33 people attended the services. By the third year the Sunday School averaged 94. Missionary interest was soon apparent. One Sunday a month was Missionary Sunday in Sunday School with a different mission field featured each month and an offering taken. On March 5, 1954, the church was organized with nine members.

In the fall of 1954 the General Youth Department launched an evangelistic crusade in San Antonio. Workers were Dr. H. K. Sheets as evangelist, song evangelist Orval C. Butcher, and the Raleigh Harris Evangelistic Party. The Crusade did much to establish the Wesleyan Methodist Church in the city.

In the fall of 1956 an educational addition to the sanctuary provided much needed Sunday School rooms, making the total investment about \$28,000. In the sixth year of the church all indebtedness was cleared by a gift of \$12,000 from one of God's choice saints, Mrs. J. M. Bassett, a member of the church. What a glorious service of praise ensued! Rev. J. Paul Hill, who was holding a revival there at the time, presided as the mortgage was burned, with Sunday School Superintendent Theron Hines and Pastor Joe Sawyer participating.

The church continued to grow under the leadership of Rev. and Mrs. Don H. Polston, who were called in the fall of 1958. Realizing the need for relocation, the church purchased a site on West Avenue in 1960 in the midst of a growing community. The next year a beautiful Sunday School-Chapel unit was built. In 1962 they acquired a parsonage at 323 Mink Drive. God blessed and gave years of fruitful ministry.

In 1963 the church called Rev. and Mrs. Walter Rowell. Under their capable direction the congregation has continued its outreach. In 1967 a beautiful sanctuary was constructed, with dedication by Dr. C. Wesley Lovin, General Secretary of Extension, in January of 1968.



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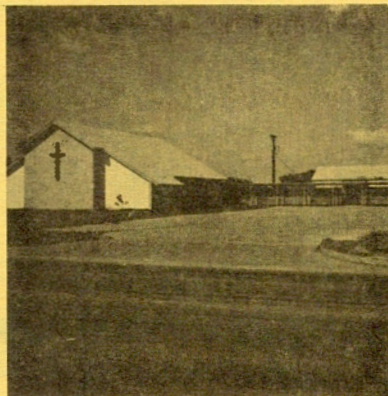
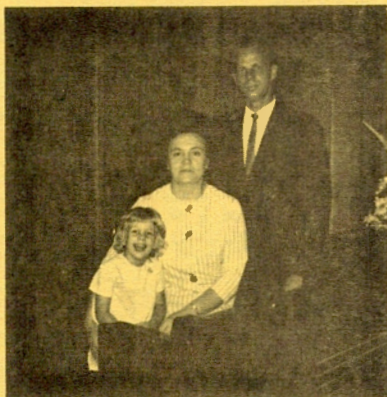
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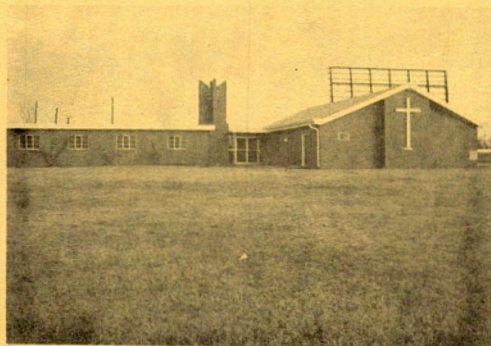
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The first effort to begin a church in Tulsa was in May of 1925 when Conference President Oliver G. Wilson sent Rev. Paul Freeze to this city for a pioneer meeting. Nothing lasting seems to have come from this. In January of 1947 the Conference President, G.C. Cockrell, and the Missionary Board made a visit to Tulsa in the interests of pioneer evangelism. Prospects were favorable and a revival meeting began April 29. A number of people were interested in a Wesleyan Methodist organization, and search for a meeting place began.

On January 27, 1948, a church building on North Frankfort was purchased from the Baldwin Methodist Church, and Rev. M. F. Bess was assigned to the new field. A class of 12 members was organized on July 27, 1949. A parsonage was built in 1956. Pastors were Marion F. Bess, to 1952; Walter Rowell, 1952-56; Allison Weatherby, 1956-57; C. Russell Bremer, 1957-60.

The next few years were somewhat difficult because of the location of the church. In 1959 the property was sold to the Antioch Baptist Church, and in 1961 a new church property was purchased at 701 South Mingo Rd. The building was completed in 1962, and the first service was held on August 12 of that year. Dedication service was November 3 with Dr. H. K. Sheets, General Superintendent, as speaker, assisted by Pastor R.J. O'Connor. In August of 1963 a parsonage at 1212 South Mingo was secured.

In the new location R. J. O'Connor was the first pastor. He served until 1964, when illness in the family made it necessary for him to resign. Conference President Joe Sawyer supplied for a year until Paul Bauer was called in 1965. Paul Bauer is the present pastor.

The Tulsa church has shown a steady growth in attendance and is well received in the community. It is located in a prosperous, fastgrowing addition on the east side of the city, and prospects are developing for a strong church there.



REV. AND MRS. PAUL BAUER

WHITTENBURG



WHITTENBURG CHURCH



REV. AND MRS. JOE GIBBENS

Whittenburg is a rural church located about nine miles northwest of Pea Ridge, Arkansas, just across the Missouri line. It is in a heavily wooded hilly area where the principle occupation is raising chickens for broilers.

Rev. Bob Robinson was assigned to pioneer work at Whittenburg by the 1954 Annual Conference. The congregation there was interested in becoming a Wesleyan Methodist Church, and in the spring of 1956 the Conference purchased the property on which the Whittenburg church is located from Rev. E. A. Anderson. A class of eight members was organized by Conference President D. O. Dorr on June 19, 1956, and Rev. Bob Robison was appointed pastor.

In 1961 an old house was bought for a parsonage and remodeling began. This took some time, as it was done only as materials and labor were available. A carload of men from Alva came over and worked for a few days, as did some individuals from other churches. The parsonage is now a comfortable pastor's home.

Whittenburg is located in a community where there are strong adherents of other religious beliefs; therefore the possible constituency is small and the church has remained small in number. However this church includes saints who are examples of steadfastness and faithfulness to the Church.

Brother Robison was pastor until 1958. Raymond and John Oyler supplied for the next two years. James LaRue was called in 1960 and served until 1962.

Following Rev. LaRue were LeRoy Johnson, 1962-65; E. J. Carry, 1965-1966; In 1966 Joe Gibbens, a ministerial student at John Brown University, Siloam Springs, Arkansas, was appointed supply pastor. He is now living at Whittenburg, being assigned as pastor in 1968.

We have here an account of events and progress as recorded in annual business sessions. True history records both failures and successes. Statistics often do not reveal the many answers to prayer, the scores of conversions, the maturing of the saints, faithful stewardship, calling of ministers and Christian workers, and the dynamic message of holiness -- all producing the growth of the Church.

The accounts of God's moving, times of revival, individual contributions by ministers and laymen would be thrilling reading; however, due to limited space and shortage of complete information it is impossible to give recognition to the many who have contributed to this work since its beginning.

We trust the past will in some way be a bridge to inspire you to cross over into greater devotion and service to our Lord as your contribution to future history of the new church.

Our special thanks to Mr. Raymond A. Tolle, who has done a splendid work in compiling this history.

--- Joe C. Sawyer
Conference President

Wesleyan Church
ARCHIVES