

Methodist Beginnings in Kentucky, 1783-1845

KENNETH CAIN KINGHORN

Many of the early English Colonists in North America believed that the Pacific Ocean washed up against the western side of the Allegheny Mountains. The first ventures of explorers over the mountains into Kentucky were often for the purpose of finding a way to the Pacific Ocean. In 1669 Robert La Salle and others began to explore Kentucky, in search of a passage to the "western waters."

For the next half-century after La Salle's explorations along the Ohio River, only a few rare expeditions ventured into the area. But eventually other explorers began voyages down the Ohio River to peek into the Western territory. The author of an article in the *Methodist Magazine* for 1820 (vol. 3) tells that in 1754,

....One James M'Bride....passing down the Ohio, with some others, in canoes, landed at the mouth of the Kentucky river, and marked the initials of his name and date upon a tree, which was to be seen until a very recent date, and may yet, for aught I know, be visible.¹

KENTUCKY SETTLEMENT BEGINS

Then, in 1750, explorers began probing into Kentucky through the Cumberland Gap, a natural land passage. In 1769 Daniel Boone began lead-

Kenneth Cain Kinghorn is a Professor of Church History and the Vice President-at-large at Asbury Theological Seminary.

ing settlers into that territory, and he earned the reputation of being Kentucky's pioneer settler, although he was not the first to come by land into Kentucky. Boone brought back to the east tales of great hardwood forests, blue grass prairies, fertile meadows and vast herds of buffalo and deer.² Soon hunters were returning reports of the wonders of "beautiful Kentuckie."³ The first permanent English settlement was established in 1774 at Harrodsburg by James Harrod.⁴ A year later, in 1775, Boonesborough was founded on the Kentucky River not far from Lexington.

The Earl of Dunmore, British governor of Virginia, began issuing Kentucky land grants to war veterans. At the same time, independent land speculators acquired land from the Indians.⁵ In 1775, the Transylvania Company, under the direction of Richard Henderson of North Carolina, purchased a large amount of Kentucky territory from the Cherokee Indians. Those holding grants of "crown land," independent pioneers, pelt hunters and private land speculators, conflicted with each other and with Indians who had long occupied the territory.

In the eighteenth century Kentucky was known as the "dark and bloody ground," in reference to the incessant wars between the Iroquois and the Cherokees. And, as stated, in the early days of the territory, the conflicts between the Indians and the white settlers was slow to cease. A. H. Redford reported in his *The History of Methodism in Kentucky*,

The settlement of Kentucky by the Anglo-American pioneer was no easy task. The fierce and merciless savage stubbornly disputed the right [*an interesting word!*] to the soil. The attempt to locate upon these rich and fertile lands was a proclamation of war.... On his captive the Indian inflicted the most relentless torture.⁶

Methodist historian Able Stevens told of the death of a Methodist local preacher named Tucker in 1784:

While descending the Ohio in a boat with a number of his kindred, men, women, and children, [the boat] was fired upon by Indians; a battle ensued; the preacher was mortally wounded; but, falling upon his knees, prayed and fought till, by his self-possession and courage, the boat was rescued. He then immediately expired, "shouting the praise of the Lord."⁷

In 1779 less than two hundred white men lived in Kentucky, but within a few years thousands of new settlers arrived in the territory. And among these settlers were Methodist lay people. When Methodism came into Kentucky, almost no cabins existed in the vast untamed wilderness outside of walled forts, called "stations." Typical of Methodism in other parts of North America, Kentucky Methodism began with lay persons who relocated and carried their religion with them.

Two of the early Methodist settlers in Kentucky were John Durham and Francis Clark. Clark was a Methodist local preacher, who moved from Virginia to a spot near Perryville, Kentucky, in the early 1780s. The first Methodist society in Kentucky

was organized in the home of layman John Durham in 1783, with Francis Clark as preacher and John Durham as class leader.⁸ Dr. Henry Clay Morrison, founder of Asbury Theological Seminary, was a great, great grandson of John Durham.

LIFE IN KENTUCKY

In the eighteenth century, the only roads in Kentucky were dirt trails. It was easier to ship goods down the Ohio River to New Orleans than to take them across the mountains. The people made or grew almost everything they used. The spinning wheel, loom, knitting needle, cobbler's bench, tannery, cabinet shop and blacksmith's shop were crucial to the times. Louisville and Cincinnati were, at the time, little more than villages.

Francis Clark's preaching helped bring about the conversion of Mrs. James Harrod, wife of the founder of Harrodsburg. Other lay persons moved into Kentucky and opened their homes to Methodist preaching and class meetings. Methodist work prospered in the territory.

Easterners claimed that life in the Kentucky wilderness was of a different character from that in the cities along the eastern seacoast. A "well bred South Carolinian," who completed a three-thousand-mile tour of the frontier, noted that in Kentucky even aristocrats "had lost a portion of Virginia caste and assumed something of Kentucky esteem, an absence of reticence and a presence of presumptuousness."⁹ The Methodist preachers sought to communicate the gospel to the Kentucky frontier in the language and after the manners of the people. Bishop Matthew Simpson (1811-1884), himself born on the frontier, later spoke in favor of "Americanizing" Methodism:

It is somewhat singular that nearly all the troubles and secessions in Methodism have arisen from trying to introduce English ideas and plans into our American Church....Every agitation has begun by extolling British usages and depreciating American.¹⁰

Nowhere did *American* Methodism speak to the people more than in Kentucky.

ASBURY ESTABLISHES THE KENTUCKY CIRCUIT

In 1786 Methodism held its conference in Baltimore. At this conference Bishop Francis Asbury officially assigned the church's first "missionaries" to the "Kentucky Circuit." These circuit riders were James Haw and Benjamin Ogden.¹¹ Concerning James Haw, Methodist historian Abel Stevens reports:

Numerous were the sufferings and hardships that he underwent in planting the standard of the cross in that wild and uncultivated region, surrounded with savages, and traveling from fort to fort, and every day exposing his life; but notwithstanding every difficulty and embarrassment, the good work progressed.¹²

Haw later wrote to Bishop Thomas Coke regarding the difficult and untamed Kentucky territory to which he had been assigned: "No man must be appointed to this country who is afraid to die." Yet, Methodism grew. In another letter, Haw wrote to Bishop Asbury:

Good news from Zion: the work of God is going on rapidly in the new world; a glorious victory the Son of God has gained, and he is still going on conquering and to conquer....Hell trembles and heaven rejoices daily over sinners that repent. At a quarterly meeting held in Bourbon county, Kentucky, July 19 and 20, 1788, the Lord poured out his Spirit in a wonderful manner, first on the Christians, and sanctified several of them powerfully and gloriously, and, as I charitably hope, wholly....As I went from that, through the circuit, to another quarterly meeting, the Lord converted two or three more. The Saturday and Sunday following, the Lord poured out his Spirit again....Indeed, the wilderness and solitary places are glad, and the desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose....What shall I more say? Time would fail to tell you all the Lord's doings among us. It is marvelous in our eyes.¹³

Benjamin Ogden's life typified those of the early circuit riders in Kentucky. One historian wrote of him:

The name of Benjamin Ogden was the synonym of courage and of suffering. No cavalier had preceded him in the West. He had alone traversed its wilds, had swum its rivers, and encountered difficulty and danger, and had met and conquered many a foe; and then on the green-carpeted earth had laid him down to rest and sleep, with no covering save the deep blue sky.¹⁴

By the end of 1786, James Haw and Benjamin Ogden reported ninety members of Methodist societies. The growth of Methodism in Kentucky was great and rapid. In 1792, when Kentucky was admitted as a state, the conference had grown to twelve ordained preachers and 2,500 members, extending over nearly every area of the state.¹⁵ In a span of eighty years Methodism grew from a single society of only a few members to a membership of almost fifty thousand, with more than five hundred ministers, churches or chapels in virtually every community, and schools scattered throughout the state.¹⁶

In 1787 Bishop Asbury divided the Kentucky Circuit (everything west of the Alleghenies) into two circuits—Kentucky and Cumberland. The Cumberland Circuit included a portion of southern Kentucky and middle Tennessee. Additional missionaries were assigned to the Kentucky Circuit, which included all remaining known western territories. A Methodist society was organized in Lexington in 1789, as a part of the Lexington Circuit. This society became the first station church west of the Alleghenies.¹⁷

In 1790 Bishop Asbury himself made his first visit to Kentucky, accompanied by Richard Whatcoat, Hope Hull and John Seawell. It is interesting to report that

an old powder horn with large lettering, "Francis Asbury, May 1, 1790," was discovered at Medina, Ohio, in a collection assembled by a Kentucky physician. Presumably, Asbury took it with him on this first trip into Kentucky, indicating that he carried a firearm on the journey.

Asbury's *Journal* reports that the travel into Kentucky was arduous and tiring. Making his way toward Lexington, he recorded:

I was strangely outdone for want of sleep, having been greatly deprived of it in my journey through the wilderness; which is like being at sea, in some respects, and in others worse. Our way is over mountains, steep hills, deep rivers, and muddy creeks; a thick growth of reeds for miles together; and no inhabitants but wild beasts and savage men....We ate no regular meal; our bread grew short, and I was much spent.

I saw the graves of the slain—twenty-four in one camp.¹⁸ I learn that they had set no guard, and that they were up late playing at cards. A poor woman of the company had dreamed three times that the Indians had surprised and killed them all; she urged her husband to entreat the people to set a guard, but they only abused him, and cursed him for his pains. As the poor woman was relating her last dream the Indians came upon the camp; she and her husband sprung away, one east, the other west, and escaped. She afterwards came back and witnessed the carnage. These poor sinners appeared to be ripe for destruction. I received an account of the death of another wicked wretch who was shot through the heart, although he had vaunted, with horrid oaths, that no Creek Indian could kill him. These are some of the melancholy accidents to which the country is subject for the present; as to the land, it is the richest body of fertile soil I have ever beheld.¹⁹

Asbury trekked on until he reach Fayette County (the Lexington area), and he lodged with Brother Richard Masterson, who had built the first Methodist Meeting House in Kentucky.²⁰ Until the construction of this chapel, known as "Masterson's Station," Methodist meetings were held in homes or out-of-doors. Masterson's Station was located about five miles northwest of Lexington, on a site now occupied by a federal women's prison. Asbury's visit to Kentucky was the first visit of the leader of any denomination to this western wilderness.

On May 14, 1790, at Masterson's Station, Asbury began the first Methodist conference in Kentucky territory. At the time, Methodist membership in Kentucky stood at 1,265 whites and 107 blacks.²¹ At this conference, Bishop Asbury ordained three elders²² and increased the circuits in Kentucky from two to four.²³ Francis Poythress,²⁴ whom Asbury appointed as presiding elder a year earlier, was left in charge of the growing work in Kentucky. In his *Sketches of Western Methodism*, James Finley, a contemporary, wrote about the early work of

James Haw, Benjamin Ogden and Francis Poythress:

They occupied the whole ground, and, with the assistance of the few local men who had been there before them, they carried the war into the camp of the enemy, and in a short time a powerful and extensive revival took place. Hundreds were added to the Church; and considering the situation of the country, surrounded by a wilderness, and the Indians continually making depredations on the frontiers, and the people constantly harassed and penned up in forts and stations, it may be considered among the greatest revivals that was ever known. In this revival a number of wealthy and respectable citizens were added to the Church....²⁵

Methodism came to Louisville in 1806, and the first permanent Methodist society was organized there in 1817, with Henry Bascomb as its first pastor.²⁶

Methodism's quarterly meetings and annual conferences were important times when the preachers met. It was reported that the circuit riders never met without embracing each other and never parted without weeping. Peter Cartwright (1785-1872) recorded in his *Autobiography*:

[People] would walk three or four miles to class-meetings, and home again, on Sundays; they would go thirty or forty miles to their quarterly meetings, and think it a glorious privilege to meet their presiding elder, and the rest of the preachers.²⁷

BETHEL ACADEMY

One of the subjects of discussion at the 1790 conference was the matter of providing education for the inhabitants of the Western wilderness. The conference adopted plans to construct Bethel Academy. Due to the offer of one hundred acres of land, the site for Bethel Academy was fixed in Jessamine County at a bend in the Kentucky River, about three miles from the present Wilmore. Asbury recorded in his *Journal* that the site was "a good spot for building materials."²⁸ Readily available were trees for lumber, limestone for a foundation and clay for brick.²⁹ Bethel Academy opened in 1794, two years before Kentucky achieved statehood. This was Methodism's second school and its first school west of the Alleghenies. Bethel Academy's first principal was John Metcalf, a Methodist preacher, who served until 1803. In 1799, the Rev. Valentine Cook took charge of the "seminary" studies at Bethel Academy. Cook was the most eminent graduate of Cokesbury College in Maryland. His teaching skills and his enthusiasm attracted students, and the school reached its peak enrollment under his leadership. We read that,

Valentine Cook beat a path from his home at Bethel Academy to the shelving rock on the bluff of the Kentucky river, and left the print of his knees in the ground where he daily wrestled with the Lord.³⁰

Cook left after only two years, "owing, principally, to a feeling of opposition that had been very improperly awakened in the Church against the institution, and which he found it impossible to overcome."³¹

For a short time Bethel Academy functioned as a center of Methodist activity in Kentucky, and indeed "the West." The first meeting of the Western Conference in the nineteenth century met at Bethel Academy (October 6, 1800), with Francis Asbury presiding.³² Kentucky Conference historian, J. L. Clark, contended, "With Bethel early Methodism succeeded in Kentucky; without it Methodism might have failed."³³ The school hosted at least six annual conferences and it was the early hub of instruction and church administration in Kentucky.

But Bethel Academy did not last.³⁴ Its lack of funds and its remote geography proved to be insurmountable obstacles. The entry for Asbury's *Journal* for May 4, 1800, shows that he believed that Bethel Academy could not be sustained.

I came to Bethel. Bishop Whatcoat and William M'Kendree preached: I was so dejected I could say little; but weep....Here is Bethel; Cokesbury in miniature, eighty by thirty feet, three stories, with a high roof, and finished below. Now we want a fund and an income of three hundred per year to carry it on; without which it will be useless. But it is too distant from public places; its being surrounded by the river Kentucky in part, we now find to be no benefit: thus all our excellencies are turned into defects. Perhaps brother Poythress and myself were as much overseen with this place as Dr. Coke was with the seat of Cokesbury.³⁵

After this entry, we find no more references to Bethel Academy in Asbury's *Journal*; he seems to have given up hope for the school. Bethel ceased to be a Methodist institution in 1803 when the principal left. The facility operated for two more years as a neighborhood school. Between 1805 and 1810 some of the building materials were removed to nearby Nicholasville, for use in the construction of another school, not a denominational institution.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE DIVIDES METHODISM

Until 1796 there was only one conference in Methodism—the General Conference. That year the General Conference divided Methodism into six annual conferences:

New England	Philadelphia
Baltimore	Virginia
South Carolina	Western

The Western Conference covered a vast region, now consisting geographically of some twenty annual conferences.³⁶ In 1796 the Western Conference was composed of two districts—Holston and Kentucky. The Kentucky District was geo-

graphically large: it included the Natchez Circuit, in Mississippi; the Scioto and Miami Circuits, in the "Northwestern Territory"; the Cumberland Circuit, in Middle Tennessee; and the entire state of Kentucky. William McKendree was appointed presiding elder of the Kentucky District of the Western Conference.³⁷

In 1812 the General Conference divided the Western Conference into two annual conferences—the Ohio and the Tennessee. Even though Kentucky had early been the center of Methodism in the West, the state was divided between the Ohio and Tennessee Conferences. One historian remarks:

For eight years, during the crucial, formative period in her history, Kentucky was divided between two Conferences, bearing the names of adjoining States. This division of territory was a death-blow to any community of interest or effort, and no wonder Kentucky Methodism lost its leadership in the West.³⁸

Not until 1820 did the General Conference recreate the Kentucky Conference.³⁹ A. H. Redford, in his *History of Methodism in Kentucky*, notes,

From 1812 to 1820, the Ohio and Tennessee conferences had each embraced about one-half of Kentucky, so that no community of interest was likely to be felt in an enterprise of this kind. The formation of the Kentucky conference placed the Church in a position to look after their resources, and to come up to the measure of their duty.⁴⁰

By this time Kentucky Methodism had grown to sixteen thousand, and church membership in Methodism in those days was far less than the actual number who attended the Methodist meetings.

The first session of the new Kentucky Annual Conference met in Lexington in 1821. At this session, Bishops Robert R. Roberts (elected, 1816) and Enoch George (elected, 1816) alternated as presiders. The conference consisted of four large districts with more than thirty circuits. The geography of these districts was determined largely by rivers. As in other conferences, the Kentucky Conference included a number of local preachers who helped care for the societies during the absence of the ordained circuit riders.

THE CIRCUIT RIDERS

In the 1820s there were great stretches of unbroken forests in Kentucky. The circuit riders traveled indistinct trails, often unsure of their way. The bridle paths frequently forked, and a new preacher seldom knew which road to take. Customarily, the preachers carried a hatchet, called a "marking iron," which they used to "blaze the trail" for those to follow. During the first years of his itinerancy in Kentucky, Bishop H. H. Kavanaugh more than one time got lost on the trail traveling the Little Sandy circuit in the eastern part of the state. Preachers sometimes had to sleep in the woods. One minister reported waking to find his

beard covered with ice from the frozen rain that fell during the night. Moses M. Henkle, a friend of Henry Bascom (later a bishop) recorded numerous stories of Bascom's adventures as a travelling preacher. For example:

He [Bascom] was preaching in a cabin, which was at once church and dwelling. The people were listening with seriousness and deep attention to the truths of the gospel, when, in the very midst of his sermon, his host, who sat near the door, suddenly rose from his seat, snatched the gun from two wooden brackets upon which it lay against the joist, went hastily out, fired it off, and returning, put the gun back in its place, and quietly seated himself to hear the remainder of the sermon. The whole affair had hardly consumed as much time as it requires to read this account of it, and in a very few moments all was going on as smoothly as if no interruption had occurred. After service was ended, Bascom inquired of the man the meaning of his strange conduct. "Sir," said he, "we were entirely out of meat, and I was perplexed to know what we should give you for dinner, and it was preventing me from enjoying the sermon, when the Good One sent a flock of wild turkeys this way; I happened to see them, took my gun and killed two at a shot; my mind felt easy, and I enjoyed the remainder of the sermon with perfect satisfaction."⁴¹

Salaries were small, and frequently the preachers were paid in produce or hand-made goods. The circuit riders seldom lasted more than a few years. Many died young.

ORGANIZATION AND PRACTICES OF KENTUCKY METHODISTS

The local Methodist societies were divided into classes. Each class was under the care of a class leader. The class meetings provided bonding, nurture and accountability; close fellowship developed between the members of the classes. W. E. Arnold writes in his *History of Methodism in Kentucky*,

The origination of the membership into classes and the class-meeting were distinctive features of Methodism when the Kentucky Conference began. Attendance upon the class-meetings was obligatory. William Burke had over one hundred names stricken from the roles of the Danville [Kentucky] circuit for non-attendance upon the class-meetings. The coming together of small groups for the purpose of talking over their religious experiences, of praying for and exhorting one another, and of receiving instruction in the way of godliness from their more experienced leaders, was indeed a school of religious education that has never been surpassed among any people.⁴²

The journals, diaries and accounts of the day reveal that prayer was a very significant part of the life of the Methodists, in Kentucky and throughout the entire Methodist connection. Nearly every Methodist home had family prayers,

both morning and evening. Customarily, preachers knelt when they entered the pulpit, and members of the congregation usually bowed for a silent prayer before taking their seats in the pews.

Methodist singing was noteworthy. Hymnals, at first, were scarce,⁴³ and the preacher "lined out" the words to the hymns. There were no pews in churches, no choirs, no organs or other instruments of music.⁴⁴ The Methodists were not philosophically opposed to musical instruments,⁴⁵ but they did not use them for two reasons: they could not afford them,⁴⁶ and they regarded the words as more important than the instrumental accompaniment.

The early Methodists in the Kentucky area lived and dressed simply, if not austere. The following passage appears in Peter Cartwright's *Autobiography*:

The Methodists in that early day dressed plain; attended their meetings faithfully, especially preaching, prayer and class meetings; they wore no jewelry, no ruffles....They religiously kept the Sabbath day; many of them abstained from dram-drinking, not because the temperance reformation was ever heard of in that day, but because it was interdicted in the General Rules of our Discipline. The Methodists of that day stood up and faced their preacher when they sung; they kneeled down in the public congregation as well as elsewhere, when the preacher said, "Let us pray." There was no standing among the members in time of prayer, especially the abominable practice of sitting down during that exercise was unknown among early Methodists. Parents did not allow their children to go to balls or plays; they did not send them to dancing-schools; they generally fasted once a week, and almost universally on the Friday before each quarterly meeting.⁴⁷

Laughter in church services was taboo, as it was felt to be unbecoming to the deep life of the Spirit.

METHODIST HIGHER EDUCATION

It is well known that the 1820 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church ordered the establishment of a committee to outline "a plan for the institution of schools or seminaries of learning, within the bounds, and under the direction of several annual conferences."⁴⁸ The committee report to the conference wished to safeguard Methodist control and to guarantee that instruction would always be in keeping with Methodist piety and doctrine. In an attempt to assure this aim, the committee recommended that "said trustees, principals, and the teachers under them, shall always be members of the Methodist Episcopal Church."⁴⁹ The recommendation of the committee lost, and along with it the church was later to lose control of many of the schools it had founded. In his article in *The History of American Methodism*, William R. Cannon remarks, "One cannot help wondering what might have been the church's education history had the amendment prevailed. Methodism, in its concern to be broadminded

and inclusive, has had a genius for establishing institutions which others have later come to control."⁵⁰ The report which was adopted recommended that "the annual conferences establish, as soon as practicable, literary institutions under their own control, in such way and manner as they may think proper."⁵¹ The conference instructed the bishops to carry the resolution into effect by recommending the subject to each annual conference.

The first annual conferences to respond to this directive from General Conference were Kentucky and Ohio. In 1821 the Kentucky Annual Conference and the Ohio Annual Conference joined resources in founding a college at Augusta, in northern Kentucky. This was the first Methodist institution of higher education above the level of an academy founded west of the Appalachian Mountains. In December 1822, the state of Kentucky chartered Augusta College, authorizing it to grant degrees. The college was located on six thousand acres on the Ohio River, the site of Bracken Academy, previously founded in 1798. In 1827 Martin Ruter, book agent of the Cincinnati branch of the Methodist Book Concern, was elected president. Kentucky's Transylvania University had conferred the D.D. degree on Ruter, making him the first Methodist Episcopal minister to receive this honorary degree.

At the time, Augusta College was the only Methodist college in existence, and it attracted students from all areas of the country. The college graduated its first class with a B.A. degree in 1829. Numbered among its alumni were Bishop Randolph S. Foster and John Miley, a celebrated theologian who became America's equivalent to England's Richard Watson. Writing in 1870, A. H. Redford stated,

The vast amount of good that resulted to the Church and the country from Augusta College can never be estimated. Over its fortunes some of the noblest intellects have presided; its faculty was always composed of men of piety, of genius, and of learning; and in all the learned professions, in almost every Western and Southern State, its Alumni may yet be found. It gave to the medical profession, to the bar, and to the pulpit, many of their brightest lights.⁵²

But the college, although poised for eventual greatness and significant national prominence, did not last. Due to the growing tensions over slavery, the 1844 General Conference voted to separate into two denominations. The division of Methodism into the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South positioned Kentucky and Ohio in two separate denominations and spelled the death of the college. Ohio remained in the Methodist Episcopal Church and Kentucky joined the new Methodist Episcopal Church, South. In doing so the Kentucky Conference withdrew its support for Augusta College, and the Kentucky legislature repealed its charter.⁵³ The Ohio Conference transferred its patronage to the Ohio University at Delaware, Ohio.⁵⁴ Thus, in 1844

sponsorship by both conferences ceased.⁵⁵ When the Methodist Episcopal Church, South was organized in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1845, Kentucky Methodism took new directions, and at this point we may conveniently mark the end of the beginnings of Methodism in Kentucky.⁵⁶

Notes

1. Theophilus Armenius, "A Descriptive View of the Western Country," *Methodist Magazine* (New-York: J. Soule and T. Mason, for the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, vol. 3, 1820), p. 386.
2. Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Oxford History of the American People* (New York: Oxford University Press), 1965, pp. 210-211.
3. William Warren Sweet, *Circuit-Rider Days Along the Ohio* (New York; Cincinnati: The Methodist Book Concern), 1923, p. 16.
4. Page Smith, *A New Age Begins, A People's History of the American Nation* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976), 2:1213.
5. Harry J. Carman, Harold C. Syrett and Bernard W. Wishy, *A History of the American People*, 3d ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), 1:236.
6. A. H. Redford, *The History of Methodism in Kentucky* (Nashville: Southern Methodist Publishing House), 1870, 1:19.
7. Abel Stevens, *A Compendious History of American Methodism* (New York: Eaton & Mains; Cincinnati: Jennings & Pye, n.d.), pp. 227-228.
8. Roy Hunter Short, *Methodism in Kentucky* (published by the Commissions on Archives and History of the Kentucky and Louisville Conferences, The United Methodist Church, Rutland, VT: Academy Books), 1979, p. 1.
9. Quoted in Page Smith, *The Shaping of America, A People's History of the American Nation* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1980), p. 172.
10. Matthew Simpson, *A Hundred Years of Methodism* (New York: Nelson & Phillips; Cincinnati: Hitchcock & Walden, 1876), p. 68.
11. Francis Asbury, *The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury*, ed Elmer T. Clark, J. Manning Potts and Jacob S. Payton (London: Epworth Press; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1958), 1:511. Asbury's *Journal* for Sunday, April 30, reads: "I preached three times, and made a collection to defray the expenses of sending missionaries to the western settlements; I spoke twice on the same subject through the course of the week." These missionaries were James Haw and Benjamin Ogden, appointed to Kentucky, and Thomas Humphreys and John Majors, volunteers for Georgia.
12. Abel Stevens, *History of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America*, (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1867), 2:361-362.
13. Quoted in A. H. Redford, *The History of Methodism in Kentucky*, 1:46-48.
14. A. H. Redford, *Western Cavaliers: Embracing the History of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Kentucky from 1832 to 1844* (Nashville: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1876), p. 24.
15. M. L. Scudder, *American Methodism* (Hartford, CT: S. S. Scranton & Co., 1867), p. 239.
16. A. H. Redford, *The History of Methodism in Kentucky* 1:11.
17. Roy Hunter Short, *Methodism in Kentucky*, p. 3.

18. This massacre is called "McNitt's Defeat." Twenty-four were killed and scalped, and five women carried away, apparently by the Chickamaugas, who rampaged from 1785 to 1794. The campsite and the graves are preserved in the Levi Jackson State Park, near London, Kentucky.
19. Asbury's *Journal*, 1: 636-638.
20. *Encyclopedia of World Methodism*, 2 vols., ed. Nolan B. Harmon (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1974), 2:1533-1534.
21. Harry R. Short, "Masterson's Station," *Encyclopedia of World Methodism*, 2:1533-1534.
22. Wilson Lee, Thomas Wilkerson and Barnabas McHenry.
23. John Fletcher Hurst, *The History of Methodism*, 7 vols., (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1903), 4:474.
24. Francis Poythress (1732-1810) was one of (Anglican) Deveraux Jarratt's converts in Virginia. He served as the first presiding elder in Kentucky and was one of the founders of Bethel Academy, supervising its construction.
25. James B. Finley, *Sketches of Western Methodism: Biographical, Historical, and Miscellaneous, Illustrative of Pioneer Life*, ed. W. P. Strickland (Cincinnati: Printed at the Methodist Book Concern, For the Author, 1856), p. 66.
26. *Encyclopedia of Methodism*, ed. Matthew Simpson, 5th rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1883 [c. 1876]), p. 548.
27. *Autobiography of Peter Cartwright, the Backwoods Preacher*, ed. W. P. Strickland (New-York: Carlton & Porter, 1857), pp. 74-75.
28. Asbury's *Journal*, 1:639.
29. Albea Godbold, "Bethel Academy," *Encyclopedia of World Methodism*, 1:258.
30. W. E. Arnold, *A History of Methodism in Kentucky*, 2 vols. (Louisville: Herald Press, 1936), 2:5.
31. Edward Stevenson, *Biographical Sketch of the Rev. Valentine Cook, A. M., with An Appendix, Containing His Discourse on Baptism* (Nashville: published for the author, 1858), pp. 22-23.
32. William Warren Sweet, *Methodism in American History* (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1933), p. 161.
33. J. L. Clark, *Kentucky Conference's Contribution to Methodism* (Louisville: Press of the Central Methodist, n.d.), p. 3.
34. Certain artifacts collected from an excavation at the original Bethel Academy conducted by G. Herbert Livingston, are deposited at Asbury Theological Seminary.
35. Asbury's *Journal*, 2:253.
36. *Encyclopedia of World Methodism*, 2:2541..
37. The Holston District embraced the Green Circuit, in Tennessee, and the Holston, Russell and New River Circuits in Virginia.
38. Clark, *Kentucky Conference's Contribution to Methodism*, p. 2.
39. In 1820, the Kentucky Conference was composed of the following districts: Kentucky, Salt River, Green River and Cumberland. A strip of Virginia and a small portion of Tennessee were also included in the Kentucky Conference.
40. Redford, *The History of Methodism in Kentucky*, 3:97-98.
41. M. M. Henkle, *The Life of Henry Bidleman Bascom, D.D., LL.D., Late Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South* (Louisville: Morton & Griswold, 1854), p. 128.
42. Arnold, *A History of Methodism in Kentucky*, 2:7.
43. In addition to hymnals, there were "songsters"—small word-only booklets which con-

tained camp meeting songs that were not included in Methodism's hymnals. The songs in these little publications lacked polish, and they often contained thin theology and incorrect grammar. Peter Cartwright recorded that in his 53 years of itinerant ministry he sold \$10,000 worth of books, and many of his sales were songsters and hymnals. The most popular of the early songsters were Stith Mead's *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, Thomas Hinde's *The Pilgrim Songster*, and Orange Scott's *Camp-Meeting Hymn Books*.

44. *Autobiography of Peter Cartwright*, p. 74.

45. Edward S. Ninde, *The Story of the American Hymn* (Cincinnati: Abingdon Press, 1921), p. 103.

46. James I. Warren, Jr., *O For a Thousand Tongues: The History, Nature, and Influence of Music in the Methodist Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), p. 73.

47. *Autobiography of Peter Cartwright, the Backwoods Preacher*, pp. 74-75.

48. *Journals of the General Conference, 1796-1836* (New York: Carlton and Phillips, 1855), p. 183.

49. *Journals of the General Conference, 1796-1836*, p. 207.

50. *The History of American Methodism*, 3 vols., ed. Emory Stevens Bucke (New York; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1964), 1:552-553.

51. *Journals of the General Conference, 1796-1836*, p. 208.

52. Redford, *The History of Methodism in Kentucky*, 3:100-101.

53. *Encyclopedia of Methodism*, p. 864.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 70.

55. Roy Hunter Short, *Methodism in Kentucky*, p. 82.

56. But it was the start of a new era for Kentucky Methodism. By 1845 Methodist membership in Kentucky had reached 52,064, the fruit of pioneer Methodism in the state. The 1846 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South created the Louisville Conference. Thus, in 1846 the Kentucky Annual Conference was divided into two annual conferences—the Kentucky Conference and the Louisville Conference.

In 1848 the towns of Lexington and Winchester received northern pastors. In 1852, the northern branch of Episcopal Methodism formed a Kentucky Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The organizing Kentucky Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church was held at Covington, Kentucky, in October, 1853, with Bishop Edmund S. Janes presiding. The conference was organized because there were Kentucky clergy persons and congregations that wished to be affiliated with the northern branch of the church. By 1849, the Kentucky Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church had about two thousand members. During the Civil War many of the clergy of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South favored the Union, although they remained members of the Kentucky Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. In 1865, eighteen ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South withdrew and joined the Methodist Episcopal Church, most as local preachers. At the meeting of the Kentucky Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1866, some twenty six preachers from the southern church were admitted into the Methodist Episcopal Church. The two branches of Methodism, of course, merged in 1939.