

The 16 Historic Shrines of The United Methodist Church

Look to the rock from whence you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were digged. Isaiah 51:1.

The United Methodist Church draws creatively upon beliefs, traditions, and practices both inherited and indigenous. The soil, the sticks and the stones that speak of these things are as rubies without price. To discover these treasures, to preserve and enshrine them in the hearts of men is a responsibility assigned to the general church Commission on Archives and History. This is a responsibility however that the Commission shares with all United Methodists who believe the past is prologue.

Official *United Methodist historic sites* are those sites or structures of historic importance so designated by an annual or jurisdictional conference and officially registered with the general commission.

Historic shrines and landmarks are official historic sites of national significance which, upon recommendation by the general Commission on Archives and History, have been so named by the General Conference.*

The following pages depict the present 16 historic shrines of The United Methodist Church. Brief descriptions of the shrines and how to reach them have been given so that United Methodists may visit one or more of these historic locations during their travels.

The three national landmarks are not described, but these are the sites of the Lovely Lane Chapel (Baltimore, Maryland), Brooklyn Methodist Hospital (Brooklyn, New York), and McMahan's Chapel (Bronson, Texas).

* Inquiries concerning historic sites, shrines, and landmarks are welcomed. Address these to the Commission on Archives and History, Box 488, Lake Junaluska, N.C., 28745.

Barratt's Chapel

Frederica, Delaware

Barratt's Chapel, a two story brick church, was built in 1780, on land donated by Phillip Barratt. A metal star on the floor marks the historic meeting of Thomas Coke, an emissary of John Wesley, and Francis Asbury, the leader of American Methodist societies, on Nov. 14, 1784. The two embraced and wept. Then holy communion and baptism were conducted for the first time on American soil by Thomas Coke and Richard Whatcoat, duly authorized Methodist ministers. After the worship service Coke, Asbury, Whatcoat and other preachers planned the Christmas Conference, which met and formed the Methodist Episcopal Church in America.

The chapel is owned by the Peninsula Conference and has a museum with a curator's residence nearby. It is ten miles south of Dover, Delaware, and one mile north of Frederica on U.S. 113.



Edward Cox House

near Bluff City, Tennessee



The home of the earliest Methodist settler in the Holston area was built by Edward Cox, who was born in Maryland in 1750. Converted by Francis Asbury, Cox and his wife built their home near present-day Bluff City. As an exhorter he conducted Methodist services in his own home. Asbury visited this home on a number of occasions.

The large, two story log house was purchased and restored by the Holston Conference. Its unique design with the open area in the center of the house makes it an unusual preservation. The house is located just off U.S. 11E, one mile northeast of Bluff City. A highway marker along route 11E directs the visitor to the proper side road.

Green Hill House

Louisburg, North Carolina

After the formation of the Methodist Episcopal Church at the Christmas Conference in 1784, the first annual conference to meet was held in the home of "Major" Green Hill, April 20-24, 1785. The conference of twenty preachers met in the attic,

a large room covering the upper floor of the house which was known as Liberty Hall. Three succeeding conferences also met here. Hill was a local preacher, probably the first native North Carolinian to serve thus. A member of the colonial assemblies in North Carolina, chaplain in the Continental Army, he died in Tennessee in 1826.

The house is privately owned, well preserved, and may be reached by travelling south on state route 39 from Louisburg to the city limits, turning left (see historical marker), and driving less than one-half mile.



Old McKendree Chapel

Jackson, Missouri



About 1806 a Methodist camp meeting was begun at the future site of Old McKendree. July, 1809, the first Methodist society was organized and a chapel, named after Bishop McKendree, was erected in 1819. This is probably the oldest Protestant church standing west of the Mississippi River. The last stated services were held 1888-90. Restoration took place in mid-twentieth century which today includes a steel canopy over the building. The first annual conference on Missouri soil was held here in 1819; and also later in 1821, 1825, and 1831.

The chapel is 2½ miles from Jackson, a short distance off the Bainbridge Road; six miles from Cape Girardeau. Highway markers are at intersection of Bainbridge Road and state route 61 and at lane to the Chapel.

Barratt's Chapel

"The Cradle of American Methodism"



In 1778 Freeborn Garrettson preached near Fred-
erica, Delaware, and formed a Society. Francis Asbury
encouraged them to build a church and in the fall of
1780 they dedicated Barratt's Chapel. For two genera-
tions it remained unfinished with only dirt floors, rough
hewn seats, and no heat; yet, with all of its limitations
it was recognized as the Cathedral of Methodism, being
the best meeting house in America belonging to the
Methodists.

On November 14, 1784, Barratt's Chapel entertained
the Fall Quarterly Meeting at which the itinerants of
the DelMarVa Peninsula received their semi-annual
appointments. Dr. Thomas Coke preached, adminis-
tered the Lord's Supper to five or six hundred com-
municants, held a love feast, and baptized sixteen
persons. At first Asbury was shocked but later he ap-
proved.

Barratt's Chapel is widely known as the "Cradle of
American Methodism" because of its unique place in
the development of its Church. It was here that the
sacramental ordinances were legally administered for
the first time in America by duly ordained Methodist
preachers to Methodists, that Coke and Asbury met for
a meeting of the minds, that John Wesley's autocratic
policies of organization, administration, and ordination
were refused by the American brethren, that the Christ-
mas Conference was called to meet at Lovely Lane
Meeting House, and that the preliminary arrangements
were made for the formation of a new Church—The
Methodist Episcopal Church in America.

Each year an anniversary service is held on the sec-
ond Sunday of November. The Shrine is owned and
maintained by the Peninsula Conference Commission
on Archives and History and listed on the National
Register of Historical Places. The church exterior re-
mains practically the same as when it was completed
but the interior has been changed somewhat. In 1946
a museum and curator's home were constructed nearby
and a full time curator was assigned.