

**The History
of the
First Methodist Church
of
Lawrence Kansas
1915 to 1954
by
Mary Patterson Clarke**

Preface

This year, 1954, offers a fitting opportunity for the First Methodist Church of Lawrence, Kansas, to review its past, just as the years beginning in 1854 and to Kansas as a whole, which is now celebrating its centennial.

But any extensive account of the past conditions and events of the church, written in 1954, must carry us back only about forty years. A history of the church in its earlier period was published in book form in 1915. The present writer was the author of that little book. Later she was away from Lawrence for about twenty-eight years; in that interval one of the ministers suggested that the history be brought down to date and designated as the person to write it Dr. Edward Bumgardner, a Lawrence dentist, who was also a local historian of some note. He had been an official member of the church for many years; had been a member of the publication committee for the original book; and, also a member of the committee appointed to assist with the “museum” with which the book was illustrated early in 1914. Personal ill-health and illness in his family prevented Dr. Bumgardner from carrying out this project; and after the writer of the first book returned to Lawrence in 1949 the task devolved upon her.

It seems wise to preface this narrative with an extremely brief summary of an earlier period. James S. Griffing was appointed in 1854 to preach in an enormous area of which Lawrence was a very small part. From that time till 1858 four ministers served the Lawrence Methodists in a primitive setting, with small numbers; in dangerous and difficult conditions; in constant need of financial help from outside; and, with no regular place of meeting except that for a part of the time they used a temporary structure commonly called “the Tent”.

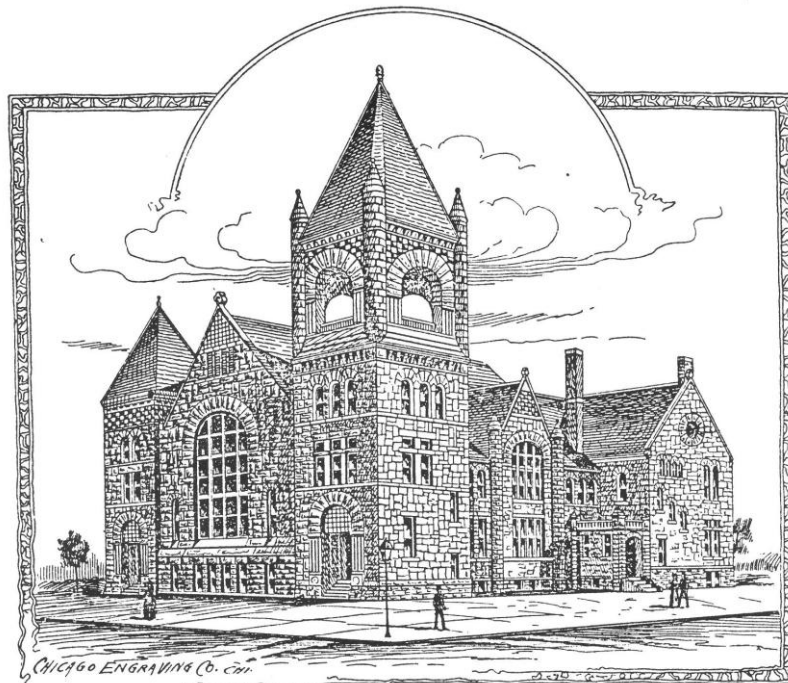
In the second period, 1858-1866, the church was served by six ministers in a frame building on Vermont Street in the seven hundred block. This building was also used by other denominations and served as a morgue at the time of the Quantrill raid, August 21, 1863. The little band of Methodists still had a struggle against pioneer conditions, but was developing; was becoming identified with movements in the church as a whole; and, was climbing up to financial independence.



Not only did the church cease to ask help from the East, but it was able to erect a new building, a brick church this time located at Tenth (then Berkley) and Massachusetts Streets where the Masonic Temple now stands. The years in this building -1866 to 1891- constitute the third period in which ten ministers served pastorates of longer or shorter duration. The longest of these, lasting about five and a half years, was that of Dr. James Marvin, and was filled with great activity, much of it connected with the stone church, that is the present church at Tenth and Vermont Streets.



The fourth period as portrayed in the old book was the age of the stone church, from 1891 to 1915.



FIRST METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH,
Corner of Vermont & Berkley Streets.
LAWRENCE, - KANSAS.

In addition to a few weeks under Dr. Marvin it included six ministries and the beginning of a seventh, as well as the adoption of a foreign pastor doing missionary work to the Japanese and the employment of a minister to care for students. It is at this point that we depart from the old History and start upon the new. The stone church we still have with us, and in it seven ministers have led the activities of the organization, in addition to the continuation of the Wesley Foundation for students, and in recent years the employment of a visitation minister.

A few words of explanation about terms or methods may be useful. First, it should be noted that the title of the old book of 1915 is “The History of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Lawrence, Kansas”, while the title of this supplementary study is “The History of the Methodist Church of Lawrence, Kansas”. This is not a mistake but an intentional change made necessary by an historical event of prime importance, that is the union in 1939 of three churches- the Methodist Episcopal, the Methodist Episcopal South, and the Methodist Protestant. This union will be more fully discussed below. Secondly, it seems well to explain that in the old book each minister was introduced by a brief biographical sketch covering his life up to the time he took charge of this church. Whatever information could be obtained about his life after his Lawrence pastorate was printed in a note at the back of the book. This plan will be followed in the present study. As Dr. Wolfe had just left Lawrence when the old history was published, the note about him must be included in this volume though his ministry here was in the previous period.

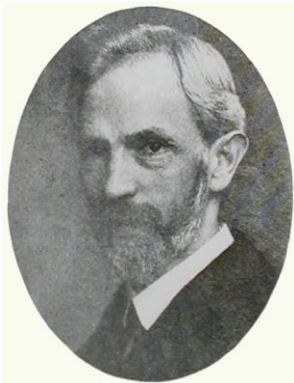
In this effort as in that of forty years ago difficulties have been encountered and they are roughly comparable to the two categories explained in the earlier preface. One has to do with the time and effort necessary in the gathering together of scattered material; and the other is the problem of selection, especially as to personal names. This last is a bigger problem now than formerly because the church is larger and has such an imposing list of organizations with many officers in each. Some lists of officers are not complete, but even those that are might have to be eliminated for want of space. However this may be, in the words of the earlier preface “the writer has never forgotten and hopes the reader will not forget that the book is a memorial not only to those persons named in it, but also to hundreds of others who have helped to make the church what it is today”.

Thanks and appreciation are here expressed to all who have given information, brought in records, or in any other way contributed towards the completion of this enterprise.

Chapter I.
The Church in General under Four Ministers.

Henry W. Hargett, March 1915 – March 1918
Samuel Sylvester Klyne, March 1918 – October 1922
Edward Hislop, October 1922 – October 1928
Harry A. Gordon, October 1928 – March 1931

The last minister whose pastorate was presented in the old history was Dr. Henry E. Wolfe¹ who was the minister of this church from October 1909 to March 1915. By way of review this period can be briefly illustrated by reference to two outstanding developments. One as the adoption of Frank Herron Smith² as foreign pastor when in 1912 the church assumed responsibility for much of his salary as a missionary to the Japanese. The other was the appointment of Rev. Gordon Bennett Thompson³ to be student pastor in charge of work among Methodist students at the University of Kansas and Haskell Institute.



Henry W. Hargett

Dr. Wolfe's successor was Dr. Henry W. Hargett who came to Lawrence in the spring of 1915 from the First Church in Emporia. He was an Ohio man, having been born in Sandusky and brought up in Akron. In 1889 he graduated from Ohio Wesleyan University at Delaware, and the next year was married to Miss Adele Hudson of the class of 1890 at the same institution. In 1891 he joined the Ohio conference and continued in it for sixteen years, serving four churches in that state. He later served the First Church of Ottumwa, Iowa and the First Church of Carthage, Missouri before transferring to the Kansas Conference and taking up his work in Emporia.⁴

Under Dr. Hargett the work of the church went on much as it had been going but conditioned by a world at war, especially after April 1917 when the United States became definitely involved. The members of the church, like everyone else, were, of course, keyed to a high pitch of activity in connection with the Red Cross, bond drives and many other enterprises. As to local affairs there was special emphasis on three phases of church work – student work, enlargement of the physical plant, and the ingathering of members. In connection with the first of these it was decided to rent an office in Myers Hall for the student minister, and establish a house to provide a home for a group of girls students that were affiliated with the Methodist Church. Also, plans were underway for advertising the work for students among all the Methodist churches in Kansas. The enlargement and improvement of the church facilities consisted mostly of finishing the basement though of course this period like every other brought its problems of repairs and improvements. Another type of activity, which this ministry shares with all others, had to do with efforts to bring in new members. The usual membership “drives” were carried on. But a special project was undertaken at this time because the German Methodist Church, which had maintained a separate existence in Lawrence since the 1860's, was about to be disbanded. The Official Board of First Church invited the German Church to combine with ours, the

Brotherhood entertained the men of the German Organization, and various personal invitations were extended to German members to transfer to First Church. The actual disbanding of the German Church seems not to have taken place till a few months after Dr. Hargett left Lawrence; and apparently no official combination was effected; but many members of the German group became and continued to be loyal and active members of First Church.⁵ It is worth noting that in this period the prayer meeting and class meeting, which had played so prominent a part in earlier Methodism, were still continuing; and part of the time Dr. Hargett gave a five-minute sermon to children on Sunday morning. On October 8, 1916 in the evening the Sunday School presented an elaborate pageant of the history of Methodism.



Samuel S. Klyne

The Annual Conference of 1918 transferred Dr. Hargett elsewhere and appointed as his successor Rev. S. S. Klyne, who had already spent more than twenty years in the ministry. From 1896 to 1898 he was on trial in the North Dakota Conference. He served three pastorates in that state. He was transferred to the West Virginia Conference and had charge of a church in Parkersburg from 1906 to 1908. He then became a member of the Baltimore Conference and for about two years was the minister of a church in the city of Baltimore. For a time beginning in 1911 he had a church in Minneapolis and was a member of the North Minnesota Conference. He transferred to the Kansas Conference and had charge of the First Church in Baldwin from 1914 to 1918, before coming to Lawrence.⁶

The war was even more in evidence in Dr. Klyne's time than in that of Dr. Hargett. Among other things it was necessary to bring the service flag and the service roll up to date now and then. Also, the Official Board offered parts of the church building to be used for Red Cross activities. Soon after his arrival in Lawrence Dr. Klyne was asked to be chaplain to the Student Army Training Corps at the University of Kansas and, with the consent of the Official Board, accepted this responsibility. The war also touched the church in its relation to students. Rev. Gordon Bennett Thompson had been transferred, and for a short time the student work here was carried on by Rev. G. E. Brown. In July 1918 he resigned to go into war work and the church was left without a director of student activities. A request was directed to the bishop and other church officials that the money, which had been provided for the salary of the student pastor, be used to pay an office assistant for the minister. Apparently this request was granted. Such a position was held for a time by McKinley Warren, a young Kansas University man, who in 1919 was recommended by the local Official Board for a license to preach. He married Vanetta Hosford, a member of an active Methodist family, and about the end of the year they went as missionaries to South America. Mr. Edwin F. Price, who has since had a long and distinguished career as head of the Wesley Foundation at Lawrence was at that time at the University and was superintendent of the University department of the First Church Sunday School. He soon became secretary in the position that had been held by McKinley Warren, and, with some time off now and then for advance study has been connected with the student work from that time to this.

But other steps were being taken in the interest of the students. In October 1919 a committee of three was appointed to look after the work at Haskell, and about the same time a group was established known as the Young People's Council. This was made up of Dr. Klyne as president ex officio, Professor E. F. Engel, chairman, Mr. E. S. Weatherby, superintendent of the Sunday School, LeRoy Holland, president of the Epworth League, McKinley Warren, who was still secretary, E. F. Price, superintendent of the University department, and Opal Woodruff representing the young women. In this same period property was bought on Ohio Street, intended to be used in connection with the student work. Also, this was the age of the "Centenary" movement⁷ in the church as a whole, that is, a celebration of one hundred years of Methodist missionary effort and the Centenary fund in this church was to be devoted in part at least to work among students. That educational methods were advancing is shown by the fact that in the summer of 1920 the Official Board voted to buy a motion picture projector at the cost of \$525. A mimeograph machine was bought, and the student work and secretarial work were separated. Miss Rovilla Tilton became the church secretary. Financial campaigns were carried on by an effective organization known as the Minute Men or sometimes Minute Men and Women.

Also, in 1920 the church received a gift, which, apart from its financial value, had much personal interest and historical significance for Lawrence Methodism. Mr. Frederick Eggert of Portland, Oregon had lived in or near Lawrence for twenty years from 1856, had survived Quantrill's Raid, and for years had been a successful businessman in Lawrence. He was a faithful and devoted member of the Lawrence First Church. This devotion continued during forty-two years of residence in Oregon, and he planned to make a bequest to what his wife called his church. Because of circumstances, which arose, he changed this plan and asked his wife to make a gift after he was gone. She therefore presented a \$5000 Liberty Bond that he had bought the very day he died. This was to be a memorial to Mr. Eggert, and was to be a "permanent irreducible fund", the income of which would be used by the church. On May 30, 1920 Mr. Eggert's seventy-seventh birthday, a special service was held at which Miss Hannah Oliver, a lifelong friend of the Eggerts, presented the bond to the church in the name of Mrs. Eggert, who was unable to be present. Mr. W. F. March, chairman of the Board of Trustees, accepted it on the part of the church. A picture of Mr. Eggert also was presented and the church still has it in a collection of historical material.⁸



Edward Hislop

When Dr. Klyne went to Colorado Springs in October 1922 he exchanged pulpits with a man to whom moving to Lawrence must have seemed like coming home. Edward Hislop was born in Steubenville, Ohio, spent most of his childhood in Dickinson County, Kansas, and lived in North Lawrence in early manhood. He was closely identified with Epworth League work in the Kansas City District. He is said to have received his chief impetus for his later work by falling under the spell of Bishops Warren and Ninde at the dedication of our stone church and by being associated with Rev. Dan Brummitt in the Centenary Church. He studied at Baker University and won honors in oratory both inside and outside Kansas.

In 1905 he was married to Miss Viola M. Hankins, a fellow student at Baker. He was on trial in 1903 and 1904 while serving the church in Argentine. In 1907 he was graduated from Boston School of Theology and admitted to full membership in the New Hampshire Conference in which he held two pastorates. In 1911 he came back to the West and became a district superintendent at Omaha. He is said to have been the youngest superintendent in all Methodism at that time. For four years he was president of the Methodist University of Oklahoma; and, he served pastorates in Salina, Kansas, and Colorado Springs, Colorado, before taking up his work in Lawrence.

In Dr. Hislop's ministry of six vigorous years it was true as it always is that much of the organization activity was a continuation of what had gone before. There are some groups, such as the Sunday School and some women's societies that tend to go on and on no matter who the minister may be. *[One member of Sunday School at that time was Mildred Clodfelter, who in 2003 allowed us to copy her promotion certificate from 1923 signed by Dr. Hislop shown in reproduction here.]*



**First
Methodist Episcopal Church**

**Tenth and Vermont Streets
LAWRENCE, KANSAS**

MINISTER

REV. EDWARD HISLOP, D. D.

**Residence: 937 New Hampshire Street
Church Office Hours: 10 to 12 m.; Telephone 1908**

STUDENT WORK DIRECTOR

EDWIN F. PRICE

**Residence: 717 Maine St. Telephone 1369 Blue
Church Office Hours: 9 to 12 m. Telephone 1908**

FOREIGN PASTOR

REV. FRANK HERRON SMITH, D. D.

Seoul, Korea

Front cover (above) and inside (below) of bulletin – May 20, 1923

THE CHURCH AT PRAYER AND WORK

TODAY—Tonight the exercises and sermon will be in the nature of a **BACCALAUREATE SERVICE** for the City High School. Our sincere congratulations are extended to the large group of young people who are completing the high school course, and it is hoped all may be enabled to go on to further training.

UNIVERSITY LEAGUE at 6:45 p. m. Charles E. Louk will lead the meeting. Subject: "Vacation Expectations."

HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE at 7:00 p. m. Subject: "What the Bible Means to Me." The meeting will be in charge of the girls of Esther Home, under the leadership of Miss Ruth Muskrat.

WEDNESDAY—The meeting of the **WOMAN'S FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY**, regularly scheduled for today, will be postponed until Thursday, May 31st.

CHURCH NIGHT SERVICE in the Epworth League room, at 8:00 p. m.

THURSDAY—The **GUILD** will have a picnic in Central Park at 6:30 o'clock. Committee in charge: Miss Mabel Glendenning, Miss Hannah Oliver, and Miss Josephine Hill. In case of rain, the meeting will be held at Ricker Hall, 745 Ohio St.

FRIDAY—The **LOYAL LADIES CLASS** will meet in the church parlors at 3:00 o'clock. The ladies of Circle No. 3 will be the hostesses.

Will any one who has knowledge as to the whereabouts of church records of some years back please communicate with the church office, No. 1908? Information is desired particularly concerning the records from 1893 to 1912.

One organization of which this was not wholly true was the Epworth League. It continued but in this general period, not simply under Dr. Hislop, was undergoing changes because of a tendency to experiment with age groups. Sometimes there were three Leagues, one for University students, one for pupils in the High School, and a third for Lawrence young people beyond high school age. In the period from 1922 to 1928 the high school League seems to be particularly in evidence in the records, the leader being Mrs. Stover. Part of the time there was a junior church directed by Mrs. Olin. There was still a class leader and this office in 1924 was held by Mr. Stout. Sometimes there was a vacation Bible school that may have been interdenominational. There was still an evening service at which the music was provided by a chorus choir. The leader of this choir was Nancy Longanecker, who was also director of pageantry. At these evening meetings a special liturgy was devised based on John Wesley's Sunday Service for the Methodist Church in America. A number of times the Brotherhood conducted a series of six or eight church-night suppers. These took place on Wednesday evenings and were for the whole membership, old and young. They not only provided a means of getting acquainted, but also were followed by worship services and addresses on various subjects. Though a few of them may have been what we now call covered-dish suppers, in the main they were arranged by a committee of men headed by Mr. Ed. Klein. One active member of the Brotherhood at that time has left a memorandum that "the men did all the work, getting the meal and cleaning up afterward." The membership of the church increased in this period. At one time in 1927 seventy-one new members were received on one Sunday.

Any Official Board has to give attention to business matters pertaining to church finances and the ownership of property. But it would seem that such problems pressed upon the board more than usual in this period. One need that developed was for personal relief. Probably all churches to some extent stand ready to help their members in distress, but in these years one elderly woman, who seems to have had no other resources, was completely supported by the church for a considerable time. In 1923 a representative committee on relief was set up, consisting of one member each from the Official Board, the Ladies' Aid, the Sunday School, the Woman's League, the Guild, The Brotherhood, the Epworth League, and the Loyal Ladies' Sunday School Class. It was decided that the Eggert fund be set aside as a nucleus of an endowment fund for local relief, but not necessarily to be limited to local application.

At this time the church owned real estate at 937 New Hampshire Street, at 1000 and 1004 Vermont Street, and in the 1200 block on Ohio. Late in 1925 the house at 937 New Hampshire, the old parsonage which had been in use as the home of the minister since 1895, was sold. Soon after this the church bought from Mr. Docking the present parsonage at 1527 Massachusetts Street. In addition to caring for all this property, the appropriate officials had to carry on fund drives both to meet the general budget and to keep up commitments elsewhere, such as the Centenary Fund, payments for the work of Dr. Smith in Korea, and for the Methodist work at Haskell. In 1926 something happened which later added to the problems about property. On August 9 of that year Mrs. Fannie Ecke, a businesswoman of Lawrence, died suddenly leaving a considerable amount of real estate which, after certain use by her relatives, would become property of the church. An estimate placed on the value of this property at that time was \$100,000.

Meanwhile the student work was advancing rapidly. In 1924 the Wesley Foundation for Lawrence and Manhattan was organized. This will be dealt with more fully below.

During his ministry here Dr. Hislop was a member of the Board of Trustees of the Lawrence Welfare League and of the advisory board of the Young Men's Christian Association [YMCA] at the University and of the Board of Trustees of the School of Religion, also on the Hill. He belonged to the Chamber of Commerce and to a service club in Lawrence, and thus had many contacts and much influence in the community outside the church itself. In greater or less degree this observation applies to all the ministers; and in addition they frequently have numerous responsibilities in connection with the Conference. It is doubtful that most church members realize what heavy burdens a minister carries in his relations to church, conference and community.⁹



Harry A. Gordon

Dr. Hislop's ministry in Lawrence came to an end in October 1928. His successor was Dr. Harry A. Gordon who had already served more than a quarter of a century as a Methodist minister. He was brought up in Stotesbury, Vernon County, Missouri, received his elementary education there and taught for a short time in his home community. He did his secondary school work at Baker Academy and his college work also at Baker, receiving his A.B. degree there in 1900. He graduated from Drew Theological Seminary in Madison, New Jersey in 1908, having served as student pastor at Hilton, New Jersey while carrying on his studies.

He married Miss Ida Hamilton of Stotesbury, Missouri. His appointments in the Kansas Conference before his coming to Lawrence were as follows: Independence Circuit, Moran, Peru, Humboldt, Columbus, Fort Scott, Independence First Church, the district superintendency of Atchison District, and also of Kansas City District.

Under Dr. Gordon of course the old established societies went on as before. So did the Minute Men and the Brotherhood's church night suppers. So did the interest of recent years in local relief. The elderly woman who had been supported by the church died in 1929 and the church paid the funeral expenses. In December the mayor of Lawrence asked the Official Board to appoint someone to represent the church on the city charity organization. Howard Parker, who had administered relief before, was designated to assume this responsibility. The Methodists continued to co-operate with other denominations in Lawrence through the ministerial alliance and other joint efforts, such as a summer Bible school and a series of union meetings. At one time a committee from the churches of the city offered resolutions for the adoption of uniform methods in handling certain problems, chiefly financial. This church, while rejecting some recommendations, did enter into the co-operative movement.

The Boy Scout activity was prominent in this period. So was the interest in missions. Dr. Frank Herron Smith, who was still our foreign pastor, was here and preached in the church in 1930. The Women's Foreign Missionary Society for a time paid all or a part of the salary of Miss Waldorf, who seems to have been the daughter of Bishop Waldorf, and then transferred their support to Eloise Smith who had gone back to Japan. For several years the names of father and daughter, Frank Herron and Eloise Smith were carried on our bulletin.

Dr. Gordon initiated a plan for one hundred persons to call on the members of the church and a new method for observing the Lord's Supper. The Sacrament was offered on Sunday afternoon or a week day afternoon, instead of the Sunday morning service. People were invited to come whenever they cared to do so and stay as long as they wished for communion and quiet worship.

In 1929 a little newspaper called the Methodist News was launched with Mr. E. F. Price as the editor and Miss Dorothy Harrison, the church secretary, in charge of the clerical work. In the summer of 1930 Miss Harrison was seriously ill in a hospital and soon resigned her secretarial position, after which the News was discontinued. It was also in the summer of 1930 that Dr. Gordon was granted a leave of absence for several weeks to travel abroad. He visited most of the European countries that tourists usually chose to see in that era, and also went as far afield as Egypt and Palestine. After his return he gave many talks about his travels, and baptized children with water from the River Jordan.¹⁰

In October 1929 the town of Lawrence had an elaborate three-day celebration of its seventy-fifth anniversary; and of course local organizations such as churches recognized this event in their own way. The chief celebration of the Methodist Church seems to have been a banquet on the evening of October 10, attended by "more than 350 persons." This also commemorated the twenty-eighth anniversary of the founding of the Methodist Brotherhood, and its charter members were honored at the dinner as were also the members of the church who had been members for many years, two of them going back to 1865. An address was made by Dr. Wolfe, the former minister, and talks by two sons of Rev. H. D. Fisher, the minister in the old frame church who had a remarkable escape from death at the Quantrill Raid.