

The Methodists

~ Chronology, before 1900 ~

- 1760 The earliest reference to Methodism in America seems to be connected with a group of emigrants from Ireland who arrived in this country in 1760.
- 1769 John Wesley sent his first missionaries to New York and Philadelphia, but most Methodism was under the leadership of lay preachers dependent upon the established Anglican clergy to provide the sacrament to their following.
- 1775 The Methodist movement swelled somewhat when Wesley's assistant Thomas Rankin visited Virginia, touring with Anglican minister Devereux Jarratt, who was a major force in the area.
- 1776 Methodists were among the minority of religions until after the Revolutionary War, with fewer than 7000 members.
- 1784 The denomination was officially organized at the Christmas Conference of 1784 in Baltimore as the Methodist Episcopal Church. They elected Francis Asbury the first bishop in this country.
- 1800 William Otterbein and Martin Boehm preached among the Germans in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. They were elected bishops at a conference which also created the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, which was strongly Methodist in polity, doctrine, and practice.
- 1807 Jacob Albright was made a bishop at the first annual conference of the Evangelical Association. He had been preaching among the German people of Pennsylvania, first as a Lutheran and then as a Methodist exhorter. He used the Methodist *Discipline* until 1809, and he preached Methodist doctrine. His followers were termed "Albrights."
- 1881 The World Methodist Council organized with the purpose of drawing the whole Wesleyan movement closer together in fellowship and devotion to the Wesleyan heritage.

The present organization of The United Methodist Church occurred in two steps. In 1939 there was unification of three branches of Methodism: (1)the Methodist Episcopal Church; (2)the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; (3)the Methodist Protestant Church. Then, in 1968, The Methodist Church merged with The Evangelical United Brethren to form The United Methodist Church. The

Evangelical United Brethren Church had grown out of a merger of two groups: the Church of the United Brethren in Christ and the Evangelical Church.

~ Records, Resources ~

It has traditionally been the duty of the pastor in charge of a Methodist church to keep a permanent record of baptisms and marriages within the bounds of his charge. He is expected to keep a register for his charge with the name, time and manner of reception and dismissal of every person belonging to the church. When a charge contains more than one congregation, the names are to be arranged under the church or appointment to which they belong. In some instances, these records were maintained in the custody of the pastor in charge. This was particularly true for the Circuit Riders.

General Commission on Archives and History,
The United Methodist Church
PO Box 127
Madison, NJ 07940

Sometimes called the "German Methodists," The Evangelical United Brethren denomination merged with The United Methodist Church in 1968. The record repository is:

Historical Society
1810 Harvard Building
Dayton, OH 45406

~ Bibliography ~

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Richardson, Harry V. *Dark Salvation: The Story of Methodism as It Developed Among Blacks in America.* New York: Doubleday, 1976.

Richey, Russell E. *Early American Methodism.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991.