1-11-1938

Aldersgate in Savannah

Methodist Episcopal Church, South. General Missionary Council

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Aldersgate in Savannah

January 11-14, 1938
May 24, 1738

"About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt that I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me, that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death. I began to pray with all my might for those who had in a more especial manner despitefully used me and persecuted me. I then testified openly to all there what I now first felt in my heart."

—John Wesley.

MORNING SESSIONS: Wesley Monumental Church
VESPER CLASS MEETINGS: Trinity Church
EVENING SESSIONS: Savannah Auditorium
Aldersgate in Savannah

The General Missionary Council of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, for 1938 will be an Aldersgate Session. The Council will meet in Savannah, Georgia, the only city in America where the Wesleys labored. The Commemoration of the "heart-warming experience" of Mr. Wesley on soil which knew his actual presence gives unusual significance to this gathering.

While the Council is an official missionary meeting of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, it will be noted that the program has been broadened and the denominational emphasis eliminated. This will be the only large event of a general character held in America to celebrate the historic Aldersgate event. It is a meeting for all American Methodists and all are earnestly invited. A nation-wide pilgrimage of Methodists is expected.

Methodists everywhere are girding themselves for a great spiritual forward movement during 1938. It is confidently expected this will be the beginning of a revival of spirituality throughout the nation and the birth of a new energy "to reform the continent and spread Scriptural holiness over these lands." At Savannah this movement will be publicly launched.

To be present is the privilege of a lifetime. On the eve of unification let all American Methodists join in the historic city of Savannah fittingly to commemorate the Bi-Centennial of the greatest single spiritual event in the history of Methodism.
THE PRIMACY OF PERSONAL RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE IN THE LIFE AND WORK OF METHODISM

The Aldersgate program is based on the assumptions that personal religious experience is the primary fact of Christianity and Methodism; that such experience has moral implications and is spurious without such fruits; that social programs and Church activity are impotent and futile unless related to vital religious experience as results are related to cause; and that the pressing need of the modern Church is a serious recognition of these facts. In thus interpreting Mr. Wesley's historic experience it is hoped that the coming of a nation-wide revival of spirituality will be hastened.

BISHOP AND MRS. WARREN A. CANDLER WILL BE HONORARY GUESTS OF THE COUNCIL.
VESPER CLASS MEETINGS

Trinity Church

5:30 P.M. Old Fashioned Methodist Class and Testimony Meeting, conducted by Dr. H. C. Morrison, President of Asbury College, Editor of the Pentecostal Herald, Wilmore, Ky.

EVENING

Savannah Auditorium

Bishop Hoyt M. Dobbs, Presiding

7:30 P.M. Address: The Significance of Savannah in the Spiritual Development of John Wesley—Dr. Umphrey Lee, Dean of the School of Religion, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tenn.

8:15 P.M. Address: The Meaning of Aldersgate—Bishop Ralph S. Cushman, Chairman of the Committee on Evangelism, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Denver, Colo.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 12, 1938

MORNING

Wesley Monumental Church

Bishop W. N. Ainsworth, Presiding

9:00 A.M. Address: The Significance of Aldersgate in History—Bishop Frederick D. Leete, Chairman of the Western Section of the Methodist Ecumenical Council, DeLand, Florida.

9:45 A.M. Address: The Theology of Aldersgate—Bishop John M. Moore, President of the Board of Missions, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Dallas, Texas.

10:30 A.M. Address: The Personal Approach to Aldersgate—Bishop U. V. W. Darlington, Chairman of the Committee on Evangelism, Board of Missions, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Huntington, W. Va.

11:15 A.M. Address: The Recurrence of Aldersgate in the Twentieth Century—Bishop A. Frank Smith, Director of the Aldersgate Commemoration, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Houston, Texas.
THURSDAY, JANUARY 13, 1938

MORNING

Wesley Monumental Church

Mrs. J. W. Perry, Presiding

9:00 A.M. Address: Aldersgate and Enduement for Service—Miss Daisy Davies, Superintendent of the Department of Spiritual Life, Woman's Missionary Council, Atlanta, Ga.

9:45 A.M. Address: Aldersgate and the Transformation of Character—Dr. Henry N. Snyder, President of Wofford College, Spartanburg, S. C.


11:15 A.M. Address: Aldersgate the Source of Missionary Passion—Bishop Paul B. Kern, Chairman of the Foreign Work Committee, Board of Missions, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Durham, N. C.

AFTERNOON PILGRIMAGE

2:00 P.M. Pilgrimage to Bethesda, the Orphan House founded by George Whitefield, 1740. An historical lecture will be given at Bethesda by Professor Paul N. Garber.

VESPER CLASS MEETING

Trinity Church

5:30 P.M. Old Fashioned Methodist Class and Testimony Meeting, conducted by Dr. H. C. Morrison.

EVENING

Savannah Auditorium

Bishop Sam R. Hay, Presiding

7:30 P.M. Address: The Need of Aldersgate in Modern Life—Dr. Charles C. Selcman, President of Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.

8:15 P.M. Address: The Aldersgate Evangel—Dr. Merton S. Rice, Pastor of Metropolitan Methodist Church, Detroit, Mich.

AFTERNOON PILGRIMAGE

2:00 P.M. Pilgrimage to Tybee Island, landing place of John and Charles Wesley, 1736, and Thunderbolt, where Wesley frequently labored. Historical addresses at each place will be made by Dr. Paul N. Garber, Professor of Church History, Duke University, Durham, N. C.
VESPER CLASS MEETING

Trinity Church

5:30 P.M. Old Fashioned Methodist Class and Testimony Meeting, conducted by Dr. H. C. Morrison.

EVENING

Savannah Auditorium

Bishop H. A. Boaz, Presiding

7:30 P.M. Address: Aldersgate the Motive of the Program of the Church—Dr. Edwin Lewis, Professor of Theology, Drew University, Madison, N. J.

8:15 P.M. Address: Aldersgate the Basis of Social Morality—Dr. Ivan Lee Holt, Pastor of St. John's Methodist Episcopal Church, South, St. Louis, Mo.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 14, 1938

MORNING

Wesley Memorial Church

Bishop James Cannon, Jr., Presiding

9:00 A.M. Address: Aldersgate and Christian Stewardship—Dr. Harvey W. Cox, President of Emory University, Atlanta, Ga.

9:30 A.M. Address: Aldersgate and Christian Education—Dr. William Preston Few, President of Duke University, Durham, N. C.

10:00 A.M. Address: Aldersgate the Basis of Methodist Doctrine—Dr. James H. Straughn, President of the General Conference, Methodist Protestant Church, Baltimore, Md.

10:45 A.M. Address: Methodism's Recall to Aldersgate—Dr. Lynn Harold Hough, Dean of Drew Theological Seminary, Drew University, Madison, N. J.

AFTERNOON PILGRIMAGE

12:30 P.M. Pilgrimage to the Wesley Oak, ruins of Fort Frederica, and site of the dead town of Frederica, on St. Simon's Island, scene of the labors of the Wesleys. Approximately 200 miles will be covered and there will be a charge of $2.50 for this trip. An historical lecture will be given under the Wesley Oak at Frederica by Professor Paul N. Garber. The party will leave the DeSoto Hotel promptly at 12:30 P.M. and will return to the hotel at 6:30 P.M.
VESPER CLASS MEETING
Trinity Church
5:30 P.M. Old Fashioned Methodist Class and Testimony Meeting, conducted by Dr. H. C. Morrison.

EVENING
Savannah Auditorium
Dr. W. G. Cram, Presiding
7:30 P.M. Address: Religion and Public Morality—the Honorable E. D. Rivers, Governor of Georgia.
8:15 P.M. Address: Christian Patriotism—the Honorable Gordon Browning, Governor of Tennessee.

Wesley Shrines in and Near Savannah
At 9:00 A.M. on Tuesday, October 14, 1735, John and Charles Wesley, accompanied by Mr. Benjamin Ingham and Mr. Charles Delamotte, left London for Gravesend on route to Georgia. John Wesley wrote in his Journal: "Our end in leaving our native country was not to avoid want, God having given us plenty of temporal blessings, nor to gain riches or honour, (which we trust He will ever enable us to look on as no other than dung and dross;) but singly this—to save our souls, to live wholly to the glory of God."

At 4:00 P.M. they went on board the ship Simmonds off Gravesend, and one week later, on Tuesday, October 21, 1735, the ship sailed.

After a stormy and uncomfortable voyage, land was sighted at noon on Wednesday, February 4, 1736. The following day the Simmonds sailed into the Savannah River and anchored near Tybee. At 8:00 A.M. on Friday, February 6, 1736, John Wesley first set his foot on American ground, on 'a small uninhabited island but a few miles in extent over against Tybee called by the English Peeper Island.' The company immediately went to 'a rising ground,' where they knelt and gave thanks to God.

For a period the missionaries lived on the ship off Tybee Island. On February 19, 1736, the Wesleys went up the river and passed Savannah to the Cowpen, the plantation of Mrs. Matthews, on a visit to an Indian camp, and on the return they stopped at Savannah. This seems to have been their first actual visit to the city itself. They returned the same night to the ship.

John Wesley remained in Georgia one year and nine months. He left Savannah at 8:00 P.M. December 2, 1737, and sailed on board the ship Samuel from Charleston, S. C., on Saturday, December 27, 1737.

During that period John Wesley was busy almost day and night, as his journal amply testifies, in preaching and general ministerial duties. The principal field of labor was Savannah. For extended periods he worked at Frederica, on St. Simon's Island, eighty miles.

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south of Savannah. Among the other places visited by John Wesley were Old Ebeneezer, twenty-five miles west of Savannah, New Ebeneezer, six miles from the old, Irene, an Indian settlement about one mile from the Cowpen, Highgate, a village of French refugees, five miles southwest of Savannah, Thunderbolt, a fishing village six miles southeastward, and Skidoway Island, about ten miles to the south.

IN THE CITY OF SAVANNAH

The Council will not attempt a directed tour of historical spots in the city of Savannah because of congested conditions. All may readily be found and should be visited, especially the following.

United States Custom House

On the Bull Street side of the U. S. Custom House, by Bay Street Lane, a bronze tablet marks the site of the first public building erected in Georgia. It was 12 feet wide and 30 feet long and was used as a court room. In this little room, John Wesley preached his first sermon in Savannah, March 7, 1736, from the thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians. Here also he held the first communion service conducted by him in Savannah. The tablet bears the following inscription:

On this spot where stood the
First Public Building Erected in
Georgia, John Wesley preached
His First Sermon on American Soil
March 7, 1736 (O. S.)
Text I Corinthians XIII
This tablet commemorates the bi-centenary of his birth,
June 28, 1903

John Wesley Hotel

The John Wesley Hotel stands on the site of the parsonage occupied by Mr. Wesley, which figures so prominently in his Journal. It had a beautiful garden which is also frequently mentioned. Here came Miss Sophy Hopkey for instructions. Here also gathered the

small group in the meeting which Mr. Wesley called “the second birth of Methodism.” Wesley moved into this house on March 15, 1736, after his predecessor, Mr. Quincy, left. On the Congress Street side there is a bronze tablet bearing the following inscription:

John Wesley
The Founder of Methodism
Lived 1736-37 on this lot
Set Apart by Oglethorpe
For a Parsonage
Here in April, 1736
According to His record
Was the Second Rise of Methodism.

United States Post-office

The present Post-office, Bull and State Streets, is on the site of the colonial court house in which Wesley preached from May 9, 1736, to November 27, 1737. In this building, it is said, he made his last public prayer in Georgia. On the rear wall, on Whitaker Street, will be found a bronze tablet with this inscription:

John Wesley
Preached in the Court House
Erected by Oglethorpe
on this lot
from May 9, 1736
To November 27, 1739 (O. S.)
This tablet is here placed on the bi-centenary of his birth
June 28, 1903.

Christ Church

Christ Church (Episcopal) is at Bull and Congress Streets, near the Savannah Hotel. A lot was set aside by General Oglethorpe for a church, but no building was erected during Wesley’s time; he had no church building while in Savannah. Christ Church claims the Wesley tradition, as the oldest Episcopal Church in Savannah. It is said that John Wesley conducted in Savannah the first Sunday school ever established. On either side of the door of
Christ Church will be found a tablet—one commemorating the services of John Wesley and the other honoring George Whitefield. The Wesley tablet bears an inscription as follows:

To the Glory of God

In memory of

John Wesley

Priest of the Church of England

Minister to Savannah 1736-37

Founder of the Sunday School of this Church

Erected by the Diocese of Georgia

First Methodist Meeting House

On the northeast corner of Lincoln and Oglethorpe Avenues, stands the first Methodist meeting-house ever erected in Savannah. The original building is intact but is now a residence. Of course Mr. Wesley had no connection with this building, which was not erected until 1812. It was called Wesley Chapel.

Probably the first Methodist preacher to visit Savannah was Hope Hull, who was appointed in 1790 and driven away by a mob. In 1796, Washington Jackson and Josiah Randall were also driven out of the city. Another attempt to gain a foothold was made in 1800, but this likewise was a failure. In 1806, Samuel Dunwoody, of the South Carolina Conference, came, taught school for his living, and preached to the family where he resided. Jesse Lee came in 1807, preached to a large congregation and formed a class of four persons who had been Methodists elsewhere. This was the first class in Savannah. The building was erected in 1812, largely with money obtained elsewhere, and was dedicated by Bishop Asbury. There was only one Methodist Church in Savannah until after the Civil War. The present Trinity Church is the successor of this first congregation; it claims to be the only Methodist Church which retains the love feast as a part of its regular worship.

ENVIRONS OF SAVANNAH

John Wesley preached in many places outside Savannah, and more than once in Charleston and other places in South Carolina. Most of these are mentioned in the account of Georgia in his Journal. Not all of these points of interest can be visited or even mentioned, but attention may be directed to the following:

Tybee Island

The exact spot where Mr. Wesley first placed foot on American soil is not certainly known. He says it was on a little uninhabited island called Peeper Island, near Tybee Island. We are not sure of the location of this island. Aside from the fact that its soil first felt the pressure of Wesley's foot, it has no significance. Tybee Island, on the other hand, is mentioned many times in Wesley's Journal.

The extreme point of Tybee Island, where the Savannah River enters the Atlantic, is approximately 22 miles east of the city. Here is located Savannah Beach, popular summer playground. Near by is Fort Screven, a post of the United States Army, situated where the river enters the sea. Here is the tall Government lighthouse which stands as a beacon for ocean-going vessels.

Investigations made preliminary to the Council meeting disclosed that probably the spot most easily accessible and nearest the actual
landing place is a point within the grounds of Fort Screven. Through the courtesy of Colonel Ganoe, Commander at the Fort, a pilgrimage will be made to this point and a brief service conducted. The place selected is almost certainly not the exact landing place of Mr. Wesley, but it seems to be as near thereto as the present terrain affords.

Thunderbolt

Readers of Wesley's Journal encounter frequent references to Thunderbolt. This is a fishing village five miles from Savannah. It was originally an Indian village and took its name from a tradition to the effect that a bolt of lightning caused a spring of water to gush forth. In Wesley's time, there were only a few English people living there. It is a picturesque spot with its small harbor and fishing craft of every kind.

Irene

Irene was an Indian settlement in Wesley's time, the village of Tomochichi, the Chief, or Mico, famous in Wesley's Journal and who was taken to England by General Oglethorpe. Here Mr. Wesley visited the Indians and an Indian school was later established. Irene is now a dead town. Under the auspices of the Federal Government, excavations are under way for purposes of research in Indian life, art, history, and customs.

Bethesda Orphan House

Although it has no connection with Mr. Wesley himself, the Orphan House is famous in Methodist history. After Wesley's return to England, George Whitefield was sent as pastor to Savannah, and in 1740 he laid with his own hands the first brick of his famous "House of Mercy." At his death in 1770, it passed by Whitefield's will to his friend and benefactress, Selina, Countess of Huntington, who supported it for many years. It is the oldest orphanage in America, and is now an institution for the boys of Chatham County.

Bethesda is located fifteen miles from Savannah in a most beautiful setting. Here is a magnificent natural outdoor amphitheater surrounded by great live oak trees. A graceful little chapel has been erected and dedicated to the memory of George Whitefield. A pilgrimage will be made to Bethesda.

Frederica

Next to Savannah, the village of Frederica was the most important scene in the labors of John Wesley. It was located on the west side of St. Simon's Island, overlooking the Frederica River, about eighty-five miles south of Savannah and near the present city of Brunswick. It was here that Wesley was troubled with the incipient scandal concerning two prominent women and General Oglethorpe. Here also a layman plainly told him that he was disliked and that nobody would come to hear him preach again: "Be-
sides, they say they are Protestants, but as for you, they cannot
tell what religion you are of. They never heard of such a religion
before!" Frederica is a dead town, only a few ruins remaining.

Here are the ruins of Fort Frederica, erected in 1736 by General
Oglethorpe to guard the frontier of Georgia against Spanish in-
vasion from the south. Near by is what is left of Frederica. The
"storehouse" in which Wesley preached cannot be identified, nor
can the site of the house which Wesley built at Frederica. One
sees traces of the foundation of a house which is said to have been
the only home General Oglethorpe ever owned in Georgia; how-
ever, a mile away is a monument marking an entirely different
spot as the site of the Oglethorpe house.

On the other side of the island Oglethorpe built another fort,
also mentioned in Wesley's Journal. The site is marked by a small
monument. Nearby also is a monument commemorating the Battle

been fulfilled at the Battle of Bloody Marsh in 1742, the settlement
began to decline and was dead by the time of the Revolutionary
War.

A little south of Frederica stands the famous Wesley Oak. It is
a great and gnarled live oak tree on which is a weatherbeaten
board bearing this inscription: "Wesley Oak. Under its branches
tradition says John Wesley preached to the Indians." Near by
stands Christ Church (Episcopal). This is probably the most notable
Wesley shrine in Georgia. None can say with certainty that this
Wesley Oak is the actual tree under which Mr. Wesley stood; it is
said that other trees in the past have been called the Wesley Oak.
The point is of little importance. The terrain is a natural amphi-
theater, probably the best outdoor preaching place on the island,
and there seems no reason to doubt that Mr. Wesley did preach on
the spot.

The crowning pilgrimage of the Council will be to St. Simon's Is-
land, Frederica, and the Wesley Oak. A round-trip drive of ap-
proximately two hundred miles will be necessary. There will be a
bus charge of $2.50, and exact adherence to the schedule will be
necessary.
General Information

There are no fees for registration at the Council. All meetings are open to the public, though the Tuesday sessions are for specialized purposes. Public addresses begin Tuesday evening. Business will be transacted Tuesday morning. All are invited to participate, but only the actual members of the Council as set forth in the Discipline may legally vote.

Visitors should make their own hotel reservations as early as possible, and are warned that disappointment is probable in cases of failure to do so.

Hotel Accommodations

De Soto Hotel

The general headquarters of the Council will be at the Hotel De Soto. This is the largest hotel in Savannah, but it will not be sufficient to accommodate all those in attendance, and it is therefore highly important that reservations be made early. The rates are as follows:

30 rooms with double bed and bath, one person, $2.50 per day
   two persons, $3.50 per day
50 rooms with double bed and bath, one person, $3.00 per day
   two persons, $4.00 per day
20 rooms with double bed and bath, one person, $3.50 per day
   two persons, $4.50 per day
40 rooms with twin beds and bath, two persons, $5.00 per day
40 rooms with twin beds and bath, two persons, $6.00 per day
20 rooms with twin beds and bath, two persons, $7.00 per day
Rooms with double bed $2.00 single and $3.00 double, without bath.

Savannah Hotel

A popular commercial hotel of 300 rooms in the heart of the city, within walking distance of all meeting places. All rooms are with private bath. The rates are as follows:

10 $2.50 single rooms
10 $3.00 single rooms
8 $3.50 single rooms
10 $4.00 double rooms, double bed
10 $4.50 double rooms, double bed
10 $5.00 double rooms, twin beds
10 $6.00 double rooms, twin beds

John Wesley Hotel

A new hotel of 100 rooms in walking distance of all meeting places. It stands on the spot where John Wesley lived in Savannah. The rates are as follows:

With bath—10 rooms, single, $1.75 to $2.25 per day
   10 rooms, double, one bed, $3.00 to $3.50 per day
   double with twin beds, $3.50 to $4.50 per day

Pulaski Hotel

Fifty rooms are available. The rates are as follows:

Single room, without bath ........ $1.50
Double room, without bath ........ 2.50
Single room, with bath .............. 2.50
Double room, with bath .............. 3.50
Four to room, without bath .......... 4.00
Four to room, with bath .............. 5.00

Whitney Hotel

With bath—Single rooms, $2.50, $3.00 per day
   Double rooms, $4.00, $5.00 per day
Connecting bath—Single rooms, $2.00, $2.50 per day
   Double rooms, $3.00, $3.50, $4.00 per day
Without bath—Single rooms, $2.00 per day
   Double rooms, $3.00 per day

All rates above mentioned are for rooms only, without meals.

Persons desiring more reasonable accommodations or entertainment of a different nature should write to Mr. Alex S. Cassells, Chamber of Commerce, 34 Bay Street, East Savannah, Ga.