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THE OLD PATRIARCH

by Frank Jones Retired U.M.C. Pastor

In 1832 the Missouri Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church met in Arkansas, at a place described as Mountain Spring Campground. Jerome C. Berryman (who later married into the Russell family and became my uncle) was one of the clergy receiving an appointment from Bishop Joshua Soule. The appointment was to be "a missionary at the Indian Mission in the Kansas Territory."

Jerome Berryman was born in Kentucky in about the same time and place as Abraham Lincoln. In his teens he was converted in a Methodist revival and received the call to preach. His Presiding Elder began preparing him for this task. Jerome, at age 18, and encouraged by his older brother, Joshua, had moved to Arcadia Valley in Missouri where Joshua lived.

He then presented his Kentucky credentials to the Missouri Conference and was recognized as a licensed exhorter and preacher. His first two years he served two circuits in the southeast and central parts of Missouri, where his salaries were \$16 and \$25, plus a 40% commission which the Methodist publishing house granted him on any books he might sell.

Rev. Berryman was next appointed to the Hot Springs and Mound Prairie circuit in southwest Arkansas. It was a six-week circuit (the time to travel the circuit doing the necessary preaching and starting churches, etc.). He completed the circuit twice and in route the third time fell very, very ill. This was common in those early days, traveling in rain, snow, sleet; swimming swollen rivers on horseback; sleeping on the ground – often in swampy country; the exposure to the elements took their toll.

After being delirious for about a month, one day he saw the face of Jesus and heard him say that this sickness would be long and severe, but not unto death. He became totally blind, and gradually, during the two months ahead, he regained his sight. When able, he resumed his six-week circuits. This brings us back to the conference in Arkansas when Jerome C. Berryman was sent to the Kansas Territory, where he remained for fifteen years, burying his wife and two of their children there — and the oral tradition of my family has always said that his wife was "the first

white woman buried in the Indian territory."

At the end of those fifteen years Jerome Berryman felt called by God to request a move from one non-traditional ministry to another, from serving in a mission station to starting a church college. So, he moved back to Arcadia Valley, where his brother, Joshua, apparently provided some financial backing for this new school, to be called Arcadia College, and introduced him to other people in the area who could help.

One of those persons was Cyrus Russell, who some years before had moved his family from Connecticut and established large farms for himself and his four grown sons, in an area along the east side of Arcadia Valley, which began to be called Russellville. One of Cyrus's first projects was to build a school/church on his land. (I remember this building well as it was still standing during most of my life, but it is no more.) Mr. Russell did not know what schools would be available, so he would use this building to start a school if necessary.

Since Arcadia Valley had no Congregational Church, he would use this building to start one of those as well. Unable to arouse much interest in a church rooted in cold New England, he gave in to the unwritten rule, "When a Congregationalist crosses the Mississippi River, he automatically becomes a Presbyterian."

Cyrus's building, which had never been used for either of its intended purposes, could house Arcadia College for its first two years, while Jerome was laying out and constructing his campus about a mile away in the south end of the valley.

Jerome Berryman saw Arcadia College as an evangelical arm of the church. Every year he had a big revival meeting, often with the preaching being done by his brother-in-law, a Methodist preacher known as Rough-and-Ready Watts.

At the conclusion of this revival each year, almost the entire student body professed God's saving grace. (The person who wrote Rev. Berryman's obituary for the conference journal wrote: "He had the unyielding moral conviction of a Puritan, and the tone of a highly-bred southern gentleman. The men he educated showed the influence of this man – whose determination, conviction, and management made such a school possible. It is conceded by thoughtful men

that church and state received no more valuable service from any source than that rendered by Rev. Jerome C. Berryman in Arcadia Valley.”)

Jerome Berryman was a delegate to Methodism's General Conference in 1844, the fateful conference that saw the denomination divide into two churches – Methodist Episcopal Church and Methodist Episcopal Church, South. He made his choice to go with the South, as did about half the ministers and churches in Missouri and almost all of the ministers and churches in Arkansas.

From mid-19th century to late 20th century, Arcadia Valley had two Methodist churches less than a mile apart; this was also the case in other communities. It was not until the 1940's, following the union of three Methodist groups in 1939, that these two churches could be served by the same pastor – and only in the 1970's that they merged and formed the Arcadia Valley U.M.C., with a new building.

The Civil War was hard on institutions such as Arcadia College. Each year of the war the college went further into debt just to keep operating, and in 1867 Rev. Berryman had to shut down the college, and sell the buildings and the furnishings just to satisfy those debts. The property was purchased by the Urselin Order of nuns for a residential girls school. Urselin Academy was still operating in my youth, and still may be today.

One of the campus furnishings which he did not sell was a life-size (six-foot) portrait of Jerome, sitting in the president's chair at the school. It went to the Arcadia M.E. Church, South and hung over the church entrance at the back of that small sanctuary – which meant that every minister who ever stood in that pulpit to preach across one hundred years had to preach with Brother Berryman's eyes following his every move. (When I was nineteen I was invited back to the church to preach my first sermon – at Arcadia at 9:00am and at Ironton at 11:00am. That means that at my very first sermon I had Uncle Jerome, or rather Old Brother Berryman, watching over me and encouraging me. Today I thank God for that.)

Upon the closing of the college, Jerome was appointed to churches and circuits, up and down the eastern part of Missouri, until he retired at the age of 76. During those years he was recognized as one of many persons who had a part in founding the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. As the years passed by, fewer and fewer of those founders remained.

Brother Berryman, once near death for months in a south Arkansas person's home, reached the age of 96, which he

probably never expected to achieve. He had buried three wives, and now his fourth wife was caring for him. He was buried near his retirement home in Caledonia, ten miles north of Arcadia Valley.

As the years passed, those who had been delegates at the fateful conference in 1844 were honored more and more and came to be called the Patriarchs of the denomination. Finally, 62 years after that conference, Jerome Berryman was the only Patriarch remaining.

In 1906, as the General Conference was meeting in Birmingham, the Conference sent official greetings to its beloved Patriarch, and he was able to send a reply. Just a few weeks later, death came to Jerome C. Berryman, after fourscore years as a Methodist preacher.



(Photo of the 1970's Arcadia Valley U.M.C.)

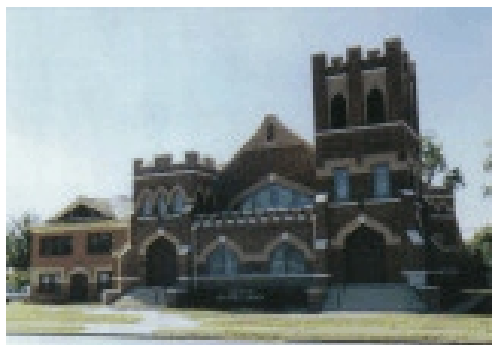
IRA Rollover Provision

~~—Reinstated through 2009—~~

(Oct. 3, 2008) President Bush signed into law the \$700 billion economic bailout bill (H.R. 1424, Financial Rescue Package), which includes a two-year extension of the IRA Rollover provision. This will apply to all gifts made from Jan. 1, 2008 (retroactive) and will apply to gifts made from that date through Dec. 31, 2009. The provision exempts from taxable income any funds transferred (“rolled over”) from an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) to a charitable organization. The following limitations apply:

- The donor must be age 70 ½ or older.
- The cap on annual IRA rollovers is \$100,000.00
- The contribution must be a **direct gift** to a charity (no planned gifts or receiving the funds and write a check).

Consider the U. M. Historical Society for a gift, or the U. M. History Museum. You can call the United Methodist Foundation at 501-664-8632 for more information.



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, HAMBURG, ARKANSAS

Submitted by a former pastor, Rev. Leslee Phillips

The 150th anniversary of the creation of the Hamburg First United Methodist Church was celebrated on May 4, 2008. Most of this information comes from a bulletin used on that occasion, plus some from Rev. Phillips.

A Mary E. Bond organized the first church school in Hamburg, Arkansas, as part of the 1848 church start. The young congregation continued to grow, and in 1850 the first pastor was appointed by the Conference, Rev. Peter Haskew. Under his leadership the church was fully organized and a one-room church was built and used until 1858.

For \$125.00, the Hamburg Methodist Church, South, purchased property for a new building. A church bell was struck in England and shipped to New Orleans, from where it made its way to Marie Saline Landing, arriving in Hamburg the same day that President Lincoln was assassinated. Today's church stands on the same spot and the same bell calls the members to Sunday School and worship every Sunday morning and rings again at the end of worship. This bell ushers every new bride and groom from the sanctuary into the public following the wedding ceremony. It calls us to remember with both reverence and pride our grand heritage.

August 10, 1910, was the day that ground was broken for the present sanctuary. Additions were made in 1950, 1956 and 1983. The sanctuary was remodeled in the early 1960's. The 1950 two-story remodeling provided a fellowship hall, kitchen and classrooms. The 1956 project was another two-story addition to the south that provided a new fellowship hall, more classrooms and a pastor's study. The 1960's renovation increased the total seating area and purchased some adjoining property to allow for expansion. The current fellowship hall was built on this property in 1983 with a kitchen, choir room and stage. The old fellowship hall was converted to make new classrooms, a pastor's study and a secretary's office.

In 1990 the church approved a three-phase renovation project. By 1996 all phases were completed, and all three buildings had been extensively renovated. All repairs and renovations to the sanctuary were done carefully and within guidelines so that the church became an historic place in 1992, when it was added to the National Registry of Historic Places.

Today (2008) the church has a membership of 271 with an average worship attendance of 93. The value of the church land, buildings and equipment is \$1,314,400.00. The spirit and drive of this church continues. In 2006 a new parsonage was constructed at a cost of \$250,000.00 without any debt incurred.

The Hamburg United Methodist Church family also takes its commitments to the United Methodist Church seriously. It faithfully pays its apportionments and has set itself a standard of paying them in full within the first six months of the church year.

Staffing needs have changed since the arrival of the first pastor in 1850. The church now supports a full-time pastor and secretary, along with a part-time staff including music director, youth director, children's director, nursery attendant, pianist, organist, custodian, and a cook to provide Wednesday Night Fellowship meals.

Since 1850 the church has been blessed with the ministry of 49 pastors, Rev. David Moore is the current pastor. Four Arkansas Conference pastors can trace their roots to the Hamburg First U.M.C.: Rev. Don Nolley, Rev. Dr. Kurt Boggan, Rev. Sam Jones, and the late Rev. Dr. Robert A. Regnier. Each of these pastors has a special place in the hearts of the membership.

The interior of the sanctuary is shaped like a ship which slopes to the front and the altar area is built up with the altar table in the center; the pulpit on the left; and the lectern on the right. The choir loft is behind and to the right of the lectern. Stained glass windows adorn the sanctuary. At the back, the window tells three attributes of faith – faith strengthens us *Physically, Spiritually, Intellectually*.

The chandelier that hangs from the center of the nave is composed of globes. Legend has it that the man who gave the chandelier won it in a raffle. Someone asked the man what he was going to do with such a large item, he replied, "I'm going to give it to the Methodist Church." And there it is. (Rev. Phillips notes: "When I was serving there, I asked about this and the response was, 'That's what I've heard.'")





United Methodist Historical Society of Arkansas

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† WORDS OF APPRECIATION †

Rev. Hillman Byram, author of an article in the Spring '09 edition of the *Occasional Papers* died this summer. The Board of the United Methodist Historical Society of Arkansas expresses our thanks for his service, and for submitting that piece to us. We offer our sincere condolences to the family.

Occasional Papers On-Line!

It is still our hope (and goal) to have the *Occasional Papers* on-line via the Arkansas United Methodist Email network in their email distribution along with other conference information.

SUGGESTIONS ? SUBMISSIONS !

Do you have a suggestion for an article? Or have one to submit. The editorial staff is open to both. Small, paragraph size, fill-in items are also desired and welcomed. Contact Ron Clark at rbclark2089@sbcglobal.net.



The **Everton United Methodist Church** is located in a former Everton school building. Everton U. M. C. for many years was part of an eight-church Enlarged Parish, including

Harrison St. Paul, Valley Springs, Valley View, St. Joe, Bellefonte, Omaha, Bergman and Everton. St. Joe has since been closed.

Bishop Charles Crutchfield will be our speaker at the **April 24, 2010** Meeting of the United Methodist Historical Society of Arkansas. **Board meets at 10:00; Lunch at 12:00 with the program following lunch.** Put it on your calendar today!



Dues for the Historical Society are due in January. Mail your \$5.00 to: **Sue Osment Jones at 2210 Maplewood Drive, Conway, AR, 72032.**