

January Trivia:

Week 1

During the civil war, there were differences in loyalties, divided opinions and patriotism advanced by both the north and the south. In 1862, the conference sent E.N. Errick to complete the year as pastor, but he eventually went into the army. He was replaced by W. H. Pearce, a scholarly gentleman and refugee from the south. The darkest period of the church was in 1863, during the hottest and most trying period of the war. It was then that L. J. Templin came to serve. But the contentious atmosphere appears to have been too much and he resigned. C. Disbro came in 1964 and eventually restored confidence in the church.

Week 2

In the spring of 1836, Thomas Johnson's proposed site for the county seat of Adams County was selected. Part of Mr. Johnson's offer, included four church lots, one each to the Presbyterians, Roman Catholic, Methodist and Baptist faiths, the first four churches to be established. He also offered ½ acre for the public square, on acre for a county seminary, and up to two acres for a graveyard. "When the decision was made by the commissioners to accept Mr. Johnson's proposal, they saddled up and rode into *town*---then just a wilderness---and marked a white oak tree about two feet in diameter with blazes on four sides, on each of which the commissioners individually subscribed their names."

Week 3

The Church's original building on First (Front) Street was sold when they built their larger and more centrally located structure on the corner of 5th and Monroe Streets, to the Church of Christ for the sum of \$775 in the spring of 1881. In the fall of 1897 it became the Bosse Opera House. When it opened, it was said to have garnered the largest and most fashionable crowd ever assembled in Decatur. Movies and radio eventually ended live theater in small towns and the building was sold to Kirkland Township to be used as a gymnasium by Kirkland High School.

Week 4

It was during the time that Ezra Menard was appointed to the Decatur circuit (1847) and under his supervision, that the Sabbath School (Sunday School) was established in Decatur, along with the Ladies Mite Society. The latter was organized to help promote the financial and social interests of the church.

The Sabbath School was originally established to educate children; they were literally schools. They were places where poor children could learn to read. The Sunday school movement began in Britain in the 1780s. The Industrial Revolution had resulted in many children spending all week long working in factories. Christian philanthropists wanted to free these children from a life of illiteracy. Well into the 19th century, working hours were long. The first modest legislative restrictions came in 1802. This resulted in limiting the number of hours a child could work per day to 12! This limit was not lowered again until 1844. Moreover, Saturday was part of the regular work week. Sunday, therefore, was the only available time for these children to gain some education. The idea eventually spread to America. When communities began to establish schools which took over the education of its children, Sabbath schools then naturally turned to religious education.

Week 5

“The Ladies Mite Society was a heroic band of devoted women working together as a unit for the material prosperity of the church.” Many churches around the country were forming such groups based on the Biblical story of the “widow and the mite”, Mark 12: 41-44. This organization lasted from 1852 until 1920. It then took on the name of Methodist Episcopal Aid Society. In 1925 it became the Methodist Episcopal Ladies Aid Society. After 1940, and after the unification of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church South and the Methodist Episcopal Protestant Church, the ladies of the church reorganized to form the Woman’s Society of Christian Service, commonly referred to as the W.S.C.S. The organization continued under this name until the church unification took place in 1968; it then became known as “Methodist Women”.