

Guide to the Wesleyan Methodist Church Presidents Scrapbook 1772-1960



DREW

Wesleyan Methodist Conference Presidents Scrapbook

1772-1960

0.56 cubic feet

drew.ms.2411

The purpose of this finding aid is to help you understand the nature of this collection and to assist you in the retrieval of material from this collection. The following pages contain a brief biographical history of the person, or persons, who created or collected these papers; followed by a general description of the collection in the scope and content note. If more detailed information is warranted then series descriptions also appear.

The container listing appears last and is the listing of material in each box, or container, of this collection. To request material you need to turn to the container listing section. It is essentially a listing of file folders, or artifact items, in the collection. Each folder, or item, has a call number associated with it. Each folder also lists the inclusive dates of the material in the folder. On the material request form list both the call number and the folder, or item, title. Use a different line for each folder, or item, requested. When your request sheet is complete, or full, bring it to the archivist and the material will be retrieved.

Biographical Note

George Osborn (1808-1891), British Methodist Minister, was born in Rochester on March 29, 1808. He entered the Wesleyan Methodist ministry in 1828. He took a prominent part in the internal controversies of Wesleyan Methodism between 1830 and 1857. Osborn was a strong opponent of change in the Wesleyan system, especially of the admission of lay representatives into the Conference and strong supporter of Jabez Bunting. In 1847, he persuaded the Wesleyan Methodist Conference to permit him to test the loyalty of Wesleyan ministers to the status quo by asking them to sign a document in which they affirmed that they had not contributed to the Fly Sheets. More than a thousand ministers signed, but the number who refused to do so was sufficient to rob the test of its effectiveness. He was elected to the Legal Hundred at the 1849 Conference at which he played a large part in the expulsion of the ministers accused of having written the Fly Sheets. In later years, Osborn continued to maintain the conservative position, and he became increasingly isolated. He became one of the secretaries for Foreign Missions in 1851, retaining the post until 1867 whereupon being appointed as a theological tutor at Richmond College, London where he finished out his career when retiring in 1884. The denomination elected him twice as President of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference in 1863 and 1881. Osborn published a number of Methodist literary works over his lifetime. Death came to him in 1891 while living in Richmond.

John Wesley was the original President of the Methodist Conference, but after his death it was agreed that in future, so much authority would not be placed in the hands of one man. Instead, the President would be elected for one year only, to sit in Wesley's chair. Each year at the Methodist Conference, the following year's President (always an ordained presbyter) and Vice-President (always a lay person or deacon) are elected. When lay people were admitted to the Conference in 1878, a lay Vice-President was also elected, and the two now serve in partnership. The President and Vice-President follow Wesley's example in traveling the length and breadth of Great Britain. They preach widely and contribute articles to the Methodist press, often choosing a particular emphasis or theme for their year. They represent Methodism in the wider world. Taken from the Methodist Church website in 2011.

Scope Note

Osborn began to create what would now be called an autograph book of all the Presidents of the British Wesleyan Methodist Conference starting with John Wesley and finishing with Eric Baker in 1960. The scrapbook has three hundred and twenty-one pages. After Osborn's death in 1891, the Reverend Edward Martin, Osborn's son-in-law, continued adding entries until the Reverend J. G. Gillman picked up the task sometime during the middle twentieth century. Osborn ordered his entries on a year by year format that continues to the end of the volume. The scrapbook primarily contains images and autographs in the form of printed portraits and sample letters or signatures. Not every entry has both kinds of documents. Many



of the letters deal with random church matters on a sliding scale of importance. Clippings, usually dealing with memorial matters, a few class tickets and broadsides round out other record types were sporadically employed by the collectors. One item of note is an early wax seal bearing the image of John Wesley which is framed by the phrase Wesleyan Methodist Conference.

Arrangement

Material has been arranged in the following manner. Material is arranged by record type.

Related Materials

Wesleyan Methodist Church Presidential Scrapbook 1744-1900

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions regarding this collection. Copyright still owned by Drew. Permissions to publish must be directed to Drew.

Restrictions on Use

Detailed use restrictions relating to our collections can be requested from the office of the archivist at the General Commission on Archives and History. Photocopying is handled by the staff and may be limited in certain instances. Before using any material for publication from this collection a formal request for permission to publish is expected and required.

Preferred Citation

When citing material from this collection please use the following format: Direct reference to the item or its file folder, Wesleyan Methodist Church Presidents Scrapbook, George Osborn Collection - Drew University, Madison, New Jersey. Do not make use of the item's call number as that is not a stable descriptor.

Index Terms

Subject Topics

Church history-18th century
Church history-19th century
Church history-20th century
Clergy

Subject Geographic

Great Britain

Genre

Scrapbooks
Seals (Impressions)

Additional Creators - Personal Names

Gillman, J. G.
Marriott, Ester
Martin, Edward

Subject - Corporate Names

Wesleyan Methodist Church



Subject - Personal Names

Wesley, John



Container List

Call Number	Folder Title	Date(s)
2130-5-3:1	Wesleyan Methodist Church Presidents Scrapbook	1772-1960
5025-7-2:22	Wesleyan Methodist Conference Wax Seal Impression	Undated

