



Messenger

JULY 2009, VOL. 28, No. 2

235 North Fourth Street • Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106 • 215-925-7788 • www.historicstgeorges.org

Lessons from a Ledger: of Roofs, Seeds, & Rebecca of Coventry

What can be learned from this early St. George's accounting record? As far as roofs go, 30 years is a lifetime. The first church roof was replaced in 1797, about 30 years after the building was completed. This 30-year life cycle for roofs is the architectural standard to this day.

Philad. Jan. 25th 1797

A Subscription intended for the purpose of raising a sum of money, to put a new roof on the Methodist Church in this city, known by the name of St. George's church —

The money is to be paid at the time of subscribing; and the trustees engage, that the money shall be applied to no other use —

	£	S	d		£	S	d
Mathias Stoff	1	5	6	David Landreth	1	17	6
Ann Abram	7	10	"	James Swanwick	1	17	6
Ray Donkersooren	"	7	6	to 3 persons	3	15	0
Reggie Swann	"	15	"	to work strength	0	15	0
Boazal Dickinson	"	15	"	Thos Kelly	1	17	6
Caleb South	7	10	"	James Phippard	4	10	0
Waggy Withers	"	7	6	paid to the Treasurer	2	6	0
W. Lyon	3	15	0	from total which has been given to me for the roof of the church	37	5	0
Wm. Davis	5	2	6				

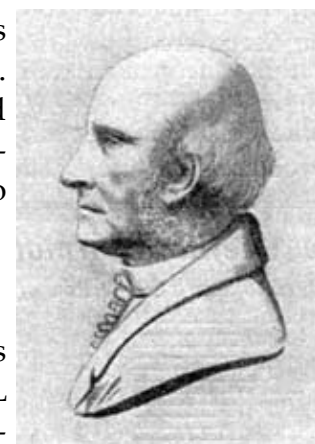
As our current sanctuary roof passes the 30 year mark and we find ourselves picking up stray shingles on New St., there comes an even more important lesson: replacing a roof is no idle business. It still takes the support of many folks.

As this edition of *The Messenger* goes to press, St. George's Trustees are reviewing bids for replacing the church roof, hopeful for the kind of patronage witnessed on this page from the past.

LSD

Even pages full of names and numbers hold interesting, amazing stories. For instance, the

headings on the columns above: what did "LSD" represent? Someone who grew up in the Sixties wants to know! In the accounting parlance of the day, it is the abbreviation for "pounds, shillings and pence". The £ and the S make sense, but why "D" for pence? Ah, it is Latin, *denarius*, an ancient Roman silver coin, oft mentioned in the Bible, originally worth ten asses ... perfectly clear! Ann Abram's gift of £7, 10 shillings (see above), translates to \$125 today¹, while a Mr. Landreth, in the second column, gave £1, 17 shillings and 6 pence, closer to \$17.



David Landreth

David Landreth

Church building projects are carried out by REAL PEOPLE who, likely unknown to us today, were active, vital participants of St. George's during their time.

Meet Mr. Landreth. Born in England in 1752, he emigrated to Philadelphia, married Elizabeth Druett, and was listed in the 1790 Census as residing in Northern Liberties. (If he only knew how hip he'd be today...) Elizabeth, his first wife, died in 1799, was buried at St. George's, and then reinterred at Mt. Moriah Cemetery when the burial ground here was closed.

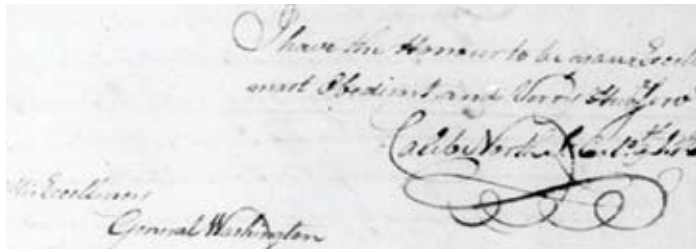
Landreth and his son, David, Jr., became founding members of the Philadelphia Horticultural Society, the organization that is responsible for our city's amazing Flower Show. Their company,

David Landreth continued from page 1

originally David Landreth & Sons, Seedmen, remains a thriving enterprise today. The web site (www.landrethseeds.com) has a thorough history section, which tells us that David introduced the zinnia to Pennsylvania, as well as the tomato, known then as a Love Apple.

A Landreth descendant, Charles, was kind enough to search the family Bible for any reference to St. George's. He found this note written by David, Jr. about his father:

"The implications made by Rev'd. John Wesley's preaching were destined to exhibit themselves, and my father shortly there after, united himself with a small band of Methodists who then worshiped at St. George's on North 4th street near New Street with which he remained connected for many years only leaving there to join a more conveniently located church, "Old Ebenezer", on South Second Street and subsequently the new one on Christian Street where my father, mother and other loved ones are entombed."



Caleb North

Sadly, the nature of public record keeping in 1797 makes tracing women far more difficult than men. Consequently, there's virtually nothing about Ann Abram or the five other top female donors. But there's a mountain of info about Caleb North, a \$100+ giver.

Col. North served in the Continental Army with much distinction, participating in many well-known battles: Brandywine, Germantown, Paoli, and Yorktown among them². His signature above is from a letter he wrote to Gen. Washington.³ He received a pension from the army upon retiring, and it was noted that following his service, he "connected himself with the Methodist Episcopal Church, of which he was a very prominent and consistent member during life."⁴

North was related to Rebecca Grace of Coventry, PA. Rebecca was a great friend of Benjamin Franklin's, and was also deeply interested in Methodism. She brought George Whitfield and others to speak to her community, once having to rescue Whitfield from some overheated ironworkers.⁵ In her will, Grace left "part of Plantation whereon I now live, described, cont. 93 perches, in trust for use of Religious Society called Methodists to erect a meeting house."⁶ (A perch is a measure of land equal to a square rod; a rod is a linear measure equal to 5.50 yards. Your editor's math stops here.).

The chapel built on Grace's legacy was later replaced in 1861 by the current Coventryville UMC. While North eventually retired to Coventryville, he resided in Philadelphia in 1819, where he was elected High Sheriff in a hotly contested election between eight candidates. During his tenure he was called on to quell a major prison riot, brought on in part by the conditions of the prisons.⁷

North was an original member of the Pennsylvania Society, our state's arm of the Society of Cincinnati, named not after the city but after Cincinnatus, who inspired their Motto: "He gave up everything to serve the republic." The Society was our nation's first military beneficial organization, formed before the Treaty of Peace was signed and before the British evacuated New York.

Mr. Landreth's and Col. North's stories are just two examples of the rich history hidden in every article of our archives. And even more, how the gifts that keep a church growing and thriving come from regular folk just like us.

1. According to Lawrence H. Officer and Samuel H. Williamson, "Purchasing Power of Money in the United States from 1774 to 2005," *MeasuringWorth.Com*, August 2006

2. www.pasocietyofthecincinnati.org

3. Library of Congress, Manuscript Division. Letters to and from George Washington

4. Pennsylvania archives by Samuel Hazard, John Blair Linn, William Henry Egle, George Edward Reed, Thomas Lynch Montgomery, Pennsylvania Dept. of Public Instruction, Gertrude MacKinney, Charles Francis Hoban, Pennsylvania State Library, Pennsylvania. Secretary of the Commonwealth, pp. 402-403

5. Bennett, Margaret; Busenkill, Estelle Kremers; Jackson, J. David; Miller, Elizabeth; Morris, Eleanor M.; Murphy III, J Kelly, Coventryville Historic District, 1977, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, Washington DC

6. Chester County Wills. Located at the Chester County Archives and Records Service.

7. Scharf, J. Thomas. *History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884*. Philadelphia: L.H. Everts, 1884.

We're Still Making History

What's Happening in the Congregation

Summer brings respite from a busy, marvelous year so far. Some highlights... **WE DID IT!** The Lenten Challenge to gather 100 worshippers for Easter was met and exceeded – **108**. No one can remember the last time St. George's had 100 for a Sunday service... Kudos to **Soloist Bruce Adams** who debuted an original composition Palm Sunday, "Majestic Prince," dedicated to church organist Dominic Silla and Pastor Day... Before we put Holy Week and Easter away for another year, note that we had another meaningful time with **Mother African Zoar** (Maundy Thursday), **Mother Bethel** (Good Friday) and **The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas** (Easter dawn)... St. George's will host a **Philly Fringe Festival** event in September and October, an original play about Edgar Allen Poe. Details in the Fall issue... **Church Administrator Donna Miller** was interviewed on WHY radio's Wider Horizons. Donna talked about how her role in First UMC of Germantown's After School Program for inner city high schoolers has changed her life ...**Mother's Day Matriarch Ann Reeves Jarvis and daughter Anna Jarvis** were smiling the 2nd Sunday in May, thanks to the *Nothing But Nets* visit by mother and daughter dynamic duo **Lynda & Katherine Commale**. Eight year old Katherine has gone over the 100K mark (or 10,000 medicated nets for Africa). By the end of the year, St. George's will contribute \$1000 of that total by skipping lunches to save a life... August 2 brings the high honor and privilege of hosting the national gathering of the **United Methodist Assoc. for Children, Youth and Family Services Conference**, meeting in Philadelphia. Touring the church and museum and a dinner in the courtyard are part of their agenda...**The Church Trustees** are busy caring for **safety, security enhancements and upgrades** to fire protection systems, emergency lighting and exits, doors and locks, intercoms, and video surveillance thanks to the endowment funds. This underscores the importance of what

you give, especially in these uncertain economic times. All these projects were urged by the **John Milner architectural report...** **St. George's & Gloria Dei (Old Swedes')** churches continue enriching relations. This summer the churches are joining in **Simply Eucharist**, an informal service of prayers, readings and Holy Communion every Tuesday. (July: St. George's – August: Gloria Dei). The services hope to connect with people away weekends and neighborhood folk alike. Services at St. George's are held in the court yard.... Plans are under way for celebrating **St. George's 240 anniversary November 22, 2009**. Lots of special programs and guests are planned. Watch for details... **There's a new theme for mid-week study group beginning this fall:** Dr. Amy-Jill Levine's *Survey of the Hebrew Scriptures* beginning in mid September. The group has enjoyed a wide range of ecumenical and neighborhood participation... The church is delighted to receive a set of **white paraments and antependia** from the former Central UMC (the home church of members Bob and Janet Mac Murray and Joyce Wilson). They are given in memory of Joseph Dawson by Jean and Betty Dawson. Wait 'til you see how beautiful they are! Here's hoping that you get to the mountains, countryside or beach for respite and renewal.



Mark the Dates!

Building on the study of our shared Episcopal / United Methodist Heritage...

Fall Combined Sunday Services w/ Gloria Dei (Old Swedes') Church

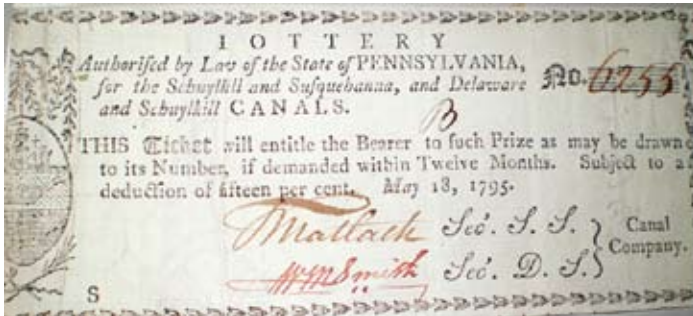
September 20,
St. George's goes to Gloria Dei

October 4, Gloria Dei comes to St. George's



Bound to Discover ...

*Items from the Scrapbook of Rev. Dr. Francis Tees,
(Pastor of St. George's (1931 - 47))*



Methodists and lottery tickets. Say it isn't so! 1795 church records indicate that St. George's benefited from a lottery ticket numbered 5545, winning 50 pounds and paying back a fee of 17.50 to the issuer. Down the slippery slope we went, buying four more tickets for no return.

Lotteries were used by Europeans for centuries to raise money for fortifications and to help the poor. In the colonies, the practice continued unabated to fund the vast array of building projects in the new land, church buildings notably among them. The Pennsylvania Gazette in the late 18th and early 19th centuries would have advertised a number of such lotteries.

Yet, lotteries were viewed by many to be gambling, and as such, were frowned upon by Methodists. Perhaps the losses after the tempting win was used as moral lesson to those looking for easy money.

Repayment of the debt incurred in purchasing this building was financed in part by lotteries un-

Wish List

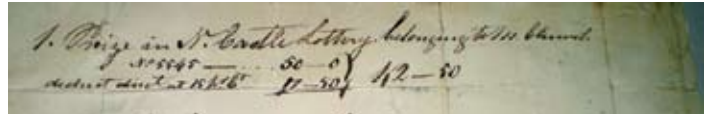
Special Gift or Memorial Opportunities

Thanks for your generous responses for the projects that keep St. George's in tip-top shape. **Marjorie Obrist** helped us install a wonderful new Guest Book to record visitors for a long time to come. **Frances Edwards** has given us the funds to transcribe the Maser VHS tape to DVD (that project will be completed shortly).

Gifts can be designated for all or part of items having significance to you.

The 2009 Roof Subscription (\$your choice). Be part of current history: have your name added to the list of subscribers to the new roof on the sanctuary. Perhaps in 200

til Francis Asbury voiced his disapproval; only then were those efforts discontinued.



Delaware and Schuylkill Canal

The intent of our lottery ticket was to fund a canal between the then-pristine waters of the Schuylkill River and the Delaware. According to Drew Brown, Philadelphia Water Department, the canal never came to fruition, although there is a chance that the underground passageway off Pennsylvania Avenue may have been a channel for that endeavor. Jane Mork Gibson, social and technological historian, tells us that it was the failure of the Canal Company that led to the selection of the site for the Fairmount Waterworks.¹ The secretary of the failed Canal Company, Timothy Matlack, was a member of the provincial conference held in Carpenters' Hall, June 18, 1775. He was a delegate to the convention of July 15, 1776, and appointed secretary of state in the new government. Matlack also put his pen to far more substantial documents than lottery tickets: he handlettered the original Declaration of Independence.

A canal constructed later farther north along the Schuylkill, between Lumberville and Phoenixville, was completed in 1820. That canal is undergoing restoration as a recreational spot.

Take *this* to the bank: St. George's will not be playing the lottery anytime soon.

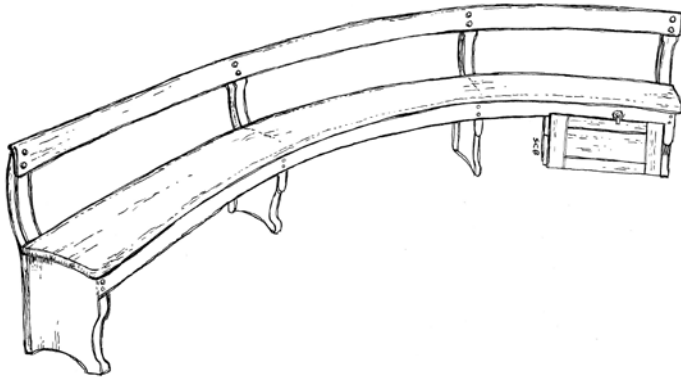
1. Bulletin, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Vol. 84, Nbs 360, 361 Summer 1988.

years, someone will look back at our list and wonder about the lives of the folks who helped keep this monument to Methodism in good shape.

Portrait Restoration: Charles Pitman (\$950) and **Joseph Rusling** (\$500). Gerald Hoepfner, restoration expert, has examined these treasures and is eager to get to work.

Front Doors. (\$5,000). Over two hundred years of wear and tear are showing on our front doors. They are in need of repair and fresh paint to provide an inviting entrance for our visitors.

New Seating Arrangements



drawing by Sandy Clay Bauer

St. George's was delighted to share six of its classic circular benches with Barrat's Chapel, Frederica, Delaware.

The benches, similar to the simple seating used in early Methodist meetings, add to the authenticity of this 1780's Methodist meeting house.

Barrat's Chapel is noteworthy as the meeting place of John Wesley's emissary, Thomas Coke, and Francis Asbury in November 1784. This meeting set in motion the historic Baltimore Christmas Conference that gave birth to the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Learn more about Barrat's Chapel online at www.barratschapel.org

Hear St. George's History On The Web

Thanks to a gift from Frances Edwards, the 45rpm recording of Rev. Dr. Robert L. Curry has been re-purposed and is now on the church web site. Check it out on the "history" tab at historicstgeorges.org: click on *Audio of Dr. Curry*, pastor during the American Bicentennial (1976).

Listen to What People Are Saying about St. George's

If you want real history, DON'T miss St. George's! — *a father and son touring through Independence Nat'l Park, advised by a guide at Carpenter's Hall.*

Such hospitality from the congregation at HSG! What a witness to our confirmation class — *Julia Hubbard-Smith, Chatham UMC, Greater NJ Conference*

You will never know the true impact that your message had on young an old alike...We could not have made a better first stop on our trip....You set a tone that made each of us inquisitive and interested in learning...God bless St. George's— *Rev. Earl Harris, Lenora Brogdon Wyatt, The Greater Allen African Methodist Episcopal Church, Dayton Ohio*

I visited St. George's several times...then moved to a new area and am now looking for a new church. Your church was so welcoming and kind to me. I can't get you out of my mind. Here is a small gift — *Hillary Ames, Medina, Ohio*

PARISH REGISTER

Births

Mason Renshaw Tummala, April 11; grandson of Frank and Sharon Renshaw

Baptisms

Laela Mae Stackhouse, Pentecost

Weddings

Amy Sinclair & Dario Mescia, August 29

Lizbeth Henshaw & Tom Miskelly, September 5; Houston, TX

Abigail Gallup and Drew Branham, September 20, Lancaster, PA

In Loving Memory

L. Gladys Chambers, April 20, 1919 – June 28, 2009
Memorial gifts in honor of Gladys may be sent to St. George's

Honored

H. Robert Cathcart received the Pennsylvania Hospital's Good Samaritan Award for his service as hospital administrator.

Who the Wind Blew -in:

Visitors to Church, Museum and Library

A busload from the **Greater Allen AME Church, Dayton, Ohio**, visited as part of a pilgrimage to understand their Methodist beginnings. • 40 youth from **Porterfield UMC, South Georgia Conference**. We introduced them to cheese steaks and took them to Simpson House where they performed a concert. • Members of the family of the **Rev. Francis Tees**, Pastor of St. George's 1933-1948. • **Mr. David Worthington, the Administrator of The New Room in Bristol, UK**. Mr. Worthington is our own Donna Miller's counterpart in the oldest Methodist chapel in the world (1739). The first Methodist classes and societies were organized there. • **Rev. Ben Ellis, pastor of Millbrook UMC in Randolph New Jersey**. Ben was pleased and proud to reconnect with Rueben Ellis, his great, great grandfather, pastor here in the early 19th century. • **Youtheology**, a group of almost 40 youth across the US, part of *Pan Methodist Pilgrimage 2009*, visited St. George's on the invitation of St. Paul's School of Theology, and UM Board of Church & Society to learn, worship, grow and explore. Led by St. Paul's Dr. Claire Smith, the group also had a presentation by Mother African Zoar's Sylvia Dixon, and visited Mother Bethel. • An adult study group from **Berwyn UMC** in suburban Philadelphia attended worship and stayed on for a tour • **Thea Scott, Steward, Wesley's Chapel, London, UK**. Thea spent the better part of a week with us exploring our museum and vault, participating in the May *Time Traveler* experience for youth and bringing greetings to a Sunday service. See Thea's Letter on page 7.

Planning Ahead

*29th Annual Christmas Musical -
December 6, 2009*

*Time Traveler dates for 2010: Saturday, March 13,
Saturday, April 10 and Saturday, May 8*

IRA Rollover Provision Reinstated Through 2009

(Oct. 3, 2008) President Bush has 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 as well as other charitable giving provisions.

The provision had expired at the end of 2007; the new provision will be made retroactive to Jan. 1, 2008, 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 70½ or older.
- The cap on annual IRA rollovers is \$100,000.
- The contribution must be a direct gift to a charity.

This Could Be Your Time!

No doubt about it, times are tough. Someone has said 401K's are now 101K's – if that! Yet, for all the downs, there are some ups. Someone among us has come into an unexpected financial blessing. If that's you, why not share a special gift with Historic George's?

Might you consider a charitable gift annuity, or might your Women's or Men's group consider supporting Historic St. George's among your benevolences?

Thanks for Your Support – The more than 400 Associates from around the country and the world, Historic St. George's have sent gifts totaling more than \$3000 following the Spring Messenger. Our goal is to raise \$20,000 by the end of the year. Thanks in advance for your generosity in support of our keeping this treasure of a place a touchstone to early Methodist spirit and tradition.

Contact Pastor Day at 215-925-7788 or e-mail him at: pastor@historicstgeorges.org



Letter from London

Observations of Thea Scott, Steward, Wesley Chapel

I struggled to write this until I read three of Pastor Day's sermons – then I laughed! Yes, my visit to St. George's started as an 'interruption', became 'the Spirit's igniting fresh wind', and is an 'unfinished' story.

I planned to visit Philadelphia to see the *Cezanne and Beyond* exhibition and just have some time out. As I am a steward involved in the heritage work at Wesley's Chapel in London, I thought it would be interesting to see your museum. I emailed St. George's, asking about a visit. Before I knew how it happened, I had agreed to bring greetings to the *Time Travelers*, enjoy fellowship with the congregation on Mothers' Day, and see all that is going on. To say that my perceptions of home, history and heritage spun on an axis is not to overstate the result.

Within minutes of meeting Donna and Pastor Day, I was at home – an excellent lunch was added value! We share common problems, mission, and opportunities at St. George's and Wesley's Chapel. Both are historic buildings, protected by law but still required to meet new health, safety and other regulations. Money, as always, is the big problem. You have the bridge and high speed line within yards of the building; we have underground trains about the same distance beneath the chapel. (The baptismal font has been known to vibrate on its plinth at inappropriate moments.) The same problems of heating and ventilation beset us both. No parking – enough said!

St. George's beautiful interior is, as John Wesley said of our chapel when it was opened in 1778, 'neat but not fine'. I wonder what he would think of our 1891 exuberant Victorian refurbishment with stained glass, gold leaf, marble memorials and jasper pillars; however, our new garden surrounding his tomb is a calm oasis.

Your mission to grow and encourage a new congregation is much as ours was 20 years ago with

similar changes in neighbourhood and population profiles. As your congregation increases, you will also face the challenge of incorporating 'heritage' into the chaos of an active all-ages community! We, too, share outreach social work at more appropriate venues and offer our site for countless musical events. The 'Time Traveler' heritage days are excellent, and I hope we replicate it here in London – part of the ongoing story.



Wesley Chapel, London

Your display relating to the saving of Wesley's Chapel in the 1970s knocked me sideways, I had never seen many of those items. Your historic objects are fascinating: the gavel made from parts of our original pulpit, the door handle, bricks and other bits and pieces – I had to travel 3,000 miles to see my own chapel's history. John Wesley's and Asbury's letters and books – and of course, that silver chalice, are treasures indeed. The most prized object for me is the handwritten hymn book prepared for the printer by John himself – priceless. I hope one day soon we can find a way to share some of this heritage.

Well, my trip became one of 'John Wesley and Beyond' – even unexpectedly finding the George Romney portrait in Gallery 280 of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Perhaps I will not cross the Atlantic as frequently as Coke, but I look forward to a continuity of communication between our two historic sites and perhaps visits from some of you, too. In the words of an old Irish blessing – 'Until we meet again, may God hold you in the hollow of His hand'.
Thea Scott

photo courtesy of Sacred Destinations (sacred-destinations.com)

Opening the Vault:

What's Up at the Museum & Archives

The **Joseph Pilmore Journal** (1769-1771), the handwritten record of one of John Wesleys' original itinerants sent to America, is being restored thanks to a grant from the UM General Commission on Archives and History. Pilmore's Journal will return to its place in the museum by summer's end... Next, we hope to offer reprints of the journal in the gift shop... **Nancy Donohue, Archivist at Neighbor Old First Reformed Church** came with a lantern slide and inquiry about St. George's original cornerstone. Her interest? The builders of this church building split-off from Old First before that splinter group discontinued. The original cornerstone, now covered by years of additional masonry layers, says in German – "This High German Reformed George Church was built in 1763" The Methodists came in 1769, purchasing the building following an auction debacle that, except for the Methodists, would have put some poor soul in Debtor's Prison. "God moves in mysterious ways, his wonders to perform" ...**Bob Williams, General Sect'y. UM Commission on Archives and History**, asked if we had record of **Richard Allen's ordination as a Deacon**, the first ordination of an African American in the Methodist Episcopal Church. Bob was addressing The Friends of the World Methodist Museum at Lake Junaluska, NC. After scouring the oldest minute books in the vault, no such documentation was found. So the best authentication of Allen's or-

dination to be found is in Jesse Lee's Short History where the ordination is recorded as June 11, 1799. ... **A researcher from New York, documenting a historically African American school** in Brooklyn, asked for some family tree info about Julia Anna and John Quincy Allen, descendants of Richard Allen and founders of the school...**our Archives were the source for an article published in The Pennsylvania Genealogical Magazine (Spring-Summer 2009), entitled "Marriages Recorded at St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church 1789-1817."** The author is Aaron Goodwin.... Pastor Day gave a presentation about St. George's to the Philadelphia Assn. of Tour Guides in May... **The Asbury Bible and Wesley Chalice** were part of Annual Conference worship and ordination services at the Eastern PA and Peninsula Delaware Conferences... and the usual number of interesting genealogical research requests from around the country looking for birth, marriage and burial records in our ledgers of closed United Methodist churches.



GUIDES NEEDED Are you in the area? Consider being a tour guide at Historic St. George's. We'll train you to share the stories of this Cradle of American Methodism.

Yes, I would like to make a gift to St. George's ...

Level: \$25 \$50 \$75 \$100 \$150 \$500 Other

Name _____		
Street Address _____		
City _____	State _____	Zip _____
E-Mail _____		