

# INVENTORY OF METHODIST PRIMARY MATERIALS AT BRIDWELL LIBRARY

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## Overview

All major branches and some smaller groups within the Methodist movement are represented in the collections of Bridwell Library. The Library's Special Collections are strongest in the areas of early Methodism in England; Texas Methodism; the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; the South Central Jurisdiction of the United Methodist Church; and the history of Perkins School of Theology.

## Methodist Periodicals and Serials

Bridwell Library has an extensive collection of Methodist journals, magazines, and newspapers, including:

- Partial to complete runs of various regional *Christian Advocates* (Alabama, Nashville, New, Northwestern, Pittsburg, Southern, Southwestern [Dallas], Southwestern [New Orleans], St. Louis, Texas)
- Annual Conference Journals and combined Minutes of the Annual Conferences
- General Conference Journals and Daily Christian Advocates
- Journals of the Jurisdictional Conferences
- Denominational Annuals and Yearbooks
- Annual reports of home and foreign mission organizations
- Annual reports of Methodist women's organizations
- Minutes of the World Methodist Conferences
- *American Illustrated Methodist*
- *Arminian Magazine / Methodist Magazine / Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*
- *Epworth Herald*
- *The King's Messenger*
- *Ladies' Repository*
- *Methodist Review*
- *Oklahoma Methodist*
- *Our Brother in Red*
- *The Quarterly of the Texas Methodist Historical Association*

- *Quarterly Review of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South*
- *United Methodist Reporter*

### **Disciplines and Hymnals**

Bridwell Library holds copies of most Disciplines and hymnals produced by and for the Methodist Episcopal Church; the Methodist Protestant Church; the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; the Methodist Church; the Evangelical United Brethren Church and EUB predecessor groups; the United Methodist Church; and the Free Methodist Church. Additionally, the library collects AME Church, AME Zion Church, CME Church, and international Methodist Disciplines.

### **Rare Books:**

Bridwell Library has collected approximately 2,000 early Methodist books and tracts, including multiple editions of nearly all of the printed works of John Wesley (1703–1791), the founder of Methodism. Several bear his manuscript annotations. Additional works by Charles Wesley and other Methodist religious and historical figures are present in first and early editions, as well as a broad array of works relevant to religious life in England and the Americas during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Bridwell Library also houses an extensive collection of later reference works, histories, and biographies concerning world Methodism.

### **Archival holdings and manuscript collections:**

Bridwell Library offers researchers more than 3000 linear feet of Methodist-related business records, personal and professional papers, images, printed ephemera, sound recordings, video recordings, and artifacts. Prominent items include letters and other documents written or signed by famous Methodists including John Wesley; Charles Wesley; Selina Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon; George Whitefield; Thomas Haweis; Adam Clarke; Francis Asbury; Thomas Coke; presidents of the British Wesleyan Methodist Conference; Littleton Fowler; Martin Ruter; Frances Willard; twenty-eight Methodist bishops including James Atkins, Frederick DeLand Leete, William C. Martin, John Heyl Vincent, and Aubrey G. Walton; Methodist ministers, missionaries, scholars, and families; and church-related organizations. The Perkins School of Theology Archive features the papers of the Deans of Perkins School of Theology; Professors Albert C. Outler, William Warren Sweet, John Hardin Hicks, W. B. J. Martin, Rabbi Levi A. Olan, and more than thirty other faculty members.

A list of all named archival collections with brief descriptions can be accessed at website [www.smu.edu/bridwell/archives](http://www.smu.edu/bridwell/archives). Finding aids (full descriptions) of processed collections may be accessed through the collections list or via the Texas Archival Resources Online website <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/taro/>.

Because charge and district business records are officially denominational assets administered by local church and annual conference archives, Bridwell Library has few such holdings. All predate the formation of the Methodist Church in 1939.

- East Texas Conference (MECS)  
Overton and Troupe Circuit quarterly conference minutes, 1879-1892
- Northwest Texas Conference (MECS)  
Corsicana District and Weatherford District records, 1875-1876  
Vernon District records, 1889-1892
- Southern German Conference (MEC)  
Bartlett Gemeinde, 1902-1905
- Texas Conference (MEC - MECS)  
Anderson Charge Historical Church Register, 1877-1885  
Anderson Charge quarterly conference minutes, 1899-1902  
Brenham District records, 1899-1909  
Calvert District records, 1883-1891  
Live Oak and Uvalde Mission Quarterly Conference records, 1857-1875  
Texas Mission and San Augustine Circuit records, 1837-1857
- West Texas Conference (MECS)  
Webberville Methodist Episcopal Church records, 1895-1919
- Central Tennessee Annual Conference (MEC)  
Waynesboro District - Nashville District - Tullahoma District - Lawrenceburg District records, 1882-1903

In addition to its own holdings, Bridwell Library houses the archives of four United Methodist-related bodies: the North Texas Annual Conference, Rio Grande Annual Conference, South Central Jurisdiction, and the Texas United Methodist Historical Society. These materials may be studied at Bridwell Library with the assistance or permission of the organization's archivist.

### **Online Resources:**

Several Bridwell Library Digital Collections

(<http://digitalcollections.smu.edu/all/bridwell/browse.asp>) feature collections of letters, documents, and images of early Methodism in England. Included are *John Wesley Letters*, *Charles Wesley Family Materials*, *Selina Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon, Letters and Images*, *Thomas Haweis Documents and Images*, and *George Whitefield Documents and Images*. There are 139 letters in the John Wesley collection making it the largest assemblage of Wesley's letters completely searchable online. Charles Wesley's collection includes letters, images, poems and an anthem penned by a family member, also searchable. Collections that feature the contemporaries of the Wesleys include letters, documents, and images. Each of these collections features large format scans of each page of the documents.

American Methodism is represented by the documents and images of John Heyl Vincent, a circuit riding Methodist preacher, Bishop and co-founder of the Chautauqua Institute. Letters written by Vincent highlight the struggles of travel, his work, and newsworthy events of the day

such as the Great Chicago Fire. Other digital collections illustrating American Methodism include the *Elmer T. Clark Portraits of Methodist Bishops*, *Frances E. Willard Documents and Images*, and *Lantern Slides produced by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South*.

Bridwell Library web exhibitions (<http://www.smu.edu/Bridwell/Exhibitions>) are virtual representations of physical exhibitions curated by Bridwell Library. Methodist materials are presented in *Early Methodists and Their Books*. This exhibition includes a hand written sermon by John Wesley, manuscript notes by Charles Wesley, and books owned by English and American Methodists. Additional web exhibitions feature archival holdings from the early years of Southern Methodist University and materials documenting the history of Perkins School of Theology.

**Also of note:**

Bridwell Library holds many rolls of microfilmed Methodist publications, missionary files, and other historical records.

In addition to the primary resources mentioned above, many researchers are drawn to Bridwell Library's collection of more than three hundred volumes documenting the histories of local charges and Annual Conferences in Texas and surrounding states.

**Conclusion:**

Whether your interest is in British Methodism, North American Methodism, Texas Methodism, or local history, Bridwell Library offers an abundance of primary resources in manuscript, print, microform, and online. The best way to begin your research is to consult the Library website and catalog ([www.smu.edu/bridwell](http://www.smu.edu/bridwell)) and contact a Reference Librarian, the Archivist, or the Curator of Special Collections (<http://www.smu.edu/Bridwell/ContactUs>).

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