

Bishop Isaac W. Wiley 1825-1884

by J. Martin Stroup, 1964

editor's note: This extended paper is a series of six articles featured in *The Sentinel*, the daily newspaper of Lewistown PA, in May 1964. They were written by J. Martin Stroup, then a former editor of *The Sentinel*. We certainly concur with the statement in the original introduction to the series that "much painstaking effort went into the gathering of facts from numerous sources." We thank *The Sentinel* for permission to reprint these articles and make this valuable information available to a new generation of readers.

1. The Story of "Mother" Stoner and the Making of a Bishop

This is the story of two careers. They were lives in which this community, especially Lewistown Methodism, can take justifiable pride. One was that of a housewife and mother. The whole community knew her as "Mother," or "Aunty," she was THAT kind of Christian. The other career started as have the lives of many persons, as a boy on the streets of Lewistown. Then, one Sunday morning in 1833 their paths crossed and he had a destiny.

A half-century later they were called to their eternal rewards in the same month. "Mother" Stoner was buried in the Methodist Cemetery on West Fourth Street on November of 1884. Beside her rested her husband, Henry Stoner, and all eight of her children who had preceded her to the grave. On the other side of the world, Bishop Isaac W. Wiley died during a tour of China and was laid to rest at Foochow beside his first wife, who had died there 30 years before while he served as a medical missionary.

"Mother" Stoner's meeting with Ike Wiley in April of 1833 was just one of the many acts of kindness that endeared her to all who knew her, and made her a legend of Christian concern in her own time. Bishop "Chaplain" McCabe visited her in her declining years and wrote of her, "She was as saintly as any that this generation has witnessed." Bishop McCabe described the incident of 1833 as follows: "One Sunday she saw a little white-haired boy (Wiley) lingering about the door of the church. She went out, laid her hand upon his head, and invited him into her class. Some time afterward she led him to the mourners' bench."

This little white-haired boy became a minister of the Gospel. Trained in medicine, he served in the China mission field, then headed a seminary, edited a church paper, and was finally elected to the highest office (that of bishop) in his, the Methodist Episcopal, Church.

"Mother" Stoner was born Elizabeth Keiser in Lancaster County, the daughter of Andrew and Jane Keiser, in 1797. In infancy, her parents brought her to Lewistown, where her father became one of the prominent citizens and

businessmen of the new Mifflin County seat that had been founded in 1790. Of her immediate family, other than her parents, we know but little. She had a sister Mary (1794-1858) who became the wife of Ephraim Banks – who was Pennsylvania auditor general, member of the General Assembly, and a prominent member of the Mifflin County Bar.

According to the 1800 tax lists, her father Andrew was a potter. By 1808 he was the owner of a slave, and in 1811 was a tavern keeper¹ with several other pieces of real estate. In 1814 he is listed as a merchant, and in 1822 again as a tavern owner. He owned considerable property in Lewistown borough and Derry township, and in 1821 he was elected president of the Lewistown town council.

Henry Stoner came to Lewistown, probably from Lancaster County, about 1823. He met and married Elizabeth Keiser not long after, and their first child was born in 1825. Mr. Stoner was a merchant with property in Lewistown borough and Derry township, including a storehouse. He was a stockholder and director of the Bank of Lewistown, the second bank in the community. He died in 1852, aged 61 years, having been a member of the Methodist Church for many years and a class leader for 25 years.

Henry and Elizabeth had eight children: Jane Hester (1825-1846), who married Milton J. Goodfellow in October 1846 and died just two weeks later; Martha (1826-1881), who married John T. Stoneroad; John Henry (1829-1861); Andrew Keiser (1831-1861); Marian (1833-1843); Mary (1836-1845); Jonathan (1839-1862); Kate Banks (1842-1853). Martha was the only one of their eight children who married and lived to maturity. She and John T. Stoneroad were the parents of the late Valentine D. Stoneroad, for many years a member of the First Methodist Church, and the grandparents of Mrs. Ralph (Audrey) Barchus.

Isaac Wiley, father of Bishop Isaac William Wiley came to Lewistown, probably from Cumberland County, about 1812. He first appears on the tax lists in 1813. By 1814 he owned a house and lot, and a cow. From 1815 on he was listed as a boatman or waterman, owning property in both in Lewistown borough and Derry township, including two acres on the river shore. The bishop's parents, Isaac and Elizabeth Wiley, were married about 1812. Her family name we do not know. Father Isaac was born about 1795 and died in 1831. Mother Elizabeth died in 1870, aged 80 years, after having been a Methodist for 50 years. Their eight children and approximate birth dates are as follows: Rebecca (1813), married James E. Brown; Letitia (1815); Eliza (1817), married Samuel Belford; George (1819); John (1821); Maria (1823); Isaac William (1825); Catherine Melissa (1827), married Ellis Griffith.

Isaac Wiley's occupation of boatman or waterman was that of one engaged in transportation on the Juniata River, this being before the building of the Pennsylvania Canal through here in 1829. "Arks" were large flatboats 50 to 70 feet long that were built to transport flour, grain, lumber and other natural products of the region. They could carry from 100 to 300 barrels of flour. They

¹ "The Bear" – which stood at the corner of Market and Brown Streets, the Russell Bank corner.

could only make the trip down river to markets at the time of the high spring water. Hence boatmen had to have warehouses to store their cargoes until the spring rains came. The arks could not be brought back up the river, and they were sold for lumber after being unloaded. Keel boats to carry from five to eight tons of merchandise often were towed down the river – loaded with groceries, hardware, iron, gypsum, and general merchandise. They were then poled back up the river by the ark crew.

Methodism came to the Juniata Valley early in the 19th century. Juniata circuit was formed from Carlisle circuit in 1804. It included Juniata and Perry counties, but the circuit riders always pushed beyond the bounds of their circuits. And so a Juniata circuit minister, the Rev. James Davisson, in 1805 or 1806, preached in the courthouse in Lewistown. In 1810 the Rev. John Thomas preached here. This is the traditional date on which Lewistown became a regular preaching point. The Juniata circuit preacher in 1811 was the Rev. John Gill Watt, and it is likely that the first class was formed in Lewistown that year.

Elizabeth Keiser, later “Mother” Stoner, was one of the first members of the Methodist church here in 1811. She was 14 years of age. The first Methodist church building was erected in 1815 at what is now 126-128 E. Third Street. The year following it was not complete, and Elizabeth Keiser, then 19, raised \$70 to pay for the plastering of the new church building. When she died in 1884, she had been a member for 73 years. The *Lewistown Gazette* on the week of her death had this editorial comment: “Old ‘Aunty’ Stoner, as she was well and familiarly known, expired this life Tuesday last at the ripe age of 87 years. She was the relict of Henry Stoner and was one of the oldest female citizens and a consistent member of the Methodist Church. Her demise, however not unexpected, was a regret to the community, she having numerous sympathetic friends who mourn her death.”

2. Compare “Mother” Stoner’s Life to New Testament Type of Piety

Following the death of Mother Stoner, the Rev. W. Maslin Frysinger, a Lewistown native and Methodist minister, wrote a tribute to her which was published in *The Christian Advocate*. Mr. Frysinger was a brother of the late George R. Frysinger – onetime editor of *The Lewistown Gazette*, the outstanding historian of Mifflin County, and founder of the Mifflin County Historical Society. Mr. Frysinger’s tribute is quoted in part herewith:

“Mother Stoner’s was a life as saintly as any which in itself so reproduced the New Testament type of piety as to furnish a living illustration of the power of Christianity to save to the uttermost... She early exhibited traits of character which made her conspicuous among the companions of her youth and a leader in their pleasures... At an early age, however, she was impressed by the preaching and piety of the few Methodists with whom she was brought in contact. These impressions deepened into conviction in her thoughtful mind, and while in a ballroom she was so overwhelmed by a sense of sin that she went to her home to agonize in prayer until she found a deliverance so complete and joyous that she never doubted its genuineness...

“The remarkable influence she exerted so long as she lived manifested itself immediately after her conversion, her parents and near friends being among the first to yield to it, notwithstanding their prejudices concerning the sect (Methodist) that was then ‘everywhere spoken against.’ Possessing a superior intellect, enriched by a familiarity with the best writers of prose and poetry of the day, and a wonderful knowledge and insight of the Scriptures, her public prayers and ‘experiences’ were often eloquent to an extraordinary degree. And her presence at revival services and campmeetings was considered as great an acquisition as that of the most notable pulpit orator.

“Her unusual gifts attracted the attention of the itinerants of an early day... Her religious experience was progressive from beginning to end, but was marked at an early period by a distinct advance into a higher life of faith and love, of which she was ever after a shining example. When she spoke of this it was with a modesty which carried with it a conviction of sincerity, even among total strangers. Among those who were familiar with her daily life there was no need of such a profession. Her humility was such that it never recognized itself. Her spirit was that of a little child. Her character was so Christ-like that benevolence seemed to beam from her very countenance.

“Her sympathy and charity knew no bounds. There was scarcely a roof in the town in which she lived, under which she had not at some time kneeled by the bed of sick or dying. Rich and poor, saintly and vile, sought her prayers. Ministering comfort to others as she did, no wonder that her own cup was full to overflowing. She could not listen to gospel themes without being profoundly moved, and she gave expression to her emotions on such occasions in so sincere and dignified a manner that it was suggestive of heaven’s own worship...”

Her home, at least in later years, was adjoining the Lewistown Borough Hall, now Municipal Building, on East Third Street. Two lots in this location were the property of the Keisers, Banks and Stoners from 1850 for 30 years or more.

In 1885, the year following Bishop Wiley’s death, a memorial to his life was published: *Isaac W. Wiley, Late Bishop of the M.E. Church, a Monograph*. Of 233 pages, the book was published in Cincinnati by Cranston and Stowe. It

was edited by the Rev. Dr. Richard S. Rust. The volume contained 15 chapters, each written by a minister or layman familiar with a phase of Bishop Wiley's life and career. The chapters cover early life and ministry, mission life, the educator, editor and author, the bishop, residence in New England, Freedmen's Aid Society, Woman's Home Missionary Society, the philanthropist, literary character, the orator, the man, closing scenes, memorial services, and editorial sketches. The volume was loaned to the writer by Slocum Library of the Ohio Methodist Historical Society at Ohio Wesleyan University at Delaware, Ohio.

The chapter on early life and ministry, written by the Rev. Dr. Henry A. Buttz, quotes from autobiographical notes written by Bishop Wiley for Dr. Leibhart and published in the *Western Christian Advocate*. It states that Isaac W. Wiley was born in Lewistown March 29, 1825, and then gives this account of his early life in his very own words:

"My father was a grain merchant, carrying on a considerable trade by river, and subsequently by the canal, with Eastern cities... His death was my first great sorrow. I was then six years old, and he had been an invalid for three years, the result of an accident... His death brought me into contact with the great mystery, and made an impression upon me that lasted through life. It solemnized me, and my mind immediately began to work on religious matters.

"Soon after I entered the Methodist Sunday School, and had for my teacher one of the most saintly of women.² For over 60 years she was a most exemplary Christian, was the means of leading many souls to Christ, and was for many years a benediction to the town. I well remember a cluster of six godly women, members of our church, of whom my mother was one, whose names were held in reverence in all places as examples of real religion. My mother lived to be 80 years old – having been for more than 50 years a Methodist.

"I used to preach to my invalid father in his sick room, and was called by him his 'little preacher.' I gathered my sisters and neighborhood children into our attic – and there we had prayer meetings, class meetings, and even miniature campmeetings. When I was about ten years of age, my good Sunday School teacher led me to a mourners' bench... My name was put down as a 'probationer' and remained there four years... Another gracious revival took place in our church when I was 14. Again I was found at the altar, and again my name was entered as a 'probationer'... Little attention was given by the church in those days to the religion of children, and all religious experiences of childhood were looked upon with much doubt. However, at the end of six months I was received into full connection."

3. Bishop Wiley Was a Founder of the Apprentice Literary Society

One of the associations in Lewistown which had a decided influence on Ike Wiley is described by a Rev. Dr. Wentworth of Erie many years later. He wrote that Wiley was one of the organizers of the Apprentice Literary Society in 1842: "Mr. Wiley... was a most exemplary young man. The society which he

² "Mother" Stoner was the Sunday School teacher he referred to as "one of the most saintly of women."

helped organize, and of which he was the first secretary and subsequent president, received favorable attention from the people of Lewistown, and has proven a stepping stone to usefulness to many as an apprentice. It still lives, and is now (1885) incorporated and owns property.” The property referred to was Apprentice Hall, now the building at 13 E. Third Street owned and occupied by the Mifflin County United Fund.³

Dr. Wentworth then quotes H.J. Walters of Lewistown, one of the founders and the first president of the society, as saying: “The bench, the bar, the pulpit, the press, the medical profession, trade, commerce, army and navy, state and national legislature – all have or had representatives from it.” When the society was founded, Henry Walters had just come to Lewistown from Erie – first being an apprentice to a cabinet maker, then becoming an apprentice in the *Lewistown Gazette* office to learn the printing trade. Ike Wiley was then apprenticed to Abraham Blymyer in the tinning trade. Dr. Buttz, in the 1885 memorial monograph mentioned previously, describes Bishop Wiley’s life during the years leading to the founding of the society as follows.

“At the age of 14 he has settled in his own mind that he would be a Methodist preacher. Accordingly, he entered the academy – Lewistown Academy, located where the United Presbyterian church house now stands. ‘This was a new thing,’ says Wiley, ‘in our region for a Methodist boy to prepare for college with a view of becoming a Methodist preacher.’ He bravely prepared to enter the sophomore class at Dickinson College.⁴

“But there was a singular interruption in his studies... perhaps one which has the marks of Providence. An extensive revival (the great revival of 1842-43) took place when he was in his 18th year. He gave himself wholly to it. He gave up his studies and was engaged directly for months in working for the salvation of souls. He devoted himself to it with all the enthusiasm of his youthful nature. About 300 were converted to God in connection with the Lewistown charge. This excessive labor resulted in great damage to his health, especially his voice. In the judgment of all, his voice was permanently gone.

“This, however, did not prevent him from noble aspirations and earnest efforts. He continued the studies at the academy for six months, then taught school for the winter. The belief that his throat difficulty would prevent his becoming a preacher led to the change in his profession and his abandonment of plans for a college course. In the spring of 1844 he began the study of medicine at Mifflin, Juniata County. It was here that he met Miss Frances J. Martin, who afterward became his wife. He described her in his autobiographical sketch as a ‘sweet-voiced, devotedly pious, and earnestly-working Christian girl.’ She was the daughter of Amos H. Martin, and was married to him at her father’s house in October 1846.”

Isaac then entered the medical department of the University of the City of New York and remained until 1846. That year he began the practice of medicine

³ The society first met in the courthouse, then in the center of the public square. Later they bought a lot and in 1853 erected the building at 13 E. Third Street

⁴ In the local church Isaac was appointed an assistant class leader at 16, an exhorter at 17, and licensed a local preacher at 18.

at Blairsville, and it was while he was there that he and Frances were married. But his success as a physician was not marked, and he remained at Blairsville less than two years. Mrs. Wiley, however, won the esteem of the people and Dr. Wiley occasionally served as a local preacher.

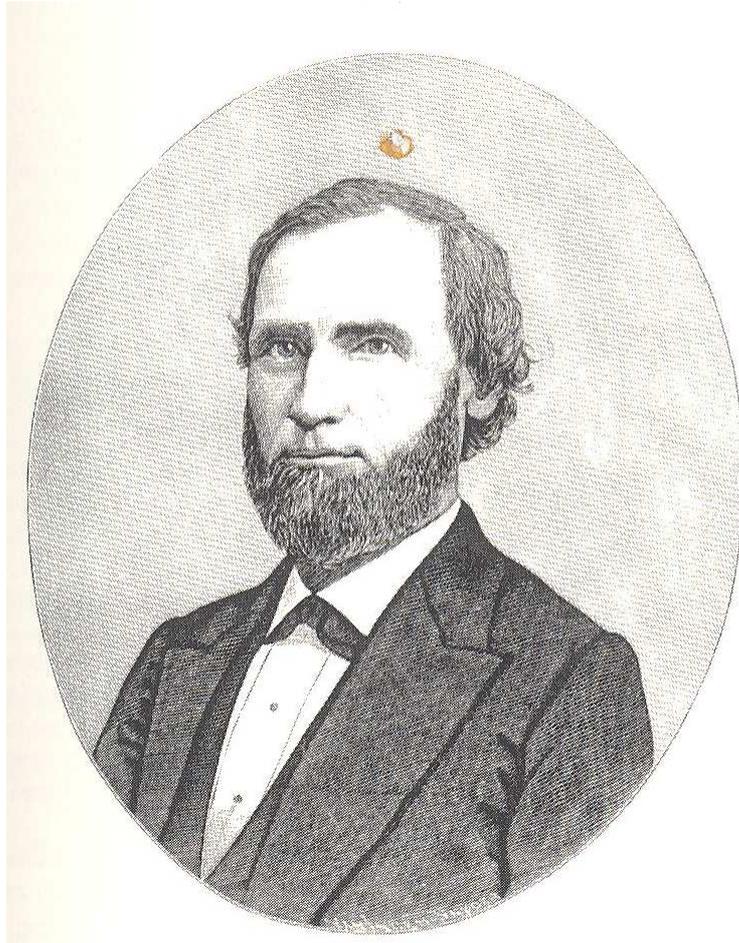
The eccentric preacher the Rev. Jacob Gruber, who once lived in the house at Third and Dorcas now owned by First Methodist Church, had tried to persuade him to enter the ministry before his marriage – urging him to “give up both marriage and medicine.” Marriage was at that time an almost inseparable obstacle to the itinerant ministry. While at Blairsville he tried to enter the ministry, but the Pittsburgh Conference “had no room for married men.”

He moved to Pottsville, and there also in addition to the practice of medicine he did occasional preaching as a licensed local preacher. In the fall of 1848 he moved to Port Carbon, near Pottsville, and continued as a local preacher while he practiced medicine. Dr. Wiley still longed to enter the ministry and applied to the Philadelphia Conference. Again there was no opening for a married man. And so he remained in Port Carbon until he sailed for China.

The Rev. Dr. John P. Durbin, secretary of the Mission Society, was present at that year’s annual conference and shortly afterward Dr. Wiley’s pastor received a letter from Dr. Durbin asking if he would learn whether Dr. Wiley would consider being a medical missionary to China. Dr. Wiley’s reply: “this has been the wish of my life.” He spent the summer of 1850 arranging his affairs preparatory to his missionary work. In preparation for his work as a medical missionary, he returned to the University of the City of New York for a course of lectures and graduation as a full-fledged M.D. in February 1851. The mission board voted him \$240 to purchase a medical outfit for a dispensary at Foochow. There had been missionary work in Foochow only from 1846.

The ocean voyage of 16,000 miles down around South America to China took from March 13 to June 17 of 1851. The Wileys had one daughter, Adah, with them on the voyage. Mrs. Wiley suffered a prolonged illness after the birth of their second daughter, Anna, on November 30, 1851. The following fall of 1852 Dr. Wiley was prostrated for six weeks with severe dysentery. Their two years and seven months in missionary work were trying times, made so by illness and the threat of rebels. In October 1853 Mrs. Wiley gave premature birth to an infant that died, and two weeks later, on November 3, the invalid husband was left with two motherless daughters.

During part of his time in China, Dr. Wiley was in charge of a boys’ school at Foochow. Mrs. Wiley’s death rendered his further stay in Foochow with two daughters impossible, and on January 16, 1854, they embarked for the United States.



Bishop Isaac W. Wiley
from Simpson's 1876 Encyclopedia of Methodism

4. Pennington School Takes Fresh Look Under Bishop Isaac Wiley

Bishop Wiley's second marriage was at the beginning of his pastorate at Halsey Street Methodist Episcopal Church, Newark NJ, in 1855. The bride was Miss Adeline Travis, daughter of Captain Travis of Staten Island. Her death occurred at a later period in the history of his life. In the spring of 1857 he was appointed to the pastorate of Trinity Church, Jersey City, one of the oldest and strongest churches of the Newark Conference. At the close of his pastorate of this church in 1858, he was appointed principal of Pennington Seminary at Pennington NJ, near Trenton.

In 1839, Pennington Seminary was officially known as "New Jersey Conference Seminary and Female Collegiate Institute." Dr. Wiley at 33 years of age, just back from China a few years and with little experience in education, took charge as principal at a time when the affairs of the institution were at low ebb. The Rev. Charles R. Smyth, headmaster of The Pennington School, still under control of the Methodist Church, provides the following account of Bishop Wiley's work at Pennington.

"Dr. William V. Kelly, who writes interestingly of this epoch, was a student under Dr. Wiley. He says, 'With the advent of Dr Wiley the institution took on fresh life and energy – due not only to the truth phrased in the *new broom* adage, but to the presence of a man of rare quality and great power.' Dr. Wiley administered the school during the dark days preceding the Civil War. In the third year of his administration, the war broke out. His biographer declares that 'in the pulpit, and everywhere, he declared that the Union must be preserved if the whole land had to be deluged with blood to save it. And the day after Colonel Ellsworth⁵ was shot at Alexandria VA, May 24, 1861, a tall flagpole was raised on the campus, from which the ensign of the Republic was henceforth kept floating.'

"His biographer further declares that the grand ideals of human character and ministerial work, given him at the outset by Dr Wiley, have been the 'pillar of fire' to his soul in all his life's march – and still in his life, as in many another, 'that lustrous column, swaying forward, bears us to the front.' This information was copied from *The History of Pennington School, 1838-1914* by the Rev. Frank MacDaniel D.D., headmaster. It was printed by the Smith Press of Trenton NJ in 1914."

Now in addition to the two daughters of the first marriage, there were two sons and a daughter of the second family: Charlie, whom they called in hope their "missionary boy" and who died in Boston in his 18th year; Willie, born at the outbreak of the Civil War and snatched away by fire 22 years later; and Nellie, born in their last year at the seminary. In the 1885 memorial monograph mentioned previously, Dr. William V. Kelly writes the following.

⁵ editor's note: Elmer E. Ellsworth (1837-1861) is often touted as the Civil War's first casualty. His death was given much newspaper attention in the North, and flags were flown at half-mast. A colonel in the Union infantry, he was shot and killed on May 24, 1861, by a southern-leaning inn-keeper while attempting to remove the man's Confederate flag. Although the War had begun with the attack on Fort Sumter over a month earlier, there apparently had yet to be any deaths due to hostile action.

“In his third year at Pennington Seminary, war broke out... Far and near he pleaded with men of every party to merge all differences in stern agreement to save the Union intact... A mass meeting held on the campus to encourage enlistments was so stirred by his fervent arguments that men came forward, amid tears of mothers and wives and sisters and friends, to give their lives for the country in such numbers that the requisition was speedily filled and a large surplus over.”

His tenure, ending in 1863 due to broken health, did much to assure for Pennington a promising future. He had given five years of effective and valuable service to Christian education. The attachment between Dr. Wiley and the people at Trinity Church in Jersey City was so great that at the end of five years as principal he was re-appointed to this congregation. He had only fairly entered this pastorate before he was elected by the General Conference of 1864 held in Philadelphia PA, even though he was without editorial experience, to be editor of the *Ladies Repository*⁶ and removed to Cincinnati.

The *Ladies Repository* was the one periodical in which the Methodist Episcopal Church, in all parts of the country, had a common interest. It was an exponent of commendable literary and chaste artistic taste. The *Ladies Repository* was a religious and literary magazine founded and conducted with special reference to the sphere, works and taste of Christian women. The memory of his devoted Sunday School teacher Mother Stoner, who through her faithful instructions and tender and prayerful solicitude led him to the Saviour, was a constant reminder to Bishop Wiley of a woman's subtle power for good. It gave him a just appreciation of the influence she was destined to exert in the church as well in the home.

Some of his strongest and best articles written for the *Ladies Repository* were republished in a volume entitled *The Religion of the Family*, one of several books from his pen. After his first Episcopal tour of the Far East in 1877, he gave the record of his observations to the church in a volume entitled *China and Japan*, a book of real and rare value. Another volume of Bishop Wiley's was *The Fallen Missionaries of China*, published in 1858.

⁶ editor's note: The *Ladies Repository* began as a monthly publication of the Methodist Episcopal Church in January 1841. Its editors were appointed by the General Conference. The important stature and influence of the magazine is evident by the fact that its first six editors left the office to become bishop (L.L. Hamline), college president (Edward Thompson), college president (Benjamin F. Tefft), state superintendent of education (William C. Larrabee), bishop (Davis W. Clark), and bishop (Isaac W. Wiley). In January 1877 the name was changed to the *National Repository*. The General Conference of 1880 discontinued publication of the periodical. The conference archives has complete bound volumes for 1846-47 and 1856-74. This is not to be confused with a Universalist monthly named *Ladies' Repository* published in Boston during approximately the same years.

5. Bishop Isaac Wiley Had Strong Ideas on Equal Rights Problems

Dr. Isaac W. Wiley came to the office of bishop through no effort of his own at the General Conference of 1872 held in Brooklyn NY. No one ever indulged in the suspicion for a moment that he was ambitious for the place. His position was indicated by the remark, "the office of bishop is too great to be sought by any man." Bishop Wiley, on his election at the General Conference of 1872, was assigned to the New England Conference with residence in Boston. Bishop S.M. Merrill, writing of Dr. Wiley's term of bishop in the previously mentioned 1885 memorial monograph, states the following.

"He has modestly gone in and out before the church as a chief pastor for more than 12 years, winning the confidence and esteem of the multitudes that have felt the touch of his spirit. And now that he has gone from us... the perfume of his consecrated life lingers to bless the church, and will pass onward to the coming generations, rich with the fragrance of heaven."

In his years as bishop, he displayed his lifelong characteristics – adaptability, wisdom and faithfulness. Bishop Wiley's position on equal rights would have put him in full accord with the present position of his church on a subject which 90 years later is still unsolved in our nation. The memoir in the General Conference Journal for 1888 says of him: "He believed in the equal rights of all men, and to the extent of his ability and opportunity he persuaded others to like views. He believed that all men are brethren, and no matter what the nationality, condition or color of men, they should love and be loved as brothers." He had been the untiring foe of slavery and greatly rejoiced in the Emancipation Proclamation issued by President Lincoln to terminate slavery on January 1, 1863. He was active in the formation of the Freedman's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church and served as its president for many years.

While Bishop Wiley was in Iowa presiding over one of the conferences, his only son died very suddenly. William Ellsworth Wiley had been a senior at Ohio Wesleyan University, a young man of great promise who was about to return to the university. On returning to Cincinnati after receiving word of his son's death, the bishop said, "The storm has struck me so often that I have gotten down to bed rock. I am wholly resting on the promises of God."

Bishop Wiley sailed for Japan in the summer of 1884 in poor health. The ocean voyage did not improve his health as he had hoped. Finishing his Episcopal work in Japan, he sailed for Shanghai and the trip made him much worse. Then the hard trip to north China nearly prostrated him, and only his resolute determination to reach Foochow and complete his work enabled him to continue. On reaching there and entering the gate of the mission compound at Foochow, he exclaimed, "Home, my old home!" remembering the house in which he had lived 30 years earlier while a missionary there.

The Rev. F. Ohlinger, one of the missionaries at Foochow, described Bishop Wiley's last day and the aftermath as follows.

“On Tuesday morning the conference assembled for prayer and roll call, after which it adjourned... Everyone was anxious to hear the last word from the dying bishop. He shook hands with a few of the native brethren, and mentioned them by name. Once after taking medicine he seemed to dwell on the word ‘give’... saying ‘I do not want to give you anything. I only want to give you God’s blessing. May God bless you.’ We sang a verse of the hymn which begins *Forever with the Lord, Amen, so let it be*, during which he sank into a sweet slumber.

“The funeral services took place on Sunday, November 23. There was a large audience of Chinese and the Americans present. The services were conducted in both languages, closing with the hymn *Servant of God, Well Done*. We tenderly laid him down beneath the olive trees beside his first wife and little child in our little mission cemetery, which grows more and more sacred as the years pass, there to rest until the resurrection morn.”

Many memorial services were held in all parts of the United States – one being at Wiley University in Marshall TX, a school named for Bishop Wiley and the audience being composed largely of colored people. One of the students read a paper on the relation sustained by Bishop Wiley to the Freedmen’s Aid Society. The principal address was delivered by Bishop W.F. Mallalieu. The November 24, 1884, issue of the *New York Christian Advocate* published a tribute “Bishop Wiley Fallen at Foochow” which closed with these words: “Bishop Wiley was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Few have suffered the shafts of bereavement more frequently than he, or under more excruciating conditions. But this can never happen again. He is gone

‘Where those who meet shall part no more,
And those long parted meet again.’”

In the 1885 memorial monograph is a steel engraving picturing the mission cemetery at Foochow showing the graves and markers for Bishop and Mrs. Wiley and their child, and the graves of four missionary women and five other children. In addition to his earned medical degree from the University of the City of New York, Bishop Wiley had been granted two honorary degrees by Methodist Episcopal institutions. While editor of the *Ladies Repository*, Dr. Wiley was honored by Wesleyan University of Middletown CT with the D.D. (Doctor of Divinity) degree in 1864. In 1879, Bishop Wiley was given the L.L.D. (Doctor of Laws) degree by Ohio Wesleyan University at Delaware OH.

6. Review Bishop Isaac Wiley and Mother Stoner; Acknowledge Informants

It has been impossible to get complete data on Bishop Isaac Wiley's family. We know and have recorded the names of his first two wives. That there was a third wife we are certain, but of the time of the death of the second wife⁷ and his third marriage we have no information. The first wife was Francis Martin of Mifflin, and they had two daughters. Adah, or Ada, was born before the trip to China. In 1911 she was Mrs. Robert M. Jones, living in Denver. A second daughter, Anna, was born in China – their “little Chinese girl” to the parents.

Three children were born to the second wife, Adeline Travis, while they lived at Pennington between 1858 and 1863. The first was Charlie, whom they called in hope their “missionary boy.” He died in Boston in his 18th year. The second was William Ellsworth, named after Colonel Ellsworth, the Zouave⁸, killed in the Marshall House in Alexandria early in the Civil War. Willie, as they called him, was killed in 1883 through an accidental explosion of some volatile oils in a store cellar and subsequent fire and suffocation. The third child of the second marriage was Nellie, born in their last year at Pennington Seminary.

At the time of Bishop Wiley's death in 1884, according to one account, he was survived by a wife and two daughters living in Cincinnati – “one of them quite a young girl.” In 1888 the pastor of St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church in Cincinnati, where the Wileys were members, wrote of the family saying that a “little pale-faced daughter” who had bid her father farewell with her mother as he left for China on his last trip “joined him a few months ago in the heavenly world.” Thus there were probably five daughters and two sons of Bishop Wiley.⁹

⁷ editor's note: The author apparently was not able to locate information about the death of Adeline Travis Wiley. The April 1866 *Ladies Repository* gives the following obituary on page 256. “Sad Bereavement – Mrs. Addie Travis Wiley, wife of Dr. I.W. Wiley, editor of the *Repository*, died in this city March 2, 1866, aged thirty-five years. She was the daughter of Captain J. Travis and Helen Travis, of Brooklyn NY, and was born June 3, 1831. Her early training was in the German Reformed Church, of which her parents are members. But in 1854 she became connected with the Methodist Episcopal Sunday School as a teacher, and the next year with the Methodist Episcopal Church as a member. She was married April 24, 1855, and in 1864 came to Cincinnati with her husband. Her residence here was brief, but no one coming as a stranger into the midst of strangers ever won more upon the affection of her acquaintances. She was a woman of mature judgment and taste combined with the freshness and sweetness of a child. In simplicity of character, in transparency of life, in tenderness of feeling, in depth of religious sentiment and experience she was superior. Few persons outside of her own family can know her real worth, but in her case the words of King Lemuel may be used with touching emphasis – ‘Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband, also, and he praiseth her.’ May the eternal God be their refuge, and underneath them be the everlasting arms!”

⁸ The Zouaves were originally an Algerian division of the French army known for their bravery and picturesque Oriental uniforms. Although not a firefighter himself, Ellsworth heeded Lincoln's pleas for volunteers by going from Chicago to New York City to recruit volunteer firefighters into “Ellsworth's 1st New York Fire Zouaves” of the Union Infantry's 11th Regiment.

⁹ editor's note: One of the daughters living in Cincinnati at the time of the bishop's death was likely the Nellie born in Pennington to his second wife. She would have been about 20 years old at the time. In that case there would have been only four daughters and two sons. This equating

We have information of the deaths of the two sons before their father's death in 1884, and the death of a daughter a few years later. The name of the third wife and where or when he married her we have been unable to learn.¹⁰

Mother Stoner's passion for souls continued until her death. In 1925 an attorney in Minneapolis, writing remembrances of his life, recalled his conversion 60 years before at a camp meeting at Manor Hill in Huntingdon County. He told of her help in his finding satisfaction at the altar there. That was James M. Martin, a native of Vira. He recalled going with his mother (Mrs. McGinnis Martin) and their pastor and wife (the Rev. and Mrs. M.L. Smith) on an all-day drive in a two-horse carriage to get there. He had recently sold a colt for \$75 and invested the money in a hat, necktie, pistol, ammunition, and a supply of cigars – all of which he took with him to the campmeeting, planning to “have a good time.”

The campmeeting was beyond McAlevy's Fort on the Manor Hill circuit, and the year was 1865. He spent the spare time between services for the first several days off alone shooting mark and smoking. Then the Rev. Mr. Smith preached on the text “My son, give me thy heart,” and Jim went to the altar. The next day he threw away the pistol and cigars and was back at the altar for the next service. Then, as he writes in his reminiscences, the following events occurred.

“A dear old saint from our home church – Mrs. Stoner – knelt in front of me across the altar and said, ‘James, be quiet and listen to what they are singing. Can't you join in that and think what the words mean.’ I gave heed and joined in the repeating chorus: ‘Hallelujah! It is done. I believe upon the Son. I am saved by the Crucified One.’ Before the words were completed on the repeat, light seemed to break and I sprang shouting ‘Hallelujah! It is done. I believe upon the Son. I am saved! I am saved!’”

Mr. Martin says Mrs. Stoner was from “the home church.” This would be the Vira Methodist Church, called the Dry Valley Church in earlier years. Mrs. Stoner spent some time living with her daughter Martha, Mrs. John T. Stoner, at Vira, and the campmeeting experience was during that period. In 1871 Mr. Martin went to Minnesota where he spent the remainder of his life, for many years an active member and official of the Hennepin Avenue Methodist Church of Minneapolis.

Acknowledgments. Many persons and institutions have assisted most graciously in providing information to enable the writer to unravel the story of

of the author's “Nellie” with the “Helen” of the will given in the appendix, appears to be the most reasonable reconstruction of Bishop Wiley's family.

¹⁰ editor's note: Nineteenth century obituaries of men are notorious for providing little or no information about the wife or children of the deceased. It is not surprising that the author had difficulty recovering this information. The November 19, 1914, *Christian Advocate* gives the following obituary on page 1633. “Mrs. Anne Elizabeth Wiley, widow of Bishop Isaac W. Wiley, died suddenly of heart failure at her home in Cincinnati OH early on Thursday morning last. She was the daughter of Jabez Seegar MD of Cincinnati and was in her seventy-eighth year, having survived her husband twenty-eight years. The funeral was held at her late residence, November 14, her pastor, the Rev. J. Archibald Holmes, officiating.”

Mother Stoner and Bishop Wiley, 80 years after their deaths. They are listed herewith.

Mrs. Ralph Barchus, great-granddaughter of Mother Stoner.

Dr. Raymond M. Bell of Washington and Jefferson College, Washington PA, historian of the Pittsburgh Methodist Conference and son of a member of the Central Pennsylvania Conference.

The Rev. Dr. Charles F. Berkheimer of Williamsport PA, historian of the Central Pennsylvania Methodist Conference.

Elizabeth Huey, librarian at The Methodist Publishing House, Nashville TN.

Lawrence D. Kline, librarian of Rose Memorial Library at Drew University, Madison NJ.

Dr. Harold J. Lancaster, director Slocum Library of the Ohio Methodist Historical Society at Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware OH.

Miss Beatrice Quinn of the Wesleyan University Alumni Association, Middletown CT.

The Rev. Dr. Charles R. Smyth, headmaster of The Pennington School, Pennington NJ.

Dorothy Woodruff, research librarian at the Board of Missions of the Methodist Church, 475 Riverside Drive, New York 27 NY.

Appendix. The Will of Bishop Wiley's Widow

The Chronicle has been able to obtain a copy of the will of Anne E. Wiley, third wife of Bishop Wiley. Written in 1912, two years before her actual death, the will is particularly valuable for the information it provides concerning the living children of Bishop Wiley. The will is part of the Wallace Family Papers collection in the Wright State University Library in Dayton OH. The Wallace family were active Methodists and prominent in Ohio for several generations.

The following individuals are designated to receive particular amounts. This is the order in which they appear in the will, and the order has no special significance.

Anne Elizabeth Wallace (Medway OH) – daughter of William Clark Wallace and Grace (Wise) Wallace. There appears to have been a connection (through the Methodist Church, and not biological) between the Wiley and the Wallace families, and Anne Elizabeth Wiley was likely named for Mrs. Wiley.

Ruth Coffin (Newark NJ) – daughter of Annie Wiley Coffin. Mrs. Coffin was the child born in China to Bishop Wiley and his first wife, Miss Francis J. Martin.

Travis Windsor (San Jose CA) – son of Helen Wiley Windsor. Mrs. Windsor is believed to be the “Nellie” born in Pennington to Bishop Wiley and his second wife, Miss Adeline Travis.

Wiley Windsor (San Jose CA) – son of Helen Wiley Windsor. While his brother Travis's given name was the surname of their maternal grandmother, Wiley's given name was the surname of his maternal grandfather.

Wiley Jones (Denver CO) – son of Adah Wiley Jones. Mrs. Jones was the oldest child of Bishop Wiley and his first wife, Mrs. Francis J. Martin.

Minnie Dehmer (Cincinnati OH) – a “lifelong friend.”

The following organizations and institutions were also designated to receive particular amounts. Given in this order in the will, almost all of them are related to the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Freedmen's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, for the benefit of **Wiley University** (Marshall TX).

Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, for the benefit of **Wiley Memorial Hospital** (Jucheng, China).

Cemetery of Spring Grove, for the perpetual care of the grave of Dr. Jabez Seegar – the father of Annie E. Wiley.

Methodist Home for the Aged at College Hill (Cincinnati OH).

Woman's Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

A Bishop Isaac Wiley Letter

by Isaac W. Wiley, 1882

editor's note: Isaac Wiley sent this letter to his fellow bishop J.T. Peck less than a year before the latter's death – and just over two years before his own demise. It reveals the compassion and personal concern of Bishop Wiley, and the fact that the media's pursuit of prominent figures has not really changed much in the last 125 years. The original handwritten letter was purchased by the conference archives last year and is part of the collection of Isaac Wiley materials in the biographical files. Offered by a dealer handling a large quantity of religious documents from the extended Peck family of Methodist ministers, this particular letter was secured because it represents one of the few surviving personal manuscripts of an early bishop elected from the Central Pennsylvania Conference.

WESTERN METHODIST BOOK CONCERN¹

Walden and Stowe, Agents
190 West Fourth Street
Cincinnati

July 26, 1882

Dear Bishop Peck²,

I have just received yours from Geneva³, and since have read your statement made to Dr. Hoyt⁴. I hope as far as possible you will not allow this contemptible matter⁵ to distress you. Without any statement at all from you, all your friends knew that it was miserably false and slanderous. Dr. Hoyt and I will take care of the matter here, and you can rest easy and get well. I do not know what will have to be done some day to protect the public from the outrageous despotism of the modern daily press – that part of it that has really become sensual and devilish. However I would advise you at present to do nothing.

I leave tonight for Chautauqua⁶, and thence to Lakeside⁷.

As ever yours,
I.W. Wiley⁸

Editor's End Notes for the Wiley Letter

¹ The Western Methodist Book Concern was established in Cincinnati in 1820, at which time Cincinnati was truly considered the “west.” Its periodical the *Western Christian Advocate* was authorized by the General Conference of 1832.

² Bishop Jesse Truesdaell Peck (1811-1883) was the youngest of five Otsego County NY brothers, all of whom became ministers – the most prominent of which was George Peck (1797-1876), editor and author and leader in the Genesee, Oneida and Wyoming Conferences. Bishop Peck, the driving force behind the founding of Syracuse University in 1870, was elected to the episcopacy along with Bishop Wiley in 1872. Bishop and Mrs. Peck had no children. He died with no financial assets, having given all to support his beloved and struggling Syracuse University.

³ Geneva NY, not Switzerland, even though the latter might seem reasonable. At that time the foreign conferences were divided among the various episcopal areas in the United States. For the 1880-84 quadrennium, for example, the fourth episcopal area included the following 7 conferences: Philadelphia, Central Pennsylvania, Erie, Pittsburgh, East Ohio along with Norway (foreign) and Delaware (Negro). During his 11 years in the episcopacy, Bishop Peck presided over 83 conferences – including some in Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden and Norway. It was while conducting a conference in Foochow, China, as part of his episcopal duties that Bishop Wiley died in 1884. But Bishop Harris was conducting the episcopal business in Germany and Switzerland in 1882, and the material in the appendix specifically identifies Geneva NY.

⁴ Francis S. Hoyt (1822-1912) served primarily as an educator before being elected editor of the *Western Christian Advocate* by the General Conference of 1872. He had been a principal and/or faculty member at Springfield (VT) Wesleyan Seminary, Newark (NJ) Wesleyan Institute, Oregon Institute (leading its transformation into Willamette University), and Ohio Wesleyan University. As editor of the *Western Christian Advocate* he lived in Cincinnati for twelve years, and retired there in 1884.

⁵ The nature of the matter, which concerned Bishop Peck's financial support of fledgling Syracuse University, is given in the appendix. The financial stability of church-related schools was a major concern in the 1800's, with institutions opening and failing with amazing rapidity. Bishop Wiley could be sympathetic, for at this exact time he was involved through his episcopal office with attempts to restart the local failed Wesleyan Female College as Cincinnati Wesleyan College. That story is related on page 457 of the New York *Christian Advocate* for July 20, 1882.

⁶ Chautauqua NY was founded in 1874 by John H. Vincent and Lewis Miller as a summer assembly ground and gave birth to the “Chautauqua Movement” of similar sites and programs across the country. Bishop Wiley is referring to the original site on Chautauqua Lake, near Jamestown in western New York.

⁷ Lakeside NY was the site of the Peck family summer cottage. This community was at the western edge of Onondaga Lake – near Syracuse, the home base of Bishop Peck during his latter years.

⁸ Bishop Isaac William Wiley (1825-1884) was born in Lewistown PA. Also a medical doctor, he served as missionary to China, pastor, principal of Pennington Seminary, and editor of the *Ladies Repository* before being elected to the episcopacy along with Bishop Peck in 1872.