

Mary Still Adams



The Kansas State Historical Society has a copy of the Autobiography of Mary Still Adams, published in 1893. She was the daughter of a Methodist minister living near Centropolis and teaching school in

Centropolis and later near Clinton. She arranged by correspondence to marry T.M. Adams, a young man living in Canada, the son of a Methodist minister. Mr. Adams came to Kansas, they were married and he was first given the Centropolis charge. Following are excerpts from her biography:

“On many of these charges the Methodist Church was just making a beginning. At some points we had only a half-dozen members, if any. The people were all poor alike: new beginners in a new country, and that just after the close of the war.”

“This year my husband was given the Ohio City work, which extended over many miles of country. Mr. Adams secured several lots in the new county seat, Ottawa, and to this place we moved the parsonage from Ohio City, by placing it upon four wheels, then in front of these wheels hitching a number of yoke of oxen. Just as the sun went out of sight behind a storm-laden sky, the faithful oxen appeared in the distance, hauling the parsonage containing all our household goods: when it reached its proper spot it was transferred from the wheels to a foundation.”

“This was a fearfully cold Kansas winter, and we had neither matting or carpeting to protect our feet from the cold. Mr. Adams secured a wagon, and hauled our firewood a distance of six miles. Notwithstanding I had a fine fat baby, and was one of the happiest mothers in Kansas.”

“At Ottawa, while my husband went up into the town hall and preached, I had an appointment in the house of a lady who was sick unto death with slow consumption.”

“At this place the Lord gave us gracious revival, and many were converted and added to the church. During the year we held two camp meetings which were greatly blessed in reclaiming backsliders and bringing souls to Christ.”

Colonel Samuel B. Rohrbaugh



Samuel Rohrbaugh was born in Pennsylvania of Dutch heritage in February of 1831. In 1854 he moved to Springfield, Illinois and worked for 15 years in a lumber yard, beginning as a wagon driver and rising in positions of responsibility.

Encouraged to come to Ottawa, he arrived here Christmas eve in 1869 and bought the McGee Lumber Yard on east 3rd (presently the location of Intrust Bank) the day after New Years in 1870.



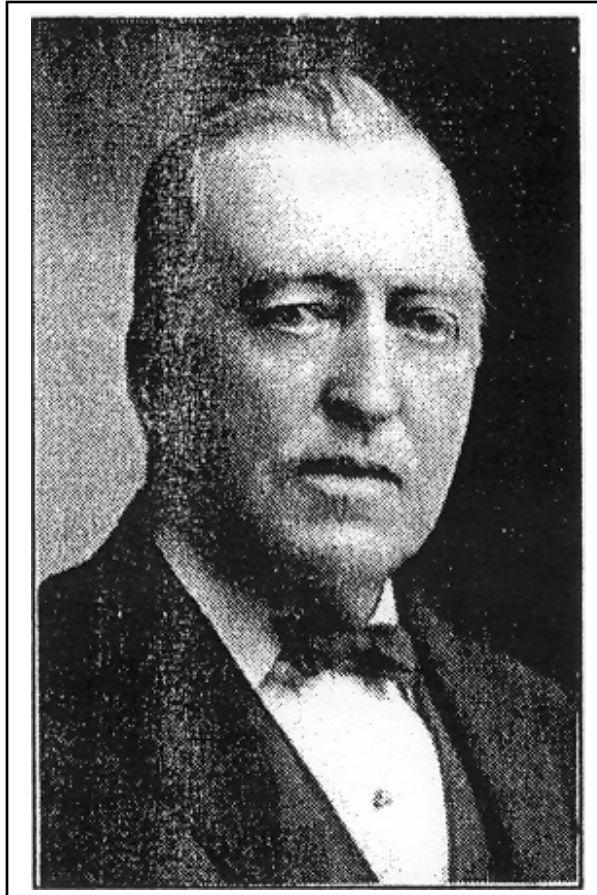
December 28, 1875, he was married to Wilhelmina (Mina) Stevens, from Garnett, by Rev. George Pye, pastor of the Ottawa M.E. Church . She was 23 and he was 43. Her sister, Ida, later was Mrs. E.P. Hubbard of Ottawa.

In October of 1876 their only child, a son Edward

Hayes, was born. Mina died in February of 1881 when their son was 4 years old and she was 28. Mrs. Ida Hubbard began to help raise the son, Edward, along with her children, Nelle and Samuel.

Records indicate Rohrbaugh joined the Church's Board of Trustees in 1883 when the renovation of the East Front at 4th & Walnut was being considered.

It appears he served continuously until his death in 1907. He supported the church generously and always took great interest in the choir.



He prospered selling building materials in a growing community. He had living quarters above the lumber yard office. He purchased real estate, one being a building he converted to an auditorium, that later burned and he rebuilt.

In 1891, his son, at the age of 15, went away to a military school in Michigan.

Upon graduation he went to San Francisco, contracted T.B. and returned to Ottawa. He became an invalid and died in 1899 at the age of 23.

In 1901 Rohrbaugh built a mausoleum in Hope Cemetery for his family.

With the death of his son, he lost interest in an active life. He made his long-time business manager, Charles Constant, a partner in the lumber business. Later, he also made his nephew, Sam Hubbard, a partner.

In 1902, according to the story, Rev. Cyrus .S. Nusbaum - then pastor here, and much admired by Colonel Rohrbaugh, - went to the lumber yard office one stormy night and found Colonel Rohrbaugh sitting there alone. Discussion turned to success, and to the records men leave.

Rev. Nusbaum took up a newspaper and pretended to read an obituary notice, - the first merely recording the death of S.B. Rohrbaugh, a wealthy citizen of Ottawa; - the other, telling in glowing words of praise, how S.B. Rohrbaugh, just deceased, had left as his monument the splendid new Methodist Episcopal Church in Ottawa.

"Which would you rather have said?" asked the minister.

"I take the one about the church" said Colonel Rohrbaugh, and he took it to the extent of \$20,000 - \$16,000 in cash, and the building site valued at \$4,000.

In 1903 he made a will with generous gifts to the Church. See the panel on "Adversities" for the outcome.

In 1906, the Hubbards and Rohrbaugh built a \$17,000 home north of the church for all of them. It was on lots that had been willed to the church.

He was in poor health during his last year and died April 15, 1907 in Excelsior Springs where he had gone for treatment.



In 1901, Rohrbaugh built a beautiful mausoleum in Hope Cemetery where he, his wife and son are interred. George Washburn was the architect.



R. B. ROHRBAUGH.

G. H. CONSTANT.

ROHRBAUGH & CO.,

DEALERS IN

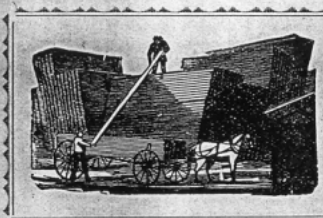
LUMBER.

MOULDINGS, DOORS, BLINDS, EAVE-SPOUTING,
SASH, SHINGLES, WHITE LIME,
LATH, LIME, HAIR CEMENT, AND STUCCO.

Ottawa, Kansas,

April 10, 1902

I, R. B. Rohrbaugh do
 herein agree to donate
 to The First Methodist-
 Church of Ottawa Kansas
 the sum of Twenty Thousand
 (\$20000⁰⁰) Dollars, as follows:
 Sixteen Thousand (\$16000⁰⁰)
 Dollars in Cash and Building
 Material, and the House and
 four Lots numbering
 29, 31, 33, 35 in Block 86
 in the City of Ottawa -
 valued at the sum of
 Four Thousand (\$4000⁰⁰)
 Dollars, for the purpose
 of building a Methodist-
 Episcopal Church on the



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Ottawa, Kansas,

above described Lots
 providing the Trustees of
 said Church shall provide
 a sum not less than Ten
 Thousand (\$10000⁰⁰) Dollars
 in Cash or its equivalent -
 exclusive of present Church
 property.
 The above Twenty
 Thousand (\$20000⁰⁰) Dollars
 shall be my full and final
 subscription and I must
 not be called upon for one
 cent more for this Church
 building

Left: The handwritten conditions of the gift from Colonel Rohrbaugh on his lumber yard stationery.



4th Monday

Georgia Whiteford, supported by volunteers, began these dinner parties in 1998.

The meat dish and the dessert is prepared by Georgia and her "Helpers".

An entertaining program follows the dinner.

Attendance has grown to average 80.

Once a month, on the 4th Monday, a social group of retired members of the Church meet in Knight Hall for dinner and a program. If you wonder why attendance is growing, note the variety of delicious foods arranged on the serving table.



One of the many Heritage Dinners that recognized long-time members.



Debi Senior



Karen Bohlender



Mrs. A. M. Telfer

Office Staff

Dedicated office staff is one of the important ingredients of a successful church program.



Treva Larkin



Mary Lee McElfresh



Terri Lansbury



Mary Lee McElfresh and Bev Bartscher

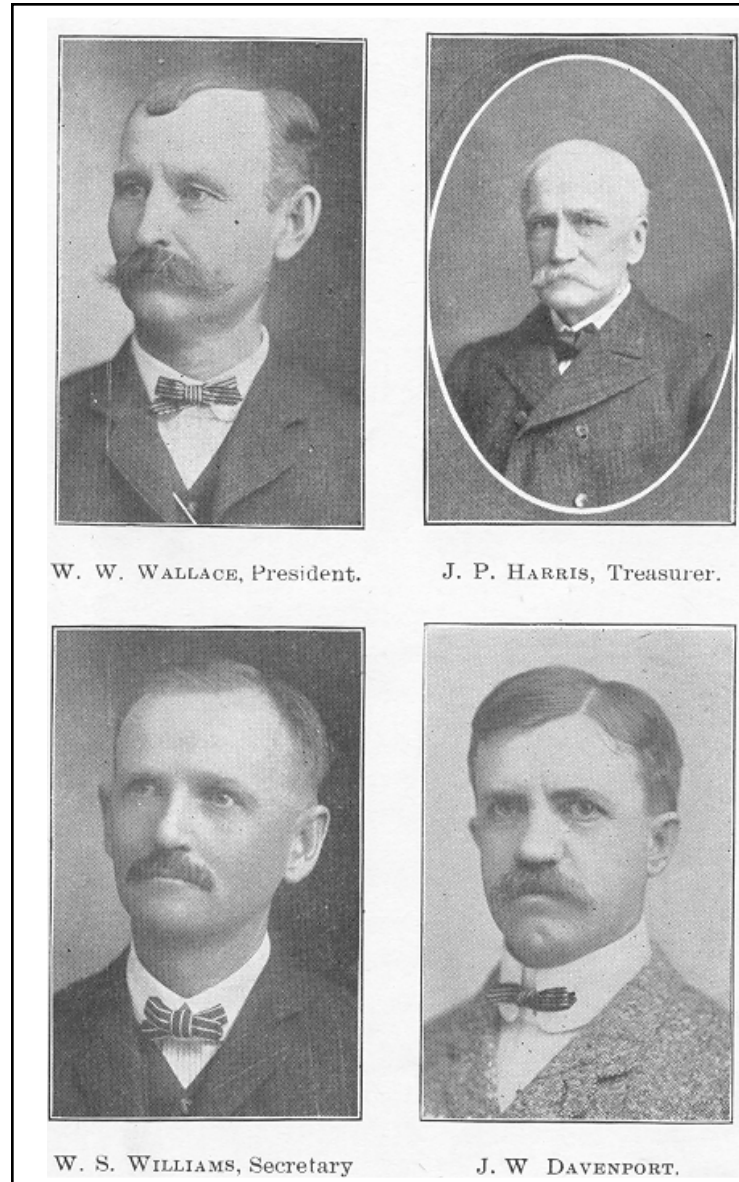


A Church Picnic in the shelter at Forest Park.



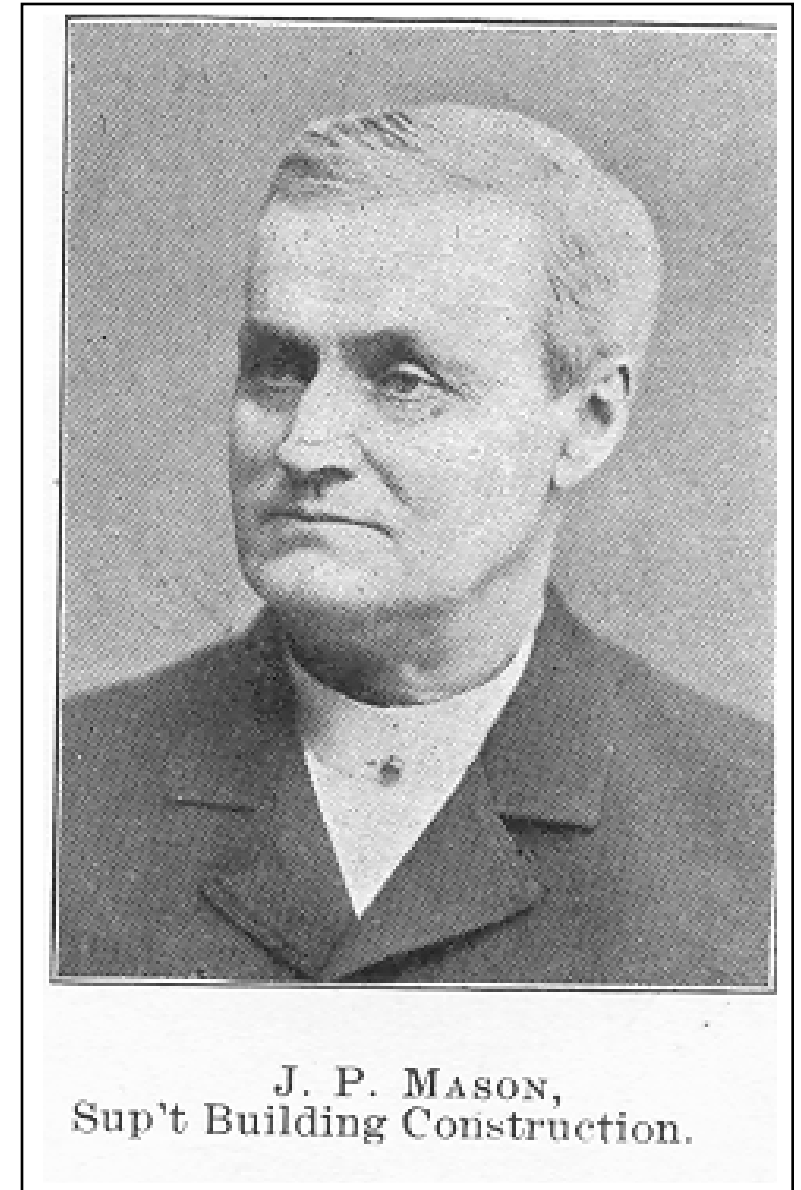
A Youth Group outing at Camp Chippewa.

The Building Committee



These are men most involved in the construction of the Church. The Building Committee from the Board of Trustees consisted of:

- W.W. Wallace
- J.P. Harris
- W.S. Williams
- J.W. Davenport



Superintendent of Construction



*Every year the Church recognizes those who have been members 50 years or more.
Above is a photo of those honored in 2003*



*Reverend Jerry Harnden holding Sarah Guge,
4 months old, after her baptism.*



*Katherine Elizabeth Reusch after her baptism
January 21, 1990*

Long Time Members

The Church has 63 people who have been members fifty years or longer. Following are the names of those recognized in 2003, including the date they joined the church.

More than 80 years

Daisy Porter, *07/11/1920*

More than 70 years

Lynn Andrew, *01/01/1931*

Doris Elder, *04/20/1924*

Ken Harris, *03/21/1929*

Beryl Hobbs, *01/01/1930*

Mary Johnson, *01/01/1932*

Ruth Shelden, *06/08/1930*

Bill Wallace, *04/08/1928*

More than 60 years

Gerald Bechtle, *05/22/1934*

Esther Bemmels, *03/01/1941*

Clairbel Cecil, *04/10/1938*

Noel Douglas, *04/05/1942*

Bruce Fleming, *04/25/1943*

Norma Geiss, *06/05/1938*

Nelle Gollier, *12/12/1940*

George Ledom, *06/05/1938*

Letha May McCracken, *03/24/1940*

Phil McCracken, *03/24/1940*

Alice Rybolt, *11/01/1941*

Harry Rybolt, Sr., *11/01/1941*

Lee Shelden, *04/02/1939*

Martha Swords, *01/01/1935*

Willa Lee White, *04/25/1943*

More than 50 years

Fred Adamson, *03/28/1948*

Katie Adamson, *04/14/1946*

Jean Blecha, *04/10/1952*

Leota Bruce, *04/14/1946*

Jack Christian, *04/09/1950*

Martha Christian, *04/09/1950*

Ruth Fleming, *11/23/1947*

Louise Fouts, *03/29/1953*

Lowell Fouts, *03/29/1953*

Genevieve Gillette, *04/14/1946*

Freda Gilmore, *03/18/1951*

Carolyn Gleason, *03/22/1951*

Reid Harder, *04/09/1950*

Jane Harris, *04/06/1947*

Dorothy Hewitt, *10/13/1946*

Ann Hoglund, *12/22/1952*

Don Hoglund, *12/22/1952*

Pamela Howard, *03/18/1952*

George Kramer, *03/18/1951*

Helena Kramer, *03/03/1946*

Bob Ledom, *04/17/1949*

Maxine Lichtenberger, *04/01/1945*

Ralph Loyd, *12/13/1953*

Charles Mavity, *03/28/1948*

Delma Mavity, *03/28/1948*

Lucille Meyer, *04/09/1944*

Thelma Miller, *03/28/1948*

Joel Nordeen, *02/22/1948*

Marilyn Nordeen, *04/05/1953*

Dorotha Prager, *04/08/1945*

More than 50 years

Eileen Roseberry, *11/12/1944*

Adeline Scott, *04/01/1945*

Willetta Sievers, *04/05/1953*

Winkie Snider, *04/14/1946*

Harold Tetwiler, *09/06/1953*

Glenn Underwood, *04/09/1944*

LaVerne Wallace, *04/09/1950*

Frances Warnock, *10/11/1953*

Bob White, *11/22/1953*

Maxine Wollen, *12/12/1948*



Game Time for some of the young people in the Church.