



EXHORTATION!

NEWS BULLETIN OF THE STRAWBRIDGE SHRINE

The Strawbridge Shrine *The First Home of American Methodism*

May 1, 2024

Vol. XXIX, No. 1

WHERE IN AMERICA WAS ROBERT STRAWBRIDGE?

By Rev Bob Kells, Vice-President of the Strawbridge Shrine Association

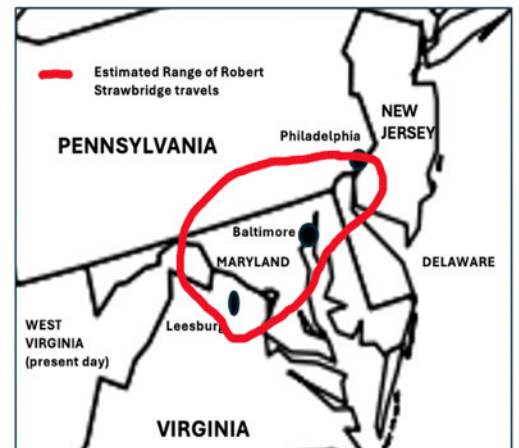
The United States will observe its [250th anniversary](#) in 2026. In conjunction with this observance, the Strawbridge Shrine Association is running a series of articles that look back 250 years to the life and times of Robert Strawbridge. This is the third article in the series.

Students of early American Methodism know that Robert Strawbridge travelled widely in the mid-Atlantic region, sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ in dozens of towns, villages, and homes. But where exactly did he go? Tracing his movements is a challenge because unlike several of the early circuit riders who came after him, Robert Strawbridge did not keep a record of his travels. In fact, we have no written material by this pioneering circuit rider. There are no sermons because he preached without notes; a fact remarked on by those who heard or knew him. There are no letters written by him to tell of his successes and setbacks, nothing to record how he assessed his work for God, no indication of how he felt about being away from home and family for extended periods of time. There is no paper trail to mark Robert Strawbridge's missionary journeys.

Despite the absence of writings by Strawbridge himself, we can reconstruct some of his travels by relying on three types of source material: official records of the Methodist movement in America, the recollections of those who encountered him, and local traditions. What follows are some examples of Mr. Strawbridge's itinerant ministry derived from these sources. They serve as a sampling of the ways and means of determining Strawbridge's whereabouts and activities in the 1760s and 1770s.

Evidence from official records is important in determining the locations assigned the traveling Methodist preachers in America. Starting in 1773, Methodist preachers began meeting annually. They discussed their activities in the mission field, determined policies to help establish and grow the

(Continued on Page 2)



FINANCIAL CAMPAIGN 2024

Rising prices at the grocery store and gas station have made a dramatic impact on giving in the past year. This year more than ever the Strawbridge Shrine Association is counting on its regular members as well as first-time donors to help meet our funding shortfall.

Please find the [membership form](#) included with this news bulletin and send it in with your donation to help ensure that the all-volunteer [Shrine Association](#) can continue its stewardship work of preserving and presenting the First Home of American Methodism for the current and future generations!

NEW: SHRINE ORNAMENT SERIES



Available now! The first ornament in a series to be offered annually celebrates the Robert Strawbridge House as the "First Home of American Methodism." We are very excited to share with you this beautifully detailed heavy brass etched ornament. Each Strawbridge House brass ornament is \$18.00 for Shrine Association members (\$20.00 for non-members).

Future additions to the series will cover the other historic buildings on our site, a depiction of Robert Strawbridge, and other monuments associated with the Strawbridges. To order, please email curator@strawbridgeshrine.org or call 443-289-0191 or visit the Gift Shop.

WHERE IN AMERICA?

(Continued from Page 1)

Wesleyan Methodist movement in America, and received circuit assignments for the next year. While we do not know whether Robert Strawbridge attended these annual meetings, the minutes show that between 1773 and 1781, Strawbridge was assigned to circuits only twice. The first was in 1773 when he was posted to the Baltimore area along with [Francis Asbury](#), Abraham Whitworth, and Joseph Yerbery. The second occasion was 1775, when he was appointed to serve the Frederick circuit. Robert Strawbridge was assisted in this mission area by William Watters, the first American-born itinerant Methodist preacher, who was converted in Methodism in part by hearing Strawbridge preach. [1] Accounts from people involved in the Methodist movement affirm that Robert Strawbridge continued to travel and preach after 1775 despite his absence from the circuit appointments for the years up to his death in 1781.

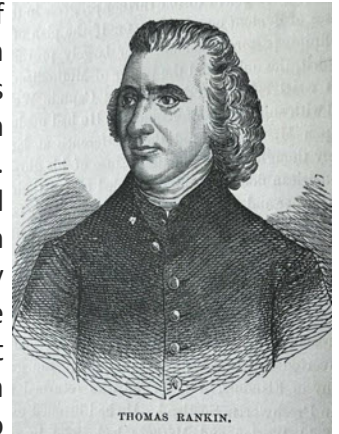
Journals kept by some of the first Methodist preachers give us occasional glimpses of Robert Strawbridge at work. Some of these journals have been published and are valuable source material for studying early American Methodism. Two examples will suffice. The first is from the Journal of [Joseph Pilmore](#), one of



the Methodist preachers (the other was Richard Boardman) sent to America by [John Wesley](#) in 1769. Pilmore and Boardman swapped preaching duties between New York and Philadelphia about every six months. On Sunday, January 14, 1770, Mr. Pilmore recorded that Robert Strawbridge spoke at [St. George's Church in Philadelphia](#): "Mr. Robt. Strawbridge, a Local Preacher from Maryland, gave us a plain useful discourse, at seven in the morning." [2] Here we have a rare example of the precise date and time for one of Robert Strawbridge's preaching appointments.

A second example of finding Robert Strawbridge comes from the Journal of Francis Asbury. Known to many as the "Father of American Methodism" for his organizational skills and his tireless traveling to spread the gospel, Asbury kept a journal from just before his arrival in America in 1771 until his death in 1816. Asbury emerged quickly as a leader among the Methodists. His relationship with Robert Strawbridge was often

strained, however, because of the latter's insistence on administering the sacraments in contravention of John Wesley's directives not to. Occasionally, Asbury and Strawbridge made common cause. In 1773, John Wesley sent [Thomas Rankin](#) to take charge of all the Methodist preachers in America. Rankin was a strict disciplinarian who had little sympathy for the complaints of British colonists against the Crown. [3] By 1775, Asbury's dislike of Rankin's leadership found a receptive ear in Robert Strawbridge. Asbury recorded meeting with Strawbridge in Baltimore during March and April, 1775:



Lord's Day, March 12. I saw brother Strawbridge and entered into a free conversation with him. His sentiments relative to Mr. Rankin corresponded with mine. But all these matters I can silently commit to God, who overrules both in earth and heaven.

Monday, March 13. After preaching at O.C.'s, about five miles from town, in a comfortable frame of mind. I returned. The next day I parted with brother Strawbridge...

Lord's Day, April 9. ...I met with brother Strawbridge, and found we were of one heart and of one mind. Lord, grant that all the preachers may be thus united in sentiment and affection! [4]

Asbury's concord with Strawbridge proved temporary. The two fell out again over administration of the sacraments. [5] But the first-hand accounts of meetings such as these help us piece together both the movements of Robert Strawbridge and the conflicts and controversies of early Methodism.

One other type of source material that helps us follow Robert Strawbridge is local tradition. While less reliable than the official records and personal journals, stories handed down through the generations help illuminate Mr. Strawbridge's impact on the communities he visited. The founding of the first Methodist church in Leesburg, Virginia, is a case in point. On May 11, 1766, a half-acre lot in downtown Leesburg was deeded to Robert Hamilton for "no other use but for a church or meeting house and graveyard." A Methodist meeting house made of soft stone was built on the site by 1768 and was replaced by a larger building by 1790. This is the founding story of Old Stone Church, which was the first property to be deeded for use by American

FALL / WINTER MEMBERS & CONTRIBUTORS

November 2023 - April 15, 2024

BENEFACTOR

Linda Webb

PATRON

Rev. John Patrick Baker

SPONSOR

Raymond & Linda Albert

SUSTAINING

Rev. Sarah B. Dorrance
Bobby & Bonnie Graham
Rev. Shari McCourt
Clarence & Jean Kaylor
Rev. Eugene & Mrs. Jane Matthews
Rev. Nancy Nedwell
Eleanor Packard
Sally Stair

DONOR

Carrie Harnick
Helen & Tim Kemp
Ronda Robinson
Judith Tolbert
Rev. Eliezer Valentin-Castanon

CONTRIBUTING ORGANIZATION

Antique Automobile Club of America
Emory Grove Association
La Plata United Methodist Church
Linganore United Methodist Church
United Methodist Women
Of Nichols-Bethel United Methodist Church
United Women in Faith
Of Westminster United Methodist Church

IN MEMORIAL

In Memory of Dolores Strawbridge
By Carl & Linda Strawbridge

In Memory of Dolores Strawbridge
By John Strawbridge

IN HONOR OF

In Honor of Harry E. Bowen
By Rev. Sue & Ken Bowen

In Honor of Pastor Robert Kells
By Arden United Methodist Church

In Honor of John Strawbridge
By Thomas & Catherine Abendroth

In Honor of John Strawbridge
By Elizabeth Strawbridge

In Honor of John Strawbridge
By James N. & Susan M. Strawbridge

PRESERVATION FUND

Ronda Robinson

BARN FUND

Rev. Sue & Ken Bowen
Robert & Donna Devilbiss

OTHER CONTRIBUTION

Rev. Mary Buzby
Keith Palmer
John Strawbridge

MISSION STATEMENT OF THE STRAWBRIDGE SHRINE ASSOCIATION

The mission of the Strawbridge Shrine Association is to preserve, interpret, and share the founding story of American Methodism through the life and legacy of Robert Strawbridge.

CURATOR'S CORNER

By Helen Kemp, Curator

Flowers are springing up and the season of new life is happening at the historic Strawbridge Shrine. . .

Now is the perfect time to visit the home of the first American Methodist circuit rider, Robert Strawbridge, who came from Ireland to 1760 America to introduce and establish the new faith called Methodism. Take a tour through our period-furnished log buildings with knowledgeable guides, meditate a while in a quiet setting of natural beauty, and join in the fun of an early American settlement on Colonial Day. Experience the story of one man's journey of faith and how it still changes lives today.

An Exciting Outreach!

At the close of last year, the curator was contacted by two national bus tour companies which are anxious to include trips to the Strawbridge Shrine in their itinerary. Our first booked tour will be for a UMC in Georgia.

Shrine Work Day!

Help is needed! Work Day on June 8, 2024 begins at 9 am (ends before the pilgrimage starts) to help make sure the buildings are clean and prepared for the Colonial Day event. Volunteers are also needed for Colonial Day on June 15.

If you would be willing to help or have questions, please contact the curator at ledbug2001@yahoo.com or 443-289-0181 as soon as possible. Thanks so much!

SHRINE TO TAKE PART IN MUSEUM ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

By Rev. Bob Kells, Vice President & Development Team Leader

There's a song by the Beatles that talks about getting by "with a little help from my friends." This year, the Strawbridge Shrine Association will receive some help from its friends in the museum community through the Museum Assessment Program (MAP). Run by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), the MAP has helped thousands of small and mid-sized museums across the country to improve their operations, plan for the future, and meet or exceed standards for museum excellence.

Museums accepted in the MAP can choose from one of four institutional assessment types: Organizational, Collections Stewardship, Education & Interpretation, or Community & Audience Engagement. The Shrine Association will take part in the Organizational MAP, which will help us look at our day-to-day operations, fund raising, and strategic planning. The MAP entails completing several learning modules and developing an action plan. A peer reviewer from a museum with experiences similar to those of the Strawbridge Shrine will visit our site and help us identify our strengths and the challenges that lie ahead. A final report will detail areas we can focus on and specific steps we can take to improve our organization.

MAP is supported through a cooperative agreement between the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the American Alliance of Museums. The AAM is the only organization representing the entire museum field, from art and history museums to science centers and zoos. AAM has been an advocate for museums since 1906, providing museum professionals with resources, knowledge, inspiration, and connections to help them thrive. For more information about the AAM, visit <https://www.aam-us.org/>.

The Shrine Association's Board of Directors looks forward to taking part in the MAP. We hope to benefit from the knowledge and experience of other museums in our ongoing effort to improve our internal operations and to provide a positive experience for visitors. If you would like to learn more about our encounter with the MAP, please contact one of the Shrine Association's MAP team members: President Rev. Mary Buzby, Vice-President Rev. Bob Kells, Curator Helen Kemp, Communications coordinator John Strawbridge. And please keep us and the Strawbridge Shrine leadership in your prayers. Thanks!

HISTORY EXPO 2024

On Saturday, February 24, 2024 many competing students and historic sites located in Carroll County gathered at the Westminster Senior High School for the Annual National History Day Competition, which is sponsored by the [Celebrating America](#) History Partnership. More than one hundred middle and high school students presented displays and gave talks on historic topics for donated prizes.

The Celebrating America History Partnership was created by the Commissioners of Carroll County to preserve county history. A valued partner, radio station WTTR, publicized the event. There were around twenty historic sites represented; most from the Civil War period. Many participants were dressed in period clothing and carried featured artifacts. It was fun to watch young people dress in corsets, hoop skirts and military clothes.

The Strawbridge Shrine was the earliest period represented, dating to 1760. This was our fourth year

of participation in this huge event. Our display included a power point slide presentation, an artifact of the Evans family and a lot of printed materials. Curator Helen Kemp and her husband Tim helped children to experience a colonial game called a 'GeeHaw Whimmydiddle". It uses two whittled sticks. One with



ridges and a tiny propeller at the end and another that you rub across the ridges to make the propeller spin right, left or both ways. They had so much fun interacting with it. Helen was also a featured speaker, telling the story of Robert Strawbridge in the school auditorium.

Our grateful thanks to Joe Thompson and Ryan Melhorn, Co-Chairs of Celebrating America, who provided the planning, venue arrangements, exhibitor set-up, and competition needs for the students.

The Expo and Celebrating America History Partnerships are an invaluable link to the unique needs of our history sites. The Expo is a tremendous opportunity to reach new visitors and to make our history visible.

WHERE IN AMERICA?

(Continued from Page 2)

Methodists. The church building is gone but part of the property was designated as a United Methodist and a National Historic Site consisting of a brick walkway, graveyard, and prayer garden. [6]

Who brought Methodism to Leesburg? No one can say for certain but Robert Strawbridge is the most likely candidate because no other traveling Methodist preacher was active in the area in the mid-1760s. Two other men with Strawbridge connections also served the Old Stone Church: William Watters and Richard Owings, the first American-born local preacher, who preached at the funeral of Robert Strawbridge in 1781. [7]

Following Robert Strawbridge through the pages of American Methodist history is a challenge. While we might wish for more and better source material to follow the trail of this pioneering circuit rider, what we have is enough to show how a life lived to God had an impact in his own time and continues to inspire us today.

SIGNS HONOR LATE BOARD MEMBER

Longtime board member, Ken Steward, was a familiar sight at the Shine for years, dressed as Robert Strawbridge to portray him at many events and services. Now, Ken's presence is again felt with the gift of two historic wayfinding signs donated in his memory.

While production on the signs was delayed a number of years by the pandemic and by a sign vendor who dropped out of the project, the two signs have now been in place since 2023. One sign tells the history of the Strawbridge House, while the other gives locations and history of the six locations that make up the Robert Strawbridge Cluster - a separate but sister GCAH historic site that also fills in the story of Robert Strawbridge's pioneering ministry.



"Where in America was Robert Strawbridge?"

End notes and Citations

- [1] *Minutes of the Methodist Conferences, 1773 to 1794*, (Baltimore: Lovely Lane Museum & Strawbridge Shrine Association, undated), 6, 14. "William Watters," in Nolan B. Harmon, Gen. Ed., *The Encyclopedia of World Methodism*, (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1974), 2471.
- [2] Frederick E. Maser, Howard T. Maag, Eds., *The Journal of Joseph Pilmore, Methodist Itinerant, For the Years August 1, 1769 to January 2, 1774*, (Philadelphia, The Historical Society of the Philadelphia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, 1969), 37.
- [3] "Thomas Rankin," in *Encyclopedia of World Methodism*, 1986.
- [4] Elmer T. Clark, Ed., *The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury, Volume I, 1771-1793*, (London: Epworth Press, 1958), 151-152, 154.
- [5] Frederick E. Maser, *Robert Strawbridge, First American Methodist Circuit Rider*, (Rutland, VT: The Strawbridge Shrine Association, Inc. & Academy Books, 1983), 48.
- [6] Gordon Pratt Baker, *Those Incredible Methodists, A History of the Baltimore Conference of the United Methodist Church*, (Baltimore: Commission on Archives and History, The Baltimore Conference, 1972), 10. "The Story of the Old Stone Church," Virginia Conference Historical Society of the United Methodist Church, article on internet, <https://vaumc.org/the-story-of-the-old-stone-church/>, accessed 13 April 2024.
- [7] "Richard Owings," in *Encyclopedia of World Methodism*, 1835.

PILGRIMAGE DAY TOUR EXPLORES ROBERT STRAWBRIDGE'S JOURNEY

Rev. Bonnie McCubbin, the Baltimore-Washington Conference Director of Museums and Pilgrimage, is the creator and organizer of Pilgrimage Day - an annual event exploring the rich heritage of Methodism in and around Maryland, focusing on historic sites and heritage landmarks in the Baltimore-Washington Conference.

This year, on June 8, Pilgrimage Day will visit a number of sites related to the work of Robert Strawbridge in Establishing the Methodist movement in the New World. Participants on this bus tour will visit the Museum and Archives at Lovely Lane, Historic Lovely Lane Church, Mt. Olivet Cemetery, Stone Chapel Church, and the Strawbridge Shrine.

For information please contact

bmccubbin@bwcumc.org

or archives-history@bwcumc.org

or register and buy tickets at

<https://arenaweb.bwcumc.org/default.aspx?page=4397&event=6535>

Tickets are \$50.00 each and include lunch.



STRAWBRIDGE SHRINE ASSOCIATION

2200 ST. PAUL STREET, BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21218

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
BALTIMORE, MD
PERMIT NO. 853

EXHORTATION!

The News Bulletin of the Strawbridge Shrine is published by:

Strawbridge Shrine Association 501(c)(3)
2200 St. Paul Street
Baltimore, MD 21218

Driving Address:

2650 Strawbridge Lane
New Windsor, MD 21776

Editor/Communications Coordinator:

John Strawbridge
info@strawbridgeshrine.org



Rev. Mary M. Buzby – President
Rev. Bob Kells – Vice President
Rev. Dr. Wm. Louis Piel – Secretary
Rev. Sue Bowen – Treasurer
Bonnie Graham – Assist. Treasurer
Helen Kemp – Curator

Self-nominations for Board Members and Officers now being accepted

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

EXPANDED OFFERINGS AT COLONIAL DAY

It's been two-hundred and fifty years in the making, and Colonial Day is back in 2024 with old favorites and new discoveries.

First up is food; We're pleased to be welcoming back the fried chicken and fish by members of *Strawbridge Church* (and made with the secret Hebron family recipe!). Also returning after debuting last year is *Uncle B's Snowballs*. Plus three new food truck vendors will be participating. Serving "international comfort food," *Plating Grace and Grub Food Truck* is a non-profit that provides opportunities for veterans, youth mentoring & training, and food ministry to the needy. The *Grilled Cheese Please Food Truck* serves a varied menu with a mission to bring people together. And another truck serving popcorn and kettle corn will meet your need for snacking.

Also new this year are a variety of children's games. Based on games kids would have played in Colonial times, these activities will have elements both new and familiar.

Of course, there will be many returning features that our guests love. Donna Nomick will be presenting period music on hammered dulcimer and recorder from 10:00 am - 1:00 pm. Historic Colonial and Native American craftspeople will be set up to do demonstrations throughout the day. The Maryland Dirt Diggers club will have archaeology on display. And the historic buildings of the Strawbridge Shrine Landmark will be open with guides all day.

Colonial Day 2024 is **Saturday, June 15th, from 10:00 am - 4:00 pm.**



The Strawbridge Shrine Association

The First Home of American Methodism

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FORM

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN THIS FORM WITH YOUR DONATION

- Type of Membership: (please select one)
- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Membership.....\$40.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining.....\$100.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Couple's Membership.....\$60.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor.....\$250.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Church / Church Group.....\$100.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron.....\$500.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth (under 20 yrs. of age)...\$5.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor.....\$1,000.00 |

Date of birth: _____

- Additional Contribution: (please select as many as apply)
- In addition to membership I / We are adding a donation of \$ _____
 - I would like to support the Preservation Fund with a donation of \$ _____
 - I would like to support the Barn Restoration Fund with a donation of \$ _____
 - I / We do not wish to become a member, but please accept a donation of \$ _____

Special Gift:

- A donation of \$ _____ In Memory of _____
- A donation of \$ _____ In Honor of _____

[ON-LINE / CREDIT CARD / ELECTRONIC PAYMENT OPTION](#)

To access the on-line payment option using your credit card or checking account, visit <http://www.strawbridgeshrine.org> and click on the tab "Join/Donate."

Member Information:

(please print) NAME(S) _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____
E.MAIL _____
PHONE (BEST) _____

Please make your check or money order to:

Strawbridge Shrine Association, Inc.
2200 St. Paul Street
Baltimore, MD 21218

The Strawbridge Shrine Association, Inc., is a non-profit 501(c)(3) entity. Your contribution is tax-deductible.