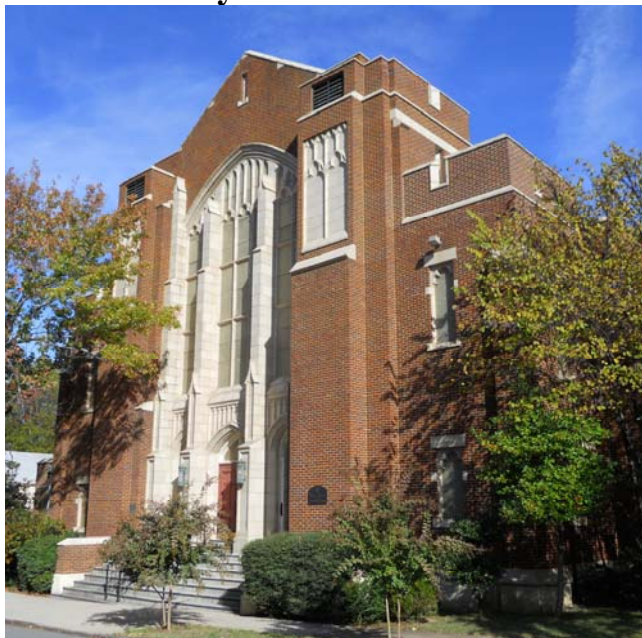


Sandwiching in History
Quapaw Quarter United Methodist Church
1601 S. Louisiana St., LR
September 9, 2011
By: Rachel Silva



Intro

Hi, my name is Rachel Silva, and I work for the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program. Welcome to the Sandwiching in History tour of Quapaw Quarter United Methodist Church (historically known as the Winfield Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, South)! I'd like to introduce and thank a few folks for allowing us to tour the church and for helping me gather information—Rev. Thompson Murray, Rev. Anne Holcomb, Julie Cabe, and Mary Henry.

Winfield Methodist Church (now QQ UMC) was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982 for its blend of Gothic Revival and Craftsman-style architecture designed by Charles L. Thompson and Thomas Harding, Jr.

Church History

Little Rock Mission Church (or Ratcliffe Chapel)

In 1868 a small group of people split off from the Second Street Methodist Church, which was then at the NE corner of 2nd & Louisiana, to form the Little Rock Mission Church (locally known as Ratcliffe Chapel after the first pastor of the

Second Street Church, the Rev. William P. Ratcliffe). The Second Street Methodist Church would later become First Methodist Church at 8th & Center. However, the LR Mission Church held services in different homes and businesses until 1871 when the members constructed a one-room, wood-frame building at the southeast corner of 12th & Spring streets.

Spring Street Methodist Episcopal Church, South

Because of its location on Spring Street, the congregation became known as the Spring Street Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Then in 1885 the church sold its building at 12th & Spring to a black congregation. Sanborn maps and historic photos indicate that the building at 12th & Spring was purchased by the St. Paul AME, Zion, Church, and this congregation later added a brick veneer and corner bell tower to the building. The 12th & Spring church burned about 1936.

15th and Center streets Methodist Episcopal Church, South

Meanwhile, the former Spring Street ME Church, South, purchased land at the southwest corner of 15th & Center streets, then considered the outer edge of the city, and constructed a small brick chapel at the rear of the property. It took four years to build the rest of the church at 15th & Center, but on May 19, 1889, a new brick sanctuary with a tall spire was dedicated. The congregation was known as the 15th & Center streets Methodist Episcopal Church, South, from 1885 until 1889, when it was named the Winfield Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in honor of Rev. Augustus R. Winfield, who had been the pastor of the Spring Street Church from 1880 to 1884.

Augustus R. Winfield has been called “one of the most influential and sometimes controversial men ever to serve the [Methodist] church in Arkansas.” He came to Arkansas in 1849 and remained here until his death in 1887. He was well-known for his oratorical skill and fundraising ability and also served as editor of the *Arkansas Methodist*. [There is a story that Winfield was determined to raise a certain sum from one congregation, so he told them that the doors would be locked until the goal was reached. By 3:00 p.m., he had collected the money and the congregation was allowed to leave.]

Winfield Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, South

As early as 1910, members of Winfield Memorial Methodist Church were already discussing a building expansion to accommodate their growing congregation. The

Board of Stewards and the pastor approached architect Charles Thompson regarding a possible addition of Sunday School classrooms and other building repairs. However, Thompson assured them that the stop-gap measures would not suffice. In March 1917 a building committee started looking for a new church site. Then in July 1920 Winfield Methodist Church purchased land at the southeast corner of 16th & Louisiana from Frederick Hotze, son of Peter Hotze, who built the first and second Hotze Houses next door (to the south and southeast).

On February 27, 1921, the Winfield Methodist Church held its last service in the building at 15th & Center streets. The former Winfield church at 15th & Center was sold to the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church that same year. [The Greek Orthodox Church occupied the building at 15th & Center until 1983, when the congregation moved to a new location on Napa Valley Dr. in west LR. The old church at 15th & Center has been converted to apartments and is now the Cathedral Square Apartments.]

Winfield Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, South, at 16th & Louisiana

The church commissioned the Little Rock architectural firm of Thompson and Harding (Charles L. Thompson and Thomas Harding, Jr.) to design their new building at 16th & Louisiana. In April 1921 the building committee met with Thompson and determined that the church would be built in sections because of financial constraints, and the basement would be constructed first. While the basement was under construction, the congregation met at the old LR High School (East Side Junior High at 14th & Cumberland; now Eastside Lofts, apartments owned by the Arc Arkansas). The Winfield congregation held the first service in the basement of this building in October 1921. After the basement (or fellowship hall) was completed, the first 2 stories of the education wing and the sanctuary were built. Then came the remaining 2 stories of the education wing, the attic, and the tower. The first service in the new sanctuary was held on June 27, 1926.

The church was initially expected to cost \$250,000, but it actually cost \$300,000. And that was even with Thompson and Harding revising the plans to save some money by slightly lowering the height of the sanctuary and eliminating some exterior detail and stonework. The congregation paid off their debt on the building in 1946.

1950s Remodeling

In the early 1950s the congregation began an extensive remodeling project. Updates and repairs were made to the Sunday School rooms and the kitchen, air conditioning was added, and an elevator was installed (still functioning). LR architect and church member Bruce Anderson served as architect and contractor for the remodeling work. In 1954 stained glass windows from Binswanger & Company of Memphis, TN, were installed on the north and south elevations of the sanctuary. The original windows were multiple panes of cream and green glass. However, the large west window is original to the sanctuary.

Membership Decline & Fausett Bequest

In the mid-1940s Winfield Methodist Church had the largest Methodist congregation in Arkansas with a membership of about 3,400 people. But beginning in the 1960s, the church experienced a steady decline in membership due to the aging congregation and a large-scale migration to the suburbs of west LR.

Fast forward to 1985...Winfield United Methodist Church member and real estate developer Elbert L. Fausett dies on January 13, 1985. There is a provision in Fausett's will stating that the Winfield UMC must move to a new location west of University Ave. within 3 years of his death in order to receive a \$479,000 bequest from his estate. After much discussion and debate, in July 1987 the church voted to move west (merged with Mountain View UMC & built church on Cantrell Rd.). But a portion of the congregation remained downtown in this building and became the Quapaw Quarter United Methodist Church.

Quapaw Quarter United Methodist Church

Today the Quapaw Quarter United Methodist Church continues a long tradition of service to the community, especially in its effort to feed the hungry. They have a Food Pantry program, which provides groceries to families, as well as free Sunday breakfast and "Stone Soup" Sunday afternoon meals. [Food pantry started in 1982 & Stone soup started in 1985.] The congregation of QQ UMC welcomes diverse groups of people and is the first and only United Methodist Church in AR to become part of the Reconciling Ministries Network. The church's HeARTworks ministry offers affordable studio space to artists as well.

[Extras: From 1994 to 1996 the church was known as Grace UMC. From 1995 to 2005 the AR United Methodist Museum was housed on the fourth floor of QQ UMC (now at 1st UMC, LR). Used to have a daycare center here, too, but it has been gone since the mid-1980s.]

Exterior Details

Thompson & Harding combined the Gothic Revival and Craftsman styles of architecture on the building. Basically, the sanctuary and tower are Gothic Revival and the education wing is Craftsman.

Gothic Revival characteristics: pointed arch window and door openings, some with elaborate tracery; buttresses; tower with crenellated parapet and pointed arch openings with elaborate tracery.

Craftsman characteristics: use of mixed materials—tile roof with brick, stone, wood, and stucco walls; multi-pane casement windows, and false half-timbering in some gable ends.

Interior Details

Sanctuary:

- Wood beams on ceiling
- Original Celotex ceiling tiles
- Organ screen with elaborate decoration—originally had a Pilcher pipe organ, but it was replaced ca. 2003 with the current digital organ
- Original color scheme in sanctuary was blue, rose, and cream—organ screen was painted several different colors as well.
- Wood wainscoting behind pulpit area
- Balcony
- 4 plaster angels—supposedly, members argued over the color of the angels' hair and the tinting of their cheeks.
- I already told you about the stained glass windows—the windows on the north and south walls date to the 1950s, while the west window is original to the building.
- Pews are original to the early 1920s & pews upstairs are thought to be from the church at 15th & Center—Winfield bought them back from the Greek Orthodox Church in the fall of 1921.
- Original cork floor

Basement:

- First part of church completed
- Now houses the Fellowship Hall & kitchen with serving windows
- An April 17, 1921, article in the *Arkansas Democrat* described the plans for the new Winfield Methodist Church, saying it would be a “comfortable place of worship, with recreational and community center features not overlooked.” It went on to say that a “social room” beneath the sanctuary would have provisions for “two complete moving picture outfits, so that two shows may be given simultaneously.” And “It is the intention of the pastor, Rev. William B. Hogg, to give ‘movie’ entertainments for the benefit of the members of the congregation during the week.”
Sure enough, a projection room was built in the basement, and it’s still there. The church had a Motiograph Motion Picture Projector. Movies were shown on Wednesday and Friday nights. Some of the early movies were Rip Van Winkle, Treasure Island, and Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm.
- Other part of first floor—food pantry, nursery, children’s classroom
- Courtyard

Second floor:

Chapel
Bridal suite
Library
Choir Room

Third floor:

Artist studios in former classrooms

Fourth floor:

Artist studios
Rotation Sunday School classrooms

Finished Attic:

See trap door for roof access

Bell tower: There has never actually been a bell in the tower.

Extras: Now about 350 members. Average attendance on Sunday mornings is 110. Sunday service is at 11:00 a.m. Upcoming Christmas in the Quarter tour of homes on Dec. 4, 2011.

Methodism: The largest and most divisive split in the Methodist church happened in 1844 over the issue of slavery (several other splits occurred, including the African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1816, African Methodist Episcopal, Zion, Church, Colored Methodist Episcopal--now Christian Methodist Episcopal--in 1870, and the Methodist Protestant Church in 1828).

The Methodist Episcopal Church, South supported slavery, while the Methodist Episcopal Church did not. Although churches in northern and western AR attempted to stay with the ME Church, most ceased worship until Reconstruction. Even after the Civil War, the congregations remained segregated in two separate conferences within the state. The break would not be healed until the "Uniting Conference" of 1939, where you get the formation of The Methodist Church. This congregation was aligned with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, until 1939. The United Methodist Church was created in 1968 when the Methodist Church joined with the Evangelical United Brethren Church (historically, German-speaking congregations with beliefs similar to Methodism).

Thank you! Next tour is October 7 at St. Joseph's Orphanage in NLR.