



The Saddlebag



Containing the latest dispatches from The First Home of American Methodism

July 2024.

Robert Strawbridge, The First American Methodist Circuit Rider

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Colonial Day 2024



Once again, the air was filled with the sounds of the blacksmith at his work, the traders promoting their wares, and the sweet notes of the hammered dulcimer. The smell of fresh cooked food filtered throughout the area on a beautiful late spring day. Guests marveled at the appearance of colonial era personages who stopped to greet them as they made their way through the site. Docents shared with visitors the stories that explain the significance of the historic buildings they stood in. This was Colonial Day at the Strawbridge Shrine, June 15, 2024, and it did not disappoint.

The Strawbridge Shrine Association sponsors Colonial Day each year on the third Saturday in June. It's an opportunity to invite the public to see our historic buildings, to learn about the first Methodists, and to understand what it was like to live in the 18th century. This year, we were pleased to have some artisans demonstrate typical trades of the colonial era. These included a blacksmith, caner, seamstress, gunmaker, and fur trader. These folks all dressed in 18th century clothing appropriate to their role in society. Additional period-attired individuals included a well-to-do gentleman farmer, a retired circuit rider, a frontier scout, and men and women of the middling sort (what we would today middle class). All these provided education and "atmosphere" for the day.



The Shrine's historic buildings were open for viewing as well. Volunteer docents were present in each structure (Strawbridge House, John Evans House, Log Meeting House, and barn) to provide the details of their importance to the Strawbridge story. Much of the information they shared told what life—especially religious life—was like for the Strawbridge and Evans families along with the neighbors who were members of the first Methodist class meetings.

Colonial Day is a big event for the Shrine, one we cannot do without the help from our members and volunteers. Thanks to everyone who helped make this day possible. We greatly appreciate your time and energy to make Colonial Day our biggest day of the year. We look forward to offering this inspirational event to our guests and neighbors, both old and new, next June. Thank you all!



"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."



Shrine Association Officers Meet Ambassador for Methodist Heritage Sites

On July 1, Strawbridge Shrine Association President **Mary Buzby** and Vice President **Bob Kells** met the newly appointed Global Ambassador of Methodist Heritage sites, **David Worthington**, during a Zoom call that explored some of the possibilities facing Methodist history sites today. **Mr. Worthington** is based in the United Kingdom. He has shared the story of Methodism at John Wesley's New Room, the oldest Methodist building in the world, for eighteen years. The New Room is located in the English seaport of Bristol. His newest calling to be an ambassador for United Methodist heritage sites was announced at the May General Conference meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina, by General Commission on Archives and History (GCAH) General Secretary **Ashley Boggan**. **David's** hope in this new ministry is to help connect people with Methodist history, and to help Methodist historic sites connect with one another as well as the resources they need to tell their own stories.

The July 1 call was mainly an opportunity to introduce **David** to the Strawbridge Shrine. **Mary** and **Bob** provided an overview of the Shrine historic site, pointing out some of the "firsts" in American Methodist history associated with Robert Strawbridge. We discussed some of the challenges facing the Shrine Association, and other historic sites, including finding innovative ways to connect with the public, identifying resources to maintain and expand our operations, and the ever-present challenge of finding volunteers. These topics, and more, are being addressed in the Shrine Association's Strategic Plan, which we hope to complete before the end of this year.

From his experiences with Methodist history in the UK, **Mr. Worthington** suggested that presenting a broad picture of Methodism's role in American history is important in engaging visitors, whether they are United Methodists, or not. Sharing the Robert Strawbridge story is our mission. Equally important is explaining how Strawbridge fits into the larger picture of Methodism's emergence in the British North American colonies. This approach can help engage a wider audience, including people who are not affiliated with the UMC, or any other religious group. "We are a Methodist museum for all people," **David** said, "not just a history museum for Methodists." The Shrine Association heartily concur!

Global Ambassador Worthington is scheduled to travel to the USA several times in the next couple of years. We hope to remain in contact with him, and to draw on his expertise in renovating and re-energizing the telling of Methodist history. We also hope to persuade him to visit the Strawbridge Shrine in person to hear his take on Methodist history as one who has seen it from both sides of the Atlantic. Historic sites are always under pressure to demonstrate their relevance to the people who visit them. We want the Strawbridge Shrine to be among those sites that shares its story in such a way that we inspire a new generation to learn how God's people called Methodists changed the lives of others for Jesus Christ in the past, and how we continue to transform lives today.

Strawbridge Shrine Calendar of Events

Jul 20	Board Meeting
Sep 14	Executive Committee Meeting
Oct 19	Board Meeting
Dec 8	Advent Service @ Log Meeting House, 4 PM
Jan 18 2025	Annual Meeting, place TBD

The Strawbridge Shrine is located at 2650 Strawbridge Lane, New Windsor, MD 21776

Visit our website www.strawbridgeshrine.org, or call 443-289-0191 to learn more about the first home of American Methodism.