

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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*"You may be as orthodox as the Devil,  
and as wicked."—John Wesley*

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## THE ROSEWOOD CLASS

*"Sent by my Lord, on you I call;*

*The invitation is to ALL:*

*Come all the world; come, sinner thou!*

*All things in Christ are ready now."*

*—Charles Wesley*

1984 marks the Bi-centennial of Methodism in America. The foundations for this denomination were largely laid by two English brothers, John and Charles Wesley. It was however, John Wesley (1703-1791) who in particular had great powers of organization while his brother Charles is best known for his hymns. Through John Wesley's ground work an important conference was held on December 24, 1784 in Baltimore. It was at that time that the Methodist Episcopal Church (now United Methodist) was formally organized.

Methodism in this area can trace its beginnings back to 1816 when the first circuit riders or Methodist preachers came to what is now Orleans County to spread their word among the early settlers. The First Methodist Episcopal Society of Albion was organized on December 6, 1830. Early in 1831 members raised money by subscription for building a church on land donated by Nehemiah Ingersoll. In the following year of 1832 this church was dedicated which still serves the congregation today at the corner of East State and Platt Streets in the Village of Albion. Throughout the years this building has undergone numerous changes as the church has continued to be of service to its members and to the community.

As Methodists celebrate their Bi-centennial and in particular, as Albion Methodists note Sunday, April 29 as Heritage Sunday, we look back to one singular service group of the Albion Methodist Church. It was known as the Rosewood Class. Members of this group are shown pictured here in the early 1920's on the steps of the Orleans County Court House. Their revered teacher, Rose Aldrich Woods, is seated second from the left.

Rose Aldrich was born at Kenyonville in 1862 and attended the Kenyonville Methodist Church. In 1880 she married Alfred W. Woods and they resided in Waterport where Mrs. Woods was

active in the Waterport Methodist Church. Their children were: Mrs. R. E. Brodie, Stanley, Howard and David Woods. In 1899 Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Woods moved to Albion and became members of the Albion Methodist Church.

In the Fall of that year, William Howard, father of Charles Howard, became superintendent of the Sunday School and at his request, Rose A. Woods took over his Sunday School class of twelve ladies. As time went on this class continued to grow in numbers and usefulness under its faithful teacher. In the summer of 1914 at the suggestion of Rev. H.C. Woods, their church pastor, the class was formally organized and named for its faithful leader "The Rosewood Class." On November 19, 1914 it was enrolled in the N.Y.S. Sunday School Association and received its charter. It was the first formally organized Sunday School Class in Orleans County. Its membership then numbered sixty-four but grew to ninety-seven in 1916.

Members of the group worked exceedingly hard for the benefit of their church. They put on socials, quilting bees, bake sales, and entertained other classes and organizations of the church. Their class motto which they took seriously was "We aim to serve." Prayer and music always formed a part of all their gatherings. The Rosewood Class was involved in the Women's Foreign Mission Society and subscribed to the free bed fund at the Arnold Gregory Memorial Hospital.

Through the years many dollars were raised by this group which they contributed to the upkeep of the church and its expansion. Mrs. Woods held a deep love and devotion for her church and strove continually to lead a truly exemplary Christian life. Upon her death in September 1937 an Albion newspaper wrote a lengthy obituary which in part includes: "The staunch faith of such a woman cannot help but penetrate the lives of those with whom she came in contact and her life has much to offer to the younger generation of today. We can commend her faith and the service she gave during her life in various capacities."

The Rosewood Class no longer exists in the Albion Methodist Church but its fine example of Christian work and its esteemed teacher of high Christian principles are still remembered. Indeed, this Methodist woman offered an example to follow for "the younger generation."

*"In all things endeavor to act on principle,  
and do not live like the rest of mankind, who  
pass through the world like straws upon a  
river, which are carried which way the stream  
or wind drives them."*

*—Susanna Wesley  
Mother of John and Charles Wesley*

