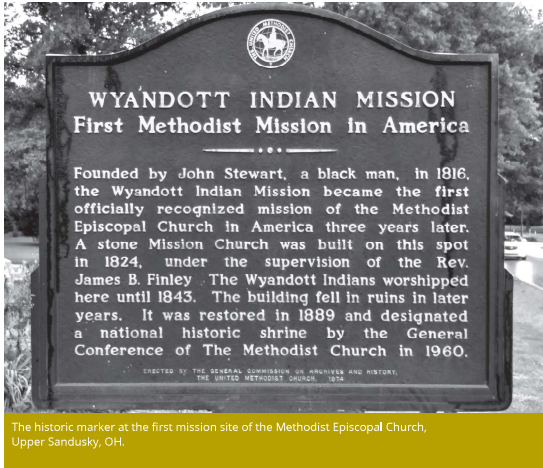
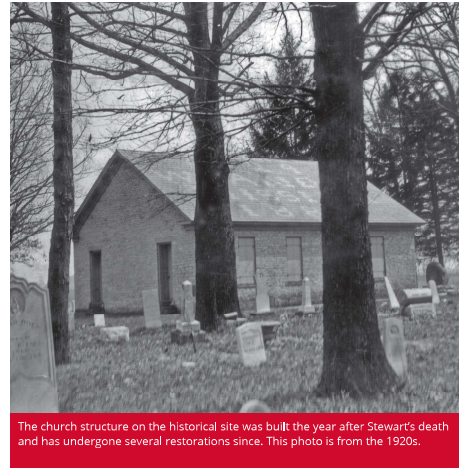


JOHN STEWART



The historic marker at the first mission site of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Upper Sandusky, OH.



The church structure on the historical site was built the year after Stewart's death and has undergone several restorations since. This photo is from the 1920s.

Founder of the First Permanent Methodist Episcopal Mission Among Native Americans

Born in Virginia of free parentage, John Stewart was a Baptist of mixed European and African descent. After he was robbed on his way to Ohio, he attempted to drink himself to death. Suffering agony of soul, he was delivered from depression by joining the Methodists during a camp meeting. He became ill from resisting a call to preach. Recovery commenced after he agreed to obey God. He heard the voice of a woman and a man calling him to preach to the Native Americans, and he set off in a northwesterly direction.

Stewart sang and preached to the Delawares on the way to the Wyandotte people. Reaching the Wyandottes, he was befriended by a government agent who directed him to Jonathan Pointer, an African American who had been captured by Native Americans and was fluent in Wyandotte.

With Pointer as interpreter, Stewart began to sing and to preach to them in 1816. Despite opposition, he warned the Wyandottes to "flee the wrath to come." His singing and preaching resulted in the conversion of the chiefs, leading women and others. Rival missionaries appeared and accused him of exercising ministerial functions without a license. Supported by Native American converts, Stewart requested recognition by the Methodist Episcopal Church and was accordingly licensed in 1819. The church supported his mission work financially and by appointing missionaries to continue it. Stewart's example helped to inspire the formation of the Methodist Missionary Society in 1820.

Source: Dana L. Robert, *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, with modifications.