

Weave Me A Story

Theme Interpretation by Joyce Stevens

Weaving is one of the oldest methods of constructing a fabric, meshing together threads that run in two different directions. Weave me a story of historical facts and personal memories to celebrate Illinois WMU!

HISTORICAL FACTS: Let's say that these are the warp threads. The warp threads go on the loom first and form a base for our story: *Prior to 1905* Illinois women were active in Woman's Home Missionary Society and Woman's Baptist Foreign Missionary Society. Mrs. J. A. Leavitt was actively supporting women's work in Illinois through writing a column in the *Illinois Baptist* newspaper in 1905.

On October 24, 1907, Baptist women met at the Presbyterian Church of Herrin to promote the work of the Woman's Baptist Foreign Missionary Society and the Woman's Baptist Home Missionary Society. Records of this meeting are found at the First Baptist Church of Herrin. The Illinois Baptist State Association was meeting in the First Baptist Church of Herrin at the same time. Many women went back and forth between the meetings because they were members of churches meeting in this first annual meeting of Illinois Baptist State Association and wanted to know what was going on. This meeting was referred to as the pre-organizational meeting of Illinois WMU. At this meeting they promoted two children's homes, a Baptist Women's Training School in Chicago, and a "Call to Prayer" with names of missionaries from home and foreign missions assigned to "praying women" for one year at a time.

On October 27, 1908, women met at First Methodist Church of Marion at 9 a.m. This was the first official meeting of the Illinois WMU. However, the women kept their affiliation with the Woman's Baptist Home and Foreign Missionary Societies.

HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONAL FACTS*: Now, let's insert the weft threads of our story: associational involvement. The first recorded Associational WMU Director of Williamson Association was Mrs. J. W. Jarrard of Johnston City. In 1916 a lengthy appeal was made to women in Williamson Association to have a Mission Society in each church. Ladies' Aid societies were encouraged to become regular mission societies. Our Illinois Baptist State Association Executive Director's mother, Mrs. Tom (Romelia) Adams, was the Associational Director of Williamson Associational WMU in 1966-68.

PERSONAL MEMORIES:** When another part of our story is needed, wrap more thread (weft) and overlap the "associational memories" with a few "personal memories". Continue weaving: our story is never complete; it just keeps expanding!

*Insert your own associational memories here.

**Insert your own personal memories here.