HISTORY
Of
HOLBROOK CHARGE

Birmingham Church
Macedonia Church
Orange Church
Pleasant Grove Church
HISTORY OF THE BIRMINGHAM METHODIST CHURCH

In the 1830's there lived in what is now the Birmingham Community, one THOMAS JEREMIAH DARTER, who was a practicing physician, merchant, and local congregationalist preacher.

In about 1835 this congregationalist preacher organized a church, which was located two miles southwest of the present village of Birmingham, a short distance east of Little River.

This congregational church was known as DARTER CHAPEL for some 18 years. About 1847 a large family by the name of HOOK, from Orangeburg District, South Carolina, moved into the vicinity of this DARTER CHAPEL, some settling on the west side of Little River and some on the east side of the stream.

In this family of HOOKS was DR. J.C.R. HOOK who lived near DARTER CHAPEL and practiced medicine in the vicinity until the time of his death in 1872. DR. HOOK had a sister named MARY who taught school in the vicinity for several years.

These HOOKS were devout Methodist. They, with the aid of JOHNATHAN L. PRUITT and his two brothers, FRANK, and TAYLOR, and perhaps others changed DARTER CHAPEL into a Methodist Church about 1853 and named the Church, Pleasant Hill Methodist Church. Dr. DARTER became a member of the new Church.

After the death of DR. J.C.R. HOOK in 1872 the Church was moved to the young and growing village of Birmingham. The Church was located on a beautiful two acre tract of land donated by the Community near the center of the village. The Church in its new location served the Community for a place of worship and school.

JOHNNY JOHNSTON, a local Methodist preacher, educator, and later State Senator, was one of the early teachers in this new school and church.
In 1889 a new Church building was erected on the same two acre plat. About the time the new Church was completed, a local Methodist preacher, educator, and promoter, PROFESSOR LAMONT GORDON came to the community from England. Prof. Gordon as leader, with the help of the Church and Community, influenced the North Georgia Conference to build and support a school in the new growing Community.

On this two acre church plat, a "big" two story building was completed in 1893. Prof. GORDON was the first Principal of this big and expanding school. In 1894 this school opened with boarding students from Big Springs, Orange, Alpharetta, Cumming, and other points.

After a few years Prof. GORDON moved on to another Community where he built another school through the help of the Northern Methodist Church.

Rev. J.O. BRAND, who is still living, was sent by the North Georgia Conference in 1897 as pastor of the Church and Superintendent of the school. Out of this school came a Baptist educator and preacher, REV. W.J. BALLEW, two prominent attorneys, one doctor and several school teachers.

A few years after the turn of the century, the North Georgia Conference withdrew its support and the school was turned over to the County Board of Education. The school had a rapid decline and in the course of time faded away. Just about the time the Church was moved from near Little River to Birmingham, a family of NEESSES, W.P. NEESE, MOLLIE NEESE ADAIR, JOSEPH P. NEESE and DR. NEESE moved into the Community. These NEESSES with the help of J.D. HARRIS? BURNETT DAY, G.W. HOLCOMBE and GEORGE SMITH families put new life into the Church.

The JOSEPH P. NEESE family has been the pillow of the Church from the time it was moved to its new and present location to the present time (1952).

In 1941 a new brick Church was built making the third or fourth Church building.
The Church has witnessed many great revivals under the preaching of the Tilmans, Sullivans, Whitfields, Singletons, Hughes, and other great men.

The plat of ground on which the Church is located has been the center of various Community enterprises for more than sixty-five years.

Today at the back of the Church a beautiful modern Community Club house stands where Community gatherings are enjoyed. Additional grounds have been acquired and converted into a modern recreation playground with grills and play equipment, ball park, etc.

The influence of this Church has been spread into hundreds of Communities where its people have moved and lived.

This sketch of history has been written by CLAUDE STEPHENS, a former member, with the help of MRS. MATTIE CHRISTIAN NEWTON, COL. G.B. WALKER, B.B. WOOD, and information gathered from the tombstones in the old DARTER CHAPEL cemetery.

This the 3rd day of June, 1952.

Claude Stephens