A HISTORY OF THE METHODIST CHURCHES OF BLUE RIDGE, FANNIN COUNTY, GEORGIA.

BLUE RIDGE, GEORGIA, MARCH 26, 1956.

The writer was appointed by The Methodist Church of Blue Ridge, to write its history; and upon reflection and giving the matter some thought, it has become obvious that this history will, of necessity, embrace the history of three churches - the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, the Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, and The Methodist Church.

THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH.

Since the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was the first one to be organized in Blue Ridge and it appearing to the writer that the history of these churches should be written chronologically, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, will be first presented.

The writer has obtained from J. W. Hopper, a member of this Church, and who will be hereinafter referred to in this history, the following historical facts connected with the first meeting of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, held in Blue Ridge:

J. L. Richardson, who was a local minister at Morganton, Georgia, in the year 1877, suggested the organization of a Methodist Church in Blue Ridge, but the exact day and month cannot be given. The organization meeting was held and the following were the first members:

Mr. and Mrs. J.L. Richardson, Ed Rivers, J.W. Hopper, W.S. Taffer, N. B. Cutcher, Mr. and Mrs. Elisha Ricketts, and Mr. and Mrs. W.M. Wilson.

The Presiding Elders were the Reverend M.L. Underwood and M.J. Cofrer.
Reverend Singleton and Reverend Johnny Atkinson were the supply ministers, with Reverend J.E. Sewell as assistant pastor.

The Stewards were J.L. Richardson, Ed Rivers, and J. W. Hopper.

A Methodist Church was constructed and the same was located just South of the old Methodist parsonage, and this church building was used until the new church building was located on East Main and Church Streets, which was used until a new church building was constructed on West Main Street following Unification of the three Methodist Churches in America.

According to the official minutes of the Blue Ridge Methodist Episcopal Church, South, the first quarterly conference in which the Blue Ridge Methodist Episcopal Church, South, participated was as a member of the Morganton and Gaddistown Mission, and the same being known as the Dahlonega District, North Georgia Conference, and was held at Morganton on January 28, 1888, with Reverend A. C. Thomas, presiding elder, James A. Sewell, Pastor, and M.L. Singleton, Assistant.

Those present representing the different churches were as follows:


These pioneer Methodists were some of the founders of Methodism in Fannin County; and they planted a small fig of Christian influence, which it appeared at times would wither and die, but under the guiding
influence of a Great Providence, it has become a powerful, sturdy oak; and as the opening part of this history is written, it is appropriate and fitting that we should pay a tribute of love and respect to these pioneers who laid deep the foundation for the Methodist Churches which exist in Fannin County today. They have been called to their rewards and have received the plaudits of the angels, but they have left their footprints religiously, and in many other respects, upon the sands of time.

The churches or charges, as they were called in those days, consisted of the following: Morganton, Leggs Chapel, Dillards Chapel, Gaddis-town, Bethel, Mt. Pisgah, Blue Ridge, and Mineral Bluff.

Commencing with the year 1888 and extending to the year 1939, the following Presiding Elders served this Church:


Commencing with the year 1888 to the year 1939, the following were the Pastors of this Church:

Timberlake, H.A. McNeil, Charles L. Allen, and J.L. Black. (The list of the foregoing presiding elders and pastors have been stated fairly correct as to the chronological order in which they served, but the exact dates cannot be given correctly for the reason that some of the minutes of the Church have been misplaced and cannot be located, and in view of this situation, it was deemed best to only give the names of the Presiding Elders and the pastors and make no reference to any specific years in which they served).

A resolution providing for Unification with the Methodist Episcopal Church of Blue Ridge was adopted in the year 1939. (The exact date when this Church passed the resolution providing for Unification cannot be given for the reason the writer has been unable to locate the minutes of this church covering the period of 1939 through 1943 inclusive. A thorough search was made and several of the older members of the church contacted, but these minutes cannot be located).

THE TRINITY METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in Blue Ridge on the 15th day of October, 1919. Reverend R. H. Robb, of Epworth, presided, having been appointed by Bishop Leete. This meeting was held at the home of Mrs. Delia Curtis.

The following were the persons attending the organization meeting and became its first members:

E. G. Garland, Mrs. E.G. Garland, Mrs. Martha A. Cochran, Cicero Smith, Rev. John H. Rector and wife, George A. Curtis, Mrs. Delia Curtis
Miss Eva Curtis, Bill Ballew, Mr. and Mrs. Joshua Hall, J. L. Forrester, Mrs. Addie Forrester, Mrs. Mary Lance, Mrs. Alice Brown, Mrs. Edith McKinney, H.H. Holt, Mrs. Martha Johnson, J. F. Wiser and Mrs. J. Y. Curtis.

The following trustees were elected: G. A. Curtis, E. G. Garland, F. L. Cochran, J. L. Forrester, A. P. Johnson.

Following the organization meeting a campaign was inaugurated to raise funds for a church and parsonage, and the funds were raised and the church was erected on West Main Street and the parsonage by the side of it; and the church has been remodeled and changed and is now being used as a parsonage for The Methodist Church. The parsonage was sold and on the lot where it was located with other additional property is where the present The Methodist Church is located.

On the corner stone of this church there appears the following:


This Church and parsonage were used from the time of their construction up and until Unification was consummated in the year 1939.

This Church adopted a resolution of Unification in the year 1939.

(A more complete and detailed history of this Church cannot be written for the reason that the minutes for a number of years are missing, and after a thorough search cannot be located, and particularly the minutes dealing with the last years of the Church leading up to Unification).

Commencing with the organization of the Trinity Methodist Church, down to the time of Unification, the following served as District Superintendents:

The following were the pastors:


**THE METHODIST CHURCH**

This church became a full station, that is, preaching and Sunday School every Sunday, in October, 1939.

Following Unification of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church, and local Unification in Blue Ridge, proper steps were taken to dispose of the church property of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the parsonage building of the Methodist Episcopal Church; and a building committee was named to have supervision of the construction of a new church and was composed of the following:

William Butt, Chairman, J. C. Thomason, Vice-Chairman, John D. Poston, Secretary, G. A. Curtis, and W. R. Dickens.

The following Finance Committee was named:

William M. Smith, Chairman, Joe Poston, Vice-Chairman, Charles W. Kiker, Jr. Secretary, J. M. Eaton, Jr., Treasurer, R. G. Hudson, Mrs. W.O. Anderson, and Mrs. H. F. Mashburn.

The new church building was completed and occupied in the year 1947, and the cost of the same was $50,000.00.

The following memorial windows, in memory of deceased members, are located in the Church: Mr. and Mrs. J.R. Willis, Mrs. Ruth Butt Stuart, Mr. and Mrs. W.A. Wilson, Ernest B. Crawford, Mr. and Mrs. J.F. Anderson,
Windows are also located in this church honoring Reverend Floyd Walden and Mrs. Betty Mowbray.

On January 30, 1955, the Church was badly damaged by fire, but sufficient funds were raised without delay and the damaged part repaired. The Church is now in a better condition than it was when it was originally constructed.

A pipe organ was placed in the Church in the year 1939.

On May 10, 1955, a picture-window of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane, was presented to the Church by J.M. Eaton, Jr., in memory of his mother, Mrs. J.M. Eaton, Sr., and in honor of his father, Mr. J. M. Eaton, Sr. This window was accepted by Rev. Shelton E. Adams, Pastor, for the Church.

Commencing with Unification in the year 1939, the following have served this Church as District Superintendents:

The Reverend J. S. Thrailkill, C. M. Lipham, H. C. Stratton, and W. H. Gardner, the current District Superintendent.

The following are the names of the pastors:


The present membership of this Church is 267.

The oldest living member of this Church is Mr. John W. Hopper, who resides in the Sugar Creek Community near Blue Ridge, and for a number
of years was a resident of Blue Ridge. He was born October 29, 1862 and is, therefore, 93 years of age, and is probably the oldest living citizen in Fannin County. As has been stated, he became a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, when it was organized in Blue Ridge in the year 1877, and has, therefore, been a member of the Methodist Churches for 79 years; and was one of its first Stewards. He enjoys robust health for a man of his age and gives attention to his farm, and it is one of the high lights of this meeting today that he can be present. He has received and is receiving the just rewards of a true, consistent Christian life.

The Methodist Church, numerically, is the strongest protestant Church in the world today, and as we all know, it was founded by the great John Wesley; and during his long ministry, he made orally, and in writing, many never-to-be-forgotten statements, but undoubtedly these words of his left the greatest impression upon the Methodist Churches and Christian civilization:

"I look upon all the world as my parish. I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty to declare, under all that are willing to hear, the great tidings of salvation. This is the work I know God has called me to; and sure I am that his blessings attends it."

William Butt,
Historian.