The History of
Cedar Grove
United Methodist Church

By James E. Hanna
The 150 year history of Cedar Grove has been a progression towards a centralized church and state, and a decline of the influence of the congregation and community. It has been an evolution from an individualistic to a corporate society. The individualism rooted itself before the Civil War. The Methodist Protestant Church (Cedar Grove's denomination) formed due to their concern for individual rights. Southern religion dwelt on emotional experiences, evidences of contact with God. The primary political structure was the farm, because people had little contact outside of that environment. This individualistic culture settled the frontier and thrived for thirty years until the Civil War destroyed it. As the world crumbled around them, the church structure survived the social and political ruin, and provided the people of Cedar Grove with guidance. Since the Church was the major structured authority in the South, the Methodist Protestants began to centralize in order to eliminate an unorganized scramble of numerous congregations going their various ways. The government moved in the same direction when the economy collapsed in the 1920s and '30s. The crisis was nationwide, and the only way out was in a united effort which would prevent individual efforts from working against each other. This centralizing of authority carried over into World War II and kept increasing throughout the Cold War. Today, the intense centralization of church and state is a discomforting reality for the people of Cedar Grove.

In her 1952 "History of Cedar Grove", Nell Moore wrote, "In the year 1822 the John B. Morris family traveled in covered wagons from
Abbeville County, S. C. to Henry Co. Georgia and purchased land lot No. 11 in the Fifteenth District from the original land grant holder, one Henry Meachamp, Sr. on Nov. 21st of that year.¹ She lists Morris as one of the founders of Morris Church (later Cedar Grove) and four of his sons, Rev. G. Warr Morris, Rev. Elijah Morris, Garrett L. Morris, and Joseph Morris, along with Allen J. Cook and John Moore.² But in 1828 when the log chapel was erected and dedicated, Joseph (who was not Joseph, but a younger John B.) was 12, Garrett 10, G. Watt 7, and Elijah 2. Cook was 10, and although Moore was 14, he had not yet arrived from Ireland.³ Nor is it certain that all four Morris boys were sons of Morris. In the 1820 census of Abbeville County, the household of John Morris lists only two boys, both over 16, and none under that age, but at that time both John B. and Garrett were under 10. However, immediately following Morris on the census list is the household of Pleasant Morris, perhaps a sister-in-law. She lists two boys under ten. Three names above Morris is the household of Phillip Cook.⁴ Young Allen J. could have come from this family. At any rate, portions of two or three of these families migrated to Henry County, Georgia in 1822, where six years later they built a church.

This was a period of American history when frontier land was sold at remarkably low prices, provided that portions be homesteaded. In 1821 unsettled Henry County was divided into land lots of 220 acres and offered in a land lottery.⁵ Henry Meachamp Sr. took land lot 11, but within the year had to sell it. Morris bought it, and the family set up camp in a clearing until shelters could be constructed. They lived as pioneers, feeding themselves on the land's wild resources until they could clear forest, plant their crops, and gradually settle into farm life. The
family resumed the agricultural chores, and after six years completed their permanent home.6

Southern families like the Morrises were tightly organized, each member with an understood position of authority and set of responsibilities. John Morris was head of the household, and organized the estate. While women often did "men's work", such as plowing, men seldom lowered themselves to work they considered a woman's responsibility, so Morris yielded the authority of these household duties to his wife, who carried the second position of authority. The children followed in rank with their respective chores, and the slaves (Morris never owned more than three) filled the bottom position.7

Within a decade the Morrises saw their country settle from a frontier to an agricultural community. By 1820 the Cherokees had been driven across the Chattahoochee, and by 1838 would be in Oklahoma.8 With the population increase following the land lottery, DeKalb County had to be formed in 1822 from portions of Henry, Gwinnett, and Fayette Counties.9 By 1830 the population of DeKalb was 10,074, or 37 people per square mile. This population remained about the same for fifty years.10 Morris answered his civic call in the new county by becoming a justice of the peace in 1826.11

Morris not only pioneered DeKalb County, but also the Methodist Protestant Church of Georgia. Methodist Protestants splintered off of the Methodist Episcopal Church, forming their own denomination in 1828, the same year Morris Church was built. They had not wanted to create a new church, but reform the old one. They demanded that the laity be represented at annual and general conferences, and objected to the unchecked power of Bishops. When the Bishops demanded that they cease their
calls for reform, they refused and were expelled from the Methodist Episcopal Church. When the Methodist Protestants adopted their constitution in 1830, the laity had equal representation with the clergy at all conferences, ministers were on an equal basis, and there were no bishops.\textsuperscript{12} Although the conflict centered in Baltimore, the sympathy for those expelled was nationwide. Georgia established twelve Methodist Protestant churches that year, and one of them was built by the Morrices.\textsuperscript{13} Other than these governmental changes, the Methodist Protestants were as Wesleyan as the Methodist Episcopal in their doctrine and the expression of their faith.

By 1828 a uniquely American style of religion had developed on the frontier. Although the Southern ancestors had been predominantly Scotch-Presbyterian or Church of England, by 1800 that heritage had been forgotten, with only 5\% of all Southerners aligning themselves with a particular faith.\textsuperscript{14} The European styled denominations had failed to progress beyond the coastal cities because their religion only suited the needs of a cultured society.\textsuperscript{15} Around 1800 the Second Great Awakening swept the country, feeding the religious needs of the American frontier. The dynamo of the movement was the camp meeting, held in familiar woodsy settings and characterized by dramatic emotional conversions. One person described the new converts as being "seized with the 'jerks, running, dancing, and barking, and, most commonly with attacks in which with piercing screams they fell on the floor or ground' seemingly dead..., the sobs, shrieks, or shouts, bursting from persons under intense agitation of mind, the sudden spasms which seized upon scores, and unexpectedly dashed them to the ground."\textsuperscript{16} Although these wild gesticulations subsided somewhat, outward
emotional expression became established as necessary symbols of faith. The 1851 minutes of the Georgia Annual Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church contain an obituary for Rev. Thomas O. Adair who had died at age 31. A fellow preacher wrote the obituary, reporting Adair's death bed words and the accompanying actions. "'Oh brother, if you could once see the glorie of the upper world as I do, this earth could offer you no charmes!' He then spent some minutes shouting and praising God... And with lifted hands he prayed, 'Lord give me patience and resignation to thy will.' which were the last words he spoke."17 The jerking and barking of 1800 had evolved into shouting and praising by 1851, but both describe the type of outward emotional expression of individual faith that was typical in the South when Morris Church was built.

As the Southern frontier settled into agricultural communities, a social structure developed, based on agricultural prestige. Large plantation owners claimed the top of the social order, followed by farmers like the Morrices who owned small amounts of land, followed by poor whites who owned no land. The Black slaves occupied the bottom of the caste system.18

The Panthersville area (the small militia district in southwest DeKalb County containing Morris Church) was largely middle class in 1860. A Southern householder valued over $10,000 was considered fairly wealthy, and Panthersville contained only eleven men worth more. The younger John B. Morris approached that figure with $9,085, Garrett was worth $5,300, and Elijah, with $4,000 was just under the Panthersville average of $4,200. George Watt (he and Elijah were both preachers by this time) had only $1,100, Allen J. Cook valued himself at $3,000, and John Moore at $3,600.
Social position could not always be based on land. Even in the highly agricultural Panthersville District, 10% of the heads of households were employed outside of the farm. Most of these owned no land, but received enough of an income to maintain a middle class lifestyle. Neither James C. Avery, an M. D. worth $20,800, nor Charles Murphey, an attorney whose wealth of $43,000 made him the richest man in the Panthersville District, owned vast plantations, but were no doubt members of the upper class, and exceptions to the agricultural based caste system. 19

But five years later the Panthersville District was in ruins. On November 14, 15, and 16, 1864, the 17th Army Corps of Tennessee, a Division of Sherman's forces, marched through the farms of Panthersville. 20 Nell Moore relates a story from that time.

"...during Sherman's march through Georgia, a regiment of the Union Army camped on the hillside around the Morris Church....

When the enemy's soldiers came to the Morris well for water, Huldah, with a prayer in her heart, went to the officer telling him of the illness there and asking for protection for the night.... The officer promised to send a guard for the home, which he did, and as Huldah took up her vigil inside the front window, and watched the armed figure move back and forth in the cold moonlight she thanked God for her good fortune and wished for the day." 21

Huldah Morris' story of Union mercy conflicted with the story in the census of 1870. From 1860 to 1870 the average value of personal estates was deflated by 80%, and the average cash value of the farms dropped 44%. The people of Panthersville lost over 70% of their livestock, wheat and corn were down 60%, cotton, wood, and sweet potatoes were down 80%, and the loss in butter production was 93%. 22
The Georgia Annual Conference was surprisingly silent about the war, making no official pronouncements. Their attitude would seem to indicate that they felt no patriotism, and considered the war a nuisance to the church. In 1861 the Southern Methodist Protestants decided to hold their General Conference in Montgomery, Alabama, because, "in the present condition of our country it is impracticable to hold the General Conference ... in the city of Georgetown, District of Columbia..." The 1864 Georgia Annual Conference failed to meet because of Sherman's march, but the only comment in the minutes the following year was a footnote on the bottom of the opening page that read, "Note – The conference failed to convene at Browns Church, near Social Circle in 1864 pursuant to adjournment, in consequence of Sherman's expedition over the territory at the time. The session in 1865 will therefore include the two years 1864 and 1865." Even when destruction came to their land, the church maintained the principle of staying out of social and political affairs.

But their true emotions surfaced in the obituaries they wrote. In the 1861 minutes the obituary of P. Ogletree read, "Brother Ogletree spoke often and earnestly of the troubled state of his country, and though an ardent supporter of his country's honor...his daily prayer was that peace might return to our borders and the chastisement we are suffering for our sins might be removed." A later obituary for Rev. B. R. Bray, a chaplain in the Confederate Army read, "The sufferings of his bleeding country deeply effected his heart.... He remained in Vicksburg during the siege of that unfortunate City. After its surrender he returned to his family greatly emaciated and in a state of extreme nervous frustration. He said that the pestulential atmosphere, the want of food, the...frustrations endured, had reduced him to his present situation; but, thanks to much
suffering had been able to see his home once more.... He had frequently
expressed a desire to live long enough to witness the deliverence of his
country from abolition...." 26

To add to the weakened condition of the South following the War, vicious money lenders descended on the South, establishing a ruinous
credit system. 27 Any meager profit went to the pocket of the loan shark.
In order to improve the desperate conditions, some Southern leaders tried
to lure northern industrialists to the South by giving them tax incent-
ives, burdening the Southern farmers with the lions share of the taxes. 28

Adding to the Southern crisis following the Civil War was the per-
plexing problem of what to do with the newly freed slaves. The white
South had no obvious immediate answer. Segregation came gradually over a
generation. Nell Moore tells that at the Morris Church before the War,
"Negro slaves went to church with their masters and occupied rear seats
provided. They repented and praised God at the same altar and went home
to plough the good earth together and wait for the Lord's blessings, spir-
itual and material. The Black slave also took his turn at death with the
white man and many of them were laid to rest on the hill where his masters
too now lie burried." 29 It is not known when the last Black person was
buried in Cedar Grove Cemetary, nor when the last Black person worshipped
in the church before it became segregated, but before the war, the whites
were not threatened by the presence of the Blacks in their church. After
the War, this attitude began changing. In 1866 F. H. M. Henderson (who
would one day be pastor of Cedar Grove Circuit and eventually be buried
at Cedar Grove Cemetary) was Chairman of the Committee on the Interests of
the Colored People for the Georgia Conference. In an effort to deal with
the Black question, his report to the conference recommended;
"1st That we tender to the colored people the use of our church houses when it will not interfere with any worship of the whites.  
2nd That the Com. on Boundaries be instructed to lay off colored missions as far as practicable; and that the stationing committee supply those missions with preachers as far as possible.  
3rd That our ministers be instructed to preach to them separately and organize them into societies and churches provided they adopt our book of discipline.  
4th That this conference endorse all efforts to improve their condition by literary and religious instruction and cherish toward our former slaves the kindest Christian feeling."\textsuperscript{30}

In the 1870s the white South gradually concluded that the solution was total and complete segregation. The Georgia Conference minutes before and after the War recorded the appointments of Black ministers to Black charges, but in 1877 the Conference gave their President authority to organize the "colored charge into an independent annual conference to be called the Colored Annual Conference of Georgia."\textsuperscript{31}

Even though Southern institutions were segregating, many white households still listed Black members. In Panthersville in 1880, Mat Richardson worked as a servant for Allen J. Cook. Charles Morris was Garrett Morris' Black servant, and Wiley Linch was a farm laborer in the household of the younger John B. Morris.\textsuperscript{32} But eventually segregation filtered down to the personal level.

With the upheavals following the War, the Panthersville district was reshaped. Farm families uprooted by the War had to find new land. The Moores, Morrices and Cooks remained in the area, but they were joined by Gunnins, Lynches, Farlows, and Petermans. While the population in-
creased 40% from 1860 to 1870, persons employed outside the farm increased 130%. There were more schoolteachers, carpenters, brick masons, and millers. There were ditch diggers, and even a general of a chain gang. Some men commuted to Atlanta to work as grocers, printers, or railroad men. The changed population resulted in a new church, and in 1872 Garrett Morris donated a piece of property on land lot 22. A $200 frame chapel and a school building were built by the fifty members, but the old name no longer described the new generation. Nell Moore writes, "After some months Rev. Lige Morris planted a grove of Cedar trees. In informal discussion, 'Cedar Grove' was suggested as a name for the new church and the name stuck."

With all of the cultural transformations, the Methodist circuit rider system survived the chaos and provided one of the few institutional orders in the war torn South. Every November at Annual Conference, the preachers of Georgia were appointed to their circuits for the following year. They would have a "charge" of a handful of churches, with a rough membership of 200-300. The preacher rotated from church to church, leaving the responsibility of the vacant pulpets to the church's class or lay leaders. The class members were responsible to the class leaders, the class leaders responsible to the preacher, and the preacher responsible to the conference. George Watt Morris and his brother Elijah were both appointed to the DeKalb Circuit, which contained the Morris Church, during the Civil War. In 1860 they had 201 members to work with, 21 of whom were Black. There were five churches on the circuit valued at $500. As we have seen, Elijah was worth $4,000 that year, and George Watt was well below the Panthersville average at $1,100. Their salaries did not help. In 1858 the total salaries paid to the DeKalb ministers was $77.00, but
that was considerably higher than the $17.34 paid in 1854. By 1875 the DeKalb Circuit was paying their circuit riders a total of $159.20.  

Morris Church and later Cedar Grove was probably a comparatively important church. While DeKalb Circuit constantly changed its boundaries, containing at various times Clifton, New Hope, Owl Rock, Stockbridge, Anvil Block, Atlanta Station, and probably others, Morris Church never changed circuits. Later, when the church changed its name, the name of the circuit was changed to Cedar Grove Circuit. Even though the entire circuit could send only one or two delegates to the Annual Conference, they were usually from Morris/Cedar Grove. The Conference occasionally held its annual meetings at Cedar Grove, and some of the current members can remember the cold November meeting they hosted in 1937. Many of the presidents of the Annual Conference, men such as F. H. M. Henderson, R. S. McGarity, C. B. McDaniel, J. M. Reynolds, W. M. Hunton, and even G. W. Morris, had been ministers of the DeKalb circuit. It is difficult to say if the prestige of Morris/Cedar Grove Church extended beyond religious influences, for the churches of that time generally believed in staying out of social and political matters, but in 1873-4, Rev. Elijah Morris served a term in the Georgia House of Representatives from Henry County, his place of residence.

The Church found it difficult to stay out of social and political matters. Dealing in spiritual matters meant condemning the ways of the world. To be spiritually whole meant to have no moral deficiencies, and the best way to insure good morality was to rid the culture of the forces of temptation. In order to clean up the world, the Church had to dirty its hands in social and political matters. The theory is summed up in this 1892 proclamation of the Temperance Committee of the Georgia Methodist Protestant Conference. "United in one earnest and prayerful effort, as
parents, as countrymen, and as followers of Christ, let us strike down this evil [alcohol] that menaces every home and every sacred institution of our land, and thus hasten the universal reign of our Lord over the children of men."37 In order for the Lord to return, and establish his Kingdom, the Church felt it could meet God half way by cleaning up the world. Even though they were against involving themselves in social and political spheres, the Church did so, rationalizing that their actions were based on spiritual concerns - making the world clean enough for Christ's return.

Being the watchdog of Christian morals had its roots in the Church before the Civil War, but they were on more of an individual basis. Each year in the decade before the War, misconduct charges were made, and trials conducted for individuals by the Georgia Conference. In 1853 the Committee of Theology examined the character of Brother P. Lingo, accused of being a universalist. They found him guilty but only scolded him, with instructions to discontinue discussion and defense of the "Doctrine of the Destructionist."38 In 1854 S. W. Fowler was found guilty of immorality and malpractice in office, and his credentials demanded.39

After the War, charges against individuals decreased and the Church made more and more pronouncements, offering guidance for the social behavior of all persons. The individual was beginning to be lost in the masses. The prime example of the Church's involvement in social issues was the temperance committees which succeeded in pressuring Georgia and later the United States to prohibit alcohol. After their Georgia success, the Georgia Conference Temperance Committee tackled tobacco, but failed to receive the entire support of the Conference. The 1906 Temperence Committee suggested that the Church work for the abolishment of cigarette smoking,
and added, "our pastors could be more effective in this if they would refrain from the use of tobacco in every form." Also in that decade a new "monster" had found its way into the culture - Coca Cola. The Temperance Committee of 1911 said that whiskey, near-beer and Coca Cola were the "worst forms of intemperance we have to deal with, that it causes more sorrow, blights more lives, widows more wives, orphans more children, erects more Gallowses, digs more graves than any other agency of the devil."  

Coca Cola was only one of the symptoms of a new culture. The South had actually recovered enough from the Civil War to claim a certain amount of affluence. The 1911 Annual Conference President reported, "I am very much gratified to be able to say this has been a prosperous year for our church in Georgia." But the Church was also wary of the prosperity, for people participated in leisure activities which distracted them from the Church. A Sabbath Observance Committee was formed and in 1913 voiced the church's displeasure. "Whereas there seems to be much of that spirit of lawlessness prevailing during these prosperous times, namely Sunday picnics, going to Soda Founts, going abroad on long trips by rail and motor for pleasure sake, be it resolved, that we feel the need of urging each and every citizen, and pastor as well, to co-operate together and secure a more loyal regard for the observation of this day of rest."  

Even though the church took conservative stands on the new social conditions brought about by prosperity, it was not uninfluenced by some of the ideals of the new age. When child labor laws were introduced in the country, the old attitude that children were to be seen and not heard, and preferably not seen, was beginning to crumble. In 1912 the President of the Georgia Conference appealed to the members to begin a separate
young people's organization. "We must utilize our young people or lose them to those who will do so. This may appear too modern to some of us, but it is no less essential." In 1920 Cedar Grove organized the Christian Endeavor Society for their youth, and it went by that name until the Methodist Church was formed in 1939, when it became the Methodist Youth Fellowship. By 1924 the Conference reported that the "Young peoples work is in excellent condition."

Another indication that the Church was changing its attitudes along with the culture was the increasing involvement of women in the conference during the time when American women were campaigning for the vote. 1924 was the first year female delegates attended Annual Conference, and the Conference subtly changed the title of laymen to lay delegates.

A surprising development only one year later was the presence among the honorary members of a "Rev." Mrs. Leila B. Fountain.

As the need for a strong organization became increasingly important for the church in the years after the Civil War, the leaders of the Methodist Protestant Church felt a weakness in their form of government. In 1851, when one of the founders of the Methodist Protestant Church died, the minutes of that conference contained a fiery obituary, condemning the Methodist Episcopalns and justifying the Reformers. The issue of individual rights was still important. But after that year, nothing is mentioned about the split or its issues. The Methodist Episcopal Church began changing some of the policies that the reformers had objected to in 1828, such as granting lay participation in the conferences. As early as 1876 the Georgia Conference of Methodist Protestants sent out feelers to the Methodist Episcopalns, exploring the possibility of union. As the Methodist Episcopalns relaxed some of their previous positions, the Meth-
odist Protestants began regretting their lack of central power. In 1898 a report to the annual conference expressed concern over the poor support of the church's general interests. "We regret to note...that there exists a far too general disposition to ignore or slight these general connectional enterprises... We also, believe that only under the pressure of such great undertakings can our denomination be welded into one great connectional organization and thus be saved from that constant drift and trend towards a selfish and destructive, independent, local congregation-alism."52 There was a possibility of joining with the United Brethren in 1913 that fell through, 53 but in the late 1920s the representatives of the 200,000 Methodist Protestants began working with both the Northern and Southern Methodist Episcopals, resulting in the 1939 formation of the Methodist Church, a powerful centrally organized body of over six million Americans. 54 Following the 1938 minutes of the last Georgia Conference of Methodist Protestants was an appendix titled, "The Story of Methodist Union - With Questions and Answers." It summed up the reasons for joining with the Methodist Episcopals by saying, "It has been generally conceded that the Methodist Protestant Church would have made better progress throughout its history if there had always been the present superintendency of the President of the General Conference, or something similar to the Episcopacy in the other Methodisms."55

Centralization of power not only took place at church levels, but also within government. The South survived the rough years following the Civil War, and enjoyed a few years of prosperity, but they were not to last. In 1919-20 the farm market collapsed. 56 100 years of planting the same crops in the same furrows finally caught up with the South. Streams and rivers were filled with red topsoil, swaths of land were left naked
by indiscriminate lumbering, and the boll weevil destroyed the cotton. Farmers who lost their land had to work as sharecroppers on farms fortunate enough to survive the crash. When the Great Depression hit the country, the government decided to pool the resources of the country, directing their use from one central location to prevent overlapping, unproductive efforts. The rise of facism in the world meant an additional need for centralization as the country prepared for war.

The Southern lifestyle was drastically altered by the hardships of the '20s and '30s. The New Deal introduced crop rotation and mechanized farming, asphalt roads replaced roads of red clay, and soon the new roads were lined with telephone poles carrying power to each farm. While this helped the Southern farms, it only further displaced the sharecroppers. Mechanization meant less work for them, and the cities overflowed with the unemployed. After Pearl Harbor, many of the sharecroppers joined the service, and those who remained in the United States migrated to the cities, finding jobs on the new assembly lines. By the time the war ended, the Southern farms were modernized, and the industries established in the cities, so the former sharecroppers returning from the war found jobs in the factories and left their rural background behind. The availability of jobs in the cities, coupled with the modernization of the farms also freed the children of the farm owners. No longer were they tied to the land, but could now leave their farms with no one suffering. The large agricultural household was becoming extinct. With the migration to the cities, Atlanta mushroomed, covering the Cedar Grove farmlands with suburban dwellings. The members of Cedar Grove were no longer farmers, but the new breed of city workers, still with the dirt of the farm clinging to their city shoes. Even today, the background of the adult members
of Cedar Grove is predominantly rural. In addition to those who grew up in the rural Cedar Grove community, half of the suburban arrivals grew up on farms, and over 80% of their parents have rural backgrounds. 58

This movement from the pre-war rural to the post-war suburban culture has demanded enormous adjustment. The large clans of Cedar Grove have been replaced by the small family unit of father, mother, and two or three children. The families no longer work together on their land, with each member responsible for a set of chores, but today one or two representatives of the family, usually the father and sometimes also the mother, support the rest of the family. The families are no longer independent and individual, able to support themselves off of their land, but are now interdependent and corporate, supporting themselves by working within the highly centralized American corporate society. They work for Delta, General Motors, Sears & Roebuck, Southern Bell, and Western Electric, corporations that are worldwide. The world of Cedar Grove no longer covers just the Panthersville District, but the entire globe.

Living in the connected world is a mixed bag for the people of Cedar Grove. For the most part they have material security, mobility, multiple interests and a variety of social activities. In general, they believe their lifestyles are correct for this day and age, and they would not want to give up what they have worked for. But they are confused and frustrated by the insurmountable problems of the connected world. They helplessly face poor education, crime, turbulent race relations, governmental corruption, pollution, immorality, energy shortages, inflation, and their list continues. 59

Part of their frustration is with the church. They have faith that the Church can answer most or all of today's problems, 60 but they feel the
Church is neglecting its responsibility to be their champion, and fight these evils. Most express disappointment in some of the recent developments in the Church, and want some of the characteristics of the past revived, a past that did not have such problems. They want a revival of the optimism that they used to feel in the Church.

An era that some of the members long for is the time before World War II, when groups like the Ladies Auxiliary sent flowers and cards, or made quilts for the sick. They contributed to charities the money they made from socials and pagents. The Auxiliary had committees on Mission Education, Christian Education, Benevolence and Stewardship, Spiritual Life, Literature, Thank Offerings, Young Peoples Union, Life Membership, Temperance and Christian Citizenship, and Pastors Aid. Yet they were a small group, interested in helping the community, not with enormous, impersonal campaigns, but with small touches. In the meeting of the Ladies Auxiliary of April 19, 1939, "It was announced that there was a faithful member of our Sunday School that was unable to attend Sunday School any more until they got them some shoes to wear. A donation... .75 was made to send for this purpose."

Another era remembered is the period following the War when Cedar Grove and churches all over the country experienced a boom, expanding its membership and welcoming suburbia. In those days, biggest meant best, for one conquered by combining strengths as in the Depression and the War. In 1961 Cedar Grove broke ground for a larger church, tearing down the small chapel erected in 1872, and plans were included for later expansion. The churches were swollen on Sunday mornings. It seemed the churches could do no wrong, people all over the country were turning to God, and the problems of the world were being conquered by combined efforts. But in
the '60s it all went sour. Vietnam, the population explosion, threat of nuclear holocaust, ushered in an age of pessimism for a world beyond control.

Today the people of Cedar Grove want the Church to give them hope, like it did in the old days, but the things hoped for are much bigger than in the old days.

For John Morris, the problems were restricted to the Panthersville District, and usually just his farm. God worried about the rain, and Morris worried about seeing that the chores were accomplished. Farm life continued in much the same way for 100 years despite the hardships of the Civil War and the prosperity at the turn of the century. But the Civil War jolted the Southern society off its foundation, leaving only the Church to provide order. The Church responded by centralizing, condemning congregationalistic tendencies and independent attitudes in order to provide its people with a common structure in which they could put their faith. The government did the same thing when the economy collapsed. Today both church and state are highly centralized, and the individual is lost in the crowd. Today optimism is difficult to maintain, because the problems of pollution, overpopulation, crime, poor education, and the many others that have arisen out of the connected world can only be solved by the connected world, and an individual alone is helpless. This impotent feeling causes the people of Cedar Grove to long for the good old days when an individual could feel a sense of accomplishment and progression towards a goal. The people of Cedar Grove cannot return to the way things were, because their world is too big. As Cedar Grove approaches her 150th birthday, she faces perhaps her greatest trial. She will have to find a way to maintain individualistic identity in a world of featureless faces.
Endnotes


2 Ibid.

3 Census Records, Henry and DeKalb Counties, Georgia, 1860.

4 Census Records, Abbeville County, South Carolina, 1820.


6 Moore, p. 1.


10 Census Records, DeKalb, 1830-80.

11 Ford and Ford, p. 19


17 Methodist Protestant Annual Conference of Georgia Minutes, 1851.

18 McKean, p. 9

19 Census, DeKalb Co., 1860.

20 Official Civil War maps of the United States Government, Savannah campaign.
Endnotes (cont.)

21 Moore, p. 2.

22 Census Records of Agricultural DeKalb County, Georgia, 1860.

23 Conference Minutes, 1861.

24 Conference Minutes, 1865.

25 Conference Minutes, 1861.

26 Conference Minutes, 1863.


29 Moore, p. 2.

30 Conference Minutes, 1866.

31 Conference Minutes, 1877.

32 Census, DeKalb Co., 1880.

33 Census, DeKalb Co., 1870.

34 Moore, p. 3.


36 Conference Minutes, 1854, '58, '75.

37 Conference Minutes, 1892.

38 Conference Minutes, 1853.

39 Conference Minutes, 1854.

40 Conference Minutes, 1906.

41 Conference Minutes, 1911.

42 Ibid.

43 Conference minutes, 1913.

44 Conference Minutes, 1912.
Endnotes (cont.)

45 Moore, p. 3.
46 Conference Minutes, 1924.
47 Ibid.
48 Conference Minutes, 1925.
49 Conference Minutes, 1851.
50 Lewis, p. 35.
51 Conference Minutes, 1876.
52 Conference Minutes, 1898.
53 Conference Minutes, 1913.
54 Norwood, p. 410.
55 Conference Minutes, 1938.
56 Clark, p. 14.
57 Ibid., p. 15.
58 Survey conducted at Cedar Grove United Methodist Church, Oct., 1977.
59 Survey question: "what is the major problem facing the country?"
60 Survey: 96% believe the Church can answer most or all of today's problems.
61 Survey: 80% expressed disappointment in recent developments within the Church.
62 Survey: Over 60% questioned want some of the characteristics of the past revived.
63 Minutes of the Ladies Auxiliary of Cedar Grove, 1939.
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