CENTRAL CHURCH HISTORY
Jan. 17, 1883 to Mar. 17, 1953

Introductory

History is a record of man and his achievements. As records of Central Church have been neglected and many events unrecorded, only a general history collected from statements of older members and memory of present members can be produced. Those contributing facts are: Mrs. Effie D. Linch, Monroe Bost, Mrs. Jim Linch, and Mrs. Eugenia Motley Maddox, mother of the writer.

Part 1

Prior to the construction of the present building of Central Church, services were held in an old two room log house, lying just west of the Central School building. Mrs. Parker, a relative of the Robys, lived in one room and taught school in the other. It was known as Central Academy and was the first school of the community. It was in that school room that Central church had its beginning.

The first Methodist Revival ever conducted in the Central community was lead by Rev. Charlie Lane. Services were held in the log school room mentioned. The revival was a spiritual success. Forty members united with the church. Rev. Cofer was the first pastor to serve on the West Putnam Circuit. He induced the members to build a church. Volunteers of the community built the present church building. Mr. J. C. Knight had the honor of hauling the first load of timber.

Part 2

Records of Gifts and Deeds
Records of deeds in the Putnam Company Court House reveal that the lot upon which Central Church stands, was donated by Mr. Mathed Ashurst Jan. 17, 1885 while conference was in session in the school room of Central Academy. At the same time, the cemetery consisting of one acre, was donated by N. C. Maddox, Sr. It was a part of the Polly Maddox estate. The Trustees receiving the donations were former members of Salem Church.

Trustees and Witnesses

The Trustees were: Lewish Linch, S. N. Howard, J. W. Carswell, and David H. Dawson. Witnesses to the transactions were: D. M. Roby and S. M. Maddox. The officer officiating was Sam Dawson, N. P.

Part 3

Original Members

The first members and founders of Central Church were: Linch, Ashurst, Howard, Dawson, Carswell, Maddox Bost, Averette, Roby's, Moreland and Wallers.

Later members

The spiritual mantel of the devout faithful organizers fell upon their posterity. The later members were: Athons, Martins, Marsh, Lawrence, Holsteins, Blacks, Dennis Knight, Folds, Stubbs, Wilsons, Linch, Maddox, Haskins, Farleys, Holsenbecks, Ashurst, Hawkins, and Jones.

Present Members

The present members are: Folds, Knights, Maddox, Harpers, Farleys, Reidy, Edwards, Shells, Wrights, Halls, Smiths, Ezelles.

Flourishing Period

Central Church and School had a flourishing period from about 1890 to 1930. At that time it was second to none in the
county in membership, contributions, and enthusiasm. Its Sunday Schools and inspiring Church services attracted both county and state wide attention and comment.

Interest, cooperation, and achievements of Central Church merited and won favorable consideration of Presiding Elders and the General Conference. As a result, many good and able pastors served this charge, and were later awarded higher appointments. A few of them were: Agustus Ernest -- Vivian Bray -- Casper Wright -- Guy Stone -- Jack Nichkols and William Boring. This community was fortunate and spiritually blessed by the influence of such outstanding pastors.

The present pastor is the Reverend Eugene Black. His members concede him a bright future.

Part 4

Events

Charleston Earth Quake

In the year 1886, a revival was being conducted by the Rev. Mr. Seals. His members believed that he was favored or stood hand in hand with God. On the last night of the revival, for some reason the members were rather cold and indifferent to any kind of proposition made by the pastor. The pastor invited all to unite at the altar for prayer. No one moved. He stated very solemnly, disappointedly, and despondently, "I have done my best for you. It will take a Higher Power than me to move you." Suddenly the windows began to rattle and the building began to shake. Mr. Seals had greater difficulty in getting all quiet and seated than he did in getting them to the altar. His consoling words were, "If I go down, I'll go shouting."
Prayers Answered Immediately

(1) On many occasions when withering crops were in need of rain the members called upon Rev. Seals to pray for rain. When he did the people were thoroughly wet when reaching home.

(2) An unfortunate family, financially, of this community was once in need of food. Prompted by faith in Biblical promises, they resorted to prayer for relief. Early on the following morning, Mr. Mathew Ashurst, that same man of God, who gave the lot for Central Church drove up at their gate with food and choice hams.

Part 5
Patriotic

Central Church has proved its patriotism in every war and crisis. Many of the younger contingent members have served in army and navy for the cause of world freedom and democracy. Listed below are the names of ones having served.

World War I
R. F. Ashurst, William Otis Knight, James Grady Knight, E. V. Tupin Knight, Van D. Folds, Vivian Price Folds, John Carl Linch, Samuel D. Maddox, Ruel Maddox, Joseph S. Badger, Charlie, Badger, James R. Badger, Fredric D. Badger, Sidney A. Pearson, Millard D. Demmis,

World War II
James W. Farley, N. L. Maddox, Jr., Oscar Holstein, Thomas Hawkins, C. K. Haekins, Joe Hall, Edge Reids

Present War
Leroy Farley, James W. Farley, Horace Schell and Harold Shell, and Thomas Hawkins remains in service.
Conclusion and Comment of Writer

Prior to the founding of Central Church and prior to the approach of Sherman's Army, it was a common sight on Sundays to see the carriages of this community, driven by slaves all dolled up in Prince Alberts and high top hats. They were on their way to Salem Church. Seated just behind the drivers, were the parents and families. The parents of that day did not ask, "Do you feel like going to church?" They said, "Get ready, we all are going to church."

It is the conviction of the writer that our predecessors, the founders of Central Church, were truly praying and spiritual people. They realized that no community could be a success without the help of their Creator. That impulse and conviction lead to organizing the church.

Present History

While Central community and Church have suffered many changes and losses, they are by no means dead. Mrs. Genie Wright has conducted a thriving, though small Sunday school. The community was benefited and blessed by her interest and efforts. Her successor is Mrs. Annie H. Folds. By her leadership and determination, together with the support of faithful Joe Hall, Central Sunday School continues to live.

Respectfully submitted,

N. L. Maddox, Sr.

Honorary Mention.

Mrs. Jim Linch of Savannah, Ga. has the honor of being Central's oldest beloved member.