Before 1771, the Cherokee Indians were so indebted to the government trading post at Augusta, that government demanded that the y settle the debt by ceding more land to be opened for settlement. The Indians reluctantly agreed. Accordingly, about 1775 a party of government surveyors and Indian chiefs started from a point some miles above Augusta, on the Savannah River, and made their way westward. When they reached a grove of great white oak trees by Indian trail leading southward from the Apalachian Hills to Greensboro, the old Indian leading the party stuck his tomahawk into a great white oak and said, "We go no further," so they turned southward from here making this the corner of the line. Since this time the place has been known as the Cherokee Corner.

The Government built a trading post and post office here. A post road was built from Augusta to Cherokee Corner, which later became the stage coach road. Soon the Indians ceded more land to the north and west and Athens and Franklin college began to build. The government factor at the trading post was a Mr. Dixon. He was the grandfather of Rev. J. R. Allen, late of the north Georgia Methodist Conference.

The White settlers came in numbers. Soon they felt the need of a church, so the entire community came together and built one. Most of them were Presbyterians, so they called it a Presbyterian Church. It was located in a grove of white oaks just south of the post, on a hill by the old trail which by this time was used by the whites than the Indians. The church was a frame house unceiled. It had a gallery for the Negro slaves and many Negro slaves worshipped here and were members until they were set free, when they built a church of their own nearby, known to this day as St. James Methodist.

The community also built a camp meeting site about two miles south of the Cherokee Corner Church. My grandfather, Fielding Dillard, was converted there in August 1825. It was maintained for many years but was abandoned before the Civil War. Soon after the building of the church the Presbyterians built a school for girls by the trail a little way north of the trading post. They planted this school for girls in the edge of the wilderness so their daughters might escape the distractions and temptations of city life. Part of the dormitory still stands, the home of Dudley Nusery. This school was maintained for a good many years, and discontinued about 1855. The school and church seemed to have been closely linked together. I remember the old Pulpit Bible presented to the church by the school girls. On the much thumbed fly leaf were the names of the girls who presented it, almost illegible from much handling. It has been lost.

Prominent Methodists of the community in this pre-civil war period were, Rev. Thomas Neely, Judge P. W. Hutchinson, his son Dr. T. D. Hutchinson, Nathan Johnson, his son, Luke G. Johnson, Sr., Mr. Winfrey, Fielding Dillard, General Pope, and maybe others.

Sometime early in this period a Miss Sallie Saffold lived nearby. My informant thought she was one of the very early foreign missionaries from the Presbyterian Church.
Then the Civil war brought confusion and change. The church was still there but the Presbyterians were all gone. The Methodist now dominated the situation. They helped to build the church and had worship there many years. So right here the Methodist met in August 1860 and organized the first Cherokee Corner Methodist Congregation. Rev. D. J. Myrick pastor of the Winterville Circuit presided at the meeting.

Cherokee Corner entertained the Athens District Conference in 1867. P. W. Hutchinson was the delegate from the local church. Also, I find a list of seventy-five members in 1867.

Rev. D. J. Myrick was pastor four years, 1867 - 1870. He was followed by Rev. W. D. Heath for two years, 1871 and 1872. Then came Rev. C. A. Connoway for three years, 1873 - 1875. In 1873 the new church was begun and finished at a cost of $850.00 in money plus such lumber from the old house as could be used in the new. The lumber for the new church was sawed in Jackson County near Jefferson. My father, James F. Dillard was sent in charge of twenty-five wagons. They left Cherokee Corner before daylight and got them loaded and back to Cherokee Corner about nine o'clock that night, all in one day. The completed church was dedicated on November 2, 1873, by Dr. E. W. Speer, presiding elder for the Athens District.

The last infant baptized in the old church was Arabella Dillard by Bro. Heath and the first one baptized in the new church was her younger sister, Frances America Dillard, by Bro. Conaway. They were my older sisters.

The church was served by Rev. C. C. Carey in 1876 - 1877; by Rev. H. C. Christian in 1878; by Rev. F. P. Brown in 1879; and by Rev. A. W. Williams in 1881. I have not found any records for 1880 nor for 1882. So I conclude that Brown and Williams probably served two years each. Rev. W. L. Wotten, Jr. served us in 1883 and Rev. Leonard Rush in 1884 followed by Rev. R. A. Seale in 1885 - 1886. One of those years Bro. Seale led Cherokee Corner in a great revival. The church conference records say very little about it, but I was there as a small boy and it made a very profound impression on this community that remained for a long time. In November 1885 Bro. Seale reported that most homes of the church held family prayer.

Prominent in the affairs of the church during this period were, Dr. T. D. Hutchinson, R. T. Johnson, L. G. Johnson, Sr., T. H. Dozier, R. F. Dillard, J. F. Dillard, his father Feilding Dillard, Joe Thomas, his son George Thomas, W. H. Morton, his father, Joe Mortmon, H. A. Hayes, H. J. Hall, his son I. R. Hall D. M. Goulding, A. C. Daniel and maybe others.

The church has some outstanding homes, the home of Feilding Dillard gave the Methodist ministry Miles H. Dillard in 1877 and Walter E. Dillard in 1887. The home of L. G. Johnson, Sr. gave Luke Garnet Johnson, Jr. to the Methodist ministry in 1881. The home of Joe Thomas gave Joe A. Thomas to the Methodist ministry in 1893. The home of James F. Dillard gave Thomas H. Dillard in 1900, and Joseph L. Dillard in 1905 to the Methodist ministry.

In Bro. Sewell's administration Cherokee Corner bought a gospel tent and erected it on the church grounds. They had a gracious revival. Prominent in this period were, W. R. Tuck, his son, Claud Tuck, T. H. Hawkins, W. M. Hayes, J. W. Morton, J. F. Dillard, Jr., E. C. Dillard, H. C. Arnold, R. M. Hall and maybe others.


Then came Rev. W. W. Benson, 1919-1920, followed by Rev. J. R. Allen, loving and being loved by everyone. He served from 1921-1924. He was followed by Rev. D. S. Patterson in 1925-1926. He conducted a tent meeting at Arnoldsville about one mile from Cherokee Corner and did much good.

Then came Rev. F. B. Mize, 1927-1928. He conducted a simultaneous revival for the Winterville Charge, each church had a service every morning, then the entire charge would gather under the big tent in Winterville for the night service conducted by Evangelist, Rev. Harry Allen. It was a great idea and much and lasting good was done.

During Bro. Mize's ministry Cherokee Corner entertained the Athens District Conference in 1928. Rev. Pierce Harris was the conference preacher. Then came the sweet-spirited Rev. M. B. Sams, 1930-1932, loving and trusting everybody and being loved by all. Bro. Sams got the three Sunday School rooms built on the back of the church. The pine trees on the church lot were cut and hauled to Mr. Edwards' farm sawmill about two and one-half miles away by the church members using their own labor and teams then the lumber was hauled back by the same people for love of the church. Mr. Frank Edwards, a good Baptist, and Mr. A. J. Lord, his foreman did the sawing with his farm hands for Cherokee Corner. Then the church members did the work themselves; so the cost in money was comparatively small.

Bro. Sams was followed by another sweet-spirited man, Rev. A. E. Barton, 1933-1934; and after him came Rev. R. W. Green, 1935-1936. After Rev. Green came Rev. George W. Davis, 1937-1938. Then came Rev. Martin W. Chambers, 1939. Rev. L. F. VanLandingham came in 1940-1941; followed by Rev. R. H. Timberlake in 1942-1943. He left us before the end of the second year to join the U. S. Army as Chaplin. He was followed by Rev. William Greenway, 1944. Then Rev. R. W. Allison who served Cherokee Corner from November 1944 to June 1945, when Cherokee Corner was transferred from the Winterville Charge to the Crawford Charge. The time of holding the Annual Conference was changed from November to June.

We started there in June 1945 with Rev. W. D. Gray who served us for four years, until June 1949 when Rev. J. Ray Melear came to us for three years, until June 1952. During his term the Sunday School room at the front of the church was begun. Then in June 1952 Rev. J. S. Strickland came to us for two years. He was an old man and loved and honored by everyone. While he was here the two Sunday School rooms that Rev. Melear began were finished. While Bro. Strickland was here a hardwood floor was laid in the main auditorium and in the front Sunday School rooms.
A number of other jobs have been done in recent years, such as the removing of the old weather boarding and replacing it with asbestos siding and repainting the house inside and out. And for the life of me I can't remember when they were done nor the cost of them, but I know that to the old-timers the Cherokee Corner of today would hardly be recognizable.

Then in 1954 the Bishop sent us a splendid young man, Rev. R. W. Mabry. He is now finishing out his first year with us. We are hoping and expecting him to come back after the conference.

In the main the people of Cherokee Corner are an intelligent high-minded lot. Many fine young people have gone out into the world from here. Many of them are witnessing to the saving power of Jesus Christ.

Now, in 1955, we have recently organized a chapter of the Methodist Youth Fellowship. They are mostly teen-agers. To attend one of their meetings is a heart-warming experience. They seem to be growing up in the church as naturally as they grow up in our homes. I think they will carry on God's work better and more wisely than we have done, therefore, I am not afraid to leave the church of tomorrow in their hands. Mrs. Wallace Myer is the loved and trusted counselor of this group.


The Women's Society of Christian Service dates back into the dim past. At present there are seventeen members, I don't know just who composes the membership but prominent among them are Mrs. M. A. King, Mrs. A. M. Fleming, Sr., Mrs. Charlie Myer, Mrs. J. D. Hawkins, Mrs. P. N. Butts, Mrs. Claud Tuck, and Mrs. G. W. Thaxton. These women are the salt of the earth, the church would be poor indeed without them. And because of them we are looking forward to a brighter tomorrow for Cherokee Corner Church and community.

May God's richest blessings be upon each one of you is my earnest prayer.

Thomas H. Dillard