The History of The Clarkesville United Methodist Church as herein contained was researched and compiled by Mrs. Levis Brewer for presentation at this Dedication of The New Church School Building. Our deepest appreciation to Mrs. Brewer and all those who were able to contribute to her labors in preparing this document.

This history was read by Jim Marlowe during The Dedication Service.
A History of The Clarkesville United Methodist Church

It is instructive to learn from our older citizens of the progress and advancement of this community during the swiftly gliding years of over a century, and there is an inspiring interest in their account of the erection of the first church in our little village in which the people met to worship God. May these autumn leaves of memory afford pleasure to our older people, and inspire in our young people greater interest in the church.

Looking backward through the mists of over one hundred years our minds eye catches a view of our little mountain town in a somewhat scattered and primitive state. Comfortable, old-fashioned residences, a few business houses, and a court-house of the plain architectural production of that day, composed the buildings of the town, without a temple dedicated to God where His people could meet for public worship.

Though far distant from the busy centers of the world, where money seemed to abound, our faithful forefathers desired to erect a church, when Col. James Brannon, one of the whole-souled citizens of the community, in March 1831, donated to the Methodist denomination a conveniently located lot (now our old cemetery) on which to erect a church to be used by all denominations. Said donation being intrusted to a board of trustees composed of John B. Chappell, Rheubin Phillips and Turner H. Trippe.

After this liberal gift we are told that the generous citizens of the community lent a helping hand to such zealous, pioneer Methodists as John S. Dobbins, William W. Alley, Richard Powell, Col. William H. Steelman, Thomas Fayette, John W. Chitwood, Judge Turner H. Trippe, William Goodrum, Hezekiah Dyer, John Fuller, James Griggs, Sidney Barr, Dr. W. J. Rusk and others in aiding the erection of the church.

The long, effacing years deprive us a knowledge of the labor and sacrifices made by the faithful men and women of that day to accomplish the result, but we do know that God blessed their noble efforts though the sad lack of records deprive us of the fact as to when or by whom the Methodist Church was organized in Clarkesville.

Many tender memories cluster around the old church as it stood in the cemetery amid majestic oaks, which shadowed the resting place of our dead. Fond mind pictures recall its white walls, its woodwork and old fashioned benches in plain drab coloring, and the long sweep of gallery on three sides of the building, which was provided by those thoughtful generous citizens for the benefit of the colored people, and where they often sat during the public services to hear the word of God.

Two rows of windows, one above for the benefit of the gallery and one below gave light to the main body of the church, while for the evening services it was lighted (as was the custom of that time) with candles, which had been gathered by the sexton from house to house.

One aisle in the center of the church led to the altar and the old time pulpit, where the word of God was proclaimed by such heralds of the cross as Rev.'s Ballew, Walter Knox, William Evans, Walker B. Glenn, John H.
Harris, J. P. Turner, William Lively, A. M. Clonts, Theophilus Harwell, T. T. Christian, L. J. Davies, A. M. Thigpen, R. W. Bigham and others whose names are familiar to our people as pastor or presiding elder and Rheubin Phillips, George H. Round (principal of academy) Thomas B. Wheeler, Abraham Littlejohn, John L. and William Richardson, and other local ministers who labored zealously here. Many were moved under their earnest appeal, and the church grew in strength and numbers.

The faithful pastors and presiding elders not only proclaimed the word of God, but carefully guarded the various interests of the church, the Sunday School, the mid-week service, the old-fashioned class meetings the soul-inspiring love feast, and the far-reaching pastoral work of this large circuit, which we must remember for some years extended from Mossy Creek campground to Rehoboth church near Tray mountain, on the West and North and to Tugalo River on the South a distance of forty miles, including Soque Campground, Nacoochee and Clarkesville Churches and in later years, Loudsville and Cool Spring Camp Grounds - consecrated heroes of the Cross - their names should never be forgotten.

As relentless years sped on, the mantle of preacher and laymen fell on other shoulders, and memory recalls among the laity the familiar names of Norris, Hicks, Byrd, Richardson, Hunt, McMillan, Lambert, Addison, Harris, Porter, and others of equal zeal, as well as the treasured names of many consecrated women who aided in the progress of the church.

From the records of The Quarterly Conference we learn that in 1859 a committee was appointed to buy or build a parsonage. A comfortable house was purchased, on now Washington Street, in the early part of 1860, and in March of that year the following trustees for the same appointed: Robert McMillan, John C. Addison, Edwin P. Williams, Levi F. Young and John G. Porter. This home has been, during the intervening years, the abiding place of many happy families.

Then came the dark days of the war of 1860, and the subsequent years of toil and privations, but the church was ably served by such zealous pastors and presiding elders as W. P. Pledger, F. G. Hughes, John F. Parker, G. W. Yarborough, and other true men of God who diligently worked for her welfare and progress.

Time changes all things, and the day came when it was thought desirable to remove the old church from the cemetery lot, and rebuild it on a part of the parsonage lot, which was done in 1881, during the pastorate of Rev. W. W. Lampkin, and was dedicated by Rev. J. H. Baxter in 1882.

The Women's Missionary Society was organized in 1884. During the years from 1892 until 1899 the following pastors served the church. A. H. S. Bugg, R. Roombs Dubos, Divens W. Farr, C. W. Davis and M. H. Edwards. In 1901 it was decided to build a new church and a wooden
building was constructed at the same location where the old church stood. This was built during the pastorate of Rev. J. D. Milton. In 1902, a new parsonage was built where the old one formerly stood, this was also during the pastorate of Rev. Milton. He was moved and did not live in the new parsonage which was built.

Following J. D. Milton the church was served by J. W. Gober, E. P. Searcy, W. A. Simmons, W. C. Fox, J. E. Rorie, J. F. Jordan, J. S. Strickland, O. M. Ponder, and L. B. Linn. Rev. Linn served on this charge for nine years and was the first pastor to have served more than four years. At the time he was here he served the following churches: Clarkesville, Demorest, Habersham Mills, Cool Springs, Alley's Chapel, New Liberty, Turnerville, and Ebenezer. The pastors following Linn were J. L. Harrison, J. G. Davis, O. J. Withrow, J. B. Smith, J. W. Gardner, and Hoke Sewell who came here in 1936.

At The Annual Conference of 1936, The Clarkesville Charge was divided with Ebenezer, New Liberty, and Alley's Chapel going to The Tallulah Falls Charge, which was a new charge that was formed, leaving Clarkesville, Demorest, Habersham Mills and Cool Springs on The Clarkesville Charge. On April 1938, during the pastorate of Hoke Sewell, the wooden church built in 1901, burned to the ground. The organ, Bible, and a few chairs were saved. In a few weeks work was started to build a new church, and on October 23, 1938, the brick church was completed, dedicated and the cornerstone laid. A few months later a second fire destroyed the interior of the new building and work was started over again to rebuild.

In 1934 The Women Missionary Society, the oldest Women's religious organization in Clarkesville, celebrated their fiftieth anniversary. In 1934 The Young Women's Circle was organized. In 1940 The Women's Society of Christian Service was organized.

Following Hoke Sewell, the pastors were: Floyd Walden, Clyde Lee, and J. B. Godfrey. The Wesleyan Service Guild was organized in 1948. In 1949, under the pastorate of Clyde Lee, a new parsonage was built. A Sunday School building using some of the material from the old parsonage was built. In a few months this building burned.

Following Rev. J. B. Godfrey were: J. H. Hearn, P. V. Hall, W. L. Cawthon, Charles Peeve and Malcolm A. Coleman. In 1960, The Kite Stribling Circle was organized. Changes in the buildings continued as membership increased, constantly meeting and reaching needs of people. The vestibule was redesigned, new front doors added, carpet installed and new sanctuary lighting. Stained glass windows replaced the old ones and were dedicated on Sunday, March 31, 1968, during the pastorate of William L. Cawthon. Youth renovated the old basement for their use. New Methodist Hymnals and robes added much to the worship through music.

During the 1960's negotiations between The Methodist Church and The Evangelical United Brethren Church (progressed) toward a plan of union -
The United Methodist Church brings together two streams of spiritual life with similar emphasis which has their beginnings in the evangelistic concerns and passion of John Wesley, Francis Asbury, Phillip William Otterbein, Jack Albright, Martin Boehm, and others who labored with them.

The Constitution was adopted in Chicago, Illinois, on Nov. 11, 1966, by the General Conference of The Evangelical United Brethren Church and The Methodist Church and thereafter by the requisite vote in the Annual Conference of the two churches. The Plan of Union was made effective by the Uniting Conference in Dallas, Texas, on April 23, 1968.

In 1971 a New Educational Building with kitchen and Fellowship Hall was consecrated. A bell tower, erected added much beauty and inspiration to the old brick structure. A Library was established and a Materials Room added. In 1973 The Women's Society of Christian Service and The Wesleyan Service Guild merged to form United Methodist Women. The four Groups are: The Fannie Fry Group, The Bertha Garrison Group, The Kite Stribling Group and The Friends in Faith Group, organized in 1978.

Through the years the Sunday School has done a great work in the program of the church, also the youth organizations, The Epworth League and The United Methodist Youth Fellowship. A Children's Church was organized in 1977.

Our church is presently served by Rev. Oscar D. Crosby, Jr.

God has richly blessed our church in permitting her ministry to touch many lives while growing to a membership of 319.

Through God's guidance and love, it is our prayer that this church will continue in the present, as in the past, growing to the honor and glory of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.