

HISTORY OF CLINTON METHODIST CHURCH

Early document records give proof that the Clinton Methodist is the second oldest church in Jones County and the first established Methodist Church.

At the July 1810 Term of the Inferior Court of Jones County the presiding Justices appropriated to the use of the "Methodist connection" in the town of Clinton, one acre of land adjoining the one already laid out. What type of building erected on this lot and used by these early Methodist nothing is known. It was not until July 14, 1821 that a deed to the Clinton Methodist was made by the Justice of the Inferior Court to William Flewellyn, Elisha Tarver, Peter Clower, James Jones and Pierce A. Lewis as trustees of the church. One hundred dollars was the consideration for the four acres of land. Deed Book "M", p 106. It is thought that this structure was erected at this period (1821). The Church was a frame house of good dimension with substantial stone steps from native granite. On each side of the first step was an iron foot cleaner set in granite. A steeple was overhead in which was a large bell, with rope attached for ringing.

Double doors formed the main entrance down the aisle to the altar which almost surrounded a raised pulpit. Back of the pulpit was a large window with a fan window above it with two windows at each end. On each side wall were four windows and a door which furnished other exits. From the middle aisle to the side wall were rows of long benches. From the ceiling hung a beautiful brass chandelier, holding six lamps with shades. On the front, back and side walls were brass brackets holding lamps that used kerosene for lighting.

A few feet inside the double doors a stairway on each side of the church, lead to the gallery with benches which were used by the slaves.

In 1897 years after the slaves became free the gallery was removed from the top of the church. The lower part of the church was not changed except there are two aisles now leading from the front door down to the altar.

The chandelier and the brass wall brackets were wired in 1941 and electricity is used for lighting.

"In 1829 Dr. Lovick Pierce was sent to Eatonton and Clinton. Clinton the county site of Jones County was an appointment in the Cedar Creek Circuit. Clinton was a place of considerable importance, being in the midst of a fine cotton producing country. In it was much wealth and style and alas! infidelity and dissipation.

The first Sunday after Dr. Pierce came he was preaching an earnest and impressive sermon when a fashionably dressed lady, the wife of one of the most distinguished and wealthy lawyers of the community, became overcome by her feelings and swooned away. She regained consciousness and was soon a converted woman. She long lived an exemplary Christian life."

(HISTORY OF GEORGIA METHODISM BY GEORGE SMITH, PAGE 184)

Dr. Smith in Life and Times of Geo. F. Pierce refers to "a revival such as America had not known since 1802, was now in progress in Georgia, in Washington, in Lexington, in Greensboro, in Macon, and in Clinton." This must have been somewhere about the year 1829.

Nothing is known of the pastors serving this old church until 1836, when Rev. James Payne is mentioned.

In 1837 the names of Abner H. Flewellyn, John Pitts, Kinchen P. Thweat, Archibald Jarrett and Anderson Rice appear as trustees of the Church property.

Rev. W. R. Branham was pastor in 1839.

In 1860 are found the names of Richard Wyatt Bonner, Isaac Hardeman, Henry Gibson, Peyton T. Pitts, Sr. and Joshua Goddard as Trustees of an additional lot given by Shadrack Slatter, Elizabeth Lowther and Jonathan Perris said property to be used for a church or parsonage.

This lot was used for a parsonage for the Clinton Circuit. During the interim between 1917-22 the lot and parsonage was sold.

Rev. Tom T. Christian was pastor in 1860.

In 1861-62 J. B. McGehee was pastor. J. B. McGehee was a missionary to the negroes. The labors of these two men resulted in building of an outstanding church in the county, Pitts Chapel.

Wesley P. Arnold was pastor from 1865-69.

"On the Warren Circuit with Allen Turner was a young man, the nephew of William Arnold, W. P. (Wesley) Arnold. For forty years he was an active, popular and useful preacher. Genial, social, full of humor, simple in manners, without ambition or jealousy. Few men have been more lovable or more loved. He was at one time a man of property but as his plantation cares interfered with his ministry, he sold his land and lost the debt. He, however, cheerfully labored on, sometimes even walking his circuit. In 1870 he was appointed to Milledgeville station, but before his removal, he was stricken with apoplexy and died with a single groan."

(HISTORY OF METHODISM BY GEORGE SMITH, PAGE 174)

W. P. Arnold's grave is between four stone posts connected by iron bars and is on the left side of the Clinton Church, a roadway between.

In 1868 Clinton Circuit was in Griffin District. Wesley P. Arnold was pastor. W. R. Branham was Presiding Elder.

According to the minutes of the Conference year ending Dec. 2, 1868 Clinton Circuit report was as follows:

Number Churches	5
Value	\$2,700.00
Sittings	1,000.00
Value of parsonage	500.00
Paid for pastor	567.00
Presiding Elder	6.00
Bishop	5.00
Conference Collections	65.00
Domestic Missions	35.00
Foreign Missions	750.00
Membership white	222
Local preachers	1
Infants baptized	0
Adults baptized white	7
Adults baptized colored	8
Sunday Schools	2
Officers and teachers	13
Sunday School pupils	70
Sunday School requisites	160
Church periodicals	15

The Clinton Methodist Church was among the earliest to organize in North Georgia a Foreign Missionary Society. ✓

In 1870 C. A. Mitchell was sent to the Clinton Circuit. In the summer of that year glorious revivals were held and many converted.

J. M. Armstrong was pastor in 1871. He was a fine scholar and able preacher.

In 1872 W. J. Hanson served the church. Rev. Hanson afterwards became a missionary to China.

J. Carr was pastor in 1873 and 1874.

In 1875 the Clinton Church and Circuit was supplied by Rev. John Knight. Early in life he was an infidel and had worked at the tailor trade in Clinton. In 1835 he was converted. His life and labors afterwards were given to the furthering of God's Kingdom. When Rev. Knight came as pastor of the Clinton church it had declined in spiritual power. Some of its best members had gone to Macon, Georgia. Rev. Knight labored hard. He had little success.

The Clinton Church Stewards in 1875 were R. H. Barron, Dr. Asbury Kingman, and Richard Henry Bonner. On the church membership roll were the names of R. H. Barron, Richard Henry Bonner, Dr. Asbury Kingman, J. W. Stubbs, Elbert Catchings, Charles Redding, Pratt Griswold, Dr. George Pursley, Robert V. Hardeman, Robert Finney, W. H. Holsenbeck and Roland T. Ross. The good

women were Ellen Barron, Anna Catchings, Drucilla Childs, Jane Gilbert, S. E. Hamilton, Ann Hutchings, Annie E. Johnson, C. E. Kingman, Lucinda Mason, Elizabeth Morgan, Lizzie Pitts, Matilda Lowe, Margaret Pope, Mary Pursley, Ann Stubbs, Elvina Stubbs, Jane Thigpen, Carrie Thigpen, Mary Jones, Ardecia Pursley, Fannie Ross, and Helen Eudora Holsenbeck.

In 1877-80 the Church and Circuit had Rev. George E. Bonner a faithful worker and very popular. About this time Rev. Sam P. Jones conducted an outstanding revival in the Clinton Church.

In 1881 D. J. Weems was pastor. He was a graduate of Emory College, a fearless, consecrated man, but not so popular as some of his predecessors.

Rev. A. M. Williams was pastor in 1882.

In 1883-84 W. D. Shea served the Church and Circuit. He was instrumental in saving some hardened sinners.

In 1885 Rev. W. F. Smith a man of pure heart, labored zealously among the people of the Circuit and Clinton Church with some success.

In 1886 Rev. L. P. Neese was pastor.

In 1887-88 Rev. M. A. Phillips. He was quiet and unassuming, loved by his people.

In 1889-90 Rev. Elison Cook was on this work, young, wide awake, and up to date. He had large ingatherings. Rev. Cook became afterwards a successful Presiding Elder. In 1891 Rev. J. T. Richardson was a good earnest, God fearing man. In 1892-93 M. H. Edwards. 1894-95 Rev. R. A. Seals. 1896-99 G. W. Farr, a successful pastor. 1900 Fred W. McClesky. He was a splendid preacher, the best pulpit orator Clinton Church ever had. 1901-04 J. P. Erwin. 1905-06 Rev. R. F. Smith.

In 1907-1908 Rev. Cantrell was pastor of the Clinton Charge. During this time a Methodist Church was being built at Gray.

In 1909-1910, B. H. Mobley served the Clinton Circuit.

The circuit was divided into two charges in 1911. The Clinton Charge consisted of Clinton, Pitts Chapel, and St. Luke Churches. Gray charge consisted of Gray, Haddock, and Round Oak Churches.

In 1911-1912 Rev. T. W. Ellis served the Clinton Charge.

In 1913 W. W. Burgess.

In 1914-1917 J. M. Sewell was pastor. During this time many of the members from the Clinton Church moved their membership to Gray. From that time the Clinton Church began to decline gradually until in 1917 it became inactive.

<u>PASTORS</u>	<u>YEAR</u>	<u>PRESIDING ELDER</u>
John Knight	1875	G. W. Yarbrough
W. T. McMichael	1876	G. W. Yarbrough
George E. Bonner	1877	G. W. Yarbrough
George E. Bonner	1878	Jesse Boring
George E. Bonner	1879	James C. Evans
George E. Bonner	1880	W. F. Cook
D. J. Weems	1881	W. F. Cook
A. M. Williams	1882	R. W. Bigham
W. D. Shea	1883-84	George H. Patillo
J. F. Smith	1885	George H. Patillo
M. A. Phillips	1886	George H. Patillo
M. A. Phillips	1887	Walker Lewis
M. A. Phillips	1888	Walker Lewis
Elison Cook	1889	Walker Lewis
Elison Cook	1890	Walker Lewis
J. T. Richardson	1891	Burto Bigham
M. H. Edwards	1892	Burto Bigham
M. H. Edwards	1893	Burto Bigham
R. A. Seals	1894	Burto Bigham
R. A. Seals	1895	Burto Bigham
G. W. Farr	1896-97	Burto Bigham
G. W. Farr	1898-99	J. L. Bryon
Fred W. McClesky	1900	W. R. Foote
J. P. Erwin	1901	W. R. Foote
J. P. Erwin	1902	W. R. Foote
J. P. Erwin	1903	W. R. Foote
J. P. Erwin	1904	W. R. Foote
R. F. Smith	1905-06	W. R. Foote
D. B. Cantrell	1907-08	Chas. E. Dowman
B. H. Mobley	1909-10	Chas. E. Dowman
T. W. Ellis	1911-12	J. W. Quillian
W. W. Burgess	1913	J. W. Quillian
J. M. Sewell	1914	J. W. Quillian
J. M. Sewell	1915	B. F. Frazier
J. M. Sewell	1916	B. F. Frazier
J. M. Sewell	1917	B. F. Frazier

From 1917 to 1922 the church was practically abandoned. At this time the church became very dilapidated with a leaking roof. The pine timber on the Church property was sold. One half of the proceeds was used to repair the roof of this old historic church, the other half was used by the Gray charge.

From 1922 to 1932 C. T. Ivey, J. F. Davis, J. K. Kelly, T. H. Maxwell and A. B. Sanders from the Gray charge held afternoon services once a month.

In 1933 the Clinton Church was reorganized and became a part of the Gray Charge under Rev. Claude Singleton's leadership. During the summer of 1933 and 1934 revival services were held. The inspiring messages induced many young people of the community to unite with the church. The membership of the Church was increased to forty members with much enthusiasm shown over its re-organization.

PASTOR

YEAR

PRESIDING ELDER

R. C. Singleton
L. J. Cowart
O. J. Withrow
H. L. Mitcham
L. S. Baugh
Grover Bailey
W. O. Lindsey
J. B. Ward

1932-36
1936-37
1937-40
1940-43
1943-45
1945-46
1946-50
1950-51

W. H. LaPrade
T. M. Sullivan
T. M. Sullivan
H. H. Jones
H. H. Jones
C. L. Middlebrooks
C. L. Middlebrooks
E. G. Mackay

Near the Church are two cemeteries (one of which is spoken of as, "The old cemetery"). The bodies of some of the best citizens of Jones County lie there, men and women who in their day made Clinton and Jones County a better place in which to live. Many old graves in both cemeteries are not marked and are obliterated as far as outward marks are concerned. Dates on some markers go back to 1812.

Mrs. J. M. Ross

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