FIRST METHODIST CHURCH
DALTON, GEORGIA

A brief sketch from the "Official History of Whitfield County, Georgia," published 1936.

Pictures of the church building now in use and of the architect's drawing of the new church building now under construction were furnished by Miss Emma Louise Wilson.

At a later date, a complete history of the church brought up to date will be submitted for publication to the NORTH GEORGIA CONFERENCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY by the local committee: Mrs. Walter Stancil, chairman, Miss Mattie Lee Huff, and Mrs. Gertrude McFarland.
"In the year 1835, Reverend D. F. Fulton and Reverend Ring were sent as missionaries of the Methodist Church to the Indians then occupying this part of the country, as well as the few scattering whites then settled in the Indian nation. The first presiding elder was Reverend David Cummings whose district, covering the whole territory occupied by the Indians, extended from the Hiwassee River on the north to the Chattahoochee on the South, and from the line of South Carolina on the east to the Tennessee River on the west. He remained on the district until the year 1838, when the Indians were removed to the West. His immediate successor was Joseph B. Dawterey, followed by Thomas Stringfield, the first editor of the Nashville Christian Advocate. The next was Reverend Timothy Sullins.

"This brings us down to 1845, the first year after the lines of the conference were changed. Russell Rineau, who was in charge of the circuit at the time of the change, was the first presiding elder thereafter. His district covered what is now the Dalton district, part of the Rome district, part of the Marietta district, and all of the Dahlonega district. He was succeeded in turn by Alfred T. Mann, J. B. Payne, J. C. Simmons, J. W. Yarborough, J. W. Glenn, B. A. Arbogast, A. G. Haygood, W. P. Harrison, H. J. Adams, W. J. Scott, R. W. Bigham, D. J. Myrick, A. M. Thigpin, W. A. Parks, J. F. Mixon, W. F. Quillian, W. T. Irvine, S. B. Ledbetter, J. F. Yarborough, S. A. Harris, Frank Quillian, J. R. Turner, and A. M. Pierce.

"In 1836 Madison C. Hawk was sent to this territory to preach. He was followed in 1838 by Daniel B. Payne, and he, in turn, by Elijah Still. The next year two preachers were sent to this circuit, William Rush and J. C. Tartar, and later Charles K. Lewis. The following years William Hickey with John Corn as his assistant. Russell Reneau was the next on this work and during 1844 the general conference changed the lines and took in all the Holston Conference lying in Georgia, except Dade county, and added the Cherokee territory to the Georgia Conference. Very near, if not quite all, the preachers working in this territory cast their lots with the Georgia Conference.

"At the time of the change of the lines of the Conference, the Spring Place circuit comprised all of what is now Murray, Whitfield, and parts of Catoosa, Gordon and Bartow Counties.

"In the year 1844, Reverend David Crenshaw was assigned to the Spring Place circuit as assistant preacher. The next year Jackson Reynolds served this work. In 1846 the circuit was left to be supplied, and the presiding elder put the Reverend Levi Brotherton in charge of the work. During this year the town of Dalton was located and named by Edward White, it having formerly been known as Cross Plains.

"The Methodists had a small membership and worshipped at a place then known as Clear Springs Academy, just out of the limits of Dalton on the north. Here were perhaps twenty-five or thirty members, composed principally of the families of Captain William Hammond, Reverend Levi Brotherton, George Chappell, and B. E. Wells. During the fall of the year, on consultation, the place of worship was moved to the log school
house in Dalton. The next year Mr. Edward White built a neat frame church on the lot where the Presbyterian Church now stands, and bought and put up the bell which is still used by the Presbyterians. He paid $250 for it. Reverend Levi Brotherton was asked by Mr. White to take charge of the church as town preacher and to preach or find a substitute every Sunday so that the people might be sure of hearing the gospel. The Methodists removed to this house in 1847.

"At the session of the annual conference held at Madison that year, Dalton was made a station and attached to it were three county appointments, viz: the Cove, Union and Sugar Valley. Reverend Levi Brotherton was placed in charge.

"In 1849 the station at Dalton, not being able of itself to support a preacher, was thrown back into the circuit and Mr. Simmons was returned to the work. It should have been before stated that the Reverend James Quillian was the presiding elder in charge of Spring Place circuit in the year 1847.

In 1850 Mr. White offered to donate a lot to the Methodists for a church, and the site was selected where the present church now stands. Mr. White conveyed the lot selected to Captain William Hammond, George Chappell, John Odell, J. E. Wells, and Levi Brotherton, in trust for the church.

During the year 1851 five hundred dollars was subscribed for the building of a church. In this house the congregation worshiped until after the war, when it was removed to make room for a more commodious building. During the year 1851 there was a union protracted service held in the church erected by Mr. White. This meeting lasted forty days and was conducted principally by Reverends Archibald Johnson,
of the Presbyterian Church, George W. Selvidge of the Baptist, and Levi Brotherton, of the Methodist Church, and Reverend John Strickland, presiding elder of the circuit. During this revival there were nearly one hundred conversions. The churches, very weak up to this time, were all greatly strengthened by additions to their number. In the fall of 1851 the new Methodist Church was finished, and Reverend Levi Brotherton preached the first sermon in it. Dalton was left in the circuit from 1849 till 1851. The preachers who served this work from this time up to the war were Clayton Quillian, Louis B. Payne, W. F. Conly, R. H. Waters, M. C. Smith, Robert F. Jones, J. D. Anthony, John Murphy, C. A. Moore and M. A. Clontz. In 1857 Dalton was again made a station. The pastors in order were: M. A. Clontz, J. M. Dickey, J. W. McGhee; and then Wesley D. Pledger, who was here in 1861, and in 1862 John W. Turner. The war having come on, there was no regular preacher when the Reverend John M. Richardson, a local preacher living near, took charge."

In 1883, the church built a parsonage at a cost of $3,000 and in 1886-87 the church was remodeled and beautified. Again in 1907 the church was greatly enlarged by the addition of a Sunday School annex; and a new parsonage built in 1924-25 valued at $20,000. The present membership of the church is approximately six hundred and seventy-five.

Presiding elders of the Dalton District from 1870 to 1935 (list provided by J. R. Turner):


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