HISTORY
OF
THE FIRST METHODIST CHURCH
DECATURE, GA.
"Study the past - the past is prologue."

As Methodists, and as members of this Church, we glory in the history and rich heritage which has been handed down to us. Ours is the oldest Methodist Church in the Atlanta area and the oldest Church in Decatur. First incorporated by an Act of the Georgia Legislature in 1830 (although it was organized in 1823), it was known under the corporate name as "Decatur Methodist Episcopal Church". Although the Charter has never been changed, the name was later changed to "Decatur Methodist Episcopal Church South."

In the year 1897 the present main building of the Church was erected and the name was given "Andersen Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church South", in memory of the deceased presiding Elders of this District. This name appears on the corner stone, but we do not know how long the name was used. Certainly it was for but a few years. Thereafter and after the organization of the Pattille Memorial Church, we were known as "Decatur First Methodist Episcopal Church South", and after the unification of all Methodist Churches as the "First Methodist Church of Decatur".

For an early history of the Church, we are indebted to the labors of our fellow-member of many years- the late lamented J. Hewell Green. No man in the Church in past or present years has ever contributed more to the furtherance of the growth and development of our Church than Brother Green. As Chairman of the Board of Stewards and Trustees,
as Sunday School Superintendent, and as a leader he exemplified the highest ideals of a layman. In 1920, he wrote a short history of our Church and we incorporate it herein as the most authentic data obtainable on the early days:

"Unfortunately the records of the Church have been kept for only a few years back, and this history must be gathered largely from external sources, and, therefore, will be very incomplete, for my investigation convinces me that the Church has a rich history that has not been recorded. Perhaps it will be well to state in the beginning that much of the date upon which this history is based is gathered from Acts of the General Assembly of Georgia, and from a series of letters written in 1879 by Mr. Levi Willard, who came to Decatur in 1826, which were published in the local paper, and which I have had access to by the courtesy of the widow of the late Mr. Hiram J. Williams, who preserved these letters in a very interesting scrap book kept by him through many years.

I have not been able to determine the exact date of the organization of the Church, but we may safely conclude that it was during the period covered by the years 1823 to 1826, for we know that DeKalb County was organized in 1822 (see Acts of Legislature, 1822, page 21) and that the Legislature on December 10, 1823 located the County site in Land Lot 246 of the Fifteenth District and incorporated it as the town of Decatur, (see Acts of Legislature, 1823, page 169), the Inferior Court of the County having previously on July 28, 1823, selected this land lot and declared it to be the County site, named the town organized
"Decatur", and ordered that all public business in and for the County should be held and done in said town, from and after the first Tuesday in September 1823, (see 1st Book minutes Inferior Court, DeKalb County, page 3). Mr. Willard tells us that the Methodists had erected a Church building in 1826 on the same lot upon which the present Church building stands, on Sycamore Street. We, therefore, knew that the Church was organized between 1823 and 1826. The erection of this house of worship is also referred to in an interesting preamble to an Act of the Legislature passed in 1832 (See acts, 1832, page 37), which runs as follows:

"Whereas, the Inferior Court of DeKalb County, did on the first organization of the County, offer to the several religious societies each, a town lot on which to erect Churches for their accommodation; and, whereas, the Methodist Society did comply with said condition and erect a Church," and the Act then proceeds to authorize the Judges of the Inferior Court to direct to the Baptist and Presbyterian Societies, each a lot, on condition that each erect a house for public worship. We thus knew that the Methodists were the first to erect a house of worship, though I have not been able to determine which was the first Church organized, for Mr. Willard tells us that the Presbyterian Church was organized some time before it erected a house of worship.

The foregoing preamble also makes it clear that the title to our Church lot, (which includes the parsonage on Pence de Leon Avenue, formerly Bread Street, and still earlier Recibridge Road, the same having been erected on the rear of the Church lot, which formerly ran
from Sycamore Street to Ponce de Leon Avenue), was derived direct from the State of Georgia, as the Judges of the Inferior Court, who donated the lot, held title to it for the State and made the donation by authority of the State.

It is fortunate that the title to our Church and parsonage lot is confirmed by the foregoing preamble, for we have no deed to the lot. Doubtless the Jesges of the Inferior Court executed a deed to the lot to the Trustees of the Church as soon as the condition of the gift, to-wit, the erection of a house of worship, was complied with, and the same was no doubt recorded, but the record was destroyed when the Court House of the County was burned in 1842.

There is a tridition, which I remember hearing when I first came to Decatur, that the deed was in the custody of a member of the Church by the name of Diamond, who moved to Texas, and probably carried the deed with him. The writer has made diligent search of the County Records, and no such deed can be found of record, nor would we expect to find it as the record in which it should be contained was destroyed by the fire in 1842.

While the Church was organized some time prior to, or at least not later than 1826, it was not incorporated until 1830, when a Charter was granted by the Legislature (see Acts 1830, page 69). The Act is short and is given in full, as follows:

"Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Georgia, in General Assembly met, and it is hereby enacted by authority of the same, that from and after the passage of this Act, the Methodist Church in Decatur, DeKalb County, shall be known and called by
the name of Decatur Methodist Episcopal Church, and that Jeptha V. George, Jesse P. Jones, Robert Ward, Larkin Carlton, and Drury Fowler, and their successors in office, be, and they are hereby declared to be, a body politic and corporate by the name and style of the Trustee of Decatur Methodist Episcopal Church, and as such shall be capable and liable in law, to sue and be sued, plead and be impleaded, and shall be authorized to make such by-laws and regulations as shall be authorized to make such by-laws and regulations as shall be necessary for the Government of said Church; Provided, such by-laws are not repugnant to the Constitution and laws of this State, and for the purposes aforesaid may have and use a common seal, appoint such officers as they may think proper, and remove the same from office for improper conduct or neglect of duty."

"Sec. 2. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that said Trustees shall be capable of accepting, and being invested with all manner or property both real and personal, all donations, gifts, grants, privileges and immunities, which may now belong to said Church or which may hereafter be conveyed or transferred to them or their successors in office, to have and to hold the same for the proper use, benefit and behoof of said Church."

"Sec. 3. And be it further enacted, that when any vacancy shall happen in said board by death, resignation or otherwise, the survivors or a majority of them shall fill the same in such manner as shall be pointed out by the by-laws and regulations of the Trustees aforesaid."

I have been unable to learn anything of the personal history of the five men named as Trustees in the foregoing Charter, except Jeptha
V. George. Mr. Willard preached and exhorted occasionally. On one occasion when speaking in the Methodist Church, in making a gesture, he knocked over the only candle that was in the house, leaving the audience in darkness till some one could go to a neighboring house and light the candle. Mr. Willard was evidently present, judging from the following language quoted: "He said while we were in darkness: 'It will be well, friends, if we never find ourselves in a darker place than this.' When light was restored, he proceeded with his discourse."

In 188... several members of the Church, evidently not knowing that the Church had been incorporated by the Legislature, undertook to incorporate the Church again under the provisions of a General Stature.

An incident not directly connected with this Church, but worthy of mention as showing the difficulties to be contended with and obstacles to be overcome by Methodist ministers of the early Church, is related by Mr. Willard. He does not undertake to fix the exact time, but as near as he could judge the time, the Methodist Episcopal General Conference met in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1829. I give the incident in his own language as follows:

"One morning two delegates—Rev. S. K. Hodges and I think the other was Dr. Lovick Pierce—drove up in their surreys, and called at my store in Decatur. I had a partial acquaintance with Mr. Hodges, and I had heard Dr. Pierce preach in Eatonton. They had to ride nearly six hundred miles in their surreys, and one hundred fifty miles of the way through the Cherokee Nation."
Mr. Hodges had the blues—was somewhat nervous and depressed at the thought of so lonely a journey. I think their intention was to return through Virginia and North Carolina. I suppose they made the trip in safety, as their names were reported after their return.

Rev. George W. Yarbrough in "Boyhood and Other Days in Georgia," gives us a little light on the early history of the Church. Decatur was in a circuit. Let Mr. Yarbrough tell it in his own language. He says, "Decatur circuit then embraced the territory lying between Lithonia and Mayson's Ferry on the Chattahoochee River. The preachers in charge that year (1828) were John W. Yarbrough and James W. Hinton. The circuit embraced three camp grounds, with Mount Gilead in the extreme west and Rock Chapel in the extreme East. The name of the other camp ground, six miles of Decatur, was Wesley Chapel."

The John W. Yarbrough referred to was the father of George W. Yarbrough. Mr. Yarbrough says his father and his colleague received into the Church five hundred members. This number doubtless included the circuit.

Mrs. W. H. Felton, of Cartersville, Georgia, lived in Decatur in her girlhood, and in her recent book, "Country Life in Georgia", refers to a great revival in Decatur, when Rev. Alexander Means, Bishop James O. Andrew, Judge Longstreet, and other noted Methodist divines, gave weeks of service, daily and nightly sermons, which resulted in securing a large membership, and which are felt to this good day in regions around and about Atlanta in Methodist families. In a recent letter to the writer, Mrs. Felton fixes the date of this revival as about 1846 and 1847.
There were only two Churches in Decatur in its early history, the Methodist, the organization of which has already been referred to, and the Presbyterian, which was organized in 1825, though its members did not erect a house of worship until some years afterward, but held their meetings first in a little log school house near the cemetery, and when the Academy was built in it. Neither of the Churches, however, had a Sunday School. Probably it was not thought that either could support a Sunday School. In 1831, Mr. Willard tells us, "a few friends met at the Decatur Academy and organized a Union Sunday School for all who would attend in the village and the adjacent county." Judge James Lemon, a member of the Presbyterian Church, was the first superintendent and served for eight years. Several Methodist names occur as being connected with the School when organized, for instance, George D. Anderson and William Latimer, probably an uncle of Mrs. Felton. The next superintendent was Mr. Willard himself, who served for twenty-five years, which brings the school down to 1864. Mr. Willard tells us that the school suspended in July, 1864, on account of the presence of Sherman's Army.

In September, 1864, Mr. Willard moved away from Decatur. Not a great while after this, the exact date I have been unable to determine, the Methodists of Decatur organized a Sunday School in their own Church, and the Union Sunday School ceased to exist. I have endeavored to learn who was the first Superintendent of the Methodist Sunday School, but have been unable to do so. I have it from Mrs. Cora Helleyman, that her father, Mr. V. R. Tommey, moved to Decatur about 1868, and was made Superintendent of the Sunday School very soon after.
Approximately speaking, then, we may say that Mr. Temmey was Superintendent of the Sunday School from 1868 until his death, which occurred December 16, 1881.

Mr. Temmey died years before the writer came to Decatur, but often have I heard the older members of the Church speak of Mr. Temmey as the main support of the Church during his life. He was noted as a faithful, loyal worker in all Church matters and as a very generous contributor to the various causes of the Church.

Upon the death of Mr. Temmey, Mr. W. F. Pattille was elected Superintendent of the Sunday School, and served in this capacity until 1908, when the writer succeeded him and served until January, 1918. Mr. George M. Napier has served as Superintendent since that time. Like Mr. Temmey, Mr. Pattille was very active in all Church matters and was a liberal giver to Church causes.

The Decatur Orphans' Home was organized in 1872, and until the writer became Superintendent the children from the Home attended Sunday School at this Church. Perhaps more than half of the attendance was made up of the children from the Home. When the Sunday School was organized at the Home and the children were taken out of the Sunday School of this Church, the average attendance was reduced to about seventy-five. The officers and teachers then realized how largely dependent the Sunday School had been upon the children of the Home, and how many of the children of the Church did not attend Sunday School, and immediately inaugurated a campaign to bring the children of the Church into the Sunday School, with the result that in a year or two the attendance of the School was as large as when the Home Children were withdrawn, and
the School has steadily grown. The Church building for more than ten years past has been entirely inadequate for Sunday School purposes, and the development of the Sunday School cannot be satisfactory, in fact it may be said it is now arrested for lack of suitably arranged space. Only by the erection of a suitable building for Sunday School purposes can the School attain a high state of organization and development.

When the writer first knew the Sunday School, Dr. Henry R. Jewett, Sr., taught the Bible Class and continued this work until his death. He was succeeded by Mr. George M. Napier, and upon his election as Superintendent, Dr. Andrew J. Sledd, of Emory University, became and still is the teacher.

This class has grown to be a very important and useful factor in the School, and is capable of rendering invaluable service in the future growth and development of the School.

One naturally wishes to know something of the time of erection and of the houses of worship used by the Church during its nearly one hundred years of existence. As above stated, I have not been able to determine the exact date when the first house was erected but it was during or before 1826. This was no doubt a wooden structure. This was followed by another wooden structure, but just when the first building was torn down and the second was erected, I have been unable to determine. Mrs. Holleyman remembers that the wooden building that was removed when the present granite building was erected was standing in 1868, and doubtless was erected a good many years before that. This building was torn away in 1899, after the present structure was erected,
which was located immediately in front of the old building, in order that the congregation might have a house of worship while the new building was in course of construction. I was at one time, during my search for information to compile this brief history, of the opinion that there had been four houses of worship upon our Church lot, but I am now satisfied that there have been only three.

The erection of the present Church building was commenced in 1897 and completed in the summer of 1899. Rev. J. R. McCleskey was the pastor in charge when the building was commenced and Rev. T. C. Betterton when it was completed. The cost of this building, which did not include the present transepts, was $6,626.00, not including pews and pulpit stand.

In 1916, the congregation had outgrown the building, only seventeen years after its completion, and its enlargement was imperative. Two transepts were decided upon as the most feasible plan to enlarge the building, and the addition was authorized by the Quarterly Conference. Work was commenced about March, 1916, and the addition was completed, with the exception of a few minor details, in November of the same year. Rev. Frank Quillian was the pastor in charge when the addition was made. This addition was not let by contract, but was built by day labor, and I am not able to give the exact cost, but it was very close to $11,000.00, cost of labor and material having advanced considerably since the main body of the building was erected.

To construct the entire building as it now stands under present conditions would cost perhaps not less than $40,000.00.

The pipe organ in the Church was built a year or two after the transepts were completed at a cost of $3,000.00.
When the writer first knew the Church, the parsonage was on the north side of Sycamore Street about half way between Candler and Church Streets. This lot and building were sold in 1903 for $1,150.00, and the present parsonage on the corner of Ponce de Leon Avenue and Barry Street was commenced in the fall of 1903 and completed in the spring of 1904, at a cost of $1,825.00.

A Foreign Missionary Society was organized by the women of the Church February 11, 1879, with Mrs. Susan Avery as its first president, the membership at organization being thirty. A Home Mission Society was organized in 1903, with Mrs. Thomas H. Alston as its first president. In 1911 the two societies were merged and known as the Woman's Missionary Society, with Foreign and Home Mission departments.

The records of the Society, like those of the Church, have in large part been lost, but any one wishing a more detailed history of the Society will find it in a report made by a Committee appointed by the Society in 1917, with Mrs. J. H. Baxter as Chairman.

The first Young Women's Society of the Church was organized in December, 1916, by Mrs. W. L. Cline. The cradle roll or baby division was organized in 1900. The Juvenile Society, now known as the Junior Division, was organized in 1881 by Mrs. Cora Hampton now Mrs. Halleyman. They were known as the "Gold Diggers," I presume from the amount of money they raised. Occasionally they disbanded, but never for any great length of time, and they are now very active.

I have not been able to obtain the old records of the Epworth League, but if my memory is correct, the League was organized about 1899 by
Miss Ida Young, who was its first president, as I now recall. The League was quite active for several years, but for some reason became dormant, but was reorganized in June, 1904, with Rev. J. C. Maness as its president, and has had a continuous existence since that time. There is now also a Junior Epworth League in existence.

In 1919 a Men's Club was organized in the Church, with W. E. Richards as its first president. This organization is too young to have demonstrated its usefulness, but its potentiality for good is very great, and if directed in the right channel, its activities will result in great assistance to pastors and the official boards of the Church.

In closing this sketch, it may not be amiss for me to say that a membership in and acquaintance with the Church for nearly thirty years convinces me that it is an unusually self-reliant church. In most churches, when some new enterprise is to be undertaken, such as erecting a new church building, or a new parsonage, nothing is done until some active, wide-awake pastor comes along and stirs the membership to action. It has not been so with the membership of this Church. They have taken hold and done these things themselves, leaving the pastors to devote themselves to their regular pastoral duties.

When I first knew the Church, in 1890, the membership was small, perhaps not more than one hundred and fifty. It now numbers about eight hundred and fifty. The town is growing rapidly, and the Church has a great opportunity for usefulness, which I believe it will grasp.

It is unfortunate that the records of the Church during its long history have not been preserved, and steps should at once be taken to
provide an appropriate place for the protection and preservation of all future records.

It would be interesting to include in this sketch the names of all the pastors of the Church, but I have been unable to obtain the list.

(This brief history was written by
Judge J. Howell Green
August 1, 1920)
**CHEROKEE DISTRICT**

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<tr>
<td>1834</td>
<td>Morgan Bellah</td>
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<td>1835</td>
<td>W. Graham, P. P. Smith</td>
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<td>1836</td>
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<td>1837</td>
<td>Abram Pennington, James H. M'Carver</td>
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<td>1838</td>
<td>Wyatt R. Singleton</td>
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<td>1840</td>
<td>Alfred Dorman</td>
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<td>R. S. Wilson</td>
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<td>1842</td>
<td>David L. Ballew</td>
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<td>1843</td>
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**LA GRANGE DISTRICT**

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<td>1848</td>
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**DAHLONEGA DISTRICT**

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**ATLANTA DISTRICT**

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<td>1857</td>
<td>Marshall E. Malsby; members-white 417, colored 24</td>
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<td>J. J. Morgan, W. A. Dodge</td>
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In 1866-1873 - No records

In 1874 in North Georgia Conference. Had been in Georgia Conference. The first session was held in Atlanta, Ga., Nov. 27, 1867. Bishop G. F. Pierce, presiding.

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<td>R. J. Bigham</td>
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N. Atlanta District

1900 . . . . . . . . T. C. Betterton . . . . . . R. J. Bigham
### ATLANTA DISTRICT

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### N. ATLANTA DISTRICT

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<tr>
<td>1920</td>
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### DECATUR-OXFORD DISTRICT

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- 17 -
In addition to our Pastors we have been blessed with the services of assistant Pastors in the presence of Brother Walter Robison and many student Pastors who served with us during their scholastic days at Emory University. They have been of tremendous help to us in our work with the young people.

Our first Director of Religious Education was Miss Ethel Martin who was succeeded by Miss Virginia Proctor, who is accomplishing a great work in this field.

We list below the Chairmen of the Board of Stewards and the Board of Trustees of the Church from the earliest records obtainable.

Col J. Howell Green - 1913
Mr. J. Ceda Addy - 1920
John M. Bell - 1928-1929-1930-1931-1932-1933-1934
W. C. Kirby - 1935
C. A. Matthews - 1936-1937-1938
Robert L. Watkins - 1939-1940
F. M. Philips - 1941-1942
John T. Goree - 1943-1944
John M. Bell - 1945-1946
Dan W. Shadburn - 1947-1948
John Wesley Weekes - 1949-1950
Roy A. Blount - 1951-1952- to July 1953

Board of Trustees:
Geo. H. Hammond - 1920
J. Howell Green - 1920-1949
J. A. McCrary - 1949-1953
Dan W. Shadburn - the present chairman

The Superintendents of our Sunday School from the earliest records obtainable are as follows:

Mr. V. R. Tommey - 1868-1881
Mr. W. F. Pattille - 1881 until 1908
Col. J. Howell Green - 1908 until 1918
Col. Geo. M. Napier - 1918-1925
Mr. W. Bayne Gibson - 1925-1928
Mr. L. M. Spruell - 1928-1942
Mr. Robert L. Hale, Sr. - 1942-June 1953

(A short history of some of the Sunday School classes appear attached to this brief sketch.)
BUILDERS' CLASS

The Builders' Class was organized at the home of Mr. and Mrs. F. Stewart Myers, 136 Glenn Circle, in June 1933, with Mrs. Myers as the first president of the class. No record was kept of those attending the first meeting nor of the charter members, but Mr. and Mrs. Myers, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Meadows, and Mr. and Mrs. Delmar Brinkley were among the first members to enroll. The present enrollment is 65.

Since there was no available room for this class - they met for about a year in the Sanctuary, then a room was provided for the class in the white cottage at 310 Sycamore Street, which has since been torn down for the new Educational Building, and a room assigned to them in the Educational Building. Because of the increased enrollment in the Sunday School in the Children's and Young People's Division, this necessitated a change again, and the Builders' Class is meeting now in the room at the end of the hall on the main floor of the Annex next to the Sanctuary.

The Builders' Class has had only two permanent teachers since its organization, - Dean Floyd Field until 1938, and Mr. Frank G. Thomas since then.

Those who have served as presidents are -

THE PATY CLASS

The Paty Class was organized by a group of Epworth League girls in 1922. Mr. Robert L. Hale, Sr., was probably the first teacher. We do not have the record of all the teachers from 1922 until 1925, except Mr. Charlie Allison and Mrs. Homer Wright. Judge Frank Harwell taught the class from 1925 through 1931. Other teachers who succeeded him were Mr. W. C. Thompson, Mrs. E. B. Emrey and Miss Nancy Matthews.

It was then, Miss Margaret Stipe, as president, that the class really organized, but the name was not given to the class until 1924, when Dr. and Mrs. Morris Paty went to China as missionaries, and the name "Paty Class" was adopted. Other teachers were Mr. H. C. Hamff, Mrs. Donald Moore, Mrs. J. D. Knox, Mrs. A. L. Brown, Mrs. Lester M. Petrie, Mrs. Spencer Jacobs, Miss Laura Byers, Mrs. Walton Peabody, Mr. John Gibbs, Mr. Farland Helliman, Mr. Alfred Guy, Mr. Lynn Griffin, Mr. Roy A. Blount, and Mrs. M. E. Blackwell.

The Class has been enriched by full time Christian workers. Miss Alma Metcalfe now Mrs. Ivan Kneeland, after graduating from Agnes Scott and attending Scarritt College in 1932—went as a missionary to Japan. She taught later at Mather Academy, Camden, S. C. The other full time Christian worker is Miss Elizabeth Thompson, as an ordained deaconess. Since her graduation from Scarritt, she has done rural work in several Southern States.

The Class presidents since organization are Mrs. Eleanor Hopkins Griffin (R.E.), Miss Dixie Drake, Mrs. Paul M. Smith, Miss Margaret Stipe, Miss Ocie Ragspess, Mrs. B. B. Fladger, Mrs. W. Pat Smith, Mrs. J. D. Knox, Mrs. Arthur McGhee, Mrs. Perry Westbrook, Mrs. A. L. Brown, Mrs. Rowland Geddie, Mrs. Hester Smith, Mrs. W. A. Porter, Mrs. Robert L. Watkins, Mrs. Martin McFarland, Mrs. F. Lawton Park— the present president.
THE FELLOWSHIP CLASS

The Fellowship Class was organized in 1946 in the parsonage at 317 E. Pence de Leon Ave., when Rev. H. C. Holland was the pastor, with the following charter members:

Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Hale, Jr., Arthur Bishop, Miss Margaret Edmunds, Miss Minnie Foster, Miss Leona McMichael, Don Proctor and James Lazanby.

When the old parsonage was remodeled, a larger room was assigned to them, after having met in five different places in seven years.

The present membership is 223.

The presidents are elected for a term of only six months. The following presidents have served: Robert L. Hale, Jr., Arthur Bishop, Lane Edwards, Eugene T. Branch, W. D. May, George Leys, Max Andrews, Wm. A. Powell, Walter Kelley and the present president Raymond Dews.

The teachers - Neal Harmon, Mrs. Nina Taylor, Mrs. T. J. Cook and Walton Peabody.
The Philathea Class was organized around 1915 with a charter membership of six young women - Miss Clara Weekes, Miss Lois Weekes (Now Mrs. Lois Weekes Riley), Miss Marian Moore (now Mrs. C. W. Ford), Adelaide Christian (now Mrs. Wallace H. Cooper), Carolyn Christian (who married Mr. Walter Marshall, and died in 1942), and Estelle Rogers (now Mrs. W. H. Owens). The Class was organized because of the need for a younger class than the Bible Class age. Col. J. Howell Green was superintendent of the Sunday School, and Rev. Frank Quillian was the pastor.

Mrs. Arabella Moore (who later became Mrs. E. S. Everitt) was the first teacher. Other teachers were Mr. J. M. Feagle, Mr. John M. Bell, Mr. W. Bayne Gibson, Dr. Schuyler M. Christian, and the present teacher Rev. W. S. Robison, with Mrs. Arthur Gresham, assistant. Rev. J. W. Veatch, pastor of the Church.

Because of the need for more class rooms, the E. B. Thompson Class in 1947 voted to join the Philathea Class, however, a few of the members went into other classes.

While the Church was supporting the Paty family as missionaries, the Philathea Class sponsored the twins.

As many of the presidents of the class as we could get information about are: Mrs. Belva Williams, Mrs. C. P. Netherton, Mrs. Wendell Wren, Mrs. R. I. Roeks, Mrs. C. M. Mason, Mrs. W. E. Donehoo, Mrs. P. E. Cloud, Mrs. G. M. Loehr and the present president, Mrs. A. L. Cole, Sr.
THE COURIER CLASS

The Courier Class composed of young adults had their first meeting in the little room on the second floor of the annex adjoining the Sanctuary in the fall of 1948 with eight charter members - James Gardner Paine, Jr., and Bob Fannon were the first presidents, followed by John Queen, Joe Botdorf, Chet Fischer, Ed Cox and Ron Yeakle, the present president.

Mrs. J. B. Thornton was the first teacher of the Class. She and Roy Ryan of Emory University alternate Sundays in teaching now, with Mrs. Frank H. Thomas as a substitute teacher.

On account of the increased membership - the class sought larger quarters, and since there was no room available, met in the room in the basement next to the furnace room. After the Educational Building on Sycamore Street was completed - a room was assigned to them there.

We have no accurate record of the first members, but we do know that Catherine and Jimmie Paine, Pat and Frank Thomas, Betty Jo and Chet Fischer, Ed Cox, Sally Woolf, Sarah Moore, and John Queen were among the first to join.
THE MOTHERS' CLASS

In September 1936 three loyal women of the Church with small children felt a great need for the organization of a Mothers' Class, and met for the first time in the little room between the Sanctuary and the room then used for a Nursery or Cradle Roll Department (now the Choir Lounge). These women were Mrs. W. C. Edwards, Mrs. Martha Eakes Matthews and Mrs. J. H. Kite. Then because there was so much passing through the room and the closeness of the room - they met on the porch entrance by the old Church office (now the Bride's Room). The Class began to grow and larger space was needed. A room was given to them in the white cottage where the new Educational Building now stands, and from the membership in the first year - 15- the class has now an enrollment of seventy-nine members.

Mrs. W. C. Thompson was the first teacher and organizer of the Class. She was the only teacher for several years and was succeeded by Mrs. Martha E. Matthews, Mrs. V. H. Meatheringham, Mrs. C. L. Straughn, Mr. Perry Westbrook and Dr. J. Fielding Reed.

The following have served as president of the Class: Mrs. Martha E. Matthews, Mrs. H. S. Waller, Mrs. J. H. Kite, Mrs. T. H. Schneider, Mrs. H. N. Dean, Mrs. W. C. Edwards, Mrs. Joe Moss, Mrs. A. D. Hubert, Jr., Mrs. W. C. Wilson, Mrs. J. C. Sewell, Mrs. Neal Harmon, Mrs. H. M. Miller, Mrs. Harry Driggers, Mrs. W. A. Streater and Mrs. G. P. Strong.
This Class was organized about forty six years ago (1907) on the two back seats in the Sanctuary. All the Sunday School Classes met in the Sanctuary at that time. The following were present at that meeting:

W. A. Dowman, Cliff Rogers, A. M. Boid, J. Geda Addy, C. A. Matthews, W. P. Johnston Sr., and W. H. Weekes. This Class later met in the adjoining room back of the Sanctuary (now occupied by the Men's Bible Class) until the need was so urgent to have a larger space for the Cradle Roll Department and the Beginner Department (using the room which formerly was an office and now "The Bride's Room") the Class voted (after an earnest plea by Mrs. Mark White, Superintendent of those two departments for more room) to find another location for meeting and give up this space to the small children.

The Wesley Class met in the right transept of the church after the transepts were added in 19 and have been meeting there ever since. The teachers of the class whose names we have recorded - Dr. Henry Jewett, Col. Geo. M. Napier, Dr. Andrew Sledd, Rhodes, Col. W. C. Thompson, the present teacher.

The presidents of the Class recorded are- Col. J. Howell Green, Mr. Boid, Mr. J. Geda Addy, Mr. C. A. Matthews, Mr. J. N. Platt, Mrs. A. J. Woodruff, Mrs. L. R. Webb, Mr. A. W. Owen, and Mr. W. P. Johnston, Sr.
THE WOMAN'S BIBLE CLASS

The Woman's Bible Class was organized Oct. 8, 1922, with an enrollment of Mrs. H. W. Cantrell, President, Mrs. C. Eugene Allen, Mrs. W. T. Bell, Mrs. E. A. Stead, Mrs. G. M. Eakes, teacher. The class was called the Woman's Bible Class Dec. 10, 1922. In two months time the class had grown from five to twenty-eight members.

Mrs. G. M. Eakes, wife of the pastor at that time, taught the class from its organization until Nov. 1926. Mrs. J. C. Maness taught the class until another teacher—Mrs. Homer Wright was elected in 1928, who taught the class until she was unable physically to continue. Mrs. R. J. Prentiss was the associate teacher until she moved away from Decatur. Mrs. W. C. Kirby followed as permanent teacher, with Mrs. G. K. Christian as supply. Other teachers were Rev. John F. Yarbrough, Dr. J. L. McGhee, and Mr. E. E. Treadwell. For the past year (1952-1953) John Henry Shadburn and Walter Murphy young Theology Students from the Candler School of Theology became regular teachers for the class.

The following are the presidents since organization—Mrs. H. W. Cantrell, Mrs. C. E. Allen, Mrs. R. N. Pelot, Mrs. T. H. Smoot, Mrs. W. P. Smith, Sr., Mrs. Geo. S. Watts, Mrs. C. E. Allen (second time), Mrs. E. O. Rider, Mrs. W. A. Winn, Mrs. B. A. Clegg, Mrs. H. M. Mahler, Mrs. H. O. Hubert, Mrs. G. K. Christian, Mrs. F. E. Kehrer, Mrs. Dan W. Shadburn.

The class first met in the rear of the sanctuary, but after the Sunday School annex was completed in February 1923 the class was given the room now used as a serving room next to the kitchen. In 1929, in order to meet the growing needs of the Senior Department, the Class gave up this room and met again in the Sanctuary until changes in the Sunday School plans made it necessary to move into the (at that time) the Church office adjoining the Men's Bible Class Room.
When the new Educational Building was completed in September 1949, the office of the Church Secretary and the Pastor's Office were relocated, and the Office was redecorated and furnished and became known as "The Bride's Room" - and we were given this as a permanent assignment. "The Adoration of the Shepherds" a beautiful picture was presented to the Class by the president - Mrs. Dan Shadburn, in honor of her husband.
KEYSTONE BIBLE CLASS

The Keystone Class organized with five young men in the Church Office (Used now as the Bride's Room) with the following members:

W. H. Cooper, Jr., M. P. Scott, Jr., Bill Edmunds, Millard Beals, Henry Rogers, Jr.

Marcus Googer, Jr., Andrew B. Robertson, Warren Jackson and John Jackson, Jr., joined the class shortly afterward.

The first teachers in the class were: John Wesley Weekes, Dr. Arthur Raper and the late Mr. Morgan Belser.

The Class was assigned to a room in the cottage at 310 Sycamore Street after the membership increased.

The late Mr. John T. Goree, Richard Metcalfe, Walter Peabody, Roy A. Blount and Martin McFarland have served as teachers.

A. Corwyn Robertson was the first president after they moved to the cottage.
THE PEBBLE CLASS

Need was expressed for a class for single adults twenty-five and above who were engaged in work. Our Director of Religious Education, Miss Virginia Proctor, deserves much credit in getting this class started. Talk continued until a prospective list was assembled from the church roll of people who were single, working and not enrolled in any class. Phone calls and personal contacts were made, and the first class met on February 8th, 1953 in the office of the D. R. E., with the following present:

Misses Sally Veatch, Myrna Adams, Peggy Herbert, Virginia Proctor, Mary Roberts (president), Marie Beaver, and Mary Taylor.

In three months the enrollment increased from seven to eighteen, and the class is unique in the fact that it now has eighteen members and eighteen teachers,—each member teaching on different Sundays. A larger room will be assigned to them in the building recently purchased at 306 E. Ponce de Leon Ave., which is now in process of being remodeled.
YOUNG ADULT CLASS

The Young Adult Class was organized in December 1950 with the following Charter Members — Sally Woelf, Sara Moore, Joe Kite, John A. Stillwell, Renee Burgess, Julia Folger (now Mrs. E. T. Hendon, Jr.,) Jim Richardson and Albert Staley.

Joe Kite was the first president of the class, and Rev. Wm. Ferguson of the Candler School of Theology was the first teacher.

The Class met for the first time at the end of the hall on the second floor of the Annex to the Church, and later was given a small room in the Intermediate Dept. At present they are in the old parsonage and have a membership of...

Besides the adult classes we have very active Children and Youth Divisions— with 230 pre-school children enrolled. There are four Nurseries for the Church School and one for the Church Services.

Mrs. J. C. Maness is Superintendent of the Children's Division.

Mr. Harold Bowen — the Youth Division

Mr. Arthur Hubert — the Adult Division

Among those who have served in the Church School as officers and teachers and pianists for a long period of time are Mrs. J. M. Jackson, Mrs. J. Geda Addy, Mrs. J.W. Stipe, Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Higgins.
From the year 1920 with a membership of 850, we have grown to become the largest Methodist Church in Georgia, with a membership of over 3100. Our Sunday School is one of the largest in the State with an average attendance of 1100. Under the pastorate of Dr. G. M. Eakes, the first addition to the Church plant was constructed in the year 1922 at a cost of $7,000. This adjoins the Church building in the rear. The adjacent lot to the west of the main building on Sycamore Street, known as the Filber home-place was bought during this period for the sum of $10,000. The house was used for several years as a Sunday School Annex. During the superintendency of the Sunday School under Mr. L. M. Spruell, the small white wooden building, costing $2,000 was erected on a part of this property. A great building program was initiated during the pastorate of Dr. Harvey C. Holland in the years of 1948 and 1949. The Filber home and the white building were torn down and on this site the present Sunday School plant was erected. This plant and furnishings and renovations to the old Church building cost approximately $214,000. Still the facilities were inadequate to serve the ever growing needs of the congregation. During the pastorate of Dr. J. W. Veatch in 1961, the parsonage on Sycamore Street was purchased for $28,500 and furnished for $7,000. This provided additional room in the old parsonage on E. Ponce de Leon Avenue for the Sunday School.
The parking problem grows more acute each year. To meet this problem, we have purchased the house and lot on the northeast corner of Candler Street and E. Ponce de Leon Avenue for $16,500, using the house for the young people's activities and the rear lot for the parking of automobiles. Some day we hope to replace the old parsonage on E. Ponce de Leon with a beautiful chapel. Other physical improvements are being made continually. Our pipe organ, purchased about the year 1915 for $1500 has been completely overhauled and rebuilt for the sum of $9,000. A gas furnace for the heating of the entire plant has been installed.

We are in sound financial condition, only owing at the present time less than $30,000 which is the balance due under the Building and Expansion Program. Our present budget is in the neighborhood of $60,000 per year.

Our Church has been extremely fortunate throughout the years in the administrative personnel which has assisted the Pastors in carrying forward the work. The first full time Secretary was Miss Beulah Harris, now Mrs. W. Stewart Bush, who served for the years 1920 to 1925. Mrs. Vivian Cofer served from 1920 to 1931, and since 1931, and since 1931 Mrs. Mark White has served as our extremely efficient Secretary. Mrs. White has been more than a Secretary to the Church. She knows the congregation and knows the needs of the Church probably better than any other member. She is ably assisted by Mrs. W. C. Edwards. The Hostesses of the Church have been Mrs. A. H. Wilson (Mrs. Annie Trotti Wilson) who served approximately 10 years prior to her resignation in 1952, when Mrs. J. L. McGhee was elected to succeed her.
The Organists which we have had in the Church have been Miss Mildred Eakes, Miss Helen Christie (Mrs. Ed Lovelace), Miss Frances Burgess, Douglas Wauchope, Irene Leftwich Harris (Mrs. R. O. Harris), Mrs. Jane Butterfield, Mrs. C. Clifford Caldwell and Mrs. Georgine Akin. Our present Director of Music is Walter C. Herbert. In mentioning the personnel of the Church, no history would be complete without paying tribute to our faithful janitor, Emanuel Tolbert, who has served the Church from 1918 to the present date. No one loves the Church better than Emanuel - better known as "Geech."

The Church has sponsored several small Churches in the community. It helped with the erection of the Glen Haven Methodist Church. It purchased the lot for the North Decatur Methodist Church for $3600 and gave this to that congregation. One of our members has given the lot on which will be erected the Skyline Methodist Church, and another member has given a lot on which will be erected a Methodist Church to serve the Glenwood and Columbia Road area.

Many memorials have been given in the memory or in the honor of some members of our Church. The first memorial was given by John W. Pearce which was a memorial window now placed in the rear of the pipe organ in memory of his mother, Eliza Ann Pearce. The tall brass altar vases were given in memory of Mrs. May Cantrell, who was President and teacher of the Woman's Bible Class, and a Steward and leader in the Church. Hymnals have been given by many of our members in honor and memory of their loved ones. The cross on the Communion table was given by friends in memory of Mrs. J. A.
Stewart. The light over the front entrance of the Church was
given by Mrs. Vassar Turner (mother of our Mrs. Walter C. Herbert)
in memory of her husband. The picture which is in the Junior De-
partment was given in memory of the late Mrs. Leon Foote by her sister,
Mrs. Clara Elgin. The silver bowl which is used for baptismal
services was given by Mrs. R. C. Ozmer in memory of her son, Vaughn.
A memorial is being given the Church by Mrs. John T. Goree and friends
of the late John T. Goree, who was Chairman of our Board of Stewards
and a prominent lay leader. The leather bound hymnal for the organist
was given by Miss Frances Burgess in memory of Albert E. Dowman, who
was for so many years a member of our Choir. The Bible and Hymnal which
are placed in the pulpit were given by the late C. E. Allen in memory
of his mother and wife, Mrs. Maude Allen. Memorial collection plates
were given in memory of Ensign William Henry Harris, who consecrated
his life to the ministry but lost it in the service of his country,
by his mother, Mrs. Helen Culver Harris; also, in memory of J. W. Queen
by his wife; Wallace H. Cooper by his wife; Mrs. Mary J. Addy (grand-
mother) by Mr. Harvey N. Addy; and in memory of loved ones in her family
by Mrs. A. H. Wilson. The beautiful silver Communion Service was presented
to the Church Nov. 3, 1946 in memory of-
Rev. J. Tumlin and Rev. G. M. Eakes by Mr. E. A. Stead; Mr. John N.
Newsome, Mrs. Annie L. Newsome, Mr. Newman Price Newsome and Mr. Billy
Swann (who lost his life in the service of our country) by Mr. and Mrs.
H. T. Newsome; Mrs. Leon Robertson Foote by Miss Mildred Tilly; Mr. C.
E. Allen by Mrs. C. E. Allen; Mrs. Homer Allen and Mrs. H. N. Sasser by
Circle No. 4; Mr. Chas. Collier, Mr. Lawrence Collier and J. Frank
Shoup, Jr. by Miss Louise Collier and Mrs. Ella Rhee Romport; Mr. F. C.
Watkins and Mr. Raiford Watkins by Mrs. F. O. Watkins; Mrs. Oma
Johnston by Mr. W. P. Johnston, Sr.; Mr. T. F. Smith by Mrs. G. A. Mason; Messrs Henry Harris, David B. Edge, Jr., T. J. Deadwyler, Jr., Ben S. Forkner, Jr., Robt. J. Rogers, Jr., Frank Roberts, Kenyon Short, who lost their lives in the service of our country – by Mr. Dan W. Shadburn, Dr. L. L. Tatum, Mr. and Mrs. W. C. Thompson; Rev. Henry H. Harris by Mr. R. P. Chatham; Rev. J. M. Tumlin and Rev. G. M. Eakes and the memory of child-hood and young ladyhood days spent in the work of this Church by Mrs. Sarah Paxton Tully; Mr. J. G. Addy by Mr. H. N. Addy; Mr. and Mrs. Geo. M. Hayes by Mr. Bob Hayes; Mr. Homer Wright by Mrs. Homer Wright; Mrs. Mary Bryan Kitchens by Miss Mary Bryan Coleman; Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Broome by Mr. W. L. Broome; Lt. Ben S. Forkner, Jr. by Mr. and Mrs. Ben S. Forkner; Rev. P. A. Kellett by Mr. and Mrs. Everitt T. Gorbandt; Mrs. Ella Cozart Trotti by Mrs. A. H. Wilson, Mr. Hugh H. Trotti and Mr. J. L. Trotti; Mrs. S. H. Jacobs by Mrs. S. H. Jacobs; Rev. S. B. Ledbetter by Mrs. S. B. Ledbetter; Miss Caroline Napier by Miss Caroline Ledbetter; Mrs. J. G. Jones by Mr. Otis H. Jones; Mrs. Virginia Adell Threadgill by Dr. S. L. Threadgill; Mr. R. N. Daughtry by Miss Marjorie Daughtry; Rev. J. D. Milton by Mrs. J. D. Milton and Mrs. J. C. Maness; Mr. A. J. Woodruff by Mrs. A. J. Woodruff; Rev. W. H. Cooper and Rev. A. L. Hale by Mr. and Mrs. Robt. L. Hale; Mrs. G. A. Almand by Mr. J. Hudson Almand; Others contributing- Mr. Frank G. Thomas, Miss Pauline Market, Mr. and Mrs. E. E. Haralson, Mr. C. P. Netherton and Mr. C. F. Johnston.

A picture "The Holy Night" was presented to the Kindergarten Department by Mrs. Geo. R. Jones in memory of her sister Miss Helen Coffee. Also, the Nativity Set (made in Vienna, Austria) was given by Mrs. Eugenia Poller of Vienna in memory of her sister, Miss Helen Coffee, who served as superintendent of the Kindergarten Department for fifteen years.
A MEMORIAM * * * FOREVER TO BE REMEMBERED

When the call came, they departed with others from this Church, to do their part — — — seven young men anxious to bring Peace and Tranquility and Love back into a war-torn world. With quickened step these hurried on — — to sail the seas, to wing through the air, to travel over ground — — to accomplish their mission, to serve their country, and to meet eternity. Now they are spiritual soldiers, in another Land — — where they have found Peace and Tranquility and Love.

Memorial Services were held Jan. 13, 1946 for the following young men who made the supreme sacrifice in World War II:


MEMORIAL COLLECTION PLATES DEDICATED Sept. 26, 1948

The collection plates that are being used today were given in loving memory of Ensign William Henry Harris who consecrated his life to the ministry but lost it in the service of his country — by his mother Mrs. Helen Culver Harris; Mr. J. W. Queen by his wife; Mr. Wallace H. Cooper by his wife; Mrs. Mary J. Addy (grandmother) by Mr. Harvey N. Addy; in memory of loved ones in her family by Mrs. A. H. Wilson.
Chimes were installed in our Church by a number of members as a memorial to certain deceased members. The beautiful silver Communion service was presented to the Church on Nov. 3, 1946 in memory of many of our deceased members. The brass urns were given by our missionaries in China, Mr. and Mrs. Morris Paty. The beautiful picture "Adoration of the Shepherds" which is hanging in the bride's room was given by Mrs. Dan W. Shadburn in honor of her husband who is at present Chairman of the Board of Trustees. The Church Office and the Pastor's Study were decorated and furnished in honor of Mr. W. H. Weekes who is the sole surviving member of the original Building Committee of the Church in 1897, and who for many years a member of the Board of Stewards.

Memorial Services were held on Jan. 13th, 1946 for the following young men who made the supreme sacrifice in World War II:

Lt. David B. Edge, Jr.  
Lt. Ben S. Forkner, Jr.  
Lt. Richard Kennon Short, Jr.  
Lt. T. J. Deadwyler, Jr.  
Ensign Wm. Henry Harris  
Lt. Robt. J. Rogers, Jr.  
Lt. John D. Trimpi

The Chimes in the Church were first played by Mr. Douglas Wauchope, organist. They were dedicated in 1947 and were given by—

Mrs. G. M. Eakes in memory of her husband who was pastor here for six years;  
Mrs. S. B. Ledbetter in memory of her brother, Col. Geo. M. Napier; Mr. E. E. Treadwell in memory of Rev. G. M. Eakes; Mrs. R. C. Ozmer in memory of her son, Mr. Robt. Vaughan Ozmer; Mrs. R. A. Broyles Jr. in memory of her father and mother—Major and Mrs. W. R. Kent; Mr. and Mrs. J. A. McCrary in memory of Mr. Robt. Vaughan Ozmer; Miss Mildred Tilly in memory of Rev. G. M. Eakes; Mr. Jos. B. Duvall in memory of his father Rev. G. W. Duvall who was pastor of this Church in 1909–1910; Mrs. A. H. Wilson in memory of the deceased members of the "Trotti" family; Mr. E. E. Treadwell in memory of
Col. Geo. M. Napier; The Ethel Bryson Thompson Class in honor of the faithful members of the Choir; Also, contributions from the Choir, Mr. Milton Allen, Mr. Harrell Ringold and Mr. Mell Turner.
The Woman's Missionary Society was organized February 11thm 1879 at the eleven o'clock service in the Church by Rev. C. A. Thomas, pastor, and Miss Sue Thomas, Conference Organizer. The following are the names of officers and members:

President, Mrs. Susan Avary; Vice-Presidents - Mrs. Pulliam, Mrs. Pearce, Mrs. Robt. Alston, and Mrs. Mary Davies.

Cor. Secretary, Mrs. Locke; Recording Secretary, Fannie Avary; Treasurer, Mrs. Cra Hampton.

The Charter members were - Mrs. Mary E. Davies, Mrs. Cora Hampton, Miss Alice Wilson, Miss Julia Wilson, Miss Carrie Tommey, Miss Fannie Avary, Miss Julia Stansell, Miss Matilda McCreary, Miss Sarah Johnson, Mrs. Pulliam, Miss Sallie Davies, Miss Katie Wilson, Miss Lena Stansell, Mrs. Robert Alston, Miss Bessie Alston, Miss Winnie Alston, Miss Mollie Hampton, Mrs. Jennie Locke, Miss M. F. Anderson, Miss Lizzie Pearce, Mr. Elizabeth Sterrick, Mrs. Fannie V. Reid, Mrs. Susie Pharr, Mrs. S. J. Marshall, Mrs. Carey Hollingsworth, Mrs. R. E. Adams, Mrs. Elizabeth Tommey, Miss Sallie Williams, Miss Susie Grant, Miss Jennie Grant, Miss Lou Marshall, Miss Hattie Marshall, Mrs. W. F. Pattillo, Mrs. Pearce and Mrs. Avary. Dues at that time were 10 cents a month or one dollar a year.

The following have served as presidents of the Society:

Mrs. Susan Avary, Feb. 1879- June 1879
Mrs. Mary Davies - June 1879 (number of years served not known)
Mrs. Robert Alston - one year
Mrs. Anna Davies - term ended 1891
Miss Annie Fulton - Mar. 1891 (resigned in few months)
Mrs. W. W. Braswell - held office 'til Oct. 1901- served for 11 years
Mrs. J. H. Baxter 0 1902- 1903
Mrs. Chas. H. Branch - 1904
Mrs. J. C. Maness - 1905 - 1906
Mrs. W. F. Ehle - 1907
Miss Cornelia Lovejoy - 1908-1909-1910
Mrs. W. E. McCalla - 1911-1912
Mrs George Waddell - Part of 1913
Mrs. Arabella Moore - 1913-1914
Mrs. J. H. Baxter - 1914-1915-1916
Mrs. J. C. Maness - Dec. 1916-1917
Mrs. H. W. Cantrell - Dec. 1917-1918-1919-1920-1921
Mrs. Homer Wright - Dec. 1921-1922-1923-1924
Mrs. W. W. Freeborn - Elected Dec. 1925 (Resigned due to illness)
Mrs. George Roerig - March 1926-1927
Mrs. W. C. Kirby - March 1927-1928
Mrs. Geo. S. Watts - Dec. 1928-1929

The following have served since that time -
Mrs. Edward O. Rider
Mrs. M. M. Simmons
Mrs. Belva Williams
Mrs. W. P. Smith, Sr.
Mrs. Boyd Ozment
Mrs. Arthur Gresham
Mrs. H. F. Higgins
Mrs. R. L. Watkins
Mrs. S. Walton Peabody

The Cradle Roll was organized about 1900

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"The humblest spire in mortal ken
Where God abides was built by men,
And if the church is still to grow-
Is still the light of hope to throw
Across the valley of despair,-
Men still must build God's House of prayer.

God sends no churches from the skies,
Out of the hearts they must arise."