HISTORY

of

EAST POINT AVENUE METHODIST CHURCH
PREFACE

In the following pages an attempt has been made to assemble facts of interest that have contributed to the building of the Kingdom of God through this church. The writer is indebted to various writers and helps in the preparation of this work.

Mr. R. F. Thompson, a charter member, has furnished facts concerning the erection and moving of the building; names of charter members; population of East Point at that time.

Mrs. L. V. Donehoo supplied details of the early work of the women of the church, also the organization of the Epworth League.

Names of Pastors, Presiding Elders (District Superintendents) and dates of service are taken from the minutes of the Georgia Conference from 1873 - 1939. From 1940 to the present, reference
is made to the minutes of the North Georgia Conference.

It is with a spirit of reverence and deep humility that the writer attempts to set forth bits of the lives of these saintly preachers who have labored faithfully in the work of the Kingdom. All this material on each life is gleaned from "The M. E. Church in Georgia" by Rev. Edmund Jordan Hammond.
Construction and Growth of the Church

The Methodist Episcopal Church was organized on Christmas Day, in the year of 1784, in Lovely Lane Meeting House, Baltimore, Maryland. Thus we find, in 1873, approximately a century after the organization of Methodism in America, that the present East Point Avenue Methodist Church was built.

In 1873 the present city of East Point, Georgia, consisted of no more than a few farm houses, a post office and one or two stores scattered over an area of several miles, with a population of near ninety.

There were no church buildings in East Point at that time; only "Societies" organized by christian groups. Such a society existed at or near Connally Mill, using an old school house as a place to preach. This was organized some eight or ten years prior to the Civil War by Rev. John W. Yarbrough.

It was during the trying days of stress and the so called "Reconstruction Era", after the Civil War,
in 1873, that Nellie Chapel was built, later to be known as the East Point Avenue Methodist Church. A one room, wooden structure was erected in the City of East Point, County of Fulton, State of Georgia. The church was named Nellie Chapel in memory of little Nellie Thompson, who was buried there. She was the daughter of Dr. J. D. Thompson, a medical practitioner.

The lot on which the church was built was donated by Dr. J. D. Thompson, who circulated a subscription list and negotiated a loan for the construction of the building. This lot was located on the main street (between the present streets of Cleveland and Whiteway). Mr. D. M. Wilson, a competent builder, and others soon completed a neat little chapel.

It became a member of the Georgia Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. At the first quarterly conference held in the building, a resolution was passed inviting other denominations to
use the chapel. Those who accepted were the Baptists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Christians.

There were twenty charter members. Among those were: Dr. J. D. Thompson, Mr. Robert F. Thompson, Mr. James L. Thompson, Mr. Sam N. Thompson, Mr. and Mrs. D. M. Wilson, Ida Wilson, Ella Wilson, a Mr. Walker and family, Mrs. Scarborough and Mrs. Cynthia Miller. The first minister serving the new church was the Rev. L. E. Ellington and the first presiding elder was Rev. J. W. Lee.

The first revival was conducted by Joseph Smith, an eighteen year old preacher, and scores were converted. He later became a noted evangelist.

The original church building is used today, having been removed from the original lot and remodeled, however.

In 1919 under the leadership of Bishop Leete, the church was removed to face East Point Ave. and became known as the East Point Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church. The church was brick veneered
and the entire plant improved. Mr. R. F. Thompson was requested to handle the problem of securing this property and getting the church property in better condition. He secured a lot 60 x 150 ft. fronting West Cleveland Ave. in exchange for a small lot of the church on Main Street. He also secured a lot on East Point Ave. 71 x 150 ft. in exchange for a lot on Main Street. He then sold the lot on West Cleveland Ave. to the East Point Masonic Lodge for $2,200.00 cash. Other funds in hand paid for all expenses of church removal and improvement and left $500.00 in the Bank of East Point.

The cemetery of some two dozen graves was not disturbed in the moving of the building, and stands to-day in the rear of the auditorium.

In 1939, after the reunion of Methodism, the church was known as the East Point Avenue Methodist Church. This reunion was held in Kansas City in May of 1939. It was the culmination of a long history.
The three Methodist Churches uniting on that memorable occasion were: the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; the Methodist Protestant Church.

Thus, after 1939, the East Point Avenue Methodist Church became a member of the East District of the North Georgia Methodist Conference.

In 1948 the church building was greatly improved and modernized. The auditorium was made a more beautiful place in which to worship. A gas furnace was installed and new wiring also put in building. A large basement with all the modern facilities was also installed. Stone steps were built at the entrance, making it much more attractive. This improvement program was led by the pastor, Rev. W. M. Bishop, with the cooperation of the Board of Stewards and the entire membership.

In 1946 a lighted cross was placed on the steeple of the church in memory of Thomas Boyd McGraw, who gave his life in the service of our country in the second
Rev. R. W. Langley served as assistant pastor of East Point Avenue Methodist Church at one time.

We are proud to claim Miss Nesmith Malone, who went out into Religious Education work. She is now Mrs. R. R. Baker, wife of the minister mentioned above. Her efforts have been tireless and she has accomplished much in the work of the Kingdom of God.

We are humbly grateful for the very important task of our own Lt. Ross A. Sheldon, who is now with the U. S. Army in Korea. Lt. Sheldon is working directly with a Rev. Kerr, veteran of 40 years in the mission fields of Korea, and other missionaries attached there. His job is among the Prisoners of War, trying to combat the Communist Doctrine and teach them the truth about the war and its causes. In a letter to his minister, Lt. Sheldon says "If we are successful we will greatly aid the cause of freedom in Asia when the Chinese and North Koreans return to their homes."
member of the East Point Avenue Methodist Church, needed a meeting place for a small group of boys of his neighborhood. From this small group the present Boys' Club has grown.

The deeds to church property do not contain the "Trust Clause", as worded in the Discipline of our church.
elected Superintendent. He served in this capacity for several years in a most capable way.

In 1884 there were forty-nine members of the Sunday School. The present enrollment is one hundred twenty-four.
The Woman's Society of Christian Service

In September of 1940 the Woman's Society of Christian Service was organized with Mrs. D. L. Dorris as president. There were twenty-seven charter members.

In 1950 the tenth anniversary of the society was observed. Much advancement, in all phases of the work, was shown in the reports at that time. The following charter members were present and active as officers: Mrs. O. T. Mitchell, Mrs. J. T. Bell, Mrs. O. W. Wilson and Mrs. W. M. Bishop.
Work of the Youth of the Church

The Epworth League

and

The Methodist Youth Fellowship

We find the youth of the church enthusiastic in the early work of the church, but no record of organized work until 1919.

The Epworth League was organized soon after the Rev. W. S. Hamilton was appointed pastor. This was in 1919. No record is found of the first president, but following are the names of some of the charter members: Virginia Donehoo, Mary Donehoo, Evelyn Donehoo, L. V. Donehoo, Jr., Anna Malone, Nesmith Malone, William Malone, Rudolph Baker, Cardwell Baker, Norris Thompson, Sheffield Thompson and Bernie Thompson.

In 1939, after unification, the name of the Epworth League was changed to the Methodist Youth Fellowship. Today the membership is fifteen.
Pastors with dates of Service

Rev. L. D. Ellington, the first pastor of East Point Avenue Methodist Church (Nellie Chapel at that time) came of staunch Methodist stock. He had a keen brain. He did much reading and was a brilliant conversationalist. Few, if any, men in the church knew the discipline better. He possessed a strong sense of humor, as well as a legal turn of mind. He was elected ministerial delegate to the General Conference in 1892, held in Omaha, Nebraska. He continued in the Georgia Conference until his death in 1927.

In the conference minutes of 1880 we find East Point listed as the Atlanta Circuit. Serving this circuit was W. E. Tarpley and S. D. Brown in that year.
Rev. E. F. Dean, Pastor, 1887-89

Rev. E. F. Dean was admitted to the Georgia Conference in 1875. He was an able preacher and a native of Haralson County.

Rev. R. H. Waters, Pastor, 1890-91

Rev. R. H. Waters had spent several years in the M. E. Church, South before coming to the M. E. Church in which he spent eleven years in the traveling connection and then located.

Rev. James L. Fowler, Pastor, 1892-93

Rev. James L. Fowler served at one time as ministerial delegate to the General Conference. He was admitted to the Georgia Conference as a deacon, from the M. E. Church, South.

Supply Pastor in 1894
Rev. A. F. Ellington, Pastor, 1901-02

Rev. A. F. Ellington was a younger brother of L. D. Ellington, mentioned above. He possessed same Methodist loyalty of his brother. He was saintly in life and generally, greatly loved. Served also as Presiding Elder and General Conference Delegate. He died in active service in 1909.

Supply Pastors served from 1903 to 1907. No names given in minutes.

Dr. W. A. Parsons, Pastor, 1907-08

Dr. Parsons was a native of North Carolina, a graduate of Grant University. He united with the conference in 1897. He was secretary of the Georgia Conference for fourteen years. He was president of Epworth Seminary in 1911, and was chosen ministerial delegate to the General Conference in 1908, also in 1915.

The Rev. W. S. Hamilton was received on trial in the conference of 1919. He is a native Georgian, a graduate of Atlanta Theological Seminary (Congregational). He rose rapidly to leading pastorates in the conference, holding office of Secretary of Conference. He is now a member of the Ohio Methodist Conference.

Rev. J. A. Callen, Pastor, 1925-26

Rev. J. A. Callen was admitted on trial to the conference in 1924, but did not remain long in it.

Rev. George S. Davis, Pastor, 1927

Rev. George S. Davis united with the conference on trial from the M. E. Church, South in 1926. Served well until forced to take a super-numerary relation, due to war connected disability.
Presiding Elders (District Superintendents)  
and Dates of Service

Dr. J. W. Lee, Presiding Elder

Dr. J. W. Lee, the first Presiding Elder (1873) of Nellie Chapel, transferred from the Rock River Conference in 1868 to the Georgia Conference. He was a native of Baltimore, Maryland, and was related to the Lees of Virginia. He served as a chaplain in the Civil War. He was, at one time, president of Clark University.

Rev. J. A. Thurman, Presiding Elder, 1882-83

Rev. W. E. Tarpley, Presiding Elder, 1884-85-86

Rev. W. E. Tarpley was an excellent man, the first of a long line of preachers from Fannin County. He traveled some years in the conference, then went to another denomination.
Rev. E. J. Hammond, District Superintendent, 1912-19

Rev. E. J. Hammond entered the Georgia Conference in 1908. He was a native of New York, where he served his first charge while teaching school. He came south due to ill health. He is a member of The Federal Council of Churches and of the Commission on Interdenominational Relations. He is serving now as Field Representative, Board of Missions and Church Extension.


Rev. J. E. Crippen was transferred from Simpson Church, Birmingham, Alabama. He was a native of Michigan.

Rev. E. J. Hammond, D. S., 1927-28-29-30

Rev. W. E. Craig, D. S., 1931-32
The first Christian church, as recorded in the Book of Acts, is a story of laymen or people who were the body and soul of the church in its formative days. In recording the great works of our preachers we would not forget to pay tribute to the worthy laymen.

Mr. Robert F. Thompson, a charter member, has served his church and community in a highly commendable way. He taught a Sunday School class at the early age of fifteen years. He served as superintendent of the Sunday School later, and chairman of the Board of Stewards. In 1892 he was elected lay delegate to the General Conference in Omaha, Nebraska, representing the Methodist Episcopal Church. He entered the business of Real Estate and Insurance Agency, which proved successful under his direction. For twenty years he was President of the Bank of East Point. He was also editor of a paper called "Flow Boy" for fifteen years. He was elected to the honored position of Mayor of East Point, in which capacity he served for twelve years in a highly efficient manner. Today, in 1951,