This is a brief, but romantic story of how Methodism became the spiritual possession of a sturdy, substantial, aristocratic people who have resided across the years in this fair section of the State of Georgia.

The beginning was with the Oconee Circuit, Georgia District, South Carolina Conference which was organized in 1804 and consisted of all the territory between Oconee and Ocmulgee rivers. There were no church buildings for many years, but regular appointments were held at private dwellings.

The town of Eatonton was laid out about 1807 and there seems to have been Methodist worship even before that time. Methodism continued to gather strength in Putnam County since there was a camp ground which was the scene of many successful revivals. Josiah Flournoy was the leading member of the Eatonton Church. Being a forceful person, he exerted great influence for good. He originated the prohibition movement in Georgia. He was generous, contributing large sums to Emory University and to a manual school in Talbot County.

In 1827, Eatonton and Madison were united in a station, with Lovick Pierce as the pastor. He lived in Greensboro. In 1829 Eatonton and Clinton were combined as a station.

The Annual Conference met in Eatonton, December 11, 1838, Bishop Andrew, presiding. The missionary collection during the conference amounted to $1200.00, even tho economic conditions of the county were bad. The last Annual Conference held in Georgia by The Methodist Episcopal Church was in Eatonton, 1851, with Bishop Soule, presiding.

See, -- G.G. Smith's "History of Georgia and Florida Methodism."

During 1818 and 1819, a union church was built in Eatonton for use of the Baptist, Methodist Presbyterian, and Christian congregations. It was said to be the handsomest church in Middle Georgia. The moving spirit in the building of this church was Rev. Dr. E.M. Pendleton, clerk of the court and minister of the Christian Church.

The Methodists were the first to build a separate house of worship. On January 15, 1857 the trustees bought a lot from James Supple on which to build a church. The trustees were: Henry M. Trippe, Stephen B. Marshall, William B. Carter, David R. Adams, and Jefferson Adams. The lot was deeded to them and their successors in trust for the Methodist Church in the town of Eatonton. On this lot the Methodist Church Building was erected in 1857. The church now used by the Methodists of Eatonton stands on this same lot and is the original building. Five hundred dollars was paid for the lot which was 80'x100'.

The first pastor was Lovick Pierce, and Bishop George F. Pierce preached the sermon of dedication.

The church building has been renovated and repaired from time to time. It is now in a state of fine material condition.

A house and lot on Jefferson Street, the lot extending thru to Madison Avenue, on the West was given to the trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church South of Eatonton by Mrs. L.S. Trippe on May 3, 1877. The trustees were D.R. Adams, L.C. Dennis, C.S. Creddille, S.A. Reid, and M.B. Dennis.
In 1902 all church property was deeded to the Methodist Episcopal Church South. During this year the most extensive renovation occurred. At this time the entrance was changed and beautiful memorial windows were installed. These lovely imported art glass windows depicting many biblical scenes are still the pride of our Church.

At a church conference on March 30, 1902, the congregation voted to accept the church property as being own by the Methodist Episcopal Church South, to make way for the improvements to follow. The trustees were: W.H. Hearn, George W. Nelson, W.L. Turner, L.M. Pennington, M.B. Dennis, Rev. W.F. Robinson was the pastor.

In 1942 the church made extensive improvements. The interior was covered with celotes, wall to wall carpet was laid over the sanctuary, many small class rooms were arranged in the basement, and a central heating plant was installed in the church. The cost of this renovating job was about $12,000.00. The pastor was J.J. Sneed, and the chairman of the fund raising committee was Mrs. Robert Rainey.

On July 21, 1949, Mrs. V.H. Taliaferro sold the church 58 feet of her lot joining the original church lot on the. $1,000.00 was paid for this addition. J.L. Black was the pastor. During this year the old parsonage of Jefferson Street was sold along with half of the lot. This made it possible for the erection of the new parsonage on Madison Avenue. This lovely home for the minister and his family is located on 404 N. Madison Avenue. This wonderful accomplishment came while J.L. Black was pastor, the Building Committee was composed of Henry B. Hearn, Edwin Hodges, and Roy L. Harrison. The value of the parsonage is $30,000.00.

In 1952 Mrs. Taliaferro sold the church her house and lot adjacent to the church property. This building is being used at the present time as an educational building. The price paid was $13,000.00. Rev. J. Douglas Gibson was the pastor.

During the Fall of 1956 the Official Board, A.C. Dickey, Jr., Chairman, proposed a complete renovation and improvement of all church property, thus getting in readiness for the celebration of the One Hundredth Anniversary of the quaint and lovely building of our church on May 5, 1957. This work has been done. The Sanctuary has been painted inside and outside. And all needed repairs and improvements have been made to make in readiness, our church, for the Centennial on May 5, 1957. Dr. O. D. Fitzgerald was pastor.

Great credit must go to A.C. Dickey, Jr. our Chairman, for his wise leadership, to W.W. Walker, our Charge Lay Leader, for his careful supervision of the work being done, to our Board of Stewards, for their constant service, our ever dependable women for their inspiration and support of the task undertaken, and especially our loyal members who have shared so generously in this notable work.

Thanks to the Special Gifts Dept.. To the Gleaners' Class for installing the beautiful folding panel before their class room. To Dr. and Mrs. J.N. Stribling for their donation of antique velvet on the pulpit furniture and the chancel kneeling pad. To Miss Forn Fitzgerald and the Adult Choir who rendered an inspiring concert, sponsored by the WSCS to purchase the gorgeous pulpit scarf and communion table runner and the free-will offering going toward their purchase. Thanks also, to Mrs. Alvin Lewis and Mrs. Edwin Hodges for their labor of love in making them. And to Mrs. J.L. Ashurst and Mrs. Cantrell Deas, who have presented a beautiful Genuine Black Seal Leather Pulpit Bible to our Church in memory of their beloved father, Rev. W.H. Boring.
The history of a church must of necessity deal with improvements, additions and expansion of physical properties. These last fifteen years, since 1957 have been many.

On February 25, 1962 a resolution was presented in a charge conference by the Trustees, that the church, thru the Chairman, M.S. Rainey, Jr. and secretary, J.L. Asurst, by the Estate of N.E. Tatum, a lot directly behind the sanctuary, approximately 75 ft. square for an amount not to exceed $2000.00.

On September 9, 1962 in the First Quarterly Conference a resolution was passed in approval of the plan to erect a new Educational Building and appointment of a Building Committee to develop and complete the plan. The committee appointed was:

H.B. Hearn, Chairman
W.W. Walker
M.S. Rainey, Jr.
J.H. Moseley

On April 28, 1963 at a called session of Charge Conference a resolution was passed that Marshall and Hudson of Eatonton, be given the contract for the construction of an Education Building, plans attached subject to certain change orders. The basic consideration to be $69,678.00.

Then another called session of Church Conference on December 8, 1963 was presided over by Larry Baumnn, Pastor. John Allen, Chairman of the Official Board stated the purpose of the meeting to be the question of the completion of the second floor of the new Educational Building at an additional cost of $20,000.00. When the vote was taken there were 56 for the completion and 23 opposed. It was later approved unanimously by a called session of Quarterly Conference. On December 10, 1963 the District Supt. J.C. Callaway, approved the recommendation to increase the debt for construction of the new annex, the debt not to exceed $75,000.00.

In Quarterly Conference on April 29, 1964, it was unanimously voted to name the new Educational Building the Baumnn Annex in honor of our pastor and his wife, the Rev. and Mrs. Larry Baumnn.

It was reported by the Commission on Education in June of 1964 that the new building, the Baumnn Annex, had been completed, equipped and its full use begun. Rev. Burch Fammin was pastor.

It was in 1968 that our name was changed to First United Methodist Church.

A building committee was elected in the Charge Conference on October 24, 1971, to formulate plans for repair, improvement and renovation of the Sanctuary. Rev. Hoyt Purcell was pastor.

The Committee elected are: B.E. Gooch, Chairman
J.H. Moseley, Co. Chairman
Cantrell Deas, Jr.
Humber Ingram
Walt Rountree
Corinne H. Hallman
Inez G. Stribling
The renovation of the Sanctuary consisted of painting exterior, removing celotex from inside walls, and adding sheet rock, painting interior, complete repair, refinishing and upholstering of pews, refinishing and upholstering all pulpit furniture, new carpeting throughout, new heating and air conditioning system, relocation of all sound equipment of organ and chimes in a sound chamber back of the choir, public address system added, repairing and painting of church basement and new piano. Special mention should be made of the untiring efforts of Bennie Gooch and Jack Moseley who many times went far beyond the call of duty, during the 19 months this committee has functioned.

Our lastest project completed was the repair and painting inside and out of the Bauman Annex in preparation for the Homecoming Dedication today, May 27, 1973. The Rev. H. Oscar Green, Pastor.