HISTORY OF THE FIRST METHODIST CHURCH
EATONTON, GEORGIA

Compiled By
MRS. J. H. WEBSTER
1953

Pamphlet about this church found in Vol. X/11
The Oconee Circuit, Georgia District, South Carolina Conference 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 became strong in Putnam County, there having been a camp ground in the county which was the scene of many successful revivals. Josiah Flournoy was the leading member of the Eatonton Church and took charge of the little class when he came to Eatonton. He was a very forceful person, of great energy and integrity. He originated the prohibition movement in Georgia. He was generous, contributing large sums to Emory University and to a manual labor school in Talbot County.

In 1827, Eatonton and Madison were united in a station and Lovick Pierce was appointed to this charge. He lived in Greensboro. In 1829 Eatonton and Clinton were combined in a station.

The annual conference met in Eatonton December 11, 1838—Bishop Andrew presiding. The missionary collection during the conference amounted to $1200.00—unusual because of panic conditions in the country. The last annual conference held in Georgia of the Methodist Episcopal Church was held at Eatonton in 1844, with Bishop Soule presiding.

In 1844 the Georgia Conference was divided into the Georgia and Florida Conferences.

G. G. Smith's "History of Georgia and Florida Methodism" is the source of the above information.
Eatonton was made a station at the annual conference in Washington, Wilkes County in December 1857, and Lovick Pierce was appointed pastor. The new church, which was the first Methodist Church in Eatonton and the first separate denominational church of any kind in the town, was dedicated in March, 1858. Bishop George F. Pierce preached the sermon.

The first quarterly conference of the Eatonton station met at the home of Henry M. Trippe on January 30, 1858. J. W. Glenn was presiding Elder and E. A. Horton was appointed secretary; Lovick Pierce was pastor. At this conference were the above mentioned with also:

- William Arnold - Preacher
- William E. Adams - Local preacher
- William B. Carter - Local preacher
- George W. Reddy - Exhorter
- Jefferson Adams - Class leader
- D. R. Adams - Class Leader
- John Trippe - Class leader

These were nominated and appointed Stewards:

- Henry M. Trippe
- William E. Adams
- S. B. Marshall
- E. A. Horton
- W. R. Adams
- B. F. Adams
- John T. de Jarnette

E. A. Horton was made Recording Steward.

The answer to the question # 5: "What is the condition of the Sunday School?" The Sabbath School is now suspended.

Question # 7: "What is the condition of the church?"

The church is considered to be rather in a cold state. The Steward reported cash $160.00 paid out as follows:

- Expense of Presiding Elder $4.00
- Expense of Dr. Lovick Pierce $24.00
- Presiding Elder quarterage $17.00
- Dr. Pierce $115.00
At the second quarterly conference on April 17, 1858, the religious condition of the church was reported to be improving, and the Sunday School reported two superintendents, twelve teachers, and sixty pupils. The preacher was paid $130.00 and presiding Elder $10.00.

The third quarterly conference was June 7, 1858, held at the church. D. R. Adams, superintendent of the Sunday School reported:

- 12 teachers
- 75 pupils
- 500 volumes in the library
- $28.00 collected for Sunday School purposes

Nine white people and thirteen colored people joined the church during this quarter.

The characters of each of the class leaders and stewards were taken up separately and passed. $95.00 was reported paid to the preacher and presiding Elder.

The fourth quarterly conference was on November 6, 1858. The total paid to the presiding Elder for the year 1858 was $77.00 and to the pastor $702.00. This is the first year for which we have any written records. This information was secured from the quarterly conference record.

During 1818 and 1819, a union church was built in Eatonton for the use of 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 V. R. Adams, and Jefferson Adams, and 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 and is 80' X 100'.

The church building has been renovated and repaired from time to time. Mention is made in the record of committees appointed to work out plans for paying the church debt, so the church was constantly struggling to improve its physical property and then get the bills paid.

The most extensive renovation occurred in 1902-03. The entrance was changed and beautiful memorial windows were installed. These windows are still the pride of the church.

Items in the Eatonton Messenger concerning the remodeling of the church in 1902-03:

March 24, 1900 - There was a church supper at the Prudden House. The Methodist ladies were beginning to raise funds to remodel the church.

January 25, 1902 - "We have no doubt that the Methodists of Eatonton will get enough money to repair their church building. It is to be hoped that the stoves will be discarded and a furnace used."

May 24, 1902 - The Eatonton Methodists are going to make their church practically new.

June 7, 1902 - The Methodists have decided to repair the church. They will worship at the Presbyterian Church two Sundays
each month. Four hundred dollars has already been raised by
the ladies toward the repair job.

August 9, 1902 - The Eatonton Methodist Church will soon
be under repair and when completed will be one of the hand-
somest churches in this section.

September 20, 1902 - D. R. Adams died. He was trustee,
steward, and Sunday School superintendent.

December 13, 1902 - The Epworth League gave an oyster
supper to raise funds for the memorial window the league will
put in the church.

January 31, 1903 - Church workers of Eatonton Methodist
Church are requested to meet at the parsonage February 2 to
decide on a carpet and other important matters.

(Signed) Mrs. J. L. Williams

February 7, 1903 - The memorial windows being put in the
Methodist Church are very beautiful.

February 28, 1903 - There was a letter from Robert Young,
clerk of the Presbyterian Church asking the Methodists to use
their church full time as they had no pastor, and a letter of
acceptance from Mr. Robinson, pastor of the Methodist Church.

March 14, 1903 - At a special meeting of the members of
the Methodist Church Wednesday night held at the Presbyterian
Church, there was much enthusiasm. The weather was bad and
many could not come. W. H. Hearn, treasurer was asked to make
a statement. In his statement, he said that all material ne-
cessary for completion of the church was on the ground and
bills for some were coming due. He stated that it would take
a thousand dollars to pay off everything in full and in a few
minutes, 16 people present pledged $500.00. A committee was
appointed to canvass the membership for the remaining $500.00. J. C. Reid, F. W. Holt and L. C. Tomlinson were named as the committee.

May 2, 1903 - The Methodists of Eatonton assembled in their church last Sunday after having been out of it about six months while it was undergoing repairs.

In 1942 the church was again renovated extensively. The interior walls were covered with celotex, a new carpet was laid, many small Sunday School rooms were made in the basement and an oil burning furnace was installed. The cost of this renovating job was about $12,000.00. The pastor was J. J. Sneed, and Mrs. Robert Rainey was chairman of the fund raising committee.

On July 21, 1949, Mrs. V. H. Taliaferro sold the church 58 feet of her lot joining the original church lot on the north. $1000.00 was paid for this. J. L. Black was pastor at the time.

In 1952, Mrs. Taliaferro sold the church her house and lot, thus extending the church property to the street on the north. This building is being used as an educational building. The price paid was $13,000.00. The church basement is still used for some of the Sunday School classes, but some partitions have been removed and the rooms made larger. Douglas Gibson was the pastor at this time.

A house and lot on Jefferson Street, the lot going all the way through to the avenue, was given to the trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church south of Eatonton by Mrs. L. S. Trippe on May 3, 1877. The trustees at this time were D. R. Adams, L. C. Dennis, C. S. Creddille, S. A. Reid and M. B. Dennis.

In 1902 all the church property was deeded to the Methodist Episcopal Church south. The trustees were authorized to do this
by a church conference which met on March 30, 1902. Ninety-two adult members, which was a majority of the members of the church, voted for the resolution to deed the property—none voted against it. The pastor at this time was W. F. Robinson and the trustees signing the deed were W. H. Hearn, George W. Nelson, W. L. Turner, L. M. Pennington, M. B. Dennis. Source of this information—copy of the deed and resolution.

In 1949 the parsonage was sold, with about half of the lot. The balance of the lot was retained and a new parsonage built facing the avenue. The new parsonage is a good brick building, costing about $22,000.00. The parsonage debt was paid in full on December 16, 1951. J. L. Black was pastor and the building committee was Henry B. Hearn, Edwin Hodges and Roy L. Harrison.

The Women's Missionary Society was organized in November, 1878 with eighteen members. The officers were Mrs. A. R. Mosley, president, Mrs. I. H. Adams, 1st vice-president, Mrs. James Reid, 2nd vice-president, Mrs. Dr. Newman, recording secretary, Miss Tallulah Dennis, correspondent secretary, Miss Lula Russell, treasurer. Dues were 10 cents a month. The society has continued its service these many years and today there are ninety-three members and the budget is $1098.00.
Lovick Pierce was the pastor in 1827 when Eatonton was made a half station, and he was the pastor again in 1858 when Eatonton was made a station. Following is a list of pastors from 1858 to 1953.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pastor</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pastor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1827</td>
<td>Lovick Pierce</td>
<td>1892</td>
<td>J. A. Timmerman</td>
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<td>1858</td>
<td>Lovick Pierce</td>
<td>1895</td>
<td>R. W. Bigham</td>
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<td>1859</td>
<td>C. W. Key</td>
<td>1896</td>
<td>J. B. Allen</td>
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<td>1861</td>
<td>A. M. Wynn</td>
<td>1897</td>
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<td>1863</td>
<td>G. G. N. McDonald</td>
<td>1900</td>
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<td>J. W. Hullin</td>
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<td>F. S. Hudson</td>
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<td>1868</td>
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<td>1912</td>
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<td>1914</td>
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<td>1872</td>
<td>B. H. Sassnett</td>
<td>1918</td>
<td>E. W. Jones</td>
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<td>W. P. Lovejoy</td>
<td>1922</td>
<td>J. W. Williams</td>
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<td>1923</td>
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<td>W. S. Norton</td>
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<td>1878</td>
<td>J. D. Gray</td>
<td>1927</td>
<td>W. W. Carroll</td>
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<td>1880</td>
<td>W. A. Dodge</td>
<td>1932</td>
<td>C. D. Reed</td>
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<td>H. J. Adams</td>
<td>1934</td>
<td>W. T. Irvine</td>
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<td>J. H. Baxter</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>R. C. Singleton</td>
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<td>1887</td>
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<td>1888</td>
<td>W. L. Wooten</td>
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<td>1890</td>
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<td>1891</td>
<td>T. A. Seals</td>
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