HISTORY

of

CHICKAMAUGA METHODIST CHURCH
Ascertaining the correct history of any Church must be difficult. In their early days they were frequently served by the most enthusiastic pastors, but not necessarily by those most efficient at keeping records. Personal prejudice and factionalism frequently appear in their actions and consequently in such records as they did keep.

To ascertain the correct date of the actual founding of this Church, several authorities were consulted. They all agreed as to the time of year and there is very little discrepancy as to the particular year. It is agreed that there was a brush arbor meeting held near where the present Church stands during the first full moon after "laying-by time" about 1874. This meeting was conducted by a Reverend Grafton of Texas, who was the principal speaker. He was most ably assisted by a Mr. A. I. Leet, who lived at Boynton, Georgia.

A great deal of interest was inspired by this meeting and a Methodist Church was organized.

I am informed that among the original members were:

Mr. and Mrs. James M. Lee
Mrs. S. T. McWhorter
Mrs. Emma Roberts Brotherton
Mr. Alec Jackson
Rev. A. I. Leet
Mrs. Jim Henderson
Mrs. E. K. Roberts

Mr. and Mrs. L. W. Myers
Mr. and Mrs. R. R. Couch
Mr. and Mrs. Jason Conley
Mr. J. T. Bilbo
Mr. and Mrs. James A. Park,
parents of Hector Park,
medical missionary to China.

It appears that Mr. J. M. Lee, the father of one of our oldest members, Mr. Tom Lee, planned to build the Church himself as a civic contribution. However, the Masonic Order had become quite active here and Mr. Leet was
Worshipful Master of this Order. They asked that they might have an interest in the building. Therefore, a combination Church and Lodge building was erected a very short distance north of where our present Church building is located.

This Church became a part of a circuit of seven churches. These were: Cove Church, Chickamauga, Rock Springs, Pond Springs, Cedar Grove, Cassandra, now Kensington, and possibly High Point, but which may have been Garretts Chapel. The parsonage was located at Cedar Grove. Mr. J. M. Lee was called upon to furnish transportation for the preachers from Ringgold to Cedar Grove on a number of occasions. They usually spent the night at Chickamauga and sometimes their visit was prolonged throughout the winter, because of the road conditions. Mr. Lee, therefore, had a small brick house constructed on what are now the grounds of the Simonton Clinic and immediately behind the present Masonic Temple, and this building was used as a parsonage for quite some years.

The list of names of the pastors following Mr. Grafton is not complete. To the best of my knowledge the following served this circuit:

- O. A. Stewart, 1874
- H. C. Christian, 1875-76
- P. C. Reynolds, 1877-78
- J. N. Myers, 1879
- A. J. Hughes, 1880
- R. L. Campbell, 1881
- N. E. McBrayer, 1882-83
- William Dunbar (no date)
- William Shea (no date)
- W. C. Dunlap, 1890
- J. R. Speck, 1891
- W. R. Kennedy, 1892-93
- G. C. Andrews, 1894
- J. A. Quilliam, 1895-96
- J. A. Thurman, 1897-98
- J. F. Balis, 1899
- W. G. Crawley, 1900-01
- Olin King, 1902-03
- H. M. Strozier, 1904-05
W. O. Butler, 1906
M. K. Patillo, 1907-08
C. S. Martin, 1909
O. M. Pender, 1910-11
E. L. Hendrix, 1912
C. A. Hall, 1913-14-15
W. J. Culpepper, 1916
F. G. Spearman, 1917-18
L. L. Landrum, 1919
C. P. Harris, 1920

Other pastors' names without dates are as follows:

B. Jones
W. B. Taylor
H. C. Green
T. L. Rutland
J. A. Sprayberry
Henry Harden
W. F. Powell
J. R. McCurdy
H. A. King

Under the leadership of Olin King in 1902-03, the residence of the Pastor was moved to Chickamauga and our present parsonage was constructed.

In 1913-15 while C. A. Hall was Pastor and under the able leadership of a Building Committee composed of Mr. T. W. Lee, Mr. G. L. Bonds, Mr. J. R. Camp, and possibly some others, our present Church building was constructed. It was designed by W. H. Sears, a leading architect of Chattanooga. Upon completion, it was dedicated by Bishop W. A. Candler.

In 1920 the Chickamauga Church became a full time charge with Pierce Harris as Pastor. He served 1921-22 and 23. It has been served by the following Pastors:

1. Dr. J. M. Radford, 1924-25
2. S. D. Cherry, 1926-27-28
3. W. J. Culpepper, 1929-30-31
4. Claud Hendrix, 1932-33
5. Hamby Barton, 1934-35
7. Walton, Part of 1937
8. Charlie Lovin, in 1937
9. William Gardner, 1938
10. Molowery Elrod, 1939-40-41-42
11. M. A. Allen, 1943
12. Ralph Hawkins, 1944-45-46-47
13. J. Walker Chidsey, 1948-49
Tracing the real estate titles held by the Board of Trustees proved quite interesting. The original building stood on land owned and donated by Mr. J. M. Lee. In 1910 his heirs donated a lot near the intersection of Wilder Avenue and Gordon Street as a site for a new Church. This lot was exchanged for a plot of ground south of the springs and near the railroad track. The existing Church was removed from its original site and relocated on this new lot. The Trustees acquired the lot on which the present building stands from Mr. D. A. Jewell, Sr., and erected our present Church building. The old Church was converted into a store and it was finally destroyed by fire. Mr. Gordon Lee donated the lot adjacent to the Church lot, on the south, during the pastorate of Mr. S. D. Cherry. In 1929 plans were made for the erection of a Church Educational Building, or as many prefer to call it, the Sunday School Building.

Under the leadership of Mr. R. S. Wheeler as Chairman, a Building committee composed of Mr. Wheeler, Mr. C. R. Street, Mr. C. Callaway, Jr., Mrs. Tom Lee, Mrs. R. H. Jewell, Mr. George Parrish and Mr. Albert Bowen supervised the planning and construction of the Sunday School Building. This committee, with the exception of those moving from the city and those removed by death, still remains active. The building itself was designed and constructed by Messrs. Stewart and Catlett, Architect and Builder, respectively. It has required several building sessions to complete this building. Bishop Decell preached the Dedication Sermon.

Recently the Board of Trustees was recipient of a deed to a beautiful lot donated by Mr. R. H. Jewell and located immediately north of our present Church building. Plans are well advanced for the construction of a Parsonage of a size and style appropriate to our otherwise modern Church property.
A number of Christian workers originated in the Church. The list is by no means complete. Rev. George Matthews decided to become a preacher while teaching school in Chickamauga. He served in the South Georgia Conference for a number of years. Dr. Hector Park joined the Church while his parents were living here. He later became one of our outstanding missionaries to China and was respected and loved by all of China. Mr. J. B. Horton joined this Church when he was a boy. He entered Y. M. C. A. work and served as General Secretary in several places and was considered a very useful citizen. Mr. Pierce Harris, our first Pastor after this Church became a full time station, has achieved considerable distinction and has become a national figure in the Methodist Church. In recent years Cecil Myers, originally of this Church, entered the ministry and his progress is being watched with interest.

It is hoped that this recital of the early affairs of the Church has proven of interest and I am sure that all of those present will join with me in the hopes that our children and grandchildren will gather here to celebrate many anniversaries of the Church.
During the several years that have passed since the gathering of Historical Data, concerning our church, in August of 1949, there have been several occurrences of interest. J. Walker Chidsey remained as Pastor until June of 1950 and was succeeded by Ewell Blackburn, who still serves in that capacity.

During the fall and winter of 1949 and 1950 plans for the Parsonage were completed. This building was completed about April 1, 1950 and was first occupied by the Chidsey Family. It was designed by Percy Shepherd and constructed by the Batson-Cook Company. The old Parsonage was sold to Crampton L. Tatum.

It should be recorded that considerable work has been done during recent years to modernize our church. The lighting system, including new fixtures, was added during this period. For the last twenty-five years the buildings have been carefully maintained.
Former Pastors with Dates

In 1920 the church became a full time station and since that time the following pastors have served:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pastor</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Pastor</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pierce Harris</td>
<td>1920 - 23</td>
<td>M. A. Allen</td>
<td>1942 - 43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. M. Radford</td>
<td>1923 - 25</td>
<td>Ralph Hawkins</td>
<td>1943 - 47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. D. Cherry</td>
<td>1925 - 28</td>
<td>J. Walker Chidsey</td>
<td>1947 - 50</td>
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<tr>
<td>W. J. Culpepper</td>
<td>1928 - 31</td>
<td>Ewell Blackburn</td>
<td>1950 - 53</td>
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<tr>
<td>Claude Hendrix</td>
<td>1931 - 33</td>
<td>James M. Moore</td>
<td>1953 - 56</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hamby Barton</td>
<td>1933 - 35</td>
<td>Thomas Fowler</td>
<td>1956 - 60</td>
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<tr>
<td>W. J. DeBaradelaben</td>
<td>1935 - 37</td>
<td>James Griffin</td>
<td>1960 - 65</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charles Lovin</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>Wesley Stephens</td>
<td>1965 - 69</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wm. Gardner</td>
<td>1937 - 38</td>
<td>Asbury Craft</td>
<td>1969 - 71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McLowery Elrod</td>
<td>1938 - 42</td>
<td>Burchard B. Berry</td>
<td>1971 -</td>
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Location of Earlier Houses and Present Sanctuary. Give details of ownership, fires, new structures, sites, parsonages, etc.

The Educational Building now in use, was erected and dedicated on March 31, 1940. Bishop Decell of Birmingham, Ala. preached the Dedication Sermon.

In August 1957 new Sunday School rooms, a kitchen and Fellowship Hall adjoining the Education Building was completed.

Parsonages:

The first parsonage was a five room house with a grate in each of the 4 fireplaces, a good cistern near the kitchen. On the lot were a small barn, a stable, a crib, buggy shelter and a coal bin. (From 1903 - 1904 church records)

In April, 1950, a new parsonage on Cove Road, north of the church was completed; the lot having been donated by Mr. R. H. Jewell. Bishop Arthur J. Moore held the Dedication Service on Feb. 19, 1955 - This parsonage is in use today.