HISTORY
of
FAYETTEVILLE METHODIST CHURCH
History of the Fayetteville Methodist Church, South

(Written by Lester C. Dickson, County Historian, Fayette County) November 1937

I want to express my appreciation for the assistance rendered me in gathering material for this history to Joseph W. Murphy, A. O. Blalock, Miss Roxie Blalock, and W. J. Stell.

Before starting on the history of this church proper, I want to give a few facts as to the early history of the Methodist church in this section which will be of interest and will show what the early preachers had to go thru in their work in building up the church.

Before 1830 the preachers came from the South Carolina Conference. The first Georgia Conference met in January 1831 with 33 preachers present. Just after the treaty of Indian Springs with the Indians by which this section of the country was opened up, Fayette County was settled up rapidly, and with the earliest settlers came the Methodist and Baptist preachers. These preachers came while the Indians were here, and began to hold church services at the homes of the early settlers, and at an early date churches were established. Isaac Boring was one of the first preachers to come to this country, only a few years, after the country was laid out, and in his history of Methodist in Georgia, G. G. Smith had this to say about him, "He knew no such word as defeat, and he dared all the dangers of his really perilous work with a fearless heart." The work of the preachers carried them into the humblest cabins for shelter, the plainest people for hearers, and the hardest fare. The list of appointments called for 30 sermons in thirty days. One Missionary of that time wrote, "Often, I traveled for miles without even a settler's blaze to direct me." The country was in woods, and with no roads, and houses few, and far between. The circuits were large, and the preachers had to travel on horse back, and preach every day in order to get over their circuits, and to each of their appointments. William J. Parks, who was one of the first Presiding Elders to serve here often got home only six times a year, of this remarkable man it has been written that his highest hope was to see his family a few days six times during the year, and such was his industry that he held the plow while he was at home, till he often left bloodstains on it. I merely mention this so that we might realize what these men had to go thru with. A hundred years ago Morgan Bellah preached here, and in his history of Methodism, Smith had this to say about him, "The salary of Morgan Bellah for several successive years were as follows: Decatur Circuit incuding Dekalb, Fulton
Gwennett, and Campbell 22 appointments, $180.00.

Newman Circuit, with Coweta, half of Fayette, Campbell and Heard Counties, 22 appointments between $150.00 and $200.00. The preacher accidentally overheard the Stewards on a circuit discussing the question of salary. One of them remarked and the other assented to it, that they ought to give him at least as much as an ordinary field hand was worth, say $15.00 per month. This they did, and paid him a year's work, about $180.00.

The Monroe(Walton Circuit) paid him for an entire year's work $86.00. Fayette County was the first in the Yellow River Mission, which included the counties of Newton, Walton Henry, Fayette and Clayton. Later it was known as Fayette Mission. The records show that the first preachers sent to this country were sent to the Fayette Mission and the first time that a preacher was sent by the Conference to Fayetteville appears in the minutes of the General Conference in 1835, and at that time Morgan Bellah was the preacher here, and this was in the Athens District, with William Arnold as Presiding Elder.

Until 1844 there was only one General Conference, and the church was known as the Methodist Episcopal Church, and in 1844 the church was split, and the church in the south was known as the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. After the Georgia Conference was established in 1831, there was only one conference in the state, and known as the Georgia Conference until 1866, when the state was divided, and there was a North Georgia Conference, and a South Georgia Conference.

The first church building in Fayetteville as far as the records show was located on Jonesboro Street about where J. B. McEachern now resides (about 200 yards east of where the present church now stands), and in 1848 a deed was made to the trustees, composed of William H. Blalock, James A. Newton, Moses Padgett, Lewis Hobgood and Richmond Dorman, and in 1855 another lot adjoining this lot was deeded to the Trustees. This church had two doors, the men went in on one side, and the ladies on the other door. If a young man carried his girl to church, he helped her in the door, and then sat on one side of the church, and the girl on the other side, and after the services were over, he waited for her at the door until she came out, and then carried her home. At that time the negroes attended the same church as the white people, and this church had a few seats at the back of the church reserved for them, and this custom continued until the close of the war in 1865. Miss Roxie Blalock told the writer that she attended Sunday School in
this church in 1860, and that Dr. William Blalock was a Sunday School teacher at the
time. This church was used as a school by Morgan Looney about 1856, while the school
house was being built. Some time after 1860 E. T. Dorsey taught a Sunday School in
the school house, later Lieutenant W. S. Beadles taught a Union Sunday School, at the
Baptist church and later a Sunday School was established and J. H. Murphy was Superin-
tendent of the Sunday School for many years, later T. F. Garrison, R. E. L. Fife, W. B.
Hollingsworth, and several others, to mention all of whom would make this history too long.

There is very little known about the early preachers, but there is one of these old
circuit riders that I want to mention, as some of the older citizens remember him, Alfred
Dorman, who preached here in 1847, 1848, 1858 and again in 1866. He was originally a member
of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and after the division in 1844, he served several charges
in the Methodist Episcopal church, South, at Zebulon, Carrollton, Fayetteville, and
Decatur. He rode horseback, had spread over his saddle a sheepskin, with a hole in it
for the horn of his saddle to come thru, and wore a tall beaver hat. He lived two miles
southeast of Fayetteville, and in 1871, he gave an acre of land for the church of the Methodist
Episcopal Church, and this little church, now torn away, was known as the Liberty Church.

He died in 1875, and is buried just two miles from here, near where the old church stood.
In those days the preachers lived wherever they could find a house, and traveled from
church to church.

About 1874 or 1875 another church was built on the west part of town, where the ceme-
tery is now, and the church on the Jonesboro street torn away, and the church remained
where the cemetery is until about 1900, when the church was built near where the parsonage
now stands, and it remained there until 1936, when it was abandoned and the present
church building was used, although not completed. The Church built in 1900 was a wooden
structure, and the contract to build it was let in October 1899 for $1000.00. At that
time J. W. Wise, R. E. L. Fife, S. D. Dorsey, T. F. Garrison, and John M. Jackson were
trustees, and Loy Warwick was the Pastor. In 1894 the property where the parsonage is
now located was bought, and the deed provided, "that it be used as a residence for the
preachers of said church."
In 1897 while A. B. Weaver was the preacher the first Epworth League in
the circuit was established, one at Fayetteville and the other at Friendship.
About that time they began to have preaching at this church twice a month, before
that time there was only preaching once a month, on the second Sunday, and Saturday
before. In 1924 Fayetteville was made a full station, preaching every Sunday and
it remained as such until 1928, since that time it has been a half station, having
services twice a month.

In the fall of 1935, a building committee for the purpose of building a new church
was named, as follows: H. F. Redwine, Dr. T. J. Busey, H. C. Hewell, Mrs. B. D.
Murphy, Mrs. W. B. Hollingsworth, K. W. McElwany and Hugh M. Stell, the church was
built during the year 1936 and 1937 and completed about March 1937.

The deed to the land on which the church is located was made by H. F. Redwine
to the church trustees, W. J. Stell, H. F. Redwine, John M. Jackson, H. C. Hewell,

In writing the history of this church, it would be nothing out of order to
mention a gift made by the late J. W. Wise, who by the terms of his will, made ten
years before this church was begun, that is in 1925, gave $1000.00 for the purpose
of building this church.

I have been able to obtain a list of the preachers, who have served this church,
this list having been prepared from the minutes of the General Conference, and the
minutes of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South,
these complete minutes being in the library of the Theological Department of Emory
University, where the list was prepared.

As stated in the first part of this history, this was at one time in the
Yellow River Mission.

In 1823 Andrew Hamil was sent by the Athens District, Samuel K. Hodges,
Presiding Elder.

In 1824 Daniel G. McDaniel, and Morgan Turrentine were assigned to the mission.
1835 Fayette Mission, John Hunter, Athens District, William Arnold, P.E.

1836 " " John Hunter, Athens District, William Arnold, P.E.

1837 " " Benjamin Bell, Athens District, T. Samford, P.E.

1838 " " Wm. U. Steagall, Tillman Douglas, Athens District, T. Samford, P.E.

1839 " " J. Freeman, Varnall Mahaffy, Athens District, T. Samford, P.E.

1840 " " N. H. Rhodes, Z. Brown, Columbus District, T. Samford, P.E.

1841 " " Willis D. Matthews, Capel Raiford, Columbus Dist. W. Arnold, P.E.

1842 Fayette " Issac Boring, Willis D. Matthews, Athens Dist. W. J. Parks, P.E.

1843 " " J. L. Hunter, J. R. Hearne, Columbus District, I. A. Few, P.E.

1834 Members 1000 white; colored 86.

1835-36 Fayetteville, M. Bellah, Athens District, W. Arnold, P.E.

1836-37 Fayetteville, Zebulon, Alfred Dorman, Macon District, W. Arnold, P.E.


1842 Fayetteville & Zebulon, Abraham Pennington, one to be supplied, Cherokee Dist. W. Arnold P

1844

1845

1846 Fayetteville & Zebulon, Noah Smith & Samuel J. Bellah, LaGrange Dist. John B. Payne, P.E.

1847 Fayetteville & Zebulon, Alfred Dorman, LaGrange Dist. John B. Payne, P.E.

1849 Fayetteville Alfred Dorman, Lagrange District, John B. Payne, P.E.

1850 " John Simmons, LaGrange District, J. B. Payne, P.E.

1851 Fayetteville & Zebulon, J. T. Smith, J. W. Sentel, J. C. Simmons, P.E.

1852 Fayetteville Morgan Bellah, LaGrange Dist. J. C. Simmons, P.E.

1853 " " " " " " "

1854 " Issac N. Craven, LaGrange Dist. J. C. Simmons, P.E.

1855 " Wm. F. Clontz, LaGrange Dist. Samuel Anthony, P.E.

1856 " W. M. Watts, LaGrange Dist., Samuel Anthony, P.E.

1857 " Henry H. McCann, LaGrange Dist. Samuel Anthony, P.E.

That year 79 white on probation, 569 full connection, 11 colored on probation, 141 full connection, Sunday Schools, 41 teachers, 219 pupils, 11 local preachers.

1858 Fayetteville, Alfred Dorman, Griffin Dist. Chas. R. Jewett, P.E.

1859 " John W. McGhee, Griffin Dist., W. R. Brannah, P.E.

1860
1861 Fayetteville    R. H. Waters of Jonesboro, Griffin Dist., W. R. Branham, P. E.
1862 "    "    "    "    "    "    "    "    "    "    
1864 Fayetteville    James Harris, Griffin Dist., Jas W. Hinton, P. E.
1865 "    "    "    "    "    "    "    "    "    "    
1866 "    "    "    "    "    "    "    "    "    "    
1867 "    "    "    "    "    "    "    "    "    "    
1868 Fayetteville Circuit, Robert Stripling, Griffin Dist. Geo. C. Clark, P. E.
1869 "    "    John W. Turner, Griffin Dist. W. R. Branham, P. E.
(533 White members: 7 local preachers)
1870 "    "    "    "    "    "    "    "    "    "    
1871 "    "    "    "    "    "    "    "    "    "    
1872 "    "    "    "    "    "    "    "    "    "    
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1880 Fayetteville Circuit, W. T. Laine, Griffin Dist., W. F. Cook, P. E.
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1891 "    "    "    "    "    "    "    "    "    "    
1892 John Speir, South Atlanta Dist., T. F. Pierce, P. E.
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1924 Fayetteville Church, H. L. Byrd, South Atlanta Dist., W. L. H umnicutt, P. E.

1925

1926

1927

1928 Fayetteville Circuit, C. D. Read, South Atlanta Dist., J. S. Jenkins, P. E.

1929 Fayetteville & Jonesboro, C. D. Read, South Atlanta Dist., J. S. Jenkins, P. E.

1930


1932 Fayetteville Circuit, A. E. Barton & J. W. Nickols, Jr. Preacher
Griffin Dist. W. T. H umnicutt, P. E.

1933

1934

1935

1936

1937

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County Historian of Fayette County, Georgia