HISTORY

of

GATE CITY METHODIST CHURCH

[Signature]
The story of the organization and the growth of Gate City Mills Church is a story of intense interest to everyone who is interested in the growth of the kingdom of God. It is a story of struggle, of self-denial, and of sacrifice on the part of all who initiated the first steps toward the organization of the membership, and the erection of the church building. It is a story of the overcoming of obstacles which at times seemed insurmountable; a story of the labor of love that only those who have a burning love for God for Christ, and for those lost souls about them can portray to the world. It is the story of an old man who had a vision of Heavenly things, and who realized that without vision the people perish. It is a story of the ministry of philanthropy on the part of employer to employee; a story of the finest cooperation between pastor and people, employee and employer, for a better understanding of life, of death, and of their fellow man.

The church had its actual beginning in the meetings which were held in the homes of the people with the Methodist preacher having charge of the services one Sunday and the Baptist the next. The work of the kingdom progressed in this manner to a marked degree, with both churches receiving and dismissing members, but when the homes would no longer accommodate those who thronged to these services, longing for the peace and quiet and happiness which accompanies the worship of God, plans were formulated by which a church building could be built.

The Methodist minister, Rev. G. W. McElroy, approached Mr. Carter, who at that time was head of the Mill company, with the suggestion that a church building be erected on their property.
Mr. Carter, who was always noted for his philanthropic activities, when acquainted with the situation, and the value of having a church for his people immediately began plans for the building.

On the fourth Sunday in July 1902, Brother McElroy saw his vision take on physical aspects. He dedicated the church, preaching his first sermon on the above date. With the building in which to worship, the people began to take on new life, and the "child grew, and waxed strength, and the grace of God was upon it." Brother McElroy remained as pastor for twenty-six years. The Baptist brethren, seeing the need of a separate church building, secured a lot on East Mercer Avenue, withdrew from the Gate City Mill Church in 1921 and built a nice church which today stands as a monument of their faith and love.

This separation left the church solely in the hands of the Methodist people. In 1921 it was placed under the North Georgia Annual Conference. August 25, 1921 marks the beginning of the official records for the Gate City Methodist Church. By this time Brother McElroy was a seasoned veteran of the ministry and his faith and labor of love were known every place. His was truly a labor of love, never accumulating much of this world's goods, but he had his treasures laid up in heaven. He served the church actively until 1928 as minister in charge, and after that as retired minister until his death in 1939. He was loved and respected by all who came in contact with him, and having spent his entire life as a minister of this church, the memories of his visits to the sick, comforting the bereaved, instructing the children, and the Gospel he preached still linger as a sweet incense after his departure into the world of eternal bliss, where there
shall be no more heartaches over lost souls, no more fear for loved ones, but only peace like a river filling his soul. However the church did not stop here, for it continues as was his vision and as it is the desire of the Master that he and we serve.

Since 1929, up to and including the present pastor, there have been twelve ministers serve the church and its needs. Those ministers are: Virgil E. Long, G. H. Stone, C. A. McGrady, L. P. Huckaby, J. M. McDuffie, D. A. Dick, John M. McMath, James L. Weldon, Fred Stinson, Carl L. Clower, Donald Croll and Brady B. Forman. The largest number of members recorded on the church records at any one time was 185.

At the present time the church is serving a very needy people in a poor community. However it is not able to meet these needs as it should under its present set-up. If it is ever to become a strong church, capable of doing the task that lies about it, it must be independent and self-sustaining. At present it is not the property of the Methodist Church, but rather that of Gate City Cotton Mill. It would appear that since there are no overhead expenses to be concerned with, that the church (the people) would be free to do a greater service than otherwise. However, this is not the case as the facts show. If everyone who has been head of the mill since Mr. Carter were like Mr. Carter who had such concern for his people and the Church of Jesus Christ, then there would be no problem, but this is not the case, nor is it likely to be so. This is not to say that those who have been head of the mill have not been generous in their giving, but rather that genuine Christian concern both out of the mill in the community and in the mill on the job has not always been present. It would be
most advisable for the Gate City Methodist Church to withdraw from all mill support in regards to property and purchase several back lots on the mill property facing Harrison Road between Willingham Drive and Eubanks Avenue. With such a location it is believed that it would best serve those who are in need of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Appreciation is expressed to Mrs. Nora Halcome and Mrs. Maude Adams and the many others who contributed much of the information needed for the above history of the Gate City Methodist Church.

Yours in His Service

Brady B. Forman
Brady B. Forman, Pastor
February 18, 1953