1912 - Augusta District

Mayfield Charge

HISTORY OF THE

JEWELL (OR ROCK MILLS): METHODIST CHURCH,

JEWELL, GA.

MAYFIELD CHARGE, AUGUSTA DISTRICT.
The earliest records concerning Methodism in Jewell relates to the organizing of the Rock Mills Church in 1840. However, Mrs. Hattie Jewell Cody, the only surviving member of the family for whom the village was named remembers bearing that even before then the Methodists were worshipping with the Baptists in their church.

Among the Methodists at that time was a man by the name of William Shivers, Senior, who owned some acres of land between Jewell and Mayfield and who was interested enough in having a church that he gave three acres of land to be used as church property. There on a knoll the first Methodist Church would be erected.

This plot of ground, located on the left, familiarly referred to as "just off the Jewell-Mayfield road", about one and one fourth miles from Jewell (in Hancock County) would remain the property of the Methodist church as long as it was used for church purposes. Mr. Shivers gave the church access to water from a near-by spring which still affords good drinking water.

Given in part from the original deeds which the church holds is a more detailed account of the donation of this tract of land: "...witnesseth that the said William Shivers, Senior, in consideration, as well as of the payment to him by said party of the second part, of the sum of one dollar, the receipt whereof is acknowledged, as of his love and regard for the Church of Christ and his desire to promote the success of the Gospel, has given, granted, bargained and sold and
hereby does give, grant, bargain, sell and convey to
the said part of the second part and their successors in said
Trust, all that certain piece or parcel of land in said county
(Hancock) near the Ogeechee River, containing three acres,
more or less, being part of the plantation of said Shivers
on the road from Sparta to his residence and mills and on
which a church or house for divine worship has recently been
erected; beginning at a runner oak on the rear and South East
corner of said lot, thence West one hundred and twenty yards
to a rock corner, thence North one hundred and twenty yards
to a rock corner near the public road, thence along the road
one hundred and twenty yards to a rock corner, thence South
one hundred and twenty yards to the beginning point or run-
ner oak with all and singular the rights, members,
tenements, and appurtenances to the said tract of land be-
longing and also the free use and privilege of the Rock Mills
Academy spring on the lands of said Shivers, near to the
portion of land hereby conveyed, and free and unrestricted
access to said spring at all times for all persons resorting
to said church and land for the purpose of worship and inter-
ment of the dead.

Thus the Jewell Methodist Church or the Rock Mills
Methodist Church as it was formerly called on account of its
location began with the Rev. Josiah Lewis pastor in charge.

The names of the twelve charter members read as follows:
James H. Middlebrooks, William L. Wilson, William Shivers,
Senior, William B. Calhoun, Mrs. Casandra Middlebrooks, Mrs.
Millerson P. Wilson, Mrs. Sara A. Shivers, Mrs. Milla A. Calhoun,
Mrs. Mary A. Florence, Mrs. Lucy Wilson, Mrs. Harriett Birdsong, and George W. Florence.

During the one hundred eleven years of service descendants from the charter members have played a large part in making up the church roll. The leading members included first the Medlocks, Mr. Edwin Birdsong, Mr. Eli Carr, the Culvers, Clarks, Coleman, and Mr. Sam Brinkley; later, the Iveys, Smiths, Brantleys, Twileys, Jacksons, Birdsons, Cones, Rhodeses, Casons, and Carrs.

When the Church was first built the pulpit was in front of the building as was also the only entrance. The white folk occupied the front, slat-back benches while the slaves sat in the rear seats. So accustomed the people became to turning around before seating themselves that years later many protested the idea of moving the pulpit to the rear of the building.

"We cannot get as happy there", they sighed.

Nevertheless, in 1888 when the benches were replaced with nicer seats or pews and the pulpit removed to the rear, the saints found they were none the less happy.

At the time of its organization Rock Mills Church belonged to the Hancock Circuit. In 1879 the circuit was divided and Rock Mills Church with Culverton, the Shoals, and Smyrna churches was placed in the Culverton circuit. The Mayfield Circuit composing Mayfield, Rock Mills, the Shoals, and Powelton was formed in 1906 and has not been changed since except for the Shoals church being withdrawn and the Smyrna Church added to the circuit. The church belonged first
to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; later to the
Methodist Episcopal Church and now to the Methodist Church.

Many great revivals have blessed the church, but the one
held in 1868 when the Rev. Josiah Lewis and the Rev. Caldwell
were pastors stands out as the greatest. Forty people united
with the church on profession of faith.

From this church have gone out several ministers among
whom were the Rev. J. L. Ivey, the Rev. Gibbs Farr, the Rev.
Bob Cook and the Rev. C. T. Ivey.

Outstanding Methodists who have preached in the Rock
Mills Church include Bishop George F. Pierce, Bishop Key, and
Bishop Hoseley (colored).

Before the Sunday School was founded in 1877 there had
not been an organ in the church. By this time, however, many
were seeing the need of one. The older members were satisfied
with the old way of having the hymns "lined out", and objected
to the Young people's proposal of purchasing such an
instrument. Nevertheless, at their insistence an organ was
added to the church.

The Woman's Missionary Society was organized July 24,
1881 with an enrollment of twenty-five members and with Mrs.
T. T. Brantley the first president. In the earliest records
may be found an interesting, legibly-written account of the
first meeting which reads:

"First Minutes of Missionary Meeting

"After organizing it was agreed that we adopt Constitu-
tions and by-laws. The president requested each member to
pay their monthly fee which was ten cents."
"The amount collected was ninety cents. That was given to the corresponding secretary to hand over to the treasurer.

"It was then moved that the society purchase two books, one for the secretary and one for the treasurer. The president appointed the secretary to buy these books. The cost was seventy-five cents.

It was then agreed that we have our meeting the first evening in every month at three o'clock. It was moved that we adjourn until our next meeting".

As nearly as can be calculated twenty-eight dollars and sixty cents was paid for all causes the first year.

In 1897 the church was moved to a small plot of ground on the Southwestern edge of Jewell in Hancock County given by Dr. J. W. Rhodes. Here the church stands today.

The church holds also the original deeds to the land given by Dr. Rhodes. They read in part: "...the following described property to wit: one tract or parcel of land situated or being in the town of Jewell, Hancock County, State of Georgia, North side of the public road running Westward from Jewell to Sparta in the South East corner of the orchard about five hundred feet South East of Dr. J. W. Rhodes' residence. Beginning from stake five feet Westward from elm tree in South East corner of said orchard running Westward alongside of public road from Jewell to Sparta forty feet and six inches to stake, thence southward fifty feet to stake the beginning corner".

Through the creditable work of the pastor, the Rev. C. A. Hall, Mr. Lucius M. Carr, and Mr. Clarence Reynolds the churc...
circuit has, since 1918, owned at Mayfield a comfortable five-room parsonage whose value is five thousand dollars. On this lot stood formerly an old house which was purchased and used as the parsonage.

All deeds to church property have contained the Trust Clause.

The names of the pastors and presiding elders (district superintendents) and the dates of service to this church are given below:

1840-1841 Rev. Josiah Lewis, pastor in charge
1841 Rev. John W. Tally, presiding elder
1842 Rev. Willie H. White, pastor in charge
1843 Rev. Capel Rayford, pastor in charge
1844-1845 Rev. Alfred T. Mann, pastor in charge
1845 Rev. George F. Pierce, presiding elder
1846 Rev. Richard Lane, pastor in charge
1847 Rev. Caleb Key, pastor in charge
1848 Rev. Josiah Lewis, pastor in charge
1848-1849 Rev. Wesley Arnold, pastor in charge
1850 Rev. Richard Lane, pastor in charge
1851-1852 Rev. Daniel Wesley, pastor in charge
1852 Rev. John W. Glenn, presiding elder
1853-1854 Rev. Josiah Lewis, pastor in charge
1855-1856 Rev. John W. Knight, pastor in charge
1856 Rev. James E. Payne, presiding elder
1857-1858 Rev. Freeman F. Reynolds, pastor in charge
1859 Rev. James E. Evans, presiding elder
1859 Rev. John B. McGeehee, pastor in charge
1860 Rev. E. J. Rentz, pastor in charge
1861-1862 Rev. Thomas T. Christian, pastor in charge
1862 Rev. J. O. A. Clark, presiding elder
1863 Rev. Josiah Lewis, presiding elder
1863-'64-'65 Rev. John W. Tally, pastor in charge
1866 Revs. Breedlove and Simmons, pastors in charge
1867 Rev. Weyman H. Potter, presiding elder
1867 Rev. Josiah Lewis, pastor in charge
1868 Revs. Josiah Lewis and Caldwell, pastors in charge
1869 Revs. Lewis and Babcock, pastors in charge
1870 Rev. Josiah Lewis, pastor in charge
1871 Rev. Caleb Key, presiding elder
1871 Rev. E. G. Murrah, pastor in charge
1872 Rev. Felix Brown; Rev. T. R. Pierce, pastors in charge
1873 Rev. Felix Brown; Rev. J. Pierce, pastors in charge
1874 Rev. Felix Brown and J. Newell, pastors in charge
1875 Rev. R. W. Bigham, presiding elder
1875 Revs. J. L. Pierce and J. Newell, pastors in charge
1876 Rev. R. W. Bigham, presiding elder
1876 Rev. J. L. Pierce; C. Newell, Jr., pastor in charge
1877 Rev. W. Bigham, presiding elder
1877 Rev. J. L. Pierce and (Rev. G. H. Patillo, Jr., pastor in charge.
1878 Rev. T. J. Pierce, presiding elder
1878 Rev. G. H. Patillo, pastor in charge
1878 Rev. G. M. Kendrick; Junior preacher
1879 Rev. T. F. Pierce, presiding elder
1879 Rev. G. H. Patillo and G. M. Kendrick, Jr., pastors
in charge

1880 Rev. T. F. Pierce, presiding elder
1880 Rev. G. H. Patillo, pastor in charge
1880 Revs. G. M. Kendrick and J. R. King, Jr., preachers

1881-1882 Rev. H. H. Parks, presiding elder
1881-1882 Rev. C. C. Carey, pastor in charge
1883-1884 Rev. J. E. England, pastor in charge
1884-1885 Rev. J. E. Evans, presiding elder

1885 Rev. J. A. Reynolds, pastors in charge
1886-'87-'88 Rev. W. F. Smith, pastor in charge
1887-'90 Rev. W. P. Lovejoy, presiding elder
1889-1890 Rev. W. T. Caldwell, pastor in charge

1890 Rev. John R. Lewis, preacher
1891-1893 Rev. G. W. Thomas, pastor in charge
1891-1894 Rev. G. W. Yarbrough, presiding elder
1894-'95-'96 Rev. A. H. Bakes, pastor in charge
1895-1896 Rev. W. F. Mixon, presiding elder
1897-1898 Rev. Crawford Jackson, pastor in charge
1899-1902 Rev. J. R. King, presiding elder
1899-1901 Rev. J. R. Lewis, pastor in charge
1902-1903 Rev. A. C. Cantrell, pastor in charge
1903-1906 Dr. J. B. Robins, presiding elder
1904-1906 Rev. W. P. King, pastor in charge
1906 George King, Jr., preacher
1907-1909 Rev. L. M. Twiggs, pastor in charge
1907-1909 Dr. John W. Heidt, presiding elder
1910-1911 Rev. E. F. Frazier, presiding elder
1910 Rev. Firley Baum, pastor in charge
1911-1912 Rev. W. H. Clark, pastor in charge
1912-1912 Rev. J. H. Eakes, presiding elder
1913-1916 Rev. W. T. Hamby, presiding elder
1913 Rev. J. B. Milton, pastor in charge
1914 Rev. M. K. Patillo, pastor in charge
1915 Rev. W. A. Wells, pastor in charge
1916-1919 Rev. C. A. Hall, pastor in charge
1917-1920 Rev. W. T. Irvine, presiding elder
1920-1922 Rev. W. J. Culpepper, pastor in charge
1921-1924 Rev. J. W. Quillian, presiding elder
1923 Rev. J. E. Snipe, pastor in charge
1924-1925 Rev. C. A. Reese, pastor in charge
1925 Rev. J. S. Hill, pastor in charge
1925-1927 Rev. J. E. Ellis, presiding elder
1926 Rev. C. A. Daugherty, pastor in charge
1927-1928 Rev. H. M. Strozier, pastor in charge
1928-1931 Rev. W. H. Clark, presiding elder
1929 Rev. J. A. Langford, pastor in charge
1930-1933 Rev. T. E. Sherwood, pastor in charge
1932-1935 Rev. W. H. LeFlore, presiding elder
1934 Rev. J. H. Jones, presiding elder
1934-1936 Rev. L. G. Hendricks, pastor in charge
1937 Rev. L. G. Coe, pastor in charge
1938-1940 Rev. L. S. Paugh, pastor in charge
1939-1942 Rev. L. M. Twiggs, presiding elder
1941-1942 Rev. A. S. Sibley, Pastor in charge
1942-1950 Rev. G. F. Wright, pastor in charge
1943-1946 Rev. J. W. C. Mckibben, presiding elder
1947-1950 Rev. George L. King, presiding elder
The Rev. W. T. Irvine, while presiding elder of the district was married in the Rock Mills Church to Miss Maude Twilley, who was a member of this church.

June 30, 1940 marked the date of the Church's one hundredth birthday. The program for the day was as follows:

Morning Worship
Welcome--Mrs. Milton Jackson
Response--Mrs. Clifford Reeves
Hymn--"All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name"--Congregation
Prayer: REV. T. E. Sherwood
Hymn: "I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord"--Congregation
Scripture: John 14--Rev. L. M. Twiggs
Solo: "Open Thy Gates"--Mrs. John Gant
Sermon: "The Three Homes"--Rev. L. M. Twiggs
Hymn: "Faith of Our Fathers"--Congregation
Benediction--Rev. Carlton Dycles, pastor of the Baptist Church
Dinner on the ground

Afternoon Worship
Soft Music--Mrs. L. S. Baugh
Duet--Mr. and Mrs. L. H. Johnson
Baptism and reception of Ruth Dickson
Prayer--Rev. R. J. Kerr
History of the church--Mrs. A. T. Jackson and Mrs. W. P. Burgany
Talk--Mrs. G. W. Twilley, oldest member
Talk--Kathryn Jackson, youngest member
Solo: "When They Ring Those Golden Bells"--Rev. W. C. Budd
Talks by visitors
Benediction--Rev. L. M. Twiggs
On September 16, 1940, because the Woman's Missionary Society changed its name to Woman's Society of Christian Service, eleven members met at the church with their pastor, the Rev. L. S. Baugh, for the purpose of installing officers. The officers remaining the same, Mrs. W. P. Carr, Sr. was the first president of the new organization. The total amount paid for all causes last year was sixty-nine dollars and sixty-five cents.

Ten years later, July 31, 1950, the Woman's Society of Christian Service celebrated its birthday at the church with a very impressive service. All the members had a part on the program. Following the plan for a chain visitation the Sparta Society was present and Mrs. Josiah Lewis, president of the Sparta Society, presented the cake.

Miss Cleat Coxwell was the first president of the Methodist Youth Fellowship.

The physical changes wrought through the years enable the church to stand today truly as a building that has emerged into a beautiful sanctuary. The first steeple was built in 1908 as was also the vestibule; in 1940 a new steeple was built, and the vestibule divided into a smaller entrance with a class room on either side. The blinds were repaired and painted green to harmonize with the building which at the same time was being painted white. The addition of a small porch and brick steps on the front completed the outside improvements. The walls of the interior were repapered and the wainscoting painted. Varnish was applied to all the furniture and a wine colored carpet run along the floor. The money
received in 1950 from the timber cut and sold from the old Rock Mills ground, amounting to one hundred fifty-one dollars, was used for other improvements: ceilings in class rooms lowered, celotex applied to the walls, and fluorescent lights installed. A newer piano was purchased in 1950.

The church contributed twelve hundred four dollars and three cents for all causes last year. With the present enrollment of forty-two in Sunday school one hundred thirteen dollars and eleven cents was paid for all causes last year.

The Church suffered keenly the disaster that occurred August 7, 1927 when the cotton mill burned. Until this time the cotton mill owned by Mr. D. A. Jewell, Senior and later by the Gant Brothers had provided employment to more than two thirds of the families who belonged either to the Methodist Church or the Baptist Church. As the years passed and the families moved away the Church dwindled in membership. Except for the "faithful few" the church doors would have closed, for out of the sixty-five whose names appear on the church roll today (including eight who have recently come from the Shoals Church) only one third of these is near enough to really "belong" to the church. As adverse as some of the circumstances have been, the church has been and is today a great, spiritual force, ministering to the sick, and needy, and helping to spread the Gospel at home and to the "uttermost parts of the earth".

By: Mrs. A. C. Ivey

Note: This history has been written from old records kept by the Church, from a history written by Mrs. A. T. Jackson for the Church's Centennial Celebration, and from facts remembered by the historian.