METHODOISM IN MCDONOUGH

I. South Carolina Conference - Methodist Episcopal Church
   Planting - 1822 - 1830

II. Georgia Conference - Methodist Episcopal Church
   Growing - 1830 - 1845

III. Methodist Episcopal Church, South
   Cultivating - 1845 - 1865

IV. North Georgia Conference - Methodist Episcopal Church, South
   Seed-time 1865 - 1938

V. Methodist Episcopal Church
   Harvest - 1939

McDonough Methodist Episcopal Church
South Carolina Conference - 1822 - 1830

Methodism came with the pioneers to McDonough and Henry County. The settlers who pushed into the "Indian lands" on the heels of the surveyors and the traders were seeking a better way of life for themselves and their families. They were "plain, unassuming in manner, industrious, benevolent and enterprising". They brought respect for law and order; regardless of denominational affiliation, they united in worship, as do their descendants to this day.

As early as 1822, the first place of worship was a rude shelter on the southwest corner of the public square, on "the Nolley lot", where Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians met to hold religious services. Later, after the village of McDonough was incorporated in 1823, the Methodists used a small building, presumably a log hut, on the hill adjoining the home of Captain A.C. Sloan, as a church. The first graveyard was a part of the churchyard and the bodies of Mrs. Bradford, Mrs. William Brown, Mrs. Cook, and Mrs. Hunt are still interred there. The South Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, meeting in Savannah, February 20, 1822, Bishop Robert R. Roberts presiding, sent Andrew Hammill to the Yellow River Mission which included this small congregation.

The Yellow River Mission included Newton, Walton, Fayette, Clayton Counties as well as all of Henry and joined the Monroe Mission on the South. Hammill had grand success in this field and gathered up a church of 350 members.

No part of the Yellow River Mission was remarkably fertile, but all was sufficiently so as to attract many settlers. Wealthy cotton planters sought the richer lands of the West, but plain provision-raising Methodists sought these cheaper lands nearer their old homes in Morgan, Jasper, Putnam,
Walton and Wilkes.

As was typical of this period, preachers pressed into the roughest regions of Georgia and the Carolinas, through forests, swamps, and canebrakes, reaching people who had never heard prayer or sermon and where general barbarism ruled. In every place some were converted and these did much to reform their neighbors.

In 1824, two ministers, Daniel G. McDaniel and Morgan Turrentine continued the work so successfully begun by Andrew Hammill. Samuel Hodges was Presiding Elder.

During the next five years, 1823-1825, the Church doubled in numbers. Those who were serving here were Joshua H. Glenn, 1825, James Bellah, 1826-1827. Thomas Sanford was Presiding Elder in 1827.

Camp meetings were being held throughout Georgia on every circuit and it was not surprising that the year 1827 was one of richer interest in the church. Of the six camp meeting sites in Henry County only one survived, historic Shingleroof. One half of Land Lot 59 in the Seventh Land District of said County was purchased for two hundred eighty dollars from William Hardin by William H. White, Wade H. Turner, William M. Crawford, Henry G. Merritt, Francis E. Manson, Roderick Harper, Samuel C. Bailey, James Patillo, and James Coker, Trustees. It was said that "the great battlefields of Methodism in the new purchase were the camp grounds and many were the victories won on them.

In 1830 an acre of land lying between Pike Street on the West and Monroe Street on the East was purchased from Tandy W. Key for fifty dollars for a Methodist Church. Trustees who selected the lot and erected a simple frame building were John Jackson, Francis E. Manson, Thomas D. Johnson, William H. White, Wm. Crayton, Jonathan W. Pock. Seven trustees and their successors "were to have and to hold the above described lot or parcel of land, forever in trust and were to erect and build or cause to be erected and built thereon a house or place of worship for the use of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America."

It has been aptly said that an institution is the shadow of a man. With such men as were the pioneers and the circuit riders who served the Yellow River Mission, either as Presiding Elders or the men who traveled to the twenty-eight appointments each month, it is not to be wondered at that the membership in the Georgia section of the South Carolina Conference grew to such an extent that a separate conference was formed in 1830, the new Georgia Conference.

Thomas Mabry and D. Allen came to the Yellow River Circuit in 1829 and were followed by Jeremiah Freeman and William R.H. Moseley in 1830. Thomas Sanford was completing a quadrennium as Elder, Athens District, South Carolina Conference.

McDonough Methodist Episcopal Church
Georgia Conference

James Bellah and George Bishop were assigned to the Yellow River Mission in 1831; James Bellah and C.A. Brown in 1832.

The Yellow River Circuit included a large part of Newton, all of Henry, Butts, Jasper, and one appointment in Monroe County. There were twenty-eight appointments and the preacher, by riding every day could fill them in one month. When Morgan Bellah took over this work, he "received for his year's labor $160."

John S. Ford, with one to be supplied, was sent to the Yellow River
Circuit in 1833. He was, for a time, missionary to the West, beyond Louisiana, but later returned to Georgia. His experiences while traveling on horseback hundreds of miles through the unpopulated and uninhabited regions, are noteworthy. He did his work well and success attended his efforts. Anderson Ray and James Dunwoody came the following year to this church, now situated in the Columbus District, Charles Hardy, Presiding Elder.

From 1835 to 1846 McDonough was in the Cherokee District. John L. Oliver and William H. Clark were sent to Yellow River Circuit in 1837; James Dunwoody and Alfred T. Mann in 1838.

Alfred T. Mann had joined the Georgia Conference in 1836, the first year that all preachers were paid in full. He "was in all respects a superior man. His father was one of the oldest and worthiest members of the Methodist Church in Augusta and his mother a woman of great saintliness. He was a bright, intellectual young fellow, who had the best educational advantages. He went to Randolph Macon while Dr. Olin was President and was converted while at college and resolved to enter the ministry. He joined the Conference and was sent on a very large up-country circuit. He found it somewhat difficult to accommodate himself to his surroundings; but he did so, and soon evinced the fact that he had sterling and staying qualities. He soon rose to the highest place among his brethren and held it to the last."

Edward W. Reynolds and Joseph T. Turner were sent here in 1839; Thomas L. Thomas with William Mills, 1840. John W. Yarborough accompanied by George Bright came in 1841 and was returned in 1842 with one preacher to be supplied.

To understand conditions confronting the circuit rider during these years, the experience of one is quoted. "It was in vain that the General Conference required the circuits to pay quarterage of $100.00 to the preacher, and the same to his wife and an amount sufficient for each child, with family expenses. There was no means of enforcing these payments, and a large circuit was comforted by the fact that the preacher, if he did not return, had no claim on them, and the conference would still supply their pulpit. There was as yet no financial system, no faithful preaching on the duty of men to use their money for Christ. Indeed, it is a sad truth that a large part of the preaching of the times was calculated to strengthen rather than to overthrow covetousness. The constant theme of many preachers was the extravagance of the people, and the duty of close economy and constant industry was enforced, but, alas, nothing was said about liberal giving; but a better day was coming. Slowly but surely! As it was "quarterage" meant, to many, contributing a quarter!"

Due to the appointment of J. Blakely Smith as Secretary of the Georgia Conference, statistics were now printed in the Conference Minutes. For instance, in 1839 McDonough reported 1006 white members and 206 colored.

In 1843, William J. Parks was Presiding Elder, Cherokee District, and Abraham Pennington with Sampson J. Turner (later known as Jackson P. Turner) were assigned to McDonough. Members numbered 1069 white; 195 colored.

Abraham Pennington was returned in 1844 with William A. Florence as assistant. Willis D. Matthews was Presiding Elder; and members were 1069 white and 195 colored. A further increase was reported in 1845 by Claborn Trussell, familiarly known as "Uncle Claib" and Jesse W. Carroll; white members 116, colored 192.

Page 39
McDonough Methodist Episcopal Church, South 1845-1865—Cultivating

The year 1845 was a fateful year for McDonough, as well as for the Methodist Episcopal Church. It was the last year of this branch of Methodism until the itinerancy was reestablished after the War Between the States.

Two Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South were held in 1846. The new church numbered 49,000 members. There were, in the whole Conference, two brick churches, one in Culloden, the other in Augusta. McDonough had been transferred to the LaGrange District. Edwin White and J.T. Smith were appointed. Members were 1,075 white, 213 colored.

"Most of the church buildings were unpainted shells, without stoves or a touch of paint. The allowance for preachers was $150.00 for men, the same for his wife and a small amount for each child under fourteen. Quarterage was considered to be twenty-five cents per quarter. No foreign missions were established by the church except the missions to the Indians and missionary collections applied to supporting missions to Negroes." The latter activity had begun by William Capers many years before and had been served by many devout, devoted men, among them Allen Turner, brother of Wade Hampton Turner of Henry County.

McDonough was in the LaGrange District from 1846 to 1855. John P. Wardlaw and Joseph T. Smith were assigned as pastors in 1846. One thousand thirty-five white members and two hundred thirty-eight colored were reported from McDonough in 1846. John Simmons came as a pastor. He was "zealous, simple-hearted, and devotedly pious and laboriously cheerful as long as he lived."

The report from the Local church to the Georgia Conference was termed "manifestly incorrect as printed" by the compiler of statistics in 1849. Only 575 white and 59 colored members were listed. Morgan Bellah was returned as minister to the Circuit he had previously served as the Yellow River Mission.

Alfred Donner was pastor in 1850. There were two sessions of the Conferences in 1851. Noah Smith, for whom "Noah's Ark", now located in Clayton County, is named served McDonough this year. Membership totalled 750 white and 106 colored.

McDonough and Jackson were united as one charge in 1852. Sidney M. Smith and Joshua G. Payne were assigned to serve. In 1853 a large increase in membership is noted, 1280 white, 349 colored. Sidney M. Smith was returned, with Lemuel T. Allen, as assistant, in 1854.

The Georgia Conference of 1854 was the first to be held in Atlanta. Bishop William Capers presided. McDonough and Jackson reported 1447 white and 327 colored members. John W. Yarborough and Lemuel T. Allen were sent to the charge.

Bishop Early presided at the meeting of the Georgia Conference in 1855 at LaGrange. McDonough was again transferred, this time to the Atlanta District, for the next three years. Hartwell H. Parks was Presiding Elder and Richard Lane, pastor. The membership totalled 1150 white, 50 white probationers; 314 colored, with 7 colored probationers; and 11 local preachers.

At the 1856 Conference in Americus, Albert Gray was assigned to the local church. Albert Gray was described as "one of the most spotless of men. He was a plain unassuming unambitious man who, without brilliant gifts, had what was better, strong sense and pure principles. He died when in the vigor of his mature manhood." He was also a graduate of Emory College.

Washington, Georgia, was the scene of the Conference, December 1857. Albert Gray was sent back for the second year.
Bishop Pierce presided at the 1858 Conference in Columbus. McDonough reported 681 members, white; 59 white probationers; 96 colored members, 5 colored probationers; 7 local preachers. Charles H. Jewett became Presiding Elder of the Griffin District, to which McDonough was shifted; Richard H. Waters was assigned as pastor.

James B. Turner, resident of McDonough, died during 1860 and was memorialized at the annual Conference that met in Augusta with Bishop Pierce president.

"James B. Turner was born in Hancock County January 27, 1792. He was awakened under the ministry of the Rev. Robert L. Edwards and was converted in October 1810. In the year 1813, he was admitted into the South Carolina Conference, traveled many years and in 1835 to a superannuated relation "without claim" which relation he sustained at the time of his death November 5, 1860. He supported his last affliction with Christian fortitude and resignation, answering all the inquiries of his friends concerning his future hopes in the most satisfactory manner. When asked if he was ready to go, he answered, 'I am ready; certainly I am.' Some one asked him, 'Are you aware that you are dying?' He answered 'Yes, I am.' 'Are you prepared?' 'I am, I am,' and lifting both hands in token of victory, he expired. Thus our venerable brother passed from earth to the mansions of the blessed.'"

James Barton Turner was the brother of both Allen Turner, Methodist minister from 1812 until his death in 1871, and Wade Hampton Turner, Founder of Turner's Methodist Church. He bought property and a home in McDonough in 1848 and probably served as a local preacher when he located there. He is buried in the McDonough City Cemetery. He served 49 years as a minister of the gospel of Christ.

Bishop Pierce was President of the Conference held in Atlanta in 1861. Albert Grey was assigned to McDonough now linked with Jonesboro. William G. Rowland was junior pastor.

The 1862 Conference met in Macon. T. B. Harben, with one to be supplied, was sent to the charge. Despite the terrors, sacrifices and dangers of war, McDonough and Jonesboro reported 717 white members, 25 white probationers in 1863. There were no colored members but there were seven faithful local preachers. Richard H. Waters was pastor.

1864 was a bitter year. Federal troops were in Georgia and fighting took place within the district and the charge. The war was drawing to a close; Emory College had been closed for two years and many ministers were serving with the remnants of the Confederate forces, and others were doing valiant duty wherever they were stationed. The Conference this year was held in January 1865 in Athens with Bishop Pierce, president. W.F. Cook was sent to the Griffin District as Presiding Elder; M.A. Leake served McDonough and Jackson.

No report was given from the McDonough-Jackson charge at the conference held November 15, 1865 in Macon. James Harris and G.T. Embry were assigned to McDonough, Griffin District.

The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was growing. The number of churches, the increase in members and in congregations required change, so after permission to divide was given by the General Conference meeting in New Orleans, the Georgia Conference was organized into the North Georgia Conference and the South Georgia Conference.
McDonough Methodist Episcopal Church, South
North Georgia Conference
Seed-time - 1866-1938

The first session of the North Georgia Conference, Methodist Episcopal, South, not in Atlanta November 27 - December 2, 1867. Bishop Pierce was directing organization and the appointments listed John M. Bright, McDonough.

McDonough reported 388 white members, three local preachers; three infants and 16 adults baptized; 3 Sunday Schools with 12 teachers and 130 pupils. The Church Library contained 170 volumes and there were 16 religious periodicals.

Griffin was host to the 1868 Conference. Bishop Paino was president.

W.R. Brenham, Presiding Elder, and John H. Harris was to supply at McDonough. The circuit had five churches valued at $3,000.00 and the pastor received $415.25.

Benjamin L. Harper, who married the sister of the three Turner brothers aforementioned, Lay Delegate to the Annual Conference that met in Athens in 1871, was stricken with a heart attack soon after he had deposited an offering in the Missionary Treasury. He was memorialized in the Conference Minutes thus: Our beloved brother, Benjamin L. Harper, a lay delegate to this Conference, from the Griffin District, has gone to the grave. On Saturday night last he was present at the Anniversary of the Missionary Society of the Conference, and after patiently listening to the reports and addresses made on that occasion, he promptly exhibited his desire for the spread of the gospel and the salvation of his race, but quietly coming forward and depositing his money in the Missionary Treasury. This was almost his last act in this life.

Brother Harper was about 65 years of age and was an acceptable and faithful member of our church, from his youth to the time of his death. He had been honored by his fellow citizens with a seat in the General Assembly of the State and by his church with the positions of steward, class leader, and delegate to this Conference.

He was stricken down suddenly, within less than four hours after he left the church. It is understood that he died of the disease of the heart and we sincerely hope and earnestly believe that our much beloved brother has but exchanged the trials and sorrows of earth for the ineffable joys of immortality in heaven.

Another memoir at this same Conference was the tribute to John Wesley Turner, the oldest son of Allen Turner, who passed away this year also.

At the Conference of 1872 in Atlanta, James R. Mayson was sent to McDonough as pastor. The number of churches on the circuit had been enlarged from 5 to 7; there were 6 Sunday Schools with 42 officers and teachers and 200 pupils.

The pastor was paid $900.00.

Bishop Pierce presided at the Conference in Newnan, December 1873. James R. Mayson was returned as pastor. Josiah Lewis, as Presiding Elder. Membership had increased to 671. Nine infants and 100 adults had been baptized and the pastor received a total of $1,100.00. The value of church property was $4,000.00 and the Campground previously reported as worth $800.00 was quoted at $1,200.00. There were 8 Sunday Schools, staffed with 40 officers and teachers who served 420 pupils.

McDonough had 525 members in 1875. The Conference was held in Griffin with Bishop John Christian Keener presiding. Under G.W. Yarborough, Presiding Elder, his father, John W. Yarborough, served the local church. John W. Yarborough was born in North Carolina, the son of Quaker parents. He came as a child to Habersham County, Georgia. He was "converted in one of the Hall County
camp meetings. He was a young man of extraordinary parts. Full of humor, noted for strong common sense, a man of fiery temper, of great energy, and of unquestioned courage, studious and thoughtful, a fervid revivalist, he was put on very hard and responsible posts and bravely did the work assigned him.

Jesse Boring was made Presiding Elder of the Griffin District in 1877. The Conference met in Gainesville with Bishop Pierce presiding. R.W. Rogers was sent to McDonough.

The year 1879 was a memorable one. The Woman's Missionary Society was organized. The so-called weaker sex was beginning to advance into a sphere of enlarged vision and usefulness. Mrs. A.C. Nolan sponsored the organization and was first president. Charter members were Madamcs A.C. Nolan, Kate Piper, T.C. Nolan, Allen Turner, Mary Walker, J.C. Nolan, Sam Daily; Misses Fannie Turner, Issie Brown, Missie Setzer, and Emma Knott. Miss Fannie Turner was the first secretary. After Mrs. A.C. Nolan, first president, retired, Mrs. Allen Turner served two years as president. Mrs. A.C. Nolan followed and served in this office for a number of years.

To be a member of such an organization required courage, leadership and determination. It is said that at one of the early conferences of the Woman's Missionary Society one of the officers who had done outstanding work and was quite efficient and conscientious, came to the altar to give a report and fainted under the strain of such unusual daring. They were truly gallant souls, these pioneer women members, and practiced great self denial in raising the funds they forwarded to the Conference Treasurer.

Bishop J.C. Koerner was president of the 1879 Conference at Augusta, McDonough Circuit had 447 members, W.F. Cook was Presiding Elder and W.D. Heath, pastor.

Morgan Ballah, former pastor on two separate occasions had died in 1880 and was memorialized in the Conference Minutes. The circuit showed an increase in membership, 553 reported, and George W. Thomas was assigned as pastor.

At the Conference in LeGrange in 1882, J.C. Davidson was assigned to McDonough. The 1883 Conference met in Dalton with Bishop Pierce, president. The North Georgia Conference was divided into new districts and McDonough was placed in the Newnan District. G.P. Gardner was Presiding Elder. Albert Gray who had previously served the church ably and well was returned. He passed away July 20, 1884. W.P. Smith was then appointed pastor.

Bishop Alpheus Waters Wilson was president of the 1885 Conference in Newnan. W.W. Wadsworth was made Presiding Elder and J.T. Richardson came to serve the 497 members at McDonough.

McDonough reported 570 members, one local preacher, at the Conference at Augusta 1886. McDonough was transferred from the Newnan District to the South Atlanta. T.J. L. Harwell, one of the "powerful" twins, both Methodist preachers of much local prestige, was sent to McDonough.

The Woman's Missionary Society was formally recognized at the 1887 Conference in Marietta. The local Society contributed $24.90 to the total of $5,789.80 received by the Treasurer of the Woman's Missionary Society that year. J.L. Bowden came to McDonough as pastor.

A Juvenile Society was organized in 1888 in the McDonough Church. Mrs. J.C. Nolan was "Lady Manager." There were only six Juvenile Societies in the South Atlanta District. Mary Bowden was President and there were twenty members. $5.50 dues were paid in. Miss Elizabeth Nolan replaced Mrs. J.C. Nolan as leader when she died in 1898. Miss Mary Turner followed her and Miss Nolan took over again until Miss Emie Clements accepted the responsibility. In 1908 Helen Dunn was President; Annie Lamon, vice-president; John Williams, treasurer; George Manley, secretary. Members were Maggie Manley,
1889 was a good year. The first parsonage was built at a cost of $1200. The building, a white frame six-room cottage, was erected on a corner lot, College and Rodgers Streets. Members of the Ladies Parsonage Aid Society first received title to the property but later said title was conveyed to the Trustees. It was remodeled and improved and continued in use until 1951.

J. W. Stipe was sent to McDonough in 1889 and T.F. Pierce, brother of Bishop Pierce, was appointed as Presiding Elder.

Bishop Robert Kenneth Hargrove was president of the Conference in Washington in 1890. McDonough, South Atlanta District, had 558 members. J.E. Rosser was appointed pastor.

In 1891, at the Conference held in Cartersville, Bishop Joseph Staunton Key was president. Bishop Key was the son of Caleb W. Key who had moved from McDonough to LaGrange in 1828. The membership of the McDonough circuit had dropped to 521. J. E. Rosser was returned as pastor.

The Woman's Missionary Society sent Mrs. Minnie Harvell, Mrs. J.Q. Nolan, and Miss Elizabeth Nolan as delegates to the meeting in Washington this year. The local society paid $20.10 dues; special $8.00. Juvenile dues collected were $8.70, special $16.00. It was during these busy years that Mrs. J. A. Nolan was heard to remark that "the ladies painted the church with ice cream!" When collections lagged, many expedients had to suffice! Mrs. Kate Piper succeeded Mrs. A.C. Nolan, who had been serving as president of the Missionary Society for a number of years and, in turn, was followed by Miss Topporeh Harrell, Mrs. Howard Carmichael, Mrs. Virginia Manley, Mrs. J.B. Newman, and others.

W.W. Brinsfield came to McDonough following the Conference in Madison in 1892. The further decline in membership in 1893 may be partly attributed to the panic sweeping the nation. Bishop Atticus Greene Haygood presided at the Conference in Gainesville. W. Fisk Cook became Presiding Elder and J.A. Thurman appointed to serve McDonough Church.

In 1895, membership had climbed to 591 at McDonough. J.A. Thurman was returned as pastor. In 1896, F.S. Hudson was appointed to McDonough and the church paid the pastor $674.15.

Bishop Charles Betts Galloway presided over the North Georgia Conference in Athens in 1897. There were two local preachers at McDonough but membership loss was almost one hundred, 498 reported as members. F.S. Hudson, pastor, received $692.60 and, for the first time, a collection had been taken for the newly created Orphans Home and $49.56 received.

The 1900 Conference was held in Atlanta. The local Church was returned to the Griffin District, J.B. Roberts Presiding Elder. John L. Moon was appointed to McDonough.

1902 brought another Georgia-born Bishop, Warren Aiken Condler, to preside at the North Georgia Conference in Atlanta. W.F. Glenn was Presiding Elder, Griffin District, and R.A. Edmondson was sent to McDonough.

R.A. Edmondson had the reputation of being a builder of churches. For some years it had been felt that the frame building erected seventy-odd years before had been outgrown; committees had been appointed to gather money for a new house of worship but nothing definite had been done. Now the sentiment for expansion on the part of the members and the minister with vision were brought together in 1903.

The new brick church, with Sunday School rooms, was finished in 1905.
It was a proud day for McDonough Methodists when this building plan was accepted and the structure started under the direction of the Building Committee, J.B. Newman, J.F.M. Fields, H.B. Neal, J.T. Sowell, R.L. Turner, G.G. Weems and E.M. Smith. Work was begun in 1904. The old church was moved to one side and worship services were held there until the new building was ready. Bishop W.A. Candler dedicated the new edifice in November 1905.

It was an indication of better things to come, modern conveniences and comforts that were to make the Twentieth Century, only five years old, seem a golden age of luxury in comparison with the primitive conditions that were typical of the early days of frontier Methodism in 1822. Electric lights had replaced oil lamps or gas; running water, the surface wells or springs; coal burning grates the cheery log fires that in some instances provided light as well as heat.

J.E. England was appointed to McDonough Circuit in 1906. The value of the parsonage was raised to $2,000.00; the church, $18,500.00. Flippen, Turner's and McDonough Churches composed the circuit.

The Golden Links Missionary Society was organized this year with eight members. President was Nina Wall; treasurer, Raleigh V. Glass; Blake Bunn, secretary. Ancient History was first studied; then the Far East, China, and Korea and the concluding programs were based on "the life of Christ." A social feature was provided by holding all meetings in the homes of the members.

Officers of the Golden Links in 1908 were as follows: Bess Fouche, president; Blake Bunn, secretary; Eva Harris, treasurer. Members were Miss Elizabeth Nolan, Manie Dickson, Bess Fouche, Emnie Clements, Annie G. Thompson, Eva Harris, Blake Bunn, Nina Wall, and Mr. Dave Wall.

Rev. Olin King was assigned as pastor in 1910 at the Conference in Athens. Bishop Wilson was president, J.H. Eakes, Presiding Elder, Griffin District.

Bishop Wilson was president of the 1911 Conference in Augusta. Fletcher Walton was made Presiding Elder of the Griffin District and Olin King was reappointed to McDonough Circuit. The charge reported 616 members with two local preachers. There were three Sunday Schools with twenty-eight officers and teachers and 300 pupils. There was only one Woman's Foreign Missionary Society with 35 members. The pastor was paid $1,000.00. The total amount raised for all purposes was $3,389.90.

Members of the 1912 Conference assembled in Carrollton for the session. Fletcher Walton was appointed Presiding Elder of the Griffin District and A.B. Sanders, pastor, McDonough Circuit.

The Conference of 1914 was held in Marietta with Bishop Collins Denny, president. H.S. Smith was sent to McDonough Circuit. An increase in the value of church property listed the church at $16,300.00; campground $8,000.00; parsonage, $2,500.00. 586 members were reported. The circuit contained three churches with 597 members, two local preachers. The three Sunday Schools had thirty officers and teachers with 330 pupils. Thirty one of these had been received into the church.

Flippen Church was transferred to the Stockbridge Circuit in 1916. The only congregations of the original twenty-eight reported in the Minutes of the Conference for 1823 were McDonough and Turner's. W.L. Pierce was Presiding Elder, Bishop W.A. Candler was president of the Conference in Griffin and H.S. Smith came back as pastor. There were 599 members of the churches and two local preachers.

The 1918 Conference in Atlanta came at a time of great joy. The Armistice ending the First World War had been signed just two days before the session opened. Bishop W.A. Candler presided. W.L. Pierce was returned to the District and H.C. Enary was appointed pastor of McDonough and Turner's.
Bishop W.A. Candler was president of the 1919 Conference in Atlanta. There were 461 members in the charge and one local preacher, L.G. Bowden. Luke G. Johnson (Brother Luke) was Presiding Elder and R.O. Emory returned as pastor. The church was valued at $18,000.00; the parsonage, $3,000.00 and the campground $12,000.00. The one Sunday School, McDonough, had sixteen officers and teachers and 160 pupils. The pastor was paid $1,500.00 and a total of $5,850.00 reported for all causes. In 1920, J.A. Partridge was appointed pastor.

Bishop U.W.W. Darlington was president of the 1923 Conference in Atlanta. J.H. Eakes was sent as Presiding Elder to the Griffin District and Terry Harper Maxwell came to McDonough-Turner’s. Bishop Darlington again presided at the 1925 Conference in Griffin November 18 to 23. Church values had fluctuated; the church, $177,000, parsonage, $3,000.00; campground, $3,000.00.

The Conference met November 10, 1926, in Atlanta. Bishop W.S. Borchamp was president. L.M. Twiggs came to the Griffin District as Presiding Elder and R.P. Ethridge to the charge. There were 382 members of the two churches. Bishop John M. Moore was president of the 1930 Conference in Atlanta. W.L. Duren was appointed Presiding Elder of the Griffin District and G.W. Hamilton, pastor, McDonough-Turner’s. There were 320 members. The thirty-nine members of the Woman’s Missionary Society reported $456.00 forwarded to the Treasurer. The Sunday School numbered twenty officers and teachers, 168 enrolled. The pastor was paid $1,800.00 and $4,506.00 was collected for all causes.

These statistical reports and numerical figures give scant information about the struggles of these depression years. The members of the churches had acute problems; and not all of them concerned money. For a number of years the parsonage families had been small; the Partridges had grown children, the Maxwells were childless; the Ethridges had two small daughters, so when the Hamiltons came with their charming, growing family, two college age, two high school and two elementary, the three bedroom parsonage was filled to overflowing and the furniture and furnishings too limited. The November conference preceded a heavy freeze; there was not enough cover to supply the beds, so the women loaned quilts, pillows, sheets, towels, until the deficiencies could be remedied. It took effort to meet all needs, both financial and household, but everyone helped in many ways, and the work prospered.

W.T. Hunnicutt came on the District as Presiding Elder in 1931. Bishop John M. Moore was president of the Conference in Atlanta. G.W. Hamilton was reappointed. Only $30.00 was sent the Orphans Home this year; there was so much local need and aid required this year. The pastor was paid $1,650.00 and the total reported for all causes dropped to $2,938.00.

In 1933 the conference met in Atlanta with Bishop John M. Moore, president. W.T. Hunnicutt was returned as Presiding Elder and C.B. Drake appointed as pastor. The pastor was paid $1,265.00 and the total of $2,253.00 was reported raised for all causes. In 1934 the pastor and his wife entertained all church officers at their parsonage home at dinner.

The one hundred fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of Methodism in America was observed in 1935. Conditions had changed completely in the century and a half, but the same enthusiasm continued with logical approach to organization and detail. It was the one hundred forth-seventh anniversary for Georgia Methodism. It was a far cry from a lone circuit rider on a travel-worn horse, to automobiles, paved roads, electrically equipped parsonages and churches and the comforts and perplexities of modern civilization. In the beginning years, all that was needed was a man and a Bible. In 1935, there were many demands made of a minister; he was required to be prepared to meet social, financial, political, organizational, what-have-you, problems and to be all things to all men.
The anniversary conference met in Atlanta. Bishop W.N. Ainsworth presided. W.M. Twiggs became Presiding Elder of the Griffin District and J.J. Copeland was assigned as pastor.

1938 marked another milestone in the history of Methodism. The breach between the two branches of the Church, the Methodist Episcopal church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was healed. For many years overtures had been made and committees appointed to study the problem and find some way to reunite the church. With some misgivings and some outspoken objections, the governing body finally decided upon a means of agreement, so in this year, the church became The Methodist Church.

Methodist Episcopal Church

Harvest - 1939

Bishop J. Lloyd Decell was president of the North Georgia Conference meeting in Atlanta in 1938. W.M. Twiggs was returned to the Griffin District as District Superintendent and J.W. Gardner was appointed as pastor of McDonough Turner's. The pastor was paid $1,550 and $3,973.00 was raised for all causes.

At the Conference, 1939, in Atlanta R.L. Russell was appointed District Superintendent. J.W. Gardner was sent back as pastor. This year the total amount collected for all causes was $6,580.00. Bishop Arthur J. Moore was president of the Conference in 1940. R.L. Russell and J.W. Gardner, pastor, were sent back.

Pearl Harbor, "the day that was to live forever in infamy", occurred two weeks after the end of the 1941 Conference. That year saw many changes. A Service Flag was placed in the McDonough Church and there were already many stars thereon. The Conference of 1942 met in Atlanta. Bishop Arthur J. Moore presided. H.M. Maxwell was District Superintendent of the Griffin District and J.W. Gardner was pastor at McDonough. The pastor was paid $2,200.00 and the amount collected for all causes totalled $5,093.00. J.W. Gardner entered the United States Army as Chaplain and was sent to Harvard for training.

Bishop Arthur J. Moore was president of the Conference in Atlanta in 1943. H.M. Maxwell was Presiding Elder but died during the year. R.L. Russell was appointed pastor.

Dr. Russell fully appreciated Shingle roof Campground. He was actively engaged in improving the facilities; and a caretaker's home, new tents and a hotel with a water system providing running water to each household were constructed. The valuation of the property was doubled in 1944. That year the Conference met in Atlanta with Bishop Arthur J. Moore, president. Paul A. Turner was sent as District Superintendent, Griffin District and R.L. Russell, pastor.

Paul A. Turner, District Superintendent was returned and Harry Lee Wood appointed pastor at the Conference of 1945 in Atlanta. Dr. R.L. Russell in his final report before he was supernumerary gave 459 members on the active list and 50 inactive. The two Sunday Schools had 231 on roll with twenty officers and teachers. There were 45 members in the two Woman's Missionary Societies and $125 was spent on local work; $225.00 forwarded to the Treasurer. A total of $8,956.00 was the amount collected for all causes.

Bishop Arthur J. Moore presided at the 1947 Conference held in Atlanta July 7-13, 1947. The date of meeting had been changed to prevent interference with school schedules and to avoid transfers during the winter months.
Paul A. Turner was appointed District Superintendent and Harry L. Wood returned as pastor. Five hundred seventeen members were reported.

The 1948 Conference met July 14-18 in Atlanta with Bishop Arthur J. Moore, president. H.L. Wood was sent back to serve as pastor. The pastor’s salary was $2,700.00 and a total of $6,453.00 was raised for all causes.

Henry H. Jones came to the Griffin District as Superintendent in 1949, with Edgar A. Fadgett as pastor, McDonough and Turner’s.

For years, particularly during the previous decade, it had been realized that the facilities at the parsonage built in 1889 were inadequate, so this year, 1951, a new parsonage was constructed. A lot on Lawrenceville Street, accessible to both Elementary and High Schools, was purchased and a seven room brick viceroy house, with full basement, was erected. Ground was broken February 18, 1951 and the structure was completed July 30, 1951. The Building Committee consisted of R.L. Turner, Chairman, C. Whitfield Turner, George E. Straun, W.W. Turner, J.S. Hunt, and Charles W. Ferguson. The statistical reports of 1951 valued the church at $42,500.00; the parsonage, $18,500.00.

J. Roe Turner came to the local charge at the Conference of 1952. Henry H. Jones continued to serve as District Superintendent. The pastor was paid $3,300.00. $13,498.00 was the total amount collected for all causes.

The fifteenth session, since the reuniting of the Methodist Episcopal Church was held June 22-26, 1953, in Atlanta. Bishop Arthur J. Moore presided as resident Bishop and Bishop Fred Corson as presiding Bishop. C. Hoke Sewell was appointed District Superintendent, Griffin District, and J. Roe Turner was returned. Under the diligent efforts of “Brother Roe, the church list was revised, a card index of members set up and 483 identified as bona fide members.

Again, to meet a long felt need, a building program was inaugurated. Started under J. Roe Turner it was actively pushed during the two years following his retirement and completed in 1954. The Educational Building included assembly halls for Senior, Intermediate, Junior, Primary Departments with a special area for Beginners and a Nursery, as well as a kitchen. The initial cost was approximately $40,000.00 but equipment and furnishings added to this amount in the final disbursement. Bishop Arthur J. Moore and Mrs. Moore attended the dedication exercises in 1955.

In 1954, C. Hoke Sewell was returned as District Superintendent and G.H. Rainey was appointed pastor. The pastor was paid $3,800.00 and the amount raised for all causes was $30,549.00. For the first time in 1955, an assistant pastor, an Emory University Theology student was accepted.

William S. Schols was appointed pastor in 1956. During his tenure, McDonough became a station, after being on a circuit since 1922. Turner’s, organized the same year, was transferred to Mt. Bethel as a half-station. These were four years of expectancy and planning. Again, there was a sense of need and discussion centered around the idea of a new sanctuary. In 1960, the Woman’s Club property, adjacent to the original church lot, bought exactly 130 years before, was purchased for $12,000.00.


In 1962, by authority of a Church Conference called October 22, 1961, it was decided to go ahead with definite plans for a new building program. Plans were adopted unanimously that called for a new sanctuary, church parlor, kitchen and offices, remodeling the former buildings and closing the street between the church and the former Woman’s Club building, now in use as an annex. A new street was opened on the south side of the church lot. The
Committee in charge of the expanded program consisted of J. P. Price, general chairman; Wynn Crumbley, vice-chairman; Zed Turner, Ambassador Chairman; Norman Fowler, assistant ambassador chairman; Paul Gates, Advance Gifts; George Strawn, assistant advance gifts; Bobby Linch, publicity; Loy L. Strawn, Spiritual Life; Mrs. Charles Coon, Auditor; John M. Minter, pastor.

The services of the Methodist Church campaign director were secured and pledges in excess of $100,000.00 were obtained. It is anticipated that actual construction will begin before 1964.

So ends the story of the first one hundred forty years. The record is based on the history of each man, woman and child who worshipped here. The church is strong as they were strong; it is truly the shadow of the congregations through the years, and as we face the opportunities of the new age, may we be worthy of the opportunities!

Henrietta Lambdin Turner