History of Mt. Carmel Methodist Church

In the early fifties and probably before that time there stood an old log church in the community. It was a union church. Baptist, Methodist Episcopal and Methodist Protestant figured in it. In about 1853 the members of this church decided to disband and each denomination build a church. The Baptist built theirs and called it Liberty Hill, the Protestants built near where the old cemetery is located and it was called White Mt., probably because of its being painted white. Mt. Carmel Academy of the Methodist Episcopal church was built on two acres of land deeded from W. W. Cochran and D. L. Gordon to John Wise, Mark Turner, R. M. Everett, John Johnson, S. Rowan and E. M. Jackson, trustees. This deed was dated July 28, 1853.

The building first erected must have been a very humble one, while the present building erected about 1878 was considered a very fine one for a country church at that time. Allen Turner bought the old one and moved it to McDonough and put it up on the square as a business house.

Mt. Carmel had been in the McDonough Circuit and was placed on the Hampton Circuit about the time the new building was erected or about 1878.

There is no record of the pastors who served at Mt. Carmel during the first fifteen years of its history. However, beginning with 1868 the following served as pastors: Rev. Bright, who served only one year; John H. Harris, a favorite during his time and who died in the pulpit later, 1869-1872; J. R. Mason 1873-1874; Rev. Roland 1875; John Yarbrough 1876; T. R. Kendall 1877-1878, about the time the present building was erected. In his report on the general state of the church, he said that he never saw such a manifestation of divine power as he did in those two years. Rev. W. F. Smith was pastor 1879-1881. He reported "great prayer meetings" during the three years of his ministry. J. A. Rosser served in 1882; Richard W. Rogers in 1883 and 1884 and this seemed to be one of the most delightful times during the history. While in service here he baptized forty babies, thirteen at one time, among them, the twin boys, James Walton and John

During the ministry of F. J. Mashburn, J. E. England, M. M. Walraven, C. A. Norton, and W. O. McMullen, or during the years from 1906 to 1920, more progress seems to have been made than had been reported up to that time. There has been a Sunday School all the years except the earlier period of the history. A large Woman’s Missionary Society was organized by R. W. Rogers, but it lasted during his ministry only. W. H. Speer also organized a society but it died at the end of his service here.

The following have acted in the capacity of Sunday School superintendent: Elijah Foster, Sr., Elijah Foster, Jr., W. A. Mays, G. E. Wise, B. C. Bright and Joe J. Fields. Among others who have been active workers and leaders are: M. D. Rountree, Eli Mays, J. W. Fields, Thomas Fields, D. T. Turner, Luther C. Hood, J. J. Bunn, A. V. McVicker, J. P. McCullough, S. H. Carmichael, William Foster, J. E. Bell, W. C. Fields, J. M. Foster, T. M. Bright and J. H. West.

Mt. Carmel claims the honor of sending out a few preachers. Among them William Hardy, a local preacher during the early history, Gus Callaway, who went to the Texas Conference, and Leroy Callaway.

Among members of prominence must be mentioned the Honorable J. W. Wise, Member of Congress, who spent his boyhood in this neighborhood and whose interest in the church continued throughout his life.

Lucile Rowan – 1924

Reverend S. D. Cherry was pastor of Mt. Carmel 1924-25.

It was during this period that the Epworth League was organized.
The Woman's Missionary Society was again organized. This time by Mrs. S. D. Cherry with the help of Mrs. Warren from Griffin. It failed to function with any degree of success however, until 1926, the year J. J. M. Mize was pastor. The name of the Society was placed in the Bennett Memorial at Samford College, Nashville, Tenn. for such a good beginning of work.

It was during this period that the project of cotton planting for the church was launched. Five bales were produced the first year.

The Honorable J. W. Wise at his death in 1925 endowed the church with a sum of money to be extended over a period of years.

W. H. Maxwell was pastor in 1927 and J. B. Gresham in 1928. F. E. Crutcher followed in 1929 with all organization in the church still flourishing. In 1930 the church took two monthly appointments with Rev. A. B. Sanders, pastor. This was one of the most prosperous years in the history of the church. Mrs. Sanders was an untiring worker with the Woman's Missionary Society.

Rev. J. S. Hill followed in 1931-1932. In spite of the difficult economic situation, the church functioned well during this period, with a show of much spiritual awakening.

Names of prominence not aforementioned in the history of this church are: Mr. W. A. Jones, Mrs. L. A. Walkins, Mr. T. O. Callaway.

Bess Rowan - 1932

The total church program flourished during the ministry of 1933-35, J. W. Gardner, with a strong Woman's Missionary Society of thirty or more members and the most active Epworth League ever known here. Rev. Gardner served three years and was followed by A. E. Silvey, 1935-1936.

J. E. Holbrook, 1936-1938, became one of the favorite pastors of this period, though the church by this time had gone into a decline that seemed to be enveloping all rural churches.

B. L. Barton, 1938-1940, spent the week of the summer revival on the church grounds in his trailer and had the first vacation church school in the history of Mt. Carmel. The vacation school was continued with success under W. O. Lindsey, 1940-1943, Mrs. Lindsey being an outstanding worker with children and an accomplished musician. Rev. Lindsey, after leaving the Hampton Charge, served
several years in the Army Chaplain Corps during World War II as did Rev. Gardner, a pastor of former years.

H. L. Gurley, 1943-1946, was followed by H. G. O'Bryant, an earnest worker, who organized the first Youth Fellowship at Mt. Carmel, the Epworth League having disbanded even before the time of union in 1939.

In 1948 J. H. Couch was appointed to the Hampton Charge, and he continues the beloved pastor of Mt. Carmel.

In 1939 with the union of all branches of Methodism, the Mt. Carmel Methodist Episcopal, South, and the Mt. Carmel Methodist Protestant Church became one and were continued on the Hampton Charge. It was decided that services would be held in the building occupied by the former congregation and so it has continued.

During the period covered by this supplement (1933-1951) the following have served as superintendent of the Church School: B. C. Bright, until his death in 1944, having served in this capacity most of the time for the last four decades; Mrs. Fannie Babb; Mr. W. A. Jones; H. L. Sherwood; J. E. Wallace; and Wayne W. Wise, who is currently filling that office.

As chairman of the Board of Stewards, Mt. Carmel has had: B. C. Bright, Wyatt Rowan, James Mitchell, Joe Rowan and Wayne W. Wise.

The Woman's Society of Christian Service has never failed to function, even during the most difficult times. The first ten years it was under the leadership of Mrs. Wyatt Rowan, who served faithfully as its president until only a short time before her death in 1937. She was followed by Miss Lee Wilkins, Mrs. G. B. Morris and Mrs. Joe Rowan.