I found ten miles from Atlanta, Ga., a Church organized in 1824, by Rev. W. J. Parks. His sermon on the occasion was from the text: "I am the door," etc. There are two or three of those then members yet living, and members of that same Church. Of one of them I wish to say a few things by way of showing what a local preacher can do:—the Rev. John M. Smith, named after John Majors, who, with his colleague Humphries, was the first to travel and preach Methodism, on this side the Savannah, river.

Bro. Smith received license to preach in 1825. His first effort was at the bedside of a dying negro. He was ordained a deacon in 1831, and has preached 1750 sermons, 700 of which were funerals sermons. He has baptized 1200 persons; has married 104 couples, and is the father of four preachers, P.P. Smith, of the Florida Conference being the eldest. He and his wife are both life members of the Missionary Society. To that Society he pays annually to the extent of his ability; he is liberal in paying to the support of his preachers, never pleading that he preaches, any more than if he were a private member. He loves to wait upon the preachers at his old camp ground. He will have charge of the preachers tent. He has been deprived of one leg and crippled in one hand, and yet he works, laboring like Paul with his hands.

The following he handed me as lines of his adoption.

I have enjoyed the Spring of life;
I have endured the toils of its Summer;
I have culled the fruits of its Autumn;
I am now passing through the regions of its Winter;
And am neither forsaken of Gor nor abandoned of man.

I see at no great distance the dawn of a new day,
The first of a Spring that shall be eternal,
It hastens to meet me;
I run to embrace it.
Welcome! welcome! eternal Spring. Hallelujah.

"A few things more, Mr. Editor, if you please, hoping to do good, by way of provoking others to "go and do likewise," I have said that Brother Smith loves to wait on the preachers; yes, and the Church also. Attend a quarterly conference at his church and you will find paper, pen and ink. Sunday morning, you will find in due time bread and water for the love-feast, and the necessary preparation for the sacrament. He appoints two days' meetings, and has love-feast, the Lord's Supper and baptism. Complaints are constantly coming up, because these ordinances are neglected, and why? Because all the ordained of our local brethren do not go and do as this dear old man has done and is doing. One of the local elders says, that he has never been invited to administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and is a preacher to wait for an invitation? Why did the Holy Ghost move him to take upon him the office of an Elder?

Lacon
For the Southern Christian Advocate
Rev. John M. Smith

This man of God was born in Elbert Co., Ga., Nov. 27th, 1789, and died in Fulton Co., Ga., Mar. 21st, 1863, having devoted more than 37 years to the work of the ministry as a local preacher.

He was licensed to preach at Monroe Camp Ground, Oct. 17th, 1823, was ordained deacon, Dec. 18th, 1831 at Madison, Ga., by Bishop Hedding — was ordained elder, Jan. 17th, 1836, at Macon by Bishop Andrew.

During his term of service he preached 1878 sermons, 716 of which were funeral sermons, and baptized 1291 persons.

His first effort as a preacher was at the bedside of a dying negro, a convincing proof of the sincerity of his motives. He was sorely afflicted with heart disease, and was compelled, sometime before his death, to withdraw from all worldly business. He continued, through all his trying affliction, in the faithful discharge of his religious duties. On the Sabbath previous to his death, he preached from Matt. 24th ch. 12, 13 verses — using the hymn commencing, "O blessed, blessed sounds of grace." He seemed conscious that his career was almost at an end. He was devotedly attached to the family altar, so much so that, being unable to kneel, he sat in his chair during family prayer on the night before his death.

During his life Bro. Smith stood heroically more than one test of genuine Christian character. His bark weathered many a storm upon life's rough sea. He experienced many of the hardships of the wilderness, but these were invariably relieved by the "pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night."

When he came to "Jordan's floods" Jehovah divided the waters, and he was enabled to utter as his dying message to his sons, "I have gone safe."

Four of his sons have been members of the Georgia Annual Conference. Rev. Sidney M. Smith died last year, Milton and Jospeh T. are still in Georgia, the latter superannuated, the former local, and Peyton P. is now a leading member of the Florida Conference.

This brief enumeration of facts in connection with the life of Bro. Smith renders eulogy useless.

May the host he has left behind clad in Christian armor, prove as faithful in life, triumph as gloriously in death and wear as bright crowns in the upper kingdom.

J. W. Yarbrough.
Away back in 1824, just after the Creek purchase was made, there were a number of North Carolinians, of Scotch-Irish descent, who settled in DeKalb county and began to establish themselves in the new country while the print of the moccasined feet was still fresh on the dew.

Among them were the Cannedys, the Fains, the Holbrooks, the Sewells and many other names of families that have become famed in local as well as state history, and chiefest among them was John M. Smith, a natural orator, who drew the inspiration of his eloquence from the pathless forests and the unsullied streams and all the grandeur and glory of primeval nature with which he was constantly brought in contact.

He was a Methodist preacher of the old sort, and a man of the most fervent zeal, and one whose piety and spirituality remained unquestioned throughout his long, useful and honored career. Such was the respect and esteem in which he was held that he was welcomed anywhere and everywhere that he went in his journeyings to and fro, and he became the spiritual as well as the temporal arbiter and adviser among his acquaintances.

He was six feet tall, a man of commanding appearance, wearing a regulation shadecloth coat and white cravat on all occasions, and preserving the dignity of his high calling in every assemblage. His long, white locks added to his venerable appearance, and he was revered by the people of this section as few men have ever been since the white people replaced the red rovers of the forest.

The first campground was established on what is now Jackson street, then the old Sandtown road, and because of the fact that it was located on the highway leading to Sandtown ferry, on the Chattahoochee river, connecting the Creek and Cherokee nations. It was called Sandtown campground. Those good old Scotch-Irish pioneers held their annual campmeetings here from as far back as 1824 until 1835.

In that year Rev. John M. Smith and old Father Fain, who is still alive and able to attend campmeetings, cut down the bushes for the location of the old brush arbor under which the services were held for so many long and joyous years.

Parson Smith was afflicted with a sore leg, and finally had to submit to amputation, so that he was rendered a cripple for the balance of his life. In those days the two political factions—Whig and Democrat—waged fierce war against each other, and DeKalb count was overwhelmingly Democratic, while Parson Smith was unequivocally Whig.

In spite of that fact when he ran for tax receiver there was not a Democrat in the county who would oppose him, and year after year, as long as he offered for the place, he was re-elected to that responsible position through the respect and reverence for his character among the people of every political opinion.

It was rather a peculiar state of affairs that year after year DeKalb county had a Democratic tax collector and a Whig tax receiver. But there was never the slightest shadow of reproach against the public life of Parson Smith, nor the slightest blame attached to his spiritual career.
The labor of his life was a work of love, and the few who are yet alive who can recall the character and appearance of the man as they knew him in days gone by, are unanimous in their expressions of admiration and high regard for the pioneer preacher.

He raised half a dozen boys and they were all preachers. They became scattered all over the state, and it was a singular thing that while listening to Judge Halsey speak of the character of John M. Smith, and afterwards hearing Colonel George Adair, speaking in the same strain, I learned that one of his sons was the man who officiated at my christening among the piney woods of southern Georgia.

Peyton P. Smith was his name, and he resembled his father, according to all accounts, in many ways. He was a man of commanding appearance, superb character, and was a pioneer preacher of the good old sort.

He it was who went to old Irwin county, New Lowndes, while the Indian troubles were still menacing the early settlers, and he and my grandfather built the old log structure known as Salem church, on Little river, in the long ago.

Such a man, they tell me was his father, old John Smith, and it is small wonder that his works live after him, for Mount Gilead is today a monument to his memory more enduring than a shaft of granite from Stone Mountain.

After the war the old brush arbor was replaced by a more substantial structure of hewn logs, and that lasted until a few years back, when another tabernacle was built of sawed timber and covered with shingles. What sacred memories cluster around that old campmeeting ground!

Through all the years that have passed since Parson John Smith helped to remove the bushes from the site of the first tabernacle of brush, there has never been a man accused of felony in that community, nor has the virtue of a woman suffered at the hands of one of the descendants of those high-souled pioneers.

Year after year, generation after generation, attended the yearly campmeetings held there, and even unto this day their recurrence is an event that is hailed with joy by those who have been so long and so happily identified with the campmeetings at old Mount Gilead.

Montgomery M. Folsom.