

MT. ZION
METHODIST CHURCH



Centennial
1865—1965

PREFACE

This is a short history of the Mt. Zion Methodist Church. It has been prepared in conjunction with the Centennial Celebration of the church which is to be held Sunday, May 2, 1965. I realize that perhaps there are minor errors in this work and I apologize for them. It is difficult not to have some discrepancies when one has to rely wholly upon secondary sources.

Information in this history has been collected from the following sources: personal interviews, early editions of The Methodist Advocate Journal, The Methodist Episcopal Church In Georgia by E. J. Hammond, Lest Faith Forget by A.M. Pierce, "The Memoirs of Dr. James Mitchell," and The Letters of R. H. Robb.

I appreciate the assistance of the following persons in this endeavor: Mrs. T.H. Gammon, Mrs. L.G. Cowart, Mrs. M.A. Gammon and Mrs. J. Myrl Gammon. I am deeply grateful to Mrs. Thomas Gammon for typing this material for me.

WILLIAM H. KIRBY

For twenty years - from 1845 to 1865 - the Methodist Episcopal Church had no organized work in Georgia. There was no portion of this period, however, when this church did not have work in the South. Mt. Zion Methodist Church was chartered in the year 1865.

The Georgia Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized October 10, 1867. As has been stated earlier this date does not mark the beginning of work in the state of Georgia by the Methodist Episcopal Church. The Rev. John Caldwell, who in June of 1865 preached two sermons on the subject of slavery at his church in Newnan, withdrew from the M. E. Church South because of the controversy these stirred and became the leader of the Georgia-Alabama Mission District of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The Rev. Caldwell had originally intended to remain in the M. E. Church South but when a brother minister stated from the Conference

floor that he could no longer accept him as a brother beloved he severed all relations with the Conference. The Rev. John Murphy joined the Rev. Caldwell in an effort to organize an Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Georgia. In reply to a request from the Rev. Caldwell, Bishop Clark met with seven ministers in Atlanta, Ga. and organized the Georgia-Alabama Mission District and connected it with the Kentucky Annual Conference.

The seven men who met with Bishop Clark for the organization of the District were John H. Caldwell, John Murphy, John T. Yarbrough, R. H. Waters, C. Parker, William Brewer and Wesley Prettyman. All of these, with the exception of Wesley Prettyman, were elders in the M. E. Church South.

It is impossible to trace the early church organizations of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Georgia with accuracy except in a few instances. Mt. Zion Church in Carroll

County was one of the earliest churches in the Conference. It was organized in the year 1865 by the Rev. John Murphy. Dr. Licks Martin named the church Mt. Zion with no particular reason in mind. As the story was related in other sources, a group of men was pondering the question: what shall we name our new church? One would suggest one name and another another. Finally Dr. Martin said: It shall be called Mt. Zion. The others agreed and it was so named.

The Mt. Zion Community is located eight miles from Bremen, Ga. and eight miles from Carrollton, Ga. It is west and slightly south of Atlanta latitude and about twelve miles distance from the Alabama state line. Mt. Zion was located on the Powdon Junction Railway, a branch line of the Central of Georgia, connecting at Bowdon Junction three miles away.

The church was organized first under a brush arbor. On May 24, 1867, the first

building, a log structure, was erected on the present church site. The land for the church and cemetery was donated by Mr. William Entrekin.

The Rev. John Murphy, who organized the church was a native of North Carolina. He joined the Georgia Conference of the M. E. Church South in 1858. When the controversy over slavery arose, he became a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He remained in the new Georgia Conference from 1866 until his death. He was a medical doctor as well as a preacher, a man of solid rather than brilliant qualities.

The first charter members of the newly organized church were: Dr. and Mrs. Hicks Martin, Mr. and Mrs. Ben Wood, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Entrekin, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Lunsden, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Leak, Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Entrekin, Mr. and Mrs. Billy Walker, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Entrekin, Mr. and Mrs. John McKissick, and Mr. and Mrs. Newton Trimble. There were twenty members in all.

The first trustees of the church were:
Hicks Martin, Samuel Leak, J. L. McKissick,
Thomas Entekin, N. M. ~~McBurnett~~, B. F.
Moon and Newton Trimble.

In a book entitled, The M. E. Church In Georgia, written by Edmund J. Hammond and published in 1935 Mr. Hammond makes the following observation about Mt. Zion Church: "This church continues to flourish and has given to the Church such names as the Martins, Ashmores, Entekins, Earnests, Lorrisses and Bishops."

In a period of about twenty months the work of the M. E. Church in Georgia had grown to a force of forty-one traveling preachers, sixty-one local preachers, forty-six church buildings and 6,886 full members. Among the ministers was Newton Trimble, a native of Carroll County Georgia. After several years in the traveling ministry, he became a local preacher and was elected reserve lay delegate to two General Conferences. He reared a

fine family of children who were staunch supporters of Mt. Zion Church.

The following is a quote from the "Memoirs of Dr. James Mitchell": "I attended the Georgia Conference of the M. E. Church held in Atlanta, Ga., October 25-30, 1876. I joined the Conference and was appointed Presiding Elder of the Atlanta District. A country church located five miles from Waco, Ga., Mt. Zion, was one of the smallest charges of the M. E. Church in the Atlanta District."

Dr. Mitchell was scheduled to preach at Mt. Zion Church. He was very much impressed with what he found. He said: "There is great good in all these youth. This is a fine field for service. A church school would prosper here."

At the Annual Conference of 1879 which was held in Atlanta, Dr. Hicks Martin of Mt. Zion was elected as a lay delegate to the General Conference of the M. E. Church. Dr. Martin

was ordained as a local deacon at this conference. Dr. Martin was a remarkable man in many respects. He was ever a loyal supporter of the church and school at Mt. Zion. Four of his sons became physicians, one of them a local preacher. He lived to see grandsons and one great-grandson in the Methodist ministry.

In 1880 Mt. Zion Seminary was founded. This school was begun as a local enterprise. Dr. James Mitchell procured a charter and organized it on the joint stock plan. Seven acres of land were secured and a three room building was erected. This school became an integral part of Mt. Zion Church and the Mt. Zion Community. It had a high academic standard and a strong spiritual undergirding. The achievements of its graduates are a credit to any school and community. Dr. Mitchell remained the guiding mind of the institution until his death.

The Annual Conference of 1894 met at Mt. Zion on October 9 with Bishop Walden

presiding. This was the first of eleven conferences to meet here. This shows the prominent position of Mt. Zion Methodist Church in organizational structure of the M. E. Church. Delegates to the conference were graciously received by the community. Many of them were received into private homes as guests for their stay. No doubt there are those here today who recall this custom.

The Conference of 1886 convened at Mt. Zion. Bishop Charles H. Fowler was the presiding officer. Newton Trimble, a resident of Mt. Zion, was elected as reserve member to the General Conference of the M. E. Church by the Annual Conference of 1886.

The Annual Conference session of 1890 convened at Mt. Zion on January 16. Bishop John F. Hurst presided over this Conference.

The Conference session of 1891 met at Demorest. Bishop E. G. Andrews was the presiding officer. Three men united with the

Conference on trial, but none remained long in the Conference. Among these was J. W. B. Pharr who continued for many years as a local preacher at Mt. Zion. This Conference decided to open a theological department at Mt. Zion Seminary. This was done in an effort to hold preachers in Georgia because they rarely returned when they attended schools of the Church in other sections.

Dr. James Mitchell was elected as the ministerial alternate to the General Conference of 1892 which was held at Omaha, Nebraska. Newton Trimble was elected as reserve lay delegate to this Conference.

The Annual Conference of 1893 was held at Demorest. Bishop Thomas Foxman was the presiding officer. William A. Martin, the grandson of Dr. Hicks Martin of Mt. Zion, was received on trial by this Conference. He was a very able preacher. He later transferred to the Holston Conference where he continued until his death. His son, J. C. Martin, rose in that Conference to be

District Superintendent and General Conference delegate.

W. T. Morriss, the father of Mrs. Lavada Malone, of Mt. Zion Church, was elected as delegate to the General Conference of 1896 which met in Cleveland, Ohio. He was prominently identified with the seminary at Mt. Zion for many years.

The second session of the Annual Conference of 1897, there being two sessions, met at Mt. Zion. Bishop Charles C. McCabe was the presiding officer.

Dr. James Mitchell was elected ministerial delegate to the General Conference of 1900 which was held at Chicago.

The Annual Conference of 1902 met at Mt. Zion. Bishop Foss was the presiding officer. Lorenzo Dow Hamil, a native of Georgia who has been described as a man of pleasing manners and a good preacher, was received on trial at this conference. His wife, the former Janie Martin, was a member of the Martin family at Mt. Zion.

The Annual Conference of 1905 met at Mt. Zion. Bishop Luther Wilson was the presiding officer. C. C. Martin was received on trial by this Conference but did not remain long in the traveling ranks. He was a valuable local preacher in Carroll County for many years.

The Annual Conference session of 1908 convened at Mt. Zion. This Conference was presided over by Bishop Anderson.

The Annual Conference of 1912 met at Mt. Zion. The Conference was presided over by Bishop Frederick Leete.

The Annual Conference session of 1918 met at Mt. Zion. Bishop J. A. Leonard was the presiding officer.

In 1922 an Epworth League Institute was held at Mt. Zion. Many other Epworth League Institutes were held here. The excellent facilities which were available at Mt. Zion were perfectly suited for such a gathering. No doubt there are many who have fond memories of these Institutes.

The Annual Conference of 1925 met at Mt. Zion. The presiding officer was Bishop Wilbur Thirkield.

The Annual Conference of 1930 met at Mt. Zion with Bishop Leete as the presiding officer.

The Mt. Zion Seminary which had been established in 1880 continued until 1937 at which time it was retired as a church school.

As time continued the church facilities were expanded. A vestibule was added to the front of the church. During the time which Rev. Alton Smith served as pastor, 1944-1946, four Sunday School rooms were added to the church building. Memorial windows were purchased for the sanctuary in 1954 and were installed in 1956.

A new parsonage was completed in 1953. This parsonage was located on a site just west of the church which had formerly been the location of a girls' dormitory at Mt. Zion Seminary. The J. C. Gammon family

resides in the former parsonage. The new parsonage, situated in a lovely grove of pine trees has 2 bedrooms, a den, kitchen, living-dining room combination, 1 bath and a screened side porch. It is tastefully and adequately furnished.

In 1955 Ramah Methodist Church, which was then on the Mt. Zion Charge was discontinued by the Annual Conference. The present pews in Mt. Zion Church are those which were formerly at Ramah. They were given to the trustees of Mt. Zion Church by the membership of Ramah in order to satisfy Ramah's obligation on the new parsonage. The membership at Ramah was transferred to Mt. Zion.

The new brick Sunday School Annex was built in 1960. This addition which includes a large class room, a kitchen and 2 rest rooms has proven an asset to the church.

In 1964 carpet was donated to the church by Mrs. Mary Ruth Norman in memory of Estella Crumpton Tant and George L. Tant. New pulpit

furniture of Gothic design was also purchased in 1964. This was made possible through a memorial gift by Mr. and Mrs. C. C. Perkins made in memory of their deceased infant son and a donation from the Wesleyan Service Guild of the church. Mrs. J. S. Windom and family placed a new picture in the sanctuary in memory of Mr. J. S. Windom.

By action of the Annual Conference Mt. Zion Church was transferred from the Rome District to the La Grange District in 1962. Mt. Zion Church became a station church in June, 1964. It is prospering and has a great future.

LIST OF PASTORS

Before 1900 (no actual dates available for
some of these pastors)

1865	John Murphy
1876	James Mitchell
	Lorenzo Dow Hamil
	H. E. Sumner

From 1900 to 1965:

1900	R. C. Bramlett
1902	D. W. Cook
1904	B. F. Allen
1905	B. F. Allen, C. C. Martin
1907	Asbury F. Ellington
1915	J. L. King
1916	J. M. McGill
1917-1919	G. W. Elliot
1920	Raymond Durr
1921	W. F. Cochran
1922-1924	H. H. Powen
1925-1930	W. W. Hamilton
1931-1937	W. C. McGarrity
1938	T. F. Cook
1939	P. H. Stokes
1940-1941	W. J. Atha
1942-1943	Dan Brewster
1944-1946	Alton Smith
1947-1948	Duma Webb
1949	T. E. Taylor
1950	H. I. Bowdon
1951	Cecil Dudley
1952-1954	Howard Odom
1955-1956	W. O. Dinkins
1957-1959	Tommy Gilbert
1960-1961	Kenneth Deitle
1962	David Elankenship
1963	William H. Kirby