History of Nellie Peters Methodist Chapel - Calhoun, Georgia

Time Marches on. The Founder of the Sun Shine Sunday School Graduated from the Calhoun High School and went away to Old Emory College at Oxford, Georgia. In 1934, the Sunday School ceased to exist until 1936. During the year 1936, Rev. T. Newton Wise attended Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. Each weekend he came back to Calhoun and solicited funds from prominent citizens of Calhoun to build a small chapel in order to establish a church and Sunday School for the people of that section. Rev. T.E. Reeve served as the treasurer.

Mr. Ralph P. Black, a professor of Civil Engineering at Georgia Tech and a prominent land owner in Gordon County was approached and asked for a donation of land and some funds to help build a church. It was agreed that if he would donate the land the church would be named after his dear mother who was named, Mrs. Nellie Peters Black. He requested that the "Black" be deleted from the name of the chapel. She was a faithful member of the Protestant Episcopal Church. He not only donated a considerable large lot on which to build the chapel but he also donated the blue prints for the building and a small sum of money at that time.

A good layman, Mr. J.E. Hardy, who lived in Gordon County was asked to be in charge of the construction in a beautiful pasture near the Fairmount Highway just outside the city limits of Calhoun, Georgia. Ground was broken on Easter Sunday 1937 for the building and Rev. Newton Wise preached the first sermon in the little Chapel shortly thereafter.

Donations were given to Nellie Peters Chapel by the leading business men of Calhoun, Georgia. Some of them are as follows: H.F. Jones, Supt. of Echota Cotton Mills; C.M. Jones, Supt. of a bed Spread factory; A.B. David, Pres. of Calhoun National Bank. His Brother, David, Father of Estes David. H.A. Wise, Father of the Founder. Lawrence Moss, Phil Reeve, James Starr, J.H. Pasca11, And The Rev. T.E. Reeve, A returned missionary for Africa.

Rev. T.E. Reeve agreed to help the service of the little church until a regular pastor could be assigned. Dr. A.M. Pierce, district Superintendent of the Dalton District of the Methodist Church was very anxious to tie this church into the regular Methodist Conference. He assigned Rev. Cullen Jones as the first pastor and put it on the Calhoun Circuit with the ECHOTA Methodist Church.

Rev. and Mrs. T.E. Reeves served for approximately 20 years as leaders of this little church even through they worked under the direction of a regular Methodist pastor. Much credit should go to Rev. & Mrs. Reeves. Without their faithful leadership, there would be no active church at present. The little church struggled along for months with a very small congregation. Under the consecrated leadership of Rev. T.E. Reeves, who although was not the pastor, worked with the pastor to sell the chapel where it was orginally built and built a larger and better building further south in the community which is known as Rock City. The Nellie Peters Chapel still stands at this location, is serving the spiritual needs of the people of the community.
This is a story about the little Sunday School organized in the barn and later the basement of the Wise Home, 509 South Wall St. This was written by Fred T. Barnett who was a traveling Lay Preacher.

"Let me tell you a good story"

During a recent visit to Calhoun, I became quite interested in the story of a lad who belongs to our Methodist Church in the town, and who is seeking in a very interesting, and I think, helpful way to bring the truth of the Bible to the boys and girls of his community.

Calhoun is a beautiful town nestling among the hills of Northwest Georgia and situated on the main line of the Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis Railway, eighty miles distant from Atlanta. Here at the altars of the Methodist church less than two years ago stood young Wise, then twelve years of age, and took the vows of church membership. Since that day he has been faithful in his attendance upon Sunday School and the regular services of the Church, having been for a time the leader of a live Junior choir. His mother and three brothers and two sisters are identified with the Methodist church of Calhoun, and his father, who is connected with the Revenue Department of the State of Georgia, is a regular member.

As soon as young Wise joined the Church, he felt impressed that some provision should be made for furnishing Church and Sunday School privileges for the boys and girls in the south end of the town where he resides. Quite a number of these boys and girls were not attending any church, and some of them stated that they did not feel that they were able to dress well enough to attend the regular churches of the town.

Newton Wise could not remain indifferent to this situation, and shortly after his conversion we find his gathering a few boys of the community into his father's barn of Sunday afternoons and relating to them well known Bible stories. As the interest grew, he removed his embryonic Sunday School to the basement of his father's home, where it continues to hold its weekly sessions. A speaker's stand has been fitted up, benches have been provided, and Bible pictures adorn the walls of this simple place of worship and study. Friends of the Sunday school in the town, and also from other towns and cities of Georgia, contributed the funds necessary to fit up this room, and our boy missionary invested his total savings over a period of several months in this cause which lies so close to his heart. It is believed that he has invested practically every cent he has earned during the past year in the work of his Sunday School.

Newton Wise has named his Sunday School the "Sunshine Sunday School." and when one looks into the bright, happy faces of the boys and girls who assemble every Sunday afternoon for the study of the Word of God, he comes to realize that the designation is not inappropriate. The Sunday School meets promptly at 1:30 O'clock, and continues in session for just one hour.

The program of the School includes singing, relating of Bible stories by the pupils, duets and quartettes, talks and prayers by visitors and members of the school, and then between twenty-five and thirty minutes are given to the study of the regular Sunday School lesson led by the youthful superintendent of the School. One of the boys of the School is gifted in the use of the French Harp, and furnishes a lively accompaniment to the singing.

Social occasions are provided for the members of the school from time to time in connection with the observance of Christmas, Easter and other holiday seasons. A program of games and special entertainment features is arranged for these special occasions, and light refreshments are also frequently served. Funds for meeting the expenses of these social features are usually provided through generous gifts of our young friend, whose home missionary program included recreation, as well as worship and instruction.