

Arkans - Elberton Dist ?

NEW BETHEL CHURCH

Hammond Meeting House, mother of the present New Bethel, was erected about 1856 or 1857, ~~Some think~~ it stood on the East side of the present Elberton-Anderson Highway, on North side of Pickens Creek, and about one mile of Sanders' Ferry Bridge.

This building was built of logs, and ~~logs~~ cut from those tall forest pines so numerous in this section at this particular time. The sills were, I suppose, 14 X 14 inches and fifty feet long, or more, on sides, not so long across ends, *Some* 40 feet, all heart, and would last a long, long time. The corners were dove-tailed together making a strong structure and hard to tear down. When those logs were placed, slaves would take broad axes, and straighten the outside and inside. Those logs were large and considerable space was between them, which was daubed with red mud, and made a comfortable building.

For sometime they used dirt floor. The ceiling was sawn by whip saws and dressed by hand, <sup>by slaves</sup> using what was known then as a jack plane. Most church attendants owned slaves, and a section was set aside for them to worship with their masters. The land was donated by a Mr. Greenway, or a Mr. Roebuck. The church was very much appreciated and people came from a great distance, for those times, and many from the neighboring state of South Carolina. Its membership was some of the most prominent people of this section, some of their offspring are the faithful ones of the church to-day. <sup>Names</sup> The ~~ones~~ I remember

were Adams, Alexander, Ashworth, Bone, Chapman, Cleveland, Daniel, Haley, Gaines, McMullan, Greenway, Partain, Rucker, Smith, <sup>S</sup> Stratton, Taylor, Terrell, Turner and others. Among

*uncle* the most dependable, were Great Grand-Father Jesse Taylor and *uncle Tommie* <sup>man</sup> really consecrated ~~and Uncle Tommie Turner~~, age giving ~~him~~ <sup>uncle Tommie</sup> the title of Uncle.

*After a period of time*, It was agreed to move the old church to a more suitable location with more accommodating surroundings. The site of

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the present church was selected. Brother W. I. Gaines, father of Mrs. O. G. Stratton, donated an acre of land, and it was given the name Bethel. In a short time it was discovered that there was a Baptist Church in the County by that name and in order to avoid confusion, our church added New to the name, hence New Bethel. They thought the church plenty large to accommodate the people, but it was too small, so it was made about twice as large in a very few years and was under construction when the Charleston earthquake came and scared people into a realization that God was powerful. This was 1886.

Later it was decided to leave off Family Burying Grounds <sup>at the custom at that time</sup> and establish a cemetery near the Church and Mrs. J.F. Rucker was the first body laid beneath the sod. This was December 29, 1894.

A short time afterwards the remains of little Nettie Taylor, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Jasper Taylor, was moved here from the Taylor-Daniel burying ground. *Some two miles away.*

Our church was on a mission for some time. I don't know how long. I can't recall too many pastors as they came to us, but I remember Bro. Benson Higginbotham, Bro. Judge Harper, Bro. Tinsley Adams coming as local preachers. We had among our first pastors <sup>as I am told</sup> Bro. R. P. Martyn, Bro. Potter Grogan, <sup>then</sup> Dunbar, Patillo, Winter, Turner, Gaines, Elrod, White, Knowles, <sup>J. E. Holbrook</sup> Foster, Lunsford, Coward, Dunnagan, Warwick, Hicks and our present Bro. Williams. *I can't recall many Presiding Elders or Super-intendents, so will leave them off.*

It is nice sometimes to revert to happenings of by gone days. It was an enjoyable occasion when all Sunday Schools assembled at one of the Churches on the Charge for a Childrens Day Program, dinner on the ground, the Pastor speaking to us at a convenient time, with probably a visiting speaker, high spot on the program. This was carried out for several years and enjoyed. Children took part with songs and recitations and

*J. E. Holbrook*  
*P. E.*  
*Shullin*  
*Venable*

(3)

In 1937 we rearranged the old Church, cut off some of the Auditorium and curtained off for Class rooms. Any changes made in a Church building has an effect for a while. This lasted until 1944, we become <sup>then</sup> tired of the old structure and decided the time had arrived to consider building a new Church. About this time a heavy wind, I guess it might be classed a small tornado, since it ramshacked the west end, <sup>of building,</sup> considerably, making necessary repair, or replace, some said I will help towards a new church, but nothing towards repairing. The soliciting committee got busy, the planning committee did the same, so in 1944 we become all set for a brick Vener Church, and in 1946 we held our first service in the new church, Rev. E. W. Dunagan Pastor.

Last, but not least perhaps, is the Women's Missionary Society, but it being an organization of ladies, it might be well for me to say, in passing, we feel they are doing good, the ones attending, and those who do not attend, are hindering -

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the Superintendent had something to say. *This was amurably -*  
*(Now)* → *(4)* Our Church has been a little short of demand,  
perhaps when it comes to Ministerial support. She gave one  
Henry Tombs Smith whose first pastorate was Chatsworth 1917  
and 1918. He was loyal to his calling and devoted to his  
people, and we feel the church suffered a great loss at his  
going. He served as pastor thirty-seven (37) years.

Next Hascal Cade Stratton served Bowden Circuit as  
a Supply in 1925. He has served many Churches of importance  
and served four years as Superintendent of Dalton District.  
*Has been*  
~~He~~ was loyal to his Church and in service thirty-one (31) years.  
No doubt many were influenced to live more noble lives by their  
precept and examples.

Some of our Sunday School Superintendents were F. M.  
Taylor, R. L. Daniel, F. M. Haley, G. M. Conwell, B. B. Broadwell,  
Beverly Adams, H. A. Adams, Denver Stratton, A. O. Charping and  
Leon Gaines. *I. S. Haley -*

Present Trustees O. G. Stratton, A. O. Charping and  
I. S. Haley. Church Secretary, A. C. Taylor.

*Respectfully.*  
*I. S. Haley.*