The early records of Pine Grove Methodist Church were destroyed by fire when the home of Jas. A. Hardy, Sec't. of the Quarterly Conference, was burned some years ago. It was organized in 1796 following a brush arbor meeting in which Lewis Parks, pioneer Methodist minister took an active part. Pine Grove Church is the oldest Methodist Church in Lincoln Co. It is located about seven miles east of Lincolnton and about two miles from the Savannah river. For ten years services were held under a brush arbor where the cemetery is now located. During that year a log church was erected, facing the west, the dimensions of which are unknown. This building was used until 1846 when the present building, a neat one-story wooden structure, about 40 feet by 60 feet in dimensions, and facing the north, was erected. After the church in Lincolnton was established, it became a part of the Lincolnton Charge.

With the erection of the first church building, a Sunday School was organized with Lewis Parks, Sr. as Superintendent. As no Sunday School literature could be conveniently obtained in those early days, and as there were no public schools the small children were taught, according to tradition, their A B C's and how to read from Webster's Blue Back speller. Mr. Parks served the school for several years and was succeeded by Aaron Hardy, who served it for half a century. Others serving as Superintendents were Charles R. Hollenshead, Elisha Gresham, Thomas Albea, W. P. Tatum, J. A. Hardy, B. C. Clary, Ollie Weeks, J. A. Hardy, V. M. Walker, R. F. West, Wm. F. Hardy, F. A. Hardy, Wilmer Harnesberger and F. A. Hardy, the present incumbent. The school has had a continuous existence from its organization to the present and it now has an enrollment of 59.

George G. Smith, D.D., in "The Story of Georgia and the Georgia People, 1732 to 1860," published in 1900, states, on page 227, in speaking of the Methodists in the county, that "it is perhaps somewhat remarkable that the oldest Sunday-School which has had a continuous life in Georgia is in a country church in Lincoln, where for over eighty years a Sunday School has been held every Sunday." He could not possibly have been referring to any other church than Pine Grove.

From extant records, the Albea, Bivins, Clary, David, Fortson, Hardy, Hollenshead,
Leverett, Lyon, Martin, Parks, Samuels, Spires, Sturkey, Tatum, Thurmond and Ulm families were prominently identified with this church.


On August 9, 1946, during the pastorate of L. G. Marlin, the 150th anniversary of Pine Grove Church was held. Rev. John F. Yarborough preached and Clay Emory led in prayer. Miss Jane Ulm was present and at that time had been a member of Pine Grove Church for 77 years. In a news item at that time mention was made of Rev. J. S. Ulm, pastor at Blairsville, who was dedicated at the altar of Pine Grove church 77 years ago.

The membership of Pine Grove has been greatly reduced in the last twenty-five years, due to deaths and removals from the community, but the church is in a flourishing condition and has a membership of 99. No doubt Pine Grove has had a tremendous influence in the establishing of Lincolnton and Bethany Churches. Though her membership is small Pine Grove Church has had a notable history and has played a great part in the building of God's Kingdom.