

HISTORY
OF
PINE GROVE
CHURCH



100-100

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Researched and written
by
Mrs. Bonnie Taylor Baker
Historical Society
Alma-Bacon County, Georgia

CREDITS

The records at The Pine Grove Church were torn up or taken away from the church building in the late thirties. Mr. Walter Thigpen has gathered and preserved throughout the past years, most of the information used as a background for the writers research. Without his help the History of Old Pine Grove Church would have been difficult to compile. Cemetery records and family histories in the Archives of the Historical Society were other sources for information.

Mr. Coleman Lee and Aunt Sally Smith along with others provided information which not only documented the details of Pine Grove's history but also made the history, hopefully more enjoyable to it's reader.

PART I.

The History of Pine Grove Church
Bacon County, Georgia

Just how many year's ago, no one seems to know, and, there is nothing of record, Pine Grove Church was once called "Briar Patch" Church. To better back up this claim there is a story which has been handed down throughout the years and told by Mr. Spencer Meeks.

The story as told by Mr. Meeks is, that stragglers from Sherman's Army, as they marched through Georgia, camped on the banks of the creek beside the home of the Sellar's Lee Plantation. There was a widespread fear that any money in possession of anyone in the area would be stolen by the soldiers from Sherman's army. One man, his name forgotten, fearing the loss of his money, buried his savings under a pillow of the Briar Patch Church.

Aunt Sally Smith, sister of Spencer Meeks, granddaughter of the Rev. Hymerick Meeks, remembers her father telling of his visits to old Briar Patch Church as he was growing up in the Moore Community. Aunt Sally, in June of 1976, will be ninety years of age.

Briar Patch Church was first organized as a Methodist Episopal Church South, and remained in the same Conference until the Fourth Quarterly Conference, Waresboro Mission, held at Hoboken, Georgia, September 17, 1881. At what point in time, in those prior years, Briar Patch Church was re-named to Pine Grove is not known. It was not uncommon, in the early days, for sections of this area to be known by their

obvious characteristics. There was "Possom Trot" to the east and "Wolf Pit" to the west of Briar Patch.

A request of the Curator at the St. Simons, Georgia Methodist Church Museum, for records of Conference Reports from Briar Patch (Pine Grove) Church, has been unanswered as of this writing. However, a diligent research of records from reliable sources, visits with former pastors and "old timers", substantiates with little if any doubt, that the church existed a good many years prior to the Civil War.

The fact that the church cemetery existed before the Civil War can be proven simply by visiting the grave of James Lee, the oldest marked grave in the church cemetery. His death is recorded as 1852, ten years before the War in 1861 and 1862. That there were veterans of the Civil War attending Briar Patch Church is commonly known, one veteran, being Mr. Asa Thompson who was an active member of the church during his lifetime and remembered by some living today. Others were: Eli Warren Lee, Thomas Peyton Lee, and J. Ben Taylor.

An early pastor at Pine Grove was the Rev. Randle McDonald. Early worshipers were Mary Thompson and Martha Thompson Rigdon, Sophronia Lee Taylor and Aunt Madie Thigpen. They were conspicuous in the front pews of the church dressed in their black bonnets and long black dresses and were known over the area for their spiritual outpourings expressed as "shouting" in those early days.

Briar Patch and Pine Grove Churches served as the area's only church for many years and long before there was an Eliza-

beth Chapel or a Lee's Chapel. People came to school and church there from the east side of the country, the Possom Trot Section and from the west side of the county, in the present Wolf Pit Church area.

Early school teachers at Pine Grove were Mr. Elmore Wheeler, Mrs. Flora Taylor, George Taylor, George McDonald, Lou Baxley, Lottie Taylor Murphy, a Miss Eason, and others.

As far back as anyone remembers Pine Grove was the center of the community's activities. District Conferences were held there. Visitors from everywhere came by mule, buggies, wagons, horses, and trains. Church members would meet the train at Beach, Georgia and keep the visiting delegates in their homes for the duration of the Conference which usually lasted a week. Sunday church meant more than just preaching, there was dinner on the ground and afternoon services, an all day affair. Singing conventions attracted crowds from miles around, lasting all day with a brief respite from singing at noon for the traditional dinner on the ground. School closing day was another day of celebrations usually lasting for two days beginning on Friday nights with school plays acted out on an improvised front porch stage, using lamps and bed sheets as props.

Four church buildings have been erected in the same or nearby spot over the past one hundred and fifty years. The first building was located in a field behind the present building, the second building in the Emory Turner field, the third building near the gate of the cemetery. The present building was erected about 1912 or 1913. The ground

was originally given to the church by Mr. James Lee. Probably because of an oversight, he failed to deed the land to the Church. In later years the land passed into the ownership of Little Henry Douglas who deeded the land December 16, 1907 to the Church, and recorded the deed in the Bacon County Courthouse in Alma, Georgia. (Deed Book Number 17 and page 187.)

Early settlers from Possom Trot on the Southeast side of Appling County and pioneer families from the old Wolf Pit section met regularly with the families of the Pine Grove section at the Pine Grove Church for replenishment of their spiritual and social needs. As a consequence there were inter-marriages of the young ones whose visits to Old Pine Grove no doubt encouraged nuptial ambitions. No better example can be given than that of the marriages of five of James Lee's daughters to five of the young Taylor gentlemen. A multitude of Bacon, Ware, and Appling County's citizens trace their ancestry back to the Taylor and Lee's of Old Pine Grove.

After slavery days Gordon Stewart Taylor and Eliza Lee of the Pine Grove James Lee family left their home and resettled in Baker County, Florida, where soon after their migration, they formed and built their own church and called it Pine Grove after their mother church. Soon there was a need for a burying place and since the majority of the resettlers were Taylors, they called it the Taylor Cemetery. Persons in search of their antecedents could very well obtain needed dates and names in this cemetery at Taylor, Florida, near McClenney. Better still attend the Taylor family reunion

held annually the first Sunday in June.

Today the Bacon County, Georgia church is often referred to, chiefly because of its age, as the Old Pine Grove Church. The church cemetery has been and is still the burying grounds for some of the oldest families in Southeast Georgia. Several generations of the same family, predating the War Between the States are buried there.

A check of cemetery records reveal that it served the needs of pioneer families as the Douglas's, Lee's, Taylor's, McDonald's, Thompson's, Sweat's, Rigdon's, Johnson's, Thigpen's, Kinlaw's, Turner's, Britt's, Ruis's, and Martin's, almost exclusively.

Officially today, the Pine Grove Congregational Methodist Church is a member of the District Conference of the Lake City District. It is pastored by the Rev. Verdie Bailey from Valdosta, Georgia, driving ninety five miles each way to hold two Sunday services each month, twice a day, returning the same day. On alternate Sundays, Layman W. F. Carter of Jamestown serves the church as a layman pastor. Membership today totals approximately forty three persons. There is a Sunday School and the church is growing in attendance and in its purpose.

Pine Grove Congregational Methodist Church, Bacon County, Georgia, is one of sixteen churches, members of the Lake City Florida District, which convene annually in October at one of the designated member churches. The Rev. Coy M. Taylor, is President, of the District, Lacy Combs, Secretary Treasurer, address Glen St. Mary, Florida.

Originally the General Conference of the New Congregational Methodist Church included^d two Districts, Pinevally and Lake City. According to The Rev. Coy M. Taylor there is no longer a Pinevally District, all sixteen churches are combined into one.

At the Annual Conference of the Lake City District to be held the fourth weekend in October of this year on Friday and Saturday, the report of the years work of the member churches will be heard, The Rev. Coy M. Taylor, presiding.

At this years Annual Conference, the time, date and place of their General Conference which meets every four years, will be decided by the Delegates. The General Conference convenes for the purpose of attending to matters of Church Discipline, among other things.

The President of the General Conference is the Rev. Luther Alford, Glen St. Mary's, Florida.

Today the sixteen member churches are:

- (1) Pine Grove, Sanderson, Florida (Taylor, Fla.)
- (2) Pine Level, Sanderson, Florida
- (3) Dinkins, Sanderson, Florida
- (4) Pleasant Hope, Starke, Florida
- (5) Mt. Zion, McClenney, Florida
- (6) Salem, Nicholls, Georgia
- (7) Hargove Chapel, Millwood, Georgia
- (8) Jordan, Dixie Union, Georgia
- (9) New Hope, McClenny, Florida
- (10) New River, Lawtey, Florida

- (11) Kettle Creek, Waycross, Georgia
- (12) Old Pine Grove, Alma, Georgia
- (13) Blocker Chapel, Vidalia, Georgia
- (14) Exekial Church, Waycross, Georgia
- (15) Lee Avenue, Waycross, Georgia
- (16) A church in Ocala, Florida

Present officers of Old Pine Grove Church, Bacon County, Georgia (1976) are:

Mrs. Jean Thigpen Parker, Secretary and Treasurer

Mr. Coleman Lee, Class Leader

Walter E. Thigpen, Ordained Deacon

Mrs. Cora Martin and Mr. Coleman Lee, Stewards.

Here are some of the early Pastors who have served at Pine Grove Church:

H. R. Cason

W. Asa Thompson

Alfred Cason

Randle McDonald

W. Lee Sweat

Manning A. Thigpen

D. J. Miller

N. J. Holton

John Taylor

Randle J. McQuaig

Hymeric Jack Thompson

Reubin J. Thompson

W. P. Leggett

Brother Morgan

Brother Howard

PART II

EARLY LEADERS
OF
PINE GROVE

W. A. Thompson

W. L. Sweat

J. Ben Taylor

W. F. Rigdon

Reubin J. Thompson

N. J. Holton

R. J. McQuaig

G. J. Pittman

Randle McDonald

G. W. Moore

John Rigdon

E. D. Douglas

Henry Thompson

John S. Douglas

Martin W. Ruis

J. W. Cribb

Thomas Peyton Lee

J. Monroe Lee

Mady Thigpen

T. Peyton Lee

Dorcas Lee

Jordon Thompson

Christain Lee

M. A. Thigpen

B. F. Bryant

W. J. Booth

D. J. Miller

S. A. Rowell

Henry Taylor

John Taylor

H. J. Thompson

W. J. Googe

W. P. Leggett

J. G. Cain

A. J. Bell

T. B. Taylor

Sophonria Lee

Leannie Lee

Mary L. Taylor

Lester Lee

C. C. Mercer

H. L. Thompson

Mrs. Randle McDonald

Kit Lee

J. S. Douglas

H. M. Cason

and many others

PART III

OTHER
MEMBERS OF
OLD PINE GROVE

1892-1937

Alex Waters	David Kirkland
Jimmy Holton	Martha Rigdon
Walter Wiggs	Anguish Brunson
Millie Lee	Mary Rigdon
Polly Rewis	Francis Ivy
John Rewis	John Council
Jewel Rewis	Lou Johnson
Mrs. L. W. Lee	Unity Lee
Manning Rigdon	Dorcas Cooksy
Mary Jane Mercer	Minnie Steedley
Fitzhugh Lee	Ida Brunson
Daniel Meeks	W. M. Lee
Levi W. Lee	Katie Sweat
Irie Lee	Bertha Dyal
Jim Mercer	Edward Johnson
Cresey Lee (Lucretia)	J. R. Mercer
Lola Lee	James W. Cribb
W. N. Lee	Millender S. Lee
Lee Thigpen	Basheba Olliff
Janie Wiggs	Dunk Smith
Elisha Hinnant	Charlie Smith
R. H. Davis	Herman Smith
Nettie Johnson	Quitman Smith
Sylvester Turner	Ella Smith

Leon A. Thigpen
Jennie Sweat
Sadie Sweat
Ella Lewis
N. J. Holton
G. C. Johnson
Calvin Taylor
Frances Taylor
Thelma Taylor
Katie Taylor
Jane Kirkland
Mary McQuaig
Henry Davis
E. O. Johnson
Jinks Douglas
Leon Turner
Delia Thigpen
Mary and Staten Smith
W. L. Sweat
"Kit" Lee
Estell Sweat

Patrick Lewis
Addie Lewis
Thomas Cain
Jack Sweat
Bessie Sweat
Jim Mercer
A. L. Turner
Ollie Turner
Pearly Lee
A. J. Rigdon
J. C. Rigdon
Sol Lee
E. Turner
Mr. and Mrs. Jasper Meeks
J. D. Kinlaw
Louvenia (Beanie) Turner
Mary Smith
Lucy Lee
Thelma Lee
George Stewart
Mamie Kirkland

PART IV

PRESENT MEMBERS
LIVING IN
PINE GROVE AREA

Mr. W. E. Thigpen
Mrs. Annie Taylor
Mrs. Cora Martin
Mr. Hilton Parker
Mr. Coleman Lee
Mrs. Peggy Lee

Mr. Donelee Lee
Mrs. Mildred Roy Lee
Mr. Johnny Rewis
Miss. Debbie Parker
Mrs. Essie Bagley

OTHER MEMBERS

Mrs. Deliah Gray
Mr. Jim Parker
Mr. Charles Taylor
Mr. Benny Taylor
Mrs. Lola Mae Steedley
Mrs. Wilma Taylor
Mrs. Jennie Sweat
Mrs. Lorene Lee
Mrs. Maxine Puegh
Mr. Van Martin
Miss. Barbara Lee Barfield
Miss. Brenda Lancaster
Mrs. Lottie Steedley
Mr. Edgar Martin
Mr. and Mrs. Joe Nettles
Mr. and Mrs. Jack Nettles
Mrs. Betty Nettles

Waycross, Georgia
Waycross, Georgia
Milledgeville, Ga.
Macon, Georgia
Homerville, Georgia
Waycross, Georgia
Rt. 4, Alma, Georgia
Rt. 3, Nicholls, Ga.

Rt. 2, Alma, Georgia
Brunswick, Georgia

Homerville, Georgia
Alma, Georgia
Alma, Georgia
Jacksonville, Fla.
Alma, Georgia

Mrs. Maude Brown

Mrs. Bessie Dennis

Lillie Mae Dennis

Eula Mae Dennis

Harris Dennis

Mr. L. D. Thigpen

Bonnie Sue Dennis

Wallace Dennis

Marvin Dennis

Rt. 3, Nicholls, Ga.

Jacksonville, Fla.

Illinois

Florida

Reidsville

Rt. 3, Nicholls, Ga.

California

Rt. 3, Nicholls, Ga.

MEMBERS DECEASED

Mrs. Leola Sullivan

Joe Dannelly

Georgia Rewis

Rev. V. A. Bailey Sr.

Mrs. Viola Thigpen

Mr. J. W. Dennis

Mrs. Nora Cain

Mr. Estell Sweat

Mrs. Minnie Meeks

Mrs. Lizzie Rewis

Ward Rewis

Mr. O. L. Dennis

PART V

THE
DECORUM
PINE GROVE CHURCH
1894

1. All conferences shall be opened with prayer.
2. This church shall hold its conference monthly on Saturday before the second Sabbath in each month. All members are requested to attend each conference unless hindered by Providence. If any member fail to attend conference for the space of three months he or she shall be waited upon and if they fail to give the committee satisfaction and with a good excuse, they shall be dealt with as a disorderly member for nonattendance. It shall be the duty of the secretary of the church to notify any disorderly members, of the charge against them ten days before the next conference.
3. It is therefore expected of all therein that they shall continue their desire of salvation by doing no harm. It is the duty of all, to lead a moral life especially that which is most generally practiced. Such as taking the name of the Lord in vain, profaning the day of the Lord by doing or ordering work thereon, buying or selling, fighting or quarreling or engaging in unprofitable conversation. Brother going a low with brother. We must not speak evil of magistrates or ministers or doing anything that we know is not for the glory of God.

4. All members shall have the right to a voice in the church conference both male or female. It shall be the duty of all members to be kind to one another, help each other, give food to the hungry, clothes to the naked. Visiting and helping them that are sick or in prison.
5. It shall be the duty of all members to do all that lies in their power to promote the cause of Christ taking Him as their leader.
6. It shall be the duty of the church or leader or deacon to hold his class meetings monthly. He shall have the right to hold a church conference and sit as moderator and that conference shall have the right to take any persons application for membership.
7. It shall be the duty of the secretary to attend each conference and keep all records of all transactions of business.
8. All trials must be conducted on gospel rules, the majority present rules in all cases. It is the duty of the church to have a communion every three months, feet washing connected as a privilege.

Ordinance

H. J. Thompson

Note: Taken from the original minutes of the Pine Grove Church from the year 1892 through 1937.

PART VI

The History of the Formation of
The New Congregational Methodist Church
First Thursday in December 1881
Pinevally District - Pine Grove Church
Bacon County, Georgia

At the Fourth Quarterly Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Waresboro Mission held at Hoboken, Georgia, September 17, 1881, the presiding elder, in what appeared to some as a prearrangement, asked the delegates to approve the following resolutions:

RESOLUTIONS FOR THE CONSOLIDATION OF CHURCHES, FOURTH QUARTERLY CONFERENCE, WARESBORO MISSION, HELD AT Hoboken, Georgia, September 17, 1881.

Mr. President:

Whereas, It is understood that the Missionary Board will withdraw the aid annually made to this Mission for some years past at the close of this Conference year; and,

Whereas, Some of the churches in this Mission do not appreciate the word, nor have the self-respect to try and adequately help sustain the preaching of God's word by giving liberally for the support of the Pastor and the other works of the Church; therefore, be it

Resolved 1st. That the smaller churches be consolidated into one large Church; whenever it can be done, so that the Church can be strengthened; that these small churches can be formed into classes, to be a class of some church; and that the local preachers are requested to be under the supervision of the Pastor, so that there will be

preaching once a month at these churches.

Resolved 2nd. That a Church be organized at Glenmore, to be known as the Glenmore Church.

Resolved 3rd. That the churches, now known as Pinevally and Booth, be now and hereafter known as Pinevally and Booth classes of Glenmore Church.

Resolved 4th. That Kettle Creek and Friendship Churches be now and hereafter known as Kettle Creek and Friendship classes of the Waresboro Church.

Resolved 5th. That permission be granted the Glenmore Church to build a place of worship. (End of Methodist Episcopal Church South Resolutions.)

The passage of the foregoing resolutions, as might have been expected, produced almost universal dissatisfaction among the members of the four churches who had been made, without their knowledge or consent, classes of the Glenmore and Waresboro Churches.

At the suggestion and request of the Rev. Wm. A. McDonald, a local Deacon and a member of Pinevally Church, a delegation of five members from each church, viz: Kettle Creek, Friendship, Booth and Pinevally, was called to convene at Pinevally, Saturday, October 22, 1881. Mount Green, a newly organized church, by Rev. Wm. A. McDonald, that had not been reported to the circuit preacher, also sent a delegation of five members.

After the meeting of the delegates from the said churches, Rev. Wm. A. McDonald, a delegate from Pinevally Church, was chosen chairman, and Wm. A. Thompson secretary of the convention

Rev. Wm. A. McDonald on taking his seat explained that the object of the call for the convention was to take into consideration the action of the last Quarterly Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, of the Waresboro Mission, held at Hoboken, Georgia, September 17, 1881.

The aforesaid conference was composed of but two legal members, Rev. Wm. P. Babcock and D.H. Bennett, besides the pastor of the Waresboro Mission. Rev. W. J. Robertson, and Rev. John M. Marshall, P. E., of the Waycross District, South Georgia Conference.

Rev. Wm. P. Babcock, being a local preacher of but short standing, had but a limited knowledge of the wants or wishes of the membership of the several churches.

D. H. Bennett, secretary of said conference, refused to vote on the resolutions when presented, stating as a reason that he did not know the wishes of the members of the several churches whose membership was to be moved. He did not know even the wishes of his own church at Waresboro on the subject, as the question had never been to his knowledge mentioned.

After various propositions had been submitted to the convention and voted down, D. J. Miller, a delegate from Kettle Creek Church, submitted the following resolution:

Whereas, By the action of the late Quarterly Conference of the Waresboro Mission, we are, unless we accept the terms of the resolutions passed by said conference, no longer members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South;

Resolved, That we withdraw from the M. E. Church, South, and from under the control of the Itinerant Preachers and

South Georgia Conference, and form for ourselves a church government on congregational principles, retaining the same faith and doctrine of the M. E. Church, South.

After some discussion the resolution was adopted by a vote of twenty yeas to four nays, the Chairman not voting.

After the adoption of the resolution, a motion was made and carried to appoint a committee of five, one member from each church, to prepare a form of Discipline and Rules of Government for the church on congregational principles.

The chairman being requested to appoint the committee the following named brethern were chosen:

David J. Miller, from Kettle Creek Church.

J. M. McQuaig, from Booth Church.

G. F. Broxton, from Friendship Church.

Wm. A. Thompson, from Mount Green Church.

Wm. A. McDonald, Jr. from Pinevally Church.

The convention then adjourned to meet again the fourth Saturday in November, 1881, to receive a report of the committee appointed.

The committee met on the following Thursday, and appointed D. J. Miller chairman, with W. A. Thompson secretary, after which they proceeded to business.

With the Discipline of the M. E. Church, South the third edition of the Alabama Congregational Methodist Discipline, and the Holy Bible before them, they made such selections from both Disciplines as suited our peculiar case, retaining the doctrines of the Bible as taught us by our Redeemer and His Apostles after him, as preached and pro-

mulgated to the world by John Wesley, the father of Methodism.

The labors of the committee were concluded by constituting the rules and regulations contained in this Discipline, and presenting them, through the chairman, D. J. Miller, to the convention held the fourth Saturday in November, 1881.

On motion, the report was adopted by a vote of twenty for to one against it. This report, by the action of the convention, is declared to be the Discipline of the New Congregational Methodist Church.

Prefacing the afore stated RESOLUTIONS is this statement taken from page one of the Discipline of The New Congregational Methodist Church printed in 1932, a reprint of an original:

"The following Resolutions are here inserted in order that all who read our Discipline may see for themselves one of the causes why the majority of the members of the following named churches withdrew from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and formed for themselves a Church Government, which is, in its nature, neither tyrannical nor oppressive."

Pinevally according to Aunt Sally Smith, a secretary of the New Congregational Conference and secretary of Salem Church, Route 3, Nicholls, Georgia, included Pine Grove, Glenmore and Salem Churches.

In a letter, postmarked February 17, 1976 from the Rev. Paul Taylor, 2630 Belfort Road, Jacksonville, Florida, he writes as follows:

"The South portion of Georgia's church that split off from the old M. E. Methodist, they named it the Pine Vally

District, New Congregational Methodist and the Florida members named theirs the Lake City District."

The Rev. Paul Taylor of Jacksonville, Florida gave the Historical Society valuable documents, which provided the source of the "Split" of the Pine Grove Church from the Methodist Episcopal Church South.

PART VII

DEED
TO
PINE GROVE NEW CONGREGATIONAL METHODIST CHURCH
BACON COUNTY, GEORGIA
DECEMBER 16th 1907

State of Georgia,
Appling County.

This Indenture made this 16th day of December, 1907, between H. S. Douglas of the State of Georgia, and the county of Ware of the first part and The New Congregational Methodist Pine Grove Church, of the State of Georgia and the County of Appling of the Second part, WITNESSETH, That the party of the second part for the consideration of The Natural Love and Respect he has for the Dead and for Pine Grove Church and for the Cause of Christ, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, hath granted, give and conveyed and by these presents doth grant, bargain, give and convey unto the party of the second part; All That tract or parcel of land lying and being in the 5th land dist. of Appling County, Ga. (3) Three acres, more or less, of lot of land No. 332, bound on East, by Cemetary fence, on South by fence of R. McDonald, West by a certain Road, North by a fence of H. S. Douglas.

To have and to hold the said bargained premises together with all and singular the rights members and appurtenances thereof, to the same being, belonging or in otherwise appertaining to the only proper use benefit and behoof of The New Congregational Methodist Church, of the State of Georgia and County of Appling the said party of the second part, and the

party of the first part for his heirs, executors and administrators, will warrant and forever defend the right and title of the above described property unto the party of the second part, their heirs and assigns against the claims of all persons whomsoever.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the party of the first part hath hereunto set his hand and affixed his seal the day and year, first above written.

Signed, sealed and delivered in presence of: H. S. Douglas (SEAL)

Byron Johnson

Omer Taylor

Levi W. Lee, N.P. an Ex. Off. J.P.

Recorded October 23, 1928. _____,
Clerk

Recorded in Deed Book No. 17, Page 187, Bacon County, Georgia records.

PART VIII

JAMES LEE

James Lee is buried in the oldest marked grave in the cemetery beside the Pine Grove Church. The date of his birth is not shown on his gravestone. His death date is May 5, 1852 (Age 62)

James was born in North Carolina in 1790, according to Mr. Huxford, genealogist of Homerville, Georgia. He was the son of John Lee, a Revolutionary Soldier, who is buried in Bethel Church Cemetery south of Homerville, Georgia.

James came with his parents to Appling County about 1819-1820. He soon married Cinderella Sellars, a daughter of Samuel and Mary Sellars.

The old homeplace of Mr. Lee was about four miles south of Alma, Bacon County, Georgia in the Pine Grove Section of the County. He was a faithful member of the Pine Grove Church and is credited with giving the land originally to the church.

Mr. Lee was Justice of the Peace in the 456th District, Appling County, 1825-1829. He can be found in the Appling County Census records of 1830, 1840, and 1850.

To Mr. and Mrs. Lee were born thirteen known children: Tobitha, Mary, Leannie, Cinderella, Thurseley Ann, Eliza, Keziah C. Margaret E. and Sophronia. Five of the girls married Taylors. Their four sons were: Sellars, Thomas Peyton, James Monroe and Eli Warren.

Leannie who married James Taylor were the founders of

the Elizabeth Chapel Church near their homeplace. Eliza with her husband Gordon Stewart Taylor moved to Baker County Florida and after resettling in their new land founded the Pine Grove Church there and named it for their mother church in Georgia. James and Cinderella are the ancestors of a large Taylor-Lee family connections in the Southeast area of Georgia.

CINDERELLA SELLARS LEE
WIFE OF
JAMES LEE

Cinderella Sellars was the daughter of Samuel Sellars and a granddaughter of Samuel Sellars Sr., a Revolutionary Soldier. Her mother was Mary Bishop. Cinderella was born in Effingham County, Georgia, May 8, 1803.

Her father with his brother John first moved from Effingham County to Tattnall County and as soon as land opened up to settlers in Appling County they moved with their families there.

Cinderella met James Lee soon after James came with his parents to Appling County, about 1819-20, according to Mr. Huxford, Genealogist of Homerville, Georgia. They married and to them were born thirteen known children.

Mrs. Lee is buried beside her husband in the cemetery at the Pine Grove Congregational Methodist Church in Bacon County, Georgia. Her grave is marked: Cindarella Lee, May 8, 1803, December 8, 1885.

PART IX

Pine Grove Congregational Methodist Church
Taylor, Florida
Baker, County

Gordon Stewart Taylor, donated land and is credited by his descendents as being the organizer of Pine Grove Congregational Methodist Church in Taylor, Florida. Mr. Taylor moved his family from the Pine Grove section of Bacon County, Georgia in 1867, to an area of pine lands on the back side of the Okeefeenokee Swamp, just beyond the St. Mary's River and into Baker County, Florida.

There he and his wife, Eliza Lee, whom he married in Georgia in February 1851 settled and built a log home. The story as handed down by descendants tells of how Eliza worked by the side of her husband carrying her part of the load until the very large log house was completed. Oxen and "scooters" were used to bring the logs to their homestead site.

Mr. Taylor was known throughout the years as a very religious and God loving man and it was the natural thing for him to very soon turn his thoughts, his time and energy to build a place of worship for his family and the descendants which were destined to be.

Not too much is known about the beginning of the Baker County, Florida Church organized by Mr. Taylor, other than it was named "Pine Grove" for the family's mother church back in the Pine Grove Section of Appling (now Bacon) County, Georgia, and that a Preacher Wolf was the first pastor. Research into the history of the Pine Grove Church in Appling County, Georgia would tend to place the original Florida

Pine Grove Church in the Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church South prior to 1881. It was not until 1881, that the Georgia Church split from the Methodist Episcopal Church South and formed the New Pine Grove Congregational Methodist Church. If the Florida Church was organized after 1881, it can be assumed that it was organized and is today a New Congregational Methodist Church.

The Rev. Paul Taylor of Jacksonville, Florida, a minister in the Congregational Church many years ago, says that member churches of the Georgia District of the New Congregational Methodist Church were originally members of the Pinevailly District and the Florida Churches were members of the Lake City District.

The church today is located a short distance from the little village of Taylor, Florida. Residents of the village receive their mail from the post office in Sanderson, Florida, Rural Route Number 3.

The church is located under a grove of old and large oak trees. It is a neat, well kept, and substantial house of worship as may be found in any rural area of South Georgia and Northern Florida. There is a large covered shelter of picnic tables nearby for "dinner on the ground" and other occasions as the Gordon Stewart Taylor family reunion held annually the first Sunday in June.

Nearby is the Taylor Cemetery, the resting place for the Taylors, Crews, Johns, Dowlings, DeLettres, Waters, Johnstons and other names reminiscent of Old Southeast Georgia families.

The village of Taylor, Florida, the Pine Grove New Congregational Methodist Church and the Taylor Cemetery, adjoining one to the other may be reached by travelling twelve miles to the east of McClenney, Florida on State Route number 125, via Glen St. Mary's, Florida.

PART X

Gordon Stewart Taylor
Baker County, Florida

Mr. Taylor was born July 14, 1830 in Georgia, the son of John Taylor and the grandson of William Taylor. William was the son of Henry Taylor a Revolutionary Soldier.

Gordon's father, John, was born 1795 in Montgomery County, Georgia and married Gordon's mother Matilda Gray in Emanuel County, Georgia in 1813. She was born in 1796 in Georgia.

Gordon had the following brothers and sisters: (1) William (2) Mary Ann (3) Lewis (4) Jacob Thomas (5) Matilda (6) James S. (7) John B.

Gordon and his brother Lewis married two of the daughters of James Lee of the Pine Grove section of Appling County, Georgia. Lewis married Tobitha and Gordon married Eliza Ann.

Gordon moved with his father, mother and family from Emanuel to Appling County, Georgia and settled in the third district. About twenty years later the family moved to the fifth land district of Ware County and bought a farm. There Gordon met Eliza Lee daughter of James Lee, and they were married in February, 1851.

Gordon S. Taylor enlisted in the Confederate Army, at Tebeauville on April 25, 1862 in Co. F. (Ware Guards), 26th Georgia Regiment. He was elected First Sergeant the next year. He was discharged near Orange County Courthouse, Virginia on April 4, 1864. On January 6, 1864 he was elected Tax Collector and Receiver of Tax Returns of Ware County.

Upon discharge Mr. Taylor assumed his elected office and served in that capacity for two years.

Gordon S. Taylor died on February 18, 1902 in Baker County, Florida and is buried in the Taylor Cemetery beside the Pine Grove New Congregational Methodist Church in Taylor, Florida.

On January 27, 1904 Eliza Lee Taylor applied for a Confederate's widows pension. She stated that she and Gordon S. Taylor were married in February 1851. She further declared that they moved to Baker County from Georgia in 1867. She stated that Gordon S. Taylor died February 18, 1902.

PART XI

Eliza Lee Taylor
Wife of
Gordon Stewart Taylor
Baker County, Florida

Eliza Ann Lee was born in Appling County, Georgia December 7, 1833, the daughter of James Lee and Cinderella Sellers. She was the granddaughter of John Lee a Revolutionary Soldier.

Eliza Ann had eight sisters, five of whom married Taylors. She married Gordon Stewart Taylor in February 1851. Her sisters were: (1) Tobitha, (2) Mary (3) Leannie, (4) Cinderella (5) Thursay Ann (6) Margaret E. (7) Sophronia, and (8) Keziah C. Tobitha, Mary, Leannie, Sophronia and Eliza married Taylors.

Her brothers were: (1) Sellars, (2) Thomas Peyton, (3) James Monroe, and (4) Eli Warren.

Eliza met and married Gordon Stewart Taylor in the area of the Pine Grove section of Appling County, after her husband served as a Tax Collector and Receiver of Ware County, the family moved in 1867 to Baker County, Florida. She helped her husband build their log home and helped him organize the Pine Grove Church there, named for their mother church in Georgia.

Mrs. Taylor yearned to visit her family in Georgia and as the story is told by her descendants she made plans for a visit. She would travel by horse and cart. She loaded the cart with quilts, corn meal, grits, canned food and all the supplies needed for the long journey back home to Georgia. The Taylor descendants said that their "third Uncle John" went with her. They would sleep on the ground at night, replenish their food supply with fish and animals killed along

the trip. They travelled about eight or ten miles a day. How many of her children went along on the trip is not known.

Mrs. Taylor returned to Florida after her visit, her husband died in 1902, preceding her death by eight years. She died January 6, 1910 and is buried by her husband in The Taylor Cemetery, Taylor, Florida.

On January 27, 1904 Mrs. Lee applied for a Widows Pension, as a widow of her husband, a Confederate Soldier.

As best as can be determined Mrs. Taylor was the only child of the James Lee family of their generation to move away from the Pine Grove section of South Georgia. The multitude of the Gordon S. Taylor and Eliza Lee descendants, majority of whom are residents of Florida, can claim kinship to the Taylors and Lees of Southeast Georgia, Bacon, Appling and Ware Counties. The writer in researching the history of the two Pine Grove Churches travelled to Taylor Florida and met for the first time, second cousins, she being a granddaughter of Gordon's wife's sister, Sophronia.

The Gordon S. Taylor and Eliza Lee family reunion is held annually the first Sunday in June. The antecedents of the Taylor-Lees in Southeast Georgia are encouraged to attend this reunion.