

HISTORY OF THE POWELTON, GA. METHODIST CHURCH.
MAYFIELD CHARGE***** AUGUSTA DISTRICT.

Powelton, as a community, is one of the older settlements of the State, and its history dates back to the era of Revolutionary War days, or probably before that time. It is said that when the matter of moving the State capitol to Milledgeville was to be voted on Powelton was also being considered as the location of the capitol, and lost by only two votes. The writer can not vouch for the truth of this statement, however.

Among the former citizens of the community were the Herndons, Wheelers, Whaleys, Barksdales, Millers, Veaseys, Seales, Coopers, Rockers, Herfels, etc., of whom many of their descendents are still in the community. The Jernigans also comprised a large part of the inhabitants, and their descendents are numbered among the prominent ones of many cities and sections of the country.

One of the most notable citizens of the community was the Reverend Jesse Mercer, who founded the old school at Penfield, Ga., and who afterwards founded Mercer University, in Macon, which bears his name.

The Baptist Church preceded the establishment of the Methodist Church, and the first Baptist Convention was organized at Powelton.

The first item of the history of the Methodist Church that could be found is taken from Masonic files from a letter written March 29, 1825 by V. D. Hinton relating a visit to Powelton in behalf of the Masonic Lodge. He tells of making " a public address in the Methodist meeting house. In this same letter he tells of a visit to the community by General LaFayette. There are a few grave stone in the cemetery dated 1802 and 1803, which makes it evident that the Church was in existence prior to 1800. ✓

The next date, 1863, tells of another building being a plainer building than the one existing at that time, lighted with candles around the walls, and surrounded by a large oak grove. The later building is the present Church building, and it has just been completely repaired, recovered and repainted (this in 1950- 51), and is good for many more years.

The first pastor of available records was Rev. J. V. M. Morris, a bachelor who frequently lectured the mothers on methods of rearing their boys. The next was Captian Talley, who suffered much from an open wound received in the Civil war. In the fall of 1865 Brother Talley had Bishop Geo. F. Pierce, Dr. Lovic Peirce and Rev. John W. Knight assist in the greatest revival in the history of the Church. The record states that "these devout and able ministers of grace, full of zeal and the Divine Sprit, delivered to the people here great messages of a real salvation from sin that may be experienced and known by all who come to the Father through faith in Jesus Christ. That which they had received and enjoyed they offered to those who waited upon their teaching, etc." ✓

In 1870 a revival was held by Rev. W. P. Pledger, with Bro. Brown as pastor, in which I. K. Waller was converted, and who subsequently became the first minister of record to go out from the Church. Another great revival in the Church was in 1871, when Rev. A. C. Thomas was pastor.

Others who served as pastors were Revs. Breadlow, Timmons, M. H. Eakes, George H. Pattillo, Geo. E. Bonner, J. R. King, Will King, J. E. England, C. C. Carey, B. E. L. Timmins, J. W. G. Watkins, A. G. Worley, J. R. Lewis, H. A. Norman, Crawford Jackson, A. C. Cantrell, W. I. Delph, J. R. Speer, M. L. Twiggs, Eugene Reynolds, John Jones, A. E. Echols, Bros. Verdelle, Wells, Milton, Clark, Pattillo, C. A. Hall, W. J. Culpepper, H. E. Stipe, C. A. Reese, J. Shill, C. A. Daugherty, W. M. Strozier, J. A. Lankford, T. E. Sherwood, L. G. Hendrix, L. J. Coe, L. S. Baugh, A. M. Sibley, George F. Wright, 1942 - 1951.

Many devout and faithful men and women have, since this Church was organized, blessed the world with faithful service and zeal as Christians.

More recent revival was held in the Church in 1921, during the pastorate of Bro. W. J. Culpepper, when the Church sent out another convert as a minister, Rev. Walker W. Whaley. Brother Whaley graduated from Young Harris College and joined the North Georgia Conference. He afterwards transferred to the South Georgia Conference and at present time (1951) is a valuable minister in that Conference.

It seems that Sunday Schools were intermittently held over the years, and there has been no Sunday School since 1941, with Brother George Rocker being the last superintendent. The reason for discontinuing the School being not enough to continue it.

The membership of the Church, which at one time numbered well over one hundred has dwindled to only eight at this time, with only five of these being resident members. Most of these are old people who are rarely able to attend services, especially at night. There are no prospects for an increase in membership.

The once proud community of Powelton has almost become a ghost-town, with the most of its buildings practically fallen down or in the act of doing so, and only a few scions of early generations left to carry on. Of these few it can be truly said that they are among the finest people to be found anywhere, and the service of our great Church will be extended them as long as the present pastor is continued on this charge.