This is the history of the Rico Methodist Church as compiled by R.A. Mixon duly appointed Historical Steward. First events are from members of church when it was in its infancy, now living in other places.

When R.G. Mixon moved his small but ever growing family from Palmetto, where he was a Steward in the M.E. Church, to the Old Shady Lewis or Geaty Herndon Place, he soon learned that there were several Methodist families there but the closest Methodist Church was 5 or 6 miles away and the roads and ways of travel made it almost impossible to attend Church except in the summer time. It was soon arranged to have cottage meetings with the pastor from Palmetto Church on the Rivertown Road named Liberty Hill and New Hope. Most of his members from there lived here so he found that here administering to his original flock as well as new people. So the Rev. Frank Qullian soon decided with Mr. Mixon that Rico needed a Church. At the District Conference in June 1902, Rev. Qullian was granted permission to organize a new Church at Rico. He at once appointed R.G. Mixon as Chairman of operations because he said later that Brother Mixon could not take no for an answer when approaching anyone for money for the Lord's work. Mr. W.J. Shannon whose membership was at Liberty Hill owned quite a bit of land around Rico where today are several small farms and homes, donated one acre of land adjoining the Baptist Church property, because he thought the two Churches should harmonize and cooperate and could do so better by being joined together in earth as well as in heaven. He then donated a strip of land containing a half acre running parallel to the Baptist cemetery to be used as a cemetery. There is no clause to this deed but to the 1 acre where the Church stands, he stated that when it ceased to be used as a Church it would revert back to his heirs and estate. These deeds are recorded in Book N, Page 463, Old Clerks Office, dated Aug. 6, 1902. Although the original ones were destroyed by fire which destroyed my home, a photo-stat copy can be had by paying for same. The deeds are made to R.G. Mixon and their successors as trustees in office. Mr. Mixon appointed the above trustees to help raise funds for the New Church as it was during the depression years and there was not much money, so trees or labor was donated instead. The logs were cut and hauled to Mr. Tom Reeves saw mill where he cut the lumber as his donation. The shingles were cut by Mr. Jethro Jones as his donation.

The Eskew Lumber Co. in Newnan gave the doors and windows, R.D. Cole, Mfg. Co., gave one of their wood heaters and brick for flue. Rev. Qullian through contact with Charlie Tillman secured the organ from the Estey Organ Co. The one big brass lamp hung in the middle of the Church came from the old Liberty Hill Church. The bell in the belfry also came from the old Liberty Hill Church about 25 years later. Rico Methodist Church South, was dedicated on May 3, 1903 by the Bishop of the North Georgia Conference and put in the La Grange District on the Union City Charge. No one seems to remember who the Bishop at that time was. It was debt free when dedicated and always has been. It has always been her policy to raise the money and then buy what is needed. I learned that she stands as a dividing line between the members of Liberty Hill to the North East and New Hope to the South East, so when the Bishop gave the invitation for members there were 46 people who moved their letters from Palmetto, New Hope, and Liberty Hill. Liberty Hill was already so weak they were considering disbanding, so at the General Conference of 1903 Rev. Qullian
secured permission to transfer the remaining members to Rico. This was
done in January following The General Conference. The first members on
the day of the Dedication were; Mr. & Mrs. Mixon and children, Mr. & Mrs.
W. F. Shannon and family, Mr. & Mrs. George Green and family, Mr. & Mrs.
Russell Daily, Mr. & Mrs. E.A. Camp & family, Mrs. J.A. Jones, Mrs. J.C.
Smith, a Bagwell family, part of the Reeves family, Mr. W.H. Reeves, Mr. H.W.
Reeves. There were several other families of Reeves, some were Methodist,
some never moved their letters from New Hope. Mrs. Oatio Gullatt, some of
her children, Mrs. R.H. Barnes, a large family of Laird's and most all of
three Gaddy families. It is not known who or when the first person to unite
on profession of faith but her last addition was Miss Patsy Reeves, daugh-
ter of Mr. & Mrs. E.F. Reeves, one the first Sunday in Oct., 1953. So far
as is known, the oldest member(living) is Mrs R.H. Barnes who moved her mem-
bership from New Hope on that first memorable day in 1903. She is 81 years
old. Her youngest member is Miss Sarah Mixon, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. R.A.
mixon, Granddaughter of the afore mentioned R.G. Mixon, she joined in Oct.
of 1952 at the age of eight and a half. Rico grew very fast for the
first years of it's life so reach a membership of 165 with a Sunday School
of 125 average attendance, but in the last few years it has struggled with
as low as 21 members but now it is gaining ground again having received six
new members in the last two years with only one death. It has been said
that more Emory students have learned to preach to her congregation than
any other Church in the Conference. A partial list of pastors are; Frank
Quillian, George P. Garry, George W. Barrett, J.W. Spear, R.W. Lunsford,
W.W. Cash, George E. Summers, D.P. Nelson, Zack Hayes, J.D. Swagerty, C.E.
Statham, Henry Bullock, R.L. Royal, J.W. Harrison, Robert Stewart, C.J.
Grille, Victor Hitcock, L.H. Cash and R.W. Langley. Most of these men
were from other CONFERENCES going to school at Emory and they
needed extra money and experience. Mrs. J. A. Jones and Mrs. R.H. Barnes
are all of the first members who are living, who have kept their membership
at Rico, there are others who are still living but they have moved their
membership at Rico to some other Church. The stewards elected in the be-
ginning were R.G. Mixon and E.A. Camp, both served until their deaths only
a few years ago and without any others until 1931, Mr. Camp said they were
both getting old and he thought others should be trained. R.A. Mixon and
W.H. Reeves were elected, Mr. Reeves soon moved away and B.P Johnston was
in his place. Johnston moved away in and in his stead was Mrs. Guy Reeves.
The official roll now consists of R.A. Mixon, Mrs. Guy Reeves, J.V. Melear,
Mrs. T.E. Stegens and Carl Crouch. There is no record of but one marriage
having been performed in the Church, that of R.A. Mixon and Eva Ingram by
L.H. Cash on Dec. 6, 1942 after the moring services were held. Rico
has been recoved twice since being build, it has been repainted, once out-
side in 1943, and we now have money in the treasury for another out side
paint job. The inside walls stayed the natural wood color till 1923 when
it was walnut stained. In 1937 R.E.A. came through and electric lights
replaced the old kerosene lamps. In 1950 we repainted the inside and
gave it a two tone color. We replaced the drop cord lights with non-glare
chandeliers. We replaced the clear glass doors and windows with multiple
color painted glass making the inside very attractive. In 1952 we replaced
the old wood heaters with two thermostat controlled propain gas burning
floor furnaces, also underpinned the whole house with cement blocks. We
feel that we are keeping the Stewardship handed down to us to the best of
our ability. We hope that now with paved roads coming our way that Rico
will continue to grow and much more good may be accomplished. I was asked
when collecting the part of 50 years ago, how was Mr. Shannon's idea of
harmonizing with the sister church by having their earthly possessions
joined working out? Now 50 years later, it has been said, that there is no other place on earth where the Methodist and Baptist cooperate as well as they do at Rico Methodist and Providence Baptist. The Methodist preacher sometimes preaches at the Baptist Church and the Baptist preacher preaches sometimes at the Methodist Church to the same people at both Churches. The Methodist Church has always had the 1st Sunday has it's meeting day, and when Sunday School is over at the Baptist Church, there is always a good crowd that comes across to the Methodist Church to worship with us. Rico can't boast of any missionaries having come from her members. But the Rev. D.P. Nelson left her pastorate to go to Europe as a missionary. She can't boast of any of her converts becoming preachers, but so far as is known, Rev. Raymond Melear's membership was in our Church until he became a member of the General Conference. He came to us with his father and sister, when they moved to Rico from Newman. Rico has always paid her pastor what she promised him. Rico has always been a problem child the EW Conference, they never seem to know what to with it as she has been changed back and forth from one district to another and one charge to another till the conference thought they had her whipped down, so their last straw was to make a charge out of Campbellton and Rico and placed R.W. Langley as their pastor and told him to see what he could do. With Rev. Langley at the helm backed by the people of Rico, it is still kicking and hopes the Conference will leave her to rest as the set up now is. She was founded as a more convienent place to worship, not through conflict or enmity on any ones part. May she ever stand as a living place of guidance to all those about her.

Respectfully submitted:
R.A. Mixon, Chairman Board of Stewards.
Historical Steward.

P.S. Mrs. S.L. Lewis of Fairburn, Ga., daughter of Mr. W.J. Shanon, who helped prepare this history requests a copy of this be sent to her and also one to be retained by Historian (whose record was destoryed by fire) to be kept for further reference. R.A. Mixon.