

1972 Labovage Dist
Centrahatchee Chgo

Heard Cty.

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Centrahatchee

SALEM METHODIST CHURCH, FRANKLIN CIRCUIT

(Originally compiled in June 1934 by Dorothy Lipham from information given by the following: Messrs. L. F. Davis, John Lipham, J. L. Thompson, Cornelius Hardy, T. J. Hyatt and Miss Polly Anne Cosby; amended and brought up to date in May 1953.)

Looking back into the early history of Salem Church there are names that stand out plainly, evidencing a strong religious faith and a devout spiritual life on behalf of their bearers. Alexander Daniel, Sam and Jack Kite, Garland Cosby, Abraham Thompson, Elisha Hyatt, Peter Crews - to these and others we owe the beginning of Salem Church. From the best possible sources of information, it seems that people have been gathering at Salem since about 1844 although no definite date has been found. 114

Garland Cosby deeded the first five acres of land to the trustees of Salem Church probably between 1840 and 1844 to be used as the location for a meeting house, grave yard, and school building. The record of this deed was lost and Alexander Daniel who had bought the Cosby farm renewed the deed. This second deed was burned when the Court House at Franklin was destroyed by fire. L. F. Davis and Samuel Simonton, who had then come in possession of the land, again renewed the deed which still stands.

There have been two church buildings erected at Salem. The logs for the first were hewn by Peter Crews and Elisha Hyatt. These were mortised and pinned together. For years the church had no glass windows and no ceiling. There was neither fire place nor stove flue in the old church.

After the establishment of the church a camp meeting was started at Salem. It seems that this camp ground was established during the War Between the States and lasted several years. In the minutes of the North Georgia Conference in 1871, there is mentioned a camp ground with twenty tents. The Reverend J. J. Little and the Reverend C. B. Oliver were pastors at that time. It is possible and very

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probable that the camp ground to which reference was made was the Salem Camp Ground, since allusion to Flat Rock Camp Ground was not made until 1878. Prior to the Salem Camp Ground there was a camp meeting held near Franklin between the site of the old Valley Grove Primitive Baptist Church and Bevis' Cross Roads. There were a brush arbor and two rows of tents at the old Salem Camp Ground. The tents were built in a line north of and parallel with the present path to the spring. Some of those who tented were Sam Kite, Jack Kite, Preacher Brickell, brother-in-law to Sam Kite, Sallie Kite Hardy, Reuben Garrett, Dr. Peddy, and Preacher Meacham. Other ardent supporters who lived near the camp ground and either attended in steer carts, or horse-back or on "foot-back" were Alexander Daniel, Abraham Thompson, Luke Bell, Garland Cosby, Bob Hightower, Jack Walls, Johnson Crews, and others. For a long time the horse block stood at the right front of the old church. ✓

Although there was no organized woman's society at Salem in the old days, some of the most faithful and devoted members of the church were women. Amanda McCombs Daniel, Patsy Thompson, Sallie Hardy, Jennie Echolds, Mrs. Douglas, Mrs. Golden, Mrs. Cosby and Mrs. Sam Kite conducted prayer-meetings and ministered to the physical needs of those early church-goers.

Immediately after the surrender, two outstanding preachers were Tom Turner and Bill Striplin. The amount paid each year to the support of the pastors was usually between \$25.00 and \$30.00.

The first grave which was dug in Salem Cemetery was that of Lowdusky Thompson, the young daughter of Abraham and Patsy Thompson, who died before the War Between the States. Some of the first tombs erected are hand hewn of flat rocks and sheets of granite obtained from the site of the present Flat Rock Camp Ground. The tombs of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew McCombs are two of the earliest tombs placed in the cemetery.

During the War Between the States and immediately following, there was a one-room school building erected near the church. Prior to this time summer schools had been held in the church. In the first year after the war, the Blue Back Speller was gradually replacing the Old Confederate Spelling Book. Grown men with bearded faces attended the school taught by Tim Pittman and learned their A, B, C's. Names familiar to a later generation of church-goers were included in the roster of that school: Bud Harden, Jim Thompson, the Watts brothers and T. J. Hyatt ^{and} L. F. Davis, who were then little boys.

After the old church had been used for many years the members decided a new church was needed. About 1908, during the pastorate of the Reverend Benson, a new church was erected. The timber was given by L. F. Davis; the use of the saw mill by Dr. John Daniel; the actual sawing by Ed Hammond and Ben Hardy; and the dressing of the lumber by J. L. Thompson, not to mention the offerings of money given by various members of the church. The church was erected by John M. Levens, contractor, with Samuel T. Jackson as building foreman. The structure as first erected was a large one-room weather-boarded building. About 1920, five Sunday School rooms were added, and a piano was bought to replace the old organ.

Later ornamental fencing was purchased to enclose the cemetery which has grown from one lone grave placed there in ante-bellum days to the final resting place of several hundreds of people who have loved Salem Church and been interested in its growth and development at various periods.

Memorial plantings of shrubbery have been placed around the church building and on the grounds which have been graded and grassed. Concrete steps have been placed at the front of the church. A butane heating system has been installed to replace the old wood burning heater.

In 1951 a new roof was placed on the church and Sunday School rooms. During the latter part of 1952 and in 1953 the main church auditorium has been completely remodeled. The overhead ceiling was covered with celotex, the interior walls were

pine paneled and the wood work was done in matching pine, all made from original timbers donated by Owen C. Davis, Hope H. Davis and Thomas A. Lipham, Sr. Offerings of money made by various members and friends of the church have made the completion of the project possible. Based on the generosity of the Callaway Foundation, LaGrange, Georgia, hardwood floors were added. Fourteen stained glass memorial windows were installed. A contract has been made for a stained glass window to be installed back of the pulpit depicting Christ in Gethsemane. The church is now a place of beauty of which its members may be justly proud. The sentimental value of the church was enhanced by the retention of the old pews which were recut, redressed, and varnished in clear varnish to match the other woodwork.

The Reverend J. C. Adams has served the church faithfully and well from 1931 to 1953.