HISTORY

of

THOMASTON SILVERTOWN METHODIST CHURCH
The Methodists of Silvertown, a textile village located one mile north of Thomaston, Upson County, Georgia, and owned by B. F. Goodrich Company, look with pride upon their record of achievement.

In 1930, a Methodist organization began and on August 3, the following became charter members of Silvertown Methodist Church: Mrs. Ida Oglesbee, Mrs. Alice Oglesbee, Levert Oglesbee, Mrs. Alberta Oglesbee, J. A. Oglesbee, Mrs. Sarepta Lord, Mrs. Mary Ferguson, John Q. Sheppard, R. W. Watson, Mrs. Carrie Watson, Mollie Watson, Amos A. Watson, Rosanell Arnold (Mrs. E. R. Barrett).

Services were first held in private homes and in the theater. Later the local school was used as a meeting place. The following pastors of Hightower Memorial Church served the Silvertown congregation: Rev. John B. Tate (1930), Rev. W. H. Gardner (1930-1931), Rev. G. H. Stone (1931-1932), Rev. MacLowery Elrod (1932-1933).

Rev. B. H. McHan became the appointed pastor of Silvertown Church in November, 1933. A beautiful building with a seating capacity of four hundred was erected by B. F. Goodrich Company who retained ownership of the church and lot. The Company also provided a parsonage. Both buildings were furnished by the people. Rev. McHan was untiring in his efforts to get the church ready for occupation. However, when the building was opened for worship on July 29, 1934, Rev. McHan was not able to be present. He had been struck with lightning a few days previous when he was returning to his home from Atlanta.

The very first service in the new church marked the beginning of a two weeks' revival conducted by Rev. J. A. Roundtree, pastor of the Morris Memorial Methodist Church, Macon. By the end of that first year, one hundred and two members had been received.

Quite remarkable is the fact that each of the fifteen persons who composed the first official board, could be called upon consistently to pray in public. They were: B. H. McHan, pastor; W. A. Hanson; W. E. Garrett; Mrs. Lucile McClure; J. J. Sisk; R. K. Gaylor; Mrs. R. K. Gaylor; A. O. Post; Mrs. Ida Oglesbee; J. C. Thompson; Mrs. Hubert Duncan; Mrs. W. E. Garrett; Mrs. Jesse Kelley; Mrs. Asa Knowles; S. C. McDaniel.

A Sunday School was started during the early days of the church history and provided a valuable center of Christian education. W. A. Hanson was the first superintendent.

The importance of youth work was recognized and on October 1, 1930, Silvertown Epworth League was chartered. This group later became the Methodist Youth Fellowship.

The Woman's Missionary Society was organized in June, 1933, with Rev. MacLowery Elrod presiding. Mrs. Hubert
Duncan was elected president. Other charter members in¬cluded: Mrs. Asa Knowles, Mrs. J. E. Shurley, Mrs. W. A. Hanson, Mrs. MacLowery Elrod.

Rev. C. A. Reece was assigned as pastor of the church in 1934 and served until 1937.

Rev. C. M. Rogers, who was pastor in 1938, was followed by Rev. J. E. Holbrook, who served until 1942.

That this church sent out a Baptist preacher is both interesting and unique. In 1940, J. C. Elliott left to become pastor of the local Baptist church.

A Hammond electric organ, the gift of Albert Matthews, was installed early in 1942.

From 1942 until 1944, Rev. E. A. Scott was pastor of the church. In the year 1944-1945, Rev. T. C. Ford served as pastor.

The period, 1930-1941, was marked with steady growth and interest. During the war, 1941-1945, there was a time of general unrest when many of the church leaders moved away. However, the few active members left, held on with determination and won the victory over discouragement.

Rev. C. H. Thomas, the present pastor, was assigned to the work in 1945.


The Silvertown Methodists have always considered it a privilege to be a part of the great Griffin District of the North Georgia Conference. Continually they have thanked God for the wonderful leadership of their District Superintendents: Rev. W. T. Hunnicutt (1933-1935), Rev. W. M. Twiggs (1935-1939), Rev. R. L. Russell (1939-1942), Rev. M. M. Maxwell (1942-1943), (Rev. Maxwell's term was shortened because of his death), Rev. A. M. Pierce (1944), Rev. Paul A. Turner (1944-1949), and Rev. Henry H. Jones (1949-).

Throughout the years, revival services have kept alive the spirit of evangelism. Among the outstanding leaders who have spoken from Silvertown Methodist pulpit is Bishop Arthur J. Moore.

At the present date, May 1950, Silvertown Methodist Church stands as a lighthouse pointing men and women, boys and girls to the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world".

The membership numbers three hundred sixty-six, and the various departments and organizations are faithful in their ministry to the needs of the community.
Comparisons are revealing. During the first conference year, 1933-1934, the financial report was:

- Presiding Elder ---- Apportioned $ 20.00 --- Paid $ 20.00
- Pastor ---- Apportioned 500.00 --- Paid 500.00
- General and Conference Work ---- Apportioned 80.00 --- Paid 22.00
- Superannuate Endowment ---- Paid 2.00

Grand total raised during year --- $ 3,689.00

During the present conference year which will end in June, 1950, the financial report includes:

- Pastor ---- Apportioned $ 1800.00 -- Paid $ 1800.00
- District Sup't. -- Apportioned 180.00 -- Paid 180.00
- Episcopal Fund --- Apportioned 31.50 -- Paid 31.50
- Conference Claims ---- Apportioned 216.00 -- Paid 216.00
- Supplementary Salary Apportioned 54.00 -- Paid 54.00
- Superannuate Endowment Paid 406.00
- Benevolences --- Apportioned 366.00 -- Paid 366.00
- Mission Special --- Apportioned 200.00 -- Paid 200.00

Grand total raised for all causes $ 5,484.00

Christ once said to a servant, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled". This suggestion is being put into action by the Silvertown church. A school bus has been purchased and, operated by volunteer drivers, it goes out and brings the people in to the regular services.

For these twenty years, this institution has gloried in the heritage that belongs to Methodism, and she faces the future with a prayer voiced by Charles Wesley:

"To serve the present age
My calling to fulfill;
O, may it all my powers engage
To do my Master's will".

This information was secured from:

Quarterly Conference Records
Conference Journals
W. S. C. S. Scrapbooks
Clippings from World Outlook
Clippings from Local Newspapers
Conferences with Church Members

Mrs. J. E. Shurley, Historian
C. H. Thomas, Pastor

May, 1950