

History of

S M Y R N A

M E T H O D I S T

C H U R C H

1853-1953

by

Wesley L. Thomas

"Copied by Rev. Hoyt Johnson"
" From 1953 Centennial History "

Smyrna Methodist Church is located on U. S. Highway # 27, five miles north of Carrollton in Carroll County, Georgia; Carrollton Circuit, Rome District, North, Ga. Conference. The exact date of organization is not known, but in Carroll County Deed Book "D", page 308, the deed dated August 8, 1853 is recorded. WILLIAM H SMITH made the deed to W M HARPER, ISHAM HELTON, JOHN ELUM, NORMAN BUTRAN and IRA W JACKSON, Trustees. The Reverend DAVID E STRIPLING, Local Elder, organized the church according to local tradition. His membership was at Smyrna at the time of his death, Aug. 13, 1882, and his grave is in the church yard. He is also accredited with the organization of Stripling Chapel Methodist Church on the Carrollton Circuit, in 1857.

The earliest record of church membership available is a "Class Book" for the year A.D. 1858. It contains the following names (males and females listed separately) S B HAYES, (class leader), WILLIAM EGGNEN (class leader), WILLIAM HARPER, ISHAM HELTON, IRA G JACKSON, BENJAMIN CROWEL, JAMES M HARPER, L S THOMAS (letters that appear to be "P C" follow the name. It is not known whether they mean "Preacher in charge" or not). FRANCIS BUTRAN, MEELEY McKISSACK, WILLIAM JEANS, WILLIAM MOTE, R L GRIFFIN, and SYNTHA HELTON, ELIZABETH BROUGHROW, ARTEMEA JACKSON, MARY McKISSACK, S W WILLIAMS, JULIA A BROUGHROW, HARRET HARPER, MALISSA HARPER, GEORGIA A JACKSON, M ? McKISSACK, EMELY SEWEL, M E WHITEHORN, CATHARINE L WILLIAMS, RACHEL I CROWEL, ELISEBETH GOSDEN, ELISA GOSDEN, SAVINA M HARPER, JANE HAYES, SARAH BUTRAN, MARY M HAYES, TERSA N WILLIAMS, ZELNY BOYD, ELISABETH MICHUM and MARGARET MOTE.

Smyrna has not sponsored another Methodist church, but when a number of Baptists in the community desired to organize a church but lacked a suitable meeting place, the Smyrna building was offered and used for that purpose. A close, cooperative spirit exists to this day between Smyrna Methodist and Pleasant View Baptist churches.

According to local tradition, Mr. Stripling was the first pastor. While not containing all desired information, the church has in its possession "The Complete Church Register." (Published Nashville, Tenn.; Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1882). The title page reads: Smyrna Church, Bowdon Circuit, North Georgia Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church, South." The "Register of Pastors" in this record begins with A J HUGHES, appointed in 1881. The "Register of Members" apparently begins with a revision from the earlier roll as nineteen male members are listed first with the "When Recieved" column blank. It does state that W H SPEER recieved the last two of the list. The name of David Stripling, L.E., heads the list. The first dated reception is that of SEABURN DUKE on March 5, 1882, by A J HUGHES

A few pages over in this book the female members are listed. Here twenty-seven names are recorded without date of reception, but # 21, SARAH L CREEL was recieved by DAVID STRIPLING. ALICE A HARPER, # 28, is dated April 1881, and recieved by W M SPEER. Three others, PATSY TOMAS, E M HARTLEY and MAHALA TOMAS, have ditto marks indicating that they were recieved by Mr. Speer also, but the date column is blank. This roll was continued until 1888, when 44 males and 68 females had been listed. After the revision made that year, 70 names were listed.

It is not clear, but indicated that Smyrna was on the Buchanan Circuit when the 1888 revision of the roll was made. This roll of membership was continued through August 9, 1900, and contains a list of 143 names. (This does not mean that the membership was ever that large. Some of the members on the roll died, transferred, or were suspended or expelled--a common practice during those days.) This roll also provides a list of pastors, almost year by year, during this period.

Another revision recorded in this book is not dated, but was probably made about the turn of the century. Members on roll at the time are listed alphabetically, and the male and female members are combined in one list. Then members are listed chronologically from April 6, 1902 through 1938--up to unification.

The minutes of three church conferences held during 1882 are written on a page of this register. Information from these minutes will be used elsewhere.

Another old record still available is "The Church Conference Record" published in 1884, and contains records of church conferences from February 2nd of that year through May 7, 1933. Not every year is represented, however. Some of the Church Conference minutes were recorded on loose-leaf forms. Those for Dec. 3, 1922, Dec. 3, 1923, and Nov. 1923 have been preserved. Also, the "Minutes of the 2nd Quarterly Conference for the current year, 1894, Bremen, Charge, Carrollton District, North

SMYRNA HISTORY

Georgia Conference, held at Smyrna, May 12, 1894, A W WILLIAMS, P. E., in the chair.

The CARROLLTON CIRCUIT, including SMYRNA, was established in 1896, for which an incomplete set of Quarterly Conference records are available. However, Smyrna has not been a part of that circuit continuously since that date. A letter from a former member (MRS TOMMIE CREEL, AYCOCK, see below) and available records reveal that Smyrna has been included at times in the following: BOWDON CIRCUIT, BREMEN CHARGE, WACO CIRCUIT, BUCHANAN CIRCUIT and CARROLLTON CIRCUIT. It has also been in almost as many Districts: NEWNAN, LAGRANGE, CARROLLTON, And ROME. This fact makes the desired data for this history rather scattered, and, in part, accounts for the incompleteness of list of Pastors and Presiding Elders or (after 1939) District Superintendents.

PASTOR	YEAR(S)	P.E. OR D.S.
DAVID E STRIPLING	1853-65	--
DAVID E STRIPLING	1866-67	--
C TRUSSILL	1868	L J DAVIES
	
WILLIE H SPEER	1880	--
A J HUGHES	1881	--
MILES W ARNOLD	1882	--
JERRY REESE	1883	W H LaPRADE
J V(orN) MYERS	1884-85	W H LaPADRE J F NIXON
ALVIN H DIMPSY	1886	--
JERRY REESE	1887	--
C H LESTER	1888	THOMAS F PIERCE
L D COGGIN	1889-90	THOMAS F PIERCE
J L IVEY	1891	THOMAS F PIERCE
J C EDMONSON	1892	W F COOK
J M CROW	1893	--
J W BAILEY	1894-95	A W WILLIAMS
W T IRVINE	1896-97	A W WILLIAMS
ARTEMUS LESTER	1898	M J COFFER
J S L SAPPINGTON	1899	T J CHRISTIAN
J N MYERS	1900-01	T J CHRISTIAN M J COFFER
G P BRASWELL	1902-03	W R FOOTE
W B DILLARD	1904-05	W R FOOTE S B LEDBETTER
G P BRASWELL	1906	S B LEDBETTER
W J LUKE	1907	S B LEDBETTER
G D FRAZER	1908-09	JOHN S JENKINS
A W WILLIAMS	1910	JOHN S JENKINS
NELSON HINSLEY	1911	W B DILLARD
J T MORGAN	1912	W B DILLARD
J MAX COOK	1913-14	J H(or T) EAKES
G P BRASWELL	1915	--
J MAC COOK	1916-18	--
F R SEABORN	1919	J R KING
Z V HAWKS	1920-21	WASHINGTON T IRVING
G W RIDLEY	1922	W T IRVING
R P TATUM	1923	W T IRVING
B W KILPATRICK	1924	W T IRVING
ZEDIKAH SPEAR	1925	JOHN P IRWIN
BENJAMIN NOONON McHAN	1926-27	J P IRWIN
JESSE LEE VARNER	1928-30	J P IRWIN GEORGE L KING
R ITHAMER JOHNSON	1931	GEORGE L KING
W L JOLLY	1932-33	GEORGE L KING
	1933-36	J W O McKIBNEN
BENJAMIN COMSTOCK MATTERSON	1936-38	HARVEY C HOLLAND
JOHN G LUPO	1939-40	H C HOLLAND W H LaPRADE JR.

SMYRNA HISTORY

ADRIAN WARICK	1941-43	W H LaPRADE JR.
GEORGE THOMAS SHELL	1944-45	B FRANK PIM
J ARTHUR GRIFFIES	1946-48	B FRANK PIM
	1948-50	WILLIS M JONES
CLARENCE L HARRIS	1949-51	DELMA L HAGOOD
WESLEY L THOMAS	1952-53	DELMA L HAGOOD
LAVAUGHN FOSTER	1954	DELMA HAGOOD

These are Presiding Elders as reported in the "History of OLD CAMP METHODIST CHURCH," page 11. While SMYRNA was not on the same Circuit during these years, the District was doubtlessly the same.

ITEMS OF INTEREST SELECTED FROM OLD RECORDS:

From: CLASS BOOK FOR SMYRNA CHURCH

"Dear Bretheren & Sisters, live in peace, 7 the god of love7 peace will be with you . Remember Friday before each Quarryerly meeting on the Circuit, as days of fasting & prayer, for the prosperity of Zion,& for us your Servents who labor with you in the bonds of a peaceful Gospel.
For Conference year 1868

(signed)L J DAVIS P.E.
(signed)C TRUSSIL P.C."

From; A 1894 Quarterly Conference Minutes,

(It being a "nd Q.C., some valuable information for this history is not given,) Held at Smerna May 12th. 1894, A W WILLIAMS, P.E., in the chair. After religious services conducted by P..E. the roll was called, and the following members were present; JW BAILEY P.C. R. FIELDS, G L SUGGS, C R MOTE, TOMMIE CREEL, G P NIXON, S P HARTLEY, W C SHELLNUT, S M DUKE, AND G L McEWEN. C R MOTE was elected Secretary.

There was a written report from the preacher in charge of the number and state of the sunday schools, filed as a supplement, but lost.

Quest.#8 What amount has been raised for the support of the ministry this quarter, and how has it been applied? Ans. Bremen 2.75; Waco 11.45; Pleasant Hill 2.80; Friend Ship .50; Smyrna 4.40;.....21.90, tot. paid P.C.19.05 Paid P.E.2.85.

From the complete Church register(pages used to record minutes of church conferances before book for that purpose was secured.)

Smyrna Church Conference met March 4, 1882 Called roll and revised Stewards report to read 4.00 paid.

Smyrna Church Conference met August 5, 1882 Rev. A J. Hughes Pastor presiding H. M. Harper Sec. called and revised the roll, Pastor explains the duties of the Secretary and the importance of keeping the record correct. Call for report of Sunday School members on roll 60 Average Attendance 35, officers and teachers 6, money raised \$1.75. What is going for the relief of the poor of the church, answer no cause for aid.

Smyrna Church met in conference Oct. 28, 1882 A .J. Hughes P.C. Presiding H.M. Harper Secretary, Pastor report since our last conference , protected services held at several churches 45 recieved on affiliation about 20 by certificate. Some children have been baptized , I have been quite busy most of the time

Submitted A. J. Hughes P.C.

Nov. 3, 1882 Summary of Smyrna Church

Number of members 68 recieved by certificate 12, died 1, paid for support of pastor \$43.50, paid for admissions \$4.60, paid for conference missions \$2.30 paid for

paid for conference clainents \$2.80, paid for Bishops fund \$1.00, parsonage furnishings \$12.00, Church finishing \$21.00, Sunday school \$2.25.

From: THE CHURCH CONFERENCE RECORD

The record of church conferences contain many interesting facts and statements, but lack certain data which would add to a historical account such as this. For example, the earliest available records show that a sunday school was organized and functioning , except during the winter months in some cases, but does not name the superintendent. However, the recoed of church conference , Sunday Jan. 9 1898 is worthy of special mention. The report is as follows: Conference opened with prayer, roll call ommitted.

The following were oppinted class leaders G.P.NIXON , G D COGGINS, J W MCKISSICK GEORGE DONEHO.

Also an Epworth League was organized with the following members
Mrs. Tommie Creel, J N COPELAND L M CARTER AND E T JACKSON

Officers pres. E T JACKSON, First vixe Mrs. Tommie Creel, Corresponding sec.
J N COPELAND Sec. L M CARTER.

ARTEMUS LASSETTER P.C. J L CARTER Sec.

The record is not signed by Sec. in every case, so the following is an incomplete list of persons who have served Smyrna church in that copacity:CHARLES MOTE, C R MOTE TOMMIE CREEL, J C ROBERTSON, J L CARTER, L M CARTER, PAUL MOTE andT I MOTE.

LAND

In addition for 2½ acres more or less made by W H SMITH mentioned above there are two later deeds, One filled in Clerks office, Carroll superior Court at 10 A.M. April 3, 1897, recorded in deed book "Z" folio 597 , made Sept, 30, 1882 states in part:

"Know all men by these present, that I, M T LOTT, for and in consideration of the love I bear for the cause of Christ, and from an earnest desire to promote his heritage on earth, do give and grant, and by these present convey unto, WILLIAM MOTE, S P HARTLEY, HENRY HARPER, BENJAMIN F EDWARDS Trustees of Smyrna Church property, and to their successors in office, all that are partial of land,Containing oneOhalf acre more or less,..."

Another deed for ¼ acre of land , more or less, purchased from Mrs. Sally Lott for \$10.00 Aug. 7, 1925. These two later FEE SIMPLE deeds are in the custody of MR.G V NIXON 1953. The original of the first deed and other early records of the church were lost in a fire which destroyed the home of Mr. G P Nixon years ago.

FIRST BUILDING

The best information available concerning the first building is contained in the letter mentioned earlier from Mrs. TOMMIE CREEL, AYCOCK. As it indicates, the buiding was used for both church and school. Her letter, or story, is entitled:

THE OLD LOG SCHOOL HOUSE ST SMYRNA

Dated, February 9, 1953

"When I was five years old (1876) we moved from Clayton Co. to Carroll Co. The first year we lived at the LEM MILLER place and my father taught school in the old log church across the road from where the church now stands(the front lawn of the present church). It seems to me it was about 20x30 feet. A door on the West side and maybe one on the East side. Not a window do I remsmber. A big wide fire place by which our teacher, Miss KATE MAY sat.Slab benches with peg legs and ne backs. The box spring down the hill was an interesting place. After Miss KATE had taught a few days, one morning she said, 'Children, I have not been doing my duty. I felt I ought to read a chapter and pray each morning.' So she did and weknelt and she taught us to pray. Oh how thankful I am. I cannot tell what a help it has been to me. (Then she lists a number of pupils and where they lived.) Of course you all know UNCLE DAVIE STRIPLING organized SMYRNA. I rember seeing him baptize Ma.

Some of the Pastors: UNCLE DAVIS, REV. WILLIE SPEAR, REV. REESE, REV. DEMPSY. REV. SAPINGTON, REV. COGGINS, REV. LESTER, REV. ARNOLD, REV. MYERS marries us, Rev.IRVINE

Not as they came. When I was small we were in the Bowdon Circuit, then in the Waco Cir. Bremen Cir., and last in the Carrollton Circuit."

Though not complete, the quarterly conference Minutes for the Carrollton Circuit since its organization in 1896 are on file in the Carrollton Circuit parsonage. The Circuit at that time was composed of Old Camp Ground, Concord, Stripling Chapel, and Smyrna, and was part of the Carrollton District. Listed on the roll from Smyrna; G.P. NIXON S.T., TOMMIE CREEL, S.T., PETER HARTLEY, S. T., C.R. MOTE, S.T., & church Sec. SEABORN DUKE TR., W.C. SHELLNUT TR., S.P. HEARTLEY TR., AND G.L. McEWEN S.T. & T.R.,

YEAR BY YEAR ITEMS

1896 The Supt. is not named, but the Sunday School raised \$5.53 for "Cedar Key Suffers." The Precher in charge was paid \$430.45 by the Circuit.

1897 Carrollton Circuit, Carrollton District. G P NIXON S.S. Supt.

1898 County line (now center point) added to Circuit. An EPWORTH LEAGUE organized at SMYRNA with four members, but did not last. Third Q.C. named a committee of two from each church to investigate the matter of a parsonage.

1899 Pastor reported that the Sunday Schools "at SMYRNA and Concord did not suspend during the winter months."

1900 SMYRNA dropped from Carrollton Circuit, Temperance added.

1901 LaGrange District included in the Carrollton area.

1903 Rome District, and thereafter.

1920 SMYRNA returned to Carrollton Circuit, which also included: Stripling's Chapel, Old Camp and Center Point. J L CARTER was S S Supt. & Steward; A D ROGERS & T I MOTE Stewards; G D CREEL, G P & G V NIXON, Trustees. At 4th Q.C. J L CARTER was selected as Arbitrator in reference to division of Waco Parsonage, indicating that SMYRNA was on that Charge for the previous years.

1921 From Pastor's report to Q.C., May 19: "The SMYRNA school has held a Children's day service, and took up a collection for needy Sunday schools of the Church." "We have a Woman's Society at Center Point, and a Young Peoples Missionary Society at SMYRNA."

1922 Clem added to Circuit. Pastor reported to 2nd Q.C., SMYRNA is an evergreen Sunday School if they don't go into singing quarters this summer. I want suffer myself to believe such a thing of such a people as the Smyrna people are. Unity is in the air and on everything that moves about this place."

1926-27 Reports of the SS are included in the Q.C. Minutes, and that T I MOTE was elected S.S. Supt. at the 4th Q.C. J L CARTER was Supt. from 1920 (or before) to this year. It is not clear who served this year.

1928 Parsonage insured. J L CARTER was Supt. The record of a Church Conference held Feb. 4, stated in part: "Motion made and carried to have services Sunday and Sunday night after March first in place of Saturday service." Quarterly Conference records are missing from 1929-30 to 1940-41. During this period, SMYRNA was on the BREMEN Circuit 1932-35. When the record resumes, J L CARTER was S.S. Supt. A Woman's Society of Christian Service was organized. Eight members. MRS. LAWRENCE NIXON as President. They paid \$6.00 to missions and spent \$2.25 locally. The Carrollton Circuit consisted of SMYRNA, Stripling Chapel, Old Camp and Center Point.

1941-42 Same S S Supt. and W.S.C.S. Pres. Bethel added to Circuit.

1942-43 Same S.S. Supt. MRS VOTICE CARTER, W.S.C.S. Pres. Miss BERT WINTER visited the SMYRNA and Center Point W.S.C.S. and organized them at Old Camp and Stripling Chapel. The Rev. E H BLACKBURN of Rome assisted the pastor in the Revival services.

1943-44 Miss BERT WINTER on Circuit for two weeks. Ten members of W.S.C.S., ORA DELL HARRIS signed the report. A report from Smyrna Young People by MARTHA HELEN HARRIS, Pres. Bethel off Circuit.

1944-45 Same officers as above, but the Woman's Society and Youth Fellowship apparently disbanded during the year.

1945-46 Dodson added to Circuit. First Q.C. approved D S to make application for financial aid in repairing churches at Center Point, Stripling Chapel and SMYRNA. Two Charge Laymen meetings reported at Second Q.C. J L CARTER S S S

1946-47 Center Point off Circuit.

1947-48 Bethel and Ramah added. Youth Fellowships organized as result of Revival at Old Camp and SMYRNA. MISS BERT WINTERS organized two W.S.C.S. on Circuit.

SMYRNA HISTORY

- VERNON WINDOM was the Assistant Pastor, serving Dodson, Bethel and Ramah.
- 1948-49 The Carrollton Circuit was composed, as at present, of New Hope, Old Camp, SMYRNA and Stripling Chapel. J L CARTER S.S.Supt./ MARTHA HELEN HARRIS P.Y.F.
- 1949-50 John C COOK S.S.Supt., MARTHA H HARRIS Pres. M.Y.F. Work started on S.S. rooms and remodeling of chorch.
- 1950-51 VOTICE CARTER S.S.Supt., MRS VOTICE CARTER Pres. W.S.C.S. (with 18 members) and MARTHA HARRIS, HAMMOND Pres. M.Y.F. with 28 on roll.
- On December 17th, the Sunday School rooms— four added across the front of the church and a new enteance way—were reported nearing completion and that the center posts removed in the remodeling if the church. Pulpit chairs added.
- 1951-53 When I, WESLEY THOMAS, came to the Carrollton Circuit as pastor in July 1951, finishing touches were being put on the sheet rock walls and ceiling of the santary, and now lighting fixtures installed. Since then, the floor has been sanded, a new alter rail built, the W.S.C.S had the pulpit covered with a lively carpet (cost \$338.13, a pulpit Bible, lighr, Sunday School Register, and ten kindergarten chairs have been added. Also exren-sive grading has been done on the yard. VOTICE CARTER held the Sunday School and Mrs VOTICE CARTER was president of the Woman's Society of Christ-ian Service both years and elected to succeed themselves. MRS CATHERINE BAGWELL was Predident of the M.Y.F. the first year, and MRS ORA REID named for the second, but the meerings were discontinued.

The preaching appointments were altered during my pastorate. Insteas of having services one Sunday per month, morning and evening, the morning service was retained at the regular First Sunday hour, and the evening service was set for the Third Sunday nights.

Begining with January 1953, the Sunday School sponsored the "Parish Cultivation Plan" of distributing THE UPPER ROOM. Some 46 copies have been mailed, along with the pastor's monthly calendar, to all member-families and a number of friends and prospective members every month.

The financial Report for the year 1952-53 shows that the church and or-ganizations paid out \$929136. (Church:/\$230.00to P.C./ \$391.42: Church School \$141.37; and W.S.C.S.\$396.57). The first Vacation Bible School on record was held in connection with the revival services during August 1952.

As this history is being compiled at the clōse of the 1952-53 Conference year, it should be stated here that plans are being made to observe the CEN-TENNIAL OF SMYRNA METHODIST CHURCH the fifth Sunday in August, 1953. The Official Roll for this year included: JACK J BAGWELL(S), MRS W B BAGWELL, JR. (PYF), J L CARTER (HON, S., T'55), VOTICE CARTER(CS,S), MRS VOTICE CARTER WS, JOHN C COOK (PAR,TC,S), V R ARRIS(S), I RENDER JACKSON (S, T'54), T I MOTE(T'53), G V NIXON(T'53), MRS G V NIXON(C), MRS L E NIXON (D. Lit.), MRS HARVEY REID(DGC), THOS G SILVEY (T'55), AND W J WALLIS (Hon.S.).

MEMBERSHIP ROLL, JUNE 1, 1953

ASHMORE, Mrs. Sam D., Jr.
BAGWELL, Jack J.
BAGWELL, MRS. J. J.
BAGWELL, MRS. W. B., Jr.
BORDERS, Mrs. J. R.
CARTER, JULIUS L.
CARTER, Votice
CARTER, Mrs. Votice
COOK, John C.
HAMMOND, Mrs John E.
HARRIS, PELHAM D.
HARRIS, Mrs. V. R.
HOLMES, Author B.
HARRIS, Verner R.

HUBBARD, Mrs. Oliver L.
HUGHES Mrs. Harry
JACKSON, I. Render
JACKSON, Mrs. I. R.
JACKSON, Jarvis Nevin
LAMBERT, Mrs Major
LONG, Mrs. Sam D.
LYLE, MRS. D. B.
MOTE, T. I.
MOTE, Mrs. T. I.
McCLUNG, Mrs. Bertha
McKISSICK, Lewis
McKISSICK, Loy
McCLUNG, Robbie

NICHOLSON, Mrs. P. E.
NIXON, EARL
NIXON, GEO. Virgil
NIXON, MRS. G. V.
NIXON, Mrs. Lawrence E.
POSEY, Mrs. Kattie
REID, Mrs Wm. Harvey
RUDY, Mrs. Chs. S.
ROBBERTS, Jesse W.
ROBISON, Joe
SILVEY, THOS. G.
WALKER, Mrs. C. V.
WALLIS, W. J.

NOTE: If you know of any corrections in this roll let the pastor know immediately.