South Bend
Methodist History 1870 1965
The main plot of land for South Bend Church was donated by Mrs. Sevier (Elizabeth) Clark.

**Mrs. SEVIER (Elizabeth) CLARK**

She was born in 1804 and died April 16, 1885. Her husband, Sevier, preceded her by more than 40 years before. She lived in Hall County for more than sixty years. Her home, the large two-story brick home located at Clark's Bridge, was built of Georgia clay by slave laborers.

Two of her granddaughters, Mrs. Ivan Richardson and Mrs. Simmons, have furnished much information about the early years of Mrs. Clark. We are grateful to them for their kindness in helping us.

**THE CLARK BRIDGE**

On April 26, 1860 Mrs. Elizabeth Clark and Mr. Richard Waters entered into an agreement (a photostatic copy is held by the pastor) so that a bridge might be built to replace a then existing "low" bridge. For allowing the bridge to be built from his land to hers, Mr. Waters and his family were given free use of the toll bridge. The right of abutment and the right of way were granted by Mr. Waters in this document. Mrs. Clark promised to maintain the bridge "in a safe and sufficient" condition. The document (the original held by Mrs. Ivan Richardson, 1298 Yonah Ave. NE, Gainesville Ga.) was witnessed by P. L. Cowers and Ralph S. Law, Ordinary. J. E. Redwine, then serving as Clark of the Court, signed the recorded document. It is recorded in Book 1 Page 277.

The bridge, built by slaves of Mrs. Clark, was a toll bridge. The toll charges as remembered by Mr. Mark Waters, were 5¢ for a person walking, 10¢ for a man on horseback, and 20¢ for a doubleteam and wagon. Mr. Mark tells the following story: a man was driving his mountain livestock to Gainesville, as was the custom, and came to the bridge. He was told the charges for his livestock and wagons, to which he was agreeable. He then asked about his flock of 80 turkeys. "One cent per head," he refused to pay this, he brought his "lead turkey" to the bridge and said "Shoo." It and the others flew to the 'ridge pole' of the covered bridge and began walking across. The birds flew down on the otherside of the river.

Mrs. Clark did not charge the persons who crossed the bridge on Sunday as they made their way to church.

**THE CHURCH DEEDS AND PROPERTY**

The original deed, dated June 8, 1874, and recorded June 15, 1874, was made by Mrs. Elizabeth Clark to original trustees-Mr. Wiley Clark, Mr. William Pass and Mr. Tyre Green. The deed called for a "church house" already built on the two acre plot and reads "an acre each way from the original building."
Until a few decades ago the Gainesville and Northwestern Railroad ran in front of South Bend on its way from Gainesville into upper White County. When it was discontinued in the early 1930's, a deed of the land between the Clark's Bridge road and the church was deeded to the church by the Railroad. In its last stages before receivership, an old bus was run on the line. When it would derail it would blow its horn and men would come and help to set it back on the rails and off it would go again.

When developing "Clark's Bridge Heights" northeast of the church, Mr. Eston Eades gave a triangular plot on the south side of the church along South Bend Drive which enters Clark's Bridge Road at the church cemetery.

In light of these gifts and the original deed, the church plot now looks as follows:

The above drawn from a plat surveyed and drawn by Owen Patton, Sept. 25, 1963 and furnished by Eston Eades of Gainesville.

Scale 1" = 100 ft.
The deeds above mentioned are in a safety deposit box in Gainesville National Bank under the care of the Church Trustees.

**Spiritual Life**

The first prayer meeting at South Bend was held by the Reverend Robert Green, a Local Preacher, and his brother, William, both of whom were among the charter members of the church. Three of Robert's daughters—Mrs. Jessie Allison, Mrs. Flora Martin and Mrs. Dessie Waters—are yet members at South Bend. Robert's daughter—Mrs. J. V. (Ruth) Hughes belongs to the Hopewell Church.

Hall County Sheriff Richard Waters was among the early, if not charter, members of South Bend. His grandchildren and their grandchildren are yet among the active members at South Bend.

The first Christmas tree was a huge holly tree cut and hauled by Mark Waters, our oldest active member. He used a team of oxen to haul it through axle-deep mud. When he arrived at the church, he had to remove several muddy branches. He augured holes in the trunk and replaced the limbs with clean ones.

The most noted of North Georgia Methodist historians was once pastor of this church. He was the Reverend A. M. Pierce, who entered the itinerant ministry in 1895 and served as pastor in 1896. He passed away in 1959 in Atlanta. His monumental work of history—*A History of Methodism in Georgia* covers the years 1738-1955. Mr. Pierce was only 21 when pastor here.

In 1903 the Conference Journal listed this church "To be supplied." The pastor that year (not listed on the pastor list on page 1 of the supplement to this history) was Rev. Brownlow. It was a custom to have worship on Saturday and Sunday. When he came first to South Bend, he preached at "Saturday meeting," then went home and "spent the night with his entire congregation." Why? For only one family—a large one—came to worship that day—The Robert Greens. The next day several other families came to hear "the new preacher."

The present pastor was licensed to preach by the pastor who served here in 1911, 1912, 1913 and 14, the Reverend W. M. Barnett now superannuated and living in Athens, Ga. Many improvements were made under his leadership. A newly married couple themselves as they came to serve in 1911, he also married several couples still active in the two churches. His first one was Mr. and Mrs. Grover C. Hurley of Murrayville. A parsonage was built at Murrayville during his pastorate. Later it was used by the Reverend Victor Roark, a superannuate minister, and his family. The parsonage was then moved to Brookton. While the Rev. Roark lived there the parsonage burned. It stood on a street parallel to Ga. #60 and behind Kemp's Story, on the street running beside the Sam Hulsey's home.
During the Barnett pastorate, the South Bend church was wallpapered on the inside and horizontal weatherboarding placed over the original vertical siding on the outside. The church has handhewn sills and floor joists, as well as hewn wall studs. At one time in this period the church was lighted by gas lights. According to Miss Delphia Pittman, an siphon pump and gas tank set in a back corner of the sanctuary. The present wainscoting was installed during these same years. Later Rev. Barnett was District Superintendent of the Atlanta-East District.

Only two ministers have served South Bend four years—Rev. Barnett 1911-14 and Rev. Hoyt Purcell 1956-60. South Bend has been on the Hall Circuit, the Gainesville Circuit, the Brookton Circuit and the Hopewell-South Bend Circuit.

During the 1953-55 pastorate of the Reverend Joseph Carson of the Virginia Conference, a seminary student, many significant accomplishments were made. The church was reorganized in accordance with the 1952 Discipline which did away with the Board of Stewards and Board of Education replacing them with the Official Board and the six commissions. The church school annex was begun on Thanksgiving Day 1954 when the men of the church gathered to dig the footings for the building which was a chore in the hard, rocky ground of this area. Thanksgiving dinner was served by the South Bend ladies.

The building, valued at $6000, was dedicated June 12, 1955. In January of that year a charge-wide Methodist Men's Club was organized and a W.S.C.S. was organized for the South Bend ladies.

The chancel area was remodeled during these years. The architectural design was changed from central pulpit to open or divided chancel. The pulpit was given by Fletcher Whitmire in memory of Fletcher Westmoreland and in honor of Mrs. Ethel Westmoreland, his grandparents. One chair was given in memory of Will Beach and in honor of Ella Beach by the Beach family. The other pulpit chair was given by Henry D. Green in memory of Mr. and Mrs. M. S. Green. The altar was given by John Kemp in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Taylor A. Kemp. Mrs. Henry Robertson gave the lecturn. The chancel rail was given in memory of Tyre Green, R. O. Green and J. N. Waters. The altar cross was given by the W. S. C. S. and the vases were given in memory of John Green by Miss Isabelle Green.

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13. The Richard Edwards family
14. Haskell and Eulene Hollifield

In March 1963 a new Kimball piano was purchased by the membership. Running water was installed in the church in 1964. Rev. Claud Mote has agreed to furnish water from his deep well.

We are today writing history as we seek to live for Christ and as we work to further the Kingdom of God.

The first person to go into full-time Christian service is Miss Dianne Shuler, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. C. Haskell Shuler.

Sincerely submitted,
Queen P. Smith

My personal appreciation to each person who has given us help and information in compiling this history.

Included with this history is the brief history compiled last year and a listing of persons who are buried in the South Bend cemetery. The trustees of our church hope to create a fund so that the cemetery may be well kept and be an area of beauty in our church grounds. If you wish to help, please mail your gift to C.H. Shuler Route 9, Gainesville, who is chairman of the Board of Trustees.

We are proud of the work of our present and past official boards who have served well and faithfully. We are proud of our church school and each of those persons who have served as church school superintendent through the years. The Boy Scout Troop #148 has added much to the total church program through the boys trained and the lessons learned. A lot has been given the church for use by the troop on a nearby private lake. Nine boys have made Eagle. Nearly a score or more have earned their God and Country awards in this church and neighboring churches.

The Methodist Youth Fellowship has enriched the lives of our youth and our adult workers and our families. Much participation in local, sub-district and recently in national events have yielded great dividends in their lives and others.

Many more chapters may be written about South Bend. If you know facts and figures, data and dates, persons and places, please jot them down and pass them on to the South Bend minister and they may be included later.