

TIGER METHODIST CHURCH

Mrs. M. O. Pleasants, Church Historian

By the latter part of the nineteenth century, the work of the Methodist ministers, who had travelled through these mountains preaching and organizing churches, was bearing much fruit. Living in a little valley, near the center of Rabun County, were a number of families who belonged to the Methodist church in other sections of the county, or who had strong Methodist "leanings." These people had no Methodist church nearby.

The records show that there was an old church called "Methodist Hill" down on the Tallulah River, which in 1882 had twelve members. Accidently, this church had fallen into sadder days, or the families had moved to the Ivy Hill Community.

So, on the fourteenth of April, eighteen and ninety-seven, under the leadership of Rev. D.C. Brown, who was working on the Rabun Mission, these people from the old Methodist Hill church, along with others, organized the Ivy Hill Methodist Church with 27 members. The first stewards of this church were: Mr. C.C. York, H.L. Keason, A.W. Kirby.

It is wonderful to read and listen to the records of those days some fifty years ago - how the new church met in the school house, for it was here that the Sunday School had been meeting for several years with about fifty children in attendance. It

is inspiring to read the list of the charter members and to realize how much a consecrated life can mean. The charter members were: Thomas Dotson, John H. Dotson, Wm. J. Dotson, Thomas Dotson, Jr., Mary A. Dotson, Minerva Dotson, Monterey G. Dotson, Sarah M. Lowery, Nancy Dockins, Adeline Nowell, Buena Visto Atkins, Laura Dotson, Jesse Green, Ava C. Green, Loula H. Stonesypher, Henrietta Cannon, Albert Kerby, Lena C. Kerby, Dan W. Seay, Mangerett Tow, Elizabeth Keener, Loulah McClain, Pelonia York, Ciscero C. York, Elizabeth Vickers, Harvey L. Keason, Elizabeth Keason, Sallie E. Cannon, Janie Harper, Sallie C. Mitchel, Harriett N. Harper, George W. Watts, Lucy N. Watts, and Samuel E. Mitchel.

Take the name of Mrs. Henrietta Cannon, for instance, whose family was, and is still, a blessing to the whole section. Or, take the family of Mr. and Mrs. C.C. York, whose daughter, Mrs. Elizabeth Keason, is still quite active in the church. Take the family of Mr. and Mrs. Dotson, the family of Mr. A.W. Kerby, who were most active during those early years. Of the twenty-seven, eight came from Methodist Hill, five from Clayton, four from the Baptist church, and some from other churches in the county such as New Hope, Antioch, and Persimmon.

The fall of 1897 saw seven others added to this church, one of whom was Mr. George Watts, who served his church faithfully until his death fifty-three years later.

George C. Gary served the Rabun Mission, to which Ivy Hill belonged, and his "juicy" reports give a clear view of the work of the pastors during that period; how hard they tried to get the people to be missionary minded, to seek education, to have prayer meetings, to use and read the church literature, to have their infants baptized, to leave off whiskey, and in every

way to seek the good life.

It was while J.H. Hughes was here, in 1899, that at a church conference, it was decided to build a church building. A building committee composed of C.C. York, V.C. Kerby, Charley Cannon, A.W. Kerby, and Jesse Green was appointed. Then, follows a period of concerted effort and noble sacrifice on the part of the faithful. Mr. A.W. Kerby gave one-fourth acre of land, more or less, for the building which is still standing. Mr. C.C. York sold his horse to buy lumber for the floors and ceiling. The men hewed out the logs for the sleepers themselves and it seems the whole community, including the Mission Board, and even the one colored man in the neighborhood, Uncle Turner Jones, gave of their labors to build the church which was finished in 1903. The new church was renamed Tiger Methodist Church on May 10, 1905 because the railroad had come through the town and the post office was given that name. This name was chosen because of nearby Tiger Mountain.

In 1921 the Church Board gave Tiger \$150.00 to repair the church, which had been blown off its foundation by a severe wind storm.

In 1899 the Annual Conference had put Clayton and Rabun Mission together, most often with two pastors to serve the nine to twelve churches on the charge. During these years, the spirit at Ivy Hill was wonderful, nearly each Quarterly Conference pastoral report mentions the Sunday School. However, along with nearly all of the other Sunday Schools of that time it would close down during the bitterly cold and muddy winter weather...and sorry to state, some years it would not reopen for the summer, especially for about ten years from about 1905 to 1915 it struggled. Then, there seemed to be a revival of

energy under the leadership of Rev. A.P. Watkins and his assistant, Rev. C.W. Smith, and for a few years the Sunday School prospered. However, during most of the twenties there was no Sunday School.

In 1922, the Presbyterians established a church at Tiger and they rented the Methodist Church building for their services at \$3.00 per month. There was a Union Sunday School for several years.

By 1934 some of the Methodist families had moved back into the community and they felt that their children needed upbringing in a Methodist Sunday School, so one was started in the spring of 1934 with Mr. M.O. Pleasants as Superintendent. This place was filled by him until his death in 1949, with the exception of three years when he and his family were away during the war. In the spring of 1935 the Sunday School began to send the fourth Sunday offering to World Service and has continued this practice ever since. This Sunday School was and is quite small, but those who belong to it feel a sense of deep loyalty toward it and pray that it may grow in service to the community.

For a few years back in the days of Rev. A.P. Watkins and C.W. Smith, there was a Missionary Society started, but it was not continued for many years. Again, in the 1930's there was a very active society with often as many as twelve present. There are now only six members of the W.S.C.S. but the programs are very carefully presented and so are the study courses, as well as the fact that the members give as liberally as possible to the cause of missions.

In 1937, Mr. Harve Keason died and the church lost one of its charter members, and most saintly souls. In 1941, the M.O. Pleasant family moved away, soon Mr. W.T. Ezzard went into

service, and before the war was over, the rest of the family had moved their membership into Clayton, as had the family of J.H. Woodall, and Lewis Keener. Other members became discouraged and moved their letters. The church received such a blow from this loss of members that it has never recovered. From January, 1949 to October, 1950 all three of the trustees were taken by death.

A very happy occasion was the wedding of Janie Pleasants, granddaughter of Mrs. J.V. Arrendale, a most faithful member and present Sunday School Superintendent, to D.H. Warren. This took place over fifty years after the founding of the church and was the first wedding in the church.

Today, there are approximately thirty-five members on the church roll. Many of these are inactive, but one finds it very hard to think that the little church founded to meet such a great need has served its usefulness. One thinks of the consecrated souls who have labored in its folds and hopes that the members who are indifferent will awaken to their duties, and that God will bless This His Church.