

1972 Rome Dist

HISTORY

Of

TRION METHODIST CHURCH

One morning in the spring of 1844 a little band of Christians who had been long under the influence of the Methodist "Circuit Riders" gathered in a beautiful grove a half mile east of the present town site of Trion and there "broke ground" for the first building of what was to become the Trion Methodist Church.

In our imagination we can see them now, as with bared heads, throbbing hearts and quivering lips they pray God's blessings upon their endeavor to provide for themselves a place of worship. With strong hands and willing hearts they went into the nearby forest and felled great trees, cut them into logs and skillfully locked them into the form of a church building, calling it "Penn's Chapel". This building stood just north of the present funeral shed at the cemetery and was surrounded by two acres of land deeded to the Methodist Church, an acre from the corner of two lots of land, by the owners A. G. Guin and Thurman Kellogg. The land was deeded June 24, 1844, the organization of the church having taken place probably a month or so before that time. Many of our citizens remember this old log building, and some remember having worshiped there, but a short time after the Civil War it had become so delapidated that it ceased to be used as a church building, and the congregation moved to a larger building near town, the lower floor of which was used for all kinds of public gatherings, the upper floor being used as a lodge hall. This building still stands, now having been remodelled and is being used as a hotel, known as the "Ragland House". It is located just across the Dixie Highway from the Trion Service Station, having since that time been moved several hundred feet north from its original site.

Services were held here until August 14, 1891, when their property at the cemetery was traded to the Trion Company for two town lots in South Trion. This transaction was executed for the church by its trustees: W. H. Penn, T. J. Ross, J. M. Hawkins, B. C. Morton and T. A. Fallis: The new deed reading as follows".... For the benefit of said Church and also for the purpose of a common school house or a County Academy."

A movement was soon started by some of the good women of the church to build a new church building on the new site, leaders among who were Mrs. Jennie Maddux and Mrs. T. J. Ross. The names of many others will long be cherished by those who know the early history of this church, but none will be revered more than those of the two good women referred to above. Theirs were lives of sacrificial love for their church, and the people whom it should serve. Upon the pulpit stand in this church now reposes a beautiful Bible bought by the church and placed there with Mrs. Jennie Maddux's name stamped in gold upon it in honor of her wonderful loyalty and service to it.

In 1908 a strip of the church's property on the south side 75 x 150 feet was traded to the Trion Company for a strip of land back of the church 75 x 200 feet in order that a street might be opened up through that section. About the same time the present parsonage was built, the pastor being Rev. H. M. Strozier. In 1924, under the leadership of Rev. Lester Kumble, the church, with the help of The Trion Company and our Board of Church Extension, a Sunday School Annex was added to the Church, which has been a great blessing to the membership. In the limited space of this book it would be impossible for us to mention each great character, layman and preacher who have contributed to the success of this church. It is befitting, however, to mention the fact that although we are owners of this property, and the Mill authorities under no obligation whatever to us, they have without a single exception proven the strongest friends we have ever had here. From the first president of the company down to the present one, Mr. B. D. Riegel of New York; and from the first general manager down to the present one, Mr. C. P. Thompson, all have exerted every effort to assist the churches of the town to be the greatest blessing possible.

(The foregoing article was written by Rev. Fred H. Ray on the occasion of the 85th Birthday of our Church and the Home Coming celebration in 1929.)

From 1929 when Brother Ray wrote the above until this good day of the 100th Anniversary of our Church our progress has been steadily forward. Faithful, loyal workers have seen to that. Under the leadership of our good women our parsonage has been refurnished and made as comfortable and as attractive a home as one could desire, with every modern convenience. We have gone forward with our finances also.

During the last five years the amounts of money raised for missions and other enterprises outside of our local congregation and for Christian services around the world has increased until Trion Methodist Church is now sending away four times more than it did 5 years ago. And the salary paid the pastor has been doubled. Our board of stewards under the leadership of Ralph Coarsey has lifted the Church entirely free of debt and has liquidated two accounts that were nearly 30 years old.

In the addition to the above, in the last 24 months our Church has accumulated under the leadership of our present committee Mr. C. R. Gree, Mr. L. A. Cook, and Mrs. J. W. Bell, approximately \$15,000.00 in War Bonds, for which we are proudly grateful. We turn every wheel with every shoulder to the wheel to end this year of our 100th Anniversary with complete funds for our new building.

Since 1944, when the above was written, Trion Methodist Church has continued to make great progress.

The old church building has been torn down and a beautiful brick church erected in its place. This church was completed in April, 1941. The parsonage has been completely renovated and made much more comfortable.

The Church has increased its benevolent giving, the pastor's salary, and all other financial contributions.

Physically and spiritually Trion Methodist Church is in wonderful condition. The seeds planted by a long line of faithful preachers and devoted laymen is bearing fruit more than a hundred-fold.