TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page
Warren County. 1
A HISTORY of the WARRENTON METHODIST CHURCH 2

1972-Augusta District North Georgia Conference

June 20, 1950

Compiled and Edited by Mr. and Mrs. J. Ralph Thomson and Rev. Lee Branham
Facts concerning the earliest history of Methodism in Warren County are rather obscure but it is known that the Methodists were preaching as early as 1788 in the territory which later became Warren County. At this time the preaching services were held in school houses and under brush arbors.

The first Methodist Church seems to have been built in 1797, as a deed on page 415 in book "A" in the office of the Clerk of the Court of Warren County, records the fact that Solomon Newsom, Sr., gave to Arthur Mathews "one acre of land to be laid out where said convenient for a meeting house near or adjoining the land of said Arthur Matthews for the Methodist Society." This deed was dated August 18, 1797, and witnessed by Joseph Walker and Benjamin Bruton.

In deed book "B" on page 388, on June 4, 1805, "For the sum of twenty-five cents, Jeremiah Beall conveys to Solomon Slatter, John Turner, Wormley Rose, Willis Harris, and Nicholas Williams, as trustees, land on which to build a Methodist church near Warrenton.

Another deed conveyed land on which to build a church to be used by the Methodist, the Baptist, the Presbyterian, or any other sect preaching the Gospel.

It is unfortunate that we have no further record of these buildings nor do we even know the exact site of any of the above mentioned structures.
The "Richmond Circuit"

The first established circuit of this section was known as the Richmond Circuit, which included Richmond, Columbia, Lincoln, and finally Warren County, which was formed in 1788. Warren County remained in this circuit until 1792, when the "Oconee Circuit" was formed. This circuit extended from Sweetwater, Iron Works, in Warren (now McDuffie) to the Oconee River. In 1805 Warren County was included in the "Ogeechee Circuit" and upon the dismemberment of this circuit in 1806, Warren County was put in the "Louisville Circuit", where it remained until 1809 when the "Warren Circuit" was formed.

These circuits were served by traveling preachers, who were known as "Circuit Riders". They rode on horse-back to their appointments. Neither the extreme summer heat nor the sleet and snows of winter could stop their ministry to these widely scattered people. Often it was necessary for them to climb high hills, ford creeks and rivers, and even swim creeks and rivers at times of high water. Urged by a zeal that knew no bounds and took no denial, they reached their appointments sometimes at risk of their lives, for they knew the congregation would be waiting for them to "break the Bread of Life".

Meeting day for a church on one of these circuits might be once a month or even once a quarter and often there would be no word from the preacher from one preaching time until the next but the people would gather at the appointed time in perfect confidence that he would come. He might be delayed by
almost insurmountable barriers but he would come and reward their confidence and their patience with a gospel sermon that lifted their hungry souls to higher heights of spiritual desire.

The hymns had to be lined to the congregation as there were no hymn books for the people. Then it was that the people appreciated the privilege of going to "meeting" and hearts that were bowed with griefs and sorrows, toils and hardships, were cheered and encouraged by the promises read from the "Good Book".

As time went on more preachers became available and the circuits were made smaller and preaching services became more frequent.

"The Warrenton Circuit"

In 1836 the "Warrenton Circuit" came into existence. It consisted of Warrenton, Prospect, Ebenezer, Fountain, Mt. Gilead, Johnson, Macedonia, Wrightsboro, Camak, and Norwood. One preacher was in charge of this vast work. However, there were local preachers to assist the pastor. The following served as local preachers during the time of the Warrenton Circuit: K. W. Hubert, Uriah Langford, B. A. Johnson, and Dr. C. Gibson. In 1834 John R. Pate, J. B. Purvis, Sylvester Johnson, and G. M. Kendrick were added as local preachers. Exhorters during these years were H. H. Fitzpatrick, I. Wheeler, E. H. Pottle, and Dr. W. H. Pilcher.

As other works were established through this vicinity the Warrenton Circuit became smaller and smaller. Eventually it
was made up of only Warrenton and Johnson. In 1937 Warrenton became a station church. At that time Johnson was put on the Norwood Circuit.

The Warrenton Methodist Church

Buildings

The first Methodist church building in Warrenton was built in 1836 and stood in front of the "Old Cemetery", right where the Camak to Macon rail road tracks now lie. It served as a meeting house through the War Between the States. This was a frame structure with a gallery in which the slaves sat during the services.

On the site of the present church building once sat a small building known as the "Warrenton Station". From this station tracks for a mule drawn car ran to Camak. This car made connections at Camak with the Georgia Railroad. At the close of the War Between the States the railroad officials decided to run a branch line from Camak to Macon. It was discovered that the Warrenton Methodist Church was standing exactly on the proposed route for the new tracks. The railroad offered to exchange the property where the Warrenton Station was standing for the church property and this exchange was completed.

The second Methodist Church building was erected on the new site in 1886. It, too, was a frame building, painted white with green shutters. This building which could seat 500 people stood for 38 years in a beautiful oak grove and was the scene of many great occasions and many outpourings of God's Holy Spirit.
Hundreds of saints are wearing crowns in the Heavenly realms whose exemplary lives and tender love for lost souls brought many to repentance at the altar. Among these saints were Mr. J. A. Allen, Dr. W. J. Walker, Dr. R. W. Hubert, Mr. Uriah Langford, Mr. Jessie Reese, Dr. M. R. Hall, and Judge H. H. Fitzpatrick.

Love feasts were held once a month preceding the worship services. For these feasts the doors of the church were closed as Christian people gathered to testify to God's goodness to them.

During these years the following Christian women were organists: Mrs. Ebb Heath, Mrs. W. J. Walker, Mrs. Augustus Scott, Mrs. J. W. Stipe (pastor's wife), Mrs. W. W. DeBeaugrine, Miss Tuddie Hubert (later Mrs. G. W. Felts), and Miss Bertie Scott.

Rev. Thomas H. Hubert, brother of Mrs. W. W. DeBeaugrine, was called to the ministry from this church and is now a retired minister living in Florida.

On the night of January 4, 1904, during the pastorate of Rev. J. T. Robins, this building burned to the ground. The pastor and a group of laymen began immediately to make plans for a new building. Before the second and last year of Rev. Robin's stay in Warrenton was ended the present brick structure was completed. The cornerstone of this building contains the following names as the building committee: Mr. W. C. English, Chairman, Dr. R. M. Hall, Dr. W. W. Pilcher, and Col. E. P. Davis.
This cornerstone was laid by Bishop W. A. Candler, who delivered a wonderful sermon out under the oak trees. Several hundred people were present for this occasion.

This building was dedicated October 7, 1906, by Rev. Luke Johnson of Rome, Georgia, during the pastorate of Rev. A. G. Shankle. An honored guest at this great occasion was the very first pastor of the Warrenton Circuit, Rev. George W. Cotter, who served the circuit in 1844, was old and feeble at the time of the dedication but this grand old Soldier of the Cross impressed everyone with his saintly bearing. A little monument in the "Old Cemetery" marks the resting place of Rev. Cotter's little daughter whom he lost while serving the circuit.

In 1933, while Rev. C. M. Haynes was pastor, a great need was felt for a place to accommodate the primary department of the Sunday School. Rev. Haynes proposed that if the church would furnish the materials he with the help of his young boy friends of the church would build a Sunday School building. That structure stands at the left rear of the church facing the street and is a monument to the persistent and indefatigable work of Mr. Haynes and these young boys, some of them members of the Baptist Church. The building is of frame construction and has one assembly room and four class rooms.

Even this building soon proved inadequate to take care of the expanding program of the church and Sunday school and for several years members of the church talked of adding an annex to the main church building.
In 1948 Rev. Lee Branham became the pastor of the church and at the first meeting of the Board of Stewards Col. Crawford Pilcher was proposed as chairman of the board. He said that he would accept the office only if members of the board would agree to begin making plans for immediate construction of the church school annex. All members of the board and the pastor were heartily in favor of this building program.

At the first quarterly conference of the year the following building committee was elected: Col. J. Cecil Davis, Chairman, Alton Davis, Jr., Lee W. Brown, and Alton Kitchens.

This committee secured the services of Mr. Lyman Robinson, and architect from Augusta. The committee contacted all members of the church in a campaign to secure enough money to begin construction. This campaign resulted in about $12,000 being raised during the next twelve months.

In July of 1949 the Evans Construction Co. of Warrenton was given the task of constructing the annex. Their bid was approximately $25,000.

The building was occupied in December, 1949. At present it still has a debt on it of $10,000 but we believe the consecrated members of the Warrenton Methodist Church will not be satisfied until this debt is paid and the building fully dedicated to the glory of God.

The new structure provides an assembly room with four class rooms and a modern kitchen opening off of it, toilet facilities, and several other class rooms.

At the end of the conference year in 1950 the trustees placed an estimated value of $70,000 on the church plant.
The Parsonage

The first parsonage stood on the lot where Mr. S. E. DuPuis' residence is located. This parsonage was sold to Judge William Gibson and a new one story parsonage built where our present two story parsonage now stands. The small parsonage served for many years but finally it was decided the building was too small and inconvenient. Mr. Jake Allen, the leading spirit in the work of the church at that time, instituted the first movement toward building a larger parsonage. Ill health and his subsequent death prevented his seeing the realization of this dream.

In 1916 the present parsonage was erected. The work was largely directed by Rev. H. C. Emory, pastor. The building is a two story frame structure, located on the main street of the city about 150 yards from the church building. Its value is placed at $10,000.

The Organizations of the Church

Sunday School

The earliest authentic date of the Sunday School antedates the War Between the States. Judge E. H. Pottle was the Superintendent in the first building. He served for several years after the church was moved to its present site. He was succeeded by Dr. W. J. Walker, who served until he changed his residence to Florida.

Mr. Jake A. Allen then carried on the Sunday School work until his health failed. He was a most consecrated and successful officer. Mr. W. C. English then filled the position of
superintendent for several years. He was followed by Mr. Peter Smith, who was the first to introduce modern methods in Sunday School work. The attendance increased from 60 to 120 and on special occasions the church would be filled to overflowing. He made plans to buy the first piano used in the church and he organized the first orchestra. That orchestra consisted of Miss Clara Smith, pianist, Miss Tuddie Hubert, organist, Mr. W. H. Latimer, first cornet, Mr. H. L. Hall, second cornet, Miss Toto McGregor, violin, and L. D. McGregor, guitar and later cornet.

For many years the school continued to wield a wide influence for good. After Mr. Smith moved to Atlanta Mr. Jule C. Evans, who had moved to Warrenton from Norwood, became superintendent. Under his leadership plus the assistance of his devoted wife "Miss Mamie" the school became most outstanding. He installed a large orchestra directed by his wife. They served for many years until ill health prevented both from continuing the work so close to their hearts.

Mr. Ashley Carr, a most beloved steward of the church, then served until the time of his death. He was followed by Mr. Pierce Hubert DeBeauprindle, who continued the work with all devotion and earnestness of purpose for ten years. Mr. William Lockett was appointed to the superintendency and he continues to serve well as he uses all his talent toward the upbuilding of the school.

The Sunday school now has 202 on roll and through the conference year of 1949-50 the average attendance was 112.
In September 1885, during the ministry of the Rev. George Duval, Miss Sallie Garvin, Secretary of the Augusta District Woman's Society, came to Warrenton and organized a Missionary Society. The society had 23 members who paid $0.10 a month dues. They elected the following officers:

President: Mrs. J. P. Swain  
Vice-President: Mrs. V. W. Hill  
Recording Secretary: Mrs. M. W. Fitzpatrick  
Corresponding Secretary: Mrs. A. W. Scott  
Treasurer: Mrs. M. L. Howell (Miss Valley)

In order to provide a school for unmarried lady missionaries in Shanghai, China, the Woman's Board of Foreign Missions sold certificates for $10 each. The local society purchased one of these shares while Mr. W. C. English, Mr. Jake A. Allen, Dr. W. J. Walker, and Dr. E. I. Burkhalter purchased one each. These certificates, which bore the likeness of Miss Lochie Rankin, first missionary sent out by the Woman's Board of Foreign Missions, hung for many years in the church.

Mrs. J. P. Swain organized a children's society. Miss Tuddie Hubert from Menninger Institute in Charleston, S. C. assumed the leadership of this group. She directed the children's activities so well that the Warrenton Children's Society held an outstanding place in the Augusta District. The society reached a membership of 60 boys and girls.

In 1900 a Home Missionary Society was organized and functioned until 1912 when both Foreign and Home Societies were merged into the Women's Missionary Society. After the
unification of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church the name was changed to the "Woman's Society of Christian Service.

While no missionaries nor deaconesses have ever gone out from the local society still the ladies have made outstanding achievements in the work of the church. The history of the local group has been marked by a faithfulness, a consecration, and a devotion to service that has reflected credit on the entire church and the Augusta District.

The membership of the Warrenton society has shown a continual growth from year to year. At present there are 79 members. Mrs. Ashley Carr, who retires as president this year, has given two years to the work of this important office. She has spared neither time nor strength in her faithful efforts to advance this work.

The ladies of the Warrenton Society had a large place in the building of the new church school annex. They made and paid a generous pledge on the building program itself, and equipped the kitchen.

Mrs. R. M. Coleman, Social Service Secretary, served as chairman of the "Kiwanis Dinner Committee". Under her leadership the women of the church served the dinner to the local Kiwanis Club each Wednesday. This work has resulted in more than $500 for the society and it still continues.
During the conference year of 1949-50 the society disbursed money as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pledge to conference treasurer</td>
<td>$260.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference supplies</td>
<td>$60.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Augusta District Rural worker</td>
<td>$60.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultivation fund</td>
<td>$10.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen silver</td>
<td>$103.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen china</td>
<td>$163.15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kitchen extras</td>
<td>$30.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen cabinets</td>
<td>$210.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pledge to annex</td>
<td>$384.60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paid on parsonage refrigerator</td>
<td>$63.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local work</td>
<td>$226.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1576.23</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Officers for the ensuing year are as follows:

President: Mrs. C. L. Pilcher  
Vice-president: Mrs. J. H. Terrell  
Treasurer: Mrs. J. C. Davis  
Recording Secretary: Mrs. Allen May  
Corresponding Secretary: Mrs. F. F. Gheesling  
Secretary Christian Social Relations and Local Church Activities: Mrs. Wilbur Harper  
Secretary Student Work: Mrs. Alton Kitchens  
Secretary Youth Work: Mrs. Julian Abbott  
Secretary Children's Work: Mrs. C. K. DeBeaugrine  
Secretary Literature and Publicity: Mrs. R. L. Todd  
Secretary Spiritual Life: Mrs. Katherine Rommen  
Church Fellowship Committee: Mrs. A. K. Carr  
Secretary Supplies: Mrs. W. T. Lockett  
Status of Women: Mrs. John C. Evans  

Circle leaders;  
Mrs. William Clary  
Mrs. Lee Branham

Superintendent Kiwanis Dinners: Mrs. R. M. Coleman

The Methodist Men

Youngest organization of the Warrenton Methodist Church is an organization of its men known as "Methodist Men". This group has had but three meetings as this history is prepared. At its first meeting Rev. Tom Wheelis of Madison made
an excellent address. Rev. George L. King, District Superintendent, was present and made some appropriate remarks regarding objectives. Mr. J. F. Fiske, District Lay Leader, attended the meeting and notified the men that the Warrenton Men's group was the eighth such group in the Augusta District and the first outside the city of Augusta.

Officers elected by the men are as follows:

- President: Duncan Brown
- Vice-president: B. H. DeBeauprime
- Secretary: C. I. Twilley, Jr.

CONCLUSION

The Warrenton Methodist Church has a membership of 262. Its budget each year amounts to approximately $6,000.

The members of the church look back at the rich heritage handed down by the "Faith of our Fathers" and give sincere thanks for what has been accomplished in the past and look ahead with complete trust in the Father above.
The following men have served the Warrenton Methodist Church as pastors:

George W. Cotter, 1836
J. C. Simmons, 1837
G. W. Carter, 1838
Josiah Lewis, 1839
Leonard C. Peek, 1840
James Jones, 1841
A. L. Leet, 1842-43
W. H. Evans, 1844-45
W. F. Arnold, 1846
John W. Knight, 1847
Allen Turner, 1848
F. F. Reynolds, 1849
F. F. Reynolds-J. H. Clarke 1850
David Blalock 1851-52
F. F. Reynolds, 1853-54
William J. Cotter, 1855-56
Josiah Lewis, 1857-58
W. P. Clonts, 1859
William A. Florence, 1860-61
John W. McGehee, 1862-63
John H. Grogan, 1864
James M. Dickey, 1865-66
William H. Evans, 1867
Thomas A. Seals, 1868-69-70
Wesley F. Smith, 1871-72-73
J. Lewis-G. W. Hardaway, 1874
F. B. Davies, 1875-76-77
J. R. Parker, 1878-79
W. F. Hamilton, 1880-81-82
George W. Duval, 1883-84-85
John A. Reynolds, 1886
G. G. Hughes, 1887-88
L. P. Neese, 1889
John H. Mashburn, 1890
W. T. Irvine, 1892
J. W. Stipe, 1893
Frank Eaks, 1895-96
Casper Wright, 1897-98
W. M. Winn, 1899-1900
J. A. Timmermon, 1901-02
J. T. Robins, 1903-04
A. G. Shankle, 1905-06
C. H. Branch, 1907-08
W. R. Foote, 1909-10
J. M. Tumlin, 1911-12
J. C. Atkerson, 1913-14
H. C. Emory, 1915-16-17
K. Reed, 1918
J. O. Brand, 1919-20-21
H. L. Hendricks, 1922-23
W. S. Norton, 1924-25-26
E. C. Wilson, 1927-28
D. P. Johnson, 1929-30
J. M. Radford, 1931
C. M. Haynes, 32-33
T. H. Shackleford, 1934
W. W. Cash, 1935-36-37
E. G. Thomaston, 1938
(Allan Budd completed this year as Rev. Thomaston was ill)
W. C. Budd, 1939-40-41-42
R. P. Segars, 1943-44
W. W. Brinsfield, 1945-46-47-June 48
Lee Branham, July 1948----
PASTORS OF THE WARRENTON FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Richmond Circuit
1788---Matthew Harris
1789---Matthew Harris and Wheeler Grisson
1790---Bennet Maxey and John Halliday
1791---John Clark
1794---George Clark and John King
1795---Josias Randle
1796---Samuel Cowles and John Simmons
1797---Josias Randle

Oconee Circuit
1792---John Clark and James Holley
1793---James Jenkins
1799---George Dougherty
1800-1801---Samuel Cowles
1802---Samuel Cowles and Moses Black
1803---Samuel Ansley
1804---Josias Randle

Ogeechee Circuit
1805---William Hardwick

Louisville Circuit
1806---John Campbell and John Hill
1807---Joseph Tarpley and William Arnold
1808---Jeremiah Lumsden and Christian Rump

Warren Circuit
1809---Eppes Tucker
1810---Eppes Tucker and H. D. Green
1811---John Tarrant and John I. E. Byrd
1812---Nicholas Powers and John Freeman
1813---Michael Burge and Elijah Bird
1814---James Hutto and Andrew Pickens
1815---James O. Andrew---
1816---Aguila Leatherwood and Z. Williams
1817---Anderson Ray
1818---Thomas Darley and Thomas Rosamond
1819---John Mote and John L. Jerry
1820---Tillman Snead and George Hill
1821 Thomas Darley and Thomas Thweat
1822---James B. Turney and Noah Laney
1823---Robert Flournoy and Benjamin Gordon
1824---Tillman Snead and William Kennedy
1825---James Dunwoody and Benjamin Gordon
1826---John B. Chappell
1827---Allen Turner and Wesley P. Arnold
1828---Patrick N. Maddox and Allen Turner
1829---Patrick N. Maddox and Allen Turner
1830---Thomas Darley
1831---Cassell Harrison
1832---Frederick Norsunthy and Joseph L. Moultrie
1833---Jesse Boring and B. Strippling

          Warrenton Circuit
1834---G. W. Carter
1835---G. W. Carter and F. M. Smith
1836---J. C. Simmons
1837---John P. Duncan
1838---George W. Carter
1839---Josias Lewis
1840---James Jones
1841---Leonard C. Peek
1842---43---A. I. Leet
1844-45---W. H. Evans
1846---W. P. Arnold
1847---John W. Knight
1848---Allen Turner
1849---Freeman F. Reynolds
1850---F. F. Reynolds and J. H. Clark
1851---52---David Blalock
1853-54---F. F. Reynolds
1855-56---William J. Cotter
1857-58---Josiah Lewis
1859---W. P. Clouts
1860-63---John McGahee
1864---John H. Grogan
1865-66---James M. Dickey
1867---William H. Evans
1868-69-70---Thomas A. Seals
1871-72-73---Wesley F. Smith
1874---Josiah Lewis and G. W. Hardaway
1875-76-77---F. B. Davies
1878-79---J. R. Parker
1880-81-82---Wylie F. Hamilton
1883-84-85---George W. Duvall
1886---John A. Reynolds
1887-88---F. G. Hughes
1889---L. P. Neese
1890-91---J. H. Mashburn
1892---W. T. Irvine
1893-94--J. W. Stipe
1895---R. P. Martin
1896-97-98--R. F. Eakes
1899-1900--C. S. Wright
1901-02W. M. Wynn
1903---J. A. Timmerman
1904-05--J. T. Robins
1906---A. G. Shankle
1907-08--C. H. Branch
1909-10--W. R. Poote
1911-12--J. M. Tumlin
1913-14--J. C. Atkinson
1915-16-17--H. C. Emory
1918---K. Read
1919-20--J. O Brand
1921-22-23--H. L. Hendricks
1924-25-26--W. S. Norton
1927-28--E. C. Wilson
1929-30--D. P. Johnston
1931---J. McD. Radford
1932-33--Claude M. Haynes
1934---T. H. Shackleford
1935-36--W. W. Cash
1937-38--E. G. Thomason and Allen C. Budd
1939-42--W. C. Budd
1943-44--R. P. Segars
1945-47--J. W. Brinsfield
1948-52--Lee Branham
1952-54--W. J. Culpepper
1954-57--J. W. Scarborough
1957-60--Sanford McDonald
1960-62--H. A. McNeil
1962-67--H. H. Dillard
1967-71--Harold Smith
1971--- Leo Burgess