1912 Augusta Ave.

HISTORY

OF

WASHINGTON METHODIST CHURCH
SKETCH OF
WASHINGTON METHODIST CHURCH

It has been said that though Wesley and Whitfield started Methodism in Georgia at Savannah, it did not grow until it was planted in Wilkes County where it took deep root and spread throughout the State. For that reason Wilkes County is known as "the cradle of Methodism in Georgia".

For thirteen years the early settlers did not have a house of worship in the county, but services were held in homes and in the little log courthouse built in Washington in 1785. Then the first Methodist Church in Georgia was built.

In 1787 five miles southeast from Washington just off the Wrightsborough Road, Daniel Grant and his son Thomas, who came from North Carolina with the early settlers to the newly opened lands of Wilkes, built a little frame house of worship near their home. The Grants had been Presbyterians, Daniel serving as Elder in his home church back in Virginia before they moved to North Carolina and then on south into Georgia. Father and son, however, fell under the spell of the early Methodist preachers as they went about preaching among the struggling little band of Christians scattered throughout the Colony.

The Grants, father and son, were prosperous merchants. Their home, it is said, was a substantial house for that time, painted and well kept. There was a room in their home called the "Prophet's Chamber" set apart for the use of Methodist preachers who came their way. In this room was kept a supply of clothing to fit any size man. These were for the use of a preacher who might be wet and cold or need extra clothing. With nothing more than trails for roads in those days, and no means of transportation except walking or horseback, circuit riders were no doubt, constantly in need of the hospitality and thoughtfulness of the Grants.

In 1917 the dream of Mr. Boyce Ficklen Sr., came true when, through his interest and efforts, the exact spot on which stood this first Methodist Church in Georgia was marked with a huge granite marker bearing the following inscription:

GRANT'S MEETING HOUSE - 1787
FIRST METHODIST CHURCH IN GEORGIA
HERE BISHOP ASBURY PREACHED OFTEN
AND HELD TWO CONFERENCES
ERECTED IN 1917. A GIFT FROM
METHODOIST OF WILKES AND THEIR FRIENDS

It is an interesting fact that the first six conferences held in Georgia were held within the bounds of Wilkes County. All except the first one within the present Wilkes.

The first Methodist Conference in the State was held on the home of Gen. David Meriwether's home in original Wilkes, but just across the Broad River in what is now Elbert County which was cut out of Wilkes in 1790.

Bishop Asbury made 17 visits to Georgia and visited Wilkes on most of them preaching or holding conferences.

In 1793 the first Methodist Conference held in Washington convened in the little log Courthouse which stood on the site of the present Courthouse.

The first Methodist School in the State was established by Rev. Hope Hull about 1794. Gen. David Meriwether, his brother-in-law, gave the land for the school. It was located on the Mineral Springs Road some three miles from Washington and was called "Succoth Academy". It was near the birthplace of James Osgood Andrew, 1794, the first Georgia born Methodist Bishop.

While living here, Rev. Hull, who, it is said, was a "singer of great power and sweetness", published his collection of "Hymns and Spiritual Songs". This was in 1803.

Lorenzo Dow, that eccentric preacher and follower of Hull, preached in Wilkes County on many occasions.

Scott's Meeting House was built in the lower section of Wilkes County and had a growing congregation. This later was abandoned and Pierce's Chapel of today erected.

The Mt Zion Church of today was the outgrowth of Grant's Meeting House. A part of the Grant's membership going to Mt Zion and a part coming to the Washington Church.

With 14 members the Washington Methodist Episcopal Church was organized.

As there are no records of the church at that time no exact date can be given. The first record is that of a deed made:

"Sixth day of July in the year of our Lord One thousand Eight hundred and nineteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the forty fourth".

This is from "Edward D. Allfriend and Nancy his wife, to William Jones, John B. Lennard, William Grant, James Bradley and Arthur W. Charlton, Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church, duly appointed".
"for the consideration of the sum of Eighteen hundred Dollars for that part of a lot as hereafter described for the use of a parsonage and the further sum of two hundred Dollars for that part appropriated for a Church."

(In 1830 the Trustees sold the parsonage for $730.00. This lot is on Main Street and today is the home of Col. J.M. Pitner. The house may not be the same.)

Upon the Church lot was built, either in 1820 or 1821 - exact date is not known - a large wooden church. In 1823 the Rev. Alexander Webster, first pastor of the Washington Presbyterian Church, was ordained in the Methodist Church which was used by all denominations when it was first built as it was the first Church erected in the town of Washington.

We are told that as late as 1836 the windows in the church had glass in only the upper section, the lower section being heavy shutters. There were no stoves in the Church until 1839.

There was a revival in 1828 that brought a number of new members, then again in 1839 there was a revival under the pastorate of Rev. Alfred Mann. This revival was started by a prayer meeting in the church to pray for rain. There was a terrible drought, the Savannah River had dried up to where it could be crossed on stones in some places, and everything was dying. There had not been rain in the Village of Washington in weeks, even into months, so a little band of Methodists met in the Church to pray for rain. While the members were earnestly praying for rain, there was such a rain as had not been seen for months and the congregation had a hard time getting home. This started such a revival that other preachers were called in to help. Rev. Samuel Anthony, the Presiding Elder on the District, or Charge, came to help in the meeting and made such an impression in the three weeks he was here, the Church and the citizens of the town wanted him to make his home in the town. He consented to come so a house in the country was bought for $700.00 and moved all the way into town for him. Rev. Anthony and his family came to live here and were here until he was moved to another work three years later.

After Rev. Anthony was moved, the house bought for him was used as a parsonage for the pastor of the Church. The dwelling is still standing and is the oldest house in the town. It is on the corner of South Alexander Avenue and Water Street and is one of the loveliest dwellings in the town. It is the home of Mr and Mrs. Carroll D. Colley.

The revival of 1839 added 100 new members to the Church membership.

In 1841 another revival came to bless the Church. This was during the pastorate of the Rev. T.C Benning. Tho he had a
great revival and many were converted under his preaching. He was later expelled from the conference for bad conduct.

Washington Church was made a station in 1842. It was on the Washington Circuit first, then the Little River Circuit until that date.

In 1834 the second Methodist Conference held in Washington met in this Church. This was while the Rev. Carswell Harrison was pastor. It was at this meeting that "Uncle Allen" Turner made the talk on the Conference floor that started the movement that built Emory College at Oxford.

There were various church organizations and activities during this time, no doubt, but there are no records to tell of them.

On November 3, 1856 the following transaction took place:


The amount paid for this property was $1200.00.

This was, so far as shown by the records, the third parsonage the Church had owned.

The membership during the '50's averaged around 108. The incomplete records show some were dismissed, some "died in peace" a very few were expelled and some moved their membership.

Then came the trying '60's. Even though the country was torn by war and suffering, the Church seemed to have held its own during the decade.

Rev. W M Fulton was pastor in 1864. We are told that he was found to be an impostor, left Washington and went to Milledgeville where he walked thru the lines into the Federal camp and joined up with them.

During the pastorate of the Rev. Habersham Adams (1865) it is said a chest was left in the parsonage by Confederate soldiers for a few days. The contents were unknown to the pastor and his family, but it is thought it contained Confederate gold, and the soldiers decided among themselves that it would be safe in a Methodist preacher's house as that would be the last place anyone would go looking for money.

** The Methodist Conference met in Washington in 1858 for the third time. Rev. J.O.A. Clark was pastor in charge at this time. **
In 1971 the first mention of a Sunday School is made. This record is the list of official members and is given as follows:

R S Smith  Steward & S S Superintendent
R L Foreman  "
W E Shelverton  "
Jas. R DuBose  "
Gabriel Toombs  "
Frank Arnold  "
Benj'm Irvin  "

That year seemed to have started with 127 members on roll. The Rev. Walter R. Branham was pastor.

In the next year - 1872 - the entry under Official Members reads:

"1872 - Same Board reelected -- Except F Arnold, M A Pharr instead."

Mr. W. E. Shelverton was the Church Treasurer for years and survived all the others elected on the Board with him, by a long number of years.

In 1873 the Board of stewards were reelected and the Officers of the Sunday School were given as:

"R S Smith,  Sup.
J R DuBose,  Asst. Sup.
Mrs. Lila Hull, Sec & Treas"

In 1878 the first Missionary Society was organized. This was Nov. 10, 1878, to be exact. It is interesting to note that one of the Charter Members of this Society is still living, Mrs. Sallie Toombs Fortson. This Woman's Missionary Society was the second organized in the Conference.

Along about this time the Congregation started talking about building a new church. Some wanted to enlarge and remodel the old church, others wanted to build a new one. So it was finally decided to dispose of the old building and start from the ground on the same lot.

The old Church was sold to Mr. John Floyd who turned it around, moved it across the side street and made it into an opera house. This old building stood in it's new location until in the 1920's when it was torn away for new brick buildings.

In 1881 the new Brick Church was built; in 1882 it was dedicated.

This lovely old building was used until 1910 when it was sold to Messrs Boyce Ficklen Sr and Jr. They sold it
in 1913 to the Masons who use it for their Temple. Recently it was painted and put in perfect repair. It is a very beautiful building, an ornament to the town.

It was in this old building on October 29, 1884 that General Robert Toombs, then 74 years of age, came and knelt at the altar and was baptised and received into the membership of the Church by his life long friend, Bishop George F. Pierce. A little over one year later - December 15 1885, opposite his name on the Church Register is written "Died in Peace".

The North Georgia Conference met here in 1890 in this Church. It was the FOURTH time the Methodist Conference met in Washington and the NINTH time it had met within the County.

In June 1893 the town had a wonderful revival. This was a tent meeting conducted by Rev Culpepper. The Rev. H S Bradley was pastor of the Church at that time and the records show 55 new members were received on profession of faith during the year. This revival is still spoken of by members who remember it.

In the early part of this century it was felt that Sunday School rooms were needed, the membership had outgrown the church. There were meetings to discuss adding the needed room to the old church. Mr T C Hogue, one of the Stewards and Trustees, offered to give a lot on the corner of Spring and Liberty Streets for a church and parsonage, and a generous cash amount if a new Church was built. It was finally decided to accept Mr. Hogue's offer and a building committee got busy raising funds for the new building.

On August 8 1906 Mr Hogue made a deed of gift to B S Irvin, Thos. C. Hogue, T. M. Green, M. A. Pharr, R. Motte Smith and K A Wilheit, Trustees to the lot and plans for the new church went forward.

The red brick building of today was finished in 1910. It had adequate space for the Sunday School of that day.

Two lovely windows were given when the Church was built. The one on the East by Mr and Mrs Hogue, This was in Memory of their only son, Dr. Russell Hogue who had died a few years before. The one on the West, A picture of Christ in the Garden, was given by the Pharr family in memory of their parents, Mr and Mrs M A Pharr Sr.

After World War I a third window, Christ the Consoler, was given in Memory of the boys of the Church who lost their lives in service. This window is on the North in the choir loft.

In 1917 when Rev G S Frazer was sent to the Church, he immediately started a movement to build a parsonage on the lot next to the Church. This was built during his pastorate and is
an attractive two story brick and frame dwelling. It is valued at $10,000.00

The old parsonage on Water Street was sold and is still standing, one of the quaintest and prettiest dwellings in the town.

When the new church was built in 1910 there were not sufficient funds to have a new organ installed. The old organ that even at that time had seen its best days, was moved into the new Church and, after a thorough overhauling, did good service until last summer. It was then removed and a handsome new Moller organ took its place. The new instrument cost around $9,000.00

Through a generous gift of $1,000.00 by Dr. T B Walton last year, a new carpet was laid in the Church. The pulpit furniture was upholstered in a matching shade of the carpet.

The Church is valued at $45,000.00

From the days of Bishop Asbury until this good day, the Church has been visited by Bishops and men of note. It is a pity there is not a record to tell of all who came and on what occasions. It is known that Bishop Pierce came from time to time; Bishop Candler came on several occasions. Bishop Ainsworth visited and preached here, and Bishop Moore has preached here also.

The long list attached showing the names of Pastors who have served the Church and Presiding Elders who have served on the District, contains names of many men of note. They all served well, and enjoyed the friendship and love given them. Perhaps "Uncle" Simon Peter Richardson expressed it best when he said, after a visit here: "All roads are downhill from Washington".

The Church today has a membership of 477 names on its roll; there are 350 enrolled in the Sunday School, and 120 members of the W S C S and Guild. Attendance at all of these is excellent. Total funds this year amounted to $21,860.00. All of that amount was raised during the year except $4000.00 on the organ fund.

This has been one of the greatest year, if not the greatest, the Church has ever had. Under the leadership of Rev. Roger Stone, Pastor, the Church has gone forward in every way; The membership has increased; attendance has reached a new high, Sunday School attendance has gone to over two hundred on Sunday mornings, and greater interest in all work is shown.

Washington Methodists have a great heritage; they face the future humbly and prayerfully -

FAITH OF OUR PARENTS LIVING STILL ....
WE WOULD BE TRUE TO THEE 'TIL DEATH.
## Presiding Elders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Samuel Anthony</td>
<td>1839-40-41-42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J E Evans</td>
<td>1843-44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G F Pierce</td>
<td>1845-46-47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josiah Lewis</td>
<td>1848-49-50-51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John W Glenn</td>
<td>1852-53-54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John N Talley</td>
<td>1855-56-57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A T Mann</td>
<td>1858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J O A Clark</td>
<td>1859-60-61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R W Bigham</td>
<td>1862-63-64-65-66-67-68</td>
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<tr>
<td>T F Pierce</td>
<td>1869-70-71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E W Spear</td>
<td>1872-73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T F Pierce</td>
<td>1874-75-76-77</td>
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<td>R W Bigham</td>
<td>1878-79-80-81-82-83-84</td>
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<tr>
<td>Geo. W. Yarborough</td>
<td>1884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesse Boring</td>
<td>1885</td>
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<tr>
<td>J D Hammond</td>
<td>1886-87-88-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>Simon P. Richardson</td>
<td>1890-91-92-93</td>
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<tr>
<td>H H Parks</td>
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<tr>
<td>L J Johnson</td>
<td>1895-96-97</td>
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<td>W P Lovejoy</td>
<td>1898-99-1000</td>
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<td>Jno. B Robins</td>
<td>1901-02-03-04</td>
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<td>W P Lovejoy</td>
<td>1905-06-07-08</td>
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<td>J Sid Bryan</td>
<td>1909-10-11</td>
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<td>W L Pierce</td>
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<td>B P Allen</td>
<td>1916-17-18-19</td>
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<tr>
<td>S P Wiggins</td>
<td>1920-21-22-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G S Venable</td>
<td>1924-25-26-27</td>
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<tr>
<td>W S Robinson</td>
<td>1928-29-30-31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J L Allgood</td>
<td>1932-33-34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J W Veach</td>
<td>1935-36-37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H L Byrd</td>
<td>1938-39-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chas. L. Middlebrooks</td>
<td>1940-41-42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J H Barton</td>
<td>1943-44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horace Smith</td>
<td>1945-46-47-48-49-50</td>
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## Pastors

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1824-25</td>
<td>Lovic Pierce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826-27-28</td>
<td>John Howard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1829</td>
<td>Thomas L. Wynn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>Elijah Sinclair</td>
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<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>Joshua N Glenn</td>
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<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>Thomas Sanford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1833</td>
<td>Thomas Shelman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1834</td>
<td>Caswell Harrison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>Geo. Chappell</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1836 - D C Johnson
1837 - Wesley P Arnold
1837 - Wesley P Arnold
1839 - Alfred Mann
1840 - George R Wright
1841 - T C Benning
1842 - J A Wiggins
1843 - J A Wiggins
1844 - W I Sassnett
1845 - E H Meyers
1846 - J P Duncan
1847 - Josiah Lewis & Thos. F Pierce
1848 - Jno M Bonnell
1849 - J H Nicols
1850 - W H Evans & W H Foote
1851 - W H Evans & W H Potter
1852-53 - Caleb W Key
1854 - Samuel Anthony
1855-56 - Daniel Kelsey
1857-58 - J C A Clark
1859-60 - Thos F Pierce
1861-62 - Jno T Norris
1863 - J H Grogan
1864 - W J Fulton
1865 - Habersham Adams
1866-67 - Morgan Callaway
1868 - G W Yarbrough
1869 - Morgan Callaway
1870 - E W Speer
1871 - W R Brannam
1872 - F W Rybun
1873 - A T Mann
1874 - W P Rivers
1875-76 - Jesse Boring
1877-78 - W P Pledger
1879-83-82 - George E. Gardner
1883-84 - L. J. Davies
1885-86-87-88 - W H LAprade
1889 - J Sid Brown
1890 - J F Mixon
1891-92-93 - H S Bradley
1894 - W W Wadsworth part of year
           J S Jenkins part of year
1895 - J S Jenkins
1896-97-98-99 - A W Quillian
1900 - W F Cook
1901-02 - E R Cook
1903-04-05 - W T Irvine
1906-07-08-09 - H J Ellis
1910-11-12 - Alfred M Pierce
1913-14 - John P Erwin
1915-16 - W R Foote
1917-18-19-20 - G S Frazer
1921-22 - E D Hale
1923-24-25-26 - T J Branson
1927 - E G Thomasson
1928-29-30 - R G Smith
1931 - J T Eakes
1932 - J T Eakes
1933-34-35-36 - J O Brand
1937-38-39-40-41-42 - J Foster Young
1943-44-45-46 - H C Emory
1947-48-49-50 - Roger W Stone