

Tradition and
Facts concerning the Watkinsville, Georgia
Methodist Church
Compiled in the Year 1950

(Tradition)

G. Frank Ashford, one of the compilers of this history, has an indistinct recollection of having heard his father, Alexander Woodson Ashford, say that the first Methodist Church in Watkinsville was located at the cemetery.

Mrs. Johnnie A. Wilson, an old resident of our town, thinks there was a Church just across the road from the cemetery.

If there was a Methodist Church in the vicinity of the cemetery, it ~~was~~ evidently was moved to a location on Water street directly behind where the county Court House now stands.

We were unable to find any deed showing that the Methodist ever owned the lot back of the Court-house, but from the following statements from old residents of the town, we feel that we may accept as fact that the building behind the Court-house which was used by the negroes from 1869 up until a few years back was originally used by the white Methodist of the town as a meeting house. Mrs. Johnnie A. Wilson states that from things she has heard in the past, she feels pretty certain that there was a Methodist Church behind the Court-house; Miss Annie White says she remembers hearing her mother say that the Methodist Church was behind the Court-house; Mr. Ira Phillips states that he heard his late wife, who was Miss Warnie Edge, say that her mother said that the Methodist Church was behind the Court-house.

The following are facts concerning
our Church that can be proven by
old Deeds recorded in both Clark
and Oconee Counties and by an old
Quarterly Meeting's Minute Book
with earliest date showing
March 30, 1850

August 2, 1832

In Deed book "P" (Clarke County Records) you will find where Asbury Null, attorney in fact for James Merriwether, administrator of the estate of William Merriwether, deeded sixty-six acres of land for the Watkinsville Camp Ground; the property was deeded to the following trustees: Jos. Smith, James Anderson, Hunter Crawford, James R. McCleskey, John Graves and William M. Morton. the price paid was \$148.50

September 9, 1851

In deed book "Y", page 163 (Clarke County records) you will find where the Watkinsville Camp-ground trustees who were J. W. Glenn, A. P. Nunnally, Green B. Maygood, James C. Parrish and Thomas L. Williamson of Clarke County and J. R. McCleskey of Jackson County deeded the Camp-ground to Parthenus Bearden for the consideration of \$667.00. This sale was made complying with instructions given at Quarterly Meeting in Watkinsville on June 20, 1851 (see old Minute book, pg. 16) The proceeds from the sale of the Camp-ground were to be placed with the proceeds from the sale of the old parsonage, which are now in the hands of the recording secretary, Mr. B. M. Overby, and to buy a new parsonage (we have been unable to find from old records where the "old parsonage mentioned was ~~located~~ sold, nor can we tell where it was located.) The decision to sell the Camp-ground was made after an investigation as to the "propriety" of selling the property rather than going to the very necessary expense of repairs. The committee who investigated as to the propriety of selling, decided that the expense both to the Church and the tent-holders would be too much to authorize any further meetings at the place, therefore, the Committee recommended the selling of the Camp-ground allowing the tent-holders to remove their tents, or to sell, whichever they choose. (the meets and bounds of this place show it to be the same as that bought from the Merriwether estate in 1832.)

December 31, 1851

In Deed Book "U", page 147 (Clarke County records) you will find where Matilda Marden Johnson deeded to the Watkinsville Methodist Circuit a house and lot for a Parsonage, which completed a directive of Quarterly Meeting Conference held June 20, 1851 at Watkinsville. This new parsonage was located on a lot back of

the house in which Mr. Ira Phillips now lives in the year 1950.

July 21, 1861

In Deed book "W", Pages 266 & 267 (Clarke County records) you will find where Richard Richardson deeded land to the Watkinsville Methodist Church for the purpose of building or having built a Church. The Church trustees at this time having been elected October 27, 1860 at Quarterly Meeting held at Dry Pond Camp Ground were John Calvin Johnson, A. Rowan, R. L. Harris, Jacob Klutts, J. C. Wilson, W. B. Maygood and Thomas Booth. This land which was bought from Mr. Richardson by the Church trustees cost \$100.00. It is assumed that the work on the Church began immediately, because the building was erected by the slaves of William Murray who were considered good carpenters, and since the war between the states began in the year 1861 the building would have to have been built not later than 1865 to have been erected by slave labor. This Church is now the property of the Christian denomination and is used by them as a place of worship. I might mention that this Church was remodeled after it was sold to the Christian denomination. Before the building was changed, it set only about two steps from the ground and had a wide and deeply recessed porch with two large columns supporting the span; the steeple was a low square arrangement rather than the tall one which you find now; inside the building and at the back was a gallery for the negroes, this gallery was approached ~~XXXXX~~ through a door on the right side of the recessed porch leading to a stairway.

October 24, 1863

In Deed book "X", pg. 144 (Clarke County records) you will find where the trustees of the Watkinsville Methodist Church Circuit parsonage deeded to William M. Ashford for the consideration of \$1000.00 lot number 9 and a small lot adjoining thereto deeded to Matilda Harden by W. M. Blanton; these two lots adjoining the lot occupied by William M. Ashford. This sale was brought about ~~XX~~ as a result of directions to the trustees at Quarterly meeting held at Watkinsville on September 26, 1862 (see old Minute book, Pg. 144) from this I quote: "The Quarterly Conference instructs the trustees of the parsonage to convey by deed to William M. Ashford, or any other person, the parsonage in Watkinsville, and to receive titles from Jane Rowan, administratrix for the estate of Abraham Rowan deceased, to the house and lot wherein she now lives. To use the difference between the sale and purchase viz. \$200.00 towards repairs of the house, and such other sums as might be collected."

This parsonage bought by Mr. Ashford was the one bought by the Circuit from Mrs. Matilda Harden Johnson in the year 1851. The trustees of the parsonage were J. C. Branch, C. L. Few, Barton C. Thrasher, James C. Wilson, Emory F. Anderson, John Calvin Johnson and Peter W. Mutcherson.

December 24, 1863

In Deed book "X", pg. 145 (Clarke County records) you will find where Jane Rowan, administratrix of the estate ~~of~~ of Abraham Rowan deeds to the trustees of the Methodist parsonage for the consideration of \$800.00 the place indicated in the old Quarterly meeting's minute book pg. 144. This parsonage was located on the lot where the Dempsey family now live in this year 1950.

At Quarterly meeting held at Watkinsville, January 13, 1877 the trustees are authorized to sell the parsonage and pay the debt (see minute book pg. 263) The committee appointed to sell the parsonage and pay the debt were John Whitlow, (Chairman) W. B. Maygood, S. R. Ward, W. Johnson and E. F. Anderson. I think the debt referred to in this item was a balance owed on the present parsonage. I fail to find in the records where the parsonage was sold, but some years later we find the property in possession of A. W. Ashford who probably bought it from the Committee named above and failed to have it recorded. It seems that this parsonage was not occupied by our preacher at the time of the sale but he was even then residing in the present parsonage ~~XX~~ to which the trustees received the deeds in 1878.

(Note Oconee County was cut off from Clarke County in 1875)

May 1, 1878

In Deed book A, pg. 337 (Oconee County records) you will find where the present parsonage, in this year 1950, was bought from Jerimah C. Fodrell and his wife Eliza in 1878. This old home was originally owned by Green B. Maygood, the father of Bishop Atticus G. Maygood and Miss Laura Maygood, the missionary. The price paid for the property was \$970.50. The old Clarke county records shows that Green B. Maygood in 1853 sold the property to Milledge S. Durham, an old resident of Watkinsville, and I assume that Mr. Durham sold the property to Mr. and Mrs Fodrell who in turn sold to the Watkinsville Methodist Church Circuit.

1893

In Deed book "D", (Oconee County records) pg. 375, you will find where the trustees of the Methodist Church deeded to A. W. Ashford the old Church which was built in the early 1860s by Murray's slaves; the consideration in this case was another lot on which the present Methodist Church now stands in 1950.

The present Methodist Church was built in 1893 by A. W. Ashford, his brothers, and two uncles, Thomas and Robert Booth as a memorial to the mother of the Ashford men and a sister to the Booth brothers.

A great improvement to the Church property within the last few years was the development of a basement for Sunday-school classes, a kitchen and a large room for gatherings etc.

We fear that the first organization of our Church will never be known, but since Watkinsville was incorporated in 1806 we feel that there was a Methodist Church here then; if the village was large enough to incorporate, there certainly must have been a Church and the other two Churches here did not come on until 1887 and 1895 respectively.

Below we are giving the chain of preachers, some junior preachers and presiding Elders who have served us from the year 1835 until this good year of our Lord 1950 :

Tr. served	Preachers in Charge	Presiding Elders	Junior Preachers
1835-1836	J. W. Glenn		
1836-1837	J. W. Glenn	Richard Lane	Walter K. Branham
1837-1838	John C. Simmons		William D. Bussey
1838-1839	Eli Bennett		James I. Winn
1839-1840	Russell W. Johnson		A. J. Deavers
1840-1841	Minton Crawford		Andrew Neese
1841-1842	Minton Crawford		J. S. Lane
1842-1843	John B. Chappell		John P. Robinson
1843-1844	Richard Lane		Augustus D. Russell
1844-1845	J. W. Knight		George M. Hancock
1845-1846	John W. Glenn		W. N. Allen
1846-1847	John W. Glenn		William W. Allen
1847-1848	Anderson Ray		A. J. Deavers
1848-1849	Henry P. Pitchford		James L. Gibson
1849-1850	Joseph D. Adams		William B. Harrison
1850-1851	J. D. Adams	Wm. J. Parks ✓	John M. Harris
1851	George Bright	Wm. J. Parks	J. M. Harris
1852	Wm. J. Cotter	Wm. J. Parks	Jno. M. Grogan
1853	Wm. J. Cotter	Wm. J. Parks	Jesse R. Littlejohn
1854	Jesse R. Littlejohn	J. W. Talley	Thomas Boring
1855	David Blalock	J. W. Talley	Jno Pattillo
1856	David Blalock	J. W. Talley	Jno. W. Mcabee
1857	Wm M. C. Cone	J. W. Talley	Jacob C. Neese
1858	Wm. M. C. Cone	Alfred F. Mann ✓	Aug. T. Williamson
1859	John C. Simmons	J. O. A. Clark	W. C. D. Perry
1860	John C. Simmons	J. O. A. Clark	Wm C. Rowland
1861	Fillman F. Reynolds	J. O. A. Clark	Jno R. Parker
1862	Atticus G. Maygood	Robt. W. Bigham	Anderson J. Jarrell ✓
1863	D. J. Myrick	Robert W. Bigham	Emory F. Anderson
1864	D. J. Myrick	Robt W. Bigham	Emory F. Anderson
1865	D. J. Myrick	Robt. W. Bigham	James L. Fowler
1866	A. G. Worley	Walter R. Branham	Robert J. Corley
1867	Cicero A. Mitchell	Walter R. Branham	Emory F. Anderson
1868	Richard J. Harwell	Walter R. Branham	Henry J. Ellis
1869	Richard J. Harwell	Thomas F. Pierce ✓	J. M. Baxter
1870	E. G. Murrah	Thomas F. Pierce	Jas. M. Bell
1871	Jno. W. Knight	Thomas F. Pierce	J. M. V. Morris
1872	J. M. V. Morris	Eustis W. Speer	Jno. W. Knight
1873	Jno. W. Knight	Eustis W. Speer	B. L. Nune
1874	Wm. W. Oslin	Thomas F. Pierce ✓	Wm. M. Lampkin
1875	Wm. W. Oslin	Thomas F. Pierce	W. M. Trammell
1876	Wm. W. Oslin	Thomas F. Pierce	W. M. Trammell
1877	Wm. W. Oslin	Thomas F. Pierce	Warren A. Candler ✓
1878	Miles W. Arnold	Robert W. Bigham	Mike D. Turner
1879	Wm. J. Cotter	Robt. W. Bigham ✓	666
1880	Wm. J. Cotter	Robt. W. Bigham	J. J. Morgan
1881	R. J. Ellis	Robt W. Bigham	
1882	R. J. Ellis	Geo. W. Yarbrough	
1883	R. A. Seals	Geo. W. Yarbrough	
1884	R. A. Seals	Jesse Boring	
1885	J. V. M. Morris	J. D. Hammond ✓	
1886	J. V. M. Morris	Simon Peter Richardson ✓	
1887	J. V. M. Morris	Simon Peter Richardson	

Junior preachers

Yr. served	Preachers	Presiding Elders	Junior preachers
1888	C. A. Conway	Simon Peter Richardson	
1889	C. A. Conway	Simon Peter Richardson	
1890	E. B. Reese	H. M. Parks	
1891	E. B. Reese	H. H. Parks	
1892	E. B. Reese	H. M. Parks	
1893	E. B. Reese	H. M. Parks	
1894	Robert T. Martin	Luke G. Johnson	
1895	Jas. J. Ansley	Wm. P. Lovejoy	
1896	Jas. J. Ansley	Wm. P. Lovejoy	
1897	Simeon Shaw	Wm. P. Lovejoy	
1898	J. S. Askew	J. R. Robins	A. B. Sanders
1899	A. J. Hughs	J. R. Robins	
1900	A. J. Hughs	J. R. Robins	
1901	A. J. Hughs	Wm. P. Lovejoy	
1902	A. J. Hughs	W. P. Lovejoy	
1903	B. P. Searcy	W. P. Lovejoy	
1904	A. A. Sullivan	W. P. Lovejoy	
1905	A. A. Sullivan	J. S. Bryan	
1906	A. J. Sears	J. S. Bryan	
1907	A. J. Sears	J. S. Bryan	
1908	J. F. Davis	J. S. Bryan	
1909	J. F. Davis	W. L. Pierce	
1910	L. A. Laughlin	W. L. Pierce	
1911	E. C. Marks	W. L. Pierce	
1912	J. R. Speer	B. P. Allen	
1913	J. R. Speer	B. P. Allen	
1914	G. S. Frazier	B. P. Allen	
1915	W. W. Carroll	B. P. Allen	
1916	W. W. Carroll	B. P. Wiggins	
1917	W. W. Carroll	S. P. Wiggins	
1918	W. W. Carroll	S. P. Wiggins	
1919	F. D. Cantrell	S. P. Wiggins	
1920	F. D. Cantrell	G. R. Venable	
1921	F. D. Cantrell	G. E. Venable	
1922	O. B. Talley	G. E. Venable	
1923	B. H. Trammell	W. S. Robinson	
1924	B. H. Trammell	W. S. Robinson	
1925	B. H. Trammell	W. S. Robinson	
1926 (Decd)	B. H. Trammell & Lunsford	W. S. Robinson	
1927	W. F. Lunsford	W. S. Robinson	
1928	W. F. Lunsford	J. T. Allgood	
1929	W. F. Lunsford	J. L. Allgood	
1930	W. F. Lunsford	J. L. Allgood	
1931	G. T. Shell	J. Allgood	
1932	G. T. Shell	J. W. Veach	
1933	Carl Stanley	J. W. Veach	
1934	Carl Stanley	J. W. Veach	
1935	Carl Stanley	C. C. Jarrell	
1936	N. B. Sams	C. C. Jarrell	
1937	N. B. Sams	M. L. Byrd	
1938	N. B. Sams	M. L. Byrd & M. M. Maxwell	
1939	N. B. Sams	C. L. Middlebrooks	
1940	J. B. Stephenson	C. L. Middlebrooks	
1941	Jas. Boyd Stephenson	C. L. Middlebrooks	
1942	Frank E. Jenkins	J. H. Barton	
1943	Frank E. Jenkins	J. H. Barton	
1944	Frank E. Jenkins	J. H. Barton	
1945	Frank E. Jenkins	J. H. Barton	
1946	Frank E. Jenkins	M. S. Smith	
1947	Frank E. Jenkins	M. S. Smith	
1948	J. S. Hill	M. S. Smith	
1949	J. S. Hill	M. S. Smith	
1950	Marion M. Conway	J. C. Callaway	
1951	M. H. Conway	J. C. Callaway	
1951-1952	M. H. Conway	J. C. Callaway	

We wish to thank Miss Vivian Ashford for certain research that she did for us at Emory University Theological Library.

The above was compiled by Grover Frank Ashford

Signed: G. Frank Ashford
G. Frank Ashford, Watkinsville, Ga.

October 11, 1951