HISTORY OF THE WHITE PLAINS METHODIST CHURCH

(Data by Mrs. T. C. (Gertrude) Moore)

Mrs. Moore lived most of her life in White Plains, Georgia. She has love and pride in the past, present and future of the White Plains community. She has the respect of all the citizens of the town and it is through her perseverance that we are able to compile a partial history of our church.

(Compiled by Mrs. Hart Marchman)
According to Smith, in his book on George W. Pierce's life, the state of Georgia in 1806 had two districts and eight appointments among the Methodist Churches. Perhaps the most important of the eight was the Apalache. It included all of Greene, Oglethorpe and Clark Counties and at that time was thickly settled with 28 societies and 646 members. Camp-meetings were held at Hastings (Siloam) every year.

We have not been able to find any record of the date when the White Plains Methodist Church was organized but we do have records which establish the fact that it was active in 1817; as found in the Resolutions on the death of Mrs. Sarah Wright. We have at this printing, the recording secretary's book from 1838 through 1881 with the names of the Trustees, Secretaries, Members, Pastors and Presiding Elders, together with resolutions, reports of committees and minutes of the meetings.

Names of male members of White Plains Methodist Church in 1838 are as follows:

1B Stephen Wright
3B Littleton Mapp
5B William H. Wright
7B Samuel Jones
9B Daniel Wright
11B William Ashley
13B Wiley Wright
15B Bunel Richards

2B Zebulon Wright
4B Zaccheus Wright
6B Matthew Pierce
8B Benjamin Alfriend
10B William A. Wright
12B Ebenezer Smith
14B Jefferson Wright
16B Charles Ashley
Names of Female members in 1838:

1B Nancy Wright  2B Sarah H. Wright
3B Sara Wright   4B Martha King
5B Mary Mapp    6B Nancy Alfriend
7B Abenath Wright 8B Lucretia Mapp
9B Nancy McGibony 10B Martha Mapp
11B Lucy C. Jones 12B Martha A. Alfriend
13B Nancy Wright 14B Elizabeth Wright
15B Charlotte Ashley 16B Cynthia Smith
17B Mourning Pierce 18B Lucy Pierce
19B Elize Smith 20B Martha Wright
21B Nancy Jackson 22B Mary Wright
23B Margaret Sylaven 24B Sarah Jones
25B Patience T. Alfriend 26B Mary Smith
27B Mitty Copeland 28B Mary Wright
29B Sarah Wright 30B Emily Wright
31B Elizabeth Wright 32B Frances A. I. Wright

Mrs. W. G. Armour of Greensboro said the White Plains Methodist Church grew rapidly when they started using the Liberty Church grounds to drill soldiers during the Civil War. We have an incomplete record of the minutes of the church from 1838 down to the present 1963.

In 1797 the Methodist Church Conference met at Charleston, South Carolina, where the appointments were made giving Rev. Mack George (afterwards becoming a Bishop) the Georgia District and Rev. James Jenkins the preacher in charge of the Washington Circuit. The Georgia District in 1797 had three circuits which covered most of the state. Six preachers had the responsibilities of these churches. The Washington Circuit included the counties of Greene, Taliaferro, Wilkes, Lincoln, Elbert, Hart, Franklin, Madison and Oglethorpe.

There have been two church buildings. The first building stood where Broad Street begins at Sparta Road and the first personage was across Main Street in front of the Baptist Church.
The present building, our second Methodist church, and the par-
sonage, which was rebuilt in 1952, were built in 1871. In 1950,
Sunday School rooms were added to the back of the church. In 1963,
the present parsonage was completed and completely furnished by
the people of the Charge; for many years the charge included only
White Plains and Siloam, Liberty Church has been included and fi-
nally, Knowles Chapel (Hancock County).

Data presented states, "...pastors of this church have been
among the most outstanding in the Conference. Bishop Candler once
said the White Plains Methodist Charge was the only appointment he
ever asked for. It was not granted. Ed Tappan is said to have
mentioned this Charge to Candler so often that it excited his
interest".

Among the ministers who have gone out from this church are:

Casper S. Wright        John Wright Jr.        J. J. Copelan
Josiah Lewis            Henry Strozier         Charles Slack
Chase Tappan

Trustees of the Methodist Church South in White Plains in
the year 1850 were: Wiley Wright, Henry G. Ware, William I. Mapp,
William L. Alfriend, and James J. Eley. Committees at that time
consisted of: Committee of Church and State; Committee of Sabbath
Schools; Committee on Finance; Committee on Missions; Committee on
Conference Funds and Support of the Bishop; Committee on Church
Literature; Committee for Relief of the Poor; Committee on Church
Repairs. Members of the Committee on "Sunday-School" in 1858 were:
Miles W. Lewis, Sr., Rufus W. Smith, William J. Mapp, Miss Sallie
Swan, Miss Mary Eley.

In 1858 a Sunday School was organized which included both
denominations, Methodist and Baptist. In a few years it was thought best for each denomination to have a separate Sunday School. In 1863 there were 7 teachers and 35 scholars in the Methodist Sunday School.

In 1850, it was agreed to let the colored people use our church on first Saturday and Sunday provided that "they keep it in good order".

In the year 1888 the Women's Missionary Society was organized. This was done as soon as the Conference granted the privilege so we were among the first to have a W. M. S. now called WSCS. Throughout the years our church has done a large share of entertaining the different organizations of the Conference.

The Sunday School now known as the Church-School, has failed very few Sundays to have services and there have been always the faithful who attend and carry on the Lord's work while we are few in number we feel the many who have gone out from our church have helped to spread the wonderful story of Christ.

The following is gathered from the papers sent by Mrs. C. C. Wills of Greensboro:

In 1893 Reverend James J. Ashley, pastor of the Greensboro Circuit, undertook to establish some historical facts concerning Greene County Methodist Churches. He wrote to the Reverend W. J. Cotter who was the pastor of Greensboro Circuit in 1862 and 1863. His reply is as follows:

"Turin, Georgia
Feb. 15, 1893"
Dear Brother Ashley,

I was pastor of Greensboro Circuit in 1862-63 during the dark days of war. The work embraced Greensboro, Hastings (Siloam), Union Point, White Plains, Liberty, New Salem, Ridge Grove and Fort Chapel.

The War was the absorbing question at that time, hence church work suffered. At Hastings I preached twice a month, once in the week at 11:00 and once at 3:00 on Sundays. The church prospered during the two years James Dolvin and Bordens were among the leading members at Hastings. The leaders at Greensboro were W. D. Weaver, Isaac Hall, Thomas Cunningham. Sister Weaver was one of the most superior women I ever met, cultured, refined, intelligent and devoutly Christian and there are others, male and female who deserve to be mentioned and praised. There were old debts hanging over the Greensboro church and so far as I can remember we paid all while I was there. Among the leaders at Union Point were W. P. Printup and L. D. Carlton.

White Plains had one of the best stewards in Wiley Wright.

The leaders at Liberty were Uncle Jackie Smith, James Smith, Thomas Smith, the Copelans and Rev. Bryant. The wives of all these Smiths were good women. Obediah Copelan's wife was a modest woman and that modesty refined by grace.

The leaders at New Salem were Dr. Cartwright, Colonel Ward and the Armors. Sister Billingslay was the widow of a old local preacher and an excellent woman; so was Sister Park, a widow and the mother of J. B. Park (Ridge Grove).
At that time Greene County had a good citizenship as I ever found in Georgia. And the membership of the churches were as good as I ever found. They were generous, liberal and kind. Their pastor shared all the good things they possessed: chickens, hams, etc. were sent to the parsonage, and if I were to say they gave me first and last 200 lbs. of butter it would not be an exaggeration. As I have said, it was war times and a struggle to live, but they sent us away with meal, flour, wheat, and other supplies to run as far as possible into the next year.

I believe I have about complied with your request as I understand it. With my friendly wishes for you and old Greene county,

I am yours fraternally,

William J. Cotter

The following is copied from W. P. Parkes' records:

Rev. G. G. Smith gives us an amusing incident at a Methodist meeting in Greene County about 1893. During that year there was a certain German preacher named Lewis Myers, who came from South Carolina and preached in this section. Mr. Smith said, "He came once a month to a church in Greene County and after Saturday's preaching requested the people to stay for class, but instead of holding class, he gave them a talk to this effect, 'Brethren, I dinks some dings might be needed here. The clap-boards on the house are loose, you might nail them on and keep the rain out. The winder boarding is ripped off, you might put dem back. The man bite tobacco and spit on the floor, a very bad habit, breden; and altogether things look shocking about here'. By this time, the congregation were tittering and Mr. H. C. Cose, then a young man, was overcome by the old man's way that he had bent his head on the bench to concealing his merriment. At that, the preacher said, 'and you young man who has your head on the bench, will pray for us.'"

No records have been found on Superintendents except Mr. H. S. Mapp and Mr. T. T. Eason were secretaries during this period.

During 1890 to 1894, the Superintendents enclosed in our records were, Henry S. Mapp, Mr. Alex Smith and Mr. Ed Purks.
In 1894, Mr. Ed Tappan became Superintendents. From 1897-1911 Mr. Ed Tappan was Superintendent. From this time, Dr. C. C. Copeland, Mr. W. C. Davidson, Mr. H. M. Minton, Mr. W. A. Purks, Mr. W. H. Harper, Mr. Purks Pricket, Mr. Frank Cheery, Mr. Hoke Contrell, Mr. Harry Thompson, and Mrs. E. L. McCorkle have served as Superintendents.

Among the teachers names given in our records are: Seaborn L. Jordan, John H. Eley, R. W. Smith, James Dolvin, W. S. Mapp, W. M. Lewis, and Wiley Wright. Later in 1886, Mrs. Sallie Smith, Mrs. Ann Tappan and Mrs. Sallie Tappan were named as teachers.

NOTES:

The Baptist used our Methodist Church in 1848 while they built their second church building. In 1871, the Methodist used the Baptist church while building the present building.

In February, 1952, our church installed an electric organ.

"Therefore seeing we are also compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."

(Data by Mrs. T. C. Moore, compiled by Mrs. Hort Marchman, copied by Larry D. Powell on this eighth day of December, 1963.)