There is very little documentary material on which to compile a history of
the Methodist Church at Young Harris. Most of this material bears only on the more
recent history. Resort has necessarily been made to the memories of older people
in the community, and in regard to the beginnings the information comes from people
long dead through their descendants. This makes it impossible to fix dates with
certainty and all early dates are only approximate.

White people came into the Brasstown Valley in the early eighteen thirties.
The original dwelling house built at Young Harris—still standing—was erected
by John Bryson in 1832 as shown by a date built into the brick chimney. This is
verified by his grandson who lived until about fifteen years ago. A little later
several families of Carsons moved in. They were Methodists. According to the best
information the Carsons soon built a Methodist Church on ground now occupied by
Young Harris College. There is conclusive evidence as to its location. It stood
almost directly in front of the present Susan B. Harris Memorial Chapel, and there
was a cemetery around it. In making excavations for college buildings several of
these graves have been uncovered.

This Church was called Zion. It stood on this ground as late as the close
of the War Between the States as several members of the Home Guard who survived
well into the present century remember standing guard around it when the community
was threatened by raids from Bushwhackers from Tennessee in the closing days of
the war. Also there were some who lived well into this century who remember attend-
ing church there as boys immediately after the war.

Soon after the war the church was moved to the present site of Zion Church
about three miles southwest of Young Harris and this was done by cutting the old
church into several sections, hauling the sections to the new site, and putting
them back together. This building stood on into the twentieth century before
another was erected on its site. There seems to have been no house of worship for
Methodists on the old site until Young Harris College began operations in 1886 and
The Susan B. Harris Chapel was dedicated in 1892. Between these last dates worship
was conducted in other school buildings.

The information leads to the conclusion that the first church was built about
1835-1838 and stood on the original site until the late eighteen sixties. After
a lapse of twenty or twenty five years the church was reestablished with the founding
of Young Harris College. In the interval the church at Zion, three miles away,
was the center for the congregation.

From the reestablishment of a congregation at Young Harris about 1886 until
1949 church services were held in the College Chapel and class rooms were used for
Sunday School work. In January the first preaching service was held on the 9th
day in the new Sharp Memorial Church in the year 1949. Rev. Claude M. Haynes
preached the first sermon. The church was dedicated by Bishop Arthur J. Moore
on May 29 of the same year. This church was built as a memorial to Joseph Astor
Sharp, D.D., a preacher of renown and longtime president of Young Harris College.
The pastor of the church during its building, first use, and dedication was Dr.
Dow Kirkpatrick.

The people of the Blue Ridge Mountain section have been from earliest time
predominantly Baptist, growing out of this denomination's missionary work among
the Indians before the time of white settlement. Most of those who were Methodists
belonged to the Northern branch of the church until Unification. There were scarcely
a hundred and fifty Southern Methodists in Towns County prior to that event. All
but a score of these were members at Young Harris and Zion. A large part of the
Young Harris congregation has through the years been connected with the College in
some capacity. During recent months the congregation has begun to grow from people
in the community and surrounding territory, and at present there is promise that a
broader basis for this church's influence is being built.

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