

HISTORY OF  
THE METHODIST CHURCH  
AT  
BLOUNTS CREEK,  
NORTH CAROLINA

att.  
Mr. Frank <sup>W.</sup> Mill

REV. MILLARD WARREN

L. C. M. Swindell

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The church is older than 100, but  
on the new site it is 100 yrs. old.  
Unable to secure any dates or info.  
on the old site in the woods.

In the year of 1893, a lay Methodist preacher from Gilead, William (Bill) Acklin, was conducting religious services under the oak trees at Blounts Creek Mill. It was rumored that a revival had been conducted there previously under a bush arbor. This was told to Jesse Warren by his wife Louisa Ricks of Grimesland. And, furthermore, she had attended the revival. It was sad indeed that Louisa died after three years, leaving behind her husband and a little girl named Emma. In due season Jesse J. Warren married Helen Lee Ricks, the youngest sister of Louisa Ricks Warren. Jesse J. Warren with his young wife, Helen, who had recently moved from Grimesland to Blounts Creek, attended the Methodist service under the oak trees, and is the author of this information given in his autobiography, regarding the founding of the present Methodist church.

"An unusually large crowd was present at the service conducted by William Acklin under the shade of the oak trees on that Sunday at Blounts

Creek Mill," said Jesse. It must have been a Pentacostal, spiritually charged service, because, as Warren told in his Journal, God spoke to him thus: "Now is the time to start building a church"! He asked Mr. Acklin's permission at the close of the service to present the idea and take up a collection.

The offering was taken: it amounted to \$43.00 in cash, a considerable amount of produce was promised, others volunteered their labor. His employer and owner of the timber firm, S. R. Fowles and Son, a large landholder of Washington, N. C., for whom Jesse Warren worked, gave an acre of land to build on, approximately 1/2 mile from the present site.

Construction of the church building began about 1893. Carpenters, Lewis Grise and George Johnson from Pitt County, who had worked for Warren previously, were hired to do the most difficult work. Times were very hard and money was not easy to come by in those days. Warren tried many ideas to raise

money and to create interest in the endeavor of building a church at Blounts Creek. On one particular Sunday, he had the carpenters, Grise and Johnson, to come and attend a service in the incomplete edifice in order to get acquainted with the people. Another Sunday morning, Jesse Warren declared: "I hated to start begging, I was fagged out and tired. I wanted to rest." However, his will power overcame human weakness. "I went anyway, he said and had splendid success. A Mrs. Tuten gave five barrels of corn." The building was soon completed and ready for dedication.

The people responded; in Warren's words, "the people took to the church"; soon the membership was over one hundred. Unfortunately, there is no record of the charter members. But there is good reason to believe the following were a part of the original membership:

Mr. and Mrs. David Gaskill, his son, Richard (Dick); and sister, Mrs. Sally Swindell, her sons,

Hiram, John and daughter, Mary; Virginia,  
Mrs. Lewis Adams; Mrs. Stilley, daughter, Sid  
Cox, and son Cam; Jesse and Helen Warren, daughter,  
Emma; William Cratch; Anson Cox, Olivia Cox (sister  
of Jesse Warren). These are a few of the elderly,  
faithful attenders.

HOW THE CHURCH  
GOT IT'S NAME

One of the daughters of Mrs. Sally Swindell, Virginia, better known as "Jennie," *S. BONNER* was responsible for the new Methodist Church's name, according to Jesse Warren's report to the writer. When the Presiding Elder ask the question: "By what name is the church to be called?" it was then that Jennie Swindell<sup>BONNER</sup> spoke up and said at the Quarterly Conference, "I move that the name "Warren Chapel Methodist Church" be given.

The music and musical instruments were not as modern and up to date as they are today. Warren tells in his autobiography that he raised the hymns for the congregation, if the pastor didn't do it." For the first revival, Jesse and Helen loaned their organ to the church, and Emma, their oldest daughter, played for the service and led the singing.

Incidentally, an organ was given later to Warren Chapel Methodist Church by Mrs. Sam R. (Mary) Fowles of Washington, wife of the donor of the acre of land upon which the church was built, so the record of Jesse J. Warren reports. It was not too difficult in the early days to persuade the young people to assemble around the organ to help lead the singing.



SUNDAY SCHOOL WAS A PRIORITY with the new Methodist Church at Blounts Creek. The Journal of Jesse Warren tells of his wife Helen bringing Sunday School literature with them when they moved from Pitt County to Blounts Creek; and, at that time, there were no services being held at the Smyrna Free Will Baptist Church. Hence, the newcomers obtained permission to use this church to start a Sunday School. As soon as the Methodist Church was completed, the Sunday School moved there. This writer recalls the time when the Superintendent of the Methodist Sunday School, who happened to be his father, Jesse Warren, walked with a large class of boys to the Christian Church. The location was known as "over the creek." The superintendent of this Sunday School was a fine gentleman named Walter Tyson. A contest was held between youths of both schools, quoting scripture verses and psalms.

Another special program, usually given during the summer and had a particular interest to the youth of Warren Chapel, was Children's Day. The wife of our pastor, Rev. W. E. Trotman, was talented both musically and in directing youth programs. In spite of the fact that she was an unusually large woman, Mrs. Trotman would drive their horse and buggy nine miles from Aurora to Blounts Creek to practice the Children's Day program once a week, usually on Saturday afternoons. So the youth were greatly enriched spiritually and culturally, solely, because they had found a beautiful spirit who cared.

The writer of this story and the evangelist for the series of services mentioned here was fortunate to have Grace, his sister, (and wife of George Diamond) bring a car load of friends each evening to the services from Washington. In addition to this valuable assistance and encouragement Grace would do Personal Work during the altar call. This writer saw several come to the altar whom she gave a friendly touch and said a few words as a witness to Jesus Christ.

There were numerous church school superintendents at Warren Chapel Methodist Church. The first one was Jesse Warren; the second was Hiram (Tiny) Swindell; the third one was Will Adams and for a brief time, Millard Warren, one of the younger sons of Jesse and Helen Warren. Attendance and interest in the Sunday School had ebbed quite low. To help the poor attendance, the young sixteen year old superintendent used his father's mules and wagon to go around the community and gather up a wagon-load of young people, carrying them to Sunday School. At the end of the summer, a delightful picnic was held on the banks of the Pamlico River at Core Point. This was in the summer of 1920, just prior to my going to W.C.I.

No doubt the Superintendent who served the longest tenure and accomplished the most was Mrs. Henry Harris, known to many as Minnie Lewis. Under her leadership three very useful Sunday School rooms were added to the Church. This writer

remembers passing through the community during the Advent season many years ago. Upon noticing cars in the yard of Warren Chapel, I decided to stop for a few minutes to enter and see what was going on. What I saw were activities too sacred to interrupt, I felt. It was Mrs. Harris and childred practicing a Christmas program, so it appeared to me.

As a very small boy, I can remember my mother and older sister giving Christmas programs, with the Christmas trees. Several years ago, after my sister had become an old woman, and Mother had gone to her Home in Heaven, I reminded Emma that I owed my knowledge and love for the familiar Christmas songs to her and Mother. The Advent season certainly could not be the same without such hymns as: "Joy to the World, the Lord is Come"; "Oh Little Town of Bethlehem"; "Hark the Herald Angels Sing"; and "Silent Night"; and many other beautiful Christmas songs.

REVIVALS AT WARREN CHAPEL METHODIST CHURCH were always deeply spiritual. As a rule, outside evangelists were invited to assist the pastor. Rev. Fernie Becton who lived in Carteret County was a favorite with some, especially my father, Jesse Warren. Others in the Warren Chapel Methodist Church asked Brother Becton, as he was widely known, to confirm a story that they had heard. Brother Becton was holding a revival during a very warm season of the year. When he sat down, perspiring freely, a fan was seen floating in the air toward him. He only had to reach out his hand and take hold of it. Thus, he was able to cool himself.

There was a deeply spiritual evangelist by the name of Browning who conducted a revival at Warren Chapel prior to the World War I period. The pastor's wife, Mrs. Trotman, walked up and down the aisle, repeating "I'm so happy." When she reached the pew on which Jesse Warren was sitting she said: "I'm so happy Brother Jesse." This evangelist was very adept in reaching youth as well as adults.

One night during the revival, a year later, the writer heard Otis Jones, a bright teenager, tell the Evangelist "I want to be a preacher just like you." Needless to say, the writer had to be at the altar to hear the statement. I was there, not because of anything the evangelist had said or because of any conviction of my sins. But I must be honest concerning this very sacred occasion. I woke up just in time to see Add and Jesse Warren, two of my older brothers, pass the pew where I had been sleeping quite soundly through the sermon. I knew it was time for me to go to the altar if my two brothers did it. I followed these two brothers wherever they went, as nearly as I could.

It was not until five or six years later, the writer, at age 16, came under the influence of a Christian roommate at a Methodist "Prep" school in Washington, and was led into a real faith in Jesus Christ. Soon after, he obtained his new experience of faith in God, and decided to

become a minister of the Gospel. In 1984 he completed fifty three years as a member of the North Carolina Annual Conference; in 1976 retired upon completing forty five years as an active minister of the Methodist Church.

Modesty almost forbids me to mention a revival in which I assisted in 1952, at Warren Chapel. The attendance was good. But there was no apparent response to the altar calls. The pastor gave little or no encouragement when he would make a statement such as "you cannot take pine trees in the church." Then on Friday, the pastor found it necessary to take his wife to the doctor in Greenville, leaving the visiting preacher to do as he pleased. Which this writer did, first by making a survey of the community with the help of a fine christian layman from Ayden, Roy Turnage, whom I had stopped by to see on my way down from Raleigh in order to solicit his aid in the revival the following week at Warren Chapel.

We were able to do some personal witnessing in the meantime. By the closing service on Sunday morning, there were twelve young adult men and one youth to come forward and accept Christ as their Savior. The pastor began the revival by saying: "We can't take pine trees into the church" but made the complimentary remark at the close; "You doubled the membership of the church." A cousin of the visiting minister, Mrs. Addie Cox Mason, was most flattering when she told him "You saved Warren Chapel."

It was during the year 1911 when the members of Warren Chapel decided that a new edifice was needed. Work was begun on a new building. In later years, Jesse Warren enjoyed telling his pastors, "we wore out one church and had to have a new one." Rev. John Hoyle, Sr. was the pastor during the building of the second Warren Chapel. He, in addition to being the pastor in charge, was



a carpenter of considerable ability. The pastor was able to save the congregation a substantial amount of money by doing much of the work. The members were in much better circumstances than when the first building was erected.

This writer remembers vividly the time of the completion of the new Warren Chapel building because it was near the terrible "September storm" that did such tremendous damage to Eastern North Carolina.

THE SECOND CHALLENGE COMES TO JESSE J. WARREN:  
FIRST BUILDING, NOW MOVING THE CHURCH. Thirty  
years after the completion of the second Methodist  
church edifice at Blounts Creek, a new highway had  
been paved through the Blounts Creek community.  
While it was a marvelous help and benefit to the  
community, as a whole, the new signal to progress  
was a drawback to the cause of the Kingdom of God.  
A very hard thing to say, but the powers that  
be, had ignored the Church by leaving her one-half  
mile off the highway. Hence the attendance and  
the interest in the activities of the Church,  
Sunday School and Worship fell way below par,  
and birds and night prowlers, known as tramps,  
occupied the Lord's House, leaving behind their  
filth and refuse. Windows were falling prey to  
an unfriendly foe. Jesse Warren, who had been  
living in Laurel, Maryland, with two sons, Doctors  
Bryan P. and John, since the death of his beloved  
wife, Helen Ricks, in 1931, was visiting his

daughter and son-in-law, Grace and George Diamond, in Washington, North Carolina.

He usually found a way to extend his visits south to Blounts Creek; also, to attend a Sunday Worship at Warren Chapel; a must with this old "Saint of God" as Jesse J. Warren was once characterized by his son, Bryan. To say that he was disappointed and saddened at the condition of the beloved church was an understatement. Out of what appeared to be a hopeless situation, Warren heard a "still small voice," this time it said, "Now is the time to move the church out to the highway." This was no little task, moving a large building at least a half mile down the road. Warren never tackled a job of any proportion or size without first going to his knees for guidance. From then on, the way was clear. The first step was to see Mr. S. R. Fowles, his old friend and former employer, about trading the original lot for a new site on which to locate Warren Chapel

United Methodist Church out on the highway. Having secured an acre of land in a favorable location, the big task of moving the building lay ahead. Professional house movers don't work for gratis. However, Warren found one at Chocowinity who agreed to move the church for five hundred dollars. This was a bargain so he decided to give him the contract.

Another bottleneck confronted him. In those difficult times, no one had five hundred dollars to give away. Jesse Warren had prayed about this phase of moving the church. And since he had no bank account, pension or social security, there was only one other way. Warren knew a lot of people throughout Beaufort and Pitt Counties and fortunately they had confidence in him. So he went to his friends and relatives soliciting gifts until he had raised the entire amount of five hundred dollars. "Everyone that I asked made a contribution, but one of my nephews, he once told his preacher son.

Addison Exum took his father's place in helping do the manual labor in moving the church building. At the ripe age of eighty five years, Jesse Warren didn't feel up to lifting heavy beams and skid poles. So he sat in a chair inside the door of the building, praising God as his church moved slowly toward her new location. In a matter of days, she was placed on a beautiful lot, facing the highway.

Soon after the completion of the moving of the church, an old friend and member, Jesse Cayton, gave her a fresh paint job. Thus, an attractive Warren Chapel United Methodist Church stood on a place that had been a bare spot. For a while, there was renewed interest and enthusiasm in the Sunday School and worship services. Three rooms were added to provide accommodation for the church school pupils.

Jesse Warren loved his pastors and they truly reciprocated his love and esteem. A few of their testimonies to this effect are as follows:

Rev. J. W. Hoyle was pastor of Warren's Chapel, and built the present structure in 1913, said of father and mother: When I look back over the way of the past forty years and let my mind settle on the good and great folk I have met, Jesse J. and Helen Warren come in view. What a fine group of children they had then! I can think of no family with more of life before them.

They were both very timid, tho they loved their church very much, and the path they went made it easy for their children to follow them. So, like Jesse of the Bible, there were sons and daughters for Lord's cause -- teachers, doctors and preacher, who will call them blessed.

It was a joy to the preacher to see how they all loved the church. It was a great joy to hear Brother Jesse Warren pray and even talk in a meeting. You could tell that he loved the Lord when he first

knew him by the way he opened his pocket book and caused others to give.

You and the good woman by your side stand out as a faithful pair, waiting to welcome the whole family to the Church Triumphant. Brother Jesse -- you stand out in bold relief on memory's page, a good and great man. My life has been made richer by coming in contact with yours. A few more years and we too will dwell with you and Helen in that land of pure delight where the saved of all the earth shall dwell." J. W. Hoyle.

Rev. Ivey T. Poole: "During the Conference year of 1920-21, I was pastor of the Aurora Circuit. On this charge at times were five churches. One of these was the Warren's Chapel Church which was founded by Brother Jesse Warren, father of Millard, a member of the North Carolina Conference. Brother Jesse Warren and his family were the backbone of the Warren's Chapel Church.

The year I was there was one of the worst years for Malaria Fever in the history of Beaufort County. Early in the year I was stricken with Malaria and Malarial Rheumatism and for about five months was unable to drive my car. It was also a bad financial year; and it looked as if the churches were going to be unable to meet their financial obligations. Brother Warren never lost heart. He would keep saying to me "Brother Poole, don't worry about Warren's Chapel, for we are going to pay every penny we owe."

On the last preaching Sunday, Brother Warren counted out and placed in my hands the last dollar of Warren's Chapel's obligation for the year. I went to Conference rejoicing; but when I got back from Conference, my heart was saddened when I learned, from reliable source, that Brother Warren had sold his milk cow to pay his church obligation. I was moved from the charge at conference because of malaria condition under which I had labored during the year; but before moving, I went to Brother Warren and asked him to take back the \$40.00 he had received



from the sale of his cow, but he would not accept it. He said to me, "Brother Poole, my obligations to my church comes ahead of all my other duties; it comes first, and I am glad the Lord blessed me with a cow to sell so that I could discharge my duties to God and my church."

Of all the loyalty which I have met in the thirty eight years of my ministry, I put the loyalty of Brother Jesse Warren at the top of the list. God blessed Brother Warren with a long life of more than ninety years. He was indeed a friend of God, and a friend of Methodist ministers, and of all people who knew him.

Through the years of my ministry, Brother Warren has lived in my memory; and will continue, as one of the noblest men of God that I ever knew, and ever had the privilege of serving.

Blessings on his memory!

Rev. H. R. Ashmore was pastor of Warren's Chapel after papa had moved to Laurel, Md. He met papa

at Cousin Miles Warren's funeral and came to know him from then intimately. Rev. Ashmore tells: "I first met Mr. Jesse Warren in an afternoon service at Warren's Chapel, in the summer of 1935, I think it was. The annual revival was scheduled to begin the following week. Mr. Warren told me he had come from Laurel, Md. to be present for this revival and that he would do anything he could that would contribute to its success. He inquired of me if I could find the time to take him in my car over the community to see the people and invite them to the services. He was greatly pleased when I assured him I would be delighted to do that. He directed me as we drove from house to house. There were no barriers of church membership or non membership which served to restrain the enthusiastic invitation of this devoted representative of the Lord of his church. Mr. Warren would greet every person warmly and invite him to attend the services of his church. No one turned him down and many of them enthusiastically

replied that they would be right there. Many of them told Brother Warren that they had been privileged to know him in days of cherished memory when he founded the church and proved his Christian faith in loving service to his neighbors and constant loyalty to his church. His heart was stirred by these tributes from his neighbors and he told them that he owed everything to the Savior who transformed his life and was his constant strength and support.

The way the people came and filled the church was a remarkable occurrence. The membership of the church was not large in number. Average attendance in my previous experience had not so much as half filled the church. Now the seats were filled with people and that alone was an inspiring scene. I was successful in persuading Mr. Warren to take the sermon time at one of the services and talk to the people about his own experience with Christ. He made a most helpful talk to his old friends and neighbors about

the great good time he was having and had enjoyed since Christ came and changed his life. He urged them to be faithful to this great Master of his and theirs. We had a good meeting that was a benediction to the entire community. My own life was greatly enriched by the fellowship I had with this exceptionally good man.

I would like to say that I highly value the children of the noble man and pray that the God of their father may continue to be to them a great and shining light. Sincerely, H. R. Ashmore.

Rev. E. G. Cowan who held a revival at Warren's Chapel a few days after papa's funeral apparently heard some reference to his name and influence. He told me at Annual Conference later:

"They tell me that your father was the only man who could fill that church, dead or alive.

No doubt the testimony to papa's good life that would please him most is the one by his own son, Dr. Bryan Warren written to his sister, Mary.

"Papa has so completely licked the devil that to me who has observed him closely for forty years will say that he has reached sainthood."

The Homecoming got started at Warren's Chapel as a Special Appreciation Day for its founder, Jesse J. Warren in 1937.

Lucy Churchill Miller Swindell <sup>transfer from Knoxville Tenn</sup>  
Corinne Swindell Whitehurst <sup>transfer from Methodist Church Washington N.C.</sup>  
1991 to Warren Chapel U.M. Chapel

Jesse Lripp  
Edgar M Swindell  
Allison Parks Swindell  
Caitlin Parks Swindell  
Baptized By Dr. Patrick Welch

Donald S. Miller <sup>from</sup> transfer Washington N.C.  
Jessica L. Parks <sup>from</sup> transfer Chattanooga  
To W.C.U.M. Church Tenn.

On Memorial Day week-end  
May, Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> - 1993

To Warren Chapel U.M. Church

This closing thought isn't a testimony but a challenge to the children of such Godly parents as ours were, and I trust to everyone who reads this:

ARE ALL THE CHILDREN IN?

" I think ofttimes as the night draws nigh  
of an old house on the hill,  
Of a yard all wide and blossom-starred  
Where the children played at will.  
An when the night at last came down,  
Hushing the merry din,  
Mother would look around and ask,  
"Are all the children in?"

Tis many and many year since then,  
And the old house on the hill  
No longer echoes to childish feet,  
And the yard is still so still.  
But I see it all, as the shadows creep,  
And though many the years have been  
Since then, I can hear my Mother ask,  
Are all the children in?"

I wonder if when the shadows fall  
On the last short, earthly day,  
When we say good-bye to the world outside,  
All tired with our childish play,  
When we step out into that Other Land  
Where mother so long has been,  
Will we hear her ask, just as of old,  
"Are all the children in?"

--Selected

*The Cross (Alter) handmade by Lucy C. M. Swindell  
Donation of plaques and light lamps over plaques  
by Lucy C. M. Swindell*

## PASTORS OF WARREN'S CHAPEL

1893 Church First Organized.....	J. E. Bristowe
1894-1895.....	J. J. Barker
1896.....	W. C. Merritt
1897.....	C. O. DuRant
1898.....	G. L. Simmons
1899.....	W. Z. Everton
1900-1902.....	P. Greening
1903-1904.....	J. M. Lowder
1905-1906.....	J. H. M. Giles
1907.....	W. A. Piland
1908-1910.....	C. R. Canipe
1911.....	J. M. Ashley
1912.....	John W. Hoyle
1913-1916.....	W. E. Trotman
1917.....	L. E. Sawyer
1918-1919.....	E. B. Troy
1920.....	Rufus Bradley
1921.....	J. T. Poole
1922-1924.....	W. C. Benson
1925.....	R. M. Price
1926-1930.....	W. G. Lowe
1931-1933.....	J. W. Sneed
1934-1936.....	H. R. Ashmore
<del>1937</del> <i>Started Homecoming Services</i> 1937.....	J. W. Dimmette
1938-1940.....	G. S. Eubanks
1941-1942.....	C. S. Boggs
1943.....	Kermit Wheeler
1944-1945.....	E. W. Downum
1946-1947.....	G. S. Eubanks
1948-1949.....	H. L. Rogers
1950-1953.....	R. F. Moore
1954.....	J. C. Staton
1955.....	-----
1956-1957.....	J. C. Staton
1958.....	L. A. Lewis
1959.....	-----
1960.....	L. A. Lewis
1961-1962.....	P. H. Hager
1963.....	J. L. Peterson, Jr.

1964-1967.....James E. Smith  
 1968-1969.....David E. Lupton  
 1970-1971.....Billy B. Cuthrell  
 1972.....E. A. Walker  
 1973-1974.....Charles M. Rector  
 1975-1976.....Eugene Tyson  
 1977-1978.....Julian D. Huffman  
 1979-1982.....Charles W. Luckeydoo  
 1983-1984.....Wilson B. Rogers, Jr.

1984-1991 - - - - - Rev. Don Earnhardt  
 1991 - 6/27/93 - - - - - Dr. Patrick Welch

Communion Sunday

07-11-93 - 6-12-94 - - - Timothy Taylor

06-26-94 - 08-13-95 - - - Rev. Billy B Cuthrell

09-10-95 - 12-97 - - - - Rev. Irving Terwilliger

01 - 98 - 06 - 98 - - Rev. Don Earnhardt

06-23-98 - - - - - Rev. Edith Jenkins