

WESLEY MEMORIAL METHODIST CHURCH  
SITUATED AT CORNER OF MAIN AND CHURCH STREETS  
TOWN OF COLUMBIA, TYRRELL COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

On account of incomplete and inadequate records it is impossible for us to get any real authentic record of this church, and the following comments are based largely upon the results of interviews with some of the older members of the church. What records are available consists largely of Financial Reports of the Quarterly Conferences, together with the reports to the Conferences of the Pastors in Charge.

However, from bits of information obtained by personal interviews with several of the older members of this church, we have been able to get a fairly adequate picture of the earlier activities of the church as well as these of later years.

By fitting these bits of information together it is very clearly established that Wesley Memorial Church was formerly organized in the year 1875. In fact that is the conceded date of institution, though no one remembers the exact date the organization meeting was held.

For quite a number of years prior to 1875, men and women of the Methodist Faith in this community held infrequent meetings in the different homes in the town and its immediate vicinity. These meetings were, in the main, conducted by various itinerant ministers traveling through the country-side of Eastern North Carolina, mostly on horse back. The organization meeting was held in the old Tyrrell County Courthouse. This building is still in use in the town of Columbia, and is one of the oldest buildings in the town. It is now owned and occupied as a residence by Mrs. W. S. Carawan, and located

on Main Street just across from our present Church.

The church held regular services in the courthouse with occasional preaching services by different ministers who came and went at irregular intervals until sometime between 1875 and 1881. We find that under date of November 15th, 1875, Willis D. Cooper, one of the original members of the church, executed an option to the church for the building site on which the present building now stands. This instrument appears on record in the public Registry for Tyrrell County, North Carolina, in Book 29, at Page 13. It seems that the terms of this option was not met with during the life time of Willis D. Cooper, but a building was erected on the lot in either 1879 or 1880, and under date of December 16th, 1881, James F. Norman, Administrator of W. D. Cooper, deceased, executed a deed of conveyance to Ephraim Leigh, Eli Spruill, Thomas G. Tarkenton, W. L. Reid and Arthur Spruill, Trustees, and their successors in office in trust for the use of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, conveying to them the plot of land described in the above mentioned option, containing three acres, more or less. A building was completed and occupied by the church, and Rev. McCall ( his initials or first name not available ) was assigned by the conference as the first settled pastor in the beginning of 1876. He served three years. The church was now a regularly organized institution and continued to function without any particularly outstanding events, but steadily growing in membership and influence, until the Quarterly Conference held on January 16th, 1909, at which time C. W. Tatem, T. W. Jones, and W. J. Privett ~~was~~<sup>were</sup> appointed building committee to build the new church. Shortly thereafter the old building was moved back and the corner stone for the present building was laid with very fitting and impressive ceremony. This service as presided over by Rev. A. W.

Price, the pastor in charge at that time. This service was held during the year 1909, the exact date is not available.

Progress on the new building was rather slow on account of difficulty in raising money to apply for material and labor, and it was not completed until sometime during the year 1912. It was occupied and formerly dedicated during that year, Rev. K. F. Duvall being the pastor in charge at that time. He served Columbia Charge from 1910 to 1913, inclusive.

For a few years immediately following the completion of the new building, due to the deaths or removal of some of the older and most active members, the progress of the church was rather slow until some of the younger generation adjusted themselves and realized the extent of their responsibilities to the church and the community, when the organization took on new life, awoke from its lethargy and began to do things in a big way. This spirit of progressiveness has continued, and the church and its determination of their parts, Rev. O. C. Melton, Pastor In Charge, reported to the Quarterly Conference held on October 5th, 1936. "Plans in the making erecting Sunday School Rooms to the Church." Floyd E. Cohoon, Joseph Davenport and William H. McClees were then appointed as building committee, and as a monument to their untiring efforts there arose a strictly modern two-story Sunday School Annex at the rear of the Church building. This building was completed the latter part of 1937, and at a Conference held on February 13, 1938, Rev. O. C. Melton again reported to the Conference: "We are proud of our new building and shall have to lift our hats to Floyd E. Cohoon, Joseph Davenport and W. H. McClees, Building Committee."

Wesley Memorial Methodist Church is now very active. It has a large and very active and interested membership composed

principally of wide awake young men and women, who are extremely keen and alive to their church duties and responsibilities. It has a largely attended Sunday School, and is doing a great work in the community which it serves.

Wesley Memorial Church, for the past several years, have been discussing the possibilities of becoming a station church, and in the early part of 1963 the members of Wesley Memorial voted to become a station church. Quarterly Conference held in Wesley Memorial Methodist Church, Columbia, N. C. on the 28th of April 1963 saw this dream come true. Motion was made by Herman Cohoon and seconded by Floyd Hollis that the trustees of the Columbia Circuit consisting of Cedar Grove, Holly Grove and Wesley Chapel Churches be authorized to purchase the present parsonage and use it as collateral to borrow money for same. Motion was made by Harry J. McClees and seconded by Johnny W. Everett that the trustees of the Wesley Memorial Church be authorized to purchase the property on the corner of Bridge and Broad Streets and borrow the money to put the property in good condition.

The present parsonage was purchased from the Joseph Ashby Spruill heirs on the 8th day of May 1963. The Spruill home was built by Mr. Ralph, Edenton, N. C. Contractor, in the year 1884. Robert L. Mitchell was chairman of the Revonation Committee. Rev. & Mrs. Earl R. Meekins were the first Methodist Minister and his wife to occupy the Spruill home after Revonation. Harry J. McClees, Floyd E. Cohoon and Jack (H.T.) Davenport were Church Trustees at this time.

The following is a roster of the pastors who have served this church from the beginning to the present date and the names of the present Church Officials:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>YEARS SERVED</u>	<u>PASTORS</u>	<u>ELDERS &amp; DIST. SUPT</u>
1876-1879	3	Rev. McCall	

CONTINUED

<u>DATE</u>	<u>YEARS SERVED</u>	<u>PASTORS</u>	<u>ELDERS &amp; DIST. SUPERINTENDENT</u>
1880-1882	2	Rev. Hunt	
<del>1882</del> -1884	2	Rev. Joseph L. Keen	
1884-1886	2	Rev. Charles C. Brothers	Rev. Wm. H. Moore
1886-1889	3	Rev. William Lowe	
1889-1891	2	Rev. R. B. Holder	
1891-1892	1	Rev. Henderson Cole	
1892-1894	2	Rev. I. A. White	
1894-1896	2	Rev. J. H. M. Giles	Rev. R. B. John
1896-1898	2	Rev. Wiley D. Sasser	Rev. Andrew P. Tyre
1898-1900	2	Rev. G. D. Moses	Rev. R. A. Willis
1900-1901	1	Rev. S. M. Brown	
1901-1905	4	Rev. W. P. Constable	Rev. J. E. Underwood
1905-1909	4	Rev. A. W. Price	Rev. John H. Hall
1909-1910	1	Rev. James A. Morris	Rev. H. H. Brown
1910-1913	3	Rev. K. F. Duvall	Rev. W. T. Flyer
1913-1915	2	Rev. F. F. Eure	Rev. G. T. Adams
1915-1917	2	Rev. M. F. Hodges	
1917-1918	1	Rev. M. B. Cox	
1918- <del>1922</del>	1	Rev. L. C. Borthers	Rev. R. H. Willis
1919-1921	2	Rev. J. L. Smith	
1921-1923	2	Rev. M. W. Hester	
1923-1924	1	Rev. F. A. Lupton	Rev. C. B. Culbreth
1924-1925	1	Rev. S. Salyer	
1925-1928	3	Rev. A. B. Crumpler	
1928-1930	2	Rev. G. C. Wood	Rev. H. I. Glass
1930-1934	4	Rev. W. J. Underwood	Rev. O. W. Dowd
1934-1935	1	Rev. W. L. Dawson	Rev. J. M. McCracken
1935-1938	3	Rev. O. C. Melton	Rev. B. B. Slaughter

CONTINUED

<u>DATE</u>	<u>YEARS SERVED</u>	<u>PASTORS</u>	<u>ELDERS &amp; DIST. SUPERINTENDENTS</u>
1938-1940	2	Rev. A. C. Thompson	Rev. B. B. Slaughter
1940-1942	2	Rev. A. L. Chaplin	Rev. J. H. Miller
1942-1944	2	Rev. A. J. McClelland	Rev. W. L. Clegg
1944-1948	4	Rev. Carl K. Wright	Rev. T. M. Grant
1948-1950	2	Rev. Grover C. Kinlaw	Rev. F. S. Love
1950-1955	5	Rev. Earl R. Meekins	Rev. F. S. Love
1955-1956	1½	Rev. Robert H. Eason	Rev. C. Freeman Heath
1956-1959	2½	Rev. J. M. Carroll	Rev. R. L. Jerome
1959-1961	2	Rev. H. Worth Pearce	
1961-1964	3	Rev. Earl R. Meekins	
1964-1966		Rev. Durward T. Goodwin	Rev. Henry Ruark

PRESENT CHURCH OFFICIALS

Durward T. Goodwin, Wesley Memorial Methodist Church, Pastor  
Columbia, N. C.

Official Board of Wesley Memorial Methodist Church:

W. W. Basnight	Mrs. W. H. McClees	H. T. Davenport
Wallace Kidd	Mrs. R. L. Mitchell	Mrs. Dan Davis
Harry J. McClees	George G. Owens	Mrs. Louise Hales
D. M. Bridgeman	Clyde Sawyer	Mrs. Lonnie Liverman
F. E. Cohoon	W. J. White	Shelton Ludford
Johnny W. Everett	Caswell Woodley	Mrs. Clyde Sawyer
Mrs. Abner Harrell	Thomas K. Yerby	W. Borden McClees
W. H. McClees	Mrs. Wilbert Simmons	R. L. Mitchell
		Wilbert Simmons

This the 5th day of November 1965.

*Mrs. W. H. McClees*

Mrs. W. H. McClees,  
Historian.