

The history of the Methodist Churches in Perquimans County

EDITOR'S NOTE: This past Sunday, August 16th the local Methodist Churches celebrated their history and the history of America's 400th anniversary. In keeping with the spirit of their celebration the Perquimans Weekly has put together a special article outlining their history. This is the second part of a two part series.

Bay Branch A.M.E. Zion Church located in Belvidere, North Carolina came into being in approximately 1866. Although the congregation does not know for sure the year the church was established because of inadequate records there is a deed registered in Book 66, Number 264 that shows that Rufus White granted one and one third acres of land and deeded it to Moses Overton, Joseph Morris, and Henry Lightfoot, trustees for the Bay Branch Church on February 10th, 1866.

With the dedication and love the church's forefathers it is believed that they constructed a log church which was their first building. The building was apparently constructed on their property shortly after it was acquired. The building was completed in approximately 1867. In 1886 the foundation of the present structure was built and the cornerstone of the church was laid under the leadership of Reverend Samuel Etheridge.

The earliest available reference to the origins of St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church is found in deed book 158, listed August 13, 1866. The indentures were made and entered between James F. Newby, D. P. Daughtery, and F.M. Cook, who were commissioners for the town of Hertford at that time. The land was sold to Randolph Perry, Harry Felton, George Barrett, Fred Skinner, and Henry Barter who were trustees for the church.

The land was sold to the trustees for a fee of \$1.00. The purpose was to erect a meeting place on the corner of Liberty Street and Dobbs Street, for divine worship. Shortly following this conveyance St. Paul's Church was established.

On July 13, 1873, a colored mass meeting was held in the chapel with black ministers and white politicians who gave speeches underlining the necessity for education. The St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church was laid October 7, 1879 under the pastorage of Reverend M. Linyear.

The first Methodist meetings in the Anderson community were held in the Thach School House. The Reverend J. M. Anderson was appointed to the Hertford Circuit in the years 1885-88. This circuit was then in the Virginia Conference, Suffolk District. In 1884 the Hertford Circuit was transferred to the North Carolina conference and the Elizabeth City District was formed.

This Methodist Church was built about 1890, and given the name Anderson Methodist Church in honor of its first pastor the Rev. J. M. Anderson. R. B. Thach sawed and hauled the lumber. J. M. Manra mortgaged his chattels to pay the carpenters for their work. When the church was completed many members were received from the Center Hill Methodist Church. In 1897 Anderson Church became part of the Hertford Charge, and in 1902 Mrs. A. K. Hardy invited Mrs. George Hawkins, District Secretary of the Women's Missionary Society of the Elizabeth City District to come to the church and help organize a missionary society. The society was named the Hardy-Winslow Circle honoring the first two presidents, Mrs. A. L. Hardy and Mrs. J. P. Winslow.

In 1912 Anderson Methodist Church was replaced on the Chowan Charge and holds that position today. At this time a "young peoples" Missionary Society was formed with Mrs. Manra Perry as leader, and since that time several other circles have been organized.

In September of 1951 Sunday School rooms were completed and services were held for the dedication of the building in memory of Horace C. Layden. From 1957 until 1961 the sanctuary of the church was renovated, and in 1958 the church celebrated its 70th anniversary. In 1962 a Methodist Men's club was formed.

On October 31st, 1976 a homecoming celebration was held, and in November of 1980 Anderson commemorated the 200th anniversary of Sunday Schools. Anderson's Sunday School dates back to 1885. Through the years many improvements have been made to the church, its building and its grounds. The present pastor of Anderson United Methodist Church is the Reverend Bobby Jordan.

In 1888, the lot on which Porter's Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church and community building now stand was purchased by Ms. Elizabeth Overton, who was to become one of the first members of the new church.

In that same year a group of men who were to compose the first Trustee board of the new church, purchased the lot from Ms. Overton and permitted the state to build a schoolhouse where the church meetings were held until the new church could be built and dedicated.

Under the leadership and skillful hand of Reverend Pettigrew and the contribution of standing timber by Ms. Lucinda Archer the church was built. The church was completed and dedicated by 1892, and Reverend McLynna served as first pastor of the church.

When Poplar Run A.M.E. Zion Church began meetings were held in the home of Willys Lawrence. Then as the church grew and expanded meetings were held on the plot of ground where the church now stands. The plot of ground was donated to the church by the late Alec Rogerson.

As time went on and the congregation grew the need for a building was foremost. People began to donate things for the new building such as logs and with the help of many a log church was erected. The church also served as a school.

The present church was constructed in 1891 and was dedicated on March 18th 1892 by the Reverend H. B. Pettigrew who was the first pastor of the church.

The Epworth Methodist Church had its beginning in 1898. The organizing minister at that time was the Reverend G. W. Starling. The first church conference was held in February, 1904.

The present building is the original building.

The Epworth United Methodist Church is now part of the Perquimans Charge and has Sunday School and Worship services every Sunday.

In the early part of the eighteenth century the people in the community known as Bagley Swamp began to see the need for a church community and a place to worship. Shortly after that time a Sunday School was started, and the meetings were held in three different houses in the area.

In 1905 a small church building was built at the location of the present building, and neighboring pastors held services there on Sunday afternoons.

In 1913 the need for a larger build-

ing was evident so the small one was sold, and it was moved. Shortly after this time a part of the present building was constructed.

The church was nondenominational until September 1914, at which time it was organized and joined the Apostolic Holiness Church. In 1922 this small denomination united with the Pilgrim Holiness Church, and in 1968 the group merged with the Wesleyan Methodist Church and the name "The Wesleyan Church" was chosen.

In 1843, the founders of the Wesleyan Methodist Church withdrew from the Methodist Church because of a difference in belief concerning slavery, the power of bishops, and the recovering of the preaching of holiness as proclaimed by John Wesley.

These same issues were to play a part a few years later in the unfortunate split of the Methodist Church into two factions.

Woodland Methodist Church developed because most of the people in the community were traveling to other churches. As they began to talk of organizing a community church, Mr. and Mrs. John T. Wood offered land.

That is the reason the church is currently named Woodland United Methodist Church in honor of the Woods.

On September 30, 1917 the cornerstone of the church was laid. The men of the community built the building and \$1,218.00 was raised to use on the building. The church was completed in 1919, and was dedicated with 81 proud members and was officially named "Woodland Methodist Episcopal Church, South."

The Reverend W. L. Loy was the first pastor, and Woodland was part of a five point charge the Rev. Loy had. In the beginning Rev. Loy preached at each of his five churches twice a month.

In 1939 the church became known as Woodland Methodist Church with the Rev. J.D. Cranford as pastor.

In 1957 there was another change when New Hope and Woodland became a two point charge with the Rev. William Pickett, Pastor.

The church than had services each Sunday in addition to many numerous meetings, thus taking care of both the business and spiritual needs for the church.

Since 1919 many changes have been made at Woodland.

One of the most important items in the church's history was when Barry Lee Lane, received his call to the ministry. He currently is serving as pastor of Fletcher Methodist Church, Durham, N.C..

Since organizing Woodland United Methodist Church eight men have served as Superintendent of the Sunday School, and there have been 25 pastors. Currently Lawrence C. Higgins is the pastor.

There are two other Methodist Churches of which little is known about. They are Leigh's Temple A.M.E. Zion Church, and Winslow's Temple A.M.E. Zion Church.

Leigh's Temple is believed to be the oldest A.M.E. Zion Church in the county although no definite date can be found to prove that fact. The church has been under the leadership of several ministers. It is known that one of the church's outstanding leaders was the Rev. E. L. Burton. During his tenure he was a dedicated christian leader for the Albemarle district.

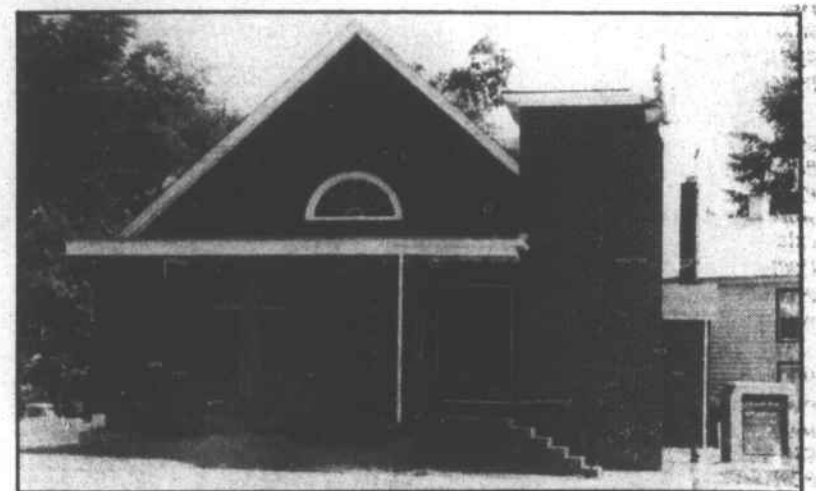
As of press time no information was available concerning Winslow's Temple.



Porter's Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church



Winslow's Grove A.M.E. Zion Church



St. Paul's A.M.E. Zion Church



Bagley Swamp Wesleyan Church



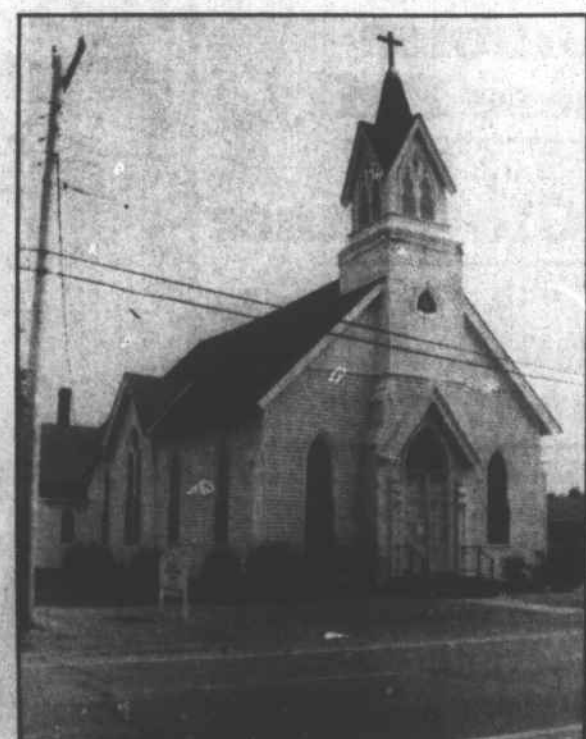
Bay Branch A.M.E. Zion Church



Poplar Run A.M.E. Zion Church



Leigh's Temple A.M.E. Zion Church



Epworth U. Methodist Church



Woodland United Methodist Church



Anderson's United Methodist Church