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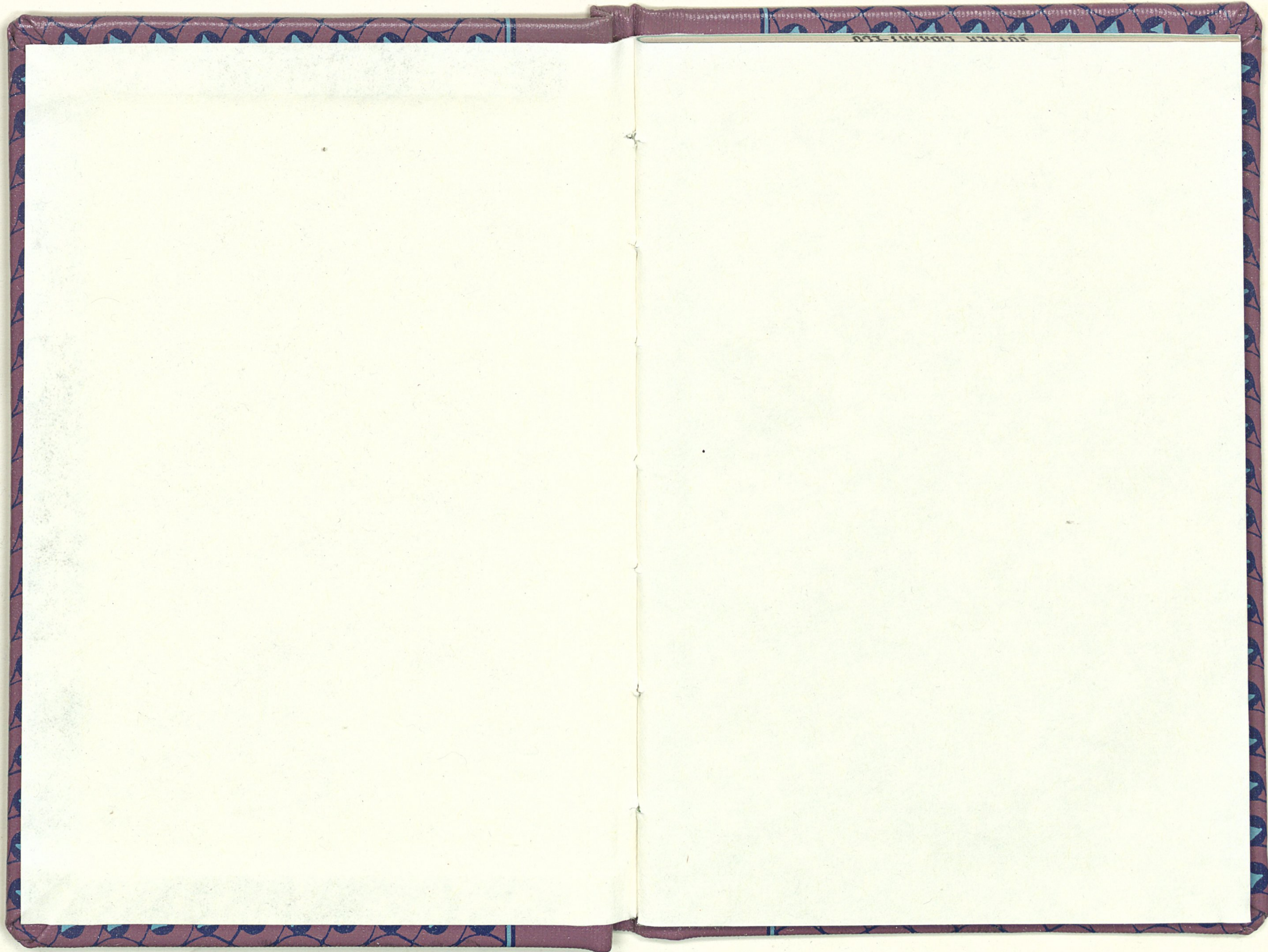
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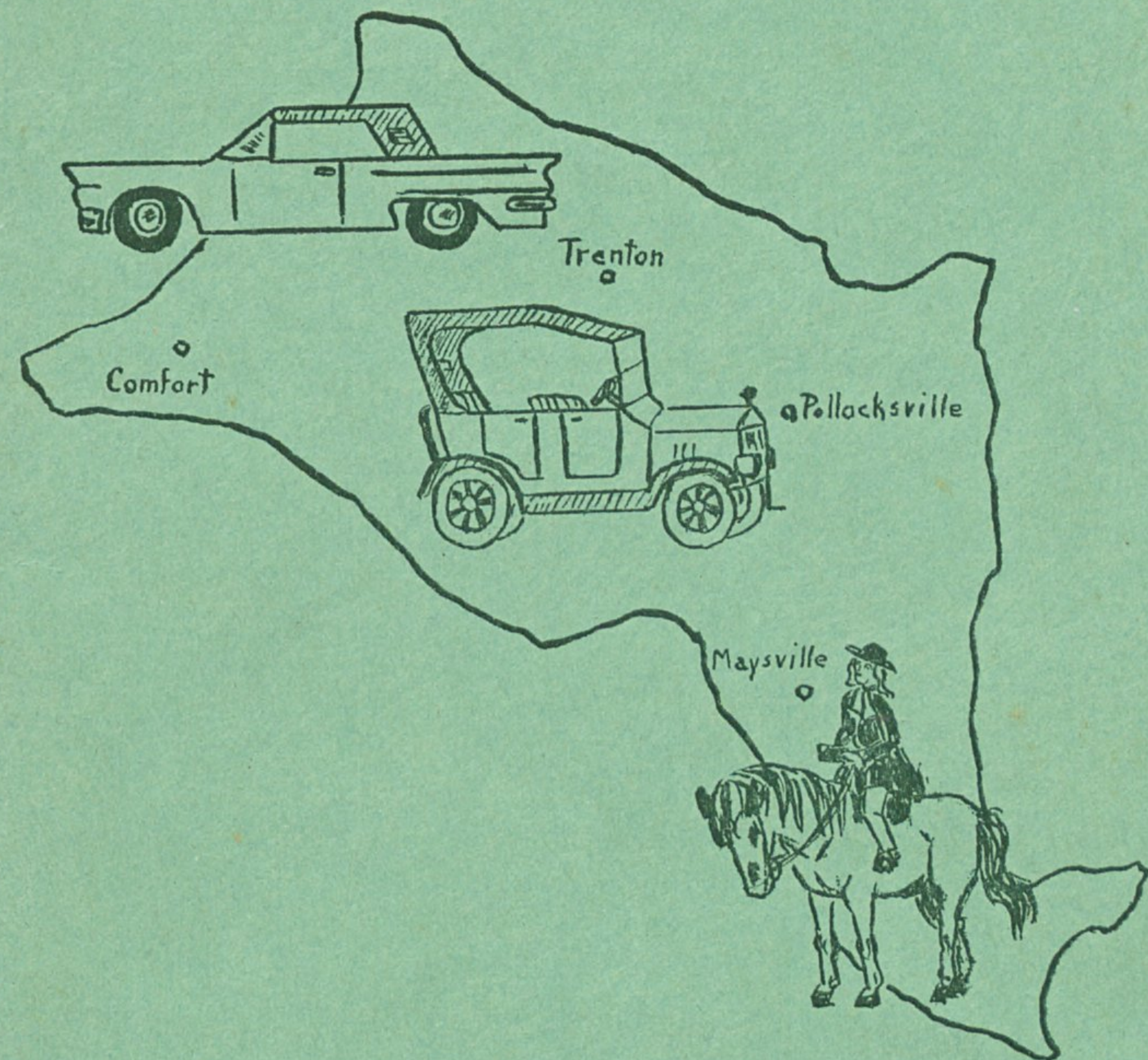
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X A Brief History of Methodism in Jones County X



By

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The Journals of the North Carolina Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Church, Southeastern Jurisdiction, 1872-1958, found in the Duke Divinity School Library.

Deeds on file in the Register of Deeds Office, Trenton, N. C.

A letter written by Mrs. Jennie Ipock in 1951 to Miss Tiny Hammond, giving her memories of the church, both old and present in Trenton.

Conversations with the following:

Mrs. Pearl Hammond and Miss Tiny Hammond; Mr. Murray Whitaker, Miss Bessie Whitaker and Mrs. Blake Daniel (who gave me the "Uncle Betts" anecdotes); Mrs. Paul Huffman; Mrs. Jennie Ipock; Mrs. Mamie Dixon; Mrs. Mabel Dixon; Mr. John Yates (who located Mussel Shell Creek for me); Mr. John Hargett (who helped identify the Argates); Mrs. Rosa Booth; Mr. Lee Foy; Mr. Leon Simmons; Mrs. Nannie Scott, Mr. Claude Banks, Mrs. Rachel Banks (who located Parker Branch and recalled Mr. Rogers' model-T); Mrs. Edgar Philyaw; Mr. Joe Becton; Mr. Burke Mattocks; Mr. Ossie Meadows; Mrs. Clellie D. Simmons, and so many others.

Thanks to Mrs. Ben Moore, Miss Tiny Hammond and Mrs. Fred Pippin, who read the manuscript.

And, thanks to my wife, who listened to all this and made suggestions.

CHAPTER ONE

Francis Asbury's Work

Where should one start a Methodist history? John Wesley was a meticulous and faithful diarist. When he felt his heart strangely warmed he gave us a date and place of the warming, May 24, 1738 at a little meeting house on Aldersgate Street. As a consequence of this heart-warming he looked upon the whole world as his parish—including wilderness America. Many books have been written about Wesley. Perhaps one of the greatest attributes which Wesley possessed was the ability to bring real greatness out of humble men. When the amateur historian turns his thoughts to the history of Methodism in any spot in the eastern part of the United States his eyes are caught and held by the flaming eyes of one such humble man whom Wesley made great.

Francis Asbury was born in 1744 in England. He was entered in school and by the age of 6 or 7 could read the Bible. His formal education came to an end at the age of 13 and he was soon apprenticed to a Methodist blacksmith. In his early youth he heard many of the beginning Methodist preachers. At the age of 18 he became a local preacher. In 1767 he was appointed to his first circuit. In 1771 he responded to Wesley's plea for preachers to go to wilderness America. He was 26 years old, a small but robust man.

Asbury was a man of incredible energy. He came to the United States in 1771 and traveled until 1816. His journeys took him throughout almost all the United States east of the Mississippi River. He never married, never returned to England to visit family and home, though he wrote wistfully of his love for both. He never took a vacation from his labors. He preached nearly every day of his life and had the responsibility of finding preachers, stationing them and supervising their labors. He never established a home for himself. His home was the wilderness road.

Thus it is that the amateur historian who tries to find the beginning of a Methodist church naturally seeks the link with Asbury.

Did Asbury pass this way? What did he say? How did people respond? Did they start a church, if so, when?

Francis Asbury kept a journal for the time of his American labors. This journal has been edited by Dr. Elmer T. Clark and others and forms the basis for this part of the historical study. The writer took the entries from his journal concerning North Carolina, from these entries those concerning Jones County and this gives the origin.

Asbury first mentions the Jones County area of North Carolina in an entry dated February 10, 1788. He had come from "Cox's on Neuse River" (Lane's Chapel) and he writes, "We then had to move towards Trent." The editors supply the information that "Asbury went to the Trent River area around the present town of Trenton in Jones County. The Trenton Circuit was formed from part of the New River Circuit in 1792." Trenton was not recognized in 1788 by Asbury as a town. There appears no evidence that there was a church here, though Asbury's "moving toward" this place indicates that it was a destination, very likely a preaching place. We pause here to recreate a picture. There were few roads and these little better than none. There were very few schools, few churches, few professional leaders and these poorly prepared. Families could settle on a clearing in the woods, expand the clearing by means of killing labor, and begin the age-old climb up the status ladder. A brick house, a few slaves, store-bought clothes, and other precious symbols of 18th century status. At the top of the ladder, those who had arrived, stood beckoning to them, men who "lived it up" with the same hardihood with which they cleared the land of its giant trees and erected the houses of wood of their own cutting and nails of wooden pegs or hand-wrought spikes. Those at the top were characteristically lovers of whiskey, horses, cards, music, women and dancing—the order of preference varying from man to man and flexible enough for the scientific dillitante, the amateur scholar and such "odd balls" to have elbow room. Life was hard and who was to blame them if they chased their pleasures with hair and coattails flying in the breeze?

Who indeed! The world has always had its full quota of philosophers, men who could rise with the sun, eat salt meat and grits, work like a mule at quitting time until quitting time, then go home, eat and sit down with the "Good Book" to ponder just what the whole race of life is about. Both alike, the pleasure-seekers and the

meaning-seekers, had one thing in common. Both were characteristically hospitable. Life was lonely on the frontier. The traveling man brought news from the outside world. He changed the talk for a while. He was movie, radio and television. If he were a circuit rider he brought more. He brought a stern pointing finger at the pleasure-lover and a comforting arm around the shoulders of those to whom life had been particularly hard. He brought the timeless message of the wrath and love of God with an exciting unforgettable quality about it. In the homes he brought the family to prayers, brought neighbors together to consider amendment of their lives, even as they could come together for a log rolling. He was welcome most places where he would stop.

Such a home would establish itself as a "preaching place." Here the circuit rider would stop on his rounds for his work. Later when the home became too small he would use a courthouse or a school. Later, still, a church would be built.

Asbury's first visit to Jones County was in February. His journals speak often of fording rivers in the winter, of being caught in rains and hails. So desperate did he view the plight of the wilderness ancestors of ours that no personal sacrifice was too great.

Asbury's next visit to Jones County came on January 24, 1791. He had been away for 3 years lacking one month. Here is the entry.

Monday 24. I had a most dreary ride to Trenton. Here I met with Lewis Bryan, brother to the late General: - - his heart and house are open. After getting some refreshment we went to the chapel, where I preached with great freedom: there were brethren present who came to meet us from a great distance. In the evening, brothers C, and L, and A, held meeting.

Now we note that our town has a name known to Asbury. It also has a chapel. This was not a Methodist church. It will be many years before there is a Methodist church in Trenton. This was very probably an interdenominational chapel; they were known as "Free" churches. The next day we find our young bishop still in Jones County. Here is the entry.

Tuesday 25. I preached at Lee's Chapel. There is a very great change for the better since I was here three years ago: they have built a very decent house for worship. I was unwell in my body, but happy in my God, and resigned to his will. This is the first Methodist church in Jones County. The deed with which Thomas Lee conveyed the land to the church is on file in

the Register of Deeds Office in Trenton. The original was taken to Raleigh by the State Department of Archives and History for safe-keeping, because this deed and others of the period were deteriorating. The deed was copied and thus the fulsome language is preserved along with the essential facts. Let us take the time to read this significant landmark of Jones County Methodism.

This indenture made this 13th day of September in the year of our Lord 1790 between Thomas Lee of the County of Jones and State of North Carolina of the one part and the Methodist Episcopal Church in America of the other part witnesseth that the said Thomas Lee have in consideration of the love, good will and affection which he hath and do bear for and towards the said church has also for and in consideration of the sum of 83 pounds to him in hand paid by the said Methodist Church at and before the unsealing and delivery of these presents, the receipt whereof he doth hereby acknowledge himself fully contented, satisfied, and paid, hath bargained and sold and by these presents doth absolutely give, grant, bargain, sell . . . convey and confirm unto the said Methodist Church in America forever one acre of land lying and being in the County of Jones in the State aforesaid and near the new dwelling of the said Thomas Lee, to be laid out in a square so as to include the new meeting house lately built by the said Thomas Lee, for the use of the said church in the center of said one acre lot of land as the same may be deemed to be most for the convenience of the said meeting house, to hold the said piece of land hereby granted including the said meeting house already in the same, belonging or in any way appertaining unto the said, forever a house and place of worship free and honorable and discharged of and from him the said Thomas Lee and of and from the lawful claim or claims of any other present or presents whatsoever according to the true intent and meaning of these presents in witness whereof the said Thomas Lee hath hereunto put his hand and affixed his seal the day and year above written.

Signed, sealed, and delivered Thomas Lee (Seal)

In presence of Durant Hatch and John Perry

State of North Carolina

Jones Court, May term, 1791. Then was the foregoing written deed from Thomas Lee to the Methodist Church duly approved in open court by the oath of Perry, one of the subscribing witnesses and ordered to be seconded.

Attest — Lewis Bryan, C. C.

Thomas Lee was the owner of a large holding of land. His descendants state that he gave the land for the church. This is no doubt true, although the price recorded is substantial. Asbury always stopped at Lee's and it is probably true that much of the money paid to Lee was also paid by Lee. Two of Lee's direct des-

cendants live near Lee's Chapel, Mrs. Clellie D. Simmons and Mr. Lee Foy, great-great-grandchildren. The church stands on the original plot of land and in later years a school stood where the old well presently stands. Other land was acquired in later years, small plots added to the original lot.

Asbury's next visit to Jones County came in 1801. Here is the entry.

Monday, March 2. We had to march down upon Trenton, sixteen miles. The appointed meeting had been transferred to Frederick Argate's, occasioned by the death of his venerable mother, the respectable wife of General Frederick Argate, who had been suddenly called away. This lady justly deserved the great and good character she had for forty years preserved, as a wife, a mother, a mistress, and a friend: to relieve the poor, and to solace the afflicted, gave her pleasure and occupation almost uninterrupted. Thursday week she was at meeting—the following she was a corpse. My subject on this solemn funeral occasion, was I Cor. xv, 22: "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." First, our union with Adam, and the unhappy consequences. Secondly, our union with Christ, and the happy consequences. We have already ridden eighty miles from Wilmington.

The name Argate is a strange one. We must remember that spelling was variable at this time and Asbury could easily mistake a name, as anyone could. We believe that Asbury's Argates are the ancestors of the present Hargetts (John, Cecil and Harold). The Hargetts lived in Jones County then and were promoters of education. In Adam all die. But imagine the pain and misery in those frontier days when death came. Neighbors came in to prepare the body, offer the best words they had, and then to "sit up," well equipped to keep eyes open—wide open. The body must be buried. It could not wait. Perhaps there would be a preacher, more often not. So, when the circuit rider came around it was his duty to commit the departed to God, and bless his memory to the neighbors and kin with an appropriate sermon. This might be weeks, sometimes months, after the burial.

Tuesday, March 3. We came to Jones court house: we had many women but few men: my text was I Cor. vii, 29-31. I suppose I shall not soon prophesy there again—for good reasons.

Went not to see our wealthy friends, but came down to Thomas Lee's, where we held a meeting on Wednesday and Thursday. My text was Acts xx, 32. Brother Whatcoat spoke from Isaiah lvii, 1; a portion of Scripture very seasonably chosen.

I began to review for this year the preachers and stations. We may perhaps find one preacher for a circuit in the Virginia Confer-

ence. I am shocked to see how lightly the preachers esteem, and how readily they leave, the travelling plan. O Lord, by whom shall Jacob arise?

Tuesday, March 3, a date to ponder. Just how did it come about that all the women went to church that day and left their men? Sly old Asbury! He knew, but he isn't saying. What bishop wants to admit that men would rather trade horses, or race them, or look at a new buggy, or roll logs, or so many other things than to hear a good sermon? Men ought to go to church, too, even on a Tuesday, but why take it out on the women? What did our good bishop say that made him so sure that he would not prophesy there again? Look up this scripture. It might give you a hint.

It was only a year since his last visit until Asbury came through Jones County again. Breathlessly, we ask, "Will he forget the slight that the men gave him and preach again, or will he pass hurriedly through?" If the writer were a novelist rather than an amateur historian you know what the answer would be, but let's see what Bishop Asbury says.

Sabbath, January 24, 1802. I have close communion with God. If we spare our lungs, yet we must work our bones and our flesh with riding. We lodged at B. Wilder's (Onslow County). Next day we came along through the rain to Mr. Hargate's near the head of Trent River.

According to the editor this could have been Daniel Hargett. That is all. The next day finds him enroute to New Bern.

Here is a sad entry.

Friday, February 18, 1803. Finding it was but forty-two miles to Newbern, we concluded to push for it. I rose early, ordained J. Wilden to the office of deacon, and started. I had thoughts of calling at a certain house but being fearful we had not the time to spare, we stopped and fed on the ground: soon after we met the master of the house and dropped a hint of being his guests had time permitted; he did not say "Will you," or "Do call at my house"—farewell! O unhappy people of Jones, and Trent, and Onslow! With a little cake and cheese, and some corn for our horses, we came in fine spirits to Newbern, about six o'clock. On Saturday I rested; and Nicholas Snethen preached upon, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

Again the old question "why" pushes its way into our minds. In the first place why did they have to push the 42 miles (from Richlands to New Bern?) Why couldn't they have stopped somewhere in Jones? Why was there something less than the usual Asbury

boldness and much less than Southern hospitality between Asbury and the would-be host? This is 1803. Asbury had been without rest or diversion for 32 years (he had no hobbies); 32 years away from beloved family and homeland; worn out from scrambling over mountains, through rivers, riding through rain, snow and hail; mentally worn from keeping circuits from New England to Savannah, Georgia, supplied with preachers willing to travel like he did. His journal shows that he was never a man to take a personal slight seriously, but he could become very discouraged and out of patience when a man, especially a Christian and a Methodist, took a religious duty lightly. Is there any wonder?

His next two entries take us to 1804. Here they are.

Friday, February 17. Reached Thomas Lee's, Trent River.

Saturday, February 18. I preached in Lee's church on I Cor. xv:58; after meeting we had a cold ride to Newbern.

The next year, 1805, saw another brief visit.

Thursday, January 24. On Thursday we rode sixteen miles to the widow Argate's: here is a change; the man is dead, the widow was attentive, and the blacks crowded to prayers.

Asbury did not believe in slavery. He spoke against slavery, but does not seem to have been very outspoken. More important to him than the question of slavery or not was the matter of whether the slaves were Christians, and whether the masters permitted them to attend church. Some did, and Asbury rejoiced; some did not because the teaching of the Gospel was subversive to slavery, and then Asbury mourned.

The next visit to Jones County came in 1806.

Wednesday, January 22. A heavy storm of rain. I rode to Eli Perry's, son of John; here is a son of faith and prayer; I walked with his dear good father—now, I trust, in the paradise of God. I met Elder Bruce; all our talk is, What hath God wrought! In Beaufort the Lord has put forth his power; the whole town seems disposed to bow to the sceptre of the Lord Jesus, after being left and visited again, within the last twenty years, by his faithful ministers.

Again, the next year.

Friday, January 30, 1807. Friday evening found us at Perry's.

We do not know who this Perry is, but the distance involved and the fact that it was a stop between Richlands and New Bern suggests that it was a stopping place to take the place of the Argate's, probably around Comfort or Cypress Creek.

Again in 1809,

We came to Adonijah Perry's (Monday, January 23): may he follow his father, who followed Christ!

Again, in 1810,

On Friday (January 12) we fled away to Adonijah Penn's: we were an hour in the night.

Here Asbury is an old man, 65 hard years old. He had borne the burden of the wilderness for 39 years. His health is failing rapidly. The location of this stop sounds exactly like the home of Adonijah Perry and we shall assume that it was a slip of a very tired pen.

Again, in 1812 we find Asbury back in Jones County.

Thursday (January 23). Thursday another ride of twenty miles brought us to Adonijah Perry's. Our host was sick, and I prescribed for him.

What did Asbury know about medicine? Nothing. But here we are back in the days when medicine was a mixture of wits, common sense, and superstition. Asbury lived by his wits and common sense, but most important of all he lived by a faith so strong that it could send him orbiting around the wilderness, loving God and loving people. The Bible says that the prayer of faith shall save the sick. There is tremendous health-giving power in the very presence of a man who is as full of zest and love of life as Asbury was. We do not know what he prescribed, however.

The next year, 1813, the very aged Asbury came back to Jones County. He had had to be carried into church a week before so that he could preach.

Wednesday, February 3. We came to John Shine's on Wednesday; we found his wife ill, and prescribed for her as well as we might. After dinner and prayer, came away to the widow Bryan's. Her husband is dead, and her son sick; we prayed, ventured to prescribe for the diseased subject, and continued onward to Adonijah Perry's.

The last visit Asbury paid to Jones County was in 1815.

Thursday (January 26). Thursday dined at Joseph Bryan's; lodged at Hardy's. We dashed through Mussel Shell Creek in a swim—it was serious work.

Mussel Shell Creek is the stream which crosses the highway from Trenton to Cove City about a mile and a half out of Trenton. It appears now to be a rather unthreatening stream. A young man can nearly jump over it but in that day it was probably much

larger. Asbury was continuing on sheer will power. He continued traveling about the middle of March, 1816. He ended his travels in Richmond, Virginia. His fondest hope was to attend the General Conference in Baltimore in May, but his strength and will power were pulling in opposite directions. He was very sick for a week or so and died.

Francis Asbury was 72 years old when he died. From this sketch one does not get the full impact of the man. All of his travels through Jones County took place either in winter or early spring. He traveled on horseback and seems only to have stopped to eat, sleep or work. Weather did not seem to do more than slow him down. He plowed through rain, snow, and hail. Even this is not all. He was as faithful in the mountains as in the coastal plains. His mountain travels often involved sheer stumbling and scrambling. Yet he continued working through the mountains to the end. He was a man working under a compulsion, such as we lesser mortals do not know.

We have noted that Jones County was a road from Richlands to New Bern. Asbury always stopped at the home of Lot Ballard in or near Richlands and from there always went to New Bern. Ballard was a very old friend and the thriving village of New Bern captured his imagination. In Asbury's lifetime there was only one Methodist church in Jones County, Lee's Chapel. The other stops, Argate's, Bryan's, Perry's all seem to have been home preaching places. There was a chapel at Trenton but Asbury could not do much with it.

We could conclude that the beginning of Methodism in Jones County was the home visits of Francis Asbury. There in the living room with family and neighbors gathered around the exciting vivacious man, seeds were planted which in time would grow fruit—Trenton, Maysville, Pollocksville, Oak Grove, Shady Grove, Foy's Memorial, Cypress Creek, Maple Grove—besides the others which bloomed for a while and then were no more—Hopewell, Myrtle Branch, Comfort, Hatch's and Harrison's.

CHAPTER TWO

From 1816 to 1859

As we continue to the next phase of our historical study of Jones County Methodism, our major concern is to fill in a gap. Francis Asbury died in 1816, as we have noted and his last visit to Jones County was in 1815. He preached in Jones County throughout his ministry, but there was only one Methodist church in Jones County at his death. He tells us in his journals that Lee's Chapel was organized and built between 1788 and 1791. We have the definite impression that all other work in Jones County was in the nature of "preaching places," that is, homes where the circuit riders stopped for hospitality and conducted services while they were there. Such places would have no organization. They were merely the seeds which later grew into churches.

The writer of this sketch went to the Duke University Manuscript Room and searched the records filed there to see what the next step was after Asbury's work. The Manuscript Room has on file Annual Conference records from 1838 through 1913. The North Carolina Conference was formed in 1838. Throughout this period Annual Conference records were hand-written in large leather-bound books. The handwriting is the beautiful archaic eighteenth century style. These records are a pleasure to read, and a lover of history could spend weeks making notes and reliving the past.

For the first twenty years of the history of our conference, 1838-1858, appointments were not listed. Statistics were given for the circuits, but the individual churches were not listed. This makes it almost impossible to determine what type, if any, of Methodist work was carried out in Jones County during this time. The editors of Asbury's journals state in a footnote that the Trenton Circuit was formed in 1792 from the New River Circuit which was formed in 1788. One looks in vain for any mention of Trenton Circuit. During this time, however, a Trent Circuit was listed. This was located

near Beaufort. I believe that the Rev. W. L. Grissom from whom Asbury's editors take their information was confused and jumped to the conclusion that "Trent" was an abbreviation of Trenton. The writer of this work made the same mistake, too, and copied many pages of statistics only to learn that he was on a wild goose chase. In the early days of our conference each session of the Annual Conference appointed a Post Office Committee whose duty it was to determine the mailing address of each preacher. The minister of the Trent Circuit received his mail at Beaufort. Besides, this work was known as Jones Circuit for most of its history, changed to Trenton Charge in 1948, but there is no evidence that it was ever known as Trenton Circuit. And so, we must place a big question around the information that the Trenton Circuit was formed in 1792. We would like to believe it, but we shall have to be more cold-blooded than that. We shall not criticize either the late Mr. Grissom, however, nor the Asbury editors, because church history is very often detective work. Names change, spelling was variable, records are skimpy, and people do not always realize the later value of present records.

Although, however, Trenton Circuit and Trent Circuit are not the same it is true that Lee's Chapel was one of the churches of the Trent Circuit. We do not know how many other churches in Jones County were a part of this circuit. In an old membership register there appears the name of a member who was taken into the membership of Lee's Chapel by Daniel Culbreth in 1842. Daniel Culbreth was the pastor of the Trent Circuit at that time. The membership register shows members received into Shady Grove as early as 1846 by Henry Gray. It was not possible to determine what circuit he was pastor of. A member was received into Cypress Creek in 1854 by D. C. Johnson. He was not pastor of Trent Circuit. Probably Jones County was divided prior to the formation of Jones Circuit, Hopewell and Lee's Chapel being part of Trent Circuit and Shady Grove and Cypress Creek being part of the New River Circuit. The other present churches were probably preaching places.

Jones Circuit was formed in 1859. We shall come to that later. But during the meantime let us note that some work was being done in Jones County. We shall not be able to give much light, however.

We notice, in the first place, that in 1822 a deed was given conveying land from Thomas Speight to Durant Hatch, Jr., Alexander Sledge, and Robert Kornegay, Commissioners for building a meeting house and school house, for \$50, lots no. 35 and no 36. This was to be a "Free" church and school and it had a long and colorful history. Mrs. Jennie Ipock has a memory of the original building.

She says, "The old church had a balcony. It was a pretty church. It was also used for a school and for court. It was not in use during the Civil War. The Yankees stole the Masonic jewels, but they were later returned from New Jersey." When the building was no longer used, it was sold to members of a colored lodge who used it for a while, but it burned down. This old building was located in the present cemetery.

Our interest in it is chiefly that it was the forerunner of our Methodist Church in Trenton. Unfortunately, we cannot determine exactly when there was a Methodist Church in Trenton. A little reasoning would lead to the conclusion that Methodist influence was always strong in the Free Church, because the Methodist Church became the leading church when the Free Church was replaced by the several denominations now in Trenton.

Next, we notice that there was some Methodist influence in the Maple Grove community. It is true that there was no Methodist Church in that community until 1899, as far as memory goes. However, there is on file in the Jones County Register of Deeds Office a deed dated May 5, 1845 conveying land from Elijah McDaniel and wife Winfred to Ivey Harrison, William Harrison and John Andrews, trustees of the Methodist Church. All people whom this writer consulted said that this must have been Maple Grove. It probably means that between Asbury and the formation of Jones Circuit there were active Methodists in Maple Grove community.

There is also a deed dated January 26, 1846 conveying land from Thomas Gillett to Noah Dennis, David M. Pickett, Council B. Wood, William Marshall, Lemuel Cudler, James C. Bryan and John Andrews, trustees of the Methodist Church, for 25 cents, land on Holston Creek. This is the old site of Hopewell Methodist Church. This church is said to have been built by Mrs. Hopewell, though her name does not appear on the deed. Perhaps she gave substantial help toward the building. This writer consulted Mr. Ossie Meadows, a very friendly and helpful man, but not a lifelong

resident of that community. He had heard of the church's origin in his young manhood. The church was located on Holston Creek on Highway No. 58 going from Maysville toward Swansboro. About 1907 it was relocated to its present site on a loop road off Highway No. 58. Hopewell was one of the churches on the Jones Circuit from 1859 until 1901 when it was changed to the Onslow (later Maysville) Circuit. It was active until 1952 when it closed down and the members moved to Maysville Methodist Church. The old church had a cemetery which still exists but the grave markers were made of cedar wood and are undecipherable. Mr. Meadows recalls that the first Methodist preacher he ever heard was Joseph Dixon, who lived near Hopewell and held services there. Mr. Dixon was a local preacher who assisted the preacher in charge of the Jones Circuit for many years and also the preacher who served the neighboring Onslow Circuit. He recalls that he was a good man and he liked to hear him preach.

Hopewell has given three of its sons to the full-time Methodist ministry, Graham Eubank, John T. Maides and Thomas Conway.

There is also a deed dated April 29, 1857 from Zaccheus Smith, Jr., to Stephen Miller, Lewis Miller and James Webb, trustees of Shady Grove for \$30.

Next, there is an interesting and puzzling deed which we shall quote in full:

This is the first day of May A.D. 1845.

Know all men by these presents that I, Lemuel C. Simmons, of the State of North Carolina and County of Jones for and in consideration of the high regard and respect that I have toward all religious societies for the worship of Almighty God and for the better accommodation of said societies and for the consideration of \$1.00 to me in hand paid before the sealing and delivering of these presents hath bargained, sealed and do by these presents bargain, seal, convey, and confirm unto all religious one certain tract of land lying and in the State and County aforesaid situated on the north side of Trent River and north side of Trent Road and east side of Parkers Branch beginning at a stake near the edge of said road and near the corner of said Simmons fence and runs . . . to the main road to the beginning, containing one acre more or less, it being the same that whereon a new meeting house or church is nearly completed or finished and the said Lemuel C. Simmons do hereby covenant and agree to bind myself, my heirs and assigns to warrant and defend said tract of one acre of ground for the above express purpose to all religious societies so long as a house shall be kept up for the above purpose to all religious societies, but if a house

shall cease or fail to keep up the above purpose then and in case of such failure said land shall return to said Simmons, his heirs or assigns.

In testimony I hereunto set my hand and seal.

Lemuel C. Simmons was the great-grandfather of T. Foy Simmons and Leon Simmons. This appears to be the deed conveying land to Oak Grove. Landmarks point to the general location of the church. Parkers (now known as Parker) Branch crosses the highway going from Trenton to New Bern by way of Ten Mile Fork near Foscue's Farm. It runs into Trent River. It is probable that the Parkers Branch and Trent River were not exact boundaries. Both are over a mile from the lot. The old church is remembered to have stood on land adjoining the present church lot. The old building was replaced around 1920 and stands about a quarter of a mile back of the present church building. It is used for a barn. We have no records to show when Oak Grove was changed from Free Church to Methodist, nor when it was given the name "Oak Grove." This name is not in this deed.

Not many years from now people will pass by and say, "Why did they name it 'Oak Grove?'" As this history was being completed hurricane Donna came through and uprooted four old and beautiful oaks. What was once a beautiful oak grove has now become a rather thin clump of trees, containing one large oak and two little scrub oaks.

Concluding this brief chapter bridging the gap between Asbury and the formation of the Jones Circuit, we have seen that there was some Methodist influence alive in the County during these years, and it is probable that preachers from some circuit conducted services here, both in the Methodist Churches, and the Free Churches.

CHAPTER THREE

From 1858 to 1900

The first mention of Jones Circuit occurs in 1858. This was the name of the work until 1948 when it became Trenton Charge. Other changes, to be described later, had also occurred. John M. Gunn (1801-1862) was assigned to the circuit and his address was Pollocksville. Lee's Chapel was the leading church of the circuit and remained so throughout the period covered by this chapter. It is doubtful that there was a parsonage. It had not been many years since the Methodist ministry was considered suitable only for bachelors because of the hardships of constant travel and the low salaries. The Jones Circuit was approximately 50 miles across during most of this time, from Hopewell to Woodington (Lenoir County). If a circuit rider wished to marry, he often became a local preacher, as distinguished from a traveling preacher. As a local preacher he was a lay officer of the church, provided his own living, and assisted the traveling preacher in his own and nearby communities. During the middle years of the nineteenth century the Methodist Church was accustoming itself to supporting families of circuit riders both with shelter and maintenance. Annual Conference records show that this was a struggle. Debate was often sharp. Good reasons were brought forth to show that since only the preacher preached only he should be supported. One can detect the lingering influence of Asbury, who believed that the Methodist preacher should be, like himself, a man who had not where to lay his head.

In 1859 Mr. Gunn was reassigned, and the following statistics were reported: 105 members, 12 white probationers, 93 colored members, 3 colored probationers, no Sabbath Schools reported. Two questions arise. What were probationers? And why were there colored members? The practice then was to place an aspiring member on a probation period, usually 6 months, and at the end of that time if his life had been consistently Christian as could be judged

by the pastor, he was then received into the membership of the church. During this time he would also be under the care of class leaders. These classes were neighbor groups which met for informal religious discussion and prayer, such discussion usually centering around personal Christian virtues and the discipline necessary to achieve and maintain such virtues. Old records as to church care and membership of slaves show that the practices were as varied as the personalities of the slave owners. There were those who forbade absolutely any religious instruction of their slaves. The reason is obvious. Christianity is a great leveler. "God is no respecter of persons." Religion might make a slave a more humble and submissive human animal, or it might make him feel like a child of God with all the rights and privileges that belong to God's children. It might make him completely dissatisfied with the yoke of slavery. For many owners the risk was too great. Other slave owners allowed the circuit riders to assemble the slaves and instruct them and lead them in worship. Other owners had in their slave communities men of outstanding leadership ability and religious discernment who could direct the religious activities within the community itself. Others had integrated churches, providing galleries where the slaves could sit and listen to the services. We notice that some (or all) of the churches of the Jones Circuit were integrated. The proportion of white to colored members is very near equal. In 1859 there were no Sabbath Schools reported.

In 1860 F. J. Eatman was assigned; there were 2 local preachers, 115 white members, 24 white probationers, 105 colored members, 19 colored probationers, one Sabbath School, 15 teachers, 73 scholars, a library of 400 volumes, \$58 raised by the Sabbath School. The Sabbath School (later Sunday School) work was for many years very difficult work. Many schools would close down for the winter and find it difficult to get going again in the spring. This work seems to have been something of a novelty. The Sabbath School movement was about 70 years old at this time. Our ancestors did not seem to take it too seriously.

In 1861 the Civil War was in progress and our Jones Circuit seems to have been affected badly. We have already noted that the church building in Trenton was not used. In 1861 G. G. Hines was assigned and the same statistics were reported as the year before. We know, of course, that the chances are beyond mathematical probability that this was true, and it is an indication that things

were not going well on this circuit. We can only guess the nature of the difficulties. Perhaps most of the Southern circuit riders were in the Confederate forces. They were certainly a hardy breed and would make good soldiers. Many might have been chaplains and many others soldiers in the ranks. Methodist preachers often did not believe in slavery but were not fanatical in their opposition; perhaps they weighed love of homeland against hatred of slavery and found the scales inclining toward a grey uniform. Back home there were the local preachers who could preach but do little else. They were farmers, business men, and professional men. They could supply the pulpits and lead the class meetings, but they could not travel constantly without losing their livings. There is no indication that the work died, but the plain fact of the matter is that administrative control was lost. For 1862 the same statistics were reported and no pastor was listed. For 1863 the same statistics, were copied, and William M. Walsh was assigned. In 1864, 1865, 1866 and 1867 either the same statistics were copied or no statistics were given and no pastor was assigned. In 1868 no statistics were reported and R. P. Bibb was assigned as pastor.

It was during this period, however, that Cypress Creek received the deed to its property. The deed is dated March 22, 1867 from Benjamin Brock to Thomas Whitaker, R. J. R. Hatch, Furnifold Brock, John M. F. Rhodes, Kenneth R. Jones, for \$1.00. The building was already on the land.

In 1869 the war was over and reconstruction was upon the backs of our ancestors. These were bleak days, indeed, but reconstruction difficulties brought forth heroic qualities. A study of the Annual Conference journals show that until reconstruction the churches had been paying their preachers their very meager salaries and very little else. Now when there was no money to be had, the churches began to provide for retirement of ministers, support of their widows, church extension, home and foreign missions, and the construction of parsonages.

In 1869 E. A. Howland was assigned. There were 115 white members, 17 infant baptisms, 11 adult baptisms, one Sabbath School with 6 teachers and 30 scholars.

In 1870 J. J. Carden was assigned. There were 135 white members, 2 infant baptisms, one Sabbath School with 8 teachers and 40 scholars.

In 1871 James Willson was assigned. There were 105 members,

4 infant baptisms, 2 adult baptisms, 5 Sabbath Schools with 40 teachers and 105 scholars. There were 6 churches on the circuit but no parsonage.

In 1872 James Willson was reassigned. There were 187 white members, 5 infant baptisms, 19 adult baptisms, 2 Sabbath Schools with 4 teachers and 30 scholars. Mr. Willson received \$311 for his living and \$400 was paid for buildings. Perhaps it would be wise for the reader of this history to note that in order to get an accurate picture of the building work done, he should compare the building money with the amount paid the pastor. Thus when more was paid for building than for a family's living, it means that this \$400 was significant. Unfortunately, however, we do not know what this work was.

The writer of this history felt that one of the most interesting features would be brief biographies of the pastors who have served the circuit. The pastors who are still living are excluded, of course. We will get ours in good time. Certain difficulties presented themselves, however. Some of the pastors were supplies, that is local preachers who left their occupation for a year or so and then returned to their work. Such men had no memorials written in the Annual Conference journals upon their deaths. They simply dropped out of sight. Some transferred to other Annual Conferences and their memorials appear in the Annual Conference journals of the Annual Conferences of which they were members when they died. These early ministers had no memorials and thus no information can be given. It is a pity because one feels that they were interesting and gallant men. We notice that after the Civil War and the dead period of our Methodist history, progress was made and quite substantial progress.

In 1873 W. H. Cunninggim was assigned. He received \$242 for his salary, and there were 4 churches on the charge at this time. There were 99 white members, 1 local preacher, 2 colored members, 5 infant baptisms, 8 adult baptisms, 3 Sabbath Schools with 9 teachers and 75 scholars. Here we pause again to ponder an unanswerable question. We know that it was not unusual to have colored members of white churches before and during the Civil War. But it would be unusual to have colored members of white churches during reconstruction. The KKK was active and bitterness was king. Were these two colored people old and beloved former slaves, or were they pushing young colored people

testing their wings after their new-found freedom? We do not know. Neither do we know if there is a connection between the re-entry of colored members and the drop of white members from 187 to 99. We shall believe that this drop was the result of one of those periodic "roll cleanings" we have found from time to time.

The four churches on the circuit at this time were probably Lee's Chapel, Cypress Creek, Shady Grove, and Hopewell. Thus, in area the circuit was almost as large as it ever became. Later Woodington was added requiring the circuit rider to travel about another ten miles beyond Shady Grove. Oak Grove and Trenton were probably Free Church preaching places.

In 1874 N. A. Hooker was assigned. There were 203 white members, 2 colored members, 13 infant baptisms, 5 adult baptisms, 7 Sabbath Schools with 21 teachers and 175 scholars. There were five churches. N. A. Hooker was born in 1816 in Green County. He joined the conference in 1840 and served forty-eight years. He was "saddle-bag" educated. There is no list or number of appointments. He was married in 1845 and he died leaving a widow, 4 sons and 2 daughters.

In 1876 Jeremiah Johnson was assigned. There were 216 white members, 2 colored members, 4 churches. There were two Sabbath Schools with seven teachers and thirty scholars. Johnson received \$330 salary.

In 1877 Jeremiah Johnson was reassigned. There were 250 members, no colored members, one infant baptism. There were three Sabbath Schools with nine teachers and sixty scholars. There were five churches. Mr. Johnson received \$282 salary. Jeremiah Johnson was born in Iredell County in 1811 and died in 1883. He joined the Methodist Church in 1832 and was licensed to preach then. He was received on trial in 1840. He served nine circuits and located in 1855. He was readmitted in 1874. After being readmitted, he served two circuits before coming to Jones and four after leaving Jones. He retired in 1881 and died in 1883.

In 1878 William H. Puckett was assigned to supply. There was no report.

In 1879 William H. Puckett was reassigned. There were 382 members, 20 infant baptisms, 88 adult baptisms, 4 Sabbath Schools with 28 teachers, 60 scholars, 7 churches—Hopewell, Lee's Chapel, Oak Grove, Trenton, Cypress Creek and Shady Grove. Woodington was served by the circuit rider at this time. It was a union church

with Methodists, Free Will Baptists and Universalists cooperating. It remained so until about 1900 when the churches divided. Also in 1879 land was conveyed from J. O. Foy and wife Caroline and J. C. Holland and wife to J. C. Bryan, H. C. Foscue, E. Sanderson and Frank Foy, trustees of Lee's Chapel Methodist Church, for \$1.00, 3 acres more or less. This appears to have been a small plot added to the original lot.

Let us pause here and note the almost phenomenal success in taking in new members. Eighty-eight is a large number. In the Quarterly Conference records Mr. Puckett lists 114 members received by profession of faith and fifteen by transfer. About this time and for some time later it was the practice to hold tent revivals and these were successful in bringing in new members. Such tent revivals are remembered as late as the '20's when C. A. Jones held a three-week tent revival at Oak Grove, and S. A. Maxwell held one at Trenton. Let us note also that the writer introduces William H. Puckett with the words "assigned to supply." We have already been introduced to the term "supply pastor." Perhaps the question might be asked, "Why should ministers be distinguished as to whether they are supplies or members of the Annual Conference?" This writer was tempted to drop this distinction because there is a slight hint of inferiority in the distinction. However, it was felt that Methodist tradition should be honored. Some supplies were very great men and some still are. However, the Methodist Church has always had a very high educational standard to which its ministers are expected to measure up. Also experience is involved. It is several years between the granting of a license and ordaining and receiving into an Annual Conference. Thus, the supplies should be understood as those men who are striving to measure up to the high standards of their calling, or else they should be understood as laymen who are helping their church in an emergency.

In 1880 William H. Puckett was again assigned to the circuit. There were 435 members, 3 infant baptisms, 27 adult baptisms, 6 Sabbath Schools with 39 teachers and 150 scholars, a library containing 200 volumes worth \$25. There were five churches, those listed for 1879. During this year Joseph Dixon was licensed to preach. This man remained a local preacher for many years. Many presently living members recall this good layman. There were four

class meetings still being held. A significant motion was passed by the Quarterly Conference this year:

Whereas, the plan that has been followed heretofore on the circuit for the support of the ministry by voluntary contributions is not in keeping with the most approved and advanced ideas of our ablest thinkers, be it resolved by this conference that we adopt the apportionment plan, and be it resolved further that we urge all the stewards at their respective churches on this circuit to urge with all proper diligence and discretion the assessment of each individual member.

Respectfully submitted by your humble servant,

G. Wood Koonce.

We have noted the very significant gains in membership without a corresponding significant gain in the financial ability of the church. The pastors were not adequately paid. Perhaps many of the persons coming into church membership were children, unable to make much contribution in money. But the larger factor of human nature comes prominently before us. Our ancestors were like their descendants. They needed a great deal of prodding to support their churches adequately. All members are never completely consecrated people. Most ministers dream of a church supported and all needs met by voluntary contributions, but things never work out that way. This assessment began a long struggle to bring and to keep the churches up to the standard set by the Annual Conference and the District Conference. It is to our ancestors' credit that, though it was many years before the circuit could report "paid out," yet they never gave up. Each year saw them accepting a larger apportionment than they could raise, but eventually the circuit did raise the amount asked for. Perhaps it is true that we gain as much by striving as by accomplishing. The pastor received \$329 this year. William H. Puckett was born in Tyrrell County in 1856 and died in 1912. He was licensed to preach in 1876. He was not educated beyond high school level. He came to the Jones Circuit as a supply. He was received on trial in 1880. His health failed in 1882 and he located until 1886. Jones was his first circuit and he served nine others. His second wife and three children survived him. He had lost his first wife, two children of the first marriage and three of the second.

In 1881 L. L. Johnson was assigned. There were 444 members, 5 infant baptisms, 14 adult baptisms, 6 Sabbath Schools with 30 teachers and 131 scholars, the same library with the same value

(books good as new!). The following money was reported raised in 1880: Pastor's salary \$329, Presiding Elder \$57, Bishop \$6, Conference Claimants \$22, Foreign missions \$22, Domestic missions \$16. The following apportionments were made by the District Stewards and accepted by the circuit: Presiding Elder \$75, Bishop \$9, Conference Claimants \$37, Foreign missions \$45, Domestic missions \$20. Mr. Johnson received \$398 salary this year. There were the same five churches on the circuit this year.

In 1882 L. L. Johnson was reassigned. His salary was set at \$500 and he received \$412. The Presiding Elder's salary was \$16 short; the bishop was paid in full; the Conference Claimants Fund was \$8 short; the Foreign Missions Fund was \$30 short; the Domestic Missions Fund was \$12 short. The circuit accepted the following apportionments: Pastor's salary \$516, Presiding Elder \$84, Bishop \$7, Conference Claimants \$30, Foreign Missions \$58 and Domestic Missions \$38, and a new fund was added, Church Extension \$15. During 1881 a Parsonage Building Committee of five was appointed with full powers to do all that is necessary to build a parsonage, Dr. C. J. Mattocks, Dr. William H. Barker, Thomas J. Whitaker, H. A. Edwards and R. A. Whitaker. During this year a committee was authorized to purchase a lot, and trustees for the parsonage were elected. A lot was purchased from Mrs. Susan King of Kinston. The deed is dated January 3, 1883.

In 1883 Alexander D. Betts was assigned as pastor. He and his family were the first to live in the new parsonage, located where the present home of Mrs. William Stilley stands. During this year George Woods Koonce was licensed to preach, and he remained a local preacher for many years. Dr. Betts received \$441 which was \$75 short. The Presiding Elder's Fund was \$12 short; the Bishop's Fund was paid in full. The Conference Claimants' Fund was \$6 short; Foreign Missions was \$27 short; Domestic Missions was \$16 short and Church Extension was \$7 short. New assessments were: Presiding Elder \$85; Bishops \$7; Conference Claimants \$35; Foreign Missions \$81; Domestic Missions \$36 and Church Extension \$23.

In 1884 Dr. Betts was again assigned. He received \$438 salary which was \$62 short; the Presiding Elder was \$34 short; Bishop paid in full; Conference Claimants \$9 short; Foreign Missions \$38 short; Domestic Missions \$26 short; Church Extension \$17 short. New assessments were: Presiding Elder \$85, Bishop \$7, Confer-

ence Claimants \$35, Foreign Missions \$81, Domestic Missions \$36, Church Extension \$23. There were the same five churches. Besides the Sabbath Schools already established there were mission Sabbath Schools at Hatch's, Maysville School and Harrison. Hatch's was the community near Comfort where the highway turns toward Richlands. There was a very prominent Jones County citizen by this surname, and it is believed that the mission was near his residence near Comfort. There is a community near Pollocksville known as Hatchville, but it is fairly certain that this mission Sabbath School was near Comfort rather than here. One member was expelled this year. The practice of expulsion was becoming rare, however.

In 1885 Dr. Betts was returned to the circuit. This year he received \$357 salary, short \$143. Other payments include: Presiding Elder \$40, \$40 short; Bishop \$8 paid in full; Conference Claimants \$19, \$14 short; Foreign Missions \$38, short \$46; Domestic Missions \$13, short \$19; Church Extension \$7, short \$14. Trinity College received \$10.

Dr. Betts, or "Uncle Betts," as he was called, is a subject of memory and is probably the most colorful circuit rider after Asbury. "I remember Uncle Betts, as we used to call him—a long, white beard down on his chest. He used to come in and sing and have us children sing." So recalls Joe Becton, speaking of his memory from the Methodist Orphanage where he lived as a boy. "One of his daughters, Lila, died there and is buried in the cemetery," recalls Mrs. Jenny Ipock. Lila was 14 years old and now lies in an unmarked grave. "When he moved away he left a square of collards in the garden and 12 hens and a rooster. I don't remember that any other minister was as thoughtful of the next one to follow," so also recalls Mrs. Ipock. "He always carried his family with him visiting, even when he went away to hold a revival. He had a two-seated surrey. Everybody liked Uncle Betts," recalls Mrs. Pearl Hammond. "Uncle Betts took communion to old folks. He loaded his buggy with children to take communion with him and the home-bound. He had a saying, 'anybody who loves the Lord ought to take communion,' when asked about children taking communion," again recalls Mrs. Ipock.

In 1885 the colorful Dr. Betts submitted the following report to the Quarterly Conference:

I, A. D. Betts, P.C., Jones Circuit, hereby complain of the action of the stewards of the circuit on February 28, 1885.

By vote they allowed the pastor enough to feed and clothe his family. But every faithful pastor needs something more than food and clothes for his family.

As he has no time to lay up money or lands for his children he ought to be enabled to educate them. That vote ignored the educational needs of this pastor's children.

Every pastor ought to spend several dollars a year for religious papers and reviews of new books but that vote did not provide for this pastor in that direction.

As this pastor's horse is 19 years old, he may live to need another. But that vote said that he should not save a dollar to meet such a contingency.

Our minutes show that most of our preachers receive a comfortable living; but that vote says this one is not worthy of support such as other pastors enjoy.

Kindly and sadly submitted,

A. D. Betts.

One day Uncle Betts was walking along the river bank when a freight boat went by with a man sitting on the deck astride a barrel of turpentine. Uncle Betts shouted, "My friend, are you on your way to heaven?" Whereupon the man shouted back, "Who in the - - - ever heard of a man going to heaven on a turpentine barrel?"

Another time Uncle Betts was riding along on his buggy when he overtook a peddler plodding along afoot. He stopped his buggy and asked the pedestrian if he wanted a ride. The man got in and the two rode along for a while. After a while Uncle Betts turned to the peddler and asked, "My friend, are you prepared to die?" The man, not being so prepared at least right at that particular moment, sprinted out of the buggy and through fields and woods. It is added that Uncle Betts had to take his pack to Maysville and leave it at the post office for the peddler to pick up on his next round.

Not many people remember Uncle Betts as pastor of the Jones Circuit, but many remember him after he moved on and eventually retired. He remembered old friends and liked to use his retirement time visiting them. The Whitakers recall his visiting in their home on one such occasion. They were about to sit down and eat a meal. The host had asked Uncle Betts to give thanks. He spied the cook out in the kitchen, so he shouted, "Cook, come here!" When the cook came, a very large colored woman, Uncle Betts said, "We are about to pray." The cook dropped on her knees so enthusiastically

that the whole house shook. When Uncle Betts said, "Let us pray," there was action.

Alexander D. Betts was born in Harnett County in 1832. He was educated at the University of North Carolina, receiving A.B., A.M. and D.D. degrees. He was licensed to preach in 1855 and was admitted on trial in 1856. He served four circuits before the Civil War and was a chaplain during the war. Robert E. Lee called him "that model chaplain." After the war he served eight circuits before Jones. After Jones he served fifteen circuits. He retired at age seventy-seven. He was married twice. There were eleven children and six survived him. Mrs. Mabel Dixon states that all his children are now dead but all that she knew about were well educated professional people. One was a professor at Louisburg College and one was a dentist. It was stated that he always asked the bishop for the hardest appointment. It is not very flattering to know that our circuit was considered one of the hardest appointments, but the difficulty brought to our grandparents this unforgettable man.

In 1886 J. F. Washburn was assigned. He received \$356 salary. There were five churches on the circuit then. This year the following budget was apportioned: Pastor's salary \$700, Presiding Elder \$100, Bishop \$12, Conference Claimants \$52, Foreign Missions \$118, Domestic Missions \$45, Church Extension \$28. It is interesting to note the work of a local preacher of this period. Joseph Dixon reported that he had held four monthly appointments, assisted the pastor in one protracted meeting, assisted Rev. B. Parrish in three protracted meetings, conducted three protracted meetings alone, received twenty-four members into the church. A protracted meeting was a revival, but the word "protracted" was intended to mean a meeting which lasted as long as good was being done and the participants wished to go on. The duration was probably about two weeks. Mrs. Jenny Ipock recalls that the Trenton Church was located in the present cemetery during Mr. Washburn's year, it being the old Free Church, now a Methodist church. Mr. Washburn received \$356 salary, and there were still five churches on the circuit then. We do not have the exact date for the building of the present Trenton Methodist Church, but it is remembered to have been built in the late 1800's. The parsonage was built by Mr. Ezra Pridgen (father of Miss Letha Pridgen). The church was built on the parsonage garden, and the other churches of the circuit paid a proportional part of the value of the land. Mr. Ivey

Andrews built the Methodist Church and had previously built the Episcopal Church in Trenton. Mrs. Ipock recalls that the payment for both buildings came in "dribbles." The deed conveying land from Circuit trustees to parsonage trustees is dated November 5, 1887, from Thomas J. Whitaker, F. A. Whitaker, and F. Foy, trustees of Jones Circuit parsonage to Dr. R. A. Whitaker, William Coble, M. F. Smith, F. H. Foy and S. Barker, trustees of Trenton Methodist Church.

In 1887 Lawrence O. Wyche was assigned. He received \$301 salary, and there were the same five churches on the circuit. Lawrence O. Wyche was born in Person County in 1852. He was the son of a greatly distinguished circuit rider, Ira Wyche. A son of L. O. Wyche became a distinguished general in the United States Army. He was educated at Trinity College. His wife preceded him in death, and he was survived by three children.

In 1888 I. A. White was assigned. During his one-year stay on the Jones Circuit his wife died, and he came back later and married Miss Johnnie Heritage. Mr. White received \$364 salary, and one church was added to the circuit.

In 1889 Robert B. Gilliam was assigned. He was pastor three years and was assigned for a fourth year but died before completing his first round. His salary for the three years was \$477, \$530 and \$536. These were also building years. Spent for building were the following amounts in 1889, 1890 and 1891 respectively: \$751, \$618 and \$946. We note that during each year the amount was substantially greater than a family living, and we thus see that important work was being done, but we cannot determine exactly what was being built or rebuilt. Probably most of this represents the cost of the Trenton church.

In 1892 Mr. Gilliam died and was buried in the Trenton Cemetery. He was born at Oxford in 1827. He was the son of a prominent family, his father being a doctor. His memorial speaks of him as a "wayward boy." He began to preach in his mature years. He was admitted to conference membership in 1885, then 57 years old. Jones was his second and last circuit. In 1892 the following budget was accepted: Pastor's salary \$530, Presiding Elder \$75, Bishop \$12, Conference Claimants \$35, Foreign Missions \$86, Domestic Missions \$57, Church Extension \$17, Education \$17.

After the death of Mr. Gilliam, W. B. Lee supplied for the rest of the year. He was a teacher in Fairfield High School in Kinston.

He received \$420 salary and \$738 was spent for buildings. There were five churches on the charge.

In 1893 W. B. Lee was reassigned. He received \$434 salary and \$780 was paid for building work. There were six churches on the circuit then. There were 625 members. Lee's Chapel had a Sabbath School at Pollocksville, and Thomas Whitaker was responsible for a Sabbath School at Myrtle Branch. It is not known now just where Myrtle Branch was located, but its location is guessed somewhere near Trenton in the direction of Kinston. It was reported that a new parsonage was needed. A "recess" was added to Lee's Chapel and a floor to Shady Grove. The budget accepted for this year was as follows: Presiding Elder \$75, Pastor \$425, Bishop \$12, Conference Claimants \$37, Foreign Missions \$89, Domestic Missions \$56, Church Extension \$17 and Education \$33.

Mr. Lee and his wife were both trained for the foreign mission field and upon leaving Trenton went to Brazil as missionaries. They returned some years later with their young son and a young Brazilian girl, remembers Mrs. Pearl Hammond.

Two items taken from Mr. Lee's pastoral reports show something of the color of this man:

At one of our churches there has been some public irregularity in the way of dancing. Most of the offenders have been spoken with with one exception. I have no charges to bring against them.

One member has been lost to the church by allowing a six months' probation to expire without desisting from evil habits.

The spiritual condition of the charge is not very flattering at this time although I do not know that it is any worse than it has been. There is among the members sin of almost every type from worldliness to wife beating. We have turned but one member out of the church and if it was to do over again I do not know that I should adopt the same course. I fail to see that the church or the person has been helped.

This, it seems, was the last expulsion of a member. Take this gem as an example of religious child nurture of this time:

I cannot say that there is any such work in the Jones Circuit as pastoral instruction of children. I try to deport myself toward the children while in their homes so as to gain their confidence and love. A child's estimate of Christianity or the church is generally the estimate he has of the preacher of that church and I have come to believe that I can do more real pastoral work among most of the children with five cents worth of candy than by all the questions I may ask. I feel that when I have drawn a child to me I have drawn him to my master. I have preached a number of times for the chil-

dren and have had some altar services for the children. I have seen as many as twenty or thirty children kneeling around the altar at once and some weeping bitterly over their sins. The more of this kind of work I do the more I am impressed with the rich harvest for heaven may be garnered from the works of childhood.

In 1894 Henry E. Tripp was assigned. Mr. Tripp received \$340 salary, and \$632 was spent on building work. The following budget was accepted: Pastor \$500, Presiding Elder \$75, Bishop \$12, Conference Claimants \$37, Foreign Missions \$89, Domestic Missions \$56, Church Extension \$17, Education \$38. Mr. Tripp's wife died at Trenton and was buried here. They had a young son who died shortly after the family moved to Pamlico County. The son's body was also brought back to Trenton and buried beside his mother's. Later Mr. Tripp came back to Trenton and married Mrs. Emma Bell. He died in Sampson County and was also buried at Trenton. In 1894 it was reported that land and nearly all material were on hand for a new church at Pollocksville and that one-tenth of the money for a new parsonage was subscribed. We note, however, that it was many years before either the Pollocksville Church was acquired or the new parsonage was built. Henry E. Tripp was born in Beaufort County in 1850 and died in 1923. He attended Trinity College for two years and worked as a teacher and civil engineer before entering the ministry. He joined the North Carolina Conference in 1892. The Jones Circuit was his second assignment and he served nine others. He was married twice. Four children died young from the first marriage and his second wife and one child survived him.

The deed conveying land to Maple Grove Methodist Church is dated October 9, 1895. It is from Andrew M. McDaniel and wife Adeline McDaniel, gift because of their love of Christ, to C. C. Smith, James B. McDaniel, and Andrew McDaniel, trustees of Maple Grove Methodist Church.

In 1896 J. M. Benson was assigned to supply. He remained four years. During his first year he received \$422 salary and the total money raised was \$855. During his second year he received \$500 and \$1337 was the total money raised. During his third year he received \$470 and \$897 was the total money raised. In 1899, his final year, he received \$476 and the total money raised was \$915. In 1899 Maysville mission was suspended.

J. M. Benson was born in Hyde County in 1853 and died in 1919. He had been an educator. He was admitted on trial in 1897.

Jones was his first circuit and he served eight others. He retired in 1918 and lived only eight months in retirement. He was twice married. His second wife and four children survived.

Recalls Mrs. Pearl Hammond: "I came to Jones County in February 1897 to live with my half-sister and her family. Her husband was the Rev. J. M. Benson. He had three sons and one daughter. They were: Sallie, Clarence, Hiram and Baxter.

Mrs. Benson hired a cook to cook three meals a day and do the ironing. Someone else did the washing. The cook's name was Anna Barbour and the wash-woman's name was Mylie Brock. She died last year. The cook's pay was seventy-five cents a week.

The Askew lot came up to the kitchen window and there was no fence between his property and the church property. A trough had been put near this window to induce cows and hogs to eat the garbage. Quite often a cow would stick her head in the window and eat cabbage or whatever she liked off our kitchen table. After two years Brother Benson asked the Parsonage Committee to get a fence there to keep the livestock away from the back of the house.

There was no well or pump at the parsonage. All water had to be brought from Mr. Askew's well out in his back yard. Sometimes we used spring water from the spring near the river. About the summer of 1898 the Parsonage Committee had a pump put in the yard. The water was not very good. It was full of blue marl. We had to wait for the marl to settle before we could use the water.

(The writer must mention that during hurricane Donna he carried water from the same spring for the use of the parsonage household.)

Let us pause here for a little and make the rounds with one of our nineteenth century pastors. The parsonage was built in Trenton in 1883. The pastor who rode this circuit for most of the time covered by this chapter had seven churches or preaching places, Hopewell, Lee's Chapel, Oak Grove, Trenton, Cypress Creek, Shady Grove, and Woodington. It is approximately fifty miles from Hopewell to Woodington, the length of the circuit. The parsonage is approximately half the distance. It is Sunday morning. We get up about daylight and begin. Some of the smaller boys get in stove-wood and mother cooks biscuits, ham, eggs and grits. One of the larger boys milks the cow, while father and another of the older

boys catch the horse, currycomb her, put a bucket of oats in the surrey, and hitch her up. Other girls are making the beds and washing up the smaller children. Having eaten breakfast we are all ready to go. We set out for points south this Sabbath day. We are on the road by seven o'clock. It is a beautiful day and everybody feels fine. We joke and sing hymns and make family plans. It takes us two hours to get to Oak Grove. We cannot push the horse too much for we have a long way to go. When we get to Oak Grove, it is nine o'clock and we have time for a service of about an hour. Father uses most of the time preaching. The children have a good time playing with their little friends for a few minutes, and then we must be on our way. We can make Lee's Chapel by dinner time, and we arrive starved. We go out to a good brother's home and eat dinner. It is a good dinner, one that the good wife and girls have spent all day Saturday preparing. The preacher's visit is a real occasion. Then after dinner, sitting around in the shady oak grove while the children chase around the oaks playing hide and seek, we are ready to preach again. After a more leisurely service here, with Father holding forth for an hour and a quarter we set out again. This time we have three more hours to go to have supper with another good brother and hold an evening service at Hopewell. This time the children go to sleep. They have heard the sermon twice before. It will be stored in that wonderful subconscious deep-freeze to be brought out many years later by that especially serious boy who will follow in Father's footsteps. They go to sleep on the hard benches. The grown-ups look enviously and amusedly at them. Then after this service the family goes to the big two-story house in another oak grove. It looks dark and spooky, and the cool air in the homeward drive has awakened the children. They are sent up to bed with a little yellow kerosene oil lamp that casts mysterious shadows. The boys go to one room; the girls, another. In the boys' room the host boys are telling stories of how this old house was a Civil War headquarters and how thirteen Yankees were hung there. When the boys finish their stories, the owls begin their comments and tense little bodies huddle under the covers waiting for the light of morning to show. The day comes, breakfast is eaten, and the circuit rider and his family set forth. His surrey is loaded on the way back with four dozen eggs, a smoked side of meat, a ham, a bag of dried peas, one of dried apples, and several coats which were outgrown. A five-hour ride will get them back

to Trenton in time for dinner. It will be cold but good. The next Sunday the same process would be repeated but this time in a northerly direction taking in Cypress Creek, Shady Grove and Woodington. It was sometimes lonely work, when someone was sick in the family and Father had to go alone. The county was thinly settled, mostly woods; few other buggies were met. Deer, bear and foxes were seen in the background to add a little interest to the ride. It was a good life but a hard one, too. The North Carolina Conference stretched from mountains to outer banks. The circuit rider might serve all over the state in a few years' time in a day when many of his church members might never leave the county they were born in. What rich experiences they could tell. Most of them had lived in the great peaks and where the ocean's waves were heard at night. Many of their parishoners had never seen and would never see either. Life was hard, too. Typhoid fever, tuberculosis and pneumonia took a tragic toll of the young. Most parents would lose several of their children along the early years of marriage. Many husbands and fathers would lose wives as they brought forth the hoped-for and much-loved babies in primitive and unsanitary conditions. Life was good, but rough and hard. Preaching had to be good, too, but rough and hard. Many of the people who heard could not read nor write. The great world of time and distance, opened up to the educated circuit riders, had to be brought down to the simple terms of the illiterate, somehow without losing its reality and appeal. They had the tremendous task of carrying the gospel into their lives and lifting the people rather than lowering the great power and beauty of the gospel itself. We believe they succeeded.

CHAPTER FOUR

From 1900 to 1930

As we begin this period, the churches of Jones Circuit are the same as they were for several years before except that Maple Grove is added. Other changes will be made within the year, however.

In 1900 Daniel C. Geddie was assigned to the Jones Circuit. He was pastor of the Jones Circuit for four years. He received as his salary for the four successive years \$500, \$519, \$606 and \$543. Total money raised for the four successive years was \$1086, \$1149, \$1018 and \$1392. Membership in 1900 was 614. There were six churches. During these years the budget still was not being paid, but significant progress was being made. A Woman's Foreign Missionary Society was organized. The six churches were: Trenton, Lee's Chapel, Oak Grove, Shady Grove, Cypress Creek, and Maple Grove. Myrtle Branch was being carried as a mission. Maple Grove got off to a slow start in 1899. Judging from payments reported at the quarterly conference it was several years before this church gained any strength. One might venture the opinion that the reason Maple Grove eventually did succeed whereas others we have noted eventually failed was that there were very patient and persistent people in places of leadership. In 1902 the first Epworth League on the Jones Circuit was organized. The officers were: F. M. Ellerbe, W. H. Rhodes, Mrs. I. Windley, Miss Birdie Koonce, Miss Estelle Murray. In 1902 a parsonage committee was appointed, J. N. Foscue, Windsor Dail and A. C. Burt. A committee was appointed to build a church for Myrtle Branch and Green School House but apparently these were never built.

In 1902 the first wedding was held in the new Trenton Church. Writes Mrs. Jennie Ipock:

That was way back in September 10, 1902. Everybody was lovely to me and the way I see things done this day and time I had a lovely wedding. "Miss Betty" Whitaker had the church beautiful. I had a carriage and span of horses. Balaam

drove. After my marriage was over, Mr. Coble had us go back to the church and take the picture.

Mrs. Mamie Dixon recalls seeing Mr. Geddie as he would ride by on his buggy on his way to or from his pastoral calls. He always had a box or coop on the back of his buggy and people would give a great deal of produce. The pastors received little money but much of their pay in kind. She recalls the comical sight of seeing him come riding by with a goose sticking his head out of the crate.

When the Annual Conference met in December of 1901 the Onslow Circuit was formed. It consisted of five churches, probably Maysville, Belgrade, Tabernacle, Lee's Chapel and Hopewell. Of these churches Belgrade and Tabernacle are in Onslow County, the others in Jones. However, the name Onslow Circuit was given to this newly formed circuit and the name remained for about two decades. The first year's preacher's salary was \$457. There were 787 members and one local preacher. The total money raised was \$1150 and \$488 was paid for building work. Furnifold Simmons Becton was the first pastor. Mr. Becton was a supply pastor. He lived at North Harlowe and was a man of independent means. His name appears often in the Conference Journals as a supply. It seems to have been the custom to call upon Mr. Becton when a circuit was being established and there was no parsonage. When he served the Jones Circuit he also lived at his home.

In 1902 W. A. Jenkins was assigned as pastor of the Onslow Circuit. The report shows that there were six churches on the circuit at this time. Since this is a study of Methodism in Jones County, no research was done to determine what church was added. It is fairly certain that it was not in Jones County. The pastor's salary was \$468, the total money raised \$735, the building work \$432. We note that this was substantial money then, approximately equal to a family's living.

In 1903 W. A. Jenkins was assigned for his second year. The report submitted showed seven churches, \$550 pastor's salary, no local preacher, \$1275 total money raised and \$292 paid for building work. Mr. Jenkins was born in Onslow County in 1858 and died in 1911. He was reared a Baptist and had intended to enter the Baptist ministry. He became a Methodist because of the Methodist doctrines of universal redemption, Christian perfection and infant baptism. He served four circuits before Onslow and

three after. He was married in 1889 and died in 1911. His widow and five sons survived him.

In 1904 Daniel C. Geddie was assigned to the Onslow Circuit. He was reassigned in 1905, 1906, and 1907. Reports show that the pastor's salary for the respective years was \$366, \$700, \$800 and \$770. The report of 1905 showed 642 members, the total money raised for the four years was \$1017, \$2035, \$2243 and \$1930. Building work was reported in 1905 as \$493 and 1906 as \$396 and 1907 as \$764. A parsonage was reported in 1905, value \$600.

Daniel C. Geddie had a hard life. He was born in Cumberland County in 1859. He was educated at Trinity College, licensed to preach in 1886 and admitted on trial the same year. In 1888 he was married and the couple had twelve children. Nine children survived with the widow. He served eight circuits before Jones and three after. He went directly from the Jones Circuit to the Onslow Circuit. In 1911 he was superannuated because of loss of health and farmed one year. He returned to the pastorate, however, and died while at work in 1913.

In 1904 F. S. Becton was the pastor assigned and he remained for two years. During this time the Jones Circuit was building the new parsonage and Mr. Becton lived at his own home. One member recalls that this circuit rider would stop in his travels wherever night overtook him and spend the night there.

In 1906 J. M. Wright was assigned to the Jones Circuit and he also remained for two years. He was the first pastor to live in the new, and present, parsonage. The old parsonage had been in service since 1883. In 1907 Mr. Wright received \$610 salary and the total money raised was \$1662. There were six churches on the circuit.

J. M. Wright was born at Laurel Hill, N. C. in 1876 and died in 1940. He was educated at Union College and Wake Forest College. He taught in the public schools for nine years before entering the ministry. He was married in 1905, and was admitted on trial in 1905. The Jones County Circuit was his second circuit. He served seven others and retired in 1927.

In 1908 Phillip Greening was assigned to the Jones Circuit. There were seven churches on the circuit. In 1908 Mr. Greening received \$600 salary and the total money raised was \$1935. In 1909 he received \$653 and the total money raised was \$1662.

Mr. Greening was remembered as a stern and blunt man. The

story is told that a grieving widow was sitting on her porch talking to passers-by. She said, "I know my man has gone to heaven." "Oh no he hasn't," responded another lady. "Why, what do you mean?" gasped the widow. "Because Mr. Greening said he didn't," replied the friend. She had remembered the funeral sermon.

The Greenings had a young son who had a great longing for a goat. One day Mrs. Greening was entertaining the Women's Foreign Missionary Society in the parsonage when the young son burst in. "Ma," he shouted, "I got a chance to buy a goat, and he doesn't stink a bit." Phillip Greening was born in Devonshire, England, in 1841. His father was a Methodist. Phillip began to exhort at the age of 18. He came to the United States in 1864 and came to the south to work as a miner. He was educated at Lutheran College, Mt. Pleasant, N. C. He was licensed to preach in 1868 and admitted to the conference on trial in 1871. Jones was his 16th circuit and he served one other. He retired in 1913 and died in 1926. He was married twice. He had four children by his first marriage and two by his second. All survived.

In 1908 the Annual Conference assigned J. T. Stanford to the Onslow Circuit and he remained four years. The report of 1908 listed seven churches with 745 members, pastor's salary \$858, total money raised \$2000. The report of 1909 shows a significant change. Only four churches are listed. The pastor's salary took a great drop to \$515, the membership down to 449, the total money raised \$1300. The reports of 1910 and 1911 show the beginning of a climb back to the former level. The pastor's salary for these two years was \$607 and \$600. In 1910 the report showed \$1484 total money raised and in 1911, \$1552. Building work in the 1911 report was \$400.

Going back for a moment, the deed conveying land to the trustees for the new parsonage is dated June 11, 1907 from Caswell Askew to J. W. Wooten, S. Barker and Frank Brock.

When the new parsonage was built, the old one was sold. The ell of the house now owned by Mrs. William Stilley is a part of the old parsonage. It is built of fat lightwood and still oozes turpentine through paint.

In 1909 a deed was given conveying land from William George and wife Mariah to W. R. Hinnant, W. B. Hargett, Lake Dillahunt, F. W. George and C. A. Rhodes, trustees of Comfort Methodist Church, for \$10. Comfort Methodist Church was started about

1908. A Mr. Gardner built it. He was a noted woodworker who had built other houses notable for beautiful woodwork. It was never finished outside but the inside was beautiful. It was built little by little as money was made available. It was started as an interdenominational church because there was no other church in the community at that time. It became a Methodist church, though it was never completed outside and never had a membership. It was faultily planned and was top-heavy. It collapsed and was never rebuilt. The persons who attended it and were Methodists went out to Cypress Creek. These facts are from the memory of Mrs. Edgar Philyaw.

In 1910 R. D. Daniel was assigned to the Jones Circuit. He received \$658 salary and the total money raised was \$2014. He decided not to remain in the ministry.

In 1911 C. E. Vale was assigned to the Jones Circuit. He was pastor for four years. He received successively \$700, \$1000, \$1000 and \$1000. Total money raised for these years was \$1884, \$2900, \$2374 and \$2183.

C. E. Vale was born in Birmingham, England, in 1876. He died suddenly in 1918. He was licensed to preach in 1905 and admitted on trial in 1907. He came to the United States in 1884. He had a public school education in the United States but no college training. He was a photography hobbyist and for a time was official photographer for a railway. He married in 1900 and there were three children. Two died young and are buried along with their parents in the Trenton Cemetery. On his first circuit Mr. Vale built four new churches and a parsonage. He served four circuits, a total of eleven years. The surviving son is an active Methodist minister in the North Carolina Conference.

The Annual Conference of 1913 assigned E. C. Sell as pastor of the Onslow Circuit and he remained three years. The reports for 1913, 1914 and 1915 show four churches, pastor's salary \$630, \$650 and \$650 respectively, total money raised \$1232, \$1156 and \$1390. No significant building work seems to have been done.

In 1915 C. T. Rogers was assigned as pastor of the Jones Circuit and he remained for four years. He was the first pastor who drove an automobile on the circuit, a model-T five-passenger touring car, probably black. He received successively \$1000, \$1200, \$1260 and \$1623. Total money raised during these years was \$2481, \$2546, \$4646 and \$6828. In 1917 there were 662 members

and during 1917 and 1918 there eight churches reported. Mr. Rogers is retired.

The Annual Conference of 1916 assigned T. W. Lee as pastor of the Onslow Circuit and he also remained three years. The reports for 1916, 1917 and 1918 show a pastor's salary of \$650 for the first two years and a significant gain to \$1000 for the third year. The report of 1917 shows 604 members. Important building work was done, \$563 and \$1000 being paid in 1916 and 1917 respectively. This same pastor served the Jones Circuit in 1927-30. He is retired.

The Conference of 1919 assigned M. W. Hester to the Onslow Circuit and he remained three years. The report of 1919 shows five churches: Maysville, Hopewell, Tabernacle, Belgrade and Lee's Chapel. The pastor's salary was \$1200. There were 677 members and the total money raised was \$2968. The next year there were six churches, Pollocksville added, and the pastor's salary rose to \$1903. Four thousand six hundred and two dollars was raised and \$519 paid on buildings. The next year the pastor's salary dropped to \$1700; the total money raised was \$2890.

In 1919 Charles A. Jones was assigned to the Jones Circuit and again in 1920. He received \$2150 and \$2500 during the two years. There were seven churches on the circuit and the total money raised was \$9247 and \$8554. In 1919 \$3000 was raised for buildings and in 1920 \$1507 was raised for buildings, both significant amounts for the time.

"C. A. 'Charley' Jones used to tell us, 'Tonight I am going to raise the roof.' Then, when we went to church that night he would tell us all the mean things we had done during the week," so recalls Mrs. Mamie Dixon.

The deed for the land upon which the present Oak Grove building stands was conveyed December 29, 1919 from George H. Simmons and wife Lucy, W. E. Cox and wife Narrine (spelling uncertain), E. Creagh, A. L. Simmons and wife, C. C. Simmons, J. A. Jones and wife Julia, R. Duval Jones, Mrs. Fannie Nixon, J. L. Hollister and wife Sophia, C. L. Stephens and wife Leah for \$7.00 to A. J. Hargett, S. A. Taylor, and A. H. Scott, trustees for Oak Grove.

Charles A. Jones was born in Moore County in 1869. He was educated at Elon College and completed the conference course of study for conference membership by correspondence. He became

a member of the conference in 1903. The Jones Circuit was his eighth circuit. After leaving this circuit he served nine others, retiring in 1942 at the age of 73. After his retirement he was appointed Wilmington District Evangelist and served in that capacity for 10 years, conducting during that time 48 revivals. He was said to be at his best in evangelistic work. He was twice married. There were two children by his first marriage and three by the second.

In 1921 K. F. Duval was assigned to the Jones Circuit, remaining for three years. In 1922 he received \$2000 salary and in 1923 \$2000. Total amount raised in 1922 was \$6230 and in 1923 \$6531. In 1922 \$3050 was raised for buildings. Sunday School rooms were added to the Trenton Church. In 1923 the records indicate that for the first time the circuit "paid out." What a happy day this must have been! Conference Work received a bonus of \$140, being assessed at \$500 and being paid \$640 and General Work received a \$78 bonus, being assessed \$400 and paid \$478. Debts were reported being paid and Foy's Memorial Church was being finished. This church was named for C. H. Foy. Mr. Foy was a member of Lee's Chapel and was a large owner of land around the present Foy's Memorial Church. He decided that this community needed a church and deeded the land to the North Carolina Conference. The family gave considerable amount of building materials and the pulpit furnishings. Its dedication was said to be a great occasion. Many people came from New Bern for the occasion. The deed is dated September 15, 1922 from G. V. Cooper and wife Rosabel, R. T. Allen, R. A. Whitaker and wife Ealine, C. E. Rosemund and wife Bessie, M. H. Allen and wife Charlotte, Eunice A. Foy, widow of C. H. Foy, and W. F. Taylor to E. H. Pollock, J. H. McDaniel and C. H. Andrews, trustees of Foy's Memorial Methodist Church, for \$1.00.

The conference of 1922 assigned C. E. Sawyer as pastor and he served two years on the Onslow Circuit. The report of 1922 shows five churches with 775 members, the pastor's salary was \$1572 and the total money raised \$3629. In 1923 the report shows six churches, pastor's salary \$1662, building work \$708, total money raised \$3543.

It is unusual for a Methodist minister to serve a charge a second time after leaving, but E. C. Sell who had been pastor of the Onslow Circuit during 1914-16 was reassigned in 1925 and served again for two years. The report of 1924 shows that the pastor's

salary was \$1400, the total money raised was \$2718. The next year the pastor's salary continued to drop to \$1104 and the total money raised \$2708.

In 1924 a certain minister who shall not be named in this history was assigned to the Jones Circuit but did not take up residence here because he feared the mosquitoes that would arise from the Trent River on the one side and the mill pond on the other. In his stead came H. L. Davis. The former brother is living and is retired. Mr. Davis received \$2000 salary and the total money raised was \$7241. During this year Oak Grove was authorized to sell its old building and apply the proceeds on the debt on the new building. The old building, now used for a barn, is about one-fourth mile back of the present building.

In 1925 J. C. Whedbee was assigned to the Jones Circuit. He received \$2000 salary and the total money raised was \$4463. This year the church budget lacked \$460 being paid out.

J. C. Whedbee was born in 1878 in Perquimans County. He was educated at Trinity Park School. He was admitted on trial in the North Carolina Conference in 1906 and served 42 years. He served 17 circuits in addition to the Jones Circuit. He retired and died both in 1948, enjoying less than a year's retirement. A widow and two children survived.

In 1926 Elijah L. Stack was assigned to the Jones Circuit. He received \$2000 salary and \$3440 was the total money raised.

Elijah L. Stack was born in 1872 in Guilford County. He was educated at Rocky Knoll School, Jamestown Academy, Oak Ridge Military Institute, Eastman Business College and Ohio University. He was a pastor in Ohio for nine years before returning to North Carolina. He served ten charges other than Jones and for a while was superintendent of the Odd Fellows Home at Goldsboro. He retired in 1938 and died in 1951. He was remembered as a man of great versatility.

The conference of 1926 assigned J. C. Harmon as pastor of the Onslow Circuit and he served for four years. During his stay conditions appear to have improved. The reports show that the pastor's salary was \$1559 for the first year and \$1800 for the three succeeding years. Total money raised was \$2678, \$3525, \$3483 and \$3918. Mr. Harmon is retired.

In 1927 T. W. Lee was assigned to the Jones Circuit and he remained four years. He received \$2000 for the first three years

and dropped to \$1700 the fourth year, the year of the "crash." Total money raised was as follows: \$3847, \$4302, \$4064 and \$2774. The budget during these years was tragically short. In 1929 a committee was appointed to sell the property at Comfort. Mr. Lee is retired.

In 1928 a resolution of appreciation was passed in honor of A. J. Hargett who had been superintendent of Oak Grove Sunday School for 40 years. A. J. Hargett was the father of Mrs. Paul Huffman and she recalls that he served five more years.

Two or three little anecdotes seem appropriate to this chapter.

Mrs. Ipock, who has furnished so many of the memories contained in this study, recalls the time when Trenton was to entertain the District Conference. She says:

"Our old steeple was so ugly. It was too little and too sharp. We went to New Bern and hired an architect, Mr. Archie Simpson, to draw us another one. He charged us \$5.00. We found that there was no one in Trenton who could read a blueprint, so we went to Pollocksville and hired a man to make a new steeple. He charged us \$7.00. I paid it myself. Eventually the church paid me back. I had a little millinery business then, and that was big money then. You just don't understand. You can't understand. There wasn't any money then—no money at all."

On one occasion J. M. Benson was holding a revival with F. S. Becton preaching for him. Mr. Becton was giving the invitation. A Mrs. Castet became happy and started running down the aisle shouting. Mr. Becton decided to meet her. In the middle of the aisle Mrs. Castet tripped and fell on her face, and Mr. Becton, not to be outdone, also fell flat. Then everybody, including the preacher, got happy.

Oak Grove was in its prime during these years. Later it lost many members because of an air base being located near, taking the farms from old settlers. After this fewer people settled on farms and the membership dwindled to a faithful few. Oak Grove has been a "mother church" in its way. Many of the Pollocksville members are former Oak Grove members and most of the Rhems members are former Oak Grove members. People remember this church for its hospitality and friendliness.

Mrs. Nannie Scott remembers a "preachers' room" in the present Carl Killingsworth home. Preachers were always welcome to spend the night there and this room was reserved for them.

Maysville Methodist Church began, as we have noted, as a mission Sabbath School of Lee's Chapel. The present church was built in 1901 at a cost of \$1500 and remodeled in 1949 at a cost of \$20,000. A parsonage was built next to the church soon after the church was built. The cost is not remembered now, but the building is still in use as a residence.

Mr. Burke Mattocks recalls many incidents from the history of this church. He and his sons operate a general store in Maysville and are a pleasure to talk to. He has not missed a Sunday School or church service for 50 years. He tells of the time when they had a new pastor who came in early on Sunday morning and found him making the fires. "Where is the superintendent?" asked the new pastor. "He will be on time," answered Mr. Mattocks, and on time the firemaker became superintendent. He recalls the preacher, too, who had not quite been paid before conference. He was in his store walking nervously around the counters. "Do you think I will be paid?" he asked. "Well," said the merchant, "if I have to sell my goods on credit, surely you can preach on credit." Then he and his son recall the time when a preacher started off to conference minus about \$300 necessary to pay out. The money was raised and someone chased the preacher down and overtook him between Maysville and Pollocksville, giving him the all-important "pay out" money.

CHAPTER FIVE

From 1930 to 1960

The conference of 1930 sent Mark W. Lawrence to the Maysville Circuit. The report shows six churches, pastor's salary \$1800 and the total money raised \$2784. The next year Mr. Lawrence was again pastor and the report shows another rather large drop in the salary, \$1384 and the total money raised, \$2468. We note these times during which the pastor's salary dropped and it makes us wonder. Such a situation now would cause severe embarrassment, and no doubt it did then. However, the records also show that there was a constant tendency on the part of the circuits to aim higher and not to be satisfied with a bad situation. This is shown in the fact that it was the general practice to accept a larger apportionment than was paid.

In 1931 P. O. Lee was assigned but did not finish his term on the Jones Circuit. He was succeeded by J. D. Young, then a supply. Mr. Young was here three full years plus the year of Mr. Lee's assignment. He received \$1230, \$1192, \$1170 and \$1500 salary. Total money raised was \$2105, \$1829, \$1947 and \$2291. In 1931 Shady Grove was authorized to receive \$3000 from the Duke Endowment for an Education Building.

The conference of 1932 sent N. M. Wright to the Maysville Circuit. He was pastor one year. The report shows six churches, salary \$1302 and the total money raised \$2461.

The conference of 1933 assigned C. J. Andrews to the Maysville Circuit. Mr. Andrews stayed four years. The reports of 1933, 1934, 1935 and 1936 show the pastor's salary to have been \$1220, \$1400, \$1500 and \$1500. The total money raised was \$2397, \$2575, \$2875 and \$2808. No significant building work appears to have been done the four depression years of Mr. Andrews' stay.

In 1935 F. B. Brandenburg was assigned to the Jones Circuit and he remained four years. He received \$1500, \$1500, \$1600 and \$1700 for the four successive years. The total money raised was

\$2356, \$2616, \$3220 and \$2996. In 1937 there were 607 members. Mr. Brandenburg is retired.

The conference of 1937 sent H. L. Harris to the Maysville Circuit and he was pastor five years. The salary for these years was \$1500, \$1391, \$1562, \$1545 and \$1600 as our country began to climb out of the depression preparing for World War Two. Total money raised was \$3154, \$4357, \$3292.

In 1939 W. G. Lowe was assigned to the Jones Circuit. In 1939 the salary was \$2000 and in 1940 it dropped to \$1465. Total money raised was \$2489 and \$2763. It had taken ten years to get the salary back up to the 1929 level, but it is sad that either the economy or the prevailing spirit of the circuit could not stand this amount. Mr. Lowe is now retired.

In 1941 E. G. Cowan was sent to the Jones Circuit. He received \$1495, \$1800 and \$2000. Total money raised was \$2681, \$3763 and \$3674.

Ernest G. Cowan was born in 1886 and died in 1960. He served circuits from Virginia to South Carolina and from mountains to Ocracoke. He also served a circuit near Baltimore. There is no list of his many and varied appointments. He was reared a Presbyterian and in his young manhood was a very active layman in that denomination. He was educated at Davidson College, High Point College and Westminster Theological Seminary. He became a minister in the Methodist Protestant Church in 1921. He lost his first wife in 1953. He remarried in 1957, the year of his retirement. His second wife and two sons survive.

The conference of 1942 sent N. P. Edens to the Maysville Circuit and he remained three years. The salary was \$1818, \$2000 and \$2000. Total money raised continued a significant climb, \$4097, \$4209, and \$5042. Each year also saw a significant amount paid for building work, \$1010, \$1040 and \$1880.

The conference of 1944 sent J. R. Poe to the Jones Circuit. He was pastor for two years. The salary was \$2200 and \$2425. In 1944 \$1030 was spent for buildings. In 1944 the total amount of money raised was \$4820 and in 1945 the total money raised was \$7045.

The conference of 1945 sent D. D. Broome to the Maysville Charge. He was pastor for two years. The salary was \$2300 and \$2500. The total money raised was \$5727 and \$6015. No out-

standing building work appears to have been done during these years.

In 1946 W. E. Howard was sent to the Jones Circuit, which became the Trenton Charge in 1948. Mr. Howard was pastor three years. The salary was \$2500 in 1946 and \$3000 in 1948. In 1946 \$3500 was spent for building work. In 1946 the total money raised was \$8517 and in 1948 the total money raised was \$6060. In 1948 the membership was 747.

The Annual Conference of 1947 sent J. D. Stott to the Maysville Charge and he remained two years. The salary was \$2700 and \$2750. The total money raised was \$6210 and \$8278.

The conference of 1949 sent Charles B. Long to the Trenton Charge and he was pastor four years. These were years of significant progress. The salary was \$3000, \$3375, \$3700 and \$4000. The total money raised was \$5624, \$6113, \$6946 and \$7525.

Charles B. Long was born in 1902 in Person County. He received his B.D. degree from Atlanta Theological Seminary in 1930. He married Miss Bernice Burns in the same year. He was received on trial in 1934. He was a chaplain in the United States Army from July 1942 until May 1948. After returning to civilian life he served five charges and died while serving the five churches of the Parkton Charge. He was a man of a deep mystical nature as his fragments of poetry show. His widow and two sons survive.

The conference of 1949 sent Ralph H. Lewis to the Maysville Charge. Mr. Lewis was pastor five years. The salary for this period was \$2750, \$3200, \$3600, \$3600 and \$4430. The total money raised was \$10912, \$6278, \$15799, \$29539 and \$27710. During this time a great deal of building work was done, the amounts paid being \$4489, \$1492, \$7586, \$20991 and \$12422.

In 1953 Joseph J. Grimes was sent to supply the Trenton Charge. He received \$3000 salary and the total money raised was \$6702. Mr. Grimes was the first pastor of the newly constituted three-point charge, Trenton, Oak Grove and Maple Grove constituting one charge, and Shady Grove, Foy's Memorial and Cypress Creek forming one charge.

The conference of 1954 sent Robert F. Moore to the Maysville Methodist Church. Maysville had become a station church. The Pollocksville Charge was formed, composed of Pollocksville, Lee's Chapel, Belgrade and Tabernacle. Mr. Moore was pastor for five years and during these years significant gains continued to be made

in the pastor's support, the benevolent work and the building work. The salary was \$3900, \$2600 (Conference was changed from November to June), \$3900, \$4200 and \$4800. The total money raised was \$11137, \$9840, \$18942, \$13331 and \$14252. The amounts paid for building work were \$3351, \$4500, \$9500, \$1800 and \$1917.

In 1954 P. C. Yelverton became pastor of the Pollocksville Charge and he remained four years. The pastor's salary was \$2700, \$1400 (eight months), \$3300 and \$3500. Total money raised was \$19967, \$12967, \$18785 and \$8270. In 1954 Pollocksville spent \$7500 on building work and \$5000 in 1955. The Pollocksville church building was bought from the Disciples Church in 1918 for about \$600 and was renovated during this time. Mr. Yelverton is a young single man and no parsonage was built until 1957, at which time one was built at Belgrade by the Belgrade and Tabernacle Churches.

In 1958 R. W. Harrington supplied the Pollocksville Charge for one year. The salary was \$3700. Pollocksville paid \$2000 for building work and the total money raised was \$14204.

In 1959 J. A. Cooper began serving the Pollocksville Charge as a supply but he died after about six months. The salary was \$3800, the building work was \$1433 at Pollocksville and the total money raised \$14664. After Mr. Cooper's death C. E. Ruffin came from Georgia to complete his term. At the last Annual Conference this charge was further divided, Belgrade and Tabernacle becoming a charge and Pollocksville and Lee's Chapel becoming the other charge. A parsonage is being rented for Mr. Ruffin on the site where a Methodist church was begun between 1900 and 1918 but never completed.

John A. Cooper was born in 1909 in Franklin County. He was educated at Rutherford College, Louisburg College, and the Supply Pastors' School of Duke University. He entered the full-time ministry in 1948. He served three charges before coming to the Pollocksville Charge. His widow, two daughters and one son survive.

The conference of 1953 assigned Earl S. Tyson to supply the Shady Grove Charge. He served one year. The salary was \$2000, the amount paid for building work \$10000 and the total money raised \$13944. A parsonage was built near the church at a cost of \$12000 including land, furnishings and building.

The conference of 1954 assigned James B. Speight to the Shady Grove Charge. He served two years. The salary was \$1466 (eight months) and \$2500. The total money raised was \$2467 and \$5102.

The conference of 1956 assigned J. D. Cranford (retired supply). He served for only five months, being succeeded January 1, 1957 by Durwood F. Wiggins, a supply. The salary was \$2210. Foy's Memorial paid \$3000 for building work and Shady Grove \$12000. The total money raised was \$17838. Three buildings have served the Shady Grove church. The first was built in 1857, the second in 1912, and the third one will be finished during 1960. It will cost, with its furnishings, about \$35000. This includes some voluntary work.

The conference assigned J. D. Vernelson to supply Shady Grove in 1958. The pastor's salary was \$3055, total money raised \$10301 and Shady Grove paid for building work \$5000.

Mr. Vernelson was succeeded January 1, 1959 by Lionel C. Swink, supply. The pastor's salary was \$3400, total money raised \$7686 and \$2000 paid by Shady Grove for building work. Mr. Swink is currently serving the Shady Grove Charge.

In 1954 Lewis A. Dillman became pastor of the Trenton Charge and remained five years. The salary during these years was \$2334 (eight months), \$3720, \$4000, \$4000 and \$4200. Total money raised was \$16107, \$15016, \$11709, \$13667, and \$16482. In 1954 the amounts paid for building were: Maple Grove \$255, Oak Grove \$345, Trenton \$900. In 1955 Trenton paid \$11326. In 1956 Maple Grove paid \$6000 and Trenton \$850. In 1957 Trenton paid \$873. In 1958 Maple Grove paid \$1727 and Trenton \$820. In 1959 Oak Grove paid \$3220 and Trenton \$100. All three churches carried out extensive remodeling programs.

We began this study with Francis Asbury running around all over the eastern United States. We trotted breathlessly along by his side through Jones County. Then we groped our way through many dark and silent years, and then had a large number of circuit riders pass hurriedly before us, getting just a word from each. The Circuit began with John M. Gunn riding a horse from Hopewell all the way through Jones County and into Lenoir as far as Woodington. This county now is served by the following:

Cecil E. Ruffin serves the Pollocksville Charge, Pollocksville and Lee's Chapel.

John T. Smith supplies the Maysville Methodist Church.
Walton N. Bass serves the Trenton Charge, Trenton, Oak Grove
and Maple Grove, assisted by Amos Taylor, local preacher.

Lionel C. Swink supplies the Shady Grove Charge, Shady
Grove, Foy's Memorial and Cypress Creek.

Each circuit rider now can ride the length of his charge in
about 10 minutes. John M. Gunn probably could not cover the
area in a day.

We believe that Methodism has made a significant contribution
to the life of Jones County. Thousands upon thousands have had
their moral training in these churches. Other thousands have been
given opportunities for exercising leadership and helping others
walk a steep and stony path.

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