

METHODISM IN ABERDEEN

In 1984, First United Methodist Church of Aberdeen, Mississippi joined other Methodists across the nation to celebrate the Bicentennial of Methodism in America. It was at the Christmas Conference at Lovely Lane Chapel in Baltimore, in the year 1784 that the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized. For those two hundred years we have been proclaiming grace and freedom in America.

As part of the celebration of our own Sesqui-centennial celebration, this compilation of historical sketches is offered for the enlightenment and enjoyment of all who have been and will ever be a part of First United Methodist Church. The writings that follow are compiled from information previously written by Dr. W. A. Evans, Miss Lucille Peacock, Mrs. Julian Evans, Sr., Dr. Tom Fite Paine, Jr., Mrs. J. L. Shell, Rev. E. M. Sharp, and George Leftwich. Many of the records come from the Evans Memorial Library in Aberdeen. Those seeking more detailed information and memorabilia are invited to look through the Methodist material in the archives section of the library.

The very name of Aberdeen, founded in 1836-37, bespeaks the town's Scottish heritage. Robert Gordon, a Scotsman, who early settled at Cotton Gin Port, the oldest town in North Mississippi, saw possibilities for a town along the "Tombechee." Land was purchased from the Chickasaw Indians and the new town, then named Dundee, was begun. As Dr. W. A. Evans, author of "Mother Monroe," the history of Monroe County, expressed it, "Robert Gordon, a Scotsman, never lived in Aberdeen; but he dreamed it, named it, and launched it."

The first Methodist church in the county is said to have been built near Wise's Gap, east of Quincy. The most famous camp ground was located at Athens, the county's second county seat. This spot was noted for great religious occasions, particularly for revivals conducted by Bishop Robert Paine.

Methodist records show that in 1836 or 1837 a circuit in Northeast Mississippi was named Aberdeen, testifying to the fact that Church work was already going on in the little new town. During this formative period the church was in the Tuscaloosa District of the Alabama Conference. On November 4, 1840, when the Memphis Conference was organized, Aberdeen was listed as an appointment in the Pontotoc District with Mordecai Yell as the Presiding Elder and John S. Williams as the preacher. It was not until 1870 that the North Mississippi Conference was formed at Water Valley, Mississippi. By that time the Methodist Episcopal Church South was established as an important center of Methodism in the area.

The first preachers listed for Aberdeen were James L. Finley and John Gilmore, as listed in the appointments of the Tuscaloosa District of the Alabama Conference for the years 1836-37. The following year they reported a membership of 399 whites and 25 Negroes. (By 1861 Memphis Conference minutes that the Aberdeen Station had a membership of 180 whites and 25 Negroes, suggesting that the earlier figures probably included membership from the several congregations in the Aberdeen area.)

The only data available on 1837 and resigned in 1842. Methodist Episcopal Church local preacher in 1813. He in 1814 .

Rev. Finley is that he joined the Alabama Conference in Rev. Gilmore was born August 2, 1776, and joined the in 1800. He was licensed to exhort in 1809 and licensed a travelled Caney Fork Circuit in the Tennessee Conference

"In 1816 he and the Reverend Gilmore, a younger brother, with their families moved from Tennessee to the Tombigbee country As soon as he settled on the Tombigbee, he began to preach as a local preacher to the people in his immediate vicinity. The largest part of his ministry was given as local preacher to that region for about 20 years."

Through the years, as Aberdeen became important to the economic development of the area, it also became important to the development of Methodism. It soon became home of the Presiding Elder and the hub of Methodist activity. Several times the Annual Conference met here. Annual Conferences which have met in Aberdeen are: 1848 - Bishop Robert Paine presiding; 1860 - Bishop George E. Pierce; 1863-64 - Bishop Robert Paine; 1874 - Bishop David Doggett; 1884 - Bishop J. C. Keener; 1898 - Bishop J. S. Key; 1919 - Bishop J. C. Kilgore; 1957 - Bishop Marvin A. Franklin.

In 1847 Bishop Paine moved to Aberdeen, making the town one of the very few in Mississippi to be an episcopal center. In 1855 he bought the present Paine home from Rev. Turner Saunders, who had built the house about 1842. It was built from timber that was cut off of the twenty-five acres tract on which it stands. All of the foundation is put together with wooden pegs made of heart pine. An Indian Chief by the name of James had lived on the place, so Bishop Paine gave his home the name, "Minke," which means chief in the Indian language. He was born in Person County, North Carolina in 1799; he died in Aberdeen, Mississippi in 1882

Long before coming to Aberdeen as Bishop, Robert Paine had been a leader in the church and Methodism's involvement in higher education. His great-grandson, Dr. Thomas Fite Paine, Jr., included the following in the Centennial Rededication of the cornerstone of Vanderbilt University, April 28, 1974. 000002

"At the tender age of 22, Robert Paine, recently licensed as a preacher, made a motion at the Tennessee Methodist Conference in 1821, to appoint a committee to consider assuming the responsibility for Bethel Academy in Kentucky. This was the first attempt to establish an institution of learning. Thus began Robert Paine's lifelong effort to bring education to the South.

"In 1825, the young preacher, 26 years old, was elected a trustee of Cumberland College in Nashville, Tennessee. Cumberland College became the University of Nashville the next year. Later it became Peabody College and is now part of Vanderbilt University.

"At age 31, in 1830, Robert Paine was appointed by the Tennessee Conference as superintendent of the newly created La Grange College near Leighton, in northwest Alabama--the first college chartered in the new state of Alabama. In the 16 years Robert Paine headed La Grange College, he kept the college going despite severe financial problems, and recruited an able faculty. He taught Moral Science, Rhetoric, Geology, and Mineralogy. The classical education there equipped many young men to assume leadership roles in the mid-South. North Alabama University is a descendent of La Grange.

"Robert Paine resigned the presidency of La Grange College in 1846, at the age of 47, when he was elected Bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. But he did not resign his interest in education. At the Alabama Annual Conference in 1855, with Bishop Paine presiding, two new colleges were established: Southern University at Greensboro in the western part of the state, and East Alabama Male College at Auburn in the - eastern area. The latter school was the forerunner of Auburn University.

"Ahead of his time, he believed in education for women as well as men, and sent his daughters, Mary, Sarah Felix, and Ludie for higher education to Wesleyan College in Macon, Georgia.

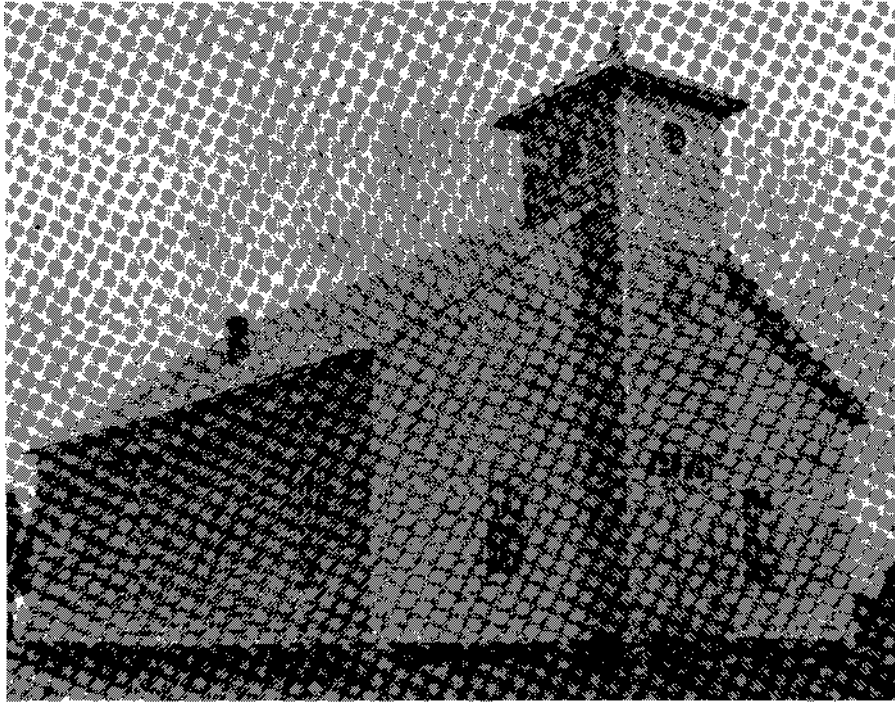
"As senior bishop of the Church, Robert Paine was instrumental in the chartering of Central University in Nashville, Tennessee, in the lean years after the Civil War. The institution was renamed Vanderbilt University when, in 1837, Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt endowed the still-on-paper school. How gratifying it must have been to Bishop Robert Paine in his autumn years when he dedicated the cornerstone of the new Vanderbilt University in 1874. I was honored to rededicate this cornerstone on April 28, 1974, the centennial of the original laying of the cornerstone of the university."

Bishop Paine was a student of Latin and Greek and a superior scholar of English. He was the author of an able and elaborate work, entitled, "The Life and Times of Bishop McKendree." The early history of Methodism in Aberdeen necessarily has to recognize the large influence of Bishop Paine.

CHURCH BUILDINGS are an important part of any church's past, because they serve as the location of worship and other activities from which to reach out into the community. The many conversions, baptisms, weddings and funerals, and the thousands of prayers in crisis and in joy filled their walls with a spirit of a people worshipping God.

From the accounts left by Mr. George J. Leftwich, prominent lawyer and Methodist layman of Aberdeen, and from later research done by Rev. E. M. Sharp, a former pastor, we know that Aberdeen has had four Methodist different church buildings. The first was built around 1837, near the Court House. It was a small wooden frame building.

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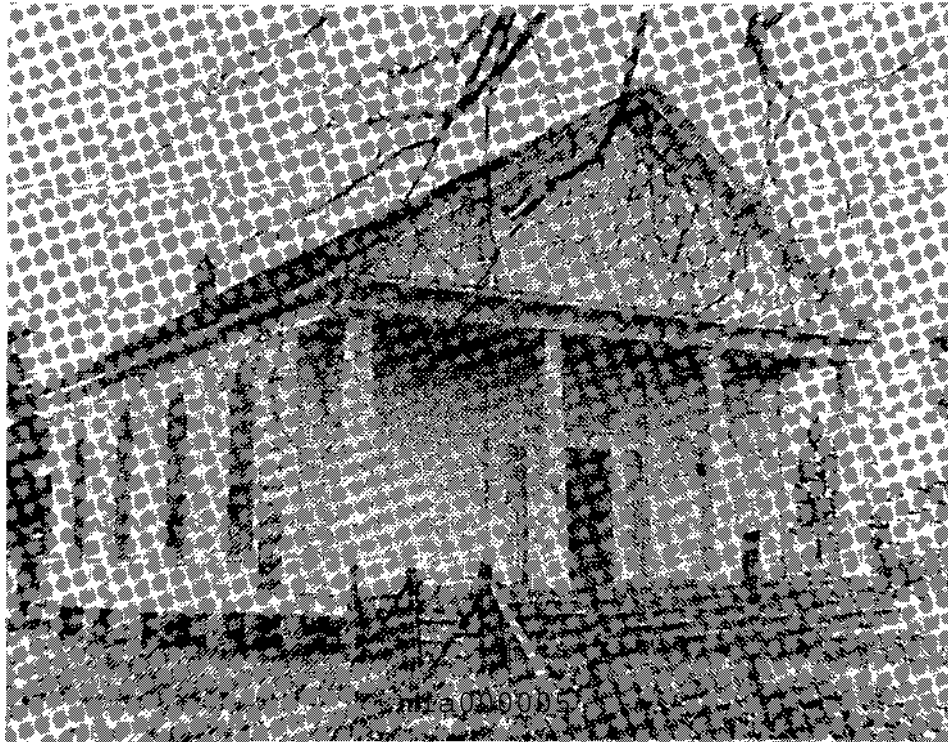


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Erected 1836 picture selected from description located just south of county court house.

CHURCH ONE

"Do a bit of imagination and take a stroll along South Chestnut Street, the towns earliest section. Try to picture that first small wooden Church building erected before 1840 somewhere in the neighborhood of the Court House. The ancient cedars there won't whisper the exact spot; neither will they tell the name of that parson, who, with saddle bags across his horse, probably rode through the woodland that Sabbath morning in the long ago. Don't you suppose he breathed a little prayer of thanks for that first little sunshine-coated sanctuary! Court House records show that in June 1836, in block 10, lots 609,610, 611, and 621 were sites allowed by the trustees of the town for church purposes. Mr. Leftwich had this to say, 'The first Church building belonging to the Methodist Church in Aberdeen was situated in Old Aberdeen, just south of the county court house and near the residence of the late Dr. John L. Tindal and built in 1837 or about that time. Among its leading members were Col. Boling C. Burnett, Alexander Carlisle, wealthy slave holders and planters, and Jeremiah D. Mann, a local preacher. Parson Gunn was another early, well known Methodist Preacher'."



Erected 1845 picture selected from description located on present site at corner of James and College streets.

CHURCH TWO

The second Methodist Church building was built about 1840 on the present church lot. The first deed to the Aberdeen Methodist Church may be found in the Court House, Book 9, page 114 and states: "Commissioners appointed by the stockholders of the town of New Aberdeen to payoff and dispose of the lots---did set apart and allot two lots, No. 11 & 12 in Block 12 in the plan of said town to be and forever remain for use and benefit of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Aberdeen---this indenture was made this 12 September 1841 by and between Charles. W. Walton trustee for and behalf of the stockholders mentioned above and Jeremiah D. Mann, Boling C. Burnett, Nicholas Reedy, Daniel G. M. Levine (or Lemire), John B. Valintine, Alexander Carlisle, John Westbrook, trustees appointed for the M. E. Church in the U. S. A. attending to the rules and discipline which from time to time may be adopted by the ministers and preachers of the said church at their General Conference in the U.S.A. and in further trust and confidence they shall---provide such minister and preacher belonging to said church shall from time to time be duly authorized by the General Conference to preach and expound God's Word."

From article, "Antebellum Times in Monroe County," by Mrs. F. B. Crawford: "The Methodist Church was a frame structure on the same site as the present brick building. Its main supporters were the Sykes, Strong, Clopton, Baker, Prewitt, Lake, Bishop Paine and Wilkes families."

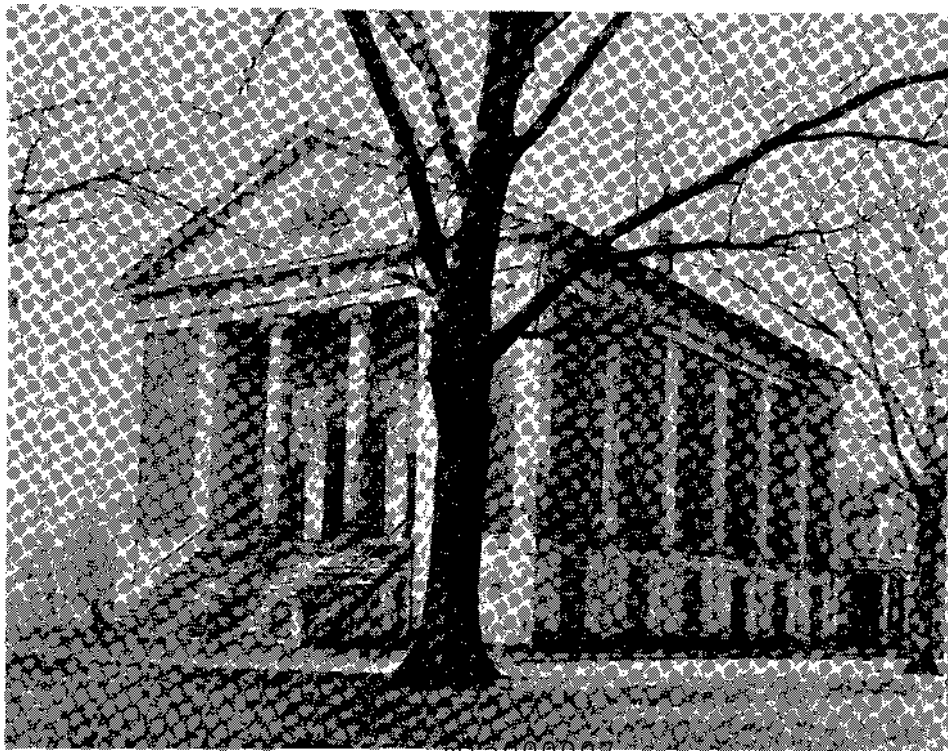
"Mr. Wilkes lived about a mile and a half from the business part of town and

supplied it with fruits and early vegetables. He had a little spring wagon for the purpose driven by an old woman named Aunt Mariah. He made money and finally bought a fine carriage in which the family drove to Sunday School (Methodist) and Church. One night some bad boys secured a paint bucket, and while the team was hitched and the family in Church, they painted on the vehicle in bold letters:

'Who'd a thought it,
Apples bought it,
If you think I'm a liar,
Ask Aunt Mariah.'

The directory tribute ends, "What a glorious record! Like Enoch he had the testimony that he pleased God. For a truth everyone who knew Bro. Kendall was certain that he had the companionship of God. His personality evidenced the fact of the sweet calming, purifying, uplifting sense of belonging to God. Surely this is a 'pearl of great price'."

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Building erected 1859. Handsome brick church Greek model. tall ionic columns. large auditorium. basement for Sunday School. One of the most attractive churches of that day.

CHURCH THREE

It was in 1858 that the little frame building was torn down and replaced by a handsome brick church constructed after the Greek models with tall Ionic columns in front. The cornerstone was laid in 1859 during the pastorate of Rev. B. T. Crouch. The building committee was composed of E. Strong, William H. Clopton, George Sykes, William H. Saunders and Wyatt Moye, William P. Mellen. Mr. Mellen was Grand Master of the Masons of Mississippi. In the Masonic dating procedure, the building was built in Anno Lucis (Year of the Light) 5859. (This is 1859 Anno Domini, plus 4000 years back to the "Year of Light.") This unusual dating can be observed on this old cornerstone at the northeast corner of building four, our present building.

The first sermon in the new building was preached November. 4, 1860 by Rev. J. T. Meriwether, the pastor. The text was Luke 24:45-48. The next Sunday morning, November 11, during the session of the Annual Conference. Bishop Pierce preached from the text, John 1:14.

Mr. Leftwich comments on the fact that this third Church was large and comfortable with a wide gallery for Negro slaves and basement rooms for Sunday School. Mrs. I. L. Shell had this to say, "The old Church had beautiful crystal chandeliers with some

25 small lamps all clustered around the center base. These lamps were for oil lights but in time they were each wired. On the walls were brackets with long pendant prisms. Mr. Jim Shell helped wire the old lights. The choir and organ were originally in the gallery in the back of the main auditorium but the church was remodelled in 1888 or 1889 and the choir and organ were moved to the front of the church."

(When Church Three was torn down to make room for the present building, two of the crystal lamps out of the sanctuary became the property of Mrs. Mary Dudley Walker and were installed on the newell posts in The Magnolias, the old Sykes-Acker home. The two capitols of the columns of the old church may still be seen in the Plant home yard [home of Mayor Frank Harrington]. The bases are at the Sykes-Acker place.)

One of the ministers serving the congregation in the third church building was Amos Kendall. From the First Methodist Episcopal Church, South Directory of 1909, it was written, "Rev. Amos Kendall was born at Ashby, Lincolnshire, England, December 25, 1830. He preached five years in England before coming to America. He joined the Memphis Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1855, which Conference at that time embraced the present territory of the North Mississippi Conference. His first sermon in Aberdeen, MS was preached in the old Baptist building in the year 1860. In the year 1865, he was sent as preacher in charge of the Aberdeen Station. His term of service in Aberdeen as pastor and on the Aberdeen District as Presiding Elder was fourteen years. In the year 1902, after an active ministry of sixty years, he took the Supernumerary Relation." (In other words, he retired.)

In June 23, 1896 the 27th session of the North Mississippi Conference was held in Aberdeen. Rev. Amos Kendall, pastor, has this to say on the spiritual condition of the church: "There is some worldliness such as visiting the opera, signing w his key peunons, etc., but on the whole the spiritual condition of the church is good with large attentive audiences. One Epworth League with 50 members."

It might not be out of place to state why Rev. Kendall referred to the whiskey petition. Note this bit of quotation from the pamphlet, "Prohibition at Last in Monroe County," by C. T. Kincannon, published in 1901. "In 1885 some citizens of Aberdeen began to record strong and formal protests against the saloon. A petition to retail liquor was presented for approval. Leaders in the fight to stop approval included Rev. Paine and Rev. Mitchell, Methodist pastors. The petition was not granted. More contests between liquor forces and prohibitionists came in 1890, 1891, 1892, and on to 1901. On the day of the election, after hard work by men and women the vote when counted stood: 576 for sale of whiskey, 1048 against. A thanksgiving service was held at the Methodist Church with the four pastors of the town present."

Mrs. J. L. Shell, one of the leading members of First Methodist Church , adds a touch of color and insight into the church and community life during the years of the third church building. Her remarks came from a conversation with an unknown interviewer.

"There was an old lady named Mrs. Ritchie", she reported in an interview, "whose husband and sons had all died and she was left alone in the world. She lived in the old house across the street from the old Plant house, which was once used for a hospital. She was a big Methodist and always went to services, rain or shine. 'Mrs. Ritchie, come and help us get the parsonage ready for the new preacher,' and she would work as hard as anybody there, and would come back the next day, and the next and the next, and tell the preacher all the gossip and scandal on everybody in the church. It got so we would call gossipy people Mrs. Ritchie. One day I was telling Bro. Jim Cunningham some of the tales on somebody and he pointed his finger at me and said, 'Now, Helen, you hush right up, you will be as bad as old Mrs. Ritchie.' If

Mrs. Ritchie didn't like the preacher, she would score him for catering to the rich members."

Mrs. Shell began teaching in the Sunday School soon after uniting with the Methodist Church and taught for 38 years consecutively in the Sunday School. She joined the Methodist Church in the year 1896.

From the old Sunday School Register of the Church for the years 1861-1865, Rev. Sharp copied some interesting reports. Consider the one for September 14, for 7th to 13th, 1862. "Superintendent reports interest in school improving; order in classes better; 8 regular teachers present; 4 teachers supplied. Treasurer reports nothing collected this week. Librarian - has appointed Clark Dennison assistant - some books came in - many out - order of calling for books not yet good. Monitors report about 25 S.S. scholars at Church, morning service - a few at night - behavior good. Some little boys sit too far back at Church and have their attention distracted by others who do not attend Sunday School.

Collection time for today was \$1.80.

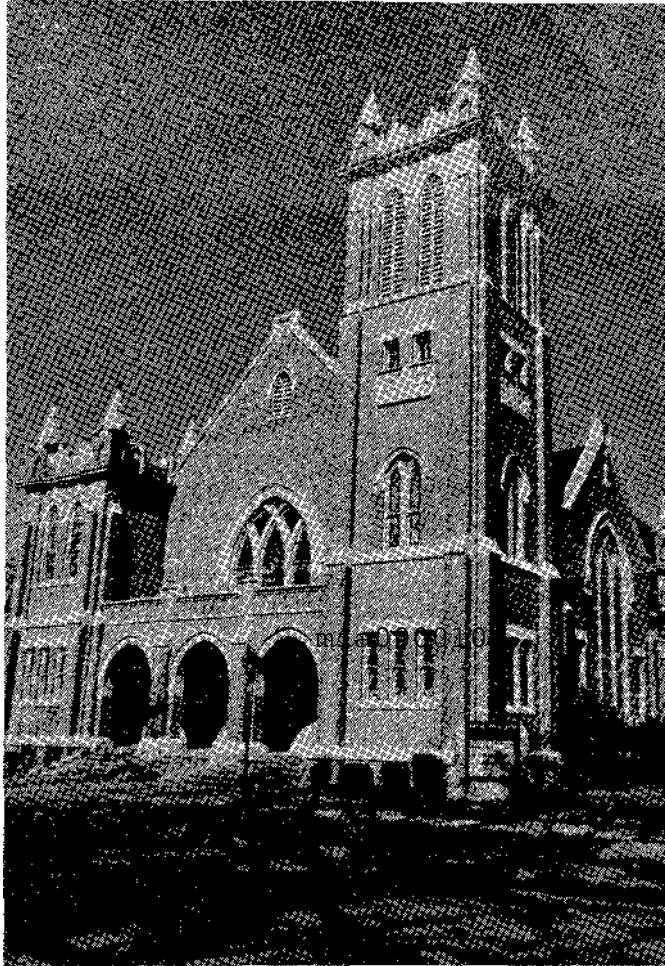
On November 2, 1862 - Sunday School
The pastor having gone to Conference and no other preacher to supply his place there was not preaching expected today there will be prayer meeting in this room.--Read part of Prov. 28 chapter and sang 234 hymn at opening of the school. Closed with 431 hymn at 10 o'clock. - There was preaching by Mr. Gladney (Rev. R. S. Gladney)."

From an article in the Aberdeen weekly of Sept. 23, 1927 one finds the first organist was Mrs. Lutie Paine Scruggs and the first choir included Dr. & Mrs. W. G. Sykes, Mrs. Strong, Mr. F. G. Henley and Mr. George C. Paine.

THE PARSONAGE was built during the time of Church Three on lots adjacent to the north side of the sanctuary. At the Court House Book 41, page 176 one reads this reference to the parsonage lot: "Indenture made 17 Aug. 1877 between Martha Prewett of St. Louis, state of Missouri party of the first part and E. Strong, W. H. Clopton, T. B. Sykes, and other trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South of Aberdeen, in lot in Block 12 and running through the lot for 300 feet to Columbus Street."

Mrs. Shell stated that the Ladies Aid Society helped build the parsonage and kept it up for years and years. It was built sometime between 1880 and 1885. Rev. John Mitchell was one of the first preachers to live in it. The mother of Dr. Ewing gave a lot of pretty furniture for the parsonage.

When in 1912 Rev. Issac Borders came to Aberdeen from California, he wrote back to his wife to describe the parsonage. "It is on a lot adjoining the church, of which I am sorry, and it is a very neat two story frame structure. It is a nice street, has a large lawn and extends back one block, giving a very large back yard, garden lot, and affording more room than we have had for a long time. Down stairs there are two bedrooms, parlor, dining room, two large pantries, a large back porch latticed, and kitchen, the bathroom opening from the back hall, a back stairway runs up from the porch to the hall above."



Erected in 1912. A beautiful church of Gothic architecture with many modern conveniences. High towers and symbolic Tiffany windows are restful to the eye and attract attention for many blocks around.

CHURCH BUILDING FOUR

On the second Sunday in April, 1906, the pastor, Rev. W. E. M. Brogan, called a session of the Church Conference and this resolution was submitted: "Resolved that we the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South Aberdeen Station, Aberdeen District, North Mississippi Conference in Church Conference assembled, do hereby authorize the proper authorities of said church to take immediate steps toward the erection of a new, modern church building to cost no less than twenty-

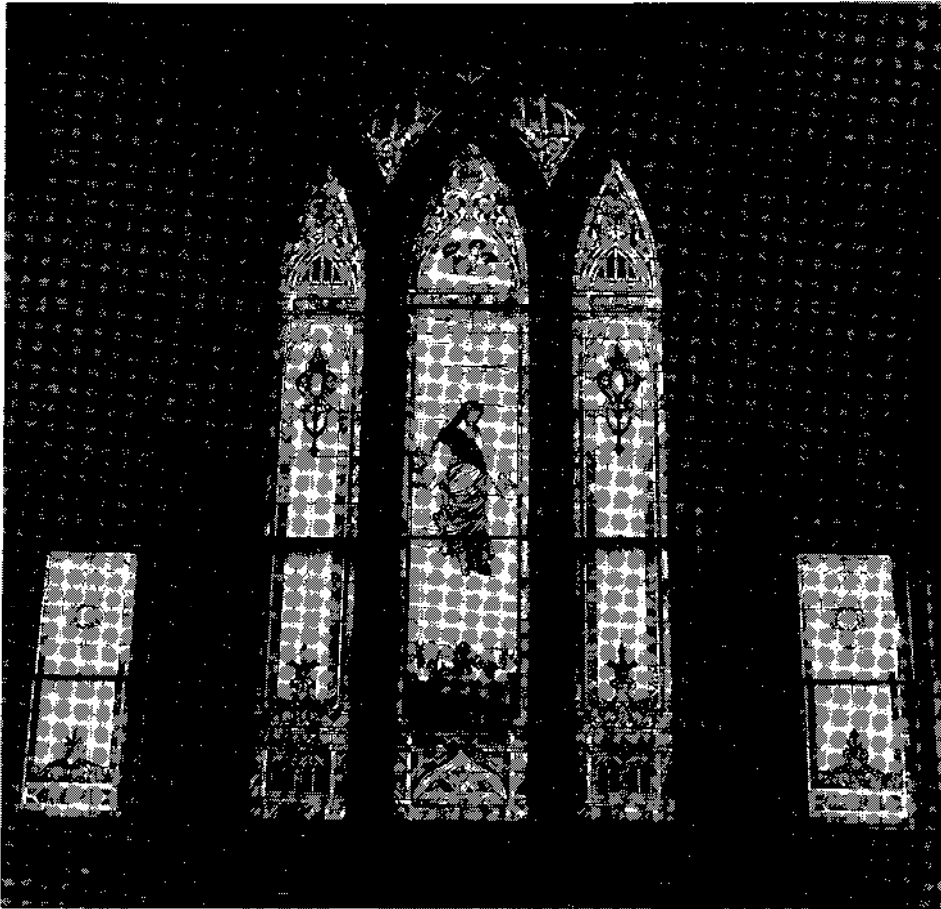
seven thousand five hundred dollars (\$27,500)." On the night of Feb. 2, 1909 at a called session the pastor reported the sum of \$18,450 secured in cash and subscriptions. The building committee elected was W. G. Sykes, Chairman; P. A. Dulin, Vice-chairman; Gaston Therrell, Secretary.-Treasurer. Others on the committee were John F. Plant, C. L. Tubb, I. B. McFarland, Kirby Lann, George I. Leftwich, and W. M. Paine.

On December 15, 1912, Rev. Isaac D. Borders preached the first sermon in the new Church. As he expressed it in a letter, "I felt quite honored that it should fall my lot to be the first to sound the gospel note within the new walls. We had a splendid congregation, having to throw open the partition separating the main auditorium and the Sunday School room. The people were good enough to be almost lavish in their expression of appreciation of my efforts and we certainly made an auspicious beginning.

Mrs. Shell says a band of young ladies was organized called the Dorcas Band to help make money for the present church. Mrs. Shell made a remark at the time that some didn't appreciate. "This name was a misnomer, because Dorcas sewed for the poor and her record was clear, but we didn't do any sewing for the poor, we made money to buy pews and stained glass windows. The Lord might have helped us but we were too busy to ask him to." They made money by frying and selling oysters, holding bazaars, and the like, subscribing \$3,000. for the new church. In old letters and local accounts one reads of their many activities in behalf of the church.

During 1914-1918, the years of World War I, from the Church went the following: A. T. Akin, Clarence Bradley, Dudley Crawford, Phillip Elixon, Harry Easter, James P. Hill, Felix Lann, Sr, P. W. Lusk, Jr., Charles Smith.

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Christ ascending into heaven _ one of Louis Tiffany's finest creations.

It was in this fourth, and present, church building that the Tiffany stained glass windows were installed.

As one visitor expressed it, "One of Mississippi's real art treasure goes almost unnoticed in this once-booming cotton town, appreciated mostly by the members of First United Methodist Church who see it every Sunday." The "Treasure" is a series of stained glass murals designed and made master American glass craftsman Louis Tiffany. The windows were installed in the church's structure when it was built in 1912, and then virtually forgotten until 1968 when a Minnesota firm identified them as originals valued at more than \$150,000.

The magnificent windows, which almost over power the Gothic interior of the church, vary from subdued, cathedral-like tones to gold and blue radiance in bright sunlight. Three Biblical events dominate the windows - the birth of Christ, Jesus with Mary and Martha, and Christ's ascension - and have been described by one craftsman as 'among the most beautiful and life-like Biblical scenes ever created.'

Why the windows, and their heritage, when unrecognized for so long remains a

mystery. Miss Lucille Peacock, resident Aberdeen historian and curator of Evans Memorial Library, said, "People just forgot the windows were Tiffany originals. The real reason may lie in the decline of popularity of Tiffany art after 1915, just three years after the windows were installed.

The artist, correctly associated with Tiffany and Company in New York, was in his hey-day in the period of 1891-1915. His ornate windows, lamps, chandeliers, and other decorative glass were fixtures in thousands of wealthy homes and churches in the latter years of the Victorian era.

Even as early as 1928, Aberdeen residents seemed unaware of the value of the windows. A church directory published that year took note of the sound construction of the sanctuary, a new pipe organ and other fixtures, but made no mention of the windows.

It was in 1968, when renewed interest in original Tiffany art and expensive reproductions first began sweeping the country, that a representative of Hauser Glass Co. in Minnesota was in Aberdeen and immediately marked the murals as masterworks. An inspection by the Minnesota art glass firm revealed that the large murals, and other stained glass throughout the church, were the work of Louis Tiffany, world famous craftsman and decorator. Two of the murals are entirely Tiffany, and the one facing the east in the sanctuary was originally Tiffany, but has a few damaged sections replaced with another kind of glass.

Coincidentally, the discovery of the windows came with a planned restoration of the church. The members, finally alerted to the value of their unappreciated art, immediately installed protective glass on the outside.

Now completed, the church's main sanctuary has a tall, graceful ceiling and pews placed in a symmetrical, circular fashion, denoting the Akron architectural plan of the Tiffany period. In a letter Rev. I. D. Borders, who had preached the first sermon in the present sanctuary on December 15, 1912, wrote, "In February [1913] the electric fixtures were installed. They were 'very handsome' having been built to order in Chicago. The main *electrolier* in the center of the auditorium cost about \$250." He also described the organ which was installed in January of 1913: "We have at last gotten the fine old organ installed and I have just been over to the church listening to its being tested. It is very sweet toned and has splendid volume. It was built in 1872."

The Rev. C. B. Burt, pastor at the time of the "discovery" said, "The discovery of these windows has made us realize what a priceless gift our forefathers left us.' Since that time occasional visitors who find out about the windows stop to view the increasingly rare specimens of Americana.

In 1927 a new organ was dedicated. In 1948 the church building was completely renovated at the cost of \$25,000. The next plan included a Sunday School annex and in March 12, 1955 the local newspaper carried this account: "The First Methodist Church in Aberdeen has signed the contract along with Lee Watson and Son, Contractors. An additional contract for \$10,000 was to air condition the new building and the sanctuary in the old building. A reception which followed the ground breaking will honor Rev. S. E. Ashmore who is completing his sixth year as Superintendent of the Methodist Aberdeen District.

The women of the church were ever busy from earliest days. The diligent Dorcas Band was an organization that subscribed \$3,000 for church building four. The Ladies Aid Society helped build the parsonage between 1880 and 1886. In 1900, Mrs. S. J. Dalton became president of the foreign missionary society. Mrs. Foote organized the Home Mission Society and was its only president. The Women's Society of Christian Service and the Wesleyan Service Guild were active organizations in their day, so were the Youth Fellowship groups.

During World War II ninety-three men of the church were in the armed services. Five were killed in action: Frazier Furr, Floy Pullen, William H. Strawbridge, Harold W. Murff, Eugene A. Murff.

A tribute we pay to all the early pioneers, laymen and preachers responsible for the origin and growth of the Aberdeen Methodist Church. In 1957, when redecoration of the church building had just been completed, the church was in preparation for once again entertaining the North Mississippi Conference in June. On hand to welcome our many visitors will be our pastor, Rev. Clinton T. Howell, District Superintendent W. M. Jones and the Board of Stewards for 1957-58 consisting of Sam Wilhite, Chairman; John Dean Fitzpatrick, Vice Chairman; James Box, Secretary; G. R. Comer, Frank B. Maier, Jr., Quinn E. Mattox, A. A. Preston, Jr., T. A. Richardson, Amos Rye, Alfred E. Spence, Hilton West, W. F. Cresswell, Jr., J. M. Ray, H. B. Harris, James H. Box, George H. Crawford, Jr., Q. F. Mattox, Walter Lann, Jr., H. W. Maier, Robert Hudson, John Dean Fitzpatrick, Jake Turnage, Bobby Smith, Norman Moore, Julian Evans, Walter Darracott, Sam Wilhite. The Trustees are: Walter Darracott, D. W. Houston, Jr., J. T. Durrett, R. D. Smith, Floyd Bradley, F. W. Whitaker, T. A. Richardson, J. E. McDuffie, Wes Lubke. The Church Secretary is Mrs. R. M. Boyd.

Other officers are: Church School Superintendents: Floyd Bradley and C. C. Clark; Secretary, J. D. Hussey; Q. E. Mattox, teacher of the Mrs. T. B. Sykes Class; Mrs. R. A. Pullen, teacher of the Fidelis Bible Class; teacher young adult class, Page Box; Supt. Young Peoples Department, Mrs. Hal Heard; Teachers, Mrs. Horace Howell, J. B. Tidwell; Supt. Junior Department: Bobby Smith, teachers; Mrs. Norman Moore, Mrs. Jack Mann, Miss Lucille Peacock; Supt. Primary Department, Mrs. F. K. Furr, teachers, Mrs. Charles Neal, Mrs. Charles Rhea, Miss Patsy Mann, Supt. Kinderg arten Department, Miss Charlene Lawrence, teachers, Mrs. Tom Burkheimer, Mrs. Floyd Bradley, Supt. Nursery Department, Mrs. C. C. Clark, teachers Mrs. James Box. President of youth Fellowship is Eugene Maier and President of Junior Fellowship is Diane Cresswell. The president of the W. S. C. is Mrs. Frances Craig and of Wesleyan Service Guild is Mrs. Hal Heard.

A hearty welcome awaits each visitor. To quote from our 1957 church bulletin:

Enter this door as if the floors within are gold;
And every wall of jewels all of wealth untold;
As if a choir in robes of fire were singing here;
Nor shout, nor rush, but hush--for God is near!"

In honoring our historic leaders we remember the old saying--"Great people are ordinary people with extra-ordinary amounts of determination. " They built our church buildings and its organization and did it successfully and wonderfully!