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History of Macedonia United Methodist Church

Macedonia United Methodist Church, Mullins

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HISTORY OF MACEDONIA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH Revised and Updated

History, which is events of the past, often holds very little significance for many of us. When, however, it deals with that group of men and women whose names are familiar to us, who first met together to build Macedonia Church, history has a real meaning, particularly when we think of the hope, faith, vision and love of those early pioneers. They, who had the courage and foresight to start a church which has not only deepened the spiritual life of our own people, but has been the means of carrying the gospel to other lands less fortunate than we. As Macedonians, we should be proud for our church has the honor of being one of the oldest churches in Marion County and was the first church built within the corporate limits of Mullins.

Macedonia had its early beginnings in 1786. It was known as "Smith's Meeting House" and was built on Morgan Swamp just below the present site of Center Church, off of Highway #76 between Mullins and Nichols. The first building was erected in 1786 under the leadership of Hope Hull and Jeremiah Mastin, who were the first ministers to serve the Pee Dee Circuit.

The Pee Dee Circuit was formed at the Conference of 1786 in North Carolina. To take charge of this immense territory and two hundred ninety-five members, there was appointed for the year 1786, Jeremiah Mastin and Hope Hull. Under their ministry the Pee Dee was swept by a mighty revival, and after giving due credit for the little accomplished before their coming, Mastin and Hull may very justly be regarded as the Apostles of Pee Dee Methodism. It is probable that Methodism of this section owes more to these two men than any others who have labored here. Their labors during the year 1786 resulted in an ingathering of 600 members and the erection of 22 meeting houses.

The first building was 16x20 feet and was built of unbarked pine poles. It had pole seats, pegs for legs and a dirt floor. Boards held by wood pins formed the cover. The pulpit was built as high as a man's chest, according to the custom of that day. The famous Bishop Francis Asbury visited this church February 18, 1787 when he stopped to eat with Moses Smith, for whom the church was named. Hardee Lewis, John McLean, David Newton and G. W. Hart were helpers in this work.

This small building served as a place of worship for the people of this community until 1820 when a new building was erected in front of the road leading across Little Pee Dee River at New Bridge on the west side of the road from Gilchrist's Bridge to Miller's Church. The second church was named "Macedonia," the beloved name our church still bears. The building was a double-pin log house 20x35 feet with slab-pole

seats, pegs for legs and a slab floor. The "Amen" seats were built of sawed and dressed lumber with backs, and placed in the corner of the church facing the pulpit.

The men in charge of the new Macedonia were James D. Smith (son of Moses Smith), George W. Hart, Dr. Daniel Gilchrist, John McLean, Solomon Huggins and others.

Between 1850 and 1854 a new frame building was erected a few hundred yards below the old church. Graves still mark the spot. Here the congregation worshipped until 1872 when the building was torn down, brought to Mullins, rebuilt and used as a school.

According to the minutes in the 1866 Quarterly Conference, Macedonia was assessed \$40.00 for the year. Quoting from the minutes of 1870 on the general state of the church: "Since entering upon the work, we have labored to the best of our ability to improve the spiritual conditions of our church, which is admitted by all and deplored by many, to be a very unhealthy condition, growing out of the following evils in our midst. (1) General coldness and indifference on the part of many of the membership of the church. (2) An unwarrantable use of strong drink. (3) A great disposition on the part of many of the young members to engage in the populous amusements of the day. In our efforts to correct these evils, it is but right to say that the pastor had the hearty cooperation of many faithful brethren and some success so far has been very gratifying. Signed: J. W. Kelly, Pastor." Are the problems of today too different from those of 1860? The minutes report that in cold weather the Sunday Schools went into what was called "Winter Quarters" - meaning no Sunday School.

In 1872 a new two-story building 40x60 feet was built in cooperation with the Masons. The lot (the present site of our church) was given by Dr. Rudolph Vampill. After the building was constructed, the Masons occupied the top story and the church, the lower floor. Women and girls in this early church sat together on the north side of the church and the men and boys sat on the opposite side. The Rev. W. W. Jones was pastor.

Just to give you a glimpse into the past, I want to quote again from the minutes and show how the stewards in 1870 estimated their assessments or expenses for the year:

"100 bu. corn @ \$1.50 per bu.	\$150.00
2,000 lbs. fodder @ \$1.50 per hund.	30.00
4 barrels flour @ \$10.00 a barrel	40.00
1500 lbs. bacon @ .12 1/2 a lb.	187.50
200 lbs. lard @ .15 a lb.	30.00
200 lbs. sugar @ .15 a lb.	30.00
30 lbs. coffee @ .25 a lb.	7.50
10 gallons syrup @ .75 a gal.	7.50

1 sack salt @ \$2.25 a sack 2.25
 80 lbs. soap @ .09 a lb. 7.20
 1/2 box candles @ \$4.00 2.00
 4 gallons kerosene @ .50 a gal. 2.00
 8 cords wood @ \$1.25 a cord 10.00

 TOTAL NECESSARY EXPENSES \$55.95 ~~55.95~~ 505.75

Twenty-six women met with the Rev. S. J. Hill on July 4, 1878 and organized the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society which was the beginning of our Women's Society of Christian Service with Mrs. N. C. McDuffie as the first president.

Mullins had a population of 262 in 1890 and Mr. W. W. Sellers in his History of Marion County had this to say concerning Mullins: "In one respect, Mullins has outstripped all other towns in the county, Marion not excepted, and that is in establishing and keeping her Sunday Schools, in both her churches. (Baptists had built a church.) They were living, moving institutions years ago, and the interest in them does not seem to abate, either in attendance or in mastering the lessons. No other public Sunday meeting, however important, is allowed to side-track their Sunday Schools. It has been so for years - the interest in them does not seem to abate in the least. The moral influences at Mullins, which are good, may be attributed in great part to these Sunday Schools, which have been in existence for a generation, and it tells upon the town and surrounding country."

When Macedonia hosted a Homecoming in 1955, it was thought to be the first, but I found that in 1880 a similar gathering was held in Mullins for the entire district. Notice the good advice given by the pastors: "We are pleased to report that during the quarter we have 11 Sunday Schools. For the most part these schools have been well officered and well conducted. Live officers and teachers make live Sunday Schools. When a teacher ceases to study and learn, he(he) ceases to teach - the class wanes and dies. If the teacher has nothing new, nothing fresh and tells nothing more than the students already know, they will seek entertainment elsewhere. Signed: S. J. Hill, Pastor."

I now quote from a letter written by Uncle Noah W. Cooper of Nashville, Tennessee to Rev. Julius Clark:

"I joined the Methodist Church in Mullins in 1881 and have been a regular church attendant ever since. Old Macedonia is full of sweet memories for me. My father, mother and all of their children were members there. My father, Noah Bryant Cooper, was superintendent of Sunday School for many years. I often call to mind the saints who gathered there in years gone by to sing God's praises; intensify their fellowship; and to renew their vows to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with their God. There were Stephen Smith, Gause Smith, Elmore Smith, John

Smith, George Rogers, Chalmers Rogers, Roy Rogers, Bob Rogers, James Norton, Fannie McDuffie, A. E. Gilchrist, Johnce Gilchrist, Mack Martin, Val Martin, 'Big' Neil McMillan, Ben Carmichael, Dr. C. T. Ford, Dr. William Harrell, Ben Ellis, Evander Edwards, Major Byrd, Melvin Edwards, J. C. Teasley, William Hardwick and many others. Mr. W. A. Hardwick and his family were regular Sunday School and church attendants: for 26 years Mr. Hardwick never missed a Sunday."

According to the Marion Star, May 20, 1896, Mullins Methodists had Sunday School picnics:

"Mullins Methodist Sunday School Picnic"
(Account taken from Marion Star, May 20, 1896)

As the heading indicates, the Mullins Sunday School, on Friday last, had a most delightful picnic at Smith's Mill.

This Sunday School has over 200 scholars on the roll, with a corp of earnest teachers, and for its Superintendent that whole-soul Christian gentleman, Mr. B. G. Smith.

This Sunday School has the best record for the greatest number of scholars, according to population, of any Sunday School in the County. Taken as a whole, this Sunday School is the banner Sunday School of the County.

At this delightful picnic over 300 children, parents and invited guests were entertained in the way that only those good Mullins people know how to entertain, and make everyone enjoy themselves and feel that it was good to be there.

Such a feast of good things that the tables groaned with their burdens of the fat of the land--turkeys, chickens, hams without number, cakes, pies of all descriptions, with coffee, lemonade, ice cream and strawberries, all in abundance; and best of all, it was according to Methodist doctrine, "free to all", and still the invitation was "let whomsoever will come" and eat.

Yes, these good people around Mullins are of the best, yes, the very "salt of the earth." I would like to particularize some of those people by name, but that would not do, for without exception they did their best to make everyone present happy.

The children--God bless them--they had a big time, boatriiding, fishing, swimming, and the young ladies and gentlemen enjoyed themselves just like wife and I used to do on such occasions, making love to each other; and the older folks enjoyed seeing the children and young folks enjoy themselves, and remembered way back "When you and I were young, Maggie."

I attended many Sunday School picnics at Huggins' Landing. The women filled trunks with all sorts of good things - the food was delicious but the high-light of the day was the lemonade Uncle Giles Hayes (custodian for many years) made in large wooden tubs. Until this day, I have never tasted any to equal it. He never let it run out. Those were great days and Sunday School and Church attendance were high.

Mrs. Sam Wightman, Crouch and Mrs. J. R. Williams (Aunt Janie) as young ladies, hitched John Wesley to a wagon and drove the first load of lumber for our present church in 1901. When Mr. Vance Martin was asked if John Wesley was a mule, he was indignant. He replied, "Of course not! No mule ever had such a high class name. John Wesley was the prettiest horse you ever saw."

In the diary of Rev. Simeon Campbell was found this notation: "The Methodist Church at Mullins was begun the first week in November, 1901. The first service was held in it Sunday, June 8, 1902 when the pastor, Rev. A. B. Watson, preached the sermon." Our present church building stands as a monument to his untiring labors and that of his cooperative congregation.

The bell in Macedonia which calls us to worship was given by Dr. John Bethea, grandfather of Mrs. Emily Bethea Townes. It was quite a coincidence that when the bell rang for the first time, it tolled the death of Dr. Bethea's grand-daughter, Mary Bethea, who died May 4, 1902.

The first two people to join Macedonia in its present site were Mr. Willie Merritt and his sister, Mrs. Mary Merritt Yarboro. Both served the church faithfully for many years.

The first couple married in the new Macedonia by Rev. A. B. Watson were Mr. John Slaughter and Miss May Smith who were married September 10, 1902. Some of their children and grandchildren are members of Macedonia.

Macedonia hosted a "Golden Anniversary Luncheon" on October, 1988 for all who have been members for fifty years. Mrs. Madge Edwards Kirby was the oldest member present and made the following comments:

"I joined Macedonia Methodist Church in 1904. The minister that year was T. C. O'Dell. I attended services here long before joining the church. I went with my father, Melvin Edwards, holding my hand, as I was so young. A. B. Watson was our preacher. Back then services were held in the Masonic two-story building. It stood in an oak grove located where the present church now stands. The Masons met upstairs. Sunday school and preaching were held on the first floor. Hitching posts were in the oak grove church yard for the horses to be tied to during services. And a watering trough was nearby. I remember Preacher Watson had a horse named "John Wesley." An interesting memory of the furnishings in the new church were individual wooden chairs where the seat would fold up and each chair had a wire holder underneath to hold a man's hat during the service. One Sunday morning my daddy hitched up his favorite horse to the one-seated buggy. Our neighbor was waiting for a ride. When he got in the

buggy he sat on my brand-new, sky-blue taffeta sash. And I wanted to cry! The church picnic, Oh what a glorious time. The women of the church not only carried picnic baskets, they also carried wooden trunks packed full of food. The picnic was held at Huggins Landing on the Pee Dee River. Set up under the shade of the trees were large wooden tubs of delicious ice-cold lemonade. My husband, Joe Kirby, was asked to meet the train and greet the new pastor. He watched all the pastors getting off the train and no one looked like a Methodist preacher. So he walked over to this young man who was the last off. He was dressed in hunting clothes, was carrying a gun over his shoulder, and was standing beside a beautiful hunting dog. Surely not a preacher! But, yes, it was Sam O. Cantey, the new preacher. And it was indeed quail season. Back then in the early days, preachers were not paid a very big salary, but they were given plenty of fried chicken! I was married in this beautiful church October 14, 1916 - 72 years ago. All of my life this church and its members have meant so much to me. Before my recent illness, I never missed a Sunday going to church. I have heard all 26 ministers preach. God has blessed this church by sending Betty and Leon Newton to us. I have enjoyed sharing my church memories with you. Now take time to build your own memories and may God bless you all.

"Miss Madge" Edwards Kirby
October 23, 1988

The Rev. T. C. O'Dell made the following observation concerning Mullins. Up to 1875 the town had no church nor Sunday School but three barrooms. In 1905 it had three white and four black churches with Sunday School in each and NO barrooms.

Macedonia in its early stages was in some degree more fortunate than we, in that it had three capable organists - Mrs. Florence Smith North, Mrs. Frosty Cooper Edwards (my mother), and Mrs. Florrie Owen Martin in whose memory our first set of Deagan chimes was given by her husband, Mr. L. Vance Martin and children.

While Dr. W. C. Kirkland was pastor Macedonia underwent a very helpful and substantial remodeling. The exterior stands today as it was remodeled in 1913.

The Rev. T. C. O'Dell was pastor in 1903 when a parsonage was built and was used as such until 1927 when the present parsonage was built at a cost of \$8,000.00. The Rev. J. Harvey Danner was pastor. The old parsonage was then used as a Sunday School building. The Sunday School in 1927 was manned by 54 officers and teachers, the great majority of whom had taken numerous courses in training schools. It was reported that no school in the conference could boast of a stronger corps of officers and teachers. The enrollment was approximately 600. For many years Macedonia Sunday School was the largest within Marion District both as to enrollment and average attendance.

Mr. Herbert Hucks was superintendent, a position he held for eleven years.

Delegates and ministers to the South Carolina Conference met in Mullins, November 12-16, 1930 for the 145th Annual Session. Members of Macedonia, First Baptist, Episcopal and Presbyterian Churches graciously offered their homes. All were eager to extend a hearty welcome to those attending.

As Conference hosts, the Rev. D. A. Phillips, pastor, and the Rev. G. E. Edwards, presiding elder of Marion District, contributed the success of the Conference to the cooperation and generosity of all the folks of Mullins.

The present educational building replaced the old parsonage in 1950. Credit should be given to the Planning and Building Committees who gave so willingly and unselfishly of their time, money, and effort.

Planning Committee: Carlisle Dixon, Mrs. Lois Neal Anderson, Mrs. Pearsall P. Johnson and Mrs. Howard B. Smith.

Building Committee: Pearsall P. Johnson, Ernest L. Anderson, Franklin B. Cooper, J. L. Dew, W. B. Schoolfield, Mrs. R. E. Lipscomb and Mrs. Howard B. Smith.

In March, 1954, while the Rev. Julius E. Clark was pastor, Macedonia members decided to remodel the interior of the Sanctuary. Church services were held in the Hut classroom of the Educational Building and not until August 15, 1954, did services return to the Sanctuary. It is not possible to describe the change, but we have one of the most beautiful churches in the state. The organ was rebuilt and a new Moller console installed a few months later.

The following committee was commended for the wonderful job they did: Franklin B. Cooper, Mrs. R. E. Lipscomb, Mr. W. D. Jenerette, Carlisle Dixon, Ernest L. Anderson, Pearsall P. Johnson, Pearsall L. Rogers, and Mrs. W. B. Schoolfield.

Many gifts were given to Macedonia following the renovation. These have been listed separately. All have added to the beauty of Macedonia.

What a gift God sent us in October, 1976 when Pat Foil began work as Macedonia's first Director of Creative Ministries.

In 1979, Christ Chapel (the Episcopal Church) was sold to Macedonia for \$1.00. The building was moved from South Main Street (across from Mullins Hospital) to the church property known as "the Jenerette House." A heat pump was installed and shrubbery planted. Christ Chapel is beautiful and is used for

small church services and weddings.

The RIP's (Retired Important Persons) was organized in 1980 and is active, meeting once a month.

The Tape Ministry, under Mr. Joe D. Rogers, began in 1980 and is going strong. Shut-ins really enjoy this church ministry.

In December, 1979, a new set of chimes were dedicated to the Glory of God, in memory of Col. Charles T. Holland and in honor of Frances E. Rogers, organist, by Mrs. Ruth E. Anderson.

Macedonia purchased its first van in 1980.

The Day Care Center began in 1981 with 28 full-time children plus several drop-in children.

Macedonia was highly honored in 1982 when our own Gary Creighton chose Macedonia for his Ordination Service. The impressive service was held Sunday, August 15, 1982 with Bishop Roy Clark presiding.

The church parking lot was paved in 1983 at a cost of \$11,000.00.

The Church Directory with pictures was published in 1983 with 166 families responding. (The Rev. Taylor Campbell, pastor.)

The United Methodist Men organized in 1984. They are most active in our church and in 1986 they began a Prayer Line which is continuing to help those in need. Some faithful members man it each Saturday morning.

The Meggs property across the street from Macedonia was purchased by Mrs. Ruth E. Anderson and was given to the church in memory of her late husband, Ernest L. Anderson. At present, it is used as a parking lot.

In 1985 the parsonage was renovated and new furniture purchased at a cost of \$25,000.00.

An A-frame type roof was put on the Educational Building at a cost of \$24,000.00.

The Turbeville property adjoining Christ Chapel was purchased for \$25,000.00.

A financial crusade for a much needed building program was conducted in 1988, under the leadership of the Rev. Leon Newton, with \$416,000.00 being pledged for a three-year period.

Sunday, September 17, 1989 was a special day in the life of our church. The new United Methodist Hymnals (400) were dedicated to the glory of God and in loving memory of Mrs. Bonnie Hooks. They were given by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Bethea.

On October 8, 1989, Macedonia Church Conference gave final approval for the building program to proceed.

* Macedonia is a great church and can do great things if we all work together, pull together and pray together for greater things in the future, forgetting self-praise and doing all that we can to the honor and glory of God.

Frances E. Rogers
~~October 10, 1989~~
March 16, 1990

POSTSCRIPT:

In revising and updating the history, I wish to give credit to Herbert Hucks, Jr., curator for the Historical Society of the South Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church Archives, Wofford College, Spartanburg, S. C. for giving me much of the material. The dates given are from the official records.

Herbert was a member of Macedonia for many years and returns frequently to visit. I thank my dear friend for helping me in this gigantic but interesting task.