

## Churches pt. 7 (M-N)

November 23, 2018

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W. H. AKINS

● BUILDING CONTRACTOR ●

225 WEST 44TH STREET

PHONE 2-1994

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

Dedicated to the Memory and honor of the Officers and members  
of Middleground Primitive Baptist Church,  
organized March 12th 1897.

Pastor Elder D.R. Mcelveen  
Clerk W.A. Groover  
Deacons Charley Akins  
Members

James E. Rushing

Maggie Akins  
Mike Bland  
Ann Bland  
James Bunce  
Elias Mcelveen  
Ann Mcelveen  
Maggie Mcelveen  
John Warnock

Those are the Charter Members when this Church was organized;

Dear sister Alice Coleman,  
I heard that some of the members had said something about installing  
A Plack in memory of your father and mine, as the first Deacons,  
so I have studied this matter carefully and feel like that to do  
justice and honor it would be to all charter members,

so I will say I am heartily in favor of the above suggestion,  
and by so doing you could honor all alike,  
if this would meet the approval of the church I will contribute  
to same.

I got this list out of the big red book of the Banner Herald  
and took it to A Company here and hope to have a price by  
time to have your next conference so you will have something to go by.

if this meets your approval you may write me and I will try to  
be with you all next conference.

this wording could be changed to more proper ones probaly  
I only did this to get this in shape for a price  
and something to work from or too,

I am sure this will be very insteering to many of the members.

Cordially yours  
in Christian Love,

W.H.Akins

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HISTORY OF MIDDLEGROUND PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

Seventy-five years ago, in 1897, Middleground church was constituted. Some few years before a man, Daniel R. McElveen, a member of Lanes Primitive Baptist church was ordained to the office of deacon. Shortly after his ordination he became restless and began visiting different churches. He could not feel at ease just visiting and soon realized that the Lord had called him into the ministry.

The burden of service lay heavily upon him. He prayed long and earnestly that the Lord would show him a place where he could serve Him. After this he believed that the Lord had shown him a church facing the east at a place where two roads crossed. He began looking and when he came upon the place where the church now stands, he felt that he had found the spot the Lord had shown him.

It was here in 1891 under a Brush Arbor that the first service was held. Brother McElveen placed his Bible on an oak tree stump and began looking for a text. As he watched the wagons filled with people arriving, his mind went to the forty-fifth chapter of Genesis, twenty-eighth verse, "It is enough". His cup was filled with the Gospel that day.

There are no records to show how often services might have been held under that Brush Arbor during the next six years, but on March 12, 1897 Middleground Primitive Baptist church was constituted with the following charter members; Elder Daniel R. McElveen, Maggie Warnock McElveen, Charley Akins, Maggie Williams Akins, Mikell Bland, Annie Rigdon Bland, James A. Bunce, Georgia McElveen Bunce, William A. Groover, Elias McElveen, Ann Rushing McElveen and John Warnock, 12 charter members.

The deacons were Brother James B. Rushing and Brother Charley Akins. Brother William A. Groover was the church clerk.

*Middleground Primitive  
Baptist*

# MIDDLEGROUND PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

1897 - 1997

*CHURCHES*



**A Brief and Modest History of Dedicated  
Service**

**To God be the glory for great things He  
hath done!**

*Bullock Co.*

**MIDDLEGROUND**  
PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH  
& SOVEREIGN GRACE  
**SERVICES**  
2ND SAT. SATURDAY 7:30-9:30 AM  
2ND SUNDAY 11:00 A.M.



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# HISTORY OF MT. PISGAH A.M.E. CHURCH PORTAL, GEORGIA

The old church was built on or around 1881 in Old Portal, Georgia, a few miles from the present Portal, Georgia. The church remained in Old Portal until the church moved to New Portal in the year of 1915.

## STATE OF GEORGIA—BULLOCH COUNTY

The indenture, made the 27th day of October in the year of our Lord, Nineteen Hundred and Fifteen between Georgia Realty Company, a corporation of the County of Bulloch and State of Georgia, at the first part, and J. P. Lester, Bob Lester, Nathan Bracewell, G. M. Mack, Arron Mahoney, S. P. ~~Burke~~ and S. C. McMilian, as trustees of Mt. Pisgah African Methodist Episcopal Church located at Portal, Georgia, of the County of Bulloch and State of Georgia, of the second part:

Witnesseth: That the said party of the first part, for and in consideration of the sum of Fifty and no/100 dollars in hand paid at and before the sealing and delivering of these presents, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, hath granted, bargained, sold, aliened, conveyed and confirmed and by these presents doth grant, bargain, sell, alien, convey and confirm unto the said parties of the second part, their successors and assigns, all the following described property, to wit:

That certain, lot of land, lying and being in the town of Portal, Bulloch County, Georgia, known and designated upon the plat of said town (recorded in the office of the Clerk of Bulloch Superior Court) as lots number 288 and 289, each lot fronting on North Fourth Street a distance—Deed Book # 45 page 523-524.

Former pastors—The Rev. Gray, 1886-1888; The Rev. Smalls, 1888-89; The Rev. Anderson, 1889-90; The Rev. J. M. Stephen, 1890-91; The Rev. John Dorsey, 1891-93; The Rev. H. M. Crittendon, 1893-98; The Rev. E. D. Thomas' unexpired term; The Rev. B. J. Powell, 1900-1902; The Rev. J. L. Cole, 1902-03; The Rev. Calvin Johnson, 1903-06; The Rev. S. E. Cruse, 1906-11; Rev. J. G. Butler, 1911-12; The Rev. J. F. Durhart, 1912-13; The Rev. J. H. Jenkins, 1913-18; The Rev. D. W. Stephen, 1918-27; The Rev. Scott Scrutching, 1930-31; The Rev. N. C. Welch, 1931-32; The Rev. C. H. Demmings, 1932-34; The Rev. B. B. Swinson, 1934-36; The Rev. S. W. Grant, 1936-38; The Rev. J. W. White, 1938-42; The Rev. A. J. Martin, 1938-46; The Rev. R. D. Pearce, 1946-48; The Rev. L. W. Lane, 1948-59; The Rev. C. M. Huff, 1959-61; The Rev. Isaac McCormick, 1961-1981; The Rev. William Eason, 1981-.

Some of former Stewards— Sam Shields, Gabreal Mack, Jeff Spells, Tom Battle, Rich Denum, Fred Lester.

Present Active Stewards and Trustees: Tommie Burroughs, James Borroughs, and Jerry Spells.

# Deed

State of Georgia  
Bulloch County

This indenture made this first day of June in the year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Sixty-nine, between John W. Kearney of the County and State aforesaid of the one part, and George Wilson, Meyer Eason, Silas Knight, as Trustees of the other part.

Witnesseth, that the said John W. Kearney hath given, granted and conveyed unto the said Trustees, George Wilson, Meyer Eason and Silas Knight, Two Acres of land, situate, lying and being in the County and State aforesaid, bounded on the North by Arthur Kirby and on the South by J. W. Kearney, also on the East and West by J. W. Kearney. To have and to hold said tract of land unto the said Trustees and their successors in office, forever, in trust, that they shall erect or cause to be built thereon a house or place of Worship for the use of the members of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, according to the rules and discipline of said Church at their General Conference in the United States of America, and in further trust and confidence that they shall at all times forever hereafter permit such Ministers and Preachers belonging to said Church as shall from time to time be duly authorized by the General Conference of the Ministers and Preachers of the said African Methodist Episcopal Church or by Annual Conference authorized by the said conferences to preach and expound God's Holy Word therein, and in further trust and confidence that as often as any one or more trustees, hereinbefore mentioned shall die or cease to be a member or members of said Church according to the rules and discipline aforesaid, then and in such case it shall be the duty of the Stationed Minister or Preacher (authorized as aforesaid) who shall have the pastoral charge of the members of said Church to call a meeting of the male members of said church for the election of all the board or a part according to Law as soon as conveniently may be and when so met the said members or Preacher shall proceed to nominate one or more persons to fill the place or places of him or them whose office or offices has or have been vacated as aforesaid. And the said J. W. Kearney doth by these presents warrant and forever defend all and singular the above mentioned and described lot as a piece of land, unto them, the said Trustees and their successors herein and appointed as aforesaid from the claim or claims of him, the said J. W. Kearney, his heirs and assigns, and from the claim or claims of all other persons whatever,

In testimony whereof the said John W. Kearney has hereunto set his hand and Seal the day and year aforesaid.  
Sealed and delivered in  
presence of

John W. Kearney

J. M. Kearney  
his  
Geo. x Wilson  
mark  
George Christburg  
State of Georgia  
Bulloch County

Personally came before me J. M. Kearney who being duly sworn, deposeth and saith that he saw John W. Kearney sign and seal and deliver the within deed for the purposes therein mentioned and that deponent subscribed the same as witness and saw Geo. Wilson and George Christburg do so likewise.

Sworn to and subscribed before  
me this November 10th, 1871

J. W. Kearney N. P.  
Ex-Off. J. P. B. C.

Recorded March 21st, 1872  
R. F. Saunders, Clerk

(This deed is without seal and the affidavit is without deponent's signature.

R. F. Saunders, Clerk)

*June 1869*

The Mt. Zion A. M. E. Church was organized March 21, 1872 by a few faithful christians who were devoted to God and the principles of righteousness. These few God fearing people, living in this unsettled wooded area of Bulloch County were devout in their christian beliefs. They believed in God, believed in the crucifixion and the resurrection, and believed in the communion of saints and the redemption of man through christian benevolence. With this belief, these pioneers worked continuously seeking a way to serve. They learned early they needed a leader, so they sought a man of God. Here they found Rev. G. W. Williams and were able to secure his services as their shepherd; thus Rev. Williams became the leader of these people and the first pastor of the church which was to be organized.

Rev. Williams took reins, and with the influence of Mr. and Mrs. F. Hagan, they got a ~~white~~ land-owner, Mr. Jake Kerney to open his heart and give them three acres of land for a church site. During those times people were very poor and were not able to build modern structures out of lumber; but they were determined to have a place for worship; so they got together and built a "Brush Harbor". Here, they began serving, giving praise to God in His highness. It is not known just how long they worshiped in this Brush Harbor, but it is known that while serving there that the membership grew rapidly. Notwithstanding the fact that during the ~~ninety-three~~ <sup>*93*</sup> ~~years~~ <sup>*years*</sup> that this church has been in operation, that death has had its toll, but today we still have enrolled one-hundred seventy (170) members.

As to the officers of this church during these ~~ninety-three~~ <sup>*93*</sup> ~~years~~ <sup>*years*</sup>, we are unable to name all of them because the record got destroyed. Through the memory of some of our present officers we are able to call the names of most of the officers from the year 1922. Those names that are not called, we prayerfully beg you to understand .

*June 1872*  
*107*

We, the Church of Christ at Nevils Creek was constituted the 17th of May 1790 by Alexander Scotte and other helps.

We whose names are under written have been baptized upon profession of our faith in Christ and believing it to be our duty to walk in all the ordinances of the gospel do declare our belief of all the doctrines of the old and new testaments preferring the explanations of them by the Author of the Baptist Confession of faith and such as agree with them to any that we see and we very sensible that our conduct and conversation both in the Church and in the world ought to correspond with this sublime and holy System of Divine truth.

To exercise a conscience void of offense towards God and man live soberly, rightiously and piously in this world Indeavouring by all lawfull means to promote the peace and welfare of Sosciaty in general.

As to our Regards to Each other, in our Church communion we feel ourselves bound to walk with each other in all Humility and brotherly love to watch over each others conduct to stir up one another to love and good works not forgetting the assembling of ourselves together as we have opportunity to worship God according his will, and when cases require such m- - - - - that exort Rebuke and admonish -

in all conditions bearing with each one weaknesses and other imperfections. We deem it as absolutely necessary to our Peace Prosperity and the Honour of God to careful maintain a strict gospel discipline all our duties together with those that respect the most peaceful and charitable conduct towards all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and a zeal according to knowledge for the propagation of the gospel. We disire and Engage to Lerform according to our humble abilities through the gracious assistance of God While - both admire and adore the grace that has give us a name in his house so much better than that of Sons and Daughters.

In testimony of our unanimous consent to the afforsaid Doctrine Duties and Covenants we most Cheerfully Subscribe our Names

17 May 1790

(NOTE: the list of names is missing and all other records are missing for the next 20 years)

Following is the next record appearing on the old Minutes:

Met at Nevils Creek April 14th, 1810

Conference was opened and the affairs of the Church seen to and then proceeded to business. Br. Garret Williams Restored.

Secondly Er. Donaldson apointed to site Er. Fairclouth and his wife to the next Conference and So Concluded as Ushal -

Met at Nevils Creek May the 18th 1810

Conference was opened and the affairs of the Church seen to and then proceeded to business the Church thought it Necessary that Er. Lewis and Br. James be apointed to site Sister Sweet to the next Conference

Secondly Bro. Donaldson has obtained leave from the Church to. Exercise his gift in the pales of this Church and So Concluded as Ushal. -

Met at Nevils Creek June the 16th 1810

Conference opened and the affairs of the Church seen to and then proceeded to business the Case of Sister Swet was taken into Consideration and for her hard speeches and for Rediculeing of the brethren she was Cut of from the Church and then Concluded as Ushal.

## CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH

We, the Church of Christ, at Bennell Creek was constituted the 17th day of May, 1790 by Alexander Scott and other helps.

We whose names are underwritten, have been baptized upon profession of faith in Christ and believing it to be our duty to walk in all the ordinances of the gospel, do declare our belief of all the Doctrines of the Old and New Testaments, preferring the explanations of them by the Author of the Baptist Confession of Faith, and such as agree with them, to any that we see, and we are very sensible that our conduct and conversation both in the Church and in the world, ought to correspond with this sublime and holy system of Divine Truth.

1. To exercise a conscience void of offense towards God and man, should live soberly, righteously and piously in the world, endeavoring by all lawful means to love and promote the welfare of society in general.

2. As to our regard toward each other in our Church communion, we feel ourselves bound to walk with each other in all humility and brotherly love, to watch over each others conduct for good and not evil, to stir up one another to love and good works, not forgetting the assembling of ourselves together as we have the opportunity, to worship God according to His righteous will, and when cases require such means as suffering, to sympathize with each others weaknesses and other imperfections.

3. We view it as absolutely necessary to our peace and prosperity, and the Honor of God, to carefully maintain a strict Gospel Discipline, and all other duties together with those that respect the most peaceful and charitable conduct towards all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and have a zeal according to knowledge, for the propagation of the Gospel.

4. We desire and shall engage to perform according to the best of our humble ability, through the gracious assistance of God, will both admire and adorn the Grace that has given us a name in His House so much better than that of Sons and Daughters.

5. In testimony of our unanimous consent to the aforesaid Doctrines, Duties and Covenants, we most cheerfully subscribe our names:

A record of the males in year 1814:

(continuation on next page)

MEMBERSHIP NEVILS CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH. 1814. (Taken from Minutes. A copy in Statesboro Regional Library.)

Males 1814

1. John Stanford
2. Luke Meazels D
3. Frances Akins D
- ~~4. Robert Donaldson~~
5. Charles James
6. William Kerby Rest
7. John Flecton
8. William Perker Dis.
9. Joseph Lewis Dis.
10. Archibel Miller
11. Garret Williams Ex.
12. Dugal Graham
13. Patrick Dickey Dis
14. Eldred Fairclouth Ex
- ~~15. William Brannen Rest~~
16. David Hart Rest
17. Davis Hurley Ex
18. Benjamin Miller Dear
19. Barret Mical
20. John Millan
21. Phillip Griner Let
22. James Thomas Let
23. David Summerland
24. Jacob Tarver Let
25. Samuel Williams Dis
26. Linear Tom
27. Holloway Jim
28. Jessie Slater Ex
29. David Goodwin
- ~~30. Zecherich Cowart~~
31. Jesse Aycok Ex
32. George Chesion
33. Jesse Mizels
34. Henry Melton
35. Samuel Williams
36. Daniel Lester

Females 1814

1. Mary Ann Bonnell Dis.
2. Sarah Prigian Dis
3. Mary Hendrix
4. Milly Prigian
5. Susanna Meazels Ded
6. Sary Hendrix
7. Nancy Duglas Dis
8. Mary Mills Ded
9. Rachel Stanford
10. Martha Bowan
11. Sary Blunt
12. Mary Hendrix
13. Elizabeth Fleeton Ded
14. Milly Armstrong
15. Sary Parker Dis
16. Neomy Beazly
17. Elizabeth Lewis Dis
18. Rebecah Bonnell Dis
19. Elender Kirby
20. Pheriby Beazley
21. Sary Williams
22. Sary Slater
23. Flory Graham
24. Sary Dickey Dis
25. Unity Fairclouth
26. Elizabeth McDannel Ex
27. Swet Res
28. Sary Dun Dis
- ~~29. Elizabeth Brannen~~
30. Mary Akins
31. Hannah Jordan
32. Ann Hart
33. Ann Linear
34. Susanna Williams Ded
35. Clarisa Williams
36. Lydia Hurly Ex
37. Mary Miller Ded
38. Civel James by Let
39. Agness Edmison
40. Jamimah Miller
41. Pheby Matthews
42. Cravy by Let
43. McCalls Creecy
44. Sary McCalls Bapt
45. Mazy Holly Bapt
46. Seletee McCall
47. Mary Monk
- ~~48. Mary Donaldson~~
49. Faraba Hart
50. Jain Michel



Alexander Lott and other helps organized 17th day of March, 1790.

(Have part of this from newspaper clipping)

### Constitution

We whose names are underwritten have been baptised upon profession of our faith in Christ and believing it to be our duty to walk in all the ordinances of the gospel do declare our belief of all the Doctrines.....

To exercise a conscience void of offence toward God and man, live soberly, righteously and piously in this world, endeavoring by all the lawful means to preserve the dignity and welfare of Society in general. Christian regard to each other, in our church communion we feel ourselves bound to walk with each other in all humility and brotherly love, to watch over each other's conduct, to strengthen one another to love and good works, not forgetting the assembling of ourselves together as we have opportunity to worship God and His Divine Will....to carefully maintain a strict gospel discipline....

### Articles of Faith - Held By Baptists in General

(election - original sin - man incapable of free will - baptism by immersion -)

10. We believe that Man has a right to administer those ordinances only those who are regularly called to ordination by laying on of hands by Presbytery.

(predestination, electing grace, effectual calling, particular redemption, justification by faith)

(two sacraments - baptism and Lord's supper.)

Minutes in 1910 (Excerpts)

(Brother Stamford was pastor and Bro. Donaldson Clerk (?))

May 12, 1810...Secondly Bro. Donaldson has obtained leave from the Church to exercise his gift in the pews of this church and so concluded as usual. (Note: "to exercise his gift" probably meant to speak out in meeting - to preach (?))

Aug. 17, 1810 Bro. Stamford and Bro Donaldson chosen as delegates to the association in September next. Bro. Donaldson to write the letter....

Jan. 19, 1811 - Bro. and Sister Brannen came forward and was received by letter.... (Query: Did they come from Little Ogeechee?)

Aug. 14, 1812 - Bro. Stamford and Brother Donaldson chosen as delegates to Association. A Letter received from Lower Lotts Creek for helps - agreed that Bro. Stamford, Bro. Graham, Bro. Akins, and Bro. Donaldson be appointed to set with them in their conference.

Sept. 1814 - 53 members; record of males, 36 (including John Stamford, Robert Donaldson and Wm. Brannen. Females, 62 - includes Elizabeth Brannen and Mary Donaldson (many Sary's)

1815 - Margaret Donaldson (? Peggy ?) on roll.

Brothers Stamford and Donaldson still chosen as delegates

The blacks on the roll are referred to in this way; their master's name first and then their given name, such as Curby's Sukey, (who was cited for disorderly conduct).

1815. Brother Donaldson resigned as Clarke.

1817 - met at Lotts Creek.

1818: George McCalls Fany came forward and was received by experience.

Vol. 1  
Records - County

NEVILS



NEVIL'S CREEK  
BAPTIST CHURCH  
MINUTES  
1810 - 1852  
&  
1859

*Nevil's Creek Baptist*

*CHURCHES*

*Bullod County*

RULES TO BE OBSERVED WHILE IN CONFERENCE

Any Member intending to speak shall stand up and direct his speech to the question in debate.

No Member ought to speak more than twice without leave from the Church.

None shall offer to interrupt one while speaking nor speak till the other sits down.

No Member shall be allowed privilege of endeavoring to pervert the sense of another's speech.

The Members shall forbear talking one to another and keep silent while one is speaking.

The Moderator shall have power to stop all unnecessary debates, and demand silence when needed.

All cases decided by vote, the Moderator cannot vote except the Members be equally divided, in which case he can decide.

If two or more Members rise at one time, the Moderator has the liberty to name the person that shall speak first.

Any male Member that shall absent himself two meetings shall be cited to the third.

The majority shall rule in all cases except touching fellowship.

# NEVILS CREEK THE OLDEST CHURCH

5-21-53  
**Records Reveal The Church  
Was Created May 17, 1790;  
In Northern Part of Bulloch**

By the following statement from the church constitution, "We, the church of Christ at Nevils Creek, constituted the 17th of May, 1790, by Alexander Loothe and other helps," it is learned that Nevils Creek Primitive Baptist Church is the oldest church organization in Bulloch county. Located in the extreme northern part of the county, it stands a few miles east of Route 25 on the third location it has occupied since its early constitution. Its membership, small but devout and in sweet fellowship, has thus made some improvements and repairs on the building.

Thus 163 years ago last Sunday these early settlers felt "it to be our duty to walk in all the ordinances of the gospel, to declare in behalf of all the Doctrines of the Old and New Testaments preferring explanations of them by the authors of the Baptist confession of faith and such as agree with them to any that we see" and proceeded to set up this church which has continued its services to this day, having held its annual communion and feet washing service last Sunday. Elder Perry Banks, of Savannah, is the present pastor, and F. T. Daughtry is the clerk.

The year 1790 was a time of big things in the United States; our Constitution was adopted by the Constitutional Convention September 17, 1787, and was ratified by the last of the thirteen original states, Rhode Island, May 28, 1790, just twelve days after the establishment of Nevils Creek Church. George Washington was our first president, having been inaugurated in 1789.

## OLDEST CHURCH ORGANIZATION IN BULLOCH COUNTY

By the following statement from the church constitution, "We, the church of Christ at Nevils Creek, constituted the 17th of May 1790 by Alexander Lotte and other helps," we learn that Nevils Creek Primitive Baptist Church is the oldest church organization in Bulloch County. Located in the extreme northern part of the county, it stands a few miles east of route 25 on the third location it has occupied since its early constitution. Its membership, small but devout and in sweet fellowship, has just made some improvements and repairs on the building.

Thus 163 years ago last Sunday these early settlers felt "it to be our duty to walk in all the ordinances of the gospel, to Declare our belief of all the Doctrines of the Old and New Testaments preferring the explanations of them by the Authors of the Baptist Confession of faith and such as agree with them to any that we see" and proceeded to set up this church which has continued its services to this day, having held its annual communion and feet washing service last Sunday. ~~May 17~~ Elder Perry Banks of Savannah is the present pastor and F. T. Daughtry is the clerk.

The year 1790 was a time of big things in the United States; our constitution was adopted by the Constitutional Convention September 17, 1787 and was ratified by the last of the thirteen original states, Rhode Island, May 29, 1790, just twelve days after the establishment of Nevils Creek Church. George Washington was our first president, having been inaugurated in 1789.

- - - - -

# Nevils Church ... oldest

By Karen Craigue  
Staff Intern

Reminiscent of an earlier time when the small country church was the focal point of the community, Nevil's Creek Primitive Baptist Church sits quietly as documentation to past and present congregations.

Constituted May 17, 1790 by "Alexander Loote and other helps," Nevils' Creek exists as the oldest church in Bulloch County and the oldest Primitive Baptist in the state.

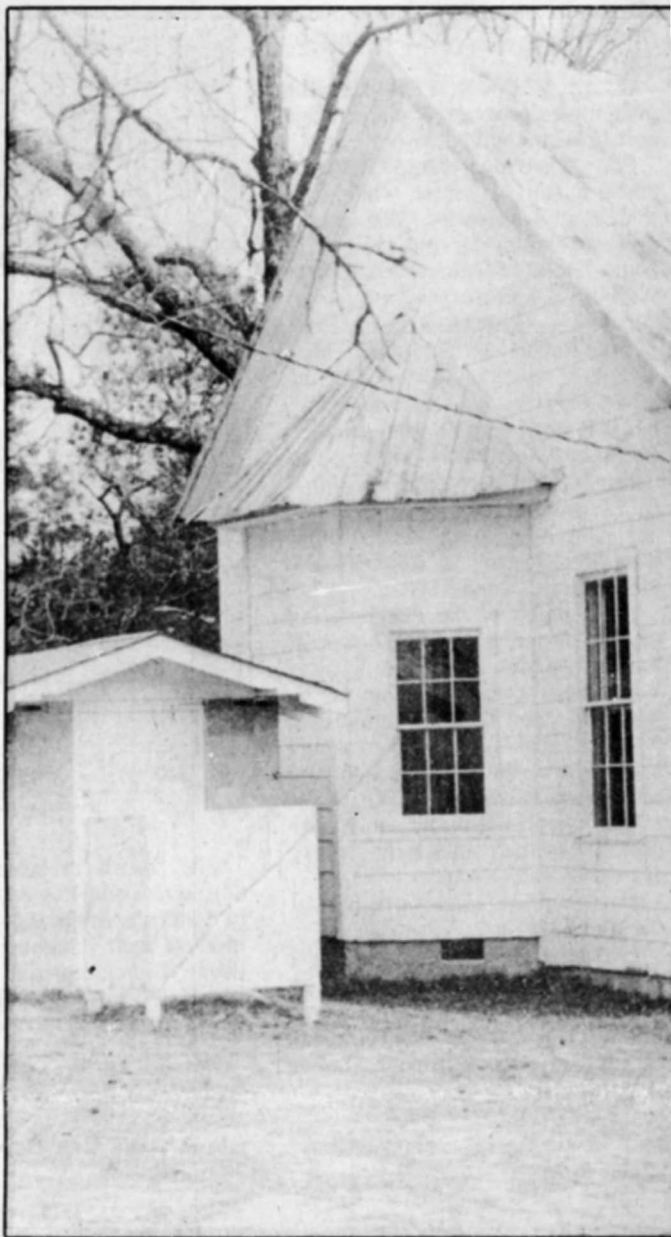
In 1790, this area was not even designated as Bulloch. As local historian Dot Brannen said, "The old saying, 'I'll see you next Sunday if the Lord's willin' and the creek don't rise,' was very appropriate."

People were few in number and scattered along the Ogeechee River. These early Georgians slowly moved inward along creeks. Brannen said they built their churches on high ground near these creeks. Being mostly Baptists, this was convenient and necessary to their belief in baptism by immersion.

Thus, the church became Nevils' Creek Primitive Baptist because of its original location on Nevils' Creek near the Old River Road.

Later, a site was chosen further north near Finch's Mill. This building burned during the Civil War in Sherman's March to the Sea.

Its third and present location is on land sold to the congregation for \$5, by J.T. Hendrix near Bay Gall Branch in the northern part of the county east of Route 25. Built in 1916, this white



*Nevils*

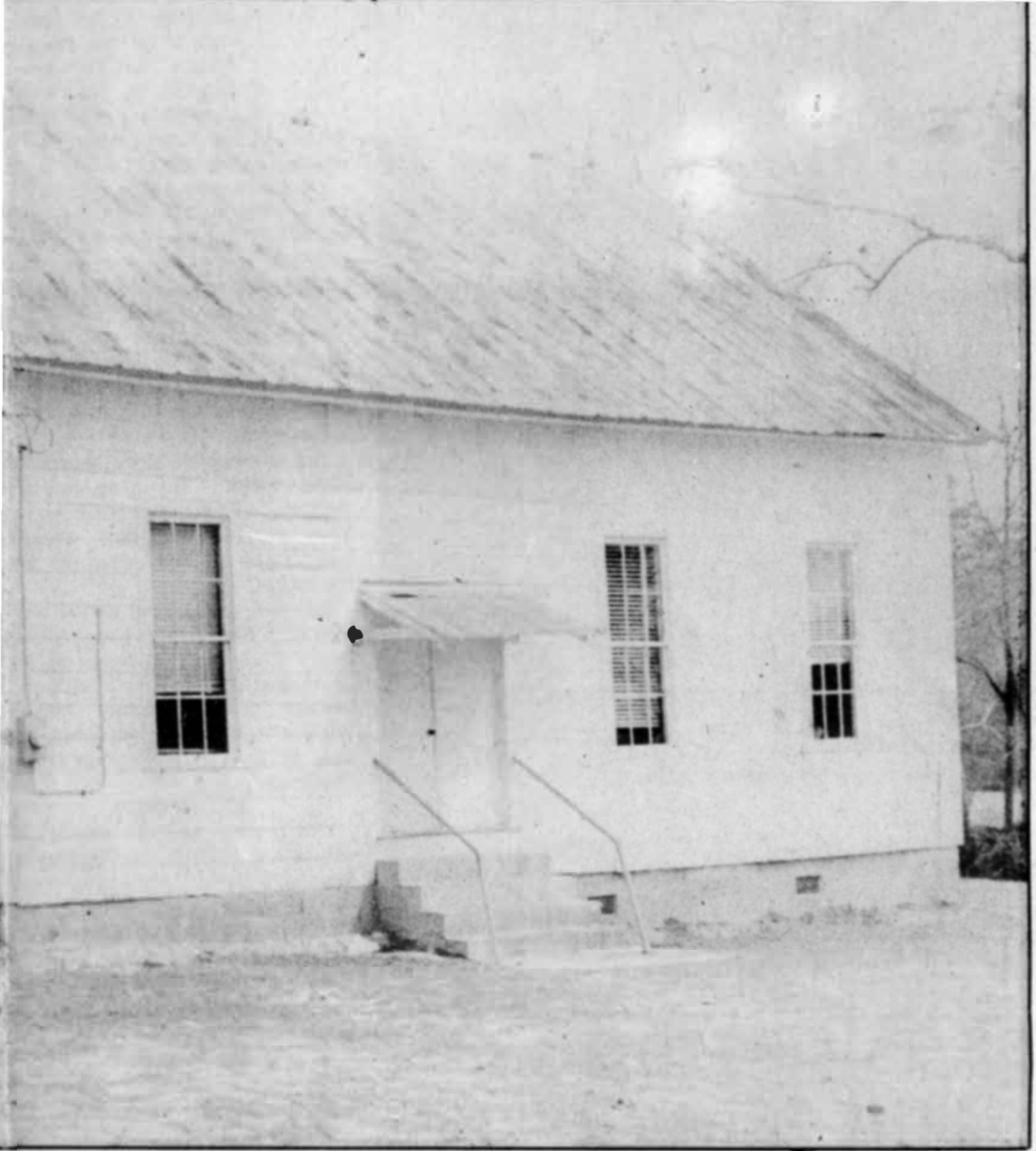
unpretentious structure is nestled amongst a stand of oak trees. A long table made of scrap pieces of wood and fence posts rotted by the time still stands as evidence to long-past dinners on the grounds and a freshly planted magnolia sappling proudly proclaims an unfaltering commitment of the Nevils' Creek congregations.

The present congregation, numbering about 22, is "small, but encouraging," the pastor of 14 years, Wilmor Lynn said. "Most of the families have some relationship or another to the original founders."

Reverend Lynn said his church still holds to the original ideology of the Nevils' Creek Constitution

*"See you next Sunday if the Lord*





### **Creek Primitive Baptist Church**

written in 1790. "...and believing it to be our duty to walk in all the ordinances of the Gospel do declare our belief in all the doctrines...to exercise a strict conscience void of offense toward God and man, live soberly, righteously and piously in the world...not forgetting the assembling of ourselves together as we have oppor-

tunity to worship God.." And so they have done for 193 years.

Under a rusting tin roof, the members gather every first and third Sunday to worship and sing "old time hymns." The women still sit on one side and the men on the other. George Barnes, the church clerk, said they still hold meetings twice a

year to partake of wine and unleavened bread and they still practice the washing of the feet as the scripture suggests.

Although the old tongue and groove wooden floors have been covered with red carpet and the pews are freshly stained, Nevils' Creek Primitive Baptist Church still has that devout country church atmosphere, which keeps bringing scattered folks together.

**s willin' and the creek don't rise"**

# Nevils Creek first Primitive Baptist Church in Ga.

*Note: The following is the 23rd in a series of columns that will describe towns and communities, past and present, that were settled after Bulloch County was first settled. Some have since been cut into other counties.*



Bulloch  
History

Roger Allen

Nevils Creek Primitive Baptist Church, the first Primitive Baptist Church in Georgia, was established south of the Ogeechee River as the Church of Christ at Nevils Creek. The church was set up in 1790 by Alexander Lotte on a high bluff along the banks of Bonnell Creek in Effingham County.

Lotte was the progenitor for many of those Lotts that settled the area known as Lotts Creek along the borders of Bulloch and Tattnall counties. This location was made part of the new Screven County in 1793 and then became part of the new Bulloch County in 1796.

Later, after being largely destroyed by Sherman's troops during the Civil War,

the congregation used Finch's Old Mill to hold their services. In 1915, the congregation moved the church to a new building on Bay Gall Branch.

Referred to as New Hayes on several old maps, the community of New Hope lay 2 miles south of Register on the old Burkhalter Road, part of which was renamed New Hope Road. The New Hope Church was organized and built on land donated by "Mr. Olliff" in 1874, with Father Styles being the first preacher.

After a disagreement, some of the church membership split off to establish the New

Bethlehem Church only 250 yards away.

When the Perkins Lumber Company (later the Register and Glennville Railroad) built a railroad line, it passed through New Hope. However, the trains did not stop to pick up passengers or freight in the town.

Ogeechee River was a train stop on the Dover and Statesboro Railroad between Donegal and Dover alongside the banks of the Ogeechee River.

According to Henry Ellis, Georgia's second royal governor, the second-oldest white settlement in Georgia

was called Ogeecheeton and sat on the banks of what was then referred to as the Great Ogeechee River.

It was located near Indian Bend and was only 1 mile north of the Old Fort Argyll (also called the First Fort on some old maps), which lay some 15 miles

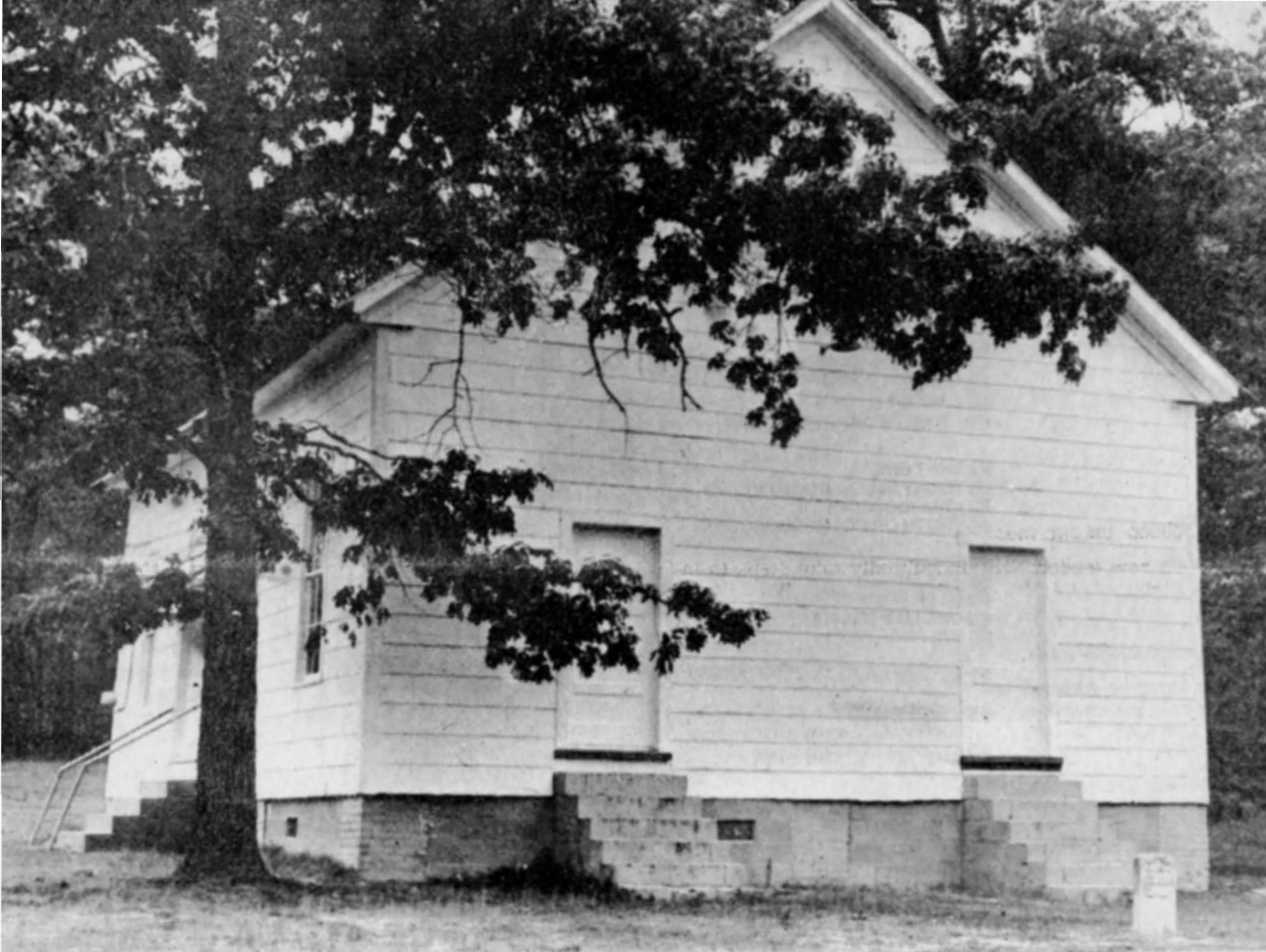
north of where the Ogeechee River splits away from the "Canoochie" (sic) River.

*Roger Allen is a local lover of history. He provides a brief look at the area's historical past. Email Roger at [rwars1953@gmail.com](mailto:rwars1953@gmail.com).*

*Bulloch County-Churches - Nevils Creek*

# **Nevils Creek Primitive Baptist Church**





### Nevil's Creek Primitive Baptist Church

Nevil's Creek Church, the first church organized in Bulloch County, was originally founded to "honor God...and to bind the people of the community together." Since its beginning in May of 1790 when the early church was constituted by one "Alexander Scotte and other helpers," it has served as a bond between members of the Bay Gall settlement in the 46th Lockhart District of Bulloch County.

The first location for the church was on the old River Road on a high place just to the left of the Nevil's Creek crossing about a mile from Blich. Later, by the time the building needed repairs, the membership had clustered further north and a new church site was chosen near Finch's Mill.

The present building, a simple and placid wood structure, was constructed by the people of the settlement in 1916 near Bay Gall Creek across from the site of the Olliff Bay School. It was said that "time moved the church back down here", for time had brought more of the members close to the original location.

The church today stands on a flat high stretch of ground among oak trees. To the front is a stone marker in memory of John Nevils, a soldier who served in the Revolution and later settled on the creek (then in Screven County) bearing his name. It is believed that Nevils, who lived from 1760 until 1804, gave the land where the first church was erected, but the records dating from 1790 until 1810 have been lost and this has never been established.

It becomes clear from the records that do exist, dating from 1810 to the present, that the organization of Nevil's Creek Church is the same today as it was over 160 years ago. Once a year all the old line Primitive Baptist churches in the area come together for association meetings as they did in 1810. In September and May foot washing and communion are held. And the old hymns "Amazing Grace" and "Showers of Blessings" are still sung by a people close to the past and close to the land.

The members profess, "we serve the bread, drink the wine, and wash feet as in the old days." And the church stands as a sign of reverence to God and as a bond that has remained unbroken.





Nevils' Creek Primitive Baptist Church

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# Church

Continued From Page 1B

Church records show that membership has fluctuated over the years, from 79 in 1814 to 15 today. In 1852, more than half the members were black. In 1878, Elder Aaron Munlin became the first black man licensed to preach there.

For years after the Civil War and emancipation, several blacks remained in the church.

Unlike larger churches, Nevils Creek does not pay its pastor or clerk a salary. A wooden plate is passed around after each service, and part of the collection goes to Lynn.

The church today is a white, one-room house with two wooden doors at the front and double wooden doors on each side. The only sign is a stone marker in memory of John Nevils, 1763-1804. Nevils was a Revolutionary War soldier and chaplain who settled on Bonnells Creek, which was later renamed Nevils Creek.

Inside the church there are 20 pine pews, a poplar pulpit and 10 tall windows framed with raw lumber. A deep red rug covers the oak floors, except under the pews, which hold "Old School Hymnals" and hand-held cardboard fans, many of which bear a picture of the Statue of Liberty.

The only decoration is a red velvet and brocade cloth which is stretched across a wooden table beneath the pulpit. On top of the cloth sits a brass vase with red and pink silk flowers, the wooden collection plate, a green water pitcher and two glasses.

"We meet at 10:30 and have 30 minutes of congregational singing," said Lynn, who doubles as song lead-

er. They often sing "Amazing Grace," "Shall We Gather at the River," and "Sweet By and By."

The a capella singing is followed by an hour or so of announcements, preaching, prayer, and an invitation.

"The Primitive Baptists have been known as 'hard shells' because they didn't go along with the movement back in 1932," Lynn said.

That "movement" or division resulted in what is now the Southern Baptist church, he said.

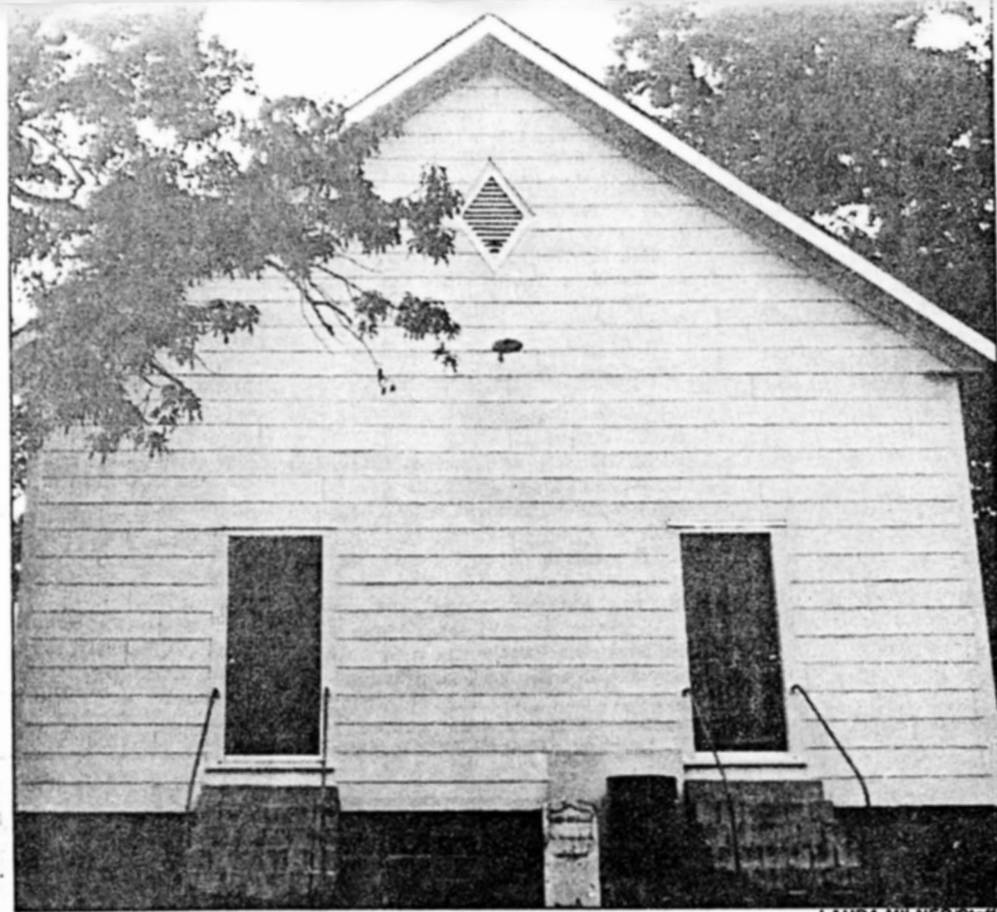
"They wanted to advocate and practice some things in church that we didn't feel was necessary for worshiping God . . . things like using musical instruments in the church service."

In a speech given to the Bulloch County Historical Society in 1973, Dr. R. Frank Saunders Jr. said that the original meeting house was built on Nevils Creek about a mile from Blich, on land that later became the Frank Newton estate. By 1887, the membership had moved farther north so the second church was built near Finch's Mill Pond on what was later W.S. Finch's pasture on Rocky Ford Road.

In 1915, the church was rebuilt a few miles down the creek to its current site. This acre of land was bound by Bay Gall Creek, Olliff Bay School and J.T. Hendrix' property.

The Primitive Baptists get together for foot washings, communion and laying on of hands with their sister churches in the Lotts Creek Association.

Sunday, as two centuries ago, the Nevils Creek Church family will meet in their church in the woods to celebrate their mission: "To exercise a conscience void of offense toward God and man, live soberly, righteously, and piously in this world endeavoring by all lawful means to preserve the peace and welfare of society in general."



LAURA MILNER/STAFF

**NEVILS CREEK CHURCH:** Church members planning bicentennial celebration

celebrate its 200th anniversary with singing, preaching, a historic presentation and dinner on the grounds.

The church meets on the first and third Sundays of each month, and third Saturday. Third Sundays often draw 50 to 60 people, said Jimmy Mallard, a longtime member whose "grandmothers on both sides" belonged to Nevils

Creek.

"We're almost like a little family church, nearly 'bout it," Mallard said. "It's been that way for a number of years."

Lynn said that a dozen or more young people attend regularly but have not joined.

"In the late 1920s and early '30s, people didn't have anything," the pastor said. "Seemingly, they depended on God more for what they needed. Back then, the congregation was three to four times larger than it is today."

He attributes the membership decline to prosperity.

"We feel like prosperity has caused people to fall away. They don't feel like church is as necessary a part of their life as it would have been in hard times."

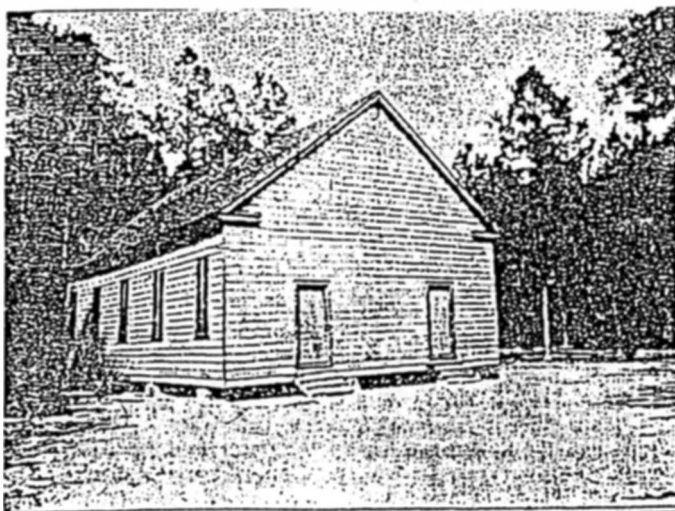
■ See CHURCH, Page 2B

PAGE 108 IN ALTARS BOOK

BULLOCH CO., GA

## A Short History of New Hope Church Bulloch County, Georgia

In the year 1801, David Kennedy moved from Glynn county to Bulloch and settled at what afterwards became Mill Ray P. O. William M. Kennedy, Sr., (doubtless his brother) was then living in this county, being at that time Clerk of the Superior Court of Bulloch county. Both of these names with those of Josiah Everett, Jarvis Jackson and Burrel Whittington appear on the deed to a tract of land containing two and a quarter acres, which was granted to them on October 12, 1804, as trustees of "New Hope Meeting House." On this tract which is situated near what is now known as Bragg school house, about two miles Southwest of the present site, the first church stood. After a number of years this property was disposed of and two acres on the "Milledgeville and Savannah Stage Road," opposite where the church now stands, was purchased. The trustees of this property being David Kennedy, (one of the first trustees) Eli Kennedy, (his son), and Shepard Williams. This deed bears the date of May 12, 1825.



THE OLD BUILDING

The first church erected to our knowledge on this lot of land was re-placed in 1855 by the present building, which, with some changes made when it was repaired about 1880.

A few of the older members seeing the necessity of more land, as the country was constantly being enlarged, purchased with the assistance of a few friends, four acres adjoining and gave it to the church. Recently the church has been moved upon this tract, and now is undergoing repairs.

Rev. William M. Kennedy Jr, who was a member of the Florida and South Georgia Conferences from 1848 to 1873, was a son of Eli Kennedy, who lived at Mill Ray, and an official in this church.

We have no record of the first Sunday-school organized at this church, but some of the oldest members attended Sunday-school here when children.

There are now two Sunday-schools kept up by the members of New Hope membership, and both are in a prosperous condition; one at the church and the other at Oak Grove School House, about three miles from the church.

Harmony church, in this county, was organized about 1877 - its membership consisting principally of members from New Hope.

BULLOCH TIMES  
Aug. 5, 1908New Hope Church, Past and PresentBrief History of the Church from the Date of Its Establishment  
in 1804 to the Dedication of the New Church in 1908

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After the death of William M. Kennedy, sr., Eli Kennedy succeeded him as clerk of the superior court of Bulloch county and served in that capacity for many years.

(Roll of white members of church from 1842 - also roll of colored members who worshipped with this church until a few years after the civil war, when they organized a church of their own - not printed but said to be available at this time.)

## HISTORY OF NEW HOPE METHODIST CHURCH CONTINUED: HOMECOMING 1966

The one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of New Hope Methodist Church was observed September 5, 1954. At which time a review was given of the history which had been published in 1949. We shall now refer to the previous sketch and enter in to the record some facts that were inadvertently omitted and list some things that have been accomplished during the last few years.

In 1886 Mrs. T. D. Strong, the pastor's wife, worked with the children in what was called a juvenile missionary society. In 1894 Mrs. Joseph Carr organized a young peoples missionary society which included a large number of young men and women as well as the older youth. Mrs. Carr led them in all the activities of the Church including missions.

The Epworth League was a later organization for young adults and youth. The leaders of this group through the years were Fred W. Hodges, Jesse Graham, and Willie Hodges. In more recent years the youth were organized into a Methodist Youth Fellowship. Mrs. Archie Nesmith was the first councilor. Mrs. Dan Hagan was the leader in this department and is now assisted by Mrs. Cardell Dyches.

The women of the Church have had a society as the center of their missionary and other activities since an early date. A Woman's Foreign Missionary Society was formed in 1886. There was also a Home Missionary Society until the two lines of work were combined and became the Woman's Missionary Society. The name of the organization was again changed in 1942 when it became the Woman's Society of Christian Service. Mrs. Luther McKinnon was president of the old society and was elected the president of the new society. Others having served as president are Mrs. Dan Hagan, Mrs. Fred Hodges, Sr., Mrs. W. A. Hodges, Jr., Mrs. Floyd Clarke, Mrs. John W. Hagan, Mrs. J. D. Clarke, Mrs. Carl Scott, and Mrs. Harold Girardeau.

In 1961 an annex to the building was completed, giving much needed room for the Church School and other Church activities. More recent improvements include the installation of a central heating and cooling system.

In 1963 and 1966 the Brooklet-New Hope Charge has been selected as the Charge of the year in the District. This, in itself, shows that down through the years the Church has been alive and active in the building of the Kingdom of God in the community and around the world.

The following people who served as officials in the Church and have gone to their eternal reward will always be remembered by those who served with them.

Fred W. Hodges, Sr. was an official from 1924 through 1952, serving as a steward eighteen years, trustee for twenty-eight years, Church School teacher for more than forty years, and he also served as Church and Charge Lay Leader.

William A. Hodges, Jr. was an official from 1924 through 1962. He served as a steward and trustee as well as being Church School Superintendent 1931-1962, a term of twenty-three years. He also served as Recording Steward and Secretary and treasurer.

J. E. "Jim" Hodges was an official from 1924 through 1965. He was a steward for forty-one years and chairman for most of that time. He also served as Sunday School Superintendent, parsonage trustee, and had been the teacher of the men's Bible class for more than forty years. At various times he was Charge Lay Leader, District Steward, and a trustee of the District parsonage.

The ministers serving New Hope since the publication of the history in 1949 have been Rev. L. C. Wimberly (1948-52); Rev. W. H. Ansley (1952-55); Rev. E. L. Veal (1955-57); Rev. R. E. Brown (1957-59); Rev. W. E. Chapple (1959-64); and Rev. Hoke O. Hatcher (1964- )

Those serving as District Superintendent while still in the Savannah District were Rev. G. E. Clary (1949-53); Rev. H. T. Freeman (1954); Rev. Anthony Hearn (1954-60); Rev. Frank Robertson (1960-63). Since the formation of the Statesboro District Rev. Tom P. Watson (1963-65) and Rev. James C. Varnell (1965- ).

Please save this and put in the bound copy of the 1949 Historical Sketch.



HISTORICAL SKETCH  
NEW HOPE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
STATESBORO DISTRICT  
SOUTH GEORGIA CONFERENCE

1804 - 1981



BY

Claudia Hodges McKinnon  
(Naomi Smith Hodges)

*New Hope - Method. st.*  
*Churches - County*

# Historical Highlights



## **NEW HOPE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

10 miles east of Statesboro on Highway 24 - Bulloch County

Organized in 1804

**SOUTH GEORGIA CONFERENCE HISTORIC SITE #19**

-O-

**MEMOIR - DR. DAN BREWSTER, Director 1964-1984**

**Georgia Methodist Commission on Higher Education and Campus Ministry**

-O-

## **Volunteers in Mission**

**COMMISSION ON ARCHIVES AND HISTORY  
THE SOUTH GEORGIA CONFERENCE  
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**



# A little history surrounding

This year, New Hope United Methodist Church on Route 24 will be added to that very small list of churches in Bulloch County which are 200 years old.

New Hope was organized in 1804 with three pastors and presiding elders listed as: Samuel Mills, Samuel Cowles and Lewis Myers. A presiding elder is now called district superintendent. New Hope was in the South Carolina Methodist Conference which included South Georgia.

Wife Evelyn's story begins in Ipswich, England, where her family built ships such as:

the Mayflower, the Seaflower and the Good Ship Anne which brought General Oglethorpe to the Colony of Georgia.

During the Revolutionary War, the British held the Port of Charleston. Wife Evelyn's young ancestor to be, Thomas Darley, brought a new ship into the harbor and was promptly arrested because he did not have papers needed to satisfy the Red Coats. He was briefly imprisoned on a ship in New York Harbor. When his papers came from England, he was impressed into duty and trained to be a



Dr. Kemp  
Mabry

British officer.

Later, he was sent into the Battle of the Cowpens in South Carolina. A Patriot soldier, Samuel Cowles, knocked him off his horse and had his sword at Darley's throat about to "do him in" when Thomas Darley flashed the Masonic Distress sign, whatever that is. Fortunately, or Providentially,

Cowles also was a Mason and spared Darley's life.

After the Revolutionary War was over, both Cowles and Darley became Methodist preachers and both served in the South Carolina Conference. Darley served as an "Agent of the Church," organizing Methodist churches across Georgia, including Washington, Wilkes County, and what became Mulberry Methodist in Macon. He kept going west where he died in central west Georgia. A call monument honors his service to the church and to the Masonic Lodge of Georgia of

which he was chaplain.

Samuel Cowles was presiding elder when New Hope Methodist Episcopal Church was organized by people who had been associated with Union Church which was organized in 1790 and is one of a small list of churches organized in 1790.

The New Hope United Methodist Church History was compiled first by Claudia Hodges KcKinnon in 1949, then Naomi Smith Hodges in 1981 and Margaret Hagin Prosser who expended much time and effort to assemble records.

My first contact with New Hope was with Mrs. Naomi Hodges who lived at the intersection of Route 24 and Burkhalter Road.

# New Hope

The Statesboro Herald invitation (advertisement) listed names of 17 people who were early members of New Hope, including Mrs. Lydia Ancaux, the widow of the Frenchman who came to America to help General George Washington in the American Revolutionary War.

The Bicentennial Homecoming Celebration will be Sunday, October 17, 2004, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

# Methodist church opens in Bulloch

*(Note: This is the third article in a series on the history of Methodists in the nation, the south and Bulloch County.)*

When General Oglethorpe arrived in the New World to establish the colony of Georgia, he brought with him an Episcopal clergyman named Dr. Henry Herbert, with him. Very soon, Herbert and others had erected a kind of tabernacle in which to worship.

Herbert stayed for a short three months, to be replaced by Samuel Quincy, a native of Massachusetts, who arrived in May of 1733. Quincy's efforts were not appreciated. When Oglethorpe returned to England, therefore, he immediately sought a replacement minister for the parish.

He found John Wesley, who it seemed was too strict for English parishioners. Oglethorpe thought Wesley might be just the man he needed to keep colonists going to the wilds in line. Wesley and his gifted young brother gladly agreed to go to Georgia.



Bulloch History

Roger Allen

Benjamin Ingham, Charles Delamotte accompanied the two Wesleys aboard the vessel "The Simmonds", which left Gravesend on October 14, 1735 and reached Savannah on February 8, 1736. There were some three hundred whites in the colony. In addition to those in Savannah, there were the colony of Salzburger at Ebenezer, the colony of Scotch Highlanders at New Inverness, and a colony of French settlers at Highgate.

There was also the settlement at Frederica, where Oglethorpe had established his headquarters, this being the town closest to the Spanish in Florida. Charles Wesley was assigned the job of being his chaplain and secretary. John Wesley began his work as the Savannah pastor immediately.

He gave numerous sermons on Sunday: at five in the morning he read prayers, at eleven he preached and administered communion; then in the afternoon he taught the children the catechism in what could be called a Sunday-school — possibly the first, in America.

During the week Wesley would visit from house to house, reproving and rebuking locals for their spiritual failures. He, not surprisingly, offended many of his parishioners. He conversed with Indian leaders, and failed to convert them.

While in Georgia, both men experienced women troubles: John with Sophie Hopkey; and Charles with Beata Hawkins and Anne Welch. Both Wesleys soon departed from the colony, never to return. Ironically, John Wesley's ship arrived at

Gravesend just as George Whitefield's departed.

George Whitefield differed from John Wesley with reference to his belief in predestination, and had not joined a "Methodist Society", and yet he was truly a Methodist Episcopalian. Whitefield's eloquence and evangelistic style of preaching was more pleasing to the colonists than Wesley's "High Church" approach.

Soon, all 500 Savannahians were attending his ministry. After one year, he returned to be ordained and funds for a proposed orphan house (Bethesda). Returning to Georgia he brought with him one Cornelius Winter. Winter was to be "the first Methodist missionary to the Georgia Negroes."

The very first Methodist Church in the Bulloch County area was the church known, in order, as Jones Church, Mount Carmel, and then Payne's Chapel. In 1776 Drury and Nancy Jones started a Methodist Episcopal Society in this area. The actual church was established in 1784 and was named in honor of the Jones'.

In 1806 the church was moved to Skull's (or Scull's) Creek, where its name was changed to Mount Carmel. The third church, called Paynes Chapel was built after November 2, 1870, when Charles A. Rowland deeded almost four acres of land to the church trustees (Robert M., Mitchell, Berry A., and Matthew Williams and Joseph Dutton).

On Old River Road near Donegal in Bulloch County you will find Bulloch County's second Methodist Church, the Union Meeting House.

The land for the church was acquired from Joseph and Jarvis Jackson, Lemuel Williams, Griffin Merrill and Joshua Hodges in a deed recorded on September 1, 1794 in Screven County, Bulloch County not having been formed yet.

In 1804, two and one-half acres of land was deeded by John Roe to build a third Methodist Church in Bulloch County. Located near the Bragg School House close to the Burkhalter Road and Clito-Brooklet Road junction, the "New Hope Meeting House" church sat about ten miles south of Union Meeting House.

## NEW HOPE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

New Hope Church, ten miles east of Statesboro, was the second Methodist Episcopal Church established in Bulloch County. Georgia was then, and until 1830, part of the South Carolina Conference. Records indicate that the Methodist people of this community had been identified with Union Church which antedates New Hope about fifteen years, and is ten miles north west of New Hope Church.

A deed dated October 12, 1804 for two and one fourth acres of land was made by John Roe and his wife Rebecca, to David Kennedy, Josiah Everette, Jarvis Jackson, Burrell Whittington and William M. Kennedy, trustees in trust for the Methodist Episcopal Church, although this deed was never signed by Rebecca Roe now was it recorded. The first "New Hope Meeting House" was built on this lot which is near the Burkhalter road where it is intersected by the present Brooklet-Clito road.

The account of the history of the Church, contains some interesting facts about those who were responsible for the organization of the church in this community.

"Francis Kennedy, a Revolutionary soldier who had lived in Virginia and the Carolinas, came to Bulloch County with his family previous to 1800. The members of his family were leaders in the church as his descendants have been through the years. Two of his sons, William M. and Eli, and his brother David who were among the first officials of the church, were also county officials and were recognized for their enterprize and public spirit.

William M. Kennedy, one of the original trustees, was also class leader and a local preacher. When in December 1805, before reaching the age of twenty three, he joined the South Carolina conference where he served as pastor and presiding elder thirty-five years. He was a member of the first delegated General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church which met in 1812 and was elected to each General Conference thereafter until his death in 1840. His son, Francis Milton Kennedy, who was also a member of the S.C. Conference was well known in Georgia as editor of the official organ of the S.C. Conference - The Southern Christian Advocate - when it was published in Macon.

William McCall Kennedy, son of Eli Kennedy, was the second minister to go out from New Hope Church. He entered the conference in 1848 and served in Florida and Georgia until his death in 1873.

This church was fortunate from its beginning to have such spirited leaders as Eli Kennedy and Mrs. Lydia Anciaux. Mrs. Anciaux was Lydia Richardson of Rhode Island before her marriage to Col. Nicholas Anciaux who came to America with the French army and for meritorious service was granted 1200 acres of land in Bulloch County, where they lived after the Revolutionary War, and where she continued to live after his death.

Records of the church are meager for the first four decades. All records for those years, except quarterly conference records of Ohoopee circuit 1814-1827, were loaned to a presiding elder who desired them for reference in some writing he wished to do. In moving to another appointment the desk containing those papers was lost in transit. All efforts to trace desk and papers were to no avail. These records had been kept by Eli Kennedy, recording Steward.

The membership of the church in 1842-1845 numbered 95. Of these 35 were



*New Hope*

**New Hope - Nevils  
United Methodist Church  
Statesboro, Georgia**

*Churches  
County*





New Hope Methodist Church

**T**he New Hope Methodist Church, ten miles east of Statesboro on Highway 24, is the fourth building and the third location for a church whose history began in 1804.

Before 1804 Union Meeting House on the old stage road was the only Methodist Church in Bulloch County. Then settlers such as Francis Kennedy—a Revolutionary soldier who came down to Bulloch County before 1800—began to farm the area south of Union near Mill Creek. Young members of Union married and moved to the New Hope Community. Union—the old home church some ten miles back up the road—was a long trip by buggy.

In 1804 the Mill Creek people purchased a 2¼ acre tract from John and Rebecca Roe and erected a one-room structure on hand-hewed sills . . . New Hope Meeting House. It stood on the Brooklet-Clito Road, near the intersection of the Burkhalter Road.

By 1825 a new site was chosen on the Old River Road across from the church that stands today. Here another one-room building was constructed which

served during the week as the local schoolhouse. In 1864 a Union soldier carried away a hymnal belonging to H. B. Hodges from this building; the book, bearing its owner's name and address, was left along the route to Savannah and later returned.

The 1855 church building was moved across the road to make more room for the cemetery in 1900. Then, in August, 1904, New Hope celebrated its centennial and W. A. Hodges, Sr., proposed a new building. The result, innovative for its day with slanted floors and the first stained glass windows in the county, was later described as the most beautiful country church in the area.

There are signs of history at New Hope today. Old pegged benches, large size for adults and a small one for children, remain in the Sunday School rooms, and the hymnal stolen by a Union soldier is kept along with church records. And there are traditions . . . dinner on the grounds . . . and a saying that recurs today as it did when the church began: "The people of New Hope set in and do what's needed and there is much left to do."

