

THE EARLY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN GEORGIA

On February 12 1733, James Edward Oglethorpe dropped the anchor of his ship, "Anna" seventeen miles up from the mouth of the Savannah River to begin establishing a colony in the new world to be called Savannah. This new land was called Georgia after King George III of England.

On this boat there were thirty five families, totaling about 125 people, including men, women, and children. They had been promised fifty acres of land, tools, seeds, and clothing for the first year.

The early immigrants suffered many hardships during the first few years. During this time additional immigrants arrived, Germans, Lutherans, Moravians, Scots, and others.

Although we know that a Presbyterian minister by the name of Rev. Francis Makemie arrived in Maryland in 1682, not much is known about the Presbyterian Church in early Georgia. History records do report that a colony of Scotch Presbyterians settled at Darien (down the coast from Savannah near the mouth of the Altamaha River) about 1735, just two years after Oglethorpe arrived. It is also recorded that a Presbyterian Church was organized in Savannah in 1765, thirty-two years after the birth of our state.

The Presbytery of South Carolina embraced the Presbyterian Churches in Georgia from their information in 1784. From the Presbytery of South Carolina, the Hopewell Presbytery was established in 1796, which embraced the whole colony of Georgia as it existed at that time.

From 1733 until 1796, a period of sixty-three years, the people of this young colony had experienced many hardships, trials; and tribulations, which included the American Revolution (1775-178). This disastrous period divided families, friends, and neighbors. Following the American Revolution, the people came back together under a new freedom and began to acquire land from the Indians, moving in a westerly direction.

In 1796, sixty-three years after Oglethorpe, our sister church of Thyatira was established in present day Jackson County. It is located between Jefferson and Commerce. Also in 1796; at the location of present day Winder, was an Indian village, Snodoa, with 37 people. This village was located on Okoloco Indian Trail which ran in a northwesterly direction.

From this point forward we will discuss the present Winder area as well as how the First Presbyterian Church of Winder came into existence.

THE CENTENNIAL
COMMITTEE

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References:
History Department,
Montreat, N. C.
A History of Georgia

BITS & PIECES ON THE EARLY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN GEORGIA

The Fanning of Presbyteries in Georgia

On July 21, 1790, near Washington, Georgia, the first recorded meeting of Presbytery, representing three small churches in Wilkes County (providence, Smyrna, and Washington), met under a tree.

In 1796 the Presbytery of South Carolina set off "The portion below the Savannah River into a separate and independent presbytery to be known as the 'Presbytery of Hopewell.

By 1840, all Indians (Native Americans) had been removed from the state, the last being the Cherokees in 1838.

The Synod of Georgia was formed in 1845 with the first meeting being held on the third Thursday in November in Macon, Georgia.

The Civil War (1861-1865) having come and gone, reconstruction presented a new way of life. In 1884, the entire State of Georgia in its present form had been settled by immigrants from the Carolinas, northern states and abroad. The state was mostly rural from Tennessee to Florida with agriculture as the principal means of livelihood and cotton the money crop.

By 1890, the Presbyterian Church was scattered over most of the state. There were six Presbyteries (Augusta, Athens, Atlanta, Cherokee, Macon, and Savannah) with approximately 175 churches, 83 ministers; and 12,000 members.

Jug Tavern

The "Gainesville, Jefferson, and Southern a narrow gauge railroad (later known as Gainesville Midland Railroad), arrived in Jug Tavern in 1883 connecting Gainesville and Social Circle. It made regular stops at Bethlehem, Jug Tavern, and Mulberry. The railroad ran through present day Winder, paralleling the south side of Midland Avenue.

On December 24, 1884, Jug Tavern, Georgia, formerly known as Snodon, was officially incorporated by the State of Georgia with a population of less than 200. N.J. Kelly was installed as the first Mayor on January 8, 1885.

On April 24, 1892 another railroad. the "Seaboard" had been completed through Winder connecting Athens and Atlanta. Two railroads, replacing wagons and stage coaches for transportation, presented Jug Tavern with excellent growth opportunities.

The population increased rapidly and the town of Jug Tavern

was officially changed to Winder in 1893 by an Act of the State Legislature honoring John H Winder, General Manager of Seaboard Airline Railroad.

In 1893, three counties (Jackson, Walton, and Gwinnett) all had a common corner or point in Winder near the intersection of Broad and Athens Streets. God's Spirit was moving. There were many country churches in the area.

By 1895, Winder claimed 1200 people and three local churches:
First Methodist (organized as Concord Methodist in 1836),
First Christian (organized in 1884), and First Baptist (organized in 1893).

"Men God picks up His magic
brush And paints the colors on
the trees A touch of Green A
touch of Gold And Crimson on
the leaves A new array of
Splendor grows
Till colors hide beneath the
snows. "

Author Unknown

It's easy to see God's hand working in Winder in 1894. Minutes of the Atlanta Presbytery meeting held at Central Presbyterian Church, Atlanta, Georgia, on Thursday, September 13, 1894, 10:00 AM read*as follows:

"Rev. J. B. Mack presented a petition signed by a number of persons living in the Town of Winder, Georgia, asking to be organized into a church. The request was granted, and the following committee appointed to organize the same. Rev. J. B. Mack, Rev. Samuel Young. and T. R. Powell. "

THE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION COMMITTEE

BITS AND PIECES
EARLY HISTORY OF
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH WINDER

In 1894 the town of Winder was beginning to grow. It boasted two recent rail lines, three churches, an education academy, and an influx of people developing a commercial; business, and manufacturing district.

We can also see God's hand working through certain Christian people in the community. We read from the minutes of Atlanta Presbytery held at Central Church in Atlanta on Thursday, September 13, 1894, at 10:00AM'

"Rev. J B. Mack presented a petition signed by a number of persons living in the town of Winder, Georgia, asking to be organized into a church. The request was granted and the following committee appointed to organize the same: viz. Rev. J. B. Mack, Rev. Samuel Young, and T R. Powell"

We do not have a copy of the original petition, but the records indicate there were seven or eight names on the petition.

MINUTES
FIFTY NINTH SESSION OF THE ATLANTA
PRESBYTERY GREENVILLE GEORGIA
APRIL 17, 1896.: FRIDAY 9:00 AM

" The committee appointed to organize a church at Winder reported that they had discharged the duty assigned to them and had organized a church at said place on October 20. The church consisted of eight members, three of whom were ruling elders. "

We have the names of seven of the eight charter members.

They are as follows:

-Professor Samuel Presley Orr. an elder and Principal of Winder Public Schools.

-J. F. Wilhite (elder)

Callie Wilhite

W Mary B. Quarteman

H Herbert Allyn

Q -Mrs. Horace Sheldon Allyn

When available (now or later) we will give a brief biographical

sketch on the lives of the charter members.

Professor Samuel Presley Orr

Son of James Orr, elder of Thyatira Presbyterian Church, Jackson County, Georgia.

(James Orr had two wives and from these marriages came a line of educators. His first wife was Ann Anderson Orr. From this marriage came one son, Gustavus John Orr (born August 9, 1819, Anderson County, South Carolina; died December 11, 1887, Atlanta, Georgia. From January 1872 until his death, Gustavus John Orr served six governors of Georgia as Commissioner of Public Schools and was recognized as the "Father of the Common School System of Georgia.

The second wife of James Orr was Mary Cowan Orr. Together they had many distinguished sons and daughters. One such child, Samuel Presley Orr. He later became Head of the Institute of Winder, Georgia, and charter member and elder of this church.

Q • Mrs. Horace Sheldon Allyn

A charter member and wife of the first pastor Revf, Horace Sheldon Allyn. ;.. " . .

W.H. and Mary B. Quarterman

W. H Quarterman and wife Mary were related to the present day Russell family. Today the ,Quarterman are buried in Rose Hill Cemetery.

H At this time we have no information on the other charter members

Most of the rural and small town churches could not financially support a Full-time pastor. This required one minister to serve three or four churches, possibly only one Sunday a month worshipsservice in homes and other church buildings.

F It appears that membership was growing as Professor Orr gave a piece of property for the erection of a building of worship. ;

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THE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION
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