

Benton Methodist

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Yazoo's early churches

Benton Methodist

No record of the early churches in Yazoo County would be complete without the inclusion of the tremendous influence the people of Benton have played in religious life of the whole county.

In 1827, only a few years after the county was established, Benton became the second county seat on land belonging to William Gadberry. Realizing their needs, the people in the new county applied for a preacher and John Cotton, was sent by the Mississippi Methodist Conference, who organized the Yazoo Circuit at the annual Conference on December 17, 1829. Thomas Griffin served the Circuit in 1831 and John Lane in 1832. The thriving little village was incorporated in 1836. That year Benton was first listed as a regular appointment with Jephtha Hughes in charge. In 1838 John Ira E. Byrd and Robert R. Gill were appointed to serve Benton and Manchester.

The protracted meetings, held each year, after 'lay by time,' at the old Benton Campground, created the spark for the organization of churches at Manchester, later Yazoo City, and other places in the county.

Following a protracted meeting at Benton in 1841 a Presbyterian church was organized by C.W. Scott, Mrs. Sophia Whitman, Mrs. E.L. Coewine, Mrs. R.O. Jenkins, Mrs. Mary Ann McInnis, Rev. Richmond McInnis, and Rev. S.M. Montgomery. This later became the First Presbyterian Church of Yazoo City.

It was at one of these meetings at the Benton Campground that Peter B. Cook, joined the Methodist Church in 1845 under Philo M. Goodwyn. He married on October 30, 1851, Miss Margaret S. Davis. For many years he served as a member of the Board of Stewards of the First Methodist church in Yazoo City and gave the land for the first church parsonage there, which was then on Jefferson Street.

On October 29, 1842, Judith Nutt Perkins of Benton, for \$5.00, deeded Lot No. 141 in Yazoo City, formerly Manchester, to Peter James, John W. Purvis, Hayden Leavel, Thomas Peacock, Edward W. Cooper, John O. Hunter, and J.R. West, Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Yazoo City. She rests in a lonely grave under a cedar tree at the outskirts of Benton: Judith N., wife R.S. G. Perkins, died August 5, 1887, aged 75 years, 1 months, 5 days.

The Rev. James A. Newsom came to Benton in 1884. In 1886

he married Miss Jessie North at the residence of the bride's father in Benton. The North family was a prominent one in the community. Rev. T.W. Adams was pastor in 1886 and J.W. Chambers served as associate pastor.

D. Bunch of Benton was a regular attendant at the Annual Conferences as a Layman. He was born in Bertie County, North Carolina May 24, 1825, and died May 23, 1897. His wife, M.M. Bunch, born 1833, died July 20, 1867. They were parents of William J., Dan S., Decton, and Margaret A. Bunch. Mr. Bunch married second, Addie Harris and they had one son, Oscar. He was a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1890. The family is buried at Black Jack.

On March 29, 1858, Thomas G. Clark and his wife, Mary S. Clark, deeded to Trustees Tilman Johnson, George W. Cooper, Henry A. Purvis and W.S. Grayson, for the benefit of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, land lying in Benton, Yazoo County, being the ¼ acre lot bought by Clark of William Smith and lying south of the said town and 33 ft. east of said town.

On Feb. 8, 1875 S.M. Dyer and Mary E., his wife, deeded to W.L. King, E.L. King, D. Bunch, A.H. Johnston, Samuel Parr, James York, John Birdwell and W.T. Shell, and M.R. Vancleave, Trustees for \$10.00, 1½ acres, commencing at a certain fig tree on the Vaughan Station Road, thence NE along said road to Lexington Road, etc. to be held, kept and maintained and disposed of as a place of residence for use and occupancy of the preachers of the Methodist Church South who may from time to time be appointed.

Mrs. L.A. Sims purchased the old parsonage property in 1902. At that time, Robert Tate, T.W. Shipp, Charles Anderson, E.L. King, and O.H. Swayze were serving as Trustees of the Benton Circuit, Jackson District.

Bibliography

Yazoo Co. Deeds—Bk. 7, page 511	BK.M., page 231
Bk. BI page 274	
Bk. SS—page 647	
Methodism in the Miss. Conf.	1872—page 128
	1885—page 269
	1886—page 305
	1887—page 312
	1888—page 353