

## **Wesley Chapel Methodist Church**

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By NINA PEPPER

# Yazoo's early churches

## WESLEY CHAPEL METHODIST CHURCH

The first settlers in the community called it Claibornesville but when the town was burned by the Northern forces in the War Between the States, it was rebuilt and called Phoenix.

Wesley Chapel was the first church. On July 14, 1855 Benjamin F. Adams and wife P.E. Adams, for \$1.00 deed to Samuel Dilly T.S. Mabin, D. Bryant, William Herron, T.R. Holloman, J.N. Bradshaw, R. Barkley, D.S. Newbaker and J.B. Clark, Trustees, a parcel of land on the Vicksburg Road in the North end of East ½ SW ¼ Section 36, T. 9, Range 4 West; to them and their successors, that they shall cause to be erected a house or place of worship for the use and benefit of the Methodist Episcopal Church South. If used in any other manner the same is to revert back to the original owner. X

On September 11, 1894 Thomas A. Holloman "in consideration of my interest in the prosperity of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, I convey to Thomas A. Holloman, A.K. Barrier, G.W. Smith, et al, Trustees and to their successors, in trust that said shall be kept and maintained as a place of Divine Worship for use of the ministry and membership of the Methodist Church South, a certain plot of land at

Phoenix, Yazoo County, Mississippi lying west of and adjacent to the Methodist Church property as deeded by Ben Adams and wife in E ½ SW ¼, containing 28-100 acres, more or less." ~~more more more~~

John B. Holloman, who died Jan. 25, 1896 at the age of 83 married Miss Nancy Bruffey, who died in 1904.

Thomas Bascom Holloman, son of T.R. and Rebecca C. Holloman, was born in Yazoo County Jan. 18, 1851. He graduated from Emory and Henry College in Virginia in 1873. Soon after he joined the Mississippi Conference and served for nearly 50 years. On Feb. 5, 1874 he married Miss Mary L. Holliday of Canton. She died in Yazoo City in 1883, leaving 7 children. He married in 1885 Miss Matilda Jones, daughter of John G. Jones. Admitted on trial in 1874 from the Warren Circuit, he served as President of the East Miss. Female College at Meridian, Presiding Elder of the Meridian District President of the Miss. Conference Historical Society, Trustee of Whitworth and Millsaps Colleges in addition to serving some of the largest churches in the State. He died Sept. 9, 1920 while serving at Lake City.

Thomas Abner Holloman, Methodist Layman, married Miss Laura Selena Warren,

daughter of Leonidas B. Warren 1885.

Others mentioned as pioneer trustees of the Church are Samuel Dilly, a native of Pennsylvania, born May 2, 1802, died Sept. 30, 1874, who came to Mississippi in 1825. He married Charlotte Lamenda Usher, born July 25, 1817, died May 12, 1890. Both are buried in the church cemetery as is George W. Smith, born March 1829, died Nov. 19, 1899.

It is possible that the R. Barkley could be the Richard A. Barkley, a farmer, who put fear into the invading Union forces in May 1863 by reporting to Col. Johnson, who passed the word to Gen. Blair, who relayed to

Gen. Grant that Lt. Gen. A.P. Hill had arrived in Jackson with reinforcements from Virginia that had built Confederate forces to 45,000 men.

The history of Wesley Chapel reveals the contribution made by the Holloman family to Methodism not only here but in the entire Mississippi Conference. Thomas Right Holloman and John Barrett Holloman were sons of Edmund and Mary Barrett Holloman of North Carolina. Thomas Right Holloman was born Nov. 23, 1818 and died Nov. 19, 1894. On March 5, 1846 he married Miss Rebecca Ann Cook, daughter of Fielding and Nancy Cook, who died May 21, 1871. He married second on

June 21, 1874, Mrs. Amanda Curtis

### Bibliography:

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Methodism in Miss. Conference, Jones  
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The Battle for Yazoo, 1862-1864

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The <sup>second</sup> ~~new~~ Wesley Chapel Methodist Church building (~~2nd building~~) <sup>was</sup> located on the site of the first church destroyed by fire by Grierson's Raiders was erected in 1866-1867. Part of the lumber for this new church was sawed on the Gwinn Place by the same tread mill that sawed the lumber for the 1st Wesley Chapel Methodist Church. The lumber for the 2nd church was sawed by steam power as the old tread mill now had steam power.

This church soon grew to a large number. The first sermon in this new church was preached by Rev. J. H. Shelton in 1867. ~~This was a sermon dedicating the new building.~~ The site on which the original church stood; and now <sup>the</sup> 3rd building <sup>stands</sup> (a modern air conditioned brick building erected in 1953) ~~was dedicated in 1858 by Tobias Gibson, a Methodist from near Natchez, Miss.~~

New settlers moved in and the church membership grew. In the years 1887 to 1906 Wesley Chapel had a membership of 194 members; a fine Sunday school with 90 enrolled. Said to be the finest Bible class in the conference with a real teacher, T. A. Holloman, who saw that the class studied the Bible; learned the History of Bible characters; and history of Bible countries. There was also a class that studied the Bapcism and rules of the church.

This church had an Epworth League with a membership of 84 members. This Epworth League had a Bible course, a prayer meeting once a week and a social meeting twice a month in some of the members home. These social meetings were always pertaining to Christian advancement of the community such as quizzes on Bible characters, questions on the books read from the Sunday School Library (which had 180 good books along with Bibles and Hymn books for all members). Had a good choir, T. A. Holloman, leader. Miss Laura Bradshaw, Mrs. Holloman and Miss

Bessie Hamberlin as organists. Miss Minnie Coody, who belonged to Hebron Baptist church also played the organ for some of the services and was a member of the Epworth League. Her father, W. W. Coody, although belonging to Hebron Baptist Church helped with all church activities at Wesley Church.