

CELEBRATING OUR 150TH YEAR

The Council on Ministries began preparations for the Sesquicentennial celebration for this church late in 1988. A special committee was appointed. It was decided that several special events should take place during the sesquicentennial year to remind all age levels of the history of this church.

During March 1989 Tom Johnston presented a drama, "A Charge to Keep" during the morning worship service telling part of the story of John Wesley and Methodism. A Banner Committee was appointed and several banners were designed by Mary Miller and Jean Mather to depict Methodism and remind members of our heritage. Various Sunday school classes made the banners. Several members of the committee began working on the history of this church in preparation for printing a small bound book for the membership. Easy Maness prepared a booklet about John Wesley and Methodism which was distributed to members. Plans were made to see if our church qualified for a historical Methodist Marker. At the time of this printing, we have not heard if we will qualify.

Johnny Bear made tapes with several of our members telling feelings and memories they have for this church.

An invitation was extended and accepted by the Bishop of the Texas Conference, Ben Oliphint, to attend our celebration service on December 17th following morning worship. A drama will be represented following the noon lunch directed by Eugene McElyea. Invitations were mailed to all former pastors and members asking them to attend and participate in our activities on December 17.

THE 150 COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN

Rev. Joe W. Fort, Jr.

CO-CHAIRMAN (SPECIAL EVENTS)

Mary Keller

PUBLICITY

Reba Spidle

HISTORY

Virginia Jones

Easy Maness

RESOURCE PERSONS

Helen Ramsey

Beth Jimmerson

CIVIC CENTER PROGRAM

Eugene McElyea

CIVIC CENTER FOOD AND DECORATIONS

Carolyn McElyea

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF MINISTERS (AND ASSOCIATES) DATES OF SERVICE

1. Henderson D. Palmer	1839—	29. Charles V. McLarty	1914-17
2. Daniel Carl	1840—	30. J. Ed Morgan	1917 —
3. Nathan Shook	1841—	31. C.B. Garrett	1917-20
4. James Harrison Collard	1841—	32. C.W. McPhail	1920 —
5. J.C. Woolam	1853—	33. E.A. Maness	1921-23
6. Sam Box	1853—	34. C.W. Hughes	1923-24
7. Harvin W. Moore	1861-63	35. C.A. Lehmborg	1924-29
8. George S. Gatewood	1863-64	36. P.T. Ramsey	1929-30
9. H.B. Phillips	1865—	37. Terry Wilson	1931-32
10. D.P. Cullen	1875—	38. John Bergland	1933 —
11. J.W. Johnson	1886-87	39. Bob Pool	1934 —
12. B.R. Bolton	1887-89	40. F.D. Dawson	1934-35
13. I.F. Smith	1889-90	41. Hooper	1935-37
14. Eugene L. Crawford	1891-92	42. H.L. Munger	1937-39
15. L.M. Fowler	1892 —	43. Harry Rankin	1940-44
16. J.L. Dawson	1982-95	44. Lee Lemons	1945-47
17. J.S. Mathis	1895-97	45. W. Clint Williams	1947-49
18. A.S. Whitehurst	1897-98	46. Leslie LeGrand	1949-53
19. John A. Beagle	1898-1900	47. Jim Heflin	1953-57
20. Ellis Smith	1900-01	48. Vernon Cornelius	1957-58
21. H.A. Hodges	1901-05	49. C.A. West	1958-62
22. C.E.W. Smith	1905 —	50. E. Jewell Strong	1962-65
23. Irvin B. Manly	1906 —	51. L.B. Broach III	1965-69
24. Jas. W. Downs	1906-07	52. J.H. Rhodes, Jr.	1969-74
25. F.M. Boyles	1908-09	53. E. J. Davis, Jr.	1974-76
26. Chas. F. Smith	1909-10	54. Earl P. Cantrell	1976-84
27. George W. Davis	1910-12	55. Alvis Coleman	1984-87
28. D.H. Hutchkins	1912-14	56. Joe W. Fort, Jr.	1987 —
		57. Beverly Ward	1988-89

**A HISTORY OF
FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
(Methodist Episcopal Church South)
CROCKETT, TEXAS**

1839 -- 1989

THE EARLY YEARS

Because Protestantism had been prohibited by Mexican statute, the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States had refrained from heeding the call of Colonel William B. Travis and others to officially send preachers to Texas. Many Methodist families had come to colonize Texas, bringing their religion with them. They practiced their faith in their homes and buried their dead without the presence of ordained ministers.

This appeal was made some seven and one-half months before his death in the Alamo and shows his concern for the spiritual welfare of the people of Texas. It was written to the New York Christian Advocate and Journal.

"San Felipe de Austin, Texas,

"August 17, 1835.

"My dear sir:

"I take the liberty of addressing you from this distant quarter of the world for the purpose of requesting you to receive my name as a subscriber of your widely circulated Advocate. We are very destitute of religious instruction in this extensive fine country, and the circulation of your paper here will be greatly beneficial in the absence of the stated preaching of the Gospel. Although the exercise of religion in any form is

not prohibited here, but is encouraged by the people, yet but few preachers have come among us to dispense the tidings of salvation to upwards of sixty thousands of destitute souls. I regret that the Methodist Church, with its excellent itinerant system, which has hitherto sent the pioneers of the Gospel into almost every destitute portion of the globe, should have neglected so long this interesting country. I wish you would do me and the good cause the favor to publish such remarks as will call the attention of the reverend Bishops, the different Conferences, and the Board of Missions, to the subject of spreading the Gospel in Texas. About five educated and talented young preachers would find employment in Texas, and no doubt would produce much good in this benighted land. Texas is composed of the shrewdest and most intelligent population of any new country on earth; therefore, a preacher to do good must be respectable and talented. In sending your heralds to the four corners of the earth, remember Texas.

"William B. Travis"

John Andrew Box had been an active Methodist in Alabama. He came to Texas (as did his father, three brothers, sister and their families), and was granted a headright on Cochina Creek, just east of the present town site of Kennard, on July 3, 1835. In January, 1836 he purchased the headright of Frank Johnson, which survey makes up the southwest portion of Crockett and beyond. After he returned from the Texas army at San Jacinto, he settled on his property near Crockett, leaving his eldest son, William R. Box to live on his headright on Cochina.

He is believed to have ministered to the Methodists in Houston County before the ordained preachers arrived. His late daughter, Mrs. Rowena Box Davidson, is remembered to have said that he preached in the townsite of Crockett when only two families resided there.

The Independence of Texas, won in the spring of 1836, made Texas a vast missionary opportunity. The general Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in session at Cincinnati, Ohio in May 1836, received news of the Texas victory at San Jacinto. The Republic of Texas was now open to the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the thousands living in this raw, extensive land, and the official formation of the Texas Mission by the Board of Missions of the Methodist Church became a reality.

Dr. Martin Ruter was president of Alleghany College at Meadville, Pennsylvania and secretary of the conference. He immediately offered himself for service in Texas. At the Tennessee Conference that year (1836), Littleton Fowler also volunteered to go to Texas, as did Robert Alexander of the Mississippi Conference. On April 20, 1837 these three men were commissioned as missionaries to Texas by Bishop Elijah Hedding, who was in charge of foreign missionary work of the church.

Upon crossing into Texas, the missionaries traveled widely, holding services wherever they found settlements, securing donations of land, and setting plans for building houses of worship. Fowler made his headquarters at McMahan's Chapel, traveled throughout Eastern Texas, and established churches at San Augustine, Nacogdoches, Washington-on-the-Brazos, Houston, Brazoria, and other points. He arrived in Houston while Congress was in session and was elected Chaplain of the Senate on November 21, 1837. Six months later, Dr. Martin Ruter, who was Superintendent of the Texas Mission, died on May 21, 1838, and Littleton Fowler succeeded to the superintendence of the Mission.

Littleton Fowler had been born in Tennessee in 1803 but moved to Kentucky when he was three. He was converted at the age of sixteen and joined the Methodist Church. Although the rural schools offered him only meager educational advantages, his intelligence was of high order and he was an ardent, life-long student. His speech was correct and he was considered one of the best evangelists of his generation.

In early youth, Fowler was thrown from a horse, sustaining an injury that caused him periods of intense pain throughout his life. Although continuous horse-back riding was of particular discomfort to him, he made the saddle his home for years. He was six feet, two inches and strait of stature. His capacity for friendship, despite his arduous labors, was quite remarkable. When he returned to his Annual Conference in Tennessee in November, 1838, his appeal for help produced three preachers for service in Texas. His great personal influence on young men, like Henderson D. Palmer and Daniel Carl, caused them to take up the ministry in 1839. These men were to become the first and second pastors at Crockett.

Houston County was part of the vast territory through which Littleton Fowler traveled, visiting the settlers and preaching. Such tours as this one chronicled by Fowler prepared the way for establishment of regular Methodist work:

"February 12, 1839, Littleton Fowler and wife, with Brother Sneed left Nacogdoches to take a tour southwest. Travelled 24 miles to John Durst's (Angelina County) he has built a block house near his dwelling. On 14, made 20 miles to Brother John Box's home, still in Cherokee lands (on Cochina Creek near Kennard). Had some fears for safety of my wife. The 15, rode 34 miles to Brother Box's, one mile and half from Crockett (southwest of town) the county seat of Houston County, travelled the last 50 miles within the Indian boundary; passed five places of fortification for defense from the Indians. On 16, went 34 miles to Cincinnati on Trinity River (southwest Houston County). Sunday, 17, preached to 30 or 40 hearers, from Mark 8:34."

It is noteworthy that Mrs. Fowler often traveled on horseback with her husband. This particular round of his Texas district on which he visited unorganized work like Crockett as well as organized circuits, required more than two months to the 24th of April. The distance traveled was 1,150 miles, with yet 180 more miles to complete the round. The Texas work stretched from the Sabine River on the east to west of the Colorado River, a distance of 300 miles.

The year 1839 was fruitful in terms of recruitment of church members and preachers for the itineracy. The Texas Mission appointments, made by the Mississippi Conference (which had administrative oversight) reveal an increase from the five circuits listed in 1838 to fifteen circuits named in 1839. Crockett was one of the ten new appointments announced for the Texas Mission by the conference that met at Natchez, Mississippi, on December 4, 1839, and Texas was divided into two districts as follows:

East Texas District--

Littleton Fowler, Presiding Elder
San Augustine, S.A. Williams
Jasper, Daniel Carl
Nacogdoches, Francis Wilson
Crockett, Henderson D. Palmer
Montgomery, Moses Spear, Robert Crawford
Harrison Circuit, to be supplied

Rutersville District--

Robert Alexander, Presiding Elder
Rutersville, C. Richardson, and president of
Rutersville College
Austin, John Haynie
Matagorda, Robert Hill
Brazoria, Abel Stevens
Victoria, to be supplied
Houston, Edward Fountaine
Galveston, Thomas O. Summers
Washington, Jesse Hord, J. Lewis
Nashville, Joseph P. Sneed

Henderson D. Palmer was assigned as Crockett's first pastor. He had attended LaGrange College, Alabama, and possibly had known Littleton Fowler who had been agent for the college when he volunteered for service in Texas. It is said that he had come to Texas to escape the feeling of a call to preach. Fowler found him teaching school in Nacogdoches in 1838, appointed him a class leader, and on July 7, 1838, gave him a license to preach. This interesting item is contained in a list of "firsts" in the Texas Methodist Centennial Year-book:

"The first man to be licensed to preach in Texas was, according to the records, Henderson D. Palmer, who was licensed by Littleton Fowler at Box's Fort, Nacogdoches County, on July 7, 1838. Palmer became a well known traveling preacher, and died a member of the Trinity (North Texas) Conference in 1869."

Palmer was admitted into the traveling ministry at the same 1839 Mississippi Conference at which he was appointed to Crockett. He not only was to organize the church at Crockett, but he was to meet his future wife there, the daughter of a local preacher, John Wilson.

The Crockett Methodist Church was organized on December 23, 1839. Palmer as pastor, John Wilson, a local preacher, and Littleton Fowler, the presiding elder, met with J.R. Bracken, John Box, L.E. Downs, Charlie Ellis, James Brent and their families and others. L.E. Downs was married to Matilda Brent, who is believed to have been a sister of James Brent. The name of Sarah Braken appears in some lists of original members and is presumed to have been the wife of J.R. Bracken.

Littleton Fowler's visits to the young congregation is established by a letter he wrote to his wife from "Brother Dykes, Angelina County, Sunday Night, March 15, 1840."

"Tomorrow I shall go to Boxes at the Fort on the Neches, 25 miles distant. The next, to Boxes, on the other side of Crockett, and next day cross Trinity and then to Father Robinsons; etc. . . . My quarterly meeting will be held in Crockett, about 100 miles from here. You may look for me in 4 weeks from the day I left home."

During that first year, it is believed that Palmer organized a Methodist Church at Shiloh. Stephen Box, father of John Box, donated three acres of land (vol. 5, page 332, Houston County Courthouse.) Camp meetings were held annually at Shiloh well into the twentieth century. Families would go to Shiloh and camp for the two weeks that preaching and grove prayer meetings were conducted each summer.

The General Conference of 1840 authorized the Texas Mission to become an Annual Conference. Bishop Beverly

Waugh was dispatched to Texas, and on Christmas Day, convened nine traveling preachers at Rutersville and organized the Texas Annual Conference. Its membership began with 1623 white and 230 colored members, twenty-five local preachers, totaling 1878 church members. The conference admitted four preachers on trial and one was re-admitted into the traveling connection. On the fourth day at adjournment, Bishop Waugh announced the appointments of eighteen itinerant preachers. Henderson D. Palmer was moved to Jasper and Daniel Carl was appointed as Crockett's second pastor.

Daniel Carl was born in New York in 1808 but moved in childhood to Tennessee. In 1837 he came to Texas and engaged in teaching as a tutor in the family of Wm. Kesse in Washington County. He surrendered to a call to the ministry while in private prayer-meeting with Littleton Fowler in Kesse's corn crib, on a rainy day in the winter of 1837-38. He was licensed to preach in 1838, and although he was admitted to the Mississippi Conference in 1839 along with Palmer and three other Texas men, his name does not appear in the list of appointments to charges. However, he must have soon begun preaching, for a letter he wrote to his presiding elder, Littleton Fowler, dated September 6, 1839 from Cincinnati (Houston County) gives an account of the spiritual state of the people at his various preaching places. He mentions Huntsville, Washington Circuit, and Independence, among others. Of his own spiritual state he writes:

"As to my health, I must say that I have been blessed with unusual health. I improve my mind by little and though I feel the special presence of the Spirit while trying to preach, I feel a great want of the grace that purifies the heart. If I had as much love as I ought, it would not be a difficult point for me to decide whether I would spend all my days in this country, in this great, important, responsible, self-denying work. It would do me much good to tell you freely all my weakness, struggles against self, sins and the devil, etc. The Lord has been very good to me in giving me favor in the eyes of this wicked and confused people."

Daniel Carl did continue in the itineracy, for at the

next conference which was the 1840 organizational conference at Rutersville, he was appointed pastor at Crockett. It is reported that "he filled acceptably the most important circuits, stations, and district in Texas. His preaching was not uniform. There were times when he appeared languid, morose and prosaic, but was always a good instructor. Then again, he became fired with his subject, then his logic was clear, his delivery was fluent and his whole theme became radiant with spiritual life. He married, spent most of his life on the Guadalupe river, and after more than a quarter of a century of faithful labor, he died in 1865."

Bishop Thomas A. Morris convened the Second Session of the Texas Annual Conference on December 23, 1841 at San Augustine. He appointed two young lay preachers to Crockett-Nathan Shook and James H. Collard.

Mrs. Mable Kyle Bynum states that Collard is the James Harrison Collard (her great uncle) who fought in the Texas Revolution and came to Crockett in 1837, probably from Montgomery County where his father, Elijah Collard had been one of the commissioners to select the location and purchase land for the county seat of Montgomery County. James Harrison Collard came to Crockett to survey our city and county boundaries. He moved his family to Crockett and subsequently is said to have become Crockett's first merchant, erecting a 16 foot log cabin. Upon his entering the Methodist itineracy, this business passed to the Collins family who operated a general store for many years.

Phelan's History of Methodism in Texas records that both Shook and Collard were licensed to preach from the Montgomery Circuit (Shook "on condition that he place property in the hands of Bro. Joshua Robinson and J.H. Collard to liquidate his debts in the United States".) Both Shook and Collard had been admitted on trial at the First Sessions of the Texas Annual Conference at Rutersville, and Collard's name appeared as one of the two men appointed to Montgomery that year. Shook's name appears for the first time in the Conference appointments in 1841 when he is teamed with Collard

on the circuit at Crockett. They would not qualify for ordination (deacon's orders) until the next annual conference.

J.H. Collard served in the ministry subsequently at Trinity and Franklin. He then took location at the Texas Conference in March 1847, returning to Crockett, where his family had continued to live during his iteneracy. His name appears in 1850 on a petition to levy a tax to build a Court House for Houston County.

Following adjournment of the conference at San Augustine (1841), Bishop Morris traveled through Crockett on his way to Washington-on-the-Brazos to pause at the grave of his friend, Dr. Ruter. The bishop recorded his passage through Houston County in January, 1842, as follows:

"When we crossed the Neches River, we entered Houston County, and some eight miles beyond lodged at a good house of entertainment, kept by Mrs. McLean, whose husband was one of the first American settlers in the Republic. The fare was both cheap and comfortable. Wednesday, 5, 1841, we passed Crockett, the county seat of Houston. The town is new and small, but apparently improving. That evening we called on Brother Box, a short distance beyond Crockett, who cheerfully received and entertained us as well as he could. Thursday, 6th, we halted at a new Methodist camp-ground (Shiloh) and filled our vesseis with water to serve us through an unsettled region of eighteen miles, where no water is to be obtained. In the afternoon we crossed Big Prairie, high dry, and handsome, but rich, and saw a large herd of deer, but so wild that we could not approach within four hundred yards of them. Leaving the prairie, we came down through poor pine woods, and in the evening, while crossing a deep ravine, broke the tongue of the wagon, which detained us some; however, about dark, we reached the house of Mr. Stephen White, who resides near the Trinity River, east side, a few miles below the town of Cincinnati, on a league of excellent land, which he obtained for settling it, and on which he has a mill, ferry, etc... Friday, we crossed the Trinity River, which is twelve rods wide, and occasionally affords water enough to admit steam boats as far up as the three forks; but as it was quite low, and we had a pilot, we forded on a smooth rock just above a sudden fall of some two or three feet. Here we took leave of eastern Texas."

The Methodist congregation was the first church organized in Crockett. The congregation first met in private homes and later shared a union church building with other denominations for a number of years. This building, small in size, was across seventh street from the present Methodist Church, where a service station is now located. The present and only Methodist site was purchased from Colonel John Long in 1858 (Book 15, Page 209, Houston County Courthouse.)

Book 15, Page 209, Deed Records, Houston County Courthouse

The State of Texas
Houston County

Know all men by these presents that John Long, a Citizen of said State and County in the year 1858 did, in said State and County, for the consideration of the sum of one hundred dollars to him paid by C.W. Cooper, and others, Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church South at Crockett, Houston County, Texas, make, execute, and deliver a deed to said Trustees and their successors in office, to a certain tract or parcel of land situated, lying and being in the town of Crockett and said State and County to wit: Beginning 60 feet East of the N.E. Corner of lot no. 304 in Block 31 upon the plat of the lot now known as the public school lot. thence South 100 feet to the lot now occupied by A.A. DeBerry, thence west on the said DeBerrys' North line to the Street. Thence North 100 feet to the place of beginning. And whereas said deed was filed for record by the Trustees aforesaid in the office of the Clerk of the County Court of said County, and whereas said deed has been lost or destroyed by fire in the burning of the Courthouse; now therefore we J.C. Wootters and his wife E.M. Wootters, F.A. Bayne and his wife E.J. Bayne, A.A. DeBerry and his wife M.J. DeBerry, J.T. Taylor and his wife E.H. Taylor, Joe Long, Chrs. Long, Dr. J.B. Smith and his wife Bettie Smith, Mrs. Lou Dunmondy, femasole, E.E. Hail and his wife Jennie Hail, all citizens of Houston County and said State of Texas and T.H. Bayne and his wife S.A. Bayne, citizens of Trinity County and State of Texas, being the sole heirs of John Long, the deceased do at the request of the Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church, herewith for the purpose and consideration aforesaid

as well as for the consideration of one dollar to us paid by said Trustees, receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, have granted sold and conveyed and do by these presents, grant sell and convey to C.O. Webb, H.W. Moore, J.E. Downes, Chas. Stokes, W.E. Haile and L.W. Cooper and their successors in office the tract or parcel of land described in the former part of this instrument together with all and singular the rights, members improvements hereditaments and appertences to the same belonging or in any wise appertaining or incident thereto: To have and to hold all and singular to the premises above mentioned unto the said C.O. Webb, H.W. Cooper and their successors in office, in Trust for the Methodist Episcopal Church South in Crockett Houston County, Texas to be kept maintained and disposed of for the use of the ministry and membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church South subject to the discipline, usage, and ministerial appointments of said Church, as from time to time authorized and declared by the general Conference of said Church and the Annual Conference within where bounds the said premises are estuate.

Witness our hands this 1st day of June A.D. 1893.

A.A. DeBerry	J.C. Wootters
M.J. DeBerry	E.M. Wootters
J.C. Long	L.E. Dunmondy
Chas. Long	E.J. Hail
F.H. Bayne	S.A. Bayne
E.J. Bayne	Thomas Bayne
John T. Taylor	E.H. Taylor
E.E. Hail	John B. Smith
	Betty L. Smith

The first Methodist building was a large frame structure and was built on this sight. All historical sketches that are in hand state that it was built during the year 1864 and credit the Reverend Harvin W. Moore and Reverend George S. Gatewood with being the pastors at the time of construction. At the close of 1864 the membership in Crockett was 252 white members, 46 colored members, and 5 local preachers.

Mrs. Gail O. King remembers that the church "was long a wooden building painted white, lighted by swinging lamps, which burned kerosene and occasionally went out if the sermon was too long, and they frequently were. It was heated by wood

stoves and was very cold most of the time. The organ was one that had to be pumped, but we always have had faithful organists in our church and for the most part good music."

Mrs. King's love for a good story is revealed in an interview she gave Georgia M. Spinks:

"The first long wooden building was raised off the ground on blocks and hogs still prowled the streets at that time, probably attracted by the corn patch between the church and the square. The building had cracks in the floor, the hogs slept beneath the floors at night, cozy in the bed of leaves that had blown and settled there, and the hogs were covered with fleas. The fleas settled permanently in the cracks in the floors of the church, feasting on the more succulent sisters during Sunday school and church services."

Mr. Jim Foster, son of Mr. & Mrs. W.J. Foster, wrote the following church history in 1954 at the age of 95 years:

"The first Church was a long wooden building. It was a one room structure across the street from the present building on Goliad and Seventh Street. In yester years it was called Church Street because all of the churches were on this one street. Annual Conferences were held often in the years 1862-1871, and 1877-1896. I joined our church in 1870. In that year on September 21, the Church had burned and a temporary building was erected across the street on Goliad on the old site in which was known as the Moore Home and Orchard for about 8 to 10 years.

On September 21, 1870 this wooden Church burned. Another wooden frame temporary church was built across from the original site, and was lifted-raised upon wooden blocks because of the sticky red clay. Between this site and the town areas there was a massive corn patch, so it was protected from straying animals. The floor had large cracks in it.

The Church was heated by wood stoves and lighted by log swinging lamps that burned kerosene. It was often too cold or too hot, becoming most uncomfortable.

The organ was one that had to be pumped. There were always good singers and musicians in the Church so we always had good music."

In 1844 the Texas Conference was divided and Crockett became a part of the East Texas Conference until the conferences were again merged in 1902. Crockett had the distinction of being the host church for the Annual Conference sessions of

the East Texas Conference four times during these years

The Annual Conference of 1862 was held November 19 24 in Crockett The Bishop assigned to preside over the conference did not arrive probably because travel was made extremely difficult by the Civil War. The Reverend R.S Finley was elected to the chair in the bishop's absence Harvin W. Moore was the host pastor

The next annual conference to meet in Crockett was November 15 26 1871 with Bishop Enoch Marvin presiding The minutes reveal that the conference convened in the Presbyterian Church which must have been larger or nicer than the Methodist building The laity had four delegates from each of the four districts. Marshall, Palestine San Augustine and Crockett (Crockett had become head of a district in 1867.) The four delegates listed from the Crockett District were John Box S B B. Durham Alexander Long and W.W. Manning. John Box was added to the conference committee on Public worship to serve with J C Woolam and W C Collins

The following resolution was adopted at the close of the 1871 conference at Crockett.

Resolved that the members of this Conference heartily sympathize with the citizens of Crockett in their recent calamity by fire, and that we highly esteem and appreciate the kindness and hospitality with which they received and entertained this conference during its session, and that they have our earnest prayers for their temporal and spiritual prosperity. Adopted by a rising vote

The appointments were made at the closing session on November 20 and included the following.

Crockett District - P. Cullen Presiding Elder

Crockett and Pennington - J.C. Woolam

Woolam was married to the widow of the late Littleton Fowler.

The annual conference again met in Crockett December 12-16, 1877 with Bishop W.M Wightman presiding. Dabney P Cullen completing his second year at Crockett was the host pastor and James B Hall was appointed by the bishop to serve Crockett the next year

The 1888 session of the East Texas Conference met in Crockett November 28 - December 3 with Bishop W.W. Duncan in the chair. B.R. Bolton, who was completing his third year as pastor at Crockett, was host for the conference, and was reassigned by the bishop for his fourth year.

THE MIDDLE YEARS

In July, 1897 a local newspaper reported that the building committee of the Methodist Church had met and organized as follows:

Rev. A.S. Whitehurst, Chairman

R.E. McConnell, Secretary

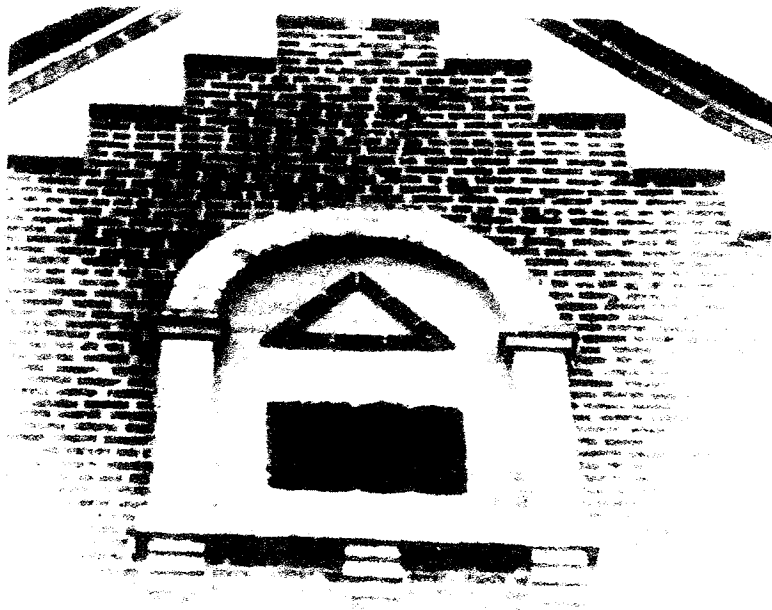
Messrs. J.E. Downes, Charles Stokes, J.B. Ellis, and W.H. Denny, Committee to solicit subscriptions.

James DeDaines and Charles Stokes, Committee to select place to burn brick.

R. Cassady to furnish plans and estimates.

Tentative plans were for a brick church 40 x 70 feet, seating five hundred people.

The frame church was moved across Goliad Street onto the Moore property and continued to be used while the brick church was being constructed. The brick was also made on the Moore property and hauled across Goliad in wheelbarrows to the building site. The building committee wanted to use some part of the old church and incorporate it into the new. They decided against using any of the old wood and decided instead to use some of the old pilings that held up the old wooden church and build three imitation windows, on the north, west, and south sides of the church, and to use these old foundation bricks to mingle the old with the new. If you look up you can see these dark brown bricks made into what looks like rounded top windows.



Exterior view of Church Sanctuary, showing one of the "Imitation" windows. Note the dark bricks in center — taken from the foundation of the previous church structure.



1930 shows the brick sanctuary at right center. The old houses, church and

At the end of the construction period, the old church was sold to John Clark, a builder, who used the materials to construct several houses on Bell Street.

The new brick building was built during 1901 and 1902. Judge L.L. Moore remembers that the cornerstone was laid September 1, 1901. Individuals present were permitted to place objects in the cornerstone. Included were various coins and a Bible. One lady who was a school girl at the time reports that she placed her arithmetic paper in the cornerstone. The cornerstone of white marble bears the inscription:

M.E. Church South
Erected
1901

The building committee was J.E. Downes, James DeDaines, Richard Cassady, R.E. McConnell, Charles Stokes, J.B. Ellis, and R.C. Spinks. R.W. Atkinson and A.H. Wootters filled the vacancies of R.E. McConnell and James DeDaines who resigned. Richard Cassady was the builder. The brick were made on the site and were laid by James DeDaines and his son, Alva DeDaines and a third mason. The bell in the tower was given by L.C. Cooper. Pastor during construction of the church was Ellis Smith, a grandson of the pioneer missionary, Littleton Fowler. The Smith's infant son died during construction and the west stained glass window is in memory of this child, Ernest Smith.

The General Conference of 1902 had merged the East Texas and Annual Texas Conferences. Crockett had the distinction of hosting the first sessions of the new reunited Texas Annual Conference on December 3-8, 1902. The new brick sanctuary was an impressive setting for the conference at which Bishop E.R. Hendrix presided.

Delegates to conferences in those years were entertained in the homes of the town. Every Crockett home literally bulged at the seams while accommodating the preachers, delegates, and families that came from far and near to enjoy this momentous occasion. Mrs. Willis Higginbotham (Ethel Wootters) recalls that one guest who remembered staying in the home of her parents during the 1888 conference returned at three A.M. ask-

ing for the same accommodations for the 1902 conference. The Wootters were too sleepy to resist at that hour and the guest moved in. Many others joined him and before the conference was over all had brought home other guest to eat or sleep at the Wootters' home. Mrs. Higginbotham sang in the choir at the meeting, and what sweet singing that must have been! A circuit rider in the congregation heard the sweet music, got "Miss Ethel's address and wrote a letter to her proposing marriage. "I kept the letter for years", "Miss Ethel" said.

The late Mrs. J.F. Cook (Laura Hester) recalls going to the conference from their home at Porter Springs. In their company was Mr. and Mrs. John Simmons, Mack Porter (father of Nettie Porter Adams), Miss Georgia Hester, and A.E. Hester. "We went early that evening to get a seat", Mrs. Cook said, "but even then every seat was taken and they had to put chairs for us behind the choir."

In a review of the history of Crockett's churches, the Houston County Times, on September 18, 1914, carried this interesting remembrance of revivals sponsored by the Methodist Church of Crockett.

"True to the evangelism of the denomination, its history has been marked by many splendid revival meetings. In the pastorate of Reverend (George S.) Gatewood (1864) . . . a great meeting was held that swept the whole town and brought many people into the churches." This could well have been the impetus that enabled the Methodists to build their first church in that year. The Times continues, "In 1886 another sweeping revival was conducted by Reverend J.T. Smith; in 1911 while Reverend G.W. Davis was the pastor, a meeting under the leadership of Reverend J.W. Bergin resulted in about 90 conversions and accessions to the church, and the great meeting of this present year (1914), led by Reverend D.L. Coale, is fresh in the memory of the people. During the two years of the present pastorate between ninety and one hundred persons have come into its ranks."

The pipe organ was installed in 1915. The program of the Dedicatory Services that were held on Wednesday, October 20 and Thursday, October 21, states, "The organ was built by

the Estey Organ Company of Battleboro, Vermont, contains more than eight hundred pipes." It goes on to describe the stops on the great organ, swell organ, and pedal organ, concluding with the information that "Blowing device operated by electric current." Mrs. Katherine Buford Peebles of San Antonio was featured as the concert organist for the dedicatory services. Also listed was Mrs. J.D. Woodson, pianist, Mrs. M.L. Sheppard, violin, and Mrs. Barker Tunstall, chimes.

During the pastorage of Rev. Earl Cantrelle (1980), \$25,000. was raised and spent to renew the pipe organ. Mrs. Ruby DeCuir was organist for many years. Mrs. Wilma Foote and Mrs. Catherine Ellis are currently the organists.

A growing church school caused the congregation to begin talking about additional education space in 1921. There was too much talk and not enough action to suit Mrs. Nettie Adams, whose home was next door to the church. One Sunday morning, Mrs. Adams surprised the congregation by coming forward and stating that the men needed to stop talking and take some action. Forthwith, she stripped her diamonds from her fingers, laid the rings on the altar, and announced they would be a starter. This got the men moving, and it is said that Mrs. Adams got her rings back, too.

The building was begun under the ministry of E.A. Maness in 1921. Gail Q. King was chairman of the building committee. Mrs. G.H. Henderson was president of the Women's Missionary Society. The ladies wanted to include a basement with a kitchen in the plans so that they could have a place for church dinners. They were told that if they would pay \$1,000. towards its cost, a basement would be included. They had no money, but Mrs. Henderson signed a note at the bank for the amount, and the ladies of the church paid her back by serving the Lions Club luncheons and operating a country store in town. The new annex was completed in 1922 under the pastorate of C.W. Hughes. This annex now houses the pastor's study,

the church office, the library, and three children's Sunday School classes on the second floor. The basement is used today as a meeting area for the Boy Scouts who are sponsored by the Methodist Church.



Pictured (left to right) Mrs. C.V. (Mamie) Sexton, unknown, Mrs. G.D. McLain, unknown, Mrs. Harry (Mattie) Trube, Mrs. A.W. (Maggie) Phillips, Mrs. Alonzo S. (Bettie) Nelson, seated Mrs. Mike (Nora) McCarty.

THE LATER YEARS

In 1952 plans were begun to build the Fellowship Hall and single level classrooms. At that time the parsonage, a two story home with porches on both levels, stood where the Fellowship Hall is today. The parsonage was moved from that spot to the south side of the church property where the children's playground is now. All of the porches were removed and some further remodeling was done at that time.

Ground was broken for the Fellowship Hall and single level classrooms in 1953 by J.M. Foster, then 94 years of age. The plans were begun under the pastorate of Leslie LeGrand and completed in 1954. James M. Heflin was pastor during actual construction. John Spinks was chairman of the Board of Stewards, J.G. Beasley was chairman of the building committee and Raymond Cornelius was vice-chairman of the building committee. Mrs. Jack Barbee was president of the Woman's Society of Christian Service. Again, the women lobbied for a kitchen and by holding rummage sales, under the chairmanship of Mrs. R.J. Spence, were able to raise \$1,900. to completely equip the new kitchen.

The classrooms south of the kitchen now house the infant nursery, toddler's room, and classrooms for children ages two through six.

The building across the court yard from the breezeway houses the Builders Class and the Toy Box (a project brought into reality by John Fore whereby used toys are cleaned, repaired, and distributed to needy children at Christmas time).



(pictures of builders class - then & now)



End view of the single-story education wing, constructed in the 1950's

October 18, 1987

BUILDERS CLASS
40th Birthday

*It's great to know that this year we are forty
And all of us are still 'hale & hearty'
This all got it's start on a frosty morn
January 1947 this class was born
We met in the basement – it was damp and dark
But we were beginning our lives and it was a lark
The war was over and we felt so free –
To be able to worship & praise Thee –
So, full of love, our voices rang
"Are ye able said the Master" is the song we sang
And able we were in so many ways
We produced many teachers, lay speakers too
And just the largest class our church ever knew
Many things have happened through the years
Heartaches and Happiness and yes a few tears.
Those of you that joined us down the line –
We're glad you did, we think you are fine –
Together with God's help we will find the way –
But for right now let's celebrate
Our Birthday*

Esta Faye Pennington

For several years the physical plant was satisfactory. About this time many outside activities drew the interest of many people, such as lakes everywhere, golf tournaments, homecomings, etc. Our pastors, Rev. Vernon Cornelius, Rev. C.A. West, and Rev. E. Jewell Strong worked hard on spiritual growth, but the needed enthusiasm was not there.

During 1967-1968, under the pastorate of L.B. Broach III, a new two level education building (facing Seventh Street) was completed. The old three level annex was also completely remodeled. The building committee was composed of Lanier Edmiston, Chairman, William B. Dabney, Aubert C. Dykes, Jr., Pat Kelley, Leo Knox, Dr. J.V. Land, and Allen Rogers. Henry Ellis was Finance Chairman for this project.

The basement of the annex was made into a beautiful youth center. Youth director was Larry Johnson. Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Shoup were counselors and there were around 40 MYF members. The basement was packed full every Sunday night.

In May, 1969 a Homecoming was held to celebrate the 130th birthday and to show off the new addition. Bishop Kenneth Copeland was here, and the historical marker was placed near the front door.



*Picture taken at the church's 130th Anniversary in 1969.
Pastor L.B. Broach is on the left.*

The idea for the present "Lift Center" in Crockett was conceived in a church-wide Mission Study on Poverty in 1968. In the discussion period after the presentation Carole Moore, daughter-in-law of Tom and Lilley Jim Moore, expressed a need for the low income children to have an opportunity to have preschool training so that they could have a more equal start in school. A small group from our church met to discuss this in a task group and decided to get as many leaders of the black and white communities together as possible. They met in our church. We had about 75 very interested people meet a number of times. A steering committee was formed which went to state and federal officials searching for funding and looking for a place to operate. It opened in 1969 with 15 children and is still operating today. A large number of the first board members were from the First Methodist Church.

The Sunday night church group became a very close-knit group, and quite often after church they would go to someone's home for fellowship.

In 1970 under the pastorate of Rev. Jim H. Rhodes, Jr., some much needed repair was done to the ceiling of the sanctuary. A committee was formed to discuss further renovation of the sanctuary, and, in fact, twelve new light fixtures were donated anonymously, but with money very scarce, nothing further was done at that time.

Youth directors were John D. Evans, Danny Vinson, and Jane Boreland. The youth took a mission trip in a chartered bus to Waco, Austin, San Antonio, and Galveston. Choir directors were Dick Gray, Janet Buchanan and Celeste Tanner. While under the direction of Celeste Tanner, the children, youth, and adult choirs did the musical production, "Cool in the Furnace", which was the story in Daniel of Shadrack, Meshack, and Abednigo. It was such a wonderful production that it was done twice in our church to a full house both times, then in the Nacogdoches church and at midwinter at Lakeview. Rev. Jim Rhodes was King Nebuchadnezzar and had one scene where he wore a night shirt.

Organists were Willma Foote and David Rogers.

The Luther Kleckley Scholarship Fund is a result of a provision in the will of Mr. Luther Austin Kleckley, who died in 1971. In his will, Mr. Kleckley established a trust, with the direction that the trustees therein named contribute Six Hundred Dollars each year for the duration of the trust, to the First (United) Methodist Church of Crockett, for the establishment of this educational fund. It provides that the Trustees of the church shall be the trustees for the fund, "and it shall be expended for educational purposes for the benefit of any person or persons they may select."

The first contribution was made by the trust in 1971, and annually thereafter. This testamentary trust shall continue until the death of certain relatives of Mr. Kleckley, at which time it shall terminate and the estate distributed to the ultimate beneficiaries.

Although Mr. Kleckley lived in Houston, Texas, for many years, he was a native of Houston County, and built a nice home on the old Kleckley family farm, next to the San Pedro Church cemetery on Lockout Road, where he spent the last years of his life.

Under the pastorate of Rev. E.J. Davis, 1974-76, discussions about the renovation of the sanctuary continued with more ideas and possibilities. No work, however, was actually done.

Choir directors were Janet Buchanan, Cathy Ormand, and Doris Davis. Cynthia McAlister and Doris Davis were organists. Youth counselors were Joe and Janet Barton, Frank and Becky Towery, and Dwight and Cynthia McAlister.

The first Crismon tree was decorated under the direction of Mrs. E.J. Davis. The women, children, and families made Crismons and there was a very impressive service to decorate the tree.

In 1976 under the leadership of pastor Earl Cantrelle, work finally began on the renovation of the sanctuary. A building committee was formed and the work began. Pat Kelley was Chairman of the Administrative Board. The Committee: A.R. Jimmerson, Chairman, Mr. & Mrs. Charles Heynie, Mr. &

Mrs. Jim Grady Waller, Mrs. Mae K. Maxwell (President of UMW), Mrs. Bertha Sanders, Mrs. Beth Jimmerson, Mrs. Helen Ramsey, Harold Walker, Mr. & Mrs. Louis Cook, Rev. Cantrelle, Pat Kelley, Bill Dabney, Ralph Mather, Phil Jones, and Mr. & Mrs. William Schmidt. The balcony was removed so that the beautiful stained glass window could again be seen in its entirety. The sanctuary had a complete renovation done by Homer Argall, a church member, with help from Alvin Jimmerson and several other dedicated members. The opening behind the pulpit was closed in, and a large oak arch (made by Mr. Argall), was added. The color scheme of rich rust carpet, rust velvet pew cushions, walls of soft white, and brown wood-work makes the large oak arch in the chancel area more beautiful. The colors, chosen by Mrs. Bobbie Waller and Mrs. Susie Cook match the robes of Jesus in the windows on the north and east side of the sanctuary.

The priceless stained glass windows, made in Bavaria, received needed repair inside and out. Plate glass protective coverings were added to the outside. Renovation was completed in 1978.

Homer Argall saved the old lumber and square nails he removed during remodeling. After completion of the work he used the lumber to make plaques in the shape of an arch (to match the arches on the ends of our pews); to these he fastened two square nails in the shape of a cross. These were sold to the membership as a memento and the money went toward the cost of the renovation.

Mrs. Florence King gave kneelers at the altar in memory of her beloved husband, Robert L. King, Sr. The kneelers are done in needlepoint in colors chosen from the stained glass windows. Ladies of the church assisted in this tedious work.

In 1977 the United Methodist Women undertook the project of renovating and improving the children's wing. All of the rooms were painted, new shades or curtains were added to each room, and the building carpeted throughout.

The old two story parsonage that stood next door to the church was in need of major repair. There were some very

spirited church conferences to decide whether to repair the old parsonage, build a new one, or buy one already built. Many people had precious memories associated with the old parsonage. The church was packed for each conference. It was finally decided to purchase the split level house at the end of Cordell Street for the parsonage. The old parsonage was sold, torn down, numbering each piece, and shipped to Brownwood where it was reconstructed.

The New Beginnings Sunday school class and the Early Birds men's class were organized with Earl Cantrelle teaching both of them.

For the first time in its history, the church bought a fifteen passenger van. Celeste Tanner was hired as Program Director. Youth counselors were Ann & Larry Jones, Ramona & Wally Koehl, Stew & Gayle Darsey, Mark & Catherine Ellis, and John & Sidney Stovall. Choir directors were Celeste Tanner, Jim Fisk, Stew Darsey, and Easy Maness.

"As you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to me." Matthew 25:40. In 1967 Judge Woodrow Seals, a federal judge, started a helping hand organization at St. Stephen United Methodist Church in Houston, Texas.

As the program grew the story was told to other United Methodists and within a few years Societies of St. Stephen sprang up all over Texas. In 1978, under the direction of Rev. Earl Cantrelle, a Society was organized in First United Methodist Church, Crockett.

Twenty-two couples answered the call to serve on the first committee which was chaired by Mrs. Mae Maxwell, who presided until 1981 when Mrs. Easy Maness was elected chairperson by the Charge Conference and is serving at the present time.

A Society of St. Stephen is a group of people in the United Methodist Church, people committed to using their resources to relieve suffering wherever it exists, one step at a time.

The Society may be connected to the local church structure through one of the regular work areas, or it may be a special opportunity for a few who are willing to organize for intentional service. The committee chose the latter form of organization.

These are some of the types of ministries: (1) providing food, clothing, and lodging, (2) financial help, (3) transportation, (4) nursing home and hospital visitation, (5) medical, dental, and eye help, (6) rent, (7) sack lunches for transients.

The name of the Society does not come from the St. Stephen United Methodist Church where it originated, but from the first Christian martyr after the resurrection of Christ. "We do not serve for ourselves or for the favor of others. We serve as obedient disciples of Jesus."

In May, 1985, under the pastorate of Dr. Alvis Coleman, the first annual church picnic was held at Ratcliff Lake. It has been a huge success every year since that time.

The New Beginnings Sunday school class took on the project of painting the Fellowship Hall, which had not been done in at least 30 years. The project was hard work and only a few dared to get on the tall scaffolding to paint the ceiling, but the class really bonded together in a special way through the project.

In 1985 a new roof was put on the sanctuary.

A beautiful Schuman grand piano now stands in the sanctuary. This Schuman replaced the Steinway which was a memorial to Mrs. Mable Durst Hail, a choir director and soloist for many years.

Choir Directors were Stew Darsey and Rosa Davis. Youth Directors were Daren Jacobson and Lynn McWhorter. Mrs. Judy Biddix and Mrs. Debbie Furrh were Youth Counselors.

The azaleas in the courtyard were placed there by Buddy Clonts in memory of his mother, Mrs. Nell Clonts. Mrs. Esta Faye Pennington gave the azaleas in front of the church in memory of her mother, Mrs. Thelma Morrow. The front entrance doors to the sanctuary were given in memory of her husband, Jim Grady Waller, by Mrs. Bobbie Waller.

A new Sunday School class, the Key class, was organized in 1986. This class was designed for college students and young singles. Mrs. Kay Smith is the teacher.

In June, 1987 our current pastor, Rev. Joe W. Fort, III was assigned to Crockett. Shortly thereafter the church was blessed with a large inheritance from the Harvey McCarty Estate. During a meeting of the Administrative Board held on June 16, 1987 an Advisory Committee composed of the Chairman of the Administrative Board (Charles Tipton), the Chairman of the Board of Trustees (Bill Dabney), Chairman of the Finance Committee (Pat Kelley), the pastor (Joe Fort), Henry M. Ellis, Jake Caprielian, and Oliver Bass, was formed. This Advisory Committee, a non-voting committee, was to report to the Board of Trustees and the Administrative Board their recommendations as to the best way to invest this inheritance.

A second committee, called a Guide Lines Committee was to study and bring recommendations to the Board of where the money would best be spent. This committee was made up of the following people: Rev. Joe Fort, Mrs. Helen Ramsey, Bill Dabney, Charles Tipton, Mark Ellis, Pat Kelley, Ramona Koehl, and Sten Olsen.

The McCarty bequest, made by Harvey McCarty in memory of his mother, Nora McCarty, amounted to \$1,309,642. which included \$768,000. in stocks and bonds, \$44,503. in real estate, and the balance in certificates of deposits. Part of this total was interest that was earned on the C.D.'s and dividends that accumulated before the bequest was funded. When the stocks were turned over to the church, a committee was appointed by the Board of Trustees to oversee the investment of the bequest. This committee was composed of Jake Caprielian, Henry Ellis, Harold Walker, Oliver Bass, and Charles Edmiston. It was decided that the church should not be in the stock market; so the stocks were sold in August and September of 1987.

The profit from these sales together with the balance of the bequest netted the church \$1,775,000. which is the beginning principal to be maintained.

The Charge Conference of 1987 voted to make the committee permanent and to maintain the principal and add 10% of yearly earnings to this amount. The income from the fund is kept separate from other church funds and budgeted expenditures are paid directly from this interest bearing account.

In 1988 almost all of the air conditioning units (which were all over 30 years old) began to quit. Thanks to the money received from the McCarty bequest, new air conditioners were purchased for the sanctuary, fellowship hall, Builders classroom, and the children's wing. The kitchen was remodeled, and a new stove and refrigerator were purchased along with an ice-maker. The Susannah Circle of the United Methodist Women donated a microwave oven, and the UMW unit added a new commercial can opener and large new pots and pans.

Also in 1988 the parsonage mortgage was paid off. Wider sidewalks and wheelchair ramps were installed.

In December, 1988, the choir showed off their new navy blue robes during their performance of their Christmas Contata. The choir held a spaghetti supper in February, 1989 to help pay for the new robes. Choir directors were Joan Hulse in 1988, Herman Merritt from June 1988 to September 1989, when he resigned. Until a new director is secured, John Carroll is serving as interim director.

In 1987 the Council of Ministries began discussing the need for a television ministry so that the shut-ins and nursing home members would be able to participate in the worship services and still feel a part of the church family. In May, 1988 the first attempt at this ministry was aired on a local station and was very well received. Johnny Bear is the cameraman. The worship services continue to be heard on radio each Sunday morning also.

Mary Keller, Chairman of the Council of Ministries, as well as Education Coordinator, was instrumental in organizing a new Sunday school class called the Disciples class. Bill Walton is the teacher.

The parking lot had developed many large "pot holes", and after much discussion, it was decided to just fill in the holes and regrade the existing surface.

The church van, which was getting old, was giving much trouble and seemed to be in the shop more than on the road. It was decided to purchase a new van, but to keep the old one also.

In June, 1989, the United Methodist Army came to Crockett. This was a youth work-camp of approximately 100 people that slept in the church and repaired homes in the community.

At the request of the mothers of young children in our church, the Board voted to build a new playground. This is located on the south side of the church where the old parsonage used to stand.

Youth Coordinators are Judy Biddix and Marilyn Musker in charge of the Senior High, and Susan Hemphill and Katherine Orlert in charge of the Jr. High. For the summer only we had a Youth Director, Julie Everett. The MYF is, at this time, a very active group. They have approximately 25 members attending, and the Senior High group is planning and working toward a ski trip next spring.

In January, 1988, Rev. Beverly Ward was hired as an assistant pastor. In June, 1989, she left Crockett to become pastor of a church in Marshall. During her year and one-half here she taught and organized a number of Bible study groups. These study groups were so well received, that although she has left Crockett, her influence is still being felt, as new study groups are being formed at the present time.

Rev. Ward worked closely with the Methodist Youth Fellowship and their adult coordinators, Mrs. Ramona Koehl, Mrs. Susan Hemphill, and Neil & Denise Durrance. In the spring of 1988 the youth made a trip to New Mexico to ski.

In the fall of 1988 Eleanor Patton, Chairman of the Missions Commission and Rev. Ward sponsored an overnight trip to visit the Methodist Mission facility in San Antonio. Other trips were made to Boy's Ranch in Waco and the Moody

House in Galveston.

In the spring of 1989 the piece of property across Seventh Street from the church, at the corner of Seventh and E. Fannin Avenue became available for purchase. The house on the property is in need of repair, but since this would be the only property likely to become available for purchase for many years to come, the Board voted to purchase the property for \$25,000. It is not known at this time whether the house will be torn down, remodeled for classrooms, used by the youth as a recreation site, or the land made into a parking lot, as more parking space is needed.

Replacing Sunday night worship services, Rev. Fort has taught two Sunday night Bible study classes which were well attended.

Several years ago the United Methodist Church in America began a revision of the Methodist Hymnal. Finally, in 1989, the new hymnal was published. Mr. Frank Foster, Jr. donated 250 copies of this new hymnal in memory of his parents, Mr. & Mrs. Frank Foster, Sr. A special musical Sunday was held September 17, 1989 to dedicate and introduce these books.

Mrs. Wilma Foote and Mrs. Catherine Ellis are the current organists. Mrs. Rosa Davis is Children's Choir Director.

Mr. John Carroll is currently Chairman of the Administrative Board and Mrs. Beth Jimmerson is Chairman of the Board of Trustees. Mrs. Mary Keller is serving as the Chairperson of the Council on Ministries.

WINDING THINGS UP

Membership rolls are available from 1864 to the present time. Some of the records are water stained and hard to read. We were able to find a list of the members who joined from 1839 to 1864. The church has a membership of 520 at the present time.

We cannot let a history of this church be written without mentioning the fact that Marie and Smith Clines were voluntary Communion stewards for almost 40 years. Also, Smith served as Building and Grounds Chairman for almost 30 years. He opened and closed the church doors faithfully each Sunday morning and evening for all of this time.

Joe Bennett served this church as Head Usher for over 30 years. He was followed by Phil Jones, A.R. "Rocky" Jimmerson and Rue Maness, who is now serving his ninth year.

Merrett Hodges has served for many years as the electrician. Any time some of the lighting or other electrical conveniences that we have today need work, Merrett gets a telephone call.

Also, we would like to mention these Sunday school teachers who have each put in many years at their jobs: Mamie Sexton, Ruth Warfield, Mr. Young, Margaret Phillips (Miss Maggie to her students), Della Gus (Gussie) Easterly, Marie Clines, Corrie Schmidt, Margaret Jones, Nan Marcum, Lucille King, Mrs. John McConnell, Bess Hazlett, John Spinks, and Baby DeGuir.

Still teaching today are Beth Jimmerson, Pat Kelley, William Schmidt, Mary Schmidt, John Martha Kelley, Ralph Mather, Eleanor Patton, Nat Patton, Rosa Davis, Bertha Sanders, Kay Smith, Dorothy Tipton, Wallace Koehl, Sidney Stovall, Dan Julian, Sandra Wilson, Ted Williams, Carolyn McElyea, Malanie Goolsby, Ric Pennington, John Carroll, Chuck Kennedy, and Sten Olsen. When you really stop to think

about it, there is, and has been a lot of time, devotion, and love of this church that goes into their faithful service.

John Fore is also currently teaching the 5th-6th grade class. John has been on the job about fifteen years, and he and his class developed the very efficient acolyte program that is enjoyed today - still under his coordination.

Last, but certainly not least, the members uniting with this church in the past few years are very much a part of its history. Without new members, this church would not be celebrating its 150th Anniversary today, December 17, 1989.

STAINED GLASS WINDOWS

The stained glass windows in the church are one of its outstanding features. The glass is of an exceptional quality from the area of Bavaria. We do not have the exact location, but the place was absorbed by Czechoslovakia after the First World War. All the windows are memorials.

The northeast window next to the organ bears this: "IN MEMORY OF OUR FATHER AND MOTHER - BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHO DIE IN THE LORD. WILLIAM JOHNSON BORN MAY 25, 1825, DIED APRIL 12, 1879. MARY J. JOHNSON BORN APRIL 26, 1828 DIED DECEMBER 25, 1872." Mr. & Mrs. Johnson are the grandparents of Lanier Edmiston and Florence King. Their influence is still being felt in our church. At the top of the window is a flower which we call the iris, also known as the fleur-de-lis. This flower has a special meaning and appears in all the windows. It means the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost. Under the flower is a dove which also represents the Holy Spirit.

The central window on the north side portrays Jesus with his open arms "Come unto me and I will give you rest." This window was given in memory of John McConnell, Sr. He was born in Ireland June 24, 1818 and died in Crockett September 7, 1898. This family has a long and illustrious history in this church and descendants are still leaders in the church today. His daughter-in-law, Mrs. John McConnell was a great leader in the fight for prohibition in Houston County.

The next window in the north is a replacement window. There are several of these windows in the church. The original windows were blown out (quoting Miss Lucille King) during a bad storm. The original glass was unobtainable, but the fleur-de-lis motif is continued.

The west window depicts Jesus surrounded by little children. "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not." This window was given in memory of Mrs. Patty Smith. She was born in 1869 and died in 1911. Her little son, Ernest Smith, was born November 1898 and died

October 1901. Mrs. Patty Smith's husband was Mr. Ellis Smith, who was the pastor of the church in 1900. Mrs. Lucille King loved this window. When the day came for Miss Lucille Beasley to marry Mr. Gale Q. King, Rev. Ellis Smith performed the ceremony. He came at the last moment and left immediately after the ceremony because his son was quite ill. The little boy Ernest, died that night. It was due to the influence of Mrs. King and her family that we have this most beautiful window. In this window, we also have the iris. Up on top we have another dove. Noah sent a dove from the ark and on the second trip brought back an olive branch. This represents that dove.

On the southwest side of the sanctuary is this little window which was saved from the storm. It reads: "IN MEMORY OF OUR FATHER, W.J. FOSTER, THE FAITHFUL SUPERINTENDENT OF SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR TWENTY YEARS. BORN JANUARY 3, 1830, DIED FEBRUARY 13, 1898. This family is still active in this church.

The southeast window was given in memory of Edward E. Downes, First Lieutenant in the U.S. Infantry. He fell in battle June 23, 1901. This window also has the lily. At the top, very prominently displayed, is a star. Miss Lucille said she couldn't decide whether it represented the Lone Star of Texas or the Star of the Epiphany the Magi followed to Jesus, but probably it represents Texas. Underneath the star is the eagle, and although that is a religious symbol for St. John, it is thought to be the U.S. Eagle, part of our seal. The flags displayed have 45 stars which gives you the date. Miss Lucille told a story about "Eddie" when he was a little boy. He loved to sing and would stand on a stool to sing, "From all the dark places of earth's heathen races". There is, in the Phillipines, a "Camp Downes" named for him.

The central window on the south is very striking, depicting a woman clinging to a large rock cross in a stormy sea. We find the lily again, also grapes and a sheaf of wheat representing the Lord's Supper. In the center are two crosses and between them is a large circle which signifies the eternal love of God surrounding the cross of death and the cross of eternal life. This window was given in memory of Catherine A. Burnett. Mrs. Burnett was visiting in Crockett, but had set a time to return to her home in Galveston before school started, so she could help get the children ready for school. It was raining when she left Crockett to return to her home in Galveston. She lived with her sons, who lived next door to each other. The morning after her arrival back in Galveston her two sons went to work. During the day it continued to storm. That was the day of the terrible 1900 Galveston flood. The two houses were demolished and many people were killed. Those two boys on that day lost their mother, their wives, and their children. Their faith in God was strong enough that they could put this window in our church and call attention to the love of God.

Beth Jimmerson

HISTORY OF THE UNITED METHODIST WOMEN CROCKETT, TEXAS

The foundation for the women's work of our church was laid in the early 1850's when the Aid Society was organized. It was not until 1894 that the Aid Society joined the connectional work known as The Parsonage and Home Mission Society.

In 1902 the Foreign Missionary Society was organized in our church. These two organizations, The Parsonage and Home Mission Society and the Foreign Missionary Society, functioned separately until 1911 when they merged to become the Woman's Missionary Society.

After 1921 the Woman's Missionary Society met in the basement of the church which also contained the first kitchen. This group numbered about 20 and met each Monday afternoon. Mrs. Ruby DeCuir was the pianist for many years.

The Missionary Society then moved to a small building on the back church yard. This building had no air conditioning and was solid windows which were raised for cooling, and then had to compete with the noise of school children. The ladies met each Monday afternoon here and had no circles. Some of the members in the Missionary Society were: Mrs. Ruby DeCuir, Mrs. Bertha Henderson, Mrs. Nora McCarty, Mrs. Mable Hail, Mrs. Willie Jordan, Mrs. Anaed Capriellian, Mrs. Eugenia Capriellian, Mrs. Ethel Burton, Mrs. R.L. Spence, Mrs. Mammie Sexton, and Mrs. Reba Spidle.

Also on the church yard was an old garage where the ladies saved old newspapers and sold them to a Houston company to make extra money. The garage and small building were torn down to make space for the new Fellowship Hall. The parsonage was also moved to the spot where the present children's playground is located.

The Crockett Woman's Society of Christian Service (WSCS) had its charter meeting September 4, 1940. Circles were formed and three circles, numbering 20 to 25 members met each Monday in homes of the members. The circles met together once a month for a business meeting in the new Fellowship Hall.

The Wesleyan Service Guild was organized in 1947 with three members present. Mrs. Victoria Gentry was the first

president. The other two members were Mrs. Mae Maxwell and Mrs. Della Morgan. The Guild became a very active group. They met once each week, always studied all of the recommended studies, attended all of the District meetings, followed all of the guidelines. The Wesleyan Service Guild grew to 25 very active members.

In 1970 the Evangelical (United Brethren) and the Methodist Churches merged. The women's organizations became the United Methodist Women. Two circles, the Della Gus Circle (named for Della Gus Easterly), and the Wesleyan Circle (named for the Wesleyan Service Guild) emerged. In 1977 the Susannah Circle was organized. Charter members were Sue Caprielle, Judy Biddix, Betty Nash, Janet Barton, Virginia Jones, Becky Towery, Gayla Roberts, and Ellen Hollis. This circle was for women with young children and they met once each week in the Parlor. Visiting shut-ins was a very important part of their women's work.

Mrs. Wanda Coleman helped to organize a Night Circle in 1985. This circle was especially organized to enable working women to participate in the women's work of the church. Charter members were John Martha Kelley, Helen Ramsey, Wanda Coleman, Dorothy Tipton, and Anna Helms. This group meets once each month in members' homes. The Night Circle now has nine very active and faithful members.

Today we have four circles with a total membership of 93. The entire unit of the United Methodist Women meets at least four times each year, and is very active in national, world, and local mission. Current Co-Chairman of the United Methodist Women are Mrs. Esta Faye Pennington and Mrs. Barbara Pennington.

Our UMW unit has always been active in the District work of the organization. Some of the past District Officers from our church are Mrs. Mae Maxwell, Mrs. Emy Latimer, Mrs. Beth Jimmerson, Mrs. Easy Maness, and presently serving as Pastoral District Treasurer is Mrs. Virginia Jones.

MY MEMORIES by Helen Argall

Homer and I moved to Crockett in May, 1976 from Cool, California. It was a big step to move 2,000 miles into a strange town.

We were Methodists, and when the new minister (Earl Cantrelle) found out Homer did remodeling, asked him if he could remodel the church. Earl said they had been trying for 10 years (so he was told) to find someone to take out the balcony, etc., and give this lovely old church a face lift. The word "can't" was not in Homer's vocabulary although he had never attempted anything like the church.

A trailer was rented in Crockett and off we went to Houston for scaffolding large enough and high enough to do the job. At that time the towns of Lufkin, Nacogdoches, Palestine and Huntsville had nothing large enough to rent.

It was a slow procedure for that old lovely window was half covered up by the balcony. He covered the window with plywood (to my relief) and started in. He hung large plastic drapes from the ceiling to keep some of the dirt out of the front section, and the back section was not used for months. When they pulled the last boards out, over one-half of the back wall plaster came with it. Now, how was he going to match the plaster? The plaster used today is so different from that used in the past. Needless to say, he experimented with different kinds of plaster, ending up with cement. When it was troweled on it was almost a perfect match. Homer never had any doubts, but guess I had enough for both of us. He loved to re-build and loved a challenge.

Next came the ceiling. The lap boards were small and dirt and dust seeped down all the time. He caulked every seam. Sometime stop and look up. Imagine the time and energy it took; for remember, they worked from narrow boards. Jack Jackson was Homer's helper and our grandson Michael, helped for a month or so before going overseas to join his Dad. Many many times Homer would work alone, with "Rocky" Jimmerson for help and company.

I believe they put 3 coats of paint on the ceiling, 2 sealers and 1 flat enamel.

Every Sunday our church was packed, anxious to see

what had been done that week. All the cracks were patched and sealed before painting, the woodwork color chosen to match and blend with our lovely windows.

Earl asked him if he would make something to go with the cross. It had a red velvet curtain and there was an altar. He built a wall, plastered and painted like the rest of the church and using the ends of the pews as a pattern, though a little higher, started with cardboard to make the design. There are 12 pieces of wood that are around our Cross, forming a rectangle that is three tiered on each side. He had to get special wood that would match the cross. He also made a small table that sat in front of the pulpit to match the one they already had. This way flowers can be on both sides, on matching tables.

About Homer's last project was to try and take the dent out of the pipes of the organ. He took them down and numbered them so they would be put back in proper order. His hammer was too large, so he improvised with a small piece of wood on a stick, covered in material. By gently tapping with it he got most of the dents out. Then he bought new ones and painted them. They looked like new and he was really proud of them.

When he decided to fix the bell. He climbed up, found the problem, almost fell, and braced himself with his feet. The bell was below and sent up tools and materials he needed. It was to hear it peel on Sunday mornings.

And the pews were sanded and revarnished and new cushions ordered. Look at the robe Jesus is wearing and then at the cushions. Almost a perfect match due to Bobbie Waller's guidance. She and her committee picked all the colors used.

Then the ladies made the needlepoint covers for the altar. This green is also picked out of the pictures on the windows.

What a lovely church we have, and all the love that went into its face lift, makes it very special to the people of Crockett.

The first Sunday it was completed Homer said, "This is my memorial", and Earl said, "God brought him to Crockett for this church", and when it was done, He called him home.

Helen Argall

MEMORIES OF JIM FOSTER

This history of the Crockett United Methodist Church was taken from the words of Mr. Jim Foster, son of W.J. Foster. Mr. Foster was born in 1848 and even at the age of 95 (when these words were penned) could remember many details about the church's early days. These are Jim Foster's memories:

"I am now sitting on the rounding porch of my brother's home (John R. Foster), writing the history of our church. He and I were of a family of twelve. We grew up in Crockett, attending church and Sunday School regularly, as the church was one of the most important parts of our lives as reflected in the church window on the south side of the church."

"I was born in 1848 and am now 95 years old, the oldest living member of the church. My papa, W.J. Foster, and my mother, Jane Frazier Foster, were always active physically and financially in all affairs of our Methodist Church, and were most faithful and loyal its needs and growth. W.J. Foster was the superintendent of the Sunday School for thirty years. My brother, John R. Foster, was superintendent for twenty years."

"Our first church was a long wooden building. It was a one room structure across the street from the present building on Seventh and Goliad Streets. In yesteryears it was called 'Church Street' because all of the churches were on this one street. Annual Conferences were held here often -- in the years 1862, 1871, 1877, and 1896. I joined the church in 1870. In that year, on September 21st, the church burned and a temporary building was erected across the street on Goliad, on the old site in what was known as the Moore home."

"The temporary church was raised upon wooden blocks because of the sticky red clay. Between this site and the town area there was massive corn patch, so it was protected from straying animals. The floor had large cracks in it. The church was heated by wood stoves and lighted by long, swinging lamps that burned kerosene. It was often too cold or too hot, becoming most uncomfortable. The organ was one that had to be pumped. There were always good singers and musicians in the church, so we always had good music."

"James Downes, John R. Foster, and Charles Stokes were among the most important leaders when I became a mem-

ber of the church. As a barefoot boy they bragged on me and drew a lot of attention, so I always wished to emulate them."

"My father, W.J. Foster, and Harvey Bayne organized the first Sunday School class in our Methodist Church, as well as the churches in Crockett. After a few years they initiated a friendship which lasted down into the following years, down to now."

"My brother John R. Foster and Alice Barbee Foster were good friends with all ministers and their families. They danced and played together in all church socials and sewing societies. They formed many Home Missions and visited many homes. Delegates of the Annual Conferences stayed in their homes. They fed them big meals. They were at the top -- heads of all organizations in our First Methodist Church."

"Rev. J. B. Bolton was pastor during this period and was a close friend of James and Lizzie Downes, and of Alice Barbee Foster. Camp meetings and revivals were most popular in this era, and they greatly increased the membership of the church."

"In July of 1897 it was decided to build a brick church. Among the planning committee was R.E. McConnell, J.E. Downes, James DeDaines, and John R. Foster. This brick church is now a beautiful edifice on Seventh and Goliad, with a good enrollment. The windows are beautiful, meaningful, and colorful."