

HISTORY OF THE RABUN COUNTY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH WORK

Foreword: The first part of the following article was written as a personal message to Rev. D. F. Helm, pastor of a group of Presbyterian Churches in Rabun County, by Rev. B.W. Baker, a former worker in this field. The last part is written by Rev. L. B. Gibbs, the successor to Rev. Baker. With the permission of Mr. Helm this article is being typed as it came from the writers. Mr. Helm left this field immediately after completing the histories of these churches mentioned in this article and is at present pastor of a Presbyterian Church in Hot Springs, Virginia. (1-5-'48)

Immediately after the Christmas holidays 1920-21, Rev. C. M. Chumbley, Superintendent of Home Missions in Athens Presbytery, came to Columbia Seminary seeking a man to do frontier work in Rabun Co., Georgia. He related that the time was then ripe for the organization of a church at Tallulah Falls; and that the entire county afforded unusual opportunities for our church. Being much interested, I later made a trip to Tallulah Falls, but found that the Methodist Church had already organized that part of the field. However, I realized that there were still good opportunities of rendering a great service for the Lord and agreed to move to the field upon graduation in May. The work was being financed jointly by the Presbytery, the Synod, and the General Assembly's Home Mission funds, and by the Committee of Religious Education and Publication in Richmond.

I started work at Tallulah Falls on May 15, 1921, preaching in the Episcopal Church. As soon as I had organized a few other preaching points, I dropped the Falls from my schedule, feeling that another church organization was not needed to care for the spiritual needs there.

Within a few days after being settled in the work, I went to Clayton for a map of the county which would locate the roads and schools, and as many churches as possible. I found just such a map in the office of the County Superintendent of Public Instruction. Mr. J. C. Howard was then Superintendent. He gave me a hearty welcome and much valuable aid. He placed the school buildings at my disposal to be used for Sunday School and preaching services, and also gave his opinion as to which communities most needed the work I was proposing to do. I know his reward in Glory will be much greater because of the assistance he gave me. We used the School property at Wiley, Timpson, Boiling Springs, and Betty's Creek during my entire ministry in the county.

Rev. Roy Ethridge was a help also in directing me to Tiger, and offering the use of his church building for our services there. If my memory serves me right, my first preaching service in the county was at Tiger. (Tallulah Falls Episcopal Church was just inside Habersham County.) Brother Ethridge directed me to see Mr. & Mrs. Keason and have them open the church for me. Checking the time, I decided to walk to Tiger, arrange for a service the following Sunday, and catch the train from there to Tallulah Falls. Not finding the Keasons at home, I left a note for them, and posted a notice of the service in Mr. Taylor's Store. On Saturday, I started to Tiger by train

(I did not buy a car until July.) A Stranger in a strange land, I had no idea where I could spend the night, or if I could find a place, yet I had faith to believe that the Lord was leading and that a place would be waiting. My faith was rewarded, for before I had boarded the train the depot agent called to me saying that the agent at Tiger wished to see me as soon as I arrived.

When the train pulled into the station, I made my way immediately to the office and met Mr. Ussery, who greeted me in this fashion, "I'm a Presbyterian too. I'm a good Presbyterian. In fact, I'm a better Presbyterian than I am a Christian". Was I glad to see him! If he were not speaking in jest, the quality of his Christianity must have increased very rapidly. For it is seldom one meets a better Christian than he. Everything had been prepared for my entertainment. We had a great service together, and located two other Presbyterians, Mrs. Tom Roane, and Miss McDowell. (Incidentally, I believe two of my best members at Mt. Carmel, (Covington, Tenn.) Mr. Marion and Miss Julia Roane, are near relatives of the Roanes there).

That gave us four Presbyterians of the very best type for a foundation. They, with Mrs. Baker, and Charlie Shirley of Wiley formed the roll of charter members in the Tiger church which was organized in the Fall of 1922, when the Synod's Evangelist, Dr. Wauchope held our meeting for us.

Mr. Ussery was elected Superintendent of the Sunday school, and Ruling Elder of the church. We continued the Sunday School in union with the Methodist people in their building until we moved into the school building (the old Cannon house). The Tiger church was the center of all activity, and until other churches were established all members were received into the Tiger church. The Timpson community became an outpost of the Tiger church. The community was considered too small to have its own separate work.

Mr. Don Wright was very helpful in getting the Timpson work going for our church. I had preached in the community, but had not had as favorable a response as I had hoped for. When the Trusty boy was accidentally killed while hunting, Mr. Wright visited them, and found that they had not planned a funeral service. He asked if he might call me for a service. He waded the February mud in for me and I managed to get out to Liberty for the service. That was February 3, 1923. The following year, several in the community came into our church. Mrs. Hollifield served as Superintendent of the Sunday School there, and did a fine job of it too.

Early in the spring of 1923, H. J. Arrendale approached me with the question of the Presbyterian church running a school at Tiger. I could not see how it would be accomplished without turning schoolmaster myself, which I was not inclined to do. So I passed the matter by. He was persistent, and insisted that he would have to move to a community which had better schools if something was not done about the matter. Pretty soon there were other people who began to talk to me about a church school there. We were doing it elsewhere, why not there.

I wrote the three Home Mission agencies that were sponsoring the work for advise. The Presbytery and the General Assembly replied

that they could do nothing; but Dr. J. B. Ficklin wired me that he and Dr. Coit would be up on a certain day to discuss the matter with us. The proposition finally agreed on was that the community would furnish a sufficient body of land and the Synod would operate the school.

A meeting was held in the shade of the sycamore in the front of the depot in which the following took part and reached agreement to buy the Cannon property for the school: H. J. Arrendale, J. T. Cannon, Wm. Duncinson, W. R. Ussery, V. B. Thompson, myself and perhaps a few others. The land was presented to and accepted by the Synod. The teachers were elected by Dr. Coit, and the school was operated as a branch school of Nacoochee Institute. The Cannon home was remodeled into class rooms and living quarters for the teachers. Miss May Blackwell, Miss Sadie Boyd, and Mrs. Mary Hollifield were the first teachers. These good women working with the children in the school through the week and through the Sunday School and Church, we were soon the dominant spiritual influence in the community. Some of the Baptist brethren objected to the teaching of the Catechism in the school, and that was confined to the Sabbath instruction thereafter. Public opinion was being molded very fast against the bootlegging, and lawlessness of the community. The leaders of vice came to the conclusion that they would have to close up, or get rid of the Presbyterian work. Their conclusions were that if the preacher was ousted, the work would stop. Hence, the opposition set in, and rumors began to come that all opposed to whiskey would be killed or driven away. We attempted to place certain of the leaders under peace bond, but the J. P. ignorantly, or otherwise, made an error so that the matter would not stand in court. Failing in securing protection from the law, we had to take measures to protect ourselves. When the showdown came the bootleggers did the running. They had been so flagrant in their opposition, that they made themselves, and the friendly Judge Jones, so obnoxious, that decent people rebelled, and a new order was brought in. In their haste to be tried by a friendly judge, they entered a plea of guilty to the crime they had accused me of. Hence, there was nothing left but for the court to throw out the charges against me. It is my opinion that all the opposition to the work, and all the disturbances of worship were inspired by the leaders residing in Tiger. The opposition having failed, the Presbyterian church quickly became the greatest factor, and influence for righteousness in the county. Not the largest--but the most influential.

BOILING SPRINGS

Largely, on the suggestion of Mr. Howard, I started services in the Boiling Springs school building. There was one Presbyterian girl in the community, Venus York, later Mrs. Gaither Coleman, who had united with the church while at Nacoochee Institute. Her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Luther York, were also a great help to me. Miss Floride Farris from the A.T.S. made a survey of the community and did Sunday School work there for some time. She was followed by Miss Emma Gray Gordon for some time. After preparing the field by Sunday School and D.V.B.S. work, the time came for organization. We brought the Synod's evangelist, Dr. Robert King to the county for the month of September, 1924. The charter members were as follows: Mrs. Venus Coleman, Minnie Forrester, Emma Grey Gordon, Mrs. I. B. Justice, Mrs. J. F. Keener,

Grace Keener, Will McDowell, Mr. and Mrs. H. M. Nichols, and Gussie Stubblefield. Mr. Nichols was elected a Ruling Elder. The following year Mellie Keener and Mr. Thomas Nichols united with the church. The Sunday School continued to meet every Sunday, and preaching services were held once each month. I believe Mr. Howard served as Superintendent of the Church School for some time, though he never in my time became a member of the church there. In the summer of 1922, we held a D.V.B.S. in the morning and evangelistic, services in the evenings for a period of one week, doing the preaching myself. The following year we repeated the process, with Sam B. Hay doing the preaching for us. In 1924, Dr. King and I organized the church there and at Wiley. Both were organized the same day September 28, 1924.

WILEY

Mrs. Owens and Mrs. Bass, Presbyterian women who had summer cottages at Wiley, were instrumental in getting our work started there. We had one Presbyterian living there, C. B. Burch, who ran a general store, was a member of the Cornelia Church. He and his family were a great help to us from the very first. A community Sunday School was already in operation in the school building. I began to preach one Sunday each month there. In the summer we held a D.V.B.S. in the forenoon, and evangelistic services at night for one week each summer. Rev. John Blackburn assisted me one summer, Miss Farris and Miss Gordon always assisted in the Bible Schools. Perhaps no one will ever be able to understand how much Charlie Shirley meant to me. He was the first person in the County to make a profession of Faith, and apply for membership in the Presbyterian church. The fact smote me that I had no church into which I could receive him, and I knew of no plan in the denomination for such a case; Yet I was sent to the field to organize a work, and if I refused membership to this first applicant, I might hinder my chances a great deal. I became a law unto myself, and received Mr. Shirley into the church at large, and congratulated myself that the work of our church was beginning to take effect. A few weeks later, when organization was established at Tiger, I placed his name on the roll there. The following year his son Fred made a profession of Faith and was likewise placed on the Tiger roll.

In September, 1924, Dr. Robert King, the Synod's evangelist, helped me in the meeting there, and we organized a church with sixteen or seventeen charter members. My records do not show that Fred Shirley was transferred back to Wiley and placed on the charter roll, but I am confident this should have been done along with his father. The charter members as I have them listed were as follows: Mrs. A. J. Hayes, Mr. & Mrs. C. B. Burch, Mary Hannah Burch, Mr. and Mrs. James C. Jenkins, Mr. and Mrs. Chas. R. Perteet, Mr. and Mrs. H. C. Ramey, Harry Ramey, Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Shirley and their daughters, May, Lizzie and Ethel. Mr. Perteet and Mr. Jenkins were elected elders. The Sunday School and church services continued to be held in the school building.

Services were held occasionally in Clayton M. E. church, in Mt. City M.E. church, in Betty's Creek School, and an occasional service in the homes of some of the summer visitors at Lakemont. A Sunday School was started at the Plum Orchard school, but the roads were so

that my Ford rebelled on them and I had to pass that by. I think of nothing else that would be of interest. Perhaps you can unscramble enough from this to refresh the memories of the local people and get a complete history.

Give my regards to all the folks.

B. W. Baker

THE CONTINUED STORY IS WRITTEN
by
REV. L. B. GIBBS

After Rev. B. W. Baker left this pastorate, in May 1926, Mr. L. B. Gibbs, who had just finished his first year in Columbia Seminary, came on June 1, as student supply for the summer. During the summer, plans were made for the addition of an eighth grade to the Tiger School and Mr. Gibbs remained in the field during the winter, teaching the eighth grade work and preaching. No new work was taken up during this year, but services were held regularly in the Tiger, Wiley, and Persimmon churches and at Timpson and Betty's Creek. In every case, the school building was used for the services.

During the summer of 1926, Mrs. W.C. Sleister, (nee Rebecca Brown) was employed by the Synod's Committee, and worked in the Persimmon community. Later after Mrs. Sleister had given up this work, Miss Mildred Holler came during the following winter and stayed for several years doing a splendid piece of work, teaching in the Sunday School in Persimmon, working in Daily Vacation Bible Schools, conducting Young People's meetings, visiting in the homes, and doing a good deal of practical nursing.

In the Spring of 1927 Dr. Ralph Gillam, Synod's Evangelist, was sent to the county by Dr. J. B. Ficklen, to raise money and erect a church building in the Persimmon community. Dr. Gillam secured a substantial part of the cost of the building from Mr. George E. King, a hardware merchant of Atlanta, who had a summer home in Chechero, and whose father had been a Presbyterian minister. Because of this gift, the name of the church was changed from Persimmon to King Memorial. A log building was erected and was dedicated early in the summer of 1927. Mr. Gibbs left the work at the end of May 1927, and Rev. P. D. Miller, who had just finished his Fellowship year at Union Seminary, came to this field.

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Mr. Miller stayed in the work for two years, from June 1927 through May 1929. During this time, the Tiger Manse was built, with Dr. Gillam assisting in raising the money and carrying on the work of building.

Mr. Gibbs, who was graduating from Columbia Seminary when Mr. Miller was called to the work of Educational Secretary of Assembly's Home Missions, came back to this field and stayed for eight years, from 1929 to 1937. In June 1929, he was married to Miss Ruth Lee Perry of Easley, South Carolina, who gave herself unsparingly to the work during the years that followed.

During the summer of 1928, Dr. E. N. Caldwell, pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Tallahassee, Florida, spent his vacation with his family, at the Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School, a visit which was to have far-reaching results in the life of the Presbyterian churches of the county. Through his acquaintance with Miss Mildred Holler, Dr. Caldwell became interested in the work. Beginning with Dr. Caldwell's interest in 1929 the Presbyterian Student League at the Florida State College for Women at Tallahassee, sent two young ladies to assist in the Daily Vacation Bible Schools. These young ladies worked without any remuneration. The League provided their travelling expense to and from Rabun County, and the people in the county provided room and board for them during their stay. The plan proved successful and for a number of years the League sent two or more young ladies each summer. Some other volunteer workers came from time to time on the same basis; and as time went on many who lived in the county helped in this work. With this help the usual summer program included five Bible Schools of two weeks each.

The Tiger Co-operative School was continued by the Synod until about 1936, and rendered a great service to that community. We cannot name all of the teachers who made their contributions through this school, and comparisons as to their relative worth would be odious, but we cannot overlook the work of Misses Sadie E. Boyd, May Blackwell, Elizabeth Latimer and Mrs. J. B. Hillhouse, all of South Carolina; Mrs. C. R. Hosale, of Riverdale, Georgia; and Misses Martha Justus, Ethel Williams, Louise Cannon and Zella Crawford of Rabun County. Those teachers who came from outside the county, and Miss Justus each during her period of service lived in quarters which were a part of the school building, owned by the Synod. This building was also used for church services and as a recreational center for the young people of the community, which resulted in the teachers' often being on duty for long hours far beyond what they would have been called on to do in ordinary public school work. Their service in the Sunday School and in young people's meetings, and their sustained interest in the church were great factors in the work of the church. By the time the school was turned back over to the public school authorities, the church had grown enough so that the loss of these teachers was not felt as much as it would have been at an earlier date.

The Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School, which has already been mentioned, was the result of the merger, at Rabun Gap of the Rabun Gap School and the Nacoochee School. The story of these schools would require separate treatment but the merger is mentioned here because of its effect upon the work of the Presbyterian Church in the county. A number of Presbyterian teachers and students came to Rabun Gap from the old Nacoochee School and in the fall of 1929 a commission of Athens Presbytery organized the Rabun Gap Presbyterian Church.

Between 1929 and 1937 church property was acquired in the various communities, and buildings were erected as it became possible

to do so. Dr. Ralph Gillam was sent to the field a number of times by the Synod in this connection, and in every case except those of the Timpson Chapel and the Wiley Parish House he played a large part in raising the money by letters and personal solicitation in the county, in the bounds of the Synod and sometimes beyond and in supervising the construction, often doing part of the work himself. At Wiley, after that school was consolidated with the Lakemont School, the old school building and the lot on which it stood were bought, and the building was remodelled into a church. Later the small Parish House was erected. The Rabun Gap Church, erected, owned and used jointly by the Methodist and the Presbyterian congregations, was built as a part of a program which included the Baptist Church of the community. The small chapel in the Timpson community was built by volunteer labor, except for one carpenter who was hired, and one dollar paid to someone to supervise once when the carpenter was absent; and the materials were purchased with proceeds from the sale of used clothing sent to the pastor from a great many different churches. The Tiger Church was the last to be built during this period.

The Wiley Church had an invaluable leader in the person of Miss Mary Bell Taylor, a teach in the Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School, who gave unstintingly of her time and means to the work in the community. Miss Taylor used her own car to come from Rabun Gap to Wiley each Sunday and many times during the week, bringing one or more students with her, visiting in the homes and teaching in the Sunday School. Her devotion to Christ, her sunny disposition, her unselfish service were an inspiration to her fellow-workers, and brought spiritual enrichment to many a person and many a home. For two winters after she stopped teaching in the school, Miss Taylor came back to Wiley paying her own living expenses and working as faithfully under the direction of the pastor as if she had been a paid employee of the church.

The story of these years would not be complete without a further word concerning two men who were always vitally interested in Rabun County: Dr. J. B. Ficklen, Executive Secretary of the Synod's Work Committee; and Rev. John A. Simpson, Superintendent of Home Missions of Athens Presbytery. By their frequent visits to the county, by their wise counsel to the pastor, by their prayers, and by their personal service, they gave of themselves to this field, so that it is, in a great measure, a monument to their devotion. Mr. Simpson often spent one or two weeks in conducting meetings in the different churches of the group giving more time to this kind of work during these years than any other one man.

We are not unmindful of the sacrifice, the service, the loyalty, of many devoted members of the churches, but it would not be fair to name some and leave others out and they are a multitude "which no man can number".

Filed May 1948.

Eunice P. Ivy
Mrs. J. Swanton Ivy, Historian
Woman's Auxiliary
Athens Presbytery

THE FOLLOWING ARE AMONG OUR PREACHING SERVICES FOR APRIL:

FIRST SUNDAY: Tiger, 12:00 Kelly's School and King Memorial 3:30;
Wiley, 8:30
SECOND " : Wiley, 11:30; King Memorial, 3:30; Timpson, 8:30
THIRD " : Rabun Gap, 11:30; Betty's Creek, 4:00; Tallulah Falls
Vespers, 7:00
FOURTH " : Tiger, 12:00; King Memorial, 3:30; Wiley, 7:30.

The Tiger Church invites all its fellow-Christians to the Lord's Table at 12 o'clock E. W. T. Easter Sunday.

A deputation from Toccoa Falls Institute will assist with the service at Wiley Easter Sunday night.

Special attention is called to Easter services at King Memorial Sunday afternoon.

Our pastor will preach at Wiley, preparatory to Communion, at 8:30 Good Friday night.

The Rev. C. C. West, pastor of the Clarkesville Presbyterian Church will preach at Kelly's School Sunday afternoon.

Mrs. Helm will review WEST OF THE DATE LINE for the Methodist women of Dillard at the home of Dr. L. Neville Saturday of this week.

Athens Presbytery has decided to limit its Spring Meeting to one day, beginning at 11 o'clock, April 10th, at Rabun Gap School.

Our Presbyterian Auxiliary meets in Gainesville April 19-20. We plan to take a full bus load of women the 20th!

EASTER THIS YEAR

URNS our hearts, in the midst of war, famine, death and destruction to "Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel;"

CALLS our attention to the responsibility of the "strong to bear the burdens of the weak" in HEALING HUMANITY in the war ravished areas of the world;

OFFERS you and me the opportunity of studying the enclosed literature and putting the Golden Rule into practice NOW.

Rabun Gap's WAR RELIEF OFFERING will be postponed until Third Sunday in April. Other Churches will take theirs Easter Sunday.

About forty copies of THE CHILD'S BIBLE STORIES by Vos are being distributed to homes by our pastor at cost, \$2.50, and others will be ordered upon request.

A helpful devotional booklet STANDING UP TO LIFE is being mailed, free, to service men whose families send their addresses to Mr. Helm.

Our pastor will fill his appointments in our Churches through Sunday, May 20th.

Congregational meetings have been called for First Sunday morning in May at Tiger; 2nd, Wiley; and 3rd, Rabun Gap to concur with Mr. Helm in his request that Athens Presbytery dissolve his pastoral relations and it is hoped that every member will make a special effort to attend.

Athens Presbytery is called to meet May 21st, at a place and hour to be stated by the Moderator, to act upon this request. Should Mr. Helm's request be granted he plans to enter the pastorate of the Presbyterian Church, Hot Springs, Va., about June 1st.

Special offerings will be taken for the Defense Service Council, charged with ministering to our Service Men, at the next service in each of our Churches.

The Wiley Church will dedicate its new Hymn Books at morning worship on Mother's Day.

Fruit cans have already been received from Thornwell to be filled by our women for our orphans in that Home of our Church.

CHRISTIAN FAMILY WEEK . . . MAY 6 - 13

IS set aside by both Protestants and Catholics for examining our HOME LIFE and making an effort to make it more thoroughly Christian:

IS every person's opportunity to pause, pray, and ask God to help us in this task of far more importance than anything we can possibly do:

IS the week in which we offer you Dr. Luccock's Home Ideal:

"To get married and stay married until death divides; . . . to live together after God's ordinance of marriage; . . . to love, honor, cherish and comfort each other; . . . to keep God always in the midst and in control; . . . to love and lead children into the Kingdom; . . . to train, and develop these children in the service of the Kingdom; . . ."

Your pastor is enclosing helpful literature and dedicating the closing weeks of his ministry in Rabun county to this purpose.

A PRAYER FOR OUR HOMES

Lover of all Good Life, be Thou our Master and Saviour every day, our nearest friend when we are alone, in the Family Circle or elsewhere, our Teacher and Guide in all we think or do. Thou, Lover of the best in us, accept nothing but the best from us, as individuals and as families. Purify our tainted minds and heal our divided hearts; cleanse our lives that we may cherish and love Thy Truth. Enable us to be receptive and responsive to Thy Grace and keep us reminded and assured, this Grace is sufficient for all our need and for the need of those afar as well as those near. And we make our prayer through the merit of Jesus Christ our Lord and for His sake. Amen.

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Presbyterian Churches of Rabun County, Georgia

AFTER TWELVE YEARS

In returning to the Rabun County group of churches on September 1, 1949, after an absence of twelve years, we found numerous changes. Better roads have been built, R.E.A. lines have stretched out into remote communities, and many homes have come out of seclusion into the modern world. In many ways this has been a gain, but some have not been ready for the changes, and not all the ways of the modern world are good. In the churches, loyal ones have remained loyal, but some who were on the fringe have slipped away from their interest in the church, and, we are afraid, from their interest in the Gospel. A good many whom we knew in the churches are gone, some have died, and others have moved away. In the place of some of them, there are new faces; some places remain vacant, and will be hard to fill. Many new houses have been built, and many new homes set up. Some of them are on the solid rock; the impact of the war and the devastating influences of modern life have wrecked many others.

Among the churches of the county, Rabun Gap seems to have grown stronger during these years. The work in the Betty's Creek community, which is a part of this church, has not brought much gain in numbers, but the people have grown in the grace of stewardship, and they remain a loyal group. In that community, the Baptist Church has grown much stronger, relatively, than the Presbyterian. They have acquired the school property (no longer needed for a school because of consolidation), where both Baptists and Presbyterians worshipped, and have erected a substantial concrete block building, with some Sunday School rooms opening off of the sanctuary. The Presbyterian people of the community helped with the erection of the building, and they attend and work in the Baptist Sunday School. The Baptist Church very graciously accords us the use of the building for an afternoon service once a month, and the people of both churches attend both Baptist and Presbyterian services. We are grateful for this fine spirit of co-operation. A great part of the strength of this church is in the faculty and students of the Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School. Through the years, they have made up the bulk of the membership, and we feel that the inter-relationship has meant much in the life of both school and church.

During this period, the well-built church at Dillard, erected, owned, and used by the Rabun Gap Presbyterian and the Dillard Methodist Churches, burned. In the settlement which followed the loss of the building, the Presbyterian Church received a lot in another part of the community, and the Methodist Church rebuilt on the original lot. The co-operative arrangement had worked well for some years, when the Presbyterian Church had no Sunday School. Since before the beginning of the present pastorate, the Presbyterian Church has had a well-organized Sunday School, which would not have been possible under the former arrangement. The church now uses the facilities of the Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School for both Sunday School and worship services, and is fortunate to have this privilege. Mr. O.C. Skinner, President of Rabun Gap-Nacoochee, has assured the pastor that as long as he (Mr. Skinner) is there, the church may have the privilege of using the chapel which is to be built in the near future. This will add much to the atmosphere in which the church services are con-

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ducted, as well as to the general religious life of the school.

The Tiger and Wiley Churches, casting up the gains and the losses through the years, seem to have about the same strength that they did in 1937. The King Memorial Church lost both of its elders, by death, during this period, and so has become weaker. We look forward to the day when, in the Providence of God, we may again have resident male members there, and so may have a church session.

The church buildings in the county, except for the Tiger Church, were in need of repairs of various kinds. The Tiger Church needed painting, and space for Sunday School classes was badly needed. The coming of a new pastor seems to have provided the spark to light the fires of enthusiasm needed for cleaning church grounds, repairing buildings, and generally making the places of worship more attractive.

The work in the Timpson community, which nominally is outpost work of the Tiger Church, is one of the bright spots in the county. Mrs. Mary Hollifield has been the mainstay here from the beginning. She is no longer young, and, because of poor health, has not been able to do as much in recent years as she used to do, but her interest is still keen, and her devotion is great. There is need here for strong leadership within the community, and we hope for its development. The little chapel, which was built years ago with money from the sale of used clothing, and almost entirely with volunteer labor, has served a good purpose through the years. At some time before the beginning of the present pastorate, the people had raised some money to buy an organ. It was decided, however, to get the old organ repaired, and to use the money to buy sheetrock to ceil the building, which had never been ceiled. This was done in the fall of 1949. Next the people put on a new roof, and the gave the money to pay for it in installments. Since then, the gifts for the building fund have continued, and will be used to buy material to build new seats for the chapel. All of these things are a token of the deep interest of the people in the work. The attendance at the preaching service once a month is good, and one of the best features is the number of men who come.

The pastor and his wife found the manse in Clayton too small, and have been grateful for opportunities to enlarge it. The Presbytery had set aside some money for improvements on the house, and a part of this had been used for interior painting. A back porch was converted into a comfortable small bedroom, a sink cabinet was built and installed in the kitchen, badly needed repairs were made on the front porch, and windows and doors were installed in openings in the rooms which had previously been built under the front porch. All this added much to the usefulness and appearance of the house. In 1950, one of the back bedrooms was enlarged. In 1951, the individual people and some of the churches gave materials and labor for the addition of a dining room and study to the manse. The Rural Training Program in the Presbytery gave \$300, and \$500 came from the Synod's Committee of Church Extension. There were various other smaller gifts. These two rooms are now in use, and add a great deal

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to the comfort of the house. They make it possible for the pastor and his wife to work much more efficiently.

In the Minutes of the Presbytery during Mr. Moore's pastorate, 1947-1949, there are references to plans for beginning some work in Clayton. Mr. Moore did hold a few services in the Community House, but it seems that the attendance was small, and the services were discontinued. There are about twenty-five Presbyterians living in the vicinity of Clayton, including some who are at present active in the Tiger Church. Plans are now under way to have Miss Lillian Medlin, Sunday School Extension Worker for the Synod of Georgia, to come to Clayton for the months of April and May, 1952. It is hoped that it will be possible to have a Seminary student to assist in the work during the summer of 1952, so that it will be possible to have services in Clayton every Sunday morning during the summer months. By then, at the end of this five-month effort, it will be possible to evaluate the situation, and to see what can be done in the future. There is no doubt that a church in Clayton is needed. We are losing members by not having one for them to join, and we feel that the work of the county can be greatly strengthened by the establishing of a church in the county seat.

As we look at the situation in the churches and in the county, we can see certain definite needs. The churches need much more pastoral care, and with the much-needed building now accomplished, the pastor will be able to do far more to meet this need. In every church except Rabun Gap, which is unusually fortunate in its leadership, there is a need for trained leaders. The Rural Training program has done a good deal in the development of leadership; there is much more to be done within the field. Rather than any spectacular emphases in the general life of the churches, we need a strengthening of the regular program, with much teaching through Sunday Schools, Vacation Bible Schools, and preaching services. The homes of our people need much in the way of safeguards thrown around them and inner strength developed so that they may be able to stand against the tides of godlessness.

Date Mar. 31, 1952

L. B. Sibbs
Pastor

Filed May, 1952

Mrs. Irene S. Howell, Historian

Women of the Church
Athens Presbytery