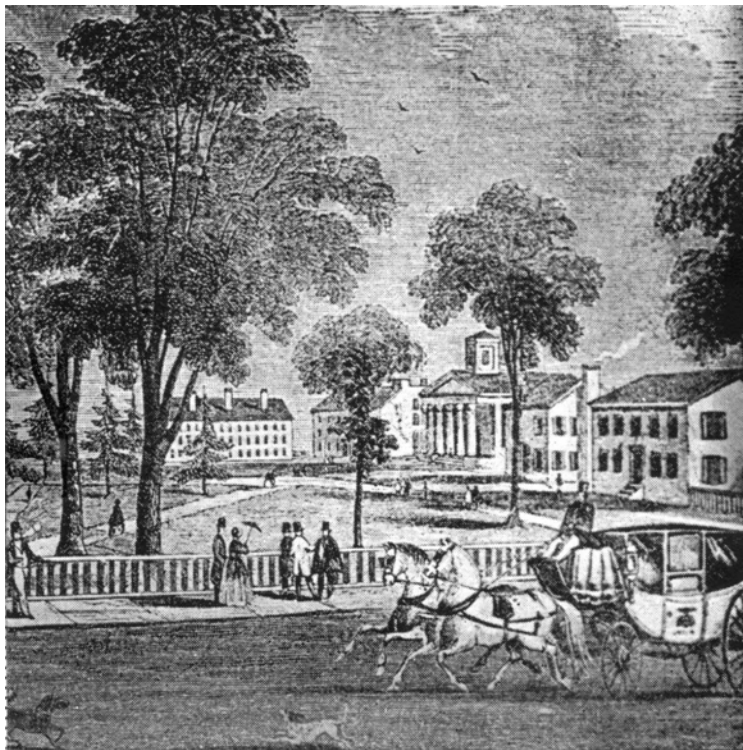


# Athens Historian

Volume 10

Fall 2005



FRANKLIN COLLEGE, IN ATHENS, GEORGIA

*Published by the*  
**Athens Historical Society**  
Athens

# Athens Historian

*Volume 10*

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# ATHENS HISTORIAN

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## A Tribute to Goodloe Y. Erwin

By Betty Alice Fowler

As the *Athens Historian* publishes its 10<sup>th</sup> volume, it is an appropriate time to pay tribute to the founding father, Goodloe Yancey Erwin. It was he who first proposed that the Athens Historical Society publish a scholarly journal at a board meeting in the spring of 1996, and the first issue of the *Athens Historian* was printed the following October. Goodloe has been listed as managing editor, but his true title might be guardian angel. He has watched over the productions and cared about the survival and well being of the journal. He has worked earnestly to ensure that the *Historian* was competently staffed, and he has contributed and helped gather articles for publication that would reflect both the diversity and range of interests of the society. Without Goodloe Erwin, the *Athens Historian* might not exist and certainly wouldn't exist as we know it.

Goodloe, when he retired in 1987 as a prominent Athens physician, soon turned his considerable energy and intellectual talents to concerns for his native city. He began nearly 20 years of service with the Athens Historical Society. He is the only president to serve three consecutive terms, and he has been responsible for many of its notable achievements. He originated and raised funds for the installation of historical markers commemorating the Confederate soldiers from Athens



*Patricia and Goodloe Erwin at the home of the author, c. 2000.*

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who lost their lives in the battle for Crampton's Gap, Maryland, and for the marker at Memorial Park honoring Athenians who were killed in World Wars I and II. The *Athens Historian*, however, may be his most lasting legacy.

The *Athens Historian* is one of only a few local historical journals in Georgia that are published regularly, and it is almost completely the work of volunteers. It features scholarly articles, essays, letters, poems, historical documents, portions of books now out of print, previously published articles, and papers presented at society meetings, as well as illustrations, maps, and photographs. The founding of the *Athens Historian* marked a return to one of the society's original purposes, "collecting and publishing historical material descriptive and illustrative of Athens." A review of the ten issues of the *Historian* shows how successful Goodloe and the staff have been at fulfilling this fundamental goal of the Athens Historical Society.

The *Historian* includes such definitive articles as "How Athens Came to Be," with its vivid descriptions of the physical characteristics of the new town in 1801, and many other interesting features on early student life at the university, the emancipation of the slaves in Athens, athletics, churches, schools, and cemeteries. Goodloe's own essay on the battle of Barber's Creek in this issue is a succinct record of how the Home Guard deterred an attack by Stoneman's raiders and preserved the relative tranquility of Athens during the Civil War.

Other pieces focus on topics less general but equally fascinating. Rayburn Moore's article is on the 2½ year correspondence of Paul Hamilton Hayne and Andrew Adgate Lipscomb, much of which centered on literary matters, while Michael Gagnon's essay on Civil War production and deprivation in Athens provides an in-depth view of the war's economic consequences on a local level. For Volume 9, Dr. Erwin wrote an article on General James Longstreet in which he sets the record straight about Longstreet's military career and post-war censure. He also describes the general's later life in Gainesville, Georgia, and his happy marriage to the young Helen Dortch.

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Throughout all of the issues of the *Athens Historian*, personal remembrances, family documents, and especially letters are a rich complement to the historical essays. Many are drawn from private collections and might not otherwise be published except for the existence of this journal and the efforts and encouragement of Goodloe and the editorial staff.

Marie Hodgson Koenig edited the first four volumes of the *Athens Historian*. A native Athenian who returned home in the late 1980s after a distinguished career as a diplomatic correspondent and journalist, she took up her duties with gusto, produced Volume 1 in less than seven months, and also contributed an article on Memorial Park. In her opinion, Dr. Erwin never took the credit he deserves for the *Historian*. “Goodloe always came in with a satchel full of manuscripts – you never had to scratch your head [to come up with material].” Tom Wilfong, long-time associate editor, agrees. “We would discuss ideas for articles, which, if not already in progress, Goodloe would usually solicit. He was invaluable because of his contacts in Athens.” Henry Ramsey, an author and rare book dealer, edited Volumes 5 through 9. He acknowledges Goodloe as the overseer of the journal and one who, for him, is the “embodiment of the spirit of the Athens Historical Society.” Of himself, Goodloe says that he has simply tried to provide a good selection of material - ideas and articles - and leave it to the editors to decide what to publish.

The articles gathered in the first ten issues of the *Athens Historian* comprise a significant body of knowledge on Athens, while revealing how much work can still be done. We, with Goodloe, can take pride in the fruits of his efforts and look forward to future issues and new discoveries.

Betty Alice Fowler is past president of the Athens Historical Society and now serves on its Board of Directors. A native of Athens, she works at the Georgia Museum of Art, where she is Assistant to the Director and Grant Writer.

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September 1992

Erwin, Goodloe Y., Marie Hodgson Koenig, Henry Ramsey, and  
Tom Wilfong: Interviews with Author, Athens, GA, 2005

Minutes, Meeting of the Board of Directors, Athens Historical  
Society, 17 March 1996

## **Stoneman's Raid and the Battle of Barber's Creek**

By Goodloe Y. Erwin

The Civil War spared Athens much of the chaos and damage inflicted on Atlanta and many other areas of Georgia that fell in the path of General W. T. Sherman and his Union troops on the famous March to the Sea. The nearest military battle to Athens between the Union forces and the Confederates occurred August 2, 1864, at the bridge where Barber's Creek joins McNutt's Creek, near the present-day Clarke-Oconee county line, four miles southwest of Athens.

The Battle at Barber's Creek, actually a minor encounter, is considered part of the military campaign called Stoneman's Raid that began further south at Macon earlier in July. Named for the Union officer, Major General George Stoneman, the raid had as its principal goal to attack the Confederate prisons near Macon and at Andersonville and free Union prisoners. General Stoneman himself was captured at the Battle of Sunshine Church, 19 miles to the northeast of Macon, and did not take part in the Athens encounter. Two of his brigades led by Colonel Horace Capron and Colonel Silas Adams escaped capture at Sunshine Church and fled northward, hoping to resupply along the way and to destroy any Confederate government works, including the Athens armory. They were stopped by the Athens Home Guard at Barber's Creek.

General Stoneman and his troops played a prominent role in the Union campaign in the South. Stoneman, a native of New York state and a graduate of West Point, where he had been Stonewall Jackson's roommate, was stationed at Fort Brown, Texas, with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry as the Civil War began in 1861. When his commanding officer relinquished his post to Confederate forces, Stoneman refused to surrender, secretly evacuated his troops to a steamship, and escaped capture. He then reported to



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General George McClellan in Virginia as his chief of cavalry in time to take part in the Peninsula Campaign in 1862.

Just before the Battle of Chancellorsville in 1863, Stoneman and his cavalry carried out a raid toward Richmond to disrupt Confederate supply lines and thus were not available to help protect General Joseph Hooker. Hooker's troops were annihilated by Confederate forces under General Robert E. Lee, and Hooker always blamed Stoneman's absence for his defeat.

Following what was regarded as a bad showing at Chancellorsville, Stoneman in May 1863 was placed in charge of a training camp and remount station near Washington, DC, and satisfactorily carried out these duties. A year later, his friend General John Schofield was appointed head of the Department of Ohio forces, and Schofield made Stoneman his chief of cavalry. In April 1864 Schofield and Stoneman joined General Sherman's command at Chattanooga just before the push toward Atlanta.



Major General George Stoneman,  
engraving from *Harper's Weekly*,  
23 May 1863

After months of skirmishing and fighting through the heavily wooded and hilly terrain of northwest Georgia, Sherman was finally by the end of July on the outskirts of Atlanta. Determined to cut off the railroad supplies to the city, Sherman sent one cavalry division under Stoneman to the southeast and another division under General Edward McCook to the southwest with orders to tear up the rail lines below Atlanta toward Macon and to capture Lovejoy Station, south of McDonough.

McCook waited for over 24 hours for Stoneman at McDonough, the appointed meeting place, but when he heard that a Confederate cavalry was nearby, McCook headed toward

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Newnan. He was attacked by a division of Confederate cavalry under General William H. Jackson and received heavy losses. McCook and the surviving troops continued on to Newnan, only to be surprised by another Confederate force under General Philip Roddey. McCook fought his way north, losing 500 men.

Stoneman had decided to continue on to Macon and attempt to free the 2,000 Union officers imprisoned at the nearby Camp Oglethorpe, and he hoped to venture further south and free the Union prisoners at Andersonville. When he reached Macon, he occupied the Dunlap House near the Ocmulgee Indian mounds. He found the bridge across the Ocmulgee River had been washed away in a recent flood and that the Confederates controlled the railroad bridge. He also learned after arrival that two-thirds of the Union prisoners had been moved out of Camp Oglethorpe.

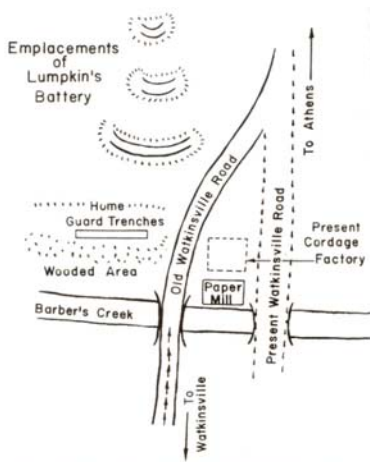
On the morning of July 30, 1864, the Confederates had 2,000 men on the northeast side of the Ocmulgee River. The scene was recorded by a Colonel Gibb: Georgia governor Joe Brown and General Joe Johnston were standing with a group of officers, and General Howell Cobb was seated in an armchair with a table in front of him on which were placed papers and a glass of tea. General Cobb, a native of Athens, had sponsored the law to form the Georgia Reserves, also known as the Home Guard, consisting of men too young or too old for active duty, and in September 1864 he took command of the Georgia Reserves defending Macon. It was Cobb who had devised defensive plans for Athens that would later prove useful.

From his position on Dunlap Hill, Stoneman deployed his forces, and his artillery shelled the town but with little damage. One of the shells hit Judge Asa Holt's house, now known as the Cannonball House and featured on Macon's historic tours. A Confederate battery on the hill near Fort Hawkins was very effective in repulsing the Union forces. Surprised by the stout resistance and unable to get his horses and wagons across the Ocmulgee River, Stoneman turned northward on July 31, where he was met by Confederate forces under General Alfred Iverson at Sunshine Church. Iverson was well prepared, and after a short

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battle Stoneman surrendered with 600 of his men, who were taken to prisons at Camp Oglethorpe and Andersonville.

Two of Stoneman's brigades, however, managed to fight their way north. These forces under Colonel Adams and Colonel Capron did considerable damage, looting and burning at Eatonton and Madison. Then continuing north, they stopped at Watkinsville briefly to rest and pillage. Mrs. Laura Ashford of Watkinsville wrote that the Yankees helped themselves to watches and jewelry. She was polite and fed the soldiers a nice meal. The troops exchanged their exhausted horses for fresh ones and made plans to attack Athens and then to make their way back to meet General Sherman above Atlanta.



Advance of Federal cavalry raiders toward Athens, August 2, 1864.

Diagram of Barber's Creek site, from Stegeman's *These Men She Gave*

Capron and Adams decided that Adams would take his brigade into Athens to destroy the armory and anything else useful to the Confederates. Capron was to protect Adams' rear and would meet Adams north of town. No trouble was anticipated. Early on the morning of August 2, as Adams and his troops reached the hill overlooking Barber's Creek, a shell suddenly burst in their midst. Several more shells followed, and the Union forces retreated. Adams decided that the creek could not be crossed, and

he and his men moved on westward toward Marietta and eventually back to Sherman's camp. The Athens Home Guard remained on active watch at Barber's Creek for two more days, but no further incursions were made by the Union forces.

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General Cobb had believed that Union forces would try to destroy the Athens armory and had ordered trenches and gun emplacements constructed in a commanding position overlooking Barber's Creek on the Watkinsville road. Cobb had also brought in Colonel William Magill to be in charge of the Athens defenses. The Union troops had no knowledge of these preparations and were surprised when they met such strong resistance by the Athens soldiers, many of whom were either very young or very old.



Athens Home Guard – Bill, Prince and Bob Hodgson, ages 18, 16 and 14, respectively – from *These Men She Gave*

Colonel Capron, after realizing that Adams had not been successful, took his men west toward Jug Tavern (now Winder) and ended up at King's Tanyard, a few miles further northwest, where, exhausted, they settled in for the night. Just before dawn on August 3, a Confederate brigade, the Kentucky 9th, under Colonel W.C.P. Breckenridge, which had been following the Union brigades since the battle at Sunshine Church, attacked; the Union troops scattered, but most were captured and taken to Athens, although Capron and some of his men escaped through the woods and finally got back to General Sherman.

Over the next several weeks a total of 431 prisoners were brought into Athens, where they were held on the campus of the University of Georgia before being shipped to the Confederate prison at Andersonville. The Athens newspaper, *Southern Watchman*, said on August 10, 1864, that the prisoners "represented a sorry spectacle. Ragged, some of them bareheaded, some barefooted, and all very dirty, we have never seen an equal number of men looking so badly."

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For the victorious Confederates there was considerable celebration in Athens. Colonel Breckenridge's brigade marched up Broad Street to attend the festivities with a band playing and banners flying. Local dignitaries gave speeches, thanking the men for their efforts. Athens ladies prepared the Confederate troops a special dinner that was served at the University Chapel.

After the success at Barber's Creek and the victory at King's Tanyard, life settled down for the folks in Athens, marked by the deprivation of war times and not much excitement. Wounded soldiers and those fleeing from the Battle of Atlanta and the March to the Sea stretched the traditional Southern hospitality of the town to the limit. The cost of living skyrocketed as Confederate money became more and more deflated and food scarce. Local factories offered to swap thread and cloth for corn, wheat, and other food staples to feed their workers.

Even those areas of Georgia not in the direct line of battle were affected by the damage and destruction of war. In his report of the march through Georgia, Sherman declared that he had destroyed the railroads for more than 100 miles and had consumed the corn and fodder 30 miles on either side of a line from Atlanta to Savannah, as well as the sweet potatoes, cattle, hogs, sheep, and poultry. He further stated that he had carried away more than 10,000 horses and mules and a countless number of slaves. "I estimate the damage done to the State of Georgia and its military resources at \$100,000,000; at least \$20,000,000 of which has inured to our advantage, and the remainder is simply waste and destruction."

General George Stoneman was released from prison in an officer exchange after the surrender of Atlanta in September 1864 and left Georgia. He continued service, however, with the Union Army and fought with distinction in Tennessee, North Carolina, and Virginia until the end of the war.

Stoneman's Raid did not achieve its goal of freeing Union soldiers from Georgia prisons, nor were Stoneman's cavalry brigades under colonels Adams and Capron successful in their attack on Athens, but these men and their military exploits have

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gained a permanence in Civil War history and in local Athens records. An historical marker stands near the intersection of Broad and Lumpkin streets, attesting to those dramatic and trying days in the summer of 1864 and to the courage of the Athens Home Guard.

Dr. Goodloe Yancey Erwin is a past president of Athens Historical Society, founder of the *Athens Historian*, and a dedicated student of Civil War history. His article about General James Longstreet, presented at the October 2003 meeting, was published in Volume 9 of the *Athens Historian*. He presented this paper at the March 2005 meeting of AHS.

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## **Coach Herman J. Stegeman and his Family**

By Dan Magill

In my lifetime spent around the University of Georgia campus, it has been my good fortune to know many of the truly great men associated with the university, beginning with President David Crenshaw Barrow in the 1920s – plus every coach of note in all sports, starting with the distinguished chemist who originated football at Georgia, Dr. Charles Herty; every star athlete, beginning with Professor John Morris, hard hitting catcher on the first baseball team in 1886, who much later taught me German, and right up to the current football greats, David Pollack and David Greene.

But the greatest coach of all, the greatest athletic director, and the most memorable person I have ever known was Herman James Stegeman.

At the University of Chicago just before World War I where the immortal coach Amos Alonzo Stagg had made the Maroons the strongest athletic program in the country, Herman Stegeman was called by Stagg the finest all-round athlete he had coached or ever seen anywhere.

At the University of Georgia Stegeman continued his versatility, molding conference championship teams in the same sports he had excelled in at Chicago: football, baseball, basketball, and track. A phenomenal feat! Who was this superman?

### **Coming to America**

Herman Stegeman's grandfather and kin departed Holland 159 years ago, bound for America and religious freedom. It was a rough trip: 40 days at sea before the "promised land" was sighted. They then traveled on land westward as far as the state of Michigan. They settled on the eastern banks of Lake Michigan



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and named their new settlement "Holland," and 45 years later, Herman James Stegeman was born on January 21, 1891, the middle son of John and Joanna Stegeman. He was born with a twinkle in his eye that remained there all his life.

He was the third of five boys. He wore wooden shoes as a boy, as was the custom in the old country, and spoke only Dutch until he entered school at age six: the first English word he learned to speak and pronounce was "c-a-t," a fact he later loved to tell his friends in Athens.

He attended the Dutch school, Hope College, then transferred to another school on the banks of Lake Michigan, the University of Chicago. There he was picked at tackle on Walter Camp's All-American football team; he was an all-star forward in basketball, and a catcher in baseball, and a member of the world's record setting mile relay team at the World's Fair track and field games in San Francisco in 1915.

But his greatest accomplishment at the University of Chicago was winning the hand of the beautiful and brilliant Dorothea Washburne.

Dr. John Stegeman's wonderful manuscript about his father, entitled "Coach Stegeman - the Legend and the Man," gives an account of his parents' beginning relationship: "In early 1913, a lovely girl had transferred back to the University of Chicago after spending three semesters at Stanford. She was Dorothea Washburne, daughter of George Foote Washburne, a physician, and Marion Foster Washburne, a well-known writer of the day. A year later, January 1914, Dorothea wrote to her mother in California: 'Saturday night I go to a basketball game and then to a dance with Herman Stegeman, who was in my German class last quarter.' That was her first mention of the young man whom she would be seeing a great deal of.

"Dorothea later wrote to her parents: 'It's Steggie who is affecting my heart strings. He's a terribly wholesome, generous, kind-hearted, manly boy. He comes of Dutch farming stock, one of five boys, all athletes and all college men. There are no girls in the family, and I think I'm the first he's ever been interested in. He sees me two or three times a week... I know you'd like him -

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he's so dependable and unegotistical and full of such genial humor.'

### **Love and Marriage**

"During the summer of 1915, following Dorothea's graduation in March and Stege's in June, Dorrie, as she was also called, traveled to San Francisco to be with her mother and visit the World's Fair. Stege told her he might be following, hoping to qualify for the National AAU track championships during the World's Fair. Up to that time, he had never mentioned love or marriage.'

"When Stege arrived in San Francisco, Dorothea took him to meet her mother, and Dorothea wrote that she could easily see why my heart was smitten. One of her first comments to me about him when we were alone together was, 'How kind he is.'

"After the races were over, Herman stayed on in San Francisco for another week to spend time with Dorrie. Many years later Dorrie recalled those days: 'We took walks... visited my brother Carleton and his wife and baby.... One day Herman told me, with amusement, that Mr. Stagg had recommended that, if he wanted to woo his girl, to take her to Mt. Tamalpais, where the beautiful redwoods made a very romantic setting. So one pretty day Herman took me to Mt. Tamalpais.'

"On that trip they decided to marry the next June. In the meantime Stege, recommended by Mr. Stagg, signed a contract in the summer of 1915 to coach football at Beloit College in Wisconsin. Dorrie accepted a position to teach English at the Illinois Women's College in Jacksonville, Illinois. They saw each other only occasionally, but letters were exchanged daily.

"The next year Herman took a position as head football coach at Monmouth College in Illinois. He and Dorothea were married in a simple ceremony August 28 at the Stegeman farmhouse outside Holland.

"When World War I began, Stege applied for service in the army and waited to be called. Finally he received his orders - as a physical instructor attached to the Army YMCA at Camp

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Wadsworth, South Carolina. They moved from Monmouth to Spartanburg, near the Army camp.

“Stege was transferred in 1918 to the Naval Training Station near Gulfport, Mississippi, and Dorrie soon followed. They were expecting their first child in November. Dorrie said, ‘At ten minutes after midnight, November 6, my baby boy was born in the King’s Daughters Hospital. Herman was with me. We didn’t know we were to have a second baby till after John was born. Then Dr. Mahoney discovered there was another baby in the wings. Imagine our surprise and joy when Joanna arrived 10 minutes later.’”

### **Moving to Athens**

The Armistice ending the war was signed November 11, 1918. A few days later Herman received orders transferring him to the physical directorship at the ROTC unit at the University of Georgia. What a lucky day for UGA and old Athens town!

The next year, after a strong recommendation from Coach Stagg, Herman was signed to a three-year contract as baseball coach at Georgia for \$5,000 a year, and before long he would also be coaching football, basketball, and track all at the same time.

By good fortune he inherited a fine baseball team, led by two ace pitchers, Claude Satterfield and Tom Philpot. Baseball in those days was even bigger than football. Stege got off to a flying start by sweeping the four-game series with arch rival, Georgia Tech, for the Southern Conference championship.

In 1919 Alex Cunningham, head football coach at the university from 1910 through 1916, returned to Athens for a final season at the helm with Stege as his sole assistant. A week after football season ended, Stege turned his attention to basketball in his first season as head coach of this sport. In two years Stege made Georgia a basketball power. He organized the first Southern Conference basketball tournament, which was played annually at the old Atlanta City Auditorium before crowds of 6,000 plus. A basketball court was constructed in front of the stage, and in March 1921 Georgia met Kentucky in the finals of that first tournament and lost a thriller, 20-19.

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Stege coached the basketball team for 10 more years and made Georgia one of the perennial powers in the old Southern Conference. His last team won the regular season Southern Conference crown with a record of 22 wins and only one loss.

In 1920 Stege became the head football coach and coached both the baseball team and the track team at the same time. He made his star miler, Bill Tate (later to succeed Stege as Dean of Men and for whom the Tate Student Center is named), his assistant track coach. But coaching football, basketball, track, and baseball all practically at the same time was too much even for Herman Stegeman. So he gave up coaching baseball, and he coached football only three seasons - 1920, 21, 22.

His 1920 football team went undefeated and claimed the old Southern Conference title. His 1921 team was undefeated in Southern competition and could claim the conference crown again. It lost only to the eastern powerhouses of Harvard, then the king of football, and Dartmouth.

### **University Athletic Director**

After resigning from football coaching, Stege became athletic director. He named a former Georgia quarterback, George (Kid) Woodruff of Columbus, the head football coach and hired several former Notre Dame stars under Knute Rockne as Woodruff's assistant coaches: Frank Thomas, later coach of championship teams at Alabama; Jim Crowley, later head coach at Fordham; Harry Mehre, who succeeded Woodruff in 1928; and Rex Enright, later head coach and athletic director at University of South Carolina.

In 1921 Stege became the first Southerner on the National Football Rules Committee, appointed by the chairman, his old coach, Alonzo Stagg. He served two terms longer than any other coach on this important committee. In 1923 he scheduled the first of Georgia's great series with mighty Yale, and he was instrumental in getting Yale to come south for the first time in the dedicatory game of Sanford Stadium. Stege was appointed the university's Dean of Men in 1929, in addition to his duties as athletic director and coach of basketball and track.

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He also loved golf and was a good player himself, shooting in the mid-70s; he once beat the defending Georgia state champion in a tournament. In the mid-1930s he originated the first Southern Collegiate golf tournament at the Athens Country Club, and it grew into the biggest golf collegiate tournament in the country - bigger than the NCAA championships at that time. Arnold Palmer, then at Wake Forest, won it one year.

One of Stege's happiest moments was seeing his most famous track protege, Forrest (Spec) Towns, win the Olympic high hurdles at Berlin in 1936. He and Dorothea were in the stadium when Spec won, and after his victory lap, Spec stopped in front of the American section, looked up at Coach Stegeman, and clasped his hands over his head in the victory salute. There were tears in Stege's eyes, Dorothea later recalled.

Adolph Hilter awarded each Olympic champion an oak sapling from the German Black Forest. Dorothea looked after it on the trip home, kept it alive, and turned it over to the university groundskeeper, a German by the name of Winemiller, who was a native of the Black Forest area.

Originally the tree was planted at the top of Sanford Stadium on the north side, but when the stadium was enlarged, it died when attempts were made to move it to a spot in front of the coliseum. Dean Tate had the same idea that my father had had when the Tree That Owns Itself died: get some acorns and plant one of them. One of those acorns now is a handsome oak near a beautiful granite bench commemorating Spec Towns' Olympic victory.

### **Retirement and Recognition**

Stege retired from coaching when his track team, led by Spec Towns, won the conference track meet in 1937. Poor health - heart trouble - began to get the best of Stege, and he died October 23, 1939. At his funeral service in the University Chapel there was an overflow crowd of students, faculty, and townsfolk. The Chapel bell, always rung for football victories, was slowly rung in tribute to Stege, and the students sang "When the Roll Is Called up Yonder."

## ATHENS HISTORIAN

On March 2, 1996, at a Georgia-South Carolina basketball game, the University of Georgia coliseum was named for Herman J. Stegeman. It was my honor to be master of ceremonies and introduce President Charles Knapp, Athletic Director Vince Dooley, and Coach Stegeman's son, John, and daughters Joanna Stegeman Traylor and Marion Stegeman Hodgson. It was certainly appropriate for this coliseum be named for the man who was the father of big-time basketball in the South.



### **John Stegeman**

The same sterling qualities of Herman and Dorothea Stegeman were passed on to their children. John F. Stegeman, Herman and Dorothea's first child and only son, was only 21 when his dad died in 1939, but he had already done many things to make his father proud. At Woodbury Forest prep school in Virginia, he was the recipient of the school's highest honor: the Archer Christian Memorial Medal for character, leadership, and athletic achievement. And at the University of Georgia he earned varsity letters in football and basketball.

His finest accomplishments came after his father's death: graduation from Emory University School of Medicine and election to the honor fraternity Alpha Omega Alpha and then service as captain in the Army Medical Corps during World War II. After the war he began his long career as a physician in Athens.

John served terms as chief of staff at both the Athens General and St. Mary's hospitals and received the Medical Association of Georgia's citation for 50 years of service. He also taught for 13 years in the University of Georgia's School of Pharmacy.

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After a back operation in 1960 and a lengthy convalescence, John developed a life-long interest in writing. John was the author of 60 articles published in local, regional, and national periodicals and of three books, which could be accorded “best seller” status.

His first book, *These Men She Gave*, was about Athens during the Civil War. It was followed by the *Ghosts of Herty Field* about the early days of UGA football and *Caty* about the courageous wife of the Georgia Revolutionary War hero, Nathaniel Greene. *Caty* was written in collaboration with his wife Janet, a gifted writer herself.

Few couples can claim a longer courtship than John Stegeman and Janet Allais. Their mothers were lifelong friends in Chicago, and when Janet’s father died, Mrs. Allais and her children moved to Athens to be reunited with the Stegemans. The two families began spending the summers at Tate Mountain, where Janet says her first crush on John began when she was six years old and John nine.

John had a great sense of humor, and his children Herman II and Ann like to recall how much fun their family vacations were. I personally am indebted to John for his humorous stories in the *Ghosts of Herty Field*, which provided me with the subjects of many of my own talks. I also spent many happy hours with John discussing the fortunes of the Georgia Bulldogs, some of the happiest being the last year of his life when we met frequently to make plans for the dedication of Stegeman Coliseum, named for his father who was my boyhood mentor and idol.

John was determined to finish a history of his father that he wanted to send to his grandchildren. Just a few days before he died, John completed the manuscript, and a copy was mailed to each of them, but they already knew a lot about Coach Stegeman through John, who epitomized the same sterling qualities as those of his father.

When John died at age 78, an *Athens Banner-Herald* editorial said: “Athens has lost one of its most illustrious citizens: a distinguished doctor, a loving father and husband, a gifted writer - and above all - a true gentleman.”

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### **Joanna and Marion**

The Stegeman girls were equally as talented as their brother John - and they are still hale and hearty - Joanna at age 87 and Marion at 83.

Joanna, John's twin, was a basketball star at Athens High, later a winner of the Athens Country Club women's golf tournament. Just before her marriage to fellow Georgia alumnus, Dr. Bothwell Traylor of Augusta, who had been manager of the football team when he was a student, Joanna coached basketball at Abbeville (South Carolina) High School. Her team was the runner-up in the state tournament.

The Traylor moved to Athens, where Dr. Traylor had a very distinguished career in obstetrics and Joanna has been a leader in civic affairs. She served eight years on the Athens Board of Education and was one of the founders of the Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation. She was president of the League of Women's Voters and a winner of the Athens Woman of the Year Award. She was the first woman member of the university's Board of Trustees. The four Traylor children have all led lives of accomplishment.

Marion Stegeman was born in Athens, December 16, 1921, and was named for her maternal grandmother, Marion Foster Washburne, famed editor of *Harper's Magazine*. She attended Barrow Elementary, as did I, and I remember her well. Marion was a smart girl and skipped a grade at Barrow. Like Joanna, she played girls' basketball at Athens High, then went to Gulfport College, in Gulfport, Mississippi, where her dad had been stationed during World War II and where John and Joanna were born. Two years later Marion returned home and graduated from the University of Georgia.

While at the university, Marion obtained a private pilot's license through the Civilian Pilot Training program, and in early 1943 she received a telegram from famed aviatrix Jackie Cochran, asking if she wanted to train as a pilot for the Army Air Force. Members of this organization eventually known were as WASPS (Women Air Force Service Pilots). Only 1,000 out of 25,000 applicants were chosen.



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These women pilots started out ferrying planes within the continental United States from aircraft factories to training bases. Some flew fighter planes to Great Falls, Montana, where the planes were picked up by Russian pilots, often women, who ferried the planes to Russian bases. They also were assigned to tow targets for the anti-aircraft gunnery practice with live ammunition.

On June 1, 1944, Marion married Ned Hodgson, a decorated Marine Corps pilot and scion of the venerable Athens Hodgson clan. They made their home in Fort Worth, Texas, after the war, where Ned had a distinguished career in the insurance business.

While rearing a family of three children, Marion also maintained a full career as a writer for national magazines. She wrote a wonderful book in 1996 entitled, *Winning My Wings*, about the WASPS in World War II. The first edition sold out, and a second printing was made.

What a wonderful family Herman and Dorothea Stegeman brought up in Athens. They all exemplified Thomas Jefferson's idea of *noblesse oblige*: to those whom much is given, much is expected. Every one of the Stegeman family has participated in civic affairs, or taught, or held office, or served his or her country: they all have a strong sense of service.

Coach Dan Magill has been called "Mister Bulldog" for his dedication to UGA and its athletic programs. Coach of the UGA tennis program for 33 years, sports information director for the Athletic Association, and executive secretary of the Georgia Bulldog Club, he continues to preserve the history of athletics at UGA through his popular newspaper column, talks, and books. His October 2002 talk on "Athletics in Athens" for AHS was published in the 2003 *Athens Historian*, Volume 8. This paper was presented at the May 16, 2005, AHS meeting.

## First Baptist Continues 175 Years of Service

By Ernest C. Hynds

Athens Baptist Church, renamed The First Baptist Church of Athens in 1944,<sup>1</sup> was constituted January 31, 1830, in the First Presbyterian Church by members of Trail Creek Baptist Church and other Baptists in the area.<sup>2</sup> Proposals for a Baptist meeting house had been advertised as early as April 1829, but the building was not ready when prospective members were ready to start their church.<sup>3</sup> Although the members and ministers of the Trail Creek church, which was located about two miles from the city on the east side of the Oconee River, were not as educated or sophisticated as those in the city churches, they did leave several legacies for Athens Baptist and others. The first Baptist Sunday School in Georgia<sup>4</sup> and one of the first women's missionary groups in the state were started there in 1819. The Female Mite Society of Athens and Vicinity was open to all denominations but gave the funds it raised to The Baptist Board of Foreign Missions.<sup>5</sup>

The new church had 15 founding members, all of whom had been attracted to Athens by the University of Georgia. Ten were women whose families had moved to Athens to educate sons, grandsons, nephews and cousins. One of the five men was a professor; one was the father of a student; two were students; and one was a recent graduate. The professor, James Shannon, who

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<sup>1</sup> *Church Minutes*, VI, 89.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Athenian*, April 21, 1829.

<sup>4</sup> Robert G. Gardner, Charles O. Walker, J. R. Huddleston, and Waldo P. Harris III, *A History of the Georgia Baptist Association, 1784-1984* (Atlanta: Georgia Baptist Historical Society, 1988), 444.

<sup>5</sup> Records of the Female Mite Society of Athens are located in the Archives of First Baptist Church of Athens.

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was also a minister, was elected pastor in March and served successfully until November 1835. After leaving Athens, he served as president of several universities, including the University of Missouri. Historian Charlotte Thomas Marshall has provided an interesting description of Shannon, the founding members, and the antebellum church in two essays that are available in the church library. She described Shannon as an “activist of the mind.”<sup>6</sup>

Despite a substantial turn-over of ministers, 10 in 30 years, Athens Baptist increased its membership from 50 in 1835 to 270 in 1860. It adopted a covenant in August 1840 and rules of decorum in November 1843.<sup>7</sup> It built a meeting house for its colored members in 1848-1849 at the corner of Thomas and Mitchell streets,<sup>8</sup> and it built a new church building in 1858-1859 on land donated by



*First Baptist Church, ca. 1901, in Albin Hajos' photogravure of Athens*

the pastor W. T. Brantly at the corner of College Avenue and Market (Washington) Street. That building cost about \$7,000 and was finally paid for in 1863 when two women members each gave \$500 for that purpose.<sup>9</sup> The church supported missions at all levels, including development of the Buena Vista and Princeton Factory churches in the Athens area in the late 1850s.<sup>10</sup> Women then as now were involved in missions. A Female Sewing

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<sup>6</sup> Charlotte Marshall, “Glimpses Into the Ante-bellum History of the First Baptist Church, Athens Georgia with Appendix” (Athens, 1981) and “The Adventurous Life of James Shannon, Our First Pastor” (Athens, November 30, 1988). See quote on page 14.

<sup>7</sup> *Church Minutes*, I, 26-27, 32.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 75.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 124-129, 132-133, 139, 164, 173-174, 177-178; II, 49-50.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 153, 161.

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Society, organized before August 8, 1830, when it presented lamps to the church, is believed to be a forerunner of the Women's Missionary Society.<sup>11</sup>

Besides James Shannon, the best-known ministers who served during the antebellum period were Shaler Granby Hillyer, son, brother, and grandson of charter members and author of *Reminiscences of Georgia Baptists*, and Patrick Hues Mell, who later served as chancellor at the University of Georgia and as a state and national leader in Baptist life.

Members observed two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper. During the antebellum period baptism was administered in the Oconee River because there was no baptistry in the church. Historians Charlotte Thomas Marshall and Mary Claire Bondurant Warren have speculated that the baptismal site was between the Oconee Street Bridge and the old Athens Factory. This was relatively close to the church and to springs that made the water cleaner and more amenable to participants.<sup>12</sup>

Members were expected to attend church meetings and comport themselves as Christians, and over the years a few were excluded for drunkenness, profane swearing, disorderly conduct, and immorality such as fornication and adultery.<sup>13</sup>

Athens Baptist and other local churches responded positively to the challenges of the Civil War and Reconstruction. Kenneth Coleman reported in *Confederate Athens* that the churches were "an important part of life in Confederate Athens, and many church members sincerely did their Christian duty as they saw it."<sup>14</sup> Members responded through the church and other organizations. Mary Ann Cobb, for example, worked through the Ladies Aid Society in making uniforms and providing aid for soldiers and in providing aid for the many refugees who came to Athens during the war. She expressed "unwavering confidence in

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 6.

<sup>12</sup> Marshall, "Glimpses," 42.

<sup>13</sup> *Church Minutes*, I, 66, 112, 145, 166.

<sup>14</sup> Kenneth Coleman, *Confederate Athens* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1967), 132-144.

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God's power and willingness to keep all whom I have trustingly committed to his care."<sup>15</sup>

The church continued to grow in the decades after the war despite losing almost half of its membership in 1867 when 129 colored members withdrew to start their own church. White members encouraged them to remain in the church, but when they decided to withdraw, the white members assisted them in their new venture. Athens Baptist grew from 168 members after the withdrawal to 394 members in 1893.<sup>16</sup> In the 1880s and 1890s it helped lay the groundwork for what became East Athens and West End Baptist churches.<sup>17</sup>

Members continued to stress attendance at meetings and other aspects of church discipline. In July 1864, a committee appointed to consider whether dancing could be tolerated in the church described it as a "worldly amusement" that should be discouraged.<sup>18</sup> In February 1867, members adopted a resolution which said, "It is the settled conviction of this church that the retailing of ardent spirits is contrary to Christian propriety and deserves the strongest condemnation of the church and that this church will not retain in its fellowship any member engaged in the business."<sup>19</sup>

Athens Baptist emerged from the post-war decades in good condition and began in the 1890s a period of major growth that continued into the 1920s. Dr. W. H. Young, who served as pastor from November 1893 to November 1907, helped the church plan and construct a new church on the site of the second one in 1896-1898. He personally constructed an organ valued at \$4,000 for the

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<sup>15</sup> Kenneth Coleman, "Mary Ann Cobb in Confederate Athens" *The Georgia Review*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (1968), 360-369.

<sup>16</sup> *Church Minutes*, II, 85-86; Sarepta Association Convention Minutes, 1867 and 1893.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 321, 322, 325; III, 86-88, 126, 155, 157, 159, 161, 165, 167; IV, 178-182; 191, 194-195, 202, 207, 213, 214, 219, 342; Mimeographed History of East Athens Baptist Church.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 60-61.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 83-84.

## ATHENS HISTORIAN

new church. The church spent \$21,437.82 on removing the old building, architect's fees, construction costs, heating facilities, windows, and furniture. Members subscribed more than \$10,000 and borrowed money and issued bonds for the remainder. The last bonds were paid off in January 1908.<sup>20</sup>

The church's stand against alcoholic beverages was tested several times around the turn of the century by the employment of church members in the Athens Dispensary, created to control the sale of alcoholic beverages. After lengthy discussion, members reiterated the stand taken in 1867 and agreed to dismiss members who insisted on retaining their association with the dispensary. Opponents argued that the dispensary served a useful purpose in controlling the sales of alcoholic beverages and that church members had been involved in creating it. Several persons excluded were restored to membership after leaving the dispensary.<sup>21</sup>

Dr. Millard Alford Jenkins, who insisted that the church give priority to missions and evangelism before accepting its call, was responsible for the first assistant ministers during his brief tenure from October 1908 until early 1911. The church hired A. J. Ruby as assistant to the pastor and director of music and Wallace Southall as church missionary, but these positions were not maintained when Jenkins and both assistants left to accept other calls.<sup>22</sup>

Dr. James William Lynch succeeded Dr. Jenkins in March 1911 and guided the church through a number of challenges, including the loss of more than 100 members in 1912 to start Tabernacle Baptist Church, later Prince Avenue Baptist; the impact of World War I; and the planning and development of the church's fourth meeting house, which was located at the current

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<sup>20</sup> *Church Minutes*, IV, 3-10, 12, 13, 15, 24-29, 31-32, 42-45, 47-48, 55-59, 62-63, 76-81, 220.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 86-87, 89-90, 95-96, 151-152, 168-170, 345; E. B. Mell, *A Short History of Athens Baptist Church Now The First Baptist Church of Athens, 1830-1953* (Athens, Georgia, 1953), 22-23.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 232-241, 245, 251-252, 259, 296-297, 300.

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site. Tabernacle Baptist evidently resulted from a revival meeting rather than a division within the church or a mission project. Athens Baptist expressed its support of the new venture and encouraged its members to help individually as they could.<sup>23</sup>

Continued growth in the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century prompted members to construct a new church at the corner of Hancock Avenue and Pulaski Street. This facility, which was ready for services in August 1921,<sup>24</sup> cost more than \$240,000.<sup>25</sup> Members raised most of the money, but had to issue \$75,000 in bonds to pay the remainder.<sup>26</sup> The first bonds were issued in April 1921, and the last ones were retired in 1943.<sup>27</sup>

Dr. James C. Wilkinson, who succeeded Dr. Lynch after he retired in September 1920 for health and other reasons,<sup>28</sup> was the driving force in paying off this huge debt during a lengthy depression that began in the 1920s in Athens because of the boll weevil and continued through the 1930s. Dr. Wilkinson, who served from May 1, 1921, until early 1949, the longest tenure in the church's history, developed many programs at home and was active in both Georgia and Southern Baptist conventions. During his tenure the church reorganized the board of deacons and created a group called associate deacons to assist them in various ways.<sup>29</sup> It also reorganized the Women's Missionary Society, which had been formed in the 1890s as a successor to several groups that had done missionary work since the church was founded.<sup>30</sup> The church developed the Baptist Young People's Union, or BYPU, and later the Baptist Training Union for all

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 327-330.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 97, 115; Mell, *A Short History of Athens Baptist Church*, 19.

<sup>25</sup> *Church Minutes*, V, 133-135, 200-201.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 117-119, 124-125; Mell, *A Short History of Athens Baptist Church*, 19-20.

<sup>27</sup> *Church Minutes*, V, 117-119, 124-125; VI, 74, 86.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 99, 119.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 145, 147.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 155, 157, 159

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ages,<sup>31</sup> and it helped the Rev. D.B. (Brother Nick) Nicholson develop the Baptist Student Union at the University of Georgia. It contributed facilities and funds to that effort, and the university BSU became a model for such groups in Georgia colleges.<sup>32</sup> The church employed its first education director, Ruth Jenkins (Mrs. John), from October 1945 until August 1948, when she left to take a position at a college in Valdosta. She returned later as a member and taught a Sunday School class for many years.<sup>33</sup>

Dr. Howard Giddens succeeded Dr. Wilkinson in 1949 and served the church effectively until 1967 when he resigned to become a professor of religion at Mercer University in Macon.<sup>34</sup> He guided the church through a period of unprecedented growth that had begun during the later years of the Wilkinson administration and included the construction of the Edwards-Sams Educational Building in 1951<sup>35</sup> and the acquisition of the S. S. Smith property on Prince Avenue in 1954.<sup>36</sup> This period culminated in the creation of Milledge Avenue and Beech Haven Baptist churches in the late 1950s and a “beginning again” for First Baptist Church in the 1960s.<sup>37</sup>

Growth was also reflected in the expansion of church staff, including the first full-time music director, Fletcher Wolfe, who served from 1956 to 1958 when he resigned to become director of the Atlanta Boy Choir<sup>38</sup>, and the first administrative secretary, Mrs. Miriam Drewry, who was employed in early 1959 and

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 375.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 219; VI, 97, 99, 101, 103-06, 118-A; VI, 186A, 188A, 190; VIII, 12-13.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 110-111, 163.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 166B, 172A, 174, 176A, 176B; IX, 18B, 18C.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 187, 194A, 200A, 200B, 204A, 204B; VII, 93, 96.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, 16, 17B, 18.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, 83I, 83J, 83O, 83P, 83Q, 83R, 83S, 84, 87, 89, 89D, 89F, 91A, 91C, 92, 93, 93A, 93C, 93E

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, 53A, 82, 88.



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served through January 1972.<sup>39</sup> It could also be seen in the inauguration of a family night meal and activities on Wednesdays;<sup>40</sup> the operation of a kindergarten for three years, 1958-1961;<sup>41</sup> and the development of a church library in 1953 under the direction of Mrs. Kathleen Broadhurst, a University of Georgia librarian and church member.<sup>42</sup> To facilitate existing programs and growth, members voted in March 1960 to air condition the church building and its annexes.<sup>43</sup>

Dr. Giddens served as president of the Georgia Baptist Convention and as a member of the foreign mission board of the Southern Baptist Convention. He was known for his emphases on evangelism, education, stewardship, and organization.

Dr. Julian Cave, who succeeded Dr. Giddens in 1968 and served until 1975,<sup>44</sup> helped church members adjust to far-reaching changes in church, religion, and culture in the 1960s and 1970s. He was a leader in efforts to bring the Athens community together at a time when integration of the schools and other facilities posed large challenges. Within the church, he encouraged efforts by the WMU and others to develop a day care center in the Parkview Homes public housing project and explored new approaches to worship, including the presentation of religious dramas, music, and dance.<sup>45</sup> He also encouraged the decision to admit members from other churches without their having to be re-baptized by immersion, as new members coming on profession of faith are baptized, and in the process helped unite many once divided families in the church.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 91B; IX, 109.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 207.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, 82, 83J-83O.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, 8,9; Church Bulletin, April 19, April 26, and May 3, 1953.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, 107B, 108.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, IX, 22G, 22H, 24; X, 152-154.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, IX, 40, 47-48, 107, 118.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, IX, 127.

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Dr. Cave also encouraged the renovation and modification of the sanctuary,<sup>47</sup> the development of a banquet sponsored by the deacons to recognize senior adults,<sup>48</sup> and the development of a foundation to facilitate the donation of funds and property to First Baptist.<sup>49</sup> One of the best things he did was recruit Bob Farrall as minister of music in 1970. Mr. Farrall developed many programs for children, youth, adults, and senior adults. He took the youth choir on four trips to Europe to sing in churches and at United States military bases before he retired in the early 1990s. Dr. Cave left in 1975 to accept a pastorate in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Dr. Jon Appleton succeeded Dr. Cave as minister in January 1976 and guided the church through major expansion programs and significant church and denominational changes before he retired in April 1999.<sup>50</sup> He presided over two major renovation projects: one in 1980 that revamped infrastructure and made maximum use of existing space and a second in the early 1990s that provided expanded facilities for the fellowship hall, kitchen, library, and classrooms. The first cost approximately \$800,000 and the second more than \$3 million.<sup>51</sup> In addition, he was the minister in 1976 when the church received from the Woodruff family in Atlanta a new Moeller organ given in honor of Nell Hodgson Woodruff, who had grown up in the church.<sup>52</sup> This organ not only has provided beautiful music for the church, but it also has been used by graduate students at the University of Georgia for music recitals.

During Dr. Appleton's tenure, the church acquired the remaining properties in the block bordered by Hancock Avenue,

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, IX, 59-61, 71-72, 75-77, 85, 97.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, X, 155.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, IX, 136, 145.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, X, 171 194A, 194B, 194C; XIII, 16, 18-20.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, X, 213-214, 216-217, 225, 239; XII, 6, 13-18, 22-23, 28; XIII, 10, 11.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, X, 181, 183; XI, 16A.

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Newton Street, Meigs Street, Prince Avenue, and Pulaski Street that made the 1990s expansion possible.<sup>53</sup> In 1998 the church joined with the Athens Area Chamber of Commerce and Ricky Chastain in purchasing property across Pulaski Street from the church for development by the chamber and Mr. Chastain and for additional parking spaces for the church.<sup>54</sup> Also during Dr. Appleton's tenure, the First Baptist Foundation was fully activated to receive gifts for buildings and benevolences.<sup>55</sup> In February 1995, the church created the part-time position of business manager to oversee financial matters, staff management, and facilities.<sup>56</sup> Jim McCullough, a retired business executive, was hired to fill this position.

In the late 1970s, Dr. Appleton supported a proposal to change church policy and open the diaconate to women, a move that more than doubled the leadership pool in the church, recognized the important roles women have played in the church, and provided for them new avenues of service.<sup>57</sup> Only a few were elected in the first few years, but many have been since.

Dr. Appleton also encouraged increased emphasis on age-related ministries. Scott Walker, who went on to become widely recognized as a preacher and author, worked with both youth and senior adults during more than five years as an associate pastor in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The church decided to employ a full-time youth minister in 1989, and Lex Horton and later Jay Ragsdale held that position during the 1990s. Matt DuVall holds it today.<sup>58</sup> Programs for senior adults were developed through a council created in October 1986,<sup>59</sup> and music ministers were later

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<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, XI, 7.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII, 7.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, XII, 19.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, XII, 48-49.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, X, 180, 182, 188, 189, 191, 192.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, XI, 61.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, XI, 32-33.

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assigned to develop and coordinate those programs.<sup>60</sup> Dr. Appleton started several Sunday School classes for young adults and endeavored successfully to get more young married couples and more young children into the church.<sup>61</sup>

First Baptist Church continued its emphasis on missions during Dr. Appleton's tenure through contributions to mission programs at local, state, national, and international levels. In July 1986, members voted to join with several other Baptist churches in co-sponsoring a mission in the Georgia Square Mall area that in time became the Cleveland Road Baptist Church.<sup>62</sup> Under the leadership of Frank Granger, minister of education since 1989, the church has joined with like-minded churches in the Southeast in developing a summer camp for children, Camp Prism, and in becoming a Stephen Ministry church. In December 1996, the church agreed to permit Elaine Hale the use of some of its facilities for a preschool and mothers' day-out program,<sup>63</sup> and in April 1997 the church agreed to sponsor a refugee family in the Athens community in cooperation with the Atlanta-based World Relief Corporation.<sup>64</sup> The Cvorovic family subsequently became important contributors to the church and community.

Perhaps Dr. Appleton's greatest challenge came in helping the church develop a response to the fundamentalists' takeover of the Southern Baptist Convention and the Georgia Baptist Convention. The response included the development of a Statement of Baptist Principles for First Baptist Church in 1988<sup>65</sup> and the creation of a Denominational Relations Committee in late 1989 to study what was going on in the denomination and

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<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, X, 254B.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, XI, 71A.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, XI, 28.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, XII, 68-69.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, XII, 71-72.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, XI, 51.

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recommend appropriate responses.<sup>66</sup> Throughout the 1980s, the church had supported the efforts of moderates to maintain a balance in the conventions, and when those attempts failed, it explored alternative means of carrying out its programs and missions. One step was an alliance with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF), formed in the early 1990s to provide educational materials and mission opportunities for moderate churches. CBF has helped the church maintain its mission work at all levels.<sup>67</sup> In 1996, for example, the church entered a two-year partnership with CBF and Milledge Avenue Baptist Church to expand and develop ministries to international students at the University of Georgia and develop service and outreach programs in connection with several Olympic venues in Athens.<sup>68</sup> A missionary couple spent two years in Athens working with these programs.

Dr. Kent Anglin, a counselor and former full-time minister, was employed as interim minister when Dr. Appleton retired in April 1999. He had spoken in the church on numerous occasions over the years, had experience as an interim minister, and proved to be an excellent choice. Dr. Anglin worked with the staff and lay leaders to keep the church moving ahead on all fronts, and he instituted several programs to honor specific groups, such as members who were military veterans. During his tenure, on April 9, 2000, upon recommendation of the Denominational Relations Committee, the church withdrew from the Southern Baptist Convention it helped form in 1845. In leaving, the church criticized the fundamentalists for abandoning the traditional Baptist principles of congregational authority and free speech in the seminaries and for restricting the role of women in the church.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, XI, 67- 68, 70, 73, 75; XII, 1-2.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, XII, 3-4, 7-8, 11-12.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, XII, 61.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII, 26-27.

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After an extensive search the church called Dr. Bill Ross of Vinton, Virginia, as senior minister in August 2000.<sup>70</sup> Under his guidance the church has continued its strong education, music, and youth and senior adult programs and has given increased emphasis to missions, especially in India, where it has conducted a medical-educational mission and assisted in the development of a seminary.<sup>71</sup> The church has also been a leader in the local area with the development of the Interfaith Hospitality Network to assist homeless families in Athens,<sup>72</sup> and it provides space at the corner of Hancock Avenue and Newton Street for the IHN day center. The young people of the church continue to conduct mission trips, including one to Jamaica in July 2003. The music program remains strong under the direction of Len Willingham, minister of music, and D.C. Rhoden, long-time organist.

After fundamentalists gained control of the Georgia Baptist Convention and strongly supported positions taken by the Southern Baptist Convention, First Baptist withdrew in November 2001 from the state group as well.<sup>73</sup> Since then it has strengthened its ties with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and like-minded churches.

Dr. Ross has developed a contemporary service aimed primarily at college students and young adults at 9 a.m. on Sundays to complement the traditional 11 a.m. service, and he has developed a popular children's sermon within the 11 a.m. service. The church is planning to increase its ministry to children and young families through the employment of a part-time children's minister. Dr. Ross and other staff members have worked with a strategic planning committee and a "Who We Are" committee in identifying who the church is and what it hopes to do for Christ as it moves from its 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2005 toward its

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<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII, 29-30.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII, 35; *First Baptist News*, January 20, 2001.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII, 55.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII, 43.

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bicentennial in 2030. Worship, missions, education, fellowship, and service have been given high priorities.

Dr. Ernest C. Hynds is a charter member of the Athens Historical Society and the former head of the Department of Journalism at the Henry W. Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communications, University of Georgia. He is the author of *Antebellum Athens and Clarke County, Georgia*, and contributed numerous articles about the history of Athens to the *Athens Banner-Herald* during the bicentennial celebration in 2001. This paper was presented at the AHS meeting on October 15, 2005.

**The First United Methodist Church  
of Athens, Georgia**

By Mary Claire Bondurant Warren

Perhaps no colony was more intimately connected with the founders of the Methodist denomination, John and Charles Wesley, than was Georgia. The Wesleys were sons of an Anglican rector and ordained ministers in the Church of England. The brothers came to the new colony of Georgia in 1735 to preach to the colonists and Indians. Charles soon returned to England, but John remained for nearly two years, preaching up and down the coast of Georgia to all who would hear him. Back in England in 1738 both John and Charles Wesley experienced a religious transformation that would become the foundation of the Methodist Church. The beliefs of this new faith were carried throughout the colonies by itinerant preachers. An eloquent evangelist and close friend of the Wesleys, George Whitefield, came to Georgia in 1738, founded the Bethesda Orphanage near Savannah in 1740, and continued preaching up and down the colonies until his death in 1770.

Another young English itinerant preacher, Francis Asbury, came to America in 1771 and almost single-handedly kept the Methodist flame alive in the New World after other preachers returned to England during the Revolution. In 1784 John Wesley sent Thomas Coke to assist Asbury in the new United States, and the Methodist Episcopal Church was established at Baltimore that Christmas, with Asbury and Coke as the first bishops. Coke returned to England and Asbury labored on, ordaining more than 4,000 preachers and organizing churches, including 17 trips to Georgia. The Methodist church in America had numbered about 600 when Asbury arrived; at his death in 1816, it had more than 200,000 members. Bishop Asbury's journals vividly chronicle his



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travels and the establishment of the Methodist denomination in America.

Among the circuit riding preachers traversing the state of Georgia were the Rev. Hope Hull, native of the eastern shore of Maryland and a long-time friend of Bishop Asbury, the Rev. Lorenzo Dow, and the Rev. Lovick Pierce. These names crop up for several generations in the communities they served.

The upcountry of Georgia was still the frontier in 1801 when the *Senatus Academicus* (the University of Georgia's Trustees and Board of Visitors) gathered at Billups' Tavern on the road between Lexington and Jefferson to select a site for the chartered University of Georgia. Local landowner Daniel Easley promoted his 633 acres lying along the Oconee River at a small settlement known as Cedar Shoals for the site. After a visit to this property, the members of the *Senatus Academicus* agreed that it was an excellent location for the new college. John Milledge, a member of the *Senatus*, purchased the land from Easley and donated the tract to the state for the college location. It is on part of Easley's tract that the present building of the First United Methodist Church of Athens stands.

As construction on the university's first building, Old College, began in 1803, two of the university's trustees, General David Meriwether and the Rev. Hope Hull, moved their families to Athens to educate their sons, James Meriwether and Asbury and Henry Hull. These early graduates of Franklin College, as the University of Georgia was first called, served as early trustees of the Athens Methodist Church.

The first Methodist meeting house on the west side of the Oconee River was built in 1804 on the property of Josiah Freeman, "near a spring about 500 yards east of Mr. Barwick's house."<sup>1</sup> In this miserable cabin two of the most eloquent men of the time preached sometimes to a dozen, never to more than a hundred hearers." Here both Hull and Bishop Asbury preached to

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<sup>1</sup> Hull, *Annals of Athens, Georgia, 1801-1901*, 47. Mr. Barwick's house is now known as the Alonzo Church-Carlton-Glover home at 255 Milledge Heights, present home of John Barrow.

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a growing number of Athenians. By 1810 a larger building was constructed near Lumpkin Street, on "Meeting House Branch," for the use of Reverend Hull and any itinerant Methodist minister. Both buildings were referred to as "Hull's Meeting House" in local records. Almost single-handedly Hull brought Methodism to Athens, and his death in 1818 was a blow to the growing congregation.

According to tradition, in 1824 Thomas Hancock offered a lot on the corner of Lumpkin Street and Hancock Avenue across from his home to "The Methodist Society" on which to erect a church. In 1921 his granddaughter, Marianna Frierson, was allowed by the church trustees to place a commemorative marker to this effect in the church. Repeated searches of legal records and of the minutes of the trustees of the University of Georgia, who sold this property, have failed to uncover the recording of a deed to this property to either Hancock or the Methodist congregation.<sup>2</sup>

Construction on this site began in 1824 of a frame church about 40 feet square, and the Rev. Thomas W. Stanley became its first minister in 1825. Galleries were built on three sides to accommodate the African-American members of the congregation, for both slaves and masters worshiped together at that time. Soon the building had to be enlarged to take care of the expanding congregation. Dr. Lovick Pierce was Stanley's successor, 1826-1827, and the first minister actually assigned by the Methodist Conference to serve the church. By 1828 the Georgia Legislature incorporated the Athens Methodist Church with five trustees, whom it authorized to be a self-perpetuating body "with full power and authority to fill any vacancy which may hereafter occur on said board...."

Serving as the first trustees of the church were James Meriwether, William Lumpkin, Cicero Holt, Asbury Hull, and Right Rogers. It was into their hands that the church property devolved under terms of the legislative act. Cicero Holt was a

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<sup>2</sup> Bondurant, *The First United Methodist Church, Athens, Georgia*, 48.

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lawyer and died in 1830. William Lumpkin was the brother of Georgia Governor Wilson Lumpkin and moved with his family to Marshall County, Mississippi, in 1837 and died there in 1840. Captain James Meriwether fought in the War of 1812, was elected to the Georgia General Assembly for two terms, and served as a trustee of the university 1816-1831. He died in 1854 and was buried in the Meriwether family cemetery near the Georgia Square Mall. Asbury Hull was a lawyer, bank president, legislator and trustee of the university; he died in 1866 and was buried in Oconee Hill Cemetery. Rogers was a shoemaker and evidently moved to Monroe, Walton County, Georgia, by 1848.<sup>3</sup>

The church records before 1866 have been lost over the years, but in 1841 the Georgia Legislature passed an act allowing the “remaining trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Athens to fill any vacancies that now exist in their Board.”<sup>4</sup> The names of these trustees are not known, but by November 1866, only Dr. Henry Hull, Asbury’s younger brother, and James R. Carlton were still alive.

The years prior to the Civil War saw many changes in the city of Athens and the South. A spirited revival in 1844-45 under the Rev. W.J. Parks brought the membership of this church to 163 white and 97 black members. In 1845, though, the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church was the scene of an schism over slavery. Congregations from the slave-holding states split off to form the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, with about 462,000 members. This division lasted until 1939 when more than 7,600,000 Methodists were again united.

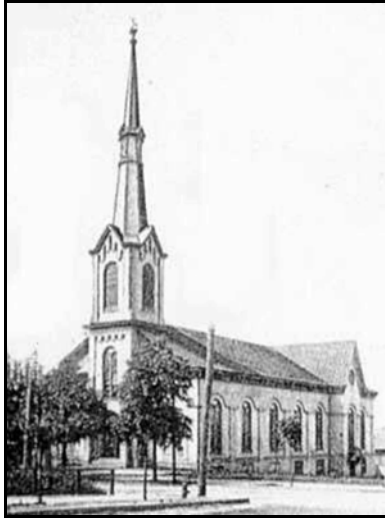
By 1852 the Athens congregation had outgrown the existing wooden church building, so it was given to a black Methodist congregation and moved to Foundry Street at the east end of Hancock Avenue. On the corner of Hancock and Lumpkin, the “Brick Church” was erected with a towering steeple that could be seen for miles around, at a cost of about \$6500. A parsonage was

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 52-77.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 50-51.

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The 1852 brick Methodist Church on Lumpkin Street, photo taken about 1900 by Albin Hajos

built on the Washington Street corner of this lot. The 1852 steeple remains today, and the interior of the building has been remodeled and enlarged several times over the 150 years of its existence.

The Civil War (1861-1865) had a lasting effect on Athens as well as the South. The first of many military units to depart Athens was the Troup Artillery, who heard a farewell sermon preached in the Methodist church by the Rev. Joseph S. Key. At the railway depot on Carr's Hill, the university's Chancellor Andrew Lipscomb

made a farewell oration, with a response by Captain Marcellus Stanley, their commander and son of the church's first minister.

In 1863 a notable preacher, the Rev. W. J. Scott, was assigned to the church; he was succeeded in 1864 by the Rev. W. Arminius Wright and then by the Rev. Harwell H. Parks, who served from 1864 until 1868. Many funeral corteges departed from the sanctuary during this tragic period. Services were interrupted once in the spring of 1864 with the report that Yankees raiders were as near as Watkinsville, and members fled to their homes.

At the conclusion of the Civil War the only two surviving members of the original trustees, Dr. Henry Hull and James R. Carlton, elected Marcellus Stanley, John W. Nicholson, and Reuben Nickerson, a transplant from Maine, to fill the vacancies on the board. Former Confederate General Clement A. Evans became the pastor in 1869.

By 1870 the Colored Methodist Episcopal (CME) Church had been formed, and the African-Americans who were members of the "First Church" joined the new denomination. The

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congregation, now all white, continued to grow and in 1870 established a daughter church on Oconee Street on the northwest side of Carr's Hill overlooking the Oconee River bridge. Many moved their membership to this new Oconee Street Methodist Church.

The installation of a Johnson pipe organ in the First Methodist Church brought some interesting limitations to its use. In a resolution passed at the third quarterly conference in June 1870, the congregation resolved that Sister Clara Barrow and Sister King act as organists and that a choir of not less than 10 nor more than 20 persons be authorized, "... these persons to receive careful instruction in singing and that three of the number, in addition to the two regular organists, be instructed to play upon the instrument." Also, the choir "shall select such music as is strictly congregational. ... and that our own authorized tune books be generally used." No chants were to be used, and "such tunes be played as the entire Choir can sing and the Congregation can easily learn." Since there was no electricity, the organ was a bellows or pump type, and the stewards were authorized to employ a boy to work the bellows of the organ during services and pay him from the church's collection.<sup>5</sup>

The new organ seems to have been a bone of contention in the "First Church" congregation. Wealthy landowner Ferdinand Phinizy, who abhorred the playing of musical instruments in church, offered a large sum to the new Oconee Street Methodist Church, "so long as they had no organ," and moved his membership there.<sup>6</sup> About 1902 the Johnson organ was replaced when Dr. W.H. Young furnished and installed a new one. A Moeller was installed in 1924, which was replaced by the present Zimmer organ, donated and installed in 1973. This magnificent organ allowed a greatly expanded musical program for the church.

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 21-22.

<sup>6</sup> Hull, *Annals*, 339

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In 1884 an addition to the west end of the sanctuary was constructed to provide Sunday School rooms. Another remodeling took place in 1910 with the sanctuary being “flipped,” and the pulpit was moved from the west to the east end of the sanctuary nearer Lumpkin Street, and more Sunday School rooms were added to the west.

In 1910 a men’s Bible class was established by Dr. Nat G. Slaughter, and Judge H.C. Tuck became its long-time teacher. The Tuck Class continues to this day and has had many prominent Athenians in its membership.

During World War I and World War II, a large red and white service flag was hung over the large skylight in the Sunday School room on the west end of the sanctuary. On each flag a blue star was sewn when a member of the church went into military service. With a death, the service flag was lowered amidst ceremony and tears, and a gold star sewn over the blue star. Each war had its own flag, and both flags are now missing.

For many years the preacher and his family were housed in a parsonage constructed about 1852 on the Washington-Lumpkin corner of the church property; it was replaced by a newer structure in 1906. When a residence away from the church was sought for the preacher, a house was purchased on Dearing Street in 1939. The 1906 parsonage then became the church office and additional Sunday School rooms, but it was demolished to make way for the two-story Sunday School building and the Stiles-Dimon Chapel in 1951-52.

A large bequest from Eustace Floyd Lampkin made possible the remodeling of the church once again, from 1960-63. The sanctuary was turned around again so that the pulpit, baptismal font, organ and choir loft were placed on the west end of the sanctuary, with entry from Lumpkin Street. Services were held in the nearby Georgian Theater while construction was in progress. Three memorial windows on the west end of the new sanctuary were given by Mr. and Mrs. William A. Mathis in memory of Mrs. Mathis’s parents, Ernest S. and Harriet Ewers Lyons, who had been Methodist missionaries in the Philippines. Landmarks

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in the history of Methodism are part of the design of these impressive stained glass windows.

The Methodist Episcopal churches around the world merged with the United Brethren denomination in 1968 to form the United Methodist Church. The Athens First church thus became known as the First United Methodist Church of Athens.

A special day in the history of the church occurred on October 26, 1978, the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration for Dr. Robert Cumming Wilson. Born at the home of Bishop George Foster Pierce, his great-grandfather, in Sparta, Hancock County, Georgia, he was baptized by his great-great-grandfather, Dr. Lovick Pierce, the first assigned minister of the Athens Methodist Church. "Dr. Bob" Wilson served this church in many capacities, as member and chairman of the Board of Stewards, member of the Board of Trustees for 43 years, and 19 years as its chairman. He had been instrumental in establishing the pharmacy school at the University of Georgia and for many years served as its head. His wife, Grace, was the daughter of the Rev. Dr. Marcellus L. Troutman, a pastor of this church. After a long and fruitful life, Dr. Bob died in Athens on June 4, 1981, and was buried beside his wife at Oconee Hill Cemetery.

More remodeling took place in 1978-79, and the trademark weathervane that had graced the top of the steeple since the early 1900s was replaced with a gilded cross. During the closing decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the church obtained the land to the west of the facility, completing their ownership of the block bounded by Lumpkin, Hull and Washington streets and Hancock Avenue. On this property, a large Family Life Center containing meeting rooms, offices, and a gymnasium was constructed in 2001-02, to better serve the ever-increasing congregation. Dr. Bill Britt, senior pastor; David Moore, minister of discipleship; Martha Aenchbacher, minister of program development and children's ministry; Margaret Davis Freeman, minister of youth; and Grady Wigley, minister of pastoral care, carry on the proud traditions of the church and its care and service to the community.

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For two centuries the Athens First United Methodist Church has played a major role in the religious life of Athens and its citizens.

Mary Bondurant Warren is the daughter of the late John P. Bondurant II, author of the volume from which much of this article was derived. She is a charter member and past president of Athens Historical Society and wrote "How Athens Came to Be" for Volume 6 of the *Athens Historian*. She is known nationally for her publishing company Heritage Papers, her genealogical publications and the weekly genealogy magazine *Family Puzzlers*.

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

In Volume 9 of the *Athens Historian*, the article "Fire Companies of Athens" was attributed to Wendell Faulkner as the author. It has come to light that the author of the article was, in fact, Eric T. Frey.

The Athens Historical Society, Inc., and the *Athens Historian* have no rights to this article, except for the one-time serial rights under which it was originally published. All other rights to the article belong to Eric T. Frey.

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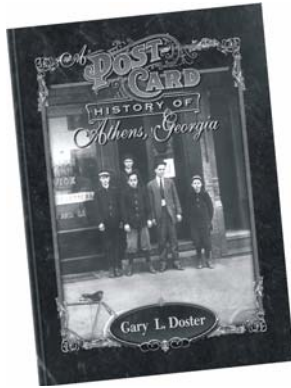
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by Gary L. Doster

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- Newton House on Prince Avenue, now a doctors' office
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## **A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ATHENS HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Excerpted from a history by  
Susan Frances Barrow Tate.

On October 11, 1959, at an informal organizational meeting the Athens Historical Society was born. This meeting was held in the Athens Regional Library, then located on the corner of Hancock and College Avenues. The founders of the Society were Sarah Maret, Director of the Athens Regional Library; John E. Talmadge, Professor of English, University of Georgia; Porter Kellam, Director of the University of Georgia Libraries; Kenneth Coleman, Professor of History, University of Georgia; Richard N. Fickett III; Marion West Marshall; Harry Hodgson, Sr.; John W. Bonner, Special Collections Librarian, University of Georgia Library; Susan Frances Barrow Tate, Library Assistant, University of Georgia Library; Lucy Clark and Robert E. Gibson. Temporary committees were formed to plan a general organization meeting to be held October 29, 1959. At this meeting, held in the auditorium of the Chamber of Commerce building, a constitution was approved, aims and/or purposes of the society were formulated, and committees were appointed.

The purposes and aims of the Athens Historical Society expressed in the current constitution are:

1. To discover, collect and preserve all materials, especially original and source materials, pertaining to the history of or in any manner illustrative of Athens, Clarke County, adjacent counties, and related areas.
2. To disseminate this knowledge for the enlightenment of our citizenry through preparing, editing and publishing historical materials, descriptive and illustrative of Athens and related areas through programs or historical papers.
3. To promote historical research.
4. To promote preservation and perpetuation of historic sites and places.
5. To bring together those interested in the history of these areas.
6. To promote and stimulate public interest in and appreciation of the history of Athens and related areas and to develop in every way an understanding of their historic past.
7. Notwithstanding any provision of these articles, this organization shall not carry on any activities not permitted to be carried on by an organization exempt from federal income tax under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law.

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