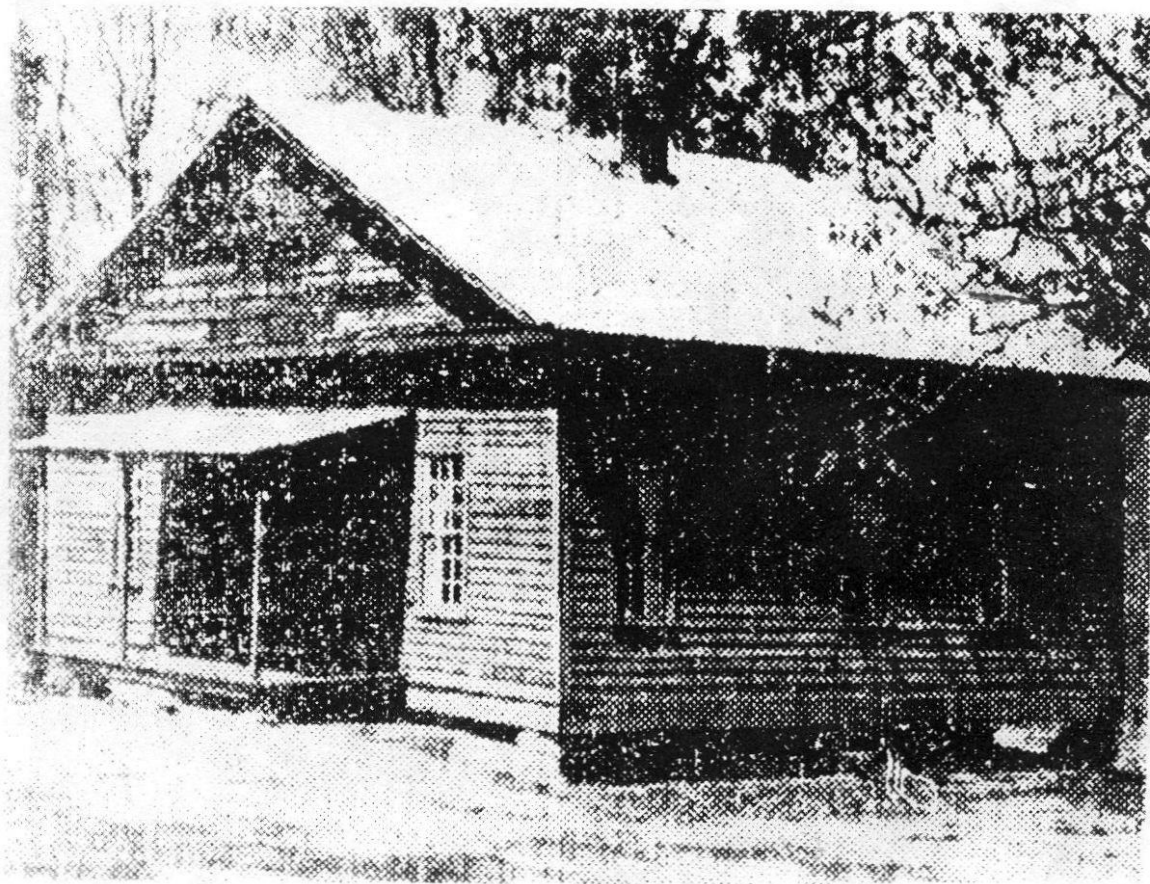


Philadelphia Presbyterian Church

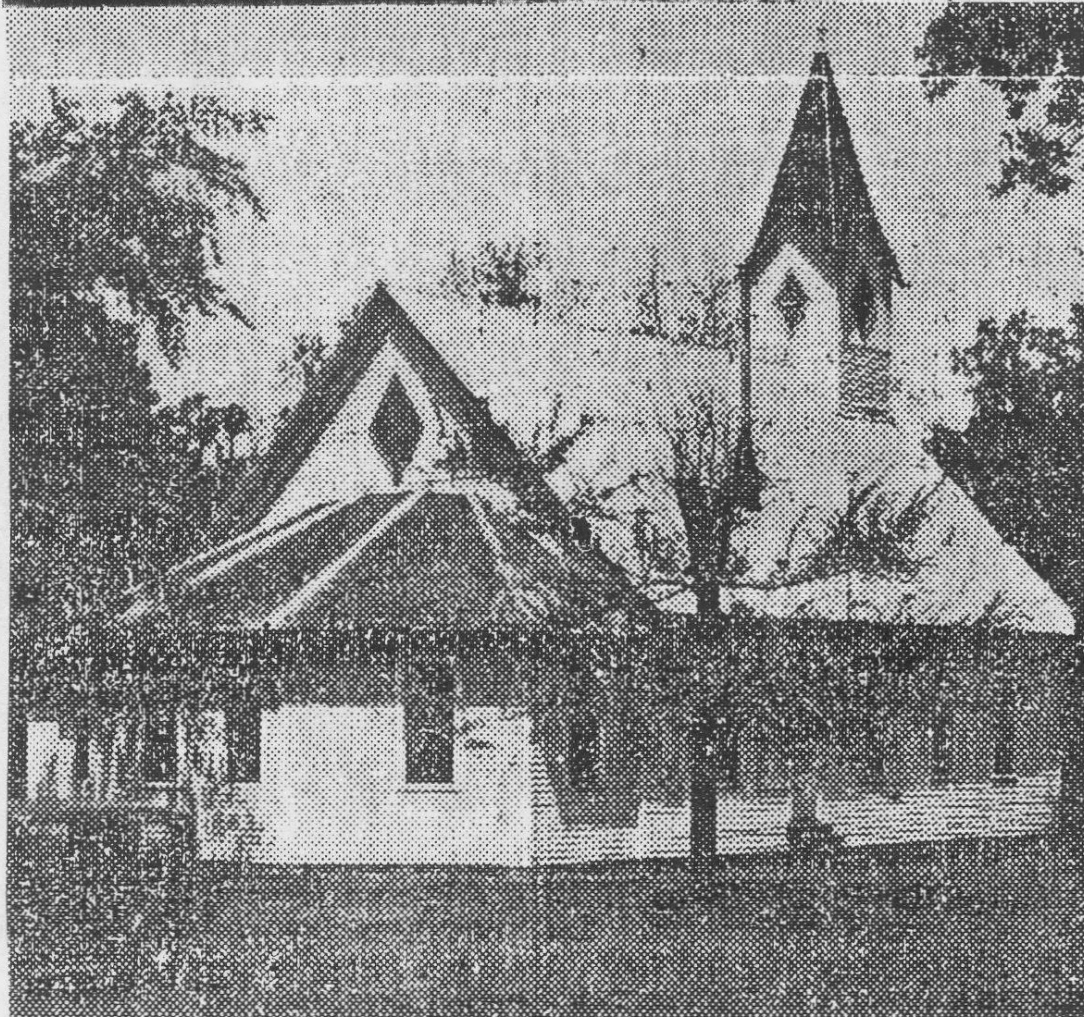
Organized 1825



201-11-10 a newspaper article appearing in the April, 1938 "The Sunday
"The 201-11-10" this was the first church structure... organized in 1825.



This second structure of Philadelphia Church was constructed in 1858 and used as a schoolhouse after 1895 as recorded by Judge William H. Reynolds.



These two photographs show the third structure of Philadelphia Presbyterian Church. The front view was taken shortly after construction in 1895 and the rear view from a 1938 photograph.

THE ATLANTA GEORGIAN

NEWSPAPER OF THE SOUTHEAST

The Atlanta Georgian Grows Just Like Atlanta

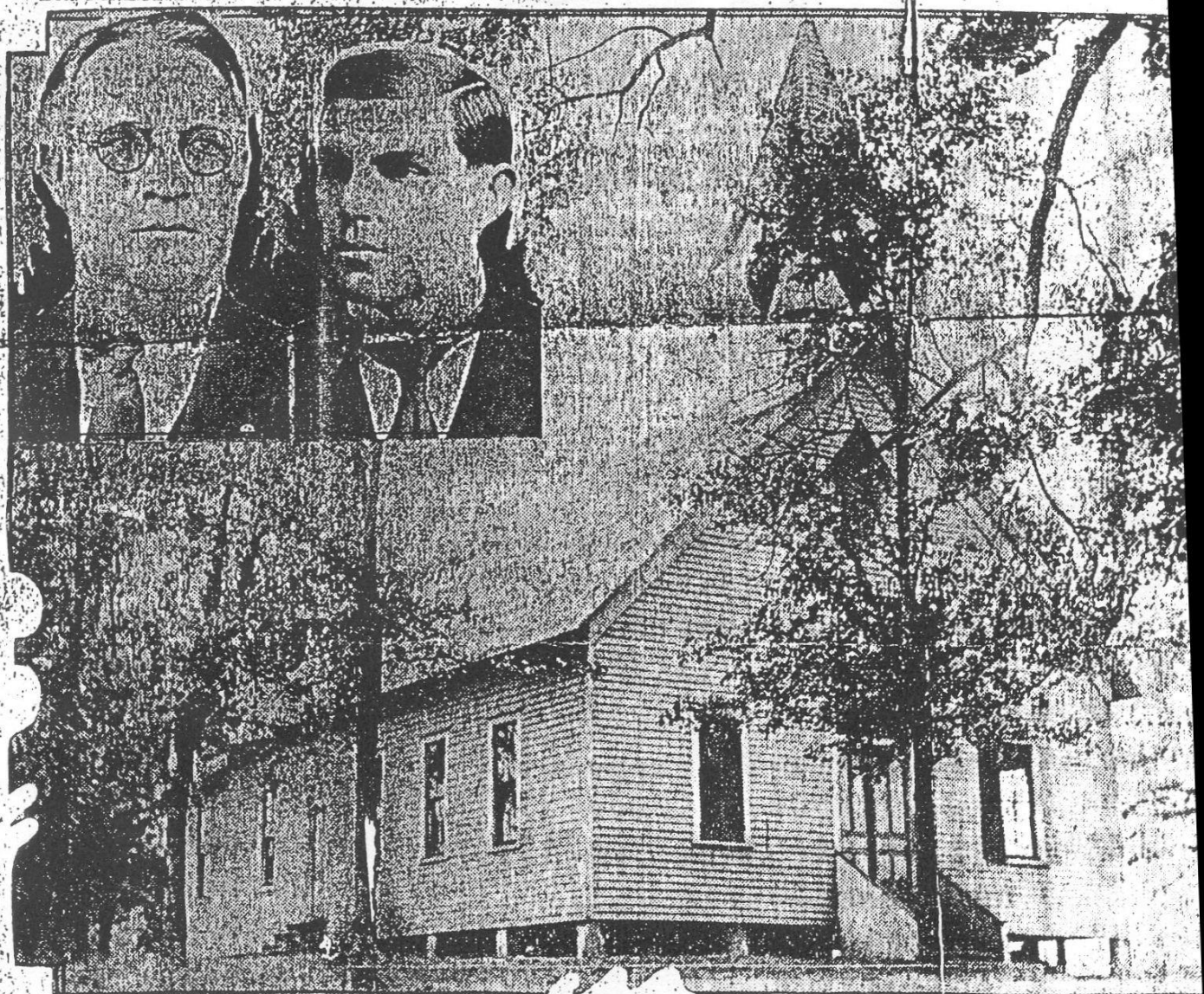
Home"

ATLANTA, GA., FRIDAY, MAY 14, 1926

Georgia Church to Celebrate Centennial

DR. FIRLEY BAUM

C. B. HULE

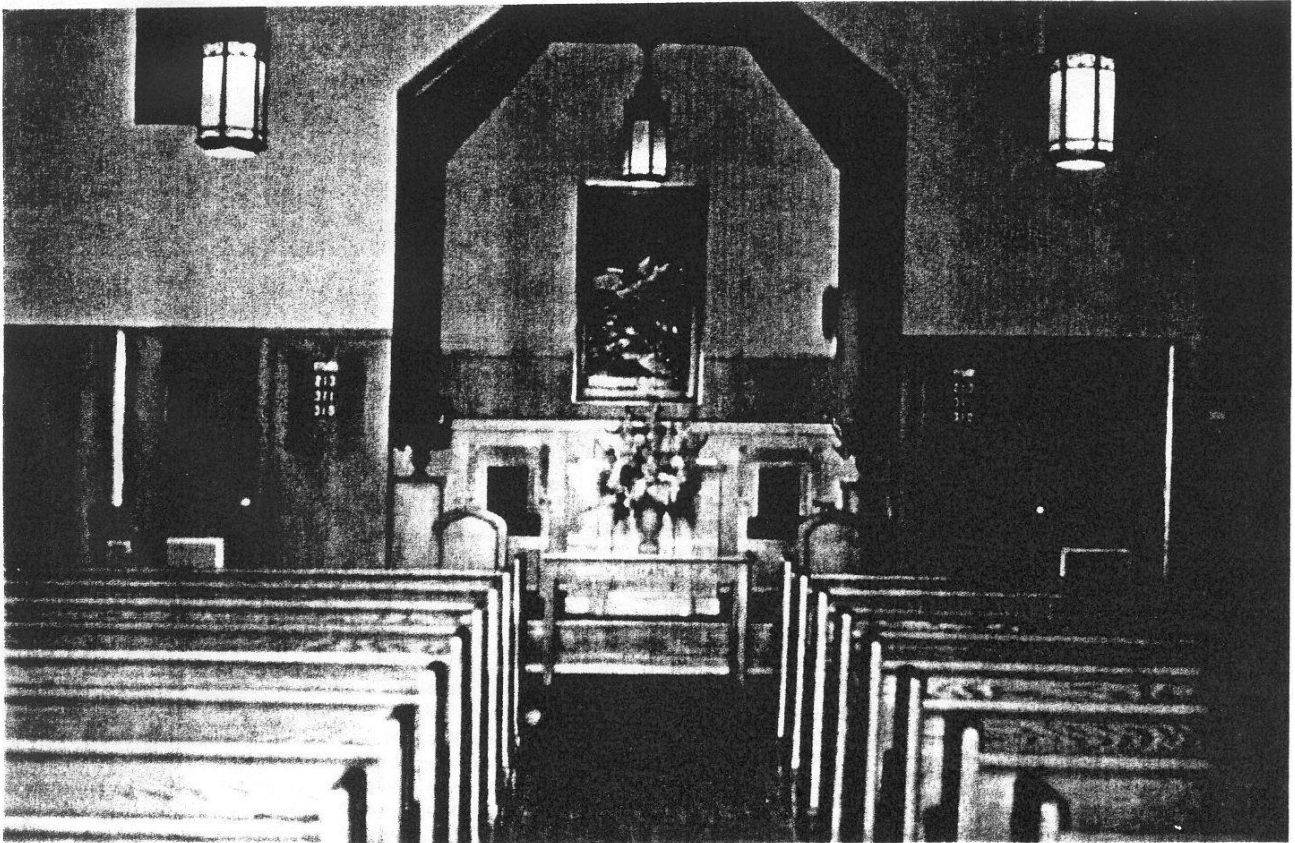


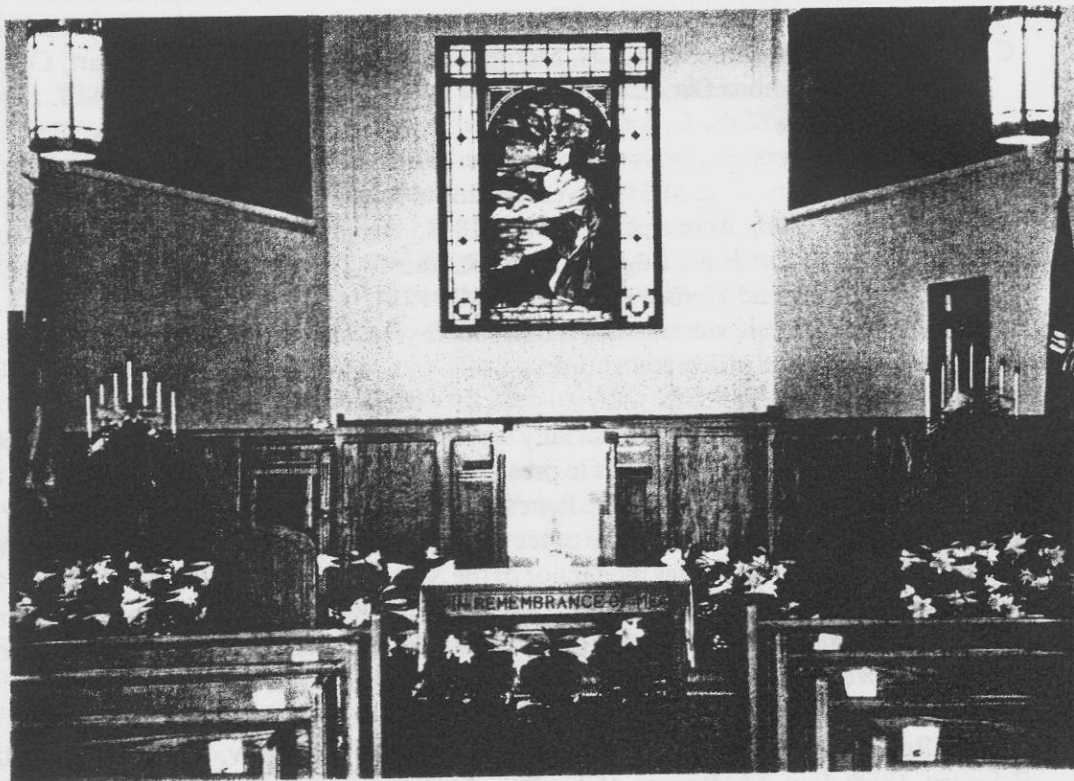
More than 100 years ago a little group of Scotchmen settled in Clayton County and in 1826 they organized and built a Presbyterian Church and on the first day of August this year there will be a centennial. All of the former pastors now living and former members will be there. In 1858 the first church was razed and a new church

built and this served until 1895, when another was erected. The same church stands as pictured above. It is called the "Phil Church," so named by Dr. John S. Wilson, the first pastor. Men in the insert are Rev. Firley Baum, the present pastor, Hule, one of the ruling elders, who has charge of the histories of the little church.—Photos by Georgian Staff.



The renovation of the sanctuary was completed in 1954. This remodeling changed the window/side door placement, added a choir loft, stained glass windows and the front narthex. Photographed, December, 1963.





Due to a fire on May 15, 1975, the sanctuary had to be reconstructed. Changes made included extending the sanctuary size adding stained glass windows & larger choir loft.

HISTORICAL SKETCH PHILADELPHIA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 1825 . . . 1950

Philadelphia Presbyterian Church is located on the Dixie Highway leading from Atlanta to Macon, about 13 miles South of Atlanta, in Clayton County, near Forest Park, Georgia.

The first steps toward the organization of the Church were taken in 1825, when the people were assembled together under the leadership of the Rev. John S. Wilson, D.D., a pioneer minister of great ability.

Unfortunately, no record was kept until the year 1831. What took place previous to that year was later recorded from memory.

The records do not state how many members were in the organization, but the number must have been very small, for in the year 1831 there were only recorded twenty-two members living, and seven dead.

Andrew L. Huie was the first Clerk of Session, and served until May 3, 1847. Alexander L. Huie served until April, 1850; Robert Collins Huie until September 17, 1856, when Andrew L. Huie was again elected and served until September 15, 1886, when he was succeeded by Dr. John Robert Nisbet, who served until July 7, 1895. George Monroe Huie then served until August 11, 1907, when Columbus B. Huie was elected and still serving in that capacity.

The records of the Church disclose that the Session was composed, at various periods, of such men as: John Barnwell, Andrew L. Huie, Robert Huie, Alexander L. Huie, George McMillan, William P. Hill, William Young Conine, James Huie, James McKown, John W. Forbes, Thomas Moore, William W. Kennedy, Robert Collins Huie, Thomas Johnson, Henry Stanley, Joseph H. Huie, Elijah Huie, Robert Stell Huie, James B. Dunn, John Robert Nisbet, Monroe Huie, Richard W. Jones, Joseph Lemuel Huie, Eugenius C. Nisbet, George Monroe Huie, J.N. Moore, David C. Huie, Enoch R. Stewart, Columbus B. Huie, James W. Conine, J. Columbus Orr, F. Leonard Terrell, Benjamin Franklin Huie and J. Newton Orr.

The early records are very incomplete. We do not find the names of any deacons until June, 1850, when Joseph Huie and John M. Huie were elected to that office. William Presley Conine, John C. Terrell and Andrew Jackson Camp were elected in May, 1874; Benjamin Franklin Huie and J. Columbus Orr, in April, 1887, Patterson Porter Huie, Edgar R. Huie, R. Merlin Terrell and William Young Conine, August, 1907; William Elijah Orr and Horace A. Orr in April, 1914. On June 16, 1907, Deacons J. Columbus Orr and Benjamin Franklin Huie were elected Elders, but for reasons satisfactory to himself, Benjamin Franklin Huie declined to accept the office at that time.

Philadelphia has been wonderfully blessed in her ministerial associations. As previously stated, Rev. John S. Wilson was the first minister to preach to this church, in the year 1825; Rev. Alexander Kirkpatrick, in 1827-28. In the year 1829 the Rev. James Gamble became pastor, and he apparently served several years. The early records do not disclose the exact period that any preacher served the church, but in 1835 we find that the Rev. John Warnick was moderator of the Session. The next year, 1836, Rev. Michael Dickson, who was succeeded in 1844 by Rev. John C. Baldwin; in 1846, Rev. Benjamin D. Dupress, and Rev. John M. McKittrick, in 1854. The records fail to show that either of these men served as pastor or stated supply. The following served as stated supply, beginning their service in the years named:

Rev. James C. Patterson, 1856; Rev. W.J. Keith, 1860; Rev. Washington Baird, 1866; Rev. Robert E. Logan, 1868; Rev. J.L. Rogers, 1873; Rev. Andrew McElroy, 1881; Rev. Henry Quigg, 1882; Rev. J.H. Alexander, 1884; Rev. Henry Quigg again in 1886; Rev. R.D. Perry, 1890; Rev. W.F. Hollingsworth, licentiate, 1895.

The following were regularly called and installed as Pastors: Rev. Nathan Beecher Mathes, 1896; Rev. Samuel Wilde DuBose, 1905; Rev. N.B. Mathes again in 1908; Rev. Archie McLaughlin, called and installed in 1914, served until June 1, 1921, when he accepted a call to Lowell, N.C. Rev. James B. Ficklen then served the church temporarily until December 1, 1921, when Rev. R.F. Clayman became stated supply and served until October, 1922. Rev. Firley Baum began serving us as stated supply, and on November 18th, 1923, was installed as pastor, and is serving us at the present time in that capacity.

Besides her regular pastors, this church has enjoyed the preaching of some of the best men in the Southern Assembly during special evangelistic services and camp meetings. It appears from the record that the Philadelphia camp meetings began about the year 1850, and continued until about the time of the Civil War. From the time of organization until the beginning of the camp meetings, we find evangelistic meetings were held by such men as Rev. Mooney, Rev. R.C. Carter, Rev. Jas. A. Patterson, Rev. Scott and Rev. Smith. During the period of the camp meeting we find that names of such preachers as: Rev. Joseph B. Stephens, Rev. James B. Stephens, Rev. James Boseman, Rev. W.D. Matthews, Rev. Joseph Y. Alexander, Rev. J.L. King, Rev. William M. Cunningham, Rev. John E. DuBose, Rev. John Mill, Rev. Jos. C. Styles, Rev. John S. Wilson, Rev. James C. Patterson, Rev. Wm. J. Keith, Rev. John W. Patrick, Rev. James Stacy and Rev. J.E. Rogers.

During the camp meeting period, the Civil War came on, which greatly interfered with the church services. This church was in direct path of Sherman's Army on its march to the sea, and our people suffered all the hardships and privations of those perilous times. A goodly number of her members volunteered and marched to the front; but those who remained at home strived valiantly to keep the home fires burning. The following members where either killed in battle or died in prison or camp:

John Wiley
William A. Huie
Samuel T. Moore

William M. Huie
Joseph W. McKown
James Columbus Huie

John C. Conine
John B. Kennedy
James W. Conine

Rev. Washington Baird became pastor about that time, and served until his death, in 1868. This is the only instance, throughout her long history, where minister died while serving the church, and a marble tablet hanging in the church commemorates his memory, giving date of his birth and death, and underneath: "We will remember the words thou didst speak to us."

From the camp meeting period until the present time we find that special evangelistic meetings were held, and the pulpit supplied temporarily when the church was without a pastor, by such men as: Rev. John Jones, Rev. L.L. Gaillard, Rev. W.A. Tigner (a minister of the Lutheran church), Rev. Robert Hall, Rev. N. Keff Smith, Rev. John J. Robinson, Rev. G.B. Strickler, Rev. John E. DuBose, Rev. J.B. Mack, Rev. J.T. Bruce, Rev. Thomas P. Hay, Rev. J.S. Kolb, a missionary from Brazil sent out by the U.S.A. Church, Rev. R.L. Bell, Rev. T.B. Trenholm, Rev. Chalmers Fraser, Rev. S.R. Graves, Rev. P.P. Winn, Rev. Frank D. Hunt, Rev. H.B. Holt, Rev. Sam W. DuBose, Rev. Thomas E. Converse, Rev. James B. Ficklen, Rev. Harry C. Hammond, Rev. Samuel Young, Rev. W. McC. Miller, Rev. J. Edwin Hemphill, Rev. D.M. McIver, Rev. McD. Shields, Rev. W.A. Murray, Rev. Robert B. Stimson, Rev. William Huck, Rev. J.E. Hammond and Rev. J.F. Brown.

It is quite probable that others of whom we have no record took part in these meetings, also. The splendid influence exerted by this church for one hundred years is due largely to the faithful preaching of these Godly men, coupled with the examples set by the old Scotch-Irish forefathers from whom most of the present members descended.

It is a remarkable fact that almost every child that has reached the age of accountability has become a member of the church. While this is true, the membership of the church has never been very large. This is partially due to our nearness to the City of Atlanta, many of our people availing themselves of its opportunities, upon reaching manhood. This has served to keep our membership small, and retarded its

expansion. However, our loss has been Atlanta's gain, for on the rolls of many Atlanta churches is to be found today the names of former members of this church. Especially is this true of Pryor Street Church, with which a number of our former members have cast their lots, and among which are several officers. Some of Atlanta's former and present citizens came from our church. Mr. George Beavers, and his son, now Chief of Police, James L. Beavers; Probation Officer Sidney J. Coogler, and Mr. Patrick Calhoun being a few of those to whom reference is made.

Rev. William Alonzo Nisbet, for many years pastor of the Hull Memorial Church, Savannah, Ga., and later pastor of the East End Presbyterian Church, Houston, Texas, and Rev. Irby D. Terrell, former pastor of Ocean View Church, Norfolk, Virginia, were reared in this church. However, Mr. Terrell was the only man to go directly from this church into the ministry.

In the year 1879, twenty-one members were granted their letters in order to organize a church at Jonesboro, Ga. This, of course, weakened our church to some extent, but by God's blessing she continued to grow and prosper.

Again, in the year 1895, twenty-eight members were dismissed, at their request, for the purpose of organizing a church at Riverdale, Ga., and since its organization eighteen additional have moved their membership to that church, making a total of forty-six. This was a severe drain upon the mother church, but God was gracious to us again, as he has always been to his people in time of need, and the church rallied nobly, and is today doing a glorious work.

Our Sunday School has been and is the great feeder of the church itself. It is from Sunday School ranks that the great majority of our members have come and are still coming. We have probably had a continuous Sunday School for the past century, and certainly for the past fifty years it has continued uninterrupted.

Three church buildings have been erected - the first shortly after the organization of the church; the second during the year 1858 or 1859, the records not being very clear; the third and present building having been erected in 1895. It may be noted in this connection that practically all of the construction work was done by members of the church. Rev. William J. McMillan, now of Baltimore, then licentiate, preached the first sermon in the present building.

Five regular and one called meetings of the Atlanta Presbytery have been held in this church. The first met on Wednesday before the second Sabbath in April 1870, and was moderated by Rev. Robert Logan. The second, April 25th, 1877, Rev. L.L. Gaillard was moderator. On account of a serious and perplexing problem confronting the church at that time, the Session asked the Presbytery to meet in called session, September 14, 1886. The third regular meeting was on Friday before the third Sabbath in April, 1899, Rev. W.E. Dozier, moderated. The fourth meeting was held on April 24, 1901, and moderated by Dr. R.C. Reid, of Columbia, South Carolina. The fifth and last meeting was held October 24th, and was moderated by Rev. M. Mac McKay.

The Presbytery honored this church by electing one of her Elders as a Commissioner to the General Assembly, in 1915.

We have not a complete list of the names of members participating in the organization of this church, but in 1831 the roll is given as follows:

Richard Curd	William Duncan	Alexander Lynn Huie
James Huie	John Hill	Eleanor Huie
Margaret Huie	William P. Hill	Andrew Lynn Huie
Mary Barnwell	Mary Barton	Sarah McMillan
Martha Cooley	Catherine Forbes	Mrs. Baird
Elizabeth Huie	Nancy Curd	Polly Duncan

Joseph Huie
George Huie
George McMillan
Robert Baird

Mary Lyn Huie
John Barnwell
John Cooley
Robert Huie

Catherine Hill
Martha Hill
Martha Coogler

Up to and including the year 1831, seven of those mentioned had died.

A few of the family names may be of interest. The most conspicuous, for numbers at least, is the Huie family, this Scotch-Irish name running throughout its entire history from organization to the present time. Other names, not so numerous, but perhaps more prominent, we find the McMillans, Forbes, Conines, Barnwells, McKowns, Burks, Johnsons, Kennedys, Stanleys, Cooglers, Irvines, Beavers, Grants, McNairs, Dunns, Parkers, Nisbets, Adams, Yarborough, and many others too numerous to mention here.

As previously stated, the membership of this church at any one time has never been large, and quite a percentage of its membership has been composed of children during all these years. At the present time we have five elders and three Deacons, and about 145 resident members. Between the date of its organization and the present, hundreds have been received into the membership of this church, either upon profession of faith in Jesus Christ or by letter from other churches. Many of these have gone out to organize and become members of other churches, scattered from New York to Old Mexico, and from the Carolinas to the Pacific Coast.

The records show that we have had 13 Deacons and 26 regular ministers, three of them serving the second time after a few intervening years. One interesting fact is recorded. Robert C. Huie, in 1853, was elected and served as Clerk of the Session for three years before he was made an Elder, this being perhaps the first and only instance where a Clerk was elected outside the membership of the Session.

At one time we were without a pastor and were unable to secure one for a season, but the church was served for several months by Rev. John F. Jones, a minister of the Methodist church, then living in this community, now residing at Hapeville, Ga.

For sixty-two years the church was able to have preaching only once a month, but since that time twice a month. There has never been any wealth in the membership of the church. The membership has all through the years been composed of that great class - the middle class - which we are told is the backbone of our country, and which Abraham Lincoln said the Lord must have loved, for He made so many of them.

At the present time the greatest harmony exists between pastor and people, and it is our hope and prayer that the Great Head of the Church, who in His Providence has cared for this church and blessed it through all the years - through seasons of adversity as well as of prosperity, will inspire her to go forward to realize the accomplishment of greater things in the future, so that we may pass on to future generations the glorious heritage that has been ours.

The above sketch was prepared and read by C.B. Huie, Clerk of the Session, at the One-hundredth Anniversary of Philadelphia Presbyterian Church.

OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING PHILADELPHIA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

(This is a reconstruction of the address of the Rev. Franklin C. Talmage at Homecoming Day, October 1950)

The speaker would not attempt to give a history of the Philadelphia Presbyterian Church, but merely to make certain observations which have been of interest to him and which grow out of the record of the church.

One might ask the first questions, why is the church here? A brief lesson in geography would be pertinent. First draw a line from the northeast corner of the state to the center of the western boundary, and we have marked off the Cherokee Country west of the Chattahoochee River, and which was occupied by the Cherokee Indians when our story begins. Then draw a line across the state from east to west, just south of Augusta, Macon and Columbus. This is what is sometimes called the "fall line" and separates in general the flat piney-woods country from the upland hard-wood areas. This low country was not highly esteemed by the early settlers, hence they sought the upper lands. The Ocmulgee and the Chattahoochee Rivers were navigable to this "fall line", and steamboats ascended as far as Macon and Columbus as early as 1826. Then we must draw a line from the "fall line" at Macon north to the Chattahoochee. To the east was the settled country which for some years had been occupied by the whites. To the west was the "new country" just recovered from the Indians, and upon it the eyes of the white settlers were turned.

This country was traversed by rivers and Indian trails, and later was to be marked by stage-coach routes. One can observe that the rivers in this section follow a generally southerly direction. The Ocmulgee flows to the Atlantic Ocean, and the Flint River flows by way of the Chattahoochee River to the Gulf of Mexico. Thus there is a watershed slightly to the east of the Philadelphia Church, which is significant in determining the old travel routes. There was also an Indian trail which followed the high ground on the eastern side of the Chattahoochee River, coming in through Gwinnett County west of Lawrenceville, then through what is now Peachtree Road in Atlanta, and on down through Fayetteville into Coweta and to the old Mackintosh Reserve. These two trails diverged slightly north of Philadelphia Church at the headwaters of the Flint River, bringing the attention of the early settlers to this area. Athens was the center of Franklin College of the University of Georgia, where for half a century, beginning about 1810, the college was presided over by Presbyterian ministers, including such men as John Brown, Robert Finley, Moses Waddel, and Alonzo Church. Stage-coach routes led to Athens from several directions. Thus may be determined the route followed by those early settlers in whom we are interested today. They made their way from the northeast, southwesterly along the route indicated. Huies and Moores from Ireland, Caldwells from near Anderson, S.C., and Conines and McMillans we pick up in Mendham and Olney Churches of Jackson County waiting for the signal from the government that the way is open to settlers. The first Elders of the new church were Robert Huie and John Barnwell. Robert Huie acquired land and remained along with others of his family. John Barnwell was looking for land further on, and moved into the Cherokee Country as soon as settlements were permitted.

Of importance to us is the presence of a young Presbyterian minister named John S. Wilson. He was a man of pioneer spirit. Reared in South Carolina and trained in the arts and in theology, he was prepared to teach and preach the Gospel. His movements were also along the afore-mentioned route. He was teacher successively in South Carolina, at Ruckersville (near Elberton), in Madison County near Danielsville, and at Lawrenceville. He had become acquainted with many of the pioneer settlers. As they moved into the "new country" he endeavored to follow them up. Teaching school throughout the week, he used his weekends for missionary excursions. On one of these he found our forebears. He reported to the then Presbytery of Hopewell in April 1826 that he had organized a church called the Philadelphia Church with 14 members. The original minutes of the church organization were lost, but six years later an effort was made to reconstruct them. The date of Mr. Wilson's visit was remembered as the day after Christmas, but the year is written indistinctly in the minutes. Therefore in the light of Mr. Wilson's own report in the Presbytery minutes, that first meeting must have been on December 26, 1825, nearly one hundred twenty-five years ago.

One might wonder what the church did for its preaching services. One can think of their meeting from time to time for fellowship and prayer in various homes. However, a road had been established about this time from Fayetteville to Decatur, traces of which may still be found. This directed them to Decatur where Alexander Kirkpatrick was teacher and preacher. They secured his services for several years till he moved back to South Carolina. It was to be the experience of Philadelphia Church to have services one Sabbath a month for the next half century and by such ministers as might be found available.

We must digress here for a moment to see the development of the country. It was the invention of the cotton-gin that had made our particular land so valuable. Markets must be found for the cotton produced, and a shipping point must be reached.

The nearest point for shipping were Macon and Columbus. Of these Macon was nearer, and could be reached by way of McDonough, Jackson and Forsyth. Later a water route was developed to Columbus by way of the Chattahoochee, and the shipping point was near Campbellton. Thus it will be seen that the Philadelphia community was accessible from various directions. There was the nearby Decatur-Fayetteville road; there was the road to McDonough; and the road to the Chattahoochee. In the course of time there developed a Presbyterian Church in every direction: - at Decatur in 1825, at McDonough and Fayetteville in early 1827, and at Salem near Campbellton in 1840. During the next period of time Philadelphia Church looked to McDonough for help. James Gamble and Michael Dickson, both teachers at McDonough, served the church as long as they lived in McDonough. During the same period a Presbyterian minister named William K. Patton lived and owned property at Fayetteville, where he taught and preached. Mr. Patton occasionally helped at Philadelphia with special services. Among the names prominent with special services. Among the names prominent in the Fayetteville Church were McBride, Cunningham, Holt, and McLure. With the movement toward the Chattahoochee some of the members of Philadelphia Church left to form a church in Campbell County known as Salem Church. It had a rather stormy history, and upon its dissolution, there came to Philadelphia Church some of the Kennedys and McKowns and Huies.

For the first twenty years Philadelphia Church had an uncertain existence. There was much coming and going, and at the end of two decades the church reported but 11 members (less than it had at organization). About that time developed the popular camp-meeting. Presbytery was divided into districts for united meetings. Philadelphia was grouped with Decatur and Salem, and the record shows these united meetings held near Decatur. As a result of these meetings new members were received into Philadelphia Church. So effective did these camp-meetings become that a camp-ground was developed at the Philadelphia Church. In the year 1852 the movement reached a high water mark for Philadelphia Church. Six of the most prominent ministers met in September at the campground. They were John S. Wilson of Decatur, Wm. Cunningham of LaGrange, Joseph Y. Alexander of Newnan, Wm. J. Keith of Griffin, Joseph B. Stevens of Newton County and J. Lawrence King of McDonough. Services began on Wednesday. There were three services each day: - in the morning, after dinner, and at "early candle lighting." Six adults were received on Sunday morning, which was customarily known as Sacrament Sunday. However, upon that occasion the camp-meeting closed with a service on Monday morning when seven infants were baptized. Throughout this prosperous period in the life of the church the leadership was in the hands of Rev. Benjamin Dupre who lived at Power Springs. The War Between the States brought an end to the period of prosperity. Three sons of the church went off to war never to return. The membership was discouraged. Services had been largely interrupted. Financial losses had been great. Rev. Washington Baird came to live among the people and to bring new hope. After but two years of service he was called home at the age of 61, and lies buried in the old church cemetery. Recovery after the war seems to have been unusually rapid. In the year 1869, under the leadership of Rev. John Jones, then pastor at Griffin and later evangelist for the Presbytery, there was a remarkable manifestation of grace when 22 members were added to the roll of the church. This recovery period was greatly promoted by the Rev. J.L. Rogers, and growth was steady for twenty-five to thirty years in spite of the fact that the Jonesboro Church was set off in 1879 and Riverdale Church in 1895. Hapeville Church also drew a few members in 1894. After a brief period of marking time, the church moved onward under the patient and faithful guidance and ministry of Rev. N.B. Mathes, and rose to a new height of strength in 1906. Then the country

was struck by a financial depression which in turn was followed by the coming of the boll-weevil and many of the people turned to new pursuits. The city of Atlanta drew off continually enterprising young adults, much to the weakening of the church. Then beginning in much more recent years, the expansion of industry in Atlanta, the coming of good roads, and the more favorable aspects of rural life, all lent much to the present era which is just beginning, when we find the membership of the church larger than ever in its history, and the church with improved physical properties. Who can estimate the developments in the immediate future?

It would be impossible in this short time to enumerate all the ministers who have served this church. Their number is about thirty during the 125 years of the church's history. It was the practice of the church to look about for a minister (for many years they found a teacher) and to make arrangement with him for a year at a time. At the close of each year the church decided whether to call him for the next year or to look elsewhere. This led often to hasty decisions and all to frequent change of ministers. A study of the church's life will reveal the most flourishing periods to be those when the pastorate extended over several years. During the first seventy-five years, save for a very short period, services were held but once a month. Then during a period approximately the first quarter of this century an effort was made to hold services on two Sundays of each month. Then in more recent years a full time program was developed with the minister living in the church's own manse in the midst of the congregation. There have been but two full-time pastors, Rev. L.A. McCutcheon and Rev. E.H. Overcash.

Who shall ever measure the rich contribution the church has been making to the larger interests of the Kingdom of God? Membership has been contributed to the organization of the three churches of Jonesboro and Riverdale and Hapeville. Two men from our membership have entered and are now serving in the ministry of our church, namely, Rev. Irby D. Terrell and Rev. G. Dana Waters. There is a worthy list of officers who were reared in Philadelphia Church and who are now rendering a rich service in many churches such as Jonesboro, Riverdale, Hapeville, East Point, Gordon Street, Pryor Street, Druid Hills, Decatur and others. Last but not least is the contribution of ever increasing sums for the promotion of the missionary causes of the church. Can any one value the large influence that the church has had upon the moral character and development of this part of the county, and the deep spiritual progress seen in many individual lives?

We now face the future with a glorious heritage. An expanding city is constantly bringing new people nearer to our doors. Our improved facilities afford opportunities for more effective service. A minister living in our midst makes ready a richer pastoral oversight. An enlarging official staff promises a strengthened leadership. It is now possible for us to surpass the fondest dreams of the founders, and even of our fathers. Are we ready in our day to bring the devotion and sacrificial service which are needed to seize the magnificent opportunity that is before us? What we do today may direct the century immediately before us.