



A Homecoming Celebration

*"Go home to thy friends,
and tell them how great things
the Lord hath done for thee."*

MARK 5:19

INDEPENDENCE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

April 25, 2004

HOMECOMING CELEBRATION

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP **Ethan and Mason Jones**

*O Come Little Children..*Johann von Schultz

Long Long Ago..... T.H. Bayly

*Ode To Joy.....*Beethoven

Violin duet dedicated to the memory of

John and Christine Boyd and John Wright Boyd Jr.

INVOCATION

*HYMN # 57 *O For A Thousand Tongues To Sing*

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH *Apostles' Creed #881*

PASTORAL PRAYER

LORD'S PRAYER

*HYMN #577 *God Of Grace And God Of Glory*

OFFERING

*DOXOLOGY

SPECIAL MUSIC

Anne Macey soloist

Donald Macey organist

Count Your Blessings

Music: Reginald Morgan

Words: Edith Temple

INTRODUCTION OF GUEST MINISTER

SCRIPTURE

SERMON

Rev. Dr. Harold Lawrence

*HYMN #557 *Blest Be The Tie That Binds*

*BENEDICTION and

BLESSING OF THE FOOD

*POSTLUDE

* Congregation Standing

On behalf of all the faithful, dedicated members at Independence UMC who worked so hard to make this day a success, welcome. It is our hope that you have many wonderful memories in and through this church, and that they are rekindled today.

Some of us will indeed meet for the first time today, but memories are made of this too. A few will discover a previously unknown family connection with someone present here, thus proving the "small world" theory.

We are delighted and blessed today to have Dr. Harold Lawrence as our guest minister. Harold is a talented author, historian, and minister, formerly serving in this pulpit. He is now senior minister at Milledgeville First United Methodist Church.

A special thank you to Donald Macey who has agreed to be our organist this Homecoming Day, and to Anne Macey for her gift of special music. The Maceys, from Augusta, revisit Independence today for this celebration.

We will have lunch after the worship service and plenty of time of fun and fellowship, getting reacquainted, catching up on the happenings over the years, and meeting brand new friends!

After lunch today we invite you to spend some time in the museum-like exhibit room set up by our historian, Dr. Sophia Boyd Bamford. You may browse the pictures, documents, models, and other displays, and chat with Dr. Bamford.

Thank you all for your presence; may the peace of God be with you, and may the God of peace be with you.

Chuck

FLOWERS PLACED IN SANCTUARY TODAY

in memory of

John & Christine Boyd

and

John Wright Boyd Jr.

by

Gail and the girls

Independence United Methodist Church
Box 248
Tignall GA 30668
706/285-2156

Pastor: Chuck Smith
140 Tim Lane
Athens GA 30601
706/369-0740

We're like pianos; we may not all be grand, but we can be upright.

GRACE-A GIFT

Grace is something you can never get but only be given. There's no way to earn it or deserve it or bring it about any more than you can deserve the taste of raspberries and cream or earn good looks or bring about your own birth.

A good sleep is grace and so are good dreams. Most tears are grace. The smell of rain is grace. Somebody loving you is grace. Loving somebody is grace. Have you ever *tried* to love somebody?

A crucial eccentricity of the Christian faith is the assertion that people are saved by grace. There's nothing *you* have to do. There's nothing you *have* to do. There's nothing you have to *do*.

The grace of God means something like: Here is your life. You might never have been, but you are because the party wouldn't have been complete without you. Here is the world. Beautiful and terrible things will happen. Don't be afraid. I am with you. Nothing will ever separate us. It's for you that I created the universe. I love you.

There's only one catch. Like any other gift, the gift of grace can be yours only if you'll reach out and take it.

Maybe being able to reach out and take it is a gift too.

Frederick Buechner
from *Wishful Thinking*, 1973

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"CHRISTIAN ART"®
MADE IN USA



**A
CELEBRATION
OF
HOMECOMING
April 25, 2004**

**Independence United Methodist Church
Tignall Georgia**

"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always and in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now...Philippians 1: 3-5

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

April 25, 2004

Today we celebrate the memory of families with ties to Independence UMC. These ties may extend back to the church's beginning in 1783 or beyond, to include the earliest settlers of the Ceded Lands in 1773. It is important to understand that these lands became Wilkes County in 1777, from which Elbert County was formed in 1790, Oglethorpe County in 1793, and Lincoln County in 1796. Other divisions of the Ceded Lands may not be applicable to this study.

Methodism in America began as a lay movement. In Georgia the first two circuit riders came in 1786. Before that time, as well as after, it was the custom for individual lay people to host meetings in their houses. These groups were known as "societies". When they outgrew the home, a "meeting house" was built and was called a "chapel". This was the origin of many Methodist churches. Others grew out of the "brush arbor" concept associated with a campground. A campground was located at Independence Crossroads. It is known that campmeetings were occurring as early as 1809, for Bishop James Osgood Andrews, the first bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, was converted at a campmeeting during that time. He was 13 years old and undoubtedly came with his parents who lived in Elbert County, and were members of Asbury Chapel. If tradition is correct, the origin of this campground should be 1783, and the early settlers and their families must have come for spiritual renewal and fellowship—the "old time revival meeting."

Immediately after the end of the Revolutionary War there was a great migration of families into the Broad River Valley (1783-1785), in search of new lands in return for military service rendered. A specific group of families came together from Wake County, North Carolina, and settled on the south side of Broad River between Pistol and Chickasaw Creeks. They were the Wootten, Hinton, Hill, and Pope families. All were destined to play a strong role in spreading Methodism in Georgia. All were related through marriage, and all had a part in the history of Independence and its related congregations.

Another family destined to play a role in the spread of Methodism and possibly the early development of Independence Church, was that of Holman Freeman Jr. and his brother, George Freeman. Their father, Holman Freeman Sr. came from Virginia to the Ceded Lands in 1773, with his wife and nine children, and they settled on Chickasaw Creek near what later became the Malloryville community around 1794. Judge Junius Hillyer, a grandson of John Freeman, another brother of Holman Jr. and George, stated in his *Memoirs* that Holman Jr. and George were Methodists in good standing. Bishop Asbury visited Freeman's Chapel in 1803 indicating that some of the Freeman family embraces Methodism. George Freeman lived very close to the Independence Campground and could have attended services there while his brother could have hosted a society in his home, and subsequently built a meeting house to accommodate his neighbors, most of whom were Methodists at that time. Unfortunately, records have not been found to prove this.

The following information is taken from *Early Societies In Upper Georgia* by Harold Lawrence:

Independence

Tradition would have us believe that Independence Church formed as an interdenominational body in 1783, the year of American Independence. It remained so identified until about 1827 when it became a uniquely Methodist congregation. The church and the school were in this community, which was called Independence Crossroads, when there were but three homesteads. These were occupied by the Poole, Pope, and Jordan families. This was 104 years before the area was called Tignall (1887), and 124 years before Tignall was incorporated. Mrs. Rebecca Gore Wright, a Wootten descendant, remembered, at age eleven, her mother's attending the centennial of the church in 1883.

The property across the road from the church, where the original site was located, also served as a campground. On August 16, 1840, Thomas Riddle deeded to Thomas Wootten, James Huling, Jarvis Sale, John Wilkinson, and William L. Wootten, *6a., 2 rods, and 26 poles* for \$133.25, to be used for the campground. On September 12, 1840, Thomas Wootten deeded the 2 acre lot on which the old church was located to trustees, William L. Wootten, Jarvis Sale, and J.T. Wootten. The original church building was moved in 1868 to State Route 17 (Huling Avenue) on land donated by the Poole family. It became known as Black Rock AME Church.

The minutes of the Little River Circuit establish that Independence was a Methodist congregation as early as 1827. Prior to that time the churches in the northern part of Wilkes County were on the large Broad River Circuit of which no circuit minutes for those years have been found.

The existing structure was dedicated by Bishop George F. Pierce in April, 1871. A parsonage in Washington, Georgia was used until 1888 when one was built in Tignall. The existing parsonage is near the church, across Independence Street. The land deeded for the original Broad River Circuit parsonage, also on Independence Street in Tignall, was done so in 1889 by James W. Wilkinson. Trustees were L.A. Wootten, J.W. Boyd, L.W. Latimer, E.J. Wilkinson, W.A. Gaines, B.F. Barksdale, and W.R. Smith. That same year additional land was deeded to the parsonage by J.A. Moss.

The parsonage burned between 1899 and 1903. Its land was given to the Tignall School in 1935, the church having sold part of its property to the school in 1917. J.A. Moss also deeded to the church adjoining properties in exchange for the property across the road. (See the deed of 1890 for 3 a.) The parsonage prior to the existing one was sold to Harvey Lloyd, who lived in it until his death.

A church school annex was built in 1950, and the fellowship hall was added in 1974, which was dedicated by Bishop W.R. Cannon. Additional church rooms were built in 1982.

Ministers going out from the church: W.Lemuel Wootten Sr. and W.Lemuel Wootten Jr.
Ministers related to the Woottens: James L. Hinton and Morgan Callaway

Following family names are on rolls since 19th century: Anderson, Anthony, Blackmon, Block, Bolton, Bradley, Callaway, Cooper, Fanning, Goodwin, Harris, Harrison, Haynie, Heard, Henderson, Hill, Hinton, Huling, Jones, Lloyd, Moss, Mullen, Newsome, Poole, Prat her, Rhodes, Richards, Roland, Sale, Sheppard, Simmons, Smith, Sutton, Thomason, Towns, Truitt, Ware, Whitehead, Wilkinson, Willis, Wootten, Wright.

20th century rolls include: Albea, Bamford, Benson, Biffle, Binford, Blakey, Bonner, Boyd, Boyer, Brown, Bryant, Burette, Butler, Cathey, Chafin, Davis, Derrick, Dixon, Dobson, Driggers, Dye, Evans, Fortson, Hall, Harwell, Jackson, Johnson, Jordan, Justice, Lindsey, O'Pry, Parker, Price, Ragsdale, Rambo, Ramsey, Roberson, Slaton, Talkington, Tankersley, Tyler, Vickery, Wansley, Way, White, Wiggins.

Ref: Steward's *Book of the Little River Circuit*
Harold Lawrence: *Records of the Tignall Charge*
History of Tignall Independence Methodist Church 1953
Deed Bk.PPP p408 (8-16-1840) Bk 7 pp530-531(5-15-1889) Bk. A46, p24 (10-18-1890)

Hill's Chapel

Abraham Hill (1732-1792) was a Methodist while living in Wake County, North Carolina. He entertained Bishop Francis Asbury in his North Carolina home. Upon removal to Wilkes County, Georgia, in 1785, he continued this friendship with the bishop. He founded a Methodist Society in his home and later built a meeting house on his property. It was located in the junction formed by Long Creek and Dry Fork Creek in what became Oglethorpe County, Georgia in 1793. (See Asbury's journal).

After Abraham Hill's death in 1792, Bishop Asbury visited the "Widow Hill's on Long Creek" on three occasions, December 6, 1799, December 12, 1800, and December 15, 1803. Afterwards there were no more entries although he was in the area on subsequent travels.

Hill's Chapel likely remained active for many years, for around 1900 it relocated into Wilkes County in the Mallory's District. A warranty deed dated March 4, 1908, and recorded September 16, 1908, (*Wilkes B. A., p46; pp498-499*) indicates that A.P. Anthony deeded 3 acres to the trustees of Hill's Chapel ME Church South. This property is located on the east side of the old Clark's Road above Clark's Station Baptist Church. (See 1877 Wilkes County Map by Callaway) The church was later discontinued, and remaining members united with Independence Methodist where many Hill descendants were members.

Ref.: *Records of the Tignall Charge* by Harold Lawrence
Hills of Wilkes County and Allied Families by Lodowick Johnson Hill (1922)
Hills of Wilkes County Georgia Vol 2 reprinted by Mary B. Warren and Eve B. Weeks

Freeman's Chapel

This chapel was located somewhere between Mark's Chapel in Goosepond and the home of Charles Tait near Coody's Creek in Elbert County, on land owned and occupied by Holman Freeman Jr., whose vast tracts of land amounted to 3300 acres on Broad River. Mentioned only once in Asbury's journal, this society was active on December 13, 1803.

Holman Freeman Sr. had moved from Virginia to Georgia in 1773. He owned 400 acres on Chickasaw Creek where he resided with his family. His son, Holman Jr. and wife, Peninah Walton, lived in the old homeplace and were members of the Methodist church. (*Memoirs of Judge Junius Hillyer*-map of the Broad River settlement) Hillyer's map positioned them on Chickasaw Creek in Wilkes County's Mallorysville community where Holman Sr. had lived. Freeman's Chapel must have been near the Freeman home. During the period of 1803-1817, many of his neighbors were Methodists, enough to support a chapel. By 1816, two of his children, Fleming Freeman (wife Martha Bibb) and Mary Ann (Polly) Freeman, wife of Dr. William Wyatt Bibb, had moved to Alabama. This left only one son, John Freeman, who inherited the homeplace after his father's death in 1817. He too moved to Alabama after 1829, taking his mother with him. It is through deeds of land transactions that several families can be placed on the map of Mallorysville at that time. Many of them were Methodist. For example, McGehee, Bibb, Fullilove, Pope, Wooten, Thurmond, Watkins, Freeman, Wright, Josey.

Shortly before the War Between the States an old house of worship known as Wynn's Chapel was occupied and utilized by a black congregation. In figuring the route of Bishop Asbury on December 13, 1803, when he was between Tait's home and Mark's Chapel, the direction could well have taken him to the spot where Wynn's Chapel stood. While there is nothing to indicate that Wynn's Chapel was, in fact, Freeman's Chapel at an earlier date, there is no accounting for its origin otherwise. (*See map of Mallorysville community and the 1877 map of Wilkes County by Callaway.*)

Inquiry about Wynn's Chapel revealed that it had been a white church prior to being a black church, and that the last person to be buried in its cemetery was a white male. While a Wynn family did own the property in the years following, they were not the first owners. Most probably the church location marks the spot of an earlier Methodist chapel and cemetery. The site is on the north side of Boyd Road (Old Baker's Ferry Road) just before the road joins Hwy 17. The cemetery is on the land of Larry Slaton. A Wynn's family cemetery is located on the south side of Boyd Road a short distance away, and it should not be confused with the church site.

New Hope-Danburg Methodist Church

Near the Wilkes-Lincoln County line, on the south side of Hwy 44, a few miles east of the Danburg Community, a cemetery was located in 1978 by Dr. Harold Lawrence. It was found in a pine forest near the old Petersburg-Danburg Road where the New Hope Church is believed to have been located. Unfortunately only field rocks mark the gravesites. The land is owned by Mrs. Peggy Guillebeau , a native of Lincoln County, now living in Albany, Georgia.

Francis Asbury on March 16, 1790, visited a new chapel at Bibb's Cross Roads. Obviously a Methodist Society existed in the vicinity, but there are few clues in Asbury's journal to identify names of the families in the congregations.

It is known that in 1810, Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians joined together to build a house of worship that was utilized by all until 1835 when the Baptists built their own house. This interdenominational house was near the area known as Goshen. The Goshen reference is that of the community by that name centered exactly in what could have been Bibb's Cross Roads, according to Dr. Lawrence. (*Early Methodist Societies* pp122-125)

One family was clearly associated with the Cross Roads Chapel, that of Isaac Herbert. It is known that John Major, one of the first circuit riders to enter Georgia died in Herbert's house on April 12, 1788, and was buried on Herbert's property. After Asbury's 1790 visit to the Cross Roads Chapel, he spent the night at Herbert's house and visited Major's grave.

The present day location of Bibb's Cross Roads is not precise due to changes wrought by the Clark Hill Reservoir. Herbert's place is partly under water and roads have been altered, but all indications place the Cross Roads in the heart of the Goshen community. More research is needed, as the Chenault community is closer to the location of the New Hope Cemetery.

There are records to indicate that New Hope was an active congregation in 1870 in the Chenault area of Wilkes County, a few miles east of Danburg. At this time they abandoned their church and relocated in what became the Danburg Methodist Church. In 1954, the Danburg Church closed, sold its property to Hiram Masonic Lodge No. 51 of Danburg, Georgia, and transferred its membership to Independence in Tignall, Georgia. Families associated with the New Hope Church when it moved to Danburg were: Chenault, Barksdale, Kendall, Ware, Beard, Albea, Bond, Standard, Beasley, Johns, Jones, and Powell. Other families on the roll at Danburg included: Sutton, Wynn, Lindsey, Bellows, Blackmon, Willis, Newsome, Samuels, Poole, Ramsey, Dye, Norman, Kelley, Dubose, McNeil, Walton, Huguley, Thurmond, Smith, Anderson, Bailey, and Bolton.

Pope's Chapel (Wilkes)

The principal families connected with the origin of Pope's Chapel (Wilkes) were the Woottens and Popes who came from Wake County, North Carolina in 1784, settling property on Wood's Branch of Pistol Creek, near the first known site of Pope's Chapel (Wilkes), and near the New Ford and Chickasaw Creeks. Like so many moving to the new Georgia lands, Thomas Wootten brought a combination of separate family groups—his own by a first marriage to Sarah Rabun (d.1768 NC), consisting of two sons, Richard Bradford and Benjamin; another of his own by a second marriage to Tabitha Bradford Crowell Pope (1729-1828), including children, Mary Ann, James, Thomas Jr., and Lemuel, and the five children of Tabitha's by her second marriage to Henry Pope (d.1764), namely Burwell, Willis, John, Henry Augustine, and Wylie. An added intricacy of this family connection was Thomas Wootten's sister, Priscilla, who was the wife of his stepson, Burwell Pope.

The family dominated early Methodist development in the Wilkes vicinity and later Oglethorpe County, where the second Pope's Chapel was established. Their influence can be traced to the foundational years of at least three Methodist churches, the two Pope's Chapels and Independence in Tignall. (*Early Societies in Upper Georgia*, H. Lawrence, pp57-65) They were related by marriage to the Hills and Hintons, neighbors of theirs in North Carolina as well as in Georgia.

Space does not permit a detailed account of these family relationships, but they are well documented and available for study.

The following summary outline of the early history of Pope's Chapel (Wilkes) may serve as a guide to the church's development and some of the families involved:

- The chapel originated on land initially owned by Burwell Pope. A warrant for the particular property on the waters of Chickasaw Creek, where Pope's Chapel was established in 1786, is dated May 6, 1784.
- A plat consisting of 200 acres is in *Grant Bk B, p.286*.
- This property was sold with additional acreage to =363 acres, on March 19, 1798, to Thomas Landrum of Amherst County, Virginia.
- On November 11, 1811, Thomas Landrum and son, John, each deeded one acre to the trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church "for the purpose of a meeting house of divine worship". These are the earliest known deeds of the church on what is presumed to be its first location.
- A marker bearing the names of the 1811 trustees, and of the 1850 trustees, was placed at the site by John W. Boyd Sr. The location is on the east side of the old Baker's Ferry Road, (now called Henry Hill Road) about two miles south of Broad River. It was identified by a cemetery containing marked graves of the Landrum-Fortson family.
- The 1811 trustees were Benjamin Taliaferro Sr., Thompson Watkins, Marshall Martin, John Pope, Isham Watkins, Ludwell Fullilove, and Benjamin Taliaferro Jr. (*Wilkes Bk.YY, p530*) The 1850 Trustees were

Nicholas M. Taliaferro, Marion I. Cash, Joseph Sheppard, Benjamin W. Fortson, Ennis Willis, and Elkanah Boswell. (*Wilkes Bk. QQQ, p404*)

- The second location was a 2.5 acre tract purchased by the 1850 trustees from Nimrod Waller. It was located on the south side of Broad River, about 2 miles east-southeast of the 1811 location. Three church buildings have been erected on this site-one in 1852, a second in 1897, and a third in 1957. A special feature of the 1897 building was the installation of two stained glass windows which were given by the children of Benjamin W. Fortson and his wife in their memory. These windows were taken from the 1897 building, which was damaged by a windstorm, and they were placed in the 1957 chapel. The final building contains the reworked pews from the former sanctuary.
- An additional $\frac{3}{4}$ acre of land was acquired on October 27, 1871, from Elizabeth Eades. Trustees were B.W. Fortson, M.T. Cash, Joseph Sheppard, A.A. Neal, and James W. Boyd. Another 2.5 acres were purchased from Samuel W. Wynn on March 7, 1876. Trustees were B.W. Fortson, M.L. Cash, A.A. Neal, J.W. Boyd, H.I. Hill, and S.A. Fortson. Another $\frac{1}{2}$ acre was conveyed to the trustees by H.M. Adams (*Wilkes Bk. A-52, p.409*) for the purpose of a school called Broad Academy. It was purchased from the Wilkes County Board of Education on January 9, 1934. (*Wilkes Plat Bk. 2, p.280*)

Over its 203 years of active service Pope's Chapel (Wilkes) was supported by many dedicated families of the Broad Community. In addition to those named as trustees when deeds to land were secured, others include Walton, Bell, Norman, Butler, Rousey, Wheelles, Willis, Johnson, Jones, Rucker, Bufford, Satterfield, Smith, Oglesby, Chafin, Roberson, Bohler, Wheatley, Heater, and Bunch.

On July 1, 1989, the remaining members of Pope's Chapel (Wilkes) voted to discontinue a congregation. Property responsibility as well as remaining membership transferred to the Independence Church. An annual homecoming event is held at Pope's Chapel on the 1st Sunday in October.

Pope's Chapel (Oglethorpe)

This chapel was a Methodist Church by 1799. It began as a society that originated on land owned by Burwell Pope, who had moved in 1793 from the Wilkes location to Oglethorpe County. It was organized under the leadership of his brother, Henry Augustine Pope, who moved to the area in 1796. Bishop Asbury visited the area frequently and stayed in Henry's home, Burwell having died in 1800. We know from Asbury's journal that about 1000 people came to hear the Bishop on November 22, 1801. Records of this church have not survived, though information about it is preserved in the Lexington Circuit Minutes from 1854 to 1860 (See a copy on pp.28-33 of the volume, *Records of the Tignall Charge*) The records for these years indicate David C. Barrow as a Class

Leader. Barrow's wife was a granddaughter of Henry A. Pope. A few years after his wife's death in 1855, Barrow moved to Athens, Georgia. During that period, the church dwindled and ultimately discontinued shortly after he moved. The church building burned in a forest fire in later years. On March 31, 1990, a marker was unveiled at this site, made possible by the late Edward B. Pope Sr., a descendant.

The location of the ruins of this church is approximately two miles west of Hutchins, Georgia, on the north side of Barrow Mill Road. A small cemetery is close by with several identifiable graves of Benjamin Blanton and his family. Blanton was from Virginia and traveled with Asbury. He was a close friend of Henry A. Pope and had numerous namesakes among the Broad River people. The family lived near Pope's Chapel (Oglethorpe), probably on land adjoining it, and Asbury locates his visits to Blanton's home near the church.

Rock UMC

Rock was organized in 1839 on the south side of Hwy 78, a half mile east of Dry Fork Creek, about 2.5 miles west of the present location near Rayle, in Oglethorpe County. The 18 charter members were Ivey Barrett, Olive Bryant, Richmond Bryant, Mary Gresham, John F. Latimer, Martha Latimer, Mrs. T.C. Latimer, John Mattox, John C. Perteet, Martha Perteet, Betty Strozier, Luke Turner Sr., Mary Turner, William Turner, B.W. Tuck, Lizzie Willis and Tom Willis.

On September 11, 1870, Mrs. Mary E. Mattox conveyed to the trustees 2 acres on the north side of the Lexington Road adjoining the lands of M.E. Mattox and the estate of Luke Turner. The area was once called Triplett and Centerville-a heavily populated area with a school that was built next door.

The present building at Rock Church was built in 1870. After a severe storm in 1910, extensive repairs were made. About 1930 the gallery was enclosed and divided into two Sunday School Classrooms. In later years a covered porch and fellowship hall were added. Cemeteries are at both sites, but the graves at the first site are only marked by field rocks.

From 1839-1900, Rock was on the Broad River Circuit. Then it was on Centerville and Mission Circuit, and then Triplett, followed by West Wilkes Circuit from 1906-1922. One of the chapels that shared their circuit was Hill's Chapel. From 1923-2002 Rock has been in the Tignall Charge.

Summary Statement

Tradition says that Independence Methodist Church was established in 1783. If so, was it from a society held in the home of one of the Virginians who settled in the area prior to 1783? Holman Freeman and family came from Virginia in 1773 and settled on Chickasaw Creek near the future community of Mallorysville. At least *two* of his five sons were Methodist: George, who settled near the future site of Independence Campground, and Holman Jr., who stayed on at his father's place near Mallorysville.

In 1803, Bishop Asbury stayed at a Freeman home and preached at Freeman's Chapel. This chapel could have had its beginning in the home of Holman Sr. or in either of the other two sons' homes, both of whom were Methodists. (see *Hillyer's memoirs*)

The first community in the area was Mallorysville, established in 1794 as a stagecoach stop. Most of the neighbors of Holman Freeman Jr. during the 1883-1820 period were Methodists, and there were enough to support a meeting house. Within a ± 5 mile radius of Mallorysville there were two Baptist churches, Fishing Creek, organized in 1783, and Clark's Station in 1786. The Presbyterians were at Walnut Hill with Rev. John Springer and in Washington Georgia (1793). This suggests that Independence was Methodist from its beginning, rather than evolving out of an interdenominational body.

Independence Crossroads had only three homesteads—those of the Poole, Pope, and Jordan families, all of Methodist persuasion. Each could have hosted a society, or could have combined with George Freeman in a society that would have later become a meeting house and a campground. All were associated with Independence Church.

Thomas Wootten and extended family, including five Pope stepsons, settled in 1784 between Chickasaw and Pistol Creeks on the south side of Broad River. Burwell Pope hosted a society that led to the formation of Pope's Chapel (Wilkes) in 1786.

Abraham Hill, son of Abraham Hill Sr. and Judith Hinton of North Carolina, came in 1785 and settled on Long Creek near the Goosepond Community of Virginians. He hosted a society which became Hill's Chapel. It was located in the forks of Long and Hutton's Fork Creeks. Later a campground was established nearby. Around 1900 the chapel was relocated in the Mallory's district of Wilkes County on land deeded by A.P. Anthony.

An assessment of the data strongly suggests that Independence Methodist Church originated in a Methodist society from which a meeting house and campground developed soon after. It is hoped that the descendants of the early settlers will explore family records in the search for clues. Meanwhile one thing is sure: All of us can be *proud of our heritage* and keep that *pride* forever in the *hearts* of our descendants.

Sophia Boyd Bamford
Historian, Independence UMC

A Thousand Souls!

In November, 1801, when the English Bishop Francis Asbury was traveling up and down the Atlantic Seaboard establishing American Methodism in the colonies, he drew a thousand people to hear him in 1801 in the countryside of Oglethorpe County, Georgia. The site: Pope's Chapel # 2.

Pope's Chapel # 2, no longer exists; but its predecessor, Pope's Chapel # 1, also visited by Bishop Asbury and other early circuit riders, is located near Tignall in North Wilkes County.

As many of you know, the remaining members of Pope's Chapel (Wilkes), founded in 1786, and sadly closed in 1989, were folded into Independence UMC. What you may not know is that Pope's Chapel (Wilkes) simply joined a line of other historic congregations in North Wilkes County, that melded together through the years to become today's Independence UMC:

- Hill's Chapel, originally located in the junction formed by Long Creek and Dry Fork Creek in what became Oglethorpe County in 1793, was visited by Bishop Asbury in 1799 when he writes: " We rode 15 miles, through heavy rain, to Hill's meeting house, upon Long Creek, where six or seven preachers, with a few people attended, we had a family meeting at mother Hill's. Around 1900 the chapel relocated in the Mallorysville area a few miles from Tignall. Subsequently, the church was discontinued and its remaining members united with Independence.
- New Hope congregation was located in the Chenault area of Wilkes County, a few miles east of Danburg. In the early 1880's, when the New Hope settlement was in decline and Danburg itself was increasing, the congregation left New Hope and relocated in what became Danburg Methodist Church. In 1954 Danburg Methodist closed and sold its building to the Hiram Masonic Lodge. Once again the members transferred to Independence.
- Freeman's Chapel, visited by Asbury in 1803, was an early meeting house around Mallorysville. It is felt the congregation joined Independence about two miles away, and the building, later known as Wynn's Chapel, shortly before the Civil War became a black house of worship. Research has revealed that Wynn's Chapel was a white church first and location of the site suggests ownership of the

land by Holman Freeman, Jr., prior to the Wynn family. The building is gone, but the foundation and cemetery remain as proof of location. This cemetery is not to be confused with the Wynn family cemetery a short distance away.

The origins of Independence itself remain something of a mystery. The only known basis to date its genesis came from a descendant of one of its earliest families. Mrs. Rebecca Gore Wright, who died in 1956. She recalled that as an 11-year-old girl in 1883 she remembered her mother attending the centennial celebration of Independence Methodist Church. Perhaps this year of independence for our country is the reason for our church name. No one knows for sure. We do know that in 1783 Independence must have been a settler's society, or meeting house, because that was 2 to 3 years prior to Methodist circuit riders being sent to Georgia, and 5 years before Asbury's first visit. In other words, we pre-date official Methodism in Georgia. Tradition would have us believe that Independence could have served settlers of all faiths before it became a Methodist congregation entirely

Many of early meetings took place in the open air, and were referred to as the "brush arbor" camp meeting, or campground. The earliest deeds in August 26, 1840 refer to the "Methodist Episcopal Camp Meeting ground, called and known by the name of Independence... .6 acres, 2 rods and 26 poles." This property today leads to a housing project. Later that September, another 2 acres, including a pathway leading to a spring, was deeded. These two acres are the present location of the church and cemetery. This spring is shown on the campground plat and can still be seen down the hill in front of the church. The original building, with its distinctive stair-step tower topped by a steeple, was sold in 1868, and was moved to its present location on South Huling Avenue in Tignall. Today it houses Black Rock African Methodist Episcopal Church. Our present sanctuary was completed in 1870.

The area later to be named Tignall was known as Independence Crossroads. People came from near and far, set up their tents at the campground, and held revival meetings for days at a time.. It is known that these meetings were occurring as early as 1809 for Bishop James Osgood Andrews, the first Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, was converted during a campmeeting at that time. He was 13 years old and undoubtedly came with his parents who lived in Elbert County. The location of the campground was at Independence Crossroads.

Ref: [A Brief History of Early Methodist Societies and Meeting Houses in the Broad River Valley of Georgia](#), by John Wright Boyd, Sr., and Rev. Harold A. Lawrence, Jr.

**INDEPENDENCE
UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH**

Memorandum

February 25, 2004

To: Members and Friends of Independence United Methodist Church, Tignall, Georgia
From: Sophia B. Bamford, Independence Church Historian
Re: Homecoming, April 25, 2004.

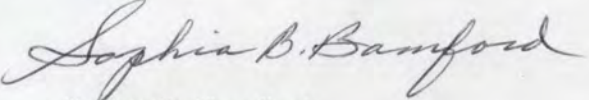
You are invited..... on April 25, 2004, at 11 o'clock.....to a special service and dinner on the grounds of Independence United Methodist Church (UMC) in Tignall, Georgia, to celebrate the memory of the early settlers of Wilkes County, and the bountiful history of their churches and their communities.

This event is not just for the members of Independence, but for all who have connections to Wilkes County, one of the original Georgia counties established in 1777, in our beloved Broad River area. Although many families with ties to this area are scattered across the world, their beginnings are here. Independence UMC, through historical chance, has become a data repository and a source of remembrance and continuity for many of us. The attached summary of the history of Independence UMC and related congregations provides interesting details of the religious life of the early settlers of the Broad River Valley.

We hope you and your families can join us for this very special event. Dr. Harold A. Lawrence, noted historian of the North Georgia Methodist Conference and a former minister of Independence UMC, will be our speaker. Please bring any old photos, records or memories you may want to share. We'll have a scale model of the original church structure for viewing, along with books and records for those who are interested. Members of the staff will be available to assist with genealogy or historical questions.

Bring your favorite dishes to share, along with a hunger to know more about your past. Every person who attends will be eligible for a drawing for a mystery prize, to be presented after the service.

In November, 1801, the English Bishop Francis Asbury drew one thousand people to a service in one of the two historic Pope's Chapels in the Broad River Valley area (see attached). If Bishop Asbury could turn out that kind of crowd over 200 years ago, surely we can do the same on April 25, 2004! We at Independence look forward to all of our friends joining us in celebration of our—and your—rich history.



Sophia B. Bamford

Tignall Topics

By Eudora LeRoy Huyck
285-2587



- July 15, 2004

America's founding fathers valued religious freedom

David Tyler, lay speaker at Independence United Methodist Church, gave the following message on Sunday, July 4, during the worship service. Dr. Sophia Bamford asked his permission to have it submitted for printing in the Tignall Topics. "I think that everyone will enjoy reading this message - both from an historical and spiritual standpoint," Dr. Bamford said.

By DAVID TYLER

Our Scripture this morning comes from II Chronicles 7:14.

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

As Americans, it is a great privilege to live in this country called the United States of America. However, little by little our privileges are being taken from us. I can't help but wonder what our Founding Fathers would think of this country in this day and time.

Today, we're going to go back in time and see just what the men who signed the Declaration of Independence were like. Twenty-four were lawyers and jurists. Eleven were merchants. Nine were farmers and plantation owners. All were men of means and well-educated.

Did you know that 52 of the 56 signers were orthodox, deeply committed Christians? The others believed in the Bible as the divine truth, in the God of Scripture, in His personal intervention. They signed the Declaration of Independence knowing that the penalty would be death if they were captured.

What was it that influenced our Founding Fathers to declare a Declaration of Independence and pro-

duce our great Constitution of freedom? From where did they derive their motivation? What is it that now influences American leaders? Does character make a difference?

Religious liberty is often called the first freedom because our Founding Fathers valued it so highly. The Fathers recognized that religious freedom in America must be protected with great vigilance. That is the guarantee of the Constitution, and that is the promise of our government throughout the generations from the 1780s until the 2003 Supreme Court decisions.

Immediately after creating the Declaration of Independence, the Continental Congress voted to purchase and import 20,000 copies of the Scripture for the people of this nation. In 1782 Congress voted this resolution: "The Congress of the United States recommends and approves the Holy Bible for use in all schools." Can you imagine the Congress of today doing something like this? Hardly.

On July 4, 1821, President John Adams said, "The highest glory of the American Revolution was this: it connected in one indissoluble bond the principles of government with the principles of Christianity." Patrick Henry is still remembered for his words, "Give me liberty or give me death," but in current textbooks the context of these words is deleted. George Washington said, "Human happiness and moral duty are inseparably connected."

Calvin Coolidge, our 30th President, reaffirmed these truths when he wrote, "The foundations of our society and our government rest so much on the teachings of the Bible that it would be difficult to support them if faith in these teachings would cease to be practicality in our country."

Did you know that the American Bible Society was started by an act of Congress and John Adams, our second President, served as its first leader?

Our Founding Fathers wanted future generations to acknowledge the hand of God in the founding of our nation. Therefore, even the Capitol Building is a witness of this. It's mighty rotunda, the center of the Capitol, features a dramatic oil painting that impresses upon visitors the direct intervention of God from the earliest days of our history. The painting portrays the landing of Columbus in the Western World in 1492. Columbus' eyes are cast toward heaven in thanks and praise as others around him kneel in gratitude to God.

The painting depicts the gratitude Columbus felt in the fulfillment of what he believed was his God-given calling. "It was the Lord who put into my mind (I could feel His hand upon me) that fact that it would be possible to sail from here to the Indies."

Those who commissioned this painting knew what we have known all along, that God in His grace and wisdom guided those who first came to these shores. When the Capitol building was built, its designers were well aware of the dependence of the members of Congress upon God and prayer. The 83rd Congress

(continued on page 10B)