

**A BRIEF HISTORY OF EARLY
METHODIST SOCIETIES & MEETING HOUSES
IN THE
BROAD RIVER VALLEY OF GEORGIA**

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POPE'S CHAPEL (WILKES)

The early history of Pope's Chapel (Wilkes) is not clearly defined. Reportedly established in 1786 through the influence of Burwell and Henry A. Pope, no record of its early circuit activity has been discovered to verify or dispute this claim. Both brothers had left the area by 1796, having moved to Oglethorpe County, Georgia, where a second Pope's Chapel was erected due to their efforts. Since they were the ones identified by Francis Asbury and connected with Georgia Methodism, their transition from Wilkes to Oglethorpe could well be the reason why little is known of the Wilkes society in its formative years.

It is to be remembered that Asbury's visits to Georgia were more numerous and extensive following the movement of these brothers to Oglethorpe County. While the society in Wilkes continued as one among many to be supplied by preachers each year, the energies of Burwell and Henry Pope were focused elsewhere. As their Oglethorpe chapel came to prominence, the emphasis of Asbury in relation to this family was centered there as well.

Pope's Chapel (Wilkes) originated on land which was initially owned by Burwell Pope (see p. 45), who owned property in the area as early as 1784 but who received his largest grants by July, 1787. (That his name is mentioned as an adjoining property owner to the tract of 1050 acres granted to Thomas Wootten on 3-10-1785 places him on the land from which Pope's Chapel Church emerged at least one year prior to its organizational date).

A warrant for the particular property on the waters of Chickasaw Creek where Pope's Chapel was established in 1786 is dated 5-6-1784. A plat for this property, consisting of 200 acres, can be found in Grant Book B, p. 286. This property was sold with additional acreage totalling 363 acres on 3-19-1798 to Thomas Landrum of Amherst County, Virginia.

On 11-11-1811 Thomas Landrum and his son, John Landrum, each deeded one acre of land to the Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church "for the especial purpose of a meeting house of divine worship" for the sum of ten dollars, each. These are the earliest known deeds of the church on what is presumed to be its first location. (Bk. YY, p. 503, 530).

The only recorded visit made by Francis Asbury to this location was on 10-24-1796. His journal entry reads: "I had a few wealthy, and I fear, wicked people at Pope's Chapel; I preached on our Lord's weeping over Jerusalem." Though he made numerous visits throughout his sojourns in Georgia, Asbury failed to record or specifically identify this society elsewhere on his travels.

An earlier entry, made on 2-28-1792 and during the next two days, indicates that the Conference, meeting on 3-1-1792, was probably held at Pope's Chapel (Wilkes). The entry reads:

"We rode through the snow to Little River, and a few people met us at Scott's: I preached on 2Tim. 4:2-4. Without staying to eat, we rode out to Washington, making thirty miles this day also. We collected our conference, and had great searching and sifting, and were under the necessity of suspending one; we were very close in examining characters and principles: each preacher spoke his experience, and made his observations relative to the work of God since last conference. Brother Hull accompanies me, and H. Herbert repairs to Alexandria in Virginia. I hope in the future there will be harmony among the brethren: if souls are converted to God it answers no valuable purpose thereafter to discipline them to ourselves. I preached on the marriage supper, and took occasion to show how some are kept from, and others lose, the grace of God, by the unlawful use of lawful things."

This lengthy entry was the product of 3 days activity. Though the place of the conference is not described or named, the logical progression of travel from Scott's to Washington on the 28th of February and then, in the next entry, to Fishing Creek and Bibb's Crossroads (Lincoln County) on 3-3-1792 indicates that the conference had to be held somewhere in between. The logical place would have been Pope's Chapel (Wilkes), yet the location was unfortunately omitted by a slight of the pen.

The likelihood of Pope's Chapel (Wilkes) being the site of the 1792 Conference is supported by two newspaper articles which appeared in the ATHENS WEEKLY BANNER on 12-9-1890 and in THE WASHINGTON CHRONICLE on 12-2-1890, the latter having been printed in THE CHRONICLES OF WILKES COUNTY on p. 215.

Both articles reported the recent meeting of the North Georgia Conference at Washington and featured an historical summary of Methodist meetings in Wilkes County. The information of that summary, the same for both papers, is given below as is found in the ATHENS WEEKLY BANNER:

NORTH GEORGIA CONFERENCE
Historical Interest of Washington, Georgia
The First M.E. Conference - Washington Church

"Georgia Methodism began in Wilkes County, the first conference in the State, which took place 102 years ago, having been held in what was Wilkes, but now Elbert. The five succeeding conferences met in our own Wilkes. That of

1789, and that of 100 years ago in 1790, took place at Grant's, a few miles from Washington on the Double Wells or Milledgeville Road. In 1791, the conference met at Scott's near the Gartrell neighborhood, and the road to Augusta. In 1792, ninety-eight years ago, conference met in Wilkes, and Bishop Asbury was here, but it is not certain that the conference met here, but it is probable that it met at Pope's Chapel on the Mallorysville road.

Ninety-seven years ago in 1794, conference certainly met in this town and Bishop Asbury preached. His text was not the first preached from in Washington, but the conference must have been held in the old courthouse of the county built in 1786."

Though it has been stated on preceding pages that the first Georgia Conference met in the home of James Marks in what became Oglethorpe County, not Elbert, the content of these articles is generally accurate, lending evidence to the fact that Pope's Chapel (Wilkes) was an organized congregation prior to Asbury's visit on 10-24-1796.

The only other pre-1811 information concerning the church is from the compilation done by J.F. Rucker in 1935. While most of Mr. Rucker's sources provided him with erroneous information on the development of this congregation and Wilkes Methodism in general, there is some information which he probably gathered from "tradition" and conversation with elders in the church that is not documented in any other prior sources.

The following are quotes from Mr. Rucker's narrative found on p. 1-4 of RECORDS OF THE TIGNALL CHARGE:

"About this time (1793), Henry Pope came to the rescue of the church that was afterwards to bear his name."

"It was so named for Henry Pope, who furnished most of the lumber to build the house. However, the house of worship was not dedicated until 1796. Bishop Asbury preached the Dedication Sermon."

(If the visit by Asbury on 10-24-1796 was for the purpose of dedicating a building at least 3 years old, one wonders how the congregation must have taken to the Bishop's sermon on Christ weeping over Jerusalem. That the mood was festive or celebrative, in light of Asbury's comments on the day, is in doubt).

From fragmentary sources, then, it can be concluded that the early years of Pope's Chapel (Wilkes) are understandably veiled in mystery and give rise to provoking questions. Given the initial plat to that property dated 1784, why is there nothing of record, save Mr. Rucker's statements, that the chapel was named for Henry Pope? Why

did Asbury neglect to name the conference site in 1792, and what prompted his remark about "wealthy but wicked" people at Pope's Chapel on the day he dedicated the building?

These and other fascinating questions may never be answered, yet from what is known, it can be assumed that Burwell and Henry A. Pope were the formative people in that Methodist society; that it probably started in one of their homes as early as 1786; that a meeting house was perhaps of necessity if the society met in the home of Burwell Pope, since he moved in 1793 and the house was erected at about that time; that no deed was of necessity until the land was sold (1798); and that two deeds were drawn (1811) by those to whom Burwell Pope sold the land for the purpose of assuring the society a permanent and legal right to its house of worship.

The 1811 Location. The property deeded in 1811 from Thomas and John Landrum to the Trustees of Pope's Chapel is located on the east side of Baker's Ferry Road, about 2 miles south of Broad River, which adjoined the home place of John Landrum. A marker has been placed on the roadside by Mr. John W. Boyd, Sr., of Tignall, Georgia, with the following inscription:

Pope's Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church
1811 - 1852

Trustees - Nov. 11, 1811 (Bk. YY, p. 530, Wilkes Co.)

Benjamin Taliaferro, Sr.	John Pope
Thompson Watkins	Isham Watkins
Marshall Martin	Ludwell Fullilove
Benjamin Taliaferro, Jr.	

Trustees - Nov. 25, 1850 (Bk. QQQ, p. 404, Wilkes Co.)

Nicholas M. Taliaferro	<u>Benjamin W. Fortson</u>
Marion I. Cash	Ennis Willis
Joseph Sheppard	Elkanah Boswell

Evidence is strong that this location was the first, owing to the fact that Burwell Pope was the first owner of the property. The case for the church moving to the 1811 location from another area, as Mr. Rucker's narrative suggests, is based on an error. He assumed that Pope's Chapel was an outgrowth of the Marks society (which he misplaced in Elbert rather than Oglethorpe), but, as has been stated previously, the society in Goosepond in the late 1780's was a close-knit Virginia community. The Popes and Woottens moved to Wilkes from North Carolina, with a Methodist heritage of their own, and built their own

society independently from that of James Marks.

There are numerous courses of speculation which could be pursued concerning the origin of this Pope's Chapel. Regardless of which course is considered to be the proper one, it is important to remember that this Pope family was in the Wilkes area by 1784 and probably established a society in one of their homes shortly afterward. It is from this society that Pope's Chapel (Wilkes) originated.

The 1811 Trustees. The seven persons listed as trustees of Pope's Chapel in 1811 all lived a reasonable distance from the church, the closest being Marshall Martin, Benjamin Taliaferro, Sr., Benjamin Taliaferro, Jr., and Isham Watkins. Thompson Watkins, who moved slightly northwest of Mallorysville, was residing near his brother Isham in 1811. That year found John Pope on Pistol Creek, south of the present location of Pope's Chapel, though by 1812, he had moved to a place on Long Creek near the mouth of Clark's Creek. Ludwell Fullilove was the only trustee in 1811 who lived west of present day Hwy. 17, though he was still in close proximity to the church.

While complete data on all of these persons has not been prepared, the material presented below gives insight into the leadership of the church at this early period. In these individuals, Pope's Chapel found remarkable dedication and resources which, following the departure of Burwell and Henry A. Pope to Oglethorpe, enabled the church to prosper rather than decline.

Taliaferro. Both Benjamin Taliaferro (1750 - 9-3-1821) and his son Benjamin were trustees of Pope's Chapel in 1811; son Nicholas M. Taliaferro (1801-1874) was a trustee in 1850. The Taliaferro property was adjoining the property of Burwell Pope and Thomas Wooten, to the north and northeast of their lands, consisting of about 1135 acres on the Broad River. The remains of the basement of the dwelling as well as a cemetery can still be identified, about three miles north of the present location of Pope's Chapel. A singular grave is marked in the cemetery with the inscription, "A.A. Taliaferro."

In George R. Gilmer's book, the house of Benjamin Taliaferro is described in this manner:

"His house was of the order called framed, in contradistinction to the round and hewed log buildings in general use. It was a story and a half high, with dormer windows, structures which projected from the sides of the roof of the house, and were in fashion in that part of the Old Dominion, where Col. Taliaferro's ancestors had lived before his father moved to Amherst County. They were designed to give air at night to the crowds who assembled

to frolic, and whose homes were too distant to be reached for sleep after they left off dancing. ...This story and a half house, with its dormer windows, was considered for a long time the head-quarters of Broad River gentility." (p. 125).

In an autobiographical sketch by Mrs. Horace Jewell (1847-1942), (nee, Martha Tabitha Taliaferro), a granddaughter of Benjamin Taliaferro, Sr. and daughter of Nicholas M. Taliaferro, the Taliaferro home of her youth (the same home) is described as follows:

"We had such a nice home in Georgia. Our house had 8 large rooms, a wide hall below and above stairs, two large pantries, wide galleries in front and back of the house. On the north end of the house in the yard were two large rooms. One was the kitchen, the other was a weaving room where cloth was woven for the Negroes. Between the house and the kitchen to the right was a splendid well of water. Under the same shelter with the well was the dairy. On the northwest corner of the yard was a large smokehouse. On the south of the house just outside the yard was a large carriage house, not only large enough for our own carriage and buggy but large enough for the carriages of company. On each side of the gate was a large pink crepe myrtle. In the southern corner of the yard was a large store room where everything unsightly about the house was stored.

"In front of our house ran the public road leading from Washington to Danburg ... Our church (Pope's Chapel) was three miles south of our home."

Benjamin Taliaferro and his children were among the prosperous members of Pope's Chapel Church. Influential in state and national politics, Benjamin, Sr. was also a trustee of Franklin College (which became the University of Georgia), a member of Congress, and a superior court judge. He is the man for whom Taliaferro County, Georgia, is named.

While not mentioned in Asbury's journal in connection with Pope's Chapel or any other Methodist society, there can be no doubt that, following the departure of the Pope brothers, this family was essential to the ongoing of the church. Its bond in marriage to the Watkins family is a further indication of its close church ties, since two of that family were also trustees in 1811.

At the death of Benjamin Taliaferro, Sr., an ad was placed in THE WASHINGTON NEWS on 1-4-1822, declaring for sale the 1300 acres of land which contained the home place, specifying that 800 acres of it had been cleared. Another tract was advertised for the same sale of 600 acres on Broad River near Anthony's mills, containing 400 acres of

cleared land and a mill. Personal property offered in this same sale consisted of 1000 barrels of corn, 80-100 stacks of fodder, household & kitchen furniture, plantation and blacksmith tools, two wagons, two carts, one riding carriage and "stock too tedious to mention." Son Nicholas Meriwether Taliaferro bought these properties in April of 1824.

Data on Taliaferro. Benjamin Taliaferro, Sr. was the first child of Zachariah Taliaferro (8-29-1730 - April, 1811) and Mary Boutwell. He was reared in Amherst County, Virginia, and served 7 years in the Continental Line of Virginia, attaining the rank of Captain. He served in the campaign in Jersey in 1777-78, volunteered for the southern army under Lincoln, and saw service in Lee's command. He was captured in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1780, having participated in the battles of Saratoga, Monmouth, and in the seige of Savannah. At the battle of Princeton, he captured a British officer. When the officer stepped forward in his brilliant uniform to surrender his sword, Taliaferro, standing barefooted, ordered his Lieutenant to receive it.

Coming south with the Mathews group following the Revolution in 1784, Taliaferro became President of the Georgia State Senate, a member of the U.S. Congress (1790-1800), a member of the Georgia Convention (1799), and Judge of the Superior Court. He was married first to Martha Meriwether, a daughter of David and Mary Harvie Meriwether. At her death, he married a Miss Cox.

Prior to her marriage to Benjamin Taliaferro, Martha Meriwether had been engaged to his brother, Zach Taliaferro (4-28-1759 - 4-14-1831). The brothers had words over the matter and parted as enemies. Zach Taliaferro went to live in Pendleton, South Carolina, marrying a woman named Margaret Chew Carter.

Children of Benjamin and Martha Meriwether Taliaferro were: 1) Louis Bourbon who m. Betsy Johnson; 2) Betsy who d. unm.; 3) Emily who m. Isham Watkins; 4) Benjamin Jr., 8-22-1787, who m. Martha Watkins; 5) David Meriwether who m. Mary Barnett; 6) Thornton who m1/ Green, m2/ Lamar; 7) Nicholas Meriwether who m. Ann Hill; 8) Martha who m. William McGehee; 9) Margaret who m. Joseph Green; 10) Mary. A child by the second marriage to Miss Cox was 11) Zachary who d. unm.

Six siblings of Benjamin Taliaferro also moved south. They were 1) Zach; 2) Sallie who m. Daniel Harvie; 3) Richard who d. unm.; 4) Burton who m1/ Sallie Gilmer, m2/ Lucy Carter; 5) Nancy who m. Thompson Watkins; and 6) Frances who m. Moses Penn. Siblings who remained in Virginia were 7) Warren; 8) Charles; and 9) J. Boutwell.

Sister Frances T. Penn had a daughter who married REV. DABNEY JONES, a Methodist preacher.

Nicholas Meriwether Taliaferro (12-3-1801 - 6-23-1874) married on 2-24-1824, Nancy (Ann) Hill (1-4-1804 - 6-31-1868). Their children were: 1) Benjamin Blanton (2-1-1830 - 1862); 2) Malinda Margaret (5-10-1832 - Oct. 1878); 3) John Nicholas (5-10-1835 - 10-9-1904); 4) Miles Hill (1-23-1837 - 10-12-1860); 5) James Hampton (8-20-1842 - 1-30-1890); 6) Ann Amelia (8-13-1845 - 1848); 7) Martha Tabitha (3-1-1847 - 10-27-1942).

This family moved to Cleveland County, Arkansas, in 1859 and 1860, where the hardships of the War Between The States devastated them and prompted a later move to Texas and a return to Arkansas following the war.

While in Arkansas during the midst of the conflict, this family found themselves situated between the lines of both armies. At one point, a group of "graybacks" sympathetic to the North assaulted the house and hanged Nicholas M. Taliaferro when he refused to tell them where his gold was buried. When they cut him down and found that he was still alive, they further abused him, though he survived to see 3 of the mob hanged. Despite hardship and suffering during the War, this family endured, and some of its members, including Nicholas M. Taliaferro, made visits to their old home in Wilkes County, Georgia.

Of the above children, the youngest child, Martha Tabitha, left an autobiographical record. She married on 1-30-1873, James M. Duncan of southwest Georgia who died after three months, leaving her with child. In 1877, she met and married Rev. Horace Jewell, a Methodist preacher at Pine Bluff, Arkansas. Data on this family can be found in the Conference Journal of the Little Rock Conference of The Methodist Church for the year 1943, p. 116-118.

It was through the autobiographical sketch of Mrs. Jewell that the only identifiable grave in the Taliaferro cemetery near the home of Benjamin Taliaferro, Sr., in Wilkes County, Georgia, was rendered significant. The inscription, "A.A. Taliaferro," marks the resting place of the second daughter of Benjamin and Martha M. Taliaferro -- Ann Amelia who died from the effects of a burn when she was three years old.

Watkins. The Watkins family was active in Pope's Chapel Church for a 10-15 year period from the mid-1790's until around 1814. Like many families which were moving west, their tenure was significant only in the early period. Shortly after the 1811 deed, both Isham and Thompson Watkins, trustees of the church, sold their property and moved away.

The Watkins family came from Prince Edward County, Virginia, and moved to the area of Petersburg in Wilkes County in 1796 where James Watkins, son of William Watkins, died a few years later. His will was made on 2-10-1800 in

Wilkes County; signed on 7-27-1801 and recorded on 7-21-1806.

This James Watkins and his wife, Martha Thompson, had 9 children: 1) William; 2) Sarah Herndon who m. Robert Thompson; 3) Samuel who m. Eleanor Thompson; 4) Robert Herndon who m. Jane Thompson; 5) James who m. Jane Thompson (cousin to Jane 4); 6) John who m. Susan Daniel; 7) Thompson who m. Nancy Taliaferro (sister to Benjamin Sr.); 8) Joseph who m. Mary Sayre, m2/ sister Delia Sayre; 9) Isham who m. Emily Taliaferro (daughter to Benjamin Sr.).

Children of Thompson Watkins and Nancy Taliaferro were: 1) Zachariah who m. Edna Bibb (daughter of Peyton Bibb); 2) James who m. Martha Marks (daughter of Meriwether Marks).

Thompson Watkins lived northwest of Malloryville, and Isham Watkins lived northeast of Pope's Chapel Church beyond the properties of Benjamin Taliaferro and David Meriwether.

The 354 acre tract on Broad River owned by Thompson Watkins was sold by him to his brother, Isham, on 8-1-1811, the same year the Pope's Chapel deed was drawn which both brothers signed. A record of this transaction can be found in Bk. AAA, p. 104 of Wilkes County deeds. Following the sale of this property, Thompson Watkins moved to Malloryville and then later to Alabama.

Isham Watkins sold his brother's property as well as his own, consisting of 940 acres on Broad River, to Benjamin Taliaferro on 10-24-1814 and also moved to Alabama.

Martin. Marshall Martin (1781-1856) was in Wilkes County, Georgia by 1803. He was in the Land Lottery of that year and in subsequent ones for the year 1819 and 1827. He purchased property on Chickasaw Creek on the waters of Broad River, consisting of 500 acres on 2-25-1806. This tract was bounded on the northeast by Broad River, on the east by Freeman and on the west by Partain. (Bk. WW, p. 57 & 58).

Like numerous other settlers of the Wilkes area, Martin left the county after 1830 and moved to new lands. The fact that he was an executor of the will of Robert Cade, will dated 4-13-1826; probated 1-1-1827 (Bk. HH, p. 203), indicates that he did not leave the county until sometime afterward.

Martin was one of the original settlers of Meriwether County, arriving there in 1832. His Methodist inclinations in Wilkes served him well in his new home, for he became a trustee of the Warm Springs Methodist Campground the year he entered Meriwether County in 1832. In 1837 he is listed as an Inferior Court Justice of that county and is credited with helping organize many of the Methodist churches in the county. In the year 1851, 5 years before his death, his

name is found in the class book of Old Trinity Methodist Church, one of the historic county churches.

The wife of Marshall Martin was Jane McCarty Oliver (1786-1852). One of their children was a Methodist preacher in Georgia, born the same year that the first Pope's Chapel deed was signed.

REV. WILLIAM DICKERSON MARTIN (5-13-1811 - 1-11-1864) was a trustee of LaGrange College and Judge of the Inferior Court of Meriwether County, Georgia. He married Martha Johnson Pope Hill (5-10-1814 - 6-19-1893), a daughter of William and Nancy Hill. Their children were: 1) Nancy Jane b. 12-6-1834; 2) John Oliver, b. 4-28-1839; 3) James Pope, b. 1-2-1842; 4) William Marshall, b. 12-20-1836; 5) George Johnson, b. 3-4-1854; 6) Peter Wellborn, b. 2-3-1852; and 7) Anna Harriett.

Martin was admitted on trial in 1838, ordained a deacon in full connection in 1841 and ordained an elder in 1843. He served the following appointments in the Georgia Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South: 1839 Hamilton and Talbotton (Columbus); 1840 Greenville; 1841-42 Troup; 1843 Mission in Meriwether and Troup; 1844 Agent, Emory College; 1845 Talbotton; 1847 Griffin; 1847 Located.

There is a brief biographical sketch of Rev. William D. Martin in W.J. Scott's, BIOGRAPHICAL ETCHINGS, p. 59-61.

Fullilove. Ludwell Fullilove (d. by 3-1-1824) was the son of John and Elizabeth Fullilove. His mother was probably a daughter of John Tatum. John Fullilove was in Wilkes County, Georgia, by 1785, listed as having 12 slaves and 600 acres in the county. On 10-1-1787 he purchased 200 acres on Pistol Creek from Churchill and Mary Hooper (Bk. D, p. 116). In the 1794 Tax Digest of Wilkes, he is listed as having 754 acres on Pistol and Soap creeks and 10 slaves. That same year John Fullilove moved to the Wolfskin District of Oglethorpe County, Georgia, where he became a neighbor of Burwell and Henry Pope.

The legatees of John Fullilove, named in Deed Bk. D, p. 94, Oglethorpe County, include his son, Ludwell, who remained in Wilkes when his parents moved to Oglethorpe. On 3-2-1801 Ludwell received power of attorney to settle his father's estate (Bk. DD, p. 116).

Ludwell Fullilove settled on Chickasaw Creek in Wilkes County. His wife, Elizabeth, was probably the daughter of Willis Pope. Their children were: 1) Willis; 2) Elizabeth; 3) William W.; 4) Mary E.; 5) Ludwell N.; 6) Henry M.; 7) Martha A.; 8) Burwell P.; 9) Seaborn J.

Elizabeth Fullilove and her son Willis were appointed administrators of the estate of Ludwell Fullilove at his death. On 7-17-1826 they sold to James Cade 330 acres on Chickasaw Creek (part of 2 tracts) granted to William Thurmond and John Partain (Bk. III, p. 261-262).

On 8-1-1827 mother and son sold to Ansel B. Leigh 65 acres on Chickasaw Creek which was part of a tract originally granted to Willis Pope. (Bk. MMM, p. 323).

On 2-20-1849 Ludwell N. Fullilove of Coweta County conferred to Burwell P. Fullilove of Clarke County all interest in a tract adjoining Leigh on the south, Marshall Martin on the north and McGee on the west and James Cade on the east. The entire tract consisted of 202 and 1/2 acres. (Bk. QQQ, p. 265).

It is regrettable that the information of the 1811 trustees of Pope's Chapel (Wilkes) is not more extensive and that no records have survived to indicate more about their participation in the development and life of the church. Perhaps the interesting feature reflective in the information given on these persons is their transient lifestyles. They were representative of a majority of church families whose membership at Pope's Chapel was as itinerant as the circuit riders who preached there.

The Second Location. On 11-25-1850 a 2 & 1/2 acre tract of land on the waters of Pistol Creek was secured by the Trustees of Pope's Chapel for the sum of \$5.00 from Nimrod Waller. This property, located on the south side of Broad Road, about 2 miles east-southeast of the 1811 location, is the present site of Pope's Chapel. Trustees in that transaction are listed on a previous page with the 1811 Trustees. The deed is recorded in Bk. QQQ, p. 404 of Wilkes County deeds.

A building was erected on the second location in 1852, followed by a second building in 1897 and a third in 1957 which is the present building. A special feature of the 1897 building was two stained glass windows which were given by the children of Benjamin W. Fortson and his wife in their memory. Fortson was an 1850 Trustee. These windows were taken from the 1897 building which was damaged by a windstorm and placed in the 1957 structure. The latest building also contains the reworked pews of the former sanctuary.

An additional 3/4 acre of land adjoining the property purchased from Waller was acquired on 10-27-1871 from Elizabeth Eades for the sum of \$5.00. Trustees for this transaction were B.W. Fortson, M.T. Cash, Joseph Sheppard, A.A. Neal and James W. Boyd. (Bk. 58, p. 25). On 3-7-1876 the trustees of the church purchased another 2 & 1/2 acres for \$35.00 from Samuel W. Wynn. Trustees for this transaction were B.W. Fortson, M.L. Cash, A.A. Neal, J.W. Boyd, H.I. Hill, and S.A. Fortson. (Bk. 58, p. 306).

Another 1/2 acre conveyed to the trustees by H.M. Adams (Bk. A-52, p. 409) for the purpose of a school called Broad Academy was purchased from the Wilkes County Board of Education on 1-9-1934 for the sum of \$1.00 (Plat Bk. 2, p. 280).

An Enduring Family. Of all the trustees named on the 1850 deed, Benjamin Winn Fortson (8-8-1808 - 7-22-1884) was responsible for a continuous family loyalty to Pope's Chapel Church which has lasted to the present. His descendants have influenced church life and development for over a century and have been among the faithful families who have supported the church during its gradual decline in a once prosperous section.

The son of Richard Fortson and Lucy Arnold, Benjamin W. Fortson was the only member of his family who did not move to Harris County, Georgia, in the early 1830's. He married on 10-16-1832, Mary A.H. Landrum (3-25-1814 - 4-17-1840), a daughter of John Landrum (1760 - 9-13-1843) who, with his father, Thomas Landrum, deeded the property in 1811 for the first location of Pope's Chapel Church. Mary Landrum is buried in the family cemetery which adjoins the 1811 property with three of her children: Margaret Ann (2-24-1835 - 8-24-1854); Julia Ann (7-26-1836 - 2-5-1837); and Mary A.H. (4-12-1840 - 8-4-1841).

Of the 5 children of Benjamin W. and Mary A.H. Landrum Fortson, only 2 grew to maturity: John Richard (12-21-1837 - 9-24-1858) who died unm. in Asheville, North Carolina, where he is buried; and Sarah Caroline (9-12-1833 - 10-3-1907) who m. Richard S. Neal and resided in Columbia County, Georgia. None of these children left descendants.

On 4-20-1841, one year after the death of his wife, Benjamin Winn Fortson m2/ Rebecca Hannah Ogilvie (1-12-1815 - 7-4-1896) who was the daughter of James Ogilvie, Jr. (12-12-1777 - 10-15-1839) and Elizabeth Watson (9-16-1778 - 6-20-1870). Her father, who was born in Fairfield District, South Carolina, and who died in Edgefield District, South Carolina, was the son of James Ogilvie, Sr., a Methodist preacher, and Penelope Parrott. Elizabeth Watson Ogilvie is buried in the cemetery at Pope's Chapel (second location) in the family plot.

Children of Benjamin Winn Fortson by his second wife, Rebecca Hannah Ogilvie were: 6) Annie Elizabeth (6-24-1842 - 12-11-1924) who m. James William Walter Boyd (11-8-1838 - 4-14-1909); 7) Benjamin Blanton (8-5-1843 - 11-6-1864) d. unm.; 8) Frances Scott (12-14-1844 - 6-17-1911) who m. Augustus Anthony Neal (1-4-1842 - 4-21-1908), a trustee of Pope's Chapel in 1871; 9) Lucy Virginia (8-4-1846 - 3-28-1917) who m. William Augustus Wright (10-28-1837 - 7-24-1903); 10) Thomas Edward (7-5-1848 - 12-17-1931) who m. Sarah Richardson Toombs (9-16-1856 - 4-7-1953); 11) Samuel

Anthony (7-1-1850 - 9-25-1876) who m. Mary Elizabeth Barksdale (9-6-1855 - 2-4-1901); 12) Emma Amelia (6-28-1852 - 10-21-1918) who m. Robert Eugene Neal; 13) Mary Rebecca (Molly) (1-8-1854 - 6-20-1913) who m. Charles Edgar Irvin (3-23-1844 - 9-18-1916); 14) Charles John (10-24-1856 - 7-10-1935) who m1/ Iola Leola Sturgis (5-21-1854 - 4-12-1905), m2/ Agnes Lizelle Walton (1-12-1876 - 1-21-1931):

(Extensive information on all the descendants of Benjamin Winn Fortson can be found in the volume, A FAMILY HISTORY, LT. THOMAS FORTSON AND SOME OF HIS DESCENDANTS, by John W. Boyd, Sr., also a descendant.

Conference and District Changes. Pope's Chapel has always been on a charge with other churches. Prior to the formation of the Georgia Conference in 1831 and the North Georgia Conference in 1867, the charges varied in size and usually covered a large territory.

In 1788, the first year Bishop Asbury visited Georgia, all of Georgia had only 4 circuits --Augusta, Burke, Richmond, and Washington. The Washington Circuit included what is today Greene, Taliaferro, Wilkes, Lincoln, Elbert, Hart, Franklin, Madison & Oglethorpe. Total members (707-71).

In 1795 Georgia had 3 circuits --Burke, Richmond and Washington. The previous year, 1794, the united conferences (Georgia and South Carolina) made one, and it was known thereafter as the South Carolina Conference. It met in the forks of Broad River, Abbeville District, South Carolina, on 1-1-1794. For the next 6 years, 1795-1800, the conferences were held in Charleston, South Carolina. In 1801, it was held in Camden, South Carolina.

In 1802 the Georgia District consisted of 7 circuits --Apalachee, Oconee, St. Mary's, Ogeechee, Augusta, Little River and Broad River. The latter (Broad River) included the upper part of Wilkes County, Elbert, Madison, Franklin, Hart & Oglethorpe.

In 1810 Georgia was divided into 2 districts, Oconee and Ogeechee, with 10 circuits.

In 1819 the Conference met in Camden, Bishop George presiding. Athens and Greensboro were united. The Conference of 1825 met in Wilmington, North Carolina. The Ogeechee District was abolished and the Savannah and Augusta districts were formed. The Oconee District was abolished and the Milledgeville District was formed. The Athens District continued. A new method of naming the districts and circuits was adopted. The districts were called after the principal towns in them and the circuits bore the names of the county towns or the counties in which they were. The Broad River Circuit was continued, though it no longer included the northern parts of Wilkes. In 1828 it included Elbert, Madison, Franklin & Hart counties.

After north Wilkes was removed from the Broad River Circuit, Pope's Chapel (Wilkes) and Independence were included on the Little River Charge as proven by the quarterly conference minutes of Little River for 1827-1830. In the 1831 minutes of the first Quarterly Conference for Lexington Circuit, Pope's Chapel and Independence are included. Little River Circuit minutes for 1832-33 do not include Pope's Chapel or Independence. The Georgia Conference separated from South Carolina in 1831.

(Some of this information has been abstracted from the volume, HISTORY OF METHODISM IN GEORGIA AND FLORIDA by G. G. Smith, p. 191, 214, 229, 232).

Churches On The Charge. It is impossible to list or give a full account of all the churches which have shared the charge with Pope's Chapel (Wilkes) due to the fact that they have ranged widely over various sections of what was old Wilkes County. In more recent years, the composition of churches on the charge has been consistent. Three of them are briefly mentioned here, though research on their origins is incomplete.