

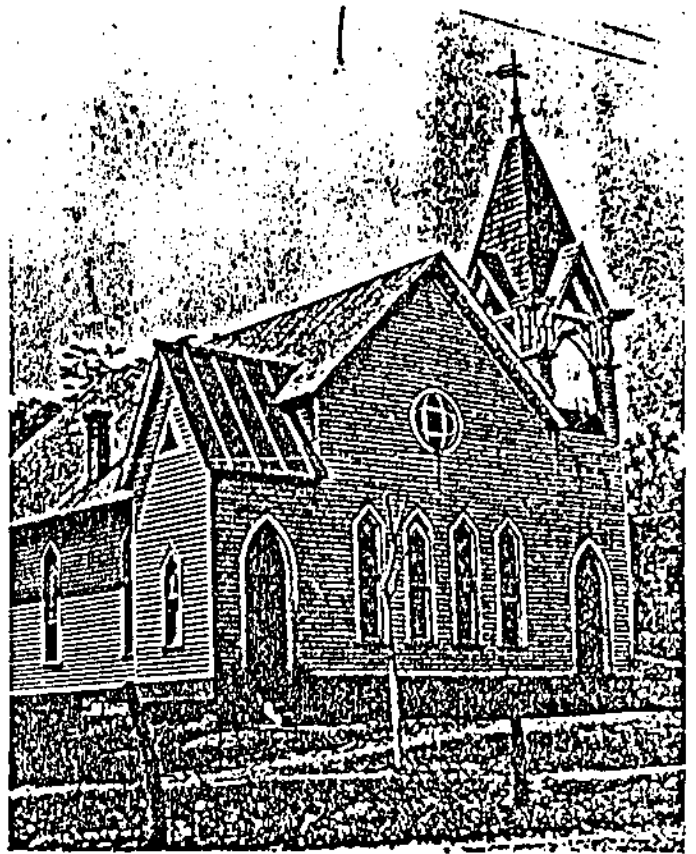
HISTORY OF THE COMMERCE METHODIST CHURCH

Records show that Methodism was prevalent in Commerce as early as 1825. The site of the first Methodist Church here was purchased from the heirs of Thomas W. Waters on March 26, 1825. This site included lots 115, 116, 117, and 118. They are located one-half block west and one block north of the present church. The purchase price for these lots was six dollars.

In the deed for this property it states that this site was to be used for a public burying ground, a meeting house for the Methodist Episcopal Church and a residence for a Methodist minister.

During the time of the Civil War the church became divided over the issue of slavery. On June 20, 1860 lot number 4 was purchased from Benjamin F. Sillman and his heirs for a Methodist Church South. This is the lot just north of the Old Baptist Church, now the Full Gospel Church. Their deed had this statement "when not in use by members of this church to be used by all other christians to worship in."

The following quotations taken from The Commerce Dispatch, a newspaper published here from 1860 to 1870, indicate that there were services and festivities at both churches during this early period of time.



Cont Next page

" Feb. 29, 1868 --- We have had protracted meetings here which have run through the past two weeks. On tuesday night quite a number of our citizens attached themselves to the church. On this occasion the Methodist Church North and the Methodist Church South, opened their doors to all sinners at the same time. Some selected the Southern route and some the Northern, according to the political views of the penitents. We can't help but admire this unity of the two branches of the church. We should all love harmony, for our prosperity, happiness and well-being depends upon it as much as upon our more material wants.

"Sept. 12, 1868 --- Rev. R. M. Morgan will preach at the M. E. Church North on Sabbath Morning at eleven o'clock."

" Nov. 14, 1868 --- The ladies of our town are about to arrange the preliminaries for a festival, to come off during the holidays, the emoluments of which is to be applied to the repairs of our churches."

"Dec. 12, 1868 --- We understand that there is a prospect of the early arrival of a church bell in our town for the Methodist Church North. The sonorous notes of which will kindly summons the citizens not to judgement but to the house of prayer."

"Mar. 6, 1869 --- Rev. Dr. Dynes will preach tomorrow morning at eleven o'clock."

"Mar. 20. 1869 --- The Rev. R. M. Morgan has just returned from conference, looking well and felling well. He will remain with us another term."

"Apr. 10, 1869 --- Rev. Mr. Mecham will preach at the Methodist Church North on Saturday and Sunday mornings and nights at the usual hours."

"May 1, 1869 --- Rev. W. G. Fewler will preach at the

cont next page