



“Preserving—Sharing—Caring”

# Crossroads

## 1824: Tallahassee’s and Trinity’s First Year

By Pamela C. Crosby

U.S. President **James Monroe** signed as bill into law on March 30, 1822, that officially established the Territory of Florida. He created a Legislative Council of 13 persons and appointed **William Pope Duval** as the first territorial governor (Ellis & Rogers,

1986, p. 4). Spain had formally ceded the land to the United States in 1821 (Martin, 1942, p. 260), and Andrew Jackson had earlier served as Florida’s military governor (“A Bit..,” 1893, p. 4).

### Setting the Stage **Treaty of Moultrie Creek**

With White settlers eager to settle and cultivate the fertile land in Middle Florida, American commissioner **James Gadsden** signed the treaty of Moultrie Creek (Ellis & Rogers, 1986, p. 5) five miles south of St Augustine with **Chief Neamathla** and other Seminole chiefs—thirty two in all—on September 18, 1823 (Davis & Gadsden, 1929, p. 330).

The Seminole peoples occupied the area once inhabited by the Apalachee indigenous peoples who had been killed or forced to move and the Spanish who had served and lived in the Spanish missions (Ellis & Rogers, 1986, pp. 2, 4).

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“William Pope Duval.” Public Domain:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William\\_Pope\\_Duval#/media/File:2\\_Duval.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Pope_Duval#/media/File:2_Duval.jpg). Information on portrait: Oil over photograph, Claribel Jett, ca. 1960 at <https://dos.myflorida.com/florida-facts/florida-history/florida-governors/william-pope-duval/>.

(cont. from p. 1)

The treaty benefitted U.S. interests—with Gadsden convincing the native peoples to trade their North Florida territory for a twenty-year annuity and a much smaller (and less valuable) area in Central Florida. The Seminole chiefs were also promised that the US government would protect them from invasion (Davis & Gadsden, 1929, pp. 330-331).

Gadsden sought to reassure the chiefs with these words:

Friends and Brothers: Beware of false prophets. Listen not to those who pretend to be your friends who speak with forked tongues. Like the bad men from across the water [referring to the British] they will delude you to your ruin. Are you not tired of wars? Have you not suffered enough, innocent victims of the folly of others? Brave warriors, though they despise death, do not madly contend with the strong. Your nation stands alone; if the peace and friendship now offered is refused, the poison of bad men will ruin you. Follow then the advice of your great father [the President of the United States]. He is



“Lieutenant James Gadsden.” Public Domain: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James\\_Gadsden#/media/File:James\\_Gadsden\\_by\\_Charles\\_Fraser,\\_circa\\_1831.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Gadsden#/media/File:James_Gadsden_by_Charles_Fraser,_circa_1831.jpg). Charles Fraser - <http://www.gibbesmuseum.org/miniatures/collection/detail/21D3CF16-507F-4D01-99E5-434674714851>.

your friend, and will do all in his power to make you happy. Go then to the South, where he directs; live in peace and friendship with the white men, and you will become a rich and happy people. (Davis & Gadsden, 1929, p. 331)

## The New Capital

Meanwhile, Governor Duval appointed two commissioners, **William H. Simmons** of St. Augustine and **John Lee Williams** of Pensacola (Ellis & Rogers, 1986, p. 4), to explore the region “between the Oklockny River on the West and the Suwannee River on the East” (Groene, 1971, p. 14) so as to provide a recommendation for a location of the capital for the Territory of Florida by January 1, 1824 (Ellis & Rogers, 1986, p. 4; FHRS, 1941, p. 3).

In October 1823, Williams, and Simmons met on the Ochlockonee River, near St. Marks, and embarked on their trip to recommend a suitable location. Earlier, Simmons, proceeding from St. Augustine to meet Williams, observed that the higher lands south of Lake Miccosukee would provide a nice setting for the seat of government (FHRS, 1941, p. 3).

Chief Neamathla (not in a hurry to leave the area) was not happy to see these White men, but instead of an attack on the explorers, the native people offered shelter, food, and even entertainment to the expedition party (Ellis & Rogers, 1986, p. 6).

The commissioners, Williams and Simmons, recommended to Governor Duval the area known as “Tallahassee” as the capital of the Territory, even though this location was several miles from the coast. In June 1824, an excerpt of Williams’s journal of the expedition, published in the *Pensacola Gazette*, outlined several reasons why the area was the most suitable for the new seat of government. Crucial to the decision was that a location would “combine the advantages of health and convenience, at a central point” (Williams, 1824, p. 3).

Although a site close to water would be more promising for “commerce,” William wrote, the explorers concluded that a coast or river bank where “the grounds are low and alluvial” combined with



"Nea-Math-La, A Seminole Chief." Public Domain: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neamathla#/media/File:Nea-Math-La,\\_A\\_Seminole\\_Chief.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neamathla#/media/File:Nea-Math-La,_A_Seminole_Chief.jpg). Charles Bird King 1785-1862 - Smithsonian Institution.

a "warm climate" would be a threat to "health." St. Marks was described as "unhealthy" and had seen frequent flooding. "Wakully" was "charming" and "the head of navigation," but also an "unhealthy spot." In addition, the "big Savannah of Mickasuky is feverish and the banks of the Suwaney too far east from the centre of the Territory" (Williams, 1824, p. 3).

The writer explained that

Tallahassee, on the contrary is within four miles of the centre, betwixt the east and west lines of the Territory, a more beautiful country can scarcely be imagined; it is high, rolling and well watered, the richness of the soil renders it so perfectly adapted to farming, that living must ultimately be cheap and abundant. (Williams, 1824, p. 3)

## Here Come the Methodists!

### John J. Triggs

In 1821 Methodist minister **Rev. John J. Triggs**, who had been born in England, was di-

rected to go to a new mission 102 miles northeast of Tallahassee called Alapaha (Georgia), which covered an area from the Ocmulgee River to the Florida border. In 1822, Triggs was sent to organize a mission in Southwest Georgia, that included parts of Georgia, Alabama, and Florida. **John C. Ley**, writer on early Florida Methodist history, wrote that by 1822, Methodist "itinerants" were preaching in Florida "east and west of the Suwannee River" (Ley, 1899, pp. 24-26).

### John Slade

In 1823, **John Slade** served with Triggs as assistant preacher (Ley, 1899, p. 26) in the Chattahoochee Mission as part of the Oconee District (*Minutes of the Annual. . .*, 1840, p. 412) that included these corners of Georgia, Alabama, and Florida (Smith, 1881, p. 225).

Slade's ongoing connection to the area as well as his pioneering achievements would eventually earn him the name as the "Father of Methodism in Florida" (Ley, 1899, p. 26). His birthplace, unlike Triggs, was not in England; rather, Slade was born in South Carolina. He was in his 30s when he traveled with Triggs (Smith, 1881, p. 225).

In describing the residents who lived in the Chattahoochee district, Smith (1881) portrayed them as

perhaps the rudest in the States, and though now and then, on the better lands, they [Triggs and Slade] found some thrifty settlers, generally they were the poorest and most ignorant class of stock-raisers. (pp. 225-226)

According to the 1823 Minutes of the South Carolina Annual Conference, **John Tabor** and **Isaac Sewell**, future itinerant Methodist preachers in Middle Florida (who would—according to unverified accounts—figure prominently in the retelling of Trinity's history) were admitted on trial (*Minutes of the Annual. . .*, 1840, p. 394).

Trinity Pastor **Rev. Dr. W. F. Dunkle**, who served as senior pastor at Trinity from 1930 to 1935 (Yates, 1999, p. 8), presented at Florida Annual Conference in 1934 and said that Triggs and Slade trekked all over Middle Florida, preaching

(cont. on p. 4)



John Slade  
“Father of Florida Methodism” as reproduced from  
P. P. Smith’s description

Brooks, W. E. (1969). *From Saddlebags to Satellites: A History of Florida Methodism*. Florida Annual Conferences, The United Methodist Church, 16. Published with permission from Florida Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.

in private homes and anywhere they could gather an audience. Dunkle also claimed that in 1823 in Pensacola, Triggs preached at a courthouse and also at “Fowlestown,” a reference to the Tallahassee area of native people’s villages, and “left an

appointment at the home of **George C. S. Johnson**.” Although Triggs found many Methodists in the locale, he did not establish a Methodist society in the area, according to Dunkle (1934, pp. 36-37).

A letter from Triggs from the Chattahoochee Mission on June 11, 1823, provided a glimpse into the experiences of itinerant preachers:

Dear Brother: Through the goodness of our blessed Saviour myself and my colleague are in good health, preaching the gospel of Christ in the uncultivated woods of Georgia, Alabama and West - Florida, and gathering into the fold of our Adorable Redeemer, the scattered and lost sheep of the house of Israel....

In some places our prospects are gloomy, congregations small, the people seem hardened in wickedness. . . .

In consequence of a disease which prevails much in this country among horses, my colleague lost his the first time he went around his circuit, and my own horse has become so poor that I fear I shall lose him. Blindness soon succeeds to the attack. Though, by parting with all his money, and pledging his credit for the remainder, my colleague bought him another horse, yet through the warmth of the weather, excessive rides, and other difficulties peculiar to the country, our horses are both blind; but, supported by grace, and animated with the prospect of promoting the happiness of our fellow men, we persevere, sometimes riding and sometimes walking over the bogs and through the mud, singing, "In hope of that immortal crown, And gladly wander up and down , And smile at toil and pain." I hope, my dear brother , you do not forget to pray for us, who labour in this wilderness, for I am sure none need the prayers of God's people more than your humble servant, John I. Triggs. (Triggs, 1823, pp. 345-345)

## 1824: A Year of Firsts

### First White Settlers

With the signing of the Treaty of Moultrie by the Seminole leaders that required them to leave their Middle Florida land, Governor Duval directed the Legislative Council members to assemble in 1824 at the brand new capital site for the next council meeting (Chandler et al., 1909, p. 24).

In the spring of 1824, a party of seven persons began rolling into Middle Florida from North Carolina, led by **John McIver** (Ellis & Rogers, 1986, p.6). McIver would later be appointed a court “crier” (Maynard, 2004, p. 18) during the first session of the Superior Court of the Middle District (Groene, 1971, p. 20). The first White set-

tlers made their way to Tallahassee on April 9, 1824, where they erected provisional shelters (Ellis & Rogers, 1986, p. 6).

An unsigned letter published in the *Pensacola Gazette* in September 1825 described the 1824 event, with the author referring to it as the arrival of the “first wagon.” The wagon came to its destination

by the way of a gentle rise upon the summit of a commanding eminence at whose eastern and southern base a beautiful rivulet meandered its course through a rich Hammock; here they made a halt.... (“Tallahassee. . .,” 1924, p. 38)

Because one of the travelers was familiar with the area, the new Florida residents knew where to stop and discerned

the only marks which the Governor in his Proclamation had given designating the scite [*sic*] selected by the Commissioners as the Seat of the Government of Florida. (“Tallahassee. . .,” 1924, p. 38)

The place where they set up their tents was so beautiful that the author said it could have been described as a “land of the Fairies” (p. 38).

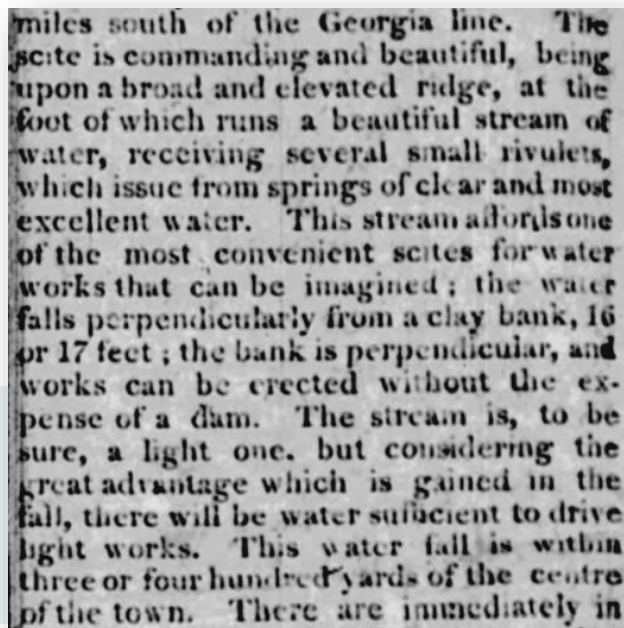
### Springs and Lakes

If there is one feature of the natural settings of Tallahassee that seemed to awe the first explorers and settlers the most, it was the water in all of its manifestations as shown in these carol of voices:

. . . finest springs arise and form innumerable pleasant streams of pure water, which however generally sink into the earth before they become rivers of any considerable size; many of these however are large enough for mill streams and are little affected by drowth [*sic*]. (“Sketches,” 1824, p. 3)

. . . the territory, on a high commanding eminence, [*is*] in the bosom of a fertile and picturesque country. A pleasant mill stream, the collected waters of several fine springs, winds along the eastern border of the city, until it falls, fifteen or sixteen feet, into a gulf, scooped out by its own current, and finally sinks into a cleft of the rock, at the base of an opposite hill. Numerous springs flow from the southern border of the town. In every part of the place, good water may be obtained by sinking wells from six to thirty feet. (Williams, 2017, loc. 1,837-1,842)

. . . to the southward and westward, the country opened to their view like a magnificent park gently undulated and studded with beautiful basins of lim-



miles south of the Georgia line. The scite is commanding and beautiful, being upon a broad and elevated ridge, at the foot of which runs a beautiful stream of water, receiving several small rivulets, which issue from springs of clear and most excellent water. This stream affords one of the most convenient scites for water works that can be imagined; the water falls perpendicularly from a clay bank, 16 or 17 feet; the bank is perpendicular, and works can be erected without the expense of a dam. The stream is, to be sure, a light one, but considering the great advantage which is gained in the fall, there will be water sufficient to drive light works. This water fall is within three or four hundred yards of the centre of the town. There are immediately in

A clipping from “Topographical: Gadsden County.” (1824, August 7). *Pensacola Gazette*, p. 2.

pid water, at their feet a crystal fountain, gushing from the declivity of a hill. (“Tallahassee. . .,” 1924, p. 38)

. . . the sound of a beautiful cascade, . . . formed by the rivulet above described, falling over a ledge of rocks into a deep glen, which forms almost a circle of about seventy yards in diameter, and disappears at the bottom of the same ledge of rocks, very near the cascade. (“Tallahassee. . .,” 1924, p. 38)

The scite [*sic*] is commanding and beautiful, being upon a broad and elevated ridge, at the foot of which runs a beautiful stream of water, receiving several small rivulets, which issue from springs of clear and most excellent water. This stream affords one of the most convenient scites [*sic*] for water works that can be imagined; the water falls perpendicularly from a clay bank, 16 or 17 feet; the bank is perpendicular and works can be erected without the expense of a dam. The stream is to be sure a light one, but considering the great advantage which is gained in the fall, there will be water sufficient to drive light works. This water fall is within three or four hundred yards of the centre of the town. (“Topographical. . .,” 1824, p. 2)

These lakes receive a number of streams, which flow from the higher grounds, and lose themselves in their placid bosoms. The largest of them are called the Iamony, Jackson, and Mickasukey, each of which is from thirty to forty miles in circumference; but there are many others of a smaller size, affording many beautiful situations for country residences. (Brackenridge, 2017, loc. 2,257)

(cont. on p. 6)



“Portrait of the first Territorial legislative council President Dr. James Craine Bronaugh.” 1822 (circa). Florida Memory. Public Domain: <https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/26780>. General Note: Born on July 14, 1788, he caught yellow fever at the first legislative council meeting in Pensacola, July 1822 and died on September 3, 1822.

## Building a New Town

Trees soon came down for these first White settlers, and land was cleared (Ellis & Rogers, 1986, p. 6). The newcomers embarked on building projects, and according to the *Pensacola Gazette*, in just two days they had built the first (for White settlers) house in Tallahassee (“Tallahassee. . .,” 1924, p. 39; Groene, 1971, p. 20).

Buildings were erected for the Legislative Council, with the body first expected to meet in May, and a modest little store was built (“Tallahassee. . .,” 1924, p. 39). In July Governor Duval’s house was constructed in the Spanish ruins. By October, Judge **Augustus B. Woodward** held Middle District Superior court sessions in the home of **Charles Pindar** (Groene, 1971, p. 20).

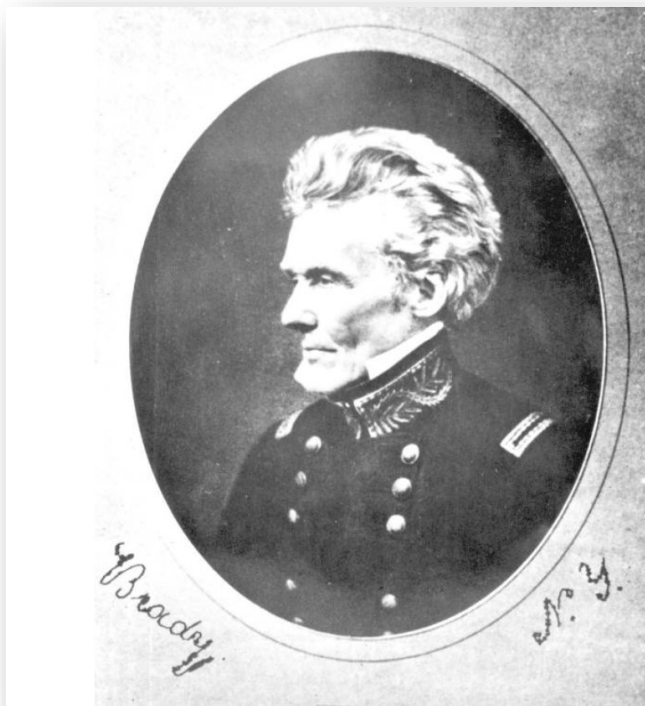
There were likely only six private homes in Tallahassee by December 1824, based on records that indicate only six persons had claimed the right of

preemption through a legislative act that was granted to those who had built before January 1, 1825 (Groene, 1971, pp. 21, 23).

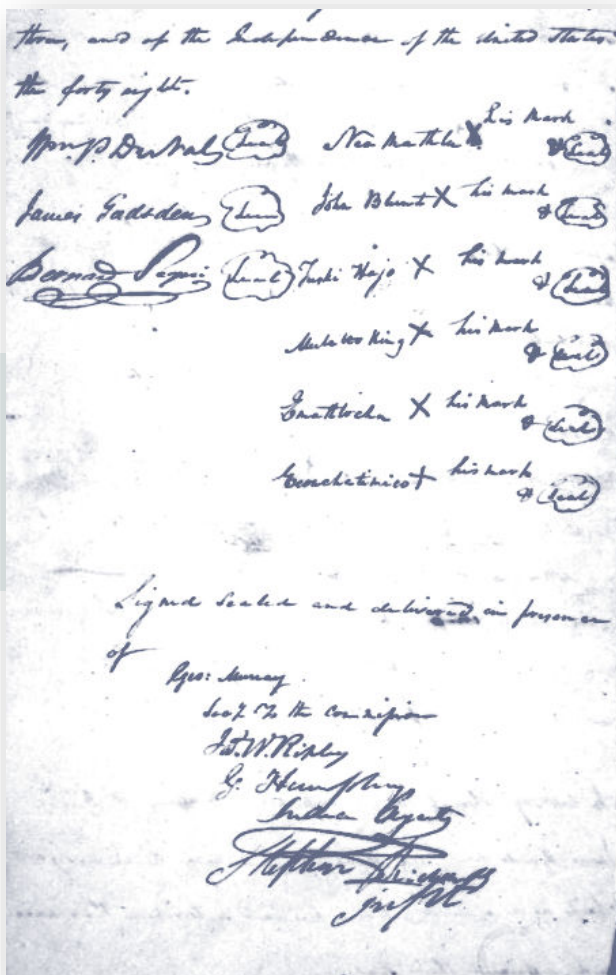
Those names determined to be head of households of the city included “William Wyatt, Ambrose Crane, John McIver, Robert Butler, William Hall, Charles Pindar, and Richard Keith Call” (Groene, 1971, p. 21).

In fall 1824, the Legislative Council began its sessions in a log cabin. In December, the Council established Leon County (FHRS, 1941, p. 4), whose boundaries were created out of Gadsden County (Groene, 1971, p. 27).

The Council also formally named the new little town “Tallahassee” (but the settlement was not actually incorporated until a year later). Streets and squares were named for Presidents and other notables as was the custom. For example, Bronaugh Street was named after Jackson’s army surgeon, **James C. Bronaugh**; Gadsden Street for James Gadsden (who had negotiated the treaty with the Seminole chiefs); and Gaines Street for **Edmund P. Gaines**, who had also served under Jackson.



“General Edmund Gaines - Gainesville, Florida.” 1870 (circa). Florida Memory. Public Domain: <https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/25572>. General Note: “U.S Commander in Florida during the 2nd Seminole War. The city of Gainesville is named for him.”



"Treaty of Moultrie Creek signature page." September 18, 1823. Florida Memory. Public Domain: <https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/22526>. General Note: "Signatures include those of: William P. Duval, James Gadsden, Bernard Segui, Neamathla, John Blunt, Tuski Hajo, Mulatto King, Emathlocha, and Econchitimo."

McCarty, or 200-Foot Street, was the city's northern boundary, which is the area of present-day Park Avenue, where Trinity UMC is located. The street was named for **William W. McCarty**, who was the second secretary of Territory of Florida (Groene, 1971, p. 19).

## The Sons and Daughters of the Forest

The Native Americans in the area did not actively hinder the building of the first government structures, business, and private houses at the capital. In fact, claims Caroline Brevard in her *History of Florida*, they offered to help the new settlers in some situations. They brought meat

from their hunts, and White men often visited their homes (Brevard, 1924, p. 87).

According to the *Pensacola Gazette*, the lands the White settlers encountered had been crudely cleared and cultivated by the Seminoles. In June 1824, Williams expressed optimism that the native people would quickly be

removed from the neighborhood, the fields now cultivated by five hundred of them although not very extensive, will be immediately occupied by the white people and improved to great advantage. (p. 3).

Yet, the native people were in no hurry to leave their land and carried on their work in raising their crops (Brevard, 1924, p. 87). By August the *Gazette* published an article, criticizing the Seminoles' husbandry and boasting of how the White farmers and businessmen would transform the neglected land by means of their agricultural expertise:

This country must settle very rapidly because no country will reward the husbandman more abundantly—very soon will the laborer's hand destroy the wilds of savage indolence, and we shall behold the most delightful country, which will very early be enlivened by industry, enriched by commerce and beautified by wealth. ("Topographical...", 1824, p. 2).

It was true that there was going to be dramatic change for all involved, including for the native people whose homes would soon be taken from them. When these people of the forest had observed the first White settlers enter the woods of Middle Florida from North Carolina, they were unsuspecting of the upcoming disturbance of their way of life:

The sons of the forest were often arrested while in pursuit of their wonted game, to gaze with wonder at the strange Phenomenon, for there was not a being among them within whose knowledge so strange a vehicle was ever seen to disturb the repose of their solitary retirement; Nor were they sensible that this was the day star which warned them to prepare to leave the land of their fathers, whose bones for centuries had mingled with the very soil from which they raised their bread. ("Tallahassee...", 1925, p. 38)

(cont. on p. 9)

## An Act Concerning Slaves, Approved December 30, 1824

“An act passed Florida's Territorial Legislative Council and approved by Governor William Pope Duval on December 30, 1824. The act sets rules for many aspects of the institution of slavery, including emancipation, runaways, overseers, treatment of slaves, punishment of slave conspiracies, misbehavior, and riots, and restrictions on slaves moving freely about, or trading.”

Sec. 3. *Be it further enacted*, That if any person, owning or having control over the labour of a slave, shall on Sunday employ him or her in any labour (except such as is of absolute necessity or of necessary family occasion) or shall cruelly beat such slave by unnecessary and excessive whipping, or shall withhold proper food or sustenance, or shall exact greater labour than such slave may be able to perform, such person committing either of the said offences shall on conviction be fined in a sum not exceeding one hundred dollars, at the discretion of the court.

Cruelty to slaves.

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Sec. 5. *Be it further enacted*, That a body of men slaves exceeding seven in number and without having a white person with them, shall not travel in any high road, and slaves thus found in a body may be whipped not exceeding twenty stripes, without reference to the civil authority.

More than seven without overseer.

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Going at large etc.

Sec 10. *Be it further enacted*, That if a slave shall go at large without a written pass from his or her owner, master, or overseer, or shall fire hunt, or shall keep a horse, a boat or a canoe such [slave] shall be punished by the infliction of a number of stripes not exceeding one hundred at the discretion of any justice of the peace.

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Excerpts from “An Act Concerning Slaves, Approved December 30, 1824.” Public domain. Florida Memory: <https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/345404>

## Human Beings as Tools

Much of the land in Middle Florida was described as ideal for raising cotton (Rivers & Brown, 2001, p. 2). The *Pensacola Gazette* in August 1824 praised the climate as being “so congenial” and the soil “so rich” for growing cotton (as well as rice, sugar, and corn). A detailed description of the soil described it as a “mixture of rich marl, and dark grey sand, based on red clay....” The cotton crops were producing “as fine as I have ever seen in any country. . .” (“Topo-graphical . . .,” 1824, p. 2). And Williams remarked that the soil was “adapted to the culture of . . . sea-island cotton. . .” (2017, loc. 2,274).

As a result, cotton planters were anxious to acquire the land and make use of these resources for their financial benefit. Many of those immigrating to Middle Florida were of wealthy agricultural families of the Old South who brought Black enslaved persons to use as their tools and work animals for cultivation of their land and/or acquired new bond servants after settling. According to historians **Larry Eugene Rivers** and **Canter Brown, Jr.**, “with . . . the growth of the Middle Florida slave population, the Methodist Church extended its reach through the region.” To add to their expanding membership, “Methodist missionaries sought out slave converts throughout the antebellum period” (p. 3).

## Methodists in Middle Florida The Chattahoochee District

In the May 1824 *Methodist Magazine*, a report from the Chattahoochee Mission said that since the mission’s creation two years earlier, there were in the first year “two-hundred and forty-one persons admitted into the Church” and in the second year an increase was noted of “one hundred and ten members.” With such progress the report emphasized that Florida could not be ignored and that a

separate Missionary District should be formed at and above St. Marks, including the newly designated seat of government. (“Chattahoochee. . . , 1824, p. 197)

In the 1824 *Minutes of the Annual Conference*, which met in Charleston, SC, the Chattahoochee mission is listed with a membership of 292 Whites and 64 Blacks and led by preachers James Tabor and Isaac Sewell (*Minutes*, 1840, p. 430).

## Trinity’s First Year

According to **William E. Brooks** in *From Saddlebags to Satellites*, in 1823, James Tabor and Isaac Sewell reported that they had preached everywhere they could gather six or more people and that they had organized a church “near Tallahassee” with six Whites and four Blacks. Brooks hypothesized that this early congregation was

(cont. on p. 10)

5944	1405	Enoree	609	139	Oconee Dist. Andrew Hamell, P. Elder.
Oconee District.		Reedy River	621	128	Oakmulgee, Josiah Evans, Benjamin Gordon, sup.
Washington	362	72			Washington, Jesse Sinclair.
Oakmulgee	466	116		3782 2266	Little Oakmulgee, John J. Triggs.
Little Oakmulgee	230	49	Pee Dee District.		Ohoopee, John H. Robertson.
Ohoopee	173	50	Georgetown	92 1232	Satilla, John Bigby, Philip Groover.
Satilla	154	38	Black River	352 748	Liberty and Darien, Asbury Morgan.
Liberty and Darien	140	53	Lynch's Creek	535 152	St. Mary's and Amelia Island, Elijah Sinclair.
St. Mary's and Amelia Island	20	10	Little Pee Dee	1165 322	St. Augustine mission, Noah Laney.
St. Augustine mission	12	40	Dee		Appling mission, Adam Wyrick.
Chatahoochee mission	292	64	Brunswick	664 420	Early mission, John Slade.
			Bladen	271 351	Chatahoochee miss., James Tabor, Isaac Sewell.
			Deep River	254 51	
			Fayetteville	113 287	
			Wilmington	118 817	
				3564 4390	
			Catawba District.		
			Montgomery	405 80	
			Reedy River	215 166	

1824 Minutes of the South Carolina Conference. Excerpt from *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church for the Years 1773-1828*: Volume I. (1840). New York, 430. Red arrows indicate Chattahoochee (misspelled “Chatahoochee”) Mission statistics and information.

(cont. from p. 9)

Pisgah (Methodist Church—north of Tallahassee; 1969, p. 36). Brooks did not provide clear evidence for this claim. The 1823, 1824, or 1825 *South Carolina Annual Conference Minutes* that I have examined did not include this information.

**Rev. Norman Booth** in his chapter “Trinity’s First Fifty Years: 1824-1874,” (published in *Trinity United Methodist Church: Tallahassee’s First Church, 1824-1999* [Yates, 1999]), wrote that 10 individuals met in Tallahassee “on the last Sunday in September 1824” at the home of “Mr. Myers” in order “to organize the first Methodist Society” (pp. 9-10). Booth based his claim on a reference to Trinity’s November 28, 1924, *Quarterly Conference Minutes*, which he said, in turn, referred to the celebration of the 100th anniversary of that 1824 organizational meeting. He did not include the 1924 *Quarterly Conference Minutes* in his bibliography.

Because there are no in-text citations or footnotes in Trinity’s history book to facilitate tracing documents to claims made by authors of these chapters, it is not clear the resource on which he based this claim. Rev. Dr. W. F. Dunkle made a



Rev. Dr. W. F. Dunkle, Trinity senior pastor from 1930 to 1935. Trinity UMC Tallahassee Archives.

On September 30th, being the last Sunday in September, we celebrated for the first time the anniversary of the organization of Trinity Church, which event took place on the last Sunday in September in the year 1824 "in the home of Mr. Myers" at which time ten persons were organized into the first Methodist Church in Tallahassee. Of these six were white and four were negroes.

Dunkle, W. F. (1934, November 28). "Report of Preacher-in-Charge to the Fourth Quarterly Conference, November 28, 1934." *Quarterly Conference Minutes: 1934-1942*. Trinity United Methodist Church Tallahassee Archives, [p. 55 of PDF]. Retrieved from <https://tumct.org/history/1934-1942%20Combined.pdf>

similar claim in his minister’s report to the November 28, 1934 (not 1924) Fourth Quarterly Conference (shown below) and in a 1934 presentation to the Florida Annual Conference (see the following page)—offering no evidence.

Rev. Booth wrote that the passage in the 1924 *Quarterly Conference Minutes* was dated “November 28”—the same day of the month but ten years earlier—as the date of Dr. Dunkle’s passage in the 1934 *Minutes*. However for the conference to have met on November 28, 1924, as Rev. Booth claimed, conference leaders would have met on a Friday, whereas the day of the week of the 1934 conference was a Wednesday, a more likely day for the leaders to meet. In fact, just a cursory check of *Quarterly Conference Minutes* dates shows that the day of the week for conference meetings on November 28, 1923; January 23, 1924; and May 21, 1924 is Wednesday—not Friday.

An inventory receipt signed by Trinity historian **Thomas N. Morgan**, dated June 11, 1963, indicated that *Quarterly Conference Minutes* from 1924 to 1927 were missing (Moor & Morgan, 1963). Although Trinity historians **E. Lynn McLarty** and **Judy Levy** have published the January and May 1924 *Quarterly Conference Minutes*, the November 1924 *Minutes* has not been located by the time of the publication of this article. It may be the case that the November 1924 *Quarterly Conference Minutes* has been missing since at least 1963, and, therefore, Booth did not see the 1924 *Minutes* to verify his claim. Regardless, he did not include either the 1924 nor the 1934 *Minutes* in his chapter bibliography.

James Tabor is the father of Tallahassee Methodism. He reported that “on the last Sunday in September (1824), after preaching to a large congregation in the home of Mr. Myers, he formed a Society with six white and four colored members.” Undoubtedly this was the first organization of Methodism in Tallahassee—and, for that matter, the first Christian church of any sort to be organized in Tallahassee. Thus Methodism began in Tallahassee, in 1824.

Dunkle, W. F. (1934). “The Beginnings of Methodism in Florida and in Tallahassee.” *Journal of the Florida Conference*, 36-37.

As we approach the celebration of Trinity’s 200th anniversary in 2024, we will continue to broaden our research and resources to seek more details of our church’s first-year history. As of the time of the publication of this article, new documents have been located bringing more possible opportunities for further research that we know will cast a brighter light on Trinity’s early history.

### Acknowledgement

E. Lynn McLarty’s research assistance was critical and much appreciated in the writing of this article.

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### Call for Submissions

Help **Crossroads** bring into balance the published narratives of the work and leadership of women in Trinity’s past so that readers, researchers, young people growing up in the church, and others can appreciate in a more comprehensive way the significant impact that women have made in the history of our church. Write to Pam Crosby ([pcrosby@tumct.org](mailto:pcrosby@tumct.org)) to send along your suggestions and submissions that help to answer the question, “What women leaders influenced Trinity United Methodist Church?”

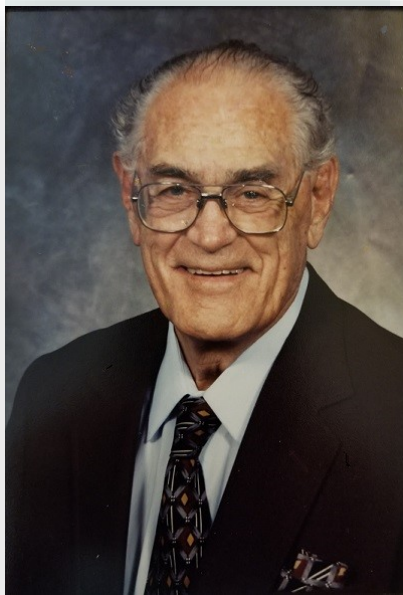
## Celebrating the Contributions of Judy Levy: We Bid a Fond Good-bye

*By Historical Society and Committee for the Preservation of Church History*

One of the most beloved members of our Historical Society is leaving us to live close to her family at Newnan, GA. We say below what she has meant to our group during her time at Trinity.

**Linda Yates**

When **Judith Tait** accompanied her parents to Trinity in the 1950s, she was an active little girl eager to find out what attractions this big new place offered. Her dad, having studied in Denver before taking his young family to Pelham, NY, to finish a degree program in recreation, also discovered that the small university in Tallahassee, FL, was excited to discover that he was just what the university was seeking to start a new degree program in recreation.



William Janes Tait, Jr., father of Judy Tait Levy. See the April 2019 edition of Crossroads, page 10, for Judy's article on her father at [https://tumct.org/history/april\\_2019\\_hs\\_newsletter.pdf](https://tumct.org/history/april_2019_hs_newsletter.pdf)

er **Edna** was always there to encourage her three children providing leadership to their peers in Sunday school,

As a young wife and mother, **Judy Tait Levy** led a cooking class (every female church member

During the 20 years that **Dad Tait** taught Southerners a new kind of recreation and leisure living at FSU, young Judy was "teaching leadership and friend-making" to her classmates. She and her brothers, **Jim** and **John**, learned the foundation of Methodism at

Trinity. Judy's Dad walked her down the aisle with brother Jim waiting his turn a few weeks later. Mother

must learn how to make cookies, she believed). She cooked with Trinity Chefs for United Methodist Women mission projects, conducted a yearly pecan sale to raise funds for more mission projects, and helped prepare meals for shut-in church members. Judy, our much-loved helper and friend, busied herself wherever there was a good deed to be done, finally as what may be her legacy, making sure membership records are recorded correctly, and our church's glorious history is written across our hearts. —Linda

**Dot Binger**

I knew Judy's parents long before I met Judy, and I recognize their exemplary qualities in her along with unique qualities which are specifically Judy.

Over many years Judy has used her unique personality and outstanding talents at Trinity UMC in multiple ways from promoting pecan sales in support of missions to many years of work helping preserve church history. To say we will miss her is an understatement, but our loss will definitely be a gain for another church. —Dot

**Rhonda Work**

My first memory of Judy was seeing her with her placard over her shoulders, crazy hat, and some bags of pecans walking down the center aisle of the sanctuary before the 11:00 o'clock service touting the sale of pecans. There is no one else in the congregation who could do what Judy did—sell pecans in a booming voice with a straight face. And sales soared!!!!

Fast forward a few years to when Judy and I became friends and cohorts through the Historical Society. Here was another side of Judy—just as creative and forthright, but with a sensitivity and sincerity that captured the heart. She has been a driving force behind the dedication of the Yates Heritage Center, a project she chose to do to honor **Linda** and **Bob Yates**. We will miss Judy, her humor, her creativity, and her love. Safe journeys ahead, my dear! —Rhonda



Members at a January 8, 2020, Trinity Historical Society meeting in what is now the Yates Heritage Center at Trinity. L -R: Rhonda Work, Judy Levy, Anne Parker, and Dot Binger. Photo Credit: Pamela C. Crosby.

### E. Lynn McLarty

On Judy's approaching departure from her hometown of Tallahassee, from her Trinity United Methodist Church, and from her abounding number of local friends, I take this opportunity to express my personal appreciation to her for the untiring work she has done with me on the church's *Quarterly Conference Minutes* and the membership records. She has been by my side for the last eleven years as we tamed what was considered a formidable project of putting these records into book and electronic formats.

For fifteen years I had been transcribing Trinity's old records to add to my computer. There was an abundant amount of material residing on my computer, but not a bit of it had been made available publicly. While I was looking for someone to help me verify the entries on the computer in 2010, Judy offered to sit down and allow me to show her my work. She immediately exhibited a fervency for the project. She became the proofreader of Microsoft Excel documents, which were eventually converted to seven bound membership books found in the Yates Center or to Portable Document Format (PDF) for dissemination in an

electronic medium on Trinity's website. She was also my proofreader of scanned images that we organized and collated for the eleven books of *Quarterly Conference Minutes*. One would have to become more involved in these records to appreciate what her unique contributions were to these projects.

We worked mostly on Friday mornings and afternoons, not passing up an opportunity for a break to enjoy companionship at the lunch tables of Dog Et Al, Shell Oyster Bar, Nick's, Voodoo Dog, or St. John's Episcopal. It was during these less-focused minutes that our friendship expanded.

Through another avenue to serve Trinity, Judy became involved with **Erin Platt** and me in delivering the *Upper Room* devotional guidebooks to our members at Westminster Oaks (WO). With the limitations brought about by the COVID-19 epidemic, face-to-face encounters with our friends at WO came to a halt. Judy and I worked to bring about mailing the *Upper Room*, the *Crossroads*, and the *Tidings* church newsletter to these homebound individuals. This gave our Westminster Oaks members continuity with their home church

(cont. on p. 14)



Lynn McLarty and Judy Levy in 2017, hard at work building an impressive archival collection of official church records from Trinity's past for online access as well as hard copy storage in what is now the Yates Heritage Center on the third floor of Trinity United Methodist Church.

Trinity. It was Judy who suggested we extend this connection by mailing the packet of literature to others in the church who had asked to be included. And, at the time of this writing, she is giving one last volunteer effort to assemble the mailing for the July-August 2021 *Upper Room*.

There were two other projects Judy and I worked on together, each as an ad hoc assignment of the Committee for the Preservation of Church History. The first was the research and the attainment of the plaque, mounted outside at the front door to the church, designating the location of the first session of the Florida Conference of the Methodist Church on February 6, 1845. The second project involved the procurement of the plaque over the door of the third-floor archives room, now dedicated as the Yates Heritage Center.

Judy, thank you for all you have done in the many capacities that ran parallel to my projects at Trinity. You are such a dear, dedicated individual!  
—Doc

**Pamela C. Crosby**

**C**reative writers are a rare breed. Most people, I would wager, would love to have such a precious gift—I know I would! But it seems to be a natural talent.

That is why I was delighted to have someone like Judy Levy write for *Crossroads*, which I edit as a volunteer for Trinity. I love and envy her style and good sense of humor. She always made me so interested in what she was writing about that I had to find out more for myself and dig in deeper with my own research. But my sort of boring, tedious style of writing is just what you would expect of an

editor. I check and recheck the facts—but however hard I try, my tedious account of them makes people yawn. Not so with Judy Levy. She dressed up whatever she wrote with her own personality—which—as anyone who knows her could tell you—is most vibrant and engaging.

I have to admit that when I heard she was moving, I let out a loud, “Oh no!” It was an expression of selfishness on my part. I had found an author with pizzazz who had been at Trinity since her childhood days, and she not only knew how to describe church life here, she had lived it—and with her gift and experience—made it live again.

My wish is that with long distance communication, she will provide *Crossroads* with more stories of Trinity—told as no one else can tell them. So I am saying to you, Judy, “Please send us stories from Newnan, GA, to publish in *Crossroads*!”

. . . . We’ll see. I’m hopeful! —Pam



Lynn McLarty and Judy Levy in January 2012, an ideal partnership from the onset—each encouraging the other’s talents and resources—and enjoying each other’s company.



Judy Levy, author, researcher, historian, contributed often to the *Crossroads* with her engaging wit and personable style.

## Paper Trails: From the Sorting Bins in the Archives Prep Room— Woman's Society of Christian Service, 1948 (Circles 1-4 of 13 Circles)

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10		
Bird, Mrs. Cora, 207 E. Gaines St.....		2192-K
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Fain, Mrs. L. D., Country Club Estates.....		288
Flanagan, Mrs. L. G., 401 E. Virginia St.....		1134
Graham, Mrs. J. L., Perry Highway.....		1845-W
Harris, Mrs. W. R., 411 Beard St.....		875-L
Hart, Mrs. Gordon, 612 W. Call St.....		883
Herold, Mrs. R. R., 814 Martin St.....		2648-R
Hooten, Mrs. Dewey B., Forest Drive, Glendale.....		2186-R
Jernigan, Mrs. F. E., 565 E. Call St.....		1838-L
Kline, Mrs. T. M., 927 N. Monroe St.....		192
Lewis, Mrs. Martha, 1327 S. Meridian.....		1263
McCaskill, Mrs. N. B., 1526 Bell Vue Way.....		1736
Mickler, Mrs. P. T., 210 S. Calhoun St.....		
Middlebrooks, Mrs. R. R., Circle Dr., C.C. Est.....		1640-K
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Patterson, Mrs. W. N., 208 W. Pensacola St.....		
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Puckett, Mrs. C. A., 530 McDaniel St.....		622-W
Roesch, Mrs. Karl, 518 Ingleside.....		876-L
Smoyer, Mrs. W. H., 519 E. Park Ave.....		
Smith, Mrs. Jesse, Belle Vue Way.....		2354-R
Somerset, Mrs. E. E., 434 W. College Ave.....		2078-R
Stokes, Mrs. H. G., 1212 Crestview.....		923-K
Sutton, Mrs. Ira R., 209 W. College Ave.....		2445
Thornton, Mrs. A. E., 423 Beard St.....		755
Turnbull, Mrs. T. T., 545 E. Park Ave.....		816-L
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11		

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12		
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White, Mrs. J. L., 519 N. Gadsden St.....		11
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13		

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Ballinger, Mrs. Kenneth, Betton Hills.....	2599
Brock, Mrs. Paul, Sr., 2016 Golf Terrace.....	1770-L
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Childs, Mrs. George, 717 N. Monroe St.....	207W-
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Crabtree, Mrs. L. C., 515 E. Eighth Ave.....	2263-K
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Moore, Mrs. Coyle, Fort San Luis Road.....	763-RX
Palmer, Mrs. Bessie, 217 S. Calhoun St.....	2355-W
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Taylor, Mrs. Robert, 643 Beard St.....	368-W
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Tooke, Mrs. R. M., 323 W. College Ave.....	2852
Watson, Mrs. J. M., 309 S. Bronough.....	958-R
Wilder, Mrs. Joe, Horseshoe Plantation.....	8018-L
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Telephone.....	Mrs. T. J. Brooks
Transportation.....	Mrs. Joe D. Drake
Supplies.....	Mrs. Thomas D. Bailey
Birthday Box.....	Mrs. I. B. Krentzman

## Hostesses

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February.....	Mrs. Thomas T. Wheaton
March.....	Mrs. M. C. McNeill
April.....	Mrs. C. F. Pierson
May.....	Mrs. C. P. Wood
June.....	Mrs. Joe D. Drake
July.....	Mrs. John Y. Humphress
September.....	Mrs. R. H. Gibson
October.....	Mrs. Thomas D. Bailey
November.....	Mrs. C. Huxley Coulter

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## Members      Addresses      Phone No.

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Brooks, Mrs. T. J., 236 E. Sixth Ave.....	1178-L
Brown, Mrs. Armstead, Country Club Estates.....	758
Bryson, Mrs. A. H., 713 Beard St.....	1655-L
Camp, Mrs. J. C., 1034 N. Gadsden St.....	985
Cole, Mrs. A. Van, 700 Ingleside.....	382-W
Coulter, Mrs. C. Huxley, 412 Ingleside.....	1076-W
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Gibson, Mrs. R. H., Piney Z. Farm.....	249
Humphress, Mrs. John Y., 524 Beverly Court.....	101-R
Krentzman, Mrs. I. B., 502 E. Sixth Ave.....	2792-R
McNeill, Mrs. M. C., 730 E. Park Ave.....	2191-L
Middlebrooks, Mrs. Hugh, Duval and Virginia.....	1835
Murchison, Mrs. E. A., 1406 Broome St.....	960-R
Payne, Mrs. D. S., 623 Proctor St.....	
Pierson, Mrs. C. F., 1222 Thomasville Road.....	525
Wadsworth, Mrs. Howell, 519 E. Sixth Ave.....	1376
Walker, Mrs. Felix C., 720 E. Park Ave.....	277-K
Wheaton, Mrs. Thomas T., 614 E. Sixth Ave.....	1588
Wheeler, Mrs. J. R., Jacksonville Highway.....	637-W
Wood, Mrs. C. P., 730 N. Gadsden St.....	2182-R

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From the Woman's Society of Christian Service information booklet. Trinity UMC Tallahassee Archives. The Woman's Foreign Missionary Society was organized in January 1882; the name was changed to the Home and Foreign Missionary Society in 1911; Woman's Missionary Society in 1919; and The Woman Society of Christian Service in 1940.

# Making History: Quarterly News from Trinity's Historical Society and Preservation of Church History Committee

## Preservation Project: Digital Library Database

By Dan Drake

A new project for the Committee for the Preservation of Church History is an effort to collect pictures of historic nature to our church. I am working with the committee to create a central location to store the photographs in digital form. This location will allow for an easy search and retrieval by key words such as names, dates, or locations.

As I was going through and cleaning out some family pictures, I began thinking about the loss of historical documentation at church of the hard copy images (pictures) we used to keep for years. However, I concluded that the new technology of our digital cameras could be a valuable source of that documentation if we could create a central location for the digital images, and we could create a useful database for historical research.

My idea was that the collection should focus on historical events of the church like our recent historical marker dedication and events like baptisms, confirmation, new member classes, high school graduates. These are just a few ideas. If the subject of the picture would be related to Trinity and of historical significance, we want them for our database.

Here is where I need your help for this project. We want your pictures! The more pictures we can collect, the more complete our history is preserved.

However, before you send them, please understand that as with all good things there is a catch, and that is that any good database needs to know the **Who, What, When and Where!** Each picture needs to have names of the persons in the picture, what the event is, the date the picture was taken, and location.

If you have a digital picture you would like to submit, here is how to do it:

### For Digital Photos

1. Attach the image to an email in the format JPG, TIF, PNG or GIF.
2. In the email, please provide **Who, What, When and Where** about the photo.
3. Send the email to our digital photo project at [tumcpch@gmail.com](mailto:tumcpch@gmail.com). You should receive an automated response that it was received.
4. Please provide your name and a contact we can use if we need further information.

### For Hard Copy Photos

1. Email us at [tumcpch@gmail.com](mailto:tumcpch@gmail.com) to let us know that you want us to scan the photo(s).
2. In the email, please provide **Who, What, When and Where info** about the photo.
3. Let us know how we can get the photo(s) from you.
4. We will return the photo(s) after scanning.

With any new project there will be refinements and changes. One refinement is that I would love for other photographers or historical enthusiasts who would like to join our small group to work with me.

If you are interested to become a part of this project or just need more information about our group, please email me at [ddraco75@hotmail.com](mailto:ddraco75@hotmail.com).

## Sharing Stories Project: Historical Marker

By Rhonda Work

On Sunday, April 11, 2021, a very special event happened at Trinity United Methodist Church. Members of the congregation arrived for the 11:00 a.m. service in the rain. It was a bit disconcerting to have rain when plans had been made for the event to be held outside.

At the conclusion of the service, **Rev. Dr. Wayne Wiatt** invited the congregation to process outside to the porch and sidewalk for the dedication of the plaque on the door frame of the church and the newly placed State Historical Marker in front of the chapel. And to everyone's delight, the rain had stopped.

Dr. Wiatt approached the marker and proceeded to offer the "Prayer of Dedication" (see below). The marker represents one of many historical sites across the state approved by the Florida Department of State.

It is quite an honor to be designated a State Historical Site. Even though Trinity Methodist has had three sanctuaries in its nearly two-hundred-

year history (1840, 1893, 1964) on the site of this State Historical Marker, the very first church building was two blocks to the west at the SW corner of Park Avenue (originally McCarty Street) and Bronough Street.

The dedication of the plaque that appears at the entrance to church is in recognition of the first session of the newly formed Florida Conference meeting held at our Trinity site in 1845.

It was a joyous and dry congregation who witnessed the dual dedication.

Members of TUMC's Historical Society and the Committee for the Preservation of Church History proudly applauded as the ceremony came to its conclusion.



## Dedication of Historical Marker

Read by Rev. Dr. Wayne Wiatt

**B**rothers and Sisters in Christ, this is a day of rejoicing. We have come together to dedicate Trinity's Florida Historical Marker commemorating the first Methodist gathering in Tallahassee in 1824, and the Historic Plaque, commemorating the first Session of the Florida Annual Conference on this site in 1845. We present these signposts of Church history for the marking of our heritage and the faithfulness of the "People Called Methodists" in Tallahassee, Florida. Let us bow our heads for the Prayer of Dedication.

Dear Friends, rejoice that God has moved the hearts of his people that Trinity United Methodist Church now stands in a long line of faithful disciples who are committed to sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

By the power of your Holy Spirit, we dedi-

cate these historic markers of our history and faithfulness, that this place may always be a site of holy gathering for God's people.

Continue to guide and empower us by the Proclamation of your Word and the Celebration of your Sacraments, the pouring out of prayer and the singing of your praise, professions of faith and testimonies to your grace. Save us from the failure of vision which would confine our worship within these walls, and send us out from here to be your servants in the world, sharing the blessing of Christ with the world that he came to redeem.

Now, O God, we dedicate and bless these markers of history, so that all who pass by will know that you, O Lord, are exalted and held above all. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit we pray. Amen.

## Committee for the Preservation of Church History

Rhonda Work, Chair

Dot Binger, Secretary Pamela C. Crosby, Publications Editor

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### Church Leadership

The Rev. Dr. Wayne Wiatt, Lead Pastor

The Rev. Neal Avirett, Associate Pastor

Dr. Nick Quinton, Director of Discipleship & Adult Ministries

*The purpose of Crossroads is to provide descriptions of historical events and to publish news related to the Trinity United Methodist Church Historical Society. Its intent is not to endorse or criticize theological or ethical positions related to issues that these descriptive accounts might raise. While we strive to be as accurate as possible, we make mistakes sometimes. Please send your comments, corrections, and requests for printed copies as well as inquiries about submissions to Pamela Crosby, chief editor, at [pcrosby@tumct.org](mailto:pcrosby@tumct.org).*

## Submission Guidelines

*If you would like to be a published author in an upcoming issue, see guidelines below:*

### Call for Stories and Articles

- **“I Remember When” snapshots:** These are short descriptions that recount church life memories. They are usually **25–100 words long**. See below for general guidelines.
- **Oral interviews:** Interviews may be audio or video taped. Trinity historians write up the interviews in narrative form with approval from the persons interviewed before publication. Videos or audios of the interviews may be posted on Trinity’s website with permission from persons interviewed.
- **Firsthand stories:** Individuals may submit stories based on their firsthand experience at Trinity. The stories are generally **500 words, but can be longer**. See “General Guidelines.”
- **Research articles:** These articles are more formal in nature.
- o Criteria for formal articles include **relevance** to the purpose of the newsletter, which is to publish articles that pertain to the history of Trinity in a substantial way; **quality of**

**writing; historical accuracy; clarity; conciseness; coherence; and readability.**

o Articles should be **original** works and not excerpts.

o The word limit for articles **is usually around 500 words, but can be longer.**

A list of resources used for historical research may be requested. **Original** sources (instead of information from history books, newspapers, or newsletters) are preferred when possible.

### General Guidelines

- Writing should be free of disrespectful language.
- Photos and information should not violate privacy, copyright, or other established laws.
- All accepted works are subject to editing in compliance with all *Crossroads* guidelines, including style guide standards, and **must pass editorial approval** before publication.
- Submit Word document to **Pamela Crosby**, editor, at [pcrosby@tumct.org](mailto:pcrosby@tumct.org).

*Editor’s note: This publication could not continue in its fifth year without the continued support and assistance of my colleagues: Dot Binger, Rubie Butterworth, Judy Levy, Lynn McLarty, Mary Margaret Rogers, Linda Yates, and Rhonda Work—and Dr. Wayne Wiatt, our lead pastor. They are always willing to help me with anything I ask, and they inspire me with their professionalism and kindness.*