

**The Methodist Churches and Teressa Chapel
Tracy City, TN**

Compiled by Jackie Layne Partin

(2014)

The Methodist Churches and Teresa Chapel in Tracy City, TN

Compiled by Jackie Layne Partin (2014)

With Major Contributions from
Von Unruh, Catherine Flury, Lanny Bell and Ralph Thompson

Our story begins in **1861** when Margaret (Melvin) Reid arrived at the end of the railroad line. She remained seated on the train until William Reid finally arrived to receive his wife. She, her children and other family members had made the long trip from Newport, Rhode Island to begin their new lives in the three-year-old town of Tracy City, Tennessee. Margaret, a religious woman, had visions of church spires reaching for the skies above the little coal town, but in actuality there was very little to call a town or even a village, and there certainly were no church buildings, no chapels, no belfries, no spires. Her hopes for a place to worship, for participation in uplifting, Christian fellowship, and for formal spiritual training for her children were diminished by what she saw, or didn't see, from the window of the trainmen's car.



William and Margaret (Melvin) Reid with their children: L to R: Isabell, Elizabeth "Libbie", Agnes and James Napier Reid (taken ca. 1858 in Rhode Island) – born after the photo was taken were twins, Willie and Matt, Margaret Jeanette "Maggie", Laura and Charlotte

The Reid family, led by a strong, determined matriarch, set about establishing communion with other believers, though in the beginning, there were few. They first met at a saw mill with logs as their pews. The Methodist Church in Tracy City was on its way to being born—it just didn't know it. We can see from Catherine Flury's wonderful book, *History of First United Methodist Church Tracy City, Tennessee Then...and Now*, that members of the Reid family became involved in many labors of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. James Napier "Jim" Reid was the first Sunday School Superintendent; his brother Will Reid was the treasurer with the help of his twin brother Matt Reid; his sisters, Elizabeth "Libbie" (Reid) Sherrill and Margaret Jeanette (Reid) Shook, were Sunday School teachers; his niece Mollie Sherrill also taught classes; she later married William Thomas Haggard (1861-1944), a prominent pastor of the church. The list could continue, but the point for the volunteer spirit, hard work and importance of the Reid family has been made.

Several years ago, when I used the following excerpt from Lou (Shook) Woodlee's little story concerning her Reid family heritage, I wondered about her usage of *Teressa Chapel*. She wrote, *"I think the Catholic and Methodist churches were the first built. At first the Methodist church was called Teressa Chapel for Aunt Teressa Shook because her husband, Colonel A. M. Shook, had persuaded Tennessee Coal and Iron Company to give the land upon which it was built, and she had helped collect money to build the church. The Shooks worshipped with (the) Methodists until the Cumberland Presbyterian Church was built. All of the early Shooks were reared in the Presbyterian Church."* Who exactly was Teressa? Where was this Chapel? What Methodist group did it house? What happened to it?

In 1871, Alfred Montgomery Shook (1845-1923), son of James Keith and Eliza Herndon (Green) Shook, married Teresa Thomas Estill (1840-1919). She hailed from the Estill family upon whose name and land the town of Estill Springs, Franklin Co., TN had its beginning. Her father was a prominent doctor/surgeon, both privately and in the Confederate Army. His name was Wallace William Estill (1789-1864), and her mother was Eleanor Thomas (Crabb) Estill (1800-1864). There will be two spellings of Teresa/Teressa's name throughout our story. In the Census records, both spellings were used, but the spelling seemed to correct itself as the family moved away from Franklin and Grundy County. The "Teresa" spelling just looks better to us in 2014. We finally got it right for Mrs. A. M. Shook when we looked at her gravestone.

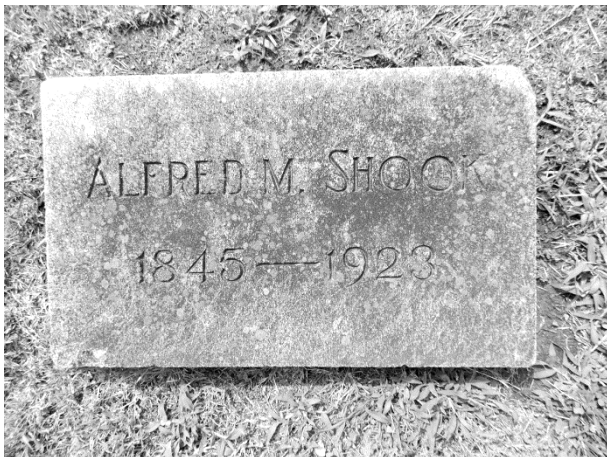
Teresa (Estill) Shook

(1840-1919)

Photo from

**The Life and
Achievements of
Alfred Montgomery
Shook**

**By Anne Kendrick
Walker**



Alfred Montgomery Shook (1845-1923)



Teresa Estill Shook (1840-1919)

The Shook Family Stone in the Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Nashville, TN is huge with these smaller stones appropriately placed.

Lou (Shook) Woodlee, daughter of Joseph Newman & Margaret Jeanette "Maggie" (Reid) Shook, was probably right about the Methodist church being one of

two faiths in the new town of Tracy City, established in **1858**. As early as **1868**, the Holston Conference Journal recorded that Tracy City and Altamont were in the same mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church-South. Sadly, Margaret (Melvin) Reid died in **1870** never seeing the Tracy City horizon interrupted by a tall, church steeple with a clanging bell calling her to worship. She left this earth before the rest of the story of the Methodist Church in Tracy City came to fruition, but her descendants experienced the dream for her.

In **1874**, with the help of Rev. James I. Cash the active group of believers in Tracy City had grown to ninety-six members, but they were still without a meeting house of their own. According to the notes of Catherine Flury, the Temperance Hall that previously stood on what became known as the "old Jossi Lot," was used by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South as a place to congregate.

Note: The "old Jossi Lot" is believed to be the same lot on the corner of 12th and Main where William Jossi once operated a store. Another possibility is that the Temperance Hall could have been on part of the 181 acres of land that ran alongside Nigger Hill Rd. as shown on an older map placing it near the old # 2 mine in Tracy City. It could have been around the Slaughter Pen Hollow area which probably included the original Jossi home later owned by his son-in-law John A. Anderson and his wife Nellie (Jossi) Anderson. There were approximately sixteen acres in that section. Since William Jossi owned several pieces of land in Tracy City, we cannot be certain at this writing which lot held the Temperance Hall.

Expounding more on the Temperance Hall in Tracy City, we read from a ledger of notes that the Woman's Christian Temperance Union of Tracy City had its first meeting on July 28, **1883**, in the "M. E. Church" with "Mrs. A. M. Shook", Teresa, as its president. I find it interesting that when the minutes of the first meeting were taken, the name Teressa Chapel was not used, and this was just two years after the chapel's erection. The Temperance Hall spoken of in the paragraph above pre-dated the group of ladies who met in Teressa Chapel. It would appear that the temperance movement was active in Tracy City almost from the day the town was named.

Rev. David Vance Price was appointed to the Tracy City mission for the years of **1879** and **1880**. With the good news being delivered by him through teaching and a great revival meeting, it became obvious that a building of their own was needed. So on Feb. 28, **1881** land was acquired as shown in the transcribed deed below.

"Tennessee Coal and R. R. Co to Robert McDonald and others: For and in consideration of building a church house on Lot No 69 in the town of Tracy City Tennessee. The Tennessee Coal and Railroad Company hath this day bargained

and sold and do by these presents, bargain, sell, transfer and convey unto Robert McDonald, William Law, James Rust in trust for the Methodist Episcopal Church South to be used, contracted, held, managed and conveyed as said M. E. Church South may in proper, for the benefit of said Church.

Said property or lot is here in described as follows: lying and being in the town of Tracy City in the 11th Civil District of Grundy County, Tennessee and bounded as follows: being Lot No 69 in the plan of Tracy City, as shown by the map of said Tracy City filed in the office of the Register of Grundy County at Altamont Tennessee to have and to hold to the said Robert McDonald, William Law, James Rust and their successors for the use of the Methodist Episcopal Church South forever.

And it is further specified, agreed and understood that if said lot and church house ceases to be used as church property and for church purposes by the M. E. Church South, then the sum is to revert to and _____ted in the Tennessee Coal and Railroad Company this 28th Feb. 1881, Tennessee Coal & RR Co, By W. Morrow President, W. H. Clercy, Secretary”

*State of Tennessee, Davidson County} Personally appeared before me, C. H. Eastman, Clerk of the County Court of said county the within _____Tennessee Coal & R R Company W. Morrow, President and W. H. Clercy, Secretary, the bargained with whom I am personally acquainted and who acknowledged that they executed the written instrument for the purposes therein contained witness my hand at office this day of **March 1881**. C. H. Eastman, Clerk*

*This deed was originally registered in Book I Page 703 and 704 at the hour of 10 o'clock a. m. this 4 day April 1881 and reregistered March 5, 1883
John W. Lockhart, Register*

The following letter penned by Rev. Price indicates the energy and zeal that flowed throughout the active group of Christians. It was written to the *Nashville Christian Advocate*, the weekly newspaper of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Courtesy of Von Unruh, a transcription of the letter follows:

Tracy City—Teressa Chapel

“DEAR ADVOCATE:--Dr. J. B. McFerrin came up to see our beautiful mountain town, and last Sunday, May 22, dedicated our new church. It is a neat building, in size 50 x 30 feet, and capable of seating two hundred and fifty or three

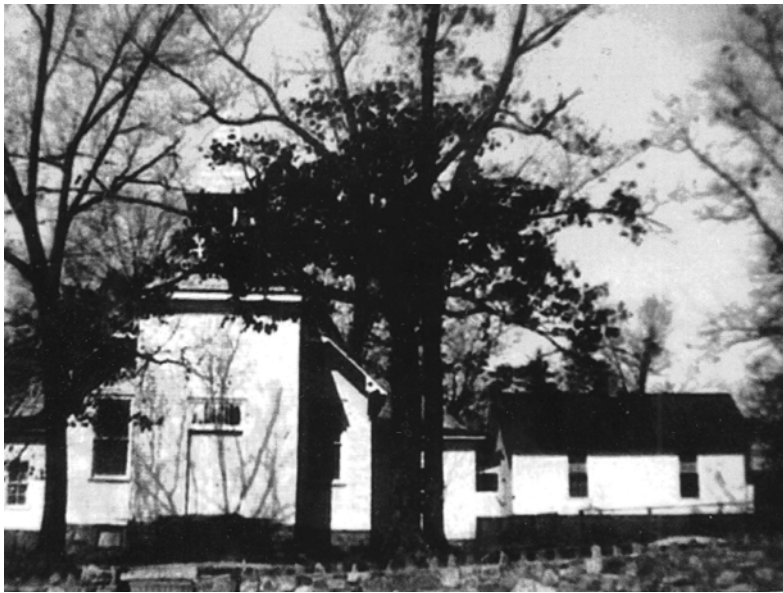
hundred persons. It is well furnished, with comfortable pews, chandeliers, lamps, and an excellent stove.

The day was very unfavorable, raining, and we had quite a large amount to raise – one hundred and fifty-three dollars. Besides the inclemency of the weather a great many of the people are afflicted with measles. But the good old beggar succeeded in raising the required amount. We are out of debt. The property is worth \$1,250. Dr. McFerrin preached twice, morning and evening, and his sermons were both highly edifying. We shall be eternally thankful to him for his services. In the afternoon he baptized two infant children of Captain A. M. Shook and his excellent lady, and also a little girl of just the age at which Dr. McFerrin was admitted into the Church – 13. This seemed to touch him.

Now, sir, allow me to return thanks to all who have helped, both here and elsewhere. I have been waiting for the dedication to discharge a duty made binding on me by the second Quarterly Conference for this station. They authorized me to formally return thanks to the Tennessee Coal & R. R. Co. for the church lot which is worth \$100, besides their liberal donations; to Dr. Wm. Morrow for the gift of our pews, worth \$150; and to Col. John W. Thomas, of the N. & C. R. R. Co., and the Tennessee Coal & R. R. Co. for free transportation of our pews. We trust that God will bless these men of princely liberality, and all others who helped, for there are others whose donations were not so great, but whose sacrifices were none the less self-denying and acceptable to Him who commended her who cast her two mites into the treasury. Now, to God be all the glory for the building of the church. We praise his holy name.

*Truly yours, D. V. Price, P. C.
Tracy City, Tenn., May 23, 1881."*

An important fact left out of the letter was the name given to the new church—**Teressa Chapel**. The name appears to have never been used, especially in documents and other media. From the beginning the church was written about as the Tracy City M. E. Church, South. In the old church directories in newspapers, I could never find it listed as Teressa Chapel. My mother named me Jacqueline, but recently my children couldn't even spell it; I AM THEIR MOTHER, but to them their mother is Jackie. The same may have been true with Teressa Chapel; it was named for a great contributor's wife who was a hard-working woman in the church, but that never changed the fact that the church was simply the M. E. C., South in Tracy City, TN.



**Left: A later version of
Teresa Chapel facing
7th St., with
Parsonage on the right**

*(Photos courtesy of
Lanny Bell)*

**Rt: 1930 View
of Teresa Chapel
with the
Big Brothers group
posed in front.**



Of importance for Tracy City history is the only other church indicated on the **August 1873** map of Tracy City was the Catholic Church which stood on town Lot #186 on Nathurst St.



Possibly the Catholic Church on Nathurst St., Tracy City, TN

It seems that later that year, 1873, the Christ Church Episcopal bought town Lot # 41 on the corner of 5th and 10th and started a building for worship.



The Christ Church Episcopal of Tracy City and Parsonage – a 1940 Reunion

Now let's go back to the M. E. Church, South for some more interesting notes. One Wednesday evening in Nov. 1888, the ladies of *Southern Methodist Church* cleared about \$60 on an *oyster supper*. In the same month Jennie Legg, wife of James K. P. Legg and later of William H. Foster, hosted the *Teacher Meeting* of the **Southern Methodist**

Sunday School. The next month on Dec. 3, 1888, the “*Quarterly Meeting and Church Conference was held at the **Southern** Methodist Church on Wednesday and Thursday.*” It is obvious from these tidbits of information from the *Tracy City News* that the **Southern** Methodist Church was well established thirty years after the founding of Tracy City. But who were the members of this group; what is the suffix “**South**” or prefix “**Southern**” all about?

The bottom line is that the Methodist Episcopal Church in America split over the question of slavery, and this was done several years before the Civil War as far back as the mid-1840s. With mutual consent, voting took place on whether the church would divide as the result of opposing views on owning slaves. Those who were from the slave-holding southern states separated from the original group. The original group was afterwards spoken of by some as the **Northern** Methodist, but for the most part, it maintained the name of Methodist Episcopal Church. This division will explain the church directory for Tracy City printed on Oct. 5, **1893**, in the *Tracy City News*. The list below gives the reader a good idea of what religious groups were quick to move into the small village, and how things stacked up thirty-five years later in **1893**. The transcribed directory follows:

- **M. E. Church, South**—Rev. R. E. Travis pastor. Services every Sunday morning and evening. Sunday school at 9:30 a. m. (*Methodist Episcopal Church, South [Tennessee Conference] – jp*)
- C. P. Church—Rev. J. D. Black, pastor. Services every Sunday and Sunday night. Bible school at 9:30 a. m. Prayer meeting Wednesday nights. (*Cumberland Presbyterian Church – jp*)
- Church of Christ—Elder J. E. Dunn, pastor. Services every Sunday and Sunday night. Bible School at 9:30 a. m. Prayer meeting Wednesday night. (*Christian Church is another name used for this group in the newspapers of the day. jp*)
- Catholic Church—Father Griffith, pastor. Services every 3rd Sunday. Sunday school at 9:30 a. m.
- **M. E. Church**—Rev. J. B. Loveless, pastor. Services every 1st, 3rd and 4th Sundays. Sunday school at 9:30 a. m. (*the Methodist Episcopal Church (North) [Holston Conference] – jp*)

- Episcopal Church—Rev. H. Easter, pastor. Services every Sunday. Sacrament meeting every 3rd Sunday. Sunday school at 9:30 a. m.
- Missionary Baptists—Services every 3rd and 4th Sundays in M. E. Church; Rev. Wm. Huff, pastor.
- **Congregational Methodist Church**—Rev. V. A. Faigaux, pastor. Services every Sunday morning. Sunday School at 9 a. m.

Please remember that the town was new, still emerging from its infancy; yet, it quickly built up a good spiritual foundation of Bible believers. But why were there so many different denominations so soon? Take into account that Tracy City was a town of immigrants, babes to this rural, wooded area. They had left behind many home churches in foreign lands that were not in existence when they stepped off the train in Tracy City, TN. Even those coming from the big northern cities could not find their own denomination to which they could attach themselves, so they attended the group whose doctrines or church oracles were nearer their beliefs until they could ground themselves well enough to finance their own church buildings.

Highlighted by me in the **1893** church directory are the groups using **Methodist** in their names. Although the other groups of different names have important histories, it is my intention to speak mostly of the Methodists in this document. We have already established from the list whom the M. E. C., South, or Southern Methodist, and the M. E. Church (North), represented. In Tracy City in April **1887**, the Tennessee Iron & Railroad deeded a portion of town Lot # 224 to the Methodist Episcopal Church, (*no suffix on the name*). I would insert a transcription of the deed, but it holds a very interesting story of its own to be told later. The deed makes no mention of a house or building being on the lot. It stood at the corner of Laurel and Douglas Streets. As of 1887, both M. E. Churches, **North and South**, existed on paper in Tracy City at the same time but worshipped several blocks from each other. Basically their faiths were the same, and this was not an unusual display of **disunity** among believers then, and it certainly isn't now, 2014.

Men like Col. A. M. Shook were Confederate sympathizers, but there were those in town who were loyal to the Union cause. Trustees for the M. E. Church (North) on Lot # 224 were T. S. Dishroom, J. P. Knox, Ed Von Bergen, George Lovelace, John Worley, W. E. Byers and H. (*maybe Harrison, jp*) Campbell. This group of Methodists obtained their lot and built their building approximately six years after the M. E. Church, South did. Why? Had they helped establish Teresa Chapel, then for some

reason left? Was this a split backwards to the mother group of the M. E. C.? Had they always been present, but still sitting on those logs at the saw mill? Were some of them holding on in anticipation of the building of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church on another section of the same town lot?

In the Tracy City Cemetery we are able to find the tombstone for **George Washington Lovelace** with his military history: CO A 1st TURNEY TN INF. With a little military search, we find that he was in the 1st Tennessee Volunteer Infantry, Company A, The Pelham Guards, Turney's Regiment, CSA. Did George W. Lovelace own slaves or was he involved in the Confederate cause merely for the states' rights issue of governing themselves? Below are thoughts from Ralph Thompson as to why the Methodist Episcopal Church (North) certainly could have had members who fought in the Confederacy but remained in the mother church.

"I believe the answer is timing.

The church split began to happen in 1840 and was finalized with the creation of MEC South in 1844. The issue was strictly slavery. MEC had forbidden a Southern Bishop from owning a slave.

The issue of slavery was settled by the Civil War which ended in 1865.

Keep in mind that most people from our area (Grundy County –jp) did not fight the war over slavery but rather 'states' rights'. States Rights was not a North and South issue as much as it was a 'State verses the Federal Government' issue. This has always been a hard issue to understand because slavery was the trigger which defined the sides (which state fought for which side), but the issue to be decided was the right of states to govern themselves. Once slavery was gone, did George Lovelace have any bone left to pick with the MEC? He had not been a slave holder so he was probably fighting for States' Rights – not a church issue.

That being said, 30 years after the end of the war there was probably very little, if any, difference between the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church South...In the 1890s, the Tarlton Methodist church was formed, and it did not go South."

Still another friend, Von Unruh, suggested, "My study of Methodist churches in Middle Tennessee suggests that the southern churches were predominately Democrat while the northern churches were predominantly Republican."

Following is a list, supplied by Von Unruh, of the Tracy City Methodist Episcopal Church [Holston Conference] ministers and their circuits from **1868-1909**. We understand that this list refers to the mother church, M. E. C., since it does not match up with the list given further on in this article to the M. E. C., South that culminated in 2014 with the name, United Methodist Church. One problem with this list is that in **1902**, the M. E. Church (North) building was deeded to the Dixie Telephone Exchange. Did the building continue to house worshippers on through the 1909-1910 years, or did they move to a smaller or larger available space?

Tracy City (MEC)
A List of Ministers and Their Circuits
1866-1909

(When one is researching a subject, sometimes the facts are not always available or exactly easy to discern, so in the list below, Von Unruh could not tell from the information he had before him which of the two appointments actually referred to the church in question—MEC).

1866-67	TBS <i>(To Be Supplied)</i> Joseph W. Peace	Jasper & Altamont (Cumberland) or Pikeville & Spencer (Cumberland)
1867-68	Elijah Still Joseph W. Peace	Jasper & Altamont (Cumberland) or Pikeville & Spencer (Cumberland)
1868-69	TBS	Tracy City (Chattanooga) or
1869-70	TBS P. E. Johnson	Spencer (Chattanooga) Tracy City (Chattanooga)
1870-71	A. F. Cresswell TBS	Tracy City (Chattanooga) or Spencer (Chattanooga)
1871-72	TBS TBS	Tracy City (Chattanooga) or Spencer (Chattanooga)
1872-73	M. H. B. Burkett	Tracy City & Spencer (Chattanooga)
1873-74	M. H. B. Burkett W. B. Ballenger	Tracy City (Chattanooga) or Tracy Circuit (Chattanooga)
1874-75	TBS	Tracy City & Dunlop (Chattanooga)
1875-76	M. R. M. Burk	Battle Creek (Chattanooga)
1876-77	TBS	Battle Creek Circuit (Kingston)
1877-78	Mark W. Broyles	Battle Creek Circuit (Kingston)
1878-79	J. J. Robinett	Battle Creek Circuit (Kingston)
1879-80	Thomas A. Cass	Battle Creek Circuit (Kingston)
1880-81	W. B. Ballenger	Battle Creek Circuit (Kingston)
1881-82	TBS	Battle Creek Circuit (Kingston)
1882-83	S. M. Tate	Battle Creek Circuit (Kingston)
1883-84	TBS	Sunbright & Tracy City (Kingston)
1884-85	TBS by J. Duggan	Tracy City (Kingston)
1885-86	TBS by J. S. Albright	Tracy City (Kingston)
1886-87	TBS by J. S. Albright TBS by J. H. Morton	Tracy City (Kingston) or Tracy City Circuit (Kingston)

1887-88	Thomas A. Cass TBS by V. A. Faigaux	Tracy City (Dayton) or Tracy City Circuit (Dayton)
1888-89	J. W. McGee TBS by R. T. Dykes	Tracy City (Chattanooga) or Tracy City Circuit (Chattanooga)
1889-90	TBS by T. C. Bruster / John Harrison	Tracy City (Chattanooga)
1890-91	TBS by J. M. Mason TBS	Tracy City (Chattanooga) or Tracy City Circuit (Chattanooga)
1891-92	TBS by J. B. Loveless	Tracy City (Chattanooga)
1892-93	TBS by R. A. Dorsett	Tracy City & Kimball (Chattanooga)
1893-94	Thomas A. Cass / J. G. Avery	Tracy City (Chattanooga)
1894-95	TBS by W. E. Killgore	Tracy City (Chattanooga)
1895-96	TBS by W. T. Duggan	Tracy City (Chattanooga)
1896-97	TBS by W. T. Duggan	Tracy City (Chattanooga)
1897-98	TBS	Tracy City (Chattanooga)
1898-99	TBS	Tracy City (Chattanooga)
1899-1900	TBS	Tracy City (Chattanooga)
1900-01	TBS	Tracy City (Chattanooga)
1901-02		
1902-03		
1903-04	TBS	Tracy City (Chattanooga)
1904-05	J. T. Bird	Tracy City (Chattanooga)
1905-06	J. H. Gillespie; one TBS	Tracy City (Chattanooga)
1906-07	TBS	Tracy City (Chattanooga)
1907-08	TBS	Tracy City (Chattanooga)
1908-09	TBS	Tracy City (Chattanooga)
1909-10	TBS	Tracy City (Chattanooga)

Von expounded more on the **TBS** acronym used in the list. He informs with the following words, *“It almost always means that the Presiding Elder (known as a District Superintendent today) couldn’t find a preacher to be appointed to that circuit. It had ‘to be supplied’ by someone, perhaps a local preacher who lived in the area (rather than a circuit rider) or maybe a student at a nearby school (someone who was planning to become a clergyman and was happy to have a place to preach at on Sunday). The difficulty probably had to do with the fact that the circuit was a “hard-scrabble” appointment. That is, it probably paid next to nothing, consisted of very small and very poor congregations, and was way off the beaten path. The returns for a year of very hard work were usually minimal, at best. All the TBS designations for the MEC (Holston Conference) suggest to me that the church in Tracy City never was on a very firm footing. From its beginning, it struggled to survive...and ultimately, of course, did not. True, it eventually built a building, but that was with great help. Unfortunately, for reasons we can’t pinpoint accurately today, it finally went belly up. Were I to hazard a guess, based on the list I have provided and supplemented by the information you (Jackie) located in local newspapers, I would say that the little northern church effectively “died” in 1894. The entries from 1894-1909 probably do not refer to the church in town that by 1894 completely became a Baptist church. The entries probably refer to the little rural churches*

surrounding Tracy City. True, the MEC didn't actually sell the building until 1902, but that date simply provides the moment when the MEC completely gave up any hope of ever reestablishing a church in town."

The **1893** church directory in the *Tracy City News* tells us that the M. E. Church (North) shared its building with the Missionary Baptist Church. A year later in **1894**, on a city map, the building was charted as being a Baptist Church. Whether it was lack of interest, low attendance or the strain of competing with its counterpart, the M. E. C., South, the M. E. C. (North) seemed to have faded away in Tracy City sometime after **1894** and before 1910. I could find no listing of it again in a church directory in the newspapers of the day. From the list above, can you sense the struggling going on between the years 1897 and 1909-1910? Again, I mention the possibility that they moved up the road into the newly built Cumberland Presbyterian Church. After all, even the Presbyterian faithful were present in the town just waiting for their own meeting house. Maybe it was one of those situations where the M. E. C. (North) was allowed to meet in the C. P. Church, a sharing should we say but not a uniting. This would have left the growing Baptist group the whole M. E. C. building to meet in during the whole of every week – full use of the building, but not ownership.

In a local newspaper of Nov. **1893**, we read: "*Congregationalists—I will organize a Congregational Church at or near William Sitz in Tracy City on the first Sabbath in November 1893. Mrs. R. J. Smith.*" William Sitz lived in White City near Myers Hill. This may well have been the beginning of the Myers Hill Congregational Church.

Another idea as to what happened to the M. E. C. (North) is that on Dec. 22, **1910** in the *Mrs. Grundy* newspaper in the Church Directory, I found this quote: "*M. E. Church (Myer's Hill); Preaching second Sunday morning; Prayer meeting every Wednesday evening.*" This leads me to believe that the Methodist Episcopal Church (North) moved out of town to Myer's Hill and became known as the Myer's Hill Congregational Methodist Church.

Next are a few entries in *italics* furnished by Von Unruh that may be worthy of our study concerning the M. E. Church (North) in support of their existence in Tracy City. They did not gain recognition as quickly as the M. E. Church, South; they struggled and eventually probably "vacated the region."

From the 1883 Holston (MEC) Conference Journal, pg. 84
Battle Creek Circuit – S. M. Tate, Supply

This charge takes in portions of Marion and Grundy counties. Has mountain, rock and stream in formidable array, with which the itinerant must battle. Tracy City, Monteagle, Beersheba and a branch of the penitentiary are all in the bounds of this work. The labors of Bro. Tate have not gone uncrowned. Thirty have been converted, and about as many added to our Zion. Benevolent collections, last year, \$8.50; this year, \$6.00.

Note: We do not know where they were meeting in 1883, but this gives credence to the fact that the M. E. Church (North) did exist in Tracy City almost from the end of the Civil War. Of great interest to me is the mentioning of the “branch of the penitentiary,” which could only be the coal mining, convict laborers at the old stockade in Tracy City.

1888 Holston (MEC) Conference Journal, pg. 47

Tracy City lies on the top of the Cumberland Mountains. Claims 4,000 population. Is emphatically a coal and coke producing town, and, like every other mining town in this District, is passing a crucial financial test this year. Rev. T. A. Cass has had charge the past year, doing faithful work which has resulted well. Though our people are poor, they are struggling grandly to build a house in which to work. Within the past few weeks they have put up and enclosed what will be, when completed, a beautiful church. With this done, we may look for good reports from Tracy City. This city has been most wonderfully moved within the past two months, religiously, from which our Church has gathered largely.

Tracy Circuit lies around the city, and extends to the valley east and west. Because of the impracticability of supplying this charge, it has had but little pastoral care for years. Very recently I employed V. A. Faigaux, a Local Preacher of Tracy City, to look after the people on this charge. He has been able to do but little. But his field has some promise and a good future, if it can be supplied with faithful pastors. If not, we may as well vacate this region.

Note: (This gives support to the buying of a portion of town lot #224 from the coal company in 1887; now in 1888, they are struggling to build

a church building. One wonders since Mr. Faigaux's name is mentioned if the group eventually was pulled into a **Congregational Methodist** setting. jp)

1889 Holston (MEC) Conference Journal, pp. 49-50

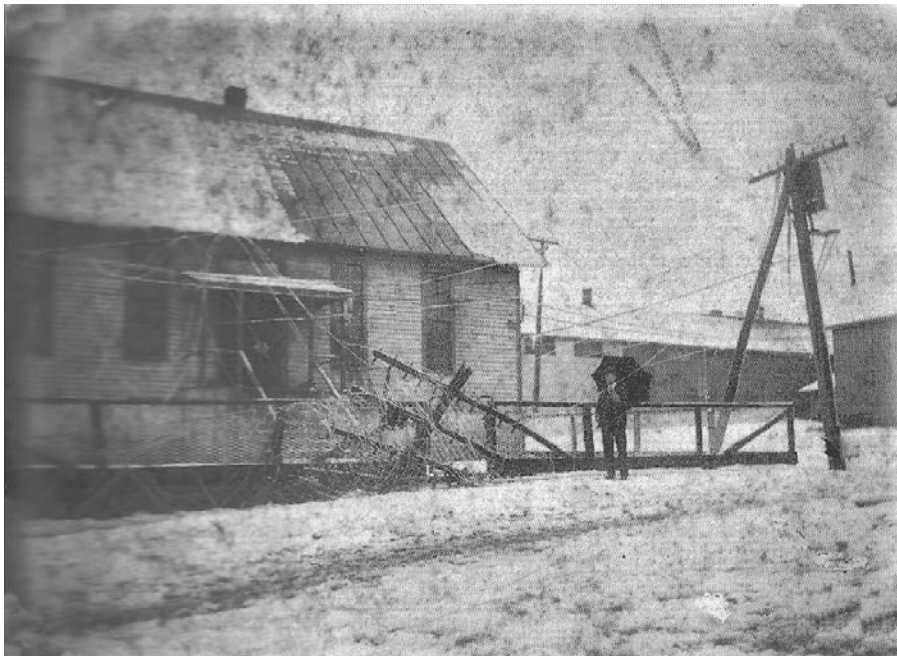
At Tracy City, there was a church building under way, which has been completed and dedicated. There was an indebtedness on this house of \$650; \$250 of this amount is due the Board of Church Extension; the remaining \$350 was provided for in subscriptions and cash on the occasion of the dedication. This church is worth \$1500. Three country churches have been commenced in the District – one on the Jasper Circuit, one on the Tracy City Circuit, and one on the Pikeville Circuit. Some others are contemplated.

Note: Tennessee Wesleyan College at Athens has the northern minutes if anyone is interested in following through on this research.

Originally, town Lot #224 was twice the size as it is now because Depot St. did not exist. When the large lot was split by Depot St., which extended between Colyar St. and Railroad Ave., Douglas St. faded away, long gone, and the lower end of Laurel St. eventually became mowed grass, underbrush, and a few stones from a long ago bridge, over an unnamed, rebellious creek that probably brought about the demise of Douglas St. If the two streets existed today, Laurel would cross the creek to tee into Douglas St. on the property now owned by David and Edwene Johnson.

Of interest to some may be that in Ike Woodward's papers, we read that on August **1894**, work had begun on the **new** Baptist Church implying that there was an "old" Baptist Church building somewhere. And in the *Tracy City News* of Sept. 5, **1895**, "*There were eleven additions to the Baptist Church at this place last Sunday, the parties being baptized by Rev. Campbell of Fayetteville.*" The Dixie Telephone Exchange, (*established some years before in the 1890s according to Ike Woodward's papers*), operated from **1907** till **1926** out of the building previously known as the old M. E. Church (North), and later the old Missionary Baptist Church. In **1902** the church building was deeded to the Dixie Telephone Company by the M. E. Church (North) showing that the Baptists were still guests and not owners of the building. But happily on Dec. 3, 1895, a lecture was held

at the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and the proceeds went toward finishing the new Baptist Church.



**Telephone Exchange
Building
previously the
Methodist
Episcopal Church
(North) and used by
the Missionary
Baptist Church**

*(Feb. 5, 1905
after an ice storm)*

On Mar. 20, 1913, we read in *The Mountain Herald* that “the Baptist Church on 12th street is having a new concrete shingle roof put on which will greatly improve the looks of this handsome little church.” From this article we know where the “new” Baptist Church was built. At what point the prefix “Missionary” was dropped is uncertain.

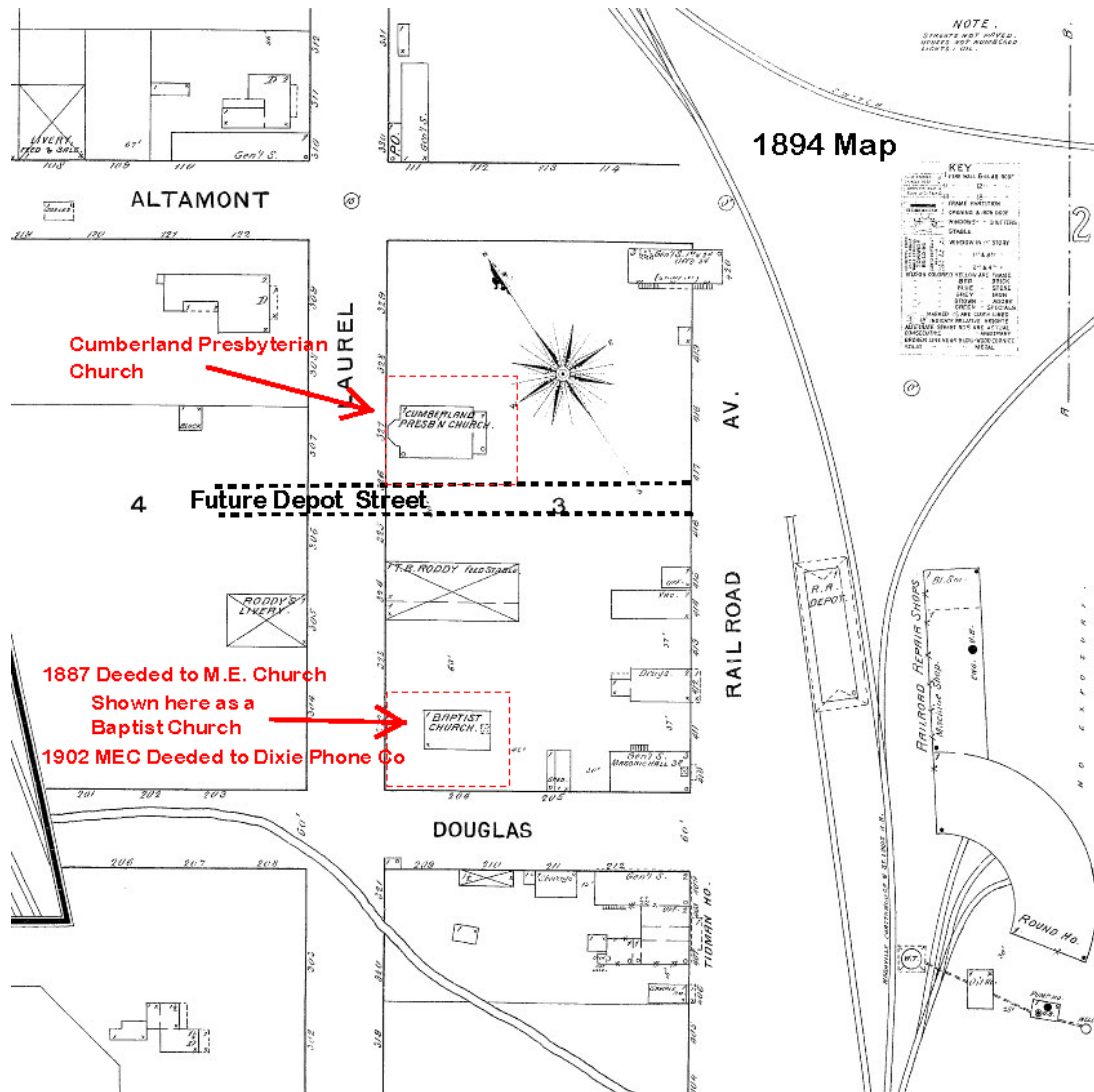
Tracy City Baptist Church

when it was on the corner of

7th and 12th Streets

**(Photo courtesy of Pictures
of Our Past, Grundy
County, Tennessee)**





1894 Map of Lot # 224 when it held both a Baptist and a Cumberland Presbyterian Church; the Baptist building was owned by the Methodist Episcopal Church.

(Map and deed work in this story courtesy of Ralph Thompson)

The Congregational **Methodist** Church was another denomination in Tracy City in **1893** using the word **Methodist** in its title. This group originally was a splinter group from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South as early as **1852**, but like most denominations it, too, has splintered throughout the years. Its pastor in **1893**, Rev. Victor A. Faigaux, (**1842-1915**), was for many years the janitor for the James K. Shook School. He came to the U. S. A. during the **1869** exodus of Swiss emigrants, some of whom made their way to Grundy County, TN. He had with him his wife, Mary Elizabeth, and stepson, John Fredric "Fred" Walker. By **1881** he was a Justice of the Peace living in Beersheba Springs; after a few months, he gave up that office and moved to Sewanee to become a janitor at the University of the South. After only four years, he moved to Tracy City and according to the 1888 Holston Journal mention earlier, he

preached for the M. E. Church (North). In 1890 he accepted a job as janitor of the new James K. Shook School. Twelve years later in 1902, he resigned from that position. When he was able, he did some work in the City Cemetery. During these years, "Mr. Faigaux had a religious turn of mind and for some years was very active in the ministry, confining his labor principally to rural communities of various religions." Rev. (Prof.) W. G. Dillon, a leader in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and headmaster of Shook School, officiated at his funeral saying, "We have lost a truly good man."

Victor A. Faigaux

**(Photo from Pictures of Our
Past – Grundy County, TN –
courtesy of Billy Frank
Morrison)**



The question may arise as to why there were so many Congregational Methodist Churches established in Grundy County and south to Alabama. "...Even today there probably aren't but about 150 churches with a total of 10,000 people in the entire U. S." Grundy County certainly was a fruitful soil for this movement. After the split from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, the Congregational Methodist churches popped up all over the county. In our local past, the area has had these congregations: Sweeton Hill, Browns Hollow, Myers Hill, Harrison Chapel, Bivens Chapel, Laager Church, Greens Chapel, Barkers Cove, Pryor Ridge, Grace Village, Chestnut Springs, Dripping Springs, Gum Springs, Burkett's Chapel, and maybe others; all were believed to be Congregational Methodist in their beginnings. Some have changed their names while adhering as much as thought necessary to the teachings of John Wesley. Why so many? What was it about their message that appealed to the religious minded souls of Grundy County and the surrounding areas?

After giving much thought to this, I have concluded that the followers of this break-away group were weary of the control factor presented by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (and North) concerning the assignment of their pastors. They wanted to "call" their own preachers from wherever they could get them instead of the

Methodist bishops assigning them. They wanted control over their own church buildings; after all, it was their backs that ached at night when they crawled into bed from a hard day stacking the logs, chinking and mudding them then finally adding the shakes to the roofs. Why should they turn their churches over to be controlled by others?

Possibly, Victor Faigaux's "religious turn of mind" was toward the rural work he did in and around the plateau with people who just didn't fit with the better dressed and more formally educated town folks. When the need for revival fell upon them, they'd just as soon have a camp meeting, throw up a brush harbor and let any preacher who had something to say, do so. To them, the Holy Spirit could continue their meetings for weeks, no scheduling, no time limits, no worrying about the fire in the woodstove and the roast in the oven at home. They had no fear that someone would pull rank on them. If one little building was busting out at the seams, or if there arose a problem among members, they didn't have to ask permission to move on over and build another church like the formal Methodists had to do. I could be wrong with my assessment, and I must say here that I have never been a member of any Methodist Church, so it is mere conjecture on my part.

This group of Methodists found a suitable existence in the afore-mentioned areas for the most part because the members were poorer monetarily but self-sufficient and independent-minded. They were plain-clothed, hard-working, and deeply religious disciples. Right in the center of Tracy City there were huge houses sheltering rich people, but in the outskirts of town, in the deep woods and on lofty hills, in the ravaged land of mining, there were folks whose God was sometimes the only real positive in their lives.

On the other hand, the Tracy City Methodist Episcopal Church, South, aka Teresa Chapel, used an entirely different approach in promoting their church objectives. One must say from what we have read so far in old newspapers and from Catherine Flury's book, the members were quite successful in reaching their goals. The M. E. C., South was a church of committees and special interest groups, i.e., Willing Workers, Missionary Society, Big Brothers, Methodist Youth Fellowship, Wesleyan Service Guild, and many, many others.

On Dec. 15, 1936, the coal company transferred all rights, title, claim, or interest of any kind to the Methodist Episcopal Church-South. An obvious approach for the church would have been to want a clear title to the land before any future building projects. Some of the older members believe that the use of Teresa Chapel as a name

for the church waned maybe as far back as the 1920's or 1930's, but the building stubbornly stood.

Tracy City UMC
A List of Ministers and Their Circuits
1867-2014

(1867-1882 – Holston Conference MECS)
(1882–2014, Tennessee Conference)

(From 1881 until about 1950, the church was known as Teresa Chapel.)

1867-68 ¹	William B. McKelvey	Tracy City Mission (Pikeville)
1868-69	J. H. Jefferson	Tracy City & Altamont Mission (Pikeville)
1869-70	H. M. Bennett	Tracy City & Spencer Mission (Pikeville)
1870-71	Edward Waverly Marsh ²	Tracy City & Spencer Mission (Pikeville)
1871-72	Albert P. Stair	Tracy City & Altamont Mission (Pikeville)
1872-73	John Wesley Smith	Tracy City (Pikeville)
1873-74	William Wiley Neal	Tracy City (Pikeville)
1874-75	John H. Kennedy	Tracy City Station (Pikeville)
1875-76	James Ingo Cash, Jr.	Tracy City Station (Sequatchie)
1876-77	James Ingo Cash, Jr.	Tracy City (Sequatchie)
1877-78	Norris B. Brown	Altamont Mission (Sequatchie)
1878-79	Jacob O. Shelley	Tracy City Circuit (Sequatchie)
1879-80	David Vance Price	Tracy City (Sequatchie)
1880-81 ³	David Vance Price	Tracy City Station (Sequatchie)
1881-82	Joseph Asbury Bilderback	Tracy City (Sequatchie)
1882-83	William Washington Pinson	Tracy City (McMinnville)
1883-84	William Washington Pinson	Tracy City (McMinnville)
1884-85	Robert Allen Reagan	Tracy City (McMinnville)
1885-86	Robert Allen Reagan	Tracy City Station (McMinnville)
1886-87	Robert Allen Reagan	Tracy City Station (McMinnville)
1887-88	William Thomas Haggard	Tracy City Station (Shelbyville)
1888-89	William Thomas Haggard	Tracy City Station (Shelbyville)
1889-90	Orville Garrett Halliburton	Tracy City Station (Shelbyville)
1890-91	Lewis Randolph Amis	Tracy City (Shelbyville)
1891-92	Rufus Elijah Travis	Tracy City (Shelbyville)
1892-93	Rufus Elijah Travis	Tracy City (Shelbyville)
1893-94	W. F. Wilson	Tracy City (Shelbyville)
1894-95	John Owen Blanton	Tracy City Station (Fayetteville)
1895-96	John Owen Blanton	Tracy City Station (Fayetteville)
1896-97	W. F. Wilson	Tracy City Station (Fayetteville)
1897-98	Thomas Roe Curtis; one TBS by Benjamin F. Gilbert	Tracy City (Fayetteville)
1898-99	Thomas Roe Curtis	Tracy City Station (Fayetteville)
1899-1900	Andrew Edwin Clement	Tracy City Station (Fayetteville)
1900-01	Andrew Edwin Clement; one TBS	Tracy City & Altamont (Fayetteville)

1901-02	Benjamin Franklin Haynes; one TBS	Tracy City & Altamont (Fayetteville)
1902-03	Thomas Lipscomb Moody	Tracy City & Altamont (Fayetteville)
1903-04	Thomas Lipscomb Moody	Tracy City (Fayetteville)
1904-05	Harva Matthews Jarvis	Tracy City (Fayetteville)
1905-06	John Beverly Jordan	Tracy City (Fayetteville)
1906-07	James Mortimer Vaden	Tracy City (Fayetteville)
1907-08	Jesse Perkins Luton	Tracy City Station (Fayetteville)
1908-09	Jesse Perkins Luton	Tracy City Station (Fayetteville)
1909-10	William Andrew Stroud	Tracy City Station (Fayetteville)
1910-11	Lee B. Ellis	Tracy City & Monteagle (Fayetteville)
1911-12	Samuel Milo Keathley	Tracy City Station (Fayetteville)
1912-13	Samuel Milo Keathley	Tracy City Station (Fayetteville)
1913-14	Samuel Milo Keathley	Tracy City & Monteagle (Fayetteville)
1914-15	Charles Radford Wade	Tracy City Mission (Fayetteville)
1915-16	Charles Radford Wade	Tracy City Mission (Fayetteville)
1916-17	Thomas Marion Wilson	Tracy City Mission (Fayetteville)
1917-18	Thomas Marion Wilson	Tracy City Station (Fayetteville)
1918-19	Berry Thomas Lannom	Tracy City & Mission (Fayetteville)
1919-20	Berry Thomas Lannom	Tracy City Station (Fayetteville)
1920-21	Berry Thomas Lannom	Tracy City Station (Fayetteville)
1921-22	Beecher Blaine Pennington	Tracy City Station (Fayetteville)
1922-23	William Edgar Couser	Tracy City Station (Fayetteville)
1923-24	William Edgar Couser	Tracy City Station (Fayetteville)
1924-25	Benjamin Franklin Argo	Tracy City Station (Fayetteville)
1925-26	Benjamin Franklin Argo	Tracy City Station (Fayetteville)
1926-27	Benjamin Franklin Argo	Tracy City Station (Fayetteville)
1927-28	Benjamin Franklin Argo	Tracy City Station (Fayetteville)
1928-29	Hiram Edwin Baker	Tracy City (Fayetteville)
1929-30	Edgar Urban Robinson	Tracy City (Fayetteville)
1930-31	James Carl Elkins	Tracy City Station (Fayetteville)
1931-32	James Carl Elkins	Tracy City Station (Fayetteville)
1932-33	John Lafayette Taylor	Tracy City & Palmer (Pulaski)
1933-34	Newton Ira Townsend	Tracy City (Pulaski)
1934-35	Edward D. Troutt	Tracy City (Pulaski)
1935-36	George Oscar Douglas	Tracy City (Pulaski)
1936-37	George Oscar Douglas	Tracy City (Pulaski)
1937-38	Wilbur Cleveland Folks	Tracy City (Pulaski)
1938-39	Wilbur Cleveland Folks	Tracy City (Pulaski)
1939-40	Wilbur Cleveland Folks	Tracy City (Pulaski)
1940-41	Wilbur Cleveland Folks	Tracy City Station (Murfreesboro)
1941-42	Keener Lee Rudolph	Tracy City Station (Murfreesboro)
1942-43	James Waddell Roberts	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1943-44	James Waddell Roberts	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1944-45	Rayburn Lawrence Benton	Tracy City & Monteagle (Murfreesboro)
1945-46	Albert Johnson Morgan (died April 1946)	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1946-47	Solomon Alexander Bass; Mark Leo Rippy, Jr. as of January 1947	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1947-48	James Waddell Roberts	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1948-49	James Waddell Roberts	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1949-50	James Waddell Roberts	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)

1950-51	Wallace Eugene Newman	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1951-52	Wallace Eugene Newman	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1952-53	Wallace Eugene Newman	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1953-54	Wallace Eugene Newman	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1954-55	Wallace Eugene Newman	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1955-56	John Wiley Leon Matlock	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1956-57	John Wiley Leon Matlock	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1957-58	James Douglas Luther	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1958-59	James Douglas Luther	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1959-60	Jacob Hogan Gardner	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1960-61	Jacob Hogan Gardner	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1961-62	Jacob Hogan Gardner	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1962-63	Jacob Hogan Gardner	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1963-64	Jacob Hogan Gardner	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1964-65	Jacob Hogan Gardner	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1965-66	Jacob Hogan Gardner	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1966-67	Amos Wesley Holden	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1967-68	Amos Wesley Holden	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1968-69	Hugh Sterling Page	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1969-70	Hugh Sterling Page	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1970-71	Ernest McKinley Tramel	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1971-72	James T. Johnson	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1972-73	James T. Johnson	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1973-74	James T. Johnson	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1974-75	James T. Johnson	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1975-76	James T. Johnson	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1976-77	James T. Johnson	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1977-78	James T. Johnson	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1978-79	Marshall Duke Moss	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1979-80	Marshall Duke Moss	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1980-81	David Gene Roberts	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1981-82	David Gene Roberts	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1982-83	David Gene Roberts	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1983-84	T. J. Bennett	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1984-85	T. J. Bennett	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1985-86	T. J. Bennett	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1986-87	T. J. Bennett	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1987-88	Walter Leon Norris	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1988-89	Walter Leon Norris	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1989-90	James Charles Stewart	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1990-91	James Charles Stewart	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1991-92	James Charles Stewart	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1992-93	James Charles Stewart	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1993-94	David Willard Kingsley	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1994-95	David Willard Kingsley	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1995-96	William Bruce Walters	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1996-97	William Bruce Walters	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1997-98	William Bruce Walters	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1998-99	TBS by Frank Eddie Blair	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
1999-2000	Frank Eddie Blair	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)

2000-01	Thad Nolen Brunson	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
2001-02	Thad Nolen Brunson	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
2002-03	Thad Nolen Brunson	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
2003-04	Thomas N. Booker	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
2004-05	David Norris Martin	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
2005-06	David Norris Martin	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
2006-07	Lytle Carter Troutt / Kenneth Molter as of 10-1-2006	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
2007-08	Kenneth Molter	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
2008-09	Danny Joel Coffelt	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
2009-10	Danny Joel Coffelt	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
2010-11	Danny Joel Coffelt	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
2011-12	Danny Joel Coffelt	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
2012-13	Danny Joel Coffelt	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
2013-14	Danny Joel Coffelt	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)
2014-15	Danny Joel Coffelt	Tracy City (Murfreesboro)

¹*The church met in the Temperance Hall from its formation in 1867 until May 1881. It was in the Holston Conference from its formation until 1882, when it was transferred into the Tennessee Conference.*

²*The 1874 obituary for Rev. Edward Waverly Marsh states that he traveled the latter part of the 1868 Conference year on the Tracy City and Spencer Mission with D. H. Atkins. Holston appointments show that Atkins was, indeed, appointed to Spencer Mission; but neither Holston appointments nor local records suggest that either Atkins or Marsh was at Tracy City in 1869.*

³*On May 22, 1881, Teressa Chapel (MECS), named for Teressa Shook, was dedicated. It is not known at what time the name of the church was changed to Tracy City.*

Catherine Flury recorded that the tearing down of Teressa Chapel began in **1949** in order to make way for a new church building. Every nail of the Chapel was saved and each sold as a souvenir to make money for the new building. On April 9, **1950**, “written consent was given to the plan for a new church at Tracy City as they were presented at the Quarterly Conference.” The new building was to sit on the same spot as the old chapel, so the parishioners met at Shook School during the months of demolition of the old and construction of the new. The work began when James Waddell Roberts was minister and carried on under a new minister, Wallace Eugene Newman.

On Dec. 24, **1950**, the first service was held in the shell of the new construction. With Rev. Newman’s tireless hard work, and that of many volunteers from all over, the church’s dedication ceremony was held in **1954**.

For further history of the Tracy City Methodist Church one may read Catherine Flury's book, a wonderful read. It can be found in the Grundy County Historical Society's Research Library or in the library of the United Methodist Church of Tracy City. Currently (2014), Lanny Bell is also writing the history of the church.

It has **not** been my intention to write or compile a historical document but to take a journey down through the ages. It was suggested to me to write about the Methodist Church at Tracy City, but like every sojourn I undertake with mouse in hand and a keyboard which no longer has letter markings on some keys, I stray off to the right on a little side road, then veer left down into a ravine, cross several creeks, and climb big hills, taking time to notice what was built, who trekked along the way, what was left behind, and that God is still with us.