

# LANDMARK



# SURVEY

## IDENTIFICATION

Street Address: 101 East Jefferson Street  
Map and Parcel: 33-190  
Census Tract & Block: 1-107  
Present Owner: First Methodist Church  
Address: 101 East Jefferson Street  
Present Use: Church  
Original Owner: First Methodist Church  
Original Use: Church

## BASE DATA

Historic Name: First Methodist Church  
Date/Period: 1923-24  
Style: Colonial Revival  
Height to Cornice: 31  
Height in Stories: 2  
Present Zoning: B-1  
Land Area (sq.ft.): 89 x 115  
Assessed Value (land + imp.): 25,880 + 230,730 = 265,610

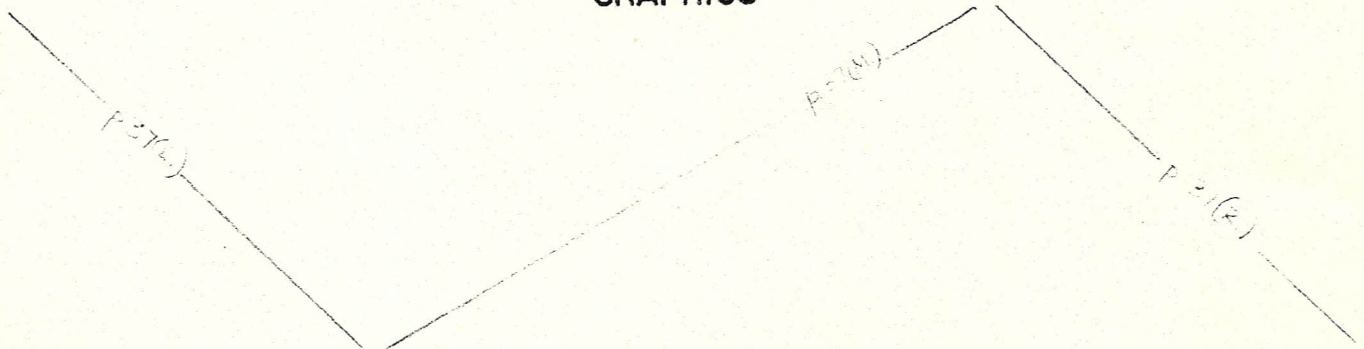
## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Colonial Revival Church with a monumental portico of four doric columns, entablature with triglyphs, and a broad pediment. One of the most unusual features of this church is its detached tower and steeple. The source for this arrangement is clearly Wren's church type, which he developed after the Great Fire of 1666. Other impressive features of this design include the flight of entrance steps which spill out well beyond the flanking terraces which are themselves inspired by those found on the Lawn of the University. The interior is painted to resemble ashlar masonry and is fitted with typical panelled woodwork. The architect for this church was Joseph Hudnut.

## HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION

The First Methodist Church bought the lot from R. S. J. Sterling in January of 1922. The \$20,000 purchase price included a residence appraised at \$2,200, which was removed to make room for the present structure. This site is the third to be occupied by the First Methodist Church. The earliest, built 1834-35, was situated on a lot bounded by Water, First, and South Streets. The second, begun in 1859, was finished in 1867, and was located on the corner of West Second and Water Streets.

## GRAPHICS



## CONDITIONS

Good

## SOURCES

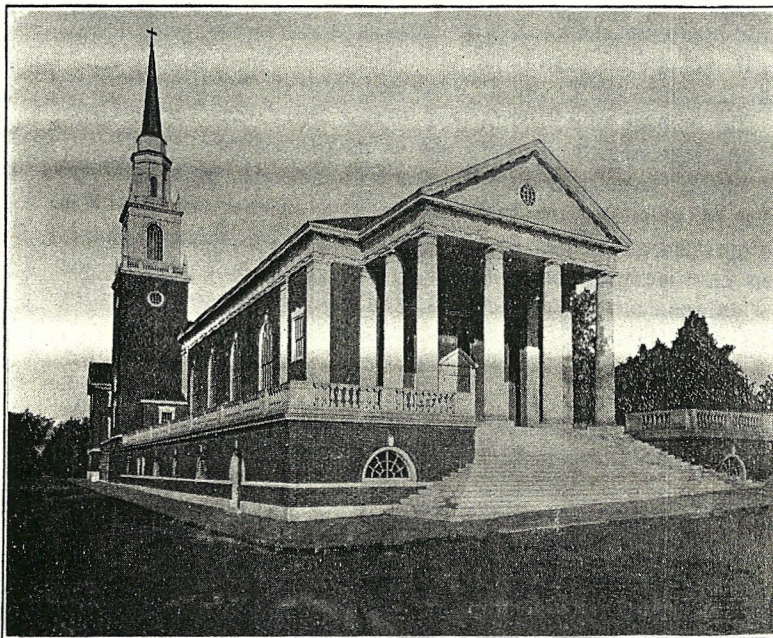
Alexander's Recollections, 1963 editions.  
City Records



A CENTURY OF METHODISM  
IN CHARLOTTESVILLE  
VIRGINIA

By  
A. L. BENNETT

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF SOME OF THE MEN AND  
EVENTS CONNECTED WITH THE FIRST METH-  
ODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH, OF  
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA



FIRST METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA.

A Short History Prepared for the Centennial Celebration  
November 11-14, 1934.

Published by  
FIRST METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH  
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA  
1 9 3 4



*The first Meth. church in Ch'ville was a small*

brick structure, built on the site now partly occupied by the old parsonage. It was built by James Lobbin, and had a seating capacity of about 350, including the gallery at the rear end. The very high pulpit, somewhat like that found in the old Episcopal churches, was used.

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The lot on which the church stood was purchased in 1834, from Jesse Scott, a colored man, for \$150. Scott presented the church with \$10 of the purchase money. This was considered very cheap, even in that day. The trustees' names were Gessner Harrison, Nathan C. Goodman, Stapleton Sneed, Matthew and Thomas Wingfield, Ebenzer Watts and Thomas Price.

The lot (bounded by Water, First and South Streets) contained about half an acre and the church stood in the center, surrounded by a large yard. The entrance was on the north side, facing Water Street. The building was surmounted by a tower of peculiar structure which Dr. Hammet said resembled an inverted card table. This comment caused the legs of the "card table" promptly to be sawed off.

There was no organ in the church, public opinion being at that time against the use of instrumental music in the service, as shown by the fact that an old lady of a sister denomination left her church upon the introduction of the violin into the choir. Nevertheless the singing was hearty, and was considered an important part of the service.

The church was dedicated in 1835 by Bishop Emory. Edward Wadsworth was then pastor. Says the late Rev. James A. Riddick: "At the Conference of 1835 Rev. Edward Wadsworth was appointed to Charlottesville and Scottsville, with one church, Temple Hill, near Carter's Bridge, between. He alternated the Sabbaths between the two towns and preached at Temple Hill during the week. Wadsworth was a young man of great ability, and Methodism gained considerably that year in all his churches. Dr. Wm. Hammet was then chaplain at the University of Virginia and greatly assisted Jamison, the first pastor and Wadsworth in securing funds for the new church.

The next year Riddick says: "I was assigned to the same charge which Wadsworth had held. The moral and religious statue of the two towns was fairly good and the Sabbath was properly observed."

"In 1837 Charlottesville was made an independent sta-

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CHAPTER THREE  
THE SECOND PERIOD

By the late fifties the congregation felt the need of a larger and better church. What we call the "old church"—the one located at the corner of Second and Water Streets and now used as a garage was begun under Dr. Judkins in 1859 but the work was interrupted by the War Between the States. The edifice was completed in 1866-67 while Thomas A. Ware was pastor. G. W. Spooner, a member of the church was the builder. Of the workmen on this building only one, George Nimmo, aged 84, is now living. The work done under the Ware pastorate cost \$3900. By 1887 under the pastorate of H. M. Hope the congregation decided to enlarge and remodel the church at a cost of \$7000.00. G. W. Spooner, the original builder and his son were the contractors. Another son, George, was the draftsman. He afterwards became one of our ministers and was superannuated last year. In a letter to the committee he states that nothing of the old church remained except the walls. A choir loft was added to the rear of the pulpit, circular galleries on the front and sides were built, the roof was made steep with open finish ceiling, new windows placed, towers built on both front corners with one of them continuing up into a high spire, modern and beautiful pews as well as a pipe organ—the first such instrument the church had—installed. The basement consisted of three rooms for the primary department of the Sunday School, the Board of Stewards and general assembly. This was the most modern church building in the city at that time.

Only the lecture or Sunday School room in the basement was finished until after the war. It was here that the services were conducted during that period.

During the days of the War Between the States Thos. H. Early (1860-62) and Jno. S. Lindsay (1862-65) were our pastors. The records indicate "in the army" after many of the names of members, some of whom never returned. It was said that Lindsay endeared himself to the people because of his work among the wounded soldiers brought here.

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W. Aiken Smart (1913-14) is a son of Dr. R. D. Smart, who five years previous was pastor of First Church. Young Smart was recognized as one of the most promising young men in the Conference. His pastorate was terminated in the summer of 1914 by a call to a professorship in Emory University, which he ably fills today. But he did much in this one year for First Church, whose membership for the first time reached the thousand mark. In his final meeting with the quarterly conference he stated his greatest regret in leaving Charlottesville was that he would not be its pastor when the new church was completed.

L. T. Williams (1914-16), now superannuated and living in Richmond, served First Church during two years when unsuccessful efforts for a new church were continued. A net gain of 218 members and an even greater increase in the Sunday School were made.

The years 1916-20 found the affable J. K. Joliff as our pastor. Many efforts to secure a new church met with the failure which befell the previous ones, but the membership showed a net gain of one hundred and fifty. The church for the sixth time entertained the Virginia Conference in 1918. Bishop Hendrix presiding and Dr. B. F. Lipscomb, a former pastor and Presiding Elder, serving as secretary.

In the fall of 1920 H. P. Myers, a young minister who had not served a church of the first rank was sent to Charlottesville, because he had performed his task so well in the smaller churches the Bishop and his advisors believed he could build a new church. What he lacked in years was more than offset in energy, earnestness and good judgment. He spent some months in visiting his members and reviving the sentiment for a new building.

On April 4, 1921, a committee composed of N. T. Shumate, W. H. Snyder, B. G. Childs, Dr. Wm. R. Smithey, O. E. Hawkins, H. B. Graves, J. D. Via, W. R. Barksdale, W. E. Wilson, and S. F. Hamm was appointed to secure pledges of \$100,000 for a new church. So well was this duty performed that \$104,431 was subscribed within a few weeks.

The next obstacle to be overcome was the location. This question had been discussed for many years and had caused a division of opinion. Some members desired the old site; others wanted a new and better located lot. Options had



been secured and allowed to expire for years; committees had been unable to solve this vexing problem.

The church wisely secured its pledges before appointing on July 25, 1921 a committee on location composed of M. V. Pence, chairman of the board; O. E. Hawkins, its treasurer; and N. T. Shumate. In the following September the location now used (bounded by First High and Jefferson Streets) was accepted.

On October 10, 1921, a committee on church plans consisting of N. T. Shumate, J. E. Harrison, W. H. Snyder, B. G. Childs, and S. F. Hamm was appointed. On October 31, 1921, Jos. Hudnut of New York City was selected as architect. The plans and specifications were adopted the following February.

The building committee, composed of J. R. Morris, M. V. Pence and N. T. Shumate, arranged with the Charlottesville Lumber Company to erect the church on a cost plus ten per cent commission. The firm, however, donated half of its commissions to the church in addition to the liberal contributions made by several members of the firm who were members of the church. J. E. Harrison, Vice-President of the Company, and a member of the board, supervised the work and endeavored to make the structure a monument to the city.

Ground for the building was broken on March 12, 1923 at which time Bishop Du Bose, who was residing in Charlottesville spoke. The work was immediately begun and rushed, although a great amount of earth had to be moved. So rapidly did this progress that the laying of the corner stone by the Masonic Grand Lodge of Virginia was held on March 31, 1924, M. W. Callahan being the Grand Master. Bishop Candler delivered a great address on the occasion.

The work on this large plant went forward so quickly that the last service was conducted in the old church on Sunday, October 5, 1924, a day mingled with rejoicing because of the progress made in achieving our goal of having one of the best church plants in Southern Methodism and sadness because we were leaving our old church which had housed us since 1859 and the site of our church home since our organization.

On the following Sunday, November 1, 1924, Dr. Myers preached the first sermon in the new church. Though the

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main auditorium was not completed until the following fall. In the meantime the social room was used for the church services. The Sunday School building was used, however, from the first day we entered the church.

While the four year pastorate of Dr. Myers will always be remembered because of the erection of the church, it would be recorded as one of the most successful in our history if the edifice had not been constructed. At the same time he was erecting the church he was building the membership and Sunday School and effecting an organization for effective work.

Henry C. Pfeiffer was assigned the task of finishing the church and occupying the main auditorium on the first Sunday in December, 1925. Bishop McMurry preached at both services on this occasion to one of the largest congregations ever assembled in Charlottesville. During the week former pastors were present to conduct the services.

The building has an auditorium that will seat 975; a social room of the same size to care for the social and physical needs of the church; a student club room, dedicated to the memory of Dr. F. H. Smith, a chapel with a seating capacity of 300, which is used as an assembly room for the adult department of the Sunday School, prayer services and Epworth League; a large and well furnished kitchen; a comfortable ladies parlor, and above all ample auditoriums and class rooms for every department of the church school.

The lots upon which the church is erected, building and equipment cost slightly more than \$300,000, of which the Board of Church Extension of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, gave \$72,125.42 out of funds left from war work and the Board of Missions of the Virginia Conference gave \$20,000. When the building was completed the church owed a debt of \$109,700 which has been reduced to \$51,800.

So well did Dr. Pfeiffer perform his duties that he served the church from 1924-28, being the sixth and last pastor to serve us for four consecutive years. He was at his best in organizing the work so as to use the new plant to its maximum capacity. As a preacher, he was among the best in the conference; as a gentleman, none surpassed him. His pastorate marked four years of growth in every phase of the work of the church.

J. W. Moore (1928-30) came to First Church after



a rich and successful pastorate in many of our largest churches. He is a deep thinker and able preacher with a wonderful storehouse of apt illustrations to aid him in driving home a truth. The membership continued to increase and every department of the church was working well when he was appointed to the Eldership of the Petersburg District at the end of his second year.

The beautiful copy of Raphael's Transfiguration in the north end of the church auditorium was the work of and presented on October 26, 1930, by Mrs. Ada Woodson Quarles, a faithful and useful member of the church, as a memorial to her father, Rev. John T. Payne, who died December 23, 1918, after being a member of the Virginia Conference for more than thirty years and to her brother, Corporal Maurice L. Payne, Co. D, 317th Infantry Division, A. E. F., who was killed in France, July 29, 1918.

Because their service to us have been so recent and helpful, mention is made of the Eldership of: W. Archie Wright, 1921-25, who came to the district as a young Elder. He served and greatly aided us during the period when we were erecting our church. M. S. Colonna proved a capable, patient and efficient leader. T. F. Carroll, another young man, showed remarkable executive ability as well as being an able preacher. Daniel T. Merritt, our present Elder, won us by his able leadership and lovely character. We wish we could keep him in his responsible position indefinitely.

C. C. Bell (1930-33) a young and energetic preacher who was not afraid of hard work followed Dr. Moore for three years of diligent labor during a time when the people were facing the depression and debt on the building courageously. He went from First Church to Trinity, Newport News, where he is proving quite successful with a splendid program of work.

In 1933 the members of the church were made happy by the return of George E. Booker whom many remembered so pleasantly from his former pastorate. He left us an able man, but returned enriched by his pastorate in many of the leading churches in the conference as well as the Eldership of the Richmond District for four years. He is recognized as one of the ablest ministers in Southern Methodism. His popularity with both the clergy and laymen is