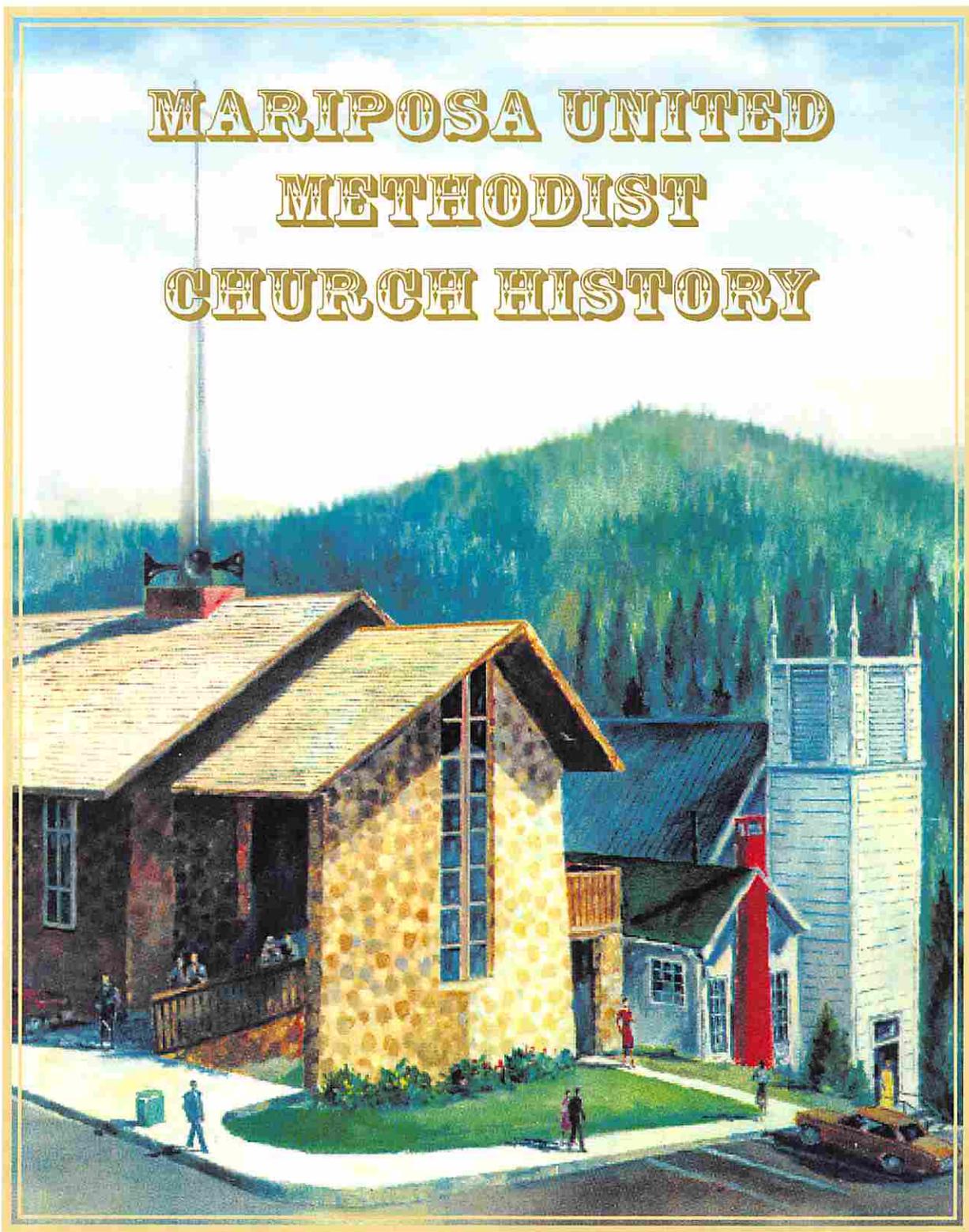


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MARIPOSA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH HISTORY



1852 - 2005

ORANGE COUNTY CALIFORNIA
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

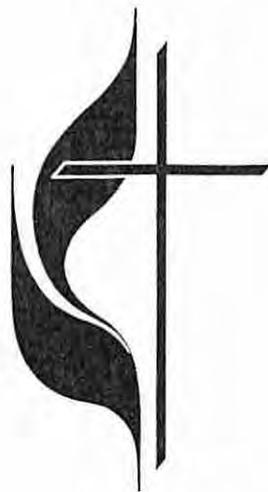


Front Cover
Sketch from "**Together For Methodist Families**" / May 1967
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MARIPOSA
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
HISTORY

1852 - 2005



INTRODUCTION TO OUR CHURCH HISTORY

You may be wondering why we are celebrating our sesquicentennial in 2005? Those who are quick in their math skills will notice that 1852 to 2005 adds up to 153 years. There has been debate about our founding date for some years. As a church we celebrated our 125th anniversary in 1980. In preparation for our 150th anniversary, Bob Boyer, Scott Pinkerton and Flora Burlingame began the process of sorting out and categorizing our historical material. With the help of the Rev. Stephen Yale, Archives Consultant of the Graduate Theological Union, we determined that the 1852 founding date was correct. In 1852 there were pastors appointed to both a Methodist Episcopal Church¹ and a Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in Mariposa, and two church buildings constructed or at least in the planning stages. With our sesquicentennial year of 2002 behind us, we continued to prepare for our celebration, setting the record straight at this time. Susan Sowards, Beth Tomsick, Marge Mueller, Beverly Pinkerton, Dick Hutchinson, and Irma Delle Tettleton joined the History Team to work on this history booklet. I figure if the baseball team of my childhood could call themselves the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim, we could celebrate the Mariposa United Methodist Church Sesquicentennial of 153 years. I hope you enjoy the work of our History Team and other writers.

Shalom, Pastor Kevin Campbell



¹ For clarity hereafter referred to in this document as the Methodist Episcopal Church (North)

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MAKING OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The Methodist Church formed at the Christmas Conference in Baltimore, Maryland in 1784 has not remained unchanged to this day. There have been a number of splits and mergers along the way. The most significant schism for our history was the separation of the Methodist Episcopal Church South. Tensions between churches in the North and South had been rising over slavery for 60 years. The growing abolitionist movement in the northern churches was opposed by southern churches having to share the gospel in slave-holding states. At the General Conference meeting of 1844 in New York City the conflict erupted. At the center of the debate was James O. Andrew, a bishop from Georgia who owned slaves. Bishop Andrew was a reluctant slave owner, who had inherited young slaves, a girl and a boy, who were both too young to release and state law prohibited their release. Bishop Andrew remarried and his new wife also owned slaves over whom he had no legal authority. The twin issues of slavery and the authority of General Conference versus the integrity of the Bishop's office came to a head, with a call to remove Bishop Andrew from office. The southern churches left the Methodist Episcopal Church and formed the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

Conflicts in border areas over whether to remain in northern annual conferences or to join the new southern annual conferences were common. Both the northern and southern churches sent missionaries to the new territories, which were neither Free nor Slave States. So in 1852 Mariposa had both a Methodist Episcopal Church (North) and a Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

Beginning in the early 1920s negotiations toward unification were attempted. It was not until 1939 that the Methodist Church was formed when the Methodist Episcopal, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Churches merged together. In 1968 the Methodist Church merged with the Evangelical United Brethren Church, a church of Wesleyan heritage that had been German speaking in its beginnings, forming the United Methodist Church.

Pastor Kevin Campbell



THE BEGINNING IN MARIPOSA

As shouts of “Gold” reverberated through mountain passes and across plains, fortune seekers from every corner of the earth followed the call. Their craving for riches soon replaced a righteous hungering for God as they dropped hoe and harness to seek instant wealth. The mingling of various cultures, languages and lifestyles in the diggings created an unholy atmosphere for developing religion, although Methodists considered California a mission challenge “that looked like a sin to give up, and folly to pursue.”

Nevertheless, they chose to pursue it diligently since California was destined to become a leading state and the gateway to the west. The home conferences selected prominent preachers as missionaries to spread the word. Eighteen pastors from various states organized the first conference west of the Rocky Mountains in May 1850 for the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Each pastor faced this new frontier challenged by unimaginable difficulties—floods, fires, ill health, meager support and questionable housing. They chose simply to commit themselves to divine guidance as they knelt together in prayer.

The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, had yet a greater hurdle to overcome. Members suffered the misconception placed on their name by those from north of the Mason-Dixon Line. To the minds of those from the north, Southern Methodist meant slavery and the name alone was synonymous with making California a slave state.

Disheartened, the Southern Methodists knew their purpose was to bring God into California and not slaves. They, nevertheless, had to prove that theirs was a righteous cause. To accomplish this they required more missionaries: men who were passionately serious about furthering the church, not inexperienced ones interested more in adventure. They earnestly appealed to the Eastern Annual Conferences for dedicated men by stating, “Send us the right sort or none.” It was a last ditch venture, but it was to take the risk or die.

This resulted in a request by the bishop to church conferences to raise \$1,000 over their regular missionary collections to pay the expenses of twenty new missionaries. While this solution did not ease the daily struggles in the west, it did further their goal. By June 19, 1852, the first Methodist Annual Conference was established in San Francisco and the First Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was erected in San Jose, California, the capital of the state at that time. The Rev. William Gober, the presiding elder of the San Francisco District, held his first quarterly meeting in Mariposa, “preaching under the branches of a spreading live oak tree”.

Camp meetings became the chosen means by which religious teachings continued in lieu of formal church buildings. Cathey’s Valley camp meetings are a good example of the religious fervor that was evident at these events. “Being at a

camp meeting was like standing at the gate of heaven and seeing it opened before you," said Frances Trollope. The History of Southern Methodism on the Pacific Coast, by the Rev. J. C. Simmons, D.D., states that "people hardly had time to eat, so urgent was the work".

When news got around that a church building was to be erected, gamblers in Mariposa said, "Boys, let's ante [in] and help build this gospel shop." Consequently, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was constructed on the corner of Main and 7th Streets in Mariposa. (Vol. A of Deeds, shows Robert W. Bigham deeded to the Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, a "Town lot and church" on the east side of Main Street, November 3, 1853, stating that he located the lot and built the church.)

By 1857, the church congregation grew so rapidly that plans were underway to enlarge the little church that had the "appearance of a barn, and public decency requires its repairing and beautifying". In the meantime, members of the Methodist Episcopal Church (North) built their church at the top of 5th at Bullion Street near the old jail, with the Rev. A.L.S. Bateman. The approach of the Civil War divided the churches even more now on the issue of slavery.

In 1866, a fire raged through town, destroying the little Methodist Church, South, forcing the members to hold services at the other Methodist Church. Only the bell that was cast in Boston in 1857 and shipped around the Horn was salvaged from the little church. The town lay under charred ash and rubble. The Mariposa Gazette reported that "for want of buildings, and for the present, the Post Office will be kept in the Gazette office and Monroe, the town barber, will shave all customers at the only existing Methodist Church."

In 1893, Frances Reynolds, editor of the Gazette newspaper, donated property on Sixth between Bullion and Main, for a new Methodist Church, South. This attractive, single room chapel supplied the needs for worshipers for almost 70 years. It was sold in 1966 to the Christian Science Society for \$1.00 and moved to its present location on 4th Street where it resides today.

By 1897, the Methodist Church (North), was listed on the Delinquent Tax Roll and was deeded to the state. George Bertken subsequently purchased this property, tearing the church down in 1899, and using the lumber to build his home. By this time the Southern Methodist congregation continued to grow, proving their religious intentions had nothing to do with slavery. In 1962, the present church building was constructed.

With several name changes over the years as well as a progression of some 70 pastors, today's Mariposa United Methodist church celebrates 150 years of leading people to a better understanding of God. It is with deep love for the church that we celebrate this year 2005 with a history of our church and dedicate a new parish hall to the glory of God at work.

Marge Mueller



THE STORY OF OUR CHURCH BELL

Our carillon chimes ring through the community of Mariposa on Sunday morning telling of the beginning of services--a melodic invitation to come to worship. But what of the bell hanging in the artistic rock tower located beside the church?

There are members here who still remember the dedication of the tower in October of 1969. Built by the late J.L. Spriggs as a memorial to Luther Stewart, a loyal Methodist during the years 1938 to 1954, the bell housing was constructed of the same sandstone hauled from Le Grand that enhances the exterior of the sanctuary. Established mainly as a symbol and reminder of the past, the ding-dong of the bell is often heard as members of the fourth, fifth and sixth grade Sunday school pull the cord to announce the end of their class and the beginning of the church service.

But the story of the bell actually begins over 100 years before the creation of the tower we see today. From early Mariposa Gazette articles and research notes by church member Alma Rowe and historian Bertha Schroeder, a sketchy yet engaging history of the bell emerges.

There were originally two Methodist churches in Mariposa—the Methodist Episcopal Church (North) and Methodist Episcopal Church, South. These names do not denote their locations in town, but rather to where the loyalties of the parishioners lay before, during and following the civil war.

Documentation suggests buildings for both churches were in the works by 1852—the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, being located near Seventh on Main (Charles Street) . A photograph of the town of Mariposa taken about 1860 shows what is presumed to be the Methodist Church (North) situated at Fifth and Bullion. That church building was torn down in 1899 and the lumber inturn used to build the George J. Bertken house which still stands near the site of the old church.

As for the bell, the Gazette article covering the dedication of the new tower in 1969 says the bell was cast in Boston in 1857, shipped around the Horn and arrived in Mariposa by ox cart. There is no date to indicate when it got here or for which church it was destined, nor is the original source of these facts clear. However, subsequent bits of information indicate it first rang at the church on Charles (Main) Street. A Gazette article printed on February 6, 1864, stated "Among the improvements in town we notice a new top loft to the bell on the Methodist church on Main Street".

In 1866 a fire swept through the downtown area destroying many buildings including the Methodist Church, South. The bell found a new home in the spire of the Methodist Church (North). In spite of the obvious conflict of minds of the two congregations, there is speculation that after fire destroyed the building on Main Street, members of that church shared the church on Bullion Street. (Archival

notes of Bertha Schroeder state, "Mrs. Alta Castagnetto told me that before the M.E. Church, South, built their present church (1893) they held services at the little old church where the Bertken house is now located".)

In 1893, a new M. E. Church, South, was constructed slightly downhill from where our new parish hall now stands. Apparently by then the animosity between the two groups had lessened as a story in the Gazette dated November 25, 1893 read: "The presiding elders of the Methodist Church kindly loaned the seats and bell from the old church here to the members of the new building until they are able to furnish their house. This is a great kindness and is thoroughly appreciated by all who are interested in church matters."

A subsequent Gazette article on December 9, 1893 waxed poetic stating, "The bell was hung on Tuesday in the new chapel, and the first chime which rang after it was in place, sounded as beautiful as the angels to those of us who have been engaged in the uphill work of building a church in hard times."

After construction of this "new" church on 6th Street, called Mizpah Chapel, there was a period of time when a certain Kate Lind considered it her duty to ring the bell every week to announce the Sunday service, and took great pride in doing so. This building served the Methodists of the community for over fifty years until the congregation and its needs required something larger. Construction of the present sanctuary and Sunday school facility began in 1961, and the new building was consecrated on December 9, 1962. The old church took a trip down Main Street and up Fourth in 1966 where it now serves the Christian Scientist Society. However, the bell stayed behind to ultimately be placed in the tower built by Spriggs.

Yet, the story does not end there. The large, solid rock firmly cemented in the center of the tower directly below the bell was not part of the original design. The late Ruth Womack called it the "Rock of Ages" and she and Scott Pinkerton told how one day a community member inadvertently drove his big Cadillac into the tower almost toppling it. He was parked in front of the church and forgot to put the car in reverse upon leaving. The structure was repaired and to protect it from future collisions, Spriggs found a hefty rock along the highway and asked Robert Sparks, who owned a truck with a hoist, to haul the rock to the church where Spriggs cemented it in place. According to Ruth, the rock has a practical function, too. It makes a good place to stand to ring the bell.

Flora Burlingame



Dedication of Bell Tower, October 26, 1969
Adah Stewart, LuAnn Stewart, Bill Stewart, J. Allen Sowards



EARLY DISTRICT CONFERENCE MINUTES TELL OF MARIPOSA METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH

"The spiritual state of Mariposa is tolerably good." . . .so begins the report of the traveling preacher, R.A. Sawrie, at the Visalia District Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, April 10, 1879.

A series of district conference minutes beginning April 1875 through April 1888, provides intriguing insight into the structure of the Mariposa Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in its early years. During that period of time the church was serviced by circuit-riding preachers. Each in turn dutifully presented a report at the district conference held annually in the spring. Several reports tell of members so scattered that social meetings were minimal or non-existent. For the Eighth Session on April 9th, 1875, Preacher J.M. Alsanson appeared most discouraged--commenting that "the spiritual condition of his charge was not good. It had been impracticable for him to hold church conferences, and the Sacraments of the church have not been administered except on quarterly meeting occasions."

The following year the Mariposa report glowed and it is difficult to imagine things had changed so radically. In the absence of the traveling preacher, the presiding elder reported as follows: "Spiritual condition good. Congregations large and attentive. Sacraments regularly administered. Pastor much beloved."

No Financial System

Every report comments that there is no financial plan for Mariposa M. E. Church, South. Yet the money still accrued. Minutes for the Eleventh District Conference held at Fresno City on March 28, 1878, read: *"The money raised for the support of the preacher (the Rev. John Wood) is collected in various ways. Sometimes by public collection and sometimes by solicitation from the people by the stewards and friends of the church."*

The preachers were obviously dedicated to their ministry (and hopefully served meals by the parishioners). Salary was not always set and when it was, the amount not always paid. The minutes of the Ninth District Conference, which convened in April of 1876, state the preacher's salary as \$750, yet he had only received \$250.00. (Perhaps the church's fiscal year did not correspond with that of the annual conference.) The preacher's report at the Fourteenth Session, 1881, actually said, "Members all poor."

Even though the Fifteenth Session minutes in 1882 state the Mariposa circuit has no financial system, the Rev. Sawrie reported that the Mariposa church has "good stewards."

Sunday Schools

An important inclusion in every report was the status of the Sunday schools. For the Mariposa circuit, this seemed to fluctuate from year to year. In April of 1876, the church boasted three Sunday schools in Mariposa County. The one in Mariposa town averaged one hundred in attendance and the other two

together had "about 50 schollars [sic]". Sister Shaw is listed as the superintendent—obviously a cracker jack of an organizer.

The following year, the minutes only referenced "two interesting Sunday schools". In March of 1878, the Rev. Wood stated he had two Sunday schools in his charge "in a flourishing condition with about 60 'scholars' in both schools." He reported that "schools opened by religious exercises and were conducted in a devout and religious way."

The 1882 report told of four Sunday schools--stating the Mariposa church ". . .has attended faithfully to the instruction of children."

Church Property

We know the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, located on Charles Street near Seventh was burned in the fire of 1866 that destroyed much of the downtown area. (On Bullion Street, not far from the old jail, stood the Methodist Episcopal Church—a separate congregation.) It appears from the District Conference minutes that the next edifice of the M.E. Church, South, was the little white church built in 1893 that now serves as a place of worship for the Christian Science congregation. References in the district minutes to church-owned buildings and property are as follows:

- Ninth District Conf., April 6, 1876: *No church houses. One parsonage in good condition, one campground.*
- Eleventh District Conf., March 28, 1878: *No church houses in the charge. One parsonage in comfortable condition though it is an old building.*
- Twelfth District Conf., April 19, 1879: *Parsonage in good condition.*
- Fourteenth District Conf., May 20, 1881: *No church. One parsonage.*
- Fifteenth District Conf., April 20, 1882: *Have bought a house and lot and owe about \$300 on it.*
- Eighteenth Dist. Conf., April 25, 1885: *No church edifice of our own.*
- Twenty-first Dist. Conf., April 5, 1888: *I am offered the donation of a lot in Mariposa and the lumber [provided] we will build a church.*

Flora Burlingame



MARIPOSA METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH (NORTH)

Most resources available refer to the local Methodist Episcopal Church, South. But what about that other church—the one in early photos with the stately spire on Bullion Street? Piecing together the early history of the Methodist Episcopal Church (North) in Mariposa is a puzzle, though we do have some information.

Fifty Years of Methodism, a History of the Methodist Episcopal Church Within the Bounds of the California Annual Conference from 1847 to 1897 by C.V. Anthony, gives us some insight into this other branch of the church. From this source, we know that A.L.S. Bateman was the first preacher assigned there.

The late Bertha Schroeder researched county documents and found no record of how the M.E. Church (North) acquired its property. However she did discover that on December 22, 1852, R. G. Hubbard and James Lamon filed a lien against the Methodist Episcopal Church for lumber furnished for the building of the church. The statement is dated October 25, 1852 and gives an itemized list of the lumber including size and length. The total amount of the bill was \$545.52, less credit of \$160.00, and a lien of \$385.52.

1852 was the same year the Rev. C. Gridley was appointed to serve the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in Mariposa. Thus we know the two congregations had their beginnings in the community simultaneously.

Anthony's book tells of the first conference in 1853, stating: "*Mariposa was another hard field for Methodism, at least for our branch of it [North]. Bateman must have been there fully 2 years and then the modest Cleveland went to work. In 1855 it was left to be supplied [by a preacher] and no report was given of it at the next conference. In 1856 it was still left to be supplied, and seems to have been supplied since a report is made one year later to the effect that there were 9 members and a church valued at \$800.*"

Things began to look up. By 1858 there were 17 communicants and the church was valued at \$1,000, and by 1860 membership had grown to 28. There were other shaky years—some without a designated pastor. In 1871, the preacher, J. Oliver, reported nothing, then "For three or more years it stood to be supplied," and in 1873 it was left out of the appointments. The organization of the Southern California Conference at Los Angeles took Mariposa out of the "older body," but in 1896 a change was made and Mariposa was restored to the California Conference.

In the meanwhile, according to Gazette articles, the church building was deteriorating. The October 24, 1891, issue of the paper reported "The old building is on the verge of tumbling down, and altogether, is a thoroughly disreputable looking affair. It is useless to talk of repairing it, as repairs would cost more than a new building...." (This story was part of the push by Editor Frances Reynolds to build a new M.E. Church, South, completed in late fall, 1893.)

The 1897 Delinquent Tax Roll lists the M.E. Church (North) and Vol. 12 of Tax Deeds state the church was "Deeded to the State" for taxes, but later redeemed. Its demise, however, was imminent. According to Mariposa Historian, Leroy Radanovich, the building was torn down in 1899 and lumber used to build the Bertken house (now owned by Radanovich).

Though Methodism in Mariposa began as two separate entities, it is apparent that by the end of the nineteenth century, the two groups combined into one congenial congregation.

Watkins 1860

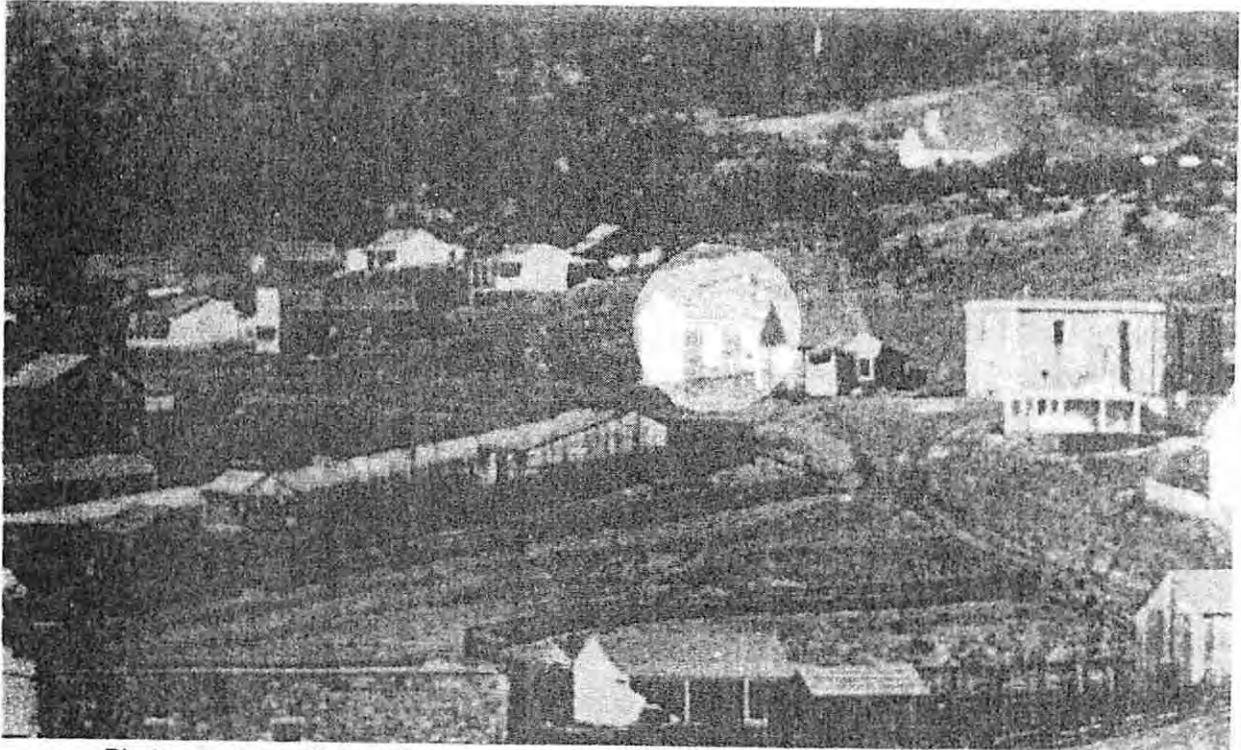


Photo courtesy of Leroy Radanovich

In 1860, Trenor Park, a partner of John C. Fremont, hired Carleton E. Watkins to come to Mariposa to photograph the assets of the Mariposa Grant. These earliest photos of our town show the Methodist Episcopal Church (North) on Bullion Street near Sixth (highlighted above).



THE CATHEY'S VALLEY CHURCH

The community of Cathey's Valley dates back to 1854 when the little valley on the west side of Guadalupe Mountain was named Vallecita. The Cathey family came to California in 1852 by wagon train, choosing this valley as their home which soon acquired the name Cathey's Valley. It was only natural that the elementary school, the post office and the voting precinct also acquired the name.

The Andrew Cathey home was built in 1853 near Owens Creek in the middle of Andrew's large holdings. About 100 yards up Owens Creek, Benjamin Wills built his home the following year. Stories of these settlers of Cathey's Valley and their church are inseparable. They chose to call their church the Society of the Cathey's Valley Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1856 with an outstanding membership of three families. Church meetings were first held in homes, then later in the schoolhouse.

An article appearing in a newspaper on the death of Benjamin Wills states, *"The life that we now hold up before you was a private life. It was a plain home life. Men were not saved by his eloquent preaching, but by his upright life. He was perhaps unconscious of exerting any great influence for good. Aye, we are sure that he was. He was too humble a man for it to have been otherwise, It was his endeavor to live close to his God, and in a humble way to serve him. He wrought better than he knew. Multitudes call him blessed. It was fitting that his funeral should be preached on that campground where he had so often rejoiced with his children and neighbors when they first found the Lord. He will be greatly missed at future convocations to be held there. May his memory contribute toward the keeping of that spot sacred."*

The Wills home with its long, inviting front porch and rocking chair was the center for many church gatherings. They had not lived in their new home very long when one evening as Benjamin and Amanda rhythmically rocked in oversized rocking chairs, enjoying the evening on the front porch, they heard someone singing a song in the distance. Amanda mentioned that if they were still back home (in the South) she would guess that it was Dan'l, their old slave, coming down the road. Shortly who should come into view but Dan'l and Alec, his son. Benjamin greeted them and asked why they had come, reminding them that he had freed them when he left for California. The old faithful slave said, "I just had to be with my people".

With Dan'l and Alec members of the community and the church congregation now, Andrew Cathey gave five acres of land for a church. This became the site for future camp meetings until the day a church building would become a reality.

The 1886 book, History of Southern Methodism on the Pacific Coast, by J.C. Simmons, reports in the 8th Session of the Pacific Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, that a camp meeting in Cathey's Valley,

near the town of Mariposa, became a remarkable success. *“Soon after the meeting began the altar was crowded with penitents and in a few days the work became so deep and powerful that there could be no regularity of service. At all hours of the day and night penitents were bowing and calling for mercy. Sometimes the people hardly had time to eat, so urgent was the work. Out in the grove, in the tents, under the trees, on the encampment, little groups might be seen at any time praying for and talking to mourners. Glad shouts of the saved were heard on all sides. Very little regular preaching was required, or done, after the first few days of the meetings.”*

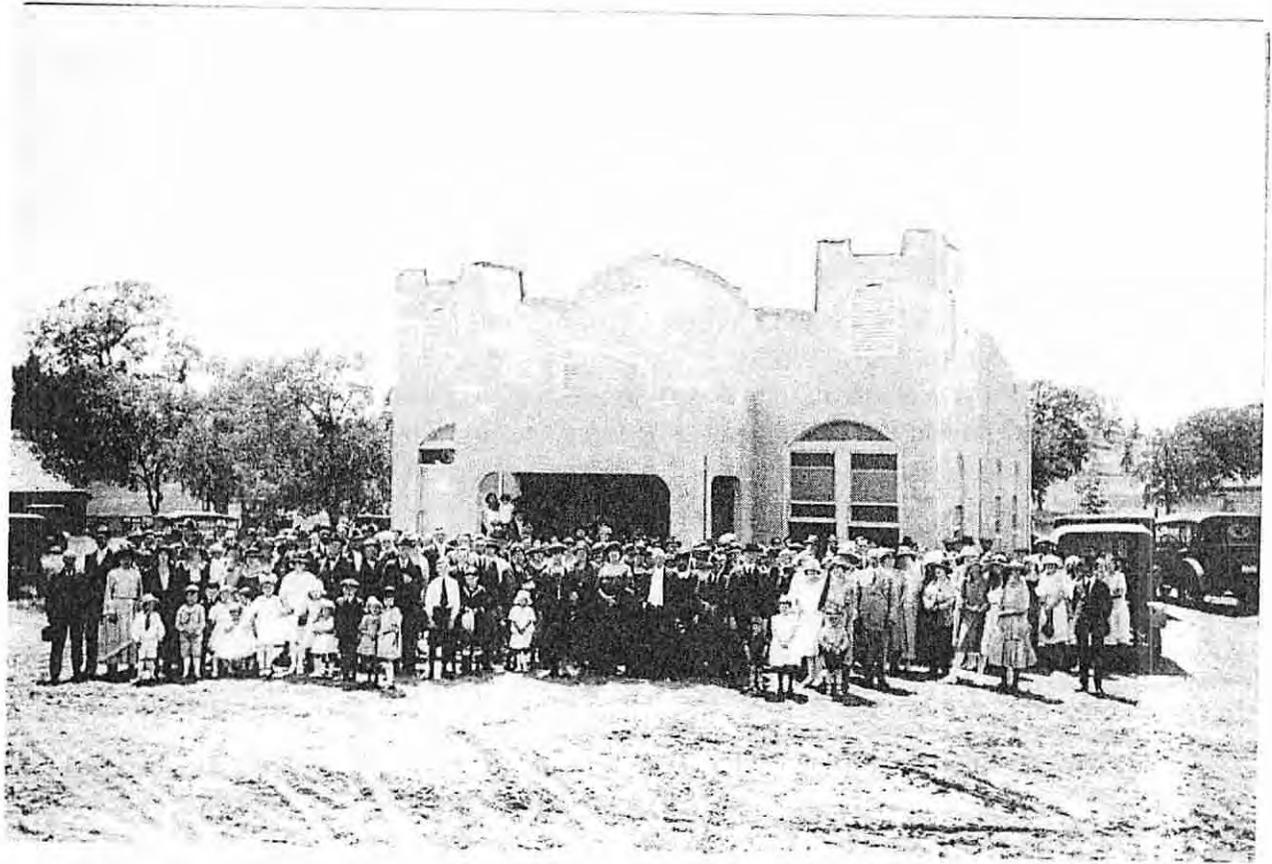
The main building or arbor was near the center of the grounds surrounded by beautiful, large white oaks. These trees still stand, although there is no trace of the arbor which was a large shake roof supported by four by fours with a platform at one end for a pulpit and choir. The pews were unfinished benches on a sod floor well padded with straw. Men gathered pine boughs on Guadalupe Mountain to cover frames which were lined with blankets or sheets to make temporary camp homes. All walkways and floors were also covered with straw. The other main building was the restaurant located on one corner of the property.

Camp meetings lasted for at least ten days, usually in August after the harvesting of grain crops. Chinese cooks from Merced fed the parishioners during the entire camp meeting. With three worship services each day by the regular minister, the presiding elder and two or three evangelistic ministers, there was but little time for men to go home to do chores between the afternoon and evening services.

People came to these camp meetings from great distances, traveling usually by buggy or horseback. This was not only a religious experience for those attending, but often the first introduction to religious training for children. Certainly it was the biggest social event of the year as they met friends from Merced, Le Grand, Chowchilla Mountain, Jerseydale and Green Mountain.

Eventually, members built a parsonage on the grounds, then remodeled it later into a church during the early 1900s, transferring the minister's housing to Mariposa. Camp meetings, nevertheless, continued on the grounds at an annual spiritual awakening. This church, like so many in those days, was destroyed by fire. Later in 1922, members as well as neighbors in the community donated funds to erect a new church constructed, this time, of concrete to survive any threats of fire. Over the years the Methodist Church of Mariposa has shared ministers with Cathey's Valley Church until late the 1980s when the last sermon was given. Although it closed its doors forever as a gathering place for the faithful, nevertheless it stood proud as a historic house of worship.

Marge Mueller



The "new" Cathey's Valley Methodist church built in 1922 after the original one was destroyed by fire. A large congregation gathers for a proud photo.



METHODISTS IN MARIPOSA MOVE AHEAD

The little white church on Sixth Street served its congregation faithfully for more than sixty years. As time unfolded, the membership grew and the need for a larger facility became more and more apparent. A newspaper story stated, "The Rev. Eugene Modlin did much to cultivate an attitude of desire, anticipation and hope in the hearts of the people of Mariposa in respect to a new building through his preaching and personal contacts..."

Once the idea was introduced and given time to simmer, it took off. A Gazette report in March of 1961 read, "Last Friday night the congregation empowered the Methodist Board of Trustees to begin construction of a modern two-story church school and sanctuary. The District Superintendent, who presided over the meeting, said, 'Now you are not writing history, you are making history; your history is in the future'."

Proposed plans were accepted, fund raising events scheduled, and members and friends of the church went out in teams to solicit funds--raising over \$20,000.00. A ground-breaking ceremony on the site of the future church was held on November 24, 1961, with four past pastors of the church attending: Rev. Harold Coleman who served during 1944-46; the Rev. C. E. Anderson, 1947-48; the Rev. L.E. Dabritz, 1949-51; the Rev. Harold Dixon, 1957-58; and Rev. Bill Beck, 1958. The service was led by the Rev. Jesse Mark, the current pastor at that time.

The new building would stand on the corner of Bullion and Sixth Street, and in order to accommodate it, the old parsonage which took up a portion of the space, was moved to the rear of the lot. Sunday school still met there during construction as well as in the parish hall next to the older church building.

The actual construction began in April, 1962, and on December 9th of that year, the first service of worship was held in the new sanctuary. A poignant transition between churches took place in a singing processional by members taking a hymnal from the old sanctuary to the new one singing "We're Marching to Zion".

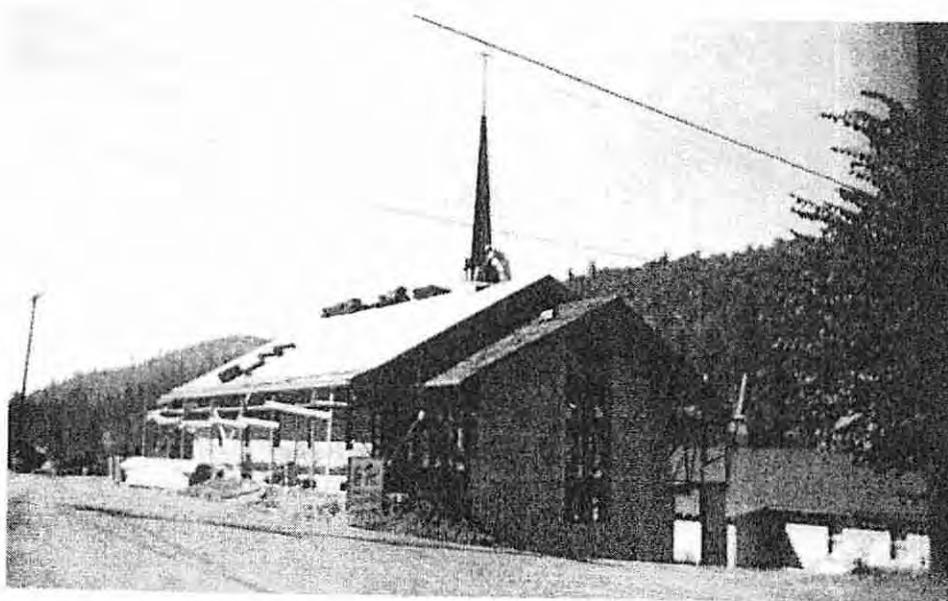
The following evening, the building was consecrated to the glory of God in a special service attended by Bishop Donald Tippet and District Superintendent the Rev. Jackson Butler.

On February 6, 1963, the board of directors received a report on the total cost of the building: \$39,359.68, considered to be "phenomenal", even for the 1960s.

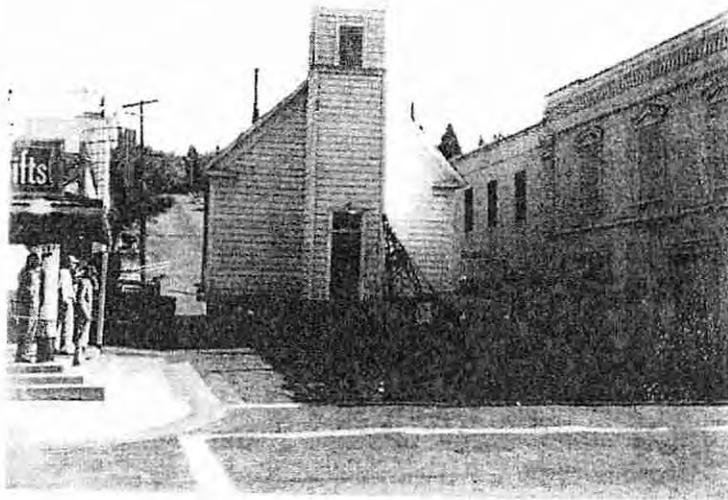
Flora Burlingame



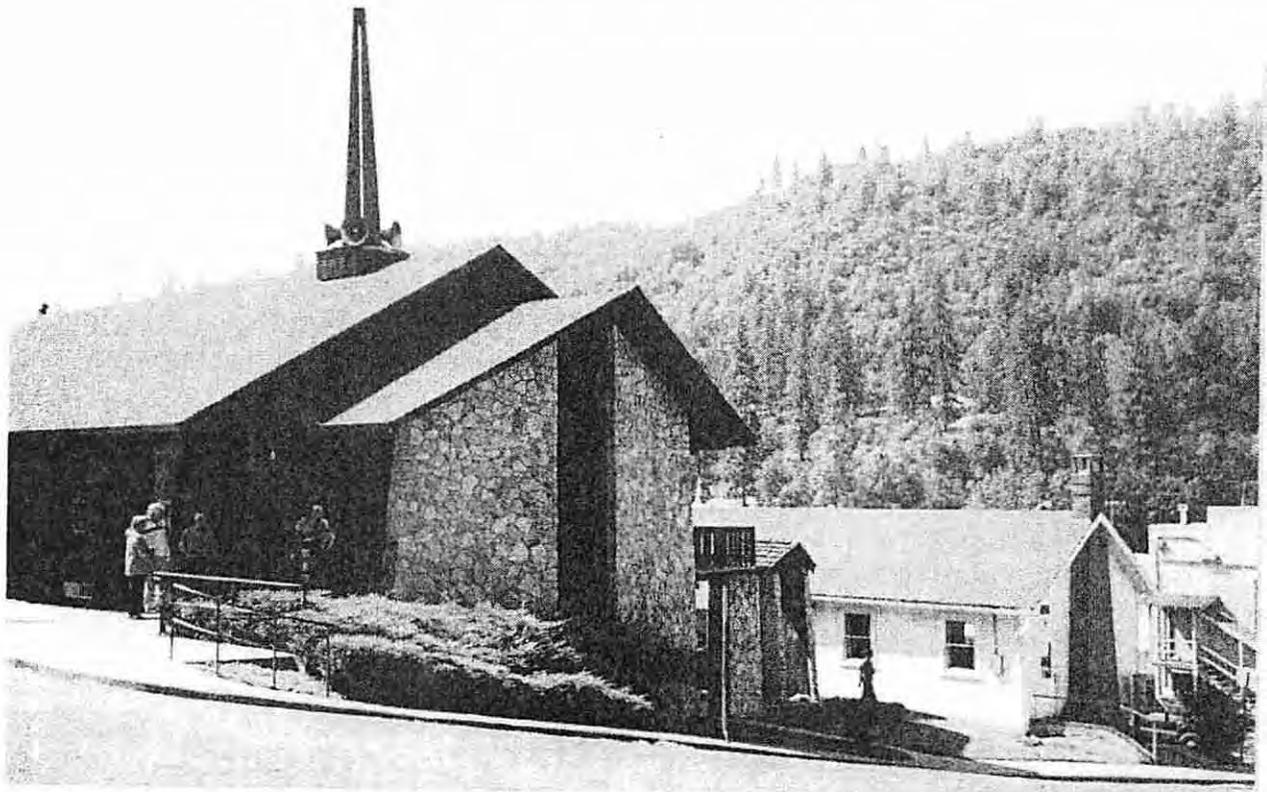
Breaking ground for the new church, November 24, 1961
J. L. Spriggs, Louis Ray, John Anderson, Bob Bondshu



Building in progress



The little white church takes a trip to Fourth Street to serve the Christian Science Society, 1966.



A 2002 photo of the "new" church and "old" parish hall (built in 1941)



2005—A NEW PARISH HALL

It all started with the need for restrooms on the same level as the sanctuary! Over the years, the Horizon Committee and others investigated ways to meet this need. Some suggestions were to put a small room with a toilet and sink on the balcony outside the narthex or to put this room on the walkway near the door by the organ. Another idea was to move the air conditioners to the roof and expand the office wall out to the curb and create a new space for restrooms. There was also a plan to remodel the parish hall in order to move the offices to that building and turn the offices into restrooms. Someone even suggested parking an RV outside the church during services with that vehicle's facilities available for congregational use!

When Pastor Emeritus Joe Kidd was chairman of the Board of Trustees in the late 1990s it was decided that the old parish hall, built by the Lions Club in the 1940s, was no longer adequate for our needs and that we should have a new parish hall and community building. Joe brought contractor and designer Ray Jeske to a meeting. Results of various needs assessments were shared with Ray as well as every idea and dream that had ever been expressed. Ray took all this information to his computer and created a plan for a two story building, connected to the church by a wide walkway, thus providing access to restrooms on the same level as the sanctuary as well as spacious offices, conference room, modern kitchen and larger social hall. These plans were approved by the board of trustees and our building project was underway!

The building committee organizational meeting was held on December 5, 2000, with Lee Miller and Cameron Burley as co-chairmen. Three major tasks were identified: financing the building, disposing of the old parish hall and designing of the new building.

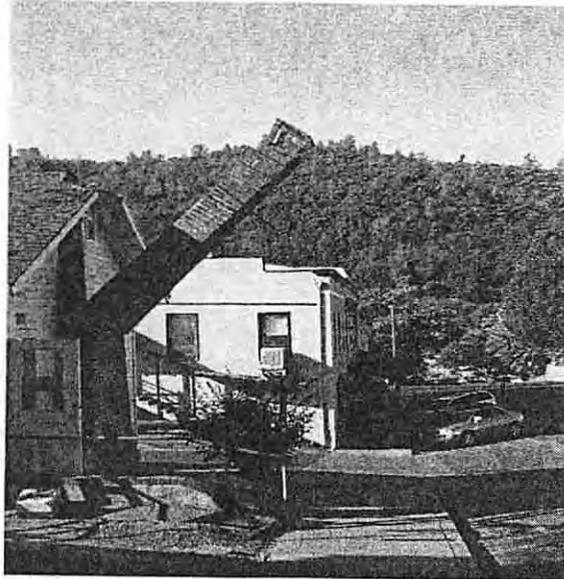
Colony meetings were held, starting in February, 2001, and the plans were presented and questions and concerns answered. The county was approached about moving the parish hall for county use. Many meetings were held with Ray Jeske. Also we met many times with the county planning department and with the Mariposa County Historic Sites Commission. At the same time, contacts were being made with various financial institutions about possible funding for the building. The plans were submitted to a local contractor to give us an idea of the approximate cost to build our dream.

The local Christian Science Congregation expressed an interest in the old parish hall. With the help of Supervisor Garry Parker and the Board of Supervisors a plan was developed so that the county would help with the cost of moving the building to the Christian Science site in return for an agreement to continue making our new facility available for community use.

In May, 2002, a fund drive was launched which was very successful with pledges, memorials, one-time gifts and fund-raisers showing the support of the congregation.

Our plans to move forward were approved at a Special Charge Conference on June 6, 2002. Contractor Dave Gerken of Alpine Builders was selected to be our builder. The old parish hall was moved in November of 2004, making way for construction to begin.

The building was completed in August of 2005 and it was consecrated when the congregation celebrated the 153rd anniversary of the Methodist Church in Mariposa. *Meg Clark*



The chimney topples on the old parish hall in preparation for moving day



A night time trip to join the little white church once again



A new parish hall becomes a reality—September, 2005.

PASTORS
AND
PARSONAGES



MARIPOSA METHODIST PASTORS

Seventy-six pastors have shepherded Mariposa Methodists from 1852 to the present time. The merger of two churches into one is a contributing factor for this surprising number. Many of these early, dedicated men were traveling preachers who serviced several churches--a difficult task with small rewards. The names of those individuals who touched the lives of many while preaching the word of God in Mariposa County are listed here. As indicated, it is uncertain which church some of these pastors served. From resources available, it appears that once the little white church was constructed in 1893, the congregations became one, if not at that time then soon after, and from then on one pastor filled one Methodist pulpit in Mariposa.

John M. Jones	1851-South appointed did not come to CA
William R. Gober	1852-South presiding Elder of SF District
C. Gridley	1852-South
A.L.S. Bateman	1852-North
Robert Bigham	1853-South, visited with Gober in 1852
Joseph Pettit	1853-North, Feb.
J.J. Cleveland	1854-North
J.W. Ellis	1855-South
J.C. Simmons	1856-South
E.B. Lockley	1857
C.N. Hinckley	1857-North
J. McKelvey	1857-North
Z.B. Ellsworth	1859-North
Ira Hale	1859-North
J. Owen	1859-North
J.F. Blythe	1860-South
B.W. Rusk	1860-North
A.L.S. Bateman	1861-North
John Balwin	1863-North
J. McKelvey	1864-North
J.O. Foresman	1865-South
W.M. Culp	1866-67
J. Overton	1869-70
W. Oliver	1870-71-North
G.M. Edwards	1871
T.D. Clanton	1872-73
J.M. Alsanson	1874-75-South
John Wood	1877-South
R.A. Sawrie	1878-81-South
Joel Hedgepeth	1882-85-South
J.T. Murrish	1886-South
A.L. Paul	1887-South

MUMC History 1852-2005

J.F. Roberts	1888
W.A. Booher	1889-90
A.F.W. Walters	1891
C.E. Clark	1892-93
G.C. Harmon	1894
A.P. Few	1895
C.C. Black	1896
H. Neate	1897-99
D. Harrison	1900-02
H. Neate	1903
C.W. Long	1904-06
Charles K. Westfall	1908-09
W.D. Hawkins	1909-local preacher
William A. Lindsey	1910-13
John Robbins Kenney	1914-local preacher
John F. Totten	1915
Claude Russell Fairfield	1916-17
Reginald Heber Wightman	1918-19
F.M. Buck	1920-23-local preacher
Geo. Otis Harwell	1923-25
Sidney Grenfell	1925-27
B.H. Mobley	1927-28
Eustace Anderson	1928-30
S.P. Pope	1930-32
Dallas A. Williams	1932-34
Wm. J. Lee	1934-37
Leroy E. Lindsey	1937-40
Roy R. McDowell	1940-41
J. Paul Coleman	1942-44
Harold C. Coleman	1944-47
Charles E. Anderson	1947-49
Lesile O. Dabritz	1950-51
H. Ray Graves	1952
Louis E. Ray	Oct. 1952-56
Harold E. Dixon	1956-58
Bill Beck	1958-summer intern
H. Eugene Modlin	1958-59
Jesse P. Mark	1960-64
J. Allen Sowards	1965-73
Carl C. Disbrow	1973-77
Noel E. Carden	1977-81
John N. Dumermuth	1981-88
Joe Kidd	1988-97
Joanne Peterson	1997-99
Kevin Campbell	1999-

REV. J. C. SIMMONS



The Rev. J. C. Simmons, D.D.,
served the Mariposa Episcopal Church, South, during 1856.
In his book, Southern Methodism on the Pacific Coast, he wrote of
the lawless and reckless characters of men "mad in their pursuit for gold", stating,
". . .it was to this surging, seething mass of gold hunters that the Church
proposed to send the preachers of the gospel."



JOHN ROBBINS KENNEY

Pastors who served in Mariposa certainly touched the lives of their parishioners and many spread their influence and wisdom beyond this tiny pastorate. One such man was John Robbins Kenney. Born in Georgia in 1890 and educated at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, his first appointment was to Mariposa and Cathey's Valley in 1914. While charming the congregation with sermons presented in a southern accent, he won the heart of Virginia Cornett, the youngest of seven children of a Cathey's Valley rancher.

"Virginia lived close to her preacher husband, sharing in every way possible his ministry to the Church. His joys were her joys; his sorrows were her sorrows; and the problems he faced, she faced with him."

Pastorates for the Kenneys following Mariposa were at Galt, Woodland, Salinas, Merced, Visalia, San Diego, and Stockton. He served as superintendent of the Fresno District for six years and continued his ministry in many significant roles in the Conference. The Journal and Yearbook of the 110th Session of the California-Nevada Annual Conference of the Methodist Church, 1958, eulogized Dr. Kenney who died that year by saying, "The story of the unification of California Methodism in 1939 and its course in the following years cannot be told without underlining the name of John Kenney. Large in body, quick and fearless in action, he was the voice of the predecessor Pacific Conference."

Virginia Cornett Kenney died in 1943 and John Kenney later remarried Sarah Evans. Their last home was the old Cornett place in Cathey's Valley where John Robbins Kenney came full circle from his first pastorate.





BILL BECK, MARIPOSA INTERN, SUMMER, 1958

The Rev. Dr. Bill Beck began his ministry in Mariposa—interning here in the summer of 1958. After working for nine years as a pastor in the California-Nevada Conference, Dr. Beck became Director of Heifer International. He retired in 2000 after serving as Director of the Pacific West Region, Director of Planned Giving, Director of Regions, Director of the Southeast Region and finally as Director of the Western Region.

Dr. Beck holds a soft spot in his heart for his early days in Mariposa and upon learning of our sesquicentennial celebration and dedication of the new parish hall, responded with a letter reminiscing of his summer serving our church.

*Rev. Dr. Bill E. Beck
UM Minister, Retired
Director of Heifer International, Retired.*

Following my ordination as a Deacon at the Cal-Nev Annual Conference in 1958, District Superintendent Charles Lord asked me to serve the Mariposa Community Methodist Church part-time for the summer. This was a great opportunity for me since I had previously done little preaching. I was between my Junior and Middler years at Perkins School of Theology, SMU.

My task was to come from Lodi to Mariposa on Saturday, call on families and stay over to lead worship and preach on Sunday morning. I stayed at the huge old parsonage, which was kind of lonely. Late at night I would finish my sermon and, being very anxious, wake up several times to review my notes. The nights were long.

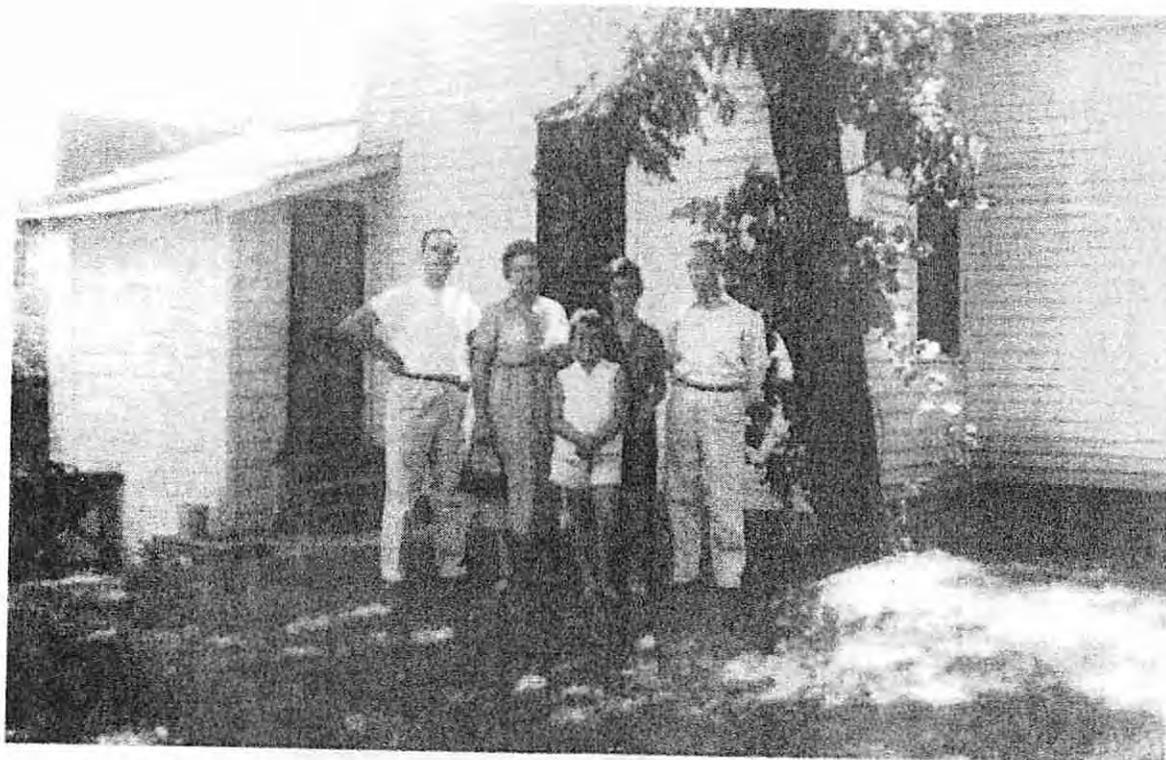
A member of the church hosted me for dinner at the local restaurant (Pine Cone Inn) every Saturday evening. I enjoyed this wonderful "home cooking" and visiting with the staff and other customers. I tried to get some customers to come for worship the next day. One person in particular liked to argue with me on the value of religion. The forest ranger lay leader and his wife often took me to lunch after church on Sunday.

Worship was held in the historic church building. (Now the Christian Science Chapel.) The laity prepared the chapel for worship with flowers. A member played the organ, I became more and more comfortable in leading worship, giving prayers and preaching. At the end of the summer my parents and sisters came to worship. Some high school friends also came. This support was appreciated.

Church School was held in the Fellowship Building. There were children's and youth classes. I met with the youth. Since I had a five-day job at General Mills in Lodi earning funds for seminary I didn't have time to do much more.

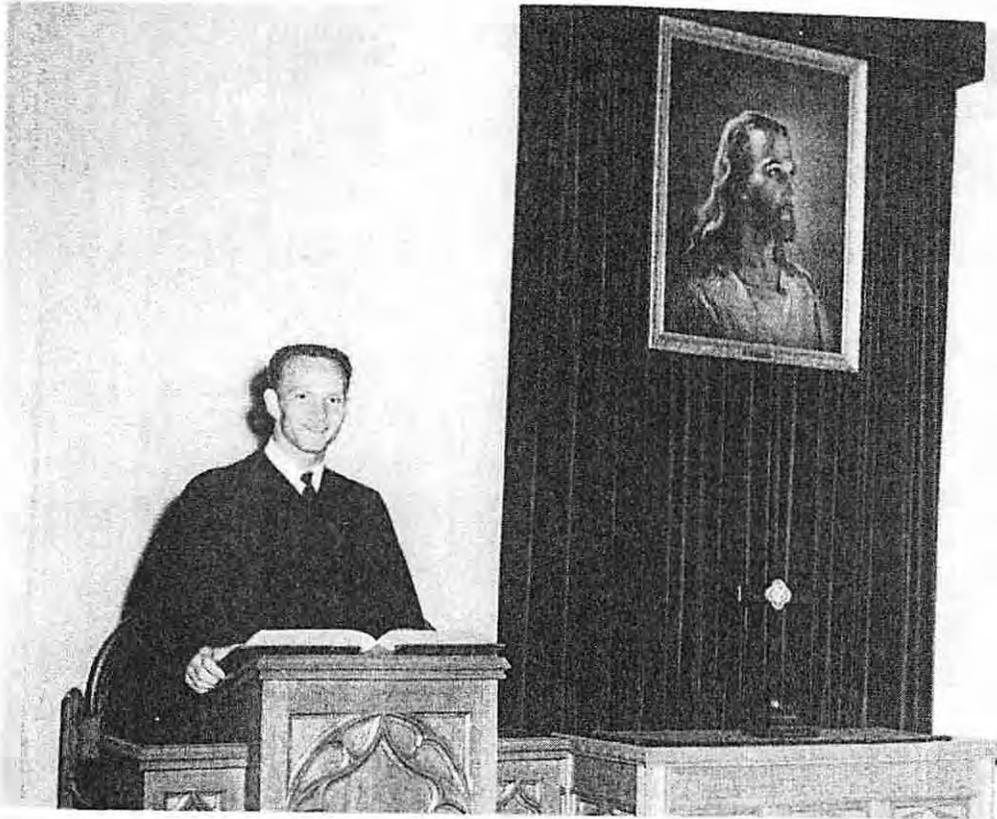
My Mariposa ministry has always been a good memory for me, but it has been 47 years and I don't remember more details. In the early 1970s, after I became the Heifer Project International Director, our family came to the church and I presented the mission of Heifer. The church has always been supportive of Heifer's program so this was just an update. It also gave me opportunity to get reacquainted with folks that I met in 1958.

May God continue to bless the mission and ministry of the Mariposa United Methodist Church for another 150 years.



Bill Beck lived in the Counts House during the summer he interned in Mariposa.
Here he is (left) behind the parsonage with members of his family.

JESSE MARK



The Rev. Jesse Mark served as pastor from 1960-'64. He preached the last sermon in the old white church and the first sermon in the new sanctuary.

The picture over the altar, Sallman's Head of Christ, now hangs in our fellowship hall. It was a memorial gift presented to the church in 1946 in memory of Ethelwynne Gaskell.

J. ALLEN SOWARDS

Pastor J. Allen Sowards served the church for eight years beginning in June of 1965. He also tended the Methodist congregants at Cathey's Valley- as did pastors before him. Some of the highlights of his pastorate included burning of the mortgage for the current church building—a celebration that brought Bishop Tippett to Mariposa; and the construction of the parsonage on Mariposa Street. Pastor Sowards had a big hand in the building of that house, spending many hours there assisting with the work. The bell tower was also dedicated during his tenure here.

Allen Sowards and his wife A'Della arrived in Mariposa in June of 1964. Two sons, Sam and David, were in the U.S. Navy at the time, but visited with their parents often. Each young man was attracted to a girl in the church. In 1966, the pastor officiated at the weddings of his sons to Susan Merrill and Mary Appling. A daughter Emily and family lived in Atwater.

Aside from his ministerial duties, some of Pastor Sowards many activities included sanding the floors in the old parish hall (before becoming a pastor he had worked in construction), cooking monthly dinners for the Kiwanis (he once was a butcher), and in his moments of leisure he enjoyed fishing and playing golf. A'Della kept herself busy working in the school library.

Susan Sowards



December 6, 1970, Burning the church mortgage.

J.L. Spriggs, Gertrude Irwin, Helen Brown, Cecil Stalvey, J. Allen Sowards, Elmer Stroming, Bob Boyer, David Routh, and Elmer Routh



JOSEPH R. KIDD

Joe Kidd was born in Wyco, West Virginia, on July 16, 1935, the son of Raymond and Evelyn (Robertson) Kidd. He grew up in Pineville, West Virginia, where he graduated from high school. After graduating from Concord College (B. A., in 1957), he attended Emory School of Theology and graduated from Wesley Theological Seminary in 1964.

Ordained a deacon in 1958, he served as a probationary member of the West Virginia Annual Conference. He was ordained an Elder and received into full connection in 1964. In his home conference he served in Augusta, West Virginia; Fredrick, Maryland; Buchanan, West Virginia; and Green Valley, West Virginia.

Traveling west, Joe transferred to the California Conference in 1967. Churches he served in this conference were: Chester, Fortuna, Taft, Los Gatos, Evergreen (San Jose), and Mariposa. Joe served our church from 1988 until his retirement in 1997. He elected to continue living in Mariposa, and was made Pastor Emeritus by the congregation he dearly loved. He also saw service on the Fresno District Board of Ordained Ministry.

Joe married Augusta Jane White on June 13, 1959. They had two sons, and later embraced a 15-year-old foster son as a member of the family.

Joe's top four hobbies were sailing, fishing, traveling and woodworking.

In 1987 Joe sustained a serious heart attack, prompting his relocation to Mariposa where he survived for sixteen more years. During that precious remaining time he became a grandpa to three grandsons.

Joe died on Sunday, March 23, 2003—stricken while dancing in a church talent show. He had a great passion and joy for everything in life, and his last words were: "That was fun!"

Gussie Kidd





PASTOR KEVIN CAMPBELL

Kevin was born in Santa Paula, California, surrounded by citrus groves. He grew up in Santa Paula and Tustin, graduating from Tustin High School. While attending Sierra College and living in his mother's hometown of Lincoln, he became involved in leading worship and on a few occasions filled the pulpit at Lincoln UMC. While at a conference summer camp, Camp Celebration, Kevin was called to the ordained ministry in 1981. He continued his undergraduate studies at UC Irvine, and earned his B.S. in biological sciences. Theological studies began at Boston University School of Theology. After some time off working as a substitute teacher, Kevin earned his Masters of Divinity from San Francisco Theological Seminary in 1990.

While on a year long internship at First UMC, Vallejo, Kevin met Tammy Lutton. After his senior year, during which he was student associate pastor in Vallejo, they married a week after Kevin's graduation from SFTS. On their honeymoon, the Campbells were introduced to the Booneville and Philo UMCs. Kevin's first three years of ministry were spent among the orchards and vineyards of Anderson Valley in Mendocino County. During those years Joshua was born.

Kevin's next appointment was a two-point charge in Siskiyou County, Etna and Fort Jones UMCs. During his two years there, Jamie was born. The next four years Kevin was appointed to Palm UMC in Dinuba, a Japanese-American congregation. On July 1, 1999, Kevin began serving the Mariposa UMC. Jamie started kindergarten and Joshua second grade at Mariposa Elementary School.

This appointment has been a good match as Kevin's focus has been on rural ministry, and the Campbells came to Mariposa, hoping to stay in a place they could raise their children. Kevin's leadership in the community has extended to Mariposa Elementary School, AIDS Education and the ministerial fellowship. Outside the community he has served the Fresno District Council on Ministry, Conference Council on Ministry, and United Methodist Rural Fellowship.



HOUSING OUR PASTORS

Where did the pastors for the Mariposa Methodist Churches live? The answer for the early years is not clear. The first reference we have of a parsonage is from The History of Southern Methodism on the Pacific Coast wherein records from the 12th session of the District Conference, 1862, report a church and a parsonage in Mariposa. Subsequent Conference minutes of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1876, 1878, 1879 and 1881 all mention a parsonage in "good condition". The location is another matter. Often these dwellings were purchased in the names of the trustees, and searching deeds in the county records reveals nothing unless we know the names of the trustees. At the Fifteenth District Conference, April 1882, Mariposa Circuit preacher, R. A. Sawrie reported, "Have bought a house and lot and owe about \$300 on it." A search for that deed proved futile.

On October 12, 1909, A. Houge & Co. deeded to the Methodist Church, South, Lot 11 on Sixth Street near the white church built in 1893. One source says a parsonage was constructed there in 1920 and it is believed to be the building that served as a parsonage for many years--then as an all-purpose facility for the congregation. This building was moved to the rear of the property during the construction of the new church in 1962 where it continued to house Sunday school classes until the lower level of the new building was completed. The old parsonage was eventually purchased by a private individual and moved to Mormon Hills where it subsequently burned.

The historic Counts House (see following story) once owned by the Methodist Church served as a parsonage for a number of years. Various members today recall that the Rev. Jesse Mark (1960-1964) lived in the Counts House during his pastorate here until the church rented a house for him near the current parsonage on Mariposa Street.

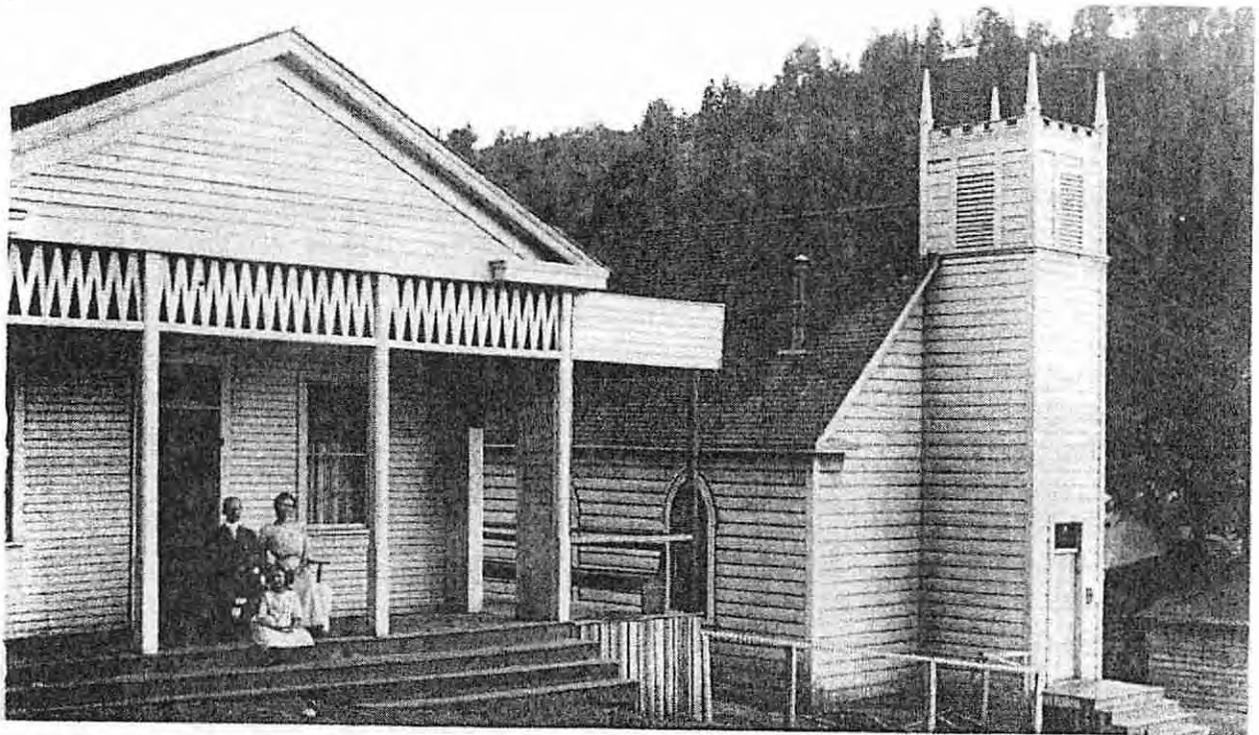
It was during Mark's term that the need to provide more adequate housing for the ministers became apparent. A lot was purchased and construction began in 1966. J. Allen Sowards was pastor by then. A newspaper article dated June 30, 1966 reads:

Parsonage Started for Methodist Minister.

"The Methodist Church has begun the work on a new parsonage on Mariposa Street. Ground was broken Monday morning. During the time of finishing the building, the pastor will be residing in the community but in different houses within the area. . . The new building is being built with volunteer labor as well as the hired labor. The church is looking forward to having the pastor in the new parsonage before the Labor Day Week-end."

On completion, the Sowards family moved in, and every pastor of the Methodist Church since then has resided there. Gussie Kidd, wife of Pastor Joe Kidd who served the Mariposa Church from 1988 to 1997, says, "I loved that house. It had a lot of room. It was a good house!"

Today it provides a comfortable home for Pastor Kevin Campbell, his wife Tammy, and their children Joshua and Jamie.



This early parsonage stood beside the church that was built in 1893. This house was moved to the rear of the lot during construction of the new church (1962) where it continued to serve as a Sunday school facility during the building process. It was then moved to Mormon Hills and later destroyed by fire. (The date of this photo is unknown.)

HISTORIC COUNTS HOUSE HAS METHODIST CONNECTION

Nestled unobtrusively on the grounds of the Mariposa Museum and History Center alongside the stamp mill and the gazette office is a charming, white, clapboard structure known as the Counts House. It is surrounded by rose bushes that burst into bloom in late Spring and an arbor that invites visitors to come take a closer look.

Today, the house is filled with period furniture and memorabilia that has been generously donated by Mariposa residents. Docents lead school and adult tours through the cozy home, sharing facts and stories relating to the Counts family. Visitors, young and old alike, are encouraged to stroll through the home, envisioning life as the two generations might have led.

Before 1991, the Counts House stood quietly, but proudly at 5064 Jones Street. At that time, the property was owned by the Mariposa County Unified School District. The school district needed the space, and therefore the Counts House needed a new home. Very fortunately for the aging house, and for all those who want to preserve history, the museum was able to acquire the home, and move it to its present location. This was a costly endeavor for the museum, but the cost of regret for not preserving this historical home would have been much higher.

The story of the Counts House begins in 1863, when Augustus Shriver built it at 5064 Jones Street. Mr. Shriver had previously built the stately Mariposa County Courthouse in 1854, and there are several similarities between the two structures. The type of siding and the window treatment are alike on both buildings, but perhaps the most notable similarity is the round medallion on the upper front of each—an Augustus Shriver trademark.

George and Malinda Counts moved to Mariposa from Coulterville in 1869 when George became county treasurer. The Counts purchased the attractive house on Jones Street on June 21, 1872, from Mr. Shriver. The Counts who were well respected, were Methodists when there were two churches in the community—the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Episcopal Church (North). Being southerners, the Counts remained with the Methodist Church, South, although they were ardent disbelievers in slavery. A Mariposa Gazette article written in 1878, reported the celebration of the Golden Anniversary of George and Malinda Counts. The author glowingly wrote, "We have ever found you truthful, correct, courageous, honest, and faithful in the discharge of your official duties; and we have never found you wanting in anything which goes to make the perfect man."

George and Malinda spent many happy years in this house and went on to celebrate their 65th anniversary as well. Malinda passed away on May 29, 1894, and when George died on April 1, 1898, his son, Samuel, and Samuel's wife Clara moved in. Samuel, who was his father's deputy, succeeded him as county treasurer and held the office for twenty eight years. The house was in the Counts family for two generations, from 1872 until 1935.

One of the unique features of the Counts house is the three sided fireplace. Fireplaces which open up into the parlor, drawing room and bedroom share a common chimney. The original bricks, which date back to the time of the civil war, were made at a yard north of Mariposa and fired from local clay. With three fireplaces to heat this home, one might assume that the house would radiate heat into every corner. However, one Mariposa resident who rented the Counts house when she first moved to Mariposa, stated that it was the coldest house in which she had ever lived.

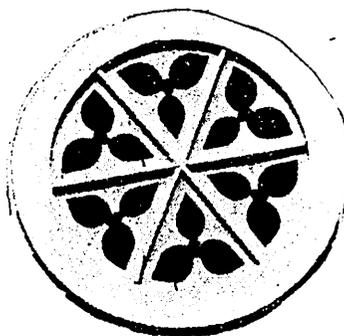
Restoration of the house in 1991 revealed several interesting discoveries. Underneath the floor boards were well preserved newspapers and magazines dating from the early 1900s. These papers were very probably placed there to supplement the insulation. Restoration also revealed human hair in the original plaster. At the time that the house was built in 1863, masons gathered hair clippings from local barbers and mixed eight parts of hair to 93 parts of plaster to reinforce and strengthen the walls.

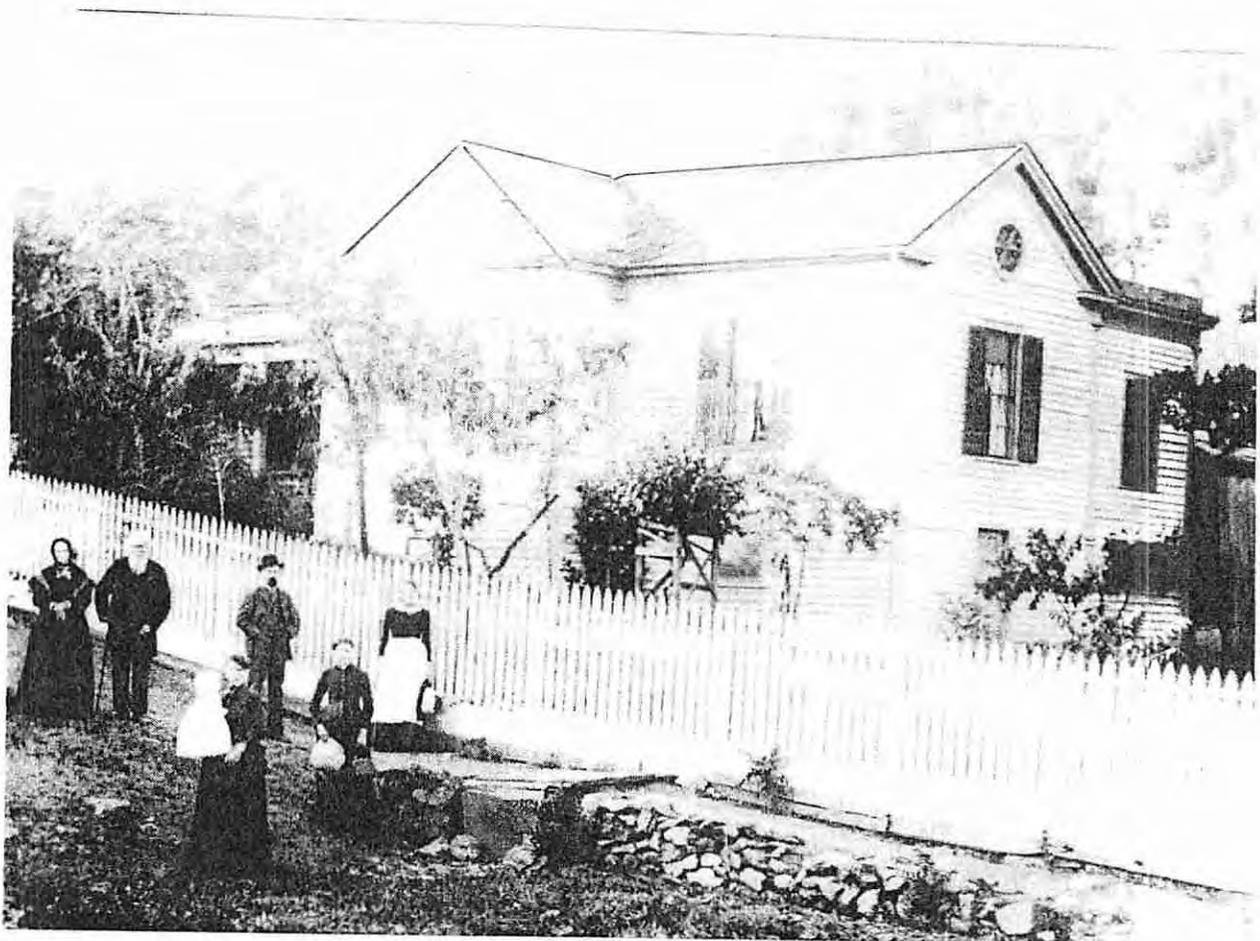
Samuel Counts passed away on July 29, 1926. On November 12, 1929, Clara Counts deeded the house to Clara Thorp as a trustee of the Ladies Aid of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Clara Counts continued to live in the house and had a bathroom installed, but never had the hot water connected.

Mrs. Clara Counts died on January 3, 1935. The local newspaper wrote that Mrs. Counts "...has been a leader in church and charitable activities throughout her life in the community." Funeral services were held at the Methodist Episcopal Church in Mariposa with the Reverend William. J. Lee officiating. Reverend Lee was the pastor for the Methodist Church from 1934 to 1937. After the death of Clara Counts, Clara Thorp, on behalf of the Trustees of the Methodist Church, deeded the house from the trustees to the church itself.

The Counts House was used as a parsonage for the Methodist Church off and on throughout the next 28 year. Details of exactly which ministers and their families lived in the Counts house are sketchy. The house was sold to Ansel Michael in 1966.

Kathy Sutherland





The Counts House on Jones Street was owned by the Methodist Church for a while and served as a parsonage



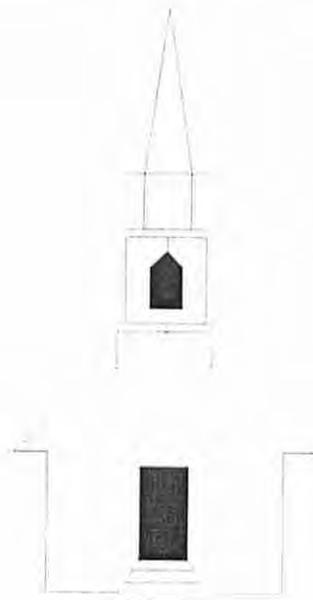
Since 1966, pastors for the Mariposa United Methodist Church have lived in the parsonage on Mariposa Street.



Pastor Kevin Campbell,
Tammy, Jamie, and Joshua
moved into the parsonage in 1999.
(Photo taken in 2002)

**OPEN HEARTS, OPEN MINDS
OPEN DOORS**

**A
CHURCH
LIVING
ITS CREED**





A LONG TRADITION OF CHURCH MUSIC

On May 2, 1852, the first musical event of a Mariposa Methodist Church took place! At the request of Robert Bigham and William Gober, two pastors of the Methodist Church, South, there would be a "blowing of the horn" to call all interested parties to assemble to organize a Sunday school.

Another musical event came a few years later when a bell could be heard calling worshipers together. This is the very same bell that is in our bell tower today.

There is little information about our church denomination's musical activity in the latter part of the nineteenth century. However, we do know that rousing hymns could be heard at the old camp meetings which brought Methodists and others together during that time.

Old newspaper clippings lead us to believe that the local Methodists enjoyed musical programs throughout the years. In the early 1900s, according to research by Dorothy Erickson found in the church archives, "a musical treat" was held at the local opera house for a Methodist pastor named Neate. The program consisted of vocal solos, quartets, choruses, and instrumental music. It was said to have been put on by "the best talent of the neighborhood."

Today our Mariposa United Methodist Church is blessed with many musicians. However, in 1943, according to Florine Johnston, fourteen-year-old Doris Ivy played hymns for services with one finger. Florine and her mother, Elsie Mae Johnston, had just arrived in Mariposa. Elsie took up the challenge of forming and directing a choir and soon had 35 people signed up. Florine was the accompanist, although young Doris took lessons from Elsie and became an accomplished pianist. For two years, the musicians worked on Handel's "Messiah". In 1945 they presented it in the little Methodist Church. Because of lack of space, the doors of the church were left open onto Sixth Street, and the audience lined the street up and down the hill to listen.

In 1948, our church acquired a Hammond organ. Some members of the church today remember this instrument, as it served the church for over forty years. For twenty-five of those years, Ruth Greenamyier was the organist. She had some help from Carline Stephens, Lois Zollars, and junior organists, Mary Appling, Ethelwynne Erickson and, later, Mary Ellen Lauritzen and others. Milton Baker was a choir director during the 1950s.

Ruth Greenamyier played at the consecration service of the current church building on December 10, 1962, and again at the dedication of the church, following the mortgage burning, on December 6, 1970. The earlier consecration service pointed out again the role of music in our church. According to one account, transition to the new church was made by the congregation in a singing processional. Participants took a hymnal from the old sanctuary to the new one, singing "We're Marching to Zion".

In the early 1970s, a young man named John Willis and I began playing occasional services and working with a choir made up of the older youth. The ensuing years saw Elizabeth Bissett, Betty Hampson, Mary Sherman, and Pamela Vanderveer at the organ, along with Madge Mercer, who faithfully played at the early service for many years. Edith DuPaul, Meg Clark, Marian Folker, and I have served as musicians for several years now, and Pam Vanderveer is a substitute musician. We have had the pleasure of playing an Allen organ which was purchased new by Mariposa UMC in 1990. It was dedicated at a concert on February 24, 1991.

Since the 1970s, the choir has "made a joyful noise to the Lord", under the direction of Doris Vineyard, Elizabeth Bissett, Nel Gorham, Dick Fiester, Shirley Fiester, Ken Raynor, and Steve Kinoshita. Bill Wendt and Bill Vanderveer have directed occasionally, as well. The dedication of many of the choir members over the years has been a blessing to our church.

In the middle 1980s, Mary and Grant Colliver donated a set of chimes to the church. The children's chimes choir, Tintinnabula, played traditionally at the early Christmas Eve service, as well as other times throughout the year, into the late 90s. The adult chimes, under the direction of Janet Langley, still has an important role in our worship service, playing several times a year.

The Sunday school children sing occasionally throughout the year and always at the Christmas pageant the middle of December. In the 1960s and early 1970s Gertrude Irwin led the Sunday school choir. Since 1975 Elizabeth Elliott, Kathy Sutherland, and I have directed the children's music, with the faithful accompaniment of Helen Bennett. Aline Allen, Janet Langley, and Pam Vanderveer play a role in the Sunday school music program, as well.

When our new parish hall was being considered, the idea was presented by Janette Uebner to have a series of concerts to raise funds for the new building. Our UMC musicians have been joined in this effort by local talent from other churches to help make the parish hall a reality.

For over one hundred fifty years, our church has sung to the Lord and praised his name through its music ministry. May it continue to carry out this ministry for a long time to come.

Beth Tomsick



The Sunday school choir, mid to late 1950s

Top row L-R: Noel Hull, Gail Massey, Eric Erickson, Emmett Fiske

2nd row L-R: John Lauritzen, Tom Jones, Jim Drown, Kenny Keyser, Bruce Anderson

Front row L-R: Don Haldeman, Jon Turner, Dawn Rushton, Denise Seely, Susan Merrill



A full choir loft in 1997



Ruth Greenameyer served as organist for 25 years



Shirley Fiester, Choir Director



Steve Kinoshita, Choir Director



Organists: Meg Clark, Edith DuPaul,
Marion Folker, Beth Tomsick



MARIPOSA UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

The first organized group of Methodist Women in Mariposa began in the 1930s and was called the Ladies Aid Society. Two of the early organizers were Clara Bertken and Ethelwynne Gaskell (mother of Dorothy Erickson).

Out of this original group was born the Women's Society of Christian Service or WSCS. Beth Hatcher served as its first president (1940-1942). Dues amounted to ten cents a month and the meetings were held on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:45 p.m. in members' homes.

From the beginning, the goals and purpose of the women's groups have remained basically the same: To unite all women in Christian living and to help develop and support work among women and children around the world; to create a fellowship without barriers in the local church and community and to expand concepts of mission by participating in global ministries of the church.

The women have always held at least two studies a year to support their purpose in addition to a program at the monthly meeting. In the beginning, these studies were all day meetings at the home of a member--with the hostess serving lunch. Some of the studies in the past have been: Building Christian Character, Faith with Works, the Total Christian Woman, and Understanding Other Cultures.

In 1972, the name of the group changed to United Methodist Women or UMW.

Until 1980, the women's organization took care of supplying the furnishing for the parsonage. After that time, the focus changed to giving to missions.

In the 1970s, the UMW cooked dinner for the Lions Club each month and served it in the parish hall. Georgia Miller usually cooked the dinner and various members served and cleaned up. This was an eight-hour project as the dinner often consisted of roast beef, chicken fried steak, or pork chops with potatoes, vegetables and dessert.

The women raise money to support their mission giving and local church activities by pledges from the members and by holding bake sales, bazaars, rummage sales, and more recently, an annual Christmas Advent tea.

Currently, the UMW's pledge to world missions, undesignated giving, and national mission is over \$1,000 a year. Locally, it supports Manna House, provides money to families recovering from fires in their homes, and for other community needs in an amount exceeding \$600 a year.

For over fifty years, the women have honored high school seniors with a spring brunch. This began as a sit down meal for the seniors and their mothers. As the classes grew, the menu changed to finger foods. At this event, former graduates of Mariposa High School speak to the students about college life or their work experiences.

In the spring of 1983, Dorothy Erickson initiated a program called Time Out. UMW members cared for pre-school children one morning a month to free up mothers. As many as thirty children participated in this community outreach. After Dorothy became ill, the program was discontinued. Then, in April of 2000, Tammy Campbell organized another program for preschool children and their mothers called Never Enough Time for Moms, or NET. Gussie Kidd directs the children's program assisted by women from the UMW. Held one day a month, activities are also provided for the mothers. As many as twenty moms and thirty children participate in the program.

The UMW presently convenes on the third Wednesday of the month. Five of these meetings are held during the day and five at night to accommodate members who work outside the home.

Today, there are eight members who have been affiliated with Mariposa Methodist women's organizations for over forty-five years: Lorraine Walker, Florence Seely, Dorothy Bauer, Elinor Croft Rollston, Evelyn Fiske, Addie Merrill, Beverly Pinkerton, and Lois Sparks.

Florence Seely



Installation of UMW officers, December 2004

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN AT WORK AND PLAY



Elegant Christmas Tea, 2002

Alice Gibbons, Tammy Campbell, and Rosann Burley

Edith DuPaul and Ida Riley
Ring bells for the Salvation Army



Net "grandmas"

Jean Werly, Gussie Kidd, Shirley Fiester,
Yuki Carbaugh, and Jean Dewey



Loretta Milne
selling
bazaar
items
with a
smile



Net "grandmas" and infants



SUNDAY SCHOOL

The classrooms have changed, the faces in the classrooms are different and the programs and curriculum haven't stayed the same, but I have discovered there are several constants throughout the history of Mariposa United Methodist Church's Sunday school. Some of these constants are the way the church family has always loved and supported the children and youth, capable leadership in the form of a superintendent, outstanding teachers with a true calling to serve our children and youth, dependable musicians willing to lead openings every week, and behind the scenes clerical help with attendance.

Our Sunday school used to meet in the parsonage where our church building is now. They would have classes in the living room and several other rooms of the parsonage. A couple of classes would meet in the church. Sometimes classes were also held in unlikely places. Florence Appling remembers how the church accommodated her family when they were unable to come all the way into town. The Applings had lots of chickens to take care of, and they also had lots of kids. Materials were sent to them so they could have Sunday school under their trees on Sunday mornings.

Florence went on to become a Sunday school superintendent. I found directions for superintendents written in an old ledger book by an unknown early superintendent. She wrote, "God will provide a staff. You just have to go out and find them!" Other duties listed included: ordering materials, making a report for the Charge Conference, attending administrative board meetings, organizing openings, planning the Christmas program, arranging special music twice a year and planning one outing for the entire Sunday school, such as a picnic. Today's superintendent has many of these same duties! It is a big job, but the special people who have held this important position say it is very gratifying. Some other early superintendents, along with Florence, were Vesta Spriggs, Gertrude Irwin, Dorothy Erickson, Alma Rowe and Flo Seely. Gertrude held the position for many years and did many special things for the children. One of these was to bring flowers from her garden to put on the altar for the opening. She would give the children numbers and draw the number of a lucky child who would get to take the flowers home. Other superintendents over the years have been Fay Dyer, Mardell Probasco, Jan Haag, Elizabeth Elliott, Ginya Lewis, Christina Lawson, Judy Gibbons and Gussie Kidd.

Each Sunday the children gather for an opening with music, birthday celebrations, a short message and offering. The music is definitely the highlight of these openings. Beth Tomsick and Kathy Sutherland are currently our music and opening leaders. Helen Bennett faithfully plays the piano each Sunday. Some past opening leaders have been Grace Bryant, Bill Vanderveer, Elizabeth

Elliott and Aline Allen. Several times each year the children sing the songs they learn during the openings for the congregation. They no longer wear white robes with bows, but it is always a special Sunday when the children perform. In the past there has also been a youth chimes choir led by Beth Tomsick. The chimes choir would perform during the church service several times each year.

Over the years the Sunday school has used several different companies for their curriculum. Classes have been divided many different ways depending on the number of circumstances. The one constant each year is the Christmas pageant. Children and adults alike look forward to this magical time. The children start the Advent season with the making of Advent wreaths and begin practicing the music. The pageant is written and the children start preparing for their parts. It is always a flurry of activity when students are fitted for their costumes. Finally, the Sunday arrives when all the preparations are complete and the entire Sunday school presents the program to the church family. It is wondrous indeed.

There are many people behind the scenes who help the Sunday school to run smoothly. The secretary in particular, her main duties being to keep all records especially the attendance records, and to pass out attendance awards. The students in past years used to get attendance pins they wore, but these days they get small prizes after each four weeks of attendance. Eleanor Richards performed these duties for many years, as did Janet Langley. Susan Sowards is currently the Sunday school secretary.

Two programs that have been offshoots of the Sunday school program are Vacation Bible School and United Methodist Youth Fellowship. In the beginning Vacation Bible School was held at the church for two weeks during the summer. Other information tells how Vacation Bible School transformed into our Camp Win Johnson. United Methodist Youth Fellowship (UMYF) has provided many activities for the church's junior high and high school students through the years. Activities for the youth have been both social and educational. The youth have always participated in service projects for the church and community. Jesse Mark and Allen Sowards led the youth while they were pastors at the church. John Dumermuth and Joe Kidd were also very active with the youth while pastors. For several years our church participated in a Joint Youth Ministries with the Lutheran and Catholic churches. At different times throughout the years the following were UMYF leaders: Flo Seely, Judy and Tom Gibbons, Elizabeth Elliott, Kathy Sutherland, Chuck Hibert, Patrick McCarthy, Janet Langley, Kerri Gibbons and Rod Timmons. While maybe not an official UMYF leader, Marge Mueller has done many special activities with the youth, including drama productions.

I've purposely not named specific teachers. Teachers, of course, have played an integral part in the history of the Sunday School. They have taught, nurtured and mentored the children of the church. They have taught the adults, also! We have had an active adult class for many years. It would be impossible to name all of these wonderful individuals and tell of all the special things they have done for their classes and individual children. I think if you asked everyone who has ever taught a Sunday school class to stand during a worship service, a large majority would be up on their feet.

The children and youth of the church are extremely important to the life of the church. This is why the Sunday school is such an essential program. Attendance throughout the years has gone up and down. In the late fifties classes had about 15 students in each. Records show that between 1989 and 2000 attendance averaged between 37 and 55 each Sunday, including the adult class.

Our Sunday school needs special prayers at this time. It is currently without a superintendent after the retirement of Gussie Kidd. Attendance has also dropped off despite enthusiastic leadership last year and the participation of numerous adults leading the children through learning centers each Sunday. As stated previously, one of the constants in the history of the Sunday school has been the love and support of the church family. Your continued love and support, combined with your prayers, will help find the answers needed to provide a vital Sunday school program for the children and youth of our church and community next year.

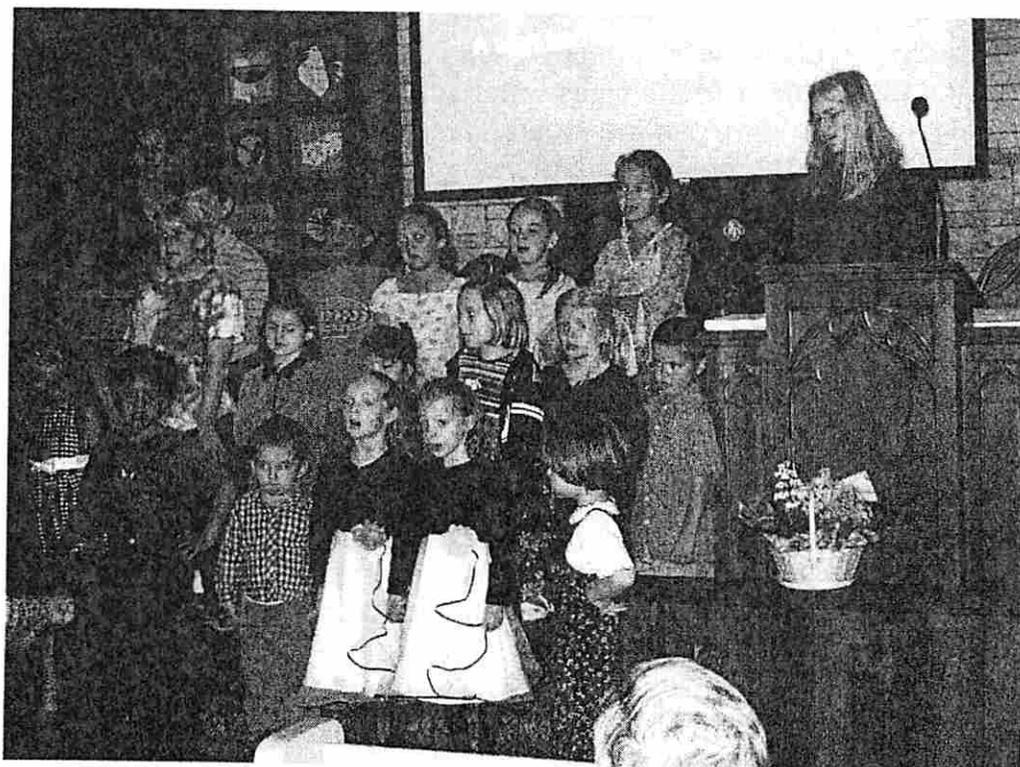
Judy Gibbons



An over-flowing Sunday school class--1961



Gospel made simple--2005



Sunday school singers--2005

THE BEGINNINGS OF CAMP WIN JOHNSON

Camp Win Johnson began 27 years ago when Fay Dyer and Mary Johnson put their heads together to create a living, inspiring memorial to Win Johnson. Fay organized and Mary supported it with money. The entire congregation backed it whole heartedly from the beginning with money, food, teaching, supervising, leading, organizing, transporting, but most of all with love. Nadine Wight was the first camp director. I, Grace Bryant, continued for the next seven years.

We began by renting the Lutheran camp in Mariposa Pines. On the day before camp Fay organized a cleaning party. The kitchen staff led by Eleanor Richards and Addie Merrill scrubbed down the kitchen, washed windows, removed spider webs, and mopped the floors. Outside, the young people organized by Len Bryant, swept, cut back the weeds, set up the archery range, hung the volleyball net, and laid out the baseball diamond. Jamie Richards, Loretta Milne, and Judy Gibbons saw that games, art supplies, and class material were placed where they were needed. I wish I could name everyone who helped with camp, but in truth it included the whole congregation. I close my eyes and see: Dwight Evans on night duty, Marge Mueller leading a skit, Alma Rowe with something special for everyone in her group, Dorothy Erickson with a car full of food, Susan Sowards helping her mother in the kitchen, Ethel Hunton, Ruth Womack, and the Michaels bringing their casseroles to the evening potluck, and Paul Lockwood with a truck load of supplies headed for the church after the cleanup was complete.

We threw ourselves into the themes. One year when we studied the Holy Land, we did a reenactment of the times with bathrobes and sheets as costumes. One class dug out a huge map of the area and placed characters at famous locations to tell the history. We set up a market place and traded morsels of fruits, vegetables, and bread for lunch.

The older campers gently included the younger ones in their games. They coached them and cheered for them with inspiring care.

Music was always a wonderful part. Beth Tomsick and Elizabeth Elliott were our first leaders. Later Kathy Sutherland joined them. Flo and Ralph Seely with his banjo appeared at the evening campfires.

Night hikes to the helipad were very popular. From the pad constellations could easily be pointed out.

After six years the Lutheran camp was sold and we decided to try using Darrah School House, which we did for two years. Alice and Ken Merriam provided the swimming pond for the afternoons. Ken made sure there was an inner tube for every swimmer. Some were from huge tractor tires. The older campers spent the night at the Jerseydale Campground.

When camp was concluded everyone was very united in the family spirit that occurs when we all come together. Camp is one of the ways we create a tie that binds.

Grace Bryant



Josh Heitzmann, Julie Sutherland, Bruce Fithian, Sarah Mosher
Camp at Darrah School House 1983 or '84



Camp 1982



Camp 1983 Or "84

CAMP WIN JOHNSON REVIVED

Pastor Joe Kidd was appointed to Mariposa in July of 1988. It was soon decided that Camp Win Johnson would be revived and that Gussie Kidd would be chairperson of the Camp Committee. By this time it had been decided to invest the Win Johnson Memorial in the Conference Claimants Endowment Board, so the interest would help fund each year's camp. The idea of purchasing our own campground was abandoned.

The nine-member Camp Committee began meeting in January of 1989. We went looking for a suitable camp we could rent. Two of the youth and the rest of the committee insisted on the Webb Yosemite Pines Camp located at 45895 Highway 49 in Ahwahnee. Carl Webb had just bought the camp from Mrs. Carl Alexander, and it was in bad disrepair, but we loved it and felt it was home for Camp Win Johnson.

A second committee was added for planning the meals and cooking. Addie Merrill was in charge of the meals and assisted by many, many church members—men and women. Loretta Milne was in charge of snacks. The four youth on the committee shared their camp experiences, and camp was designed from that. We decided to use Vacation Bible School curriculum.

The Webbs were not ready for campers, so Dave Lile and the camp staff cleaned the cabins and bathrooms, while Grant Colliver put the beds together. One hundred campers and adults went to camp that first year. The water line broke, the walk-in refrigerator didn't work and the doughboy pool was leaking, but we had a great time anyway. Laura Lynn Hays was my assistant and acted as camp disciplinarian.

The Lions Club International bought the camp and improvements began to be made. There is now a new water system, remodeled cabins, and best of all a beautiful new swimming pool. Under the Lions' ownership, the camp was renamed Camp Pacifica.

Our youth have been very important in the life of the camp. Each one is assigned to a younger camper--a "little buddy"—with whom they eat meals, swim, and fish. In general, the older campers look out for their little buddy. Because the youth are so vital to the life of the camp, they go to camp a day before the younger campers and help set up, then have time for swimming and their own retreat.

Music has been an important part of camp. Elizabeth Elliott and Kathy Sutherland were our first music leaders. They were also in charge of the campfires. Some years Aline Allen led the music. Some years the youth led the music. And every year Flo and Ralph Seely came to play the banjo and sing at campfires.

Arts and crafts have been another important part of camp. Aline Allen, our "Artist in Residence", has inspired and made it possible for the teachers and children to create projects for class and free time. Tie dyed T-shirts have become a camp tradition.

Fishing has been a favorite of the campers. Joe Kidd was in charge of getting the fishing gear together. There were many others who patiently untangled fishing line, and supervised the fishing pond. Some of our best fishing campers were Michael Bennett, Josh Heitzmann, Chris Butler and Joanie Elliott.

The Camp Committee increased to 15 hard working members. Even though the Lions Club did not increase rental fees for many years, we still had to have fundraisers. E.O. Lewis persuaded Delaware North and the Park Service to donate the Lost and Found from Yosemite. This led to some wonderful rummage sales. The big fundraiser was an all church Chicken BBQ Dinner, Silent Auction and Talent Show. Tom Hays was the BBQ chef when the event was held at the old Masonic Hall. Church members and friends came to eat a good meal, buy wonderful treasures and see a fine show. E.O. Lewis and one of the youth would be Co-Masters of Ceremony. Kathy Sutherland, Elizabeth Elliott, Beth Tomsick, Janet Langley and Aline Allen led the singing of camp songs throughout the evening.

Camp Win Johnson has always been a successful camp, because of the wonderful support of the congregation. Each person in our congregation has supported the camp with camperships, donations of snack foods, donations of silent auction items, donations and help at rummage sales, and working at camp. All these persons are too numerous to mention individually.

When Joe retired from Mariposa United Methodist Church on July 1, 1997, I retired from the Camp Committee. Camp Win Johnson is still in my heart and soul. I am very proud of the years the Camp Committee worked and developed Camp Win Johnson into the camp it is today.

Gussie Kidd



Meal time line-up, Camp Win Johnson, June 2005



Camp "buddies" 2005



Song time, Camp Win Johnson, June 2005



WHO WAS WIN JOHNSON?

Camp Win Johnson was started by Mary Johnson, wife of Win. The Johnsons moved to Mariposa from San Jose about 1965 and were some of the first settlers of Lushmeadows. They were our closest neighbors for over twenty years.

The Johnsons had two sons and many grandchildren. Win loved all children, especially just talking with them. When our children were small and even in their teens, they would beg to go see Mr. Johnson. He would open the garage door, pull down the tailgate of his station wagon and talk to them about their hopes and dreams and sometimes give advice. (He always called the tailgate the "communicator.") He knew all the children in church by name and mentioned several times how he enjoyed talking to Wally and Marge Mueller's children.

Win died in 1978, and Mary and I had many conversations after that about him. She wished to do something special in his memory. One day she came walking down the path that connected our properties and knew exactly what it was going to be—and the idea of a camp in his honor was born.

Mary started the camp fund with \$10,000 which was put in the Methodist Endowment fund and today helps to pay for the camp in many ways through the interest earned. Mary, who died in 1986, was a dear, feisty lady. Joy Johnson of San Jose, daughter-in-law of Win and Mary, continues to support the camp on an annual basis.

For years the camp was called "Win Johnson Camp", but as time went on, it became just the "Church Camp." When Joe and Gussie Kidd arrived and learned about the origin of the camp, Gussie reinstated the name "Win Johnson Camp"

Helen Knobles





MUMC SPONSORS VIETNAMESE REFUGEES

After the fall of Saigon and the departure of American troops from Vietnam, waves of immigrants began arriving in the United States from the former Indochina. During the middle to late 1970s thousands of Vietnamese and ethnic Chinese fled Communist rule in Vietnam and sought asylum in this country. However, they began their long journey in small, crowded boats which made the precarious crossing from Vietnam to Thailand and other destinations, and, for this reason, they were called "boat people." Many drowned on these boat trips, and many others spent years in refugee camps in Thailand and Malaysia.

In 1979, Dorothy Erickson and I proposed to the Administrative Board of the Mariposa United Methodist Church that we sponsor a family of "boat people" from Vietnam. Other United Methodist Churches in our conference had taken on this responsibility, and there were people in the conference who could help us with this project. Our board understood that this sponsorship would include housing and language training for the family and a job for the father. In addition, as a church, we would need to give moral support and perhaps financial aid to the family until they were on their feet. The board agreed to the proposal.

By the middle of October, a small apartment had been located and a job with CETA (Comprehensive Employment and Training Act) program set up for the father.

On October 25, 1979, the Tang Mieu family arrived from Malaysia at the Fresno airport where they were met by several members of our church. Mr. and Mrs. Tang were accompanied by their daughters, Dung and Tu, and by his 90-year-old mother, Tran Tu. Tran Tu had had the distinction of being the oldest refugee in their Malaysian refugee camp where they had spent one year.

Until their apartment in Mariposa could be readied for them, the Tang family stayed with Dorothy Erickson at her hilltop house near Hornitos. Imagine, if you can, how disoriented a family from the large city of Saigon might feel on a ranch near Hornitos. The Tangs could not believe that Dorothy lived alone in such a big house surrounded by acres and acres of property. Another surprise for them, shortly after their arrival, was our celebration of Halloween. We took them to Woodland School to see the children in costume, and they seemed to enjoy that event.

However, we were soon to realize that the Tang family would not be staying in Mariposa. Although they were required to go from Malaysia to the town of their sponsors, they already had friends, and even family, in the Bay Area. After one week here, Mr. Tang informed us that the family would be joining another daughter in San Francisco. We understood their desire to be with friends and family.

Through the years Dorothy and I kept in contact with the family. I still hear from Mr. Tang regularly at Christmastime. In 1994, he wrote the following message to our family:

"We're happy to get your beautiful Christmas card, in which we feel a good, warmth friendship. We're thinking and appreciated you, who are sponsor of us to the United States."

Mr. Tang was writing to all of us in Mariposa United Methodist in gratitude for bringing his family to this country.

For sixteen years Mr. Tang worked as manager of an apartment building on Leavenworth Street in San Francisco. He retired from this work in 1995. His daughters went to college and married. They have contributed to our society, and we can be happy to have helped them in their quest for a better life.

Beth Tomsick





MARIPOSA UMC HAS SISTER CHURCH IN MANOSQUE, FRANCE

In the fall of 2004, I was on a train bound from Gap in the province of Hautes-Alpes, France, to Marseille in the south. It was with interest that I looked out on the small city of Manosque from the train window. We made a brief stop there, and I would have liked to jump off to see if the Abel family was still in the phone directory.

Jean Abel was pastor of the Église Réformée (Reformed Church) in Manosque in the early 1980s. Mariposa UMC member, Dorothy Erickson, would travel now and then to Manosque since her daughter, Ethelwynne, had married Édric Cane who was from there. Dorothy would be welcomed by her daughter's in-laws and attend church there. It was during her visit in October of 1981 that William Cane, Édric's father, asked Dorothy if she knew of a California church which would be interested in establishing a special relationship with the Manosque church. The purpose would be to "explore Christian ideas and customs and to promote adventure in exchange visits."

Dorothy returned home and planted the seed for this sister church relationship in Mariposa UMC. The first exchange visit took place in August of 1982 when William Cane and his grandson, Jean-Loup, visited our church. Mr. Cane cordially invited members of our church to come to Manosque.

A second visit came later that same year when Jean Abel and his wife, Guillemette, arrived in Mariposa. Mr. Abel was one of eleven European delegates to an ecumenical program, sponsored by the United Presbyterian Church in an eastern synod that fall. After a six-week visit in Michigan, he came west to speak in two Presbyterian churches in Los Angeles and to Mariposa to visit his church's sister church, Mariposa UMC.

John and I had the pleasure of entertaining the Abels at our house after church on a Sunday in November of 1982. They were a charming couple and interested in making the most of their visit here. They stayed with Dorothy Erickson who made sure that they saw Yosemite Park and other tourist sights. The Abels found the area somewhat similar to their own area in the foothills of the Alps. I can vouch for this from having just visited that region myself.

The focus of the relationship between the two churches, after the initial visits was a sharing of information. We sent our church newsletter to Manosque, and they sent their newsletter "L'eau-vive" ("The Living Water") to us. Dorothy's daughter, Ethelwynne (Wyn) Cane, and I would translate sections of these, from time to time and report on them in our newsletter.

One old Mariposa UMC newsletter contained briefs on an ecumenical meeting held in Basel, Switzerland, where world problems were discussed; at a district camp for the young people who made collages to "define Jesus"; and an

article on Christian faith which allows Christians to be liberated from worry so that they can concentrate on service to others.

While no one from our church, other than Dorothy, visited Manosque during the days of sisterhood between our churches, all of us benefited from the exchange of information and the opportunity of looking outward. Dorothy was the impetus behind the program, and with her loss in 1989, this unique relationship came to an end.

Beth Tomsick



Jean Abel, pastor of Église Réformée
(Reformed Church)
in Manosque

MEMBERS
OF
LONG AGO
AND
TODAY





EARLY COMMUNITY LEADERS AFFILIATED WITH METHODIST CHURCH

Early Mariposa newspaper accounts reveal that Angevine Reynolds, editor-publisher of the Mariposa Mail and later the Mariposa Gazette (1875 to 1888), was affiliated with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

The funeral services for his first wife, Virginia Bird Reynolds (and mother of 13 of his children) was conducted on June 6, 1875 at the Methodist church, South, by J.M. Alsanson.

A happier event occurred on July 13th, 1879 at the Odd Fellows Hall, where the Rev. R. A. Sawrie of the Methodist Church, South, held "divine services" uniting Reynolds and Miss Frances Utter in marriage.

Reynolds died in 1888, however, Frances Reynolds continued in his stead as publisher of the Gazette. A strong supporter of the M.E. Church, South, she featured articles regarding the dilapidated condition of the M.E. Church and the need for a new building (this must have been the M.E. Church on Bullion Street—as there are no records of another building for the M.E. Church, South, after the fire of 1966, more hints that the two congregations shared the same sanctuary.)

A story which ran November 21st, 1891 read: "A movement is on foot towards getting a new church for the Methodist congregation here. Such a need has been advocated too often to want much more said on the subject, earnest work is what is wanted now. A good deal of work and self-denial and co-operation will build a church which will be an ornament to the town."

By March 4th, 1893, things were underway and the newspaper announced: "Subscription paper for the new church fund can be found at Zeller's Store, at the parsonage, and at the office of the School Superintendent, and the Gazette. Any subscriptions gratefully received. The cause not only is a worthy one, but is a necessary one, as the old church is beyond repair."

Mrs. Reynolds as president of the "ladies' committee" for the church was very much involved and donated the land for the new church building. (Vol. 14 of Deeds, page 270, August 31, 1893, Frances A. Reynolds to the Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, Lot 10, Block 22, Mariposa.)

The new church was dedicated on Thanksgiving Day, 1893.

Flora Burlingame



MY MEMORIES OF MARIPOSA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

By Florence F. Appling

Reverend L. Dabritz was the minister at the time I was baptized and joined the church in May, 1950. My husband Philip Appling transferred his membership from St. Paul's Methodist Church in Fresno at the same time. We had two children then and another due the next October.

We were unable to go to church every Sunday because of our egg ranch commitments. But the congregation was great to greet us when we did come to church.

When our house burned down on November 10, 1952, the ladies of the church gathered clothing for our family (which included another expected child). Winnie Freyschlag and Vesta Spriggs were two of the women who came to my in-laws' home to sort through the clothing with me.

There were studies at the church during the daytime. I was able to attend one I remember especially well--titled "A Christian and his Money". It was very worthwhile even to this day

The choir has been good to our whole family. My husband and some of the girls sang in it, and our girl, Nel, was director for some time.

Lucille Ray, the minister's wife, offered to care for my children when I went to church after I advertised in the paper for childcare. It was a time in my life I felt I really needed to leave my children for a "break". Lucille told me to go on and attend church and she would watch them since she heard the sermon every Sunday and could miss one. Her thoughtfulness meant a lot—even to this day. Her husband made several trips to our home (16 miles) to visit our family while he was our minister.

When my girls were teenagers, and there was a need for childcare during church, they filled in many times. Before that time, Eloise DeGrendele and I took turns caring for the nursery since we each had youngsters. For a while, a very nice Seventh Day Adventist lady would do it for no pay except what we could share from our gardens, etc.

Rev. J. Allen Sowards and his wife, A'Della, had a son in the Navy who became acquainted with our oldest girl, Mary Jane. She and Frank David Sowards were married in our church on June 26, 1966. As time went on Rev. Sowards performed marriages for four more of my girls in the church:

Nel in December, 1971

Fran in May, 1973

Liz in June, 1973

Lamar in July, 1981

The current carpet was laid down just a few weeks before the July 1981 wedding.

Rev. Sowards left our church in 1973 and I was asked to be custodian before then. I have done it ever since.

I remember many fund raisers over the years: The new roof of the church, the new organ, the parsonage and now the new parish house. One year Zona and Don Neubert offered to donate a heifer for the Heifer Project if the church raised enough for the first one—which we did.

In 1986, my daughter, Fran, played her guitar for the summer special music. Part of the family sang with her and they have been doing it every summer since then. However, that first year was the only time their dad was there to hear it as he passed away December 2, 1986. Fran writes the songs for them to sing now.

I realize it is the people who make a church what it is and I truly hope I have been an asset to this wonderful congregation.

MORE MEMORIES. . .

We were married in the old Methodist Church on Flag Day, 1947, where our friends proceeded to “decorate” the photographer’s car thinking it was ours! We joined the congregation in 1949. All our children were baptized and attended Sunday school and church here, and three grandchildren were also baptized here. Six generations of our family have been associated with this church, so it means very much to us. Long may it stand!

Scott and Beverly Pinkerton

AND MORE. . .

When I joined the church, I didn’t want to go up to the front all by myself so Mary Johnson and another dear friend, Marge Larsen, walked up with me as my sponsors. Marge became blind in later years. During that time she commissioned Al Perry, a wood carver from Lushmeadows, to make the cross hanging above the altar.

Helen Knobles



OUR LIFE IN THE MARIPOSA METHODIST CHURCH

By Hazel Estel

It was 1938 when we came to Mariposa from Ohio as newlyweds.

Bob's first love was playing softball in Mariposa. Among the people he met was Art Childers, who played ball, worked at Buckholtz' grocery store, and attended the Methodist church. Art invited us to the church and that appealed to both of us. I had always been a Methodist.

Art and his wife Erma became our very special friends. In mid-summer of 1939 while we were enjoying a visit at their home, Erma announced that she was expecting a baby that fall. Also Mrs. Lindsay, wife of our minister, was expecting a baby in late August. Our son Dick was due in early August, and we found out that Dorothy Erickson was expecting in November. We were adding to the church membership though none of these infants are part of the church today.

In the year leading up to the 1960s, Bob's work and our electrical business, as well as our family activities, had somewhat taken us from the church. When they were planning to build the new church the pastor, Jesse Mark, asked Bob if he would work out something for the electrical needed on the building.

This sparked Bob's interest. He furnished his time and labor for construction at no cost, plus material at a highly discounted price. That made it "our church" once again. Bob was always very proud of his contribution and continued doing a number of projects for the church throughout the years.

I can't remember when I didn't sew, knit, crochet or work on any conceivable craft, so it was only natural that I started donating many items to the annual bazaars. I was working at the time, so I couldn't attend meetings, but I boxed up needlework to take to the sale.

Later, Bob would arrange his work schedule so he could be in the shop and I could go to "craft days" and attend the bazaar. Eventually, I was asked to chair the bazaar which I did for a number of years. It was such a pleasure working with the wonderful people--both the church workers and those who came to buy our wares.

But time passed on as did many members who made things happen in the church. Others continued successfully for a number of years, and things have changed. The bazaar was replaced by the Advent Tea. I'm thankful that I experience these events in our church.

LOOKING BACK . . .

Looking back over the years, I realize I have been worshiping in the Mariposa United Methodist Church since 1935, beginning in the little white church. I've seen much growth and changes. The first parish house, in the early 1940s, was a Lions Club and community project along with the church. Then came our beautiful, existing sanctuary and Sunday school building, and a new parsonage in the 1960s.

Here it is 2005 and our new parish hall is near completion. Each project, large or small, when brought before the congregation, was always met with enthusiasm, voluntary service, and of course, pledges.

I'm certain our church will continue to grow and I'm so grateful to have been a part of it these many years—seventy to be exact!

Lorraine Walker

REMEMBRANCES . . .

Marge Mueller

At a public meeting featuring guest speakers, Wawona Washburn Hartwig and Shirley Sargent, the audience listened as Wawona described a delightful, secluded pond near the Wawona Hotel. Recalling boyhood escapades, Cliff Westfall (Cathey's Valley Methodist Church) jumped up announcing, "I used to go skinny dipping in that pond." Instantly, Wawona quipped, "I thought I recognized you."



Frances Meyer possessed an artistic flare when arranging flowers, either artificial or fresh. She often mentioned how she would enjoy working in a florist shop, although never did. Instead she, as a young woman, became a model for Coca Cola ads.



Children captivated Winfred "Win" Johnson so much that he had to converse with each one every Sunday after the service. Kids seemed to know how much he cared, too, and were drawn to him by the invisible power of love.

J. L. Spriggs had a persimmon tree in his yard that was heavy with fruit each year. He faithfully brought boxes of persimmons to church to share in time for Christmas baking. Also, the beautiful chandeliers in the sanctuary were donated by J.L. and Vesta. Since he helped build the church, he felt a heightened responsibility not only for its upkeep, but also its presentation.



Ethel Hunton served as church treasurer for years as well as treasurer for the History Center, too. She would take the offering home and spread it out on her dining table and get to work counting the money single-handedly.



Ted Parker, a big man, had an interesting hobby. He hooked rugs—beautifully, too



As I prepare to move from Mariposa within a few months, there are many "goodbyes" to be said. However my church home for more than twenty years will go with me in several ways: memories, both sad and joyful; friendships; spiritual growth; education about the Bible and Methodist tradition. As I reviewed the list of pastors who have served me, I realized that I received unique gifts from each one. I've acquired an abiding certainty of God's continuing care and presence for the world and for my life. My thanks to each person who has sustained this church over the years! The richness of life in this congregation has been the over-riding experience of my years in Mariposa. "May the Lord, loving God, bless and keep you forever!"

Inna Delle Tettleton





The Church's One Foundation

The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord;
She is his new creation by water and the word.
From heaven he came and sought her to be his holy bride;
With his own blood he bought her, and for her life he died.

Elect from every nation, yet one o'er all the earth,
Her charter of salvation, one Lord, one faith, one birth;
One holy name she blesses, partakes one holy food,
And to one hope she presses, with every grace endued.

Mid toil and tribulation, and tumult of her war,
She waits the consummation of peace for ever more;
Till, with the vision glorious, her longing eyes are blest,
And the great Church victorious shall be the Church at rest.

Yet she on earth hath union with God the Three in One,
And mystic sweet communion with those whose rest is won.
O happy ones and holy! Lord, give us grace that we,
Like them, the meek and lowly, on high may dwell with thee.

Samuel J. Stone, 1839-1900

Samuel S. Wesley, 1810-1876

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Members, Mariposa United Methodist Church

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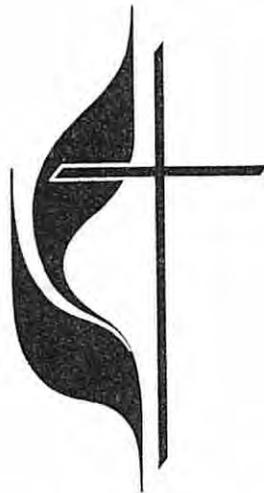
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