

A History of Presley Chapel United Methodist Church

*“A family oriented, small country church
celebrating it’s 125th year”*

Alabam, Madison County, Arkansas



By Kevin Hatfield
Church Historian

May, 2010

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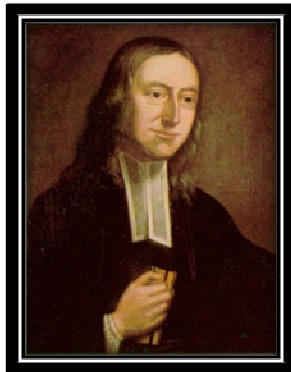
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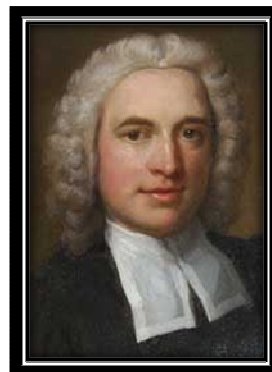
3rd Great Grandson of Melenium Brown Presley and Nancy Terry Walden

Early Methodism

Methodism came into what is now Arkansas at least two decades before statehood, just as it had been brought to North America at least two decades before the American Revolution. Led by John Wesley, an Anglican priest, his brother Charles, and a few others, Methodism had begun as a movement within the Church of England in the 1720s. Wesley never considered himself anything but an Anglican priest, but after the Americans had won their independence, his followers here demanded a new and separate church. (Britton, 2008)



John Wesley



Charles Wesley

Structure of the Church

Wesley's followers studied and worshiped as small independent classes or societies until the **Methodist Episcopal (ME) Church** in America was officially organized in Baltimore in 1784. At that time, the church had nearly 15,000 members.

Reverend Eli Lindsey holds the distinction of being the first Methodist Preacher appointed to a charge in the Arkansas Territory. In 1815, he was appointed to the Spring River Circuit of the Missouri Conference. His home site was near Jesup, (Lawrence County) Arkansas. In 1815, Methodists in the Arkansas Territory were part of the Tennessee Conference of the

Methodist Episcopal Church. The following year, all of Arkansas north of the Arkansas River was assigned to the Missouri Conference. (The Arkansas Conference Archives)

Another distinct denomination separated from the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1830. A group of reformers, believing that the church was not democratic enough, had been agitating for change for over a decade. Among the features they adopted when they organized a new church four years later were equal representation for laymen (although not women) at the conference sessions and replacement of bishops by elected presidents. They also decided that committees at the annual conferences should appoint the preachers. As the **Methodist Protestant Church**, the new denomination remained separate until the Uniting Conference of 1939. By that time, the newly created Methodist Church embraced most of their reforms.

In 1836, the Arkansas Conference of the Methodist Episcopal was organized at Batesville. The Methodist Protestant Churches were a part of the Tennessee Conference.

The most painful and damaging schism within the Methodist Episcopal Church, however, came about at the General Conference of 1844. The issue was slavery, which would divide the United States itself some seventeen years later. Out of a whirlwind of debate, and even violence, the various annual conferences in the slave-owning states of the South withdrew and formed a new denomination, calling it **the Methodist Episcopal Church, South**. Some ME or “Northern” churches struggled to survive in parts of northwestern and northern Arkansas, but most had closed by the late 1850s and reopened their doors only after the Civil War. This is the group that the new church at Alabam would be a part of. (Vernon, 1976)

History of the Methodist Conferences in Arkansas

Before proceeding with the history of Presley Chapel, a quick history of the founding of the general Conferences in Arkansas is in order. In 1854, Arkansas had two Conferences: north of the Arkansas River was the Arkansas Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church South and south of the river was the Ouachita Conference. The Ouachita Conference was renamed the Little Rock Conference after the Civil War.

In 1870, a third Conference was created by dividing the Arkansas Conference in half and was called the White River Conference. In 1914, Arkansas Conferences were reduced from three to two. The merged Arkansas Conference and White River Conferences became the North Arkansas Conference.

From 1914 – 2003, Presley Chapel was part of the North Arkansas Conference. Our present Conference, the Arkansas Conference which comprises all the United Methodist Churches in the State of Arkansas was organized in June, 2003. (The Arkansas Conference Archives)

The Alabama (Alabam) Methodist Episcopal Church South

Local articles, letters, and remembrances indicate the date of the founding of the new Methodist Episcopal Church South as between 1885 and 1888. According to a 1993 article, "a very successful" revival meeting was conducted **in 1885** by the Revs. Thomas A. Norwood and James H. Myers. This revival meeting was held at the Lake School House, northwest of Alabam. (Simpson, 1993) Because of the success of the revival, a need for an organized local church was realized. Prominent families involved in the early organization of the church included the Presley's, Norwood's, Everett's, Hatfield's, Porters, and Walden's. The article states that the church building was constructed in 1885 on land donated by Melenium Brown Presley. (see plat on page 5) The original deed from M. B. Presley and Nancy T. Walden Presley that conveyed the land was executed in July of 1889. (Circuit Clerk' Office-Madison County) While one cannot imagine today that a congregation would build a church house on land that they did not legally own, it appears that is what they did. The deed speaks of the church house that is already on the land. The article went on to say that those that could afford it donated cash to purchase materials and many donated labor to clear the land and aide in the actual construction. The building was dedicated in 1890 and was dedicated as Alabama Methodist Episcopal Church South. (Simpson, 1993)

Original Deed Conveying Land to the ME Church South at Alabam

Know all men by these presents - that we M.B Presley and N. T. Presley, his wife, of the County of Madison and State of Arkansas for and in consideration of the sum of one dollar to us in hand paid, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged and for the further consideration of our interest in the cause of Christianity, we do hereby give, grant, bargain, sell, and convey unto M. B. Presley, Samuel Everett, and William Brogan, church trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church South and to their successors in office forever, the following tract or parcel of land situated in the County of Madison, State of Arkansas to wit:

A part of the SW quarter of the NE quarter of Section 7 in Township 17 North of Range 25 West and more particularly described as follows to wit:

Beginning at a hickory tree about five inches thick and about 20 feet west of the mouth of the lane and on the west side of the Alabam Post Office and Kingston road; thence running North 78½ yards; thence West 98½ yards; thence South 98½ yard to the line of Willis Wiggins Land be the lane more or less; thence East with the said Wiggins line 98½ yards; thence North to the hickory tree the place of beginning, all for two acres be the same more or less.

To have and to hold the same unto the same M. B. Presley, Samuel Everett, and William Brogan as such Trustees and to their successors in office forever. And we hereby covenant with the said Trustees that we will forever warrant and defend the title to said lands against all lawful claims whatever.

*And I, N. T. Presley, wife of the said M. B. Presley for and in consideration of the said sum of money and the consideration for the cause of Christianity herein expressed, do hereby release and relinquish unto the said Trustees and their successors in office all my rights of Donor in and to said Lands. And it is further provided that the **Trustees of the Church House on said land** shall at all times permit such ministers and preachers belonging to the Methodist Episcopal Church South as shall from time to time be duly authorized by General Conference of said church or by the Annual Conference to preach and explain God's Holy Word and to execute the discipline of the Church and to administer the sacraments therein according to the meaning and purposes of our seal and settlement.*

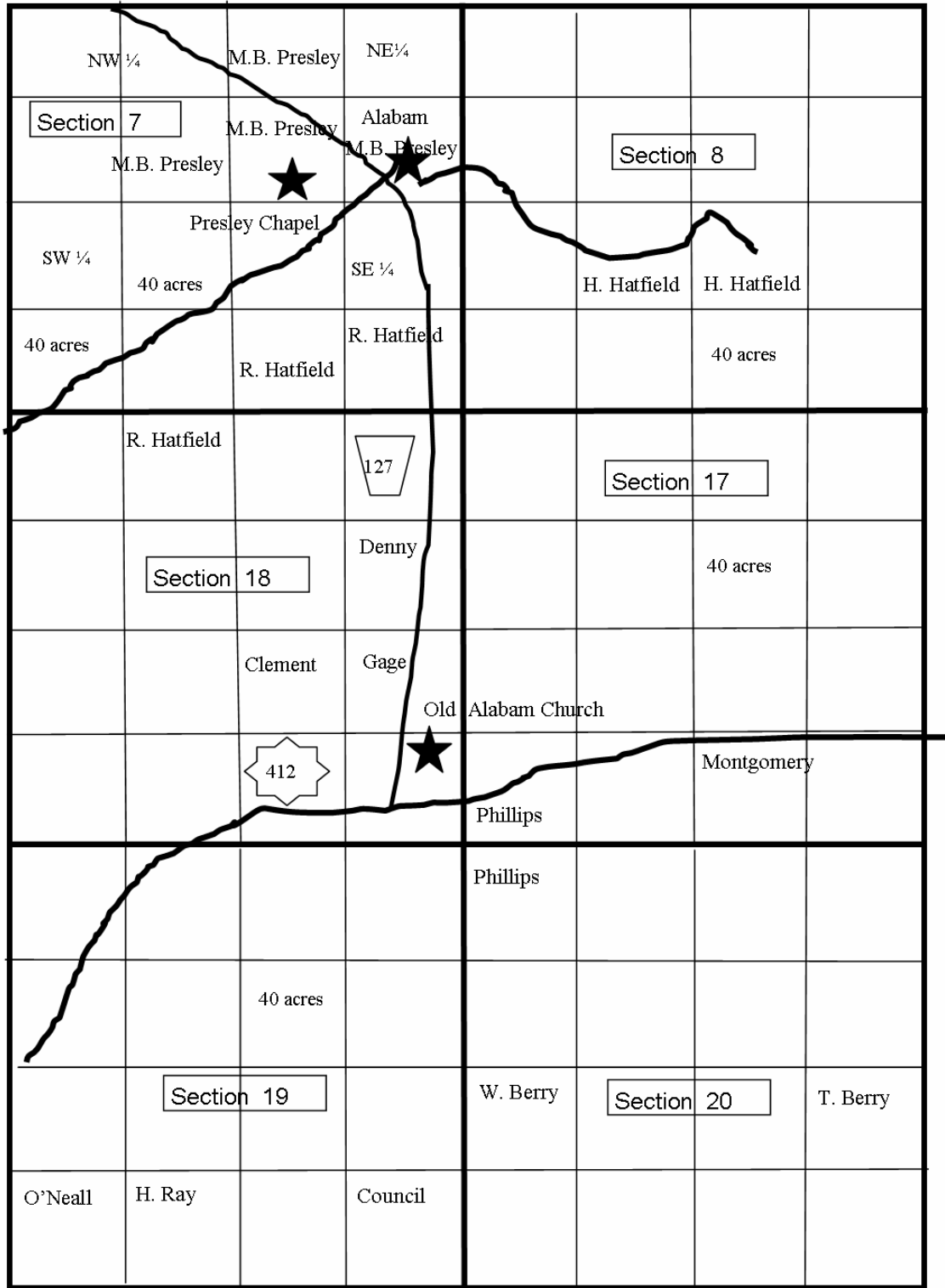
Witness our hands and seals this __ day of July, 1889.

The Goodspeed History of Madison County Arkansas, published in 1889, refers to the church as the Alabama Church, not Presley Chapel, and mentions James B. Presley and Wiley Burns (the son and son-in-law of Melenium Brown Presley respectfully) as stewards of the church at Alabama (Alabam). (Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1889)

Another version of the founding of the church is found in a local history entitled The History of Alabam in which Mrs. Leota Hatfield is interviewed and gives the date 1888 as the date that the church was built. In a separate article in the book, it states that about 1888, Melenium Brown Presley donated the land on which to build a church. They went on to say that the land was to be used for religious and funeral purposes only. This was probably done to insure that the building was not to be used for a school or fraternal order, which was common during this period. (Epsilon, Theta Mu, 1980) In the original deed, the use of the property to further the cause of Christianity is most evident.

In a 1941 letter to Pearl and Ruby Light, Mabel Lindsay who was the daughter of Hugh Hatfield (one of the original church members) wrote that the building was completed about 1893. This date is questionable if the 1885 or 1888 dates are correct. The church would have had to meet in temporary quarters or a brush arbor for five to seven years.

The land grant patent, along with the accompanying plat, proves that the land where Presley Chapel is located did indeed belong to Melenium Brown Presley. The deed to the property indicates that the original land granted to the church was about 2 acres.



← One mile →

Township 17, Range 25, Madison County, Arkansas



The United States of America,

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME, GREETING:

Homestead Certificate No. 1298
Application 1925

Whereas, there has been deposited in the General Land Office of the United States a CERTIFICATE of the Register of the Land Office at Harrison Arkansas, whereby it appears that, pursuant to the Act of Congress approved 20th May, 1862, "To secure Homesteads to actual settlers on the public domain," and the acts supplemental thereto, the claim of Millennium B Presley

conformity to law for the west half and ^{of the North East quarter} the south east quarter of the North East quarter, and the North East quarter of the North west quarter of Section seven, in Township seventeen North, of Range Twenty five West, in the District of lands subject to sale at Harrison Arkansas, containing one hundred and sixty acres.

according to the Official Plat of the Survey of the said Land returned to the General Land Office by the SURVEYOR GENERAL.

Now know ye, That there is therefore granted by the UNITED STATES unto the said Millennium B Presley the tract of Land above described: To Have and to Hold the said tract of Land, with the appurtenances thereof, unto the said Millennium B Presley and to his heirs and assigns forever.

In testimony whereof, I, Ulysses S Grant, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, have caused these letters to be made Patent, and the Seal of the General Land Office to be hereunto affixed.

Given under my hand, at the CITY OF WASHINGTON, the thirtieth day of June, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy six, and of the Independence of the United States the One Hundredth.

BY THE PRESIDENT: U. S. Grant
By D. D. Cone, Sec'y.
B. W. Clark, Recorder of the General Land Office

1621599



Conclusion

Official records from the Archives of the Arkansas Conference confirm that Presley Chapel was established in 1885. (Journals of the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church, 1907 - 1929) If the church had been founded in 1888, the year information was being compiled for Goodspeed's History of Madison County, one would reason that the compilers would have mentioned in the article on Methodism in Madison County the fact that a new church had just been formed at Alabam. This would have been worthy of mention. A summary of the article is below:

*The Huntsville Circuit of the Methodist Episcopal Church South contained seven churches during this period: Huntsville, McConnell Chapel, Arbor Church at Aurora, Withrow Church, **Alabama Church**, (Alabam) Pleasant Home and Bohannon Mountain. The church at Hindsville was a part of the Goshen Circuit and the Saint Paul Circuit numbered three churches, Saint Paul, Bollinger's and The Cove Church. In all, eleven ME South churches were operational in Madison County in 1889. There was one Methodist Protestant Church in the county, located in the Lamar Township. (near Wesley)*

Based upon the evidence, it appears that Alabama (Alabam) Methodist Episcopal Church South (Presley Chapel) was founded in 1885, a church was built on the land soon thereafter, the land was officially deeded to the church in July, 1889, and the church was dedicated in 1890.

Presley Chapel - The Early Years

The local congregation donated the \$50 to purchase a bell which is still housed in the church today. The Church was just one big room with two doors at the front, one for women to enter and one for men to enter, which was the custom of the time. It is also probable that the men sat on one side of the church and women on the other, a practice highly regarded by John Wesley. (Vernon, 1976)

The steps to the doors were large sandstone rocks. (Note: some of the original rocks were used for the facing of the porch on the new church and are still visible) The foundation was also constructed of native stone. A small elevated stage was centered at the front. In front of the stage was a low bench, referred to as the "moaners bench" which was used for worshipers to kneel at and pray. According to early members of the church, the name came from the sincerity of those who prayed aloud, sometimes moaning aloud while asking for forgiveness of their sins and transgressions. Shouting for joy and praying aloud were quite common in the early days of the church. The early members of the Methodist Episcopal Church South were quite often referred to as "shouting Methodists." Church services were never expected to be quiet and solemn.



Presley Chapel United Methodist Church c. 1950

This name commonly applied to early nineteenth century Methodists, "shouting Methodists" was a name Methodists were glad to accept and make their own. What was meant by the term, "shouting Methodists"? At the very least, it meant that Methodists were a noisy lot, interrupting the preacher with shouts of "Praise the Lord," "Hallelujah," and "Amen." Alexander Campbell declared that the Methodist church could not live without her cries of "Glory! Glory! Glory!" And he reported that "*her periodical Amens dispossess demons, storm heaven, shut the gates of hell, and drive Satan from the camp.*" (Vernon, 1976)

But Methodist noise was not limited to the shouting. Singing and clapping, groaning and crying, praying and exhorting, contributed to the din (*a continuous noise*). In one Methodist hymn book, dated 1807, the initial impression of a convert is reported:

**The Methodists were preaching like thunder all about.
At length I went amongst them, to hear them groan and shout.
I thought they were distracted, such fools I'd never seen.
They'd stamp and clap and tremble, and wail and cry and scream.**

It is clear that "shout" was a prominent part of the Methodist vocabulary. Nowhere is this more evident than in the refrains of their spiritual songs. "Shout, shout, we're gaining ground," they sang. "We'll shout old Satan's kingdom down." The word would appear in casual conversations. An aged person, for example, would rejoice at being still able "to shout," and a death would be recorded: "She went off shouting." This aptly describes Presley Chapel, at least through the 1940's.

In addition, there were four large windows on each side of the church. The church would originally be lit by suspended kerosene lamps but with the coming of electricity to the area, five large chain suspended light fixtures would replace the kerosene lamps. (Those five light fixtures are still in use at the new church) Also, the first neon sign in the community hung on the front of the church. In two brilliant colors, it simply stated: Presley Chapel. This was probably added in the 1940's.

The aforementioned letter from Mabel Hatfield Lindsey is interesting because of the insight it gives as to what church may have been like during this period. The letter is concerned with the untimely death of Rev. William Henry Hatfield in Southwest City, Missouri. Rev. Hatfield was her uncle. Rev. Hatfield served Presley Chapel as its minister from 1921 – 1925. According to his obituary, he was a Methodist Minister for 40 years in Madison County and the Indian Territory. Rev. Hatfield was murdered in 1927 by shotgun while on duty as a night marshal.

Rev. W. H. Hatfield

Saved when young about 25. About 60 years ago.

Southwest City, Missouri. He served as night watchman and was brutally murdered by gunshot wound. "Whiskey fighter"

"Rev. W. H. Hatfield was a man who always stood firm for what was right, and lived that kind of a life, and while our citizens were sleeping, he was brutally murdered at his post of duty."

From family of five – four boys were preachers and the sister good Christian woman. Pray beautifully and was often blest by the Lord. All are dead now. They helped to build Presley chapel which now stands after 48 years. Built in 1893, Methodist of the old fashioned type preaching a real salvation. These preachers preached here many times and held many revivals here. Always kneeling in prayer and much shouting.

Married and five children

Mrs. Lee Lindsay

Alabam, Ark.

In her closing line of the above letter, Mabel Lindsey mentions "Always kneeling in prayer and much shouting. At least through the 1950's, this practice of kneeling for prayer was still practiced, at least by the older male members at Presley Chapel. When called to prayer, several of the male members would kneel at their seats, with hand positioned over their foreheads, and pray. More often than not, they would pray aloud even as the pastor was offering up his prayer aloud. It was common for some to approach the "moaner's bench" to offer up their prayers.

The shouts of “glory, hallelujah, and amen” were often uttered aloud during the sermon. At times, as the spirit of the church moved them, a member might break out into an unannounced song “at will”, even in the middle of a particular stirring sermon. Many a times, the old song “I am bound for the promise land” would be sung during the sermon. The pastor would just stop and all would sing. When the song was finished, the preacher would continue his message.

Early church records indicate that the first marriage at the new church occurred in 1890 by Rev. James H. Meyers, who is known to have been a member of the Huntsville Circuit in 1888. He performed the marriage of Francis J. “Bud” Presley, son of Melenium Brown Presley and Nancy Terry Walden to Martha Ann “Mattie” Everett, daughter of Sam J. and Sarah Jane Everett.

Alabam ME Church South becomes Presley Chapel

At what point the name of the church is changed to Presley Chapel is unknown but the first record of the church being referred to as Presley Chapel occurs in 1902, the same year that Melenium Brown Presley died. One might assume that this would be a fitting memorial to one of the early church leaders and the one who donated the land on which the church building stands. Even though the church was dedicated in 1890, it could have been named Presley Chapel at that time but the naming of edifices for people who were still living was not a common practice.



Melenium Brown Presley and Nancy Terry Walden

Melenium Brown Presley was born in Clay County, North Carolina on October 25, 1828, his parents being Sanders and Elizabeth Crowell Presley, both natives of North Carolina.

They afterwards made their home in Middle Tennessee. Sanders Presley, who was a farmer and a circuit rider in the Methodist Church, died in Tennessee in 1840. Brown Presley married Nancy Terry Walden on May 9, 1847 in Jackson, Tennessee. In 1857, Melenium, known by his middle name "Brown", moved his mother and family to Arkansas and arrived in Madison County on November 7, 1857. After the Civil War, he had claimed right to over 400 acres of land in the Alabama community which he divided among several of his children. In 1889, he still retained 160 acres, having donated about two acres for the building of a new church building at Alabama (Alabam), The Methodist Episcopal Church South.

Brown Presley and Nancy Terry Walden had eleven children, all which would be active in the local church. They were:

Mary Emeline Presley, b. Oct 11, 1848 who married Wiley Burns

Allen Washington Presley, b. Aug. 22, 1850 who married Mary Jane Hatfield, daughter of Rev. Robert H. Hatfield and Sarah Jane Montgomery Hatfield

William T. Presley, b. Dec. 29, 1852 who died on Jan. 25, 1870 at the age of 18

Dacey Jane Presley, b. Dec. 28, 1854, who married Rev. Hugh Melvin Hatfield, son of Rev. Robert H. Hatfield and Sarah Jane Montgomery Hatfield

Rev. James B. Presley, b. Jan 6, 1856 who married Flora Irene Wilcox.

Sarah A. Presley, b. May 5, 1859 who married Rev. Robert C. Hatfield, son of Rev. Robert H. Hatfield and Sarah Jane Montgomery Hatfield

Henry M. Presley, b. Nov. 6, 1861 who married Martha E. Montgomery, daughter of Campbell Montgomery and Amanda H. Berry

Catherine Tennessee Presley, b. April 20, 1864, who married William Darret Everett
Wiley B. Presley, b. Oct 24, 1866 who married Amanda A. Porter

Martha A. Presley, b. Jan 20, 1868 who married Robert Edward Graham

Francis J. Presley, b. Sept. 9, 1871, who married Martha Ann Everett, daughter of Sam J. and Sarah J. Everett (Hatfield, 2009)

The marriage of the Presley children into the Hatfield's, Everett's and Porter's was enough in itself to have a large congregation from the very beginning. Nearly all the aforementioned names can be found on the early rolls of the church.

Early Church Membership – The first 50 years.

During the first 25 years (1885 – 1910), 96 new members were added to the rolls of Presley Chapel. A full time minister was probably not used at the Church but varied from period to period. Circuits and Circuit riders were in use quite often during this period. The circuit rider, traveling usually on horseback because it was economical and suited to the forest pathways, preached nearly every day and twice on Sundays, thus covering his circuit every four or five weeks. His appointments were usually in pioneer cabins and schoolhouses. The circuit rider often had a limited education, but he was usually an effective preacher and lived a very self-sacrificing life.

Records found indicate that Revs. John Villines, William Henderson Corely, Thomas Norwood and James H. Myers were active during the early years of the church. As previously indicated, the church has its beginnings at the Lake School house in 1885 and may have even met there while the church building was being constructed. The local community was recovering from the aftermaths of the Civil War (which hit the area hard due to “Bushwackers”) and the local community was working hard to rebuild itself not only for the present day but for the future.

Mrs. Juanita Bailey, a current member of the church, recalls interviewing Mrs. Matilda (Presley) Walden, one of the founding members of Presley Chapel, in 1940 when “Aunt Tildy” was 93 years old. Aunt Tildy was the niece of Brown Presley and she died in 1950 at the age of 101. She recounted that during the war, their meals (breakfast, dinner, and supper) consisted of nothing more than cornbread and wild onions which were found during the day. The Bushwackers had stolen all of their possessions and food and even resorted to burning the feet of the small children to force the mothers to tell them where any food might be buried. In the spring, they had no food at all and no seeds in which to plant. They raided the nests of rats and found enough corn kernels in which to plant some corn. It was this kind of faith and perseverance which led to the founding of Presley Chapel.

During the next 25 years (1911 – 1936) an additional 88 new members joined the church, bringing the total for its first 50 years to 184. During this period, revivals were held often and some of them evidently quite successful in bringing new members into the church. This is evident by large numbers of people joining the church on the same day. One great revival must have been held in September of 1912 as eight members joined the church on the 4th. We know of another held in August of 1930 in which 15 were baptized and joined the church under the auspices of Rev. Oscar Anglin. As of the writing, one of those 15 was still alive, Dixie Hatfield Blair, who recalled that the baptism of all took place in War Eagle Creek, just below the Old McMurray Bridge.

Huntsville-Presley Chapel Charge

It appears that the Huntsville-Presley Chapel Charge of the church was established about 1929 although the charge assignment would change at least twice over the next 25 years. Records from the Conference archives also confirm that Presley Chapel was established in 1885. A Historical Annual Report of the Harrison District for 1907 states that the Huntsville Circuit consisted of Huntsville, Hindsville, Cross Roads, Presley's Chapel, McConnell's Chapel and Union Gap.

In 1929 – 1930, Huntsville and Presley Chapel were listed together in the official journals of the Arkansas Conference of the church. (Journals of the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist

Church, 1907 - 1929) In 1931 Presley Chapel was listed with Berryville. From 1932 to 1939 Presley Chapel was listed on the Huntsville charge, along with several other churches.

In 1941 and 1940 Huntsville and Hindsville were listed together; and Presley Chapel was on the Alpena Circuit along with Alpena, Osage, Piney and Shiloh. From 1942 to 1955, Presley Chapel was always listed on the Huntsville Charge or sometimes they were both on the Madison County Circuit, sometimes with other churches at various times: (Brannon Chapel, Delaney, Elkins, Nichol's (Nickell) Memorial, St. Paul, Crosses, Alabam, Hindsville, Hartwell, Osage, Piney, Shiloh, Goshen, Zion, Rocky Branch)

A list of pastors can be found in the journals and those names basically agree with those provided by local church records although the years of assignment are at time off by one year. The reporting year of the Conference and the actual years recorded in local church records may not have been the same. For example, local records were usually based upon a calendar year while the Conference year may have begun in July.

“The League”

Presley Chapel met each Sunday night where the local members and friends of the church conducted what was just referred to as “The League”. Just when this program started is not known but may have been in use as early as the 1930's. Rev. Charles Fry, in his report of 1939 reported “Presley Chapel Sunday evening meetings are well attended and made interesting by a large number taking their part.” This was a form of Bible study in which one member had control of the program. The program centered on some topic of interest to members, such as salvation, love, forgiveness, prayer, etc. The leader of the league would pass out slips of paper with a Bible verse or hand out a small published article, usually from the “Upper Room” magazine which was relative to the topic of the evening as members arrived. The leader maintained a list of those in attendance and once the league started, the leader would call the names of those in attendance from the list and that person would read their assigned verse and then comment upon it. Sometimes others would also make a commentary on the verse or article. The league would end when everyone had read their assigned verse or article. Some person would then volunteer to conduct the league the following Sunday night. It was up to the leader to select the topic, find appropriate Bible verses or small articles relative to the topic.

It is probable that “The League” was the remnants of the old Epworth League of the Methodist Church. The **EPWORTH LEAGUE**, which set a pattern for church youth organizations, was founded at Cleveland's Central Methodist Church in 1889, taking its name from the birthplace of John Wesley, Epworth, Lincolnshire, England. Within 10 years it claimed over 1.75 million members in 19,500 chapters internationally. Prior to 1889, as many as 5 young people's organizations existed in the Methodist Episcopal Church, among them: the Methodist Alliance, and the Young People's Christian League, among others. The Epworth League's motto was “Look Up, Lift Up.” The league, which soon spread worldwide, focused on Spiritual Life, Social Work, Literary Work, Correspondence, Mercy and Help, and Finance. Local chapters organized literary events, lecture series, and fellowship gatherings. The Epworth League's name would be changed to “Methodist Youth Fellowship” in the late 1930's. As the number of youth fell in the Alabam community in the 1950's, (the young couples were moving from the community to find work) the league was probably continued much like it had been conducted by the youth prior. Young people were encouraged to still participate and conduct the league into the early 1960's. As attendance fell in the 1960's and 70's, the league was discontinued. (Epworth League, 2009)

Formation of the Methodist Church

The two Methodist Episcopal Churches, North and South, and the Methodist Protestant Church co-existed uncomfortably for almost a century. Finally, after many years of negotiations, the three denominations merged at the so-called *Uniting Conference of 1939* to form one nationwide body known as the **Methodist Church**.

A New Presley Chapel

By 1962, the original building of 1885 had become structurally unsafe. During windy weather, the old building would sway with the wind with enough movement to be noticed while sitting in church. Nails that held the outside planks to the framework were coming loose and protruding more and more as the building moved. The congregation, being urged on by the church treasurer, Elmer Everett, decided it was time to build a new worship facility. Raymond Berry was elected to head the finance committee and the facility was designed by the minister, Rev. J. Hillman Byram. Tom Norwood of Rogers, a member of the church and a descendant of Rev. Tom Norwood, one of the founding ministers, served as the general contractor. Rev. Byram constructed a scaled model made of cardboard of what the new church would look like, complete with a removable roof so that church members could view the interior. The building would contain four classrooms and the sanctuary. The original two classrooms on the west end would be separated by folding doors and was to double as an area in which to set up tables for church socials and dinners. The walls were to be covered with wood paneling and the floors were hardwood. Estimated cost of construction was \$15,000. (Simpson, 1993)

The old building was torn down by members of the congregation in the spring 1962 and church was held in the old Alabam store building, formerly owned by Raymond and Lizzie Berry, during construction. Much of the internal framing of the new church was from timbers in the original church built about 1885-86. The first service held in the new church was on Sunday, July 1, 1962 with the Rev. A. Stewart Aist, officiating. (Murray, 1964) At first, the original handmade pews from the old church were used. Besides being somewhat uncomfortable, they definitely did not fit the new décor and soon thereafter individual members purchased new pews.

Dedication of Presley Chapel Methodist Church

In 2 short years following the construction of the new church, the congregation had paid off all loans and costs associated with the \$15,000 structure, and the church was officially dedicated on September 6, 1964 with Dr. John Bayliss, District Superintendent, officiating at the dedication. Rev. J. Hillman Byram, the pastor who had designed the church, was invited back to Presley Chapel to deliver the morning sermon at 11:00 a.m. Following the church services, a pot-luck dinner was served. Following the meal, the church reconvened for the dedication ceremonies at 2:00 p.m. which was attended by over 100 members and guests. After the dedication ceremonies were completed, the Charge Conference of the Huntsville-Presley Chapel Charge was called into session. (Murray, 1964)

Those attending the dedication ceremonies of the church were:

Mrs. Lela Coger of Huntsville
Mr. and Mrs. Arlis Coger of Huntsville
Mrs. Blanche Feller of Wichita, Kansas
Mary Miller of Wichita, Kansas
Nelle Newton of Wichita, Kansas
Mr. and Mrs. Bill Eden and Brenda of Lowell
Mr. and Mrs. Frank Dillahunt of Huntsville
Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Ewing of Huntsville
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Kirkpatrick of Tulsa, OK
Mr. and Mrs. Carl Grimes and Carolyn of Delano, California
T. W. and Ruth Norwood of Rogers
Mr. and Mrs. C. L. Davidson of Springfield, MO
Mr. and Mrs. Tommie Presley of Alabam
Harvey T. Hatfield of Alabam
Kate Shackelford of Alabam
Mr. and Mrs. Lee Lindsay, Alabam
Mr. and Mrs. Charles H. Berry of Hector
Mr. and Mrs. Earn Montgomery of Springdale
Mr. and Mrs. Ronnie Hatfield of Alabam
Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Worley of Alabam
Rev. E. H. Faulkner of Berryville
Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Berry of Alabam
Ruby and Pearl Light of Alabam
Mr. and Mrs. Ray Drake of Huntsville
Mrs. Dorma Vaughan, Marla and Twila of Huntsville
Eugene Holloway of Alabam
Nete McCloud, Ricky and Randy of Alabam
Lyle Monger, Berryville
Val Robison, Alabam
Stella Montgomery, Alabam
Marie Berry, Springdale
Ella Hatfield, Alabam
Pauline Presley, Alabam
Linda, Ina, and Winnie Simpson of Alabam
Woodrow Harmon, Alabam
Mr. and Mrs. Arvil Hatfield, Kevin , Kenny, and Kim of Alabam
Edith Auslam, Huntsville
Doris Ann Coger, Huntsville
Mr. and Mrs. Rupert Berry and Gene of Springdale
Mr. and Mrs. Donald Myers of Springdale
Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Myers of Springdale
Charles Vanderpool of Huntsville
Ricky Kirkpatrick of Tulsa, OK
Mack Hobbs of Forum
Mr. and Mrs. Earn Patrick and Donna of Alabam

Dillard Reeves of Huntsville
Mr. and Mrs. C. N. Watson of Huntsville
V. N. Phillips of Valley Springs
Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Ham and Debbie of Forum
Walter Smith of Prairie Grove
Mr. and Mrs. Will Patrick of Huntsville
Mr. and Mrs. Labe Owens of Huntsville
Mr. and Mrs. Brice Everett of Huntsville
Margaret Davidson of Springfield, MO
Carolyn Hatfield of Alabam
Gary, David, and Kathy Horton of Lakewood, CA
Mr. and Mrs. Virgil Hatfield of Alabam
Mr. and Mrs. Carl Hatfield of Alabam

All in all, visitors from five states and ten towns in Arkansas were present. (UMC, Archives - Presley Chapel, 1962)



The United Methodist Church - 1968

One other change in the national organization of the church had little impact on Arkansas. ***In 1968, the Methodist Church united with the former Evangelical United Brethren (EUB) Church, taking the current official name—the United Methodist Church.*** (Britton, 2008)

A Fellowship Hall is added

When the new worship facility was built, funds were somewhat limited. Money was not available to purchase pews or even a pulpit that would match the décor of the new sanctuary. Mrs. Maud Norwood, sister of the general contractor, Tom Norwood of Rogers, purchased and donated a new pulpit for the church which was in use until the fall of 2009. Mrs. Grace Ray donated an art print that depicts Jesus and other followers which was hung on the stage wall.

The western classrooms, divided by a set of folding wooden doors, was used for church dinners and socials. It soon became apparent that this was not the ideal situation. While folding tables were used to place the food, there was not room for even a medium gathering to sit down and eat. People were forced to go outside and “stand and eat”, sit on the ground, or go into the sanctuary and sit in the pews and eat. Also, there was no water which contributed to a myriad of problems, especially with children filling their plates. The need for a fellowship hall was the answer. About 1972, a fellowship hall was added, complete with kitchen and bathroom facilities. Up to this point, an old fashion “outhouse” was the only bathroom facility. It would be discovered later that the outhouse did not actually sit on church property.

All along, ample parking had been a problem at the church. In 1986, the church trustees wanted to obtain some additional land for parking and to add a small play area adjoining the fellowship hall. While laying out the playground and deciding where to place the fencing, it was discovered that the church did not own the land that the trustees wished to place the fence along. As no land survey was available and there had evidently not been a need for a survey since the land was originally granted to the church, a survey was commissioned. Just how and when it happened is not known, but the survey indicated that the tract of land owned by Presley Chapel now contained only 0.79 acres, not two as originally granted. In addition, part of the church was actually not on property that the church owned and the outhouses were on someone else's property. The problem was easily fixed as church members Noble and Eria Grubbs signed a Quitclaim Deed granting Presley Chapel 1.03 acres, bringing the tract to 1.8 acres. Presley Chapel may be one of the few churches anywhere to construct two separate worship facilities on land they did not own at the time. (Madison County Circuit Clerk, 1986) In 2002, the frosted windows in the church were replaced with memorial stained glass windows.

Ministers Serving Presley Chapel

Since 1885, Presley Chapel has had at least 80 ministers, each serving an average term of only two years, with 20 serving only one year or less. Rev. John Kermit VanZant would serve the longest term of seven years, 1945 - 1952. Since 1980, the average term of a minister has been 2.8 years. Even though no woman minister has ever been assigned to the Huntsville-Presley Chapel Charge, in the late 1950's, Rev. Mary Chapin, one of the earliest women to be ordained in the Methodist Church, was assigned to the Saint Paul Church. One Sunday, each quarter, the Huntsville-Presley Chapel Minister would go to Saint Paul and Rev. Chapin would come to Huntsville and Presley Chapel. She was noted for her telling of Bible stories, especially in terms that children could relate to and most of the kids could hardly wait for her time to visit.

Up until 1976, the order of worship at Presley Chapel had remained basically unchanged for at least the 50 years prior to that. The congregation assembled, church was opened with a prayer; a hymn was sung, followed by another prayer. Then another hymn was sung, followed by the sermon, the third hymn and a closing prayer. That was just about it. There was little ritual and this was just the way church was to be conducted. With the formation of the United Methodist Church in 1968, a new liturgy was introduced at Presley Chapel. With the introduction of church bulletins and a more formal order of worship, other appointments were soon added. Gerald Ham constructed the first altar to be used in the church and the old "moaner's bench" was replaced by kneeling rails also constructed by Gerald Ham. Soon thereafter, a baptismal fount was also crafted by Mr. Ham to match the pulpit, altar, and kneeling rails.

Ministers of Presley Chapel 1885 - 2010

James H. Cummins	1885	M. Hearn Smith	1936
John N. Villines	1886	Charles C. Fry	1937 - 1939
William Henderson Corley	1887	Benton Bailey	1939 - 1940
James H. Myers	1888	T. A. Moody	1940 - 1941
Thomas A. Martin	1889	Wilson B. Shultz	1941 - 1942
Zechariah W. Lindsey L. W. Lindsey	1890 -1891	Jewell Nelson	1942 - 1943
Bascom Monk	1892	John W. Coontz	1943 - 1944
John N. Villines	1893	Rev. Bowers	1945
David C. Ross	1894	John Kermit VanZant	1945 - 1952
T. M. Jackson	1895-1896	Luther K. Wilson	1952 – 1953
John P. Humphreys	1897-1898	Thomas R. Whiddon	1953 - 1956
Hugh M. Hatfield	1899-1900	John J. Clark	1956 - 1957
Hugh A. Armstrong	1901	Jewell E. Linam	1958 - 1960
John A. Womack	1902	J. Hillmann Byram	1960 - 1962
John W. Griffin	1903 - 1906	S. Woodrow Woods	1962 - 1963
Robert C. Hatfield M. C. Sooter	1903 - 1906	A. Stewart Aist	1963 - 1966
John H. Hatfield	1903 - 1906	Charles Wages	1966 -1967
W. W. Albright	1907	Vann Hooker	1967 - 1971
James M. Haley	1908	Lindsey Rolland	1971 - 1972
James R. Ennis	1909	Jerry K. Yarbrough	1972 - 1974
T. C. Steele	1910 - 1911	Neal E. Kearney	1974 - 1976
F. A. Lark W. J. Harris	1912 - 1915	James S. Williams	1976 - 1977
John W. Griffin	1912 - 1915	Gary W. Barbaree	1977 - 1979
A. E. Moody	1912 - 1915	Cooperative Parish – Charles Armour, Glenn Pettus, Chris Cooper, Phil Hathcock	1980 (6 months)
Charles Edwards	1916 - 1918	Lewis T. See	1980 - 1983
M. D. Cox S. P. Douglas	1919 - 1920	Roger K. Beal	1983 - 1985
Charles Jackson Wade	1919 - 1920	Ben H. Anderson	1985 - 1988
C. E. Cullum	1919 - 1920	Michael Gordon	1988 - 1992
Shepard R. Coburn	1919 - 1920	John D. Palmer	1992 - 1994
William Henry Hatfield	1921 – 1925	J. Mark McDonald	1994 - 1998
Edward Vann	1926	Stephen Waggoner	1998 - 2000
James B. Presley C. M. Hughes	1927 – 1928	H. Franklin Cook	2000 - 2003
Russell D. Harding	1929	James B. Harris	2003 - 2007
Oscar Anglin	1930	Michael Topham (Interim)	2007 - 2008
William C. Hutton	1931 - 1934	Heath Ray Bradley	2008—2010
W. J. Mayhew	1935		

Known members of the Church

Presley Chapel has in its possession copies and original records of membership. The earliest record contains the names of members who lived in the Alabam community during the 1850's and forward. This is of great historical significance especially for those researching family genealogies. If there was ever a "family" church, Presley Chapel certainly fits that description. Nearly all of the early members were related to each other: the Presley's, Hatfield's, Everett's, Burns, Walden's, Withrow's, etc. All of them married into each other's family. Apparently in the early days, one married within the local community.

The first records of the church are contained in a purchased register entitled:

The Church Register
Of
Presley Chapel
Methodist Episcopal Church, South

It contains a partial list of early pastors and well as a list of the church members and later on the dates (when known) that they were received into the membership of the church. For the early members, no dates are listed and it can be assumed that they were original members of the church from the period of 1888 – 1910, a period of 22 years. The first exact date occurs in 1912.

One can assume that the records are fairly complete due to an admonishment given by the registrar or secretary of the church, handwritten on the first page of the membership roster section:

Dear Preacher, or anyone keeping this Church Register –

*Please turn to front of Book and Read simple instructions and then use
common sense and Go By them.*

Do Not Revise the Roll.

Check like this - X – as names Removed.

If one followed the simple instructions given at the front of the book as so admonished, then the names of the members were recorded in chronological order as members joined the church. In addition, no names were erased as the member left the church or died. As directed, a large X was placed by their name as they were removed from the church roll.

Name	Date Received	Name	Date Received
M. E. Fields	1885 - 1910	Bud Presley	1885 - 1910
M. E. Berry	1885 - 1910	Sarah Porter	1885 - 1910
Matilda Walden	1885 - 1910	Nancy A. Withrow	1885 - 1910
Wiley Burns	1885 - 1910	Stella Montgomery	1885 - 1910
James B. Presley	1885 - 1910	Allie Withrow	1885 - 1910
Samuel J. Everett	1885 - 1910	Beulah Hatfield	1885 - 1910
Mary Presley	1885 - 1910	Ethel Hatfield	1885 - 1910
Dicey J. Hatfield	1885 - 1910	Zelpha Everett	1885 - 1910
Hugh M. Hatfield	1885 - 1910	Charles Presley	1885 - 1910
Sarah A. Nicely	1885 - 1910	Johnny Hatfield	1885 - 1910
Martha A. Presley	1885 - 1910	P. R. Fields	1885 - 1910
Thomas J. King	1885 - 1910	T. A. Garrison	1885 - 1910
Susan King	1885 - 1910	N.T. Presley	1885 - 1910
John H. Hatfield	1885 - 1910	Martha Dunn	1885 - 1910
Martha Hatfield	1885 - 1910	J. A. Withrow	1885 - 1910
Charley M. Hefner	1885 - 1910	S. T. Montgomery	1885 - 1910
Vance Walden	1885 - 1910	Jane Hatfield	1885 - 1910
Ettie Hatfield Porter	1885 - 1910	M. Brown Presley	1885 - 1910
Henry Montgomery, Jr.	1885 - 1910	Stella Hatfield	1885 - 1910
Martha Presley	1885 - 1910	N. J. Withrow	1885 - 1910
Belle Montgomery	1885 - 1910	Amanda Stone	1885 - 1910
Wiley B. Presley	1885 - 1910	Martha Fields	1885 - 1910
Berry Montgomery	1885 - 1910	Kitty Nicely	1885 - 1910
Allen Presley	1885 - 1910	Burse Presley	1885 - 1910
Robert C. Hatfield	1885 - 1910	Mary Burns	1885 - 1910
Effie Hatfield	1885 - 1910	Price Pullen	1885 - 1910
Samuel Withrow	1885 - 1910	Claude Presley	1885 - 1910
R. L. Withrow	1885 - 1910	Clarence Porter	1885 - 1910
J. L. Fields	1885 - 1910	Albert Hatfield	1885 - 1910
Nancy Hefner	1885 - 1910	Artie Presley	1885 - 1910
W. J. Porter	1885 - 1910	Elbridge Presley	1885 - 1910
Catherine Everett	1885 - 1910	Essie Presley	1885 - 1910
Thursa Withrow	1885 - 1910	Mabel Hatfield	1885 - 1910
Amanda Hatfield	1885 - 1910	Margie Pullen	1885 - 1910
H. M. Presley	1885 - 1910	Mary Everett	1885 - 1910
Emma Burns	1885 - 1910	Lewis Everett	1885 - 1910
Eli Everett	1885 - 1910	W. H. Porter	1885 - 1910
Amanda Presley	1885 - 1910	Cora Burns	1885 - 1910
Bettie Scott	1885 - 1910	Avery Burns	1885 - 1910
Florence Everett	1885 - 1910	Ruth Burns	1885 - 1910
Flora Presley	1885 - 1910	Sarah J. Everett	1885 - 1910
Flora Hatfield	1885 - 1910	Tommie Norwood	1885 - 1910
Anna Presley	1885 - 1910	Ella Grubb	1885 - 1910
Minnie Ray	1885 - 1910	L. B. Presley	1885 - 1910
Mattie Presley	1885 - 1910	Laura McLoud	1885 - 1910

Name	Date Received	Name	Date Received
Ella Hatfield	3/11/1904	Bertha Presley	1917-1925
Norma Grimes	1885 - 1910	Anna Presley	1917-1925
J. T. Everett	1885 - 1910	Raymond Berry	1917-1925
Virginia Everett	1885 - 1910	Hattie Grubb	1917-1925
Nellie Polk	1885 - 1910	Tom Hatfield, Jr.	1917-1925
Belle Norwood	1885 - 1910	Mary Grimes	1917-1925
Minnie Hatfield	9/4/1912	Kate Hatfield	1917-1925
Mabel Norwood	9/4/1912	Tommie Hatfield, Sr.	1917-1925
Martha Perry	9/4/1912	John Perry	1917-1925
Maudie Norwood	9/4/1912	Carl Hatfield	1917-1925
Lizzie Hatfield	9/4/1912	John Hatfield, Jr.	1917-1925
Lafayette Polk	9/4/1912	Virgie Presley	1917-1925
Sarah Presley	9/4/1912	Earn Montgomery	1917-1925
Arlie Presley	9/4/1912	Myrtle Montgomery	1917-1925
Jennie Sisco	9/4/1912	Luther Holland	1917-1925
Lee Lindsay	8/11/1912	Kyle Hobbs	1917-1925
Anna Chaney	8/11/1912	Carson Roberts	1917-1925
Aubrey Burns	8/11/1912	Carl Roberts	1917-1925
Arlena Harmon	6/8/1913	Raymond Hatfield	1917-1925
John F. Thorp	6/8/1913	Ruth Norwood	1917-1925
Katie Thorp	6/8/1913	W.H.G. Harmon	1917-1925
Eula Burns	5/1914	William R. Hatfield	1917-1925
Clyde Presley	1916	Ollie Hatfield	1917-1925
Allie Presley	1916	Ruth Hatfield	1917-1925
Tommie Presley	1916	Vera Hatfield	1917-1925
Oscar Hefner	1916	Marvin McLoud	11/7/1926
Clara Everett	1916	Hugh Bailey	11/7/1926
Lizzie Hobbs	1916	Leota Everett	7/17/1927
Fred Montgomery	1916	Bruce Presley	7/17/1927
Bruce Newton	1916	William Everett	10/7/1928
Grady Newton	1916	Carrie Hatfield	7/27/1930
Herbert Ray	1916	Lucy Everett	8/24/1930
Daisy Hatfield	1916	Hattie Presley	8/24/1930
Virgil Hatfield	10/7/1917	Lavada Presley	8/24/1930
Rule Holland	1917	Lois Lindsay	8/24/1930
Steve Montgomery	1917-1925	Dale Lindsay	8/24/1930
Elsie Hatfield	1917-1925	Clara Grubbs	8/24/1930
Bonnie Grubbs	1917-1925	Wyatt Harmon	8/24/1930
Elsie Holland	1917-1925	Burrel McLoud	8/24/1930
Elmer Everett	1917-1925	Howard Hatfield	8/24/1930
Bernetie Hefner	1917-1925	Kenneth Hatfield	8/24/1930
Beulah Presley	1917-1925	Harvey Hatfield	8/24/1930
Elsie Grubbs	1917-1925	Dixie Hatfield	8/24/1930
Norman Berry	1917-1925	Grady Grubbs	8/24/1930
Hugh Holland	1917-1925	Pauline Presley	8/24/1930

Name	Date Received	Name	Date Received
Grady Berry	8/24/1930	Woodrow Harmon	3/10/1946
Noble Grubbs	8/30/1932	Grace Harmon	3/10/1946
Eria Grubbs	8/30/1932	Lem Owens	6/9/1946
Ercelle Jones	8/30/1932	Ruth Harmon	9/14/1947
Belle Norwood	2/1/1938	Kate Hatfield (Lem)	9/14/1947
Lewis Everett	3/6/1938	John M. Barrack	11/9/1947
Mary Everett	3/6/1938	Sidney Fields	6/27/1948
Beryl Beth	10/9/1938	Marion Lewis Bickley	9/26/1948
Chancey Beth	10/12/1938	Vernice Bickley	9/26/1948
John M. Byrd	10/12/1938	Nancy Bickley	9/26/1948
Turnsi Byrd	10/12/1938	Marion T. Bickley, Jr.	9/26/1948
Timmie Byrd	10/12/1938	George Bickley	9/26/1948
Glen Presley	8/13/1939	Adelene Hatfield	6/12/1949
Ruby Presley	8/13/1939	Lloyd Vaughn	6/12/1949
Mary Lindsay	8/13/1939	Dorma Vaughn	6/12/1949
Ruby Lindsay	8/13/1939	Lorene Presley	8/20/1950
Carl Grimes	8/13/1939	Elwood McLoud	8/20/1950
Leslie Grubb	8/13/1939	Mrs. Elwood McLoud	8/20/1950
Lina Grimes	8/13/1939	Hoyt McLoud	8/20/1950
Dell Lindsay	8/13/1939	Arla McLoud	8/20/1950
Iva Sands	4/14/1940	Mrs. Herman Spradling	8/20/1950
Earnest Patrick	4/14/1940	Roberta McLoud	8/20/1950
Herbert Presley	9/4/1940	Lee Gilstrap	6/13/1951
Edith Everett	9/11/1940	Mrs. Lee Gilstrap	6/13/1951
Lillian Hatfield	9/11/1940	John Barrack	7/10/1951
Arthur Bundy	2/8/1942	Nora Barrack	7/10/1951
Jay Bohannon	2/8/1942	Larry Paul McLain	4/28/1958
Alma Ewing	2/7/1942	Carolyn Hatfield	5/10/1959
Irma Genet Ewing	2/7/1942	Rev. Victor N. Phillips	3/1961
Movelda Ewing	2/7/1942	Tom. W. Norwood	7/1961
Ruby Light	2/7/1942	Ruth Norwood	7/1961
Bruce Horton	2/7/1942	Grace Ray	7/1961
Arvil Lewis Hatfield	2/7/1942	Winnie Simpson	11/4/1962
Bobby Kirkpatrick	2/7/1942	Ina Simpson	11/4/1962
Lem Hatfield	2/9/1942	Linda Simpson	11/4/1962
Claude Litterell	11/9/1942	Carolyn Harmon	11/4/1962
A. M. Barrack	11/9/1942	Frank Grubbs	1963
Mrs. A. M. Barrack	11/9/1942	Edith Presley	1963
Mrs. Jesse Owen	11/9/1942	Flem Wasson	1967
Mrs. Claude Litterell	11/9/1942	Rock Allen Hatfield	9/1968
Artie Hatfield	1943	Rhonda Hatfield	9/1968
Lois Hatfield	1943	Jeff Jenkins	4/1969
William Nail Harmon	1/14/1945	Oda Jenkins	4/1969
Homer Murphy	5/17/1945	Kevin Louis Hatfield	5/25/1969
Cam Murphy	5/17/1945	Ted Sherman	5/25/1969

Name	Date Received	Name	Date Received
Charles H. Berry	3/1970	Audie Fritts	3/21/1982
Deanna Berry	3/1970	Dewayne Smith	4/25/1982
Hugh Worley	3/17/1970	Darrell Smith	4/25/1982
Penny Gaskill	10/5/1970	Michelle Medinger	11/28/1982
Sherri Gaskill	10/5/1970	Timothy Gaskill	1985
Van Albertson	1970	Glen Leatham, Jr.	10/1985
Pearl L. Fulkerson	10/6/1974	Tim Leatham	10/1985
Byrle Jeannie Smith	10/6/1974	John Richardson	10/18/1987
Charles H. Snow	8/22/1976	Anna Richardson	10/18/1987
Doris Snow	8/22/1976	Laura Lievsay	1989
Cathy Snow	8/22/1976	Deana Corley	4/19/1992
Randall Abrahams	9/14/1976	Bill Corley	4/19/1992
Mary Lou Abrahams	9/14/1976	Alex Cruickshank	4/19/1992
Charlene Jackson	12/5/1976	Emerson Miller	11/7/1993
Tom Shrum	12/12/1976	Maury Alan Awn	2/13/1994
Marion Smith	12/12/1976	Robin Irene Awn	2/13/1994
Jeraldine Hatfield	12/19/1976	Ron Woollen	2/13/1994
Dorothy Smith	12/12/1976	Mary Woollen	2/13/1994
Ora Kendell Hudson	9/18/1977	Andrew Latham	1996
Alvin Lee Lievsay	5/14/1978	Linda Latham	1996
Nick Tice	9/10/1978	Tyler Tvrz	1996
Aubry Sikes	9/10/1978	Shannon Tvrz	1996
Leslie Davis	9/10/1978	Sharon Calvert	1997
Shelly Davis	9/10/1978	Fred Calvert	1997
Sharon Davis	9/10/1978	Glenn Frick	5/7/2000
Christy Davis	9/10/1978	Shirley Frick	5/7/2000
Karen Hatfield	5/13/1979	Diane Atwell	5/7/2000
Terese Hatfield	12/30/1979	Suanne Morgan	6/11/2000
Mary Harrington	12/30/1979	Jack Morgan	6/11/2000
Dawn Jackson	12/30/1979	James Ronald Lievsay	6/11/2000
D'ette Jackson	12/30/1979	Crystal Atwell	6/4/2000
Larry Haines	12/30/1979	Felicia Campbell	6/4/2000
Wanda Haines	12/30/1979	Ronnie Keith	1/21/2001
Lisa Jones	12/30/1979	Vicki Keith	1/21/2001
Brian Jones	12/30/1979	Glen Latham, Sr.	8/11/2002
Flora Ethyl Jones	12/30/1979	Viola Leatham	8/11/2002
Elizabeth Berry	12/30/1979	Jim Eichler	2003
Mike Thorpe	7/26/1980	Orville Gill	9/21/2003
Susan McLean	10/24/1982	Clara Gill	9/21/2003
Nanette Marsh	1/17/1982	Joyce Brasch	10/12/2003
Ernest Binam	2/7/1982	Sarah Hatfield	11/16/2003
Donna Binam	2/7/1982	Tasha Calvert	1/11/2004
Warren Atkeison	8/15/1982	Krissy Mount	4/11/2004
Charlene Atkeison	8/15/1982	Paula Harris	11/14/2004
Jerry Fritts	3/14/1982	Geneva Edwards	11/28/2004

Name	Date Received	Name	Date Received
Douglas Wayne Clark	11/28/2004	Douglas Mitchell	3/28/2010
Pamela Y. Clark	11/28/2004	Colleen Mitchell	3/28/2010
Juanita Bailey	12/21/2004		
Margie Stout	10/30/2005		
Gerald Ham	11/6/2005		
Evelyn Ham	11/6/2005		
Denton Grubb	11/6/2005		
Wanda Grubb	11/6/2005		
Robin Tipton	12/25/2005		
Shelia Chapman	7/9/2006		
Km Gabbard	1/28/2007		
Kortnei Gabbard	1/28/2007		
Sharon Kay Myers	7/8/2007		
Sue Myers	7/8/2007		
Ed ward Yancey	7/8/2007		
Janeal Yancey	7/8/2007		
William Goudeau	7/15/2007		
Terry Goudeau	7/15/2007		
William C. Pittman	8/5/2007		
Melissa D. Pittman	8/5/2007		
Taylor Calvert	11/18/2007		
Kyler Dennis	11/18/2007		
Kortney Dennis	11/18/2007		
Jessica Trvrz	11/18/2007		
Katherine Trvrz	11/18/2007		
Zackary Trvrz	11/18/2007		
Anna Chappell	4/27/2008		
William "Butch" Chappell	4/27/2008		
Sara Chappell	4/27/2008		
Jeanne Stains	4/27/2008		
Nathan Boyd	10/26/2008		
Ashley Scott	10/26/2008		
Andy Plaukovich	10/26/2008		
Julie Thompson	10/26/2008		
Shelby Thompson	10/26/2008		
Jean Thompson	10/26/2008		
Milton Thompson	10/26/2008		
Trisha Bolinger	10/26/2008		
Shaun Bolinger	10/26/2008		
Betty Dillahunt	10/26/2008		
J. W. Fritts	10/26/2008		
Valerie Fritts	10/26/2008		
Lindel McCollough	8/23/2009		
Laura McCollough	8/23/2009		
		(Frick, 1885 - 2010)	406 members

Church Membership per 25 Year Period

1885 – 1910 - 96 new members (3.84 new members per year)
1911 – 1935 - 88 new members (3.52 new members per year)
1936 – 1960 - 69 new members (2.76 new members per year)
1961 – 1985 - 69 new members (2.76 new members per year)
1986 – 2008 - 80 new members (3.48 new members per year)

402 Members since the founding of the church. Average is **3.27** new members per year. Since **2000**, growth has been **7.88** members per year.

Melenium would have been proud of the New Millennium

A breakdown of new members being added to the church rolls by decade since 1920 is listed below. Church membership fell dramatically following WWII. During this period, many young people left Madison County (and Alabam) in search of work in the more industrial areas of the country. Why the increase in membership during the decade of the 1970's is unexplained. One wonders what affect the newly created United Methodist Church (1968) with its new liturgy had on church growth. The two decades that followed are marked with a decrease in new membership. And then, all at once, with the new millennium, an unprecedented growth in new membership, accompanied with a marked increase in church attendance occurred. In 2000, Presley Chapel started the new decade with only 38 members on the roll. Many church members wondered if the church would survive at all. There can be no doubt that credit for this growth can in large part be contributed to three outstanding ministers of the Gospel: Revs. H. Franklin Cook, James Harris, and Heath Bradley. By the end of 2008, Presley Chapel would have 80 professing members plus a church constituency.

Church Growth by Decade

Decade	New Members	Decade	New Members
1920 -1929	40	1960 – 1969	17
1930 – 1939	35	1970 – 1979	38
1940 – 1949	40	1980 – 1989	18
1950 – 1959	13	1990 – 1999	14
		2000 – 2008	63

New members added every ten years = 31 (avg.)

Total Church Membership Since 1980

1980	63
1988	55
1989	52
1990	43
1991	41
1992	41
1993	40
1994	42
1995	39
1996	41
1997	39
1998	38
1999	33
2000	38
2001	36
2002	37
2003	41
2004	48
2005	51
2006	53
2007	65
2008	80
2009	82

From 1980 to 2000 (20 years), the average church membership was 43 each year. Church membership from 1980 – 2000 decreased by 40%

Since 2000, church membership has increased 110%!

Membership Statistics

Since the founding of the church in 1885, an average of **2.62 members have been removed** from the church roll each year, as of the end of 2008. Since 1885, Presley Chapel **has added an average of 3.3 new members each year.**

In 2000, the membership of the Church was 38. According to the statistics, we lose an average of 2.6 members each year. From 2000 through 2008, (8 years), we should have lost a total of 21 members. $(38 - 21) + 63$ new members added = 80, which correctly predicts the church membership at the end of 2008.

Since 2000, growth has been 7.88 members per year. If this trend continues, the net growth of Presley Chapel should be 5.26 members each year.

Estimated Church Membership at the end of
2010 should be 90
2011 should be 95
2012 should be 100

If church membership gains continue, on our 125th Anniversary (2010), Presley Chapel will have achieved an all time membership record since its founding in 1885.

Most Common Surnames of Church Members

Since the founding of the church, the most common surname of its members has been **Hatfield**, which occurs 51 times on the church rolls. The second most common surname is **Presley**, which can be found 39 times on the rolls. Other surnames include **Everett** (18 times), **Montgomery**, (9 times), **McLoud**, (8 times), **Norwood** (8 times) and **Berry** (7 times).

Member Tenure

As of 2010, Roberta Prouty is the “Dean” of the Presley Chapel Congregation having joined the church on August 20, 1950, having been a member for 60 years. Roberta’s grandmother, Laura Bell Presley McLoud joined the church in about 1902. She was the granddaughter of M. B. Presley and Nancy.

Roberta is followed in tenure by her children, Rhonda Hatfield Lievsay and Rock Allen Hatfield who joined the church in September, 1968.

Others Members

Kevin Louis Hatfield	5/29/1969	Charles and Deanna Berry	3/1970
Penny McCloud Gaskill	10/5/1970	Sherri Gaskill Cozad	10/5/1970
Marion and Dorothy Smith	12/12/1976		

Planning for Continued Growth

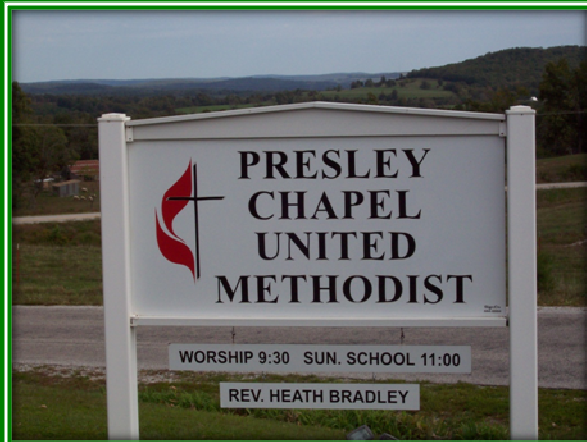
In 2007, the Huntsville-Presley Chapel Charge purchased a new parsonage located at 143 Madison 8593, northwest of Huntsville.

Beginning in 2008, the church membership approved the building of an additional parking lot at the back of church and the paving of all church parking. It just so happened that the Engineer hired to design and oversee the project was Charles Presley, great-great grandson of Melenium Brown Presley. The project was completed in early 2009. In March of 2009, Diane Atwell urged the church to begin its proposed expansion of the sanctuary. The plan called for removing the wall behind the stage that created the two west classrooms and removing the wall between the two classrooms. Under the supervision of Butch Chappell, the walls were removed in March and a larger stage and expansion of the sanctuary was underway. This turned out to be a well timed effort as on Easter Sunday, April 12, 2009, the previous attendance record of 105 for a Sunday worship service was broken, as 107 members and friends of the church attended to hear the Easter Message of Rev. Heath Bradley. (Note: On Easter Sunday, 2010, a record 112 worshipped at Presley Chapel)

Besides creating a much larger and well defined chancel, new pews for the nave were purchased. In addition, new signage for the southeastern face of the church was added as well as general landscaping around the church and the fellowship hall. (see photographs)



Butch Chappell , Alvin Lievsay, and Ron Woollen framing storage areas in the newly expanded chancel. The older pews, made of a compressed particle board material, can be seen in the foreground.



Along the county road, all are greeted by new signage which was updated and repainted.



A view of the church and parking lots taken in October, 2009



A view of the church with the newly added signage and landscaping below



A view of the church and fellowship hall with the new roses blooming along the church below.





At a church meeting in the summer of 2009, Anna Chappell proposed a design for the back of the chancel which was resoundingly accepted by the entire group. With the assistance of the Presley Chapel Women's group who aided in the cutting of the fabric, Anna and Butch Chappell produced a modern day tapestry that has become the focal point as one enters the church. The top picture shows the chancel without the "tapestry" and the second picture with. The banner was first displayed on October 4, 2009.



The underlying theme of the banner is the promise of God to humanity.

The left panel represents the creation and beginning of God's ultimate plan/promise. The design was inspired by Genesis, Chapter 1 and represents the spirit of God moving upon the face of the waters; the universe without form and void and the hands of God and Christ (the "we" making man) cradling the world, and to be a reminder that the Holy Trinity has been with humanity all along.

The center panel represents the delivery of God's promise, the life, sacrifice and resurrection of Christ. Inspired by Isaiah 53 and the Gospels, one sees the tender shoot out of parched ground; the lamb lead to the slaughter, grave with the wicked, with rich man in death, poured out himself; darkness fell; the stone rolled away and a young man in white robe sitting on the right.

The panel on the right represents the culmination of God's promise and the ultimate reason for the pain not only suffered by Christ, but by God and the Holy Spirit as well in dealing with us. Scriptural references are scattered throughout Revelation: The Coming with white clouds, seven stars, and the great white throne of God with the rivers of the waters of life coming from it and the trees of life on either side. - Anna Chappell



The following projects were undertaken in 2008 and 2009:

- 1. Building of a new rear parking lot with sidewalks and steps leading to the church.**
- 2. Asphalt Paving of the new rear and front parking lots.**
- 3. New signage at the road and on the building**
- 4. New wireless sound system in the sanctuary, nursery, and fellowship hall.**
- 5. Expansion of the Sanctuary with larger stage and area for choir and storage.**
- 6. Addition of a banner and two Methodist flaming crosses on the left and right in the rear of the chancel. (see picture on page 31)**
- 7. New pews in the Sanctuary**
- 8. New Pulpit**
- 9. Landscaping around the church and fellowship hall.**



Adult Sunday School Class from the 1970's. Raymond Hatfield, Jay Bohannon, Lois Hatfield, Artie Hatfield, Hattie Baker, Clara Grubb, Carrie Bohannon, Leota Hatfield.



Young adult Sunday Class from the 1970's. From the left, John Marsh, Nan Marsh, Marion Smith, Jeraldine Hatfield, Jean Smith, Loy Smith, Charles Berry, Deanna Berry, Nete McLoud, Larry Haines, Alvin Lievsay, Flo Jones, Karen Hatfield, Rock Hatfield, Gerald Ham, Evelyn Ham.



Intermediate Class – Dyanna Smith, Tracy Stroud and Dorothy Smith. Below, Charles Berry, Tracy Smith, and Charlene Jackson.



A scene from a Christmas program at the church. Below, Marion Smith, Leota Hatfield, Karen Hatfield, Liz Berry and Dyanna Smith.





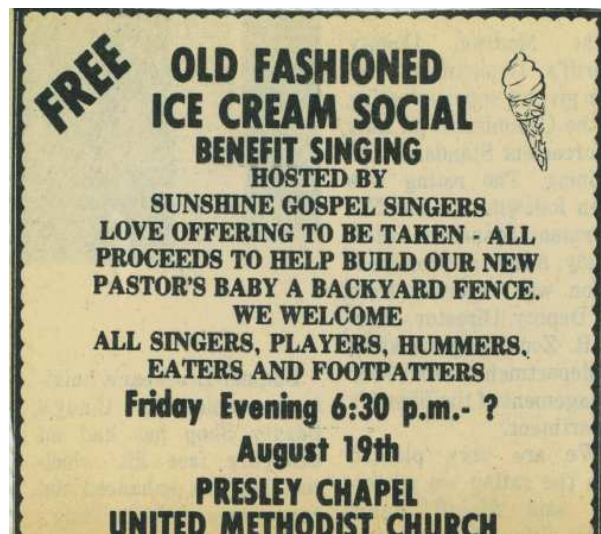
Brian and Lisa Jones, D'ette Jackson and Mike Thorpe.



The Sunshine Singers; Darrel Smith, Larry Haines, Jim Owens, Wanda Haines, Evelyn Ham, Gerald Ham, Juanita McCloud, and Kent Owens.



Rock Hatfield, Kim Hatfield, Twila Vaughn, and Danny Harmon on an Easter Sunday in front of the old Church about 1960.



Inside the church taken about 1966.



Baptism at the 412 War Eagle Bridge in 1967. L to R – Marla Vaughn, Dorma Vaughn, Rick McCloud, Randy McCloud, Greg Smith, Rev. Noel Easterling, Evangelist, Kenny Hatfield, Rhonda Hatfield Lievsay, Kevin Hatfield – Children – Kim Hatfield, Twila Vaughn, Rock Hatfield. Right, Christmas at Presley Chapel, c. 1980.s. Below, Easter abt. 1986. On the porch, Leota Hatfield, Laura Lievsay in hat, J.R. Lievsay, John and Nan Marsh and children. Right, Alvin Lievsay, Kim Gabbard, Trent and J. R. Bottom, Trent Gabbard's first egg hunt barefoot; Right, Marsh Children and Mandy Hatfield.



Early Members of the Church (c. 1885 – 1920)



Melenium Brown Presley and Nancy
Terry Walden Presley



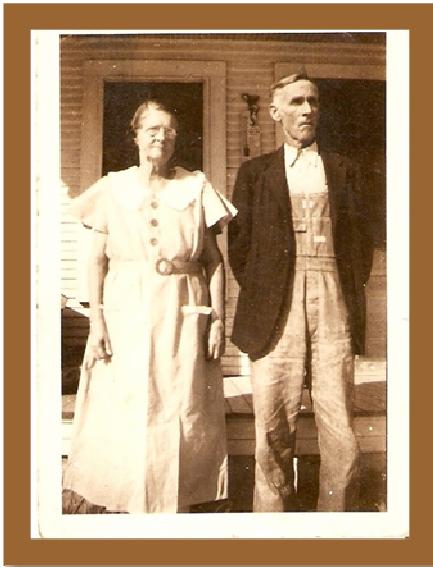
Dacey Jane Presley Hatfield and Hugh Hatfield



William Darret Everett, Catherine
Tennessee Presley Everett, Maggie
Everett and Lewis Brown Everett



Sam J. Everett and Sarah J. Everett



Flora Lovenia Everett and William
Robert Hatfield



BOOTH, EUREKA SPRINGS, ARK.

James Thomas Hatfield



The Lewis Brown Everett Family : Lewis, Brice
Everett, Mary Francis Wasson Everett, Clara
Everett, Alva Everett



Mabel Mattie Hatfield and Essie Elizabeth Hatfield



J.T. (Jim) and Virginia "Jennie" Everett



Wiley and Emma Burns Family (Emma was a daughter to Brown Presley; children William H., Avery, Hollis



Eli, Elmer and Zelpha Wasson Everett



Dixie Hatfield Blair and Harvey Hatfield



Francis. J. "Bud" Presley, son of Melenium Brown Presley and Nancy Terry Walden and Martha Ann "Mattie" Everett, daughter of Sam J. and Sarah Jane Everett with their two sons, Burse and Claude. Their marriage in 1890 by Rev. James H. Meyers, is the first recorded marriage at Presley Chapel. This photo was made c. 1893.

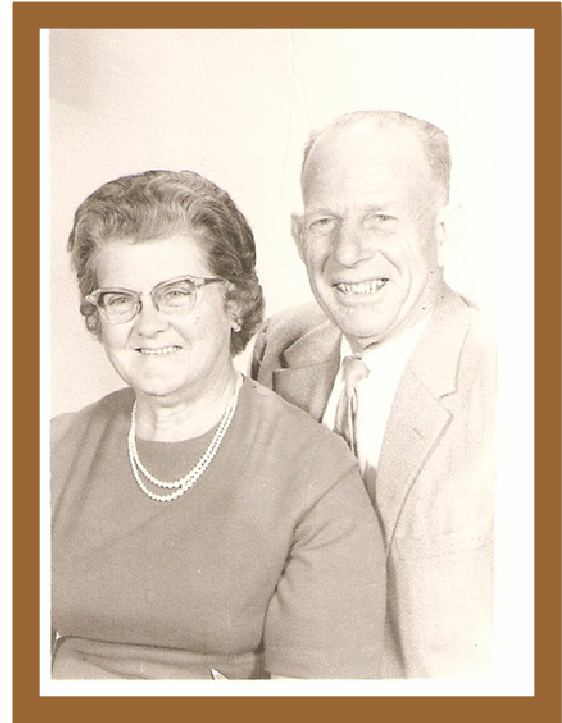


William Herbert Brown Presley and Flora Pauline Lindsey Presley. Herbert was a grandson of Brown Presley and Pauline was the granddaughter of Hugh Hatfield. Herbert and Pauline are the parents of Sharon Presley Myers and Sue Presley Myers.



Pauline Lindsey Presley and Hattie Sarah Presley Baker. Hattie was a sister to Herbert Presley. Right, Lee and Mabel Hatfield Lindsey and baby Doug Myers.





This page features the church treasurers of Presley Chapel since about 1940. Top left, Elmer and Edith Everett at their home in Huntsville. Elmer urged the congregation to build the present day Presley Chapel and died months after its completion. After his death in 1962, Carl Hatfield served as treasurer until his death in 1983. His wife, Leota would be treasurer until her death in 1999 and their daughter Evelyn Ham is the present treasurer since 1999.



Rev. James Buchanan Presley, son of Brown Presley with wife Flora Wilcox and sons Melvin Brown, Marion Alonzo "Lon" and daughters Minna Lee (Lelia Coger) and Clementine Edith (Edith Auslam) Rev. Presley served Presley Chapel as pastor c. 1927-1928



Ernest and Daisy Hatfield Patrick



Known to everyone as Aunt Kate.
Kate Grimes Hatfield Shackelford

Daughters of Rev. James B. Presley and Flora Irene Wilcox: Mattie, Lelia, Edith.
Granddaughters of Brown and Nancy Presley.

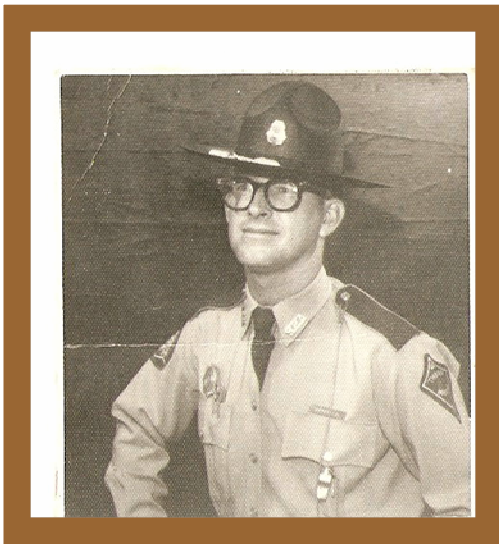




Uncle Raymond and Aunt Lizzie Berry. Raymond served as Chairman of the Finance Committee for the new church in 1961.



Arvil, Leota, and Evelyn Hatfield - all in dresses. Evelyn is in the christening gown of Elmer Everett. Arvil is not a happy camper.



Ronald Lee "Ronnie" Hatfield who was with the Arkansas Highway Police



Artie, Raymond, Carl, and Kevin Hatfield – Fishing at Lake Catherine State Park near Hot Springs

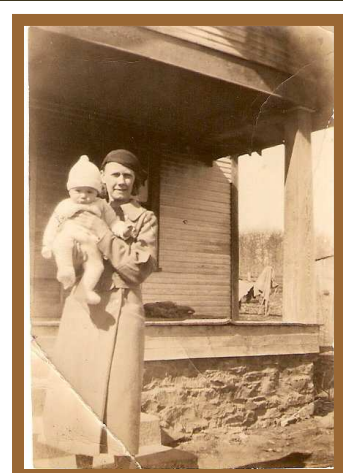




(L) Sharon Presley Myers (holding Doug); Pauline Presley and Mabel Lindsey; Doug Myers, Pauline Presley, and Robin Myers Tipton.



L) Sue Presley Myers and Stan Myers; Doug and Sharon Presley Myers- Below Sue Presley Myers and Robin Myers Tipton. Middle – Virgil Hatfield (Right) Lizzie and Charlie Berry.





Thomas J. (Tommie) Presley was the grandson of M.B. and Nancy Presley. Tommie's parents were Wiley and Amanda Porter Presley. L to R – Tommie, Edith, Dorma and Naidene Presley Drake; Tommie and Edith Presley in 1974; Marla Vaughn, Tommie Presley, Edith Howard Presley, Twila Vaughn (Witt) Ray Drake, Naidene Presley Drake, Lloyd Vaughn. (husband of Dorma). Below Lloyd, Dorma, Marla and Twila. Left – Virgil Hatfield, below wife Lillian and lower left, daughter Carolyn and Juanita Bailey.



Pictures from Church Directory c. 1968



Mr. & Mrs. Artie Hatfield



Arvil Hatfield Family



Mr. & Mrs. Carl Hatfield



Charles Berry Family



Daisy Patrick



Danny Jackson Family



Denton Grubb Family



Mr. & Mrs. Frank Grubb



Fred Calvert Family



Gerald Ham Family



Grace Ray



Harvey Hatfield &
Kate Shackleford

Pictures from Church Directory c. 1968



Hattie Baker



Mr. & Mrs. Hugh Worley



Mr. & Mrs. Jay Bohannon



Mr. & Mrs. Jeff Jenkins



Mr. & Mrs. Norman Berry



Mr. & Mrs. Raymond Hatfield



Mr. & Mrs. Raymond Berry



Ronald Woollen Family



Ted Sherman



Mr. & Mrs. Tom Norwood



Rev. Vann Hooker



Mr. & Mrs. Virgil Hatfield

Pictures from Church Directory c. 1968



Bill McLoud Family



Mr. & Mrs. H. O. McLoud



Howard McLoud Family



Mrs. Bill Jones Family



Robin & Doug Myers



Mrs. Pauline Presley



Mrs. Jennie Jones



Mr. Marvin Jones



Presley Chapel Teen-age Class



About 1971: Seated, Lois Hatfield, teacher. L to R Kim Hatfield, Rocky Hatfield, Steve Grubb, Kenny Hatfield; Back row: Greg Smith, Freddie Calvert, Rhonda Hatfield, Alvin Lievsay, and Randy McLoud. View of the church about seven years after it was built. Note the lack of landscaping and the absence of the fellowship hall.

Pictures of Members and Friends of the Church (c. 1980)



Hattie Baker



James & Anita Bates



Charles & Deanna Berry
& Liz



Jay & Carrie Bohannon



John & Ronda Dunham



Jerry & Judy Fritts, Jr.,
Chris & J. W.



Penny Gaskill,
Sherri & Tim



Clara Grubb



Denton & Wanda Grubb



Noble & Eria Grubb



Larry & Wanda Haines



Gerald & Evelyn Ham



Artie & Lois Hatfield



Arvil & Jeraldine Hatfield



Carl & Leota Hatfield



Kenny & Terese Hatfield,
Mandy & Stacy



Kevin & Sandy Hatfield



Raymond Hatfield



Rock & Karen Hatfield,
Kristy & Andrea



Virgil & Lillian Hatfield



Danny & Charline Jackson,
Dawn and D'Ette

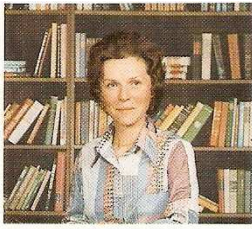


Flo, Brian and Lisa Jones



Alvin, Rhonda, and Laura
Lievsay

Pictures of Members and Friends of the Church (c. 1980)



Susan MacLean



John & Nan Marsh,
Sarah & Daniel



Howard & Nete McLoud



Hoyt & Arla McLoud



Patsy Medinger,
Lucas & Michelle



Lorraine Presley



Aubrey Sikes



Greg & Terry Smith



Loy & Jean Smith



Marion & Dorothy Smith,
Tracy & Dyanna



Milton & Jean Thompson



Mike Thorpe

THOSE NOT AVAILABLE FOR PICTURES PRESLEY CHAPEL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



In Memory
Ernest & Donna Binam



In Memory
Helen Hatfield



Hugh & Elsie Holland



Bill Jones



Jeff, Bill, Helen
& Doug McLoud

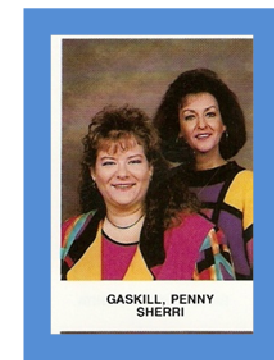
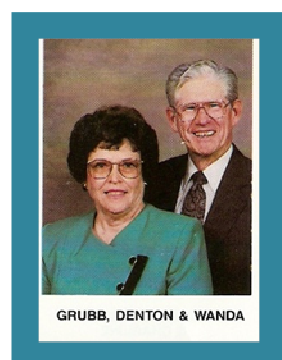
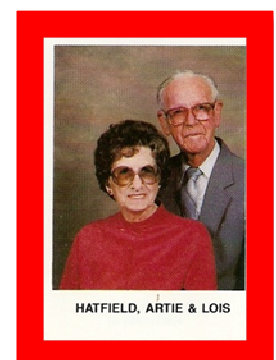
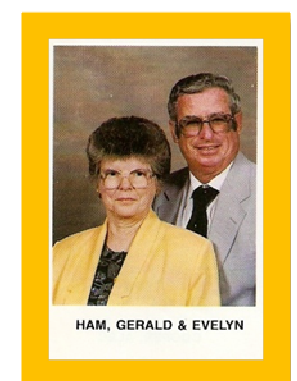
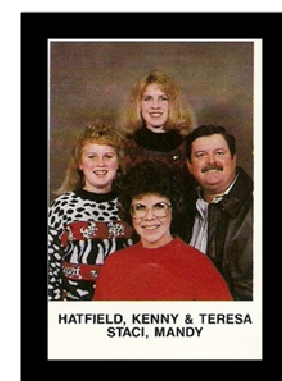
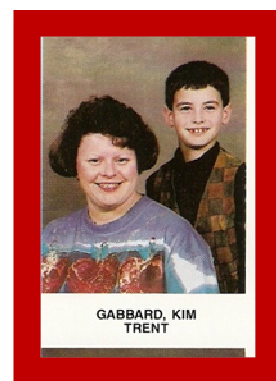
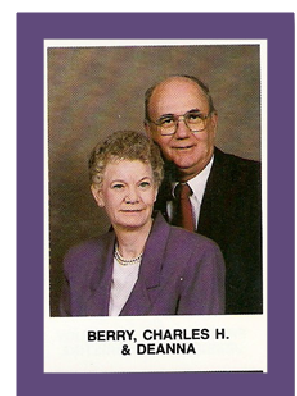
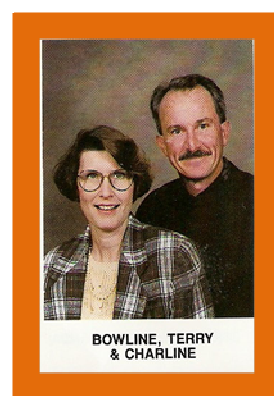
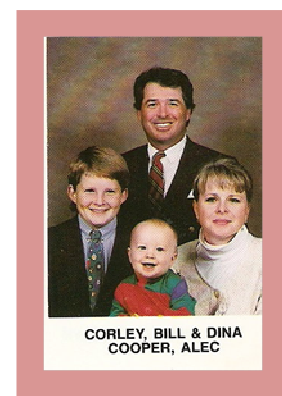
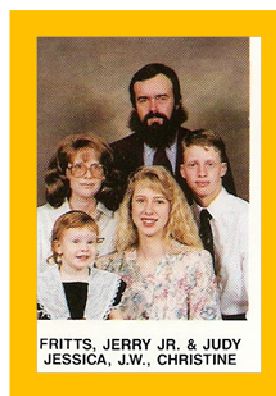
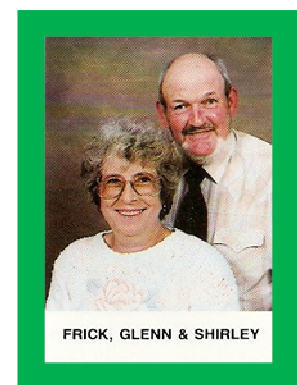
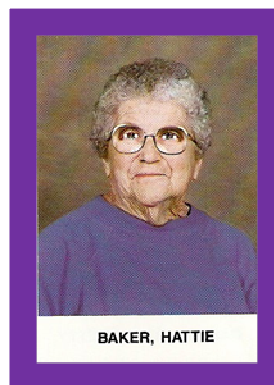
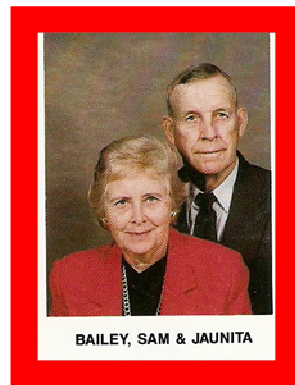
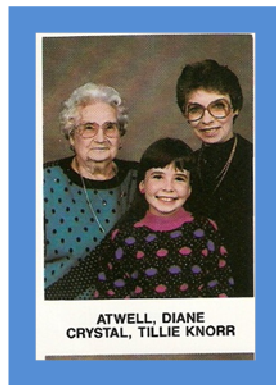


Pauline Presley

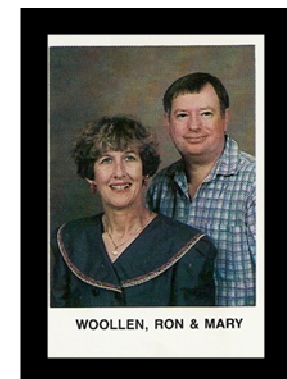
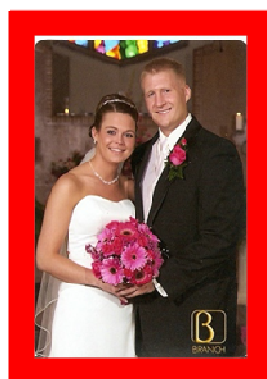
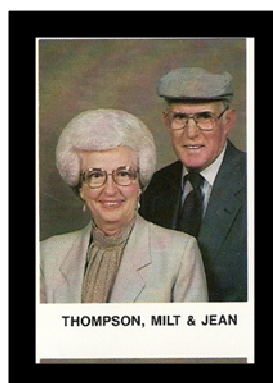
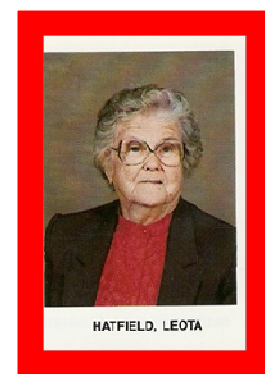
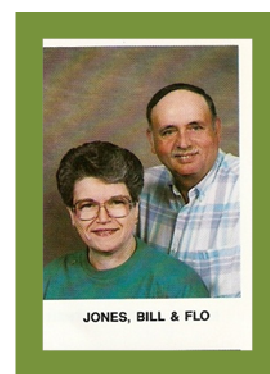
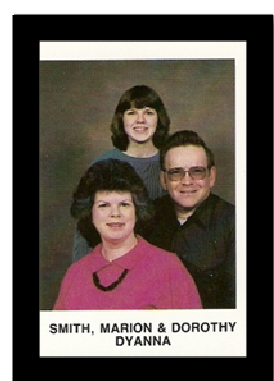
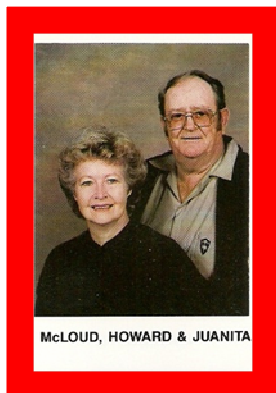
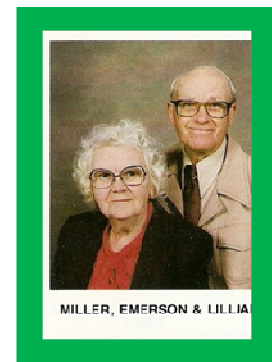
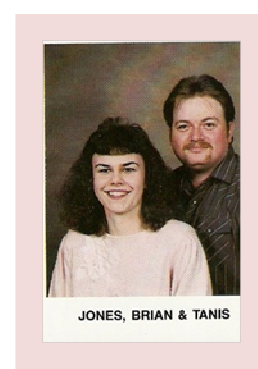
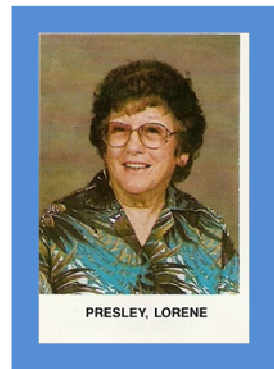
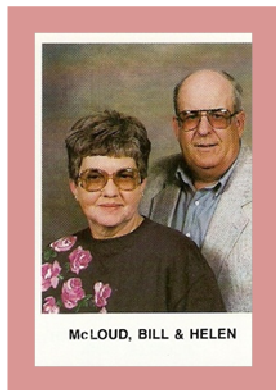
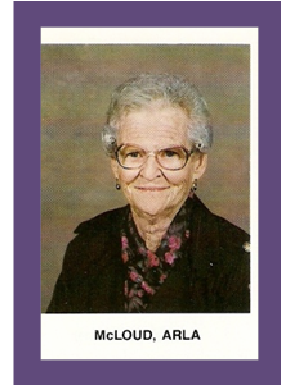
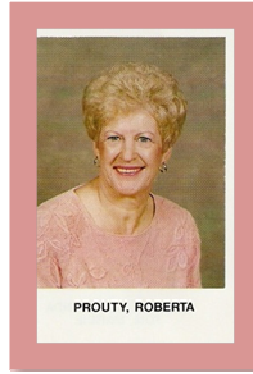
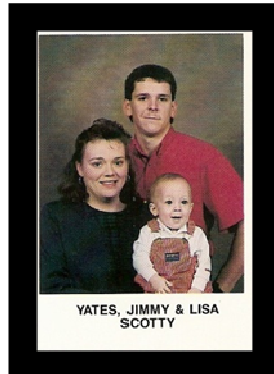
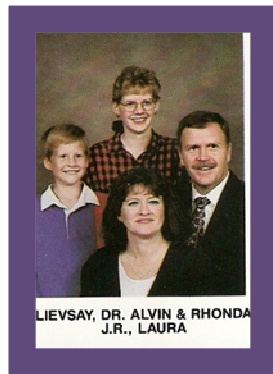


Dale & Roberta Prouty

Pictures of Members and Friends of the Church (c. 1992)



Pictures of Members and Friends of the Church (c. 1992)



Members and Friends of the Church - March 2010



Crystal, Diane, & Mike Atwell



Shelia & Ron Chapman



Deanna & Charles Berry



Brady, Shaun, Dylan, and Trisha Bolinger



Ava, Andrea, Rev. Heath and Anabelle Bradley



Tasha, Taylor, & Sharon Calvert

Members and Friends of the Church - March 2010



Felicia & Ed Campbell



Nathan Boyd



Juanita Bailey



Shirley and Glenn Frick



Pam and Doug Clark



Geneva Edwards



Sherri, Remington, Madison Cozad



Betty Dillahunt



Penny Gaskill

Members and Friends of the Church - March 2010



Kevin Hatfield, Trent, Kortnei, and Kim Gabbard



Anna, Butch, and Sara Chappell



Evelyn and Gerald Ham



Clara and Orville Gill



Terese and Kenny Hatfield



Wanda and Denton Grubb



Lorraine and Danny Miller

Members and Friends of the Church - March 2010



Terry and Buddy Goudeau



J.W., Valerie, & Kyle Fritts



Sarah and Rock Hatfield



Carol Horton



Lindel & Laura McCollough



Colleen and Doug Mitchell



Flo and Bill Jones



Shay, Scotty, Jimmy, Chase, Lisa, and Kyle Yates



Rhonda & Alvin Lievsay



Corrie and J.R. Lievsay



Andy, Laura, & A. J. Plaukovich



Roberta Prouty



Parker, Melissa, Will, & Palmer Pittman



Sharon Kay Myers



Dorothy & Marion Smith



Lucille (Polly) Potter



Ashley Scott



Jackson Willbanks



Jeanne Stains



Jack & Suanne Morgan



Brandi & Marvin Solorzano



Debbie and Randy Whitman



Mattie, Shelby, Oakley, and Julie Thompson



Mary and Ron Woollen



Jean & Milt Thompson



Ed, Vallie, and Janeal Yancey

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Portraits by Olen Mills (1968, 1980, 1992)

Portraits by Jarred Rogers (2010)