

The History of Julia A. Porter United Methodist Church

The North Georgia Conference appointed Rev. Firley Baum to be Pastor of “Porterdale Mission” along with his other pastoral assignments. This took place at its annual meeting in November of 1903. At its founding conference held on January 17, 1904, Pastor Baum reported having visited with many of the residents in The Village, and that most favored organizing a church. According to the church conference records, following the “religious services” conducted by the Pastor, the organization took place with thirty-five persons becoming its charter members. Also, the following elections were made:

Two Stewards

Mr. C. T. Lummus (Mr. Lummus also served as the 1st Sunday School Superintendent)

Rev. John Wesley Jay

Church Secretary

Mr. W. P. Roseberry

The name of the church was designated as: “The Porterdale Church of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.” (In its over 100 year history, the church would be known by three other names: Julia A. Porter Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, South; Julia A. Porter Memorial Methodist Church; and Julia A. Porter Memorial United Methodist Church.)

The vote of the church to organize was recorded as being unanimous. Other business mentioned was the receiving of an offering of \$17 for charitable purposes.

The place of meeting for the new Methodist Church was The Community Building. A new brick school was built in 1917, and it is thought that the church met in it until the present building was erected in 1925. Rev. J. J. Mize (Pastor 1921-1925) began a campaign to raise funds for the new building. The people gave from their wages, many buying bricks on a regular basis. The Bibb Company gave the land for the building, and we know that Mr. James Hyde Porter contributed \$50,000 toward the project, and this with the gifts of the people enabled the building to go forward. Cost amounted to approximately \$80,000. Actual construction began early in 1925, and finished by September.

The dedication service was held September 27, 1925, and was led by Bishop Warren A. Candler, Resident Bishop. The request of Mr. Porter that the church be named to honor his mother, Julia A. Porter, was granted, and the church was designated “Julia A. Porter Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, South.” She was beloved in the community as she tirelessly sought to help the people in their needs, as her husband Oliver had worked to develop the mills. She turned the first shovel of dirt for construction and was present for the dedication. Her death came the following year on September 27, 1926. Mrs. Porter lives on in the legacy bequeathed to this area

through her family. Her portrait, along with that of her son, James, hangs in the entrance of the church that bears her name, of which she and her husband, along with Miss Charley Josephine Camp, James Hyde Porter, and John Anthony Porter, are listed as Charter Members. She had two other children not listed, Mary Erin Porter who died of pneumonia at the age of 14 and Oliver William (Wick) Porter.

Julia A. Porter is buried in the Covington City Cemetery. Her legacy is that she taught her children to have respect and compassion for those who were less fortunate. Her children and their descendants helped to build a library, schools, recreational facilities, and church in Porterdale and Newton County. They funded scholarships for local students. Even today, the Porter Foundation contributes to the ongoing ministry of Julia A. Porter United Methodist Church.

Charter Members (Given to Lucille Ivey Shaw by several on the list)

Dr. E. H. Adams and Wife	J. D. Roseberry
J. E. Cline	W. T. Smith and Wife
A. J. Carson and Canella	J. E. Cline*
C. T. Lummus	Effie King
Annie Moore Lummus	J. F. Hanson
Fleeta Lummus	John O. Harper
W. P. Roseberry and Wife	O. D. Johnson
J. W. Jay and Wife	Alex Wheeler
S. J. Yancey and Wife	Janie Wheeler
Oliver S. Porter	Lee Wheeler
Julia A. Porter	Pidie Hinton
Charley Porter	Carrie Hinton
John Porter	Tollie Hinton
James Porter	Gertrude Harpe

*J. E. Cline is listed twice; possibly another member of his family.



Julia A. Porter



James H. Porter