

**METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH,  
SOUTH. TELFAIR CIRCUIT (GEORGIA).  
Telfair Circuit (Methodist Episcopal  
Church, South) record book, 1829-1850.**

Emory University  
Pitts Theology Library  
1531 Dickey Drive, Suite 560  
Atlanta, GA 30322  
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### **Descriptive Summary**

**Creator:** Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Telfair Circuit (Georgia).  
**Title:** Telfair Circuit (Methodist Episcopal Church, South) record book, 1829-1850.  
**Call Number:** Manuscript Collection No. 408  
**Extent:** .2 cubic feet (1 box)  
**Abstract:** Consists of the record book of the Little Ocmulgee Circuit, the Jacksonville (Georgia) Circuit, and the Telfair Circuit of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South from 1829-1850.  
**Language:** Materials entirely in English.

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### **Administrative Information**

#### **Restrictions on Access**

Unrestricted access.

#### **Terms Governing Use and Reproduction**

All requests subject to limitations noted in departmental policies on reproduction.

#### **Source**

Gift, 1917.

#### **Custodial History**

This bound manuscript was accessioned by Emory University's School of Theology Library in 1917 (Accession # 19). The book exhibits signs of scribbles and practice writing by Henry Bascomb Dopson (1848-1919), son of Telfair Circuit member Alexander Thomas Dopson. Although its provenance is not entirely known, it is likely that the work was in the possession of Alexander T. Dobson and then Henry B. Dopson until it was donated to Emory two years prior to Dopson's passing.

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### **Citation**

[after identification of item(s)], Telfair Circuit (Methodist Episcopal Church, South) record book, MSS 408, Archives and Manuscript Dept., Pitts Theology Library, Emory University.

### **Processing**

Processed by Brandon Wason, March 2016.

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## **Collection Description**

### **Historical Note**

In 1806, the United States government took control of the area in Georgia between the Ocmulgee and Oconee Rivers that was inhabited by the Creek Nation. The formation of Telfair County quickly followed. The area was sparsely inhabited by Western settlers in the early nineteenth century due to its place deep in the interior of Georgia. The city of Jacksonville, Georgia was established in 1807 as the county seat. Jacksonville, the largest town in Telfair, had a port along the Ocmulgee River, where many found the soil to be rich farmland. It was here that the Little Ocmulgee Circuit began. This circuit, named after the Little Ocmulgee River (a tributary of the Ocmulgee River), was originally part of the South Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church until 1831 when it became part of the newly-created Georgia Conference. The remoteness and slow development of Telfair County, made it a difficult circuit for the preacher. James Dunwoody, who endured the harsh conditions of the Little Ocmulgee Circuit, gives the following description (paraphrased):

"He says that it was a three-weeks' circuit for one preacher. The population was sparse, the rides were long. The people were very poor, living in log huts; and often during cold winter nights, as he slept in these cabins, the wind poured in upon his head all night long. In windy weather the wind blew down the large stick-and-dirt chimneys, and mixed lumps of clay and soot with the not enticing food. The country was much infested with flies and mosquitoes, but the young itinerant, sick and weary as he was, did his work until conference." (Smith, *History of Georgia Methodism*, 143)

The name of the circuit changed from the Little Ocmulgee Circuit to the Jacksonville Circuit in 1837. Then in 1840, the circuit changed its name to the Telfair Circuit. When, in 1844, the Methodist Episcopal Church decided to split into Northern and Southern branches, the church in the South became the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. This name change is reflected in the manuscript during the year 1845.

**Biographical Source:** Lawrence, Harold. *Methodist Preachers in Georgia, 1783-1900*. Tignall, GA: Boyd Publishing Co., 1984. Mann, Floris Perkins. *History of Telfair County from 1812 to 1949*. Macon: J. W. Burke Co., 1949. Smith, George G. *The History of Georgia Methodism from 1786-1866*. Atlanta: Caldwell, 1913.

### **Scope and Content Note**

This manuscript records basic activity of the Methodist Church in Telfair County, Georgia from 1829 to 1850. The circuit that operated in this area first went by the name Little Ocmulgee Circuit (1829-1836), then Jacksonville Circuit (1837-1839), and lastly Telfair Circuit (1840-1850). The circuit meetings were held quarterly, and the notes for each meeting

describe its location and date as well as which members were present. The manuscript records minutes related to the circuit, such as resolutions, complaints, disputes, trials, and finances. A number of Georgia Methodists are listed in the minutes. The list of presiding elders over the period covered in this manuscript includes Josiah Evans, George Asbury Chappel, William Justice Parks, George W. Carter, William Choice, John W. Talley, Leonard C. Peek, John C. Simmons, Frederick D. Lowry, and John Moore Bright. Numerous place names are mentioned in the manuscript, many of which were used as meeting places for the circuit. These include: Jacksonville, the camp ground (now unincorporated town of Temperance), Bethel Church (now China Hill), Dublin, Hogan's Branch (possibly Twiggs County or Wilcox County), Concord campground (possibly the same as in Temperance), Centenary (Church), Alston's Camp ground, Alexander Thomas Dopson's house, Phelps' meeting house, John Hudson's meeting house, and Powell's school house.

Records prior to this period have been permanently destroyed. At the beginning of the volume, there is a note signed by Charles S. Shelton, stating the following:

"The Recordbook and Minutes previous to this and which were handed over over to me when I was appointed Recording Steward were all burned up with the burning of my house.

"C. S. Shelton/15th October, 1844"

**Arrangement Note**

Collection contains only one item.

## Container List

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Content</b>
1	1	Telfair Circuit record book, 1829-1850

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