

National Mission Institutions in the North Georgia Conference

Paine College, Augusta, GA



Class of 1901

Paine College was founded by the leadership of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, now United Methodist Church, and the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, now Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. Paine was the brainchild of Bishop Lucius Henry Holsey, who first expressed the idea for the College in 1869. Bishop Holsey asked leaders in the ME Church South to help establish a school to train Negro teachers and preachers so that they might in turn appropriately address the educational and spiritual needs of the people newly freed from the evils of slavery. Leaders in the ME Church South agreed, and Paine Institute came into being.

More information can be found at <http://www.paine.edu/>.

New Bethlehem Community Center, Inc., Augusta, GA

The mission of New Bethlehem Community Center is to be an extension of God's ministry and to improve the quality of life. Founded in 1912, New Bethlehem Community Center was established to provide social services to impoverished residents that would have the potential of improving the daily lives and functioning of impoverished minority individuals and families. Today, the mission is accomplished through our monthly food distribution, clothing center, after school program, GED program, Narcotics Anonymous, senior citizen meal program, summer camp, community garden, Community Thanksgiving Dinner, Christmas toy giveaway and computer literacy courses.

Clark Atlanta University

Clark College was founded in 1869 as Clark University by the Freedmen's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, which later would become the United Methodist Church. The University today celebrates its historic bond with the denomination. Clark University was named for Bishop Davis W. Clark, who was the first president of the Freedmen's Aid Society and became bishop in 1864. The first Clark College class was housed in a sparsely furnished room in Clark Chapel, a Methodist Episcopal Church in Atlanta's Summer Hill section. In 1871, the school relocated to a newly purchased property at Whitehall and McDaniel streets. In 1877, the school was chartered as Clark University.

An early benefactor, Bishop Gilbert Haven, visualized Clark as "the university of all the Methodist schools founded for the education of freedmen. Strategically located in Atlanta, the gateway to the South, the institution was founded to "give tone" to all other institutions of the Methodist Episcopal Church providing education for Negro youth. After several changes in location, Bishop Haven (who was Bishop Clark's successor) helped acquire 450 acres in South Atlanta where, In 1880, the school conferred its first degree. In 1883, Clark established a department in honor of Dr. Elijah H. Gammon, known as Gammon School of Theology. By 1888, Gammon School of Theology became an independent seminary and, today, is part of the Interdenominational Theological Center.

More information can be found at <http://www.cau.edu/>.

Murphy-Harpst, Cedartown, GA

In 1914, Ethel Harpst was appointed by the Women's Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Church to a poor mill village in Cedartown, Georgia. She taught adults as well as children to learn to read and write, conducted worship services, and cared for the sick. Due to severe outbreaks of typhoid, tuberculosis, and influenza, many parents died and, at the time of death, requested that Miss Harpst care for their children. In many instances, Miss Harpst prepared the bodies for burial and conducted funerals. With an increasing number of orphaned children, she was granted permission by the Mission Society to establish the Harpst Home in 1924. Then, with even more children left without parents during the Great Depression and World War II, the Harpst Home expanded with the help of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Pfeiffer of New York and the Mission Society.

In 1931, Sarah Murphy, a Spelman College graduate, established a school at the edge of Cedartown for African-American children. Then, in response to the plight of so many of her students whose parents died during epidemics in the 1930s or could no longer care for them, Sarah and her husband, Shug, transformed her school into an orphanage. Their motto was always, "We'll make room." With very few resources, every meal became an act of faith. In 1946 Sarah won a \$1,000 "Good Neighbor" award on a national radio show, and the exposure brought in donations, enabling them to add a new building to the compound. In 1950, the Sarah Murphy Home burned. Some Methodist women learned of the situation and came to the rescue. In 1961, a decade following the deaths of Sarah and her husband, the national Women's Division of the Methodist Church took over the Sarah Murphy home.

In 1984, the Women's Division merged the two homes into Murphy-Harpst Children's Centers. At that time, it became increasingly apparent that most of the children served by the organization had suffered emotional trauma from abuse and neglect and needed professional treatment. Today, such children from across the State of Georgia are referred to Murphy-Harpst by the Department of Family and Children's Services and the Department of Juvenile Justice for residential treatment and specialized foster care. Murphy-Harpst continues the visions of Sarah Murphy and Ethel Harpst as a place where

young people with no alternatives are welcomed, provided loving care and professional treatment to heal the scars of abuse, and given hope.

More information can be found at <http://www.murphyharpst.org/>.