

Black Creek Methodist-Episcopal Church of Middleburg

The Church was built in 1847 by Black slaves owned by Buddington and Branning. The pews were hand-carved by the slaves. The Church had a wide aisle separating the women from the men, and the back two pews were for the Black members of the congregation. The design was by Charles Barthlow, and has classical allusions. The bell was cast in New York in 1852; but the bell-tower was not completed till 1860.(1,pp159-160)

Sources:

1) "Faith and Hope in Florida" by Elsbeth Gordon



MIDDLEBURG METHODIST CHURCH

Founded on or before July 27, 1828 by Isaac Boring a Methodist Circuit Riding Preacher. First known as The Black Creek Methodist Church. This frontier Methodist society met in homes until the present church was built in 1847. In continuous use since that date, the structure represents the oldest Methodist meeting place in Florida.

Built mostly by slave labor, from native lumber and hand wrought nails from local blacksmiths. The heart of pine exterior is of clapboard square edge siding. A design unique to this period. The windows and mahogany wood for the pews were brought from overseas ports. The bell was cast in New York in 1852 and shipped here prior to 1860 by George Branning. It was tolled for the first time for the funeral of his son on February 29, 1860, who died during a swamp fever epidemic.

The wide aisle was left down the center to segregate the men and women. The back pews were reserved for slaves. The pews were put together with wooden pegs and hand drawn. The marks of the draw-knife can still be seen.

During the mid 1800's the cemetery was used to bury the town Protestants. The Catholic Cemetery was located 120 feet north of here. In recent years the Cemetery became the burial ground for the community in general.

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