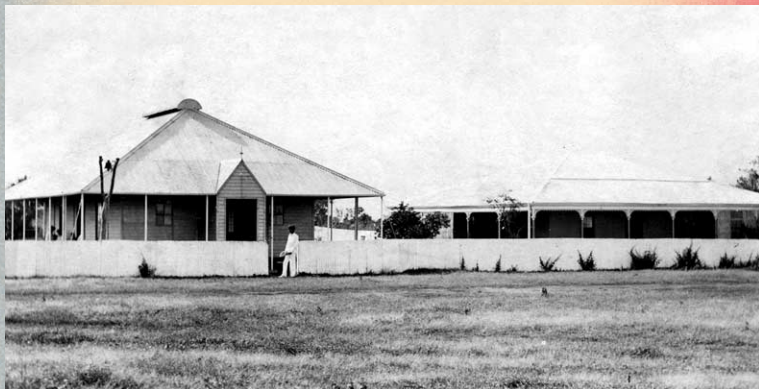




The Wesleyan Methodist Church – a portable church



The Wesleyan Methodist Church, corner of Knuckey & Mitchell Streets, c1920. NT Library Moyle Collection

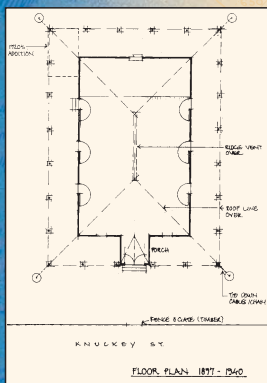
The Wesleyan Methodist Church was assembled in Adelaide before being dismantled, packed and shipped to Darwin. It was described as a *'portable church for the Palmerston Wesleyan congregation'* and replaced an earlier timber church destroyed by a cyclone in early January 1897.

Following the cyclone, Church authorities decided to rebuild in iron and steel which had the added advantage of being resistant to termites. This was not an unusual decision as it was an era when prefabricated iron buildings were widely used in Australia. The new building was designed and manufactured by A. Simpsons & Sons of Adelaide, the same company that is now synonymous with washing machines. It arrived in Darwin in June and was erected in Knuckey Street. The first service was held in November of that year.

Prior to erecting the new church the Methodists purchased the land on the corner of Knuckey and Mitchell Streets from William Longbottom, a Methodist layman of Adelaide. A board of trustees comprising Paul Foelsche, Nicholas Waters and George McKeddie was appointed.

'On 24th August, 1873 I had the honour of preaching the first sermon in Palmerston - in the open air - no building being obtainable - and my text was: 'What shall we do?'

Rev. A.J. Bogle, extract from diary, quoted in Rev. N. Pearce, c1960.



Church floor plan, 1897

The Wesleyan Methodist Church is a small rectangular building, with a surrounding verandah.

The first of many changes occurred in the 1920s when a small storeroom was constructed in the back corner of the verandah. A raised floor was also added to the back of the Church to form a chancel for the altar.

Morning services attracted about 20 people while as many as 50 people attended evening services.



The first Methodist Church, c1895. NT Library Tracey Collection

The first Methodist Church was erected in Knuckey Street in late 1873 by Rev. Archibald Bogle, a Methodist Missionary. It was a small timber weatherboard church sent to Darwin by the Congregational Chapel Building Society to be used as a library during the week and for church services on Sundays.

