1972 - Drought

Sublime Charge

CONCORD CHURCH HISTORY

WRITTEN BY MRS. ROSA ORR, 1951
In the year 1842 a preacher began coming on horseback and sometimes on foot from Trion, Georgia, to East Armuchee Valley to bring the gospel to the people who had settled in this valley. The only pay he received was feed for his horse and the hospitality of the homes while there. I have been told it was Rev. Peter Cartwright, he was working for the Lord and had a desire to help the people who lived here. Rev. Henry Cosper had moved to East Armuchee Valley from South Carolina. The place now owned by E.A. Puryear was the Cosper home.

Concord Church was organized in 1844. The word Concord means unity and harmony. It is one of the oldest churches in Walker County, Georgia. It is on the Subligna Charge, Dalton District, North Georgia Conference; located 2 miles from Villanow and is 1 mile south of the Dalton LaFayette Highway.

The first building was of logs which was about 20' by 20 ft. It was used for a schoolhouse too. Some of the people who were instrumental in the early life of Concord Church were Cosper, Rainey, Tate, Calloway, Kennemer, Griffin, Puryear, Hampton, Brock, Eaton, Harris, Moore, Pope, and Hamilton. This house was large enough for the worship service until 1851 when the people began to see the need for a new church building. Rev. Henry Cosper gave to the church two acres of land on which the log house stood at that time. The deed recites that for "good considerations" the land is granted to have and to hold in trust for the ministers and members of the Methodist Epis-
copal Church, South, as a place of worship. This deed was dated May 28, 1851. The following names were on this deed. Wm. D. Tate, Charles F. Harris, Amos Griffin, Wm. M. Puryear, John A. Tate, Thomas Griffin and was signed by Henry Cosper. In 1851 the congregation erected a large two story building to be used as a church and a Masonic Hall.

This new two-story building was used for headquarters for one of the generals of the Confederate Army. The guns were stacked on the first floor while the men kept a quiet vigil from the upper hall. The sentinels were on the outside.

Rev. Henry Cosper died in 1853 and was laid to rest in Concord Cemetery. He did not have a long life but he did things that have lived on and blessed East Armuchee Valley. Many people worshipped God at Concord and received spiritual blessings.

In 1855 the trustees of the church bought 12 more acres of land from the administrators of the Rev. Cosper estate, making 14 acres in all. The names on this deed are Jesse O. Kennemer, Amos Griffin, Dawson Brown and James T. Rainey, who were the administrators and church trustees. The price paid for the 12 acres of land was $68.

Soon after the establishment of the church, a camp ground was laid out. Annually, till the days of the Civil War, a camp meeting was held at this place. A large arbor was erected with sills and braces all hewn from oak logs. It was 60 by 90 feet. The boards were rived from the oak trees to make a roof. In 1900 it was covered a new but it was let go and not a piece is to be found today.
People came from far and near to attend these meetings. The crowds were often estimated at 1500 people. Houses and tents were built to accommodate those who came to camp. These houses contained sleeping rooms, porches and passageways and were quite comfortable. Long rows of these houses were built, mostly of logs. Cooking and eating was done mostly in the open. The visitors and strangers were given a hearty welcome and asked to eat. Great numbers of horses, oxen, wagons and carts were present. One person remarked "yonder comes Pap with those oxen right through the camp ground". Those who did not have tents would use their covered wagons. The preachers stayed and slept in the church. Mrs. Callie Hamilton Dobson recalled how as a little child, she would help get the church ready for the preachers. Many of the old-time gospel preachers attended these meetings. I would like to mention here such characters as Simon Peter Richardson, Tom Simmons, Joe Abb Louis, Dickey Harwell, Presiding Elder Thigmen, Dr. Felton, Hickman and J.L. Perryman. These old preachers spoke with such force and power and with such heart-felt unction that, not only were Christians made to rejoice, but many sinners were made repentant and converted from their evil ways. At eight o'clock in the morning the ladies would have their grove meeting near the cemetery. They would sing and pray with many good testimonies given and often there were praises and hallelujahs heard in these services. It has been told to me that the shouting would begin at the grove meeting and continue until the three o'clock service. Aunt Cindy Griffin and Aunt Nellie Bowman were sisters and they would get happy in the grove meeting and go back go back to the camp ground shouting their.
Their brother Uncle Needham Kennemer would meet them. Aunt Cindy ou would take one of his hands and Aunt Nellie the other, they would go off into the preaching services shouting the praises of God. There was a dozen or more shouting at the same time. Uncle Needham Kennemer would get down to pray and rise shouting. He would be in the field plowing and get so happy. He was a man with a rich Christian experience who exercised his faith in God. Rev. Tom Simmons was a great singer as well as a good preacher. It would make anyone happy to hear him.

I would not leave out Rev. Lowery. Back in those days W. T. Hamilton was called to preach while a member of Concord Church. He served the Summerville Circuit and attended camp meeting while pastor there.

The spiritual awakening from powerful sermons leading to a renewal of consecration in the Christian lives of the people, the daily Bible readings, for many could not read, the holy conversations and the fellowship were sources of great religious power, in the very early history of Walker County.

Uncle Ezekiel Harris said one time in a testimony meeting "my wife and I both had better not come, so I told her to stay at home and let me come, that there was no danger of her falling from grace". He was a wonderful old man; the grandfather of our pastor M.L. Harris of 1903. Uncle Jake Harris was shouting one day and said, "Glory to God, I'm glad I am a Methodist. How could it be otherwise, when I was raised on Methodist milk?"
Theme camp meetings were held in September beginning Friday before the third Sunday, holding until the following Wednesday. The prayer service on Wednesday was a service to be remembered. They would return home with their souls fed from the word to talk of the great experiences, and to long for the next annual meeting. One lady said, "I always looked forward to Christian Camp Meeting and Christmas. They had rushed around getting fodder pulled, peas picked in order to be caught with their work so they could be present. The sweet potatoes must be dug and washed, beans, peas, roasting ears and cabbage gathered. I would like to mention here that I was told that you could smell cabbage cooking across the camp ground." It came to my mind how distasteful to God the odor of the burnt offerings were but I knew the odor of the cabbage was not held against those who came with clean hands and pure heart. I will get back to the work that must be done. The cows must be milked more carefully to have plenty of extra milk and butter. Some carried their cows with them and others turned the calf with the cow. A friend that could not go would look after the things left at home. A hog must be called up out of the mountains to be butchered, a beef killed, also a goat and a sheep. The women must be busy baking old fashioned light bread, sweet bread, ginger bread and stacks of pies. Those who had more of the world's goods would share with others to help them get ready for the camp meeting. There was extra green coffee to roast in the oven before the fire. It took care to roast it even and good. The nights had begun to go cool so the food would keep for several days. Those saints of old were not
there for food to sustain the body but there to get their souls rekindled with the spirit of the Lord for days ahead. The cold winter was coming, those who lived in remote sections could not get to church in bad weather. Some people did not have suitable clothing for cold weather.

The camp meetings were discontinued during the Civil War. But after peace was established they reorganized and continued until 1892. I would like to mention some of those who attended and camped at Concord Camp Ground. Uncle Tommie Griffin and Aunt Cindy, Amos Griffin and family, Needham Griffin and family, Billy Griffin and family, Henry Griffin and family, E.R. Hamilton and family, Jim Hamilton and family, Johnny Tate and family and Aunt Sarah, Pinkney Tate and family, John John Rainey and family, Tom Rainey and family, William Puryear and family, Sam Brown and family, By P. Neal and family, A. H. Neal and family, Edward Bomar and family, J.N. Keown and family, D. N. Price, Mary C. Smith, J.A. Eaton, B.C. Gray, Hannah Brock, Dr. Adam Clement Cavender, H. G. Moore, and James Shahan.

V. E. Looney used the school house for her tent. Many others used covered wagons.

Dr. Adam Clement and family attended the meetings. His family was great in the service that it gave to the country. Dr. Wilson Clement made his home in Subligna and practiced medicine until a real old man. He was always a friend to the pastor of Subligna Charge. Hon. Judson Clement was Congressman for years. There were others of the family who had a part in the earlier days. The Cavender family was a part of the camp meeting people. Mr. Joe Cavender would come to the Quarterly Conference in later days and enjoy the fellowship on Saturday. He was a friend to the poor.
Rev. Reese Griffin wrote that he was carried to Concord Camp meeting when he was a baby and then he related an experience he had one Sunday afternoon when he was six years old. A service was being held for children. L.A. Snow was pastor at this time. After the talk he asked all the children present who wanted to give their hearts to come forward and give his their hands. Rev. Griffin started and fell in the straw before he reached Rev. Snow. His heart was made expressibly happy. He shouted the praises of God. I am impressed to mention the conversion of Emma Brock Bowman back in those days. She stepped up on the bench saying "I am nothing but a little child but I love Jesus".

In 1882 the two-story church building was torn down and a new building erected in its place which was remodeled in 1907.

At the fourth Quarterly Conference in 1878 Concord Church property was valued at $500. The pastor was paid $45. by this church. In 1871 they promised to pay $15. to missions. This was a small salary but people did not have very much money. The cost of living was down in comparison with the salary. There have been many answers given why the camp meeting stopped. One said "the people were too poor to take care of the preachers". Another said, some apple brandy was being made to sell during the meeting. In 1892 the last meeting, a man from Dalton named Longley started to drive across the grounds. Mr. Surratt was bailiff, he tried to stop him but he persisted to go on anyway. The bailiff picked up a piece of plank and stopped him very effectively. The singing, praying and preaching was pleasing to God but the devil had to get in his work. On Wednesday morning, 1892
the last Concord Camp Meeting came to a close with a prayer service before they returned to their homes. I hope that this place may be used for Camp Meetings again if God wills it so.

Joel Couey, a great Christian layman and teacher was a great help in the church. He loved to sing, one of his favorite songs was "The Half Has Never Yet Been Told". He was a local preacher. He was loved by old and young. Mrs. Fletcher Smith would sing "Is Not This The Land Of Beulah". Such songs mean so much in a worship service. She was the mother of Rev. H. S. Smith.

Rev. W. F. Quillian was presiding elder in the year 1885. He was a forceful preacher. One of his sermons on the Christian home and family is full of instructions to follow even now.

Fletcher Walton was another great preacher of 1890.

In 1896 Miss. Lucy Puryear and Mrs. M. F. Pope belonged to the Sub-ligna Charge Missionary Society. The class leaders for 1896 was James Hegwood E. F. Bowman and J. T. Rainey. The church roll had reached a high of 96 members at this time.

One day after a testimony meeting Esq. E.F. Bowman said "I am not in a hurry to leave this world for I am better acquainted down here". When I saw this, by S. G. Browning, I cannot say,

Beneath the pressure of life's cares to-day,

I joy in these;

But I can say

That I had rather walk this rugged way,

If Him it please.

E.F. Bowman was superintendent of the Sunday School, trustee and steward for several years. He was a Christian gentleman and a useful citizen.
I would like to give a list of the Sunday School Supts. James T. Rainey, Charles H. Phillips, James M. Roper, John Puryear, James w. Hegwood, W.F. Tate, M. T. Kennemer, H.H. Morrison, W. H. Gray, Some of the older Sunday School teachers should be mentioned. Mrs. Betty Rainey Hegwood, Mrs. Paly Puryear Myers, Miss Sarah Tate, and there are many more who deserve mention.

The Literary School was in session during the revival. The teachers were always ready to cooperate. I will mention some of the teachers. Columbus Kennemer, Henry Walraven, Harvey Keown, Waltz Keown, Joel Couey, M.L. Keith, W.N. Morgan, Miss Jennie Johnson, prof. Giles, Hammontree girls and many others.

Singing was an important part in the church. The people would meet at night, line up the hymns and sing getting ready for the Sunday afternoon singings. The Brocks, Kennemers, Hegwoods, Morgans and many others were interested in music. In 1900 the first organ was bought. Some of the people thought the church was making a mistake, when they put a musical instrument in the church. It bothered some about singing at first but it was alright when they got used to it. When there would be no one to play the old songs would ring out strong from those who wanted to sing without music. This organ was sold to Mr. Conley and Dolores Roper Smith bought a new organ for the church. It was used until 1942 when B.F. Childs raised money to buy the piano that is now in use. The Sunday afternoon singings were extra good for years. I would like to mention the faithfulness of Mrs. Ludie Bohanan Brown in playing the organ. Prof. Moody Love taught a large singing school at the church in 1910. The Walker County Singing Convention was held here in 1910. People seemed to be happy.
How many would be members of the church today if the old rule was followed?

It was a rule to remove the name of a person from the church roll if he or she did not attend or support the church. Rev. Granville Rainey, a grandson of Esq. James Rainey, related how his name was removed while he was off working and going to school. But he was reinstated when he returned. He was called into the ministry and preached at Concord many times. In 1943 he came back to visit and conducted the Quarterly Conference for Rev. Thrailkill. A large crowd came to give him a hearty welcome. He is in the South Georgia conference and has been pastor of Mulberry Street Church in Macon Georgia; and has held many important appointments. Rev. Horace Freeman lived in this community. He held a meeting in this church while his parents lived here. His father was converted during this meeting. One Text he used was, "What wait I For My Hope Is In Thee". He is a member of the South Georgia Conference and pastor of St. Paul Methodist Church in Columbus, Georgia. He has been a member of five General Conferences.

In 1907 Rev. J. S Rawls came as pastor. He did excellent work for the few months God permitted him to live on the charge. He was taken ill with spinal meningitis and died April 4, 1908. He was laid to rest in Concord Cemetery. C. S. Martin came to take his place and carry on the work. The church was more spiritual than it had been for some time. N. A. Parsons came to help in the revival. Souls were saved and backsliderd reclaimed. The church would be filled on regular preaching days. The young people were in their places and loved the church. People of all denominations liked to come back to the camp ground. I will give you some of the families you would see in the services. Holcomes, Grays, Morgans, Hegwoods, Wyatts,
It was suggested that a marker be placed near the church in memory of Rev. Henry Cooper. The money was contributed and Maude Petersen Aiken wrote a short sketch of his life and a part of the early church history.

While W.S. Norton was pastor in 1912 Rev. Sappington was pastor at Summerville. He came to help in the revival. It was really a revival. The church members were refreshed and renewed.

In 1918 the trustees sent a report to Quarterly Conference that read as follows; "We have a warrantee deed to 14 acres of land. Church building is in fairly good condition. Value of the land and building, $1000. Deeds recorded in Deeds recorded in LaFayette, signed, A.H. Holcomb. (Value of Property 1950, $4000/ W. D. Peterson loved Concord Church and was faithful in supporting it with his means.

The Rev. J.H. Couch was pastor in the early 20's. He wanted more room at the parsonage. The parsonage trustees got busy to build an addition. Concord's part was $125. The timber on the church ground was sold to pay this bill. Repair work has been done on the church at different times. The outside of the church was painted while G.D. Erwin was pastor. Some work was done on the inside in 1950. Lights were put in last year, 1950, at a cost of 100 dollars.

Steps and underpinning is being done this year, 1951.

For several years there had not been a Sunday Schooe. Mrs. E. A. Puryear, Lee H. Conley, Mr. and Mrs. B.F. Childs and Mr. and Mrs. T. J. Hegwood and family saw the need of a Sunday School in the community. They soon had 60 on roll. Average attendance was 30. Collection for a year was $75.

Mr. Claude Tate has been a great help in the Sunday School and church. E.A.
Furyear has been ready and willing to help that the church grounds might be improved. There are many others that have helped. This should be a soul winning station for many years to come. Several pastors that have come and gone thought the church would have to be dropped because people would not come and we the members were too poor to pay sufficient salary. The pastor’s salary last year was only $150, that is small but I am thankful for a pastor that has not complained. The amount raised for pastor, benevolences, conference claims, bishops fund, was $185.60 with $20 for Golden Cross.

Concord Cemetery is one if the old burying grounds. Many have been laid to rest here. Rev. John Clemons, a Baptist Minister who was converted during camp meeting days is laid to rest here. Prof. Greene, Rev. J.S. Rawls, Dr. and Mrs. Johnson, Hamptons, Travillians, Prof Giles, Rainey’s, Heggwoods, Popes, Keowns, Morgans, D. N. Price and wife and the Tates.

I will give a list of the pastors and Presiding Elders from 1870:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pastor</th>
<th>Presiding Elder</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>Samuel L. Price</td>
<td>H.J. Adams</td>
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<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>J. B. McFarland</td>
<td>G.J. Pierce</td>
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<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>W.R. Branham</td>
<td>R.W. Bigham</td>
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<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>S.D. Evans</td>
<td>D.J. Myrick</td>
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<td>1874</td>
<td>G.W. Thomas</td>
<td>Alexander m. Thigpen</td>
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<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>J. B. McFarland</td>
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<td>1876</td>
<td>W. L. Yarbrough</td>
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<td>1877</td>
<td>E.B. Reese</td>
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<td>1878</td>
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<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>R. P. Martin</td>
<td>W.A. Parks</td>
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<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>J. A. Shackleford</td>
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<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>Mark Edwards</td>
<td>F. Mixon</td>
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<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>W.F. Quillian</td>
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<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>T. J. Edwards</td>
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<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>George T. King</td>
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<td>1885</td>
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<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>Sam B. Ledbetter</td>
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<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>L.N. Snow</td>
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<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>T. S. Edwards</td>
<td>J.M. Lowery</td>
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<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>F.L.R. Smith</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
1892  L. D. Coggins
93   "   "
94  W. R. Kennedy
95   "   "
96  J. N. Myers
97   "   "
98  C. H. Hartman
99   "   "
1900  J. E. Russell
  01  Walter Millican
  02   "   "
  03  M. L. Harris
  04  J. A. Sprayberry
  05   "   "
  06   "   "
  07  J. S. Rawls
  08  C. S. Mattin
  09  J. T. Pendley
  10  I. J. Lovern
  11  L. B. Hughes
  12  W. S. Norton
  13   "   "
  14  T. E. Thurman
  15  A. E. Silvey
  16   "   "
  17  J. B. Gresham
  18  Nelson Hinsley
  19  J. E. Legg
  20  J. H. Couch
  21   "   "
  22   "   "
  23-24  V. A. Roark
  25-26  R. O. Johnson
  27-29  Odum Clark
  30-32  V. J. Taylor
  33-34  J. B. Stephenson
  35-  G. T. Sorrells
  36   Cullen B. Jones
  37-46  G. D. Erwin
  47  J. R. Thompson
  48  R. J. Donaldson
  49-51  J. F. Gladney

W. C. Dunlap
  "   "
H. J. Adams
  "   "
A. W. Williams
  "   "
B. P. Allen
  "   "
Ford McRee
  "   "
F. P. Lovejoy
  "   "
T. J. Christian
  "   "
W. T. Irvine
  "   "
Sam B. Ledbetter
  "   "
Jno. Yarbrough
  "   "
Harris
  "   "
Frank Quillian
  "   "
A. M. Pierce
  "   "
J. S. Thrailkill
  "   "
Gas. M. Lipham
  "   "
Peter Manning
  "   "
The homecoming day held each year on the 4th Sunday in May is a good day of fellowship. The church has a membership of 37 but if each of us would do our best a great work could be accomplished. Prayer will change things.

The new consolidated school is only a short distance away. We are hoping for this to be a help to the church.

Those who helped in getting up the information should be mentioned here. Mrs. Carl Warnock, Mrs. Emma Jackson, T. H. Moore, J. S. Bomar, Rev. Reese Griffin, Mrs. Nina Eaton was very helpful by sending the address of Mrs. Callie Hamilton Dobson. She gave such a thrilling account of the good old days when she lived in Georgia. She is 83 years old and her home is in Childress Texas.