HISTORY

of

TOCCOA CHARGE

Confidence Church

Providence Church

Sunshine Church
Confidence Methodist Church, near Avalon in Stephens County, Georgia is on the Toccoa Circuit of the Gainesville District of the North Georgia Conference.

In the years preceding the War Between the States, a small group of Methodists had for their meeting house a small one-room log building on the Jarrett's Bridge Road which ran through the Eastanollee community as it wound its rugged way from Carnesville, Georgia by way of Jarrett's Bridge, a covered span, over into South Carolina, on the other side of the Tugalo River. The name of this log structure, according to the best recollections that the oldest people now living in this community have, was Mount Carmel. It was used jointly for church and school.

The war took its toll, and the few Methodists left lived nearer another log schoolhouse, known sometimes as Post Oak and sometimes as Seven Oaks, deriving its name from seven post oaks that stood in a straight row. For a period of time, church, school, and Sunday-School work activities were conducted there in this building which was located on the old Red Hollow Road which led from Toccoa to Lavonia. The schoolhouse was located one-half mile north from the present location of Confidence Church.

Confidence Church was organized as Confidence in 1870. In the early 1880's there arose in the hearts of the loyal band of Methodists a fervent desire for a new church building. The following is taken from the original record.
"Georgia, Franklin County

October 14, 1882

The M. E. Church at Confidence, being almost wholly without a meeting house to worship in, have appointed the following committee to solicit contributions for the purpose of erecting a suitable house to worship in: The new one to be built about one-half mile down the Red Hollow Road below where the old one now stands, it being Seven Oaks School-house. The contributions will fall due on or by the 1st of Nov. 1882.

Those who wish can subscribe labor or material or both, specifying the amount. All contributions will be thankfully received.

W. A. Cooper
J. L. Ertzberger
J. C. Holbrooks
John Stonecypher Committee
W. L. McBath

A list of contributors follows:

Mrs. Nancy Looney pd. $0.50
W. A. Cooper " 10.00
Alex Mauldin " 5.00
T. R. Yow " 2.00
Russell Cheek " 5.00
Harrison Farmer " 5.00
Robt. Matheson " 5.00
Mrs. Matheson
Mrs. Jane Stonecypher Hayes pd. 1.00
Miss Lucy Looney " 1.00
Mrs. Bonds " 1.00
Mrs. Ertzberger " 1.00
Mrs. "auldin " 1.00
Miss Nancy Farmer " 0.50
Miss Sheriff " 1.00
Mrs. Jesse Holbrooks " 1.00
J. G. Eskew " 1.00
Mrs. Sheriff " 1.00
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<th>Name</th>
<th>PD.</th>
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<td>Eliza Ledbetter</td>
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<td>Howell Cox</td>
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<td>John Ledbetter</td>
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<td>Quincy Adams</td>
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<td>Charlie White</td>
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<td>JJ White</td>
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<td>M. Higginbotham</td>
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Lumber was sawed for the framework. The ceiling and inside walls for the church were hand-hewn. The sturdy pine benches were handmade, and are still in use. The windows are wide and tall. Originally the windows had outside slatted blinds. Time and weather made them unfit for use after due time, and they were discarded.

The original members of the church named Confidence were

M. Swilling
Martha W. McBeth
Matilda Stonecypher
Jim W. Payne
Samantha Ertzberger
Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Holbrooks
Mrs. A. Patrick

These foregoing names were the names of the persons who belonged to this church up to the year 1873. Members added in 1874 and in the years closely following were

L. Patrick
M. A. Payne
L. Stowe
F. M. Stowe
E. Sheriff
J. E. Sheriff
M. J. Sheriff
J. O. Sheriff
J. L. Holbrooks
P. V. Kay
C. Kay
O. B. Selman
F. Holcomb
E. Cheek
S. Green
S. Hill
S. C. McBath
S. E. Cooper (by letter)
Juggy Mauldin
L. S. Ertzberger
J. S. Holbrooks
N. A. Payne
U. R. Kay (Adams)
S. O. Kay (Clark)
M. Bond
Martha Crawford
L. E. Black
Texas Holcomb
J. L. McBath
W. L. McBath
R. A. Cheek
J. M. Odell
W. L. Brock
W. A. Cooper
J. P. McCall
James L. Ertzberger
Alex Mauldin and son
G. N. Swilling
The first funeral service conducted there was that of Jesse Holbrook who died on April 9, 1883. The people attending the funeral sat about on the piles of lumber which had been brought in for the new church; and, from a lumber pile a little more elevated perhaps than the rest, Reverend W. A. Cooper preached the first funeral that was preached at Confidence.

The church was started on its own initiative. Why it was given the name of Confidence no one living seems to know, but those now living who remember Reverend Cooper could easily attribute the choice of name to him. During his ministry, or in a part of it at least, the four churches on the Toccoa Circuit were Confidence, Providence, Prospect, and Sunshine, and the writers vividly recall a saying of his concerning the four churches and their faith. It was this, in meaning, at least: "We have Confidence in the Providence of God that, if we follow His leading, we shall have a bright Prospect of Sunshine."

Worship services and Sunday School are still held in the original building which is still well-kept and well-preserved. In the fall of 1950 the new pine flooring, which in the spring of the same year had been laid on the old original floor, was sanded, shellacked and varnished. New doors late in 1950 replaced the old ones. A church marker standing at its right tells the passer-by that it is Confidence Methodist Church and that it was established in 1870. The front yard and the cemetery at the right and left and back of it are well maintained.

The exact location of the church is on Highway No.17 about eight miles south of Toccoa, near Avalon, Georgia. The whole setting gives a feeling of peace and quiet, and sometimes a stranger, a passer-by, sees the door open, and enters to worship there. That is what we would have it be - a church with a wide-open door like a wide-open heart standing by the roadside among sturdy oaks and whispering pines, standing tall and erect inspiring the hundreds who pass by every day "to look up and live."
The register of pastors who have served the church are as follows.

Reverends

J. H. Mashburn 1870
S. D. Evans 1871
B. B. Higginbotham 1872
W. L. Yarbrough 1873 and 1874
E. J. Hendrix 1875 and 1876
W. T. Newman 1877 and 1878 (Lavonia and Confidence)
J. C. Crogan 1879 and 1880 and 1881
A. W. Quillian 1882 and 1883
W. A. Cooper

(Confidence new church) 1884 and 1885 and Providence

T. F. Lankford 1886
B. F. Frazer 1887
A. D. Echols 1888, 1889, and 1890
M. D. Smith 1891
W. A. Cooper (Avalon Circuit) 1892 and Toccoa Mission 1893 and 1894
B. P. Searcy 1895
J. C. Atkinson 1898 and 1897
J. W. Gober 1898
A. F. Nunn 1899
L. P. Winter 1900
J. E. Rorie 1901, 1902, and 1903
W. A. Cooper 1904 and 1905
D. C. Brown 1906 (Served 6 weeks, died, and W. A. Cooper app'td to work)

J. P. Ledbetter and Mr. Talkington 1907

L. E. Wright 1908, 1909, and 1910
J. W. Brinsfield 1911 and 1912
H. L. Byrd 1913 and 1914
W. T. Wadley 1915
G. H. Bailey 1916, 1917, 1918, and 1919
J. B. Gresham 1920
A. F. Foster 1921 and 1922
W. E. Mills 1923
George Wright 1924
E. O. Vickery 1925
J. E. Holbrook 1926, 1927, 1928
I. J. Lovern 1929
B. C. Mattison 1930 and 1931
P. H. Stokes 1932
J. B. Ward 1933 and 1934
Lester J. Coe 1935 and 1936
T. G. Hackney 1937
J. M. Perryman 1938
E. V. Hawks 1939 and 1940
T. E. Sherwood 1941 and 1942
J. M. Barker 1943 and 1944
Dr. George Shaw and Arthur Chamblee 1945

C. H. Wheelis 1946 and 1947
J. H. Smith 1948
J. E. Ellis 1949 and 1940

Eugene Brown 1951
The original church land property was a gift from Samuel Y. Swilling and Thomas M. Looney and contained 1 and 7 tenths Acres. This deed was dated October 15, 1881 and is recorded in the office of the Clerk of Stephens County and the date of recording is October 8, 1925. This is recorded in Book 15 folio 340. If it is as thought, it was originally recorded in the Clerk's Office in Franklin County.

Deed dated December 1, 1920 lists one-half acre bought from Mrs. Lillie Dean. This deed was recorded in the Clerk's Office of Stephens County in Book 17 folio 334. The date of this recording is June 20, 1927. The amount the church paid for this land was $86.85.

Deed dated February 23, 1950 names a gift to the church of one-half acre given by Mr. H. L. Price. This deed is recorded in the Clerk's Office of Stephens County in Book 46 folio 285 under date of February 23, 1950.

The deeds are now in the hands of Paul Cooper, one of the trustees of the church.

The church keeps an insurance premium paid up every year.

The present trustees of the church are Paul Cooper, Loy Frederick, Ralph McBath, Daily Swilling, and Harold Elrod.

Sunday School has been in operation during the entire life of the church. The present enrollment is 60 with a good attendance every Sunday. The teachers are well trained. The membership of the church is around a 100. There continues to be a good spirit of fellowship among the members.

The first W. S. C. S. (it was the Woman's Missionary Society then) was organized by Miss Bert Winter in the fall of 1921. Its first president was Miss Estelle Hayes, and the original enrollment was 6 members. At the present time, 1951, there are 18 members.

Several of the members of the church all along through the years have taken responsible places in the business, industrial, farming, and educational work of the community and in other communities as well.

The circuit of the churches (there are 5 churches in the circuit, since Mt. Zion was added about 1943) owns a nice brick veneer parsonage on Hill Street in Toccoa. This was erected in the middle 1940's and the old parsonage and a part of the parsonage lot were sold to help defray the expenses of building the new parsonage. This house has five rooms, a bath, 2 porches, a back and front porch on the ground floor and a small apartment of rooms upstairs.

The deed for the parsonage and lot was dated November 9, 1897 from S. H. Hardeman to the trustees of the parsonage. It is recorded in the Clerk's Office in Stephens County in Book 2, Folio 264. It was recorded May 25, 1908.

The source of the material recorded herein was furnished by Miss Lula Cooper of Avalon, Georgia who has through the years kept the books which were so painstakingly kept up by her father, Reverend W. A. Cooper.

Historians
Jewel Hayes
Daisy Hayes
May, 1951

Hayestone
Rte. 2
Toccoa, Georgia