HISTORY OF REDWINE CHURCH
Organized in 1789

July 29, 1973

Redwine Church was founded with the co-operation of a Redwine family for whom it was named. Jacob Redwine was the son of Frederick Redwine who was born in Prussia. Jacob was born in Pennsylvania, but he later moved to Montgomery, North Carolina where he served as a soldier in the Revolutionary War. As payment for his war services he received the land close to the place where Redwine Church now stands. This land was formerly in Elbert County, but is now in Hart County. He married Rowena Rhinehart of Elbert County who was buried by his side in the old Redwine Cemetery.

The Reverend William Redwine, who was the grandson of Jacob Redwine, was probably the first pastor.

Although no recorded date for the organization of Redwine Church has been found, the accepted date is in the year 1789. Anyway, it was built when church houses were improvised log cabins in the wilderness. The first church building was located several hundred yards west of where the present church now stands. At this place is an abandoned cemetery where many of the pioneer families of the church are buried.

In the summer a brush arbor would be built so that the people could worship in the open air. In this brush arbor, Lorenzo Dow, an itinerant, independent evangelist visited Redwine. Dow was a peculiar fellow who always made his appointments to preach a year in advance, but he always filled each appointment on time. On this notable occasion the people had gathered from miles around forming a great concourse of worshipers. Promptly, at the appointed hour, there appeared in the doorway a long-haired, dusty, way-worn stranger who peeped in at the door of the little pine-pole church and then turned away. He went outside to a fallen chestnut tree where he mounted the trunk and began to sing lustily. This was his signal for services to begin. He sang, he prayed, and he preached. Sometimes he was astride the log, sometimes sideways, and sometimes, he stood mounted on the log. When he finished with his sermon he disappeared as quietly as he came. Lorenzo Dow is quite well known today as one of the great early Methodist evangelists. His name is listed as such on the marker erected by the Georgia Historical Commission on the front lawn of the present church.

The Reverend William Redwine died about five years after the organization of the first church. He had encountered many obstacles in establishing a permanent religious institution at Redwine, but he did not live long enough to see his plans materialize.
The second church was also a log building which was located not far from where the present church stands. This church was used as a school house for one year. Sometimes only a small group of men and women attended the church services which were held on Sunday evenings and Saturday afternoons. They kept working toward their goal and in a few years the second log church became too small for the increasing number of members.

Some of the most outstanding members who were responsible for the growth of the church at this time were:

Tom Swilling, James Taylor, Luther and Parks Cunningham, Bill Fleming, Banks Cunningham, Jacob Pruitt, and B.D. Johnson.

These Christian men, and others, contributed to the church not only financially but spiritually as well.

Mrs. Elizabeth Cunningham, who was a faithful and devoted member for many years, gave the four acres of land which belong to the church. In 1957, Mr. Mac Beggs donated 1.3 acres of land to the church grounds making a total of 5.3 acres instead of four acres.

Redwine was on the Hartwell Circuit during this period of the church. The pastors from 1866 to 1878 were:

- Britton Sanders - 1866-1867
- Levi P. Neese - 1868
- Amicus W. Williams - 1869-1870
- John W. Baker - 1871-1872
- William T. Norman - 1873-1876
- W.P. Neese - 1879

None of these pastors are living today.

When the second log church became too small for the increasing membership the highest officials of the church decided that a new building must be erected. So a frame church was built in 1878. The Reverend A.G. Worley, who was Presiding Elder, preached the dedicatory sermon. A.B. Turner was licensed to preach at this time.

In 1887 The Reverend Lundy Howard Harris was sent by the North Georgia Conference to preach at Redwine. On his circuit were Redwine, Fellowship, Macedonia, and Royston. He had just married Miss Corra White of Elbert County. Mrs. Harris (Corra White) became a famous novelist after her husband's death. A Circuit Rider's Wife and My Book and Heart are two novels written by Mrs. Harris. Both of these books give a complete record of her life as the wife of The Reverend Harris at Redwine. Some of her stories are humorous, others are pathetic, and still others are based on the grand old revivals held at Redwine Church each summer.

Mrs. Harris's novel, A Circuit Rider's Wife, was made into a moving picture entitled "I'd Climb the Highest Mountain." During the filming of this movie an investigation of Redwine Church and community was made for some of the scenes, but since a program of renovation had just been completed on the Church and many changes had been made since the writing of the novel - A Circuit Rider's
Wife - the pictures were taken near Cleveland, Georgia in order to more resemble the scenes described in the novel.

The sentiments of Mrs. Harris toward Redwine Church can be expressed in an extract from one of her letters written to Mrs. W.L. Hodges, Regent of the John Benson Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, in reply to an invitation to be present at the unveiling of the monument to Major Nathaniel Durkee. This is in part what she wrote:

"In all of my 'Circuit Rider Stories' I have laid the scenes at Redwine. Of course my heart has never left the people of that church. I see myself so young and happy among them, so confident of God and His great mercies which in the deepest sorrows have never failed me. I loved every thing about Redwine - even the tombstones in the church yard. I think often of my husband who began there with such ardor and practice of His Beatitudes. I have eaten the bread of sorrow and I have found strength. I am now old and feeble and bereaved, yet I have not lacked for anything that the Lord has promised. I have suffered much, and I have been blest far beyond my merits with so much love and from all parts of the earth. I have learned not only to believe in God, but in men and women. I learned this in Redwine Church. I want to thank the good people there for all they have done to help me in my life."

This letter was written in 1921. Mrs. Corra Harris passed away in 1935. During this period in the history of the church some of the most influential leaders were:

- D.H. Agnew
- J.H. Winter
- J.W. Taylor
- W.R. Johnson
- H.P. Dickerson
- R.B. Pruitt
- Roland West
- R.B. Hilliard

Redwine was on the Hartwell Circuit for eight years. During this period of the church the pastors were:

- W.A. Farris - 1878-79-80-81
- R.A. Seale - 1882
- M.P. Ryburn - 1883
- W.M.D. Bond - 1884
- W.T. Norman - 1885

The Church was changed to the Royston Circuit in 1886. While on this circuit the pastors were:

- Luke G. Johnson - 1886
- Lundy H. Harris - 1887
- M.H. Strozier - 1888
- W.A. Cooper and W.F. Norman - 1889
- Ford McRee - 1890
- J.M. Sewell - 1891-92
A.H.S. Bugg - 1893-94
E.J. Mashburn - 1895-96
H.F. Branham - 1897
E.R. Seaborn - 1898-99
J.A. Reynolds - 1900
Lovie P. Winter - 1901-02
John F. Yarbrough - 1903-04
W.A. Maxwell - 1905-06-07-08

The third church building was demolished 28 years after its erection. A fourth church, which is our present church, was built in 1906. The Reverend John Mashburn preached the dedicatory sermon, and The Reverend W.A. Maxwell was the pastor.

The memorial window in the back of this church was given in memory of Eliza and Lavonia Cunningham. These virtuous women were faithful to the church and community by performing many helpful services to them. They were responsible for the attractive appearance of the church interior.

Some of the very influential and consecrated members during this period of the history of the church were:
- D.H. Agnew
- R.B. Pruitt
- John White
- Perkins Cunningham
- S.J. Boggs
- B.P. Johnson

At this time Redwine Church was still on the Royston Circuit.

The pastors were:
- W.W. Gaines - 1909-10-11
- W.A. Simmons - 1912-13
- F.D. Centrell - 1914-15
- F.M. Sullivan - 1916-17-18
- Irby Henderson - 1919

In 1919 Redwine was changed from the Royston Circuit to the Canon Circuit. While on this charge the pastors were:
- M.B. Whitaker - 1920
- J.G. Devis - 1921-22
- F.E. Crutcher - 1923-24
- G.E. Smith - 1925-26-27-28
- G.G. Ramsey - 1929
- J.W. Jones - 1930
- Z.V. Hawkes - 1931
- Carl Stanley - 1932
- G.T. Shell - 1933-34 (Who was a direct descendant of the noble Redwine Family)
- H.L. Gurley, Sr. - 1934-35
- J.W. Coffann - 1936-37
- W.E. Brown - 1938-39
- S.T. Sherrill - 1940-41
- H.O. Green - 1942-43
- Frank E. Jenkins, Jr. - 1944-45
W.A. Woodruff - 1946-47-48  
Charles Chandler - 1948-49  
C.S (Bo) Coogler - 1949-1954

The church membership in 1934 was 138. The present membership (1973) is 151.

On December 20, 1921 the John Benson Chapter of the "Daughters of the American Revolution" unveiled a monument which they had at the grave site of Major Nathaniel Durkee, a Revolutionary War hero, who fought at the Battle of Kettle Creek, and who was buried in the old cemetery at Redwine. The Georgia Historical Commission erected a marker on the front lawn of the church in memory of this war hero. Major Durkee was a nephew of General Nathaniel Greene whose wife gave Eli Whitney his idea for the invention of the cotton gin. Major Durkee gave the income from a thousand acres of land which he owned to promote the invention of the gin. His friends maintain that he is entitled to first honor in the praise which is given to one of the greatest inventions of America.

In 1954 Redwine was changed from the Canton Charge to the Macedonia-Redwine Charge. The pastors on this charge have been:

- Marion H. Conway (deceased) - 1954-60
- Bob L. Bone - 1960-63
- Burchard Berry - 1963-64
- A.W. Williams - 1964-65
- C.R. Hill - 1965-70
- James Wellman - 1970-72
- Douglas Lott - 1972--

During this period many improvements have been made such as the building of a brick parsonage about mid-way between Macedonia and Redwine on an acre of land donated by John A. Baggs. The construction of this building was made possible by the hard work and untiring efforts of the members of both Macedonia and Redwine churches under the ever watchful eye and cheerful words of encouragement and inspiration of the pastor, The Reverend Marion Conway. The parsonage was completed in 1960 and was first occupied by The Reverend Bobby L. Bone, Mrs. Bone, and young son David. The Reverend Conway never lost interest in the church work at Redwine and when he passed away in March, 1972 his body was laid to rest in the cemetery there because this was the church of his choice in his later years.

Some of the older leaders of the church who passed away during this period were:

- Loy Johnson, Sr.
- L.A. Pruitt
- John Ridgeway
- F.D. (Doc) Nixon
- G.B. Poore

Sam David
J. Rush Phillips, Sr.
Don Moorehead
J. Mac Brown

Some recent improvements that have been made at the church are:

1. Installation of a hardwood floor
5.

Installation of well to well room
6. New church in new building
7. Installation of a centrally located heating and air-conditioning system
8. Rest rooms
9. Building of Sunday School rooms
10. Construction of a Fellowship Hall which has just been completed.

Another achievement of Zewan Church was to give inspiration for the ministry to some of the descendants of early members of Zewan. Two men who became ministers and are in the Methodist Conference are: Frank Moorhead who has advanced to the position of "Director of Programs" for the North Georgia Conference and Bond Fleming who is now President of Emory at Oxford Junior College at Oxford, Georgia.

Organizations of the Church

In 1940-41 the W.S.C.S. was organized under the supervision of Miss Bert Winter who was an active member of the North Georgia Conference for a number of years. The W.S.C.S. is composed of a dedicated group of church women who seem to instinctively realize the needs of the church and community and work together in harmony and friendship to accomplish many Christian deeds.

The M.Y.F. was organized in 1943 and has been a beacon for the youth of the church since. By being a member of this group the young people develop character and become adult citizens with a desire to carry on the work of the church.

The Men's Club was organized in 1939-40 during the pastorate of Reverend James Wallman. This group of men was largely responsible for the planning of the new Fellowship Hall, and they provided the stimulus for carrying the project to completion in a short period of time.

There have been several homecomings at Zewan Church. The first of which we have a record was on June 17, 1934. Another was in 1953, and today, July 26, 1973. On each occasion a great number of former members and friends have congregated to enjoy the fellowship and receive a blessing.

Thus, for approximately 115 years Zewan Church has been an active force in the ministry of God and the history of the surrounding area. It has advanced in structures varying from a brush arbor to a comfortable, air-conditioned building. It has produced more nearly perfect citizens, more dedicated fathers and mothers, and more secure members of the Kingdom of God.

The added vigor of the church group, due to the untiring efforts of both young and old working in harmony toward a common goal, will continue to play this leadership role well into the future.

(Ken thanks Mr. and Mrs. Guy Smith who compiled this information.)