SKETCH OF ROCK CHAPEL CHURCH
by J. B. Bond

In 1825 (exact month and day not known) a few scattering Indians still roamed the forest, but William Griffith, Ben Carr, Charles McGuffey, William Lee and a few other Methodists met and erected a small log meeting house near a spring near the north end of a rock mountain and each one took the name of Rock Chapel.

Nine years later my grandfather, J. B. Bond, moved down from Hall county and bought land just west of the church and gave a plot of land, pine tree to blackjack etc., about two hundred yards west and a frame building was put up and also used for a school. It was burned in 1870 and temporary building was used as a church and school for some years.

In 1886, M. L. Underwood was pastor and a church conference voted to build a new church. Edmund Lee had fine pines just east of the mountain. He gave the pines. My father, Easom J. Bond, and David B. Chupp, Tandy Y. Nash and others moved a sawmill near it at pool, sawed it and stacked it to dry. In August of that year, D. B. Chupp had a small planer. The lumber was dressed and the church hulled in. The building was finished in 1887 and dedicated November 7 of that year by Bishop J. S. Key. The Sunday School rooms were added in 1923.

I think in the early days the church was in the Gwinnett (but always in DeKalb county) circuit. In 1848, Dr. George Yarbrough in his history tells us it was in the Decatur circuit with his father as pastor.
along with three other campmeetings. Some years later it was in the Stone Mountain circuit, then many years with Lithonia and then Redan and Rock Chapel.

Before the War Between the States we find that the slaves belonged to the church with their white folks and on the church roll their names appear as Smith's John, Brown's Susie etc.

The membership of Rock Chapel has never been very large, from 75 to 150. The Methodist, Dr. J. W. Lee, W. L. Underwood, R. M. Calvin, and two Baptist preachers have gone from her midst and hundreds of good men and women who have blessed the state and nation. Many prominent pastors have served the church. It is the mother church of the Lithonia church.

Now a word about the campmeeting which started about 1840 and held until 1861 when the war broke it up. These were great meetings. In 1872, my father, Easom Bond, his brother, Dr. W. P. Bond, David Chupp, Dr. Chupp, Thomas Johnson, B. B. Braswell, Jacob Chupp, Ruben Evans, Marion Welborn, Dan Venable and many others rebuilt the campground and a large arbor or tabernacle. Campmeetings were discontinued in 1902 but the old arbor was repaired and recovered and used for revivals and social and educational meetings. Among the Bishops who have preached from its platform, I remember Haygood, Candler and Franklin before he was a bishop. Many D. D's., Governors, Senators, and Congressmen were other speakers. The arbor was torn down in 1948.

At one of these campmeetings my father was praying for a freckled faced lad at "grove meeting". He was converted, joined the church that night. His family moved to Merriweather and a wealthy
uncle sent him to Emory College. Later he joined the North Georgia Conference and after filling the highest appointments was transferred to St. Johns Church in St. Louis where he died. He was the author of several books and I heard him say that he would plow in his fathers fields with a book nailed on the handles of his plow and turn the page at the end of the row. This is the story of just one of the contributions to the world that this grand old church has made.