ROOPVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
ROOPVILLE, GEORGIA

A HISTORY - THOUGH INCOMPLETE

by

Mrs. Julian (Frances) Freel
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FOREWORD

This is the history of the Roopville United Methodist Church. It is not a full history because records, reports, documents and other data needed are not available. It is based on a small number of records that were not ruined when water leaked into the Church basement and on first-hand knowledge and hand-me-down information.

The description of the Church as it was originally and much of its early history comes from the oldest member, Mrs. Jim (Zed Staples) Veal. She has spent long arduous hours reviewing the past in an effort to help perpetuate the memory of Roopville United Methodist Church as it was and as it is 1883-1983.

This history has a twofold purpose: To begin giving Roopville Methodist a written visible continuity, since it has endured one hundred years and now seems to be as such an indestructible spirit as it is a building of wood and brick. Secondly, to encourage its youth to develop loyalty and pride in their Church heritage.
"Old and new put their stamp on everything in nature. The snowflake that is now falling is marked by both; the present gives the motion and color to the flakes; antiquity its form and properties. All things wear a luster which is a gift of the present and a tarnish of time."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

In 1845 Martin Roop migrated from South Carolina to Georgia. He settled first in Jackson County later in Coweta and in 1855 moved to the vicinity of Roopville. John K. Roop, his oldest son, aided in the settling of this area and became its most prominent citizen. In 1861 Mr. Roop enlisted in the Confederate Army and upon retiring to civilian life became the owner of 2,000 acres of land much of which he donated to enhance the growth of this area. Included in this acreage was a huge rocky ridge atop the counties point of highest altitude. The view from this point was majestic and the brisk breezes cooled many weary pioneers who settled there.

Found among the names of the early settlers are many of the founders of Roopville Methodist Church. They include Alexander, Almon, Blackwelder, Cammons, Craven, Freel, Huff, Nolen, Pentecost, Phillips, Staples, Steed, Storey, Thomasson, Veal, Ware and Warren.

In 1882 the citizens of the community were given their first post office and the village surrounding it was officially named Roopville, after Mr. John K. Roop. Later on October 7, 1885, the city of Roopville was chartered.

One year after the post office was established and Roopville named, Mr. Roop donated half the money to build a Methodist Church and one acre of land on which to build it. The date was 1883 and the Church has been in existence since 1874. Members previously had worshipped at Mt. Gilead near Bonner Gold Mine. Later the Church was moved to Mt. Zion, some three miles west of Roopville on McIntosh Road. The Church was part of the Bowdon Circuit and trustees at this time were; Dr. Frank Thomasson, David Nolen, George W. Storey, Wilson L. Craven, E. W. Worley, G. T. Storey, W. S. Alexander and George R. Jacobs.

In 1883 at the Bowdon Circuit's Second Quarterly Con-
ference, Information of this donation was received. Authorization was granted for building a Church on said land. W. H. Lafrade was Presiding Elder of the district and M. W. Arnold was the pastor in charge.

A second lot, consisting of a strip of land 30 feet wide, lying along the south side of the original lot was donated in 1894 by Mr. Roop.

The Church was built with volunteer labor. The trustees, building committee, male members and other interested persons began building immediately.

Wood was cut from local pines which grew in abundance in this area. This was made into lumber at the sawmill housed in the local gin house. These pines were hauled back and forth by teams of oxen. A one story building was constructed at a cost of $2,000 in 1883 and was considered one of the most important accomplishments in this community.

Originally, the front door opened into a small foyer which had a door on each side opening into the sanctuary. The Church was arranged so that there were two aisles with narrow pews on either side and the long pews in the center.

There was a raised choir stall on the right front side of the Church. When the bay was added to the sanctuary the choir moved there. At the same time the bay was added the raised part of the sanctuary was installed. This change made the area of the pulpit more definitive.

The pews on the front left of the Church ran parallel with the side wall and facing the pulpit. This was called the "Amen Corner". Many a loud emphatic "Amen" was heard from this area where the men who were the backbone of the Church usually sat. As they became involved in the sermon their fervent "Amens" served a threefold purpose. They emphasized the minister's point, made nodders jump and become alert, and recaptured the attention of recalcitrant children.

Originally the Church had double steeples, one of these steeples housed the bell and was not as tall as the other, there was no basement at that time. During the time that W. M. Twigrs was Presiding Elder, 1943-1946, the steeples were torn down and a modern brick and tile porch and new double doors were installed.

The doors did not fit well and one night during a ser-
mon a kitten strayed into the Church, the doors had not completely closed. It walked up the aisle into the pulpit, which it crossed with great dignity, and preceded to rub against the preacher's leg. At this minute the pastor was reaching the climax of his sermon, he continued with his sermon and made his point, although the expression on his face clearly showed his disappointment. The minute he finished he reached down, picked up the cat, and holding it away in great distaste, he walked to the window and dropped it out.

A little boy who had been followed to Church by the cat watched this and the minute the service ended rushed to the door to go outside and look for his kitten. The cat was found just outside the door on the porch, ready to sneak back in. Needless to say after that night, the congregation and the minister watched to see if the door was completely closed. Also, needless to say, the little boy closed his kitten up before he left home.

At the same time that the steeples were removed, a basement was cleared under the Church. Over the years this has plagued the membership because of water leakage. Much money has been spent here in an effort to stop the leaking. It has been learned that the water problem stems from creek gravel having been used in the mixing of the cement for the basement. At the present time Damtite has been used and the Church has been told that if a ditch is dug across the back of the church basement similar to the one on either side, the problem may be solved. Just one problem, the granite doesn't ditch too well.

In January, 1952, it was decided to partition the basement into a storage room, three classrooms, one of which was twice as large as the others, and one large fellowship hall. A sink and stove had previously been installed at the back of the fellowship space.

Kirby Hamil obtained three tables and sixteen chairs for the hall. Just recently J. W. Wood gave sixteen additional chairs and the Church bought sixteen more of the same kind. This gives a seating capacity of approximately 50.

Donations from members have gradually furnished the classrooms, with Mrs. Berma Hamil having bought small chairs for the very young.

During the late 40's and early 50's beautiful stained glass windows were installed in the sanctuary. When installation of the windows was completed, the Church celebrated
with a homecoming. This was a joyous occasion with many former members attending. The windows were dedicated on that day.

Inscriptions on the windows read as follows:

Rev. W. W. Benson
1873-1944
Mrs. Kate H. Benson
1860-1974

William S. Alexander
1825-1941
1833 Mary A. Alexander 1913
1867 Orville M. Alexander 1953
1870 Atta Alexander 1942

William T. Freel
1871-1948
May V. Freel
1874-1966

Zeddoch T. Freel
1849-1915
Mary E. Freel
1849-1933

William Jacobs Blackwelder
1852-1926
Nancy Louise Ware Blackwelder
1852-1926

Dr. W. L. Craven
1835-1923

Rev. W. M. Twiggs
Dis. Supt. 1943-1949

T. T. Staples
1849-1922
Rachel R. Staples
1844-1917

P. P. Staples
1876-1959
Ola I. Staples
1886-1969

Willie Roy Staples
1902-1925
In 1974 the antique arm chair and two side chairs in the pulpit were in need of refinishing and new upholstering. A lovely antique gold velvet was agreed upon and when the work was done the results were beautiful. Therefore in 1979 when the church had the antique pews refinished and seat pads made, it was accepted that they would be matched to the pulpit chairs and blended with the carpet.

In 1974 insulation was blown into the walls of the Church in preparation for the central heating and cooling system which was to be placed there. The new central system would be installed at a cost of $1,400 for heat and $1,500 for air conditioning. Work was begun and the project was soon completed.

With the new central system installed it was agreed that the interior of the Church now needed painting. This was done immediately, June 1974, and the Church was now ready for carpet. It was decided that the entire sanctuary would be carpeted rather than just the aisles as had been discussed. The carpet was selected by the ladies of the Church and donated by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Cammons in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Bob Cammons and by Mrs. John Staples in honor of John Staples.

The restrooms in the basement were one of the top priorities for many years. In 1975 Georgia Power was adding guy wires to their power poles and paying $100 per wire - when they got to Tom Staples's pasture they were not able to count. Tom insisted on the number of wires that were
Georgia Power insisted they were correct. So Tom acting as his own lawyer took them to Court and won his case. He said from the beginning of the dispute with the power company that all the money he got from them he would give to the Church... Tom won his case and the money was used toward building the restrooms.

The largest of the three classrooms was divided into two. This was done to honor both Julian Freel and Hugh Storey by naming a room for them, both men being then deceased.

In September the sign in front of the Church was finished having been paid for by Earl Cammons and Mrs. Evelyn Pennybaker.

Mr. and Mrs. Jerry (Deborah) Bryan and Kirby Hamil painted the classrooms and Deborah updated the memorial windows herself. This was much appreciated because that type work was expensive and involved risk of breakage in moving.

In October 1975, as planned, homecoming was held and the sign dedicated to Mr. and Mrs. Eff Cammons, the carpet to Mr. and Mrs. Bob Cammons and John Staples, the two new classrooms to Julian Freel and Hugh Storey and pictures of these two men were hung in the basement.

The Church with its wide board ceiling, carpet of warm colors, gold velvet upholstery and beautiful stained glass windows makes a truly lovely setting for a wedding.

It is especially effective in the afternoon at the time when the sun is low enough for its rays to pour through the stained glass. Several Church members have, through the years, taken advantage of this atmosphere and married here with the present or a former pastor officiating.

At one of these weddings a very elegant little old lady, who was attending from out of town stood outside after the service looking back at the Church. She turned to one of our members and said, "Wasn't that a beautiful wedding? I grew up in a Church like this and its simplicity made everything so meaningful. We replaced it with that great big mausoleum on the hill and nothing has ever been as nice since. I'm so glad I came."

During the years of which we have no records many lovely and useful gifts have been given to the Church.
The lectern in the pulpit was built and given by Rev. W. W. Benson. Through the years it has made the pulpit unique in appearance. The two large Bibles there are also gifts, with Horrie Duncan donating the red one, and the brown one was given by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Cammons in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Bob Cammons.

The antique armchair was given by Mrs. John Blackwelder and the two antique side chairs were donated by Herbert Dabney. These chairs are placed back in the bay and give it a look of beauty and dignity.

Toward the front of the pulpit the communion table made of oak matches the antique railing found. This was given by Mrs. Clyde (Margaret) Freel in honor of Clyde Freel.

Hanging in the back of the pulpit is the painting "Meditation", which was given by Mrs. Lee Pylant.

Placed also in the pulpit is the beautifully carved collection plate which was bought in Germany by Dr. P. P. Staples, Jr., and presented to the Church. It matches beautifully with the simplicity of the building.

The beautiful brass cross and candlesticks which burn white candles and give an atmosphere of serenity to the worship service, were donated in honor of Karl Staples by his brothers Tom Staples, Max Staples Pal Staples and John Staples and by his sisters Mrs. Zed Veal, Mrs. Blanche Brown and Mrs. Lunelle Lockwood.

On either side of the pulpit is a flag - one the Christian Flag and the other the flag of the United States of America. These were given by the Woodmen of the World.

Many years ago the Woman's Society of Christian Service presented a Communion Set to the Church and Mrs. Charlie (Helen Huff) Smith gave a graceful engraved Communion Wine Pitcher in honor of her father, Levi Huff.

Hanging on the wall back of the piano is the beautiful painting of The Last Supper given in honor of Mr. and Mrs. G. C. Storey by Mr. and Mrs. George (Estelle) Storey.

The piano, placed at the front of the sanctuary at the right of the congregation, was given in honor of Mr. and Mrs. W. T. Freel by Mr. and Mrs. Victor (Sarah) Johnson. It was not only welcomed because it is a beautiful piece of furni-
ture but because it was so vitally needed. Our old one had been 'on its last legs' for some time.

The three attractive side chairs, upholstered in black leather, were given by Mrs. Tom (Blanche Smith) Staples. These are used wherever the occasion demands and have been most helpful on special occasions.

In July 1982 it was decided that the Church would start discussing its Centennial. Since Roopville Methodist Church was founded in July 1883, it was agreed to set the date from July 17 through July 24, 1983.

The celebration is to begin with Zed Veal Day. A tea in honor of "Zed", our oldest member, will be held just prior to the Worship Service. The schedule is as follows:

Sunday, July 17th
  6:30 P.M. Reception honoring Mrs. Zed Veal. Fellowship
  7:30 P.M. Worship Service, Rev. Herbert Chisenhall

Monday, July 18th
  7:30 P.M. Worship Service, Rev. Tommy Green

Tuesday, July 19th
  7:30 P.M. Worship Service, Rev. Dan Williamson

Wednesday, July 20th
  7:30 P.M. Worship Service, Rev. Ken Bowman

Thursday, July 21st
  7:30 P.M. Worship Service, Rev. Hugh B. Duling

Friday, July 22nd
  7:30 P.M. Worship Service, Rev. John H. Haney
  8:30 P.M. Home movies of the past to be shown in Sanctuary

Sunday, July 24th
  11:00 A.M. Centennial Celebration Service of Worship
  Rev. Jamie Jenkins
  12:00 noon Dinner on the ground
  Bring picnic basket and a hunger for old friends and food (Church is furnishing meat and drink).
  2:00 P.M. Spend time looking at memorabilia at Church and Roopville Historical Society Building.
  Also, old home movies of past events will be shown in fellowship hall.
In April 1983 Rev. John Haney called a Church Conference. With George Greene presiding, the congregation voted to accept a donation to purchase and install vinyl siding on the Church. Other projects receiving a vote of approval with work to be done as quickly as possible and certainly before the Centennial were:

1. Paint columns on front entrance and back stoop, also front and back porch of parsonage. Cost $150.

2. Sanctuary to be caulked and painted. Cost $850.00

3. Install outside protective aluminum framed plexiglass windows over the stained glass windows. The windows have been evaluated at $50,000. Cost $2,150.

It had earlier been agreed that Tom Staples would donate side railings for the Church steps with George Greene donating the work of installing them.

Over the years the Church has grown from an insurance evaluation of $2,000.00 in 1883 to a projected insurance value of $70,000.00 for the building and $18,000.00 for the furnishings in 1982. The many improvements to the Church have greatly increased its value.
THE CHURCH SCHOOL

The Church School was organized when the Church was founded and has continued meeting every Sunday since that time. With no written records for this, but from conversations with older members it seems the Church was divided into many classes for the youth and a class for the men and another for the women. Finally the adult classes were combined into one large class.

During the periods of time when W. T. Freel, P. P. Staples, Mrs. Frances Freel, Mrs. Ruth Dabney and Phil Almon served as Church School Superintendent the special offering made to the Methodist Children's Home each year has been the membership's favorite of all these special offerings contributed by the classes.

This offering has not always been made with money as it is now. During the time of the "Great Depression" Mr. Thoe Bell, Mr. Willie Freel and Mr. Pelham Staples would load Theo's big truck with produce from the community farms and gardens and deliver these good things to the Children's Home once each year. When the economy revived and this area became less farm oriented the Church began sending money.

At the death of "Mr. Pelham" Staples, the new Superintendent, suggested that the money raised that year be sent in honor of him. A goal of $100.00 was set and raised. This money, along with a letter dedicating the money to Mr. Pelham and explaining why this was being done, was forwarded to the Children's Home. A letter of appreciation and acknowledgement was received in reply.

A special effort has continued through the years and in 1981 the amount donated amounted to $9.20 per member, and in 1983 $5.68 per member.

There have been different types of organization of the Sunday School over the years. Many years ago the entire congregation met together before and after classes. Songs were sung, there was prayer, birthdays were celebrated, announcements, reports and business were highlighted. Sometimes there were special programs with the young people participating. Meetings were at 10:00.

At the present time Church School meets at 11:00, after Worship Service which is at 10:00 A. M. The entire Sunday School meets in the sanctuary for Worship and when this is over and after a brief recess, members assemble in their own classes and leave the Church from there. Any business to be taken care of is discussed with the Adult Class before the lesson begins.
During the "Great Depression" the Church had many lean years. "Mr. Willie" Freel was treasurer and money was short. The official board would have a "hide and tallow" session and Mr. Willie would contact each man in the Church for an additional contribution and any immediate need was met.

In December 1953 records quote the treasurer, Julian Freel, saying "$200.00 is needed to bring the Church finances up to date." It is not certain that this meant the Church was in debt then or would be if that amount was not raised. At times such as these members and former members came to the aid of the Church.

In the lean years of the fifties the Church began paying Church College Askings because most of its pastors were students. Health insurance was added in 1973 while Rev. Jamie Jenkins was pastor. It was decided all incoming pastors would be offered this service with the option of accepting or not.

In 1919 records for the Circuit show the pastor's salary was $1,800.00. This small amount covered the entire salary paid by all Churches. However, it seems from Roopville Church minutes that for many years it has followed the practice of giving the pastor a bonus when there was any extra money.

In 1972 the Roopville Church had increased its payment to $1,000 and by 1980 this had been raised to $2,000 salary, $1,400 car expenses and $360.00 utilities.

In October 1977 the Church treasury showed money on hand. It was decided to invest $2,000 in a savings certificate to be used when needed in improving the Church building. L. D. Hamil and Beulah Storey were co-signers. This was later withdrawn and used in installing vinyl siding on the parsonage.

In April 1981 $1,000 was invested in another savings certificate with L. D. Hamil and Wayne Seabolt, co-signers.
YOUTH ACTIVITIES

The program for the youth has always been a vital part of our Church. Enworth League and programs for younger children have always been emphasized. The number of participants of course has always been contingent on the number of teenagers and younger children attending Church at that time.

Methodist Youth Fellowship evolved out of the Epworth League and at times this organization was very active in local and district activities.

Youth choir was always an interesting part of the program in our Church. Special music for special events quite often resulted from this activity.

Easter Egg hunts have been an annual event for as long as can be remembered. Easter programs, Christmas programs and many other special events have traditionally been observed with the youth taking an active part in these events.

In 1982 the Church had the traditional Christmas program. In addition the youth of the Church, with Kirby Hamil and Rev. John Hamil assisting, set up a live Nativity Scene on the front lawn. All characters, including a donkey, sheep (really it was a goat) and ducks were live.

Several years ago all the youth Sunday School classes decided that instead of exchanging gifts after their Christmas program they would take this money and send to the Children's Home. The young people enjoy this activity much more than they did the gifts they exchanged with each other. Only the kindergarten children receive gifts. The Church gives each young person a bag of Christmas fruit and candy and this is enjoyed. Another activity greatly enjoyed by the youth and the families visited is the singing of Christmas Carols. This same group of young people visit the nursing home and carry the patients a small gift.

With our present schedule the pastor is unable to preach at our Church on the second Sunday of each month. Many times this service has been taken over by the younger members, under the leadership of Mrs. Luella Ellefson, who presented very meaningful services.

In 1983 a small number of the youngsters who were nine years or over attended a six weeks Acolyte training program with Rev. Haney as teacher.
Several times in recent years this group has put on their blue jeans, placed their fishing poles across their shoulders, and gone off to fish in Tom Staples's lake. Under the supervision of Rev. Haney, Kirby Hamil and Hershel Howard they have caught enough fish for the whole congregation to enjoy an old fashioned fish fry.

The Church has a very modified recreation program. For many years at Church get-togethers and youth meetings badminton has been played on the side lawn. Recently volley ball and horseshoes have been added.

Many of our young people after finishing high school have gone on for higher education. A larger number have gone into the teaching profession than any other. Paul Davis, son of Rev. George Davis, became a Methodist minister. Few have settled in our community but wherever they have lived they have taken an active role in their Church and we are very proud of the many useful and dedicated people that have grown up in our Church community.

At the present time we have an active MFY and hope many meaningful ideals are evolving from this program.
The composition of the membership of the Church has changed over the years. When it was founded approximately 75% of the members were farmers. However, at the present time, approximately 10% farm while teachers make up the largest percentage, with a few businessmen, merchants, engineers and sales people. As one can see a large percentage of the members have educational training that helps in the leadership of the Church.

The Roopville Church reached a membership of 325 at one time. The Church building was small and this necessitated worshipers sometimes sitting in the windows. The Church was crowded with as many pews as it would hold and these pews were crowded with people.

When one of the Roopville's ministers was instrumental in building Churches at Welcome and Lowell the membership dropped drastically. At this time the rolls were not kept up to date and since conference assessments are based on the number of people on roll this laid the foundation for future problems.

Pride has been taken in paying conference assessments through the years. Many times these assessments seemed quite large compared to the small number of members who tried to pay them. This was a direct result of the roll book having not been kept up to date.

During one quarter while Dr. W. H. Likins was minister, active members met at the Church one night each week and went forth to visit members who lived in this area trying to revive their interest in the Church. A letter committee worked toward contacting all listed members who had moved away and another visited new arrivals. At this time approximately five new members were added and the roll was reduced. It was found that many of the listed members had transferred their membership, joined other churches and some were deceased.

Another such concentrated effort was made while Rev. Herbert Chisenhall was pastor. Workers went through the roll book and wrote to every member they could not contact in other ways. Many letters were answered, and the Quarterly Conference again allowed many names to be dropped.

The membership at that time became 89 which was an accurate count. At the present time it numbers 42 and is kept up to date by the pastor.
Over the years members of the Church have taken their place in defense of their beliefs and their country. They have served in many branches of the armed forces.

CIVIL WAR: Records show that three of our members were caught up in this great internal struggle which tore the Methodist Church apart. Wilson L. Craven, Co. K, 34th Regiment was captured at Vicksburg, Mississippi, July 4, 1863. George W. Storey, born in Coweta County, 1840, was a member of Co. E. 55th Regiment, Ga. Volunteer Infantry. Zedic T. Freel, Confederate soldier.

WORLD WAR I: Records show Norman Freel, John Staples, Karl Staples and John Worth Veal on the roster of those serving.

WORLD WAR II: Records show nine members in various branches of the armed forces. Earl Cammons, Fred Cammons, Robert Cammons, Joe Broadwater, Julian Freel, Pelham Staples, Jr., Paul Steed and Jimmy Veal. Earl Cammons, son of Mr. and Mrs. Eff Cammons, gave his life for his country during this awful conflict.
The Board of Stewards has always been the backbone of Roopville United Methodist Church. They meet to plan the church program then work to see that it is implemented.

Hand-me-down information states that this group met quarterly at one time. Records since 1951, show monthly meetings, to meet quarterly was no longer sufficient to carry out the business of the Church. Called meetings have always been used when emergencies arise between meeting dates.

Through the years some members have not taken their duties seriously. At the June 1955 meeting this dereliction of duty was discussed and quoting from those minutes, "It was decided to activate an old rule we once observed. If a member is absent three consecutive meetings without good reason that he be dropped automatically." Further minutes show two other times when activating this rule was discussed by the Board. No evidence is shown that the rule was ever enforced.

Duties of this Church body through the years have been to write the budget, oversee the work of the Church in general, and take care of all Church properties. It also sets the minister's salary and provides offering envelopes so that the members may contribute regularly. Quite often when these envelopes are being used unrecognizable drawing and irregular lines are found on them. Some youngster has entertained himself through the service and the parents conscientiously placed the envelope back in the holder.

The church treasurer, our present one being L. D. Hamil, is probably the busiest of all the church officers. He is the receiver of all monies and the recorder of the donor's name and the amount given. He deposits this money quickly so that if checks are needed there will be no delay. Upon order from the Board, the treasurer issues checks covering all monies paid out by the Church. This officer performs many tasks that do not necessarily go with that job. In this community it seems that the custom of calling on the treasurer concerning Church matters of all kinds began many years ago. Probably at the time when the Church began being served by student pastors who were at school most of the day.

Another hard working member of the Board is the secretary. Even though many records have been lost thus leaving them incomplete, it is by no means that officer's fault. (This is explained in the "Foreword" of this history.)
Our present secretary, Mrs. Luella Ellefson, is taking special care of the Church records and carefully recording all new and old business in the Church minutes. It is her desire and also that of all members that these will eventually be used to assist those who follow in a written and visible continuity of the Church.

Another officer who has much work to do is the Chairman of the Board. Kirby Hamil filled this post for many years until George Greene took over in 1983. Both these men along with other officers 'pushed and pulled' the Church in the way it should go.

Over the years Mrs. Ruth Dabney has given the Chairman of the Board much help by acting as secretary. She writes many letters, makes phone calls, contacts tradespeople and performs many helpful services.
An activity which appears to be dear to the heart of most ministers is Family Night. Apparently this is an excellent way to get to know the members of the Church. In the Roopville Church's minutes almost every new pastor, since 1955, has enthusiastically endorsed this activity.

A definite rhythm seems to have been established for Family Night to follow. It begins in July or August with a steady rhythm, a loud beat of interest and activity and a constant melody. Then the beat slowly decreases as the meetings end with the melody lingering on in thought of reviving this activity.

Since 1977 L. D., Berma and Kirby Hamil have prepared fruit baskets which they deliver at Thanksgiving for the Church. These go to senior citizens and shut-ins in our community. The Church youth took this over in 1982.

One year a very independent senior citizen thanked them for the basket and asked if they were sure she qualified for one since she was still very active. She went on to say she had been hoping to get one but didn’t want to get the person delivering them in trouble.

Rev. John Haney established the Thanksgiving Eve Service, which is discussed in the Ecumenical section, and we hope it will become traditional.

Another event which Rev. Haney hopes will become traditional for the Circuit is that of Easter Sunrise Service and breakfast at Caney Head.

For the last two years 1982 and 1983 the tradition of Maundy Thursday was begun under the supervision of Rev. Haney and Mr. and Mrs. George (Pat) Greene. This is a circuit activity and takes place at the Roopville Church. The fellowship hall had a festive and dedicated air with the use of white linens, white china, white candles, silver and crystal. The Passover Meal was served and Communion was partaken of from the Communal Cup.

In 1982 Thanksgiving Breakfast supervised by Rev. Haney, Herchel Howard and Kirby Hamil was served to approximately 68 people and their guests. This meal was prepared, cooked and served by the men of the Church. It is hoped, especially by the ladies, that this will become a tradition.
To add to the confusion caused by records having been destroyed Roopville has been in the Circuit with one, two and five other Churches since it was founded. The Churches with whom Roopville has served are Lowell, Caney Head, Tyus, Veal and Welcome.

This history covers a very small number of years of Circuit activities and even though it is most inadequate the Roopville Church, 1983, is anxious that what is now known become a part of the written continuity of the Church.

At the founding of the Church, Quarterly Conference was almost a social event because communication was scant and difficult. Dinner was spread "on the ground's" on that day and laughter and friendly chatter filled the air as friends caught up on news; men discussed weather, crops and business; small children played; boys and girls flirted; and women tasted foods and exchanged recipes. Many times the old quotation, 'train up a child in the way he should go and he will not depart from it', was heard as parents discussed rearing families. However, as memberships decreased in some Churches it became almost impossible to prepare for this pleasant custom and it was discontinued.

Quarterly Meeting Day was divided into three main events; the sermon usually delivered by the District Superintendent; dinner on the grounds; and lastly the business meeting in which the Conference forms were compiled by a secretary elected by the membership. These forms combined reports from each Church, thus giving a comprehensive report for the Circuit. Just as they are done today, except for the way in which information is written before the meeting.

From approximately 1957 to 1980 the Roopville and Lowell Churches made up the Roopville Circuit. Then in 1980 Lowell and Clem combined to make a separate circuit and Roopville became a part of the Unity Circuit with Welcome and Caney Head.

In June 1979 Lowell announced plans for building a parsonage between Lowell and Clem where they had obtained a building lot. When the new pastor, Rev. Jim Burgess, arrived he moved into the Roopville parsonage and began preaching at both Churches. It became settled at this time that these two Churches would remain in the Roopville Circuit until June 1980. After that time there would be a change in organization since Lowell showed much interest in becoming self-supporting.
Lowell began work on the new parsonage soon after Rev. Burgess arrived and in December 1979 Rev. Burgess moved from the parsonage in Roopville to the new Lowell parsonage. There were no other changes made at this time.

Records and deeds had been found and studied by the Roopville Church. The Church also decided at that time that Tom Staples should have copies of these papers so they would be more readily available. As the parsonage had been built on land bought by Roopville Methodist Church from Mrs. E. A. Roop and the construction done by the Church members, it was decided that Lowell would be paid the sum of $426.56, the amount of its original investment. The District Superintendent, Rev. Dwight Nyswander, who met with Roopville several times agreed and this was done.

Roopville and Lowell were each to take the furniture that had been given the parsonage by their members and do with it as they wished. Roopville took what was theirs, selling what could be sold and leaving the other in the parsonage. The red antique sofa and chairs were sold to Wayne Seabolt, the antique halltree to Mrs. Ruth Dabney, dining table to Tom Staples, six dining chairs to George Greene and the bookcase to Mrs. Gerle.

After several meetings, one of which District Superintendent Dwight Nyswander attended, it was decided that the Roopville Church would pay Lowell rent on the new parsonage. Said rent to be in the amount of $30.00 per month. Lowell, after discussion with Rev. Nyswander, agreed to accept this.

In March, 1980, it became generally known that in June of that year a new charge composed of Lowell and Clem would be organized. Discussions of what Roopville would do then began in earnest. As the Church had at one time been on the Circuit with Welcome and Caney Head, discussion of reuniting with them was heard. Records had been lost and ruined and it was impossible to get accurate information as to what had occurred when that union was dissolved. Finally, rising above this, it was decided this Church would become part of the Unity Circuit with Welcome and Caney Head.

This change was made June 1, 1980, and Rev. John Haney became Roopville's new pastor. He was already in residence at the Welcome parsonage and would remain there. Rev. Haney was offered the use of any furniture left in the Roopville parsonage. He felt he could use one of the twin beds and it was moved to Welcome.
Roopville, having no vested interest in the Welcome parsonage, began paying that Church $30.00 a month rent with $30.00 monthly for utilities being added later.

The Pastor-Parish Relations Committee from each Church began meeting jointly once each quarter with Rev. Haney. This has proven to be an excellent means of keeping communications open between the Circuit Churches.

Changing from one Circuit to another is a difficult procedure, and is made even more so if there are no records to point the way. The eight paragraphs preceding this one are written with the hope of assisting the Church if this should happen again. They point out that the end results of over a year of discussion were very simple, even though thousands of words had been said.

In 1972, with Rev. Jamie Jenkins pastor, a newsletter written by the minister was begun, and has been continued by pastors who have followed him. This has proven to be an excellent way to keep Circuit Communication open. Roopville bought the typewriter, mimeograph machine and two cassette players which are used in conjunction with publishing these newsletters.
The Woman's Missionary Society dates from the founding of our Church. The Woman's Society of Christian Service dates from the union of the northern and southern Methodist Church to form the United Methodist Church. In 1939, known charter members of the Missionary Society are Mrs. Tyus Blackwelder, Mrs. May Freel, Mrs. Georgia Pentcost, Mrs. Ola Staples, Mrs. Minnie Staples, Mrs. Sally Storey, Mrs. Sarah Elizabeth Veal and Mrs. Zed Veal.

The Woman's Society of Christian Service is no longer active. Its demise could be said to have been caused by the changing pattern in women's lives. Many women were now beginning to work away from the home.

During the years the W. S. C. S. was active it was responsive to the needs of both home and foreign missions, worked to develop the spiritual life of those with whom it came in contact, and welcomed and attended special leadership programs.

Members readily attended the district meetings and gladly served as participants in programs when asked. The Society served as hostess to the District on occasion and paid all assessed moneys. Work was done toward keeping the parsonage attractive and furnished with necessities such as dishes and linens.

As the new pastor moved in the ladies gifted them with a 'pounding' and often had a tea inviting the whole community so they could meet everyone.

They assisted the departing pastor in any way possible. After he had moved and before the new pastor arrived they cleaned anything that had been overlooked, freshened the house and had the parsonage ready for the new minister and his family to occupy. Food was prepared and brought in for their first day and breakfast foods were left in the refrigerator.

It has been a sad experience through the years to watch our minister and his family move from the parsonage. One departure that is remembered vividly is that of Rev. Herbert Chisenhall and family.

Juanita, their infant daughter, chose that day and hour of departure to have a 'tummy ache'. She let everyone know in no uncertain terms that she was hurting. This upset her brothers and sister, all the ladies and Mrs. Chisenhall.
Rev. Chisenhall tried to calm everyone but with little success. When he picked up three of the children, put them in the car, crawled in with them and closed the door they dissolved into tears and loud sobs. The baby's crying and their moving had become too much for them. The ladies trying to hold back tears with very little success helped Mrs. Chisenhall into her car and handed her the sick baby. Making an effort to look cheerful they waved Rev. Chisenhall and his three on to Bowdon and Mrs. Chisenhall and the infant on to Carrollton to the doctor.
ROOPVILLE PARSONAGE

In September 1907 the lot on which the present parsonage now stands was purchased from Mrs. E. A. Roop for $75.00. Construction was begun with Rev. W. W. Benson supervising and doing much of the work as the parsonage was built. It was a five room building with living room, dining room and kitchen on one side of a wide central hallway and two bedrooms on the other side. A large porch extended across the front and around the south side to the dining room. A large back porch was built across the back of the house with an extension out beyond the building to enclose the well, the well having been dug on the north side of the parsonage.

The ceilings were high and the rooms large except the kitchen. There was a fireplace in each room and closets in two. Over the years the closets have been enlarged and others added. Some of the fireplaces were closed after World War II and wood and coal burning heaters were installed. These were used until heating was changed to gas.

In the years 1935-1936 Rev. R. C. Owen was pastor. At this time the front porch was torn down and a stoop built at the front door.

Later when Rev. H. H. Blackburn 1937-1940 was minister a bathroom was installed in the back hallway.

There were many knot holes in the floor and since these were covered with linoleum many strange bumping noises were heard especially, it seemed, in the middle of the night. This was caused by the wind sweeping up under the house which wasn't underpinned and causing the linoleum to flap. It gave the same impression as a haunted house and was frightening until the cause of the noise was found.

It was a common practice for the occupant who was moving out to acquaint the one moving in with this peculiarity. However, those things are difficult to remember when said to one in the process of moving; therefore, the house continued to haunt its occupants until it was underpinned in the 1950's.

During World War II the parsonage was unoccupied for a long period of time and kudzu gradually took over the grounds. It had been uprooted from the yard by the time Rev. Chambers arrived in 1946. Gradually it was removed from the entire Church property.

In the 1940's the icebox was replaced with an electric
Refrigerator and a hot water heater was installed. Later the old wood-burning range which had to be lighted at 3:00 in order to bake biscuits by 6:00 was replaced with a new electric range. These were the years following World War II and all electrical appliance dealers had long waiting lists of prospective buyers.

Rev. G. T. Shell added much to the appearance of the grounds in 1950 when he borrowed a mule and wagon, loaded it with manure from a nearby barn, hauled it to the parsonage where he spread it on the lawn and the garden spot. He then reseeded the lawn, planted a garden and harvested a bumper crop.

During the time Rev. Gilbert Steadham 1949 and Dr. William Liking 1951-1953 with his bride, Martha, lived there much work was done toward making the parsonage furniture more attractive. "Bill's" Grandmother and Mrs. Tom (Blanche Almon) Staples worked diligently toward making the house more liveable. Both ladies made donations and at this time Blanche gave antiques that the Church later sold.

In 1960-61 Rev. Herbert Chisenhall occupied the parsonage, an electric washer and dryer were installed. With three small beautiful brown eyed children it was a necessity.

In 1960 the parsonage was recovered. Records show that it was insured for $2,500, which did not cover its value but at this time, even though the members would have liked to increase this, they found themselves financially unable to do so.

In 1963-1964 Rev. George Davis occupied the parsonage and he completely remodeled the kitchen at his own expense. Then with the help of the Circuit he remodeled the den. Ceilings were lowered, walls painted and papered, and the floors covered in both rooms. Rev. Davis had beautiful cabinets built into the kitchen.

The charge members were delighted with this new look and grateful to the pastor. It was not long before it was discovered that Mrs. Davis was one of the world's best cooks. No one blamed Rev. Davis for putting forth an effort 'above and beyond the call of duty' to provide an attractive place for her to work.

Early in 1974, when Rev. Jamie Jenkins was pastor, the parsonage insurance was increased to $15,000.00 and central heat was installed. In 1975 the Church installed a new septic tank, this was real progress.
Records show that in May of 1976 Rev. Hearn proposed that an associate pastor be allowed to live in the Roopville parsonage. He, Rev. Hearn, was living in his own home and with the parsonage unoccupied insurance rates were being drastically increased. In June Rev. Robert Garwood moved in as resident pastor.

In 1977 the bathroom was redone and ready for Rev. Lamar Whitten. Also Northwest Exterminators were contacted and a contract drawn up when bugs were found to have invaded the premises.

In November 1979, when it was learned Roopville parsonage would be vacated in December, the Church began to talk of renting the building. Charlie Storey was contacted and became the rental agent with the privilege to call on L. D. Hamil when help was needed.

Roopville and Lowell decided to sell furnishings donated by their respective members and keep their share from the sales.

In December 1980 while Rev. John Haney was living in the Welcome parsonage it was decided to cover the Roopville parsonage with Vinyl siding. This was done by Central West Georgia Siding Products at a cost of $4,245.00. In January 1982 a new dryer was placed in the parsonage.

Since 1980 the parsonage has been rented to occupants other than the pastor. It has been used by three families. It was hoped rent could be raised from $150.00 to $200.00 when the present renter moved in, however it was found that $150.00 was about all we could ask if we desired to keep it rented, so there was no increase.

Through the years the parsonage has been taken care of by the ladies of the Church. They have kept it furnished and met as many of the desires of the pastor as financially possible. Many of the ministers' wives have enjoyed making the house as nice as possible and the ladies of the Church have watched this with much pleasure.
One of the Church's first experiences in this phase of Christian concern focuses on one member of the Roopville Baptist Church, Theo Bell. During the "Great Depression" years he owned one of the few large trucks in this community. Living only one door down from the parsonage he was always a good friend and neighbor to the Methodist ministers. One of the things for which he is best remembered by the Church is his use of that truck to move the Methodist pastors back and forth to their appointments. This neighborly deed was done free of charge.

Through the years the Church has sponsored Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts and Girl Scouts intermittently. The first year of which we have a record of this activity is 1952 (Dr. W. H. Likins, pastor). The Church has permitted the different groups to meet in the basement with no obligation, except that they turn off the utilities and put their materials away. It has also made donations to them of as much as $50.00 from time to time and has offered leadership support.

In 1981 Rev. John Haney celebrated the Boy Scouts Anniversary with the members and their families as guests of the Church. They marched in, said the Pledge of Allegiance and after being seated listened to a special sermon by Rev. Haney.

In 1949, 1950, 1951 with Rev. Gilbert Steadham, Rev. G. T. Shell and Dr. W. H. Likens, pastors, the Baptist and Methodist Churches sponsored the Cub Scouts jointly. One particularly interesting activity of that group was a Pet Parade followed by judging of the pets. This was an annual event of the Carrollton Cub Scouts and they invited Roopville to participate. Both Churches shared in building pet cages and transporting all to Carrollton and back. Needless to say they also shared in doctoring scratches, consoling losers and congratulating winners.

Off-hand on, through the years, the Roopville Baptist and Methodist children have attended Vacation Bible School at both Churches. Members from each Church have assisted at the other when asked.

For approximately eight years the Churches met together at Christmas for a celebration with the two Churches alternating as hosts. A Christmas program with members from both Churches participating was enjoyed, later the host Church served refreshments followed by the Christmas Tree.
A committee of men from the host Church would find the largest, prettiest tree available and it would be beautifully decorated and loaded down with gifts for both old and young. Santa, with many helpers, would quickly deliver the gifts and in a short while the congregation, their faces wreathed in happy smiles, would be on their way home.

For many years the Baptist Church sponsored a Brotherhood Club which met monthly with a covered dish dinner being served, this meal was followed by a program. Methodist men and women were invited to attend.

The Methodist Church sponsored a Men's Club after the Brotherhood Club was no longer active. It followed the same format with the addition of a "Chitling Night". On this night once a year the men ate these "gourmet delights?" at a small restaurant in Carrollton. Even after the club disbanded "Chitling Night" continued for several years with the men gathering at the Church before departing for Carrollton.

When Rev. Jamie Jenkins was pastor the Churches combined in attending a weekly skating party. The participants were transported and chaperoned by members from both denominations.

Rev. Jenkins also organized a summer athletic program for Roopville. Every child was welcomed and allowed to take part. This program remains very active.

The Baptist Church sponsors a Sunshine Club for retired and senior citizens. Members of both Churches participate in these meetings. A covered dish dinner is enjoyed then the program follows. This Club meets monthly and is a way of keeping communication open between the different denominations.

In October 1982 the people of the Churches and community organized the Roopville Historical Society. Their two immediate objectives were to assist the Mayor and Council in celebrating the Roopville Post Office Centennial, November, 1982, and to perpetuate a visible history of Roopville by establishing the Roopville Archives. With both Churches celebrating their Centennial in the summer of 1983, the most pressing item on the agenda after the Post Office Centennial was to get as much done toward renovation of the building as possible. Then set up as much Church history as could be found by the middle of the summer.

There is no written campaign but the Society hopes its objectives will become known far and near. To make this effort a success it is requesting pictures, maps, books, clippings, artifacts, donations and any thing citizens,
former citizens, relatives and friends think can be used.

For the last two years the Churches have alternated in sharing a Thanksgiving Eve program. These programs consisted of a sermon with the ministers, Rev. John Haney and Rev. Larry Johnson, exchanging pulpits and the Baptist Choir furnishing seasonal music. This is part of the Unity Circuit Program and the Church at Welcome was used for the Methodist meeting.

In the spring of 1983 the Roopville Methodist and Baptist Churches shared a film series, both visually and financially. The title of the series was "Focus on the Family". Meetings were held at each Church on alternate Sunday nights.
FLASHBACK MEMORIES
OF FORMER PASTORS

1904-1906 Rev. W. R. Kennedy  His son married one of the Gentry girls from Roopville
1907-1910 Rev. W. W. Benson  He built the parsonage
1913-1915 Rev. R. P. Tatum  Roopville's Joe Veal married his daughter, Mable
1918-1920 Rev. W. A. Woodruff  Built Welcome and Lowell Churches
1924-1928 Rev. B. W. Kilpatrick  Had a large family of lovely children
1927-1928 Rev. W. L. Brackman  Married a Hearn girl from Burwell
1929-1930 Rev. I. J. Lovvorn  His son married Roopville's Clyde Staples
1933-1934 Rev. Dan Maxey  First child born in Roopville
1935-1936 Rev. R. C. Owen  Renovated the parsonage
1937-1939 Rev. E. H. Blackburn  Built bathroom and partitioned parsonage hall
1944-1945 Rev. Glenn Miller  Pastor when Church steeples were removed
1946 Rev. George Chambers  First minister to live in parsonage after WWII
1947-1948 Rev. Roy Clark  Was from Kentucky
1949 Rev. Gilbert Steadham  Mother was Salvation Army Captain
1950 Rev. G. T. Shell  A former teacher
1951-1953 Rev. William H. Likens  His grandmother helped fix up the parsonage for his bride, Martha, whom he married while serving our Church
1954-1955 Rev. Hugh Duling  His dad was a college professor
1956-1959 Rev. Howard Odum Baby sat and let his wife go to the basketball games; built birdhouses

1960-1961 Rev. Herbert Chisenhall Children adored him, he told funny stories; his sense of humor in the pulpit always assured his point beautifully taken

1962 Rev. Marvin Chadbourne Wife's parents were Italian and she liked Italian food

1963-1964 Rev. George Davis Family worked hard in the Church. Mrs. Davis was a fantastic cook and shared with the shut-ins or sick in the neighborhood

1965 Rev. Freeman Porter Was extremely conscientious

1966-1968 Rev. Dan Williamson Did his practice teaching in Carrollton. Owns a home at Victory

1969 Rev. Eugene Westbrook Was very conscientious, had sickness in his family

1970-1971 Rev. Tommie Green Had just married when he was assigned to Roopville. Moved from here to Carrollton

1972-1974 Rev. Jamie Jenkins Got things done in the Church and in the Community. Was extremely successful working with the youth

1975 Rev. Howell Hearn Semi-retired and lived in own home

1976 Rev. Robert Garwood Was interested in working with senior citizens

1977 Rev. Lamar Whitten Married to an English girl

1978 Rev. Edward Haywood Didn't stay long

1978 Rev. Alice Kenner Only woman preacher the Church ever had. Members thought she was great!


What you have just read is our sincere effort to acknowledge in some way as many of our beloved former pastors as possible. These flashbacks consist of the memories shared by the largest number of members.

"............., the records made,
The last deed done, the last word said,
The memory alone remains
Of all its joys, its griefs, its gains,
And now with purpose full and clear,
We turn to meet another year."

Robert Browning
FORMER PASTORS SERVING ROOPVILLE

The records do not show the exact dates on the Ministers serving this Church between its organization in 1883 until 1889. Those serving during this time were W. H. Speers, Morris, Hughes, Davenport and others. However, from 1889 through 1933 the list is correct.

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LAGRANGE DISTRICT

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HOME DISTRICT

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<td>1917</td>
<td>Lucian Roper</td>
<td>J. R. King</td>
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36
1918-1920 W. A. Woodruff  V. P. Irvine  W. A. Candler
1921  W. P. Carmichael  "  "
1922  B. S. Fleming  "  W. B. Murrah
1923  Z. V. Hawkes  "  U. V. Darlington
1924-1926 B. W. Kilpatrick  J. E. Erwin  "
1927-1928 W. L. Brackman  G. L. King  "
1929-1930 I. J. Lovern  "  John M. Moore
1931-1932 J. V. Coffman  J. W. McKibben  "
1933-1934 Dan Maxey  "  W. N. Ainsworth
1935-1936 R. C. Owen  H. G. Holland  "
1937-1939 H. H. Blackburn  "  

LAGRANGE DISTRICT

1940  H. H. Blackburn  H. G. Holland  W. N. Ainsworth
1941-1942 J. K. Brown  George L. King  A. J. Moore
1943  J. D. Williamson  W. M. Twiggs  "
1944-1945 Glenn Miller  "  "
1946  George Chambers  "  "
1947-1948 Roy Clark  "  "
1949  Gilbert Steadham  Joe S. Thraikill  "
1950-1951 G. T. Shell  "  "
1954-1955 Hugh Duling  "  "
1956-1959 Howard Odum  J. W. Vestch  "
1960-1961 Herbert Chisenhall  John B. Tate  John O. Smith
1962  Marvin Chadbourne  "  "

37
1963-1964 George Davis
1965 Freeman Porter
1966-1968 Daniel Williamson
1969 Eugene Westbrook
1970-1971 Tommie Green
1972-1974 Jamie Jenkins
1975 Howell Hearn
1976 Robert Garwood
1977 Lamar Whitten
1978 Edward Haywood
1978 Alice Keener
1979 Jim Burgess
1980-1982 John Haney
1983 Ken Bowman

John B. Tate
Robert Taylor
Eugene Westbrook
Robert Taylor
Edgar Padgett
Tommie Green
Jamie Jenkins
Howell Hearn
Robert Garwood
Lamar Whitten
Edward Haywood
Alice Keener
Jim Burgess
John Haney
Ken Bowman

John O. Smith
Frank Crawley
John Tate
Dwight Nyswander

John O. Smith
Frank Crawley
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John Tate
Dwight Nyswander

Joel McDavid