HISTORY OF THE

SOUTH CAROLINA CAMPGROUND METHODIST CHURCH

Lyerly Charge

Dalton District

by Charles Hemirix

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The South Carolina Campground Methodist Church is located in Chattooga County, Georgia about eight miles southeast of Summerville, the county seat. It is directly at the south end of Taylor's Ridge, the end of which is called High Point.

The name of the church is derived from the fact that many of the charter members had migrated from the State of South Carolina. Also, this place of worship was a campground for a number of years before the church was established.

The original name of the church was Ewing's Chapel. Mrs. Hester Clark was of the opinion that it was organized in 1849. However, it was apparently at least one year older. This is based on a statement found in the history of the Summerville Methodist Church published in the Summerville News, January 29, 1939. It was stated that in 1848 Reverend J. H. Ewing was pastor of the Summerville Circuit which included fourteen churches and Ewing's Chapel was one of them. It also seems apparent that the church was founded by Brother Ewing and that his name was applied to it. We do not know much about this beginning, however, the original deeds give us the names of some of the officers who will be mentioned below. They were probably charter members.

The original deed was made on January 26, 1849 "between Jonas McClung of Chattooga Co., Ga., and S. Calhoun, James McCollum, J. B. Knowles, J. R. Carr, James M. Smith, E. E. Strange, James Sturdivant, Jonas McClung and Floyd S. Hudgins, trustees in trust...and their successors." It was given "for and in consideration of his good will towards the Methodist Episcopal Church, South..." It can revert to the McClung estate if ceased to be used for public worship." (From Deed)

On Feb. 29, 1873, William P. Bowles made a new indenture relinquishing any claim to four acres on the western part of the land containing the church house and grave yard.

On Sept. 19, 1892, J. W. McCollum for "one dollar and other good and sufficient considerations" conveyed about 3 1/2 acres of the eastern part in fee-simple. This portion contains the spring. (From Deed.) Thus the reversionary interest retained by Jonas McClung in the deed executed in 1849 was completely eliminated by the deed executed by J. W. McCollum" (And by Wm. P. Bowles) (F. H. Boney, Attorney-at-law, Summerville, Ga.)

There are approximately 7 1/2 acres in the church property on which there is also a cemetery. Much of the land is in woods with a small spring at the foot of the hill on the east side of the property.

The church is a part of the Lyerly Charge and has an interest in the parsonage at Lyerly.

The original log building was erected in 1849 and was used until 1872 when it was torn down and the present building was constructed the same year. John Rivers was the builder. The present building is a large white frame structure facing north, fronting on the Dirttown Road leading east to Silver Hill (although removed from the road several yards). Now in 1939 the building is still in fair condition.

From notes given by Mrs. G. O. White: This church was noted for having great revivals and large attendance at services. Under the leadership of preachers called of God, many souls were saved. Many devout persons worshiped here and expressed themselves in song, prayer, testimonials and shouting.
Mrs. Hester Clark recalls that some of the outstanding revivals were conducted by the following preachers: Richard Harrell, Osgood Haygood and O. A. Thrower.

P. A. Kellett went out from the Campground to serve in the ministry of the North Georgia Conference, entering the itinerancy in 1900. He died in 1939 in Decatur, Georgia at the age of sixty-eight.

The Sunday School was begun about 75 or 80 years ago. Mr. Alex Strange was superintendent for many years. The Sunday School was discontinued a number of years ago but was reactivated in 1957.

In 1993 in the Journal of the North Georgia Conference (the earliest records available to the writer), the Summerville Circuit reported 535 members with 40 additions on profession of faith during the year. The three churches involved were valued at $2500.00. The pastor was paid $583.00 For Missions and benevolences $165.00 was spent. The total budget was $1,071.91.

Unfortunately, many people have died or moved away from the church so the membership has seriously declined. Now in 1959 the church has 8 members. The pastors salary is $250 and missions and benevolences amounted to $29.00. The total budget was $394.00.

In 1957 the church had electric wiring installed and put into use. There is a modern paved highway passing by the church leading from Summerville to Rome. Because of the building up of industry in these towns, it is felt that people will be building homes near the church to maintain this old church. There is a large number of interested friends who are eager for the success of the old Campground.

This church was on the Summerville Circuit until 1897 when it was placed on the Lyerly Charge and so remains to the present. M. L. Troutman, Jr. was the first pastor to serve South Carolina Campground from the Lyerly Charge.

The following list of pastors was taken from the history of the Summerville Methodist Church through 1896; then we follow a list prepared by Mr. A. D. Bridges, Summerville, Georgia:

J. H. Ewing -1848-49  
W. N. Pambrungh-1850  
J. L. Gibson -1851  
S. C. Quillion -1852-53  
William Brewer-1854-55  
H. P. Pitchford-1856  
W. F. Connelly-1857  
W. N. Bond-1856-59-60  
D. T. Myrick & J. D. Anthony-1861-62  
C. A. Mitchell-1863-64-65-66  
William Powell-1867  
W. T. Hamilton-1868  
John P. Reynolds-1869  
W. D. Heath-1870  
W. C. Dunlap-1871-72  
J. N. Myers-1873  
J. R. Kromer & W. Hickey-1874  
W. P. Lowe-Joy-1875-76  
H. C. Christian-1877  
G. W. Duval -1878  
O. A. Thrower-1879-80-81-82  
W. J. Cotter-1883  
W. T. Hamilton-1884-85-86  
R. A. Seale -1887  
T. M. Simmons-1888-89  
J. T. Lowe-1890-91  
G. W. Griner-1892  
J. E. Rosser-1893-94-95-96  
M. L. Troutman-1897-98-99  
J. S. Embry, 1900  
J. O. A. Grogan, 1901-02  
W. A. Simmons, 1903-04-05  
J. W. Gober, 1906-07  
F. W. McCleskey, 1908  
Georgia C. Harris 1909  
J. E. Rorie, 1910  
R. A. Cliett, 1911-12  
N. A. Parsons, 1913-14  
George A. Chambers 1915  
John W. Little 1916  
N. A. Parsons 1917
L. H. Green, 1918
T. L. Bryson, 1919-1920
Harvey C. Holland -Part 1920
C. A. Baggerly 1921
W. H. Speer, 1922-23
Charlie Drake 1924
O. P. McDermott 1925-26-27-28
Forest Blater 1929
Clyde Lee 1930-31
T. L. Rutland 1932
Max Whitemore 1933
A. Warwick, 1935-36
W. B. Hughes, 1937-38
W. P. Rowe 1939-40
T. M. Luke 1941-42
B. L. Betts 1943-44-45
Shelton Adams 1946-47-48
Loran Parker, 1948-49
M. H. Smith 1949-50
Oscar Dyer 1950-52
J. P. Gladney 1952-53
Floyd Hale 1953-54 and part of 54-55
J. E. Stephenson -part of 54-55
C. M. Blackwell -1955-56
Paul P. Dearman, Jr. 1956-57
Charles C. Hendrix -1957-58-59