

Winnsboro, South Carolina

during this period, too, in 1824, that the Society began to hold its meetings in Winnsboro. Until this year it had met in Charleston.

James W. Hudson came to Mount Zion in 1834. He was a dominant character and a great teacher. Students came to Mount Zion from all over the Southern States. Hudson made Mount Zion famous. "It became the ambition of favored young men to avail themselves of the Superior Advantage of Mount Zion." Among Hudson's assistants were William Bratton, Thomas McCants, D. Wyatt Aiken, George H. McMaster, James H. Rion, and Wood Davidson. Hudson is buried under a monument erected to his memory just in front of the present graded school building.

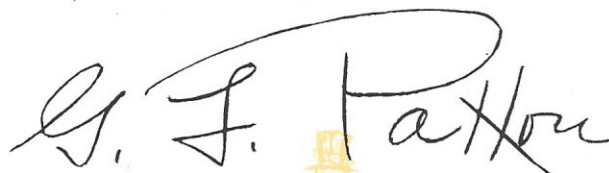
During the period of the war between the states Mount Zion never closed its doors. In the latter part of the war the buildings were used as a military hospital, and at the last were occupied by Federal troops. Meeting disaster with unflinching courage, the trustees continued the school, the classes meeting in the Baptist Church, Thespian Hall, anywhere where a roof to cover the pupils could be found.

In 1867 there came the crowning blow. Fire destroyed the building completely. The Society, still reeling from the shock of war and in the midst of the terrible reconstruction era, suffered a loss of thirty thousand dollars. But the spirit instilled by the founders was indomitable. In 1873 a smaller building was erected and the school continued. In 1878 Mount Zion was changed from an academy to a public graded school, still connected, however, with Mount Zion Society. This was undoubtedly the first public school in the state outside of Charleston. Professor R. Means Davis, great gentleman and beloved teacher, was the guiding spirit in this innovation.

About 1880, an attempt was made to revive the collegiate features of the school. A joint meeting of the Society and the citizens was held. The town issued its bonds for some seven thousand dollars, giving the proceeds to Mount Zion. Funds were raised in other ways and the session of 1881 was opened "in a large and well arranged brick building, furnished with improved seats, chemical laboratory, etc." W. H. Witherow became Superintendent, and for sixteen years under his leadership the school grew in usefulness. From Witherow's time until the present, the school has been a public graded and high school under the laws of the State of South Carolina.

In 1922, the building, which was so "large and well arranged" in 1881, was torn away and the present grammar school building was erected. This structure was used by both graded and high schools until 1936, when a new high school building was erected.

The "light on the hill," as Dr. Jas. H. Carlisle called Mount Zion, still shines. We hope that the spirit of the founders still animates us, who use the tools they forged. Honor, reverence, courage, loyalty, sound learning, courtesy, and consideration for others—these are the things Mount Zion has stood for. The fads and frills and foolish fancies of education of these latter days are not a part of her spirit and her tradition. Let us hope that she will hold fast to her ideals: changing her methods, but not her purposes, slowly and sanely as the years go by.



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