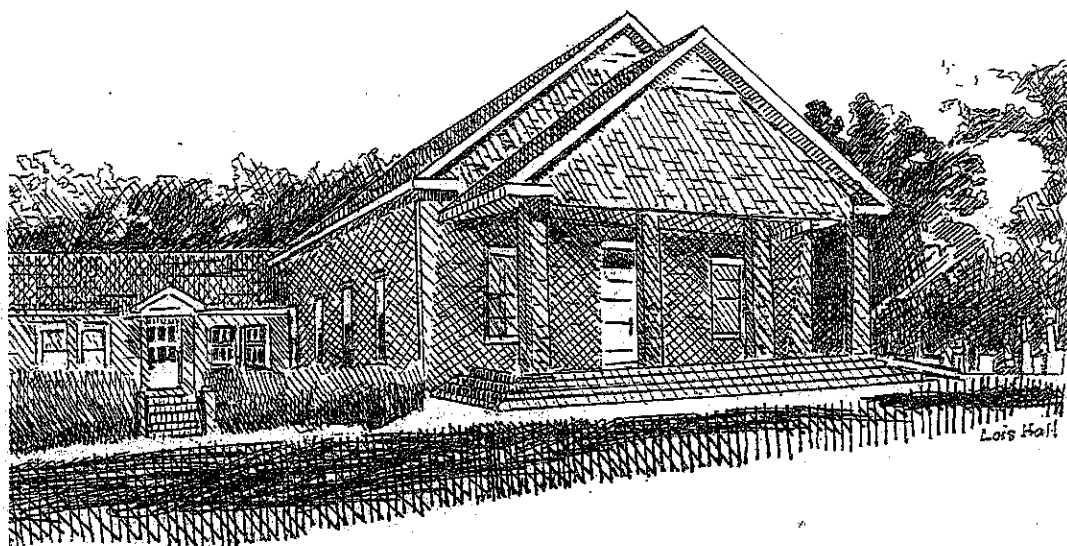


A History of
Beaver Creek Baptist Church
1797 - 1997



Bicentennial Observance
Sunday, August 3, 1997

BEAVER CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH
1797 - 1997

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BEAVER CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

1797 - 1947

*Christ is made the sure foundation
Christ the head and cornerstone
Chosen of the Lord and precious
Binding all the church in one
- Henry Smart*

Beaver Creek Baptist Church, situated in the hills of northwestern Fairfield County, was organized in 1797. The original church building stood near the headwaters of Beaver Creek; hence the church's name.

Sometime between 1758 and 1760, Edward Mobley with his six sons emigrated from Maryland to South Carolina and settled on Poplar Ridge on the east side of Beaver Creek in Fairfield County.

As the Mobleys came through North Carolina, the caravan was joined by Hans Wagner, a Hollander, and his family which consisted of himself and his six daughters.

History records that a house of worship, the Mobley Meeting House, was built by these and other early settlers. In this house all denominations worshiped God together. Later, the various denominations withdrew, when they were larger in number, and built their own separate churches. As a result, within a few miles of Mobley Meeting House, there are Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Universalist Churches. It is very probable that the Baptists from that house of worship were those who founded Beaver Creek Church in 1797.

What this original church was like or how long it was used, is not known. In the course of time the membership of the church moved northward and the church was moved to the present location.

Records in the Chester County Courthouse (Book Y, page 447) show that the four acres of land for the church were bought from Enock Grubbs for the sum of twenty dollars. The deed was recorded in February, 1832.

In the cemetery the earliest marker bears the name of Rhodia Colvin, who died October 23, 1848. From this date and the date the land was bought, we are led to believe the church was moved to this location about 1835.

Mrs. Lizzie Wilkes Wright of Chester attended this church most of her girlhood days and she remembered the building. It was built largely of the lumber that was moved from the old church on Beaver Creek. It stood to the rear and south of the present one, and faced the south, having two front entrances and one side door. Inside the building between the front doors was the pulpit, and one entered the church facing the congregation unless the door on the side was used. She does not remember the gallery but we have records indicating that the Negroes attended services and held membership in the church.

There were Aunt Patience McLurkin and Uncle Anderson Simpson and others of whom stories have been handed down to preserve their memories. Uncle Anderson was a slave of Mr. John Simpson. It is said he remained a member of this church as long as he lived and attended services regularly, always sitting on the back seat. We have record of one colored member through 1886. Therefore we presume Uncle Anderson must have died in 1887.

Early Pastors

We know of two men who served as pastors of Beaver Creek before we have minutes to record. Rev. Ephriam Fant (Phant) was a minister of the gospel 17 years, and we are told he preached at Beaver Creek for some years during his ministry. He died in 1851, so he was probably the first pastor of the first church built on this ground. He evidently died in the vicinity of Woodward, S.C., as he was buried in a church cemetery near there. Due to heavy rains at the time of his death, it was impossible to get to Beaver Creek with his body for burial. A grandson from Florida had his remains moved to this cemetery.

Mr. Randolph Grant remembers his mother speaking of Rev. John Only who preached at Beaver Creek. She often quoted to him one of Rev. Only's favorite illustrations: "If you want to raise chickens, you have to save the eggs."

Elder J. D. Fant

The first record we have in our church minutes was dated "Saturday before the first Sabbath April 1863." Until years later, all church conferences were held on Saturdays. And all preachers, up to Mr. Mahon, were addressed in the church minutes as Elders. So we speak of them as Elders in this sketch.

At that time Elder J. D. Fant, an uncle of the late Mr. C. E. Fant, was pastor and James Elliott Robinson, father of the late Mrs. Victoria Robinson Coleman, was church clerk. In November 1863, Mr. Robinson was at Fort Sumter, Charleston. Becoming ill, he was sent home on furlough. After recouperating he was planning to return to his post of duty. On Sunday before he planned to leave, he and his family walked from their home to attend services at Beaver Creek in the morning. That afternoon he took a congestive chill and died. A page to his memory is inscribed in the minutes book of that period. Mr. L. A. C. Estes, father of the late Mrs. Mollie Estes Durham, was then elected to serve as church clerk and served in a most efficient way for a number of years.

Elder G. W. Phillips, who was the late father of Mrs. Lula Phillips Lee of Chester, supplied at Beaver Creek a

number of times while Elder Fant was pastor.

During Elder Fant's pastorate, in December 1864, J. H. Crosby requested the church to grant him the privilege of exhorting and beseeching sinners to God, which was granted.

The church roll at that time included 192 whites (64 males and 128 females) and 128 Negroes (42 males and 78 females.) They were listed as white males and white females, black males and black females.

We gather from the church minutes that deacons at that time were: L. A. C. Estes, J. B. Lee, (great grandfather of the late Mrs. S. M. Douglas), J. Neaves (father of the late Mrs. Tabby Neaves Dye), John Simpson (grandfather of N. H. Stone, Sr.), Stephen Crosby (father of the late Mrs. David P. Crosby).

A page in the minutes book is inscribed to Mr. Crosby's memory and we quote, "meekness, humility and benevolence were prominent traits of his Christian character." These men were earnest loyal workers in the affairs of this church. Elder Fant was in failing health and resigned September 1865. On Sundays when he was not able to preach "Bro. J. Neavens read a chapter of the scripture and led the singing of a hymn, and Bro. J. B. Lee prayed."

Elder William Hilliard Hartin

The day Elder Fant's resignation was accepted by the church, Elder George Washington Pickett, who was preaching at Woodward Baptist Church was called. For some reason Elder Pickett did not accept the call, and Elder William Hilliard Hartin was extended the call to serve as pastor for one year. He seems to have led his people in the straight and narrow path. In a conference meeting presided over by Elder Hartin "a charge was preferred against Bro. Robert Coleman for dancing. Bro. J. Neavens was appointed to cite him to attend the next conference meeting." At the same time a resolution was passed "that the church disapprove of 'publick' plays and membership to be notified thereof." At different times others were charged with misconduct, drunkenness, etc. Elder Hartin was the father of Mrs. Sara Hartin Clark, of Winnsboro. For many years he filled the pulpits of several Fairfield and Richland County Churches. His last years were spent on his farm near Ridgeway.

Elder George Washington Pickett

In September 1866 Elder Geo. Washington Pickett was again called to Beaver Creek. This time he accepted and "the church pledged him an annual salary of \$150.00 in currency." His acceptance of this call united Beaver Creek, Cool Branch and Woodward churches into one field.

Mr. Tyre Lee, grandfather of the late Mrs. S. M. Douglas, became church clerk at this time and served eight years. On the first Sunday in June 1870, Mose C. Stone and David P. Crosby were ordained deacons. Mr. Stone became one of the strong pillars of his church, serving faithfully as deacon until his death in 1921, and was Sunday School superintendent for 30 years.

He married Miss Amanda Timms and was the father of Mrs. Ella Cunningham, who was a member of this church for many years, and lived in Chester.

We know of one marriage performed by Elder Pickett while here - that of the late Mr. and Mrs. Jack F. Stone, parents of N. H. Stone, Sr. Mrs. Stone was Miss Mattie Simpson.

While serving this church Elder Pickett was moderator of the Bethel Baptist Association to which Beaver Creek, Woodward and Cool Branch churches belonged until 1878. Bethel Association minutes of 1868 closed with "on motion, after prayer by the Rev. J. C. Furman, D. D., the association adjourn, to meet with Beaver Creek church, 15 miles south of Chesterville, 11 o'clock Friday before the fourth Sunday in September 1869. Signed, G. W. Pickett, Moderator."

Elder H. C. Hinton

Elder H. C. Hinton was the next pastor. He was born in Wake County, N. C., and was graduated at Wake Forest College. He came to Beaver Creek Baptist Church, December 1872. After serving four years he was called to Brushy Fork Baptist Church, and for many years he preached in various churches in the Chester Association. He died November 11, 1905, and is buried in Evergreen cemetery at Chester.

While he preached at Beaver Creek the church began holding services twice a month - on the first and third Sundays - a custom that continued for many years, except for a few months at the beginning of the year 1880, when "it was unanimously decided, owing to the stringency of the times, to have preaching once a month."

Elder Tillman R. Gaines, pastor of Woodward Baptist Church, and Elder A. P. Pugh, a young student whom Elder Gaines was assisting in educating, supplied here at different times during Hinton's pastorate. Elder Gaines was the father of T. R. Gaines of Chester. For a number of years he served on the Baptist Courier staff as editor.

It was during August 1874, that Dr. C. C. Estes was made church clerk. From his minutes of July 1878 we quote "It was ascertained that the constitution of the church has been lost, and a committee consisting of J. D. Mahon, L. A. C. Estes, Mose Stone, and David Crosby were appointed to draw up a new constitution. It was also ascertained that the church was without by-laws, where on a committee consisting of C. C. Estes, John Simpson and W. S. Durham were instructed to frame a code of by-laws."

Rev. John D. Mahone

The Rev. John D. Mahone from near Winnsboro, (the first pastor to be addressed in the minutes as Reverend), was called as a supply one year before Elder Hinton's resignation. After that in 1877, he was given a call for an indefinite time.

Rev. Mahon was a graduate of Furman University. He married Mrs. Rebecca Shedd Durham of Ridgeway. They and their fine family seem to have brought new interest and enthusiasm into the church and community. For a short time they lived in the John Weir house on Cool Branch Road, and later the old Boarding House of the Crosbyville Institute, about one mile south of this church, was used for the parsonage.

On the first Sunday in May 1880, the church took a special collection to send Rev. Mahon to Louisville, Ky., to attend the Southern Baptist Convention. He must have come back from that convention full of zeal and spirit, for we find on the first Sunday in July, the church met in conference to discuss which would be better, to build a new house of worship or repair the old one.

Rev. Mahone was appointed a committee of one to solicit contributions. A month later, the first Sunday in August, he reported that enough money had been subscribed to build a new house. The building committee composed of L. A. C. Estes, Mose C. Stone and David P. Crosby, was appointed to buy lumber and employ workmen to build the house. It was also agreed that a correct record of all names and amount subscribed be recorded in the church book. The list has been well preserved. The contract for labor and building was given to J. H. Crosby for \$349.50. The building, including labor, lumber, hardware, roofing, etc., was erected at a total cost of \$818.20, leaving a balance of \$14.80 in the building fund.

The cost seems very low compared with prices today. Logs were given by people of the community and much of the lumber was sawed at David Crosby's sawmill by Sam Wright, a man whose memory is held in high regard by the people of this community, and who, during his active life, supervised the digging of most of the graves in the cemetery. Much of the lumber inside the building was hand dressed. J. Monroe Grant estimated the number of shingles it would take to cover the house. His family still has this estimate in its possession. The pillars of the house were built by B. F. Faley, father of Tom C. Faley. Mr. Tom, as a boy of eight or nine years, carried water from the branch at the foot of the hill to mix mortar. In those days lime came in big lumps in barrels and had to be dissolved. Mr. Tom said "it took a lot of water to melt that lime."

The building had two entrances on the front, making two aisles. There were long seats between the aisles and short seats on each end. There were no rooms on the rear and no baptistry. For many years the church maintained a pool and dressing room at Coleman's Spring approximately a mile north of the church.



Photo by Nichols Studio

Sunday, July 1881, one year after the building was first discussed, Rev. Mahon preached the dedicatory sermon in the new building. The protracted meeting was held that year, beginning the first Sunday in August. A young student from the seminary, Rev. W. A. Williams, assisted Rev. Mahon.

The church experienced a great revival. The following were baptised: Misses Florence Chapman, Lily Estes, Minnie Castles, Minnie Halsell, Mrs. Betheny Woodward, J. B. Lee, Butler Weir, Thomas Wix, Edward Chapman.

Beaver Creek accepted an invitation from Mizpah Presbyterian church to hold services there while the church was under construction.

After using the new building for two years,

the congregation painted it white, trimmed in red. In 1883, Rev. Mahon accepted for the church a beautiful silver communion set presented by the ladies of the church.

Three years later, 1886, new seats were made for the church, the ones in use today. Wilson Gibson and Edward Chapman hauled the lumber from Blackstock to make the seats. The roads were in bad condition and on one trip their wagon stalled on the McKeown hill, going up from the creek toward Bethlehem church. Another wagon came along and the driver hitched his team to the rear of the loaded wagon and pulled it back down hill. Then he told Mr. Gibson and Mr. Chapman, "try it again boys, and see if you can make a better drive this time." The seats were made on the grounds and put in the church by Mr. John Clark, grandfather of the late John W. Weir.

Soon the need for a musical instrument was felt, yet some considered a musical instrument in the church a sacrilege. In September 1891, a committee was appointed to purchase an organ: David P. Crosby, H. R. Chapman and D. T. Weir. The first organists were Miss Ernie Mahon, daughter of Rev. Mahon, now Mrs. T. W. Smith, and Miss Maggie Robinson, daughter of James Elliott Robinson, and who later married Tarlton E. Clark, son of John Clark.

In August 1887, Dr. C. C. Estes died, and W. S. Durham, a step-son of Rev. Mahon, was appointed his successor as church clerk. Although he died in early life, Dr. Estes had lived a full life in service to his Lord and to humanity.

While Rev. Mahon was here the first wedding in this church took place. Prof. David Busbee and Miss Elizabeth Faucette were married one Sunday just after preaching services. Prof. Busbee was principal of Crosbyville Institute and Miss Faucette was the music teacher.

Mr. Jake R. Coleman and Miss Emma Cockerell of Alabama, were also married in the church by Rev. Mahon. Theirs was a quiet church wedding with only a few friends present. While visiting her uncle, V. B. Wright, grandfather of

Henry Wright, she met and married Mr. Coleman. (The exact dates of these weddings are not known.)

Mrs. Mahon died in 1885, and is buried beside this church. Rev. Mahon resigned in 1892, and moved to Union. While there he married Miss Gemina Crosby. In 1895 he was again called to Beaver Creek, and served as pastor for a year going back and forth from Clinton, where he was living at that time.

Rev. D. A. Swindler

During the period between Rev. Mahon's two pastorates at Beaver Creek, D. A. Swindler filled the pulpit. He also preached at Woodward church. Rev. Swindler came from Maybington Baptist Church. Being a young man with a great personality, as well as fervor and devotion for his Lord's work, he endeared himself not only to his congregation, but to the community. He boarded in the vicinity until he married Miss Eugenia Lee of Whitmire.

When he returned with his bride they were met at the railroad station (Leeds) by a number of young people who escorted them to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Mose C. Stone where a reception was held for them that evening. Rev. and Mrs. Swindler kept house for a few months in the Crosbyville schoolhouse. Shortly after they set up housekeeping the church gave them a surprise pounding.

Mrs. J. F. Stone, whose marriage has already been mentioned, was being driven by her son, John Simpson Stone, to the Swindler's for the pounding when they met Rev. Swindler on the road. After exchanging salutations, the preacher asked, "Where are you headed for?" To which Mr. Stone replied, "to the poor house," and drove on much to the embarrassment of his mother. After two years of service Rev. Swindler resigned and went to Louisville, Ky., to complete his education.

Rev. A. M. Pittman

Rev. A. M. Pittman, who was living at Blackstock and had been pastor of Blackstock Baptist Church for some years, was called to serve Beaver Creek also. Although Rev. Pittman's pastorate was not long, he was beloved and held in highest esteem by the congregation. While here he officiated at the wedding of Miss Daisy Crosby and Mr. John S. Stone. They were married at the home of the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. David P. Crosby, Sunday morning, January 7th, 1894, just before the preaching hour. They and all the wedding party attended services and then went back to her home for the reception afterward. Rev. Pittman resigned in December 1894, and then Rev. Mahon was given his second call to Beaver Creek.

Rev. Edward A. McDowell

It was during Rev. Edward A. McDowell's ministry that the church held her Centennial celebration. Rev. McDowell borrowed the early minutes of the church to help prepare his historical sketch for that occasion, and failed to return them. Not having a copy of his sketch, or the minutes, has left us without a recorded history.

Rev. McDowell married Miss Eva Scott, daughter of the late Dr. Scott, prominent physician of Fairfield County. She was a vocalist and musician and used her talent to enrich the church services.

Rev. McDowell never lived in the community, but came to pay pastoral visits and to hold services first from Strothers, and later from Monticello. Coming in 1896, he rendered faithful service for five years, resigning in 1901 to take up work elsewhere. He preached to some of the largest congregations ever assembled at Beaver Creek for preaching services. This section at that time was thickly populated and people came from miles around.

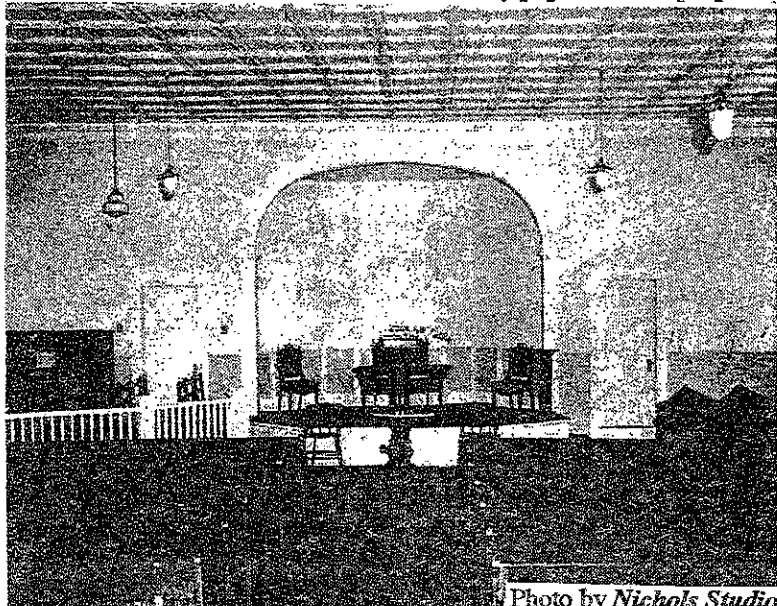


Photo by Nichols Studio

still has one of the books used in the school.

It was Rev. McDowell who instigated the building of a baptistry in the church. He was the first to administer baptismal rites in the baptistry and Miss Eunice Roberts (Mrs. A. J. Taylor), Miss Leila Banks (Mrs. S. T. Weir), Miss Mary Crosby (Mrs. J. T. Collins), Mr. N. H. Stone, Sr., probably Hon. John M. Wise, and others, thirteen in all, were the first to be baptised in it.

Mr. Tillman R. Gaines held a singing school at Hopewell A.R.P. church in 1898. Widespread interest was taken in the school. Beaver Creek delegated Mr. Randolph Grant and Mr. C. E. Fant to go to Hopewell and engage Mr. Matthews to hold a singing school here. The school was held in September of that year, with old and young attending. It was so great a success that Mr. Matthews was engaged to return the next summer. The results of these singing schools were enjoyed for years in the song service of this church. Mr. Grant

The church began to see the disadvantage of not having a home for the pastor to live in the community. Several times a committee had been appointed to look into the advisability of building a parsonage. It was either not advisable to

build or the committee would fail to report. Under Rev. McDowell's leadership the movement was started again.

In 1894 the church came in possession of what we know as the "Parsonage land." The land belonged to Mr. John Dye, a great uncle of Mr. W. C. Taylor. Some years before he had died, willing the land to his wife, Mrs. Tabby Neaves Dye, for her life time, and after it was to be the property of Beaver Creek Church. Mrs. Dye died in 1894, and the church appointed W. H. Banks to look after and rent out the property. This gift has been a help to the church financially in that the land was rented out for years, and a good bit of timber and pulpwood has been sold from it, the proceeds being used in various church expenses. It has also furnished a home for the pastors of the church.

Having land of its own on which to build, the church decided to build a parsonage. We do not know who composed the building committee, but we have been told two Negroes, Henry Hickenbottom and Benny McLarkin, built it. It was completed and ready for occupancy in 1901, but Rev. McDowell left just before it was finished.

On the afternoon of December 5, 1899, Mr. Sam Stone and Miss Roberta Clowney were married in Beaver Creek by Rev. McDowell. Only a few friends and relatives were present.

Rev. Ellis Dulaney Wells

Rev. and Mrs. E. D. Wells, who came here from Georgetown in 1901, were the first to live in the parsonage. Rev. Wells was a graduate of Wake Forest. Beaver Creek and Cool Branch became associated into one field at that time and Rev. Wells served twenty-one years. It is said that he officiated at more weddings than any other pastor Beaver Creek had. He and Mrs. Wells were always fond of young people.

Mrs. Wells had a hobby of taking and developing pictures. Many of her pictures are found in homes around here. Rev. Wells enjoyed fishing and hunting.

While he was pastor the second organ was bought for the church. Mrs. Simp Stone, Miss Mattie Roberts, Mrs. Ross Durham, Mrs. N. H. Stone, Miss Eva Durham (Mrs. Earl Steadman), and others served as organists.

In the winter of 1901-2, Mr. A. C. Estes fell and fractured his hip. He never fully recovered and died in March 1902.

In 1911 Mr. William H. Banks, deacon and treasurer of the church for a number of years, died. In December 1917, Mr. W. S. Durham, church clerk and deacon for 30 years, died. For years he was treasurer of the Chester Baptist Association.

Mr. John W. Weir succeeded Mr. Durham as church clerk. Mr. Weir and Mr. Sam Henry Banks were elected deacons while Rev. Wells was here.

In February 1921, Mrs. Wells died and was buried in the cemetery of the church.

Mrs. Wells and Mrs. Ida Stilley of Palisade, Colorado, were devoted friends and while in school made a solemn pledge to each other, if in later life, either of them married and one died, and the other was not married or was a widow, that one would marry the living husband and take care of him. They never saw each other after leaving school but kept up correspondence. Mr. Stilley died some years before Mrs. Wells died. In one of her last letters to Mrs. Stilley Mrs. Wells reminded her of their promise to take care of "The Boy," as she called Mr. Wells. After Mrs. Wells' death Mrs. Stilley wrote Mr. Wells and enclosed that part of Mrs. Wells' letter. After a year Rev. Wells resigned and went to Palisade where he married Mrs. Stilley. He died there February 12, 1940, and his body was brought to Beaver Creek for burial beside the first Mrs. Wells, who was Miss Grace Brownson of Toledo, Ohio.

Rev. John S. Harris

The year that Rev. Wells resigned the Rev. J. S. Harris was called. He was a South Carolinian but was holding a pastorate in Mason City, Nebraska, at that time. His coming joined Beaver Creek, Blackstock, Cool Branch and Woodward churches into one field.

Mrs. Harris was Miss Bertha Sanders of McCormick. Their three children, Elizabeth, born in Nebraska, John S. Jr., and Bertha, born during his ministry at Beaver Creek.

Rev. and Mrs. Harris were zealous workers and a number of new members were added to the church roll under their leadership. The Sunday School took on new life, and the largest attendance of Sunday School the church has ever recorded was reached. The Woman's Missionary Society was reorganized with Mrs. N. H. Stone, president, and is still serving. The regular monthly program was first used with meetings in the homes. A Baptist Young Peoples Union was organized with Mrs. C. M. Adams (Now Mrs. Tennant), the first president. A Sunbeam Band was organized and Mrs. D. P. Crosby (now Mrs. Heath), was leader. She was a person fitted for that particular work, and many of us look back with fond memories of our days in the Sunbeam Band under her capable leadership.

In 1924 the church building was remodeled as it stands today. The front entrance was changed from two to one entrance, and a cement porch was added. The inside walls were plastered, metal ceiling put up, the choir loft built and the windows fixed. Mrs. Nora Cornwell gave the paint and the floor was painted. A new carpet was put down. Chester Machine and Lumber Company was given the contract for remodeling, but to the late Mrs. Daisy Crosby the church is indebted for her tireless efforts in planning and carrying out the remodeling. Mr. Claud Crosby, at that time president of Chester Machine and Lumber Company, gave the pulpit stand in memory of his parents, the late Mr. and Mrs. David P. Crosby.

After the remodeling of the church a piano was bought. For some time piano and organ were used in services, Mrs.

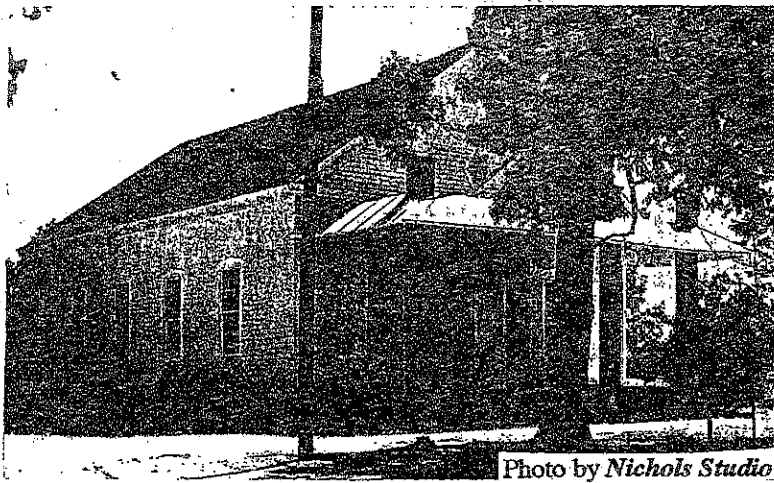


Photo by Nichols Studio

D. P. Crosby playing the piano and Mrs. Harris the organ. (The organ has in recent years been used by Blackstock Baptist Church.)

The first Sunday in October 1925, an election of deacons took place as follows: C. E. Fant, S. H. Banks, J. W. Weir, (who were already serving) and H. J. Hair, T. R. Varnadore, and Harvey Weir. Miss Maude Durham was made church clerk and still serves in that capacity.

While Rev. Harris was here the individual communion set was bought and used.

Because of failing health Mr. Harris resigned in 1927, and moved his family to McCormick, where he died a few months later. In the Associational minutes of 1927 a page is inscribed to his memory.

Rev. A. C. Odom

Rev. A. C. Odom and his family moved into the parsonage the year Mr. Harris left. They came from Saluda, S.C., and after serving two years moved to Landrum. It was with regret that the church gave up Mr. Odom and his fine family. Edith, Francis and Ella May took active parts in the B. Y. P. U., and Frank was a Sunbeam. Another daughter, Ruth, was studying in New York.

Rev. D. Homer Owings

Following the Rev. Odom, Rev. and Mrs. D. H. Owings from Dovesville, in Darlington County, took up the work here, July 1929. Rev. Owings had for a number of years been a missionary to China. After his return to the States, while preaching near Spartanburg, he married Miss Alma Sandifer of Bamberg, who was teaching school there.

Rev. and Mrs. Owings were an inspiration to their churches. Mrs. Owings taught the Ladies' Sunday School class, and she started a movement to turn the dressing rooms on the rear into Sunday School rooms. She organized a Y. W. A. She died in 1934, and was buried in the cemetery at her home church in Bamberg County.

A few months later Mr. Owings went to Florida to live. Some years later he returned to Bamberg and married Miss Nettie Sandifer, sister of the first Mrs. Owings.

Rev. J. Ned Taylor supplied as pastor for a few months and then went to Winston-Salem, N.C., to become assistant pastor of a Baptist Church there.

Rev. George Washington Gurley

Rev. G. W. Gurley, who was serving churches in Edgefield and Greenwood Counties, accepted a call here, April 1936. He and Mrs. Gurley did a good work in the young people's organization and the Sunday School. Mrs. Gurley taught the Young People's class and Mr. Gurley the Bible class. They re-organized the B. Y. P. U., with Miss Mattie Stone being made the director of the organization. During their stay here the church entertained the Sunday School Convention, the Chester Association, and the W. M. U., Chester Association. Approximately 25 members were added to the church. Their daughter, Virginia, now Mrs. W. R. Funderburk, of Greenwood, a high school student, was pianist for the church. Mr. Gurley was really a pastor. While they were here electricity was installed in the church and parsonage. The Gurleys gave up their work in June 1941, and went to Callison, S.C.

Rev. James F. Moseley

In August 1941, the Rev. James F. Moseley was called to Beaver Creek, Cool Branch and Blackstock churches. Mrs. Moseley was Miss Dolly Stoner, daughter of a Baptist minister. Their family consisted of two daughters, Anne and Carol Beth, and two sons, Jimmy and Sherry. Mr. and Mrs. Moseley were the youngest couple to occupy the parsonage.

The church work was reorganized and a new system of finance was adopted which put the church on a cash basis and it proved successful. For the first time in the history of the church services were held every Sunday, and is continuing.

New teachers were elected in the Sunday School and Miss Mattie Stone made superintendent. Mrs. Moseley taught the Adult class and was pianist. One Sunday after attending her class, Mr. N. H. Stone told her, "Look, here, you are as good as a preacher. When your husband can't come to preach, tell him to send you."

Mr. J. H. Hair moved to Woodward church and Mr. T. R. Varnadore, who was serving as deacon and church treasurer, resigned leaving two vacancies for deacons; C. M. Banks and J. Simp Taylor were elected as deacons and John W. Weir became church treasurer.

Mr. Taylor died in 1944. Later his brother, Walker C. Taylor, was elected to fill the vacancy.

The three churches sent the Rev. Moseley to San Antonio, Texas, to the Southern Baptist Convention in May 1942. After four years of service in this field Rev. Moseley resigned and accepted work at Flint Hill Baptist Church near

Fort Mill.

An electric water system was put in the parsonage after the Moseleys came. The communion glass holders on the church pews were made and given by W. S. Durham, grandson of the Mrs. W. S. Durham mentioned above, and Miss Floride Durham.

Miss Elizabeth Banks and Sgt. James Walters were married in the church by Rev. Moseley at noon, after the service, Sunday, July 19, 1943.

During Rev. Moseley's pastorate Beaver Creek lost four of her oldest and greatly beloved members: C. E. Fant, Mrs. Catherine Roberts, Mrs. Mollie Estes Durham and Mrs. Victoria Robinson Coleman. Mr. Fant served as deacon for over 50 years and served as superintendent of Sunday School for as many years. Due to ill health Mrs. Roberts was not able to attend services but kept a deep interest in her church. Mrs. Durham and Mrs. Coleman were charter members of the Beaver Creek W. M. S. They joined the church early in life and were baptised the same day. Through life theirs was a warm unbroken friendship. All four of these had reached their four score years and more, and their Christian influence continues in our church.

Rev. Henry Miller Hodgens

Rev. and Mrs. H. M. Hodgens came to us from Townsville, in December 1945. The weather and roads were a hindrance to Rev. Hodgens in getting acquainted with his new field before spring, but when he did get started he covered ground. Since his coming all three churches have been painted. The parsonage has been painted and remodeled to some extent - the long porch on the front taken off and the stoop added. Miss Floride Durham had an underpinning put around the north side of the church, in memory of her mother, Mrs. Mollie Estes Durham.

The building improvements committee serving was Miss Floride Durham, W. C. Taylor and Mack Henry Banks.

There have been two church weddings since Rev. Hodgens came: Miss Eloise Weir and Victor Blanks, married Saturday evening, June 22, 1946; Miss June Hodgens and Sgt. Bryant Chapman, married at noon, May 15, 1947.

Rev. Hodgens held his own protracted meeting last year and gave the expense of a visiting minister to the improvement fund of the church. Several have been added to the membership and all financial apportionments have been met. Rev. Hodgens taught the adult Sunday School class and Mrs. Hodgens, besides teaching Sunday School, was active in all phases of the church work.

Miss Mary Alice Banks served as pianist until she entered Wintthrop College, then her sister, Miss Nettie Lee Banks, began to render the service.

In July 1946, Leslie B. Weir and Jake F. Stone were elected deacons. Mrs. Mary Beam, the oldest member of Beaver Creek died in 1945.

In December the church lost a most ardent worker in the death of John W. Weir. His son, J. D. Weir, has been elected his successor as deacon and treasurer of the church.

Women's Work

The minutes of 1883 record in the Digest of Letters from Beaver Creek that a Mary Harlem Mission Society had been organized. We know nothing of this organization or its officers.

In 1889 a Woman's Missionary Society was organized with Mrs. David P. Crosby, president, and Mrs. Victori R. Coleman, secretary.

As far as we are able to learn the following ladies have served as president of the W. M. U. in the order given: Mrs. David P. Crosby, 1889-1895; Miss Mary Jane Weir, 1895-98; Miss Ella Stone (Mrs. Cunningham), 1898-1900; Miss Clara Chapman (Mrs. Agnew), 1900-03; Mrs. W. H. Banks, 1903-04; Miss Ella Stone, 1904-?; Mrs. V. R. Coleman, ?-1922; Mrs. N. H. Stone, Sr., 1922-present (1947).

The Willing Workers Society was reported in the minutes of 1891. While active the Society bought the first Bible for the church.

June 13, 1909, Mrs. John S. Stone organized a young peoples society under the name of Willing Workers. They had for their goal that of enclosing the cemetery, but after a year, it dropped out. Funds raised before being dropped are \$55.70.

Different organizations among the young people and children are Y. W. A., G. A., R. A., and Sunbeams; Mrs. Leslie B. Weir is leader of the only society, the G. A.

The following ladies served as presidents of the B. Y. P. U.: Mrs. C. M. Adams (Mrs. Tennant); Miss Leila Varnadore, Miss Sara Banks, Miss Mattie Stone, and Mrs. John S. Stone Jr.

Sunday School

In May 1869, during the pastorate of Rev. Pickett, the minutes record Sunday School being held near Halsellville Post Office, which was Chapman's Store, where Mr. Leslie B. Weir now lives. We have been told that the building in which Sunday School was held stood somewhere between the Grant home and Mrs. Ross Durham's. J. B. Lee, deacon at the time, or Nicholas Colvin, were superintendent of the Sunday School. Both names are remembered in connection with the Sunday School.

During Rev. Mahon's pastorate Sunday School was perhaps held in the church for the first time. The records show

the followingserved as superintendent: J. D. Mahon, Mose C. Stone, C. E. Fant, W. S. Banks, N. H. Stone, Sr., S. H. Banks, T. R. Varnadore, and Miss Mattie Stone.

Another son of Beaver Creek, Mr. Thomas C. Faley was licensed to preach in 1901 by the Board of Ministerial Education of South Carolina Baptist State Convention in Greenville, S.C. He joined Beaver Creek while Rev. Swindler was pastor and was baptised at Coleman's Spring.

Mr. Faley attended Furman University and also Shenandoah College in Virginia. He studied music and voice, and during his college life he sang in the choir of the various churches.

Taking up evangelistic work he preached and directed the music for revivals at a number of churches throughout South Carolina, Georgia and Virginia. Quite often he assisted other evangelists by directing the music, one of them being the noted Dr. N. W. Tracy of Boston, Massachusetts, who held a five weeks' tent meeting in Columbia, S. C., on the ground where the post office now stands. He sang in the State Chautauqua, of Louisiana, where the well known evangelists Sam Jones and DeWitt Talmadge were important lecturers, and he was in a series of meetings in Virginia with Dr. Brookes, of Louisville, Kentucky, who was a famous evangelist of the Christian Church. He served as assistant pastor of Southside Baptist Church in Columbia, S.C., and also of Second Baptist Church of that city. On several occasions he filled the pulpit at his home church.

Some time during this work he edited a hymn book, "Revival Songs." No doubt many who read this article will remember that little book of soul-stirring hymns.

Mr. Faley married Miss Margaret Shannon. They and their fine family lived on Columbia Road, about five miles from Chester.

Part in Chester Baptist Association

Beaver Creek was active in organizing the Chester Baptist Association in 1878. Mr. Nicky Colvin and Mr. Monroe Grant were the representatives at the organization. The third annual meeting of the association was held at Beaver Creek.

At that time delegates came from all over the Association and were assigned to homes of the church for night lodging. Dinner was served on the church ground.

The following answered the call to service for their country in World War I: Charlie Mack Banks, Robert S. Banks, John J. Clark, J. Elbert Roberts, S. Simp Taylor, Walker C. Taylor, Sr., Leslie B. Weir. In World War II, Mary Elizabeth Weir (Mrs. W. W. Rogers,) Redding, Calif., Charles C. Adams, Mack Henry Banks, Wallace Banks, William Banks, Charlie Stone, N. H. Stone, Jr. Jake Stone, W. C. Taylor, Jr., J. D. Weir, Walter Widener.

There have been four ministers of the Gospel: Mr. J. H. Crosby was licensed in December 1864. He supplied several Sundays at Beaver Creek during his ministerial years.

Mr. J. D. Crosby was licensed in the 1860's. He went West to preach. The W.M.S. ladies made a quilt and embroidered their name on the block which she made. This quilt was given to the Rev. Crosby as a love gift, to take with him.

Mr. Belton P. Estes was licensed on the third Sunday in July 1884, at Beaver Creek. He married Miss Etta Watkins from Honea Path.

Mr. Hartwell R. Chapman, who attended Wake Forest College and Furman University, was ordained at Brushy Fork Baptist Church with the Rev. L. C. Hinton, a former pastor, officiating. He went to Oklahoma where he was president of a college. He was twice married, first to Miss Palmer of Bullock's Creek and second, to Miss Ficklin Blackville. The Rev. Chapman died in Aiken.

This church has furnished two representatives of the medical profession and one lawyer.

Dr. C. C. Estes has already been mentioned in this history; Dr. John F. Coleman has practiced medicine for 45 years and is still active in his profession at Smoaks, S.C.; Hon. John M. Wise practiced law in Chester and represented Chester County in the State Senate for a number of years.

We mention one of the many businessmen who has gone out from Beaver Creek: Mr. David P. Crosby, whose name appears on almost every committee of which we have record from 1870, when he was made deacon, until he moved with his family to Chester in 1896, and joined Chester First Baptist Church. In Chester he became affiliated with Spratt Lumber Company. After some years he bought the establishment and changed the name to Chester Machine and Lumber Company. He married Miss Fanny Crosby, who was the first president of Beaver Creek Woman's Missionary Society. Mr. Crosby was a man whose business included time and means for the Kingdom. He was the founder of Crosbyville Institute, a school of higher education that was received in the common schools of that time. He not only built the three-room school house, but also a three-story boarding house to be used as a dormitory for students who lived too far away to come to school from their homes each day.

There are many others whom we would like to mention in this history who labored faithfully and well in this church, and have meant so much to the world.

Although it is impossible to mention all of them here, those who have passed on, and those who are still giving their best yet we trust that this church will stand throughout the ages as a monument to the men and women who have made it possible.

HISTORY OF BEAVER CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH 1947 - 1997

The Reverend Henry Miller Hodgens was pastor of Beaver Creek Church when it observed its Sesquicentennial on September 21, 1947. He left in 1948 and the Rev. D. Yates Bingham was called as pastor. He served less than a year. He resigned to accept an opportunity to attend a language school in preparation to become a foreign missionary. During his pastorate a cyclone fence was built around the cemetery.

The Reverend A. L. Willis was called to Beaver Creek in 1949 and served until 1957.

During this time many improvements were made to the church building. Three Sunday School rooms and a social hall were added onto the left side of the church. A subfloor was placed in the auditorium, and gas heaters were installed to replace two pot-bellied stoves in the sanctuary.

In 1957, Cool Branch Church withdrew from the field, leaving Beaver Creek and Blackstock. The Beaver Creek parsonage was completely remodeled just in time for a new pastor, the Reverend W. D. Steppe, to occupy it in July, 1957.



Photo by Nichols Studio

Reverend Steppe served Beaver Creek for 14 years. During his tenure, the church building underwent several improvements. A well was dug in 1959. In 1960 new carpet was installed in the sanctuary. All church windows were replaced. Grounds were landscaped in 1961 and a new roof was put on in 1963. Two restrooms and a kitchen were added to the educational complex in 1967.

Records show that church finances were in good order. In 1965, pulpwood was sold from church lands and receipts were deposited to the building fund.

A new organ was purchased in 1970, and paid for with memorial donations.

Changes took place in Beaver Creek's history when the Reverend Joseph E. Walker became pastor in 1971. Beaver Creek and Blackstock Churches bought land between the two and built a new parsonage at a cost of \$30,373, with each church paying half.

In 1977-78, Beaver Creek Church added a new pulpit, baptistry and choir loft behind the pulpit. The sanctuary was freshly painted. New pews, pulpit furniture and communion table, carpet, and central heat and air were installed. New hymnals were purchased. In 1979 the church and educational building were bricked. New chandeliers were installed in 1983, and were paid for with memorial donations.

In 1980, 92 acres of the church's property were cleared and pine seedlings planted. Pulpwood was sold and \$8,100 came to the church from a conservation program through the Federal Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Agency.

Also in 1980, Beaver Creek received a certificate of recognition for being in the top ten churches in South Carolina in per capita giving to Annie Armstrong Easter offering for Home Missions. The church also gave generously to Hugo Storm Fund in 1989.

Reverend Walker served Beaver Creek and Blackstock for twelve years and proved himself an effective pastor as well as an outstanding spiritual leader. He wrote:

"The idea of laying remodeling hands upon so much history was not well received -- at the beginning, but this work set the tone and tempo for the third century of the congregation's existence."

In 1983, Beaver Creek stood alone after Blackstock Church withdrew from the field. The Reverend Clyde L. Riley became pastor that year. The congregation accepted an offer from Blackstock to purchase Beaver Creek's half-interest in the pastorium.

Miss Mattie Stone Day was observed by the Beaver Creek congregation in 1983. She was honored for her consecrated services as director of Baptist Young Peoples Union (BYPU) since 1936, and as Sunday School teacher and/or superintendent since 1941.

In 1985 the church roof was replaced including rafters, sheathing and shingles.

In 1985, Miss Florida Durham Day honored her for her many services and contributions to Beaver Creek in the executive, membership, history and property committees as well as her strong support of missions.

In 1988, Beaver Creek observed Homecoming with a mortgage burning of all the church's indebtedness. The church has been debt-free since that time.

In 1989, a Steinway upright piano was donated to Beaver Creek Church.

In 1990, a trust fund of \$50,000 was set up for Beaver Creek Church. Other donations were a picnic shelter that was erected behind the church, a handsome display case and bookcase, handcrafted and donated by the pastor of the church. In 1992, 200 shares of Duke Power Company common stock were donated to the church's cemetery fund.

Also in 1992, Mrs. Corinne R. (Cora) Weir on her 97th birthday was honored for teaching in Sunday School for 73 years.

Several laymen were honored by Beaver Creek's congregation. In 1993, John David Weir, Sr. was recognized for dedicated service as both church treasurer and deacon since 1946. Jake F. Stone also received a plaque for serving as deacon since 1946. In 1997, Robert S. Banks was presented a plaque for service as Sunday School secretary and deacon since 1956.

Church records bear names of veterans serving in the United States Armed Forces from Beaver Creek:

Korean War: Billy Banks, Elliott McDonald, Edward Morrison, Kirk Roberts and Walker C. Taylor, Jr.

Vietnam War: Robert S. Banks, III, Claude W. Gwin, Jr., John E. Roberts III, and W. Douglas Steppe, Jr.

Desert Storm: John E. Roberts III and Jake F. Stone, Jr.

Reverend Riley served Beaver Creek as pastor until 1994. He was an Army veteran of World War II and a leader of Crusade of America in Canada, sponsored by the Baptist Home Mission Board, and of Crusade in Japan sponsored by Foreign Mission Board. He retired from ministry in 1994 from Beaver Creek Church.

Beaver Creek has continued to gain wide recognition for its gifts to missions. In 1993, it received a certificate of recognition for top ten in per capita giving within the S.C. State Convention for gifts to Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions. In 1994 and 1995 it received certificates of appreciation from the Foreign Mission Board for exemplary giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering placing it as one of South Carolina's top 25 churches in per capita dollars given.

A certificate in 1995 from the Foreign Mission Board recognized Beaver Creek "for services rendered in the cause of Christ and Southern Baptists in World Missions."

Also in 1995, Beaver Creek was honored by South Carolina Baptist Convention for ranking among top 50 churches in resident member per capita gifts to Janie Chapman Offering.

Beaver Creek Church continues devoted and meticulous care of the building, grounds and cemetery of its 200-year-old church. In 1996, cushions were placed in the pews, new carpet was installed, inside walls were painted, a chandelier was installed over the choir loft, pulpit furniture was recovered, and a new baptistry curtain was added. The antique pulpit furniture was refurbished. An easy-access ramp for the handicapped was placed on the right front of the church in 1997.

The Rev. Terry Wingate became Beaver Creek Church's pastor after Rev. Riley retired in 1994. Rev. Wingate is bivocational, working as a paramedic at Piedmont Medical Center in Rock Hill, S.C.

Plans are well underway for the observance of Beaver Creek Church's 200th anniversary on August 3, 1997.

This hallowed rural church steadily maintains its worship, work, outreach and dedication. Its beneficent influence spans many generations, and has been the lodestone of countless families. To those members who remain in the pews each Sunday, and to those who have emigrated far and wide, the ties to Beaver Creek Church remain lasting and strong. Love gifts to the church come often, from many persons whose lives have been blessed by their "little church in the vale."

*This holy church of God appears
Through every age and race,
Unwasted by the lapse of years,
Unchanged by changing place
- Samuel Longfellow*

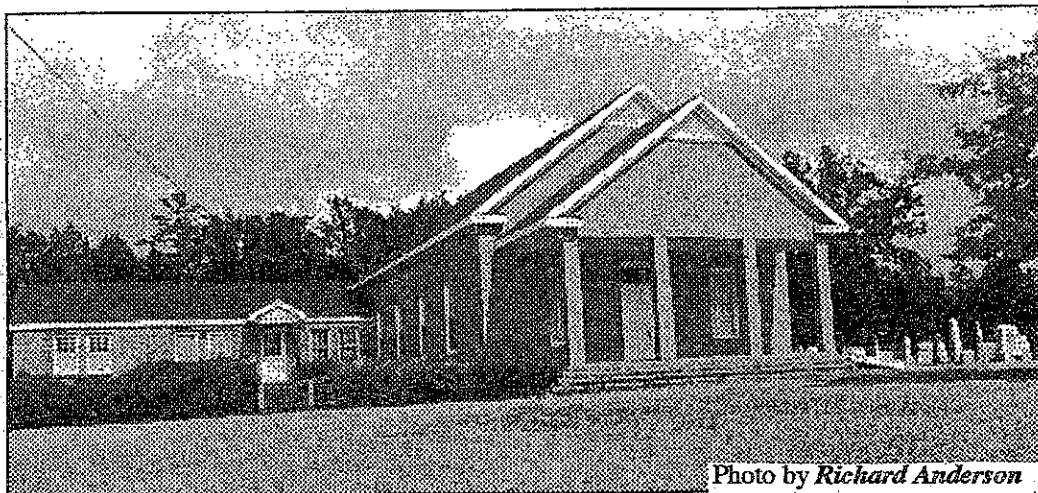


Photo by Richard Anderson

CHURCH OFFICERS

Deacons 1947-1997

Samuel H. Banks	1913-Died 1966
C. M. Banks	1942-Died 1964
W. C. Taylor, Sr.	1944-Died 1973
Leslie B. Weir	1946-Died 1950
Jake F. Stone	1946-1997
John D. Weir	1946-1997
Charles McHenry Banks	1948-1986 moved church letter
Robert S. Banks, Sr.	1956-1997
Walker C. Taylor, Jr.	1959-Died 1991
Walter Widener	1959-Died 1986
Thomas Elliott McDonald	1959-1997
Thomas Kell Reid	1964-1997
Wallace H. Banks	1965-Died 1975
Robert G. Sterling	1965-1968 moved church letter
Jimmy Huey	1979-1997
Charles Dickey	1981-Died 1991
Robert S. Banks, Jr.	1982-1997
William Propst	1983-Died 1996
Jimmy Lewis	1983-1997
John E. Roberts, Jr.	1985-Died 1994
Curtis Boulware	1987-1996
Marion Craig	1990-1991 - moved

Junior Deacon

Edward Morrison 1965-1967 - moved

Treasurer

John D. Weir	1947-1970
Wallace H. Banks	1970-1974 (Died '75)
John D. Weir	1974-1997

Clerk

Miss Maude Durham	1925-Died 1961
Mrs. Lavinia W. McDonald	1961-1997

Sunday School Superintendent

Wallace H. Banks	1960-1961
Charles McHenry Banks	1961-1963
Mrs. Sarah G. Banks	1963-1969
Charles McHenry Banks	1969-1978
T. Kell Reid	1978-1979
Charles Dickey	1979-1980
Charles McHenry Banks	1980-1984
Mrs. Sarah G. Banks	1984-1986
Charles Dickey	1986-1991
Mrs. Sarah G. Banks	1991-1995
Jimmy Huey	1995-1997

Sunday School Secretary

Robert S. Banks, Sr. 1956-1997

Pianist and/or Organist

Miss Nettie Lee Banks	1946-1949
Miss Mary Agnes Banks	1949-1960
Miss Judith Reid	1960-1961
Miss Patsy Stepp	1961-1962
Miss Dianne Banks	1962-1968
Miss Margie Banks	1968-1972
Mrs. Dianne Banks Huey	1972-1997
Mrs. Vera Riley	1983-1994

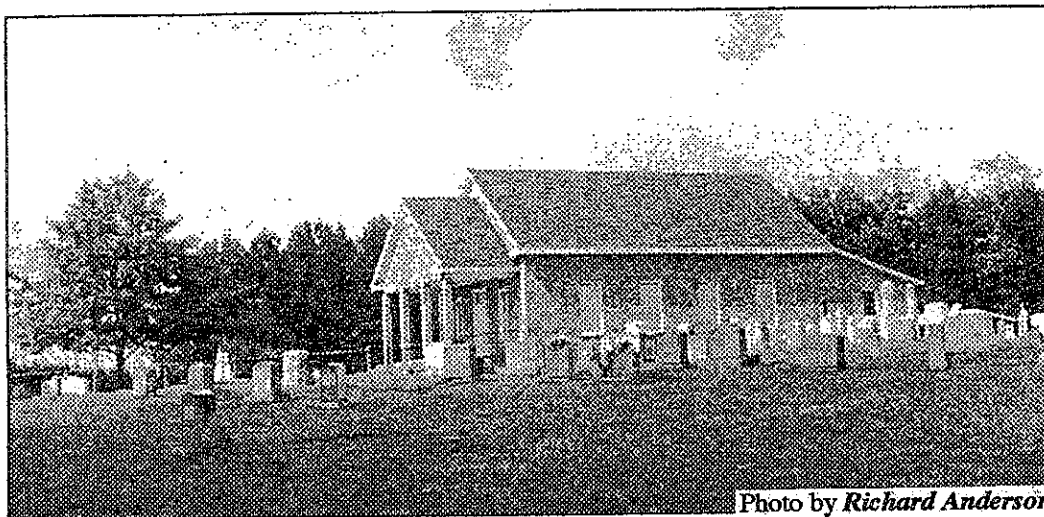


Photo by *Richard Anderson*