

WDATA.015 A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE IN THE CHESTER (SC) NEWS DATED
OCTOBER 26, 1950 ON THE WOODWARD BAPTIST CHURCH.

DEDICATION SERVICE SUNDAY

On Sunday at the historic Woodward Baptist Church the Sunday school building was dedicated in memory of the late Mr. & Mrs. John G. Colvin, Sr., who rendered faithful and consecrated service to this church for over half a century.

Dr. J. E. Rawlinson, secretary of the Baptist Foundation of South Carolina, Columbia, was guest speaker. His topic was "Building for God."

The devotional was conducted by the pastor, the Rev. Furman O. Kelly, who also favored the congregation with a solo.

Lunch was served around 12:30 o'clock.

The afternoon session was devoted to the Memorial service, which featured a sermon by Rev. Rawlinson, the history of the church, which was written and read by Arthur Cornwall. He also sang a solo and was accompanied by Miss Doris Hare, Director of Music of the First Baptist Church of Chester.

Miss Kate D. Maires of Ridgeway, a teacher at Columbia college was a special guest. She is the great grand daughter of Elder William Woodward, founder of Woodward Baptist Church in 1789.

The following history of Woodward Baptist Church was read by Arthur Cornwall:

The Chester Association has 18 churches, with a total membership of about twenty-seven hundred. Woodward Baptist Church, five miles from Chester on the Ashford Ferry Road, is one of these churches. If we look back to 1789, we will see the beginning of this church, for on that date the church was constituted.

The present brick building was erected in 1830. Previous to that time there were two wooden structures. The first church was down on Sandy River, on land owned by Eli Cornwall. Then in 1800 it was decided to move the church to a more convenient location. The second church was built in 1803, because it was under date of October 11, 1802, the one and one fourth acres of land were purchased from John Franklin.

This purchase was made by Elder William Woodward, Richard Evans, Eli Cornwall, Daniel Price, Henry Carter, Mason Huey, Jacob Dunagan, Nobley Coates, and Neguens Whitted. These men were trustees appointed for the purpose of buying a site for the church. The amount paid to John Franklin was Three Hundred Dollars. This deed was witnessed by Jacob Bennett and

Charles Boyd. It is recorded in the Office of Clerk of Court in Deed Book "I" pages 111, 112 and 113 under date of October 11, 1802.

It is therefore probably that the second wooden church was a temporary structure-serving until a brick church could be built. This second wooden church was erected beyond the cemetery in the direction of Chester. Tradition says that the present edifice was brought from England.

Elder William Woodward, for whom the Woodward Baptist Church was named, was the son of Thomas Woodward, of Fairfield County. William Woodward was born in 1763 (wrong b. 1762) and died in 1820. A tablet on the walls of the church bears this inscription:

"OCTOBER, 1830. SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF ELDER WILLIAM WOODWARD, WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1820, ON THE 23RD DAY OF JULY; AGED 57 YEARS, 9 MONTHS AND 18 DAYS. THIS TABLET IS ERECTED TO HIS MEMORY BY THIS CHURCH, WHICH WAS PLANTED BY HIS INSTRUMENTALITY THROUGH THE INDULGENCE OF A KIND PROVINCE, A.D. 1789. HE WAS ALSO, THE MEANS OF PLANTING SOME, AND BUILDING UP MANY OF THE NEIGHBORING BAPTIST CHURCHES. IN CONSIDERATION OF HIS MANY VIRTUES THIS CHURCH HAS UNANIMOUSLY CONSENTED TO BE KNOWN FOR THE FUTURE BY THE NAME OF THE "WOODWARD BAPTIST CHURCH OF CHRIST."

In the Old records of the church, in enumerating the names of the church members they are sometimes described, as well as numbered, for instance: 112. Old Mrs. Leak. 146 Patsy Black (woman) white and servant. Fear seems to be entertained lest one might think Patsy black, as her name indicates. Charges were brought against Brother Milbank for walking with Mrs. Cloversee and denying the same. Later it is announced that

Mr. Milbank withdrew with a committee, acknowledged that he was intoxicated when he took his "famous" walk. He was sorry; he was forgiven. The disappointment of poor Amos Layard is recorded: "The gift of Amos Layard was taken into consideration and it was unanimously agreed that it is best not to give him a license to go out to preach the Gospel at present." Edward Moberly is cited to appear before the church to answer for the charge of riding over his plantation last Sunday. Brother James Hand has given satisfaction to the church for starting to market in Charleston on Friday, thereby using his horses and slaves and himself on the Lord's Day, which he might have avoided had he started on Monday or Tuesday.

The official old records of the church were unfortunately lost in a fire some years ago, when the home of Mrs. Lily Mobley Douglas burned.

The first pastor I can find record of was the Rev. George

Washington Pickett. He was called in 1853. Mr. Pickett was born in King George County, Virginia, August 30, 1828, and died April 15, 1907. He moved to Texas in 1871. When Mr. Pickett was pastor of Woodward Baptist Church he lived in the old Eli Cornwall house, which was situated on the plantation now owned by the family of Mrs. Nannie Hardin Wilks. The old Cornwall graveyard is not far from the site of this house.

The Rev. Kamilus Jeter preached for the Woodward Congregation for some time-coming over from Santuc. The Rev. Thomas Dixon, Sr., was pastor at Woodward church 1859-1860. He came down from his home in Shelby on horseback. He married Amanda Elizabeth McAfee. They were the parents of the famous author, Thomas Dixon, who wrote "The Clansmen" and other books. Some years after his pastorate at Woodward church the Rev. Thomas Dixon returned, as he said "to preach once more in the dear old church." Only one person was present at the special service, who had heard him formerly, as pastor of Woodward, and that was Miss Betsey Sweatt.

In April 1865, Mrs. Jefferson Davis, with her children and attendants refuged to Charlotte, North Carolina, in advance of the evacuation of Richmond, where they were given a home

and every attention bestowed upon them. From Charlotte they came to Chester. At the station, conveyances were ready to take them to their destination for the night, which was the lovely and hospitable home of Mrs. Mary I. Mobley. Her home was called "The Oaks." The weather was very bad and Mrs. Davis thought it best to stop at the "little church by the side of the road" for the night. Next morning the party went to Mrs. Mobley's for breakfast. Mrs. Mobley had each of her daughters to hold the infant, Winnie Davis, and in later years they all cherished the fact that they had held in their arms "the daughter of the Confederacy."

In the minutes of the church on the fourth Sabbath in November (not legible) the Rev. W.A. Gaines was elected pastor of Woodward church for an indefinite period. Rev. A. P. Pugh, who was assisted greatly by the Rev. Gaines in obtaining his education, was the regular supply, preaching every second and fourth Sabbath in each month. Mr. Gaines lived about a miles from Chester, not far from the home of General Walker, of the Confederacy. He conducted a farm, had a buggy and harness repair shop on Gadsden Street in Chester, and served Woodward and other county churches. He assisted in organizing the Chester Association at Woodward church, March 1878, which body met in its first regular annual session at Hopewell church in September, 1878. Mr. Gaines was born in 1831 and died 1916. Dr. Frank P. Gaines is his younger son.

Rev. W.A. Gaines was succeeded at Woodward by the Rev. John D. Mahon-one of the best of men. He served as pastor of Woodward Baptist Church for seventeen years. He married the widow Durham (formerly Miss Rebecca Shedd) and they had three

children: Minnie, Percy and Ernie.

While Mr. Mahon was pastor a Sunbeam organization was promoted. Miss Linnie Smyre (the late Mrs. W.W. Isaacs) was the president. However, when many began to move away from the Woodward community, the Sunbeam organization ceased to exist. But in 1930, Mrs. D. Euta Colvin re-organized the Sunbeam band. To work among the young people at Woodward much credit is due to Mr. and Mrs. D. Euta Colvin-earnest, consecrated members of this historic church.

Rev. Daniel A. Swindle followed Mr. Mahon in the field at Woodward church. Mr. Swindle was loved by the people-serving this splendid church for several years. Mr. Swindle resigned in November 1893, and was succeeded by the Rev. J. Henry Yarborough. Mr. Yarborough served other churches along with Woodward and was a most useful, able preacher, beloved pastor, very affectionate, true and sincere, winning many friends, and leaving a fine impression on his people where he labored.

In the minutes --at church conference--in November, 1898, we read: "T. B. Cassells was appointed at the Association to collect from this church all the money he could to relieve the few brethren of Yorksville, who gave bond in paying a debt with the Baptist High School at Yorksville, property which proved a failure after running a short while, leaving a considerable debt by the Baptists of four counties, York, Chester, Lancaster and Union.

In the protracted meeting at Woodward church in August 1894, the Rev. L.C. Hinton and the Rev. H.C. Buckholz assisted Mr. Yarborough.

On November 28, 1895, after conference, Deacon Thomas W. Shannon and C.J. Moore were elected to serve on the building committee and to confer with like committee from the Blackstock Baptist Church in regard to purchasing a lot and building a parsonage thereon and with title of property made to them and their successors in office, as trustees of Woodward church.

About 70 years ago the interior of the present church building was remodeled and the pulpit and pews changed. Formerly the pulpit was at the rear of the present church--in other words, the pastor faces Ashford Ferry Road today, as he preaches to the congregation; formerly the congregation faced the road.

At one time there was an arbor near the church, where often some of the church exercises were conducted. One member, living in 1930 told me she remembered when this arbor was used, and that the men had some of their meetings in the arbor, while the women gathered in the church building for

their services.

October 27, 1901, a Woman's Missionary Society was organized by Mrs. H.C. Buckholz, wife of the pastor at that time, of the First Baptist church in Chester. Previous to this time there had been a missionary society, but unfortunately the minutes were not preserved.

Following Mr. Yarborough came the Rev. Alonzo Finch in 1902; Rev. J.O. Sessions was elected pastor in 1905; the Rev. H.B. Jordon served for one year, 1907; then came the Rev. J.W. Bishop. Mr. Bishop was the pastor until January 1913, when the J. Earle Freeman was installed as Woodward's pastor. All of these were able preachers and very consecrated workers in the field at Woodward and other churches they served.

Under date of February 1912, an Estey organ was bought for the church. It was delivered in 1912, opened for use March 8, 1912. Also 12 Baptist hymn and praise books were bought. Mr. J. Monroe Grant, father of Miss Jay and Messrs. Martin and Randolph Grant, was one of the leaders in this church. He was chairman of the committee to buy the organ and hymn books. Of course, the church had previously had an organ--this was a new one. It was probably the last organ used in this church.

On March 23, 1913, after a lecture on Sunday School history, "The pastor J. Martin Grant and James C. O'Donnell were appointed to select officers and teachers for the Sunday School. The Rev. J. Earle Freeman was elected superintendent, John G. Colvin, first assistant, J. Martin Grant, second assistant, T. Clyde O'Donnell, secretary and treasurer. The teachers were J. Martin Grant, Miss Jessie Wilks, Miss Lucille Cassells, Miss Jay Grant, Mrs. S. B. Roberts, Mrs. E. Abner Cassells, Mrs. J.C. O'Donnell and Robert Cassells, superintendent of the home department."

The envelope system was adopted at Woodward Church, May 11, 1913.

June 10, 1917, the Rev. Jessie F. Pittman was called to the pastorate of Blackstock and Woodward churches. October 8, 1922, the Rev. James S. Harris preached his first sermon. Mr. Harris resigned on account of ill health, May 8, 1927 and died May 28, 1927, and was buried at McCormick, South Carolina. Never in its interesting history has Woodward church had two finer workers than Mr. and Mrs. John S. Harris (formerly Miss Bertha Sanders). Rev. A.C. Odom was called as pastor in 1928. He resigned and was succeeded on November 10, 1929 by the Rev. D.H. Owings.

Mr. Pittman and Mr. Odom were greatly loved by Woodward and other churches they served.

Rev. G.W. Gurley followed Mr. Owings. The next pastor was

Rev. Howard Gordon, and he was succeeded by the present pastor, Rev. Furman O. Kelly. All three of these ministers served the church well and have the highest regards of the entire church membership and the community. The present new Sunday School building, no doubt, was brought about by the fine work of the present pastor. He and his family have meant a great deal to this church and the entire community.

C.T. Minors was church clerk in 1874--as far back as the present minutes go. Then came George L. McNeill, and on March 11, 1877, John Bennett Cornwall was church clerk. He was church clerk until his death in 1888. W.A. Hardin was in this office until June 25, 1893, when the minutes appear under the signature of Thomas W. Shannon, clerk pro tem.

On November 8, 1896, Martin Arthur Colvin (son of Col. N. G. B. Colvin and his wife Mary Virginia Cornwall) was elected church clerk. This office he held for nearly 27 years--until his death in April, 1919. John G. Colvin Sr., was acting church clerk until July 1919, when his son, D. Euta Colvin was elected church clerk.

Under date of December 10, 1876, two deacons were elected: N. G. B. Colvin and Columbus Phillips. In 1892 C.J. Moore and John G. Colvin were elected deacons. T. B. Cassells, T.B. Lee, Robert Cassells, William Yongue, John W. Durham, J. C. O'Donnell, J. Monroe Grant, A.E. McKeown, R.T. Mockbee, Richard Wilks and William A. Cassells have served as deacons.

Mrs. W. H. Cassells is leader of the Sunbeams; Miss Mary Banks Cassells, President of the W. M. S. and W. H. Cassells, Director of the B.T.U.

J. Martin Grant was treasurer for about six years. John Bennett Cornwall and Levi R. Wilks, both served as treasurers of Woodward church.

The present Board of Deacons is composed of D. Euta Colvin, Chairman, W. H. Cassells, Robert Hare, Harvey Hare, Herbert Beam, Ellis Beam, Robert Taylor and W.T. Lee.

D. Euta Colvin is church clerk, Harvey Hare superintendent of the Sunday School and D. Euta Colvin is also church treasurer.

In 1930 when I wrote my detailed history of this church the three oldest members were: Mrs. Maggie Kennedy Yongue, Mrs. Nannie Hardin Wilkes and Mrs. Sallie P. Wright, all now deceased.

One interesting fact to note in connection with the finances of this church, is that Woodward church has always supported herself, and received no aid from the State Board. This is highly commendable and worthy of recording in the history of

this fine church.

There were no more loyal supporters of Woodward church than the Mobleys. Mrs. Isaiah Mobley (before marriage Mary Wagner) spent her life under three influences: love of church, love of family and love of country. She loved and venerated Old Woodward church beyond measure; there she communed and her children were baptized--some of them by the Rev. Thomas Dixon Sr., Dr. and Mrs. Isaiah Mobley had one son, Edward, who gave his life in the cause of the Confederacy, and five daughters, Mrs. Katie Mockbee, Mrs. Minnie Durham, Mrs. Alice Cornwall, Mrs. Lily Douglas and Mrs. Sunie Cunningham.

No two people loved Woodward church more than Mr. John G. Colvin and his wife, Mrs. Maggie Guy Howard Colvin, and it is particularly appropriate that a building to further the religious education of the youth of the community should contain a plaque with their names on it, for surely in this church their hearts are planted.

End of document

