

South Carolina Baptist Townsland - Florence S. C. 1935 - 1670 - 1805

second minister; there is nothing else to support the claim, but as he spent most of his life in the neighboring churches, he may well have served this one for a time.<sup>143</sup> "The Baptist Church of Christ, of the Healing Springs, in Barnwell District," was incorporated on December 21, 1804.<sup>144</sup>

*Statistics of Edisto Church, 1787-1794.*

Year	Ministers	Other messengers to association	Baptized	Recd. by letter	Dismissed	Excluded	Dead	Total members
1787	Nathaniel Walker*	Uriah Edwards, M.D.	---	---	---	---	---	124
1788	" "	" "	---	---	---	---	---	---
1789	" "	Richard Creech	15	3	---	---	---	142
1790	" "	" "	---	---	---	---	---	---
	Matthew Collins		---	---	---	---	---	---
	Robert Taylor		---	---	---	---	---	---
	Elisha Washington (L)		---	---	---	---	---	---
	Charles Nix		---	---	---	---	---	---
	George Ashley		---	---	---	---	---	---
1791	Nathaniel Walker*		---	---	---	---	---	---
1792	" "		---	---	---	---	---	130
1793	" "		---	---	---	---	---	120
1794	" "		---	---	---	---	---	142

11790-1794 from *Asplund's Register* 3., 5., and 6. ed.; all other years from *Charleston Association Minutes*.

A group of Sabbatarians, also coming from Connecocheague and from French Creek in Pennsylvania, settled near Broad River between 1745 and 1757. The leaders were Thomas Owen, who arrived in South Carolina with his wife in 1752 or 1754, and Victor Naley, who came with his wife in 1756 or 1757, both of whom had land on the east side of Broad River, the first on Conaway Creek and Wilkinsons Creek, the second on Little River and Rocky Creek of Broad. John

<sup>143</sup>Rev. Lewis H. Shuck, *The Barnwell Baptist Association of South Carolina, Its Churches and their Deceased Ministers* (Charleston, 1867), p. 25; the identity of Edisto and Healing Springs is an inference from location and from Rev. Nathaniel Walker's connection with both; Rev. Nathaniel Walker was for a time at Lynches Creek; tradition says he came from Ireland or England by way of Pa. to S. C.; he removed from Lynches Creek to the Edisto region where he received numerous grants in 1786, 1787, and as late as 1795, and where he preached for the remainder of his life, probably having led Edisto to join the Charleston Association in 1787; he was sent by the Charleston Association as messenger to the Georgia Association in 1791, but seems thereafter to have taken no active part in associational meetings or work, probably due to illness; he is listed in 1790 with 10 in family and 6 slaves (Edwards, Crozer MS, p. 9; Plats, VII, 207; XIIq, 168, 316, 317; XVIq, 131; XIXq, 260; XXXII, 355, 607; Shuck, *Barnwell Assoc.*, p. 53; *Charleston Assoc. Min.*, 1787, 1797, 1798; *Census*, p. 100).

<sup>144</sup>McCord (ed.), *Statutes*, VIII, 222.

Gregory and his sons John and Richard completed the constituents. The members met alternately on the Seventh Day at the homes of the two leaders and there practiced their peculiar rites. Two John Pearsons were included in the 1772 congregation, one of them probably the exhorter who assisted Rev. David Martin at Beaver Creek. Though the meetings were held on the east side of the river, the membership was widely scattered between Broad and Wateree near the rivers on each side, and a goodly number settled on the southwest side of Broad River along Second and Cannons Creeks, whence John Pearson wrote his letters of exhortation, with a few about Saluda River, besides which they retained some connection with their brethren in Pennsylvania.<sup>145</sup> Israel Seymour

<sup>145</sup>The 1772 membership of Broad River Church, as given in Edwards, Crozer MS, p. 47; Furman MS, pp. 67, 68, is roughly divided into three groups according to the location of their surveys: (1) On the northeast side of Broad River, including Victor Naley (Edwards spells the name Nelly, other records Nally) 150 acres on a branch of Rocky Creek, Dec. 4, 1756, and 100 acres on Little River of Broad June 25, 1759; he is listed in Fairfield County without slaves in 1790 (Plats, VII, 45, 262; *Census*, p. 20); Thomas Owen petitioned on Sept. 2, 1755, for 250 acres surveyed for Charles Harris and wife, self, and 9 children (JC, Sept. 2, 1755), for which he had a survey Nov. 24, 1755, on northeast side of Broad River on Conaway Creek; someone of the same name had a survey of 200 acres on Wilkinsons Creek Aug. 25, 1752 (Plats, VI, 64; V, 448); John Gregory, an old man, came from East Jersey May, 1748, and petitioned in 1749 that his 50 acres be included with his son Benjamin's land, Benjamin Gregory's land being laid out in 1750 on Crims Creek; Richard Gregory of East Jersey asked in Feb., 1749, for 300 acres on Wateree Creek for himself, wife and 4 small children, 278 acres being laid out for him at the junction of Wateree Creek and Wateree River (JC, Feb. 2, Oct. 3, 1749; Plats, IV, 519; V, 79, 184); these with John Gregory's sons, Richard and John, were the leaders and constituents; others were John Dunkley on Burkhalters Creek on Broad River 1764 and 1771 (*ibid.*, IX, 133, 144, 230; XIV, 496); Joseph Smith 300 acres north side Broad on Cedar Creek 1763 (*ibid.*, X, 133); (2) on Wateree: Isaac Aldridge, Jr. and Sr., 200 acres 1765 and 200 acres 1768 on Crooked Creek of Wateree (*ibid.*, VIII, 180; X, 228); James Dunn 100 acres on west side of Catawba 1768 (*ibid.*, XIV, 506); William Harris 200 acres on north side Wateree near Sparrow Spring (*ibid.*, IV, 453); Matthias (Messias) Fellows 100 acres 1765 on Twenty-five Mile Creek (*ibid.*, IV, 93); 100 acres 1771 on Taylors Creek (*ibid.*, XV, 106); Richard Kirkland 350 acres on Wateree Creek on path from the Congarees to the Catawba Nation 1753 at which time Richard Gregory's land bounded his (*ibid.*, V, 353), 150 acres on southwest side of Wateree on Richard Gregory in 1762 (*ibid.*, VII, 252); a Richard Kirkland was also on Chavises Creek of Stevens Creek in 1771 (*ibid.*, XVII, 495; XXI, 448); (3) South of Broad River: Paul Williams on Second Creek petitioned for 150 acres of land for his daughter's husband, John Pearson, who came from Philadelphia and is later called a Quaker (Charleston County Records, Bills of Sale 1765-9, p. 408; JC, Nov. 29, 1750); the land was surveyed on Reedy Branch near Second Creek between Broad and Saluda and certified to John Pearson May 7, 1751 (Plats, V, 126); there was also another John Pearson of Broad River Church, probably John Pearson of Congaree, who exhorted here; Sam Cannon, Esq., 100 acres on Broad River in 1754 (Bundle referred to in Plat Index, plat lost); he had later surveys of 200 acres on Cedar Shoal Creek of Enoree 1765 and 200 acres 1771 and 150 acres 1772 on Cannons Creek (Plats, VIII, 371; XIII, 520-1); Ephraim Cannon 200 acres on Cannons Creek 1769 (*ibid.*, XI, 15); Benjamin Gregory (*supra*); Jeremiah Pearson 100 acres 1772 on Second Creek in fork of Broad and Saluda (*ibid.*, XIX, 106); George Smith 100 acres on Cannons Creek 1756 (*ibid.*, VI, 208); the only survey found for Lewis Williams, another member, was 200 acres on Coosawhatchie 1767 (*ibid.*, XXI, 483); and

from the world and membership in the aristocracy of heaven. Action, action in which all engaged, caught and kept the attention of the new settlements. The power of public prayer and exhortation might descend upon any man, however untrained, and only his own weakness could prevent its exercise. This was particularly true of the Separates who first won the back country, and it continued after their turn toward the Regular position. Church organization being congregational, the business meetings furnished an outlet for further activity and trained the members to the usages of direct democracy. Other sects which offered any of these advantages made the same appeal, but the Baptists appear to have presented a peculiarly attractive combination of rigid theology and democratic activity.

Business meetings or church conferences were almost invariably held monthly, usually on Saturday, followed by public service on the Sabbath, as Sunday was generally called, sometimes on Friday, with public devotion on Saturday and Sunday; occasionally these conferences opened with singing and prayer and preaching. For the conduct of church business, the churches usually selected a moderator or chairman, but the Separates preferred not to use this officer in either conference or association. The group of baptized believers was in effect the church; they dealt with matters of doctrine, discipline, and religious policy. Especially after incorporation, unbaptized persons who attended and supported the church might vote on secular concerns. A few of the churches chose and arranged for the ordination of ruling elders, but this office most of them gradually dropped. The ministering elder or pastor and two deacons carried out the decisions of the business meetings, the minister's authority covering ordination and administration of baptism and communion; the deacons' any other matters, as of discipline, finance, and mediation. A clerk kept the minutes of the business meetings, the only officer besides the occasional moderator not receiving ordination.

Deacons frequently served on trial for a time before be-

ing ordained. The church either called an ordained minister as pastor or put forward one of its own members to exercise his gifts as a preacher; if the church decided that he had the necessary qualifications, he was usually licensed to preach, and after a year, or even less in some cases, his church, or one desiring to use his services, arranged for his ordination. Though Welsh Neck stated plainly that ordination consisted in the church's choice of a man to office, and needed not the laying on of hands to make it valid, yet a presbytery to examine the qualifications of candidates and to lay hands on them to complete their ordination generally attended. In fact, due to the growing tendency of the associations to pronounce ordinations illegal where this form was not observed, few churches after 1800 neglected to secure the assistance of at least two or three visiting ministers or elders on such occasions. Ministers were most frequently called Brother, often Elder, but sometimes Reverend in later years.

The history of the individual churches shows excessive drinking to have been the great sin of the times, with neglect of the church and its commands a close second. Amusement of every kind, but especially shooting matches and dancing, called forth severe condemnation and excommunication. Harsh or erratic discipline seldom occurred, and the hearing given to minority groups by associations or neighboring churches soon obviated the evil or isolated the erring church. In the main, the disciplinary measures of the churches were only the expression of public indignation against cruelty, injustice, and immorality. In new communities, those little gatherings held in the house of John Jones or Victor Naley or many others became dynamic nuclei of law and order. Public suspension and excommunication were powerful weapons against the truly religious, and even among the irreligious the action of the churches established the local norm of conduct.

There were outcroppings of heresy, as John Williams's adoption of the "universal plan," and divergences of doctrine,

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Townsend Florence, S. C. 1935