

Ante Bellum Congregation in Western Hertford:

Pleasant Grove Saw Chowan College's Birth Church Story Placid

PLEASANT GROVE — Down in the far southwestern section of Hertford County is Pleasant Grove Baptist Church. The little "country church" is off the beaten track, set on a comfortable, wooded site in the good farmland between Catawhtickie Swamp and Ahoskie Swamp.

"It is located in a section of country known as Ahoskie Ridge," say the minutes of the third annual session of the West Chowan Baptist Association, meeting at Pleasant Grove in 1885. "This area is noted for the fertility of its soil, its advanced agricultural interest, and the generous and unbounded hospitality of its people."

The 1885 report continues: "Near by the church is Mulberry Grove, the home of the late Dr. G. C. Moore, who for thirty-six sessions was chosen Moderator of the Chowan Association, and presided over that body with such promptness, ability and fairness as to commend him to the respect and love of that Association, which will ever cherish and revere his memory."

"The membership of this church in 1884 was one hundred and fifty-five, representing in point of numbers a fair average of the churches of this Association, and has among the members a number of good substantial working brethren," the minutes remark.

"But she has also what is perhaps better—true, zealous Christian sisters, who are ever ready to lend their aid to the causes of benevolence, the Sunday school work, and all other good enterprises of the church demanding their assistance and co-operation."

"Fortunate, indeed, is the church which can count among her members true, consecrated, working Christian women, whose deeds deserve not only to be enshrined in the hearts of those who know them best, but to be embalmed in history."

This glowing tribute to the women of Pleasant Grove is unusual in the annals of the Baptist churches in Hertford County. But the founder of Pleasant Grove was unusual, himself, and believed strongly in the power of women's intellect.

Dr. Godwin Cotton Moore was born just after the beginning of the 19th century, in 1804, at "Mulberry

Grove," the ample plantation of his parents, James and Ester Cotton Moore.

Both of Godwin Moore's grandfathers had served valiantly in the Revolutionary War: Col. William Edward Moore of the Virginia Continentals had left his son James an orphan, to be raised at Mulberry Grove by an uncle, also named James Moore.

Godwin Cotton had been aide-de-camp to Col. Robert Howe of Brunswick, who commanded the Second North Carolina Continentals at the battle of Great Bridge.

Godwin Moore was a fine student, and was graduated from the University of Pennsylvania at Philadelphia in medicine. Returning to Hertford County, he practiced medicine at Mulberry Grove and married the beautiful Julia Monroe Wheeler of Murfreesboro.

In 1836 Dr. Moore was baptized a member of the Conaritsa Baptist Church, which was almost ten miles from his home, in Bertie County. There he endorsed the Baptist faith so heartily that he began what was to be a lifelong career in the service of the Baptist church.

A year later, Dr. Moore became the founding father of another Baptist church. According to the oldest minutes book of Pleasant Grove, the church was constituted on April 2, 1837, by Elders Stephen Baizemore and Francis Haulay. The building stood on a piece of land donated by Dr. Moore.

Although the earlier minutes of the church were burned, a record shows that the first Sunday in each month (and the Saturday before) were set as the time for monthly meetings.

Varied Congregation
Because of the location of the church, it drew a varied congregation from three counties—Bertie, Hertford, and Northampton. In three directions, it was only several miles to the county line. Even today, many members of Pleasant Grove live in Northampton, work in Bertie, and worship in Hertford.

Only three years after the founding of Pleasant Grove, the church sent her distinguished member, Dr. Moore, to head the Chowan Baptist Association as moderator. This post he held for 36 years before his death in May, 1880. It was in the



PLEASANT GROVE—One of Hertford's oldest church buildings is the plain frame meeting-house of Pleasant Grove Baptist Church. Interesting architecturally for its severe, classic lines, the building is striking for its high windows. The building has changed little since ante bellum days when it was built. The building has been the scene of several associational meetings of Baptists, and for many years was home church for Dr. Godwin Cotton Moore, ante bellum Baptist leader who served 37 years as moderator of the Chowan Association.

home of Dr. Moore in 1848 that six Baptist fathers gathered to discuss the question of an education for their daughters.

At their urging, the Bertie Union Meeting approved a resolution, passed on to the Chowan Association, for establishment of a school for girls. Chowan Collegiate Institute opened its doors on October 11, 1848, the product of Dr. Moore's idea.

The six fathers purchased a lot in Murfreesboro and gave the school its start, but these sold their stock to the Chowan Association in 1859. The school became the Chowan Baptist Female Institute in 1852. Dr. Moore was president of the board of trustees from the inception in 1848 until 1865.

Some of the earliest members listed on the church roll were: Julia M. Moore, July, 1837; Eve-line Jacobs, October, 1837; Martha Odom, August, 1838; Susan Odom, November, 1840; Ethelred Odom, August, 1841; and Jordan J. Horton, October, 1841. The latter was certainly a "big" addition, for Mr. Horton weighed between 300 and 400 pounds.

Ardent Democrat
Dr. Moore, an ardent Democrat in the face of many Whigs in Hertford County, perhaps had a hand in writing the 15th article of the church covenant. It resolves "that civil government is of divine appointment for the interest and good order of human society, and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed, except in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the Conscience, and the prince of the kings."

No reference to the Civil War is found in the church minutes, except that the time of meeting was changed for a short time at the beginning of 1863 "for the convenience of the beloved pastor at that time, Rev. John Mitchell." Still later, the meeting was changed to the second Sunday of each month, and the Saturday before.

In the records of the conference held on the second Sunday of September, 1883, is the note: "Proceeded to the election of delegates to attend the meeting of the several churches west of the Chowan River to be held at Cashie Church beginning Tuesday after the 2nd Lord's Day in October, 1883, for the purpose of organizing a new association which resulted in the election of brethren Jos. W. White, W. W. Jenkins, J. R. White, and R. J. Dunning alternate."

With the establishment of the West Chowan Baptist Association, \$25 was collected and sent by the Pleasant Grove church for the minute fund.

On Saturday before the second Sunday in March, 1888, "the Sabbath school question was brought up and thoroughly discussed and the question was asked whether or not the church desired a Sabbath school and the church voted unanimously in favor of the school." Brother J. R. White was unanimously elected superintendent of this first Sunday school.

Helped Others
As one of the few churches in the Association almost 50 years old in 1885, Pleasant Grove felt a responsibility to help others.

"The Association pledged itself to an honest effort to raise \$1,350 for the Baptist Orphanage during the year," the minutes of 1885 read, "and the work mapped out for the coming Association year is much larger than that of other years. We know in some respects the financial outlook for increased liberality with us is not favorable. Stock gambling and bank speculations have disturbed the needed confidence in business and trade, while the crops in many of the fields within the

bounds of our territory are pitifully blighted."

In May, 1888, Brother C. T. Deenes reported that he pledged at the late session of the Bertie Union meeting \$1 for the erection of a church at Margarettsville.

A collection was taken up and the pledge redeemed, the minutes report. Also recorded is the fact that in April, 1889, the church members granted the Friends the privilege of preaching in the meeting house one Sunday each month.

Keeping up the good missionary spirit of the church, \$20 in cash and pledges was raised in May, 1906, for a new church at Conway.

World War I was impressed upon the church by an agreement in June, 1918, that the names of those in camp were to be called, with the dates when they left. At the next conference, in August, 1918, the handsome sum of \$25.50 was raised to be sent to the Jewish Relief Fund, which was one of the major "drives" during the war.

War and pestilence went hand in hand, for in October, 1918, church clerk A. R. Harman of Aulander noted "On account of the epidemic of Spanish influenza their was no meeting." The flu epidemic lasted so long that the church was also prevented from holding a conference in November of 1918.

After World War I, Pleasant Grove settled back into much the same course it had traveled before, until the 1930 depression years.

Then the church lost its pastor, who had received only \$100 of the \$300 annual salary he was due when he resigned, and found it extremely difficult to find and keep a pastor. In 1932, the Rev. K. E. Bryant agreed to preach once each month for \$150 yearly, and served until June, 1935. The Rev. W. V. Tarlton of Rich Square served as supply pastor until December, 1935.

At that point, services were discontinued "on account of bad weather and bad roads." The church was without a pastor then until August, 1936. By that time, the situation had improved somewhat, and the Rev. B. L. Davis of Roxobel agreed to become pastor at Pleasant Grove.

New Interest
This revival of interest came just in time, for the church celebrated its 100th anniversary on May 20, 1937, with an all-day homecoming.

At the start of Pleasant Grove's second hundred years, the members raised the pastor's salary to \$250 yearly, appointed officers for church and Sunday school, and ordered the membership divided into active and inactive lists. Several revivals were held, with good additions as a result.

But World War II put another damper on the church's enthusiasm. In September, 1942, the Rev. Mr. Davis resigned as pastor because of the distance he had to travel, considering the gasoline shortage.

Until March, 1943, the church was again without a pastor. The Rev. J. B. Folds of Aulander was

Wynns, Southall, Barnes, Vaughan, Cowper

Famous Hertfordians Are Buried In Southall Cemetery in Murfreesboro

(Men whose names ring loud in Hertford County history lived and died in Murfreesboro. Many of these famous men lie side by side in an equally famous old cemetery in the community. In this article, prepared by a Murfreesboro High School student for the Hertford County Historical Association, the story of these men and of the cemetery paints an excellent picture of some of Hertford's leading men of history.)

By MARY LOU PARKER

If you have ever wandered through a cemetery, then perhaps you have pondered as you look at each tombstone, and occasionally read an epitaph, "Just who was that person and what did he accomplish that was of worthwhile value during his life?"

These are the questions that ran through my mind one day as I rambled through one of the oldest cemeteries in Murfreesboro.

The Rea Cemetery, later called Southall Cemetery, is located on Broad Street near the pre-Revolutionary Freeman House, known today as the Murfreesboro Woman's Club.

Surrounded by an old rustic fence rest the remains of some of Murfreesboro's most outstanding and prominent citizens of the early nineteenth century.

The first tombstone I noticed was that of John W. Southall, born July 28, 1797, and died July 3, 1873.

Mr. Southall was a very wealthy plantation owner in Hertford County. Being a devout Methodist, he spent his money freely to advance the cause of his church. Land for the first Methodist Church in Murfreesboro was donated by him.

He aided greatly in building the Wesleyan Female College in Murfreesboro.

He took an active interest in the affairs of Hertford County and also served as magistrate for a number of years prior to the Civil War.

The cemetery which I visited is now called Southall Cemetery in honor of Southall, who so generously gave this land to the town.

Fannie Southall

The most beautiful monument in the entire cemetery stands

watchfully over the grave of his lovely daughter, Fannie Southall.

She was regarded as one of the prettiest and most fascinating women of her day. Her noble and beautiful character brought her much admiration from the eligible young men.

She died on September 30, 1852, and her death caused deep sadness throughout the community. My attention was soon attracted to a plot covered with thick green ivy which replaced the usual slab.

Beneath this pall lay the body of Jarret Norfleet Harrell.

According to the marble monument standing at the head of the grave, Jarret was born January 24, 1824, and died November 4, 1892.

He and his brother owned the largest mercantile business in Hertford County.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Jarret left his business and entered the Confederate Army as a captain. Because of his outstanding leadership, this tall, striking-looking man was eventually promoted to the rank of major and then later to colonel.

Perhaps one of the oldest graves in the cemetery is the one in which the bones of Thomas Wynns are interred. The exact date of his birth is not known. However, the Raleigh Register records 1758 or 1759 as the approximate date.

Belonging to one of the oldest and most prominent families in Hertford County, he was elected to Congress in 1802 and served his county in this capacity for five years.

In 1808 he returned to his old seat in the North Carolina State Senate, where he remained until 1817.

At his death in 1825 at the age of sixty-six, not only did his wife, Mrs. Elizabeth Southall, grieve his passing, but the state and nation as well.

Resting beside General Thomas Wynns is Colonel Benjamin Wynns, his father. Colonel Wynns lived in the early 1700's. His aged, weather-beaten marker does not reveal the dates of his birth and death. I was told that, as a young man, he served the General Assembly in the year 1759.

During the Revolutionary War he was in command of Continental troops at Norfolk. He met

Governor Dunmore, a former British Governor of Virginia, who was in command of British forces there. In a conflict between the two armies, Colonel Wynns succeeded in driving Dunmore back in a speedy retreat.

After this victorious campaign of Colonel Wynns' forces around Norfolk, he returned through the Albemarle section, where he and his men received great praise from the people along his route. Indeed, Murfreesboro was proud to have had such a great man as a citizen.

Benjamin Wynns

Still in the Wynns plot, I noticed the marker of Colonel Benjamin Wynns' great-grandson, James M. Wynns.

He is said to have served his people in important positions. In the mid-1800's he served as Justice of the Peace, as a member of the special court of the county, and as a captain in the Confederate Army, from which position he was later promoted to the rank of colonel.

While in the army he was elected to serve his county in the Senate in 1864—1865 and for years served on the County Board of Education. He loaned Hertford County \$4,000 in gold to aid in equipping the soldiers for the Civil War. This money, incidentally, he lost. His death in the late 1800's was a great loss to this town.

At the back of the cemetery enclosed in an iron fence of its own, I discovered the final resting place of Honorable David A. Barnes.

He was an aide-de-camp to Governor Vance during the Civil War. Having graduated from the University of North Carolina, he became quite a reputable lawyer and in time was a member of the House of Representatives in 1844, 1846, 1850, and 1854. The silver-haired bachelor married the youthful, fascinating and much-admired Bettie Vaughan, a daughter of Colonel Uriah Vaughan.

On June 24, 1892, David Barnes died leaving his lovely widow, three daughters, and his only son, David Collin Barnes, who today is Hertford County's oldest lawyer.

Having often heard of Miss Bettie Vaughan's father, Colonel

See HERTFORDIANS, Page 6

Photographic Visit to Old Home:

Mulberry Grove, Ancestral Home Of Cotton, Moore Clans, Stands



MULBERRY GROVE—DISTINGUISHED OLD HOME MIRRORS HERTFORD HISTORY

MULBERRY GROVE—Site of one of the earliest settlements in Hertford County is famed Mulberry Grove, the ancestral home of the Cotton family and later of the Moore family. Located west of present-day Saint John's, the brick house is now (1959) occupied by tenants. The home site was occupied by settlers in the early years of the 18th century, and the house that stands today was originally built sometime in the latter part of that century. Nearby is Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, where Dr. Godwin C. Moore of Mulberry Grove and others met to plan a Baptist fe-

male school that later became Chowan College.

In the yard of the house today, giant, gnarled mulberry trees are a reminder of the big house's namesake. These trees, some over 80 years old, are offshoots and descendants of trees planted in the early part of the 19th century. Trees which later gave the present manor house its name. The trees are located in the back and side yards of the house.

In 1880, Mulberry Grove was at its height as a plantation house. A map of the era shows four buildings on the house side of the road, eight other houses in neat rows directly across the road (which

was a direct east-west route from Vinton to the west). These were slave quarters and outbuildings for his extensive farming interests of the owner.

At the time, Dr. Godwin Cotton Moore was head of the manor, ending Democratic Party leader, a founder of Chowan College, and extensive farmer.

His son, young John Wheeler Moore, was on the eve of service in the Confederate army, after which he would become the compiler of the roster of North Carolina soldiers who served in the war, and Hertford County's earliest novelist.

As one of the few churches in the Association almost 50 years old in 1885, Pleasant Grove felt a responsibility to help others.

"The Association pledged itself to an honest effort to raise \$1,350 for the Baptist Orphanage during the year," the minutes of 1885 read, "and the work mapped out for the coming Association year is much larger than that of other years. We know in some respects the financial outlook for increased liberality with us is not favorable. Stock gambling and bank speculations have disturbed the needed confidence in business and trade, while the crops in many of the fields within the

In Ramsey Graveyard:

Other Hertford Names on Stone

(Many of the famous people of Hertford County history are now but names in a book, or on a gravestone. Such is the Borland family, which was at one time an aristocratic leader in Hertford. In a graveyard near Murfreesboro, much of the story of the Borlands is found on weathered stone of grave sites. This article, prepared by a Murfreesboro school student for the Hertford County Historical Association, tells of the graveyard and of the famous family in Hertford history.)

By GERALD BYRD

The Ramsey farm is located two miles North of Murfreesboro on the Severn Road in Hertford County near Vaughan's Creek.

The farm was bought by Dr. Thomas Borland around the year 1809. The old Ramsey house is no longer standing. The only thing that remains of the old house is the crumbled down old brick chimney.

The chimney is now surrounded by a thick growth of vines and bushes.

The farm is now owned by the Winbourns, who inherited it from the Ramseys.

The Ramsey graveyard is located on a high hill a few hundred yards from the place where the house used to stand. The graveyard can be seen from the road during the fall and winter months when the growth of bushes and vines is not so thick.

The old graveyard is a very interesting place to visit and read the epitaphs on the old tombstones.

There are ten visible graves in the old cemetery and probably more but they have been covered by nature's blanket of leaves and grass.

Borland Family
Dr. Thomas Borland married

Harriet Godwin and moved to Murfreesboro from Suffolk, Virginia, in 1809. Thomas Borland had three sons by his wife. They were Euclid Borland, Solon Borland, and Roscius Cicero Borland. Dr. Thomas Borland was one of the wealthiest men in Murfreesboro. He was also a judge in Hertford County. Thomas Borland died in 1830.

The first grave in the cemetery is that of Dr. Euclid Borland, the first son of Thomas Borland and Harriet Godwin. He was born in Suffolk, Virginia, October 27, 1809. Euclid died in Norfolk, Virginia, April 28, 1821. From there he was sent to be buried at Ramsey with the rest of the family.

Beside the grave of Euclid Borland is a second grave which is that of Euclid's first wife, Elizabeth R. Moore. Elizabeth was a born in North Carolina, December 24, 1818. Elizabeth had two daughters and four sons. She died January 15, 1850.

The youngest daughter, Fanny Borland, was born in Mississippi, October 10, 1846, and she died November 15, 1849.

The oldest daughter of Elizabeth Borland was Elizabeth Borland. Elizabeth was born February 14, 1814, and she died November 15, 1849.

Several years later the bodies of Elizabeth R. Moore, Fanny Borland, and Elizabeth Borland were exhumed to be buried at Ramsey. When they were reinterred they were all buried in one grave. On their tombstone was written this inscription:

"The remains of these loved ones were brought here from Louisiana and reinterred here in 1852."

General's Grave
A third grave is that of General Euclid Borland, the first son of Dr. Euclid Borland by his first wife Elizabeth R. Moore. General Euclid was born in New Orleans

in 1844. He died in Norfolk, Virginia, September 26, 1896, at the age of 52. From Norfolk he was sent to Murfreesboro to be buried with his father.

Beside the grave of General Euclid Borland is a fourth grave, that of Charlotte Wilcocks McCall, the wife of General Euclid. Charlotte McCall was born June 8, 1852, and she died February 1, 1885.

The body of Lucy Wilkinson, Dr. Euclid's second wife, lies in the fifth grave. Lucy was born in Norfolk, Virginia, May 23, 1819. After her death she was sent to Murfreesboro to be buried with her husband. She died in Brooklyn, New York, May 10, 1881.

Lucy Wilkinson had one child. It was a boy whose name was Lucin Borland. The small body of Lucin Borland lies in the sixth grave. Lucin was born in Marshall County, Mississippi, February 23, 1842. Lucin's tombstone is very simple. Lucin died in Murfreesboro, North Carolina, October 4, 1845, at the age of three years, five months, and twelve days. Who knows what caused his death? It could have been Yellow Fever or the Flu Epidemic. Only those at Ramsey who are resting with him at the family graveyard will know this answer.

The second son of Dr. Euclid and Elizabeth Borland was Solon Borland who came to Hertford County from Arkansas in 1842. Solon was a General in the Confederate Army and he died in Texas, January 31, 1864. There is no visible evidence of his being buried in the family graveyard.

A third son of Euclid and Elizabeth was Roscius Cicero Borland. Roscius practiced law in Hertford County but he later moved to join his brother in Mississippi because of his poor health.

On his way it was said that he

See RAMSEY, Page 7