

# History of Laurel Hill Presbyterian Church

## Brief Sketch of Organization in 1807 and Interesting Records of Over a Century

It is with a degree of pleasure that the Exchange gives space to the following historical sketch of the Laurel Hill Presbyterian church, perhaps the oldest church of this faith in this section of the Carolina, and the name of Presbyterianism in this county. This document was recently unearthed in some of the old church records and was kindly supplied this paper for publication. Into this sketch are woven fragments of local history that will be of interest to descendants of the early families of the county. From the special appeal of church loyalty. It is our information that this sketch was written by Rev. A. M. Ferguson, pastor about the year 1875.—Editor.

Laurel Hill church (in the Presbytery of Fayetteville, N. C.) is located in the lower portion of Richmond county, 20 miles east of Rockingham (the county town) and directly on the public road leading from Rockingham to Lumberton (the county town of Robeson.)

From the most authentic information we have been able to gather, we conclude that this church was organized in 1807 or 1808 by Rev. Malcolm McNeil.

Previous to the organization of the church, there were two or three points in the community where there was occasional preaching by the itinerant preachers, Sully, Lindsay and McIntyre. We learn that the Rev. Carr was the first minister regularly employed by the people to preach at these different places. One of these points was about 4 miles northeast of where the church now stands and the other about 3 miles south.

Rev. Carr was followed by Rev. Malcolm McNeil. After entering upon his work in this community he preached for awhile at these places; but it was desirable that the congregation concentrate at some particular point where there might be formed a regularly organized church. The difficulty, however, was in getting the people to unite. Some were contending for one place and some for another. The northern party (as we may term them) were willing (at least a majority) to compromise by going to Laurel Hill, where occasional preaching was held—but a portion of the southern party would not yield to this proposition. Mr. McNeil was himself in favor of this middle point, and he with some others determined to have the matter decided.

He had an appointment at the southern point, the congregation being assembled, he made proclamation that all who were in favor of going to Laurel Hill, would follow him. He was at once followed by a majority of the congregation. They proceeded to the point designated and there determined to establish a church. In due time a good-sized log house was erected, in which the people worshipped for a number of months. After a lapse of years it was found that the original building was insufficient for the increasing congregation. So they determined to build a larger and more respectable house of worship.

The result of this determination was the erection and completion of a commodious frame building, which was dedicated to the service of God. Mr. McNeil preached at Laurel Hill about 19 years, which was nearly the whole of his ministerial life. In connection with this church he also served the churches of Centre, Ashpole and Red Bluff. For some months before his death his health failed so that he could not preach regularly. On the first Sabbath in August, being the fourth day of the month, in the year 1823, the pastor called him to his grave. He was a faithful and zealous laborer in the Lord's vineyard. He was greatly beloved by his people and in his death they felt that they were sorely bereaved. He was buried in the McFarland grave yard in sight of the church (Laurel Hill). The congregation had a neat marble monument erected at his grave, which later marks the resting place of his early labors, which has long since mouldered into dust. Upon his tomb stone is the following inscription:

"Sacred to the memory of Rev. Malcolm McNeil, Late Pastor of the Churches of Centre, Ashpole, Laurel Hill and Red Bluff.

Who departed this life, on Sunday, 4th Day of Aug. A.D. 1823; In the 40th Year of his age and 26th of his Ministry.

"A zealous advocate of Sacred Truth; A pattern for old age, a guide for youth;

Mild, meek and patient, courteous and kind;

Of temper uniform; of solid mind. Modestly abstaining from man's vain applause.

Yet faithful in his Master's holy cause.

His counsel oft did comfort the forlorn,

Immanuel's image did his life adorn."

If we are correctly informed, the next minister who preached to this congregation was the Rev. John McIntyre. After him came Rev. Colin Melver. He was succeeded by Rev. Wm. Paisley. From what we can learn neither of these ministers remained long in charge of the church. We have not been able to get at the dates of their entrance or departure. After Mr. Paisley came Robert Lynch, who remained for some years. Following him was Rev. Duncan McIntyre from Scotland, who remained for a year or two. After his departure, Rev. Brown and Archd. McQueen ministered to the congregation alternately for about two years. Mr. Brown then retired from this field.

Rev. A. McQueen remained and continued to minister with much acceptance to the church until October, 1841, when his ministrations were suddenly terminated by his entering into the marriage relation with Miss Mary McLeod, the sister of his deceased wife.

(In this connection it is appropriate to quote the following interesting sentences from the history of Col. James McQueen and his descendants, GAL 2—HISTORY OF L. H. entitled "The McQueens of Queensdale," by Mrs. A. B. McElyse of Maxton, which throw light on an interesting chapter in the life of Rev. A. McQueen and of the Presbyterian church: "Before closing the history of Rev. Archibald McQueen and his family, I feel it a duty to add, for the reason that future generations might get a distorted or garbled account of it, a brief statement in regard to his marriage to Miss Mary McLeod, who was the sister of his second wife, Miss Julia Ann McLeod. After he had married the third time murmuring began to arise among some of the ministerial brethren throughout the churches, which finally assumed active proportions, and he was arraigned before Fayetteville Presbytery, accused of transgressing Scriptural laws by marrying his deceased wife's sister. . . . And in January, 1842, Mr. McQueen was deposed from the ministry for what was then thought to be a violation of the church law, which said law was supposed by some to be warranted by Scripture and forbade the marrying of a 'deceased wife's sister.' . . . From this verdict and judgment the case was appealed and went back and forth to the Synod and General Assembly several times, until finally he was restored to the communion and to all the privileges of the ministry, but the fight against him had been so long and bitter, and the prosecution so determined and uncompromising, and that too by many who hitherto had been his warmest and most intimate friends, that the strain told heavily on him, and he only survived a short while, and died at Floral College, N. C., broken-hearted. . . . Thus he became a martyr, in a sense at least, in the cause of religious freedom, for while the Book of Church Order forbade such a marriage, he himself was perfectly sure that it was not warranted by Scripture; and there is now no doubt that he was right in his contention, for long since, that part of the Book of Church Order has been repealed, and it was the long and thorough discussion of his case that doubt brought about its abrogation, and now it has not only been brought about its repeal in the Presbyterian churches, but in all church and state laws on both sides of the Atlantic, and so it appears that he was some forty years in advance of the thoughts of the church courts in seeing the truth that it was not unscriptural to marry a 'deceased wife's sister.'")

Soon after this event, the Rev. Archd. Baker of Robeson county, who had recently entered the ministry, was invited to take charge of the church. He came and preached about two years when he removed to the town of Salisbury, where he remained for a number of years. Next came Rev. Mr. Colt of Cheraw, S. C., who supplied the church for part of a year. After him the church was supplied for the year 1846 by Rev. Andrew McMillan, who was

born and reared in the congregation. Next came Rev. Jas. B. McIntosh, who remained for about 3 years.

In 1856 Rev. Jas. P. McPherson was invited to minister to this congregation. In 1859 he was installed pastor, which relation continued until the spring of 1867. He served the church for about 11 years during which time about 121 persons were added to the church on examination and by certificates. It may be proper to state in this connection that about the time Mr. McPherson entered upon his labors here, a new house of worship was being erected which was completed during the year 1856 at a cost of \$2,700. This building today after being in use for 25 years is in good condition, and is perhaps one of the largest and one of the best country church buildings in the bounds of the Presbytery.

After Rev. Mr. McPherson retired from this field, Rev. M. T. Bowden came and served this church in connection with Laurinburg until the close of 1868. During 1869 the church was supplied by Rev. Andrew McMillan. In the latter part of this year 15 persons were added on examination.

In 1870 Rev. D. Fairley preached a few times to the congregation. In June, 1871, the present pastor (Rev. A. N. Ferguson) was by the unanimous vote of the congregation invited to supply this church with preaching twice a month. He was installed pastor in May, 1875. He has been ministering to this congregation over 8 years during which time entire harmony and

peace have prevailed. The church has been gradually growing in numbers and we hope in spiritual strength. During the past 8 years 102 persons have been added to the church; 83 on examination and 9 by certificates.

In all the history of this church we do not find from the records or from any other source, that there was ever at any time any very remarkable outpouring of the spirit. But there has been all along a gradual growth; a gradual ingathering of souls (which in our view is more desirable.)

The original ruling elders of this church were John Buchanan and two John McNeirs (one known as Hatter John and the other as Red John.) In addition to these the following persons were at different periods brought into the eldership, (viz) John McMillan, Duncan Stalker, Wm. McLeod, Robt. Campbell and Geo. McIntosh. We have not been able to get at the dates when any of these entered the eldership. In this respect as well as in some other particulars there is an unfortunate defect in the occasional records for the first 25 or 30 years of the church's history.

In July, 1831, Murdoch McKinnon was elected and ordained elder. In 1840 Daniel C. Stewart was received into the eldership, he having been previously ordained an elder in Smyrna church. In 1846 Messrs. John McNeill, J. C. Baker and Milton McIntosh were elected and ordained. In 1859 Messrs. John McKay, Murdoch Morrison and Dr. Archibald Patterson were elected and ordained elders.

In November, 1877, Hector McNeil, Lytch and John F. McNeil were elected and ordained. In June, 1879, L. B. Prince (who had been for a number of years an elder in another church) was elected and installed elder in this church. Of those who have thus been at different periods installed as Ruling Elders in this church, the following are active officers at this time, and the only ones now living except J. C. Baker, who resides in Albemarle; D. C. Stewart, M. McIntosh, John McKay, M. Morrison, H. McNeil, Lytch, Jno. F. McNeil and L. B. Prince.

(The deacons are Jno. D. Currie, Wm. Buchanan, Dr. A. Stewart, Jno. B. McNeill and A. F. Patterson.) This congregation is composed almost entirely of Scotch descendants and a few natives of Scotland. The following are some of the family names now common in the congrega-

tion: Currie, Buchanan, Carmichael, Paisley, Gillis, Lytch, Lee, Monroe, Malloy, McElyse, McArn, McIntosh, McLean, McNeill, McNeil, McMillan, Patterson, Prince, Stewart, Shaw, Stalker, and others.

Some of the original families when the church was first organized were McFarland, McKinnon, McLaughlin, Buchanan, McLaurin, McMillan, McNeill, McNeil, Williams, etc.

Finally the remark that this congregation is in the main composed of generous and liberal-hearted people. For the most part they pay their minister promptly what they promise, and contribute liberally of their substance to the various benevolent objects of the church. And in an intellectual and moral view will, we think, compare favorably with most congregations in our Presbyterial bounds.

September, 1879.

This interesting historical sketch comes down to the year 1875. Of the work of the church since that time no accurate and detailed account has been prepared. In recent years the church has made great progress. Pastors who have served it since 1918 have been Dr. F. O. Heller, Dr. Duwald McIntyre, Dr. Frank I. Johnston (deceased), and Rev. G. F. Kirkpatrick, who is the pastor at this time. In 1917 a beautiful manse was built for the use of the pastor and it stands on the church grounds. The membership now numbers 132 and last year the congregation gave \$5,000 to the various causes of their church. The elders are E. L. Mc-



Laurel Hill Presbyterian Church

Nair, Clarence Lytch, Fairly Monroe, Deacons: Albert Lytch, J. A. McMillan, Raymond Monroe and John McLean.

### SCOTLAND EXPECTED TO PRODUCE 800 CAR CANTALOUPE THIS SEASON

(Continued from page 2) splendid returns and in other years they suffer losses. It just about evens up as a good average proposition and it is said that the wise farmer is the one who plants a reasonable acreage to cantaloupes year after year, taking his good profits in those years that are favorable and taking only moderate losses when loss comes, which sometimes happens in the case of cantaloupes.

With approximately 1800 or 2,000 acres planted to cantaloupes this year, Scotland county, with reasonable weather conditions will produce around 800 car loads of cantaloupes, or 300,000 crates. Shipments this year are expected to start about July 10. The loupes are shipped in refrigerator cars and are hurried to the great markets of the North and East by the railroads. Many cars also go to the South, as Jacksonville, Tampa, Birmingham and New Orleans, the markets there being good after the season for cantaloupes in those states is past.

### Scotland County Co-operative Cantaloupe Exchange

A Co-operative Marketing Association of Cantaloupe Growers That Has Functioned

A question of first importance and consideration with growers of cantaloupes is that of markets. Many growers know how to produce a crop of cantaloupes, but that is only half the fight. Once the loupes are grown and ready for the market the next big question is a profitable market. In former years the growers took their chances, so to speak. That is in good years they got good prices and in bad

# Laurinburg High School Ranks With the Best

## Its Graduates Make Envyable Records at College and University, a School of the People

(By S. W. Rabb, Superintendent)

An appreciation of any business or organization may best be had from a review of its growth and by a comparison of relative values. Due credit for its present material and physical standard can only be given after a study of its development during the history of its existence.

The present graded school system of Laurinburg was organized in 1909 with an enrollment in the white schools of 283 pupils, and with 257 in the colored schools. During the last fourteen years the enrollment of white pupils has increased to 792 and that of colored pupils to 557, totaling 1349 pupils. This increase of 179 per cent in white pupils and 117 per cent in colored pupils is indicative not only of the growth of the town and community but also of the interest that is taken in educational affairs.

A further comparison of the physical equipment is noted in that when the Central Building was erected in 1900 the vacant rooms in that building were fully expected to care for the increase in enrollment for at least a generation. Since 1914, the demand for additional room rapidly grew until ample relief was found in the construction of one of the handsomest and most thoroughly equipped high school buildings in the state. In this building complete laboratory equipment is offered for teaching the sciences and arts, and the conveniences of a modern building are fully provided for. At present there are four buildings for white children, while the colored school boasts of two substantial buildings for class room work, two excellent dormitories, a hospital, print shop and a blacksmith shop. This excellent equipment of the colored schools is largely the result of the energy and zeal of the colored principal, E. M. McDuffie.

A necessary adjunct to our equipment is a home for the teachers that is most conveniently located and which offers comfortable accommodations to those who take advantage of it.

In 1909 the property valuation of the Laurinburg school district was \$1,328,154, while in 1923-24 the valuation had increased to \$6,564,026. A special tax rate of 55 cents has been voted on the district but only 48 cents is levied. Thirty-one and one-half cents of this for all operating expenses and sixteen and one-half cents are applied on the bonded indebtedness of the district.

One of the main assets of any school system is the teaching personnel. For a number of years our schools have been able to boast of an efficient corps of teachers. A large majority of these are graduates of "A" colleges, and are specialists in their particular line of work. The faculty of the white schools in 1909-10 consisted of three high school and five elementary teachers, while at the present time the high school faculty numbers five and the elementary teachers seventeen, with an additional teacher in public school music and one in domestic science, and a librarian.

One of the most encouraging features is that 85 per cent of the high school graduates enter college, and make a most creditable record there. A partial review of the report of the Southern Association of High Schools and colleges for 1923 as given below places the percentage of failures among Laurinburg high school graduates in college next to the lowest of any school in the state.

	Per Cent Failures
Winston-Salem	2.7
Laurinburg	3.6
Wilmington	5.6
Charlotte	10.9
Fayetteville	16.3
Raleigh	17.2

This review of the schools of the city would not be complete without mentioning the unusually fine interest and spirit manifested by the citizens of the town and surrounding community. No community can boast of a finer heritage and of a keener appreciation of forces that are uplifting in their influence. This solidity of character is keenly manifest in the student body as well as in the citizenship, and its influence upon the morals of the school strengthens every effort for its advancement.

### Smyrna Presbyterian Church

years they got bad prices, with the result that many of them became disgusted and sorely disturbed in mind as to what was the best possible way to get a reasonable price for the loupes.

Nothing definite was done until the year 1921, when a number of cantaloupe growers, led by such men as D. E. McKee, F. C. McCormick, Angus Blue, J. Walter Jones, T. L. Henley, W. DeB. McEachin, and others organized the Scotland Co-operative Cantaloupe Exchange as a marketing organization and succeeded in persuading many of the cantaloupe growers to pool their crops and market them through one channel. One of the first things to be emphasized and insisted upon by the cooperative association was that of quality. It proposed to guarantee quality and to market its loupes under one brand which in the big markets would be that guarantee of quality. It chose as its brand name the word "Melrose," copyrighted in the U. S. patent office. All cantaloupes sold by the Cantaloupe Exchange under this brand are guaranteed as to quality.

The exchange also has another brand "Dundee," under which it markets cantaloupes of another grade. These are also guaranteed as to quality.

Even a hog will appreciate plenty of clean, fresh water during the hot days of summer; how much more so, will the delicate dairy cow.

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Smyrna Presbyterian Church

Seed from Colorado The cantaloupe exchange makes sure of quality at the source. To do this it leases an acreage for cantaloupes in the Rocky Ford Valley, Colorado, and under the personal inspection of one of its members, a crop of loupes is grown there for seed and all the cantaloupes planted by members of the exchange come from this Colorado seed farm, as well as most of the acreage planted by independent growers. Good seed means superior loupes, and it is believed this plan offers more than any other in the way of guaranteeing quality.

Officers of the Scotland Co-operative Cantaloupe Exchange are: Angus Blue, president; T. L. Henley, secretary and treasurer. The directors are: Angus Blue, D. E. McKee, H. W. Malloy, L. M. Blue, J. Walter Jones, N. P. Gilchrist, Frank Carmichael, H. W. McLaurin, and H. F. Monroe. Frank C. McCormick is sales manager, and W. DeB. McEachin is general inspector for the packing sheds.

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Residence of Hinton James, Laurinburg, N. C.



Home of A. L. James, Church Street, Laurinburg, N. C.



New Home of Dr. Peter McLean, Laurinburg, N. C.