

### Interesting Chapters in W. N. C. History BREVARD-DAVIDSON RIVER CHURCH OLD PRESBYTERIAN INSTITUTION

By  
(JUDGE ROBERT L. GASH)

The recent consolidation of the Brevard and Davidson River Presbyterian churches makes the history of the old and historic Davidson River Church of more than usual interest. The sessional records of the church go back to the reorganization in June, 1828 which was made under the direction of Dr. H. M. Kerr, at which time the Rev. Christopher Bradshaw was installed as pastor. The church was organized thirty years earlier but the record from 1800 to 1828 is only fragmentary and so some extent not direct.

To understand the early history of this church it is necessary to have a fair knowledge of the early history of this section and of the conditions at the close of the Revolutionary War. West of the Blue Ridge was the territory of the Cherokees. The extreme settlements of the Whites of North Carolina were around Old Fort at the foot of the Blue Ridge on the East. During the Revolutionary War the Cherokees were allied with the British and the Whites from North Carolina did not visit them except an occasional trapper or trader. Immediately after peace was made with England in 1781 the settlers commenced pouring over the Blue Ridge, through the Swannanoa Gap, and built their cabins on the upper reaches of the Swannanoa, and it was only a few years until the choice portions of the valleys of the Swannanoa, French Broad, Pigeon, Tuckasee and the Little Tennessee Rivers were settled. The majority of these early settlers were of Scotch Irish stock, similar to the settlers in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, and in York District, South Carolina.

The Swannanoa Presbyterian Church was organized about 1783 or 1784 and the pastor, Rev. George Newton established preaching points or as they were usually called in that time "camp meeting grounds," at various other points notably on Reems Creek near where Weaverville is now located, on Cane Creek near the present site of Fletcher, on Mills River and on Davidson River. Reems Creek was the first separate church to be organized. After Swannanoa, and from all the data the writer has been able to gather, Davidson River was the second. I have not the date of the organization of Reems Creek but know that the synodical records of the Synod of the Carolinas in 1799 refer to both Swannanoa and Reems Creek Churches, with George Newton as pastor.

At the close of the Revolutionary War, Benjamin Davidson, one of the younger members of the Davidson family recently settled on the Swannanoa, entered and took grant for a large boundary of land on both sides of and including the mouth of Davidson River. Davidson River is named for him and the Davidson River Church stands near the center of his boundary, and his old residence was across the river and about a quarter of a mile from where the church was

afterward organized. Other settlers in the immediate neighborhood were Jacob Wetzel, Robin Orr, Thomas Patton, Lambert Clayton, John Trammell, George Davis, Ethan Davis and Daniel Davis and others.

The early preaching points or camp meeting grounds were usually located in a grove and marked by a large roomy shed or "tabernacle" where preaching could be held in rainy weather. There were often a number of smaller sheds grouped around, large enough to shelter camping parties and live stock. The main preaching periods were during the summer time, after crops were "laid by" and before harvest.

The record of the original organization of the Davidson River Church has been lost but I think that we can fairly place the organization as having been affected during the summer of the year 1800. The synodical records for the year 1799 do not mention the Davidson River Church. I have not had access to the records for the year 1800 but the Swannanoa Church granted church letters or letters of dismissal to the Davidson River Church in 1800. In 1800 Rev. Daniel Davis lived in the Davidson River Valley on a tract of land adjoining the Ben Davidson land on the West. In October, 1800, the Presbytery of Greenville was organized embracing the territory now contained in Western North Carolina, West of the Blue Ridge, and East Tennessee, East of the Cumberland Mountains, which is practically the present boundary of the Synod of Appalachia, except Abington Presbytery in Virginia. This record, while not giving any details of the Davidson River Church names Daniel Davis of Davidson River as one of the four preachers taking part in that organization. The other North Carolina preacher taking part was Rev. George Newton of Swannanoa and Reems Creek. This clearly gives the implication that Davidson River was organized as a separate church and with a resident pastor. This same Rev. Daniel Davis was on the roll of the church as one of the members but not as the pastor when the church was reorganized twenty-eight years late in June, 1828.

A side reference pointing in the same direction is found in the diary of Francis Asbury, the great Evangelistic Bishop of the Methodist Church, under date of Thursday, November 18, 1800. The bishop in his own peerless way writes in his diary as follows: "We crossed the French Broad to Davidson's whose name names the stream. The aged mother and daughter insisted on giving notice for a meeting; in consequence thereof, Mr. Davis, the Presbyterian minister and several others came together. Brother White was taken with the bleeding of the nose so that necessity was laid upon me to lecture. My subject was Luke XI:17. ('Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and the house divided against the house falleth.')

John Murray was an early member of Davidson River Church and was made an elder at the reorganization of the church in 1828. From his obituary published in the Asheville Messenger long before the Civil War we gather some information about this church. It is there stated that John Murray united with the Davidson River Church by profession in 1802 and was active in the church work until the church became dormant, and that when the church was reorganized in 1828 he was made one of the ruling elders.

The original camp meeting ground was on the East bank of Davidson River and the "tabernacle" or large shed stood in the open space near the present church. As the work of the church progressed the question immediately arose as to where, when and how to put up a permanent church building. The old camp meeting ground was on the grounds of Ben Davidson. The pastor lived across the valley some half mile or so West. In 1820 a tract of about four acres adjoining the lands of the pastor was conveyed to trustees for a church site. This location would have been much more convenient for the pastor but

### MISS BEDDINGFIELD WINS SECOND PLACE

Miss Rhusma Beddingfield, selected to represent Brevard High School and Western North Carolina in the State High School Music Contest held in Greensboro last week, won second place. Competition was keen, each contestant representing eight counties, and Miss Beddingfield's signal success in winning second place in the state-wide contest has brought much joy to the western part of the state, and especially to Brevard. At the conclusion of the contest Miss Beddingfield was given high praise by John Powell, famous American pianist, who was judge at the contest.

Friends in Brevard have been congratulating Miss Beddingfield, and her instructor, Prof. Alvin Moore, upon the young woman's great accomplishment.

Mrs. Roland Owen accompanied Miss Beddingfield to Greensboro.

### JUNIOR CLASS OUTING LAST WEEK ENJOYED BY MANY

By Glenn Miller, Jr.  
The Junior Class of the Brevard High School, under the direction of Miss Jessie Copp, spent a delightful evening at Maiden Hair falls last Wednesday.

Leaving town early in the afternoon, the picnicers arrived at their destination and soon were enjoying games and hikes, through the woodlands that are famous for their beauty. Especially at this time of the year.

Returning to the picnic grounds a delightful picnic supper was spread and after the afternoon of running, walking and playing, each member of the party did justice to the culinary art of the young ladies.

After supper, the party played games and soon started their homeward trek.

Those enjoying this delightful picnic were: Johnnie Lee Dermid, Flora Reid Shipman, Mamie Mason, Mildred Hamilton, Smanthie Mull, Lila Johnson, Georgia Gailmore, Helen Carland, Thelma Collins, Mabel Gillespie, Marjorie Buckner, Olga Dermid, Mary Nell Black, Nell Duckworth Frances King, Christine Saltz, Winifred Nicholson, Hattie Sue Sitton, Louise Gillespie, Emma Deaver, Margaret Barnette, Ethel Lee Lane, Thelma Johnson, Joe Schachner, Joe Black, Francis Plummer, Moultrie Truluck, Lionel Aiken and Fred Talay.

### B. I. NINE SHUT OUT BLUE RIDGE TEAM

Tony Trantham's Brevard Institute nine played havoc with Blue Ridge here last Saturday afternoon when the crack pill chasers whitewashed the visitors with a 16-0 score.

Tommy Graham and Rex Skidmore played the greater part of the game by themselves, having fourteen strikeouts chalked up to their credit. Mitchell and Aguilar came through with circuit clouts to help the score along.

Tony will take his boys to Lee School this Thursday for a return game. The locals played a tight game with Lee here several weeks ago, when Brevard won 4-2.

much less convenient for the majority of the congregation.

There was an old tradition in this section of the country of a great "split" or division in the church over the question of where to build the church, and the writer in his early boyhood has often heard old men (eighty or more years old) speak of this "split" or division and while he has a rather hazy recollection of these talks he clearly recalls that all of the talks agree on two points: One was that the "split" on this subject practically killed the church for a number of years and the other that this "split" was prior to the erection of the first permanent church building on the bank of Davidson River.

In December, 1825, Ben Davidson conveyed a tract of land to John Mackey, John Clayton, George C. Neill, G. D. Davis "as trustees that was appointed for the building of the free meeting house and their successors in office forever." About the same time the first permanent church building was erected. A year and a half later, the church was reorganized under the direction of Dr. Kerr and the church now has sessional records extending from June, 1828, to the present time. It was about the time this church was first organized in 1800 that the great wave of evangelism under Geo. Whitfield, Wesley and others swept the country from one end to the other and it was shortly after the ebb of this evangelistic wave, when the work of the churches all over the country was languishing, less vigorous, that the movement in a "difference of opinion" over the location of the church building and kindred subjects, and the work of the church gradually came to a standstill. A few years later the church was reorganized, the members at the reorganization being partly made up of those who had belonged years before, and a number of young men and women who had just come to maturity.

The territory of this church included approximately what is now Henderson County and the territory extending west indefinitely and included camp meeting grounds both at Davidson River and at Mills River.

Being the first church organized in this section the early members included many who were inclined toward other denominations, and members who withdrew and joined the denominations of their preference when the Baptists and Methodists organized churches within a reasonable distance.

(To Be Continued)

### Society News and Club Activities

MRS. LOFTIS HOSTESS TO  
FORTNIGHTLY CLUB

PEARCE-SELLERS ENGAGE-  
MENT ANNOUNCED

Regular meeting of the Fortnightly club was held Thursday afternoon at the home of Mrs. J. E. Loftis, with all members present and two guests.

Following the transaction of routine business presided over by the president, Mrs. Loftis, an enjoyable program was presented in charge of Mrs. L. E. Brown. The program features included two readings by Miss Edna Brown and Miss Garnell Lee, students of Brevard Institute.

Refreshments were served by the hostess during the social hour following the program. The next meeting will be in the nature of a farewell luncheon, the last meeting of the club year, which will be held at the home of Mrs. J. E. Waters, on Thursday, May 14, at one-thirty o'clock.

ASHE MACFIE ENTERTAINS  
SENIOR CLASS

One of the most enjoyable social events of the Senior class was a dance given by Ashe Macfie Tuesday evening, at the lovely Macfie home. Lilies, the class flower, were tastefully arranged throughout the entire lower floor which was thrown en suite, and the class colors, orchid and green, were carried out artistically in the decorations. Miss Rowena Orr, Donald Lee Moore and Phillip Price, furnished music for the evening. A delicious ice course was served by Mrs. Macfie, assisted by Miss Edith Sellers and Miss Dorothy Fetzer.

Members of the senior class present were: Misses Sarah Louise Andrews, Sue Hunt, Eliza Nicholson, Ruth Perry, Edith Sellers, Rebecca Sumner, and Rachel Williams. Messrs. Ashe Macfie, Henry Erwin, Glen Miller Jr., John Reece Sledge, Hinton McLeod, James Jones, Clarence Bowman, William Bridges, Carol Davis, John Lyday, Jack Miller, Hubert Batson, Paul Black, Craig Misener and Clifford Montiech. A number of the younger set of Brevard were invited to the lovely affair, including: Misses Mary Osborne Wilkins, Almeta Waters, Rose Schachner, Margaret Barnette and Dorothy Fetzer. Messrs. Julius Hinton, George Bromfield, Moultrie Truluck, Frank Henry, Joe Schachner, William Erwin, Langdon English, Milton Sellers, Paul Kellar, Ruffin Wilkins, and Hary Clayton.

Paul P. Smathers is in New York this week on business. Mrs. Julia Trowbridge, who has been very ill, is reported as improved.

Announcements have been received in Brevard of the approaching marriage of Miss Margaret Pearce to Mr. Harry Sellers, to be solemnized early in June. Miss Pearce is the daughter of Mrs. R. S. Pearce and the late Mr. R. S. Pearce. The family is now living in St. Petersburg, Fla., where the late Mr. Pearce was at one time mayor of that city. The family has long spent the summers in Brevard, and will return to this place at an early date. Miss Margaret Pearce is one of the most popular young ladies known in Brevard, and announcement of her approaching marriage to Mr. Sellers will be received with great interest. Mr. Sellers is manager of the A. & P. Store, Broad Street, and is an outstanding man of the community.

Following is re-printed from the St. Petersburg newspapers, being the first public announcement of the engagement of these popular young people:

"Of much interest throughout this city and North Carolina is the announcement of the engagement of Miss Margaret Strange Pearce, daughter of Mrs. Robert Strange Pearce, 4543 Third avenue south, and the late Mayor Pearce, to Harry Russell Sellers of Brevard, N. C., the wedding to be an event of early June.

"Miss Pearce is one of St. Petersburg's most attractive and popular girls. She graduated from the local high school in the class of 1926, having served as vice president of her class through the four years. Later she attended Junior college and was a member of the first graduating class from the college. While a student at the college she was chosen as the May Queen both years.

"Mrs. Sellers is the son of Mr. and Mrs. A. B. Sellers, Asheville, N. C., but makes his home in Brevard where he is in business."

MOORE-CARPENTER ENGAGEMENT ANNOUNCED

(Hendersonville Times-News)  
Mr. and Mrs. E. H. Jones of Brevard announce the engagement of Mrs. Jones' daughter, Emily Ruth Moore, to Dr. Walter William Carpenter of Hendersonville. The marriage is to take place in the early summer.

The foregoing announcement will be of wide interest to a large circle of friends in the Carolinas and other states. The bride-elect, who has spent a number of years of her life here, is a young woman of much culture and charm and is widely beloved for

her sweet graciousness of manner. At present she is a member of the faculty of the school at Andrews.

Dr. Carpenter, who is the son of Mrs. Lula Carpenter and the late Mr. Carpenter of Landrum, S. C., came here several years ago and is one of the most prominent dentists of the city. He has made many warm friends on account of his sterling qualities and genial disposition and among other affiliations is a member of the Kiwanis Club. He is a brother of Mrs. A. Yates Arledge, who with Mr. Arledge and little daughter, Phoebe Anne, prominent residents of this city, have moved to Asheville.

Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Siniard, Mrs. L. E. Siniard, Mrs. Dermitt and Miss Dermitt spent Wednesday in Asheville, shopping. Mrs. C. H. Trowbridge of Weaverville, is visiting Mrs. Julia Trowbridge.

### SPECIAL SERVICE FOR THE JUNIOR ORDER

Special services for the Junior Order will be held at the Glady Branch Baptist church Sunday evening, May 3rd, the service to be held at 8:00. The pastor, Rev. I. N. Kuykendall, will be in charge of the service and will deliver the message to the members of the Order. The public is invited to attend this service.

The Junior Order in Brevard has been very active in the past several months, and many new members have been added.

### ED MCCOY LEASES FILLING STATION

Ed McCoy announces in this week's issue of The News that he has leased the filling station on the corner of Broad and Jordan streets, and will open for business Friday morning May 1st. This station, recognized as one of the ideal locations in the town, is up-to-date equipped, and Mr. McCoy announces that he will handle Standard gasoline and motor oils as his main line of business, also carrying a full line of tires and tubes.

The "Mayor of Pisgah Forest" who is also postmaster, announces that he will continue in business at his old stand in Pisgah Forest, and that Albert Lyday will have charge of the station in Brevard.

Free parking space will be provided customers of the new station, a large lot being situated adjoining the station.

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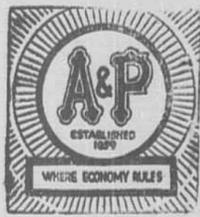
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Salted Assorted Flavors

lb. Jar **19c**

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Large Can Full Bulk **10c**

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OLD DUTCH CLEANSER

6 cakes **19c**

4 cakes **19c**

3 cans **20c**

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8-lb. BUCKET **89c**

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10-lb. **47c**

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