

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

By
(JUDGE ROBERT L. GASH)

At the close of the Civil War this whole section of the country was in a very unsettled state. The bushwhackers were much in evidence. The returned Confederate soldiers and the returned Union soldiers, to put it mildly, did not fraternize much. Gen. Stoneman's Brigade of Union soldiers passed through. Live stock, poultry, and rations of all kinds, and nearly everything that was moveable disappeared.

The two elements in the church were still more widely separated. One element was all for staying with the General Assembly U. S. A. (the Northern church), and the other was all for the General Assembly U. S. (the Southern church). There were still meetings held but the two divergent elements didn't mix. When a Southern preacher appeared, most of the other element remained away, and vice versa.

About the time of Stoneman's raid, during the summer of 1865, a Southern evangelist was holding a meeting at the church, and interest ran high. He was about as fiery and emotional as an old time Circuit Rider could be. On Sunday night when interest ran high, the preacher called on the brethren to pray, to pray out loud so that all could hear, and to pray for the things they wanted most. Among others who accepted the invitation was Thomas D. Clayton, a returned Confederate soldier just recovering from his wounds. Those who remember Uncle "Tommy D" can well recall his powerful voice, and its wonderfully clear and carrying qualities. At the top of his voice he commenced an eloquent prayer for Jeff Davis, Robert E. Lee and the Southern Confederacy. Some returned Union soldiers in the back of the church started a riot. The meeting broke up in disorder. A number jumped on Tommy D. When the "double-teaming" started, Charley Patton and William Deaver took a hand to see fair play. Their lead was followed by many others, and in a few minutes the disturbance was over. Some one procured a warrant for Tommy D. for disturbing the church services. The matter came up in the Superior Court, I believe before Judge Shipp. The evangelist testified as to his invitation, and that Mr. Clayton was literally following out the invitation of the evangelist, although with unexpected results. A number of the best citizens of all factions testified as to the character of Mr. Clayton, and his excellent record as a soldier. After hearing all the evidence the judge called the prosecuting witness before him and gave him a lecture (the witness was dressed in a new blue Federal Uniform). After the lecture, the judge held the witness accountable for the whole disturbance and gave the witness his choice between a jail sentence on the one hand, and on the other for the witness to stand up in court while the sheriff cut the buttons off his uniform and to pay a fine. The witness chose the latter.

For some months services were irregular, and more often there were none.

In March, 1866, Dr. Robert Hett Chapman held a series of meetings. Mr. Chapman, an evangelist and teacher, was one of the commissioners who organized the General Assembly of the Confederate States (the Southern Presbyterian church) in 1861. After the close of the war, the word "Confederate" was stricken out, and the word "United" inserted instead. The session was convened March 31, 1866. Elders present were James W. Killian, Elizur Patton and Charles Patton. M. Jasper Orr, Lambert C. Neill, Isaac T. Lyday, Eli Patton and Martha E. Gash, Florida Galloway and Elson Galloway united with the church. Dr. Chapman was called to the pastorate, and served the church for the next five years. Representative and alternate were elected to attend meetings of Concord Presbytery. Regular church work and services continued for many years.

It was during Dr. Chapman's pastorate, at a meeting of Concord Presbytery held at Davidson River in 1869, that overture was sent up to the Synod of North Carolina for the formation of Mecklenburg Presbytery. (Twenty-seven years later, in 1896,

assembly and Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

Res. 3: That we will discountenance and give no aid to secessionist disloyal schismatical preachers or others who may come among us to cause division and strife as Paul commands, Rom. 16, 17, 18: "Now I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause division and offenses contrary to the

doctrine which ye have learned and avoid them, for they that are such serve our Lord Jesus Christ but their own belly, and by good words and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple."

Resolved 4th: That believing as we do that some of the former members of our church now with the division have been misled or deceived in this

church matter we earnestly and cordially invite them to return in good faith to the old church of our ancestry, the old ship is still sailing, outlives the storm of schism and fanaticism and able to receive more passengers, and we say, renounce error come to me and go with us in peace for we make no strife, no division, no schism.

church be spread upon our session book where our original organization is recorded as having taken place in the year 1828.

From the summer of 1866, for a number of years, there were two churches about a mile apart, each claiming to be the true Davidson River Church.

(To be continued)

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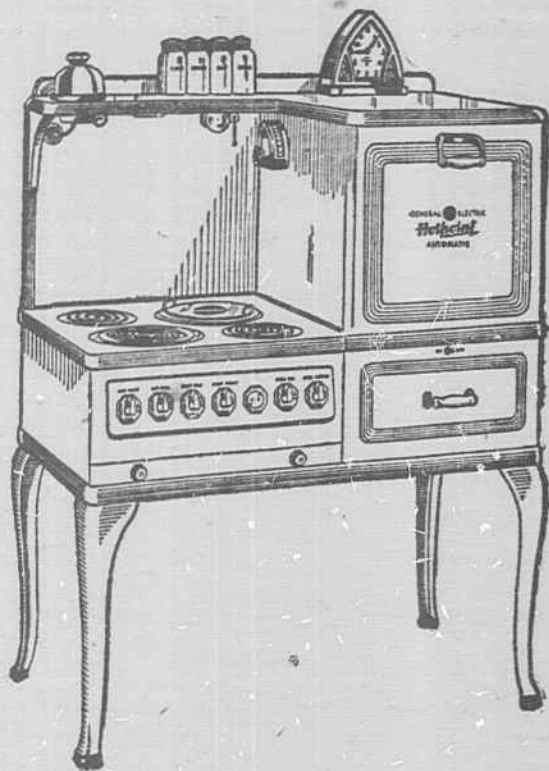
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