

History of Church Of Advent Given

(Continued from page one)

strong advocate for the election of a bishop for North Carolina in the conventions at Tarboro, and he was the only minister who attended all four meetings at Tarboro. He was the president of one and had been selected as a delegate to the General Convention.

Bishop White notes this last fact on p. 201 of his "Memoirs," "The Rev. James L. Wilson embarked as a deputy to the General Convention of 1792 (from North Carolina); but after an unusually long passage, arrived too late. At his special request, his arrival after the adjournment was noted by the secretary." So we can see the very prominent part which Mr. Wilson of Martin County played in the early Episcopal history of North Carolina.

Now where was the church located that Mr. Wilson served during his seven year ministry in Williamston? The Diocesan Journal of 1790 lists him as the clerical representative of Martin and Edgecombe Counties.

The only record found to date of the Episcopal Church in or near Williamston around this time is to be found in "The Life and Times of Elder Reuben Ross, pages 77 and 90. Reuben Ross was a Primitive Baptist preacher who lived in Williamston in 1800. Suffering financial reverses and desiring to go to Tennessee to re-settle and preach, he made preparations for the journey. His son John, who made the trip, tells of it in his book: "The sixth of May, 1807, was set for the commencement of the journey, on which day all were to meet at a deserted Episcopal Church, in a pine forest a few miles west of Williamston, and there pitch their tents for the first time. Several other families had concluded to emigrate with us." p.77. "The time for beginning the journey arrived. It was agreed that all should leave their homes the same day, in the morning, and meet at a deserted Episcopal church that stood in a forest of pines some distance from the town, and there encamp the first night.

There were many of these deserted churches in Virginia and the Carolinas at that time. When the law was passed depriving the clergy of that church of the sixteen thousand pounds of tobacco to which they had been entitled annually, the Established Church was broken up, and these lonely and decaying buildings might be seen in many places in the country. As many of these churches had grave-yards attached, which were likewise neglected, the superstitious imagined they often saw forms that did not seem properly to belong to this world—not only by night, but sometimes in broad day—standing still or moving about; people generally went a little out of their way to pass around them.

On the day appointed, the whole party met at the old church; and as night came on, the tents were pitched.

The first night we children camped out we were ill at ease.

We thought ghosts could not find a more desirable place for their walks than the lonely church. The scarred trunks of the pines, white with the indurated resin, the moaning of the wind in their lofty tops, and the red glare of the campfires among their branches worked on our imaginations and caused the whole scene to appear weird and spectral. But at length "tired nature's sweet restorer" came to our relief, and in the deep slumber of happy childhood all was forgotten. Next morning betimes all were up, the teams were fed, breakfast prepared and served, the tents struck, and the long journey began in earnest."

There stand today, three miles west of Williamston, on the Hamilton road, two cemeteries on the Slade farms. The inescapable conclusion is that this Episcopal church mentioned above stood adjacent to the older of these two cemeteries. In 1790 the Slade family owned almost all of this area near Williamston. The McKenzie and original Slade families were Church families and this fact, with those already mentioned, leads us to conclude that this Episcopal church, abandoned by the year 1807, was the scene of Mr. Wilson's ministry during his years here as an ordained priest of the Church. If the church had a name we do not know it. However, it might very well have been designated as St. Martin's for in the year 1774 when Martin County was created from parts of Tyrrell and Halifax counties, the county was also named as St. Martin's Parish.

Until the year 1842 and particularly 1850, we hear little more of the Episcopal Church in Martin County.

In 1842 the Rev. William B. Otis was Rector of Grace Church in Plymouth. He held occasional services in Williamston and on December 19, 1842, he baptized the infant son of William J. and Frances H. Ellison. This family will be seen as the lay founders of the parish. The date of this baptism is the first official act of administration in connection with what was to become the Church of the Advent congregation. After Mr. Otis, in 1844, the Rev. Alfred A. Watson became Rector of the Church in Plymouth. He came to Williamston as a missionary and held services in the old courthouse at stated times. Mainly to his efforts, the present organization of the church is due.

The following history is from the papers of the late Miss Emily Whitley. "Mrs. Frances Helen Ellison (whose tablet is in the present church) had at this time (1844) a Sunday school, the children at her house. She also had the children of the slaves to come every Sunday afternoon and say their catechism orally from a little book compiled by Bishop Ives to teach the slaves. Her mother, Mrs. Ann G. Hyman, gave the plot of ground on which the church is built. After the death of Mrs. Frances H. Ellison in 1849, her husband, William J. Ellison, became interested, and with the assistance of Mrs. Ann G. Hyman, Miss Betty Hyman, and Miss Helen Slade, the Church was built with but little outside assistance. Mr. Ellison was very much interested in the work and devoted

much time and money to it. His carpenter, Moses, a slave, did most of the work. Rev. Alfred A. Watson planned the church and the plastering of it is due to the earnest efforts of Miss Betty Hyman and her maid, Sabina Hyman, the cost of which was \$100.00.

The beginning of this amount, \$8.00, was made by the sale of a lamb given Miss Hyman by Mr. Henry Slade. The remaining \$92.00 they raised by sewing, making bonnets, aprons and quilts to sell. Mrs. Ann G. Hyman with the help of her maid, Jane, raised enough money by knitting and crocheting, to buy the chancel furniture, chairs, carpet, etc.

The church was consecrated to the service of God on Friday, April 26, 1850, by Bishop Ives, Bishop of North Carolina, under the name of "Church of the Advent". He was assisted in the services by Rev. Alfred A. Watson. The dedication sermon was preached from the Gospel according to St. John XII:26, "If any man serve me let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor".

At this time there were two confirmed, Mr. William J. Ellison and his daughter, Annie H. Ellison. Seven persons partook of the Holy Communion, administered by the Bishop.

The church was admitted into union with the Convention of the Church of the Diocese at the Convention held in Elizabeth City, May 30, 1850. Mr. William Ellison and Dr. T. H. Wingfield were the two delegates to the convention.

The Parish not being able singly to support a clergyman, measures were taken to unite with the neighboring Parish of St. Thomas, Windsor, for the purpose of having regular services, and the Rev. Charles A. Maison, formerly assistant minister of St. Paul's, Edenton, N. C., became the first Rector of the united Parishes. His first services in this Parish church were held on the morning and evening of the 21st Sunday after Trinity, October 20th, 1850.

In January 1851 a Communion Service was presented to the Parish by Mrs. Josia Collins of Lake Scuppernon, a handsome silver chalice and paten, with a flagon and two alms basins of britannia ware. In 1851 Mr. John A. Gambrel of New York, a special friend of one of the church members, presented to the church a bell, with complete hangings, toward which the congregation contributed \$15.00. On January 5, 1852, Rev. C. A. Maison resigned the charge of the Parish. It was resumed again in June 1852 by Rev. Alfred A. Watson, who continued to hold it until 1858. At the General Convention of 1853 held at New York, Bishop Ives was deposed from his jurisdiction and office, and Rev. Thomas Atkinson was consecrated to fill his place. Bishop Atkinson made his first visit to the Church of the Advent, April 12, 1854.

In 1857 the chancel was newly carpeted, an altar cloth provided, and brass branches placed upon the walls. The second chancel rail was built and also placed there by Mr. Watson himself in 1858.

In 1858 Rev. Alfred A. Watson

resigned the charge of the Parish, having accepted a call to Christ Church, New Bern, N. C.

The Parish not being able to support a clergyman, Rev. Benjamin S. Bronson volunteered his services and took charge in 1859, giving one Sunday in each month. From the Spring 1861 to the Spring 1866, the church was without services because of the Civil War. During the four years of the war Miss Betty Hyman was a refugee and it was through her loving care that the Communion Service and chancel carpet were preserved. She sold the carpet and on her return to Williamston gave the money together with the Communion Service to the Rev. Thomas B. Haughton, then minister-in-charge.

She found the little church had been almost destroyed by the Northern army and subscriptions had to be taken up for repairs. As Miss Hyman was the oldest member of the church, it fell to her lot to carry the paper around, and she succeeded in collecting the needed amount.

In the Spring of 1866 Rev. Thomas B. Haughton took charge here in connection with Grace Church, Plymouth, and St. Luke's, Washington County. Through the efforts of Mr. Wilson G. Lamb, Mr. Joseph M. Sitterson, Mr. Frank A. Rhodes and a few others in the Parish a vestry room was added to the church in 1869. In 1870 Mr. Lamb and Mr. Sitterson purchased a lot adjoining the church property and presented it to the church. During this same year, the lot was enclosed with a good fence.

On May 27, 1872, Miss Helen Slade, one of the founders of the church, purchased the Rectory at a cost of \$1,000 with the understanding that Rev. Thomas B. Haughton would remove to this Parish and occupy the building, which he did on October 17, 1873. The church building was repaired and painted in 1874, towards which Miss Margaret Thompson of Grace Church, Woodville, N. C. gave \$100.00, the remainder being given by the members of the Parish. This congregation was also indebted to the Woodville congregation for the gift of a second-hand melodeon.

On March 20, 1874, Judge Asa Biggs very kindly gave to the church a strip of land adjoining the church grounds.

(To Be Continued)

CARD OF THANKS
I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my many friends who sent me cards and beautiful flowers and words of kindness during my recent illness and stay at the Martin General Hospital. I also would especially like to thank Dr. Himmelwright and the fine staff of nurses for being so kind and nice to me. The best of luck and success for you all is my prayer.
J. R. P. Griffin.

TWO ROOMS FOR RENT ON
North Houghton Street for light house-keeping. See Louis Wobbleton, Call 2301.

SPECIAL THIS WEEK ON BABY
Ruth Candy, 85c for box of 24 bars, 6 5c-bars for 25c, 3 5c-bars for 13c. Leggett's, Main St. oc 17 2t

FOR SALE: 1942 4-DOOR PLYMOUTH. Good condition. Write box 787 for further information. oc 17 2t

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"Two Flags West"
Linda Darnell
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WEDNESDAY THURSDAY - FRIDAY "Stella"
With Ann Sheridan Victor Mature
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IT'S BIG and in Technicolor "THE BLACK ROSE" With Tyrone Power, Orson Wells and Cecile Aubry
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LOST: LADIES' GOLD RIMMED glasses belonging to Messida Spruill last Thursday evening in the vicinity of Colonial Frozen Foods. Finder please return to The Enterprise office.

ATTENTION CROSLLEY AUTO-mobile owners: Will give you good trade on your car for brand new Crosley. Immediate delivery. Easy terms. General Sales Co., (Kinston), "Crosley Distributors." oc 10 3t

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With Bruce Cabot Gene Tierney
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