

Methodist Church Plays Part In Early History

(Mrs. A. H. Patterson)

Central Methodist Church of Kings Mountain, was organized in 1874 by Rev. J. W. North, who was the pastor of Shelby Circuit in 1873-76.

In the early part of 1874, I. Walton Garrett and family, Richard Garrett and family, Captain and Mrs. R. S. Sugg and Bennett R. Willeford came from Edgecombe county to make their home in this sparsely settled village. They bought property and erected store buildings. The Garretts operated a general merchandise store and Captain Sugg, a drug store. The Garretts also bought large tracts of nearby mountain land.

Being of the Methodist faith these newcomers attended services at El Bethel, the nearest church of that denomination, but since they were establishing permanent homes they saw the necessity for a church in this immediate locality. An organization was effected with the following charter members: Dr. and Mrs. James Wright Tracy, pioneer settlers of this community and up to this time members of El Bethel church, I. Walton Garrett and wife, Richard Garrett and wife, Mrs. R. S. Sugg and Bennett R. Willeford.

Others were soon added and the group with Rev. J. W. North as pastor, held services in the small frame school house, the only building available at that time. This church was grouped with El Bethel, Beulah Concord and at times other small churches and preaching services were only held once a month. At this time the circuit rider as preacher was then known, visited in the homes of the few members and ministered to the spiritual needs.

The members, small in number overcame many obstacles and soon completed their church, a one-room frame building which stood on the corner of Piedmont Avenue and Mountain street. This served as a place of worship for thirty years of more. The doors of the old frame church were thrown open to other congregations, who had organized and had, as yet, no church of their own.

Of the number who went out from this church and make a distinct contribution for good in one way or another, we shall mention one—Rev. Plato Tracy Durham, D. D., who early in life worshipped with his painted mother and grandparents at El Bethel and at Central Methodist, Kings Mountain. Dr. Durham grew to manhood in a home of culture, homo rich with the spirit and traditions of the Methodist church. He was prepared for the ministry at Trinity College, now Duke University and later studied at Oxford University, England. For a number of years he served as pastor of several larger churches of the Western North Carolina Conference. It was fitting indeed that Dr. Durham be invited to preach the sermon when the present Central Church edifice was dedicated in 1914.

Dr. Durham's eloquence and power as a preacher, seemed almost unexcelled, but according to his own

testimony, he had not enjoyed the fullness of a rich, Christian experience, until the last years of his life, when like Wesley of old he "felt his heart strangely warmed."

At the time of his death only a few years ago, he was Dean of Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.

In the early years of Central Methodist church, Sunday Schools were held regularly, a Missionary Society was organized and in 1895 or earlier, a children's missionary society was organized under the direction and leadership of Mrs. B. E. Dixon. This was called the Light Bearers Society and functioned under that name for many years, later being absorbed by the Epworth League and other similar organizations.

Factors serving Central Methodist Church were Revs. J. W. North, 1874-75-76; H. T. Hudson, 1877-78; W. D. Lee, 1879; J. S. Erwin, 1880; J. T. Abernathy, 1881; J. W. Jones, 1882; H. E. Wiley, 1883; J. W. Wheeler, 1884; W. H. Townsend, 1886; J. A. Berry, 1887; S. E. Turrentine, 1888-89; J. B. Carpenter, 1890; W. S. Hales, 1891; T. J. Evans, 1892; J. W. Bowman, 1893; C. C. Brothers, 1894; J. D. Arnold, 1895; Z. Parrish, 1896; J. W. Dorman, 1897; D. H. Cannon,

1898-99; G. D. Herman, 1900-01-02-03; M. H. Vestal, 1904; G. F. Kirby, 1905-06; E. G. Kilgore, 1907; D. F. Carver, 1908-09; M. E. Clegg, 1910-11-12-13; E. O. Cline, 1914-15; R. M. Hoyle, 1916; R. A. Swearingen, 1917; E. L. Kirk, 1918-19-20; R. M. Hoyle 1921-22-23; J. E. Thompson, 1924; O. P. Ader, 1925-26-27; J. R. Church, 1928-29-30-31; W. O. Goodé, 1932-33; J. W. Adams, 1934; E. W. Fox, 1935-36-37-38.

During the pastorate of Rev. Geo. D. Herman, definite steps were taken toward securing a larger lot and building a church that would more adequately meet the needs of a growing congregation and Sunday school. A beautiful lot, opposite the old church, was available and was soon purchased. This lot afforded space for a church, educational building and a parsonage with ample grounds for each. The old church property was sold and also the parsonage property, located on West Mountain street, (property now owned by Claude Rhyne.)

Under the leadership of Rev. Geo. F. Kirby, the church was erected. The laying of the cornerstone took place in 1905, with appropriate ceremonies. Besides the church proper, this building contained several Sunday school class rooms, an assembly room, etc.

A dwelling that stood on the church property served as a pastor's home, until the present parsonage an eight-room brick veneer building was erected during the pastorate of Rev. J. E. Thompson in 1924.

In late years an Educational Building was erected. This building has a number of Class rooms, dining room kitchen, rest rooms, etc., and fills a long felt need for a place for recreational activities, for young and old, as well as for additional Sunday School facilities.

The Sunday School is divided into

various departments and the work is carried on as near as possible according to the standards of the Conference Board of Christian Education.

An efficient Board of Stewards, a number of whom are younger men of the church, has charge of the financial work of the church and also assist the pastor in work pertaining to the church.

Worship services and regular preaching services are held each Sunday morning and evening, with a mid-week prayer service on Wednesday evening.

The membership is now approximately 400.

Regular meetings are held for the active organizations of the church as follows: Board of Stewards; Missionary Society; Missionary Circles (Both Senior and Junior); Sunday School Council, Boys Scouts, etc.

In the late fall of 1936, a pipe organ, the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Williams, was installed. This gift brought joy to the congregation and has added greatly to the beauty of the church service. Vestments were bought soon after and the choir under the pains-taking direction of Mrs. Aubrey Mauney, organist, and choir director, deserves more than passing mention for the service they render.

The above is a brief chronicle of Central Methodist church, so far as we're able to give it, but no figures can be given to tell in full the accomplishments and far-reaching in-

fluence of this church over more than a half century. This record can only be found in the archives on high. The sermons by the pastors and the prayers of the saints can never be gathered and given a place in story; though they live on in lives made better and in the songs of the redeemed around the throne of God. The early leaders and many who came after, had hearts burning with a passion for advancing the Kingdom of God and asked little more than souls for their hire.

Members of Central Methodist Church and their posterity have indeed a priceless heritage—one that challenges the best in them.

Today, as yesterday, the same. Breathe thou on us the sacred flame; The paths our vallant fathers trod; Help us to find, O Changeless God; Reveal in us anew this hour The love of Christ, His life, His power.

(North).

Note:—We are greatly indebted to Dr. Paul N. Garber, Professor of Church History, of Duke University, Mrs. Emma Garrett Mann of Atlanta, Georgia, Rev. J. E. Thompson of Shelby, who furnished missing links in order that our records be complete and also to Rev. E. W. Fox for his interest and assistance.

Summary Of D. A. R. Activities

Credibly justifying itself as a progressive unit since its organization 32 years ago, the Colonel Frederick Hambright Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution has not only furnished much historical data for state and national records, but it has also given aid to Crossnore school, and many other institutions carrying out an active program of patriotic education, conservation, national defense and Americanism.

NOTICE OF SALE

Under and by virtue of the power of sale contained in a deed of trust given by Wiley H. McGinnis, and wife, Minnie E. McGinnis, to the undersigned as trustee for the Kings Mountain Building and Loan Association on the 9th day of August 1935, and registered in the Register of Deeds Office for Cleveland County in Book 197 at page 232 to secure the indebtedness therein mentioned and default having been made in the payment of same and the request of the Kings Mountain Building and Loan Association, I will sell for cash at the Courthouse door in Shelby, Cleveland County, North Carolina, on Monday, April 10, 1939, at ten o'clock A. M., or within legal hours the following described real estate:

Situated on the East side of Canaler Street in the Town of Kings Mountain, N. C., and beginning at an iron stake in the edge of said street Monroe Reed's corner, and runs thence with Reed's line East 107 feet to a stake, his corner; thence North 50 feet to an iron stake; thence West 107 feet to an iron stake in edge of Canaler Street; thence with Canaler Street South 50 feet to the beginning, containing 5250 square feet, more or less, and being a part of the lot conveyed by W. A. Morris and wife to J. R. Davis by deed, dated 18th December, 1925 as will appear on record in Register of Deeds Office for Cleveland County in Book NNN at page 658.

SECOND TRACT: Situated on the West side of Canaler Street in the Town of Kings Mountain, N. C., and beginning at a stake in the edge of said street 150 feet North from corner of Hazel Brown's lot, and runs thence West 200 feet to a stake; thence North 75 feet to a stake; thence East 200 feet to a stake in the edge of Canaler Street; thence long Canaler Street South 75 feet to the beginning, containing 15,000 square feet, more or less.

This the 6th day of March, 1939. J. R. Davis, Trustee.

ad—march 20

The Kings Mountain chapter owes its organization to the work of Mrs. G. V. Phillips of Gaffney, formerly Miss Clara Carpenter of Kings Mountain. On December 21, 1916, 11 of the 15 members whose applications had been accepted by the national board held their first meeting at the home of Mrs. C. E. Neisler, organized the chapter, and elected Mrs. Neisler regent.

The chapter name Colonel Frederick Hambright was chosen because four of the charter members of the organization were lineal descendants of the colonel, two more were descended from men his ranks, and Colonel Hambright led troops from Lincoln county, part of which is now in Cleveland.

Right just before the country declared war on Germany and the Federal powers, the club formed an auxiliary unit to the local Red Cross. Since, the club has placed a number of monuments commemorating the deeds of heroes of the battle. Since 1921 it has annually given a history lesson to a student of Kings Mountain High school.

Today it is endeavoring to fulfill the promise on which it was organized—work for the present and future development of the nation.

The following members have served as chapter regents: Mesdames C. E. Neisler, W. S. Dilling, F. R. Summers, W. K. Mauney, D. C. Mauney, W. F. Thomson, O. B. Carpenter, J. E. Herndon, E. W. Griffin, P. M. Neisler, and the present regent, Mrs. A. L. Hill.

Red Cross Organized in 1917

The first meeting in the interest of Red Cross was held July 2, 1917, in the Presbyterian Church with less than 20 persons present. With this small number the chapter has grown through the past twenty odd years in both numbers and service to the community. The chapter includes all the territory in number 4 township.

During the years of its existence much has been done to relieve suffering here and throughout the entire world. First officers of the organization were: Chairman, Rev. G. L. Kerr; Vice Chairman, Mrs. M. L. Plonk and Mrs. C. E. Neisler; Secretary, Mrs. Frank Summers; and Treasurer, P. D. Herndon. From that time to the present leading citizens of Kings Mountain in all walks of life have taken an active part in Red

Cross work. Several years ago leaders of the Red Cross Chapter decided to expand in their field of aiding the suffering and needy of Kings Mountain. At that time Mrs. Ruth Gamble was secured as Executive Secretary, a permanent office was set up and the Red Cross assumed the welfare work of Kings Mountain. Columns could be written about the untold cases of the down-trodden being helped, the sick cared for, the hungry being fed, the poorly clad being clothed, but this is unnecessary because the citizens of Kings Mountain already know these facts, which is manifested by their contributions each year at Roll Call time.

Offices are maintained in the basement of the City Hall. Present officers are: Chairman, Ladd Hamrick; First Vice Chairman, Mrs. C. E. Neisler; Second Vice President, Mrs. Frank Summers; Secretary, Mrs. Grady King, and Treasurer, Mrs. Prude Ratterree.

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