

A History of the
Sugata Creek Presbyterian Church

Charlotte, North Carolina

Neill Roderick McBeachy

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A History of the
Sugaw Creek Presbyterian Church

Mecklenburg Presbytery
Charlotte, North Carolina



by

Neill Roderick McGeachy

May 1954

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Dedication

To the members of the Sugaw Creek Congregation, who, because of their faith in God, their love of Christ, and their devotion to His Church, were a source of inspiration to me in the years of my intimate association with them.

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Foreword

The Sugar Creek Church, founded by Scotch-Irish emigrants in North Carolina during the Colonial period, is one of the oldest Presbyterian churches in North Carolina, and one of the first to have its own settled pastor. Its history parallels in large measure the history of the nation. It reflects the history of the changing South in the Revolutionary period, in the period preceding and following the War between the States, in the period of the "New South" and today.

The story of the Sugar Creek Church has therefore more than local interest. As Mr. McGeachy tells it, it is the story of a church influenced by and reacting in turn on its environment. The author mentions names and includes details which will be of interest only to the members of the church and its numerous descendants scattered now over the nation; but others, Presbyterians and non-Presbyterians, will read it with interest because of the light thrown upon changing conceptions of worship (hymns replacing psalms, the introduction of organs, and the like); the evolution of its organization (deacons, for example, had no important role until some time after the Civil War); the decline of church discipline (a major concern of the session as late as 1917); the development of stewardship (it is a long cry from the early subscription lists on which the church depended for the support of its pastor to the modern budget, supported by an every member canvass); the organization of the various lay activities (especially the Women of the Church); the development of the church's educational program (Sunday Schools, quite unlike those of the present day began to be organized in the second decade of the 19th century); and other important aspects of the Church's life.

Mr. McGeachy has based his study on a careful examination of the available sources, and a wide reading of other materials which throw light upon the church and its times. His labor of love (representing days of laborious toil) will not fail of its reward.

ERNEST TRICE THOMPSON

Preface

In June, 1941, while teaching a course on the Church for the Pioneer Department in the Sugaw Creek Daily Vacation Church School, I was confronted with two facts. The first was that the children of the church and many of the older folk did not know the basic facts of the history of their church, and the second was that the history was well worth knowing.

Asking questions of the older members, reading the Sessional records, and any books that were recommended, and exploring the materials in the Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, North Carolina, I became convinced that the Sugaw Creek history ought to be written.

The suggestion was carried to the Session of the church and the elders asked me to attempt to write it. This has been a thrilling and rewarding experience and my only regret is that full justice has not been done to the story of the pastors and members of the church who have left such an impressive heritage to their descendants.

There are some things omitted that ought possibly to have been included, but where no historical proof was available it seemed wise to leave them out and to stick, with one or two exceptions, to the story that could be authenticated from existing records.

I should like to express my appreciation for all the courtesies I have been shown by the librarians, historians, and historical societies in this country and in Great Britain. Space will not permit the listing of all the individuals and institutions that have been consulted. Proper acknowledgement is made in the bibliography of the letters that were written and the papers that were made available for research and quotation.

Two men are deserving of special tribute. My father, the Rev. D. P. McGeachy, D.D., Th.D., who first awakened in me a love of history, and the Rev. E. T. Thompson, D.D., Litt.D., Professor of Church History, Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Virginia, who, in my undergraduate days, deepened the interest already aroused and who, during my years of graduate study, has made suggestions and criticisms that have improved the quality of this history.

N. R. M.

Statesville, North Carolina
March, 1954

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A special word of appreciation is due the following for their assistance in research: Dr. T. H. Spence, Director of the Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches; Mr. Guy S. Klett, Research Historian, of the Department of History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America; Dr. Henry M. Brimm, Librarian, of Union Theological Seminary in Virginia; Dr. W. Edwin Hemphill of the Virginia State Library; Dr. Chalmers G. Davidson, Librarian, of Davidson College who also read parts of the manuscript and made many helpful suggestions for its improvement.

This history could not have been completed or prepared for publication without the unfailing cooperation of Mrs. Edward Coffin, Jr., and Mrs. Eugene McJunkin, whose gracious service and untiring efforts are gratefully acknowledged.

Introduction

The Session of the Sugaw Creek Presbyterian Church, taking a justifiable pride in the heritage and history of its church, has long desired that the story of the settlement of its territory, the founding of its church, the record of its pastors and its people, should be fully and accurately written. As early as 1843 the Session overtured Concord Presbytery, to which at that time the church belonged, as follows:

Whereas the first civilized occupants of the soil within your territorial limits were intelligent and decided presbyterians who earnestly desired gratefully enjoyed and duly appreciated the labores of Presbyterian ministers both as misionaries and Pastors.

Whereas Since your venerable body was organized it has accomplished much for the interest and sound learning and true piety, which constitute the only sure basis of a republican government.

Therefore Resolved — That the history of the Presbyterian church in your bounds is inseparable connected with the history letters and civil liberty in N. C. and if judiciously prepared would not only be extensively circulated but subserve important ends — Resolved that such a work cannot be done aright except by your authority and under your direction and that *the means of accurate information in referance to many important facts and events will in a short time not be available to those by whom it should be undertaken.*

Resolved That it is our sincere desire and earnest request that at your next regular Sessions you take such action on the Subject as your superior wisdom may direct.¹

Hopeful that Concord Presbytery would answer their request the Session left blank the first fifty pages of their next Session book so that the history of their church might be written there. Concord Presbytery did compile a brief history of the churches within its bounds, but the Sugaw Creek history was never completely written and the prophecy of the Session in 1843 has been largely fulfilled “that the means of accurate information in referance to many important facts and events will in a short time not be available to those by whom it should be undertaken.”

In 1843 many records that are now lost should have been avail-

¹ Minutes of Session, Sugar Creek Presbyterian Church, 1841-46.

able and there should have been men and women who could have given accurate information on the history of the church as to its beginnings and life.

The earliest extant record of the Session bears the date of the spring of 1827 with this notation: — “No record of Church members or proceedings having been found, the following list was made out by the help of the Elders and the following record of additions, dismissions, deaths, dismissions, etc., kept in behalf of the Session.”²

To find the story of the beginnings of Sugaw Creek then we must turn to other sources. The first of these is the history of the Scotch-Irish migration into the State of North Carolina, the other, the records of the Presbyterian Church in America.

² *Ibid.*, 1827-40

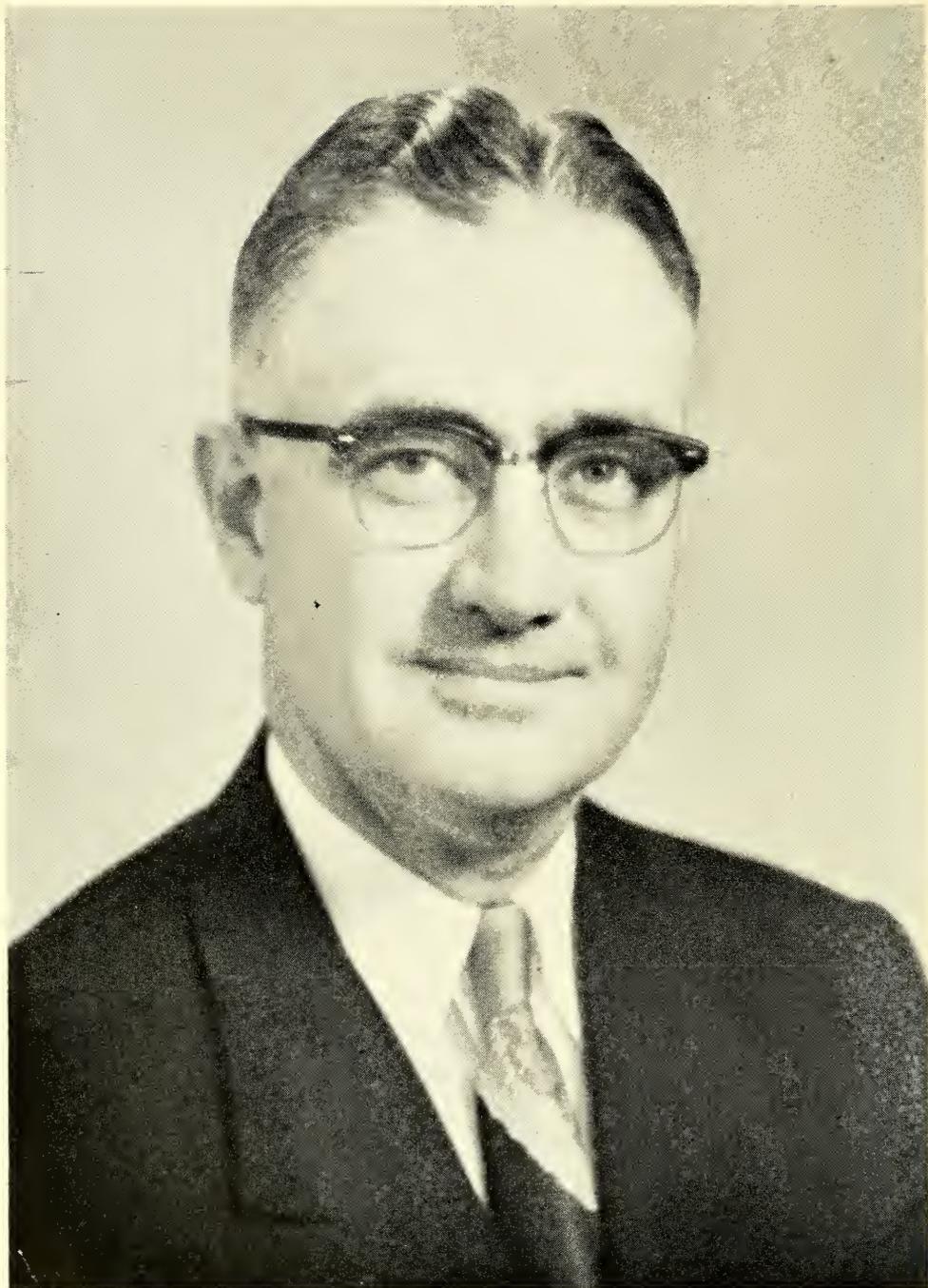
EXPLANATION TO THE READER

Some clarifying statement needs to be made as to the apparent inconsistency in the spelling of the name of the church in this volume. The reader's attention is called to Chapter XI, where the history of the name is discussed in some detail.

The Session, feeling that there was nothing to be gained in requesting Presbytery to change the spelling at this time, has asked that the “w” be used as far as possible, except where its use would be incongruous.

In line with this request, the name has been spelled with an “r” in those periods when it was so used in the records and with a “w” in the later history when the spelling was changed, by the action of Presbytery, to “Sugaw”.





Rev. A. Leslie Thompson
Pastor, Sugaw Creek Presbyterian Church
Charlotte, N. C.

CHAPTER I

THE PIONEERS

In 1737 the King of England granted 1,200,000 acres of land in Piedmont North Carolina to a merchant in London, Henry McCulloh, and his associates. The Crown made this grant upon the condition that McCulloh and his associates would pay four shillings per one hundred acres as Quit Rents and settle 6,000 persons on the lands.¹

Seven years later the Surveyor-General of North Carolina divided this land into twelve tracts, each containing 100,000 acres.² Tracts number one and three were assigned to McCulloh's associate, John Selwyn. Tracts number two and five were assigned to another associate, Arthur Dobbs of Ireland, who was later the governor of the colony of North Carolina. The warrants making this division of the land were dated March 3, 1745.³

Henry McCulloh and his associates were given until March 14, 1756, to fulfill the conditions of the Crown's warrants. Due to the Cherokee War the time was extended until March 25, 1760, and when it was impossible for them to meet the terms at that date, a compromise was worked out whereby they would be permitted to keep their rights to the land if they brought in one settler for every 200 acres.⁴

While McCulloh and his associates were struggling to fulfill the terms of their contract with the Crown, events were taking place in Northern Ireland and in the Middle Atlantic colonies that would eventually send settlers into their lands.

In Northern Ireland, or Ulster, was a group of people called the "Scotch-Irish". These people were Scots who had been brought over to Ireland by the Crown in an effort to tie England and Ireland more closely together. High rents, religious persecutions, and periodic crop failures caused many of the Scotch-Irish to become restless and they began as early as 1714 to emigrate to the American colonies.⁵

The largest number of the Scotch-Irish settled in the middle

¹ W. L. Saunders, Ed., *The Colonial Records of North Carolina*, Raleigh, N. C., 1886-90, Vol. V, pp. xxxiv-xxxvi.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. VII, pp. 9-11

⁴ *Op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. xxxiv-xxxvi

⁵ C. L. Thompson, *The Religious Foundations of America*, New York, 1917, p. 229; also G. S. Klett, *Presbyterians in Colonial Pennsylvania*, Philadelphia, 1937, pp. 10-24

Atlantic colonies, but after a time they began moving southward through the valley of Virginia to Piedmont North Carolina. This movement began about 1740 but the real tide of settlement came in 1750 and continued on up to the Revolutionary War.⁶

The area around Sugar Creek was located in the land of Tract Number Three which had been assigned to John Selwyn. The emigrants from Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and the other Middle Atlantic colonies, finding this land vacant settled on it, built their cabins, and began raising their crops. Though the unsettled conditions on the frontier prevented the landowners from fulfilling their contract with the Crown, they did not keep out the Scotch-Irish emigrants, as a matter of fact they caused many of them to move into North Carolina.

Apparently the first settlers were left alone by the agents of the landowners and the officials of the colonial government, but in 1760 the colonial government began seeking to collect taxes from them and get them to serve in the colonial militia.

When the governor's duly appointed officers attempted to collect the taxes the settlers in the Sugar Creek community retorted that they belonged to the colony of South Carolina and did not owe taxes to North Carolina. They also told the officials of the South Carolina government that they were North Carolinians when the colony of South Carolina came into their community to collect the taxes.

The governor of North Carolina, Arthur Dobbs, entered into correspondence with the governor of South Carolina and tried to work out a satisfactory solution of the problem. Finally he petitioned the king to settle the dispute by ordering the boundary line between the two colonies surveyed and established. In the petition he sent to the king he wrote:

. . . We further beg leave most humbly to represent to your Majesty in Council excepting those Lawless people who are settled upon Sugar and Reedy Creeks and have been before mentioned as the cause of those disturbances it would be far most easy and agreeable to all the North East side of the present Boundary Line to remain annexed to this Government as by our Constitution they can have Justice administered at their doors. . . 7

⁶ *North Carolina*, a Guide to the Old North State, Chapel Hill, N. C., 1939, p. 36; C. G. Davidson, *Piedmont Partisan*, Davidson, N. C., 1951, pp. 3-5

⁷ Saunders, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 778

Sugar and Reedy creeks are located in the area originally covered by the Sugar Creek congregation. There are two Sugar Creeks mentioned in the old deeds and shown on the earliest maps of Mecklenburg County. One is called "Big Sugar Creek" and the other "Little Sugar Creek". Big Sugar Creek is today called "Irvin's Creek" and Little Sugar Creek is known as "Sugar Creek". These two creeks unite south of Charlotte and flow into the Catawba River. Reedy Creek flows east, rising from springs near the present villages of Newell and Hickory Grove and the junction of the Robinson Church and Lawyer's roads, to Rocky River, joining the river between Back Creek and McKee's Creek.

In 1767, it was reported to the colonial Council that there were look after his father's interests. He went to Rowan County and worked out settlements with the people who had moved into his father's lands.

George Augustus Selwyn, who had inherited his father's property, asked young McCulloh to serve as his agent and to collect the money that was due him from the people who had settled on his property.

H. E. McCulloh did not want to serve as Selwyn's agent because he knew the reputation of the people with whom he would be dealing.⁸ His father, however, prevailed upon him to help Mr. Selwyn and so, he reluctantly consented.

Just about the time McCulloh was ready to move into Tract Number Three to settle with the people there new trouble broke out. This was related in a communication sent to Governor Dobbs on October 8, 1762:

. . . And these Informants further say, that though the Settlers on Sugar and Reedy Creeks live in the part of . . . in this province, no officer or Justice from either Province dare meddle with them, their number rendering them formidable, there being near 150 of their families settled together, in General, and indeed almost all together people of desperate fortune, and without any property or possession but that of the said patentees Lands which they hold by force; who unite together to repel what they call an injury offered any one of them . . .

. . . .

Sometime ago upon Complaint being made to the County Court of Anson by Townsend Robertson the then High Sheriff of that

⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. VII, pp. 12-34

County, that he had been abused and Insulted by some of these settlers on Sugar and Reedy Creeks, in the Execution of the Duty of his office Orders were given to him to raise the *posse Comitatus* to apprehend them of which they having notice collected themselves together and upon his and his Associates endeavoring to execute such orders and their beginning to behave in a riotous manner the said Sheriff in the Kings Name commanded the peace upon which they damned the King and his peace, and beat and wounded several of those whom the Sheriff had called to his Assistance; . . .⁹

There were two reasons why these Scotch-Irish settlers felt that they had a right to the lands on which they were living. The first was that the colonial government of South Carolina was alleged to have made them certain promises:

. . . Another reason why these people have been induced to keep possession of the lands belonging to Governor Dobbs and Mr. Selwyn, and claim the sanction of the South Bounds without any other rights that what they may obtain from the South Government, is the report industriously spread amongst them from South Carolina that his Majesty's Receiver General in that province or any claiming authority under him would make no demand for Quitrents due upon any Lands held above Crane Creek, which is above eight or ten miles below Waxhaw Settlement in North Carolina and almost thirty miles from Sugar and Reedy Creeks. . . .¹⁰

The second reason is suggested by Professor Wertenbaker, who wrote:

. . . Those settlers whom the patentees had brought over from Europe, paying their ocean fare and other expenses, were morally as well as legally bound to pay for their holdings. For the squatters the case was quite different. The government had made these enormous grants with the sole purpose of encouraging settlement and the McCulloh associates were to receive land only for services performed. Was it right, after they had fallen far short of what they had promised, that they should take advantage of families who had moved in of their own volition and at their own expense? In equity and in accordance with old custom it was the settler who should have had title, not the associates . . .¹¹

Mecklenburg County was set off out of Anson County near the end of the year 1762.¹² This was done to settle the boundary question

⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, p. 795

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 795-796

¹¹ T. J. Wertenbaker, *The Old South*, New York, 1942, p. 336

¹² D. A. Tompkins, *History of Mecklenburg County*. . . , Charlotte, N. C., 1903, Vol. I, p. 29

and to quiet the disturbances in that section. On the twenty-sixth of February, 1763, Moses Alexander, who had been appointed High Sheriff, and Robert Harris, who had been named Clerk of Court, took office and the county began to function as a new unit in the colonial government of North Carolina.¹³

During the summer of 1764 Henry Eustace McCulloh paid a visit to the tracts of land belonging to Governor Dobbs and George Augustus Selwyn. This trip was made in order that he might become familiar with the territory and size up the situation he was to deal with. He reported that on this visit “. . . he was given to understand that many of the settlers upon Mr. Selwyn’s Land and the late Governor’s intended to hold to the South (. . .) and oppose their running any lines; . . .”¹⁴

Despite this evident opposition McCulloh planned to return to Mecklenburg in January, 1765. He was delayed, however, until March when he arrived on Tract Number Three “. . . to defend the Cause of his Employer, . . .”¹⁵ As he and the members of his party attempted to begin surveying the lands and to collect the quit-rents due Selwyn they were met with armed resistance. Hoping to arrive at a peaceful settlement McCulloh asked the settlers to meet him at Abraham Alexander’s house on Sugar Creek. The next day, when he arrived at the meeting place “. . . he found 150 persons assembled as near as he could judge: . . .”¹⁶

These settlers, armed with their rifles, and irritated by McCulloh’s demands and attitude, beat John Frohock, who was McCulloh’s surveyor, and told him “. . . the best usage he could expect to meet with would be to be tied Neck and heels and be carried over the Yadkin, and that he might think himself happy, if he got off so . . .”¹⁷

This incident started what McCulloh facetiously called “The Sugar Creek War.”¹⁸ When Governor William Tryon ordered him “. . . to desist from any steps in Law to disposes [the settlers] . . . settled on Lands of George Selwyn, Esqr. . . .”¹⁹ he reported that he did not recollect making any remarks to aggravate the settlers except

13 *Ibid.*, p. 30

14 Saunders, *op. cit.*, Vol. VII, p. 18

15 *Ibid.*, p. 20

16 *Ibid.*, p. 21

17 *Ibid.*, p. 22

18 *Ibid.*, p. 32

19 *Ibid.*, p. 6

"...now and then telling them (what he thought) that they were a parcel of Blockheads;..."²⁰

The struggle between the "squatters" and the patentees went on for several years and some of the land titles on Tract Number Three were not settled until after the Revolutionary War.²¹

During 1765, McCulloh, as Selwyn's agent, donated 360 acres to the commissioners of Mecklenburg County to be used as the county seat. A court house, stocks and a prison were to be erected on the site.

In 1767 it was reported to the colonial Council that there were 1600 white taxables in Mecklenburg County and that these were "Mostly Presbyterians."²²

The next year, on the land given by Selwyn, a town was laid off and named Charlotte, in honor of the wife of King George.

These Scotch-Irish settlers came to North Carolina down "The Great Road" which ran from Philadelphia to the Yadkin River. This road passed through the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, crossed the James River at Looney's Ferry and joined the Catawba Trading Path at the Yadkin.²³

The famous "Conestoga" wagons, developed by German refugees who settled in Pennsylvania, were used to haul their families and their household goods.²⁴ They brought with them cattle and horses, furniture and cooking utensils, and everything else they could to make their new homes as livable as possible under the circumstances.²⁵

Claiming the unsettled lands of Selwyn, they soon erected their modest log cabins, plowed and planted their fields, and began the precarious process of earning their daily bread.²⁶

Some of these settlers soon got titles for their lands, but it is an interesting fact that, according to the deeds recorded in the Mecklenburg County Courthouse, most of them did not secure deeds

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 23

²¹ Wertebaker, *op. cit.*, p. 338

²² Saunders, *op. cit.*, Vol. VII, p. 541

²³ F. B. Kegley, *Kegley's Virginia Frontier*, Roanoke, Va., The Southwest Virginia Historical Society, 1938, p. 178

²⁴ Information furnished by Oliver Sprout of Lancaster, Pa., a member of the Lancaster County (Pa.) Historical Society, on August 7, 1952. In 1755, Lancaster Co. furnished 147 Conestoga wagons, with four horses for each, for Gen. Braddock's expedition against the French.

²⁵ See for an example of the goods owned by pioneers, the Inventory of the estate of the Rev. Alexander Craighead, on file in the North Carolina Historical Commission, Raleigh, N. C. This inventory was made November 21, 1766.

²⁶ G. G. Johnson, *Ante-Bellum North Carolina*, Chapel Hill, N. C., 1937, Chapter VIII.

until the first of the year 1767 and some of them did not secure a clear title until many years later.

Though called "lawless" and "people of desperate fortune" by the colonial authorities, these Scotch-Irish pioneers were a hardy, courageous group. They braved the dangers of the frontier, travelled the inadequate, primitive roads and trails, and stood firmly for what they considered their rights against the colonial government. In these early years the foundations for their break with the mother-country was laid and the first movement toward independence was begun.

Too high a tribute to their endurance, their courage, and their character, cannot be paid by those who have entered into the fruits of their labors, or inherited the freedom for which they sought and for which many of them risked their lives.

CHAPTER II

THE CHURCH

It is apparent from the history of the Scotch-Irish that wherever they went, as soon as a sufficient group had gathered, they banded themselves into "societies", or congregations, for the worship of God.¹

As early as 1744 the Presbyterians in North Carolina were petitioning the Synod of Philadelphia for help and for a minister to "correspond" with them.² The Synod ordered the Reverend John Thomson to correspond with these petitioners. In 1751 Mr. Thomson visited Piedmont North Carolina and lived there for about two years in what is now southern Iredell County. He died sometime between May, 1752, and May, 1753.³

On May 24, 1753, the Synod of Philadelphia had another petition before it and took the following action:

It being reported to the Synod that there is a supplication from Carolina, the Synod defer that with the affair of Virginia, till our next *sederunt*.

. . . .

. . . , at three o'clock, P.M. . . .

. . . .

. . . The Synod recommends it to Messrs. McMordie and Donaldson to show a special regard to the vacancies in North Carolina, especially betwixt Atkin and Catoba rivers, in giving them a considerable part of the time they spend in those back parts.⁴

There is no indication in the minutes of the Synod as to whether or not these two ministers carried out this recommendation.

There was at this time a division in the Presbyterian Church in America. In 1741 the Church had divided into two synods, one called the Synod of Philadelphia, the other the Synod of New York. The Synod of Philadelphia was sometimes referred to as the "Old Side" and the Synod of New York was called the "New Side".⁵

This split was caused by disagreements that had been growing

1 See C. A. Hanna, *The Scotch-Irish*, 2 Vols., New York, 1902; also W. M. Engles *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, Philadelphia, 1841; G. S. Klett, *op. cit.*

2 Engles, *op. cit.*, p. 173

3 *Ibid.* p. 208

4 *Ibid.*, pp. 208-209

5 Klett, *op. cit.*, pp. 147, 157-158; L. J. Trinterud, *The Forming Of An American Tradition*, Philadelphia, 1949, p. 169

in intensity for several years and which came to a head when the Synod met in 1741.

The causes of this break were disagreements over subscription to the Westminster standards,⁶ the examinations of ministers to be received into the Church,⁷ the question of ministers and probationers intruding into the congregations served by other ministers or vacant churches in neighboring presbyteries,⁸ the education of ministers,⁹ and, finally, the Great Awakening, a revival that swept over the colonies for several years before and after 1741.¹⁰

The Old Side believed that all ministers ought to give an unqualified subscription to the Westminster standards.¹¹ The New Side believed that some doctrines taught in the Standards were essential but that some were not.¹²

In the matter of the examination of those to be received as ministers in the Church, the Old Side wanted to exercise strict control and so it stood for the examination of all such men by the Synod.¹³ The New Side held that each presbytery should have the right of examining those to be received.¹⁴

Under the influence of the Great Awakening and because the New Side brethren were more aggressive in training men for the ministry their ministers and probationers began traveling widely and preaching wherever they found opportunity to do so. The Old Side resented these "intrusions", as they called them, and tried to stop them by passing overtures against them in the Synod.¹⁵

Professor Trinterud asserts that the Old Side group ". . . refused to consider anyone an educated minister if he were not from a Scottish university . . ." ¹⁶ The New Side group, facing the situation realistically, began educating ministers in a college founded by William Tennent, Sr., and by training those who could not attend the college in their own congregations. These were referred to as having had a "private education".¹⁷

6 Engles, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-93, 96, 116-117, 125, 155-156, etc

7 *Ibid.*, pp. 92, 96, 107, 108-109, 113, 116-117, 139-140, 149-152, 156, etc.

8 *Ibid.*, pp. 133, 136, 144-145, 152, 155-158, etc.

9 *Ibid.*, pp. 139-140, 144

10 *Ibid.*, pp. 108-109, 156-167

11 *Ibid.*, p. 125

12 *Ibid.*, p. 92; see also L. J. Trinterud, *The Forming of An American Tradition*, Philadelphia, 1949, p.49

13 *Ibid.*, p. 144

14 *Ibid.*, pp. 144, 149, 151

15 *Ibid.*, pp. 133, 136, etc.

16 Trinterud, *op. cit.*, p. 64

17 Engles, *op. cit.*, p. 146. etc.

To defeat the New Side men the Old Side began introducing overtures before the Synod designed to hamper both the work of the "Log College" and the private education of ministers carried on by the New Side.¹⁸

The final cause of the schism in the Church was the Great Awakening.¹⁹ This was a revival that began in the Presbyterian Church about 1729 and continued until about 1750.²⁰ The Old Side was bitterly opposed to the revival, while the New Side men were its active leaders.²¹ The New Side ministers antagonized the Old Side by accusing them of being unconverted.²² The Old Side retaliated as best it could but the revival spread throughout the Middle Colonies and the New Side grew steadily while the Old Side gradually lost adherents.²³

When the Synod of Philadelphia (Old Side) failed to come to their aid, due to a shortage of ministers, the settlers in Piedmont Carolina turned to the Synod of New York (New Side). On September 26, 1754, the following action was taken:

The Synod taking into consideration the destitute condition of Virginia and North Carolina, as it hath been represented unto them, do appoint Messrs. Beatty, Bostwick, Lewis, and Thane, each of them to make a visit to those parts for the space of three months, and the seasons to be agreed upon by themselves. 24

Two of these men, Messrs. Beatty and Thane, fulfilled their appointments, and Mr. Thane went as far south as the ". . . fork of the Broad and Saluda Rivers . . ." ²⁵ in South Carolina. This must have taken him to and through Sugar Creek, for the main trading path, as it was called, ran from the north to Charleston, South Carolina, through that settlement.

There is now no way of determining the exact time Beatty and Thane were in Piedmont North Carolina except to say that they made their visit between September 27, 1754, and October 1, 1755.²⁶

During the summer of 1755 Governor Dobbs paid a visit to western North Carolina. In August of that year he wrote a letter

18 *Ibid.*, pp. 139-140, 145-146, 151, 156, etc.

19 Trinterud, *op. cit.*, p. 135

20 *Ibid.*, p. 150

21 Engles, *op. cit.*, pp. 155-158 (This refers especially to the Protestation introduced by the Rev. Robert Cross.)

22 Trinterud, *op. cit.*, p. 89

23 *Ibid.*, p. 169

24 Engles, *op. cit.*, p. 260

25 R. Webster. *A History of the Presbyterian Church in America*....., Philadelphia, 1858, p. 586

26 Engles, *op. cit.*, pp. 260-261

to the Board of Trade in London and gave a description of the people who had settled on his lands around Rocky River.

Governor Dobbs wrote:

. . .
 There are at present 75 families on my Lands I viewed betwixt 30 and 40 of them, and except two there was not less than 5 or 6 to 10 children in each family, each going barefooted in their shifts in the warm weather, no woman wearing more than a shift and one thin petticoat; *they are a colony from Ireland removed from Pennsylvania, of what we call Scotch-Irish Presbyterians who with others in the neighboring Tracts had settled together in order to have a teacher of their own opinion and choice; . . .*²⁷

Here is a picture, drawn in words by the colonial governor, of the purpose of these Scotch-Irish settlers to have a teacher “. . . of their own opinion and choice; . . .” and of their determination to join with the neighboring settlers to make their desire a possibility.

Since Governor Dobbs' tract on Rocky River adjoined Tract Number Three, which covered the Sugar Creek community, this quotation, plus the visit from the two New Side missionaries, explains an action taken by the Synod of New York on October 3, 1755:

The Synod appoint Mr. Clark to take a journey into Virginia and North Carolina, to supply the *vacancies* there for six months, betwixt this and next Synod, particularly at *Rocky River* and *Sugar Creek*, at the *Hawfields*, *Enno*, *Ilico*, and *Dan Rivers*.²⁸

The Rocky River and Sugar Creek settlers, determined to have a minister, united and sent a petition to the Synod by the two missionaries who had recently visited them. Whether Messrs. Beatty and Thane organized these two groups of settlers into churches is not shown in the existing records, but it is clear that the people in the two communities had so far united themselves, for the purpose of obtaining a minister, that they could join in sending a petition to the Synod.

The summer of 1755 is about as definite a date as can be set for the beginning of the Sugar Creek Church. The evidence stated above bears out this conclusion. The church may not have been organized but the settlers had banded themselves for worship and to secure a minister.

²⁷ Saunders, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 355-356 (Italics added by author for emphasis).
²⁸ Engles, *op. cit.*, pp. 263-264 (Italics added by author for emphasis)

The Indian War of 1755, with General Braddock's defeat, on July 9, 1755, near the site of the present city of Pittsburg, threw all the frontier into a state of disorder. Caruthers wrote:

. . . "The Western parts of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, were left exposed to the incursions of the Savages; the frontier settlements were generally broken up and the inhabitants were driven into the interior" . . . Some fled in one direction, and some in another, as attachment to distant friends, or as prospects of safety or interest directed; . . .²⁹

The raids of the Indians upon the frontiers drove many settlers to the south. Some fled into North Carolina and even farther. The Reverend Hugh McAden, a licentiate of New Castle Presbytery (New Side), was sent to Carolina by his Presbytery in 1755. He was in Virginia when he heard the news of Braddock's defeat.³⁰ Leaving the valley of Virginia, McAden swung to the south-east and entered North Carolina somewhere near the present counties of Caswell or Person. About the first of September he started for the Yadkin River. On the twelfth of October he preached at Justice Alexander's, on Rocky River, and on the nineteenth at James Alexander's, on Sugar Creek, where there were, he wrote, ". . . some pretty serious, judicious people—may the Lord grant His blessing!"³¹

McAden mentions preaching in meeting-houses on several occasions but he does not refer to a meeting-house at either Rocky River or Sugar Creek when he writes of preaching in those communities. Though some of the settlements had erected meeting-houses it would appear from McAden's diary that in the fall of 1755 Sugar Creek had not as yet built a house of worship.

He also stated that when he revisited Cathey's meeting-house [now Thyatira] in December the people there wanted him to stay with them and divide his time between Cathey's and Rocky River.³² McAden did not think it wise to accept this call because the congregations were divided as to whether they wanted an Old or New Side minister.³³

A few years later the Presbytery of Hanover, which had been

²⁹ E. W. Caruthers, *The Life and Character of the Rev. David Caldwell, D.D.*, Greensborough, N. C., 1842, p. 27

³⁰ W. H. Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, New York, 1846, p. 163

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 165-169

³² *Ibid.*, p. 350

³³ *Ibid.*

organized by the Synod of New York in 1755, took the following action:

Cumberland, Jany 25th, 1758

. . . .

The Presbytery appoint Mr. Craghead to preach at Meherrin the next Sabbath, the Sabbath following at Nutbush, next at Rocky River and other places in Carolina at Discretion till next Presbytery³⁴

This "Mr. Craghead" was to become Rocky River and Sugar Creek's first settled minister.

Foote suggests that Craighead had been in North Carolina since the summer of 1755, having fled there, with members of his congregation in Virginia, to escape the Indian raids.³⁵ This may be true, but in the spring of 1756 the Presbytery of Hanover appointed him to supply ". . . the vacancies in Augusta county . . ." ³⁶ This does not sound as though Craighead was living in North Carolina.

Caruthers quoted one of Craighead's daughters as saying, that

. . . 'as they went out at one door the Indians came in at the other' — meaning that when they left the house the Indians were close at hand; and that they narrowly escaped with their life, without being able to take any of their property or furniture with them³⁷

There is no reason to doubt this statement but, from the size of Craighead's estate and the furniture he possessed, it would seem that when the scare was over he returned to his home in Virginia for a time, at least, and gathered his possessions before moving to North Carolina.³⁸

On the tenth of June, 1757, Craighead and one of his neighbors witnessed a sale of land in Augusta County, Virginia, ³⁹ and then on September 28, 1757, he was elected moderator of Hanover Presbytery, excused for his absence from the last meeting, and ordered to supply several churches in Virginia.⁴⁰

When the Presbytery of Hanover met on April 26, 1758, ". . . a call from Rocky River in North Carolina requesting that Mr. Crag-

³⁴ Minutes of Hanover Presbytery, January 25, 1758

³⁵ Foote, *op. cit.*, pp. 185-186

³⁶ Minutes of Hanover Presbytery, March 18, 1756

³⁷ Caruthers, *op. cit.*, p. 27

³⁸ See Alexander Craighead's Will; and the Inventory of his estate in the North Carolina Historical Commission Archives in Raleigh, N. C.

³⁹ Augusta County (Va.) Deed Books—Sale of land by Peter Wallace and wife to Francis McCowan, Yoeman, June 10, 1757

⁴⁰ Minutes of Hanover Presbytery, September 28, 1757

head might take the pastoral care of them . . .” was read, and also a letter to the Presbytery from Craighead stating that he wished to accept the call and that he wanted someone appointed to preside at his installation.⁴¹ The Presbytery “heartily” consented to this call for Mr. Craighead’s services and appointed a Mr. Martin to preside at the installation service.⁴²

For some unstated reason Mr. Martin did not preside at Mr. Craighead’s installation. When Hanover Presbytery met on September 27, 1758, and was informed that Mr. Martin had not been able to install Mr. Craighead, it appointed the Reverend William Richardson to perform the service as he passed through Rocky River on his way to serve as a missionary to the Cherokee Indians.⁴³

This service Mr. Richardson performed on November 6, 1758. An extract from Richardson’s diary shows how he fulfilled the Presbytery’s appointment:

. . . .

Wed. Novr. 1. rode to the Revd. Mr. Craighead in Anson County about 10 mi whom the Presbytery has ordered me to install we cannot be done this week.

Novr. 2. at Mr. Craighead’s. Not well today. This gentleman has been twice driven from his congregations in Virginia, has a large Family 6 Daughters and 2 sons.

Novr. 3. preached for him today, rode abt. 5 miles and gave notice for his installation on Monday,

Novr. 5. preached at Rocky River for Mr. Craighead in one of his houses. rode 20 miles today

Novr. 6. preached and installed Mr. Craighead, . . .⁴⁴

There is a tradition in the Sugar Creek community that Mr. Craighead was installed at Rocky River on Sunday morning and at Sugar Creek in the afternoon. There is no evidence for this in Mr. Richardson’s diary, which stated that he installed Mr. Craighead on Monday.

There is evidence that Mr. Craighead preached in more than one meeting-house, for, on November 5, 1758, Richardson wrote, as we have seen, “. . . preached at Rocky River for Mr. Craighead in one of his houses, rode 20 miles today . . .” This could have been Sugar Creek Church which was approximately ten miles south-west

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, April 26, 1758

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*, September 27, 1758

⁴⁴ *Diary and Journal of Rev. William Richardson, South Carolina, 1758-1759 (Original in the New York City Public Library.)*

of Rocky River. Whether by this time the Sugar Creek Presbyterians had erected a meeting-house will remain a conjecture, as will the question as to whether Richardson was referring to Sugar Creek or some other community. There is no known contemporary evidence that throws any further light on the matter.

As the population grew, the colonial authorities became more zealous in the collection of taxes, and it was shortly after the Reverend Alexander Craighead came to Rocky River and Sugar Creek that the disturbances described in Chapter One took place.

To settle the boundary line between North and South Carolina a large commission was appointed.⁴⁵ This commission contained two men who were a little later designated as trustees of the Rocky River Presbyterian Church.⁴⁶

These two men were Nathaniel Alexander and Robert Harris.⁴⁷ The fact that these men, trustees of Rocky River Church, were willing, in the summer of 1760, to cooperate with and serve the colonial government, caused Alexander Craighead to leave Rocky River and to devote his services to Sugar Creek.

When the united Synod of Philadelphia and New York met in Philadelphia on May 23, 1761, it had before it a supplication from Rocky River asking for supplies:

A supplication was brought in asking for supplies, from Hico, Hawfields, Enno, Coddle Creek, *Rocky River*, Davidson's Creek, and Lower Settlement, near the Atkin River, all in North Carolina, and particularly for *unsettled ministers or candidates*.⁴⁸

Mr. Craighead, as will be related in a later chapter, had had several clashes with the colonial authorities in Pennsylvania and Virginia. Now settled in North Carolina he wanted the members of his congregation to resist, not cooperate with the government.

Governor Dobbs, as a reward of their services, gave to the two trustees of Rocky River a title to the land on which their meeting house had been built. This deed was dated June 24, 1762. The deed itself is not recorded in the Mecklenburg County records, but a deed made in 1777 by Robert Harris refers to it and states ". . . which said deed bears date the 24th day of June, 1762. . . ."⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Saunders, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, pp. 778-796

⁴⁶ Mecklenburg County Deed Book, 10, p. 206 (Register of Deeds Office, Mecklenburg County Court House, Charlotte, N. C.)

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Engles, *op. cit.*, p. 310 (Italics added by author for emphasis)

⁴⁹ Mecklenburg County Deed Book 10, p. 210

The struggles between the colonial government and the landowners with the Scotch-Irish Presbyterian settlers continued. In 1764, Governor Dobbs wrote to the Secretary of the [Anglican] Society for Propagating the Gospel in London. His letter, dated March 29, said,

. . . .

I would recommend it to the Society to fix a missionary or schoolmaster who might be also established for Mecklenburg county, who are mostly now Presbyterians or other foreign Sectaries which may be of great use in those back western frontier settlements
. . . .⁵⁰

The Governor felt that a missionary from the Church of England would have a quieting effect upon the "Lawless" people of Mecklenburg and so he sent this appeal for help.

The Society responded to the Governor's plea in 1766 by sending out to North Carolina the Reverend Andrew Morton. Mr. Morton described his experiences in a letter which he wrote to the Secretary in London from Northhampton, North Carolina, on August 25, 1766:

Reverend Doctor,

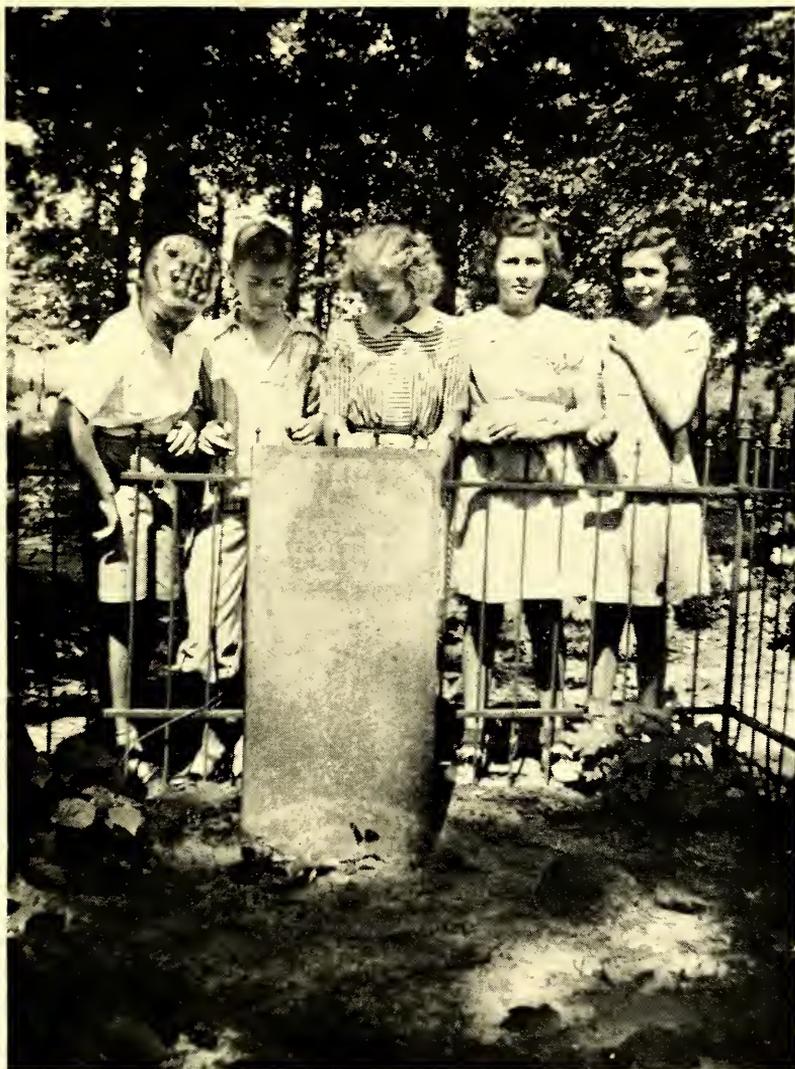
I wrote to you in June last, informing you of my Journey to my new Mission in Mecklenburg County — From Newbern I pursued my Journey to Cape Fear where I received such Intelligence as discouraged me from proceeding further — There I was well informed that *the Inhabitants of Mecklenburg are entire dissenters of the most rigid kind — That they had a solemn league and covenant teacher settled among them That they were in general greatly averse to the Church of England* — and that they looked upon a law lately enacted in this province for the better establishment of the Church as oppressive as the Stamp Act and were determined to prevent its taking place there, by opposing the settlement of any minister of the Church of England that might be sent amongst them — In short it was very evident that in Mecklenburg County I could be of little use to the honorable Society and I thought it but prudent to decline embroiling myself with an infatuated people to no purpose and trusting that the Venerable Society, upon a just representation of the matter would not be dissatisfied with my conduct. . . .

Andrew Morton 51

From this quotation we see that the fame of Alexander Craighead

⁵⁰ Saunders, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, p.1041

⁵¹ Saunders, *op. cit.*, Vol. VII, p. 252 (Italics added by author for emphasis.)



Alexander Craighead's Grave

and the loyal support his congregation was giving him were known down across the colony of North Carolina to the mouth of the Cape Fear River, opening into the Atlantic.

During this period all Dissenting churches, as all denominations were called which dissented from the established church, or Church of England, labored under many difficulties.

No minister of a dissenting church could perform a marriage ceremony until 1766 when the Provincial Assembly revised an earlier "Act concerning Marriages", but even then the fee involved was to go to the minister of the Church of England in the parish in which it was performed.⁵²

In 1764 the Assembly passed a law that gave the vestry in every North Carolina parish the power to levy a ten-shilling tax on all inhabitants of their parish for the purpose of building churches, encouraging schools, paying the clergy, and maintaining the poor.⁵³ It was to this law that the Reverend Andrew Morton referred in his letter, cited above.

There is an interesting picture drawn of the Presbyterian Church in North Carolina by the Reverend Charles Woodmason, who served as an Anglican clergyman in South Carolina from 1752 until 1773. Woodmason wrote, in 1765, of the Presbyterians:

. . . When the Church of England was established in Carolina, the Presbyterians made Great Struggles; but finding themselves too weak, they determined to effect that by Cunning (the Principles they work by, for they are all Moles) which Strength could not effect. Wherefore, as Parish Churches were built only along the Sea Coast, they built a Sett of Metting Houses quite back behind in the Interior Parts — . . . — If they could not suppress, they would *cramp* the Progress of the Liturgy and Church Establish'd. And accordingly did, erect Meeting Houses as before said⁵⁴

In their new settlements, and with money hard to earn, the Scotch-Irish found it difficult to attract ministers. It was necessary for several congregations to join themselves together in order that they might offer a minister an attractive salary.

In the records of the Presbyterian Church, as it developed in

⁵² Saunders, *op. cit.*, Vol. VII, pp. 432-433

⁵³ Walter Clark, Ed., *The State Records of North Carolina*, 16 Vols.; Goldsboro, North Carolina, 1895-1906, Vol. XXIII, p. 605

⁵⁴ Richard J. Hooker, editor, *The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution, The Journal and Other Writings of Charles Woodmason, Anglican Itinerant*, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1953, p. 80

North Carolina, there are almost no references to ministers salaries. The following, taken from the minutes of the Synod of Philadelphia and New York and dated May, 1767, is very illuminating:

The following congregations in North Carolina, viz. Sugar Creek, Fishing Creek, Bethel, the Jersey Settlement, Centre Congregation, Poplar Tent, and Rocky River united in a petition for one or more, of the Rev. Messrs. Spencer, Lewis, McWhorter, and James Caldwell, to be sent there, promising for their encouragement that the sum of eighty pounds be paid by any of these congregations in which he shall choose to spend half of his time, and another eighty pounds by the vacant congregations he shall supply; this petition being read, the several gentlemen mentioned in it were interrogated whether they would comply with this request to which each of them returned a negative answer.⁵⁵

Among the papers of Waightstill Avery, now in the Library of the University of Wisconsin, there is the following document, bearing no date and no signatures:

“To his Excellency William Tryon, Esquire, Captain General, Governor and Commander in Chief in and over the Province
The Petition and Address of the Inhabitants of McLenberg County of the Presbyterian Denomination humbly Sheweth
That we claim it as our incontestable Right to petition the Legislature of this Province for redress of Grievancies We therefore beg leave freely to represent ours trusting to your Laws and our Rights and Privileges and prevent all infractions of the same. We would inform you that there are about One Thousand Free-men of us, who hold to the established Church of Scotland, able to bear arms within the County of McLenberg. We declare ourselves faithful and loyal subjects firmly attached to his present Majesty and the government ready to defend his Majestys Dominions from hostile Invasions. We declare ourselves zealous to support Government and uphold the Courts of Justice that the Law may have its free course and Operation: And we appeal to his Excellency, the Governor how ready and cheerful we were to support government in time of insurrection.

We would by no means cast reflexion on our sister church of England: No let them worship God according to their consciences without molestation from us. We ask on our part that we may worship God according to our Consciences without molestation from them.

⁵⁵ Engles, *op. cit.*, p. 374

We now support two settled Presbyterian ministers in this parish. We feel it a grievance that the present law make us lible to still further burdened to support an episcopal Clergyman, especially as not one twentieth Part of the Inhabitants are of that profession. We think that if there were an episcopal clergy in his Parish his labors would be repetitious.

We feel ourselves highly agrieved by the exhorbant Powers of the vestry to tax us with the enormous sum of ten shillings each taxable, which is more than double the Charge of Government and that for Purposes, to which we ought by no means by compulsion.

We therefore think that under the present Law, the very Begin of a Vestry in this Parish will work a great grievance.

—————
 —————
 We further think that the Countys of McLenberg, Rowan and Tryon be wholly relieved from the Grevances of the Marriage and Vestry Acts it would greatly encourage the Settlements of the Frontiers, and make them a Stronger Barrier to the Interior Parts of the Province against a Savage Enemy.

We think it a grievance that this act inforces heavy Pinalties on our Clergy for marrying after publication of the banns by those made in their own Religious Assemblies where the Parties are best known.

We declare that the Marriage Act obstruct the natural and unalienable Rights of Marriage and tends to introduce Immorality.

We believe it subjects many to several Inconveniences one whereof is going into South Carolina to have the Ceremony preformed.

We pray that the premlé of this act may be defined, and that our Minister and Ministers may be from the penalties thereof, they respectively to the Confession of the Faith.

We pray we may be relieved from the Grevances of the Vestry Acts and the Acts for Supporting the episcopal Clergy.

We pray that, to those further grevances, You will in your Wisdom and Goodness, grant that redress which we enter in this legal and constitutional method.

And we assure your Excellency, Your Honor of the Council, and Honorable Speaker and Gentlemen of the House of Burgesses that we shall thereby be more ready to support that government under which we find most liberty. Your petitioners as in Duty bound shall ever Pray.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Papers of Waightstill Avery, Wisconsin Historical Society Library, Madison, Wis., paper IKK 117, no date

The date of this paper must be somewhere between 1769 and 1771 because there were not two Presbyterian ministers in Mecklenburg County until Joseph Alexander (1768) and Hezekiah James Balch (1769) came to Sugar Creek and Rocky River respectively, and Governor Tryon resigned in the summer of 1771.

Our Presbyterian forefathers in the colonies lived hard lives in those ruder days, facing not only the dangers inherent with living on the frontiers but troubles with the powers of Church and State. They were men and women of faith and hope and filled with an unconquerable courage and determination. Those of us who come after them, and live and worship where they lived and worshipped, can only bow our heads in reverent memory to what they did and endured that we might be free and enjoy the fruits of their labors and struggles.

CHAPTER III

SUGAR CREEK IN THE LATE COLONIAL AND REVOLUTIONARY WAR PERIODS

With the coming of Alexander Craighead to Sugar Creek between the years 1758-61 we enter into the first settled pastorate the Church enjoyed.

Craighead, according to Dr. Glasgow in the history of the Reformed Church in America,¹ was born near Donegal, Ireland, on the eighteenth of March, 1707, and was the son of the Rev. Thomas Craighead and his wife, Margaret. The Craigheads were originally from Scotland but some of the family moved to Ireland as early as 1658. Thomas Craighead and his father, Robert Craighead, were both Presbyterian ministers in Ireland, but in 1714 he and his brother-in-law, the Rev. William Holmes, came to America landing at Boston in October of that year.² He settled at first in Freetown, Mass., and in 1723 he moved to New Jersey, then on to Delaware and finally, in 1733, to Pennsylvania, where he became a member of the Synod of Philadelphia and of the Presbytery of Donegal.

Alexander Craighead studied the Classics and Theology under his father, and in 1734 was licensed and in 1735 ordained by Donegal Presbytery.³ His first and only charge in Pennsylvania was the Middle Octorara Presbyterian Church in Lancaster County. Before he settled in Lancaster County the Presbytery sent him "over the River" as a missionary and so he became the first clergyman to preach west of the Susquehanna River.⁴ He seems to have had a very quiet and uneventful ministry until after the death of his father in 1739. About this time the Great Awakening, often called the revival of 1740,⁵ under the leadership of Gilbert Tennent, Samuel Blair, and other ministers began to sweep across New England and the Middle Atlantic states.

In 1739 George Whitefield came to the colonies and became the most prominent exponent of revivalism. Alexander Craighead joined in all this and began, like the other revivalists, to preach in other

¹ W. M. Glasgow, *History of Reformed Presbyterian Church in America*, Baltimore, 1888, p. 464

² C. L. Thompson *op. cit.*, p. 229

³ Minutes of Donegal Presbytery, in Presbyterian Historical Society, Phila., for Oct. 17, 1734 and Nov. 19, 1735

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ C. H. Maxson, *The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies*, Chicago, p. 54

congregations whenever a pastor or a congregation would invite him to do so. In 1739 the Synod passed a resolution forbidding its members to preach "out of their own bounds"⁶ without the permission of their Presbytery.

On the fourth of November, 1740, Donegal Presbytery, meeting at the Forks of Brandywine, received a supplication from "the Rev^d. Mr. Francis Allison complaining of Mr. Craighead for intruding into y^e bounds of Congregⁿ without any invitation . . ." ⁷ The Presbytery also received a supplication from "Several members of Mr Craigheads Congregⁿ complaining of his male [bad] conduct in Several particulars, . . ." ⁸ The Presbytery adjourned to meet at Middle Octorara Church on the second Tuesday of December to judge of these complaints and ordered one of its members to cite Mr. Craighead to appear and answer these charges.

Whitefield mentions Craighead in his Journals and made the following entry on May 13, 1740:

Tuesday. In the morning preached at Wilmington to five thousand; and at Whiteclay Creek, in the evening, to three thousand . . . After sermon at Whiteclay Creek, I rode toward Nottingham with Mr. William Tennent, Mrs. Craghead*, and with Mr. Blair, all worthy ministers of the Lord Jesus, and with many others belonging to Philadelphia. We rode through the woods singing, and praising God. and got to a Quaker's house at midnight.⁹

Perhaps Craighead's first association with Whitefield is indicated in this quotation from his Journal:

Tuesday, Nov. 20 (1739). Reached New Brunswick about six last night; and preached today, at noon, . . . Among others who came to hear the words, were several ministers, whom the Lord has been pleased to honour, in making them instruments of bringing many sons to glory.¹⁰

When the Presbytery met at Middle Octorara Craighead was ready for them. He had prepared a paper denouncing the Presbytery and the character of its ministers, calling some members by their names and charging them with every form of moral failure. While Presbytery was meeting in the church, Craighead, aided by David Alexander

⁶ Engles, *op. cit.*, p. 144

⁷ Minutes of Donegal Presbytery, November 4, 1740

⁸ *Ibid.*

* Three versions of the spelling are used in the records of this early period, Craghead, Craghead, and Craighead.

⁹ Louis Tyerman, *The Life of the Rev. George Whitefield*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1890, Vol. 1, p. 386

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 331

and Samuel Finley (Alexander was an ordained minister charged with the same offense of making "intrusions" and Finley was a young licentiate), harangued the large crowd that had gathered for the occasion in a "tent" or shelter that was used for open-air assemblies. This mob, responding to Craighead's tirades, raised such a tumult that the Presbytery had to adjourn from the church to a private home "that we might get our business carried on in a peaceable and Christian manner, . . ."11 The next day the Presbytery came again to the meeting house and found Craighead preaching on Matthew 15:14: "Let them alone, they be blind, leaders of the blind."12 The trial finally came to a climax when the people raised such an uproar that the Presbytery was "obliged to break up in an abrupt manner."13 The Presbytery voted to suspend Craighead and ordered "that if Mr Craighead write to any member Signifying his penitential Sorrow & Concern for his past male conduct & his willingness to satisfy the Pby., for it, that that member before our next convey Sd. Sa^{fn} to the Moderator. . . ."14

Mr. Craighead continued to serve the Middle Octorara Church and when the Synod of Philadelphia met on May 27, 1741, with barely one half of its members present, he is listed as present and as a member of Donegal Presbytery.15 Immediately after the Synod convened at 9 A.M. the second day the right of Craighead to sit as a member of the Synod was challenged and his case became a "test case" for those who held to the side of revivalism. This went on, with a recess for Sunday, May 31, until 3 P.M. on Monday, June 1, 1741, when the Synod reconvened and the Rev. Robert Cross introduced a protestation, signed by twelve ministers and eight elders sitting in the Synod, aimed at making the revivalists either surrender or withdraw.

The minutes of the Synod express what happened in these words:

Upon this it was canvassed by the former protesting brethren, whether they or we were to be looked upon as the Synod. We maintained that they had no right to sit whether they were the major or minor number. Then they motioned that we should examine this point, and that the major number was the Synod. They were found to be the minor party, and upon this they withdrew. After this the Synod proceeded to business.16

11 Minutes of Donegal Presbytery, *op cit.*, p. 302 ff

12 *Ibid.*

13 *Ibid.*, p. 302 ff

14 *Ibid.*, p. 307

15 Engles, *op. cit.*, pp. 156-157

16 *Ibid.*

These now excluded, and minority, members of the Synod met the next day, June 2, and formed themselves into Presbyteries, with Gilbert Tennent, Wm. Tennent, Jun., Eleazar Wales, John Rowland, Wm. Tennent, Sen., and Richard Treat in the Presbytery of New Brunswick, and Samuel Blair, Alexander Creaghead, David Alexander, and Charles Tennent in the Presbytery of Londonderry.¹⁷

Dr. Hodge, in a footnote on page 193 of the second volume of his history, says: "Indeed the four Tennents, Mr. Blair, and Mr. Wales were the only men of any weight of character who belonged to that party. Mr. Creaghead was violent and bigoted and soon left the church . . ." ¹⁸

When we remember Craighead's subsequent labors in Virginia and North Carolina we cannot so lightly dismiss him. Because of his background he had an ardent admiration for the church in Scotland and especially for two of its leaders, who were rebels themselves, namely, Richard Cameron, who was the leader of the Scotch Covenanters and who was killed July 22, 1680, by royal troops for having disowned the King's authority over the church, and Ebenezer Erskine who was the founder of the Scottish Secession Church. Erskine preached a sermon in 1733 in which he claimed for Christ the sole headship of the Church and denounced all secular control over the Church, that the Church should be free from all external authority and be "the freest society in the world." It is interesting that the same year Erskine was deposed from the ministry by the General Assembly in Scotland, Alexander Craighead was suspended from the ministry by Donegal Presbytery in Pennsylvania.

When the split came, in 1741, in the Presbyterian Church Craighead tried to get those who withdrew with him to adopt, as a part of their testimony and of the Confession of Faith, the renewal of the National and Solemn League and Covenant. These covenants had been adopted by the Presbyterian Church in Scotland in 1580 and in 1643, and those who swore to the covenants promised to defend the Presbyterian Faith, as the Christian Doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures. Craighead felt the Covenants were still binding but the Presbytery to which he now belonged did not agree with

¹⁷ C. Hodge, *Constitutional History of the Pres. Church in the U.S.A.*, Philadelphia, 1851, pp. 161-162

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 103

him and so, in September, 1742, he withdrew from the Presbytery.¹⁹

Thompson, in his history, says:

Three ministers of the American Synod—Alexander Craighead and David Alexander, both of Donegal Presbytery, and John Cross, of New Brunswick Presbytery—were in agreement with the Reformed Presbyterians (or Covenanters) as to the perpetual obligation of the Covenants, while the rest, in so far as they had any distinct opinion in the matter, were satisfied with the Revolution Settlement. In 1740 Craighead was suspended for making the Covenants a term of communion in his congregation at Middle Octorara, Pa., and for other matters growing out of his zealous advocacy of the Awakening. After the exclusion of the Presbytery of New Brunswick from the Synod of Philadelphia he pleaded with them to renew the Covenants, and when they refused he turned to the Scottish Reformed Presbytery, and asked helpers for America²⁰

From 1743 until 1749, according to Glasgow, Mr. Craighead was the president of the Covenanter society in Pennsylvania.²¹ Sometime prior to May, 1743, Craighead seems to have written a paper that disturbed the Governor of Pennsylvania, for Thomas Cookson, one of he king's justices in Lancaster County, brought the paper before the Synod of Philadelphia on the twenty-fifth of May. The Synod deferred all other business and listened to the reading of the paper and then took the following action:

. . . it was unanimously agreed; That it is full of treason, sedition, and distraction, and grievous perverting of the sacred oracles to the ruin of all societies and civil government, . . . ; and we hereby unanimously, with the greatest sincerity, declare that we detest this paper, and with it all principles and practices that tend to destroy the civil and religious rights of mankind, or to foment or encourage sedition or dissatisfaction with the civil government that we are now under, or rebellion, treason, or any thing that is disloyal. And if Mr. Alexander Craighead be the author we know nothing of the matter. And we hereby declare, that he hath been no member of our society for some time past, nor do we acknowledge him as such though we cannot but heartily lament that any man that was ever called a Presbyterian should be guilty of what is in this paper. . . .²²

¹⁹ A. Craighead, *The Reasons of Mr. Alexander Craighead's receding from the present Judicatures of This Church*—B. Franklin, Philadelphia, 1743

²⁰ R. E. Thompson, *A History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States*, New York, 1895, p. 41

²¹ Glasgow, *op. cit.*, p. 778

²² Engles, *op. cit.*, p. 163

On November 11, 1743, Craighead gathered all the members of the Covenanter societies together at Middle Octorara in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and with drawn swords they renewed the National and Solemn League covenants as their spiritual forebears had done. As a part of this ceremony they adopted, along with many others, this paragraph:

9thly, We do likewise enter our Testimony against George the I. his having any legal Right to rule over this Realm, because he being an outlandish Lutheran; likewise against George the II. for their being sworn Prelaticks, the Head of Malignants, and Protector of Sectarian Hereticks, and Electory Princes of Brunswick, in chusing of new Emperers, which is their giving their Power to the Beast; and for their Confederacy with Popish Princes, directly contrary to the second Commandment; and for their want of Spiritual and National Qualifications, as is above Said; and for their being established Head of the Church by the Laws of England. . . . 23

Because of the spirit of this paper and this action Charles A. Hanna says of Craighead: "Mr. Craighead was the foremost American of his day in advocating those principles of civil liberty under a republican form of government, to confirm which the Revolutionary War was fought."²⁴

Craighead wanted the people to be allowed to choose "the lawful Supreme Magistrate", because they could thereby be assured that he would profess and allow "the true Reformed Presbyterian Religion", and would grant them the "religious Liberties wherewith Christ hath made us free", and would not "Usurp the Royal Prerogatives of the glorious Lamb of God." In this we see clearly Craighead's spiritual kinship with Cameron and Erskine of Scotland.

With this "declaration of independence" Craighead drops from view, except for a brief reference we find to him in some of the literature of the times, i.e., Gilbert Tennent's, *Examiner Examined* and T. Prince, Junior's, *The Christian History*, for the year 1743, and the minutes of the Synod of Philadelphia for May 30, 1746.

In 1749 he left the Covenanters and sometime after September, 1751,²⁵ moved to Augusta County in Virginia. Waddell, in his book,

²³ A. Craighead, *Renewal of the Covenants*, Nov. 11, 1743, printed by B. Franklin, 1744.

²⁴ Hanna, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 40

²⁵ See John Cuthbertson's Diary, Pres. Hist. Soc., Philadelphia (September 24, 1751)

Annals of Augusta County, writes "Mr. Craighead came from Pennsylvania and settled on the Cowpasture River, near Windy Cove (now Bath C.,) in 1749."²⁶ *The William and Mary College Quarterly*, for January, 1927, has an article by Charles E. Kemper in which he states:

Alexander Craighead patented land in Lancaster County, Pa., in 1734, in 1753, Rev. Alexander Craighead, a Presbyterian minister, was licensed by the county court at Augusta County, Virginia, to perform the rites of matrimony.²⁷

Rev. A. J. Ponton, in the history which he compiled of the Windy Cove Presbyterian Church, writes:

In the "annals of Bath County", page 28, there is a record of 1080 acres of land obtained by patent by Adam Dickinson in 1750. In 1754 he sold to Alexander Craighead 311 acres for 150 pounds. In 1765, Mr. Craighead sold the same land to Andrew Sitlington for 200 pounds. . . .²⁸

Dr. R. B. Woodworth dismisses Craighead in these words:

Donegal Presbytery became a storm center of fratricidal disturbances which marred even its sessions. The firebrand was Alexander Craighead who preached an abusive sermon from Matt. XV; 14, intruded into other men's congregations without permission, finally renounced the jurisdiction of the Presbytery and was suspended on December 11, 1740 for contumacy, slander and the imposition of new terms of communion and baptism, became pastor of Mossy Creek Church in Augusta County in 1749, fled in 1755 to North Carolina with his congregation before the Indian Menace, and died in March 1760 as pastor of the Rocky River Church.²⁹

None of these men record the fact that Craighead lived at first about two miles south of the present city of Lexington, Virginia, and that some time prior to June 10, 1752, his neighbor Richard Woods, one of the magistrates of Augusta County, "administered the Oaths of Allegiance" to him and "allowed him to omit what part of them he thought fit."³⁰

On June 10, 1752, Gov. Dinwiddie, of Virginia, ordered the

²⁶ J. A. Waddell, *Annals of Augusta County*, Richmond, 1888, p. 69

²⁷ *Wm. and Mary College Quarterly*, 2nd Ser., Vol. 7, pp. 58-59

²⁸ A. J. Ponton, *A History of Windy Cove Presbyterian Church . . .*, Staunton, Virginia, (n. d.), pp. 4-5

²⁹ R. B. Woodworth, *A History of the Presbytery of Winchester*, Staunton, 1947, p. 59

³⁰ W. L. Hall, ed., *Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia*, Richmond, 1945, Vol. V., p. 399

Sheriff of Augusta County to "apprehend and secure in safe custody the said Creaghead, and immediately bring him before the Governor in Williamsburg."³¹ The governor issued this order because two of the vestrymen of the Church of England in Augusta Parish had appeared before the Governor's Council and testified that "the Rev^d Mr Alexander Creaghead has taught and maintained treasonable positions, and preached and published pernicious doctrines."³²

The evidence is that Craighead, being warned that the two vestrymen were going to lodge this complaint, went to Philadelphia in May, 1752, and secured a letter of recommendation from two of his former ministerial brethren of the Synod of Philadelphia and also a certificate from the Governor of Pennsylvania that entire credit could be given to the testimonial letter.³³ At this meeting the Synod assigned Craighead to supply for the Rev. John Craig, who was an Old Side minister in the Valley of Virginia.³⁴

When he came back from Philadelphia, Craighead and his friend, Richard Woods, went even further to get matters straightened out. On August 21, 1752, Craighead took the oath over again, subscribed the test and the 39 articles, except what was exempted by the Act of Toleration.³⁵ That same day Richard Woods petitioned the county court on behalf of himself "and others" that "a Presbyterian Meeting House in Forks of James River, . . . , be recorded a Public Place of Worship."³⁶ The court ordered this done and it is so recorded in the Augusta County Orders of Court.

When the Governor's Council met in Williamsburg on October 17, 1752, Mr. Craighead appeared to answer the complaint made against him in June. He brought his testimonial letter and his certificate and the Council ordered

That the said Alexander Creaghead be permitted to preach, upon fully recanting his disloyal Principles, and the Doctrines contained in the Book delivered to the Governor, and taking the Oaths to the Government openly in the General Court.³⁷

The records of the General Court were destroyed by fire so we do not know when, if ever, Craighead fulfilled this order.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 407-8

³⁴ Engles, *op. cit.*, p. 204

³⁵ Augusta Co. Court Records, Order Book III, p. 326

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Hall, *op. cit.*, pp. 407-8

On the eighth day of March, 1753, Alexander Craighead purchased 553 acres of land from Benjamin Borden, who held one of the large land grants in the Valley.³⁸ This land adjoined the plantations of Richard Woods and Joseph Lapsley, who seem to have been the guardians of the "Forks of James Meeting House."³⁹

Because of his relationship with Richard Woods and Joseph Lapsley, it is natural to suppose that Craighead preached in the nearby meeting house. It was a year and a half after purchasing land near Lexington that Craighead bought 310 acres on the Cowpasture River. The Augusta County Deed Books show that on the twenty-sixth of September, 1754, Alexander Creaghead, clerk, bought, for £150, 310 acres in Cowpasture from Adam and Catherine Dickinson.⁴⁰

The actual records show that Craighead sold his 553 acres in Forks of James community to John Bowyer in 1761⁴¹ and his 310 acres on the Cowpasture were sold in 1768 by his executors as ordered in his will.⁴²

At a meeting of the Synod of New York, held in Philadelphia on October 3, 1753, Alexander Craighead is listed as an absent member.⁴³ The earliest records of the Presbytery of New Castle, or Londonderry, as it was first called, have been lost, so we do not know the exact date that Craighead rejoined the New Side Presbyterians, or the Synod of New York.

It would seem to be a logical conclusion, though there is no known record that would confirm it, that on his trip to Pennsylvania, in the spring of 1752, Mr. Craighead renewed his membership in New Castle Presbytery, even though he appealed to the more conservative ministers of the Synod of Philadelphia for a letter of recommendation. The members of the Synod of Philadelphia, because they were less aggressive and therefore caused less disturbance, were more acceptable to the colonial governments. In 1745, Governor William Gooch, of Virginia, had assured the Synod of Philadelphia that its missionaries, producing proper testimonials, would have his protection.⁴⁴

In the Presbyterian Historical Foundation in Montreat the Diary of the Rev. John Craig, the first settled minister in colonial

38 Augusta Co. Deed Book 5, p. 257

39 Kegley, *op. cit.*, p. 146

40 Augusta County Deed Book 6, p. 541

41 Augusta County, Va., Deed Book 9, p. 274

42 *Ibid.*, Book 15, p. 115

43 Engles, *op. cit.*, p. 249

44 *Ibid.*, p. 183

Augusta County, Virginia, can be read. There is no record or mention of Alexander Craighead in this diary but that is not surprising, for John Craig was an ardent supporter of the "Old Side" viewpoint and was one of the signers of "the protest" of 1741 that drove the "New Side" ministers and elders out of the Synod of Philadelphia. There are some references to "New Side" ministers who intruded into the bounds of his congregation but he does not call these men by name. In 1758, when the Old Side and New Side were united, the new Synod of Philadelphia and New York (a combination of the names of the divided Synods) put Craig and Craighead in the same Presbytery. In 1759 Craig and his friends asked to be made a separate Presbytery, evidently because ill-feeling still existed, but this request the Synod denied.

According to tradition, if he ever was installed, Craighead remained the pastor of Windy Cove until the Presbytery of Hanover, on April 26, 1758, consented to his accepting the call from "Rocky River in North Carolina". Waddell says:

It is said that he (Craighead) had a double motive for leaving Virginia—to escape the savages, and also the disabilities imposed here upon Dissenting ministers. He was a man of ardent temper, and could not brook the idea of holding the frontier and protecting the people of Eastern Virginia from savage inroads, while not permitted to celebrate the rite of marriage according to the ceremonies of his own church.⁴⁵

When Alexander Craighead came to North Carolina and Sugar Creek he found most of the people who were to be the members of his congregation living in log cabins.⁴⁶ There may have been a few living in rock houses, although Hezekiah Alexander's stone house was not built until 1774. The church in which he was to preach was built of logs and stood on a rise, near some springs, south of the present church and west of the Creek. The old cemetery was some little distance away, as is shown in an old deed for 1767 which has already been referred to and is now quoted more fully:

This Indenture made the 7th day of Jany in the 7th year of the Reign of King George &c and in the year A.D. 1767 between George Augustus Selwyn &c and David Kennedy of Mecklenburg County . . . On the headwaters of Sugar Creek Beginning at a Hickory Near the head of a branch Running into the Creek

⁴⁵ Waddell, *op. cit.*, p. 69

⁴⁶ See Johnson, *Ante-Bellum North Carolina*, Chapel Hill, 1937, Chap. VIII.

below the meeting house running thence No 23 W 132 po to a W. O. Thence No 30 W 102 po. to a Hickory by a graveyard thence No 88 W 122 poles to a B.O. Then S 24 W 150 po to a gum on the creek thence So 47 E. 70 to a W.O. Thence So 37 E 96 po to a W.O. Thence to the beginning, Containing 210 acres. . . .

The oldest marked grave in the cemetery is that of Alexander Craighead himself. The grave, according to tradition, was marked by two sassafras trees that grew from the poles that were used to carry his coffin from the church to the graveyard and were then thrust into the ground to mark the spot. The poles took root and grew to be large trees.⁴⁸ A storm about one hundred and twenty-five years later uprooted one and the other was broken off about 20 feet above the ground. The people all around, hearing of the destruction of the trees, came and cut them up for souvenirs.⁴⁹ One piece of the wood was used to make the top of the present pulpit, and, through the kindness of Mr. Osmand Barringer, the Church now has a small wooden cup that a relative of Mr. Barringer had made from some of the wood. For many years the Synod of North Carolina had a gavel made from the wood of one of these trees. Today there is a granite marker over the grave and it is enclosed in a small iron fence.

The second oldest marked grave is that of Margaret Carr, "late wife of Robert Carr who deceased June y^e 29, 1769 aged 57 years." One of the most interesting markers reads "Sacred to this memory of Elizabeth Orr who departed this life February 30th, 1798 in the 32nd year of her age. 'Let worms devour my wasting flesh. And crumble all my bones to dust My God will raise my frame afresh at the revival of the just.'" Another interesting group of graves is that of four children. The markers read, "Dugel Campbell, died Jan. 1, 1781, age 15 years; Ambrose Campbell, died Jan. 2, 1781, age 13 years; Mary Campbell, died Jan. 3, 1781, age 11 years; Ann Campbell, died Jan. 4, 1781, age 9 years." The four children lie buried next to their older brother John and with him make an interesting but tragic story.

John Campbell fought in the battle of Kings Mountain (Oct. 7, 1780) as a lad of only sixteen and was wounded and invalided home.

47 Mecklenburg Co. Register of Deeds Office, Deed Book 3, p. 218

48 Foote, *op. cit.*, p. 132

49 Edith M. Craig, Broome, "The Birthplace of Democracy", no date

He had evidently been exposed to small-pox among the troops, for he developed a severe case and then gave it to his younger brothers and sisters. John recovered but his younger brothers and sisters died one after the other and are buried as indicated beside each other in the old, or first, cemetery. John lived until 1790, when he died at the age of 26 on July tenth. His grave is marked with a large stone and bears the Campbell coat-of-arms, his stone having been cut and marked in England and shipped to this country.

Jean Wallis, the mother of the Rev. James Wallis of Providence Church (1792-1819) is also buried here. She died July 31, 1792 "in the 80th year of her age."

The last grave to be mentioned here is that of David Robinson, who "died Oct. 12, 1808, aged 84 years." This is the final resting place of the father of the Rev. John Robinson, D.D., who was the beloved pastor of Poplar Tent Church for thirty-six years.

But Alexander Craighead also found a people who were responsive to his ministry and eager to share his views. Hanna expresses it in these words:

In Carolina he found a people remote from the seat of authority, among whom the intolerant laws of the English colonies were a dead letter. Here, he was so far divided from other congregations that there could be no collision with him on account of his system of faith or practice; and his own congregation was so far united in its general views of religion and citizenship, that he was the teacher of the whole population. Here he poured forth his principles of civil and religious government, undisturbed by the jealousy of those in authority, who were too remote to be aware of his doings, or too careless to be interested in the poor and distant emigrants on the Catawba. Accordingly Alexander Craighead had the opportunity of forming the civil and religious principles, in no measured degree, of a race of men that feared neither the labor and hardship of the pioneer's life, nor the dangers of a frontier which was the scene of frequent bloody attacks by the savages. It was a race that had sought and found freedom and prosperity in the wilderness. Under the teachings of Craighead, it is not strange that these people should be among the first to conceive the idea of Independence, to announce it to the world in their convention held in May, 1775, and with their fortunes and lives to sustain that idea through the trying scenes of the Revolution.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Hanna, *op. cit.*, p. 43



Hezekiah Alexander House

Craighead did not sever his relationship with Hanover Presbytery when he moved to North Carolina. He was several times elected Moderator, the last time at a meeting held at "Bird in Goochland, April 7th, 1762."⁵¹

It is also interesting to note that though Craighead reappears on the roll of the Synod of New York in 1753 as an absent member for the first time since his break with his brethren in 1742, he never attended a meeting of the Synod, but is listed year after year under "Ministers Absent."

While maintaining friendly relations with Hanover Presbytery Craighead did not forget the Covenanters with whom he associated between 1743 and 1749. In 1764 the Associate Presbytery unanimously appointed the Rev. Robert Annan to answer petitions that had come to it from Carolina "to be three Sabbaths at the Hawfields, and two at Sugar Creek."⁵²

At the same time, 1764, the Synod of Philadelphia and New York concerned over the state of many of the congregations to the southward, and particularly in North Carolina, ordered two of its members, the Rev. Messrs. Elihu Spencer and Alexander McWhorter, to go there as their missionaries and to form congregations, ordain Elders, adjust bounds, and particularly teach them how to go about obtaining ministers. They were also to assure the people that the Synod had their interest at heart and would send them preachers to the utmost of their ability.⁵³

In 1765 the Synod sent the Messrs. Nathan Kerr, George Duffield, William Ramsey, David Caldwell, James Latta and Robert McMordie to North Carolina to serve as supplies for "half a year."⁵⁴

On May 22, 1766, the Synod entered this minute: "It is reported by a member of this body, that the Rev. Alexander Craighead departed this life some time in March, 1766,"⁵⁵ and on May 29 at the same meeting we find this: "Another call also from Sugar Creek and Rocky River, for the Rev. Mr. Nathan Kerr, was brought in and read."⁵⁶ This shows that the Sugar Creek congregation knew Mr. Kerr prior to the death of Craighead and in all probability this acquaintance began with his visit to North Carolina the year before.

⁵¹ Minutes of Hanover Presbytery, *op. cit.*

⁵² R. Z. Lathan, *History of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South*, Harrisburg, 1882, p. 265.

⁵³ Engles, *op. cit.*, p. 339

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 346

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 352

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 360

Dr. Caruthers says that Craighead "was somewhat disposed to melancholy."⁵⁷ Perhaps this is what made him and his congregation ask for and welcome supplies in the last two years of his life. Perhaps he suffered from more than melancholy for the ninth of April, 1765, he drew up his will and disposed of all his property.

His will, which has never been fully published, and which is a most interesting document in Will Book A in the Office of the Clerk of the Superior Court, Mecklenburg County, is reproduced here:

I Alexander Craighead of Mecklenburg County in No Carolina Minister of the Ghospel being weak in body but of sound and perfect mind & memory Blessed be God for the same calling to mind the uncertainty of my time in this transitory world & that it is appointed for all men once to die; Do make & ordain this my last Will & Testament in manner & form following that is to say I recommend my Soul & Body to God that gave it— As to what world goods that God bestowed upon me I dispose of as follows:

Primis. I order that my Just debts & funeral expenses be paid & discharged by my Executors hereafter named. Item. I order it is my will that my well beloved wife Jane Craighead shall enjoy & possess the benefit of my plantation* where I now live and my plantation upon longcreek & the whole of it thereof and likewise the use & benefit of all the negroes I now possess for the support of my family during the time she bears my name—

Item. I give & bequeath Unto my eldest daughter Margaret five pound Current money to be delivered five years after my decease.

Item. I give & bequeath unto my daughter Agness five pounds of Current money to be delivered five years after my decease—

Item. I give & bequeath unto my daughter Jane Sixty pounds hard money or one Negroe which my Executors shall see fit or most convenient to give besides Horse Saddle & bridle, bed & its furniture which is to be delivered as soon as convenient after her marriage.

Item. I give & bequeath the same to each of my other daughters Rachel, Mary & Elizabeth to be delivered agreeable to the same manner as above to my Daughter Jane.

Item. I give & bequeath to my sons Robert & Thomas all and singular my books except Bibles & some other common books that is used in the family.

Item. I order & it is my Will that my land in Augusta County

⁵⁷ Caruthers, *op. cit.*, p. 27

* The Plantation "where I now live" was evidently the land that his widow bought from H. E. McCulloh in 1767 for these are the only two pieces of property listed for either Alexander or Jane Craighead in Mecklenburg County.

In 1764 Craighead bought 551 acres on Long Creek in Mecklenburg from John Garrison and Margaret, his wife.

Virginia containing by estimation 310 & my land on fishing creek in county containing by Estimation 500 be sold as soon as opportunity will permit.

Item. I order & it is my will that my two Sons Robert & Thomas shall be kept at learning till they attain to what learning that can be had in these parts—

To the discharge of the above particulars

Item. I order and it is my will that notwithstanding of what is said above concerning lands & negroes that it is not to be understood but that my Executors if they see it necessary for the discharging the above particulars they are hereby impowered to sell & make Sufficient titles to the purchase of any part thereof

Item. I order & it is my will that my Executors is fully impowered to make Sufficient Titles or conveyances to the above mentioned two Tracts of land in Virginia & fishing creek—

Item. I order & it is my will that if my beloved wife shall change her name that shall have her dower or third as the Law directs but if she continues in my name during her natural life she is fully to enjoy what I order above. At her decease what remains of Land & negroes or whatever else shall be Equally among my children.

Item. I nominate and appoint my said loving wife Jane Craighead & John Davis of this county to be my Executors of this my last Will and Testament and lastly I disannul & make void all former Wills & Testaments by me made whether in word or writing, & declare this only to be my last Will & Testament / In Witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand & Seal this ninth day of April one Thousand seven hundred & sixty five— Signed Sealed Pronounced & Declared by the said Alexander Craighead to be his last Will & Testament in the presence of—

Nathan Orr

Alexander Craeghead

Mildredge Orr

William Orr⁵⁸

Nathan and Mildredge Orr were husband and wife and William was their second son. They lived on a plantation adjoining the Craigheads. Nathan Orr's will, drawn in 1779, indicates that at that late date the settlers on Sugar Creek were still paying for their lands to H. E. McCulloch.

Some comments are in order here about Mr. Craighead's children. Margaret, the oldest daughter married prior to 1765 a Mr. Carruth. Agnes, or, as she is often called, "Nancy", married William Richardson who had installed her father at Rocky River in 1758.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Book A., Will Books, off. of Clerk of Superior Court, Mecklenburg Count, pp. 167½-168

⁵⁹ J. G. Craighead, *The Craighead Genealogy*, Philadelphia, 1876, p. 51

When these two girls were married their father gave them a horse, saddle and bridle, a bed and its furnishings, and either £60 hard money or a slave. Jane was getting ready to marry Mr. Patrick Calhoun. They had lived near each other in Virginia, and she did marry him but died in September after her father died in March.⁶⁰ Rachel, who has been mentioned earlier, married David Caldwell in the fall of 1766. (David had known Rachel in Pennsylvania when they were children.)⁶¹ Mary married Samuel Dunlap, and Elizabeth, Alexander Crawford. Thomas, about whom we shall hear more later, was licensed as a minister in 1778 and married Elizabeth Brown, a daughter of Rev. John Brown, a minister in Hanover Presbytery from 1755-1796, in 1780; Robert, the youngest son, served in the Revolutionary War as a Captain and married Hannah Clark. He died in Knoxville, Tennessee on October 1, 1829.⁶²

Sugar Creek Congregation loved Craighead. This is evident from the fact that in 1778 they called his son to be their pastor but he declined. Then, in 1791, they called his grandson, Samuel Craighead Caldwell, who accepted and stayed for 35 years. And then, in 1837, they called his great-grandson, John Madison McKnitt Caldwell, who remained with them until 1845.

Time and talent both fail as we try to assess the worth and contribution of this man whose life and work set the mold for Sugar Creek Church and whose family and descendants have extended his influence through a large part of our Southland, and its institutions. Alexander Craighead, faithful servant and minister of Jesus Christ and His Church, fighter for freedom and self-government, your spiritual descendants rise up through the centuries and call you "blessed".

When Craighead died the Sugar Creek Church united with Rocky River once more and called Nathan Kerr, who had visited them the year before. This call Mr. Kerr declined,⁶³ so in 1767 Sugar Creek called the Rev. Joseph Alexander, a licentiate of New Castle Presbytery and on the third Friday in May, 1768, David Caldwell, at the appointment of Hanover Presbytery, installed him.⁶⁴

Mr. Alexander was a graduate of the College of New Jersey,

60 See *Wm. and Mary Quarterly* (2nd Series) Vol. VII., p. 57

61 See Caruthers, *op. cit.*, p. 27

62 Craighead, *Craighead Genealogy*, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-76

63 Engles, *op. cit.*, p. 367

64 Minutes of Hanover Presbytery, March 4, 1768, p. 133, and October 5, 1768, p. 136

Class of 1760, and married the daughter,⁶⁵ Martha, of the Rev. Samuel Davies, who in 1759, had left Virginia to become the President of the College. He was licensed by New Castle Presbytery and sent south to serve as a missionary under Hanover Presbytery. He preached for the Sugar Creek Congregation and they liked him and called him, and he accepted the call. He went before the Presbytery and they consented to his acceptance and ordained him on the twenty-third of May, 1768.

In April, 1770, at the request of the Revs. Alexander, Caldwell, McAden, Balch and other ministers in North Carolina, Hanover Presbytery voted to overture the Synod to divide Hanover and set up in North Carolina a Presbytery "by the name of ye Presbytery of Orange...and that...first meeting may be..., on the first Wednesday of September next insuing."⁶⁶ The Presbytery also agreed to appoint Mr. Alexander to carry the overture to the Synod. It was in all probability on this trip that he married Samuel Davies' daughter,⁶⁷ for on May 16, 1770, he was present at the Synod meeting in New York. On May 24 the Synod agreed to set up Orange Presbytery and ordered it to meet in September, 1770.

Joseph Alexander was the son of Thophilus Alexander, who was a brother of Hezekiah, John McKnitt, Ezekial, Amos, Jemima, Josiah, and other Alexanders who settled in Mecklenburg County about 1754.⁶⁸ He, therefore, came to a pastorate that had many of his uncles and cousins in its congregation. Joseph inherited in 1768 his father's lands in North Carolina. His mother, Catherine Wallis, died in Mecklenburg County in 1775. Abraham, Moses, Adam and Aaron Alexander were also his father's kinsmen.⁶⁹

There are a few clues that indicate that Alexander Craighead conducted a school at Sugar Creek,⁷⁰ but the first school of definite record was conducted by the Rev. Joseph Alexander, assisted by Mr. Joel Benedict.⁷¹ Foote says that Mr. Alexander was "a fine scholar, . . . and, taught a classical school of high excellence and usefulness."⁷²

65 Letter from Dr. Julian Boyd, Librarian, Princeton University

66 Minutes of Hanover Presbytery, April 26, 1770

67 D. D. Egbert, *Princeton Portraits*, Princeton, 1947, p. 44

68 Mollie H. Ash, "The Alexanders of New Munster", *D.A.R. Magazine*, Oct. 1930

69 Mss. "The Alexanders" das no author, date and is a typewritten copy loaned by Mrs. Kate Smith of Charlotte to the author. Also Elkton, Maryland, Wills, Liber B.B., Folio 302 (Feb. 20, 1768)

70 Davidson, *op. cit.*, p. 17

71 *Loc. cit.*

72 Foote, *op. cit.*, p. 194

In this period (1768-1770) there were a number of "old-field" and classical schools in Piedmont North Carolina, but there was no college where the young men could continue their education.⁷³ In 1771 the General Assembly of North Carolina granted a charter to Queen's museum, which was to be located in Charlotte. Joseph Alexander is listed, along with Abraham and Hezekiah Alexander (two of Sugar Creek's elders), as a trustee of the college.

Governor Tryon in the letter which he sent to England with the bills that the House had passed said:

. . . Though the President is to be of the established church and licensed by the Governor, the Fellows, Trustees, and Tutors I apprehend will be generally Presbyterians, the college being promoted by a respectable settlement of that persuasion . . .⁷⁴

The governor was right, for beside Joseph Alexander there were three other Presbyterian ministers listed and several other elders. Mr. Alexander also taught in the college. The King declared this act void and of none effect on the twenty-second day of April, 1772.⁷⁵

Though the King would not grant it a charter, the College continued to flourish, and when the Revolution came its name was changed, in 1777, by the Legislature of North Carolina, to "Liberty Hall Academy" with four of the original trustees still on its Board.⁷⁶

The same day that the King disallowed the act establishing Queen's College, he also disallowed an act that the Assembly had passed, in answer to the petition from the inhabitants of Mecklenburg County quoted in part in Chapter II, that would have permitted the Presbyterian ministers to "solemnize the rites of Marriage, according to the Westminster confession of Faith, by publication in their religious Assemblies, where the parties are best known, and by License, without any Tax or Fees to the Clergy of the Establishment."⁷⁷

In 1768, trouble that had been brewing for some time over taxes, land rents, lack of currency, and justice in the courts came to a head. Groups of dissatisfied citizens from all over the western counties of the colony formed what was known as "The Regulation." These men were "Regulators" in attempting to straighten out the affairs of the colony.⁷⁸ Four of the Presbyterian ministers then resident

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 194, 234, 435

⁷⁴ Saunders, *op. cit.*, Vol. VIII, p. 526

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. IX, pp. 284-5

⁷⁶ C. L. Hunter, *Sketches of Western North Carolina*, Raleigh, 1877, pp. 152-154

⁷⁷ Saunders, *op. cit.*, Vol. VIII, p. 322

⁷⁸ S. A. Ashe, *History of North Carolina*, Greensboro, 1908, Vol. I, p. 343

in the colony wrote Governor Tryon pledging their allegiance and wrote at the same time, August 23, 1768, to the "Presbyterian Inhabitants" of the province urging them to remain faithful to the King and the Governor. These four ministers were Hugh McAden, James Creswell, David Caldwell, and Henry Patillo.⁷⁹

The climax of the struggle between the colonial government and the Regulators came with the "Battle of Alamance" fought on May 16, 1771. The governor's forces numbered about 1000 men and the Regulators had about 2000. The Regulators were defeated in the battle, but the sympathies of the backcountry people, which up to this time had been definitely divided, were swung largely to the Regulators. The Regulators had justification for their complaints, regardless of how unjustified their methods of correcting the evils of their day may have been.⁸⁰

There is one incident connected with the Regulation involving a member of the Sugar Creek congregation that is worthy of inclusion here.

Governor Tryon had ordered powder and other munitions from Charleston, S. C., and they were being transported to Alamance by way of Charlotte and Salisbury. Captain William Alexander, a member of Sugar Creek, and a group of his friends from the Rocky River community learning of this waylaid the wagons near the present site of Concord and blew up their contents in a tremendous explosion.

Captain Alexander and his friends had blackened their faces to avoid recognition and he was called thereafter "Black Billy." He died December 19, 1836, at the age of eighty-four and is buried in the second Sugar Creek cemetery.⁸¹

Joseph Alexander seems to have left Sugar Creek about 1772. He accepted a call to the Bullock's Creek Church, which is located in York County, South Carolina. He died in 1809 and his death notice was published in the *Raleigh Register* on the twenty-fourth of August, 1809:

DIED

On the 29th ult. in York District, S. C. the Rev. Joseph Alexander, D.D., minister of the Presbyterian Church, approaching to 80 years

⁷⁹ Saunders, *op. cit.*, Vol. VII, pp. 813-816

⁸⁰ Foote, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-67 (For a much fuller account, see W. S. Powell, *The War of the Regulation and the Battle of Alamance, May 16, 1771*, Raleigh, 1949)

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 481

of age. He was a native of Pennsylvania, and graduated at Princeton College in 1760. He came to Carolina soon after the Peace of 1763, and was eminently instrumental in planting Churches both in North and South Carolina, at the early period of the settlement of the back country, when both states were in a very destitute condition with respect to religious instruction. He was an excellent classical scholar, and one of the fathers of learning in the Western Woods of Carolina.⁸²

Though Joseph Alexander left Sugar Creek pastorless during the period of the Revolutionary War, and for a good many years after its close, she did not fail to do her part. Two of her elders, Abraham and Hezekiah Alexander, were active in the famous independence movement in Mecklenburg, that met in Charlotte in May, 1775. Abraham was often chosen chairman of the meetings and Hezekiah was one of the most influential participants.

Abraham Alexander was also chairman of the Mecklenburg Committee of Safety and Hezekiah was a member of the Provincial Congress in 1776, which met in Halifax in November of that year and drafted the first Constitution of the State of North Carolina.⁸³

These two leaders in Church and State are buried in the second cemetery, which lies across the highway in front of the present church building. Abraham died when sixty-eight, on April 22, 1786, and Hezekiah at seventy-three, on July 16, 1801.

Alexander, in his *History of Mecklenburg County*, attributes the zeal and undaunted courage of these men, and others like them, from Sugar Creek congregation, who labored so earnestly for freedom and who fought so valiantly in its cause, to the teaching of Alexander Craighead, though he had been dead for nine years.⁸⁴

Queen's Museum, or "Liberty Hall" as it was called after 1777, had as its president from 1779 to 1780 the Rev. Alexander MacWhorter, whom the people of Mecklenburg and the surrounding territory remembered very favorably.

Dr. MacWhorter had lived, with his mother and the other members of his family, in Piedmont Carolina, where they moved after his father's death in 1750, for two or three years.⁸⁵ During his stay in Rowan County Dr. MacWhorter was tremendously impressed by a sermon preached by the Rev. John Brown from Psalm 7:12.⁸⁶

⁸² C. L. Coon, *North Carolina Schools and Academies*, Raleigh, 1915, p. 229

⁸³ Hunter, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-42

⁸⁴ J. B. Alexander, *History of Mecklenburg County*, Charlotte, 1902, pp. 84-85

⁸⁵ E. D. Griffin, *A Sermon Preached at the Funeral of Rev. Alexander MacWhorter*, D.D. . . . , New York, 1807, pp.8-9

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9

Mr. Brown later became the first settled pastor of the Providence and Timber Ridge churches in the valley of Virginia.⁸⁷ Dr. MacWhorter graduated from the College of New Jersey in 1757 and was licensed to preach in August, 1758, by the Presbytery of New Brunswick.⁸⁸

As was related in Chapter II, the Synod of Philadelphia and New York sent Dr. MacWhorter and the Rev. Elihu Spencer on a mission to organize the congregations in the Carolinas in 1764. In 1767 Sugar Creek, along with six other congregations, issued a call to any one of four ministers including MacWhorter. This call Dr. MacWhorter and the other three ministers declined.⁸⁹ Then, in 1775, the Continental Congress asked him to visit Piedmont Carolina "to employ his influence to bring over the enemies of the revolution to the American interest."⁹⁰

The corporation of Yale College conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Divinity in 1776.⁹¹

In 178, he was called to Charleston, S. C., as pastor of the church there but the situation of that city was such, due to the threat of an invasion by the British, that he declined the call.⁹²

Mr. Griffin states,

In the following summer, (1779), he received a call from the congregation of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, accompanied by an invitation from the trustees of Charlotte Academy to accept the presidency of that institution.⁹³

There was at this time no church in Charlotte, so this call must have been from Sugar Creek, the nearest church to the town.

When Cornwallis' forces invaded Charlotte on the twenty-sixth of September, 1780, Dr. MacWhorter and his family were forced to flee.

On their return, after the British had withdrawn, they found that they had lost almost everything that they possessed, including the Doctor's library. Griffin states that Dr. MacWhorter and his family remained in Charlotte for about a month and then removed

87 Foote, *op. cit.*, p. 162
88 Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 12
89 Engles, *op. cit.*, p. 374
90 Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 17
91 *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18
92 *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20
93 *Ibid.*, p. 20

to Abington, Pennsylvania, where he supplied for the winter of 1780-81.⁹⁴

The Synod records for May, 1781, state, "Dr. MacWhorter reported to Synod, that the distressing circumstances of North Carolina, arising from the war, have rendered the objects of his removal thither abortive, and prevented him from obtaining a regular dismissal from the Orange Presbytery."⁹⁵

At the junction of the Old Salisbury road and the Sugar Creek road, just a little to the north-west of the present church building, one of the skirmishes of the battle for Charlotte was fought.

As the Americans were forced to retreat from Charlotte, Colonel William Richardson Davie, the foster son of the Rev. William Richardson, and his cavalry troops served as the rearguard and fought a delaying action with Tarleton's cavalry. One of the American officers, Captain Joseph Graham, was severely wounded and left on the battleground, supposedly dead. Graham had received nine wounds, six from sabre cuts and three from bullets, but after the fighting had passed on he regained consciousness and crawled to a spring near the site of the present church.

Miss Susannah Wilson, a sister of the Rev. John Makamie Wilson (for many years the pastor of the Rocky River Church), found him at the spring and took him to her mother's house, where she and her mother dressed his wounds.

Mrs. Wilson and her daughter nursed Capt. Graham all through the night and the next day. That afternoon the wife of a British officer, seeking fresh provisions, came to the Wilson home and on discovering the wounded officer there, offered to send a surgeon to attend him.

Capt. Graham, fearing he would become a prisoner, fled under the cover of darkness to his own home in Lincoln County. Here, Capt. Graham soon recovered from his wounds and was within two months back serving with the American forces.⁹⁶

Miss Susannah Wilson, or "Aunt Susy" as she was affectionately known by the Sugar Creek folk, married John Alexander, who died in 1805, but she lived on until she was ninety-seven and a half years old. "Aunt Susy" is buried in the third Sugar Creek cemetery near a large magnolia tree.

⁹⁴ Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 21

⁹⁵ Engles, *op. cit.*, p. 491

⁹⁶ Alexander, *op. cit.*, pp. 427-428; Foote, *op. cit.*, pp. 254-255

This same Widow Wilson's home had served as a refuge, when Tarleton and his cavalry attacked the Waxhaws, for young Andrew Jackson and his mother. Mrs. Jackson was a friend of "Nancy" Craighead Richardson and it may have been at her suggestion that the Jacksons sought refuge in the Sugar Creek community.⁹⁷ In after years over in Tennessee Jackson and Thomas Craighead continued the friendship that must have sprung up between the fatherless boy and young man during this time.

Thomas Brown Craighead, Alexander's second son, was prepared for college by his brother-in-law, the Rev. David Caldwell, and graduated at Princeton in the Class of 1775.⁹⁸ He was licensed April 11, 1778, and ordained to the ministry by the Orange Presbytery some time before May, 1780, for he is listed as a member of Orange Presbytery by the Synod on that date.

Several of the historians of this section state that Thomas Craighead supplied the Sugar Creek congregation for a short time but declined a call to his father's last pastorate.⁹⁹ At a court held in Washington County, Virginia, on September 17, 1782 Thomas Brown Craighead was licensed to solemnize the rites of Matrimony according to Law.¹⁰⁰

On May 22, 1786, the Synod placed him in the newly erected Presbytery of Transylvania, though when Synod opened on the seventeenth he was listed as an absent member of Orange Presbytery.

Thomas Craighead became the first pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Nashville, Tennessee, and the founder of Davidson Academy from which sprang the University of Nashville. He died in 1825.¹⁰¹

From 1780 until 1792 Sugar Creek was also supplied by the Reverend James McRae and a young licentiate of Orange Presbytery, Samuel Craighead Caldwell. Foote quotes a letter from Dr. McRae, written from Swannanoa, North Carolina, January 26, 1838, in which he said,

. . . all the surrounding congregations, which were generally vacant when I settled in Steele Creek and which I often visited

⁹⁷ B. J. Lossing, *Pictorial Fieldbook of the Revolution*, New York, 1902, pp. 427-428; Foote, *op. cit.*, pp. 254-255

⁹⁸ Craighead, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-74

⁹⁹ Foote, *op. cit.*, p. 193; Caruthers, *op. cit.*, p. 23; Alexander, *op. cit.*, p. 183

¹⁰⁰ L. P. Summers, *History of Southwest Virginia*, Richmond, 1903, p. 1115

¹⁰¹ Jeannette T. Acklen, *Tennessee Records, Tombstone Inscriptions and Manuscripts*, Nashville, 1933, pp.78-79; Clark, *op. cit.*, Vol. XXIV, p. 751

as supply. Often have I ridden in the morning to Bethel, Providence, Sugar Creek and Hopewell, and returned home in the evening of that day.¹⁰²

Other ministers who possibly supplied the Sugar Creek pulpit during this time were David Caldwell, Hezekiah James Balch, Thomas Reese, Robert Archibald, and James Hall.

As the story of this period in the history of Sugar Creek comes to a close, it is sufficient to say that her men and women did their part fully and courageously in the War for America's independence, and gave gladly the last full measure of devotion in freedom's cause.

¹⁰² Foote, *op. cit.*, pp. 435-436

CHAPTER IV

FROM THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR PERIOD TO THE CIVIL WAR

Sometime after the death of Craighead the Sugar Creek Church building was changed from near the first graveyard to a site nearer the creek and east of the Salisbury Road. This building stood in the north half of what is now designated the second cemetery. Alexander says of this building:

The building which occupied a part of the graveyard, . . . was the second house built by the congregation. It was a plain, substantial log house. In order to secure room for large numbers who came to worship there, the house was made of two lengths of logs, joined together at the middle by a crib of short logs, so put together as to form a recess on the inside and a jutting out of several feet from the main side wall. . . .¹

The title to the property was made to the trustees of Sugar Creek congregation in 1806, but we do not know the exact year the building was erected. This church site was purchased from John Montgomery, Jr., whose family had acquired, in 1771, the land on which the first church building stood, for in 1807 his brother sold the land containing the first graveyard to the church.

The Trustees, to whom these two tracts of land were sold, were Amos Alexander, Nathaniel Alexander, Joseph Flynn and John H. Orr. For the new church site they paid Montgomery \$17.50 for the five acre site and they paid Robert Montgomery \$5.00 for the old, or first, "burying ground."

On February 21, 1792, Sugar Creek's third minister was installed by order of Orange Presbytery. The Rev. James Hall, Jr., Revolutionary hero and pastor of Fourth Creek, Bethany and Concord Presbyterian Churches in Iredell County, preached the sermon and conducted the ordination service. Hall's sermon, and his charge to the minister and exhortation to the people, was published in 1795.² The new pastor was the Rev. Samuel Craighead Caldwell, son of David

¹ Alexander, *op. cit.*, p. 283

² James Hall, *A Sermon Preached at Suga-Creek on Feb. 21, 1792*, Halifax, Abraham Hodge, 1795, (in rare book collection, Charlotte Public Library.)

and Rachel Craighead Caldwell and grandson of Alexander Craighead. Mr. Caldwell was born July 10, 1768.³ He was educated by his father and at the age of nineteen licensed by Orange Presbytery. Foote writes that five years elapsed between his licensure and ordination and that most of these years were spent in supplying Sugar Creek and Hopewell.⁴ These two churches united in calling him and he was ordained and installed as pastor of both.

Dr. Hall in the sermon says: “. . . 2. Parents and governors of families; it is now twenty years since a separation took place between you and your former pastor. . . .”⁵

This would mean that Dr. Joseph Alexander left Sugar Creek about 1772 and not in 1774 as is commonly stated.

During the time of young Caldwell's supplying Sugar Creek and Hopewell, to quote Dr. Hall again, from a note which he added to the sermon,

Under Mr. Caldwell's first ministrations in those congregations, it pleased God to send a reviving time, in consequence of which, there were upwards of seventy young communicants admitted to the Lord's table in one day.⁶

Samuel Caldwell lived with Mr. David Robinson from the time he began his ministry at Sugar Creek until his marriage in 1793. It is thought that he helped prepare Mr. Robinson's son, the Rev. John Robinson, for the Gospel Ministry while he lived in this home.

According to the Mecklenburg County Marriage Bonds, Caldwell married on the eighth of May, 1793, Abigail Bane Alexander, daughter of John McKnitt Alexander of Hopewell and moved to that community to live. She died May 14, 1802, leaving him with two small children, Jane B., who later married Rev. W. S. Pharr, and David T., who became a doctor and later a member of the Sugar Creek Session. Somewhere between 1803 and 1805 he married Elizabeth Lindsay of Greensboro and in 1805 left Hopewell and moved back to Sugar Creek, building a home on Sugar Creek Road about three-quarters of a mile west of the Church. This house was removed to the C. W.

³ Craighead, *Genealogy, op. cit.*, p. 160

⁴ Foote, *op. cit.*, p. 195

⁵ Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 37

⁶ *Ibid.*

Robinson farm and stood behind the Robinson home for many years.

Sommerville tells us that Caldwell resigned from Hopewell in 1806 because a minority, but very vocal part, of his congregation opposed his "warm addresses" and the evidences of revival that were manifest in the congregation.⁷ The Revival of 1800 which started in Kentucky began to be felt in North Carolina as early as 1802, and it was during this revival time that Samuel Caldwell had to break off his relations with Hopewell and move back to Sugar Creek.

Foote and Sommerville both tell of the infidel controversy that swept over the country soon after Samuel Caldwell became Sugar Creek's pastor and how the Sessions of Sugar Creek and Hopewell met, in 1793, at Robert Robinson, Senior's, and drew up resolutions of unity and Christian friendship to combat this atheism.⁸ Hezekiah Alexander was elected chairman of the group and the other Sugar Creek elders listed were Robert Robinson, Se., Wm. Alexander, James Robinson, Isaac Alexander, Thomas Alexander and Elijah Alexander.⁹

The eighth meeting of the Synod of the Carolinas was held at New Providence Church on October 1, 1795. On that day the Synod divided the Presbytery of Orange and appointed a new Presbytery for the western part of the state to be called "by the name of the Presbytery of Concord." Sugar Creek was placed in the new Presbytery and Samuel Craighead Caldwell named as one of its original members. The Synod ordered the Presbytery of Concord to hold its first meeting at Centre Church ". . . on the last Tuesday of March 1796."

The Synod of North Carolina was formed by the General Assembly in May 1813, and held its first meeting at the Alamance Church ". . . on Thursday, the 7th day October 1813." In 1824 the Synod of North Carolina set up the Presbytery of Mecklenburg and placed Sugar Creek within its bounds. It also ordered Samuel C. Caldwell to preach the opening sermon and to preside until a moderator could be chosen.

Mecklenburg Presbytery held its first meeting at New Providence on April 5, 1825. Mr. Caldwell preached, as ordered by Synod, and then was elected moderator.

⁷ Foote, *op. cit.*, pp. 210-11; Sommerville, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-36

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 211 and p. 35

In 1828, the Synod dissolved Mecklenburg and placed its ministers and churches back in the Presbytery of Concord. The reconstituted Presbytery of Concord met at Centre Church on September 4, 1828.

In 1805 or 1806 Caldwell began preaching in Charlotte, sometimes under a grove of trees and sometimes in a log house, and continued to do this once a month until his death.¹⁰

On November 16, 1819 the Town Commissioners bought from William Davidson, for \$125.00, several lots near the heart of town. The deed stated “. . . The aforesaid lotts are granted . . . for the use and benefit of a Church now building.”¹¹

Mrs. Fore, in her history of the *First Presbyterian Church, Charlotte, North Carolina*, states that the building referred to in this deed “. . . was begun in 1818 but was not completed until August, 1823 —when the dedication sermon was preached by the Rev. Doctor McRee of Iredell County. . . .”¹²

Samuel C. Caldwell not only preached in Charlotte but he also organized a classical school at Sugar Creek. The minutes of Concord Presbytery for September 8, 1805, read as follows:

Whereas the Rev. Mr. Caldwell has signified his willingness and intention to open a school in the congregation of Sugar Creek early next spring, resolved therefore that said institution be approved of, and be under the care and patronage of the Presbytery.¹³

In addition to these duties Mr. Caldwell also preached at Paw Creek from 1808 until 1819 and helped organize a church there and at Mallard Creek. (Paw Creek was called “Caldwell” from 1865 until 1882 in honor of its first minister.)¹⁴

In 1820, a movement to build a college for the citizens of the state living west of the Yadkin River began to take form, and because of his reputation as a scholar and a man of real character Mr. Caldwell, whose activities and interests were apparently limitless, was elected a member of the board of trustees. This college never actually took form, but many historians feel that out of this movement, largely

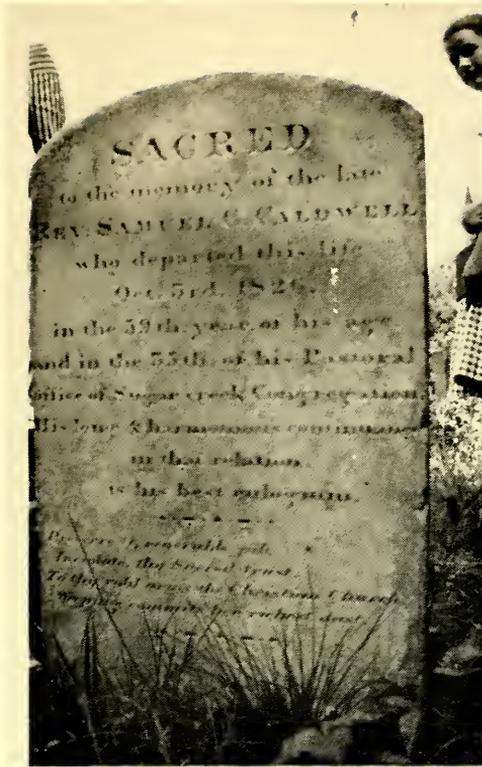
¹⁰ Mrs. J. A. Fore, *First Presbyterian Church, Charlotte, North Carolina*, Charlotte, (n. d.), p. 5

¹¹ This information was furnished by Miss Madeline Orr of Charlotte, North Carolina

¹² Fore, *op. cit.*, p. 5

¹³ Minutes of Concord Presbytery, September 8, 1805

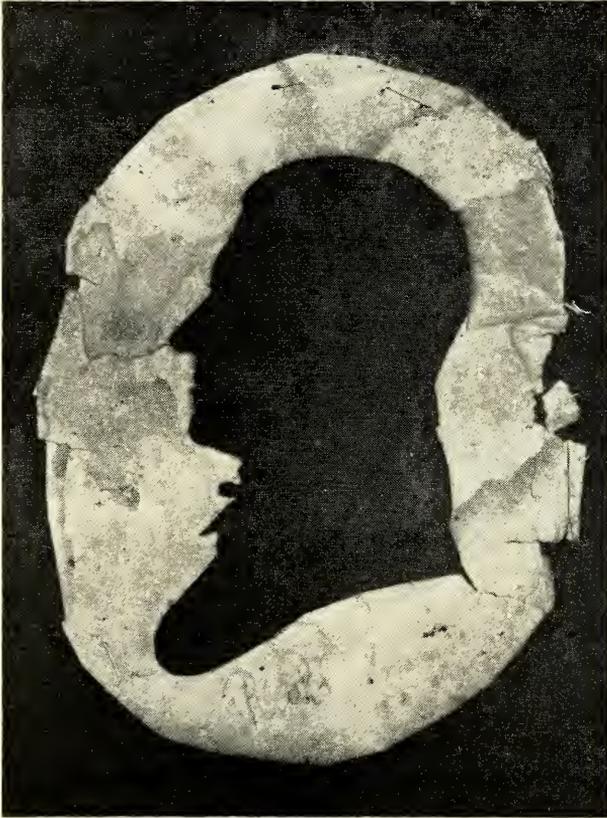
¹⁴ Minutes of Mecklenburg Presbytery, July 14, 1942



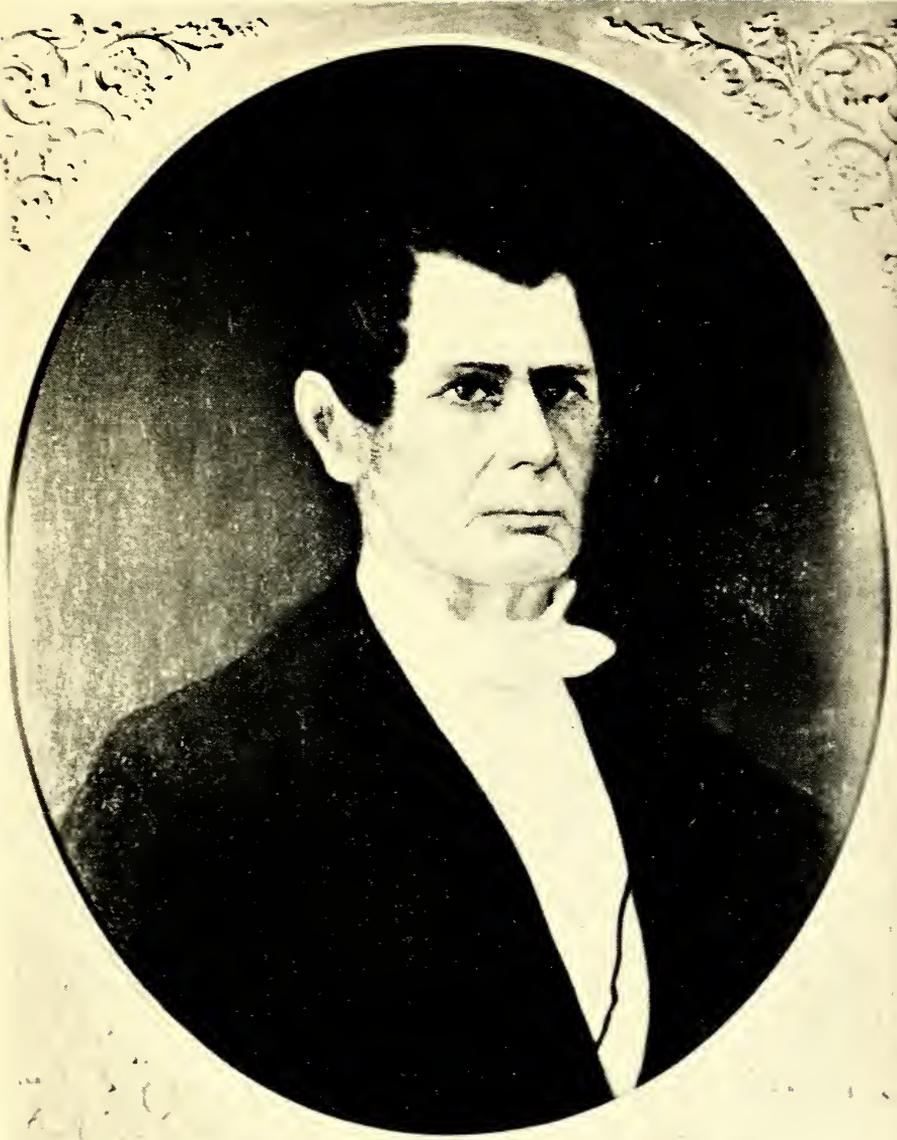
Samuel Craighead Caldwell's Grave
Second Sugar Creek Graveyard



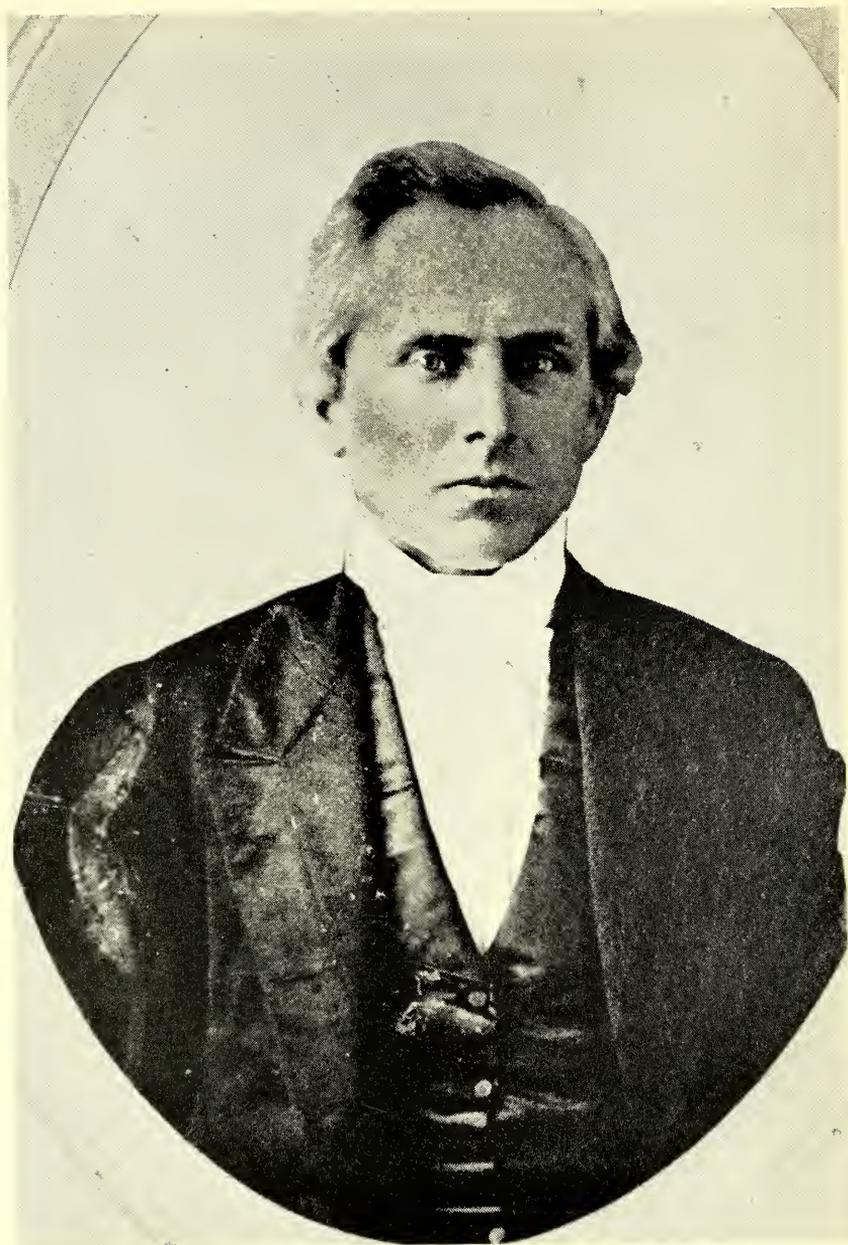
The S. C. Caldwell House
(now destroyed)



The Rev. Samuel Craighead Caldwell's silhouette
photograph of the original by courtesy of
Mrs. Abigail Caldwell Roane of Winston-Salem, N. C.,
a grand-daughter of Caldwell



The Rev. R. H. Morrison



The Rev. R. H. Lafferty
Courtesy of Dr. R. H. Lafferty
of Charlotte, N. C.

led by the Presbyterians of the western part of the state, Davidson College had its birth.¹⁵

Because there are no records of the relationship between Mr. Caldwell and the Sugar Creek Church, except the incidents described by Foote, Alexander, and a few other historians of this section, an event, that occurred in the latter part of 1819 and the first months of 1820, would have been completely lost had it not been preserved for us by the Rev. Robert Hall Morrison.

Mr. Morrison, who was to be Mr. Caldwell's successor, wrote of this incident in a letter addressed to his cousin, the Rev. James Morrison in Rockbridge County, Virginia, and dated February 12, 1820:

Sugar Creek and Mr. Caldwell have had a wonderful ado of late. Early in the fall he went to Tennessee with the intention of moving if he could suit himself. He returned dissatisfied. Soon after the Trustees of Salisbury sent an embassy to him. He went to see them and immediately engaged with them for 3 years without consulting the people of Sugar Creek, Presbytery or any other person it seems. There is no organized Church in Salisbury. He was to superintend the male and female academies for the sum of \$1,250. He engaged a house and returned with the intention of moving the 1st of February.

Soon after he returned the house at Salisbury was taken possession of from a previous conditional agreement. He by this time began to see as other people that his move was rash and imprudent in the extreme and immediately concluded to stay at Sugar Creek with their permission. A few days since they had a congregational meeting and received him unanimously. I suppose he will now stay¹⁶

Evidently Caldwell shared in the general state of restlessness that was abroad at this time, but the action of the congregation shows how much Sugar Creek loved him, valued his ministerial services and wanted him as its pastor.

The Rev. Samuel Craighead Caldwell died October 3, 1826, and was buried under the communion table of the log church where for thirty-five years he had administered the Sacrament.¹⁷

Mr. Caldwell's tombstone has the following inscription:

¹⁵ Coon, *op. cit.*, pp. 648 ff

¹⁶ Robert Hall Morrison to Rev. James Morrison, 2/12/1820, Morrison Papers, 1820-1882, from the originals in the Southern Historical Collection, Chapel Hill, North Carolina

¹⁷ Foote, *op. cit.*, p. 194

SACRED

to the memory of the late
 Rev. Samuel C. Caldwell
 who departed this life
 Oct. 3rd, 1826
 in the 59th year of his age
 and in the 35th of his Pastoral
 office of Sugar Creek Congregation
 His long & harmonious continuance
 in that relation
 is his best eulogium

— . — . — . — . — . — . — . —
 Preserve O venerable pile
 Inviolatè, Thy Sacred Trust.
 To thy cold arms the Christian Church
 Weeping commits their richest dust.
 — . — . — . — . — . — . — . —

After Mr. Caldwell's death, the school which he had conducted at Sugar Creek was continued, as is shown by the following advertisement, which appeared in the *Catawba Journal* for February 13, 1827. The notice not only tells of the continuance of the school but gives an interesting picture of the times and the school.

Sugar Creek Academy, 1827
 To The Public

The school at Sugar Creek Church, superintended by the Rev. Samuel C. Caldwell, deceased, will be continued by the subscriber. Young men wishing to study Geography and Astronomy, can enjoy the benefits of a set of Globes. Board can be had in the neighborhood for sixty or seventy-five dollars per annum, the student finding his Candles. Tuition, twenty dollars per annum. The subscriber hopes to meet the liberal patronage of an enlightened public, by his punctuality and fidelity on the discharge of the duties of a preceptor. The patronage of the public will be kindly received and thankfully acknowledged by

Walter S. Pharr

Jan. 30th, 1827 18

In November, 1826, Sugar Creek called as its pastor the Rev. Robert Hall Morrison, a native of Cabarrus County, from Fayetteville, North Carolina, and he accepted the call and moved to Sugar Creek in January, 1827.

Mr. Morrison, who grew up in the Rocky River congregation, was given his early education by the Rev. John M. Wilson, pastor of the Rocky River Church. He attended the University of North Carolina and graduated in 1818. The Rev. John M. Wilson and the Rev. John Robinson, pastor of the Poplar Tent Church, taught him Theology when he came home from the university.¹⁹

The church in Charlotte united with Sugar Creek in calling Mr. Morrison. He was to give two-thirds of his time to Sugar Creek and one-third to Charlotte. Mecklenburg Presbytery met in adjourned session at Sugar Creek on June 8, 1827, and installed Robert Hall Morrison as pastor of Sugar Creek and Charlotte churches. The Rev. John Robinson preached the sermon and the Rev. John M. Wilson presided by order of the Presbytery.²⁰

With Mr. Morrison's pastorate the oldest Sessional records begin. The first page of this small note-book reads as follows:

Rev. Saml. C. Caldwell died Sept. 1826 having been the faithful, successful and beloved Pastor of Sugar Creek Church for more than thirty years.

In Nov. 1826 R. H. Harrison was invited to become pastor of Said Church and having accepted the invitation removed from Fayetteville and took charge of the Congregation in Jan. 1827.

Having received unanimous calls from the churches of Sugar Creek and Charlotte, R. H. Morrison was installed Pastor of said Churches in the Spring of 1827.²¹

The final paragraph having to do with the beginning of a list of members and record of proceedings has already been quoted on page xii.

On the inside cover we find the list of elders given, viz., "Amos Alexander, Alexander Robeson, Dan Alexander, John F. McNeely, Samuel Caldwell, John Howie, and John Campbell." According to this earliest record there were 159 members of Sugar Creek in 1827. One hundred and fifty-one of these were white and 8 were slaves. In April, 1832, Sugar Creek reported to Presbytery: "Total now in Communion—215."²²

¹⁹ Cornelia Shaw, *Davidson College*, New York, 1923, p. 27

²⁰ *Presbyterial Book*, or the Records of Mecklenburg Presbytery—Charter granted by Synod of North Carolina, Oct., 1824

²¹ Minutes of Session, Book A

²² Report of Rev. R. H. Morrison to Concord Presbytery—Concord Presbytery's Misc. papers. P. H. S., Phila.

From 1827 until the spring of 1832 the Session Book shows the reception of small groups on profession and by certificate and the usual troubles with the members of the church over intemperance, and conduct unbecoming to Christians. One woman was suspended from the church for "having been proven guilty of a temper of mind in her domestic relations inconsistent with the Spirit of the Gospel . . ." Then in May, 1832, we find thirteen being received into the church with this note: "This appeared a Season of deep concern and great promise for the Church. Many were awakened and many professed a hope in the Lord Jesus Christ." Then in September forty-six were received and this note is added:

This was a time of deep & joyful interest. God's people were animated & comforted—Sinners were awakened & many fled for refuge to the Lord Jesus Christ—Over 100 persons were thought to be anxiously concerned for Salvation at this Season—During that year of deep impression 78 were added to Sugar Creek Church & 37 to that of Charlotte. To God be all the glory for his abounding mercy, May the Lord continue to pour down his Spirit. Amen.

Also among the records of the Sugar Creek Session is a book inscribed "Book of R. A. McNeely" and on the first page of that book, dated January 1, 1833, we read this entry:

January 7th, 1833, The congregation being assembled the question Shall we take the whole of Mr Morrison's time was put. And answered in the affirmative. Subscription papers, was put out to obtain an increase of Subscription.

Then follows a paragraph about settling with the preacher each year and the Congregation directs its collectors to take notes "whare money cannot be obtained, and where neither can be obtained, they are directed to sue in time to recover before the expiration of the year."

The record continues:

January 19th, 1833. The subscription papers were brought together and the following persons were present. Amos Alexdr. Jas Moor, Dan Alexandr. Saml Caldwell, John F McNeely, John Campbell, Ira Parks, these 7 persons Promised R. H. Morrison \$500 for his ministeriel services for the year 1833 which offer sd. R. H. Morrison accepted with the understanding that such like arrangements to secure the payment of this sum ware to be continued. But that those 7 persons have named stands pledgd onldy for the year 1833.

Thus in its quaint style the old record book tells of Sugar Creek's growth to the place where it could call its pastor to full-time service. He resigned from Charlotte Church and became the full-time Sugar Creek pastor on April 3, 1833.

About 1830 gold was discovered in Mecklenburg County. In 1836 the Federal Government built a mint in Charlotte so that the gold would not have to be carried to Philadelphia. After the Civil War the Mint was used only as an assay office. The fence that was once around the Mint grounds is now around the first Sugar Creek Cemetery, being placed there in 1914.²³

As has been evidenced all along through this history the Presbyterians who early settled this part of North Carolina were intensely interested in the education of their children. Schools or academies sprang up beside many of the early colonial churches, but the people felt the need of a College where their sons could be more adequately trained. After the failure of the effort to secure a western college (1820-24) the members of Concord Presbytery, which was set off from Orange in 1795, continued to think and talk about having a college of their own. All this culminated in a meeting of Concord Presbytery held at Prospect Church near Mooresville on March 13, 1835, when the Presbytery voted to establish a Manual Labor School and named Rev. Robert Hall Morrison chairman of a committee to select a site.²⁴ This was the beginning of Davidson College.

After the trustees had offered the presidency to Samuel B. Wilson of Fredricksburg, Va. and he had declined it, in November, 1836, they chose R. H. Morrison as president at a salary of \$1,200 and a home. At a called meeting of the Presbytery on December 21, 1836, he accepted the call and resigned his pastorate leaving for Davidson in February, 1837.

On the first day of May, 1837 the Sugar Creek congregation elected John Madison McKnitt Caldwell, a son of Samuel Craighead Caldwell, as their pastor, at a ". . . salary of \$450 for three fourths of his ministerial labors in sd congregation." Concord Presbytery consented to this call and on the tenth of November, 1837, he was installed as pastor. There is a note marked N.B. in the record of the Congregational meetings which states: "The Rev^d John M. M.

23. Gertrude S. Hay, *Chapter Histories of the North Carolina Daughters of the American Revolution*, Durham, 1930, pp. 34A-34H

24. Shaw, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12

Caldwell's ministerial labours at Sugar Creek commenced the first of July 1837." John M. M. Caldwell was a great-grandson of Alexander Craighead, Sugar Creek's first settled and known pastor. His mother was Elizabeth Lindsay, Samuel C. Caldwell's second wife.

During the last years of his pastorate the Sugar Creek Session and congregation became involved in a bitter controversy with an itinerant Methodist preacher named James Jenkins.

Jenkins published a little book in 1842 entitled *Experiences, Labours, & Sufferings of James Jenkins*, and in it he said of the Sugar Creek Presbyterians of 1814-1815:

After the Presbyterians had their prejudice sufficiently removed to hear the Methodists, the first fruits appeared among them. Previous to this it had been a general custom, as the young people grew up, they went forward and joined the church and partook of its ordinances; but never appeared to think that they were thereby laid under any obligations to forsake their old customs and habits. Their conduct seemed to say, that a name in the church was all the religion the Bible required. *Hence every fashionable vice was tolerated in the Church.* Dancing was an innocent amusement, swearing was manly, and "drunkenness" common. the writer of this sketch has repeatedly seen the elders of the church reeling in the streets under the influence of ardent spirits²⁵

The reason for this venomous striking at the Sugar Creek elders and congregation was that J. Jenkins felt that Samuel C. Caldwell and his elders and congregation had not treated the early Methodists who came to Charlotte fairly and he accused them of an "*improper and uncharitable temper towards the Methodists.*" The Session came back with several resolutions, upholding the character of their former minister and of their congregation and then entered this in their minutes:

Resolved — That we do know and affirm that "every fashionable vice" was not tolerated in the church with which we are connected prior to the introduction of Methodism into the town of Charlotte — And that the statements in reference to the moral and the religious character of this church found on the 27th page of the "Memoirs of J Jenkins" are both false and slanderous.²⁶

On August 10, 1843, the Session resolved to request the Rev.

²⁵ James Jenkins, *Experiences, Labours, & Sufferings of Rev. James Jenkins of the South Carolina Conference*, printed for the author, 1842

²⁶ Minutes of Session, Book B—1841-1846

R. H. Morrison, D.D., to preach a sermon or sermons in which he would embody a history of the congregation and its pastors because he had personal knowledge of their character and also "access" to sources of information about them. Then on the twenty-eighth of August they passed the resolutions with which this history began.

In 1843-44, we find the first mention of some of the organizations of the Church. On April 2, 1843, there is the record of \$25 having been contributed "From the Sugar Creek Female Benevolent Society for educating a Heathen Child." In 1844 there is this entry:

May 26—Sunday School ^{commenced} *organized* for the summer."

All through this period we find the Session meeting to discipline the members of the church, both white and colored, for "traveling on the Sabbath, dancing, intemperance," for "absenting themselves from church services", for "the use of profane and intemperate language", and one member for "borrowing a ring" to mend his harness when away from home on his way to market. This member said in his defense that he borrowed it from the man on whose land he was camped on Sunday evening because he had a dog that guarded his gate "which might have made an early application on Monday morning unsafe."

By 1841 the Church had 237 members, 194 of these were white and 43 were slaves. This same year, because they would not raise his salary, Sugar Creek consented to let their pastor supply one-third of his time at Poplar Tent.

In January, 1845, the Rev. John M. M. Caldwell resigned from the pastorate of Sugar Creek giving as his reason:

That for the two last years he had been under the needsesity of giving too much of his attenohion to his worldly conserns, and the same cause would operate for years to come, & he wished to place himself in such a situation that he could give his whole time to the work of the ministry.²⁷

A few days later the Congregation met and voted to accept this resignation. The Congregation then appointed a day of humiliation and prayer and asked the Rev. Walter S. Pharr to preach for them, which he did "greatly to the satisfaction of the hearers." On this day of humiliation and prayer a committee was appointed to look for a new pastor.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

The committee turned to Robert Hall Morrison, who, in the summer of 1840, had resigned as President of Davidson on account of ill health. Dr. Morrison would not accept a call as pastor but he did consent to supply the Church. He "commenced preaching at sd. place on the third sabbath in March 1845." In September Dr. Morrison's health was so poor that he could not continue to supply, so on the twenty-first of that month the Congregation agreed to "hire the Rev^d Mr. Lafferty until the end of this year and offered him one Hundred dollars and his Board for his Ministerial labours for the term above named. . . ."

This offer Mr. Lafferty accepted and "commenced his labours on the fourth Sabbath of September 1845."

The Rev. Robert Harvey Lafferty was a native of Ohio. He graduated from Washington College (later Washington and Jefferson) in August, 1840 and in September he came to Indiantown, South Carolina where from October, 1840 until November 25, 1842, he taught school. On November 30, 1842, he entered Columbia Theological Seminary from which he graduated on Thursday, July 10, 1845. On Friday, October 20, 1843, he was taken under the care of Harmony Presbytery in South Carolina and on April 7, 1845, that Presbytery licensed him to preach.²⁸

In September, 1845, according to his diary, he came to North Carolina to visit his friend, Rev. H. B. Cunningham, who had become the pastor of the Hopewell Presbyterian Church in April 1843. Dr. Cunningham, in the funeral sermon which he preached for Mr. Lafferty, at Sugar Creek, in 1864, said:

About the first of August of that year (1845) by special request from me, he visited this part of North Carolina, and supplied the pulpit of Hopewell Church during my absence. On the next Sabbath at my suggestion and by special invitation, he visited and preached at Sugar Creek Church then vacant by the recent removal of Rev. J. M. M. Caldwell to Ga. . . .²⁹

Dr. R. H. Morrison moderated a meeting of the congregation on the twenty-second of November, 1845, at which the congregation voted unanimously to call Mr. R. H. Lafferty as their pastor, at a salary of \$400 for his whole time. This call was signed by the elders

²⁸ Diary of Rev. R. H. Lafferty

²⁹ *North Carolina Presbyterian*, Fayetteville, December 14, 1864

of the church, John F. McNeely, Saml. Caldwell, John Howie, John Campbell, Ira Parks and D. T. Caldwell.³⁰

At the meeting of Concord Presbytery held in Statesville on the third of April, 1846, this call was approved and arrangements made for his ordination and installation. The Presbytery then met at Sugar Creek on April 24 and 25; all day the twenty-fourth was spent in examining him and on the twenty-fifth of April, 1846, the Rev. R. H. Lafferty was ordained and installed as pastor of Sugar Creek Church.

In Mr. Lafferty's diaries we find a number of interesting entries:

Tues. April 27, 1847

Paid \$1.25 cts for the purpose of procuring a Sabbath School Library in Sugar Creek Church

Mon. Oct. 18, 1847

Bought a blank book for the Ladies Missionary Society of the Church of Sugar Creek, price 18¾ cts.

Nov. 7, 1848

Received from [—] Alexander One Dollar which he gave for preaching in Sugar Creek for the year 1848. He is not a subscriber.

On February 8, 1848, Mr. Lafferty was married to Jane T. Chamberlain, a native of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, who was teaching at Claremont Academy, a school for girls that was located on Sugar Creek Road about one and a half miles west of the Church. Rev. T. R. English, the great-grandfather of a much later pastor of Sugar Creek, came from South Carolina to perform the ceremony. Mr. Lafferty gave Mr. English a \$3.00 box of cigars as a present for his services. Then on Tuesday, June 27, 1848, we read this in Mr. Lafferty's diary: "Paid M. A. Hill \$10.00 for making coffin for my dear wife Jane."

Mr. Lafferty remarried on the third of January, 1850. His friend, Rev. H. B. Cunningham, performed the rites which united him to Miss Cornelia Hannah Parks, who was a daughter of Ira Parks, one of the elders of Sugar Creek.

He was the Stated Clerk of Concord Presbytery from 1848 until his death in 1864.

The Lafferty home still stands near Atando Junction on the

³⁰ Dr. R. H. Lafferty of Charlotte had the original call

Derita Road. It is said to be one of the most architecturally perfect homes built in this section during the middle of the nineteenth century. As one faces the house from the railroad the small building one sees on the right was Mr. Lafferty's study, built off from the big house so that he might have some peace and quiet away from the children in the home.

When the Civil War began Mr. Lafferty went from the meeting of Synod in Raleigh, on November 4, 1861, to Richmond, where he received permission to serve as a chaplain to the troops in the various Confederate camps. He contracted typhoid fever while visiting a camp near Petersburg, Virginia, and was brought home where he died on July 18, 1864, and he was buried in the third Sugar Creek Cemetery.

Mr. Lafferty's first wife, Jane, is buried in the second cemetery and his second, Cornelia, is buried at Davidson, N. C.

After Mr. Lafferty's death the Sugar Creek Church was supplied by the Rev. Henry Barrington Pratt. Mr. Pratt was born in Georgia, graduated from old Oglethorpe University in 1851 and from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1855. He was ordained by Cherokee Presbytery and went as a foreign missionary to Bogota, Colombia, South America. He came home in 1859 and served as Stated Supply for the Hillsboro, N. C., Church until he entered the Confederate army as chaplain in 1861. In 1864 he came to Sugar Creek and in December of that year he was "unanimously requested to supply the pulpit." Mr. Pratt "entered immediately upon the discharge of his duties." He stayed at Sugar Creek until January, 1867, when he left to serve again as stated supply for the Hillsboro Presbyterian Church.³¹

Mention has been made of the first house of worship. Sometime between 1832 and 1835, a third house of worship was erected, this one on the plot of ground just north of the second cemetery and east of the Salisbury Highway. The Congregational Meeting Book for the first of January, 1835 reads:

Resolved 2nd that there be a committee appointed to examine into the accounts of the building committee, for the building of Sugar Creek Church, for the purpose of ascertaining, if anything, and if any how much, is due them from the congregation for building the meeting house. . . .

³¹ E. C. Scott, *Ministerial Directory of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S.*, Austin, 1942, p. 586; Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, 1858-1867, minutes for January 8, 1865 and Jan. 6, 1867

This third church was built of brick. The shape was rectangular and the pulpit was placed against the east wall, with the pews facing it from north, south and west. The doors were at the north and south ends of the building.

Just outside was a "stand" or brush arbor where on special days extra large congregations could be accommodated. In 1836 the Congregation voted to use \$200, they had received from the sale of some land that had been bequeathed by a family of Carsons to Sugar Creek, to pay their remaining debt on the new church, to repair the stand, to secure the fastening of the meeting house, and to employ a doorkeeper for the church.³²

In 1837, it was discovered that the congregation had built its new church on property for which they had no deed. The trustees paid Thomas A. Houston, who owned the property and from whom they had bought two acres adjoining the Montgomery property in 1807, fifty dollars for three acres, three rods and fifteen poles. The deed states that it is for the property "... on which Sugar Churches house now stands."³³

Then in the Session Records for 1859 we read this resolution:

Session Room, Sugar Creek Church Sabbath, March 27, 1859

It was resolved — that our Spring communion be postponed until our house of worship be so far completed that the congregation can assemble in it.

The minutes of Concord Presbytery for the years 1855-1862 under the title of Narrative, for the meeting at Third Creek on April 18, 1859, throws this light on the quotation just given:

The attendance upon the public means of grace is encouraging, and the extension of Church accommodations by the erection of several large houses of worship, and the enlargement of others during the last year, . . .³⁴

Either the third house of worship was being renovated and enlarged, or a fourth house of worship was being erected. A careful reading of the papers printed in Charlotte and other North Carolina towns fails to reveal any notices or ads asking for bids on renovating or building a church at Sugar Creek.

³² Minutes of Congregational meetings, 1833-1870, R. A. McNeely's Book

³³ Mecklenburg County Deed Book, New No. 1, p. 174, Deed dated March 8, 1837

³⁴ Minutes of Concord Presbytery, Vol. VI, 1855-1862, p. 506

The original Session and School house was evidently, like the church, built of logs. There is no record in the minutes of either the Session or the Congregation of the School house or Session house until 1841. *The Charlotte Observer* for July 16, 1933, [Sec. 3], has a photograph of the reunion, in 1887, of the class of 1837 of the Sugar Creek School. The Observer states: "The school increased so much in attendance, that it was decided in 1837, to build a larger school house of brick. This was built by Mr. Gillet, a Frenchman. The boys then attending were required to keep Mr. Gillett supplied with Brick and mortar."³⁵

This school house was used at times by the congregation as a place of worship.³⁶ An earthquake, that occurred in August, 1886, seriously damaged the school house but it was repaired, the walls braced, and soon put in use again.³⁷

This brings to a close another period of Sugar Creek's history and once again it is perhaps needless but proper to say that the Sugar Creek men and women did their full duty to their community, State and country during the Civil War period. In the third cemetery lie some of the bodies of those who were spared and came home to take up the burden and cares of the Reconstruction Period when the war was over.

(For a partial and perhaps inaccurate list of the men from Sugaw Creek who served in the Confederate army see Appendix F., page 182.)

³⁵ *Charlotte Observer*, July 16, 1933, Section II

³⁶ R. A. McNeely's Book, December 31, 1870

³⁷ Information furnished by V. L. Hunter, Sugaw Creek elder. The breaks in the outer walls can still be seen (1953)

CHAPTER V

RECONSTRUCTION AND THE FIRST YEARS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Because there are no records of Sugar Creek's membership before 1827 we do not know when negroes were first received as communicants in the Church. In 1827 the Church had on its roll 159 members and eight of these were negroes. By 1841 the Church had grown in membership. That year the Session reported as the total number of communicants—237 and 43 of this total were listed as "persons of color."

During the years 1863-1866 the roll of the Church was not kept very accurately, but in 1867 the minutes of the Session for August 22 record the following:

There are 170 white members of the Church. In view of the establishment of a Church of Colored People within our bounds and of the apparent determination of the blacks to join it, it was not deemed proper to enumerate them in summing up the membership.¹

This movement for the establishment of a separate church had begun as early as 1865. On October 7, 1865, just about six months after General Lee's surrender at Appomattox, the Session made this entry:

Cubit Moore, Jefferson Parks, and Derrick Moore, prominent and influential colored communicants in this Church, appeared before Session at the request of the Pastor to confer with the Session touching their church relations, it appearing to be the intention of the two first named to connect themselves with the Northern branch of the Methodist Episcopal Church. After a protracted interview, in which it was the earnest desire of Session to demonstrate to these misguided, deluded, and hitherto unexceptionable colored communicants, that it still felt a sincere interest in their welfare, spiritual and temporal, it was determined that Messrs. Henderson Query & J. M. Hutchinson be appointed a committee to state to such colored communicants as were not disposed to change their church relations (that their white friends would assist them in building a house of worship in convenient proximity to this church) that if it were their fixed determination to sever their

¹ Minutes of Session, Book for years 1867-1874. (See also Chapter XII, p. 171)

connection with this church it would be better for them to do so by certificate from the Session.²

Written over the parenthesis in the above quotation is, "This offer was for the colored people continuing with us."

Derrick Moore stated that he and his friends who lived in the Query and Parks quarters wanted to remain in Sugar Creek. This pleased the members of the Session and they gave to Moore and his friends "assurance of encouragement and assistance."³

For five months there is no further mention of the colored members, then on March 4, 1866, the clerk made the following minute:

The Moderator was instructed to announce to the colored people (who have so widely scattered and most of whom have silently withdrawn from our congregation) that all who do not within six weeks report themselves to the Session as desiring to continue in our fellowship and under our oversight, will be cut off from the Church.⁴

Another year and a half went by, without any reference to this problem and then on August 25, 1867, the Session record reads:

Rev. S. C. Alexander, representing himself as a missionary to the blacks from the Northern Old School Church, appeared before Session, Mr. Howie in the chair, *pro tem*, expressing a desire to promote harmonious relations between them and the whites, &c. It was determined by Session that as many as presented themselves for that purpose should be granted certificates to join the Church of Colored Members in Charlotte in connection with the Northern Old School Assembly, or any other in which their lots might be cast.⁵

On the inside of the back cover of the Session minute book for the years 1858-1866 some unidentified person wrote this note:

Had regular preaching until 15 Jan. '67 then unregularly until 15th April. Since regular. Lord's Supper celebrated once. Effect on State of religion favorable. Attendance regular both on preaching & Sabbath School. Salary for last year paid. Have secured Rev. G. D. P.⁶

On April 24, 1867, Concord Presbytery dismissed the Rev. H. B.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Minutes of Session, years 1858-1867

Pratt to Orange Presbytery and in the month of May the Rev. George Dickinson Parks signed the minutes of the Session as moderator. In November, 1868, Concord Presbytery reported to the Synod of North Carolina that "On the 6th day of June 1868" it had "installed the Rev. G. D. Parks, pastor of Sugar Creek Church (for the whole of his time,) . . ."⁷ Mr. Parks was well known in the Presbytery for he had served in several fields before becoming Sugar Creek's minister. The Davidson College Alumni Catalogue states that he was educated as a physician as well as a theologian.⁸ The available records do not indicate whether or not Dr. Parks practiced medicine while serving as a minister.

The Rev. G. D. Parks was a native of Mecklenburg County and graduated from Davidson in the class of 1848. He taught at the Providence Academy for a year and then his record becomes obscure until 1856 when he became the pastor of the Steele Creek Church. Dr. Parks came to Sugar Creek from the Fifth Creek and Enola churches where for three years he had been serving as stated supply.⁹

In 1868 the Session reported to Concord Presbytery a membership of 240. The next year they indicated a slight loss, reporting 234. In 1869 they made their first report in their records as to Sabbath School enrollment—"No. of children in Sabbath School & Bible Class—100."¹⁰

When the Synod of North Carolina met at Morganton in October, 1869, at the request of Concord Presbytery, it erected a new Presbytery "to be known by the name of 'The Presbytery of Mecklenburg'; . . .". In 1824 the Synod had tried this venture but the first Presbytery of Mecklenburg had been too weak so after a few hard years the ministers and churches had been taken back into Concord Presbytery. Now once more the churches in the southern half of Concord were to try their wings. Synod reported, "This Presbytery of Mecklenburg will thus embrace 17 counties, 38 churches, 23 ministers and 5 candidates."¹¹ Sugar Creek was placed in this new Presbytery and has remained in Mecklenburg ever since.

Dr. W. E. McIlwain in the *Historical Sketch of the Presbytery of Mecklenburg* gives the following report on Sugar Creek in 1869:

⁷ Minutes of the Synod of N. C., 1861-1877, printed at various places. The record appears in minutes of meeting at Wilmington, Nov. 1868

⁸ T. W. Lingle, Ed., *Alumni Catalogue of Davidson College*, Charlotte, 1924, p. 55

⁹ Scott, *Ministerial Directory*, *op. cit.*, p. 555; Lingle, *op. cit.*, p. 55

¹⁰ Minutes of Session, 1867-1874

¹¹ Minutes of the 56th Session of the Synod of N. C., Fayetteville, 1870, p. 13

“Pastor, G. D. Parks; Added on Examination 13, on Certificate 7; Total Communicants 250; Infants baptized 18; Pupils in S. S. 100; Value of the Church \$4000.”¹²

For some inexplicable reason the Clerk of Session never thought to record in his minutes many important events, some that brought great happiness and some great sorrow to the membership, in the life of the Church. For instance, in the minutes for January 30, 1870 in writing up the reasons why the case against a certain member of the church had not been heard by the Session the clerk recorded: “. . . , and the church building having been burned, . . .”.¹³ This is the only reference to a tragic fire that completely destroyed Sugar Creek’s house of worship. But even more amazing is the fact that the minutes of the meetings of the congregation do not mention the fire or even the building of a new house of worship until December 30, 1870.

The Southern Home, a weekly newspaper published by General D. H. Hill in Charlotte, carried this account of Sugar Creek’s disastrous fire in its issue of February 17, 1870:

BURNING OF SUGAR CREEK CHURCH

This venerable Church, in three miles of Charlotte, was burned by an incendiary on the night of the 10th inst. Thousands in other States all over the South and West will learn of its destruction with deep sorrow. Emigrants from this congregation and their descendants are scattered far and wide and carry with them the characteristics of Sugar Creek, sturdy independence, integrity, fair dealing and love of truth.

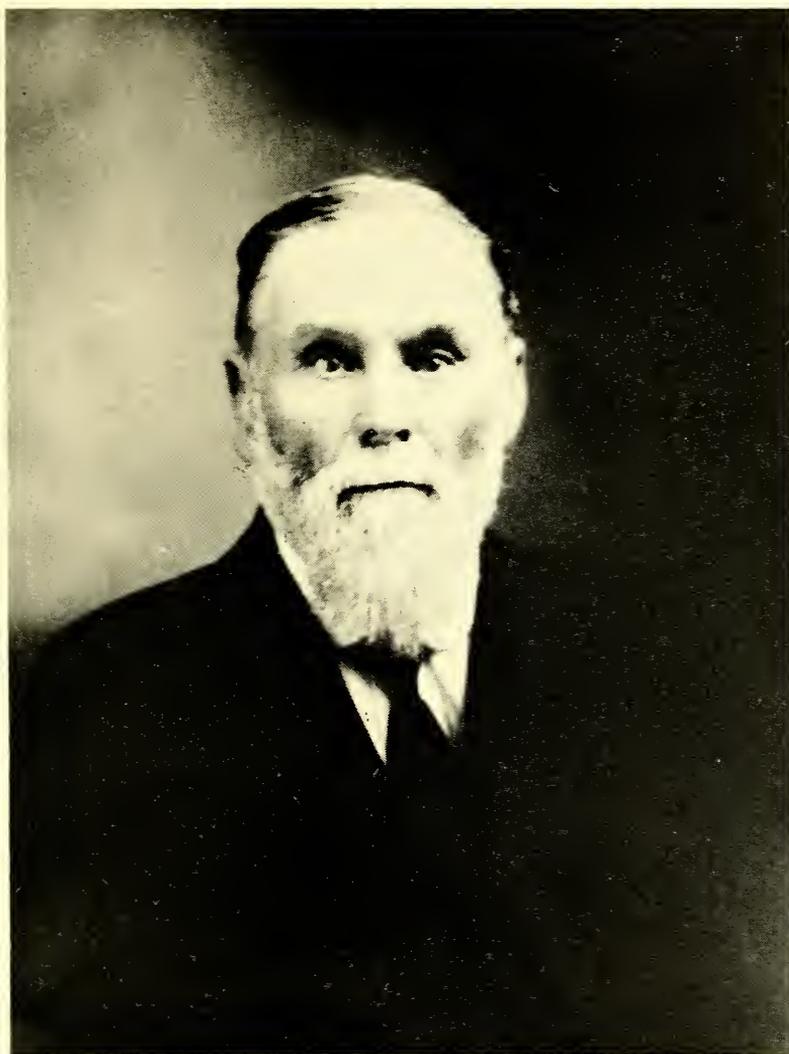
This congregation was organized in 1765 under Rev. Alexander Craighead, a celebrated minister in his day. He is the true father of the famous Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, May 20, 1775, more than a year before the National Declaration. The Convention that met on that bright May day was largely from Sugar Creek, and its President, Abraham Alexander, was an elder in that Church. The congregation was true as steel in the dark days of ’76, and no less so through all the changes of the gallant and righteous Confederate struggle. It is sad to think that a church with such a history has perished in such a base and cowardly way.¹⁴

The North Carolina Presbyterian carried a story of Sugar Creek’s fire in its issue for February 23, 1870:

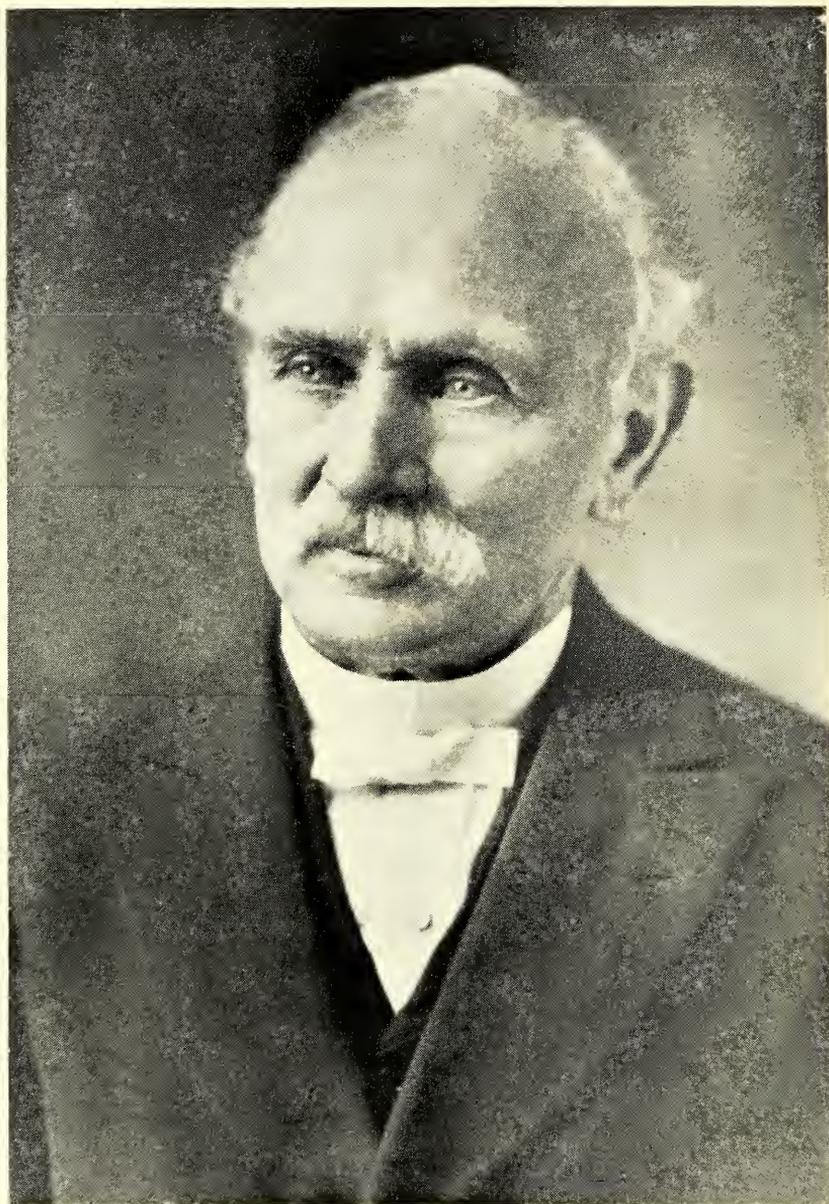
¹² W. E. McIlwain, *Historical Sketch of the Presbytery of Mecklenburg*, Charlotte, N.C., 1884, p. 65

¹³ Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*

¹⁴ *The Southern Home*, Vol. I, No. 5, Feb. 17, 1870, Charlotte, N. C., p. 1



The Rev. H. M. Pressly



The Rev. C. W. Robinson



The Manse — built in 1885 during
the Rev. C. W. Robinson pastorate



The Rev. W. R. McCalla

BURNING OF SUGAR CREEK CHURCH

The Church of Sugar Creek, three miles from Charlotte, of which Rev. G. D. Parks is pastor, was burned on the night of the 10th. It is stated that no fire had been in the building after the services of Sabbath. The burning must, therefore, have been the malicious act of an incendiary. We have no statement of the amount of loss, but it must have been considerable. The building was a substantial brick edifice and had recently been repaired and fitted up at considerable expense. . . .¹⁵

This last statement may be a reference to the building that was done in 1859 when the Session had to order the "Spring communion postponed" until the house of worship was so far completed that the congregation could assemble in it.¹⁶

There seems to be a discrepancy between the newspaper accounts and the Session records as to when the church was burned. In one of the diaries kept by the Rev. R. H. Lafferty, for the year 1857, his wife made the following notes on some pages in the front which for some reason he had left blank:

Friday, Feb. 10, 1870

Last night our dear old church was consumed by fire.

Monday 13th the whole congregation turned out to devise ways and means to reconstruct the old house of worship — Vote unanimous

Thursday 24th A few of the congregation assembled today. Set aside the first days work & agreed to build a new house in A.D. 1870.¹⁷

For several years, as indicated in Chapter V, the Church had been acquiring property around the site of this building that was burned. Sometime prior to 1852 the wagon road that ran between Charlotte and Salisbury was moved, from a location west of the ground on which the original church stood and where the first cemetery is still located, to the very edge of the lots on which the burned building had been and where the second cemetery now is.¹⁸ This road had to be crossed to reach the spring which was the only source of water for the people attending the services of the church. There is a tradition that the congregation, feeling that the increased wagon traffic made the road unsafe for the women and children,

¹⁵ *North Carolina Presbyterian*, Wednesday, Feb. 23, 1870, Fayetteville, N. C., p. 1

¹⁶ Minutes of Session, 1858-1867

¹⁷ Diary of Rev. R. H. Lafferty, for 1857, orig. in possession of Dr. R. H. Lafferty, Charlotte, N. C.

¹⁸ Mecklenburg Co. Deed Book 3, p. 314. Deed dated April, 1852.

voted to move across the road to the property on which the present building now stands.

This land was purchased by the Trustees of Sugar Creek from George Houston for fifteen dollars. The brick school house, built in 1837, was already across the wagon road and now the Church was placed between the school and the spring.

In the *Western Democrat*, for Tuesday, March 15, 1870, the following notice or advertisement was printed:

NOTICE TO BUILDERS & CONTRACTORS

Sealed proposals will be received by the undersigned Committee until the 1st day of April, 1870, for the erection of a brick Church at Sugar Creek (three miles from Charlotte on the Salisbury road, and within half mile of the N. C. Railroad). The Church to be 80 by 56 feet. Plans and specifications can be seen at Dr. McAden's Drug Store. The committee reserve the right to reject any or all the bids.

J. P. Alexander, Jas. F. Houston,

E. C. Wallis, E. L. S. Barnett,

J. Mc. Henderson, Committee

Charlotte, March 14, 1870 19

Mr. E. C. Wallis was the treasurer of the building committee and his book has been preserved among the records of the church. He lists the money received from the Sugar Creek congregation and from "Veries Sours" outside the congregation. Rocky River, Hopewell, Davidson College, Charlotte, Concord Town, Poplar Tent, Providence, Steele Creek, Unity, Mallard Creek, Sharon and Philadelphia are recorded as congregations that made contributions to the erection of the new church.

Mr. Wallis' book also shows that as treasurer he paid a Mr. Holt seventy-five dollars for the plans and specifications for the new building, that he paid Clark Wright fifty dollars for "puling down old House", Smith Watson five dollars for "Advitising Contract", and that Samuel Taylor was the contractor the committee employed. He gives \$5,206.25 as the total amount paid for the building of the new church. This figure includes the interest paid on the money the congregation had to borrow from the First National Bank of Charlotte and from various individuals in the congregation in order to pay the contractor on time.²⁰

¹⁹ *The Western Democrat*, Charlotte, N. C., March 15, 1870, 18th Vol. No. 913, p. 3
²⁰ E. C. Wallis, *Treasurer's Record Book*, 1870-1872

In the minutes of a congregational meeting held on February 9, 1871 the collectors reported "whole am't paid out \$3925.00—Still due on the Church \$2575.00."²¹ The addition of these two sums would indicate that the new church cost six thousand five hundred dollars.

According to an article published in the *Charlotte Observer* on Sunday, January 5, 1930,

. . . , The contractor once threatened to close up Sugaw Creek because the congregation had met with many difficulties in raising the money to pay him. Henderson Query, a member of the building committee and an ardent Christian, came to the rescue and said: "This church will never close as long as I have a cent." . . .²²

However, according to the congregational minutes a meeting of the congregation was held "in the Grove near the Church, on Saturday, January 14, 1871."²³ At this meeting it was reported that "the amount still due on the building is 2400 dollars in round numbers, . . . , that 1000 dollars in cash is necessary to be raised in order to secure the completion of the building at an early day."²⁴ There is no mention of any money being borrowed from Mr. Henderson Query or being loaned by him to the church. Mr. Wallis records that James H. Orr loaned the committee one thousand dollars on the fifteenth of an undesignated month but between September and November, 1870. The only other individual listed as lending any money was E. L. S. Barnett who loaned ninety dollars on January 14, 1871.²⁵

In May, 1871, the congregation was still in arrears to the contractor so they authorized four elders and three deacons and two women together with the pastor to sign a note for the amount due Mr. Taylor which was to be borrowed either from the bank or private individuals.²⁶ Mr. Wallis states that on the sixteenth of May, 1871, the committee borrowed twelve hundred and sixty dollars from the First National Bank.²⁷

One of the women named in the group to sign the note was Mrs. R. H. Lafferty. Earlier, when the Church had been forced to borrow money Mrs. Lafferty had refused to sign and gave her reasons

21 Book of Record for Sugar Creek Congregation, 1870-1920, p. 23

22 *Charlotte Observer*, Charlotte, N. C., Sunday, Jan. 5, 1930, Sec. III, p. 3

23 Book of Record for Sugar Creek Congregation, *op. cit.*, p. 19

24 *Ibid.*

25 Wallis, *op. cit.*

26 Book of Records, *op. cit.*, p. 25

27 Wallis, *op. cit.*

in the diary already referred to. This is the way in which she defended her actions:

Saturday April 30 1870. Today the congregation of Sugar Creek Church assembled in the Session House. Organized and after much discussion the majority agreed to sign a bond of 3397 dollars which amount had been previously subscribed by members of the congregation. I with several others refused to sign the bond and I here wish to record my reasons, having been falsely accused of opposing the building of the church. My reasons are simply these—Want of confidence in many of the subscribers makes me unwilling to stand security for them. My plan to secure the amount to the committee was to let each subscriber give his or her own note with such security as each could give.²⁸

According to the traditions current in the congregation the bricks for the new building were made in the southwest corner of what is now the Southern States Fair Ground. The furnishings for the new church, pulpit and pews, were made by one of the deacons, Mr. E. L. S. Barnette. Mr. Barnette, a Confederate veteran, operated a wood-working shop at his home place just to the east of the Statesville highway and north of Irwin's, or Big Sugar, Creek. There is no record in the Treasurer's book of the cost of these furnishings. It is believed that some members donated the timber and others helped Mr. Barnette and that in this way they made a real contribution to the new church.

The communion table, oval shaped and with a marble top, still in use today, was given by the J. W. Wadsworth family of Charlotte. Mr. Wadsworth operated a livery stable at the time he and his family presented this gift to the church.²⁹

Out in the church-yard, scattered over the grounds are groups of large stones, flat on top and raised off the ground by smaller stones. These large stones were the steps and foundation stones of the church destroyed by fire on the night of February 10, 1870. They were moved across the road when the present building was erected and were used as picnic tables by the families of the congregation when they came with their dinners to spend the day in worship. In 1909 the picnic stone that had been used by the McConnell family was moved to the first graveyard to be used as a marker. The Meck-

²⁸ Diary of Rev. R. H. Lafferty, *op. cit.*

²⁹ Information furnished by F. S. Neal, Jr., Sugaw Creek Deacon

lenburg Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution had this marker erected and suitably inscribed.³⁰

In 1874 the Session reported a membership of 207. This decided drop came because Sugar Creek dismissed a great many members to the Second Presbyterian Church in Charlotte. This Church was organized by a commission of Mecklenburg Presbytery on October 22, 1873.³¹ Not only at its organization but steadily through the years Sugar Creek has made a great contribution to this sister, or even truer, grand-daughter church, as it has given to it many of its strongest and most loyal members.

The next year, after listing nineteen members as being received into the church on August 8, the clerk made this note:

The last four months has been a time of unusual interest in this Church The Spirit of God has been poured out in rich effusion upon us in quickening the graces of his people and in awakening of many careless Souls.

the Lord be praised.³²

Dr. McIlwaine, in his *Historical Sketch*, already cited, tells of this revival at Sugar Creek, and quotes Dr. Parks as saying that for more than a year and a half he had been praying for a revival. Dr. McIlwaine gives several lengthy quotations from a diary kept by Dr. Parks. In order to give a true picture of what occurred some of those quotations are reproduced now:

August (1875): Our communion was on the second Sabbath of August. Was again alone on the Sabbath but God was my helper. . . . At the close of the sermon my soul was moved with such overpowering desire to see sinners come to Jesus that my strength was well nigh exhausted. After recess the Lord's Supper was administered, and great solemnity and tenderness filled the house. A blessed day: Christ was in our midst, . . .; for 19 new converts sat down with us, for the first time, at this communion, and three of them were our own children. . . .³³

Dr. Parks goes on to write of how he felt about his children joining the Church and that they made the fifth generation of his kindred "who as Presbyterians who had loved and served God."³⁴

Then Dr. Parks wrote:

³⁰ Hay, *op. cit.*, p. 36

³¹ Minutes of the Synod of N. C., October 1874, p. 8

³² Minutes of Session, 1874-1878

³³ McIlwaine, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-40

³⁴ *Ibid.*

At the close of the day's services I asked the congregation whether the meeting should continue or close. The silence was broken by the voice of a good old mother who had long been praying for the conversion of her sons, saying, 'Don't stop.' An aged father, whose children had manifested no concern about their souls, rose and with tears moved that the meeting be continued. Immediately the whole congregation rose as an expression of earnest desire for its continuance. . . .³⁵

The last entry from Dr. Parks' diary, that Dr. McIlwaine gives, states that between April and October, 1875, forty-four members were added to Sugar Creek on profession of faith.³⁶

In the summer of 1880 Dr. Parks assisted the ministers of Hope-well, Steele Creek, and Mallard Creek in a meeting that was held in a grove, on the Beattie's Ford road, about five miles from Charlotte. This meeting eventually resulted in the organization of Wil-liams Memorial Church by Mecklenburg Presbytery on April 25, 1885.³⁷

During the late 1870's and early 1880's Sugar Creek had difficulty in raising its minister's salary. A part of the problem lay in the economic situation and a part in the fact that Dr. Parks' health was not good. Dr. Parks offered on several occasions to resign but his congregation voted for him to remain with them "as long as his health may permit."³⁸ In view of this action, the Deacons, pastor, and congregation devised several schemes for remedying this financial problem, but none of them proved very successful. (These plans will be discussed in the Chapter on "The Deacons and the Stewardship" of Sugar Creek.) These Reconstruction days were times of hardships and poverty and no local plan could cure that South-wide condition.

On December 30, 1883, at a congregational meeting that had been called by the Session, Dr. Parks requested the congregation to concur in his request to Presbytery that the pastoral relationship be dissolved. The congregation reluctantly, but unanimously, voted to concur with his request. Then, on the following Sunday, the congregation adopted a paper that expressed the sympathy and esteem the congregation felt for him and spoke of the "high appreciation" they held of "his labours" among them.³⁹

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Sommerville, *op. cit.*, p. 79; Minutes of Mecklenburg Presbytery (150th Stated Session) Oct. 22, 1940, pp. 20-21.

³⁸ Book of Records, *op. cit.*, p. 27

³⁹ Minutes of Session, 1879-1911, *op. cit.*, p. 33

The Session minutes do not state who supplied the pulpit from the time Dr. Parks left until his successor was elected. The congregation met on May 25, 1884, and held an election for a Pastor "which resulted in the choice of Rev. E. P. Davis."⁴⁰ This call Mr. Davis declined so on September 7, 1884, the Session called another congregational meeting and this time the Rev. Charles W. Robinson was elected as pastor.⁴¹

The Rev. Charles Wilson Harris Robinson was born in Mississippi. He was a grand-son of Rev. John Robinson and a graduate of Davidson, the class of 1874. He studied theology at Columbia Seminary, graduating in 1879. Sugar Creek called him from the church in Graham, Kentucky, and he was installed by Presbytery on September 18, 1884.⁴²

From Craighead's until Mr. Robinson's pastorate all of Sugar Creek's ministers lived in either their own homes, built by them at their own expense, or in a house rented for them in the community. During 1885 the Manse was built for Mr. Robinson and his family. In the book used by the Treasurer of the Church Building Fund in 1870-72, some unknown person has written with a pencil the record of the money received and paid out "for work done on parsonage."⁴³

It is impossible from the records to ascertain the exact cost of the manse which was built of brick and contained originally six rooms, three downstairs and three upstairs. A kitchen was built and a well dug in the yard behind the house. The mason work totaled \$154.05 and 48,195 bricks cost \$240.27. Four kegs of nails, two buckets, four chains and a pulley are listed as costing \$14.38. The doors and window frames came to \$42.55. The cost of digging the well is given as \$35.00. A fence was built to enclose the manse area at a cost of \$47.51.⁴⁴ In one place the keeper of this rather haphazard record states: "Money received \$707.15, Paid out \$699.50; balens on han \$7.65."⁴⁵ But on several pages, all these unnumbered, after this he continues to list money as received and paid out.

After a brief pastorate, marked according to the Session minutes with a steady reception and dismissal of members and the usual dis-

40 *Ibid.*, p. 35

41 *Ibid.*

42 *Ibid.*, p. 36 (some of this information was taken from the Davidson College Alumni Catalogue, *op. cit.*)

43 Wallis, *op. cit.*

44 *Ibid.*

45 *Ibid.*

ciplinary cases, Mr. Robinson asked the Session, on November 19, 1887, to call a meeting of the congregation to concur with him in his request to Presbytery that it dissolve the pastoral relationship.⁴⁶

Mr. Robinson had been called to the Presbyterian Church in Monroe, N. C., and asked for this action in order that he might accept the call. The congregation gave its concurrence and Presbytery dissolved the relation.

To secure a new minister the congregation on December 11, 1887, appointed a committee of seven men "to take such steps as they might deem proper in procuring a pastor for this church . . .".⁴⁷ On Sunday, January 1, 1888, the Session gave notice of a meeting of the congregation, to be held on January 8, for the purpose of electing a pastor. The committee nominated the Rev. James Leander Williamson, pastor of the Poplar Tent Church in Cabarrus County and a native of Lancaster, S. C., and a graduate of Davidson and Columbia Theological Seminary. Mr. Williamson received the unanimous vote of the congregation and was promised a salary of "\$750 per annum, to be paid quarterly, with no unpaid balance at the end of the year."⁴⁸ Presbytery installed Mr. Williamson in March, 1888.

During the second year of Mr. Williamson's pastorate a Sunday School was started in the home of Mr. W. B. Newell, a deacon in Sugar Creek, who lived in the Newell community. In 1890, as a result of this Sunday School, a petition was presented to Presbytery asking for the organization of a church. Presbytery granted this request and the Newell Presbyterian Church was organized in 1890 with thirty-one charter members.⁴⁹ Beside the members of Mr. Newell's family Sugar Creek gave about ten more of her members to help start this church.⁵⁰

After a rather uneventful ministry of five years Mr. Williamson began having difficulties with some of his officers. Because of this, on November 12, 1893, he offered his resignation and asked the congregation to concur in it. The vote was taken and resulted in fifty-eight votes being in favor of his remaining at Sugar Creek. Not a single dissenting vote was heard.⁵¹ This vote seems to have quieted the

46 Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, p. 53

47 Book of Records, *op. cit.*, p. 29

48 *Ibid.*, p. 30

49 Minutes of Mecklenburg Presbytery, October 1948

50 Session Register, 1879-1917

51 Book of Records, *op. cit.*, p. 33

difficulties for a time but in 1896 the Session found it necessary to adopt the following paper:

March 26

Sugar Creek Church

The following resolution was adopted — “Resolved that all persons who may be opposed to the continuance of the present Pastoral relation & who feel that steps should be taken looking to a dissolution of said relation, be requested to meet with the Session at a meeting to be held April 5th after Sermon, This step is taken because of certain rumors that the present Pastoral relation is unsatisfactory, the Session finds it impossible to ascertain the facts, and will expect all persons to appear who may be dissatisfied. This paper be read from the pulpit next Sunday morning.⁵²

When the Session met on April 5, a petition signed by thirty-seven members of the congregation was read by the clerk. This petition requested the Session to call a congregational meeting to determine whether the congregation wished to retain Mr. Williamson or not. In its reply to this paper the Session pointed out to the petitioners that the question as to whether or not the pastoral relationship should be dissolved “can only be decided by Presbytery,” but it agreed to call a meeting on April 26 to put the question to a vote.⁵³

At the meeting on April 26 forty-three members voted to ask Presbytery to dissolve the relationship and forty-eight against it.⁵⁴ This division was too nearly equal to settle the problem so on the tenth of May Mr. Williamson reported to the Session that he was going to ask Presbytery to dissolve the pastoral relation,⁵⁵ and asked for another congregational meeting. This time the congregation voted unanimously to “agree to the dissolution of the Pastorship.”⁵⁶ On the thirty-first of May the congregation met again and the committee that had been appointed to represent the church at Presbytery reported that “Presbytery had dissolved the Pastoral Relation”⁵⁷ At this meeting a large committee of eleven men was appointed “to secure a Pastor”⁵⁸

In the interim the Church had as occasional supplies the Rev. J. W. Stagg, D.D., pastor of the Second Church and the Rev. Jonas

⁵² Minutes of Session, 1879-1911, p. 148

⁵³ Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, pp. 152-153

⁵⁴ Book of Records, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-41

⁵⁵ Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, p. 154

⁵⁶ Book of Records, *op. cit.*, p. 42

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* p. 43

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

Barclay, pastor of the Williams Memorial Church.⁵⁹ At a meeting of the congregation on July 19, 1896, moderated by Mr. Barclay, the congregation voted "to try to secure Mr. T. J. Allison of Alabama as supply for one year and a salary of \$750 if the deacons can raise the money."⁶⁰ Another meeting was held on August 2 and the congregation ordered the committee "to write to Mr. Allison and ask him to come as quick as he can and take charge of the church . . ."⁶¹

The Rev. Thomas Johnston Allison was a native of Cabarrus County, a graduate of Davidson and Union Theological Seminary, Hampden-Sydney, Va., and was pastor of the Decatur, Alabama, Church when Sugar Creek offered him this work as their supply.⁶²

Mr. Allison responded to this request and moved to Sugar Creek about the first of September, 1896. He served as supply until April 25, 1897, when he was unanimously called to be the pastor. The congregation promised him the same salary that he had received as supply.⁶³

Mr. Allison had remarkable gifts as an evangelist and during his pastorate there were an unusually large number of additions to the church, most of them coming on profession of faith. For instance, there were 20 additions on profession in 1903. However, Sugar Creek did not grow a great deal. Almost as rapidly as it gained new members it dismissed others to the steadily growing churches of Charlotte. In 1896 there were 210 members, in 1904, only 226 were reported.

At a Session meeting held on March 13, 1904, Mr. Allison informed the elders that he had been elected Evangelist for Mecklenburg Presbytery and asked them to call a meeting of the congregation for the following Sunday in order that the church might concur in his request to Presbytery that the pastoral relationship be dissolved.⁶⁴ The next Sunday, March 20, the congregation "agreed to the dissolution of the Pastorship."⁶⁵

During 1903 and 1904, according to the records of the Session, the church and manse were repaired. The minutes of the congregation do not show that these repairs were ever voted on by the congregation in a formal meeting, but the Session's minutes state that a

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 44

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 45

⁶² Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 10

⁶³ Book of Records, *op. cit.*, p. 50

⁶⁴ Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, p. 231

⁶⁵ Book of Records, *op. cit.*, p. 59

joint meeting of the Elders and Deacons was held on October 15, 1903, and that "the Deacons were instructed to raise \$150.00 or more to repair our Manse and church."⁶⁶ Then at another joint meeting, January 14, 1904, the Deacons reported "that more money was needed to be collected to finish the repairs on the Church and the Manse."⁶⁷

On January 10, 1906, after Mr. Allison's successor had come the Deacons reported to the Session, "On Current Expenses and Manse repair there is outstanding Note for \$62.00 & Interest with \$26.00 Cash on hand for Credit."⁶⁸

Though no one seems to know, this must have been the time when the present kitchen was added to the original six rooms, built in 1885.

The pulpit was supplied from the first of April through July, 1904, by the Rev. A. J. McKelway, editor of the *Charlotte Evening News*, and the Rev. J. A. McMurray, who was serving as supply pastor for the Robinson Presbyterian Church.⁶⁹

On July 17, 1904, the congregation extended a unanimous call to the Rev. Harvey Mason Pressly, whose birth place was Illinois and who had come to North Carolina the year before and was serving as the stated supply of the Albemarle Church. Mr. Pressly attended Monmouth College and Xenia Theological Seminary, both in Ohio. Though these are both United Presbyterian Institutions there is no record that he ever served that denomination. Mr. Pressly's pastorates were all in the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America until he came to North Carolina in 1903.⁷⁰

Sugar Creek offered Mr. Pressly a salary of "\$850 payable quarterly."⁷¹

Shortly after accepting Sugar Creek's call Mr. Pressly suggested to the congregation, as a change he thought would be helpful, that the Sunday School ought to be held immediately after the morning worship service. This suggestion was made and adopted because it was felt that in this way the entire congregation could be brought to attend the Sunday School. For a while this new plan worked and

66 Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, p. 228

67 *Ibid.*, p. 231

68 *Ibid.*, p. 245

69 Book of Records, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-61

70 Scott, *op. cit.*, pp. 583-584

71 Book of Records, *op. cit.*, p. 62

the Sunday School showed an increase in enrollment and attendance.⁷²

In 1905-06 there were twenty-seven members added to the church but in April, 1906, the Session put twenty-nine members on the retired roll, so that the Church's report to Presbytery showed a net loss of two, or a total membership of 210. Twenty-three more were retired the next year, and with only seven members being added, the total membership dropped to 194.⁷³

⁷² *Charlotte Daily Observer*, Sept. 15, 1912—Article "A Sketch of Sugar Creek", by Miss Julia Alexander

⁷³ Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, p. 254

CHAPTER VI

THE FIRST THREE DECADES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

On the seventh of April, 1901, the Session adopted the following summary of the past year's work and ordered it included in its report to Presbytery:

The Session would report to Presbytery that the attendance upon divine services has been more or less variable, because of sickness, inclement weather and indifferance only a small number comparatively observe family worship, but the observance of the Sabbath is good. The children are being taught the scriptures and Catechisms in the home and Sabbath School. There has been some increase in the contributions to the Benevolent Causes of the Church, while the Pastor has been paid the full amount of his salary. There has not been any special evidences of spiritual growth and zeal among our ptope on the contrary there is no glowing worldly conformity.

. . . .¹

Four years later, April 7, 1905, the elders sent this report:

The attendance at public worship is fairly good though some are careless and negligent. Many observe family worship in their homes, but a large number do not. The Sabbath is observed by most of our people. In most of the homes children receive some training, but some leave this work to others.

. . . .

Too many ask 'what is popular?' instead of 'what saith the scripture?' but many are willing to be peculiar and right, rather than the friends of the world.

. . . .²

These two narratives give a fairly accurate picture of the changes that were taking place in the spiritual life of the Sugar Creek congregation as the Twentieth Century began to unfold. Even further evidences of the changes taking place can be found in the Chapter on "The Session and Discipline".

On January 9, 1908, Mr. Pressly requested the Session to call a congregational meeting for the next Sunday in order that he might

¹ Minutes of Session, 1879-1911, p. 203

² *Ibid.*, p. 242

ask "The Congregation to relieve him from his present relations to the Church."³ As the Session began to discuss this request and Mr. Pressly's reasons for making it, they found that it was perfectly proper because Mr. Pressly had never been installed by Mecklenburg Presbytery. The elders then "very reluctantly agreed to his request."⁴

It is very interesting to note that the records of the congregation show that the congregation did not meet during Mr. Pressly's pastorate except on the Sunday they accepted his resignation.⁵

In the interval between this resignation and the coming of the next minister the Church was supplied by the Rev. W. W. Davidson, Ph.D., a graduate of Yale and during 1908-11 a teacher in the Presbyterian College for Women in Charlotte.⁶

At a congregational meeting, held on April 12, 1908, Sugar Creek extended a call to the Rev. J. L. McKinstry, who was the pastor of the Waxhaw and Siler churches. This call Mr. McKinstry declined and in his letter to the Clerk of Session, Mr. F. S. Neal, he wrote

I have thought of your call and appreciate it exceedingly. Your community is the best. It is near the city. The roads are excellent. All of which makes it a desirable field in which to labor. But more important than all, there is room for some growth. . . .⁸

After this disappointment the Church waited and looked until the twenty-third of August, 1908, when the pulpit committee recommended and the congregation unanimously voted to extend a call to the Rev. Walter Richardson McCalla, pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Aberdeen, Mississippi. The salary was set at \$900 and the manse "but no fire wood."⁹ This call was accepted by Mr. McCalla and with his coming one of Sugar Creek's happiest and most successful relationships began.

Mr. McCalla was born in Rosemark, Tennessee, and graduated from South Western Presbyterian University in 1898 and from the Divinity School in 1900. He had served the Aberdeen Church for four years prior to his acceptance of the Sugar Creek call.¹⁰

Sugar Creek's new minister moved into the Manse the latter

³ *Ibid.*, p. 259

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ see Book of Records, *op. cit.*, p. 62

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 62-63; Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 171

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 63

⁸ Original letter has been placed with the other Sugar Creek records. The letter is dated May 6, 1908

⁹ Book of Records, *op. cit.*, p. 63

¹⁰ Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 445

part of October, moderated his first Session meeting on November 1, and was installed by a commission of Presbytery, November 29, 1908. This commission was composed as follows:

. . . Rev. Dr. A. A. McGeachy preached the Sermon—Rev. J. E. Berryhill Presided and Charged the People—Rev. C. E. Raynal Charged the Pastor—Rev. C. W. Robinson a former Pastor was present and led in prayer at the close of the services.¹¹

With Mr. McCalla's pastorate the Church began its steady growth that has continued through the years. Mr. McKinstry was right when he wrote "there is room for some growth". In April, 1909, about six months after Mr. McCalla began his ministry the Session reported a membership of 189¹² and in April, 1921, just before Mr. McCalla resigned it reported a membership of 321.¹³ This shows a net gain of 132 for the twelve years approximately Mr. McCalla served the Church. Charlotte continued to grow through this period and Sugar Creek still dismissed members to its churches but her growth under her beloved pastor was sure and solid.

The Session's narrative for 1910 reflects the new life Sugar Creek was experiencing,

The attendance upon the services of the sanctuary is good. About one third of the heads of families have family worship. The Sabbath is fairly well observed by our members. The training in the scriptures and Catechisms of the Children of our Church, is done in the Homes and Sabbath School. Our statistical report to Presbytery shows by far, the largest amounts to Benevolent Causes in twenty years. . . .¹⁴

Early in Mr. McCalla's pastorate the church building was renovated and the beautiful ceiling, with its figures of the wreath of immortality and the lamp of knowledge, was placed overhead.¹⁵

Having taken care of the church in 1910, in 1912 several officers at a regularly called congregational meeting spoke of "the condition of the parsonage." The congregation, hearing these reports, voted "that it be fixed up at once."¹⁶

On the tenth of May, 1913, the Session received a request from

¹¹ This is written in the front of the Session Register, 1879-1911

¹² Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, p. 268

¹³ Minutes of Session, 1911-1935, p. 93

¹⁴ Minutes of Session, 1879-1911, p. 275

¹⁵ Book of Records, *op. cit.*, p. 65

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 66

Miss Julia Alexander, representing the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, asking that they be allowed to repair the wall around "the old Creighead Cemetery."¹⁷ This request was granted and the D.A.R. repaired the rock wall, placed the fence that had been around the Mint on it, and erected a marker dedicating their work to the memory of the Rev. Alexander Craighead, Sugar Creek's first minister. This work was completed in 1914.¹⁸

In its report to Presbytery, which was approved on April 11, 1915, the Session reported 247 members, twenty-seven having been added during the past year. The next spring the report to Presbytery showed 40 additions, 30 on profession and 10 by certificate. The total membership for 1916 was 276.¹⁹

Though our Country had entered World War I in 1917 the records of the church do not mention it until April 3, 1918, when the Session requested "Our Pastor . . . to write each one of our Boys in the service, a letter expressing the interest of the Session in their welfare."²⁰

Then in July the Session voted "to send our Sunday School Literature to our Boys in the Army."²¹ Sugar Creek had 25 men who served during World War I and it is an interesting fact that every one of them was spared to come home when the war was over.²²

The General Assembly met in Charlotte in May, 1920, and the *Presbyterian Standard* prepared a special edition in honor of the meeting. One of the features of this edition was an unsigned article entitled "Some Country Churches of Mecklenburg County." The writer of this story had this to say about Sugar Creek:

Sugar Creek is the oldest. It was organized in 1757 by Alexander Craighead, and has been ever since the source of supply for other Churches. Under the present pastor, Rev. W. R. McCalla, who began his work here in 1908, it has been taking on new life. It has a membership of 290. It contributed to all causes \$1,260 in 1909 and in 1920, \$4,929. Of this it gave to benevolence about \$2,981. These figures do not indicate a moribund condition. . . .²³

17 Minutes of Session, 1911-1935, p. 21

18 See Chapter IV, pp. 68-69

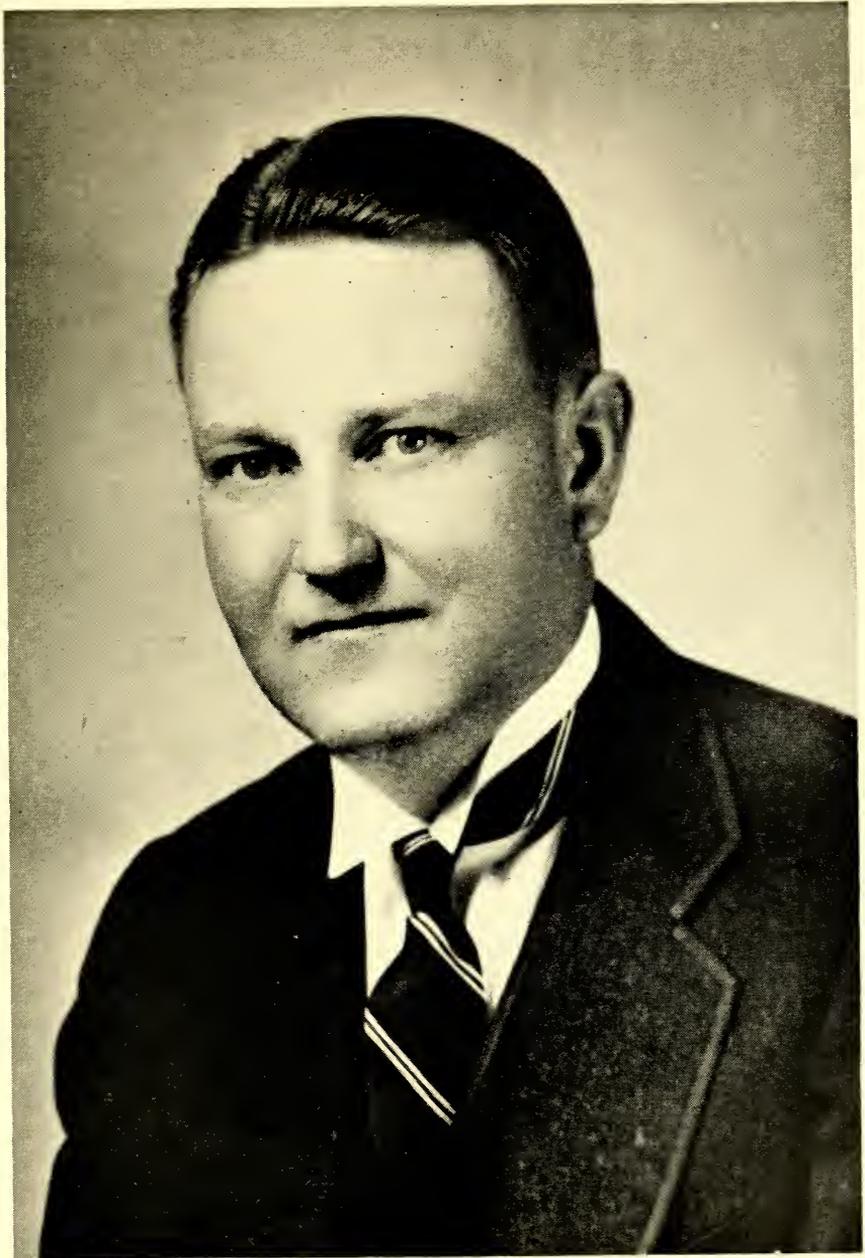
19 Minutes of Session, 1911-1935, pp. 37 & 45

20 *Ibid.*, p. 59

21 *Ibid.*, p. 64

22 See appendix for list of those in service.

23 *Presbyterian Standard*, Vol. LXI, No. 19, May 19, 1920, Charlotte, N. C., p.9



The Rev. LeRoy Perry Burney, D.D.

The growth of Charlotte and the coming of many new families into the Sugar Creek community caused the Session to appoint, on May 16, 1920, a committee of six, "three men and three ladies whose duty shall be to look after strangers who attend our Church."²⁴

As far as the church records are concerned, both of the Session and the congregation, no notice of the resignation or departure of Mr. McCalla was ever taken. There is no record of the Session calling a meeting of the congregation to decide whether or not it would concur in the pastor's request to Presbytery that the relationship should be dissolved. On July 7, 1921, the "Session met and was opened with prayer. Present Rev. W. R. McCalla Moderator . . ."²⁵ On August 21, 1921, the Session met again but this time Mr. McCalla's name is not listed.²⁶ The next time the Session met, September 11, 1921, the Rev. W. H. Frazer, D.D., was named as the moderator.²⁷

Dr. Frazer was at this time the president of Queen's College and he supplied Sugar Creek's pulpit from September, 1921, until October, 1922.²⁸

While Dr. Frazer was the supply pastor, Mr. W. T. Campbell gave the Church the collection plates now in use. Prior to this time wicker baskets were used, and the tradition is that in the early days the offerings of the congregation were taken up in hats.²⁹

When the Session met on September 10, 1922, the "Committee on securing a pastor reported they had someone in view, . . ."³⁰ so a meeting of the congregation was called "to hear the report of the Committee and extend a Call for a Pastor if the way be clear."³¹ At this same meeting a committee of three elders was appointed to interview the Newell Church and to learn "their wishes as to arrangements for preaching."³²

At a congregational meeting, held on September 24, 1922, a call was extended to the Rev. Morris Elmore Peabody. Mr. Peabody was born in Bainbridge, Georgia, attended Hampden-Sydney College and Union Theological Seminary in Virginia. He was pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Jefferson, Georgia, when Sugar Creek called

24 Minutes of Session, 1911-1935, p. 82

25 *Ibid.*, p. 95

26 *Ibid.*

27 *Ibid.*, p. 96

28 *Ibid.*, pp. 96-104, 5

29 This information supplied by Mr. F. S. Neal, Jr., a Sugar Creek Deacon.

30 Minutes of Session, 1911-1935, p. 104

31 *Ibid.*

32 *Ibid.*

him as its minister.³³ He and his family moved into the manse the first of November, 1922, and he moderated his first Session meeting on November 12.

Mr. Peabody served as stated supply of the Newell church as well as pastor of Sugar Creek.³⁴

In the "Narrative" sent to the Presbytery when it met in the spring of 1923 Sugar Creek reported ". . . Seven members have been added during the year on profession, Seven by certificate and our total membership is 336 . . ." ³⁵

During the summer of this same year a sign was erected at the corner of the Salisbury and Sugar Creek roads, giving the name of the church and the date of its founding, which was stated as 1756.³⁶ In the late summer and early fall electric lights were installed in the Church and the Session recorded its "thanks and appreciation to Mr. Lon Alexander for his interest in securing lights for our church."³⁷

The following fall a furnace was installed in the church. From its erection up to this time the church had been heated by two stoves.³⁸

A mission Sunday School was started during the spring of 1924. Dr. S. M. Henderson and Mr. Fred Gibbon were appointed a committee to find ". . . a suitable house . . ." for it to meet in.³⁹

In February, 1925, the Session granted the pastor permission to help in the Queen's College Endowment Fund Campaign.⁴⁰

Sugaw Creek's Sunday School had met after the morning worship service ever since the pastorate of Mr. Pressly, but in 1926 the congregation voted to have its Church School "before sermon".⁴¹

Mr. Peabody, like Mr. Williamson, had begun to have difficulties with various officers and members of the church. Due to these difficulties, he informed the Session, on March 25, 1927, that

. . . he would offer, at the coming meeting of Presbytery . . . his resignation as Pastor of Sugar Creek Church, to take effect June 1st, and asked for a congregational meeting to be called

33 Scott, *op. cit.*, Revised Ed. (1950) p. 535

34 *Ibid.*

35 Minutes of Session, 1911-1935, p. 110

36 *Ibid.*, p. 114

37 *Ibid.*, p. 125

38 *Ibid.*, pp. 129, 160, 265. Also Minutes of Congregational Meetings for August 18, September 15, and October 19, 1924.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 125

40 *Ibid.*, p. 134

41 *Ibid.*, pp. 153, 159

to meet next Sunday week April 3rd, notice and purpose of the meeting to be given next Sunday.⁴²

This meeting was held on April 3, 1927, and the congregation voted 115 to 81 not to accept his resignation.⁴³ The work of the church, as indicated by the minutes of the Session, went quietly on until July, when at a Session meeting on the seventeenth Mr. Peabody again told the Session it was his intention to resign as pastor, this time effective September 1. He again asked that a congregational meeting be called for the next Sunday "to hear and act on the same." Once again the clerk recorded: "Session called the meeting as requested."⁴⁴ On July 24, 1927, the congregation voted to accept his resignation.

The minutes of the Session do not give any indication that trouble was brewing and that the worst breach in Sugaw Creek's long history was to come soon. The elders met, to receive a new member, on August 7, 1927, and recorded that the pastor was absent. They met again on September fourth and asked the Rev. W. C. Underwood, pastor of North Charlotte Presbyterian Church, to act as their moderator. The clerk then presented a petition, signed by 119 members of the congregation.

Perhaps the best way to tell the story of the difficulties that had arisen and now come to a head is to let the records speak for themselves. This is the story as recorded in the Session's minutes:

The following petition with 119 signatures having come into the hands of the Clerk to be read to the Session— We the members of the Sugar Creek Presbyterian Church feeling that our vote on Mr. Peabody's resignation held at a regular congregational meeting was ignored by the action of the Session having a meeting a few days later, questioning Mr. Peabody as to when he expected to resign, on insinuating he had not kept his promise to resign the 1st of June; We feel that the Session was stepping beyond their official position, Therefore we respectfully ask the Session to apologize to Mr. Peabody and to the congregation for their action."

After discussing the petition, and in answer to same, the following paper was adopted, (6) six voting for and (1) one opposing—

While the Session of Sugar Creek acted within its Jurisdiction, as set forth in Paragraphs 31 and 65 of our Book of Church order in having a meeting on June 5th, 1927, and while emphatically

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 162

⁴³ Minutes of Congregational Meeting, April 3, 1927

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 168 — also Minutes of Congregational Meeting, July 24, 1927

disclaiming any wrong motive either against Rev. M. E. Peabody or any element in the congregation; yet after due consideration thinks it advisable to refer all matters in the petition to Presbytery. We therefore refer the petitioners to Presbytery, and ask Presbytery to appoint a Commission before which they may lay their complaints against the Session and have the answer of the Session to the same.⁴⁵

In the meantime Mr. Peabody had gone to work with Queen's College, helping in its Endowment Fund Campaign,⁴⁶ and Mrs. Peabody and two sons were granted letters to unite with the Westminster Presbyterian Church.⁴⁷ Mr. Peabody continued to serve as the stated supply of the Newell Church until 1934.

The Session met two weeks later, read and approved its minutes to date, and then voted to defer asking Presbytery for a commission until some later date.⁴⁸ The Rev. John G. Garth, editor of the *Presbyterian Standard* and Stated Clerk of Mecklenburg Presbytery, served as moderator. Mr. Garth had been asked to serve as supply pastor and he continued to fill the pulpit until the second of June, 1929.⁴⁹

On the sixteenth of October the Session appointed three of its members as a committee to meet with a like number of representatives of the petitioners "to see if a basis of agreement satisfactory to all parties could be reached."⁵⁰ This action proved futile. Feelings were running high and the sides were rigidly drawn. The next page of the minutes of the Session is blank and the next entry consists in the minutes of a commission of Presbytery and a mimeographed copy of its findings which has been pasted into the Session book.⁵¹

This Commission was appointed by Presbytery on October 19, 1927, and it met at Sugaw Creek on October 24. Then on October 28 it met at Sugaw Creek again and suspended the official functions of the Elders and Deacons and enjoined both officers and members to refrain from any further agitation among themselves of the differences that had brought on the trouble. The Commission pointed out that there had been grave mistakes and misunderstandings on both sides and that they did not want anyone to take their action in suspending the Elders and Deacons from the functions of their offices as a censure of any party or parties involved. Finally the whole membership was

45 *Ibid.*, pp. 169-170

46 Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 535

47 Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, p. 170

48 *Ibid.*, p. 170

49 *Ibid.*, pp. 170-191

50 *Ibid.*, p. 171

51 *Ibid.*, pp. 173-174

called to unite in an aggressive program for the upbuilding of the Kingdom of God, because this old and historic church, according to the Commission, offered unlimited opportunities for service, especially among the children and young people.⁵²

After a number of conferences between the commissioners and the officers, the Elders and Deacons signed a paper in which they covenanted to let "by gones be by gones" and work "harmoniously" for the upbuilding of the Church.⁵³ A little later the members of the congregation, hearing the paper read that had been adopted by the officers, entered into the same covenant. On February 12, 1928, the Commission restored the officers to the exercise of their official functions.⁵⁴

There were four ministers and two ruling elders on this commission. Two of the ministers, the Rev. A. R. Shaw, D.D., and the Rev. R. S. Burwell, D.D., had served churches but at this time were honorably retired; the other two were the Rev. C. R. Nisbet, D.D., pastor of the Caldwell Memorial Church and the Rev. C. H. Rowan, pastor of Paw Creek and Cook Memorial churches. The two ruling elders were Mr. T. J. Smith of the First Presbyterian Church, Charlotte, and Mr. T. B. Spratt of the Steele Creek Church.⁵⁵

From April, 1922, through April, 1927, Sugaw Creek had grown in membership from 319 to 327.⁵⁶ In 1926, the Session placed twenty-four members on the retired roll. It is a tribute to the work and spirit of the Commission, but more especially to Mr. Garth and the people of the Church, that in April, 1928, Sugaw Creek reported to Presbytery the addition of thirty-four new members and a total membership of 346.⁵⁷

52 *Ibid.*, pp. 173-174

53 *Ibid.*, p. 174

54 *Ibid.*, p. 175

55 *Ibid.*, p. 174

56 *Ibid.*, pp. 101, 164

57 *Ibid.*, p. 179

CHAPTER VII

THE ERA OF SUGAR CREEK'S GREATEST GROWTH

As the first three decades of the Twentieth Century drew to a close Sugaw Creek's wounds, caused by the troubles of 1926 and 1927, were slowly healing. Under Mr. Garth's leadership, and inspired by his gracious spirit, the Church was ready, by the summer of 1928, to begin thinking about the calling of a pastor.

On September 9, 1928 the following committee was appointed to look "to the calling of a pastor: Elders W. R. Long, J. O. Earnhardt, Deacons W. R. Garrison, Roy H. Todd,—from the congregation—Ralph Robinson, B. J. Hunter, John S. Davis, W. S. Abernathy."¹

The clerk of the Session added a note to this minute that "Fred L. Gibbon and F. F. Morrison were later added to the committee from the congregation."²

This committee after a painstaking investigation of many prospects and after long deliberation asked the Session to call a meeting of the congregation for Sunday, January 27, 1929, for the purpose of calling a pastor. The Session granted this request and the meeting was held. The committee nominated Mr. LeRoy Perry Burney and the congregation voted to extend him a call. The call was not officially extended to Mr. Burney until February 3, 1929,³ because at the Session meeting, when it was decided to have a congregational meeting, it was also moved "That it was the sense of this body that after the congregation has acted next Sunday on nomination of Pastor, fixing the terms of the call be postponed to an adjourned meeting of the congregation."⁴

Mr. Burney, a native of Bladen County, North Carolina, graduated from Davidson in 1923. He taught for several years, after his college work was completed, in the Berry Schools, Rome, Georgia. In 1929 he graduated from Columbia Theological Seminary and came to Sugaw Creek just a few weeks after completing his theological

1 Minutes of Session, 1911-1935, p. 185

2 *Ibid.*, p. 185

3 *Ibid.*, p. 188

4 *Ibid.*, p. 186

course. Mr. Burney was ordained and installed by a commission of Presbytery on June 2, 1929.⁵

The commission that ordained and installed Mr. Burney was composed of Mr. Garth, who presided and preached the sermon, the Rev. J. R. Bridges, D.D., editor of the *Presbyterian Standard*, who led the prayer, the Rev. C. C. Beam, superintendent of the Presbyterian Hospital, who charged the pastor, and the Rev. W. H. Frazer, D.D., who charged the people. Mr. Charles H. Caldwell, a Sugaw Creek elder was also a member of the commission.⁶

On May 19, 1929, a new Presbyterian Church was organized on the western edge of the area served by Sugaw Creek. A commission of Mecklenburg Presbytery met in the Nevin Community House and organized the Nevin Presbyterian Church with twenty-two charter members.⁷

Just before Mr. Burney came to Sugaw Creek the Session reported to Presbytery a membership of 332 and a grand total of all contributions of \$6,047.00.⁸ In the spring of 1940, approximately six months before he resigned as pastor, the annual report showed a membership of 552 and \$7,568.00 contributed to all causes.⁹

On June 23, 1929, Mr. Burney moderated his first meeting of the Session and the first item of business was to plan for a religious census of the area served by the Church, plus "That part of the Nevin territory on this side of the Statesville road, with the cooperation of the Pastor and Officers of the Nevin Church . . .".¹⁰ This canvass paid rich dividends, for at the close of the church year the Session reported to Presbytery forty additions and a total membership of 361.¹¹

In July the congregation voted to renovate the manse and a bathroom was added at the same time.¹²

One of Mr. Burney's greatest contributions to Sugaw Creek was to lead the church to the fulfillment of a long felt need and dream. Only a few days after he had been at Sugaw Creek two months the Session began making plans as to how the Sunday School might be adequately housed. For a good many years the Session and Sunday

5 Scott, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-95 (Revised Ed.)

6 Sessional Register, 1912-1940 on page facing page 1.

7 Minutes of Mecklenburg Presbytery, October 1929

8 Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, p. 189

9 Minutes of General Assembly, *op. cit.*, 1940, p. 234

10 Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, p. 191

11 *Ibid.*, p. 212

12 *Ibid.*, p. 192

School leaders had realized that the Sunday School was handicapped due to a lack of classrooms for the separate classes and age groups. Now they were ready for something more concrete than dreams.

On September 1, 1929, at a joint meeting of the elders and deacons a committee of six was appointed "to look into the cost, plans &c of both a temporary and permanent Sunday School building, . . ."¹³ Two weeks later this committee reported to another joint meeting of the officers and the officers decided that they were only interested in a permanent building and they appointed a committee to "work out an effective financing for said building, . . ."¹⁴

These preliminary steps led to the congregation voting to erect a Sunday School building and to employing an architect. Ground was broken in February, 1930, and on May 25, 1930, the building was used for the first time. The final payment on the building was made on December 27, 1943 and it was dedicated on Sunday, May 28, 1944.¹⁵

This new building, erected at a cost of approximately \$18,000, proved a real blessing. In 1930 the Sunday School enrollment was 289, in April 1931 it was 410.¹⁶

A second contribution Mr. Burney made was in the development of an adequate organizational pattern for all of the various activities of the church. A Sunday School Council was set up to plan for and supervise the program of Religious Education. The men's work was reorganized and an enlarged program was projected. Regular monthly prayer meetings were instituted in various sections of the congregation, these being led and sponsored by the Men's Club. The work among the young people was made more adequate to meet their needs and to train them for future leadership in the church.¹⁷

Also under Mr. Burney's leadership the church grounds were beautified with the planting of shrubs in tasteful arrangements around the church and manse and old school building and at other places over the church property. A study of the pictures taken before and after this landscaping was done will show what wonderful improvements it made in the appearance and how it brought out and accentuated the inherent beauty of Sugaw Creek's historic buildings.¹⁸

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 194

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Manuscript History of Sugaw Creek Educational Building by W. R. Garrison, read at the Dedication Service, May 28, 1944.—see also Mins. of Session, *op. cit.*, 1935-1947, p. 202

¹⁶ Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, pp. 213, 228

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 209, 211, 216, 239, 242, 290

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 215, 276

As 1933 came to a close, plans were being made for a "Homecoming Day" and for the erection of a marker at the site of the original church.¹⁹ The Mecklenburg Chapter of the D. A. R. had marked the first cemetery in 1909 and the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence Chapter had restored the old wall, putting the iron fence and gate upon it, dedicating its work to Alexander Craighead, in 1914. Now the Church, cooperating with the Mecklenburg Committee of the Colonial Dames, was to have a permanent memorial marking the approximate location of its first building.

On Sunday afternoon, May 20, 1934, this marker was unveiled and presented to Sugaw Creek. Mr. James A. Bell, a lawyer in Charlotte, gave the small triangular plot of land and Mrs. John R. Irwin, also of Charlotte and a descendant of some of Sugaw Creek's first settlers, was responsible for the gift of the memorial by the Colonial Dames.²⁰

At the end of the Church Year, 1934-35, Sugaw Creek reported a membership of 450.²¹

Quite frequently during Mr. Burney's pastorate the Church had special services and celebrated various anniversaries. One of the most unique services featured a group of couples that had been married fifty years or longer. At this service, held on Sunday, June 24, 1934, nineteen couples were present, marched down the aisle to wedding music and were honored in various ways during the day.²²

Then in May, 1936, Sugaw Creek observed "Robert Hall Morrison Day" celebrating the 100th anniversary of its former pastor's election as the first president of Davidson College. The two honored guests who spoke to the congregation were Col. R. H. Morrison of Charlotte, a direct descendant and namesake of Dr. Morrison, and the Rev. Joseph Graham Morrison, a great-grandson.²³

On June 6, 1937, the Session requested the Deacons to preserve the names, and other pertinent data, on the tombstones in the three cemeteries owned by the church.²⁴ During August and September, Ralph Kiser, one of the young men of the congregation, made type-written lists of the inscriptions found on the tombstones and these are preserved with the other records of the church.

19 *Ibid.*, pp. 273, 274

20 *Ibid.*, p. 283, also printed copy of the church bulletin for May 20, 1934

21 *Ibid.*, p. 297

22 *Charlotte Observer* for Monday, June 25, 1934

23 See Sugaw Creek Church Bulletin for Sunday, May 17, 1936

24 Minutes of Session, 1935, 1947, p. 47

In June, 1939, Sugaw Creek took notice of the fact that Mr. Burney had been its minister for ten years,²⁵ and that fall a sexton's home was built on the southwestern edge of the grounds, so that better care could be taken of the church's property.²⁶

On November 3, 1940, Mr. Burney announced to the Session that he had been elected a Regional Director by the Assembly's Committee of Religious Education to serve the Synods of South Carolina and Georgia, and asked that a congregational meeting be called for Sunday, November 10, to act on his request to Presbytery to have the pastoral relationship dissolved. On November 11, 1940, Mecklenburg Presbytery dissolved the relationship and on December 1, Mr. Burney took up his new work.²⁷

The Sunday the congregation met to concur in Mr. Burney's request, the Session placed (43) forty-three members on the retired roll, ²⁸ giving a total membership on March 31, 1941, of 497.²⁹

The committee to supply the pulpit and secure a permanent pastor was composed of the following: "J. P. Robinson, chairman, F. S. Neal, Jr., Joe H. Robinson, Mrs. C. W. Wilson, W. W. Welch, F. G. McNeil, Edith Craig and Mrs. Hawley Hunter.³¹

After careful investigation this committee recommended the Rev. Neill Roderick McGeachy and at a congregational meeting held on March 9, 1941, he was extended a call to become the pastor.³²

Mr. McGeachy was born in Lenoir, N. C., and graduated from Davidson College and Union Theological Seminary in Virginia. He was pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Spencer, N. C., when Sugaw Creek called him to its pastorate, and he and his family moved into the manse on April 2, 1941. His first service was conducted on Friday evening, April 4, and was a preparatory service for Communion which was celebrated on Sunday, April 6.³³

Mecklenburg Presbytery received him on April 15, 1941, and installed him on Sunday evening, May 4, 1941. The commission of Presbytery was

25 *Ibid.*, p. 101

26 *Ibid.*, pp. 68, 75

27 *Ibid.*, pp. 134, 135

28 *Ibid.*, pp. 136-137

29 *Ibid.*, p. 155

30 *Ibid.*, pp. 144, 149

31 *Ibid.*, p. 139

32 *Ibid.*, p. 148

33 *Ibid.*, p. 152

Rev. J. M. Walker, D.D., pastor of the Steele Creek Church, who presided, Rev. C. C. Hamilton, pastor of the St. Andrews Church, who charged the pastor, Rev. D. P. McGeachy, Jr., pastor of the First Church, Monroe, N. C., who led in prayer, and Elder J. W. Thompson, of the Myers Park Church, who charged the congregation. The Rev. D. P. McGeachy, D.D., of Decatur, Ga., the father of the new minister, preached the sermon at the invitation of Presbytery.³⁴

Mr. McGeachy and his family had hardly settled in the manse and begun to know the congregation when the war-clouds that had been over Europe began to move over the United States. On June 22, 1941, the Sugaw Creek congregation observed the "Day of Fasting and Prayer for World Peace" that had been designated by the General Assembly meeting in May.³⁵ Then on December 7, 1941, our country was plunged into World War II.

At the end of the first year of Mr. McGeachy's ministry Sugaw Creek reported fifty-seven additions to its membership and a net membership of 540. It also reported \$9,993.00 as the grand total for all contributions.³⁶

In 1942 memorial Bibles were placed in the Sanctuary by various members of the church³⁷ and plans were initiated looking toward the writing of the history of the church and the celebration of the Three Hundredth Anniversary of the Westminster Assembly and the Two Hundredth Anniversary of Alexander Craighead's first break with the Colonial and British Governments,³⁸ which occurred on the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Westminster Assembly.

On December 13, 1942, the suggestion was made that the church ought to keep in touch in some fashion with its members who were in the armed services. The Session requested the minister to appoint "a committee to write a letter once a month . . . to each member of our church in the armed forces."³⁹ This committee, which sent out a monthly mimeographed letter, written by a different member of the church each time, was composed of Vinton L. Hunter, Mrs. John McDaniels, and Mrs. C. L. Abernathy, Jr.⁴⁰

34 N. R. McGeachy's own personal record of the Service

35 Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, pp. 161-162

36 *Ibid.*, pp. 184-185

37 *Ibid.*, pp. 167, 173

38 *Ibid.*, p. 198

39 *Ibid.*, p. 201

40 *Ibid.*, p. 202

In an attempt to meet the transportation problems caused by the "gas rationing" a plan was adopted in the spring of 1943, for "a family church night," which was to feature a dinner social hour and then separate meetings for the various organizations of the church.⁴¹ This resulted, finally, in the holding of a mid-week prayer and study service.

The summer and early fall found the congregation busy preparing to entertain the October meeting of Presbytery. On October 17, 1943, the morning worship service was a reproduction, in part, of the service used by Alexander Craighead and his followers on Friday, November 11, 1743.⁴² This service was designated to be a fitting prelude to the historical pageant presented on October 21, 1943, by Mecklenburg Presbytery.

On October 31, 1943, the following was entered in the minutes of the Session:

The Presbytery of Mecklenburg met with us here at Sugaw Creek on Thursday, October 21, 1943, to celebrate the 300th Anniversary of the Westminster Assembly and the 200th Anniversary of Rev. Alexander Craighead's first open break with the English government.

At the request of the retiring Moderator, Rev. R. H. Stone, Dr. W. L. Lingle, President-Emeritus of Davidson College, preached the opening sermon. God blessed us with a beautiful day, and there was a large attendance of Ministers, Elders, and visitors. At eight o'clock Thursday evening the two anniversaries were appropriately observed with a pageant, "The Rock and the Pit," written by the Rev. D. P. McGeachy, D.D., of Decatur, Ga., father of our minister. This pageant given in the Armory-Auditorium, Charlotte, was well received by an overflow audience, estimated to be over 5,000 people. The scene celebrating the Craighead Anniversary was put on by members of our church. We wish to record our gratitude to God for His blessings upon us, our thanks to all who gave of their time, their talents, and of their material resources to make this day and occasion one to be long remembered by our congregation and our Presbytery.⁴³

As 1944 began, plans were started looking to the dedication of the Educational Building which was completely paid for by January 1, 1944. A committee, consisting of V. L. Hunter, Dr. C. W. Robinson,

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 209

⁴² For this service of 1743 see Craighead, *The Renewal of the Covenants*, Phila. 1748; see also church bulletin for Oct. 17, 1943.

⁴³ Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, pp. 225-226

and Roy H. Todd, was appointed to make nominations for a Dedication Committee that would plan for this service.⁴⁴ The members of this special committee named to plan for the long hoped for occasion were: "C. W. Wilson, chairman; Joe H. Robinson, W. W. Welch, W. R. Todd, Mrs. J. P. Robinson, Miss Kate Neal, Mrs. C. L. Abernathy, Jr., and Rev. N. R. McGeachy."⁴⁵

On Sunday, May 28, 1944, the Dedicatory Service was held. Mr. W. H. Neal, a son of Sugaw Creek, sang and Dr. Patrick H. Carmichael, Director of Leadership Training for the Executive Committee of Religious Education, Richmond, Va., preached on the topic "The Church's Responsibility for Religious Education." In the afternoon the congregation was greatly disappointed when it learned that Mr. Burney, who was to have preached, could not be present because he had been taken ill in Alabama. Mr. W. R. Garrison read the history of the Educational Building, the notes were burned by Mr. F. S. Neal, Jr. and Mr. B. J. Hunter, representatives of the Trustees. Mr. Neal presented the now debt-free building to the Church, represented by Mr. J. P. Robinson, clerk of Session. Mr. McGeachy led the dedication service which was concluded by a prayer of dedication, led by the Rev. Roy E. Watts, Moderator of Mecklenburg Presbytery.⁴⁶

On August 2, 1944, a memorial service was held for Pfc. John A. Overcash who was killed in action in France on July 12. At this time Sugaw Creek had 114 of its young people in service and John Overcash's was the first gold star placed on the Honor Roll that had been made and presented to the Church by Mr. George Bickett in 1942.⁴⁷

When the elders and deacons met on October 1, 1944, at the request of the minister, arrangements were made to heat the Session room so that it might be used as the Pastor's study during the week. A stove was put in and a telephone installed for his convenience. At this same meeting Mr. Joe H. Robinson was elected to represent the church at the meeting of Presbytery to be held at Steele Creek on October 17. This was the celebration of the seventy-fifth Anniversary of the organization of Mecklenburg Presbytery.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 229

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 230

⁴⁶ Information taken from Sugaw Creek Bulletin for Sunday, May 28, 1944

⁴⁷ Paper in the possession of Rev. N. R. McGeachy and Minutes of Session *op. cit.*, p. 193

⁴⁸ Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, pp. 249, 250

This same year, at the suggestion of Mr. F. S. Neal, Jr., Chairman of the Board of Deacons, plans were initiated looking toward the building of a "Community House."⁴⁹ On the thirtieth of April two committees under the general chairmanship of Ralph K. Robinson were appointed:

Building Committee

Elders: W. W. Welch and Dr. C. W. Robinson

Deacons: F. S. Neal, Jr., chairman and W. S. Abernathy, Jr.

Sunday School: George L. Bickett

Auxiliary: Mrs. S. M. Craig

Young People: Miss Louise Hart

Finance Committee

Elders: Roy H. Todd, chairman and J. R. Abernathy

Deacons: J. E. Graham and W. P. Wilson

Sunday School: Mrs. Hawley Hunter

Young People: Roy J. White⁵⁰

It was felt this building was necessary because the Church and Sunday School membership was growing and many departments were overcrowded. After a meeting on November 28, 1944, these committees recommended that a congregational meeting be called in order that the tentative plans might be presented to the congregation for its consideration and action. This recommendation was approved and the meeting called for Sunday, December 10.⁵¹

At a called meeting of the Session, held on Friday evening, December 8, 1944, the Session voted to employ Mrs. A. Julian Warner, whose husband had been the pastor of the Tenth Avenue Church in Charlotte, as a Field-Worker for the Church and as a part-time secretary for the pastor. Her salary was left to the action of the Board of Deacons. Mrs. Warner began her work with the church on December 15.⁵²

Mrs. Warner, who soon came to be titled "Director of Religious Education", served until April 30, 1946, when she resigned.⁵³

Mr. McGeachy informed the elders and deacons, at the quarterly meeting on January 7, 1945, that he was accepting a call to the First Presbyterian Church, Statesville, and asked the Session to call a meeting of the congregation for the dissolution of the pastoral

49 *Ibid.*, pp. 228, 229

50 *Ibid.*, pp. 242, 243

51 *Ibid.*, p. 252

52 *Ibid.*, pp. 253, 254

53 *Ibid.*, p. 294

relation.⁵⁴ This request the Session granted and on Sunday, January 21, 1945, the congregation voted to concur with him.⁵⁵

At a called meeting of Presbytery, on January 23, 1945, the pastoral relationship was dissolved, effective February 15, 1945, and Mr. McGeachy granted a letter of transfer to Concord Presbytery.⁵⁶

During Mr. McGeachy's brief pastorate of three years, ten and one-half months, 154 members were received into the church. This is an average of thirty-eight and one-half per year.⁵⁷

As he resigned the Session granted him the privilege of continuing his work on the Sugaw Creek History,⁵⁸ and the following elders were appointed as a committee on the history of the church: "Dr. C. W. Robinson, W. R. Garrison, and W. W. Welch."⁵⁹

The congregation, on the Sunday it acted on Mr. McGeachy's resignation, elected "C. W. Wilson—chairman, F. S. Neal, Jr., R. H. Todd, L. P. Hunter, Jr., Mrs. J. J. Earnhardt, Mrs. W. S. Abernathy, Jr., Mrs. Ralph Puckett, J. R. Abernathy, and Paul A. Craig" as a pulpit committee to secure a permanent pastor.⁶⁰

On Sunday, March 11, the Session, at the request of the Pulpit Committee, voted to call a meeting of the congregation for March 25 to hear and act on the report of the committee.⁶¹ At this meeting the name of the Rev. A. Leslie Thompson was presented and he was unanimously elected.⁶² On April 1, Mr. Wilson, chairman of the pulpit committee, announced that Mr. Thompson had accepted the call extended to him by the Sugaw Creek congregation.⁶³

At the call of the Session, the congregation met again on Sunday, April 8, to hear a report from the Manse Committee in regard to the remodeling of the manse. The congregation voted "... to make the manse as modern as possible."⁶⁴

The Rev. Andrew Leslie Thompson was born in York, South Carolina. He graduated from Davidson College in 1933 and from Union Seminary in 1936. He was licensed, ordained and installed by Mecklenburg Presbytery as pastor of the Troy (N.C.) Presbyterian

54 *Ibid.*, p. 256

55 *Ibid.*, p. 257

56 *Ibid.*, p. 258

57 *Ibid.*, summary of those received in 1942, '43, '44, and '45

58 *Ibid.*, p. 256

59 *Ibid.*, p. 259

60 *Ibid.*, p. 257

61 *Ibid.*, p. 260

62 Minutes of congregational meeting, March 25, 1945

63 Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, p. 262

64 Minutes of congregational meeting, April 8, 1945

Church on June 21, 1936. In 1940 he moved to Raleigh as pastor of the North Vanguard (now Westminster) Church.⁶⁵ It was from this work that Sugaw Creek called him in the spring of 1945.

The Rev. Hunter B. Blakely, Th.D., President of Queen's College, who had supplied the pulpit for four months after Mr. Burney resigned, served as the supply pastor during the interval between Mr. McGeachy's leaving and Mr. Thompson's coming.⁶⁶

Mr. Thompson's first service was held on Sunday, May 6, 1945,⁶⁷ and he was received by Mecklenburg Presbytery on May 15, 1945, and installed by Presbytery on May 27, 1945.⁶⁸

The Commission of Presbytery that installed the new pastor was as follows:

The Rev. W. H. Frazer, D.D., who presided, The Rev. J. W. Stork, who charged the pastor, Elder H. J. Spencer, who charged the congregation, The Rev. Hunter B. Blakely, Th.D., who preached. The Rev. J. A. Garth and Elder J. W. Thomson were alternates.⁶⁹

As already noted, Sugaw Creek had voted to make "the manse as modern as possible." Anticipating Mr. Thompson's arrival, with his wife and two children, the manse was completely renovated. An oil furnace was installed, a bathroom added upstairs, the back-porch was enlarged and glassed-in, and a new tile front porch was built. The whole house was painted white on the exterior and completely redecorated on the inside. Approximate figures as to the cost of this work will be found in Chapter X, on "The Diaconate and Stewardship".

At a joint meeting of the elders and deacons on January 6, 1946, the officers voted "... to set up a fund to buy an organ for the church ...".⁷⁰ Nothing more was heard of this action until September 1, 1946, when at another joint meeting the Moderator, Mr. Thompson, appointed Dr. C. W. Robinson, and Messrs. F. L. Gibbon and C. L. Abernathy, Jr., "... as a committee to visit families who lost their sons in World War II and discuss with them some plan for a memorial ...".⁷¹

This committee made a partial report on October 6 at which

⁶⁵ Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 677

⁶⁶ Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, p. 268

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Minutes of Synod of N. C., Oct. 9-11, 1945, pp. 293-294

⁶⁹ Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, p. 268

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 283

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 303



The Rev. N. R. McGeachy

time the officers voted "to include in this group Reece Hunter, Jr., a former member of this church . . ."72 Two weeks later the committee reported that the families of the men who had lost their lives in World War II would like to have an organ placed in the church.73 This report was unanimously adopted by the officers and plans were initiated to secure an organ immediately.74

Mr. Thompson announced to the Session on November 17, 1946, the appointment of the following committee to secure the organ: "Session—L. P. Hunter, Jr., Chairman. Deacons—J. E. Graham, Sunday School—W. R. Tood, Young People—Guilford Kirkman, Woman's Auxiliary—Mrs. Hawley Hunter, Church-at-large—Mrs. R. K. Robinson."75 On December 1, this committee reported to the officers they would recommend the purchase of an electric organ. This recommendation was adopted and it was further decided to "secure an architect to plan for the placing of the organ in the church . . ."76

In February of the following year, Mr. L. P. Hunter, Jr., reported to the Session that Mr. and Mrs. Reece Hunter wished to give a set of chimes with a loud speaker to the church as a memorial to their son, Reece Hunter, Jr. "who lost his life in India during World War II."77

These plans culminated in the calling of a meeting of the congregation by the Session for Sunday, June 13, 1948. At this meeting the congregation approved the plans for the building of a choir loft and for the installation of the organ and chimes.78

On Sunday morning, November 28, 1948, the new electric organ and the chimes were dedicated to the glory of God and in memory of Staff Sergeant R. D. James; Private First Class Ernest W. McConnell; Private First Class John A. Overcash; and TMIC George H. Wilson; and Staff Sergeant Reece Hunter, Jr.

The Session invited to participate in this dedicatory service two former pastors; Rev. L. P. Burney, who led the Litany of Dedication, and Rev. N. R. McGeachy, who preached the sermon, and also the Rev. George L. Cooper, of the Overbrook Presbyterian

72 *Ibid.*, p. 306

73 *Ibid.*, p. 307

74 *Ibid.*, pp. 307-8

75 *Ibid.*, p. 309

76 *Ibid.*, p. 310

77 *Ibid.*, pp. 316-17

78 Minutes of Congregational Meeting, June 13, 1948

Church, Richmond, Va., and pastor of Mr. and Mrs. Reece Hunttr, who led the prayer of dedication.⁷⁹

About five months after the plans were begun looking toward the securing of an organ, plans were also presented to the Session and Diaconate, meeting jointly on May 19, 1946, seeking to meet the pressing needs of the Sunday School for additional space. A committee, consisting of Mr. J. J. Earnhardt, Chairman; S. M. Craig, C. A. Davidson, F. L. Gibbon, Howard Wilson, J. R. Abernathy, and Dr. C. W. Robinson, was appointed to make further investigation and to report one week later.⁸⁰

On the twenty-six of May this committee made the following report to the joint meeting of the elders and deacons: "... [We] recommend a building 28' x 50' with two rooms 28' x 25' costing approximately \$2500.00".⁸¹ The officers voted unanimously that this report be adopted and named the original members of the committee, with any additional help they might desire, as the Building and Finance Committee. They also ordered that the committee proceed immediately to see to the erection of this temporary structure.⁸²

This building is mentioned in the minutes of July 28, 1946, where Mr. Earnhardt and Mr. Davidson made a report,⁸³ but it is not referred to again until September 1, where "the new Sunday School Building Fund" is named.⁸⁴ Then on October 3, it is under consideration twice. The first time the elders and deacons voted "that the new Sunday School Building be covered with adequate insurance immediately."⁸⁵ The second time they voted that "we paint the new Sunday School Building and buy a piano for it immediately."⁸⁶ Then on November 3, 1946, the Session voted to buy sufficient song books for the new building.⁸⁷

During the first five years of Mr. Thompson's pastorate a total of 228 members were received on profession and by letter. The church gave to Benevolences \$43,480.00 and its grand total for the five years to all causes was \$124,272.00.⁸⁸

79 See Sugaw Creek Bulletin for Sunday, November 28, 1948

80 Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, p. 297

81 *Ibid.*, p. 298

82 *Ibid.*

83 *Ibid.*, p. 300

84 *Ibid.*, p. 303

85 *Ibid.*, p. 305

86 *Ibid.*, p. 306

87 *Ibid.*, p. 308

88 See Minutes of the General Assembly for years 1946-1950

The year 1950 has been arbitrarily set as the limit to be covered in this volume of Sugaw Creek's history. Two hundred years is a long time in the history of any organization in the Piedmont section of North Carolina, but it surely is only the beginning of the history of this great, old Church. The future, in the hand of God, lies before the present membership and they can, under His blessing, write their own record of achievements and victories in the on-going of the Kingdom of God.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SESSION AND DISCIPLINE

Because the earliest records of Sugaw Creek were lost many years ago, and because the records of Hanover Presbytery and the first synods of the Presbyterian Church in America do not give many details about local churches, we do not know the names of the first elders, or when or by whom they were ordained, nor do we have any record of their deliberations or actions.

The first reference to the Session at Sugar Creek occurs in the minutes of Hanover Presbytery on October 15, 1766. The pastor had been dead for approximately seven months and the elders felt they needed the advice of wiser heads than their own as to how to deal with a young woman who had given birth to an illegitimate child.

This is also the first question, now known, that the Session had to face of a disciplinary nature. The Presbytery "determined" that public satisfaction was to be given to the Church before the woman was to be admitted "... to church privileges."¹

The second reference to a Session comes many years later when the Sessions of Sugar Creek and Hopewell met in joint session and adopted a set of resolutions designed to strengthen their work in their respective congregations and to enable them to meet "our mutual enemies from without."² This meeting was held at the home of Robert Robinson, within the bounds of Sugar Creek on May 15, 1793.

Though his name does not appear in the list of elders given (see page), according to the minutes of the Synod of the Carolinas, Robert Craighead was an elder in 1790. The Synod's record shows "Robert Craghead", under elders from Orange Presbytery, at the meeting held at Bethany on the 6th of October, 1790.³ "Mr. Craghead" was appointed by the moderator to the "committee of Overtures."

In 1799 the Synod listed as present: "Ministers, ... S. C. Caldwell, ...; Elders, ... Robert McNeely ...".⁴ This with the references given above is all we know about Sugar Creek's elders or Session until 1827 when the existing records of the Session were begun.

¹ Minutes of Hanover Presbytery, *op. cit.*, October 15, 1766

² Foote, *op. cit.*, pp. 210-211

³ Mss. "Records of Synod of the Carolinas" (U.T.S. Library) October 6, 1790.

⁴ *Ibid.*

When Robert H. Morrison began his ministry at Sugar Creek he seems to have led a search for previous records but none having been found, he and his elders made a roll of members and began the orderly keeping of the minutes of the Session, together with a record of admissions, dismissals, deaths, and so forth "in behalf of the Session."⁵

Following the listing of members the first action of the Session was to receive eleven members, five on profession (two of these were slaves—listed as "persons of color") and six on certificate. These members were admitted on June 9, 1827, and in the group was the minister's wife, Mary G. Morrison, "removed from Church in Fayetteville."⁶

The first disciplinary action came on September 30, 1827, when the Session resolved to suspend "from the privileges of the Church until he give good evidence of repentance and reformation", a member who "is habitually and grossly intemperate to the great dishonour of religion."⁷

The whole year of 1828 passed without any record being made of any member being disciplined but in 1829 another man was suspended for being "habitually intemperate."⁸ This same man was restored, when he "acknowledged his penitence and promised an exemplary deportment as a Christian,"⁹ in April, 1830. In October, 1830, the Session suspended a woman for having "a temper of mind in her domestick relations inconsistent with the Spirit of the Gospel."¹⁰

Two members of the Church got into trouble with the Session when they married, after the Session had warned them that the General Assembly had ruled it was unlawful for a man to marry "a sister of his deceased wife." This occurred in April, 1831, and the Session resolved to suspend them because "The General Assembly had declared such marriages unlawful and unchristian and requires the Confession of Faith to be maintained in its purity."¹¹

During 1832 and until the fall of 1833 Sugar Creek enjoyed a season of revival and there were no cases of discipline recorded in the Sessional minutes. In September, 1833, a man "having been con-

⁵ Minutes of Session, 1827-1840

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

victed of a temper and deportment towards his family inconsistent with the gospel,"¹² was suspended. This same man was restored in September, 1834, upon his confession and promise to live a better life.

The Session recorded no disciplinary actions during 1835 and 1836 but in 1837 its minutes begin to have many cases of intemperance, fornication and adultery which it acted upon. In almost every instance when the accused party made "public acknowledgement of the crime" the Session voted to restore the guilty person to the "communion" or "privileges of the Church."¹³

In 1839, one of the members was convicted "by his own acknowledgement of opening his house to Amusements on or about Christmas last; . . ." ¹⁴ In the spring he again "opened his house to amusements" and again the Session cited him to appear before them. When he confessed and promised not to "admit such parties in house again", the elders "felt themselves bound to receive and continue him as a member of the Church."¹⁵

This same year the records show, for the first time, members of the church being called before the Session "for permitting dancing" in their homes.¹⁶ The Synod of the Carolinas had ruled, in answer to an overture, in 1789, that

dancing, revelling, horse racing and chard playing are wrong and that the practisers of them ought not to be admitted to sealing ordinances until they be dealt with by their spiritual rulers in such a manner as to them may appear most for the glory of God, their own good and the good of the Church.¹⁷

For many years thereafter one of the chief causes for disciplinary action by the Session was for "dancing".

From the very beginning the Session divided the congregation into quarters and assigned each quarter to one of the elders, making him responsible for the spiritual development and Christian conduct of the members in his quarter. The first Sessional records show that in 1828 the quarters of the Sugar Creek congregation were under the oversight of Amos Alexander, Dan Alexander, John F. McNeely, and John Howie.¹⁸

On August 28, 1840, the Session was "informed" that a young

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Mss. "Records of Synod", *op. cit.*, September 5, 1789

¹⁸ Minutes of Session, 1827-1840

wife and mother, who had presented "her child" for baptism the day before, had been "guilty of the crime of Fornication." The elders appointed two of their number "a committee to suspend her from the communion of the church" and to require her to make public acknowledgement of her sin before she would be restored to full communion.¹⁹

The first of November the woman came before the Session and confessed she was guilty as charged and made a statement of her repentance and sorrow that the officers considered satisfactory. After she then made a public confession before the congregation she "was restored to Church membership."²⁰

In 1841, the Session of Sugar Creek consisted of the following: "Amos Alexander, John F. McNeely, Calvin G. Alexander, Samuel Caldwell, John Howie, John Campbell, Ira Parks, and D. T. Caldwell. Dr. D. T. Caldwell is the present clerk."²¹

At this time the elders in charge of the quarters of the congregation were: "John F. McNeely, Samuel Caldwell, John Campbell and Amos Alexander."

In 1841 and '42, the Session had their first cases dealing with "travelling on sabbath." The elders appointed two of their number to talk with one man who was reported to them for this offense. The committee reported

. . . he expresses great sorrow for the offence and regrets the circumstances and feelings which induced him to drive on sabbath and also stated that he would have to quit waggoning to avoid the temptations in that way presented to violate the sabbath.²²

Frequently the Session called before it members of the church who "habitually absented themselves from public worship."

In 1843, there is the first record of the Session electing a representative to Presbytery. Prior to this time they had been represented but the clerk did not record their election or attendance in his minute book. The elders were usually very faithful in their attendance on Presbytery and Synod but once in a while illness or some other reason would keep them from going. One elder, who was to represent the church at Synod, reported he did not attend because his conveyance

¹⁹ Last page of Session Minutes 1827-1840

²⁰ A loose page in front of Session Minute Book for 1841-1846

²¹ Minutes of Session, 1841-46

²² *Ibid.*

broke down on the way to Charlotte and so he missed the train by five minutes and consequently could not go.

One of the most unusual actions of the Session took place in October, 1846. The pastor brought to the attention of the elders what he called "irregular membership." It appears that he had found several people who had been living in the bounds of the Sugar Creek congregation for a good many years who thought they were members of Sugar Creek Church although they had never asked for letters of transfer from the churches to which they belonged.

The Session, after the matter had been discussed at length, voted that each elder would visit such people living in his quarter and if they regarded themselves as members of Sugar Creek then the elder was "to report it to the clerk of session, and he shall immediately enrol them as members." Then the Session went on record that thereafter they would not receive any such persons as members of the church "until they present a letter of dismission from the session of the church from which they come."²³

According to the records in the early years when the Session called members before it they usually confessed the error of their ways and asked for forgiveness and restoration. By 1847 the members began to argue with the Session about matters of discipline and we find more and more records of the members stating flatly that they did not consider that they had done wrong in dancing, travelling on the Sabbath, drinking, and so forth.

One of the most interesting and controversial cases occurred in 1848 when the Session called before it a member accused of operating his whim (a pump used to draw water) in his gold mine on the Sabbath. The committee appointed by the Session to confer with the accused submitted its report in writing, giving the member's views as to why he thought it proper to operate his whim. This paper listed among other reasons the following:

1st That the gold being placed in the bowels of the earth by the Divine Being, and being, no doubt, intended for the use of his creatures, and as the ingenuity of man has not yet invented any means whereby the water can be drained from the veins of ore without running a whim, . . . it becomes a work of necessity . . . to protect the works.

2nd It is as much the work of necessity in the above case, as it

²³ Minutes of Session, 1841-1846 (October 17, 1846)

is to make monthly collections for Foreign Missions, and for the purpose of building churches.

. . . .²⁴

The Session was not satisfied with this paper and so it cited the member to appear before it two weeks later. The accused did not appear so the Session issued a second citation for two weeks later. This time the Sabbath violator appeared and stated that "being infirm in both body and mind, I have thought best to hand in my Defence in writing."

His defense consisted in six items, among them, that Concord Presbytery had sanctioned the practice of running pumps in gold mines; that a matter of such importance ought not to be handled by a Session because they were not as "competent to act upon it as a body of Divines"; that since he was the last in the community to use a whim, he ought not to be the first to be treated as a transgressor; that he believed the Session did not think it "a breach of the Fourth precept", because some of the officers and members of the church had been doing the same thing; that, since God had placed the gold in the earth and it could not be mined without running a pump and since his own conscience told him it was all right, it came under "works of necessity", and was not a violation of the Fourth commandment.²⁵

The Session, having heard this paper and asked some questions, voted to excuse the brother "in consequence of the palliating circumstances arising from his supposition that our Presbytery had sanctioned the practice . . .".²⁶ They told him that he would be liable to church censure if he did not stop running his whim.

One of the elders was excused from voting on this case because he was charged with the same offense. The elder expressed sorrow for his sin and the Session voted that they would "regard him as innocent of the sin with which he had been charged."

In 1858, the Session was composed of the following elders: "John F. McNeely, R. A. McNeely, John Howie, J. M. Caldwell, E. C. Wallis, Ira Parks, Dr. D. T. Caldwell, James A. Todd and R. F. Barnette."²⁷

On the eleventh of March, 1860, the Rev. R. H. Lafferty reported to the Session a member who had refused to talk with him on "the

²⁴ Minutes of Session, 1847-53

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

subject of personal religion.” When Mr. Lafferty asked the member why he would not talk with him, he replied “Because you and Mr. John F. McNeely were too hard on me in the session some two or three years ago in requiring me to pay my arrearage money . . .”. Mr. Lafferty then inquired what he could do to relieve the situation and the man said “Refund the money the Session required me to pay!” Then Mr. Lafferty asked him what the amount was and being told it was fifteen dollars he paid it from his own pocket. Mr. Lafferty said to the Session that he prayed with the family and left.

The Session cited this man to appear and when he heard the report of what Mr. Lafferty had told the Session, he confessed that it was true and asked for forgiveness. This the Session gladly granted and restored him to full communion in the Church.²⁸

As far as their official records are concerned the Session took no notice of the approaching Civil War. After the conflict had begun they called upon the congregation to observe the days of fasting and prayer as they were appointed by the General Assembly or by the Synod and Presbytery. Quite frequently the minutes show the reception of men, who were in the Confederate Army, by certificate. These certificates were issued by chaplains to whom the soldiers had made their confession of faith. On one or two occasions the Session was not satisfied with the statement sent them by certain chaplains and they asked the minister to correspond both with the chaplain and the prospective member before they would consent to receive the soldier.

During the Civil War years the slaves who belonged to the congregation did not give much trouble to the Session. There are remarkably few instances recorded where the Session was required to take disciplinary action.

One case that the Session recorded at some length in its minutes serves as an illustration not only of the Session in action but also of the times.

The minutes show that on April 19, 1863, it was brought to the attention of the Session that “Cupit, . . . a member of this church, had been whipped . . .” because he had bought from another servant some pots that had been stolen. The Session cited the servant to appear and answer to the charge.

²⁸ Minutes of Session, 1858-67

Six days later the Session met again and proceeded to hear the case. David Henderson, Esquire, was called as a witness and he stated

. . . that Cupit had been whipped, not because there was any evidence that he knew that the pots that he bought had been stolen, but because he had brought them, and thus had traded with his fellow-servant, thereby transgressing the law.²⁹

Mr. Henderson went on to say that when a search was made in Cupit's quarters he had made no effort to hide the pots.

The Session then called on the servant to testify and he stated that though he could see the pots were new and had not been used, yet it did not occur to him that he was doing wrong or violating any law.

Hearing this testimony the Session adopted the following resolution:

Resolved — That from everything that has come to our knowledge respecting this matter, we are satisfied that in this transaction Cupit had no intention of doing wrong, and did not know that the property which he bought had been stolen; but we think, and so express it, that he ought to have been more cautious in buying property of that description, which from its newness, and, at this time, from its scarceness in the market might have led him, at least, to suspect that it was stolen.³⁰

With the close of the war the Session records resume their account of more prosaic actions. They show the record of accessions and dismissals, of members disciplined for intemperance, dancing, swearing, selling intoxicating beverages, failure to pay their promised part of the minister's salary, neglect of Divine worship, fornication or adultery, travelling on the Sabbath, and worldliness.

Frequently during the years after the Civil War the Session was called upon to settle family quarrels. There are cases recorded of brothers who would not speak to one another, of women who repeated gossip about other women, of splits in families that had to be tried before the Session. Sometimes when the elders could not bring about a reconciliation they were forced to forbid the unforgiving member the privileges of the church.

In 1868, the following elders constituted the Session: "Henderson Query, Ira Parks, John Howie, J. M. Caldwell, Elam Robinson, J. M. Hutchison, E. C. Wallis, and R. A. McNeely."³¹

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Minutes of Session, 1868-74

From the roll of the Session one name that had been on the first roll in 1827 has now been dropped, that of John F. McNeely, who was Clerk of Session from 1827 to 1840 and from November, 1844 until July 4, 1847, and who, when he died in 1865, had been an elder for at least thirty-eight years. Mr. McNeely, in 1847, resigned as clerk because he thought he was going to be away from the church. His expectations did not come true but in the meantime the Session had asked Mr. Lafferty to serve as their clerk as well as moderator.³²

In 1871 the quarters of the congregation were divided among these four elders: Elam Robinson, John Howie, R. A. McNeely, and Ira Parks.³³ Mr. Howie died the next year and at his death, like Mr. John F. McNeely, he had served Sugar Creek as an elder for thirty-eight years.

Though the third building burned during this period the Session minutes take no notice of it except in the minute that was quoted in Chapter V, page 64. It is evident from this entry that the clerk, who in 1870 was the Rev. G. D. Parks [once again the Session had asked its moderator to act in that capacity], was accustomed to make rough notes and then later write his minutes carefully in the Sessional record. Actually we know, from the newspaper accounts and from the diary of Mrs. R. H. Lafferty, Sugar Creek Church did not burn until after mid-night February 10, 1870, but Mr. Parks wrote his minutes as though the fire had occurred prior to January 30, 1870.³⁴

With the new church year, in 1874, the Session recorded only four elders and the minister as constituting its membership. These were: Rev. G. D. Parks, Moderator, and elders, Henderson Query, Elam Robinson, R. A. McNeely, James M. Caldwell."³⁵ Two years later four additional elders were elected by the congregation and ordained and installed by the Session. These men were: "Nickles Gibbon, W. M. Robinson, J. M. Davis, and M. H. A. Gray."³⁶ Mr. Gray had been an elder in a Presbyterian Church in Thomas County, Georgia, before coming to Sugar Creek so he was only installed.³⁷

On November 3, 1877, the Session voted "to purchase from the committy of publication at Richmond a book for sessional records."³⁸ From the first existing book of minutes up until this time the Session

³² Minutes of Session, Book C, 1847-53

³³ Minutes of Session, 1868-74

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Minutes of Session, 1874-78

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

had recorded its actions in very inexpensive note-books, but now they felt they ought to have a book that would be more permanent in form and one that was more suited to the keeping of their deliberations. On the second of March, 1878, the Committee that had been appointed to purchase the book reported that "the Book was so dear"³⁹ they did not think it advisable to buy it without reporting back to the Session. Hearing this report the Session decided to postpone the buying of a book from the Publication Committee for the present but they voted that "the committy is to be continued". In 1879, the Session ordered the book from the committee in Richmond and since that date it has used a prepared book for the Sessional Records and also kept a Church Register in which it has recorded the names of its pastors, elders and deacons, and the roll of the congregation.⁴⁰

Back in 1875 the elders received a letter from one of the members stating that he wished to discontinue his membership on account of his disbelief in some of the doctrines of the Presbyterian Church. The Session cited him to appear before it and when he came he said that what he had written was true, that he did not believe some of the doctrines the Church taught, and that furthermore he did not believe he had ever experienced a change of "harte" or ever been a Christian and that consequently he felt he was living under "fals pretense." After hearing this testimony the Session voted to suspend him from communion and to place him again among the non-communing "baptised" members of the church.⁴¹

In 1878, the Session felt it had to do something to stem the rising tide of Sabbath breaking and the attitude of the membership toward church discipline, so it voted to request the minister to preach "a sermon or sermons on Church Discipline and on Sabbath Observance."⁴²

One of the men of the congregation was late in 1879 tried in the civil court in Charlotte on the charge that he was the father of an illegitimate child. The Session, hearing of this case, cited the man to appear before them and to give an account because "certain reports touching his Christian character" had come to their attention.

From November 1879 until April 3, 1880, when he appeared before it, the Session issued repeated requests for him to meet with

39 *Ibid.*

40 Minutes of Session, 1879-1911

41 Minutes of Session, 1874-78

42 *Ibid.*

it. The man told his story, and after a great deal of discussion the Session voted to postpone any decision until its next regular meeting.

The thing that bothered the elders was the fact that though the man denied he was the father of the child, yet he had entered into a bond, before the civil court, for the support of it. His reasons for this action did not satisfy the Session, but once again it voted to postpone final action until its next regular meeting.

On September 5, 1880, the elders voted to suspend the man "from the communing ordinance of the church indefinitely."⁴³

The member, who had been suspended at his own request in 1875, appeared before the Session on the nineteenth of December, 1880, and asked to be restored to the full communion of the Church. The elders gave him a "suitable examination" and then restored him "to the sealing ordinance of the Lord's Supper."⁴⁴

During the years 1881 through 1885 the minutes have numerous references to various elders being appointed to see members of the church with "regard to absenting themselves from church" and "in regard to their standing in the church." As an illustration of how the Session dealt with members in regard to their standing in the church we find in the minutes for January and February, 1885, the story of a family that moved from Sugar Creek to a town in a neighboring county.⁴⁵ The minister of the Presbyterian Church in the town, at their request, wrote to Sugar Creek asking for their letters of dismissal. The Session granted letters to all except the husband and wife and ordered the clerk "to address a note to _____ [the minister], setting forth difficulties in Mr. [_____]'s case and that they thought some acknowledgement was due from Mr. [_____]!" When the Session met a week later they voted to cite the husband to meet with them at his earliest convenience. At their meeting the first of February the clerk read "a paper" from the absent member in which he acknowledged that he had not acted in a manner becoming a Christian. He stated that he was sorry and hoped that God had forgiven him. The clerk wrote a parenthesis in which he said that this acknowledgement was written before the citation sent by the Session was issued but that it was not received until afterwards. After what the clerk called "mature deliberation" the Session decided

⁴³ Minutes of Session, 1879-1911, pp. 8, 9, 12, 13, 16

⁴⁴ Minutes of Session, 1879-1911, p. 18

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39

to grant letters of dismission to the man and his wife and at the same time they directed the clerk to write to the man reminding him that he was still behind with his subscription to the pastor's salary and that it was "his duty to make himself square on the Books."⁴⁶

The Session of 1885 was composed of elders, Elam Robinson, J. M. Caldwell, J. M. Davis, Nicholas Gibbon, William J. Robinson, R. A. McNeely and the minister, Rev. C. W. Robinson.⁴⁷ In March, 1888 Elam Robinson died ⁴⁸ and in August of the same year Mr. Sidney F. Query and Mr. Francis S. Neal were elected elders and ordained and installed by the Session.⁴⁹

These new elders had hardly had time to take their place in the Session before they were plunged, with the older elders, into a deluge of disciplinary cases.

Three cases, typical of what the Session had to deal with, can be given here. The first had to do with a quarrel between one of the elders and his neighbors. The minutes do not state what originated the trouble but it came to the notice of the Session, when the elder's neighbors began circulating rumors about him. The Elders appointed a committee to investigate the trouble and when the committee reported they said all they could establish was that the evidence was conflicting. A new committee was appointed to confer with the parties involved "to endeavor to bring them to a sence of their guilt, and to try to settle the difficulty without any further proces." Finally the quarrelling parties came before the Session and after considerable consultation the elder and his neighbors "made friends, and agreed to forgive and forget the past troubles and to live as Christian neighbors hereafter."⁵⁰

The second case involved a member of the church who had been absenting himself from the church services and who also had been charged with adultery. As was their usual custom the Session appointed a committee to investigate and report back to it is findings. The committee submitted the following report:

1st In regard to non-attendance at Church Worship — That while he may not be able to attend every Sabbath, yet we do think that if his heart was stirred with the love of Christ — the interest

46 *Ibid.*, p. 39

47 *Ibid.*, p. 41

48 *Register of Elders, 1879-1911*

49 *Minutes of Session, 1879-1911*, p. 57

50 *Ibid.*, pp. 57, 58, 60, 63, 64

& welfare of his Church,—The growth of his soul in grace, he would often be at God's house of worship. 2nd In regard to reports of adultery — We find that [he] has been guilty of conduct, while not criminal, yet is entirely unbecoming a profession of faith in Christ, who has taught us in his word that we are lights and examples in this wicked world. Resolved that we go into regular process of trial⁵¹

A week later specific charges were preferred against the member as follows:

In the name of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, You [————] a member of Sugar Creek Church stands indited and charged with the following offences.— Charge 1st—Failing to support the gosple. Specifications,—that said [————] being unmindful of his duty to the Lord Jesus Christ the great Head of the Church, has wrongfully neglected to attend and also to contribute of his means to support the church of which he is a member. Charge 2nd.—Specifications,—that said [————] being unmindful of his duty to the grate head of the Church did on or about the 17 of August 1888 wilfully and wrongfully enter the house of [————] putting his hands upon the person of [————] with impure motives. Said [————] knowing or having good reason to believe that the said [————] was alone and without protection. All of which is against the peace, unity & purity of the Church and the honor & majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ as the King and Head thereof.⁵²

A copy of these charges was sent to the accused member and he was cited to appear before the Session two weeks later. He did not appear so the Session ordered a second citation sent to him to appear two weeks after the date of the citation. When this time he did not come to meet with it the Session ordered the member suspended for contumacy.

The third case had to do with a member of the church who was "retailing liquors in Charlotte." The clerk, at the order of the Session, had issued a citation to this man to meet with the Session, and then he reported that the following letter had been received from the membr:

Mr. N. Gibbon, Clerk of Session, Sugar Creek Church, Yours of 19. inst. to hand and noted. It will be impossible for me to meet the Session on the day you appoint. You can dispose of my case

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 59

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61



Angus Gromartie and Class—Sugar Creek School

as you think best. I am not fit for a church member. Remember me in your prayers. Yours &c [—————].⁵³

The Session then voted “that [—————] be indefinitely suspended.”

On July 10, 1890, the Session ordered its Clerk to publish a “notice in the Charlotte papers forbidding parties from holding pick-nics on the Church ground.”⁵⁴

Ten pages of the minutes, covering the first six months of 1891, are devoted to the Session’s hearing of a case involving two members of the church. The session tried every means at its disposal to get the two men to become reconciled but all was in vain and finally the Session was forced to “indefinitely suspend” both men from the church.⁵⁵

A Methodist Church had been organized in the Derita community in 1891. Mecklenburg Presbytery referred to the Sugar Creek Session the responsibility of surveying the possibilities of organizing a Presbyterian Church there in 1891. On August 8 of that year the Session voted that they did not think it expedient to take any steps “just now looking to that end” and then added in their minutes, “resolved that we dismiss the whole matter.”⁵⁶

Mr. John P. Hunter gave the land on which the Methodist Church was built and was made a Trustee, though he was a Presbyterian. This church was at first a mission of the Trinity Methodist Church in Charlotte.⁵⁷

On February 17, 1892, Mr. R. A. McNeely died. He had been elected an elder in 1853 so at his death he had served as an elder in Sugar Creek for thirty-nine years.⁵⁸

In the spring of 1892 the Session appointed “a committee of six ladies” to collect funds for the Orphans’ Home.⁵⁹ This is the first recognition of the recently established Home for orphan children under the control and the support of the Synod of North Carolina.

The Session in 1893 was made up of five elders: “J. M. Caldwell, J. M. Davis, F. S. Neal, S. F. Query and Nicholas Gibbon.”⁶⁰

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 74

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 78

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 84-94

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 97

⁵⁷ Information furnished by Mr. V. L. Hunter, an elder in Sugar Creek Church

⁵⁸ Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-105

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 105

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 110

In March Mr. Gibbon resigned from the Session and on the sixth of April the congregation voted to accept his resignation. The Session, receiving the official report of the congregational meeting, declared the relationship dissolved and adopted the following paper:

That in dissolving this relationship, we do so solely because he [Mr. Gibbon] has requested it, and we further state, that we are exceedingly sorry he has taken such a course that Christian courtesy requires us to accede to his request.⁶¹

On the twentieth of December, 1893, Mr. Gibbon was again elected an elder by the Sugar Creek congregation.⁶² At this same meeting Mr. C. W. Robinson was also elected to the office of elder. On the twenty-eighth of January, 1894, the committee appointed to interview the newly elected elders reported that Mr. Gibbon was unwilling to serve and that Mr. Robinson would accept the office.⁶³ On February 11, 1894, Mr. Charles W. Robinson was ordained to the office of Ruling Elder in Sugar Creek Church.⁶⁴

On September 23, 1894, Dr. T. C. Neal was elected an elder by the congregation and, having signified his willingness to serve, he was ordained and installed on the seventh of October.

The Session was now composed of five elders, namely: J. M. Caldwell, J. M. Davis, Dr. T. C. Neal, F. S. Neal and C. W. Robinson."⁶⁵

For some time the old custom of dividing the congregation into quarters and assigning a quarter to an elder for his oversight had fallen into disuse. On the second of January, 1896, the Session took the following action: "C. W. Robinson & F. S. Neal were appointed a Committee to Divide the congregation into districts giving each elder a district or Quarter, & report back to Session."⁶⁶

As the difficulties between Mr. Williamson and various officers and members of the church described in Chapter V came to a head about this time, this committee did not report until January 6, 1897, at which time the report was adopted and the Clerk was

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 112-114 (name inserted for clarity)

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 126

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 128

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 128

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 140-141

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 146

“ordered to furnish Each Elder with a list of members assigned him.”⁶⁷

In the spring of 1898, the Session sent the following narrative to Mecklenburg Presbytery:

The attendance of the officers and members upon the Services of the Sanctuary has been very good. Family worship is Observed in some families, but sadly neglected in large majority of our families. The Observance of the Sabbath has been very good. We think there has been a decided improvement in the study of Catechism, and the religious training of the children of the church.

. . . .

There has been no special evidence of spiritual life but the growth and activity have been good and steady. There is no prevalence of excessive worldliness in the bounds of the congregation. The Church has no special mission work, except that the Pastor has begun to preach twice per month at Louise Mills with the view of developing a Mission.⁶⁸

In the summer of 1898 Sugar Creek was host for an Elders and Deacons Institute, sponsored by Mecklenburg Presbytery for the purpose of training the church officers and of giving them a deeper zeal for the performance of their duties.⁶⁹

During this same year the Session had only two disciplinary cases. One man who had become involved in a dispute with his neighbors was “suspended indefinitely for contumacy.”⁷⁰ The other man was charged with intemperance and when he failed to answer the citations sent him, he too was “suspended for contumacy.”⁷¹

At a meeting of the Session held on the fourteenth of July, 1899, the Pastor and Mr. C. W. Robinson were appointed a committee “. . . to prepare and submit to a future meeting of Session a ruling on non-residents, who have no relatives or friends Buried here or who have never been members of our Church, burying in our graveyard.”⁷²

The committee reported in October and the Session adopted its suggestion which was that the Deacons be instructed “to lay off a portion of the Grave Yard for such purposes.”⁷³

67 *Ibid.*, p. 169

68 *Ibid.*, p. 173 (Rev. T. J. Allison was now the pastor.)

69 *Ibid.*, p. 173

70 *Ibid.*, pp. 176-177

71 *Ibid.*, p. 180

72 *Ibid.*, pp. 186-187

73 *Ibid.*, p. 188

During the years 1899 and 1900 the Session did not record a single disciplinary case.

Dr. T. C. Neal, who had been a faithful and greatly beloved elder in Sugar Creek, since his election to that office in 1894, died on February 16, 1901.⁷⁴

At its first meeting in the new Church year the Session approved Presbytery's apportionments with the exception of what they listed as "the causes of Church and Christian Education and Publication." As it took this action the Session appointed a committee of two to prepare a paper stating the objections held by the elders to these two benevolence causes. The Rev. T. J. Allison and Mr. F. S. Neal were asked to serve as the committee.⁷⁵ When the Session met on the twenty-first of April its only item of business was to hear the report of this special committee. The clerk pro-tem recorded the meeting as follows:

The Committee appointed to prepare a paper setting forth our objections to Collections for the Causes of Church and Christian Education, and Publication, having reported that we learn that no part of the Collections for Church and Christian Education goes to Davidson College, but the whole amount goes to Mission schools, and the Session having decided to Overture Presbytery as to the Cause of Publication, the Apportionments for these two causes were approved, and the following Overture ordered sent up to Presbytery— "The Session of Sugar Creek Church have always endorsed and had collections taken in our Church for the cause of Publication and Colportage and believed that the mere fact of a Book passing through the hands of our Committee at Richmond, or distributed among our people by our Colporter as Sabbath School literature was a guarantee of its quality. In ordering a lot of books through our Colporter for our Sabbath School we received some books unfit to be given our Sabbath school Children for Sabbath reading, and some unfit for reading at all; Therefore we respectfully Overture the Presbytery to take proper steps to correct this evil."⁷⁶

There is no reason given as to why the Session objected to its funds going to Davidson College and a careful reading of Miss Cornelia Shaw's *Davidson College*⁷⁷ fails to throw any light on the matter unless it lies in her reference to a severe outbreak of typhoid

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 205

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 201

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 206

⁷⁷ Shaw, *Davidson College*, *op. cit.*, p. 170

fever among students and Commencement visitors following the closing of the session of 1898. Miss Shaw states, "This was made the subject of many sensational newspaper reports and the fall term opened with less than two dozen Freshmen."⁷⁸

The minutes of the General Assembly do not show any action taken on the overture sent up in 1901 by the Session to Concord Presbytery. In 1908 the Assembly ruled, that since

It has been repeatedly stated in advertising matter sent out by the Executive Committee, as well as in reports to the General Assembly, that no responsibility is assumed for the contents or teachings of outside publications, other than those recommended as suitable for Sabbath School libraries, . . .⁷⁹

and that since it knew that the Committee could not personally examine all the new books "which come from the press at the rate of one every hour in the calendar day, . . .,"⁸⁰ it commended the policy of the Committee and expressed confidence in its judgment and zeal.

This same year the Session had only one disciplinary case. One of the members of the congregation took a job as a clerk in a bar-room in Charlotte and, after the Session had cited him to appear before it on two occasions and he had not heeded the citations, he was "suspended indefinitely for contumacy."⁸¹

The next year (1902) only one case was recorded. A young woman who had given birth to an illegitimate child appeared voluntarily before the Session and told them her story. The clerk recorded the Session's action in these words:

While the Session did not think she was forced in the usual sense of that word, yet after a careful consideration of all the circumstances, surroundings, and undue influence brought to bear, and also her deep sorrow, thought it best to pray with and admonish her without suspension.⁸²

On November 1, 1903, three new elders were elected by the congregation. These men, Messrs. C. L. Abernathy, D. F. Hunter, and R. W. McConnell, were ordained and installed on Sunday, December 6. These new elders gave Sugar Creek a Session of seven.⁸³

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 170

⁷⁹ W. A. Alexander, *Digest* (1910), Richmond, Va., 1911, p. 336

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ Minutes of Session, 1879-1911, p. 210

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 217

⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 228-229

As Charlotte continued to grow the Session found it necessary to rescind its former action in regard to the cemetery. On the fifteenth of October, 1903, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

That owing to the limit of our burying ground, and the increase in population, the privilege of burying in our Cemetery hereafter will be permitted only to families connected with our Church or congregation, or who have near relatives buried here.⁸⁴

In 1904 and 1905, the records show only two members of the church being called before the Session. One was a man accused of the "Sin of Intemperance". When he confessed and expressed sorrow and promised "to be more guarded in the future" the elders agreed no further action was needed.⁸⁵ The other was a young woman whose conduct the Session felt was "unbecoming a Christian" and when she, too, confessed and repented and asked that "she be continued in full communion" the officers let the case drop.⁸⁶

Thirty-three members were placed on the roll of retired members by the Session in 1906-07 because these men and women were not attending or supporting the work of the church.⁸⁷

In 1907, the elders agreed that they would canvas the congregation and discover how many families actually had family worship. In 1908, they reported that they had found "20 out of the 60 families" in the church had a family altar.⁸⁸

In February, 1910, a committee was appointed "to look into the North Charlotte work,"⁸⁹ and in April, 1911, the Session reported to Presbytery "We are helping support a mission at North Charlotte which gives promise of good results."⁹⁰ This "mission" was the North Charlotte Presbyterian Church, which, according to the minutes of the General Assembly, was organized in 1909.⁹¹

On November 3, 1911, Mr. James Milton Caldwell died. At his death he had been a member of the Church for sixty-six years and an elder for fifty-five years and one day. He was ordained as an elder on November 2, 1856.⁹²

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 228

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 228

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 236

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 243

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 246, 253

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 258, 264

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 274

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 282—see also mission in 1898 in Chapter XII, pages 167-168

⁹¹ Minutes of the General Assembly, 1951, *op. cit.*, p. 341

⁹² Minutes of Session, p. 8

In 1913, after issuing three citations to a member who was “engaged in selling intoxicating drinks” and who each time refused to meet with the elders, the Session suspended him from “the sealing ordinances of the Church.”⁹³

During 1915 the women of the church requested the Session “to adopt the Individual Communion cup.” The Session stated it had “no objection to the Change, but owing to the money stringency” it thought it best to defer action for awhile.⁹⁴

For nearly a year the elders worked with one of the deacons who had stopped attending the church services and fulfilling his duties as an officer because he claimed “. . . that the organization of a choir two years ago, and arrangements then made for the music of the Church, was in a way a show, and was against his Judgement and advice.”⁹⁵

The Session made it very clear in its records that it had been patient and had made repeated efforts to effect a reconciliation. Finally, however, when all of its attempts had ended in failure, it had to suspend the deacon for contumacy and for his conduct as an officer of the church. This action was taken on April 8, 1917.⁹⁶

Captain James M. Davis, who, after the death of J. M. Caldwell, had been the senior elder on the Session, died on March 20, 1918. He was seventy-eight when he died and had been an elder for forty-two years. Capt. Davis made a generous bequest to the church in his will, the interest from it being equally divided between the Benevolences and the Current Expenses of Sugar Creek.⁹⁷

The Session called a congregational meeting for October 12, 1919, and at this meeting, Dr. S. M. Henderson and Messrs. C. H. Caldwell and George L. Hoover were elected elders. On November 1, 1919, the first two men were ordained and installed. Mr. Hoover had been an elder in the Mulberry Church prior to moving to Sugar Creek so he was only installed.⁹⁸

Mr. Hoover had been in office less than three months when he died, February 24, 1920.⁹⁹

By 1920, the breakdown in morality that followed World War I

93 *Ibid.*, p. 22

94 *Ibid.*, p. 39

95 *Ibid.* pp. 47, 52, 53, 55-56

96 *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56

97 *Ibid.*, pp. 62-63

98 *Ibid.*, pp. 74-75, 84

99 Session Register, 1911-1935, p. 2

and the more wide-spread use of the automobile made the Sugar Creek grounds a favorite parking place for what the Session called "immoral purposes." To break up this practice the elders had used their influence to have a member of the Church, Mr. Howard Wilson, made a special officer to patrol the grounds and to arrest those violating the law. The Church was severely criticized by a few individuals for pursuing this course, and the Session appointed a committee of three to talk to these men and also adopted an expression of appreciation for the services rendered by Mr. Wilson.¹⁰⁰

In 1923, the "immoral practices" were still in evidence, and this time the Session voted to leave the matter in the hands of the deacons.¹⁰¹ Three months later it "authorized our Pastor to organize a Law & Order League" to try to meet this situation.¹⁰²

On November 24, 1924, Mr. W. R. Long and Mr. J. O. Earnhardt, both of whom had been elders in other churches prior to joining Sugar Creek, and who had been elected to that office by the congregation, were installed as elders in the church.¹⁰³

From 1917 when it suspended a deacon for "contumacy" until the present the Session has been more lenient in its use of discipline. During the "twenties" when it was dealing with members accused of "adultery and fornication" it admonished them and then after the individuals had expressed repentance, apparently just let the cases drop.¹⁰⁴

It is clearly evident, as we read the story of the Sugaw Creek Session and discipline in the church, that many factors have entered into and profoundly influenced it. The spiritual state of the congregation, the personalities of the various ministers and individual elders, the economic, political and moral atmosphere of the various periods of the Church's history, and the official attitudes and standards of the whole Church, have all borne their separate and, at times, corporate influences.

In later years, as more emphasis has been laid on the "love of God" and on toleration and patience rather than on the "holiness of God" and on immediate and severe punishment for the infraction of His law, discipline has been less frequently used, not merely in

100 Minutes of Session, 1911-1935

101 *Ibid.*, p. 114

102 *Ibid.*, p. 114

103 *Ibid.*, p. 132

104 *Ibid.*, pp. 139, 140, 143

Sugaw Creek, but throughout all major denominations in our country.

There is no evidence in any of the records of the Sugaw Creek Session that it ever used discipline in any fashion that was prompted by a malicious spirit. It always used it for the honor of the great Head of the Church and with a view to the redemption of the individual or individuals involved.

Summing this whole story up, it is unquestionably true that the Sugaw Creek congregation can look with pride at the history of its elders and the record of their spiritual oversight "of the flock" through all the year.

(For a complete list, with the dates, of Sugaw Creek's Elders, see the Appendix B—pages 176-177).

CHAPTER IX

THE DIACONATE AND STEWARDSHIP

A. THE OFFICE OF DEACON

It will come as somewhat of a surprise to those who have not investigated the subject to learn that the Presbyterian Church in America and the Sugar Creek Church were late in making full use of the scriptural office of the Deacon.

It was not until 1840 that the General Assembly "enjoined" all of its Presbyteries to take whatever steps were necessary to secure the setting up of this office in the churches within their respective bounds.¹

Concord Presbytery took note of the Assembly's charge and passed it on to the churches within its bounds. Sugar Creek obeyed the injunction and on February 6, 1841, elected four men to serve as its first deacons.²

Prior to this date Sugar Creek had called the men responsible for its finances "Collectors" and for several years after the first deacons were elected the records show that this title was still used.³

The principal function performed by these "Collectors" was to receive the money from the members of the congregation who had made a subscription to the minister's salary.⁴

The first men elected to the office of Deacon by the Sugar Creek congregation were: Samuel S. Harris, Isaac S. Alexander, James A. Todd, and Robert W. Parks.⁵

At the same meeting, the congregation, finding that it was having trouble meeting the salary promised the pastor, gave its consent for the Rev. J. M. M. Caldwell to give one third of his time to the Poplar Tent Church.⁶

Perhaps the reason Sugar Creek responded so promptly to the injunctions of the General Assembly and the Presbytery was that its pastor, Mr. Caldwell, was a commissioner to the General Assembly from Concord Presbytery in 1840.⁷

¹ Minutes of the General Assembly, 1840, p. 286

² R. A. McNeely's Book, 1833-1870, Feb. 6, 1841

³ *Ibid.* (This term was ancient and historic. It was used in the Presbyterian Churches in Ireland prior to 1717.)

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, Feb. 6, 1841

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Minutes of General Assembly, 1840, p. 281

The Form of Government, in use when Sugar Creek's first deacons were ordained, had this to say about the work of the deacons:

CHAPTER VI

of Deacons

The Scriptures clearly point out deacons as distinct officers in the church, (3) whose business is to take care of the poor, and to distribute among them the collections that may be raised for their use. (4) To them also may be properly committed the management of the temporal affairs of the church. (1) ⁸

The four men elected in 1841 served as Sugar Creek's deacons until 1846, when three additional deacons were elected.⁹ One of the first deacons had died in 1844 and one was elected to the Session in 1846, so now Sugar Creek had only five deacons.¹⁰ These were: Samuel S. Harris, Isaac S. Alexander, Batte Irwin, George A. Houston, and Cyrus A. Allen.¹¹

These men seem to have served without any questions as to the duties of their office or of the honor conferred on them by the congregation. In 1853, however, when the congregation elected six deacons five of those chosen declined to accept the office and the one remaining deacon-elect stated that "...he was unwilling to serve alone."¹²

Five years later (1858), the congregation tried again and this time elected eight deacons. Three of these, "...Dr. Thos. Neal, David M. Henderson, John W. Moore, declined accepting the office of Deacon,..." but the other five, namely, Albert Wilson, Elam Robinson, Wm. H. Robinson, William Kirk, and Julius P. Alexander, accepted and were ordained and installed as deacons on Friday afternoon, April 23, 1858.¹³

There was no reason given in the Session's minutes as to why the five men in 1853 and the three men in 1858 were unwilling to accept the office of Deacon. Some men have refused the office because they did not feel spiritually qualified, others have refused it because they did not wish to assume the responsibilities it laid upon them, but another reason is that some men have felt that it was an empty office, without responsibility and without honor.

⁸ *The Form of Government, The Discipline, and the Directory for Worship of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, Philadelphia, 1841, pp. 410-411. (The figures in the parentheses above refer to proof texts.)

⁹ R. A. McNeely's Book, *op. cit.*, Feb. 5, 1846

¹⁰ See Appendix D, Sugar Creek's Collectors and Deacons, p. xx

¹¹ R. A. McNeely's Book, *op. cit.*

¹² Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, Sept. 24, 1853 and Nov. 27, 1853

¹³ *Ibid.*, 1854-1858, April 23, 1858

At this time there was no clear-cut doctrine of the office of Deacon, and in Sugar Creek, as elsewhere the elders were doing a great deal of the work that could well have been the responsibility of the deacons.

After the organization of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, in December, 1861, an enlarged statement on the duties of the deacons was placed in the Book of Church Order. This new section on the Deacon said in part,

. . .

II. The duties of this office relate to the temporal goods, the collection of oblations, and their distribution to the objects for which they are designed

. . .

IV. The jurisdiction of the deacons is not over persons, but only over things; it does not appertain to the government of the church or the cure of souls, but to the care of ecclesiastical goods and tables, viz: the table of the Lord, providing and serving the sacramental elements; the table of the minister; and the table of the poor.

. . . .14

Apparently no other effort was made by the Church to clarify the duties of the deacons until 1877 when the General Assembly was asked by the Synod of Alabama to clarify the relationship of the deacons to the Session. The Assembly ruled,

The duties of the deacons, as servants (ministers) of the Church, are to execute the orders of the Session (or parochial Presbytery) as rulers of the Church. Therefore it is the duty of the deacons to collect and appropriate all funds for church purposes, whether for local purposes, support of a pastor, aid to the poor, and expenses of the church, or for objects of Christian benevolence recognized in the action of the courts of the Church, under the direction of the church Session.¹⁵

Mecklenburg Presbytery, concerned over the doctrine of the diaconate, sent an overture to the Assembly of 1879 asking clarification of the office and duties of the deacons.¹⁶

At the Assembly of 1880 the Committee that had been appointed the year before to study the question, reported "... that said report was not yet prepared, whereupon the same Committee was con-

¹⁴ *The Book of Church Order*, Presbyterian Church in the United States, Richmond, Virginia, 1867, pp. 14-16

¹⁵ Minutes of General Assembly, *op. cit.*, 1877, p. 410

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1879, pp. 46-47

tinued...".¹⁷ The following year a report from this committee was read and then placed on the docket for consideration by the next Assembly.¹⁸ The Assembly of 1882 referred the report to the Assembly of 1883.¹⁹ In 1883 the Assembly first tabled the report and then on the last day of its meeting voted to refer it "... to the next General Assembly."²⁰

The General Assembly of 1884 took up the report, referred it to a special committee and ordered it "... to report to the present Assembly."²¹

In its report the special committee expressed the gratitude of the Assembly for the work done by the original committee and suggested that after the paper had been revised it should be printed in the "... Appendix to the Minutes of this Assembly...".²²

The main head of this report, as printed in the appendix to the minutes, are:

First, . . . , the higher office of presbyter does not so include the lower office of deacon, as, . . . , to make it legitimate for presbyters to discharge the functions of deacons.

. . .

Secondly, The scope of the deacon's functions is not restricted to the care of the poor, but may legitimately be extended so as to embrace all the temporalities of the Church.

. . .

Thirdly, The functions of the deacons are not restricted within the limits of the congregation of which he is an officer.

. . . 23

The committee concluded its report by recommending to the Assembly:

That the Assembly formally approve the principle, that whenever, in its administrative policy, strictly temporal functions require to be discharged, deacons should be appointed by it for their performance.²⁴

This report, which was never endorsed or adopted, did not fully answer the question asked by Mecklenburg Presbytery, or solve the

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1880, p. 186

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1881, p. 355

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1882, p. 552

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1883, pp. 21 and 61

²¹ *Ibid.*, 1884, p. 199

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 204-205

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 283-290

²⁴ *Ibid.*

problem, but it was the only statement made on the duties of the deacons for many years.

In 1885, Sugar Creek had only three deacons. The functions that ordinarily would have been performed by the deacons had been assumed very largely by the elders. The minutes of the Session show the elders taking care of the poor of the congregation,²⁵ soliciting funds for various causes, and doing other things that the deacons could well have done.²⁶

The Sugar Creek Session, on December 1, 1889, voted to "... meet regularly hereafter on the first Monday in Jany, April, July & Oct. and the Deacons of the church were required to meet with the session regularly."²⁷

From the summer of 1891 until the present the elders and deacons of Sugar Creek have met in their joint meetings with amazing regularity.

In 1892, and again in 1894, the question of the rights of the deacons came before the General Assembly. In one case the question was asked whether the deacons had the right to hire a sexton and fix his salary, in the other the question arose over whether the management of the "temporal affairs" of the church was committed to them by virtue of their ordination or by a special act of the Session. To both of these the Assembly answered that the management of the temporal affairs of the local church is committed to the deacons by a special act of the Session.²⁸

Then, in 1899, the Assembly was asked to answer the question whether the Session or the congregation had the authority to commit to the deacons the management of the temporal affairs of the church. Once again the Assembly stated that the authority lay with the Session.²⁹

After these actions the question of the duties of the deacons lay dormant until 1919 when, in answer to an overture, the General Assembly appointed a committee of three to study the matter. In 1920, the Committee stated it was not ready to report. The Assembly continued it and added four additional members.

²⁵ Minutes of Session, *op cit.*, (1879-1911), p. 21

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 29

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 71

²⁸ Minutes of General Assembly, *op. cit.*, 1892, p. 460; 1896, p. 575

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 1896, p. 430

In 1921, the Committee presented a unanimous report to the Assembly which was adopted and ordered sent down to the presbyteries for their advice and consent.

When the Assembly met in 1922, and it was reported that the necessary number of the presbyteries had approved the recommended amendment to the Book of Church Order, it enacted the revised statement on the Deacon into the law of the Church where it stands as Chapter XI, paragraphs 44-50, of the Form of Government in the Book of Church Order.³⁰

The main changes were to make the duties of the deacons more positive. This was done by a frequent use of the word "shall" in place of the older "may".³¹

The new section also laid upon the Deacons the duty "... to develop the grace of liberality in the members of the church, ..." and placed the care and repair of the church property in their hands. It further stated that "... In the discharge of their duties the Deacons are under the supervision and authority of the session." Finally the suggestion was made that "... It is desirable that the Session and the Board of Deacons meet in joint session to confer on matters of common interest."³²

This last recommendation, as has already been pointed out, had been adopted in the Sugar Creek Church in 1889, and has been followed faithfully through the years.

As in the case of its Session, Sugaw Creek can be proud of the men who have served on its Board of Deacons and in the work they have done in giving leadership in the temporal affairs of the congregation.

While all has not been perfect, the relationship between the Session and the Diaconate has been remarkably harmonious. This has been due to many factors, among them, the spiritual qualities of the elders and deacons themselves, and the fact that for sixty years they have been meeting together quarterly and in these joint sessions ironing out their mutual problems and difficulties.

'For an almost complete list of the Sugaw Creek Deacons, with dates of service, see Appendix D, pages 179-180.)

³⁰ See the Minutes of the General Assembly, *op. cit.*, for the years 1919, 1920, 1921, and 1922.

³¹ Compare the Book of Church Order for the years 1879 and 1922

³² Minutes of General Assembly, *op. cit.*, 1922, pp. 73-74

B. THE DEVELOPMENT OF STEWARDSHIP

In this section a report will be given of the stewardship of the Sugaw Creek Church and of the various methods that were used by the Deacons to develop the giving of the membership to the financial objectives through the years.

Unfortunately, because the early records of the finances of Sugar Creek were lost many years ago, a full account of the stewardship cannot be given from 1755 until 1950.

The earliest statement of Sugar Creek's finances is dated in the year 1768. The North Carolina State Department of Archives and History has in its archives the record of the payments made on the salary of Alexander Craighead two years after his death. Three men, John Scott, Saml. Irwin, and Moses Alexander, paid to his estate on February 24, 1768, £3, 20s, 0d.³³ Then on January 21, 1773, when Jane Craighead (Alexander's wife) and John Davies, the executors of Alexander Craighead, rendered their final accounting they stated that his estate had received "£74 10s 5d . . . of salary—. . ."³⁴

The next financial record comes a good many years later during the ministry of Samuel Craighead Caldwell. Mr. Caldwell reported to Concord Presbytery that he had brought from Sugar Creek for "Home Missionaries \$8."³⁵ In the years that followed there are other small sums listed in the minutes of the Synod.³⁶

The next statement that shows Sugar Creek's stewardship was made during the ministry of Robert Hall Morrison. In the miscellaneous papers of Concord Presbytery preserved in the Department of History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Philadelphia, Pa., there are a number of reports that show the combined giving of Sugar Creek and the Charlotte church.

On October 3, 1832, Morrison's report to Presbytery gives the contributions of Sugar Creek to benevolences at \$18.60.³⁷

The earliest records of Sugar Creek's financial activities, that the church possesses, begin with January 1, 1833. On this date the former "Collectors" resigned and four men were named by the congregation

33 Paper in North Carolina State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, N. C., Mecklenburg County, Records, Settlement of Estates, 1750-1769.

34 Paper in North Carolina State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, N. C., Mecklenburg County Records, Estates. (This paper is entitled "The State of an account of Alxr. Craighead Deceased 1773")

35 Mss. Minutes of the Synod of The Carolinas for the year 1801. (These minutes are in the Library of Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Va.)

36 see Minutes of Synod of the Carolinas for the years 1805, 1812, 1819.

37 Mss. Miscellaneous Papers of Concord Presbytery (1829-1864), in Department of History, Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., paper dated October 3, 1832.

to replace them.³⁸ The congregation also elected John F. McNeely, one of the elders and a former "Collector" as the "Treasurer" of the Church.³⁹

At this same meeting the congregation discussed the possibility of securing Mr. Morrison as its full-time pastor. No action was taken until January 17, 1833, when the vote was called for on the question "Shall we take the whole of Mr. Morrison's time . . . And answered in the affirmative."⁴⁰

The Rev. Robert Hall Morrison had come to Sugar Creek and Charlotte at a promised salary of \$600.00 a year.⁴¹ Now Sugar Creek offered to pay him \$500.00 per year for his whole time. He accepted the offer and the congregation set out to raise the necessary money. Up to this time they had been paying only \$400.00 toward his salary. As it undertook this larger obligation the congregation voted ". . . that there must be a settlement made with the preacher every year, . . ." ⁴²

On the nineteenth of January the subscription papers were brought together and seven men of the congregation, three of them elders, guaranteed Mr. Morrison his salary in full for the year. The two largest subscriptions were for ten dollars per year and were made by Isaac Alexander and Dan Alexander. The smallest amount subscribed was fifty cents and the average ran between one dollar and five dollars.⁴³

During this period Sugar Creek was sending small sums of money to the benevolence causes of the Church. In 1834, the treasurer reported he had paid six dollars, eleven and one quarter cents for the Commissioner's Fund of the General Assembly.⁴⁴ The next year he recorded that he had ". . . Paid \$5 in hands of treashurer of presbyty out of my own pocket in March 1835 and \$4 is all I have received."⁴⁵

In 1836, the reports of the General Assembly show Sugar Creek giving \$186.00 to Missions and five dollars to the Commissioner's Fund.⁴⁶

38 R. A. McNeely's Book, *op cit.*, January 1, 1833

39 *Ibid.*

40 *Ibid.*, January 17, 1833

41 Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 27

42 R. A. McNeely's Book, *op. cit.*

43 *Ibid.*, January 19, 1833

44 *Ibid.*, April 2, 1834

45 *Ibid.*, April 27, 1835

46 Minutes of General Assembly, *op. cit.*, 1836, p. 390 (This is the first year that reports from individual churches are included in the Minutes.)

The congregation all through the pastorate of Robert Hall Morrison had difficulty in raising his salary. On the twenty-fourth of January, 1837, just before he left Sugar Creek to begin his work as the first president of Davidson College, Dr. Morrison wrote the following in the Treasurer's book: "The whole amt. received from Sugar Creek Congregation for the years 1832, 1833, 1834, 1835 and 1836 to January 24th 1837. \$1488.01."⁴⁷

In 1838 the church was still struggling to pay his back salary. The congregation met on January 13, 1838, and adopted the following resolution:

Resolved that the former collectors with the present collectors from the time of the Revd. R. H. Morrison became our Pastor up to the 31st of December 1836 use every effort to ascertain how much every individual has they they are and to Collect so far as possible and make report on the 1st Saturday of March next.⁴⁸

It is evident from the treasurer's records in this period that except for the annual subscriptions to the minister's salary, there was no systematic effort to raise the benevolence funds requested by the Church.

From time to time special offerings for benevolences would be taken and these would range over a year from as much as one hundred dollars for Missions to as little as fifty cents for all the benevolence causes.⁴⁹

In the spring of 1859, the Session included this statement in its "Narrative on Religion":

Observed monthly consort of prayer on 1st Sabbath in each month — took a collection for some one object claiming the attention of the church. Sometime during the year a collection is generally taken up for each of the Boards. Foreign Missions received most attention. No regular systematic plan by which each member may be personally approached & solicited for his contribution to the different objects recommended by our General Assembly. We hope by next year to report some regular plan.⁵⁰

The idea of a systematic plan is not referred to again until

⁴⁷ R. A. McNeely's Book, *op. cit.*, January 24, 1837

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, January 13, 1838

⁴⁹ Minutes of General Assembly, *op. cit.*, 1837, p. 609, and 1842, p. 140.

⁵⁰ Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, 1858-1867, March 24, 1859. (The Monthly Consort of Prayer" was begun in 1815 by the General Assembly. The congregations were asked to meet once a month and pray for "...The advancement of Christ's Kingdom on earth..." and an offering was to be taken. At first these meetings were held on Monday, but in 1838 they were changed to Sunday. See *Baird's Collection, op. cit.*, pp. 179-180.)

1868. At the first meeting of the Session in that year Dr. G. D. Parks, the pastor, presented a plan that he felt would strengthen the stewardship of the congregation. The clerk recorded it in this way:

The Moderator laid before the Session a new plan of making contributions, viz: a weekly system of contributions payable monthly or at longer periods, which it was agreed to adopt for the current year.⁵¹

When the Session met in April, 1868, to prepare its annual report to Presbytery, it entered a most intriguing statement in its financial statistics, "... Co. & State Tax, including poll for current year—\$519.90. Am't. tax per communicant—2.16"⁵²

The tax receipts of Mecklenburg County are kept for ten years only and are then burned, so there is no way of checking on these figures. The historians of the Reconstruction period that have been consulted say they know of no other similar incident. The explanation surely lies in the fact that the Radicals, who were taking over the governments of the Southern states, were land hungry and they saw an opportunity, through higher taxes, to confiscate the land of the Southerners, who were hard up for ready cash, when they failed to pay their taxes.⁵³ Sugar Creek's membership must have pooled its resources and paid the taxes owed by the congregation so that every family would be able to keep its land and its source of income.

Mr. J. W. Moore, the church treasurer, wrote a letter to the *North Carolina Presbyterian*, in the spring of 1869, in which he described the new system of raising the benevolence funds, which had been approved in 1868. The editor printed it under the headline, "Gratifying Success":

Mr. Editor:-

At the Fall meeting of Concord Presbytery, 1868, the system of weekly contributions was recommended to the churches under its care; and ministers and elders were urged to make an effort to introduce this plan for raising funds for benevolent purposes. And it might be of service to the cause, if the churches which have introduced the plan, would make known, through your paper, the results of this system. I would therefore, furnish some facts in regard to the workings of this plan in the time-honored Church of Sugar Creek.

⁵¹ Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, 1868-1874, January 5, 1868

⁵² *Ibid.*, April 1, 1868

⁵³ See, for example, E. M. Coulter, *The South During Reconstruction, 1865-1877*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Louisiana State University Press, 1947, pp. 154-156.

All of our members are given an opportunity to subscribe. The largest subscription is 35c per week. The great majority do not exceed 5¢tns.

The following contributions have been made up to June 1869 — Sustentation \$165, Publication \$80, Foreign Missions \$65, Education \$34-45, Evangelist \$44, Poor Fund \$48, Commissioner's Fund \$15; Incidental Expenses (Such as Sexton's fee, communion expenses &c.) \$53. Total \$504-45. During 1868 in addition to the above we raised \$100 for rent of house for pastor, \$250 for repairs to church, and \$1000 for pastor's salary. This seems good for a country church of 240 members.

It will serve to recommend this plan to other congregations to state, that in Sugar Creek there is but little wealth, that there are in our congregation an unusual number of widows and that much of the land cultivated is of inferior quality.

J. W. Moore, Treas.⁵⁴

During the late 1870's Sugar Creek had trouble once more in meeting its promised salary to its pastor. One reason was Dr. Parks' poor health, which hindered his performance of his pastoral duties. Apparently he had been troubled in this way for a good many years,⁵⁵ but in these years his ill health seems to have returned. He and the officers of the church covenanted together that they would be more diligent in the performance of their duties.⁵⁶

This resolution did not solve the problem however, so the Session voted to read the names of the delinquent subscribers at the next meeting of the congregation.⁵⁷ Too much opposition arose over this plan and the elders had to rescind their action.⁵⁸

These plans having failed to produce the desired results, near the end of 1878 the Session decided to "...solicit aid..." from the people in Charlotte who owned farms within the bounds of the congregation.⁵⁹ This idea, too, met with failure and the officers had to ask Dr. Parks to join with them in asking Presbytery to permit them to lower his salary.⁶⁰

⁵⁴ *The North Carolina Presbyterian*, Fayetteville, North Carolina, Wednesday, June 30, 1869, p. 2.

⁵⁵ Dr. G. D. Parks, from Hendersonville, N. C., to Dr. J. Rumble, January 14, 1861. This letter is in the Miscellaneous Papers of Concord Presbytery, Dept. of History, Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., Philadelphia, Pa.

⁵⁶ Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, 1874-1878

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, November 3, 1877

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, December 22, 1877

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, December 26, 1878

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 1879-1911, p. 3

In 1899, the congregation adopted "...the envelope system of collections..." and instructed the deacons to inquire if the members who were absent from the meeting "...were willing to adopt it..."⁶¹

One month later at a joint meeting of the elders and deacons the following plan was approved:

... session adopted the following Envelope System. All who favor Envelope system to contribute 1st. 2nd. 3d. Sabbaths of each month to Pastors salary & contingent Expenses, 4th Sabbath to regular Benevolent objects, 5th. Sabbath, if there be one, to any object needing special collection. Those who are opposed to the Envelopes to contribute both as to Pastors Salary & other objects as heretofore...⁶²

Then in 1910, the General Assembly recommended that every church appoint a "Beneficence Committee" with a separate treasurer and that this committee canvass every member of the local congregation for a subscription to the benevolence causes rather than depending upon special collections taken from time to time.⁶³

Sugar Creek accepted this new plan and it paid rich dividends, for by 1912 it could report that it had "...given more to the benevolent causes than to local expenses..."⁶⁴ This continued to be the case until 1922, when the current expenses exceeded the benevolence giving by more than \$200.⁶⁵

On the fourteenth of January, 1916, the first Every Member Canvass, to include Benevolences and Current Expenses (also the Pastor's salary), was approved by the church officers.⁶⁶ At first this new plan did not prove too successful, for quite frequently the records show meetings of the congregation being called to raise money for various purposes.⁶⁷

For many years the Sugar Creek congregation ran its local finances on the basis of the calendar year and its benevolence program on the basis of the church year. An accounting of the local finances was made early in January of each year and the benevolence report was made in March or early April.

In 1921, the "...custom [of] asking a blessing by our Pastor,

61 Book of Records, *op. cit.*, p. 52 (January 22, 1899)

62 Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, p. 182

63 Minutes of General Assembly, *op. cit.*, 1910, p. 22

64 Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, 1911-1935, p. 3

65 *Ibid.*, p. 101

66 *Ibid.*, p. 48

67 *Ibid.*, p. 50, 52, 61, 77

on our offering after the Deacons have taken the collection . . ." was adopted by the officers.⁶⁸

Though the General Assembly began asking questions of the local churches about their canvass for benevolences as early as 1911 the Sugar Creek records show no answers until 1922 when, as a part of the annual report to Presbytery, the clerk recorded:

We had an every member canvass preceded by an all day congregational meeting, with program of speakers on the subject. Our resident members are about 275. Subscribers through the envelope is increasing after each canvass.⁶⁹

At the end of the church year 1922-23 Sugar Creek reported its total giving as \$7,165.00.⁷⁰

The plan of an itemized budget was approved by the church officers in 1930.⁷¹ This was an attempt to give more information to the membership about the causes of the Church and where the money subscribed was to go.

In February, 1930, the work on the Education Building was begun, so in March the elders and deacons decided they could not meet Presbytery's benevolence askings of \$3,600 and set the church's goal at \$2,800.00.⁷²

While the Education Building was being erected several requests came before the officers from various groups in the church asking that they be allowed to give "entertainments" or "put on suppers" for the purpose of raising money to be used to buy equipment for the new building.⁷³ These requests were granted but a few weeks later the officers took up the "Matter of formulating a policy or guide on various ways of raising funds for church purposes, . . ."⁷⁴

Although the General Assembly, as early as 1888, had advised clearly against the practice of having "... concerts, suppers, etc., . . ." to raise money "... to be used in the Master's work. . . ." and had stated "... This advice is given because we believe that the Lord has ordained that giving should be an act of worship and thus a means of grace, . . ."⁷⁵, the Sugaw Creek officers kept deferring any final action until at last the question was just forgotten.⁷⁶

68 *Ibid.*, p. 97

69 *Ibid.*, p. 102

70 *Ibid.*, p. 112

71 *Ibid.*, p. 203

72 *Ibid.*, p. 209

73 *Ibid.*, p. 216

74 *Ibid.*, p. 217

75 Minutes of General Assembly, *op. cit.*, 1888, p. 402

76 Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, pp. 216-218

In the spring of 1931, the Church reached its highest peak of giving. Its total to all causes was \$20,663.00. Of this amount \$15,211.00 was for the new Sunday School building."⁷⁷

The "Depression" years of 1933-34 brought the giving to its lowest point during Mr. Burney's pastorate.⁷⁸ The officers knew that with the church's larger membership the giving ought to be higher, so on February 4, 1934, they voted that all "...who are able to give but give Nothing to the Church are to have their attention called to this matter . . . with a view of making our E. M. Canvas as near comple as we can. . . ."⁷⁹

On December 2, 1934, the officers met to consider the "Belmont Covenant Plan."⁸⁰ This plan, developed in the Belmont Presbyterian Church, Roanoke, Virginia, was endorsed by the General Assembly in May, 1934, and commended to the churches for their use. It called for the membership to agree to give a tenth of their income to the church for a definite period of time.⁸¹

After a great deal of discussion the plan was approved for use at Sugaw Creek and met with good success. In April, 1935, when the year's report was made up, the clerk stated:

Belmont Covenant Plan adopted for 10 weeks period, beginning January 1st Sunday. 50% of contributing members participated. Benevolent gifts and current expenses included alike. An increase in gifts of about 85% noted. Thirty permanent tithers a result. A good plan and a blessing to church people⁸²

At the request of the deacons, in the spring of 1937, the Session "...voted that all funds of the church be handled through the general church treasurer"⁸³

In 1938, a recommendation was made to the officers that "the church employ a secretary." This was committed to the Deacons for study and recommendation and on February 12, 1938, they recommended that we do "not employ a full-time church secretary" but that "a clerk be employed to assist the treasurer—salary not to exceed \$20 per month."⁸⁴

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 227

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 101, 260, 280

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 276

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 289

⁸¹ Minutes of General Assembly, *op. cit.*, 1934, pp. 52-53

⁸² Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, p. 300

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 1935-1947, p. 40

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 59, 62

On the tenth of April, 1938, the officers asked Mr. Reece Hunter, "... and any other Deacons who would, ..." to go before the Finance Committee of Presbytery and ask them to help the Church work out a plan whereby it could pay its delinquent Presbyterial taxes.⁸⁵ In August the Session ordered the Deacons to make a special effort to pay the compromise taxes the Finance Committee had agreed to accept.⁸⁶

It was in this same year that the Deacons reported, at a joint meeting, that they had under consideration the possibility of erecting a house for the sexton on the church grounds. The Session approved this idea unanimously and voted "to leave the plan to the Deacons for further consideration."⁸⁷

The year Mr. Burney resigned the Church had 552 members and gave \$7,764.00 to all causes, which was an increase over the year before of \$1,737.00.⁸⁸

Just before Mr. McGeachy came to begin his ministry forty-three members were retired and these, with the members lost by death, and transfer, caused Sugaw Creek's membership to drop to 497 on March 31, 1941.⁸⁹ At the end of the church year 1941-42, the membership stood at 540 and the total contributions \$9,993.00.⁹⁰

At a joint meeting of the elders and deacons held on April 4, 1943 when the Church Treasurer, Mr. Z. V. Kiser had completed his report on the finances of the church, the clerk entered this in his minutes: "The report showed the budget for 1942-'43 had been met in full both for church expenses and benevolences with a substantial excess for which we should be thankful to Almighty God."⁹¹

By 1945, the membership had reached 557 and the total contributions \$10,988.00.⁹² This was a reflection of the financial prosperity that had come with the Country's entry into World War II.

In the last ten and one-half months of Mr. McGeachy's ministry fifty members were received and after he moved in February, four more

85 *Ibid.*, p. 68

86 *Ibid.*, p. 77

87 *Ibid.*, p. 68

88 *Ibid.*, pp. 119-120

89 *Ibid.*, p. 155

90 *Ibid.*, pp. 184-185

91 *Ibid.*, pp. 211-212

92 *Ibid.*, pp. 236-237

members were received. This gave the church on March 31, 1945 a net membership of 589, and the report to Presbytery showed the giving to benevolences was \$5,360.00 and to current expenses was \$5,980.00, making a grand total of \$11,340.00.⁹³

In the months between the leaving of one pastor and the arriving of the new, the manse was extensively repaired and renovated. This is reflected in the report to Presbytery, made in April, 1946. The church gave \$5,914.00 to benevolences, spent \$5,615.00 for current expenses and listed \$8,860 as building expense.⁹⁴ These, plus the pastor's salary made the total contributions for the year \$23,144.00. This was, up to this time, the largest amount Sugaw Creek had ever contributed in any one year.

By the spring of 1946, the idea of a community house had been abandoned and was replaced by the pressing need for additional space for the Sunday School.⁹⁵ A committee was authorized to study this need and after some deliberation it recommended that a temporary Sunday School building be erected.⁹⁶

At the end of the church year, 1946-47, the continued payments on manse renovation and the erection of the temporary Sunday School building are reflected in the financial report. \$8,257 is listed under Building Expense, \$7,055 under total to Benevolences and \$4,766 under Current Expenses. These three items plus the minister's salary show total contributions of \$23,078.00.⁹⁷ This is a loss of \$66.00 over 1946.

The next year the giving topped the previous high record by \$2,595.00. This was brought about through increased giving to Benevolences (\$9,410), a larger Current Expense spending (\$7,779), and an effort to finish paying the indebtedness on the manse, with the purchase of an electric organ, and chimes, which called for a change in a part of the church around the pulpit, the doors into the Educational building, and the building of a choir loft. All of this amounted to \$5,150. These items, plus the minister's salary gave a grand total of \$25,739.00⁹⁸

93 *Ibid.*, pp. 265-266

94 Minutes of General Assembly, *op. cit.*, 1946, p. 267

95 Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, p. 297

96 *Ibid.*, p. 298

97 Minutes of General Assembly, *op. cit.*, 1947, p. 277

98 Minutes of General Assembly, *op. cit.*, 1948, p. 277, Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, pp. 303, 310, 316

The Church year ending March 31, 1950, saw Sugaw Creek reach its all-time high peak in giving. Its total contributions amounted to \$26,366.00.⁹⁹ On the basis of the reported membership of 695 the per capita giving was about \$38.00. The Assembly's per capita giving in 1950 was \$56.39,¹⁰⁰ which means that while Sugaw Creek can take pride in its accomplishment it can also look forward to greater growth.

⁹⁹ Minutes of General Assembly, *op. cit.*, 1950, p. 229

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 292

CHAPTER X

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

1. THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Presbyterian Church has recognized the importance of a number of organizations in contributing to the training of adults and children, and in helping to develop them in Christian character and service. In this chapter the work of the Sunday School, the Women of the Church, the Men of the Church, and youth organizations will be considered and their histories briefly told.

According to the scanty sources now available the oldest organization developed to supplement the teaching work of the church at Sugaw Creek was the Sunday School.

This movement to give additional training in the life of the Protestant Church received its real impetus in 1780, when Robert Raikes organized his first Sunday School in Gloucester, England. Raikes' first schools were designed to provide religious instruction for the poor and neglected children of the factory workers in his home city.¹

In his standard work on the history of the Sunday School E. W. Rice states that there were schools to be found in America, held on Sunday, which were very similar to the present-day Sunday School ". . . long before his [Robert Raikes] day."²

Rice further tells us: "The churches . . . continued to regard the Sunday School movement not as a church institution but as a philanthropic effort to improve the moral condition of the ignorant and neglected classes outside the church."³

Apparently such were the motives that led to the first Sugar Creek Sunday Schools. Robert Hall Morrison wrote a letter to a cousin, the Rev. James Morrison in Rockbridge County, Virginia, in 1820, in which he said, "*Respecting Sunday Schools for the Blacks we have two in Rocky River. Some in Poplar Tent & also in Sugar Creek . . .*"⁴

Twelve years later, when Robert Hall Morrison was Sugar Creek's pastor, James E. Morrison, one of his cousins, wrote to the same

1 E. W. Rice, *The Sunday-School Movement and the American Sunday-School Union, 1780-1917*, Philadelphia, 1917, pp. 14, 15, 17

2 *Ibid.*, p. 43—parenthesis added by author for clarity

3 *Ibid.*, p. 48

4 R. H. Morrison's correspondence, *op. cit.*, Letter of Feb. 12, 1820 (italics added for

minister and relative in Virginia. He wrote of a Sunday School "...going into operation..." at Rocky River and said, "Sabbath Schools have been in operation for some time in different parts of the congregation. These schools are all moved to the meeting House & compose one school..."⁵

Though there is no absolute proof now available it seems logical to assume that these incidents can be used to illustrate the beginning of Sugar Creek's Sunday School. It would appear that it began as separate small schools in the various quarters of the congregation. The first schools were for the slaves but later the same methods were used to train the children of the Church. Finally, these scattered schools were brought to the church and consolidated into one central school.

The minutes of the Session do not mention the Sunday School until 1844, when the clerk entered this note: "May 26, 1844—Sunday School *organized* for the summer." Over the word "organized", which is underlined in the original minute, the clerk wrote "Commensed."⁶

The first record of a superintendent for the Sunday School comes four years later. On May 28, 1848, the Session appointed John F. McNeely, one of the elders, ". . . to superintend the Sabbath School of our congregation."⁷

The first report on the number of pupils in the Sunday School is in the minutes of the General Assembly for the year 1856. Under Sugar Creek in the statistical report this item is entered: "Children in Sabbath School and Bible Class—100"⁸ The statistical report for the following year indicated the enrollment had dropped to fifty.⁹

On April 24, 1858 Mr. R. A. McNeely was "...appointed to superintend the Sabbath School during the summer." This second superintendent named McNeely continued in that office until on March 3, 1883, he resigned on account of what he termed "... infirm health..."¹⁰

Mr. Francis S. Neal was "... appointed Superintendent of the Sabbath School" on April 13, 1883,¹¹ and he served until April 14, 1895, when he resigned.¹²

emphasis)

5 *Ibid.*, Letter of James E. Morrison to Rev. James Morrison, dated April 20, 1832

6 Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, 1841-46

7 *Ibid.*, 1847-1853

8 Minutes of General Assembly, *op. cit.*, 1856, p. 685

9 *Ibid.*, 1857, p. 182

10 Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, Books for 1858-1867, and 1879-1911, p. 29

11 *Ibid.*, 1879-1911, p. 30

12 *Ibid.*, p. 141

On the twenty-sixth of April, 1895, Mr. Charles H. Caldwell was elected as Mr. Neal's successor.¹³ Mr. Caldwell continued as superintendent of the Sunday School until April 2, 1926, when he asked the Session to accept his resignation.¹⁴

Thus in seventy-eight years the Sunday School had only four superintendents and Mr. Caldwell's service was the longest, thirty-one years, and Mr. R. A. McNeely's was second with twenty-five years.

In 1866, there were eighty-five children in the Sunday School¹⁵ and in 1874, there were 110.¹⁶ Fourteen years later the Session reported "10 teachers and 80 scholars."¹⁷ During six of the decades that followed the enrollment as reported in the minutes of the General Assembly is listed as having been as follows:

- 1890, Twelve teachers and 100 pupils;¹⁸
- 1900, Fourteen teachers and 142 scholars;¹⁹
- 1920, Total Sunday School enrollment, 167;²⁰
- 1930, Total enrollment, 289;²¹
- 1940, Total enrollment, 483;²²
- 1950, Total enrollment, 520.²³

When the Sunday School was first brought to the church, and for many years thereafter, it met in little groups scattered in various parts of the sanctuary, but in the later years as it began to grow the officers of the church and Sunday School found themselves faced with the problem of housing the school. Before 1898 the Sunday School was using the Session or school house for some of its classes.²⁴ In the spring of 1910, because the Sunday School enrollment had reached 175,²⁵ the congregation met and appointed a committee to take "... steps ... to build committee and class rooms in the church."²⁶

On the sixth of May, 1910, the committee reported and recommended "... that 5 rooms be cut out of the church at an expense of about \$450." The congregation adopted this report and asked the committee, with the Board of Deacons, "... to carry out the plan."²⁷

13 *Ibid.*, p. 141

14 *Ibid.*, 1911-1935, p. 150

15 Minutes of the General Assembly, *op. cit.*, 1866, p. 99

16 *Ibid.*, 1874, p. 642

17 *Ibid.*, 1888, p. 504

18 *Ibid.*, 1890, p. 143

19 *Ibid.*, 1900, p. 741 (for 1910 figures see next paragraph.)

20 *Ibid.*, 1920, p. 260

21 *Ibid.*, 1930, p. 212

22 *Ibid.*, 1940, p. 234

23 *Ibid.*, 1950, p. 228

24 Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, 1879-1911, p. 179

25 Minutes of General Assembly, *op. cit.*, 1910, p. 215

26 Book of Records for Sugar Creek Congregation, *op. cit.*, p. 64

27 *Ibid.*

Nothing came of this action however, for the interior of the church was not altered.

The Session on February 1, 1920, appointed the Sunday School superintendent and two deacons as a committee "... to look into the cost of making some Class Rooms for our Sunday School.²⁸ As far as the Session's minutes are concerned this committee was never heard from.

Then on the seventh of July, 1923, another committee was appointed by the Session. This one was "... to confer with the Christian Endeavor Society looking to the erection of a suitable building for Society and Church purposes, ..." ²⁹ Once again nothing more was heard from this committee.

A joint meeting of the officers was held on September 11, 1923 and the clerk entered this record in the minutes:

The object of this meeting was to get the sentiment of the officers as to what could be done with reference to more room for our Sabbath School and Church Societies. After discussing the matter our Pastor was asked to let the congregation know from the pulpit what we have in view³⁰

This action apparently brought no results because there is no record of anything being done to carry the project any further.

On the nineteenth of December, 1926, the Session granted a request made by the Deacons that they be allowed "... to arrange Class Rooms on the galary" ³¹ Just after this action was taken Mr. Peabody offered his resignation as pastor and the difficulties that followed seem to have prevented the follow-up of this plan.

Mr. Burney came to Sugaw Creek on the first of June, 1929, and in August a movement was started once again to do something about securing adequate housing for the Sunday School. On the first of September, the officers appointed a committee, consisting of Joe H. Robinson, C. W. Wilson, C. H. Caldwell, Mrs. T. J. Hunter, Mrs. Lloyd M. Flowe, and the minister, "... to look into the Cost, plans &c of both a temporary and permanent Sunday School building. . . ." ³²

This committee recommended:

²⁸ Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, 1911-1935, p. 77

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 95

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 117

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 159

³² *Ibid.*, p. 194

1st — That plans for a permanent building only be considered, and that steps be taken to secure same. 2nd That plans in hand be carefully considered and suggestions be made to better them if possible.

. . . .³³

The committee then closed its report by recommending that a finance committee be appointed to work out an effective plan for financing the proposed Sunday School building. The officers named the following to the finance committee: J. H. Robinson, J. O. Earnhardt, F. S. Neal, Jr., Roy Todd, and C. H. Caldwell.³⁴

At the quarterly meeting of the officers, held on November 3, 1929, a building committee was named, F. S. Neal, chairman, B. J. Hunter, W. R. Garrison, D. G. Wilson, Roy Todd, Preston Robinson and Wade Todd (these last two were appointed as joint treasurers of the building funds), and authorized to proceed with the completion of the plans.³⁵

At the next joint meeting, January 6, 1930, the elders and deacons approved the action of the building committee in employing “. . . Mr. Asbury as our Architect. . . .”, and called a congregational meeting for the nineteenth of January “. . . for the purpose of authorizing the Deacons to sign the Necessary papers to secure funds from Building and Loan Association for our Sunday School building.”³⁶

The work of the Building and Finance committees resulted in the ground for the Education Building being broken in February, 1930. The building was completed and put in use on May 25, 1930. At 9:45 A.M. the Sunday School assembled in the church auditorium and, after worship, the superintendent, Mr. C. W. Wilson, assigned the various departments to their new rooms.³⁷

After the Sunday School hour the congregation assembled at eleven o'clock for worship and a service of Thanksgiving. The Rev. C. W. Robinson, pastor of the church from 1884 until 1887, was present and led the prayer of consecration. Mr. F. S. Neal, Jr., who had served as chairman of the building committee, presented the keys to the new building to Mr. Burney, who in turn handed them over to the superintendent. Dr. W. L. Lingle, the president of Davidson

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 198

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 203-4 (The “Mr. Asbury” in this minute was Louis H. Asbury, one of the outstanding architects in the South. Mr. Asbury was located in Charlotte, N. C.)

³⁷ Mss. History of the Educational Building, read on Sunday, May 28, 1944

College, preached the sermon for the occasion. Dinner was then served, picnic style, with many former members and friends present.

That afternoon the First Presbyterian Church of Charlotte led the second service. The principal address was given by Mr. R. A. Dunn, a leading elder in the First Church, who spoke on the relation of the country church to the city church.³⁸

This modern Sunday School building has been a valuable asset to the church and it was finally completely paid for on December 27, 1943, and dedicated on May 28, 1944.³⁹

Though there is no actual proof for the assumption it is believed that at first the Sunday School met in the afternoon. This apparently was not completely satisfactory, so during Mr. Pressly's ministry it was changed to meet immediately after the morning worship service.⁴⁰ Mr. Pressly was at Sugar Creek from 1904 until 1908. In 1906 the Session could report to Presbytery that "all of each days attendance upon the preaching services remaining for the Sabbath School."⁴¹

This schedule was continued until 1926, when on May 4 the Session called a congregational meeting for May 16, 1926, "...to decide on change of hour for meeting whether before or after sermon."⁴² The congregation voted to hold the Sunday School before the preaching service.⁴³ On February 3, 1930, the Session recommended that the hour of 9:45 A.M. be set as the time for opening the school "...to remain throughout the 12 months."⁴⁴

It is evident, from the records, that the Sunday School at first met only during the spring, summer and fall and was closed during the winter. The first record of the Sunday School, as we have already seen, has the school "commencing" in May and as late as 1888 the Session voted to discontinue the Sunday School "...until the first of April 1889."⁴⁵

The Session on May 5, 1895, elected Lawrence J. Rumples secretary and treasurer of the "...Sabbath School, the superintendent

38 Taken from an account of the day written and preserved by Mr. V. L. Hunter, a Sugaw Creek elder.

39 Mss. History of the Educational Building, *op. cit.*, also min. of Session, *op. cit.*, 1935-1947, p. 228

40 Julia Alexander, Historical Sketch of Sugar Creek Church, Charlotte (N.C.) Daily Observer for Sunday, Sept. 15, 1912, pp. 14-15

41 Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, 1879-1911, p. 250

42 *Ibid.*, 1911-1935, p. 153

43 Minutes of Congregational Meetings, May 16, 1926 (a loose sheet in back of Secretary's book.)

44 Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, 1911-1935, p. 205

45 *Ibid.*, 1879-1911, p. 63 (meeting held on November 25, 1888)

being relieved of these duties."⁴⁶ Prior to this time the superintendent had evidently had to fulfill these duties in addition to his other responsibilities.

For some season, though it was charged with the oversight of the Sunday School, the Session books do not mention the curriculum of the Church School until April 5, 1877, when, at a joint meeting of the elders and deacons, the following motion was adopted: "...Moved and adopted that we adopt in our Sabbath School the Westminster Lesson leaf. Moved and adopted that Dr. Parks & H. A. Gray be appointed a committee to procure sd Lessons..."⁴⁷

The lesson leaflets are not referred to again nor does the Session act on any other texts for the Sunday School until July 7, 1878, when the following minute was recorded:

A deficiency in Sabbath School Question Books, having been reported, it was moved and adopted that the Superintendents of the Sabbath School be authorised to purchis such Question Books as was needed for the School.⁴⁸

These "Question Books" were first used in the American Sunday Schools in 1837 and were revised and adapted to meet varying situations many times.⁴⁹ Perhaps a question from one of the early editions of the "Question Books" will be of interest, "Why do you suppose God said, *remember*, and not *thou shalt*, when he commanded the children of Israel to keep the Sabbath? Genesis 2:2,3."⁵⁰

The Sugar Creek Sunday School had a library as early as 1847. Rev. R. H. Lafferty recorded in his diary on Tuesday, April 27, 1847, "Paid \$1.25 cts for the purpose of procuring a Sabbath School Library in Sugar Creek Church."⁵¹

In 1838, the General Assembly set up "The Board of Publication of Tracts and Sabbath-School Books of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America."⁵² In its first report, in 1839, this Board listed eighteen books that had been published during the past year.⁵³ These small books cost between twenty and thirty cents per volume, so Sugar Creek's first Sunday School library must have consisted of some four or five books.

46 *Ibid.*, p. 142

47 *Ibid.*, 1875-1879

48 *Ibid.*

49 F. G. Lankard, *A History of the American Sunday School Curriculum*, N. Y., 1927, pp. 179-185

50 Given in Lankard, *op. cit.*, p. 183

51 Diary of Rev. R. H. Lafferty in possession of Dr. R. H. Lafferty, Charlotte, N. C.

52 Minutes of the General Assembly, *op. cit.*, 1838, p. 23

53 *Ibid.*, 1839, pp. 198-199

On April 25, 1869, the Session took the following action:

The Pastor was requested to give notice to all who had in their possession books belonging to the Sabbath School Library to return them, in order that a proper catalogue of books for replenishing the Library might be made out. Also to request the congregation to come prepared to contribute for renewing the Library on next Sabbath, announcing the intention of the Session, to appoint a Librarian, have the book-case locked, & take such other measures as shall best secure the circulation and preservation of the books.⁵⁴

Year after year the Session recorded in its annual report to Presbytery that "... only the Standards of the Church are used" as textbooks and that "The Catechisms are taught" in the Sunday School. As an example of one of these reports this extract from the "Sabbath School" report for 1896 is given:

What Books of Instruction do you use besides the standards of the Church? None. Do you have Catechetical and Bible instruction in Sabbath School and families? Answer Attended to in the Sabbath School and neglected in a few families.⁵⁵

The Session's minutes do not show that it approved the teachers for the Sunday School until fairly late in the history of the church. On April 28, 1883, in writing of the appointment of Mr. Nicholas Gibbon as assistant superintendent, the clerk made this notation: "... and teacher selected."⁵⁶ The appointment or election of teachers is not mentioned again until April 27, 1895, when the Session elected and assigned to various classes eleven teachers.⁵⁷

In 1897, the questionnaire sent down by the Assembly to be filled in by the Session on the Sunday School work in the local church asked the question "Do you have a normal class?" or a class where teachers can be and are trained for their work? The Session answered the question, stating "We have no normal class."⁵⁸ The Session continued to answer this question in the negative until January 12, 1920, when it "... decided to organize a class of young people, with F. S. Neal as teacher, to take a course in the Catechisms and doctrines of our church—this with a view of training future Sunday School teachers."⁵⁹

⁵⁴ Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, 1867-1874

⁵⁵ Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, 1879-1911, pp. 149, 150, also 117, 131, ff.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 31

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 141-142

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 163

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 1911-1935, p. 73

The next effort to train teachers is mentioned three years later. On July 30, 1923, the Session agreed to the organizing of a class of young men and women who were to study the Shorter Catechism. "The object in this," wrote the clerk, "was to train some of our younger members for future teachers in the Sabbath School."⁶⁰

Three elders, C. H. Caldwell, J. O. Earnhardt, and C. L. Abernathy, were appointed by the Session on April 8, 1925, as a committee to "... bring in recommendations for a better organization of the Sunday School."⁶¹ This committee reported on May 3, 1925, and made this recommendation:

That Ralph Robinson be appointed to keep a record of the attendance of the whole Sunday School — That Roy Todd be appointed assistant, with the additional duties of looking after those on the outside of the Church that do not attend Sunday School services.⁶²

These additional duties laid on Mr. Todd were an effort to get the men, who brought their families to Sunday School and then remained out on the grounds, into the class provided for them.

On November 1, 1925, the elders "... authorized a gift of \$10.00 to Standard Training School for Church and Sunday School Workers."⁶³ According to the report of the Executive Committee of Publication and Sunday School Work made to the General Assembly in 1926, a Training School was held in Charlotte during 1925⁶⁴ and evidently some of Sugaw Creek's officers and teachers had participated in it and this "gift" was a token of appreciation.

Mr. C. H. Caldwell resigned as superintendent of the Sunday School on April 2, 1926, and Mr. Charles W. Wilson was elected as his successor.⁶⁵ When the Session met nine days later to make up the report to Presbytery it gave 250 as the Sunday School enrollment and stated that 32 pupils had united with the church during the past year.⁶⁶

One of the best features of Sugaw Creek's work with its children in the last few years has been its Daily Vacation Bible School. The

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 116

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 136

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 142

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 147

⁶⁴ *Report of the Executive Committee of Publication and Sunday School Work to the General Assembly for year ending March 31, 1926*, Richmond, Va., 1926, p. 36

⁶⁵ *Minutes of Session, op. cit.*, p. 150

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 151

first one mentioned in the minutes of the Session was held during August 1927.⁶⁷

Mr. Wilson, the new superintendent, asked the Session to appoint a committee to study the work of the Sunday School on June 26, 1927.⁶⁸ The elders granted his request and gave him the privilege of naming the membership with a representative to be selected from the Session, the Diaconate, and each of the various departments of the church.⁶⁹

Sugaw Creek's first Religious Education committee was elected on April 20, 1930, and was composed of "...Mrs. J. H. Robinson, Mr. C. H. Caldwell and Miss Sudie Wilson."⁷⁰ On March 14, 1931, Mrs. Robinson and Miss Wilson resigned and Mrs. Ralph Puckett and Miss Alice McConnell were elected to fill their places.⁷¹

Mr. C. W. Wilson submitted his resignation as superintendent on February 7, 1932, and Mr. Reid Garrison was elected in his place.⁷²

On this same date, after having considered it for some time, the Session adopted a plan for one continuous service "...of both Sabbath School and Church Service,..." This was done with the hope that the people, who had been going home after the Sunday School hour, would be brought into the preaching service.⁷³ This unified service came up for discussion at several later meetings of the Session but there is no record of any action being taken as to its discontinuance though the regular Sunday School hour was resumed by 1937.⁷⁴

Since 1936, Sugaw Creek has sponsored, in addition to the two weeks Vacation Bible School for its own children, a Bible School for the children of the Rockwell A.M.E. Zion Church in Derita. This school usually ran for one week and was staffed by Sugaw Creek teachers and paid for by the Sugaw Creek congregation.⁷⁵

Mr. Garrison offered his resignation as superintendent to the Session on April 21, 1935, and Mr. Z. V. Kiser was elected to replace

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 166

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 168

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 214

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 224

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 239

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 239-240

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 267, and in 1935-1947 book, p. 51

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 1935-1947, pp. 38, 70, etc.

him.⁷⁶ Mr. Kiser served until March 14, 1937, when he resigned⁷⁷ and Mr. Wade W. Welch was elected superintendent on March 21, 1937.⁷⁸ Mr. Welch resigned on March 11, 1945, on account of ill health and Mr. J. Reid Abernathy was elected by the Session as the new superintendent.⁷⁹

2. THE WOMEN OF THE CHURCH

Like the early history of the Sunday School, the beginnings of the organizations among the women of the church are hidden by the years when no permanent records were kept or, if any were kept, have been lost.

Some of Sugar Creek's neighbors had women's societies as early as 1817. The first hint of an organization among the Sugar Creek women is given in a letter which the Rev. S. C. Caldwell wrote to the *Christian Herald* in 1818. Mr. Caldwell stated that "the women" of the church had made him life member of the United Foreign Mission Society.⁸⁰

In the Minutes of the Session the first reference to any organization among the women comes much later. On April 2, 1843, the clerk recorded that he had received twenty-five dollars ". . . from the Sugar Creek Female Benevolent Society for educating a Heathen Child" and that he paid this money to "Michael Brown C.B.F.M. Salisbury Agent."⁸¹

The next mention of an organization for the women is dated "Saturday, June 12th, 1847."⁸² This record reads,

The Ladies of Sugar Creek met according to notice previously given for the purpose of organizing a Female Missionary Society. The meeting was opened with prayer.

. . .

The Ladies of Sugar Creek feeling that it is their duty not only to pray, but also to labour for the extension of the Redeemer's Kingdom here on earth, and feeling that combined and sympathetic effort is the best way of securing the accomplishment of any object,

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 33

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 34

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 261

⁸⁰ Gertrude J. Howell, *The Women's Auxiliary of the Synod of N. C., 1912-1937*, Wilmington, N. C., (n.d.); *The Christian Herald*, Vol. 5, p. 508

⁸¹ Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, 1841-1846

⁸² New Book for the Record of the Ladies Missionary Society of Sugar Creek Church, Aug. 12th, 1861.

have resolved to form themselves into a society and adopt the following constitution:
 . . . ,⁸³

Then follow the nine articles of the adopted constitution dealing with the name, officers and their duties, meetings, membership, disposition of money collected, dues, and so forth.⁸⁴

After this constitution had been read to the group present and had been adopted, the following officers were elected: “. . . For President Mrs. Jane Houston, for Vice-President Mrs. Annabella J. Alexander, for Secretary Miss J. T. Chamberlain and for Treasurer Mrs. Esther Caldwell.”⁸⁵

The next minute is dated April 20, 1861. At this meeting Mrs. Eliza Cannon was elected president; Mrs. R. Neal, vice-president; Mrs. M. E. Moore, secretary; and Mrs. C. R. McNeely, treasurer.⁸⁶

Though now formally organized the Session took no notice of the Ladies Foreign Mission Society in the minutes until 1894. On the fifth of April, in making up the annual report to Presbytery, the Session recorded “Rec’d from W. F. Mis. Soc., 57,73.” for Foreign Missions.⁸⁷

The Session books do not refer to any work by the women again until 1902, when it indicates that the Church has two women’s organizations, “The Ladies Foreign Mission Society” and “The Ladies Aid Society.” At this time the Foreign Mission Society had forty members but no membership figure is given for the Ladies Aid organization.⁸⁸

The Women of Mecklenburg Presbytery formed a Missionary Union in 1904.⁸⁹ The women of Sugar Creek took notice of this on October 10, 1905, when they voted “. . . that each member should pay something toward paying Delegates expenses to attend the Missionary Union that is to be held in Monroe the 3rd and 4th of October.”⁹⁰ This Union was the forerunner of the Presbyterial, one of the most effective working units in the Presbyterian Church organization for women.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* (In Feb. 1848 Miss Chamberlain married Rev. R. H. Lafferty)

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, 1879-1911, p. 130

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 212

⁸⁹ Howell, *op. cit.*, p. 7

⁹⁰ Minutes of Ladies F.M. Society, *op. cit.*, p. 20

From 1908 until 1911 "the Womans Foreign Mission Society" and "the Womans Home Mission Society" met jointly.⁹¹ Then the minute book shows only the records of the Foreign Mission group.⁹²

The Woman's Auxiliary of the Presbyterian Church in the United States was organized in 1912⁹³ and the Auxiliary Circle Plan was adopted in 1917.⁹⁴ It was not easy for the women in the local church to give up their old organizations. Mrs. W. C. Winsborough, the first president of the women of the Assembly, writes this about the difficulties:

. . . The Foreign Mission Society, with its program and free-will offerings, was considered "high-brow" by the industrious and hard-working Ladies Aid, while the former sometimes minimized the importance of Home Missions. "As well try to mix oil and water as to unite 'Missioners' and 'Aiders'" as one shrewd woman put it! . . .⁹⁵

It was not until 1922 that the Sugar Creek Session could report the existence of a "Woman's Auxiliary" in the church, with a membership of forty-seven.⁹⁶ The next year all of the women's organizations were consolidated in the Auxiliary, and a membership of one hundred was reported.⁹⁷

By the year 1930 the Woman's Auxiliary had grown in membership to 140 and gave to all causes \$708.00.⁹⁸ In 1946, the total membership was 170 and the total contributions were \$1,008.00.⁹⁹

Because the Women of the Church have been careful to write and preserve the yearly history of their organization it is not necessary to give a detailed account of their excellent work through the years. Anyone interested in studying further, and in more detail, the history of the women will find it on file in the Presbyterian Historical Foundation in Montreat, North Carolina.¹⁰⁰

91 *Ibid.*, pp. 43-76

92 *Ibid.*, pp. 77 ff.

93 Mrs. W. C. Winsborough, *The Woman's Auxiliary Presbyterian Church, U. S.*, Richmond, Va., 1927, p. 23

94 *Ibid.*, p. 34

95 *Ibid.*, p. 33

96 Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, 1911-1935, p. 100.

97 *Ibid.*, p. 111

98 *Ibid.*, p. 213

99 *Ibid.*, 1935-1947, p. 293

100 Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, T. H. Spence, Jr., Director, Montreat, N. C.

3. THE MEN OF THE CHURCH

The need for a separate organization among the men of Sugaw Creek congregation was not felt until very late in the history of the church.

In 1910, the Session appointed the pastor, Rev. W. R. McCalla, and Mr. Joe H. Robinson and Mr. L. J. Rumble as a committee "... to organize a young mens prayer meeting for the benefit and training of the young men of our Congregation."¹⁰¹ There is no further mention, after this minute, of this proposed organization.

The next reference to any special work among the men is in 1912. On January 25, 1912, the Session appointed the pastor and Joe H. Robinson as "... delegates to the approaching meeting at Chattanooga, Tenn. of the Laymans Forward Movement,"¹⁰²

Ten years later the Session appointed "Messrs Roy Todd, Reid Garrison and Willis Robinson . . . to represent our Church at a Laymans meeting to be held this afternoon in Charlotte."¹⁰³ This meeting of the Session was dated November 19, 1922.

Then at a joint meeting of the officers held on January 11, 1923,

J. H. Robinson, J. C. Alexander, and Fred Gibbon were appointed to receive funds for the Laymens Convention to be held in Charlotte in February, representatives to this convention to be named later. It was the desire of those present that a mens prayer band be organized.¹⁰⁴

These rather spasmodic attempts to have some sort of organization for the men finally culminated in the Session, on August 31, 1925, appointing C. W. Wilson, C. H. Caldwell and J. O. Earnhardt "... to arrange for a meeting at the Church next Sabbath at 3:30 P.M. to organize the men of our Church."¹⁰⁵

On April 10, 1927, the Session included in its report to Presbytery these facts: "... Male membership of Church 18 years and over 108. Enrollment in "Men of Church" 40. Proportion of our men in Bible Class 100%"¹⁰⁶

This organization did not fully meet the needs of the men, for the next year we find the Session appointing another "... committee

¹⁰¹ Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, 1879-1911, p. 273 (meeting held on Jan. 7, 1910)

¹⁰² Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, 1911-1935, p. 6

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 105

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 106

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 144

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 163

looking to the organization of a Mens Club." This committee was composed of C. W. Wilson, J. O. Earnhardt, W. R. Garrison, and Roy Todd.¹⁰⁷

This time the plan proposed was the right one and since 1928 the Sugaw Creek Men's Club has been a valuable asset to the whole church. It provides a means of service for the men, an intimate period of fellowship once a month, and training in personal spiritual growth and in the work of the Church. Year after year the clerk of Session in recording the annual report to Presbytery says of the Men's Club: ". . . contributed through the General Church Treasurer to Causes. Current Expenses met by individuals."¹⁰⁸

In 1942, the clerk wrote the same report but appended to it this statement: "The Men's Club contributed \$167.00 for the purchase of an electric range for the Kitchen"¹⁰⁹

Through the years the Men's Club has sponsored the neighborhood prayer meetings, held monthly, in various sections of the congregation. The men divided the congregation into six areas and assigned two men to serve as leaders in each area. These leaders were responsible for the prayer meetings for a year.¹¹⁰

During World War II these prayer services were moved to the Church.¹¹¹ This was done because a great many members of the church felt they ought to have a united prayer meeting for the men in the armed services and for peace.

At this same time the men's meetings were combined with a "family-night" supper which had been started to try to meet the shortage of gas and tires.¹¹² In June, 1945, however, it was decided to start holding separate monthly meetings of the Men's Club.¹¹³

Though it has had its ups and downs, its times of strength and weakness, the Men's Club continues to make a very worthwhile contribution to the life of the men, and it has, since its organization, meant a great deal to the total life of the Church.

4. YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

The first organization, listed in the minutes of the Session, that was exclusively for young people was called "The Busy Bee Society"

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 176 (meeting held on Feb. 26, 1928)

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 1935-1947, pp. 38, 70, 121, 156, etc.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 185-186

¹¹⁰ For a sample list see Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, p. 154

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 209, 230

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 270

and it was for the young women of the Church.¹¹⁴ The first work that this group did was to raise four dollars toward the purchase of the "Congo Boat" during the church year of 1893-94.¹¹⁵

The next attempt to provide for the needs of the young people was a "Christian Endeavor Society" which the Rev. T. J. Allison started in the Derita community sometime between January 14 and April 9, 1902.¹¹⁶ This society included both young men and women. Mr. Allison reported to the Session a membership of thirty-eight after the organization had been completed.¹¹⁷

A little while later a second Christian Endeavor Society was organized and in the annual report to Presbytery for 1902-3 the Session said of these two groups:

Young Peoples Societies

Christian Endeavor Society No. 1

L. J. Ruple President No Members Male 31 Female 30
total 61. Contributions for Current Expenses \$8.79.

Christian Endeavor Society No. 2

W. A. Donaldson Pres No Members 30. Their object is general and are composed of both males and females. They have both a prayer-meeting of their own and a regular plan of bible study. but no regular plan of Mission study, neither a plan for systematic and proportionate giving.¹¹⁸

There is no report recorded for any of the youth organizations at the end of the church year 1903-4.¹¹⁹

In 1905, the Session made this fairly long report on the "Busy Bee Society" but does not mention the Christian Endeavor societies:

Amount paid to Foreign Missions \$3.15 other Causes \$11.75 Total \$14.90 Its object is general and its members are composed of Females only. Have regular prayers only in connection with regular meetings. Has no regular plan of Either Bible or Mission study or systematic giving and no special form of Church Work.¹²⁰

Only the "Busy Bee Society" is reported in 1906.¹²¹ Apparently the Christian Endeavor societies have dropped out of the life of the

¹¹⁴ Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, 1879-1911, p. 130

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 211-212

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 212 (The "Busy Bee Society" is also listed but no report of membership is given.)

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 222 (This year the "Busy Bee Society" is not listed.)

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 233-235

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 239

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 249

Church. In 1907, no report is shown from any young people's organization in the minutes of the Session.¹²²

On April 12, 1908, the Session reported three "Young People's Societies", the "Willing Workers", the "Miriams-Members 18", and the "Young Ladies—Members 21."¹²³ The "Willing Workers" are not listed in 1909 but the "Miriams" and "Young Ladies" are.¹²⁴ In 1910 the "Willing Workers" are again in the report, along with the "Miriams" and the "Young Ladies."¹²⁵

In 1911, the following "Societies" were recorded: ". . . Young Ladies Missionary — F. Missions 5.00 other Causes 35.00. Boys Home Missions 10.00. Miriams—other Causes 12.00."¹²⁶

The "Boys" Society had disappeared by the end of the next year and nothing more was done for them until October 20, 1916, when a committee was appointed to organize a ". . . Covenanter Band . . ." in the Church.¹²⁷ This organization was popular and flourished until World War I took most of its membership into the service and so it gradually withered away.¹²⁸

The Session gave its approval to a plan to organize anew a "Christian Endeavor society for the young people," on May 30, 1920.¹²⁹ On April 7, 1921, the report to Presbytery lists three "Societies" for the young people, the "Young Ladies Missionary, Christian Endeavor and Junior" Christian Endeavor.¹³⁰ In 1923, the year after the Woman's Auxiliary had been organized at Sugar Creek, the Young Ladies Missionary Society is not reported by the Session. It had been absorbed into the Auxiliary.¹³¹ This left only the Christian Endeavor and Junior Christian Endeavor as the organizations for the young people.¹³²

Mr. C. W. Wilson, president of the Christian Endeavor, came before the Session on April 8, 1925, and requested permission to organize an "Intermediate C. E. . . ." This request was granted.¹³³ This same day the enrollment of the Senior Christian Endeavor was

122 *Ibid.*, pp. 253-255

123 *Ibid.*, p. 263

124 *Ibid.*, p. 267

125 *Ibid.*, p. 275

126 *Ibid.*, p. 281

127 *Ibid.*, 1911-1935, p. 50

128 This information furnished by R. K. Robinson, an original member of the Covenanter Band and now a Sugaw Creek Deacon.

129 Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, 1911-1935, p. 83

130 *Ibid.*, p. 92

131 *Ibid.*, p. 111

132 *Ibid.*

133 *Ibid.*, p. 135

given as 106 and the Junior was given as twenty-seven.¹³⁴ With the organization of this Intermediate Christian Endeavor Sugaw Creek had three "societies" for its young people again.

In 1924, the General Assembly adopted the name "Young Peoples League" for its youth organization¹³⁵ and in 1927 this is reflected in Sugaw Creek Session's minutes, for it records "Young People's Work."¹³⁶

The same terminology is used in 1928¹³⁷, but in 1929 under Young Peoples Work it reports a "Christian Endeavor" Society, with a membership of thirty-seven.¹³⁸ The report to Presbytery for the year ending March 31, 1930 does not give a name to the Young Peoples Societies", it simply lists them as "No. 1—" and "No. 2—".¹³⁹ In 1935 two groups are named, "... Members—Senior C. E. Society 35. —Intermediate 25. Total 60."¹⁴⁰

Under the leadership of Rev. L. P. Burney the young people's work was reorganized in 1932 in line with the General Assembly's plan. This gave the Church two Young People's Leagues, a Senior and an Intermediate, with the membership corresponding with the same age and departmental organization in the Sunday School.¹⁴¹

Though in more recent years the terminology has been changed again, Sugaw Creek has continued to have two young people's groups that meet each Sunday evening at the church for a planned worship and inspirational program.

This pattern has proved a blessing in the lives of the young people and has provided them with guidance and training in leadership that have enabled them, on reaching adulthood, to readily take their places in the life and work of the Church.

Too high a tribute cannot be paid to the consecrated men and women who have served through the years as advisors to the young people, and who, by their counsel and example, have contributed so much to the lives of those with whom they have played and worked and worshipped.

134 *Ibid.*, p. 136

135 Wallace A. Alston, "A History of Young People's Work in the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. (1861-1938)" Typed Thesis (U.T.S.) May, 1943

136 Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, p. 163

137 *Ibid.*, p. 180

138 *Ibid.*, p. 188

139 *Ibid.*, p. 214

140 *Ibid.*, p. 229

141 *Ibid.*, p. 245

5. MUSIC AND CHOIRS

Like the story of the Church itself, the history of Sugaw Creek's music and choirs is shrouded by the mists of all the years since 1754 and '55.

From the history of the Presbyterian Church in America it is known that in colonial times only Psalms were sung. Usually some man, appointed by the Session, would give the pitch which he would get from a tuning fork if he was fortunate enough to own one, and then, because song books were very uncommon, he would "line out" the Psalm. This means that he would read a line of the psalm from his book and the congregation would sing it, then he would read another line which the congregation would sing. This continued until the whole psalm had been sung.¹⁴²

The first version of the Psalms sung in the American churches was called "Rous's". During the years of the settlement of the Sugaw Creek community and the organization of the church, the Synod of New York, from which its first missionaries and pastor came, was constantly troubled by the introduction into its churches of Isaac Watts' version of the Psalms.¹⁴³

Because Alexander Craighead, Sugar Creek's first pastor, looked with such favor upon the Scottish traditions of his forefathers it is safe to assume that he had his church sing Rous's version of the Psalms which had been authorized by the Westminster Assembly in 1646.¹⁴⁴

Foote, in his *Sketches of North Carolina*, tells of a split that occurred in the Providence Church in Mecklenburg County in 1802 over the use of these two versions of the Psalms. Those who preferred Watts' version stayed on in Providence and those who liked Rous's formed the nearby Sardis congregation, which later became a member of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church.¹⁴⁵

The General Assembly in 1830 approved the "Psalms and Hymns" and stated that "its use in the worship of God be authorized in all the churches under their care."¹⁴⁶ This hymn book was divided into two parts. In the first were the versions of the psalms and in

142 Johnson, *op. cit.*, pp. 443-444

143 Engles, *op. cit.*, pp. 255, 267, 537

144 S. W. Carruthers, *The Everyday Work of the Westminster Assembly*, Philadelphia, 1943, pp. 115-119

145 Foote, *op. cit.*, p. 294

146 Minutes of General Assembly, *op. cit.*, 1830, p. 32

the latter part over 800 hymns. There is no record to be found in the minutes of the Sugar Creek Session as to when this hymnal was first introduced and used.

On Friday, October 14, 1859, the congregation met and elected four men to lead the singing during its worship. These men were: "Messrs. J. T. McGinnis, John W. Moore, jun., R. A. McNeely, Amzi Howie."¹⁴⁷

Music at Sugar Creek is not mentioned again in the records until 1880. When the Session met on July 25, 1880, it had before it a "Petition . . . signed by a large number of the members of the church, asking the consent of the Session to the use of an organ in the Church." After a great deal of discussion the elders decided to postpone action until the next regular meeting.¹⁴⁸

Only two members were present at the next meeting so "... no business was transacted."¹⁴⁹ The matter was not acted on until October 3, 1880, when the Session voted to permit the use of an organ in the church "... under certain conditions and restrictions hereafter to be adopted."¹⁵⁰ On June 4, 1881, the elders adopted the following paper in regard to the use of the organ and church music:

Resolved 1st that the music of this Church shall be under the controle and supervision of the Session of the Church. 2nd That no leader or performed shall be appointed or employed without concurance of the Session. 3rd That the music during the hours of public worship shall at all times be such as is consistant with the Solemnity and devotion becoming the worship of God.¹⁵¹

Though the use of an organ was permitted in 1880, it was ten years later that the minutes of the Session show the election of an organist. The minutes for November 27, 1890, reads "On motion Miss Mary Davis was elected organist and Mr. C. J. Orr & Mrs. F. S. Neal leaders of the choir."¹⁵² From this it is clear that sometime prior to this date the church had abandoned the use of a percenter and had begun to use a choir to lead the congregational singing.

On September 6, 1896, "Mrs. C. H. Caldwell was appointed organist with Ora Davis Assistant during the absence of Mary Davis our regular Organist."¹⁵³ According to the minutes of the congre-

¹⁴⁷ Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, 1858-1866

¹⁴⁸ Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, 1879-1911, p. 15

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 16

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 17

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 17, 21

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 82

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 155

gation it met on November 26, 1896, to consult about the need for a new organ. After some discussion it was moved and carried "... that we try to get a new organ, and that a committee be appointed to raise the money."¹⁵⁴ It is interesting to see that three women, "Mrs. C. Robinson, Mrs. J. M. Davis and Mrs. C. H. Caldwell..." were named as the committee.¹⁵⁵ The old organ was placed in the Session house and a larger one was purchased and put into use.¹⁵⁶

This organ was used until November, 1929, when it was removed to the Session house and the church began using a piano.¹⁵⁷ On the seventeenth of October, 1922, a committee from the Christian Endeavor Society came before the Session and asked "... to be allowed to place a piano in the Church for their use and the use of the Sunday School. This request was granted."¹⁵⁸ Then in 1929 the small organ was given to the mission Sunday School, meeting at the Robert Mason's on the Mallard Creek Road, and the larger one was moved to the Session house and the piano was used for the church's worship.¹⁵⁹

The minutes of the Session indicate that the choir was re-organized in 1915. The evidence for this statement is that in 1917 one of the deacons gave as his reason for not attending or supporting the church, when questioned by the elders, "...the organization of a choir two years ago,..."¹⁶⁰

A committee was named by the Session on May 9, 1920, to get "... a full supply of Hymn and Song Books" for the church. The members of this committee were: "W. H. Neal — Kate Neal — Mrs. C. W. Robinson, Mrs. Vinton Hunter, Ellis Garrison — Ralph Robinson..."¹⁶¹ This committee submitted its report to the elders and deacons on July 16, 1920:

....

Your committee makes the following recommendations — 1st That an adequate number of Church hymn books be provided, one third of which should be note books if such are not too expensive. 2nd That a new book be selected for use in the Sunday School, and we suggest "Life and Service Hymns", 3d. That all books

154 Book of Record Sugar Creek Cong., *op. cit.*, p. 47

155 *Ibid.*

156 Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, 1911-1935, p. 199

157 *Ibid.*

158 *Ibid.*, p. 104

159 *Ibid.*, p. 199

160 *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56 (see Chapter VIII, p. 119 for more details)

161 *Ibid.*, p. 81

be marked and the request be made that none be taken from the pews. 4th That a rack showing hymns and tune number be placed in view of the congregation. 5th That the old Sunday School books be disposed of to some one advantages. signed

Kate M. Neal chairman¹⁶²

The Session elected Miss Kate Neal "...Principal organist for the church with Mrs. Martin Davis as assistant..." on April 26, 1923.¹⁶³ On April 10, 1924, "...Mrs. M. C. Davis — assistant organist for the Church services..." resigned and Mrs. C. W. Robinson was elected to "...fill the vacancy."¹⁶⁴

When the Session met on June 3, 1924, Mrs. F. S. Neal offered her resignation as "...Leader of the Choir..." and, after accepting it, the "...Session adjourned to meet next Thursday night to take up the matter of abolishing the Choir..."¹⁶⁵ On Thursday night, June 3, the Session acted. "By a full vote in the affirmative the Choir was abolished indefinitely...", the clerk recorded.¹⁶⁶ At the quarterly joint meeting of the officers on April 8, 1925, "...W. R. Long, R. W. McConnell, and F. S. Neal were appointed a committee to bring in recommendations for the reorganization of the Choir..."¹⁶⁷

These men reported on May 3, 1925, and the Session adopted their recommendations and named "...W. R. Long leader of the Choir, with ... Mrs. F. S. Neal, Mrs. Vinton Hunter, Miss Ruth McConnell, Mr. Ralph Robinson and Mr. Reid Garrison as helpers..." The committee recommended that these six people "...be called a Committee on music..." to see to "...the music in the public worship of God..." It further recommended that the pastor be asked to furnish the leader of the choir with a list of the hymns to be used in the worship service. The report was closed with a statement calling to the attention of the Session the General Assembly's recent action interpreting the section in the Book of Church Order dealing with the Session's oversight of the singing in public worship.¹⁶⁸

Mrs. Vinton L. Hunter was elected church organist on April 2, 1926, and Mrs. Ralph K. Robinson was named as the assistant.¹⁶⁹

162 *Ibid.*, pp. 83-84

163 *Ibid.*, p. 114

164 *Ibid.*, p. 122

165 *Ibid.*, p. 127

166 *Ibid.*, p. 128

167 *Ibid.*, p. 136

168 *Ibid.*, pp. 141-142

169 *Ibid.*, p. 150

Mrs. Robinson, on May 4, 1926, exchanged places with Mrs. John Davis who had been the organist for the Sunday School. This was approved by the elders.¹⁷⁰

The Sunday School superintendent, Mr. C. W. Wilson, asked the Session for permission to organize a Sunday School choir on February 27, 1927, and his request was granted.¹⁷¹ On the fifteenth of April, Mr. W. R. Long was appointed to lead the new choir in the Sunday School.¹⁷²

During the winter of 1929, upon the recommendation of Mr. W. R. Long, representing the choir, Mrs. C. W. Robinson, Mrs. V. L. Hunter, and Mrs. F. S. Neal, the "Ladies Auxiliary" and Mr. Reid Garrison, the Sunday School class he was teaching, the Session authorized the purchasing of the "New Hymnal" for the use of the congregation.¹⁷³ This new hymnal was "The Presbyterian Hymnal", published in 1927 by the Presbyterian Committee of Publication in Richmond, Virginia.

Mr. W. Reid Garrison was elected "...leader of the choir..." on April 6, 1931. At this same meeting the Session discussed the matter of an organist and the music in the church but decided to postpone any action until some later date.¹⁷⁴ Then, four pages after, under the date of April 5 [sic], 1931, Mrs. Harvey B. Taylor was "...elected Organist for the Church music." Immediately after this election "...A motion was made and seconded that we abolish the Church Choir." After discussing the motion the Session voted to lay the motion "...on the table till our next meeting."¹⁷⁵ On May 10 the Session met, and following parliamentary procedure, resolved "... that the Choir was ordered disbanded to take effect next Sunday week."¹⁷⁶ As it disbanded the choir the Session voted to retain Mr. Garrison as choir leader and Mrs. Taylor as organist.¹⁷⁷

Mrs. Hawley Hunter was elected first and Mrs. John Davis second assistant organist for the church on November 2, 1931.¹⁷⁸

On February 14, 1932, W. R. Long, Joe H. Robinson and W. R. Garrison "...were appointed a committee to secure a musical director from outside our bounds to begin April 1st..." by the Ses-

170 *Ibid.*, pp. 150, 153

171 *Ibid.*, p. 161

172 *Ibid.*

173 *Ibid.*, p. 185

174 *Ibid.*, p. 226

175 *Ibid.*, p. 230

176 *Ibid.*

177 *Ibid.*

178 *Ibid.*, p. 236

sion.¹⁷⁹ This committee reported to the Session on April tenth that they had made no progress, so the elders voted to continue it. At the same time the Session elected "... Mrs. Harvey Taylor... organist, with Mrs. Ralph Robinson first assistant and Miss Alice McConnell 2nd Assistant,..."¹⁸⁰

Mrs. Ralph K. Robinson was elected church organist on March 5, 1933, and Mrs. Hawley Hunter was named her assistant.¹⁸¹

Mr. W. R. Garrison was selected as "... Musical Director..." for the church services on March 24, 1934.¹⁸² From the records it appears that all went well with the music and the choir for the next few years, but on January 2, 1938, a recommendation was made to the elders and deacons by the Church Council that a music committee be appointed "... to select persons for the Young People and Adult choirs..."¹⁸³ This was adopted, but evidently caused quite a stir, because at the next meeting of the Session "It was moved and carried that any matters not pertaining to routine or emergency presented to session be deferred until the next meeting for action."¹⁸⁴

Mr. C. W. Wilson was elected, on April 10, 1938, chairman of a committee that was charged by the Session "... to have some instruction in music given to the young people of the church and to provide special music for the enrichment of the worship service..."¹⁸⁵

This committee employed Mr. Charles Isley, who had just completed his freshman year at Davidson College, upon the recommendations of professors J. C. Pfohl and Thane McDonald of the Davidson music department. Mr. Isley, a native of Cooleemee, North Carolina, began his work with the young people's choir in the summer of 1938. His salary, for the first year, was paid by twenty members of the congregation. After the spring of 1939, his salary was included in the church budget. Mr. Isley resigned at Christmas, 1940,¹⁸⁶ and it was with deep regret that the young people of the choir and the members of the congregation said "good-by" to him.

Under the direction of Mr. Isley, and with the assistance of Mr. Burney and Mrs. Ralph K. Robinson, a splendid young people's

179 *Ibid.*, p. 241

180 *Ibid.*

181 *Ibid.*, p. 256

182 *Ibid.*, p. 279

183 Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, 1935-1947, p. 60

184 *Ibid.*, p. 61

185 *Ibid.*, p. 68

186 This information concerning Mr. Charles Isley was furnished by Mr. and Mrs. C. W. Wilson in a letter dated Aug. 6, 1952.

choir was organized. Mr. Isley also developed a Junior Choir with the help of Mrs. Hawley Hunter.¹⁸⁷

Mr. Francis Magill, another Davidson student, came to direct the Sugaw Creek choirs after Mr. Isley left.¹⁸⁸ Mr. Magill remained at Sugaw Creek through the spring of 1941, when he resigned.¹⁸⁹

Mrs. Ralph Robinson directed the choir until September, 1941 when the Church employed Mr. Melvin Harris, who was an employee of the Brodt Music Company, Charlotte, N. C.¹⁹⁰ Before Mr. Harris could really become acquainted with the membership of the young people's choir the draft began to call most of the young men into the armed services. Mr. Harris was called into the service in 1942, and once more Mrs. Robinson assumed the double duties of pianist and choir director at the request of the Music Committee.¹⁹¹

On the eight of October, 1946, Mrs. Robinson resigned as church pianist, and various members of the congregation played for the services until April, 1947, when Miss Mary Yandell came to Sugaw Creek as Director of Religious Education and Music.¹⁹² During Miss Yandell's period of service the electric organ and chimes were installed and dedicated in memory of the Sugaw Creek men who gave their lives during World War II. (See Chapter IX, p. 137). In August, 1950, Mrs. Wilson, nee Mary Yandell, resigned and was followed by Miss Gladys Turner, who served until June, 1951.¹⁹³

While much has been written about the choirs and leaders in the music in the church, one of Sugaw Creek's great assets has been neglected. This is the fine congregational singing that is one of the best features of her worship services. In the congregation there have always been men and women with a natural gift for music and it is a thrilling experience to hear this people, so devoted to Christ and His Church, praising God with "... psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all [their] heart,"¹⁹⁴

187 Mss. "The Birthplace of Democracy" by Edith Craig Broome.

188 Information furnished by Mrs. R. K. Robinson

189 *Ibid.*

190 *Ibid.*

191 N. R. McGeachy's personal file of Church bulletins, etc.

192 Information secured from Rev. A. Leslie Thompson (Miss Yandell married, while employed at Sugaw Creek, Mr. David Wilson)

193 *Ibid.*

194 *The Holy Bible*, R. S. V., Thomas Nelson & Son, N. Y., 1951, Eph. 5:19

CHAPTER XI

SUGAR CREEK'S NAME

From the very first mention of Sugar Creek in the records of the Presbyterian Church in America and the colonial records of North Carolina the name both of the Church and the Creek, from which the Church seems to have taken its name, is spelled "Suger".

The first reference to the Church is in the minutes of the Synod of New York, meeting in Philadelphia, October 1, 1755, and here we find the name given as "*Sugar* Creek".

In the records of colonial North Carolina during the time of the controversy over the boundary line between the provinces of North and South Carolina we find Sugar Creek mentioned for the first time and here, as in the proceedings of the Presbyterian Church, the spelling is "Sugar".

In the earliest deeds recorded in Mecklenburg County there is more variation in the spelling. The predominant version is still "Sugar", however, with "Shugar" and "Suger" running a bad second and third.

The earliest Sessional records of the Church have but two ways of spelling the name, "Sugar" and "Suger". This last form of spelling is not used very often in the minutes of the Session, and one Clerk used to write the name as one word, viz. "Sugercreek".

Gov. Dobbs, writing of his efforts to resettle the Catawba Indians on the new lands south of the Catawba River, states that they had a village on the east bank of the river called "Sugar Creek Town."¹

Foote, in his Sketches of North Carolina, writes:

"The Indian name of the creek, which gave name to the congregation, was pronounced Sugaw or Soogaw, and in the early records of the Church was written Sugaw; but for many years it has been written according to the common pronunciation, ending the word with the letter r, instead of w."²

The Sugar Creek Session referred a matter to Hanover Presbytery, meeting at Cub Creek on October 15, 1766, (this is the earliest reference to a Session yet discovered), and the Presbytery took the following action:

¹ Saunders, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 787

² Foote, *op. cit.*, p. 189

As to the matter referred to the Presbytery from the Session of Sugar Creek respecting [—————], it is determined, that she the said [—————] give public Satisfaction to the Church for her Bastard Child, before she be admitted to Church privileges.³

Here again we see the commonly used spelling is Sugar.

The earliest known maps of the area between the Yadkin and Catawba Rivers all spell the creek Sugar or Shugar, again the former spelling is the more common.⁴

Perhaps Dr. Foote was right in saying that the Indians pronounced the name of the creek, from which the congregation got its name, as *Sugaw* or *Soogaw*, but there is no existing evidence that in either the early records of the church or of the community that it was spelled "Sugaw" rather than the more common "Sugar".

John Lawson, who was a colonial Surveyor-General in North Carolina, wrote a journal of a trip he took through North and South Carolina in 1700. This journal was published in London in 1709 and he states

... This day we passed through a great many Towns and Settlements that belong to the Sugeree Indians, no barren land being found amongst them, but plenty of Free-Stone and good Timber.⁵

Dr. Jethro Romple, commenting on this statement by Lawson, writes "The name 'Sugaree' suggests the inquiry whether the ancient name of Sugar Creek, was not Sugaree, rather than "Sugar" as found in old records."⁶

D. L. Rights, in his standard work on "The American Indian in North Carolina" says that Sugar Creek "derives its name from the Sugaree Indians, Kindred of the Catawba."⁷

These quotations would seem to contradict Dr. Foote's statement about the name given by the Indians to the creek, though here again we see a variation in the spelling, Lawson using "Sugeree" and Rights

³ Minutes of Hanover Presbytery, 1755 to 1786, October 15, 1766

⁴ Maps of Mecklenburg Co.—Library Congress—espec. map drawn in 1768 for King George III. Plan of Mecklenburg County drawn in 1789 by Maj. Joseph Graham—see Graham, *Gen. Joseph Graham and his Revolutionary Papers*, Raleigh, N.C., 1904.

⁵ John Lawson, *History of North Carolina*, ed. printed in London, 1714, reprinted Richmond, Virginia, 1937, p. 40

⁶ Jethro Rumpel, *A History of Rowan County*, (1881) reprinted Raleigh, 1929, p. 28

⁷ D. L. Rights, *The American Indian in North Carolina*, Durham, N. C., 1947, p. 67

giving it as "Sugaree." Dr. Rumble was evidently influenced by Foote when he spoke of "the old records."

There is a printed copy of a sermon, that the Rev. James Hall, Jr., preached at Sugar Creek on Thursday, February 21, 1792, at the installation of Mr. Samuel Caldwell, as pastor of Sugar Creek and Hopewell Churches, in the Charlotte Public Library. This booklet has the name spelled "Suga - Creek." There is also a printed sermon of the Rev. Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, which he preached at the opening of the Synod of the Carolinas on October 2, 1793, and here the name is given as "Sugar's Creek."

The Rev. Eli Caruthers tells us, in his *Life of David Caldwell*, that there were no existing records for either Orange Presbytery or the Synod for the Revolutionary period. He states that the Presbytery of Orange met at "Sugar Creek" on April 2, 1776. He also tells us that Joseph Alexander was received as a licentiate from New Castle Presbytery; and was ordained and installed as pastor of "Sugar Creek" in March, 1768.⁸

Our conclusion surely must be that the preponderant evidence is on the side of spelling the name of the Church with a final "r" rather than the "w" that is now in use. Actually, in the records of the Presbyterian Church the "r" was used exclusively until it was officially changed at the request of the Rev. M. E. Peabody, pastor of the Church, at the Spring Meeting of Mecklenburg Presbytery, at Hamlet, on April 17, 1924.⁹ Mr. Peabody was evidently quoting from Foote's Sketches when he asked "that the original name of Sugaw and not Sugar, be restored, and that in the future records of this Presbytery the name so appear, . . ."¹⁰

On February 5, 1933 the Sugar Creek Session appointed a committee to study the spelling of the name of the church. This is the action as recorded in the minutes:

As to why the spelling of the name of our church has been changed, a committee consisting of Joe H. Robinson, W. R. Garrison, Mrs. Ralph Puckett and Miss Kate Neal was appointed how it had been spelled as far back as records go.¹¹

⁸ Caruthers, *op. cit.*, pp. 189 and 96 (the month is wrong—it was done in May.)

⁹ Minutes of Mecklenburg Presbytery—109th Stated meeting, Hamlet, N. C., April 16, 1924, p. 25

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 25

¹¹ Minutes of Session, 1911-1935, p. 255

The clerk recorded on April 2, 1933, "Committee on the spelling of the Church made report with no action taken on the report."¹²

Perhaps to the ear and eye "Sugaw" is more attractive, but the weight of the historical evidence now available bears on the side of the use of "Sugar" as the original and true spelling of the name of the Church.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 259

CHAPTER XII

MOTHER OF CHURCHES

Through the work of many of her early ministers Sugar Creek has had a part in the organization of a number of other churches. Also through the giving up of many of her members she has made a rich contribution to the life and work of many others. In more recent years the Session has made a definite effort to have the church engage in out-post work and this has helped in the organization of at least one other church.

According to tradition and such evidence as is available, the first church organized by a Sugar Creek minister was the Hopewell Presbyterian Church, one of the historic churches of Mecklenburg County.

The History of Hopewell Presbyterian Church, by Dr. C. W. Sommerville, states: "So far as tradition and incidental evidence go, the organization of the hearers of his preaching into a church was due to the Rev. Alexander Craighead, at Richard Barry's not later than 1762, perhaps much earlier."¹ The "his" in this quotation refers to the Rev. John Thomson, who was an earlier missionary in the section of North Carolina between the Yadkin and Catawba Rivers.

It is interesting to note that Mr. Thomson and Mr. Craighead had both served the Middle Octorara Church in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, that they both lived for a little while in Virginia, that they both migrated into the same section of North Carolina, and that Thomson is buried in Baker's Graveyard near Mt. Mourne and Craighead is buried in the oldest Sugar Creek cemetery.²

About the time he left Hopewell, Alexander Craighead's grandson, the Rev. Samuel Craighead Caldwell, began preaching in the town of Charlotte. Fore's history of the First Presbyterian Church, Charlotte, states that Caldwell continued to preach once a month until his death in 1826.³ This preaching resulted in the organization of the First Presbyterian Church "... on the fourth Sunday in Aug-

¹ Sommerville, *The History of the Hopewell Presbyterian Church*, Charlotte, N. C. 1939, p. 23

² See, Foote, *op. cit.*; Sommerville, *op. cit.*

³ Fore, *op. cit.*, Charlotte, p. 5

ust, 1832, with thirty-six members and Messrs. David Parks and Nathan Carrol as ruling elders.”⁴ The Rev. R. H. Morrison was the member of Concord Presbytery who presided at this organization according to Mrs. Fore.⁵

Samuel C. Caldwell also preached in the Paw Creek community from about 1808 until 1819.⁶ Paw Creek Church was organized by Concord Presbytery in 1809 and Mr. Caldwell was “...‘hired’ to preach for one year on the fourth Monday in each month.”⁷ In 1810 Mr. Caldwell began preaching at Paw Creek on Sunday, giving the church one Sunday a month.⁸

Dr. Sommerville states that S. C. Caldwell “...resigned in the spring of 1819 — and Paw Creek was grouped with Hopewell, ...”⁹

After he resigned from Paw Creek, Samuel C. Caldwell began preaching in the Mallard Creek community in addition to his work at Sugar Creek and in Charlotte. He served the people of Mallard Creek until 1826, when he died.¹⁰ A Church was organized at Mallard Creek in 1827.¹¹

It is obvious from this record that Samuel Craighead Caldwell can be thought of as the “father” of three churches, the First Church of Charlotte, Paw Creek, and Mallard Creek.

No further missionary work is evidenced by Sugar Creek’s ministers until in the summer of 1880. At this time the Rev. G. D. Parks, Sugar Creek’s pastor, helped the Hopewell minister in a meeting which was held in a grove about five miles from Charlotte, out on the Beattie’s Ford Road.¹² As a result of this meeting and the fine work that was done by the members and pastors of Hopewell Church, the Williams Memorial Presbyterian Church was organized by a commission of Mecklenburg Presbytery on April 25, 1885.¹³ This church was named for the Rev. John C. Williams, who was Hopewell’s pastor from 1868 until 1874.¹⁴

The Rev. C. W. Robinson came to Sugar Creek, after Mr. Parks

4 *Ibid.*, p. 6

5 *Ibid.*

6 Minutes of Mecklenburg Presbytery, 157th Stated Session, July 14, 1942, pp. 12-14; see also Foote, *op. cit.*, p. 195, and Sommerville, *op. cit.*, p. 64

7 Sommerville, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-65; Mins. of Mecklenburg Pres., *op. cit.*

8 *Ibid.*

9 *Ibid.*

10 *Ibid.*, p. 61

11 Minutes of General Assembly, *op. cit.*, 1952, p. 364

12 Minutes of Mecklenburg Presbytery, *op. cit.*, p. 20

13 *Ibid.*, p. 21

14 Sommerville, *op. cit.*, p. 42

resigned, in 1884. Some time prior to the fall of 1887, Mr. Robinson had begun preaching at the McComb School house,¹⁵ approximately eight miles east of Sugar Creek. One week after Mr. Robinson asked the Sugar Creek Session to call a congregational meeting in order that the church might concur in his request to Mecklenburg Presbytery that his pastoral relationship might be dissolved,¹⁶ the Presbytery organized the Robinson Presbyterian Church at the McComb School house.¹⁷

This church was named in honor of Mr. Robinson, who had taken an interest in the spiritual welfare of this community, who had preached for them for two or three years, and who, as one of his last acts as pastor of Sugar Creek Church, had served on the commission of Presbytery that organized it.¹⁸

In 1889, a group of people, living in the Newell community, organized a Sunday School in the home of Mr. W. B. Newell.¹⁹ Mr. Newell was a deacon in the Sugar Creek Church but he gave leadership to this movement and, when the Newell Presbyterian Church was organized on November 15, 1890,²⁰ he and three other members of his family were granted letters by the Session so that they might become charter members of the new church.²¹ On the same day five other members of Sugar Creek were given their letters for the same purpose.²² The Newell Church was organized with thirty-one charter members,²³ and nearly one-half of these had been members of Sugar Creek.²⁴

In the spring of 1893, Mr. F. S. Neal was elected clerk of Session by his fellow-elders.²⁵ With his election the minutes of the Session show the "narrative" which was submitted annually to the Presbytery. Three days after Mr. Neal's election the Session met again and approved the report to Presbytery.

In this report the Session stated "...We have no destitution, our territory being fully occupied..."²⁶ The next year the Session

15 Information given to author by Mrs. E. B. Watts of Statesville, N. C., a granddaughter of Mr. McComb.

16 Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, 1879-1911, p. 53 (meeting held Nov. 19, 1887.)

17 Minutes of Mecklenburg Presbytery, *op. cit.*, September, 1931—pp. 8-10. Robinson Church organized November 26, 1887.

18 *Ibid.*

19 Minutes of Mecklenburg Presbytery, *op. cit.*, October 19, 1948, pp. 36-37

20 *Ibid.*

21 Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, 1877-1911, p. 83

22 *Ibid.*

23 Minutes of Mecklenburg Presbytery, *op. cit.*

24 See Chapter VI, p. 87

25 Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, p. 114

26 *Ibid.*, p. 116

reported, "... We have no spiritually destitute in Our Vicinity ..."²⁷ These statements were the replies of the elders to the question asked by the Presbytery as to "The diligence and success of the Church in reaching the spiritually destitute in its vicinity."²⁸

Then on March 31, 1898, the Session reported to Presbytery in answer to this question: "... The Church has no special mission work, except that the Pastor has begun to preach twice per month at Louise Mills with the view of developing a mission."²⁹

The minister in 1898 was the Rev. T. J. Allison and as a result of this work, which he carried on until he left Sugar Creek in 1904, the North Charlotte Presbyterian Church was organized by Mecklenburg Presbytery in 1909.³⁰ In 1911, the Session reported to Presbytery that Sugar Creek was still "... helping support ..." the work "... at North Charlotte which gives promise of good results."³¹

Though Sugar Creek had nothing to do with the organization of the Second Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, yet she made a remarkable contribution to her sister church in the quality and quantity of the members that have been dismissed by Sugar Creek to the Second Church.

Between 1884 and 1904 Sugar Creek granted letters of transfer to fifty-one of its members in order that they might unite with the Second Church.³² This may not seem to be a large number at first glance, but when the size of Sugar Creek's membership during these years and the fact that these members were all dismissed to *one* church are recalled, it will be apparent that it is really not an insignificant figure.³³

If there is any one just criticism that can be made concerning the Session of Sugaw Creek, it is that it records the beginning of many interesting activities in its minutes and then never refers to them again.

As evidence of this judgment the following examples are cited. On April 14, 1924, "Dr. S. M. Henderson and Fred Gibbon were appointed to secure a suitable house for the establishment of a Missionary Sunday School, and set a date for the first meeting. L. J.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 132

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 149

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 173

³⁰ Minutes of the Gen. Assembly, *op. cit.*, 1952, p. 352

³¹ Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, p. 282

³² See the Church Register of Sugar Creek for these years.

³³ Sugar Creek's membership in 1884 was 225 (see page 165), in 1904 it was only 226 (See Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, 1879-1911, p. 234)

Rumple was authorized to order sufficient literature . . .”³⁴ This “Missionary Sunday School” is not mentioned again in the minutes of the Session.

On the twenty-fourth of November, 1929, the Session’s minutes record: “Mr. Long reported that the Mission Sunday School had started with services last Sunday at Mr. Robert Masons, with encouraging prospects. . . .”³⁵ This school is not referred to again until March 3, 1930, when the Session voted “. . . that \$50.00 of our Benevolent fund be set aside for our Congregational Mission School.”³⁶ In its annual report to Presbytery, made April 8, 1930, the Session reported thirty-nine pupils in its outpost.³⁷ On May 5, 1930, the elders decided “. . . that our Mission Sunday School is to be under the Management of the officers of our Main Sunday School.”³⁸

This mission is not mentioned further except that in the annual report made up on April 9, 1931, the enrollment is given as thirty.³⁹ What the fate of this outpost was is not recorded in the Sessional records. Perhaps it slowly dwindled away and finally was just abandoned by the mother church.

In April, 1936, in the report submitted to Presbytery, under the Religious Education, the Session listed once again “. . . Enrollment in outpost Sunday School 15.”⁴⁰ This new outpost is mentioned in the report for 1937, where the enrollment is given as nineteen.⁴¹ By 1938, however, it has disappeared from the record and is not referred to again.

This attempt at an outpost Sunday School was made by the Session as it tried to fulfill the spiritual needs of the people on the outskirts of the Sugaw Creek community. This Sunday School was started out on the Mineral Springs road and met in a building on the Dr. T. C. Neal farm.⁴² The young people of the church took a great interest in this outpost and some of them taught in the Sunday School as long as it continued to exist.

34 Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, 1911-1935, p. 125

35 *Ibid.*, p. 199

36 *Ibid.*, p. 209

37 *Ibid.*, p. 213

38 *Ibid.*, p. 215

39 *Ibid.*, p. 228

40 *Ibid.*, 1935-1947, p. 16

41 *Ibid.*, p. 38

42 Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, 1911-1935, p. 274

On July 9, 1944, Mr. McGeachy reported to the Session that he had made an investigation of a nearby neighborhood called "Shanty Town" and that he felt the needs of the people in that community were the responsibility of the Sugaw Creek Church. The Session voted to make a more thorough investigation and appointed Dr. C. W. Robinson and Mr. J. Reid Abernathy to serve with the pastor as a committee to make this study.⁴³ Dr. Q. N. Hunneycutt, who was employed by Mecklenburg Presbytery's Home Mission Committee, was secured to make a survey of this community.⁴⁴

In the summer of 1952, during Mr. Thompson's pastorate and with his leadership and that of several officers of the church, a Sunday School was begun in Shantytown neighborhood.⁴⁵

About one half mile west of Sugaw Creek Church and about one hundred yards south of Sugaw Creek road stands the New Hope Presbyterian Church. This Church belongs to the Presbytery of Catawba of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America. The date of the organization of this church is now unknown because the first records of the Atlantic Synod have been lost. The Rev. J. M. Alston, who is serving as stated supply, states that the Rev. W. L. Metz of Edisto Island, South Carolina, found a record of a meeting of the Atlantic Synod on October 7, 1869, at which meeting New Hope was represented. He feels that New Hope may have been organized as early as 1866.⁴⁶

From the minutes of the Session of Sugar Creek it would appear that New Hope was not organized until about August, 1867.⁴⁷ Derrick Moore, who in 1865, stated that he and his friends, who lived in the Parks and Query quarters of the Sugar Creek congregation, wished to continue their membership in Sugar Creek church, was a member of New Hope Church and was an ancestor of John Alexander, who is a member of New Hope at the present time.⁴⁸

Although the Session minutes never record the final action of the elders in regard to the colored members of the church, yet it can be safely assumed that some, at least, of Sugar Creek's members were

43 Minutes of Session, *op. cit.*, 1935-1947, p. 245

44 N. R. McGeachy's personal record of his Sugaw Creek pastorate.

45 Information supplied by Rev. A. Leslie Thompson

46 This information supplied by Rev. Justus M. Alston, Stated Supply of the New Hope Presbyterian Church. Mr. Alston lives 2012 Oaklawn Ave., Charlotte, N. C.

47 See Chapter V, page 62, for minute dated Aug. 25, 1867

48 See Chapter V, pages 61 and 62. Mrs. John Alexander gave the author the information about her husband's relationship to Derrick Moore.

in the first organization of New Hope, and so she can be listed as a daughter church of Sugaw Creek.

Mr. Alston says that prior to 1900 New Hope was a strong, thriving church. Since 1900 many of its members have moved away, most of the land around the church has been bought by white people, and so today New Hope is having a difficult time. Its membership in 1949 was one hundred and it has a preaching service twice a month.⁴⁹

Thus, in nearly two hundred years, eight churches have come into being through the efforts of Sugaw Creek and her pastors. This is not a large figure but when it is remembered that Sugaw Creek is the ancestor of most of Charlotte's churches, and how many other churches have been organized by those that Sugaw Creek is directly connected with, it will be seen that her influence and missionary activities have had far reaching results.

⁴⁹ Information furnished by Rev. J. M. Alston (see footnotes 46, p. 172)

APPENDIX A—MISSIONARIES, MINISTERS AND SUPPLIES

MISSIONARIES

1. John Thomson, 1751-1752 [?]
2. Charles Beatty, 1754
3. Daniel Thane, 1754
4. Hugh McAden, 1755

PASTORS AND SUPPLIES

1. Alexander Craighead, 1758-1766
2. Joseph Alexander, 1768-1772
3. Alexander MacWhorter, 1779-1780
4. Thomas Craighead, supply, 1780-1782
5. James McRee, supply, 1780-1787
6. Samuel Craighead Caldwell, supply, 1787-1792
7. Samuel C. Caldwell, 1792-1826
8. Robert Hall Morrison, 1827-1837
9. John McKnitt Madison Caldwell, 1837-1845
10. Robert Harvey Lafferty, 1845-1864
11. Henry Barrington Pratt, supply, 1864-1867
12. Geoge Dickinson Parks, M. D., 1867-1883
13. Charles Wilson H. Robinson, 1884-1887
14. James Leander Williamson, 1888-1896
15. John Weldon Stagg, supply, 1896
16. Jonas Barclay, supply, 1896
17. Thomas Johnston Allison, supply, 1896-1897
18. Thomas J. Allison, 1897-1904
19. Alexander Jeffrey McKelway, supply, 1904
20. John Addison McMurray, supply, 1904
21. Harvey Mason Pressly, supply (though he served as pastor, he was never installed), 1904-1908
22. W. W. Davidson, supply, 1908
23. Walter Richardson McCalla, 1908-1921
24. William Henry Frazer, supply, 1921-1922
25. Morris Elmore Peabody, 1922-1927
26. John Godall Garth, supply, 1927-1929
27. LeRoy Perry Burney, 1929-1940
28. Hunter Bryson Blakely, Jr., supply, 1940-1941
29. Neill Roderick McGeachy, 1941-1945
30. H. B. Blakely, Jr., supply, 1945
31. Andrew Leslie Thompson, 1945-

TOTALS

- 16 regularly installed pastors
- 14 occasional or stated supplies
- 4, if not more, missionaries

APPENDIX B—SUGAW CREEK'S ELDERS

NAME	ORDAINED AND/OR INSTALLED	REMOVED, RESIGNED OR DIED
Abraham Alexander	unknown—Elder according to tradition	d. April 23, 1786
Robert Craghead	unknown—serving 1790	unknown
Robert Robinson, Sr.	unknown—serving 1793	unknown
Hezekiah Alexander	unknown—serving 1788	d. July 16, 1801
William Alexander	unknown—serving 1793	d. October 26, 1805
James Robinson	unknown—serving 1793	unknown
Isaac Alexander	unknown—serving 1793	d. September 2, 1833
Thomas Alexander	unknown—serving 1793	unknown
Elijah Alexander	unknown—serving 1793	d. September 21, 1812
Robert McNeely	unknown—serving 1799	unknown
Amos Alexander	unknown—serving 1827	d. January 25, 1847
Alexander Robieson	June 22, 1828	d. 1839
Dan Alexander	unknown—serving 1827	Removed 1837 (means dismissed here)
John F. McNeely	unknown—serving 1827	d. July 10, 1865
Samuel Caldwell	June 22, 1828	d. June 16, 1854
John Howie	September 26, 1834	d. July 13, 1872
John Campbell	September 26, 1834	d. January 27, 1851
Elim Moor	April , 1839	d. January 30, 1840
D. T. Caldwell, M.D.	August 2, 1840	d. December 24, 1861
Ira Parks	August 2, 1840	d. December, 1871
C. G. Alexander	August 2, 1840	d. April 17, 1841
James A. Todd	April 24, 1846	d. November 24, 1862
Silas Orr	April 24, 1846	suspended Nov. 29, 1857
R. F. Barnette	June 26, 1853	d. May 30, 1860
Batte Irwin	June 26, 1853	d. July 28, 1854
R. A. McNeely	June 26, 1853	d. February 17, 1892
James Milton Caldwell	November 2, 1856	d. November 3, 1911
E. C. Wallis	November 2, 1856	d. January 19, 1873
Henderson Query	December 26, 1858 (Ins.)	d. August 6, 1877
Elam Robison	August 9, 1863	d. March 22, 1888
James M. Hutchinson	August 9, 1863	last record April 25, 1869
Nickles Gibbon	February 20, 1876	Resigned April 6, 1893
William J. (or M.) Robison	February 20, 1876	Resigned Dec. 1, 1888
J. M. Davis	February 20, 1876	d. March 20, 1918
H. A. Gray	February 20, 1876 (Ins.)	Dismissed Oct. 21, 1881
Sidney F. Query	August 26, 1888	d. June 19, 1894
Francis S. Neal	August 26, 1888	d. September 28, 1936
Charles W. Robinson	February 11, 1894	d. November 20, 1938
T. C. Neal, M. D.	October 7, 1894	d. February 16, 1901
C. L. Abernathy	December 6, 1903	d. October 23, 1929

NAME	ORDAINED AND/OR INSTALLED	REMOVED, RESIGNED OR DIED
David F. Hunter	December 6, 1903	Dismissed April 30, 1911
R. W. McConnell	December 6, 1903	
George L. Hoover	November 1, 1919 (Ins.)	d. February 24, 1920
S. M. Henderson, M.D.	November 1, 1919	Dismissed October 26, 1924
Charles H. Caldwell	November 1, 1919	d. April 23, 1931
W. R. Long	November 24, 1924 (Ins.)	d. October 13, 1937
J. O. Earnhardt	November 24, 1924 (Ins.)	d. June 3, 1947
W. Reid Garrison	October 20, 1929	d. October 18, 1950
Joe H. Robinson	October 20, 1929	d. July 9, 1945
F. F. Morrison	October 20, 1929	Dismissed March 12, 1939
Charles W. Wilson	August 28, 1932	
Fred L. Gibbon	August 28, 1932	
J. Preston Robinson	August 28, 1932	
James Calvin Alexander	August 28, 1932	d. April 6, 1944
J. Reid Abernathy	March 28, 1937	
Lloyd D. McConnell	March 28, 1937	
Wade Reece Todd	March 28, 1937	
Wade W. Welch	March 28, 1937	
W. S. Abernathy, Sr.	March 28, 1937 (Ins.)	d. October 14, 1942
Roy H. Todd	June 14, 1942	
C. W. Robinson, Jr., M.D.	June 14, 1942	
Vinton L. Hunter	June 14, 1942	
L. P. Hunter, Jr.	July 7, 1946	
S. M. Craig	July 7, 1946	
J. J. Earnhardt	July 7, 1946	
C. A. Davidson	July 7, 1946	
W. P. Wilson	July 7, 1946	
V. W. Hunter	February 18, 1951	
A. F. Penninger	February 18, 1951	
J. N. Porter, Sr.	February 18, 1951	
R. H. Thomas	February 18, 1951	

APPENDIX C—CLERKS OF SESSION — 1827-1950

NAME	YEARS OF SERVICE
1. John F. McNeely	Spring of 1827—Aug. 28, 1840; Nov., 1844— July 4, 1847
2. D. T. Caldwell	June, 1841—November, 1844
3. Rev. R. H. Lafferty	July 11, 1847—May 8, 1864
4. J. M. Hutchinson	Aug. 21, 1864—Oct. 7, 1865; April 15, 1866— April 25, 1869
5. Rev. H. B. Pratt	February 4, 1866—April 6, 1866
6. Rev. G. D. Parks	Aug. 13, 1869—March 24, 1872; Dec. 30, 1879— Aug. 7, 1880
7. R. A. McNeely	April 28, 1872—Dec. 26, 1878; Sept. 4, 1880— Sept. 16, 1888
8. H. A. Gray	April 5, 1879—November 16, 1879
9. Nicholas Gibbon	Sept. 16, 1888—April 6, 1893
10. F. S. Neal	April 6, 1893—Sept. 28, 1936
11. J. P. Robinson	November 1, 1936—

APPENDIX D—SUGAW CREEK'S COLLECTORS

1. Isaac S. Alexander	served prior to 1833	
2. Samuel Caldwell	served prior to 1833	
3. William E. McCree	served prior to 1833	
4. John F. McNeely	served before 1833 through 1841 was also an elder before 1827	
5. Alenson Alexander	appointed, 1-1-1833	— resigned, 1-1-1838
6. Ira Parks	appointed, 1-1-1833	— resigned, 1-1-1834
7. James A. McNeely	appointed, 1-1-1833	— resigned, 1-1-1838
8. John Kirk	appointed, 1-1-1833	— resigned, 1-1-1838
9. John Campbell	appointed, 1-1-1834	— elected elder 1834
10. Robert W. Park	appointed, 1-1-1838	
11. David Henderson	appointed, 1-1-1838	
12. Ulises Alexander	appointed, 1-1-1838	

SUGAW CREEK'S DEACONS

	Service Began	Service Ended
1. Samuel S. Harris	2-6-1841	
2. Isaac S. Alexander	2-6-1841	
3. James A. Todd	2-6-1841	elected elder—1846
4. Robert W. Parks	2-6-1841	died September 3, 1844
5. Batte Irwin	4-24-1846	elected elder—1853
6. George A. Houston	4-24-1846	
7. Cyrus Allen	4-24-1846	
8. Albert Wilson	4-23-1858	
9. Elam Robison	4-23-1858	elected elder—1863
10. William Kirk	4-23-1858	
11. Julius P. Alexander	4-23-1858	
12. William M. (or H.) Robison	4-23-1858	elected elder—1876
13. J. Harvey Robinson		died, 7-18-1890
14. Elam Barnet		1880
15. John Orr		released, 9-2-1888
16. Nicholas Gibbon	3-2-1868	elected elder—1876
17. James M. Davis	3-2-1868	elected elder—1876
18. J. H. Cheshire	3-2-1868	suspended, 9-5-1880
19. F. S. Neal	7-7-1877	elected elder—1888
20. John E. Moore	10-20-1877	
21. P. M. Rich	10-20-1877	removed—3-15-1885
22. J. M. Irwin	10-20-1877	
23. Sidney F. Query	11-19-1881	elected elder—1888
24. Robert W. Trotter	11-19-1881	removed—3-18-1888
25. Neil Frasier	11-19-1881	removed—11-30-1884
26. Charles H. Caldwell	11-19-1881	elected elder—1919
27. W. B. Newell	10-7-1888	removed—11-9-1890
28. R. W. Hunter	10-7-1888	removed—4-12-1891
29. J. G. McConnell	10-7-1888	suspended, 4-25-1891
30. Charles W. Robinson	12-28-1890	elected elder—1894

	Service Began	Service Ended
31. Rufus Morris	12-28-1890	died—9-27-1896
32. J. C. Cochrane	10-25-1891	resigned—10-11-1896
33. Joe H. Robinson	10-7-1894	elected elder—1929
34. Laurance J. Rumble	10-7-1894	removed—5-13-1928
35. J. K. Alexander	11-22-1896	removed—1-20-1929
36. N. S. Alexander	11-22-1896	removed—9-10-1898
37. M. A. Barnett	11-22-1896	died—7-18-1912
38. James C. Alexander	4-16-1911	elected elder—1932
39. Dallas C. Berryhill	4-16-1911	suspended, 4-8-1917
40. Vinton L. Hunter	11-1-1919	elected elder—1942
41. Francis S. Neal, Jr.	11-1-1919	
42. Fred L. Gibbon	11-1-1919	elected elder—1932
43. W. Reid Garrison	11-24-1924	elected elder—1929
44. Charles W. Wilson	11-24-1924	elected elder—1932
45. Roy H. Todd	11-24-1924	elected elder—1942
46. Z. V. Kiser	10-20-1929	
47. B. J. Hunter	10-20-1929	
48. Wade R. Todd	10-20-1929	elected elder—1937
49. W. S. Abernathy, Jr.	10-20-1929	
50. J. Preston Robinson	10-20-1929	elected elder—1932
51. J. L. Walthall	8-28-1932	removed—1-4-1942
52. S. M. Craig	8-28-1932	elected elder—1946
53. Wade W. Welch	8-28-1932	elected elder—1937
54. J. E. Penninger	8-28-1932	
55. C. W. Robinson, Jr., M. D.	8-28-1932	elected elder—1942
56. Lloyd M. Flow	3-28-1937	died—2-7-1940
57. Reece Hunter	3-28-1937	removed—1-10-1943
58. Clyde G. Hewitt	3-28-1937	
59. Floyd Penninger	3-28-1937	elected elder—1951
60. Ralph K. Robinson	3-28-1937	
61. F. G. McNeil	6-14-1942	removed—7-9-1944
62. J. E. Graham	6-14-1942	
63. L. P. Hunter, Jr.	6-14-1942	elected elder—1946
64. W. Parks Wilson	6-14-1942	elected elder—1946
65. Cameron O. Banker	6-14-1942	
66. C. L. Abernathy, Jr.	6-14-1942	
67. Robert G. Fox	7-7-1946	
68. Ralph H. Thomas	7-7-1946	elected elder—1951
69. W. O. Yoemans	7-7-1946	
70. S. W. Robinson	7-7-1946	
71. T. J. Hunter, Jr.	7-7-1946	
72. Hawley Hunter	7-7-1946	
73. Roy J. White	7-7-1946	
74. G. L. Bickett, Sr.	2-18-1951	
75. Guilford Kirkman	2-18-1951	
76. J. P. Mitzel	2-18-1951	
77. T. W. Hunter	2-18-1951	

APPENDIX E—SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

John F. McNeely	1848-1858
R. A. McNeely	1858-1883
F. S. Neal	1883-1895
C. H. Caldwell	1895-1926
C. W. Wilson	1926-1932
W. R. Garrison	1932-1935
Z. V. Kiser	1935-1937
W. W. Welch	1937-1945
J. R. Abernathy	1945-

APPENDIX F—CIVIL WAR SOLDIERS

1. E. L. S. Barnette—Co. B, 53rd N. C. Reg., Lane's Brigade
2. M. A. Barnett—served with seventeen year olds.
3. John Barnett—killed at Gettysburg, Pa.
4. William Barnett—killed at Gettysburg, Pa.
5. J. F. Campbell
6. Capt. J. M. Davis
7. Nicholas Gibbon—Commissary in 28th N. C. Reg.
8. J. H. Henderson
9. Robert H. Hunter
10. David S. Hutchison—Co. C, 1st N. C. Calvary, died August 15, 1864
11. T. Y. McConnell—Co. A, 11th N. C. Infantry
12. M. O. Montieth—killed in Battle of the Wilderness, May, 1863
13. J. G. A. Orr
14. N. F. Orr—died in Chaffin's Hospital, Va., July 6, 1864
15. Elam Robinson—served as guard at the Confederate Prison, Salisbury, N. C.

Numbers 1 and 2, and 5 through 15, are buried in Sugaw Creek's second and third cemeteries.

Some of the information given here was furnished by members of Sugaw Creek, some was taken from *Histories of the Several Regiments and Battalions from North Carolina in the Great War 1861-'65*, edited by Walter Clark. This history, in five volumes, was published by Nash Bros., Goldsboro, N. C., in 1901. The other source used was the cemeteries of Sugaw Creek, where the graves of the veterans have been marked by the United Daughters of the Confederacy.

APPENDIX G—

RECORD OF MEN WHO ENLISTED FOR WORLD WAR I
WHO WERE MEMBERS OF SUGAR CREEK
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

NAME	ENLISTED	REMARKS
Linnis L. Banker		36th Division
Edward Parks Davis	May 4, 1917	1st Lt. Infr.
Richard Parks Gibbon	Sept. 18, 1910	Navy, U.S.S. President and Grant, Mach. Mate First Class
William Reid Garrison	Dec. 3, 1917	1st Sergt. Construction Co. 1, Air Service
James McCaleb Garrison	May 10, 1917	Navy
Paul Harrison Garrison	Sept. 5, 1917	Navy
Gilbert Monroe Howland	Oct. 1, 1918	Army
Silas Newell Hunter	July 15, 1918	Navy, U.S.S. Montana, Seaman 2nd Class
Hawley Hunter	July 15, 1918	Navy, U.S.S. Montana, Seaman 2nd Class
Graham Hunter		
Lewis Lee Leach	May 2, 1917	Co. F, 105th Engineers Div., Sgt. 1st class
James Olin Martin	July 18, 1918	Army, Pvt., 23rd Div.
James Caldwell Neal	Dec. 10, 1917	Army, Pvt., 23rd Div.
William Henry Neal	Oct., 1918	Army
Henderson Overcash	Oct. 7, 1918	
Andrew Floyd Penninger	July, 1918	Navy Proving Grounds
Ralph Knox Robinson	July 15, 1918	Navy, U.S.S. Minn., Gunners Mate 3rd Class
Samuel Willis Robinson	Oct. 17, 1918	Army
Harry Jones Rumple	Oct. 17, 1918	Navy
William Boyce Rumple	July 10, 1918	Navy
Charlie M. Timmons	May 28, 1918	Army, 81st Div.
Joseph Howard Wilson	May 31, 1918	Navy
Earl Pharr Welch	Jan. 6, 1918	2nd Lieut.
Oscar Blain Welch	July 27, 1918	2nd Lieut.
Wade Wilson Welch	August 26, 1918	58th F. A., 1st Class Pvt.

APPENDIX H—

List of the names of those on Honor Roll of Sugaw Creek Church who were members during World War II.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Abernathy, Clement Lee, Jr. | Gray, Ranson Boyce |
| Abernathy, Harrison L. | Gray, Preston W. |
| Abernathy, Joe Reid, Jr. | Garrette, Jesse W., Jr. |
| Abernathy, Kenneth McCoy | |
| Adams, John Hope | Hefner, Miss Brenda |
| Adams, Thomas | Hefner, Jack B. |
| Adams, Robert M., Jr. | Hefner, Billy Gray |
| Adams, Thomas | Hewitt, Clyde E. |
| Alexander, Nathaniel S. | Hinson, Fred |
| | Hunter, Miss Leona |
| Banker, Cameron O., Jr. | Hunter, Parks Rodgers |
| Banker, Herman Long | Hunter, Thomas Jefferson, Jr. |
| Banker Linnus L., Jr. | Hunter, Horace Ross |
| Banker, Richard Jones | Hunter, Craig Wilson |
| Bickette, George L., Jr. | Hunter, Harvey Marion |
| Bickette, Joe Francis | Hunter, Claude Morrison |
| Black, Craig | Hunter, Thomas Wilson |
| Black, Loyd I. | |
| Barnette, Miss Billie W. | James, Royal Domestic, Jr. |
| Bridges, Roy A. | James, Harvey Walter |
| | |
| Canady, Genair | Kirkman, Guilford M. |
| Christenbury, L. Kenneth | Kiser, Harold K. |
| Christenbury, Neal M. | Kiser, Ralph W. |
| Cochran, James Curlee | Kiser, Clyde V. |
| Cook, Wilbur F. | Kiser, Mrs. Helen |
| Craig, Paul | |
| Craig, Samuel McE. | Lawing, Herman |
| | Leazer, James Shelly |
| Davis, John Sample, Jr. | Love, Robert Lee |
| Davis, William A. | |
| Daniels, Howard W. | McConnell, Everette L. |
| | McConnell, Ernest W. |
| Ervin, John Ray | McNeill, Allen H. |
| Ervin, Lewis Wilson | Martin, Lee Olin |
| Ervin, Jonas | |
| | Overcash, Rufus B. |
| Faires, W. Grier | Overcash, Earl |
| Faires, Harold | Overcash, John Allen |
| Farrell, Charles A | Orr, Otho A. |
| Flowe, Eugene | |
| Fow, Robert Gaston | Penninger, John Ellis |
| | Penninger, William Jackson |
| Graham, James E. | Penninger, Richard |

Penninger, Charles
Porter, Thomas Edgar
Query, Mrs. Dorothy

Richardson, Frank E., Jr.
Richardson, Charles J.
Riley, Harold K.
Robinson, S. Erickson
Robinson, John Knox
Robinson, Samuel Willis, Jr.

Sherrill, Martin Jay, Jr.
Spencer, Fred
Sullivan, Maurice C.
Sullivan, Edward L.

Todd, Clyde E.
Tucker, Martin L.

Walkup, Burton P.
Walkup, Joseph N.
Watts, V. J.
Welch, James
White, Roy, Jr.
Wilson, Charlie Woodrow
Wilson, George Hampton

Young, Edward Fant
Young, Robert Lyon
Young, William Stewart

List of the names of those on Honor Roll of Sugaw Creek Church
who *were not* members during World War II.

Black, Walter J.
Brannon, Marvin
Brannon, George W.
Brooks, Fisher Alexander

Cooper, George L.

Dinkins, Albert E.
Dinkins, Cecil A.

Hefner, Wilfred
Hefner, George W.
Hunter, Reese, Jr.

Mims, F. W.
Mathis, Walter B.
McConnell, Robert G.

Todd, Brooks B.
Todd, James A., Jr.

Wilson, Lieudean L.
Wooten, Melvin O.

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In the custody of the Clerk of the Congregation.
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