



A SHORT HISTORY
of
BANKS METHODIST CHURCH
by
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It is impossible to obtain a complete history of Banks Methodist Church because of insufficient historical data and the lack of detailed records. This history will suffice to give those interested a historical sketch of the past events in the founding and life of the institution which is presently Banks Methodist Church.

The writer is indebted to the records of Mr. Francis Hayes and Mr. A. A. Hicks of Oxford, Mrs. Robert J. Rose of Franklinton, Dr. J. A. Morris and Mrs. A. F. Breedlove of the Wilton community for much of the information of our Church prior to 1920. Especially is he indebted to Mr. J. H. Landrum of Oxford for the detailed account of the activities of Thomas Banks and the Banks family. A word of appreciation is expressed to Miss Norma Breedlove, Mrs. E. T. Husketh, Jr. and Mrs. W. A. Jenkins who played a major role in collecting and assembling this material.

It is generally accepted by historians and genealogists who are familiar with the early history of Granville County, that Thomas Banks came to Granville county from Carolina County, Virginia. The first land transaction on record in Granville County to which Thomas Banks was a party was made in August, 1762. The deed shows that Thomas Banks purchased from William Gray 253½ acres of land for the price of 66 pounds 16 shillings. The present church lot and structure are within the boundry of land obtained by Thomas Banks in this purchase. In all transfers of this property from this date on an exception is made, sometimes one acre and on occasions two acres "for Banks Chapel" church property.

There are numerous records concerning the activities of Thomas Banks in Granville County from 1762 until 1784-85. He bought and sold many tracts of land in addition to being a jurymen and operating a tavern. He was a justice of the peace in 1774-75. Records evidence the fact that he administered the Oath of Allegiance to many citizens. He continued to serve in this capacity after the state government was formed. Thomas Banks, along with his son, Ralph Banks, and other members of the Banks family, moved to Wilkes County, Georgia, in 1784-85.

Banks Chapel was originally an Episcopal Church. The records of Mr. A. A. Hicks tell of the establishing of Banks Chapel "an order having been passed by the General Assembly establishing the Church of England in North Carolina, was accepted in good faith in Granville County. In accordance with the law a Globe was purchased, consisting of 400 acres. A parrish house was constructed thereon and a minister furnished by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel lived there. He served St. John's Church at Williamsboro, St. George's Chapel at Harrisburg and Banks Chapel which was twelve miles southwest of Oxford and Harrisburg. Two miles east of Harrisburg was a crossroad. The southern end of it has been known for 160 years as the Banks Road, as it led from the Globe Road to Banks Chapel. No deed was ever found for said Chapel, but there are many deeds conveying this original William Gray-Thomas Banks tract of land, all deeds since 1762 excepting one or more acres for the Chapel."

The deed for the land for Banks Chapel was issued to trustees John Smith, Pleasant Floyd, Eaton J. White, James Wyche, W. R. White, Wesley Whitfield and William Mayes.

Mr. Fred A Olds in the *Orphans' Friend* about 1922 designates Banks Chapel as a Colonial Church of England and tells the story of the Anglican minister being ejected bodily from the sanctuary. Mr. A. A. Hicks also relates the story. "In the early days of the American Revolution the Rector using his Episcopal prayer book asked the Lord to preserve the King of England; whereupon the congregation arose, chased him from the church and tore his surplice from him as he passed through the door."

Precisely when Banks Chapel withdrew from the Established Church and cast its lot with the infant Methodist Societies seems to be a matter of conjecture. By 1780, according to the records of Mrs. Robert Rose, Banks was a member of the Tar River Circuit. This was one of the three circuits in North Carolina at the time and had a membership of 900. Such ministers as Frances Poytress, John Major, and James O'Kelly, who founded the O'Kellyite Christian Church were

among the first preachers. In 1797, William Ormond was the preacher on this circuit.

The first Methodist Bishop in America, Francis Asbury, visited in the Banks Chapel community on several occasions. In 1780 he was the guest of Col. Edmund Taylor at which time he "preached at the schoolhouse". Then in his memoirs of 1804 Bishop Asbury mentions a great revival on this circuit. The following year a conference was held at Col. Taylor's home. The successive ministries which followed the conference were those of Lewis Skidmore, Thomas Manor, William Burge, and Enoch Johnson, the later serving in 1820.

The next date of established fact is 1831 when George N. Gregory, grandfather of N. H. D. Wilson, served here. He was followed by James Reid who was buried at Louisburg. Prominent in early Methodism in America was Peter Doub who succeeded Mr. Reid. Until this period the Tar River Circuit was under the jurisdiction of the Virginia Conference. In 1837 the North Carolina Conference was formed which embraced this area. It was in the same year that William E. Pell, a distinguished publisher, became the minister for the Tar River Circuit. His successors were Phillip Anderson, Joseph Goodman, David Culbreth and Robert C. Maynard who later made his home in Franklinton.

The appointment of Sidney D. Bumpass, who originated the first church paper, was made in 1844. Rare copies of this church paper are to be found in the library of Duke University. The pastors for the next decade were John W. Lewis, Alfred Norman, Thomas C. Campbell, Archibald C. Allen, Numa C. Reid, William Carter, Lemon Shell and William M. Jordan; the last two resided at Louisburg.

In 1859 Joseph B. Martin, father of Mrs. J. A. Morris, became pastor of the Tar River Circuit. It was he who purchased the "Yellow House", as the parsonage in Franklinton was called. It is still the site of the present parsonage of the Franklinton Methodist Church.

The conference held in 1861 met at Louisburg and W. H. Barnes was sent to the Banks Chapel locality. A year later T. Page Richud

was appointed to this circuit. This was the same T. Page Richud who interested Mr. Carr of Durham in helping Charlie Soong, father of Mme. Chaing Kai Shek, acquire an education in the United States and become a Christian.

The next three years saw Joseph H. Wheeler as pastor in this territory. He was followed by J. P. Simpson. From 1868 until 1888 Paul J. Carraway, Henry H. Moore, R. S. Barrett, John T. Gibbs and Joseph J. Rean ministered to the needs of the Banks Chapel congregation. As the result of increased membership it was deemed necessary to divide the Tar River Circuit. Consequently, in 1889 the Franklinton Circuit was formed. The first minister under the new plan of organization was Edward Lee Pell, who edited *Pell's Notes* in Richmond. It was in 1890 that Annie L. Moss presented the Silver Service which is still in use. It consisted of a Flagon, two goblets, two plates and a Baptismal bowl.

Constant growth and expansion demanded the creation of a new conference. Banks Chapel remained in the North Carolina Conference which served the Eastern portion of the state. The new conference was designated as the Western Carolina Conference. Ministers of Banks Chapel during this era between 1890-94 were H. D. Wilson, W. S. Davis and George Bascombe Perry.

In 1901 John H. Shore, for whom some local people are named, came to this area. He served his people with great faith and concern for many speak lovingly today of Mr. Shore.

It was W. E. Coltrane who began the effort to secure lumber for a new church structure at Banks. He was followed by W. W. Rose who ministered in the Banks Chapel community during the years 1909-1912. He was the father of Robert J. Rose of Franklinton. Dr. J. A. Morris fondly recalled Mr. Rose asking the congregation from the pulpit one morning, "Will you meet me here next Wednesday?" The result of that meeting was the present church building. It is probably the fourth structure constructed somewhere near the original site of the first Banks Chapel. It was built partly from the

lumber of 12 trees cut from the church yard. The actual cost was \$3,500.00 which left a surplus of \$125.00 in the building fund after all bills were paid. Mrs. Sam Vane of Franklinton and Mrs. Ed Bobbitt gave the beautiful pillars which grace the front entrance. From records left by Lelia Suitt, we find that the new church was dedicated on July 29-30, 1911. The first wedding in the new church was that of Alma Lane to Mr. Rice in October of 1912.

The old church structure was sold to Dr. J. A. Morris and was re-assembled on his farm. It may be seen today at the same location which is now the I. L. Jenkins farm. The old building had two front entrances. It was customary in the nineteenth century for the men to sit on one side of the church and the women to sit on the other. As Mrs. J. A. Morris often said, "The women sat on the left, the men on the right, and the babies cried in the middle pews."

Mr. Rose wrote that Banks was the best-known country church of his knowledge. After his death in 1913, a student from Trinity College, W. A. Cade, supplied. For the next four years A. J. Parker and James E. Buffalo were pastors here.

In 1917 reorganization was again necessary. Banks was added to the Creedmoor charge and Timothy A. Sykes was appointed minister. Most of the present congregation will recall such later ministers as V. A. Royal, J. J. Boone, B. E. Stanfield, W. L. Loy, K. F. Duval, E. C. Durham, E. B. Craven, D. D. Traynham, Charles McCoy, D. M. Sharpe, and W. G. Farrar.

Outstanding during the ministry of B. E. Stanfield was the erection of our Sunday School annex in 1927. Two building plans were presented to a church conference meeting by the board of architects of the church. A plan was unanimously agreed upon, providing for a two story building with six classrooms joined to the sanctuary by a corridor. The following finance committee served for the duration of the building program: Mrs. J. A. Morris, secretary and treasurer, Miss Norma Breedlove, Miss Nannie Parrott, Mrs. F. E. Parrott, Mr. W. N. Bobbitt and Mr. A. T. Morris. Members of the church who

were carpenters labored diligently with the pastor in building the new structure. Much of the equipment was given by individuals or classes. Past superintendents of our Sunday School have been Charlie Morris, Ed Bobbitt, "A" Mitchell, Willie Lyon, Rufus Horner, Joe Usry, Frank E. Parrott, and W. B. Bragg, Jr. For over a century members of Matt Satterwhite's family have served as custodians for Banks Church.

Our present organ was a gift to Banks Church by a former choir director. Mrs. Alice Kirkland, known and loved by all in the Banks community, presented the organ to the church in 1952. It was given in loving memory of Loren P. Kirkland and W. Philo White, Jr.

Under the leadership of Morris J. Byers, who came in 1956, many changes took place at Banks. A well was dug which furnished water for a new church kitchen and rest rooms. Interest was begun to build a parsonage at Banks. Mr. Byers worked diligently to begin construction before his departure in June of 1960. Being led by Mr. Byers, in precept and example, the congregation rose to the challenge, facing it in joyful anticipation and with great faith. On May 8, 1960 Miss Linda Jenkins, secretary elected for the meeting, recorded the motion made by R. A. Dixon and seconded by Mrs. L. B. Flintom to accept the second contract bid of Roberts' Brothers Builders in the amount of \$13,700.00. Soon afterward construction began on the parsonage. Mr. Byers himself laid brick and spent long hours in physical labor on the new structure.

Two months later the Creedmoor Circuit divided. Creedmoor became a station church and the Banks-Grove Hill Methodist Charge was formed as a student appointment in the Durham District of the North Carolina Conference. Dr. C. D. Barclift served as District Superintendent during this period of building and expansion. It was he who appointed Stuart I. McRae, a student in the Divinity School of Duke University, as minister of the newly created charge. Mr. McRae lived in the home of Mrs. Tom Dixon until the parsonage was completed in September.

The new parsonage, which now represents an investment in excess

of \$15,000.00 proved to be a good investment for Banks Methodist Church. In meeting this new challenge the congregation received the intangible benefits which inevitably follow dedication and sacrifice. The church was unified in spirit and endeavor. The effect of having the minister live in the immediate community for the first time stimulated new interest and zeal. Evidence of this new interest manifested itself in many ways. Full scale youth and choir programs developed with sessions once and twice a week. New church furnishings were acquired such as hymn boards, new hymnals, commercial lawn mower, choir robes, wardrobe for choir robes, new music, acolyte robes and attire, a new church sign, a large cross for the sanctuary, timing system for the Sunday School, and a new cabinet for the communion set. Such improvements are indicative of the new interest and enthusiasm which prevails at Banks. The Woman's Society of Christian Service worked at many special projects to secure funds for parsonage furnishings.

In July of 1962 Banks rose to accept another challenge. It ceased to be a student appointment and the Banks-Grove Hill Methodist charge moved to full-time status. Stuart McRae remained as minister having graduated from Duke University in June of 1962.

Banks Methodist Church, though rich in Christian history and steeped in Methodist Tradition, is not preoccupied with its past. The eye of the congregation is fixed on the future where there are new depths of God's love to be experienced and new avenues of service to mankind to be traveled. Those who worship here speak as with one voice, which says, "We plan for a glorious future, relying on the Grace and Guidance of Almighty God, for we are the sheep of His pasture and He is our Shepherd."

ADDENDUM TO BANKS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH HISTORY

February 17th 1984

It may be of interest to note that a member of Banks Church in 1984, William Ormond Husketh, bears the same name of the William Ormond who was preacher on the Tar River Circuit in 1797.

The value of the parsonage, referred to in 1962 church history, of \$15,000.00, was the monetary value at the time of dedication, November 3, 1962.

Pastors serving since 1960 have been the following: Stuart McRae, J. W. Lineberger, Jr., Herman N. Ward Jr., Morris L. Barber, Phillip W. Keel, Quentin L. Scholtz III, Helen G. Crotwell and John W. Wenberg.

Bishops visiting our church since 1962 are Robert M. Blackburn and Kenneth Woodson.

On September 28, 1980 Banks Church celebrated the 200th anniversary of Sunday School. Special recognition was given to Irvin Lee Jenkins who had served more than forty years as Sunday School treasurer and Norma Shore Breedlove, who has served as a teacher in the Children's Division for more than sixty years. Both are serving in these capacities in 1984.

Sunday school superintendents since 1962 have been Edward Parrott Jenkins, James Madison Pitts, Robert David Hunt Sr., Mrs. Alma Ormond Husketh, Robert David Hunt Sr., David Lott Howell and William Motley Gardner.

Daisy Martin Breedlove, Robinette Meador Husketh and Tamara Kay Wheeler serve as organist, both for the adult devotional period and church services. Mrs. E. Parrott Jenkins is pianist for the Children's Division.

In 1970 stained glass windows were placed in the sanctuary as memorials. Other memorials and gifts include refinishing of the pews, a piano for Elementary I-III classroom in 1977, choir robes with stoles, paraments, air conditioning units for the annex and some furniture and books for the Thomas Banks Library.

On April 20, 1974 members of the Banks Family Association met at Banks for the dedication of a Marker which they had placed at the front entrance of the church, to honor the memory of Thomas Banks.

Substantial contributions from the Banks Family Association members were instrumental in the organization of a church library for us, under the direction and supervision of Mrs. Alma Ormond Husketh, retired public school librarian. The library located in the front entrance of the annex will be known as the Thomas Banks Library dedicated October 31, 1982.

Activities of the United Methodist Youth Fellowship, United Methodist Men and United Methodist Women continue to bless many.

Enthusiasm and dedication mark the members of Banks.

This addendum to Banks United Methodist Church history has been secured from Church and Sunday School records, by the church historians (Norma Breedlove and Alma Husketh) February 17, 1984.