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HISTORY OF CORE CREEK CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

The present day Core Creek Church is even more appreciated when viewed along with Core Creek Community.

Core Creek was a small stream until it was connected to Adams Creek and the Neuse River through the digging of the canal that formed the inland waterway connecting boat passage from New York to Florida. This canal was finished in 1911 and was officially opened with an elaborate celebration in that year.

The earliest knowledge of Core Creek Community is that a man from Newport, Rhode Island, named Henry Stanton, came here and settled on the east side of Core Creek. The exact year he came is not known, but in 1721 he was married to a native Carteret County girl, so he must have been here for sometime before that.

Later a friend of his, who was also from Newport, Rhode Island, migrated here and settled on the opposite side of Core Creek. His name was John Dickinson, and was known as Capt. Dickinson. So he was most probably a sea captain; and he was also a merchant.

The first recorded date of him in Carteret County was when he purchased some land near Beaufort in 1740. He was still living in Rhode Island in 1727-1728, so he migrated here between then and 1740.

But with these two families, the Stantons and the Dickinsons, thus began the Core Creek Community. It is interesting to note that Col. Farleigh Stanton Dickinson, who built this present Core Creek Church bears the name of both of the two earliest settlers. The first Stanton-Dickinson marriage occurred on May 14, 1850.

In approximately the year 1865 there were eleven families here, and most of them were farmers. One ran a cotton gin as well as farming and one operated a sail driven corn mill. Cattle ran free until the stock law came into effect in 1921. The men helped provide food for their families by hunting which was done with muzzle-loading guns. Each family had his own orchard and also kept bees. Oxen and mules were the work animals and also pulled the carts for transportation. The forests were filled with the finest of timber, but this was mostly all cut by the Yankees during the Civil War.

Houses and their kitchens were built separately as almost all old communities were. Square dancing and candy pullings were the chief entertainment.

A one room school was conveniently located for the education of the children. Its water came from an open well and one tin cup was provided for all to drink from. The school was open from one to three months during the year, but a great deal was taught in a short time.

Strangers in the community were few and far between. Occasionally a peddler came through carrying his pack of wares on his back. Picture enlargers and horse traders just about completed the list of strangers.

A small frame Missionary Baptist church stood in the approximate vicinity where the present Core Creek Church is located. One preacher conducted services in this church from 1870-1888. After that preaching was less often, usually held by some one just passing through or a neighboring preacher. Sunday School was held regularly however, and the special programs of this little church are still sweet memories for the oldest citizens now (who were the children then). This church was used until the present church was built in 1939 by Col. Farleigh Dickinson. Col. Dickinson was a great, great, great grandson of the first Dickinson settler, John Dickinson.

J. H. Dickinson, who was a life-long resident of Core Creek Community, loved the old church and always did everything he could to preserve it. But one day while burning dry growth ~~from~~ around it to protect it from forest fires, the wind carried a spark that resulted in the church being burned.

In the years 1938 and 1939 this beautiful church and community house were erected and suitable grounds laid out, including a cemetery.

"Col." Dickinson was born and spent his childhood in this locality but later settled in Rutherford, New Jersey where he was partner in the manufacture of surgical instruments, the company being known as "Becton-Dickinson".

It was while late in life, when on a visit to his old neighborhood that he decided to carry through his previous plans and do something worthwhile for his relatives and friends for all time to come. His decision being to build this church.

With much effort this site on the inland waterway at the foot of the bridge was selected. The materials were finally acquired and in due time it was completed.

The first service was held on May 19, 1939 by Rev. W. Y. Stewart who faithfully served this church during the ten following years.

One of the outstanding services is the Easter Sunrise Service which has been held every year (except one) since the church was built. It has been attended by many from various parts of the world. For many years this was the only Sunrise service in our county.

The church was lighted with Aladdin kerosene lamps in the beginning but when the R.E.A. brought electricity to the community in 1940 a switch over to electric lights was made.

The first plumbing was done in Core Creek in 1945 and modern rest rooms were added to the church property in 1952.

Up until the year 1948 all expenses, including the upkeep of the property were paid for by Col. Dickinson. At his death in 1948, his family gave the property to the N. C. Conference of the Methodist Church. Trustees were named and membership initiated. It began functioning as a Methodist Church with only twelve members, and due to the small community, membership is still less than 100.

Core Creek Church has been one on a circuit of churches almost from the beginning as a Methodist Church. The circuit at the present time (1976) is called the Core Creek Circuit with Merrimon and Tuttles Grove completing the circuit.

A modern type parsonage was constructed across the road from the church in 1950.

The church has been noted for its life-size Nativity scenes which the members erected on the church grounds for several years. This, too, was a first for the county.

Numerous weddings have been officiated in this church through the years of local people and also those with no community ties at all.

It is said of Col. Dickinson that when he left this community he promised to return someday and do something worthwhile for his community. Such must have been the prayer of his heart. He lived to see his youthful promise fulfilled, and worked to have his prayer answered. The people of Core Creek Church and community honor his memory and appreciate this blessing he has bestowed in erecting this beautiful church.

Since becoming a church in the North Carolina Conference in 1950 it has been served by the following pastors:

W. Y. Stewart (in its non-denominational years)
Maness Mitchell
Louie Lewis
Bob Paulk
Leonard Mayo
James E. Smith
William D. Moore
Clarence Mason
C. I. Umstead
Homer Yearick
Ron Cyr
Stephen Mann
Vance Lewis (Present Pastor, 1976-)

Also serving the church from time to time has been Duke ministerial students for short periods. And many laymen in this church district have participated in special worship services through the years.

More room has been added to the community house in recent years to help meet our growing needs--the community house serving for Sunday School rooms as well as for social activities.

At the present time much of the land along the canal which borders the church property is being developed by Sea Gate, Inc. It is with regret that we see the beautiful natural growth being destroyed, but we look ahead with faith that this can be part of God's plan, too. So we welcome the new families that this development is designed to bring to this area.

We cannot let Col. Dickinson's dream of building this church cease to continue. We must build as needs demand, to the glory of God, and in loving memory of our benefactor.