

Historic old Ebenezer church in Fork township was entirely, too small to contain the hundreds who flocked to it Sunday, for the Home Coming Celebration which had been scheduled under the direction of the pastor, Rev R.E. Brown. A sermon in the morning by Rev J.M. Wright, of Carthage, a picnic at noon, and in the afternoon a history of the church prepared and delivered by Dr. Will B. Crawford, with an eulogy to the deceased members of the church, by Chas L. Neal, made up the program of the day. Rev Mr. Wright is a former pastor of the church, and was heard gladly by his old flock yesterday. For more than an hour, he talked upon the text, "Bear ye one anothers burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ". From all points of the state the former members returned to worship at the old church, One family was present from Los Angeles, Cal. The history of the church as prepared by Dr. Crawford, adequately reflects the part which Ebenezer has played in the religious upbuilding of the county, and shows scholarly research on the part of Dr. Crawford. The history represents a valuable contribution to local history. It follows: (Editor).

In attempting to give the history of Ebenezer church, I am sadly aware of the fact, that this part of the program, would have been decidedly more interestingly and correctly given by my sa^{nt}ified Mother, had she lived to perform this duty, which had been assigned to her, and how she would have enjoyed the pleasure it would have given her! And while I feel inadequate to the task, compared to her superior qualifications, and abundant store of knowledge of the church history, which I do not possess, I am comforted and encouraged with the assurance that if there is such a thing as those whom we have loved and lost awhile, mingling with us in spirit, after they have lain down this frail body (as I believe is the case), she is most assuredly among this assembly and will give me her smile of approval, even if not visible to the human eye,

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in my feeble effort to take her place, in a work which for so many years had been uppermost in her heart--that of doing what she could for Ebenezer and this community. For there was nothing nearer her heart, and for which she labored more willingly, than the church and community in which she lived, and gave her very life's work, in any place where she was needed. It was here that she labored and loved, and was beloved, for many many years, and her faithful service here, and the influence she exerted over this community, will never die, but will last as long as XXX time endures. As a lasting evidence of the love she had for her church and community, and how very near her christian heart it had ever been, the last word she ever uttered, though in a semiconscious condition, was "EBENEZER". Some friends present, at the hospital, spoke of the very beautiful flowers, in her room, and she replied, "Yes, my children at Ebenezer". Some of the very best men and women in this community at this time, received all the education they ever had, from her, as she taught the Ebenezer school for many long years.

To go back to the very first days of Methodism, and Ebenezer, church, in this community, would take one over the long lapse of years which go to make a century, if not a little over, when William Rose--Billie, as he was lovingly called, the father of Rev Ransom Rose, both of sainted memory, father and grand father of the community's esteemed and respected citizen Mr. W. F. Rose, built the first Methodist church of this section, and it was located just behind the barn, at the home place of Mr. Frank Rose, which was then all in dense woods. The building was a log structure, as was the custom for all buildings, or at least most of them, in that day and time, and was approximately twenty, by twenty two feet. Billie Rose preached there as long as he lived, and his son Ransom Rose, feeling called to preach, when quite a young man, when his father died, his mantle fell on the shoulders of his worthy son Ransom, although the young man had already started in the ministry, before the death of his father Billie Rose.

And after his fathers death, he faithfully took up the work, and threw his heart and soul into it, and the result was that ere long, there was great need for a larger building. It was then that Rev Ransom Rose, Rufus Cox, Edmund Coor, and Morris Howell, built the first frame church that was erected on the present location. The four men behind the enterprise being four of the countys staunchest, most successful farmers, each one of whom, possessed with those traits of character which go to make the type of men, who labor for the betterment of mankind, and everything pertaining to the promotion of good, and advancement of the Masters vineyard. The old church which they built, stood just to the rear of the present location, and a decidedly better one, in view of the nearness of the present disturbing effect of the highway traffic, and no doubt the location was selected by them, in order to give the church a more retired appearance, than it would have had, if put directly on the public road, and in this, I now think they displayed good judgment, as they ^{did} in other ways. It was erected about the year 1840, and when the time came for the church to be named, Ransom Rose was given the privilege, as he was the minister in charge, and after giving the matter due thought and consideration, he named it Ebenezer. He could not have possibly have found a more appropriate name, or one which would stand as a lasting monument to the good work of all concerned, The word Ebenezer, means, "STONE OF HELP," A stone set up by Samuel, after a signal defeat of the Philistines, as a memorial of the "help" received on the occasion from Jehovah. So this church is a memorial of the help received by those who were responsible for its beginning, and though each one of them have since gone to their eternal reward, their good work here still goes on. Although it has been eighty seven years since the old church was built it is still doing good service, not as a church building, but as a barn the home of Mr. Chas Cogdell, at the cross roads below our home. Here it bears ~~many~~ mute evidence of the fine material from which it was

Constructed, and the superior judgment of the builders, because of the fact, that those of us who remember it, as it stood on the grounds as a church, it looks just as it did then, with the exception of the absence of windows and doors, if viewed from the rear, as there has been an addition put to the front, since it was moved to its present location.

Uncle Ransom, as he was known by every one, preached in the old church forty years, and was loved by every one who knew him, for he was never known to be unjust, or unkind, or not to heed the call of his church duties. And in fact, his devotion to his ministerial duties, was just a little nearer his heart than anything else, and weather was never too unfavorable and the night never too dark ~~and~~ gloomy for him to refuse to render service either in the pulpit, or at the marriage altar, or at the tomb.

He was not a highly educated man, as that class were few and far between in his day and time, but he was a pioneer in the advancement of all that pertained to the betterment of his community, and above all else, he had a fund of sound ^{hard} common sense, combined with industry, and frugality, which enabled him to not only make a success of his church work, but also his farming interests, placing him a head and shoulders above the average, from the fact that while he had a very large family, having raised seven girls, and five boys, all to be grown, and to live past middle life, and near the term allotted to mankind. Even with this large family, he made crops, and plenty for his family and to spare, and was noted for his glad welcome, and genuine hospitality in his home, to all who visited there. All of his children have passed over the river but one, Mr. W. F. Rose, he being the last one of this large, and exceedingly industrious family. Uncle Ransom was a good Bible student, and with successfully managing his large farm, he found time to labor in the Masters vineyard, and was never happier than when so doing, and seemed to never tire, in his devotions, especially if he was conducting a protracted meeting, and good congregations attended, as was usually the case.

Fortunately he was blessed with good health, and he was not over burdened with his work as might have been supposed, simply because he took care of himself, and there was no habit of his, that had the least damaging effect on his rugged health and active mind. In the discharge of his many duties there was not the drain on his powers of Endurance as would have been the case, had he not been so physically able to attend to all the work he seemed so easily to manage, with apparently little effort, no matter what he attempted. He preached the old time gospel sermons, hewing to the line, and let the chips fall where they might, He received no salary, nor did he even expect any, and in fact would have taken it as an affront, had he been offered pay for any service he rendered. For there was nothing which prompted him, but that he felt called to preach, and the abundance of the love for the work, which filled his honest heart even to overflowing. And then too, he did not need any salary, as he made plenty and to spare, from the vegetables and meats in his garden and smokehouse, and the corn and wheat, in his barn, and the fodder for stock, to the genuine woolen suit he wore, raised on his own sheep, ~~XXXXXX~~ ^{spun} and ^{woven} ~~XXXXXX~~, and made into coats, and vests and pants, all, right in his own home, by his faithful wife, and ~~XXXXXX~~ daughters, as none of the seven daughters ever married, and only three of his sons. All of them living and dying, right at the old home place, except one, who was killed in the civil war. He was a great revivalist, and the old church was never so much aroused, as it was in those days of the very long ago, when he would start a revival, and Rev John N. Andrews, and wife, all of them of sainted memory, would assist him, which they often did, And too, his services in other communities were in demand during the revival season, which in those old days, were held after the crops were finished. He was a Fundamentalist, in the fullest sense of the term, and was noted for his honesty of purpose, integrity of character, and strict adherence to the teaching of his Bible, as he understood it, regardless of everything else. This present church was built in 1879, and was dedicated the next year, by

Rev John T. Bagwell, pastor of the church at Coldboro, and who at that time was one of the most eloquent preachers in Conference, and one of its very best men. Uncle Ransom lived to preach one sermon in the then new church, as I have been informed, having died during the year 1880, at a ripe old age, leaving lifes richest legacy to his children, that of a faithful servant of the Most High, combined with admirable traits of character that made him both a good father and husband, and also, as good neighbor as any could wish to live near. Methodism then in this community was first established by the Rose family, and among the descendents still, and also from one of old church builders (Edmund Coor) there are those here, who are yet rendering valient service, in the advancement of Christs kingdom. After this new church-, as it was called, was built, there was a gracious revival held in which Rev J. T. Bagwell, and R. P. Troy did the preaching. The services extended through a number of weeks, and there was a great outpouring of people from this community, and others, and something near one hundred were converted. Nearly all the young people of this immediate section were converted, and the result was that the occasional square dance which was very popular in those days, were entirely broken up here, and from what I can learn, there has never been one in the community since. The question of placing an organ in the church was considered, as only a very few rural churches had organs at that time, some of them not even had song books. The custom being that the preacher would "give out" the hymn two lines at a time, and the congregation then singing them. I remember very distinctly when that was the custom of the old church, during Uncle Ransoms ministry, and in most of the country churches, this custom prevailed. There was some little objection raised to an organ being put in the new church, by a very few, but it was finally purchased, and my oldest sister, Lizzie, was made organist, and I was a member of the first choir, and also took part as organist, when my sister was not present. I am the only living member of Ebenezers first choir, as all of the once glad number, have passed

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over to join the angelic choir, that sang over the plains of Judea on the night of the nativity.

I remember very distinctly how very much amused my sister was, as she was full of humor, when one Sunday after services, soon after the organ had been installed, and the congregation had grown larger, on account of the organ:

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This particular Sunday, after leaving the church and congregating around the door, as is the custom of country people, in which there is delightful social intercourse, which is so much enjoyed, and I think commendable, in the rural congregations. Among the number was a dear old soul, who was bitterly opposed to the organ, though she was a saintly old sister, every one loved. Lizzie knew her well, and knew how she felt about the organ, and when she shook hands with her she asked, "How she liked the organ". And the good old lady replied, "I dont like music in the church, and I will tell you now, Lizzie, you will never get to heaven, blowing that thing". She had

reference of course, to the pedals, as all organs were peddled in those days. But in the course of time, her objections were overcome, and she changed her opinion somewhat in regard to the matter, and seemed to get as much pleasure out of the singing as any one. The following ^{ing} pastors have served Ebenezer church, many of whom, have finished their labors here, and have gone to their reward. This list dates back to 1884, which is all the record I could find, hence is not complete. W. G. Perry, Solomon Pool, P. L. Herman, A. H. Puckett, E. C. Glen, W. J. Twilly, W. J. Crowson, M. M. McFarland, H. M. Jackson, J. M. Benson, T. E. Tripp, J. M. Carraway, G. W. Stancill, F. T. Fulcher, C. C. Durant, M. W. Dargan, J. M. Wright, C. A. Jones, E. C. Durham, J. G. Johnson, W. G. Perry, R. E. Brown
W. G. Farrar

Of this number, Revs Solomon Pool, W. G. Farrar, H. E. Tripp, J. M. Carraway, served the limited time, four years, and Rev W. G. Perry was pastor in 1884, and then for three years prior to this year. Several served two years, among them Rev J. M. Wright. So we see that Ebenezer church has been reflecting the light of that great love which gave the world its redeemer for a full century, and is still pointing the way to those in spiritual

darkness, into the marvellous light and liberty of the Son of God.
 The ONLY TRUE CHRIST! The beloved Son of God! given as a sacrifice, not only
 for your sins and mine, but for the whole world.
 The worlds Saviour! Its Priest and King! the long promised prophet, who ~~was~~
~~to~~ the jews had been taught by their prophets to expect--being both
 human and Divine. He is fitted for the Saviour of mankind. The wisdom and
 power of God unto salvation. To bring His people and the church into
 complete victory. Whose second coming, is nearer than many of us suppose,
 the Divine warnings of which are being unheeded by a great many, and will
 find us, as were the foolish virgins, who took no oil in their lamps, if
 we do not awake ^{to} the necessity of being ready for the bridegroom, when
 He cometh. The only true Christ! The beloved Son of God! who is not only a
 propitiation for your sins and mine, but who bids you and all mankind to
 the marriage feast, Whose outstretched hand, Divinely spreading throughout
 creation, beckoning to every living creature, having lifted the gates of
 empires from their hinges, and turned into new channels, the stream
 of centuries.

Will B. Crawford.

May 30th 1927.

Rec^d of Rev. Ransom Rose one dollar
on acc. R. C. Advocate.

Apr. 2. 1855.

Ch. F. Deems.

Feb 3 1858. Received of Rev Ransom Rose ~~two~~^{one} dollars which
pays for the Richmond Christian Advocate up to March 1854
J. Fillett

Philip A. Bourgeois
 Ransom Row C. 1, 4, 1, 90
 Kaper, Row
 Royal Row (up) 1, 90
 Hills Row
 Catherine, Row
 Stephen Row
 Mary, Smith
 Abby, Hastings
 Gold, Major
~~Robert, Jones~~
 Nancy, Bonds
 Richard, Bonds
 Willie, Row
 John, Row
 Henry, Row
 Chilly, Row
 Frank, Row
~~William, Row~~
 Nathan, Row

Recd of Ebenezer K. Cox four for his & Ransom Row
 part of what was behind in paying up for the building of
 the Methodist Church called Ebenezer in Jul —

June 27th 1848

B. W. Raiford