

Note to Readers: The "History of Grove Hill United Methodist Church 1840 - 1940" was written by Miss Marie Jenkins. Miss Jenkins prepared this document in 1940 for the church's 100th anniversary celebration. Miss Jenkins was the daughter of Aubrey and Lottie Strother Jenkins of the Grove Hill Community, Granville County, N.C. She was a school teacher in the North Carolina public school system and taught for many years in Durham County. Miss Jenkins was born on September 30, 1907 and died on February 3, 1998. She is buried in the church cemetery.

This document was word processed by Edith Strother Gill and footnotes were added by same.

History of the Grove Hill United Methodist Church 1840 - 1940 by Marie Jenkins

Let us picture (the Grove Hill) community one hundred years ago. At that time there (were) only a few roads and they were often impassable to anything with wheels. There were no radios, no automobiles, no 'phones, (and) few newspapers. There were slaves. At that time there was no church here (in the Grove Hill community), but there was one at Banks (in the Wilton community) and one called "Kingswood" between here (Grove Hill community) and Franklinton. Some say that "Kingswood" divided making way for Grove Hill, Wesley's Chapel and Ebenezer.

Be that as it may, it is certain that some people in this community (of Grove Hill) felt the need for a place of worship nearer by. On June 10, 1840 Ann Jenkins deeded the present site of three acres to the following trustees and their successors in office:

Lamuel¹ Mitchell,
William W. Young,
John White,
John P. Lawrence²,
Whm.³ R. White,
Kemp P. Hill and
John W. Jenkins

(...) "that they shall erect or cause to be erected or build or cause to be built thereon a house of worship to be called Grove Hill Church for the use of members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, where ministers and preachers of the said Methodist Church shall expand God's holy word."

Ann Jenkins, the donor of the site, was the mother of Jonathan Jenkins and grandmother of the late June and R. S. Jenkins of this (Grove Hill) community. Major Limuel Mitchell was grandfather of the late Alfonzo and Alonzo Mitchell. John White was father of old Dr. Ed White of this (Grove Hill) community. John Lawrence was the late Mrs. Fannie Lawrence Moss's father. Whm. White was grandfather of Mr. Philo White.

John W. Jenkins was father of Rev. John Jenkins, W.H.P. Jenkins and E. S. Jenkins. Anderson Walker lived at the old Moss place.⁴

¹ Spelled both as "Lamuel" and "Limuel" in Miss Jenkins' document.

² Lawrence is spelled "Lawrence" throughout Miss Jenkins' document and could be a typographical error.

³ "Whm." is as typed in Miss Jenkins' document.

⁴ There is no prior reference of "Anderson Walker" in this document.

The (Grove Hill) church became a member of the Tar River Circuit. The first circuit formed wholly in North Carolina was formed in 1776 and called "Carolina." Jessie Lee⁵ says that in 1778 it was divided into New Hope, Roanoke and Tar River Circuits. In 1804 Bishop Asbury reports "a great revival on that ancient and goodly circuit of the Tar." The North Carolina conference was not formed until 1837.

A small unpainted frame building was erected on this site.⁶ The people of the community came together and built it. At first benches without backs were used. Later comfortable benches planked to the floor were installed. One of our present members⁷ says that when dangling feet hit them, they resounded like drums. The interior of the building was finished with wide ceiling stripped.

In those days it was the wish of the people that the pastor have no home but visit members of his circuit for a week or so at the time. He was not supposed to serve but one year on the circuit. In January⁸ Joseph Goodman was appointed to serve this circuit⁹. His assistant was P. W. Archer. In December of the same year¹⁰, Daniel Culbert¹¹ was appointed.

In 1842 the North Carolina conference met at Louisburg. Robert C. Maynard was the next pastor. He was allowed to stay two years. He was followed by Sidney Bumpass who in 1851 edited the first conference paper.

In 1844 the slavery question was coming to the front and our church was divided, our part becoming the M. E. Church South.¹²

Then came John Lewis assisted by Rufus T. Heflin who lived near here in our own county (Granville). Alfred Norman followed Lewis in 1847. He was considered successful in the revivals of his day being instrumental in the conversion of the following ministers: N. H. D. Wilson, L. S. Burkhead and Norman F. Reid.

Then came Thomas Campbell who filled the best conferences of his time and who acted as chaplain during the Civil War. Archibald Allen served the next two years and in 1851 Norman F. Reid, who was located in Louisburg, and whose sons wrote of the early work of the Tar River Circuit. He (Reid) was allowed to stay two years and wished it might have been longer. He was followed by Lemon Shell and Whm. Jordan.

In 1859 the present parsonage lot¹³ at Franklinton was purchased and became the residence of the Tar River Circuit pastors. In December of the same year, Rev. J. B. Martin, father of Mrs. J. A. Morris, was appointed pastor and James Reid his assistant. This was but his (Rev. Martin's) sixth appointment but he served forty more before his death. It is said of him: "The life of a Methodist Circuit Rider in the fifties (1850's) was one of labor and hardship, but from the first Brother Martin manifested the courage and zeal which older members of his time know so well as characteristic of him. In the face of many difficulties he preserved¹⁴ not only circuit riding but circuit walking and hosts were added to the church through his

⁵ No prior reference made of Jessie Lee.

⁶ No date provided in Miss Jenkins' document, but it could be referring to 1840 when the 3 acres of land was donated by Ann Jenkins.

⁷ Referring to a member of Grove Hill Church in 1940

⁸ No year provided in Miss Jenkins' document, but could be referring to 1841 (following the 1840 donation of land).

⁹ Assumption that "this circuit" refers to the Tar River Circuit.

¹⁰ No year provided in Miss Jenkins' document, perhaps it was 1841 since the next reference is 1842.

¹¹ Spelled "Cultbert" in Miss Jenkins' document and thought to be a typographical error.

¹² This sentence has been word processed just as it appears in Miss Jenkins' document. Though it is written as "our church" was divided, it could be interpreted that the NC Conference or Tar River Circuit was divided since the sentence further indicates that "our part becoming the M.E. Church South" (assuming that to be the Methodist Episcopal Church South).

¹³ The term "present" would indicate as of 1940 when this history was written by Miss Jenkins.

¹⁴ Perhaps "preserved" is a typographical error for "persevered" meant to read "...he persevered, not only

ministry and many of his converts became pastors.”

In speaking of these early pastors, Rev. J. B. Floyd, local pastor of that day, says: “Alfred Norman, Hezekiah Leigh, John Lewis and James Reid were mighty men of God. They were Holy Ghost men and preached with great power.”

The later appointments were as follows:

1861	Rev. W. H. Barnes
1862-63	Thomas P. Ricaud (Ricaund)
1864-66	Joseph Wheeler, Sr.
1867	Rev. J. P. Simpson
1868-71	Paul J. Carraway
1872-74	Henry H. Gibbons
1875-78	Richard S. Webb
1879-82	Rev. Wh. H. Moore was pastor and S. D. Adams P. E. ¹⁵

We have an accurate record here of the church work for some twelve years from the Quarterly Conference records. At that time Tar River Circuit was composed of the following churches: Franklinton, Banks, Grove Hill, Ebenezer, Wesley’s, Trinity, Plank Chapel and Kittrell. Wesley’s left this charge for Youngsville in 1885.

In 1881 the first quarterly conference was held at Ebenezer. Grove Hill was represented by Paul Jenkins, steward. Rev. W. H. Moore reported “the weather has been so unfavorable since the last meeting that we have been able to hold services at only a few places. I heartily congratulate the circuit on the report of the last annual conference. All claims on the circuit were reported in full with a small amount over paid on conference fund and the largest contribution for foreign missions of any charge in the conference.”

The second conference of that year (1881) was held in April and all appointments were reported filled and five Sunday Schools in operation. “The seeds sown will yield their fruitage in due time,” said Mr. Moore.

At the fourth quarterly conference in 1883 licenses of the following local pastors were renewed: L. D. Pok¹⁶, L. T. D. Smith and J. B. Floyd. It was decided to raise \$250 for parsonage repairs.

In 1884 the first quarterly meeting was held on February 16. Rev. Robert Barrett was pastor. He says, “Franklinton, Plank and Trinity (are) holding Sunday School. Other churches (are) in winter quarters. There seems to be peace and harmony among the brethren and some have zeal for the church.” Willie E. Moss and J. P. Jenkins have been taken into the church. The local pastors of this time were J. B. Floyd and L. T. Turner while J. T. Finlayson was assistant pastor. The third conference of the same year (1884) reports Joseph A. Moss and John S. Moss taken into the church. “The revival of spirit prevails, the circuit congregations large, order goes.” E. S. Jenkins elected Sunday School Superintendent. Trustees reported Grove Hill Church in good condition.

Rev. J. T. Gibbs was the next pastor. He served one year. Rev. Joseph Renn served the charge four years.

We find the following in the quarterly conference records for 1886: Paul Jenkins resigns as steward. W. H. P. Jenkins and Alonzo Mitchell appointed stewards and E. S. Jenkins Sunday School Superintendent, and the following from a report on February 5, 1887: “Most of the Sunday Schools are in winter quarters at present. A state of things to be deplored in judgment of the pastor for the schools that are closed have comfortable churches supplied with stoves and conveniently near to about all who attend services in summer. Three schools are open and well attended, at Franklinton, Kittrell and Grove Hill. The latter (Grove Hill) furnishes an example worthy of imitation. There is no stove at Grove Hill. The country

circuit riding but circuit walking, and hosts were added ...”.

¹⁵ Word-processed as written in Miss Jenkins’ document.

¹⁶ Word-processed as written in Miss Jenkins’ document, but may have been the name “Polk”.

around (Grove Hill) is rough and the winter has been severe yet the (Grove Hill) school has not been closed. The earnest prayer of this pastor is that all others may do likewise.”

On October 15, 1887 the record says “Great Revival on the charge: 141 converted... 16 at Grove Hill. Stewards, W. H. P. Jenkins, Alonzo Mitchell and J. Y. Husketh and Sunday School Superintendent, E. S. Jenkins. In 1889 Grove Hill observed Children’s Day with an interesting program and a collection was taken.¹⁷

At the quarterly conference held at Franklinton (on) September 21, 1889 it was decided the Tar River Circuit should be divided as follows: Plank Chapel, Kittrell, Trinity and Ebenezer to be known as Tar River Circuit; and Franklinton, Grove Hill and Banks as the Franklinton Circuit.

In December, 1889 Rev. Edward Leigh Pell was appointed to the new circuit¹⁸.

It was decided to raise \$375 for parsonage improvements. Alonzo Mitchell was appointed to succeed E. S. Jenkins as Sunday School Superintendent at the latter’s death.

On September 26, 1890 it was decided to replace the church building which had served the (Grove Hill) community for fifty years for said they, “The church property of Grove Hill is properly serviced but does not meet the needs of the community.” The trustees, W. H. P. Jenkins, Alonzo and Alfonzo Mitchell, R. W. McGhee, J. Y. Husketh, were authorized to sell the church building--W. H. P. Jenkins bought the building for \$50. The chair which was in it is here today¹⁹. The building committee was composed of W. H. P. Jenkins, Alonzo and Alfonzo Mitchell.

In speaking of his first year here, Mr. Pell said, “There has been glorifying progress along all lines of church work. Many souls have been converted and in every part of the charge the Holy Spirit is manifested. It has been decided to build a handsome brick building at Franklinton and an attractive plank building at Grove Hill.”

The present church²⁰ began on September 26, 1890 and was dedicated the last Sunday in May 1891. It was erected at a cost of \$900.

In reporting on his second year here, Rev. Pell says, “On the whole it has been a year of great prosperity in our material interests with only moderate success in our spiritual interests.”

In 1891 Rev. N. H. D. Wilson came to this charge and served four years. He says that he visited the Grove Hill and Franklinton Sunday Schools on the fifth Sunday in January 1892 and found them doing nicely. In speaking of this pastor one lady says “I think he is one of the most Godly men I ever knew.”

He (Wilson) was followed by Colonel William Davis, a veteran who lost one arm in the Civil War. After that came Rev. George Perry who served four years.

In 1901 Rev. John H. Shore came to our charge. He served us four years, and it was he whom we chose to preach our centennial sermon.

Rev. N. E. Coltrane was appointed in 1905 and served four years. In the church book we find this report

¹⁷ This paragraph was word processed as written in Miss Jenkins’ document and no closing quotation was provided. It is the assumption that the Oct. 15, 1887 record ended following the naming of the Sunday School Superintendent, E. S. Jenkins.

¹⁸ Assumption that the “new circuit” refers to the Franklinton Circuit which consisted of Franklinton, Grove Hill and Banks.

¹⁹ The chair referenced is still at the church as of 2004.

²⁰ “...present church...” refers to Grove Hill Church as it existed in 1940.

made on June 10, 1906, J. A. Moss serving as secretary. The Sunday School reported 70 members and good attendance. The W.F.M.S. reported 21 members. In 1908 J. Y. Husketh, Sunday School Superintendent, moved away and Ed Strother was appointed to take his place. Rev. N. E. Coltraine says, "On the 13th of August I closed a very fine meeting at Grove Hill, large congregations, perfect attention-- church greatly revived. One of our members, Miss Beatrice Jenkins graduated from the Training School at Nashville, Tennessee last June (and) plans to go as a missionary to Korea next month. This is the beginning of the fine work done by the consecrated women of Franklinton Circuit."

Rev. W. W. Rose came to the charge in December, 1909 and remained until his death in 1913. He was truly a man of God, visiting and holding prayer services in all the homes in this section for he believed that all souls were precious in the sight of God whether church members or not. He made several calls and held prayer with sick people on the last day he was up and about. His family remained in Franklinton after his death. A young pastor, Rev. C. A. Cade, completed his appointment. In 1911 we²¹ purchased a new organ. Rev. A. J. Parker served the next year (1912) and was followed by Rev. J. H. Buffalo. He remained here three years.

In 1917 Rev. T. A. Sykes came to our charge and it was at the end of his second year here that Franklinton became a station and Grove Hill and Banks were put on the Youngsville Circuit for one year during which time Rev. H. M. Jackson was our pastor. In the fall of 1920, Grove Hill and Banks were put on the Creedmoor charge with Creedmoor and Bullock. Rev. V. A. Royal was our first pastor in the new charge. He was in failing health when here and is now passed on (as of 1940). Rev. J. J. Boone was appointed in 1924. He is the pastor at Smithfield now (as of 1940). Rev. E. B. Stanfield followed him in 1925 and served four years. A truly consecrated man who has since been called to his reward.

Our more recent pastors are as follows:

1929-1932	Rev. W. L. Loy
1933	Rev. F. K. Duval
1934-1936	Rev. E. D. Dodd
1937	Rev. Earnest Durham and in
1938	Rev. E. B. Craven, our present pastor (as of 1940).

You will remember those last pastors and the work done by them²².

Our present (1940) board of stewards and stewardesses are as follows: Mr. B. T. Strother, Miss Pauline Mitchell and Miss Fannie Jenkins. Miss Mary Strother is our Sunday School Superintendent. Our church has sixty-seven members, twenty eight of which reside outside our community but the church serves and is served by many of other denominations who reside here. Some of our members who live outside the community have remained loyal to the church.

All through the years our church has been greatly helped by other churches of the charge--first Franklinton, then Creedmoor, and Banks all the while.

One pastor, Rev. John Jenkins, the founder of the Methodist Orphanage (in Raleigh, N.C.), began his

²¹ Assumption that "we" refers to Grove Hill Church.

²² Reminder to Readers: This is written to the audience attending the 100th anniversary celebration of Grove Hill Church in 1940.

religious training at Grove Hill Church.

One lady, Beatrice Jenkins Gamble, gave her life that the Gospel of Jesus Christ might be taught in Korea. She trained herself for the work and was later the wife of a missionary and today her body rests with those for whom she labored.

As we look back over these hundred years and marvel at all the changes which have taken place, it is well to find one thing which has remained the same, the need of man to know and serve the Jesus Christ of Nazareth. As long as our church shall be able to render this service we think it is fulfilling its purpose. We believe as did Ann Jenkins of old, "Our community needs Grove Hill." Let us not forget that Grove Hill needs us in greater service for the Master.

Note: This concludes the 1840 - 1940 history as written by Miss Marie Jenkins.

Note for the Record: This "1940 - 1986 Supplement" is an abbreviated version of a document written by Mrs. Edith S. Murphy and the late Mrs. Pauline M. Renn (members of Grove Hill UMC). The Murphy-Renn supplement is for the period 1940 to October, 1986. It outlines improvements made to the church as well as a list of items that were donated primarily from the 1960's to 1986. The complete Murphy-Renn supplement is on file at the church.

Grove Hill Church History Supplement: 1940 - 1986:

Many improvements were made to Grove Hill Church primarily beginning in the 1960's. Members and friends of the church were extremely generous in donating financial resources for a number of major purchases including:

- Exterior Siding
- Central Heating A/C System
- Carpeting of sanctuary
- Picnic shelter; cement walkway, granite benches
- New furniture for sanctuary (pews, pulpit chairs, communion table, pulpit)
- Hammond organ and choir robes
- Stained glass windows in the sanctuary and tower
- Two additions: Sunday school rooms, fellowship hall, kitchen, bathrooms and furnishings for same.

Grove Hill Church ministers from 1940 to 1986:

E. B. Craven	1938-1941
D. D. Traynham	1942-1945
C. S. McCoy	1946
D. M. Sharpe	1947-1950
W. G. Farrar	1951-1955
Morris J. Byers	1956-1959
Stuart I. McRae	1960-1962
J. W. Lineberger, Jr.	1963-1964
Herman N. Ward, Jr.	1965-1968
Morris L. Barber	1969-1972
Philip W. Keel	1973-1975
Quentin E. Scholtz, III	1976-1978
Helen G. Crotwell	1979-1982
John W. Wenberg	1983-1986

In 1960, when Creedmoor became a station, Banks and Grove Hill churches were removed from the Creedmoor Charge to form the Banks-Grove Hill Charge.

Rev. Stuart McRae was the first minister to occupy the new Banks-Grove Hill parsonage located on Highway 56 one mile north of Wilton adjacent to Banks Church.

During Rev. Ward's ministry the Methodist Church united with the United Evangelical Brethren and became known as the United Methodist Church.

Dedication services include:

- Parsonage - November 3, 1963
- Sanctuary furnishings - June 4, 1967

- Stained glass windows - May 12, 1968
- First addition - June 14, 1970
- Hammond Organ - September 16, 1973
- Picnic Shelter - 1976
- Second addition - November 3, 1985

Rev. Ward and his wife, Ann, had a positive influence on the youth of the church. A junior choir was formed during his ministry. Ray Gooch, a teen member of Banks Church, took a leadership roll in the choir and played the piano for Grove Hill during Mr. Ward's tenure.

The first addition/fellowship hall²³ was given by W. W. Hill in memory of his wife, Hattie Jeffreys Strother Hill. Its furnishings were given by relatives and friends in memory of Helen Strother Reeves. Her husband, Robert L. Reeves, was in charge of the business arrangements regarding its construction and Thurman Scott of Durham was the builder.

In 1972 Edith S. Murphy organized an adult choir. At the dedication of the new organ on September 16, 1973, Olive Jenkins, a harpist with the N. C. Symphony Orchestra, played for the first time at Grove Hill.

In 1976 Rev. Quentin Scholtz organized the United Methodist Men and a prayer group--both Charge organizations. He sang with the Grove Hill choir and his beautiful tenor voice added much to the worship service.

Heritage Sunday was observed in 1981. Many worshipers came dressed in the style of by-gone days. Bishop Kenneth Goodson, retired, preached the sermon and David Leonard (son of Billy and Frances Strother Leonard) was soloist. (David sang in the Duke Chapel Choir and became a member of the General Assembly Chorus.)

A second Heritage Sunday was held in 1983. On this occasion Dr. Dennis Campbell, Dean of the Duke Divinity School, preached and David Leonard sang.

The need for a larger fellowship hall which could be converted into classrooms became apparent and in 1985 a new addition was erected at a cost of \$67,202. The debt was paid off in one year's time through pledges, a grant of \$15,500 from the Duke Endowment, and a gift of \$1,000 from the N.C. Conference Board of Missions. Architect James M. Stevenson designed the new structure. Mrs. Mae Blackley served efficiently as chairperson of the Building Committee.

A new Sunday School class was formed in 1985.

In July 1986, the Rev. Helen C. Crotwell was appointed Superintendent of the Fayetteville District--the first woman to achieve that honor in the North Carolina Conference.

Mention should be made of the outstanding contribution by Rev. Wenberg for his inspirational sermons and ministry to individuals. He played the banjo and was a prize-winner in an international contest in 1985. Rev. Wenberg often played at church, community functions and nursing homes. In October 1986 he was part of the Volunteers in Mission Work Team, sponsored by the North Carolina Conference, to help work on the church school and community building of historic Wesley Church in Jamaica.

During Rev. Wenberg's ministry, Rev. Motlalepula Chabaku preached one morning worship service. Rev. Chabaku was granted asylum from her home country of South Africa.

Four student interns from the Duke Divinity School were assigned to Grove Hill for short periods from 1980-86: Gayle Felton, Kelly McClendon, Britt Skarda, and Jim Murphy.

Grove Hill has been fortunate in having dedicated Sunday School Superintendents including Mary Strother

²³ The church was a one-room structure from 1890 until the first fellowship room was added.

Feeley, Dora Jenkins Gooch, Pauline M. Renn, Howard Wynn and Mae Blackley. The church was also blessed to have Howard Wynn and Elsie Thomerson as long-time teachers.

One significant contribution to the community was the church's bi-annual Christmas Eve programs. Olive Jenkins, harpist, and Clifton Preddy, an exceptionally talented young violinist, provided music for the programs. Clifton is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Johnny Preddy of the Grove Hill community.

Grove Hill History from 1986 - June 20, 2004: Not available at this time. The last service as a church in the United Methodist Conference was held at Grove Hill on June 20, 2004. Approximately 75 - 100 attended the final Methodist service which was followed by a covered dish lunch.

Present:

Since June 20, 2004, Grove Hill Church has operated as a "non-denominational" church. The first service was held on June 27, 2004 and has continued each Sunday thereafter. Worship services are held every Sunday at 10 a.m. Visitors are welcome. The minister is Brian Arsenault of Wake Forest.

**Additional Information Regarding Grove Hill Church
Taken from "Heritage and Homestead" Publication:**

There is mention of Grove Hill Church in the Granville County Historical Society's publication entitled "Heritage and Homestead".

The publication notes that Granville County churches in the late 19th century included those with Gothic Revival Style architecture, sometimes overlaid with Victorian and Queen Anne elements. It references two of the surviving late 19th century churches standing outside of Oxford as St. Peter Episcopal church (deconsecrated) in Stovall and Grove Hill located in southern Granville County near the community of Wilton.

The publication notes that the Grove Hill congregation built its second and present church in 1890. The architectural description includes it being a frame structure with overtones of Victorian, having a front corner tower and being adorned with triangular arch windows and Gothic quatrefoils and trefoils. The old pews were pierced with a three-leaf pattern (as is the altar in the sanctuary).

Grove Hill School:

On July 28, 2004, Edith Gill contacted Mr. Rudolph Jenkins of Raleigh and inquired about the Grove Hill School. Mr. Jenkins was born in 1913 to Aubrey & Lottie S. Jenkins. He is the brother of the late Marie Jenkins (the author of the 1840-1950 centennial history) and provided the following regarding the Grove Hill School:

The Grove Hill School building was located about 100 yards from the current church building. Mr. Jenkins attended Grove Hill School until third grade. He described the school as a one room structure with a heater in the center of the room and a platform ("rostrum") on one end. Mr. Jenkins said Grades 1 through 7 were taught there. He thinks Grove Hill School closed after the Spring Session of 1922. He does not know when the school was built but thought the building was at least 20 years old when he attended. He named two of the teachers: Mrs. Florence Preddy and Miss Eura Strother.