

## *Hebron Methodist Church*

*Roper, North Carolina*

### H E B R O N    M E T H O D I S T    C H U R C H    H I S T O R Y

Prior to 1824, the Methodists living in Lee's Mills, the settlement that grew around the old grist mill on Kendrick's Creek, had no place of worship. In that year, James Davenport gave a deed for a piece of land to Joseph Christopher, James Blount, John Phelps, Thomas Frederick Steely, and Harmon Tarkenton, Trustees, for the building of a Methodist meeting house. The land was located about where the old post-office building use to stand. A crude building was erected there and was used for worship until 1842.

For some reason in that year it was decided to change the location of the church. The trustees, Aaron Harrison, James I. Harrison, John F. Gaylord, William Woodley, and Henry Williams, purchased a lot on the opposite side of the road from Seabury Treadwell of New York City, Joseph Kissam of Elizabethtown, and Samuel Kissam of Brooklyn for the sum of one dollar.

The church located there is described by those who remember it as a plain, barn-like building about the size of the present sanctuary with broad steps across the front. The interior was unfinished with a row of posts down the center and a gallery for negroes in the back. The furnishings were rude, home-made benches for the worshipers and a pulpit for the preacher. Huge pine trees surrounded the building, and a well of water furnished refreshment for the congregation.

The church yard was first used for a cemetery in 1881 when Cottie Williams, the child of henry and sarah Williams was buried there.

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The year 1886 marked a turning point for the community. The John L. Roper Lumber Company built a sawmill and a planing mill in Lee's Mills. The new mills became the center of a thriving village which was named Roper. The old meeting house no longer met the needs of the people. Mr. L. G. Roper, local superintendent and a devout Methodist, was interested in remodeling the church. Gifts from the officials of the lumber company aided the project. A steeple was added to the front and an addition made to the back of the church. The walls were plastered and modern furnishings acquired over the years.

Hebron Church has been well served by its pastors. Among the earlier ones were William S. Colson, 1842 and Thomas Cook Moses, 1847. Among them all, none was more devotedly loved than the saintly J. W. Potter.

In 1947, the Reverend Buell E. Bingham became pastor. At that time the need for Sunday School rooms was acute. Under his leadership, the present plant came into being.