

The Kenansville Parish
of
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

**A Brief History of Four
Small Churches Located in
Duplin County, North Carolina**

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Excellent supplementary material is found in:

Methodism Alive in North Carolina

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This is a preview and record of the celebration of the Bicentennial of North Carolina Methodism, written by scholars who have a special interest in North Carolina Methodism.

PREFACE

It, of course, has not always been known as the Kenansville Parish of The United Methodist Church....only since 1973 when our present program and churches began functioning as a cooperative unit. The four churches of the Parish and their founding dates are Wesley (Chapel), 1815; Kenansville, 1850; Woodland, 1903; and Sarecta, 1955. As one will discover later, there have been several circuit names and varied structures through the years.

To understand and appreciate fully our Methodist heritage, we must look to dates and events within Methodist and secular history. For instance, according to the historical statement in THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE of The United Methodist Church, 1972, "In 1766 Philip Embury, a lay preacher from Ireland, began to preach in the city of New York. At about the same time Robert Strawbridge, another lay preacher from Ireland, settled in Frederick County, Maryland, and began work there." This date is considered to be the beginning of American Methodism, although officially the Methodist Episcopal Church in America was not organized until the Christmas Conference, meeting in Baltimore on December 24, 1784.

Methodism's entrance into North Carolina is a debatable question in regard to the date the first "official" Methodist preacher set foot inside the colony. Joseph Pilmore preached at Currituck courthouse on September 29, 1772, which the author has found most historians agreeing upon as the beginning of North Carolina Methodism.

Duplin County has two churches with a founding date of 1790, namely, Charity and Carlton's. Thus, the county was among the earlier centers of Methodism in our young nation. John Wesley died in 1791, and Methodism already existed in our area.

Within the bounds of our present Parish, we are not absolutely positive of the founding date of the first preaching place other than Wesley Chapel (formerly Dark Branch School) in 1815. At that time John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Daniel Boone, and other famous pioneers were still living. There were only eighteen states. James Madison, our fourth President, was serving. In the same year, Napoleon "met his Waterloo."

The brief historical sketch which follows is by no means complete. It should be considered as a beginning of further research and later supplementary booklets. It is hoped that one will read this material in the spirit of "having been there" in the past...with a great deal of pride and with a deep sense of appreciation for the dedicated circuit riders and laypersons who gave of themselves to allow us to carry on in God's work.

WESLEY CHAPEL, THE OLDEST - 1815



Before it was known as Wesley Chapel, the "preaching place" was at Dark Branch School, a building or meeting house which was located at the present site, five miles east of Kenansville on State Highway 11. Dark Branch is mentioned in records of Andrew's Chapel, Route 1, Roseboro, as one of seventeen churches on the Black River Circuit. From an article in the FAYETTEVILLE OBSERVER, November 15, 1974, "the territory included Duplin, most of Hanover, Sampson, and that part of Bladen County on the east side of the Cape Fear River. It took a preacher six weeks to make a round." Three other churches in Duplin County, Carlton's, Charity, and Providence were a part of this huge circuit of churches. No record of Dark Branch prior to 1815 has been found, although the Black River Circuit was first mentioned in the 1810 Minutes of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Even before that date, there was a Goshen Circuit which probably included some of the above mentioned churches and possibly Dark Branch or another place in the lower Goshen area of Duplin County. This, however, is purely speculative. It should be mentioned that the individual churches of the circuits were not identified by name in conference journals and minutes until 1926, therefore information is scanty regarding the early structures of circuits.

Dr. Edgar L. Perkins, a physician, was the minister in 1843 and 1844. He wrote an article for the ADVOCATE in 1887 entitled "Reminiscences of Duplin Circuit." This article is so full of information about the churches in Duplin County as well as the community that it is quoted in its entirety:

"Seeing mention made of the Duplin circuit and the Magnolia circuit, both in the same paper, I was at once led to reflect on the vast changes which have taken place since 1843. Conference was held in Louisburg in the fall of 1842 and I was sent to the Duplin circuit for the following year, 1843. My uppermost appointment was Union Academy, about eleven miles west of Goldsboro, then a little village. My lowest appointment was Pigford's, in Newhanover Co. My most westerly appointment was Salem, near Lisbon, in Sampson county. My most easterly appointment was Prospect, east of the great Goshen swamp, as you go from Kenansville to Kinston. The more central appointments were Thunder Swamp, Friendship, Dark Branch, Center, Charity Chapel, Providence, Evergreen, Bryan's, Carlton's. One appointment was in Wayne county, three in Sampson; one in New Hanover, the rest in Duplin. There was no church and no membership in Kenansville, and there was no Magnolia. This last place was called Stickland's; on the west side of the Railroad stood a little log building where rum and whiskey were sold, and on the opposite side of the road was a small frame of a building not yet completed. No one dreamed of making a town there during this century. At Warsaw there were three buildings besides a warehouse. The Railroad had been running but a few years and the engines had smoke-stacks resembling stove-pipes, only a little larger, and everytime they puffed, about a half peck of live coals were thrown in the air to fall in all directions. You had to stand clear or get burned. It was at this place I started on my first ride upon a railroad. At first I took my seat at the end with my legs so placed that I could spring for the door in case of accident. I soon got used to the danger and sat decently after the first two miles. In those days the cars were mere rattle-boxes compared with those of the present times. The road bed was laid with bars of iron resembling the tires of a cart wheel, and holes all along the bar through which spikes were driven, to hold them to long stripes of wood that rested upon the cross ties. But to return to the circuit. I do not know that there is a single individual living in the bounds of the circuit now, whose house was my home during the two years, 1843 and 1844, I was on the circuit. I have read the obituaries of nearly all of them. "Though God buries his workmen he carries on his work." New and fine church buildings have taken the places of the old ones and many new places have grown up since then.

Union Academy was a well built school house; at this place my homes were mostly with Ezekiel Smith and John Smith. Thunder Swamp was an old free meeting house where everybody could preach and nobody could do any good. I gave it up for Elliot's school house, which has since given place to Smith's Chapel, built by the direction of Dr. Deems. At this place I generally stayed with the celebrated John G. Elliot, whose fame was extensive on account of his having educated so many of the young men of his times. He was a skeptic and withal a very eccentric and a very remarkable man.

Friendship was a well-built school house in a very wealthy and refined neighborhood, but there were few professors of religion and but a small number of them were Methodists. Dark Branch was an old school house with a shed added to make it large enough for a preaching place. During my second year a fine building was put up at this place and it was called Wesley Chapel. My home was mostly with James Pearsall whose daughter Zilphy, Rev. D. B. Nicholson, P. E., married in 1843. Prospect, on the opposite of Goshen, was a framed building, free for all, and where none were successful. Charity Chapel was a framed building. A large class of devoted Christian people worshiped at this place. The preacher's home was mostly at James Carr's, a man of blessed memory to all who knew him. To the weary itinerant his house seemed like home with all the welcome and sweetness which that word can convey. The Mallards held their membership also at this place, a most excellent family of people

Center was a building of hewed logs, and a very odd looking four square building. Providence was a well proportioned framed building. In 1843 we had a meeting, which continued two weeks, at this place, resulting in sixty converts. Bro. Henry Gray came to our assistance. Pigford's was a bush harbor; the Presbyterians have since built a house of worship there. Solomon Turner joined the church during our two week's meeting at Providence. His warm hand was ever afterward extended to invite the preacher to a hospitable home. Whoever went to his house was happy. Kilby Peterson was another whole souled man, the fruit of that great revival. Salem was an old log building, the second of the kind that had been built on that ground. Bishop George once preached in the first building, so I was informed by brother Bright Johnson, who was present on the occasion. From this place went Enoch Johnson into the Virginia Conference. Evergreen was a school house several miles below Salem. The spirit of controversy about the mode of baptism raged in this community. Bryan's was a good framed building constructed with a view to having a school house and a chapel all in one. Here we had a grand temperance meeting lasting two days, eighty persons signed the old Washingtonian pledge. A revival in the church followed and 30 or 40 joined the church. Carlton's was an old log building with one corner tumbling down. It looked dangerous for a congregation to enter it. But when the Rev. Peter Carlton died he left a tract of land to be sold and the money to be applied to the building of a new church, hence the neat looking Carlton's Chapel of the present time.

In those days we often had preaching at school houses and private houses for the want of more convenient places. Since the days to which I have referred, the old church buildings have mostly given way to new and comfortable ones. New places have been built and Methodism has kept pace with the grand march of improvement which has been going on....May it continue to grow."

One may question the printing of the above article in its entirety as a part of our history; however, it is hoped that one envision something of the life of one dedicated circuit rider and the many "parsonages" he lived in, the types of preaching places, and the characteristics of the communities and people to whom he ministered. More will be said later regarding certain aspects found within this article.

We have therefore identified the age of the present building of Wesley Chapel as 1844, making it one of the oldest Methodist buildings in the North Carolina Conference still in continuous use. It originally had a slave balcony above where the pulpit now stands. The pulpit was located at the front of the building with doors at each corner. This was characteristic of many churches in the 18th and 19th centuries, women and children entering through one, men by the other. They sat on opposite sides of the sanctuary. There was a rear door for the slaves to use in ascending to the balcony. In the 1930's, the building was renovated to create a central door as it now exists. The balcony was removed. Although the author has not confirmed it, the doors on the two corner rooms at the sides of the vestibule are believed to be the original outside corner doors.

The ceiling is the original and one can observe where the heating stove once sat in the middle of the sanctuary as well as where the center support column were. One can also detect the location of the balcony by looking above the pulpit at the board design of the ceiling. The walls and floor have been remodeled, but if one desires to examine more carefully he may find around the vent on the west wall evidence of the original wall. The plaster is mixed with animal hair, probably swine, which was used for substance and strength. The flooring may be examined by kneeling beside or crawling under the building to see the huge joists or logs undergirding the structure.

The furniture is all homemade and handcrafted. The pulpit is thought to be the original. The communion table is difficult to date since it was donated to the church in recent years. The pews are thought to be of the Civil War era. This dating was determined approximately by a representative of the State Department of Archives and History.

An ascent to the attic is an inspiring trip to the past, for it is there that one can really see part of the skeleton of the building. The rafters, beams, and joists are hand-hewn logs, many with bark still intact. Most are joined with pegs. Old rough, square-head nails are evident in abundance. The old brick chimney, roughly laid, still stands in the middle of the attic no longer serving as a link between the warmth of the sanctuary and the cold of the sky above. The author could sense the solemn, almost sacred atmosphere in that place where many spoken and musical words through 132 years had ascended.

The front porch and educational building were added in the 1960's. Other minor repairs followed through the years, and in 1975-76, in celebration of their heritage, the people underwent an extensive restoration project. The educational building's interior and the entire exterior were painted. Shutters were added to the windows to give this beautiful structure a colonial appearance. Further efforts are still under way to retain the original beauty such as the refinishing of the pews and chancel furniture to its natural finish.

A MYSTERY.....BETHEL ACADEMY?

The original deed for Dark Branch School, simply specifying a meeting house or school, was dated 1821 and involved the giving of four acres of land and the building by John Pearsall and Howell Best to the following trustees: Col. Stephen Miller, George E. Houston, and James Pearsall. The witnesses were Edward Pearsall and James Chambers.

In 1829 we find the names of the trustees of Bethel Academy as follows: Gen. Stephen Miller, Maj. George E. Houston, James Pearsall, James Chambers, Howell Best (all listed in the 1821 deed) and in addition, Richard Miller, George Miller, Jeremiah Pearsall, Charles Chambers, and at the top of the list is the Rev. David O. Shattuck.

Rev. Shattuck was the minister for the Black River Circuit in 1826. In 1827 he was listed in the Minutes of the Methodist Episcopal Church as being "superannuated or worn out." In 1828 he was listed as "located" which means that he was no longer an itinerant or traveling preacher. Rev. Shattuck undoubtedly liked the Dark Branch area and decided to return after he was "worn out." Records show that he purchased 626 acres of land from Jeremiah Pearsall in the Dark Branch area on April 25, 1829. He sold 210 acres to George E. Houston on the same day and the remaining portion back to Jeremiah Pearsall in September, 1829. By the way, he made a couple hundred dollars in the transaction. This does establish, however, his residence in the community at the time of establishing Bethel Academy.

On September 2, 1829, we find Rev. Shattuck deeding the same four acres and meeting house as described in the 1821 deed to the trustees of Bethel Academy (un-named). It is not known how he obtained these acres or why the deed was necessary. This deed, incidentally, was not filed until April 6, 1882 and was attested to by the Rev. Daniel Culbreth who knew Rev. Shattuck's handwriting.

The mystery of Bethel Academy does not stop there, moreover; for we find still another deed dated 1843...one year before the

present building was constructed. This deed specifies that John Oliver gave the same four acres and meeting house to Bethel Academy. Here again, it is not known how and why this occurred. Dr. Perkins said nothing about Bethel Academy but rather Dark Branch School in the article previously mentioned. Were there two separate schools sitting on the same four acres of land? Did two separate educational units use the same building?

The author continued to pursue an answer to the mystery. A deed was then found indicating that on September 10, 1867, one acre was given by James B. Carr to the trustees of Bethel Academy who were at that time: Jeremiah Pearsall, John A. Bryan, Edward Pearsall, William W. Miller, George E. Houston, Alexander H. Grady, and James B. Carr. Questions were asked in the community until it was finally thought that a school by the name of Carr School, located behind D. F. Chambers' home was once known as Bethel. Still it was just heresy until a 1923 county map by Mr. E. S. McGowen (oldest member at Kenansville) showed clearly the name Bethel School in the same location as the old Carr School, a little over one mile from Wesley.



Almost certainly in the opinion of the author, this building was moved to its present location from where Wesley now stands. The building appears to be even older than the present church building. The picture above is Bethel Academy/Carr School and just maybe where our ancestors once worshipped. It is being used presently as a tobacco pack house.

Current Membership Roll

Following is a list of the present members. We apologize for any mistakes, omissions, and misspellings. We copy from the information on hand.

Batchelor, Sandra Kearns
Fresca, Elizabeth Grady
Grady, Alan
Grady, Mrs. Alan
Grady, Roy
Grady, Margaret
Grady, J. T.
Grady, Nancy
Grady, Mrs. Charles
Grady, D. V.
Grady, David Allen
Grady, Teresa
Grady, Frances
Grady, Mrs. Henrietta
Jones, Ray
Jones, Clifford
Jones, Mrs. Charlie
Kearns, Mrs. Clyde
Kearns, Frank
Lines, Mary Grady
Martin, Mrs. Charles
Mozingo, Donald
Price, Mrs. Carolyn
Whaley, Frank
Whaley, Jeannie
Wilson, Snodie
Wilson, Nancy Grady

KENANSVILLE CHURCH - 1850



Although the deed is dated July 24, 1858, information compiled by the late O. P. Johnson indicates that a WPA Survey of State and Local Historical Records, 1937, states that the church was organized in 1850. Where the congregation worshipped for those eight years is not known. Using this information by Mr. Johnson and a historical sketch compiled by the late C. E. Quinn in 1962, the following history is available, supplemented by the author's research.

The land was purchased for \$170 from Needham W. Herring. If one desires to read the deed, it is found in the Register of Deeds' office in Book 22, page 473.

Mr. Quinn's sketch states that "a modest, wooden church was built. This building made provision for the attendance at church services for the slaves owned by members of the congregation, for galleries were placed at the back and on both sides of the church." Mr. Johnson's records from the Survey states in addition that "there was a vestibule...and a steeple with a large iron bell. It was built with a recess for the pulpit which was taken out about 1887 and the church was slightly remodeled." In 1916 the church was again remodeled with a new shingle roof, the side galleries removed, and the inside refinished. The Rev. T. W. Lee was pastor at that time. Some repair was also done on the outside.

In 1935, the two-story educational building was built, repairs were made to the interior, and steps built of concrete were added. According to Mr. Quinn's records, the church building was brick-veneered that year at a cost of \$3,800, of which Duke Endowment paid \$2,000.

In 1938, the building once again was renovated, this time extensively. No details are furnished as to what the repairs were, however.

In 1956, the building again underwent further changes, the back gallery was removed and the extension was added to the front. The present fellowship hall and kitchen were added. Beautiful and modern furnishings completed the church. This was all done at a cost of \$40,000.

Her People

Although we do not have old church rolls and other records, we have been able to identify from several deeds some of the first generation members.

The original deed, dated 1858, showed the following trustees: David B. Nicholson, John Furlaw (also Forlaw), James Pearsall, Edward Pearsall, James B. Carr, Milton K. Devane, Thomas H. McGee, John A. Bryan, Thomas Hall.

A deed, dated January 7, 1870, for 10 acres for a parsonage. The trustees were: Benjamin F. Cobb, A. D. McGowen, John A. Bryan, Henry C. Moore, James O. Carr, Benjamin Franklin Pearsall, Thomas Hall, Edward Pearsall, and David Rouse. This parsonage, by the way, never materialized. These 10 acres were sold in 1875 to Richard Millard....at a loss of \$150. Two other names were on that transaction as trustees: Jacob Carr and Joseph W. Hall.

On March 22, 1879, property was purchased again for a parsonage (see picture under parsonages) and the deed was to Jacob W. Carr, William R. Allen, and associates. Attested to by T. Page Ricaud (minister at that time).

Another deed, dated October 16, 1874, is not clear in regard to purpose other than the exchange of land. Some of the same names as appear on others also appear on this one. Additional ones, however, are Joseph F. Pearsall, I.C.M. Loftin and wife, Elizabeth, E. O. Pearsall, and John Wesley Pearsall.

A deed, dated October 30, 1886, showed four trustees, namely Jacob W. Carr, A. D. McGowen, H. E. Newberry, and M. K. Devane.

As far as can be determined, there are very few descendants of the names mentioned in the various deeds above, who are presently members of the church. As one will see later in the current membership roll, the names of Pearsall, Carr, Devane, McGee, Bryan, Cobb, Moore, Rouse, Allen, Loftin, and Newberry are no longer.

The Pearsall family will be discussed in a separate section later because of the prominent role played in both Wesley and Kenansville Churches.

Some information found on a few of the names mentioned in the deeds may help the reader in seeing the relationship of the members to one another and also to the present. This is, admittedly, bits and pieces in no particular sequence.

It appears that with the information available that Mrs. E. S. (Fannie) McGowen is the only current member who can trace ancestry back to the original trustees through not only her maiden name of Bryan but through the Pearsall and Carr names as well. In addition, she is kin to the Oliver and Chambers families mentioned in the Wesley and Bethel Academy sections of this booklet.

Mrs. McGowen's great-grandfather was John Alexander Bryan. Captain Bryan married Mary Oliver, daughter of John Oliver. John Oliver was married to Anne Pearsall, brother to James, Jr.

David B. Nicholson is mentioned in some information as being the first minister of the church, however, this is not possible since he was the presiding elder (district superintendent) of the New Bern District at that time. Probably his name appears on the trustees as the "P.E." It was also found out that he owned and was living on a farm near Magnolia in 1850, from which he served his post as presiding elder. As mentioned in Dr. Perkins article, Zylpha (or Zilphia), the daughter of James Pearsall, Jr., married Rev. Nicholson in 1843. He was born in Iredell County in 1809. He served as a presiding elder for 24 years, except 1861-62 when he was on the Magnolia circuit. From 1850 until his health failed, he was elected to the General Conference. He presided over the annual conference session twice in the absence of the Bishop. He was a trustee of all the institutions of the Church within our conference. He died April 15, 1866 and is buried at Magnolia. His memoir in the 1866 Journal stated, "Thus lived and died one of the most eminent of our ministers, leaving the legacy of a blameless life." He and his wife had four children, listed because of their names still prominent in this area: Susan Frances Herring; David B. Nicholson, Jr.; Martha Kornegay; and Ella Catherine Roberts. David, Jr., became a lawyer, practicing in Magnolia. He died around 1924.

Charles Jones Soong

One of the most interesting points of the Kenansville Church history is the visit of Charles Jones Soong in 1885. Charlie Soong was a cabin boy aboard a ship which docked in in Wilmington. While there he attended Fifth St. (now Fifth Ave.) Methodist Church and was converted. He later attended Trinity College (now Duke) and obtained his license to preach. His conversion took place under the ministry of Thomas Page Ricaud, a former minister of the Duplin circuit, and possibly the latter was responsible for his coming to Kenansville to preach in 1885 during the ministry of A. G. Gantt.

The most significant fact concerning Charlie Soong is that he and his family returned to China as missionaries, where he established the famous Soong dynasty. Soong is written up in WORLD BOOK ENCYCLOPEDIA. Without elaborating in lengthy detail, it should be noted that he and his family had a tremendous influence on the establishment and operation of the Republic of China. He became secretary and treasurer to Sun Yat-sen, generally called the "Father of the Revolution" of 1911. One of his daughters married Sun Yat-sen. Another married another very prominent political figure, financier H. H. Kung; and the most famous of all, Madame Chiang Kai-shek, wife of the President of the National Republic of China (Formosa).

He also had a son, "T. V.," or Tse-ven Soong, born 1891, who became a famous leader in China and who also has an article in WORLD BOOK. Among his accomplishments were minister of finance in 1925, Chairman of the Bank of China in 1935, foreign minister in 1941, Premier 1945-47. He came to the United States to live in 1949, but it is uncertain if he is still living.

It all started with a Methodist minister who served Kenansville and the Duplin circuit only a couple years before his message stirred the heart of a little cabin boy.

The Pearsall Influence

As previously mentioned, Dr. Edgar L. Perkins, stayed with James Pearsall when he was in the community of Dark Branch on his preaching schedule. The Pearsall name shows up many times on deeds for schools, academies, and subsequently Wesley and Kenansville Churches. Probably more than any other single family, the Pearsalls shaped the future of the Methodists in these two areas.

The Pearsall genealogy is quite lengthy and comprehensive, and it is hoped that the author has been able to identify the right persons in the proper setting for the appropriate time. To demonstrate what is meant, many families of that era kept certain names through several generations by naming a son after his father, grandfather, uncle, etc. For instance, Edward had a son, James (Sr.), who had a son, Edward and a son, James, Jr., who also had a son, Edward. In addition, James, Sr., had a son Jeremiah but he also had a brother, Jeremiah. In looking at deeds, this can become very complicating.

The James Pearsall to whom Dr. Perkins refers is James, Jr. (1780 - 1859). He is the one whose name appears on the Dark Branch deed, Bethel Academy deed, and the Kenansville deed. James, Sr. died in 1812 before all of these documents and there appears to be no other. It appears, therefore, that he was involved in the founding of Wesley as a young man, and then Kenansville in his elderly years.

The Edward Pearsall on the Dark Branch deed as a witness could be either the brother of James, Jr., or one of two cousins of the same name, the sons of Jeremiah or Edward, brothers of James, Sr. The Edward Pearsall on the Kenansville deed is the son of James, Jr., judged to be so by his span of life (1812 - 1871). This is further substantiated by the later appearance of two of his sons, John Wesley Pearsall and Benjamin Franklin Pearsall as trustees. Also, a daughter, Annie Elizabeth, married Dr. I. C. M. Loftin, a trustee.

James, Jr., had another son, Joseph P., whose daughter, Cora married Stephen Wells. Stephen and Cora Wells were the parents of Joseph and Cora Wells of the Pearsall Chapel community. Miss Cora Wells has just recently passed away. It was Joseph P. Pearsall who left Wesley Church to found Pearsall Chapel Free Will Baptist Church, deeding the land for the church on March 27, 1900. It is not known why this occurred and it should be noted that the two churches and people get along splendidly.

It is not known when the last Pearsall no longer graced the rolls of either the Wesley or Kenansville Church, but we thank them for their influence upon our founding.

Current Membership Roll

Following is a list of the full members of the Kenansville Church. We apologize for any mistakes, omissions, and misspellings. We copy from the information we have on hand.

Baveries, Elizabeth Ruth	Johnson, Willard
Benfield, Jane (Mrs. Jack)	Johnson, Margaret (Mrs. Willard)
Benfield, Terri	Johnson, Cordell
Benfield, Susan	Johnson, Minnie (Mrs. O. P.)
Butler, Bruce	Johnson, Jimmy
Butler, Honoree (Mrs. Bruce)	Johnson, Sarah (Mrs. Jimmy)
Butler, David	Johnson, Lynn
Bostic, Andrea (Mrs. Ronnie)	Johnson, Owen
Dail, Paul Ed	Lacoe, Marion Hardy
Dail, Celia (Mrs. Paul Ed)	Kornegay, Gordon
Dail, Paul Ed Jr.	Kornegay, Ruby (Mrs. Gordon)
Dail, Henry	Kretsch, Juanita (Mrs. Phil)
Dail, Lynn	McGowen, E. S.
Daughtery, Sammy	McGowen, Fannie (Mrs. E. S.)
Elks, Rufus	Newton, Ruby (Mrs. E. Alton)
Elks, Alice (Mrs. Rufus)	Nethercutt, J. C.
Elks, Betty	Nethercutt, Gladys (Mrs. J. C.)
Fields, Jane (Mrs. Ivey)	Nethercutt, Jackie
Frazelle, Z. W.	Nethercutt, Randy
Frazelle, Jean (Mrs. Z. W.)	Martin, Gail Newton
Frazelle, Debbie	Morrow, Sally Newton
Frazelle, Mary Allison	Patterson, Andrew
Grady, Norman	Patterson, Elizabeth (Mrs. Andrew)
Guy, Henry	Patterson, Yvonne
Guy, Norma (Mrs. Henry)	Page, Ralph
Hall, Dixon	Pearce, Pearl (Mrs. John)
Hall, Elaine (Mrs. Dixon)	Roller, Cynthia Kretsch (Mrs. Clyde)
Hall, Clute	Quinn, Ruth (Mrs. C. E.)
Hall, Page	Quinn, Joe
Hall, Carolyn (Mrs. Stuart)	Quinn, Ruth (Mrs. Joe)
Hardy, Earl	Quinn, Joey
Hardy, Polly (Mrs. Earl)	Quinn, Frank
Hardy, Earl Jr.	Quinn, Myrtle
Hasty, Hortense	Quinn, Viola
Helton, Chuck	Quinn, Thomas, Jr.
Herring, Shirley Whitfield	Rector, Ed
Houston, Lattie	Rector, Dilaine (Mrs. Ed)
Houston, Jessie	Rector, Lydia
Hughes, Robert	Rector, Beth
Hughes, Timmy	Reynolds, Ruth
Ingram, Sally (Mrs. W. M.)	Ryder, Eloise
Ingram, Bobby	Scott, Hazel
Jenkins, Conrad	Scott, Johnny
Jenkins, Mary Anne (Mrs. Conrad)	Smith, Marie (Mrs. Stacy)
Jones, Sharon Houston	Smith, Amy

Sykes, Mary Lee	Williamson, Margaret (Mrs. D.S.)
Taylor, H. D.	Williamson, Robert Franklin
Taylor, Thelma (Mrs. H.D.)	Warrington, Larry
Westbrook, Stokes	Warrington, Marie (Mrs. Larry)
Westbrook, Nannie Sue (Mrs. Stokes)	Warrington, David
Williams, Robert	Warrington, Holly
Williamson, Steve	Warrington, Alice
Williamson, Nancy (Mrs. Steve)	Wood, Alan
Williamson, Stephen	Wood, Faye (Mrs. Alan)

WOODLAND CHURCH - 1903



We are not sure when Methodism began "east of the great Goshen swamp" as Dr. Perkins describes it in his article previously mentioned. We know that he preached at Prospect where "none were successful." In trying to identify the exact location of where Prospect Church stood, we have two speculative answers....in the Albertson area and in the B. F. Grady neighborhood. The latter seems more likely since Dr. Perkins mentions "as you go from Kenansville to Kinston." Moreover, we are not positive that Prospect was a forerunner in any way to Woodland...only that there were at least some hearers of the Methodist circuit rider in that community in the mid-1800's.

An article in a 1967 newspaper edition of THE DUPLIN TIMES on Snow Hill Free Will Baptist Church mentions "Probability" as existing in 1831. Our historical tradition does trace our beginnings to that church though unofficially. The Free Will Baptist congregation, according to the article, moved to Kornegay's Chapel in 1893 and that this particular building was first built as a free school house, confirmed by a deed by Mr. and Mrs. Hargett Kornegay and Mr. and Mrs. C. D. Chestnutt to the school commissioners, P. H. Kornegay and John H. Westbrook. According to the deed the land was on the "south side of the Probability Church Lot." The article goes on to say that the "school was soon changed to Woodland and the building was left for a church." The Free Will Baptists moved on to build Snow Hill Church. According to oral tradition, this building was used until 1906 or 1907 when some members decided to build a new church and school



building (pictured above). Peter Kornegay, a charter member, gave the lumber for the building. Other charter members were John Hargett Westbrook, Lewis Gaston Westbrook, Cora Kornegay, Charlie Chestnutt, and P. L. Kornegay.

This building remained a school and a church until 1928 when B. F. Grady school was built.

It is difficult to pinpoint an actual founding date... somewhere between 1900 - 1903 according to tradition; however, no document is in hand to confirm the date. The earliest deed mentioning Woodland Methodist Episcopal Church, South, is dated September 15, 1904, and is for an acre of land adjacent to the school house lot, also by Hargett Kornegay to trustees, C. D. Chestnutt, J. H. Westbrook, and P. L. Kornegay. The old church-school house is now used as a tenant home and is located a few hundred feet from the present Woodland Church. The property undoubtedly remained also under the jurisdiction of the Duplin County Board of Education until December 3, 1928 when the county deeded it to our trustees, S. R. Chestnutt, L. G. Westbrook, and P. L. Kornegay, which as the deed describes is the same land as the school land mentioned in the 1893 deed.

According to a short history of the church, "Early in 1935, Rev. H. Leroy Harris was called to Fayetteville, and in April, 1935, Rev. H. M. McLamb, a Duke University student, was sent to the Pink Hill Charge to serve out the year. Under his leadership, Woodland embarked on a building program for a new building to accommodate the needs for more space. It was decided that a brick veneer building be erected. The site was given by Mr. and Mrs. Stacy Chestnutt. It was to cost four thousand dollars." The new church was formally opened for services on December 26, 1937.

The fellowship hall was planned and completed under the leadership of the Rev. W. E. Howard (1962-65).

Current Membership Roll

Following is a list of the full members of the Woodland Church. We apologize for any mistakes, omissions, and misspellings. We copy from the information we have on hand.

Carrawan, Nancy	Kornegay, Thomas Eugene
Chestnutt, Raymond	Kornegay, Harold
Chestnutt, Vicki	Kornegay, Hazel Ruth
Dunn, Alton K.	Kornegay, David
Ferrell, Florence K.	Kornegay, Lamuel
Grigg, David T.	Kornegay, Belle
Grady, William Sr.	Kornegay, Manly
Grady, Nannie	Kornegay, Maggie Lou
Grady, William Jr.	Kornegay, Selby Jr. (Doc)
Grady, Lonnie W.	Kornegay, Nannie
Graham, Gail Outlaw	Kornegay, Rodney
Huffman, Brenda W.	Kornegay, Janice
Herring, Olivia	Kornegay, Mary Ann
Herring, Curtis	Lee, Nick
Herring, Christy	Lee, Sandra
Herring, Prentice	Lee, Dean
Herring, Taft	Lee, Angela
Herring, Mary Lou	Marker, Robert
Herring, Thurman	Marker, Linda
Heath, Violet Grady	Marshburn, Billy
Howard, Janice	Marshburn, Bobby
Hroza, Marilyn Kornegay	Marshburn, Susie
Jernigan, Phillip E.	Massey, Bessie
Jones, Callie G.	Maxwell, Lee
Kornegay, Andrew	Millard, Russell
Kornegay, Carl, Sr.	Millard, Audrey
Kornegay, Thelma	Oates, Mildred
Kornegay, Carl, Jr.	Outlaw, Remus
Kornegay, Linda	Outlaw, Doanie
Kornegay, Cecil	Outlaw, Jennings
Kornegay, Jean	Piver, Ella
Kornegay, Gerald	Rouse, Peggy W.
Kornegay, Kevin	Raynor, Myrtle R.
Kornegay, Roger	Smith, Boyce G.
Kornegay, Danny Craig	Smith, Kenneth
Kornegay, Craig	Smith, Jennie
Kornegay, Elizabeth	Smith, Mollie K.
Kornegay, Garry Michael	Smith, Norman
Kornegay, Terry Dean	Smith, Irene
Kornegay, Debbie	Smith, Steve
Kornegay, Louise	Smith, Braxton
Kornegay, Evelyn	Smith, Ryan E.

Smith, Iona K.	Westbrook, Darden
Stroud, Linda	Westbrook, Hettie Belle
Summerlin, Rebecca S.	Westbrook, Keith
Tyndall, Rose Marie	Westbrook, Alice
Tyndall, Ronnelle W.	Westbrook, Henry
Walker, Hal B.	Westbrook, Viola
Walker, Jo Ann	Westbrook, James
Walker, Arnold	Westbrook, Hazel
Walker, Nell	Westbrook, Joseph
Walker, Maggie	Westbrook, Lewis
Walker, Durwood	Westbrook, Larry Gaston
Walker, Dwight	Westbrook, Paul
Walker, Elaine	Westbrook, Ruth
Walker, Aubrey	Westbrook, Willard
Walker, James Howard	Westbrook, Eula Mae
Walker, Julia McCullen	Westbrook, Anthony
Wallace, Elmo	Williams, Flora
Wallace, Hazel	Williams, Paul W.
Wallace, Gerry	
Wallace, Karen	

Woodland takes pride in three of her former and one of her present members entering fulltime Christian service, namely:

George Bryan Westbrook, son of Mr. and Mrs. Joe Westbrook who is serving as a Baptist minister.

Carlyle and Judy Herring, who are presently serving as missionaries in Haiti. Carlyle is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Leland (Buck) Herring. Judy is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Kornegay, Sr.

Selby Kornegay, Jr. (Doc) who is presently a student at Duke Divinity School. Doc is still a current member.

SARECTA CHURCH - 1955



The following information is compiled primarily from a history written at the time of the dedication service on May 22, 1960, furnished by Mrs. Carey A. Williams, Sr.

"In 1955, Rev. J. R. Regan, pastor of the Pink Hill Charge, found that there were members of the Woodland Methodist Church in the Sarecta community who seldom attended any church. He also discovered that there were other Methodists who had never changed their membership from the old Smith's Chapel church. Immediately he began investigating the possibility of beginning a new church in this area and thought of Beulaville as a strategic point.

After discussing this with Mr. Kirby J. Smith, Rev. Regan decided on the Sarecta area. Upon contacting Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Rogers, they suggested that he see Mrs. Bessie Smith, and she referred him to Mrs. Carey A. Williams. Mrs. Williams, with the help of others, carried out a survey covering a three mile radius. Approximately 100 members or prospective members were contacted.

Under the guidance of Rev. J. R. Regan, we obtained chairs and a used piano and our church school was established on February 13, 1955 in the old Sarecta school building. Mrs. Carey A. Williams was elected as the first Superintendent with Mr. Randolph Smith as her assistant. Our total membership was around 82.

Outgrowing our space around the first of May, we moved to the old store building and bought pews from Corinth Baptist Church.

On May 29, 1955 we were officially organized as Sarecta Methodist Church. The officiating officer was Rev. H. M. McLamb, who was assisted by our pastor, Rev. J. R. Regan. On the same date, thirty-three members were received by profession of faith and thirty-three by transfer of church membership by letter. These became the charter members of the Sarecta Methodist Church.

The first stewards were Raymond Rogers, Marvin Norris, Jim Atkinson, Carey Williams, and Mrs. Arthur Whitfield. Through the years our faithful teachers have been: Mrs. Marvin Norris, Mrs. Francis Williams, Mrs. Arthur Whitfield, and Mrs. Barbara Smith. Mrs. Georgia Smith has been our pianist.

In June, 1955, the conference appointed Rev. C. E. Vause of Hookerton as our pastor. Under his guidance, we adopted a budget and began making plans for our new church. Rev. Vause was very helpful in visiting the members, influencing others to attend, and organizing the Methodist Youth Fellowship. Mrs. Hunter Wells, the former Alice Rogers, was a very active leader, who has been greatly missed.

When Rev. Vause was transferred to Clinton, Mr. Otis Ridge became our pastor. He was a great inspiration to our church. Not only did he encourage our own members to be more faithful in attending church, but he also helped to obtain transfers from the Lee's Chapel Church. Mr. Ridge was very instrumental in helping to establish our building fund and inspired us to

work toward the goal for a new church. At this time, Mr. Randolph Smith became our new Superintendent.

In 1956, Rev. Russell G. Spence came as our pastor. He devoted not only his time and his good faith but also his material gifts. Mr. and Mrs. Spence have spent many happy hours in our community visiting shut-ins and remembering the sick with cards.

In June, 1956, Mrs. Bessie Smith donated the land for the site of our new church in loving memory of her husband, Norwood Smith. The construction soon began with Mr. Jim Atkinson, Chairman of the building committee, and Mr. Carey A. Williams, Chairman of finance. The men of the church donated labor and money. The ladies contributed all the proceeds from barbecue suppers to the building fund.

The educational building was completed first and we used this for church and church school. In October of 1957 a revival was conducted by Mr. Robert Rose, lay leader from the Goldsboro District. Our offering during this revival was given to the building fund. Our own members and visitors from other churches helped to make our revival a success.

Through funds from the Duke Endowment of \$3,500 and the Ten Dollar Club's donation of \$7,500, we have been able to continue our building project. We have also received a great deal through the conference with special missions from the district and the efforts of interested members. Many people outside the church membership have been very gracious in donating to this fund.

This year, Mr. Jim Atkinson, one of our faithful members, became Superintendent. We have now undertaken the project of purchasing pews and pulpit furniture for the sanctuary. Several have pledged to buy one pew and help with others if necessary.

Without the undying faith of our members and the gracious love of God, our Church would have been a failure. We wish to express our gratitude to the members, friends, pastors, and District Superintendent upon whom we have depended greatly.

It is our fondest hope that as we meet in this beautiful sanctuary to worship God, we may truly find peace and joy in our fellowship with each other."

Note: Bishop Paul N. Garber was present for the Dedication Service....almost five years to the date...lacking one week....of the organization of the church valued at \$40,000, PAID FOR AND DEDICATED! Other ministers present were the District Superintendent, Rev. H. M. McLamb; the Rev. J. R. Regan; and the Rev. H. L. Harrell, all taking part in the Service.

Of the charter membership of sixty-six, 16 are now deceased. Seventeen others have moved from the community although some still retain their membership. Another ten have moved their membership to other churches.

Following is a list of the charter members of Sarecta:

Mrs. Bessie Smith	Mr. J. H. Atkinson
Mr. Shirley N. Smith	Mrs. J. H. Atkinson
Mr. William Randolph Smith	Mr. Carey A. Williams, Sr.
Mrs. Elsie Smith Pollard	Mr. Marvin Norris
Mrs. Carey A. Williams	Mrs. Shirley Sommers Rhodes
Mr. Gilbert E. Smith	Mrs. JoAnn Stroud
Mrs. Shirley N. Smith	Mrs. Betty Baker
Mrs. Verona Williams Bass	Mrs. Sheraldene Howard Hayes
Mrs. Glacus Murray	Mr. Frank Ross Sommers
Mrs. Arthur Whitfield	Mr. Kenneth Davenport
Mr. George Williams, Sr.	Mildred Louise Turner
Mrs. George Williams, Sr.	Mrs. Evelyn Hall Blalock
George Williams, Jr.	Mrs. Fannie K. Hall Grady
Mr. Raymond Rogers	Mr. James Travis Jarman
Mrs. Raymond Rogers	Mrs. Billy (Mary Ann) Sanderson
Mr. Benjamin Rogers	Mr. Travis Williams
Mrs. Alice Rogers Hunter	Mr. Mazel Houston
Mrs. Eugene Smith	Mrs. Wilma Houston
Mrs. Pearl W. Smith	Mrs. Marvin Norris
Mrs. Major Lanier, Jr.	Mrs. Willard Gresham
Mrs. Eva Brown	Mrs. Peggy Williams Provst
Mr. James Brown	Mrs. Sandra Atkinson Brinkley
Mrs. James Brown	Mrs. Linda Hall Albertson
Mrs. Nettie Atkinson	Mrs. Edna Gresham Houston
Mrs. Vera Rogers Turner	Mr. Joel Lawson Williams
Mrs. Bessie B. Atkinson	Mr. Major Lanier, Jr.
Mr. Cleon Smith	Mr. Lebron Williams
Miss Eula Shepherd	Mr. Arnold D. Gresham
Mr. Clarence Shepherd	Mr. Oliver Lee Blizzard
Mr. Oliver Blizzard	Mrs. Marie Jones
Mrs. Oliver Blizzard	Mrs. Lois Williams Jones
Mr. Lawson Williams	Mr. Murphey Ray Williams
Mrs. Lebron Williams	Mr. Clayton Gresham
	Mr. Paul Williams

The column on the left joined by transfer from other churches. The list on the right joined by profession of faith.

Sarecta Church is thus a combination of folks from Woodland, Smith's Chapel, Lee's Chapel, and others. It should be noted that Methodist services were discontinued in the latter two churches in 1940. Lee's Chapel was closed and Smith's Chapel was deeded to the Presbyterian Church in exchange for a church on the Seven Springs Charge which was also being used jointly by Methodists and Presbyterians. It is obvious from these facts that no Methodist Church existed in the Sarecta, Beulaville, Hallsville areas for at least 15 years.

An interesting side note which most people do not know is that an attempt was made in 1895 to establish a Methodist church, known as Hallsville, which was temporarily located on the Sarecta-Hallsville road, north of State Highway 24. After a couple of years of holding preaching services at a bush arbor, the land was sold to Mr. Egbert Miller.

Current Membership Roll

Following is a list of the full members of the Sarecta Church. We apologize for any mistakes, omissions, and misspellings. We copy from the information we have on hand.

Atkinson, Donald	Kennedy, Hilda
Atkinson, Mrs. J. H. Sr.	Kennedy, Glenda
Atkinson, Zylphia Carol	Kennedy, Kathy Williams
Albertson, Linda	Lanier, Major Jr.
Brown Eva	Lanier, Susie
Brown, James	Lanier, Wanda
Brown, Catheline	Lanier, Rhonda
Baker, Betty Faye	Miller, Etta
Blalock, Evelyn	Malpass, Carson
Blizzard, Oliver Sr.	Norris, Marvin
Blizzard, Oliver Jr.	Norris, Lou Dell
Brinson, Pamela Atkinson	Norris, Jim T.
Ballard, Gene	Norris, Edward
Ballard, LaMonn	Pate, Lucille Sommers
Ballard, Mark	Rhodes, Shirly Sommers
Davenport, Thurman	Smith, Randolph
Davenport, Arlene	Smith, Georgia
Davenport, Tex	Smith, Gilbert Elwood
Davenport, Edward Earl	Smith, Shirley N.
Davenport, Marie	Smith, Mrs. Shirley N.
Davenport, Teresa	Smith, Mrs. Eugene
Gresham, Annie	Smith, Pearl
Gresham, Clayton	Stroud, Jimmy W.
Gresham, Joyce	Stroud, Jo Ann
Gresham, Arnold	Stroud, Mary Allison
Grady, Sandra Atkinson	Sanderson, Billy
Houston, Mazel	Sanderson, Mary Ann
Houston, Mrs. Mazel	Sanderson, Teresa
Houston, Marie	Sommers, Mrs. Frank
Houston, Herman	Shepherd, Mamie
Houston, Thelma	Shoup, Linda
Houston, Gloria Faye	Taylor, Christine
Houston, Betty Jean	Taylor, Timothy
Houston, Laylon	Taylor, Kenneth
Howard, Louise	Turner, Mildred Louise
Jarman, James Travis	Williams, Carey A. Sr.
Jones, Jane Marie	Williams, Hazel
Jones, Lois	Williams, Carey A. Jr.

Williams, Woody
Williams, Mrs. George Sr.
Williams, George Jr.
Williams, Shelby
Williams. Lebron
Williams, Frances
Williams, Tony

Williams, Peggy Sue
Williams, Joel Lawson
Williams, Murphey
Williams, Mrs. Della
Williams, Mrs. Alton
White, Cecil
Wiley, Judy

MINISTERS

Unfortunately, most of the preachers are just names as far as biographical information is concerned. The primary resources for information were the Conference Journals and the Minutes of The Methodist Episcopal Church. Many did not have memoirs printed in these sources. In some cases, only the dates of birth and death are known. In other instances, the memoirs were read by the author and only excerpts were selected.

Wesley Chapel Ministers 1815 - 1850

- 1815 REUBEN ELLIS was the preacher for the Black River Circuit. In researching, the name, Reuben Ellis, was very prominent in several books and documents in early American Methodism. The name appeared beside the names of Francis Asbury, Thomas Coke, and several other of the first American Methodist preachers. The author became excited, thinking that he may have once served Wesley Chapel. Further research, however, disclosed that the eminent Reuben Ellis died in 1796. No mention has been found of his family other than a statement in METHODISM ALIVE IN NORTH CAROLINA edited by O. Kelly Ingram of Duke Divinity School. Larry E. Tise of the North Carolina Division of Archives and History refers in chapter three, page 39, to the "Ellis family which contributed a number of clergymen to pioneer Methodism." It is possible that the minister was a son or other close relative of the more prominent preacher of the same name.
- 1816 - 17 JOHN FLAVEL WRIGHT is written up in the ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AMERICAN METHODISM. He was born in 1795 and as a young man in his early twenties served the circuit for two years, which was highly unusual in those days. Early Methodist preachers seldom were appointed for more than one year. Nothing is known of what he was like or what he did on the circuit. We do know that he transferred to the Ohio Conference in 1821 where he became an outstanding minister in that state. He served as a presiding elder for several years. In 1832, he was elected book agent in Cincinnati, an honor in those days. He was a delegate to General Conference from 1832-52, and in 1844 he received a very large and complimentary vote for Bishop although never elected. When the Civil War began, though he was in his late sixty's, he became a chaplain for the 1st Kentucky Regiment. He died in 1879.
- 1818 WADDILL JOHNSON (died in 1841 in Raleigh)
- 1819 JOAKIM LANE
- 1820 BENJAMIN MASON

1821 MANN DUTTON

1822 THOMAS B. HUMPHRIES

1823-24 BENJAMIN EDGE ("worn-out" in 1828, died in 1836)

1825 DAVID O. SHATTUCK (already discussed in section on Wesley)

1826-27 WILLIAM B. MOSS

1828 CURTIS HOOKS and JOSHUA JOLLIFF

1829 WILLIAM M. SCHOOLFIELD and ALFRED NORMAN

Alfred Norman was born in 1804. He was admitted into the Virginia Conference in 1828, therefore this was his second year of preaching. When asked "where do you wish to be sent?" he replied, "Send me where there are sinners." He was the "Jr. Preacher" on the Black River Circuit in 1829. He was stricken with facial paralysis in 1861 and retired in Caswell County. Later his health improved and he began preaching again in 1867. He died in 1873 and is buried in Caswell County. The Rev. Dr. John E. Edwards wrote in the Advocate: "Alfred Norman was a power at a camp meeting. I have heard him in exhortation and in prayer at camp meeting when he shook the whole camp and carried everything before him."

1830 JAMES W. BELL and J. I. CARTER

1831 HENRY D. WOOD and HENRY ALSPAUGH

1832-33 JOSEPH P. DAVIDSON

Note: Until 1832, the circuit was still known as Black River and was a part of the Neuse District of the Virginia Conference. In 1832 the circuit became known as Duplin and was a part of the New Bern District...still the Virginia Conference.

1834 BENJAMIN BARNES

1835 WILLIAM M. JORDAN (born in 1813 in Virginia, died in 1882 at Roxboro)

1836 J. M. LEWIS

1837 JAMES M. BOATRIGHT

Note: The North Carolina Conference was formed in 1837.

1838 ALFRED NORMAN (second time on this circuit)

1839 CHAPPELL FEATHERSTONE (died in 1843 at Washington, N. C.)

1840 WILLIAM H. BARNES

1841 WILLIAM W. NESBITT was born in Iredell County. He was admitted to the Conference in 1840, therefore another second-year man. In 1855 he went to Patrick County, Virginia, for health treatments in the springs, but he grew worse instead of better. His memoir in the 1856 Minutes indicates that on his death bed he "burst forth in triumphant strains" shouting "Can this be death? Am I dying, or is it a dream? I am almost afraid that I am dreaming. Glory! Glory! An eternal weight of glory! Too much for poor mortals to hear! Glory! Glory! Glory!" When he could no longer speak he would point his finger "to the home above", directing waiting friends to that bright world of joy into which he was entering. He died on November 2, 1856.

1842-43 DR. EDGAR L. PERKINS Very little could be found of a personal nature on Dr. Perkins. He was a Medical Doctor and kept scrapbooks of articles from various publications. He also wrote a lot of articles himself for THE ADVOCATE. The Duke Divinity School has two scrapbooks which are no more than papers pasted in textbooks.

Note: Dark Branch became known as Wesley Chapel when the new church building was constructed in 1844.

1844 ARCHIBALD ALLEN

1845-46 JOHN W. TINNEN was born in Orange County in 1817, admitted to the Conference in 1841, died in Pittsboro of typhoid fever in 1865.

1847 JOHN RICH (born 1815, died 1851)

1848 JOHN W. WILSON was born in 1825, admitted to Conference in 1847, and died in 1852 in Chapel Hill.

1849 T. C. MOSES and JOHN W. WILSON (see 1848 above)

1850 G. A. GOWEN

Note: Old records indicate that Kenansville Church was organized in 1850 even though the building was not erected until 1858, therefore the sub-heading now reads:

Wesley Chapel and Kenansville Ministers 1851-1902

1851 JOHN D. MONTAGUE

1852 ABRAM WEAVER

1853 JAMES L. FISHER

1854 MALCOLM L. DOUGLASS was born in Richmond County (no date). He was a clerk of Superior Court before he became an itinerant preacher in 1853. He preached only 3 years, dying on November 14, 1856 of a "severe, congestive chill."

1855 JAMES B. BOBBITT was born in Halifax County in 1835. From 1869-1878 he was the owner and editor of the "The Episcopal Methodist", the newspaper of the Conference. He changed the name of the paper to the "Raleigh Christian Advocate" in 1870. He became the Financial Agent for Trinity College (later Duke) in 1888, and was one of the trustees for the college for several years. He died in Raleigh in 1896.

1856 DOUGAN CLARKE JOHNSON was born August 10, 1825 at Trinity College. He was converted in a revival at the college in 1847. Later graduated from Trinity in 1853. He died in 1878.

1857-58 JESSE A. CUNNINGGIM, Doctor of Divinity, was born in Greene County, January 28, 1832. His father was a Methodist minister, the Rev. W. H. Cunninggim. His mother was the daughter of the Rev. John Gibbons. He received his call to preach at the age of 11. He hesitated for years but finally accepted the call and was licensed in 1853 and admitted to the Conference in 1855. He married Lucy Armfield of Statesville in 1862 and the two of them later were to be referred to as "Uncle Jesse and Aunt Lucy" in North Carolina Methodism. Dr. Cunninggim was a Presiding Elder from 1883-98. The following was written in the 1899 Journal: "Great grief was felt all over the state when the news was sent abroad that 'Uncle Jesse' was dead. The state had lost one of its best citizens. The Conference felt that one of its strongest pillars was removed. Strong men and women wept, and little children sobbed when they learned that this man of God was not more."

Note: The Duplin Circuit became a part of the Wilmington District in 1858.

1859 BENJAMIN F. GUTHRIE was born in Chatham County in 1837 and was admitted to the Conference in 1859. He made a profession of faith at age 8. He served as a chaplain in the Confederate Army, was stricken by disease, and died near Richmond, Virginia, in 1862.

1860 JOHN B. WILLIAMS

- 1861 EDWIN A. YATES was born in Cumberland County in 1829. He was admitted to the Conference in 1860. He was a Presiding Elder from 1869-77, then again from 1891-1900. He held a Lectureship at Trinity College from 1902-09. He also was awarded a Doctor of Divinity degree. The 1909 Journal (the year he died) states, "For years and years he was probably our greatest preacher. He was one of the most versatile and cultured of the ministers that have graced the pulpits of our state."
- 1862 EDWIN A YATES (see above) and W. H. MOORE were both assigned to the Duplin and Magnolia circuits.
- 1863 JOSEPH C. THOMAS served both the Duplin and Magnolia circuits this year, probably because of the War.
- 1864 D. C. JOHNSON served a second time on the Duplin circuit. Magnolia circuit was separate this year.
- 1865 The question at Conference was asked "Where are the preachers stationed this year?" The reply in the Journal was "No Answer." Why? One can only surmise that the situation was quite uncertain and confusing at the close of the War.
- 1866 BERNICE B. CULBRETH was born in 1835 in Sampson County and died at Cary on May 12, 1903.
- 1867 C. M. ANDERSON
- Note: The appointment became known as the Kenansville circuit in 1867
- 1868 Listed as "To be supplied"...do not know who if anyone was appointed later.
- 1869-70 JAMES B. BAILEY was born in Suffolk, Virginia, in 1818. He began preaching as a "Jr. Preacher" in 1844 and was admitted to the Conference in 1856. He died in Wilmington in 1896.
- 1871-73 C. M. ANDERSON served the circuit for a second time and was the first preacher to do so for more than two years consecutively.
- 1874 JOSEPH B. MARTIN was born in 1824 and died in 1897.
- 1875 J. T. BAGWELL
- 1876 T. W. SMITH

- 1877-78 THOMAS PAGE RICAUD was born in Baltimore, Maryland, on October 19, 1817. His parents died when he was very young and was reared by relatives. He went to Mexico City when he was five years old where he was educated. As a young man, he took a special course at the University of Mexico in preparation for the Roman Catholic priesthood, but soon became involved and fought in the civil war in Mexico. While still in his early manhood, he left Mexico for France but returned after a short while to Virginia where he studied law. He was converted in a Methodist revival and was admitted to the Virginia Conference in 1841. One may find part of his story in the book, STORIES OLD AND NEW OF THE CAPE FEAR REGION, by Louis T. Moore, Wilmington, 1956, pages 211-214. After leaving this circuit, he went to Wilmington where he served Fifth St. Church (now Fifth Ave.). He was known in that community as "Uncle Ricaud". A description of him was that he was an "old gentleman of striking appearance, with long hair and an earnest, prophet-like bearing." One of his daughters, Mrs. Sarah R. Farrior, remained a resident of Kenansville where she taught Sunday School for many years. One may read the article on Charles Jones Soong in the section on the Kenansville Church to review the part T. Page Ricaud played in his life.
- 1879-81 A. D. BETTS was born in Cumberland County in 1832 and died in Greensboro in 1918.
- 1882 WILLIAM I. HULL was born in Cabarrus County in 1854, the son of a Lutheran minister. He was educated at Rutherford College and taught school for several years. After serving this circuit, he also went to Fifth St. Church in Wilmington for a few months. He became ill in 1884 and died about a year later in 1885.
- 1883 HENRY H. GIBBONS was born in Greene County in 1818, the son of Rev. John S. Gibbons. He married Elizabeth Hardy in 1836. He was admitted to the Conference when he was 32 years of age. His last appointment was our circuit. He died in 1887 at the home of his son-in-law, James Westbrooks at Mt. Olive and is buried at Faison in the family cemetery of Samuel Westbrooks, another son-in-law. Note: The "s" on the end of the latter two names is not a typing error but the way it appears in the Journal.
- 1884-86 A. G. GANTT
- 1887-90 W. A. FORBES was born in 1846 and died in Pender County in 1919.
- 1891-93 A. R. RAVEN

1894 To be supplied

1895 Listed as "Kenansville circuit and Onslow Mission..one to be supplied and A. D. CRUMPLER. We do not know what happened that year and the year before (above).

1896 GEORGE WASHINGTON FISHER was born in Catawba County in 1859 and died while serving Garner circuit in 1926.

1897-98 J.W. MARTIN

1898-1900 W. E. HOCUTT

1900-1901 G. B. WEBSTER

1901-1904 W. D. SASSER

Note: Woodland was founded between 1900-03. From this point on until 1920, Wesley, Kenansville, and Woodland were on the same circuit along with other churches also.

1905-06 V. A. ROYALL was born in 1860 in Sampson County and died in 1929, buried in Jonesboro.

1906-08 FRANCIS ERNEST DIXON was born in Craven County in 1872 and died in 1940. Buried in Lenoir County.

1908-12 JAMES MARTIN LOWDER was born in 1852 in Stanly County, died in 1940. Buried at Norwood.

1912-13 DANIEL CLARK GEDDIE was born in 1859. He married Leanna M. Maxwell in 1888. They had twelve children, nine of whom were still living in 1913. In 1911 he had ill health and resided in Rose Hill while farming some. He wanted "to die in the harness" according to the 1913 Journal and was appointed to the Kenansville circuit. He lived only a few short weeks of labor, dying on January 30, 1913.

1913-17 THOMAS W. LEE was born in 1878 in Gates County, died in Durham in 1963. He is the minister for whom Lee's Chapel was named.

1917-18 J. P. PATE was born in 1868 in Wayne County, died in 1920, and is buried in Wayne County.

1918-20 MILTON FRANKLIN HODGES was born in 1879 in Robeson County, died in 1947, and is buried at Laurinburg.

Note: In 1920, Wesley and Kenansville remained on the Kenansville circuit, while Woodland became a part of the Pink Hill circuit from 1920-1962. From here on, dates and

circuit structures are difficult to columnize, therefore, the circuits will be examined individually.

Kenansville and Wesley Ministers 1920-1956

1920-23 J. W. HOYLE, SR., was born in 1868 in Cleveland County and died in 1960 in Durham.

1923-26 G. C. WOOD

1926-27 JAMES WILLIAMS SNEEDEN was born in New Hanover County in 1876 and died in 1952 in Wilmington.

1927-30 N. P. EDENS is still living, retired, at Route 3, Box 193-A, Clinton, 28328

1930-32 JAMES FRANKLIN CULBRETH was born 1887 in Cumberland County and died in 1960 in Fayetteville.

1932-36 F. B. JOYNER, SR., was born in Spring Hope in 1901, died in 1949 at Siler City. His son, F. Belton Joyner, Jr., is the minister at present at First Church, Mebane.

1936-40 A. L. THOMPSON is retired and living in Southern Pines, P. O. Box 272, N. Leak Street, 28387

1940-44 J. W. LINEBERGER, SR., is retired and resides at 612 Daniels St., Raleigh, 27605

1944-45 D. D. BROOM

Note: Kenansville circuit was put with Faison circuit in 1944-45, probably because of a shortage of ministers and World War II.

1945-48 JOHN M. CLINE is still on the itinerancy and is the District Superintendent of the Rocky Mount District. His address is 3621 Sheffield Drive, Rocky Mount, 27801.

Note: The name of the charge was changed to Duplin circuit in 1945 but dropped the Faison circuit after that one year. No wonder D. D. Broom only stayed one year. He only had 12 churches!

1948-49 A. D. WOOD only served for six months.

1949-51 M. K. GLOVER is retired. His address in the Journal is Route 2, Box 36, Pink Hill, 28572.

1951-52 R. H. COLLINS returned to Alabama in September, 1952.

1952-53 E. RAY GOODWIN succeeded Mr. Collins in September, 1952

1953-55 JAMES G. WHITE, JR.

1955-60 C. G. NICKENS

Note: Wesley and Sarecta were placed together in 1956. Kenansville had two more ministers before being placed with Woodland. They were:

1960-62 THOMAS H. HOUSE now serving at Clarkton, Box 704, 28422.

1962-65 J. P. PEGG is retired and residing at 1905 Wheat St., Rockingham, 28379.

Woodland Ministers 1920 - 1965

1920-23 B. W. BARFIELD

1923-26 K. S. L. COOKE

1926-27 SAM LEFFERS (Supply)

1927-28 JOEL WALTER DIMMETTE was born in 1884 in Wilkes County, died in 1966, and is buried in Greensboro.

1928-29 W. J. FREEMAN

1929-35 H. LEROY HARRIS is retired and is living at Wendell, P. O. Box 866, 27591.

1935-39 HOWARD M. MCLAMB is now serving Apex. His address is 301 E. Chatham St., 27502. He has served two terms as District Superintendent 1954-60 and 1970-75.

1939-42 R. E. WALSTON

1942-43 To be supplied...J. R. Jolly came December 1, 1942

1943-45 M. E. COTTON

1945-47 WILLIAM GRAHAM LOWE was born 1887, died 1973.

1947-48 ROBERT GOODCHILD

1948-50 THOMAS M. HORNER

1950-53 DANIEL C. BOONE is presently serving at Bath; Route 2, Box 170, Belhaven, 27810.

1953-57 JAMES R. REGAN is retired and is living at 2702 Arlington Ave., Fayetteville, 28303.

Note: The Goldsboro District was organized in 1954.

1957-62 HAYWOOD L. HARRELL is presently serving at Pikeville; P. O. Box 43, 27863.

1962-65 W. E. HOWARD was born in 1895 in Denver, N. C. and died in 1968 at Goldsboro Woodland was a station church during those three years. Mr. Howard came out of retirement to serve. Mrs. Howard recently moved from her home in Mt. Olive to the Methodist Retirement Home.

Sarecta and Wesley Ministers 1956 - 1967

Sarecta was organized while J. R. Regan was pastor of the Pink Hill circuit. In June, 1955, C. E. VAUSE was appointed to serve Sarecta. He was transferred to Clinton that year and OTIS RIDGE finished the year. In 1956, Sarecta joined Wesley as a two-point charge for 11 years, being served by one minister during that time, RUSSELL G. SPENCE, 1956-67. K. R. MINTON was appointed for the year 1967-68.

Kenansville and Woodland 1965 - 1967

These two churches constituted a two-point charge for these years under the pastorate of WILLIAM L. WOLFE who is presently serving at Haw River, P. O. Box 457, 27258.

Kenansville, Woodland, and Wesley 1967 - 1970

Wesley was added to make a three-point charge in 1968, served by W. THOMAS CLARK, now serving the Pink Hill Church.

Sarecta 1968 - 1970

Sarecta was placed on the Richlands circuit in 1968, served by ORVILLE LEONARD, presently serving the Turkey-Unity-Friendship Charge.

Finally....the Four Together 1970 - Present

1970-73 HENRY G. JINETTE

1973-76 JACK M. BENFIELD, the author of this history, who learned while typing the manuscript for this booklet, that he would be moving in June, 1976.

CIRCUIT STRUCTURES

As previously mentioned, not until 1926 were the individual churches listed in the Journals, only the names of the circuits; therefore, information regarding the size of the charges and the names of the various churches are unknown with a couple of exceptions:

1815 The Black River Circuit included Dark Branch Academy, Parker's Meeting House, Johnson's Old Meeting House, Riley's Creek Meeting House, Ebenezer Meeting House, McLain's Meeting House, Manns Bluff, Bethlehem, Charity, Carlton's Meeting House, Mount Zion, Farrell's Meeting House, Nahunta Meeting House, Bryant's Meeting House, Providence Meeting House, Bethel (now Roseboro), and Thunder Swamp Meeting House (Clinton). The ones underlined are Duplin County "preaching places."

The other exception is the list of churches which Dr. Edgar L. Perkins mentions in his ADVOCATE article. The author refers the reader to pages 2-3 of this booklet for that information.

We are assuming that Duplin circuit and Kenansville circuit after 1850 included Wesley and Kenansville, and that Woodland was a part of the same circuits between its founding in 1903 until being placed on the Pink Hill Charge in 1920.

Since the statistical information in the Journal is for the previous year, the 1926 Journal therefore shows the circuit make-up for 1925. Following is the breakdown of circuits from 1925 to present.

1925-30 Kenansville Circuit: Kenansville, Wesley, Friendship, and Lee's Chapel
Pink Hill Circuit: Pink Hill, Smith's, Woodland, Woodington's, and Webb's

1930-42 Kenansville Circuit: Kenansville, Wesley, Faison, Goshen, Friendship, King's, Warsaw

1930-37 Pink Hill Circuit: Smith's, Woodland, Pink Hill, Woodington's, Webb's, and Lee's Chapel

1937-40 Pink Hill Circuit: Noble's Chapel was added to the six above.

Note: In 1940, services were discontinued at Lee's Chapel (closed) and Smith's (turned over to the Presbyterians).

1940-53 Pink Hill Circuit: Woodland, Pink Hill, Woodington's, Webb's, and Noble's Chapel

- 1942-43 Kenansville Circuit: Kenansville, Friendship, Goshen King's, Wesley, Garland, Antioch, Centenary, Epworth, Johnson's, and Salem
- 1943-45 Kenansville Circuit: Kenansville, Friendship, Goshen, King's, and Wesley
- 1945-47 Duplin Circuit: Kenansville, Friendship, and Wesley
- 1947-53 Duplin Circuit: Kenansville, Friendship, Wesley, Unity and Magnolia
- 1953-55 Duplin Circuit: Kenansville, Wesley, Magnolia, and Unity
Pink Hill Circuit: Pink Hill, Woodland, Noble's Chapel, and Sarecta for part of 1955.
- Note: The Goldsboro District was organized in 1954.
- 1955-65 Duplin Circuit: Kenansville, Magnolia, Unity
- 1955-62 Pink Hill Circuit: Pink Hill, Noble's, Woodland
- 1956-68 Sarecta and Wesley
- 1962-65 Woodland (station)
- 1965-68 Kenansville and Woodland
- 1968-70 Kenansville, Woodland, and Wesley
- 1968-70 Sarecta on Richlands Circuit with Haw Branch, Gum Branch, and Beulaville.
- 1970- Kenansville Circuit: Kenansville, Woodland, Sarecta, and Wesley.

PARSONAGES

Because of the complicated alignment of circuits through the years as one can readily see on the previous pages, it is not positive where all of the preachers lived. It is, however, known that three of the parsonages owned by the Church are presently in Kenansville, and that for the exception of the years, 1944-48, a parsonage was available for occupancy by the assigned minister.



The first one for which a deed could be found is pictured above. The deed for it is dated March 22, 1879 from W. H. Henderson to Jacob W. Carr, William R. Allen and associates, trustees of the Kenansville circuit, attested to by T. Page Ricaud.

This parsonage was sold on May 11, 1944, to C. B. Sitterson. The trustees were C. E. Quinn, D. S. Williamson, and Mrs. H. D. Williams.

This house is located across from Grove Presbyterian Church.

It is known that while John M. Cline was the pastor from 1945-48 that he lived on the second floor of the Kenansville educational building.

In 1948, another parsonage was purchased. This parsonage was the home of the ministers until 1966 when it was sold to Oliver P. Boyer, Jr. It is located next to Liberty Hall, and is pictured on the following page.



The present parsonage, pictured below, was built in 1966. The deed reads: Margaret M. Williamson, Robert F. Williamson, Hazel Scott, Stephen M. Williamson, Nancy A. Williamson to the trustees: Larry Warrington, Stephen Williamson, Hazel Scott, Eloise Ryder, Lattie Houston, Paul E. Dail, Willard Johnson, E. A. Newton.

This parsonage is owned by the Kenansville Church. Rent is paid by the other three churches to be used for the upkeep of the property.



THE KENANSVILLE PARISH: PHILOSOPHY, STRUCTURE, PROGRAM

The history of the Kenansville Parish of The United Methodist Church would not be complete without elaborating on the philosophy, structure, program, and brief history of the Parish as it now exists.

Prior to Annual Conference in 1973, the Rev. Albert F. Fisher, then Goldsboro District Superintendent, realized that the possibility of a cooperative parish situation existed in and around the Kenansville Charge. At that time there was only one other cooperative group of churches identified as a "parish" in the North Carolina Conference.

The term "parish" denotes several different meanings, but for our purposes it is used to mean simply two or more churches working together in programs and services best done cooperatively.

The author was appointed and challenged to develop such a cooperative venture among the four-point circuit with possible visions of expanding the program with other surrounding churches. One must understand that for a number of years Methodist ministers and laypersons have had to cope with two potentially precluding situations toward better ministry and mission within the small membership church. The stigma of a pastor serving more than one church...especially three or four...has caused ministers and laity alike to feel that they are less important in the eyes of the "larger" appointments and station churches. For several years, Methodism went through a period of time when churches desired to go station as soon as they were able to pay minimum salary, sometimes even less. Subsequently, the Conference is now having to deal with some less than desirable situations.

The author must admit to second thoughts when he first heard "four churches!" Mr. Fisher, however, presented the challenge of the parish in such a way that proved convincing and exciting. This minister, thereafter, became dedicated to the philosophy. The task still was before him to sell the concept to the people. After a summer of establishing rapport and getting acquainted, a Pastor's Advisory Committee was selected to assist in surveying the needs of the churches and communities, to develop the guidelines and structure of the Parish, and to plan and implement programs. This committee, composed of three members from each church, began functioning in late August, 1973, and by the November Charge Conference the structure and guidelines were submitted for approval and the Parish Council was elected upon nomination by the respective local Administrative Boards.

The Parish Council began meeting in January, 1974, which we consider as the official beginning of the Kenansville Parish.

The first Parish Council was as follows:

Kenansville - Dixon Hall, Bruce Butler, Mrs. Sally Ingram
Woodland - Rodney Kornegay, Mrs. Willard Westbrook, Robert Mark Sarecta - Carey A. Williams, Sr.; Lebron Williams, Carson Malpass
Wesley - Snodie Wilson, Frank Whaley, D. V. Grady

Even before the Parish was organized, changes occurred in a positive way concerning the financial program. Mrs. Dixon Hall was the new charge treasurer in 1973, and in a meeting of the local church treasurers, it was agreed that all conference and district benevolences, and all other funds except the local church expenditures would be sent to her for disbursement. The pastor's salary and expenses, and petty cash, heretofore were the only items handled by the charge treasurer.

Soon after the Parish was established, it was evident that there was a need for secretarial help for improved administration by the pastor. A weekly newsletter had already been a valuable instrument for communication for several months. Mrs. Conrad (Mary Ann) Jenkins was hired on a part-time basis. She later assumed the responsibilities of financial secretary in January, 1975. Mrs. Dixon Hall is still the Parish treasurer. When Mrs. Jenkins obtained work fulltime, Mrs. Charles (Joan) Smith was employed.

Prior to November, 1974, smoothness of operation was still lacking from an administrative-clerical standpoint, since the minister worked out of the parsonage, the mimeograph machine was at the Kenansville Church, and the secretary worked out of her home. The Parish Council voted to rent office space in the new Worthington Building across from Duplin General Hospital. This has been a significant step in not only providing adequate space and communication but also in placing the concept of the Parish "on the street." A large sign in front promotes our image and availability.

There is a temptation to delineate in great detail the programs and services accomplished over the last three years, however, space and expense of printing will not permit. May we abbreviate instead some of the cooperative efforts.

Prior to 1973, so some have remarked, the only time the folks from the four churches got together was at Charge Conference and then only for an hour. We have had several occasions to get together. PARISH DAY at Camp Don Lee in 1974 when 126 persons from all four churches traveled two hours from home for a day of worship, food, fun, and fellowship; and again at Camp Rockfish in 1975 when we had 90 on a Labor Day weekend. In connection with those events we have had YOUTH RETREATS over the same weekends.

In addition, we have had three Fifth Sunday Worship Services at Sarecta, our largest sanctuary, on March 31, 1974, when over 150 persons from all four churches filled the church. Then, again, on Easter Sunday, 1975, and on November 30, 1975, when Bishop Robert M. Blackburn, Raleigh Area, was our guest. These services not only serve as a unifying tool but allow the minister to swell with pride at seeing most of the people from his charge in one location at one time.

There have been other occasions such as Holy Week, Thanksgiving, Holy Communion, Parish Confirmation Classes, Administrative Board Workshop, which have brought the people together.

In the area of service to others, they have been together in spirit as they have accelerated the program of missions. In 1974, the children were challenged to save and contribute a "mile of pennies" to the Methodist Home for Children in Raleigh. A "mile of pennies" laid side by side amounts to \$844.40. They topped this with \$880. Dr. Marvin Vick, Superintendent of the Home, visited the Parish on November 17 as the guest preacher; and on December 7, 1974, forty-seven children and adults visited and toured the Home.

In 1975, the children once again responded in a similar program, giving \$500 to the Children's Home and \$500 toward scholarships for underprivileged children to attend one of our camps. In addition, our Easter Sunday offering for World Hunger was \$500. Never before had the Kenansville Parish as a group of four churches done as much in missions.

In 1976, thus far, we have already raised over \$1,000 for World Hunger during the first five months of the year, and the children are just beginning their "mile of pennies" for the Children's Home and a foreign mission project.

The stewardship has been reflected also in regular contributions as well with the budget and giving increasing by almost 40% in three years. It is significantly indicated also in the full acceptance of not only the Single Figure for 1976 but of all other conference apportionments. This is the first time that all four churches have done so in recent years, and this was accomplished even though there has been a 37% increase in the last three years.

Lest one should think that we have become an ideal, fully-dedicated Parish, it should be noted that we have only scratched the surface of what can be done and should be. The development of the Parish is still a challenging reality with many more things to accomplish. It serves now as an example throughout the North Carolina Conference of what can happen when churches cooperate with one another. In a recent

Conference mailing (May, 1976) to all ministers, an insert by the United Methodist Parish Fellowship stated: "The Kenansville Parish in the Goldsboro District is a prime example of a Strong Pastoral Charge. This charge is made up of four congregations served by one pastor and a secretary. Program planning occurs through a Parish Council and they see themselves as 'ONE CHURCH IN FOUR LOCATIONS'." The author thanks the writer of this insert for not only publicizing our efforts but for undergirding our faith in THE PARISH. We believe it is the salvation of the small membership church.

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MY LOVING WIFE, JANE, the best minister's wife in the North Carolina Conference.



JACK M. BENFIELD 1973-76