

Chapel on South Flyco

**The
Story
of**



**Lea's Chapel
United Methodist Church
Person County
North Carolina**

**by
Ben Lacy Rose
and
Preston Satterfield III**

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The
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Person County, North Carolina

1750-2000 AD

by
Ben Lacy Rose and Preston Satterfield III

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Ben L. Rose

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Foreword

This book has been prepared as part of the 250th Anniversary celebration of Lea's Chapel United Methodist Church, which was once called "The Chapel on South Hyco."

This is more of a *story* than it is a *history* because so many of the facts and dates about Lea's Chapel are not known to us. For example, we do not know when the first building was constructed; we do not know who built it; we have no rolls of those who worshipped here in the early years; we do not know the exact date when a Methodist church was formed here. There are numerous traditions concerning these items, but some of those traditions have been found to be in conflict with documentary evidence in existing court and church records.

This is the story of a community and a people who have worshipped God in this place for two hundred and fifty years. The Chapel on South Hyco has a proud and interesting heritage, and we have tried to present some of that in this book.

June 2000

Ben Lacy Rose
Preston Satterfield III

Authors

Ben Lacy Rose is a retired Presbyterian minister who became interested in Lea's Chapel because, in his genealogical research, he discovered that his ancestors played significant roles in the early years of the chapel. He is descended from William Lea, Eunice Lea, Anness Lea, John McNeill, Alexander Rose, Duncan Rose, and Hugh McAden and is a cousin of George C. McNeill who deeded Lea's Chapel to the Methodist Episcopal Church. Dr. Rose is a native of Fayetteville, NC, educated at Davidson College and Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, VA where he earned the degree of Doctor of Theology. He served pastorates in Presbyterian churches in North Carolina and Virginia, and was a Chaplain in the U.S. Army during World War II. For 17 years he was Professor of Preaching in Union Seminary in Richmond. He and his wife, Anne, now live in Richmond, VA.

Preston (Pete) Satterfield III is a retired Roxboro, NC business man who has been a member of Lea's Chapel for almost fifty years. His family roots are deep in Person county and he has a keen interest in the early history of the area, including Caswell county. He was educated in the public schools of Person county, and in college at N.C. State University in Civil Engineering with a construction option. He was the founder and President of Roxboro Concrete Services, Inc. His civic activities include service as Vice-Chairman and Chairman of the Economic Development Commission, the Person County Memorial Hospital, the Roxboro Chamber of Commerce and the Roxboro Rotary Club. He served in the US Marine Corps Reserve. He has served Lea's Chapel by being a Sunday School Teacher, Lay Leader and a choir member. He also served as Sunday School Superintendent, Trustee and Board Chairman, and, along with his wife, as UMYF youth leader. He and his wife, Jan, live in Roxboro, NC.

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Mission Statement:

Lea's Chapel reaches out in faith and hope
as we witness the Love of Christ to all.

Address:

Lea's Chapel United Methodist Church
6415 Leasburg Road
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Chapter 1

The Beginning and Early Years of Lea's Chapel

Lea's Chapel is probably the oldest continuously used site of Christian worship in Person County, North Carolina. On the spot where the present church now stands devout families have been worshipping since long before the American Revolution.

There is no record of the precise date when the first chapel was built, but it is thought to have been around 1750. The name of John Lea is traditionally connected with the first chapel, but the building was probably built by the citizens of the community with John Lea as an initiator and leader. All of the grants to John Lea, the first being around 1752, were for land located more than a mile from the site of the chapel. The land on which the chapel was built¹ was not granted to anyone until it was granted to William Lea in 1779. William Lea, who received his first grant around 1753 for land on South Hico² creek, lived only a short distance from the chapel. The records show that at one time he was appointed "overseer of the road" (which meant that he had to keep the road in good repair) "from the chappel (sic) to Chas Stevens." So we know that William lived nearby and had a part in the erection of the first chapel. John and William were apparently the Leas from whom Lea's Chapel took its name.

The first building was probably erected as a public meeting house on land owned by the Earl of Granville. It was not unusual for property in the Granville District to be used in this manner. The minutes of the Orange county court show that two petitions "to build a public grist mill on land belonging to the Earl of Granville" were approved and the minutes note that Granville's agents were to be notified. We know that some of the Earl's agents were lay readers in the Church of England and so would have been sympathetic to building a place of worship

¹ See article in Appendix on "Who Owned the Land on Which Lea's Chapel was Originally Built?"

² Hyco or Hico is the shortened form of the Indian word, *hycotee*, which means "turkey buzzards' roost."

on Granville land. There were a number of such public "meeting houses" in North Carolina in the eighteenth century.

"The Granville District" was created in 1744 when the king of England settled a dispute with the Earl of Granville by giving him all of North Carolina between 35 degrees, 34 minutes north parallel and the Virginia-North Carolina line, which was in fact the northern half of the colony. What is now Person, Caswell and Orange counties were in the western less-populated portion of the Granville District. The Earl never came to this country, but his agents in the colony granted land and collected rents. A "grant" was not a free gift. The land was actually sold for a very reasonable price and the owner promised to pay an annual quitrent -- a form of tax -- "forever." The wooded knoll on which Lea's Chapel was built was land which belonged to the Lord Granville but which, for reasons unknown to us, was never granted to anyone.

When the colonies declared their independence in 1776, the people of North Carolina within a few months adopted a constitution and created a state government. The state confiscated all the land in the Granville District that had not been granted to individuals. In 1779 the State of North Carolina granted the land on which the chapel was standing to William Lea.

Shortly after the King gave the Granville District to the Earl, the Granville Land Office was opened and immediately settlers began to move into the area and to petition for grants. By this time the Indians had left the Piedmont section of North Carolina and moved westward to the mountains. With good arable land available at low prices farmers, artisans and professionals began to move into the area from Virginia and Pennsylvania. Two of the early immigrants who came from Virginia were John Lea and William Lea. John and William were not brothers, but they both came from the same section of Virginia where there were other Lea families, so they were almost certainly kin to each other.

There were Leas in Virginia before 1700, most of whom had emigrated from England. At that time in England there were Leas in Cheshire, Wiltshire and several other British shires, but there is no documentary evidence to show from what parts of Britain the Virginia Leas came. The names of Lea, Lee and Leigh, being pronounced the same, were occasionally confused

by county clerks. In some of the records of land grants to John Lea and William Lea their names are spelled "Lee." Later some Leas adopted the spelling of Lee. But by 1700 these three families in Virginia and North Carolina were clearly distinguishable.

There were many other Leas in this area of North Carolina at that time. Indeed there were so many that clerks began to distinguish some of them with identifying phrases. The 1755 tax list of Orange County NC has on it the names of eight Leas, six of whom lived in the general area of Lea's Chapel. Those on the tax list who lived near the chapel were: John Lea, who was designated "John Lea of Richland Creek", William Lea, who was referred to as "William Lea of South Hico" and later as "Capt. William Lea," William Lea of Cobbs Creek, James Lea of Cobbs Creek, George Lea and Zachariah Lea. On the 1755 tax list were also James Lea of Country Line and William Lea of Country Line Creek who lived 15 miles to the west on Country Line Creek. That stream was called "Country Line Creek" because it emptied into the Dan River on the line between North Carolina and Virginia and, at that time, Virginia and North Carolina were thought of as two different countries.

A petition circulated in 1771 requesting the formation of a new county in the northern part of Orange county was signed by eighteen Leas. Seven of the Leas on the 1755 tax list signed the petition, but William Lea of Cobbs Creek had died in 1762. The other eleven on the 1771 petition were: Barnett Lea, Edmund Lea, Elliott Lea, Henry Lea, James Lea of Kilgore's Branch, James Lea son of James (KB), John Lea of Country Line Creek, Major Lea, Thomas Lea, William Lea of Leasburg, and another William Lea whose identity is uncertain.

We can identify 33 other Leas in this area of North Carolina before 1800. The list includes: Abner Lea, Absolom Lea, Benjamin Lea, Carter Lea, Gabriel Lea, Gabriel B. Lea, Col. George Lea, George Lea of Orange county, George Lea son of Zachariah, Ira Lea, James Lea (Jimmy Shoo Boot), James Lea (little), James Lea (stuttering), James Lea son of William of Leasburg, John Lea (Canebrake), John Lea (Halifax), John Lea (widow's son), Luke Lea, Major Lea Jr, Owen Lea, Solomon Lea, Vincent Lea, William Lea son of Gabriel, and William Archer Lea.

In the records of Orange, Caswell and Person counties between 1752 and 1800 there are seven different William Leas, six different John Leas and six different James Leas. It is no wonder that county clerks sought ways to distinguish them from each other by using identifying phrases.

Lea's Chapel, in the early records, is referred to as: "the chapel on South Hico," "Hyco chapel," "the chapel" (spelled also chaple, chapple, chappell), "the meeting house," "Lea's chapel," "Lea's chapel on south Hico," and "chapel church." Where the road west of the chapel crosses Hyco creek is, in county records, referred to as "Capt Lea's ford," "Capt. Lea's bridge" and "Lea's bridge." It was also popularly known as "church bridge" and "chapel bridge" and the hill to the creek as "chapel hill."

The earliest written reference that we have to the chapel is in the Journal of Rev. Hugh McAden, a Presbyterian minister, who was sent on a missionary trip to North Carolina by his presbytery in Pennsylvania. Travelling on horseback McAden crossed the Dan River in August 1755 and stopped at the home of "Solomon Debow on Hico." On August 5th McAden reports that he "rode ten miles to the chapel on South Hico and preached to a number of church people and some Presbyterians." By "church people" he meant members of the Church of England. Several years later McAden returned, settled near the present town of Milton, NC and served Presbyterian churches in the area.

Francis Asbury, who became one of the founding bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, when itinerating in North Carolina in 1780, recorded in his Journal that he lodged in the home of John Lee (sic), and on Monday, August 7th, "preached at Lee's (sic) Chapel in Caswell County to about sixty people." In his Journal Asbury also wrote, "The roads are bad. I have my carriage to refit almost every week. This is Caswell county; the poor people have been much put to it the past year for bread, but the present year they have exceeding fine corn."

Tradition has it that in its early years Lea's Chapel was connected with the Church of England. Since we know that John Lea's wife, Ann Carter, was baptized in Christ Church Parish in Virginia, we can assume that they were of Anglican persuasion. Further evidence of the connection with the Church of England is in an extant Anglican Prayer Book which was listed in the

inventory of Capt. William Lea's estate, and which became the property of Capt. Lea's daughter, Eunice, and her husband Alexander Rose. Unfortunately none of the early records of Lea's Chapel have survived and so we do not know exactly what connection it had with the Church of England, which was at that time the established church in the colony of North Carolina.

When Orange Co NC was formed in 1752 from portions of Granville, Johnston and Bladen counties, the parish of St. Matthew's was also formed with boundaries the same as those of Orange county. When formed, Orange county had 3,573 taxable whites, many of whom were nominally Anglicans. St. Matthew's Parish, with its seat in Hillsborough NC, did not have a rector until 1767 when the Rev. George Micklejohn was appointed to that position by the Governor. In the meantime the parish was served by visiting clergy of the Anglican Church.

Records show that St. Matthew's Parish in the latter part of the eighteenth century had at least three chapels: St. Jude, located in what is now Alamance county, St. Mary's, located a few miles northeast of Hillsborough, and New Hope, which was located on the site of the present town of Chapel Hill, NC. From this chapel the town took its name. In none of the extant records of St. Matthew's Parish is there any mention of a chapel on South Hico. We know, however, that the Rev. Micklejohn ministered to families in that area. Alexander Rose, who lived about three miles from Lea's Chapel, recorded in his family Bible that in 1777 his son, Duncan, "was baptized by the Rev'd Geo. Mickle John (sic), minister of the Gospel for the cot'y of Orange of Parish of St. Matthews." Duncan Rose is buried in Lea's Chapel churchyard. The Rose Bible shows also that Micklejohn baptized six other children of Alexander Rose and his wife, Eunice Lea. Beverly Rose, their son, in a letter to his sister said that their mother and father are buried at the Chapel.

Lea's Chapel in its early years, therefore, appears to have been what was called a "plantation chapel," one which was *not owned* by the Church of England but was under private control and was used for preaching and services by the rector of a nearby parish and also by visiting preachers and evangelists of other denominations. It is doubtful that Rev. Hugh McAden, who was a Presbyterian and not an Anglican, would have received permission in 1755 to preach in Lea's Chapel if it had

belonged to the Church of England. The chapel and the land around it were granted in 1779 to William Lea. He willed it to his daughter, Anness, and she in turn willed it to her grandson, George C. McNeill, who in 1833 gave it to "The Methodist Episcopal Church." It has belonged to the Methodist Church ever since.

The majority of the persons who lived in the area of Lea's Chapel and who worshipped there in its early days were the owners of small farms, ranging in size from a few acres to a thousand. Very few if any of them owned plantations of more than three thousand acres. In this the colony of North Carolina was different from the adjoining colonies of Virginia and South Carolina. Virginia and South Carolina had numerous plantations of thousands of acres worked by hundreds of slaves. As a result, Virginia developed a plantation culture with a definite class system -- aristocracy at the top, indentured servants at the bottom and small land-owners, artisans and professionals in between. Contributing to the existence of large plantations in Virginia and South Carolina was the fact that Virginia and South Carolina had excellent easily available deep-water ports while the coast of North Carolina had no such. The farmers of North Carolina were thus largely cut off from international trade and did not develop many large plantations and the class culture that went with it. There were a few extensive land holdings in the coastal section of North Carolina, but the Piedmont section, which was then referred to as "the back country," was composed almost exclusively of small and middle-sized farms worked by the owners themselves, sometimes with the help of two or three slaves.

It was also true that in Virginia there was an elite class that held most of the positions of responsibility in the government. Middle-class citizens were generally denied positions of influence. But in North Carolina, without a class-system, responsible positions in the government were open to all persons. That was probably one reason why the Leas and many other families moved from Virginia to North Carolina in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Here they achieved positions of responsibility in the local and the state government; here they became sheriffs, Justices of the Peace, officers in the militia, and state legislators.

Chapter 2

Early Personalities

History is, in truth, the combined stories of persons who lived in a certain place at a certain time. The history of Lea's Chapel is the collected stories of the personalities who lived and worked and worshipped there. We have records of some of these persons, but unfortunately the stories of many of them have been lost or were never recorded. In this chapter we shall tell briefly the stories of some of these early personalities.

John Lea, who tradition says was responsible for the building of the original Lea's Chapel, was one of the first Leas to settle in this area of North Carolina. He is identified in county records as *John Lea of Richland Creek* because most of his property was on and around Richland Creek. John was married in Virginia to Ann Carter, the daughter of George and Elizabeth Carter of St. George's Parish, Spotsylvania Co VA. In February 1745 George and Elizabeth Carter deeded 185 acres of land in Spotsylvania Co VA to John and Ann Lea "in consideration of natural affection." Seven years later, when John and Ann Lea sold the same 185 acres to Thomas McNeal, John was designated as "John Lea of Orange County, North Carolina." So, some time between 1745 and 1752, John and Ann moved to North Carolina. John received several grants of land in the vicinity of Lea's Chapel, the first around 1752, described as, "640 acres in Orange Co NC lying on South Hico Creek beginning at or near the mouth of Rich Land Creek running down both sides of sd creek." He was granted 770 more acres in 1754 "on both sides of South Hico and Richland Creek," and 700 more acres in 1761 "adjacent to his own line." John Lea is on the tax list in 1777 of Caswell County with 1750 acres in the St. Lawrence district.

In the late 1760's a number of persons in Orange Co NC became unhappy with the local government. They felt that some local officials were dishonest and that taxes were too high. Finding that they could get no relief from the governor, they took matters in their own hands. Calling themselves the Regulators, they caused much civil disruption in and around

Hillsborough. John Lea, at that time, was sheriff of Orange county. From *The Colonial Records of North Carolina* we learn that, as John went to serve a paper on one of the Regulators, he was seized by five men, tied to a tree and flogged.

John was a Justice of the Peace in 1777 and as such he opened the first court in the newly formed county of Caswell. It is significant that Francis Asbury, who was sent to the American colonies by John Wesley to foster Methodism, when travelling through this area in August 1780, lodged with John Lea; which shows that John was a devoted Christian and a well-respected person in the community. The house in which John and his wife Ann lived and raised a large family of children is still standing, about six miles from Lea's Chapel. John died prior to September 1781 when his will was proved in Caswell county. The will mentions seven children: Edmund, Elliott, Millie, Phoebe, Elizabeth, Carter and Owen. Since his wife, Ann, is not mentioned in his will, we assume that she died before 1778 when John wrote the will. We do not know who his father was, but John was probably a brother of William Lea of Cobbs Creek. John is buried in the family cemetery near his old home in what is now the Olive Hill community.

William Lea of South Hyco (also called Capt. William Lea) was born in England around 1715 and came to America with his parents before 1731. The family settled in King & Queen Co VA and William's father is known in the records of Virginia as *John Lea of King & Queen County*. William was the oldest of three children. He had a brother James and a sister Betsy. William's father died and his mother, Ann, married Thomas Creathers and moved to Spotsylvania Co VA. The three children chose Creathers as their guardian, but a month later William changed his mind and chose as his guardian Zachary Taylor, who was the grandfather of U.S. President Zachary Taylor. In the settlement of his father's estate, William received one hundred acres of land in Spotsylvania Co VA on which he settled. There he married and began to raise a family. His wife's name was Frances, but we do not know her family name. William tended his farm and apparently served as constable in Spotsylvania county for a time, but in 1752 he sold his land to Thomas White, who had married his sister Betsy, and moved to

North Carolina.

William petitioned for a grant of land in Orange Co NC on South Hyco creek and a survey of it was ordered in 1753. William built a home and settled his family on this land. In 1755 he was appointed Captain of the local militia and after that he was referred to as "Capt. Lea." The Orange county militia was called out by Governor Tryon in 1768 and again in 1771 to suppress the Regulators, and it is possible that Capt. Lea participated in these engagements, including the Battle of Alamance, which took place not far from his home. Capt. Lea's name does not appear on any list of officers or soldiers from North Carolina who participated in the Revolution. In 1776 he would have been over 60 years of age and was probably considered too old for such duty.

Capt. Lea was a respected citizen of the community and was quite active in local politics. In addition to the usual services as overseer of the road and various jury duties, he was for a long time Trustee (Treasurer) of the county and was also for a number of years a Justice of the Peace. Capt. Lea and his wife, Frances, had five children: Frances who married James Hendrix and moved to South Carolina; Eunice who married Alexander Rose and lived not far from Capt. Lea's home; Anness who married first John McNeill and second James Cochran and who also settled in the area of Lea's Chapel; Elizabeth who married James Lea, son of William Lea of Cobbs Creek; and George who married Lucy Tolbert and moved to Georgia. George Lea's granddaughter, Maggie Lea, married Gen. Sam Houston of Texas fame and raised a fine family of eight children by him.

Capt. Lea was not a rich man, but he was not a poor man either. To his original land grant of 332 acres on South Hico creek, he added several other tracts until he owned almost a thousand acres. The inventory of his estate after his death listed two slaves. Before he wrote his will in 1802, his wife Frances must have died for she is not mentioned in the will. Capt. Lea was 87 when he wrote his will, which begins thus: "Being aged and in a weak and enfeebled state of body but sound mind and memory and reflecting how uncertain in the date of this present life, I make my last will & testament." James Cochran, Capt. Lea's son-in-law, came into court in December 1803 and alleged that Capt Lea "has lost the reason of his natural power and is non

compos mentis." The court arranged for a jury to ascertain the truth of the allegation, but Capt Lea died before the jury could be assembled. An inventory of his estate was presented to the court in June 1804 by his son-in-law Alexander Rose, who was one of the executors named in the will. The inventory of Capt. William Lea's estate, made by Alexander Rose, included, among many other items, these: "Two Negroe Fellows, Bristol and Cyrus....1 cow & yearling, 1 nohorned cow & ditto, deduct the value of the old cow's calf as since is dead, ...1 brass clock, 1 bedstead & cord, Capt. Lea's easing chair was without a bottom until one was put in....1 ten gallon Rundlett at Mr. Thos. Meeley's not returned, 2 barrels fallen to pieces for want of a good place to put them in, 1 old scyth blade broke, the remains of a vial of castor oil, Capt. Lea's armchair at James Cochran's, ditto house Bible at James Cochran's, there was a glass tumbler of his but the rats throw'd it off of the shelf and broke it all to pieces, 2 sermon books, 1 Book of Common Prayer at James Lea's."

Capt. Lea is probably buried in Lea's Chapel churchyard. Several years ago a marble headstone with the name "William Lea" engraved on it was found in the churchyard with no grave anywhere near. At that time the southwest corner of the church building was sagging and needed such a stone to support it. The church committee instructed the workmen to use the headstone as underpinning for the corner. The committee felt that no place was more appropriate for this stone to be preserved than as a cornerstone of the church the Leas had founded. Since then the church has been enlarged by the addition of Sunday School rooms and a fellowship hall so that the gravestone is now so far under the building that it would be impossible to retrieve it. Whether this stone marked the grave of Capt. William Lea, we shall never know.

Capt. Lea had a brother, James Lea, who came from Virginia to North Carolina and settled on Kilgore's Branch two miles west of the present town of Leasburg. He was known as *James Lea of Kilgore's Branch*. His son, William, became a prominent merchant and was instrumental in the establishment of Leasburg, where his business was located. It was for him that the town was named. Gabriel Lea, another son of James Lea of Kilgore's Branch, was the father of Solomon and Lorenzo Lea,

both of whom became prominent Methodist ministers. Rev. Solomon Lea was at one time president of Greensboro College. These Leas of Leasburg worshipped at Bethany meeting house which was located a mile and a half north of Leasburg. When the Leasburg Methodist Church was formed, they transferred to that church. Miss Wilhelmina Lea, a daughter of Rev. Solomon Lea, says in a memoir that her father often preached at Lea's Chapel and that she much enjoyed attending services there.

Anness Lea was born January 13, 1761, the daughter of Capt. William Lea. At the age of nineteen Anness (sometimes spelled Annis) married John McNeill, a successful merchant in the area, and bore him six children: Frances, Sarah, Hosea, William Lea, John H., and George. John McNeill died in October 1791 and Anness, at age 30, was left as a rich widow with six children. James Cochran, an ambitious young bachelor in the community, recognized a good thing when he saw it and married Anness a little over a year after John McNeill died. James Cochran died in 1807 and Anness herself died in 1821. Two of her descendants distinguished themselves by their public service. Her grandson, James Cochran Dobbin, was in the US Congress as a Representative from North Carolina from 1845 to 1847 and served as Secretary of the Navy, from 1853 to 1857, under President Franklin Pierce. Dr. William Louis Poteat (1886-1958), a great grandson of Anness, was for many years the distinguished president of Wake Forest College and highly regarded in the state and the nation for his integrity and his Christian commitment.

James Cochran, Anness Lea's second husband, served as a Justice of the Peace of Person county and represented Person county in the NC State legislature in 1802, 1803, 1804, 1805 and 1806. He was a senator from Person county in state legislature in 1807. James Cochran tried but failed to have his father-in-law, Capt. William Lea declared non compos mentis, and when Alexander Rose presented in court the will of Capt. Lea to be probated, Cochran objected. The court ruled against Cochran and the will was admitted to record. James Cochran died in 1807 and is buried in the chapel churchyard, the oldest marked grave there.

Alexander Rose and his wife, Eunice (Lea) Rose lived first at what is now Roseville NC, but moved in 1794 to a farm near the chapel. Alexander was born in Scotland and came to this country around 1755. His uncle, Duncan Rose, was a merchant in Petersburg VA and for a time "Sandy" (as he was called) served as a drummer, traveling and selling goods in "the back country" of North Carolina. Around 1765 he settled in what was then Orange Co NC and for a time operated his own merchandising business. In 1774 he married Eunice Lea, the daughter of Capt. William Lea, who bore him ten children. In their family Bible, which is still extant, Alexander records that several of their children were baptized by Rev. George Micklejohn, rector of St. Matthew's Parish of the Church of England. Alexander served as Treasurer of Person county and also as executor of the will of Capt. William Lea, his father-in-law. When Alexander and his family moved from Roseville, their new dwelling, which they called "Rose Hill," was only a few hundred yards from Lea's Chapel. Beverly Rose, their youngest son, in a letter to his sister Elizabeth, remembered their "childhood days when we were children together playing about Hico Creek and the bridge over it, and then the old Chapel where our father and many others are sleeping in death."

Duncan Rose, whose tombstone is in the Lea's Chapel cemetery, was born May 9, 1777, the son of Alexander Rose and his wife Eunice Lea (the daughter of Capt. William Lea). Duncan was baptized by the Rev. George Micklejohn, rector of St. Matthew's Parish, and married Sally McAden, the daughter of Rev. Hugh McAden. It was McAden who reported in his Journal that, on a missionary journey through North Carolina, he preached in "the chapel on South Hico" in 1755. Duncan Rose and Sally, his wife, and their nine children lived in what is now the village of Roseville, which was named for him. Duncan commuted to Roxboro where for forty years he served Person county in numerous capacities including over twenty years as Clerk of the Superior Court. Duncan's death on October 5, 1839 was caused by his falling from the loft of his barn. Miss Wilhelmina Lea says in a letter dated 1903 that John McAden Rose of Fayetteville NC, the son of Duncan and Sally Rose, visited Caswell and Person counties and gave her father money

to have the Duncan's grave marked with a stone. Duncan's wife, Sally, died in 1864 and is buried in Greensboro NC where she lived with her daughter during the last years of her life.

Thomas McNeill owned the land northeast of and across the road from Lea's Chapel and adjacent to the tract of land on which the chapel was built. Thomas was born in Londonderry, North Ireland, around 1724, married Ann Tolbert, and came to this country around 1750, landing at Norfolk, Virginia. He and Ann settled first in Spotsylvania Co VA where he had business dealings with John Lea. He moved his family to North Carolina before 1777 when he appears on the tax list of Caswell county. Thomas' parents in Ireland were persons of some wealth and their bequests to him made him a man of some means. He in turn passed on much of his estate to his son, John. Thomas and Ann had eight children: Thomas, John, Benjamin, Elizabeth, Nancy, Mary, Patsy and Lois. In 1779 he signed a deed with a bold signature, but three years later, shortly before his death at age 57, he only affixed "his X mark" to a deed. It is possible that he had had a stroke and was partially paralyzed. A short time later, in 1781, he died. His wife, Ann, outlived him by almost 40 years and died around 1820 at the age of 86.

John McNeill, the son of Thomas and Ann McNeill, was a prominent merchant and planter who owned a store a few miles west of Lea's Chapel near the present town of Leasburg. On Sept 8, 1780 he married Anness Lea, daughter of Capt. Lea, and they had six children. Like his father Thomas (see sketch above), John died young and rather suddenly. In July 1791 he petitioned the court and was granted a license to have an ordinary (i.e. tavern) in his store, but three months later he died without a will and his wife qualified in court as his executor. When he died at the age of 37, he was one the richest men in the county. The inventory of his estate shows that he was owed money by about 200 persons in Caswell and nearby counties. John's widow, Anness, married James Cochran.

William Lea of Cobbs Creek came from Virginia and first appears in North Carolina on the 1755 tax list. He was a contemporary of William Lea of South Hico (i.e. of Capt. Wm.

Lea) but, although some writers have confused them, they were not the same person. Since Cobbs Creek is located between Lea's Chapel and Leasburg, and since it appears that he was a brother of John Lea of Richland Creek, it is a good guess that William Lea (CC) was also a patron of the chapel. William died intestate before Sept.1762 when the court of Orange county recorded an inventory of his estate filed by his wife, Mary, and his son, John. Mary was apparently William's second wife; she outlived him by 22 years and died in 1784. We know that John, James, George and Sarah were children of William Lea (CC), but some persons believe that Barnett, Richard, Henry and Zachariah were also his sons. There is nothing that shows who his father was.

James Lea of Cobbs Creek was the son of William Lea of Cobbs Creek, probably by William's first wife.. It appears that James Lea (CC) married Elizabeth Lea, daughter of Capt. William Lea, and had seven children: Abner, Richard, Benjamin, Naomi, Frances, Eunice and Annis.

William Sergeant was an early resident of the area. In 1754 he owned land adjacent to the tract being surveyed for John Lea on South Hico and Richlands creeks. William's wife's name was Sarah, but we do not know her family name. He is described in the records as "planter" and "gentleman," and when he died in 1768 he bequeathed 1164 acres to various family members. In his will, which was witnessed by his neighbor John Lea, he mentions children: Thomas, Joseph, James, Stephen, Elizabeth and another daughter who married Joseph Gold. It is believe that he had another son, William Jr.

All these persons are a part of the history of Lea's Chapel. Each one contributed to its life and in all likelihood was blessed by its influence. Other persons that settled in the area of Lea's Chapel were: William Fulcher, William Fuller, Joseph Gold, Robert Mitchell, Robert Moore, Henry Rogers, and Samuel Winstead. Other prominent family names in the community at that time were: Dollarhide, McCoy, McGehee, O'Briant, Snipes, Thaxton, Vanhook, Wagstaff and Whitfield.

Chapter 3

The Rev. George Micklejohn

The Rev. George Micklejohn, who was rector of St. Matthew's Parish, Hillsborough, NC and who almost certainly preached and held services at Lea's Chapel in the late eighteenth century, was a very interesting and colorful character.

A Scotchman, born around 1717 near Berwick-on-Tweed, Micklejohn is said to have served with an English regiment under Frederick the Great, King of Prussia, and with the Duke of Cumberland at the Battle of Culloden in 1746 where the Scottish clansmen under "Bonnie Prince Charlie" were disastrously defeated by the English.

Receiving a degree from Cambridge University, Micklejohn was licensed as a minister in the Church of England by the Bishop of London on March 12, 1766 and, in that same year, was sent to North Carolina as a missionary by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Governor Tryon first sent him to Rowan County NC, but a few months later appointed him the rector of St. Matthew's Parish, Orange Co NC, where we find him settled in April 1767.

Described as "tall, dark, large-boned and gaunt, with harsh features and a slow and deliberate manner in the pulpit and out," Micklejohn was about fifty years of age when he arrived in America. Some time after his arrival in Hillsborough, the parson married Elizabeth Lockhart and had seven children by her.

Somewhere in his very eventful life, quite probably before he came to this country, Micklejohn developed a deep distrust of women. The story is told that, on one occasion, Micklejohn was going on a trip and entrusted his money-belt, in which he carried most of his cash, to a friend for safekeeping. When he returned from the trip and asked the friend for the belt, the friend replied that he had given it to his wife and would go and get it. "What!" shouted the parson, "You gave me money to a woman?" and he was quite frantic until the friend had returned with the belt and he had counted the money.

Beside his deep distrust of women, Parson Micklejohn had at least one other failing: like most Scotsmen, he loved good whiskey. He is reported to have had "a fondness for strong drink

and a Scotch capacity for resisting its influence." He was able to drink steadily and freely without ever getting drunk. It is said that on one occasion he bribed a man to come to church by giving him a drink from the flask which he regularly carried on his person. The parson also loved good horses and had a reputation for riding only the best.

About the time that Micklejohn arrived in Hillsborough, the Regulators began their protests against dishonesty and abuses of power by county officials. Hillsborough was the focus of their activities. At first the Regulators had the sympathy of most of the citizens for there was general agreement that reforms were needed, but, as time went on and the Regulators became unreasonable and began to use violent means, they lost most of their public support. At the first Parson Micklejohn worked diligently to assist the Regulators in obtaining redress for their grievances. On several occasions he served as mediator between the Regulators and the authorities. His efforts, however, to achieve a peaceful settlement of differences were not successful and the tension grew. The situation became so bad that in September 1768 Governor Tryon personally led military forces against the Regulators and they encamped not far from Hillsborough. The governor invited the Rev. Mr. Micklejohn to hold services for his assembled troops. The parson accepted the invitation and preached such a moving sermon that the governor arranged to have it printed and distributed quite widely. Micklejohn chose as his text for the sermon Romans 13:1-2 where the Apostle Paul says:

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, for there is no power but of God. The powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the powers, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation."

The parson minced no words in condemning those who oppose duly constituted civil authority. He warned his hearers that those who disobey king and governor would incur divine wrath and bring damnation upon themselves.

Whether Micklejohn's sermon had anything to do with it or not, the tension subsided and the governor and his troops returned to their places. Two years later, however, the Regulators were at it again. They marched on the courthouse in Hillsborough, roughed up the register, Edmund Fanning, whom they considered to be their worst enemy, as well as the judge and

several lawyers. Before leaving town, they destroyed several private homes. It was clear that strong measures were required. Governor Tryon again marched his forces to Hillsborough and called into service a large body of North Carolina militia.

To oppose the governor's troops, which numbered about eleven hundred, the Regulators assembled about two thousand men, though many of them were without arms. On May 16, 1771 the two forces met in the Battle of Alamance in which the Regulators were soundly defeated and most of their leaders taken prisoner. A special court tried fourteen of them; twelve of these were convicted and sentenced to death for treason; six of these were hanged and the other six were later pardoned. Several other Regulators and sympathizers were put in the Hillsborough jail, among them Thomas Person. How much Person was involved in the rioting and plots of the Regulators is not known, but he had probably participated enough to have been found guilty of treason. But he was a loyal Church of England man and a friend of Micklejohn. So, as soon as the parson heard of Person's incarceration, he hastened to visit his parishioner in jail. Person confided to Micklejohn that there were incriminating papers in his, Person's, home at Goshen and he asked his friend to help him destroy them. Thereupon the parson prevailed upon the jailer (who he must have known) to allow Person to leave the jail after dark on the promise that he would return before daylight. Mounted on the parson's fleet mare, Person rode the thirty-five miles to Goshen, destroyed the papers and was back in the jail in Hillsborough before daylight. As was expected, Governor Tryon's men later searched Person's home, but found nothing. When rumors arose about the incident, Micklejohn, with true Scotch canniness, allayed suspicion by observing that it could not have happened because he had had both supper and breakfast with Parson in the jail in Hillsborough.

Thomas Person was one of the few Regulators who took up the cause of American Independence and joined the colonists in the Revolution. He became a general in the colonial forces, and after the war was quite prominent in the governmental affairs in the state of North Carolina. Person county was named for him. One of the founders of the University, he made a generous donation to its construction and Person Hall on the University campus was named for him.

After the Battle of Alamance, Micklejohn continued to serve as rector of St. Matthew's Parish and to minister to his people in Orange, Caswell, Alamance and Granville counties. But rebellion was in the air, in the North as well as in the South, and in 1775 at Lexington and Concord the conflict began and the first blood of the Revolution was drawn. When the news of these conflicts arrived in North Carolina, a Provincial Congress was called to determine what actions should be taken. The Congress convened in Hillsborough and met in the Episcopal Church there. At the official request of the Congress, conveyed by Francis Nash one of his vestrymen, the Rev. Mr. Micklejohn opened the meeting with prayer. But the parson's heart was not with the Revolution, and a few months later he joined about sixteen hundred other Scotchmen who rallied to the king's standards at Cross Creek (now Fayetteville). Probably as their chaplain, he set out with them for Wilmington NC to join a larger body of the king's men. At the Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge on Feb. 27, 1776 colonial forces defeated the loyalists and Micklejohn was taken prisoner. A few months later, however, he was released when he took the oath of allegiance to the colonial government. Apparently the parson concluded that the new authorities were now the divinely constituted government to which he should submit. His Anglican friends in Virginia never forgave him.

By 1780 Micklejohn had left Hillsborough and had settled in Granville county, North Carolina, near the home of his friend, General Thomas Person, and surely rejoiced when, in 1792, Person county was named for the general. While residing in Granville county, the parson regularly returned to Orange, Caswell and Person counties to preach and baptize children and grandchildren of his old St. Matthew's parishioners. Alexander Rose's Bible records such ministries in the Lea's Chapel area.

It is significant that in 1794, when the trustees of the newly formed University of North Carolina were seeking a president, the name of George Micklejohn came up for consideration. He was not chosen; he was probably far too old, but the fact that his name was even considered shows that he was held in highest regard. Early in the nineteenth century, Micklejohn, moved to Mecklenburg county, Virginia, where he died at around the age of 100 -- a colorful but faithful servant of the Lord, loved by many and respected by all.

Chapter 4

Lea's Chapel and the American Revolution

During the winter of 1780-81, the Revolutionary War swirled around the little church at Lea's Chapel. Ominous winds of war began to blow through the Hyco valleys, and the people who worshipped at the little chapel began to be affected by the events that were occurring in their country but which, until now, had seemed far away.

In February and March of 1781, two of the most significant events of the American Revolution took place within a few miles of Lea's Chapel. The armies that participated in those events marched past the door of the little chapel and persons closely connected with the chapel were personally affected. The two events were: the strategic retreat of Gen. Nathanael Greene, the colonial commander in the south, to the Dan River and the Battle of Guilford Courthouse. These two events were a turning point in the War and the beginning of the end for Lord Cornwallis and the British forces in America.

Strategy

British strategy in 1778 was devised from the "divide and conquer" concept. They set about to dismember the colonies by subduing the southern colonies. Pursuant to this plan, Lord Cornwallis sailed into the harbor at Charleston, SC, and captured that city on May 12, 1780. Moving quickly inland, he dealt the Americans under Gen. Horatio Gates a stinging defeat at Camden, SC in August.

In that same month, as the folks at Lea's Chapel listened to the preaching of Francis Asbury, the war seemed far away indeed. But it was approaching their back-country community faster than they knew.

After the defeat at Camden, the Continental Congress dispatched Gen. Nathanael Greene to relieve Gates and to organize the defence of the southern colonies. Gen. Greene had been Gen. George Washington's Quartermaster General and was known as one of best military strategists in the colonial army.

Knowing that the American forces at the time were smaller and less experienced than the British and were no match for their enemy, Greene's strategy was to get his British prisoners to safety, draw Cornwallis away from his base of supply at Charleston, and wear down Cornwallis' army by guerilla tactics.

Race for the Dan

The Americans gained encouraging but temporary victories at Cowpens, SC and at King's Mountain, NC, but Greene continued his strategic retreat northward. Thus began the race for the Dan River. Greene's plan was to put that river between himself and the British forces and there to wait for reinforcements. Cornwallis was determined to engage Greene in an open battle before he reached the Dan. Cornwallis knew that he could defeat Greene in such an engagement, and that Greene and his army were the only impediments to the complete conquest of the Carolinas.

In this race to the Dan both armies marched through Caswell county a few miles west of Lea's Chapel. Greene sent men forward to requisition all the available boats and ferries along several miles of the Dan River.

Greene won the race, and, with the boats he had secured, his main army crossed the river on February 15th only fifteen miles north of Lea's Chapel between where today are the towns of Milton, NC and South Boston VA. Greene's army rested safely on the northern bank of the river.

Cornwallis, without boats, was unable to cross the Dan, and so turned his troops southward from the river and marched a few miles to Semora, NC, then known as Dobbins. There Cornwallis quartered some of his German mercenary soldiers at Red House Presbyterian Church.

Rev. Hugh McAden

The home of Rev. Hugh McAden, who in 1755 had preached in Lea's Chapel, was near the church. McAden had died only a few weeks before the British arrived, and was buried in the church graveyard. It was a well-known fact in North Carolina, as elsewhere, that the Presbyterians had been a thorn in

British flesh. They had been extremely critical of the king's rule. A local rumor indicates that the Hessian soldiers who were sleeping in the church dug into McAden's grave looking for valuables.

McAden's son, John, in a letter written some years later said: "The British encamped in the yard of Red House church. They remained there some time, going about the country and committing many degradations upon all the neighbors.....They came to (my father's) house and searched it throughout, destroying many things, and also many valuable papers, on account of which the knowledge of my father is so limited....They committed many depredations upon the church which were not repaired for years."

Such unmilitary conduct was not pleasing to Lord Cornwallis, and, to his credit, he issued an order on Feb 17, 1781 saying, "Lord Cornwallis is very sorry to be again obliged to call to the attention of the officers of the army to the repeated orders against plundering. He desires that the orders given on the 28th January, 4th of February and 6th of February be read at the head of each troop and company....and he assures the officers that if their duty to their king and country and their feelings for humanity are not sufficient to enforce their obedience to them he must, however reluctantly, make use of such power as the military laws has placed in his hands."

But the British commander was in a desperate situation. His supplies were almost depleted and he was far from his base at Charleston. To reach that base, he started marching his army south toward Hillsborough where he planned to raise more troops that were loyal to the crown. His route carried him on what is today State Route 119 toward Leasburg, the county seat of Caswell county. All the county records were kept there, but they were moved to safety before the British arrived.

Turning eastward at Leasburg and following what is today US Route 158, Cornwallis soldiers marched along the road immediately in front of the Chapel on South Hyco. Some of the redcoats undoubtedly quenched their thirst at the spring on the church grounds..

Beware! Smallpox

To feed his army, Cornwallis sent foraging parties into

the surrounding countryside. One of these foraging parties approached the home of John Lea, one of the founders of Lea's Chapel, who lived only a few miles from the church. To protect his property from being ransacked by the British soldiers, John Lea resorted to a simple trick. He posted a sign, "Beware. Smallpox," and scratched the same in the glass in one of the front windows of his house. Smallpox was a dreaded disease at that time and almost always ended in death. It was an effective ruse, for tradition says that it discouraged the redcoats from plundering Lea's property. This is the same house in which Frances Asbury had lodged only six months before when he preached at Lea's Chapel. The house is still standing today and the scratched warning in the glass may still be seen. John Lea died only a few months after this incident.

Keys to the Storehouse

Very early in the war paper currency, used to pay taxes and other accounts, became worthless because of inflation. It became necessary for the state to accept farm produce as payment for taxes. These staples of corn, flour, pork, etc., a sort of "taxes in kind," were collected and used for the state troops who were fighting in the war. The produce was gathered in storehouses located at various points in the state. Col. John Williams was the colonial commissioner for Caswell county and one of his storehouses was located on the plantation of Alexander Rose, one of the patrons of Lea's Chapel. Rose's plantation was near the present village of Roseville. Although Gen. Greene had ordered all such supplies moved to prevent them from falling into the hands of the British, wagons had not been available. As a result, those supplies in Rose's smoke-house were confiscated by one of Cornwallis' officers.

An affidavit by Alexander Rose gives an account of the incident. He said in the signed paper, "On Sunday morning the 19th Feby 1781 came to my plantation on Scotch Town, where Col. Jno. Williams lodged grain etc for use of the Army, his Britannic Majesty's Light Horse commanded by Col. Tarlton and in a genteel manner demanded the keys where the state's provisions for its Army was lodged; his request I granted and made delivery. The short stay the Army made put it quite out of

my power to say what destruction was made by them while they tarried but in the account rendered Col. Williams I imagin it may be in and about 500 bushels of corn, 20 of wheat, 150 oats, 100 flour, 20 of rye, 90 salted beef, 360 pork & in and about 8 or nine galls whiskey, all the above is short by my acct rendered him when Lord Cornwallis officers took the keys; I know not what they have done with while was under them for they say not. Alexr. Rose."

In a similar affidavit, Robert Dickins, a rather prominent local citizen, testified that he was taken prisoner by the British and "was conveyed to Alexander Rose's where Cornwallis' army was then in camp."

To Guilford Courthouse

On Feb. 18th Gen. Greene ordered his cavalry forces under Col. Henry Lee ("Light Horse Harry," the father of Robert E. Lee) to recross the Dan River and make contact with Gen. Andrew Pickens who was coming from the south with colonial forces. The main body of Greene's army recrossed the Dan River on Feb. 24th and moved southward along much the same route Cornwallis had taken.

From that time onward there was constant marching and countermarching until the two armies of Greene and Cornwallis met on March 15, 1781 in the Battle of Guilford Courthouse fifty miles southwest of Lea's Chapel.

In terms of numbers and of who was left holding the ground, the Battle of Guilford Courthouse was a British victory. In reality, however, it was anything but a victory for Great Britain. Cornwallis, much depleted in manpower and supplies, lost even more of both in the battle. He was in an extremely poor position, with no easy prospect of re-supplying either. He elected to conduct a painful retreat to Wilmington NC (which was nearer than Charleston SC) where British warships could offer some protection and supplies. From Wilmington, Cornwallis marched northward into Virginia -- and to Yorktown, where he surrendered to Gen. George Washington on October 19, 1781.

The effective end of British rule in America, however, was assured and the independence of the American colonies was won less than ten miles from Lea's Chapel eight months earlier.

It ultimately had not been won with a military victory, but with a defeat of purpose. Lord Cornwallis failed completely to catch the smaller forces of General Greene and annihilate them before they crossed the Dan River between Milton, NC and South Boston, VA. The Americans showed great tenacity and skill in their retreat to the Dan. The British had been out-marched, out-generaled and out-foxed in this campaign.

Other Leas in the Revolution

There were other persons whom we know were connected with Lea's Chapel who were officers or soldiers in the colonial army.

Owen Lea, the son of Carter Lea and grandson of John Lea, was a soldier in the Revolution. After Owen's death, his widow, Elizabeth Wright Lea, applied for and was given a widow's pension for his Revolutionary War service. In the application and affidavit for the pension, Elizabeth made the statement that Owen served under "Capt. George Lea" who, she said, was "his own cousin." This Capt. George Lea was the son of William Lea of Cobbs Creek, and it is Elizabeth's statement of kinship that leads us to believe that William Lea of Cobbs Creek was a brother of John Lea of Richland Creek.

George Lea, son of William Lea (CC), (who was the "Capt George Lea" noted above) is referred to in court records in 1795 as "Major George Lea," and when his will was probated in 1830 it was entitled "Colo. George Lea's Will." These ranks were almost certainly held in the North Carolina militia.

Gabriel Lea, the son of James Lea of Leasburg (and hence nephew of Capt. William Lea one of the founders of Lea's Chapel), served in the Revolution and attained the rank of captain. While Capt. Gabriel Lea was serving in the colonial army, Cornwallis' soldiers, marching through Leasburg, entered his home and emptied feather beds in the yard. His family said it was "for spite." After the war he continued to live in Leasburg, served in a number of important positions in the county, was a faithful member of the Methodist Church and is buried in the Leasburg cemetery.

Chapter 5

Lea's Chapel Becomes a Methodist Church

Methodism in the American colonies, as in England, was a movement within the Church of England. John Wesley, who remained all his life a minister in the Church of England, sent lay preachers to the colonies (just as he also sent them out in England) hoping to effect a spiritual rebirth in the Anglican Church. Gatherings of Methodists at that time were referred to as "societies," not as congregations or as churches. They were units within the Church of England.

One of the preachers whom John Wesley sent to America, Joseph Pilmor, preached the first "official" Methodist sermon in North Carolina in the Currituck courthouse in Sept 1772. The first Methodist conference in America was held in Philadelphia in 1773 with ten preachers present. By 1776 there were enough Methodist societies in North Carolina, most of them located in the northeastern part of the state, to form the Carolina circuit. When formed, it was the third largest in the nation, having 683 members and staffed by three preachers.

Circuits of Methodist societies were served by itinerating preachers, all of whom were unordained laymen. Methodist preachers could preach and conduct services, but they could not administer baptism or the Lord's Supper. Methodists had to look to the Anglican clergy for the sacraments, but in 1772 there were only eleven Church of England ministers in the entire colony of North Carolina. Although Methodist lay preachers regularly recommended that their hearers attend and receive the sacraments in the Church of England, they were only occasionally invited to preach in Anglican churches. They preached mostly in homes, in courthouses, in public meeting houses or in the open.

The few Methodist societies in the Piedmont section of North Carolina were in the Pittsylvania circuit, the largest part of which was located in Virginia. The societies in this area of North Carolina were transferred to the Caswell circuit when it was formed in 1783. Jesse Lee and Peter Moriarty were the first preachers appointed to the Caswell circuit.

In a memoir Jesse Lee says,

"Caswell at this time (in 1783) was a moral wilderness; it had but recently been taken under the superintendance of the Methodists, who were resolved to take in as much ground as they could conveniently cultivate. This wilderness has since, in many places blossomed as the rose, and many in that section of the Lord's vineyard have been brought to the knowledge of the truth through the instrumentality of the Methodists."

At that time there were in all about 1500 members of Methodist societies in North Carolina. In 1784 there were 165 members of Methodist societies in the Caswell circuit and by 1788 that number had increased to 312.

We do not know when the persons who worshipped at Lea's Chapel became interested in forming a Methodist society. If any records were made, they have long since been lost. We do know that Francis Asbury visited the area in 1780, lodged with John Lea and preached in Lea's Chapel. The fact that he lodged with John Lea suggests that Methodist preachers had visited the Chapel before and/or that someone, perhaps John Lea himself, had gotten word to Asbury that there was an opening here for the formation of a Methodist society. It may even be that Asbury organized the Lea's Chapel society on this visit.

While staying with John Lea, Asbury records in his Journal that "our quarterly meeting began at Henley's preaching house," which he described as "a log house with long shingles." There he preached "to about five hundred people." Twenty-three years later, in 1803, Rev. Edmund Henley, who was almost certainly a member of the family for whom the meeting house was named, became a Methodist minister. Jesse Lee, in his book *A Short History of the Methodist Church*, tells us that Edmund Henley was born in Person county, North Carolina, and that, after a ministry of only five years, he died and was buried there.

Another place of Methodist preaching in the area was Bethany meeting house, a mile and a half north of Leasburg. Bethany was the site of early Methodist camp meetings and the Leasburg Methodist Church, formed in 1857, was an outgrowth of Bethany.

It was natural that the folks at Lea's Chapel should be inclined toward becoming a Methodist society because of their previous relationship with St. Matthew's parish in Hillsborough and Rev. George Micklejohn. By the time of Asbury's visit in

1780, Micklejohn had left St. Matthew's Parish to settle in Granville county and the large majority of the Anglican ministers in the colonies, being loyalists, had fled to England. As a result, the Anglican Church in America declined and its churches were neglected. In 1783 when Francis Asbury visited the area again, he found the Anglican church building in Hillsborough much neglected and in great need of repairs. During the Revolution, Lea's Chapel was, therefore, without the regular services of a minister and the people who worshipped there were without anyone to give them the sacraments. That is almost certainly why the folks at Lea's Chapel decided to cast their lot with the Methodists.

The Methodist Episcopal Church in America came into being on December 25, 1784 at a conference of Methodists preachers and clergy in Baltimore, MD, one year after the signing of the Treaty of Paris which officially brought the American Revolution to a close and in which Great Britain recognized the independence of the colonies. The Christmas Conference (as it is called) not only created the Methodist Church in this country as an entity separate from the Church of England, it also elected and ordained deacons and elders who could administer the sacraments. In addition, the conference elected and set apart Francis Asbury and Thomas Coke as "superintendents." The conference did not use the term "bishop," but Asbury later assumed that title.

In 1785 Rev. Mr. Ellis, who was appointed to the Caswell circuit, attended the Louisburg Conference and reported that a Methodist church had been formed at Hyco Chapel (Lea's Chapel). A deed for the building and grounds was not delivered, however, until 1835 and the name of "Lea's Chapel" does not appear in conference minutes until well into the twentieth century.

The Caswell circuit was then and remained in the Virginia Conference until 1837 when the North Carolina Conference was formed. In 1813 the Caswell circuit was in the Raleigh District of the Virginia Conference and reported 568 white members and 154 colored members. The African Methodist Episcopal Church was formed in 1816 and many of the colored members joined that church. In 1820 the Caswell circuit was in the Yadkin District of the Virginia Conference and reported 745 members.

By 1830 its membership had increased to 874 members, but in 1835 it was in the Danville District and its membership had declined to 760.

When the North Carolina Conference was formed in 1837, the Caswell circuit became a part of that conference. The Caswell circuit was still in the Danville district in 1840 and its membership had declined to 609 members.

In 1844 a division took place in the Methodist Episcopal Church. The Methodist conferences which were located south of the Mason-Dixon line withdrew from the General Conference and formed the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The dividing issues were slavery and ecclesiastical authority. The Caswell circuit, with Lea's Chapel, remained in the Danville district of the North Carolina Conference. In 1855 the Leasburg circuit was formed with 350 members and Lea's Chapel was assigned to it. Since then Lea's Chapel has been in several circuits and in several districts in the North Carolina Conference.

The division of 1844 came about only after long and heated debate and much prayerful heart-searching. The breach was not healed until 1939 when the northern and southern branches reunited to form The Methodist Church. Then in 1968 The United Methodist Church was formed by the union of The Methodist Church and The Evangelical United Brethren Church.

The best account we have of the Lea's Chapel Methodist Church in the 19th century and how its members fared is given by the Rev. Dr. L.L. Nash who served the Leasburg circuit from 1884 to 1887 when Lea's Chapel was on that circuit. He relates that in December 1883 when the conference met in Statesville NC he was anxious to be given an appointment where he could put his 14-year-old daughter in a good school which would prepare her for college. He was delighted, therefore, when he was sent to the Leasburg circuit in Caswell and Person counties because Rev. Solomon Lea had a good school in Leasburg which his daughter could attend.

The Leasburg circuit at that time had ten appointments of which Lea's Chapel was one. Dr. Nash reports that in his second year

"We had a meeting at Lea's Chapel in which nearly everybody in the community was converted. Several of the leading men in the community came into the church Among them were Col. C.S.

Winstead and A. J. Hester, Jr. Mr. Hester belonged to a Primitive Baptist family. His mother, a lady over seventy years old, who had been reared in that faith was converted and joined the church....I preached very plainly against drinking and drunkenness....We had two services, and dinner on the grounds between the services."

As result of that meeting Dr. Nash says Lea's Chapel "took on new life, and has been a strong church every since."

Col. Charles Smith Winstead, whom Dr. Nash mentioned above, was a rather affluent lawyer in Person county, quite prominent in public affairs. Nobody knows where the title "colonel" came from for there is no record of his serving in the military. During the Civil War, when a man was called to service, he could hire someone to serve in his place. When Mr. Winstead received his call, he engaged a man and paid him to go in his place, promising the man that if he were killed he would take care of the man's family for the rest of their lifetime. The man was killed and "the colonel," true to his word, cared for the man's family, and even left money in his will to be used to look after one member of the family who was still living when Winstead died.

Andrew Jackson Hester, whom Dr. Nash mentioned above, was born in 1835, the son of Robert H. Hester. He moved to the Olive Hill area soon after the Civil War where he bought 3000 acres for two dollars an acre. After joining Lea's Chapel, he became a trustee of the church and a much respected and beloved citizen in the community. Although he did not have a doctor's degree, he ministered to the sick by following "Dr. Gunn's Doctor's Book."

Dr. Nash continues his reminiscences:

"At the time I was on the Leasburg Circuit, from 1844 to 1887 inclusive, that section was in a very prosperous condition. The principal market crop was tobacco; and the farmers were receiving fine prices. The organization of the American Tobacco Company brought the price to the farmer down, and ran the small manufacturers out of business. I am not stating these facts with a view of condemning those who compose the tobacco trust; for after all, it may be in the end good for the farmer that his attention was turned to something else. It is my opinion, and I was reared on a tobacco farm, that tobacco culture will ultimately impoverish a

country, and I do not say this from any fanatical objection to the tobacco habit, while I admit it is a bad habit, yet the best men I ever knew were tobacco users. But tobacco culture, continued for a series of years, impoverishes the soil and burns up the wood, for it takes a large quantity of wood to cure the weed, and leaves the farm in a poor condition."

Dr. Nash reports that he lived largely off his farm and could therefore save most of his salary. But, he declares, that he was careful to assure that his farming interest did not interfere with his ministerial duties. He was also careful not to give the people any excuse for not paying for his full support. He spent much of his time visiting his people in their homes and declared

"I made it a rule when I went to a new charge to visit every family as soon as I could. I kept a little book, and when I went to a home I would inquire the name of every member of the family and write them down. I would write the names of all the children in my little visiting book; and when I went again I would familiarize myself with all the names so I could call all the children by name. I found the children liked that. They do not like to be called "bud" or "sissy", and that way I could get hold of the children and get them to like me; and when I had got hold of the children I always found that I had the parents too.....I made it a rule also whenever convenient to have family prayer, but always had an eye to the fitness of things. I made it a rule not to stay too long at any place, and to be careful not to show partiality to any particular family. I gave more attention to the poor members of my charge, for the poor, as a rule, are more sensitive, and need more careful handling than those who are well to do."

He says that when he left the Leasburg Circuit there seven hundred and forty members on the register of the circuit and that he knew every one of them by sight and name, and he knew all the children in his charge

A very interesting thing happened in Dr. Nash's third year in Leasburg. On August 31st, 1886 there was an earthquake which greatly damaged the city of Charleston SC and shook the country for hundreds of miles around. The quake was so severe that bricks were shaken from some chimneys in Leasburg! Dr. Nash was holding, in one of the churches on his charge, a revival meeting at which the attendance has not been very good. The

whole community, however, was thoroughly frightened by the earthquake and the day after it the congregation in attendance at the revival meeting was very much larger than the day before. "Our revival," he observes, "received a great impetus from the earthquake." God moves in mysterious ways his wonders to perform!!

Another interesting incident occurred in 1886. When the North Carolina Conference met in Reidsville NC, the conference was blanketed by the biggest snow ever to fall during a conference session. The snow in Reidsville was seventeen inches deep. To get back to Leasburg from Reidsville, a distance of only 13 miles, he had to travel by train to Danville and by a narrow gauge railroad to Milton NC. There he hired a carriage to take him to Leasburg, but the snow was so deep and the crust so thick that the team began to balk, and only after several hours of great effort did they reach the home of a Mr. Jones, who was a member of his charge. Mr. Jones hitched a pair of mules to the carriage they had hired from the livery stable in Milton and took him to Leasburg. When he got home, he found all his family sick with colds.

Dr. Nash reports another fact about life in the area at the time. He says

"While I was in Leasburg we put up ice every winter for summer use, and there was no winter while I was stationed there that we could not get thick ice with which to fill our ice houses. This was a great blessing to us, as we were thirteen miles from the railroad and could not get manufactured ice."

In July-Aug 1885, during Dr. Nash's ministry, the Durham District Conference and S.S. Conference met for five days at Lea's Chapel. On the conference Directory, which has been preserved, are the names of ninety-six members of the conference with the homes in which they were entertained and the distances to those homes. Only four were housed as far as 5 miles from the church; five were 3 miles away and the remainder at shorter distances. Thirty six were assigned homes in Leasburg and most of the others were within two and one-half miles of the church. The Presiding Elder, Rev. W. S. Black, was housed in the home of T. J. Stephens "near the church." Several persons had two and three persons lodging with them; A.J.

Hester had six persons staying with him and Col. C. S. Winstead had five.

Dr. Nash makes this very interesting statement:

"There is one mistake I made that I would warn young preachers against. I too frequently took young lady members of my charge out visiting with me. I did this innocently, and no harm ever came of it; but there are those who are ready to think evil; and I found after awhile that it mattered not how pure my intentions, it would be better to avoid such association with the women of my flock. This a very delicate subject, but one to which attention should be called. I think eventually I swung to the opposite extreme, and for several years I had very few lady associates, in so much that a friend of mine told me that a lady told him she thought I was a proud man and not very social. I know her estimate is wrong but I am not conscious of pride, and I am of a social disposition."

Dr. Nash was a native of Halifax county, North Carolina. He entered the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1872 and served in the North Carolina Conference for forty-three years. Before coming to the Leasburg circuit, he had served the Bath, the Williamston and the Greenville circuits in the eastern part of the state. After leaving the Leasburg circuit, he served charges in Raleigh, Wilmington, New Bern, Fayetteville, Rocky Mount, and Henderson, and also served as Conference Evangelist. His book, *Recollections and Observations*, from which this material is taken, was published in Raleigh in 1916.

Chapter 6

People, Pastors and Physical Property

The tangible elements of any church's history are its people, its pastors and its physical property.

People

During the years for which statistical records of membership are available for Lea's Chapel church the number of persons on the roll has moved from 173 in 1950, to 122 in 1975, and to 65 in 2000. But the church remains a close-knit fellowship that grieves the loss of any member and rejoices to welcome all new members.

One of the most loyal members that Lea's Chapel ever had was **Bessie Mary Bradsher**, known as "Miss Bessie." Born March 18, 1899, the daughter of John Richard Bradsher III and his wife, Flora Alice Stephens, Miss Bessie lived most of her life in Person county. She attended Alliance Hall School in the Olive Hill community and, after graduating from high school, entered college in Greensboro. In 1922 she transferred to the State Teacher's College in Boone, NC to prepare to teach. After teaching for eight years in Caswell, Stokes, and Orange counties, she returned home to help her brother, mother and father on the farm. She was a fifth generation descendant of John Lea, one of the founders of Lea's Chapel, and she lived much of her life in the house that John Lea built. This is the house of which we tell (on pages 27-28 of this book) about the word "smallpox" that was/is written over a window. Following John Lea's death, the house passed to his son, Carter Lea Sr; from him to his son, Carter Lea Jr; from him to his daughter, Mary Sergeant Lea, who married Richard I. Bradsher. From them it passed to their son, John Richard Bradsher III, Miss Bessie's father. Miss Bessie inherited it from her father and lived in the house until her health began to fail and she moved to a Nursing Home in Monroe, NC to be near her sister. The celebration of Miss Bessie's one hundredth birthday on March 18th, 1999 was quite an occasion. Cards and letters came from all over the country. She died only a few weeks thereafter. No one was ever more loyal to or loved

Lea's Chapel more than Miss Bessie. She fulfilled many responsibilities in the life of the chapel; she and her brother, Bennie, who died in 1974, served as treasurers; she taught Sunday School "since the memory of man runneth not to the contrary," and she was acknowledged as the official Lea's Chapel church historian.

Miss Bessie Bradsher's father, **John Richard Bradsher III** (1865-1955), was the son of Richard Ivey Bradsher and his wife, Mary Sergeant Lea. John's father died when he was only a few months old, leaving his mother and five small children. The family lived near Leasburg until 1877 when they moved into the John Lea home, which Mary (Lea) Bradsher had inherited from her father, Carter Lea Jr. John was converted in a revival meeting at Lea's Chapel. The revival was conducted by Mrs. Mary Moon, the Quaker preacher, who was a controversial figure in the latter part of the 19th century simply because she was a woman preacher. She was opposed by many but regarded by others as the greatest evangelist of her time. She drew crowds that numbered in the thousands and in every meeting there were numerous conversions. While holding services in the Methodist church in Winston Salem NC, it was said of her, "She stirred North Carolina as never before." The Bradsher family attended Lea's Chapel and there John met and fell in love with Flora Stephens, the daughter of the choir director, Thomas Stephens. John and Flora were married in 1896 and had five children: a son who died at birth, Bessie Mary, Janie Frazier, Ruth Pearl, and Bennie Richard Ivey. John was named for his grandfather, John Richard Bradsher II of whom Rev. Solomon Lea wrote, "He was converted at a camp meeting held at Bethany Church near Leasburg NC; joined the M.E. Church, South, and became a leading member of Lea's Chapel...." The first John Richard Bradsher came to North Carolina from Virginia before 1802. The name "Richard Ivey" first came into the Bradsher family from a circuit rider of that name who accompanied Francis Asbury on his visit to North Carolina in 1780. There was also a Rev. Thomas Ivey who was pastor of Lea's Chapel in the late 1800's for whom several babies were named, including Thomas Ivey Rogers and Ivey E. Pleasant Sr.

The **Wilkersons** have been members of Lea's Chapel for over 100 years. In 1881 **Thomas Earl Wilkerson** and his wife, **Mary Susan Henry**, moved with their family from Orange county to Person county to a farm on South Hyco owned by Col. C.S. Winstead, a distant relative of Mary Susan. It was called "The Lawson Place." Col. Winstead had heard that there was a lot of drinking in Orange county, and, wanting to provide a better living environment for his kinfolks, he sent, unannounced, three wagons to bring the Wilkerson family with their possessions to Person county. Thomas and Mary Susan Wilkerson had six children: William, Lawson, Charles, Ina, Walter and Thaddeus. All of these grew up in Lea's Chapel, but all of them eventually moved away except William. In 1893 William (who became known as "Mr. Willie") married Ara Elizabeth Brooks, who also joined Lea's Chapel. Between 1894 and 1917, this union was blessed with thirteen children: Gertrude, Earl, Mary Estelle (Mollie), Jessie, Carrie Lee, Annie Royal, Aliene, Robert, Charles, Edgar and Edna (twins), Willard, and Thaddeus. All of these children were members of Lea's Chapel in their early years. Many of them moved away from the community when they reached maturity, but three of the boys: Earl, Charles and Thaddeus, and three of the girls: Aliene, Mollie and Edna remained and became faithful lifelong members. Edna taught Sunday School for sixty years, and the services of Mr. Willie, Mollie (Mary) and Aliene are recalled in Chapter 7 of this book.

Two brothers, **William and Burns Pleasant**, moved into the Lea's Chapel community in the 1880's. They married sisters, **Jeanne and Betty Willis**, whose mother, **Sophia Ann Willis**, was the first of the family to be buried at Lea's Chapel in 1899. Both the Pleasant and the Willis families attended Lea's Chapel and many members of both families are buried in the cemetery. Lea's Chapel was always an important part in their lives. Will Pleasant was a steward in the church for many years. Six of his sons served in World War I and eight of his grandsons in World War II. William's youngest grandson, **Robert Lawrence**, died in 1999 and willed Lea's Chapel and Leasburg UMC each \$50,000.

Mr. John and Mrs Janie Hester and their children were also valuable members of the church. Mrs Janie could be called

on at any time and would respond whenever she was needed. She is buried in the cemetery. Mr. John, now in his nineties, can still be depended on whenever a new project is started. His knowledge and common sense are regularly sought.

Mr. Henry and Mrs. Elizabeth Rogers were the parents of Mrs. Janie Hester. "Miss Lizzie" was known for her regal bearing as well as for her faithfulness to Lea's Chapel. It is said that she always cooked enough so that if no one invited the preacher and his wife to lunch on Sunday, she would.

Mr. Jesse and Mrs. Ruth Carr were described as "rock-solid" members of the church. Both are buried in the cemetery. Mr. Jesse worked hard and almost always went to sleep during the service, and it wasn't rare to see Miss Ruth punch him in the ribs with her elbow to wake him up. Miss Ruth sold flavoring and rooted geranium plants. When persons ordered such from her, she would bring the items to church but would not take the money on Sunday. That would desecrate the Sabbath. It would be collected later.

Mr. Alex Wrenn and his wife, Mrs Florence, moved to the Lea's Chapel community from Brooksdale and were valuable and faithful members. There was a big rock in front of the church, and one Sunday Mr. Alex hit it with his car. Mr. Jack Hester told him that that made him a full-fledged member of Lea's Chapel.

Pastors

One of the important elements of any church's history is its pastors. Lea's Chapel has been blessed through the years with a succession of fine men who served the Lord well in this place. Several of these men, after serving Lea's Chapel, went on to become prominent leaders in the Methodist Church. Jesse Lee introduced Methodism to the New England states and became known as "The Apostle of Methodism to New England." Peter Moriarty became presiding elder in the Ashgrove District of the New York Conference. Thomas Ware's contribution to Methodism are recorded in *The Life & Travels of Rev. Thomas Ware*.

Unfortunately the minutes of Methodist conferences at that time did not give the names of the charges on each circuits. When Lea's Chapel became a Methodist Church around 1785, it was almost certainly assigned to the Caswell circuit, which had been created two years earlier..

The following data about the Caswell circuit are given in the conference minutes:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Preacher</u>	<u>Number of Members in the Circuit</u>
1783	Jesse Lee & Peter Moriarty	
1784	Richard Swift	165
1785	Elijah Ellis	
1786	Sihon Smith	300
1789	Thos. Ware & Henry Ledbetter	
1790	Henry Meritt & Simon Carlisle	
1791	Enoch George & Henry Hill	
1792	Jonathan Bird & John Sproul	
1800	John Ray & John Gamewel	635
1813	Samuel Garrard	722
1820	Lewis Kimbrell & John Thompson	851
1825	Joshua Leigh	804
1830	John H. Watson & J. I. Head	985
1835	W. Anderson	825
1840	John A. Miller & Jehu Hank	665
1844	Jas. L. Nicholson & Richard R. Dunkley . . .	724
1845	Jas. L. Nichollson & A. Lea	522
1850	Addison Lea & J. J. Hines	

The Leasburg Circuit was formed which included Lea's Chapel.

1852 William M. Jordan

1855 John W. Lewis

Pastors from 1855 to 1867 included Joseph Wheller, H. W. Jenkins, J. T. Gillis, R. H. Willis and D. L. Earhart

1867 P. J. Carraway

1868 W. M. Robey

The Person Circuit was formed which included Lea's Chapel.

1868-1872 Marcus C. Thomas
1872-1876 William M. Jordan
1875-1879 H. H. Gibbons
1879-1882 T. A. Boone.

Lea's Chapel was transferred to the Roxboro Circuit.
1882-1883 J. Sanford

Lea's Chapel was returned to the Leasburg Circuit
1883-1887 L. L. Nash
1887-1889 M.M. Hoyle
1889-1893 Thomas N. Ivey
1893-1896 M. H. Tuttle
1896-1900 N. E. Coltrane
1900-1902 D. N. Caviness
1902-1906 K. D. Holmes
1906-1909 J. A. Hornaday

Lea's Chapel and Concord Church were placed on the
Person Circuit.
1908 J. A. Hornaday
1910 J. M. Ormond

Following is a list of full-time pastors who served a five-
point charge of which Lea's Chapel was one:

1913-16 C. R. Ross
1916-20 J. A. Dailey
1920-24 B. C. Thompson
1924-28 J. W. Bradley
1928-32 W. L. Maness
1932-36 E. B. Craven
1936-39 M. W. Lawrence
1939-43 F. B. Peeble (died while serving)
1943 M. G. Flemming
1943 Ernest Golden Overton

Following is a list of full-time pastors serving a four-point
charge of which Lea's Chapel was one.

1943-47 Daniel Lane
1947-51 Carl Barbee

- 1951-54 M. C. Henderson
1954-56 J. R. Hailey
1956-60 A. M. Williams

Following is a list of student pastors serving Lea's Chapel and Warren's Grove.

- 1960-64 B. B. Brown
1964-67 Edgar Ellis
1967-71 Thomas G. Holtsclaw
1971-73 John W. Lipphardt
1973-77 Edward Bogie
1977-81 Allen Weller
1981-85 Eddie Elkins
1985-86 Tim Holloran

Following is a list of full-time pastors serving Lea's Chapel and Warren's Grove.

- 1986-88 Bob Skinner
1988-91 Ron Snider
1991-92 Ellen Metcalf

Following is a list of student pastors serving Lea's Chapel.

- 1992-96 Mark Kurowski
1996-00 Douglas Lain

Physical Property: Buildings

Lea's Chapel has had three buildings in its history. The first, which was constructed around 1750, was built of logs and covered with split shingles. It had two entrances, one for the women and one for the men, and on the inside there was a division down the middle, the women sat on one side and the men on the other. This was true of many colonial church buildings. The first building at Lea's Chapel is said to have faced south, in the opposite direction from the present building. Some old maps show the road at that time on the south side of the wooded knoll on which the chapel was built. The first meeting house had backless seats made of rough-hewn planks and was heated by a large fireplace on one side.

This original building was torn down in the spring of

1852 and a second building was constructed on the spot. Rev. William M. Jordan was serving the Leasburg Circuit at that time and Lea's Chapel was on that circuit. The new building, which was larger and more commodious than the first one, consisted of a sanctuary with pews and a large pulpit but without any other rooms. This building was used for over fifty years.

By 1905 Lea's Chapel had outgrown its facilities and the members began to make plans for another building. After several months the plans were finalized, the old (the second) building was torn down and the present sanctuary erected. It was completed and dedicated in 1906 while the Rev. K. D. Holmes was the pastor, but it too consisted of only a place of worship without other rooms.

There are no records to tell us when the Sunday School at Lea's Chapel was first organized. In 1885 the chapel entertained the Durham District Conference and Sunday School Conference, which suggests that there may have been a Sunday School in the chapel at that time. The Sunday School movement was strong in this country in the latter part of the 19th century.

Up until 1951 Lea's Chapel had no Sunday School rooms. Several classes met in the sanctuary and, when the weather permitted, some classes met under the trees or in cars in the churchyard. In 1952 two class rooms were constructed and in 1960 more classrooms and a fellowship hall were added.

In the early days the annual Sunday School picnic was a much-anticipated event in the life of the chapel. Miss Bessie Bradsher in her history of Lea's Chapel says, "When Sunday School picnics were held, the children and young people rode in covered wagons and on horseback. The older people rode in buggys or carriages. Everyone had a wonderful time and lots of good food to eat."

It would be impossible to give a full list of all the persons who have taught in the Sunday School over the years, but some of the superintendents were: Stephen Garrett, John R. Bradsher, Willie Dixon, Willie R. Wilkerson, Jerry Hester, Kelly Brewer, Charlie C. Wilkerson and Elgin H. Rudder.

Physical Property: The Parsonage

The present parsonage, which was purchased in 1992,

is a nice three bedroom cottage a mile and a half from the church. Former parsonages were located in Leasburg and in Roxboro.

Physical Property: Cemetery

From its beginning Lea's Chapel has had a cemetery. The first burial was that of an unknown person who was traveling through this part of the country. He became ill and stopped at the home of John Lea. He died before he could tell anyone his name. The Lea family found no identification papers on him nor anything concerning his relatives. He was buried under one of the oaks on the chapel grounds, so he probably lies in one of forty graves in the cemetery marked only by a large rock with no engraving on it. Others buried in the cemetery without engraved stones are: William Lea, Alexander Rose, Eunice (Lea) Rose, Thomas McNeill, Ann McNeill and John McNeill. The oldest tombstone that now stands at Lea's Chapel cemetery is that of James Cochran, who died in 1807. A full list of the tombstones in the cemetery will be found in the Appendix of this book (pages 69-72).

Spiritual Life

People, pastors and physical property are important in the history of any church, but the most important thing about a church is its spiritual life -- the joyous praise that rises to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ through the worship services and through the daily lives of the church members -- the glad ministry rendered to the world in Christ's name and the zeal the church has for sharing its faith with others. That is what counts about a church and in that regard Lea's Chapel has never been found wanting. Its life together has been marked by an absence of divisions and bickering and its ministry to the community and to the world have always been commendable.

Chapter 7

Reminiscences

The past comes alive in reminiscences.. At the request of the authors several persons have written memoirs about events and people at Lea's Chapel. Some of them are still living in the community, others have moved away but remember Lea's Chapel with much affection. Here are some of their memories:

Ivey Pleasant says, "I am 74 years old and have attended Lea's Chapel all of those years. There are not many of the people that I knew over the years who are still with us. I can think of John Hester, Aliene Taylor, Edna Wilkerson, Algie Carr, Frances Winstead Rudder, Norma Starnes Wilkerson, Margaret Morgan Allen, Elgin Rudder and Willey Lea. We are the old folks now.

"I have some stories of the old days. Rev. Solomon Lea was a very prominent minister in his day. He lived in Leasburg. According to the historical marker near his home, he was the first president of Greensboro College and also founded an Academy in Leasburg. Like all the Methodist preachers he was against alcohol in any form. I can remember when we had a temperance lesson every quarter in the Sunday School. The story goes that Mr. Lea was preaching at Lea's Chapel one Sunday and had a sinking spell, and someone had some whiskey outside. They went and got it and gave Mr. Lea some and he got better. The people asked if he was feeling better, and he said that he was, 'But give me a little more of that "stuff."'

"My grandfather was an old man and loved to go hear Mr. Lea preach. He had never joined the church. Mr. Lea made the remark that a death-bed confession wasn't worth the breath that it took to confess it. He never went to hear Mr. Lea again. He joined the Primitive Baptist Church when he was 82.

"In the Methodist Church there were people called Stewards that carried on the business of the church. It was told that they appointed one man for a steward and he remarked, 'They must be (blank) hard-up for stewards.'

"I remember that the revivals were different. We had large crowds for week long revivals. They didn't have an altar

call as they do now. I don't know what the invitation was but everybody would march around and shake the Preacher's hand.

"I have heard it said that some of the revival preachers would dangle the people over the fire. It was said before my time that it wasn't unusual for some of the (it seems to have been women) members to be so moved that they shouted.

"The church didn't have any utilities. There was a spring close by and they would get the water in a bucket and set it on a little table in the vestibule. There were brackets on the walls inside the church for kerosene lamps. We had two big heaters in a front corner and a back corner. These burned coal. There were two short pews behind the stove; we had the little ones for Sunday School on those pews, and the old men sat there during worship services.

"Some of the families that I remember are: Wilkerson, Rogers, Brewer, Harris, Bradsher, Hester, Pleasant, Bowes, Fulcher, Allen, Oliver, Newton, Crumpton, Wagstaff, Carr, Day, Winstead, Perkins, Foushee, Stephens, James, Lea, Knott, Frederick, and Garrett.

"Mr. Willie Wilkerson and his wife, Mrs. Ara, were faithful members. They had a big family. Four of their children stayed as members of Lea's Chapel. The late Charlie and Thad were faithful and held many jobs in the church. Sisters Aliene Taylor and Edna are still faithful workers for the church.

"Mr. Will Rogers and his wife, Mrs. Capitola, had a large family and were faithful, but the only member still at Lea's Chapel is grandson Will Rogers.

"The Hester family were Mr. Bob and Mrs. Jessie. Most of them were valuable members, but John Hester is the lone survivor.

"The Pleasant family were members for many years. The great-grandmother, Sophia Willis, was buried in the cemetery in 1899 and most of the rest of the family are buried in the cemetery also. My father, Ivey Pleasant Sr and Anna May Harris Pleasant, were members. I am the only one that still worships at Lea's Chapel.

"There were many of the Bowes that remained as worshipers at Lea's Chapel. The oldest, Clem and his wife, Molley, would drive from Reidsville as long as he was able. Another of the Bowes was Lula Bowes Fox. Mrs. Fox was noted

for her public prayers. You could tell that she wasn't talking to a stranger.

"One of the most memorable pastors we ever had was Rev. M.C. Henderson who served in the early 1950's. At one of our finance committee meetings he said 'Money makes the mare trot,' and then added, 'The more you feed her, the faster she'll trot.' Mrs. Henderson, his wife, had a hat that had a long feather that stood straight up. When she thought her husband had said enough, you could see that feather bobbing like a fishing cork, and he would quit preaching right away. Once in a morning prayer he said that he was glad that he wasn't on the chain gang. Sam Winstead, sitting beside me, said, 'The old man must be feeling lucky this morning.' That broke me up for any more worshipping that day.

"Mr. Willie Rogers served over fifty years as a steward. The church gave him a hat. That was a handsome gift back in the 1930's.

"Another couple that made a big impression on me was Mr. Clarence Boyd and his wife, Mrs. Jessie Wilkerson Boyd. Mrs. Boyd was a superb pianist. She played at Lea's Chapel for years. That was before we had air-conditioning. He sat on the seat behind her and fanned her all the while."

(Note by the editor: Ivey Pleasant is a farmer, who for more than forty years, has taught Sunday School at Lea's Chapel. He was educated at Appalachian State University and served in the U.S. Navy during World War II.)

Willard R. Wilkerson says, "Foremost in my memories of Lea's Chapel are those of my father, William Robert Wilkerson, known as 'Mr. Willie.' No one knows (at least I do not) when he joined. He often mentioned that he started attending Lea's Chapel when he was 'a boy,' which would place his connection as starting in the early 1880's, and it lasted until his death in 1943.

"During his lifetime he held every elective and appointive office in the church. Every fall, after the tobacco market had opened and the members had started to sell their tobacco, he was active in contacting those whose names were on the church roll but were not regular in attendance for their 'church money.' Every member was asked for an exact amount. Just how that

amount was determined I do not know, but I do remember that the less active members were not asked for as much as those who were active and attended on a regular basis.

"Special offerings were requested on occasion. I remember that before every fifth Sunday, my father would get a postcard from the Methodist Orphanage in Raleigh asking for a special donation. As I recall, a Mr. Barnes was the superintendent of the orphanage and my father would ask for all those assembled at Sunday School for their help in meeting the request from 'Brother Barnes.'

"Another occasion involving finances that I remember was the church 'auction.' For some reason there was a need for funds and the minister made the appeal from the pulpit during a Sunday afternoon service. The preacher would start with a high figure and ask who would give that amount. Then he would gradually reduce the figure down until a minimum figure was reached to which even the least inclined and the poorest could subscribe. Making a commitment for the highest amount was my father, and this figure I recall was \$450. Ours was not an affluent family in terms of money and we were reminded from time to time that there was no money for material things enjoyed by some of the other children. If this was the case, I could not understand how my father could give more money to the church than any other member, especially those with fine clothes and cars.

"The present sanctuary of Lea's Chapel was built by the members, and my father was one of them. The initials of those who worked on the church were inscribed (very unprofessionally) on a spare tombstone which was conscripted and placed in the foundation as a cornerstone.

"Being members of the same church produced a special relationship. Everyone, including the preacher and the presiding elder, was called 'Brother,' especially on Sunday and at church. During the week this was not so strictly observed, but the responsibility remained. I remember the case of a member of an adjoining Methodist church who had fallen on hard times and his entire farm was up for sale to satisfy creditors. Through the efforts of the members of Lea's Chapel and others enough money was collected to enable him to retain his home and a few surrounding acres.

"Revival services of a week's duration were held in July. Strong, fervent pleas would be made from the pulpit to repent of your sins, accept Christ as your Savior and vow to lead a new life in the future following the teachings from the Bible. As I recollect, these were directed first to those who were not church members to officially join, and secondly to afford an opportunity to the membership to rededicate their lives and reaffirm their faith.

"Attendance at these services was always very good. No doubt, this was due in part to the dinner on the grounds between the morning and afternoon sermons. There was fried chicken galore and cakes and pies of every description. Personally, it gave me an opportunity to partake of the white meat which was quite a treat since I was always relegated to a drumstick at home. Only one piece though, then into many pieces of the most delicious cakes one can imagine.

"Such fervent pleas were made by the minister! Some of these had some very scary implications, especially to a country youngster of 8 or 10 years. A particular one that comes to mind was the story by the preacher of a railroad engineer who was delayed to the extent that he could not make his schedule on time. His crew advised him that it would be impossible to make up the lost time. Nevertheless, this engineer did not want to blemish his record by a late arrival. He dismissed the advice of his crew and vowed, 'I'll put her in on time or I'll put her in hell.' The train was pushed to its speed capacity, failed to make a curve and was wrecked, and the engineer was killed. How all this fit into a revival service has puzzled me for all these years, but the preacher did say something that a young lad remembered.

"Equally as impressive were the urgency and seriousness of the pulpit invitations. I remember on one occasion the minister could not get anyone to come to the rail. He proceeded to go out into the congregation and hold whispered conferences with certain people. Surely, I thought, he will not come and talk to me! But he did. 'Do you love the Lord?' he asked, and I replied 'Yes' (of course). 'Do you want to give your heart to Jesus?' and I replied, 'Yes' (of course). Then all I had to do was to go down to the rail and let the minister pray for me.

"The same invitation hymns were used over and over. Between verses the minister would hold up his hand to stop the

music and singing to make a forgotten point or reinforce his plea. I remember one occasion, however, when this did not work. In the congregation was Mr. George Harris, one who loved to sing and did it with no reservations. The preacher raised his hand to hold the music, but Mr. Harris, who was looking at the words in the songbook and not at the minister, proceeded, all alone, with the next verse. My sister, Jessie, at the piano, saw the predicament, picked up the music to Mr. Harris' words and the poor minister was forced to forego his 'between verses' plea.

"In my early years I used to sit on the front pew with my father. One of the first ministers I remember preached the Word in very loud and profound tones. Not only would he shout but he would step down to the rail with coattails flying and pound his fist on the rail to emphasize his point. This would scare the daylights out of me. However, I knew better than to discuss my fright with Papa. When the time came for the minister to be replaced, my highest hope was that his replacement would not shout! What a relief to find that the new preacher did not follow the example of his predecessor.

"Transportation to church was, in my childhood, by horse and buggy, between my father's knees. The horse was a high spirited beautiful black mare named 'Gentry.' She loved to run and I liked that fast pace which was possible only on level smooth sections of the road. However, if ever a horse had hay-fever, she had it, as was evident by her snorting and sneezing when trotting swiftly. Every time she sneezed, we got it back like a shower. This was all very exciting to a small lad and was accompanied by his father humming loudly 'In the Sweet Bye and Bye.'

"Then, as now, attendance was mostly families living in the immediate area. These included Mr. W.G. Rogers, Mr. Henry Rogers, Mr. Bob Hester, Mr. Thee Hester, W.D. Fulcher, John Brewer, George Harris, Jesse Carr, John Pleasant, Jack Pleasant, Bill Pleasant, Howard Allen, Sam Newton and my family of Wilkersons. Sadly, these heads of families are gone to their reward. Not forgotten, though, in my mind every time I repeat the Affirmation of Faith and come to the words 'communion of saints,' I remember these good people. Today, when I visit the Chapel, only a residue from the above remain. Where are all the children? Where are the new families who

have built homes lining the highways in recent years? These are the challenges which must be met to insure that 250-year-old Lea's Chapel will survive -- surviving vibrant and forceful -- in today's world. 'Holy Ground' are the words I remember hearing my cousin Betty Brooks (buried in the cemetery with her parents) use to describe Lea's Chapel. Thus it will ever be for me."

(Note by editor: Willard Roland Wilkerson, the son of William Robert Wilkerson, was born and raised in the Lea's Chapel area. He now lives in Richmond, VA.)

Mollie (Mary Wilkerson) Rogers says, "I remember Mr. Willie Dixon as Sunday School superintendent. He moved to a farm at Leasburg and did not attend Lea's Chapel after that. Papa was superintendent of the Sunday School for more than thirty years.

"I remember Miss Alice Hester and Miss Mary Stephens getting up our 'Children's Day Exercises.'

"I know Preacher Holmes was there when the new church was built. I remember Papa saying he worked as hard as anyone.

"When we had dinner on the grounds, each family had his own table and you invited people to eat with you. Later we had one long table and each family used a space to put out their food.

"Miss Mary Stephens and Mac Wagstaff were the first couple to be married in the new church. (They were married on June 27, 1907 by Rev. J.A. Hornaday). Miss Mary invited all the Sunday School to attend the wedding.

"Mrs. Mary Hambrick, even after she was married, always came out and fixed the communion. Afterwards Miss Alice did."

(Note by the editor: Mollie (Wilkerson) Rogers is the daughter of William Robert Wilkerson).

Aliene (Wilkerson) Taylor says, "I remember the spring of water east of the church -- the children would go to the spring and get water in a pitcher for the minister to have in the pulpit. The pitcher was used for baptism as well. I was baptized with that pitcher. Corene Harris and Cleo Rogers were some of the girls I remember going to the spring.

"Every summer, in the second week of July, the church would have a 'protracted meeting,' now called a 'revival.' Tables were set up in front of the church outside. One of the tables had only three legs, so someone nailed the table into the tree. The tree today has a knot in it where it was damaged by the table. About the food, each family had a specific place to put their plates. After the blessing, the young girls would run to get their mother's food.

"Preachers held sermons at different churches. For 'the Big Meeting' he would come to Lea's Chapel about every four Sundays. Service was held sometimes in the afternoon. The young people would come and sit in people's cars. The 'courtiers' would go to Mr. Will Rogers' house to get well water instead of drinking the limestone spring water. Any excuse to get away!

"Capitola Rogers (Mrs. Will Rogers) had a key to the library cabinet that was in what is now the vestibule. She also kept records of who borrowed books.

"Parents of the children would go to the altar calls. After they kneeled, they would stand up, put their arms around each other and shout 'Glory, Hallelujah!' and the like.

"Church families had a picnic at Lock Lilly (Chub Lake) every summer. The church was once called 'Methodist Episcopal South.'"

(Note by the editor: Aliene (Wilkerson) Taylor is the daughter of William Robert Wilkerson and the sister of Mollie Wilkerson Rogers, Willard R. Wilkerson and Edna Wilkerson.)

Harold Dunevant says, "My grandfather, Clem Baswell Bowes, was a loving, kind, hardworking, religious man and a longtime member of Lea's Chapel. He married my grandmother Mary Mollie Elizabeth Brann on Jan. 20, 1901 in Yanceyville, NC and they had eleven children.

"My grandparents were farmers and lived almost all their lives in Person county NC. The last ten years of their lives were spent in Reidsville, NC where three of their children lived. But they remained loyal members of Lea's Chapel, even after moving, and they came back to Sunday services in their two-door Chevrolet, passing many churches along the way.

"My mother, Maggie Bowes Dunevant, said that when she was a small child she did not like for the minister at Lea's

Chapel to call on her father, Clem Bowes, to pray during services because her father would always begin to cry before he finished his prayer, and when he cried it would cause my mother to cry. I remember my grandfather always referred to God as 'The Old Master.' Both my grandparents' funerals were held at Lea's Chapel although they are buried at Burchwood cemetery in Roxboro."

(Note by editor: Harold Dunevant was raised in Lea's Chapel but now lives in Winston-Salem, NC.)

John Alden Rogers, Jr. says, "There is a stone on the grounds of Lea's Chapel church that was the cornerstone of two of the earliest Lea's Chapel churches. The stone is indigenous to the area. It is thought to be blue granite. The stone is thought to have come from Lea's Chapel spring branch some three or four hundred yards northwest of the present church building.

"The stone has a long and interesting history. Its first known use was that of an Indian stone for grinding maize and other food stuffs. The top of the stone is concave, caused by considerable grinding of food stuff with a pestle. The stone is of such size that the natives could not have carried it very far. Consequently there must have been an Indian village nearby. There is a bold spring about two hundred yards from the church known as 'Lea's Chapel spring.'

"I grew up on the adjoining farm and helped clear and till the land adjoining the church property. At the beginning of World War II, I had a gallon of arrowheads plus an ax or tomahawk which I had found.

"There were four generations of the Rogers family who were members of Lea's Chapel: George C., George A., Willie G. and myself.

"I remember two incidents of my youth concerning the church. One, the day I joined the church on the second Sunday of July 1920, there was being held a Quarterly Meeting. The presiding elder, of course, was present. After the business session concluded, the local minister called for all children in the congregation to join him at the chancel rail, and those who were not already members of the church were asked to join the church. The membership of the church increased some 10 to 20 percent that day.

"The other incident that is very vivid in my memory happened a year or so before or after the church-joining. At that time, each summer a Children's Day was held at the church. We were practicing for the occasion when lightening struck an oak tree about fifty feet in front of the church, tore a hole in the boarding of the tower of the church and scared the daylights out of children, women and horses. No cars present at that time."

(Note by editor: John A. Rogers Jr was raised in Lea's Chapel, but lives in Tallahassee, FL.)

Elizabeth Rogers Morgan says, "George Clark Rogers bought 895 acres in 1844 in Olive Hill township. He moved his family from Woodsdale township soon after that and built his home near Lea's Chapel. His will of 1855 gave land to three children of his second marriage: George A. Rogers, Henry A. Rogers and Mary Frances Rogers. All of these families were members of Lea's Chapel.

"I remember at 10 years of age attending the wedding of Jessie Wilkerson and Clarence Boyd, at 6 o'clock, June 6, 1922, at Lea's Chapel.

"During church service one Sunday Edna Wilkerson cried out, 'Mrs. Rogers, Elizabeth is taking off my red shoes!' Perhaps, I was about age two. The story has been told to my family and I continue to like red shoes."

(Note by editor: Elizabeth Rogers Morgan is the daughter of Willie and Capitola Rogers. She lives in Smithfield NC).

A few persons at Lea's Chapel still remember an incident that occurred in the early 1900's when two boys caused much consternation among the members one Sunday. At that time most of the people came to church in buggies, and often, when it was hot in the church, mothers would leave their babies in the buggy in the shade outside while they were attending the worship service inside. Two boys, both about 11 years of age who remain unidentified, came to church with their parents but slipped out before the service was over, and decided it would be interesting to see what would happen if they switched two of the babies, which they did. The mothers did not discover the exchange until they had gotten home. The confusion which followed did not subside until each baby had been restored to its own mother.

Chapter 8

Celebrations

History comes alive in memoirs and in celebrations. In the past few years Lea's Chapel has celebrated its 225th Anniversary in 1975 and its 250th Anniversary in the year 2000.

For the 225th Anniversary the young people of the Chapel, under the leadership of Pete and Jan Satterfield, produced and presented an historical pageant which portrayed some of the rich heritage of Lea's Chapel and sought to lead the people to a renewed dedication. The young people gave two candlelight performances in the church, one for the membership of the chapel and the general public, and another for the youth of Person county. The young people of the chapel sewed the British flag and made Williamsburg period costumes complete with ruffles and caps for the ladies and vests and knee-britches for the men. A series of tableaux were presented with a narrator and background music.

Here are excerpts from the narrator's manuscript:

"We extend to each of you a warm welcome to an evening at Chapel Church, 1750.

"Our country is now in the Bi-Centennial period marking the 200th anniversary of the founding of the United States of America. As we celebrate this event, the United Methodist Youth Fellowship has deemed it appropriate to present some sketches of the first 225 years of the life and times of our church here at Lea's Chapel.

"Although the mists of time shroud much of what we would like to know about Lea's Chapel's history, there is some documented evidence of certain events which occurred during the church's early years. These events historically and correctly we shall picture as they have been given to us.

"Other periods of the life of this church and its members can but be speculated on with some accuracy. Those scenes will be painted by us with the broad brush-strokes of general knowledge of a given historical period, the conditions of this geographical area, and the people who lived in those times.

"However, through all the times and circumstances surrounding this church, we hold the certain knowledge that a chapel was built here on this oak-covered knoll on the frontier of the colony of North Carolina when this country was governed by George II, King of England -- and the people who were its early members, however many, were able to worship here with freedom and a deep sense of reverence. They were also able to enjoy close fellowship, one with the other, and could use the church not only as a place of worship, but as a place to meet and discuss the issues which would affect their lives.

"We ask you to travel backward with us down through the corridor of time to a page of history written 225 years ago. The place is here, on the South Fork of the Hyco River, and the year is 1750. You are now in an unsettled wilderness area known as the Carolina back-country .

"If you could move as a hawk, wheeling high and free on clear currents over the rolling hills of the Hyco, you would see below an area of wild and splendid beauty, relatively untouched by man -- and as far as the eye could see in any direction there would be a carpet of majestic forest, broken only by an occasional rocky bluff or flowered clearing. Looking westward toward the blue wall of the mountains, you could see mighty oak, hickory and poplar trees --their color broken by the deeper blue-green virgin pines. They stand like giant sentinels over the occasional meandering of game trails or Indian trading paths."

Then there follows in the pageant scenes of the arrival of the first Lea families, the building of the chapel, the visit of Rev. Hugh McAden to the chapel, the visit also of Francis Asbury, the American Revolution and the visit of General Cornwallis to the area, the Civil War and finally the revival in 1885 under the Rev. Dr. L. L. Nash.

The pageant concluded with the narrator reading that famous tribute to the Church by William Henry Boody:

My Church

"Before I was born, my Church gave to my parents ideals of life and love that made my home a place of strength and beauty. My Church enriched my childhood with the romance of religion and the lessons of life that are woven into the texture of my soul. Sometimes when it seemed that I might surrender to foolish and

futile ideals, the truths my Church had taught me become radiant, insistent and inescapable. In the stress and storm of adolescence, my Church saw and understood the surging of my soul and guided my footsteps by giving me a vision of purity and truth. When first my heart knew the strange awakenings of love, my Church taught me to chasten and spiritualize my affections, sanctified my marriage, and blessed my home. When my heart was broken with sorrow, and I thought the sun could never shine again, my Church drew me to the Friend of all the weary and whispered to me the hope of another morning eternal and tearless. When my steps had slipped and I had known the bitterness of sin, my Church believed in me and gently called me back to the life that is noble and pure. When my children came, dearer than life to me, my Church helped me to train them for joyous, clean and Christly living. My Church calls me to her heart. She asks my service and my loyalty. She has a right to ask it! I will help her to do for others what she has done for me. In this place in which I live, I will help her keep aflame and aloft the torch of a living faith."

The pageant is reported to have been a moving experience for all who attended, bringing, not only a knowledge of the heritage of Lea's Chapel, but also a fresh dedication to the Church and the things of Christ's Kingdom.

250th Anniversary

On April 9, 2000 the congregation at Lea's Chapel celebrated Homecoming and the 250th Anniversary of the church. A large and enthusiastic crowd of approximately 275 people was on hand for the occasion. Bishop Marion Edwards, bishop of the North Carolina Conference, was the guest preacher, and numerous memorial gifts (made to the church over the past year to mark this special anniversary) were acknowledged. One of the memorial gifts was the roadside historical marker which has been placed on the highway in front the church. It reads as follows:

LEA'S CHAPEL
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

-0-

The church was formed as an Anglican Chapel in 1750 on South Hyco Creek. It was a widely recognized landmark in this frontier region and was known as "Chapel Church."

Francis Asbury, one of the first Bishops of the Methodist church, preached here in 1780 during the Revolutionary War. The church passed to the Methodists after 1784.

The church was the first organized church in what became Person county in 1792.

Note: the church was in Granville County when formed in 1750 and was next in Orange County before being passed to Caswell County and became Person County in 1792.

Nathan Franke, sixteen year old son of Leo and Joyce Franke, who received the Eagle Scout Award on April 22, 2000 at a ceremony held at Lea's Chapel, constructed and gave to the chapel as his contribution to the 250th Anniversary, the Scattering Garden on the chapel grounds, as a place for scattering the ashes of those who have been cremated. Nathan is a member of Lea's Chapel and previously earned the Scout "God and Country Award."

The Future

After 250 years of service to Christ and his kingdom, Lea's Chapel looks to the future with *confidence* and with *hope* - - confidence that the Lord who has led us in all the way that we have come will continue to lead us until we are gathered before the throne of God in Heaven and see fulfilled the vision of John in the Revelation where he says: "After this I beheld and, lo, a great multitude which no man could number, out of every nation and kindred and people and tongues, and they stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes and palms in their hands, and they cried with a loud voice saying, 'Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power

and might be unto our God forever and ever" (Rev. 7:9-12).

We look forward with confidence -- *and also with hope* -
- hope that we will be able to fulfill our tasks as faithfully and
as diligently as those who have gone before -- as those who have
served Christ at Lea's Chapel and are now in that great company
before the throne. "Wherefore seeing we are compassed about
with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us.....run with patience the
race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and
Finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him,
endured the cross, despising the shame and is set down at the
right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1-2).

Anniversary Celebrations



225th Anniversary Pageant in 1975 (above)
Presented by the Young People of Lea's Chapel



250th Anniversary in 2000
Road Marker (above) with Lea's Chapel in Background

Appendix

- A. Who Owned the Land on Which Lea's Chapel Was Originally Built?
- B. Gravestones in the Cemetery.
- C. Stained Glass Windows at Lea's Chapel.
- D. Lea's Chapel Today.

Appendix A
Who Owned the Land on Which Lea's Chapel
Was Originally Built?

The ownership of Lea's Chapel and the land on which it is built is shown in two deeds recorded in Person Co NC Deed Book L. The first deed, on page 324, is for 50 acres and the second deed, on page 325, is for 30 acres. In these two deeds George C. McNeill of Cumberland Co NC sold in 1833 80 acres of land (50 a. & 30 a.) to John M. Dobbin. In the second of these deeds the land is described as "being on the waters of South Hico....the aforesaid tract...of land was willed by William Lea to his daughter Annis Cochran.....she made her will and bequeathed the same to her grandson George C. McNeill." In this deed there is a proviso which reads: "reserving the chappel house and half-acre immediately around it." Yet another deed signed two years later in 1835 in Person Co NC (Deed Book 78, page 495) shows that George C. McNeill conveyed to the Methodist Episcopal Church "a certain chapel known as Lee's (sic) Chapel, lying and situate in Person county together with an half an acre of land connected with and about the said chapel to be used as a burying ground. The said chapel and tract of land being a part reserved by the said George C. McNeill on disposing of the adjoining tract." This reservation of Lea's Chapel and the land around it is mentioned in yet another deed in Person county (Deed Book O, p. 361) by which in 1841 James C. Dobbin, executor of the will of John M. Dobbin (John M. Dobbin died in 1837), conveyed a tract of land to Solomon Vanhook. After giving the boundaries of the tract, the deed says, "being the same parcel of land conveyed by George C. McNeill to the late John M. Dobbin, always reserving however the chapell house and perhaps two acres of land immediately around said chapel conveyed by the said John M. Dobbin to the Methodist Episcopal Church." Since there is no deed on record in the Person Co NC clerk's office of John M. Dobbin ever conveying land to the Methodist Episcopal Church, we can assume that somebody's memory was faulty and that this refers to the deed by George C. McNeill to the Methodist Episcopal Church. Somebody misremembered also the number of acres conveyed.

From these deeds it is clear that the land on which Lea's Chapel stands was owned by William Lea. How William Lea came into possession of the chapel and land is shown in a deed in Caswell Co NC (Deed Book A, page 142) which tells us that William Lea was granted the land in 1779 by the State of North Carolina (Caswell Co NC Deed Book A, p.142). The State of North Carolina had appropriated the land from the Earl of Granville. When, after the Declaration of Independence, North Carolina became a state, it took over all the ungranted land in the Granville District, which included the land on which Lea's Chapel was standing.

It appears that the land on which the chapel was originally built was a tract which lay between the Granville grant to William Lea in 1753 (NC Archives, Granville Grants SSLG 95-F, 102 Orange Co) and land owned by Thomas McNeill. It could have been land which was simply overlooked by Granville's agents. The grant by the State of North Carolina of 426 acres to William Lea in 1779 appears to include, not only the 80 acres on which the chapel stood, but also the 332 acres already granted to William Lea in 1753.

When William Lea petitioned the State of NC for the grant in 1779, he was apparently having a disagreement with Unity McCoy about a claim adjacent to his land. In petitioning for the grant from the State of NC, he may have wanted to do several things: settle the dispute with McCoy, get a clear title to his own land and acquire the tract on which the chapel stood.

So, it appears that the Chapel on South Hyco was originally built on land that belonged to the Earl of Granville; the State of North Carolina appropriated it from the Earl and granted it to William Lea, who willed it to his daughter, Anness Cochran, who willed it to her grandson, George C. McNeill, who gave it to the Methodist Episcopal Church. It is interesting that in the records it is not referred to as "*Lea's Chapel*" until after 1779 when it was granted to William Lea. Apparently the chapel and the land on which it stands have never belonged to the Anglican Church.

(Note by the editor: Because some of the things we have said here are contrary to what had been believed for a long time, we have been careful to give the documentary evidence, with references, which led us to our conclusions.)

Appendix B
Gravestones in the Cemetery

Bowes, Betty Ann b & d 1953	Brewer, Infant son of J.M & W.A. Brewer
Bowes, Hallie M. 1891-1957	Brewer, Robert E. 1834-1904
Bowes, Cora Ann 1878-1958	Brewer, James E. 1872-1894
Bowes, Isaac M. 1924-1972	Brewer, Agnes M. 1842-1916
Bowes, Obie Franklin 1927-1998	Brewer, Cassie Maywood 1907-1909
Bowes, Erma L June 15, 1918	Brooks, Ella Bradsher 1868-1937
Bowes, Cleve 1884-1942	Brooks, Mrs. Bessie S. 1846-1936
Boyd, Jessie W. 1899-1993	Carr, Roxie Harris 1878-1917
Boyd, Clarence Lacy 1895-1950	Carr, Melvin Merritt 1915-1981
Bradsher, Frances 1827-1888	Carr, Alvenia Frederick 1918-1987
Bradsher, William 1811-1879	Carr, Ruby Howerton 1893-1968
Bradsher, Eunice 1853-1895	Carr, Wanda Gale 1956-1998
Brandon, Sarah T. 1848-1914	Carr, Charlie C. 1888-1956
Brandon, G. B. 1845-1912	Carr, Jesse M. 1876-1947
Brewer, Willie A. Smith 1885-1937	Carr, Ruth Garrett May 8, 1886
Brewer, Edgar Slade 1909-1962	Childress, Mrs. Emmer F. 1858-1918
Brewer, Janie Snead 1908-1986	Clayton, Myra Lynn b & d 1959
Brewer, John M. 1876-1942	Clayton, Rebecca Gail b & d 1956

Cochran Anness 1761-1821	Gray, William M. 1913-1972
Cochran, Aurelia d. 1812, 6 yrs of age	Gray, Nannie S. 1914-1958
Cochran, James d. 1807, 46 yrs of age	Gray, Charlie Junious 1939-1987
Coleman, Mrs. Sarah 1774-1854	Hester, Jimmy 1941-1952
Collins, Virginia P. 1923-1954	Hester, Richard 1944-1952
Collins, Franklin L. 1923-1993	Hester, Janie Rogers 1910-1995
Day, (Boy) b & d 1953	Knight, Alfred Ray 1919-1970
Fox, Helen Carr Knight 1919-1988	Knott, Howard, 1907-1929
Frederick, Thomas E. 1913-1968	Knott, William R. 1917-1980
Fulcher, Bettie B. 1853-1927	Knott, Bessie Aug.10, 1920
Fulcher, Samuel 1884-1967	Knott, John Willie 1905-1975
Fulcher, Ruth Pearl 1886-1973	Knott, Henry 1877-1935
Fulcher, Obediah 1847-1928	Knott, Willie Gene 1902-1955
Fulcher, Mary Ann 1882-1965	Knott, Violet Solomon 1876-1953
Garrett, Almira Garratt	Lee, Bertha Oliver 1891-1988
Garrett, Stephen 1810-1863	Lee, Ira Thomas 1895-1978
Garrett, Wilson E. 1861-1916	Lee, Harry 1926-1941
Gray, Betty Jean 1938	Murphy, Flora 1870-1909
Gray, Alvin Junious 1959-1976	O'Briant, Patsy Gentry 1934-1990
Gray, Lonie Sue b & d 1935	Oliver, Ella Willis 1866-1960

Oliver, Daniel Lindsay 1868-1948	Pleasant, Edith Winstead 1908-1968
Oliver, O. M. 1797-1897	Pleasant, John P. 1892-1966
Oliver, William H. 1895-1973	Pleasant, Minnie Tatum 1896-1979
Oliver, Ella J. b & d 1948	Pleasant, William Samuel 1887-1963
Oliver, Winnie Saunders 1894-1984	Pleasant, Betty Briggs 1890-1973
Oliver, Rosa V. 1890-1977	Pleasant, Thomas Allen b & d 1960
Oliver, W. Melvin 1921-1943	Pleasant, Herbert C. 1897-1979
Pleasant, William M. 1861-1922	Pleasant, Alphonso Alice 1897-1924
Pleasant, Jennie Willis 1857-1935	Pleasant, Virgie S. Aug. 7, 1912
Pleasant, Julia Blanche 1914-1915	Pleasant, Major Y. 1890-1976
Pleasant, Robert Lawrence "Bob" 1946-1999	Pleasant, Ida Clayton 1884-1974
Pleasant, James Henry W. 1895-1914	Pleasant, Ivey Ellis, Sr 1895-1983
Pleasant, E. B. 1856-1942	Pleasant, Anna May Harris 1891-1976
Pleasant, Bettie 1864-1935	Pleasant, Henry M. 1888-1971
Pleasant, H. Lillian 1900-1990	Pleasant, William Preston 1979-1981
Pleasant, Katy Sue 1914-1915	Pleasant, Robert H. 1916-1989
Pleasant, Andrew Jackson 1886-1963	Rice, Stephen C. 1844-1918
Pleasant, Robert Samuel b & d 1916	Rose, Duncan 1777-1839
Pleasant, Enwood Samuel 1907-1922	Shell, Ruth Tatum 1922-1998
Pleasant, Robert H. Jr. b & d 1954	Stephens, Eliza M. 1818-1851

Wagstaff, Robert Hester
1926-1980
Wagstaff, John Lassiter
1964-1970
Wagstaff, Blanche Hester
1900-1980
Wagstaff, Sandra Hester
1954-1976
Wagstaff, Lewis Teague
1896-1972
Wagstaff, Nancy Wilson
1928-1975
Watson, Richard A.
1883-1955
Watson, Nora B.
1882-1954
Wilkerson, Cornelia M.
1914-1980
Wilkerson, Thaddeus Vernon
1917-1990
Wilkerson, Robert J.
1907-1974
Wilkerson, Esther Thompson
1901-1971
Wilkerson, Frances Starnes
1954-1955
Wilkerson, Charles C.
1909-1997
Wilkerson, Ara Elizabeth
1874-1951
Wilkerson, William Robert
1871-1943
Wilkerson, Charles Vernon
1939-1966
Wilkerson, William Earl
1896-1972
Willis, Sophia Ann
1832-1899

(Information on gravestone in
the cemetery was compiled by
Jill Wilkerson Frisbie.)

Appendix C

Stained Glass Windows at Lea's Chapel

Andrew Jackson Pleasant

1886-1963

Minnie Tatum Pleasant

1896-

In Memory of

John Lassiter Wagstaff

July 23, 1964-Feb 25, 1970

George E. Harris

1867-1945

Valerica Stanfield Harris

1873-1952

In Honor of

Ivey E. Pleasant

Anna May Pleasant

John R. Bradsher

1865-1955

Flora S. Bradsher

1863-1954

John M. Brewer

1876-1942

Willie Smith Brewer

1885-1937

Robert Charles Hester

1862-1946

Jessie Dixon Hester

1874-1946

Howard F. Allen

1891-1962

Maggie Newton Allen

1897-1962

William George Rogers

1869-1945

Capitola Pointer Rogers

1871-1942

Presented by

Preston Satterfield Family

William Robert Wilkerson

1871-1943

Ara Brooks Wilkerson

1874-1951

Henry W. Rogers

1861-1931

Elizabeth F. Rogers

1876-1954

Eunice Winstead Wagstaff

1854-1949

Joseph P. Rogers

1906-1971

Ruth Sears Rogers

1915-1974

Appendix D

Lea's Chapel Today

- Allen, M.M. (Margie)
1668 Hester's Store Rd.
Roxboro, NC 27573
- Allen, Ricky & Lynn
1873 Hester's Store Rd.
Roxboro, NC 27573
- Allen, Ronnie & Sandra
1834 Hester's Store Rd.
Roxboro, NC 27573
- Bailey, Lynn
PO Box 123
Leasburg, NC 27291
- Carr, Algie & Juanita
6656 Leasburg Rd
Roxboro, 27573
- Carr, Carl & Delores
6797 Leasburg Rd
Roxboro, NC 27573
- Carr, Reginald & Barbara
407 Clayton Ave
Roxboro, NC 27573
- Carter, Doug & Tina
145 Thee Hester Rd
Roxboro, NC 27573
- Cook, P. Ann
608 West Murray St
Durham, NC 27704
- Day, Hazel
7870 Chapel Hill Rd
Cary, NC 27511
- Day, Richard & Patricia
6165 Leasburg Rd
Roxboro, NC 27573
- Franke, Leo & Joyce
Erica & Nathan
231 White Oak Dr.
Roxboro, NC 27573
- Hester, John
691 Mill Hill Rd
Roxboro, NC 27573
- Lain, Rev. Doug & Tara
4940 Leasburg Rd.
Roxboro, NC 27573
- Lea, Arnold & Lynette
212 Charles Circle
Roxboro, NC 27573
- Lea, William & Ann
6685 Leasburg Rd
Roxboro, NC 27573
- Mise, Daniel & Jean
1562 Mill Hill Rd
Roxboro, NC 27573
- Mudano, Belle
46 Forest Oaks Dr
Durham, NC 27707
- Napier, Cindy
535 Cunningham Rd
Semora, NC 27343
- Norris, Bob & Patricia
Coleman & Kellie
191 Blalock Dairy Rd
Roxboro, NC 27573
- O'Briant, Elizabeth
1885 Old Durham Rd
Roxboro, NC 27573
- O'Briant, Tim & Tammy
Sanford, Chance
317 Whitt Town Rd
Roxboro, NC 27573

- Owen, Henry & Leona
4787 Leasburg Rd.
Roxboro, NC 27573
- Pearce, David & Kim
2266 Thee Hester Rd
Roxboro, NC 27673
- Pleasant, Ivey, Jr.
535 Ivey Pleasant Rd
Leasburg, NC 27291
- Pleasant, Vergie
1502 Woodland Dr.
Durham, NC 27701
- Rogers, Will
90 Clay Thomas Rd
Roxboro, NC 27573
- Rudder, Elgin & Frances
33 Rolling Hills Rd
Roxboro, NC 27573
- Sams, Charles & Marian
525 Mill Hill Rd
Roxboro, NC 27573
- Satterfield, David & Lisa Anne
98 Thee Hester Rd
Roxboro, NC 27573
- Satterfield, Pete & Jan
195 Westover Dr.
Roxboro, NC 27573
- Satterfield, Tommy & Rita
1618 Hester's Store Rd
Roxboro, NC 27573
- Shultz, Mike & Bonnie
2090 Hester's Store Rd.
Roxboro, NC 27573
- Shultz, Miles & Marian
2127 Hester's Store Rd
Roxboro, NC 27583
- Stephans, Mary
PO Box 123
Leasburg, NC 27291
- Talley, Caroline
301 Hester's Store Rd
Roxboro, NC 27573
- Taylor, Aliene W.
2529 Rolling Hills Rd
Rosboro, NC 27573
- Wallace, Dean & Jayne
790 Blalock Dairy Rd
Roxboro, NC 27573
- Watkins, Steve & Cindy
1751 Chub Lake Rd
Roxboro, NC 27573
- Wilkerson, Carol
3089 Rolling Hills Rd
Roxboro, NC 27573
- Wilkerson, Edna
2491 Rolling Hills Rd
Roxboro, NC 27573
- Wilkerson, Norma
2949 Rolling Hills Rd
Roxboro, NC 27573
- Wilkerson, Sheila
615 Kingsbury Dr.
Durham, NC 27712

Officers & Personnel of Lea's Chapel Meth. Church for 2000

- Nominations:** Pastor Doug Lain; Lay Leader Reggie Carr, Kim Pearce, Coleman Norris, Edna Wilkerson, Elgin Rudder, Cindy Watkins, Erica Franke, Tim O'Briant, and Rita Satterfield.
- Trustees:** Chairperson Richard Day, Cindy Watkins, Susan Satterfield, Dean Wallace, Bob Norris, Liz O'Briant, Pete Satterfield, Tim O'Briant, Bonnie Shultz, and Rita Satterfield.
- Pastor Parish Relations:** Chairperson Steve Watkins, Bonnie Shultz, Patricia Day, Elgin Rudder, Doug Carter, Jan Satterfield, Leo Franke, Bob Norris, John Hester, and Kim Pearce. Reggie Carr as Lay Leader is a non-voting member.
- Parsonage Committee:** Chairperson Bob Norris, Jan Satterfield, Lynette Lea, Edna Wilkerson, Doug Carter, Pete Satterfield, Sidney O'Briant, Dean Wallace, and David Pearce.
- Nurture & Membership Care:** Chairperson Frances Rudder, Cindy Wilkerson, Barbara Carr, Leona Owen, Jan Satterfield, Edna Wilkerson, Tammy O'Briant, Tina Carter, Joyce Franke and Doug Carter.
- Outreach:** Chairperson Liz O'Briant, Tammy O'Briant, Elgin Rudder, Bob Norris, Lynne Bailey, Jayne Wallace, David Satterfield, and Chance Sanford.
- Worship:** Chairperson Patricia Norris, Cindy Watkins, Jan Satterfield, Aliene Taylor, Susan Satterfield, Wiillie Lea, Delores Carr, and Leon Franke.
- Cemetery:** Chairperson Reggie Carr, Algie Carr, John Hester, Bob Norris, Arnold Lea, and Margie Allen.
- Christian Education:** (Sunday School teachers) Chairperson Tammy O'Brian, Leo Franke, Edna Wilkerson, Norma Wilkerson, Patricia Norris, Ivey Pleasant, Elgin Rudder, Jean Mise, Patricia Day, Cindy Watkins, and Susan Satterfield.
- Finance:** Chairperson Elgin Rudder, Treasurer Bonnie Shultz, Pastor Doug Lain, Richard Day, Reggie Carr, Ivey Pleasant, Sheila Wilkerson, Bob Norris, Susan Satterfield Jayne Wallace and Steve Watkins.
- Witness:** Frances Rudder, Tim O'Briant, Tammy O'Briant, Jan Satterfield, Reggie Carr, Patricia Norris, Bob Norris, Elgin Rudder, Doug Carter, and Richard Day.

Administrative Council:

Chairperson of Adm. Council .	Susan Satterfield
Recording Secretary	Marion Shultz
Membership Secretary	Edna Wilkerson
Lay Leader	Reggie Carr
Alternate	Bob Norris
Treasurer	Bonnie Shultz
Financial Secretary	Jayne Wallace
PPR Chair	Steve Watkins
Trustees Chair	Richard Day
Nurture Chair	Frances Rudder
Outreach Chair	Liz O'Briant
Finance Chair	Elgin Rudder
Worship Chair	Patricia Norris
Christian Education Chair . . .	Tammy O'Briant
Sunday School Superintendent	Jean Mise
Asst. Sunday School Supt . . .	Rita Satterfield
NC Advocate Rep.	Ailene Taylor
Historian	Pete Satterfield
UMW President	Leona Owen
Cemetery Chair	Reggie Carr
PUMP Reps.	Joyce Franke & Leo Franke
Disaster Preparedness Chair . .	Bob Norris
Native Amer. Awareness Rep. .	Elgin Rudder
Ten Dollar Club Rep.	Tina Carter

At Large Members: All professing members of
Lea's Chapel .

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