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Richlands United Methodist Church

Richlands, NC



Homecoming

19 September 2004

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At

Richlands United Methodist Church

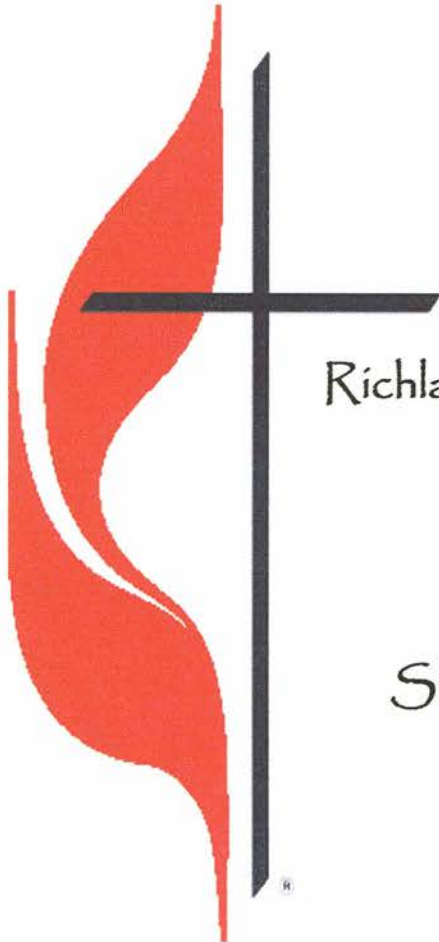
On

Sunday, September 19, 2004

Preached By

Rev. Charles L. Pollack

During the 11 O'clock Service



A HISTORY OF RICHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Several short histories have been written about Richlands United Methodist, and published in various Church Directories in the past.

This paper is an attempt to compose a history as extensive and documented as possible. A history of anything can best be constructed through the use of existent documents, and testimony of people involved in this history. Methodist doctrine itself is based on *Tradition, Experience, and Reason*. These three ideals will be used herein.

Unfortunately the early "Church Records" of the congregation, prior to 1900 have been lost. A search for early records was done by the staff of Archives at the North Carolina Conference, Raleigh, NC; the North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, NC; and the Duke University Library, Durham, NC but nothing was found! Therefore, the following have been relied on: Church Records since 1900; Register of Deeds, Jacksonville, NC; prior histories mentioned above; and other writings.

Methodism and the local Methodist Church, Richlands, had its beginning with visits to the area by Francis Asbury in the 1780's, 1790's, and 1800's. Asbury recorded in his journals that he met folks for worship at Mr. Lott Ballard's home. Lott Ballard and his family lived at Chapel Run, and have the distinction of being the first Methodists in Onslow County. Services were held in several other private homes and at an "old log cabin." One of Asbury's visits may have been to this log building in Oak Grove (now known as Richlands) which the congregation had removed in 1813 .

(See excerpt from Journal in Addendum A)

The earliest "Circuit," about 1786, in the organization of Methodism included churches from New Bern to Wilmington. In following years Richlands Church was in the Goshen Circuit, Wilmington Circuit, and New Bern Circuit.

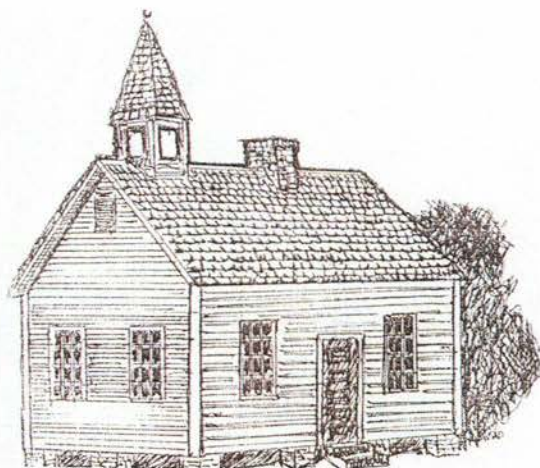
The year 1791 is the traditional date for the beginning of Richlands United Methodist Church first known as Richland's Chapel. As early as 1795 the congregation owned an acre of land across the street from our present church building. At this time according to a Deed from Thomas Glenn to Zachariah Barrow, Nathan Wilder and William Shaw "one acre of 131 acres was reserved for ... meeting house... on the Main Road" (Present day NE corner Wilmington and Hargett Streets). *Deed Book T, page 18, dated 13 April 1795.*

This same land changed hands through 1837. On 5 February 1827 James Glenn, Sr. deeded the land (131) to James Barrow, "excepting an acre for the Methodist Chapell, the well and the schoolhouse..." *Deed Book 17, page 184.* The third deed, dated 6 October 1829, shows "Thomas Battle deeding to John A. Averitt the land, 131 acres, ..."excepting acre deed to the Methodist for a Chapel... *Deed Book 21, page 97, registered 5 June 1835.*

James Mills acquired the land some time before his death as shown in a deed which involved several of his kin folks which was disputed in court. (*This is another story*).

On 17 February 1837 this land (131 acres) was deeded to William Mills by “Lewis Mills, Mary Basden, John Mills, Benjamin Parker and wife, Nancy Parker, and Lott Mills...which includes the Methodist Chapel, wells, etc. and the school house.” Witnessed by Bryan Shine Koonce and Obiah Gardy. *Deed Book 22, page 236*.

It has been written that “on a plot of land about where the present parsonage is located, donated by Uzza Mills, a one-room log structure was built to be used as a Methodist Church in 1813. This was the first building erected in Richlands, then called Oak Grove.” However, this is in error. Uzza Mills could not have “donated” the land because he was not born until 21 January 1821. If there was a log chapel, it had to have been located on the original acre across from the present building. This one-room log structure most likely was located on the one acre of the original 131 acres.



On 17 April 1848, a meeting was called at the Methodist Chapel to consider the establishing of an institution of higher learning in the area. Rev. E. L. Perkins, who was the pastor of Richlands Methodist church at the time explained the purpose of the meeting. An associate, the Rev. William Closs, explained all the advantages of having such an institution in the area. It was passed that an Academy preparatory to Randolph Macon College (Methodist) be erected.

A committee of five, composed of William Humphrey, Harvey Cox, E. L. Perkins, John A. Averette and Bryan Shine Koonce, were appointed to continue the organizational work.

The Academy building, an oblong structure of two large rooms, to which a music room was later added was built. Leonard Groninger Woodward, of Pennsylvania, was chosen to be the Head Master of the New School.

On 29 April 1848, Lott Mills deeded to the trustees “for \$1.00 a certain lot of land bounded on the north by the lot on which the Methodist church in Richlands...is now situated and the land of Uzza Mills, on the east by the lands of Uzza Mills and Nathan Sylvester, on the west by the main Wilmington and New Bern Road, containing 1 ½ acres of land, so long as there is or may be an Academy or a house of worship for the use of the members of the M. E. Church, S.. Witnesses: Nathan Sylvester, Harvey Cox.” *Deed Book 29, page 294*. The trustees were: Bryan Shine Koonce, Uzza Mills, Abner Irvin, Charles Gregory, and James White.

It was on this property that a church was built in 1848. “There is evidence that another building was erected in 1854.” The necessity for rebuilding within ten years is not known but a possibility is destruction by fire.

A description of the church during this time is of a building that had entrance doors on either side with a door in the back for forced attendance by slaves... Lilah Aman describes an early church (the 1854 one) as having an entrance at the



center with two side aisles. A stove was in the middle section of the pews. The altar at the front was accessible by steps on each side. A few pews in the altar area were positioned sideways facing the altar. The organ was centered in front of the altar with choir seats on either side. The picture shown here was painted by Iona Griese of this church. *(See specifications in Appendix B)*

The 1900 Census for “Village of Richlands” lists 28 “white” families. Of this 28 families, 16 were members of Richlands Methodist church.

Listed here are the white families of Richlands (which had been chartered in 1880). Families of the congregation are listed with “*”

- *COX, Alvia Bryant
- BARBER, Adelphus
- MARSHBURN, Isaac
- PADERICK, Charles
- *HILL, William
- HEATH, William H.
- NORTH, Leah (female)
- *NICHOLSON, James L.
- *HARGETT, Lewis
- *STEED, McKenzie B
- *HENDERSON, Margaret
- KOONCE, Francis D.
- *MILLS, John W.
- *TAYLOR, John A.
- *HUMPHREY, John D.
- *SYLVESTER, Nathaniel
- *AMAN, John L.
- *KOONCE, Henry B.

*MILLS, Uzza W.
*WOODWARD, John L.
VENTERS, Ammitee (female)
STROUD, Everett
BROOKS, John
*WELCH, Edward R. & Wife Lula (*Boarders in the home of John Brooks above*)
JUDGE, Aley
CANADY, James
COOPER, Benjamin F.
*MILLS, William C.

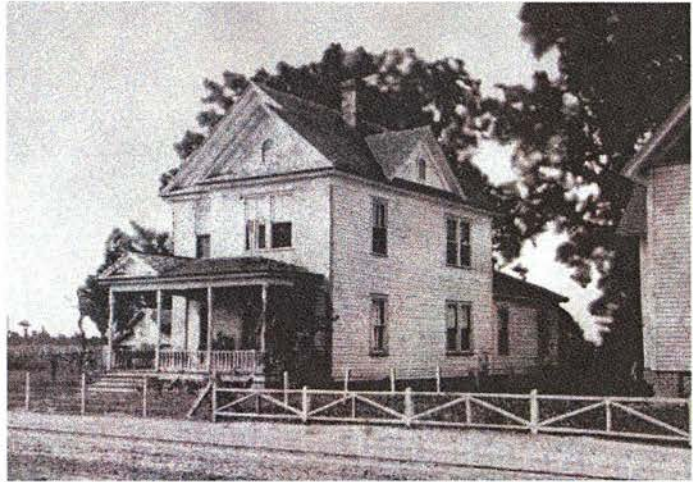
The above names were checked against the existent Records of the Church.

In the year 1905 the trustees sold off 5 lots of the original 1 acre of land across the street from the present church building. Most of these lots were patented off in 40' X 100' . Lot #1 went to McKenzie Bradford Steed; Lot #2 went to John Willis; Lots #3 & #4 went to O. B. Cox; and lot #5 was sold to John Willis.

In 1907 a new church was built on the present site. It was a wooden structure with a gabled roof, stained glass windows and a bell tower. The main entrance was from Wilmington Street.



Next to the church building was a two story parsonage probably built about 1900. A later picture shows shutters on the sides of the windows. This parsonage was replaced in 1951 by the present parsonage.



As an aside the story is told that one of the ministers' wives upon seeing this building stated that she was "not going to live in that!" A house was rented for the parsonage family until the new, present one was completed.

Present Parsonage.



In 2004 the Sylvester home located on Wilmington Street across the street from the church was donated by the Sylvester/Hargett families as a new parsonage. The home was built about 1860.

From 1938 until 1943 a two story education annex was constructed and major renovations were made including brick facing on the total structure. The dedication was held October 3, 1945.



A new Fellowship Hall and classrooms were added beginning with the planning stage in 1969 and completed in 1973. On land donated by Zannie Hatch, the foundation was laid 1 March 1972 and completed and dedicated November 16, 1975. The total cost was \$185,000.



In 1985 a former commercial building and lot at the back of the church were purchased. This property was renovated to provide additional parking and the structure was divided for use between a Youth Center and the Thrift Shop.

In 1990 the Youth Center was named “The Reuben Shaw Youth Center” in honor of a long-time member and dedicated servant of the Richlands United Methodist Church.



The Thrift Shop was opened in 1986. In 2001 it underwent a reorganization. Since that time proceeds and donations have increased to where the Shop is now taking in \$3000 or more a month. Many church projects have been paid out of these funds in addition to helping folks of the community.



The Cavanaugh home was purchased in 2000 for \$80,000. A grant for \$120,000 was received from the Duke Endowment Fund and the home was renovated. The Center had its Grand Opening on September 18, 2002 and is a partnership with Onslow County and is known as the Community Senior Service Center. In 2004 a room was added to the back of the building for additional activities.

**PASTORS WHO HAVE SERVED THE RICHLANDS CHURCH
FROM EARLIEST RECORDS TO THE PRESENT:**

E. E. Perkins	1847-48	A. S. Parker	1923-24
A. D. Bette	1880-82	James Frazzelle	1925-27
T. P. Ricand	1883-84	L. A. Watts	1928-32
G. C. Grant	1887-88	R. M. Price	1933-34
Mr. Rover	1889-90	J. L. Joyce	1935-36
H. H. Gibbons	1891-92	H. L. Davis	1936-39
N. H. Bobbitt	1893-94	I. T. Poole	1940-41
J. T. Kendall	1895-96	W. A. Crowe	1942-51
W. A. Forts	1897-98	O. L. Hardwick	1952-53
D. B. Parker	1899-00	J. D. A. Autry	1953-59
E. R. Welch	1900-01	W. B. Cotton	1960-63
C. C. Brothers	1901-02	Robert F. McKee	1964-66
V. A. Royall	1902-04	H. D. Garris	1967-69
R. R. Grant	1905-07	Clyde Boggs	1970-72
W. H. McLaurin	1907-08	Clingman Capps	1973-77
J. C. Whedbee	1909-10	Henry A. Bizzell	1977-81
W. E. Brown	1911-12	Charles L. Pollock	1981-85
J. M. Lowder	1912-13	W. Eugene Tisdale	1985-88
C. T. Rogers	1914-15	Robert O'Keef	1988-91
C. E. Vale	1916-17	William Kenneth Hall	1991-92
E. W. Glass	1918-19	William A. Boykin	1992-98
N. J. Watson	1919-20	Charlene Pierce Guider	1998-02
B. T. Hurley	1921-22	M. Dale Curtis	2002-present

ADDENDUM A

ASBURY'S JOURNAL

1785 Wednesday, April 6 1785

Preached at Swansbury in sight of the sea. Here are a wicked people indeed; nevertheless a few have joined society.

1785 Saturday and Sunday December 24 and 25 (Christmas)

We held Quarterly meeting at Swansbury, many people - little religion.

1791 Thursday January 27

I had many to hear at Swansbury - the people were attentive - O that God may bless his Word to them. I returned to Brother T,-s a mile out of town, but the people found where I was and came out. Jan. 28 we rode 16 miles to an old chapel (North East) on the way to Richlands. I spoke a little and administered the sacrament after which I rode cold and hungry 16 miles more to Brother C. Ballards. (New River Chapel).

1796 December 20

"At the Richlands but amongst spiritually poor people. I had about 30 hearers and here are a few precious souls. The next day preached at Stones Bay." (Lot Ballard lived near New River Chapel. He is mentioned as the first Methodist in the County).

1799 February 17

Preached at Richlands Chapel. Cold. Slave not permitted to come into house.

1801 February 28

Came to Lot Ballard's at the Richlands of New River. Preached from Luke 19-10. Serious but unaffected congregation.. Joseph and Mary Ballard gone to rest. (Ballards were Methodist before Asbury came to Onslow). 18 years a Methodist, also John Perry, a backslider from the Baptist. Regenerated by Methodist, "became a preacher and deacon, died on way to appointment. Neither were slaveholder - Hail happy souls."

1802 January 24

It was not at all agreeable to me to see nearly 100 slaves standing outside and peeping in at the door, whilst the house was half empty. They were not worthy to come in because they were black! Farewell, farewell to that house forever.

1803 Feb. 17

Arrived at Chapel too late for service. I conclude I shall have no more appointments between Wilmington and New Bern. There is a description of people we must not preach to. The people of Onslow seem to resemble the ancient Jews - they please not God and are contrary to all men. Farewell, farewell, Oh unhappy people.

1804 Feb. 16

Lodged with Lot Ballard - no services.

1805 Jan. 21

Stopped at Ballard's

1806 Dec. 21

At Ballards "Lot lives in Jerusalem."

1807 Jan. 29

Preached at Ballards.

1809 Jan. 27

At Richlands. Stopped with Gains Rowe - God is worshipped in their house. Oh what a change in here. Poor Africans once oppressed have now great privileges allowed them.

1813 Jan. 30

Preached and ordained Lot Ballard (*Probably grandson of original Lot Ballard. Mr. Ashbury's legs had given out; he conducted the ordination as well as preaching services on his knees.*)

1815 Jan. 23

At Lot Ballard's

from: *The Commonwealth of Onslow*, by Parson Brown, pages 273-274.

ADDENDUM B

from: *Wilmington Journal*, September 29, 1854

To Contractors

Richlands, Onslow Co., N. C.

Proposals will be received at this place until the 15th day of November next for the building of a CHURCH, at which time the bids will be examined, and the contract awarded to the lowest bidder. The drawings for the above may be seen at Nathan Sylvester's of this place.

Specifications are as follows: The Building to be 60 by 36 feet – 14 feet between joints – the said building to have 4 outer sills 9x12 inches; also 2 girders running parallel with the side sills 9x12 inches – the said sills and girders to be supported by 28 brick pillars, 18 inches above the ground, and deep enough to secure a good foundation – the said pillars to be 4 feet broad by 1 thick, the sleepers to be 12 feet long, 3x8 in., extending across the breadth of the building, and to framed flush with the sills and girders, space 21 inches from centres. There are to be 4 windows on each side, and 2 on each end, to contain 18 lights 12x6 inches: also one in the rear of the pulpit of 12 lights, 10x16 inches. There are to be 3 folding doors, panel, 4x9 feet, one to be in front side of the building – one opposite in the rear, the other in the end opposite the pulpit; the corner-post to be 6x8 in., the door and window posts to be 6x6 in., and the intermediate 3x6 inches, the braces 6x6, plates 4x7; the weatherboarding to show 5 inches and fillistered; the window frames to be made with sub-sills outside; shutters bead, porting bead, and inside quirk bead; the said building to be covered with a good truss roof of a suitable pitch, etc. There is also to be a plain cornice running the length of the building on each side, and returned a suitable distance on the angles, also running up the gables. The roof to be covered with cypress shingles, the lower framing to be of good clear heart timber, also all to outside work. The interior: There will be an aisle from the front door to the rear one 5 feet wide- also one extending from the altar to the door, in the opposite end, intersecting the above in the centre. There shall also be an altar space enclosed, by a railing and balustrade. The pulpit to be of neat pannel work, with steps to ascend on each side. There shall also be an aisle around the altar to afford access to the angle seats. There are to be 48 benches or seats, with reclining backs. The inside finish of Windows as follow: An apron piece, surmounted by a capsill, with a suitable moulding in the angle; plain pilasters with return bead; door trimmings to correspond; the doors to be secured with good bolts and locks; the sash to be furnished with Jones' patent sash lock – the sash to include glazing; no estimate to be made for painting or plastering. Address, postpaid, Nathan Sylvester.

Abner Ervin, ch'm'm/

Nathan Sylvester, Secretary
Sept 27

Compiled by
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