

ZOAR CHAPEL

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

4119 Buckhorn Road
Bullock, North Carolina 27507

1868-2014

ONE HUNDRED FORTY-SIX YEARS OF FAITHFUL AND
DEDICATED SERVICE TO THE BULLOCK COMMUNITY



MISSION: " to offer Christ Jesus to a lost and dying world; to tell them of God's mighty acts of salvation found in the Son; to walk by faith and not by sight; to be a place where humanity can encounter and know the one true God of glory; to be the church alive".



History of Zoar Chapel United Methodist Church

As the curtains of the past are rolled back, there stands the little white wooden church peering through a grove of towering oak trees, located in Northern Granville County. William P. Hayes, Thomas Pettiford, Lacy Morton, Gloster Lewis and James Royster, trustees for the Methodist Church, set out to acquire land on which to build a new place of worship. The earliest deed stated that Wilkins Stovall and wife Leona of Granville County deeded to the Methodist Episcopal Church trustees one half acre of land for the sum of five dollars. This deed was dated March 22, 1877, containing a reversion clause, which would return ownership to Wilkins Stovall whenever it ceased to be used as a Methodist Church. The deed also stated that a new church building was being erected. The deed can be found in book 31, pages 178-180, in the Granville County Courthouse.

A new church building is being erected, possibly can be explained by this fact. Samuel G. Marrow, a missionary from Rhode Island started a school and organized a church August 23, 1868 at the Bullock Cross Road. He possibly lived and taught in the house later known as the Bullock Colored School. More details will be given later.

The second deed made by Wilkins Stovall of Granville County to Anthony Marrow, James Royster, and other trustees of the Colored Methodist Church near Bullock on October, 1892, replaced the deed of March 22, 1877, Wilkins Stovall bargained and sold to the said trustees all his reversionary rights and interest in the one-half acre tract of land forever for the sum of one dollar.

Apparently, trustees named in all deeds had already been recognized by the North Carolina Methodist Conference. Zoar Chapel's first known pastors, Rev. D. Brooks, Rev. L. B. Gibson, Rev. R. Alexander, Rev. W. H. Payne, Rev. C. N. Grandison, Rev. A. Newsome, and Rev. Charles W. Blaylock are listed as prominent leaders of the North Carolina General Conference. The North Carolina Conference thirty-sixth session was held on October 4, 1894 in Oxford, North Carolina.¹ This was during the pastorate of Rev. Blaylock while living in the parsonage at Bullock Crossroads.

¹ North Carolina Annual Conference – Methodist Church in Celebration of Its One-Hundredth Session, June 10-15, 1958. It was donated to Richard Thornton Library by Mildred Royster.

Bullock Cross Roads

The lives of slaves living in the Bullock community underwent a dramatic change due to Samuel G. Cross. The son of Amos Cross (1809) and Eliza Gilbert, Samuel came to Bullock, North Carolina around 1866. His parents' marriage record shows that Amos Cross, of Griswold and Eliza Gilbert of Middletown, Connecticut were married on September 6, 1832. Black marriages were allowed since most of the black population who lived in Connecticut was free by 1784.

Samuel Cross was one of five children born to the couple. Samuel and a brother were mariners, better known as Black Jacks. Samuel came south to teach the newly freed slaves and had been assigned by the American Missionary Association to the Bullock, North Carolina area.

The following information is taken from a letter to his sponsor, Edward Smith of the AMA. The letter reads:

Bullock Cross Roads
September 3rd, 1868

Mr. Ed. P. Smith

Dear Sir,

Having waited to hear from you in regards to the proposition you made me of furnishing some remuneration to me for teaching and not hearing from you I write to let you know that on the 24th I opened school at the above named place and have 20 pupils and would have had more but for a protracted meeting which commenced last Sunday. I have 27 mourners and one convert as the results of the labors so far. Would have written more but had not the time. Write me word whether you could send me some money, as I am not getting any.

Respectfully Samuel G. Cross

The school that's being referred is the Bullock School and the 27 mourners and one convert can be surmised as the beginning of the Methodist Episcopal Church at Bullock. The above information gave to Mildred Royster by Henrietta Cross Hatton.²

Samuel Cross married Rebecca Marrow in 1867, daughter of Anderson and Lucy Marrow, and the granddaughter of Anderson Marrow Sr. Note Senior had to be added to Anderson Marrow name by me for the mere fact that slaves only had first names. They always gave children their first names since the last name was that of the owner and would change with ownership.

The trustees named in the second and third deeds, Anthony Marrow, and Levy Marrow were relatives of Rebecca Marrow. Anthony is listed on the 1880 as a carpenter and is 62 years

²Henrietta Cross Hatton- Eleanor Cross Bullock Shelton Works

old. He may have been instrumental in the building of the churches of 1877 and of 1892.

No one knows the name of the pastor who presided over the congregation between 1870 - 1877. Samuel Cross left after only two years of service. The name of the congregation is not known nor the place of worship during this period. Since Marrows Chapel was mentioned in the North Carolina Conference Directory,³ it may be the same congregation. The Marrows were active when it was the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church and the Zion Methodist Episcopal Church.

Throughout the booklet you will notice various names referring to the same congregation. They include that of Marrows Chapel located off Highway 15 and on the Townsville Road⁴, Methodist Episcopal Church and Colored Methodist Church found on the deed of October 1892. The next name is Zion Episcopal Methodist Church found on the deed of October 28, 1892. Later, Bullock Methodist Church, Zorro Chapel, (as printed on Patrice Hargrove's baptism certificate 1977 by Rev. Gregory V. Palmer,) Zora Chapel United Methodist Church and now known as Zoar Chapel United Methodist Church.

Further information was gathered from relatives of Allen Crews (born 1843-1940) as to why the house of Rev. W. Marrow may be the same as Marrow Chapel. Annie Crews Jordan tells the story of how her father, took his second wife Fannie Marrow Crews, (a lifetime member of the Methodist Church), and other family members, to the meeting house of Rev. W. Marrow. Allen Crews would spend the night in order to attend Michael Creek Church located about one mile south of the Marrow house. The rest of his family and other families would return to their own homes. Allen attended regularly the Methodist Church with his family members. There are still remnants of the three houses about 1 1/2 miles south of Zoar on the Bullock Cross Road, also referred to as the Taylor-Ferry Road and Old Clarksville Road. These houses were owned by Anthony Marrow and lived in by Anthony Marrow, Levy Marrow and Rev. Willie Marrow. The deed can be found in Granville County Court House. This property first owned by Wilkins Stovall.

A third deed was made October 28, 1892, to James Royster, Levy Marrow, and Edward Jordon, trustees of Zion Methodist Episcopal Church by Wilkins Stovall, for a place of residence for the use and occupancy of the preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The deed was mailed to the pastor, Reverend Charles W. Blaylock. It is filed in book 48 in the Granville County Courthouse. It is most likely the site of the first school as well. The Bullock Colored School was the last to operate from this site. It is not known how long the Methodist Church provided housing for its pastors.

Planning for Fellowship Hall

³ North Carolina Conference Directory see under Granville County

⁴ A book entitled Former Churches- courtesy of Robin Harry, historical librarian for The N. C. Conference Commission on Archives and History.

On December 31, 1977, Rev. Albert Shuler and the Trustee Board met with Sam Hodges to discuss plans for building a fellowship hall. Trustee members for 1977-1978 terms were co-chairmen Charles Clark and William Gregory Royster along with Lucille Bullock, Mildred Marrow, Isabelle Reid, Albert Royster, Annie Mildred Royster, Rufus "Tom" Royster, Elizabeth Young and special Building Treasurer Elsie R. Hargrove. They agreed for the removal of the last huge oak tree at the rear of the church. This oak tree had offered shade for the long handmade picnic tables used during Homecoming Services and other special occasions. This space was needed for the new building and later for the walkway between the two buildings given by Ernestine Royster.

This project lasted over several years. Therefore, the trustee board members were somewhat different when the fellowship hall was completed. In 1979, the family of the late Walter Griffin and wife Bettie Bullock Griffin gave the church land to build a fellowship hall. The trustees were Charles Clark, William G. Royster, Mildred Marrow, Rufus Tom Royster and Mildred Royster. In 1981, under the leadership of Rev. David Dunlap it was completed. Some Other trustees serving during the period of 1979-1981 were Elsie Hargrove '79, Dallas Watkins '81, Elizabeth Henderson '81 and Jesse Marrow Jr. '81. A wooden handicap ramp was built to make the building accessible to all. This ramp was removed and a new ramp was built in 2012.

Exterior Changes

Time has brought many changes. The building has been rebuilt or remodeled at least three times. It was possibly destroyed by fire at least once before the 1900's. This may be the reason for having to buy back the property from Wilkins Stovall in 1892. The church was remodeled around 1904.

There are some noticeable changes. The first windows were clear glass. In 1977, a storm blew out one of them. The window was board up by Rufus Tom Royster. Later, William Gregory Royster purchased a replacement window. In October of 1978, all windows were replaced with sun blocking ones.

The church's exterior was painted several times. In 1978, it was painted for the last time and vinyl siding added.

The wooden steps replaced by cement steps and a rail. Concerned about safety, Goodrich "GD" Marrow gave the set of railings installed by Arthur Palmer.

The front wooden doors were locked from the inside by placing a bar across two wooden posts attached to the double doors. These doors replaced by Willie L. Royster in memory of his wife Lucy C. Royster.

Interior Changes

Throughout the years, major changes took place in the sanctuary. The kerosene lamps were

replaced by the electric lights in the late 1940's or early 1950's. The lights were Globe shaped. These were replaced with the present day chandeliers, hanging from long chains due to the high ceilings.

The church was first heated by a coal burning pot belly stove. This stove had to be fed coal during worship services for the mere fact the services were long. One of the persons who performed this job was Isaac Isaham Fields. All of the children were fascinated by the fire's blazes when the coal was put in the stove. This pot-belly stove was replaced by an oil burning heater, purchased by Albert Royster. Mary Lee Mason was one of the members who had the task of lighting the burner on cold Sunday mornings. She was the last to do so. During the leadership of Rev. Walter McLeod, Charles Clark worked to replace the stove with a central heating system.

During the leadership of Rev. Donnie Jones paneling was donated in memory of Ernest Clark. His daughter Marjorie Friend donated the paneling. The windows in the pulpit area were painted to block the sunlight and other needed chores done by Rev. Jones. He was known as Pastor Handy.

The first pews were handmade. Due to the efforts of Isabelle M. Reid, they were replaced with the present pews and bench pads.

The church floor was fully carpeted under the leadership of Rev. Donnie Jones and the pulpit was also extended. In 2013, the family of Charles Clark replaced the carpet in his memory. This carpet was installed during the pastorate of Rev. William Johnston.

Traditions

When the kerosene lamps were replaced by electric lights, the revival meetings could now start later and the farmers could work later in the fields. The revivals lasted a week. During this period the Methodist Episcopal Church thrived. One of the well-known revivalists was Rev. Kingsberry. Different members would agree to feed the pastor and the guest minister at their home nightly. Children would complain because they knew that the ministers would get a meal fit for a king, while they would have the leftovers and sometimes something totally different. Revival was usually held in July. Some say this was because the members' gardens would be in full harvest.

Revival meetings were the only time you could join the church in earlier times. The unsaved would sit on the mourner's bench while the saints prayed and sang over them. These terms probably originated with Samuel Cross, since he used them in his letter. Rev. Glendora Hargrove in 2011 was the first woman revivalist.

After baptism on Sunday morning the new converts were read into the church and served Communion. The Communion was originally given from a single cup served by the pastor.

Individual small communion glasses replaced the single cup. Today, a packaged bread and cup is used. After the converts received the Bread and Wine, the Right hand of Fellowship extended.

The Sunday school was established during the early 1900's. Known superintendents were: Henry Martin, Ida J. Marrow, James Sneed, Bettie Bernice Bullock, Belle Field, Elsie Hargrove, Annie Mildred Royster, Mary Lee Mason, Janie Royster, and Geraldine Royster. Regretfully at the present time the Sunday school is inactive.

Most services dismissed by the congregation standing, lifting right hands, and the minister offering the closing blessing taken from Numbers Chapter 6 Verses 24-26. "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."

In the early church, the men were seated on the left and the women on the right. No one can remember who the first woman was who sat on the men's side, but they remembered raised eyebrows on the matter.

Music Ministry

The first musical instrument was an organ. The first known organist was Ida Jones Marrow followed by Esther Hall. At one time the church had an organ and a piano. Later the piano replaced the organ completely. Mrs. Hall organized the first choir; members included; Betty Bullock, Dorothy Marrow Harris, Goodrich Marrow, Adele Marrow Paschall, and Belle Fields Scott. The following are a list of other piano players; however, they may not necessarily be in order of service. They were: Mary C. Evans, Goodrich "GD" Marrow, Randolph Lockett, Rosa Small, Verona Thorpe, Steven Hargrove, Mary Anna Marrow, Mary Eaton, Gladys Thorpe, Shawn Carroll, and Rickey Allen, who served before, is the current piano player.

Women Society

The Women Society now known as the United Methodist Women has been very active over the years. The pulpit scarves, the second communion set, the set of candle holders, and the first carpet for the pulpit were given by this organization.

The most active time for this organization was during the leadership of Mrs. Cobb, Mrs. Doris Brunson and Mrs. Brenda Jones. At the present time the unit is inactive.

Past Presidents are as follows: Mildred Marrow, Bettie Bullock, Thelma Murray and Isabelle Reid.

United Methodist Men

The United Methodist men were active for a brief period. The only president was Dallas Watkins. The organization contributed much to the spiritual and physical growth of the church.

Cemetery Upkeep

After the church members and community helpers performed their annual spring cleaning, an individual volunteered to maintain the church ground and cemetery. These individuals were Eddie Griffin, Boley Marrow, Dallas Watkins, Rufus Tom Royster, and Little Jesse Marrow. The only tools being used were a sling blade, a rake, an ax and later a push mower. Later on Albert and William Royster took care of the grounds and cemetery. Janie Royster also played a big part in the upkeep of the buildings and grounds as the Trustee Board chairperson for several years. There were other members who worked in this capacity.

Dedicated Ushers

There has been four dedicated ushers. The first two were Mary Alice Marrow Smith, president of the usher board, and Elizabeth Marrow Young. The third faithful usher was Mary Mason. She worked with Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Young. They were present at practically every worship service and most choir anniversaries, (as seen in choir picture), and all other special church functions until their health failed. Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Young serviced as ushers for more than 40 years each. Mary Lee Mason served as President as well. The present president, Willa Jean Smith Richard took up where they left off in 2003. On the first and third Sundays, she leaves work in order to render her service at the 9:00 morning services. Ushers are the first to greet the people. This brings to mind another person, Walter Griffin, who stood at the front door to greet the people long before the term usher was used. He probably can be referred to as a dedicated usher/greeter.

Walter Griffin and Isaac Isaham Fields were church bell ringers. The bell ringer would toll the bell to let the community know that there was a death, a fire, or some other emergency. A different toll would be used to signal a death, a fire, and another would signal that the worship service is about to start. Different tolls alerted the listener of what action needed to be taken. An emergency toll meant to gather at the church, whereas the death toll was informative. (Toll: to ring with strokes separated by long, equal interval, usually as a solemn signal of death, disaster, etc). Jesse Marrow also became a bell ringer mainly to signal the start of worship services, and for funeral processions. There was no need for emergency signals due to modern means of communications. The bell had to be removed due to safety concerns. The damaged tall steeple replaced by a shorter one.

Pastoral Appointments

Outstanding leadership has been the legacy for the Methodist Episcopal Church at Bullock. Much of the information was collected and kept by Mildred Jordan Marrow, (1901-1997), granddaughter of Allen Crews and passed down to her daughter, the active church historian, Annie Mildred Marrow Royster. Also, a book housed in the Richard Thornton Library helped to put in order and to solidify those pastors' names remembered by Mildred Marrow⁵.

Following are the pastoral appointments: It includes Rev. D. Brooks (1877-1878), Rev. R. Alexander (1879), Rev. W.H. Payne (1879-1880), Rev. L.B. Gibson (1881-1882), Rev. C.N. Grandison, (1883-1884) and Rev. Alex Newsome (1884-1885). During the period from 1885-1889 it is not clear that Zoar had the same pastors as St. Peters. It is not until 1891 that Mildred Marrow recalled hearing Rev. Milton M. Jones (1891-1892), and we know from the deed made on October 28, 1892 that Rev. Charles W. Blaylock was the pastor. He served from 1892-1894. Rev. Blaylock was followed by Rev. R.C. Campbell (1894-1895), Rev. S.B. Barker (1896, 1899-1900), Rev. G.F. Hill (1899-1901), Rev. G.W. McMaster (1901-1902), Rev. William Wells (1902-1904), Rev. J.C. Prince (1904-1907), Rev. A.H. Newsome (1907-1911), Rev. A.G. Jenkins (1911-1914), Rev. J.A. Baxter (1914-1916), Rev. R.J. Shipp (1917-1918), Rev. J.C. Rush (1918-1921) and Rev. J.H. Isham (1924-1925). Rev. James W. Hall (1925-1953), did not serve as Zoar's pastor for the entire time as he did for St. Peters. Rev. Alfred, Rev. Evans, Rev. Hill, Rev. R.J. Shipp and Rev. Walter Lomax were Zoar's pastor for some of this period. Rev. Hall is buried in the church cemetery along with wife and daughter. The next appointed pastors were Rev. J.W. Gwynn Sr. (1953-1957 still the Oxford Charge), Rev. L.W. Coltrane (1958-1959), Rev. W.E. Tyler (1960), Rev. Charles G. Bynum (1961), Rev. Ira A. Friend (1962-1967), Rev. T.V. Carter (1968-1977), Rev. James White (1972-1973) and Rev. Charles Cobb (1973-1977). Rev. Gregory Banks and Rev. Gregory V. Palmer served as co-pastors for a short time in 1977. These pastors were followed by Rev. Albert Shuler (1977-1980), Rev. David Dunlap (1980-1983), Rev. Jesse Brunson (1983-1987), Rev. Derrick Harris (1987-1991), Rev. Walter McLeod (1991-1994), Rev. Donnie Jones (1994-2003), Rev. Christopher Chikoore (2003-2006), Rev. Brian Williams (2006-2007), Rev. Marcus Singleton (2007-2009), Rev. Christopher Diggs (2009-2010), Rev. Antoinette Burwell (2010-2011) and Rev. William A. Johnston, 2011-present). Each pastor's imprint has been left on the church.

⁵ To Be Faith To Our Heritage- A History Of Black United Methodism In North Carolina by Linda D. Addo and James H. McCallum

Credits

Annie Mildred Royster- Church Historian
Elsie R. Hargrove – Compiled Booklet
Patrice LaVette Gray – Typist {church history}
Mattie C. Royster – Typist
Rev. William Johnston – Editor

Appreciation

Many thanks go out to the following people for their contributions of pictures and other materials.

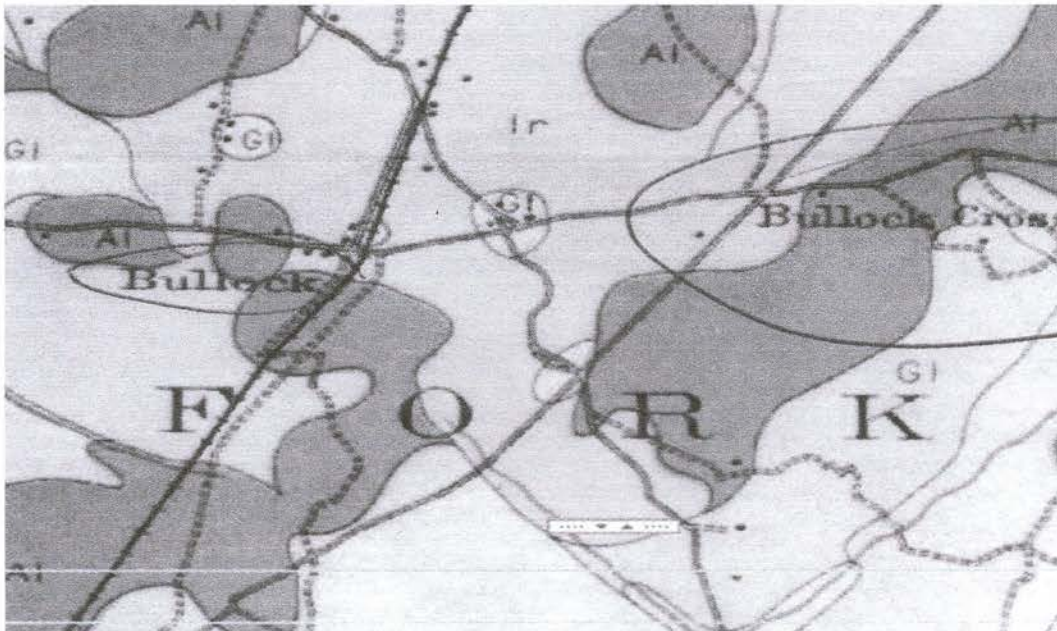
Isabelle Reid
Bessie Royster
Ruth Morton Gayles
Henrietta Cross Hatton
Gloria R Smith
Priscilla Davis
June Royster Tucker

David Stovall
Willa S. Richard
Sylvia Ann Griffin
Boris Kirk Royster
Clinton Smith
Juanita H. Cozart
Adele M. Paschall

James E. Morton
Fannie B. Wilson
Marie Murphy
Regina Y. Miller
Sarah R. Terry
Barnette R. Green
Cora C. Royster

Zelma C. Burwell
Dorothy M. Harris
Mattie C. Royster
Geraldine Royster
Kimberly Hargrove
Sharon Shelton
Rudy Turner

Special thanks to Curtis G. Royster, and Mark Pace, Richard Thornton Historical Librarian.



Zoar Chapel United Methodist Church is located in the Bullock Cross Road circle.