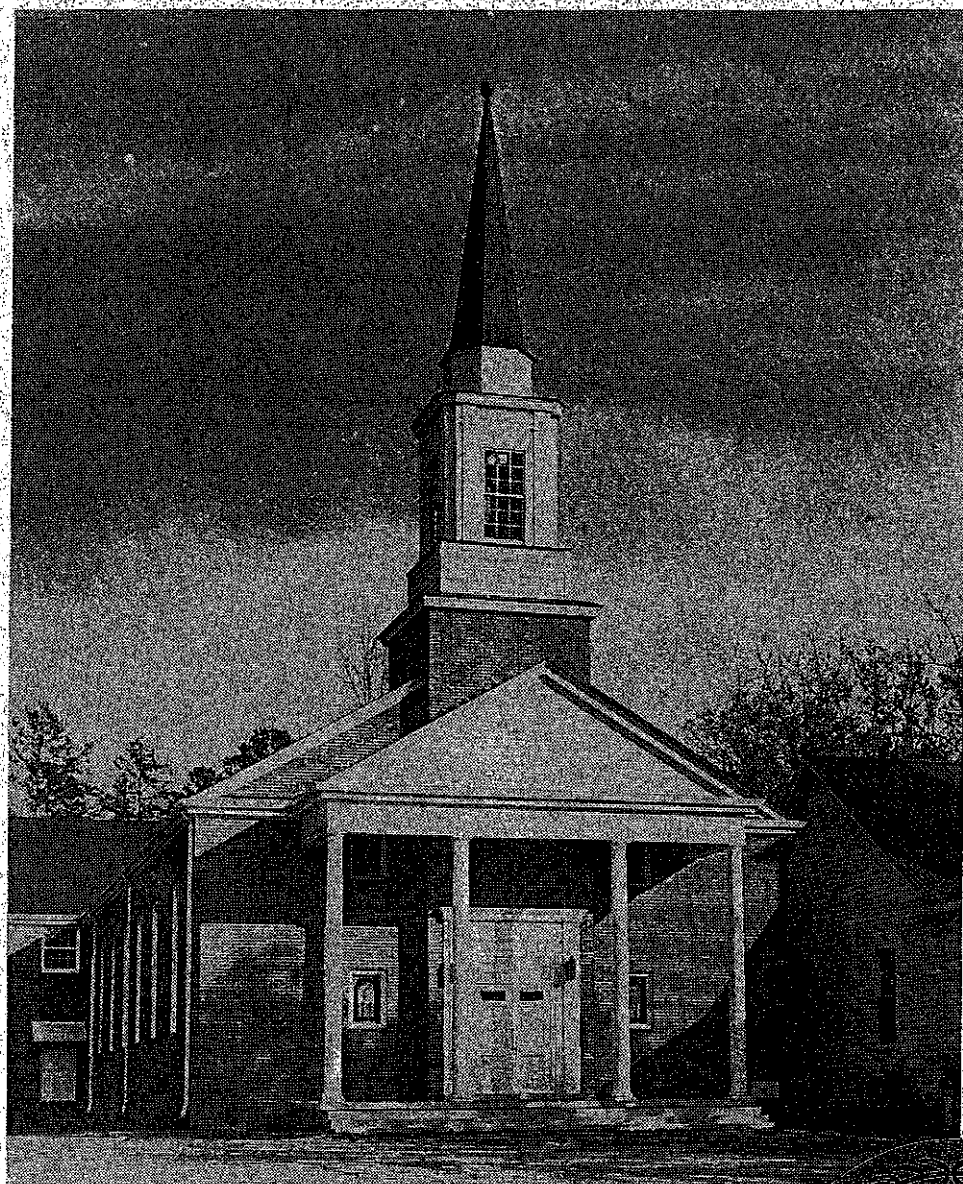


# A History of Mt. Carmel Baptist Church

Chapel Hill, North Carolina



Bicentennial Year  
1803 - 2003





# A History of Mt. Carmel Baptist Church

RFD No. 3

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Prepared by

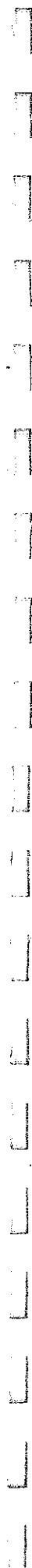
**MRS. L. W. SPARROW**

**Sesquicentennial Year  
1803 - 1953**

**SESQUICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE**

Mrs. S. C. Hundley  
S. T. Noell  
R. L. Blackwood

Mrs. A. D. Fowler  
Junius Sparrow



## INTRODUCTION

The present is often of more value than either the past or future, but it often pays to pause and look back over the road traveled, especially if this road has been long. One hundred and fifty years is a rather long road when we consider it in relation to the length of a man's life. Just why is Mount Carmel Church in existence after all these years? No doubt one reason is the firm foundation laid by our forefathers. Note in the old deed that Mount Carmel was to be called the "Church of Christ at Mount Carmel." All through these years there have been people, sometimes few in number, who have kept that reason first in their hearts. Even if they did not know the words were in the deed, they loved the old Church and knew that it was Christ's Church.

What were the conditions that prevailed during the years of the Church's life which have made it what it is today? Perhaps the Old Testament way of carrying out Law to the letter hindered this church as it did many others. The road uphill could be climbed only at a snail's pace because we so often stopped to discipline this or that weaker brother.

As we look back over the hundred and fifty years the mistakes of any particular period do not seem so outstanding. After all, we are far from the fourteenth milepost on the old Hillsborough-Fayetteville great-road in more ways than one. Any one knows that we would have been much farther if these mistakes had not been made, but they are in the past. Let us press forward to the future, taking only those things from the past that will help us on to a successful future; a future of which God will say, "well done."

Defense is needed for going so far afield as to tell of world, national, and state history in the history of Mount Carmel. With each successive year the world becomes more unified. Mount Carmel realized her responsibility to her neighbor in her early days but the concept of neighbor has grown since that time to include the whole world.

Why would the purchase of the Louisiana Territory affect us? The Louisiana Territory opened up new land to be settled by the residents of the seventeen states in the Union at that time. These people went west or southwest to new settlements carrying the customs and the beliefs of the old home with them. It is good that the early churches had been organized at that time because they served to spread the Gospel to the new territories even without special missionary effort.

This church history was electronically scanned using optical character recognition software. It was then reformatted using a word processor. The character recognition process is not totally accurate. Therefore there may be some minor differences from the original spelling, punctuation etc. that was used by Mrs. L. W. Sparrow in her original effort. A less-than-thorough manual scan was made in an attempt to preserve the original spelling however the automatic spelling checker within the software may have succeeded in some cases. No deliberate effort was made to change Mrs. Sparrow's original effort (Nat Blackwood)

*Italics in text indicate factual errors in original text corrected by Ruth Hundley Vickers*



## **BACKGROUND CONDITONS IN THE EARLY YEARS OF MOUNT CARMEL**

### **World History at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century**

It is difficult to connect the events of world history with the early affairs of Mount Carmel; a small rural Church in piedmont North Carolina. At this time Napoleon was the center of attention as he made his famous attempt to conquer the whole of Europe for France.

Switzerland had just succeeded in a revolutionary attempt, and declared herself an independent republic, while the hated George III sat on the throne in England as he became more and more mentally unbalanced.

The African continent still lay in unexplored darkness during this period, and all the Oriental world, which so occupies our attention today, was truly a separate world from the Occidental.

### **American History at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century**

A brief look at the United States about the time our church was organized shows us that these were important years in determining the size and strength of the young nation which had recently won its independence.

All the vast area contained in the Louisiana Purchase, which more than doubled the area of the United States, was purchased in 1803 from France. From this purchase the states of Montana, Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Kansas and Louisiana were formed. Altogether, one million square miles of territory were bought for fifteen million dollars. The chief proponent of the Purchase was President Thomas Jefferson, who was elected in 1800 by the House of Representatives, since the nominees for President and Vice President received the same number of electoral votes.

It was also in 1803 that Ohio was admitted to the union as a free state; that is, no slaves were allowed in the state. The issue of slavery versus abolition was growing more bitter as the years passed, so that eventually this issue outweighed all others in the minds of the statesmen and voters of the time.

In 1804 the famous Lewis and Clark Expedition crossed the North American continent and gave the United States its claim to the West Coast territory which later played such an important part in the gold rush and the great migration to the west.

Four years after the forming of Mount Carmel Church Robert Fulton's boat, the "Clermont," steamed from New York to Albany in one and one half days, marking the beginning of steamship transportation.

George Washington, the immortal soldier who gave so liberally to fight for our independence, had been

dead for only four years when Mount Carmel was organized, and the first American veterans were still living in great numbers.

In 1812 the United States fought a second war to prove its independence and strength. It was the War of 1812 that showed that we were a strong determined nation, well capable of settling great issues justly.

Truly these were great years in the history of our country, just as they were important years for the young Mount Carmel Baptist Church, which had just been organized.

### **North Carolina History, at the Beginning of the 19th Century**

North Carolina can well be proud of its rural people. They made up the state for the most part in early days and have retained a prominent place in its progress to this day.

In the year of 1803 each little rural settlement was a world of its own to a great extent. It is most likely that piedmont North Carolina did not have the ruffled shirts and wigs which are commonly associated with early colonial times, because this section of the state was still in the pioneer stage of development. Homespun and leather was probably the fashion of the times. The hunters and farmers probably dressed in leather shirts and breeches made to withstand the hard wear of the frontier. They could have copied the Indians in their dress, for some still lived in the region. We are told that a whole tribe, the Suscunor, moved away just one year before Mount Carmel was organized. This left the Cherokees who later moved west. The women dressed in floor length dresses with hoops on important occasions, while the little girls dressed in somewhat the same manner as their mothers.

These people lived and worked in settlements miles apart; yet with few exceptions they worked their way up to something better year after year. It is wonderful how mere handfuls of people scattered over wide areas year after year managed to improve their circumstances as they did.

We have to think hard to leave public education out of our plan of life; but when Mount Carmel was begun, public education was no more than a wild dream in the minds of a few far-sighted individuals. Indeed, the very conditions of the settlements made public education, as we know it today impossible. It would have been hard to locate a school so that a goodly number of children could conveniently attend.

For many years what the churches had to offer as education was all that could be obtained by rural people. Many of the older, more firmly established churches had grants of land or other sources of income with which they established and maintained schools. People had to pay for

other education from their own private funds.

In 1825, almost a quarter of a century after the founding of Mount Carmel, the Orange County Sunday School Union petitioned the General Assembly for funds to help out in schools which were conducted by that Union. Twenty-five cents annually for each Sunday School pupil was asked. There were between eight hundred and one thousand children in such schools at the time that this petition was made. This request was turned down twice by the assembly. Some time after this boarding schools and academies came into existence, but the ordinary people still depended on the church for their education.

Roads were mere trails of dust or mud, depending on the season. No doubt this made our forefathers more anxious for "meeting houses" to be as close together as communities would allow. Almost all preachers traveled on horseback with Bible and other helps, as well as a change of clothes stored in large saddlebags.

The road on which Mount Carmel was located was built of boards. Plank roads stretched from one trading center to another at this time. The road on which Mount Carmel stood stretched its bumpy line from Hillsboro to Fayetteville. Over this road passed wagons hauling farm produce, slaves to be sold, and many other items not found in markets today. Drove of cattle and horses passed the little church on the hill near Morgan's Creek. Perhaps the travelers stopped to drink from that spring mentioned in the deed and commented on the wisdom of building churches and the influence for good this church had in the neighborhood.

The country seemed so new, so full of life and so ready to try new ideas; so ready to make of itself a great nation. We should be glad that at such a time the nation almost as a whole turned its thoughts to the true source of power. The time was ripe for such a revival as swept our entire state in 1880.

These revivals first started as camp meetings. All denominations met together. Those three most often mentioned were Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian. As converts from these meetings returned home members of the same denomination would begin meeting in homes, and finally a church would be organized. The rural communities were the first to organize such churches. Thus we see Mount Carmel with a church building in the country near Chapel Hill, while the village itself had no Baptist church. Camp meetings would last two days or a week. Many attendants walked seven or eight miles with just bread in their pocket to eat, while others with a longer distance to travel might bring a picnic lunch.

As congregations grew and became more united in their purposes they built permanent houses to use instead of meeting in the homes. Generally the neighbors got together at a "bee" or "building spell" and built a log church much like their own homes, many of which had no floors. Mount Carmel was probably built in this neighborly way. These churches were the chief forces for law and order in the

community. As soon as the churches were built they were put in use for schools, political meetings, or other public functions. After public schools were built, the congregations complained about this non-religious use, and all functions other than religious were moved to the schoolhouses.

It is interesting to notice the naming of these early churches. For the most part they were named for location: Rock Spring, Bear Creek, Cane Creek were all named in this manner. Some were named for large land owners who had given the land on which the church was built. We do not know whether our church founders had a vision of the tasks and possibilities of our church, or whether the name was suggested by the rough terrain, but the name has come to mean more and more to the members as the years have passed.

We hope that any moneys needed were supplied in a way pleasing to God. In 1810 it is recorded that at least one church in Orange County obtained money for needed buildings by lottery. That seemed to be a common practice for in 1830 we find it recorded that such means of raising money were sinful, and the practices referred to soon were ceased. Even horse swapping was done at churches in some of the very early days.

Baptists and Methodists were the only denominations which did not require a formal education for ministers. More emphasis was placed on call and public gift of speaking than on education. In 1848 the Baptist State Convention announced that prejudices AGAINST education were about to give way.

Frequently people came to church from a radius of twenty miles for all day services. People would stand outside talking until the preacher came on horseback to the meeting house. The preacher would go immediately to the pulpit where he would deposit his saddlebags on the floor and begin the service as the last outsider came quietly in. Sermons usually lasted two hours. Rural preachers preached against the unpardonable sin, while the city preachers talked about social reform, temperance movements, church doctrine, piety or humiliations. Elder Purefoy wrote that the best preachers were those who could best explain the scripture.

With these background facts in mind, we now turn our attention to Mount Carmel in its early beginnings.



## **MOUNT CARMEL BAPTIST CHURCH PRIOR TO 1870**

It is hard to obtain accurate information about early church work. Records were not made, or if they were made, they were not kept. Sometimes they were destroyed by fire and sometimes they were lost. As late as 1816 it is recorded that some thought it a sin to number people, basing this opinion on God's displeasure at David's numbering the people of Israel, as recorded in I-Chronicles 21:1-7.

In his volume on Sandy Creek History Purefoy gives the following short history of Mount Carmel Church.

### **MOUNT CARMEL**

Is located on Morgan's Creek, in Orange County, N. C., about two miles southwest from Chapel Hill. This church was constituted in A.D. 1803, at Pritchard's meeting House, a few miles south of its present location.

Of its early history but little is now known. In June 1816, a few of the members met at Mount Carmel M.H., and organized for business. Elder R. T. Daniel was with them at this meeting.

In 1817, this church was represented in the General Meeting of Correspondence for Missions.

In 1818, Abner W. Clopton, of Virginia, a member of this church, who was principal of the Preparatory School at Chapel Hill, was ordained to the work of the gospel ministry by Elders George Roberts and David Newlin.

In 1819, Elder Clopton tendered his resignation as clerk of the church, and James G. Hall, who was then a student at Chapel Hill, was licensed to preach the gospel. He is now a prominent minister in South Carolina.

In 1823, this church organized an arm at Mount Gilead, which was organized into a church in 1824. George Oldham and Thomas D. Oldham were the first deacons after the church moved to Mount Carmel M.H.

Thomas Weaver was licensed to preach by this church in May, 1818, and was ordained by Elders Thomas Freeman and Isaac Kirby, in 1826. Previous to 1826, this church belonged to the Flat River Association. Since then it has belonged to the Sandy Creek Association.

In May, 1827, William H. Merritt, at the call of the church, was ordained to the work of the gospel ministry by Elders James Ferrell and Thomas Freeman.

In 1852 or '53, a large number of members were dismissed by letter, to organize a new church at Lystra M.H., by which their number was very considerably reduced.

In 1854, Mount Carmel formed an arm for business at Chapel Hill, which was soon constituted into a church. Mount Carmel, though now reduced in numbers, is the mother of three flourishing churches.

Dr. William Hooper was baptized into the fellowship of this church in 1832.

The following ministers have served this church as pastors: R. T. Daniel, William P. Worrell, P. W. Dowd, William Hooper, R. McNabb, George W. Purefoy, Enoch Crutchfield, B. J. Hackney, and M. D. Andrews.

This church has enjoyed several interesting revivals of religion. Its present number of members is thirty-five.

The Purefoy "History of Sandy Creek Association" gives a summary of the happenings of the churches in the Association each year. After 1827, when Mount Carmel received a letter from the Flat River Association to join the Sandy Creek Association, this church was represented a greater part of the time at the annual meetings. Some idea of the activities of the church can be obtained from this History.

It is recorded that in 1805, in September, Abner Clopton, a member of Mount Carmel, preached at Arbor Meeting House at the Associational Meeting. In 1808 R. T. Daniel of Mount Carmel led in prayer at the Association. We assume that Elder Daniel was the first pastor of this church since he is the first one listed by Dr. Purefoy in the above history.

As late as 1809 we find the Baptists still practicing laying on of hands following baptism, although the ritual was not a test of fellowship. At the Association of 1809 four preachers preached on Sunday, and one of these was Ralph, a colored man. Elder Robert T. Daniel preached at many of these meetings and was Moderator at many. Four years after Mount Carmel was organized we find that the expenses of the Association were still paid in pounds, shillings and pence.

In 1827, the year that Mount Carmel joined the Sandy Creek Association, Elder Thomas Weaver and Grey Huckabee were the Delegates from Mount Carmel, as well as for the next year when the Meeting was held at Mount Gilead. The following year Elder William H. Merritt was a third Delegate from Mount Carmel. When the Association met at Lick's Creek, Chatham County, in 1830, a serious difficulty in Mount Carmel Church was reported. What the difficulty was is not mentioned, but a committee was appointed to effect reconciliation.

At the Associations of 1830 and 1831 William H. Merritt of Mount Carmel was Moderator and William Hooper of Mount Carmel preached the associational sermon. Many associational meetings during these years found the same delegates from Mount Carmel: Merritt, Huckabee, and Weaver. The report is recorded that Elder William H. Merritt baptized one hundred candidates at different churches in the year 1832. Elder Merritt was known as a great revivalist and was very much in favor of missions and Christian Education. He was later a large benefactor of Wake Forest College.

In 1833 the introductory sermon at the association was preached by George W. Purefoy, then of the Raleigh Association, but later the great leader and Historian of the Sandy Creek Association. At this meeting Cane Creek asked Mount Carmel and other churches to send messengers to help settle a dispute about an excommunication. Mount Carmel sent Thomas Hunter. There were ten baptisms reported from Mount Carmel in 1833 and the total

membership was sixty.

About this time there was much agitation over whether individual churches should be missionary or not. Mount Carmel was always on the side of missions. Elder Robert T. Daniel, first pastor, was called the "Prince of Missions." In 1821 he was employed by the North Carolina Baptist Missionary Society at \$40.00 per month to organize local missionary societies in various parts of the state.

In 1834 there were no baptisms reported from Mount Carmel and the membership stood at forty-two, compared with the sixty in the previous year.

The associational sermon in 1835 was preached by William H. Merritt at the Emmaus Meeting House in Chatham County. Of the nine ordained ministers in the Sandy Creek Association in 1835, three of them were members of Mount Carmel: W. H. Merritt, William Hooper and Thomas Weaver.

When the Association met at Mount Gilead in 1836, a committee was appointed to inquire into the reason for the low state of religion in the churches. At this meeting William H. Merritt gave \$100.00 along with other donations to be used by the Baptist State Convention for Judson's translation of the Bible in Burmese. This year Mount Carmel reported forty-four members with no baptisms. The death of Luther Rice, a companion missionary of Adoniram Judson, was reported and the resulting preambles and resolutions are good reading because they show so plainly the deep feelings for missions.

A new delegate from Mount Carmel in the year 1838 is recorded. He was William Barbee, who went along with Merritt and Weaver. At no time are the women mentioned in the proceedings.

In the 1839 minutes Elder George W. Purefoy wrote a circular letter on the importance of education among ministers of the gospel. Mount Carmel this year reported twenty-three baptisms and sixty members. This is the best report coming from this church.

At the 1843 association meeting at Antioch, Mount Carmel sent up a question: "To what extent shall we go in receiving worldly testimony in our churches? The answer was: "When the church deems it necessary to take testimony from the world, hear it, and give it the weight to which it is entitled." No baptisms were reported from Mount Carmel this year and the membership was one hundred and seven.

In 1847 Alfred Boothe was a delegate from Mount Carmel. In 1848 James M. Cheek was a delegate. In 1850 Mount Carmel reported one hundred and five members but no baptisms. Prior to this meeting Elder William H. Merritt had died and a committee was appointed to prepare an obituary.

At the 1853 Meeting Lystra Church reported for the first time. She reported eighty-four members. No doubt many of these came from Mount Carmel's roll, since she is Lystra's mother church. Mount Carmel was represented by letter this year and reported seventy members.

The year 1854 heard Chapel Hill Baptist Church asking for a seat in the Association. This new church had

many former Mount Carmel members for it too was a daughter church of Mount Carmel. This year James P. Mason was recommended by the church at Chapel Hill for examination with the view of ordination for the ministry. Elder Purefoy and others were appointed to attend to that duty at Mason's convenience.

In 1857 Mount Carmel was represented at the Association by James Edwards and S. T. Lindsey. Perhaps this delegate, Edwards, was a member of the Edwards family for whom the range of hills in front of the present church is named.

In 1858 George W. Purefoy preached the Centennial Sermon for the Sandy Creek Association before a great crowd. This sermon was later enlarged into the "History of Sandy Creek Baptist Association." Mount Carmel reported two baptisms and thirty-five members this year. Edwards and Lindsey were again the delegates.

The remainder of this section contains information gleaned from the minutes of the Sandy Creek Association from 1859 through 1869, which are kept in the Wake Forest College Library. The year 1859 finds Mount Carmel reporting forty-four members with one member excommunicated. S. T. Lindsey was the church clerk. He, along with J. M. Cheek and R. Daniel were the delegates to the Association for that year. George W. Purefoy was the Moderator of the Sandy Creek Association in 1860. Clerk Lindsey reported only forty members for that year. At the Association P. H. McDade of Chapel Hill reported that Mount Carmel had no Sabbath School and that there was a scarcity of children in the community and some backwardness on the part of the church in taking hold of and pushing forward such an enterprise.

Still further decline was recorded for the church the next year. Only thirty-seven members were reported. Cheek, Edwards and R. Daniel were the delegates. The presence of the same delegates year after year indicates a lack of leaders in the church.

Still further decline is indicated in 1862. No delegates were present and the membership remained at thirty-seven. The next year there was no report at all. The Civil War was taking its toll. In 1864 again there was no report and no delegates. From 1859 to 1864 there are no pastors listed.

It is good to see that in 1865, just after the war ended, Mount Carmel sent back its old delegates, Cheek, Daniel and Lindsey. Lindsey, still clerk, reported fifty-eight members and the Reverend O. Churchill as pastor. The next year saw still more progress. The new clerk, J. S. Tilley, reported eighty-two members. Tilley, R. Daniel and O. Churchill were delegates to the Association.

The year 1867 was a red-letter year for Mount Carmel. A Sabbath School was reported with thirty scholars and four teachers. The school closed during the winter but it still marked a good beginning. Isaiah Cole was the superintendent, assisted by W. H. Lloyd. Oren Churchill was still Pastor and Mr. Daniel had two new

delegates, Hudson Sparrow and W. H. Lloyd, to accompany him to the Association. However, there was a loss of seven members.

An addition of two members is reported the following year. Oren Churchill is still pastor while R. M. and A. Daniel and D. S. Pendergrass were delegates to the Association. J. S. Tilley was still clerk. The report of 1869 is not so good. There was no Sabbath School report. Membership was four short of the year before. The pastor this year was James P. Mason. This year of 1869 concluded the stay of Mount Carmel Church in the Sandy Creek Association.

Before leaving this early period in Mount Carmel History, another word is in order concerning those two spiritual giants about whom much has already been said, William Merritt and George W. Purefoy. The burial place for both Purefoy and Merritt is on a high knoll southwest of Morgan's Creek bridge on Highway 15-501. This is the family burial ground for the old Purefoy family. George W. Purefoy married Lucy Merritt, daughter of W. H. Merritt. The two, Purefoy and Merritt, made a fine family team for the great religious work they did together.

Many of the farms around Mount Carmel were bought from the Purefoy descendants. They were fine neighborhood builders. When the old South's way was broken by the Civil War these people sold their lands under terms agreeable to purchaser, and purchaser and seller became lasting friends.

We find the descendants of Merritt and Purefoy still filling many places of community and church service. The likes of these great men live on. Mount Carmel Church owes her debt to George W. Purefoy for donating the tract of land on which the present building now stands. But much more does she owe to both these men and the other great leaders for the spiritual heritage she has from them.

## MOUNT CARMEL CHURCH SINCE 1870

In the year 1870 Mount Carmel received a letter from Sandy Creek Association in order to join other churches in forming the new Mount Zion Association. This new group was composed of churches in Alamance, Orange, Chatham, Durham and possibly some other counties. The minutes record that one of the names suggested for the new Association was NEW HOPE, after the Creek of the same name. However, one Brother objected on the grounds that the Association might prove to be as sluggish as the creek. This year of 1870 found Mount Carmel with forty-nine members and no pastor is listed. George W. Purefoy was elected the Moderator of Mount Zion in 1870 and also in 1871. In 1871 and 1872 the church membership dropped to 47. W. R. Gualtney was pastor.

The year 1873 saw another epochal step in the church's history. This was the moving of the church from the original sight deeded by Mathew McCauley to the present

sight on the south border of Orange County. There is no record of the exact reason why Mount Carmel was moved several miles south of its first location. Many old-timers think the Baptist feelings ran so high that the idea of Merritt's Chapel Methodist Church gaining membership in what could be Baptist grounds just could not be ignored. Be that as it may, other factors could have influenced the move. Chapel Hill now had a Baptist Church to take care of many people that were formerly Mount Carmel members. P. H. McDade's statement that there was a scarcity of children may have influenced the movement. Also, many of the names on the records at this time were residents of the present Mount Carmel community. Certainly a member living at the Rich place, as did Hudson Sparrow, would welcome his church nearer home. The Merritts and Purefoys also lived nearer the present location. In fact, Elder Purefoy gave the land for the present location. Interest at the old church seemed about dead at times, as is recorded in Purefoy's History. It may be that the church was moved in an effort to preserve the last spark of life it retained.

It is told by word of mouth that in the year 1873, after the crops were laid by, there was a "working." The old church was torn down and hauled by wagons to the present location, where it was rebuilt. The fine old hand-planed boards were placed there as they are today in the center section of the building. Probably quite a few members were inconvenienced by the move, for in the early minutes for the succeeding years we find the Womble family (W. N. Savannah, and Sims) asking for letters.

We have only to look at the record of growth in the church in the following years to be assured that the move was a healthy one. The very year of the move the membership jumped from forty-seven to seventy, a gain of roughly fifty per cent. By 1876 there were one hundred and sixteen members. For a period of nearly thirty years this number was not exceeded. In fact, the church membership varied between seventy-seven and one hundred and fifteen until 1904 when it rose to one hundred and thirty one. The reason for the fluctuation in numbers was due largely to the practice of excluding members and then restoring them to church fellowship when they conformed to church requirements.

The best sources for any church history are the minutes of the Church conferences or business meetings. Unfortunately, there are no such records of Mount Carmel prior to 1888. A copy of the oldest set of minutes is contained in the appendix to this history. It was in the fall of 1888 that the Mount Zion Association met with Mount Carmel. Rev. W. S. Olive was pastor at the time and there were ninety-seven members.

At the December business meeting of 1889 it was decided to give the first two months' collections to Foreign Missions. This collecting was to be done by Brother C. L. Andrews and Sister Susan Cheek.

In January of 1890 the church decided to withdraw fellowship from all able-bodied men who did not pay their part of the pastor's salary. For some reason,

the former pastor, Rev. W. S. Olive, was to be notified of this act. At the February meeting of the church Brother A. Riggsbee and Sister Lela Merritt were appointed to collect for the next two months for home missions. The March conference of this year granted letters to Sisters Savannah Bland and E. S. Upchurch. Delegates to the Sunday School Convention were W. J. A. Cheek, J. M. Womble, and J. B. Cheek. In June of this year letters of dismissal were granted to Sister S. N. Cheek and Brother H. Y. Stone. August saw a number of committees appointed. W. G. Clements headed a committee to secure funds for the Baptist Orphanage.

November of 1890 was the month for the election of a pastor. Rev. J. W. Watson was called for another year at a salary of \$100.00. The church decided to pay the pastor each quarter. In this year a lengthy tribute of respect was recorded in the records for Sister Sarah Andrews, lately deceased.

In September of 1894 the church had a committee to collect the balance due on the salary of Rev. J. W. Watson who left the church in 1892. Rev. A. C. Cree agreed in November of 1894 to serve the church for "what the committee can raise." These must have been hard years for Mount Carmel, but even in these times she was honest in trying to pay all her debts. We find plans were made in the January conference of 1896 to finish paying the back dues to Rev. W. A. Smith. Brother Cree kept these debts before the people. In May of this year the church accepted funds obtained from an entertainment at Merritt's School House. These funds were to be used to cover the church. In August 1895, a motion was made to extend the roof of the church to correspond to the boxing. September found the church pledging money to help pay for shingles. One dollar was the highest amount paid. "Friday after next" was the date set for covering the church.

During these years preceding 1900 the post office for those in the Mount Carmel community was Rialto. This strange sounding name is now Farrington, according to report. The address of community people was changed to Chapel Hill in 1903 or 1904.

We mention only a few more facts in this section to show some of the trends in Church life. A much fuller account of the later years of the church's history will be found in the next section. In all of the church's conferences the roll of members was called and absentees noted. The roll was divided into a male roll and a female roll. At the April 1914 meeting it was decided that the female roll would be called quarterly henceforth. A check of the minutes for several years reveals that more and more the roll call was omitted, until eventually it died out.

On the Saturday before the second Sunday in March 1917, the church voted that it was wrong for church members to dance and all who were guilty would be dealt with by the church.

On the third Sunday in March 1926, the church decided to do away with Saturday meeting and have meetings first and third Sundays. The Saturday meetings were restored under later pastors but this was the beginning

of the end for the Saturday meeting. It was also the beginning of a fuller program of church services. As the membership and the financial ability of the people grew the need for full time services was seen. The first full time pastor was Rev. C. E. Bryd in 1945. The salary paid was \$1200.00.

Instead of the Saturday meeting or even the Sunday church conference, the church now convenes in business session on the Wednesday night following the first Sunday in each month. The church now has a full-time program of work including: A pastor on the field, Preaching service twice on Sunday, Wednesday night services, rehearsal of adult and youth choirs on Thursday night, and occasional social meetings in the Cabin.

Most of the other phases of church life are covered in the section to follow, however, it might be well to mention the present general church officers. They are: Clerk, L. W. Sparrow; Treasurer, Mrs. E. G. Merritt; Librarian, Nat Sparrow; Chorister, Billy B. Sparrow; and Pianist, Mrs. E. G. Merritt. The trustees of the Church are: June A. Sparrow, P. E. Johnson, and A. D. Fowler. The deacons are: A. G. White, chairman, L. W. Sparrow, Martin Sparrow, E. T. Dollar, S. T. Noell, W. L. Carson, Sr., J. E. Pendergraft, J. C. Carter, Dwight Pendergraft, Odell Blackwood, and J. H. Merritt.

#### INTERESTING PHASES OF MOUNT CARMEL LIFE

##### Mount Carmel and the University of North Carolina

Although at present there seems to be little connection between our church and the University of North Carolina, in the past the University has had more influence on our affairs than we realize.

For one thing, the University and the church are about the same age. The University was only eight years old when the church was organized. Since so many leaders of early years came from the University it might have been a force in getting the church organized. At the time of the church's organization there was no Baptist church at Chapel Hill. The distance to the nearest Baptist Church was prohibitive to student attendance, so there was definite need for a Baptist church closer by. The first site of Mount Carmel was within easy walking distance of the campus and the South Building bell could be plainly heard at the church.

Abner W. Clopton, principal of a preparatory school in Chapel Hill, while not a member of the University faculty, was ordained to the work of the Gospel ministry at Mount Carmel. He served also as clerk of the old church and when he resigned James Hall, a University student, became clerk.

In 1819 Iverson L. Brooks, a student was licensed to preach the gospel by Mount Carmel.

Dr. William Hooper, an Episcopal clergyman of Chapel Hill, was baptized into the fellowship of Mount Carmel in 1832. He served as Professor of ancient

languages, rhetoric and logic at the University. He co-authored a report on education to the Baptist State Convention which resulted in the founding of Wake Forest College in 1834. He later became second President of Wake Forest College. He was a grandson of the William Hooper who signed the Declaration of Independence. He is buried on the University campus beside his mother and stepfather, Dr. Caldwell, former president of the University.

We cannot forget the Y.M.C.A. boys who walked to Mount Carmel in former days to teach Sunday school when our leaders were few. They came to the University with an earnest desire for education, and with a willingness to suffer hardship in order to get it. Among these students were Cooper, Walker, McKnight, Jones, Auld and Vogler, along with others whose names are forgotten, but whose efforts are still remembered. Perhaps they still remember the old church and the dinners to which they were often invited after services.

Professor Gore of the Physics department was a leading member of our church for many years. We find him attending Union meetings and associational meetings as a delegate from our church.

With the founding of the Baptist Church in Chapel Hill student participation in Mount Carmel affairs decreased. The efforts which these students made will be appreciated as long as they are remembered.

### **Mount Carmel and Sunday School Work**

The first report of a Sunday School at Mount Carmel was made in 1867. It was then called a Sabbath School. The Superintendent was Isaiah Cole. The school closed for the winter months. There were four teachers and thirty scholars. The next year a report was made was in 1871. The number enrolled was still thirty. Within six years after the church was moved the enrollment had gone up to fifty. G. P. Moore was then pastor.

From 1880 to 1900 the enrollment ranged from twenty-five to seventy-five. The enrollment from 1900 to 1920 was up and down with a slow but steady progress being noted. As late as 1908, when Mr. A. Riggsbee was superintendent, the school was open only ten months in the year. In 1920 there were sixty-five enrolled. By 1930 this number had grown to one hundred and thirty-seven, by 1940 to one hundred and ninety-one. The 1950 enrollment was two hundred and eighty-nine, while 1951 was the all time high of two hundred and ninety-seven, with an average attendance of one hundred and forty-six. Last year, 1952, saw the enrollment drop down somewhat but the attendance remained at one hundred and forty-six. This year of 1953 promises to exceed last year in attendance.

The Sunday School is well-graded and uses the six-point record system. There are at present nineteen classes, a Nursery, Cradle Roll, and Extension department in the School.

The superintendents during the past quarter century have been: C. W. Sparrow, A. E. Knowles, W. M. Pendergraft, I. F. Hardee, L. W. Sparrow, S. J. Crabtree, P. E. Johnson, J. H. Sparrow, E. T. Dollar, and A. G. White. Brother White has served as superintendent since 1946. Further plans are being made to expand the Sunday School in 1954.

### **Mount Carmel and Training Union Work**

The first report of a Baptist Young People's Union at Mount Carmel was in 1921. Rev. J. B. Davis was pastor and Miss Viola Cheek was president. There were eighteen members. In 1922 this had increased to thirty-five. The next several years show an up and down situation but with gradual overall progress. By 1940 the enrollment was sixty-two. There was no Union reported in 1942-44. In 1945 the enrollment was eighty-one. Follows a steady gain until the peak year of 1951 when the enrollment was one hundred and fifty-seven and average attendance of eighty-two.

The influence of Training Union is seen throughout the Church's activities. Whenever a new worker is needed to fill some place of responsibility, that worker has more than likely been trained in the Baptist Training Union. The Training Union at Mount Carmel is a well-graded organization with unions and leaders for all age groups.

The Training Union Directors since its inception have been Miss Viola Cheek, Miss Agnes Knowles, Miss Mamie Lee Blackwood, J. O. Blackwood, Miss Jessie Sparrow, Billy Sparrow, Miss Eva Doris Blackwood, Joseph Fowler, Mrs. C. E. Byrd, E. T. Dollar, Vernon Sparrow, and Martin Sparrow.

### **MOUNT CARMEL AND MISSIONARY EMPHASIS**

From the earliest date Mount Carmel has been a strong missionary church. She is seen standing by her convictions in the earliest days. Churches left the Association and were refused a place because of their anti-mission sentiment, but never Mount Carmel. Mention is made of different phases of early mission work here and there throughout Purefoy's History.

Always there was a missionary spirit and a

way to carry on, although at times that way seems to us today very inadequate. The collecting of money by a committee was one of the ways tried. Sometimes this committee would be appointed as late as August with instructions to collect until the meeting of the Association. The needs for particular causes are not usually recorded. It was a collection just for missions.

The spirit of Missions increased with the beginning of Woman's Missionary Union. We hear of the first Woman's Missionary Society at Mount Carmel in 1916 when Rev. O. L. Riggs was pastor. He had not been long married and he brought his beautiful young wife to help with the church work. No doubt this young woman, full of love for her Master's work, inspired the women of Mount Carmel to take that first step. The first enrollment was twenty-two.

From that day there has been a steady growth in the interest of missions. Many have been the women of Mount Carmel who have been leaders in mission organizations since that early beginning in 1916. The presidents of the Woman's Missionary Union for the past thirty years have been: Mrs. C. L. Rich, Mrs. June A. Sparrow, Mrs. Charles Knowles, Mrs. P. E. Johnson, Mrs. Jesse Merritt, Mrs. Carl Sparrow, Mrs. E. T. Dollar, Mrs. E. G. Merritt, Mrs. Vernon Sparrow, and Mrs. S. C. Hundley.

As could be expected from the increased interest, auxiliaries were soon organized and added to the W. M. S.. The Girls' Auxiliary and the Royal Ambassadors Chapter, along with the Sunbeam Band, have been active for many years. Outstanding Royal Ambassador Leaders have been: Mrs. Flora Fowler, Mrs. E. T. Dollar, and Mrs. Martin Sparrow. The present leader, Martin Sparrow, is the first man to serve as R. A. Leader.

The members of the Girls' Auxiliary groups have been led by these efficient helpers: Mrs. Phillip Sparrow, Mrs. A. D. Fowler, Mrs. Leonard Sparrow, and Mrs. William Kilpatrick. The young boys and girls get started in missionary training in the Sunbeam Band. Among the leaders of this Band have been: Mrs. W. L. Carson, Sr., Mrs. Edgar Stone, Mrs. James Fletcher, and Mrs. John Williams.

The men were without a mission organization until the Brotherhood Chapter was organized in 1949, while Mr. Wagoner was pastor, with nineteen members. Though the idea of missions is primary in the Brotherhood, this is a men's organization with the purpose of undergirding the total program of the local church. S. T. Noell has been the president of the Brotherhood since its inception.

A section on Missions would be incomplete without a look at some of the objects of missionary zeal. As early as 1890 the church gave its first two months collections to Foreign Missions. The next two months collections went for Home Missions. This early interest has

continued through the years.

The Baptist Orphanage has long had a big place in the Church's heart. In days past the whole Sunday School has visited the Mills Home at Thomasville. For years also the Sunday School offering on each first Sunday has gone to the Orphanage. For the past few years Mount Carmel has taken a special interest in the Chowan Cottage of boys. Each Christmas gifts are sent to this group and each Spring these boys and their leaders come to Mount Carmel for a week-end visit. Several of the youngsters usually spend their Christmas holidays with Mount Carmel families.

Many homes have opened to welcome these boys as one of the family, even for as long as their two-week summer vacation. None have shown more genuine hospitality than the Leonard Sparrow family, who, in a recent year had vacationing boys from Mills Home in their home for a full month. Leonard never seemed happier than when these children from the Orphanage came to visit.

The Baptist Hospital has long been a recipient of Mount Carmel gifts. A few years ago when North Carolina Baptists were asked to raise a large amount for a new south wing, each church in the state was asked to give a sizeable amount to this cause. Mount Carmel gladly came through and paid in full the amount requested.

Another feeling of satisfaction comes to Mount Carmel over its response to the call of North Carolina Baptists for money to help in moving Wake Forest to Winston-Salem. Mount Carmel accepted a goal of \$1200.00 to be paid within five years. In September of 1952 the five years was up and the pledge was paid in full.

With the advent of the Baptist Home for the Aging, "Resthaven," this church placed this new cause in her budget and on the hearts of her people. Associational Missions is another cause in which Mount Carmel has her part. From the first she has seen the need of a paid worker in the Association and this year is paying \$250.00 to support this cause.

There are other mission objects to which the church gives individually. However, through the years she has given liberally to many objects through the Co-operative Program of our Baptist Convention. Beginning in 1926 with contributions of \$150.00, there has not been a year since in which gifts have not gone out to the ends of the earth through the Co-operative Program. A total of over \$12,000.00 has gone to worldwide missions through these channels. This year's budget calls for \$1725.00 through the Co-operative Program.

People of Mount Carmel have envisioned a budget with a 50-50 ratio between missions and local expenses. This ideal has not been reached in recent years, although in at least one year, 1920, the church gave well over fifty per cent of its expenditures to missions. Brother Dorsett was



then pastor. The present budget calls for thirty four and one-half per cent for missions, or a total of \$3,144.00.

All this goes to prove that the Divine command, "Go ye into all the world" is being heeded more and more as the years pass, and as a result Mount Carmel is proving herself a blessing as a witness to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Mount Carmel membership is made up of hard working people whose income is never in the high brackets. Not since the days of W. H. Merritt and Purefoy have there been individuals with much wealth. It might be thought that such a church would not be so generous, but not so with Mount Carmel. She has through the years been conscious of her financial stewardship.

In the olden days money was raised to pay the pastor and give to missions by the assessment or dues system. Usually there was an assessing committee and a collecting committee or a combination of both. That the system worked poorly can be seen by the hard times they had trying to collect the dues. Gradually we have come around to the position of a vital and challenging stewardship of possessions, which presents the needs to the people and then seeks a voluntary response.

As the pastors and church leaders have stressed the obligation of every Christian to be a good steward the church gifts have grown through the years. A glance at church records will show that in 1902 the total church expenditures amounted to \$121.41; in 1910, \$405.19; in 1920, \$727.55; in 1931, \$980.69; in 1940, \$1229.50; and in 1950, \$10,245.67. Over the same period the pastor's salary increased from \$100.00 per year for one Saturday and one Sunday service per month to \$2860.00 for full time work. By 1953 the pastor was receiving \$3600.00 per year.

One main reason for the church's sound financial status can be found in the consecrated treasurers through the years. There have been only three treasurers in the past thirty years: Mr. June A. Sparrow held this office for many years. Then Ben Tripp was treasurer, and Mrs. E. G. Merritt has now been treasurer for several years.

#### **MOUNT CARMEL CHURCH MUSIC**

Music, especially singing, has always been a vital part in the worship services of rural churches. This is as it should be, for no other part of the worship can be participated in by so nearly everyone. It is pleasing to the ear, it gives emphasis to the sermons, and it carries out the theme of the service in a way nothing else can do.

In the earliest churches there were no hymn books, nor any musical instruments. Indeed, at the time Mount Carmel was first organized, only a few of the hymns we know today were in existence and use. The Psalms were sung as the only appropriate church music. Later came the hymns that we are familiar with as the old-time songs, and still later came the popular innovation of gospel songs. In early times, a deacon often preached in the absence of a

regular pastor. This deacon would often lead in the singing, and from this custom the term "deaconize the lines" came to be applied to song leading. Most often the deacon or Pastor would read or sing a line, which the congregation would repeat after him, continuing this process until the hymn was sung. Hymn books were as much a rarity as books of any kind when Mount Carmel was a young church. The possessor of one of these hymnals often copied the words and distributed them to members of the congregation so that the hymnal served as many people as possible. If there was a time when the people of Mount Carmel did not like to sing, it is not known or recorded. Entire generations have come to be known as music lovers. The Yergans, Baileys, Andrews, and the Sparrows were a few of the old families who took pleasure in making the church house ring with music. The Sparrows were so numerous and so settled that we still find them well represented in the singers of Mount Carmel.

Mr. Caswell Andrews was one of the good leaders of the old tuning fork day. When he, his good wife Lula, his sister Louisana, and his little less than a dozen children sang their best, there was little left for the remainder of the congregation to do but join in.

Many "Singing Schools" were conducted in by-gone days. John Bryan, brother of Dean D. B. Bryan of Wake Forest College, and Mr. Lynch are two well-remembered teachers.

The first musical instrument bought was an organ at which sat various ladies laboring at the pumps to produce accompaniment for the singing. Next came a piano and we now look forward to the day when we can progress to an electric organ. It has been wonderful that at no time has there been any lack of pianists or organists to provide music for the church. Mrs. E. G. Merritt has for some years served well and faithfully as church pianist.

The church now has two choirs, the adult choir directed by Billy Sparrow, and the youth choir directed by Mrs. Morgan the Pastor's wife. Both choirs rehearse on Thursday evenings. The adult choir regularly sings at Sunday Morning services while the Youth choir sings at evening service. This year of 1953 a group of the young girls entered the Training Union Hymn Festival. They qualified at the Associational and District meetings and went on to become state winners at Caswell Assembly on July fourth. In addition to the two choirs there is a junior song service at the evening preaching service, at which time the smaller children sing choruses.

#### **MOUNT CARMEL BUILDING PROGRAM**

After the church was moved to its present location in 1873 there was a period of thirty-one years in which no substantial changes were made in the building. That building can be recognized as the rectangular center section of today's building. There have been three additions

to the original building.

The first of these came in 1904, according to the best record. It consisted of adding a front or entrance section on the side next to the road. This section is still used as the front entrance to the building. This is the section with the steeple on it. The old minutes tell us that the cost was \$450.00, which sum the church voted to borrow and repay as it could.

Increased attendance at Sunday School and the inconvenience of teaching in the auditorium in curtained rooms led the church to undertake the building of Sunday School rooms. The addition at the back of the auditorium gave four small rooms on the ground floor and four of the same size on the second floor. This addition was started in December of 1930 and was completed in 1931.

As soon as this addition was in use some farsighted members saw the possibility of two other rooms, one on each side of the front entrance. The building of these rooms was slow and discouraging but was finally finished in the Spring of 1942. This left only one class meeting in the auditorium.

The next step in Mount Carmel's building program came as the result of a specific need, namely, a full-time pastor living on the field. The Parsonage was built during the pastorate of Rev. Thomas Bland. Although Brother Bland was pastor at the time of completion of the parsonage in 1948, he was not married at the time and planned to leave to enter the seminary at Louisville the following year. For this reason, it was the next pastor, W. R. Wagoner, who was the first to live in the parsonage.

Never had the progress of the church seemed so evident as now with the pastor living in the community. The cost of the pastors home was about \$12,500.00, a large part of which was borrowed. Since that time the third Sunday of each month in Sunday School has been parsonage debt day. According to the church budget this debt is due to be paid in full this church year.

In the meantime the Sunday School had grown to such proportions that more room was needed. Thus it was that the idea of a Cabin came about. The cement block Cabin was paid for only as the money came to hand for materials, and most of the labor was supplied by the people themselves. As soon as the sub-flooring was in and the roof on the building was put to use. A whole junior department was organized, consisting of all classes up through junior age, to meet in the Cabin with Mrs. Wagoner as the first superintendent. Since 1951 Mrs. Martin Sparrow has been superintendent of this important segment of the Sunday School. Equipment for a kitchen in the Cabin has been given by individuals, classes and other groups. The local Home Demonstration Club has furnished money for the ceiling and flooring of the Cabin within the past year.

To give some idea of the increase in property value through the years, compare the value of the property

in 1904 with that of today. In 1904 the total value was \$1000.00. Today the evaluation is about \$30,000.00.

### **MOUNT CARMEL'S FULL-TIME CHRISTIAN WORKERS**

In the early years of its history Mount Carmel was blessed with ministerial sons. Most of these have been mentioned already in this history. Abner Clopton was ordained in 1818. Iverson L. Brooks was licensed to preach in 1819. Thomas Weaver was ordained in 1826. W. H. Merritt was ordained in May 1827. Dr. William Hooper was baptized into the fellowship of the church from the Episcopal denomination. He was already a clergyman and we have no record of further ordination but Mount Carmel can consider him as one of her ministerial sons.

From 1832, when Hooper was received into the church, until 1911, we have no record of either a son or daughter of the church who went into full-time Christian work. There may well have been some but the records have not come to us.

The next person on the list is Rupert Merritt, who was born in the Mount Carmel community on March 14, 1891. Rupert's mother, Mrs. Lizzie, still attends church and Sunday School regularly here at Mount Carmel. Rupert was educated at Merritt's Schoolhouse, Chapel Hill High School, Elon and Wake Forest Colleges, University of North Carolina, and Southern Baptist Seminary at Louisville, Ky. Converted at the age of thirteen, Rupert early felt the pull of Christian service. He served Mount Carmel as Sunday School Superintendent and Deacon before answering the call to preach.

This young man was licensed to preach on September 26, 1911. His first pastorate was Lizzie Mill Baptist Mission in Selma. As soon as he was called to this field of service Mount Carmel ordained him on September 16, 1917. Since that time Rupert has served the following churches: (1) The Sandy Bottom field near Kinston composed of four churches, (2) the Dobson field, also composed of four churches, (3) Buffalo, Kentucky, (4) Murfordsville and other part-time churches in Kentucky, (5) Hiseville, Kentucky, (6) the South Fork Church, where Abraham Lincoln's father attended many years ago, (7) Mount Eden, Kentucky, (8) Mount Pleasant, near Concord, N. C., and (8) Powell Tabernacle in Fayetteville.

At present Brother Rupert is doing a fine job with the last mentioned church. After forty-two years in the ministry he is still being greatly used by the Lord. During his ministry many young people have gone out to serve the Lord in a full-time capacity. He has had a varied and interesting life of paying church debts, building churches and parsonages, and serving as Temperance leader. We wish for this Son of the old church many more years of successful ministry.



Joseph Fowler is another Mount Carmel preacher who promises to be used of the Lord wherever he goes. He was always a quiet, thoughtful boy who loved his church and tried to serve anywhere he was needed. He served his church in many capacities including that of Training Union Director and Deacon. He saw over-seas service in World War II, coming at the end of the war to enter the University of North Carolina and graduate. After college graduation Joseph entered the Southern Baptist Teleological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. In 1952 he received his B.D. degree from the seminary and will soon complete work on the Th.M. Degree. After his first year there he married Miss Pearl York, a Bible teacher in the public schools. This consecrated couple have a great future in the Lord's work.

The most recent entry from Mount Carmel into actual full-time Christian work is Vernon Sparrow. Vernon served the church long and faithfully before deciding to go into full-time service. He served as Deacon, Sunday School teacher and was for some years the Training Union Director. He is a graduate of the University of North Carolina. In the Fall of 1951 the call came so strong and in such a definite way that Vernon sold his business, took his wife and four fine children, and moved to Winston-Salem where he has since been serving as Director of Education and Recreation at the North Winston Baptist Church.

At present, another of our young people, Miss Carolyn Fowler, is in school at Mars Hill College preparing for a life of Christian Service. During the summer months of this year of 1953 Carolyn is serving as Assistant Associational Missionary in charge of Vacation Bible School Work. Carolyn served well as Training Union Director before entering upon her collegiate studies.

There are other young people in our community who have either answered or are contemplating the call to Christian service. We pray that the Lord of the harvest will send forth a host of others from Mount Carmel to bless the world.

## CONCLUSION: LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

We would not close this history simply by looking at the past and present. We must look to the future. The backward glance is a profitable thing if it is used as a means to future growth and service. We at Mount Carmel do not glory simply in the fact that the old church has somehow weathered the storms for one hundred and fifty years. Rather, we delight to see how the fathers of our church examined their own mistakes and then went on to overcome them. The story of Mount Carmel has been one of progress. If we should somehow feel that with this sesquicentennial year Mount Carmel has reached its peak and we can take a resting spell, then the old-timers would have just reason to be ashamed of us. Time does not stand still. Neither must Mount Carmel. There is much to be done in the Master's

Kingdom. We can well take as our challenge the word of the Lord to an earlier generation: "Speak to the children of Israel that they go FORWARD." (Exodus 14:15). Mount Carmel has done, is doing, and can continue to do great things in the Master's Name.

## APPENDIX

Deed for the First Site of Mount Carmel Baptist Church Mathew McCauley  
to

The trustees of the Baptist Society: This indenture made this 14th day of May in the year of Our Lord One Thousand eight hundred and fourteen between Mathew McCauley of the County of Orange and the state of North Carolina of the one part, and Abner W. Clopton, William Henry Merritt and Thomas Weaver, all of County and State aforesaid, acting as trustees of and for the Baptist Society in said County of the other part, witnesseth that for and in consideration of the sum of one dollar to the said Mathew in hand paid at or before the sealing and delivery of these present, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, he the said Mathew hath granted, bargained and sold and by these present doth give, grant, bargain and sell claim, release, convey and confirm unto the said Abner W. Clopton, William H. Merritt and Thomas Weaver as trustees as aforesaid and their proper successors for the use and behoof of the said Baptist Society (and for the purpose of building a church thereon) a certain piece of land situate lying and being in the County and State aforesaid on the South side of Morgan's Creek on the great road leading from Hillsborough to Fayetteville and bounded as follows (viz.) Beginning on a white oak saplin on the east side of said Road at the 14 mile post thence along the same south 6 1/2 degrees West-3 chains and 30 links to a stake thence South 83 1/2 degrees East 3 chains and five links to a stake thence North 83 1/2 degrees West to the Beginning containing by estimation one acre be the same more or less; and all the estate right, title, interest use, trust, property, claim and demand whatsoever of him the said Mathew of in and to the said Land and premises. And the said Mathew doth also hereby grant to the said Abner, William H., and Thomas as aforesaid the free and untroled use and privilege of such spring or springs of water as may be most contiguous to the said land for the use and benefit of such society or congregation of people as may from time to time assemble at said place for the purpose of worship etc. without any bar or hindrance whatsoever. To have and to hold the aforesaid Land and premises herby granted with the appurtenances unto the said Abner, William, and Thomas and their successors forever for the sole and exclusive use of the said Baptist Church as aforesaid to be called and known by the name of Christ's Church at Mount Carmel: And the said Mathew doth covenant and agree that he will the right, title and claim of the said one acre of land as above described and the appurtenances from the claim or claims of all and every other person or persons to the said Abner, Win. & Thomas and their successors warrant and forever, defend by these Present-

In testimony whereof he the said Mathew hath hereunto set his hand and affixed his seal the day and date first above written.

Signed Sealed and delivered in the presence of

John Pendergrass

Edw'd Robson

Mathew McCauley

Orange County May Term 1814 The

Execution of this Deed was duly proved in open Court by the Oath of John Pendergrass a subscribing witness thereto and ordered the Register.

Test

J. Taylor CC

Book 14p. 654-655,

The Mathew McCauley who gave this deed to Mount Carmel Church is an ancestor of Miss Pearl Cole, a resident in the Smith Level community who works in Rose's Store in Chapel Hill.

The land on which the old church stood is now owned by Dwight Ray, who is a partner in the Lloyd-Ray Hardware Co. at Carrboro. The outline of the old foundation rocks can still be seen there. There is an oak tree at the spot, but it is doubtful that it is the sapling mentioned in the deed. It stands on the left side of the old roadbed coming up from Morgan's Creek. This road is one which was traveled by Cornwallis. Down at the foot of the hill is the spring mentioned in the deed. This is probably the only feature which has not undergone change in the years since Mount Carmel was located at this site.

## OLDEST EXTANT ROLL OF MOUNT CARMEL CHURCH

This is the first roll of the church given in the church records. It dates back as far as 1888, perhaps farther. Additions were made in later years as new members were admitted. Since this was the way in which the roll was kept, the number of people listed cannot be taken as the number of members in any one year of the church's history.

Jackson Andrewse	A. S. Blackwood	R.J. Crittendon
Sarah Andrewse	A. B. Bennett	Ida Cheek
C.L. Andrewse	Nancy Cheek	J.Marvin Cheek
M.A. Blackwood	Laura Canady	Melvin Cheek
M.C. Blackwood	M. J. Cheek	R.H. Cheek
M.S. Blackwood	Susan Cheek	J.R. Council
M.L. Blackwood	W. J. A. Cheek	Eugenia Council
T.D. Blackwood	J. W. Cheek	McQuary Council
J.L. Blackwood	J. B. Cheek	W.C. Carson
Nancy Blackwood	R. D. Cheek	Ella Carson
A. L. Blackwood	Fletcher Critendon	Elizabeth Dodd
E. C. Burgess	Frances Critendon	Mittie Daniel
M. H. Bennett	James Merritt	Algernon Daniel
S. J. Blackwood	Cheek	F.B. Daniel
E. D. Blackwood	E. A. Clements	N.L. Daniel
W, F. Booth	W. G. Clements	A.L. Davis
W. E. Blackwood	Anna Clements	H.B. Daniel
Allie Burgess	Charley Cole	A.F. Duke
I.F. Baily	B.J. Cole	A.L. Duke
L.H. Baily	James Cole	J.M. Duke
Nelie Baily	Pinckney Cole	E.H. Goodwin
Gannie Baily	Seaton Cole	M.J. Goodwin
Bessie Blackwood	Roda Cole	Jane Gooch
John F. Bennett	Nelle Cole	J.W. Gore
D. M. Bailey	Anner Cole	Madge C. Gore
Mertle Bailey	Mary D. Cheek	A.Hunter
Elcie Boothe	L.O. Cheek	Virginia Hunter
Hattie Bennett	Clauda J. Cheek	M.E. Henderson
W.S. Blackwood	Abbie Crittendon	Catie Holden
Robert Blackwood	Ella Cheek	Rutha Hester
M.L. Blackwood	Hattie Cole	A.S. Harward
(Lilly)	M.S. Cole	E.J. Horton
Minnie Blackwood	Jocie Cheek	J.P. Harward
Sam Blackwood	Mittie Cole	T.R. Harward
John A. Blackwood	Walter Cheek	W.J. Harward
H.C. Blackwood	Bettie Cole	

Mettie Harward  
 Annie Hutchins  
 Maria Johnson  
 Mary Johnson  
 Arthur Johnson  
 Olie Jones  
 Samuel Jones  
 Lloyd Johnson  
 P.J. Johnson  
 Martha King Mary  
 G.W. Kimbro  
 Caroline Lynsey  
 Elizabeth Lloyd  
 Louzania Lloyd  
 Mary Leycock  
 Florences Lloyd  
 M.L. Laycock  
 Tommie Lloyd  
 E.D. Laycock  
 E.G. Marshall  
 Anne Marshall  
 M.B. Merritt  
 M.H. Merritt  
 E.S. Merritt  
 L.A. Merritt  
 Mary B. Merritt  
 C.C. Merritt  
 Elizabeth Merritt  
 W.H. Merritt, Jr.  
 I. F. Meatcham  
 Lelian Morgan  
 William Mitchell  
 Alice Merritt  
 Cle Merritt  
 W.C. Merritt  
 W.B. Merritt  
 Jes. C. Martin  
 Mintie Merritt  
 Minnie Morgan  
 Meter Merritt  
 Esther Mabel Merritt  
 N.F. Merritt  
 Mary Morgan  
 Luby Morgan  
 Jack Myrick

H. Carl Merritt  
 J.C. Merritt  
 Annie Merritt  
 R. P. Merritt  
 J. H. Merritt  
 E. J. Merritt  
 Elizabeth Neville  
 Joseph Nevill  
 C. Pendergrass  
 Mary Pendergrass  
 Daniel Pendergrass  
 Nathaniel  
 Pendergrass  
 Jennie Petty  
 James Purefoy  
 Maggie Purefoy  
 J. M. Pendergrass  
 Belle Pendergraas  
 R. A. Pendergrass  
 Melvin  
 Pendergrass  
 J. E. Riggsbee  
 Ninie M. Riggsbee  
 J.M. Riggsbee  
 M. E. Riggsbee  
 N. E. Riggsbee  
 J. W. Riggsbee  
 Lizar Riggsbee  
 H. Riggsbee  
 Callie D. Riggsbee  
 T. E. Riggsbee  
 J. J. Riggsbee  
 J. S. Riggsbee  
 P. E. Riggsbee  
 J. C. Riggsbee  
 Lucy Riggsbee  
 Lougana Riggsbee  
 Ida Riggsbee  
 T. T. Riggsbee  
 Adda Riggsbee  
 I. J. Riggsbee  
 B.O. Riggsbee  
 Frank Riggsbee  
 Eva Riggsbee  
 M. E. Riggsbee  
 Jessie Riggsbee

Bessie D.  
 Riggsbee  
 Milton Riggsbee  
 Earnest Riggsbee  
 Lillie Riggsbee  
 Veter Riggsbee  
 C. W. Riggsbee  
 M. J. Riggsbee  
 W.M. Biggsbee  
 J. Edward Riggsbee  
 Lilla Riggsbee  
 Hudson Sparrow  
 Pupp Sparrow  
 Caroline Sparrow  
 E. L. Sparrow  
 H, F. Stone  
 M. Z. Sparrow  
 T. E. Sparrow  
 Eve Sparrow  
 M. I. Sparrow  
 Lizzie Sparrow  
 Lodie Sparrow  
 Junius Sparrow  
 Malory Sparrow  
 Bertha Sparrow  
 Wescot Sparrow  
 Comma Sparrow  
 Lydia Sparrow  
 Agnes Sparrow  
 Nannie Sparrow  
 Eliza Sparrow  
 S.C. Sparrow  
 Laura Whitaker  
 Nora Whitaker  
 W. H. Williams  
 Francis Williams  
 J. M. Wombel  
 Mary Wombel  
 Savana Wombel  
 Josephine  
 Williams  
 Fred H. Williams  
 Dora Williams  
 Enna Womble  
 J. J. Williams

1888 Mt. Carmel Baptist Church

Orange County, N. C.

Rev. W. S. Olive, Pastor, Salary \$135.00 January

Saturday before the 4 Lord's day in January. After services by the Pastor, Rev. W. S. Olive, the church convened for conferences. The roll was called and absentees noted. The proceedings of last conferences were read and approved. Committee called on to report. The Committee to see Bro. Olive reported that Bro. Olive would preach for this church this year 1888. The Church ordered the treasurer to pay over to Bro. Olive what money he had on hand. Letter of Dismission was granted to Sister Bettie Williams & N. A. Wombel. The conference adjourned..

Rev. W. S Olive Moderator

W.G.C. cc

*The original spelling is retained in both the roll and the minutes in the interest of authenticity.*

## PASTORS OF MOUNT CARMEL BAPTIST CHURCH

Robert T. Daniel		C. A. Upchurch	1898
William P. Worrell		W. D. Bostic	1900
Patrick W. Dowd		J. C. Hocutt	1901 - 1903
William Hooper		A. C. Hamby	1904 - 1905
R. McNabb	1803 - 1858	J. C. Hocutt	1906 - 1907
George W. Purefoy		R. E. Clark	1908 - 1909
Enoch Crutchfield		O. B. Mitchell	1910 - 1915
B.J. Hackney		O. L. Riggs	1916 - 1917
Owen Churchill	1865 - 1868	H. G. Dorsett	1919 - 1920
James P. Mason	1869	J. B. Davis	1921 - 1922
W.R. Gualtney	1871 - 1872	J. F. McDuffie	1923 - 1926
W.T. Farrow	1873	S. A. Wilkinson	1926 - 1927
R. A. Patterson	1874	C. H. Henderson	1928 - 1929
G. P. Moore	1874 - 1879	A. C. Hamby	1930 - 1935
C. C. Newton	1880 - 1884	F. D. Hemphill	1936 - 1938
D. D. Edwards	1886	J. C. Shore	1939
W. S. Olive	1887 - 1888	W. B. Cone	1940
J. W. Watson	1888 - 1889	M. A. Pegram	1941 - 1943
W. A. Smith	1890 - 1892	C. E. Byrd	1944 - 1946
A. C. Cree	1893 - 1894	T. A. Bland	1947 - 1948
W. A. Smith	1895 - 1896	W. R. Wagoner	1948 - 1951
W. H. Edwards	1897	H. A. Morgan	1951

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

1. Purefoy, George W., "A History of the Sandy Creek Baptist Association from its Organization in A.D. 1758, to A.D. 1858."
2. Johnson, "Ante-Bellum North Carolina."
3. Knight, "History of Education."
4. "The Hillsborough Recorder."
5. Minutes of the Sandy Creek Baptist Association.
6. Minutes of the Mount Zion Baptist Association
7. Hutchinson, B. L., "History of Mount Carmel Church,"  
As printed in the Minutes of Mount Zion Baptist Association  
for 1852.
8. Minutes of church conferences of Mount Carmel Church.

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60  
61  
62  
63  
64  
65  
66  
67  
68  
69  
70  
71  
72  
73  
74  
75  
76  
77  
78  
79  
80  
81  
82  
83  
84  
85  
86  
87  
88  
89  
90  
91  
92  
93  
94  
95  
96  
97  
98  
99  
100  
101  
102  
103  
104  
105  
106  
107  
108  
109  
110  
111  
112  
113  
114  
115  
116  
117  
118  
119  
120  
121  
122  
123  
124  
125  
126  
127  
128  
129  
130  
131  
132  
133  
134  
135  
136  
137  
138  
139  
140  
141  
142  
143  
144  
145  
146  
147  
148  
149  
150  
151  
152  
153  
154  
155  
156  
157  
158  
159  
160  
161  
162  
163  
164  
165  
166  
167  
168  
169  
170  
171  
172  
173  
174  
175  
176  
177  
178  
179  
180  
181  
182  
183  
184  
185  
186  
187  
188  
189  
190  
191  
192  
193  
194  
195  
196  
197  
198  
199  
200  
201  
202  
203  
204  
205  
206  
207  
208  
209  
210  
211  
212  
213  
214  
215  
216  
217  
218  
219  
220  
221  
222  
223  
224  
225  
226  
227  
228  
229  
230  
231  
232  
233  
234  
235  
236  
237  
238  
239  
240  
241  
242  
243  
244  
245  
246  
247  
248  
249  
250  
251  
252  
253  
254  
255  
256  
257  
258  
259  
260  
261  
262  
263  
264  
265  
266  
267  
268  
269  
270  
271  
272  
273  
274  
275  
276  
277  
278  
279  
280  
281  
282  
283  
284  
285  
286  
287  
288  
289  
290  
291  
292  
293  
294  
295  
296  
297  
298  
299  
300  
301  
302  
303  
304  
305  
306  
307  
308  
309  
310  
311  
312  
313  
314  
315  
316  
317  
318  
319  
320  
321  
322  
323  
324  
325  
326  
327  
328  
329  
330  
331  
332  
333  
334  
335  
336  
337  
338  
339  
340  
341  
342  
343  
344  
345  
346  
347  
348  
349  
350  
351  
352  
353  
354  
355  
356  
357  
358  
359  
360  
361  
362  
363  
364  
365  
366  
367  
368  
369  
370  
371  
372  
373  
374  
375  
376  
377  
378  
379  
380  
381  
382  
383  
384  
385  
386  
387  
388  
389  
390  
391  
392  
393  
394  
395  
396  
397  
398  
399  
400  
401  
402  
403  
404  
405  
406  
407  
408  
409  
410  
411  
412  
413  
414  
415  
416  
417  
418  
419  
420  
421  
422  
423  
424  
425  
426  
427  
428  
429  
430  
431  
432  
433  
434  
435  
436  
437  
438  
439  
440  
441  
442  
443  
444  
445  
446  
447  
448  
449  
450  
451  
452  
453  
454  
455  
456  
457  
458  
459  
460  
461  
462  
463  
464  
465  
466  
467  
468  
469  
470  
471  
472  
473  
474  
475  
476  
477  
478  
479  
480  
481  
482  
483  
484  
485  
486  
487  
488  
489  
490  
491  
492  
493  
494  
495  
496  
497  
498  
499  
500  
501  
502  
503  
504  
505  
506  
507  
508  
509  
510  
511  
512  
513  
514  
515  
516  
517  
518  
519  
520  
521  
522  
523  
524  
525  
526  
527  
528  
529  
530  
531  
532  
533  
534  
535  
536  
537  
538  
539  
540  
541  
542  
543  
544  
545  
546  
547  
548  
549  
550  
551  
552  
553  
554  
555  
556  
557  
558  
559  
560  
561  
562  
563  
564  
565  
566  
567  
568  
569  
570  
571  
572  
573  
574  
575  
576  
577  
578  
579  
580  
581  
582  
583  
584  
585  
586  
587  
588  
589  
590  
591  
592  
593  
594  
595  
596  
597  
598  
599  
600  
601  
602  
603  
604  
605  
606  
607  
608  
609  
610  
611  
612  
613  
614  
615  
616  
617  
618  
619  
620  
621  
622  
623  
624  
625  
626  
627  
628  
629  
630  
631  
632  
633  
634  
635  
636  
637  
638  
639  
640  
641  
642  
643  
644  
645  
646  
647  
648  
649  
650  
651  
652  
653  
654  
655  
656  
657  
658  
659  
660  
661  
662  
663  
664  
665  
666  
667  
668  
669  
670  
671  
672  
673  
674  
675  
676  
677  
678  
679  
680  
681  
682  
683  
684  
685  
686  
687  
688  
689  
690  
691  
692  
693  
694  
695  
696  
697  
698  
699  
700  
701  
702  
703  
704  
705  
706  
707  
708  
709  
710  
711  
712  
713  
714  
715  
716  
717  
718  
719  
720  
721  
722  
723  
724  
725  
726  
727  
728  
729  
730  
731  
732  
733  
734  
735  
736  
737  
738  
739  
740  
741  
742  
743  
744  
745  
746  
747  
748  
749  
750  
751  
752  
753  
754  
755  
756  
757  
758  
759  
760  
761  
762  
763  
764  
765  
766  
767  
768  
769  
770  
771  
772  
773  
774  
775  
776  
777  
778  
779  
780  
781  
782  
783  
784  
785  
786  
787  
788  
789  
790  
791  
792  
793  
794  
795  
796  
797  
798  
799  
800  
801  
802  
803  
804  
805  
806  
807  
808  
809  
810  
811  
812  
813  
814  
815  
816  
817  
818  
819  
820  
821  
822  
823  
824  
825  
826  
827  
828  
829  
830  
831  
832  
833  
834  
835  
836  
837  
838  
839  
840  
84



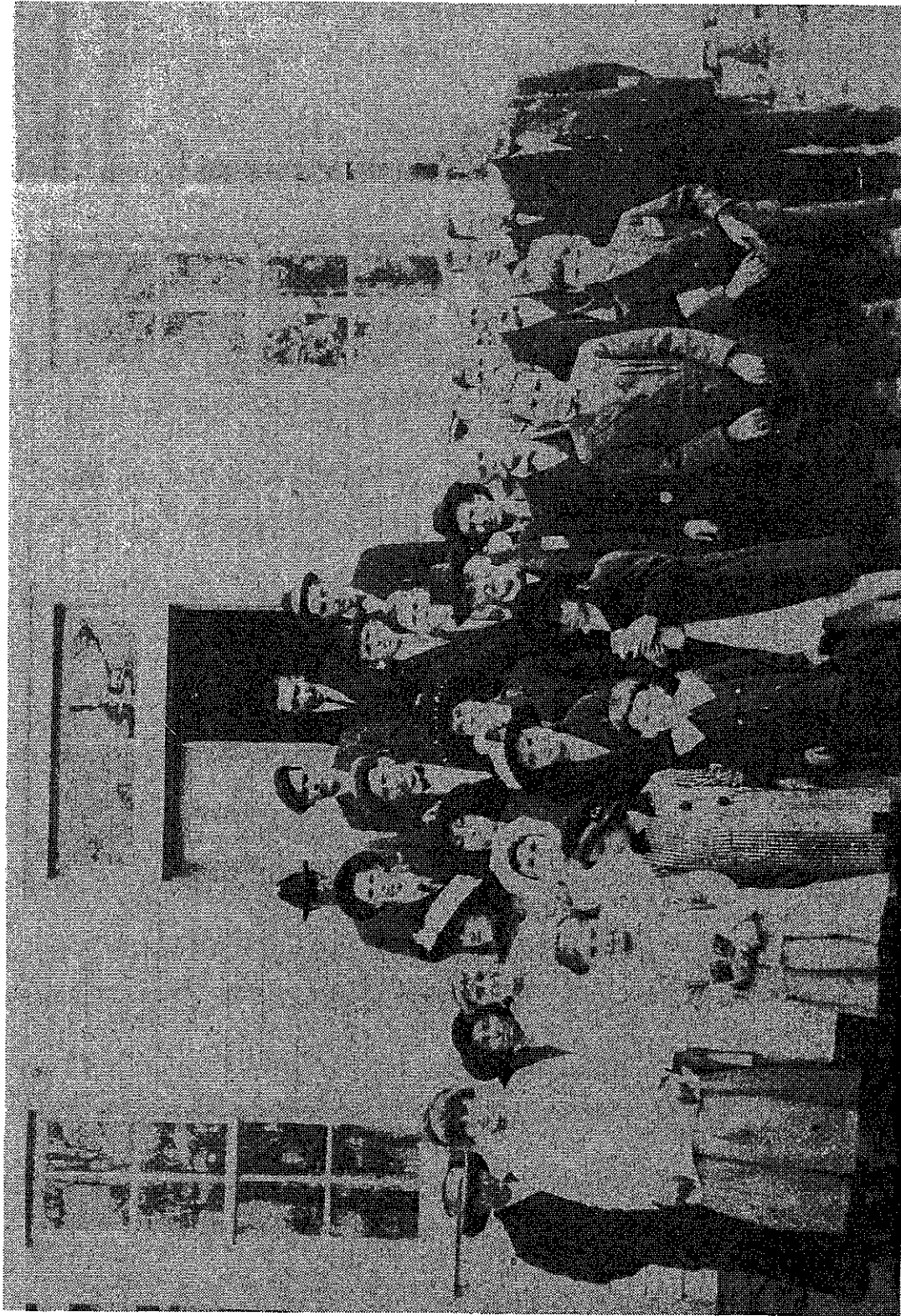
**Original Building as Renovated - July, 1949**



**Congregation and Building After 1904 Addition  
Circa 1915**

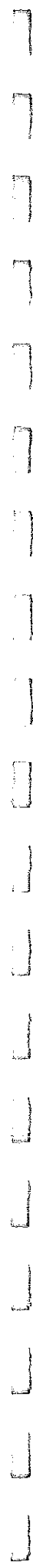


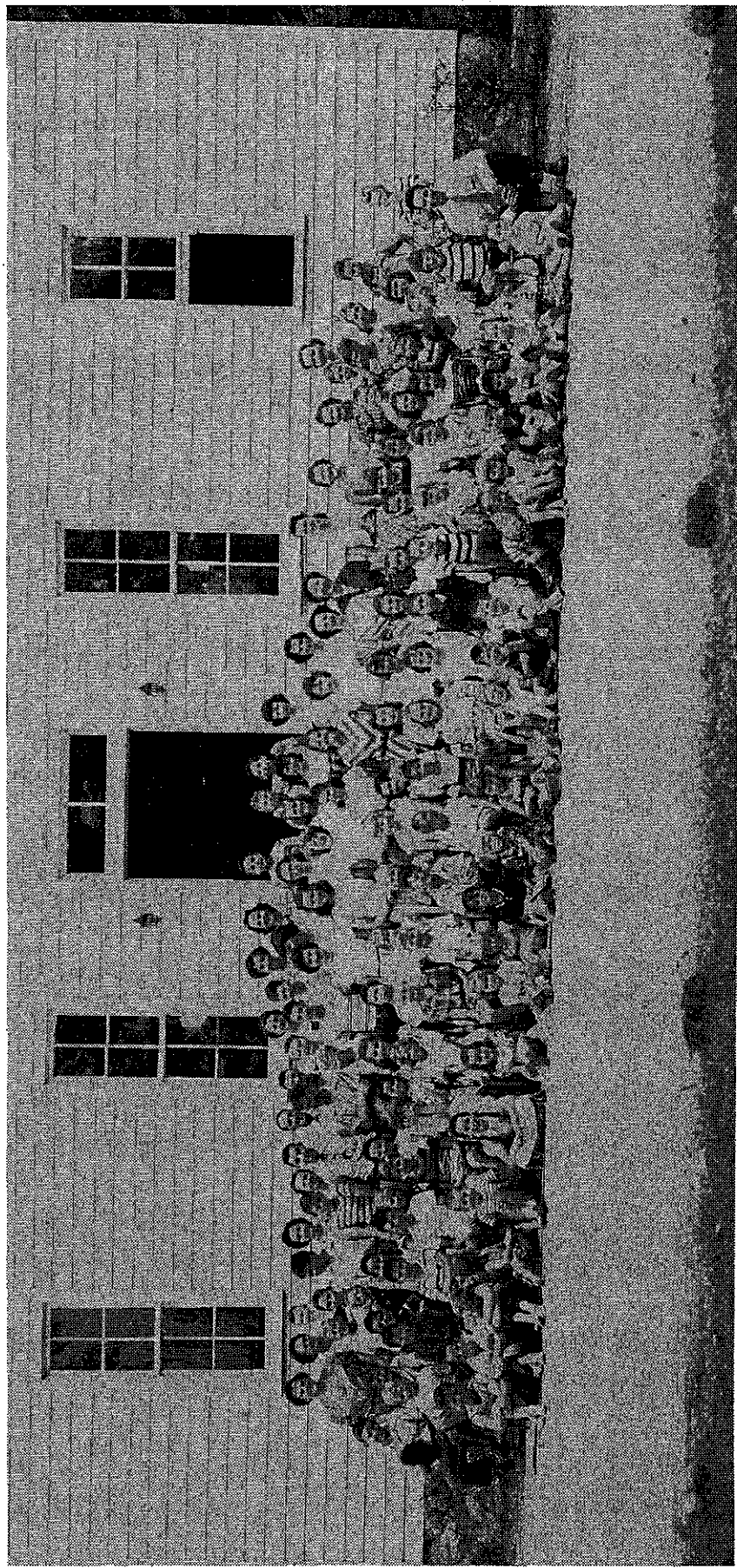




### Congregation, Early 1920's

By Rows, Left to Right: Isley Pendergrass (Stinson), Cara Belle Blackwood (Horton), Thomas Blackwood, Daphney Riggsbee, Seaton Blackwood, Odell Blackwood, Berta Pendergrass, Grace Pendergrass, Velma Blackwood (Pendergraft), Euphazine Riggsbee, Fonzie (Alphonso) Riggsbee, W. C. Clemmons, Ed Blackwood, Weldon Pendergraft, Madison Womble, Mitt Blackwood, Minnie Andrews, Lela Mae Spivey (Baucom), Nonie Pendergrass (Blackwood), Evie Sparrow (Morris), Wynun Blackwood, Willie Burgess, \_\_\_\_\_, Exie Sparrow, Jimmy Sparrow, Doc Sparrow, Raymous Spivey, Bob Blackwood, Marion Riggsbee, Willie Blackwood, Al Pendergrass, Edward Riggsbee





# Bible School 1949

Left to Right, Row #1: Unnamed, Lonnie Burgess, 3 Unnamed, \_\_\_\_\_ Glenn, Unnamed, Flora Jane Hauk, Unnamed, \_\_\_\_\_ Burgess, Unnamed, Jane Mangum, 2 Unnamed, Roger Sparrow, Wayne Hartness, Unnamed, Jerry Sparrow, Unnamed, Ray Sparrow, Tommi Blackwood, 2 Unnamed, Wynne Carter.

Row #2: 3 Unnamed, Tommy Noell, 3 Unnamed, Wayne Earp, Unnamed, Deryl Merritt, James Horton, 4 Unnamed, \_\_\_\_\_ Williams, Unnamed, Patsy Sparrow, Josephine Pendergraft, 2 Unnamed, Sue Pendergraft, Beth Sparrow, \_\_\_\_\_ Mickey Sparrow, Marvin Carson, 2 Unnamed, Elaine Hartness, 8 Unnamed, Bess Blackwood, 2 Unnamed.

Row #3: \_\_\_\_\_ Barbara Cheek, Joan White, Eula Blackwood, \_\_\_\_\_ Burgess, Mazie Tilley, Robert Carson, Charles McDuffie, Bobby McDuffie, Robert Blackwood, Carolyn Fowler, Gladly Hall, Lucy Blackwood, Rosalee Turner, Clarice Merritt, Doris Pendergraft, Nettie Lewis Pendergraft, Louise Earp, Virginia Grantham. Unnamed, Mildred Blackwood, Wyndell Merritt, Cara Belle Horton, Donnie Sparrow, Willie McDuffie, Emily Sparrow, June Sparrow, \_\_\_\_\_ Turner.

Row #5: Lonie Merritt, Glenn Merritt, Annie Mae Sparrow, Mary Leonard Sparrow, Joe Fowler, Ben Tripp, Ruby Merritt, Nina Best, Dan Fowler, Nina Carson, Lou Riggsbee, Louise Blackwood, Mary Hall, Ronnie Sparrow, Mary Ann Mangum, Paul Carson, Ruth Hundley, Bobby Blaylock, Peggy Horton, Eva Doris Carter.





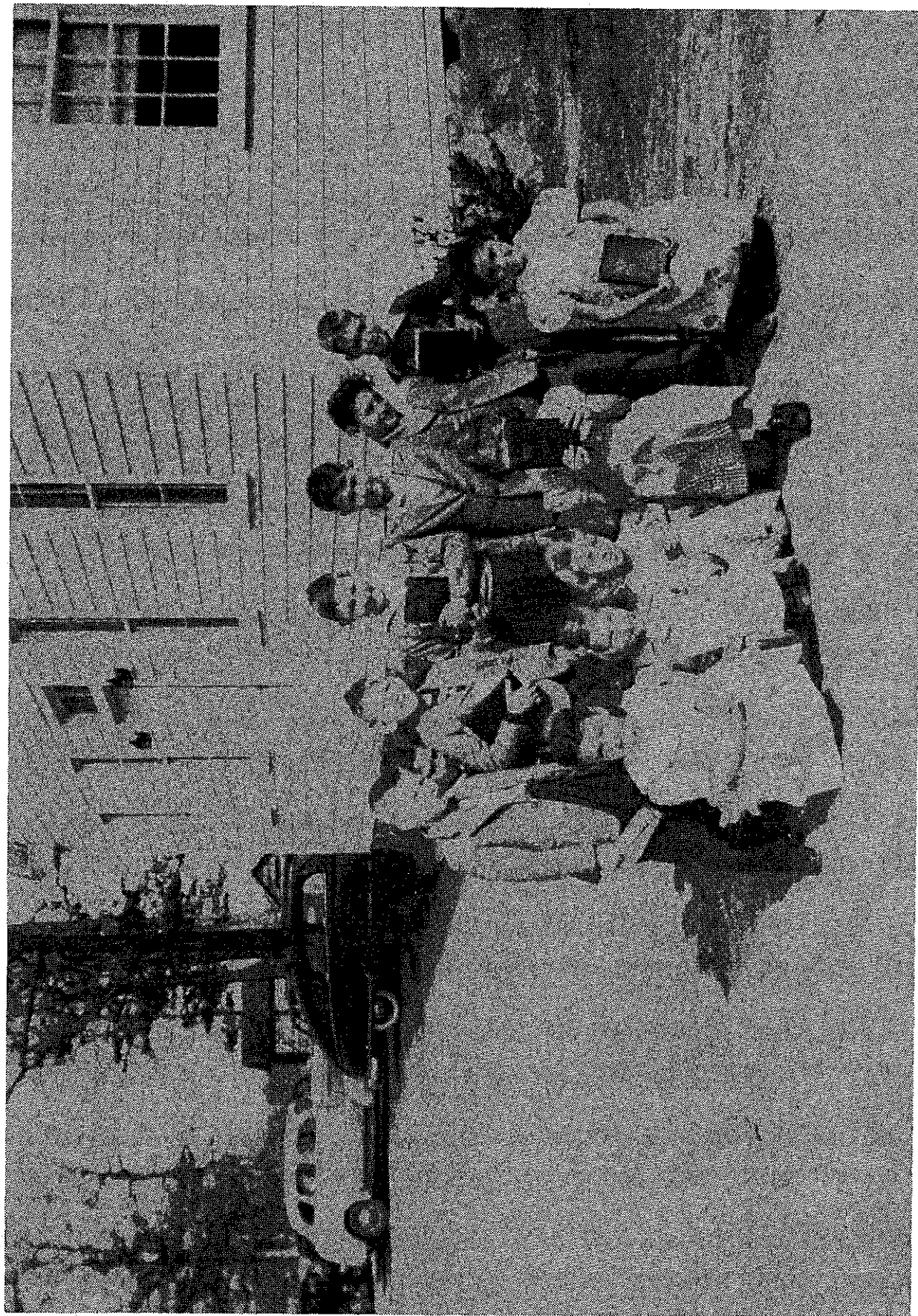


### Homecoming Congregation

July, 1949

Identifiable, Left to Right: James Horton, Tommy Noell, Rosa Johnson, Larry Mangum, Robert Carson, Elizabeth Pittard, Alice Merritt, Nat Pittard, Bertha Bright, Dwight Pittard, Minta Stone, Magnolia Lynch.





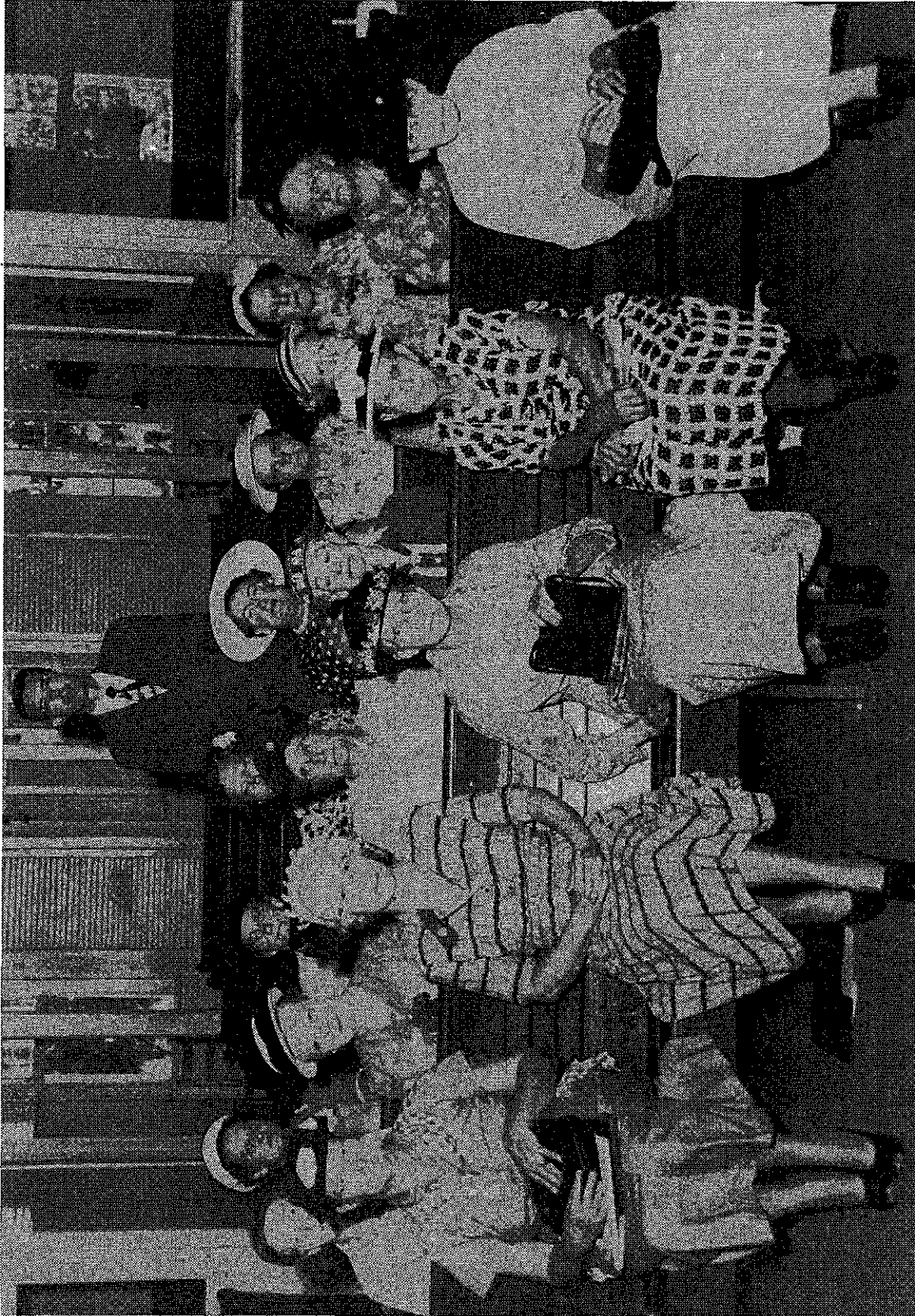
**Sunday School Class**

**Circa 1950**

Left to Right: Josephine Pendergraft, Patsy Sparrow, Elaine Hartness, Bess Blackwood, Alene Pittard, James Horton \_\_\_\_\_, Wyndell Merritt, Mickey Sparrow, Jimmy Hardee, Deryl Merritt, June Sparrow





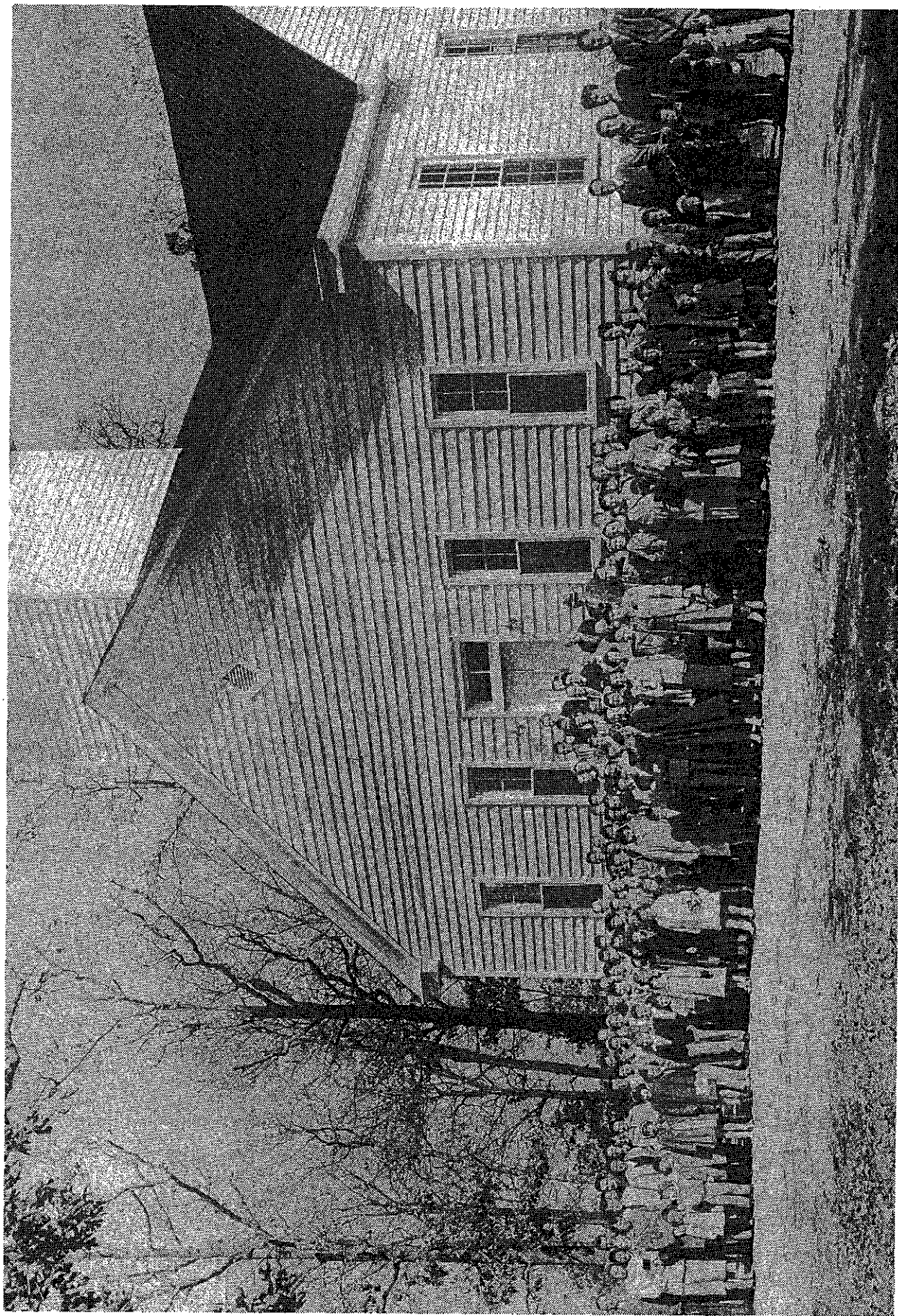


**Willing Workers Sunday School Class**

**Circa 1952**

**By Rows, Left to Right: Mrs. W. R. Stanley, Bessie Bland Hundley, Flora Daniel Fowler, Mary Johnson Sparrow, Theodosia Blackwood Duke, Lizzie Sparrow Rich, Maybelle Hunt, Minta Merritt Stone, Lizzie Merritt, Alice Merritt, Pearl Duke Cheek, Lonie Pendergraft Merritt, Maggie Sparrow, Eleanor Hobby Merritt, Enner Womble Pendergraft, Rosa Pendergraft Johnson**  
**Pastor: Henry A. Morgan**





**Congregation, November, 1955  
Kick-Off Sunday for Building Fund Drive**







### **Building Committee**

**1958**

Left to Right: Clyde Hobby, Daniel McDuffie, Eva Doris Blackwood Carter, Algie Fowler, Phillip Sparrow, Odell Blackwood, S. T. Noell, Martin Sparrow, Ethel Womble Sparrow



### **Building Finance Committee**

**1958**

Left to Right: Clyde Hobby, Ruth Hundley Vickers, Carl Merritt, Preston Buckner, Louise Stone Blackwood, Hattie Suitt Williams, E. T. Dollar, Melvin Cheek, Jr.





### Groundbreaking for New Building

March 1, 1959

Left to Right: Rev. Walter C. Mitchell, Oldest Male Member, J. H. (Boss) Merritt, Youngest Female Member, Ann Martindale, Oldest Female Member, Lizzie Sparrow Rich, Youngest Male Member, Roger Sparrow, Building Finance Chair, E. T. Dollar, Building Chair, Phillip Sparrow







Congregation, Summer, 1980



# **A History of Mt. Carmel Baptist Church**

2016 Mount Carmel Church Road

Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27517

Prepared by

**RUTH HUNDLEY VICKERS**

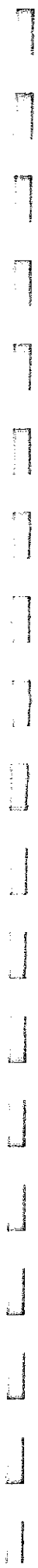
**Bicentennial Year**

**1803 - 2003**

**A History of Period 1953 - 2003**

**BICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE**

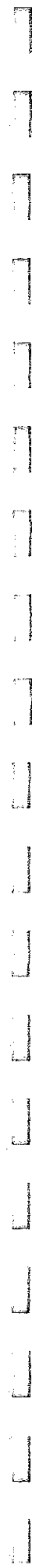
Robert C. Atwater - Louise Stone Blackwood - W. Scott Blackwood - Ellen Sparrow Cheek  
Ruby Hunt Merritt - Ruth Hundley Vickers



Reading the minutes of over five hundred church conferences has taken a while! That statement is in no way a negative. The dedication, long suffering, hard work, Christian attitude, acts of kindness, seemingly small at the time, done in the name of Christ, have given me a new realization of what this church has been to the local community, as well as the world. What would this community of faith have been without its presence?

With so much more material and sources available documenting Mount Carmel's history over the past fifty years, I am more appreciative than ever of the research put forth by Cousin Ethel Womble Sparrow to record our history for the first one hundred fifty years. This appendage is meant to be just that, a "tack-on" of sorts, to bring her record to current status.

We hope you will refresh your knowledge of Mount Carmel's first century and a half, that the recorded last fifty years will prompt memories, inform new readers, and impart a deeper appreciation for the faithfulness, stubborn independence, and love of Christ and fellowman that has caused this "Church of Christ at Mount Carmel" to remain till now.





# **A History of Mount Carmel Baptist Church**

## **Chapel Hill, North Carolina**

### **1953 ~ 2003**

## **Fifty Years of Change**

In 1953 when Mount Carmel Church celebrated its Sesquicentennial, it was common to walk what was then Farrington Road for a mile distance, at the right time of day, and not meet an automobile. Chapel Hill High School graduated seventy-three young men and women that year and the cornerstone for North Carolina Memorial Hospital had been laid just two years earlier. Schools were segregated and Lincoln High School, attended only by Blacks, had the best marching band in the area. Annual insurance on a new Ford automobile cost \$120 and a family of four could get by on \$10 a week for groceries if they had a garden and hogs. Some families still kept a milk cow, plowed their fields with a mule, and gathered eggs daily. Cars parked at a forty-five degree angle on Chapel Hill's Franklin Street and parking meters were non-existent.

America was engaged in the "Korean Conflict", but Korea was a long ways off and daily life in central North Carolina experienced minimum effect from this or most other happenings outside the State. "Noontime Revels", a regular Saturday broadcast from radio station WPTF in Raleigh, announcing itself with a fiddler's rendition of "Ragtime Annie," brought its listeners the latest corn, wheat, tobacco, and cotton prices, as well as other current farm reports.

Mount Carmel children handed and primed tobacco, if not for their daddies, then for the neighbors, to buy school clothes. Chapel Hill's limited single department store forced most shoppers to take the Trailway trip twelve bumpy miles to Durham for school and church clothes. Except for Mallie Stone's store (gas, milkshakes, bread, milk, and basic groceries), or Ben Tripp's small station (gas, milk, bread, hoop cheese, a fair selection of groceries and fresh chicken), a person had to go to Farrington, Chapel Hill, or Carrboro to get other groceries which might be needed.

A doctor employed by the new hospital up on South Columbia Street purchased land in the neighborhood and built a home with terrazzo floors, similar to those that glistened the hospital corridors. Sunday afternoons, courting teens regularly walked to the building site to see how the work was coming and marvel that Mount Carmel's neighborhood included such cosmopolitan design.

The number of television sets in the community could be counted on one hand. Many families had no phone. Most entertainment and social activities were centered at Mount Carmel Church.

Then gradually housewives had less time than before. They were holding down jobs in addition to raising a family and maintaining a home. Their time was less flexible. Husbands were commuting twenty or thirty miles to work instead of to the barn to feed up or to the field to plow.

Then it was the early sixties. John Kennedy was shot in broad daylight in Dallas, TX. In the neighborhood, an old Episcopal minister marched with the college students down Franklin Street for equal rights no matter color or race. The police arrested Father Parker, along with the students, and put them in jail. This man we knew and liked, too old to be a threat to anyone, was willing to be locked up for what he believed was right.

Subdivisions, pocketed off the main road, began to appear. Hillside Estates, commonly referred to as "Wallace Town" for former property owner, Wallace Womble, development of the Billy Hunt

property located between Parker Road and Morgan Creek, as well as many individual new homes infiltrated the community during the decades between 1965 and 1985.

In the early eighties the Carolina Meadows project was begun just across the Orange County line in Chatham County. For the first time in its history, lights were visible at night though the oak woods which bordered the rear of the church. The 1990's watched the exclusive Governor's Club development spread itself over the hills long known to the locals as Edwards Mountain, or simply "the mountain." In the latter part of the decade other appendages of the Governor's Club sprang up, surrounding the initial project with apartments as well as more moderately priced homes. The church neighborhood to the south became more densely populated each year. Development of Jordan Lake in the 1960's, less than ten miles south of Mount Carmel, turned Farrington Road (now called Mt. Carmel Church Road) into a ready corridor to this recreational facility. Traffic brought on by the lake, heavy development in northern Chatham, and growth occurring throughout the entire Triangle area, was increased many times over since the fifties.

In contrast, the neighborhoods to the north of the church, those lying between the Highway 15/501 and the Chatham County line, maintained much of their rural appearance, due primarily to the Orange County "Rural Buffer" zoning stipulations placed upon the area.

But, all that being said, the Mount Carmel "community" also changed in definition. Many more member families now live beyond the old community boundaries, commuting several miles to services, often several times a week. A large contingency from daughter church, University Baptist, moved its membership to the mother church within recent days. Despite the drastic changes that have occurred throughout our area and state, Mount Carmel has maintained its presence. Membership totaled 373 in 2002; in 1953 the count was 351.

Despite dramatic changes in the local community, as well as the whole of central North Carolina, Mount Carmel has apparently "held her own." Worship attendance is high, youth involvement is strong, stewardship is evident.

The following details, gleaned primarily from conference records, will highlight the events that have occurred within Mount Carmel during this half-century of change.

## **General Organization**

As noted in the published 1953 history, Mount Carmel began its extended affiliation in the Flat River Association, remaining from her 1803 date of origin until 1827. From 1827 until 1870 she belonged to the Sandy Creek Association, and to the Mount Zion Association, headquartered in Burlington from 1870 until 1955. In 1955 she joined the newly formed Yates Association with offices in Durham.

February, 1955 conference minutes explain: "The reasons for our desire to change from Mount Zion to Yates are largely geographic. Also there is a closer natural tie with several of our rural neighbor churches of the Yates Association, such as Lystra, Mt. Gilead, Bells, Ephesus, and Mount Moriah."

It is important to remind ourselves that Mount Carmel never, throughout two centuries, separated herself from other associations nor the membership "split" due to anger or disagreement. There is no evidence, either written or oral, to indicate discord among the members when our three daughter churches were formed. And consistent with her past, she elected to join the Yates group for practical and reasonable purposes.

"Rules of Decorum for the Baptist Church of Christ as Constituted at Mount Carmel" as well as a "Defined Order of Business" preface the earliest existing records of Mount Carmel's business meetings. Minor revisions to those rules are recorded throughout since that date in 1888. In recent decades there have been two major overhauls to our "rules of operation": in August, 1962 a committee composed of Ruby Merritt, Bobby Spaugh, Freddie Merritt, S. T. Noell, and Martin Sparrow was elected to "draw up and present a church constitution." Adopted in July of 1963, this document was the basis of business conduct until the church was legally incorporated on May 20, 1992, at which time the constitution/bylaws were revised, complying with the North Carolina laws governing corporations. (The act of incorporation restricted the liability exposure to both the church and individual members.)

A rotating system of deacons was established in May, 1954. With occasional minor exceptions, approved by the membership, the process is still followed.

A proposal in 1971 by Yates Association regarding "open church membership" was not supported by Mount Carmel who instructed its delegates to Annual Meeting to vote against "open church membership, a practice of accepting members without being immersed and calling them Associate Members." This position has since been reversed.

As our Nation faced civil rights issues which aroused world attention in the early 1960's, Mount Carmel deliberated various "official" positions. In August, 1960 business meeting, responding to a question from the ushers regarding the seating of Blacks who might attempt to integrate a worship service, there was emotional discussion and several motions, all of which were defeated. One other motion "that they (the Blacks) be seated anywhere as quietly as possible" ended in a tie vote.

But in May 1972, the following recommendation from the Church Council and Deacon Board was overwhelming accepted: "' Believing that God giveth to all life and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth' (Acts 17: 26b-27a) and realizing that 'God is no respecter of persons but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.' (Acts 10: 34b-35) Any person, without regard to race, color, or national origin, will be welcome to attend the Bible teaching program, the worship services, and upon request, will be received into the full fellowship of Mount Carmel Church through baptism by immersion, or in any way that this church receives members."

**Women's Rights issues**, dominating the National scene during the past century, have also created change within our church. Our earliest records remind us that even our church roll was segregated, the Male Roll and the Female Roll. At business meetings in the late 1800's and early 1900's the rolls were called, but often the female roll call was omitted, as apparently the females in attendance were not financially solvent enough to waste time on roll call. (Male roll call generally involved assessment of the male members for funds to pay the pastor's salary.)

But there is evidence in Mount Carmel's early history that its leaders believed in sexual equality. William Hooper, a member of Mount Carmel, joining the fellowship by baptism in 1832 and later, President of Wake Forest College, when speaking to a female seminary, stressed that women needed a solid academic program, with some attention to physical education. Shame on man, he said, with all his opportunities for education if he could not keep up with an educated woman. "Woman's rivalry, instead of alarming his jealousy, ought only to let him know the necessity of continued progress, lest she overtake or outstrip him." Perhaps Dr. Hooper conceived or strengthened his convictions in this regard while at "Carmel." Whether this be true or not, as early as the first decade of the twentieth century Mount Carmel women were appointed to committees to raise funds for missions. Missionary societies played a significant role throughout the Nation in providing women a structure in which to

develop their leadership abilities. At Mount Carmel, Sunday School classes, Vacation Bible School, mission organizations such as WMU, RA's, GA's, and Sunbeams, have traditionally been led by women.

As women have gained leadership status in the secular workplace, they have become leaders in local churches, including Mount Carmel. Our first female deacon, Margery Blackwood (Barton) was ordained in 1982. Since that date the board's composite has averaged at least one-third female. Women lead our Sunday School, major committees, serve as ushers, and, on occasion, preached our sermons. In particular, a "Women's Day" is held annually, sponsored by the WMU, where women lead in all aspects of the worship service.

As early as 1991 our conference elected a **Denomination Relations Committee**. Their task was to monitor the rapidly expanding fundamentalist doctrines evidenced in the Southern Baptist Convention, with which Mount Carmel had long been affiliated. Throughout the 1990's a gradual shift in support was made by the congregation, becoming more and more involved with the **Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF)**. In June, 2000, the Southern Baptist Convention revised its "Baptist Faith and Message", with changes which limited the office of pastor to males, condemned homosexuality, abortion regardless of cause, and supporting a strict literal translation of the Scriptures.

In September, 2000, Mount Carmel issued the following resolution to the Southern Baptist Convention, the North Carolina Baptist State Convention, Yates Baptist Association, and the *Biblical Recorder* publication:

"Whereas Mt. Carmel Baptist Church's heritage of 198 years contradicts the recent rulings of the Southern Baptist Convention; and  
Whereas Mt. Carmel believes in the "priesthood of the believer," that membership and congregation are responsible to God; and  
Whereas Mt. Carmel believes in the "autonomy of the local Church," that important issues can be brought before the local congregation for decisions; and  
Whereas Mt. Carmel believes females can serve God in the way He leads; and  
Whereas Mt. Carmel has supported and will continue to support women in ministry; and  
Now, therefore, be it resolved that Mt. Carmel Baptist Church recognizes the significant contributions and the freedoms that have been won by our Baptist forebearers and wish to go on record opposing the direction taken by the Southern Baptist Convention."

Due to the missionary program of the Southern Baptist Convention being committed exclusively to male missionaries and the "conservative take-over", contributions that, in the past were funneled through the State Baptist Convention in support of the Southern Baptist Convention, are now being given to CBF, unless specifically designated otherwise by the contributor. CBF's membership, made up of individuals as well as approximately 1700 churches, has an operating budget of \$19.3 million for 2002-03 with 60% committed to global missions. The Fellowship, with offices in Atlanta, Dallas, Houston, Raleigh, and Richmond, is led by a Coordinating Council elected by the membership.

Throughout these fifty years the following general church officers have served, assisting in maintaining a continuity of records, democratic procedures, and smoothness of operations, even as ministerial leadership changed numerous times: **Treasurers** - Ruby Hunt Merritt, Junius Sparrow, Ellen Sparrow Cheek, Scott Blackwood, Cynthia Cheek Taylor, Robin McDuffie, and Wynne Carter Thomas. **Clerks** - Nat Sparrow, Ruth Hundley Vickers, Ellen Sparrow Cheek, Elaine Hartness Cate (Frag), Brenda Moore, and Norma Diggs. Currently the church is served by: Norma Diggs, Clerk, Grace Beckwith Harris, Assistant Clerk, Ellen Sparrow Cheek, Treasurer, and Margery Blackwood

Barton, Chair of Deacons. Mary Anne Duncan has been employed as church secretary since 1987 and Ossie Hatley, as custodian, since 1967.

## **Finances**

Mount Carmel's annual budget totaled \$9,994 in 1953, with \$3,600 (36%) designated as pastor's salary and 39.3% labeled for missions.

In 1965, under the leadership of pastor, Everette Smith, it was voted to adopt a "Forward Program", a comprehensive stewardship emphasis which was designed to involve every church member. Brother Martin Sparrow was elected General Chairman, supported by various steering committees. This program and its long-term effectiveness changed the church's overall stewardship, even to today. Nineteen sixty-seven's budget totaled \$28,050.

In stark contrast, the budget amount for 2002 was set at \$243,000, of which \$78,200 (32%) was line-itemed as pastor salary/benefits and 14.5% contributed to missions.

Obviously, gross dollar comparisons between 1953 and 2002 are relatively worthless. But the percentage comparisons reflect the consistency in pastor salary and the decline in mission allotment. The major difference in expenditures is reflected in additional staff salaries, utilities, building upkeep and insurance.

Additional funds have been made available throughout the years by proceeds from harvest sales, barbecue and Brunswick stew suppers, breakfasts and bake sales. The use of these funds has varied, but there has been a consistent percentage set aside from these profits for missions, capital improvements, and other prevailing needs of the moment. Not to be minimized but impossible to define in monetary increments are the blessings received from the friendship, cooperation, and Christian fellowship that the sales events continue to generate.

## **Building Projects**

In 1953, Mount Carmel had only constructed one church building "from scratch", that being the structure built on land deeded them by Mathew McCauley located near what is now University Lake and moved, in 1873, to its current site.

Though much private discussion had taken place prior to conference on June 8, 1955, no documentation is found that the matter of a new building had been presented in a business meeting. At the conclusion of that conference, Brother Billy B. Sparrow rose and suggested that "some active planning be undertaken concerning the building of a new church." No action was taken that day, but at July's conference a Survey and Planning Committee composed of the Church Council, Deacons, and "an outside person" was appointed.

At the August meeting, the Survey and Planning Committee presented the following recommendations, all of which were accepted without a dissenting vote:

"We recommend that the Church approve the idea of building a Sanctuary (auditorium, whenever sufficient funds are on hand to begin such a building) plans for which will include suitable space for an education addition to be added at a future date.

We recommend that the Church authorize a Building Finance Committee of seven (7) to be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the Church (or by any other means desirable to the Church) whose duty will be to direct the raising of Funds for the building.

We recommend that on Sunday morning, August 21<sup>st</sup>, a special effort be made through the Sunday School to pay off the remaining debt on the Heating Plant. (*Heating plant for existing wooden church.*)

These recommendations made by the Survey and Planning Committee (16 members present) on July 18, 1955."

Subsequently, the following committees were elected:

**Building\***

Phillip Sparrow, Chmn.  
S. T. Noell  
Paul Johnson  
Clyde Hobby  
Daniel McDuffie  
Odell Blackwood  
Braxton Sparrow  
Mrs. S. C. (Bessie) Hundley  
Martin Sparrow

**Building Finance\***

E. T. Dollar, Chmn.  
Bruce Martindale  
Mrs. John (Hattie) Williams  
Melvin Cheek, Jr.  
Carl Merritt  
Paul Johnson  
Preston Buckner  
Elmer Pendergraft  
Mrs. Kenneth (Ruth) Vickers  
Mrs. Ralph (Louise) Blackwood  
Clyde Hobby  
Tom Sparrow

(\*Lists from 1957-58 Nominating Committee report. Committee membership varied slightly from year to year.)

The following recommendations were accepted with no dissenting votes on Sunday morning, January 11, 1959:

"A scaled drawing of the proposed new church was shown and the following recommendations read by Mrs. S. C. Hundley, secretary of the Building Committee:

**BUILDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Below is given the recommendations to the church, from the building committee, January 11.

1. That we plan to begin the actual building about the first of March, 1959.

Brother Martin Sparrow made a motion that this recommendation be accepted, and Bobby Spaugh seconded the motion. Mrs. E. T. Dollar asked how extensive present building plans were, and Brother Phillip Sparrow, Chairman of the Building Committee, replied that plans were to spend the money on hand, and the committee hopes this amount will be sufficient to dry in the building. The motion carried.

2. That the new building be placed just to the left of the present

building where the stakes have been placed, and as shown on the sketch on the bulletin board.

Mrs. E. G. Merritt moved that this recommendation be accepted, and Mrs. Carl Merritt seconded the motion. Brother Odell Blackwood pointed out to the church that this would locate the new building nearly in the center of the lot. This motion carried.

3. The committee estimates that it would cost at least \$ 3,000 to move the old building to the back of the lot, and to get it in condition for use again. Therefore, we recommend that the old building be allowed to remain where it is until the new one is ready for occupancy, *then torn down and sold to the highest bidder.*

Brother E. T. Dollar moved that this recommendation be accepted as it was originally typed and Melvin Cheek, Jr. seconded the motion. Mrs. E. T. Dollar suggested that the last phrase be deleted and Mrs. June Sparrow made a motion to that affect. Mrs. Dollar seconded this motion and the motion carried concerning the alteration. The recommendation, as altered, was passed.

4. We recommend that a "working" foreman be employed to oversee the work on the new building, using such volunteer help as is available, and hiring one man or more to work with him.

A motion of acceptance was made by Mrs. W. C. Mitchell and seconded by Mrs. E. T. Dollar. In the following discussion, Bobby Spaugh pointed out that if the building hinged on volunteer workers, and Saturdays the only free time of many, that building progress would be very slow. Brother Fowler observed the recommendation allowed for the hiring of "one or more" men to work with the foreman. Mrs. L. W. Sparrow added that to her knowledge, volunteer building programs had succeeded at other places. It was brought out that such decisions as, how many men will be needed to hire will be left up to the Building Committee. The motion carried.

It was noted that, with the exception of the motion of deletion in Recommendation # 3, there was no seen opposition to any of the motions.



The meeting was dismissed with song.

Rev. Walter C. Mitchell Moderator  
Ruth Vickers, Clerk"

Groundbreaking ceremonies were held following worship service on Sunday, March 1, 1959 and the 34<sup>th</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> chapters of Exodus were the morning's text. Pastor, Walter Mitchell, J. H. (Boss) Merritt, Lizzie Sparrow Rich, E. T. Dollar, Phillip Sparrow, and Anne Martindale and Roger Sparrow, youngest male and female members, took part in the ritual, with Boss Merritt turning the first spade of soil. "*Bless Be the Tie That Binds*" was sung under the bare oak trees.

It was both a sad and glad time when, on October 21, 1962, the last service was held in the wooden sanctuary, which had housed the congregation for nearly one hundred fifty years. On Sunday, October 28<sup>th</sup> pastor Walter Mitchell led in the first worship service in the new building. Completion of the interior of the education plant was gradual, much of the work performed by members at night and on Saturdays. The upstairs floor, the last section to be finished, was occupied in May, 1966.

The wooden building was sold to Billy B. Sparrow for the sum of \$500, with the provision he tear down/move the materials, and this was done in the winter of 1964. Its benches were offered to a local Black congregation at no cost.

A Building Fund, begun in May, 1954 which showed a total of \$20,000, was on hand when ground was broken. A loan for \$6,000 was authorized in October, 1960 and an additional one in the amount of \$28,000 in May of 1962 "to complete the sanctuary." An additional \$15,000 was borrowed in February, 1966 in order to complete and furnish the educational plant. It was a day of gratitude on January 19, 1975 when a note-burning service was held, opening with the hymn, "*O Thou Whose Hand Hath Brought Us.*" Former pastors C. E. Byrd, Thomas A. Bland, W. R. Wagoner, Henry A. Morgan, W. C. Mitchell, Everette J. Smith, and R. H. Kelly were invited to participate in this glad occasion. Brother A. D. Fowler, oldest active male member, a signer of the original note and Trustee, Enner Womble Pendergraft, oldest female member, S. T. Noell, Chairman of Trustees, and Martin Sparrow, Deacon Chairman, also spoke. Once more, "*Bless Be the Tie That Binds*" dismissed this momentous event.

Other building projects followed.

- December, 1977 - Voted to spend up to \$35,000 to renovate the "Cabin", now referred to as the **Fellowship Hall**. It was re-occupied in the summer of 1978. Foundation stones from the original building site near University Lake were used to form the fireplace hearth in the remodeled structure. The fireplace mantel is formed from a beam from the original worship house.
- Spring, 1991 - Completion of the 100'x30' shelter directly behind the Fellowship Hall.
- Spring, 1994 - Completion of the breezeway connecting the shelter to the main buildings.

In the 1990's restrooms and entries were modified to meet the needs of the handicapped. Upgrades were made to comply with fire codes. A playground space was prepared for the children. Parking facilities were expanded.

In October, 2000 the church called Dr. Dennis Hill, interim, as pastor. Dr. Hill did not choose to occupy the church parsonage and therefore, after repairs, the parsonage was let for rent.

## Land Acquisition

Several additions to real estate have taken place over the past half-century.

**The original church-site property**, amounting to approximately two acres, was donated by Elder George W. Purefoy. The major addition to this acreage was purchased in 1984 and is currently the Charles Harris Ball Field, named in memory and honor of the member most responsible for the acquisition of this property. Charles persisted over an extended period in his attempts to negotiate with owner, Mary Lindsay Polk and/or her representatives. His dedication to the project has added both a financial asset and a physical buffer between the original church property and the extensive building projects that have occurred just across the Chatham County line to the south. Another minimal land exchange was conducted in 1991 between the church and Larry and Susan Wimbley along the northern property line.

Members Allen G. and Pauline White gave the property, located across SR1008 on which the parsonage dwelling was constructed, to the church in 1946. This plot, consisting of three acres, was increased in 1954 by a small addition, again donated by the White's.

**The original Mount Carmel Church Cemetery property**, located just left of and near the entrance of Parker Road, consisting of nearly one acre, was purchased in 1925. It is located directly across a driveway from the long-existing Sparrow Cemetery. In 1959, John S. and Hattie Suitt Williams gave a nearly one-half acre addition. Additional acquisitions, purchased in 1980 and 1987, increased the cemetery site to over three and one-half acres.

## Water and Cemetery

In reviewing the last fifty years' church conference minutes, two subjects appear time and again: *water* and *cemetery*.

It is certainly a fact that **maintaining a sufficient water supply** for the church facilities was an ongoing challenge. Hardly a year passed that someone was not forced to bring up "water" in business meeting. The old well, which still stands on the church tract and was the chain-bucket-windless water method, was probably dug when the church building was moved from its original site near University Lake. It had (and still has, presumably) wonderful, freestone water, somewhat rare in wells in the immediate neighborhood. Lime is prevalent and a good well of water is truly a "thing of beauty." So water, (or the lack of it), was not an issue until our parsonage was built in 1948. After that date, here's how it went:

- A well was drilled for the parsonage at the end of the parsonage driveway.
- Soon its water wasn't sufficient to meet the parsonage needs.
- A pump was installed in the dug well to supplement the parsonage well. It was not sufficient.
- Melvin Cheek, Sr. offered water from his spring on The Mountain.
- The elevation of the parsonage prohibited connecting with Cheek's spring.
- The Carl Sparrow family offered water from the "Dud Sparrow" spring, property currently owned by the Frank Kenan family and located behind Martin and Emily Sparrow's home. This offer was accepted and a line was run from spring to parsonage at the cost of \$1200.00. This was in the fall of 1953.
- In March, 1954, Mt. Carmel's Home Demonstration Club supplied funds to run water to The Cabin kitchen.
- The pump was pulled from the dug well on the church grounds.

- In June, 1963, the church released its easement agreement on the Sparrow property at the family's request, so as to allow the land to be marketed.
- The "Dud" spring changed ownership, but the water kept running to Carmel.
- The availability of city (Chapel Hill) water was on the horizon in December, 1964, and the church voted to buy two taps at \$500/ea if available. The water didn't come down the road.
- In 1967 the dug well was cleaned out, rock walling repaired, a pump re-installed, and an outdoor fountain put in place for hot days and thirsty children (and adults).
- Water was reported "short" again in August, 1978. The newly renovated Cabin (Fellowship Hall) had bathrooms and an active kitchen. Demand was up.
- The church requested permission to tap onto a neighborhood line with source on the Ben Tripp property. There was no official response to the request.
- In late 1978 it was voted to drill a well on the church property; one was drilled 246 feet deep near the existing dug well.
- A good supply from the newly drilled well soon diminished, as a neighbor drilled a new well nearby and evidently tapped into the same reservoir.
- In 1984, as a result of the purchase of property in Chatham County (ball field -Seller, Mary Lindsey Polk) the church was able to tap onto Chatham County Water System.

There have been other "water" problems at Mount Carmel, mainly how to get rid of *unwanted* water! Due to the presence of a layer of red/gray clay which dominates the area and lies approximately eighteen to twenty-four inches below ground surface, water drainage is difficult. On completion of the brick educational plant in 1964, ditches and sump pumps were necessary to remove collected water from under the building, especially around the furnace. The space under the Fellowship Hall has also required a special draining system. This situation has demanded regular maintenance until now. Proper sewage disposal has also been difficult. Permission was granted allowing the church sewage line to tap onto Carolina Meadows Retirement Center's system in 1986, and the parsonage property was added in 1988.

Throughout these fifty years of water difficulties, one family business has been constant in its support and maintenance: *Sparrow and Sons Plumbing, Inc.* Without the financial and manual help they have provided, Mount Carmel would have suffered much expense that they have not had to bear.

The Mount Carmel Church Cemetery has also been a frequent topic at business meetings over the years. Though itemized documentation such as just listed regarding water is far less varied, perhaps it is sufficient to state that there is frequent discussion and occasional action regarding the regulations governing the cemetery.

It has been repeatedly stated that "we are not in the cemetery business" but, in fact we (the church) is, to some degree. In essence, it seems that Christians have difficulty drawing lines of exclusion, especially to those who are experiencing grief. Who to allow burial rights, what fees to charge to whom...these questions still exist and are debated. It has been difficult for the Cemetery Committee and the church to agree on regulations that encompass both businesslike procedure and Christian compassion. In looking back over action taken by the membership in questionable situations, it is important to point out that Christian love seems to always prevail. Those members presently serving on this Committee are: Lucille Oakley Sparrow, Bob Blackwood, Ellen Sparrow Cheek, Ardent (Buck) Blackwood, Kenon Blackwood, David Oakley, Clarence Oakley, and Kenneth Vickers.

## Sunday School

Prior to the completion of our current educational plant, Sunday School classes met in the Cabin and in the approximately ten classrooms in the wooden church building.

On completion of our brick plant in 1964, each department was able to hold separate opening assemblies, then splitting into various classes for study, classes being defined by age and, in some departments, by sex.

The Nursery department, besides caring for a consistent herd of babies and small children, soon began to supply care during preaching service as well, thus freeing parents to focus on worship. Traditionally Nursery department leaders have had lengthy tenure, often teaching two generations of children. Mary Crabtree Sparrow, Tommi Jean Blackwood, Eva Blackwood Carter, Melda Blackwood Oakley and Peggy Martindale Williams are among those who have given decades of care, love, and instruction.

Greater space and improved facilities allowed Primary and Junior departments to expand handwork, crafts, and music, in their weekly schedules. A larger staff of teachers, oftentimes the pupils' parents, were enlisted to fill the leadership demand.

Youth and young adult classes have varied in composite over the past half century, depending on interest, attendance, and needs. Classes for college age, young married couples, and other defining criteria have grown and ebbed, based on the membership makeup at particular times.

Adult classes, too, have fluctuated in structure. But the consistency of dedicated men and women willing to tackle projects involving hard work has remained a strong and binding fiber in our Sunday School.

The **Fellowship Class**, mainly composed of the church's young fathers, was responsible for rejuvenating suppers to raise funds for building projects, as well as for the purchase of our early church busses. January, 1964 conference minutes: "It was voted that the church sponsor a supper to supplement the building fund and to create a spirit of fellowship and cooperation among the members." Brunswick stew suppers, initiated in the late 1940's to raise funds to build the Cabin and held in Bessie Bland Hundley's dirt-floor basement, were a ready supplement to the "Third Sunday Offerings", already designated for the building fund. These events, renewed by the Fellowship Class, have been modified and varied since their conception over fifty years ago, but continue until now. Records also show that in October, 1973, the church "accepted with gratitude, the bus from the Fellowship Class." (A new, *Thomasbuilt* brand church bus, purchased in 1986, at a cost of \$22,334.00 with a seating capacity of nineteen is currently still in use by our XYZ group, youth, dart ball team, as well as others.) This group was the pool for volunteer carpenters responsible for the completion of the interior of our educational plant during the early 1960's. Later combined with the **Matthew Class**, made up of our older men, it was re-named the **Martin Sparrow Class** in 1998 in memory of one of our faithful leaders. It is currently being taught by various class members.

Two women's classes also consistently carried their load. The **Ruth Class** has raised funds for various improvement projects throughout the years as well as spearheading other tasks, including church membership directories. These publications, produced on a five-year cycle, began in 1972 and continue to the present. The directories have aided members in becoming acquainted. They have also created a unique church history which resides in nearly every home in the community. Jackie Riggsbee-Collins, Norma Diggs, and Peggy Yates currently teach the Ruth Class. **Willing Workers**,

a name chosen by the church's older ladies in the 1940's, continues to be filled with faithful women, bearing their years of service to the Lord in quiet and strong example to all. Their attendance, attitude, stewardship, and wisdom exemplify what God can do with dedicated lives. The current teachers for this group are Shirley Davis and Hulda Beckley.

At present, adults and children meet for a time of fellowship and refreshments in the Fellowship Hall each Sunday prior to School. Enrollment for 2002 was 185 persons, an average attendance of 75 per Sunday. The superintendents supplying leadership since 1953 are:

S. T. Noell, Bill Buckner, Ralph Blackwood, Elbert Hardee, Martin Sparrow, Kenneth Vickers, Bobby Spaugh, Brenda Moore, Bob Atwater, Eddie Williams, Bob Royster, Norma Diggs, Reggie Stroupe, Jim Diggs, Randy Bishop. Ann Cowen currently leads our teaching program.

## **BTU and Bible School**

The Baptist Young People's Union (BYPU), organized at Mount Carmel in 1921 and later renamed **Baptist Training Union (BTU)**, was a strong arm in developing local church leadership. Its sessions increased knowledge of Baptist history and doctrine, scriptural insight, and last, but far from least, provided children, young people and adults with a Christian social framework which flourished on Sunday evenings. During the 1960's attendance dwindled and it was voted in May of '69 to cease our BTU organization. Church members gained confidence in public speaking, in-depth discussions of spiritual and social topics, confidence still demonstrated on a regular basis at our meetings and services. Those who led as director since 1953 include: Freddie Merritt, S. T. Noell, Ernest Rackley, Mary Blake Winters, Ralph Blackwood, Rex Littlejohn, and Louise Blackwood.

The mention of **Vacation Bible School** first surfaces in church records in 1939. As it was not mentioned again in business reports for several years, it is difficult to ascertain that a School was held every year thereafter. Building on the leadership of Rev. C. E. Byrd, our first full-time pastor, Reverend Thomas Bland was hired in 1947 on an interim basis and land had recently been acquired to build a parsonage across the road. That summer Bible School was reported a great success and it has remained a viable teaching event until the present. Many teachers have given many hours of study, work, assistance with crafts, refreshments, and devotion to our children in the name of Vacation Bible School. It was many years after 1947 before our annual association letter provided space to record Bible School information; nevertheless, those who have attended or led in this important annual event know of its significance in their lives.

## **XYZ and Youth Activities**

In the last half century "old folks" have become a dominant part of the church's population, as well as the Country as a whole. A Senior Citizens Committee was elected in 1973. From that beginning, those seniors who have been willing and able (and medical science has assisted in growing this segment of our membership) have a long-standing active group referred to as "**The XYZ's.**" Monthly activities include meals as well as day trips to various sites of interest in the Piedmont area. Norma Diggs, current XYZ leader, continues to plan and execute fun and fellowship events for Mount Carmel's seniors. Other current Committee members: Eva Doris Blackwood Carter, Jim Diggs, Doris Underwood Jennings, Ann Hatley Oakley, Bobby Spaugh, Edna Shytle, Peggy and Leon Yates.

As early as the 1940's, Mount Carmel had a **strong youth attendance**, primarily focused in Baptist Training Union activities. As the community grew increasingly urban due, in part, to improved roads, vehicles, and financial status, our youth program has faced greater competition. There were more

places to go, things to do, and the means whereby other choices became readily available. In addition to these factors there has been the most readily available competition: television.

It is of a great credit to our Youth committees and parents that the current youth programs are as active, or perhaps more so, than ever. Our first salaried youth director was Kathy Freeman, who was also serving as choir director. That was in 1972. Since that date, college students have held short tenures, and in several cases the dual role of choir director/youth director, as this was the economically feasible choice for the church.

Ski trips, beach retreats, summer camps, community mission activities, youth musicals - these and many other youth activities have been an essential and responsible breeding ground for new adult generations who remain faithful leaders at Mount Carmel.

The church currently employs Virginia Taylor as Youth Minister. The Youth Committee is headed by Deb Greene. Parents of youth serve as Committee members.

The church in 1973, and again in 1982, furnished meeting facilities and leadership for a **Boy Scout troop**. Both Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts are featured in worship service on designated Sundays each year.

## Music

During the early fifties, Mt. Carmel's music program included both an adult and youth choir. Led by Mildred Morgan, wife of pastor, Henry Morgan, the youth group was active in Sunday evening worship services as well as regional and state competition sponsored by the State Baptist Training Union Department. Children of Junior department age and younger were led in chorus groups as a part of weekly Sunday School activity. Gradually, as paid music directors were added to the church staff, musical activities for children and youth groups expanded to include cantatas as well as participation in Sunday morning worship services.

In 1954 the church was presented a gift: a Baldwin electronic organ, given in memory of Leonard J. Sparrow. As a piano had been the only musical instrument used in worship for many years, this acquisition required someone willing to adjust pianist skills to those of organist. Nat Sparrow, who had played piano for Sunday School since an early age, mastered the new instrument in short order. On most occasions the organ-piano combination has accompanied Mount Carmel's congregational singing since that time.

The 1954 instrument was replaced in 1964 by a larger Baldwin, a memorial to both Leonard J. Sparrow and his recently deceased sister, Maggie Sparrow Dollar. Rapid developments in electronic and computer technology led the church in 1981 to purchase an Allen brand digital computerized instrument. This fund drive, led by the Music Committee and choir director, Bill Meredith, was one of the shortest in Mount Carmel history (less than six months); this organ continued in its commemoration of both Sparrow and Dollar.

In 1964 a new sanctuary piano was contributed by Grace Beckwith Horton in memory of James Ronald Horton. This piano was relocated to the Fellowship Hall in the summer of 2002 due to the acquisition of a Steinway grand piano. Purchased with private donations, the Steinway has been designated by the church's Bicentennial Committee as Mount Carmel's "official" Bicentennial gift. A dedication service, held on July 14, 2002, featured this piano in congregational singing, and piano solos, led by numerous former choir directors and pianists of the church.

Mount Carmel's music leaders long depended solely on talents within its membership, talents which were strong, dedicated, and spiritually motivated. Beginning in the 1930's and on through the 1950's, choir leaders, Theodore Dollar, Billy Sparrow, Joree Crabtree Merritt, Sylvia Sparrow Riley and instrumentalists Ruby Hunt Merritt, Ellen Sparrow Cheek, Nat Sparrow, and Ruth Hundley Vickers continued to staff the church's music program. All were unpaid volunteers. A special word is necessary for the long and dedicated tenure of Ruby Merritt. From the mid-nineteen twenties until her hands could "no longer move fast enough" Ruby faithfully accompanied the choir, the congregation, and anyone else who called upon her talent. Even more importantly, she honored her Master in it all.

In 1987, Pearlie Modlin, along with other "technicians", assisted in installation, embellishment, and regular manning a sound system for the sanctuary which continues to add volume and clarity to the spoken word as well as projecting the music.

In 1965, Mount Carmel hired its first "paid" choir director, Harry Cashwell. Harry was followed by a goodly list of directors, the majority of whom were short-term, as they were, for the most part, UNC music majors needing supplementary income. Those other directors have been: Tom Jenrette, Linda Godwin, Donna Certain, Gordon Spice, Ted Staton, Kathy Freeman, Rose Dwiggin, Phil Bouldin, Bill Meredith, Kathy White, Jane Cutchin, Mitch Fuller, Mildred Morgan, Jo Anne Stokes, David Smith, and current Minister of Music, Patti Lingafelt.

For-pay pianists were also employed, beginning in 1982. Those persons serving since that date include: Christie Degener, Jane Cutchin, Kevin Twine, Mitch Fuller, Bryan Miller, Stephanie Lutz, Debbie Poplin, Grace Synn, Heather Upchurch, and currently, Mark Windham.

In 1992, former minister's wife and choir director, Mildred Morgan, was instrumental in formation of a hand bell choir. The bell choirs are composed of children, youth, and adults and have opened a new and different door for musical expression in our worship.

It can certainly be said that Mount Carmel has been blessed with more than its fair share of musical talent. This includes choir members, congregational members who lift their voices in praise, as well as Sunday School teachers and parents who have faithfully led our children to "sing unto the Lord."

## Missions

As evidenced by the budget percentage which Mount Carmel awarded the line item, "Missions" in 1953 (39% +), Christ's admonition to "Go...therefore, and teach all nations" has motivated generations of members to spread the gospel by both word and deed. Consistently, month in, month out, year in, year out, Mount Carmel's history as recorded by conference minutes is abounding with references to mission projects.

For decades sizable contributions were set aside for support of our State's Baptist orphanages. Over the past half-century support for these institutions has come to be funneled through monies contributed to the State Baptist Convention, income derived from assets overseen by the Baptist Foundation of North Carolina, and from the social and welfare programs which have developed for all children of North Carolina. For similar reasons other projects, long funded, have dropped from the church's list of direct recipients, but others have taken their place.

Oftentimes action becomes such a routine that it is hardly recognizable as a "mission", but those who are on the receiving end of those "acts of Christian kindness" are acutely aware of the message:



- A Tape Ministry, recording Sunday services on a routine basis for those unable to attend, has been a practice of long duration.
- Volunteers conduct a Deaf Ministry, offering signing at Sunday service to a segment of Chapel Hill's deaf community. Front pews are set aside for those hearing-impaired who need them, as well as space within the sanctuary for those who may require mobile equipment to "get about."
- The local Inter-Faith Council for Social Services continues to provide a venue for Mount Carmel members to meet local needs. For several years members prepared meals on a regular basis to assist in feeding the homeless through this Service. Other projects sponsored by the Council continue to enlist our help, including food provisions for disaster relief and food for the Chapel Hill/Carrboro communities, clothing to face the cold, as well as other needs.
- Two special mission offerings are collected annually, one for foreign and one for home missions.
- Murdoch Day, an annual event of long-standing, brings residents from the Murdoch institution located in Butner, NC to the church for an outing. Food, games, and most importantly, bonding, are some of the activities which are rewarding to all involved.

In the fall of 1997 Mount Carmel was called on to furnish a regular meeting place for a **Hispanic group** who, prior to that time, had been meeting in the Carrboro Baptist Church building. With the assistance of Yates Association's CCM Director Faye Bassett, former foreign missionary to Guatemala and Mount Carmel "son", Dr. Harry E. Byrd, and Mount Carmel pastor, Dr. Ron Boswell, the church opened its facilities to this congregation for weekly meetings. Led by Hispanic pastor, Enrique Gil, the group currently averages around forty persons per service, though this number fluctuates greatly due to migratory work site shifts throughout the region. In addition to worship services, prayer meetings are held, both at Mount Carmel and in members' homes, at varying times through the week. Gil and his wife, Alicia, graduated from a seminary extension program in May, 2002 as Pastoral Ministers. In addition to furnishing meeting facilities, Mount Carmel currently contributes \$220 per month toward their pastor's salary, the balance being subsidized by funds from Yates Association and the State Baptist Convention. The mission has set a five-year goal to build its own place of worship.

In 1994 Mt. Carmel responded to a **Baptist State Convention – Ukraine Baptist Union** partnership opportunity to sponsor a Ukrainian home missionary for \$750 per year. A relationship was started with Pavel Khrapak, pastor of a 600-member congregation in Zhitomir, Ukraine.

The Zhitomir congregation extended an invitation to Mt. Carmel to come help them in the construction of their new church building which is now the Central Baptist Church. Seven members of Mt. Carmel accepted that invitation and traveled to Zhitomer during the summer of 1997. Using partnership funds and with additional financial support from Mt. Carmel, the group purchased and hand delivered more than 25,000 brick to help begin the construction. The group participated in all of the worship services and worked daily on the construction site passing brick to the bricklayers. They worked, played and worshiped daily with their fellow Christians in a country that a few years earlier could not openly worship. They witnessed great faith among the congregation and enjoyed Ukrainian church music. The members brought back to Chapel Hill a brick from the work signed by the Ukrainian brothers and sisters in Christ as a symbol of a continuing relationship. The group also presented 100 new hymnals in the Ukrainian language to the church congregation.

Several other members of the congregation have visited Zhitomir and other areas of the Ukraine throughout the past several years and Pastor Pavel has visited Mt. Carmel twice and has served as pastor during a Sunday worship service.

This continuing relationship and support of the sister church in the Ukraine have blessed Mt. Carmel.

The partnership that began with the support of Pastor Pavel now extends to the congregation of Central Baptist Church in Zhitomir.

These named projects are "organized" missions. The list certainly does not include nearly all the organized projects with which Mount Carmel is involved but is only meant to give some dimension to the activity, which is constantly in motion within the church. Moreover, there is no way to categorize or document the personal, individual ways which members fulfil Christ's mission daily. Phone calls, visits to hospitals and rest homes, cards, food, prayers lifted up on the behalf of another... this form of mission activity is so much the norm that we often take it completely for granted, that is, until we are the recipients of the act. Then we are made aware once more that we are in the midst of believers.

Our leading mission organizations are an active Brotherhood and Women's Missionary Union, under whose umbrella are sheltered Children-In-Action (CIA) and Mission Friends, who meet monthly and lead daily as "missionaries on the home field." Those who have led our mission organizations since 1953 include: **Brotherhood:** Ralph Blackwood, J. C. Carter, Freddie Merritt, S. T. Noell, Eddie Williams, Algie Fowler, Vernon Sparrow, Bruce Martindale, Don Lane, Elward Horton, Charles Harris, Jim Diggs, Clyde Jefferson, Gary Spaugh, Bernard Collins, and current leader, Clarence Potter. **WMU Directors:** Louise Stone Blackwood, Hettie Dillehay Sparrow, Ruby Hunt Merritt, Emily Sparrow Sparrow, Mildred Bennett Blackwood, Mary Wilson, Jean Ellis Atwater, Teresa Gragg Modlin, Beth Watson, Patsy Buckner Williams, Carolyn Boswell, Betty Stroupe, Lucy Blackwood Jefferson, Ann Blackwood, and Ann Cowen. Current leaders are WMU: Teresa Modlin, Betty Stroupe, Patsy Williams; CIA: Jean Atwater, Theresa Oniffrey, Steven Lingafelt, Ralph Smialowicz and Ralph Taylor; Mission Friends: Beverly Moore.

## Social/Sports Activities

Mount Carmel's sports history began in the late 1940's when a **baseball team** was formed as a part of a local church league. Home games were played on a field owned by neighbor and church leader, Allen White, currently the site of Eddie and Patsy Williams' home on Mount Carmel Church Road. In the spring of 1953 member Preston Buckner offered the use of his field, located off of what is now Mangum Court. The team sported new uniforms (probably at their own expense) and furnished many afternoons of diversion for the neighborhood. This team dissolved as the young athletes married, acquired children, and took on family responsibilities. (And grew older!) Following the leasing (and later purchase) of the field adjacent to the church property to the south, church teams have competed in local leagues on an on-and-off basis. The summer of 2002 produced Mt. Carmel's first co-rec team, playing **slow-pitch softball**. In 1965 the newly formed **dart ball team** requested permission to "use the church basement every Tuesday night" to play dart ball. It was also reported that the team had purchased a heater to make the basement tolerable. The men had already dug the floor to a lower grade to gain adequate overhead space for the speeding darts. Except for one interval, the team has continued to be a source of fellowship among the Mount Carmel players as well as forming relationships with other team members throughout the league. Mount Carmel won the league championship in 2002.

In the last decade it has become custom to hold a **church golf tournament** on the Saturday before annual Homecoming. The event brings out the real golfers, the would-be golfers, and those with a fondness for a good time.

Records indicate that **Thanksgiving Sunrise Services** were held as early as 1940. Similar services, followed by refreshments in "the cabin" were begun in 1952, a tradition which continues till today. Fifth Wednesday evening **fellowship suppers**, instigated in 1953, have evolved into an every-Wednesday-evening event, bringing the church family to a common table and significantly increasing attendance at mid-week services. **Halloween carnivals**, begun in the early '60's and initially held in the "new" (brick) church basement, continue to be a highlight for children and adults alike, as well as providing a safe backdrop for our children. A church-wide **Christmas party** traditionally follows the children's Christmas program. An adult choir cantata, a "Hanging of the Greens" service including a Chrismon Tree, and caroling embellish the Holiday season. **Easter-egg hunts**, a **Fun Day** during the Labor Day weekend, as well as various other "eating/greeting" events transpire on a routine basis. Never a month passes without incidental activities that continue to bind us to each other and to the Lord.

Expanded and improved facilities, males who have assumed the food preparation role in assistance to working wives - these and other factors have created Homecoming-like events which regularly intersperse our activities. Certainly not trivial incidents contributing to this routine victual consumption are the issuance of two **Mount Carmel cookbooks**, one in 1978 headed by Margery Blackwood (Barton) and an embellished, enlarged issue in 1989, coordinated by Grace Harris, Teresa Modlin, and Patsy Williams.

---

In seeking words to conclude this appendage to the history written fifty years ago by Ethel Womble Sparrow, no words seem more suitable or appropriate for the time than those very ones she chose in 1953:

## **"CONCLUSION:    LOOKING TO THE FUTURE**

We would not close this history simply by looking at the past and present. We must look to the future. The backward glance is a profitable thing if it is used as a means to future growth and service. We at Mount Carmel do not glory simply in the fact that the old church has somehow weathered the storms for *two hundred* years. Rather, we delight to see how the fathers of our church examined their own mistakes and then went on to overcome them. The story of Mount Carmel has been one of progress. If we should somehow feel that with this *bicentennial* year Mount Carmel has reached its peak and we can take a resting spell, then the old-timers would have just reason to be ashamed of us. Time does not stand still. Neither must Mount Carmel. There is much to be done in the Master's Kingdom. We can well take as our challenge the word of the Lord to an earlier generation: "Speak to the children of Israel that they go **FORWARD**," (Exodus 14:15) Mount Carmel has done, is doing, and can continue to do great things in the Master's Name."

Pastors of Mount Carmel Baptist Church  
1954-2002

Henry A. Morgan	1951-1956
(Interim: L. J. McCullough)	
Walter C. Mitchell	1956-1963
(Interim: Thomas A. Bland)	
Everette J. Smith	1964-1967
(Interim: Thomas A. Bland)	
R. H. Kelly	1967-1973
(Interim: Thomas A. Bland)	
Jimmy Pitts	1974-1978
(Interim: David Lee)	
Larry Wilson	1978-1984
(Interim: David Lee)	
Don Christian	1985-1989
(Interim: Richard Spencer)	
Ron Boswell	1990-1999
(Interim: Dennis Hill)	
Dennis Hill	2000-

### Credits

Major credit for information used in recounting our history during the past half century is due to those faithful Mount Carmel Church clerks whose pens provided business conference minutes year after year. Additional thanks are due to Ellen Sparrow Cheek, a former clerk, whose painstaking work converted handwritten minutes to typed text beginning in 1888 and continuing until the 1960's when typed minutes were begun to be prepared by the clerk serving at the time.

Assistance in editing was provided by Ruby Hunt Merritt, Clarice Merritt Page, Ellen Sparrow Cheek, and Randy Bishop.

Thanks are due to Nat Blackwood for help in re-formatting our Sesquicentennial History. He has been generous with his time, talent, and computer skills.

Appreciation is hereby expressed to those members who have been indispensable to the Bicentennial Committee. You know who you are and we know what you have contributed, asking no credit or recognition.

The *major credit* is due Mount Carmel's members who worked, gave, prayed, and remained steadfast in the spirit of Christ through these fifty years.

### Bibliography

1. Minutes of Mount Carmel Baptist Church, 1888 - 2003.
2. Annual Meeting Reports, Yates Baptist Association.
3. Register of Deeds office records, Chatham County, NC and Orange County, NC.
4. Scott, *"The Southern Lady From Pedestal to Politics 1830-1930"*



# **A HISTORY OF MT. CARMEL BAPTIST CHURCH**

**CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA**

**PREPARED BY**

**WILLIS P. (BILL) WHICHARD**

**THE DAWN OF A NEW CENTURY**

**1999-2015**



On August 8, 1999 the Reverend Dr. Ron Boswell, in a letter addressed to "The Good People of Mt. Carmel Baptist Church," informed the congregation that his time as the church's pastor would end on Sunday, September 19. He had accepted a call to serve Calvary Baptist Church in Reidsville, North Carolina.

The church minutes for October 27, 1999 list several "Visiting Ministers" who, in the absence of a fulltime pastor, would lead worship on designated Sundays. Among them was Dr. Dennis Hill, who was scheduled for November 7, 14, and 21.

These minutes also reflect the election of the following members to serve on a Pastor Search Committee: Eddie Williams, Chair; Walter Barton; Connie Bishop; Ellen Cheek; Karen Colton; Dan Cowen; and Greg Spaugh.

At the December 1, 1999 church conference, Connie Bishop reported that the committee had met with John Saunders regarding procedures for selecting a pastor. She informed the membership that the committee would meet in December "to prepare a survey to be sent to members of the church body regarding pastoral needs of Mount Carmel." The committee would "actively search for a new pastor in January."

In a report from the Deacons, Randy Bishop stated that a serious search was underway for a new pastor "and that Dr. Hill will continue to present the sermons for the next two weeks." Later that month Eddie Williams reported that letters had been sent to members "regarding what they want in a pastor."

The regular church conference for January 2000 was cancelled due to twenty inches of snow – the most since 1892, according to weather reports. By early February the church was ready to call an interim pastor. It appears that the church was pleased that Dr. Hill had "continue[d] to present the sermons," for it now voted to approve him as the interim pastor.

The work of the Pastor Search Committee then entered a long silent phase. No further minute entries on the subject appear until July 26, 2000, when it was noted that the committee would meet its first prospect in approximately two weeks. In the two months that followed, the committee completed its work. At a church conference on September 27, 2000, there was an announcement that on October 4<sup>th</sup>, the Deacons and the Pastor Search Committee would respond to questions; that on October 8<sup>th</sup>, immediately following the worship service, there would be a reception in the Fellowship Hall for Dr. and Mrs. Dennis Hill; and that on October 15<sup>th</sup>, the church would be called into conference to vote on calling Dr. Hill as pastor.

At the October 15<sup>th</sup> conference, the recommendation of the Pastor Search Committee and the Deacons passed. It received more than the two-thirds majority required by Article X, Section 2 (A) (3) (b) (4) of the church Bylaws (Constitution).

Neither Dr. Hill nor the Mount Carmel congregation could have anticipated the eventful times they were entering together. They were at the dawn of a new century. The first United States presidential election of the new century would also be the first, and to date the only one, to be resolved by a decision of the United States Supreme Court. The second of the new century's presidents would be the first African American to occupy the Executive Office.

The country would experience the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, which would lead to its long involvement in wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Natural disasters, such as Hurricane Katrina in 2005, at least seemed both more common and more devastating. Technology advanced apace, with the advent of, among other innovations, Facebook, Youtube, and iPhones.

Closer to home, the church's surroundings were changing rapidly and dramatically. The undulating rural countryside of its first two hundred years was swiftly urbanizing. Several large

new developments arose in close proximity to the church, among them the Governors Club, Governors Village, Governors Park, Governors Forest, Governors Lake, the Preserve at Jordan, Legacy at Jordan, and the Carolina Meadows retirement community. These brought new residents to the area, many of them in search of a church home. A church that had been in equipoise between growth and death chose, with strong encouragement from the new pastor, to grow. Members of families that had resided in the area since before the American Revolution welcomed those who had arrived only days before.

The years of the Hill pastorate brought change as well as growth. Externally, upon the recommendation of its Denominational Relations Committee, the church changed its primary denominational affiliation from the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF). The June 2000 revision of the SBC's Baptist Faith and Message statement had limited the office of pastor to males, condemned homosexuality, proscribed abortion regardless of the reason, and dictated a strict, literal interpretation of the Bible. The Mt. Carmel congregation, by contrast, respected every Christian's perception of his or her call to the Christian ministry; preferred an emphasis on the grace and love of God to all people; viewed the Holy Scriptures as living, dynamic, and open to individual interpretation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; and adhered to traditional Baptist beliefs in the priesthood of all believers and the autonomy of the local church. The congregation thus found CBF, with its similar beliefs and emphases, a more compatible denominational relationship. In September 2000 it notified the SBC and the Yates Baptist Association, the local denominational affiliate, of the change. The Biblical Recorder, published by the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, also received notification.<sup>1</sup>

Internally, probably the most significant change related to the organizational structure through which the church conducts its operations and ministries. Early in Barrett Freeman's tenure as Minister to Children, Youth, and Young Adults, he introduced Dr. Hill to the deacon leadership/organizational model followed at the Zebulon Baptist Church in Zebulon, North Carolina. That church had revised its committee structure into a more participatory system that empowered church members to serve in new ways that emphasized the spiritual gifts of the laity and a holistic connection between specific task groups and the greater church vision. Under the leadership of Dr. Hill, Barrett Freeman, and others, first the deacons, and soon thereafter the larger church, commenced exploration of a transition from committee task groups to the Deacon Leadership Model.

Previously, the church had functioned with nine deacons who served three-year terms, staggered so that the terms of three members ended each year. Pursuant to changes in the church Bylaws (Constitution), the deacons recommended a substantial increase in their number. Three deacon groups were established: Administrative Deacons, Mission Deacons, and Care Deacons. Members were nominated, voted upon, and ordained into each of the three groups according to their calling and spiritual gifts, in both their own and the congregation's perception.

The focuses of the three groups were as follows: Administrative deacons, on the administrative tasks of the church, including finances, and buildings and grounds; Mission Deacons, on worship, discipleship, and service projects; Care Deacons, on the ongoing care of members, guests, and friends of the church, including ministry to the bereaved and the sick, visitation, other outreach, and prayer.

A Deacon Leadership Council was established as a coordinating mechanism. It contained representation from the three deacon groups. It served to maintain communication

between the groups, to oversee matters such as personnel issues that affect all three, and to connect the individual group functions with the larger church vision and function.

An outline of the Deacon Leadership Model, which acquired the title “A Better Way,” follows:

### **A View of the Deacon Leadership Model**

#### **I. Administrative Deacons**

*\*Purpose: To make a way for missions and care.*

- a. Finance/Budget/Stewardship
- b. Building and Grounds
- c. Transportation
- d. Communication
- e. Cemetery
- f. Insurance
- g. Marketing

#### **II. Mission Deacons**

*\*Purpose: Leading missions (service, discipleship, and worship)*

- a. Worship
  - i. Host Team
  - ii. Media
  - iii. Music
  - iv. Liturgical/Seasonal (Advent, Lent, Homecoming, etc.)
- b. Discipleship
  - i. Sunday School
  - ii. Small Groups
  - iii. Wednesday Night
- c. Service
  - i. Feed the Hungry
  - ii. Clothe the Naked
  - iii. Heal for the Sick
  - iv. Welcome the Stranger
  - v. Visit the Prisoner

#### **III. Care Deacons**

*\*Purpose: Leading Care (formerly deacon family ministry)*

- a. Family Care
- b. Bereavement/Grief Team
- c. Prayer Team
- d. Outreach Team
- e. New Member Team

#### IV. **Leadership Council**

*\*Purpose: Providing harmony throughout the model*

- a. Representation (chair, chair-elect, at-large from each group)
- b. Coordinating the three groups
- c. Communication between the three groups
- d. Cross-cutting tasks (tasks that involve all groups)

New and enhanced forms of worship were a part of the “Better Way” proposal. Most significantly, the church commenced a “contemporary” worship service. The personnel committee developed a job description for a “Contemporary Worship Leader,” who would “[l]ead contemporary worship using music, prayer, media, scripture as needed to support the sermon”; “[p]articipate in other parts of the church . . . to connect with the congregation”; and “[p]lan direct and implement music for the youth ministry.” To date Adrienne Armes, Cameron Russell (interim), and Michael Tyndall have served in this position. Katie Henry Murad now fulfills this function, with the title “Minister of Children and Worship Arts.”

Contemporary worship occurs at 9:00 a.m. each Sunday in the church Fellowship Hall. Its leaders have made a conscious and concerted effort to incorporate contemporary with more traditional worship styles. There is no choir; instead, a praise team featuring multiple vocalists and instrumentalists – playing guitars, keyboard, bass guitar, and drums – leads worship songs. The media team assists by supplying audiovisual supplements during both the singing and the sermons. At Dr. Hill’s suggestion, Barrett Freeman has served as the primary preaching pastor for this service. The pastors have coordinated their efforts, however, to maintain consistency of scriptures and themes between the two worship services.

The contemporary service, known as “The Altar,” has continued to grow in attendance since its inception. Through it the church has conveyed the good news of the gospel message to a considerably broader segment of the community. Many new members have joined the church

as a result of contemporary worship attendance, and they have been encouraged to participate in other church functions to enhance spiritual growth and Christian service.

Technological improvements and expanded media use have enhanced the church's worship experience and other activities. Historically most of the church's media operations were contained in an enclosed sound booth created and stocked by Perle Modlin, chief television engineer at the WUNC-TV transmitter. Remnants of his system, used in the traditional worship service, remain visible in small, unused speakers scattered about the sanctuary pews.

Will Diggs served as the initial media team leader, succeeded by Mike Smith, who continues to serve. Smith identified needed upgrades to the church's media equipment. With Dr. Hill's support, he secured support and financing for adequate audio equipment in the sanctuary. This included additional speakers, microphones, stands, and wiring. The media team grew significantly, with rotations of volunteers and scheduled work shifts.

With the sanctuary adequately equipped, the media team addressed fellowship hall needs. Mike Smith worked with Eddie Williams and Jim Bowen to design a new facility adequate for wiring and media utilization. In anticipation of concerts, other musical events, and contemporary worship services, the church added microphone cables to the stage, video projectors, and wireless microphone systems. The media team also pulled cables through conduits to the nurseries, fireplace room, kitchen, and the booth at the back of the sanctuary. At times as many as twenty volunteers assisted with the installation of wiring speakers and cables. The result was a quadrupling of equipment and supplies for operating the fellowship hall and the sanctuary. The budget was increased to replace aging equipment as the need arose.

The enhanced technology accompanied a very active church building program during the Hill years. Foremost among the construction projects was a new Fellowship Hall Building.



Growth in church membership had rendered the former fellowship building inadequate for its many activities, particularly the Wednesday evening dinners. In 2006 a Building Committee, led by Jim Bowen and Eddie Williams, commenced the process. Preliminary drawings by an architectural consulting firm were secured. Further discussions by the committee and visits to local churches, combined with input from other church members, led to the addition of classrooms. Visits to other churches also led to designs for the kitchen, adequate hallway width, and storage facilities.

The new fellowship hall, completed in July 2008, opened new possibilities for fellowship, discipleship, and missions. It hosts community outreach programs, support groups, multi-age study groups, weekday small groups, concerts, banquets, family functions, wedding and funeral receptions, recreational events, community meals, Red Cross emergency shelter access, contemporary worship, and much more. There can be little doubt that the facility has admirably served God's purposes in this time and place.

Whether to pave the church parking lot was an issue for the Fellowship Hall Building Committee. Some members feared the church would lose its "country church charm" if this were done. Others, however, advocated paving for the advantages of a clean, smooth, and thus safer surface; long-term reduced maintenance costs; enhanced ease of marking parking spaces; reduction in dirt tracked into the sanctuary; and greater control of surface water. The old practice of Martin Sparrow scraping the drive and parking area with his Farmall Cub tractor was now viewed as inadequate. The latter view prevailed, and the paving was done.

Fortunately, Grace Harris requested that a sizable sum in a Memorial Fund for her late husband, Charles Harris, be applied to this purpose. Other donations had been designated for this purpose. Church member Brent Mellott met with the committee several times during the

planning stages. Mellott Paving and Trucking Company worked with the Committee on specifications and cost estimations. With the Mellott assistance, the final cost approximated the original estimate, an increase in petroleum prices notwithstanding. Today few, if any, would question the wisdom of this decision.

Two other significant construction projects occurred during this period. The first created a church Youth Center. Upstairs classrooms and closets in the sanctuary building were converted into a more open and functional space to serve as a gathering place for youth and families. The youth and their families accomplished most of the demolition and preparatory work. Richard Lawrence, Bill Stone, Ron Craig, Michael Sparrow, David Oakley, and other men of the church provided essential supervision and guidance.

The four small rooms in the center of the upstairs floor plan became a single room labeled "Youth Café." It included a kitchenette, several high-top tables, and three wall-mounted TV monitors. This space facilitated the youth activities of sharing meals, watching videos, listening to music, and other forms of fellowship. The three classrooms nearest the fellowship hall became a single one labeled "praise" room. It included a stage, a large TV screen, and a media booth. The three rooms above the church offices were upgraded to serve as a ministry office, a recreation closet, and a classroom. The two remaining classrooms were not physically modified but were upgraded with technology capable of providing "smart classroom" features.

The second of these projects was designed to improve the physical space that serves the church's music ministry in two ways: by providing additional rehearsal space for the Morgan Handbell Choir, and an enhanced robe and folder storage area for the Sanctuary Choir. The project was completed in the summer of 2014.

The Handbell Choir room could barely contain the choir's tables. Richard Lawrence devised and supervised a plan to remove a hallway wall, move a door, and close in hallway entrance doors. Eddie Williams furnished a steel beam in the basement to reinforce the sub-floor before new sub-flooring, flooring, and tile could be placed. The room then received new sheetrock and paint to match that of the music suite. Cabinets received new countertops and fresh paint. Metal shelving units were then purchased and mounted to provide more storage space for music and equipment.

Sanctuary choir robes had been stored on two mobile clothing racks. Two large robe storage units were now built on the back wall of the choir room – one for men's robes, and one for women's. Shelf space on top of these units offered additional storage areas for music stands and other items. The construction included two large folder storage bins. These were built and installed on either side of the choir room and included slots for folders and music and shelving space for miscellaneous music items.

The church's music program, the beneficiary of these improvements, thrived during this period. Dr. Hill assisted in identifying several able ministers of music: David Smith, Patti Lingafelt, Davis Bingham, and Doug Thompson. All contributed greatly to the provision of a first-class worship experience through music. Three – Patti, Davis, and Doug – were ordained ministers who led both musically and spiritually. Dr. Hill worked closely with the ministers of music to coordinate choir specials with sermon topics, thus providing a more meaningful worship service. There were many and meaningful special music programs: Christmas and Easter cantatas, musical presentations with neighboring choirs, Tenebrae services, special music for weddings and funerals, and "Down Home," a program of old-time hymnology.

While the ministers of music deserve considerable credit, the contributions of the many volunteers from the laity should not be overlooked. The sanctuary choir, the handbell choir, and numerous individual performers committed extensive time and energy to preparation for the various productions. Several members of the sanctuary choir have served in it for over twenty years.

Prior to 2002, the church's Sunday School classes were gender-specific; males and females did not attend the same classes. An influx of new members accustomed to mixed-gender classes led Dr. Hill to encourage the formation of new, mixed-gender adult classes. Mixed-gender classes for all age groups followed in the next few years.

At the beginning of this period the church library, then located on the second floor of the education building, was largely inactive and outdated. The decision was made to relocate it to the first floor, adjacent to the church office, for greater visibility and easier access. Dr. Hill made the initial sketches from which the current space was designed, and the altered configuration has continued to the present.

Adequate stewardship is essential to the survival and success of any church. Mt. Carmel has been blessed over these years with a supportive congregation and able financial leadership. An earlier history notes that in 1953 the total church budget was \$9,449.<sup>2</sup> By 2002 the budget was approximately \$243,000. Over the past twelve years it has almost doubled to approximately \$450,000.

During this time the church also completed several capital campaigns to fund building of the current Fellowship Hall, which was completed in 2008. To date these campaigns have generated over \$1.5 million. As this is written, a debt-free status for this building is in sight.

In the summer of 2008 a sad, tragic incident occurred in the life of the church. The church treasurer, after apologizing for having embezzled extensively from church funds, committed suicide. In the wake of the tragedy Dr. Hill led the Finance Committee through a major revision of church financial policies and procedures, designed to provide safeguards to prevent similar occurrences and to improve both the security and transparency of the use of church assets. Throughout his ministry Dr. Hill was a strong advocate for financial support of the church's missions and responsible stewardship of personal resources.

Long a missions-minded church, the church's mission efforts both grew and expanded over the past fifteen years. They included the following.

Campus Ministries: The church has reached out to local college students, especially through the Campus Student Fellowship (CSF). Church families have "adopted" students, provided speakers and meals for their meetings, and involved students in Mount Carmel mission projects. The church has also bonded with a Christian sorority, Phi Beta Chi, by hosting spiritual retreats, providing it with worship leaders, and partnering with it in community missions. It has continued the long practice of providing care packages for its students at exam periods.

Emergency-Response Shelter: When building the new Fellowship Hall, the church had the foresight to insure that it would qualify for future use as an emergency shelter. Recently the Red Cross approved it for such use.

Hispanic Mission: In 1997 the church commenced a mission to serve the Spanish-speaking element of the local population. A Hispanic group of Christians, which had previously met in the Carrboro Baptist Church building, started meeting at Mt. Carmel. Led by Hispanic pastor Enrique Gil, the group developed from Bible study to mission, and ultimately to an independent church. It took the name Mision Bautista Monte Carmelo (Mount Carmel Baptist

Mission). It offered Spanish-language worship, Bible study, and prayer meetings; it also held joint services with other Hispanic communities. Mt. Carmel and Monte Carmelo occasionally held bilingual services. Mt. Carmel contributed \$220 per month to Monte Carmelo's budget.

Dr. Hill consistently encouraged Monte Carmelo to grow in independence and self-sufficiency. In 2007 Monte Carmelo, with a membership of approximately eighty-five and an average weekly attendance of approximately fifty, secured and renovated an existing church building. Since that time it has functioned as an independent church entity, but with Mt. Carmel's encouragement and prayer support.

Inter-Faith Council: Mount Carmel has been an active participant in Inter-Faith Council (IFC) projects in the Chapel Hill area. These include a wide range of missions, including the Project 5000 stocking of the IFC Food Pantry, assisting with service of meals in the Community Kitchen, and serving at the men's and women's shelters. The church has also participated in IFC's annual CROP walk, which raises funds to feed the hungry, worldwide and at the local level.

Kids2Carolina: This mission, commenced in 2012, provides a meal and a ticket to a University of North Carolina home football or basketball game for children otherwise unlikely to have such an opportunity. Through this program the church offers food and a guest speaker to thousands of underprivileged youth each fall. The purpose is to emphasize to the participants the importance of, and the relationship between, faith, character, and education.

Missions and Maintenance Days: The physical facilities in and through which the church conducts its mission outreach require repairs and maintenance. Accordingly, the church periodically asks its members to devote a Saturday, or a portion thereof, to work projects on the

church's buildings and grounds. Where the need exists, work on these occasions may also be done on members' homes and other local facilities.

Prison Ministry: Jesus clearly admonished his disciples to visit the imprisoned (Matthew 25). In response to this directive, the church has been a strong supporter of inmates in the Orange County prison in Hillsborough. Church members have worked on the prison chapel, provided presents for inmates to give to their families at Christmas, conducted Bible studies with inmates, and both visited with them and had them visit at Mount Carmel. Members have also contributed clothing items for inmates and their families.

Ronald McDonald House: Families of children who are patients at UNC Hospitals stay at the Ronald McDonald House. Some Church members provide meals for these families. Others provide cleaning services to assist with prevention of colds, influenza, and other ailments in a community highly susceptible to these.

Shepherd's Table: A Kevin Klingel proposal, this mission outreach provides a meal on Christmas Eve each year for persons who might otherwise go hungry. The original concept was to deliver meals to such persons. It evolved into a family-style meal at Mt. Carmel, with take-out meals provided to those for whom it would be difficult or impossible to come to the church. The family-style meal at the church offered a sense of community as well as provisions for those served. In its just-completed third year, the program hosted dozens at the church Fellowship Hall and delivered over 600 meals to others in need in the surrounding community.

Stop Hunger Now: This service provides pre-packaged, basic meals of fortified rice and soy prepared to be reconstituted with water. A churchwide project, in which the church first participated in 2011, it involves people of all ages. Over 100 members have helped package 10,000 such meals in a few hours.

The foregoing does not, and could not, adequately render a full accounting of all the service endeavors of the church and its members. It is an active congregation. Both the church as a corporate entity, and its individual members, participate in a host of activities, large and small, in fulfillment of Jesus's mandate to serve "the least of these."

In January 2014 Dr. Hill, then in his sixty-ninth year, announced his retirement from the pastorate effective May 17, 2015. In a document entitled "We Can Embrace Change," he said to the congregation: "The years and seasons of life roll by very quickly. I have known that the day would come when I should discuss my retirement with the congregation. During the last year, I reminded the deacons that I continue to have birthdays, and that at some time in the future we should discuss the process for retirement. That time has come." Thus, for the first time in fifteen years, the church faced the calling of a new pastor.

This time, however, was different. In a document dated May 25, 2011, a search committee had recommended that Barrett Freeman be called to serve as Minister to Children, Youth and Young Adults. On Sunday, June 5, 2011, the church was called into conference for the limited purpose of passing on the committee recommendation. The motion to call Barrett Freeman for this position carried unanimously.

The relationship proved a felicitous one. The youthful minister built programs for, and relationships with, the church's children, youth, and young adults; and these elements of the congregation grew, both in numbers and in intensity of Christian commitment. He developed a rapport with adult members of the congregation as well. The working arrangement between youth minister and senior pastor likewise proved highly cooperative, complementary, and pleasant.



As a consequence, the church leadership and congregation arrived at a realization that perhaps the right person to succeed Dr. Hill was already in their midst. On February 26, 2014, following the required notice and appropriate congregational discussion, the deacons submitted to the church in conference a ballot with the following options:

Congregational Option 1: We the congregation of Mount Carmel Baptist Church recommend that the pastoral search committee recommend Barrett Freeman as our next senior minister.

Congregational Option 2: We the congregation of Mount Carmel Baptist Church recommend that the pastoral search committee not recommend Barrett Freeman as our next senior pastor at this time and consider other qualified candidates for the position.

There were 100 votes for Recommendation 1, 15 votes for Recommendation 2, and 4 abstentions.

On March 26, 2014, the church in conference, upon the recommendation of the Deacon Leadership Council, elected the following members to serve as a pastoral search committee: Tyler Stone, Will Hendrick (chair), Dick Richardson, Ruth Vickers, Julianne O'Daniel, Michael Sparrow, and Jessica Barlow. The committee engaged in a standard and thorough process of examining the candidate who had been recommended by a substantial majority of the church members present and voting at the February 26 conference. Satisfied that Barrett Freeman admirably fulfilled both the qualities and the qualifications the congregation desired in a senior pastor, it recommended that the church call him to the position. At a called conference on Sunday, June 22, 2014, by a vote of 127 for, 9 against, and 1 abstention, the congregation approved the recommendation. The 92.7% affirmative vote again considerably exceeded the two-thirds majority required by Article X, Section (A) (3) (b) (4) of the church Bylaws (Constitution).

Because Dr. Hill had accumulated significant vacation leave time, his last sermon as senior pastor was scheduled for Sunday, January 11, 2015. On the afternoon before, the congregation held a joyous farewell gathering to celebrate his fifteen years of caring and productive service as the church's senior pastor.

### **NOTES**

---

<sup>1</sup> The resolution can be found in Ruth Hundley Vickers, A History of Mt. Carmel Baptist Church: A History of the Period 1953-2003 19.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 20.

### Acknowledgments

While I have authored this account, numerous church members provided essential information by contributing draft statements on various church activities. I am aware of the following: Jim Bowen, Catherine Diggs, Barrett Freeman, Grace Harris, Will Hendrick, Richard Lawrence, Steven Royster, Mike Smith, Doug Thompson, and Eddie Williams. There may be others, of whom I am unaware, who contributed to these drafts. Barrett Freeman coordinated the efforts of the various drafters. I thank all of them for using their many gifts to make this project possible.

I recall UNC history professor George Taylor's definition of history as "only the recorded part of the remembered part of the observed part of what happened." In other words, history is inevitably fragmented and incomplete. This rendering of a portion of our collective immediate past does not pretend to depict it fully. Indeed, no such account could. The participants in its production trust, however, that it will serve as a significant remembrance of at least the essence of our service to God and our neighbors during this important period in the history of the expression of Christ's church that for over two centuries has gathered as a body of believers under the name "Mt. Carmel Baptist Church."

Willis P. Whichard

January 8, 2015

