



McBride

A MOTHER IN METHODISM

By H. E. Spence

ROSEBUD

BEHOLD I BRING YOU GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY.

UNCLE LARRY

A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM

ROSEBUD MISSIONARY SOCIETY

This is to Certify that *Joseph C. Ethredge* is a Member of the
Chamberlain Rosebud Missionary Society of *McBride*
Church Camden Circuit in *Conference*
W. T. Howell Secy

Miss H. Campbell, President Board of Managers

Uncle Larry, General Secretary & Treasurer.

ROSEBUD

SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN TO COME

UNTO ME AND FORBID THEM NOT.

ORGANIZED JANUARY 1879

CERTIFICATE OF CHARTER MEMBERSHIP IN ROSEBUD MISSIONARY SOCIETY

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 COUNTY)
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McBride

A MOTHER IN METHODISM

A BRIEF HISTORY OF MY OLD HOME CHURCH

The Haven from which my ship sailed forth in the morning
 of life, fraught with wonderful dreams; and
 to which it returns at eventide, laden
 with beautiful memories

By

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Professor Emeritus of Religious Education
 Duke University Divinity School



Durham, N. C.

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TO MY MOTHER

Affectionately known as "Miss Lucy" by the hundreds of friends and neighbors who respected and loved her; by the scores of little children whom she taught to read and trained in the art of "speech-making"; by the many hungry and poor who always found welcome at her door; by the scores of heart-hungry souls whom, through example and personal pleading, she led to her Master,

THIS BOOK IS LOVINGLY DEDICATED.

To Dr. Ben Powell, a distinguished
librarian and an interested educator.
Here's hoping this little book will
bring you helpful memories of
"Dow East".

Caroline
H. E. Sherrill

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Preface

McBride Methodist Church is situated in Camden County, North Carolina, about two and a half miles east of South Mills, in a little community known as Pearceville. It is one of the oldest churches in the Albemarle region and may properly be called A Mother in Methodism. Two other churches, Trinity and Sharon, were largely made up of persons from its membership. The church was founded in 1792, and is therefore one hundred sixty-five years old. This brief booklet deals especially with its history from 1792 to the early 1920's. Lack of source materials prevents my bringing its history up-to-date.

H. E. SPENCE

CHAPTER I

A Labor of Love, A Task of Thrills

I AM HAPPY at having the privilege of writing this brief history of my home church and of presenting it as a gift of gratitude to my friends and old-time neighbors. This work is a labor of love. I deeply appreciate the opportunity of doing something for the old church which has meant so much to me. When I was but an infant, Mother carried me to its services and placed me on a little pallet, just within the altar rail, to sleep while the services were in progress. At that altar, I was baptized as a small child by the Reverend John O. Moss, who was pastor there at the time. I remember as if it were yesterday that I wore a little blue suit with brass buttons on it. As we came back to our seats I complained to Father: "He got water on my new suit." At that same altar I found Christ and was received into the fellowship of the church. In that building I offered my first public prayer, made my first speech, led my first prayer service and preached my first sermon. Perhaps the most significant occasion of all was that first sermon, preached on an afternoon of a hot July day in 1902. Although that was fifty-five years ago, I remember vividly how the perspiration literally jumped off my chin as I excitedly spoke. I recall the text: "At evening time it shall be light." I scarcely knew what it meant then, but now that the evening time of life has come to me, I more fully understand.

Adjoining the churchyard and closely connected with the church, stood the old schoolhouse, a one-room, one-teacher school; yet that little school had untold influence in the community. The church people frequently used the house for afternoon preaching when the weather was too cold and the crowd too small for the larger church sanctuary. Occasionally a traveling showman would give an entertainment there, with a part of the proceeds going to the church to save himself taxation and to gain the patronage and support of the community. I carried my first girl to a show in the school house. The doorkeeper said: "Twenty-five cents for you, ten cents for your little sister." She was that small.

Not only did I receive my first public instruction there, but the training which I received there in "saying" speeches and in debating was also invaluable in the after years. On that playground we romped

and played as happy children. Strange to say, although we played ball between the schoolhouse and the church, we never broke a window in either building. A favorite place for playing on rainy days was under the old church. The same well furnished drinking water for both the school and the church. The people of the neighborhood would sometimes put a small pike in the well to eat the mosquito eggs, tadpoles, and wiggletails. We children thought that if one fish was good for the water, twenty-five would be worth far more; so we caught several dozen small fish and put them in the well. With little food to eat, the fish died, and the water became horribly contaminated. What a miracle we did not all die!

I taught my first school in that little schoolhouse. Several of those adorable little children are still living in the old community after these fifty-five years.

I must not forget to acknowledge my indebtedness to three men, especially, for their assistance in preparing this book. Mr. Jesse Pugh of Old Trap, a prominent educator and author of "Journeys Through Camden County," has furnished me not only that pamphlet, but also some very fine citations from source materials on the history of the county. Judge William I. Halstead was kind enough to allow me to use the speech which he made at the church on July 1, 1956. He also sent me a copy of the lease from Jeremiah Sexton to the trustees of McBride Church and a copy of the judgment pertaining to the church ground. Mr. George F. Pearce has also furnished me invaluable aid not only by letters and conferences, in which he gave me much information from his personal knowledge and recollection, but also by allowing me the use of the old record books and other written documents containing information concerning the activities of the church and its outstanding personalities. These men will appear again and again throughout the book.

As I go through the old materials which have accumulated through the years, read the roster of those who were once members there, scan the minutes of Sunday school, missionary societies and church meetings, I am filled with a pleasure-pain which is indescribable. I meet again many whom I recollect as a boy and many others about whom I heard my parents speak, until it seems as if I knew them also. Some of the greatest names in eastern Carolina are to be found in those lists. McBride was not only the Mother of Methodism, but the Cradle of Culture for Upper Camden County as well. Such distinguished doctors as J. H. Pool and Francis Mullen; merchant princes like John Jacobs; tavern keepers like Robert Bullock; lawyers like the Halsteads; planters

like the McCoys, Taylors, Bagleys; and many others were on those lists. The ministry is indebted to this church for at least five preachers. Three of them—Nelson Chamberlain, John Lane Chamberlain, and H. E. Spence—were from the distinguished Chamberlain line of descent. One, Worthington Pearce, was a descendant of the prominent Pearce family. One of them, a Baptist, Louis E. Dailey, brought up in this Sunday school, became a useful and successful Baptist minister.

At least nine-tenths of the outstanding persons in the northern section of Camden County were connected in some way with McBride Methodist Church or Sunday school. Men and women went from this church to Trinity and Sharon when they were founded. Many others went to Ebenezer Baptist Church. Norfolk, Berkeley, Portsmouth, Elizabeth City, and many other cities in both North Carolina and Virginia have well-known, influential citizens and church folk who were at one time connected with McBride Church.

I remember the old services as well as if it were yesterday. The women came into the church early. The men sat outside, on the roots of the big oak tree, which stood in front of the church, or stood around, chewing tobacco, swapping yarns, and talking about the weather. During the services, the men occupied benches on the side to the left of the pulpit, and the women to the right. Sheep and goats *a la* the Parable. It was not customary for mixed groups to sit together, unless, of course, a young man escorted his lady friend as a sort of suitor. The old women and old men frequently sat in the "Amen Corners." They were literally that. Always, the older persons knelt in prayer as they came in. Frequently loud amens came from these corners during both the praying and preaching. Some of the men who sat out in the main section of the church got next to the wall so that they could lean their heads against it and go to sleep, if the sermon proved to be too tedious. Large, dark grease spots were left on the wall where they leaned their heads. Sometimes they would chew tobacco and spit on the floor. When we went out to do the spring church cleaning, the men would take along chisels to scoop the tobacco remnants from the floor. This house-cleaning, like many other efforts of the church, was a community affair. Prominent families would take turns in furnishing wood, cleaning the church, making the fires, and cleaning the lamps.

I was always fascinated by the dress of the worshipers. The old ladies invariably wore shawls and little black straw bonnets fitting their heads closely. The young women at times wore bustles which must have been eight or ten inches thick. I always wondered how they sat on the narrow benches with this much obstruction. Sometimes

the sleeves were so large that they had to sit sort of edgewise to make room for each other. The young sports wore patent leather shoes, blue coats, with white duck or flannel trousers. Some carried gold toothpicks in their mouths.

The types of vehicles were things to wonder at. Judge Halstead mentioned that they ran all the way from the ox cart to the modern, fine automobile. There were the usual type two-wheel carts, an occasional wagon, sulkies, dogcarts, rockaways, surreys "with the fringe on top," top buggies with the H.M.T. and H.M.V.T. seats. These initials stood for "hug me tight" and "hug me very tight." The H.M.T.'s had eighteen-inch seats, the H.M.V.T.'s, fourteen-inch seats. The rigs which I remember best were those owned by Dr. Mullen and Mr. John Jacobs. The doctor invariably came in a large closed carriage, drawn by a span of beautiful bay horses. The Jacobs family came in a barouche, drawn by two milk white horses. Nothing could have been more impressive.

In examining the old records, I was fascinated and amazed at the severity of the requirements for church membership in those days. I also was surprised to find that some of the prominent people whom I had always considered the leading citizens were churched and sometimes expelled. Men were turned out for dancing, drinking, cursing, brawling, and many other things which would be entirely overlooked today. One woman was actually turned out for immorality. One of the church trials describes a brawl between two of the most prominent citizens, socially, politically and religiously. One of them caned the other and cursed him. He was suspended for six months. Church members were supposed to renounce the devil and all his works and flee the wrath to come. It took more careful conduct to belong to the church in those days than it does to be a minister now. The church frowned on dancing, drinking, gambling, cursing, shows, circus-going, candy parties, and almost every type of worldliness. Persons who wanted to join the church were not only required to give evidence of their conversion, but were also put on probation for six months. An examination of their roll of probationers reveals that a large proportion, in some way, failed to make the grade. At least their names did not appear on the regular roll.

But enough of my personal recollections and reactions. We shall now turn to the history and development of the church.

McBride in the Making

"DON'T FORGET to put in your book that July 1, 1956, was a red letter day in the history of McBride Church, for on that day a high dignitary visited it. This is the first time that a bishop has been to McBride in its long history." These words were spoken to me in a semi-jocular vein by the Reverend Key W. Taylor, the present pastor of the church, when I agreed to undertake the writing of a brief history of my old home church. I gladly grant his request, since the "high dignitary" in question was none other than my long-time friend, the brilliant Building Bishop, Paul Neff Garber. Bishop Garber and I have been close friends since 1924, when he came to Duke University as a teacher of history. For many years we were opponents on the tennis courts. We were colleagues in teaching; then he became my dean and now is my bishop. He has been responsible for many of the good things which have come my way. He was directly responsible for securing an honorary degree for me, and I learned much from him about the matter of research in historical fields. For, as many know, he was one of the most popular and prolific writers in the field of Methodist History in America.

However, the very technique which he taught me has enabled me to uncover some evidence that points to the fact that another bishop antedated him in a visit to McBride by a hundred and fifty years. This bishop was Francis Asbury, the Patron Saint of American Methodism, if Methodism could be said to have a patron saint. It is a well-known fact that Asbury traversed almost the entire length of the Atlantic Seaboard from Maine to Georgia. He also traversed the State of North Carolina from the mountains to the sea. His *Journal* has many references to his experiences in this state. Mention is made of several places near Camden County, and, on several occasions, the county itself. He tells of his preaching in the court-house in Elizabeth City where "many heard but few felt." He records a preaching experience at Camden Court-house where he preached with freedom but "the people appeared insensible." So we know that he was in this immediate vicinity. However, there are some statements in his *Journal* which seem to indicate that he preached at McBride. In his

Journal, Vol. II, under the date Feb. 3, 1787, he tells of preaching in Virginia and then visited a Brother Porthress. This brother tried to frighten the Bishop with the idea of the Great Dismal Swamp and suggested that the Bishop ride around the swamp. Asbury states that he could not consent to ride sixty miles out of his way around the swamp, so he rode through it. He states that he preached in the new chapel and "hoped not in vain." Said he: "I am now surrounded with waters and hideous swamps near the head of the Pasquotank River."

It seems evident that Bishop Asbury came down the old road, now the George Washington Highway, hardly more than a dim trail at that time. The trail ran parallel to the canal which is said to have been dug by Washington's men as a means of transporting munitions and men from Virginia to Carolina. It seems likely that the "new chapel" to which he refers was McBride or its immediate predecessor. The deed to the land on which the church stood mentions "finishing" the chapel. It seems likely that this was Forke Chapel, or McBride in its unfinished state. Certainly there was no other chapel in that immediate vicinity at that particular time.

In Volume III, under the date line of Saturday, March 21, 1801, Bishop Asbury tells of leaving Gatesville and coming twenty-two miles to Newland Creek. He describes the country as "most awful." After giving full details of the trip, his preaching, the distance, direction and other details which indicate that he went on to Camden County, he writes: "We came to McBirde's. I had a dumb chill and sick night."

Again it is very apparent that Bishop Asbury is referring to McBride. Neither the Colonial Records, compiled by Saunders, nor the State Records, compiled by Judge Walter Clark, contain, in the list of Camden families, the name of McBirde. McBride *is* in the list. The error was doubtless a mere transposition of letters by some careless copyist. That it was a church and not a private residence which the Bishop visited is suggested by the fact that he almost invariably used a given name or mister or some other title when speaking of individuals or families. So the conclusion seems not too far-fetched that this was Bishop Asbury's second visit to the church.

It is even possible, although not likely, that a bishop of the Church of England may have been in this locality long before the Revolutionary War. However, since there was only one regular Anglican bishop in America in that period, he probably did not come this far south. But there was an Episcopal chapel on this spot as early as 1733, or even much earlier. Moseley's Map, made in 1733, shows the location of a church at the spot where the church now stands. The

church was called the Forke Chappel and continued as such until around 1800 when that name was dropped and the present name adopted.

In a splendid address on that memorable day, July 1, 1956, Judge William I. Halstead traces the development of religious freedom in the state and points out that the Crown, that is the government of England, did not tolerate worship in any churches other than the Church of England. He traces the gradual development of something of religious freedom, and suggests that the Methodists met in homes before the Revolutionary War. This would account for the fact that there were preachers listed for McBride before the church was established in 1792. It is likely that by 1784, the date of the appointment of the first ministers to the church, hostility had died down to the extent that the Methodists were permitted to worship in the church building which afterward became theirs. Earlier in the century, there was definite opposition by the Episcopalians. The leading minister of that faith in this state, the Reverend James Reed, wrote in 1761: "The Methodists have given me no end of trouble. They insist upon the inexpediency of human learning and the expediency of dreams and visions." He stated that he was making some headway against them. Evidently there was a kindred spirit developed between the two denominations when the strain came about between the Crown and the Colonies. In 1785 Bishop Coke traveled through the eastern section of North Carolina and on at least two occasions preached in Episcopal churches. In speaking of the chapel at Coinjock he says: "I preached here in a pretty chapel, which, I believe, belongs to the Church of England; but we do regular duty in it." He made practically the same notation with regard to St. John's Chapel. So the two denominations were beginning to cooperate. It is not surprising that they became joint lessees in procuring the site where the church now stands which was once jointly owned. The lease for this property is found in Deed Book F, on page 79. Copies of it were furnished me by both Judge Halstead and Mr. Jesse Pugh. The deed reads as follows:

"This indenture of lease made 14 day of November, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-two, between Jeremiah Sexton of Camden County, State of North Carolina, on the one part, and Elisha McBride and Joshual Gambling, members of the Methodist Society, Joshua McPherson and Morgan Cartwright, members of the American Episcopal Church on the other part, witnesseth that the aforesaid, Jeremiah Sexton for and in consideration of the tents and covenants herein mentioned to be made and performed doth grant, bargain, and

let unto the said Elisha McBride and Joshua Gambling in trust for the aforesaid Methodist Society and Joshua McPherson and Morgan Cartwright in trust for the American Episcopal Church, one lot or parcel of land bounded as follows:

Beginning at a locust tree on the main road then running No. 69 W along a row of locust trees to a corner locust tree $4\frac{1}{2}$ chains from the beginning, then No. 62 E two chains and twenty links to a beach, then So. 71 E two chains twenty links to the Main Road then South 16 W along the main road to the first station situate on the South side of Joye's Creek near the Fork Bridge containing half an acre more or less according to the bounds with the necessaries thereunto belonging for the purpose of finishing and keeping in repair a house of worship for the joint use of the Methodist Society and the Episcopal Church of America; and to such others as they may appoint in trust for the purposes aforesaid and during a term of 99 years from the date hereof to be fully completed and ended freely, fully and clearly from the aforesaid Jeremiah Sexton, his heirs, Executors and Administrators for and during the said term—yielding and paying yearly and every year one grain of Indian corn unto the said Jeremiah Sexton and his heirs during the said term.

"This lease was signed, sealed and delivered in the presence of Peter Mercer in the December term of court, 1792."

The terms of the lease were apparently never fulfilled. When the centennial was celebrated in 1892, the lease had lapsed and the church was on ground which the Methodists did not legally own. The fact was not brought to mind until recently when an attempt was made to secure aid from a foundation which requires a fee simple deed to property before assistance will be granted. The title was finally secured through the efforts of Judge Halstead, assisted by Mr. John T. Chaffin, grandson of a former pastor of the church. It should be stated that neither of these gentlemen would accept any fee for his work.

The deed was finally secured at the September term of Superior Court, 1956, by a suit brought by J. J. McCoy and others representing the Trustees of "McBride's" Church. The case was heard by Judge Walter J. Bone, and the jury rendered the verdict that the plaintiffs had been in undisputed possession of the property for more than thirty years prior to the bringing of the action; and that they are entitled to the possession of the property. Thus the trustees and their successors were finally awarded the possession of the property with a fee simple deed. The description of the lot is in modern terms. The ruling handed down by Judge Bone includes the following provisions: Said premises shall be used, kept and maintained as a place of worship

of the Methodist ministry and members of the Methodist church. Subject to the Discipline, usage and ministerial appointments of said church as from time to time authorized and declared by the General Conference and by the Annual Conference within whose bounds the said premises are situated.

Mr. Jesse F. Pugh, in his research for materials dealing with the history of Camden County, found numerous references to "Forke Chapel" and "McBride's Church." These references establish the fact that the church has been organized many years and was known by its present name early in its history. No one knows for whom it was named, but it is reasonable to suppose that it was named for Elisha McBride, one of the lessees of the lease of 1792. He is listed in the Colonial Records as the head of the McBride family in Camden County. He seems to have been a man of wealth and prominence. He was at one time a member of the North Carolina Legislature. There is a suggestion that it may have been named for Peter McBride, a prominent member of the McBride family who died in 1820.

A marble plaque high on the front of the present church reads: "McBrides M. E. Church. Erected 1792 A.D. Rebuilt 1837. Remodelled and Rebuilt 1882." The 1837 church was six feet wider than the present church, but of the same length. It had no extension for a pulpit and presumably no high roof. This would make its dimensions 41 feet in width, 47 feet in length, and of unknown height. These facts are suggested in the minutes of the meeting of the committee appointed to plan for the remodelling and rebuilding of the church in 1882.

This committee was called Feb. 2, 1882 by the Pastor, the Reverend A. M. Hall. Members of the Committee were the Reverend Nelson Chamberlain and Messrs. George H. Riggs, C. W. Pearce, J. P. Pearce, and M. N. Sawyer. The minute further reads: "Mr. W. H. Tatem, feeling much interest in the enterprise for which the meeting was called, also attended." Mr. Tatem also agreed to solicit funds from those outside the membership of the church. The fact that he was sheriff of the county gave him a wider acquaintance with those who might not belong to any church and yet would like to contribute to the building of one.

The Reverend Nelson Chamberlain was appointed chairman of the Building Committee. Messrs. Preston Pearce and George H. Riggs were appointed to solicit funds from the membership. It was agreed that the church should be built on the same spot as the old one, should be six feet narrower, of the same length, and that a recess

should be added for "pulpit purposes." A cut-off of eight feet was made in the front of the church for "vestibule purposes" and also for the support of a suspension roof. A gallery was built above this vestibule, partly to increase the seating capacity of the church and partly to accommodate the colored Methodists who had no church of their own until the New McBride was built, two miles distant, on the road to South Mills.

The pulpit was elegantly furnished with chairs and sofa built of mahogany and splendidly upholstered. The pews in the church and gallery had solid walnut ends. The church had lovely windows, bordered with colored glass, with panes partly transparent and partly translucent. There were three windows in the pulpit, and ten in the main church and vestibule. A large oval window in the end of the church above the gallery was made up of several large round panes of various colors.

In one end of the vestibule stood the large book case which held the books of the library. At the other, a stairway ascended into the gallery. Beneath the stairway was a large closet which was the catch-all for brooms, mops, dust-rags, kerosene cans, and other utensils useful in keeping the church clean and the lamps furnished. For many years this was also the repository of the communion wine. Blackberry wine was used for communion in those days. The closet was discontinued as a repository for the wine after some mischievous boys broke into the closet and drank the wine one night when a Christmas tree program was being held.

Church services were held in the schoolhouse while the new church was being built. It is worthy of note that this new church was also furnished with an organ, believed to be the first organ used in a church in the upper end of Camden County. The organist was Mrs. W. H. Tatem, nee Mary Etta Chamberlain, a near relative of Nelson Chamberlain. She was also a teacher in the nearby school, a teacher in the Sunday school, and a music teacher. She was largely responsible for the musical training of many of the young women of the community, some of whom afterward became organists in the church.

The Centennial of the founding of the church was celebrated in 1892. A large tabernacle had been built near South Mills, partly for this occasion, partly as a place where a circuit-wide revival might be held. There the celebration was held during the pastorate of the Reverend Charles R. Taylor. Outstanding clergymen participating were Dr. P. A. Peterson of Richmond and the Reverend George

Vanderslice of Suffolk. The latter remained to preach in the revival services which followed.

McBride has been called a Mother in Methodism. Trinity Church was organized largely from its membership in 1888, during the pastorate of the Reverend J. W. S. Robins. Sharon, formerly a chapel of the Christian denomination, was taken over by the Methodists in 1894, and drew its membership also, to some extent, from McBride.

Within the past few years notable additions have been made to the church, and repairs and refurnishings have been done in the main auditorium. Under the leadership of the Reverend C. A. Johnson, a Sunday school annex was begun and nearly finished. This Sunday school building is fifty-nine feet in length and thirty-one feet wide. It contains five rooms and a hallway, as well as provisions for two rest rooms. The rooms are done in green, with natural finish woodwork.

The church auditorium is done in white and light green. All the furniture is walnut finish. New benches have been installed; a new piano has been purchased; and new choir chairs match the pews. The pulpit furniture has been retouched and newly upholstered. Necessary repairs have been made, and lighting and heating have been installed in something of the modern manner. Instead of the old lamps and stoves, the church is lighted by electricity and heated with gas. Both beauty and utility have been taken care of in the work recently done at McBride. This work has been done under leadership of the present pastor, the Reverend Key W. Taylor.

*P.E.'s, P.C.'s and P.P.'s Presiding Elders,
Preachers-in-Charge and Prominent Personalities*

THESE SEEMS to be some discrepancy between the lists available for the ministers who have served the charges with which McBride Church has been connected at various times. Once it was on the Pasquotank Charge. Once or twice it was joined to Edenton. At times it has been on the Camden Charge, and then on the South Mills Circuit. The list will contain those ministers who have served the immediate territory with which the church has been connected.

This list of ministers dates from 1784. Questions have been raised as to where these men could preach if the church was not founded until 1792. The answer is simple. As stated in chapter 2, the congregation worshiped in Forke Chapel, which evidently has been standing on the spot now occupied by the church since 1733, perhaps even longer. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, the Church of England had possession of this building in its earlier history, but graciously allowed the Methodists to worship there, and eventually owned the church jointly with the Methodists.

The list of preachers which I am publishing is the one furnished by Dr. P. A. Peterson of the Virginia Conference at the time of the Centennial Celebration in 1892. So far as I know, it is correct. A list of presiding elders (known for the past eighteen years as District Superintendents) will also be published here.

PREACHERS-IN-CHARGE AND YEARS OF SERVICE

1784 Richard Ivey	1789 Rice Haggard
Wm. Dameron	David Southall
1785 Wm. Partridge	1790 Salathiel Weeks
Wm. Steins	Hezekiah Arnold
1786 Jno. Robertson	1791 Jesse Richardson
Jno. Steward	Thomas Easter
1787 Sihon Smith	1792 Archer Davis
1788 Henry Birchett	Wm. Hunter
J. Diferal	

1793 Benj. Blanton	1821 Allen Ormond
Anthony Sale	1822 Moses Brock
1794 Joel Tucker	1823 Jacob Hill
Wm. Wilkinson	1824-25 Benton Field
1795 Edward Hardy	1826 Samuel Harrell
1796 William Wells	1827 Thomas Garrard
1797 James Rogers	1828 Simeon Norman
1798 Jno. Bonner	1829 Thos. V. Webb
1799 Wm. Brittan	1830 Jonathan Williams
Jas. G. Martin	1831 Simeon Norman
1800 Jos. Rimmell	Abner Waddell
1801 Jeremiah King	1832 George A. Bain
1802 James Smith	H. Kelly
1803 Nathaniel Walker	1833 J. Goodman
1804 C. S. Mooring	J. Williams
W. Atwood	1834 Alfred Norman
1805 C. S. Mooring	1835 Alfred Norman
Daniel Ross	J. Atkinson
1806 Wm. Steward	1836 W. E. Pell
Richard Lattimore	1837-38 George M. Kassie
1807 James Jennings	1839 Geo. W. Langhorne
1808 Benj. Devaney	J. L. Rhen
Jno. Early	1840 Robt. Scott
1809 Robt. Thompson	L. Harrison
Wm. Murphy	1841 Jas. M. Lewis
1810 Humphrey Wood	H. Billups
Jacob Hill	1842 Humphrey Billups
1811 Joshua Lawrence	1843 A. H. Steward
Henry Holmes	1844 Wm. M. Kane
1812 Henry Holmes	1845 Wm. Reed
1813 Wm. Elliott	1846 Jno. S. Briggs
1814 Thos. Cooper	1847 Thos. W. Haynes
Wm. Hyatt	1848-50 Humphrey Billups
1815 Sam. B. White	1851 Stephen W. Jones
Benj. Stevens	1852 Geo. W. Grimyear
1816 C. S. Mooring	1853 Thomas Diggs
Sam Wills	1854 Benj. Spillar
1817 Jno. F. Brame	1855 H. P. Nelms
1818 David Browder	1856 Thos. L. Williams
1819 W. H. Starr	1857 Francis Boggs
1820 Joakin Lane	1858-59 J. D. Lumsden

1860-61 J. J. Edwards
 1862 Jeremiah McMullen
 (1863-64 No preachers sent,
 were within Federal lines.)
 1865 J. W. Honeycutt
 1866 J. D. Lumsden
 1867 Jos. H. Amiss
 1868 Jas. L. Fisher
 1869 Geo. W. Nolley
 1870-72 T. L. Williams
 1873-75 J. W. Compton
 1876 Joshua L. Garrett
 1877 Ben. Tennille
 1878-79 Wm. P. Jordan
 1880-83 Alex. M. Hall
 1884-85 Jno. O. Moss
 1886-89 J. W. S. Robins
 1890 Joseph E. Potts
 1891-92 Chas. R. Taylor
 1893-94 C. D. Crawley
 1895 Jonathan Sanford
 1896 Solomon Pool
 1897 Jas. Y. Old

1898-99 A. J. Parker
 1900 W. J. Crowson
 1901-04 W. E. Hocutt
 1905-06 R. L. Davis
 1907 D. L. Earnhardt
 1908 L. M. Chaffin
 1909-12 C. P. Jerome
 1913-14 A. W. Price
 1915-18 E. L. Stack
 1919 J. L. Smith
 1920 Daniel Lane
 1921 R. G. L. Edwards
 1922-23 L. M. Chaffin
 1924-25 A. B. Crumpler
 1926-29 W. F. Walters
 1930-33 J. M. Jolliff
 1934-36 L. E. Sawyer
 1937-40 E. W. Downum
 1941-43 W. N. Vaughan
 1944-47 L. T. Singleton
 1948-52 C. A. Johnson
 1953-57 Key W. Taylor

PRESIDING ELDERS

(Since Unification called District Superintendents)

The dates covered are from 1858 until the present time. There are a few years of which we have no record.

1858 James A. Riddick
 1859-60 Leroy M. Lee
 1865 J. D. Lumsden
 1866-67 E. P. Wilson
 1868-72 Henry Cowles
 1873-76 L. S. Reid
 1877-80 B. F. Woodward
 1881-84 W. H. Christian
 1885-88 J. A. Proctor
 1889-93 T. H. Campbell
 1894-96 R. B. John
 1897 A. P. Tyer

1898-1901 R. A. Willis
 1902-05 J. E. Underwood
 1906-09 J. H. Hall
 1910 R. H. Broom
 1911-14 M. T. Plyler
 1915-18 G. T. Adams
 1919-22 R. H. Willis
 1923-26 C. B. Culbreth
 1927-28 H. I. Glass
 1929-31 O. W. Dowd
 1932-34 J. H. McCracken

1935-39 B. B. Slaughter
 1941 T. M. Grant
 1942-43 W. L. Clegg

1944-49 J. H. Miller
 1950-52 F. S. Love
 1953-57 Freeman Heath

PROMINENT PERSONALITIES

The third section of this chapter deals with prominent personalities. Some of these would naturally come from the ministers. One Presiding Elder, Leroy M. Lee, was a notable preacher. His sermon on "Sin and the Punishment of Selfish Wealth" was included in *The Southern Pulpit*, the first great volume of sermons by southern ministers. Several of the sermons included were by bishops. There were also many striking personalities among the ministers. The suave Dr. Solomon Pool was at one time acting-president of the University of North Carolina. Perhaps the Reverend C. D. Crawley was the most spectacular preacher of the last seventy years. He was only five feet ten inches tall but weighed two hundred and ten pounds, every inch of which was muscle. He could walk up a flight of stairs with a two-hundred pound sack of salt under each arm. He was a great hunter and a lover of fine horses. His voice was like the roar of a cyclone. When he stopped singing, it seemed as if more than half the congregation had stopped. He could easily be heard a mile, when he prayed. Dynamic in personality, he was also a great preacher. Men trembled when he preached and sought the Lord in fear. I saw him flabbergasted only once. He had preached a terrific sermon on the necessity of being reconciled to the will of God. At the conclusion, he said: "I want every person in this congregation who, if he went home and found that some brute had ravished his wife, murdered his children and burned his home, could say, 'the Lord's will be done,' to stand." A large proportion of the congregation stood, including some ten and twelve year old boys. Father kept his seat. In astonishment the preacher thundered: "What's wrong with you, Brother Spence?" Father rose excitedly to his feet and blurted out: "It depends on how it struck me. I might say, 'Thy will be done,' or I might borrow a gun and go shoot the brute." I have a notion that the majority of the audience, including the preacher, felt that this would have been a sure and satisfactory way of helping carry out God's will. When Mr. Crawley came on the charge, he heard that at one of the churches there was chronic disturbance by young men who rose, one at a time, and strolled out of the church during the preaching. They would gather in front of the church, talk in loud tones, and disturb the congregation. On his first visit to the church, just as he began to

preach, a young man walked out. The minister stopped preaching and stared at him. Shortly afterward, another rose and made for the door. Crawley stopped and shouted in a voice of thunder: "Hear me! If anyone else starts out of this church while I am preaching, I am going to come down there and wipe up the floor with him." There was no further disturbance.

It seems to me, however, that the most prominent personalities were among the laity rather than the ministry. I have pointed out earlier that practically every outstanding family in the upper end of the county was in some way connected with the church or Sunday school. I would list the first dozen families in size and activity as follows: Abbott, Forehand, Gordon, Jones, McCoy, McPherson, Pearce, Sawyer, Spence, Taylor, Whitehurst, and Williams. If one were asked to select one individual as the outstanding member of all time from that church, the nominee would probably be the Reverend Nelson Chamberlain. He was not only a profound minister, but also a leading educator, a teacher, steward, class leader, and civic-minded man. He was responsible for the organization of the school library. A man of considerable wealth, he remembered the church in his will, and left a farm of considerable value to the church to help pay the minister. Incidentally the Missionary Society of the church, Rosebud Missionary Society, was known as the Chamberlain Missionary Society as long as it existed.

Mr. George H. Riggs was another outstanding man who merits mention. He was actively engaged in the work of the church as early as 1875. His name appears as church secretary and secretary of various organizations more often than any other three. He, also, was a man of wealth and, like Mr. Chamberlain, he too left a farm to the church for the same purpose, the support of the ministry. He was almost literally a "walking encyclopedia." I have never known an individual who had more important facts at his tongue's tip. He had a photostatic mind which easily absorbed and retained whatever important facts came his way. At the Centennial Celebration in 1892, he recited without notes the names and dates of every minister who had served the charge from 1784 to that time. In addition to being a generous contributor, he was a steward, Sunday school teacher, superintendent, church secretary and president of the missionary society. Three other men, Messrs. F. B. Pearce, J. P. Pearce and J. N. Spence were also stewards from thirty to forty years. They shared with Mr. Riggs the offices mentioned, usually taking the superintendency and presidency of the missionary society in rotation. They also were teachers of more

than a third of a century's service. They largely shared the work of furnishing the fuel for the church, "janitoring" it, and rendering many other services. No task was too hard or too menial for them to perform.

From the standpoint of numbers in the family and amount and quality of service rendered, I suppose the Pearce family would probably take first place in that period. Their ancestor, Ira E. Pearce, was a class leader in the church for seventeen years. Five generations of members of McBride Church came from him through one of his sons; six through another. Through J. P. Pearce the list would read: Ira E. Pearce, J. Preston Pearce, George F. Pearce, William C. Pearce, and Lois Pearce Jones. Through Frank B. Pearce the list reads: Ira E. Pearce, Frank B. Pearce, Nelson C. Pearce, J. Lane Pearce, Lucile Pearce Clinkscapes, and Howard Lee Clinkscapes. The family line on the mother's side will also include five generations. The maternal grandparents, William B. and Edney Old, were the parents of Sarah F. and Betty Pearce, wives of Preston and Frank Pearce, respectively. Through George F. Pearce, Ira Pearce, and Marion E. Pearce, the line here reaches five generations also. The same holds true for Betty Pearce's children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

From Willoughby Sawyer through William T. Sawyer, another double strain runs, resulting in two sets of five generations of members. To the first belong Willoughby L. Sawyer, Elwood D. Sawyer, and Dianne Sawyer. To the second belong Mack Sawyer, Everett Sawyer, and Elaine Sawyer.

Frederick and Lucretia Sawyer are forbears of another five generations, the list of which will read: John F. Sawyer, Addie Sawyer Forehand, Lawrence C. Forehand, Jack and Allen Forehand.

Four different groups of five or more generations come from Nancy McPherson, another of the famous Chamberlain family. The first reads: Nancy McPherson, Sarah McPherson Taylor, J. Nelson (Net) Taylor, Pat Taylor Pearce, J. Lane Pearce, Lucile Pearce Clinkscapes, Howard Lee Clinkscapes. This is the largest number of generations from any one family of the church, seven in all. Through the Nancy McPherson, Sarah McPherson, and J. Nelson Taylor strain come two other groups of five or more generations: First, Etta Taylor McPherson, Mary McPherson, Canfield-Fischer, and Homer Canfield. The second reads: Adeline Taylor McCoy, Geraldine McCoy Old-Onley.

Still another from the same stock runs: Nancy McPherson, Sarah McPherson Taylor, Joe. C. Taylor, E. Linwood Taylor, and Elaine Taylor Blake.

A final five generation list is: Mrs. Jane Jones, J. Frank Jones, Lydia Jones Sawyer, Everett Sawyer, and Elaine Sawyer.

In addition to Mr. Ira E. Pearce, there are listed other class leaders which include Nelson Chamberlain, Lane Chamberlain, James F. Jones, Joseph Ferebee, Joseph Bright, John Jacobs, and James Robey.

In addition to those already named as teachers, the names most often mentioned back of the twenties were: Mrs. Lucy I. Spence, Mrs. Etta Tatem, Mrs. Sarah F. Pearce, Mr. and Mrs. George N. Jones, Mr. Peter Sawyer, Mr. Grandy D. Sawyer, and Mrs. Annie Sawyer.

A trio of later date cannot be overlooked, namely, Mr. and Mrs. George F. Pearce and their sister Mrs. Addie Pearce Pritchard. Mr. and Mrs. Pearce were married in 1903 and have been definitely connected with the church in some official capacity since that time. Mrs. Pritchard was organist, Sunday school superintendent and teacher for many years. Chessie (Mrs. G. F.) Pearce taught a total of thirty-five years and held offices in the women's societies. Mr. Pearce began teaching in 1907 and still teaches fifty years later. Between him and his sister they held the superintendency of the Sunday school for twenty-six years. He also was trustee and steward. The sum total of service rendered for these three amounts to more than a hundred years. It is doubtful if any three persons of one immediate family ever served so long or in so many capacities as this trio. If so, I have been unable to find such a record anywhere.

The Evangelistic Work of the Church

IN SOME RESPECTS, almost every meeting held in the church of seventy-five years ago was evangelistic. That is to say, nearly all of them stressed the lost condition of mankind, pointed out a way of salvation, and urged the acceptance of Christ as a personal Saviour. The average church service was evangelistic in its appeal. Even the funeral services were occasions of praise for the good and condemnation of the bad. Those attending were urged to mend their ways and prepare for death. Prayer-meetings and class-meetings were to some extent evangelistic, also. Songs were sung and prayers and exhortations offered which were a constant reminder of man's lost estate and his salvation through faith in Christ. The class meetings were definite investigations of the religious experiences of the members, reproofs for shortcomings, and enthusiastic testimonies on the part of those who were leading satisfactory lives.

However, the main evangelistic efforts were put forth in what was known as protracted meetings. These were usually held once a year and continued throughout an entire week. On occasion they were extended for two or more weeks. In the country, these were held in the day time, since lighting facilities were poor, and the slow method of transportation did not permit of night services. Ordinarily, a revival began on Sunday at the regular services, continued on Monday afternoon and held two sessions each day through Friday. In most instances "dinner on the grounds" was served.

The same week was usually set aside each year for a series of meetings at a given church. The time for the meeting at McBride was the third week in August. To undertake a change in the date was paramount to inviting failure. In some way, the people could not, or would not, put their hearts into the meeting if the time was changed.

Usually the first few services dealt largely with the church members. Attempts were made to get them interested in the fate of sinners. Sometimes there were community grudges, hard feelings among neighbors, disaffection for some cause or other, and it was necessary to have these old grudges and differences settled before much enthusiasm could be worked up for outsiders. Reconsecration services were

held. When the non-church people saw the Christians shake hands and make up, the effect was usually wholesome. Then, too, it was natural for some people to grow cold or lukewarm through the year unless they had been active workers all the time. So the first few services were "warming up exercises," to state it in terms of athletic events.

Normally, interest in sinners became manifest about Wednesday afternoon. Following a rousing sermon on Wednesday morning, the afternoon service was specifically directed to a call for "mourners." The meetings normally increased in interest throughout the week, and personal work, that is, solicitation of persons throughout the congregation, was urged upon the Christians. Occasionally, some person whose life had not been too exemplary would cast a coldness over the meeting by being too evident in personal activity when the majority of the congregation felt that this person belonged to the altar seeking pardon for his own sins. Envious or jealous neighbors often watched those in whom they had little confidence, wondering if they would have the nerve to do public solicitation. As one man put it: "I watched Betty—to see what she was going to do. If she had gone to work in the congregation, the devil would have flew into me in a minute." Which raised the question as to whether the devil had already "flew" into him.

Sometimes prayer meetings were held either in the church or in neighborhood homes as a preparation for the revival. At times, such meetings would be held in neighborhood homes at night during the revival. Frequently small groups would go over to the schoolhouse during the noon hour, or back in the woods, to pray for the visitation of the spirit of God upon the meeting.

The old-time revivals had quite a mixture of activities. In some respects they were the social events of the year. People came for miles around. Dinner was served and there was never a more definite illustration of those who came "because of the loaves and fishes." But this food was far more than loaves and fishes. In these days of high prices and scarcity of servant help, it is almost distressing to contemplate what those dinners were like. Usually the church members divided the days among themselves, and three or four would assume the responsibility of furnishing food for a specific day. Thursday and Friday were the best attended days and, therefore, more people would be assigned to these. Large wooden boxes, as large as ordinary trunks, were filled with food. Of course, there were the inevitable vegetables—cabbage, corn, beans, tomato-pudding, Irish and sweet potatoes, and many others. Chickens by the dozens were fried, boiled or baked.

Boiled hams were served lavishly. Sometimes beef and mutton found their way to these well-filled tables. And the desserts! Pies of every description from apple jacks to all kinds of fruit pies. Cakes of every sort. The tables literally groaned with the food. So did the congregation afterward—or perhaps "snored" would be more descriptive.

The long tables were served and then the congregation was invited to them. The rush for the first tables sometimes was almost disgraceful in lack of manners on the part of some of the greedier ones. Some also preferred to eat from a clean plate. One man would go to the first table and eat all the way through until the last scrap was gone. He was a little fellow and the wonder was how he could hold so much food. As greedy as Mr. B— became a proverb in the community.

After dinner was eaten and the dishes cleared away, quite a time was enjoyed socially. Sometimes, to top off things, some one would cut a few watermelons and set up the crowd to this treat. Young men who had brought young ladies would go to their buggies and sit and converse a while. Frequently others, who did not bring girls, would "butt in" on their conversation, to the disgust of the boys and sometimes to the delight of the girls. When the dinner hour was over and singing began in the house, the buggies were usually fixed so that if rain should come up there would be no damage done; then all would come into the house. Still, in spite of all that dinner, the afternoon hour was, as a rule, the more effective service.

Some of the earlier meetings had something of a carnival aspect. Tent photographers would take pictures. Refreshment stands were provided and ice cream and lemonade were dispensed. Bananas and other fruit were sold.

There never was a camp meeting held at McBride as far as I can learn, but these protracted meetings had many aspects of the more celebrated meetings. The preachers and people were both serious, intensely so. When the time came for the invitation to be extended, the preaching was almost fierce. Such texts as "Prepare to Meet Thy God," "Be Sure Your Sins Will Find You Out," "It Is a Fearful Thing to Fall Into the Hands of a Living God," were the foundation for fiery sermons. The hymns were equally impressive. For the songs before the sermon, or in the earlier part of the week, such hymns were sung as: "Children of the Heavenly King," "We're Marching to Zion," "Father I Stretch My Hands to Thee," "Amazing Grace," and others of the old favorites. Normally these were accompanied by the organ. But after the sermon, when pressure was brought to bear on the unsaved, there was no instrumental music. In fact the type of music did

not lend itself to instrumental accompaniment. Perhaps the custom of lining out hymns for lack of books in the old days set the precedent, but a favorite type of hymn was one which had a sort of repetend and therefore could be remembered easily. Hymns of this type ran: "We have Mothers over yonder, over yonder's ocean. By and by we'll go and meet them, Won't that be a happy meeting?" These lines were repeated several times in each stanza. Then they sang of having fathers, sisters, brothers, etc. Another of a similar sort was, "I have a Mother in the Promised Land; When my Mother calls me I will go and meet her in the Promised Land; I'll away to the Promised Land"; etc. This also went the gamut of the whole family and added a Saviour. Other songs which had a telling effect were "And Must I Be to Judgment Brought?" "And Am I Born to Die?" and "The Old Ship of Zion." The last named was one of the most effective of them all.

At times the results were indescribable. Scores came flocking to the altar. Personal work with the "mourners" was done and when the penitent felt that his sins were forgiven, happiness was unbounded. I have seen dozens of persons shouting at the same time. Their faces glowed with a supernatural light as if they were greased. Often they became exhausted and went into a sort of trance. I do not remember any one with the jerks, but I do recall seeing a crippled man becoming as stiff as a board and sliding across the bench tops, a thing which he could never have done under ordinary circumstances.

At one meeting while the congregation bowed in prayer and emotion ran high, someone claimed he saw a light enter the church door and pass along the wall the whole length of the church. After the story got started, many other people claimed that they saw it also. The next week at a neighboring church of a different denomination, someone was seen trying to throw the reflection of the sunlight in a bucket of water through the window so that they could boast of a light in their church also.

Those were great occasions. With the loss of faith and enthusiasm, they have become passé today. But the church never had a more potent means of saving souls.

The Educational Work of the Church

THE EDUCATIONAL work of the church embraced that done by the Sunday school, the Missionary Society, and the Library.

1—The Sunday school. This institution was what the name implies. It was a school, and its sessions were held on Sunday. The modern church has discarded the name in favor of Church School. This is for the purpose of emphasizing the educational value of many organizations other than the one meeting on Sunday morning. Perhaps there was some advantage in making the change. However, the term Sunday school did emphasize the fact that it was a school, and that a part of each Sunday was specifically set aside for training in the work of religion. The school at McBride was really a school. It did not teach the three R's, "reading and riting and rithmetic," but it did teach "reading, riting and religion." Many children and a few grown-ups were taught the rudiments of an education.

The texts were interesting. For the very small children and the utterly illiterate there were heavy cardboards with the alphabet printed on each side. The boards were of deep red and the letters were heavy black. The capitals were printed on one side, the small letters on the other. Mr. Grandy D. Sawyer was one of the most patient and efficient teachers of little children that I have ever seen. A little child would sit close to him and repeat the letters after him. When both sides of the cardboard had been finished, the child would move away and his place would be taken by another. This continued until every little tot had had a chance. When the children had learned their letters, they were furnished with that amazing book, *The Blue Back Speller*. Never has there been a more thoroughly graded book in the history of American education. The children who had learned the alphabet were taken through this book step by step. At first they were taught the two letter syllables: a-b, ab; e-b, eb; i-b, ib, etc. Then they went stage by stage, until they reached that unforgettable column of words, b-a, ba, k-e-r, baker; s-h-a-, sha, dy, shady; l-a-, la, dy, lady, etc. Every conceivable arrangement of words was made and sentences were inserted after each new set of words to illustrate their use. On and on it went for nearly a hundred-fifty different lessons. At the

close of the book there were a number of illustrated fables, each containing a moral. The catechism was also studied until 1880.

When the children had learned to read fairly well, they were advanced to a class in the easier portions of the New Testament. The older persons read the more difficult parts of the New Testament, reading in turn and having a few explanatory remarks or comments made by the teacher. It was not until the turn of the century that modern literature was adopted for the school as a whole. However, there was some rather attractive literature to supplement the lesson materials. For the smallest children there was a paper called "Our Little People." For the older ones, "The Children's Visitor" was the paper welcomed by young and old, alike. I shall never forget one number of it. It was the Christmas number and on the entire front page, there was a long and thrilling poem called, "The Children's Visit to Santa Claus." The center of the page was adorned by the picture of good old Saint Nick trudging through a snowstorm with a heavy pack of Christmas gifts on his back. That poem, composed of more than a hundred verses and too long to print here, impressed me so that I still remember nearly the entire poem.

McBride school was one country school which did not follow the usual custom of country schools seventy-five years ago of going into winter quarters. Although the roads were usually rough during the winter (one leading directly to the church is still called by its early name, Muddy Road) there were not many Sundays when school was not held. A few records read: "No Sunday school or church today on account of very bad weather." On one other occasion the note reads: "No Sunday school today. The school adjourned to attend Children's Day at Trinity."

Children's Day of the long ago was a day long to be remembered. For weeks in advance, the children were trained and drilled in the recitation of speeches, singing of songs, and giving of dialogues. Once the Sunday schools of Trinity and McBride met in a joint session and vied with each other as to which could put on the best program. I remember that the Trinity group wore showy sashes, carried banners, paraded the aisles and put on a real show. The reason I remember the occasion so well was my personal chagrin at its outcome. The schools gave identical programs; the rivalry was in the execution of the programs. Execution was right, and I got *executed*. The particular occasion of my chagrin was the recitation of a long and rather dramatic poem entitled, "The Reapers." I recall the first stanza:

At dawn the call was heard,
And busy reapers stirred
Along the highway leading to the wheat:
"Wilt reap with us?" they said;
I smiled and shook my head;
"Disturb me not," said I, "my dreams are sweet."

Those dreams were rudely shattered when the contest began. I recited the poem intelligently but monotonously and rather mechanically. My competitor was a lovely young girl named Mary Hinton, the daughter of the silver-tongued orator and distinguished teacher, Professor William Hinton. The girl had much of her father's talent and the full benefit of his training. What she did to me should not have happened in church. I was completely outshone and thoroughly humiliated. I have had many a "licking" since, ranging from the conventional leather-strap in the woodshed, through college and conference political scraps, as well as many hundreds of contests in sports and games. But this stands out as the worst defeat of my life. Even I conceded an overwhelming defeat.

The rest of our school fared little better. Since there were only two schools competing, we could claim a poor second-best. But normally each school had its own program. The program at McBride was usually given the third Sunday afternoon in May. The preacher allowed the taking over of the regular preaching hour and encouraged it in every way. Here appears a strange inconsistency. The preacher of seventy-five years ago relied largely on the revival for his converts and new members. The preacher of today is largely limited in the gaining of new members to those taken in through the Sunday school. Yet the old-time preacher allowed his best hour to be taken over by the Sunday school, while the preacher of today is almost oblivious to the work of the children so far as giving over his pulpit hour is concerned. Also, the Children's Day of the long ago has been superseded by the Church School Day, which at best does little more than call attention to the unity of the school, and at worst disturbs the real teaching work of the church with hardly any commensurate values in return. There is no longer time to pay attention to the children—this in spite of the fact that almost every home now has labor-saving gadgets which ought to provide more time for the training of the young. Those women of the long ago had no labor-saving devices. They were mothers usually of large families, which they brought into the world without benefit of doctor or hospital. They helped raise their own gardens, canned their vegetables, milked their cows, churned their

butter, did their own boiling and baking, raised their own geese which they picked for feathers for their beds, carded their own wool, spun their own yarn, knitted the stockings and mittens, made the clothes for the family, and yet had time to train children in religion. But to go back to Children's Day: the beautiful windows in the old church were made even lovelier by the great festoons of roses, known as Seven Sisters, and sweet-smelling honeysuckle sometimes dotted with sweet-shrubs. The house was literally a place of beauty and of sweet incense of flowers. And the children were in the program in songs, little speeches, dialogues, and other attractive features. Folks came for many miles and crowded the sanctuary to hear them.

The minutes of the sessions of the Sunday school were rather stereotyped but quite revealing. One noticeable thing was the type of hymns which were sung. Many of them would be considered today as being too heavy for even the preaching service. Some of the titles were: "Awake and Sing the Song," "Not All the Blood of Beasts," "Day by Day the Manna Fell." It is not to be wondered that they could sing, however, since they had a singing master in their own group. Mr. F. B. Pearce, in addition to being at various times a teacher, steward and Sunday school superintendent, was also a powerful exhorter and a singing master. Frequently he would hold sessions of his music class to which all were invited without charge.

Sometimes a sad note would creep, in a beautiful way, into the minutes. One read: "Etta V. Taylor, a member of this Sunday School oldest daughter of James N. and Mary V. Taylor, passed away into the arms of him who said: 'Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not' on the 9th day of August, 1887. May this entire school again meet her in the Sweet By and By."

Christmas trees and other occasions such as picnics were quite a stimulant to the attendance upon the school. Several families joined both McBride Methodist and Ebenezer Baptist churches shortly before Christmas so as to get gifts from both schools. These occasions were somewhat like Children's Day, except that cedar and holly were substituted for roses and honeysuckles. Sometimes there was a beautiful tree. Always an interesting program was held with Christmas carols, speeches, and dialogues, as well as scripture and prayer. However, a great deal of dissatisfaction resulted from the allowing of gifts to be put on the trees by outsiders for their friends. Some of the children and even the young ladies would be heaped with presents while others received only small, unimpressive gifts. The occasions were finally changed to Christmas treats instead of trees, and each

person on the roll received exactly the same amount of goodies or other presents.

2—Missionary Society. In the old times, the work of raising conference collections was the task of the preacher. Today there is a church budget, all finances are dumped into one lump, and raised either by the stewards or the properly appointed, or even employed, persons. It is well that the preacher's burden should be lightened, but the fact remains that when it was his task to raise the missionary money, the congregation learned a great deal more about missions than they do today. Certain times were set aside for cultivating the missionary spirit. Missions were more than a general interest of the church. They were the attempt of the church to wash its hands of the responsibility for a lost world. Men thought of the duty of the church as a watchman shouting a warning to the dying heathen. Old missionary songs were sung such as, "From Greenland's Icy Mountains," "The Morning Light Is Breaking," and others. Even the children were called in to help with the raising of funds. I have on my desk at this writing a card which was given me as a child. The main feature of the card was a large star, composed of one hundred small stars around its rim. In the center of the card was a candle with the command to send forth the light. Whenever a child secured a penny for the cause he was allowed to stick a pin through the card, and when the hundred stars were punctured, the light streamed through the hundred holes.

The main organization for the cultivation of regular and constant giving, however, was the Chamberlain Rosebud Missionary Society, Number 262. The general society known as the Rosebuds was organized in the home of the Reverend Thomas H. Campbell, the parsonage at Gatesville, N. C., Jan. 1, 1879. It was planned by his daughter, Rosebud, who afterward became a missionary to Mexico. There were only seven members of this first society, two adults and five children. The idea spread rapidly and within a few years there were hundreds of chapters. A page concerning its work was conducted, in the *Richmond Christian Advocate*, by the Rev. J. B. Laurens, known as Uncle Larry. Children from all over the conference sent letters to these columns.

The McBride Society was named for the great Nelson Chamberlain. It had the usual officers and usually met each third Sunday morning after Sunday school. The monotonous minutes were written, stating that the meeting was called to order, roll was called and dues received. Collections for the day were noted. But the society meant far more than the minutes indicate. In addition to the usual prayer, scripture and song service, the little children were encouraged to "say" speeches.

Many a little child got his first training in public speaking here. I made the first of my twenty or twenty-five thousand sermons, speeches, and lectures here. It was a simple little thing, but I was only about two years old. It read:

I would not throw upon the ground,
The crust I cannot eat,
For many hungry little ones
Would think it quite a treat.

Another little speech was typical:

I am a little Rosebud,
My name is on the roll,
I pay up my dues
Whenever I am told.

Then come, children, come
And join our happy band
And help send the Gospel
To the far heathen land.

The recitations were usually simple but ordinarily carried some moral or exhortation. I quote verses from two other poems:

Keep a watch on your words, my children,
For words are terrible things;
Like bees they are freighted with honey,
Like bees they have terrible stings.

* * * * *

Think it no excuse, boy,
Merging into men,
That you do a wrong act,
Only now and then.

Better to be careful,
As you go along;
Striving for the right, boys,
You can ne'er go wrong.

While the iron is hot, boys,
Hit it on the head;
Strike with all your might, boys,
While the iron is red.

When you've a thing to do, boys,
Do it with a will;
They who'd reach the top, boys,
First must climb the hill.

While others took turns about in holding the presidency of this society, Mr. George H. Riggs was the guiding spirit in it. He offered prizes consisting of books for every child who would make a speech each meeting for a whole year. Grace Tatem, daughter of Mr. W. H. Tatem and now Mrs. Elmer A. Thornton, recited a speech each meeting for two whole years. She prizes a book which she received very highly. It is a copy of Scott's *Lady of the Lake*.

The certificate reproduced in the back of the book is one which was furnished by Mr. Joseph G. Etheridge, the oldest living member of the society. He was a charter member, as was also Janet Tatem, another daughter of W. H. Tatem and now Mrs. W. H. Thompson. The poem, "Think It No Excuse, Boys," was one of those which Mr. Etheridge recited as a boy. His certificate was signed by Mr. W. R. Dozier, the first president of the society, a prominent layman, school teacher and register of deeds for the county. Mr. Dozier married Mr. Etheridge's sister Fannie, a ward of Mr. Riggs, and the second organist of the church.

Many speeches were made by the older children and were longer and much more significant. Dues in the society were two cents a month. They were paid at the marble-top table. As the roll was called each member, young and old, marched proudly up and put his two cents on the table.

The society was organized between 1880 and 1883. It continued to hold meetings regularly until 1923. When Camden Charge was transferred from the Virginia to the North Carolina Conference, it was learned that the North Carolina counterpart of this organization was called Bright Jewels, the column for children's letters was in the *Raleigh Christian Advocate* and the letters were addressed to Aunt Lizzie. However, the name of the society at McBride was never changed. It was the Chamberlain Rosebud Missionary Society, No. 262, until it was disbanded.

3—The Sunday School Library was organized Sunday, March 29, 1874, with the following officers: Nelson Chamberlain, President; Wm. H. Abbott, Vice-President; Alfred Abbott, Secretary; George H. Riggs, Asst.-Secretary; M. N. Sawyer, Treasurer; Preston Pearce, Librarian; and George W. Taylor, Asst.-Librarian. There were more than sixty members in this first organization, and the initial number of books ran into the hundreds. A glance at a few of the titles will indicate the seriousness and value of these books: *Life of McKendree*, Baxter's *Saint's Rest*; *Wesley's Works*; *Spurgeon's Sermons*; *The Methodist Pulpit, South*; *Luther and Cromwell*; *The Life of Napoleon*; *The Light*

of the World, and many other well-known and important books. These were systematically handled and the records show a wide use of them—a fine comment on the culture of the homes of those days from which these books came as a gift to the library. I have here at hand a copy of the *Life and Works of John Milton*, presented to McBride's Church Library by J. C. Rudder. A few of the older readers may remember him as the prominent keeper of the Locks at South Mills. He was superintendent of the Sunday school in 1866. This book was No. 75 in the list of donations.

The library was one of the earliest Sunday school libraries in North Carolina. The book case, evidently home made, is 36 inches wide and 78 inches high. Four shelves are in the top section and the lower part is a sort of storage place. It still has on its shelves many of the fine old books which it contained long ago. This library is a monument to the constructive work in religious education which was done even in that early day. Across the churchyard stood the little school house, carrying out the tradition of early American civilization of a schoolhouse and a steepled church on the same grounds, both striving for the promotion of education and religion among the people.

There were other minor organizations during the years. An Epworth League was organized and existed for a short time. The Parsonage Society existed for many years for the purpose of furnishing the parsonage. And of course there were regular missionary societies, Home and Foreign, now united and known as the Woman's Society of Christian Service. All of the organizations described and discussed worked in thorough cooperation for the development of the religious, social, and civic life of the people.

Finale and Farewell

THE COMPLETION of the Sunday school annex and the refurnishing of the Sanctuary mark a definite period in the history of McBride Church. Here I bring this part of that history to a close. But it is still in the making. The end is not yet. For nearly two centuries this church has stood like a beacon light near a stormy sea, blessing individuals and communities, and helping thousands by its ministrations. A greater future may still lie ahead.

This booklet does not attempt to give a complete account of the history of this church to the present date. At most it covers only the years from its beginning through the 1920's. I have not been in close touch with the community for more than thirty years. Nor have I had access to the records covering the last quarter of a century. Even if I had, there would not be room enough in this brief account to record the deeds and services of those of recent years. There are doubtless officers and teachers who have served for many years and who merit mention along with their forbears. But I have had no way of learning those details. This part of the story must be left for some future scribe to write. For the history of this wonderful church will need to be written again and again.

There is an indescribable feeling of depression and sadness as I lay aside my pen. Homesickness as acute as that which I felt when I left Father's fireside seizes me as I recall those old familiar faces of the long ago. For the greater number of those about whom I have written are no longer with us. As they once sang in the old revival hymn, they have gone "Over yonder's ocean." Aside from a feeling of gratitude to them for their influence upon me, I also have a faith to which I cling that helps me sing: "By and by we'll go and meet them."

I cannot refrain from expressing my regret that many of those who helped with this work of improving the church and who looked forward eagerly to its completion, will not be here to rejoice with the others. Surely these closing pages should record their names. Some were generous contributors, some were officers and teachers, others were but pupils and faithful attendants upon the services. All loved the church and would have rejoiced to see the day of dedication. I list

those who have died since the work was first enterprised. They are given alphabetically.

Lemuel F. Jones, Kiddy McCoy, Adeline McCoy, Lena Old, William R. Old, Addie Pritchard, Hersey Small, Maggie Small Taylor and William B. Whitehurst. All these have gone "To where beyond these voices there is peace."

What the future of this grand old church will be, only time can tell. Strong sons and diligent daughters of the great ones of the long ago still work eagerly for its welfare and success. Many others have come to join with them in their undertakings. Changes have come about as must be expected. The old schoolhouse has been removed, but a larger and better school system has taken its place. Too, the work of the church has changed. No more may we expect the shouting and ecstatic emotionalism of the former years. The amen corner went the way of the old surreys and top buggies. But earnest preaching will continue from its pulpit. Wrong will be reproved. Evil will be denounced. Faith will be strengthened. Heavy hearts will be made happy. The work may be less spectacular but hardly less efficient.

What of its future? It may be that the prophet's words will apply to McBride as they did to the temple of old: "The glory of the latter house shall be greater than that of the former." Please God the church may continue for centuries yet to come—"A city that is set upon a hill and cannot be hid."

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- Asbury's Journal.
- Coke's Diary.
- Saunders' Colonial Records.
- Clark's State Records of North Carolina.
- Camden County Deed Books and Will Books.
- Letters from Mr. and Mrs. G. F. Pearce, Mrs. W. H. Thompson, and Mrs. E. H. Thornton.
- Notes, pamphlets and other materials from Mr. Jesse F. Pugh.
- Interviews with Mr. G. F. Pearce, Judge W. I. Halstead, and the Reverend Key W. Taylor.
- Voluminous memoranda from the Reverend Key W. Taylor.
- Copies of original lease from Mr. Pugh and Judge Halstead.
- Court Decision giving fee simple deed to property from Judge Halstead.
- Old record books of church, Sunday school, missionary society, and library.
- Personal recollections and memory of things told me by persons connected with the church in the long ago.

McBride Organization, 1956-57

MINISTERS

Paul Neff Garber, *Presiding Bishop*, Richmond, Va.
C. Freeman Heath, *District Superintendent*
Key W. Taylor, *Pastor*

OFFICIAL BOARD

W. L. Sawyer, *Chairman*
Lawrence Forehand, *Vice-Chairman*
Ralph Sawyer, *Secretary*

STEWARDS

James Albertson, Lawrence Forehand, G. F. Pearce, Mrs. N. C. Pearce,
W. R. Pritchard, Mrs. F. L. Sawyer, M. L. Sawyer, Ralph Sawyer,
W. L. Sawyer
Mrs. Elwood Sawyer, *W.M.S.C. President*
Elwood Sawyer, *Sunday School Superintendent*

TRUSTEES

J. Lane Pearce, *Chairman*; J. J. McCoy, *Treasurer*,
Frank Sawyer, Jr., *Secretary*

SUNDAY SCHOOL OFFICERS AND TEACHERS

Superintendent, Elwood Sawyer
Assistant Superintendent, Ralph Sawyer
Secretaries, David Sawyer and Melvin Albertson

TEACHERS

Nursery and Kindergarten: Mrs. Ralph Sawyer, Mrs. Elwood Sawyer
Intermediate: Mrs. Will Trotman
Young People: Mrs. E. W. Sawyer
Adult Women: George F. Pearce
Adult Men: J. J. McCoy

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McBRIDE CHURCH—1957