



GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Whiteville, N. C.

x HISTORY OF

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Portions of this history were
taken from an article written
for the Mission Herald, October,
1935 by the Reverend Arthur H.
Marshall.

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Back in the days when the town of Whiteville gave little promise of growth or prosperity, the Reverend Thomas P. Noe, who was then Rector of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Wilmington, saw possibilities of growth, not only of the town, but also for the Church. Even though there were only two Episcopalians in Whiteville at this time, at the request of Mrs. Seth Smith, Mr. Noe began coming over at occasional intervals to hold services, and succeeded in gaining the interest of a few people.

In the year 1911, Mr. Noe laid the matter of purchasing a lot in Whiteville before Bishop Strange who agreed with him that there were possibilities that should be developed. A lot was purchased and according to records: "This deed made this 20th day of June A. D. 1912 concerning lot No. 3, in block one of the Perry Division of the Lewis Place, sold by J. D. Maultsby and wife to Robert Strange, William Calder, and Clayton Giles, Trustees of the Diocese of East Carolina for the sum of \$500."

It is one of the rich traditions of the older people of Whiteville, the consecration of this lot, with Bishop Strange in his robes holding the service of Consecration and the prayers he uttered on that occasion are still green in the memories of those who attended the Service.

After the Service of Consecration ~~the~~ Bishop told the assembly that it was his wish that the Church to be built on the lot would be called Grace Church, which was ~~done~~.

It has ever remained, Grace Church, not only in accordance with the wishes on the Bishop but also as a loving memorial to him for his kindness and interest.

The first member of the Church was Mrs. Seth Smith, who was a Communicant of St. Thomas' Church, Atkinson and who transferred her membership to Grace Church because she believed with the Bishop and Mr. Noe that Grace Church would some day give a good account of itself in the Diocese.

Mrs. John McNeill who was the other Episcopalian in the community at that time, opposed the building of the Church because she felt there was not sufficient interest to make it a success.

Before the Church was built, the services were held in the School house, but Mr. Noe found this arrangement unsatisfactory and it was this situation that determined Mrs. Smith to seek funds for the erection of the building. Bishop Strange when informed of the project, donated four hundred dollars towards the building. Mrs. Smith went out and interested the citizens of the town and from them received four hundred six dollars and fifty cents. The American Church Building Fund Commission granted three hundred dollars and the building became a reality.

It is of interest to all of us to know who these good people were who helped, by their contributions, to make Grace Church possible. The subscribers were: Mrs. Seth Smith, Seth Smith, W. T. Aycock, G. R. McNeill, S. E. Memory, H. L. Lyon, Powell and Powell, Oscar High, J. B. Schulken, D. M. Thompson,

W. E. McDaniel, Walter Powell, R. C. Powell, Dr. L. J. Meredith, M. T. Moyer, E. F. Powell, J. G. Thompson, Dr. W. H. Crowell, J. D. Maultsby, Miss Lida J. Russell, Mrs. Issac Jackson, L. L. Hinson, H. H. Corbett, J. F. Barkley, John Carter, H. F. Schulken, W. R. McRackan, E. S. Lewis, J. T. McKenzie, J. L. Powell, W. H. Phillips, F. L. Lord, Mrs. Henrietta Formyduval, Dr. R. B. Whitaker, J. R. Gurganus, W. M. Spivey, Mrs. Sally McDaniel, A. W. Baldwin, Miss Aileen Smith, L. V. Grady, Sr., E. M. Dewey, Donald McRackan, E. M. Toon, F. B. Gault and Mrs. R. C. Carson.

The Reverend Mr. Noe continued to hold services and presented several candidates for confirmation. The new Church was dedicated July 4, 1915. Those who attended this service have related that "-the Church was so full, they were hanging out of the windows, and it was one of the hottest days on record." Bishop Thomas C. Darst conducted the Service of Dedication and confirmed its first candidate, Mrs. Etta McDaniel.

The first wedding in the Church took place on February 14, 1918 when Miss Aileen Smith became the wife of Mr. Fenner Hill.

During the twenties many people came into Grace Church and influenced the future of the Church. Among these who did so much work were: Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Schulken, Mrs. Molly Dickson, Miss Lilly Dickson, Mr. and Mrs. Manly Hill, Misses Sibyl, Mildred and Naomi Skiles and Miss Mary McWigan.

About the year 1926, through the work

of the Women's Auxiliary, the first addition to the Church was made. This was the beginning of the Parish House and was one large room on the south side of the lot. In 1936 three small rooms were added at the back of this room. These rooms were used as Sunday School rooms and a kitchen. Then in the year 1948, the Parish House as it exists today was completed by the addition of a large room on the north side of the first room.

During these years, we experienced many discouragements and many began to despair of any further progress. Had it not been for the strong loyalty and the vital leadership of "Mr. Willie and Miss Minnie" Schulken the Church might have folded. However, under their leadership and with the able assistance of Bion Sears the Church, not only kept alive but continued to grow. In these years, Mr. Walter Gope was one of our most devoted members who left the only legacy bequeathed to the Church, at great personal sacrifice.

As far as records of the Church show, there has been a steady growth, but Whiteville, like all small towns has sent its communicants into the cities at the expense of its own prosperity. In spite of its smallness, it is not too much to say that Grace Church has fulfilled its function in the religious and spiritual life of the community, because in accordance with the custom as well as the canons of the Church, it has confined itself to the preaching and teaching of the Gospel of our Lord and Savior.

During the years our Church has been served by many rectors. The complete list will be found in the back of this booklet. At first men were sent out at intervals from

the Wilmington Churches. Later we shared ministers with other Parishes viz.: Lumberton, Clinton, and Southport. In 1947, the Vestry called the Reverend Julius A. Pratt to become its first full-time Rector. Since this was a vital step in the history of the Church, it is seemly that we name the men who at that time were members of the Vestry. They were: W. W. Schulken, W. C. McNeill, P. C. Townsend, Dr. D. W. Pittman, C. B. Floyd, Porcher Smith, Guy Culpepper, Dr. J. N. Dawson, Leo Best and C. L. Taylor.

Under the leadership of this same Vestry a Rectory was purchased by the Church on East Smith Street on June 24, 1947. The Pense can was then instituted to help defray these payments.

In 1953, under the leadership of the Reverend Charles I. Penick, the Church had over eighty members on the register. As he said, "Not much growth? Can many parishes boast of multiplying their original membership by eighty in the last forty years?" This year must also be marked down as a year to be remembered by the people of Whiteville and the people of East Carolina, for it was this year that Grace Church made a step forward, bringing the vision of Mr. Noe and Bishop Strange into sharper focus. On July 1, 1953, Grace Church became a self-supporting parish.

During the years the strain of the high roof caused the sides of the Church building to bulge. Iron rods were inserted in an attempt to correct this. After an unusual wind storm, contractors determined that the building was unsound. The attention of the

congregation was then focused on building a new Church. On Easter Sunday, March 29, 1959, the building was dedicated by Bishop Thomas Wright. The following was copied from the Church bulletin of that date; "The building of the new Church is the realization of a program that was started during the rectorship of Charles Penick, continued under John Prior and completed under Samuel Black.

Mr. W. C. McNeill has been the diligent and devoted Chairman of the Building Committee and much of the success of the enterprise is due to his untiring efforts and those of the entire committee." Those serving on this committee were: P. C. Townsend, John Ward, John B. Glass, Edward Culpepper, Henry Mahaney, Robert MacRae, William Taylor and Frank Gault.

The history of any Church would be far from complete without a great deal of credit being given to the women in the congregation. As in the very beginning, Mrs. Seth Smith, now Mrs. J. T. McIntyre, was the motivating center; throughout the years the women have always been ready and eager to lend a hand in every effort for the betterment of the Church. They have taught Sunday school classes, taken care of the Altar, made Choir and Altar vestments and linens, and they have always raised money in order to come to the aid of the Vestry in any project they have undertaken. We wish it were possible to name each of these women who have given so much of themselves in the work of the Lord. Since we do not have a complete list, however, this does not seem advisable!

This history is written March 10, 1960 on the occasion of the Consecration of the Church by the Right Reverend Thomas Wright.

MEMORIALS

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| Electric Organ | W. W. Schulken |
| Minnie, Elizabeth and Billie Schulken | |
| Chalice and paten | W. W. Schulken |
| Friends | |
| Small Missle stand and book | Walter Alexander |
| and Elizabeth Wright - By Taylor children | |
| Cruets (one-half pint) | R. M. Holroyd |
| Mildred Holroyd | |
| Brass Alms Basins | Manly and Lena Hill |
| St. Mary's Guild | |
| Large Missle Stand | Molly Dickson |
| St. Martha's Guild | |
| Missle Book | Lillie Dickson |
| St. Mary's Guild | |
| Processional Cross | Kemp Smith |
| George and Polly Smith | |
| Church Flag | Phillip & Willie Townsend |
| P. C. Townsend | |
| Budded Cross | Harry Lee and Lucy B. Watson |
| Harry Lee and Susan Y. Watson, Jr. | |
| By Elizabeth Hoskins | |
| Altar Window | The Women of Grace Church |
| One seven-branched Candelabrum - William and | |
| Amanda Love | By Mary Blackmon |

Seven-branched Candelabrum--John Brown Love
Lura Love

12" brass vases
Lura Love

Church Lights
Walter Gore and Willie Schulken

Green Bible Markers Mary MacNeill
Fannie Mottinger

Green Lectern Fall Paul Caldis
Ruth Caldis

Green Pulpit Fall Lucy Schulken

Purple Bible Markers Naomi Skiles
Patricia & Charlene Floyd

GIFTS

Plain Brass Altar Cross - - F. B. Gault
Antique Brass Candelabra -- Mr. and Mrs.
F. P. Lynch

Three-branched Candelabra -- Mrs. Seth Smith
Small Pump Organ - - Mrs. Seth Smith

10" Brass Vases - - Mrs. J. K. Wise

Eucharistic Candelabra -- Mrs. Frank Hobson

Small Chalice and Patten -- Woman's Auxiliary

Book of Penitential Office - Young Churchmen

Paschal Candelabrum -- Emily McNeill

One pint Cruets - Miss Smithie Britt

All new Church Furniture - Mrs. J. T. McIntrye

Thirteen side windows, depicting the twelve

Apostles and Baptism - Dr. W. H. Hoskins

Bread Box - - Elizabeth Hoskins

Lavabo - Mrs. George Smith

Baptismal Bowl - - Mr. & Mrs. Garland Weaver

Fair Linen (solid embroidery) - J. A. Pratt

White Altar Vestments - Estelle Townsend

Red Altar Vestments - Mrs. W. L. McElmurray
and Mrs. C. B. Barrett

Purple Lectern and Pulpit Falls - Lillie
Dickson

Linens - Emily McNeill

Fair Linen and Purificators - Diocesan Altar
Guild

Furnishings for new Sacristy - W. C. McNeill

BISHOPS: The Right Reverend Robert Strange,
Thomas C. Darst, Thomas H. Wright

RECTORS: (These came from Wilmington)

Thomas Noe 1911-18

Walter Noe 1919-21

Alex Miller 1922-23

E. W. Halleck 1924-25

George Cameron 1926-28

(These served with another Parish:
1929-47)

Sidney Mathews (3 separate times)

George Jackson

J. E. W. Cooke

Homer J. Lewis

Fred Turner

Arthur Marshall

Lawrence Fenwick

B. F. Huske

Edward Fergurson

Richard S. Sturgis

(These were full-time)

Julius A. Pratt 1947-50

Ernest P. Runnels 1950-51

Charles I. Penick 1951-54

John Prior 1954-56

Samuel M. Black 1957-

WARDENS:

W. W. Schulken (Senior)

Guy Culpepper (Junior and Senior)

Bion Sears (Junior)

Edward Culpepper (Junior)

C. L. Taylor (Junior and Senior)

W. C. McNeill (Senior)

John Ward (Senior)

P. C. Townsend (Junior)

JOYNER



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