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H. M. HOCUTT

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STRUGGLING UPWARD

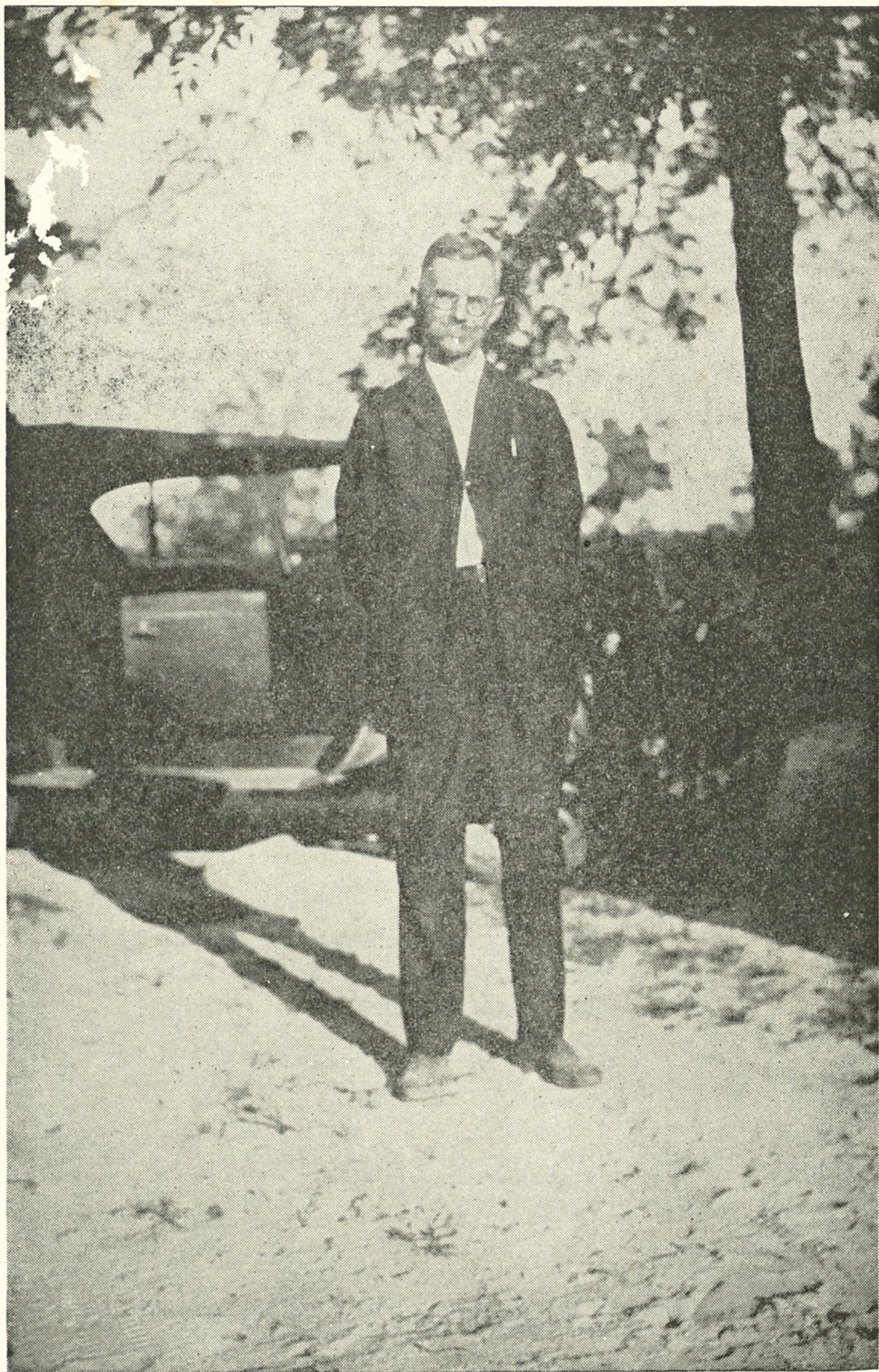
A Brief Story of the Upward Struggles of Rev. and Mrs. J. D. Hocutt and their Fourteen Children of Burgaw, North Carolina, with Special Emphasis upon the Record of the Family in Christian Education.

By

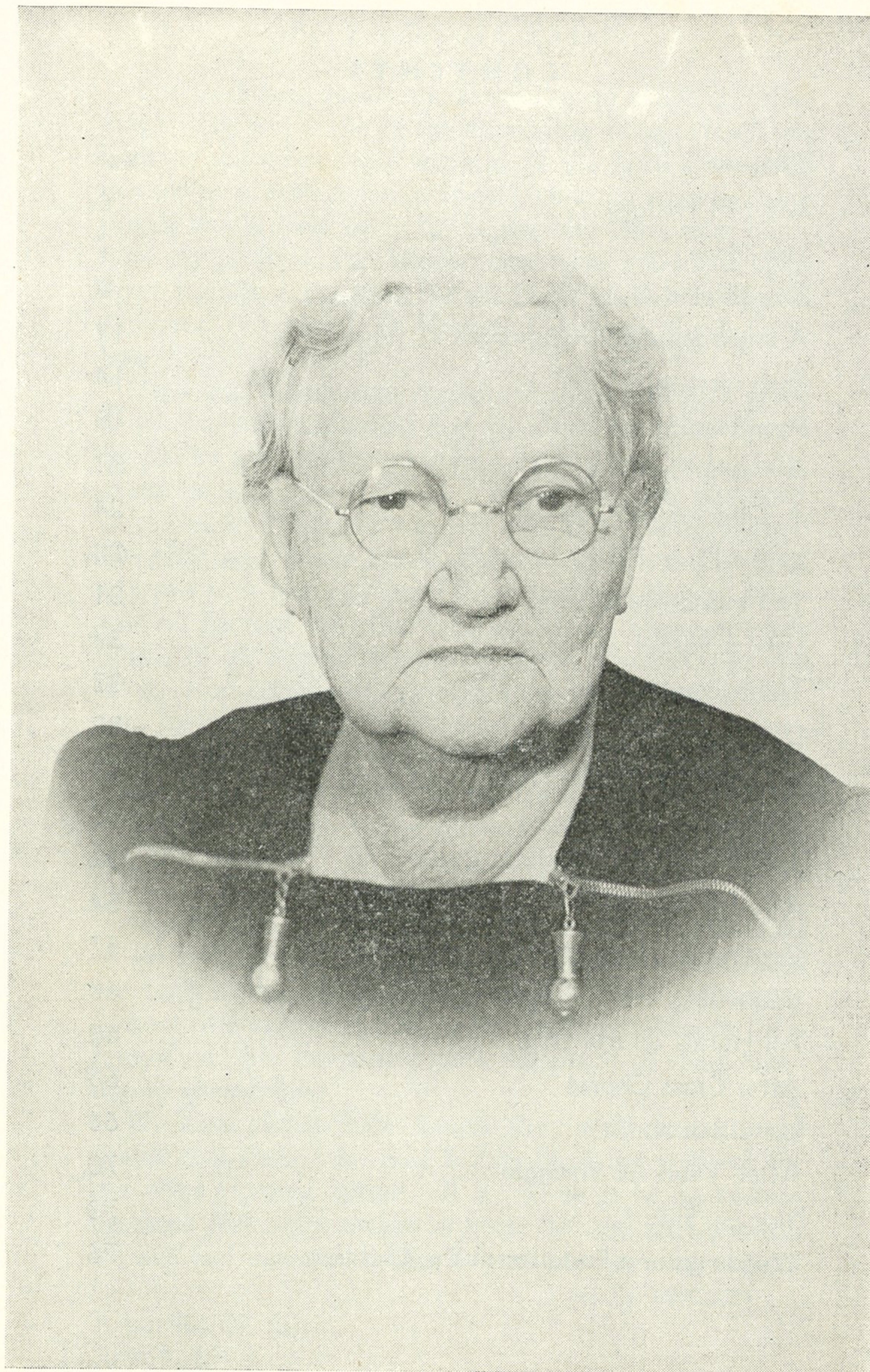
H. M. HOCUTT

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(If other copies of this book are desired, contact the author at 112 Belmont Avenue, Asheville, N. C.)



This is the best picture available of Papa. It was taken in the back yard at the home just a few years before his death in 1932.



A picture of Mama, Mrs. J. D. Hocutt, taken about a year before her death on May 26, 1948.

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INTRODUCTION

The following pages are written in an effort to relate in a simple way some of the interesting things about two humble and consecrated servants of the Lord who dared to attempt in the education of their children what to many people would have been the impossible. We refer affectionately to Papa and Mama, who were known to their many friends, apart from the members of their family, as Reverend and Mrs. J. D. Hocutt of Burgaw, North Carolina.

Papa and Mama each completed about the fifth grade in school, but they toiled and sacrificed for more than a quarter of a century to provide a high school and college education for their children. When the task was completed, eight daughters and two sons had graduated from Meredith and Wake Forest Colleges in North Carolina, and two sons had graduated from Southern Baptist Seminaries. Each of the other four sons spent a year or more in one of the Baptist Schools in North Carolina, and one of the four completed his high school work. The fourteen children in the family spent a total of seventy-five years in the Baptist Schools of North Carolina, with the years spent in the Southern Baptist Seminaries included.

There were few if any times when Papa and Mama had the ready cash with which to pay all their bills; yet, by the providence of God, by their determination and ingenuity, and by their hard work and the co-operation of all members of the family, about \$28,000 was spent for high school, college, and seminary work away from home. We believe this is no little accomplishment for a farmer and his companion who did much of their farming on rented land.

We have prepared this simple story with the hope and prayer that those who read it may catch the spirit of the two lives pictured herein. If it proves to be an encouragement that helps others to keep "Struggling Upward," we will feel that our writing has not been in vain.

H. M. HOCUTT

Asheville, N. C.
June 5, 1951

A BIT OF HISTORY

As a matter of interest, we give here a brief history of the Hocutt Family. The best information available traces the name as far back as 1453 to a location near Harrogate, England. A study of records at the Historical Commission in Raleigh from Chowan and Albemarle Counties in North Carolina in 1723 and 1729 gives the names of William and Edward Hocot. Note the way the name was spelled. No further record has been found of William, but a will of Edward Hocot dated in Beauford County in 1749-1750 gives his wife's name as Martha and his sons' names as William, Nathaniel, and Edward.

The will of William Hocot in Johnston County in 1795 gives the names of his children as William Brown, Sarah, Elizabeth, and Mary Millie. William Brown (Hocut) married Aley Oneil on April 5, 1795, and then he married Creacy Oneil on February 24, 1806. At his death he left the following orphan children: Hinson, Willey, Lucretia, Sally, Sarah, and Zachariah. A large number of descendants of this branch of the family may be found in sections of Eastern North Carolina.

The lineage of the particular family given in this booklet goes back to Edward and Martha Hocot in 1749-1750 and to their son Edward, brother of William and Nathaniel. The will of the younger Edward just mentioned appears in "Olds Abstract for North Carolina Wills from 1760 to about 1800." The names of his children were William, Edward, Richard, Benjamin, Henry, and John. His son Benjamin Hocutt (the first time the name is found spelled as given here) married Nancy Holoman in Johnston County on September 26, 1809. His will dated in Johnston County in 1858 gives his wife's name as Sintha (a second marriage) and names his children as Nancy, William, Rilda, Laney, Atlas, James, Caswell, Harriet, Bryan, and Lemuel. Lemuel Hocutt married Lucy Oliver Ligon of Johnston County on January 11, 1841, and their children were Nancy, James Allison, William Bryant, John Caswell, Augustus, Sarah, Ennis, Hilliard M., Jefferson Davis, and Ella Mae. The Jefferson Davis Hocutt just mentioned is the Jeff. D. Hocutt of the story found in this booklet.

THE URGE

During the periods of the history of mankind, when the light of civilization seemed to be burning low, the Master, who sees beyond the darkness, has cradled in infancy many leaders of men who have helped to blaze the path that points the way for the upward march of man. If one will pause for a moment to meditate upon the lives of some of the greatest men he has known or about whom he has read, he will observe that many of them in our country were born in the latter half of the nineteenth century. They spent their early youth in an environment that was influenced greatly by the Civil War. We believe it was providential that in the hearts of these men was planted an urge to help build a better world. They saw clearly the need for a better world. In 1861, one was born under humble circumstances who was destined to take his place among men, one who would make his contribution along with others toward the betterment of mankind. When he was born he was given the name of Jefferson Davis (Hocutt) after the President of the Confederacy.

This one about whom these lines are written did not come to be known as a national leader. His name will not be found in any hall of fame, and he was not listed in *Who's Who in America*. He was an humble man who lived an humble life, unknown by many who are called great. He entered no institution of learning from which he could receive a diploma or degree of honor. To begin with, his sphere of opportunity was limited. He took his place on a small farm in Pender County in Eastern North Carolina, and there he lingered as a faithful tiller of the soil through his threescore years and ten. Yes, there he remained, and there he labored and toiled with his devoted companion to rear and to provide for his family; but while this man labored with his hands from daylight until dusk, and while he lingered close at home in his community, there was something about him surging in his heart and mind that lifted him out of his limited surroundings and circumstances and made him to

live with the lofty, the noble, and the great. It was an inner urge that would not let him be satisfied just to live. He was willing to be a tiller of the soil. To him that was an honorable task. He was not restless and dissatisfied, but rather the opposite was true. About him was a sense of the Master's presence as he planted the seed and reaped the harvest. He had a feeling that he was in partnership with God. For him, life on the farm was something more than the amount of his harvest or the size of his bank account. His was a sacred task. In him there was an urge that lifted him above life's material things. Above all there was a deep, abiding longing within him that he might live a life of the greatest usefulness possible and that the world might be made better because he had lived in it. It was not what he might receive from his fellowmen that meant most to him, but rather it was what he might give to his generation that was his crowning glory.

During the winters of his youth, before the responsibilities of life fell too heavily upon him, he was able to finish about the fourth grade in school, and that was the limit of his academic training; but it was not the finish of his schooling, not this man. Throughout the days of his life he was a student. Being a Baptist, and an ardent one, he saw to it that the very best literature provided by his denomination came to his home regularly, and he found time during his busy life to read those periodicals and to keep himself informed about what Baptists and other denominations were doing. He was a reader of books, but he wanted none but the best for himself and his family. More than once his sons and daughters, fresh from college, were stumped by his questions. At his death he left a library of no mean size to be divided between his two preacher sons.

Not in books and periodicals alone did he find that for which his hungry, alert mind longed. He was a lover of men, and he sought the company and fellowship of the greatest men who came in reach of his community.

To them his home ever extended a most cordial welcome. Preachers, college presidents, denominational leaders, and missionaries frequented his home and ate from his table. He was especially fond of such men as Dr. R. T. Vann, the "Wingless Eagle of North Carolina Baptists," and Rev. David Wells Herring, a boyhood friend who was a missionary to China. His pastor was always a close friend and brother. He loved the company of these men; and while he was an humble farmer, the greatness of his soul made him perfectly at home among the great and the noble. To him, these were men after whom he could pattern his life and after whom he would have his children to pattern theirs.

This constant longing for the best that life had to give for himself and for all members of his family constituted an inner urge that followed him throughout the days of his life.

THE CLOSED DOOR

Throughout his life, Papa had a deep interest in missions. Of all his friends, Rev. David Wells Herring, who went as a missionary to China from a neighboring community, was one of his closest. One of Mr. Herring's sons died while quite young, and he was such a fine little fellow that his father wrote a little book about him that was entitled *The Manly Boy*. Papa received one of those books as a gift from his close friend, and the story of the fine little lad touched his heart. Soon after that book was received, the writer of these lines made his appearance as the fifth son in the family and was given the name of Manly.

In his library that was divided between his two preacher sons after his death were many books of missionary interest, among which was the story of David Livingstone. Of all his books, other than the "Book of Books," this one about Livingstone showed the most use. The backs were all but gone from it, and many of its pages were loose. More than once the name of Livingstone was used

in conversations in the family circle. Papa was familiar with the events of this great missionary's life, and this interest helps to explain why his first son was named David.

But to read the story of missionaries and to know personally those who gave their lives to this great work did not satisfy the longing in Papa's heart. There was a feeling that he never got away from that he too must do something to carry the news of the gospel to others; thus early in life he felt the call to go as a missionary to Madagascar, an island off the coast of Africa. This feeling of a call was so clear that time after time late in life he referred to it, and he wished so much that he might have gone, but circumstances made it necessary for him to so plan his life that this missionary interest might be used by the Master in other ways.

Papa was the youngest son in a family of ten children. He had a twin sister who died in infancy. Being the youngest son, he was faced with the necessity of providing adequate care for his parents in their old age. He was devoted to them, and not once would he think of leaving home. That was out of the question. He wanted an education as an older brother, John, was getting at Wake Forest in preparation for the ministry, but with him, the completion of the fourth grade was the limit. To go on to school and from there to the mission field was a desire and a longing that lingered in the depth of his heart. It was the one thing above all others that he wanted to do, but with him, do what he might, he found a "Closed Door."

Had God made a mistake in placing this call into the heart of a lad when to carry out the demands of the call was impossible from every human viewpoint? Was Papa mistaken about the call that he felt? Is it possible that the feeling he had was only a thrill for adventure that was stirred by the reading of the life of David Livingstone? These questions come into our minds, and with the limit upon our understanding of the workings of the Master, we confess that we are not certain of all the answers to

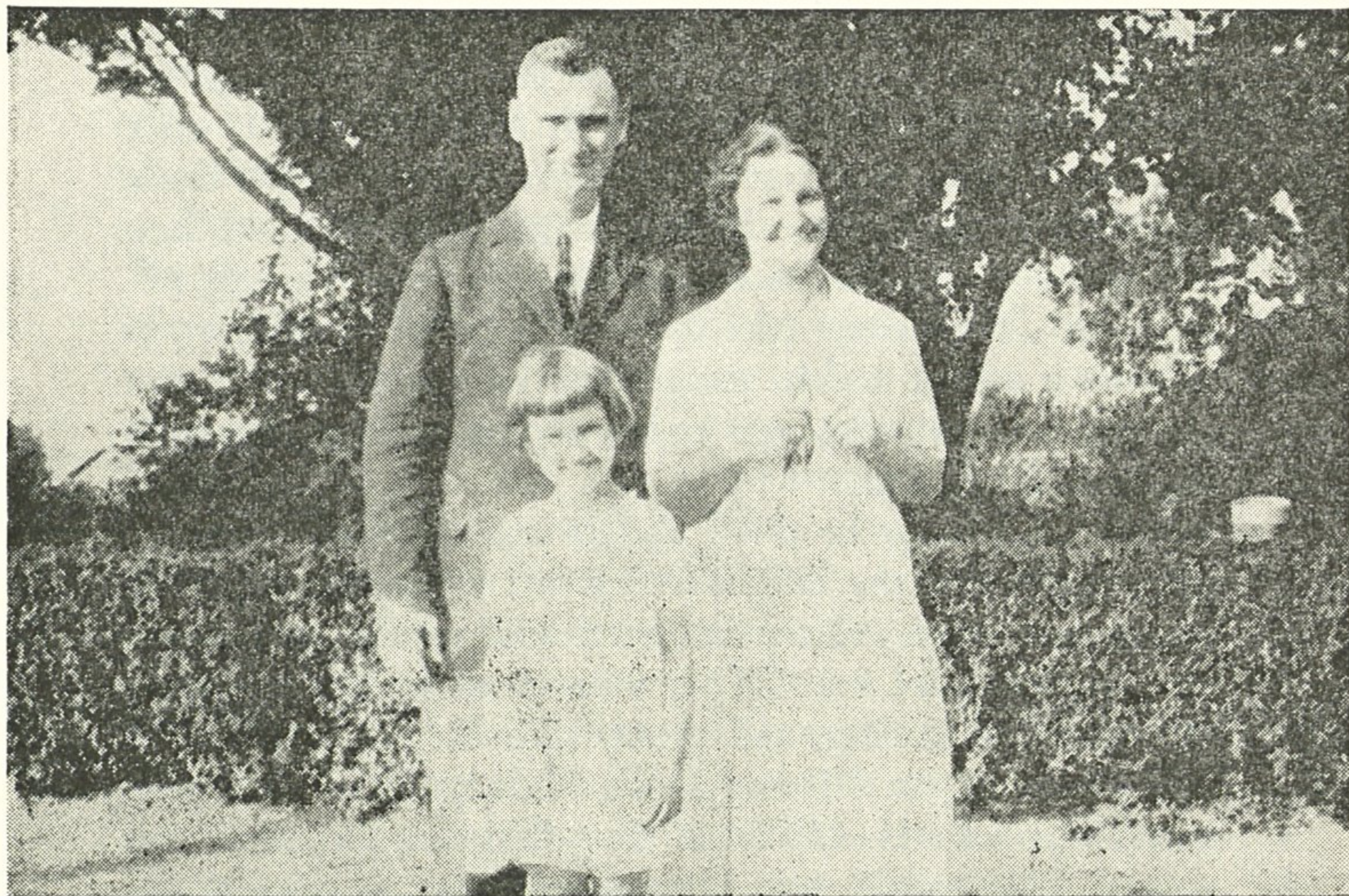
all these questions; however, we are perfectly confident that the Master was working in His own way to bring about His will; thus we make bold to suggest that judgment be withheld at least until all the pages of this story have been read.

The answer to these questions was not as easy and logical to Papa as the above lines seem to indicate. He was entirely conscious of all the circumstances involved. He was a man who faced the problems of life as they came day by day in a practical, common-sense way. He knew all too well the situation before him, but at the same time he knew the feelings of his heart. It was not a vision in the sky or a strange voice that convinced him on the spur of the moment of his call. It was rather an inner feeling prompted by a "still small voice," a voice familiar to him, that put upon his heart the need of those in heathen darkness. It was a call that lingered into the nights, a call that stood out over all the seemingly impossible difficulties; thus to answer it with logic or to dismiss it as impossible was out of the question. To him the call had meaning, and he knew that in time the meaning would be clear.

But what must he do? To go was impossible, but to get away from the call was just as impossible, or even more so, and he was the last man who would try to solve the problem that way. Thus what must he do? To him the answer was clear, and about it he did not worry. He was aware of the "Closed Door," but he knew One who could open doors, and with that faith the problem was solved. He would give himself to study, to prayer, and to a life of service and not worry about what he could not do.

This attitude led him to study geography. None of his children knew as much about the countries of the world when they received their college diplomas as he knew. He studied world conditions. He was interested in people and their customs. Mission magazines caught his eyes. He would read them and leave them handy for his children to read. In that way he would answer the call he

felt by keeping his mind and heart filled constantly with every available item of interest about our missionary program. Then he would do his part by teaching and by giving to make his church a truly missionary church. Being unable to do the one thing his heart longed for, he gave himself to do with all his might what his hands found to do, and God let him live to see the "Closed Door" open and to see Rosa, his oldest daughter, enter that door. She and her husband, Rev. J. C. Powell, sailed for Nigeria, Africa, as missionaries on January 11, 1920. Later Papa was heard to say that the day they left home for Africa was the happiest day of his life.



This is a picture of Rosa and Carlyle Powell and their daughter Mary Hester Powell. Rosa is the oldest of the children in the Hocutt Family. She and Carlyle sailed for Nigeria, West Africa, as Baptist Missionaries on January 11, 1920. Mary Hester was born in Africa. After completing her college work and taking training as a nurse, she joined her parents as a Missionary in Africa. She is at the Baptist Hospital in Ogbomoso, and Rosa and Carl are at Oyo.

A LIGHT KINDLED IN THE DARK

After the death of grandfather Lemuel Hocutt in 1885, Papa and one or two of his sisters, who had not married, remained at home running the farm and caring for grandmother Lucy Legion Hocutt until her death on December 21, 1890. That day, the day of her death, was an event-

ful day in more ways than one. She had been ill for some months, and it was evident that her illness was serious and that she could not live very long. She was most appreciative of what her children had done for her, and to the very end she was interested in their welfare and future happiness. The fact that Papa had remained at home and had not married and had given her every attention possible during her last days made her all the more appreciative of him. Within those last months, he had won the affection of Hester Katherine Murray, daughter of George and Amanda Murray of the "Murray Town", some miles north and east of Burgaw, who at that time was living near Rocky Point with her sister Eliza who had married Hilliard M. Hocutt, one of Papa's brothers. The date of their wedding had been set for Wednesday, December 24; but grandmother, realizing that the end was drawing near, expressed a wish that she might see them married before her death. She said that she could die happy if she knew they were married. Papa was very attentive to his mother, and he was anxious to comply with her every request if possible. That being true, on Sunday morning, December 21, 1890, he left to go for his chosen bride. He found her without all things in readiness for the wedding day, but she was willing to join him without waiting longer, and off the two lovers went to have their lives united in matrimony.

When the word had been spoken before Tom J. Armstrong, Justice of the Peace at Rocky Point, after it was evident that no preacher could be found, there was neither a reception nor a honeymoon trip; but instead, traveling by horse and buggy, the newly-wedded couple made their way to the home where a mother was lingering between life and death. They knew that time was an important element if the expressed wish of the sick one might be realized. With anxious hearts, the lovers arrived to find that she had slipped away; and upon checking on the time, it was thought that the end had come at about the same moment they stood before the marriage altar.

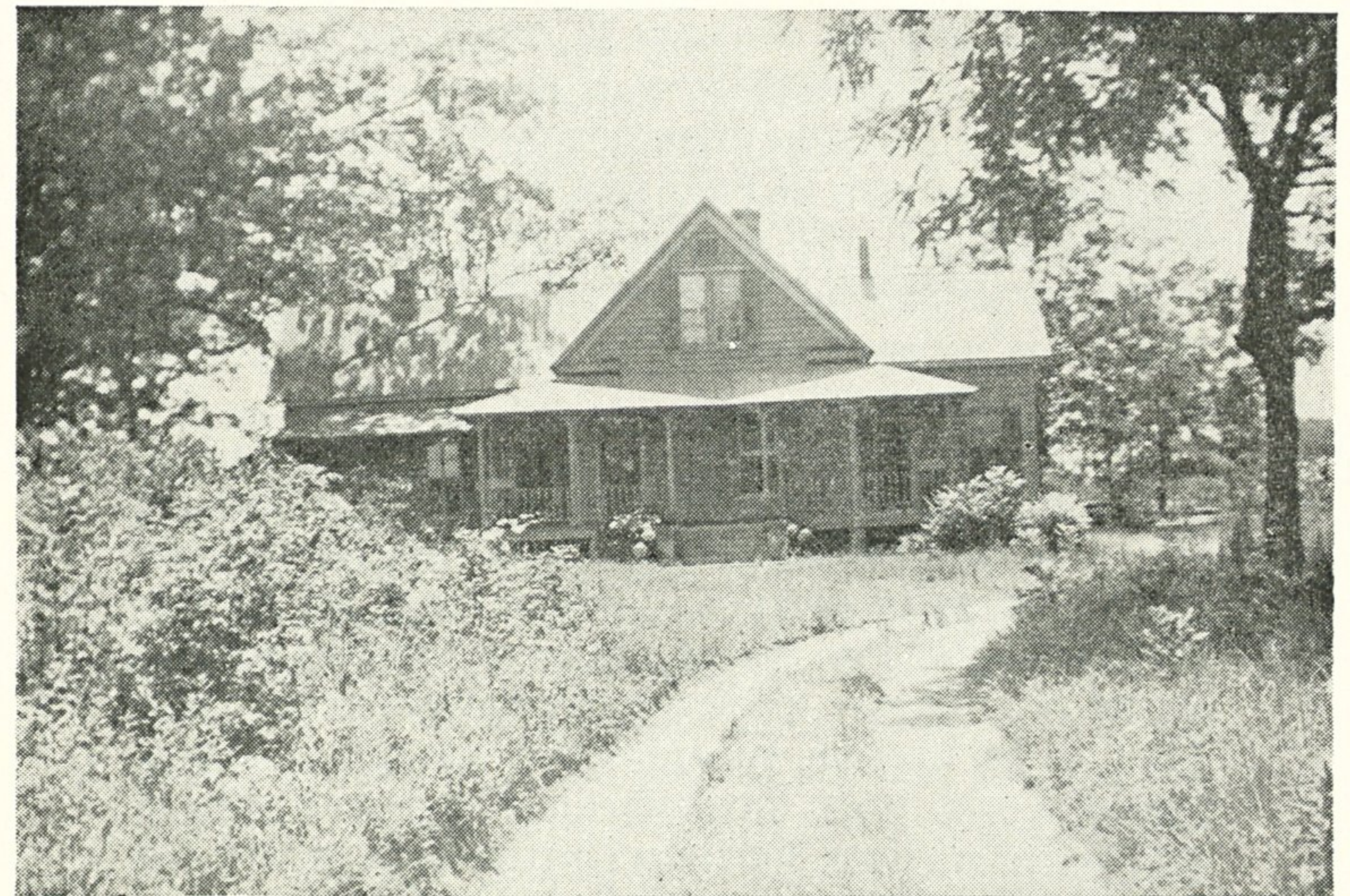
For these two, the experiences of this eventful day were mingled with joy and sorrow. A dear one called by the name of Mother had slipped away. For any appreciative child, memories of childhood days crowd the mind and heart when the tender hand of Mother is stilled in death. The joys of wedding bells do not crowd out the emotions experienced on such a day. Clouds of darkness gather, and life's shocking experiences become a cold reality. It is not easy to give up one's dearest friend, and that is what happened to Papa. But in that hour when one was called away, another was welcomed into his life and into his home. When these two were wed in this hour of darkness, a light was kindled, the rays of which are still shining. A light was kindled because the two who were wed were light-bearers. It is not so with all weddings, but with this one, two lives were united for life, and the two became one in purpose, in plan, and in sacrifice; and through their varied experiences of life, they walked side by side as one through the years in "The Light Kindled in the Dark."

EARLY STRUGGLES

An attempt to describe the early struggles of Papa and Mama is like trying to record an event that one knows little about. The best one can do is to retell some of the things that along through the years were revealed by them. Not all the things that occurred were known by members of the family because many of the events were so sacred to them and so peculiar to their interests that an attempt to relate them would be like treading upon sacred ground. To them there was no thought that what they were doing would ever be recorded. They were not living and working for that purpose. With a sense of divine leadership, they were just doing what they could to follow the fixed purpose and plan for their lives.

Among the things that entered into their early struggles was the need of more land for cultivation. The home place that came to them was very small, and enough could not be produced on it to provide for a family. This was a matter of no little concern because there was so little with

which to pay for more land that might be obtained. That being true, there was only one thing to do, and that was to venture cautiously little by little and then to make the necessary sacrifice to pay for such land as they would dare to buy. This they did, and the personal sacrifices they made were far greater than anything that may be described herein; however, with all they could do, they were unable to secure all the land needed, and until the end of his days, Papa did much of his farming on rented land.



This picture of the home place was taken early in July, 1951. In former years a large oak tree stood just back of the house on the right of this picture. It was in the center of the yard and was a shade to a large part of the yard. Alma, one of the sisters, and her husband Fulton Blanchard live there now with their daughter Mary Emma.

Another thing that entered into their early struggles was the need for a larger and better house in which to live. The dwelling on the home place was very small and was in need of repairs. The kitchen, a separate room built of logs some distance from the rest of the house, had about served its day. This need for a larger and better place to live was an urgent necessity, but it took

time, hard work, and sacrifice to get it. Papa hauled on a wagon all the lumber for the new house from a sawmill near Burgaw, some five or six miles away. A neighbor helped in fixing the pillars and chimney, but Papa did much of the rest of the work. He planed by hand the lumber that was used for weather-boarding. Members of the family who were old enough to drive nails helped in putting on the lathes for plastering, and most of that was done on rainy days when work could not be done on the farm.

Central in the cause for struggle and toil was the fact of a growing family. There were children to be provided for, and the number continued to increase until there were fifteen, one of whom died in infancy, leaving fourteen, eight girls and six boys, to grow to manhood and womanhood. To provide food, clothing, and other necessities for this group was no little task. It required long hours of work six days to the week during every month of the year.

To meet this need there had to be co-operation, and every minute of time had to be utilized. It was not enough to raise just the ordinary crops. Special means of income had to be planned. This necessity led Papa to start making sausage during the winter months for sale on the Wilmington market, some eighteen miles away. Then by the time the sausage season was over a crop of asparagus was ready for market. Along with this, in the early years there were strawberries to be picked and shipped. These extra things just had to be done to meet the demands of a large family.

But all the story was not just the earning of an income with which to buy the necessary things. There had to be careful planning at home to make things go as far as possible and to save where it could be done, and at this Mama was a genius. She learned to patch and then to patch some more to make clothes last a week or two longer. She could sew and she taught her daughters to sew in order to help make their clothes. In the purchase of cloth, enough would be bought at times to make sev-

eral dresses from the same piece in order to save in the cost and to make it go farther. Then there was no laundry and no washing machine. Clothes had to be cleaned on the washboard, and only those who have done it know how hard this type of work is. This was done at home by Mama with none too much outside help, and that was no little task where there were so many children to get clothes dirty.

Along with the things already mentioned, there were other things that had to be crowded in somewhere. It took shoes and plenty of them for the feet of fourteen children, and those shoes were constantly in need of repairs. At this task Papa was efficient. To see him put soles on shoes, one would think he was an experienced cobbler, and that was not far from true. Chairs and other bits of furniture had to be repaired, and this also would fall to Papa's hands.

Papa tried to do all he could to make the housework as easy as possible for Mama. One day a sewing machine salesman came to our home, and Papa bought a new "White" machine for a total price of fifty-five dollars. He was allowed twenty dollars for an old machine that he traded in for the new one, which left a balance of thirty-five dollars to be paid. Some weeks later it was discovered that the actual price of the new machine was thirty-five dollars. The salesman was a smooth-talking fellow who was friendly and joked with the children present, and he went away richer by twenty dollars. That loss of twenty dollars to Papa and Mama represented many long hours of hard work.

With Papa's help, David, the oldest son, fixed a definition of a baby as a "Troublesome Pleasure" in an advertising contest. For this definition he was given credit of seventy-five dollars on the price of a new piano, which left a total of two hundred and seventy-five dollars for Papa to pay. That explains how a piano was purchased.

The struggles that came through the years called for thinking and planning together, and that is what Papa and Mama did. Bill Armstrong, a Negro man who was a faithful helper, got much fun out of trying to tell how Papa would say so often when facing a problem, "O Katie, my dear wife, please help me to think." Throughout their years together they looked to each other for help in the solution of every problem. As is evident in this story, Papa did his full part in all things, but it is equally true that in Mama he had a true helpmate. She did help him to think, and she helped him to carry every load. In every struggle she was standing by his side. The dark hours were made lighter and the heavy burdens were more easily borne because of the help and encouragement he received from Mama. No man ever had a nobler or truer companion. As one, they shared the struggles and sacrifices that came to be a real part of all their years together.

POOR HEALTH

The energy that served as a constant urge for Papa through his threescore years and ten did not find its source in a strong and healthy body, but instead it came from an alert mind and impelling spirit that would not let him find comfortable idleness behind the weakness of the flesh. As will be seen in these lines, he had few days in which he enjoyed the best of health, but the motivating power of his life made him the victor and not the victim of this physical handicap. What his real trouble was remained somewhat of a mystery. If the doctors ever knew all that was wrong, they did not tell him. Some of his chronic troubles were intense nervousness, indigestion, rheumatism, and some form of heart trouble.

In the early years after his marriage, so severe was his nervous condition that in the spring of the year, when the land had been prepared for the planting of corn, he would lead a mule up and down the rows behind him as he dropped the seed corn by hand and covered it by pushing dirt over it with his foot. His condition was so intense that he dared not get too far away alone, and the

mule with him gave him a sense of security and self-confidence that enabled him to go on with his work.

In later years, when some of us would be plowing in the field where he and others were working with the hoe, he would have those of us who were plowing to so scatter ourselves in the field that some of us would be near him with a mule as much of the time as possible. At times when we would go to the field for work when no plowing was to be done, he would have one of us to take a mule along and tie it under the shade of a tree close by where we were working to give him the sense of security that his nervous condition demanded.

Different ones of us have heard Mama say many times that during the early days after their marriage, when he would leave home for the field or for the market, she was not sure whether he would return dead or alive. Her feeling about his condition was so uncertain that at all times she kept some clean sheets in a certain drawer where they could be had immediately in the event of his death.

These lines are written, not to magnify Papa's illness, but rather to call attention to some of the difficulties under which he worked that served as a constant test of his zeal and determination. Many a man with less zeal would have surrendered under less difficulties and become an object of charity, but no such thought ever entered the mind of the one about whom these lines are penned. No one ever caught him sitting on the stool of do-nothing and talking about his aches and pains. He was a busy, alert man. There was work for him to do all the time, and plenty of it. Those who knew him marveled at the amount of hard work he did and the amount he got others to do. He did more real hard work than many who were blessed with stronger bodies, and he put to shame many who started life under more favorable circumstances.

There is another side to this picture. By the side of this man walked a woman who had promised to stand by him in sickness and in health, and this she did until he slipped away. Her task was all the harder because of

his condition. Think of her as a mother with small children who looked to her for the tender care that is due every child. With them her hands were full, but they were not her only care. She has never revealed the full depth of the anxiety she bore when a sick husband would go from her sight to places of work, and she tried not to let him know how anxious she was when his return was delayed beyond the expected hour. With a willing and a tender hand, she went about her work and did all she could to relieve him of extra duties and responsibilities. More than once, of necessity, she was called upon to do the unusual thing.



A picture of "Grandma," Mrs. Amanda Murray, Mama's mother. She spent her last years in our home.

In the sausage season during the winter months, she took her place for two days each week in helping to kill the hogs and to make sausage, liver pudding, etc. She helped to clean the chitterlings and to get them ready for the market. For long hours she stood in the smoke by the pot where the lard or the liver pudding was cooking. Many times she worked from the early morning until the midnight hour when there was not sufficient help or when for some reason the work did not move along as was expected. In no event did she stop until she saw that all things were finished and in order. It would have been most difficult, if not impossible, to do this work without her help. She was one person who could give just the help that Papa stood in need of. She was a true helpmate.

At this point, it is fitting to say that Mama's weight of responsibility was made heavier by the attention and care demanded by her mother, Mrs. Amanda Murray, who made her home with us for many years. To all of us, "Grandma," as we called her, was as much a member of the family as any of us. During her last years, her health was poor, and faithfully Mama responded to the many calls to see that all her many needs were met.

A PUBLIC SERVANT

Papa's life was one of varied activities. He was looked upon by people in different walks of life as one who was a leader in his community and one who was interested in all the things that went to make for a better community. The theme of these chapters magnifies his interests in education, but that interest would not be completely described without some statement about his service as a school committeeman. He was one of the three men who were charged with the responsibility of selecting teachers and of looking after all the business matters pertaining to the little school that will be described in a later chapter. This was no little or light matter. To him it was a serious responsibility. He was concerned about those who would

teach his children and all other children who attended the school, and he considered it his sacred duty to give his time in seeing to it that the needs of the school were provided for.

A second matter of community interest that claimed his attention was the public road system of the county. In the early life of this writer, so far as he can recall, there was not a foot of paved road in all of Pender County. Most of the roads were narrow and ungraded, and many of the smaller streams had no bridges across them. During the winter months the ruts were cut deep by the wheels of the wagons and buggies that constituted the means of travel and of hauling produce. The care of these roads was in the hands of a committee with limited funds provided by the county. This was a work that called for people of public interest, and in this capacity Papa was asked to serve. He was interested in roads because he used them regularly, and he knew they were essential to the community and county. He was among those who took an interest in improving the road system even if it did call for higher taxes. He agreed with those who said that good roads cost less than bad ones. This was especially true with the coming of automobiles.

When the matter of whether the people would let their stock run free in the woods or would build fences and confine them came to be a serious issue in the country, some politically-minded people, who were concerned about this matter, came to Papa and asked him if he would run for the state legislature and introduce legislation to decide this important issue. The law passed in a previous session of the legislature favoring the free range of stock was not satisfactory to many people in the county, and they wanted a man who favored the confining of stock who could be elected to the legislature; thus they came to Papa and asked him to become a candidate. This was something new under the sun for him. He was interested in politics, as all good citizens should be, but he had no desire to run for a public office; however, when his fellow citizens came to him and made known to him their desires and requested that he announce himself as

a candidate for election as a representative to the legislature, he considered it his duty to serve his fellowmen in this way, and he offered to serve subject to the will of the people. After this announcement was made, he wondered how active he should be in seeking his election, but it did not take him long to reach a decision in the matter. Early in the campaign, he told one man that he would appreciate his voting for him in the election, and the answer that was given cooled Papa's political fervor. After that one experience, he decided that so far as he was concerned he would request no one else to vote for him. If the people wanted him in the legislature, it was up to them to elect him, and with that thought in mind he left the campaign in their hands. The people knew him, and they could decide whether or not they wanted him to go to the legislature, and they did decide. When the votes were counted, he was their choice, and this expression of confidence in him by the citizens of his county touched his heart. He was appreciative of the votes cast for him, and he considered his election a sacred trust. He must represent the people in an important assembly of the land, and when the state legislature opened in Raleigh early in January, 1919, he was on hand to take his place with representatives from the other counties in the law-making body of the state. His service in this capacity was of such nature that when time came to elect a representative again he was approached on the matter by a number of his fellow citizens, but since there was no special controversial issue involved, he declined the request and left this place open for others to seek.

There were other ways in which he was called upon to serve. The people knew that they could depend upon him to be honest and fair in all matters, and they called upon him for varied duties. After the death of a close neighbor, a large plantation was to be divided among the several children, and Papa was one of a committee of three who served in this capacity. When the time came

that a revaluation of the land for taxation was required, he was called upon to serve with others in seeking to determine a just valuation of property.

These lines describing Papa as a public servant would be incomplete without a brief discussion of the calls that came to him to conduct funerals and to perform marriage ceremonies. He was the only ordained minister in our immediate community, and many requests came to him to go to homes of the bereaved to bring comfort and to speak the last words over departed loved ones. Many such calls came because of the esteem in which he was held by those who were bereaved.

When it came to the matter of weddings, many interesting things happened. On one occasion a couple came in the middle of the night, and members of the family were called from their sleep to witness the ceremony, but no word was said until he was convinced that they were not a run-away couple. On another occasion, he was in the middle of the ceremony when suddenly he forgot what came next, and after stammering for a moment trying to continue, he stopped the wedding and excused himself until he could go into another room and get the ceremony straight in his mind. One day a Negro couple came seeking matrimonial bliss. After the knot was tied, the Negro man took Papa off to himself clear out of sight of those who witnessed the wedding and asked him how much he owed him. Papa was ready for some fun, as was often the case, and he told the man that there was no definite charge and that he could pay him what he thought his bride was worth. The poor fellow pulled out twenty-seven cents and gave them to Papa.

A TILLER OF THE SOIL

Perhaps it was providential that Papa was a tiller of the soil. What finer place could a couple find to live and to rear their children than out in God's open country?

Let no one be misled, however, in thinking that a child is sure to sprout wings if it is reared in the country. That does not happen. At least it did not happen with the "Hocutt Clann." Nevertheless, it was good for us that we spent our early days on the farm where there were few places of amusement to be found and plenty of work awaiting our hands. It was there that many of life's important lessons were learned and many of life's habits were formed.

In thinking about the farm and the advantages of a farm life, one is immediately impressed with the fact that this is a work with which the average man of all ages is familiar. It is a work of honest toil by which the lowly, the humble, or the great may earn a livelihood; thus the man on the farm is a man among men engaged in life's common task of making a living for himself and for his family. With some people it is drudgery; with others it is a happy privilege; but with all it is a field of honest labor. Many of earth's noble men have been among those who have worked with the soil. For instance, the Psalmist was a shepherd lad and Abraham Lincoln was a splitter of rails. What made them different from those about them? It was not the farm on which each lived, and it was not the type of crop each farm produced. It was just that something that is related to man's inner self that makes him great. These and many others have had that trait of greatness while they lived and labored among the common folk. It was here that Papa took his place. He was a farmer. That within itself did not make of him a great man, and it did not keep him from being great. Instead, it gave him an opportunity to stand on level ground with other men, and the height to which his shoulders reached was the measure of the man that he was.

As a farmer he was a hard worker. There were no idle days with him and with the members of his family. He and Mama were the first to arise in the early morning, and when they had gotten out of bed, his first impulse was to call his boys. Those who heard those early-

morning calls will never forget how his voice rang up the stairs to the little room in which they slept, and his voice did not give an uncertain sound. It was the call of a father who was ready to go himself. He and Mama believed in the teaching of the Bible where it says, "Six days shalt thou labor." Other boys in the community could find the time for a Saturday afternoon swim in the creek, but it was a rare treat when we had the privilege of joining them. Papa did not object to our going for a swim. He went with us a few times, but most of the time there was work to be done until the late afternoon on the sixth day, and even then many things went undone.

One of the things that showed Papa's ability as a farmer was the variety of crops he raised. He never stopped looking for new ways to make his farm more productive. No member of the family will ever forget the acre or so of butterbeans that he planted each year. Early in the summer a six-foot pole had to be cut and stuck deep in the ground at each hill of beans for the vines to run on. Then when the picking time came, it was no little job, and less fun, to pick and to shell from one to three hundred quarts of beans each week for sale on the Wilmington market. More than once the call was sounded at four or five o'clock in the morning to begin the tedious day's work of shelling beans. That called for work and plenty of it, but it was just one of the things that came as a result of Papa's ingenuity in planning for variety on the farm. The one thing he tried to do was to keep some crop coming in as much of the time as possible to provide a steady income for the family.

With Papa the matter of tilling the soil was for a purpose. It was the means of his livelihood and more. An illustration given to us from his early years makes clear his high motive in all of life. The Burgaw Baptist Church, of which he was a member at the time, was seeking to erect a place of worship, and Papa wanted to do his part. He promised forty dollars on the new building when he did not have a penny to give. In the early spring of that year he planted an acre of cantaloupes,

and never before had he seen cantaloupes grow any faster or produce a larger yield. When the crop was sold, the income from it amounted to forty dollars, the exact amount he had promised on the new church. He was farming for a purpose, and God honored that purpose.

These lines would be incomplete without one other word. With Papa, his farming was a sacred task, and all about him he saw evidence of a divine plan. In the blade of grass, in the stalk of corn, in the flower, and in the bird he saw an evidence of a Supreme Being. George, one of the sons, relates this story. He and Papa were together at the plantation one day when the corn was in its prime. It gave evidence of a good crop, but rain was needed. In the afternoon a refreshing shower came. Later in the afternoon they were looking at the corn, and Papa said to George, "I have been anxious about the corn because it has been needing rain. All day I have been praying for rain, and here is the answer to my prayer." He loved to walk through the field of corn when the roots from the first and second joints on the stalks were reaching toward the ground to give anchorage and protection against the winds and rains, and, with a stick he carried with him most of the time, he would point toward the roots that were reaching for the ground and ask, "Who can look at that without believing in God?" He loved to clip a simple weed and point out the beauty and symmetry of it. The God whom he served had a plan for all things, even the weed and the flower about him, and he wanted that from the simple things of life his children would get this important lesson. For that reason, he considered his task as sacred, even in the midst of his growing crops. After his death in 1932, Olivia, one of the daughters, copied the following lines from a page in his Bible:

"I rise with the early dawn and retire when the chores of the world are done. I live with nature, walk in the green fields under the golden sunlight, out in the great alone where brain and brawn and toil supply mankind's primary needs. And I try to do my humble part to carry out the great plan of God. Even the birds are my companions; they greet me with a symphone at the new day's dawn and chum with me till the evening prayer is said."

—Author unknown.

IN THE FRONT RANKS

If by any chance in the reading of the preceding chapters, one has come to think that Papa's health or purpose in life prevented him from becoming a progressive farmer and from taking the lead in many of the things that he did, let such an one change his mind immediately. The truth is that in whatever he did, he was among those who were at the front. His very nature kept him from being satisfied with second best in any field in which he engaged. Thus, while he farmed for a purpose that was larger than his farm, he farmed so progressively that in more things than one others followed his example.

In our immediate community, the Fordson tractor that Papa bought and put to work was the first one in use by any farmer. He had been reading about tractors, and he was anxious to put one into service on his farm. Finally the time came when he felt that necessity demanded it, and he ventured to purchase this useful machine and to enlarge his farm program to make the purchase of it a wise investment. In this act, as a pioneer in his community, he was venturing forward, and his venture proved to be wise and successful; however, he was not alone in this move very long. Before many summers had passed, other farmers had secured tractors and had come to think of them as an essential part of their farm equipment.

For many years at our home we had a very definite inconvenience. The open well, which was our one source of water, was fully two or three hundred yards from the house, and to us children it seemed much farther than that. The only way we had to keep an adequate supply of water at the house was to bring it from the well in buckets. Yes, there was a much-used path between the back porch and the well. Among the chores about the home, the bringing of water was one that none of us escaped. The one convenience that Mama wanted more than any other was water close to the house. In this desire she was joined heartily by Papa and most heartily by every child in the family; thus it was a day of rejoicing when a Lally Light Plant was purchased which carried with it a pump and a tank that put water on the back porch, in the kitchen, out to the barn for the stock, and to the shed where the clothes were washed. This plant was one of the first of its kind purchased and installed in the community.

One of the leading things in which Papa pioneered was the making and selling of sausage on the Wilmington market. Early in his married life he was faced with the necessity of enlarging his income, and he began killing hogs, grinding the meat into sausage, selling what of it he could to the stores, and peddling the rest from house-to-house in Wilmington. When one remembers that we lived eighteen miles from the city and that the means of transportation was by wagon or by train, he will see clearly that it was no easy task to peddle sausage in Wilmington, but that is what Papa did winter after winter for forty years. During those years, the automobile came along, and along with it came many changes and improvements that made his work easier, but on he went each winter making sausage and selling it in an ever-increasing quantity until "Hocutt Sausage" came to be widely known and much in demand.

More than fifteen years after Papa's death, Berta, one of the girls who lives in Wilmington, was explaining to a neighbor that she was from Pender County and was a

daughter of J. D. Hocutt, and the friend to whom she was talking exclaimed, "A daughter of J. D. Hocutt! I didn't know that. I have bought sausage from him and I shall never forget the uplifting, inspirational talks I had with him as I bought sausage." Many of his other friends have come to know Berta as the daughter of the man from whom they bought sausage and have spoken in similar terms of him. These experiences help to explain why there was such a ready sale for his products.

As the years passed, others were attracted by his success in this effort, and a growing number of farmers began the same trade. The result was that competition became rather keen in Wilmington in the sausage business, but Papa went on making a good grade of sausage and selling it at a reasonable profit with no special trouble because of the trade and the reputation that he had built in this field. Since his death, no member of the family has followed him in this work, but about over the county there are several small packing houses where pork is turned into sausage and the sausage into a steady stream of income that has brought thousands of dollars to the farmers of the county and employment to no few people. In this profitable trade in our county, Papa held a leading place.

One day a representative from a nursery came to our home selling peach trees. He had a distinct advantage in making a sale because Papa was interested in fruit trees and because he saw in peaches an opportunity to make his farm more productive of a steady and needed income. Before the salesman left, five hundred trees were purchased, and later they were set out in one of the most fertile spots on the little farm. It was some three to four years before they began to yield; but when they did begin to produce fruit, the trees, along with the ripe peaches on them, were an attraction to people from far and near. Others talked of putting out trees on their farms. This was a bold venture that proved profitable, but it did not come empty-handed. The peaches were ripening entirely too fast to be hauled to market by wagons

or by a Ford car that was one of the first to come to the community. Out of the urgent necessity, a truck had to be purchased and that immediately, and that called for a move that involved a large expenditure. There was no money on hand, but Papa's credit was good wherever he was known; so the truck was bought, and the peaches were put on the market. When the summer was over, there was a debt that had to be worked off later, but the season and the peaches had proved profitable in more ways than one. The progressive nature of a far-sighted farmer had been put to the test; and though he was doing what others about him had not done, he was proving the wisdom of his venture, and others profited by his experience.

THE HAND-ME-DOWNS

To provide adequate clothing for a family of fourteen is no little task for any couple, and this problem was one of the many that tested the ingenuity and the patience of Papa and Mama. We were just normal children, and perhaps some of us were too much on the normal side when it came to using clothes that had already been worn by one or two older brothers or sisters. Yes, we were a family of children whose graduating heights could well resemble the ascending steps of a staircase; and, as we grew taller in height, each in his turn fell heir to that which his older brother or sister was no longer able to use. This was both an advantage and a disadvantage. It was a blessing in that no garment was put aside as no longer useable until it was worn beyond repair. Then to us, it seemed as a disadvantage because it meant that a new dress or new pair of trousers was more often longed for than received.

There are many things about those years that linger vividly in our minds. More than once two of the sisters would be seen wearing dresses made of the same material

and cut on the same pattern. This plan made it possible to save a few pennies in the purchase of material, and it made the task of the seamstress, a work at which Mama was proficient, a bit more simple. With some sisters, the matter of wearing dresses made on the same general pattern would be distasteful, and the sisters in our family were none the less human; however, when one of them faced the possibility of a new dress, the joy of it was not diminished by the fact that another sister had one made like it in every respect except the size.

In this important lesson of life, this son had more than one experience that has lingered fresh in his mind. He is nearly two years younger than George, his preacher brother, and he came near missing his call to the ministry because he was not fully surrendered to the proposition of wearing the hand-me-downs when George got the new trousers. Quite frequently the two of us would walk the two miles to Sunday School, and many times we were in the company of other boys in the community who went with us on Sunday afternoons. It was the one day in the week when each of us put on his best and made his way to the little church, about which more will be said later, but the fact that occasionally George would get new trousers and that his old ones would be given to me did not tend to make me more spiritually minded. Perhaps there is some consolation today in the fact that this writer is the larger in size of the two brothers, and his religion is no longer put to the test by having to wear his older brother's pants. Then, too, there is some consolation in the fact that both of us have grown old enough to get down on our knees and thank God for parents who did their best to provide for the needs of their children and who were patient and understanding when they realized that each of us wanted that which was new.

Let no one think for a minute that the experiences described here were without thrills. One eventful day stands out in memory. Three of us boys went to Wilmington, eighteen miles away, in a buggy. Papa had gone in the early morning by train, and we were to meet him in

the big city where he was going to buy each of us a new suit of clothes. What a day! No child ever got more joy from Christmas than we did from the experiences of that day. We saw the sights that were to be seen, and, too, each of us got a new blue suit of clothes. That was something to talk about. We had something to show, and in true child-like fashion we put on a display. Not many Sundays had passed before the entire community knew of our trip to the city, and especially of our new clothes in which we delighted. Being the youngest of the three who made the trip that day, I requested the privilege of returning home with Papa on the train, and the request was granted. The joy of that ride for those eighteen miles on the train almost made me forgive George for being two years older and for his passing on to me some of his clothes when they were too small for him.

Many other things could be said on this subject, but some of them should be favored by charitable silence. We have no purpose in seeking to relate only the harder experiences of the family. In the matter of clothes, we did not have all we might have wanted, but none of us suffered unduly, if at all. Today the experiences of those years have more the appearance of blessings than of suffering or of sacrifice. We had what we needed. We were better off by far than we thought. We came to know how to appreciate things when we got them. Then we learned how to share with others, and we came to think a little, at least, of the needs of one another. Today we have homes and families of our own. We live in different communities or cities and some of us in different states and countries; however, we have remained a family of brothers and sisters, and each of us stands ready to help the others. If wearing hand-me-downs had any part in teaching us this lesson, it is worth all it cost and a thousand times more. We are not poorer but richer by having done it.

LET US FORGET

The little farm on which we lived had to be productive to meet the demands and needs of the hungry, growing children who had to be fed and clothed from the things it produced, and its yield did give evidence of fertile soil, but at no point did it sprout angel wings. They just did not grow on our farm. Everyone of us was a full-blooded descendant of Adam's race. We were human with perhaps a little added emphasis on the human side. We went to Sunday School and church regularly. Papa and Mama saw to that, and it was good they did. We needed to go. It is doubtful if the preacher realized how important his sermons were when we were in the congregation.

There is one thing in particular that no one of us can accuse Papa and Mama of being partial about. Not one of us was exempted from the use of the correcting rod when it was needed, and that article was a much-needed part of our household equipment. It was kept in rather constant use. The instrument that served this purpose when this son was in the greatest need of it was a black paddle about twelve inches in length. The memory of its size and stinging effect still lingers, but the paddle is no more. It broke before this writer did. The day it was used last has not been forgotten. The need of such an instrument in our home was so urgent that not many days passed before Mama asked Robert to make another one to take the place of the one recently broken. She needed one about the kitchen to stir jelly with when she cooked it in large containers during the summer. That was her chief use for it, but rather frequently she used it to stir things other than jelly. When she called on Robert to fix it, he got a piece of green ashe. He was very careful about trimming it down, and when he finished with it, it was well shaped. When it was seasoned, it was hard and firm wood, and it stood the test of time and of frequent use. When the household goods were divided years later,

so far as we can recall, there was no particular contention about who would fall heir to this much-used and feared article.

One day when George and I were rather young, Mama sent us to gather some squash that had gotten too old for table use and to feed them to the hogs. Each of us got about as many as he could carry in a bag and took them to the fence around the hog lot. Then one of us threw them over into the lot, and the other was cutting them with the axe so the hogs could eat them easily. The one throwing them over the fence faced a little too much temptation, and all of us know that temptation has been rather detrimental to the human race. The result was that not many squash had been thrown before there had to be a change; so we exchanged places, and the one throwing the squash then took good aim at the other to make sure of revenge. Before we knew it we were engaged in a desperate struggle to see which was the better man; and, as it always happened, Mama appeared on the scene just at the wrong time. Both of us were guilty. Mama knew it, and we knew it. It so happened at that particular time that Robert, one of the older brothers, and Bill Armstrong, a faithful Negro helper, were working out at the barn; and they witnessed all that took place. You could not prove much by me, and it is doubtful if you could by George, but they declared that one of us was crying, "Oh Mama, please quit," and the other was saying, "I won't do it no more." Poor prospects we were for preachers! Let others not be discouraged. If the Good Lord could make preachers out of us, there is plenty of hope for others.

Another event deserves relating. It reveals human nature. One Sunday afternoon during the summer just before apples began to get ripe, George and I started to the apple orchard where there were about a dozen trees loaded with fruit that was beginning to turn red. As has been true of others, we were tempted by red apples; so we ventured in that direction. We had not gone far before John discovered what we were doing, and he decided

to join us. Now John was some several years younger than either of us. At least we thought he was, and we considered ourselves too grown up to have him going along with us; however, there was not much we could do about it. We knew if we made him go to the house he would tell on us, but we very much did not want him to go. Since there was nothing else we could do, we let him go, but we gave him definite warning against his saying anything about our going to the apple orchard. When we had sampled the apples and had made our way back to the house, we observed that some neighbors had come to visit with us. All the members of our family at home and the visiting neighbors were sitting on the front porch enjoying a pleasant Sunday afternoon, and we came up as innocent looking as we could and joined them. Not many minutes had passed before John, who was sitting on the bannister in the center of the group, said, "We ain't been to the apple orchard." It was good for him that he was in the midst of the group. The occasion did not permit George and me to express our feelings.

In her younger days, Alma, one of the younger sisters, seemed to get much joy in hearing Mama call one of the rest of us. That was especially true when she thought the one called might receive an application of the correcting rod. On such occasions she would express her delight by saying, "Goody, goody, goody!" One day Mama called her when she was not sure the correcting rod would not be applied on her. She walked very slowly toward Mama and stopped at what she thought was a safe distance. Then in a very slow and question voice she said, "What—do—you—want?" For months thereafter she was the object of many laughs when a member of the family would say for her special benefit, "What—do—you—want?"

The topic of this brief chapter is "Let Us Forget." In the spirit of charitable silence, we close these lines and leave the things untold to tantalize the minds of curious

readers. After all, we do not care to write a book on this topic. There are other things more pleasant and more profitable to relate.

THE SECOND TABLE

Did you ever eat at the second table? If you did, you are better able to understand the content of this brief chapter, and you are better able to appreciate the privilege of sitting down with the entire family assembled around the table when a good meal is enjoyed by each one present. In our family, the matter of some of us waiting for the second table was not a rare thing. That was especially true when we had company with us. Let the preacher come on Sunday, with perhaps one or two others coming along from church with us, and some of us knew that regardless of how hungry we were, we just had to wait until those who could be seated around the table had eaten to their satisfaction.

As a rule, those of us who were younger were called upon to wait our turn, when waiting was necessary. It was not difficult to know how many and about who would be called upon to stand aside and let others have the first place. That depended entirely upon the number present for the meal. The long table that stretched diagonally across the dining room would seat about a dozen; thus when members of the family who lived elsewhere came in or when visitors came to eat with us, a proportionate number of us who were younger knew that we must give others the privilege of eating first. Though we did not welcome the privilege of waiting, there was no difficulty about it. When dinner was ready and the group was called, Mama took her place at the end of the table to give instructions about the seating of those who would eat at the first table; and when one came to the door for whom there was no room, an expression on her face or the nod of her head gave the signal that was understood and was not questioned by those of us who had to wait for the second table.

As children, we enjoyed playing, as ordinarily children do, but somehow, at that particular time, there was not much inducement to play. There were other things that attracted our attention. We were hungry, and the sight of others enjoying a good meal just made our desire to eat all the more intense. We stood around close to the doors and windows and peeped in and saw the best pieces of chicken disappear at the hands of those blessed with the privilege of the first picking, and we wondered when those at the table would ever get through. They talked and ate and then talked and ate some more. We just knew that they had forgotten about us. By this time the good impressions made by the preacher in the sermon of the morning were about gone. We were thinking about other things. How human we were!

On a few occasions the second table was not the limit. There were times when thirty to forty people shared in the Sunday dinners at home. Those were rare occasions, but they did come. At such times there were about three full tables of us. That called for no little shifting and plenty of patience on the part of those who ate last.

One may wonder about how diminished those who waited found the table. Well, it had been relieved of some of its burden, and the best pieces of chicken were less conspicuous; however, there was always plenty for those who waited, and it was worth waiting for. As has been said in other places, we had to be careful where the pennies went because there was such a demand for them; but when it came to the matter of food, there was always an adequate supply on the table. Mama was a genius in the kitchen. She was not a miracle worker. She could not make something out of nothing, but she could take what she had and serve a meal that was fit for a king and then have some left. No member of our family can say that he went hungry. That didn't happen.

There is another side to this matter of the second table. It was rather lonesome at home when the group got down to four or five or less. It didn't seem much like home. Too many were missing. It was not easy

to wait for the second table, but it was easier to do that than it was to eat at the first and only table when there were just a few present. It was a happy occasion when the entire family was there with all the in-laws and all the nieces and nephews included in the group. We looked forward to such gatherings. The food just tasted better when the entire group was at home.

DOWN AT THE BEACH

With our family it was necessary that we work, but it was not all work and no play. We put aside work for at least one day each summer and went either to Carolina or Wrightsville Beach for a day of fun and for a picnic. That was a day that we looked forward to, and it was a day long remembered and much talked about. We lived about fifteen miles from the ocean the way a crow would fly, but it was about twenty-five miles the way we had to go through Wilmington. That was a long distance in those days. That was before we began measuring a trip in terms of twenty or thirty minutes. When one traveled a long distance on a car then, the trip was talked about in terms of the number of tires he had to fix or the number of times he had to stop to get water for the car.

The matter of transportation was no little problem the first few summers that we made this trip to the beach. We did not have a car then, and as someone has said, not even a Ford. Remember there were fourteen of us children to go, and everyone of us was there for that great experience, and each one was ready on time. Then one of the thrills about it all was the fact that we were making a trip twenty-five miles from home—all the way to the beach. For that eventful day, Papa hired two automobiles with their drivers to go and take the family. Yes, we crowded in till those two cars were full, and the rest of the family went on the train to Wilmington and rode the trolley car from there to the beach. There were eighteen in the group, with the two drivers included.

One of the things of interest when we went to Wrightsville was the fact that we got to ride across the sound on the trolley car that made regular runs from Wilmington to the beach. There was no road for cars across the sound; so at that point we parked the cars, and all of us got on the trolley car and rode across to the beach where we spent the day. It was no little experience for a family like ours, right off the farm with one day for a picnic, to get to ride across the sound on the trolley; and no doubt it was a sight long to be remembered and much to be talked about by those who saw us. We saw all that was going on, and most likely it was evident to all who were about us that we were not accustomed to trips and rides of that kind.

The sight of the ocean, with its ever-restless waves stretching out into the blue, was as much a mystery as it was a thrill for us. It was something new for our untrained eyes. We could not understand it. We stood and gazed as far as we could see, and we wondered why we could not see the other side. While we were enjoying this thrilling sight, Alma, one of the younger sisters, spoke up and said that she saw a fence on the other side; and for many days thereafter we laughed and teased her about seeing a fence on the other side.

A part of the plan for the day was a swim in the surf, and all of us, with the exception of Mama, took advantage of that opportunity. That was before the days when people began to wear abbreviated bathing suits, but even so, Mama preferred to enjoy the day otherwise. The salt water and the waves tested our swimming ability or revealed the lack of it, but just the same we dared to venture, and the experience was one of no little fun. As time passed, some of us got to the place that we could ride the waves and dive into them with reasonable skill. In later years, the writer of these lines was one of two who went out and rescued a man who had gotten beyond the point where he could make his way back to safety alone.

In August, 1915, when we took one of our first trips to the beach, we stopped in Wilmington for a picture of the entire family. Such a group was quite a test for a camera, but it came through all right, and the picture taken that day is one of the prized possessions of each member of the family. The studio where we went for the picture was on the fifth floor of the building, and we went up and down on the elevator. Then we looked out the window and saw the people walking on the street five stories below us, and they looked like ants walking along. That was almost too much for us in one day. Perhaps it was best that the building we were in had only five stories.

A part of every picnic day was a big dinner. That was just a part of it, but it was a big part, and everyone of us was present for it. We thought we had been hungry before, but after taking a ride all the way to the beach and after going into the salt water for a swim, our appetites had grown to full size; and as a result, the chicken, the sandwiches, the cakes, and the pies that were packed in the lunch box were well devoured with nothing left for supper. One's appetite seems to know no limit on a day like that.

The fun of a picnic at the beach did not remain a secret very long. We had something to talk about, and we left nothing untold. Thus it was not long until other families began to go with us, and finally the Sunday School at the Riverside Church came to plan an annual outing at Carolina Beach. By that time Papa had bought a car and a truck, and we arranged seats in the truck to help carry the group. Robert drove the truck on most of the trips, and by his side was Gussie, a member of another family of fourteen that will be mentioned in another chapter. The day was most important for them. They were joined in matrimony later.

Those days of outings were not without their meaning for us. In our plans for the year, they stood out and brought a challenge to us as we anticipated them. We could not go until the crops were finished and until other things were out of the way. When the day was finally decided upon and when we began to work toward it,



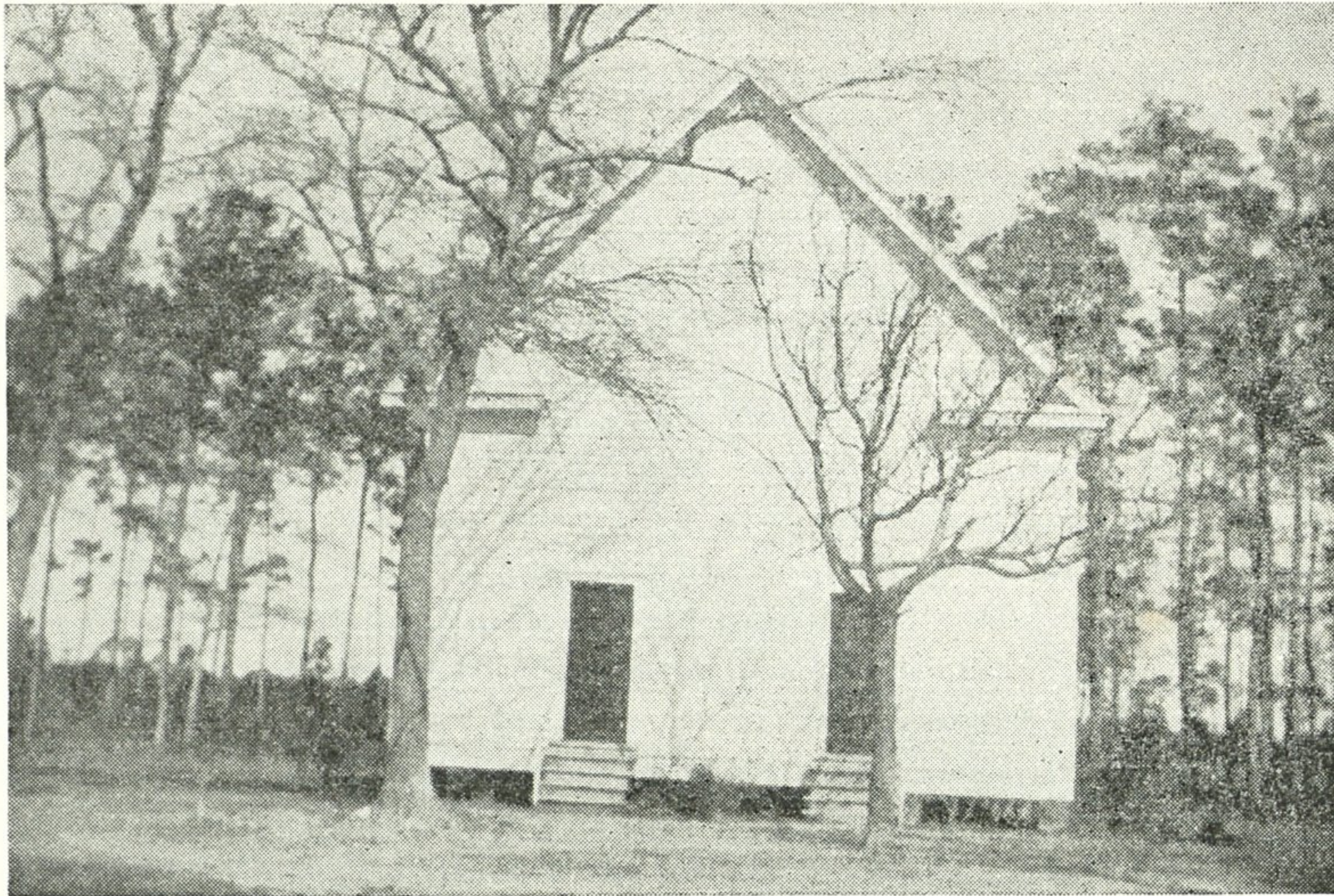
The Hocutt Family on the opposite page

A picture of the entire family taken in August, 1915, the first time we went to the beach together. Reading from left to right, the four sitting in front are Zelma (Mrs. L. H. Dawson), John, Naomi (Mrs. David Chambers), and Alma (Mrs. Fulton Blanchard). In Papa's lap is Betsy (Mrs. A. D. Wilder), and in Mama's lap is Louise (Mrs. Lamber E. Turner). Those on the middle row are Rosa (Mrs. Carlyle Powell), Papa, Mama, and David. Standing in the middle directly behind Papa and Mama is Manly. Those standing in the back are J. D., Berta (Mrs. J. C. Scott), Robert, Olivia (Mrs. Frank Marshburn), and George.

the unfinished tasks were completed with an ever-increasing speed. We wanted nothing to hinder those plans, and usually nothing did. One day the car had to be taken to the garage on the morning we were to go, and the mechanic had to work a long time to fix it. The entire group waited for some time after the appointed hour to leave, and then the car that had been hired for that particular day was filled, and those in it went on their way while the rest of us waited through what seemed to be unending hours for our car to come and speed us on our planned trip. Those waiting hours detracted from the pleasure of the day, but they did not keep us home. We were almost ready to start walking, or running, if need be, to join those who had preceded us; however, when the day was over, it held only pleasant memories. That was true of all the days spent at the beach. They filled our minds with memories that have remained pleasant. The work of the year was made easier by this one day of fun and frolic. The family was molded more firmly into a unit by those days of outings together.

WHERE TWO FAMILIES MET

Let no one think for a moment that the Riverside Baptist Church near Burgaw, North Carolina, about which these lines are written, was composed entirely of the members of two families. There were many others in the community that helped to make up the membership of our little church, but there were two large families of fourteen children each who were loyal and faithful in attendance and in support of the church, and the presence of the members of these two families made a difference, and a big difference, in the attendance at the services.



Riverside Baptist Church where the family went to worship. The church was located near the North-East Branch of the Cape Fear River and about six miles from Burgaw. Some years ago due to small attendance, the group consolidated with the Burgaw Baptist Church.

We refer to the family of Mr. Tom Batson, who lived on a large plantation between the church and the bend of the North East Branch of the Cape Fear River, and our family. We lived near the highway about two miles west of the church. With fourteen children in each of these family groups, naturally the success of the work in the church was dependent to no small degree upon the activities of the members of these families. When a new preacher or a visitor would come to our church, it was interesting to observe his reaction as he was introduced to the people present. Invariably someone would tell him to call each person a Batson or a Hocutt and he would be right most of the time, and that was about correct.

Our little flock at Riverside never grew to be very large, and there were reasons why that was true. We were located near the river, and the nearest bridge was about five miles away. That meant we could draw our membership from only a limited territory. This fact hindered our progress in numerical growth, but by no means did it indicate that we were lacking in interest or that our church was considered weak. More than once the annual meeting of the Wilmington Association was held at Riverside, and the faithful women who knew how to meet the need on such an occasion did their full duty in preparing bountiful dinners of fried chicken, ham, country sausage, cakes, pies, etc. Not once did any one attending such a meeting at Riverside go away hungry, and no one was disappointed in the dinner. Our flock was known far and wide as a church of not-too-large membership, but it was composed of a faithful and thoroughly dependable group.

Another interesting matter was the fact that we never had services more than one Sunday each month except during special revival meetings. As a rule, our pastor lived at Burgaw and served other churches in what we called the Burgaw Field. Usually the time for our service was the first Sunday morning, and part of the time we had a service on the preceding Saturday afternoon or night. That made the first Sunday the big day of the month for us, and we looked forward to it. Always on the preceding Sunday our superintendent would remind us that the next Sunday would be preaching Sunday, and he would urge us to be on time for Sunday School so we would not take the time from the preaching service. With few exceptions, we had our largest attendance of the month on this Sunday. After the Sunday School had closed, we would have a brief intermission, and then we were called into the church for the important service of the day and of the month.

Our pastors believed the Bible just as it is written, and they preached it with vim and vigor. They did not soft-pedal their statements about hell and the eternal doom of the sinners, and they waxed eloquent in their descriptions of heaven and of eternal life. It was no unusual thing for members of the congregation to be seen shedding tears during the service. We were lifted to lofty heights by the men of God who came to feed our little flock. He fed us on the "Bread of Life," and then he went into our homes where he was fed on bread which is "the staff of life." Each Sunday when the service was over, we stood around on the grounds and talked and visited for about thirty minutes before departing for our homes; and always when we left the church, the preacher was on the way home with one of the families where he enjoyed a good Sunday dinner along with the members of the family where he was a welcome guest.

It was no unusual thing for the preacher to come to our home, and we always delighted in his coming. Mama anticipated the possibility of our having him with us on preaching Sunday, and as a rule, some advance preparations were made on Saturday. We have vivid memories of seeing the sisters stirring the chocolate and fixing the cakes three or four layers high, and the sight of such preparation for Sunday assured us of better things to come. Then many times on Sunday morning there was the ice cream freezer to be turned. Yes, the dessert had to be ready to go along with the fried chicken, rice and gravy, etc. The preacher was coming, and some other friends might come with him. That made a good dinner an urgent necessity. No wonder two sons in the family felt called to preach early in life!

A history of no little size could be written about the activities of the Riverside Church. We had just a small one-room building with no Sunday School rooms, and many years passed before curtains were provided to separate the classes. Each class took its place in one corner or in some part of the building, and there the teacher set forth to teach the Word of God to pupils who saw all

that was going on in all the classes and heard much that each teacher said. No one will deny that we were limited in equipment, but at the same time, no one in that group will admit till this day that we were limited in interest or that we had a weak Sunday School. This writer will never forget those days, and in particular he will never forget his teachers who touched his life by the lives they lived and the truths they taught.

Not far from the church was a large creek that flowed into the river just a short distance away, and we went there each summer after our revival meeting in August to baptize the new converts. Close by the river were graves of early settlers of our country. Dates on the stones at the graves carried the mind of the reader back before the days of the Revolutionary War. It was an historic spot, but much of its history was unknown. We called the location the "Grave-Yard Landing." In former days, boats had stopped there on their trips up and down the river. At this sacred spot many in the community followed Christ in the sacred ordinance of baptism. It was a natural setting for such a service, and many eyes saw pictured there the truths proclaimed centuries ago by John the Baptist on the banks of the Jordan River.

Then there were other occasions when the "Two Families Met." On January the fifth, 1922, Robert, an older brother, and Gussie, a daughter in the Batson family, met at a sacred altar in our church and were pronounced husband and wife, and the knot still holds. This wedding was the result of many visits between the members of the two families, and especially many visits on the part of Robert, who did his courting with interest and determined effort. On another such occasion Rosa was married to Carlyle Powell shortly before they sailed for Africa as missionaries. The decorations for the ceremony were so arranged that the aisle in which they entered was named America, and the aisle they marched out was named Africa. The words were spelled with flowers fastened to the wires that had been arranged for the curtains that divided the Sunday School classes. On a later date, Zelma,

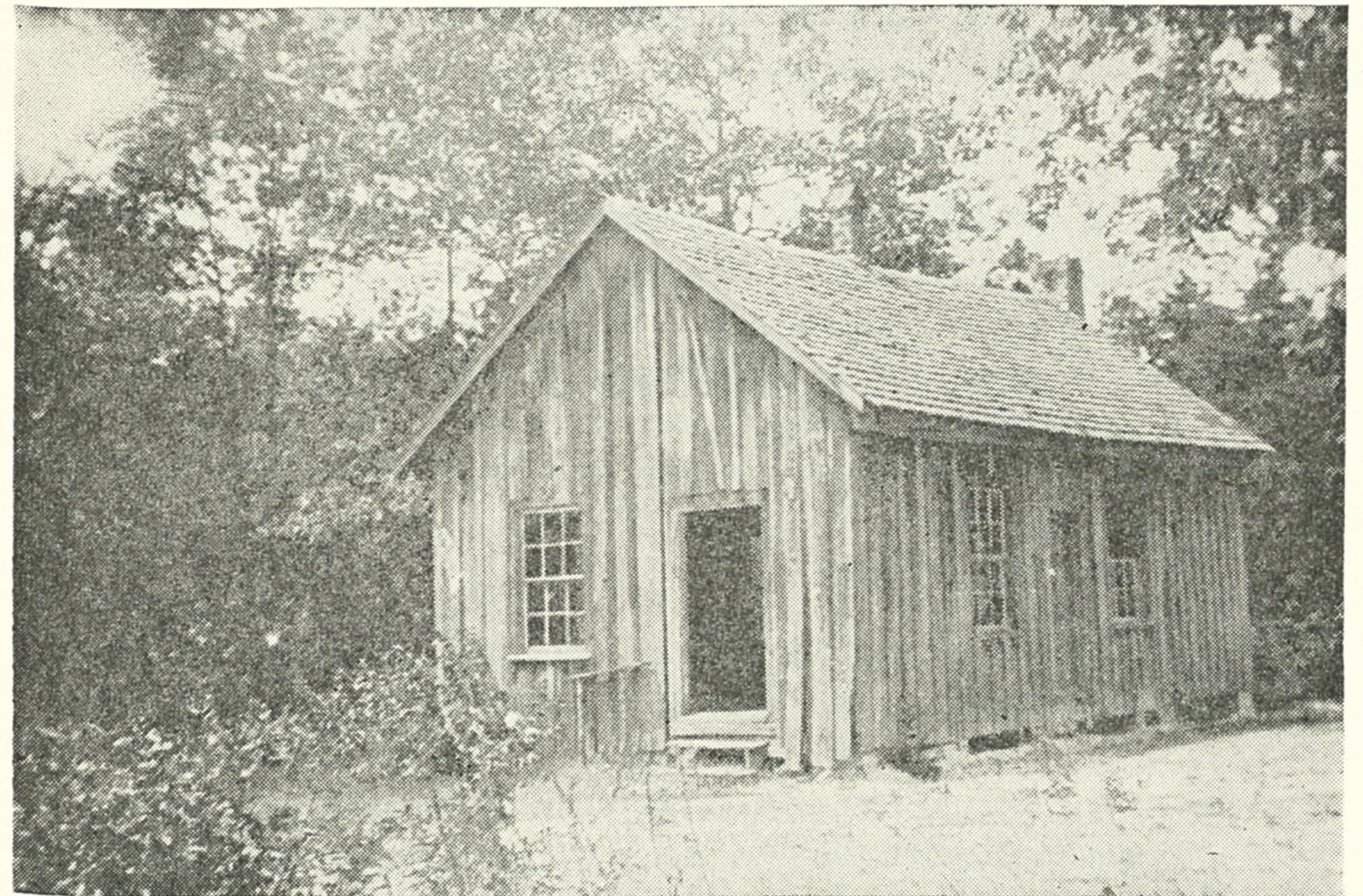
a younger sister, was married to Harper Dawson at the same altar; and the last time the church was used for such an occasion by any member of our family, Louise, the youngest sister, was married to Lambert E. Turner.

Things have changed now. The building still stands, but the Riverside Church as such is no more. Many members who were leaders in the church have gone to their reward, and most of the young people have married and located in other places. Then the good roads and the coming of the automobile brought the community much closer to Burgaw; thus a few years ago, the Riverside Church merged with the Burgaw Church. This means that the little church has gone from its sacred spot of hallowed memories, but it lives on in the memories of those who were blessed by its noble ministry. An evidence of the fruitfulness of the Riverside Church can be seen in the fact that it sent out one missionary to Africa, two ministers, two others who became ministers' wives, a number of deacons, and a larger number of Sunday School teachers and faithful Christian workers. Today we are a scattered flock, but we are thankful for the "tie that binds."

A LIGHT ON THE HILL

One of the abiding centers of the community that stood as a landmark through the years was the little, unpainted, one-room school building in which one teacher patiently tried to teach all the subjects through the seventh grade. The school ground, with the building in the center, was a part of our little farm and was located near the main road on an elevation slightly above the level of our yard. When this school had its beginning is a matter unknown to this writer, but the fact that it was located on our farm is an evidence of interest in education on the part of Papa and Mama. To them, this was one institution that had to be located in the community and close to our home. And why shouldn't it be close to our home?

There were more pupils enrolled in the school from our home than from any other family; and from the time Rosa, the oldest daughter, began her schoolwork until a new, two-room building was erected on another road in the community, there were two or more of us in this school all the time until eleven of the fourteen of us had learned the alphabet and the multiplication tables in this one-room institution of learning. It was in this school that half of our family graduated from the seventh grade, and four of us who started to school there completed the first seven grades in the new building erected nearby, where the youngest three started their schoolwork.



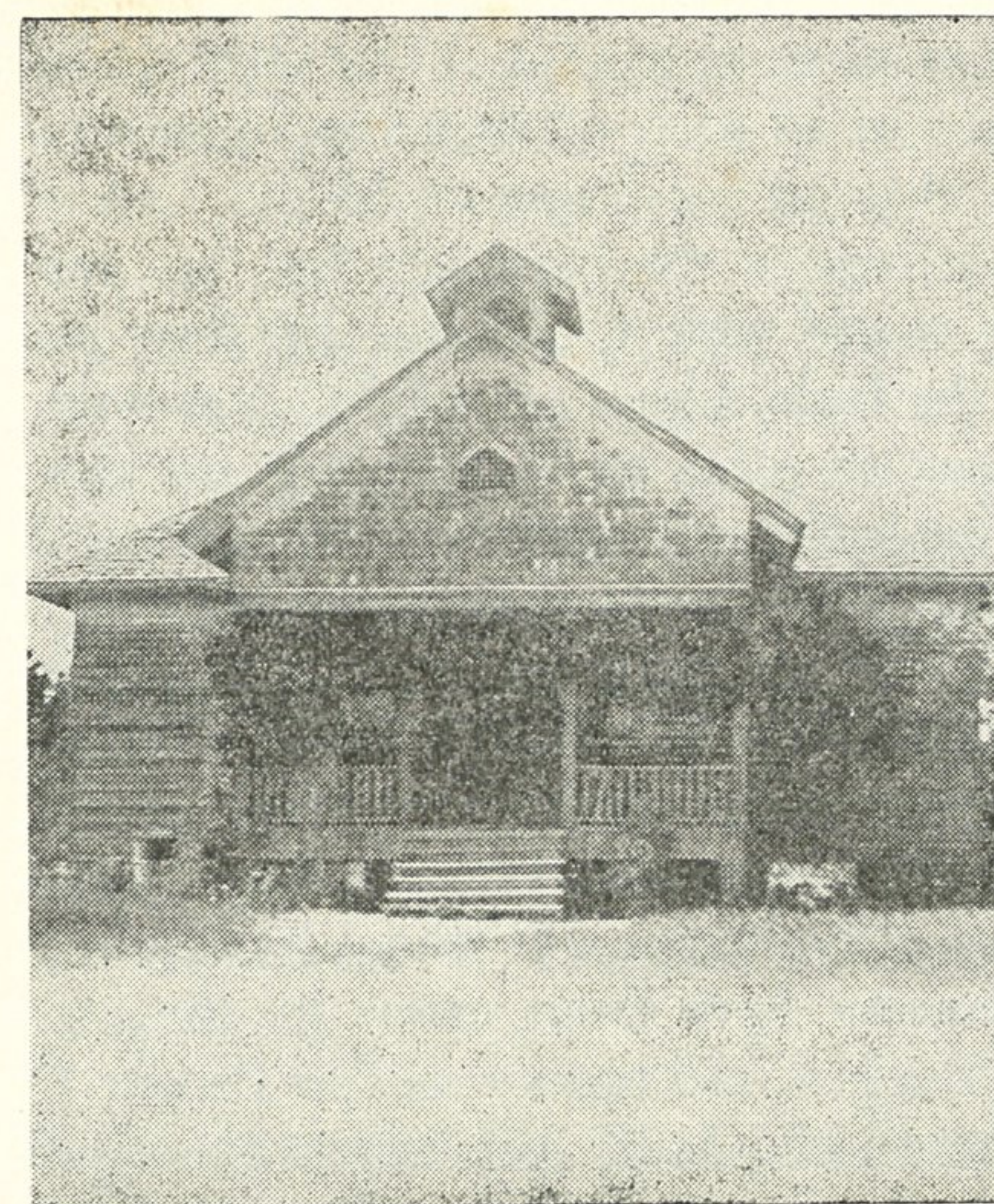
The one-teacher school building where eleven of us started to school and where seven of us completed the first seven grades. It was known as the Ashton School.

On cold mornings in particular it was a mighty nice thing to be close to the school, but there were some features of it that did not please us too well. For one thing,

we were close enough to go home for dinner, and that fact denied us the privilege of taking along with us a tin bucket and of sitting down at school as others did and eating our lunch out of a tin bucket, and surely no child's education is complete who is denied that privilege. At least some of us felt that way about it. But that isn't all. By the time we ran home for dinner and got back to school, the other children had finished eating and were in the midst of a ball game, and we either had to stand by and see them play or be the last ones chosen on the opposing sides of the game.

Another undesirable feature about our being close to the school was the fact that we did not get to join the other boys and girls in the long walk to and from school, and just how much that handicap deprived us of we did not know. We knew that much that happened during the day was the topic of conversation among those who walked together on the way home from school, and we could not be with them to hear what was said and to get in our say. About all of this we were not too happy, but we had little time to think about it because by the time we got into the yard at home there was plenty of work ready and waiting for us, and our little minds that had been enlightened (?) during the day were occupied with more practical things.

From the viewpoint of later years, we look back today to the one-room and one-teacher school with many cherished memories crowding into our minds. Those were happy, gleeful, care-free days filled with more of life's sweet experiences than we realized. At night there were lessons to learn, and we gathered around the long table in the dining room and studied by the kerosene lights. Part of the time the teacher lived at our home, and her presence brought an added touch that lingers in our thoughts. We had good teachers who showed an interest in all the pupils, and they were admired and appreciated by all the people of the community, and especially by the young men. They had to be teachers of no little ability and



The new Ashton School building with two rooms providing space for two teachers, a great improvement over the original one-room building. The three younger members of the family began their schoolwork here. In later years this school was consolidated with the school at Burgaw.

with plenty of ingenuity to handle the problems of discipline in such a group and to direct our study through all of the first seven grades, and this had to be done in a creditable way for the sake of those who would continue their studies in other schools. We have no purpose in seeking to magnify this school above those of later days with better equipment and more teachers who teach under more favorable circumstances, but we do say that we learned some fundamental lessons of life in this little one-teacher school that have followed us through the years, and life has been enriched because of the experiences we had in those days. The multiplication tables we learned there have remained unchanged, and the ties of friendship formed in those days have lingered to make life sweeter for us.

Before leaving this subject, we would give an expression from another viewpoint. The little school described above afforded to each of us better opportunities for an education than either Papa or Mama had. They had taken advantage of the best they had, but for their children they would seek to provide the best possible, and for them the little school on the hill was only the beginning of greater plans in their minds for their children. Today as we look back upon those days, we feel unworthy of the heritage we have, and we express again and again our thanks and gratitude for the way our footsteps have been directed by noble and far-sighted parents. The passing of the years has made the little school ground on which we played all but too sacred for our feet. Years ago, with the coming of highways and school buses, the children of the community have been taken to the more modern school at Burgaw, the county seat of Pender County; but the "Light on the Hill" has never gone out for those who sought the first steps of an education there.

A FATHER AND MOTHER IN ISRAEL

Papa and Mama possessed the qualities of good parents. They knew what it meant to have the care and responsibility of providing for and rearing a large family of children. They were blessed with some natural ability, and they received no little practical experience before we were old enough that we did not need parental care. They were far above the average in many things, but in nothing did they show more apt qualities than they did as parents.

One thing that will linger long in the mind of each of us is the fact that they were firm in their statements and in their decisions. They seldom spoke to any of us twice about the same thing. They were not harsh in their statements and requests, but there was something about the ring in their voices and the expression on their faces that made us understand that ready obedience was expected. There was no talking back to them. We knew better than to attempt it. Well do we remember some experiences when there was an inclination to be slow in

following instructions about afternoon chores when we came from school. We boys delighted in playing ball, and when once we had started a game, it was not easy to stop and do the work that was waiting for us. Mama had no objections to our playing ball. She helped us to make balls several times, but it was her rule that we must do the work first, and then we could play. A few times when she had reminded us of this rule, we let our desire to play get the best of us. When that happened, she appeared on the scene unannounced, and the ball that had given us so much delight was taken from us. Once or twice she gave us the ball again when the work was finished, but there were a few times when the balls were never returned. It was a little hard on us then, but we had to learn the lesson of obedience and of work first and then play.

While Papa and Mama were firm in their dealings with us, we understood that they had our interest at heart. We knew they would go their limit for us in any need. We were their children, and as such, we were their delight. It was for us that they labored and toiled, and we knew it. When anything was wrong with any of us, immediate attention was given to the matter. There was never any delay in calling the doctor if one of us was not well. They were interested in our well-being, and that interest did not slacken as we grew older. As different members of the family went away to school, there was much concern about how they were getting along, and not many days passed without someone going to the post office about a mile from home for any mail that had come from those who were in school. This interest lingered on through the school days and beyond. In fact, it never stopped. If at this point they made any mistake, it was the mistake of doing too much for us and too little for themselves. In things that concerned themselves, they were most unselfish; but in the matter of their interest in their children, no parents ever excelled them.

One of life's important lessons that Papa and Mama taught each of us was the lesson of work. They did not drive us, but there was no mistake about their teaching us to work. There was no way around that matter. They were not blessed with too much of this world's goods, but they were blessed above many in the size of their family, and that fact made work for each of us an inescapable necessity. There was no limit to the things that had to be done, and no one was excused from sharing in the doing of those things. It was a little hard on us then, but now we are better able to understand that "All things work together for good to them that love the Lord" (Romans 8:28). In the struggle for existence, we learned the lesson of honest toil.

One further word needs to be said at this point. Papa and Mama taught more by example than they did by word of mouth. They pointed the way and set the pace, and we had to keep on the move to follow them. They expected nothing of us that they did not do themselves. In the matter of church attendance, they never sent us; they took us. We were there with them, and that meant that we were in the church at the hour of worship and that our behavior was such as would be expected of people in religious services. The same was true in other things. At meal time they were ready and in their places, and they expected the same of us. If for any reason one of us was not there, they knew why. If there are any failures among us, let no one for a minute charge that failure to poor or inadequate parental care and instructions. They did their duty well. The rest lies with their children.

A FIXED PURPOSE

For Papa and Mama it was not enough just to live and to provide for the physical needs of the members of their family. This had to be done, and it was done, but for them there was something in life that was more important than merely making a living. They were living for a pur-

pose, and they wanted that their children, all fourteen of them, would have an understanding of the higher purposes of life and that they would seek to live and to serve in an honorable and worthy manner.

A better understanding of this fixed purpose becomes evident when we remember that Papa and Mama had very limited opportunity for schoolwork. Neither of them went beyond the fourth or fifth grade, but they were determined that their children would have the best opportunity possible for completing their high school and college work. This was no idle dream with them. It was as much of a necessity as the food that went on their table. Having been deprived of this privilege themselves, they would make any sacrifice necessary to see to it that the door of education would remain open for their children.

At first thought, one might think that it was rather ambitious for parents who had received only a few years of schoolwork themselves and who were farming mainly on rented land to think of and to plan toward sending fourteen children through high school and college. Such an undertaking would challenge and test the faith and highest hope of any man and wife, and many a couple would say that it could not be done and would not attempt it, but not so with Papa and Mama. With them it had to be done. There was no thought of doing otherwise. It was an undertaking that they thought of as being divinely given. It was a thing that God was expecting of them, and in that realization they faced it honestly and purposefully. Not once did they flinch from it. This was the purpose for which they were living, and this was the purpose toward which they would lend their every energy and for which they would gladly and cheerfully make any needed sacrifice. This was an expensive undertaking that did call for no little sacrifice, but no member of the family has ever heard one word of complaint from those who had the education of their fourteen children as their fixed purpose.

Later chapters will give in detail how this purpose became a reality. Here we would give some glimpse of the ingenuity and planning that would give hope to such a noble undertaking. A fundamental truth reveals the real secret that is the very foundation for all that has been said or will be said about the lives of these two people. It can be said in four simple words, namely: **THEY BELIEVED IN GOD.** To them the Bible was an open book, and the God about whom they read in "The Book" was ever a constant reality with them. They believed that the God who opened jail doors could open school doors, and with that faith they did not think of the undertaking as impossible. With them there was a definite feeling that they were "labourers together with God" in a high and holy task. This feeling of assurance removed from them the grind of their daily tasks and kept them from tiring through the long years of endless toil.

A second statement reveals a secret of success that should be linked inseparably with the thought already given. This guiding principle, too, is simple. Papa and Mama added plan, hands, and feet to their purpose, their faith, and their prayers. They did not sit idly by and wait to see accomplished that which they believed was God's will for their lives. They arose in the early morning and toiled till late at night to make their purpose a reality. The little farm on which they lived along with the land that was rented had to yield an hundredfold. In addition to the regular crops of most farms, this little farm was called upon to produce extra vegetable crops for the market in the early spring and throughout the summer.

Mr. C. M. Beach, who for many years was connected with Dell High School and later with Wingate Junior College, was visiting in our home one spring when it was about the time to begin shipping asparagus. He and Papa were looking at the two-acre field of asparagus, and Mr. Beach spoke of it as a crop that would yield some early income for the family. In response, Papa replied somewhat as follows: "Yes, it will bring in some early income. I need it to help pay the expenses of my children in school.

That field of asparagus is dedicated to God for the education of my children." It was in that spirit and for that purpose that he was a tiller of the soil.

CASTING FORTH THE MANTLE

Papa was a lover of preachers. To him they were a select and noble group of men. He thought of the ministry as a work for God-called men who would give themselves willingly and completely into the hands of the Lord to be used of Him in the greatest of all fields of service. Nothing of any other nature stirred his heart and soul as did the simple preaching of the gospel by an able, courageous, consecrated, and God-called preacher. He would gladly travel a long distance to hear one sermon by a man of renown in the ministry. If he could have done the one thing that he wanted to do more than anything else in life, he would have been a great preacher of the gospel. He talked of great preachers. He studied their greatness. He longed in his innermost being to be among them. Deep in his heart he felt the urge and call of God to this noble work, and in all sincerity he yielded to the call and was ordained as a Baptist minister. With him there was no conflict between his feeling of a call as expressed here and a call to the mission fields as already has been described. He could not think of the ministry without thinking of missions. He thought all preachers and all Christians should have a deep interest in missionary work.

Of necessity Papa's work in the ministry was limited, and this limitation was due in part to his being unable to get the preparation in school that he so much longed for. He had a high conception of the ministry. To him it was a high calling and a sacred task. There was no place in his thinking for the minister who was satisfied with anything less than his best, and he was not willing to excuse himself and do a half-way job on the grounds that he was limited in his preparation for the work; however, it was evident to him that he would be unable to serve in a manner comparable to his high conception of the gospel ministry.

A second thing that put some limitations on what he could do in the work that was dear to his heart was his fast-growing family of children. He loved his family, and he had no sympathy for a man who would fail to do his best to support the members of his household in a worthy manner. To him his children were a sacred trust, and he would be the last man to deny that trust. They must be adequately cared for, and they must have some opportunities and privileges that were denied him. Thus the demands of his family made it necessary for him to maintain a reasonably large income. It took food and clothing and plenty of it to meet the needs of the youngsters in his home. There was a time when a barrel of flour would last about five weeks, and one summer over a hundred gallons of syrup were made and kept for the hungry mouths of his children, but it did not last for the twelve months. Flour and syrup were just two items. There were many other things that had to be had proportionately. This demand would constitute a constant drain on the energies of the strongest of men, and they left Papa no time to be idle. His was a busy life, and there was no way around it. With this responsibility upon his shoulders, he had little or no time for sermon preparation, and no one realized better than he that it was impossible for him to render a service of an acceptable nature in the work that was dear to his heart.

For a number of years Papa served as best he could as pastor of some of the small churches near our home in the Wilmington Association. Before the days of automobiles, he drove a white horse that was partially blind. He would leave home on Saturdays for services at the appointed hours on Saturday and Sunday. Quite frequently one of the older sons went with him to keep him company on his journeys and to prevent his becoming fearful due to his nervous condition. He went regularly to all the meetings of the association and to all gatherings where members from different churches came together for services. It was his nature to be one in their midst. He

loved the work, and he loved the brethren; however, after serious and prayerful consideration, he decided it would be best for him to discontinue the work of a pastor and to devote himself to the education of his children. It was evident to him that he could not do both of these things well, and with him anything that was worth doing at all was worth doing well. That was especially true as he thought of the two major things before him, namely: the work of the ministry, and the education of his children.

There was another element that entered into his consideration of this most serious matter, and that thought touched a tender place in his heart. As he thought of his family, his consideration of their needs went far beyond the matter of food, clothing, shelter, and so many years in school. Each of his children was to him a gift from God, and each one had talents and abilities worthy of the highest development. With him and with Mama there was a feeling and a hope that if they would give themselves to the proper training and education of their children that at least some of them might be called of God into the work that they themselves so longed to do but felt themselves unprepared for. With that in mind, Papa did not withdraw from the ministry. He had no thought that he was failing to do the will of God, but instead he felt that his was a peculiar task. He would magnify the work of the God-called minister. He would serve as a faithful worker in his church to the best of his ability. Then he and Mama would give their lives for the education of their children, and this was done with a prayer that their children would be responsive to the call of the Master in whatever field they were led and would render more effective service because of their opportunity of an education. They would not decide what their children should do in life. No parent should do that, and no wise parent would attempt it. However, they could work, and they could do their best to put their children under the best influence and in the best atmosphere possible, and

then they could leave the rest with God. That is exactly what they did, and they did a good job of it. Different members of the family can recall many conversations that showed purpose behind decisions and plans that involved the family. We were led to believe that God had a plan for every life, and we were persuaded that the advantage of an education was a sacred trust; and when we saw the sacrifices that were made to that end, we could not help but realize something of the seriousness of life and the greatness of the blessings afforded us.

Two incidents will give further evidence of the hopes they held for their children. George, an older brother who is a minister, was riding in the buggy with Papa to the plantation one day. In some way the conversation between the two was turned to the presidents of our country. Papa spoke of how some men had arisen to the presidency from very humble beginnings. They were discussing some of the things that made some of our presidents great men. As they rode along and talked together, in all seriousness Papa turned to George, a lad in his teens, and said to him, "George, why don't you be president?" That expression was no idle dream. He was trying to stir within his son the desire to live a noble and a worthy life. The other incident was in the form of a letter received from Mama by the other preacher son after she learned that he had been elected to a place of leadership in the Baptist Young People's Union at what was then Buie's Creek Academy. The letter was tear-stained, and in the heart of it was the following statement that has not been forgotten: "I am thankful for the place you have in the Baptist Young People's Union. I have not been able to do much for the Master myself. I hope I can live for Him and serve Him through you children."

LAUNCHING OUT

It was a mettle-testing experience for Papa and Mama when Rosa and David, their two oldest children, were ready for high school. They were confronted with problems that would have been too difficult for many parents.

In the first place, there were no high schools immediately available. We lived five miles from Burgaw, the county seat of Pender County, where the nearest high school was located. That was before the day of good roads and automobiles, and it was before the day when county schools received the interest and attention they needed to give them their proper standing. The Baptist people of North Carolina saw clearly the need of offering better educational opportunities to the youth of the state, and, as a result, several Baptist high schools were started in different sections of the state. One of these schools was located at Delway in Sampson County, some thirty-five miles from our home. It was to this school that Papa and Mama wanted their children to go.

The most serious problem faced at that time was the matter of finances. It takes money to send children away from home to school, and money was a thing of which they had little. They had eleven children at that time, and it took much work and careful planning to keep them fed and clothed; therefore, it had been impossible to save the necessary money to send any of them away to school. That made it necessary for school expenses to be provided year by year along with all the other demands of a large and growing family. Then the same advantage must be offered to each of their children, and that made their undertaking all the more serious and difficult. Nothing but true faith would stand the test of such a venture.

Still another problem before them was the matter of setting a precedent. Before that time, few parents in the community had sent their children off to school, and not all the people thought that Papa and Mama were wise in their plans; however, they dared to pioneer in what they thought was a wise and a most necessary step. Fortunately, a number of others have done the same thing, and today many young people from the community have had the benefit of training in the best schools and colleges in the land.

It was in the fall of 1908 when Papa and Mama launched out on the bold and daring venture of an educational career for their children that stretched across more than a quarter of a century. Mere human language will not describe all that went into that undertaking when two little trunks were packed and when two children, a son and a daughter, were told good-by as they started on their journey toward a high school and college education.

The highest hopes, the noblest purpose, the greatest sacrifice, the most genuine faith, and the most sincere prayer of an humble man and woman were all combined on that eventful day when they dared to stake all they had against the promises of God as they sent out from their home their oldest son and daughter in search of a Christian education.

On the day of their departure, Papa took them to Ashton, the little railway station, where they took a train to Rose Hill, a distance of perhaps forty miles. From there they were taken on wagons some ten miles across the country to Dell High School, a good place in a good location for a young man or a young woman to go to school. This school closed a number of years later, as did many others of its kind, but it served a noble purpose for many years. Seven members of our family took part or all of their high school work there.

ALL HANDS ON THE OARS

In Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, he said, "For we are labourers together with God." That verse will explain much that was accomplished in our family. It was not all done by human strength. God was at work in ways that we did not realize. Then as a family, we had to work together. There just had to be co-operation on the part of each member. There was no other way for us. Papa and Mama saw to it both by example and by teaching that there were no loafers among us while we were at home.

The effort to make the farm as productive as possible required diligent work over a period of many months. All of us know that there is little idle time on the farm, even during the winter. In the early spring the land must be prepared, and the crops must be planted. Then in the late fall the harvest time comes. These two important seasons would come while school was in session, and that made it necessary for some of us to stop school in the early spring to start the crop and for us to remain at home in the fall through the harvest season. In that way many of us, and particularly the boys, lost much time from school until we reached the age that we were sent away to school.

It is not an easy thing for a child to remain at home and work on the farm in the fall of the year after other boys and girls have started to school, but of necessity we had to do it. The cotton had to be picked, and that called for help from the girls as well as the boys. On the way to and from the field, we passed the school grounds where we saw other boys and girls at school and at play. Then in early September we saw an older brother or sister or both leave home to enter school. Somehow as children we did not understand why it had to be that way, and we did not like it too much. To us it did not seem to make good sense. We didn't think it was fair. But one day, some years later, this son came to see things in a different light.

The time had come when he was one of the two members of the family attending what was then Buie's Creek Academy, now Campbell College. He had lost about five years from school, and he was much discouraged because he was behind in his work. One day he received a letter from Rosa, who had gone to Africa as a missionary. In the letter she said something like this: "I know you have lost a lot of time from school, and I know you are discouraged because of it. I wish I could help you, but I can't; however, I do want to tell you that you helped to pick the cotton that sent me to school, and I want to thank you for it. The cotton you picked helped to pre-

pare me for the work I am doing here." That letter gave a different meaning to things that had happened. Then it was that this writer dropped his head and thanked God that he had been privileged to pick cotton while older brothers and sisters were away at school, and he wished that he had picked more cotton and that he had done it in a different spirit.

Between the sessions of school, it was full speed ahead on the farm for all of us, and that included the sisters as well as the brothers. They could take a hoe and get the grass out of the peanuts or corn as fast and as well as men could do it. They took their place by the side of Papa, and they did their part working by the side of Negro helpers and thought nothing of it. We boys were at the plow handles. In later years one of us was on the tractor. During the rush season of the summer, we worked that way six days to the week.

We did most of our farming about two miles from home, and that made it necessary for us to take our dinner along in a large tin bucket. Mama cooked enough at breakfast to fix for our dinner, and that was plenty because we were hungry when dinner time finally arrived. At noon Papa would take his coat and spread it out on the ground and then spread on his coat the things Mama had prepared for us to eat. With each of us sitting on the ground around the coat, we proceeded to satisfy our hunger. Usually there was a large bowl of hominy with gravy mixed in it, and on top of the hominy was a piece of meat for each one of us. When that meat was ham, and it was occasionally, it had put just the right seasoning into the hominy, and was it good! There was a spoon for each of us, and each in his turn went after the hominy, all eating from the same bowl. That was before the day of germs . . . ha! Occasionally two or more of us would move toward the dish at the same time, and all but one would have to back off. One day Olivia, one of the older sisters, made several attempts to get a spoonful of hominy,

and another beat her to it each time. Finally in somewhat of a desperate condition, she backed off and made a dive for the dish, saying, "I guess I will get some," and she did, but at the expense of others.

Mama never went to the field with us. She was the queen of the home, the home-maker, and the home-keeper. She was at her best there. All meals were cooked by her or under her supervision, and she was a master in the kitchen. The friends who once tasted of her cooking welcomed an opportunity to visit the home for a meal. Along with the cooking, there were the clothes to be made, to be mended, and to be washed; and this was no easy task where there were so many for whom clean clothes had to be provided. She did not go to the field because the greatest need for her was in the home. Usually one or two of the older girls remained at home to help her. It was a matter of the complete family circle at work. All hands were on the oars. It had to be that way.

AFTER-CLASS CHORES

This matter of our going to school was a co-operative affair. Each brother and sister received some help from Papa or from some older member of the family who had already finished school, and then each one was expected to do what he could toward his expenses while in school. It had been hard work for us while at home, and the same was true while in school. We were not there for play. The best figure we can arrive at indicates that school expenses amounting to approximately \$8,500.00 were taken care of by work done after classes, between classes, or on Saturdays. This figure, which is close to one third of the entire cost of school work away from home, includes some amounts borrowed by some of the sisters in their junior and senior years that were repaid soon after their graduation.

An account of the things done in an effort to help meet school expenses by different members of the family may

seem like an exaggeration, but in relating the story we are trying to be careful not to overdraw the picture. The purpose of these lines is an effort to give encouragement and inspiration to others who may have to toil long and late to secure funds for college expenses. It is not to one's discredit if he has to work while in school. This hardship, if it is a hardship, may prove to be a vital part of one's college career. No member of our family is any the worse off by having gotten his school work this way.

Work done by the sisters reveals that the training received at home was carried over and put to good use during school days. All eight of them had some after-class chores. They worked in the kitchen, waited on tables, checked laundry, did club work, answered telephones and door bells, helped in bursar's office, worked in campus store, and did substitute teaching in elementary grades.

The chores done by the boys varied in about the same manner as the things done by the girls. We picked cotton, cut wood, worked in the dining halls and boarding houses, swept floors, drove tractors, built fires, served as janitor in literary society, helped to clear new ground, helped carpenters, drove school buses, and served as manager of a "Bachelor's Club."

At one time four members of the family, two sisters and two brothers, were in college at the same time. It would have been impossible for this to have happened without each of the four carrying his or her full part of the load. It was not an easy road to an education. Nothing was handed out to any of us on a silver platter. We had to get it the hard way, but today each one of us rejoices in the little part he has had in the upward struggle.

UNSELFISH HELP

It was not possible for each brother and sister to have some part financially in helping others with their school expenses. That can be understood easily because there was no further need in this direction after the younger sisters and brothers had completed their work. Then

some of the older ones had heavy responsibilities of their own and were unable to render assistance. But all in all, one of the most commendable things done by any members of the family was what was done by a few of the sisters in particular in helping younger brothers and sisters with expenses during school days. It would have been impossible for Papa to carry the full load for the entire time we were in school. He carried the load in the lean, early years before any of us got far enough along to give him some relief. From that time on he did what he could, but much of the weight of things fell to some of the older sisters who had completed their work and were teaching school. No word too praiseworthy can be said of those members of the family. This writer, along with some others, was on the receiving end of help, and through the years it has been his hope that some day he could tell the story of heroic and sacrificial sisters who nobly did their full part and more to help their younger brothers and sisters through their years of schoolwork.

Rosa, the oldest child in the family, did what she could in this respect for a short time, but not too long after graduation she married Carlyle Powell, better known as "Sky" Powell, and the two went to Africa as missionaries. Berta, the second sister, graduated just at a time when the need for help seemed greatest, and not once did she flinch from making any needed sacrifice in helping to answer any call of need. In response to a questionnaire sent to the brothers and sisters to secure information for this story, Berta answered the question about the amount of help given to others while in school with the following statement: "All I made for eleven years of teaching except one hundred dollars each year for insurance and living expenses for myself." That statement is no exaggeration. She did just what she said, as many members of the family can testify. In answer to the question about the names of those helped, she wrote the names of Naomi, George, Manly, Zelma, Alma, and John—a total of six. I do not know what she did for others, but she sent this brother



The picture on the opposite page was taken at Berta's home in Burgaw a few years after Papa's death. The group numbers 31 and is composed of Mama and 11 of the children with their families as follows: (1) Rosa, Carlyle, and Mary Hester Powell; (2) David, Irma, William, Olivia, and Harry; (3) Berta, Cleve, and Jeannette Scott; (4) Robert, Gussie, Ruth, and Dorothy; (5) Olivia and Frank Marshburn; (6) Naomi and David Chambers; (7) Zelma, Harper, Laura Catherine, Lewis, Ruth, and Alice Dawson; (8) Alma (married later); (9) John (married later); (10) Betsy and A. D. Wilder; and (11) Louise (married later). The three absent brothers with their families were (1) J. D. (single); (2) George, Ada Margaret, and Margaret Gale; and (3) Manly and Mildred. This picture is typical of the group that gathered at home at times on Sunday.

a total of \$1,350.00, and he is just one of the six she helped. Other things can be said about the sacrifices she made for the rest of us, but the following story will give a picture of some of the things she did. Along then we were having each summer a state-wide B. Y. P. U. convention, and those meetings attracted large numbers of young people in particular. Some of us attended a few of the meetings. One summer Berta was anxious to join a group of friends who were going to that convention. She was very anxious to go, and she was a bit hesitant in explaining why she was not going. Finally when no other explanation would satisfy, she said, "I would like to go, but I just don't have a dress suitable to wear." Instead of buying a nice dress for herself, she had spent her money paying the school expenses of younger brothers and sisters.

After Olivia and Namoi graduated, the need for help was not as great as it had been; but according to the need, they did their part in the same sacrificial spirit displayed by Berta. Together they gave some assistance to George, Zelma, Alma, John, Betsy, and Louise. For two years Olivia, Betsy, and Louise did light housekeeping at Campbell College. During those years Olivia taught at Campbell, and Betsy and Louise did their first two years of college work there.

These lines would be incomplete without adding another word from another viewpoint. It was necessary for some member of the family to be at home or near home at all times as a helper for Papa and Mama in the heavy load they were carrying. It was at this point that Robert and John made a contribution that exemplified the spirit of true sacrifice. The demand for the type of help they could give made it all but impossible for them to go as far in school as some others were privileged to go. For many winters, Robert was Papa's main help on the farm and in the making and selling of sausage. Then John, as the youngest son, was faced with the same condition that Papa faced as a young man when the responsibilities of the home fell upon him. For that reason we speak of these two brothers in sincere appreciation for what they did, and along with them we make mention of Alma, who remained at home with Mama for a number of years after Papa's death. The service rendered by these three in the way just described was equally as important as the things done by other brothers and sisters. They helped to meet some vital needs of the family, and they did it unselfishly. King David remembered and commended those who stayed by the stuff along with those who went to battle. In that same spirit we make mention of these three at this point.

AFTER YEARS OF STRUGGLE

When commencement day came at Meredith College in Raleigh in June, 1934, a little over two years after Papa's death, a day of victory and of rejoicing had finally come. It was the occasion of the graduation of Betsy and Louise, the two youngest members of the family. It had been a long and hard struggle of twenty-six years since Rosa and David entered Dell School in the fall of 1908. During those years each of the fourteen children had spent at least one year or more in one of our Baptist Schools in North Carolina, and the total number of years

spent in these schools by the entire family had reached seventy-five. That figure includes the time spent in two of our seminaries by two of the sons. The graduation of Betsy and Louise brought to ten the number of sons and daughters who had completed college work. Those years spent in school away from home had cost the family approximately \$28,000.00. The best information or estimate we have is that Papa provided about half that amount.

In addition to the years in our Baptist Schools, as have been described, David, the oldest son, was stationed at West Point for some time while he was in the United States Army. Then J. D., the second son who was named for Papa, attended the Macfeet-Bowen Business College at Columbia, S. C. He is the only member of the family who has not married. Both of these sons were in the Army during World War I. David spent a year in France and married while he was there.

The credit for these years spent in school goes to Papa and Mama who had the vision to see the need of it, the faith to believe it could be done, the courage to attempt it, the spirit of sacrifice that led them to pay the price, and the determination to stick to it. When they began this seemingly impossible task, they took God at His word and put their lives in His hand, and through the years they lived, toiled, and planned in simple, child-like faith. They had no doubt about the outcome. They came to see their faith translated into assurance. That means that this accomplishment of sending fourteen children to one or more of our Baptist schools for a total of seventy-five years at a cost of \$28,000, with ten of the children graduating from college, when the father and mother did most of their farming on rented land, is nothing short of a miracle of grace made possible by two lives linked with God. This story gives at least some illustration of what might be done when two lives, blended in matrimony, completely and

unreservedly give themselves and all they have to the one thing above all other things that they believe is the will of the Master for them.

At this point the picture turns, and rightly so. As the pages of this story have shown, Papa and Mama have rendered their service to God and to humanity in their lives of consecrated Christian service. Their record speaks for itself. No one questions it. But what of their children for whom they did so much? Let it be said with all sincerity that those of us who have been privileged to be their sons and daughters have a deep appreciation for the heritage we have and that we feel most keenly the responsibility upon us. The torch given us has already been held aloft with consecrated hands that towered heavenward. We must live nobly and well or the torch handed us will be lowered in our hands. We have been blessed far beyond many others with a heritage more precious and more lasting than silver and gold. This privilege given us in no way elevates us above others. Let no one get that idea. Just the opposite is true. We must be willing to take the little, the lowly, the hard, or the difficult place and in that place to lose ourselves in the service of the Master. Whether we preach, or teach, or plow corn, the task to which we give ourselves must not be for self but for the sake of the good of humanity. If we spend our lives seeking greatness in the eyes of the world, we prove ourselves unworthy. If we fail to be true servants of the Master, we prove ourselves unfaithful.

It will be left to others to say how near we approach the high standard given us. We will go no further than to say that five of us, three daughters and two sons, are giving ourselves to full-time Christian service. The three daughters are wives of ministers, one of whom is a missionary. The two sons are ministers. Another son is a deacon. All of us are Christians and members of Baptist

Churches, and most everyone of us has been active in the work of the church. We trust that those who read these lines will be charitable in their judgment of us as they measure us by the lives of those who gave us birth.

SIDE BY SIDE

The story we have tried to give in these pages is simply the record of two noble lives who gave themselves each to the other and both to God and who for a period of forty-two years and a little more walked together in an effort to make their lives count for the most possible for the glory of God. They lived in a day when divorce records were climbing and when evil forces were invading the sanctity of the home, but side by side they stood, making their home a haven of refuge for themselves and for the children whom God had given them.

We have no purpose in these closing words to overdraw the picture. Papa and Mama were human, and they were not free from faults. They did not always see things alike, and there were times when they did not fully understand each other. Each of them lived constantly under the strain of a heavy load. All of this adds up to show that they were not always at their best. None of us are. However, their lives were blended into a noble union, and they lived as a true husband and wife ought to live.

In the toils and responsibilities of life, they stood together as one person. Out on the farm Papa worked and toiled earning the bread for the family, and in the kitchen Mama worked just as hard baking the bread for her tired and hungry husband and for her children. Papa worked to provide, and Mama worked to conserve. They were in the business of life together.

Then there were sacrifices that had to be made, and those sacrifices were real, but they were shared by both of them. In the early years, Mama did without a needed new dress more than once; and in the same spirit, Papa

wore his old hat or old clothes until the money was available for each of them to do better. This same spirit of sacrifice and of sharing each with the other was an abiding part of their relationship throughout their years of living together. No one of us saw any spirit of selfishness in the life of either of them. That did not exist.

In life's closing years, they walked on faithfully together. They saw all of us go out from their home to institutions of learning, and when one of us went out to school, the return home usually was only for a brief span of time. They saw many of us united in marriage, and they saw us taking our places in different walks of life. As is true of all good parents, they delighted in our marriages and in our finding our places in life, and through it all they lingered together and shared together with a growing and a deepening devotion expressing itself in their love each for the other. For some several years with only one or two of us at home at the time, they lived on in the sunset of life as busy at work and as thoughtful of one another as would be true of any couple in any stage or age of life.

On Monday night, February 8, 1932, at the age of seventy, Papa slipped away suddenly. Death came at a time when he and Mama were sitting together in the dining room after supper. His going was the first death in the family with the exception of the death of Fannie Ruth, an infant child, in 1900. For a little over sixteen years after his going, Mama remained with us. She filled those years with active work as long as she was able. She delighted in doing little things for each of us. Each summer she would fix strawberry preserves or something of that nature in small jars, and when we went to visit her, she had a jar of preserves to give to us. She was still living, not for herself, but for her children who were all grown and who were far more able to care for themselves than was true of her. To each of us to the very

end, she was Mama, and wherever she was was the place of the center of our interest. After four years of sickness and suffering, she, too, slipped away on Wednesday, May 26, 1948, at the age of seventy-six. Her going from us gave her an opportunity to be reunited with Papa in the realm beyond the reach and the power of death. After her going from us, the fourteen of us, surrounded by a host of relatives and friends, saw her body laid to rest by the side of Papa's in the small cemetery by the side of the lane at the home place.

Side by side two lovers stood,
Before an altar great and good;
They clasped a hand; they made a vow,
That proved for them a strength and tower.

Side by side two workers toiled,
Earning their bread from nature's soil;
With sweat on hand, on face, on brow,
They toiled together each day and hour.

Side by side two travelers walked,
With pace in step, in plan, in talk;
The Book, their guide; the Lord; their strength;
No load so heavy to make them shrink.

Side by side their course did run,
Till nature did bring the setting sun;
The battle fought, the victory won,
A gentle voice has said, "Well done."

Side by side two bodies lie,
Waiting a summons from the sky;
As one, at ease, at sleep in peace,
They wait and rest in sweet release.

—Original

WEDDINGS AND FAMILIES OF
THE CHILDREN

Jefferson Davis Hocutt and Hester Catherine Murray were married at Rocky Point, North Carolina, on December 21, 1890, by Thomas J. Armstrong. We give below information about the marriages and families of their children.

Rosa Beatrice was born September 27, 1891. She married Rev. J. Carlyle "Sky" Powell on July 24, 1919. They have one daughter, Mary Hester.

David William was born January 24, 1893. He married Irma Victoria Louise Deschamps in Grandchamp, France, on March 22, 1919. Their children are William, Olivia, and Harry.

Berta Mabel was born July 8, 1894. She married J. Cleve Scott on April 28, 1927. They have one daughter, Jeannette.

Jefferson Davis, Jr., was born September 4, 1895. He has not married.

Robert LeRoy was born February 12, 1897. He married Gussie Catherine Batscn on January 5, 1922. Their children are Ruth and Dorothy.

Olivia Blanche was born December 16, 1898. She married Rev. Frank Marshburn on April 7, 1934. They have no children.

Fannie Ruth was born April 23, 1900. She died November 27, 1900.

Naomi Hull was born November 10, 1901. She married David Thomas Chambers on June 7, 1934. They have no children.

George Lemuel was born April 27, 1903. He married Ada Margaret Bowden on September 1, 1936. They have one daughter, Margaret Gale.

Hilliard Manly was born March 9, 1905. He married Mildred Mae Stancil on December 19, 1930, and she died February 25, 1943. He married Marie Frances Sayles on June 3, 1945. Their children are Kathryn Mae, Cynthia Ann, and Broadus.

Zelma Ruth was born July 22, 1906. She married Rev. Lewis Harper Dawson on June 19, 1929. Their children are Laura Catherine, Lewis, Ruth, and Alice.

Alma Lucy was born March 16, 1908. She married Fulton Blanchard on November 6, 1942. They have one daughter, Mary Emma.

John Carlton was born February 17, 1910. He married Katie Williams on June 21, 1944. They have one daughter, Catherine Joan.

Catherine Pearl "Betsy" was born December 15, 1911. She married A. D. Wilder on December 21, 1940. They have one son, "Al", Jr.

Louise was born September 4, 1913. She married Lambert E. Turner on June 27, 1942. They have no children.

