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A Brief history of the Presbyterian Church



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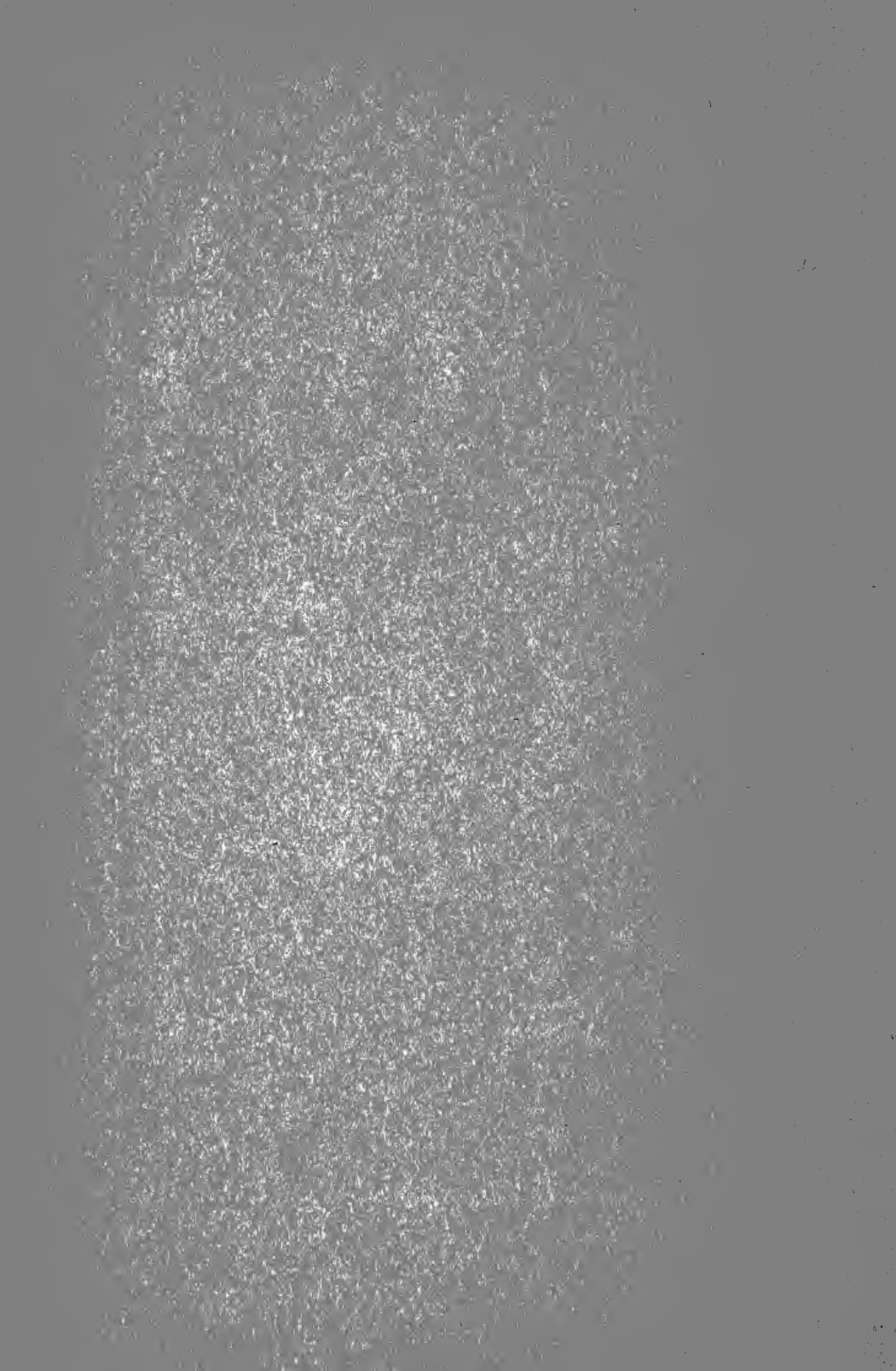
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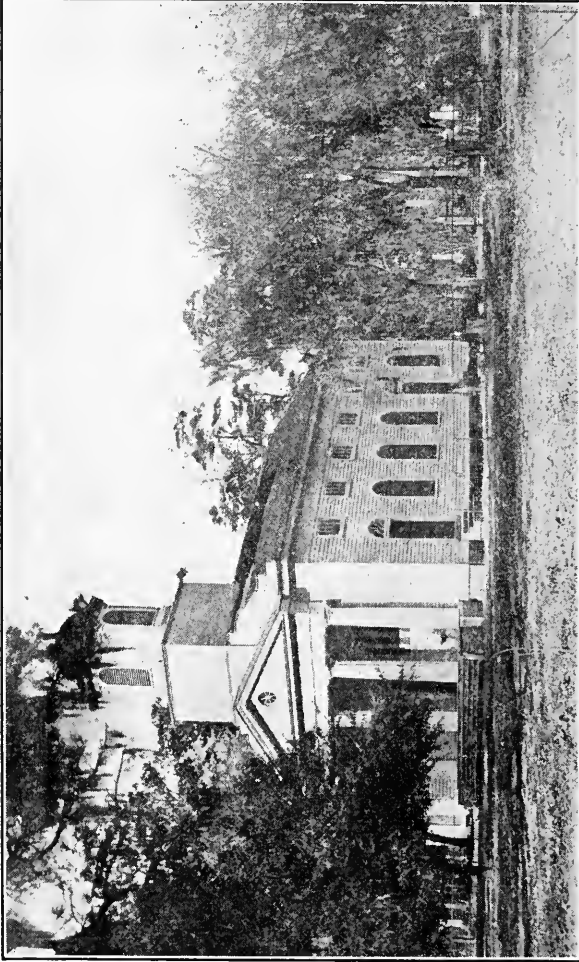
A Brief History
of
The Presbyterian Church
of
Edisto Island

Edisto Island
South Carolina
1933



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Presbyterian Church, Edisto Island, South Carolina

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH of EDISTO ISLAND

The earliest records of the Presbyterian Church of Edisto Island, South Carolina, are lost in antiquity. However, we know that this Church was founded very early in the eighteenth century, if not before.

In 1911 she celebrated her bi-centennial anniversary, the authenticity of her 200th birthday resting upon the following facts:

Dr. George Howe, in his History of the Presbyterian Church in S. C., says (p. 146): "A letter written from Charleston, June 1, 1710, says there are (in the colony) five churches of British Presbyterians. The Church in Charleston being one, and Wilton one, the other three must be selected out of those of Cainhoy, James Island, John's Island, and Edisto."

On page 170, Dr. Howe says: "Sometime during this period (1710-20), if not earlier, we may probably place the commencement of the Presbyterian Church in Edisto Island." Nevin, in his Presbyterian Encyclopedia, expresses the same opinion.

Also, in evidence, is the ancient and crumbling monument to the benefactors of the Church, which stands in God's acre, in front of the session house door. It records the consecrated gift of three hundred acres of land by Henry Bower, in 1717, "to this Church," or, as Howe has it, "to certain persons named, in trust for the benefit of a Presbyterian minister on Edisto Island". The tract had been his since its grant from the Lords-Proprietors in 1705—twelve years. He would hardly have made so munificent a gift where there was no need, certainly not to a Church non-existent. Does not this noble benefaction imply that there was an organized Presbyterian Church here to receive benefit from it; that difficulty had been experienced in securing and supporting a pastor, and that this was Henry Bower's way of meeting and overcoming that difficulty?

From "A Historical Sketch of the Baptist Church in South Carolina" we learn that a number of Baptist families from Lord Cardross' unfortunate colony at Port Royal settled on Edisto Island about 1686. Until 1722, they worshipped in a building in common with the Presbyterians. In that year the Baptists built their own Church, the Presbyterians laying exclusive claim upon the old Church under the leadership of Rev. Archibald Stobo. Was not the claim of the Presbyterians acknowledged to be superior most probably because of priority of possession? Then, Mr. Stobo had resigned his pastorate in Charleston in 1704 and devoted him-

self to evangelistic work, becoming the founder of many coast churches before 1710. Does not his connection with this event suggest that as the founder of this Church he became its natural guide and leader in that crisis? In that case, Edisto was one of the five maritime churches of 1710.

A strong presumption that this Church was founded very early in the eighteenth century is based upon the antecedents and character of the settlers of our Island. It was occupied during the last years of the seventeenth and the first of the eighteenth century by immigrants from Scotland and Wales—wholly Presbyterian except for Lord Cardross' Baptists. These men had fled to these shores to escape religious persecution. Their love for their Church had been purged and tempered in the forge of adversity. The one great longing of their hearts was for freedom to worship God after the dictates of their own consciences. To satisfy that longing they had forsaken their native land and the graves of their fathers for the untried wilderness. Can it be believed that there was any long delay in accomplishing this great end of their pilgrimage when once they set their homes upon this soil? It is only in simple keeping with human nature that, immediately after their settlement here, they should join themselves together and under this free sky erect an altar to their God. It is therefore most probable that this Church had its beginning almost with the settlement of the Island. History fixes that period as between 1686 and 1710. The beginnings of this Church may have been as early as the first date; they were not later than the last.

Special attention is merited by one fact, Edisto Island Church began its existence as a Presbyterian Church; all through its life it has remained Presbyterian; it is Presbyterian. It was one of the four churches that formed the first Charleston Presbytery and was a member of that body until its dissolution by the death and removal of all its ministers during the troubled revolutionary period. Though unconnected with Presbytery for many decades after its re-organization, it maintained its strict Presbyterian character throughout the interval and finally returned to its connection. We therefore claim for the Presbyterian Church of Edisto Island: that it is probably the oldest Presbyterian Church existing in its original location and of unbroken continuity in South Carolina.

Though it is probable that the real centenary mile-post had been past some years before, it was thought best to be conservative in our claims where authentic history is silent and therefore it was decided to celebrate, as the first of the third century of our beloved Church, the year of Grace 1911.

For many years after its organization the Church was with-

out a pastor and dependent upon the irregular ministrations of visiting ministers. Its association with the Baptists, before mentioned, was probably due to this fact. As Mr. Stobo spent the years between his resignation of his pastorate over the Circular Church, 1704, and his installation at Wilton in 1728 in evangelistic labors, it is probable that he was a frequent supply at Edisto, an assumption confirmed by his leadership during the crisis of 1722.

The difficulty of securing pastors for the young churches in the American colonies was great. There were few ministers among the immigrants and the supply had largely to be drawn from across the sea. To induce a pastor to leave a settled charge in his native land with its manse and glebe and secured income, it was necessary to offer something like an equivalent and, in addition, to provide for the expenses of his voyage.

It is, therefore, no matter of surprise that we can find recorded no name of a pastor of this Church for many of its early years.

Yet careful provision was made for the support of a pastor. As we have seen, Mr. Bower had in 1717 deeded for that purpose three hundred acres of land. In 1732 certain negro slaves were conveyed by a deed of gift from Joseph Russell, W. Edings, Paul Hamilton, W. Bird, James Lardant, Timothy Hendrick, and W. Whippy to the congregation for that purpose. About the same time, a valuable donation of land was made by Mr. Waills. In 1737 Mr. Paul Hamilton conveyed as an equivalent for this land £2,500 currency to certain trustees, the interest upon which was to be used for the support of the Pastor of this Church. In addition, at dates unknown, other donations for the Church were made: "Paul Hamilton, £322, 10 s, and two silver tankards for sacramental purposes; James Lardant, £300; William Cummings, £94, 12 s; James Clark, £100; Mrs. Mary Bu, £100; Mrs. Mary Russell, £100; of the then currency."

There was danger of the intrusion into the colonial churches of unworthy ministers—men who because of unsoundness of doctrine, laxity of conduct, or other cause of unfitness had been found unacceptable to the churches of the old countries. It is interesting to note how careful the fathers of this Church were to guard against this peril. The preamble of the deed conveying slaves to the congregation in 1732 has this stipulation: "For the perpetual maintenance of their labor of a Presbyterian minister who owns the Holy Scriptures for his only rule of faith and practice, and who, agreeably to the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, shall own the Westminster Confession of Faith, with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, as a test of his orthodoxy, and that before the Session for the time being, before his settlement as the rightful minister of the aforesaid Church or congregation."

There must have been some strong motive back of the action of the Church in the year 1722 by which the Baptists withdrew from their house of worship. What more probable motive than preparation for the coming of a pastor? History is silent, but under date of 1733, in the Manuscript Records of the Circular Church, Charleston, we find noted the death of the "Rev. Mr. Moore, minister of a congregation at Edistoe." We have no means of knowing how long had been the term of service thus cut short by death. Mr. Moore is the first minister of this Church of whom we find record. It is said to contemplate the fact that of this laborer in our beloved vineyard we know only his name and the year of his death; yet it was almost surely during his ministry that the largest contributions were made for the support and permanent endowment of this Church.

We find no record of a successor until the settlement in 1741 of Rev. John McLeod.

Mr. McLeod's first pastorate was at Darien, Ga. Picked men from the glen of Strathlean came to America in 1736 and founded a village to the north side of the Altamaha, near its mouth. Desiring to have a Presbyterian minister who could preach to them in Gaelic and teach their children, they applied to the Scotch Society for Propagating Religious Knowledge and Mr. John McLeod of the Isle of Skye was sent out to them. The colony lost many of its inhabitants at the massacre of Fort Moosa and the survivors were left in a nearly defenseless condition. Discouraged by these conditions Mr. McLeod left the Colony of Georgia and in 1741 accepted a call to the pastorate of the Edisto Island Church. He served this Church probably for thirteen years, his ministry here apparently closing in 1754, although, as it appears hereafter, he continued to reside on the Island, at least for a season. A number of his descendants now live in McPhersonville.

Rev. Archibald Simpson, who was licensed by Charleston Presbytery on May 15, 1754, and appointed to preach at Wilton, was also directed to give every fourth Sabbath at Edisto, then vacant. His diary relates that on his first visit to Edisto, Friday, June 7th, 1754, he was lost in the woods but got over the next day. On another occasion, his diary tells us that he was driven back by the winds and reached the Island late at night. Lord's Day, July 27th, 1755, he writes: "Prevented preaching by violent rain in the forenoon. At 12 o'clock preached to about thirty people. Spent the evening with Rev. McLeod." Thursday, March 11, 1756, "Capt. Edings died suddenly. A great loss. Went by land to Edisto. The corpse sent by water. Crossed over and rode several miles to the place of interment." The entries in his diary relating to Edisto end with this. It is probable that he ceased to preach

here regularly after his settlement at Stoney Creek on June 16, 1756.

The sketch of the Church in the appendix to Ramsay's History of South Carolina says that a Rev. Mr. Henderson, a native of North Britain, succeeded Mr. John McLeod. We have seen that by appointment of Presbytery, Mr. Simpson, then a licentiate, filled the pulpit and continued to do so for a year after his ordination on April 2, 1755. Howe says Mr. Henderson did not become pastor before 1770. Mr. Simpson's diary gives us an account of the reception of Rev. Thomas Henderson by Charleston Presbytery on May 17, 1770. It says: "Mr. Henderson, chaplain to the Royal Scots, stationed at present at St. Augustine, who has a call from Edisto and I believe will accept of it when he receives letters from the governor there (St. Augustine) Colonel Grant or the general-in-chief. His testimonies from a Presbytery and Synod in Scotland were very full and he was received very unanimously. He seems to be a young man of a very promising countenance, about thirty years old or better, and in the after business of the day appeared to be a very sensible and judicious person." We do not know how long Mr. Henderson remained as Pastor on Edisto, but find mention of him as Pastor of Wilton Church in 1777. He continued as Pastor of that Church during the War of the Revolution. He died there of bilious fever on January 18, 1786—a true and faithful minister of Christ.

The Revolutionary struggle had now begun. Time will not permit even the briefest review of the sufferings of the devoted people of the low country of South Carolina. Suffice it to say that it was the scene of sanguinary struggles and its people the victims of persecution such as modern times have rarely seen visited upon non-combatants. We know little of events on Edisto Island during this period. The British army was in Charleston or near by from early in 1779 to its evacuation in December, 1782. These were years of distress and suffering to the State and necessarily also to the Church. So far as known, this congregation was without a pastor, though Mr. Henderson may have and probably did render occasional service in holy things to his former flock.

On the 26th of March, 1784, an important event occurred: a charter was granted and the Church incorporated. Hitherto the property had been vested in eight trustees, but had so largely increased that it was deemed safer and more for the interest of the Church to put it under the control of all the male members of the congregation constituting a body henceforth a most important element of its life, known as the "Corporation". We do not know what was the amount of the property owned by the Church and now vested in the Corporation, but in 1807 it consisted of \$23,370.30

in bonds bearing interest, and £84, 10 s annual rent of the lands exclusive of the forty acres attached to the parsonage for the use of the Pastor. There seems to have been no tax on the members of the Church for its support—the income from invested funds being sufficient.

Establishment of such endowments seems to have been the rule among our most ancient low country churches. The custom was probably due to the survival of ideas relating to church finance brought from England, where the support of religious and charitable institutions was generally so provided. Undoubtedly this course tends to secure the permanence of such institutions in old and settled states of society but in this new country it has not proved successful. Nearly all the old endowments of our churches have been dissipated and lost in the constant changes of society and especially in the confusion and disaster of two great Wars which have devastated these coasts. This Church has preserved of its inheritance a greater part than most of its sisters—about one-third of its lands and a little more than one-third of its invested funds. It speaks well for this people that the loss of this income has not diminished but rather increased their activity in all Christian benevolent work.

We are so fortunate as to have the complete Minutes of the Corporation from “Wednesday, June the sixteenth, one thousand seven hundred and ninety.” The first pages contain “The five constitutional articles” and fourteen by-laws of the Church. The second by-law reads strangely to Presbyterians of today, for it declared that Presbytery shall upon no pretense or occasion intermeddle with the secular affairs of the Church, nor shall they have any cognizance of the ecclesiastical except in cases of reference or appeal, and the ordaining and installing of the minister.” Another thing seems even more remarkable. The Corporation and not the congregation seems to have called the pastors. This is especially strange in that non-communicants were thus given a voice in choosing a pastor which was denied to communicants, if female.

These Minutes give us history at last, at least so far as the administrative and financial life of the Church is concerned, and we use the material found in them. For several years, probably since 1784, Mr. T. Thomas Cooley had been Pastor of the Church. On the first page of the Minute Book stands this record: “A motion then made and seconded whether Mr. Cooley should continue as pastor or minister in said Church, when on balloting there was found a great majority against him; viz., seven to one. It was then agreed that Mr. Cooley should be informed by letter of the proceedings of the meeting relative to his removal. Norman McLeod

and Duncan Littlejohn were appointed to wait on him and deliver the letter." Ephraim Mikell was president and John Aiken secretary of this meeting which was held June 16, 1790.

May 1st, 1792, Rev. Wm. Speer was called to the pastorate and Ephraim Mikell, Norman McLeod, and Joseph Edings were appointed to sign the call. The stipend was named at £200 sterling money of the state of South Carolina, with the use of the parsonage and other necessary buildings and forty acres of land. A very liberal provision was that Mr. Speer's salary should begin the first of the preceding January and that he should have leave of absence during the summer months. On the second of the following January, Mr. Speer not having complied with his agreement to return, his call was declared null and void. At the same time Thomas Baynard, Wm. Edings, and Joseph J. Murray were given power to repair the old parsonage house and kitchen or to build new ones and to repair the Church.

April 4, 1793, it was resolved that "Mr. Donald McLeod shall remain with us for six months on trial, and that he shall receive for the same the sum of £60, exclusive of his board which will be £20 for the time specified to any person that he stays with." Minutes signed Danl. Townsend, President; John Aiken, Clerk.

December 2, 1793, a call was extended Mr. McLeod on the same terms as mentioned in the call to Mr. Speer and to be signed by the same committee. Thus began a pastorate of twenty-eight years—terminated by death.

For some years the seating of the Church was under discussion. It seems that it had been supplied with box pews and the replacing them with "seats", as our modern pews were called, was a theme of agitation—pro and con. The battle was waged for years until in 1800 it was resolved the meeting-house be put all in seats, retaining the parson's pew. A "shed" was also added to the building and appropriated to the use of the negroes.

March, 1803, the Pastor resigned his office, but a year later a new call was issued to him which led to a renewal of the relation. Perhaps an explanation of this strange course may be found in a memorandum on a loose sheet of paper found in the book. It is as follows: "Motion made by Wm. Seabrook and seconded by Ephraim Mikell, Senr.: Resolved, that a committee be appointed to retain counsel to cooperate with the public prosecutor in bringing to justice the perpetrator of an act of violence committed on the person of Rev. Donald McLeod, Minister of this Church, and to repel the attempts which we believe are made to affect his character and to destroy his usefulness, and that Isaac Auld, James Clark and Wm. Seabrook be that committee." Here we see how over a century ago this people stood loyally by their Pastor, held faster to him

in evil than perhaps in good report for we note that the stipend named in the second was one half greater than in the original call and the perquisites were also increased. For twenty years longer he served them and when he died they mourned him and honored his memory with a mural tablet of marble, on which tribute is paid to his piety and faithfulness.

He tells us in the statistical account of Edisto Island prepared for Ramsay's history, that a parsonage was erected for him to replace one destroyed by fire. There must have been a considerable interval between the destruction and reconstruction for on June 5, 1800, £70 sterling was ordered paid Mr. McLeod to compensate him for the disadvantage he had labored under in the want of the parsonage buildings, and it is not until March 1807 that it was "resolved by the Corporation that the Parsonage House to be built shall be in length 34 feet and in width 18 feet."

Mr. McLeod died January 30, 1821. This is recorded of him: "His friends were many, his enemies few, this Church will long mourn his loss."

On the 7th day of March, the same year, Rev. William States Lee was called to the pastorate of the Church, a relation which was to endure for fifty-one years and six months.

The early years of this long pastorate were marked by great material advancement. In 1826, the monument to the benefactors of the Church was erected and the tablet in memory of Dr. Donald McLeod was affixed to the wall of the sanctuary. In 1830 the building of a new Church was resolved and on June 5, the contract for this venerable house was let to Mr. Pillans. By July of the next year, the contract was fully completed and the subscriptions having gone beyond the most sanguine expectations, a bonus of \$300 was paid to the contractor. The building committee was: William Seabrook, Sr., John C. Mikell, William Seabrook, Jr., Edward Whaley and Joseph Edings. In 1832, the old Church was razed and the material used in repairing and enlarging the parsonage. The next year a parsonage was erected at Edingsville Beach, as a summer residence.

In 1836 by the last will and testament of an elder, William Seabrook, whom the records of the Corporation show to have been zealous and active in every good work, the Church received a bequest of \$5,000.00.

The same year, this building was very much improved and beautified. The smaller pillars, which supported the cupola, were replaced by the large fluted columns which give such dignity and beauty to the portico, and the interior was so changed as to present the present arched ceiling. The contractor was Mr. E. M. Curtis; the building committee: E. Whaley, D. Townsend, E. Mikell, Wm.

Seabrook, Jr., W. G. Baynard, Wm. M. Murray, and G. W. Seabrook. The beautiful memorial to William Seabrook was set in its present place, the inscription having been prepared at the request of the Corporation by Rev. William States Lee. In 1838, the present parsonage was erected, an appropriation of \$3,000.00 having been made for that purpose.

The invested funds of the Church, in spite of these large expenditures, were increased until as shown in the last report before the War between the States they amounted to \$35,390.12.

The oldest sessional records in our possession begin in 1837 and close in June 1861. They show a steady growth. The most striking fact they reveal is the constant and solicitous care taken by the Session of the spiritual interests of the negroes. There is not a single recorded meeting in which in some way this was not a subject of discussion. During Mr. Lee's first thirty-seven years 449 colored members were received and 338 infants baptized. There is little doubt that the present material and moral character of our Island negroes is largely due to the fine influence exercised by this Church.

The last meeting of the Session was held June 2, 1861. The Minute Book was left on the Island, when the members of the Church departed for battle and for places of refuge up the State. The negroes got possession of it when they organized themselves into "The Edisto Union Church", and it was carried to the North. At the close of the War word came informing the Church that the old Session Book might be regained by writing for it. This was done. Since those troublous days it has reposed with other records in the old home Church.

After the fall of Port Royal, South Carolina, November 13, 1861, the inhabitants of the Sea Islands were ordered to the mainland. Edisto and the other Islands were deserted.

"The Church was left a lonely sentinel, still keeping her silent vigil over the quiet sleepers of generations passed."

In 1863 the Church was robbed of all her furniture. The pipe organ was taken down and packed to be carried away by the enemy. (As testified to by Major Butts and other members of 47th N. Y. Regt., then stationed here.)

The close of the War found the people penniless; their homes in possession of the U. S. Government. The Church in possession of former slaves.

We quote the following from a paper read by Mr. Townsend Mikell, Elder, at the Bi-centennial Exercises in 1911:

"After much trouble and anxiety we were re-possessed of our lands and returned in May 1866 to our homes, with our rights to

them disputed by the negroes, who had possession of them, as they were led to believe by the U. S. authorities.

"Having secured restoration papers from Washington, D. C., and seeing the absolute necessity of getting immediate possession of the Church building and property, which were being used by the negroes, our Senior Elder wrote to our venerable old Pastor, Rev. Wm. S. Lee, who was still in Edgefield, S. C., where he had refugeed, to come down at once to open services, which he did.

"Well do I remember the scene on one Sabbath morning in the last of May or first of June, when a little band of ten of us, with two or three children, assembled across the road opposite the old Church, that was packed with negroes, we holding a conference as to what was best to be done. The decision was to send for the Commandant of the U. S. military, located on the Island, and let the Government execute her own orders.

"When the Commandant came we formed in line of twos, and marched in on the north side door. The Commandant and our venerable Pastor, who had led this flock for half a century, taking the lead. As we entered the door we found the building packed. The old pulpit with its winding stairway on either side, contained four. The whole congregation was singing most lustily. Mr. Lee waited, thinking there would be a cessation after the singing, when he would tell them of our mission, but before it stopped their spokesman arose and commenced praying. Before he stopped, another opened the Bible and commenced reading. Mr. Lee then held up the restoration papers and said, 'In the name of God and by authority of the U. S. Government, we are here to claim our Church', and addressed them, asking those who were former members to retain their accustomed places. Their preacher, Rev. Hedges (colored) answered that for reasons best known to themselves, they had better stay to themselves, then told his congregation that as the U. S. Government had so ordered, they would have to leave, which they did in a body. We then had our quiet service, Mr. Lee preaching from the text, 'I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.' (I Cor. 2:2.)

"Our fears and cares now were by no means at an end to protect this old citadel. . . .

"By the last report of the Trustees of the Corporation of this Church (1859) we find the endowment, in bonds and script, was \$34,061.13, with cash in hand, after Pastor's salary and other indebtedness paid, \$1,214.99. The Pastor received then \$1,285.00, with manse and forty acres of land, which he planted.

"Of course the funds of the Church shared the same fate as personal property during the War, and after strenuous efforts for two or three years we rescued \$11,156.70 of it. We in no case

distrusted our debtors, and in one case our claim was the means of keeping the possession in the family, to whom it belonged for generations past.

"Mr. Lee, our Pastor, received the first year (1868) only \$339.00. In the next year (1869) \$369.00. In 1870 he received \$1,882.58. The meagre salary of the first two years was on account of the impoverished condition of our people, but there was not a murmur from any one of the family, though at times, when they arose from their scanty meal, they did not know where the next was to come from, but when the time for the meal came, the meal was there."

The Church was not, then, connected with Presbytery. It had been one of the four that formed "The Presbytery of Charleston", but when that Presbytery was dissolved, it did not join Charleston Presbytery until 1870. (See Sessional Book, April 17, 1870, and Minutes of Corporation, 1871).

The Church did not have Deacons until March 25, 1873 (see Session Book), when Dr. D. T. Pope and Mr. Townsend Mikell were chosen her first Deacons.

Rev. William States Lee remained Pastor of the Church until October 2, 1872, serving in this capacity for six years after the close of the War. He had come to this pastorate from the Dorchester Church in 1821.

Rev. John R. Dow commenced his pastorate in 1872, which ended October 1, 1876.

Rev. J. E. Fogartie was Pastor of the Church from September 1877 to December 1, 1881.

Rev. R. A. Mickle accepted a call to the Church in 1882 and served in this capacity until 1887.

Rev. Thomas P. Hay commenced to preach here in September 1887, but did not accept the call as Pastor until 1890, the reason being on account of physical strength. His pastorate ended in 1898.

Rev. Hugh R. Murchison was Pastor from February 1898 to April 21, 1901.

Rev. Thomas B. Trenholm served the Church as Pastor from June 9, 1901, to December 31, 1906.

Rev. S. C. Caldwell accepted the call on September 1, 1906 and remained as Pastor of the Church until 1918.

During Mr. Caldwell's pastorate, the Church had a celebration commemorative of the first year of her third century of life. The exercises were of a varied and interesting nature and covered a space of three days, April 28, 29 and 30, 1911. On Friday morning there were addresses of welcome made by the Pastor, Mr. Caldwell; by the President of the Corporation, Mr. E. Mitchell Seabrook; and by a member of the Session, Mr. William S. Edings,

whose tones and manner gave evidence of the sincerity of their greeting. Dr. H. B. Lee, a son of Dr. States Lee, who was for more than fifty years the beloved Pastor of the Church, gave an interesting and touching talk of childhood and boyhood days on Edisto. He spoke of those who had passed into the great beyond, but who, in passing, had left an impression of their noble characters on the place and the people, who would know them in the flesh no more.

Rev. E. C. Murray, D.D., another son of the Church, of whom she is proud, spoke of boyhood days on Edisto forty years ago.

On Saturday, Rev. S. C. Caldwell gave a most interesting and instructive History of the Church in Early Days, from its founding in 1710, or before, to 1861, the beginning of the War. Ruling Elder Townsend Mikell, then, gave the Post Bellum History of the Church. He gave a vivid picture of the terrible times during and just after the War, and showed the various records and books of the Church from early days, and one book that was "taken prisoner" as he expressed it, carried North and kept there several years.

Mr. Hay, former Pastor, sent a paper on "Pastoral Reminiscences", which, in his absence, was read by Mr. Caldwell. Dr. Fogartie and Mr. Trenholm, former Pastors, were prevented by illness from being present.

Rev. H. R. Murchison, who was Pastor of the Church for three and a half years, previous to the time when Mr. Caldwell took charge, spoke feelingly of his experiences on Edisto, of the unfailing courtesy, kindness and hospitality with which he was treated. He spoke of the natural beauties of this place, the varied and almost tropical flora and fauna, of the Island, and what a soothing, uplifting effect these signs of God's loving kindness, to His children, had on his nature.

On Sunday, April 30, in the morning, Rev. Melton Clark preached, and that afternoon Rev. P. S. McChesney, of Wadmalaw, preached from Luke 23:22,23. Special music was furnished by Miss Kate Palmer and Mr. Parker E. Connor.

Dinner was served under the beautiful trees near the Church. Altogether, the Bi-centennial Exercises of this historic Temple of Worship is an occasion long to be remembered by all who had the pleasure and honor of being present.

In 1918 Rev. C. E. Robertson became Pastor of the Church and served until the fall of 1929. For the following year or more, Rev. E. C. Bailey, a son of the Church, supplied the pulpit twice a month.

In April 1931 Rev. Daniel J. Currie, came from DeFuniak Springs, Fla., in acceptance of a call to the pastorate.

Are we the same Presbyterian Church of Edisto Island, as two hundred years ago?

Of the names most frequently recurring in the records of the 18th century: Bower, Lardant, McLeod, Russell, Hamilton, Waills, Bird, Whippy, Hendrick, Littlejohn, Clark, Edings—they no longer remain amongst us. The records of the 19th century read as if of today in that all the names are familiar: Mikell, Seabrook, Whalley, Murray, Townsend, Bailey, Pope, Hopkinson, Wilkinson, Baynard. It is remarkable that in the pews today sit the bearers of those who occupied them 150 years ago—a fact almost without a mate in this land of incessant changes and migrations. In a very special sense this congregation is the heritor of the generations gone before.

What is going to be the record of this Church when another two hundred years have rolled around? The answer is with us. To us is this—the Church of our Fathers—a sacred trust committed from generation to generation to be handed down to generation after generation, God granting, until the Bridegroom claims His Bride.

(This account is based on "The Early History of the Church", a paper written by Rev. S. C. Caldwell, and on other records.)



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