

## **Cedar Fork Baptist Church**

**1805-2005**

The church history presentation by Ruth Couch during the Bicentennial Celebration, April 22,  
2005

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# 1805-1858

## Chapter One



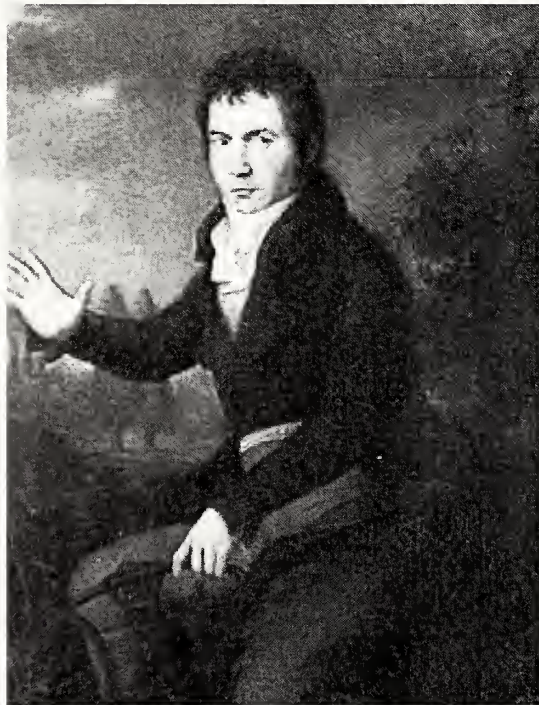
It was spring, 1805 in North Carolina. Trees were budding



and flowers were blooming. Spring plowing had begun.

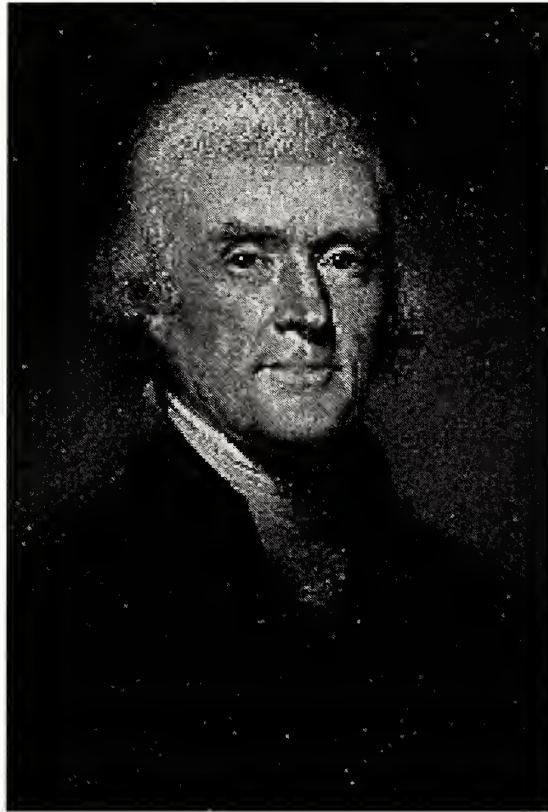


The United States of America had been a nation for only 20 years. Napoleon became emperor of France on May 18.



Beethoven was writing and conducting symphonies in Germany.





Thomas Jefferson was re-elected for his second term as President of the United States.

## 1805

### January

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1 New Year's Day

### February

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10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
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14 St. Valentine's Day  
22 Washington's Birthday  
27 Ash Wednesday

### March

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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17 St. Patrick's Day

### April

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1 April Fool's Day  
7 Palm Sunday  
12 Good Friday  
14 Easter

### May

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### June

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21 Summer Solstice

Elder (preacher) George Roberts and Roland Gooch were riding on horseback to an area of Wake County to organize a new Baptist church on April 22, 1805.

# 1804

## January

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1 Easter  
1 April Fool's Day

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21 Summer Solstice

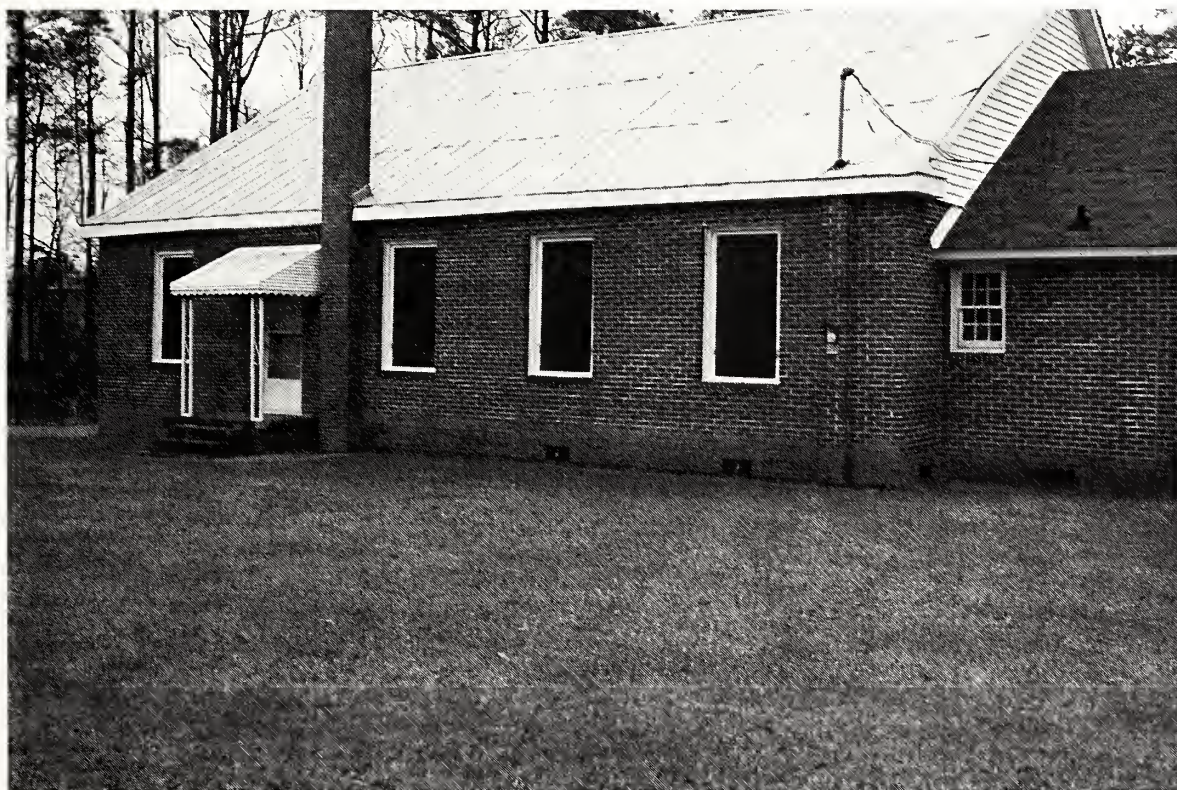
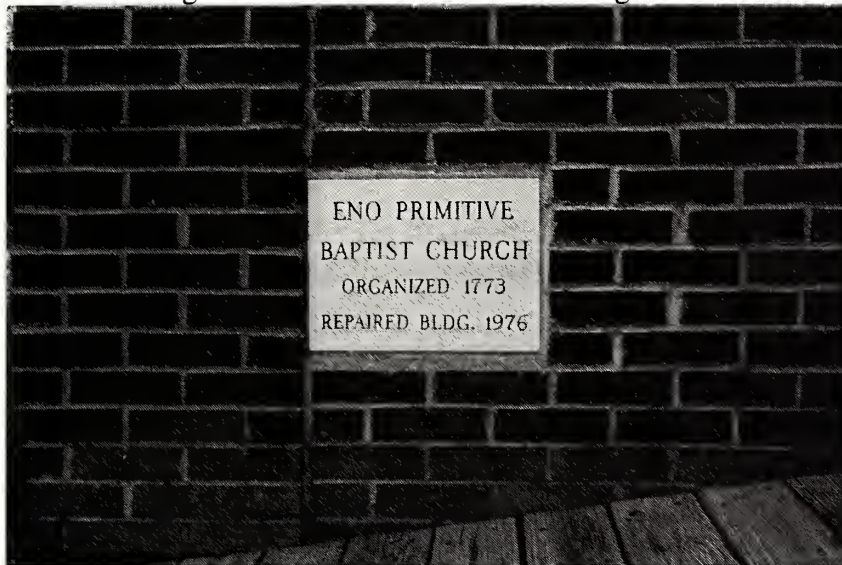
(April 22 was on Sunday in 1804. Could we be older than we think?)

The new church would be an "arm" or branch of Eno Church.





Eno Primitive Baptist Church was organized in 1773. Eno was a member of the Flat River Association in 1794 when two acres were given by Richard Rhodes in what is today Bragtown for the Eno Meetinghouse.<sup>1</sup> This is their third meeting house



Notice the blinds or shutters over the windows. During these years, there had been a noticeable slump in religious interest. On January 11, 1797 Preacher Roberts, the organizer of Cedar Fork, wrote to Isaac Backus: "It has been but a cold and languishing time in Religion in our parts and

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<sup>1</sup> Anderson, Jean Bradley, *Durham County*, p.53



the Churches of my acquaintance for a considerable while paste(sic). Some years ago we had a happy ingathering, in which the Church grew from about 50 or sixty to upwards of 200, but alas (sic) now our harps are hung on the willows.”<sup>2</sup> It was during those happy early years that he organized Tabb’s Creek Church in the Flat River Association.<sup>3</sup>



Early church members would construct rough buildings of logs like this one of Sandy Creek Church in Liberty, NC. Sandy Creek Church was actually the grandmother of Cedar Fork. Shubal Stearns was born in Boston in 1706 but left the established churches of that day because he believed having an experience with the Lord was a necessary part of salvation. He came to Sandy Creek and established this church in 1755. His group was known as Separatist Baptists. General Baptists had established themselves in eastern North Carolina and they would later become Free Will Baptists. By 1772 there were 42 churches and 125 branches from Sandy Creek. Some of these were revived churches in the Flat River Association and some were new churches in that association.

As late as May, 1801, Elder Roberts wrote, “I am still indeavouring(sic) to labour in my poor Manner in that worthy cause I embark’d on near 30 years ago, but I am not so happy as to enjoy a revival of late, as have other places where Divine Goodness is pleased to work....I think I was reviv’d as much as I have been lately a few weeks ago, as I was riding from a meeting I met a man lately from Kentucky who said he saw 28 baptis’d in a

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<sup>2</sup> Taylor, Raymond Hargus, *Partners in Missions and Ministry: A History of Flat River Baptist Assn.*, p.27

<sup>3</sup> Taylor, Raymond Hargus, *Partners in Missions and Ministry: A History of Flat River Baptist Association*, p.180



day some small time before & there had been 68 basptis'd in one day. O that it might spread into every Dark and destitute place.”<sup>4</sup>

The first signs of the revival in North Carolina occurred in the Presbyterian churches of Orange County in the summer of 1801. “Quite suddenly and to the surprise of all, a spontaneous emotion swept the congregation, producing tears, faintings, shakings, shoutings, despair, or ecstasy. Crowds grew as the hysteria spread. A church would arrange for a protracted meeting and provide a series of services often held by ministers of more than one denomination. Families would pack provisions into their wagons and prepare to camp out around the meeting grounds, where their days would be filled with exhorting, praying, singing, and preaching....”<sup>5</sup> Use of mules and wagons to travel at a very slow pace over great distances made overnight stays a necessity. In March and April, 1871, rain, not snow, would cancel conferences at Cedar Fork due to the mode of travel and lodging in those years.



<sup>4</sup> Taylor, Raymond Hargus, *Partners in Missions and Ministry: A History of Flat River Baptist Association*, p.28

<sup>5</sup> Jean Bradley Anderson, *Durham County*, p.63



Later, families would build small cottages, rather than camps, around the meeting grounds. Many of today's assembly grounds are the result of early camp meetings. Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts began this way.



Camp Creek Meeting House and congregation, 1942.  
Photograph by Benjamin F. Patrick.

Roberts' prayers were answered. He had been overjoyed to assist in organizing another church, Camp Creek Primitive Baptist, north of the Cedar Fork area in 1803. Cedar Fork would be the only other church organized in Durham County within the 1801-1805 years of the Great Revival. Elder George Roberts assisted in organizing both churches. Camp Creek Church was disbanded in 1942 when the location was requisitioned by the United States Army to build Camp Butner.

We are therefore the second oldest surviving Baptist congregation in Durham County with Eno being older. Mount Bethel Methodist Church was organized in the 1780's, so we are



the third oldest surviving church of any denomination in the county. Since Eno remained a Primitive Baptist Church, we are the oldest Missionary Baptist congregation in Durham County.

Other arms, or missions, of Eno church included Rose of Sharon, Holly Springs, Shady Grove, and Mount Moriah.

At the time of Cedar Fork's constitution the members entered into the following covenant:

*For as much as Almighty God by His grace has been pleased to call us whose names are hereunto subscribed, out of darkness into his marvelous light and all of us having been regularly Baptised upon a profession of our faith in Christ Jesus and giving up ourselves to the Lord and to one another in a gospel way, to be governed and guided by a proper discipline agreeably to the word of God. We do therefore in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by his assistance keep up the discipline of the church of which we are members, in the most brotherly way toward each other, which we endeavor punctually to observe the following Rules:*

*That in a brotherly love to pray for each other, to watch over each other, and if need be in the most tender manner to reprove each other, that is if we discover anything amiss in a brother. -and tell him his faults according to the instructions of our Lord in the 18<sup>th</sup> chapter of Matthews Gospel, and not to be whispering and telling it abroad*

*We also agree with God's assistance to pray in our families, attend our church meetings, observe the Lord's day and keep it holy and not absent ourselves from the communion of the Lord's Supper, without a lawful excuse, to be ready to communicate to the necessities and defray the expences of the church and for the support of the ministry and not irregularly to depart from fellowship of the church, not to moove to distant Countries without a letter of dismissal. These things we do covenant and agree to keep and observe. Signed by the mutual consent of the members whose names are underneath subscribed-*

Raleigh Baptist Association was also organized in 1805 but Cedar Fork did not join it until 1811. We have belonged to four associations-Flat River, Raleigh, Mt. Zion, and Yates. Cedar Fork left Raleigh Association and joined Mt. Zion Association in December, 1882.<sup>6</sup> Mt. Zion Associational meeting was held at Cedar Fork in September, 1886 (after our new church was built) and 1904. Homes were opened for delegates to the Associational meeting. In 1948, the church left Mt. Zion Association to join the newly formed Yates Association.<sup>7</sup>

Ezekiel Trice was our first pastor and served for 33 years at a starting salary of forty dollars. "Reverend Ezekiel TRICE was born about 1760 in Orange County, NC. Commissioner of the University of NC in 1819. He died after 1820 in Orange County, NC"<sup>8</sup>. He preached at Cedar Fork until 1938. His wife was Mary Ann Herndon, sister of Lewis Herndon, who owned the land for our first meetinghouse.

Joseph Barbee and Thomas Johnson were the first deacons, and 48 other members made a charter membership of 51. The church was located at the head of Cedar Fork Creek, said to be about a mile toward Cary beyond the present location.

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<sup>6</sup> Shipp, Stokes, and Walton, *A History of Cedar Fork Baptist Church-1805-1970*, p.37

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, p. 114

<sup>8</sup> Richard Floyd Pickett family history notes



**Cutting Boards with a Whipsaw, Kennebunkport  
(Maine Historic Preservation Commission)**

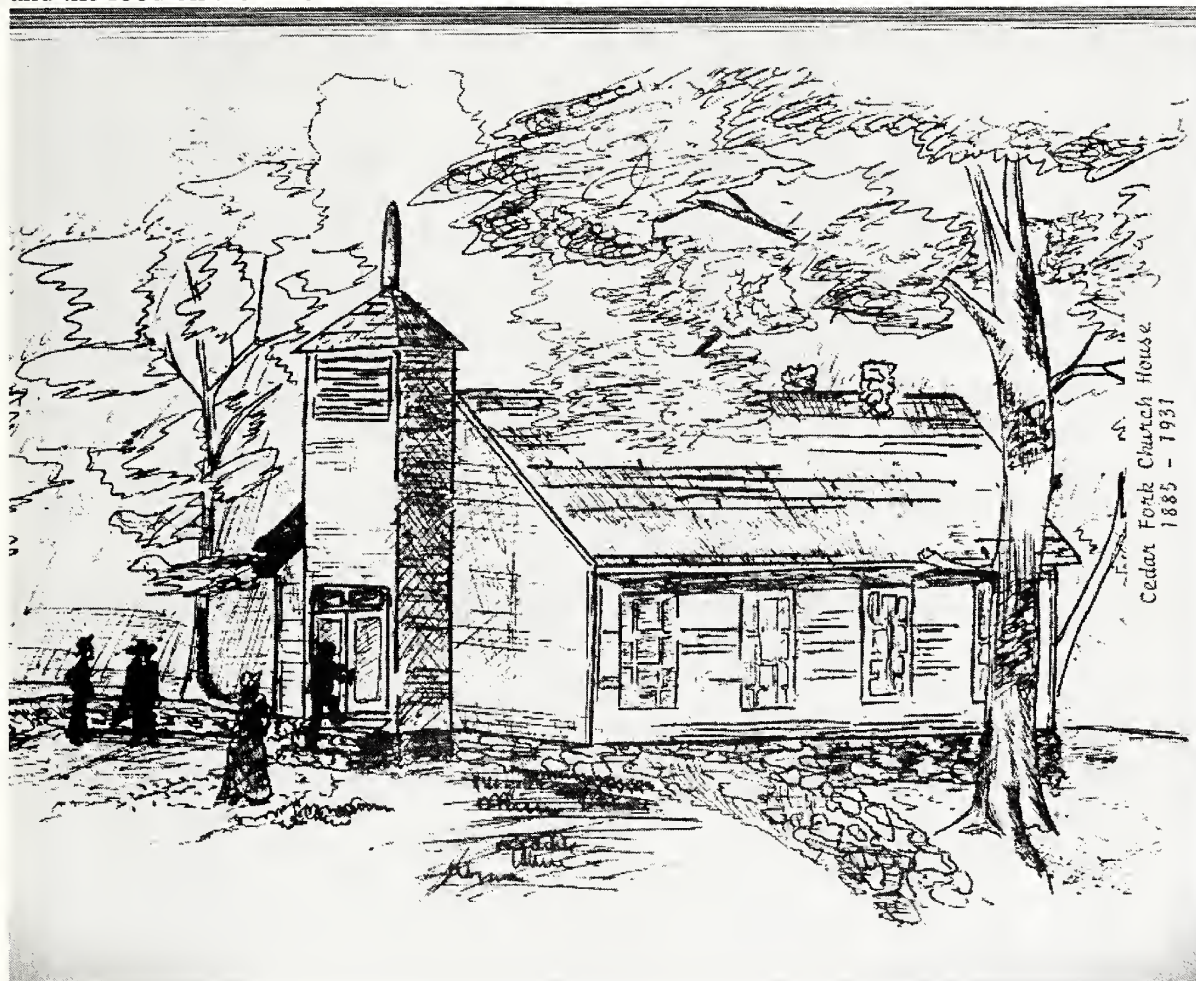
The first building was made of logs sawn with whipsaws or pit saws, narrow 6 foot long 2 man saws which ripped the logs lengthwise, with one man below and one above. The first log building was built on the land of Lewis Herndon, or the Rich place as it was later known- beyond the Weatherspoon cemetery. There was a gallery along one side of the building for the slave congregation. In 1859 there were 50 black members, servants baptized and accepted as members of the congregation. The slaves of the small farmer lived in a cabin not very different from their master's, in the same yard.



The wife and children of the master labored in the fields beside the black family. They were called "Uncle" and "Aunt" by the white family. Both races faced common dangers-



accident, disease, and death. Their life was precarious and all the early settlers were vulnerable to illness and death that could take away the breadwinner of a family, and leave orphan children, elderly widows, or other helpless dependents. There were no Departments of Social Services or government assistance. Survival was difficult under these conditions. Lack of education and illiteracy were common to both races. Minimal earthly possessions characterized their homes, and the food on their tables and the clothes on their backs were similar for both races.

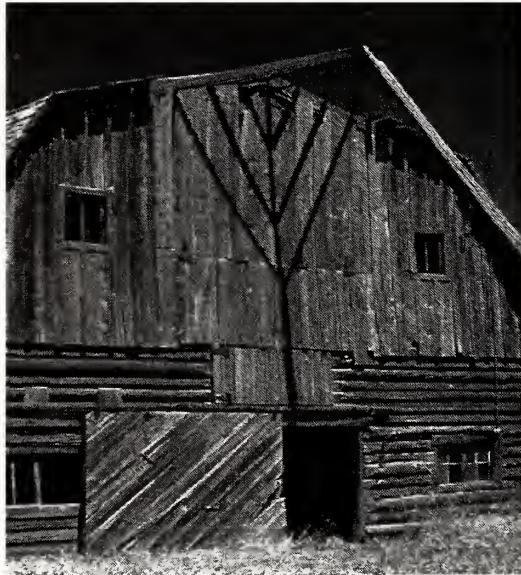


Lewis Herndon had a brother, Zachariah Herndon who was a physician, owned a lot of land, and operated a sawmill, possibly on Northeast Creek or one of its tributaries. Among his papers is a bill dated 1822 from carpenter John Hudgins for building a sawmill, apple mill, store, ginhouse, and a meetinghouse. Another in 1827 records his putting four windows in the meetinghouse. If these relate to Cedar Fork church, then a second meetinghouse could have been built in 1822. Tradition says that a second structure was built in 1834 on land donated by Joseph Jones to the church deacons, Edmund Herndon (brother of Lewis and Zachariah and Mary Ann Trice) and John Hill. Jonathan Stephens, Nat Warren, and Ridley Warren sawed all the lumber to build the church. Ridley Warren was still a member in 1874. Stephens was both a carpenter and preacher and he preached the first sermon in the new meetinghouse. This location was across from the present church behind the Home Demonstration Club House. It was far enough from the road for a newer building to be built in front of it in 1885 on the site of the present clubhouse.

The details of the meeting house are few. There was a sexton who was paid to furnish the wood or coal and keep the fire on days of meeting and clean the church. In January, 1917, a committee was appointed to see about getting stoves for Sunday School rooms or use old stoves for Sunday School rooms and get new ones for the main room. In 1865 the enclosure around the church was sold. Wells, dippers and buckets are often mentioned in minutes. The hand dug wells often went dry. It was 1955 before an adequate well was dug, and in the spring of 1962 a water fountain was installed in the hall of the Educational Building. Before this all drinking water had to be brought in for Vacation Bible School. A stand with a seat and two chairs, a lamp, other lamps in 1901, a communion set of goblets and pitcher, a yearly gallon of wine, a clock, carpet, and window blinds (shutters?) are all mentioned. In March, 1903, the window blinds were taken off and the windows frosted.

The Piedmont and Mountain regions of North Carolina were the poorest section of the poorest state in the nation in the early 1800's. By 1840 one third of native North Carolinians had moved on to other states or the frontier which offered hope and opportunity for advancement. In "December, 1859, the church extended the offer of pastorate to Johnson Olive, who had resigned to go West, but had not done so on account of sickness."<sup>9</sup> Cedar Fork township was referred to as "the dark corner of Durham County" because of its sparse population and lack of good roads to either Durham or Raleigh.

Churches acted as magnets to draw other public enterprises. As a result communities grew up around them. Cedar Fork can be credited for our Nelson community. Later in the century railroads would choose these stable communities for stations.



Boards cover this barn. In the 1830's the Primitive Baptists ("Hardshells") withdrew from their Baptist brothers because the primitives opposed missions, Sunday School, and educated ministry. They were led by Elder Osborne, a brilliant man of Baltimore who said, "Our fathers used boards to cover their homes, barns, stables, pig pens and cow sheds, while those mission advocates use boards to send the gospel to the heathen."<sup>10</sup> After this division, in 1830, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina was formed and Wake Forest Seminary began at Wake Forest, NC in 1834.

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<sup>9</sup> Shipp, Stokes, Walton, *A History of Cedar Fork Baptist Church-1805-1970*

<sup>10</sup> Mount Moriah Baptist church minutes



Today many Baptist churches include Missionary Baptist in their name. This basic belief in missions is still a cornerstone of Cedar Fork and perhaps we can understand why it is such an important part of our heritage. Under the influence of missionary minded pastor, W.S. Olive, the church budget was almost evenly divided between church expenses and missions in 1903. There was a treasurer for missions and one for church expenses. Some of our members can remember the controversy when the church lowered their contribution to missions to 30%, rather than 50%.

The temperance movement began in the early 1800's but began to take hold in North Carolina in the 1840's to combat the pervasive and obvious evil of alcoholism. In April 1874 our church conference recommended a petition to the Wake County Commissioners for the holding of an election in Cedar Fork Township to prohibit the retail of spirituous liquors in said township.<sup>11</sup> In April 1884, however, a committee of five was appointed to investigate rumors in regard to church members being implicated in running illicit distilleries. The pastor later reported that he had investigated and found the rumor to be unfounded and altogether false.



In 1845 Cedar Fork helped establish Rose of Sharon which became First Baptist Church of Durham. During that year also the Southern Baptist Convention was formed in Atlanta after a split among Baptists over whether slaveholders should be appointed as missionaries. In 1850 the North Carolina Railroad made a survey map of the route of the newly proposed railroad showing Cedar Fork Church as a landowner along its path. Before the railroad was built the congregation carried water from a spring where W.H. Morris's sawmill later stood. The railroad was built between the church and the spring. Because of the difficulty of climbing the railroad bank to get to the spring, the railroad company paid for a well to be dug. In 1855 our church assisted in the formation of another church, Berea Baptist Church.

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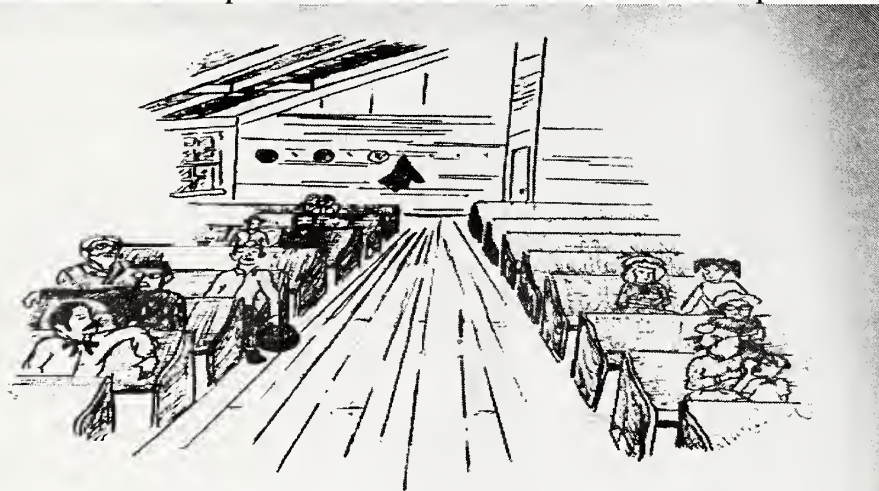
<sup>11</sup> Shipp, Stokes, and Walton, *A History of Cedar Fork Baptist Church 1805-1970*, p.20

# 1859-1900

## Chapter 2

Church minutes prior to 1859 are missing, and the previous information was gleaned from history of Durham County, other church minutes, and our church history written in 1970. In the first part of our record book beginning in 1859 are the rules of decorum for the Church of Cedar Fork, Wake County, NC stating that conference should be opened with prayer and praises to God, a door of experience should be opened each time, and the standing of the church should be inquired into. The standing was reported as being "all at peace" or charges were preferred against members for such things as intoxication, using profanity, adultery, perjury, fiddling and dancing, dueling, or disorderly conduct. Any member who was wounded with his brother or sister and did not take the gospel steps, but told it abroad, was to be dealt with by the church.

Failure to pay your portion of the expenses of the church when the assessment committee asked for money was also answerable to the body of believers. When members asked for forgiveness and expressed regret for their actions they were restored to fellowship, but those who did not do so were excluded and their names removed from the roll. The roll was always to be called and if any male member failed to attend a conference he was to appear at the next one and make his excuse or be dealt with as the church thought proper. Our present constitution is more lenient but persons inactive for two years are to be removed from membership. Members were to speak one at a time and be treated with respect.



*Interior View Around 1890  
Male and Female Members were Always Seated Separately*

Next in this minute book was the church roll divided into male and female members since they sat separately-the men on the colder, north side and the women on the sunny, south side. A third lists the black members of the church by first name.





Education at this time was private and parents of the students would hire a teacher for their children and provide a place for them to meet. At the conference of July, 1859 Brother H. Weatherspoon requested that the church let the trustees of the Cedar Fork Academy build an academy on church land. The request was granted. In May of 1860 the church voted to allow the students of Cedar Fork Academy to hold their examinations and exercises in the church. Richard Watson York was principal and teacher at the Cedar Fork Academy and founded the "Wake Riflemen" in January, 1860.



In the early months of 1861 he drilled his students in military tactics and dissolved classes when news of Ft. Sumter reached the Cedar Fork area. The group became the Cedar Fork Rifles. Lawyer York lived in the small white frame house on the Beasley property.

In August, 1861 Cedar Fork adopted resolutions as follows:

*Whereas—in view of the present unhappy condition of our country, we as members of the Church of Christ, bewail our manifold transgressions, and bow in humble humiliation to the Great I Am, and*

*Therefore, as a Church of Christ, we must not forget the assembling of ourselves together in humble prayer before God. If we desire our happiness, the happiness of our friends and relations, and the peace, and independence, of our country, Therefore be it resolved:*

- 1. That we will by divine sanction meet with this church as often as convenient for the purpose of praying for the prosperity of Zion, the safety of our friends And relations in battle and in the peace, and independence of our country.*
- 2. Resolved secondly:  
That we will implore Almighty God to protect our absent brethren, members of this church, now or hereafter engaged in the field of battle.*

In September, 1862, a collection of \$56.05, half the preacher's salary for the year, was taken up for colportage (the work of a traveling agent of a religious society who gives away Bibles and tracts) among the soldiers. Several other colportage offerings are recorded. In the conference of June, 1863, the church agreed to release Reverend Blackwood, the pastor, from this church to preach to the soldiers whenever he wanted to and to pay his expenses when thus engaged.

The Civil War ended in April, 1865. In October, 1866, the church accepted the invitation to send a delegation to the new meetinghouse near Morrisville on October 12 to constitute a church there. In October, 1867, a committee was appointed to consider a report about the separation of the white and Colored members of the church. They submitted the following report which was adopted:

*Your committee to whom was referred the consideration of the white and Colored membership of this church begs leave to submit the following report.*

*The subject is one of grave importance and one that has for the last few years puzzled churches, associations, and conventions to know what course to pursue, but it seems now that the mystery heretofore connected with the matter is at least to some extent removed. This will appear by consulting their (the Colored members') inclinations, as manifested in the course they are pursuing. We see they are inclined, very much inclined, to independent action in religious matters as well as everything else, and seem to have no heart to worship God ( even at churches where their memberships are) with the white race. This of itself, to our minds, very clearly indicates the course to be pursued, and that is dissolution of our relationship as church members.*

*We would, therefore, recommend that the Colored members of this church be requested to withdraw from the church, and organize churches of their own race and color, where they can worship God without restraint and embarrassment.*

Shiloh Baptist Church was established by these members.

There were a lot of people joining our church. On September 11, 1868, 43 persons were baptized into the membership of the church. After the revival in August 1874, 29 persons were baptized. The August, 1907, protracted meeting, or revival, resulted in 22 presenting themselves for baptism.





This is an 1828 pool found in Georgia. It reminds me of the one I remember as a child under the big oak tree that still stands in our side yard. Baptism has changed over the years. In the conference of November, 1861, on Sunday morning the church met at the water and baptized several. In October, 1887, the members “repaired to Brother Barbee’s fishpond where the ordinance of baptism was administered”<sup>12</sup> “Baptizing was administered near Brother L.A. Page’s after the August meeting on Tuesday morning, 1901, at 9:30 a.m. and 43 were baptized and seven restored.”<sup>13</sup> In September, 1907, a committee was asked to have a tent fixed for the girls to dress in after the baptizing. In September, 1914, the church decided to construct a pool but the church met at the creek on Sunday morning for baptism. In 1915 the pastor appointed a committee to build a pool and two dressing rooms at the end of the church. In 1921 the church was still “seeing about” a pool for baptizing. It was not until 1919 or the early 1920’s that the pool was finally constructed and paid for. When the church was moved across the road there was a baptistry built near the big oak tree. It was not used at a later date when the well went dry. Sister churches were generous to let us use their indoor baptisteries until 1964 when our sanctuary was redecorated and our baptistry constructed.

Queries, or questions about church life, were proposed for discussion when Baptist groups gathered for conference in the 1800’s. In November 1860, a question for the next conference at Cedar Fork was proposed: “Is there any Scriptural authority for the course pursued by Baptist churches in asking a great many questions of applicants for admission into our churches?” In February, 1877, the question was the following: “Is it not the duty of every male member of Cedar Fork Church to pay to the support of the pastor? If so, nothing else will excuse him but inability; and if unable, would it not be best for the willing members to give him something, so they can give?”

<sup>12</sup> Shipp, Stokes, and Walton, *A History of Cedar Fork Baptist Church-1805-1970*, p.47

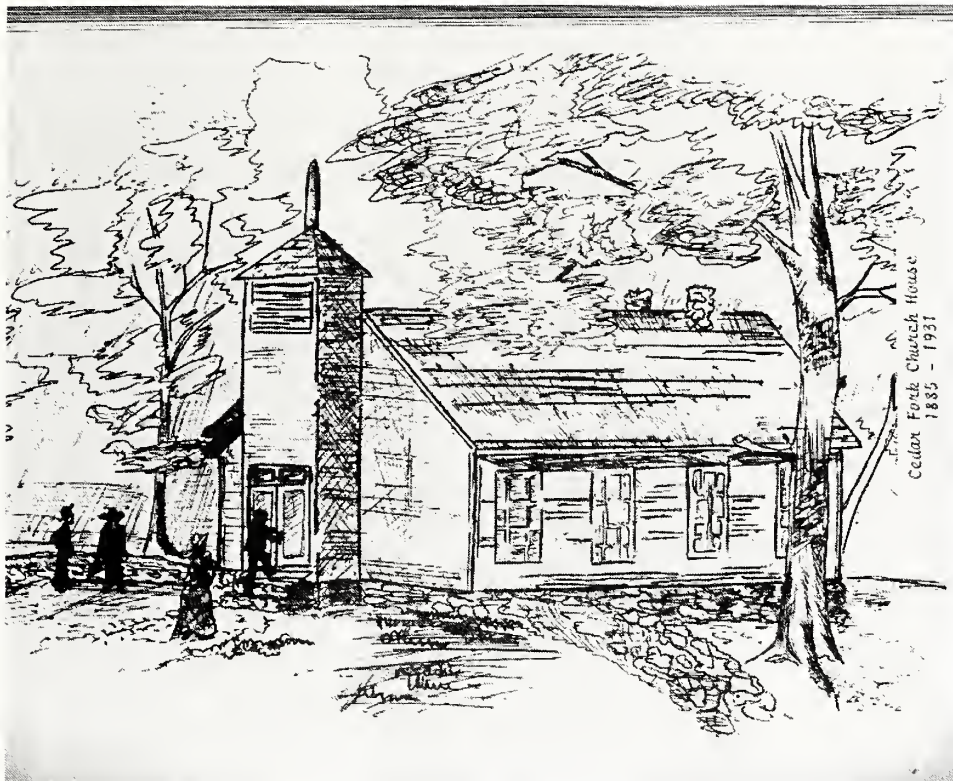
<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p.72

In 1878 the minutes first mention a Sabbath School, although Mt. Moriah had organized a Sunday School seven years earlier.



The 1878 conference agreed to adopt the Baptist Hymnal for church music. One dozen books were bought. Music has always been an important part of our worship. It was in 1899 that a church organist was first elected to play the reed pump organ. In April, 1906, contributions were solicited for a Singing School. A singing school is a brief course of musical instruction devoted to the rudiments of note-reading and sight-singing, with a focus on sacred music. Singing schools, established as early as 1700, were the first American musical institution; they fostered musical skills, notational innovations like shape notes, and the publication of tune books. Early singing schools often lasted two or three months, usually during a season of slack agricultural work (the winter months, or midsummer "laying-by" of crops). Twelve new hymn books were bought at that time for the 150 members attending. C. Barbee and W.O. Stone were elected as the first Leaders of Singing that year, also. In September, 1920, the church bought its first piano from Rev. L.E.M. Freeman. (This is the piano rescued from the fire, and it remains in the younger children's Sunday School room today). Rev. E. Weldon Johnson organized Cedar Fork's first choir with six members in 1951. A choir loft was built in that year as the choir grew. During Alex Booth's pastorate, the church purchased a baby grand piano. In 1962 Mrs. Annie Ruth Duke, the pastor's wife, presented the idea of choir robes for the choir and they were ordered.





During Rev. Christopher Columbus Newton's pastorate (1884-1889), there came a severe snow storm so heavy that it caused the rafters to slip out of place over the edge of the house structure. It was necessary to build a new church-house in 1885 at a cost of \$1000. There are no pictures of that church but the drawing in the picture was in the 1970 history of the church and may be from someone's memory



This may be a picture of an early Good Hope Baptist Church but it shows the architecture of churches of the era. Berea Baptist Church looks similar to this one.



This is an earlier church at Mt. Moriah from the same period.

Cedar Fork's new church was located in front of the previous church and nearer the Raleigh Rd where the present clubhouse stands. The new building was dedicated on the fourth Sunday in September, 1886. Rev. Newton became a missionary to Africa and he and his wife died and were buried there 5 years after he left Cedar Fork.

Being near the railroad presented some hazards. A committee was appointed in January, 1888, to have the straw and litter burnt off around the church in order to guard against fire from the passing trains. In 1895 the church letter stated that the membership consisted of 60 males and 130 females.

In November, 1896, a committee was appointed to secure a place for a graveyard. They reported in January, 1897, that they could not secure a suitable place. In November, 1916, the church set off the southwest corner of church property to be used as a church cemetery. In 2004 the church established a Cedar Fork Baptist Church cemetery maintenance endowment fund. The income from this fund will provide for the care of our cemetery in the future, whether the church is here or not. Some of those who have family members buried in the cemetery have contributed.

*Designation and Investment. This Endowment and any additions made to the same shall be known as the Cedar Fork Baptist Church Cemetery Maintenance Endowment Fund,*

In October, 1887, our pastor held an eight day meeting at High Point, a community located three miles south of Lowes Grove near the present Chatham County line in the community of Genlee and in the vicinity of Wake Road. . In April, 1897, a branch Sunday School was scheduled to meet at High Point Second Sunday in April. I.S. Barbee was elected Superintendent of Branch Sunday School at High Point.<sup>14</sup> In April, 1909, the deacons were appointed to go to High Point Church to see about their church organization. According to

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<sup>14</sup> Shipp, Stokes, Walton, *A History of Cedar Fork Baptist Church, 1805-1970*. p. 65



historian Jean Bradley Anderson, a Sunday school known as High Point had been organized in 1879. In 1907 the Rev. Robert E. Atkins began to preach to them regularly. He persuaded them to form what they named High Point Baptist Church, despite opposition from members of Cedar Fork who thought the competition would weaken our church. We evidently went to talk with them about their plans before they merged with the group at Lowes Grove which had the schoolhouse to meet in and formed Lowes Grove Baptist Church in 1909. High Point had been unable to raise funds to build their own meeting house.

# 1901-1950

## Chapter 3

In October, 1900, the church letter to the association reported the following information: Membership, 181; seating capacity of the church, 450; Numbers of Biblical Recorders taken, 10; Value of Church Property Estimated \$1200.

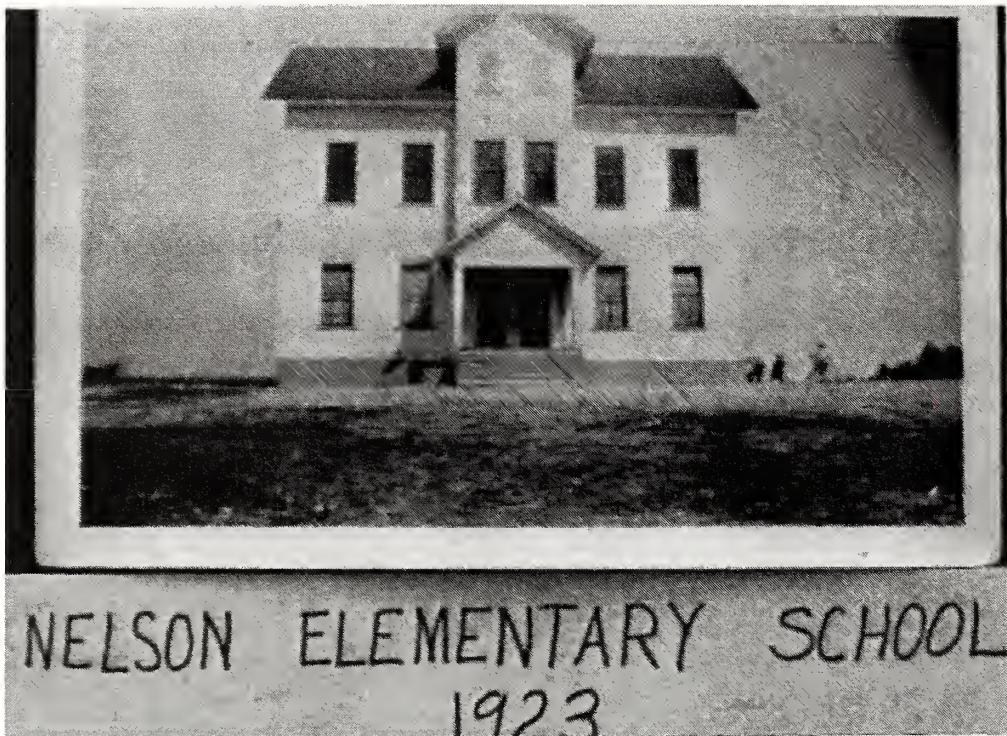
In November, 1902, the church voted to build a steeple, recover the roof, and paint the meeting house and seats. In March, 1903, the church was painted inside and out, the window blinds (shutters) taken off, and the windows frosted. In 1904 the building and repairing committee reported paying for building a belfry and a bell to put in it, covering, jacking up, and filling in yard in front of the meeting house. The Sisters raised money for carpet and chairs. The church invited the Association to meet at Cedar Fork for their next meeting in 1904.

In February, 1905, a committee reported on plans for a Century Meeting for April 22, 1905 at 10 o'clock. The church decided to have a long table at the Century Meeting and put their dinner on it. A committee to make the table was appointed. . At this anniversary service a record, or history, of Cedar Fork was read, someone reported on the Camp Meeting held at Cedar Fork about 1839, and representatives from daughter churches made short speeches. The history noted that "The congregations that worship here now are more reformed and have more respect for the Lord's house than they did. Even 50 years ago some of us recollect that it was a common thing to see at church the floor spit on with tobacco juice places nearly as large as a tablecloth all over the house and also the congregations are more orderly and attentive now than they used to be. They never thought of disturbing the preacher, going out or coming in at any time during the services way back when we first could recollect. At protracted meetings services were held nearly all day without any intermission or any time to eat until they got back home".<sup>15</sup>

In 1911 Cedar Fork Township was moved to Durham County from Wake. In 1918 the meeting house was insured. In 1922 the road in front of the church was paved and was called NC Highway 10. A committee was appointed to ask the Highway Commission to fix up the church yard and repair damages to the yard. In 1925 an accident occurred in front of the church when a car driven by a church member, C.B. Green, was struck by someone driving on the highway. No serious damage resulted but the church decided to move the church building since it was so near the highway and dangerous for members entering and leaving the church grounds.

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<sup>15</sup> Cedar Fork Church minutes, April 22, 1905, S.P. Marcom, church clerk



There was no church land available so the church purchased the land on which the church now stands from the Durham County Board of Education. Nelson Elementary School had formerly been located there but in 1923 the auditorium in the upstairs of the school was condemned as a firetrap. Nelson School was consolidated with Lowes Grove School .

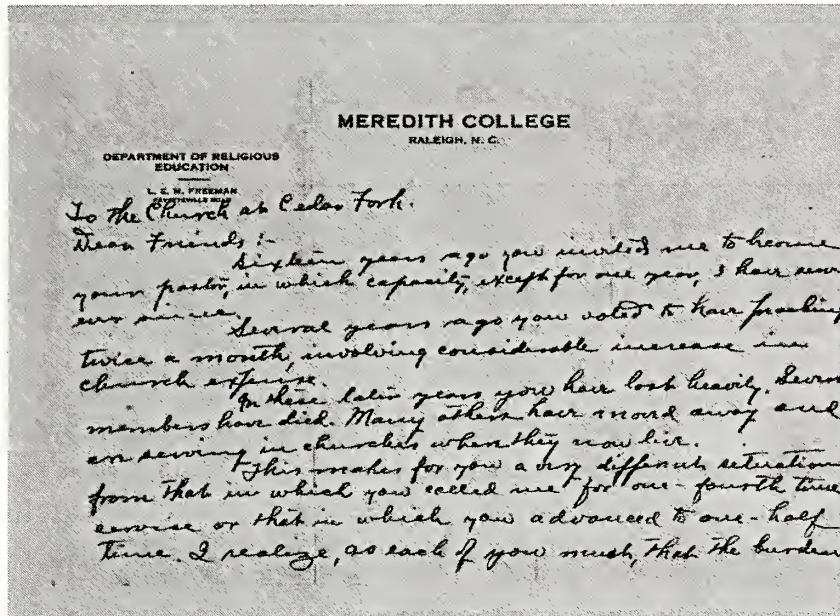


In the fall of 1925 the building was placed on round poles and a mule pulled a cable to move the building very slowly a few feet at a time. It was relocated across the road near its current location.



In 1928 the church decided to hold conference quarterly rather than monthly as previously. In March they decided on a rotating system of nine deacons with terms of three years. Lights were installed in the auditorium. .

The women of the WMU offered their services as janitor during the summer months of 1929 to save money towards a new roof. In October a galvanized tin roof was put on the church. On Sunday morning after a Sunday School Enlargement Campaign the attendance was 165-a red letter day for Cedar Fork.



Rev. L.E.M. Freeman, pastor, and professor at Meredith College resigned in 1929. He wrote in his letter of resignation on January 13, 1929 after 16 years of service that "Several years ago you voted to have preaching twice a month, involving considerable increase in church expense. In these later years you have lost heavily. Several members have died. Many others have moved away and are serving in churches where they now live. This makes for you a very difficult situation from that in which you called me for one-fourth time service....I realize, as each of you must, that the burden of church support is greatly increased by the decline in members. In view of this fact, I feel it would be unfair for me to continue as pastor under an arrangement made when you were much stronger than you are now". Does the situation sound familiar-and this is 76 years later. But God was and is faithful, and we depend on Him for our future.

In April, 1930, six new deacons were elected. This was the first time in the history of Cedar Fork Church and Mt. Zion Association that the church and Association saw fit to elect women as deacons. The committee could not find six men to serve as deacons, so three women were ordained. In 1954 a secret ballot was put into effect for selecting deacons. The two men and one woman receiving the highest number of votes was elected for a three year term, thereby keeping the ratio of six men and three women on the board. Due to declining membership, the number of deacons was reduced to five-three men and two women- in 2000.



In 1930 the women of the Nelson Home Demonstration Club requested permission from the church to use the exact spot where the building previously stood across the road, to build a club house. After much discussion, in April, 1931, the church gave permission with the following restrictions since it was on church property:

1. No dancing.
2. No card playing.
3. Nothing of an immoral nature could be held there.

If the rules were violated, the church would recall the property. This building was completed in May of 1932 just after the church was rebuilt



On September 23, 1931, during a late afternoon thunderstorm, the church belfry was struck by lightning and the church burned to the ground and the bell fell and broke. The heroic efforts of the men of the community saved the pews and the piano.



The church met in an empty store building owned by Epenetus Walton while plans were made to build a new church as soon as possible. It was to be a T-shaped building made of brick veneer with an auditorium and four Sunday School rooms at a cost of \$4805. Insurance collected was \$2500, and money from pledges: \$977; leaving a balance of \$608. The insurance policy written in March, 1924 for \$2500 coverage cost \$53.75. The old building is described as a frame one with a shingle roof located “on the west side of Durham & Raleigh Macadam Road about nine miles southeast of Durham, NC and about 150 yards from the Railroad Station at Nelson, NC.”<sup>16</sup>

Members rallied to the cause. The ladies took over the janitor’s duties, devotional books written by J.A. Williams, husband of Florence Page Williams, were donated to be sold and proceeds go to the building fund. Junior boys trapped and sold rabbits. Plays and suppers were held.



Finally, the building was paid for in the heart of the Great Depression. In June of 1932 the first Homecoming was held. The building was dedicated third Sunday in February, 1934. In 1937 the church was growing and a need for more Sunday School rooms was seen. In 1939 the first Vacation Bible School was held.

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<sup>16</sup> National Liberty Insurance policy



In November of 1939 the church approved plans for five new Sunday School rooms to be added and attached to the back of the brick building after one half of the money was raised.



*Photo courtesy of Marguerite Lloyd*  
**Older Church Members-Early 1940's**  
**Left to right: Rev. N.A. Catlett, Mrs. Peggy Searls, Mrs. Elliott, Mrs. Helon Shipp, Mrs. Ella Green**

In April, 1940, there was a celebration to open the new Sunday School rooms. N.A. Catlett was pastor.

In 1948 Cedar Fork united with the newly formed Yates Association. The young people requested a playground for a tennis court and a court was constructed behind the clubhouse. The first movie projector was purchased by the Young Men's Class.



# 1951-2005

## Chapter 4



The New Parsonage

In 1950 the church began to hold services every Sunday during the pastorate of Weldon Johnson. Two brothers, H.H. Green and C.B. Green donated the land for a parsonage. A six room brick veneer building was built for \$8000 with the members doing much of the work themselves. The pastor moved in in January, 1951.



A parking lot was made and the church grounds improved.



Hazel Searls, Johnnie Evans, Gwen and Gayle Johnson

Rev. Johnson and his wife had two twin girls, Gayle and Gwen.



Here we see an early sign for the church, much like the one described in the interview with Hugh Green in 1933. Emerson Page's Sunday School class constructed a sign in 1952.





Women of the church in 1952.



Our senior ladies today. Some of them are in both pictures.

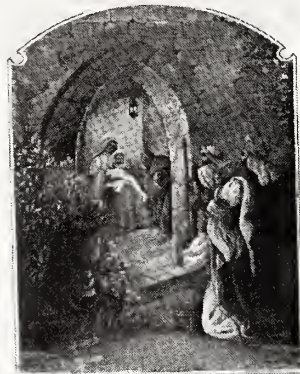


The following note was included in the church history of 1955; “We have been greatly blessed in many ways. During World War II, all of our young men, who proudly carried our nations colors on the battlefield were spared by the mercy of God to come back to us, not any of them losing their lives, nor being seriously wounded. Many of our younger men saw service in Korea, but all have been allowed to return safely to us. For this we thank our heavenly Father.”

A program of recreation for young people with volley ball, horseshoes, and one movie each Saturday night was sponsored across the road at the clubhouse by the church. In 1954 weekly prayer meetings were started. Homecoming was held in September of 1954. (See video.) At Christmas, 1955, the custom of Christmas caroling for our shut-ins began. In December, 1957, the church dedicated its new educational building and began night services.



Reverend R.L. Holt, a former pastor, was the speaker for the dedication and Alex Booth was pastor at the time. The land for the new addition was purchased from R.L. Stone, Sr. A pastor's study was made by altering one of the old Sunday School rooms. In December, 1957, the church adopted its first constitution



December, 1948



December, 1951

Bulletins have evolved over the years. Early bulletins were programs printed for special occasions such as Christmas or Homecoming. Rev. Booth began the weekly bulletin.





# Cedar Fork Baptist Church

Nelson, North Carolina



"Where God's Finger Points, His Hand Will Make A Way."

J. R. GREEN  
SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPT.  
W. C. COLCLOUGH, JR.  
KID'S SUPT.

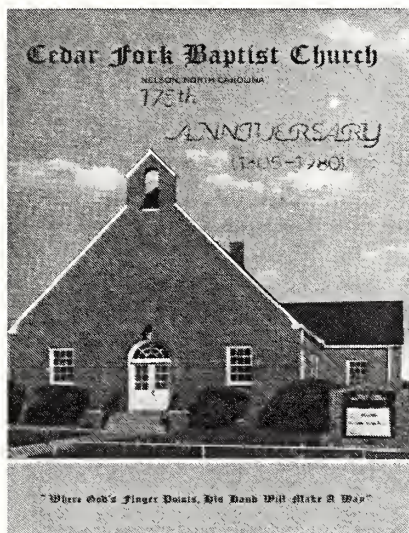
MRS. H. L. PAGE  
I. S. DIRECTOR  
PHYLLIS WARREN  
CHURCH FANIST

WAL. SCOTT  
Pastor

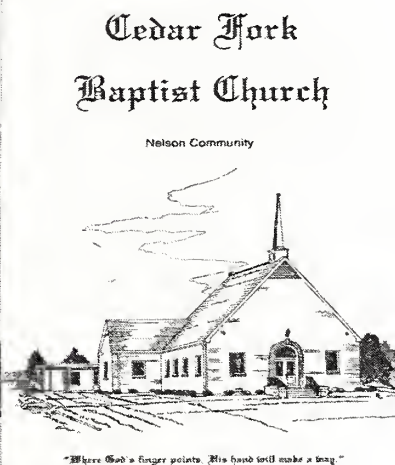
ALEX L. BOOTH, JR.  
PASTOR

Homecoming, Sept.26,1954

September, 1957

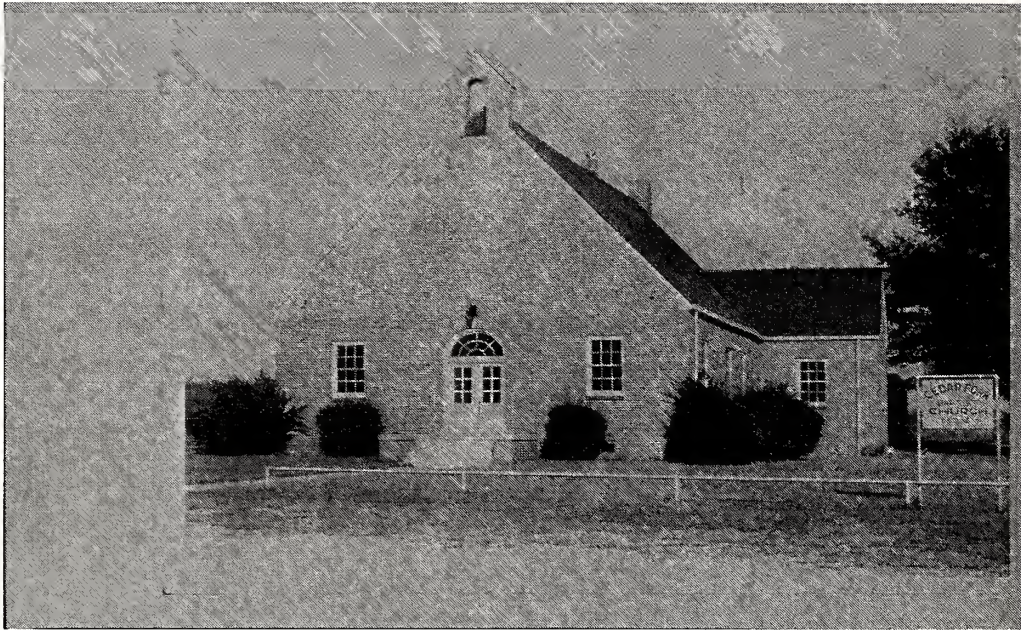


November, 1980



April, 2005





**Between 1957-1967**

Here we see another sign for the church.



**Work Day at Church-1959-1962**

Mildred and Bill Beasley, Walter Searls, W.C. Colclough





*Left to Right: Teresa Duke, Rodney Evans, Ray Green, Phyllis Clegg or Ann Beasley?*



1971



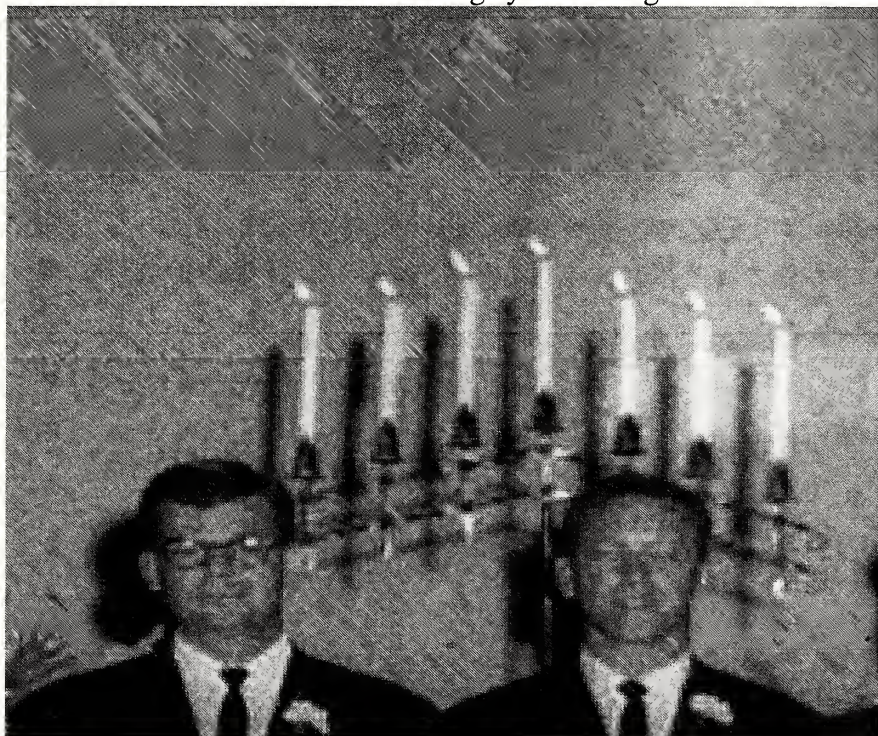
In 1967 a brick sign was erected in front of the church with funds from Maude Colclough's memorials.



In 1988 another sign was erected by C T Wilson in memory and honor of Mrs. Maude's son, Lewis Colclough, one of his cherished employees.



The observation of Youth Week with a banquet and the young people in charge of Sunday School, prayer meeting, and church services for one week began in 1960 during the pastorate of Carlton Duke. In 1962 a central heating system using hot air was installed.



Rev. Charles Thompson followed Carlton Duke as our pastor.



This is a view of the inside of the church during Ray Proctor and Faye Beasley's wedding before the sanctuary was redecorated and new pews purchased. There was lattice behind the pulpit, dark woodwork, and three sections of pews. Windows were opened during the summer.



New pulpit furniture was donated by Mr. and Mrs. C.L. Stone. A baptistry was constructed and carpet purchased for the pulpit and aisles. In July, 1965 the first baptismal service was held in the new baptistry. The first candidates were Nancy Merritt, Sue Searls, Marie Searls, Cathy Green, Pat Searls, Carolyn Ward, and Raymond Proctor. In 1966 the highway was widened and a new parking lot had to be constructed beside the church. In 1968 central air conditioning was installed.

Louis Stokes was called to become the first full-time pastor in Nov. 1970 at a salary of \$5500 plus social security payments, private telephone, and oil for heating the parsonage which had been completely renovated before he came. Rev. Stokes currently lives in Atlanta and is 75 years of age.

In 1969 the church had its first pictorial directory made and over 200 people had their pictures made at the church.



Mrs. Marilyn Baumeister became the first woman to serve as Adult Sunday School Superintendent in January, 1970

Rev. Glenn Whitley served as pastor from May, 1971-October, 1971.





Rev. Pat Collins served as pastor from Feb., 1972-1974, with his wife, Marjorie, and sons Marsh and Anthony.





He is currently serving as interim pastor at Preston Oaks Baptist Church, Roanoke, Virginia.

In 1974 Mrs. Mildred Sanders had the beautiful baptismal mural of a North Carolina pond or creek bank painted and installed above and behind the baptistery in memory of her husband Junius. A breezeway was completed in 1972.



A GA recognition service



The Women's Missionary Union has always been a strong part of our church. When it was organized in 1883, the church met in conference once a month. The men met in one room to conduct the "business" and the women met in another for their missionary meeting. At one time there were three circles and an organization for each age group. We have had Girls in Action, Acteens, Sunbeams, and Royal Ambassadors. All of these groups learned about our Baptist missionary efforts and achieved awards for their study. As a result of Cedar Fork's WMU's unwavering commitment to missionary education and support, we have received many recognitions from the NC Baptist State Convention for our superior giving to missions for a church our size.



A 1963 recognition bulletin



An Acteen coronation in the early '70's

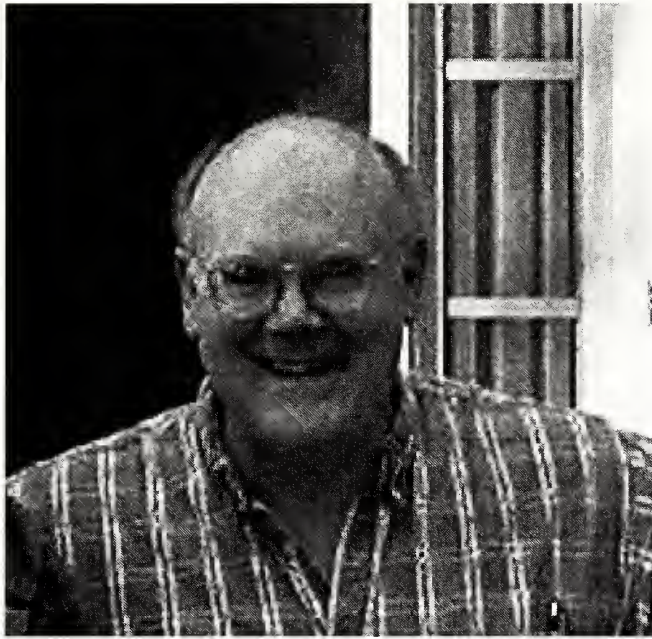


Our last Acteen coronation in 1986.



In June of 1975, Rev. Don Brown was called as pastor. His wife, Jackie, was a wonderful musician and led our choir and church in several dramatic musical presentations. Rev. John Lambert, a retired pastor, followed him as interim from Feb., 1980 until September of 1980.





Rev. Fred Williams was called as pastor in 1980 and remained as pastor until 1986.

During his pastorate the church participated in resettling a family of Cambodian refugees. He also taught Evangelism Explosion and baptized 14 persons in one year. We were the Yates Association Church of the Year during that time.



Easter egg hunts have been a tradition at Cedar Fork from the 1940's through the nineties. This is the group in 1984.



In July, 1986 the church dedicated beautiful stained glass windows for the sanctuary.



Here we see an inside view of the light coming through the windows on Sunday Morning.





Rev. Michael Shumate became our pastor in December, 1986 and remained our pastor until Sept., 1993. While he was here he married Edith and had two children, Rebekah and Aaron.



October 29, 1987 was the last day we owned our parsonage. Since the area had become commercial, pastors felt isolated and unsure of the safety of their children there. The house was sold and the money put into a certificate of deposit. The interest on the certificate was to be used toward a housing allowance for our pastor to buy his own home.





We established a long range planning committee in 1989. As a result of the work of this committee, in 1990, the sanctuary roof was reconstructed because the weight of it was bowing the walls.



A steeple was added at this time.

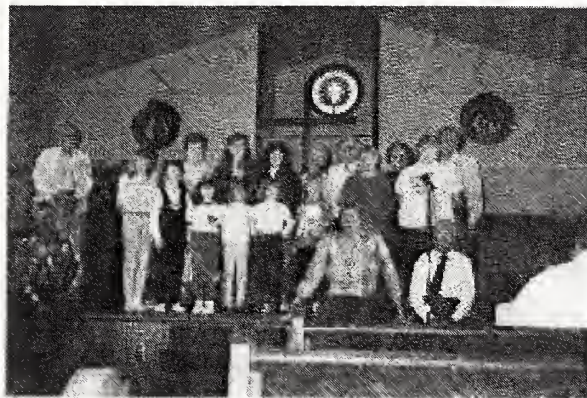


In 1964 Warren and Ruth Harris donated an electric organ to the church in memory of their son, Bobby, who had died in an accident. In 1989 Mrs. Flora King donated our electronic organ for the sanctuary. In March of that year, due to a lack of members, the Nelson Home Demonstration Club House was given back to the church. While Mike Shumate was pastor we had another church pictorial directory published in 1992.



The Worship Choir

From 1991-1994 our music ministry expanded and the choir grew under the leadership of Dave Clark.



The Music Ministry  
"The Witness"

The group presented the musical drama, *The Witness*, at several area churches





The Christian Arts Team  
1988



Edith Shumate directed the Children's Choir.





The Youth Ministry





Michael Shumate resigned in September, 1993. The church has lost momentum since that time. We have faced the challenge of a community that is disappearing. Rev. Bob Phillips served as interim pastor until June, 1994. Rev. Allen Admire served as pastor from June, 1994-July, 1997.



In 1996 a church van was purchased for group trips.

Rev. Ernest Holt was our interim pastor from Oct. 1997-Oct. 1998. Rev. Mike Reynolds served as our pastor from Nov. 1998 until September, 2000. He was very much loved by our shut-in members. During 1998 the pulpit, baptistry, and choir loft areas of the church had to be repaired because of structural damage. Rev. Fred Williams returned to serve as interim pastor from October, 2000 until January, 2001.



Travis Biller was called as pastor in February, 2002. Ten members completed an Evangelism Explosion course and attempted to reach persons with no relationship with Jesus Christ in our community in 2003.





A children's chapel and children's church for children through the age of six was begun.



New playground equipment in a safer play yard was installed.





Church chimes were purchased this spring, March, 2005, and installed as an audible call of our church and our Lord to our community.



We have been blessed with the talents of Nita Zurbrigg and her family as musicians since January, 1997. We owe a great debt to her for her service and sacrifice on our behalf.



# **Cedar Fork Baptist Church Pastors**

Ezekiel Trice	1805-1838
James Dennis	1838-1850
Johnson Olive	1850-1859
Alexander Doughan Blackwood	1859-1877
J C Wilson	1878-1881
M S Ferrell	1881-1884
Christopher Columbus Newton	1884-1889
C A Woodson	1889-1892
W S Olive	1892-1910
Elvis Martin Lassiter	1910-1913
Dr. L E M Freeman	1913-1922
B G Early	1923-1924
Dr. L E M Freeman	1924-1929
T Rupert Coleman	1929-1932
Paul M Baisch	1932-1933
C E Baker	1933-1938
Needham Arthur Catlette	1939-1946
R L Holt	1946-1950
Trela Collins, Interim	June-Dec. 1950
E Weldon Johnson	1951-1952
Gerald W Naylor	1952-1955
Alex L Booth, Jr.	1955-1959
J Carlton Duke	1959-1963
Larry Painter, Interim	Aug. 1963
C W Thompson	1964-1967
Edward St. Clair, Interim	Nov. 1967-Jul. 1968
Louis T Stokes	1968-1970
Glenn Whitley	May, 1971-Oct. 1971
Pat Collins	1972-1974
Don Brown	1975-1980

John Lambert, Interim	Feb., 1980-Sept., 1980
Fred Williams	1980-Oct. 1986
Mike Shumate	Dec., 1986- Sept., 1993
Bob Phillips, Interim	1993-June, 1994
Allen Admire	1994-July, 1997
Ernest Holt, Interim	Oct., 1997-Oct., 1998
Mike Reynolds	Nov., 1998-Sept., 2000
Fred Williams, Interim	Oct., 2000-Jan., 2001
Travis Biller	Feb., 2002-Present

## **Ministers of the Gospel from this Church**

Gabriel Barbee

W.H. Pope

David Edwards

W.H. Edwards

Willie Hurst

Russell Barbee

Allen Page

## **Daughter Churches**

Mt. Herman

Berea

Lowe's Grove

Bethany, now Morrisville

Rose of Sharon, now First of Durham

Bethesda

Ephesus

Shiloh

Sorrell's Grove





Tonight we celebrate our 200<sup>th</sup> birthday. We praise the Lord for His grace that has allowed us to serve him in this place for 200 years. . We join together in this sanctuary to affirm our trust in God who has brought us this far and pray," O God our help in ages past; our hope for years to come. Be thou our guard while life shall last, and our eternal home."





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