

# North Carolina Presbyterian Historical Society

## Winter, 2022

**Spring Tour, 2020: Saturday, April 23**

### A Journey Back In Time—Early Granville and Vance Counties

If the above headline looks familiar, it should be! This spring we will finally have most of the tour we announced in March of 2020, just before everything shut down. It's a wonderful tour, and the churches are just as excited for our visit as they were then.

Now shortened to one day, we will begin Saturday morning at the **Oxford Presbyterian Church** in the lively county seat of Granville County. The church was organized in 1818, just two years after the establishment of the town, by members from Grassy Creek (est. 1755). Services were held at the Oxford Academy until 1830 when a building was completed. The present building was built in 1892, and they have a wonderful hand-built organ. The congregation spent 2018 celebrating its 200 years of history.



In 1860 the Oxford congregation included 12 African Americans communing members. But by 1888 only one remained, Mrs. Harriette Howell. That summer George Shaw, a visiting African American student from Auburn [Presbyterian] Theological Seminary in New York, was surprised that a town with so many Negro citizens (56%) had no black Presbyterian church. With the help of Mrs. Howell, he organized one and became its minister. It was named **Timothy Darling Presbyterian Church** for one of his professors at Auburn.

The next year a school was started at the church, since the black children in town had no advanced schooling. Almost right away, George Shaw began building a boarding school with strong support from his friends at Auburn Seminary, especially Mrs. Mary Potter, and also the Presbyterian (PCUSA) Board of Missions. For many years it was the only high school for African American students in Granville County. It had high standards and drew many students from out

#### Please Note

Since the Covid19 coronavirus is still with us, we will be taking certain precautions. The tour has been cut to one day in order to avoid evening dinner in a restaurant and a motel stay. **We are asking all those attending to be vaccinated and boosted.** We will travel in our own cars. Inside buildings, masks will be strongly advised.

Unfortunately the shortened program has meant leaving out some historic places we had planned to visit. But their stories will still be included in the tour book.

of state. Although the name changed a few times over the years, it was generally known as the **Mary Potter Academy**. Its closing in 1970 was a great blow to the community. Shaw's home is now a museum in Oxford.

Moving further back in time and east to Vance County, we will visit **Nutbush Presbyterian Church** in Townsville. The area was settled by the earliest Scotch-Irish immigrants, who moved south from Virginia into the eastern part of North Carolina when the French and Indian War was being fought to the west. Presbyterians at Nutbush, Grassy Creek, Red House, and along the Hico River were among those who gathered to hear Hugh McAden on his



missionary journey through North Carolina in 1755-56. The congregations have traditionally dated their beginnings from then, but Nutbush and Grassy Creek were officially organized with ordained elders in 1765 by Rev. James Creswell. Creswell served both churches as well as Lower Hico until sometime between 1772-74.

The Rev. Henry Pattillo (1726-1801) served at Nutbush and Grassy Creek in his later life, from the age of 54 until his death at 75. But he had had a colorful life before then. Coming from Scotland in 1740, he taught school in Virginia and began to study for the ministry under the Rev. Samuel Davies. Ordained in 1758, he came to Orange County, NC, in 1765 to serve the Hawfields, Eno, and Little River churches. He also began a very successful classical school in his home. In 1768 during the War of Regulation, he and several other Presbyterian ministers were against the uprising and urged a peaceful solution with Governor Tryon. In return, Tryon asked him to preach to his troops on a Sunday. By 1774, however, Pattillo left his churches to teach in Bute County and supported the Patriot side. He was elected to the third Provincial Congress in 1775 and was appointed to a committee to persuade former Regulators that the oath of loyalty Tryon had forced them to take was not morally binding and did not prevent them from fighting for independence from Great Britain! He also became a member of the Halifax District Provincial Council. He continued to teach and supported establishment of other academies.

In 1780 he accepted a call to the churches of Nutbush and Grassy Creek. In 1784 the members gave him a farm on condition he stay with them to the end of his life, which he did. During that time he published three works, which we will hear about. The Rev. Dave Vallenga, retired minister of Nutbush, has agreed to speak to us about Henry Pattillo, including the finding of his printed sermons a few years ago.

Our last stop of the day will be to a beautiful church building that no longer has a congregation. Old St. John's Episcopal Church was built by the established Church of England in 1773 and originally called St. Peters. By law the landowners in each county elected a parish council to build a house of worship and to care for the poor. After the Revolution, there were no Church of England or Episcopal priests in the county and the building was used for public meetings and secular entertainments. It was reconsecrated in 1825 as St. John's, but in the 20<sup>th</sup> century it fell into severe disrepair. In the 1950s it was beautifully restored and is now used for special services. The colonial interior has almost entirely survived, with its box pews and elevated pulpit.

The registration form for this tour is on page 7. ♦

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### **News from the Presbyterian Heritage Center, Montreat** [www.phcmontreat.org](http://www.phcmontreat.org); 828-669-6556

This year it has been 125 years since the founding of the Mountain Retreat Association by John C. Collins, a Congregational minister from New England. He purchased 4000 acres near the community of Black Mountain to create a religious retreat for church members in the North Carolina mountains. A hotel and a few cabins were built but it was not a financial success. In 1906 the property was purchased by the Synod of North Carolina for a Presbyterian retreat center. It continued to struggle financially until Robert Campbell Anderson was appointed in 1911 as administrator. Anderson initiated a highly successful capital campaign, a promotional campaign, added buildings, held training conferences for missionaries, and started the Montreat Normal School which became Montreat College.

A new exhibit at the Presbyterian Heritage Center tells the story of the Mount Mitchell (Logging) Railroad, 1911-1921. Documents and photographs are supplemented by an operating model of the railroad passing from the sawmill in Black Mountain through part of Montreat's property. The model will show Montreat as it was about 1915 around Lake Montreat, now known as Lake Susan. The display will be up through the end of 2022 and will be brought back for the end-of-year holidays in 2023.

The much-anticipated Inklings conference, planned for mid-March, has been rescheduled for Sept. 7-9, 2022. "From Shakespeare to the Inklings: The Bible's Impact on the Creative Imagination" will feature world-renowned speakers from England and across the United States. The Inklings were an informal literary discussion group associated with J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis. On display during the conference will be some illustrated manuscripts and early printed material, including an early folio of Shakespeare's plays (1630) and the first printing of the King James Bible (1611). The event already has 200+ registrants. More information on the conference at 828-419-9829 or [www.phcmontreat.org](http://www.phcmontreat.org).

## Historic Churches Celebrating Anniversaries in 2022

This year our society is recognizing eight churches for having reached a significant anniversary of their founding. Our new president, Sam Martin, has for years been our society's emissary to present the certificates of recognition and congratulation personally, but he wasn't able to do that for much of the past two years. However, he has plans to continue visiting these historic churches this year to bring recognition and sincere congratulations from the North Carolina Presbyterian Historical Society. The following churches celebrate anniversaries in 2022:

### 225 years

Old Laurel Hill Presbyterian Church, Laurinburg

### 200 years

Bethlehem Presbyterian Church, Mebane

### 150 years

First Presbyterian Church, Durham

Oak Forest, Asheville

### 100 years

Turner Presbyterian Church, Monroe

Collinstown Presbyterian Church, Westfield, Stokes County

Tryon Presbyterian Church, Tryon

Buladean Presbyterian Church, Bakersville, Mitchell County

Congratulations to all of these congregations! This anniversary year is a great time for each of you to begin or update the history of your church. It is truly worth recording the heritage on which you build. The records and the memories are too easily lost.

**Old Laurel Hill**, outside Laurinburg, will celebrate its 225<sup>th</sup> anniversary on March 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. On that Saturday Revolutionary War reenactors will be there while an historian shares stories from the area during revolutionary times. Sunday morning a special worship service will be held at 10:30, with narrations by figures from their past, special music, and a meal.

**First Presbyterian Church, Durham**, was organized on New Year's Eve, 1871, so their celebration began last year and has continued into this year. Dr. Peter Fish, Church Archivist, wrote a splendid history to which we gave an award in 2018. For the sesquicentennial this year he is writing snapshots of their history, appearing with photos on their webpage. Last fall he was elected our society's Awards Chairman.

**First Presbyterian Church, Charlotte**, celebrated its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary last year, and its bicentennial history has just been published. *200 Years in the Heart of Charlotte: A History of First Presbyterian Church* by Lois Stickell is a beautiful book of text and pictures that includes much of the history of Charlotte as well as the history of the church. It can be ordered on the church website. ♦

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In the past two or three years we have lost some our older members whom many of you will remember:

**Dr. Eugenia Q. Blake** of Chadbourn died last year at 95.

**Frances E. Cherney** of Cary died in January this year at the age of 98.

**William "Bill" Craig** died in Gastonia in 2020 at the age of 91, just three months after his beloved wife **Wilma**. They had been members of our society since it began in 1964 and came to all meetings as long as they could.

**Sarah Belk Gambrell**, Charlotte philanthropist, died in 2020 at the age of 102.

**William E. Graham, Jr.**, of Raleigh died last summer at 91.

**Elizabeth McPherson** of Yanceyville, Caswell County historian, died two years ago at age 90

**Dr. William J. "Bill" Wade** died last summer in Bristol, TN, aged 93. Bill taught history at King College from 1952 to 1998. When he and his wife Margaret came to our meetings, he took photos for the newsletter. He researched Presbyterian and other history and worked with the Presbyterian Heritage Center.

Fortunately we have also gained a good number of members in recent years!

## Board of Directors

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## History Awards given by NCPHS

Since 1968, the NC Presbyterian Historical Society has given awards in recognition of well researched books or projects on some part of Presbyterian history in North Carolina -- usually for books, but sometimes for history made public in a different way, such as an excellent historical room, a theatrical production, or detailed research on an historic cemetery. These projects were all brought to our attention. Doubtless there have been many that we did not know about.

Last year the board voted to continue giving certificates of recognition and appreciation, but in some cases, if a submitted history or project meets the criteria for excellence, a monetary award of \$100 will be given.

**If you know of a recently published church history or a completed church history project**

**that you feel is worthy of consideration for an award**, please send the book or a description and photographs of the project to Awards Chairman Dr. Peter Fish, 1006 Urban Avenue, Durham, NC 27701. Awards are given for works published or completed in the previous year or in a recent year. ♦

## Meeting of the Board of Directors January 24, 2022

On January 24, 2022, the Board of Directors of the NC Presbyterian Historical Society gathered by Zoom. All officers were able to attend except Sarah Alexander. After the opening prayer, Sam Martin welcomed our new Awards Chair Peter Fish and also Don McLeod, who has agreed to be our new Program Chair. Don will be formally nominated at our next meeting. Our past program chair, Steve McRae, joined us for the discussion of the delayed spring meeting that he originally planned in 2020. Minutes of the Fall Meeting and the report of the Treasurer were approved.

After some discussion, it was decided that we should hold our Spring Tour in person on April 23, 2022. Out of continuing caution for the health of participants, it will be a one-day tour only and we will ask all to be vaccinated and boosted. People will travel in their own cars, and masks will be recommended indoors. We hope that everyone will feel free to join us for this long anticipated tour. Steve McRae, Don McLeod, and Barbara Cain will make contacts and arrange the tour to fit into one day.

Flo Durway reported on her visit to the Presbyterian Heritage Center at Montreat and urged the society to plan a meeting there soon.

Peter Fish reported that the history of First Presbyterian Church Charlotte by Lois Stickell is very impressive and has been suggested for an award.

Our historian, Sally Owens, reported on the research she did in response to an inquiry about the slave Omar Ibn Said. He was well educated in Arabic and in the Koran in Senegal before capture. Eventually owned by General James Owen of Bladen Co., he often attended services at Tar Heel Presbyterian Church there.

Copies of Dr. Dudley's book will be sent to all the presbytery offices and will be given to churches that feature prominently in the book. It will also be given to churches that we visit. Others may buy one for a \$30 donation to the NCPHS Dudley Fund.

The next board meeting will be on June 19. The meeting was then adjourned. ♦

**Report on our Fall Meeting  
October 9, 2021  
White Memorial Presbyterian Church  
and by Zoom**

The Fall Meeting last year was our first general meeting of any kind since the fall of 2019. It was held in a classroom in the new addition to White Memorial church in Raleigh and registrants at home could join via Zoom. Unfortunately those who came had to battle the wind and rain, and those at home had to put up with a Zoom operator unfamiliar with the system at White Memorial. However, we and the speaker soldiered on with eventual success.

Our patient guest speaker was Dr. Nancy Midgette, professor emerita of history at Elon University. Since retirement she has become the Senior Research Historian at the Presbyterian Heritage Center, primarily researching and designing exhibits. Her latest exhibit was “Cultures & Conflict: The 350-year History of Native Americans and Presbyterian Missions.” Her talk was based on that research and is summarized here.

Most of the early settlers in North America believed it was their duty not only to Christianize the Native Americans but also to civilize them. They should adopt a European lifestyle that included a sense of property antithetical to their understanding of land usage. The growth of farms created barriers to their movement, and the resulting conflicts undermined missionary-minded settlers.

Some early missionaries were sent out by presbyteries, but their work was interrupted by the French and Indian War and the American Revolution. The first missionary of the PCUSA was sent to the Cherokee in 1803. Missions to the Indians came under the Board of Foreign Missions, set up in 1837, or the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), which was both Presbyterian and Congregationalist. Success was defined in baptisms, number attending services, and numbers in mission schools. Education was more important to most Native Americans than theology, as they saw it as the key to survival.

The missionaries who stayed the longest and whose work outlasted them were quite willing to incorporate Native American spirituality into their worship, and they stood with them during difficult times. A prime example is Cyrus Kingsbury, appointed in 1817 to replace Gideon Blackburn who had gotten in trouble with both the Creeks and the Cherokee when shipping out whiskey from his own legal distillery. Kingsbury worked with other missionaries to construct schools and to teach manual skills as well as religion and the 3 Rs.

In 1819 Congress passed the Civilization Fund Act providing support to missionaries to Native Americans. It was hoped that missionaries would reduce Indian wars and would help convince Eastern tribes to move out west. Meanwhile Kingsbury had moved to Mississippi to live with the Choctaw. In 1820 they asked if he would help them negotiate with the federal government about their territorial rights. He was horrified by the disrespect shown the Choctaw by federal agents and realized that missionaries were being used as pawns to persuade Native Americans to give up their lands and move west. So he decided to help the Choctaw resist removal. When that was unsuccessful, Kingsbury made the trek to Oklahoma with them. There he worked to establish churches and especially schools. During the Civil War the Choctaw refused to give up their slaves and lost support of the ABCFM. In September 1861 the Indian Presbytery voted to align with the PCCSA. Kingsbury stayed with his people and attended the first General Assembly in Atlanta that December. He died in 1870 but his his Good Land Mission survived from 1835 to today as Goodland Academy.

Marcus and Narcissa Whitman travelled the Oregon Trail to southern Washington. In contrast to Kingsbury, they were rigid in theology and failed to develop good relations with the Indians. Ultimately they were blamed for a measles outbreak and were killed. G.C Sterling was a successful missionary establishing small churches on the Pine Ridge Reservation in Dakota Territory at the time of the massacre at Wounded Knee. Sheldon Jackson in 1877 was the first Presbyterian missionary in Alaska. Working also for the government, he recruited missionaries from multiple denominations to open schools throughout the territory. Charles H. Cook established more than a dozen churches among the Pima and Maricopa Indians in Arizona and a Bible school to train indigenous preachers. Both Jackson and Cook showed the same acceptance and flexibility as Kingsbury.

After a struggle with PCUSA bureaucracy from 1972-82, the Dakota Presbytery was allowed to remain a non-geographic presbytery, bringing together churches with a common language and culture. Somewhere Cyrus Kingsbury is smiling.♦



Flandreau Presbyterian Church, South Dakota, then and now.

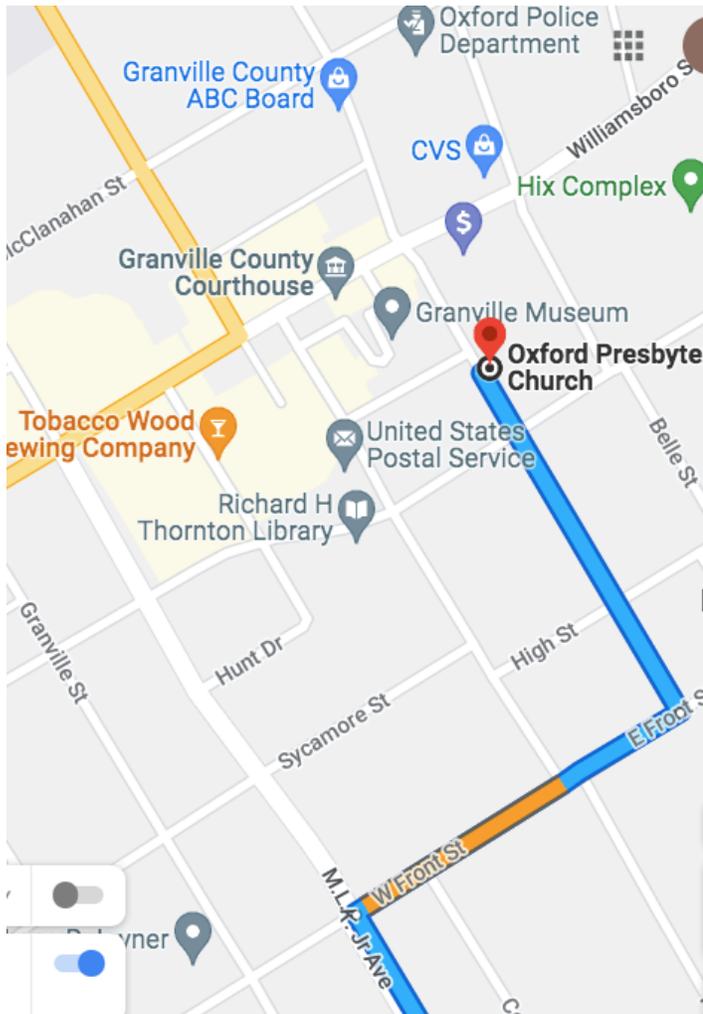


## Report on the Annual Business Meeting October 9, 2021

The historical society held its annual meeting in person and on zoom in the Outreach Room in Edinburgh Hall at White Memorial Presbyterian Church in Raleigh. Sam Martin opened the meeting with prayer. The treasurer and committee chairpersons gave their reports. The group discussed the use of the Dudley fund now that the book has been published. The consensus was to use the money in ways that will preserve the history of the Presbyterian churches in NC. Steve MacRae reported that plans for the spring meeting are the same as they were in 2020 and 2021, namely a tour of the churches in Granville and Vance Counties.

Barbara Cain, as chair of the nominating committee, nominated Sam Martin as President, and Peter Fish, working with Connie Hudson, as chair of the Awards Committee. The motion carried. A program chair will be nominated at the fall meeting. Other business included plans to give the Dudley book to the early churches mentioned in the book, to churches that host the society's meetings, to Presbyterian Retirement Homes in NC, and to the Heritage Center in Montreat. Barbara Cain reported that all the files for the historical society will be housed at the Heritage Center in Montreat. Sam Martin gave a special thank you to Barbara Cain for her years of work on the Dudley book. He then adjourned the meeting with prayer. ♦

### Directions to Oxford Presbyterian Church



From I-85, take Exit 204 onto NC 96N/MLK Jr. Ave. going north. At Front St. turn right. In two blocks turn left onto Gilliam St. The church is on the right.

**Parking:** Park on the street in front of the church or drive to the right of the church to the back where there are a few spaces. Overflow parking at the business (closed Saturday) to the left of the church.

There are steps to the front door of the church. A ramp is at the back door.

On the map, the Shaw House is on E. McClanahan St. next to the police department. Timothy Darling is on the same street two blocks west.

## North Carolina Presbyterian Historical Society 2022 Spring Tour

### Saturday, April 23

9:00	Oxford Presbyterian Church, 121 Gilliam St., Oxford Registration, coffee, and social time.
9:25 - 10:15	History and tour of church.
10:30 - 11:15	George Shaw Museum, 202 E. McClanahan Street <b>Oxford, NC 27565</b> History of Timothy Darling Church and the Mary Potter Academy
11:30 - 12:00	Timothy Darling Presbyterian Church, 123 W. McClanahan St., Oxford.
12:15 - 12:25	Grassy Creek Church (now God's House of Restoration), 203 US Hwy 15 North, Stovall (brief stop)
12:45 - 2:00	Nutbush Presbyterian Church, Nutbush Church Road, Townsville. Lunch from the Strong Arm Bakery, Oxford Talk about Henry Pattillo: Rev. David Vallenga History and tour of the church and cemetery
2:15 - 3:00	Old St. John's Episcopal Church

If you would like to stay in the area before or after the meeting, our recommended accommodation is the Sleep Inn, 18 Market St., Henderson, NC 27537. You can call the Sleep Inn directly for reservations at (252) 654-4398. Motel has free wi-fi and a complimentary breakfast.

Registration fee is \$20, including morning coffee and lunch on Saturday. Please send the form below and a check (payable to NCPHS) *by April 15* to NCPHS, P.O. Box 20804, Raleigh, NC 27619-0804. If you have questions, contact our new Program Chairman Don McLeod, [donaldcmcleod@gmail.com](mailto:donaldcmcleod@gmail.com), 910-695-5550.

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### Registration, Spring Tour, April 23, 2022

**Name(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Registrations:** \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$ 20.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Transportation needed? \_\_\_\_\_

**Dues** if included (Individual \$15; Family \$20; Individual Life Membership, \$125): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total enclosed:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Please send this form **by April 15** with a check (payable to NCPHS) to NCPHS, P.O. Box 20804, Raleigh, NC 27619-0804.

To order a copy of *A History of the Sources and Development of Presbyterianism in North Carolina* by Harold J. Dudley, please send a separate check for \$30 per book, with Dudley Fund in the memo line.

**If you can do so, please put the following announcement in your church bulletin or newsletter:**

**The North Carolina Presbyterian Historical Society's Spring Tour** will be in one of the first areas of Presbyterian settlement in North Carolina, just below the Virginia line in Granville and Vance counties on Saturday, April 23. The Nutbush and Grassy Creek congregations date from 1755-1756, Old St. John's Episcopal was built in 1773, and in Oxford the group will learn the histories of two Presbyterian churches and a very important school. Registration is \$20 including lunch. The schedule, registration form, and address are on the website at [www.ncphsociety.org](http://www.ncphsociety.org), or contact 919-455-1493 for a copy.

If you haven't paid your 2022 dues yet, please send them in. The form is on p. 7.

\*\*\*\* Individual \$15; Family \$20; Individual Life Membership, \$125 \*\*\*\*

North Carolina Presbyterian Historical Society  
P.O. Box 20804  
Raleigh, NC 27619-0804

Spring Tour, Saturday, April 23  
Granville and Vance Counties  
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