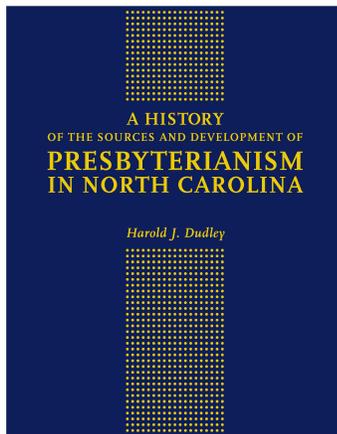


No Spring Meeting this year. Fall Meeting will be October 9.

North Carolina Presbyterian Historical Society

Winter, 2021

Published by the Society



DR. HAROLD J. DUDLEY
General Secretary
Synod of North Carolina

A new book is out on the history of Presbyterians in North Carolina! *A History of the Sources and Development of Presbyterianism in North Carolina* by the Rev. Harold J. Dudley, D.D., covers briefly the growth of Presbyterianism in Europe, and then details the earliest Presbyterian settlers in North Carolina, the first ministers and churches, and the trials and gradual expansion of the denomination to 1813 when the Synod of North Carolina was established. The final chapter is an overview of the history of that synod from 1813 to 1983. The appendices include chronological and biographical listings of all Presbyterian ministers who worked in or visited the state before 1813; a chronological list of Presbyterian churches organized from the beginning to 1967; and a listing of churches that have been dissolved over the years. Also included are an outline history of the courts of the church, a list of synod moderators and clerks, a bibliography, and an extensive index. In all, it comes to almost 500 pages.

Its author, Harold J. Dudley (1902-1999), grew up in Richmond, Va., with a great love of history. Born a Baptist, he attended Hampden-Sydney College and became convinced that the Presbyterian Church was “the most Biblical of any of the denominations, as to both form of government and doctrine.” After graduation from Union Theological Seminary, he served churches in Virginia, Alabama, and North Carolina, including Kinston, Snow Hill, Jason, and First Presbyterian in Wilson.

No Spring Tour this year!

In an abundance of caution, your Board of Directors decided in January not to have a Spring Tour of Historic Churches this year. Instead, the really wonderful tour we had planned for 2020 in Granville and Vance counties will be held next year on April 22-23, 2022.

This fall, however, we will have our usual one-day meeting on October 9, 2021, with an interesting program and our annual business meeting. If necessary we will meet by Zoom, but here’s hoping we won’t have to! More about that in the Summer Newsletter.

Meanwhile, please pay your annual dues to the Society unless you have purchased a Life Membership. Please print the [Membership form](#) and mail along with your check.

From 1951 to 1971 he was the first Executive Officer/General Secretary of the Synod of North Carolina (PCUS). Synod had just reorganized and would eventually have its own small office building on Wade Avenue in Raleigh. This position allowed him to expand on his great interest in the historical development of the Presbyterian Church and its establishment and growth in North Carolina. He began to collect church histories and often included historical material in the *Presbyterian News*, which he edited and published at Synod Office. In 1963, for the sesquicentennial of the Synod of North Carolina, he wrote a three-part history of the synod for the *Presbyterian News*. He also oversaw the reprinting and first indexing of William Henry Foote’s *Sketches of North Carolina* (1846) and John P. Hale’s *Trans-Allegheny Pioneers* (1886).

In 1964 Dr. Dudley organized the North Carolina Presbyterian Historical Society as an

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organization within the Synod of North Carolina. It was not until 1981 that our society became incorporated as a separate entity. He began our yearly visits to historic churches in North Carolina, and after his retirement he led more than 30 tours to church-related historic sites in Europe and the Holy Land.

In the 1980s Dr. Dudley finally began to organize all the information he had gathered for decades and began writing about the sources and development of Presbyterianism in North Carolina. Our Society gave him assistance and encouragement for the project. It was a huge undertaking without a computer or the internet, and he was still working on it at the time of his death in 1999. He listed 84 churches that were established or existed briefly before 1813, and he included some historical information about almost all of them. Many of his secondary sources were outdated even by the 1990s, but the book as a whole does offer the reader a detailed account of early Presbyterianism in this state.

The publication of this book was paid for out of the Dudley Fund, set up years ago by the Society for this purpose. Two churches with which Dr. Dudley was associated, the First Presbyterian Church in Wilson and Snow Hill Presbyterian Church, donated to the fund, as did individual members of the Society. When the offices of the Synod of North Carolina were closed after reunification, some of the remaining funds were assigned to the North Carolina Presbyterian Historical Society and were added to the Dudley Fund in his honor. Now that the book has been published, there is still money remaining in the fund. The current officers of your Society would like for this fund to continue but be put to a different purpose appropriate to our mission.

For this reason, the Board of Directors decided that for a donation of \$30 to the Dudley Fund, we will send you a book, postage paid. Unfortunately it won't be a tax-deductible contribution, since at present we do not have the 501c3 tax status.

[Download and complete the order form here.](#)

Presbyterian Newspapers

For many years in the 19th and 20th centuries, Presbyterians in North Carolina could read their own weekly newspapers. There were a lot of Presbyterians in the state, and they constituted a pretty big market for a newspaper. The first one was *North Carolina Presbyterian*, published from 1858 to 1898 in Fayetteville. Then came *Presbyterian Standard*, published in Charlotte from 1899 to 1931, when it merged with *Presbyterian of the South* (Atlanta, Ga.). These were private, for-profit businesses. In 1935 the Synod of North Carolina decided to put out its own monthly newspaper, *Presbyterian News*. This was published by the synod here until 1988 and then was published by the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic until 1993. The *Africo-American Presbyterian* was published weekly or bi-monthly in Wilmington from 1879 to 1938. Rev. Daniel J. Sanders of Chestnut Street Presbyterian and Biddle University founded and edited this newspaper until his death in 1906.

All of these newspapers have been digitized, can now be found on the Internet, and are fully searchable. The first three are on the Internet Archive (www.archive.org). Many issues of the *Africo-American Presbyterian* have not survived, but those that have are available in the Pearl Digital Collection at the Presbyterian Historical Society website: www.digital.history.pcusa.org. These Presbyterian newspapers all have articles about individual churches and ministers, articles and advertisements about academies and colleges, and news of foreign and domestic missions and missionaries, as well as reports from meetings of the General Assembly, Synod, Synodical, presbyteries, and presbyterials. The contemporary articles are excellent sources when writing a history.

For example, the following appeared in the *North Carolina Presbyterian*, November 6, 1858:

WARRENTON, N.C.

A neat and beautiful little church has just been built in this place, through the liberality of a lady now gone to her rest. There are very few Presbyterians in the town or country. So far as I have been able to learn there are not a half-dozen Presbyterian Hymn Books in the county. Will not some warm hearted, liberal Presbyterian in N.C., box up and send four or five dozen such books for the use of this new church? They have a Bible presented by Weston R. Gales, of Raleigh, a number of years since; but no hymn books. Any one wishing to do good may do so by directing to J. Wilcox, Warrenton, N.C.

P. H. D.

Historic Churches Celebrating Anniversaries in 2021

This year our society is recognizing eight churches for having reached a significant anniversary of their founding. Usually Sam Martin has been able to present the certificates of recognition and congratulation personally, but he wasn't able to do that last year and has to put it off for the time being this year as well. However, he has plans to start visiting these historic churches this summer and fall, to bring recognition and sincere congratulations from the North Carolina Presbyterian Historical Society. The following churches celebrate anniversaries in 2021:

200 years

First Presbyterian Church, Salisbury
First Presbyterian Church, Charlotte

150 years

First Presbyterian Church, Durham
Topsail Presbyterian Church, Hampstead

100 years

Candor Presbyterian Church, Candor
Lake Waccamaw Presbyterian Church, Lake Waccamaw
Raven Rock Presbyterian Church, Harnett County
William and Mary Hart Presbyterian Church, Leggett, Edgecombe 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.

First Presbyterian Church, Charlotte, has a separate section in their website devoted to the ongoing celebration of their 200th anniversary: <https://www.firstpres-charlotte.org/bicentennial/>. They are including video recordings of events, interviews with older members, and recipes!

First Presbyterian Church, Durham, was organized on New Year's Eve, 1871, so they will probably be celebrating late in this year.

In April 2022 we will be visiting **Oxford Presbyterian Church**, which celebrated its 200th anniversary in 2018. One of their present members is a descendant of their first minister, and she produced a one-woman show about the minister's wife. We understand it was a big hit, and we are hoping to see it when we are there next year. ♦

Wilma Ratchford Craig, 1930-2020

It is with sadness that we report the news that Mrs. Wilma Craig died last June. Most of our members surely remember Wilma and her husband Bill from Union Church, Gaston County. Wilma and Bill were founding members of our society when it began in 1964, and they almost never missed a meeting. Both grew up in Gaston County where their families had lived for generations, and they were married for 68 years. Wilma taught in the Gaston County schools for 33½ years, taught classes in local history and genealogy at Gaston College, and published books on Ratchford and Craig genealogy. Both were very active in the Gaston County Historical Society, and Wilma edited their Bulletin for 50 years. Wilma also served on the Gaston County Historic Preservation Commission and on the board of the Hoyle Historic Homestead near Dallas. As a church organist and pianist, she loved playing for us to sing in the churches we visited. We miss them both, and our hearts go out to Bill and their family. ♦

Board of Directors

John Goodman, President
 Phone: 910-862-3730
 Email: presbypicker2@gmail.com

Flo Durway, Secretary
 Phone: 919-846-5757
 E-mail: floanddan74@gmail.com

John Myhre, Treasurer and Past President
 Phone: (919) 772-5514
 E-mail: johnmyhre@nc.rr.com

Steve McRae, Program Chair
 Phone: (336) 693-1929
 Email: smcrae@stevemcraelaw.com

Sarah Alexander, Membership Chair
 Phone: (828) 698-9388
 Email: sitka@bellsouth.net

Connie Hudson, Awards Chair
 Phone: (919) 787-6638
 Email: ibchudson@webtv.com

Sally MacLeod Owens, Historian
 Phone: (919)-835-0920
 Email: sally.owens76@gmail.com

Sam Martin, Publicity Chair
 Phone: (910) 428-4165
 Email: smartin8@embarqmail.com

Barbara T. Cain, Newsletter Editor
 Phone: (919)-782-0944
 E-mail: bt Cain3@gmail.com

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 Mrs. Connie Hudson, 501 E. Whitaker Mill, Apt. 406A, Raleigh, 27608; ibchudson@webtv.net. Awards are given for works published or completed in the previous year or in a recent year. ♦

Meeting of the Board of Directors January 16, 2021

On January 16, 2021, the Board of Directors of the NC Presbyterian Historical Society gathered by Zoom. All officers were able to attend except for Connie Hudson. After the opening prayer, Barbara Cain reported on the status of Dr. Harold J. Dudley's book, *A History of the Sources and Development of Presbyterianism in North Carolina*. It is now ready for publication and will be printed by R.R.Donnelley & Sons in Durham. It will be published by the Society with money from the Dudley Fund. The fund has grown during the years since Dr. Dudley's death and now contains more than enough for publication. Copyright for the book now belongs to Dr. Dudley's grandchildren, and they have given permission for it to be published. The Board decided to have 250 copies printed, some of which will be given to libraries of Presbyterian history and to the earliest churches. It was decided by the Board to make the book available to others in exchange for a donation of \$30 to the Dudley Fund. This fund will then be available for other purposes relating to our mission. Also decided were various details relating to the storage and mailing of books.

The next discussion concerned upcoming meetings of the Society. Although the spring tour of churches in Granville and Vance counties has been delayed twice already, it was decided that April was just too soon to meet in person. So the tour will not take place until April 22-23, 2022, the weekend after Easter next year. We will, however, have our one-day meeting on Saturday, October 9, 2021. The meeting will be in person if possible, or by Zoom if necessary. Details will be in the summer newsletter and on our website, www.ncphsociety.org.

Since there was no business meeting by the general membership last fall, the elected officers who served last year have carried on for this year as well. During the Board meeting the appointed officers were approved for the coming year: Treasurer, John Myhre; Publicity Chairman, Sam Martin; Historian, Sally Owens; and Newsletter Editor, Barbara Cain.

John Myhre submitted the treasurer's report, which was accepted. Minutes had been distributed by email and approved. The next board meeting will be on June 19. The meeting was then adjourned. ♦