

#1058

SC

FISHING CREEK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1- A Bit of History

by Captain W. H. Edwards

2- Various Sites Occupied

By The Church ...

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FISHING CREEK CHURCH -- HISTORY

see

SCR Howe, George, History of the
285 Presbyterian Church in S.C., 1870
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Rock Hill Public Library
Rock Hill, S. C.

A Bit of History by Captain W. H. Edwards.

On the 9th of January 1914, I went with Judge George Gage to an old cemetery known as the "Burnt Meeting House", located one-fourth mile west of R. H. Ferguson's home. We went to locate the grave of Justice John Gaston, with the view of erecting a monument to his memory. We had no trouble in finding the graves of himself, his wife, Rev. Hugh Gaston, and Margaret McClure, since Thomas Howze had pointed out their graves to Judge Gage about 25 years ago.

When Margaret McClure, a daughter of Justice Gaston, died, he buried her in this graveyard. She left two sons, Samuel and John McCreary. When John Gaston was buried, a space was left between his grave and Margaret McCreary for her two sons. John Occupied his place in 1833 and Samuel his in 1834.

Justice John Gaston was born in 1700 and died in 1782. The monument erected over his grave as (a) memorial by his relatives is a beautiful piece of work. It is 8 feet long, 3-1/2 feet wide, and 6 inches thick. It is placed on a concrete foundation built 6 inches above the surface of the earth. The top part is polished and contains the names of John Gaston, his wife Esther Waugh, and Rev. Hugh Gaston.

The church that formerly stood here was a Presbyterian Church and was one of the oldest church organizations in Chester County. It was organized and the first house of worship was built at a point near the residence of John Dickey, now the home of his daughter, Mrs. R. H. Westbrook. She is the daughter of his last wife, who was a Miss Simpson. Her first husband was Dr. A. P. McNeal.

The old church building was turned into a stable. Who lived there before John Dickey I do not know.

It being inconvenient to the majority of the congregation, it was moved down to a point about 1/4 of a mile west of the home of the late R. H. Ferguson. This church was afterward known as the "Burnt Meeting House". How long they worshipped there I do not know, but it must have been for many years. This building was burned by a forest fire, which were common occurrences in the early history of the country.

After the church building was burned the congregation did not re-build at this point, but moved again and built on the eastern side of Tinkers Creek. Benjamin Culp (or Kolb) donated eleven acres of land for this building, he being the first Culp that ever settled in east Chester County. (His sister Hanna was great-grandmother of J. C. Jordan). This last mentioned building was located just about two or three hundred yards west of the present home of Mrs. Ella McWaters, on the road that leads to Wylie's Mill. It was then named Richardson in memory of the pastor, William Richardson, who was then pastpr of the Waxhaw Presbyterian Church. The congregation worshipped at this point for many years, but this location being inconvenient to the majority of the membership, they decided to move once more. Cedar Shoals was selected one mile south of Bascomville, and the name of the church was changed to Cedar Shoals. The Culp and their relatives were very much opposed to this move, but were outvoted by the majority of the membership. The Culp then all joined Hopewell Baptist Church, which was organized in 1792. The Culp (or Kolbs) were Dutch Presbyterians who came to Chester County from Pennsylvania before the Revolutionary War. If the church has a written record it will show that it is one of the oldest church organizations in Chester County. The Woodward Church is the oldest Baptist Church in the county, but I do not know when it was organized. I think about 1789. With the exception of Cedar Shoals, I suppose Catholic Church is the oldest church in the county. I know the present Fishing Creek Church was there during the Revolutionary War, but whether it outdates Catholic or not I do not know, but am inclined to think not.

(Signed) Capt. W. H. Edwards.

I, R. L. Edwards, am adding some things to this history. If Justice John Gaston died in 1782, it is logical to believe that the "Burnt Meeting House" was still standing when he was buried in the cemetery near by. He evidently died during the Revolution. This old church evidently was organized some years prior to this time. Whether it was burned before or after the Revolution we don't know, but perhaps shortly afterwards. The marker at William Richardson's tomb shows that he died in 1781, aged 42 years. This being true, this old church evidently was organized prior to that date.

William Richardson's wife was Nancy Craighead, who was a daughter of a Presbyterian minister by the name of Craighead.

Note. Mr. R. L. Edwards is a son of Capt. W. H. Edwards,
who wrote this sketch.

Various Sites occupied by Church now
known as Cedar Shoals Presbyterian Church.

1. Point near the residence of John Dickey, later the home of his daughter Mrs. R. H. Westbrook.
2. Point one-fourth mile west of home of R. Hall Ferguson. This church was afterwards known as "Burnt Meeting House". The cemetery is still there, and contains monument to Justice John Gaston and others.
3. Point on east side of Tinkers Creek. Benjamin Culp (or Kolb) donated eleven acres of land for this building. This church known as Richardson's.
4. Present site of Cedar Shoals Presbyterian Church.

Rock Hill, S. C.,

June 25, 1954.

Dear Wade:

We certainly appreciated your promptness in sending Capt. Edwards' diary (extracts). I have always wanted to know where Richardson's Church was located.

The enclosed information concerning the organization of Fishing Creek is from Howe's History.

Fishing Creek Church received a Certificate from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church on its two-hundredth anniversary.

Sorry we could not find anything about the Catholic families.

Sincerely,

(Signed) Kate Dendy.

FISHING CREEK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

Fishing Creek Church was organized about the year 1770.

Howe's History of Presbyterian Church.

"Previous to 1700, or as early as this date, there were at least two congregations and two places of worship. The most ancient of these was now called Lower Fishing Creek, and the more recent, Upper Fishing Creek. The convenience of the inhabitants, whose settlements were extending themselves, and the growing congregation, led to this new arrangement. Lower Fishing Creek embraced in the bounds of its congregation the northeast corner of Chester District, and was separated from Waxhaw Church by the Catawba River. Upper Fishing Creek was higher up the stream from which the church is named, and is the one now known as the Fishing Creek Church. It was organized in 1770. The new church soon eclipsed the original organization."

PARTIAL LIST OF PERSONS BURIED IN _____
CEMETERY IN CHESTER COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

Partial List Of Persons Buried In _____ *
 Cemetery In Chester County, S. C.

Culp, Benjiman	D. 10-29-1819	78yr.
Dunlap, Elizabeth	12-15-1779	11-16-1830
Ferguson, Calvin	10-9-1885	1-15-1887 Son of C. M. & Sallie
Ferguson, W. P.	9-19-1818	7-17-1859
Fudge, Rhoda (wife of Charles)		2-13-1838 55 yr.
Fudge, Suffy [Duffy?]	10-12-1844	62 yr.
Gaston, Esther Waugh	1715-1789	} (Covered by one Slab) Patriots of Revolution
Gaston, John	1700-1782	
Hamilton, James	2-15-1769	10-19-1841 72-8-4 [?]
McCully, Ernest M.	3-1-1855	6-18-1886 Son Of S. H. & M. E.
McCreary, John	D. 11-4-1833	72 yr. Sheriff of Chester City
** McCreary, Samuel	D. 3-2-1834	71 yr.
McFadden, Elizabeth	3-15-1796	1-17-1866
McFadden Nicholss; Eliza	11-22-1882	6-5-1940
[Nunnery?] Nunnev, S. P.	2-13-1811	4-11-1876
White, Benjamin	5-20-1808	3-9-1841
White, S. E. Mrs.	12-22-1860	6-7-1893

* See Map on Next Page

{ McCreary, Samuel D. 3.-2-1834 71 yr.

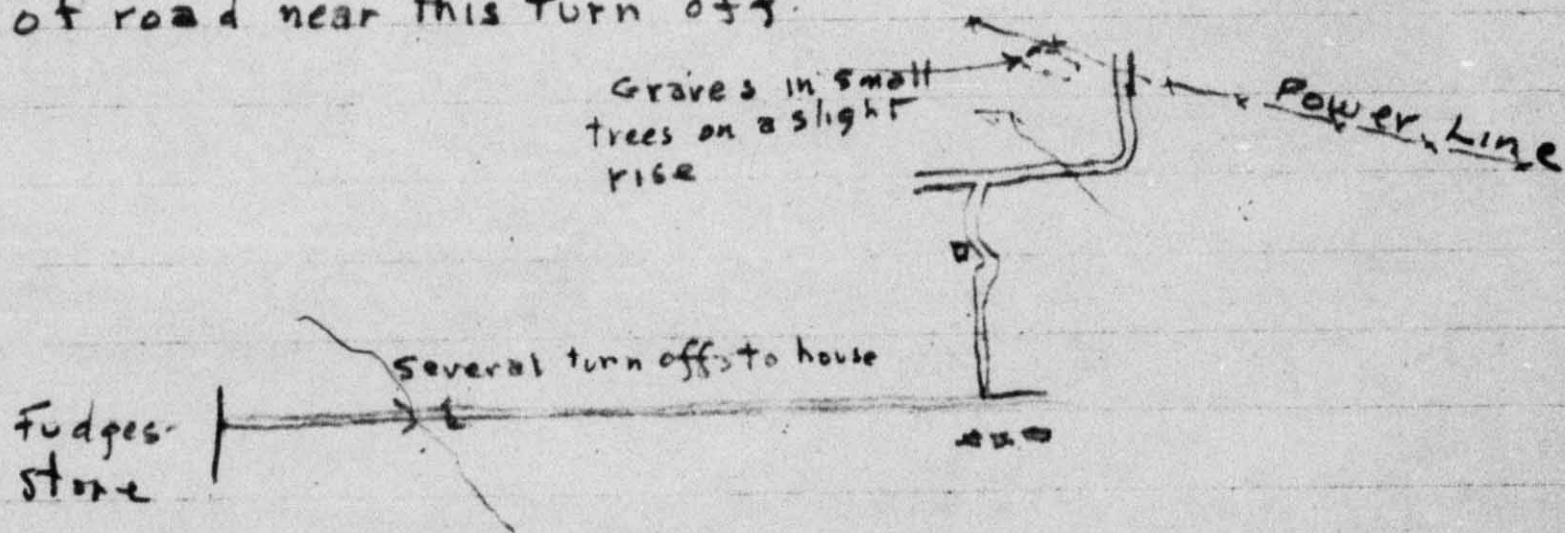
** { Pastor of Thompson Baptist Church

{ 2-11-1807 till day of death.

There are many more stones here- it is in a cow pasture with nothing to keep cows off of graves.

Kindness of:
 M. W. Harbison

Best direction I have are; at Fudge's Store
turn West about 1 1/2 Miles. to first road going
South. (unpaved) There are 3 houses on upper side
of road near this turn off.



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S.C. - Churches - Presbyterian
S.C. - Churches

S.C. - Churches

of the congregation they moved down to the place afterwards known as burnt meeting house. How long they worshipped here I do not know, but must have been for quite a number of years. The house was burned by a forest fire, which was common in the early history of the country. The congregation again moved and built on the eastern side of Finkers creek and built on 11 acres of land donated by Benjamin Culp, called Richardson, in honor of their pastor William Richardson. How long they worshipped at this point I do not know, but must have been for quite a number of years. A majority of the members living inconvenient to the church decided to move again and Cedar Shoals one mile south of the present village of Bascomville was selected as the location for the church. The Culp and their family connections strenuously opposed this move but were outvoted by a majority of the members. Consequently they were never any more identified with Cedar Shoals church, but joined the Baptist church at Hopewell which was organized in 1792. The Culp (or Kolbs) were Dutch Presbyterians who came to Chester county from Pennsylvania before the Revolutionary war. If the old records of Cedar Shoal church had been preserved they would show that it is one of the oldest, if not the very oldest church organizations in Chester county. The Woodward church is the oldest Baptist church in the county, but I don't know how far back its history goes. With the exception of Cedar Shoals I suppose Catholic Presbyterian church is the oldest church in the county. I know the present Fishing Creek Presbyterian church was there during the Revolution-

ary war, but whether it antedates Catholic I do not know, but am inclined to think not. There was a Presbyterian church at what is known as Beckhamville whose pastor during the Revolutionary war was an old man by name of Martin, who was an uncompromising and outspoken whig. His church building was burned by the Tories and I do not think was ever rebuilt. The church buildings, near Lando, and at the Burnt Meeting

House and at Richardson were all log houses.

W.H. Edwards.

MORE CHURCH HISTORY.

Capt. Edwards Writes About Some Old Churches - Interesting Reminiscences.

Editor Reporter: - In writing some bits of church history recently published in The Reporter, I was then under the impression that the church on the eastern side of Fishing Creek was an offshoot of the old Fishing Creek Presbyterian church. After some further research I am now satisfied that I was wrong in that impression. The Richardson meeting house which stood on the spot now known as the "Burnt Meeting House," was from some information I have been able to gather, an older church than Fishing Creek. I am not able to fix the date of the organization of either one of these churches, but from a letter written by Justice John Gaston to the widow of his brother, the Rev. Hugh Gaston, in Ireland, we learn that the Richardson church and graveyard was there prior to 1766, the year Rev. Hugh Gaston died.

Justice Gaston says, "We buried brother Hugh in the graveyard at our 'meeting house' on Fishing Creek and shortly afterwards my daughter, Margaret, died, and we buried her beside brother Hugh." In that letter he speaks of a meeting house fourteen miles further up the Creek, which no doubt was old Fishing Creek church.

D. G. Stinson, Esq., in "Women of the Revolution," says that Justice Gaston and his wife were buried at the old Richardson church and that no stone marks their graves. After this church building was destroyed by fire, they rebuilt, one and a half miles further east, but never established any burying ground at the latter place, but continued to use the old cemetery at the former site of the church.

John and Samuel McCreary are both buried at the Burnt Meeting House. These men were both soldiers in the Whig army in the latter years of the war. They were grand sons of Justice John Gaston, and grew up in his family. Their father, James McCreary, had married Margaret, the oldest daughter, and in fact the oldest child of Justice Gaston. She died in early life, and the children were reared by their grandparents. Both of these men belonged to Hopewell Baptist

church, which was organized in 1791 and the first meeting house built near the site of the present house of worship, which is near the little town of Bascomville.

This church had a rapid growth, and its health and progress in its early years was largely due to the labors of John and Samuel McCreary. It is rather remarkable that these men born of Presbyterian parents, reared in a Presbyterian family of a high type of piety both became Baptists, holding to the distinctive principles of the Baptists with uncompromising fidelity to the close of life.

John first married his cousin, a daughter, of Robert Gaston, who settled on Lynch's Creek in Lancaster county (then district). She died in early life leaving three children that I knew, viz, Samuel, William and Esther. Samuel married Harriet Edwards and settled at Beckhamville, and built the house afterwards owned by Dr. William Cloud. This house was a landmark for many years, but a few years ago was destroyed by fire. He died leaving several children, and his widow married Col. James Woods. William never married. Esther married James Crain and reared her family in close proximity to the residence of Joseph Gaston, Esq.

John and Samuel McCreary were men far above the average men of their day in intellect and self acquired information. John was for a number of years sheriff of Chester county, and for several years represented the county in both branches of the General Assembly, and was also sent to Congress from the district known at that time as the "Pinckney Congressional District." Samuel became a Baptist minister of very great ability and influence and was known and greatly esteemed for his work's sake all over the Piedmont belt of South Carolina. Along about the year 1800 he said to his brethren at Hopewell that he was impressed with the thought that he ought to preach the gospel. They said to him, that they would hear him preach, and if satisfied with his gifts they would give him orders. After they heard him, they told that in their judgment he had better wait awhile. He said no more about the matter for seven years, when he said to them again that he had never relinquished the purpose of preaching the gospel. Impressed with his life and character and his earnestness, they told him that they would gladly give him another chance and hear him preach. When they heard his second trial sermon they said: "Yes, we will gladly recognize and set you apart to the ministry." He never married and devoted his life

to the ministry. He was ordained pastor of Hopewell church and remained its pastor until the day of his death. The church erected a

handsome headstone to his grave with the following inscription "To the Memory of Samuel McCreary. Died March 2nd, 1734, aged 71 years. He was among the first who constituted the Hopewell Baptist church. Ordained pastor Feb. 11, 1807. His first and last sermon was preached at Hopewell. His time was given entirely to the ministry. It may be truly said of him, 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth.' 'Yea', saith the Spirit, 'that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.' Done by the church"

The following is the inscription on the gravestone of John McCreary: "In Memory of John McCreary. Died Nov. 4, 1833, in the 72 year of his age. He was a member of Hopewell church from early life, a friend of the widow and orphan, sheriff for many years and for many years a representative of both houses of the General Assembly of S. C.; and also a representative from his district in the lower house of the U. S. Congress."

I find also a headstone (now broken) at the grave of John McCreary's son, Samuel. These graves in this old cemetery would be strong circumstantial evidence that the ancestors of these men were buried there. But we are not dependent upon circumstantial evidence. We have the evidence of the late D. G. Stinson that Justice Gaston and his wife were buried there. The letter of Justice Gaston written in 1767, recording the death of his brother, the Rev. Hugh Gaston in October, 1866 proves the early origin of this church. He calls it "our meeting house," and there he places the grave of his brother Hugh, and also the grave of his daughter, Margaret McCreary, who was the mother of John and Samuel McCreary.

In another letter I will make mention of other old men and women of that region of Chester county, which perhaps will be of some interest to the younger generation. W. H. Edwards.

**A BIT OF HISTORY BY
CAPT. W. H. EDWARDS**

**Cedar Shoals Presbyterian Church
Is the Oldest Church In
Chester County.**

CATHOLIC IS NEXT OLDEST

**Woodward Baptist Church Is
County's Most Aged Baptist Church.**

On the 9th of January 1914 I left Chester in company with Ho George W. Gage and went to Richbur and from there to an old cemetery known as the Burnt meeting house, this old graveyard is located one fourth of a mile west of the store and residence of R. H. Ferguson. Our mission was to locate the grave of Justice John Gaston with the view of erecting a monument to honor his memory. We found no trouble in locating the graves of himself, his wife, Rev. Hugh Gaston and Mar. McClure, Thomas Howze, Sr., some twenty-five or thirty years ago, pointed out these graves to Judge Gage. When Margaret McCreary a daughter of Justice John Gaston died he buried her in this graveyard. She left two sons, Sam'l and John McCreary. When he died and was buried, a space was left between his grave and the grave of Margaret McCreary for her two sons, John and Samuel. John occupied his place in 1833 and Samuel in 1834. Justice John Gaston was born in 1700 died in 1782. This monument is a beautiful piece of work. It is a granite slab 8 feet long, three and a half feet wide and six inches thick. It is placed on a concrete foundation built six inches above the surface of the earth, the top side of the slab is polished and contains the names of John Gaston, his wife, and Rev. Hugh Gaston. The church that formerly stood at this place was a Presbyterian church and was, and is still one of the oldest church organizations in Chester county. It was organized and the first house of worship was built at a point which afterwards became the residence of John Dickey Esq., now the residence of his daughter, Mrs. Robt. Westbrook.

Who lived there before John Dickey I do not know, and how long this church worshipped there I do not know, but because it was inconvenient for a majority

Old Fishing Creek Church's
Long History Is Recalled

Fishing Creek church expects to have a minister soon, a preacher to serve both Fishing Creek and Uriel Presbyterian churches.

In this connection, the following reprint from an edition of the Chester Reporter, some 15 years ago, has some interest. It was written by Mrs. J. R. Carson for the Mary Adair chapter of the American Daughters of the Revolution.

"Among historic spots in Chester county that should be marked are the churches. The early settlers in Chester district were Scotch-Irish and mostly of the Presbyterian faith. They organized and built churches almost as soon as they did homes. The earliest of these is Fishing Creek in the eastern section of the county.

"This was organized in 1752 by persons chiefly from Pennsylvania. Historian Ramsey says in his 'History of the Revolution in South Carolina' that British troops under Captain Huck — 1780 — in a very particular manner showed his enmity to the Presbyterians of Fishing Creek by burning the library and dwelling house of their clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Simpson, and all Bibles which contained the Scotch translation of the Psalms.

"During the Revolutionary war the Rev. Mr. Simpson joined the ranks under General Sumter, but after the war he resumed his pastorate of Fishing Creek and services were continued uninterrupted.

"The original church had a square, boxed-up pulpit reached by steps, with a little gate to close after the preacher entered.

Only the top of his head, if tall, could be seen when seated, and the pews had doors.

"The present church building, which is the third one, is also old. The seats in it are very heavy and cumbersome and are pegged together instead of nailed. The same old collection bags, velvet attached to long poles, are still in the church.

"In the cemetery are buried the pioneer ancestors of many North and South Carolinians, also veterans of four wars. It is quite noticeable, in going through this old cemetery, that many of the graves of pre-Revolutionary days are marked by thin soapstone slabs, hand shaped and hand lettered.

"Fishing Creek cemetery has no flowers or shrubs, only white oak trees. The arrangement of these is that of nature, and nature always produces a pleasing effect.

"This historic spot is more fortunate than most of these fast fading landmarks that were once the center of early civilization, for it has an endowment fund to help perpetuate it. In the will of Mrs. Julio Agurs Farley, a native of Fishing Creek section and once a member of the old church, we read: 'The balance of my estate to be used for the keeping up of the Agurs line of graves at Fishing Creek church and also to be used as an endowment fund for the benefit of Fishing Creek

church.' Trustees are appointed and as such hold and manage the church property."

The Chester (S. C.) News, August 5, 1954

Ted H. Beasley, Jr. To Be Ordained And Installed As Fishing Creek-Uriel Pastor

The ordination and installation of the Rev. Ted H. Beasley, Jr., as pastor of Fishing Creek and Uriel Presbyterian Churches will be held at Uriel Church Sunday night, August 8, at 7:45 p. m.

Presiding will be the Rev. Fred A. Hopkins, Executive Secretary of Bethel Presbytery. The sermon will be preached by the Rev. Richard L. Scoggins, pastor of Wallace Memorial Presbyterian Church of Panama City, Florida; and Mr. Clarence T. Gallogher of Charlotte, N. C., will sing. The commission appointed by Presbytery to act at this service consists of the following ministers: The Rev. W. S. Cale, pastor of Oakdale Presbyterian Church of York, The Rev. J. S. Rigell, pastor of Saint Paul's Presbyterian church of Chester, and the Rev. Paul H. Felker, pastor of Beersheba and Filbert Presbyterian Churches of York. The visiting elders taking part on the program are Mr. George Cartwright of the First Presbyterian Church of York, Mr. Sam Hope and Mr. L. G. More of Saint Paul's Presbyterian Church of Chester.

There will be an informal reception on the lawn of the manse immediately following the ceremony.

OLD CHURCH ADDS NEW WING

CHESTER (Special) — Fishing Creek Presbyterian Church near Rodman, which is over 200 years old, and has a beautified sanctuary of its old building, has added an educational wing. The new wing has four Sunday School rooms, an assembly hall, a kitchen, two rest rooms and two porches. The old church with its original planks, has been enclosed in brick veneer. The first settlers of the Fishing Creek community were Scotch-Irish from Pennsylvania and of Presbyterian faith. They migrated here as early as 1749, but it was not until the winter of 1752 that one finds any record of a minister being in their midst.

The present building has been changed several times. The first building was much larger. A part of the church was for Negro members. The church was remodeled by taking off the part that accommodated the Negro members.

The same old collection bags are still in use. These velvet bags are attached to long handles on poles. The two original poles are still in use for collection.

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