

Brief History of Trinity Church

By

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The religious horizon of this area broadened greatly when on December 19, 1833, the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina passed an act establishing Trinity Parish. Prior to this, local Episcopalians had attended communion services at St. David's Church in Cheraw, conducted by the Reverend Alexander W. Marshall. On other Sundays, they worshipped in the Welch Neck Baptist Church and in St. David's Academy here in Society Hill. St. David's parish had been established in 1768 by the legislature of the Province of South Carolina.

Trinity Church was founded by a small group of seven men and their families, namely: Judge Josiah J. Evans, later United States Senator; Col. Nicholas Williams; John W. Witherspoon; Major John DeWitt; Enoch Hanford, later professor at South Carolina College; Edward Edwards and John McCullough. Much credit is also due Miss Julia Hawes. The first vestry included the underscored names above and William Henry Snipes, John N. Williams and John Marshall.

The parish was only four months old when the church was built at a cost of \$1,150.00 on a lot given by Elias Gregg. The Rt. Rev. Nathaniel Bowen, D.D. Bishop of the Diocese of South Carolina, April 25, 1834, consecrated Trinity Church as "A house suitable for the worship of Almighty God".

The first minister in residence was the Rev. M.M. Wheeler, 1836-1838. Previous to this, the Rev. Alexander W. Marshall had served the church on a part-time basis. From 1839-1856, the following ministers served for only brief periods: The Revs. F.M. Hubbard, N.P. Tillinghast, L.C. Johnson, M.A. Curtis and A.F. Olmsted. During the traumatic years 1858-1865, the rector was The Rev. J.S. Kidney. Under his leadership, extensive repairs were made to the church, including the addition of a chancel, at a cost of \$2,000.00. He was followed by The Rev. P.D. Hay. In 1873, The Rev. Tucker Lee became rector and served for seven years. It was during this time that the pipe organ (manufactured by W.B.D. Simons and Co. of Boston) was installed at a cost of \$1,250.00.

The last resident minister was H.K. Brouse, 1880-1886. During the second year of his ministry, a walnut font was presented as a gift from the Sunday School. After a vacancy of several years, the following ministers from other parishes also served Trinity until it closed as an active church in 1930: The Revs. A.A. McDonough, T.P. Baker, Albert S. Thomas, later Bishop of this Diocese, H.H. Lumpkin, O.T. Porcher, R.F. Blackford, Mortimer Glover and H.L. Hoover.

Prominent among the lay readers who served in the absence of the ministers were: Col. William H. Evans, John Witherspoon and Major J.J. Lucas.

A number of treasured memorials are still available for use in Homecoming services, providing a spiritual oneness with the past. They are: a hymn board, gift of Mrs. Mary Williams Harrison Ames in memory of her parents, Col. and Mrs. Nicholas Williams; two brass altar vases, gift of N.W. Kirkpatrick in memory of his mother, Mrs. J.D. Kirkpatrick and a brass cross, gift of the congregation in memory of Major J.J. Lucas.

Unfortunately, the records of the church were destroyed in a residential fire in 1934.

Homecoming services were conducted yearly by Bishop Albert S. Thomas until his retirement in the 1940's. From the offerings of these services and other generous contributions, it was possible to repair the church and, in 1948, replace the roof. In recent years, the Homecoming services have been sponsored by the St. Matthew's Men's Club of Darlington.

Since 1970, additional renovations have been made to the church, including interior carpentry work, painting and roof repairs, with funds lovingly donated by former members and by your gifts at these annual Homecoming services.

Sources: Lucas, T.S., Centennial address, May 13, 1934

Thomas, The Rt. Rev. A.S., The Episcopal Church in South Carolina

Picture from original water color by Marion Simonson, 1978.