

Adam Ivy - Ivy Place

Leader in church, community

■ Businessman Adam Ivy served Methodists, helped Catawbas.

Adam Ivy (1798-1888) was born in the Waxhaws of Lancaster County, the son of Wyke Ivy and Anne Clarke.

The Waxhaws were a Presbyterian stronghold, but the Ivys were Methodists. Anne Clarke Ivy's father and brother had been active followers and associates of John Wesley in England. Wesley had founded the Methodist Church in England and Adam Clarke is buried close by Wesley's



Nearby history

LOUISE PETTUS

grave in City Park Church Cemetery in London. Adam Clarke was the author of "Clarke's Commentaries" and was considered to be the "greatest living scholar of ancient languages in the England of his time."

Adam Ivy became a Methodist preacher, but not an ordained one (official Methodist records do not list him). He was what is called a "lay preacher," but was highly respected and invariably referred to as the Rev. Ivy, and occasionally in newspapers his name was given as "Rev. Dr. Adam Ivy." He founded two, perhaps three, Methodist churches. The Waxhaws Methodist

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Church was probably the first and was located on his father's land south of Van Wyck in Lancaster County. It is no longer in existence.

In 1835 Ivy, along with John Mills, John Robinson, James Hagins and John Fincher, founded the Mount Ararat Methodist Episcopal Church in Indian Land. David Hagins, owner of Hagins Inn, a major stagecoach stop on the Camden-to-Charlotte route, gave the church 6½ acres off of his Catawba Indian lease.

For some reason, the church did not get title following the Nation Ford Treaty of 1840. Lancaster County Courthouse deeds show Mount Ararat's deed was filed and recorded on March 3, 1885. The Rev. Adam Ivy, now an old man of 87 years, made oath that the signature was that of David Hagins. In 1918 the name Mount Ararat was changed to Belair Methodist Episcopal Church of the South. Still thriving, it is now known as Belair United Methodist Church.

Adam Ivy first married Ann Morrow, daughter of James McKnight Morrow and Susannah Watson, staunch Presbyterians and leaders of Six Mile Presbyterian Church. There were four daughters and one son before the death of Ann Morrow Ivy in 1843. The son, James Morrow Ivy, developed the cotton futures market that put Rock Hill on the map. Ivy also founded The Evening Herald.

Adam Ivy next married Jane Spratt Ezzelle Phifer. She brought a stepdaughter and a considerable dowry to the marriage. Her late husband, Ezra Phifer, had mined gold from "Gold Hill" north of Van Wyck. The gold dust paid for a handsome large home (said to have taken two years to build) on Ridge Road in the Indian Land township north of the village of Van Wyck. The house, still standing, was extensively remodeled around 1920 by Dr. James Nisbet.

By his second marriage, Adam Ivy had six more daughters and two more sons, almost all of them moving to Georgia and Florida during his lifetime.

Besides being a major plantation owner of the area, Ivy had a large flour and grist mill on the Catawba River that was known as Turkeyhead Mill in the pre-Civil War era and later as Ivy Mill. The mill, situated at Roddey Bridge just south of Sugar Creek's confluence with the Catawba River, went down in the "Great Flood of 1916."

Adam Ivy also served a number of years as the state-appointed Catawba Indian agent. Letters written on behalf of the Catawba plight during the 1850s and 1860s show Ivy to be a compassionate supporter of the Catawbas.

He died at the home of a daughter in Bushnell, Fla., Dec. 30, 1888, age 90 years and six months. His tombstone has an open Bible carved on top as a symbol of his ministry. His widow, Jane, died Oct. 21, 1896, and was buried beside him.

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Louise Pettus is a retired history professor from Winthrop University. Her column appears Saturdays.

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