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ROCK HILL, S. C.

HISTORICAL RESEARCH COMMITTEE PAPERS

- 1- OLD EBENEZER
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- 3- EBENEZER ACADEMY

Presented by:

Douglas Summers Brown,
Chairman, H.R.C.

MRS. M. A. AVERY.

Mrs. M. A. Avery was born January 9, 1834, in York county, and lived there until 1897, when she removed to Baltimore.

In 1900 she came back from Baltimore to South Carolina to live with her daughter, at Anderson. So, that with the exception of three years, all of her life has been passed in the Palmetto State.

When a girl, scarcely out of her teens, she was married to Dr. E. T. Avery and came to "Old Ebenezer," where she lived until 1897. Her years set so lightly upon her that it is difficult to believe that she ~~has~~ passed the three score year and ten limit. Bright and happy in disposition, easy and graceful in manner, highly educated, she adorns any circle and is the favorite at any gathering.

It is said of John Knox "that he never feared the face of man." During the Ku-Klux days in South Carolina, Merrell and his men said the same of Mrs. Avery. Although her house was searched at all hours of the day and night for her husband, as a member of the K. K. K., yet her dignity and coolness commanded the courtesty and respect of all the different squads that invaded the privacy of her home. Few women in our Southland have suffered as she has for the cause of truth. As a young wife she buckled the sword on her young husband and sent him to the front. What property they accumulated was expended in defense of her husband on false charges as a Ku-Klux. 16-

For days and weeks she kept him in hiding in her own home and, with his life ~~in~~ hers at stake, by her calm demeanor, thwarted the efforts of those who would destroy her home for the stake of gold.

After S. D. Barron and Miss Bessie Mills instituted Memorial Day, she became the president of the association, and until her removal to Baltimore was the counselor and adviser and executive in all the proceedings. The old veterans have a great reverence for her and always flock to see her when she revisits the old place.

She is entitled to a place "In Women of Mark," in South Carolina, and her record will compare favorably with the heroines of the Revolution.

To her many natural graces there is added an abiding faith in Christ and a consistent walk and conversation. Her bow still abides in strength, and no one would even think, much less dare, to call her old.

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OLD EBENEZER

by

Mrs. M.A. Avery

I have been asked by the S.D. Barron Chapter of the Daughters of the Confederacy to write them a short sketch of historic Ebenezer of long ago.

My earliest personal recollections of the place dates back to the 40's, but even at that time it had been one of the oldest settled places in the upper part of the State. There is little in the present Ebenezer to show its age, but the graveyard. You can find on some of the old time-worn headstones the dates of 1770 and on others dates soon after and about the time of the Revolution.

On one can be found a quaint and valorous inscription of being ready if the "Britishers" should return. Why such an inscription should be put on a tombstone I could not ever know, but these primitive people had ideas of their own. The oldest antiquity ever assigned to the old graveyard was given it by some North Carolina wagoners. As they reached the old graveyard, coming down the road from North Carolina, one of them remarked how very old the graveyard looked to be. The other replied, "Why, yes, some of Adam and Eve's children are buried there." He spoke more truthfully than he knew, for did not all people at this time look upon Adam and Eve as their forebears? The Darwinian theory was after their day, and they did not claim kinship with the monkey.

In the '40's Ebenezer had only about seven or eight homes, scattered from the church to Mrs. White's house, now standing in Rock Hill, which, with the Moore house on Moore's Hill, was considered the suburbs of Ebenezer. Until the railroad was built these places were considered as being the city of Ebenezer. A church, an academy, one store and a postoffice was there. It was a place of great morality, hospitality and also a seat of learning. The church was always filled by the best of preachers and the academy by the best of teachers.

The first teacher I ever recollect of hearing was Rev. Eleaza Harris, who filled both places as preacher and teacher, a good wise man, and some of his descendants can still be found around Fort Mill I doubt not.

The hospitality of Ebenezer was proverbial, and the place was composed of men of true worth. Col Avery, Mr. Withers, Mr. Alexander Fewell and other lived in Ebenezer, and nearby could be found many of the same kind who cooperated with him for the good of the church and school. Mr. Brumfield, Mr. James Moore and Mr. George White, the Steeles and many others were identified with the place. On each Sabbath day the grove around the church was filled with vehicles, bringing in from miles around, whole families, who would come prepared to spend the day in worship and social intercourse.

Ebenezer in the days long gone by was noted for its pretty girls and women. I never heard whether the men were equally noted or not, but I think some handsome men could be found in those days.

A long row of white poplars on each side of the road, near the church, was planted and grew into large trees and were very much marked by the school boys' names, cut with their knives; and the higher the name the greater the honor and achievement. These names remained on the trees as long as they were allowed to ~~stand~~ stand and served very much as an album quilt does to keep in memory the boys who had been at school many years before.

One Peter Campbell was the next in succession to the Rev. Mr. Harris. He was noted principally as a disciplinarian, as I have heard some of the boys who were his pupils spoke very knowingly of it on that line, but I dare say some of them needed it.

Father Bishop preached and taught there many years and had a large and flourishing school there about the year of 1840 and later. Boys from all parts of the State were sent there to school to be prepared for college and a class was sent out to the South Carolina College and Davidson College every year. Many who received their first instructions there achieved prominence in the State as

preachers, lawyers, doctors, judges, and one or more governors were taught there.

Gen. Alston filled the Academy for many years with great efficiency and satisfaction and the church had Rev. Monroe Anderson and Rev. Miller, both of them great, good men and very eloquent preachers. The good people of the place owe much of their prosperity ^{and success} by having faithful preachers and teachers. The church and academy were at that time both wooden structures. The centennial of the church was held many years ago, and when the new brick church was dedicated tears mingled with our rejoicings, for many of us felt for the old church as one does for a loved mother and we were loth to see the old building taken away.

Mr. F.R. Shurley was the next one of importance that taught in the old ~~XXXXXX~~ the wooden academy. He removed to the place a large and flourishing school known as the Shurley Institute near Winsboro and once more crowds of boys from all over the state were sent there to be prepared for college and every year many were sent to the different college and many had sufficient education to make good business men. He was a conscientious and faithful teacher and died at his post. The last year he was instructor he had to recline on a couch to fulfill his duties. It was during the time that he was teacher that the wooden building burned to the ground. One day at noon it took fire from spontaneous combustion from the chemicals in his laboratory. He taught in the old church while the present brick structure was being built. The brick church and brick academy have been filled each year with preacher and teacher and at this time the church has a loved and faithful preacher and the school a teacher who is a descendant of one of the oldest inhabitants of old time Ebenezer.

The Civil War and its horros passed over the old place and it suffered as other places in the southland ^{did} and under the sod of the old grave yard are many who died in service and many ~~xxx~~ of the survivors each year are placed in the cemetery until the ranks of the Veterans are growing quite small.

The S.D. Barron Chapter proposes at an early date to unveil a monument to the memory of the heroic soldiers, in thus honoring them by this tribute

of love and patriotism they do honor here now, who are familiar with it. I can scarcely realize it is the same place I first knew. Rock Hill at that time was a forest, and cultivated fields, and it seems as if it had sprung up in a night, it being now a large and beautiful town, with progress and achievement written all over it, and this old town is keeping pace with the overgrown daughter, and many new things of the present day are here and I hope very soon Rock Hill's electric cars will be speeding every half hour back and forth from Rock Hill to the church.

MRS. M.A.AVERY

(See further for sketch)

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A DESCRIPTION OF THE FIRST EBENEZER CHURCH - by Rev J.H. Thornwell (1905)

" In this primitive square log house, seating 150, they worshipped until 1826, each person furnishing their own seat, and so when offended with the preacher they might, as Jenny Geddes, throw their stool at the preachers head, or take it home and be known as a " Quit".

In this church there were no doors, but rails were crossed in the entrance to keep out sheep and other animals during the intervals of worship. In July 1826 - a " Second" frame building was erected in which the congregation worshipped until 1890 when the present handsome brick structure was built and dedicated Oct 6th, 1890.

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on her young husband and sent him to the front. What property they accumulated was expended in defense of her husband on false charges as a "u-Klux. For days and weeks she kept him in hiding in her own home and, with his life and hers at stake, by her calm demeanor, thwarted the efforts of those who would destroy her home for the sake of gold... She is entitled to a place in "Women of Mark" in South Carolinax and her record comapres favorably with the heroines of the Revolution. "

From : "The Women's Edition" of The Record
1905

EBENEZER ACADEMY

" The Ebenezer Academy was founded in the spring of 1834; by Randolph Withers, (father of the late Judge Withers), Capt Edward Avery, Jessie Broomfield, Dr. John Miller, James Moore, (father of Dr. A. A. Moore of Camden and E. P. Moore of Chester). These gentlemen had several sons whom they wished to have prepared for college and they engaged for this purpose the Rev. P. E. Bishop, a Presbyterian clergyman as their pastor and teacher. From that time until the opening of the Rock Hill High School, Ebenezer was a flourishing institution of learning., and very many prominent men, both in the church and in the state, were prepared for college within its hall. She was a constant feeder of the S. C. College and Davidson College and the University of Virginia, and other places of note. Many of the older ministers in our Synod received their classical education in the old brick building, yet standing. Among the teachers of the school, besides the Rev. P. E. Bishop, we may mention Gen. Jno. A. A. J. ston, Leitner Shurley, Leitner's son, Leitner, and J. H. ~~XXXXX~~ Wilson. In this old school Dr. Moore says, " The Fewells, Masseys, Barnetts, Mays and many others, whom I cannot recall, were students. " Since the commencement of the Rock Hill High School Ebenezer has been merged into a public school, and is now taught by Miss Pearl Fewel, who is a worthy successor to the great educators who have preceded her. "

Author Unknown

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