

THE BOYCE FAMILY OF YORK COUNTY

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This paper is intended to follow the lives of three generations of the Boyce family of “Spring Hill” in the Fort Mill Township in York County. The men, each named William Boyce, played important roles in local history, religious life, and education.

ORIGINS

The William Boyce family of York County had its origins with the immigration of James (1740-1803) and Margaret Moorhead Boyce from Ulster Province of Ireland to America sometime in the 1750s or 1760s. They initially settled in Pennsylvania, but like so many Scots-Irish, soon moved to the back country of North Carolina. The couple settled in eastern Mecklenburg County on McAlpin Creek, very close to what is now the Sardis Road area of Charlotte. The family grew to consist of three sons and four daughters.¹ In the early period, the family name was spelled in various ways, including Boyse, Boies, and Buoyes in public records. Records in Mecklenburg County show that James Boyce received over 500 acres of land in several grants between 1775 and 1779.² The Boyce family worshipped first at New Providence Presbyterian Church, now known as Providence. Due to a division in the church, Sardis Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church was organized in 1790, and the Boyce family was one of the original families in the church. James Boyce, Jr. was an early elder.³

The Boyces prospered as a farming family. The third son, Samuel Boyce, married Deborah Black, daughter of John Black, who had settled in the McAlpin Creek area about the same time as the Boyces. John Black was also an early elder at Sardis church. It is probable that Samuel and Deborah Boyce farmed land that had been either in the Boyce or Black family. Samuel was an elder in the Sardis Church under the ministry of Rev. Isaac Grier, who served from 1804 to 1842.⁴ Samuel and Deborah Boyce had six sons and two daughters. William Boyce

¹ Information on the origins of the Boyce family is taken from *Sketch of the Descendants of James and Margaret Boyce*, Rev. E. B. McGill, 1952 and from an article in the January 9, 1890 issue of the *Associate Reformed Presbyterian* magazine, “In Memoriam, Rev. James Boyce, D. D.” by Rev. Robert Lathan.

² The Boyce Family Papers, a file in the Carolina Room Collection at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library.

³ *Centennial History of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church*, published by the Synod, 1905, page 573.

⁴ *Centennial History*, page 574.

(1812-1870), one of the subjects of this paper, was one of the sons. Two of William's brothers had outstanding careers within the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. Rev. Ebenezer Erskine Boyce (1820-1902) had a remarkable career serving churches in Gaston County, N. C. and western York County, S. C. and was instrumental in establishing the strong presence of the denomination in those areas. Rev. James Boyce (1808-1889) was a pastor, editor of the *Christian Magazine of the South* and the *Associate Reformed Presbyterian* magazine, and professor at Erskine Theological Seminary in Due West. Both of these brothers received classical educations in local academies and then traveled to Jefferson College in Pennsylvania for their college degree.⁵

WILLIAM BOYCE (1812-1870)

William grew up on the family farm in the Sardis area of Mecklenburg County. Little is known about his education. At least two of his brothers attended local academies, including Union Academy and Ebenezer Academy. It is not known if William had such advantages. He moved to York County, just a few miles away from the Sardis area, and settled on a farm with 576 acres located very close to the present site of Carowinds, just inside the state line.⁶ It is believed William Boyce came to York County about 1832 and the following year he married Nancy Scott, daughter of Alexander Scott.⁷ Alexander Scott had begun acquiring leases from the Catawba Indians as early as 1801, eventually acquiring 668 acres, described as being on the east side of the Catawba River in York District.⁸ The area was referred to as the Flint Hill area of Fort Mill Township, named for Flint Hill Baptist Church, one of the first Baptist congregations in the area, established in 1792. The area is also often referred to as being near Pineville, which although located across the line in North Carolina, was a natural reference point.

The family home was known as Spring Hill. The earliest known occurrence of the name Spring Hill is for the Spring Hill Academy, which received a lease for 12 ½ acres from the Catawba Indians on February 14, 1804. The land was described as being on the east side of the Catawba River adjacent to lands of William McKinney, Alexander Scott, and Elijah Davis. The trustees for the academy were James Harris of York District and William Patton of Mecklenburg.⁹ There was also a post office known as Spring Hill, located in the house, which operated from 1828 to 1852. William Boyce served as Postmaster from 1846 to 1851.¹⁰ It is believed that the home

⁵ *Centennial History*, pages 64-67 and 69-71.

⁶ The property is shown on a composite map of early land owners of Fort Mill Township by Tom Mayhew, and the deed is dated 1845.

⁷ Linda Lawless Blackwelder, *A History of Central Steele Creek Presbyterian Church*, 1984, page 30.

⁸ Louise Pettus, *Leasing Away A Nation: The Legacy of Catawba Indian Land Leases*, Katawba Valley Land Trust, et al, 2005, pages 70, 72, 76, 78.

⁹ Pettus, page 70.

¹⁰ Samuel Brooks Mendenhall, *A Compilation of York County Post Offices*, 1960, page 81.

known as Spring Hill was built about 1805 and was located near the present intersection of I-77 and US 21 (Carowinds Boulevard).¹¹ William farmed his land and became a well-known local citizen. His name shows up in York County records related to court records, sale of land and slaves, and sheriff's sales. At some point, William Boyce inherited Spring Hill from the Scott family due to his marriage to Nancy.

Further evidence of the early history of Spring Hill is contained in an article written by Major W. W. Boyce which appeared in the *Associate Reformed Presbyterian* magazine and was reprinted in the *Fort Mill Times*. He wrote: "This farm is historical. My father, William Boyce, was postmaster on the Stage Line from Charlotte to Columbia and a letter found in the ceiling when I was remodeling our old home, dated 1851, bears testimony to the fact that this place was Spring Hill, S. C. years ago. I also found that our old home was built in 1805 by Alexander Scott, Mrs. John S. Douglass' grandfather, and from time to time was repaired by my father and myself."¹²

One source states that William Boyce was married four times. A grave at Blackstock Cemetery lists Mary G. Boyce, daughter of William W. and Nancy Boyce, born 1837 and died 1844. Nancy, William's first wife, is believed to have been the daughter of Alexander Scott. She possibly died before her daughter.¹³ A second wife was Clementina Boyce, who died December 11, 1842.¹⁴ The third wife was Rachel S. Boyce, daughter of Joseph and Nancy Miller, who died September 10, 1849 at the age of 30 and who left three young children and her husband, William Boyce.¹⁵ Possible sons of this marriage include James Calvin Boyce (1844-1854) and John M. Boyce (1848-1879), both of whom are buried at Blackstock Cemetery. The final marriage of William Boyce was to Emeline Walkup (1822-1898). From the cemetery stones, it appears that the couple had three children who died at a young age, including Laura Jane Boyce (1853-1857)¹⁶, Lorenna Carolina Boyce (1858-1860)¹⁷, and Lola Boyce (1868-1869). Their son William Walkup Boyce (1861-1943) lived a full and productive life.

¹¹ Catawba Regional Planning Council, *Historic Sites Survey of York County*, 1975, page 12.

¹² *Fort Mill Times*, March 11, 1915.

¹³ A notice in the April 1844 issue of the *Christian Magazine of the South* stated "died, after a short illness, Mary G. Boyce, daughter of Wm. Boyce, in the 7th year of her age." It does not mention a mother.

¹⁴ The January 1843 issue of the *Christian Magazine of the South* contained a notice, "Departed this life on Steel Creek, York District, S. C., on the morning of Sabbath, December 11, Mrs. Clementina Boyce, wife of William Boyce."

¹⁵ *Christian Magazine of the South*, November 1849, pages 351-352.

¹⁶ The *Due West Telescope* reported on December 11, 1857, "Died of croup in York District, S. C., Laura Jane, daughter William and Emeline Boyce, in her 4th year."

¹⁷ The *Due West Telescope*, November 2, 1860, reported "Died on Friday October 12 at the residence of Mr. John Douglass, Fairfield District, S. C., of typhoid dysentery, Lorenna Caroline, infant daughter of William and Emaline Boyce of York District, S. C., aged about 13 months...interred at the family burying place at Lower Steel Creek Church."

William Boyce was a member of the Steele Creek Associate Reformed Presbyterian (ARP) Church, which had been organized in 1783. Although records of the church have not survived, it is known that he served as an elder. Because there were several ARP and Presbyterian churches in the area with the name Steele Creek, the Steele Creek ARP Church was often called Blackstock Church, after one of the early ministers, Rev. William Blackstock, who served from 1793 to 1804.¹⁸ The church building for Blackstock Church was located across the road from Spring Hill and was probably originally a log building. A church grave yard was established about 1794. It appears that the church was located on part of the land owned by William Boyce. The first deed recorded was in 1853, when William Boyce deeded the ten and one-half acre church property to the deacons of the Blackstock Church.

On the death of William Boyce in 1870, his land was divided into four sections, deeded to J. S. Douglas (120 acres), son John M. Boyce (120 acres), Emeline Boyce, his widow, the home place and 178 acres, and 16 acres to his son William Walkup Boyce. In 1883, through a combination of congregations, the old Blackstock Church location was abandoned, and the church trustees conveyed the 10 ½ acre church site to Emeline Boyce for \$200. The church building was sold and moved close to Fort Mill to be used as an AME Zion church.¹⁹ The Blackstock Cemetery continued to be used for church members, and a Cemetery Association was organized in 1928. Because the cemetery was located on Boyce land and the family continued to use it, it was sometimes considered to be a family cemetery.

WILLIAM WALKUP BOYCE, SR. (1861-1943)

In 1870, the U. S. Census records the Boyce household in the Fort Mill Township, consisting of Emeline Boyce, age 48 as the householder and William Boyce, age 9, as the only other member. William Boyce, the father, had died earlier in the year. For most of the rest of his life, young William was known as W. W. Boyce or as Captain or Major Boyce.²⁰ In 1880, he is shown in the Census as a student in Kings Mountain in Cleveland County, N. C. boarding in the household of William Dewey. It is not known how far his education was pursued, but he was a well-read and careful researcher. He probably returned to Spring Hill and began a career as a farmer as a young man. In the early 1880s, W. W. Boyce married Julia Marshall (1861-1896). They had at least six children. An infant died in 1884 and Mary M. Boyce died as an infant in 1887. Four

¹⁸ There is a very confusing history of affiliations between the Presbyterian, ARP, and Associate Presbyterian denominations for Steele Creek which is beyond the scope of this article to describe. The current congregation is known as Central Steele Creek (PCUSA) and is located in Mecklenburg County.

¹⁹ Blackwelder, pages 60 and 115.

²⁰ His military titles result from service in local militias. The *Fort Mill Times* of August 29, 1900 reported "Lieutenant W. W. Boyce of the Yorkville Military Company, attended the drill of the Fort Mill Light Infantry last Thursday evening."

children survived to adulthood, Emmie Louise Boyce (1885-1950), who married William Barber Roddey; William Walkup Boyce II (1888-1974); Julia Florence Boyce (1889-1984), who married Ellis Junius Rhyne; and John Marshall Boyce (born 1892) who married Martha Grier Ross. Julia and William W. were born in Gastonia, N. C. It is not clear if the family was living there in the 1880s or if the births took place among relatives there. Sadly, Julia Marshall Boyce died in 1896 at the age of 36. She left four children between the ages of 11 and 4. Just two years later, W. W. Boyce lost his mother. He told a poignant story about her death. While on her death bed, she asked him to sing her a song. His uncle, Rev. Ebenezer Erskine Boyce, was also present. He remembered that Uncle Ebenezer had asked him to learn the 26th Psalm one day in 1880 when he left the family home to return to Gaston County. William sang the Psalm word for word for his mother as she died on December 13, 1898.²¹

In the fall of 1898, W. W. Boyce was elected Auditor of York County, and he moved the family to Yorkville, the county seat.²² The 1900 Census lists the family as living on Liberty Street in Yorkville. In addition to William W., age 38, the household consisted of Emma L. (15), William (11), Julia F. (10), John M. (8), and a nephew, John M. Boyce, age 20, who was born in North Carolina and was working as a clerk in Yorkville. Living with the family was a housekeeper, Josie Clodfelter. While living in Yorkville, the Boyces were members of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, and W. W. Boyce was elected an elder. Unfortunately, W. W. Boyce's service as County Auditor was short-lived. He was defeated in the election of 1900 after only one term, although the *Fort Mill Times* reported that he was a "thoroughly efficient officer."²³ Before he left office, Boyce had remarried. In November, he was married to Miss Roxana Thompson of Headquarters, Kentucky in the bride's home.²⁴ She was born in 1867. It is believed that Roxana was the younger sister of the wife of W. W. Boyce's first cousin, Rev. James Boyce. As far as is known, the couple had no children.

Shortly after the end of his term as County Auditor, Boyce moved his family to Rock Hill. During the time he lived in Yorkville and Rock Hill, he continued to farm the family home place at Spring Hill, possibly with tenant farmers or a caretaker. He is among the list of cotton growers in the county in 1905.²⁵ He is listed as a farmer in the 1910 Census, even though he was living in Rock Hill, and the 1910 Walker's Postal Route map of York County shows his home near Flint Hill as belonging to "W. W. Boyce." The initial home in Rock Hill is not known. By 1908, the City Directory shows the family at 149 North Academy Street (now 143 North Confederate Avenue). This home had been built in 1905 and was designed by architect James

²¹ Rev. E. B. McGill, *Sketch of the Descendants of James and Margaret Boyce*, 1952, page 16.

²² The *Yorkville Enquirer* for September 17, 1898 recorded his victory in the Democratic primary and also included a notice from Boyce thanking the voters for their confidence.

²³ *Fort Mill Times*, September 5, 1900.

²⁴ *Fort Mill Times*, November 28, 1900.

²⁵ *Yorkville Enquirer*, March 28, 1905.

M. McMichael of Charlotte. McMichael also designed Flint Hill Baptist Church and a number of buildings in Charlotte. It is possible that the house was built for the Boyce family. In 1908, his occupation is listed with the Roddey and Boyce Agency, located at 105 East Main Street. It is not clear if this was an insurance agency or another type of business.

The 1910 Census shows the family living at 149 Academy Street, where the home was owned with no mortgage. The family includes the younger three children. Also living there are two boarders, John A. Jenkins and William C. Lauper, who are both insurance agents. In the 1913 City Directory for Rock Hill, the family is still listed at 149 Academy Street, and W. W. Boyce is listed as a farmer. Daughter Julia was working as a milliner at Mutual Dry Goods Company and son Marshall was also listed as a farmer.

When the family moved to Rock Hill, they joined First ARP Church and because of his service as an elder in Yorkville, W. W. Boyce became an elder in the Rock Hill congregation. He was soon active in a number of areas of church life. In 1906, he was Superintendent of the "Sabbath School," or Sunday School, with an enrollment of 311. This led to service on the county and state level with Sunday School groups. He served as President of the York County Sunday School Association in 1909, and hosted the convention of the group in Yorkville.²⁶ This society included many denominations. The next year, he was elected as State President of the Sunday School Association when it met in Rock Hill.²⁷

There is an interesting story about his service in the Rock Hill ARP Church. In 1911, during an expansion of the sanctuary, the congregation decided to acquire a pipe organ to replace the old pump organ which had been used. Col. Boyce was a member of the committee appointed to accomplish the project. The philanthropist Andrew Carnegie was known to fund such endeavors. Boyce wrote several letters to Mr. Carnegie requesting a donation. He received no reply. In the fall, he gathered a box of persimmons and sent it as a gift to Carnegie, which resulted in a note of thanks. About a month later, Boyce wrote again, mentioning the persimmons and asking again for a donation. Carnegie promptly provided half the cost of the organ.²⁸

W. W. Boyce was also active in the business life of Rock Hill during the time the family lived there. He served as Trustee for several land transactions in Rock Hill,²⁹ and was among a group of business men who bought the home of Rev. James S. White on White Street at auction in

²⁶ *Yorkville Enquirer*, June 11, 1909.

²⁷ *Fort Mill Times*, February 24, 1910.

²⁸ Paul M. Gettys, *Centennial History of First Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church*, Rock Hill, S. C., 1995, page 53.

²⁹ *Yorkville Enquirer*, July 1, 1904.

1907. Earlier, he was among a group who purchased a group of lots from the estate of Capt. A. E. Hutchison.³⁰ He served as Foreman of the York County Grand Jury in 1907.³¹

Boyce and his wife enjoyed traveling. In the summer of 1909, the Boyce family and the family of Professor E. W. Hall rented a cottage at Montreat for the summer. They also took trips to Due West, where his cousin Rev. James Boyce was President of the Due West Female College.³²

In 1915, the family decided to move back to the ancestral home at Spring Hill. He stated, “ This winter, owing to the many modern conveniences making farm life desirable, we decided to make our home here again and we have remodeled this place considerably. We moved up yesterday and the ladies are delighted with the new home, which gladdens my heart, for there is no place so dear to me...”³³ Boyce continued farming the property. For a time, he worked as food administrator for the Fort Mill School District.³⁴ During World War I, the couple was listed as subscribers to Liberty Loans for the Flint Hill area.³⁵ As a cotton farmer, Boyce cooperated with efforts to control the cotton market by reducing his acreage in 1919.³⁶ A storm in June, 1919 toppled a tree on the home at Spring Hill and caused considerable damage.³⁷

The 1920 Census reported the family living at Charlotte Road in Fort Mill Township. Living with W. W. and Roxanna Boyce were son John Marshall Boyce and his wife Martha. They were married October 6, 1917 as Marshall was preparing to leave for service in World War I. She was the former Martha Grier Ross of Morganton, N. C.³⁸ In 1920, Major and Mrs. Boyce traveled to Princeton, New Jersey, where their son W. W. Boyce, Jr. was studying Theology at Princeton.³⁹ By the 1930 Census report, W. W. and Roxana Boyce were living alone at Spring Hill and he is listed as retired at the age of 69.

Boyce was interested in local history. In 1931, he presented a paper at a meeting of the York County Historical Society at a meeting at Flint Hill Baptist Church describing the history of the church, the surrounding community, and the social life of the area. The society, founded in 1927, is now known as the York County Genealogical and Historical Society and publishes the

³⁰ *Rock Hill Herald*, August 10, 1901.

³¹ *Yorkville Enquirer*, November 29, 1907.

³² *Abbeville Press and Banner*, January 1, 1902.

³³ *Fort Mill Times*, March 11, 1915.

³⁴ *Fort Mill Times*, February 14, 1918.

³⁵ *Fort Mill Times*, October 17, 1918.

³⁶ *Yorkville Enquirer*, March 11, 1919.

³⁷ *Rock Hill Record*, June 13, 1919.

³⁸ *Fort Mill Times*, October 4, 1917.

³⁹ *Abbeville Press and Banner*, April 30, 1920.

Quarterly. President of the society, Rev. Dr. T. Tracy Walsh, called the presentation “the most painstaking and scientifically prepared paper we have ever had.”⁴⁰

Roxana Boyce died in 1938, and W. W. Boyce, Sr. died in 1943 at the age of 82. They are both buried in the Blackstock Cemetery close by Spring Hill.

WILLIAM WALKUP BOYCE, JR.

As the first son, William Walkup Boyce, Jr. was named for his father. He was born at Gastonia on November 20, 1888 and baptized there by his uncle, Rev. Ebenezer Erskine Boyce. His early years were spent at Spring Hill, but the family lived during his formative years at Yorkville and Rock Hill. He joined the York ARP Church at a young age, then transferred his membership to First ARP in Rock Hill, where he spent his teen-aged years. He was a student in the Rock Hill Graded Schools and graduated from Catawba Military Academy, a boys’ high school in Rock Hill.⁴¹ He entered Erskine College in 1905, graduating with an A. B. degree in 1909. While a Junior, he was selected to speak at the funeral of Mrs. William Moffatt Grier on behalf of the students at Erskine.⁴² Mrs. Grier was the widow of the former President of Erskine and a beloved presence in Due West. He then spent two years in Erskine Theological Seminary, graduating in 1911. While W. W. Boyce was in Due West, his older cousin, Rev. James Boyce, was President of the Woman’s College of Due West⁴³, and undoubtedly provided a role model. While undertaking his seminary studies, Boyce preached a student sermon at his home church, First ARP of Rock Hill, and is considered the first son of the congregation to enter the ministry.

The details of the ministry of Rev. W. W. Boyce are taken largely from the Memorial sketch written by Rev. Ray A. King for the Minutes of Synod.⁴⁴ William Walkup Boyce, Jr. spent some time preaching in Memphis, Tennessee and was ordained by the Memphis and Louisville Presbytery. On January 2, 1912, Rev. Boyce left to serve on the mission field in Mexico. He was registered by the U. S. Consul on June 20, 1912 in Mexico.⁴⁵ The ARP denomination had

⁴⁰ *Yorkville Enquirer*, February 27, 1931.

⁴¹ The author’s grandmother, Maud Martin Gettys, was a graduate of Winthrop College and tutored many students in Latin. Dr. Boyce told my brother, Dr. James W. Gettys, that he was one of her students during his teenaged years in Rock Hill. Undoubtedly, this extra work in Latin was valuable in his later studies.

⁴² *Abbeville Press & Banner*, March 18, 1908.

⁴³ The institution had been established in 1859 as the Due West Female College to provide an equal education for women alongside Erskine College. In 1904, it was accepted as an official ministry of the ARP Church and the name was changed to the Woman’s College of Due West. In 1927, the college was fully merged with Erskine.

⁴⁴ *Minutes of the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church*, meeting at Bonclarken, Flat Rock, N. C., June 3-6, 1974, Rev. Ray A. King, pages 667-669.

⁴⁵ Certificate of Registration with U. S. Consulate, June 20, 1912. In the document, he gave his father, W. W. Boyce, Rock Hill, S. C. as the person to be notified should he die in Mexico. His citizenship was established by documents

established a mission field there in the 1870s in the area of Tampico on the Gulf Coast. The work in Mexico soon spread into the central areas inland from Tampico. The young missionary's aunt, Mattie Boyce, had served on the mission field in Tampico for five years, from 1891 to 1896.⁴⁶ Unfortunately, the Mexican Revolution was raging when the young W. W. Boyce arrived, and conditions soon became untenable for the missionaries. In October 1913, Boyce and the other missionaries were recalled. During the next ten years, he served several pastorates in ARP churches including Salem in Tipton County, Tennessee; Ebenezer in Alleghany County, Virginia; Unity in Lancaster County, SC; and Mooresville, NC. Further theological education was secured during this period, as Boyce studied at Biblical Theological Seminary in New York, the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, and Princeton Theological Seminary.

On June 29, 1916, Boyce was married to Lucile Lathan Faulkner in Idaville, near Atoka, Tennessee. He was serving Unity church in Lancaster at the time, so he must have become acquainted with Lucile while preaching in Tennessee. Ironically, her family was originally from the Waxhaws area of Lancaster County, where both the Faulkner and Lathan families were among early settlers. Lucile was a graduate of the Woman's College of Due West and served in all his pastorates as a strong supporter. She was active and prominent in the women's work of the denomination, serving for a term as President of the Women's Synodical Missionary Union.⁴⁷

Shortly after their marriage, William was required to register for the draft related to World War I. His registration described him as tall, slender, with blue eyes and dark brown hair. He was 28 when he registered, and there is no indication that he served in the military.⁴⁸ After serving the church in Lancaster County for five years, from 1914 to 1919, the couple moved for a time to Princeton, where William continued his seminary training. The couple is shown in the 1920 Census living there on Dickinson Street.

The couple then served in Mooresville for almost three years, when they decided to offer to undertake another missionary tour in Mexico. They departed from the U. S. on February 17, 1924 and arrived at Rio Verde on April 15.⁴⁹ The ARP mission work had spread into the central highlands of Mexico, and the couple worked among the villagers in that area. Lucille began to suffer from medical issues, and their service there was limited to about eighteen months. Upon returning home, William became pastor of the Sardis ARP Church in Mecklenburg County, NC,

from his pastor at First ARP in Rock Hill, Rev. A. S. Rogers and by William Joseph Roddey, a prominent Rock Hill businessman.

⁴⁶ Rev. James G. Dale, *Mexico and Our Missions*, 1910, page 117.

⁴⁷ *Sesquicentennial History, Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church*, published by the General Synod, 1905, page 91.

⁴⁸ World War I draft registration, Lancaster County, SC, June 5, 1917.

⁴⁹ U. S. Consular Registration, from consulate in San Luis Potosi, Mexico, April 15, 1924.

the church of his ancestors.⁵⁰ Here they served for six years until 1930, when William was called to be pastor of First ARP Church of Charlotte, at that time one of the largest churches in the denomination.⁵¹ “While in Charlotte, Dr. Boyce became something of a pastor to the whole city through his well-remembered radio devotionals.”⁵²

In September 1939, Rev. Boyce was offered a professorship in Erskine Theological Seminary. In preparation for this position, he returned for a year of study at Princeton. The 1940 Census shows the couple located at 26 Alexander Street in Princeton, where he is identified as a theology teacher. He was evidently teaching and taking additional courses. He received a degree of Th.M. in 1940. The degree from Princeton would today be called a Masters in Theology. As the couple prepared for the move to Due West, Lucile became suddenly more ill and passed away. She died at Presbyterian Hospital in Charlotte on October 8, 1940 at the age of 49 and was buried at the Boyce family compound at the Blackstock Cemetery. Boyce arrived in Due West in November 1940 as a widower, one of the most difficult times in his life.

The following years were perhaps the most influential time in the life of W. W. Boyce, Jr. He served as Dean of the Seminary at Erskine from 1941 to 1959, and taught on a part-time basis until 1966. He was known as a Biblical teacher with a clear, literary style. His careful instruction and loving guidance to his students were important to their development as young pastors. One of those students, Dr. Robert J. Robinson, recalled that “I have always believed that the church should maintain a proper approach to worship. There should be a traditional and dignified worship experience. I suppose that Dr. W. W. Boyce, Professor of Worship at Erskine Seminary and a son of this congregation, instilled in me an appreciation for the dignity of worship.”⁵³ Dr. Boyce’s prayers, on which he sometimes spent more preparation time than his sermons, were known to be poetic masterpieces. He was an enemy of extemporaneous prayer, and insisted that his students have well-structured prayers. He worked ceaselessly to build up the faculty and reputation of the seminary. He often preached in ARP and Presbyterian churches, and was well-respected for his eloquence. He especially loved to preach in his home county of York, participating in the July 1945 celebration of the 50th anniversary of the pastorate of Dr. A. S. Rogers at First ARP in Rock Hill.⁵⁴ Because of his ability in the Spanish language from his service in Mexico, he sometimes taught Spanish at Erskine College in addition to his duties in the Seminary.

⁵⁰ The Sardis church transferred from the ARP denomination to General Assembly (now known as PCUSA) in the 1950s.

⁵¹ In the 1950s, First ARP suffered divisions and was weakened. It was dissolved in the 1990s and the building on North Tryon Street is now the McColl Center for Art + Innovation..

⁵² Rev. Ray King, Memorial, page 668.

⁵³ Paul M. Gettys, interview with Dr. Robinson March 6, 1995, cited in *The Centennial History of First Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church*, Rock Hill, S. C., 1995, page 124.

⁵⁴ Gettys, page 72.

Dr. Boyce was known as a lover of beauty, both in the natural world and in human culture. He lived at the corner of Main and Washington Streets in Due West, just down the street from the Seminary. “The minister in a community, Dr. Boyce believed, ought to represent the best, not only in moral integrity, but also in human culture. This cultural concern, linked with his quest for the beautiful, led Dr. Boyce to collect, live with, and display for others antiques and objects of art.”⁵⁵ He also had a keen eye for nature, cultivating a fine garden in his yard and providing beautiful flower arrangements for churches, college functions, and dinner parties.

Dr. Boyce was a faithful servant of the denomination, filling many positions over the years such as terms on the boards related to Home Missions, Foreign Missions, and Religious Education. During the 1950s and 1960s, the Associate Reformed Presbyterian denomination endured two major controversies. The first was the issue of approval for local congregations to sing hymns instead of psalms exclusively and the related issues of merger with the Southern Presbyterian Church. The second was the issue of compliance of Erskine College with the Civil Rights legislation of the 1960s. Dr. Boyce was the only minister who served a critical role on committees deliberating both these issues, providing calm and dedicated leadership during contentious discussions.⁵⁶

Erskine College conferred the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity on William Walkup Boyce, Jr. in recognition of his exemplary service to his church and the college. The last two years of his life was a trial, spent in hospitals and nursing homes. He died on April 12, 1974 and is buried among his family at the Blackstock Cemetery.

⁵⁵ Memorial, Rev. Ray A. King.

⁵⁶ A full discussion of his role is included in *The Second Century: A History of the Associate Reformed Presbyterians, 1882-1982*, published 1982 by the Synod Bicentennial Committee and authored by Lowry Ware and Dr. James W. Gettys, Jr.

