

The North Carolina Presbyterian Historical Society

Summer 2024



Buffalo Presbyterian Church

Photo by Sam Martin

The NCPHS Returns to the Gate City

The North Carolina Presbyterian Historical Society will convene the Fall Meeting on Saturday, October 12, 2024, with registration at the Greensboro History Museum. Registration and social time will begin at 10:00 a.m., followed by a tour of the museum. As former home of First Presbyterian Church, the museum gives its visitors a look into the rich history of a small city with great importance in local, state, and national events.

Following the tour of the museum, the group will travel a short distance to Buffalo Presbyterian Church (803 16th Street). Buffalo was founded in 1756, a short time before the founding of Greensboro and the establishment of our state and nation. David Caldwell, an important educator and politician, was the first minister of Buffalo and served for 55 years. Caldwell was also the first minister at nearby Alamance Presbyterian Church which was founded in 1764. Buffalo was an old

side congregation while Alamance was a new side one. There were no doctrinal arguments, but the Alamance church adopted a new more enthusiastic worship style influenced by the "awakenings" occurring nationally. Caldwell did not see this as a religious problem. Rev. Caldwell is buried in the Buffalo cemetery. Don McLeod will share a thumbnail sketch of David Caldwell following the business meeting and lunch, leading up to a presentation by Dr. Carole Troxler, "Rachel Caldwell Remembers David." The Society is very grateful to the Session and members of Buffalo Presbyterian Church, as well as Pastor Brian Marsh.

Presbyterian Log Colleges and the New Republic

In the American Revolution period there were less than 10 universities in the 13 states and none in NC. A crucial development was the creation of Presbyterian affiliated academies and so-called log colleges. After two years in a classic academy or log college an aspiring graduate could apprentice to become a lawyer or physician or enter the third year of a university. The log college alone was sufficient to produce many congressmen, senators, governors, preachers and military officers. There were several early important Presbyterian academies in the development of NC culture.

Queen's College, founded 1770 in Charlotte by the General Assembly, was the first NC institution of higher learning. It was ratified by Gov. Tryon but rejected by the Crown because too many non-Anglican dissenters (Presbyterians) were trustees. The college operated for a couple of years with name changes to Queen's Museum and later Liberty Hall. After the Revolution it was closed and resurfaced as Salisbury Academy under Samuel McCorkle. This academy closed in 1791 and McCorkle and his congregation at Thyatira started Zion-Parnassus Academy. McCorkle was one of 23 Princeton graduates trained under John Witherspoon who became Presbyterian ministers or educators in NC. Other early academies were Clio's Nursery near Statesville and Crowfield Academy in Iredell County. Crowfield operated from 1760 to 1788. Many education and political leaders were graduates, and it is stated Crowfield was the impetus behind Davidson College founded in 1837. Donald McLeod, Program Chair

DAVID CALDWELL D.D. AND THE GREENSBORO LOG COLLEGE

David Caldwell, a Princeton graduate, was an educator, minister, physician, farmer and astute politician. He was deemed the most important educator, during the revolutionary period, south of the Potomac river. He, his wife Rachel Craighead and his congregations at Buffalo and Alamance were of Ulster Scot (Scots-Irish) descent and fervent patriots for the American cause. Caldwell had about 50 students annually and educated 33 other log cabin academy presidents, 135 ministers, 50 U.S. and NC senators, six governors and many who went on to be physicians, lawyers and useful citizens.

From the pulpit he preached that the Glorious Revolution in England, which gruesomely deposed King Charles, was justification for the American Revolution.



Carole Troxler

We are delighted to have for the program this fall Carole Troxler, PhD, perform an enactment, in period dress, entitled "Rachel Caldwell remembers David Caldwell." Dr. Troxler has a PhD in history from UNC Chapel Hill and is a widely published expert on the Regulator War in NC. She is Professor Emeritus at Elon University.

Don McLeod, Program Chair

North Carolina Presbyterian Historical Society Spring 2024 Tour and Meeting April 5-6, 2024, in Scotland, Hoke, and Robeson Counties

The annual spring meeting of the Historical Society Meeting convened at Antioch Presbyterian Church in Red Springs, NC on April 5, 2024. Antioch Presbyterian Church is considered to be the continuation of Old Raft Swamp Church (1789), which was the first Presbyterian Church in the area. It still has artifacts, such as pewter communion plates from the original church. At first there were two services, one in English and one in Gaelic. Sam Martin presented the Dudley book to the church.

We continued our church visits at Philadelphus Presbyterian Church in Red Springs. Started by Scottish Highlanders in the 1700's, the church was built in the 1860's by a Negro carpenter. Members spoke English and Gaelic, and women and men sat separately in the church. There was an academy next door.

Our next visit was to Centre Presbyterian Church in Maxton, NC. Centre was originally the home of Floral College, the earliest college for women in North Carolina. This church, too, was built by a free black contractor, who built several other churches in the area. As with other churches of the era, Negroes were seated in the balcony.

On April 6, the “Day of the Tartan,” according to Don McLeod, we started the day visiting Old Laurel Hill Church in Laurinburg. We were welcomed by Neil McKey, the pastor, who led us in prayer. The Society of Friends had move to Scotland County, but in the 1760’s there was influx of Scots and English. In 1827, the last Quaker moved to Guilford or Orange County because of the slavery in the southern area of North Carolina. Here, too, preaching was in Gaelic and English. The church was started by three elders in 1797, and the preacher was shared by Centre Church 15 miles away on horseback. In 1853, the new church was built, again by the Negro contractor, Jackson Graham, and his crew. The old church was moved and became a school, which Sherman and his men ruined it and left graffiti all over it.

Old Laurel Hill Church suffered through the Depression and a wet spring that prevented the planting of crops by the farmer members of the church. The Rev. G. F. Kirkpatrick, minister at the time, asked members to set aside “God’s Acre,” where the crops would be their gifts to the church. In August 1931, members cooked and served dinner for the congregation and friends and neighbors who were invited to join them after worship. The visitors purchased goods and “even bought livestock and bales of cotton before returning home.” The “gathering” saved the church.

Rev. Dr. Douglas Kelly, our last speaker of the morning, spoke on “The Presbyterian Church during the Civil War.” While Virginia and South Carolina were Episcopalian States during this time, North Carolina was Presbyterian. Gov. Gabriel Johnson invited Highland settlers to reside here. Until the 19th century, Presbyterians dominated, but Methodists and Baptists began to gain a presence because they didn’t have to have an educated clergy. Presbyterians continued to be the dominant faith among intellectual leaders. The church did not call for revolt; politics was not to be the program of the church. There were many revivals during the War Between the States, especially in the army. (See Ben Lacy’s book *Revival in the Midst of Years*.) During the war there were many black members of the Presbyterian Churches, and many stayed after the war. The separation of blacks and whites in the church seats began in 1890; prior to this blacks sat with the families where they worked. White Men and women were also seated separately. Three black churches formed out of Old Laurel Hill Church, and they still exist, although one is now Methodist.

Our weekend ended with lunch and the business meeting.

Submitted by Flo Durway,

Secretary

North Carolina Presbyterian Historical Society Board Meeting of April 4, 2024

Old Laurel Hill Presbyterian Church, Laurinburg, NC

Society Board Members attending the meeting included Sam Martin, John Myhre, Sally MacLeod Owens, Don McLeod, Peter Fish, and Flo Durway.

Awards Chair Peter Fish presented the Church History Book Award to Betty Kay McGirt Williams for her church’s Historical Sketch, *Ashpole Presbyterian Church, Rowland, North Carolina, 1796-2021* (2022, 99pp.appendix, bibliography) He gave a brief summary of the book’s contents, noting that church’s Scottish antecedents including a collection of communion coins inscribed “KS” (Kirk of Scotland). He also mentioned that worshipers had built several houses of worship, one with two

doors, one for men and one for women. Noted as well were as detailed lists of donated items and major purchases ranging from a 16mm movie projector to a church bus, an organ and sanctuary air conditioning In 1963. Noted as well was the ordination of women officers in 1974. Biographical coverage of the ministers marked both the text and the appendix. Some ministers were Scottish immigrants, but most were born in America. Some were deemed to be organizational geniuses, others dynamic preachers, while at least one preached in Gaelic, and another was swept away at age 43 in the Great Influenza epidemic of 1918. Then there was the saga of Rev. James Sinclair, immigrant from Scotland, called to Ashpole and Smyrna churches in 1857, who became a Confederate chaplain and later a Union army chaplain. His cross-over and post-war activities led an early church historian to describe him as an “unpopular and an unworthy pastor [with] charges of a serious nature being made against [him] in 1865.” The Awards Chair closed by suggesting reasons for ostracism visited upon Rev. Sinclair.

John Myhre, Treasurer, presented the treasurer’s report. Sally MacLeod Owens, Historian, noted several inquiries, some from the Virginia Archives. Sam Martin, President, reported on 12 visits to churches celebrating anniversaries of their beginning.

Rebecca Turner, Newsletter Editor, has asked to be relieved of her responsibilities.

Ann McRae, member of First Presbyterian in Fayetteville will investigate the “missing” letter from the church’s files. Respectfully submitted, Flo Durway, Secretary

Treasurer’s Report for April 5, 2024

New Covenant Mutual Fund

Dudley Fund 1/1/2023	\$106,420.90
Purchases	0.00
Withdrawals	0.00
Dudley Fund 12/29/2023	\$124,266.51
Current Fund 1/1/2023	
\$20,490.30	
Purchases	0.00
Withdrawals 3/24/2023	3,000.00
Current Fund 12/29/2023	\$20,530.19
Checking Account 4/5/2024	\$2864.69

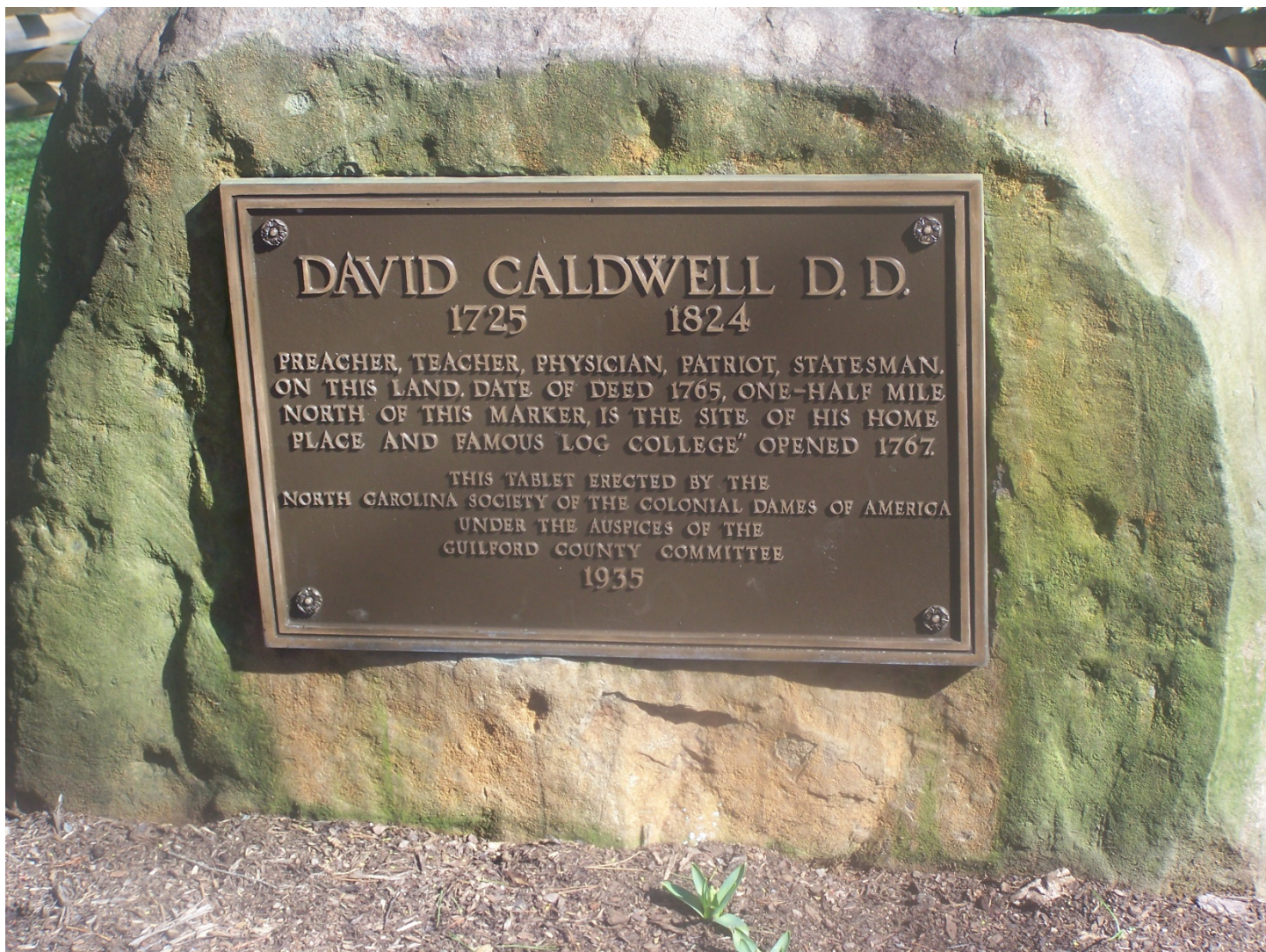
Submitted by John Myhre, Treasurer



Greensboro History Museum

Saturday October 12 Schedule

- 10:00 am Convene at Greensboro History Museum
130 Summit Avenue, Greensboro, NC 27401 (Tel 336-373-4321)
- 11:30 am Drive to Buffalo Presbyterian Church
803 16th Street, Greensboro, NC 27405 (Tel 336-375- 3380)
- 11:45 am Tour of Buffalo Church and Cemetery
- 12:15 am Catered Lunch and Business Meeting
- 01:15 pm Commentary on Reverend Doctor David Caldwell, Don McLeod
- 01:30 pm Rachel Caldwell Remembers David, Carole Troxler, PhD
- 02:30 pm Adjournment



Registration Form for Fall Meeting, October 12, 2024

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Registrations: ____ @ \$ 25.00 = \$ _____ Transportation needed? _____

Dues if included (Individual \$15; Family \$20; Individual Life Membership, \$125): \$ _____ Total enclosed: \$ _____ Please send this form by October 7 with a check (payable to NCPHS) to NCPHS, P.O. Box 20804, Raleigh, NC 27619-0804.

NORTH CAROLINA PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 20804
RALEIGH, NC 27619-0804