

# North Carolina Presbyterian Historical Society

September 2025 Newsletter



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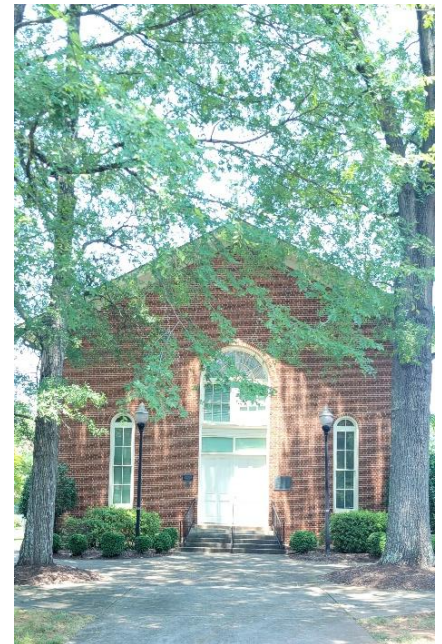
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## NC PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY FALL MEETING OCTOBER 11 2025

### HOPEWELL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH MEETING SITE

The origins of Hopewell P.C., located in Huntersville near Charlotte, goes back to circa 1750 when John Thompson, a Presbyterian missionary, preached at several sites south of the Yadkin River. The preacher Alexander Craighead was responsible for the first meeting house (church), a log cabin in 1765. In 1746, New Side Scots-Irish Presbyterians, favoring a more dramatic and passionate church, founded the College of New Jersey, now Princeton University. Craighead was a New Side zealot and is considered the father of several Charlotte area churches, each populated largely by Scots-Irish settlers who predominately arrived by the Great Philadelphia Wagon Road.



Hopewell Presbyterian Church

Cotton brought great prosperity to the congregation, and a brick sanctuary was built in 1831, which remains as the core of the church property. The church's magnificent cemetery contains the graves of many of Mecklenburg's most notable pioneers, including esteemed General William Lee Davidson, killed at the Battle of Cowan's Ford in the Revolution. A magnificent stone wall surrounds the church. Hopewell continues as an active, vibrant Presbyterian community.

(Hopewell P.C. History, Prof. Dan Morrill, UNC Charlotte, 1987)

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<http://www.ncphsociety.org/>

## **PRESBYTERIANS BRING AMERICAN REVOLUTION TO CHARLOTTE**

The N.C. Piedmont was settled in the mid-1700s largely by immigrants traveling the Great Wagon Road from Pennsylvania, Maryland and western Virginia. These included Quakers, German Lutherans, Moravians and especially Presbyterian Scots-Irish (Ulster Scots). A leading figure in the Charlotte area rebellion was the fierce Covenanter-styled preacher Alexander Craighead. Craighead founded or aided the formation of seven pre-Revolution Presbyterian churches in the Charlotte area: Rocky River, Sugaw Creek, Hopewell, Centre, Poplar Tent, Steele Creek and Providence, the so-called Seven Sisters. The only authority Craighead bowed to was Almighty God and Jesus Christ, certainly not the British Crown. His hatred of the Crown was near psychotic. As the Revolution proceeded, local Presbyterians would play critical roles in Charlotte being called the "hornets' nest" by the British general Lord Cornwallis.

Several important battles occurred in the Charlotte region, including Kings Mountain, Cowpens, the Waxhaws and patriot-loyalist skirmishes at Ramsour's Mill, Colson's Mill and Hanging Rock. Leading patriot military figures were General William Lee Davidson, Col. William R. Davies and General Griffith Rutherford. At the time of the Battle of Charlotte in September 1780, the town consisted of about 20 houses, a courthouse, a tavern and intersecting roads, now Tryon and Trade streets.



Retired Col Thomas Phlegar, a Revolutionary War reenactor, will discuss the Charlotte experience in the Revolution.

## **MECKLENBURG DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE (REALLY?)**

On the N.C. state flag there are two dates. One is April 12, 1776 which recognizes the Halifax Resolves, passed unanimously by the Fourth Provincial Congress of N.C., and authorizes its delegates to the Continental Congress to declare independence from Great Britain. The Resolves were in rapid response to the Battle of Moores Creek where patriot militia quickly defeated loyalist militia composed largely of Highland Scots. N.C. was the first state to declare its support for independence from Great Britain.

The second date is May 20, 1775 which recognizes the creation of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence (Meck Dec). A group of 28 mostly Scots-Irish Presbyterians, local leaders in the Charlotte area, convened and dispatched copies to N.C. delegates to the Continental Congress in Philadelphia. The original copy was destroyed when the home of John McNitt Alexander burned. The controversy of authentication still smolders, although Charlotte just celebrated the 250th Meck Dec anniversary. An essential book on the controversy is David Fleming's *Who's Your Founding Father*. After reading you will be convinced of the Meck Dec existence. President John Adams even accused Thomas Jefferson of plagiarism in composing the July 4, 1776 Declaration!



Sarah Sue Hardinger, an experienced Revolutionary War speaker and reenactor, will discuss why the Meck Dec occurred in Charlotte, who were the principals and why there was such long skepticism.

**NORTH CAROLINA HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
BOARD BUSINESS MEETING HAMPTON INN  
STATESVILLE, NC ~ APRIL 25, 2025**



Thyatira Presbyterian Church

The business meeting was opened with prayer. The first item of business was to name Steve McRae, John Myhre, and Flo Durway to a nominating committee for the positions of president and secretary; the

committee should report at the October meeting. Peter Fish noted that there have been no submissions for the rewards committee to review. Flo Durway offered to call Laurie Dunn about the celebration booklet for Howard Memorial's anniversary. Jerry Blankenship at Third Creek in Statesville mentioned that they were preparing a document for their 275th anniversary. Information announcing the meeting in Iredell County was sent to church newsletters in Iredell and Rowan Counties. Many Presbyterian Churches are no longer PCUSA; there are now 22 Presbyterian denominations and 920 different Presbyterian Churches.

Lois Stickle suggested that the Fall meeting (October 11, 2025) be held at Davidson Presbyterian Church; it will be the anniversary of the 1775 Mecklenburg Resolves. The meeting was adjourned for the evening.

**NORTH CAROLINA HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
STATESVILLE, NC ~ APRIL 26, 2025**

The spring meeting of the Society was opened with prayer by Sam Martin, president. Board members attending the meeting were Sam Martin, John Myhre,

Sally McLeod Owen, Don McLeod, Peter Fish, and Flo Durway. Sam thanked Jeff Gray and Don McLeod for their interesting presentations: Don's was Scots-Irish from the Scottish Borders to Ulster and North Carolina; Jeff's was Scots-Irish Experience in Iredell and Rowan Counties. Sam reported that Helene relief money was sent to Western North Carolina Presbytery as a result of the motion made at the last board meeting. John Myhre said that \$14,000 was sent to Byron Wade, Presbytery Executive. John also reported that the value of the Dudley Fund has decreased. Sally McLeod Owen told about the interest of Tina Locklear in the remaining tombstones at the site of a Lumber River Scots Church. She also gave us the news of the closing of St. Andrews University in Laurinburg, NC. Several on the board wondered what will happen to the Scottish Heritage Center and to the book collection on Presbyterian Churches housed at college. A motion was made and passed to have the book collection moved to the Heritage Center in Montreat if the Scottish Center is not reestablished. John Myhre asked if the books were a gift or a loan. Don McLeod mentioned the possibility of having the October 11<sup>th</sup> meeting in the Charlotte area, perhaps at the Davidson Presbyterian Church, as suggested by Lois Stickle.

The Old Business consisted of discussion about the newsletter, the website and consolidating the efforts. Printing and emailing by someone who can "turn things around quickly" is needed by Don McLeod. Publicity suggestion was to have materials available at Presbytery meetings to make the Historical Society as visible as possible. Anne McRae suggested hiring a company to do all the work: write, print, and website. Sam suggested talking to the printer who did the Dudley book- a non-profit. Steve said we need to decide who is going to be in charge, to make decisions. Sam said he'd plan a zoom call to the board. Steve, John, and Flo need to receive nominations for President, Secretary, and Membership. John Myhre closed the meeting with prayer.

**NORTH CAROLINA PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
FALL PROGRAM OCTOBER 11, 2025  
HOPEWELL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
10500 Beatties Ford Road, Huntersville, N.C. 28078**

10:00 a.m.    Arrival and Tour of Church and Cemetery  
11:00 a.m.    Welcome Hopewell Staff  
11:15 a.m.    Business Meeting  
12:00 noon    Catered Lunch in Church (Flyin Lions Ministry)

Recommended Hotel:

Hampton Inn & Suites  
Northlake Mall, Charlotte  
833.372.9713

(Afternoon Program Open to Congregation and Public-no charge)

01:30 p.m.    Thomas Phlegar "Southern Campaign in the Revolution  
                    and Hornets' Nest in Mecklenburg County"  
02:30 p.m.    Sarah Sue Hardinger "Mecklenburg Declaration of  
                    Independence and Resolves"  
03:30 p.m.    Jayden Roney "Freedom"  
                    (Jayden is an inspired 8th-grade guitarist, singer and composer)



**Registration for the Fall 2025 Tour  
at Hopewell Presbyterian church in Huntersville (near Charlotte)**

Name/s: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Registrations: \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$25 = \$\_\_\_\_\_

Dues if included: individual \$15; Family \$20; Individual Life Membership \$125: \$\_\_\_\_\_ Total enclosed \$\_\_\_\_\_

Please send this form by **Oct 1** with a check payable to NCPHS to:

NCPHS  
PO Box 20804  
Raleigh, NC 27619-084