

Meeting registration is on p. 7.

North Carolina Presbyterian Historical Society

Summer, 2015

Annual Meeting: October 10, 2015

Summerville Presbyterian Church, and the Problems of Preserving Historic Churches



Summerville Presbyterian Church, Lillington

The Fall 2015 Annual Meeting of the North Carolina Presbyterian Historical Society will convene on Saturday, October 10, at the picturesque Summerville Presbyterian Church near Lillington. Located in the heart of North Carolina in Harnett County, the church was established in 1811 as Tirzah, the first daughter of Barbecue Presbyterian Church. The church building and cemetery were included on the National Register of Historic Places in 1985.

The community of Summerville and the Summerville Presbyterian Church have intriguing histories that predate the establishment of Harnett County. From colonial days onward, the population of the upper Cape Fear region grew steadily, due to the commercial importance of the river for trade and agriculture. The good citizens of northern Cumberland County wanted a more convenient location to do their political business, and for over 100 years had tried several times to get the colonial government and General Assembly to agree to their wishes. When Harnett County was finally established in 1855, the center of the new county, already the home of the highly regarded

Summerville Male and Female Seminary, was selected to be the county seat.

However, two facts seemed to doom this decision. First, the legislature named the new town Toomer, for Fayetteville Judge J. D. Toomer (1784-1856). A common comment was "we didn't fight for separation from Cumberland County so we could live in a town named for a Fayetteville lawyer!" The second fact was the location -- an inconvenient walk of about three miles from the river and its crossing point.

The courts continued to be held at Toomer for about five years until the citizens voted to move the county seat closer to the river, establishing a new town named for war hero Alexander Lillington. An interesting story concerns the arrest of the first prisoner placed in the brand new jail. The man escaped before breakfast of the first day by digging through the poorly constructed brick walls after "regaining his sobriety." All prisoners were kept from that point forward in Fayetteville until the new courthouse in Lillington was completed.

The Summerville Presbyterian Church building is an antebellum structure constructed in 1848. It is the oldest church building in Harnett County. It is thought that the original structure took the Greek Revival style popular in many similar rural church structures of the mid-nineteenth century, but changes to the building in the 1870s gave a Gothic Revival look to the exterior. The interior changed little until the 1950s when the gallery below the balcony was enclosed. The pulpit and sanctuary furniture are original, and the pews date to the 1870s.

The church itself was dissolved by Fayetteville Presbytery in 1929, only to be re-established as Summerville Church with 50 members over twenty years later. The fellowship building was built in the early 1950s after the reorganization of the church.

The Summerville Presbyterian Church is also known for being "The Home of the Stranger;" we look forward to more of this story.

The National Register of Historic Places

Summerville Presbyterian Church is one of 53 Presbyterian churches in North Carolina that have been placed on the "National Register." What is it,

and what difference does it make to the congregation? What are the tangible benefits, aside from the honor? And does it in any way limit what the congregation can do? Why are some of the more historic churches NOT on the register? On Saturday, October 10, two staff members from the **State Historic Preservation Office** will join us at Summerville to discuss these questions. It should be a very interesting and informative morning.

Here are the Presbyterian churches on the National Register in North Carolina, by county:

Alamance: Cross Roads Presbyterian Church and Cemetery and the Stainback Store, Cross Roads Hawfields Presbyterian Church, Mebane

Avery: Crossnore Presbyterian, Crossnore

Bladen: Brown Marsh Presbyterian, Clarkton Mount Horeb Presbyterian Church and Cemetery, Council

South River Presbyterian, Garland

Brunswick: New Hope Presbyterian Church, Winnabow

Burke: Waldensian Presbyterian Church, Valdese

Cabarrus: Rocky River Presbyterian Church, Rocky River

Caswell: Griers Presbyterian Church and Cemetery, Frogsboro vicinity Red House Presbyterian, Semora

Catawba: First Presbyterian, Hickory

Chatham: Pittsboro Presbyterian, Pittsboro

Cleveland: Shiloh Presbyterian Church Cemetery, Grover

Craven: Ebenezer Presbyterian, New Bern First Presbyterian Church and Churchyard, New Bern

Cumberland: Big Rockfish Presbyterian, Hope Mills First Presbyterian, Fayetteville Old Bluff Presbyterian, Wade

Duplin: Hebron Presbyterian, Pink Hill

Forsyth: Lloyd Presbyterian, Winston-Salem

Guilford: Buffalo Presbyterian Church and Cemetery, Greensboro

Harnett: Summerville Presbyterian Church and Cemetery, Lillington

Iredell: Bethany Presbyterian Church and Cemetery / Ebenezer Academy, Statesville Bethesda Presbyterian Church, Session House, and Cemetery, Amity Hill

Centre Presbyterian Church, Session House, and Cemeteries, Mount Mourne

Coddle Creek Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church and Cemetery, Rocky River

Lee: Buffalo Presbyterian Church and Cemeteries, Sanford

Euphronia Presbyterian Church and Cemetery, White Hill

Lenoir: Kinston Baptist/White Rock Presbyterian Church, Kinston

LaGrange Presbyterian Church, LaGrange

Lincoln: First Presbyterian, Lincolnton

Macon: First Presbyterian, Highlands Franklin Presbyterian, Franklin

Madison: Dorland Memorial Presbyterian, Hot Springs

McDowell: First Presbyterian, Marion

Mecklenburg: East Avenue Tabernacle Associated Reformed Presbyterian, Charlotte

First Presbyterian, Charlotte

Hopewell Presbyterian Church and Cemetery, Long Creek Township

Providence Presbyterian Church and Cemetery, Matthews

Ramah Presbyterian Church and Cemetery, Huntersville

Steele Creek Presbyterian Church and Cemetery, Charlotte

Moore: Bethesda Presbyterian, Aberdeen

Robeson: Ashpole Presbyterian, Rowland Philadelphus Presbyterian, Philadelphus

Rowan: Back Creek Presbyterian Church and Cemetery, Mt. Ulla

Third Creek Presbyterian Church and Cemetery, Cleveland

Thyatira Presbyterian Church, Cemetery and Manse, Millbridge

Sampson: Black River Presbyterian and Ivanhoe Baptist Churches, Ivanhoe

Oak Plain Presbyterian Church, Waycross

Scotland: Laurel Hill Presbyterian, Laurinburg

Wayne: First Presbyterian Church (Christian Science Church), Goldsboro

Wilkes: Wilkesboro Presbyterian, Wilkesboro

What is the State Historic Preservation Office?

One of the chief tasks of the State Historic Preservation Office is to conduct an ongoing survey of historic buildings and districts within the state of North Carolina. Over the years surveys of historic architecture have been completed and published for over 40 counties and over 30 municipalities. The more recent surveys are available online, and the published ones are listed at their website, www.hpo.ncdcr.gov. They also prepare the nominations to the National Register of Historic Places, a federal program, and offer some kinds of assistance and advice to owners of historic buildings. All the National Register nominations are available online.

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Awards: If you know of a recently published church history or a completed church history project that you feel is worthy of consideration for an award, please send the book or a description of the project to Awards Chairman Mrs. Sheila Brewer, 915 Evans Dr., Sanford, NC 27330. Her contact information is above. Awards are given in the spring for works published or completed in the previous year or in a recent year.

Board Meeting, April 10, 2015

The officers of NCPHS met the Saturday evening of the tour in Edenton. Minutes and the treasurer's report were approved. Sam Martin reported that we had permission to hold our Fall Annual Meeting at Summerville Presbyterian Church in Harnett Co. He was looking into the possibility of holding our spring tour in Charlotte, with the emphasis on two

150-year-old African-American churches. [This plan has since had to be postponed. – ed.] A possible summer outing for the society was also discussed, to see the new play *Liberty Mountain* at Kings Mountain.

Sarah Alexander reported that at least 29 individuals or families had paid dues so far this year, and we have a number of new members. [We have 35 life members.] Sheila Brewer reported that no church histories had been submitted for awards. John Goodman announced that officers to be elected this fall are president, secretary, treasurer, and membership chair, and he will be appointing a Nominating Committee.

A special meeting of the Board was proposed by John Goodman, to continue discussion on the future of the society. This would include plans for publication of Dr. Dudley's history and plans to revise the website. It was agreed to meet again on Sept. 26 at the home of Tom and Brenda Spence.

In Memoriam

We note with great sadness the passing this summer of two of our former officers – Dr. Leslie Syron and Col. John Wray.

Leslie grew up in the Union Presbyterian Church in Augusta County, Va., attended Mary Baldwin College, and received her Masters and Ph.D. from UNC in the 1940s. Most of her career was in the Sociology Dept. at Meredith College, where she established the first accredited program for social work education in NC. She served as our society's membership chairman, and she planned and organized our very successful tour of Presbyterian churches in the Shenandoah Valley (2001). She loved our meetings and came as long as she physically could.

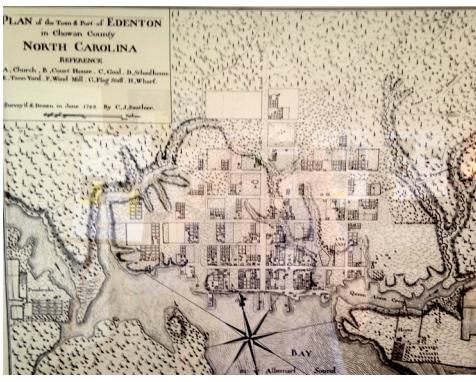
Col. John Wray grew up in Raleigh, where his family were members of the First Presbyterian Church. After studying civil engineering at Georgia Tech and serving in the army, he continued in the army reserve while at graduate school and during his career in public service. In 1994 he retired as Deputy Director and Chief Engineer of the N.C. Div. of Water Resources. He loved history and the Presbyterian Church, and served our society as program chairman in 2006-7. Our sympathies go out to Marion and all his family.

We also note with sadness the passing last year of Mrs. Dorothy Kirkpatrick. She and her husband Mills served our society in several capacities over the years.

Spring Tour of Edenton, NC (established as a town in 1712)



On a beautiful spring Friday in Edenton, society members and guests met on the veranda of the Penelope Barker House for registration, refreshments, and conversation. The house where Mrs. Barker and 50 other women agreed to boycott tea and other British goods in 1774 now overlooks the bay and serves as a Visitor's Center, but it was moved years ago from the center of town and was beautifully restored. In the house is a copy of the 1769 map of Edenton by C. J. Sauthier.



The first stop on our tour was the Roanoke River lighthouse, which was moved from the river entrance to the bay. It has been restored as it was in the 1880s, as quarters for the lighthouse keeper's family. A trolley tour followed, taking us all around the town with a very knowledgeable guide telling us much about Edenton history and its residents, including the now disused peanut processing plant and the mill village, and the oldest known house in NC (1719), its original structure recently uncovered in a renovation project.

Our next stop was the First Presbyterian Church of Edenton, where we had a long and interesting conversation with members of this small but active congregation. They and the Methodist church have shared hospitality for groups coming to repair storm damage in the community. Their pastor, Dr. G. Douglas Eddy, arranged for a special addition to our schedule – a tour of the Wessington House (1859), being beautifully restored.



After checking into motels, we met for an excellent meal at the Nothing Fancy Café and Market.



The next morning we met for a walking tour at the headquarters of Historic Edenton, housed in the home where Harriet Jacobs was a slave. Her book, *Incidents on the Life of a Slave Girl*, told of her life in Edenton and her escape to Philadelphia. Our group was divided in two and headed in different directions to see the main historic sites. (Group photo is compliments of Historic Edenton)

St. Paul's Episcopal Church (1736).

In this lovely colonial church we were treated to a special showing of their communion silver, including a cup



and paten given by Edward Moseley, a prominent colonial official and member of the vestry. Other church members included Joseph Hewes, Thomas Jones, James Iredell, and Samuel Johnston.

Beginning in the late 19th century, graves and gravestones of early North Carolinians were moved to St. Paul's churchyard from outlying plantations, for concern about damage from storms. These include Governors Henderson Walker, Thomas Pollock, and Charles Eden, as well as Stephen Cabarrus.



The Cupola House was built in 1758 by Frances Corbin, land

agent for Lord Granville. After the Civil War the house could not be maintained, and in 1918 the elaborate Georgian woodwork was sold to the Brooklyn Museum. This prompted a local association to be formed to purchase the house. The county library for 45 years, the house has now been completely restored with period furnishings,

with the lost woodwork faithfully reproduced, and the colonial garden reconstructed.



The Chowan County Courthouse, built in 1767, is still in use today and is the most intact colonial courthouse in America. Joseph Hewes helped to raise money for its construction, and Judges James Iredell and Samuel Johnston heard cases in its courtroom. The stocks and pillory are on view behind the building.

The James Iredell House was built and added to from the 1770s to the 1820s. It was the home of James Iredell, attorney general of NC and associate justice on the first US Supreme Court, and the birthplace of James Iredell Jr., governor of NC, 1827-28, and US senator.

After lunch at the 309 Bistro, a brief general business meeting was held. Reports were given on the board meeting the night before, and very warm thanks were extended to our program chairman, Sam Martin, for planning and organizing our visit to Edenton. Our Spring Meeting of 2015 was then adjourned.



Summerville Presbyterian Church is west of Lillington at 2065 Old Hwy. 421, Lillington, NC 27546. The road is also known as the Summerville-Mamers Road, or NC 1291.

Suggested accommodation:

--Hampton Inn, 1904 S. Horner Blvd (US 421), Sanford, 27330. \$84 a night. (919)775-2000. 18.5 miles from Summerville Church.

--Microtel Inn and Suites, 300 Cornelius Harnett Blvd. (US 421), Lillington, 27546. \$70 a night. (910)893-2626. 4.6 miles from Summerville Church.

North Carolina Presbyterian Historical Society
51st Annual Meeting
Summerville Presbyterian Church, Lillington, NC

Saturday, October 10, 2015

9:15	Registration and coffee
	Social and catch up time
10:00	Tour of Summerville Presbyterian Church and Cemetery
11:00	Speakers from the State Historic Preservation Office
	The National Register of Historic Places, and Preservation of Historic Churches
12:00	Lunch
1:00	Business Meeting
	Reports
	Election of Officers
	Unfinished and New Business
2:00	Update on future meetings
2:30	Adjourn

Registration: \$20, including lunch.

Suggested accommodations and map are on the opposite page.

Please send the form below and a check (payable to NCPHS) by October 4 to NCPHS, P.O. Box 20804, Raleigh, NC 27619-0804. If you have questions, please contact our Program Chairman Sam Martin, (910) 428-4165, smartin8@embarqmail.com.

Registration, Fall Annual Meeting, 2015

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

No. of registrations _____ @ \$20 each = \$ _____

Dues if included (Individual \$15; Family \$20; Individual Life Membership, \$125): \$ _____

Total enclosed: \$ _____ Please send this form with your check (made out to NCPHS) by October 4 to NCPHS, P.O. Box 20804, Raleigh, NC 27619-0804.

If you can do so, please put the following announcement in your church bulletin or newsletter:

The North Carolina Presbyterian Historical Society will hold its **Fall Annual Meeting** on Saturday, October 10, at the historic Summerville Presbyterian Church in Harnett County, near Lillington. Registration is \$20, which includes lunch. Our speakers will be from the State Historic Preservation Office in Raleigh. Fifty-three Presbyterian churches in North Carolina are on the National Register of Historic Places, but how are small congregations to preserve them? Come to discuss this important issue. The schedule, registration form, and address are on our website at www.ncphsociety.org, or contact Program Chair Sam Martin at (910) 428-4165.

**** If you haven't paid your 2015 dues yet, please send them with the registration form. Individual, \$15; Family \$20; Individual Life Membership, \$125. ****

North Carolina Presbyterian Historical Society
P.O. Box 20804
Raleigh, NC 27619-0804

Fall Annual Meeting: October 10, 2015
Summerville Presbyterian Church, near Lillington

See registration form on p. 7.