

Precious Memories

I remember a few years ago
As children then, to church we'd go
To Pleasant Grove, up on the hill—
And there we go, to this day, still

The buildings have changed; they are not the same-
A new building was built, and given the old name
Our leaders through the years have come and gone
Each filled his purpose according to need, and moved on
The church family has evolved through several generations
Similar to people's families of loss and additions

The buildings have changed, past pastors moved forth
The congregation evolved with progress and growth
We appreciate the differences the years have brought
And treasure more the memories the past has wrought
As we recall these memories of the old Pleasant Grove
From then to now the experience has been one of love

Truly if 'Where the heart is' is home
Our home church has become our church 'home'

By: Louise Andrews Stewart



History of Pleasant Grove Baptist Church

Early in the year of 1882, the J.B. Williams family moved to Wolf Pit Township from Union County. Mr. Williams had purchased 234 acres of land at a reasonable price and decided to make this his home. With the help of his son and neighbors, who were also new settlers (namely, Austins, Crumps, Gaddys, Huntleys, Deberrys, Maskes, Greenes, and Liles), Mr. Williams built a four room log house for his family. After all were settled in their homes, they felt the need for worship and built a brush arbor under which to have services.

Their first pastor was Rev. J.M. Bennett. J.B. Williams and H.S. Liles were named as the first Deacons, and J.M. Liles and H.E. Maske as Trustees.

After Mr. Williams and his sons planted a garden and some crops, they began to think about building a church. These thoughts became a reality. A tract of land was acquired from John W. Cole. (In later years, Henry C. Wall gave them additional land to make a total of 3 acres.) Logs were sawed at the mill of W. E. Crosland, Sr., free of charge. Soon there was a one-room church setting in a lovely grove of oak trees. They named this church Pleasant Grove. It was located on "Sandhill Road" about eight miles south of Rockingham, on "Cameron land" (forebears of N.C. Governor Cameron Morrison) directly opposite the field where Kilpatrick's Calvary, 25,000 strong, camped for three days during Sherman's raid in March, 1865. Just a few hundred feet south, the birth of Saint Paul Methodist Church occurred about one year later than Pleasant Grove by the Diggs, Rogers, Harrington, Crosland and other families. Leonidas Williams, Attorney, son of Pleasant Grove's J. Blackman Williams stated of the two churches: "These two churches stood as mighty beacons not far apart in that neighborhood. I remember it was arranged that when preaching was at one church there would not be any at the other, so that the same congregation would attend all the services. I have never known two churches of different denominations to work in greater harmony."

Among the earliest pastors of Pleasant Grove were: Revs. J.M. Bennett, Harrison, R.L. Pruett, E.D. Cameron, Livingston Johnson. Rev. Johnson from Spring Hill Township (Wagram area) now in Scotland County then in Richmond County, later became one of the leading preachers of the Baptist denomination in North Carolina. For many years, he was Secretary of the State Baptist Convention. Rev. Johnson preached the dedicatory sermon of Pleasant Grove in 1892.

On September 17, 1894, J.C. Maske, the stepson of Mr. J.B. Williams, died with typhoid fever. This was the first funeral in the church. He was buried in the church cemetery.

The first wedding was on November 21, 1900, when Mary Williams, daughter of Mr. J.B. Williams, married John A. Liles.

Records show these as the pastors from 1895 to 1924: Rev. J.F. Tuttle, T.S. Wright, J.W. Cobb, T.J. Hudson, I.E. McDavid, P.H. Parnell, Jerry Reeves, C.E. Edwards, A.G. Melton, W.M. Huggins, and J.H. Booth.

In 1924, Rev. T.W. Hearne became pastor of Pleasant Grove. Under Rev. Hearne's leadership, there was growth in every respect. At the time he became pastor, the membership was 51. In 1939, when he celebrated his fifteenth

anniversary of service, the membership had grown to 138. In 1934, five Sunday school rooms were built. The church members furnished most of the lumber and materials and performed the construction under the supervision of Hall Ballard, member, and Rev. Hearne. Henry C. Wall, friend of the church, furnished the siding and some other materials. Mr. Wall later gave the church additional land.

Rev. R.D. Riggins became pastor in March of 1944 and served until September of 1952. At the beginning of his pastorate, Training Union was started with Wade McKnight serving as first director and, also, mid-week prayer service. After a large increase in membership, Rev. Riggins became the first full time pastor. The first pastorium, located on Highway No. 1, a few miles south of Rockingham, was built and paid in full in one year. In April, 1952, the first service was held in the beautiful sanctuary of a new brick church, which stood a few feet from the old one. Else Clemions was the first person baptized during the first baptismal



service in the new building. The first funeral service was that of Leach Parker. Cooperative Program gifts were started during these years.

Dr. Ben Ingram, faculty member of Coker College, served as interim pastor. Sometimes his understudies filled in.

Rev. H.S. Price was pastor from March, 1953, until June, 1959. During his pastorate, the Woman's Missionary Union was organized, Vacation Bible School was started, and the new church building was paid and the mortgage burned.

From June of 1959 to March of 1961, Rev. Alton A. Coble served as interim pastor and, during this time, was ordained as a minister at Pleasant Grove. Under his leadership, Vacation Bible School was at its peak. Attendance in every area remained good.

Rev. Billy Godwin accepted the call and served as pastor from March 9, 1961, until August, 1962.

In August of 1962, Rev. Doran Cook became pastor and retired August 1990. Rev. Cook saw the need of a pastorium near the church. As a result, a modern pastorium was built about 1 mile north of the church on Sandhill Road in 1964, after the original pastorium was sold for use by Saint Paul and Trinity Methodist Churches' pastor. The church has recently been redecorated and a new heating system and air conditioning have been added. Other important accomplishments include: a better coordination of programs and the increase in gifts to the Cooperative Program. The cemetery lots were plotted and rules governing its use adopted. In 1982, a special centennial service was held. Under Rev. Cook's leadership, gifts to the Cooperative Program were increased and overall coordination of programs improved.

Men ordained as ministers at the church were: Tom D. Lyde, Wade McKnight, Joe Campbell, and Alton A. Coble. As this church looks to the future, may the true and living God lead it in His truth, and everything God has given all His people be used for His glory.

Some Pleasant Grove Memories

By: William T. Campbell

Submitted: April 2006

Fishing during preaching



I recall one spring morning when I was about 14 years old that it seemed like it was better to go fishing after Sunday school rather than go to preaching. So I decided to slip into Walt Brigman's pond just north of the church knowing it would be safe because Mr. Brigman was in church. Well, I somehow, somewhere, found a piece of fishing line and a hook. For bait there were plenty of crickets and grasshoppers. The brim was bedding. Not having a pole or weight I had to sling the baited hook as best I could. It seems that every cast produced a very nice sized brim, about 5 pounds or better, which was much larger than I was accustomed to. I must have caught 15-20 of these big fish and had to release them all because it was Sunday and I was supposed to be in church: fishing on Sunday was then a sin.

Driving during preaching

For some reason Melvin Richardson would leave the key in his ford car and there may have been others who did the same. Well, this was very tempting to young boys in their early to mid teens that were anxious to drive anything and particularly a car rather than a tractor, truck, horse, or mule. There was a woods road on the South side of the church



leading to the road beside Saint Paul's Methodist Church. It is my recollection there may have also been some other roads in the woods. Instead of going to preaching some of us boys would go to Melvin's car and take a ride on the woods roads. We had the good sense of not to go on the highway. It is a miracle we did not run into a tree or something. I often wondered if Melvin knew what we were doing. Melvin, if you read this, I never drove; it was always someone else.

Smoking during preaching

Mr. Leach Parker was a large man and smoked cigars. After Sunday school he would light up, however there was not enough time to smoke a cigar before preaching started.



Mr. Parker would lay his smoldering unfinished cigar on the side of the steps into the old church building. This was before the present building was built. Some of us boys would wait until everyone was in preaching, take a puff or two from Mr. Leach's cigar, place the remainder back in place on the step and then go into preaching. Just a few years ago, I told Lauren Parker, Leach's daughter and church member about smoking her father's cigar.

Wars, governor, goat, and etc.

My mother Evelyn Grice Campbell and her family lived across the road from Pleasant Grove for a few years when her father, Zack Grice, was overseer of the Henry Wall farm. This place was called "the Cannon Ball". It may have gotten its name from the fact that part of Sherman's army camped there on their march from Cheraw to Fayetteville. It could have something to do with the Revolutionary war since it joined General Harrington's place and British troops visited his plantation. All of this is about the name is speculation on my part and not very connected with the story. The story is one that my Aunt Lucy Mae Rainwater Taylor recently told me during a visit with her in the rest home. She said her

father Zack, my grandfather, bought her brother William, my uncle, a billy goat. She said he also made William a cart for the goat to pull while he rode. Lucy tells that William tried to train the goat. She said that she would get into the cart with William and ride. To fully appreciate what Lucy says happened on one of these rides you have to hear her tell it and see the happiness and excitement on her face and hear the laughter. She says the goat went up the steps on one side of the church and down the steps on the other side with her and William in the cart. Lucy said William never did train that goat.



Precious Memories 111

Billie Mae Richardson Caulder remembers

The men's prayer band and choir.

Some of the men at Pleasant Grove had a very active prayer band. They would meet one night every week and more if need came up. They prayed over in the morning for our men in service. Mr. Jimbo Wallace, Mr. Herbert Diggs, Mr. William Gardner, Mr. Boyd Smith. I think I am right about the last names. They prayed for men out in sin and would go visit them. Mr. Pelly McGee was the one that always stands out in my mind. His testimony would send chills down your spine. They always had special prayer for church members young and old. Our men had a choir that could ring the bells of heaven. It was wonderful to hear them.



Shouting

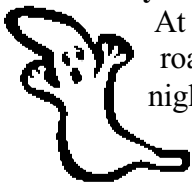
Ms. Hattie Smith could bring heaven down when the spirit hit her. She would stand up and raise her hands up and say "Glory, Glory, Glory." Our church members were touched and sinners found their way to the altar.

Outside Bathrooms



In our younger years we had outdoor bathrooms (toilets). The Women's were on the left side coming into the church yard and the Men's on the right side. You had to go after Sunday school... you did not dare ask to go during preaching... no sir! It was the pits when raining or cold.

Wednesday Night Story Time



At the front of the old church there was a set of cement steps going back to the road. Mr. Leach Parker held story (ghost) time on the steps every Wednesday night. We were scared but always went to hear his ghost stories. Our special was about the man with no head that would walk from the graveyard behind the church to those steps to sit and watch cars go by. One night after church my sister, Nellie, and I had forgotten to feed our calf so we had to walk in the dark about 600 yards to the barn. On our way back Nellie said, "I sure wish I had not gone to hear that story. It made me afraid." At that time an animal ran by us. We could have won a race that night!

Training Union

When training union began, some members thought it was a waste of time and money. It was not so for me or most of the young people. Mr. Herbert and Miss Margaret (that's what we called her) were our first leaders. We were given a training union book and every

week 4-5 people had a part to read and tell what we thought it meant. We were never told we were wrong, and at the end of the lesson Mr. and Mrs. Diggs would bring out what we had missed. They were great. They taught us the value of a true Christian life and to continue to learn from the Bible. So we did not regress from what our former teachers



taught us. Then we began something new to us that made a big impact on my life, we had what is called, "Bible Sword Drill." They would call out bible verses from the whole Bible and we had to see who could find it first, step out and read it. After about six months we were given 6 Bible verses to read and learn to find them.

Mama told me that week I needed to study them hard. She would call them out to me. Then Sunday night the big surprise. Everyone met for Assembly before going to the classes and Mr. Diggs stood up and said, "Will my class please come to the front" We almost froze in our tracks. Mrs. Margaret came and as she always did, said, "Don't worry, you will do great." She was our salvation when we felt afraid of a new task. We presented our first Sword Drill and Mrs. Margaret said we did great.

My younger years at Pleasant Grove

I always loved Sunday school. We had a little 1 page card, then in the junior class we had a four page booklet. Our teachers, Miss Sally Dabbs, Mrs. Claude McGee, and Mrs.



Minnie Mae Watkins taught us the basics---read your Bible, pray everyday for everything, thank God everyday for what he has given you, and love everyone. Mrs. Minnie Mae told us every Sunday morning, "You come to church to learn about Jesus and there is something good in everyone. You have to look harder in some people. Never go to bed at

night mad with a family member. Remember to pray before you go to sleep." We were asked to learn Bible verses or the books of the Bible. They didn't have to tell us, we were eager to learn them.

My first Christmas Program

My first Christmas program was a lot of fun learning our song, I heard the bells on Christmas Day." We had to sing walking down the aisle. Everyone



turned around and looked at us. We almost forgot the words. We were already upset at the boys saying we couldn't sing, and that everyone was going to laugh at us, and that we had to do a chorus because we were too mean to be angels. We told them that they were the mean ones because they had to carry a stick. (They were shepherds.) The program turned out great. We

all did very well.

Baptism

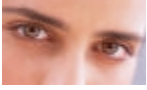
This was a new, exciting and fearful time because I couldn't swim. I'm scared of water, and tadpoles, and was scared there were snakes in that water. It was at Snead's Pond, back in the woods, there were lots of people and ice cold water. The best I remember there was a wonderful feeling spiritually, not body wise because of wet clothes. The next Sunday we had to stand in front of the



Church and everybody came by and shook our hands. I thought my hand would fall off.

Cynthia Campbell remembers

Through a child's eyes...



One of Mr. Cook's sermons that got her son Roger's attention. She said that Roger was about 5 years old at the time. It seems Mr. Cook's message was that all have sinned and come short. In the discussion he said that there was no-one that was perfect. Roger disagreed and said that was wrong... that Mrs. Cook was perfect. Mrs. Cook took a lot of time with Roger, and he adored her.

Evelyn Campbell remembers



That she was among the largest group to be baptized at one time in the history of the church. She said that Mr. Hearn was the pastor of Pleasant Grove at that time. It was 1934 and Mr. Tom Lyde was preaching a revival at the church. She said she was a young girl then and was saved during the revival and was baptized after, along with others at Wall's Pond. There were 27 in all baptized after that revival, and that was the largest number in the church's history.

Memories of Louise Andrews Stewart

Men's prayer band service

The men of the church had a prayer service for about 30 minutes before the evening services and the prayer band members met in the basement of the church where the Sunday school classes were. The ladies would gather upstairs in the sanctuary part and talk, clean, or practice singing. That left us kids with a few minutesto socialize. Lots of times we would choose to spend the time walking. Sandhill Road was not paved at that time and the bridge across the creek down the road was our walk limit. We would walk as a group to the bridge and throw stones into the water to disturb the bats in the trees over the water. We then would run as a group back to the church, chased by the bats.



Outdoor Toilets

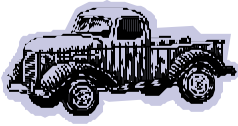
There were men and women toilets, each in the edge of the woods to the left looking form the road and beyond and behind the pump to a distance that would not contaminate the well water. The men's toilet was down and the women's was up the hill, near the grave yard. The the ladies followed to the toilet led along side the grave yard. time, before evening service when it was beginning to get dark, I tried to scare one of the ladies by jumping from behind a headstone just as she walked by. I learned quickly that it was not as funny as I thought it would be. Just a note--- the women's toilet usually had two holes in the seat so the small kids could go at the same time as mom... I don't think the men had the same accommodations.



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The Original Church Bus

Frank Richardson drove a pick-up truck to most church services. There were usually at least five or six of us kids on the back of the truck that had no other way to church. He would drive several miles out of his way to pick up some of them. We all would stand and sing gospel songs as loud as we could all the way to church. It was a joyful fun time together as we praised the Lord, even if we didn't realize that was what we were doing. Uncle Frank didn't realize he had the first church bus, either.



The Pitcher Pump Well

The well water was available by the operation of the pitcher pump. I recall how important we kids felt if we could be the one to 'man the pump' before a service would start. We won the honor if we could be the first to get to the pump after we arrived at the church. We had to compete with all the other kids to be the first to get to church, and the fastest to run to the pump after we got there. We would spend probably 30 minutes before the service would start just pumping the pump and keeping water available so that when the adults came by they could have a drink before going into the church. There were usually two dippers to drink from so mom or dad could drink at the same time the kids did.



Most of the 'pumpers' were a size that required us to jump up and pull down the handle of the pump to keep the water flowing, but what an honor we felt if we could be the one. And just think, how much a good drink of water was appreciated back then when everyone had to work so hard to get one. We should be very thankful for water fountains today.

Bible School

Bible school projects were not as prepared and organized as they are now. One project I remember well was the sword drill. First we had to memorize the books of the Bible in the order of sequence. We spent maybe the first three days learning twenty or twenty-five books, then the next day we had to learn the next twenty, 'till we knew them all. Then we practiced finding given scripture verses, 'till we became proficient in locating the scriptures.



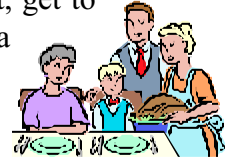
The commencement exercise was for everyone to line up around the front of the church and demonstrate our skill. The leader would call out a Bible book, chapter, and verse number. The first student to find the scripture stepped forward and read the scripture aloud to the others. We became very familiar with the Bible, heard all the various scriptures read, and hoped to be able to read one ourselves, even if we had to overcome our insecurities of reading aloud in public. We were very proud to be the first to locate the scripture we needed, and gained much needed confidence with using the Bible.

False Confidence

After I became saved, I was so proud that I wanted to tell the world. I learned that pride 'goeth before a fall, though. A friend at school told me something that I didn't think was so. I made a big deal of informing her that I was a Christian now, and she couldn't tell me a 'story.' I pictured a Christian as infallible, someone that knew everything and could not be fooled or confused about anything. After all, were not all the adult Christians that I knew authorities on everything? Anyway, I soon learned that what she told me was right after all, and I had to admit that even if I did claim to be a Christian, I still had a lot to learn.

Feeding the Visiting Preacher

One revival week mom invited Preacher Riggan and the visiting preacher to Tuesday dinner. She had, I know, sensed criticism from others for lack of participation in such situations and even though she was not comfortable doing so, she chose her appointed time carefully. Daddy was not a social type person, and would not cooperate with these type dates, so Mama chose a time that would not interfere with his schedule. He worked hard and got dirty and greasy. When he got home all he wanted to do was eat, get to himself, get comfortable and not be bothered. Tuesday dinner would be a time that he would be at work, and undisturbed. So Mom cleaned most of Monday night, and started cooking early Tuesday morning. By noon time Tuesday she had her best table set, and all her best food on the table waiting for the company to come eat. She waited and waited. Food got cold. 5 o'clock came and soon Daddy came in from work, hot and dirty and hungry. He washed his face and hands and sat down to eat, greasy clothes and all. Six o'clock came and so did the preachers. Mom had kept the food as "fit" as she could all evening and the visitors still got the best she had to offer, as well as her embarrassment, Daddy was not apologetic, he felt he was home, and company got what they came for. I learned the importance of clear communication. To Mom, dinner was the midday meal, but to the preachers, dinner was the evening meal. Mom stayed with in her comfort zone after that and ignored the criticism of others. She did not need approval of others to validate her actions.



Women and Children Had Their Place

Lots of revivals and Wednesday night meetings included Bible verse reading assignments and testimonials. The preacher would ask different ones how many Bible verses they had read that day, and if they would give their testimony. One time I was reading the verses, and I read that women should not speak in the church, but to tell the man and let him speak for her. I was twelve years old and did not have a man to tell what I thought. So when I was asked that evening how many verses I had read, and if I wanted to testify, all I would say was that a woman should not speak in church. That was my explanation of all the fear and intimidation of public speaking. Made sense to me!



Memories of Doris Richardson Rainwater

My mother, Annie Mae Richardson, knew the Disability Act passed by Congress was past due. At the age of 26, she was in an auto accident. It left her crippled with a limp and four small daughters. She died in 2002 at the age of 89. She told us of the blessings she received from Margaret Diggs, wife of Herbert Diggs at Pleasant Grove Church. Margaret would be waiting on us at Church.—Mother and her four small daughters. This help give Daddy (Frank Richardson) time for his Sunday school and church work. Margaret would help us get in the church and get us seated. She was sure to give us all a hand fan in the summer time. Mother always said "Margaret Diggs instigated the Disability Act.



The B.T.U.

The Baptist Training Union was started at Pleasant Grove Church in the 1940's. The training union classes were held at six o'clock on Sunday afternoon before the evening service. These classes were well accepted by the children-no food or drink included. Many of us discovered our first coloring books. Bible stories we had studied in Sunday school came alive with our first crayons. In older classes, we had cut-out books. We constructed Bible scenes like the woman at the well, the lion's den, and the three crosses with Jesus and the thieves. Our classes had informed teachers, we were able to express ourselves. These classes were cool for country children, some had never been anywhere except Grandma's. Our first life long positive friends were found here.



Memories of Alta Clemmons Smith

Down Memory Lane

Let me take you back down memory lane when living was worth while. Pleasant Grove had growing pains, and we pulled her through with a smile. Everyone worked together back in days of yonder. No one had much money to give 'cause most everyone was poor, but the building was built for the money was well spent "hard work" was all that we knew, so with a smile on our face and a heart full of love we pass this building.



The Beach Trip

We had the best group of young people in the world and we loved our Sunday school teacher. We thought she could do no wrong. But one day we got together and talked her into going to "Cheraw Beach." Now our pastor didn't believe in "mixed swimming" so we planned it without his knowledge. But the next day being Sunday, we all showed up with sunburn and sore spots. Before we left Church the preacher had heard the news about our trip to the beach. You guessed it—our teacher and her close-knit Sunday school class got reprimanded and we almost lost our favorite teacher. We learned a lesson that Sunday.... Don't go back to "Cheraw Beach" where there is mixed swimming.



The Ghost

Many of us had to walk to church. We walked about 2.5 miles, but we didn't mind. The road would be filled with young people before we got to the church. We seldom had a ride. However, on one occasion a young boy was there with a car and we got a ride home. There wasn't room for all of us so one of the boys decided to stay at the church till the other boy returned. The boy who stayed at the church said he would stoop behind a tomb stone when a car passed by so they wouldn't see him. But, he got up too quick one time and was spotted. The passer-by thought a ghost got up out of the grave, and the tale of the ghost got around. We still laugh to this day about the ghost at Pleasant Grove.



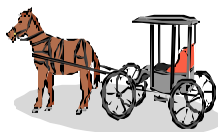
Melvin Richardson remembers

The Youth Fellowship socials that the youth had in the late forties. The youth had planned and organized the group that met in the Sunday school class each Saturday night. The events were financed by the youth everyone enjoyed the opportunity to get friends for evenings of fun and fellowship. and something to do on a Saturday night. of the youth fellowship because that was with his wife, Myrtle Gilmore. He says he meeting but the fellowship provided a chance to get to know her that would not have happened at a regular church service. He tells of a time that he had a badly burned hand and wrist from a grease fire at home. He went to a fellowship hot dog supper with the hand about useless from big blisters, and could not easily prepare his own hotdogs. He remembers Myrtle as the one with enough sympathy and feeling for another to help him “fix” his hotdog...his words, “she was a special girl, and I fell in love with her.”



Lucille Richardson Haywood remembers

Going to Pleasant Grove Church along with a mule drawn wagon. She says, “Dad had a truck that he drove to church, but Adam Farmer had kids my age and I had rather go with them along with the wagon that they used. I say along with the wagon and not in the wagon ‘cause we ran along behind the wagon more than we rode it. If we passed plums or berries growing beside the road we took time to pick a handful and ran to catch up with the wagon that had kept going, and maybe hop onto the back to eat the berries before jumping off again for whatever we could find. Imagine how we looked by the time we got to church, running on the dirt road, in dust stirred by mules and wagon wheels, hot and sweaty from the heat, and stained with berry or plum juice. But it was fun. There was also another family, Watkins Family, that used the mule and wagon to go to church then, but they were not as close neighbors as the Farmers.



Then Lucille remembers that Adam Farmer was the music leader for the church. He always started the church service by vocally traveling up and down the music scale-DO, RE, ME, FA, SO, LA, TO, DO, DO, TI, LA, SO, FA, MI, RE, DO-As he timed the music with arm and hand movement. Each year the church had a grave-yard-clean-up event. Everyone planned to be at the church on day to clean up, and made a family event of it by bringing a picnic lunch. Aunt ‘Cille remembers one special event that introduced her to a pineapple sandwich. Someone brought canned pineapple and bread, and with a little mayonnaise made pineapple sandwiches. That was the first time Lucille had tasted one and she says it was the best thing she had ever tasted. The picnics turned a day of work into a day of fun and visiting that were few in those days and even fewer these days.

Emma Richardson Starling remembers

That Adam Farmer later had a “T Model” car that was large enough for extra kids to ride to church, and she used to go with them in it sometime. They couldn’t stop to pick berries along the way to church, but she has memories of picking and eating “sparky berries” that grew on bushes near the outside toilet at church. Anybody know what a “sparky berry” is?? Few know what the outside toilet is.



Ruth Carter remembers

In 1941 when she and her husband, Rufus, built their home in the community, and decided to go to Pleasant Grove Church. Preacher Hearn was the preacher then and lived in Pee Dee, where Ruth grew up and had known her all her life. One service Rufus decided to join this church, and went to the front to do so. Ruth says she didn’t go at first, but she was sitting on the bench beside Tempe Belle Richardson, who kept elbowing her in the side and telling her to go on. Finally Ruth got up and started down the aisle to join Rufus at the front. Preacher Hearn said, “Now this little girl is such a good girl, this man stole her and married her, but he has repented and God forgave him, so now they can join the church.”



Evelyn Campbell remembers

A pot bellied wood stove in the middle of the church, with a box of dirt under and around the stove to catch ashes. She said some of the older members tried to always sit in the front benches, not to keep warm but to be able to spit snuff and tobacco juice into the dirt in the box during service. Evelyn also remembers as a child her family lived at one time across the road from the church. She says that once her Dad gave her a test task to do. He wanted her to go to the church and bring him back the roll book. He made her think that she couldn’t do it. She said, “The only time I was really afraid was when I had to cross the road, but I did it, and I brought the book back to him.



Evelyn remembers when they no longer lived across from the church, that they rode a horse drawn buggy to church. Not a wagon, but a real buggy.

Alice Richardson Rickett remembers

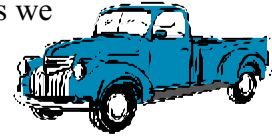
In summer it was so hot in the classroom, the teacher took us out and we would have Sunday school under the pine and oak trees in the yard. It was cooler than in the class room...



Before and after church we walked from the church down to the creek and back to the church. Also, I remember playing in the grave yard and chasing each other there, playing hide and seek, getting to the pump first to pump water for the adults. Also, I remember one Sunday my Daddy went to church. He didn’t go that often. I was cutting up and couldn’t be still. He promised me he would take me out and spank me if I didn’t be still. That was the only time my daddy promised me a spanking.

Claude Wallace remembers

Our family moved on a farm in Wolf Pit community in 1941 next to the Albrights. My father had an old 1933 model “B” Ford truck. On Sundays and revivals we would load up on the truck and stop by the Albright’s and load up and go to Pleasant Grove Church. After church we would go home and have a big meal. Later on my Dad traded and got an old Dodge truck. He could haul more people to church. On special events, I, Walter, (my brother) and Joe Albright would walk to church and back home after working on the farm. All this was before I got driving license.



Howard and Virginia Price remember

When we were in Rockingham and Howard was pasturing Pleasant Grove we had many interesting situations which became happy memories for us:

Our children were young, Edna Jane (2), Sylvia (3), and Buddy (5). They were very active, climbing under the pews, playing in the baptistery, running up and down the aisles. Buddy spent most of his time in the “boiler room” with Sam the janitor because he misbehaved and we had duties to be busy with.

While Howard attended seminary I had to do much of the pastoral duties and one incident when Nicky Pence fell off the back of a truck and was in ICU, I had to pack up the children and put in Ruth Wallace’s bed while I went to the hospital to visit Nicky.

I remember Mrs. Smith who was a dear, dear lady always patting her foot and saying “Glory” when we would sing *Amazing Grace* or *When We All Get to Heaven*. She was really sincere in her worship and praise.



When we first went to Rockingham, the first people to visit us were Daniel Lee and Evelyn Campbell. They brought us a bucket of eggs! They have always remained our dear friends.

Some of the guys were always playing tricks, like putting a snake in the pulpit stand, and a goat in the preacher’s yard, one guy could disguise his voice and he sounded like a woman. “She” called one night from S.C. to say she wanted to get married and wondered if the preacher would perform the ceremony. So the preacher said, “Come on by and let me talk with you.” The preacher dressed up in a suit and tie and waited. Finally the telephone rang and J.P. McDonald asked if he had a wedding. “I bet you got all dressed up.” There really was not a wedding! The years we spent at Pleasant Grove 1953-1959, were the happiest years of our lives and we have so many wonderful memories and this church family has remained in our hearts and lives until this very day. Thanks for letting us share.
Howard and Virginia



Herman Deberry remembers

Going to church on a horse drawn wagon. He says there were only one or two cars or trucks on the church lot in those days. Lots more horses and wagons. Some of the horses would stay within the wagon tongues while tied to trees; others would be loosed from the wagons before they were tied to stay during service. The owners assured shade for the animals in hot weather though.



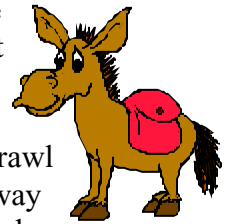
Exploding Cigars

One of the earlier Deacons, Leack Parker, smoked cigars, but left them outside during services. He was known to leave them on the steps or window sill. One time two young boys, Alex Watkins and Glen Campbell took the cigar and loaded it with not one, but two cigarette loads and placed it back where they found it till, Mr. Parker came outside and retrieved it. When it burned down to the first load, and blew the end off, Mr. Parker shook his head, pinched the damaged end off and relit. Just as he began to enjoy the smoke, another explosion almost blew it out of his mouth. With that, he gave up and without a word to anybody walked to his car. Wonder if he found a new storage place after that?



They Did What They Had To, To Get the Job Done

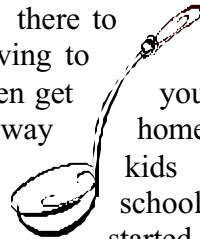
Herman tells of when the original church building was raised up higher so Sunday school rooms could be built underneath. The building was raised, but space had to be dug under it too for additional depth. Herman said the dirt was removed from under the building using a drag pan pulled by a mule. His job was to start at one front corner leading the mules, and as the dirt was dug and placed onto the pan, they had to dig the way to the back opposite corner so the mules could exit on the other side. The hole had to create a tunnel or drag road that had a crawl space for the mules to walk through pulling the drag pan, moving the dirt away from the building. Talk about doing something the hard way! Herman surely contributed his part to the growth of our church.



Ruth Moore Melton remembers

Traveling to and from church with Orene Smith and her Dad, Walt Smith in his truck. She said Mr. Smith never talked much to them, but in the silence was not uncomfortable because he whistled all the time, all the way to church and home again he whistled the tune of *Footsteps of Jesus*, Every week, always the same, *Footsteps of Jesus*.

Ruth remembers the days before the pitcher pump well. There was a spring head of water across the road from the church, and a “dipper” there to drink from. The water was cool and refreshing and no-one minded having to cross the road to get a drink. If you brought your own jar, you could even get your water there and take some with you to drink later maybe on the way home.



Ruth taught a Sunday school class of school age kids in the original church building and also remembers the best Bible school she taught. She says she worked the night shift, and the Bible school started at 9:00 am each day. It was tough working all night and getting home to get ready to go that early, but she remembers as many as 100 kids coming from all over the country. It was a really good vacation Bible school that year.

Ruth’s husband, Bill Moore, was the choir leader and music director at the church during those years. It was during that time that their son, Bo-Bo, was killed. He was 17 years old and had just graduated High School. He was on the way to spend some time with his older brother when the car he was riding in was involved in a collision with another car.

Ruth was attending Pleasant Grove church when they built and moved into the new church. Preacher Reese Riggins was the pastor then. Mr. Price later became the pastor. Ruth said that one time some of the members wanted to hold a meeting about asking Mr. Price to resign, and asked Mr. Price to leave the congregation so they could have a discussion without him. Mr. Price refused to leave, saying he was a part of the congregation, and had

a right to stay and participate. Mr. Boyd Smith stood up for the pastor and supported him against some relatives that were for the pastor leaving. Our Sunday school lesson today was on using the opportunities God gives us to serve him, even when there is opposition! Sounds like our earlier members did just that.

Ella Mae Richardson remembers

Walking to church with her Uncle Will and riding back home with Uncle Tom. Her family lived a short distance down the road from the church. She said that there was a “drive-way” for the horse or mule drawn wagons and the cars or trucks to access the “parking lot” of the church which had steep and high banks on each side. People not wanting to go all the way around to the drive-way had to climb the bank to get onto the church yard. There were steps leading from the side of the road up the bank to the top so people could walk up, but most children never used the steps. They played on the bank, climbing up and running down the dirt bank, getting dirty in the dust. There was very little traffic then, so little danger from falling into the road.

Ella Mae also fondly remembers the “Funeral Home Fans” they used to keep cool during service. Funeral homes usually provided the fans for free. They had the name of the funeral home on the back for advertisement, and a very nice picture on the front, with a handle to hold. There were usually a few on each pew and if someone needed another they could always get one from another pew. There was enough for everybody to have one, even the children, and they really made a difference while sitting through the service. It could get really hot and just a little air from the fan helped. Makes one appreciate today’s air conditioners.



Susan Standridge Lipford remembers

VBS in the morning and Little Debbie cakes during snack time. VBS was conducted in the morning back then before it took two incomes to support a home. At playtime during VBS, I remember playing Frisbee with Wayne Webb, Tommy Campbell, Jeff Hammond (I’m sure there were others) and one of them broke one of the windows. We were all in trouble. Thankfully, this was one of the top windows and way before the stained glass windows were put in.

Lloyd Watts as Music director, with his jolly personality and the love for the Lord. I remember his laugh as if it were only yesterday.

Else Clemions and our Sunday School Easter Egg hunt. I thought I was rich to find a dime in an egg. Then we found a small snake and the egg hunt was over.

Going to Cheraw Lake in SC as a big church group, for an afternoon of eating, swimming and fun. Newman Clemions and Doran Cook didn’t bring their swim trunks so they went into the Souvenir store and bought paper swim trunks. They were picked on for a long time.

Gertrude Wilson as our Wednesday night training union teacher. The love she had for the Lord was obvious and she was a very special woman to me.

Doris King telling the story of her dog Alice and the flea. She was such a great story teller and I wished I had the story on tape for my children.



Delinda Lowery as our youth music teacher. We went to choir practice at Audrey Watts house and Delinda would always tell us to sing from the bottom of our lungs. One day at practice, as we would start to sing, I would take a deep breath and start laughing, and so would everyone else. We finally made it through practice and the next Sunday morning, Judy Dennis, Delmar Lassiter Jr., Gary Standrige and myself sang “There’s Just Something About that Name”. We actually did well that morning.

Doran Cook visiting my grandmother, Annie Nuttall Richardson’s house on Sunday afternoon. My birthday was a week before his and he just so happened to show up on my 13th birthday. He told me he was going to spank me for my birthday, and I said you have to catch me first. That day he chased me around till he caught me and I received a spanking for my birthday. I learned a lot of the old hymns (The Old Rugged Cross, I Love to Tell the Story, and How Great Thou Art, are just a few) from my grandmother as she sang them as she cooked Sunday Dinner after church.

Roast the Preacher night. Everyone was telling things on Doran Cook that had happened during his time as the minister. I was 21 years old by now and should have stopped with the jokes, but just one more. I asked Doran’s wife, Betty Cook if I could put a whipped cream pie in his face. She said she didn’t care. As I proceeded to tell of all the jokes we played on each other through the years and that it was my turn to do the next joke. He turns and looks at me and I put a pie in his face. I’m not sure but I think I ended up with the last joke. But through everything that has happened, Doran was always my closest minister. He helped me through a lot of hard times. If I could touch one life the way he touched mine.