

**Summer Meeting of
The Edgefield County Historical Society
Celebrating the Life and Works of
Hortense Caroline Woodson
(July 7, 1896 - October 20, 1990)**



**and the First Half-Century of
The Edgefield County Historical Society
(1939-1989)**

3:00 P.M., Sunday, July 7, 1991,

Edgefield First Baptist Church

Born in Edgefield July 7, 1896
Died in Edgefield October 20, 1990

**Daughter of Reverend Tucker Everett Woodson
and Agatha Abney Woodson**

Author of many works related to the history of Edgefield

A half century of service to
The Edgefield County Historical Society: 1939-1990
Vice President, Treasurer, President, President Emeritus

**She loved Edgefield with all of her being and
Edgefield loved her as it loved no other.**

The Spirit of Edgefield

(Air: The Bells of St. Mary's)

The Spirit of Edgefield,
Whatever betide,
Is calling her children,
From far and from wide;
In city and village
Or far out at sea,
They hear her voice calling,
"Come back, sons, to me!"

**Old Edgefield, dear Edgefield,
Thy children all love thee;
Thy great men, thy good men,
Wherever they be,
Turn back to the scenes oft'
Remembered in story
Thy children all come back,
 come back
To thee, to thee.**

The Spirit of Edgefield
Is calling today
Her young men and maidens,
Her youth, to the fray
To build a great nation
As strong men of yore;
A challenge she offers:
"Go forward once more!"

**Old Edgefield, dear Edgefield,
Thy children all love thee;
O, Thy great men, thy good men,
Wherever they be,
Turn back to the scenes oft'
Remembered in story
Thy children all come back,
 come back
To thee, to thee.**

-- Hortense Caroline Woodson

Program

Invocation.....Rev. Roger G. Donathan,
Chaplain of the Society

Call to Order and Welcome.....Joanne Rainsford,
President of the Society

Memorial Period.....Owen Clark,
Vice President of the Society

The First Fifty Years
of The Society.....Hendrik Booraem, V., PhD.,
Past President of the Society

Introduction of Speaker.....Bettis C. Rainsford,
Historian of the Society

Address: Life and Works of
Hortense Caroline Woodson.....J. Strom Thurmond,
United States Senate

Response from the Family.....Susan E. Robertson,
Great Niece

"The Spirit of Edgefield".....Cherie Griffin,
Soloist
Kate M. Shull,
Accompanist

Benediction.....William Richard Kremer, PhD.
Pastor, First Baptist Church

*Adjournment to the Edgefield Village Baptist Cemetery for
unveiling of the monument.*

Reception following at Magnolia Dale.

**Reflections Upon
the Life and Works of
Hortense Caroline Woodson**

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Hortense Caroline Woodson Author, Scholar, Historian

By: Bettis C. Rainsford, Historian of the Society

Miss Hortense Caroline Woodson, a prominent local historian, died in Edgefield on Saturday afternoon, October 20, 1990, at the age of 94. She had been in declining health for several years and her death was not unexpected. She passed on quietly in her room at the Plantation House on the Town Square where she had lived for most of the past decade. Her devoted companion, Ms. Norma Parrish, was at her side.

Widely known for her precise and prolific researches into the history of Edgefield County, "Miss Hortense" was a much-beloved citizen of the County. She was perhaps best known for her having been President of the Edgefield County Historical Society for nearly twenty-five years. She was the undisputed best source for anyone seeking historical or genealogical information on Edgefield County or Edgefield County families.

Miss Hortense was the daughter of the Rev. Tucker Everett Woodson and Agatha Abney Woodson. She was born in Edgefield on July 7, 1896. Her mother's family, the Abney family, was one of the oldest families in the Old Edgefield District. Her maternal grandfather, Colonel Joseph Abney (1819-1870), was one of Edgefield's most prominent leaders. A veteran of both the Mexican War and the War Between the States, he had been at various times a teacher, journalist (Editor of the *Edgefield Advertiser*), and lawyer. During the period between 1845 and 1865 few issues surfaced in the District in which Colonel Abney did not play an important role and on which he did not exercise his oratorical skills. As a result of severe War experiences, Colonel Abney returned to Edgefield a man of broken health and died prematurely in 1870 at the age of fifty-one.

Miss Woodson's father, a native of Virginia with deep and aristocratic roots in that state, was a veteran of the War Between the States. Thus, Miss Hortense was a "real" Daughter of the Confederacy (one whose own father, rather than grandfather or great-grandfather, actually fought in the War Between the States). Miss Hortense was the last

such "real" daughter of the Edgefield Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy.

She was a lifelong member of the Edgefield First Baptist Church, or the "Edgefield Village Baptist Church," as she preferred to call it. Deeply devoted to her church, she served for a number of years as clerk of the church and was also clerk of the Edgefield Baptist Association.

Miss Woodson was the author of a number of important works of history, all of which relate to the history of Edgefield County. Her first significant publication was "Publish Glad Tidings, A Pageant Depicting the History of the Edgefield Baptist Church From Its Organization in 1823." This pageant was published in 1945 by the Edgefield County Historical Society. "The Spirit of Edgefield," a much-beloved song sung at all occasions of the Edgefield County Historical Society, was written at least as early as 1948. This song expressed the love and nostalgia which she felt for Edgefield County and was perhaps the creation of which she was most proud.

Peter Ouzts I and his Descendants, a genealogical work on the Ouzts family, was Miss Woodson's next book, completed in 1949. In 1950, *Giant In The Land, A Biography of William Bullein Johnson, First President of the Southern Baptist Convention*, was published by the Broadmore Press. In 1956 Miss Woodson continued her genealogical work with the publication of *Charles May and his Descendants*, a genealogy of the May and allied families.

The Edgefield Baptist Association, a history of the Association, further expanded Miss Woodson's published work on the history of the Baptist Churches of Edgefield County. This important book was published on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Edgefield Baptist Association and included valuable histories of all of the individual churches in the Association which were contributed by various church historians.

One of the best contributions which Miss Hortense made to the study of County history was the book which she co-authored in 1958 with Mrs. Mamie Norris Tillman, *Inscriptions from the Edgefield Village Baptist Cemetery*. This thorough compilation of all of the inscriptions at this historic cemetery, complete with annotations, is an invaluable tool to anyone working on any facet of Edgefield

County history. Miss Woodson later updated and expanded this volume, but the expanded version was never reprinted.

In 1960, on the centennial of South Carolina's Secession from the Union and the beginning of the War Between the States, she published *Come Out, Brave Men of Edgefield*, a booklet which contained, as part I, "Headlines from the *Edgefield Advertiser* November 1860 - 1865," a scholarly paper by Faye Christie, and as parts II and III, "Secession and its Aftermath" and "Troops from Edgefield in Confederate Service," both compiled by Miss Woodson.

Miss Woodson is also known to have completed an unpublished manuscript on the history of the Palatinate settlers who arrived in South Carolina in 1765 and who settled up on the banks of Long Cane, Cuffeetown and Mountain Creeks. Many Edgefield County families, including the Stroms, Dorns, and Timmermans, are descended from these early pioneers. This manuscript was presumably lost in a 1983 fire.

Miss Hortense lived for most of her life at "Pine Terrace," her mother's home at the corner of Lynch and Church Streets, near the bridge where Church Street crosses Academy Branch. Here she was just across from her beloved Village Cemetery where so many of the people she studied about were laid to rest. She was also just down the street from the Edgefield Village Baptist Church where her religious convictions were anchored.

Pine Terrace was integrally interwoven with her life and personality. It was a two story house dating from early in this century. It had been added to on several occasions. At the front were two massive columns which were from the old Addison house, formerly located on the hill behind the Baptist Church. The grounds at Pine Terrace contained huge old trees which formed a canopy over the formal gardens of boxwood, azaleas and camellias. These gardens had not been tended in many years, thus giving an overgrown and musty, but inviting, appearance to the exterior of the home.

Inside, the Woodson home was somewhat dark, but comfortable and amazingly cheerful. It was a veritable archives with books and records on every facet of Edgefield history. Hardly a subject could be brought up that Miss Hortense could not get up, shuffle into the adjoining room,

rumble about, and re-emerge with a document which verified or answered the question at hand.

Each room contained a number of family relics which were especially dear to Miss Hortense. Perhaps the most significant possession in the house was the portrait of her grandfather, Colonel Joseph Abney, which hung over the fireplace in the entry hall. This impressive portrait was painted by Scarborough, the famous Southern portraitist of the early nineteenth century.

Her home was also known for the large number of cats which inhabited the place. In her gentle and infinitely patient way, she gave these cats free run of the house. They were as likely to be found on the top shelf of the bookcase, or curled up amidst the tea service, as to be in their proper place. Whatever she had in the house to eat, the cats were sure to have first choice. Visitors were often taken aback at having to share space with the cats but Miss Hortense's disarming and soothing manner soon set matters straight.

Perhaps one of the most familiar sights in front of Miss Hortense's home was the out-of-state cars, indicating that Miss Hortense was once again generously dispensing time and information to travelers from afar who were searching for their Edgefield roots. Generous and hospitable to a fault, she loved having visitors and was totally oblivious to those domestic conditions in her home which might have worried a more particular housekeeper, but which were completely unnoticed by this devoted academic. Unlike many her age, she was a night person and often kept visitors spellbound into the evening long after normal visiting hours. Visitors could see that she was obviously enjoying their company and the subjects which they were discussing, and thus often relented when she objected to their leaving.

Miss Hortense's health began to fail in the early 1980's and she went to live at the Plantation House on the Town Square where she was well cared for by her cousins W. W. and Sue Padgett Mims. Remarkably, with the regular meals which she got here, her health improved and she was able to enjoy a number of additional happy years.

At the fall meeting of the Edgefield County Historical Society in 1983, Miss Hortense was honored with "A Testimonial Celebration In Observance of the 21st Year of her Presidency of the Edgefield County Historical Society."

This auspicious occasion was held at the Edgefield First Baptist Church and was attended by many of Miss Hortense's admirers. The Honorable Joe F. Anderson, Jr., now Federal Judge, then Member of the South Carolina House of Representatives, presided.

Letters of congratulations were presented from the following persons or organizations: President Ronald Reagan, Senator Strom Thurmond, Congressman Butler Derrick, Governor Richard Riley, Senator Thomas Moore, Representative Joe F. Anderson, Jr., the Edgefield County Council, and the Towns of Edgefield, Johnston and Trenton, the South Carolina Press Association, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the United Daughters of the Confederacy, the American Legion Auxiliary, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the First Baptist Church, the Edgefield Baptist Association, the South Carolina Baptist Convention, the Southern Baptist Convention, the Baptist Missionary Society, the Baptist Historical Society, the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, and the South Caroliniana Society.

On this occasion Governor Richard Riley conferred upon Miss Hortense the Order of the Palmetto, South Carolina's most distinguished award. Federal Judge Clyde H. Hamilton, Edgefield native, was on hand to congratulate Miss Woodson. United States Senator Strom Thurmond, Edgefield's tenth Governor and its seventh United States Senator, made the principal testimonial address: "Hortense Woodson, My Distinguished Friend." Miss Hortense had worked in Senator Thurmond's office for a number of years and thus was especially close to the Senator. A reception in the Church Fellowship Hall followed the Testimonial Meeting.

This occasion was a great one for Miss Hortense and it capped off her most useful career with the acknowledgements which she so well deserved.

1983 was not to be a totally happy year for her, however. On December 6th of that year she suffered a tragic loss when her beloved home, Pine Terrace, went up in flames, taking with it a large number of her most cherished books, records and other possessions which had been accumulated over several lifetimes. Only a few items were saved and these

were taken up to the Plantation House. It is not known whether any of the papers or books survive today.

While many would have been totally devastated by this tragic loss, it was characteristic of Miss Hortense that, after a period of deep grieving, she accepted the loss and continued to find meaning in her life. She had faced tremendous personal difficulties during the course of her long life, and had long since learned to deal with things which she could not change. She was deeply devoted to her God and Savior and had developed a spiritual strength which amazed even her closest admirers and friends.

Moreover, she was almost totally good, never having a bad word to say, nor a bad thought to think, about anyone. She thought only of the positive in those she knew and refused to acknowledge the negative. She worked in the service of her Lord. In short, she was a pluperfect Christian if ever one existed.

During the last two years of her life, Miss Hortense began to become increasingly feeble. In July of 1990, for the first time in memory, she was not able to come out for her annual birthday party which had become an important annual event for her many friends. The party was therefore held at the Plantation House and many friends were saddened to see her feeble condition. Thus, few were surprised in October of 1990 when word began to circulate that Miss Hortense had passed on.

A brave soldier, a toiling worker, a devoted friend, Hortense Woodson may be gone on to another world, but her Spirit of Edgefield shall forever sing in the hearts of all who knew her.

Hortense Caroline Woodson

(July 7, 1896 - October 20, 1990)

By: W. W. Mims, Editor of *The Edgefield Advertiser*

She had the spirit of an angel, the heart of a poet, intellect of transcendent creative power, religious ardor with such devotion as to give her whole life in service to others and country in surpassing love and patriotism.

Esto Perpetua

(To Dr. William Bullein Johnson, First President of The Southern Baptist Convention)

*Like a long-leaved pine that reaches high
To touch with glistening boughs the sky,
While yet its roots are deeply bound
Within the moldy crust of ground,
So you in spirit raised your eyes
Above the earth to gleaming skies,
Yet walked with men from day to day
Whilst dwelling in your mortal clay.*

*Beyond the rift, you saw afar
The radiance of a guiding Star,
With heart attuned to Heavenly sound,
You sought to free the souls, sin-bound;
Yours was the lofty plan, sublime,
That stood the matchless test of time;
Yours was the living faith, serene,
That led through timeless paths unseen.*

*Mighty the forces born that day
When Southern Baptists sought God's way;
Cleaving a mighty eternal gain:
Down through the years as ages roll,
The Story is told from pole to pole;
"Esto Perpetua" - so may it be,
Forever until Eternity!
H. C. W.*

Hortense Caroline Woodson was born in Edgefield on July 7, 1896. She was the daughter of the Rev. Tucker Everett Woodson and Agatha Abney Woodson of Charlottesville, Virginia, and Edgefield.

Her schooling began in the local elementary school. When the family moved to Augusta, Georgia, she entered Tubman High School there, graduating in 1912 as Salutatorian of her class. She was a student at Winthrop in the years 1912 and 1913, and for several years following taught in the Antioch Public School eight miles west of Edgefield.

Miss Woodson joined the *Edgefield Advertiser* staff in 1918 during the editorship of J. L. Mims. Her maternal grandfather, Colonel Joseph Abney, had been editor of this publication for a time when the Mexican War began. Then he joined "the far-famed Palmetto Regiment" to serve as aide to Colonel A. P. Butler in 1846.

"Young men, born when the nation was in swaddling clothes, felt a quickening of spirit as one century closed and another spanned before them...impelling Spirit in 1802. Two years later in South Carolina, William Bullein Johnson, brilliant young lawyer of Beaufort, heard the insistent Voice as he tossed on his couch...and felt within himself a quiet serenity.

"In the year 1830, I received an invitation from the Edgefield Baptist Church to become her minister, and at the same time from one of the Trustees of the Edgefield Female Academy to become its Principal. I accepted both invitations...'

"That was Dr. Johnson's introduction to the twenty-two years he was to spend in Edgefield..

"The Baptist Church of Augusta...stood like a grand lady in her impressive dignity awaiting the event."

Her association with *The Advertiser* extended over a period more than seventy years interrupted by several periods of employment with other newspapers and a period of seven years working as the Aiken, South Carolina secretary for U. S. Senator Strom Thurmond.

Intermittently she was employed with *The Edgefield Chronicle* and *The Newberry Herald and News* in Newberry, South Carolina.

Returning to Edgefield in 1925, she spent the rest of her life "blessing the community" in ways without end as long as she lived.

She was very dear to The Advertiser as a staff member in both the typesetting department and by her valuable contributions in writing social news and organizational reporting.

Although her professional career was in the newspaper field, the Christian religion became very early the inspiration of her life, a profound motivation directing-leavening-refining her splendid talent in prose and poetry in an endless flow of published writings throughout her active life.

Her father, the Rev. T. E. Woodson, had been an early graduate of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary while it was still located in Greenville, South Carolina. Her roots were deep in the Baptist Church, reaching back to her great-great-great-great uncle, Dr. Richard Furman, for whom Furman University was named - founded in Edgefield. It was the Rev. Richard Furman about whom Cornwallis, Commander-in-chief of the British Armies, stated, that he feared the prayers of Furman more than George Washington's Continental Army.

Miss Woodson's example brought others into lifelong service in the church and in many notable activities and civic achievements throughout the community. In addition to a leadership role speaking, teaching, and in organizational work, she wrote and directed the pageant "Publish Glad Tidings," celebrating the church centennial.

She had taught her Sunday School class until near her 90th year, was a member of the choir and a leader in the Training Union, and the Business Women's Circle from the time of its organization until her health declined.

She was author, during well over fifty years of her life, of invaluable articles and treasured books, biographical and genealogical, continuing in demand. Her most significant book was *Giant in the Land*, a biography of Dr. William Bullein Johnson, first President of the Southern Baptist Convention, an inspired work of love for the dedicated ministry generally, and a monumental contribution to church history.

In this book of supreme historical moment she wrote, "The spirit of God was moving upon the face of the United States of America when the nineteenth century dawned, lighting the fires of evangelism, rekindling the flame of Christian education, speaking again His timeless decree, 'Let there be light!'"

Before the hour of eleven on Thursday, May 8, 1845...The Spirit of the living God breathed upon the assembly, and the Southern Baptist Convention was born...The delegates having been ascertained, the committee proceeds to the appointment of officers:

"Rev. William Bullein Johnson, D.D., of Edgefield, South Carolina, president...

"Baptists of the South had entered upon a new era of Christian evangelism under the leadership of Dr. Johnson, whose justice, impartiality, dignity, and urbanity in presiding, together with his unquestioned Christian integrity, qualified him supremely for the task."

When *Giant in the Land* was released, Miss Woodson was extended especial honors at the Ridgcrest Assembly Conference.

She received recognitions and awards including a memorialization by the Women's Section of the South Carolina Press Association.

The First Baptist Church of Edgefield presented her with a plaque,

In Grateful
Appreciate to
Miss Hortense Woodson
For Thirty-Five Years
Of Faithful Service
As Church Clerk
First Baptist Church
Edgefield, S. C.
10 - 1 - 84

Another notable work was the comprehensive chronicle, *Edgefield Baptist Association*, a book of 340 pages and another treasured record, that of one of the county's and area's highly influential organizations since 1807. The book, published in 1957, is still in demand.

Miss Woodson was called on to author family histories, and she gave generously of time and much effort in research compiling massive genealogical data on Edgefield families and beyond. She received calls constantly from throughout the United States from researchers asking her assistance. Her responses were always as generous as time allowed.

Her latest major work was a manuscript prepared with the tedious labors required for reading all the hundreds of tomb stones in the famous Willowbrook Cemetery on Church Street in Edgefield - "Where Sleep the Brave," as she described this most historic burial ground, in a less complete compilation in the Sesquicentennial Edition of *The Advertiser*, in which she wrote,

Journeymen, pause as you pass:
Tarry awhile where heroes lie,
Wrapped in memories of yesteryear,
Holding shrouded dreams once dear;
Come where the phantom banners wave:
Hallowed spot! Where sleep the brave.

She would write poetry for friends and organizations, for special occasions, the following published in *The Advertiser's* Sesquicentennial Edition:

Whispering Pines

Whispering pines, O tell us a tale
Of those who wraught in sad travail;
Tell of their hopes, their joys, their fears,
Tell of their lives so wrought with tears.

Tell of the men of God who came
And gave them help in Jesus' name.
Tell of their trip on water's shore
Of trials sad they gladly bore.

Tell of romance of man and maid,
Who plighted their troth on Charles Town's glade.

Whispering pines, O tell us anew,
Faith ever conquers, Right shall endure.

School children came to her in their research for class assignments of historic note, and through the generation the youth of the area knew her for her warmth of good will and tireless giver of her time, she sensing a moment of excitement that the youth of Edgefield might, too, become enamoured of Edgefield County history, their lives inspired to emulate the ennobling examples - men and women who had made that history, who had helped in formulating the character of a great country - examples that had animated her youth toward a career of historical commemoration, and distinguishing her as Edgefield's greatest living citizen.

Miss Woodson is the last survivor of eight children of Tucker Everett Woodson and Agatha Abney Woodson.

Florence Everetta Woodson, born June 19, 1881, at New London, Virginia, died November 1, 1884, in Texas.

Eleanor Woodson, born and died July 10, 1884, in Texas.

William Able Woodson, born November 5, 1886, in Texas, was a member of the Baptist Church, a Mason, a Chancellor Commander of the Knights of Pythias. He was a first lieutenant in the Clinch Rifles, National Guard of Georgia. He served overseas as captain during World War I after service on the Mexican border, and after the war worked in sales. He married Alice Aull Boozer of Newberry, S. C. He died March 10, 1940 in Columbia and was buried in the Woodson family plot in Willowbrook Cemetery.

Joseph Abney Woodson, born April 29, 1889, in Edgefield, where he was reared and educated, first became affiliated with the Baptist Church, later with the Christian Science faith. His career was with the Department of Agriculture where he was head of one of its divisions in Washington. On retirement he and Mrs. Woodson made their home in Florida.

Elizabeth Woodson, the elder sister, was a public health nurse. In a distinguished and colorful career, she nursed Indians on a Nevada reservation, and was an army nurse during World War I. She retired to Edgefield to make her home with her mother and sister. Death came January 3, 1962, and burial was in the family plot.

Josephine Woodson studied and practiced law in Georgia where she married Walter McDonald, prominent

Georgia official and also a lawyer. A second marriage was to Thomas E. Merrit, industrialist and contractor. At her death she was buried in the family plat. Her husband, who made his residence in Edgefield, with the family, chose to be cremated.

Surviving are the following: One niece, Josephine, the daughter of Josephine and Walter McDonald and her three daughters. Also two nephews, children of Joseph Abney Woodson: Joseph B. Woodson and David W. Hadley.

Funeral services for Hortense Woodson were held in the First Baptist Church at 11:00 a.m. Tuesday, October 23, 1990 with the Rev. Richard Kremer, pastor, officiating, assisted by the Rev. Roger G. Donathan of Augusta, Georgia. Banks of floral arrangements attested to the love of friends communitywide. Burial was in the family plot in the older section of Willowbrook Cemetery, behind the Baptist Church.

I, as editor of *The Advertiser* and earlier in her association with the paper, knew her and was associated with her longer than any other.

In the past nearly four decades she had carried on a tradition of the noblest of women leaders, who achieved probably the dominant influence in education, in social and to a large extent in political life over the state. It was an activist, organized role to inspire, to "agitate, educate," and create an environment for family life in its imperative, fundamental role - the foundation for "civilized progress."

These women of great care and vision foresaw the possible alterations that society would face in the emerging scientific, industrial developments and shifting populations.

They realized that increasing worldly influences would assault community standards, with the emerging radio networks and the growing concentration - monopolization of the print media. The critical challenge was to meet the coming revolution by every means on the local level and to unify their high purpose against the oncoming destabilizing forces.

They were essentially the heart of patriotic American character as it had evolved from the struggles of the pioneers and early religious leaders. It offered the greatest hope and

love - in - action toward the fulfillment of a growing American leadership for the world.

Their devotion to world missions reached a pinnacle in enthusiastic support, with the strong faith that the country had been ordained, leader of the world under the guiding Star of Christianity.

Their role was comprehensive: Preserve the greater features of the past through historic memorialization, and secure the future for God, family and country.

At the funeral Tuesday, one who had come from another state because, he said, he sensed a profound duty out of his memories of living through some of these extraordinary years of a pulsing, ennobling Edgefield, that throughout its long history had responded to the calls to duty in the fields of the highest and most challenging endeavors.

She lived with us, in close communion of kinship and long association, and it has been a great and distinct privilege to care for her, and indeed, to have had the privilege of her presence through the years.

Hortense Woodson's Writings

By: Hendrik Booraem, V., PhD., Past President of the
Society

The Romans had a saying, *Littera scripta manet*: The written word remains. The other parts of human lives, conversation, actions, thoughts, images are fleeting compared to the written word. Once you have something in print, it will, with luck, last for generations even if you make no special effort to preserve it. The written word, or more properly the printed word, was an important part of Miss Hortense Woodson's achievement. Not necessarily the most important part, or even the most lasting in a sense - for the effects of her sweetness, her gentle faith, her service to others and her kindness to all will go on and on, transmitted from person to person, as long as this community lasts. But the printed works bearing her name will march proudly through the years, within this community and outside it as well.

Miss Woodson's works are historical; that is to say, she was a historian. But it is important to make clear at the outset what kind of historian she was. John Quincy Adams once said, "The historian should have no country." The historian, he meant, should be an impartial, detached figure analyzing and, when necessary, judging human actions. Miss Woodson was not that kind of historian. She was, in an older and honorable tradition, passionately attached to her community; her histories were stories of the community's past meant to strengthen and inspire its present. She wrote about Edgefield because to her it offered not merely a field of study but a story of acts worthy of emulation. The titles of her works reveal her faith in and admiration for Edgefield: "Where Sleep the Brave"; "The Spirit of Edgefield"; *Giant in the Land*; "Publish Glad Tidings."

Hortense Woodson did not begin writing history until she was almost fifty, although she had written as a professional journalist most of her adult life. Her first historical publications - four of them - came almost at the same time, in the late 1940's. Two were pamphlets for the

Edgefield County Historical Society, which she served as secretary: *Edgefield County Judges* and *Edgefield Remembers Mexican War*. The other two were family histories of the May and Ouzts families. In these, her role was that of editor - arranging the histories of various family lines written by various hands, and supplying a short introduction to summarize the family's story. A couple of years later she took on a similar assignment, as associate editor - that is, the person who actually did the work - of O. K. Walker's photographic compilation, *Historic Edgefield County*. But all these works were like rehearsals for the major biography she published in 1950, *Giant In The Land*, the life of William Bullein Johnson, the Low-Country pastor who spent much of his life in Edgefield and guided the Southern Baptists during their years of turmoil and dissension with their Northern counterparts. Following this work came two more important compilations: "Where Sleep the Brave," an indexed compilation of tombstone inscriptions from Willowbrook Cemetery, the historic cemetery just across the street from her house; and the history of *The Edgefield Baptist Association*, for which she assembled histories of the individual churches by various church historians and crowned them with her own excellent introduction.

There were also some minor works in various forms: the pageant "Publish Glad Tidings" based on the history of the Edgefield Village Baptist Church, and the familiar song "The Spirit of Edgefield," inspired no doubt by World War II but sung for many years afterwards at Historical Society meetings. - When Miss Woodson died, at least one major work of hers, on the Palatine settlement in the Londonderry area of upper Edgefield District, remained unpublished.

The picture of Edgefield District in Miss Woodson's work is worth noticing. Many historians, local and academic, have written of Edgefield in terms of its violent relationships, the power and pretentiousness of its planters ("Home of Ten Governors"), or the tension of black-white relationships in an agricultural economy. To Miss Woodson these features were there, but not central. Her Edgefield was a place where God was close to people and people were close to God, where small miracles happened, where family and community were all-important. This is

an image of Edgefield different from what we often have, but significantly it is also the primary image in Vernon Burton's impressive scholarly history, *In My Father's House Are Many Mansions*, whose title evokes church, family and home.

The first thing that strikes you, upon opening one of Miss Woodson's books, is how densely factual they are. Some historians spend page after page on rhetoric or interpretation, trying to make their facts fit into some larger intellectual orthodoxy; that was not her style. Some of her books, indeed, like "Where Sleep The Brave," are just accurate, invaluable compilations of fact. But even in her histories, interpretation takes a back seat; facts are paramount. In *Giant in the Land*, for instance, she follows the children of William B. Johnson and recounts the tragically early deaths of several, without suggesting that this was "God's plan" or that it was a "challenge" for Rev. Johnson to "overcome." She simply records the facts and lets the reader put his or her own spin on them.

This quality is what makes me so sure that Miss Woodson's work will last. Facts are the imperishable raw material of history. Interpretations and syntheses grow old; facts endure. Years from now, historical researchers will still be consulting her works in search of the truth about Edgefield. Years from now, Edgefield people will still be proud that a lady of such diligence, accuracy and faith flourished among us.

"That You May Know the Truth"

Luke 1:1-4

Funeral Sermon for Hortense Woodson, October 23, 1990

**By: William Richard Kremer, PhD., pastor,
Edgefield First Baptist Church**

When I came to Edgefield the first thing people said to me in introducing Miss Hortense Woodson was, "Oh, I wish you had been here before the fire. For in that terrible tragedy no telling how many countless treasures were destroyed!" Even today people still mourn the loss of those countless precious documents and shall continue to do so. But I tell you we shall mourn far longer the loss of the one person most deftly equipped to interpret those documents and place them in historical context. Somewhere along the way in her life, Miss Hortense Woodson learned so much that she ceased to know Edgefield history and she became Edgefield history, a living chronicle of her time. Miss Hortense saw her life as a sacred mission, made possible because she thought she lived in a sacred land.

Not everybody values historians. Henry Ford is alleged to have said that "History is bunk." However, poet George Santayana spoke more wisely: "Those who ignore the past are condemned to repeat it." Miss Hortense would have agreed with Santayana, but she found more in common with the Gospel writer Luke, a historian, because she saw history's function as not merely highlighting avoidable errors but underscoring truths worthy of emulation. Her histories identified ideals, recognized wisdom and championed heroes. She wrote not only to educate, but to inspire. If William Faulkner was right in asserting that literature's highest calling is to uplift the human spirit, then Miss Hortense can rightly be said to have spent her life fulfilling a noble mission. For certainly she wrote to improve the soul.

I have always thought it ironical that *Giant in the Land* was written by an author who seemed to stand about four feet tall. And yet in her own way Miss Hortense was herself a

giant -- an intellectual giant and a Christian giant. Truth, particularly historical truth, is slippery and complex. It took someone of Miss Hortense's tenacity and concentration to weave her way through the labyrinth of relationships that constituted so many family histories. For years, the answer to the area's every genealogical question was, "Go see Miss Hortense." It took someone of Hortense's extraordinary intelligence to take the dusty materials of a musty and impenetrable past and transform them into a record that was accessible to the present. She used her formidable mind to fashion the past into a comprehensible presentation. It took a person of Hortense's dedication to truth to seek to distinguish fact from fiction when dealing with such complex matters as the career of William Bullein Johnson and the corporate life of the Edgefield Baptist Association. Hortense alone had the unique gifts, willingness, and dedication to pursue such subjects.

But again, we must remember: Miss Hortense wrote not merely to inform; she always sought to uplift. She intended her work to do what Luke did: write an orderly account of things that would enable people to know the truth. And she knew that her writing would have no real power unless she lived her faith with the same sort of intensity and rigor. And she did. Miss Hortense remains for many in this church the pluperfect example of what a Sunday School teacher ought to be, compelling in delivery, comprehensive in preparation, compassionate in personality, and sacrificial in commitment. You can tell a great deal about a person from the level of loyalty they inspire in their friends. Everyone who knew Hortense, who came in contact with her, became a fan of hers, a supporter -- none more loyal than Norma Parrish. For all of us, our loyalty to Miss Hortense reflected our desire to be gracious toward her. For she was unfailingly gracious toward us.

And now Miss Hortense's earthly career has ended. But she would not want us to fret overly much about that. She would say to us that she had done all that she could do here anyway. She would probably quote to us the same verse she quoted from William Bullein Johnson in the forward to her book: "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom of God." Miss Hortense did not fear death, for she, like the apostle Paul, had been of

two minds for several years. To remain on earth was to perform God's service to us. And yet, to be absent from the body would mean to be present with the Lord. Miss Hortense would say to us, "It is okay to grieve, but do not despair. For our God is a God of resurrection power who has triumphed over the grave. Death has no ultimate victory. Death has no ultimate sting." Like the apostle Paul, Miss Hortense knew how to be abased and how to abound, how to be content in all circumstances. If Miss Hortense could look back on her life and career and pronounce benediction upon it, she would simply say to us, "It's been grand. It's all been grand. God has been grand to me. So do not grieve."

I leave you with a final image, a metaphor if you will, that serves as a symbol of her life. It is the image of a half-typed page. When I was visiting her a couple of years ago -- she was 92 at the time -- I noticed her old blue typewriter and in it was a half-typed page. I don't recall the paper's title nor did I look at its content -- it would have been bad manners to pry -- but I only noticed that she had managed to get about halfway down the page before she had tired and decided to rest for awhile, intending to return. And I thought, "Here's Miss Hortense: her spirit is still willing -- even if her flesh is weak." Now God has granted her an eternity to rest and to work . . . and to finish the page.

Let us give thanks to God for his goodness to Miss Hortense. And let us thank God for his goodness to us in blessing us with the gift of this dear, sweet saint.

The Woodsons and Their Connections

By: Susan E. Robertson, great niece of Hortense Woodson

Dr. John Woodson and his wife Sarah came to America on the ship *George* in 1619. Dr. Woodson had completed his course at Oxford University and was ready to go with Governor Yeardley to Virginia. There was always the menace of Indian trouble and in April 1644 trouble erupted. Dr. John was returning from professional work when Indians slew a number of colonists, including Dr. John himself.

Back at his log cabin home which was surrounded by Indians, Ligon, a hired man (a shoemaker) seized an eight foot gun and fired upon three of them, and then upon two more, killing them. In the meantime Sarah had a pot of boiling water into which one Indian fell as he tried to come down the chimney. Then she seized an iron spit and hit another on the head, putting him out of commission. Then all the Indians outside fled. Brave Sarah had protected her two sons, John and Robert, by putting one under a tub and the other in a potato hole. Thereafter they were then called the "Tub Woodson" and the "Potato Hole Woodson."

John, the eldest son, was born about 1634. He and his wife made their home at "Fleur de Hundred" on the James River. Through the years, generation after generation of the family were born, even to the eighth generation, until a certain Pryor Woodson was born. He married Josephine Ables, and they became the parents of William Ables Woodson, born August 10, 1817, at the family home, "Halcyon Hills," seven miles from Charlottesville, Albemarle County, where he was reared and educated. He was a graduate of the University of Virginia, and became a minister of the Gospel. He died in January of 1882 on his farm in Nottoway County.

Other children of Pryor and Josephine were Frances, Joanna, Annice, Elizabeth, Lydia, Joshua Ables, John Sheppard, Pryor, Jr., Andrew Jackson, and Tucker Everett Woodson.

Tucker Everett Woodson was born August 17, 1837, at "Halcyon Hills," Albemarle County, Virginia, where he

received his early education. He was graduated from the University of Virginia and took a regular course at the Baptist Theological Seminary. At the beginning of the War Between the States, he enlisted in the Confederate Army and served until the close of the War. He was ordained to the Baptist ministry but spent most of his time teaching. He was so occupied in Culpepper County, Virginia when he met Miss Agatha Elizabeth Abney of Lexington, South Carolina, who was in Virginia finishing her collegiate course. They were married June 1, 1879, at her mother's home in Lexington.

Agatha was born August 24, 1859, in Edgefield, S.C., a daughter of Colonel Joseph Abney, a lawyer, orator, journalist, and veteran of the Mexican-American War as well as the War Between the States, and his wife, the former Susan Haynsworth Miller. After her father's death, her mother married a Mr. T. S. Arthur, also a lawyer, and moved to Lexington. Agatha was educated in Charleston, S.C. as well as in Virginia. When quite a young girl, she united with the Baptist church, and was always interested in the Lord's work.

After their marriage, Tucker and Agatha went to Claiborn County, Tennessee, where he occupied a chair as joint principal of Tazewell College for one year. Agatha taught art and elocution at the same college. The following year (1881) they returned to Virginia and assumed charge of New London Academy in Campbell County, remaining there two years. About 1883 they went to Austin, Texas, where Tucker took charge of the city schools. From there they went as superintendant and matron of Bayland Orphan Asylum, remaining there about six years until the institution was reorganized and moved to another place. They then returned to Edgefield where Agatha owned a comfortable home left to her by her father.

Tucker had charge of various schools in Edgefield until his health began to fail. About this time he inherited a splendid farm in Virginia from his brother William Abless Woodson and moved there with his family. Unfortunately, Tucker, a man of scholarship, but of no particular business sense, lost the farm due to poor crops and poor management and the Woodsons returned to Edgefield. About 1900 Tucker became a patient at the veterans hospital in Richmond,

Virginia. He died April 23, 1913, and is buried in the veteran's cemetery there.

Meanwhile, Agatha struggled to support her husband as well as to provide for her five children in Edgefield. When the mortgage on her home was called in, she was forced to place her younger children (Hortense and Josephine) in the Augusta Orphan's Asylum while two of the older children (William and Elizabeth) went to work for a local farmer for room and board. Her eldest son, Joseph Abney Woodson, situated himself in Augusta working as he could to help out his family.

Agatha was very skilled with her needle, a true artist. In Richmond, where she had gone to be with her husband, she formed an association with Mrs. Woodrow Wilson, President Wilson's wife, and went to work for her as a seamstress. Upon her return from Virginia, Agatha moved to Augusta where she reclaimed her children, supporting them by taking in sewing. Eventually, Agatha was able to return to Edgefield, where despite continued difficulties, she managed to hold her family together by teaching and writing history.

She was a member of the U.D.C., W.M.U., W.C.T.U. and organized the Edgefield Chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution. She was a great historian and genealogist, and many came to her in search of family data. Her home "Pine Terrace" at 225 Church Street was a frequent gathering place for organizations, friends, and family. Agatha Abney Woodson was ninety-two years old when she suffered a stroke and passed away February 10, 1952.

The children of Tucker Everett and Agatha Abney Woodson were as follows:

1. Florence Everetta Woodson, born June 19, 1881, at New London, Virginia, and died November 1, 1884, in Texas after swallowing a whistle.

2. Eleanor Woodson, born and died July 10, 1884, in Texas.

3. William Ables Woodson, born November 5, 1886, in Texas. He was a member of the Baptist Church, a Mason, a Chancellor Commander of the Knights of Pythias; first lieutenant in the Clinton Rifles, National Guards of Georgia. He served overseas as captain during World War

I after service on the Mexican border. After the war he worked in sales. He married Alice Aull Boozer of Newberry, S.C. He died March 10, 1940, in Columbia of kidney failure. His last rites were held in Edgefield at the Willowbrook Cemetery.

4. Joseph Abney Woodson, born April 2, 1889, in Edgefield, where he was reared and educated. He united with the Baptist Church but later became affiliated with the Christian Science movement. He was a first lieutenant during World War I. Later he served as chief of the U. S. Treasury Department's Division of Bookkeeping and Warrants. He died July 5, 1965, in Orlando, Florida of cancer. His body was removed to Washington, D.C. and last rites were held in Arlington National cemetery. Joseph and his wife Edna were the parents of a foster son, David Hadley, and a son, Dr. Joseph Bernd Woodson, a U.S. Navy veteran of WWII, who practiced as a psychiatrist in Arlington, Virginia, until forced by ill health to retire. He passed away in 1990.

5. Josephine Haynsworth Woodson, born April 5, 1882, at Edgefield. She united with the First Baptist Church of Edgefield. She moved to Augusta, Georgia where she became a nurse at the Wilhenford Hospital and later read law and was admitted to the Georgia Bar. She was married first to Walter Raleigh McDonald and they parented a daughter, Josephine Adeline McDonald. Her second husband was Thomas Edward Merritt of Macon, Georgia and they made their home in various parts of the country. She was active in the D.A.R., U.D.C., the California League of Women Voters, and was elected President-general of the Colonial Dames XVII Century. She passed away in Aiken, S.C. of heart failure and was interred in Willowbrook Cemetery in Edgefield. Mr. Merritt died in 1981 and gave his body to science.

6. Elizabeth Agatha Woodson was born January 17, 1894 in Nottoway County, Virginia. She was a member of the Baptist Church and was a World War I nurse, serving overseas with the rank of lieutenant. After her return she continued her service as a public health nurse. At one time she nursed Indians on a Nevada reservation. She retired to Edgefield to make her home with her mother and sister,

Hortense. She died of cancer on January 3, 1962 and is buried in Willowbrook Cemetery.

7. Hortense Caroline Woodson was born July 7, 1896, in Edgefield where she spent most of her life. She worked as a linotype operator and later as a reporter for the *Edgefield Advertiser* and the *Newberry Herald and News*. For six years she worked as the Aiken secretary of U.S. Senator Strom Thurmond. She was clerk of her church, the First Baptist, and spent much time writing. Her works include *A History of the Edgefield Baptist Association*, *Giant in the Land*, (a biography of William Bullein Johnson), and a number of other historical and genealogical works. She organized the Edgefield unit of the American Legion Auxiliary, and was a member of the D.A.R., U.D.C., Colonial Dames of the XVII Century, and for twenty-two years was president of the Edgefield County Historical Society.

On December 6, 1983, her home, "Pine Terrace," burned, and she moved to the Plantation House in Edgefield. It was there she suffered a final stroke on October 20, 1990. She is buried in the Willowbrook Cemetery.



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Senate

A TRIBUTE TO MISS HORTENSE WOODSON

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to the memory of a great South Carolina lady, Miss Hortense Caroline Woodson, who passed away recently. Miss Woodson was a woman of character, compassion, and courage, and a beloved citizen of my native county of Edgefield. Her friendship and support over the years meant a great deal to me personally, and I will miss her greatly, as will all who knew her.

"Miss Hortense," as she was affectionately called, was a well-known figure in Edgefield County. She was a distinguished scholar and historian, and the author of a number of books on South Carolina history, all of which centered on Edgefield.

She was also active in community affairs. She was the president of the Edgefield County Historical Society for over 25 years and was a member of the Daughters of the Confederacy. She was, in fact, a true daughter of the Confederacy—her father, Rev. Tucker Everett Woodson, was a veteran of the Civil War.

Miss Woodson was a devoted lifelong member of Edgefield First Baptist Church. She served for a number of years as church clerk, and was also the clerk of the Edgefield Baptist Association. One of her historical works is a complete and annotated recounting of all of the inscriptions at the historical Edgefield Baptist Cemetery.

Miss Woodson was renowned for her wit and hospitality. She was always prepared to regale her many visitors with historical anecdotes and stories of life in Edgefield. Her extensive library and encyclopedic memory were valuable tools for genealogists, and she often entertained out-of-State visitors in search of their Edgefield roots.

Her love of animals was as well known as her love of company. Pine Terrace, her family home, was also home to her many cats, which had free run of the lovely old house.

Miss Hortense was one of those kind souls who never had a bad word to say of anyone. In spite of her gentleness, however, she was an extremely strong person. When her beloved home was destroyed in a fire in 1983, she was naturally devastated by the loss of her many cherished family heirlooms. However, she persevered in her work despite the loss of her valuable books and documents in the flames.

For her many contributions, Miss Woodson was awarded the Order of the Palmetto, South Carolina's highest honor, by Gov. Richard Riley in 1983. She was a woman of great intellect, generosity, and talent; a loyal friend; a devoted and conscientious citizen; and a true Christian. Edgefield was immeasurably enriched by her life, and her passing leaves a void which cannot be filled.

Nancy and I would like to extend our deepest sympathy to her family and many friends at this difficult time.

Baptist Courier

NOVEMBER 1, 1990

Personally



by John Roberts

In his wisdom God sometimes puts a person of a special talent in a place where that talent can best be used. So it was with Hortense Woodson. She was born in Edgefield and spent her 94 years there.

Edgefield is a town of history, steeped in Baptist tradition. She belonged, being Baptist by heritage and by enthusiastic choice. Newspaper employment sharpened her writing skills as she fed on the history of the area. She wrote articles about half a dozen governors from her small town and about such things as the service of her grandfather, Joseph Abney, in the Mexican War.

Her best work was *Giant in the Land*, a biography of William Bullein Johnson, pastor of First Church, Edgefield, at the time he was elected first president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

I first met Hortense Woodson almost 25 years ago. She said that I, as the new editor, needed a special lesson in Edgefield and South Carolina Baptist history. "Come," she invited, choosing a date and an alternate choice or two. "And be sure to bring your boots and walking clothes."

History was lively, exciting, interesting when told by her. She showed me through First Church, Edgefield, organized in 1823. She had led in furnishing its prayer chapel with memorabilia, some of which pre-

dated the church. At my insistence we visited the parsonage across the street where R. G. Lee, when he was pastor, had written his famous "Payday Someday" sermon. But she considered that more contemporary than historical. "Now let's go out and see some real Baptist history," she ordered.

We went four miles southeast of town to Horne Creek Church, organized in 1786. We walked an overgrown road and crossed a stream to find a clearing with a surprisingly beautiful and well kept white church building. It had not been used regularly for worship since the 1920s when R. G. Lee had preached there. But it continues to be maintained by local people and others with Edgefield roots who want to preserve something of their heritage. When cotton was king, she reminded me that day, and agriculture was the mainstay of South Carolina, Horne Creek was a thriving church for plantation owners of the area.

I have seen her perhaps twice a year but heard from her quite regularly. Always it has been a chipper and cheerful note about things present and past and their interlinkings pertinent to Baptists.

My epitaph to her reads:

Hortense Caroline Woodson, July 7, 1896 - October 20, 1990. Happily in touch with present and past, and therefore in touch also with the future.

Appendix:
Winning Essays for the 1990-1991
School Year in
The Edgefield County Historical Society's
Annual Essay Contest

The Asparagus Industry in Edgefield County

**By: Chris Yonce
Wardlaw Academy**

One of Edgefield County's first crops was asparagus. Parts of Edgefield County are located on the Ridge section of South Carolina. The predominant area that asparagus was grown in South Carolina is composed of a sandy type soil and extends about seven miles wide and twenty miles long. It is located between Monetta and Trenton, South Carolina or south of Highway #23.

Asparagus is a perennial plant of any of a genus of plants of the lily family with tender edible shoots, with small scalelike leaves and many needlelike branches.

Asparagus was first introduced in the Ridge area of South Carolina in the early 1920's. It helped replace a cotton crop that was being devastated by a new insect called the boll weevil. The Ridge, which was the predominant area on which the asparagus was grown, had excellent sandy loam soil. This soil has a well-drained subsoil and is above average in fertility, and its organic matter is particularly adapted for asparagus.

The preparation of soil prior to the planting of the asparagus is a vital part of the crop's success. The preparation is important because the plant is deep-rooted and remains in the ground for up to fifteen years. The establishment of an asparagus crop begins with the planting of the asparagus seed that produces a crown. Then the crown must be replanted in rows of six feet wide for the production of asparagus spears. From the time of transplanting of the asparagus crown, production usually would take three growing seasons.

During cold months, asparagus spears grow about one or two inches, but in the spring when the temperature is in the high seventies, the spears would grow as much as six inches a day. Because of this rapid growth, harvesting was necessary every day. The asparagus was cut twice on Saturday to maintain growth over the weekend. The most abundant crops come between the fourth and tenth years, and

around the twelfth to fifteenth year of production, the crop will start to decline.

The asparagus was harvested in the spring. Raising an asparagus crop was arduous, but cutting the asparagus was an even more intense job. Because once cutting season was in, a farmer had to harvest frequently. There were no machines to gather the asparagus. Therefore, abundant labor was necessary. The laborers needed to know the proper way to cut asparagus. The farmer faces a full cutting season, which is eight to nine weeks, approximately three growing seasons after setting out the asparagus. The first year about two weeks of cutting good spears was possible, and five or six weeks during the second growing season. The cutting required a long-bladed knife.

The cutter would place the asparagus knife near the spear and push straight down to the depth necessary to obtain spears of the desired length. If the cutter jabbed several times to cut the spear, he or she could injure other spears and buds developing. As each spear was removed individually from the soil, it was then carried to the packing house where it was graded into three types of grades. One was the Colossal which was the larger spear. The next larger spear was the Fancy, and the smallest spear was the Choice.

Each spear was then placed by hand in a mold that produced what is called a bunch of asparagus. The bunch of asparagus weighed two pounds. A group of twelve bunches was placed in a crate. Since the asparagus needed ample moisture to keep fresh until placed on market, it was placed on water-soaked moss. All of this harvesting and packing was done by hand labor.

After the asparagus went through the packing shed, it was loaded on trucks in Johnston and shipped to market. A group of growers formed an association, and they took their daily production to Johnston to be shipped on a truck together. One platform which was used frequently to load asparagus was behind Monroe Kneece's present day liquor store. During the peak harvest time, usually March to May, truck loads of asparagus were shipped each day. These trucks had about three hundred crates on each. Each crate contained twelve bunches of asparagus.

These truckloads of asparagus were usually shipped to northern cities such as Washington, D.C., Philadelphia,

Boston, and New York City. These trucks were not refrigerated, but they were open-bedded trucks. This open-bed kept the product cool, but it was a problem when bad weather was a factor. The first refrigerated truck of asparagus left Johnston in 1938. This truck was owned by Dewitt Trucking Company, which still ships products to markets.

Asparagus created a large economy for many farmers from the early twenties until the mid-forties when it had to be abandoned. This crop was a much needed cash crop for many farmers in this area for many years. The massive use of hard labor was the main cause of decline of asparagus production. The farmers during this time had no machines, and the demanding manual labor caused workers to become scarce. This is even a factor today in the peach industry. The farmers can't find enough labor to work a large farm. Even though asparagus is not a great cash crop anymore, many people still enjoy planting this crop.

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The History of Philippi Baptist Church

**By: Jennifer Mills
Wardlaw Academy**

If Philippi Baptist Church could talk, it would tell you many interesting stories of its past. It would tell of its early services and how they have changed, of its first preachers and members, and it would probably tell of the confusion in the church in 1973 that led to its division and the forming of another church in 1974.

Philippi was established in the year 1814. The church was then on a place known as Bull Branch, about three miles south of its present location, and it was called Bull Branch Church. It was founded by Thomas DeLoache, Francis Walker and John Landrum.

Minutes that date back to the beginning of the church state that it had 25 charter members when it first opened. Twenty-two of the members were white, and three were of the Negro race. Those who were of the Negro race were the slaves of various church members.

In March of 1868, the church organized its first Sunday School. Dr. W.H. Timmerman served as superintendent, and he appointed instructors. The next year, in August of 1869, the Negro members applied for the consent of the church to build a separate house of worship nearby for their own color. At this time, Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church was built on a neighboring plot of land. There are names of 52 Negro members on the old church membership roll.

Many interesting facts were found in a ledger that is dated from February 1814 to July 1917. The entries in the ledger were recorded each month at the church meetings.

According to the ledger, in the early days of the church, members were "expelled" or "dismissed" from fellowship for dancing, intoxication, gambling, and adultery.

One entry, dated Feb. 14, 1835, read, "The church met in conference and took up the case of report against Brother (name withheld) for dancing. The church found the conduct of said Brother to be unwarrantable and expelled him." Another entry, dated Jan. 6, 1875, read "Brother James Howard brought to the attention of the church Sisters (name

withheld) and (name withheld), they both being guilty of adultery. On motion of Brother A.G. Williams, they were expelled."

The ledger also contained information about the church services and the amount of offering collected when the services were held. One entry in the ledger told the order of the church service. It was dated May 21, 1882, and it read "Sabbath School - then preaching by pastor, mission collection was two dollars and eighty cents, there were about eighty members present, thirty-five females and forty-five males."

Another entry telling of the order of the service was dated June 17, 1883. It said "Sunday School was at three o'clock p.m., preaching by pastor was at four o'clock p.m. followed by celebration of the Lord's Supper."

Reverend Thomas DeLoache, who was one of the founders of Philippi, is believed to have been the first pastor of the church, although Reverend Peter Galloway, who served the church from 1821 to 1839, is the first pastor of whom the church has any records. Reverend J.C. Brown, who served continuously for 30 years, holds the record for the longest pastorate.

Reverend Brown served from 1884 to 1914. His salary was first fixed at \$175 per year. After 19 years of service, it was raised to \$325. Reverend Brown called the ladies of the church together in 1899 for the purpose of organizing a woman's missionary society. This was the first mission work in the church.

Mrs. Dorothy Toney, the oldest member of Philippi, was born in 1893. In an interview with her, I found that she vividly remembered when Reverend J.C. Brown was pastor. She said that Reverend Brown, who lived in Aiken, would drive a horse and buggy to Philippi on Saturdays. He would spend the night in Johnston, sometimes at Mrs. Toney's house with her and her parents, and go back to Aiken after Sunday's service.

Back then, services were held on Saturdays and Sundays. These services were held only once a month. Mrs. Toney recalled sitting near the front of the church and listening to Reverend Brown preach, using no notes. She was baptized by Reverend Brown in 1905, at the age of 12. She said that since there was no baptismal pool to be baptized in,

she was baptized in a creek located behind the church. Mrs. Toney said that there were even two dressing rooms by the creek for those who were baptized to change in.

There were eight pastors who served at Philippi after Reverend Brown and before the church had a full-time pastor. Reverend V.M. Forrester served as the first full-time pastor. He served the church from 1944 to 1952. Between 1952 and 1972, Reverend R.W. McKinney was pastor. In 1972 Reverend Kenneth Tompkins came to Philippi.

Reverend Tompkins served as pastor from 1972 to 1974. While Reverend Tompkins was at Philippi, a great deal of confusion took place in the church. Reverend Tompkins said and did many things that caused conflict among the members of the church. The problems got out of hand, and in 1974, the church divided. The members who left Philippi formed Providence Baptist Church, and Reverend Tompkins left Philippi to serve at Providence.

Philippi Baptist Church continues to grow and prosper, even though many thought it would not survive the division. The church has a long and impressive history, and it will continue to serve its members for many years to come.

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