

Included in the 1977 Smithfield Bicentennial record of the Johnston County Churches as reported in the Smithfield Herald by Editor Tom J. Lassiter on April 26, 1977, we find this account of Mt. Zion:

"The oldest Methodist Church in the County - Mt. Zion in western Johnston, founded in 1809 - owes its origin to the Leaches of Leachburg Plantation."

We are thankful and proud that our Church has continued in the work of our Lord for so many years.



Christmas 1974 - Mt. Zion in the snow.

"Only fear the Lord,
And serve Him in truth,
With all your heart;
for consider what great things
He hath done for you."
I Samuel 12:24

And from Psalms 48, Verse 2:

"Beautiful for situation,
The joy of the whole earth,
Is Mt. Zion - - -"

May we ever strive to reach this situation and joy.

EARLY HISTORICAL ITEMS OF VALUE AND INTEREST

"Remove not the ancient landmark,
Which Thy Fathers have set."
Proverbs 22:28

Bits and pieces of very interesting references to Mt. Zion Church have been unearthed since Volume I was completed in 1966. So, again comes to mind the poem by G.H. Holland:

"Heaven is not reached by a single bound,
But we build the ladder by which we rise
From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies,
And we mount to its summit, round by round."

One of these items is concerning a Masonic Lodge Meeting held near Mt. Zion in May 1873. The meeting was called to pay last tribute to Dr. John Sanders Leach who had died in January 1873. This meeting was held at the home of his father, Dr. James T. Leach. The forty members who were present were formed in "regular procession and marched to Mt. Zion Church, one-half mile away, where Rev. W.H. Bobbit of the Conference of North Carolina preached an able and interesting discourse". (The Rev. Mr. Bobbit was the Mt. Zion Pastor.)

The above recorded memorial service took place a hundred and six years ago and the account of this event was found in the Old Masonic Minute Book of 1870 - 1876. Mr. C.S. Coats reported this in a 1974 Smithfield Herald.

Another item of importance and interest was found in an 1887 copy of the Smithfield Herald concerning the "Johnston County S.S. Society". It is copied verbatim as follows:

"At the regular semi-annual meeting of the Johnston County Sunday School Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, held at Mt. Zion Church, October 29th and 30th, 1887, the following resolution was adopted: Resolved, 'that a copy of the minutes of this Conference be furnished to the Raleigh Christian Advocate and Smithfield Herald for publication.' In compliance with the above, I respectfully transmit the following:

"Conference called to order by Vice-President G.A. Turner. Music - 'Father While We Come To Thee'. Prayer by the President. C.E. McCullers appointed Secretary Pro Tem. The roll of delegates being called, it was found that there was not a quorum. On motion of J.M. Turner, the Brethern present resolved themselves into a Sunday School Conference. On motion, the Chair appointed Brothers J.M. Turner, B.W. Young, and C.E. McCullers a Committee on Programme. On motion, the Chair appointed Brothers A.D. Taylor and J.M. Turner to assign homes to delegates. On motion, Conference adjourned for one hour.

"Afternoon session opened with prayer by Brother A.D. Taylor, The Chair announced that there being only three schools represented owing to the inclemency of the weather that the receiving and reading of reports would be dispensed with, and the discussion of queries would be in order. On motion, the query, 'Is The True Spirit of Liberality Sufficiently Inculcated in Our

Sunday Schools?' was taken up and discussed at some length by Brothers Young, J.M. Turner, and A.D. Taylor after which the Chair made some very interesting and instructive remarks. On motion of Brother Turner, the subject was laid over for further discussion. On motion, Conference adjourned to meet at ten o'clock Sunday morning, October 30th, 1887.

"Conference convened pursuant to adjournment; President, G.A. Turner, in the Chair. Music - 'O, Worship the Lord'. Prayer by Rev. E. Pope, of Newton Grove Mission. Roll of schools called. Eight officers and delegates responded. On motion, the Chair appointed a committee of three on credentials and to receive reports. Only three schools reported. Query, 'Does the Subject of Missions Receive Proper Attention in Our Sunday Schools?' being called, elicited real soul stirring speeches by Brethren B.W. Young, Rev. E. Pope and A.D. Taylor which resulted in the adoption of the following resolution:

"Resolved, that the importance of missions receive greater emphasis and the Secretary of this Conference be instructed to procure from our Publishing House in Nashville, Tenn., leaflets and pamphlets upon this subject to supply this Conference.'

"Corinth, on the Clayton Circuit, was elected as the place for holding the next Conference; fifth Sunday and Saturday before in April 1888. On motion, the Secretary was instructed to transmit reports from schools to the President of the Conference and suggest the importance of calling a meeting of the Conference on the fifth Sunday in January to elect officers for the ensuing year. On motion of B.W. Young, Conference adjourned with Long Meter Doxology and prayer.

G.A. Turner, President
C.E. McCullers, Sec'y Pro Tem"



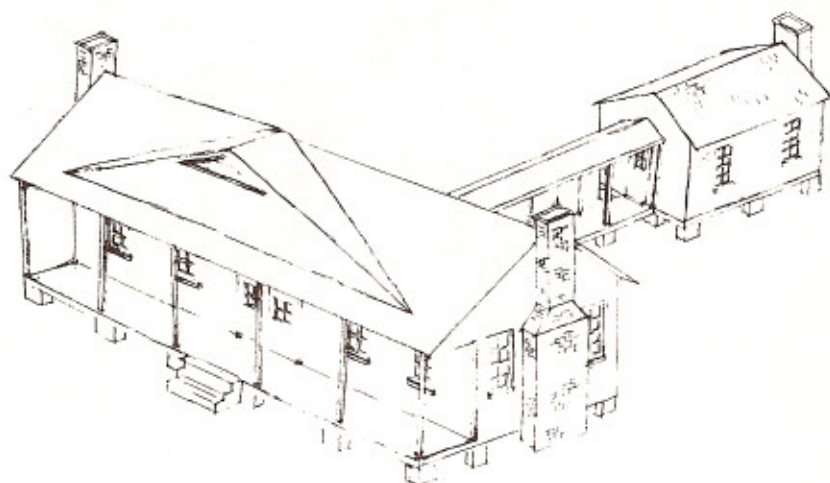
Charles Edward McCullers.
1844 - 1914



Alfred Dickerson Taylor.
1843 - 1930

An article was found concerning the old Johnston Academy at Mt. Zion which was often called the "Mt. Zion Academy". This school was established prior to the Civil War and was built on land donated by Dr. James T. Leach just north of the Church. (This information was recorded in 1889 by Superintendent of Johnston County Schools, Mr. Mebane, in his "Historical Account

of the Academies in Johnston County Prior to the Civil War".) The newly found news article concerning the Academy was written by W.M. Sanders in 1924. Mr. Sanders states in the article that he, as a youth of sixteen years in 1875, lived in the home of Dr. James T. Leach, whom he considered an "exampler" of all men, and attended the Mt. Zion Academy. He also states, "An old lady by the name of Johnson endowed the Academy". This fund evidently helped deserving students to attend the Academy as did the Susan Leach Parrish Scholarship Fund as recorded in Volume I.



JOHNSTON ACADEMY
"Called Mt. Zion Academy"

From description by Floy J. Leach: Sketched by W. A. Sherratt.

The old "Mt. Zion Academy" was torn down and the Mt. Zion Free School was built on the same site in 1910.

Mr. W.M. Sanders also relates his joy in attending Mt. Zion Methodist Church as well as attending Elizabeth Methodist, Oakland Presbyterian, and Shiloh Baptist Churches. He states, "Mt. Zion held services on first Sunday, Shiloh held services on second Sunday, Elizabeth held services on third Sunday, and Oakland held hers on fourth Sunday"; and then he added, "So, if the people were not quite so good as they should have been, it was not for the lack of good preaching".

I will add to Mr. Sanders' record that the schedule for services at Mt. Zion and our neighboring churches, Shiloh, Elizabeth, and Oakland, was the same when I was a small child, seventy years ago. And to me it was also a joy to gather with our neighbors at their respective churches and to join them in praise and thanksgiving to Our Lord.

There was also a small one-room school house across the road, west of the Church, in which the younger children were taught the three R's - "Reading, Riting, and Rithmetic" (the Grammar Grades) before entering the Academy. There has recently been found the record of a deed for the land on



Interior of old Church.

which this school was built. It was drawn by Miss Claudia Leach in the late 1800's, deeding the land on which the school was standing to Johnston County. (Record of Deeds Books W-10, Pg. 164, and X-7, Pg. 521) This small building was standing as late as the middle 1930's.

We, too, with God's help are privileged to "leave footprints on the sands of time" as penned by Longfellow.

Only One Life

We have only one life to live,
Only this day our help to give,
Only this moment our Lord to love,
Only this time to look above,
Only this hour our work to bear,
And only this minute God's gifts to share.
Help us, dear Lord, to do Thy will
And ever in Thy presence dwell.

Merdyth McCullers Lane

SPECIAL DAYS

"Remember Thy Congregation, (O' Lord), which
Thou has acquired of old,
Which Thou hast redeemed as the tribe of
Thy heritage.
This Mount Zion, Where Thou art dwelling."

Psalms 74:2 M.L.

We praise our Heavenly Father for dwelling at our Mt. Zion since it was established and we pray that we will always join hands in serving and honoring Him during our special days as well as every day.

Homecoming is a wonderful day which brings us together with many friends and loved ones bearing glorious memories and hearts filled with thankfulness. We always plan for this day in September after the crops are in and before the Fall work begins.

The first Homecoming I knew about was in 1905. We lived in Raleigh at the time and it was a very special "horse and buggy" trip out to Mt. Zion. My grandfather, Charles E. McCullers, playfully asked me where I was going. I answered, "I-go-'om--Bam-Bam". (Or so I was often told by those who were present) Hence, Mt. Zion was to be "Bam-Bam" until we moved back into the country and I became a young lady of five years. At that time I realized that "Bam-Bam" was Mt. Zion and was the most important part of my parents', Ed and Leute Willis McCullers, lives and thus it became so for me. It has always been a glory to go home to Mt. Zion and may it always be to all those who grew up surrounded by God's love for us and our love for Him and for one another.

Many of our former pastors, members and one District Superintendent have "returned home" to bring a special message to us on this day of days and to share with us its joys. Some of those who have blest us thusly during the last few decades are the Reverends J.G. Johnson, E.B. Craven, Dr. Edgar Fisher, E.R. Shuller, Charles E. Sparks, J.W. Garrison, E.W. Rogers, Dan E. Meadows, Dr. W.W. McIntyre, Berrie (Bobby) Barbour, W.E. Barber, and Lay Speaker Charles L. McCullers. Some of these have returned several times to add to the day.

We always serve a sumptuous meal and enjoy the fellowship to the fullest.

We ever join the Rev. John Wesley, who founded Methodism in 1729, in his Table Prayer:

"Be present at our table, Lord
Be here and everywhere adored;
These mercies bless and grant that we
May feast in fellowship with Thee. Amen"

May our Heavenly Father answer this prayer for all of His children.

One of the most precious services of this day is a memorial to our loved ones who have gone Home to Heaven during the year.

Our Thanksgiving Service is a wonderful joint meeting with our community sister churches of all denominations. We meet with a different congregation each year and raise our voices in prayer and song to our Lord. We, also, have "a feast" with Him at this time and delight in our love for Him and our fellowmen.