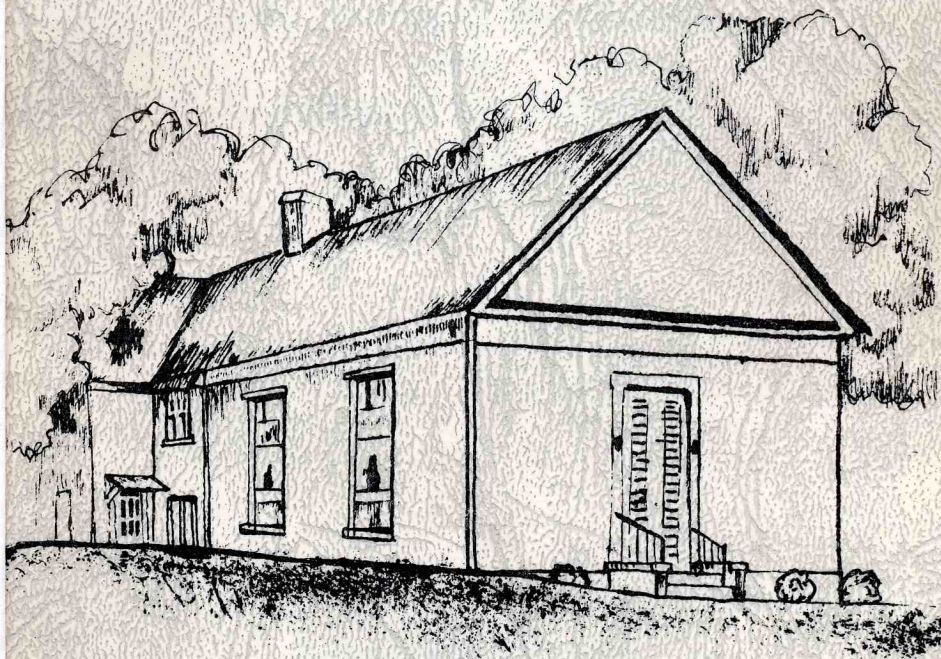


**YANCEYVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
YANCEYVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

**Early History of the Church  
with  
Sketches of the Founders**



By  
**Katharine Kerr Kendall**

1976

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Dedicated to my Presbyterian ancestors  
George Washington Oliver (1866-1952)  
Elder, Griers and Yanceyville Churches  
Frances S. Motley Oliver (1866-1950)  
Iverson Lea Oliver (1828-1913)  
Mary Covington Oliver (1838-1916)  
Thomas Covington (1806-1875)  
Elder, Griers Church  
Elizabeth Willis Stanfield Covington (1807-1875)  
Reuben Oliver (1795-1837)  
Nancy Lea Oliver (Murray) (1805-1874)  
Member Cross Roads Church

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## YANCEYVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

While researching many Caswell County deeds, wills, and other records during the past 25 years, I have discovered interesting and pertinent historical facts about the Yanceyville Presbyterian Church. Since the early church minutes were destroyed when the manse burned in early 1900's, a complete history of the church can never be written. One has to seek every bit of information from minutes of Orange Presbytery, Caswell County records, diaries, etc. for any adequate sketch.

The most interesting fact discovered in this research is that there have been two Presbyterian Churches in Yanceyville at different locations. By chance, the exact date of the formal dedication of the present church was discovered, and the diary of John S. Grasty gave the names of the architect and builder.

First let us regress to the Mother Church. The Yanceyville Church was an outgrowth of the Rattlesnake or Bethany Church. Foote, in his *Sketches of North Carolina Churches*, makes the first mention of this church when he states "there was a church in Caswell of long standing called Bethany, or Rattlesnake, situated on the road from Milton near Yanceyville, near the residence of George Williamson. It enjoyed the labors of Reverend Ebenezer Currie, now (1846) the oldest minister in Orange Presbytery. This church divided and the old place abandoned, one part of the congregation worshipping in Yanceyville, and the other following the church of Gilead, five miles southeast of Milton."

Caswell County deed book H, pages 14 and 43, records that on March 26, 1792 the ruling elders of Rattlesnake Congregation purchased two tracts of land on the waters of Rattlesnake Creek — one from David Shelton for 9 pounds, the adjoining plot from Thomas Jeffreys for 14 pounds. Rattlesnake Creek rises just north of Yanceyville, flowing northeast to meet the Dan River near Blanche. Rattlesnake Church is mentioned in Orange Presbytery minutes from 1795-1813. The minutes are missing for years 1813-1831. It was during this time the name was changed to Bethany. After 1831 mention is to the Bethany Church, and in 1836 Reverend N. H. Harding represented Bethany and Milton Churches at Presbytery in Greensboro.

The minutes of Orange Presbytery, meeting in Milton, Friday 13th of April, 1838 read as follows: "George Williamson and others obtained leave to be formed into a church at Yanceyville. Pickard, Montgomery, Lynch, and Harding were appointed a committee to meet at Yanceyville on the Saturday before the 3rd Sabbath in June to organize the church, ordain and set apart elders." The four named men were all ministers in Orange Presbytery.

By 1838 the streets in Yanceyville had been named. The first lot purchased for the church was on *Church Street*. It has been determined that Church Street in 1838 was the same as Wall Street today. A search of the deed of the old James and Bettie Wall house

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(now owned by Mise family) proved it to be Church Street, and it was still Church Street in the 1880's.

The deed reads: Book FF, page 329; November 18, 1841 — Allen Gunn, Jr. deeds to George Williamson, James Mebane, and Alexander McAlpine a lot in Yanceyville on *Church Street*, beginning at a rock at corner of land of William Graves and John Harvey. The deed states "members having purchased a lot of ground from Allen Gunn and erected a house thereon to be used for religious worship in Presbyterian form, and said church desiring to hold house and lot do purchase it for \$50.00." The deed definitely indicates the church was already built when the lot was paid for and deeded in 1841. Since the street was named "Church" at least by 1839, the building must have been there at least by that date. Why name a street "Church" unless there was a church thereon?

Alexander McAlpine, one of the organizing elders, had purchased four lots on north side of this same street east of the Wall lot. So the church stood somewhere on the northern side of present day Wall Street and in the eastern sector. The congregation had quickly proceeded with the building of the first church. The County Court Minutes in 1838 show that all religious groups were invited to hold services in the court house. It is possible the early congregation met there.

The organizing minister of the Yanceyville Church was Reverend Nehemiah Henry Harding who was minister of the Milton Presbyterian Church. He continued serving both churches from 1838-1848.

In January 1849, after attending a session of Orange Presbytery in Greensboro, a youthful minister, Mr. John Sharshall Grasty, accepted an invitation to supply the Yanceyville Church. He kept a diary which covered two years of his work in the Church. His first year was on a trial basis for he was not ordained until July 1850. From this diary one does learn that Mr. Grasty, a bachelor, took a room with Josiah Rucks (house now owned by Mrs. A. Y. Kerr) on Main Street in Yanceyville. During his first year, he at times preached at Bethesda, but his official call was to the Griers and Yanceyville Churches. It was during his tenure the present church was erected. He wrote in his diary on March 8, 1849 that "Dr. Roan came up to my room and he drew the plans for the church." On April 1, 1849 he wrote "I attended first meeting of our Sabbath School." On the 3rd Sunday of each month, he preached to the colored people. No mention is made as to whether the service was in the church or elsewhere. He stated that Orange Presbytery met in the church on July 4, 1850, later coming to his room to examine him for ordination. Mention was made that Dr. Roan and A.C. Lindsay were elected elders on this date.

During his initial year at the church before ordination, Mr. Grasty invited visiting ministers to serve communion and for christenings. Reverend Doll or Reverend Harding often assisted. No mention is made of a cemetery at the first church site. According to a note left by Mr. McAlpine, there was one funeral there, that of



James C. Holt on March 10, 1850. Burial followed in Mr. Lindsay's cemetery.

No reason is known as to why the location of the church was moved from Church (Wall) Street to the present site. Possibly there was no space for a cemetery? The new church was built on what was Harvey Street in that period. The land was a part of the land of Colonel Thomas Graves as shown on a plat drawn in 1839 which also gives the street names. It is listed as lots 16 and 17. (Book EE, page 261). Thomas Graves left Yanceyville in 1839 and moved to Social Circle, Walton County, Georgia. He sold all his lots in the town. This was a block given him by his father, Captain John Herndon Graves. The Graves family owned all the land south of Wall Street to Country Line Creek.

It took two years to build the church. Mr. Grasty tells that Alfred A. Mitchell was the builder. On one occasion Mr. Mitchell fell from his scaffold. He makes last mention of the church on November 1, 1850 when he said, "Mr. Mitchell was hanging the bell." The diary ended at the end of 1850.

No mention is made of salary paid Mr. Grasty. He made note on three separate occasions of being paid \$100.00, first by Thomas D. Johnston, then William Chiles, and lastly by A.C. Lindsay. After preaching the funeral of Dr. Roan's son, Dossey, he was handed a gift of \$10.00 by Dr. Roan. On July 1, 1849 he accompanied George Williamson in his buggy to Clarksville, Virginia where he officiated at the marriage of Mr. Williamson and Mrs. E. A. Hunt. For this happy event, Mr. Williamson came to his room and handed him \$25.00.

Alexander McAlpine, one of the first elders or trustees, will have to be accorded the honor of being the first church historian. He listed his occupation in 1850 Census as a tailor. He was public register (register of deeds) for Caswell County during a part of the 1840's and 50's. Thus he had access to the deed books, and he surely was the person who wrote on a fly leaf in front of deed book HH this interesting note which was discovered a few months ago:

"The Presbyterian Church in Yanceyville was dedicated to the service of Almighty God on Saturday the 19 of April, 1851." Another note reads: "November 6, 1851, John K. Mitchell, son of A. A. and Eunice Mitchell died and was buried next day at the Presbyterian Church and the first that was buried at that place; also on the 29th, Saturday, at about 12 o'clock, Josephine Mitchell, daughter of the above."

According to the 1850 census, John K. Mitchell would have been 6 years in 1851 and his sister Josephine 2 years old. Mr. Mitchell, born in Virginia, gave his occupation as house carpenter in 1850. He later owned a hotel which was burned during Reconstruction Era and then a drug store on west side of the square. It was he who had built the church. Futhermore, Alexander McAlpine and Alfred A. Mitchell may have been brothers-in-law. The wife of the former was Mary M.



Badgett and the wife of the latter was Eunice Badgett. The McAlpine home was later the McGuire home.

What about the other initial trustees? George Williamson, the founding father, affectionately known as "Royal" George, lived a few miles east of Yanceyville. He was sheriff of Caswell County from 1815-32, Chairman of the County Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions from 1836-54, and in 1831 served on the committee to superintend the building of the second court house in Yanceyville. James Mebane was of middle age when he moved to Yanceyville marrying his second wife, Mary Graves, the daughter of John Herndon Graves. He was of the famous Alexander Mebane family of Mebane and Hawfields and had represented both Hawfields and Crossroads Churches at Presbytery. He and his wife lived "near Yanceyville," exact location of home unknown. Mr. Mebane was active in the unsuccessful attempt to secure a railroad through Yanceyville. (From Milton newspapers).

The first church and lot were sold in 1854. On April 20, 1854 — Book II (eye-eye) page 64, a deed was recorded as follows: Alexander McAlpine, George Williamson, James Mebane, N.M. Roan, and A.C. Lindsay, trustees for the church sold to Alfred Mitchell the old Presbyterian Church for \$200.00, and he was to remove the building. The lot, described again as in the 1841 deed, was sold for "promises" and \$1.00 to Yancey and Ezekial P. Jones. The Jones brothers came from Rockingham County and were owners of a store and a tobacco factory which stood near the lot. They were probably Presbyterians. An earlier Ezekial Jones appears in Bethesda Church history.

The final deed for the present church was not made until April 15, 1874 (Book KK, page 677) when "Y. and E.P. Jones deeded to N.M. Roan, surviving trustee of Yanceyville Presbyterian Church for \$100.00 paid in 1854 by trustees of church" a lot containing the church. The old church lot was apparently traded to the Jones brothers for present lot, and that constituted "promises" referred to in first deed. In book II, page 303, April 25, 1856 — Alexander McAlpine deeded to Elders of Yanceyville Presbyterian Church 1/8 acre of land "upon which there is a graveyard." This appears to be land back of church.

In the latter deeds the name of Dr. Nathaniel M. Roan (1803-1879) appears. His record as a physician extended over many years. His public service as a member of the county board when the present court house was built is a matter of record. He built and lived in the brick house now owned by R.M. Johnston. A.C. Lindsay, a native of Orange County, came to town to found the Yanceyville Male Academy (earlier known as Dan River Academy). His residence was the home later known as the Robertson place, now burned.

Several other business men should be mentioned in connection with the church although their names do not appear as trustee or elder on the early deeds. Josiah Rucks, a coachmaker or "buggy manufacturer," a native of Virginia, was a Presbyterian. His daughter, Virginia Rucks, was married to Mr. Gilliam in 1860 by the Reverend Doll. His young son, William Quinn Rucks, (1845-58) was buried in



the churchyard. His tombstone has now disappeared, but it was there in the 1930's when a WPA project recorded grave stones. The Rucks family returned to Virginia after the War Between the States.

In his diary for 1850, Mr. Grasty recorded that the following had been baptized at the Yanceyville Church: Ann Augusta, Mary Virginia, and William Quinn Rucks; also Mary Lindsay.

The most successful business man of the 19th century in Yanceyville, Thomas Donoho Johnston, is also buried in the churchyard. (1800-1883). A large plantation owner, merchant, president of the Bank of Yanceyville, owner of a blacksmith shop, and part owner of a tobacco factory, he also rendered public service as county trustee (treasurer) for many years. He was one of the first commissioners of the town of Yanceyville named by the Legislature in 1833. He built and lived in the large brick house southwest of the post office. Mr. Grasty in his diary often mentioned eating Sunday dinner with Mr. Johnston. His second wife was a daughter of George Williamson. Two of his grandsons were the late elders Thomas J. Henderson and William F. Henderson.

Some interest has been shown in the ornate rose-carved tombstone in the churchyard erected to Annie Bailey Watt Smith (1848-1869). A tombstone carver remarked it would be practically impossible to reproduce the stone today, and if an artisan attempted such, it would cost at least \$5,000.00 She was the daughter of Robert B. Watt, a lawyer and native of Rockingham County who came to Yanceyville to practice law. The Watt family lived on Wall Street in what was later the Lloyd Johnson house.

William H. Chiles, a cabinetmaker and a native of Virginia, was mentioned by Mr. Grasty several times in his diary. Could he possibly have made the church pews?

## THE GROVE

The "grove" of the Yanceyville Presbyterian Church played an important part in the history of the town. It seemed to be the favorite gathering place for political gatherings which the court house could not accommodate. The *Milton Spectator* on October 4, 1854 gave a full page description of a public dinner given in honor of Congressman John Kerr on his return from Washington to honor him for his efforts in promoting the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act. The dinner was held "in the grove of the Presbyterian Church," and Captain A.A. Mitchell catered the affair. State officials were present. Hon. Calvin Graves presided, and after numerous toasts, Congressman Kerr responded with a "speech of more than an hour in length."

In the 1890's former Governor Zebulon Vance as a senatorial candidate, campaigned in Caswell and spoke at a rally in the grove of the Presbyterian Church. This event was attended and recalled by T.J. Henderson and A. Y. Kerr.



## THE MANSE

The deed to the old manse goes back to 1853 when George Williamson gave to the Presbyterian Church a home and lot for the pastor. (Book II, page 290). The deed indicates a house already stood on the lot. This lot was a part of the land of Captain William Graves and was purchased by Mr. Williamson in 1846 when the land of William Graves was divided into lots and sold. (GG, page 45).

One other interesting deed was found. On August 14, 1861, Y. and E.P. Jones deeded to Jacob Doll "for the consideration of the appreciation which said Y. and E.P. Jones have for Jacob Doll, a tract of land, 7/10 of an acre." (JJ, page 247). This lot was next to the manse, and it was sold by Jacob Doll and his wife in 1875 to Louisa H. Graves for \$275.00. (LL, page 5). The Reverend Doll succeeded Mr. Grasty as pastor of the Church in 1856.

## PASTORS

**Nehemiah Henry Harding** — born at Brunswick, Maine, October 1794. After being a ship captain and at sea, he quit the sea and entered business in Raleigh, North Carolina and soon began study for the ministry; studied 2 years at UNC and in 1826 went to Princeton Seminary for 2 years. Licensed by Orange Presbytery 6 November, 1828 and ordained by Committee 18 April 1829. He was installed pastor of Oxford Church 10 July, 1830, and in December, 1835 became stated supply to Milton Church where he remained until close of his life. He was founder of Yanceyville Church and preached at Bethesda part of the time. Died 17 February, 1849. (From *Presbyterian Encyclopedia* — at Presbyterian Foundation, Montreat, N.C.)

**John Sharshall Grasty** — born Mount Airy, Pittsylvania County, Va., April 24, 1825. Student at Washington College, Virginia. Studied law at UNC. Pastor Yanceyville and Griers, 1850-56; Fincastle, Virginia 1856-67; Shelbyville, Kentucky, 1867-74; Austin, Texas, 1874-76; Columbia, Mo. 1876. Married Miss Ethel Pettus of Mecklenburg County, Virginia about 1851. Last sermon preached in St. Louis, Mo. Died in Kansas City, April 18, 1883. Left wife and 6 children. (From minutes of *Missouri Synod*, October 14, 1885; and from *Catalogue of Union Theological Seminary*, 1925 — from library at Historical Foundation, Montreat, North Carolina.)

The Reverend John S. Grasty, pastor of the church from 1849-56, was a man of great literary and oratorical talents. He had endeared himself to the whole community. In July 1850 after the death of President Zachary Taylor, a committee was formed to plan a public service to honor the deceased President. The committee included John Kerr, N.M. Roan, Thomas D. Johnston, Jos. J. Lawson, and William S. Hatchett. On July 26, 1850, the committee wrote to Reverend Grasty asking him to deliver a funeral sermon or memorial service



for President Taylor. This was a compliment to the ability of Mr. Grasty and he was "complimented for the manner in which he discharged this duty."

The discourse was printed, is 16 pages long, and a copy was found in North Carolina Collection, UNC Library. The sermon was delivered on July 26, 1850 in Yanceyville. Mr. Grasty took his text from *Jeremiah 6:16* — "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way and walk therein and ye shall find rest for your souls." In referring to General Taylor, he stated: "An eminent man has left us, and we are this day called upon to make some reflections at his departure. Death has visited the White House and cut down a Hero whom earthly captains and marshalled armies could not conquer."

Mr. Gasty was a young man when serving this church. Two of his children, Henry L. Grasty (1852-53) and Philip Grasty (1855-56) are buried in the churchyard. In 1871 he published a lengthy biography of Reverend Samuel B. McPheeters, the first pastor of the Raleigh Church.

*Abstracts from  
Minutes of Orange Presbytery at Historical Foundation  
Montreat, North Carolina*

*April 11, 1838* — Presbytery met at Milton. Among elders was Richard I. Smith, Red House. George Williamson, elder of Bethany, appeared and took his seat. 1838 report: Griers 45 members; Bethesda 83; Milton 42; Red House ?; Bethany 24; Danville 64.

*October 11, 1838* — John P. Pickard, Moderator. — Meeting at Greensboro. "Church formed by direction of Presbytery at Yanceyville was at their request taken under care of Presbytery and Mr. James Mebane, an elder from that Church took his seat as member of Presbytery." George Williamson elected trustee Caldwell Institute.

*April 24, 1839* — Meeting at Hillsboro — "Church known by name of Bethany was directed to be enroled by name of Gilead." Yanceyville Church assessed \$5 for Commissioner's fund; Gilead \$2. 1839 Annual Report to General Assembly: Yanceyville 14 members; Gilead 14; Milton 38; Griers 45; Red House 35.

*September 18, 1839* — Meeting at Danville — Mr. W.N. Mebane ordained as Evangelist. Committee appointed to "draw resolution expressive of views of this Presbytery on the subject of our church members attending and giving countenance to parties for dancing."

*April 16, 1840* — Among Ruling elders present: George Williamson. N.H. Harding resigned as Stated Clerk — resignation not accepted. Elected trustees to Caldwell Institute: George Williamson, James Mebane, son Giles Mebane.

*October 1840* — Hawfields — James Mebane present.



April 1841 — New Bern — Elder Williamson named Commissioner to General Assembly.

November 12, 1841 — Meeting at Red House — Mr. Paisley ordained and installed bishop at Red House, Harmony, and Griers.

April 14, 1842 — Meeting in Greensboro — Among elders, Eli Murray of Cross Roads. Trustees of Caldwell Institute report the institution "is in very flourishing condition, number of students, 100."

J. A. Stanfield of Carmel Church (Halifax Co., Virginia) introduced as a candidate for the ministry.

April 19, 1843 — At Clarksville, Virginia — Elder George Williamson, present. N. H. Harding to continue as stated supply at Milton and Yanceyville. Williamson and Burwell appointed commissioners on Female Scholarship. George Williamson gave report for Trustees of Caldwell Institute.

October 12, 1843 — Meeting at Yanceyville — Sermon by Reverend Drury Lacy. Present: Samuel Kerr, Samuel Turrentine, John Jones, Shelby Curry, Elijah Pickard, Green D. Jordan, G. A. Faucett, O. F. Long, N. M. Lewis, Jno. W. Paxton, John L. Leseur, and Alexander McAlpine, all ruling elders. J. Doll installed as pastor at Louisburg. Mr. Mebane on Committee on supplies.

"Resolved that the thanks of this Presbytery be presented to the Citizens of Yanceyville for their kindness and hospitality and also to the Baptist and Methodist Churches for the use of their houses of worship."

April 1845 — Meeting in Danville — Elder James Mebane, present; George Williamson, elder, commissioner to General Assembly.

May 14, 1845 — At Red House — Ruling Elder George Williamson present.

June 11, 1845 — at Cross Roads — James Mebane present — Discussed places to re-locate Caldwell Institute — Vote taken: Hillsboro 18, Yanceyville 15; Oxford 2. Trustees ordered secure property required at Hillsboro. Trustees to transfer House and land belonging to the Institute in Greensboro to Trustees of Greensboro High School.

April 1847 — Meeting at Milton — James Mebane, elder, present. Commissioners to receive \$40 each for their expenses to General Assembly. George Williamson and James Mebane re-elected trustees of Caldwell Institute. Mr. Dalton appointed missionary to labour in Stokes and part of Rockingham counties.

James Mebane to fill vacancy in the Executive Committee of Missions.

October 1847 — Meeting at Raleigh — James Mebane present.

December 6, 1848 — Greensboro — J. H. Lewis and J. S. Stanfield to supply at Yanceyville.

June 13, 1849 — Meeting at Nutbush — Resolutions adopted upon death of Reverend N. H. Harding. Paper laid before Presbytery containing the resignations of Mr. George Williamson and Mr. James Mebane as Trustees of the Caldwell Institute.



November 2, 1849— Hillsboro— Call from Church at Yanceyville for the services of Mr. John S. Grasty was read and found in order and was placed in the hands of Mr Grasty.

June 1850— Bethesda— Special session set at Yanceyville on the Thursday before 1st Sabbath in July at 12 o'clock to ordain and install Reverend John S. Grasty as pastor with Reverend A. Currie presiding with Reverend Cyrus K. Caldwell to charge the pastor and Reverend J. Doll charging the people.

July 4, 1850— Special (adjourned) meeting— Yanceyville— Proceeded with examination of John S. Grasty on his "experimental acquaintance with religion, Philosophy, Theology, the Sacraments, Church History, and Church Government."

July 5, 1850— Examined Mr. Grasty on the "Hebrew and Greek Languages, after which the roll was called and the examination in all its parts and as a whole." After sermon by Reverend Archibald Currie, Mr. Grasty having answered in the affirmative the questions required by our form of government, Reverend Grasty was by prayer and the laying on of hands, ordained to the office of the Gospel Ministry. After the charges to the Pastor and to the People, Mr. Grasty took his seat as a minister of Presbytery."

June 18, 1851— Meeting at Yanceyville— Opened with sermon by Reverend John A. Grasty. Present, Dr. N.M. Roan, ruling elder. Met in the Male Academy. Pleasant Chandler represented Gilead. Mr. N.M. Roan appointed member of Committee to present a plan for the endowment of Caldwell Institute on the scholarship schedule.

November 5, 1856— Meeting at Bethesda— Yanceyville Church call for Reverend J. Doll received and found in order and placed in hands of Reverend Doll. Reverend Doll accepted the call and installation set for 3rd Sabbath in April.

April 22, 1858— Hawfields— J. Doll chosen Moderator.

November 12, 1858— Washington— Church at Roxboro organized. P.H. Dalton to re-organize the Warrenton Church.

March 23, 1859— Griers— Dr. N.M. Roan, Ruling elder, present.

June 12, 1861— Oxford— "Tomorrow, June 13, Thursday, being day recommended by President of Confederate States of America to be observed as day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer, Presbytery resolved to hold no sessions."

October 23, 1863— Greensboro— Alexander McAlpine, Ruling elder, present.

April 13, 1864— Bethesda— Robert B. Watt, Ruling elder, present, and chosen commissioner to next General Assembly.



At the State Library, Raleigh, North Carolina can be found printed copies of the *Minutes of Orange Presbytery* for a few sessions, Abstracts below are items taken from these minutes which relate to the Yanceyville Church.

June 11, 1856 — Presbytery met at Shiloh Church, Granville County. Yanceyville Church failed to pay its assessment of \$12 for Presbyterial fund.

April 22, 1858 — At Hawfields Church — Representing Yanceyville Church — J. Doll and Dr. N.M. Roan. P.H. Dalton named Evangelist for Presbytery — salary \$1000 per year. E.H. Harding licensed to preach and employed by Spring Hill Church on salary of \$400 per annum with board for himself and horse. (Ed. note, E.H. Harding son of Reverend N.H. Harding, founder of Yanceyville Church). J. Doll — Stated Clerk. Orange Presbytery assessed \$75 by Synod to meet liabilities. Annual Report of Orange Presbytery to General Assembly: April 1858 Report from Yanceyville Church: J. Doll, Pastor; communicants added on certificate 3; colored communicants 4; total communicants 56; 1 infant baptized; number children in Sabbath School 46; funds collected for Congregational \$1120; for missions etc. \$260. (Ed note; In comparison — Grier's had 33 communicants; Milton 59; Red House 28; Bethesda 70; Danville 130; Raleigh 118; Greensboro 165; Hawfields 221, largest number in Presbytery.)

June 15, 1859 — Presbytery met in Danville. Present: J. Doll and A.C. Lindsey. List of supplies: J. Doll to preach one Sabbath at Wentworth and one at Leaksville. Member of Board of Directors of Union Theological Seminary; Dr. N.M. Roan from 1859-71.

1882 report to General Assembly — Yanceyville Church had 2 elders, 25 communicants and no minister.

November 8, 1883 — Met in Tarboro — Suggested that Yanceyville and Griers call Reverend James L. Currie. Eno opposed the call.

C.H. Wiley, D.D. and P.H. Dalton to supply Yanceyville Church one Sabbath and one week day. Presbytery wished to unite Grier's, Stony Creek with Eno and Little River, and urged Yanceyville to unite with Milton and Red House.

August 8, 1883 — met at Greensboro — Re-grouping ordered Yanceyville grouped with Grier's and Stony Creek.

April 23, 1884 — met at Greensboro — Yanceyville represented by ruling elder J.A. Long.

April 1884 — report to General Assembly — Yanceyville Church had 4 elders; 15 members added on certificate; 60 in Sabbath School; total membership not given.

March 25, 1885 — met at Henderson — \$50 appropriated for mission in Yanceyville field if necessary. Faucette, Craig, and J.L. Currie to supply at Yanceyville.

September 1894 — Yanceyville, Bethesda, and Stony Creek to be grouped together and Reverend W.R. Coppedge appointed to make



arrangements for securing pastor. Caswell field supplied by candidate W.K. Forsythe during summer. Reverend W.S. Campbell, temporary supply at Yanceyville.

September 25, 1895 — met at Bethesda to install N.B. Campbell as Pastor at Yanceyville.

1896 Report of Orange Presbytery to General Assembly — Yanceyville reported 2 elders; 18 communicants; N.B. Campbell, Pastor; 31 in Sabbath School; \$75 actually paid toward pastor's salary.

The following sketches of ministers who served the Yanceyville Church from 1857-1904 are abstracts from *Ministerial Directory of Presbyterian Churches — 1861-1941*, copy in State Library, Raleigh, North Carolina.

**Jacob Doll** — born Martinsburg, West Virginia, June 27, 1812; attended Jefferson College and Union Theological Sem. 1838-41; pastor Oxford and Lewisburg 1843-48; Milton 1849; Bethesda 51-52; Madison 54-56; Yanceyville 1857-74; Reidsville 1875. Died suddenly at Presbytery in New Bern April 27, 1878.

**Henry T. Darnell** — born Augusta County, Virginia, July 28, 1837; attended Washington and Lee, and UTS; Pastor in Pearisburg and Amelia Court House, Virginia; Milton 1875-80; Yanceyville 1875-80; Durham 1880-93.

**Pleasant Hunter Dalton** — born Rockingham County, North Carolina, March 4, 1821; pastor in Concord Presbytery several years; Bethesda 1851-56; Madison 1856-58; High Point; Mocksville; supply at Yanceyville 1883-84. Died Madison 1896.

**Walter Raleigh Coppedge** — born Lynchburg, Virginia, August 1, 1851; wife Mary Duffy of New Bern, North Carolina. Attended Hampden-Sydney and UTS; pastor New Bern 1874-76; Dechard, Tennessee 1877-78; Newcastle, Virginia 1878-82; Jacksonville and Turtle Rock 1883-87; Yanceyville, Bethesda and Griens, 1887-90; Graham 1890-95; Hamlet 1895-1900. Superintendent, Schools Richmond County, North Carolina 12 years. Died April 10, 1927.

**J.M. Greenlee** — born 1847; farmer for many years in McDowell County, North Carolina; pastor Yanceyville and Bethesda 1892-93; Studley, Virginia 1912-23. Died 1923.

**Ned Burns Campbell** — born Martinsburg, West Virginia, March 31, 1867; attended Hampden-Sydney and UTS 1892-95; pastor Yanceyville, Bethesda, and Stony Creek 1895-97; in 1898 went to Wilmington Presbytery and held several pastorates there; later in Virginia. Died October 25, 1930.

**Samuel Hill Williamson** — born Yanceyville, North Carolina, November 25, 1859; attended U.S. Naval Academy 1881; in USN 1881-85; UTS 1895-97; supply Yanceyville, Roxboro, Stony Creek, and Bethesda 1897-1904; Statesville 1904-06; Fayette Presbytery 1906-19; Booneville, Mississippi 1919-29. Died Yanceyville January 28, 1930 and buried in Presbyterian Church Cemetery. (*Ed. note — Mr. William-*



son was grandson of George Williamson, one of the organizing elders of Yanceyville Church in 1838.) His wife was Sadie Wharton of Ruffin, North Carolina.

Ministers serving since 1904 — Compiled by Mary O. Kerr

**S.C. Smith** — 1905-06 — Grier's Church was his home church. Retired on account of ill health; died 1909.

**H.C. Cathy** — born Charlotte, North Carolina, 1878; graduate Davidson College; while Seminary student served Yanceyville, Bethesda, Grier's, and Pleasant Grove Churches; after 1911 served in Arkansas and Virginia; died 1860; was married while serving in Caswell.

**H.H. Cassady** — 1911-13 — Born Randolph County, 1870; served in Virginia and Kentucky; Died 1942; Mrs. Cassady organized the Woman's Missionary Society, later Auxiliary, in 1912 in Yanceyville.

**George W. Oldham** — born 1879, Chapel Hill, North Carolina; graduate UNC and UTS 1911; Served Yanceyville, Bethesda, Grier's, and Pleasant Grove Churches 1913-21; later in Kenansville, North Carolina, Hot Springs, Virginia, and Jasper, Florida until retirement 1950; his wife, Eula Kirkpatrick Oldham, was President of Orange Presbyterian about 1917; died 1964 and buried Bethlehem Church, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

**E.B. Thompson** — born 1890; Graduate Davidson and UTS; pastor in Yanceyville 1921-23; first daughter was born in Yanceyville; served in Louisiana, Mississippi, Georgia, and Virginia; died 1940.

**William Washington Warren McMorries** — born 1859 in South Carolina; his father was killed in War Between the States and he was reared by an uncle, Dr. W.M. Grier, Due West, South Carolina; graduate Erskine College; decided to enter the ministry following a severe attack of typhoid fever; degree from Erskine Seminary; served the Yanceyville charge 1923-32; retired to Atlanta and died 1933. Mr. McMorries was gifted with an easy flow of language. According to a memorial written by Reverend Whitley, "His sermons were impressive and interspersed with appropriate illustrations. His prayers beautiful, a man of strong convictions and fearless before his fellowman." He made an effort to begin a Sunday School in community where Oakview now stands.

**Roy F. Whitley** — 1932-1945.

**Herman J. Womeldorf** — 1946-1951.

**Reverend R. Murphy Williams** (supply) — 1951-52.

**Cecil Callis** — 1952-1958.

**D. Lee Williamson and Ralph** (supplies) — 1958-59.

In January 1959 Mr. Williamson was killed in a automobile accident.

**William E. Lytch** — 1959-1965.

**Robert S. Ledbetter** — 1966-1971.

**John Duncan** — 1972-1975.

**Homer Spencer** — 1976-



## SUMMARY

June 16, 1838 — The Yanceyville Presbyterian Church was organized by Orange Presbytery. There was a church building erected before 1839 on the north side, eastern sector of present day Wall Street (then known as Church Street). The old church and lot were sold in 1854. Organizing Minister — Nehemiah Henry Harding, D.D. Organizing Elders — Alexander McAlpine, George Williamson, and James Mebane.

March 8, 1849 — Dr. Roan drew plans for present church.

April 1, 1849 — First Sabbath School held.

April 19, 1851 — Dedication of present church building. Architect — Dr. Nathaniel M. Roan. Builder — Alfred A. Mitchell.

1851 — First to be buried in cemetery: John K. Mitchell — age 6, and Josephine Mitchell — age 2.

In the 1930's the Church formally celebrated the 100th year of the organization of the congregation with two services and a "dinner in the Grove." In 1976, when the United States of America celebrates its bicentennial, the Yanceyville Presbyterian Church is eligible to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the formal dedication of the present church sanctuary. (1851-1976).

## Bibliography

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*Milton Spectator* — 1854

Caswell County Minutes of Pleas and Quarter Sessions.

Census of 1850, 1860, and 1870 of Caswell County.

Marriage bonds of Caswell County.

Diary of John Sharshall Grasty — copy owned by Mr. M.Q. Plumblee.

Minutes of Orange Presbytery — at Historical Foundation, Montreat.

*Presbyterian Encyclopedia*.

Cemetery records.

Foote — *Sketches of North Carolina Churches*.



Mrs. Kendall of 2814 Exeter Circle, Raleigh, North Carolina 27608, welcomes additional information on this subject. She retains her original notes and will gladly clarify any point or give additional proof. She wishes to thank her mother, Mrs. A. Yancey Kerr for her assistance in preparing this booklet and her brother, George Yancey Kerr for his help in searching for deeds at the Court House. Her sister, Mary Frances Kerr Donaldson, assisted with editing. She is eternally grateful to her husband, Henry E. Kendall, for his enthusiastic encouragement, his faithful assistance, and his steadfast determination that she proceed with this endeavor.