

NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

in August (This date was soon changed). A full record of the proceedings to be kept and a copy of the minutes together with a Circular Letter and information gathered from the letters as to the state of the churches was to be sent to every church. (6) The Association adopted the Philadelphia Confession of Faith.

This first session organized with the election of Jonathan Thomas of Toisnot church as Moderator and Elisha Battle of the Falls of the Tar as Clerk. The only record of business was with reference to Rev. Charles Daniel, the minister of Lower Fishing Creek, a church which at this time was not a member of the Association. By his own consent, however, he came to a "legal trial," and by order of the Association he was suspended from communion and silenced from preaching until he should be restored.

The Association now entered upon several years of growth. There were no new churches added the next year, but the Fishing Creek (Reedy Creek) church continued the relationship begun the first year until 1772 when it regularly joined the Association. Other churches whose delegates sat in on the meetings were those of Burch's Creek, Virginia (1771), and Amelia County, Virginia (1771)—probably both, certainly the latter, of the Separate order. The church at Red Banks was not represented after the first meeting until 1774, when the notation was made that it had no pastor and the delegates sent were Wm. Traves and John May. In 1771, the church in Pasquotank (Shiloh), represented by its pastor Rev. Henry Abbot and Joseph Creech, was admitted. The next year, 1772, in addition to the admission of the Fishing Creek (Reedy Creek) church already mentioned the Association added the following churches: Sussex County, Virginia, represented by Rev. John Meglamre and others; the church at Bear Creek in Lenoir County, represented by Rev. Joshua Herring, Major Croom and Abraham Baker; and a church in Brunswick County, Virginia, under

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the care of Rev. Zacharias Thompson, who at the first session sat in as a visitor from the church at Fishing Creek (Reedy Creek). In 1773 the church in Pungo, Virginia, with Robt. Lane and Augustus Lane as delegates was admitted. In the next year, 1774, two other churches were received. These were a church in the Isle of Wight County, Virginia, Mill Swamp, represented by Rev. David Barrow and one in Craven County represented by its pastor, Rev. James Willis. In the same year Rev. Henry Ledbetter in behalf of the church of Tar River in Granville County made application for admission but the record does not show that the church was admitted. Thus in five years the Association had increased from five to thirteen or fourteen churches.

During these first five years we find a considerable number of able ministers connected with this Association. Among them were Rev. Jonathan Thomas, the gifted pastor of Toisnot church, John Meglamre and William Burges, associated as pastors of the Kehukee church, James Abington, pastor at Sandy Run, Jeremiah Rhame of Red Banks, John Moore, Sr., of the Falls of the Tar; John Moore, Jr., of Three Creeks; Henry Abbot of Pasquotank; John Thomas of Toisnot; William Walker of Fishing Creek (Reedy Creek); Joshua Herring of Bear Creek church, Lenoir County, and Lemuel Burkitt of Bertie.

Of these men sketches will be given below. It was at the session of the Association of 1773 that we first find Lemuel Burkitt, then a young man of twenty-three years. Already his talents and character must have been known and respected, for at this his first meeting he was made clerk of the Association. For many years he was to be most prominent in Baptist affairs in this section.⁹

⁹ John W. Moore in his manuscript history of the North Carolina Baptists in the library of Judge T. M. Pittman, has this to say in introducing Burkitt. "When the Baptists of America were then in travail over the grave differences which made two peoples what should be one a man of extraordinary endowments became conspicuous in the churches of the Kehukee

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Still more distinguished was Colonel Nathan Mayo. He was born September 22, 1742. Being converted and baptized shortly before, he became a constituent member of the Flat Swamp church on its organization in 1776. Since he was a very ardent patriot a plot was made against his life, from which he escaped by the timely warning of his brother Baptists. In the war he became successively Captain, Major, and Colonel of Militia of his county.³⁴ In a civil capacity he served as Justice of the Peace, and in the Assembly.³⁵ He was also a member of the Conventions of both 1788 and 1789 on the adoption of the Federal Constitution.³⁶ Colonel Mayo was greatly esteemed by his fellow citizens and by his Baptist brethren, who often made him Moderator of the Kehukee Association. Late in life he joined the newly established church at Cross Roads on the Conetoe in Edgecombe County, which he served as Deacon, an office he had occupied in the Flat Swamp church. To his last year "religion was the burden of his song." On March 14, 1811, "he departed this life, beloved by many."³⁷

In the county of Dobbs (now Lenoir) was the Bear Creek church. Its pastor, Joshua Herring, was made a Justice of the Peace by the Halifax Congress of 1776.³⁸ Major Croom, a member of this church, was, on September 9, 1775, appointed by the Hillsboro Congress a member of the Committee for the New Bern district, and was active in that office. On February 1, 1779, he was appointed with Jesse Cobb to build a magazine for the preservation of the military

while, he was at length ordained pastor of the church at Flat Swamp, which was dismissed from Toisnot and became a constituted body. He continued preaching for several years, and his labors were blessed. After finishing the work his Heavenly Father designed him to do, he departed this life October, 1796." *Kehukee Association*, p. 120.

³⁴ Biggs, *Kehukee Association*, p. 192. The records show that he was made Lieutenant Colonel of Martin County. *State Records*, XX, 272, 460.

³⁵ *State Records*, XV, 693; XXIII, 994; XXIV, 647.

³⁶ *State Records*, XXII, 2; XXIII, 37.

³⁷ Biggs, *Ibid.*, p. 192-93.

³⁸ *State Records*, XXIII, 993.

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stores in the New Bern district.³⁹ He was a man of some social prominence and probably of considerable wealth, as he was one of the bondsmen of Richard Caswell upon his appointment as Public Treasurer in 1773.⁴⁰

Although the church at Three Creeks in Johnston County was represented in only two meetings of the Association, yet two of its delegates had part in the struggle for Independence. These were John Sanders and Hardy Sanders. We know of John Sanders only that he was in the army,⁴¹ but Hardy Sanders did distinguish service. He was probably a member of the Swift Creek branch of the Johnston church of which Rev. John Moore, Jr., was pastor. For his home was in this section of Wake County. Before Wake was erected from Johnston Sanders had been made a Justice of the Peace of Johnston County.⁴²

In the Act of Assembly creating Wake County he was appointed one of the Commissioners of the county.⁴³ In 1778 and 1779 he represented Wake County in the House of Commons in the State Legislature. In 1781 he was Lieutenant Colonel and addressed a letter to Governor Burke warning him that David Fanning was on his way to capture him, which warning Burke disregarded and became Fanning's prey. In the same letter he suggested that the proper way to stop the operations of the Tories was to block the approach to Wilmington by putting troops on both sides of the Cape Fear, which was the plan finally successfully used after Fanning had been allowed to continue his depredations for more than a year.⁴⁴ A year later Sanders was sheriff of Wake County.⁴⁵

³⁹ *Colonial Records*, X, 215, 415, 417; XIII, 683-84.

⁴⁰ *Colonial Records*, IX, 592-93. Samuel Peacock, another wealthy member of this church, built a bridge over the Great Contentney on the road "leading from Johnston to Edgecombe" in 1751. *State Records*, XXIII, 369. Another member, John Rows, was in the militia in 1754, a cornet. *State Records*, XXII, 331.

⁴¹ *State Records*, XVII, 247.

⁴² *Colonial Records*, VIII, 149.

⁴³ *Laws of 1770*, Chapter XXII.

⁴⁴ *State Records*, XIII, 610.

⁴⁵ *State Records*, XVI, 208-09.