NAME: Talbert, W. T.

DATA: Photograph

SOURCE: 75th Anniversary booklet of McGill Avenue Baptist Church, Concord, N. C. (NCCF)
A Collection of Historical Gems

By

J. K. Rouse
A few weeks after the War Between the States in July of the year of 1865, Levi West and daughter, Mary Ann, were enjoying the cool breeze which was blowing across the porch of their plantation home in Kershaw County, South Carolina. Mary Ann, for some time, had been trying to find a convenient time to tell her father of her plans for the future. Tonight would be the right time to let him know what she had on her mind. “Dad, I am going to get married.” “Who will you marry, Mary Ann, for most of the young men who left Kershaw and Chesterfield counties to serve in the Confederate Army were killed in service.” “I will marry William T. Talbert who lives about two miles away in Chesterfield County, South Carolina.”

Mary Ann’s statement brought forth this immediate answer from her father: “Talbert is a fine young man; but if you marry him, you will be a widow in less
than a year. While serving in the Confederate Army he contracted consumption and he will not live.” Mary Ann West ended the conversation with these words: “I’d rather be a widow than an old maid.”

William T. Talbert and Mary Ann Elizabeth West were married in August of the year of 1865 at the home of the bride’s father in Kershaw County, South Carolina.

By the tender care of a faithful wife William Talbert regained his health. Following his marriage he was engaged in agriculture in South Carolina. A few years later he decided to move his family to a better farm in Union County, North Carolina. Here Talbert remained for several years and then moved again to a farm in Cabarrus County, North Carolina, which was situated on the west side of Rocky River near the present town of Midland, North Carolina. The change of residence to Cabarrus County was made to be near his father, William Samuel Talbert and mother, Elizabeth Talbert, who were very old at this time.

The Talbert family were faithful members of the Clear Creek Baptist Church of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. At their death William Samuel Talbert and his wife, Elizabeth, were buried in the graveyard at the church.

Shortly after the death of his father William T. Talbert purchased the old Jackson Bost plantation from Martin Boger and wife, Amanda, which was located on Irish Buffalo Creek about two miles from the Coldwater Baptist Church in Cabarrus County.

On the 6th day of April of the year of 1890, William T. Talbert and his wife, Mary Ann Elizabeth, and six of their children were received into membership of the Coldwater Baptist Church. In June of this same year he was appointed a delegate from the Coldwater Church to the Baptist Association which met at the Clear Creek Baptist Church of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. The next year he was appointed a member of a committee to revise the Coldwater Church records and was again appointed a delegate to the Baptist Association which met at the Clear Creek Baptist Church.

Church records fail to tell us the time when William T. Talbert was called to preach the Everlasting Gospel. We do know that the Coldwater Baptist Church of Cabarrus County licensed him to preach on the 8th day of February of the year 1892. Two years later he was ordained by the same church to be a Baptist minister. Following his ordination, the minister served as a supply minister to Baptist churches that were without pastors. During this time he preached one summer at the Wilson Grove Baptist Church in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina.

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At the beginning of the 20th Century, Concord, North Carolina, began to take on new life. At this time cotton factories and mill villages were being built in the town. People were leaving the farms for the better paying jobs in the cotton mills. The growth of the population in Concord made it necessary for the people to establish new churches which were located near the textile mills.

A Baptist mission was established at the Gibson Mill Community in Concord in the year 1901. The mission was started under the care of the First Baptist Church of Concord with Pastor B. Lacy Hoge doing the preaching. On June 22, 1902, the church was organized as the Second Baptist Church of Concord with 12 charter members. At the Sunday evening service three persons presented themselves as candidates for baptism and were received into the fellowship of the church. The 12 members of the church unanimously extended a call to William Talbert to be the pastor of the congregation.7

In the year of 1909 the name of the church was changed to the McGill Street Baptist Church. Today the church is one of the largest Baptist churches in Cabarrus County.

One year after he became the pastor of the Second Baptist Church of Concord, Rev. William Talbert sold his farm on Irish Buffalo Creek in Cabarrus County to George Green and moved to Spring Street in Concord to be near his church.8 The fine saddle horse he used on the farm was not sold but was kept for transportation to visit the members of the congregation.

After two years of service to the members of the Second Baptist Church of Concord, the pastor resigned in the year of 1904.

Rev. William Talbert was a missionary-minded Baptist minister. It was his great desire to find a remote section of Concord that did not have a Baptist church and build one of that faith in the community. The Baptist preacher, on a horseback ride through west Concord in the year of 1905, found a vacant building on or near the Pink Motley property.

The rider dismounted from his horse and asked the owner if the building could be used as a place for a Sunday School. The request was granted and a Sunday School met each Sabbath Day in the building. From this enthusiastic Sunday School class grew the West Concord Baptist Church which was established in the year of 1906. At the organization of the church the members called the Rev. William Talbert to be their pastor.

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About the time the minister reached his 68th birthday he requested the congregation to call a much younger man to be their pastor. He felt that the church would make more progress under a young man. The congregation took his advice and selected Rev. John W. Snyder of Concord, North Carolina, as their minister.

Early in March of the year 1909 the Cannon Manufacturing Company was employing 840 people in their plant at Kannapolis, North Carolina.10 In this group of employees were a number of persons who were members of the First Baptist Church. The church was established in November of the year 1908 by Rev. J.L. Kirk, a Baptist minister who remained at the church a few months and then left the congregation to take charge of a Baptist Church at Palmersville in Stanly County, North Carolina.

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The First Baptist Church of Kannapolis did not have a pastor in November of the year of 1909. However, the church was trying to persuade a retired Baptist minister of Concord, North Carolina, to take charge of the congregation. After much prayer and meditation the aged minister agreed to become the pastor of the church. A news item in an old issue of the “Carolina Watchman” of Salisbury, North Carolina, tells why the minister was slow in taking charge of the church.

“At a congregational meeting on last Sunday at the Baptist Church in Kannapolis, Rev. W.T. Talbert was extended an unanimous call. For several months this good old man has protested against such a call giving as a reason that a younger man was needed. But coming as it did he has accepted and will move there about the first of the year.”12

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At the conclusion of the revival the minister took leave of his congregation for a few days visiting old friends who lived south of Concord, North Carolina. Returning from the restful vacation Rev. Talbert decided to move his home to Walnut Street in Kannapolis near the Patterson Mill. The change of residence was made so that he would be near the center of his pastoral charge.

In the space of a few months after his arrival in Kannapolis the minister acquired the confidence and respect of the young people of the town. When it came the time to get married, they called on Rev. Talbert to perform the marriage ceremony. In September of the year of 1910, the minister married Mr. W.A. Thornburg and Miss Mattie Demarcus at the home of the bride's father, Mr. A.A. Demarcus on Maple Street in Kannapolis. The ceremony was performed in the presence of a large number of friends.15

By the end of the year Pastor Talbert had married so many young people in Kannapolis that the editor of "The Concord Times" named him the "Marrying Parson." Our "Marrying Parson," Rev. William T. Talbert, has been busy again. On Saturday night he said the ceremony which united Mr. J.T. Baker and Miss Mary Stoker in the holy bonds of matrimony in the presence of a large number of friends at the home of the bride's father, J.D. Stoker on Maple Street.

It had been a good year for the employees of the Cannon Manufacturing Company during the year of 1910; and when the Christmas season arrived, they were in the mood to celebrate. To make sure that each person would catch the spirit of the joyful season the religious leaders of the community erected two Christmas trees. The First Baptist Church placed a beautiful decorated tree in the Baptist Hall in downtown Kannapolis for the members of the Sunday School. The Baptist Christmas celebration took place on Friday night before Christmas. A much larger tree was placed in the David Franklin Cannon Memorial Hall of the Y.M.C.A. for the general public.16

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An article in “The Concord Times” tells why the Baptist minister had to leave his field of service. “The whole community is sorry that Rev. William Talbert had to give up active work and while his congregation is sorry to lose their pastor they would not insist on his holding on in his enfeebled condition.”¹⁷ We hope that with rest and quiet he will soon recuperate and be able to do much Christian work.

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The construction of the structure was under the supervision of the new pastor, Rev. E.C. Andrews. In October of this year it was necessary for Rev. Andrews to make a trip to Raleigh, North Carolina, about the construction of the new building.¹⁹ Being absent from his pulpit at the Sunday morning service, he asked Rev. William Talbert to preach for him on that day.

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TALBERT, WILLIAM THOMAS, Concord, N. C.---Born, Lancaster Co., S. C.; Loc. 1880, Ord. '90, Cold Water, N. C.; P. Chaney's Hill, Oak Grove, Locust Level, Phaniels; p. 3 chs., My.---.

BAPTIST MINISTERIAL DIRECTORY, p. 715
Geo. W. Lasher, Ed.

920/L33

(This should be: TALBERT, WILLIAM THOMAS. BHC Staff)
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REPORT ON OBITUARIES

REPORT ON REVS. J. J. McLendon and W. T. Talbert.

Since our last Association the two oldest ministers of our Association, Rev. J. J. McLendon and W. T. Talbert, have gone to their reward, and remarkable to say, on the same day, June 16, 1913.

Brother McLendon died at his home near Matthews. There was no truer man among us than he. He held some important positions, but a great deal of his ministerial life was given to missionary work. He was unable for the last several years of his life to take regular work, but he still manifested his loyalty to the cause of Christ in his home church and Association. He was a man pure in word, thought and deed. Like Enoch, he "walked with God and was not for God took him."

Brother Talbert died at the home of his son in Kannapolis, June 16, 1913. Brother Talbert was beloved by all who knew him. He was in the organization of the Mecklenburg and Cabarrus Association and was always interested and exerted himself to the extend of his ability in its upbuilding. This interest showed itself in his untiring energy and zeal as pastor of country churches in the Association for a number of years. He organized McGill Street and West Concord churches and also aided in the organization of the church at Kannapolis. It can be said of him, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth, saith the spirit, for they rest from their labors and their works do follow them.

J. C. GILLESPIE
J. W. SNYDER

MECKLENBURG & CABARRUS BAPTIST ASSOCIATION MINUTES, 1913, pages 19-20.
I was away from home when the sad intelligence reached me that Brother Talbirt had gone to rest.

His zeal, his love to build up the Master's Kingdom was an inspiration and his ministry a benediction to all who knew him. While I thought of his life and his achievements, though wrought through many tribulations, my mind most naturally went back to my boyhood days, and in memory gazed upon even the features and the mighty works done by two old saints of the east—Reverends Lewis F. Williams and Alfred Guy. As the former was never married he had nothing to interfere with his ministerial tours, and he visited every hamlet in the Eastern Association. A most pleasant and companionable old man in the home; in the pulpit he was vigorous. His usual theme was the condition of the soul after death—picturing heaven in all its glory—then turning to the left of the pulpit he would figuratively souse a pitchfork in the sinner and toast him over the pit in language never to be forgotten.

Brother Guy was not only different in physique and in manner, but in his style of preaching, "God's great love" was the foundation of all his sermons. The saints were strengthened and the sinner made to realize that God was using every means to save him. He was cheerful in his work and seemingly contented with his lot, yet he was a widower and having the care of two maiden sisters, one an invalid, living on the borders of a frog-pond near Warsaw, not able to own a horse, he frequently walked eighteen or twenty miles to fill an appointment.

What these holy men did in the East for little, and oft-times no pecuniary aid, Brother Talbirt did for the West. He not only gladdened the hearts of thousands during his active ministry, but he left monuments in church organizations and in church buildings that will endure until time shall be
no more.

He was born in the year 1840 in Lancaster County, South Carolina, of humble parentage; but he inherited and retained to the end all the qualities of a gentleman.

When the war broke out he enlisted and served until the surrender at Appomattox.

While he never attended school but three months he was well informed and had a knowledge of the Bible surpassed by none. His sermons were his own, thoroughly original, but using God's love and mercy as the great if not the only force in moving sinners.

In Associational discussions he was practical, shrewd, and cunning with a vein of humor running throughout which always embarrassed his antagonist.

He leaves a devoted wife and seven children (five sons and three daughters). So far as I know, he was the last one of the old-fashioned preachers. But the world was blessed and benefited by his having lived in it.

H. C. HERRING.

Concord, N. C.

BIBLICAL RECORDER, JULY 25, 1913, p. 8.
A Civil War Hero

The Rev. William T. Talbert, a Civil War veteran who had been a member of the council that organized our church in 1908, became pastor in 1909, succeeding the Rev. Mr. Kirk.

He was elderly at the time, and accepted the call with reluctance. For several months he had insisted that the young church in Kannapolis needed a young minister.

But, after he accepted, he entered the field with the same diligence that had marked his service at Second Baptist Church in Concord (he was called at the organization meeting in 1902 and the church later assumed the name of McGill Avenue Baptist) and West Concord Baptist Church (which he established in 1906 in an old vacant building).

Just as he had been early in his service as a pastor, the Rev. Mr. Talbert was evangelistic and mission-minded.

In 1910 he conducted a spring revival in the Junior Hall, with the assistance of the Rev. A.C. Davis of Union County. The following August, he preached a series of evangelistic services in the David Franklin Cannon Hall at the brand new YMCA here.

The Concord Times, on August 4, 1910, said the Rev. Mr. Talbert was a “very earnest preacher and has the confidence and respect of the entire community.” Another observer described the minister, past retirement age, as “an old work horse who has been in the harness a long time” but “still as zealous as a young preacher, thus enjoying the attention of his audience and his preaching is effective.”
The Rev. Mr. Talbert was also known as the "marrying parson."
He was still providing effective leadership in the early months of 1911, but was left in a feeble condition after an attack of influenza in March. He resigned, effective the first of May 1911.
He continued to live in Kannapolis, on South Main Street beside the home of his son, Marion, who was the town's police chief.
He died on June 18, 1913.

The Rev. Mr. Talbert was the father-in-law of John W. Fisher, one of the charter members of our church. The minister's family was still represented in our congregation in the 75th Anniversary year by two granddaughters, Mrs. Bertha Seaford and Miss Gladys Fisher, and two great-granddaughters, Doris (Mrs. Larry) Hinson and Grace (Mrs. Charlie R.) Crowe.
Another granddaughter of the Rev. Mr. Talbert, Mrs. Clemmie Fisher, was active in our congregation until her death.

Our First Choir: Left to Right — Miss Bessie Funderburk, Mr. Reeder, Miss Carter, Mr. E. F. Carter, Miss Carter, Miss Donie Noville, the YMCA Secretary, Cora Propst, Grace Martin Brown, Ina Bridges, Nell McClamrock Allen.

The 2nd YMCA in Kannapolis offered meeting space to the huge Baraca Men's Class of our church when they outgrew their classroom in the church building.