Abernathy, Elder Alexander was born in Lincoln county, N. C., March 13th, 1790. His birthplace is near Mountain Island Shoal, on the Catawba River. He remained at that place until he was nine or ten years of age. During that period of time Smith Abernathy, his father, made a profession of religion and joined the Presbyterians at a church called Hopewell, of which Rev. Humphrey Hunter was pastor; and wishing to teach his children strictly in all the doctrines of the church, he had Alexander, his son, when about six or seven years of age, "dedicated to the Lord" in baptism by sprinkling. Shortly after this he removed from that place and settled nearer to Lincolnton, on a stream known as Dutchman's Creek, but not being yet suited in a situation after remaining there a few years he again moved to the northwestern extremity of the county, and settled on Henry's River, but still not satisfied after a few years' sojourn he removed from there to Rutherford county, and settled on the waters of Broad River, where he remained several years. In the meanwhile Alexander, the subject of this sketch, had arrived to manhood and became subject to military duty. In the years 1812 to 1814 the war between England and the United States was being prosecuted, and Alexander Abernathy being then 22 years of age was subject to draft, which caused much uneasiness in the family circle; still he was not drafted, and consequently took no part in the war.

During the second year of this unnatural struggle between the two countries by people of kindred blood, and speaking the same language, it pleases God to move upon the minds of the people by the gentle operations of His Holy Spirit, to take into consideration the great wickedness that abounded in the country (always the outcropping of war,) a call was made for a more faithful and energetic exhibition of the Gospel among the people. Many became serious and repentant of their sinful ways of living, and began to call on the name of the Lord for succor in this gloomy and severe time of trial. There was no Presbyterian church in this locality to respond to the call of the people; the old man,
Smith Abernathy, and several members of the family attached themselves to the Methodist Episcopal church, and about the close of the war Alexander, the son, fell into line also. Preaching became plenteous among the Methodist people—a great number made profession of religion, and what is usually termed a precious revival was the consequence. Alexander Abernathy became absorbed in the perusal and study of the Bible, and as he read he became more and more distressed about his future state of existence. The more preaching he heard, the more he became confused in his mind. While the minister would tell him one way of escape, God's word and the dictates of conscience would tell him another. He was entertained frequently with lectures on the Free Agency of Man, while he read in his Bible, "No man can come unto me except my Father who sent me draw him." Feeling that he had lived in sin and took pleasure in it, and no good thing being discoverable in himself, while in lieu of that, he had only to complain bitterly of a wicked, unbelieving heart, prone to sin continually: why then, under circumstances like these, should he attach himself to a church? He felt that he was entirely unfit for such a position. His spiritual advisors, however, would persuade him that he should join the church as a means of grace, while he entertained the notion that unbelievers were not fit subjects for church membership at all. On this subject his troubles increased, and although he had many comforters, yet, like ancient Job, many of them knew not what they were talking about—one advising one thing while another advised something else. In this distracted condition of mind Mr. Abernathy said he almost considered himself out of the reach of mercy; so many under similar instruction, having made professions and apparently at ease about their souls' welfare, while he yet felt that he was "in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity." His case must be beyond the reach of mercy. In this desperate condition he remained for some time, refusing to attend the meetings of the church, but relying solely upon the teachings of the Bible. While in this despondent condition an ever memorable day he retired from all company, with his Bible in hand, still interceding for pardon, but nearly in despair and without hope; from some unexpected source, however, light sprung up out of darkness, and the merits of Christ's atonement for sinners was made plain to his view; he was enabled to see that He had paid the ransom price of man's redemption in full, and that man's part of the business was to trust in Christ alone, making a full surrender of himself and saying, "Here, Lord, I give myself away, it is all that I can do." That the work
of salvation was "His alone; that there is no merit in our works, and therefore it is that we must rely entirely on the merits of Christ for salvation. Taking this view of the case, he was made to feel happy indeed, and rejoiced that all was now apparently so well with him; that Christ had pardoned freely all his sins, great as they certainly had been. But in this lively state of mind and reasoning he was troubled with the idea or thought of the insufficiency of his baptism in infancy by sprinkling. He felt inclined to obey Christ in the ordinance of baptism; his brethren, however, attempted to dissuade him, alleging his baptism was all right, and there was no need of being buried under the water. This caused a great weight to fall upon his mind, and his condition was somewhat similar to that of man in his fallen state—subject to eternal death without a change from the power of sin and wickedness. Under this consideration another duty began to disturb his mind, to go and warn people to flee from the wrath to come. This became a mighty weight indeed. What! without education, or an opportunity to obtain any mental culture or training, would the Lord require so frail and ignorant an individual to preach the Gospel? To use his own language, these impressions continued to increase until he had but little rest day or night, still feeling unwilling to undertake so great a task. He thought some of the brethren might be able to tell him how he might be freed from a burden so great; so he made known his troubles to some of them, who at once advised him to go forward in the discharge of duty in warning sinners, in a public way, of their great danger. At first he was only permitted to exhort and pray, then he was licensed to take a text of Scripture and make the effort to preach. After having had this liberty for a year or more, he was appointed to a circuit, but by reason of the differences hinted at before, he declined to accept the appointment made by the Conference. He was still ill at ease in regard to the baptismal question, and could not be reconciled to believe that "sprinkling" could be valid baptism. The brethren, he said, labored hard to convince him, but he could not be satisfied. Besides, there were two other leading doctrines of his church besetting his mind continually. Man's ability to restore himself from his lost condition by his own free will or agency, was a doctrine he could not hold. And the final perseverance of the saints in grace, is another doctrine repudiated by his church that he firmly believed to be true and Scriptural. Entertaining these views, what was he to do? These doctrines were frequently discussed and commented on, and it behooves every honest man "to show his hand." He, however, continued
to preach in the midst of these differences for some time, his ministering brethren admiring him in the meantime that if he did not believe in free agency, to keep that to himself; and if he believed in the final perseverance of the saints, to keep that also to himself, for they considered that a dangerous doctrine, and certainly contrary to the Book of Discipline. So in the midst of his troubles in the 24th year of his age he was united in matrimony with Miss Elizabeth Wilkie, a daughter of Elder William Wilkie, of Rutherford county, N. C., and he continued no longer than about one year afterwards in the Methodistic connection.

His father having moved to the State of Tennessee, Alexander and wife Elizabeth both made application for letters of dismissal from the church to which they belonged, and were consequently dismissed from the Methodistic connection in full fellowship, and in a short time thereafter moved to the southeast corner of Burke county and settled on Henry's River, where he lived to the time of his death.

Shortly after he settled at this latter place the renowned Baptist preacher of Virginia, Elder Hosea Holcombe, filled a list of appointments at a place known as the Mountain meeting-house, in Lincoln county, four miles from his new home. He visited Elder Holcombe and attended his meetings at the Mountain, became fully satisfied in reference to the points herebefore mentioned, presented himself as a candidate for baptism and membership, and was received into the fellowship of Union church, and was baptized by Elder Hosea Holcombe, in Henry's River. Thus at last he found a more congenial home, and having preached over two years in the Methodistic connection, and many of the Baptist brethren having heard him preach, and knowing of his good standing in society at once had him licensed to preach the Gospel on the 29th of April, 1817, at Union church. He continued at that church and surrounding neighborhood in the exhibition of the Gospel until the said church presented him for ordination to the full work of the ministry, and he was ordained by Elders Hosea Holcombe and Druery Dobbins, acting as a Presbytery.

Shortly after this Elder Holcombe moved away, and Elder Abernathy was chosen pastor of the Union church, and he continued in the pastorate until a few years previous to his death, which took place August 31st, 1866. He preached in Lincoln, Rutherford, Caldwell and Burke, besides other counties, and to great numbers of churches. The text for his last sermon will be found in Hebrews, iv. 9: "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God," which was preached and peculiarly appropriate to the occasion.
which was preached exactly three weeks previous to his death. The 13th verse of the first chapter of 1st Timothy was selected by himself as the text of his funeral sermon: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." The sermon was preached by Elder J. C. Grayson, an old veteran of the cross, and fellow-helper of the Truth.

Elder Alexander Abernathy had attained to the age of 70 years when he died and went to his reward. He had passed beyond the scriptural allotment of three-score-and-ten, and died with the Gospel harness girt about him brightened by constant use. He leaves behind him a son every way worthy of such a sire. Elder William Abernathy, who was born in Burke county, N. C., on the 25th December, 1821. Married Miss Irene, youngest daughter of Elder Thomas Carleton, July 27th, 1853. He joined the church at St. John's, Sept., 1866; was licensed to preach Dec. 1st, 1866; ordained August 10th, 1867. May he rival his father!

In 1819 Elder Abernathy appeared as a delegate from Union church to the session of the Broad River Association held that year at Head of Tyger River church. The church does not appear, from the Minutes, to have been represented again until the session of 1825, when Bro. Abernathy again attended the session of that year at Buffalo church as a delegate. The church after that session was not represented again until after the organization of the Catawba River Association in 1828, when the Union church became a constituent member of that body, and consequently Alexander Abernathy was no longer a Broad River minister. He, however, continued in his new relationship up to the time of his death. We notice in the Catawba Minutes that at the sessions of 1858–59 he presided as the Moderator of the body. We recollect hearing "Old Aleck," as he was familiarly called, at a session of the Broad River Association in 1829 preach an able sermon to a large concourse of people, who seemed to receive the exhibition of the Word by him with rapt attention. His style of preaching was very different from that of many of the olden time "sing-song" preachers. He had a good flow of words, very appropriate and suitable to express the noble thoughts that appeared almost intuitively to originate in his mind without previous reflection or study, and his delivery as to elocutionary rules was preferable to anything taught in the schools. It was simply natural and free from affectation of any kind, and peculiar to himself alone. Had Alexander Abernathy
been well educated in early life, and had the patronage of the lovers of the christian cause in which he was engaged through a long series of years, instead of dragging, along in neglect and extreme poverty, and his ability to do good in the cause of the Master thereby so crippled in the struggle of life in maintaining himself and family by the sweat of his face, there is no one now living able to tell what would have been the results of his labors in the time he lived.

Personal Appearance:—Alexander Abernathy was about five feet ten inches in height, of round and heavy build, though not corpulent; large chest, complexion brown, eyes of hazel color, features fine and handsome, gestures attractive, and his general make up was that of a good looking Dutchman.

Allen, Deacon Woodward was born November 20th, 1820, near Woodruff, in Spartanburg county, S. C. Here he resided until his marriage with Miss Harriet, daughter of John Wells, Esq., of said county, on December 24th, 1840, immediately after which time he moved to the present homestead. While on a visit to his parents in Oct., 1840, he professed conversion in a meeting then in progress at Bethel church, and was baptized into its membership. By letter from this church, a few months after his conversion, he joined the Cedar Springs Baptist church, where he remained an honored and useful member until by faith he was translated to the church triumphant, where there is no pain, no sin, no sorrow.

Bro. Allen served Cedar Springs church with entire satisfaction to all, as clerk and treasurer, for over twenty years, and was only permitted to resign then by reason of continued ill health. His church loves to honor him for his zeal and liberality, as was manifested by his appointment to represent them in the Broad River Association for the last eighteen years in succession, as well as in many other ways. He loved his Association, and it will greatly miss him, as will also his church. May his mantle fall upon his sons that are in his church, and for his Redeemer's kingdom be, though dead, may still live and labor.

Bro. Allen was a great sufferer in his last days. God was trying his faith, and it failed not. His Christian patience had its perfect work, and his faith in God was strong unto the end. He lived and died in the triumphs of the christian faith.

As a citizen, Deacon Allen was kind, liberal in mind and means, industrious and progressive; as a christian he was benevolent, performance of every kind, affectionate, but our loss is his.
A form of church letter was adopted, but contained no place for contributions.

Delegates are appointed to the North Carolina Baptist State Convention, and the Association has continued its connection therewith since that time.

1864. Met with Long Creek church. Salem was received from the Broad River Association; membership 113. A board of three appointed to superintend Associational Missions. No missionary to be elected, but the Board to use ministers in the destitute places and let them look to collections for remuneration.

1865. Met with Warlick's.

1866. Met with Salem. Lebanon was received from the King's Mountain Association; membership 53.

ALEXANDER ABERNETHY.

Alexander Abernethy was born March the 13th, 1790, and departed this life August 30th, 1865, in the 77th year of his age. Elder Abernethy was born near the Mountain Island Shoal, on the Catawba river, Lincoln county, N. C. He was the son of Smith Abernethy and removed with his father to Dutchman's creek, at an early age. In a few years after, Smith Abernethy, father of A. Abernethy, moved to the South Fork, Lincoln county, N. C. Then in a short time he removed with his father to Rutherford county, N. C., and at the age of 22 years he joined the Methodist society and shortly after professed religion and was licensed to preach. After laboring with the Methodists several years, he and his wife obtained a letter of dismission, and returned to Burke county, near his last residence. Shortly after this he joined the Baptist church. His membership was in Union church till his death. Elder Abernethy was baptized by Hosea Holcombe on the 26th of April, 1817; and was ordained to the work of the gospel ministry by Drury Dobbs and Hosea Holcombe. He labored in that work from his ordination till his death. He was a faithful minister and in full fellowship with the church and much loved by all ministers and brethren with whom he mingled and was acquainted. While on his deathbed he said, "Tho' he was weak in body, he was strong in faith" and "though he was called to go through the valley and shadow of death he feared no evil."

1867. Met with Union II. Tuckasege church. Mecklenburg membership 34 was received. The historical sketch prepared by Brother Poe was submitted and ordered to be printed with the minutes.

ELDER THOMAS CARLTON.

Obituary of Elder T. Carlton is published in the minutes. He was 80 years of age. He preached for 40 years and did missionary work in the South Fork territory. He was poorly compensated and farmed to support his family. "His happy turn of mind and pleasant conversation gave him a kind reception around all firesides." He was a Baptist landmark in the history of this section.

1868. Alexander, a newly constituted church in Burke county (it was located where Union had been located on its removal from Mountain Meeting House,) with a membership of 20, was received. It reported irregularly until 1874, but was always a weak body. It had three baptisms during its existence; was served by Elders Wm. Abernethy and J. Leatherman as pastors; P. Hoffman was clerk; J. Johnston delegate. This church met in a school house and never had a house of worship.

1869. Met with Providence church.

Executive committees were appointed to employ a missionary for the next year. A committee was appointed to locate a school either at Catawha Station or Hickory Tavern. A presbytery was appointed to "organize some negro churches into an Association of their own."

NEGRO CHURCHES.

In the time of slavery the negro joined the same church as the whites, but not always the same church as their master or mistress. The matter was left to their choice. The large houses were built with galleries, or "lofts," portions of which were given to the negroes for occupation. Where there was no gallery, a portion of the house was
The committee on Obituaries, submitted the following report, on the death of our much esteemed brother A. Abbernathy: Alexander Abbernathy, was born March the 13th 1790, and departed this life August 30th 1866, in the 77th year of his age. Elder Abbernathy was born near the Mountain Island Schoal, on the Catawba River, Lincoln County, N. C. He was the son of Smith Abbernathy, and removed with his father to Dutchman's Creek at an early age. In a few years after, Smith Abbernathy, father of A. Abbernathy, moved to the South Fork, Lincoln County, N. C. Then in a short time he removed with his father to Rutherford County, N. C., and at the age of twenty-two years he joined the Methodist Society, and shortly after professed religion, he was licensed to preach. After laboring with the Methodists several years, he and wife obtained a letter of dismission, and returned to Burke County, near his last residence. Shortly after this, he joined the Baptist Church. His membership was in Union Church till his death. Elder Abbernathy was baptized by Hosea Holcomb, on the 26th April 1817; and was ordained to the work of the Gospel Ministry, by Drury Dobbins and Hosea Holcomb. He labored in that work from his ordination, till his death. He was a faithful Minister, and in full fellowship with the Church, and much loved by all Ministers and brethren with whom he mingled, and was acquainted. While on his death bed he said, tho he was weak in body, he was strong in faith, and though he was called to go through the valley and Shadow of death he feared no evil. . . . .

NAME  Eld. Alexander Abernathy  \( \text{Jan. 16, 1790} \)

Married  Elizabeth Wilkie

b.  \( \text{d.} \)

Ancestry  Smith Abernathy

Ancestry  Eld. W. Wilkie

Lincoln Co.

Record  Drowning Brook  1852

Many Churches in Broad River Area

See  Logan p. 249+  (fine biography)