

4. THE YEARS 1958-1968



Rev. D.J. Abernathy and family.

The church and highly respected 9 months. Many members church moving

The Rev. Mr. D. J. Abernathy from Tampa, Florida, began his ministry at Hickory Grove on December 7, 1958. At that time the church claimed 376 members. The Sunday School had an enrollment of 560, with an average attendance of 303. The tithes and offerings that year totaled \$41,184.00.

Mr. Abernathy proved to be a great preacher and an outstanding teacher. He was a man with a purpose who persistently commanded the congregation to press forward to greater accomplishments.

Two educational buildings, numbers 4 and 5, were occupied on July 17, 1960. The Activities Building was completed in April, 1965. Buildings 6,7, and 8 were ready just one year later in April, 1966. Building 6 in an interim sanctuary with a seating capacity of 832.

In February 1961, the church called Marion Epps as the first Minister of Music and Education. Managing the church office was also one of his responsibilities. During the 5 years Mr. Epps served the church, he organized a successful music program consisting of 5 graded Choirs, with 200 people enrolled.

Henry T. Maxey was the next Minister of Music and Activities, coming in September, 1967. Youth choir tours and folk musicals were big events as he led over 100 youth through exciting musical and spiritual experiences.



View of Complete Church Layout in 1966



Henry Maxey.

The records show that Mr. Abernathy was truly a missions oriented minister. Many missionaries regularly visited the church to inspire the congregation with their preaching and teaching. The WMU and Brotherhood were among the most active in Mecklenburg Baptist Association.

In 9 years the church membership had grown from 376 to 1198. The budget had increased to \$154,399.00. Cooperative Program received 16 percent of the budget, and mission gifts were \$21,348.00.

D.J. Abernathy resigned in June, 1968, to accept a pastorate in Orlando, Florida.



In October, congregation. H University and held pastorates well through as Sunday of Nov



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