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HISTORY OF SOUTH FORK ASSOCIATION.

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By W A Graham
Meeting Houses. Brother Hoyle, however, located at the old church.

The following obituary was submitted by Dr. Cobb:

GEORGE J. WILKIE. ✓

This aged minister of Christ departed this life on Christmas Day, 1884, after a brief illness, in the 79th year of his age. He was born in York county, S. C., July 4th, 1805; was baptized by Elder Alexander Abernethy, at Sandy Ford, South Fork River, North Carolina, September 15th, 1844, when nearly forty years of age, and was ordained as a minister of the gospel September 17th, 1864, when nearly sixty years of age, at the call of Providence church, near Catawba Station, in Catawba county, according to his own diary, by "Elders James Reid, A. J. Cansler, and William Walker, and Deacons Samuel Danner, D. C. Cochrane, H. F. Loller, A. Danner and A. B. Ervin." For several years he rode as a missionary of the Catawba River Association in the counties of Burke, Catawba, Lincoln and Gaston, and preached also in the counties of Cleveland, Iredell and McDowell. He was instrumental in the constitution of eight churches, viz:—Macedonia, Kid's Chapel, Mt. Zion, Ezra Mull's Chapel, Providence II, Mt. Zoar, Bottles' and Dry Pond, the first five of which are now members of the South Fork Association. He was at different times moderator of the Catawba River Association and enjoyed the affection and respect of his brethren to a large degree. A short time before his death, when in apparently perfect health, he visited the scenes of his former labors, calling upon his kindred as he passed through the country, and making arrangements for the settlement of some of his children. A week before his death he visited Hickory and spent an afternoon with the writer of this sketch. He talked over his work as a minister and expressed his regret that he had failed to preach more to the churches the duty of giving for missions and the support of the ministry. He said many of his brethren had blamed him for his course in serving churches for nothing, or for whatever they chose to pay him, and he

believed they were right; but, as he had plenty to live on, he had a delicacy in bringing up the subject. He has left behind a large family of children and grandchildren, most of whom are professors of religion, and some of them active workers in the vineyard of the Lord. N. B. COBB.

Elder Wilkie classed himself with the old style, unlearned preacher, but he was not entitled to such classification. Although he had not the advantage of the highest grade of schools, or of college, he had an education of forty years in business and observation before entering the ministry. He was a man of a high order of common sense. He merchandised for several years and served as Clerk and Master in Equity in Catawba county. This office attended to the settlement of estates and caring for the property of orphans. It required a man of business talent of a high order to administer it. These duties are now attended to by the Clerk of the Superior Court in the respective counties. He was the most influential man of his time in the Catawba River Association. What he believed he would preach, but unfortunately he did not examine some of the doctrines of the Bible until after he had been sometime in the ministry, particularly worshipping with your property for the support of the minister and missions. He owned a good farm and had money at interest, consequently remuneration was of no consequence to him and he often refused it when tendered. Later in life, he preached differently, but it was too late to correct the evil he had done. He had a logical mind and his sermons ranked with the best of his time, but were generally long. He would study honestly any scripture on which he differed from any of his brethren and if convinced he was in error, did not hesitate to admit it and to so preach it. He considered that it was his duty to preach the gospel and baptize all who professed to receive it; that what became of them afterwards was no concern of his. He did not return "to see how they do." He was a kind of church "militant"—would baptize or restore a person and give them a letter to some church. I do not believe he ever turned any one out. He was anxious to

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ordain to the ministry those who would consent, and was not careful to "lay hands on no man suddenly (or hastily.*)" He was of a jovial disposition and a welcomed visitor in the families where he called. It was reported at one time that he was dead. He shortly afterwards stopped at the house of a brother, when one of the family came out to meet him exclaiming: "Oh, Brother Wilkie, we heard you was dead!" He replied; "I heard that too, and I knew it was a lie as soon as I heard it." He was often missionary of the Association and of the State Board. He probably organized more churches than any other minister in the South Fork bounds.

The report on State Missions has so much of South Fork history in it that I include most of it. It was prepared by Dr. Cobb:—

"In our section Elders J. K. Faulkner, N. B. Cobb, J. B. Marsh, J. A. Hoyle, and J. F. Morris have been acting under the Board. Elder Cobb has been preaching at Hickory, Morganton, Glen Alpine, and Catawba Springs. The house of worship at Catawba Springs (a union house) has been finished and a stove purchased. At Lincolnton, Elder Faulkner has succeeded in completing the baptistry and pulpit, largely at his own expense, and the church house is now comfortable and attractive within. He recommends the discontinuance of the mission at Lowell. Elder J. F. Morris has been preaching at Denver, in Lincoln county, and Hebron, in Gaston. Hebron is still without a house, but promises to be self-sustaining next year. Elder J. A. Hoyle has preached at Lebanon, in Catawba county, and at Link's Chapel. He has baptized at these two places 50 persons, but has done nothing towards building. Elder C. M. Murchison has preached in afternoon at Winkler's church, in Catawba county."

Prayer by request was made for Elder James Brumfield and a collection of \$7.40 made in his behalf.

ELDER JAMES BRUMFIELD.

When a lad, upon the streets of Richmond on a Sabbath morning, Dr. Robt. Ryland invited him to go with him to

NAME

Eld. G. J. Wilkie

July 4, 1805
b.
d. Dec. 25, 1884

Ancestry

Married

b.

d.

Ancestry

York Co. S.C.

Bap. 1844 - Ordained 1864

Record Catawba Station 1872

Long Creek - Gaston 1871

See

Graham's S. 7. p. 14 & 125 } same
South Fork Assoc. 1886, p. 4 }

File No.

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professed to receive it - what they became afterwards was no concern of his. He never turned anyone out of the church.

About 1837 he became heterodox in the faith, advancing "free will" ideas. He was discarded as pastor, moved to South Carolina and identified with Methodists. He was disciplined for intemperate habits and some years after died in disorder.

He wrote circular letter in 1828. "Wherefore Thou art no more a servant but a Son, then an Heir of God through Christ." (21)

✓ G.M. Webb

1831-1917

He was baptized by his father, Reverend J.M. Webb in 1844 (1802-1854) and licensed to preach in 1863. His father was a dynamic preacher of the pioneer era - active in all phases of church work - clerk, moderator, writer and speaker on many occasions for the Association. He was a former member of the North Carolina State Legislature and his delivery of debates and sermons was most outstanding. G.M. was one of 16 children, born into his home. He followed his father's footsteps in Christian service - also clerk, moderator, speaker and writer for the Association.

He was married to Priscilla J. Blanton, a worthy Christian who shared the aims for his life. With little opportunity for formal schooling, he was largely self taught the doctrines of theology by his father. He soon developed a command of language and became a brave and daring speaker -- boldly declaring the truth of the scriptures.

Feeling his own lack of early literary training, he was a strong advocate of ministerial education. He was the power behind the formation of the Female College in Shelby.

His son, E.Y. (Yates) Webb and O. Max Gardner, governor of North Carolina, carried out the greatest wish of his father's heart - the establishment of Gardner-Webb College as a Christian educational college for the youth of the area. This son served as a federal congressman, and later, a federal judge in North Carolina.

The younger Webb, (E. Yates) also was for a number of years a member of the Board of Trustees of Wake Forest College.

In 1865, he was appointed Sunday School agent with the responsibility of visiting all churches to form a Sunday School - or strengthen existing organizations. The report of his work is filled with the pathos and tragedy of the aftermath of the Civil War. Only 6 new organizations were formed.

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My eyes have seen the
glory by Mrs. Ray Mayberry
III-

R.P. Logan

1810-1882

He was licensed to preach in 1839 - married to Belinda Gladden. His efforts were hindered by lack of education, however, he was popular and useful as a disciplinarian and explanatory preacher. About 1867, symptoms of absent mindedness were noticed and soon after insanity overtook him. He died in 1882. In his useful years, he was a faithful and useful minister. (19)

E.A. Poe

1867-68

He was a well-educated man - college graduate - teacher in school at Dallas. He was a writer of some note and has recorded for the future the achievement of many of the early churches and the pastors who served therein. Within the Association, he wrote and circulated pamphlets that quelled dissension and brought greater harmony to the churches. (20)

X G.J. Wilkie

1868-1876

He was born in York County, South Carolina in 1804 and died on Christmas Day, 1884. He was a grown man when baptized (40) and ordained when he was sixty. He was appointed a missionary from the Catawba River Association. He was active in the installation of 8 churches and was moderator of the Association on several occasions.

Being a man of means, he accepted what pay the churches chose to pay. He was often criticized for this. He was considered by many to be the most influential man in the Association. His logical mind produced sermons that were the best of the time - but long.

He was jovial by nature. Upon meeting a friend whom he had not seen for some time, the friend, remarked, "What a surprise, I heard you were dead." He laughed and replied, "Yes, I heard it, too - and just as soon as I heard it I knew it was a lie." He is said to have organized more churches than any other preacher.

He classed himself as an old style, unlearned preacher. This was not at all true. Though unschooled, he was considered a man of a high order of common sense. Probably his biggest short coming was his failure to closely examine the Scriptures - and preached as he believed they were - rather than being sure of what they actually were. He considered it his duty to preach and baptize all who

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N. B. COBB

US CENSUS ---- Catawba County ----- 1850

	<u>Age</u>
G. J. WILKIE	44
ANN WILKIE	40
ZIENO L.	19
CAROLINE P.	18
LORENZO D.	14
JANE A.	13
WILLIAM GEORGE	11
SIDNEY	8
OCTAVIUS M.	2