

THE STATE OF ROBESON
BY: Robert C. Lawrence

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ANGUS WILTON

REVEREND CHARLES H. DURHAM, D.D.

"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Paul: Phil. 3-14.

CLEVELAND COUNTY is famous in American history, for on her soil was determined the fate of American Independence. Here, on the slopes of Kings Mountain, the Continental army under Cleveland Shelby, Ferguson and Sevier, met the British red coats, and when the shades of night had fallen, those slopes no longer belonged to the King but to the patriot forces.

The hills of Cleveland are rugged, and she produces rugged men. From these hills came the Webbs: the father, George M., mighty minister of the Word, pioneer Baptist preacher to an entire section; a son, Edwin Yates, fifteen years in Congress, co-author of the Webb-Kenyon act, distinguished judge of the Federal Court for the western district of North Carolina; another son, James L., able and fearless solicitor, who for many years adorned the Superior court bench of our State.

From these hills came the Dixons: Thomas, world famous author and playwright; his brother, Clarence, the George W. Truett of his day; his brother Frank, noted lecturer, whose son has but recently been elected as governor of Alabama; their sister, Dr. Delia Dixon-Carroll, pioneer woman physician.

From these hills came also Governors of North Carolina, O. Max Gardner, and his brother-in-law, Clyde R. Hoey, distinguished not only for his statesmanship but for the high quality of his Christian character.

And from these hills came the Durhams: Plato, the elder, brilliant lawyer of reconstruction days; Plato, the younger, he of the scintillating mind and eloquent tongue, Methodist minister, professor in Duke and Emory universities; and Columbus Durham, mighty servant of God, leader of North Carolina Baptists as corresponding secretary of their State convention for many years; and from these rugged hills came along their kinsman—CHARLES H. DURHAM.

His grandparents were: Lemuel Durham and Temperance Scruggs Durham of Cleveland, Henry Cansler and Fannie Shuford Cansler of Catawba. His parents were: Dr. L. N. Durham and Fannie Cansler Durham. His Cansler ancestry makes him a near kinsman of that premier North Carolina lawyer, Edward T. Cansler, Sr., of Charlotte. His brothers were: Augustus, Gordon, Alexander (all deceased) and two yet living, T. L. Durham of Hendersonville, and Dr. B. J. Durham of Columbia, S. C. His sisters were: Mollie, Bettie (Mrs. J. B. Bostic) and Addie (Mrs. O. F. Thompson), all deceased.

Dr. Durham was born at Shelby, July 13th, 1868. His boyhood was the usual one, save that God laid hands upon him while yet a lad, and the ministry called to him at an early age. He entered Wake Forest college, and here I first met him one Friday night at two o'clock a. m. As a member of the freshman class, I was joining the Euzelian Literary Society, and when I was led into the sanctum sanctorum where the secret and mystic fraternal words were to be imparted to me, the one who imparted the magic words was a young man just as serious, just as stately, just as dignified, as he is today. I thought that night that Charles Durham was a great man, and during the forty-five years since then I have never wavered in that conviction. And here at Wake Forest was paid him the highest

[138]

tribute I have ever known. It was one day beginning a group of his fellows, The story was not finished to be told.

He was graduated in 1893, one of the most distinguished. Among his classmates were William Bailey, United States Attorney, Win Yates Webb, congressman, Judson Porter, noted professor, Washington, D. C.; Col. Greensboro lawyer; Charles Norfolk Pilot; Stephen Robesonians.

He was ordained to the following two years. Theological seminary at Methodist ministry as pastor at a famous call from the First Church. He was accepted by him in 1914. He remained until May, 1914. He accepted a call to the First Church at Winston, where he remained when his home people asked him not to resist, and he came here. He has been ever since. He will remain until called Lord and Master.

His church has paid I think it has to offer. He has been an association for twenty-seven years. He was a trustee of the Home for the Blind.

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tribute I have ever known paid to any man. A student
was one day beginning the recital of an off-color story to
a group of his fellows, when Charles Durham walked up.
The story was not finished. In that presence it could not
be told.

He was graduated from Wake Forest in the class of
1893, one of the most brilliant ever sent out by that insti-
tution. Among his classmates were: the near-genius Josiah
William Bailey, United States senator; the magnetic Ed-
win Yates Webb, congressman and Federal judge; Samuel
Judson Porter, noted preacher, pastor First Baptist church,
Washington, D. C.; Col. Franklin P. Hobgood, prominent
Greensboro lawyer; Charles P. Sapp, distinguished editor,
Norfolk Pilot; Stephen McIntyre, needing no introduc-
tion to Robesonians.

He was ordained to preach in January, 1894, and for
the following two years attended the Southern Baptist
Theological seminary at Louisville. He entered the Bap-
tist ministry as pastor at Gastonia in July, 1896. A unani-
mous call from the First Baptist church of Lumberton
was accepted by him in September, 1900. Here he re-
mained until May, 1914, when, to the distress of his peo-
ple, he accepted a call to the Brown Memorial church
at Winston, where he remained until November, 1918,
when his home people again called so loudly that he could
not resist, and he came back to his Lumberton home.
Here he has been ever since, and here—please God—he
will remain until called to receive the "well done" of his
Lord and Master.

His church has paid Dr. Durham about all the honors
it has to offer. He has been moderator of the Robeson
association for twenty-seven years. He was the North Caro-
lina member of the Home Mission board for twelve years.
He was a trustee of the Southern Baptist Theological

seminary for twenty-two years, until he resigned. He has been a trustee of Wake Forest college since 1926. In 1911 North Carolina Baptists paid him their highest honor, electing him as president of their State convention, and re-electing him in 1912, 1913 and 1914. In 1922, Wake Forest college conferred upon him a Doctorate of Divinity.

These various honors may serve to show the esteem in which Dr. Durham is held by North Carolina Baptists, and their admiration for him, both as a man and as a minister, but his real life's work has been here in Robeson county and in Lumberton, where is situated the child of his heart, the center of his affections, the blood of his life—the First Baptist church of Lumberton.

Within her walls Dr. Durham has done a truly monumental work. When he came hither in 1900, the Baptists were but a feeble folk, few in number, supported largely by the purse of the late Berry Godwin. But under his wise guidance, able administration, and loving stewardship, a new, commodious and well-equipped church and Sunday-school building was erected in 1910, followed by the erection of the education building in 1927, making the church plant as well equipped as any in the South of similar size, and its membership has reached nearly one thousand. For many years this church has had the reputation of being one of the most liberal in the southern states in its gifts to benevolence; and for many years it led all North Carolina churches in its gifts to the orphanage at Thomasville.

May we here pause and pay silent and reverent tribute to some of those heroes of the faith who have upheld the hands of Dr. Durham during his long ministry, even as Aaron and Hur upheld the hands of Moses upon the rock of Horeb: Edward Knox Proctor, Jr., Robert D. Caldwell,

[140]

Stephen McIntyre, I. Williams, and others. upon the hearts of the follow them. Amen.

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While his church ha a crusader for civic ri moral forces of our Sta eration may marvel wh mad, but I have seen h But his indignation ha tion of vice or sin here he scourged with whi scourged the money ch salem. He has never fo position as seemed wise lar for the moment suc gedly adhere to that p vindicated. He has led with all the energy of h crusader. He would be mind is made up that without regard to frien mops up! And the peop of his leadership. He h of cloud by day and a pi

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Stephen McIntyre, Luther H. Caldwell, Quitman T. Williams, and others. They each wrote their name large upon the hearts of their brethren, and their works yet follow them. Amen.

I do not deem it necessary to speak of Dr. Durham's quality as a preacher. Yet I may say that I have sat under his ministry since 1903, and while I have often heard him reach the heights, I have never yet heard him preach a poor sermon. The fact of his long ministry, his unanimous recall here after his first pastorate of fourteen years, the fact that his people still hear him eagerly and gladly, speaks far more eloquently than I can write of the magnetism of his gospel and his power as a preacher.

While his church has been his one passion, he was ever a crusader for civic righteousness—ever a leader of the moral forces of our State and county. The younger generation may marvel when I say I have seen our Doctor mad, but I have seen him mad—white hot! Yes, indeed! But his indignation had been aroused over some condition of vice or sin here at home or in the state, and this he scourged with whip and scorpions even as Christ scourged the money changers from the Temple in Jerusalem. He has never for a moment hesitated to take such position as seemed wise to him—no matter how unpopular for the moment such position might be—and to doggedly adhere to that position until his cause should be vindicated. He has led—can still lead—a forlorn hope with all the energy of his soul and all the zeal of the true crusader. He would be friends to all men, but once his mind is made up that a thing is morally wrong, then without regard to friend or foe—he just wades in and mops up! And the people love him for just this quality of his leadership. He has for many years been a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night to the moral

forces of Robeson county, and when the roll is called of those who wrought mightily for moral righteousness in North Carolina, the name of Charles H. Durham will stand near the top.

But it is not so much for the preacher, not so much for the reformer, not so much for the pilot or the prophet, not even so much for the shepherd, that the people of Robeson bear affection. It is for the manner of man that he is. Upon this ground men of all races and all degrees, men of all creeds and none at all, unite in paying tribute to Dr. Durham as the best beloved of his generation. Dr. Durham has become not only the shepherd of his own flock, but of other flocks as well, until the united Christian forces of Robeson pay tribute to his leadership, and join in admiration of his character. Prophets are said to be without honor in their own country, but this does not apply to Dr. Durham.

And what manner of man is this? Dr. William B. Royall, professor of Greek at Wake Forest college, was the most saintly man I have ever known, but Dr. Durham follows in his train. Yet he is neither a kill-joy nor an ascetic. He loves the companionship of the young, and they feel entirely at home in his presence. And the charm of his manner, the geniality of his presence, the graciousness of his personality, the radiant joy of his life, endear him to all who know him. His head may be white, but the life blood of his heart still glows ruby red with affection for his fellow men, and with devotion to the cause of his Master. And he is now doing the best work of his life.

In 1896 Dr. Durham married Miss Essie Moore, of Gastonia, held in loving remembrance by Robesonians, and to them came three children: Wilma, wife of David H. Fuller, prominent lawyer of Lumberton; Margaret, wife of Jasper L. Memory Jr., professor of education at Wake

[142]

Forest; Kathleen, wife of the First Baptist minister of Coker college.

In 1916 Dr. Durham died at Walnut Cove, N. C. the Doctor's home had been such a fitting place.

And so at this time over the blessings we are, with one accord Giver of every good thing, a man as Charles H.

In July of this year we honored Dr. Durham with a tribute throughout North Carolina. He deserved tribute, but he should have read:

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Forest; Kathleen, wife of Dr. Howard M. Reeves, pastor
of the First Baptist church of Hartsville, S. C., and chap-
lain of Coker college.

In 1916 Dr. Durham married Miss Sadie Tatum, of
Walnut Cove, N. C., that gracious lady who presides over
the Doctor's home with such queenly grace, and who has
been such a fitting helpmeet to him in his ministry.

And so at this Thanksgiving season when we count
over the blessings which His hand hath bestowed upon
us, with one accord we of Robeson return thanks to the
Giver of every good and perfect gift for the life of such
a man as Charles H. Durham.

In July of this year, the editor of The Robesonian hon-
ored Dr. Durham with a citation which was acclaimed
throughout North Carolina. It paid our Doctor a well
deserved tribute, but it was still inadequate. The Citation
should have read:

"DEFENDER OF THE FAITH"

N.C. Baptist State Convention
Annual, 1951



CHARLES HENRY DURHAM

*To Whom This Volume of the ANNUAL is Dedicated
Jointly with L. Bun Olive*

Born in Shelby, North Carolina, July 13, 1868, the son of Lenuel Newton Durham and Frances (Cansler) Durham. Attended Shelby City Schools, entering Wake Forest in 1889, graduating with A.B. Degree 1893. Studied Southern Baptist Theological Seminary 1893-1896. Wake Forest College conferred the Honorary Degree of D.D. 1922.

On November 24, 1896, he married Essie Modena Moore of Gastonia, who died May 2, 1911. The children of this marriage, Wilma, now Mrs. David H. Fuller, Lumberton; Margaret, now Mrs. Jasper L. Memory, Jr., Wake Forest; and Kathleen, now Mrs. Howard M. Reaves, Mobile, Ala., survive. On April 25, 1916, he married Sadie Tatum, now of Lumberton.

The full time active pastorate of Dr. Durham covered forty-eight years (1893-1941). His ministry included, Bryson City (1893-1895); First Church, Gastonia (June 1896-Dec. 1898); French Broad, Asheville (Dec. 1898-July 1900); First Church, Lumberton (Sept. 1900-May 1914); Brown Memorial, Winston-Salem (May 1914-Dec. 1918); First Church, Lumberton (Dec. 1918-Jun. 1941). For seventeen years (1919-1935), while in Lumberton he gave an afternoon appointment to Back Swamp Church, Lumberton.

Upon retirement, June 1941, as pastor emeritus of Lumberton First Church, he served the following interim pastorates: High Point First, (April, May 1942); Raleigh First (Sept. 1942-Aug. 1943); Salisbury First (Sept. 1943-Dec. 1943); Lexington First (Feb. 1944-Aug. 1944); Bladenboro (Dec. 1944-May 1945); Fort Myers, Fla. First (Sept. 1945-Nov. 1945); Red Springs (Mar. 1947-May 1947); Lumberton First (Jan. 1948-May 1948); East Lumberton (Jan. 1949-Jun. 1949).

His denominational service included: President North Carolina Baptist State Convention 1911-1914; Moderator Robeson Association, 33 years (1902-1914) (1924-1945); Trustee Wake Forest College (1926-1947); Trustee Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (1914-1935); North Carolina Member Home Mission Board (1916-1928).

The editorial language of *The Robesonian* reveals the true worth of Dr. Durham—"looked the part of a man of God." Thus he will always be remembered by those who knew him. His passing occurred on May 8, 1951, with interment in Meadowbrook Cemetery, Lumberton, North Carolina.

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~~Minutes.~~
Durham Carl M.
Papers

August 22, 1973

Mr. Howard M. Reaves
306 East Sixth Street
Lumberton, N. C. 28358

Dear Mr. Reaves:

Your letter of August 17, 1973, relative to the complete set of Robeson Baptist Association minutes, has been received. We would be delighted to have this gift.

As you can see in the enclosed brochure we also have private collections of papers of Baptist pastors and alumni. I would be happy to establish a collection of materials for Charles H. Durham should you and your mother-in-law wish to deposit his correspondence files, photographs, or other memorabilia with the Collection. We are also interested in receiving any books from Dr. Durham's library which you may wish to dispose of.

I appreciate your interest in our work here. Please let me know if we can assist you in the preservation of any additional materials you might locate.

Sincerely yours,

John R. Woodard, Director
Baptist Historical Collection

JRW/ml

Enclosure

Perler
WV Gabel
Fusell
Perler BSC

306 E. Sixth Street
Lumberton, N.C. 28358
August 17, 1973

Dear Sirs:

I am writing in behalf of Mrs. Charles H. Durham, the 92 year-old widow of the Dr. Charles H. Durham, who was Pastor of the First Baptist Church, Lumberton, N.C. for 37 years, to inquire whether you already have a complete file of the minutes of the Robeson Baptist Association from 1883 to the present time and whether you would be interested in receiving as a gift a file of the above minutes which have been collected and bound and which are now in her possession.

I am a son-in-law of Mrs. Durham and have been assisting her in going through many books and papers which she has.

Please let me know as soon as possible whether you would like to have these minutes to be included in your historical collection.

Sincerely yours,
Howard M. Reaves

September 23, 1974

Mrs. Basil M. Watkins
1415 North Mangum Street
Durham, N. C. 27701

Dear Mrs. Watkins:

We have recently been involved in a project to collect the correspondence, photographs, and other memorabilia of former alumni and trustees of the college and university. Since your late husband was so intimately connected with the college and a graduate, his papers have historical value and should be preserved for future generations.

We have recently established Private Collections for Irving Carlyle, W. R. Cullom, O. M. Mull, and other individuals connected with the Baptist denomination and Wake Forest. A similar collection for your husband's papers would be established should we receive any materials from you or the family.

Please let me know if I can be of service to you and the family in any way in the preservation of our heritage. If you have additional questions or thoughts on this matter, please write or call me at 919-725-9711, extension 277.

Sincerely yours,

John R. Woodard, Director
Baptist Historical Collection

JRW/ml

September 23, 1974

Dr. J. C. Canipe
8324 Raintree Lane
Matthews, N. C. 28105

Dear Dr. Canipe:

Finding your new address in a recent issue of the BIBLICAL RECORDER brought to mind a project that we have been working on here in the Baptist Historical Collection. We have been trying to contact former Presidents of the Baptist State Convention and other leaders of the denomination to request that they provide for the permanent preservation of all correspondence, photographs and other memorabilia connected with their life and activities.

We have recently established Private Collections for Irving Carlyle, W. R. Cullom, O. M. Mull, and other individuals connected with the Baptist denomination and Wake Forest University. I am glad that you are back with us in North Carolina and we would be delighted to have you place here, for permanent preservation, any papers relating to your long and active life in the denomination. Please let me know if we can assist you in the preservation of our Baptist heritage.

Come by and visit the Collection when you happen to be in Winston-Salem and should you desire additional information about our work please phone us at 919-725-9711, extension 277.

Cordially yours,

John R. Woodard, Director
Baptist Historical Collection

JRW/ml

September 23, 1974

Dr. McChord Williams
3954 Churchill Road
Charlotte, N. C. 28211

Dear Dr. Williams:

I regret the loss of your father and I feel that the Baptist denomination has lost one of its outstanding leaders.

We have been working on a project here in the Collection of trying to obtain the correspondence, reports, photographs, and other memorabilia of former Presidents of the Baptist State Convention and University trustees. We are the official depository for the Convention.

I am writing to you and your family to ask if we could acquire any materials of your father and establish a Private Collection in his name. We have recently established collections of papers from M. A. Huggins, Irving Carlyle, J. Ben Eller, E. Norfleet Gardner and others involved in denominational activities.

We would be delighted to have your father's papers placed here in the Collection for permanent preservation. Please let me know if we can assist you and the family in the preservation of a portion of our denominational heritage. If any additional information is desired, please call me at 919-725-9711, extension 277.

Sincerely yours,

John R. Woodard, Director
Baptist Historical Collection

JRW/ml

Dedicated to the Memory of

CHARLES HENRY DURHAM, D.D.

July 13, 1868-May 8, 1951

Moderator of the Robeson Baptist Association 1902-1914 and 1924-1945.

Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Lumberton 1900-1914 and 1918-1941. Pastor Emeritus 1941-1951.

ROBESON BAPTIST ASSOCIATION MINUTES, 1962, p. 2

Also a photograph.

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B The First Baptist Church, Lumberton, N. C.
286.17563 Photograph of Charles Henry Durham, p.26.
L97

NAME		Eld. Charles Henry Durham		b. d.	5-9-51
Ancestry		Married		b.	d.
WF 93 BA 22DP.		Ancestry			
Record		Lumberton 1900 + 1922 Gastonia 1896-1898			
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