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- **Regular Meeting, October 16, 2006, 7:00 pm, at the New Conway Library**
- **Regular Meeting, January 8, 2007, 7:30 pm**
- **Spring Tour, TBA**
- **Regular Meeting, July 9, 2007, 7:30 pm**
- **Regular Meeting, October 8, 2007, 7:30 pm**

The Independent Republic Quarterly

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Some Factors which gave rise to the Origin of Selected Black Churches in Horry County, SC

By Reverend Covell C. Moore, Sr.



I was reared in Horry County and attended churches of various denominations because I had relatives and friends affiliated with several churches and worshipped accordingly. Further, the custom was that, for the most part, any given church held worship service only once monthly. Worshipping with each other afforded us the opportunity to experience preaching every Sunday. As I grew older and my church increased its hours of worship and activities, I followed the tradition less frequently.

As far back as I can remember, I always questioned why there were so many churches and denominations, for what reasons did they exist, who the founders were, and what factors inspired them to establish these churches.

Having pursued a curriculum of religious studies, I have become more curious as to the desires of blacks to control their own religious destiny and exactly what theological and sociological meanings appertain thereto. This led me to want to trace a history of the black churches in Horry County.

In my search relating to this subject, I found information on the development of religious denominations in Horry County as reported by James Ira in The Horry Herald.¹ I was further encouraged by a study done by John

Troy McQueen, entitled "A History of Black Churches in Marlboro County."

Collecting histories from the area churches was challenging at times. Oral histories and interviews also contributed significantly to this data.

To organize and interpret this material, I have chosen five factors which I consider key to the origin and establishment of the selected churches: (1) race relations (religious freedom), (2) convenience (distance), (3) worship style/theological concepts (withdrawal), (4) division due to power play, and (5) denominational seeding.

I will support my premise by using the histories of five churches to illustrate the significance of each of these five factors.

Race Relations: A Factor in the Origin and Development of Bethel AME Church, 1530 Racepath Avenue in Conway

In 1787 racial prejudice prompted the conflict in the St. George Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia, PA. Former slave, Richard Allen and other blacks walked out of that church to seek freedom from religious oppression and to seek their own place of worship. In 1793 they established the Bethel



Bethel AME Church, 1530 Racepath Avenue, Conway

Church on a lot at the corner of Sixth and Lombard in Philadelphia. Bishop Francis A. Asbury was sympathetic to Allen and his followers. In 1794 he dedicated the building Allen had purchased, and in 1799 ordained Allen a deacon.²

The movement which begun as a result of a walk out blossomed. In April 1816, black churches from other states, experiencing similar injustice, met in Philadelphia to form one body under the name of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. It is the oldest black religious denomination and existed mainly in the North before the Civil War. The AME Church grew rapidly and was the second largest denomination at the end of the century for black Carolinians.³

Similar occurrences account for the formation of the black Baptist church and other black denominations.⁴

After the Civil War, blacks who had experienced discomfort in their former master's church began to worship under their own "vine and fig."⁵ This growth of churches seemed to be especially true during the period 1866 through 1899.⁶ The idea of separate churches was pleasing to the blacks who recognized that they had little or no freedom in any other phase of their lives and were happy to be free in their church worship. Accordingly, they sought freedom by whatever means necessary.

The whites began to relinquish their control of the black church and, to a limited degree, encouraged church separation but still maintaining white supervision; by giving existing church buildings to blacks when they moved or built new churches for themselves; by willingly granting the request of blacks who desired their own church; by friendly counsel and advice; or, by direct acts

of discriminating against them.⁷

Blacks left their former churches to become members of black churches. The following example shows the same trend in Horry County.

“During the period of 1871 through 1876, records show that both colored and white citizens in Horry County worshipped in the same churches. For example, the Baptist church in Conwayboro, as this area was called at that time, listed among its members thirteen colored in 1872. The following year this number dropped to nine and continued to decrease until in 1876 when only one colored member was still listed. By that time it was known that Negro churches were organized in Horry County.”⁸

A local example of such separation of a black congregation from a white community of worship is the origin and development of Conway’s Bethel AME Church.

There are two accounts of the beginnings of the founder and first pastor of Bethel AME. The family and members of Bethel AME’s historical committee maintain that Rev. Henry Jones was a Conway native, born in the 1400 block of 5th Avenue.⁹

A biography appearing in the *Marion Star* in 1868 by a correspondent known as “Waccamaw” reported that Henry Wallace Jones, a former slave, was born about 1829, (according to the 1880 Census) “in North Carolina on a ‘turpentine farm’ and came to Horry in 1852 ‘in the service of Ruben Wallace.’”¹⁰

Jones ran a still where pine sap was broken down into spirits of turpentine and rosin.¹¹ Before his conversion, he also had quite a reputation as a fiddler. After joining the Conwayborough Methodist Episcopal Church, South, his religious fervor caused him to become an exhorter. This led him into conflict with the Rev. James Mahoney, the white Irish minister of that church.¹²

Rev. Mahoney resented Jones so much that he “brought all the acrimony, and prejudice Green Ireland’s son could bring to expel him from the pale of that church he had so devotedly made up in his mind’s heart and conscience to serve.”¹³ Rev. Mahoney might have succeeded had it not been for the intervention of Thomas W. Beaty, a white member of the church, who was impressed with Jones’ ability.¹⁴

Despite this opposition, Jones became a preacher, building a strong following among blacks. After the war, he returned and seceded from his “former love and plighted faith.”¹⁵ Jones, “always attired in a long-tailed, dark-blue Prince Albert coat, frequently walked ninety miles from Wilmington, North Carolina to Conway, to

preach and help organize [the first AME church in the district].”¹⁶

Dr. Charles W. Joyner, distinguished South Carolina historian, suggested that I talk with Rev. Herbert Williams in Georgetown, because he might have information pertinent to Rev. Jones. I made an appointment with Rev. Williams. On February 10, 1993, he permitted me to tape our conversation. Rev. Williams, who was in his eighties, seemed to recall quite clearly most of the history of Rev. Henry Jones and his work in establishing Bethel AME, thus repeating and confirming most of the data I had previously gathered. He finally told me, with a knowing smile, that Rev. Jones was his great-grandfather on his mother’s side.¹⁷

The Works Progress Administration microfilm records report that Jones left the Conwayborough Methodist Episcopal Church, South and founded Bethel AME Church in 1870.¹⁸ However, the members of Bethel’s historical committee say the church was founded in 1866 or 1867.

The deeding of a spot of land by Rev. Jones was the beginning of the organization of Bethel AME. The first structure was a tent located next to the Old Conwayborough Academy, later used as Whittemore School, near the old Chess Jones and Lynches home. Rev. Jones was the first pastor of the church, and the length of his tenure is unclear. He was succeeded by Rev. W. Heyward.

During the tenure of Rev. T. J. Walker as pastor, a terrible storm blew the church off its block foundation. It was supported by posts until a new church was built.¹⁹

Bethel AME Church was moved to the present site at the corner of Racepath Avenue and Smith Street in 1882. “One-half acre of land was given by Nancy Anderson on February 15, 1882, to be used by the African Methodist Episcopal Church.”²⁰

The formation of this church is an example of strained race relations leading blacks to seek religious autonomy from their former masters and freedom to conduct their own religious services in accordance with their own mode of worship.

Convenience: A Factor in the Origin and Development of Silent Grove Missionary Baptist Church, 3420 Highway 917 near Loris

In searching for information supporting my observation that convenience was a factor in the origin and establishment of some black churches in Horry County, I found that much of my information could

only be obtained from oral testimony. It is true that many of the churches had produced written accounts of themselves but they were organized and established when few records were kept and those that were preserved gave insufficient information. The available documents did not tell how the churches might have come into being, nor why they were organized.

When investigating Silent Grove Missionary Baptist Church in the Loris area, I received conflicting information, thus causing me to spend considerable effort trying to confirm and substantiate the given data. By and by, I finally found the pattern of convenience fitting the establishment of Silent Grove.

Prior to its organization, the people had attended High Hill Missionary Baptist Church in Nichols. According to information taken from the [Kingston Lake Centennial Bulletin](#), High Hill Missionary Baptist Church dates back to 1869 and is the oldest black

church in Horry County.²¹ This information will be questioned shortly.

Individuals who might have been able to share some information were either deceased or unable to recollect. I then relied heavily on oral histories passed down from generation to generation and whatever documents could be found.

In trying to piece together the story from oral testimony, I was directed to Deacon A. J. Gerald who was 76-years old. He said that he was not old enough to remember such history and sent me to his sister, Ethel Stackhouse, who was 81-years old. Although she did not have any information, she directed me to Rev. G. W. Watson. I made an appointment and met with him at his home for the interview on March 1, 1993.

At the time, Rev. Watson was 89-years old and had been the minister of High Hill and the former Moderator of the Kingston Lake Missionary Baptist Association.



Silent Grove Baptist Church, 3420 Highway 917, Loris

According to his recollection, Mt. Pisgah AME Church in Loris was the oldest black church in Horry County; High Hill Baptist Church grew out of Mt. Pisgah AME Church, and Silent Grove Missionary Baptist Church grew out of High Hill.

High Hill had pulled out of Mt. Pisgah because many of its members resented the Methodist "budget system." It also became increasingly more difficult for their families to continue traveling the long distance through the swamps, wading streams and ponds, and walking across logs to church. They then, in 1869, organized High Hill Missionary Baptist Church. Lewis and H. D. Bullock gave the land for the church and the graveyard, according to Rev. Watson's recollection.²²

Fearing that I would stay too long at one setting with Rev. Watson, who was not strong, I requested another meeting. Although a physical invalid, he was a mental giant. He and his wife were kind enough to grant another appointment.

In the meantime, I learned that the AME Church records indicate that the Mt. Pisgah AME Church was organized on July 7, 1887.²³ The verification of Mt. Pisgah's date of origin has been difficult, and I have not been able to determine it conclusively. (I would like to point out that sometimes when we say "oldest church," we are not necessarily talking about the building, because many churches were organized in homes before any church house was erected.)

On March 11, 1993, I returned to Rev. Watson's home. We continued our conversation regarding the founding of Mt. Pisgah and High Hill.

Rev. Watson affirmed that in a short while after the formation of High Hill, the swampy terrain and distance once again played a role in the organization of yet another church. As some of the people traveled from the Finklea area to High Hill in the Nichols area, they tired of the ordeal of transporting their families the eight miles to church. The community was growing, and they wanted a church more convenient to their homes. The elderly Steven J. Floyd I, the Bullock brothers and others met and organized Silent Grove Missionary Baptist Church in 1870.²⁴

Information from the Kingston Lake Missionary Centennial Bulletin states that Silent Grove Missionary Baptist Church was organized in 1870 and "Christian leadership assistance was provided by deacons Sender Bullock, Stephen Joe Floyd I, and Baccus Bullock.²⁵ After numerous services of worship held under trees, the church was constructed on one acre of land donated by Deacon Baccus Bullock."²⁶ This written record leads us to believe that they were the leaders who organized Silent Grove Missionary Baptist Church as Rev. Watson had stated.

In order to further validate this data, I visited Silent Grove Missionary Baptist Church and participated in their Sunday School and church service. I was subsequently invited back to preach. During the announcement period, I informed the church members of the study that I was conducting on the origin of certain black churches in Horry County. I secured an interview with the chairman of the Deacon Board, Deacon Stephen Floyd II, the grandson of Deacon Floyd I.

I visited with Deacon Floyd at his home on March 17, 1993. He gave me essentially the same information shared by Rev. Watson. Deacon Floyd affirmed the narrative of families traveling from the Finklea Crossroads area the distance of seven or eight miles through swamps to get to High Hill. (The children were likewise challenged as they waded across the streams carrying the younger children and girls on their backs as they traveled to school.) In time, they realized there were enough members in their area to support a church of their own without having to travel the great distance through the unwieldy terrain.²⁷

As a result of these experiences, we are led to believe that other churches in Horry County of different denominations were organized and established as simply a matter of convenience for their membership.

Worship Style/Theological Concept (Withdrawal): A Factor in the Origin and Development of St. John Holiness Church, 3401 Kates Bay Highway in Conway

In researching this theological element, I have found data substantiating the fact that all church withdrawals and splits did not occur because of anger, strife or theological differences.

Withdrawals and splits in the black churches probably began to occur during and after the great migratory period between 1900 through 1940 when individuals and groups were trying to make their social, economical, and religious adjustments in new rural and urban environments.²⁸ Some were the results of friendly withdrawals, at times accompanied by letters of withdrawal to simply establish a different type of ministry. Others withdrew because of what they claimed to be the autocracy and oppression of their denominational authorities. Still others withdrew to be free of any outside governing authority and any ecclesiastical affiliation. They could now plan their own religious program, develop and control their own financial resources, cultivate their own community outreach programs, and ensure their local church was developed by the people and for the people.²⁹

Further studies revealed that black migration, especially from the South to the urban environment of the North, had a great impact on their mental, social, economic and religious outlook. Blacks were impressed by their new status in positions of trust and authority, such as that of apprentice, group supervisor and plant foreman in factories, fireman and policeman in the city, and by the right to vote in their communities. They were also exposed to the same educational opportunities as whites. Through these experiences, they developed a new perception of themselves. As a result, a new class structure emerged which not only helped to change the general pattern of black life but also caused a change in the general religious outlook of each class. Churches began to develop styles of worship conducive to the class of the worshipers they served.

The upper class attended services that were ritualistic and deliberative such as those conducted in the Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Congregational churches. The members of the upper-middle class tended to be affiliated with both the upper class churches and those churches whose services were less ritualistic and deliberative, such as the Baptist and Methodist. The lower middle class attended churches which were described as semi-demonstrative, which allowed and encouraged the emotional participation of its members. Thus, many of the members of the lower class preferred to attend certain Methodist and Baptist churches.³⁰

The large city churches in the North tended to develop impersonal, cold bureaucratic organizations which in turn tended to repel the large masses of blacks who were seeking a style of religious association that had a warm, intimate and more comfortable atmosphere.³¹ Accordingly, this gave rise to the small storefront churches found in many cities. The storefront churches represented an attempt on the part of the migrants, especially those from the rural South, to re-establish a type of church in the urban environment to which they were accustomed. Hence, many members withdrew from the larger churches and joined the storefront churches.

The services, sermons, and singing of these storefront churches in the cities, North and South, were then, as well as now, the type which allowed the maximum of free religious expression on the part of the participants.³²

One of the best examples of withdrawals due to theological or doctrinal concepts was provided by the history of the origin and development of the Church of God in Christ and its founder, Charles Harrison Mason.³³

Mason was converted in 1880 and later became a Baptist minister receiving his license from Mount Gale Missionary Baptist Church in Plumersville, AR. Be-

cause of his staunch belief in sanctification, speaking in tongues and a spirited charismatic type of preaching, he was dismissed from the Baptist Church. He continued preaching as an evangelist, holding many revivals which resulted in his expulsion from the Arkansas Baptist Association.

Undaunted, Rev. Mason secured a place of worship in an abandoned cotton-gin house. His revivals were so successful that sixty converts became charter members of the Holiness church that he organized in Lexington, MS. In response to his charismatic personality and devotion to duty, his membership grew large enough to support the construction of a new building which was "erected in 1906 and named the St. Paul Church of God in Christ, the first church of the fledgling denomination."³⁴

The origin and development of St. John Holiness Church in Conway was somewhat similar to that of the St. Paul Church in that its point of departure began in a Baptist Church, the Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church in Conway.

St. John's history was derived from mostly interviews and limited records. The oral testimony for this work was given by Reverend Laura B. Spain and her cousin, Bishop Edward Blain Jr. Rev. Spain is the present pastor of St. John Church of God and the granddaughter of Mr. and Mrs. Nixon Blain in whose house this church began. After several general conversations about the origin of their church, a formal interview transpired on March 23, 1993.

It is wise to pause here to state that Bishop Edward Blain, Vice-Bishop of the General Assembly Church of God (1956-1958), indicated that the name of St. John Holiness Church was officially changed in 1958 to the St. John Church of God under the administration of Bishop D. W. Flowers who was completing the incorporation of churches in South Carolina. For the benefit of local area readers who only know the name St. John Holiness Church, I will refer to it henceforward by the latter name.

Rev. Spain's grandmother, Sister Nolie Bryant Blain, her father, uncles and aunts originally were members in good and regular standing of the old Bethlehem Baptist Church, participating in all facets of church life.

Evangelists Mother Grace Gladen and Mother Evelyn Ivans came to the community preaching the Doctrine of Holiness saying "that in order to be saved and be able to go back with Jesus when He comes, you must first be converted, sanctified from the evil of the world, filled with the Holy Ghost, and speak in tongues."³⁵

They preached with spiritual fervor. Their services were led with emotional spiritual singing, clapping,

shouting and praising God in a manner quite different from the Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church. Sister Blain and others enjoyed participating in these services, accepted the doctrine of sanctification and speaking in tongues.

When they went back to their regular church and proceeded to worship as they did in the Holiness meetings (testifying, shouting, and speaking in tongues), some of the members and officers of Bethlehem resented their behavior and said, "that kind of behavior was not welcomed in their church."³⁶ Subsequent church services produced the same kind of comments that eventually resulted in tensions between the more conservative members and those who were becoming more Pentecostal in their worship.

Feeling uncomfortable and not desiring to cause further trouble between members, kin and friends, the Pentecostals decided that it would be best for them to find a place where they could worship in a manner more suitable and comfortable to them. It is important to note that the withdrawal was peaceful and did not change the social relationship between those that left and those who remained in the Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church.

The first organizational meeting took place in the home of Mother Nolie Blain in 1926. They continued to meet there until the membership outgrew the home. They decided to build a bush shelter large enough to accommodate the growing membership. This primitive shelter is formed by cut poles being held together by vines, ropes and wire and covered by bushes and leaves.

The next meeting place was an abandoned tobacco barn loaned to them by a farmer in the community. Revivals were sometimes held in the community's old Rosenwald School.

The fourth meeting place was the old Odd Fellows Hall. The Odd Fellows held their meeting upstairs while the church members held their meetings downstairs. At times, when the group was temporarily without a meeting place, this Pentecostal group connected themselves with the Church of God under the administration of Bishop J. E. Gant of Walterboro, SC, who was then the District Overseer.

When the organization of the Odd Fellows dissolved, the Deacon Board, chaired by Deacon Ed. Blain, purchased the property from them.³⁷ The Odd

St. John Holiness Church, 3401 Kates Bay Highway, Conway



Fellows Hall was torn down, and the first church was built and named the St. John Holiness Church.³⁸ Services were held there for approximately thirty years.

When a new church was built, the first seven hundred concrete blocks were purchased by Mother Mamie Blain, (the wife of Deacon Ed. Blain and the mother of Bishop Edward Blain) and Deacon Simon Spain (husband of Reverend Laura B. Spain). Construction of the new church began about 1970 and was completed in 1975. The fellowship hall was completed in 1984 and dedicated to Sister Rosa L. Faulk who donated the land for the church and fellowship hall.³⁹

It is interesting to note that Reverend Laura B. Spain is the granddaughter of Mother Nolie B. Blain in whose house the first organizational meeting was held. She is the twenty-first pastor of the St. John Holiness Church, the daughter of Elder Arthur Blain, who was the eighteenth pastor, and the sister of Elder Barney A. Blain who was the nineteenth pastor of this church.⁴⁰

St. John Holiness Church is one of the leading churches in the General Assembly Church of God, and although relatively small in membership, it is very effective in its outreach service in the Sandridge community of Conway. In addition, it brings to the community a flexible theological approach to member participation, freedom of expression and order of service.

According to this study, churches divided and established because worshipers desired the freedom to worship according to their own theological concept.

Power Play: A Factor in the Origin and Development of Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, 1111 Grainger Road in Conway

Research has shown that the origin of many organizations, churches and institutions are the results of schisms and/or power plays. Such activities occurred as early as the 1800s when church organizations grew out of the AME and AME, Zion Churches such as the Reformed Methodist Union Episcopal Church (1885), the Reformed Zion Union Apostolic Church (1881), the Independent African Methodist Episcopal Church (1907) and the African Union First Colored Methodist Protestant Church.⁴¹ Another example is the outgrowth of the Church of God in Christ, International, in 1969 from the Church of God in Christ.⁴² Furthermore, schisms and power plays have been factors in the origin and organization of the National Baptist Convention of America (NBCA) in 1915 and the Progressive National Baptist Convention (PNBC) in 1961.⁴³

Similarly, the origin of the Friendship Baptist Church in Conway was the result of a split in 1950 from

the Cherry Hill Baptist Church. According to the Kingston Lake Ushers Bulletin, "Cherry Hill Baptist Church was organized in 1884 under the leadership of Rev. B. J. Brown. It was rebuilt in 1935 under the able leadership of Rev. George Goings Daniels. Cherry Hill was the name given to the church because its services were once held in a lovely grove of cherry trees. Older members stated that they heard that the first services probably originated with a small group of people under a crepe myrtle tree."⁴⁴

Under the able and dynamic leadership of Rev. George Goings Daniels, new and varied programs were initiated that resulted in a tremendous and expanding membership. For almost eighteen years, the church experienced a great period of growth, peace, and spiritual tranquility. Church history states: "Then controversy set in, turning into dissension and bitter conflict, resulting in complete eruption. The body was split, the doors closed and with an unusual turn of events, the pastor had an injunction put upon us."⁴⁵

According to an interview with one of the members, who was clerk of the church, Rev. Daniels did not place an injunction on the church until later, as we shall see. She further stated that one or two of the trustees and a deacon wanted to get rid of the pastor for reasons unknown. However, they used as an excuse the desire to have services every Sunday, knowing that Rev. Daniels also pastored a church in Georgetown. In order to appease them, Rev. Daniels asked the church to give him time to negotiate with the other church to see if he could serve Cherry Hill on Sunday mornings and Georgetown in the evenings.

Before his negotiations were completed, this small group of dissenters held a secret meeting without the consent of the official board of deacons and trustees and decided that they would fire the pastor and hire a pastor of their choice. This brought about a great disturbance in the church. A church meeting was called to get to the root of the commotion and to set an official course of action.

After discussion, Rev. Daniels asked for a vote to be taken to determine who would be the pastor of the church. Rev. Daniels was voted back in as the pastor of Cherry Hill by a majority of the members.

This angered the opposing faction who immediately took out an injunction against the pastor. The injunction closed the door of the church to both factions during the period of litigation. Each faction had to find other locations to hold their services.⁴⁶

Excerpts from an old newspaper article dated April 6, 1950, bearing the title "Negro Church Divides; Church Doors Closed," state that,



Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, 1111 Grainger Road, Conway

The Cherry Hill Baptist church colored, pastored by the Rev. Goings Daniels is now in the midst of quite a mess of litigation, headed by white attorneys on both sides from Conway and Georgetown. Examination of the record at the courthouse shows that two factions within the church are locked in a terrible fight over whether the Rev. Daniels shall continue as pastor of the church, or that he shall accept the verdict of one of the factions and take his leave and allow some other pastor to take his place in the pulpit.

The trouble all began when the trustees and deacons early this year met and dismissed Daniels and elected another as pastor and preacher for the church. Then they wrote Daniels and informed him of what had been done. The next Sunday was the time appointed for the new pastor to takeover, but on that Sunday Rev. Daniels returned and took over the pulpit and still acted as the pastor of the flock regardless of the other man.

After that the trustees and deacons filed suit for an injunction against Rev. Daniels, prohibiting him from interfering with the operation of the church in any way. The other faction brought a counter action by way of petition in the main cause and also obtained an injunction. Both sides were tied up. The result was that the church went under lock and key. The counter suit alleges that the charges made against the minister are false; that names were used as plaintiffs in the first action without the consent or knowledge of the persons whose names were used; that certain papers in the first action had not been signed as was apparently the case.⁴⁷

The following week a rebuttal was sent to the editor of the The Horry Herald by the Daniels faction seeking to correct the alleged errors in the former paper. Excerpts from the column titled "Cherry Hill Officers Stand with Old Pastor" state that,

We have read with interest your article in the April 5th issue of your paper under the caption "Negro Church Divides; Church Doors Closed." This comes as a correction of certain statements therein with the request that the same prominence be given this as the former article. The paragraph which states: "The trouble began when the trustees and deacons early this year met and dismissed the pastor and elected another," is also an error. The deacons have never voted against the pastor. In January during our annual business meeting and according to the laws of the church, the pastor was re-elected and given power to nominate the officers of the church for re-election. There was only one person who voted against the pastor out of more than one hundred and fifty persons present. This meeting, held by persons some of whom do not hold membership in the church, wrote the pastor not to come back. The pastor was right to disregard the notice. The only deacon present who signed the injunction against the pastor has since signed an affidavit before a Notary Public stating that he was misled and was coming out of the fight. The board of officers is with the pastor one hundred percent. (Signed by the Deacons and Trustees of Cherry Hill Baptist Church.)⁴⁸

The Bishop of the Mt. Zion Fire Baptized Holiness Church of the Americas, (locally called the Mt. Zion Fire Baptized Holiness Church) was Rev. Daniels' friend. When he saw that the church was closed to both factions, permission was given to Rev. Daniels and his supporters to hold services in Mt. Zion on Sunday evenings.

The judge ruled in favor of Rev. Daniels and his faction. However, when he and his supporters returned to the church, there was another injunction on the door. At this point, they decided that the split was too great to return to Cherry Hill. They continued to worship at Mt. Zion until they could build their own church.⁴⁹

After much searching and negotiating for a suitable site on which to build, they were offered property by Sarah Jane Nesbit. An option was taken, negotiations were completed; it was agreed that the members could pay the money in installments. The final payment was made with church funds by Bertha Floyd on October 3, 1950.⁵⁰

Construction began on the first Monday in June 1950. The work on the building progressed rapidly because of the commitment of the loyal members, kind-hearted friends of other churches, and friends of the city. On July 10, 1950, a meeting was held for the official organizing of the church. The next day a special church conference was held to ratify the officers and the naming of the church, Friendship Missionary Baptist Church.

On the second Sunday in July 1950, the members

and friends of the church, along with the Mayor of Conway and other dignitaries, marched from the Mt. Zion Fire Baptized Holiness Church to the site of the new church. Before entering the church, a soul-stirring prayer of blessings and thanksgiving was given by the late Sister Rosa Long of Mt. Zion Holiness for God's blessing on the church and its members and on those who helped in any way to ensure the success of the church. This will always be an important day in the history of the church.⁵¹

Rev. Daniels remained pastor of the Friendship Missionary Baptist Church until his death in May 1961. He was succeeded by his son, the late Rev. Rufus J. Daniels, a politically active civic leader and very visible member of the NAACP in Conway and throughout Horry County. The church, under his civic and religious guidance, became a creditable influence which is still echoed in the community today. Rev. Rufus J. Daniels served as pastor until his death on March 6, 1983.

The need for a new site and expanded facilities came to fruition as a result of program expansion and membership growth under the dynamic leadership of his successor, Rev. Charles W. Pee. He began his official pastoral tenure in April 1983. With careful negotiations, the property for the new facility was purchased in the Graingertown area of Conway in 1984 and 1985.⁵² The church was completed in August of 1993, and the congregation held their first service in the new church on September 5, 1993.

Although Friendship Missionary Baptist Church's beginning was a result of adversity or power play, because of its ever-expanding and varied community-based programs, it has become one of the most visible and leading black churches in Horry County.

Denominational Seeding: A Factor in the Origin and Development of Mason Temple Church of God in Christ, 1520 Racepath Avenue in Conway

John Wesley realized the potential for the rapid growth of the Methodist Episcopal (ME) Church in America. At Wesley's request, Bishop Francis A. Asbury was sent to America towards the end of the 18th Century to play "a leading role in founding and establishing the ME Church." He was sympathetic to the difficulties encountered by the blacks as they sought religious freedom. We witnessed his support in the origin of the Bethel Church of Philadelphia as shown on pages 1-2 of this report.⁵³

An example of denominational seeding took place in New York in 1766. However, it started earlier in Ireland when Barbara Heck, after hearing a sermon by John Wesley, converted to the Methodist faith. In 1760 she moved with her family and cousin, Philip Embury, to



Mason Temple Church of God in Christ, 1520 Racepath Avenue, Conway

New York City. After witnessing the need for faith in the lives of the immigrants there, she organized services in Embury's home in 1766 and eventually persuaded him to preach.

Among the early five members was a black servant known only as "Betty." The membership quickly outgrew Embury's home, necessitating the building of a meeting house. This humble beginning resulted in the establishment of the John Street Church in New York City, the first Methodist society in America. Among the names of contributors to the building were several slaves.

From New York, Philip Embury planted the denomination in surrounding areas such as Long Island, New Jersey and even in Philadelphia where the St. George ME Church was established (see page 1).⁵⁴

Blacks of the North sought complete freedom for themselves and others. They saw the church as a symbol of black independence and were filled with a sense of urgency and determination. They believed that their church "was an instrument in the hands of God to lift their race up from degradation and this work should be done by blacks and only by those who were members of the AME Church." So strong was their belief in their principles that Bishop Jabez P. Campbell stated, "We

would like to have all the ground."⁵⁵ The AME church soon found that they were not alone in their desire to have the "hallowed ground," the freedmen's religious preference.

The debate over slavery at the ME Church Conference in 1844, resulted in the division of the denomination into the ME Church, North and ME Church, South. The ministers of the ME Church, North "believed that they were the agents of Southern re-education and redemption and that other religious organizations were incapable of doing the job; God was wreaking upon the South His inevitable vengeance against sinners; that God had chosen the North to be the instrument of His justice against a people who condoned man buying, woman whipping, maiden debauching and children selling." However, underlying all of this, the real desire of the Northern Methodists was to "bring back into their fold all of those southerners who had joined the ME Church, South in 1845."⁵⁶

Other denominations all desired the same territory--the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, the Roman Catholic Church, and the American Missionary Association. This effort led to very stiff and un-Christian competition as they sought to establish their own denomination in various parts of the South.

Denominational seeding in American was not only done by Methodist but also other denominations like the Baptists whose origin, like the Methodists, began in England.

The American Baptist movement began in the colonies during the same period as the movement in England and is generally dated with the arrival in America of Puritan Roger Williams in 1631. He obtained a charter from the British monarch and established the Rhode Island colony. The first Baptist church in America was established by Williams in 1639. A second Baptist church was organized in Newport, RI, in 1641 by John Clark, spawning congregations in Massachusetts.

By 1707 five churches in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware united to form the Philadelphia Baptist Association, and the Baptist movement really began. Out of this movement, the first black churches in America, generally known as the African Baptist or "Bluestone" church was established on William Byrd's plantation near the Bluestone River in Mecklenberg, VA, in 1758.

Records indicate that the Silver Bluff Baptist Church, established by a slave named George Liele between 1773 and 1775, was located on the South Carolina bank of the Savannah River near Augusta, GA. The First African Church of Savannah was organized by Andrew Bryan in 1788. The Springfield Baptist Church of Augusta was organized by Jesse Peters around 1787.

While these early churches were growing and multiplying in the Savannah area, other independent black churches were being established in cities such as Williamsburg, Richmond, and Petersburg, where there were larger number of blacks and proportionately more free blacks. Baptist churches were established early in North Carolina and South Carolina.⁵⁷ From this meager beginning, the Black Baptist church multiplied and spread throughout the South, often during perilous periods and conditions.

The Consolidated American Baptist Missionary Convention was the first effort to amalgamate an independent Black Baptist denomination, resulting in the spread and formation of other Baptist associations and organizations.⁵⁸

History has it that the Church of God in Christ was started in a cotton-gin by Elder Charles Harrison Mason assisted by Elders C. P. Jones and W. S. Pleasant. The meetings were very successful and the membership began to grow. The denomination was first known as the Church of God but was later incorporated as the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) in Memphis in 1897. In succeeding years, the membership grew steadily and rapidly until they were able to erect their own building in 1906, to become the first church of the denomination.

It was named the St. Paul Church of God in Christ.

During the General Assembly of the COGIC, the church became divided in its views of the doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, resulting in the formation of the COGIC U.S.A. In spite of this split, the COGIC grew rapidly, planting churches throughout Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas, Oklahoma, into the states of Texas, Missouri and California. From 1907 to 1914 the COGIC was the sole incorporated Pentecostal body in existence.

In spite, or because of its difficulties, the denomination has experienced phenomenal growth and is currently considered the second largest of all the black Christian bodies.⁵⁹

The Church of God in Christ, especially the Mason Temple Church of God in Christ in Conway, was seeded and spread in a similar fashion. By the time Mason Temple was ready to be established, the denomination was well able to give assistance and direction.

The history of its development was recounted by Sister Mary Lou Maynor, one of the oldest members of Mason Temple, in an oral interview. Sister Maynor states that her sister and her husband were living in Waynesville, NC, in the 1930s. Some people from New York started a [Church of God in Christ] mission there. Sister Maynor's sister and her husband "got saved." Sister Maynor said,

Sometime later I went to visit [my sister and her husband] and went to the mission meeting and "got saved." I stayed with my sister a good while. When I came back [home], I went to Mt. Zion Fire Baptized Holiness Church and joined under watchcare.

My sister and her husband came to visit us and we got together then to get us a church of our own. [They eventually moved to Conway] to help organize the church. [Our building] was just a little shack made out of old boards, just something to shelter in and did not have a name. After we got it established Sister Cochran came in and joined us.... Even though we didn't have a name, we knew that we belonged to the Church of God in Christ movement.

Mr. Willie Lynch, who was the Worshipful Master of Moon Light Lodge granted us permission to worship in the bottom part of the Masonic Hall where we had the best time. [He eventually] sold us the piece of property next to the Masonic Hall.⁶¹ Later on, I gave the church the name Mason Temple. Some time later the church bought a piece of property from Mrs. Juanita L. Kelly.⁶⁰

The following excerpts were taken from a copy of the church's history produced by Elder James L. Lee, present pastor of Mason Temple Church of God in Christ.

Mason Temple Church of God in Christ was first

conceived in 1938. For the first three weeks of the church's existence, services were held in the living room and front porch of Missionary Mary Maynor's home. The services were later moved to the sidewalk in front of her house. Later the members rented a building for three dollars per month from Mrs. Hawkins. That building stood on the site of the present residence of the Kelly Family on 9th Avenue.

The members encountered some difficulties trying to get a church started so Overseer D. James from Florida came to Conway to help. He rented a hall erected on the site of the present Masonic Lodge from Mr. Willie Lynch. This arrangement lasted some two years. Overseer James then began the construction of a sanctuary on land purchased from the Masonic Lodge. Missionary Mary Maynor, Bro. Jimmy Johnson and his wife, Roberta, washed and ironed clothes to complete the building effort and pay off the loan for the land to Mr. Willie Lynch of the Masonic Lodge.

Superintendent Eugene Canty who was the pastor of Mason Temple at that time, recommended Minister James Lee for ordination in 1980. After Elder Lee was ordained, he was reassigned by the Bishop to Mason Temple Church as Associate Pastor working with Superintendent Canty. It was during Superintendent Canty's administration that the initial planning for the construction of a new sanctuary was begun. Elder Lee was given permission to actively seek a site for the erection of the new church. Several areas were looked at, but the Lord kept bringing Elder Lee back to this location. Having resolved in his heart that this was where the Lord wanted Mason Temple Church to remain, Elder Lee began checking the courthouse records to determine/insure ownership of the property. Mrs. Juanita Lynch Kelly was given this property by her father. Because of the sentimental value attached to this property, Mrs. Kelly was reluctant to part with it; but, on Christmas Eve night in 1980, she graciously consented. Construction of the new church soon began.⁶¹

Payment of the property was completed. The deeds were secured and recorded July 8, 1982.⁶²

From its inception, Mason Temple Church of God has witnessed many changes and has had many preachers and pastors. Today with the help and blessings of God and under the dynamic and powerful leadership of Elder Lee, the membership has grown tremendously. Mason Temple's new sanctuary stands as testimony of the faith and sacrifice and is a symbol of the best efforts and commitment of the membership. Further, it is an icon of devotion, and a monument of strength and community leadership. Today Mason Temple Church of God in Christ stands as one of the leading churches in this community.

Now we see how the denomination of the Church of

God in Christ was planted first in New York and then seeded in North Carolina and South Carolina with nurturing leadership from Florida.



Researching this project has helped to answer some of the questions for this seeker, who for most of his life, wondered why there were so many different churches and denominations in Horry County, the purpose of their existence, who the founders were, and what factors motivated them to establish those churches and denominations.

Most of the founders had a common motivating desire to be reasonably and progressively free to "have, belong, and to be."⁶³ Accordingly: the right to "have" a voice in setting one's course or direction, be it theological, sociological, political or economical; free to "belong" to the social order, class, religious dogma, country, or political party of one's choice; or, free to "be" what one seeks and strives to be instead of what others or some system thinks he should be. Hence, each church and denomination was established.

This project has helped me to see more clearly the value of research, documentation and good record keeping; to appreciate more than ever those who write articles, columns, short or long stories, scientific journals, periodicals and books. It has helped me to be aware of some methods of approach to future projects that I may assume. Finally, I will make available my services as a resource for the churches used herein, as well as those who furnished information that could not be included in this writing.

¹Ira, James. "Some Recollections of the Ministers of the Conway Circuit in 1836 and up to 1850," *Horry Herald*, 18 September 1902 as reported in *The Independent Republic Quarterly*, 8:1 (January 1974), 8-9.

²AME Church. *Book of Discipline* (Nashville, TN: AME Publishing House, 1988), 19.

³*Ibid.*, 22 and White, Andrew. *Know Your Church Manual*, (1965), 7.

⁴Mays, Benjamin Elijah and Joseph William Nicholson. *The Negro's Church* (New York: Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1933), 20-37.

⁵*Book of Discipline*, 19.

⁶Mays and Nicholson., 37.

⁷*Ibid.*, 6.

⁸Thomas, Eunice M. "Evolution of Religions in Horry County, *The Independent Republic Quarterly*, 8:1 (January 1974), 7.

⁹Bethel Historic Committee, "Bethel AME Church History Presented on Bethel's 105th Anniversary," 8 February 1987.

¹⁰Lewis, Catherine H. "Horry's Black Delegates to 1868 Constitutional Convention," *The Independent Republic Quarterly*, 29:4 (Fall 1995), 31.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

¹³The Marion Star, 2:39 (February 26, 1868).

¹⁴Lewis.

¹⁵The Marion Star.

¹⁶Lewis.

¹⁷Rev. Herbert Williams Tape, 10 February 1993.

¹⁸WPA microfilm in Horry County Memorial Library on the date of the establishment of Bethel AME Church.

¹⁹Bethel Historic Committee.

²⁰Horry County Register of Deeds Book V., dated February 15, 1882, 12.

²¹Lewis, Adolph H., Kingston Lake Missionary Baptist Association Centennial Bulletin, 1887-1987 (Myrtle Beach: Positive Images, Inc., 1987), 10.

²²Watson, Rev. G. W. (Tape I, 4 March 1993).

²³African Methodist Episcopal Church. Seventh Episcopal District. African Methodism in South Carolina: a Bicentennial Focus/Seventh Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (Tappan, NY: Custombook, Inc.), 231.

²⁴Watson, Rev. G. W. (Tape II, 11 March 1993).

²⁵Kingston Lake.

²⁶Watson, Rev. G. W. (Tape III, Silent Grove, 17 March 1993).

²⁷Floyd, Stephen II, (Interview Silent Grove, 17 March 1993).

²⁸Mays and Nicholson, 33-37.

²⁹Ibid., 35-37.

³⁰Frazier, E. Franklin Frazier, The Negro Church In America (New York: Schocken Books, 1974), 55-57.

³¹Ibid., 57.

³²Ibid., 58-59.

³³Lincoln, Eric C. and Lawrence H. Mamiya. The Black Church in the African American Experience. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 80.

³⁴Ibid., 80.

³⁵Spain, Reverend L. B. Spain and Bishop Ed. Blain, St. John Holiness (Tape dated 23 March 1993).

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Deed from Odd Fellows (7 November 1968).

³⁸Handwritten Historical Graph with Historical Sketch from the WPA microfiche files in the Horry County Library for St. John AME Church .

³⁹Deeds from Sister Rosa L. Faulk to St. John Holiness Church.

⁴⁰Historical Sketch for St. John AME.

⁴¹Lincoln and Mamiya, 48-49.

⁴²Ibid., 84.

⁴³Ibid., 287.

⁴⁴The 25th Anniversary of the Kingston Lake Usher's Convention. "A Record of Events in Black and White" (1977), 65.

⁴⁵Historical Sketch of Cherry Hill Missionary Baptist Church, 2.

⁴⁶Friendship's Origin Tape (11 August 1993).

⁴⁷"Negro Church Divides; Church Doors Closed," The Horry Herald, Vol. LXIV. 6 April 1950, sec. 1, 1.

⁴⁸"Cherry Hill Officers stand with Old Pastor," The Horry Herald, Vol. LXIV. 13 April 1950, col. 1, 1.

⁴⁹Historical Sketch of the Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, Conway, South Carolina.

⁵⁰Deeds from Mrs. Sarah J. Nesbit to the Trustees for Friendship Baptist Church of Conway, South Carolina, (3 October 1950).

⁵¹Deeds made to the Trustees of Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, Conway, South Carolina, from Larry W. Paul (12 September 1984) and the second deed (30 July 1985).

⁵²Friendship Historical Sketch.

⁵³Richardson, Harry Van Buren. Dark Salvation (Garden City, N. Y.: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1976) 37.

⁵⁴Ibid., 35-36.

⁵⁵Walker, Clarence Earl Walker. *A Rock in a Weary Land* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 82-83.

⁵⁶Ibid., 83-84.

⁵⁷Lincoln and Mamiya, 21-24.

⁵⁸Ibid., 28-38.

⁵⁹Ibid., 80-84.

⁶⁰Sis Mary Maynor Tape, (4 January 1994) and Deeds titled, Lynch to Johnson, et al. (27 June 1941).

⁶¹History of Mason Temple.

⁶²Deeds titled Kelly to Maynor et al., (8 July, 1982).

⁶³Haselden, Kyle, *The Racial Problem in Christian Perspective* (New York, Harper and Brothers, 1959), 90, 118, 137.



☞ Reverend Covell C. Moore, Sr. prepared this thesis in 1994 for a master of arts in the Department of Religious Studies from the University of South Carolina. He also earned a bachelor's degree from Morris College and a master of science degree from South Carolina State University. Moore was an itinerant preacher in the Seventh Episcopal District of the AME Church for 24 years and retired after 28 years with the Horry County School District as a science teacher at Whittemore and Socastee High Schools. He is the recipient of Coastal Carolina University's Founders' medallion. This paper was edited by Chyrel Stalvey.)

(Many thanks to Brenda Cox for helping to prepare Rev. Moore's document for printing.)

The HCHS regrets an interrupted publication schedule. This issue of *The IRQ* continues an accelerated schedule to correct the lapse.

Bryan House Available for Special Occasions

The Rebecca Bryan House, ca. 1912, is the headquarters of the Horry County Historical Society. In the spring, the house was renovated and is now ready for weddings, events, and meetings. For rental fees and availability, contact Toni Montondo at Ray Realty, phone (843) 248-6363 or fax (843) 248-6721.

The guidelines, pictures, and rental rates are also on the website at <http://www.hchsonline.org>.

African American Information on the HCHS Website

Did you know the Horry County Historical Society has a link on its website entitled "African Americans of Horry County?" The link is: www.hchsonline.org/afro/index.html.

Church cemetery catalogs on the website include: Bethlehem (Sandridge Community), First Chesterfield Baptist (Wampee), Freemont Baptist (Longs), Greater St. James AME (Conway), McNeil Chapel (Longs), Mt. Calvary #1 Missionary Baptist (Hwy 905), Mt. Vernon Baptist (Nichols), Montgomery (Wampee), Popular (Wampee), and St. Paul Missionary Baptist (Homewood). There is also information from the Horry County, SC Marriage Register which was prepared for the 2000 Woodward Family Reunion. This information was compiled and submitted by Etrulia P. Dozier, retired librarian. Additionally, there is a deed for Henrietta Paisly, "a free colored woman" from 1836.

Another link on the website is to the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture at the College of Charleston, which has a wonderful archived collection of oral histories, manuscripts, photographs, newspaper collection, and pictures. This site can be reached from the link listed above.

The HCHS welcomes your genealogies, personal and church histories, cemetery catalogs/updates, and historical pictures to be shared in The IRQ and to be placed on the website. Please submit your information to the address found on the front cover of this issue.

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Brockington Speaks on Hobcaw Barony

The guest speaker for the July 10, 2006, meeting of the Horry County Historical Society was Lee Brockington, author of the newly published Plantation between the Waters, A Brief History of Hobcaw Barony and senior interpreter at the Belle W. Baruch Foundation.

More than fifty audience members were held captive as the story of Georgetown County’s Hobcaw Barony unfolded. Bernard M. Baruch purchased the property which was comprised of 11 former plantations—17,500 acres in all—for a mere \$3.15 an acre. Baruch made his money as a Wall Street financier and became advisor to presidents. Prime ministers, presidents, and politicians were invited to this magnificent hunting and fishing retreat which became the family’s winter residence—from Thanksgiving into the new year.

His daughter Belle, celebrated horseman, pilot, sailor, and hunter, loved the Barony and began buying land from her father in 1935. Before her death in 1964, Belle guaranteed the Barony’s preservation for future generations by setting up a foundation for that purpose. The Belle Baruch Foundation has created a haven for the studies of forestry, wildlife, marine science and historic preservation being conducted by Clemson University, the University of South Carolina, and Coastal Carolina University. Check out their website for more information and tour times: <http://hobcawbarony.org/>.