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# Sesqui-Centennial Celebration

*Sunday, August 5, 1934*

**MT. MORIAH BAPTIST CHURCH**  
**AMHERST COUNTY, VIRGINIA**

"MT. MORIAH—PROVIDED BY JEHOVAH."

"This is the house of the Lord God, and this is the altar of the burnt offering for Israel."—Chronicles 22:1.

## Mount Moriah

*By Eva Watson Swinley*

Mount Moriah, ho'ly temple,  
 Blest abode of Christ our King,  
 We the children of thy faithful  
 Gather here thy praise to sing.

Thou that guided our forefathers,  
 Pointing out salvation's way,  
 Bless us too, revive our spirits,  
 Tune our hearts aright this day.

Teach us Christ-like consecration,  
 Grant us understanding hearts,  
 Let us not mistake the message  
 Holy writ of God imparts.

God, the source of life eternal,  
 Keep alive thine ardent ray!  
 Mount Moriah, Mount Moriah,  
 Onward march, for aye and aye!

(Written in honor of the one hundred fiftieth anniversary of Mount Moriah Church, and dedicated to the memory of my beloved father and mother, Wilkins T. Watson and Bettie Ellis Watson, and my grandmother, Elizabeth Holloway Henley Watson, long active members of this church.)

## MORNING WORSHIP

PIANO RECITAL — Miss Louise Davis  
 DOXOLOGY  
 INVOCATION  
 HYMN: "All Hail The Power".  
 SCRIPTURE READING  
 PRAYER  
 DUET: Mr. and Mrs. Swimley  
 HYMN: "How Firm a Foundation"  
 ADDRESS OF WELCOME Pastor  
 RECOGNITION OF VISITORS  
 RESPONSE W. H. Carter  
 HISTORY OF MT. MORIAH  
 "AULD LANG SYNE"  
 ANNOUNCEMENTS  
 CONGREGATIONAL SINGING  
 "Old Time Religion"  
 PRAYER  
 HYMN: "O Happy Day"  
 BENEDICTION

## AFTERNOON WORSHIP

PIANO MUSIC  
 HYMN: "Come Thou Fount"  
 PRAYER  
 MUSIC (Amherst Quartette)  
 WORDS OF GREETING  
 HYMN: "More Love To Thee"  
 SCRIPTURE  
 PRAYER  
 SERMON — Rev. John T. Coburn  
 HYMN: "Faith of Our Fathers"  
 ANNOUNCEMENTS  
 HYMN: "Blest Be The Tie"  
 BENEDICTION

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J. T. Brockman ..... Clerk  
 J. E. Campbell ..... Treasurer  
 E. R. Smith ..... Financial Secretary  
 Mrs. E. B. Smith ..... Director of Budget

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 T. J. Tucker N. C. Loving  
 P. M. Lawman

### TRUSTEES

E. B. Smith T. J. Tucker  
 J. D. Lawman

### W. M. U. DEPARTMENT

Miss Hennie Wright ..... President  
 Mrs. E. B. Smith ..... Vice President  
 Mrs. J. T. Brockman Secretary-Treas.

### SUNDAY SCHOOL

E. R. Smith ..... Superintendent  
 F. G. Brockman ..... Asst. Superintendent  
 Catherine Smith ..... Sec.-Treas.  
 Mrs. J. E. Campbell ..... Pianist

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C. E. Drummond ..... Adult Dept.  
 Mrs. E. B. Smith ..... Adult Dept.  
 Mrs. Hennie Wright ..... Senior Dept.  
 G. D. Lawman ..... Senior Dept.  
 Mrs. J. E. Campbell Intermediate Dept.  
 Mrs. J. T. Brockman ..... Junior Dept.  
 Miss Elsie Loving ..... Junior Dept.  
 Mrs. M. V. Mays ..... Primary Dept.

### B. Y. P. U. DEPARTMENT

Miss Elsie Loving ..... President  
 Ray B. Smith ..... Vice-President  
 Catherine Smith ..... Secretary  
 Cabell Brockman ..... Treasurer

## A PARTIAL HISTORY OF MOUNT MORIAH CHURCH AND BAPTIST BEGINNINGS IN AMHERST COUNTY, VA.

By C. E. DRUMMOND

The sketch of history of Mt. Moriah church written for the Virginia Baptist Historical Society was written at the request of several members of Mt. Moriah and, also, the persuasion and solicitation of those whose opinions and wishes he respected have induced the

writer to perform the duty.

Owing to the fact that all records of Mt. Moriah had been destroyed, the writer has had to rely principally upon facts he learned from older people and of what he has known of Mt. Moriah. In compiling the history the writer has made use

near his home, known as the "White Oaks" Church, where he met with his family and neighbors each Lord's Day for worship and preaching. He was the pastor of his church until near his death which was in the year 1785.

Religious services were continued in the "White Oaks" Church until about 1834 when the property passed from his heirs, being sold by his eldest son, Rev. William B. Duncan, executor of his father's estate, to Richardson Henley.

Rev. John Duncan's remains with his wife's, children's and neighbors', were buried in a corner of his garden, which was beautified with many shrubs and lovely old flowers. His grave-yard has been cultivated to farm crops, and there is now no sign of the grave markers.

In 1770, a Rev. Martin Dawson began preaching in the vicinity of the present Mt. Moriah Church. And it was said, of bits of information found in Taylor's "Virginia Baptist Ministers", Old Minutes of the Albemarle Association and from a few other sources.

The Baptist principles of the Christian religion were begun in Amherst County as early as the year 1745 by a Rev. John Duncan, who came to Amherst County prior to the above date. In that year Mr. Duncan purchased a tract of land from a Mr. Daniel Tucker and built a commodious home. He also built several substantial homes near his own which were occupied by the following families of sterling worth: the Masons, Ryans and Moses. Mr. Massie was the tutor in Mr. Duncan's home. Mr. Duncan married a Miss Camden of Amherst and raised nine children; he owned, at an early census, 19 slaves. Mr. Duncan's true character was proven by his early endeavors to lead his family and neighbors in the Christian religion.

He built a hewn log house of worship "He planted the church known as the Buffalo Baptist Church." Mrs. Mildred Coleman, the widow of Mr. Daniel Coleman, gave the land for the church, which was near her home. Mrs. Mildred Coleman was a member of the White Oaks

Church, but on account of her excessive weight could not attend the services.

The "Buffalo Church" was built about 2½ miles North-East from the "White Oaks" Church. The following worthy ministers were the pastors of the Buffalo Church: Rev. Martin Dawson, Rev. Benjamin Coleman, Rev. Zacharias Dawson, Rev. John Alderson, Rev. Arson Flowers, Rev. John Duncan, II. Rev. Arson Flowers and John Alderson were related to the Coleman family. Rev. John Alderson had suffered persecutions for preaching. Rev. John Duncan and Mrs. Mildred Coleman were married in November, 1819.

At an early meeting of the Albemarle Association the Buffalo Church reported a membership of 120 members. There was a division in the membership of the Buffalo church and a new church organized and built near where the Mt. Pleasant M. E. church now stands, and had as its pastor a Rev. Philip Edmond. This new church must be the one mentioned by Rev. John Asppenel in his "Register of Baptist Churches of Virginia" as the "Upper Church" and having 50 members and Rev. Benjamin Coleman, pastor.

A Rev. James McDonald, a "gifted speaker" with attractive appearance was the pastor of the Buffalo church, and it must have been during his pastorate that the first brick church was built and the name changed to "Mt. Moriah". Mr. McDonald resigned the pastorate for : while so he could return to England on legal matters. He never returned and it was supposed that the vessel on which he took passage to return was lost at sea. He had said to his congregation that he wished to be buried at sea.

In 1799, Rev. John Young came from Caroline County to Amherst, and purchased a home from the Charles Taliaferro estate, and the following year became the pastor of Mt. Moriah. Mr. Young had served a lengthy jail confinement in Caroline County for preaching. There are many instances where this meek and pious man was the subject of unholy opposition because he chose to obey God rather than man. During Mr.



Young's pastorate the divided churches were united, and in 1803 about one hundred members were baptized and received into the membership of the church.

Rev. James Childs, "a gambler whom God plucked from the fire" and Rev. William Webber, "who had suffered much by jail confinement", often aided Mr. Young in the great revivals of that day and were used of God in bringing many souls into his kingdom.

April 16, 1817 at the age of 79 years, Mr. Young in a happy state of mind yielded his soul into the hands of his Saviour whom he so dearly loved and had served so faithfully. His remains are awaiting the resurrection of the just in an unmarked grave near his old home, which in later years has become the property of the Massie family.

Mr. Young had a son, Rev. John Whitefield Young, who left Amherst in 1829 and was ordained in Elim Baptist Church of Haywood County, Tennessee. He became an eminently useful minister in the Big Hatchie Association of that state.

In 1815, Rev. William B. Duncan, the eldest son of Rev. John Duncan (who was the father of the Baptist principles of the Christian religion in Amherst County), became the pastor of Mt. Moriah church. His popularity as pastor and preacher was so great that the little church could not accommodate the large congregations, and it was enlarged by an addition on the West side. Mr. Duncan like the apostles of old, baptized and received many entire families into the membership of his church. Many came from quite a distance to unite with Mt. Moriah.

The day that Mr. Duncan preached his farewell sermon to Mt. Moriah the congregation was so large that the services were held on the church yard. About 1832 Mr. Duncan resigned his pastorate with Mt. Moriah and removed to Caloway County, Missouri, where in 1833 he accepted work as a missionary to the pioneers and Indians of the Mt. Pleasant Association of that State. Rev. William B. Duncan's brothers, John and

Wesley, succeeded him in the pastorate. Rev. John served only a short while. Rev. Wesley Duncan's ministry was for a number of years with faithful service. He resigned to accept charge of churches in Bedford County. From an old minute of the Albemarle Association for 1848, I found that the following members of Mt. Moriah were enrolled as delegates to the Association: Leonard Henley, Charles Jones, James Cash, Nathaniel Montiply and Charles Massie.

Rev. Wesley Davis accepted the pastorate and labored many years zealously for his Master's kingdom, which was blessed of God in the conversions of many souls. Mr. Davis was the founder and father of New Prospect church, and I have no doubt but that he gave up Mt. Moriah to devote his time and talents to this charge.

Rev. Samuel B. Rice, of Bedford county, followed Rev. Wesley Davis as pastor. He was a man of "ability and strength of intellect"; "especially on theological subjects was his knowledge enlarged and profound"; "A talented pulpit orator". It was said that his sermons were characteristically doctrinal and mighty in fundamental truths. Dr. Rice purchased a home from Richardson Henley which was destroyed by fire. His popularity was so great that not only members of Mt. Moriah church but people from distant parts of the county aided him in rebuilding a much larger and more convenient home.

During Dr. Rice's pastorate the present "Mt. Moriah" church was built as the first one could not hold the increasingly large congregations. The present Mt. Moriah was well planned with galleries for the accommodation of the large numbers of slaves who attended and were members of the church. The spirituality of slaves was carefully guarded by the pastors and members. Orpheus Galvin, a consecrated colored brother, was ordained as Dr. Rice's assistant pastor to the colored members and served with fidelity until his death, which was some years after the close of the Civil War. There is a neat marble monument over

his grave which is near the church, having the following inscription: "Erected sacred to the memory of Rev. Orpheus Galvin by the white members of Mt. Moriah Church". Dr. Rice resigned the pastorate in 1854 to accept the pastorate of Adiel Church in Nelson County.

Rev. F. M. Barker followed Dr. Rice as pastor of Mt. Moriah and served the church with devotion and ability for a number of years. Mr. Barker had married a daughter of Rev. Wesley Davis, a former pastor.

After Mr. Barker's resignation, Rev. Thomas Roberts of Nelson County, accepted the pastorate, and like his predecessors, became popular and drew large congregations. Many were the additions by baptism. During Mr. Roberts' ministry the first Mason and Hamlin organ was purchased, and much interest taken in church music and singing. Mrs. Thomas Varland Richeson was the first elected organist and Dr. Samuel Gibson, a prominent physician and member of the church, taught vocal music and trained the large church choir.

Dr. Gibson was also the efficient superintendent of the Sunday School. It is said that he would ride until late Saturday night visiting his patients so he could be prompt on Sunday morning meeting his Sunday School, which he always opened at 9:00 o'clock by singing, "Always Be There at Nine in the Morning."

Dr. Gibson married first a daughter of Rev. Wesley Davis, secondly, Widow Caroline (Bourne) Montiply, who possessed a high degree Christian experience and knowledge of the scriptures. She was a great aid to him in his Christian labors.

Miss Mary Davis, a daughter of Rev. Wesley Davis and sister of Dr. Gibson's first wife, was his most useful Sunday School teacher and sang the first alto voice in the choir.

Rev. Mr. Roberts resigned his pastorate in 1870. He conducted a school for young ladies in Nelson County known as the Oakland Academy, which was largely attended by many young ladies from

"Mt. Moriah" church. Mr. Roberts was ardent in many great and glorious revivals at Mt. Moriah by the following prominent ministers: Rev. Poindex Henson, D.D., "whose keenly logical mind was skilled in attacking error a defending truth"; Rev. William Broadus, D.D., "who was called earnest, persuasive, practical pastor who held tenaciously to the fundamental doctrine of grace"; Rev. A. E. Dickson, D.D., under whose earnest, plain preaching many could date their first awakening of consciousness to the grace of God; Rev. A. M. Poindexter, D.D., whose preaching was distinguished by great fluency and power of speech who swayed and moved the masses with great power; Rev. Cornelius Tyree, D.D., who received ordination at Mt. Moriah 1838, and Rev. Abram Brown, D.D., 1845.

Mt. Moriah, a mother of churches preceding the Civil War, granted letters of dismission to many of her members to become members of New Prospect Piney River, and Ebenezer churches; for some years following the war, many letters were given to members to assist in organizing Amherst, Central, X way and Emmanuel churches.

From the beginning of Mt. Moriah to some years after the Civil War, Episcopalians used the church regularly for their services, and it was said that Mr. Daniel Coleman stipulated, when granting the lot for the church, that Episcopalians were to have a day for their services when the Baptists were not using it.

A Christ-like spirit of congeniality and friendship always existed between Baptists and Episcopalians at Mt. Moriah.

Nearly all of Mt. Moriah's white members were enlisted in the service of the Confederate army. The survivors returned to their homes from conflict poor and humbled, confronted new responsibilities and duties which

impossible to describe here.

With an untried future, a "new era" in adjustment and organization of the church must now begin, and under the leadership of Dr. Samuel Gibson, Captain Nathaniel Montiply, Captain John Woodford Broadus, Col. William Richeson, Charles Massie, Taliaferro Stinnett and many others of like zeal and fidelity, Mt. Moriah launched forth with a new life for Christ and humanity.

At the close of the Civil War, Mt. Moriah's membership was considerably over 500 members, and many over half of that number were colored members. All but a few old ones were given letters to organize churches of their color. St. Mary's, Piney Grove and St. Mark's were the churches organized.

Rev. Vincent Settle accepted the charge of the new organization and served until 1872. He resigned the pastorate for a field of labor in Missouri. He had been the pastor of St. Stephens and Ebenezer churches, and had also conducted a school for boys and young ladies at his home, "Winton", at Clifford. "His ministry was signally blessed, many were added to the membership by baptism and restoration."

The beloved William Allen Tyree was the next pastor, and many happy conversions resulted from the numerous revivals held during his ministry of three years. He resigned the pastorate May, 1875.

Following are the names and dates of service of the pastors of Mt. Moriah beginning year 1875:

(1) Rev. Samuel Massie—from May, 1875 to May 1879; (2) Rev. Cornelius Tyree, D.D. (supply pastor)—May 1879 to Dec. 1879; (3) Rev. A. G. Loving—January 1880 to August 1881 (resigned to attend S.B.T.S.); (4) Rev. Henry Petty—October 1881 to October 1882; (5) Rev. Cornelius Tyree, D. D.—1882 to Nov. 1884; Rev. William Cornelius Tyree—Dec. 1884 to Jan. 1888 (resigned to attend SBTS); (7) Rev. Paulius P. Massie (supply pastor)—Jan. 1888 to June 1888; (8) Rev. Otis Hughson—June 1888 to Nov. 1891 (resigned to attend

SBTS); (9) Rev. Archie A. Scruggs—Nov. 1891 to Dec. 1893; (10) Rev. J. A. Sessom—July 1894 to Nov. 1895 (he resigned to accept call to Cordeal, Ga.); (11) Rev. James L. Witty—Jan. 1896 to 1903; (12) Rev. J. B. Cook—Jan. 1904 to 1905; (13) Rev. J. R. Owen—1905 to 1907; (14) Rev. L. P. Little—1907 to Jan. 1909; (15) Rev. W. R. McMillian—June 1909 to 1912; (16) Rev. J. R. Coleman—August 1912 to 1915; (17) Rev. O. P. Lloyd—1916 to 1917; (18) Rev. E. M. Ramsey—1917 to 1920; (19) Rev. E. E. Sumpter—June 1920 to October 1925; (20) Rev. J. M. Street—March 1926 to July 1929; (21) Rev. E. E. Sumpter—October 1929—.

In 1915 Mt. Moriah entered into a new church field composed of Piney River, Central, Emmanuel.

For several years following 1875, Mt. Moriah held through many glorious revivals with many additions to her membership. Dr. Cornelius Tyree held a meeting at Mt. Moriah, assisted by Samuel B. Rice, Rev. Wm. A. Tyler and Samuel Massie, all former pastors of Mt. Moriah, and a large number of conversions and baptisms. Nearly all of them were persons passed middle age.

During the pastorate of Dr. Cornelius and W. C. Tyree, 108 members were received by baptism, 8 received by letter and 27 given letters to unite with other Baptist churches.

Dr. Byron H. Dement aided Rev. Archie Scruggs in a meeting resulting in over 80 conversions and 79 uniting with the church by baptism. Rev. Atwell Tucker assisted Mr. Scruggs in baptizing the candidates. A hallowed scene it was, both ministers immersing candidates at the same time.

In 1896, Rev. Wm. C. Tyree aided Rev. James Wiley in a protracted meeting at Mt. Moriah, with many conversions and restorations and a number baptized. Dr. Tyree's preaching was full of holy zeal and power. A Rev. Mr. Stealy also assisted Mr. Wiley in a meeting with great results.

At a meeting held June 6, 1884, Mrs. Lucy Penn was granted permission to

sell the old church organ and purchase a new one, and Sunday July 13, 1884, a new Mason and Hamlin organ, costing \$175.00 was installed.

Mt. Moriah entertained the Albemarle Association August 12, 13, 14, 1884. A large crowd attended. Many visiting ministers from other associations, all taking part in discussing the problems and topics for debate.

Another big association convened at Mt. Moriah, and at this meeting the Amherst and Nelson County churches withdrew from the Albemarle Association and formed the Piedmont Association, consisting of about 25 churches and over 3000 members.

Previous to the meeting of the Association in 1884, nearly all the female members of the church organized into a ladies' aid society and raised considerable money for use in repairing and painting the church, paying on the new organ, purchased a new sofa for the pulpit, a neat walnut marble top table for the rostrum, a handsome sterling silver water set for the pulpit stand, a water cooler for the church, many new hymn books and a new Bible rest for the pulpit. The merchants of Amherst presented the church with one dozen new Baptist Hymnals with notes.

Mr. Thomas Richeson, a former member, who had removed to Missouri, presented Mt. Moriah with a handsome pulpit Bible and a beautiful sterling silver communion service set.

The following members were the ordained deacons of Mt. Moriah after the Civil War: Joseph H. Massie, William Sandidge, Gandy Brockman, Samuel Lawman, John T. Sandidge, Taliaferro Stinnett and Nathaniel Montiply.

Mr. William Sandidge removed his membership to the Amherst Baptist

church. Mr. Wilkins G. Watson was elected a deacon at a meeting held Sept. 30, 1883 and ordained a deacon of Mt. Moriah Sunday, October 28, 1883.

The following were the treasurers of Mt. Moriah, beginning year 1880: W. G. Watson for year 1881, Richeson Henley for year 1882, W. G. Watson for year 1883, Hon. Joseph H. Massie 1884, Walter P. Mason 1885, W. G. Watson again for a number of years followed by Richardson Henley, Sims Brockman, James W. Henley, and W. G. Watson.

The following were the efficient Sunday School Superintendents after Dr. Gibson's long service as superintendent: Capt. Nathaniel Montiply for several years, Mr. Price Roberts for several years, William Sandidge, W. G. Watson, Silas Stinnett, Rev. John Martin, P. L. Saylor, Capt. Geo. Henley, W. G. Watson, Walter P. Massie.

After Mrs. Thomas Varland Richeson's resignation as organist, Mrs. Lucy M. Penn was elected and served faithfully for years; she was succeeded by Mrs. W. G. Watson, Mrs. Penn, Misses Alm Woodson, Ora A. Hill, Nora Ware, Ann Gannaway and Ora A. Hill.

If the church is founded upon a history it is not a history which ends with death but a history renewed by the new life—The Resurrection.

It is said to be an age of doubt and scepticism when Christian history is fading away among other myths and traditions of an early dawn. The writer submits this paper to the Virginia Baptist Historical Society and Mt. Moriah trusting that it may stimulate an inspiration to return to the "Faith of our Fathers" and consecration of our lives to Christ and His Church, Christianity not an influence, but a life.

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