

*One-Hundred Year
History
of
Ayden Christian Church
(Disciples Of Christ)
1893-1993*



by

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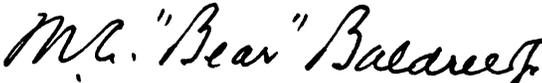
Dedication

This history of Ayden Christian Church is essentially the product of the efforts of one man, Dr. Stephen Sudor. While yet in practice, Dr. Sudor began the arduous task of searching, collecting, copying, visiting, interviewing, organizing, reading, studying, checking, writing and rewriting which has culminated in the material you will read in this publication.

Dr. Sudor devoted eight years to the gathering of information for this book and nearly two years to its writing.

On behalf of the congregation, the Centennial Committee extends our deepest thanks to Dr. Sudor for this labor of love and to his wife, Bert, for both helping with and sharing his time with this task.

Be it therefore resolved that this *One Hundred Year History of Ayden Christian Church* is lovingly dedicated to the man responsible for its very existence, Dr. Stephen Sudor, Church Historian.


Mr. "Bear" Baldree, Chair
Centennial Committee


Mrs. Hannah Gaylor, Chair
Official Board


James M. Daily, DMin. Sr. Minister

Dedication

This one-hundred year history of Ayden Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is dedicated to the many hundreds of people from the beginning thirty-two members to the present three-hundred-forty-three. May God bless each and everyone of them.

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CHAPTER I
THE BEGINNING

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

Genesis 1:1 (RSV)

It was September in 1893.

It was hot. It was humid. It was wet. Much rain had fallen over the past week, enough so that the farmers were concerned for their crops. The unpaved streets were not dry and dusty. Instead there were puddles of water. There was mud. Buggy and wagon tracks were evident. Animal tracks were predominant.

The weather did not matter for this was to be a great day!

It is believed and chronicled by historians of the past that Ayden Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) was born on September 18, 1893 on the same day that Carolina Christian College opened its doors. Credit for this birth has been given to Peter Stephen Swain, an enthusiastic, dedicated ministerial student who was also a member of the faculty at the school. C.C. Ware records this date and place of organization at the newly formed school in several books he has written.

However there exists some discrepancy as to the date the church was organized. In an article written in "The Eastern Reflector," Greenville, North Carolina on Wednesday, September 20, 1893 it stated:

The North Carolina Christian College at Ayden, this county, was formally opened last Friday (September 15, 1893) with appropriate exercises, and the regular work of the first session of the institution was begun Monday (September 18, 1893) morning. On Friday (September 15, 1893) there was a large gathering of the people of the community and they listened attentively to an admirable address by our townsman (Greenville), ex-Gov. T.J. Jarvis.

The entire article (which appears later on) does not mention that the Church was formed. In looking at the calendar, it is certainly possible that Sunday, September 17, the date between the formal opening on Friday the 15th and regular

workday on Monday the 18th the Church could have had its first Church service especially since attendance at the Church was required of all students and faculty.

In an "Ayden news item "dated November 13, 1893, a Monday, there appeared in "The Eastern Reflector" this statement:

A congregation of the Christian Church was organized Sunday (November 12). It will hold its meetings in the College building.

However we must consider the time. There was no telephone and no automobiles. There was a train. There was horse and buggy. News traveled slowly. The date listed above the column for several news items from Ayden was November 13. This could very well have been a collection of news from Ayden occurring over the past several weeks. Or it may be that the formal organization of the Church was November 12, 1893.

Another conflicting article appears in "The Eastern Reflector" in an October issue:

Friends of the College have organized a Sunday School with Rev. P.S. Swain as Superintendent. Mr. Swain has been Sunday School Evangelist for some time and is just at home when preaching over a Sunday School.

Mr. Swain organized the Church and the above article proves he organized the Sunday School. Can we believe he organized the Sunday School before he organized the Church?

It seems logical to consider that "*the large gathering of the people of the community,*" the Ayden Disciples, those near Ayden, those from afar, those of the faculty, and the students were emotionally peaked, excited and eager enough to have held a Church Service on that Friday, Saturday, Sunday or Monday. All we can do is guess unless

we accept the written word of C.C. Ware in his book "A History of the Disciples of Christ in North Carolina" printed in 1927 or accept the many other references through the years that state, The Ayden Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) was organized September 18, 1893, the day Carolina College opened. Amen.



Carolina Christian College

CHAPTER II

THE COLLEGE

"I am a Jew, born at Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, educated according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as you all are this day."

Acts 22:3 (RSV)