

Mills Reviews Role Of Music In Church

By CHARLES E. MILLS

I joined the choir of First Presbyterian church in 1882 when I was 20. At that time, as I recall, the choir was composed of Mrs. H. C. Cowles, Mrs. Julia Fawcett, Miss Eva Allison, Miss Julia Stockton, Miss Emily Bell, Miss Elizabeth Brady, Miss Louise Hall, Miss Annie Wilton, Miss Mary Lizze Cowles, D. A. Baker, J. P. Burke, James McLelland, J. B. Woods, Francis Stephenson and T. J. Witherspoon.

Mrs. H. C. Cowles was leading soprano many years during the pastorate of Dr. W. A. Wood. Mary Gage Walton (Mrs. J. F. Carlton) was leading soprano for 35 years. Mrs. Thomas B. Spencer was soprano soloist and leader several years. Miss Annie L. Parker (Mrs. H. O. Steele), Miss Gertrude Robbins (Mrs. M. C. Wood), Miss Ruth McDonald (Mrs. W. C. Current) and Miss Ella Anne Davies (Mrs. Charles E. Mills), all voice teachers at Mitchell college, were leading singers. Mrs. A. P. Steele and Mrs. E. M. Land were leaders in choir work many years, also many others.

Some recent directors of the choir were E. B. Stimson, F. S. Smith, Miss Margaret Sloan (Mrs. Muse), Mrs. Thomas B. Spencer and Mr. and Mrs. Franklin Riker. Since 1943 Miss Rosa Watts has been director of the choir and Miss Gladys Stephens has been organist since 1934.

Others who have been organists at the church within my recollection: Mrs. Anne B. Cowan, who played for a church dedication in 1870; Miss Bettie Sharpe, Miss Belle Houston, Miss Linda Rumpie, Miss Williams, Miss Misseldine, Miss Jennie Culver, Miss Mary Cowles, Miss Louise Hall, W. P. Bell, Miss Jessie Fowler, Dr. Ayers, Miss Louise Siddall, Miss Mary Scott, Miss Rac Gill, Mrs. Cully, G. H. Cartledge, Prof. Karel Bondam, native of Holland who was organist of the church for many years and director of Mitchell college music department; Miss Lou Serogus, E. B. Stimson, Miss Margaret Sloan, F. S. Smith, Harry Lee Knox, Miss Rosa Watts and Hobart Whitman.

A writer of note has said that "the organ is one continuing voice in a church. Preachers, singers and congregations come and go but the organ is always there awaiting only the musician's touch to bring its message to the human soul. It will voice the joy of the bride as she approaches the altar; it will comfort the sorrowing as they follow their dead; it will be jubilant with us in our victories, hearten us in our defeats, and bear us out upon the tides of time to those heavenly regions where the discords of life are resolved into the harmonies of the peace of God."

The present organ, dedicated July 26, 1925, was built by Casavant Bros., St. Hyacinth, Canada. It was dedicated to the memory of James Columbus Steele and Dora Montgomery Steele (a gift of their children).

"This organ was built by French Canadians, and contains 32 speaking stops and 2,250 pipes. Its individual tonality and special voice structure are outstanding features — and it is amply supplied with a pleasing variety of solo stops of much beauty and dignity and is, also, resourceful as an orchestral or ensemble instrument. The harp and celesta st., containing 61 bars, was built by Deagan of Chicago, and purchased through Casavant Brothers as a separate unit to the main organ and mechanically arranged for the purpose of obtaining a unified registration — and is intended as an embellishment to the various stops that are of blending timbre quality — therefore producing a quality of music both pleasing and dignified."

Music has always appealed to the soul of man and is a significant gift of those whom he loves best. This beautiful spirit is fully manifested by four bronze plaques in the church.

1925 — The organ in this church is lovingly dedicated to the service of God in memory of James Columbus Steele and Dora Montgomery Steele and is the gift of their children.

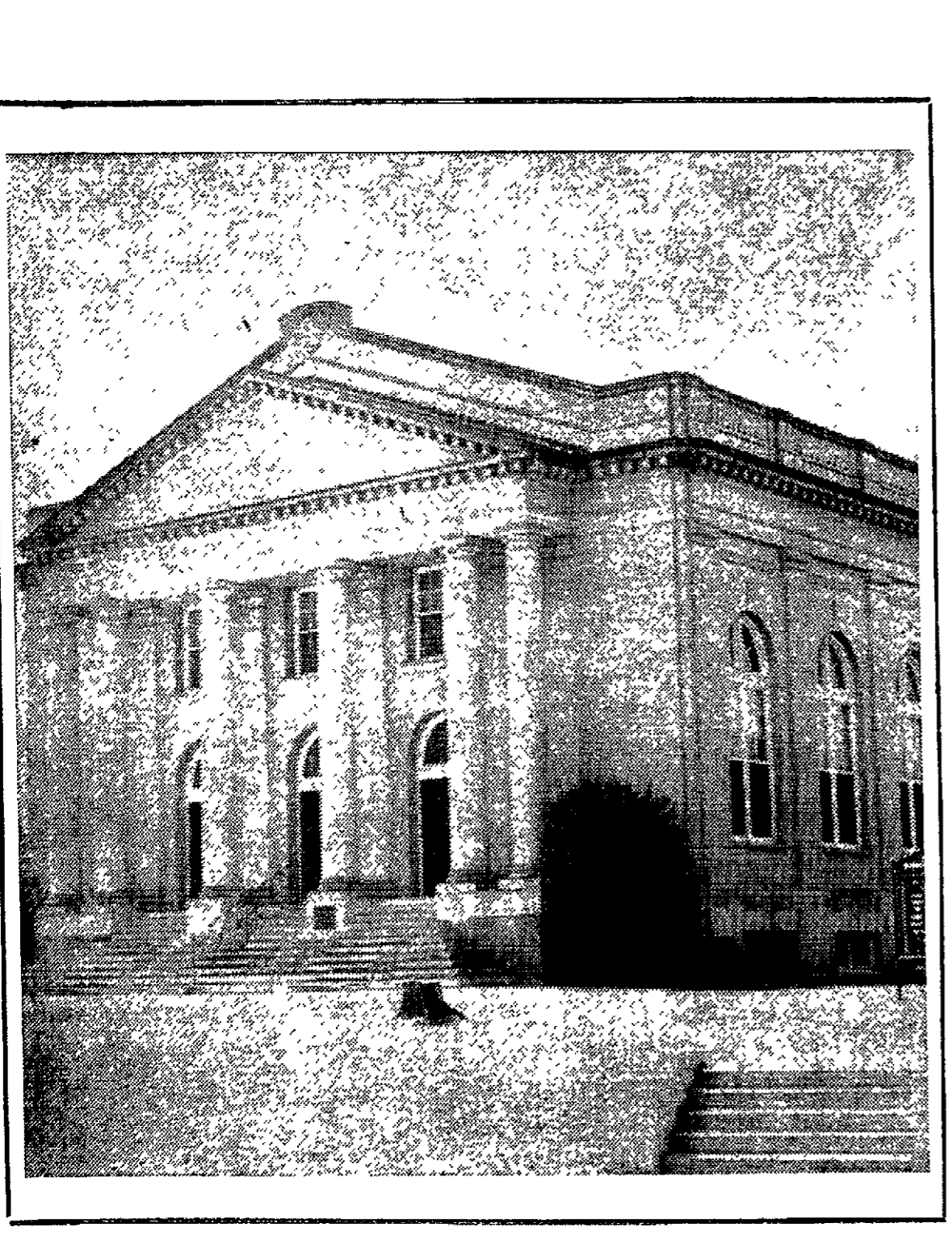
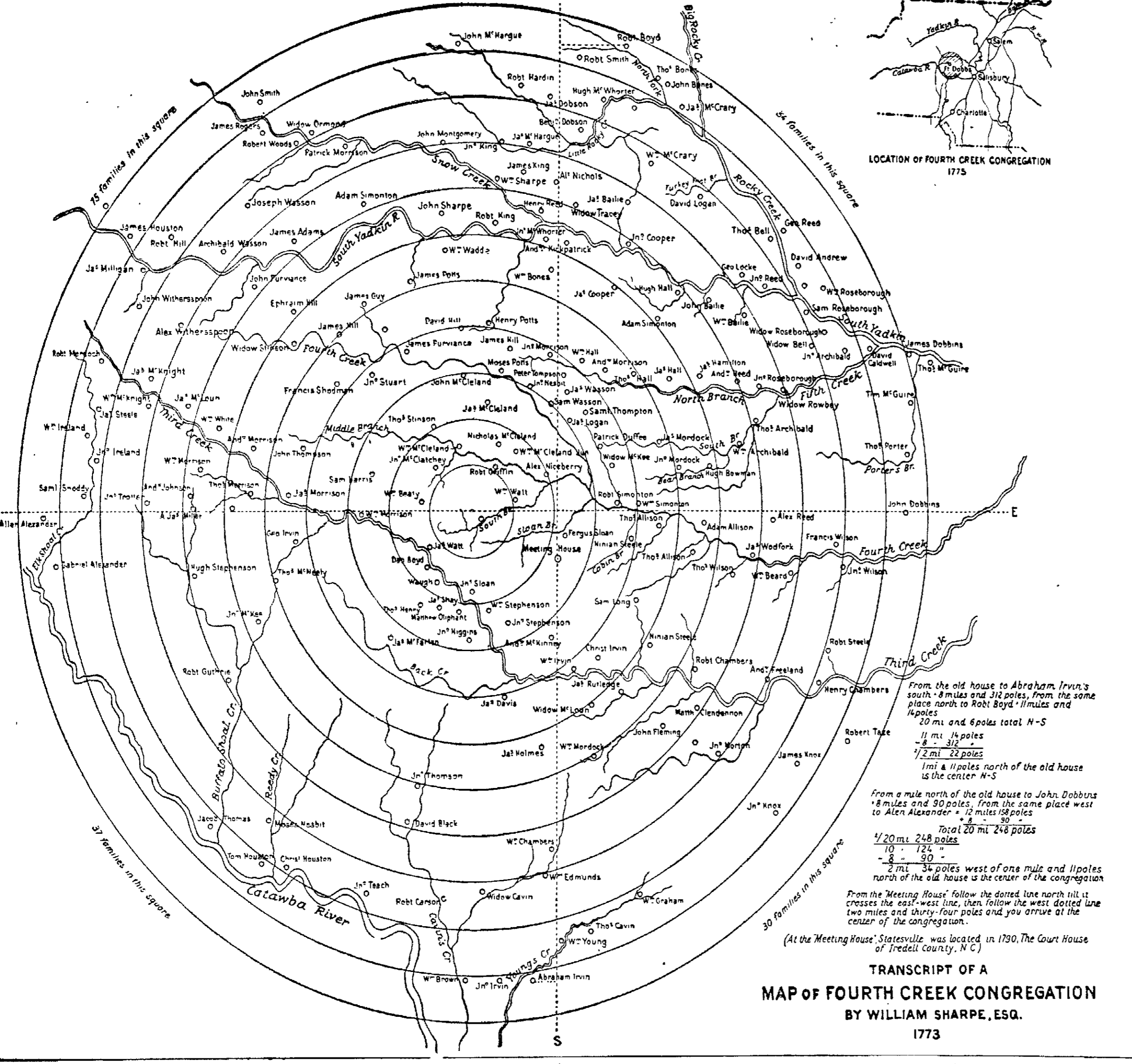
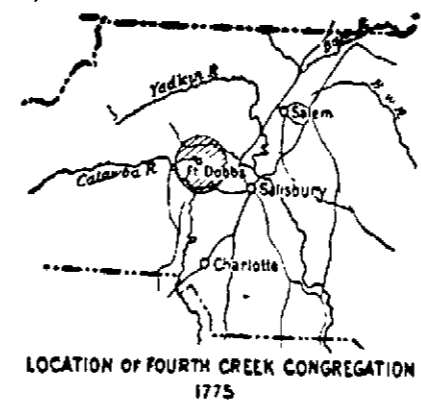
The chimes within this organ are lovingly dedicated to the memory of Ardrey W. Barringer, January 18, 1946, by his wife, Frances Barringer, and children, Sue Bettie, Margaret, and Ardrey W. Barringer, Jr.

The harp and celesta unit in the organ is lovingly dedicated by Charles E. Mills the donor, to the memory of his wife, Lula C. Mills, April 4, 1940.

The chimes in the church were erected by O. W. Slane as a tribute of love and appreciation to his parents, John E. and Anna C. Slane, 1924.

CAT IN CHURCH

"While Mrs. H. C. Cowles was playing the organ, she noticed her kitten had followed her to service," recalls C. E. Mills. "I was delighted to take it out. I hid it under my long frock coat, but it's tail stuck out. Dr. Wood stood aside, giving me room. The cat yawned and caused some laughter during the church hour, while I was pulling it out the back door so it could run home."



Shown above is a view of First Presbyterian Church as it is today. 200 years of constant progress have resulted in one of the largest and most beautiful churches to be found in this area. Sunday First Presbyterian Church is celebrating its 200th Anniversary.

Attend The Pageant Sunday Night
Depicting This Church's 200-Year History

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Pioneer Women Active In Work Of Church

By NANCY B. ELIASON

Pioneer Fourth Creek women worked for their church in cleaning and beautifying its lawn and burying ground. They planted boxwoods and myrtle above their beloved dead. These under years of care and protection flourished to become large beautiful specimens coveted by many of their own people and admired by everyone.

The women attended all meetings, using their talents for music and the teaching of their children in the church and at home.

The first Foreign Missionary society was organized by Mrs. E. W. Grant and Miss Margaret Mitchell on November 2, 1875. Miss Emelie McGilvary (Mr. R. W. Orr) was president and Miss Margaret Mitchell was elected secretary-treasurer, a job she held for 29 years. In her well-kept minute books, 18 names were listed as charter members. Mrs. W. F. Hall and Mrs. M. C. Wood were two of these 18 charter members. In 1884 Miss Lou Graham was president.

In 1890, mite boxes were instituted and added substantially to their total gifts. In 1902 children's mite boxes were being opened along with them.

The Auxiliary then organized into circles. This was the first church in Statesville to adopt the circle method of meetings.

Then, along with other Presbyterian churches, the auxiliary adopted the name of the Women of the Church, First Presbyterian church, Statesville. There have been a line of fine officers. Mrs. H. H. King is the present officer.

Other early women's societies were the Ladies Aid society, organized in 1884 with Mrs. I. Hatfill, Mrs. M. R. Adams, Mrs. Kate White and others as president; Mesdames D. A. Miller, B. F. Long and other secretaries and treasurers.

In 1904 Miss Mitchell was given one assistant secretary because her eyes were failing. Mrs. Carrie Barringer Watts, Miss Mitchell died October 26, 1905.

Mrs. J. A. Scott, Sr. was president in 1906, with Mrs. Watts as secretary and treasurer. In January, 1906, the society joined the Missionary union. By 1908 all the women's societies began holding joint meetings.

In 1912 prayer circles were discussed. In 1914, the Home and Foreign Missionary circles united, with Mrs. M. R. Adams president. The auxiliary plan was adopted. The Home Mission Society was organized in 1892 by Miss Jane Caldwell. She was elected its first

president. Its objective was to work for the mission schools in the mountain region — Banner Elk, Spruce Pine and Plumtree were newly opened schools in charge of Rev. Edgar Tufts and others.

Ladies Union Temperance Society was organized in 1884 in connection with other denominations. Of the officers of the temperance society, Misses Lou Graham, Louise Hall and Helen Watts belonged to First Presbyterian church. Mrs. R. A. Willis, Mrs. M. C. Coone and Miss Mary Anderson were members of the Methodist church, now Broad Street Methodist church.

E. B. Stimson Pumped Organ For Lessons

It was on the old Neiman church organ E. B. Stimson started his career. His father wished him to become a professional or business man and felt organ lessons were not for his son. However, E. B. expressed his desire to Miss Louise Siddall, a Mitchell college teacher who lived in the C. E. Mills home.

She offered him lessons if he'd "pump" and asked, "Would you pump for me to play if I'd give you lessons?" His answer was, "Would I like to go to Heaven?" He became an accomplished organist and outstanding musician in our community.

Boy Impressed By Church

By HERBERT MORRISON

Coming to Statesville as a teenager in February of 1897 — before the days of paved streets — I can recall many customs now almost forgotten.

But the one most lasting impression was the First Presbyterian church with the late Dr. W. A. Wood of saintly memory as the pastor and many of the older generation in their accustomed places. Among these were the Rockwells, the Steeles, the Sherrills, the Hills, the Brady family and the Stimsons.

Scene 11 From The Pageant



A Sunday morning walk to the "preaching station" was fraught with danger as you can see from the apprehension in manner of this little group. The boy in the center looks as though an owl's hoot would send him running. Scene 11 of the Fourth Creek Pageant makes this danger believable as Indians attack the settlers who are cutting and laying logs for their cabins.

In the cast of characters for this scene will be a number of entire families and a group of boys playing the parts of Indians: Bobby Crawford, John Montgomery, Bobby Wilhelm, Malcolm Cameron, Nathan Moore, Bobby McLeod, Gray Lewis and Tommy Slane.

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Attend The Pageant Sunday, 7:30 P.M.

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