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Rev. Drury Dobbins Was Father Baptist

ELLENBORO MAN FOUNDED CAUSE IN TWO COUNTIES

Baptists Have Honored Him
With Three Memorials In
Rutherford And Cleveland

By STAFF WRITER

With a membership in excess of 25,000 members, Rutherford and Cleveland counties are said to be the banner Baptist counties in North Carolina.

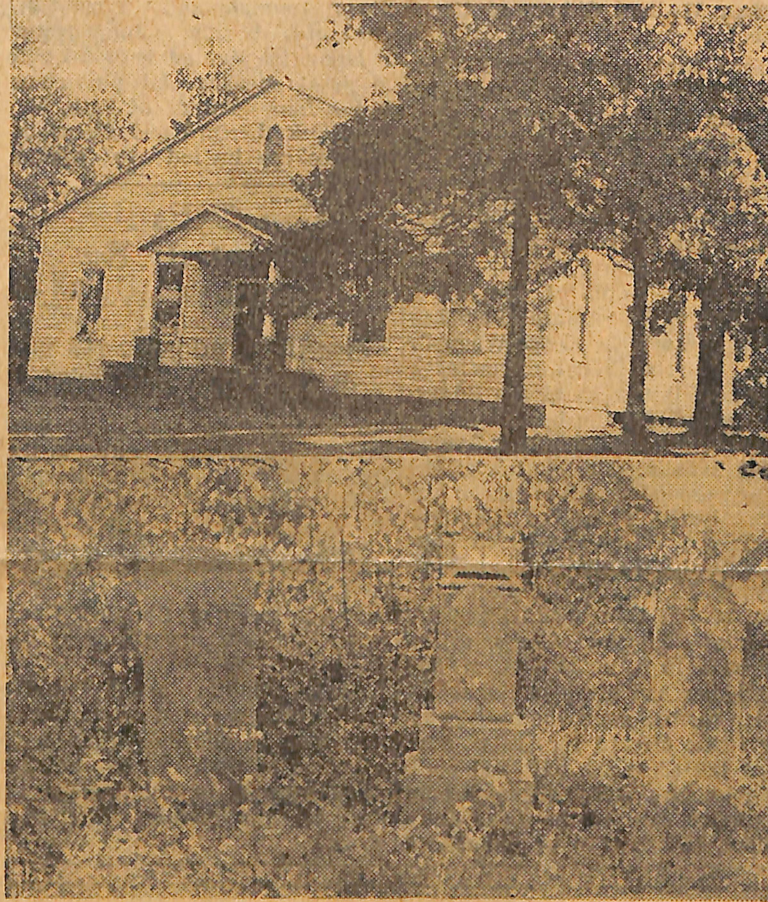
The Baptist cause in this area

started shortly after the American Revolution and continued to grow.

One of the leaders of the movement, who is often referred to as the "father of the Baptist denomination" in this area was Rev. Drury Dobbins. Today his memory is kept green and revered in the Sandy Run, Green River and Kings Mountain Baptist association. He has been honored with at least three memorials to his memory. On the lawn of the Sandy Run Baptist church at Mooresboro, Cleveland county, stands a magnificent monument erected by that church and the association. The association also erected a monument to the graves of Mr. Dobbins and his wife, in the family cemetery, near Ellenboro, Rutherford county, when the lettering on the two soapstone headstones began to fade. Just a mile away from the family cemetery is the Drury Dobbins Baptist church, founded in 1918, astride the Rutherford-Cleveland boundary.

Rev. Drury Dobbins was born in what is now Spartanburg county, S. C., on the State Line on April 7, 1776, shortly before the signing of the American Declaration of Independence. Little is known of his early life, but as a child his parents, William and Susannah Dobbins, removed a few miles north to Colfax township of Rutherford county. Young Dobbins acquired considerable real estate along Sandy Run creek in that township. The family cemetery and Drury Dobbins church are located on this property. By occupation he was a farmer and a

Memorials Honor Rev. Drury Dobbins



THE DRURY DOBBINS Baptist church (top) stands east of Ellenboro almost on the Rutherford-Cleveland line. Grave of Dobbins and wife, with new marker placed by Baptists of this area in family cemetery near Ellenboro. Monument to Dobbins on lawn of Sandy Run Baptist church. (Staff Photos)



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The adjoining grave
wife. The simple inscription reads:
"Hannah Dobbins, died Jan. 8,
1848, aged 80 years". The inscrip-
tion on the original soapstone
headstones are fading and are now
almost illegible. The Sandy Run
Baptist association has placed a
marble headstone between the
two graves and put the inscrip-
tion on that shaft.

Less than a mile from the old
home stands a new, modern Bap-
tist church building, named for
the old patriarch. This church
building sits almost astride the
boundary lines of Rutherford and
Cleveland. It is rather symbolic
that it should be thus located,
since his life's labors were spent
in those two counties. Located on
the same property once owned by
him, the building stands in Cleve-
land, while its back yard and part
of the cemetery is in Rutherford
county.

The Baptist denomination of this
area owes more to Rev. Drury
Dobbins than to any other single
individual for the growth and de-
velopment of the Baptist cause in
Cleveland and Rutherford coun-
ties. The overwhelming, top-hea-
vy Baptist population in the two
counties is today evidence of his
good works.

shoemaker, and seemed to have
accumulated much of worldly
goods before being called to the
Baptist ministry. Next to people,
he was a lover of books and it is
said that even when he pegged
shoes he had a book at his side.
For fifty years he rode horseback
through Cleveland and Rutherford
counties preaching the gospel and
founding new churches, and re-
ceived the munificent sum of \$24
per year.

Dobbins was a godly man, but
with all he had a good sense of

humor. Once he heard that men
were praising him, telling of his
good deeds and powerful preach-
ing, and saying how much they
admired him for the great work
he was doing for the Kingdom of
God. The old fellow became con-
cerned. He recalled the Biblical
admonition "Beware when all
men speak well of you." He began
to wonder if, since he was pleas-
ing men, he was pleasing God.

The following Sunday morning,
while passing through the church
yard before preaching-time, he
overheard one man say to ano-
ther: "There goes that --- old hypo-
crite, Drury Dobbins". He was re-
lieved. Obviously he was not pleas-
ing everybody and all men were

county and one of the greatest
men of his age. Died May 19, 1847,
aged 72 years. His body lies in
the family graveyard."

On the Dobbins homestead, on
Sandy Run creek, near Ellenboro,
is the Dobbins family cemetery.
Nearby is the site of the Dobbins
home, long since fallen to decay.
The headstone reads: "In memory
of Rev. Drury Dobbins who died
May 19, A. D. 1847 in the 72nd
year of his age. The deceased was
an able minister of the Baptist
church about 50 years. Pastor of

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er: "There goes that - - - old hypocrite, Drury Dobbins". He was relieved. Obviously he was not pleasing everybody and all men were not speaking well of him.

Dobbins had no opportunity for formal education, but was a self-taught man. As he progressed in the ministry he became a polished orator, and his sermons could sway multitudes. He was a great student of the Bible.

For upwards of fifty years he covered both Cleveland and Rutherford counties. Contemporaries describe him as a large man, riding a bay mare. His saddlebags containing a Bible, a hymnal, a slab of bacon and a pone of cornbread, with a blanket tied to the saddle. On his trips over the area he would frequently camp out under the stars when no home was available in the neighborhood. He conducted countless brush arbor meetings, and held hundreds of services over the area in private homes. He was the pastor of Sandy-Run Baptist church at Mooresboro for 44 years.

He was frequently called upon to write the circular letters to the Broad River Baptist association, and was very active in the affairs of that organization.

In early life he married Mrs. Hannah Sams, nee Miss Hannah Calahan, and they lived harmoniously together through a long series of years, during which time a daughter was born to them, who afterwards married Richard Harrill, from whom descended numerous progeny of respectable standing in the Ellenboro and Colfax communities.

A marble shaft stands before the Sandy Run Baptist church at Mooresboro. Around the base is engraved the following inscription: "Rev. Drury Dobbins, a member of the Baptist church for 50 years, pastor of the Sandy Run church for 44 years. Founder of the Baptist cause throughout this