

Pioneer Minister's Grave Moved To Concord Baptist

By GLENN JAMES
Star Correspondent

SPINDALE—After one hundred and eighteen years, the remains of one of the well-known early pastors of Concord Baptist Church now rest in the quiet, grass-covered cemetery of the church.

Mrs. O. Max Gardner of Shelby was responsible for the moving of the grave of her great-grandfather, the Rev. James M. Webb, to the cemetery of the church he served for 16 years (1833-1849). Also moved to the Concord Church cemetery were the graves of Webb's wife, Katherine Webb, a daughter and an infant. The inscription on the gravestone of the pioneer preacher and statesman reads "Rev. James M. Webb, Died April 24, 1854, age 51 years, 7 months, 17 days" and the gravestone inscription of the minister's wife reads, "In memory of Katherine Webb, wife of James M. Webb, Died September 10, 1848 in her 39th year."

The graves were moved from the Webb family plot at the home of Mr. and Mrs. John Wall Jr. on Highway 64, the Morganton highway. The Webb homestead was sold to the Walls several years ago by Mrs. O. Max Gardner of Shelby who inherited the property from her father, the late Judge James L. Webb, a descendant of the early minister.

The Rev. James M. Webb was the first moderator of the Green River Baptist Association. Born Oct. 7, 1802, he was the son of Daniel and Polly Celia Webb. He was married June 19, 1825 to Kitty White and was the father of 13 children by his first marriage, seven sons and six daughters. To his second wife, Nancy Walker Hampton was born three children, a daughter and two sons. The Rev. George Milton Webb, son of the Rev. James M. Webb, was Mrs. O. Max Gardner's grandfather.

The Rev. James M. Webb

was the first pastor of the First Baptist Church in Shelby. Mrs. O. Max Gardner and her children financed the building of the Webb Chapel, back of the church, the bronze plaque inside naming her ancestor as the first pastor.

The Rev. James M. Webb was a man of many talents. He grew to young manhood on the farm and was elected to the House of Commons when 26 years of age, representing the county three terms, in 1828, 1830 and 1831. He was ordained a Baptist minister in 1834.

In 1833 James M. Webb was elected clerk of the superior court of Rutherford County to succeed James Morris. He held the position until his resignation in November, 1849. In May of 1841, he acquired the newspaper plant of the old Carolina Gazette located at Rutherfordton, and began the publication of the Rutherfordton Intelligencer. He edited and published the newspaper until May, 1843, along with other duties as a minister and clerk of court. He gave up the newspaper business because of ill health.