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A SKETCH OF THE OLD SCOTCH SETTLEMENT AT UNION CHURCH.

BY C. W. GRAFTON.

This is the name given to a large section of country in the eastern end of Jefferson County, Mississippi. It extends about twenty miles from west to east, running over into the present county of Lincoln for several miles. Its average width is perhaps ten miles from north to south. It embraces the two Presbyterian Churches of Ebenezer and Union and at a later date two Methodist Churches, Nebo and Galatia. It has figured in civil and church councils for nearly one hundred years.

In 1805, just after the Louisiana purchase, four men with their families came from North Carolina to Tennessee and remained there for one year, thence by way of the Mississippi River they came to Bruinsburg, in Claiborne County. So far as can be found out these were the first settlers in the section known as the Scotch Settlement. These four persons were George Torrey, his son Dongold Torrey, Laughlin Currie and Robert Willis. They made two crops in Claiborne County, and in 1806 settled in Jefferson County, near the present site of Ebenezer Church. They were soon followed by the Gilchrists, Galbreaths and Camerons. A few years later all the country around Union Church, which is twelve miles east of Ebenezer, was filled with Scotch settlers who came mainly from North Carolina. Some of them, it is said, spoke the Gaelic language, and to this day there is extant in one of our homes a book of the Psalms and the Westminster Shorter Catechism in that old dialect. These Scotch people were nearly all Presbyterians and the history of the settlement is mainly a history of the two Presbyterian Churches that were organized at the very beginning of the period. These two churches were Ebenezer and Union Church. Thirty years ago Ebenezer Church was dissolved and the building sold to our Methodist brethren. This was caused by the constant removals from the neighborhood to cities and towns. The records of the old church are not accessible to the writer and therefore details must be omitted from this sketch.

The church was organized in 1811 by Rev. Jacob Ricklaw. During all its palmy days its pastor was the Rev. William Montgomery. It was a church of great wealth and influence. One of its members stated not long ago that in the days of its prosperity it represented property worth a million of dollars. This is not difficult to believe when we recall the names of some of its prominent families. There were the Darden families, including Jesse Darden, Buckner Darden, Samuel Darden and George Darden. There were two or three families each of Camerons, Curries, Montgomerys and Torreys. There were the families of Malcolm Gilchrist, Duncan McArn, J. J. Warren and quite a number of others. Now, when we remember that the soil was in its virgin state, that these men owned a great many slaves and that they were very valuable, we can readily credit the statement concerning the wealth of this part of the Scotch settlement. This section of the county furnished its full share of representatives in the State and County government. George Torrey was for a long time sheriff of the county. His son, W. D. Torrey, and M. M. Currie were at different times members of the State Senate, while Daniel H. Cameron represented his county in the lower house of the Legislature. The people of Ebenezer were refined and cultivated and to them the civil war with its results was exceedingly disastrous. When their slave property was lost their lands became useless. Their splendid carriages, wagons and teams rapidly disappeared. The price of cotton was not remunerative, the old men gradually died and the young men left the farms, so that the glory of this part of the Scotch settlement is mainly in the past. Some of the old houses remain and there are good citizens in the community, but the Scotch element has passed away.

Union Church was organized in 1817 by Rev. Joseph Bullen before the State was admitted into the Union. The earliest settlers came in 1808 and 1810. They were mainly from Robeson County, North Carolina. The pioneer missionaries sent out by the Synod of the Carolinas began preaching here in 1811. After several years Rev. Joseph Bullen gathered the Presbyterian families that had collected from different parts of the country and organized them into a church, which has ever since been known as Union Church. In process of time a postoffice was

established and a village grew up which took the name of Union Church and which at one time was incorporated, with its mayor and other officers. In 1880 the Union Church High School was organized under a liberal charter and has been maintained with more or less success for more than twenty years.

The people in the early days were noted for the simplicity of their manners. They were not wealthy, as were their neighbors of Ebenezer. They were plain, unpretending, honest people. Father Montgomery, who preached so long at Ebenezer, was likewise the pastor of Union Church. He served in this position from 1820 to 1848 and was a most faithful minister. In a marked manner he was punctual in his appointments for this long period of twenty-eight years. Owing to the sickness and death of his daughter he missed one Sabbath day during this period. He was an earnest, self-denying man. On one occasion he declined a large salary offered by the people of Pine Ridge, preferring to give his life to the Scotch people at Union Church. He died in 1848, but his name lives in the memory of our oldest people who speak of him with the deepest veneration.

At a later period in the history of the church his son, Rev. Sam Montgomery, filled the pulpit for seven or eight years. He was a man of great talent, with unusual power as a public speaker. The stories told of his eloquence are remarkable. Thirty years ago the writer saw him in the pulpit, and though he was infirm in body and in declining years, no one could have helped being thrilled by the fascination of his address. In 1883 Rev. J. J. Wheat, Professor of Greek in the State University, asked the writer, who was on a visit to Oxford, what had become of Sam Montgomery. The answer was, "The old man is living about among his friends." Said he, "I once heard Sam Montgomery preach and for power and impressiveness and command over an audience I have never seen him surpassed," or words to that effect. Father Montgomery lies buried in the neighborhood of Ebenezer. His son went to the Yazoo Delta in 1884 and died soon after in the home of his grandson.

Union Church was supplied several years by Rev. Angus McCallum, next by Rev. John H. Smiley, next by Rev. Thomas H. Cleland. These three served the church for just a few years

each. Father McCallum bought a piece of land near the village of Union Church and opened up a good, productive farm. He was a man of fine judgment, an excellent manager and was very thrifty in the conduct of his business. He had a most excellent wife and they reared a family of ten sons and daughters, five of whom are living to-day. This venerable brother died in 1885, and with his good wife lies in the graveyard at Union Church.

Rev. John H. Smiley was from New England and was a man of great force of character. He was a rigid Calvinist of the highest type and for many years after his death his strong presentation of doctrine remained fresh and green in the memory of the people. Rev. Thos. H. Cleland was a mild and gentle man. He died not long since in Louisiana.

Rev. C. W. Grafton became pastor of Union Church in 1873. Thirty-two years have passed away and he still abides, going out and coming in among the descendants of the ancient Scotchmen.

The church has been blessed with a faithful body of Ruling Elders and Deacons. During the hundred years now closing the following men have served the people as Ruling Elders:

Angus Patterson, Neil Buie, Jr., John Buie, Sr., Matthew Smylie, Charles McDougald, Murdoch McDuffie, John Watson, Sr., John Buie, Jr., Archibald Baker, Reuben Lee, Malcolm McPherson, Lewis Cato, Sterling Cato, Daniel Grafton Buie, Daniel H. Cameron, William B. Alsworth, Samuel Davis McCallum, Allen Baxter Cato, N. R. C. Watson, David G. Galbreath, John A. Smylie, George S. Torrey, Peter Wilkinson, L. A. Cato.

Here, too, is a list of the Deacons' names:

Gilbert M. Buie, Daniel N. McLaurin, Isaac N. Buie, Joseph Josling Warren, John A. Galbreath, John L. Scott, S. D. McCallum, E. E. Smiley, Allen B. Cato, Dr. D. C. Warren, A. Schaefer, John Lee Scott.

There have been in all three church buildings. The last one was erected in 1852, has been repaired two or three times and stands to-day upon the old site surrounded with venerable oak trees and crowned with blessed memories. During its existence many hundreds have been received into its communion. All its friends will recognize these leading family names. To begin

with, there are twenty-three sets of Mc's enrolled in its sacred register of names:

McArn, McArthur, McBride, McCall, McCallum, McClure, McClutchie, McCormick, McCorvey, McDonald, McDougald, McDuffie, McEachern, McFater, McIntyre, McLaurin, McLean, McMillen, McMurchie, McNair, McPherson, McQueen, McRea.

These Mc's would establish the claim to the title of "the Scotch settlement" if nothing else did.

There were six different sets of Buies, whose sons in a few years married and formed a large number of Buie families.

There have been sixteen families of Catos. A few more leading family names are as follows:

Alsworth, Baker, Barnes, Blue, Brown, Buckels, Cameron, Clark, Currie, Fairly, Galbreath, Gilchrist, Knapp, Knox, Lee, LeGette, Newman, Patterson, Ray, Scott, Smiley, Smylie, Smith, Torrey, Warren, Watson, Wilkinson.

The period between 1820 and 1830 might be called the romance days of the Scotch settlement. Everything was young, bright, fresh, and full of life and vigor. The country abounded in game and the streams in fish. The lowlands and sometimes the hills were covered with canebrakes. Farming was an easy matter at that day. Burn away the brakes and plant your corn and you would be sure of a harvest. Natchez was the market town for all the country and Union Church was a point on the highway between the eastern counties and Natchez, and in the fall of the year long trains of wagons pulled by teams of heavy oxen were strung out a hundred miles from the interior of the State to the Mississippi River. It is forty-five miles from Union Church to Natchez, and it was a great occasion for a farmer to yoke up his oxen and start to market with the whole week before him for going and returning. Some of the old Scotch were not averse to strong drink, and coming back with a jug of Scotch whisky their animal spirits would be stirred on the way and their home coming would be loudly advertised. But such an one would unfailingly be brought before his brethren in the church and he would be certain of a reprimand and would probably be excommunicated for a while. The old records of Union Church abound in illustrations of the faithful dealings of the elders with their brethren. Let a man be overtaken in a fault, such as vio-

lating the Sabbath day, or taking God's name in vain, or becoming intoxicated and he was certain of discipline by the church. And this faithful attitude of the Ruling Elders doubtless saved many an erring brother.

This period was famous as the camp-meeting period. On the slope of the hill where the church has stood so long great rows of wooden sheds were built and in the fall of the year the people came together. The best preachers of the old Presbytery of Mississippi assembled, and for many days at a time—morning, evening and midday—the voice of prayer and praise and preaching was heard. No one can tell the far-reaching influence of those sacred gatherings. People would come to them from a distance of forty miles and more, would profess faith in Christ, then go back home to spread the leaven of gospel truth and grace. Surely in the coming day when the King takes the roll of his people it will be said, "This and that man was born there."

Father Montgomery, Zebulon Butler, Jacob Rickhow, Joseph Bullen, James Smylie, and other godly men who were faithful heralds in the old Scotch settlement passed away long ago, but "they being dead still speak." They live to-day in the monumental churches which they founded and fed in those early days. Many men of very fine talent were born and reared in this old heart of the Scotch settlement.

There was one old Buie family out of which came some wonderful men. There was the Rev. Whitfield Buie, who took first honors at Oakland College. He was a man of fine intellectual power. He studied at Princeton College, but he had scarcely begun his earthly ministry when it was closed by death. He had a brother, Dr. William E. Buie, who for intellectual ability and skill in the medical profession was easily the peer of any man in all the land. He was a man of great gentleness and self-denial, of chaste speech and behavior, and lived for the good of his fellow men. He had calls to lucrative positions in distinguished medical institutions, but he declined them all and gave his life to his humble friends of the Scotch settlement. He moved with his brother, Newton Buie, to Texas during the war, but returned like a pilgrim to the old spot that gave him birth and died a man of stainless name and sleeps with his fathers in the sacred dust of our Scotland.

Rev. William G. Millsaps was also a man of unusual power and influence. He studied theology at Danville, became a minister in the Methodist Church, and for a long time served his people faithfully and effectively. He was the brother of our friend Major R. W. Millsaps, of Jackson.

When the civil war broke out the first company that left Jefferson County for the seat of war was the "Charley Clark Rifles," from the Scotch settlement around Union Church. It was a sad and long-to-be-remembered day when those dear young men paraded in the shade of the trees close to the old church and received from the hands of Miss Flora Buie a silken banner of the Southern Confederacy. Dr. J. J. McLean was the first captain of this company and Dr. Rufus Applewhite was his successor. Of the 105 men who formed that first company there are now just twelve men living. Their names are worthy of at least a mention in this short sketch of the old community and I gladly put them here on record. They are:

Dr. Rufus Applewhite, Captain; B. L. Applewhite, C. C. Erwin, William Ferguson, Jake Garrett, Joe Garrett, Sam King, Winston King, F. Krauss, S. D. McCallum, Tom McNair, Lewis Vaughan.

Their comrades lie all the way from Sharpsburg in Maryland to the Rio Grande.

The men of those former days were men of great faith and prayer. A few old people now living tell many stories of the fervency and length of their prayers. They were deeply devoted to the Calvinistic interpretation of the Bible and to the traditions and memories of the old church of the Covenant, the Presbyterian Church, the church of their love and veneration. Here is an instance:

Mary McDougald was received into the church in her young girlhood. Quite young she married a Scotchman named McEachern and moved with him to Carroll County, where they formed a new home. She carried with her all her love for the church of her fathers. She was earnestly solicited to join a church of another denomination which at that time held the field in her neighborhood. Said she, "No, I will help you all I can. I will sing with you and pray with you, and give money to you, but I am a Presbyterian and can never be anything else,

and when we have a chance we will organize one right here." This good mother in Israel died in 1903, leaving behind her 121 children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and nearly every one of whom that has reached mature years is now a member of the church in full communion. She lived to see seven white Presbyterian churches organized and one colored, all of which trace their origin directly to her influence. The life of this good woman spans the whole century of the Scotch settlement at Union Church.

Another noted good woman was Aunt Mary Wilkinson. She was the daughter of Ruling Elder Matthew Smylie, the brother of Rev. James Smylie. She married Daniel M. Wilkinson of fine Scotch lineage. She was a true, outspoken member of the Presbyterian Church, perfectly loyal to the very last in her love for the old settlement at Union Church. With her husband she moved to Jackson. She gave one of her daughters to Col. J. L. Power, another to John D. McArn, another to Mr. Cadwallader, and she, too, spanning nearly the whole century, passed away two or three years since wearing a crown of sweetness and joy triumphant in the hope of the gospel. Her children and grandchildren and all her friends bless her memory.

There are many others whose names are found upon our grave-stones who had in them the stuff to make them stand in Senate halls or wear the crown of martyrs, but like the "many a flower that wastes its sweetness on the desert air," they rest sweetly in their quiet beds with no sculptured urn or monument to tell their story.

Like Ebenezer, Union Church has suffered immensely by the loss of its sons and daughters. During the last thirty years more than seventy families have moved away from this community. They are found all over the country. Memphis, Vicksburg, Port Gibson, Natchez, Jackson, Hazlehurst, Wesson, Brookhaven, different parts of Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas claim the sons and daughters of our old Scotch settlement. It seemed at one time as if the entire settlement was destined to share the fate of its twin sister, Ebenezer. But the school and the church are wonderful conservators of neighborhood life, and these two factors have worked hand in hand to keep alive this old community. The school bell still rings and pupils and

teachers meet in the schoolhouse. Sabbath after Sabbath the congregations assemble at the old church and sing the old songs—Arlington, Mear, Rockingham and Uxbridge. The doctrines of grace still sound from the pulpit. Girls and boys make love as of old, and evergreens and flowers adorn the marriage altar, while again and again the people weep in the house of mourning.

It might be asked how the neighborhood still lives if its families move away and none move in. The answer is, it grows from within. The Scotch settlement is an endogen. John D. McArn married Lizzie Wilkinson, and he has twelve children. Peter Wilkinson married Mary Faris, and he has ten living children. J. E. Lamb married and had thirteen. Clint Faris and Jim Currie have ten each. Would not Queen Victoria, the model mother of Great Britain, have smiled on these descendants of the ancient highlanders? Would not the men who love large families feel at home at Union Church? So the church still lives and has over 200 members on its rolls.

The settlement is twenty-five miles from Brookhaven on the east and twenty-one miles from Fayette on the west. Port Gibson is twenty-eight miles north and Meadville twenty miles south. The Scotch settlement therefore, with Union Church as a nucleus, has been in the center of a wide influence for 100 years.

They talk of building a railroad from Hattiesburg to Natchez, and a route has been surveyed through Union Church. That road may be built and we may get more strength. We may be opened up better to the commerce and methods of the world, but the history of Union Church for these hundred years past is beyond the reach of change. It is embalmed in precious memories that lie hidden away on old tombstones and in old Bibles all over the land.

With reverent hearts we bid adieu to the past and with courage born out of that past we hope for the future.