

## African American Members of First Baptist Church Hillsborough, NC

**Background:** The Hillsborough Baptist Church was organized on Saturday, November 19, 1853 in the old wooden courthouse purchased by Reverend Elias Dodson in 1845. The church was organized with fifteen members - six men and nine women. All were members of the Mars Hill Baptist Church located three miles north of town. London, slave of S. Moon, was the first African American accepted for membership. Soon additional slaves (servants) joined, many transferring their membership from the Mars Hill Baptist Church.

The "colored" congregation continued to meet at the church until April, 1868. With the exception of Lewis Jenkins, they voluntarily withdrew their fellowship to form a church of their own. At first they met in each other's homes. Ms. Susannah Washington Graham, wife of William Alexander Graham, a former Governor of North Carolina (1845-1849) donated land for the congregation to build its first building. Eventually the congregation became known as the Mount Bright Baptist Church named in honor of their first pastor, Rev. Alfred E. Bright.

**Church Conference Minutes:** The church's minutes provide the dates, first name and often the "owner" of the slaves (servants) who were accepted for membership. The following is extracted from the Conference Minutes.

Hillsboro April 1856

The church held its slated meeting this evening. Conference in session.

Doors of the church opened for the reception of members. London slave of S. Moon united with the church by letter.

Hillsboro May 15th 1856

At a called meeting for the purpose

Amos & Taff. servant of ?? Strudwick(?) and James servant of Col. Jones united with this church by Christian exsperience rec'd and were duly rec'd as candidates of baptism. No other business adjourned.

H. C. Stroud c.c.

Hillsboro July 3rd 1856

Conference in session doors opened for the reception of members. May (Mary?) servant of H. Mullen (?) presented a letter and was rec'd as member of this church in full fellowship.

H. C. Stroud c.c.

Hillsboro Augt 5th 1856

The church held its slated meeting this evening.

Prayer by moderator. Letter of dismission & recommendation of Mars, James, Edith, Polly, Peggy, Harriet, Hester, Ada, Judith, Nancy, Sally, Mary, Mary, Peggy, Judith, Milly, Anna & Moriah all servants from Mars Hill Church & they were all rec'd into the fellowship of this church

Hillsboro May 1858

Conference in session

Elder J. Mitchell presiding, door of the church opened the following persons came forward and related their Christian exsperience to the church - vz **Henry servant of J. Turner** **Walter servant of Jerry Williams** & **Peter servant of Col. Terry**, and were received as candidates for baptism. No other business adj.

H. C. Stroud c.c.

Hillsboro June 26th 1858

Called meeting of the conference.

**James servant of Col. Jones** related his Christian exsperience & was rec'd as candidate for baptism. No other business adjourned.

H. C. Stroud c.c.

Hillsboro Augt 1858

The church held its slated meeting this evening.

**Julia servant of W. B. Williams** related her Christian exsperience and was duly rec'd as candidate for baptism. No other business adjourned.

H. C. Stroud c.c.

Hillsboro Oct 1858

The church held a called meeting this evening.

The following person presented themselves and were upon a profession of faith duly rec'd as candidates for baptism vz Sarah Scott Elizabeth Newman Sarah A. Quackenbush Mrs. Christmas Thomas Hancock & **Jane, Mary & Dinah(?) servants**. No other business adjourned.

H. C. Stroud c.c.

Hillsboro January 6th 1859

Conference in session

Bro. Cheek mod protem. A letter was read from Catawba Baptist Church recommending **Helda servant of ?? Jones** to the fellowship of this church which was received.

Oct 13th 1859

The church held its slated meeting this evening.

Conference opened by prayer. A letter of dismission was granted **Hester Baily, servant**. Committee on the indebtedness of the church report the debt to be sixty six dollars. They having failed to raise the money were allowed another week.

Oct. 16th 1859

At a called meeting **Ned, servant of Capt John Berry** related his Christian experience and was received and baptised.

H. C. Stroud, c.c.

March 1st 1860

The church held its slated meeting this evening

Conference opened by prayer. Minutes of former meeting read and approved. Doors of the church opened for the reception of members March; a servant of G. S. Leathers was received by letter. No other business adjourned.

H. C. Stroud, c.c.

May 3rd 1860

The church held its slated meeting

Minutes of former meeting read and approved Door of the church opened for the reception of members whereupon Sisters V. Fuller and Mary P. Gattis presented letters of dismissal from others to join this church and were unanimously received into the fellowship of the same. Mrs. Pleasant also came forward and related her Christian experience and was received as a candidate for baptism and also Sarah servant girl of H. Whitehead, was rec'd as a candidate for baptism. Daniel was appointed assistant sexton with a sallery of \_\_\_\_ per month. No other business adjourned.

H. C. Stroud, c.c.

Thursday before the 1st Sunday in July 1860

The church held its slated meeting this evening

Prayer by Bro. Jones. Minutes of former meeting read and approved. Doors of the church opened for the reception of members whereupon Emily servant of Dr. James Cain, came as a candidate for baptism.

Called meeting Sunday following Servant of Mrs. Nash was received and baptised.

H. C. Stroud, c.c.

March 2nd 1861

The church held its slated meeting this evening

Prayer by moderator Minutes of former meeting read and approved Business taken up in order Doors of the church opened for the reception of members Peggy, the servant of Dr. E. Strudwick, came forward and was received by letter.

**Membership List:** The following list of African American members was handwritten in the back of a Red Journal that contained the minutes of church conferences. It contains the first and last names of these members and the date they were received by letter (transfer of membership from another Baptist church) or baptized. The spelling and abbreviations remain as found in the original text.

## List of Colored Members belonging to the Hillsboro Baptist Church

London Moon	Recd by letter April 3 <sup>rd</sup>	1856
Amos Strudwick	" " baptism May 15 <sup>th</sup>	1856
Taff Strudwick	" " " " "	1856
James Jones	" " " " " Diss	1856
Nancy Whitted*	" " letter July 3 <sup>rd</sup> (Expld Jany 1859)	1856
Edith Black	" " " Augst 5 <sup>th</sup> Diss	1856
Polly Whitted	" " " " "	1856
Peggy Jones	" " " " "	1856
Harriet Graham	" " " " " Diss by letter	1856
Ada Hill	" " " " " Dead	1856
Judith Webb	" " " " "	1856
Nancy Fuher	" " " " "	1856
Nancy Whitted*	" " " " "	1856
Sally Whitted	" " " " " Dead	1856
Mary Turner	" " " " "	1856
Mary Palmer	" " " " "	1856
Peggy Strudwick*	" " " " "	1856
Judith Norwood	" " " " "	1856
Milly Turner	" " " " "	1856
Moriah Whitted	" " " " " Diss by letter	1856
Mars Whitted	" " " " "	1856
James Thompson	" " " " "	1856
Hester Baily	" " " " " Diss by letter Oct 13 <sup>th</sup>	1856
Anna Nash	" " " " " " " " " 15 <sup>th</sup>	1856
Martha Norwood	" " baptism Nov	1856
Henry Turner	" " " May	1858
Walter Williams	" " " "	1858
Peter Jones	" " " "	1858
Julia Williams	" " " Augt	1858
Jane Jones	" " " Oct 23 <sup>rd</sup>	1858
Mary Thompson	" " " " " Dead	1858
Dinah Webb	" " " " " Dead	1858
Hetty Jones	" " letter Jan	1859
Franklin Berry	" " baptism June	1859
Ned Berry	" " " Oct	1860
Lewis Jinkins	" " " Jany	1860

March Leathers	" "	"	March	1860
Sarah Whitted	" "	baptism	May 11 <sup>th</sup>	1860
Emily Cain	Rec by	baptism	May 6 <sup>th</sup>	1860
Nash (Julio)	" "	"	" "	1860
Peggy Strudwick*	" "	letter	May	1861
Kisiah Kollock	" "	letter	July	1861
Margaret Norwood	" "	baptism	July 13 <sup>th</sup>	1862
Dinah Strayhorn	" "	"	" "	1862
Harriet Lynch	" "	"	" "	1862
Jno Jones	" "	"	" "	1862
Jack Williams	" "	"	" "	1862
Daniel Latta	" "	letter		
Lelow Norwood	" "	"	Feb 25	1866
Diana Faucett	" "	"	" "	"
Jane Thompson	" "	"	" "	"

{Editor's note: Two more individuals are mentioned in the church's minutes as having been accepted as members on Feb 25<sup>th</sup> 1866, Mary Whitted and Maria Whitted. In addition, there is the following information appended to the name of Lewis Jenkins but found on page 461 which reads Dismissed by letter Nov 3<sup>rd</sup> 1870. No date is given for Daniel Latta joining the church; however, there is a reference to Daniel being paid as the church's sexton.}

\* Nancy Whitted is listed twice, both times 1856. Peggy Strudwick is listed twice, once in 1856 and again in 1861. Most likely are the same individuals.

**Handwritten Page:** The following is an example of the handwritten list that appears on pages 460 and 461 of the Red Journal.

460				
<i>List of baptized members belonging to the Hillboro' Baptist Church</i>				
<i>London Moore</i>	<i>Rec by letter</i>	<i>Apr 3<sup>rd</sup></i>		<i>1856</i>
<i>Amos Strudwick</i>	<i>" "</i>	<i>Baptism</i>	<i>May 15<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>1856</i>
<i>Luff Strudwick</i>	<i>" "</i>	<i>" "</i>	<i>" "</i>	<i>1856</i>
<i>James Jones</i>	<i>" "</i>	<i>" "</i>	<i>Dec</i>	<i>1856</i>
<i>Nancy Whitted</i>	<i>" "</i>	<i>letter</i>	<i>July 3<sup>rd</sup> (Exp'd. Jan'y 1857)</i>	<i>1856</i>
<i>Edith Black</i>	<i>" "</i>	<i>" "</i>	<i>Aug 5<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>1856</i>
<i>Sally Whitted</i>	<i>" "</i>	<i>" "</i>	<i>" "</i>	<i>1856</i>