

Timeline of Events in the Life of Christ Church, Albemarle The Early Years to 1944

- 1817 The diocese of North Carolina is formed.
- 1841 Stanly County is formed from Montgomery County following the destruction of the Montgomery County Courthouse by fire. Prominent area citizens living west of the Yadkin/Pee Dee River system successfully petition the North Carolina General Assembly to establish the area as an independent entity based upon recent growth in the region. The county is named for John Stanly (1774-1834) of New Bern who served in the North Carolina House of Commons and the United States House of Representatives.
- 1857 After the formation of Stanly County, its Board of Commissioners work to establish a county seat within eight miles of the home of Eben Hearne, the county's first sheriff. Nehemiah Hearne donates fifty-one acres of land for the construction of the new county seat. Albemarle is formally incorporated in 1857 and named for the Duke of Albemarle, George Monck (1608-1673) who was an English soldier and political figure during the reign of Charles II. As a token of gratitude for Monck's loyalty to the king, Charles II gave Monck title to a large tract of land in North America that included the present-day states of North and South Carolina.
- 1863 Frances Swift (1841-1915), who is believed to be the first Stanly County Episcopalian, flees to Albemarle following the destruction of her family home in Plymouth, North Carolina during the Civil War.
- 1873 Miss "Fannie" Swift marries William Harrison Hearne (1841-1905) in 1873. They raise five daughters, four of whom become Episcopalians.
- 1886-7 The Rev. C. J. Curtis, Evangelist from the Charlotte Convocation holds services in Stanly County. One of the duties of the Evangelist is to serve Episcopalians who live outside the reach of existing parishes. He is persuaded to come to Albemarle through the determined efforts of Mrs. Hearne for what is believed to be the first visit of an Episcopal clergyman to Stanly County. During his visit, Janie Walker Hearne (b. 1886), the youngest daughter of Frances and William Hearne is baptized.
- 1891 The Yadkin Railroad begins service to Albemarle in September, 1891.
- 1896 Efirid Mills begins operation in Albemarle in 1896 followed by Wiscassett Mills in 1899. By the turn of the century, Albemarle has a population of 1,392 with over fifteen thousand residents living in Stanly County.



Gravestone for Frances Swift Hearne and her husband, William Harrison Hearne in the Hearne Family Cemetery in Albemarle.

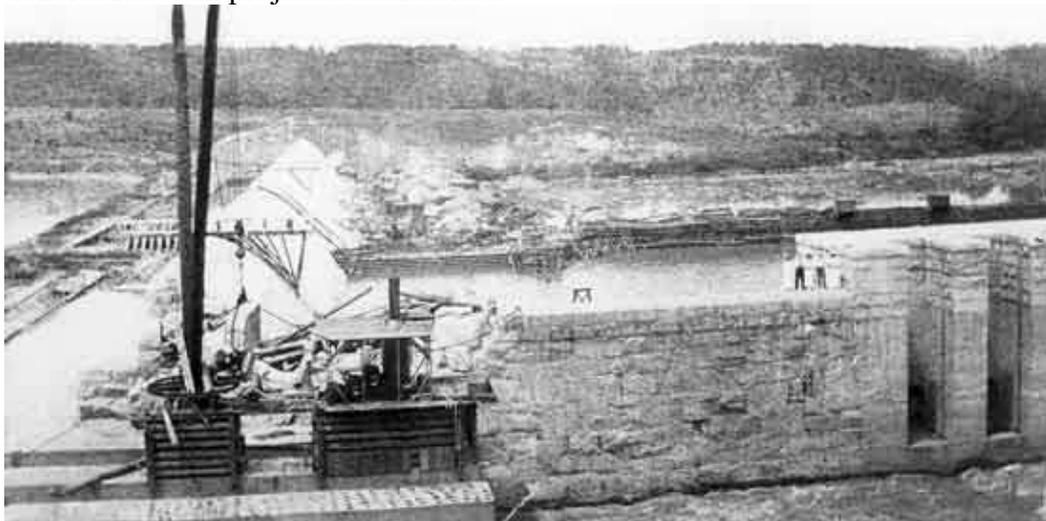


A view of the Efir and Wiscassett Mills in Albemarle

1901 The Albemarle Episcopalians come under the care of The Rev. Edwin A. Osborne, Archdeacon of the Charlotte Convocation.

March 13, the congregation receives the first episcopal visitation from Bishop Cheshire.

Plans to generate electricity from the Yadkin River begin in 1901 when Pittsburgh financier, George I. Whitney starts construction on a dam made of granite blocks taken from his own quarry about 20 miles from the dam site. By 1907 his investments in the region post a loss of approximately nineteen million dollars. The dam project is abandoned.



The first dam built on the Yadkin River was made of granite blocks. Construction started in 1901 but was left unfinished when financier, George I. Whitney went bankrupt in 1907.

1902 Episcopal services are conducted on an occasional basis between 1902 and 1908 by The Rev. Francis J. Murdoch, rector of St. Luke's in Salisbury and by Archdeacon Edwin A. Osborne between 1902 and 1911.

- 1911 The Winston-Salem Southbound Railway (WSSB) begins regular service to Albemarle in November 1911. By 1917 the area is served by no less than ten WSSB passenger trains a day.
- 1912 The French-owned aluminum company, *l'Aluminium Français*, buys the property formerly owned by George Whitney. The company determines that the Narrows is a better place to harness the river for hydro-electric power.
- 1913 Construction begins on the Badin and Narrows Dam, however events in Europe that lead to the outbreak of World War I in 1915 cause work on the project to stop when the French government prohibits French capital for foreign investment from leaving the country.
- 1915 *L'Aluminium Français* is bought by Andrew Mellon's conglomerate, Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA) and construction resumes on the Narrows Dam, which is completed in June of 1917. The 5,300 acre Badin Lake fills for the first time on August 5, 1917.

By 1917 ten of the fifteen Episcopalian communicants residing in Stanly County live in Badin. The significance of Badin in the history of the parish is seen in the name Albemarle-Badin Episcopal Mission that was used during this time. It also is reflected in 1939 when Bishop Edwin Penick makes the decision to build the church in Albemarle rather than in Badin.

The congregation meets under lay leadership during the early years, and celebrates Holy Communion when possible during visits by area clergy such as The Rev. Theodore Andrews, rector of Grace Church in Lexington. Although detailed records are lacking for this period of time, a 1923 report by the Women's Auxiliary to the Board of Missions suggests regular activity by members of the church.

- 1924 Palm Sunday, Archdeacon William H. Hardin from Charlotte reports that an unorganized mission has been established in Albemarle with The Rev. Wilmot S. Holmes, rector of Grace Church in Lexington performing three evening services each month and Archdeacon Hardin providing a morning service with Eucharist on the third Sunday of the month. The church, which numbers 28 baptized persons and 14 communicants, meets in the old wood frame First Presbyterian Church following the Presbyterian's move to their new church in February of 1924. Archdeacon Hardin recommends the purchase of the 1901 Presbyterian structure located diagonally across the intersection from the new church on the corner of First and North Streets.



The "first" First Presbyterian Church of Albemarle

1927 Members raise about three of the five thousand dollar purchase price for the Presbyterian property but the project is dropped due to the lack of funds caused in part by the loss of members who moved away. The church meets on an irregular basis between 1927 and 1935 in the American Legion Hut.

1935 The Rev. John F. Haymaker, rector of Calvary Church in Wadesboro becomes the priest-in-charge for the Albemarle Mission, which soon takes the name of Christ Church. During his tenure, the Women's Auxiliary is reorganized and the church flourishes reporting a congregation of forty-one baptized and twenty-five communicants. John Tipton Oxford, who serves as treasurer during this period,



is one of the leading lay members and remembered for his mission work in the community. He is employed by Wiscassett where he organizes services and is said to have almost lost his job for taking too much time out for the purpose.

Fortunately, his employer likes him and allows him to continue to hold services as long as he limits them to certain times.

Mr. Oxford also goes into the community to bring children to Sunday School. His work is recognized when the church honors him by naming the chapel in the left transept the Oxford Chapel.

The Oxford Chapel

1937 Mr. Haymaker retires and is succeeded by The Rev. Frank E. Pulley, who is also rector of Calvary Church in Wadesboro. Parochial reports from this period record 53 baptized, 23 communicants and a Sunday School enrollment of 15. On March 16 the congregation votes to purchase a lot east of the Floyd Teeter residence on Pee Dee Avenue. The purchase price of \$ 1,000 is reduced by two hundred dollars in the form of a donation from the Home Builders Association, owners of the property. The balance of eight hundred dollars is obtained from a trust established by Mrs. F. J. Murdoch Sr. of Salisbury whose husband conducted services in Albemarle between 1902 and 1908 during the time when he was the rector of St. Luke's Church, Salisbury.

1939 Mr. Pulley accepts charge of a parish in Leesburg, Florida. Christ Church membership includes more than fifty persons. On September 1, The Rev. William Penn Price, priest-in-charge at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Asheboro becomes priest-in-charge in Albemarle. The congregation continues to meet in the American Legion Hut. From September 24, 1939 until June 16, 1940 the church meets at 7:30 pm on Sunday evenings in Hearne's Music Studio.

The church begins serious efforts to build a new church. Some discussion of building in Badin is entertained because many members live there, however Bishop Edwin A. Penick ultimately declares that Albemarle is to be the site. It

is determined that the lot previously purchased on Pee Dee Avenue is too small so an adjoining lot is purchased from Mr. Floyd Teeter for \$1,200, Mr. Teeter giving the church \$100 on the cost.

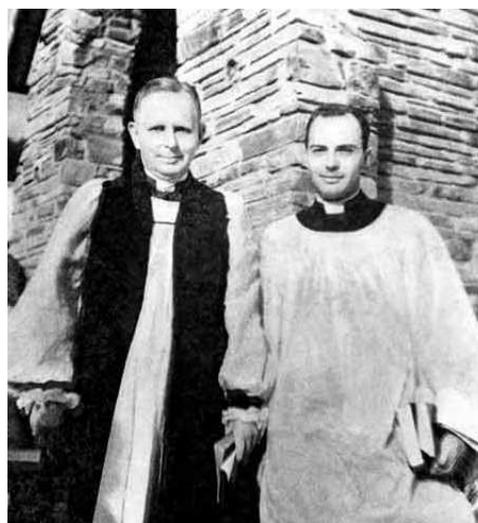
Mr. Walter Dallam Toy, Jr. (1906-1991) an Episcopalian and architect with the firm of Hook & Hook in Charlotte draws plans for the new building, which he donates to Christ Church. It is his first church project.



The little stone church on Pee Dee Avenue is built by contractor D. A. Holbrook. Stone masons are Wagoner & Sons who quarry a type of slate called North Carolina Bluestone for the exterior walls from their own quarry in Davidson County. Mr. Wagoner reveals that there is only one other building in Albemarle, a private residence, made of stone from the same quarry but that the church is unique in the rough texture of its outside surface.

1940 The cornerstone, donated by Will Palmer of Palmer Stone Works in Albemarle, is laid by Bishop Edwin A. Penick on June 23 when the church is used for the first service. Participants in the event, which includes confirmation, include the choir from St. Luke's in Salisbury. A social hour is held following worship on the lawn of the Teeter's residence west of the church.

The new church, which seats 175 in reasonable comfort, cost a little over \$ 8,200 and is the result of many fund raising activities, labor, sacrifice and gifts from parishioners and non-parishioners. One gift of particular significance comes from the S. H. Hearne family. When the Lutheran Church stopped administering



Bishop Penick & The Rev. William Penn Price – June 23, 1940

communion by common cup they returned a set of silver communion vessels to the Hearne family who gave them to Christ Episcopal Church.

In September, Frank Pulley visits the church and wrote of it as “one of the prettiest, and finest small Churches” I have ever seen. Later he wrote the following in a newsletter to his Florida congregation:

Albemarle mission has “only 30 or 35 members, and their venture of faith in building this beautiful modern Church is an example of love and zeal to all who see it. The members are not wealthy but they are earnest and eager. We pray that their effort to pay for their Church may be crowned with success.” He added that he and his family left Albemarle “with a profound appreciation of what God can do with a handful of truly inspired and active Christians.”

1941 The Rev. Mr. Price leaves Christ Church and is succeeded by Franklyn Herman Board, a newly ordained deacon who is the first resident minister. He lives at 462 Montgomery Avenue in Albemarle.

1942 The baptismal font is added to the church and the Women’s Auxiliary raises money for landscaping and flagstone walks. The church celebrates its first wedding on March 21 when Laura Maie Shaver marries Lt. Robert Pettee.

The church has its first ordination when Mr. Board is ordained on June 11. Mr. Board concludes his ministry on September 27 to become rector of All Saints’ Church in Concord.



Parishioners and choir members following Sunday Eucharist during the early 1940's

During World War II many of the men of the church are away while engaged in various branches of military service. During this time, the women serve unofficially on the Mission Committee even through the Canons of the Episcopal Church do not allow it. Insight into the difficulties of the war years is evident in a letter that Spencer Percival, Senior Warden writes to the Church Building Fund Commission to request financial assistance.

We now anticipate a decrease in our church pledges by the members during the coming year for several reasons: first, several members of our church live in a town (Badin) seven miles distant from Albemarle and we can logically expect the present restrictions on the use of automobiles to become even more rigid in 1943, which may result in the temporary loss of these members; second, several of our members are now in the military service, with their families away from Albemarle for the duration, and others will probably be leaving soon; third, the remaining members of our church may be forced to reduce their pledges by high taxes and the general increase in the cost of living.

Although the church did not receive the requested financial assistance, the congregation is able to pay off its indebtedness just one year after the end of the war.

1943 The Rev. Robert Hampton Price, brother of William Penn Price, becomes priest-in-charge on February 1. He is ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Penick in a service held at First Lutheran Church on December 21.