

The Memoirs of Katherine Echols

My twin brother, Wilbur Hollis Alford, and I, Katherine Bailey Alford, were born to Linda Mae Winstead Walston Alford and Lawrence O'Bryan Alford on March 6, 1909 in Kenly, North Carolina. Our mother was manager for a hotel for the Dennis-Simmons Lumber Company and still kept the hotel for a year or two after my parents were married. My father was bookkeeper for Bailey and Kirby General Merchandise Store in Kenly. My brother was named for a friend of my father who was in training at Fort Monroe in Virginia in the late 1890s. I was named for Mrs. Katherine Heidi Kirby, wife of Mr. Jim Kirby and Mr. W. T. Bailey.

My mother moved to Kenly in 1907. Three of her children who were teenagers were her main helpers for running the hotel; since there was no electricity or plumbing then, there were many chores to do for up to thirty five boarders.

There was little chance for my mother to go to church on Sunday morning but when she could attend at night she did so. One Sunday night her younger son, George Earl Walston went with her to the Methodist Church. When they were seated George punched my mother and said, "There's that man over there I've been telling you about." After church George introduced her to my father. He was a Presbyterian and she was a Baptist. It was ironic that they should meet in a Methodist Church.

For their wedding, Linda and Lawrence rode the train to Fayetteville, a distance of about 65 miles. The minister of the Kenly Presbyterian Church, Rev. Souders, lived there in Fayetteville. Due to the train schedules, Linda and Lawrence were able ^{to} ride down to Fayetteville and back on the same day.

My father's first wife had died at child birth several years before, and he was taking his meals at his brother's home and sleeping in an upstairs room at the store. When his brother's family went on vacation to Atlantic City, New Jersey, he went down to the "big mill" to eat at the hotel. I guess he liked my mother's cooking and kept returning. They were married in February 1908 in Fayetteville, North Carolina, by the Rev. Soudors.

Thirty-three days after my twin brother and I were born we were baptized at home by the Rev. G. F. Kirkpatrick who was then pastor of our Presbyterian Church.

I don't know when my parents purchased a twin baby carriage. It was made of reed with a big black umbrella to keep the sun off. I have a picture of the carriage with us in it.. I am sure we were pushed everyday - just to show us off. It has been told me that Wilbur was most admired

because he had thick lips. Mine were thin.

Through snow and whatever the elements were outside, my father believed in getting us to Sunday School and Church. I remember being carried in his arms many times. It was only about four or five blocks to the Kenly Presbyterian Church. This was a wooden building. By the time I was five a new brick church building was begun. The old church was sold to a Holiness Church and moved to the street going toward to the High School.

A manse was planned in the place where the old church was located. My father donated some trees from his farm for the erection of the manse. Almost late every afternoon my father would take us children to see the progress of the church being built and then when the manse was started we were interested in seeing the progress of that.

My father's farm was located just outside Kenly. The farm is visible from the newly constructed Interstate 95 Highway. After my father's death in 1938, the farm was sold. The part of the money I received from the sale bought a piano for the family to enjoy.

On December 20, 1911 my baby brother, Charles Winstead Alford was born. When he was between two and three he had diphtheria. Dr. J. C. Grady came to the home and gave him antitoxin. He did not tell my mother to keep the active boy quiet and he became very immobile which scared my parents. Afterwards when Charles was quizzed about the incident he would say, "A snake bit me."

It was about this time my Grandmother, Susan Carter Winstead, and Grandfather Winstead visited us. While they were there we three youngsters gathered some kittens and put them in the wood burning cook stove oven in the kitchen. The smell began to penetrate the house. I do not remember if the kittens survived or not. Not too long after this episode we three gathered some soap and put it into a little hotter oven. This time my mother thought the house was on fire.

Sometime when we were still very young we went to Banner Elk and Spruce Pine on vacation. We stayed six months but when the cold weather came we headed back to Kenly. When we lived in Banner Elk, Lees McRae College was being built. My daddy helped with the construction of some of the buildings on that campus.

While we were there in the mountains, Wilbur and I, followed by baby brother Charles, locked ourselves up in the bathroom in the house. Such squalling we made when we realized that we couldn't get out. My mother finally calmed us down long enough to get us to turn the key. I'm sure we were happy kids to be free again.

My baby brother, Charles, was very hard to wean. He could talk very plain, and when my mother would rub mentholatum on her breast, he would tell her to rub it off. He was at last weaned. He did not like the mentholatum taste.

When we went back to Kenly there was no place to live except in a cousin's house several miles out in the country. There we had some hens and pigs. One of the hens became sick. I decided that Cousin Abby Pope, who lived nearby, could cure the hen. I gathered the hen in my arms and took her across a log over the ditch to Cousin Abby's. By the time I got there and sat down on the steps, I looked and saw my mother coming with a long switch. I was half crying telling her why I was there but my mother told me to get home. I can remember looking back and saying "I'm 'tweating'". My mother said, "I'll make you sweat if you don't get back home." That ended my going away from home for a while.

When we moved back to town we lived in the old Hooks house (long since burned down). It was right down town between the Funeral Home and the Doctor's Clinic. One day my half-sister, Mattie Walston, was coming home with a boy friend and lo and behold the sight she saw was disgusting and made her angry. There she saw Wilbur and me on the front and side porch running after each other. One of us had the training potty wearing it on our head and the other one hollering for it to be worn. It was our brother Charles' potty that we were playing with. Mattie was so mad she used her tongue to whip our mother with.

One other story about my half-sister Mattie. She was going to a Sunday School picnic. My mother had bought a new pair of shoes and had left them in the box on the sewing machine. Mattie had packed her lunch in a shoe box and put it on the sewing machine. She went to primp a little more. When her date arrived she was so excited that she grabbed the first box, after my mother had warned her not to take her shoes. At the picnic when the ladies were undoing the boxes of food and putting the food out on the table some one yelled, "Who brought these new shoes to the picnic?" Of course, Mattie wanted to go through the ground, but she had to claim them and face a mother who reminded her that she had been warned.

When I was about four we moved to the Darden house. The posts on the porch of this house had many short limbs jutting out. These posts were played on many times by the three Alford children and their playmates.

I remember my father owning a horse, buggy and surrey. He carried the U. S. mail on the buggy many years until he bought a model T Ford which was nice to drive in dry weather but when it rained he got stuck in the mud many times a day.

While we lived in the Darden house we had chickens, pigs, cats and rats in the barn. Once a big rat ran up my father's pant's leg. There was a big scurry and hollering in the barn until the rat decided which way was down.

After a rainy spell one spring, we children were going late one afternoon to help feed the pigs. My father was along. We had to walk beside a ditch. The ditch was full of water and my baby brother, Charles, fell into the ditch. He had bobbed up and down about twice before my father got to him to pull him out. He had a close call.

Another time while we lived at this same house, Charles had a home-made vehicle. He took it out in the dirt road in front of the house almost crawling to push it along. He didn't see a horse and buggy coming from the opposite direction. They bumped into each other, but he was not seriously hurt - only a few scratches and bruises.

We sat in the dining room at the Darden house instead of the parlor as it was more comfortable. We had a Franklin stove in there which burned coal and kept us quite cozy. One day late in the afternoon I was sitting in front of the stove getting my feet warm. I had put them on the foot rest and all at once I leaned back. The stove fell backwards and the stovepipe came out from the chimney flue. My half-brother, George Walston and my father ran in with gunny sacks and put the stovepipe back into the flue and got the stove up again. No more feet propping on that stove!

Another incident happened which later I got scolded for. My grandfather Winstead had died in Elm City in March 1914. My mother and father had gone to the funeral. My Aunt Mary Alford was left to look after us three children. I liked to play with one of my special dolls - a not too large celluloid one. As there was a deep snow outside I was going to be sure the doll was plenty warm. I had put some of my baby clothes on the doll and was holding the doll close to the grate in the Franklin stove when all at once - zip - flash - the doll was no more. I was left holding my baby clothes. I ran to the buffet drawer and crammed them in and closed the drawer. After several days when my mother was home again, she opened the drawer for a clean table cloth and discovered the burned and scorched baby clothes. She pinned me down, and I had to confess what had happened. She made it very clear to me that I could have burned the house down with me in it. That taught me a lesson.

We did not live too far from my Uncle Bennett Alford's. They had a nice apple orchard. In the summertime we children could pick up apples from the ground. When we went there we always had to go through the stock law gate at the west end of town. My twin brother liked to open and close the gate when the farmers came or left town. They would usually throw

him a piece of money which he always saved. When he would see some strange looking caravan coming down the road, he would run and hide until they passed. He remembered the stories Grandma Winstead would tell about her little brother disappearing when some gypsies had been seen in her community in Nash County.

Straight down the road from this gate was where my father, Lawrence Alford, was born on January 2, 1868. His farm was next to the home place. In previous years my father had some logs cut from his woods. There was a huge sawdust pile there and an old pump. One hot summer day he took us for a walk in his woods. He pointed out to us in a tree ahead a long snake looped over a limb. That began the fear of snakes I still have. We came back by the sawdust pile. I was so hot and thirsty that I ran to the pump and yanked it up and down at least twice when my face, arms and hands were covered with wasps. Talk about hurting! I was in tears. My father took me back to his old home place. A Ballance family lived there then. The woman dipped snuff and she said that would help relieve the pain so I was daubed with wet snuff on all the bites. The stuff smelled terrible to me. Maybe that's why I always shun tobacco products.

About this time my Aunt Elizabeth A. Pittman died November 24, 1912. My Uncle Bennett Alford died on September 8, 1914. Then Aunt Mary Catherine Alford died on May 21, 1916.

My half-brother George Walston was married to Mary Callie Rollins in June, 1916 in Sebrell, Virginia. He forgot to take the wedding ring but phoned Mattie, his twin sister, when he discovered he had forgotten it. She mailed it on the next train and the ring arrived in Virginia just in time. Mattie had stayed with us so Mama could go to the wedding. Mama always remembered the dusty, bumpy roads she traveled on.

Mattie Evelyn Walston was married to James Fred Webb on October 14, 1916. She remembered they rode on a horse and buggy from Wilson to his home in Edgecombe County after the wedding.

One thing I have forgotten to mention was my mother's first marriage. She was married at 19 years of age to Robert Edmond Walston from St. Lewis, Edgecombe County, North Carolina. They had four children: Levy, Edna, and George and Mattie (twins). Edna never married and died at the age of 79 in 1971.

"Ed" as my mother called her first husband was a railroad man and was transferred to Waycross, Georgia. Levy was born in Elm City in 1890. All of the other children were born in Waycross. When "Ed" was 28 years of age he had dropsy and died in January, 1896 with no insurance. My mother was left with four small children; the oldest was five. My mother

had to go back to her parents to live. Levy's Aunt Mollie Walston Hearne and Uncle Charlie Hearne wanted to take Levy, so Levy made his home at Macclesfield with the Hearnese.

The time we lived in the mountains, Levy Walston married Effie Green and came on their honeymoon to see us there. In 1917, Effie died at childbirth leaving a four day old little girl named Effie Vivian. She is Mrs. Harold Bass now living at Momyer near Nashville, N. C. In the early twenties Levy married again: Ottie Montrey who lives in Farmville, N.C. They had one son, Donald E. Walston, who graduated at the Naval Academy at Annapolis. Franklin D. Roosevelt was at his Graduation. When he called out the names of the graduates to get their diplomas, he called one, Strong Boozer, which gave every one a big laugh.

When Wilbur and I first began to talk, our Uncle Lee Alford, from Raleigh and who was mechanical superintendent for the News and Observer for 53 years, came for a visit. He gave us a dime a piece. Wilbur immediately asked for "more grits." Uncle Lee said, "If you will say 'more money' I will give you some more." Wilbur studied that for a few minutes and came back to Uncle Lee and said, "More money." He got some. To me things that I didn't like or I thought was not pretty I would call "quickie." My parents told me that I would call a freight train a "quickie train." I would also call a bicycle, a "cycle-bi."

I don't remember very much when I was in the first grade except my teacher's name. She was Miss Rena Edgerton, but she later married a Mr. Holland. I do know that she used a pencil to hit me on the head. I guess I was talking too much. I didn't let that happen again.

In the second grade Wilbur and I had the measles. The weather was cold. Our mother did the best she could to keep us covered up. I believe those days I missed from school were the only days I was ever out of school. Wilbur had to have his adenoids and tonsils taken out because his nose bled so often. I think he had the operation during the school year in Rocky Mount. He and my Daddy went on the train and rode back on the train.

All the schools began late then. Children had to help pick cotton. Then school began usually, in October school let out each afternoon because the cotton was waiting to be picked.

I began taking music (piano) when I was in third grade. My mother had already taught me my treble notes, and I could pick out a few hymns with one finger. Before Christmas that year I was called on in chapel (assembly) to play a solo. No one had said anything to me about playing. Of course, some other music pupils were called on, too. When I heard my

name I froze to my seat. When I went home that day I persuaded my mother that I wanted to stop taking lessons. She let me stop for the time being but I did begin taking again when I was in 8th grade from January until May. I took about seven months in all.

My brothers had quite a few boy playmates. One day one of them brought his bicycle. I wanted to ride it. The boys helped me on and gave me a push. I pedaled once or twice, ran over a stump in the dirt road, I turned loose the handlebars, I went one way and the bike another. That was the end of my bicycle riding.

The First World War was going on when we were in primary grades. I well remember the first time I heard an airplane and finally saw it. I was on my way to school one morning, walking under pecan trees, when I heard the plane. Of course, I ran to a clearing where I could see the strange bird-like thing. That was an eventful day.

When November 11, 1918 came, we Alford children along with some friends were at our cousins just at the edge of town picking cotton that morning. All of sudden church bells, whistles, horns all started blowing at the same time. We knew something important had happened. It was over! The World War I was over on November 11, 1918 at 11 o'clock. The eleventh month, eleventh day and the eleventh hour.

When I was nine years old I spent the summer in the country out from Macclesfield, Edgecombe County. I helped my sister with her first born baby, Fred Webb, Jr. and let her help with the tobacco crop. After that summer I came back many other summers and learned to help with putting in tobacco. I handed tobacco to the looper who put it on the tobacco sticks. Later I learned to loop tobacco. We worked at the barn. Of course we had to take the sticks to the barn to be put on the tier poles later. The men folks had to straddle the poles and hang the tobacco to be cured.

Of course, I made thirty or forty dollars during the summer which helped buy my school books and supplies for school.

One place that I was hired to help put in tobacco was Buren Lewis's farm. He also raised hens. When I arrived one morning I did not need my straw hat so I put it on top of a hen house. At lunch I grabbed my hat and walked in the sun about 3/4 of a mile to my sister's house, itching around the face and neck all the way. She had dinner on the table, but I had to get the black tobacco gum off my hands. Everyone was seated at the table when I got in the dining room. I sat down by my brother-in-law, Fred Webb, Sr. He said, "Kat, you are covered with chicken lice." Mattie began hustling me out to the pack house. She brought soap and warm water and clean clothes to me. I even had to shampoo my hair. (I'm glad it was

bobbed at that time.) When I returned to work that afternoon I left my chicken-lice hat behind to be burned.

My father and mother bought a two-story, green house which was nearer the school. This house had a back porch which had a wooden floor with a few knot holes in it which were punched out. My brother, Charles, had an episode with a hen one day at one of the knot holes. The chicken yard extended under the house. Instead of going to the outhouse or garden house since we had no indoor bathroom, Charles decided to use the knothole. A hen was at the right place at the right time. Such a scream my mother heard! His older brothers and sisters teased him about being henpecked for years.

It was at this house I fainted and fell into the fireplace. We were burning coal in a grate. My mother was in the bedroom with me and pulled me out. My hair was singed a little and a lump of coal had burned my left arm. I was dressing to catch an early train (called shoo-fly) to go to see my grandmother Winstead in Elm City. It was Thanksgiving Day. My mother was truly thankful for she thought I had dropped dead. She called my father to help get me on the bed since I was unconscious. When I woke up, my mother was crying and saying, "Oh, how can I let her go." I opened my eyes and asked, "Go, Where?" I did not go to my grandmother's that Thanksgiving Day, though.

Wilbur had started a paper route. Early in the mornings he delivered papers, and after school he worked at his little place of business he called "The North Pole." I would help him sometimes at "The North Pole." I would also coach him in his school work. He would depend on me to get homework assignments. We usually had double desks at school, and we always sat together at school. We were in about the ninth grade when Wilbur won a trip to the World Series for selling magazines. He went to Des Moines, Iowa on the train. Fast train.

My parents sold the green house and bought a bungalow. That's where we were living when Wilbur and I were in tenth grade. We were still living there when all three of us were married. One summer during the time Joe was in seminary he painted our house. That was the best painting job that ever was! My parents lived there when they died. My father died on August 7, 1938 at Carolina General Hospital in Wilson, NC. My mother died August 8, 1962 at home.

I think we were in tenth grade, when my father who was working for Atlantic Coast Line got my mother, Wilbur and me ~~a~~ train passes to go to Gainesville, Florida for a few days during Christmas holidays. My Uncle Paul Winstead and Aunt Penny there had lost their 18 year old daughter,

Katherine Winstead, whose clothing caught fire and burned her so badly and injured her kidneys. She had passed away several months before. That winter in Florida proved to be the coldest in years. The poinsettias growing outside were all dead before we left to come back home.

In 1926 (the year I graduated from Kenly High School) I gave the farewell address at commencement. There were twenty-two students in my class. That summer my half sister, Mattie, had twin girls. One of them was a blonde, Evelyn, and the other brunette, Edna. My sister reminded me that just because I was a twin that I wasn't immune from having twins when I was married. I told her that I hoped I would. And I did in 1936 - ten years later. You see she was a twin and had believed all those years that she could not bear twins. She could not believe it until the doctor had the twins taken to the bed for her to see.

The fall of 1926 I headed for college. I was going to Flora MacDonald College at Red Springs, N. C. I was going on faith that the good Lord would help me with finances. I had earned a \$75.00 scholarship by getting subscriptions to the Christian Observer and by borrowing from Dr. H. H. Sweet's College Fund. My mother had instilled in me that where there is a will, there's a way. How right she was! My sister-in-law, Callie Walston, George's wife, donated a winter coat she had outgrown which I used my four years there. No student ever went to college with any less than I had.

I was given a work scholarship the next three years and continued to borrow from Dr. Sweets. My senior year I was assigned to wait on Dr. Vardell, the President's table.

While I was in college, I was on several class teams in sports, but I enjoyed tennis more than anything. I even made varsity in my senior year. I was also elected president of the Flora MacDonald Christian Association.

I had majored in Latin and English but since we were in a deep Depression period, jobs were not to be had. I finally got a job to teach at Macclesfield in the third grade. I taught there for three years. I decided that I needed to be nearer home for my daddy "was getting feeble." He was having mini-strokes. Then the doctors called it creeping paralysis. Also, Four Oaks was on the Atlantic Coast Line railroad and I could hear from Joe and he could get my letters quicker from Four Oaks. I could be with my parents almost every week-end.

I got the Four Oaks teaching position after I saw James Woodard, father of Dr. B. L. Woodard of Kenly, one day in downtown Kenly. He was on the County Board of Education. I told him that I would like to teach in my home county. He said that he was sure I could get a job there. In a few

days I was offered a job at Four Oaks. Mr. Woodard told me that my daddy had been his teacher when he was a youngster. That was in the 1890's before my daddy was at Fort Monroe in Virginia during the Spanish American War, and before his first marriage.

The two years while I was teaching at Four Oaks, I stayed with the Hunter Stricklands. The last year I roomed with Harriett Woodall and lived with Mrs. Penny A. Moore. I taught in Four Oaks from 1933 - 1936.

In November 1935 I was married to Joseph Todd Echols. He had finished Union Theological Seminary in Richmond that year. He was supplying Second Presbyterian Church in Rocky Mount when we were married. We lived on Cokey Road in the home of Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Gay.

The beginning of 1936 found us in Benson. Joe was pastor of the Benson Presbyterian Church, Four Oaks and Cape Fear Churches and I was still teaching at Four Oaks. The train schedule in the afternoon after school was just right for me to ride back to Benson the afternoons that Joe was visiting his members.

Our twins, Joseph Todd, Jr. and Linda Margaret, were born while we were living in Benson. Also, ~~twenty-one~~^{two} months later our son, Charles Lowery was born. Several months later I knew that he was going to be some kind of artist. He looked at a painting on the wall with such intensity!

One Sunday I remember going with the three babies (as there were only twenty-two months between Joe Todd, Jr. and Linda Margaret, the twins, and Charles' ages) to the Cape Fear Church with Joe to worship service. On the way back, Joe was going along at a low speed when one of the car's wheel rolled off the car into a ditch. Of course we were in there, too. The Lord took care of all of us. None of us had a scratch.

My daddy had retired while I was teaching in Macclesfield. He was getting more feeble all the time. I do remember that he came to see us for a short visit while we lived in Benson after the twins were born. I can't remember if he came after Charles was born. I don't think he was able. He died with uremic poisoning and double pneumonia in Carolina General Hospital in Wilson. He died in August 7, 1938 at the age of seventy. A good, kind soul he was!

After my father's death, my brothers knew that my mother needed to be helped financially. She had to make building and loan payments, light bills, phone bills, food and household needs to be paid. Each one of my brothers I am sure felt that God had blessed them and their families for having such a good mother. They began sending my mother a check each

month. She was a good stretcher of pennies and nickels. Every time I visited her just before telling her good-bye she would always place a \$10.00 bill in my hand to help with our trip back to Alabama, Mississippi, South Carolina or West Virginia. She passed away in 1962 at age 93. A wonderful mother I had!

Beginning 1938 Joe accepted a call from Rocky Point, Pike and Currie Churches. We remained there until January 1945. While we lived there we had three more babies born to us. (I was afraid to move any other place for every place seemed that three more would be added to the family.) Mary was born in 1940, John in 1943 and Ruth in 1944. I could count six children in seven years and eight months. Whew! A lot of work but it was all worth it. I even got a whole school year of teaching plus two half years teaching while we lived at Rocky Point. Of course, I had to have some help while I was teaching. My husband was a very good baby sitter when it was necessary. But even he needed help!

Lutoria Davis lived in Kenly near my mother. My mother thought she would come to help me. She was about 16 years old when she came to Rocky Point. Every time we moved she came to live with us - to West Virginia; Huntsville, Alabama; and Leakesville, Mississippi. She was excellent with the children. She finally married a man with three small children. She was a good mother to those three children.

In January 1945 I had a varicose vein operation on both legs. My husband had accepted a call to two churches in West Virginia, Matoka and Lashmeet, to begin in February. The children and I went to my mother's until I had recovered from my operation. The latter part of March Joe came to take us to West Virginia. This was the third school that three of the children had entered during that school year. It did not seem to hurt them.

The stay in West Virginia was short and sweet. I just loved every minute of it. Joe's father died in December 1945, and Joe had sinus so bad and had to have all his teeth pulled. He felt that he had to have a change of climate. In 1946 he received a call from a church in Huntsville, Alabama. He became pastor of a church in the city, one across the Tennessee River called Tallucah and one in Limestone County called Limestone Presbyterian Church. About the time I was getting my roots put down, Joe received a call from Leakesville, Mississippi to a two-church field: Vernal and Leakesville. We moved to Mississippi in February of 1949 and stayed until 1953.

In 1953, Joe's only brother, Roger, was going to Edinburgh, Scotland to study and asked Joe to supply his church at Leslie, South Caroline for one

year. We moved there then moved back to Mississippi to Waynesboro the next year.

In 1956 a call came from Littleton, Warrenton and Gruver Memorial Churches in N. C. We moved to Littleton to stay until 1959 when we moved back to Mississippi. Two of our sons were in college at Belhaven in Jackson, Mississippi and that seemed to pull us toward them. We moved to Nettleton, Mississippi.

In 1958 Linda had finished college at King College at Bristol, Tennessee. In 1959 she had taken a job at Presbyterian Book Store in Richmond. She then worked for Dr. Slider. She entered Presbyterian School of Christian Education and graduated in 1961. She became a Director of Christian Education at Lakeside Presbyterian Church in Richmond, Va. where she worked until she was married to Thomas Lee Perry in August 1963.

In August 1961 John and Dean Powell were married in the Powell home in Tupelo, MS. Their first child, Teresa was born in March 1963.

By this time all but two of the children were married. Ruth was at Belhaven College and Charles had gotten his M. A. degree in music from University of Texas and had volunteered for service in the Army and was sent to France. He was in France when Joe Todd was married to Gail Ballentine in May 1963 at Sardis, Mississippi.

By the end of 1963, we had 3 grandchildren: Jimmy Clark, Janice Clark and Teresa Echols.

In 1964 Joe had a serious operation in Baptist Hospital in Memphis. Part of Joe's lung was removed. It was cancer but had not spread out.

The first of January 1965 we moved to Virginia. Joe had three churches in Halifax County: Providence, Memorial and Herman.

It was the year 1966 that Ruth was married in the Providence Presbyterian Church on June 12th to George McNinch of Jackson, Mississippi. In June, 1969 Joe and I flew to Santa Monica, California, to Charles' wedding to Shirley Storey at the First United Methodist Church of Santa Monica where he was organist.

Joe and I lived in Providence, Va., until August 1971 when we moved to Macclesfield where Joe's father had begun an Associate Presbyterian Church in 1922. Joe retired in 1974 in name only for he preached two more years. We moved out of the manse to Gaston Lake near our daughter, Mary Clark and her family in Warren County. Joe still came back (from Lake Gaston) each Sunday to preach at Macclesfield or at Bethany.

Then we had a chance to buy a retirement home in Macclesfield - so

back we moved! We were away only eight months. Joe preached up to two Sundays before his death. The last Sunday that he was in the pulpit, I am sure he had a light stroke. The next week the doctor told him not to preach any more. He was sent to hospital in Wilson to have some tests run but had a massive stroke and died there on April 15, 1976. Joe's long time friend, W. W. (Bill) Glass had charge of the funeral services. Joe was buried on April 17 (Saturday before Easter Sunday) in Wilson, NC. (Joe's remains were moved to the Macclesfield Cemetery in June 1990.) I thought the world was about to collapse on me, but the Lord has given me strength to keep carrying one.

It was in 1974 that I retired from teaching. I received a plaque that has 34 years of teaching on it. Really with the half years and substitute days would add up to 40 or more years. In 1975 a teacher had a heart attack and I was asked to substitute. I finished the year out - from November 1975 until June 1976. This was a trying spring for me coping to get adjusted to living alone. It was good that I had something to keep me busy for I might have been less active now. Since I am nearing seventy nine I am still engaged in a little substituting but I am a little picky where or what grades I teach.

If I were getting teacher retirement pay I don't think I would be substituting now. One can not transfer teacher retirement from one state to another and since I married a minister and we moved from state to state I have no retirement. With Social Security and a little annuity from Board of Pensions (as it is called now) I am still existing. The Lord is watching over me.