



**PLAN CENTENNIAL:** The committee who planned yesterday's centennial celebration at York's Church of the Good Shepherd included (left to right): Mrs. Fred Shirley, publicity; George H. Hart, Sr., vestry representative; John A. Marion, senior warden; Mrs. S. K. Lowry, Jr., decorations; Miss Frank Clawson, auxiliary chairman; Mrs. George French, luncheon chairman. (Photos by Joe Azer.)

## York Episcopal Church Sets Centennial Fete Next Friday

The centennial of its founding will be celebrated on Friday, Nov. 18, by the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd, York.

The Episcopal Church building is the oldest worship edifice in York, although the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches are older in organization.

Preaching the centennial sermon at 11 a.m. will be the Rev. Oliver J. Hart, bishop of the Diocese of Pennsylvania. His grandparents were among the church's founders.

Others participating will be the Rev. C. Alfred Cole, bishop of the Diocese of Upper South Carolina, the Rev. E. Hopkins Weston, rector; and the Rev. C. Earle B. Robinson and the Rev. Cyril N. Sturup, former rectors. A centennial luncheon will be served at 1 p.m. at the parish house.

Although the cornerstone of the church was not laid until 1855, organization was begun as early as 1852. The Rev. John DeWitt McCullough, missionary priest sponsored by the Society for the Advancement of Christianity in S. C., conducted early services which

were held in the Methodist Church and at the courthouse.

The first formal organizational meeting was held May 21, 1855 in the Rose Hotel, S. Congress St., now used by the Carolina Carpet Mills. Early founders of the church were Col. William Blackburn Wilson and W. E. Rose. The latter was a member of the Church of England and built the Rose Hotel.

Among the early vestrymen were Asbury Coward, Micah Jenkins, who established the Kings Mountain Military Academy; William K. Hackett, Dr. James M. Lowry, and Lt. Cato A. B. Seabrook. The first resident rector was the Rev. James D. Gibson of Savannah.

The Church of the Good Shepherd, of conservative Gothic lines, has been remodeled and enlarged since its erection. The bell bears an inscription dated 1865.

The parish house, erected about the same time as the church building, was purchased in 1923 and enlarged. The white frame rectory on Wright Ave. was given in 1896 by Major Walter B. Moore as memorial to a former rector, the Rev. Robert A. Lee.

## Church Of Good Shepherd Dates To 1855 Area's First Episcopal Church

By JOHN SMITH

The then new Rose Hotel in York was the meeting place of several gentlemen on the spring evening of May 21, 1855. Their goal: to organize an Episcopal church in the town.

It was to be the first church of that denomination in York County and one of the first in this part of the state.

W. E. Rose had built the hotel in 1852 on the eve of a decade of prosperity for the town. Rose was an Englishman and a member of the Church of England.

The 1850's were years filled with great things for the town of York (then Yorkville). The Yorkville Female College, a Presbyterian institution, had been established in 1854; the Kings Mountain Military School had opened in the fall of the same year with Micah Jenkins and Asbury Coward as founders; and the Kings Mountain Railroad had been built from York to Chester by local merchants and planters. This made the town a depot for the back-country area of north-western South Carolina and western North Carolina. York was the closest railroad point for these areas.

Under these conditions, a number of prominent families had moved to York. The Episcopal Church was the predominate church of the Charleston area and these people, added to the new Episcopal families in York, decided to establish their own church.

Micah Jenkins, later a famous Confederate brigadier-general, recorded the minutes of this first meeting at the Rose Hotel. The

gentlemen elected the first vestry of the church at that time.

However, this was not the first Episcopal organization in York. In 1852, the Right Reverend Christopher E. Gadsden visited the town. The Diocese of South Carolina considered the church organized before the bishop's death that year. There had been Episcopalians in York, according to Robert Mills' statistics compiled in 1820.

In 1855, the church building was completed. It was of brick construction, stuccoed and in the plain Gothic style. This building is the one used today. Inside, the windows are shuttered and the light filtering through them is softened.

Beside this building is the parish house named in honor of Walter Bedford Moore, a member of the church. It is also well over a century old and was built by the Jeffries family who came up to York from Charleston. It is an elaboration of the raised cottage style of architecture. Double, curving stairs once ascended to the second floor gallery.

The Rev. J. D. Gibson was the first rector of the church, which was named, in the original meeting of the vestry, the Church of the Good Shepherd.

The church was consecrated on Sunday, Nov. 18, 1855, by Bishop Thomas Frederick Davis, of the Diocese of South Carolina.

The outbreak of hostilities at

Charleston in 1861 brought a considerable refugee immigration of Episcopal churchmen to York from the low-country. The Rev. William Johnson moved to York with a large part of his church membership from Edisto Island.

Many of these families remained throughout the war.

A number of men from the Church of the Good Shepherd served with distinction during the war. General Jenkins, General E. M. Law, Col. Asbury Coward, Capt. Cato S. Seabrook, Lt. Samuel C. Lowery, and William Knox Hackett were among those listed. Four of these, Jenkins, Seabrook, Lowery and Hackett, were killed. General Law lived until 1920 and, at his death, was the ranking officer of the Confederate Army.

Col. Coward returned to York and operated the Kings Mountain Military School for a number of years and then was named president of The Citadel in Charleston.

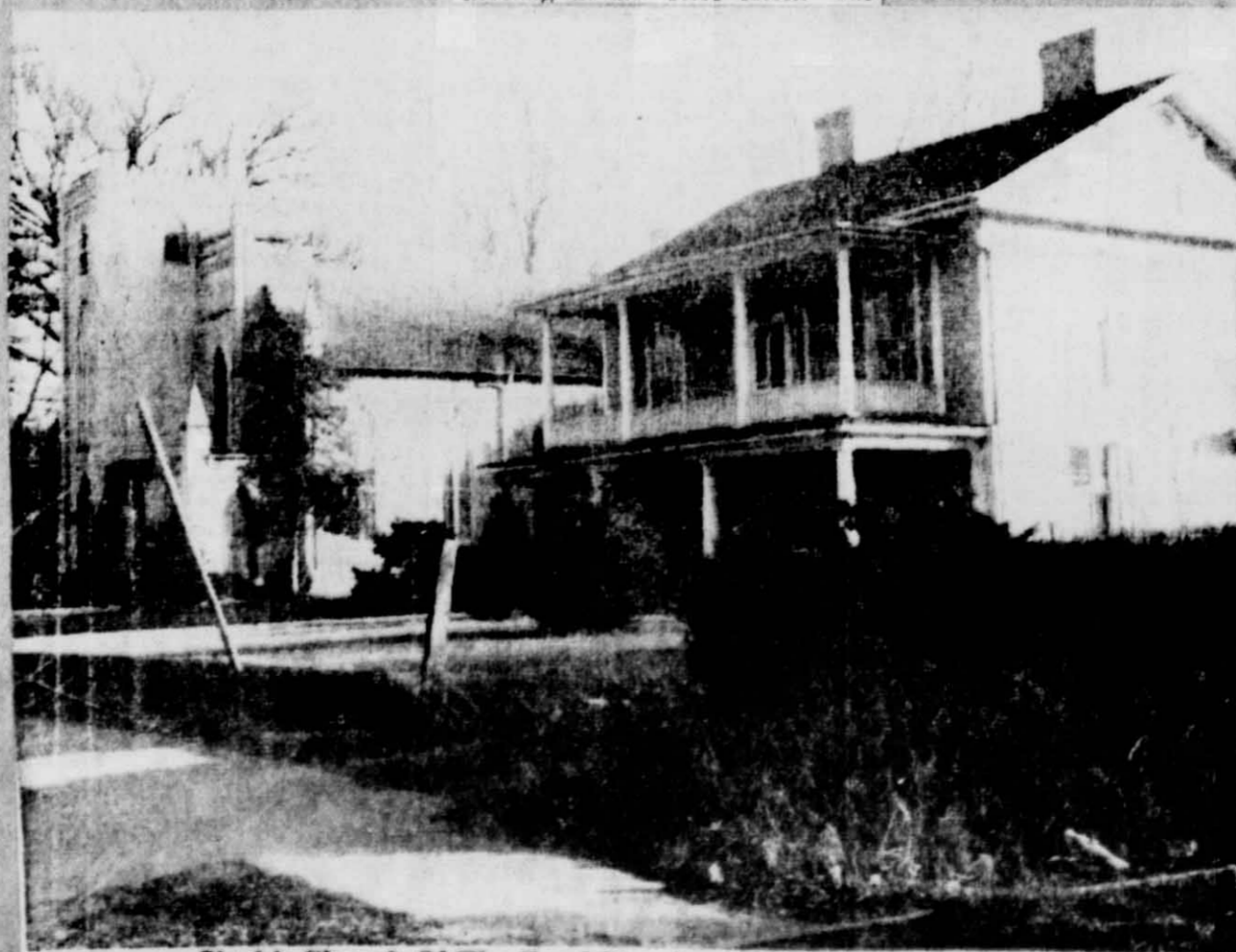
According to Joseph E. Hart Jr.'s Centennial history of the church, the parish lost "by removal many of its members, who could not cope with the Freedman's Bureau and the troop of Federal cavalry which together made life for such gentlemen exceedingly difficult" during the Reconstruction period.

In 1874, the rector of the church sent a sad report to the Diocesan convention. The Federal troops still occupied the town and he had granted "three more leaves" from the parish registry.

The Good Shepherd church has been served by a number of distinguished rectors. Among them were: the Rev. Theodore DuBose Bratton, "born in Fairfield County but a cousin of the Bratton family in York". He later became bishop of the Diocese of Mississippi.

The Rev. Thomas Tracy Walsh was rector of the church in 1909. He had formerly been arch deacon of the Diocese of South Carolina and served as chaplain to the church home orphanage when it when it was re-moved to York from Charleston in 1909. The Rev. William Charles Cravner, who served the church during World War II, is the author of a number of religious books.

In recent years, new doors to replace the old ones on the historic church have been added. One is named in honor of Micah Jenkins and the other for Asbury Coward. Each Sunday, children from the children's home in York pass through these doors. These children live in the building that was formerly the Kings Mountain Military School founded by Jenkins and Coward over a century ago.



York's Church Of The Good Shepherd (L) And Parish House

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S.C. - Counties - York - Churches - Episcopal  
(S. C. - COUNTIES - YORK - MARRIAGE RECORDS)

Marriage Records

from the

O.K.

Register Book

Church of the Good Shepherd

York, S. C.

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