

in obtaining some of the windows by asking friends for their donations. She died in 1908. Later, memorial windows were given by devoted parishioner Helen Price. The Bishops Chair is in memorial to William Bell Howe, sixth Bishop of South Carolina (1871-1894).

Sources:

*The Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration Saluda, North Carolina 1891-1991*

by Anne Riggs Osborne, beloved friend and parishioner

*Building The Walls of Jerusalem* John DeWitt McCollough and His Churches

by Judith T. Bainbridge

*Historical Sketches* Diocese of Western North Carolina

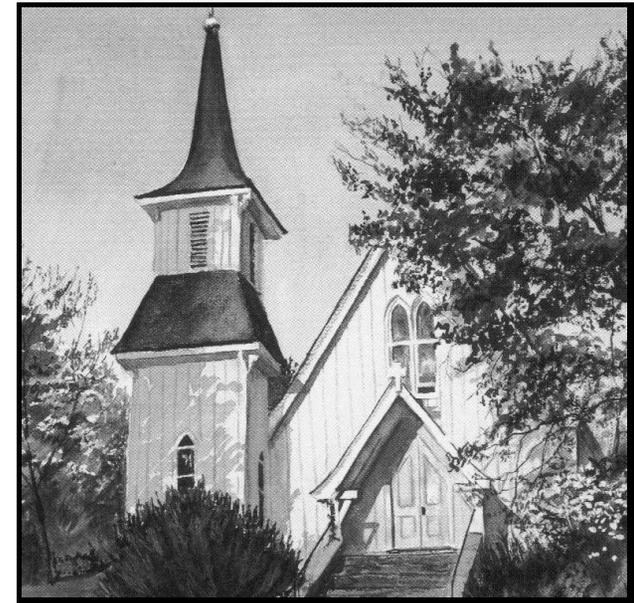
by James B. Sill

And remembrances

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## **A Short History of The Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration Saluda, North Carolina**

**Compiled by  
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The story of the Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration in Saluda begins with John DeWitt McCollough. He was born, December 8, 1822 in Society Hill, South Carolina and died in Walhalla, South Carolina on January 23, 1902. He was a carpenter, architect, priest, and a builder of the "walls of Jerusalem." "Build thou the walls of Jerusalem" (Psalms 51:18) was McCollough's motto, the epigraph to one of his most significant sermons, the imperative that shaped his career. He continued on to say, "Let us keep before our minds and in our hearts the truth that this is but the symbol of the spiritual house, builded only by the Divine Architect." The Church of the Transfiguration, over the years, has become that symbol for generations of churchgoers.

The first Calvary, Glenn Springs, South Carolina, was his first architectural work. It began just a month after he was ordained as a deacon on June 21, 1848. The Church of the Transfiguration, a small Carpenter Gothic church, was his last and the only one outside South Carolina.

The Rev. McCollough first came to Pace's Gap, as the village of Saluda was called at that time, in the summer of 1880. He was quoted as saying, "I had Divine Service August 22, AM and PM in a room over Tanner's Store. Congregation small. A few friends from Spartanburg present. Had an offering and announced that it would be the beginning of a fund for building a church." "1889 the Church was occupied and Holy Communion celebrated the first time Aug 4th." Further he said, "The Church was consecrated by Bishop Lyman, Sept 1st 1891, Bishop Howe present."

In 1880, Mr. McCollough and his sons, plus a group of young students from Sewanee, started building the church on land donated by Mr. Frank Thompson. One of the students, Theodore Bratton, who later became Bishop of Mississippi, told "Father Bill" (The Reverend W.S. Stoney) that they were always eager to come to Saluda because, although Mr. McCollough was a hard taskmaster by day, he allowed them to have their evenings free. There were enough girls to go around for dates, and if nothing else could be found to entertain them, there was always square dancing several nights each week. (This was from Nettie Owings' notes.)

An excerpt from a letter from Captain Pearson's wife to one of her sons reads, "I have heard that Mr. McCollough hoped to build a church at Saluda this summer or earlier. Maybe you and Ned will be able

to help him some." Eunice Pace remembers her father telling her that when he was a young man he had helped build the pews in the church. Elizabeth Cooper Nabers once told Eunice that her uncle Frank Arthur had carved the rood screen that was later moved to the wall on either side of the altar. He was also the uncle of parishioners Ellen Forcier, Charles Nabers and Johnnie Kinard. It was said that he later carved the doors of St. John the Divine in New York City. This task took seven and one half years. Johnnie Kinard made and carved our prayer desks currently used from Carolina Hemlocks. Robert Burt writes that "the church pews were hewed out of dead chestnut trees and that the altar was carved out by Mr. McCollough and the reredos and lectern top was made from the McCollough's mahogany dining table broken in one of the trips up the mountain from Spartanburg."

Mr. McCollough certainly designed the church and did a major part of the building and decorating, but the project was an ecumenical labor of love that involved Saluda natives as well as summer residents and visitors.

The nave needed to be extended within a few years, so many were the worshippers. You can see where the original church ended just past the baptismal font. The bell tower was added at that time. The tie rods were probably inserted also at this time of construction as a preventive measure because of the devastating earthquake that rocked Charleston in 1897.

In 1920, Rev McCollough's daughter Phoebe Staton created a plan for a memorial garden in the churchyard, using different flowering plants to form church symbols at the points of the compass. The plan was carried on until her death in 1940.

The following is from Miss Hattie Staton, Mr. McCollough's grandchild, who compiled a list of some of the people instrumental in making early donations to the Church:

Dr. Francis Le Jau Frost donated the chancel window in the church and also the baptismal font. Mr. William G. Hinson donated a window over the door. These and the nave windows are of stained glass and given as memorials to the departed. Julia Goelet, deaconess and sister of Dr. E.B. Goelet, a pioneer doctor of Saluda, was instrumental