

FEATURED ARTICLE

December 13, 1863

Reuben's Appointment as a Deacon of the Methodist Church

On December 13, 1863 Bishop George F. Pierce appointed rev. Reuben Washburn a Deacon in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. He could thus perform marriages, baptisms, and burials. {At that time, the South Carolina Conference covered parts of North Carolina, as it was so far to Raleigh, the headquarters of the North Carolina Conference. All the western part of North Carolina with a dividing line running between Greensboro and Burlington was formed into the Western North Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South in 1900.}

In checking with the South Carolina Church Historian, he found that {as normal for the Methodist Bishops} Great Grandfather, Rev. Reuben was assigned to the Beauford, S.C. District. Of course, he refused to go all the way to the Coast of South Carolina. Thus his history with the Methodist Church ended in 1865. He may have continued, but I have been unable to find any record of his doing so. My Mother, Lillian May Washburn Neill said and wrote that he was a circuit riding minister. Maybe so, we will never know, unless some more records surface. The original copy of this document is in the hands of cousin, Mearle Bradley Umstead Ritchie, who at this time resides in Atlanta.

Correspondence of Nollie Washburn Neill
May 6, 2004

The original document reads as follows:

Know all Men by these Presents,

That I, George F. Piece, one of the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, under the protection of the Almighty God, and with a single eye to his glory, by the impression of my hands and prayer have this day set apart Reuben Washburn for the office of DEACON, in the said Methodist Episcopal Church, South; a man who, in the judgment of the South Carolina Conference, is well qualified for that work, and he is hereby recommended, to all whom it may concern, as a person to administer the Ordinance of Baptism, Marriage, and the Burial of the Dead in the absence of an Elder, and to feed the flock of Christ, so long as his spirit and practice are such as become the Gospel of Christ, and he continueth to hold fast the form of sound words, according to the established doctrines of the Gospel.

In Testimony Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal, this 13th day of December in the year of our Lord on thousand eight hundred and sixty three.

Geo. F. Pierce