

STONE FAMILY OF STOKES COUNTY

A Family History Submitted to The Stokes County History By Mrs. Luther N. Byrd

Elder Francis Preston Stone, for many years a Primitive Baptist minister and known to thousands of people in all walks of life in Stokes County and throughout many areas of both North Carolina and Virginia, was father to the Stone family which resided in the historic Asbury community, an area located in the Northwest corner of Stokes near the borders of Surry County in North Carolina and Patrick County in Virginia.

More familiarly known as Elder Press Stone to thousands of his fellow church members and friends in many areas, he was ordained to the Primitive Baptist ministry in 1905. He became clerk of the Fisher's River Primitive Baptist Association in 1911 and served in that post until 1929. In that year of 1929 he became moderator of the Fisher's River Association and held that position until his death in 1959. Such was his record of more than half a century as a minister.

Elder Stone was born in Surry County in 1872, son of Francis Rutherford Stone and Sarah Poindexter Stone, and he was married on March 6, 1897 to Cassie Chilton of the Westfield community. She was born in 1875, the daughter of James Chilton and Sallie Pell Chilton. In addition to these Stone, Poindexter, Chilton and Pell grand-parents, both Elder Stone and his wife were descended from other families long known to Stokes County, among them the Jessups, Gordons, Martins, McKinneys and others.

Press Stone himself was a direct descendant of William Stone, who was the third colonial governor of Maryland from 1648 until 1660. As colonial governor this ancestor pushed through the Maryland Colonial Assembly in 1649 the very first statute of religious freedom in American history. Cassie Chilton Stone also could trace her ancestry into the early colonial period to three Chilton brothers who came to Virginia by 1660. Both husband and wife could further trace their lineage in unbroken line for forty or more generations to the Emperor Charlemagne, ruler of France from 768 A.D. until 814 A.D.

After their marriage Elder Stone and his wife established their home on a farm in the Asbury community, settling on land that had been formerly held by Cassie Stone's father, James Chilton. Both husband and wife took active parts in the civic, educational and religious life of the Asbury community. He was a leader in the affairs of the Asbury School, which for many years offered high school training, although it was later reduced to the elementary level as the Westfield and Francisco High Schools developed into accredited institutions.

In addition to the community service, Press Stone also served at the more extended county level, for he served as a member of both the Stokes County Commissioners and the Stokes County Board of Education. For many years there was seldom a "First Monday" when he was not found at the county seat at Danbury.

Mr. and Mrs. Stone became the parents of nine children, among them four sons and five daughters. The sons included Herschel Stone, who married Marie Hutchins; Alton Stone, who married Virginia Swanson; ~~and~~ Frank Stone, who married Lelia Flippin; and Thomas Stone, who remained unmarried. Herschel and Alton Stone engaged in business activities in Winston-Salem for many years; while Frank Stone, who served several years at Stokes County Tax Supervisor, worked in later life in federal government positions in Washington, D. C.

The five daughters included Lola Stone, who married Ernest Collins; Glennie Stone, who married Carlos Spence; Gladys Stone, who married Carnis Sheppard; Belle Stone, who married Fred Denny; and June Stone, who married Luther Byrd. All have lived useful lives as home-makers or as business or professional women.

Descending from these children of Elder Press Stone and wife there are sixteen grand-children and a number of great-grand-children and even younger descendants; and numbers of these more recent descendants from the Stone family of the Asbury community have contributed in uncounted ways to modern life as a result of their business and professional activities.